

P R I M E V A L

THE WOLF

NIGHT OF THE YELLOW MOON

by John Dunn



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NIGHT OF THE YELLOW MOON

An Adventure for Characters of Levels 4-6

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Based on the *Primeval Thule Campaign Setting*
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Thule is a land steeped in savagery and superstition. Vile cults lie hidden in the hearts of the great cities or rule over barbaric tribes in jungle vales, practicing terrible rites handed down from the prehuman denizens of earlier ages. Of these forgotten cults, few are as fanatical—or mad—as the wanderers who call themselves the Golden Ones. Servants of the Great Old One Hastur, the Golden Ones believe that the time is coming for He Who Must Not Be Named, and that it is their holy task to prepare the way by spreading his worship throughout the world and punishing all nonbelievers.

For years, the Golden Ones have roamed the wilds more or less at random, burning villages, pillaging caravans, and attacking tribal camps under the guise of recruiting new followers. However, now something is different. A charismatic new high priest named Monyat has become the leader of the cult, and he believes that the signs and portents point to Hastur's imminent triumph. A rare astrological alignment known as the Yellow Moon is coming, and Monyat intends to celebrate it with a ritual far larger than any the Golden Ones have attempted before. The Golden Ones need hundreds of new recruits, and thousands of potential sacrifices.

Inspired by this mad vision, Monyat now feverishly drives the Golden Ones on a rampage through the tribal lands near Quodeth. The hour of the Yellow Moon approaches, and Monyat plans to stage the final act in his apocalyptic plan in the heart of the city.

Adversaries and Treasure: Statistics for monsters and new items presented in *Night of the Yellow Moon* can be found in the Adversaries and Treasure appendix, at the end of the adventure. References to the *Primeval Thule Campaign Setting* are abbreviated *PTCS*.

Encounter Difficulty: The adventure is intended for 5th level characters, but for much of the adventure the PCs only need to deal with one or two combat encounters per day. As a result, most of the encounters are deliberately set a level or two above the expected party level.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure opens when the player characters enter Morlun, the village of the Stonespear barbarian clan. They have a minor errand or old ties with the Stonespears, and expect a friendly

welcome. Instead, they discover that the clan has been wiped out by unknown marauders. A search reveals that a tribal elder is the only surviving member. She warns the heroes that a band of nomadic cultists visited the tribe the night of the attack.

The characters are expected to follow the cultists in the hope of recovering stolen goods, rescuing captured Stonespears, or exacting vengeance for the murders. As they continue their pursuit, they discover a trade caravan and another Ammur clan that the cultists destroyed. Encounters hint that there is dark magic at work, including a battle with a gibbering moulder and the discovery of one of the Golden Ones' misplaced relics.

In the second act of the adventure, the player characters catch up to the Golden Ones at the camp of the Storm Eagles, another band of Ammur barbarians. The Golden Ones are seeking to induct the Storm Eagles, who are still hearing out the cultists when the PCs arrive. At this point, the heroes can either try to confront the cult directly, or make allies of the Storm Eagle clan to overwhelm the twisted cultists.

Defeating the cultists at the Storm Eagle camp does not put an end to Monyat's foul scheme, unfortunately. The heroes soon discover that the high priest Monyat and a group of elite followers split off from the main body of the Golden Ones, and headed directly to Quodeth. In the final act of the adventure, the PCs must find Monyat and his followers in the teeming streets of the city before the followers of Hastur can begin the Yellow Moon ritual. If the heroes fail, Hastur's minions will bring about the deaths of countless Quodethi and convert thousands of broken survivors to the path of their terrible god.

NOMADIC CULTS

Wandering bands of pilgrims are relatively common in some parts of Thule. Some lead lives of endless pilgrimage, traveling from one ancient shrine or lonely wilderness altar to the next to honor their grim deities; individual devotees join these groups for a season or two before finding a place to settle down and giving up their travels. Other nomadic bands are driven by the desire to proselytize their beliefs, and seek out opportunities to make new converts. Some of these are content to live on the alms of those they visit, while others expect a tribute of goods—food, equipment, and other precious materials—to

support their wanderings. Finally, the worst of Thule's wandering pilgrims are little better than bloody-handed raiders following dark and demanding gods.

While wandering cults often spell trouble for those they meet, they aren't entirely unwelcome. Thule's pilgrims are responsible for spreading many of the myths that circulate across the land. Certain popular legends—creation myths, stories of tremendous heroics, and tales of tragic loss—are commonly recounted by the better sort of nomadic cult. In some cases, these religious zealots bring healing or call on divine magic to perform minor wonders for those they seek to impress. As a result, many traditional tribes (and even some city dwellers) maintain a sense of awe and respect toward the nomadic cults. The arrival of a nomadic cult is seen as a sign, and turning them away risks the anger of the gods.

THE GOLDEN ONES

The Golden Ones are a particularly wicked nomadic cult. They see themselves as the chosen servants of Hastur, the King in Yellow, and believe that their devotion to him will be rewarded when Hastur comes to establish his dominion over the earth. As a sign of their devotion, the cultists wear slaves' collars made from beaten gold; high-ranking cultists wear heavier collars with loops of gold chain draped over their shoulders. The collars are poorly made and cruelly fitted, but the Golden Ones bear their sores as badges of honor.

When the Golden Ones encounter another tribe or village, they present a peaceful aspect at first. While few members of the cult have any firm grip on sanity, some are at least capable of concealing their madness. It is these representatives who first introduce themselves to outsiders. They explain away the madmen among them by saying that the cult has many members whose delight and rapture has "freed them from concerns of the physical world," and in their "blessed" state they may be hard for nonbelievers to understand. The cult representatives then allude to the tremendous power of "the King of the Stars," or "the Sleeping One," and hint at the favors that they can offer to those who heed his word. Examples include wealth and bounty, security from attackers, as well as fertility and fecundity.

Invariably, at least some outsiders fall prey to the promises that the speakers initially make. In short order, the Golden Ones draw these potential converts to rituals conducted around isolated

campfires or within hastily erected tents. Most who join in the rituals succumb to madness, joining the cult as new recruits. Those who do not fall prey to insanity are typically slain as sacrifices to Hastur—an important part of each ritual. The Golden Ones then continue to prey upon their hosts until all are either recruited or killed, which seldom takes more than a day or two. Throughout the process, the cultists take care to lure in just a few individuals at a time and insure that none escape to warn others of the danger. Once everyone who dwells nearby has been converted or slain, the Golden Ones move on to find new prey.

Legend has it that other tribes and cities have tracked down and wiped out the Golden Ones at least three different times. However, within a few short months, the tribe was once again travelling across Thule and spreading the word once more. It may be that there is more than one band of Golden Ones travelling the continent, or that survivors were able to restart the process, converting new members and growing their unholy religion again.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The opening scenes of *Night of the Yellow Moon* take place in the eastern foothills of Ammurath, the homeland of the Ammur barbarians. The Ammur are advanced as far as barbarian tribes go, and many of their clans engage in some amount of trade with outsiders. The adventure works best if the characters have reason to visit Ammurath and expect a friendly welcome from at least one Ammur tribe—the Stonespear clan, whose home village is Morlun.

If you have the opportunity to plan ahead a little, introduce the Stonespears as friendly NPCs in an adventure that takes place before you run *Night of the Yellow Moon*. Establishing a good relationship with the Stonespears before the adventure begins will provide the characters with plenty of motivation to avenge the tribe after the events of the opening scene.

Choose one of the following hooks to bring the characters to Morlun and begin their pursuit of Monyat and the Golden Ones, or create one of your own. Remember that few adventurers in Thule have entirely selfless motivations. Make sure that the party has good reason to pursue the Golden Ones after the first scene.

The Tablet of Darieoth: Travelers passing

through Morlun have reported that the Stonespear clan possesses an unusual treasure: A gold, disk-shaped tablet covered in ancient writing. The barbarians said their ancestors found the tablet in “the flying ship of Darieoth,” which crashed in nearby Lake Kydar and sank. A PC with scholarly interests—for example, an Atlantean noble, occult scientist, or star-lore adept—heard the traveler’s tale in a nearby city, and resolved to go to Morlun to examine the tablet, persuading the rest of the party to come along.

The Sacred Hunt: One or more of the player characters counts the Stonespear clan as friends or kin. The Stonespears are about to embark on a ceremonial hunt—an occasion for weeks of revelry and the renewal of old bonds—and the character has been invited to bring his or her comrades to Morlun and join in the revels. A jungle trader PC may have traded with the Stonespears before; a freeblade or tribal outcast may have found shelter with the Stonespears for a time; or a Dhari hunter PC may belong to an allied tribe.

The Panjandrum’s Son: The heroes are hired by Jor Thodel, a wealthy panjandrum of Quodeth, to track down his missing son, a young man named Khado. Khado Thodel was traveling with a caravan in the Quosa Vale a couple of months ago when the caravan met with a wandering band of pilgrims who wore gold collars and talked about the wonders of a coming “age of dreams.” The impressionable Khado abandoned the caravan and left with the cultists. After weeks of asking about pilgrims wearing gold collars, the heroes learn that the band was last seen near Pyriador, on the trail to the barbarian village of Morlun. Jor Thodel will pay the heroes 250 gp each for bringing Khado home.

ACT ONE: TRAIL OF RUIN

The adventure opens when the characters arrive in the village of Morlun, home to a friendly barbarian tribe. Upon their arrival, they discover that the village has been savagely destroyed. The ruined village has attracted dangerous jungle scavengers, and the PCs must first fight off a pack of dire wolves before they can investigate the scene. In searching the ruins, the characters find a single survivor: Leena, a village elder who successfully hid from the attackers. Delusional and near death, she can tell the tale of what befell Morlun. Her story sets the PCs on the trail of the Golden

Ones, and leads them into the Kurmanur Wilds. There the characters soon stumble over more of the cult’s grisly handiwork.

When you are ready to begin, read the following:

You are traveling to the village of Morlun in the forests of eastern Ammurath. Morlun is home to the Stonespears, a clan of Ammur barbarians who are known to trade with outsiders and sometimes serve as guides to travelers from civilized regions. The day is drawing to a close, but the village is only a few miles off, and you should be there well before dark.

Explain the heroes’ reason for making the journey to Morlun, if you haven’t done so yet. The players are free to take any precautions or scout around if they wish—the area around the village is deserted, and they meet no one else.

MORLUN

The Stonespears are an Ammur clan who take their name from a group of natural spires near their village. Because the tribe dwells relatively near Quodeth, they have begun to fall prey to its mercantile practices. Other Ammur clans would describe them as dangerously civilized. The Stonespears often traded animals skins, gems from mountain streams, and occasionally excess fruits gathered during the harvest season. They are far from wealthy, but they have lived in Morlun for generations, and their lifestyle is comfortable and secure. The village headman is a scarred old warrior named Gram One-Eye, and the rest of the clan’s members are prototypical Ammur barbarians. If the PCs have any connection or history with the Stonespears, they would regard the clan as strong, brave, and certainly capable of fighting off almost any imaginable trouble. However, the party discovers the village in ruins:

An ominous silence greets you when you arrive in Morlun. The village is an utter shambles. Bodies of people litter the ground, intermingled with the remains of livestock. Everything is dead, and it is clear that many of the victims were subjected to awful torture before meeting their ends. The attack appears to have been violent solely for its own purpose—most of the lodges and storehouses have been badly damaged, and some are burnt to the ground. Perishables, useful goods, ruined tools, and household furnishings are scattered across the area, as though the attackers had made a half-hearted attempt to pillage Morlun.

While none of the Stonespears appear to have survived and no attackers are lingering in the area, the player characters can turn up several valuable clues by examining the area.

TALES TOLD BY THE DEAD

Characters who can magically question the dead or otherwise divine something about the attack can piece together the story easily enough. The Golden Ones, led by their high priest Monyat, came to Morlun three days ago. Monyat is known to his followers as “the Golden Prophet.” He is a human man of middle years who wears ceremonial golden armor with a chained collar.

The cultists preached for hours about the “King of the Stars” and “the Night of the Yellow Moon,” a fast-approaching revelation or transformation that would usher in an age of wonder and delight for those who followed their god. A DC 20 Knowledge (Religion) check identifies the “King of the Stars” as a name for the Great Old One Hastur used by his cultists. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (Arcana) check identifies the night of the Yellow Moon as an obscure astrological alignment associated with ill omens. Its next occurrence is in about two weeks.

The Golden Ones performed various blessings for the villagers (most mere mummery, although neither ordinary cultists nor Stone-spear villagers knew that), begged for provisions, engaged in minor trades, and urged likely recruits to join them in their great pilgrimage. A handful of villagers were intrigued enough to attend the cultists’ rituals (none of the villagers or ordinary cultists lying dead know it, but those individuals were enthralled by Monyat’s magic or drugged with hallucinogens in the ceremonial wine). By evening, dozens of Stonespears were dancing alongside the cultists and were swept up in “the rapture of true belief.” Gram One-Eye, the village headman, was plied with drink and beautiful dancers until he fell asleep.

At moonrise, Monyat gave the signal, and the cultists suddenly turned on the villagers who had declined to join them. The Golden Ones believed they were “purifying” the village of those who refused to be saved. The recently converted Stonespears were in a stupor and did not realize what was happening to their kin. The barbarians fought back, but they were overwhelmed by the cultists’ numbers. Gram and the other chief warriors were burned to death in the headman’s lodge.

The Golden Ones spent the next few hours looting Morlun, and left by noon. They carried off their new recruits (most still in a drugged stupor) and struck out eastwards along a small footpath. None knew where Monyat intended to go next.

Call or Shout: If any character thinks to call loudly for survivors to answer, the party hears Leena’s response—a weak, rasping moan—a moment later. See Finding Leena, below.

Examine the Dead: Most of the dead were slain by sword-cuts, arrows, or bludgeoning injuries. About sixty villagers are dead here, along with twenty or so outsiders. The outsiders are humans of Kalay or Nimothan descent. They are dressed in scraps of leather armor and mismatched kilts, robes, and capes in yellow. Four wear thin collars made from beaten gold (each is worth 10 gp), while the other outsiders have chafing and sores around their necks, suggesting they wore similar collars which were removed recently (the Golden

Ones stripped most of the collars from their own dead, and overlooked a few).

If any of the characters know the Stonespears well, they can tell at a glance that scores of villagers are missing. Otherwise, any character examining the bodies may attempt a DC 10 Intelligence check. On a success, the character realizes that based on the number of buildings in the village, there are at least 30 or 40 villagers unaccounted for.

On a successful Heal or Survival check (DC 15), a character can tell that the bodies have been here about three days. So far, scavengers have stayed away from the scene.

Look for Tracks: Any character who makes a careful search of the village and its surroundings automatically discovers a trail leading north-east into the Giantstead Grove—a large party of humans, including sledges drawn by oxen, left Morlun. On a successful Survival check (DC 10), the character can also determine that, based upon the tracks and the time since the last rain, the PCs are the first people to enter the village since the time of the attack.

Search the Buildings: Characters who systematically search the buildings in the village discover Leena in the ruins (see below). If a character searching the buildings succeeds on a DC 10 Perception check, he also discovers that a strange symbol has been carved into the woodwork in several places. It resembles a crown with three points.

To identify the symbol, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) skill check or a DC 20 Knowledge (local) skill check. The symbol is associated with the Golden Ones, a wandering cult devoted to Hastur.

Search for Loot: Any one searching the village for valuables realizes that the attackers were quite haphazard in their looting (most of the Golden Ones are not terribly lucid, so attention to detail is not their strong suit). An hour of gathering scattered provisions and valuables results in 80 days’ worth of provisions, an assortment of ordinary clothing and tools, 320 sp, and 90 gp. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Appraise check also finds a pouch of uncut emeralds, containing six stones worth 40 gp each, and a jeweled dagger worth 350 gp.

Stand Guard: If any character stands watch and keeps an eye on the surrounding forest, he or she spots the approaching pack of wolves (see Scavenger Attack, below). The party is not surprised in that encounter.

FINDING LEENA

Characters who call out for survivors or make a thorough search of the village buildings discover that one Stonespear still lives. A weak moan from a collapsed building attracts their attention; Leena, an old woman who is one of the Stonespear elders, is pinned under the wreckage of a collapsed wall.

A weak moan reaches your ears. Following the moaning to its source, you find an elderly woman pinned under partially collapsed building. It seems that her current predicament may have saved her from the attackers, as she is largely concealed by what was once the structure's thatched roof. She appears badly dehydrated, and her eyes are clouded with cataracts.

Leena is pinned and unable to free herself. She is incoherent at this point, and can't answer questions; the best she can manage is, "Help me," or "Water, please, water." It only takes a few minutes of work to free her. Any character familiar with the Stonespears recognizes her as Blind Leena, one of the village elders.

Initial attempts to talk to Leena are bound to be frustrating for the player characters. The woman has been trapped under a building for three days, and was in poor physical condition prior to that. Leena is responsive, but her voice is weak and faltering. The PCs can understand her requests for water—and she greedily gulps any they give her. Beyond that, her words are largely nonsense at first. Unless the heroes have a means of magically clearing her mind or providing her rest (any magical healing will suffice), she needs at least eight hours of rest before she can be questioned.

Roleplaying Leena: Normally, Leena would be suspicious of outsiders, particularly given the recent destruction of her clan. However, the player characters have most likely just rescued her from a slow and agonizing death. Whether or not they intend to give her further aid, she is in their debt and willing to repay their kindness. She hopes that the party might be willing to exact vengeance against the attackers, but she knows that is a lot to ask from a band of strangers.

Even once she has recovered, Leena still speaks slowly and methodically, with a wavering voice. She often pauses mid-sentence, as though she is struggling to breathe, and her breath often rattles as she inhales. The woman is clearly elderly and in failing health. It is miraculous that she managed to survive three days trapped under the collapsed structure.

When questioned, Leena provides the following story:

"I am Leena," the old woman begins in a weak voice. "My people were the Stonespears. Three days ago, a large band of pilgrims came to Morlun. They called themselves the Golden Ones, and told many tales of the wonders awaiting those who would join them in worshiping their god. Wandering bands of holy people pass through Morlun from time to time, and we thought these Golden Ones were the same.

"My eyes are cloudy and dim these days, and I cannot tell you what they looked like. I listened to their talk for a time.

Their leader was a priest named Monyat, and he asked Gram, our chief, many questions about the tribes nearby. Then he gave Gram many gifts.

"I thought the Golden Ones' words were so much nonsense, but I know that some of the other villagers were swept up by their stories. I went to bed an hour after sundown. But in the middle of the night, I was awakened by terrible screams and the roar of flames. I went to the door of my hut to find out what was happening, and I heard our warriors shouting that the Golden Ones had turned on us. Then the roof of my hut fell in on me, and I knew no more. When I woke up, it was day, and I was pinned. I called for help, but none heard my cries."

Leena witnessed (or at least overheard) most of the events described in the Tales Told by the Dead sidebar. She does her best to answer any questions the characters have for her, and urges them to avenge her people. However, she is terrified about what will happen to her once the party leaves Morlun—she is old, blind, and frail, and her home has been utterly destroyed. She has nothing of value, including the bare necessities for survival. If the characters choose to leave her in the ruins of the village, they are essentially consigning her to a slow death.

The characters can significantly improve Leena's circumstances by taking an hour or two to gather supplies, clear the village of the dead, and set her up in one of the surviving huts. Alternatively, they can take Leena to the village of a nearby clan, which requires several hours of travel and delays pursuit of the Golden Ones by half a day.

SCAVENGER ATTACK (CR 6)

So far, scavengers have shied away from Morlun—the smells of mankind (and sinister magic) lie heavily over the village. As the characters discuss how best to pursue the Golden Ones and what to do with Leena, a small pack of dire wolves drawn to the area by all the decaying bodies overcome their hesitation and move in to attack. The wolves creep to within 40 feet of the party by skulking through the ruined buildings, then burst out of the ruins.

3 dire wolves (hp 45 each)

If any character is specifically standing watch during the party's first examination of the scene, the character spots the wolves nosing around the outskirts of the village—the wolves cannot surprise the party. Otherwise, each PC must attempt a Perception check (DC 13). Any character who fails the check is surprised by the wolves.

The dire wolves only press the attack until two of the pack members are incapacitated. At that point, the last member breaks off from combat, grabs remains from the village, and attempts to flee.

Leena makes no effort to participate in the battle. She hears and smells the wolves, but not until combat is engaged. During the fight, she screams out for someone to protect her. When the conflict is over, she despairs over her current plight, begging the characters to see her to safety before they go.

WHY PURSUE?

Since Morlun has already been destroyed, some characters may not see a reason to pursue the villains. However, each of the hooks suggested at the beginning of the adventure offers compelling reasons for even the most mercenary of parties to make the Golden Ones their problem.

Missing Tablet: Characters who came to Morlun to examine the *Tablet of Dareioth* discover that it's missing. It seems likely that the Golden Ones carried it off when they plundered Morlun.

Panjandrum's Son: Khado Thodel is not among the dead cultists left unburied at Morlun. It's clear that the missing youth is probably still traveling with the Golden Ones.

Vengeance: Characters who had friends or kin among the Stone-spears shouldn't need much of a reason to chase down the Golden Ones—someone must avenge the dead.

Loot: Characters unmoved by the brutality of the attack at Morlun might be interested in a more concrete reward. Clearly, the cultists carried off a fair amount of loot from the village. Looting the looters may not be heroic, but there's no sense in allowing the Golden Ones to keep their plunder.

FOLLOWING THE GOLDEN ONES

The next move for the characters is to chase down the Golden Ones, but the cultists have a three-day head start. Normally, the cultists wander more or less at random, but their leader Monyat knows that the alignment of the Yellow Moon is coming soon, and he means to reach Quodeth in

time. He drives his followers mercilessly, setting their course eastward and pushing them hard. The Golden Ones only stop to induct new members into the cult or to quickly slaughter travelers unfortunate enough to cross their path. In order for the characters to catch the Golden Ones, they need to move swiftly.

In this part of the adventure, the characters follow the cultists' trail (described in *The Chase*, below). They encounter more evidence of the cult's violent ways in *The Slaughtered Traders* and *Dire Portents*. The chase ends at the barbarian village of Rethenna, home to the Storm Eagle clan.

THE CULTISTS' PATH

On the evening that the heroes arrive in Morlun, the Golden Ones are camped in the plains south of Lake Kydar, about 35 miles northeast of Morlun. The timeline of their movements is described below; the heroes enter the story on Day 3.

Day 0: The Golden Ones come to Morlun, and massacre the village.

Day 1: Northeast through the forests of the Giantstead Grove, covering 9 miles and camping in a forest clearing.

Day 2: Continued northeast through the forest, covering 11 miles and camping on the edge of the plains south of Lake Kydar.

Day 3: Northeast across the Kydar plains, marching 15 miles. The PCs arrive at Morlun in the evening; the cultists are camped 35 miles away.

Day 4: Northeast across the Kydar plains, crossing the Upper Kydar at a stony ford around noon. The cultists attack a party of traders at the ford (see *Slaughtered Traders*, below) and camp about 10 miles east of the river (a total of 18 miles).

Day 5: East across the Kydar plains, striking the Cheir-Rethenna trail a few miles east of Majestic Keep. The cultists despoil the Redrock shrine (see *Dire Portents*, below) and camp there (17 miles).

Day 6: Follow the trail to Rethenna, camping a couple of miles from the village (15 miles).

Day 7: The Golden Ones arrive at Rethenna around noon, and begin to proselytize the Storm Eagles (5 miles this day, 90 miles from Morlun). Monyat and a group of chosen followers leave Rethenna at dusk.

THE CULT ON THE MOVE

Day 8: The cultists remain in Rethenna. Monyat's group heads east along footpaths through the Kurmanur Wilds, covering 20 miles. The group is smaller, so they travel faster and are harder to track.

Day 11: Monyat's group arrives in the town of Ansumo, at the east end of the Kurmanur Wilds.

Day 13: Monyat's group arrives in Quodeth.

Day 15: The Feast of the Yellow Moon.

Pacing: The adventure works best if the heroes catch up to the cult at Rethenna. It's about three to four days' travel from Morlun for a party on foot marching hard. If the party moves slower, you can assume that the Golden Ones take an extra day or two, lingering in their camps until midday.

It's possible that a party of fast-moving characters (or heroes who use magic) might be able to manage more than 30 miles a day, and potentially overtake the cultists. Mounts won't help the party move faster on the path in the Giantstead Groves—riders in the forest are limited to a walking pace. However, the plains south of Lake Kydar are more open, and a mounted party can make excellent time. If you need to slow the party down, bad weather might make it difficult to follow the trail on the plain, or the party can run into "random" encounters with Thule's dangerous wildlife. Finally, it's not unreasonable for the Golden Ones to push hard to get into Rethenna on Day 6.

The Golden Ones consist of more than two hundred mad cultists. Most of the cult's members travel afoot, but they also use oxen to pull sledges, loaded with provisions (most looted from Morlun), tents, and the paraphernalia necessary to perform their rituals. There is little logic to any other goods they carry. Some carry food and water, while others go hungry unless Monyat orders the band to make camp and distribute supplies. Others carry bits of plunder or useless items such as branches, looted furnishings, or worthless "totems" simply because madness compels them to.

Discarded goods, empty packs and crates, and even the bodies of cultists who have collapsed along the way provide clear markers for the trail. The cultists left behind on the march die quickly from exhaustion or deprivation, or are killed by their fellows. Because of their numbers and inattentiveness, the Golden Ones leave a trail that is easy to follow (a DC 0 Survival check in forest, or DC 5 in the plains).

The Golden Ones begin their travel each day an hour after sunrise, and they continue travelling until it sets or they encounter another camp or village. They travel at the pace of their ox-drawn sledges (speed 20 feet), but frequent stops and general disorganization mean that they rarely make 20 miles in a single day.



WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Thule's jungles and forests are home to many deadly creatures. Small parties traveling cross-country are especially likely to meet something dangerous. If you wish to slow the heroes down or highlight the peril of the wilderness, select one or two of the encounters below. These should take place on the first or second day of the heroes' pursuit.

Saber-Tooth Cat (CR 6; *PTCS*, page 212): The cat picks up the party's scent in the Giantstead Grove and stalks the party; have the rearmost character make a Perception check (DC 14) to spot the cat before it attacks.

Ghoul (CR 1; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, page 146): A gang of 1d4+2 ghouls is squabbling over the remains of Golden Ones who collapsed and died along the trail; the heroes can surprise them if they are scouting ahead and the scout succeeds on a Stealth check (DC 17).

Giant Frilled Lizard (CR 5; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, page 194): The party encounters 1d2 of the lizards on the Kydar plains.

Winged Ape (CR 6; *PTCS*, page 232): The ape shadows the party and attacks their camp in the middle of the night when they stop to rest. It tries to overpower and drag off any character standing watch.

SLAUGHTERED TRADERS (CR 5)

Two days after the Golden Ones decimated the Stonespears, they encountered a small caravan of traders from nearby Quodeth. Caravans travelling through Ammurath are normally well protected against the dangers of the wild as well as barbarian attacks. Clearly, their defenses proved inadequate against the Golden Ones. As long as the player characters are directly following the Golden Ones' trail, they come across the remains of the caravan a day or two into their journey.

The scene is disturbingly similar to that of the Stonespear clan's village. In a large forest clearing lie the remnants of a trading party. Slashed and torn tents flap in the breeze. The remains of more than twenty humans—most apparently porters or animal handlers—and a half-dozen ponies fitted with wicker panniers are interspersed with the ruined trade goods they were carrying. A tattered yellow cloth marked with a red, three-pointed crown symbol flies from a tent pole in the middle

of the wreckage.

As long as the party is not surprised, add the following:

Several big, hairy man-like creatures dressed in foul scraps of hide are rummaging through the wreckage—a raiding party of beastmen. They carry wicker shields and stone-headed axes.

The beastmen are ransacking the wreckage when the heroes arrive. They were not responsible for the destruction, but are perfectly willing to salvage whatever equipment and sundries they can from the mess that the cultists left behind. The beastmen are not, however, willing to share their newfound treasures with the heroes.

Surprise: If the PCs are taking no special precautions, the beastmen attempt to hide and ambush the party; have each character attempt a Perception check (DC 12). Characters who fail the check are surprised. If the PCs are proceeding cautiously (for example, arranging for a stealthy character to scout ahead), they have a chance to surprise the raiders. Have the party's scout make a Stealth check; the beastmen make one Perception check (+4) to spot the party scout.

4 beastman hunters (*PTCS*, page 214); hp 16 each

1 beastman cursemaker (*PTCS*, page 215); hp 35

The hunters spread out, each picking his own character to attack. The cursemaker hangs back a short distance from the fighting, and uses his jujitsu heads to attack enemy spellcasters. The beastmen hold their ground until three of them are defeated, at which point the survivors attempt to flee.

Clues: If the characters defeat the beastmen and search the wreckage of the camp, they have an opportunity to make several discoveries. First, the human bodies scattered around the camp include 14 traders and 7 cultists in yellow robes. Two of the cultists are former members of the Stone-spear clan who wear yellow hoods and cloaks over Ammur clothing (player characters who knew the Stonespears recognize these cultists as members of the tribe).

Treasure: A close search of the wreckage requires an hour. If the characters take the time to search, they find a pendant of cosmic alignment (see Adversaries and Treasure) on the body of a cultist wearing tattered yellow robes embroidered with the three-pointed crown symbol of the Golden Ones. If the characters just make a curso-

ry search, they find the pendant only if a searching character succeeds on a DC 15 Perception check. If the characters find the pendant, read:

One cultist dressed in more ornate robes than the others wears a strange pendant around her neck. It is made of a fossilized yellow resin, probably some kind of amber, and hangs from a worn leather thong that passes through a hole drilled in the stone. A symbol in the shape of a three-pointed crown is scratched into its surface. When not in direct sunlight, the yellow stone has a faint golden glow.

The symbol represents the cult of the Golden Ones is inscribed into the pendant's stone. To identify the symbol, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) skill check or a DC 20 Knowledge (local) skill check. A *detect magic* spell reveals a faint divination aura on the stone.

In addition to the pendant, a fair amount of treasure can be gathered from the scene—several of the traders are wearing coinpurses that were not looted, and some of the cultists likewise carried minor valuables. These include 24 pp, five tourmalines worth 20 gp each, a jeweled ring worth 250 gp, a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and a *potion of gaseous form*.

DIRE PORTENTS (CR 6)

About twenty-five miles past the scene of the slaughtered trade party, and fifteen miles after the Golden Ones' Day 4 campsite, the heroes come across the cultists' next atrocity.

You catch sight of smoke and circling vultures from a low rise a couple of miles ahead. It soon becomes clear that a small settlement on the hilltop has been burned. When you reach it, you find ruins that are by now disturbingly familiar. Like Morlun and the trade caravan, this tiny clan-hold was overwhelmed by the yellow-robed cultists. A handful of the attackers lie dead alongside the villagers they massacred, and the villagers' belongings are strewn over the hillside. All of the lodges have been put to the torch, but an old shrine of roughly fitted fieldstone still stands at the top of the hill.

This time, the victims were the Redrock clan, another small Ammurath tribe. Characters familiar with Ammurath recognize the place; other characters identify Redrock with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check. The small clan-hold only had about forty inhabitants; thirty are dead here, and ten were dragged off with the Golden Ones. Many of the dead lie badly charred among the ashes and rubble of their homes.

Shrine of the Redrocks: This small shrine was



built long ago by barbarian priests dedicated to Tarhun, god of storms; the village of Redrock grew up around the place. The Golden Ones desecrated the shrine, and used members of the Red Rock clan as sacrifices to Hastur.

Unlike the burned lodges outside, the old shrine remains intact. It looks much older than the rest of the village. An old, rusted battleaxe is affixed over the entrance, which consists of stone steps leading down to a dark, open doorway. The interior is a circular chamber half-buried in the earth, forty feet in diameter, and ten feet high in the center of the room. It is very dim inside, but you can make out huddled shapes lying on the floor and a big stone altar near the middle of the chamber.

Characters who bring a light source (or who see well in low light) can see that the walls are painted with simple religious pictographs, although many seem to have been recently defaced with smears of charcoal and blood. The images depict storms, battle, and hunting; a character who examines them and succeeds on a DC 10 Knowledge (Religion) check identifies the place as a primitive shrine dedicated to Tarhun, god of storms. If the characters move in for a closer look, add:

There are five dead villagers on the floor, their bodies arranged carefully to form a shape like a three-pointed crown. The bodies are covered with many strange, rasped-away circular wounds, rather like the bites of lampreys. You hear a low whimpering sound from behind the altar, which is immediately joined by several more soft sobbing voices.

Characters that enter the room to examine the bodies or look for survivors behind the altar discover that the Golden Ones left something else behind: A gibbering moulder of unusual size, which was summoned during their foul ritual to devour the sacrifices. It remained within the temple, awaiting further prey.

Giant gibbering moulder (CR 6; see Adversaries); hp 54.

A madness check (page 141 *PTCS*) is certainly appropriate. The moulder might surprise characters expecting to find survivors hiding here; allow characters a Perception check (DC 8) to avoid surprise before the monster surges out to attack. The creature opens the battle by gibbering, to try to incapacitate its foes. It then systematically attempts to engulf and devour anyone that comes close, and pursues (slowly) if the party flees the temple.

If the characters defeat the aberration, they can investigate the chamber. A character with the Astrologer or Star-Lore Adept narrative recognizes that the ritual appeared to be based on an astronomical alignment of the moon and certain stars. Other characters must succeed on a DC 10 Knowledge (Religion) check to gain this insight. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana or religion) check allows the character to predict the night of the alignment (it will occur after moonrise on Day 15 of the timeline, however far away that is now).

ACT TWO: AGAINST THE GOLDEN ONES

The player characters might not know it, but they are closing in on their quarry. The Golden Ones are encamped at the barbarian village of Rethenna, home to the Storm Eagle clan. It lies only fifteen miles away from the ruins of Redrock. In this part of the adventure, the PCs catch up to the Golden Ones, only to find that the Storm Eagles don't yet recognize the threat posed by the cultists—if the heroes aren't careful, they might end up fighting both the Golden Ones and their unwitting hosts.

There is one more complication the heroes don't know about: Monyat, the Golden Prophet, leaves Rethenna before the party arrives. Confident that his underlings can subdue the unsuspecting barbarians, Monyat and a group of picked followers press on eastward after only a few hours in Rethenna. The Golden Prophet intends to begin preparations for his great ritual in Quodeth, and expects the rest of the cultists (reinforced by many drug-addled Storm Eagles) to follow him in a day or two.

This part of the adventure begins with End of the Trail. Depending on how the players proceed, continue with Rash Attack, Urgent Diplomacy, or Hidden Heroes. Act Two concludes with Massacre at Rethenna—although whether that is a massacre of cultists or Storm Eagles remains to be seen.

END OF THE TRAIL

When the characters reach Rethenna, they may be surprised by what they find.

The track leads across the plains to a good-sized barbarian village surrounded by a ditch and palisade. Pastures full of goats and sheep ring the village. A couple of hundred cultists in yellow robes or hoods are encamped around the village. The village gates stand open, and there seems to be quite a lot of mingling and trade between the tribesmen and the cultists. Some cultists are preaching to the villagers, others are pitching tents and starting cookfires, and many are dancing languidly, turning in small circles to no music you can hear. Quite a few cultists simply slump on the ground and stare into nothing, or mumble to themselves. No one notices you.

The Golden Ones include 110 converts, 70 fanatics, and 5 acolytes (see Adversaries). They are divided into a dozen small encampments—a tent or two, a sledge, a cookfire, or just stupefied cultists sitting in a circle on the ground—each numbering anywhere from 15 to 20 Golden Ones. About 25 of the Golden Ones converts and fanatics are former members of the Stonespear clan; the Golden Ones took no recruits from the trading party or Redrock village.

Three of these clusters are grouped around each of the two gates leading into the Storm Eagle village, and the remaining six ring the settlement, each about 50 or 60 yards from the next. In daylight, any pitched fighting or sudden burst of activity in one encampment will certainly be noticed by cultists in nearby encampments.

Golden Ones Leader: In Monyat's absence, the leader of the group is the Golden Ones acolyte Zuria. She and several other important cult-

ists are negotiating with Tariss, chieftain of the Storm Eagles, in the chief's lodge, which stands in the middle of the village. They are introducing themselves, requesting alms, and offering them the chance to participate in the cult's rituals that evening. (The characters can't see what's going on in Tariss's lodge unless they enter the village.)

The Storm Eagles: The Storm Eagle clan is very traditional, generally distrusting outsiders and especially city dwellers, whom they see as greedy and indolent. They make their home in the eastern end of the plains south of Lake Kydar, growing a range of crops and keeping herds of sheep and goats. The leader of the clan is Tariss, a woman of fifty years who is still a formidable hunter. The tribe includes more than two hundred members, many of whom have returned to the sprawling village after a day of tending their livestock and crops. Most are commoners, but 60 are Storm Eagle Clan Warriors (see Adversaries).

Tariss and the other clan's elders are wary of the Golden Ones since something about these pilgrims just seems "off." However, they recognize that wandering bands of pilgrims often bring gifts of news, healing, and the favor of the gods—it would be disrespectful to turn them away. Tariss is meeting with Zuria and some of the other cultist leaders when the characters arrive.

RASH ATTACK

Since the Golden Ones take no notice of a small group of travelers approaching, there is nothing to stop the player characters from falling on the nearest group of cultists in a murderous fury. (The Golden Ones have certainly earned it!) The cultists react slowly, but their great numbers are probably more than the PCs can overcome. Worse yet, the Storm Eagles feel obligated to defend their guests from what appears to be a random and senseless attack.

If the PCs attack before nightfall, they can easily surprise the inattentive cultists, who call for help. Nearby bands notice the fighting and cries of alarm and come to help, resulting in waves of reinforcements that join the encounter every 1d6+2 rounds. (If the PCs wait until nightfall to attack, they've waited too long—the cultists turn on the Storm Eagles, beginning the Massacre at Rethenna encounter.) Groups of Storm Eagle warriors join in to repel the attack.

Wave One (CR 5): 8 Golden One converts.

Wave Two (CR 6): 2 Golden One fanatics and 6 converts.

Wave Three (CR 6): 6 Storm Eagle warriors.

Wave Four (CR 6): Golden One acolyte and 6 converts.

Wave Five (CR 8): 4 Storm Eagle warriors and 5 Golden One fanatics.

Wave Six (CR 8): Golden One acolyte, 2 fanatics, and 10 converts.

See Adversaries for descriptions of these foes.

Breaking off the Fighting: Sooner or later, even the most truculent heroes may realize they can't kill all the cultists. If the party chooses to flee, the Golden Ones don't pursue. If the party simply stops fighting and calls for a truce, any Golden Ones or Storm Eagles likewise stop—they have no idea why the party attacked and want an explanation.

CULTIST DREAMWINE

The Golden Ones encampments are disorderly collections of sledges, tethered oxen, baskets full of provisions, and battered tents. There is very little that is valuable, but three of the encampments have sledges full of small earthenware jugs sealed with wax. These contain dreamwine—common wine of rather poor quality the Golden Ones acquire in trade, then infuse with mind-altering mushroom powder. The cultists share their dreamwine freely with their hosts, with the result that many warriors are in a drugged stupor when the Golden Ones attack.

Dreamwine is an ingested poison (Fort save DC 15) with an onset time of 1 hour, a frequency of 1/hour for 8 hours, and 2 successful saves to cure. On the first failed save, the imbiber takes 1d4 Wis damage and is sickened (although he feels lightheaded and euphoric, not ill). On the second failed save, the imbiber is nauseated (again, the sensation is extreme dizziness and strange visions). If the victim is threatened by danger during this time, he becomes confused for 1d8 rounds, then lapses back into nausea. On the third failed save, the victim becomes unconscious. Victims reduced to 0 Wisdom by repeated dreamwine become insane (as the *insanity* spell).

URGENT DIPLOMACY

If the characters try to get to the Storm Eagles and warn them, the Golden Ones don't hinder them. Most of the cultists outside the village just aren't paying attention. However, the barbarians aren't sure what to make of another band of outsiders that shows up with wild tales of whole villages slaughtered. Any random warrior or villager the characters accost hears them out, then replies, "Tariss should hear this. She will know what to

do.” The villager then leads the party to Chief Tariss’s lodge, where they find the Golden Ones speaking with the Storm Eagle chief.

The chief’s lodge stands in the center of Rethenna. The door stands open; half a dozen Storm Eagle warriors sit cross-legged on the ground outside, looking inside. A couple of Golden Ones cultists dance slowly nearby. Inside the lodge, you see four Golden Ones (dressed in better robes than most of the others) sitting around a fire-pit, speaking with five tribal elders, including a fierce-looking woman of middle years who wears a circlet of leather and gold around her brow.

If the characters wait a moment to listen, they hear the following:

“We thank you for your welcome, Chief Tariss,” one of the Golden Ones says. She is a dark-haired woman who carries a tall staff. “The King of the Stars smiles upon this hour. Tonight at moonrise we shall join together in worship and raise our song to the skies. Will you not drink with us and celebrate this fortunate day? Great wonders are close at hand! Rejoice with us, good friends!”

“There is honey in your words, Zuria, but I know not why,” the chief replies. “Why share these things with the Storm Eagles? We know nothing of these matters. And where is Monyat, the one they call the Golden Prophet? I thought he would come to treat with me.”

“He has gone ahead,” the woman replies. “The Night of the Yellow Moon draws near, and Monyat goes to make all ready for the great celebration.”

The characters can burst in and interrupt at any time; however, that will come across as terribly rude. Allow the characters on the scene to make Sense Motive checks (DC 15) to recognize that bursting in may give offense. If the party interrupts anyway, Tariss’s starting attitude is Unfriendly. If the heroes wait for Tariss to finish with Zuria and the other Golden Ones and refrain from interrupting, Tariss begins the discussion with an Indifferent attitude.

No Negotiations (CR 9): If the characters just attack the Golden Ones in Tariss’s lodge, both the Golden Ones and the Storm Eagles fight back. This is an extremely dangerous encounter—encourage the players to retreat. See Adversaries and Treasures for statistics.

Chief Tariss, hp 57

4 Storm Eagle warriors inside the lodge, hp 22 each.

Zuria, Golden One acolyte, hp 38.

3 Golden One fanatics, hp 28 each.



Negotiations: Initial interactions with Tariss take place under the constraints of diplomacy, as both Zuria and the heroes attempt to turn the chief to their respective points of view. Ask the players to tell you what they say to the Storm Eagle chief; if the players make good arguments to you, their characters automatically succeed in convincing the chief. If the players fumble for words, argue with each other, or are otherwise unconvincing, have them make opposed Diplomacy checks against Zuria. Zuria's Diplomacy check is +5; the first side to score three "wins" succeeds.

Zuria lies unabashedly about the cult and its deeds. She insists to Tariss that the heroes are "mistaken," and that "we harmed no one." Because the cultists and Tariss are both extremely insistent, the discussion is unlikely to have a peaceful outcome.

Roleplaying Tariss: Tariss has little patience for outsiders, either the heroes or the Golden Ones. She is gruff and wants to keep her tribe isolated from forbidden influences. The clan enjoys a relative level of prosperity, and she intends to preserve that. Out of respect for those who serve the gods, Tariss's first reaction is to trust the Golden Ones.

Outcome: If the heroes can convince her of the danger the cultists present, Tariss demands that the Golden Ones leave. Zuria is furious, but she leaves the tent and tells the rest of the cultists to prepare to march. A few minutes later, she gives the order for the cult to attack. This leads to the Massacre at Rethenna encounter.

If the cultists persuade Tariss that the PCs are liars, then the Storm Eagle chief demands that the heroes depart and accepts the presence of the cult. The Golden Ones attack the barbarians at moonrise, converting or killing the Storm Eagles just as they did with the Stonespear clan. If the characters are still nearby, they can intervene and perhaps save the Storm Eagles; see Massacre at Rethenna.

If neither side is able to persuade Tariss, then the Storm Eagles demand that both the Golden Ones and the player characters leave. Zuria agrees and gives the command to go, but then orders the attack a few minutes later.

HIDDEN HEROES

If the player characters do not want to interrupt discussions or directly interact with the leaders of either faction, they might attempt to sneak in and

disrupt the Golden Ones' plans. This opens up several possibilities:

The PCs can **steal or destroy the Golden Ones' stores of dreamwine**, preventing them from drugging the Storm Eagles. This gives the Storm Eagles the edge when the fighting breaks out.

The PCs can **attack one faction while disguised as the other** in order to provoke a fight before the Golden Ones are ready.

The PCs can try to **decapitate the cult by taking out Zuria**, the Golden One acolyte that is currently in charge. She returns to one of the encampments outside the village when she finishes her discussion with Chief Tariss and can be confronted with few other cultists nearby. However, other acolytes and fanatics among the cultists can carry on with the plan to attack at moonrise.

The PCs can **keep out of sight and await developments** (they will certainly be able to intervene in the Massacre at Rethenna).

Disguise: This is actually not very hard. The Golden Ones have no idea who their own fellows are beyond "other people wearing yellow," and the Storm Eagles don't know the cultists. No one challenges one more band of "Golden Ones" wandering around. The party must first rob one of the cultist encampments to steal robes, improvise fake robes, or lure a group of cultists away in order to defeat them and take their robes. After that, no one questions them.

Disguising themselves as Storm Eagles is harder for the party. The Golden Ones don't know the villagers, but the Storm Eagles know their own kin and neighbors, so strangers trying to pass as Storm Eagles are definitely a cause for alarm. Passing for Storm Eagles requires a successful DC 14 Disguise check if the party enters the village or approaches the chief's lodge.

Stealth: If the party tries to simply not be seen, it's easy enough out in the cultist encampment. The Golden Ones outside Rethenna ignore anyone who isn't actually attacking them, so it doesn't matter if the PCs are seen or not. Creeping around inside the village certainly looks suspicious to the Storm Eagles, though—they assume that strangers who are trying to sneak in are up to no good, and attack. Getting into position inside the village requires a group Stealth check (DC 12); if at least half the characters in the party pass the check, they can find an empty shed or feed

crib to hide in near the center of the village, or get to the back wall of the chief's lodge without being seen.

MASSACRE AT RETHENNA

If the characters take no action, the Golden Ones suddenly turn on the Storm Eagles at moonrise, a couple of hours after sunset. By that point, more than half of the Storm Eagle warriors are suffering from significant doses of dreamwine and are lost in a drugged stupor or (worse yet) hallucinating badly enough they can no longer tell friend from foe. The Golden Ones claim another 30 or 40 converts, and wipe out the rest of the tribe.

If the characters intervene—warning the Storm Eagles, provoking an early attack, or simply jumping in on the barbarians' side when the cultists go mad—the outcome is very different. With no other help from the characters, the Storm Eagles succeed in driving off the cult at the cost of scores of deaths. If the PCs actively side with the Storm Eagles, they can swing the odds significantly in the tribe's favor. You can assume that barbarians are fighting cultists all around the party, but the PCs can make a difference at a few critical points.

The Initial Rush (CR 5): The cultists go from dreamy lassitude to murderous savagery in the blink of an eye.

A strange ululating cry echoes through the village. The Golden Ones in sight stand dazed for a moment, then they take up the cry, snatch up weapons, and throw themselves on the villagers! The village is instantly embroiled in a furious battle between the Storm Eagles and hundreds of Golden Ones.

A band of 8 Golden Ones converts attacks the player characters (or threatens a handful of Storm Eagle elders near the party, at the GM's discretion). When five are defeated, the remaining three are swept away by the tide of the battle.

The Embattled Chief (CR 6): Chief Tariss does her best to organize resistance to the treacherous attack. The Golden Ones seek to overwhelm her.

"To me! To me, Storm Eagles!" You hear the clear voice of the tribe's chief ringing through the village. Chief Tariss stands with longsword in one hand and the tribe's standard in the other. Around her, a knot of embattled Storm Eagle warriors prepare to make a stand, but a band of Golden One warriors near you hurry to join the others threatening Tariss.

This group consists of 3 Golden Ones fanatics

and 3 Golden Ones converts. Chief Tariss and the warriors near her are busy fighting off a number of cultists already, and if these six get past the PCs to join the attack on Tariss, things could go badly for the Storm Eagles.

Counterattack (CR 7): Most of the Golden Ones fight with a distinct lack of skill or discipline, but the cult leaders are much more dangerous. The player characters can take out the cultists' leadership and break the back of the assault.

The scene is absolute chaos—gangs of cultists run every which way, attacking at random. Some ignore the Storm Eagle warriors altogether, snatching up torches to burn huts or hacking savagely at villagers who are already dead. But near the village gate you spot a Golden One in ornate robes who seems to be casting spells and giving orders to the cultists around her.

This group consists of a Golden One acolyte (Zuria, if she is still alive), plus 2 fanatics and 2 converts who stay close by to guard her. If the PCs are already badly wounded by this point, 3 Storm Eagle warriors join them in their attack on the cultists' leader.

After the characters defeat these three groups of cultists, the Golden Ones attack falters, and the Storm Eagles gain the upper hand. The battle quickly turns into a massacre as the enraged barbarians hunt down the mad cultists and slay them.

AFTER THE FIGHT

If the Golden Ones prevail, the characters may not know what to do next, especially if they did not interact with Chief Tariss. You can assume that the Golden Ones linger in the ruins of Rethenna for a day or so, then set out eastward, following Monyat's trail to Quodeth. If the PCs linger in the area, they can eavesdrop on cultists planning their march to Quodeth, grab a cultist to question, or even fall in with the cultists and march along in disguise when they leave.

If the Storm Eagles defeat the cultists, the characters enjoy significant rewards for their victory, described below.

Friendship of the Storm Eagles: If the PCs made a conspicuous contribution to the victory (for example, by seeking to warn Chief Tariss or by handling their three scenes in the Massacre at Rethenna), the Storm Eagles are deeply in their debt. Chief Tariss and her warriors become lifelong allies for the party if the PCs show them a little respect for their bravery or compassion for their losses.

If the players don't think to ask about Monyat or leaders of the cult, Tariss (or any surviving Storm Eagle elder) tells the PCs that a small group of Golden Ones left the village, heading east on a trail that leads toward the Quosa Vale. The cultists who left were overheard telling the ones who stayed in Rethenna to "follow us to Quodeth when you are finished here."

Strange Plunder: Looting the dead Golden Ones and searching through their encampments requires several hours, but yields 2,400 sp; 1,260 gp; 60 pp; 44 assorted small gemstones worth 10 gp each, and 8 assorted gemstones worth 50 gp each. In addition, the party finds a ring of protection +1, three potions of lesser restoration, and a jar of mushroom powder sufficient to mix 50 doses of the cultist's dreamwine. (The existing dreamwine in the sealed jugs rapidly denatures, and loses its toxicity within a day or two.) The Storm Eagles ask for half of the coins and gems, but if the PCs were especially conspicuous in fighting for the tribe, they offer the entire hoard to thank the characters for their help.

In addition to the valuables, the Golden Ones possess many scrolls and strange texts among their goods. Most are poorly cared for, and many are covered in indecipherable writings. These are collectively their holy texts. These include directions for performing rituals, sacred writings, and a number of star charts. A character who examines the star charts and succeeds on a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes that a major astrological alignment is imminent; this is described as "the Night of the Yellow Moon" in the accompanying texts, and supposedly offers the opportunity to perform some sort of summoning to call "the Children of the Yellow Moon" down to the Earth.

Interrogating Survivors: Even if the characters make no special effort to capture Golden Ones, a couple of dozen survive the battle—some were in such a stupor they were unable to fight, and others were knocked out or badly wounded in the fighting. The surviving Golden Ones make no effort to conceal their intentions—instead, they are eager for the opportunity to demonstrate their devotion. They repeatedly cry out praises to "the Sleeping One," and "the King of the Stars," and urge the characters to "join the Golden Prophet for the great cleansing in Quodeth."

A little questioning by the PCs reveals that Monyat, the Golden Prophet, left Rethenna a few hours before they arrived. Monyat and a small

band of chosen followers went ahead to Quodeth. There, the Golden Prophet intends to perform a ritual on the Night of the Yellow Moon to bring "enlightenment" to that unholy city. The cultists here don't know exactly what that means, but they believe it will be a wondrous event, and that the King of the Stars will descend to bless all his faithful. (Characters who understand that the Golden Ones worship Hastur can readily infer that this would presumably be a Very Bad Thing.)

Among the survivors, the characters find ten former members of the Stonespears clan. However, all of these individuals now suffer from insanity. Restoring them to normalcy requires greater restoration or similar magic, although it would be easier to confine the victims for a few days of rest until the dreamwine's Wisdom damage wears off.

Unfinished Business: Depending on the adventure hook you chose for the characters, they soon discover that their business with the Golden Ones is not finished yet. If the party is looking for Khado Thodel, the panjandrum's son, they soon realize that he is not among the Golden Ones in Rethenna (living or dead)—he accompanied Monyat. If the party is looking for the Tablet of Darieoth, it isn't here, since Monyat still has it with him. Finally, characters looking to avenge the Stonespears still have a score to settle with the Golden Prophet. The final confrontation still lies ahead of them.

ACT THREE: THE YELLOW MOON

The final act of the adventure takes place in Quodeth. Leaving behind his slow-moving camp, Monyat makes much better time. He and his small group of guards push hard along the trails of the Kurmanur Wilds, and reach the large town of Ansumo in three days. Given the fact that Monyat has at least a twenty-mile head start on the party, it is almost impossible for the PCs to catch the Golden Ones...but they know where the Golden Prophet is going.

The crazed cultists arrived in Quodeth just two days before the Night of the Yellow Moon, which happens to take place at the same time as a harvest festival. The city is full of pilgrims, travelers, and people from the surrounding countryside who are celebrating. Only a few astrologers and sages know that an ill-omened alignment is due to take place, and even they have no inkling that the alignment is sacred to a despicable cult of Hastur-worship-

ers. Ideally, the heroes arrive in Quodeth on the very eve of the Yellow Moon, and have only a few hours to locate Monyat and his cultists before the ceremony begins.

SUCCESSFUL PURSUIT?

While Monyat's head start should allow him to keep ahead of characters chasing him from Rethenna, it's possible that a fast-moving party armed with the right kind of magic could overtake him. If your players pull it off, don't force them to fail to keep the final confrontation in Quodeth. You can assume that Monyat's auguries warn him that he is about to be overtaken; he makes a stand in a ruined temple by the trail in the Kurmanur Wilds, and waits for the characters to catch him. Conclude the adventure with a confrontation against Monyat and his followers in the wilderness.

INTO THE CITY

Because of the festival, many farmers and merchants are bringing their goods to Quodeth. The festival lasts for several days, but tonight is the height of celebration. This has slowed the routine checks to a crawl. When the characters reach the city, there is a lengthy line of people waiting to enter.

You spy the walls and spires of Quodeth from miles off. The traffic along the Quosa road is growing steadily heavier, and it seems that everyone is making their way to the city: ox carts loaded with produce, wagons loaded with cages full of chickens, merchants leading long lines of heavily burdened porters, priests and officials riding in palanquins. As you draw near, you can make out the magnificent Gate of Mammoths—two huge stone mammoths that defiantly stand guard against the wilderness—and the mighty forty-foot walls surrounding the city. And you can also see that the line of people awaiting admittance to the city is at least half a mile long, and creeping along at a snail's pace. It seems the gate guards are closely questioning everyone who seeks to enter.

The city's other gates are likewise guarded, and thronged with long lines of people waiting to enter.

Wait It Out: Waiting patiently in line takes several hours before the characters reach the front. Allow the party to make a group Perception check (DC 10) every half-hour; if at least half the characters succeed, the PCs notice that every ten to fifteen minutes, parties of wealthier travelers—officials carried on palanquins, merchants leading their caravans, or nobles on riding horses—bypass the line and enter Quodeth with little delay.

If the characters choose to cut the line and head

straight for the front, they can do so at any time. Groups of laborers or cart-drivers grumble and shoot dirty looks their way. Feel free to insert a nonlethal brawl that can be easily averted with some diplomacy or intimidation.

Gaining Admittance: When the party reaches the gate, read:

The gate is guarded by a company of bored soldiers wearing mail cuirasses and carrying spears. A weathered-looking warrior with a dark beard and a red plume on his helmet holds up his hand as you approach. "Halt," he tells you. "Who are you, and what is your business in Quodeth?"

A detachment of twenty Quodethi soldiers guards the Gate of Mammoths. The commander is a young noble-born officer named Dhol Meyarn, who takes little interest in the business of the gate unless something unusual comes up. The guards question each traveler about their reasons for entering the city and the intended length of stay. The answers are largely irrelevant; the guards simply do not care. They just want to extort a few coins from the people coming into the city, and they recognize that the longer the line and the greater the delay, the larger the bribe they receive from people who wish to bypass it. The customary fee is 2 cp per traveler for those who wait through the line, while a party that bypasses the line must pay a 1 gp bribe on top of the entrance fee. If the party is hostile or insolent, the price might reach 5 or 10 gp.

Panjandrum characters can simply command the gate guards to admit them, and need not pay any bribe. Characters who refuse to pay are refused admittance; the guards attack if the party tries to force its way inside.

20 Quodethi Guards, hp 16 each.

Warning the Guards: The soldiers have no interest in any warnings the heroes bring to them. They have heard many wild stories from people trying to evade the gate tax, and assume that predictions of doom are just another ploy. Persuading them to offer even the most basic assistance—particularly when the guards could be collecting bribes from everyone entering the city—requires a DC 20 Diplomacy check, or a compelling bit of roleplaying on the part of the players.

Characters with unusual position or influence, such as Atlantean nobles native to Quodeth or panjandrums, gain a +5 bonus on any check to persuade the guards to help. (If the PCs are work-

ing for the panjandrum Jor Thodel, mentioning his name has the same effect.) Characters might also pretend to be important, although Bluff or Disguise checks would be more appropriate. Finally, if the heroes just offer a generous bribe (10 gp or more), it buys basic cooperation from the gate guards.

If the Guards Cooperate: Unfortunately, the gate guards know nothing about the Golden Ones. The most Commander Meyarn can do is suggest that the heroes investigate the Temple Quarter. That's the central area of the festivities, and the place where most of the religious celebrations take place. Dhol Meyarn can also be persuaded to alert his superiors to look out for the Golden Ones, but he warns the characters that it may take several days and some lofty connections to get the city's magistrates to look into things. Quodeth is a large city; finding the right people could take days.

SEARCHING QUODETH

If the characters have previously visited Quodeth, they already know the city's basic geography and may have contacts within its walls. Feel free to reuse NPCs the characters met during previous visits for the sake of consistency. Characters new to Quodeth (particularly those who have not previously visited any major cities) are likely to find the entire experience alien.

The Gate of the Mammoths leads to Caravan Way, one of Quodeth's busiest avenues. This is the city's Bazaar Quarter, and it is crowded with thousands of people. The press of bodies in the crowded streets, the stink of fires and human waste, and the cries of merchants hawking their wares seem overwhelming after weeks in the wilderness. The Golden Ones are not in sight.

Characters familiar with the city can see at a glance that Quodeth is unusually crowded—they have returned to Quodeth in the middle of a yearly harvest festival dedicated to Kishar, the goddess of agriculture. The whole city is busy, but the center of the celebration is the Temple Quarter.

If the characters head straight for the Temple Quarter from the Gate of Mammoths (most likely because they persuaded the guards to be helpful) and they're familiar with Quodeth, they arrive during Stage 1 of the Yellow Moon ritual. Otherwise, the amount of time it takes to locate the Golden Ones depends on how the characters try to find them.

Asking Around: Characters might try to locate the Golden Ones by gathering information at local taverns, markets, inns, or asking people likely to take note of strangers (for example, street urchins or guard patrols). Each character attempting to gather information may make a Diplomacy check; the best result in the party is the one that counts. Since time is of the essence, the party's level of success determines how quickly they learn what they need to know and get to the Yellow Moon Ritual (see below). The more the PCs learn, the earlier they arrive at the site of the climactic encounter.

Diplomacy

Check	Result
0-9	No one has seen any "priests in yellow," but priests belong in the Temple Quarter, so maybe the Golden Ones are there. The PCs arrive at Stage 3 of the ritual.
10-21	A party of priests in yellow robes wandered the streets for hours earlier in the day, telling everyone to come to the Temple Quarter later. They promised great wonders and free wine. The PCs arrive at Stage 2 of the ritual.
22+	The Golden Ones were seen setting up their banners on the steps of the old abandoned Tower of the Moon. They sent criers through the streets all day telling people to come to the Street of Gods at moonrise to see great wonders and drink free wine. The PCs arrive at Stage 1 of the ritual.

Roam the Streets: If the PCs try to physically locate the cultists by crisscrossing Quodeth and looking for them, they soon find that the flow of the crowd leads to Quodeth's Temple Quarter. The general chatter of the crowd anticipates great revels on the Street of Gods later in the evening; the PCs arrive at Stage 2 of the ritual. Finding the Temple Quarter is not hard—many people in the streets are already making their way there, and any passer-by can provide directions.

Futile Actions: If the PCs choose to do something else—for example, waiting hours for an audience with a magistrate, seeking out a library to do research on the Yellow Moon conjunction, getting caught up in Quodeth's many splendors, or looking after personal business first—their first warning of failure is disaster striking. Distant screams and flashes of golden light erupt from the Temple Quarter; if the PCs hurry, they can reach the Golden Ones during Stage 3 of the ritual.



THE YELLOW MOON RITUAL

The Golden Prophet and his followers spend most of the day wandering the streets, telling people to come to the Street of Gods. In the

late afternoon, they assemble on the steps of the Tower of the Moon, an old temple dedicated to a forgotten goddess. The Tower is known to be the headquarters of the thieves' guild known as the Red Furies, but the thieves pay little attention to strange priests on their doorstep—the temple doors are firmly locked, and it's not unusual for peddlers, merchants, beggars, or crazy priests to stand on the front steps and address people passing by on the Street of Gods. In fact, most of the Red Furies are out burglarizing wealthy homes and businesses in now-deserted parts of the city or working the crowds in the Temple Quarter.

If the characters succeed in quickly running down rumors or combing the city, they can catch Monyat and his followers at the beginning of the Yellow Moon ritual (see Stage 1, below). Otherwise, they arrive on the scene in the middle of the ritual (Stage 2) or right at the climax (Stage 3). Basically, this encounter is presented in three different forms—use the version that reflects the party's success in finding their quarry.

The PCs can choose to wait and watch if they arrive in an early stage, intervening when they decide to act. However, it should be clear that the situation is growing more and more dangerous as the Golden Ones continue their vile ceremony.

Khado Thodel: If the characters began the adventure searching for Jor Thodel's son, they find that Khado is one of the Golden One converts they face in this scene. The PCs recognize him when they face him. Khado is quite mad now, but if the PCs can knock him out and restrain him, he can be returned to his father and perhaps cured later.

STAGE 1 (CR 6, THEN CR 7)

During the ritual's early stages, not all of the cultists join in. While Monyat begins the rites, his followers make a half-hearted effort to engage passers-by.

A little after sunset, you find a crowd beginning to gather on the Street of Gods in the heart of Quodeth's Temple Quarter. On the wide stone steps of a long-abandoned temple stand a number of the Golden Ones. Some hold tattered yellow banners and call out to the small crowd gathering here: "Welcome, brothers and sisters! Welcome! Tonight is the Feast of the Yellow Moon! Come, join us as we dance and celebrate for the King of the Stars!" Others pass out tatters of yellow cloth to anyone who pauses to listen, but few people seem to be taking them seriously.

A wooden table at the top of the steps draped with yellow

serves as the altar; here stands a thick-bodied man of middle years, dressed in golden armor. He is reading continuously from a large scroll unrolled in front of him, but his words sound like nothing but gibberish.

Few of the passers-by give the Golden Ones any heed. Priests at other temples distribute food and other alms for Kishar's Harvest, which draws far more attention than the obviously destitute cultists in their tattered rags. The Golden Ones assume the PCs are more potential converts and invite them to join, too. They do not attack unless attacked, and in fact can be easily surprised by a sudden assault by characters pretending to be part of the crowd. However, they hurry to intercept anyone moving to directly confront Monyat—the cultists fight furiously to keep Monyat from being interrupted.

Monyat does not participate in combat as long as he has at least one follower still defending him. If he has to, he continues reading from the scroll while moving away from attackers, concentrating completely on the ritual. However, once all his protectors are defeated, Monyat abandons the effort and fights back. As a result, this combat consists of two distinct parts: Getting through Monyat's followers, then defeating the Golden Prophet himself.

First Group (CR 6)

2 Golden Ones fanatics, hp 28 each.

6 Golden Ones converts, hp 10 each.

Second Group (CR 7)

Monyat, the Golden Prophet, hp 54.

If any PC tries to make sense of what Monyat is doing, allow the character to attempt a Spellcraft check (DC 24). On a success, the character recognizes that Monyat is working on a massive summoning ritual intended to bring extraterrestrial beings to the earth.

STAGE 2 (CR 6, THEN CR 8)

As the ritual progresses, all of the cultists join the ceremony. This leaves them incapable of fighting the heroes. However, at this stage, the crowd—now numbering hundreds—is affected by the ceremony, and breaks out into mad brawling and confusion.

Flickering torchlight illuminates a wild scene on the Street of Gods. On the wide stone steps of a long-abandoned temple stand a number of the Golden Ones, gathered around a wooden

REINFORCEMENTS

If the characters make an effort to bring city guards, guild-brothers, or other allies to confront the Golden Ones, you can assume that the cultists include a matching number of low-level converts. During the final confrontation, the PCs' allies battle these "extra" cultists, leaving the characters free to deal with the encounters as they are presented below. Let the players feel that using their connections was a good idea.

table at the top of the steps draped with yellow. Here stands a thick-bodied man of middle years, dressed in golden armor. He is reading continuously from a large scroll unrolled in front of him, but his words sound like nothing but gibberish. The other cultists echo his words—and, disturbingly enough, so do many in the crowd gathered in the street. Hundreds of Quodethi—laborers, merchants, even guards—dance drunkenly, shriek at the sky, or simply sway and mumble. It looks like they're all mad!

Watching the ceremony and listening to the Golden Ones is not healthy; any character within earshot (about 120 feet) who observes for at least 1 minute must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become confused (although victims only stand still and chant until violence threatens).

When the PCs attempt to intervene, the first thing they must do is fight through a crowd that suddenly turns wild. Once they reach the temple steps and attack the cultists, Monyat and four of his followers turn to deal with the intrusion—none of the other Golden Ones present are in condition to defend themselves.

First Group (CR 6)

8 Golden Ones converts, hp 10 each.

4 Quodethi guards, hp 16 each.

Second Group (CR 8)

2 Golden Ones fanatics, hp 28 each.

2 Golden Ones converts, hp 10 each.

Monyat, the Golden Prophet, hp 53.

STAGE 3 (CR 7, THEN CR 8)

With the crowds entranced by the ritual, it reaches its peak shortly after moonrise unless the heroes manage to disrupt it. At this point, the Golden Ones pierce a dimensional barrier, and a plague of gibbering moutherers begins to descend upon Quodeth.

Flickering torchlight illuminates a wild scene on the Street of Gods. On the wide stone steps of a long-abandoned temple stand a number of the Golden Ones, gathered around a wooden table at the top of the steps draped with yellow. Here stands a

thick-bodied man of middle years, dressed in golden armor. He is reading continuously from a large scroll unrolled in front of him, but his words sound like nothing but gibberish. The other cultists echo his words—and, disturbingly enough, so do many in the crowd gathered in the street. Hundreds of Quodethi—laborers, merchants, even guards—dance drunkenly, shriek at the sky, or simply sway and mumble.

There is a sudden flash of sickly yellow light, a column of crackling lightning that shoots down from the sky into the middle of the crowd. You catch a glimpse of some strange amorphous mass taking shape in the column, then a festering mass of eyes and mouths surges out of the light to attack the people nearby! Another mass begins to grow slowly in the crackling column of light.

This scene warrants a madness check (PTCS page 141). The cultists concentrate on keeping the dimensional gateway open, allowing “the Children of the Yellow Moon” to descend to Quodeth. The entranced crowd watching the ritual dissolves into panic and madness; most flee, while some turn on each other.

First Group (CR 7)

Giant gibbering moulder, hp 54.

4 Golden Ones converts, hp 10 each.

Second Group (CR 8)

2 Golden Ones fanatics, hp 28 each.

2 Golden Ones converts, hp 10 each.

Monyat, the Golden Prophet, hp 53.

Monyat’s group remains by the altar, holding open the gate. At the end of 6 rounds, another giant gibbering moulder appears in the crackling column of light. The PCs can interrupt this by attacking Monyat’s group at any point; if they fail to stop the summoning, the Golden Ones will eventually bring down hundreds of the aberrations upon the city. At this stage, the biggest challenge is to battle through the crowd and the gibbering moulthers to reach the site of the ritual.

THE RITUAL’S WAKE

Defeating Monyat ends the Ritual of the Yellow Moon. Any other cultists still on their feet are shocked and overwhelmed at the death of the Golden Prophet, so completely overwhelmed they lapse into uncontrollable sobbing or take their own lives. Citizens of Quodeth caught up in the madness of the ceremony lapse into a helpless stupor, slowly coming back to their senses in hours or days (some never recover without help). If the characters are interested in healing

any of the victims, restoration or similar magic can bring them around faster. Any gibbering moulthers that are loose must still be dealt with, although the city guard cooperates in eliminating them.

If Monyat or any other cultists survive, they can provide little help. They are irrevocably insane without the use of powerful healing magic. All the cultists know is that they were instructed by the Golden Prophet to perform the ritual at this time and place, and that the Golden Prophet was guided by “visions” sent from the King of the Stars, also known as He Who Must Not Be Named, the King in Yellow, or the One Who Sleeps—all soubriquets for the Great Old One Hastur.

Treasure: The Golden Ones did not carry large quantities of gold with them into the city. Their belongings consist of a handful of packs or satchels heaped together under the table they appropriated for use as an altar. The valuables include 220 sp, 450 gp, 85 pp, a pouch of four small garnets worth 100 gp each, and a wand of magic missile (CL 3rd, 25 charges remaining). If the party was looking for the *Tablet of Darieth*, it is here too. It’s a thin golden disc covered with strange writing, worth 500 gp to a sage or a collector of curiosities. (The Tablet’s mysterious writings can easily provide a clue to the characters’ next adventure.)

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Characters who succeed in stopping the ritual receive a story award of 800 XP each. If the characters were also able to disrupt the activities of the Golden Ones at Rethenna and save the Storm Eagles, increase the story award to 1,200 XP each. Finally, if the characters succeed in their original objective (recovering the Tablet of Dareioth, saving Khado Thodel, or slaying Monyat in revenge for the Stonespears), increase this reward to 1,600 XP each.

Depending upon how the characters stopped the Golden Ones and Monyat, different groups may feel indebted toward them. In the case of surviving members of the different Ammuran tribes, any compensation is unlikely to have a direct financial value. Survivors of the Stonespear clan need to rebuild, and they are severely crippled by their losses. However, they gladly spread word of the player characters’ heroism, and are indebted to them for as long as their tribes

survive. The Storm Eagles likewise have little to offer beside their friendship, but that is nothing to sneer at.

The authorities in Quodeth are not sure what to make of the characters' efforts. The city's magistrates hear only the most garbled and confused stories about some kind of riot and evil sorcery in the Temple Quarter. Enough lucid witnesses eventually come forward to confirm that the characters played a big part in stopping something awful. Grand Vizier Ibland Posk (*PTCS* page 171) summons the party to hear their tale, and authorizes a reward of 500 gp each for the characters. If the characters made significant efforts to warn the city officials ahead of time, the reward is increased to 1,000 gp each.

ADVERSARIES AND TREASURE

Here are monsters and treasures specific to *Night of the Yellow Moon*.

GIANT GIBBERING MOUTHER

XP 2,400

N Large aberration

Init +2; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

Defense

AC 10, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 54 (4d8+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **DR** 5/bludgeoning;

Immune critical hits, precision damage

Offense

Speed 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 6 bites +5 (1d6+2 plus grapple)

Special Attacks blood drain, engulf (6d6 damage plus 2 Con damage, AC 13, hp 4), gibbering, ground manipulation, spittle (+4 ranged touch)

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 28, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 18 (can't be tripped)

Feats Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +12, Swim +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

Language Mi-Go

Special Abilities

All-Around Vision (Ex) A gibbering moulder sees in all directions at once. It cannot be flanked.

Amorphous (Ex) A gibbering moulder's body is malleable and shapeless. It is immune to precision damage (like sneak attacks) and critical hits, and can move through an

area as small as one-quarter its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing.

Blood Drain (Ex) On a successful grapple check after grabbing, several of the creature's mouths attach to its target. Each round it maintains its grapple, its mouths automatically deal 1d6 points of bite damage and 1 point of Constitution damage as it drains its victim's blood.

Engulf (Ex) This ability functions as swallow whole, except for the following changes. An engulfed creature is trapped in the gibbering moulder's body, where several of its mouths continue to feed and drain blood. A gibbering moulder can engulf only one foe of its size or smaller at a time. If an engulfed creature cuts its way free (the moulder's damage reduction still applies to those inside), the moulder simply flows together again and can still use its engulf attack.

Gibbering (Su) As a free action, a gibbering moulder can emit a cacophony of maddening sound. All creatures other than gibbering moulthers within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or be confused for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting compulsion insanity effect. A creature that saves cannot be affected by the same moulder's gibbering for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ground Manipulation (Su) At will as a standard action, a gibbering moulder can cause stone and earth under its body to grow soft and muddy. The ground remains muddy for 1 minute after the moulder moves off of the location. A gibbering moulder can move through these areas with ease, but other creatures treat them as difficult terrain.

Spittle (Ex) Each round as a free action, a gibbering moulder can emit a stream of acidic spittle at one target within 30 feet. On a successful attack, the target is blinded for 1d4 rounds unless he succeeds on a DC 20 Fortitude save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

GOLDEN ONES CONVERT

XP 200

Human commoner 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception -1

Defense

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 10 (2d6+3)

Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +2 (1d6+1)

Statistics

Str 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Skill Focus (Profession), Toughness

Skills Profession (various) +6, Handle Animal +4 Languages Kalayan, Low Atlantean

Gear club

GOLDEN ONES FANATIC

XP 600

Human commoner 1/warrior 3

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +3

Defense

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield)

hp 28 (1d6+3d10+8)

Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +2

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee morningstar +5 (1d8+4) (includes Power Attack)

Ranged throwing axe +5 (1d6+2)

Statistics

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills Intimidate +4, Knowledge (religion) +2, Perception +3, Perform (dance) +2, Profession (various) +3

Languages Kalayan, Low Atlantean

Gear leather cuirass, light wooden shield, morningstar, throwing axes (2)

GOLDEN ONES ACOLYTE

XP 1,200

Human cleric 4

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; Senses Perception +1

Defense

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 38 (4d8+12 plus 8 temporary hp)

Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +7 (+8 vs. fear)

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sickle +6 (1d6-1) or spell-like ability +5 touch (includes *aid*)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 13, 2d6)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +11)

6/day—*uncontrolled perception*

6/day—*vision of madness*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +11)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds, enthrall, hold person* (DC 15), *touch of idiocy*^P

1st—*bles*, *command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds, doom, lesser confusion*^P

0 (at will)—*guidance, purify food and drink, resistance, stabilize*

^P Domain spell; Domains Cosmic (PTCS), Madness

Statistics

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 13

Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 13

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Sense Motive +8, Survival +5

SQ aura, channel negative energy 2d6 (4/day) (DC 15), domains (Cosmic, Madness), spontaneous casting

Languages Kalayan, Low Atlantean

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2); Other Gear masterwork leather cuirass, masterwork sickle, wooden holy symbol, *pendant of cosmic alignment, Golden Crown robes* (see New Items)

MONYAT, THE GOLDEN PROPHET

XP 3,200

Human cleric 7

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; Senses Perception +7

Defense

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, -1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 53 (7d8+14 plus 8 temporary)

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +9 (+10 vs. fear effects)

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 morningstar +8 (1d8+2) or spell-like ability +7 touch (includes *aid*)

Ranged dagger +5 (1d4+1/19-20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 14, 4d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15)

6/day—*uncontrolled perception*

6/day—*vision of madness*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +15)

4th—*air walk, confusion*^D (DC 18), *unholy blight* (DC 18)

3rd—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, displacement*^D, *prayer*

2nd—*cure moderate wounds, enthrall* (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon, touch of idiocy*^D

1st—*command* (DC 15), *cure light wounds, divine favor, lesser confusion*^D, *obscuring mist, shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water, guidance, light, purify food and drink*

D domain spell; Domains Cosmic (PTCS), Madness

Statistics

Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 13

Base Atk +5; CMB +6; CMD 15

Feats Brew Potion, Channel Smite, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +6, Diplomacy +5, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Linguistics +4, Perception +7, Spellcraft +6

Languages Kalayan, Low Atlantean, Mi-Go

SQ aura, channel negative energy 4d6 (4/day) (DC 14), domains (Cosmic, Madness), spontaneous casting

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*; Other Gear +1 breastplate, heavy wooden shield, +1 morningstar, cold iron dagger, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *pendant of cosmic alignment, Golden Crown robes* (see New Items), silver unholy symbol

QUODETHI GUARD

XP 200

Human warrior 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +2

Defense

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor)

hp 16 (2d10+5)

Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee glaive +3 (1d10+1/×3) or shortsword +3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged javelin +2 (1d6+1)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 13

Feats Alertness, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +4, Perception +2, Ride +4, Sense Motive +2

Languages Kalay, Low Atlantean

Gear scale coat, glaive, shortsword, javelin (2)

STORM EAGLE WARRIOR

XP 400

Human warrior 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +1

Defense

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 dodge, +1 Dex)

hp 22 (3d10+6)

Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee greataxe +5 (1d12+3/×3)

Ranged composite shortbow +4 (1d6+1/×3)

Statistics

Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 16

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Run

Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Perception +1, Profession (hunter) +4, Survival +1

Languages Dhari, Low Atlantean

Gear studded leather armor, greataxe, composite shortbow (Strength +1)

TARISS, CHIEF OF CLAN STORM EAGLE

XP 1,600

Human barbarian 6

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +10

Defense

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, -2 rage)

hp 57 (6d12+18 raging)

Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +5 (raging)

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk spear +11/+6 (1d8+6/×3) or dagger +10/+5 (1d4+4/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +10/+5 (1d8+3/×3)

Special Attacks rage (15 rounds/day), rage powers (no escape, quick reflexes, scent)

Tactics

Base Statistics When not raging, Tariss has AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; hp 45; Fort +6, Will +3; Melee mwk spear +9/+4 (1d8+3/×3); Str 14, Con 13; CMB +8; CMD 21; Climb +11

Statistics

Str 18 (raging), Dex 16, Con 17 (raging), Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 23

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (spear)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +13, Intimidate +8, Perception +10, Survival +10

Languages Dhari, Low Atlantean

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear oil of magic weapon, thunderstone; Other

Gear +1 studded leather armor, mwk spear, mwk composite longbow (+3 Str) with 40 arrows

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The cult of the Golden Ones has endured for hundreds of years. Over that time, a few of the more powerful or devout prophets have learned the secrets of imbuing items with a touch of divine magic drawn from He Who Must Not Be Named.

GOLDEN CROWN ROBE

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 3rd

Slot body; **Price** 8,400 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

Description

This tattered and frayed robe is yellow, with cuffs and a peaked hood of scarlet. The image of a three-pointed crown is embroidered on each shoulder. It confers the benefit of an *aid* spell upon the wearer (a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and saves vs. fear effects, plus 8 temporary hit points), but only if the wearer is devoted to the worship of the Great Old Ones. The robe regains expended temporary hit points at moonrise each night.

Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *aid*; **Cost** 4,200 gp

PENDANT OF COSMIC ALIGNMENT

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot neck; **Price** 1,650 gp; **Weight** –

Description

The pendant is a small, egg-shaped piece of amber pierced by a leather thong. It subtly sharpens its wearer's intuition for interpreting the mystical significance of astrological events such as conjunctions, eclipses, or alignments. The wearer gains a +2 insight bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks made for the purpose of casting horoscopes or predicting celestial alignments. In addition, the pendant glows as important alignments approach. It sheds soft golden light in a 5-foot radius within 10 days of an important alignment, increasing to a 10-foot radius within 3 days and a 20-foot radius within 1 day. When the pendant indicates an approaching alignment, the wearer can use *augury* once per day as a spell-like ability. (In any given month, there is a 10 percent chance that an alignment of some sort takes place.)

Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *augury*; **Cost** 850 gp



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