

CALL OF CTHULHU®

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# CTHULHU INVICTUS COMPANION

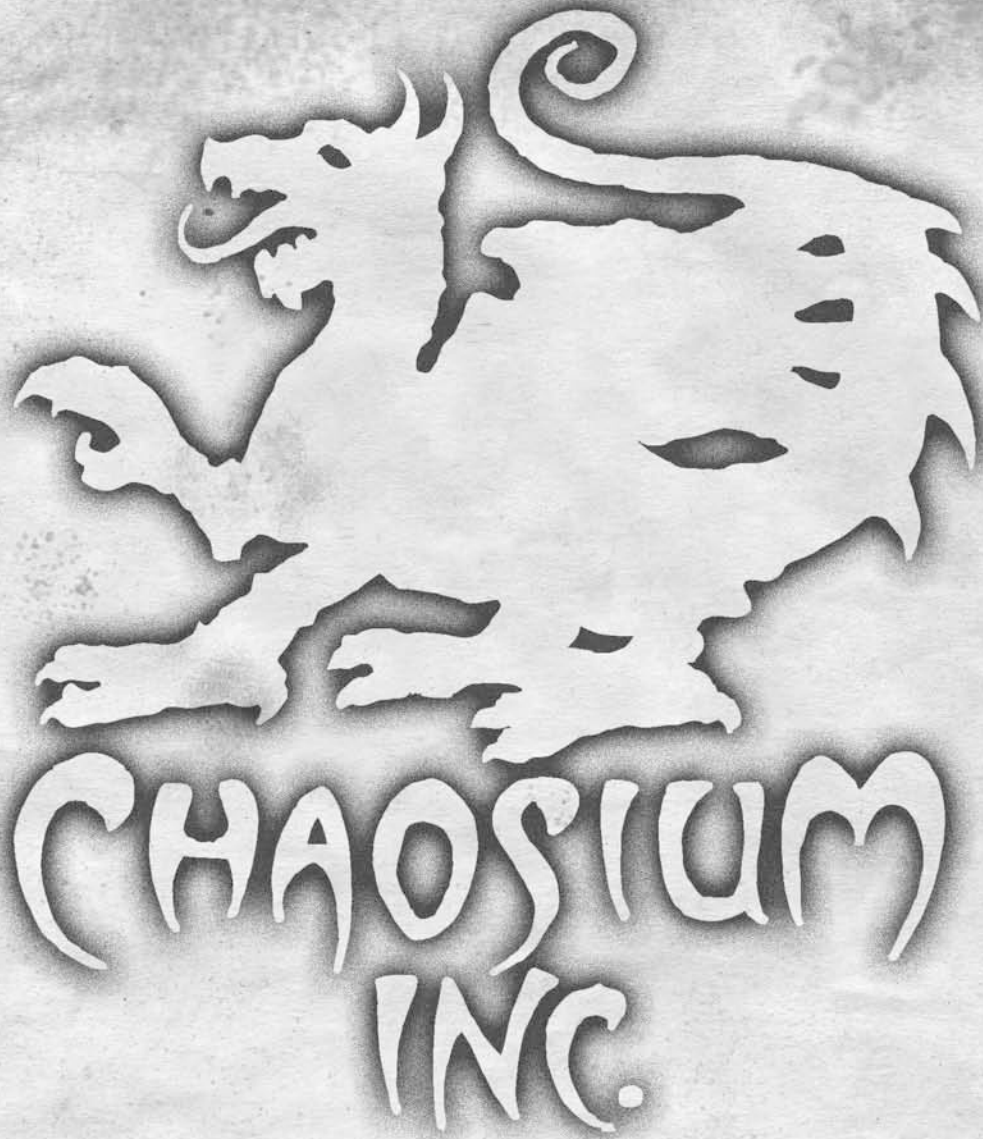


CHAD BOWSER,  
ANDI NEWTON,  
& FRIENDS

THE MYTHOS THREATENS  
ANCIENT ROME



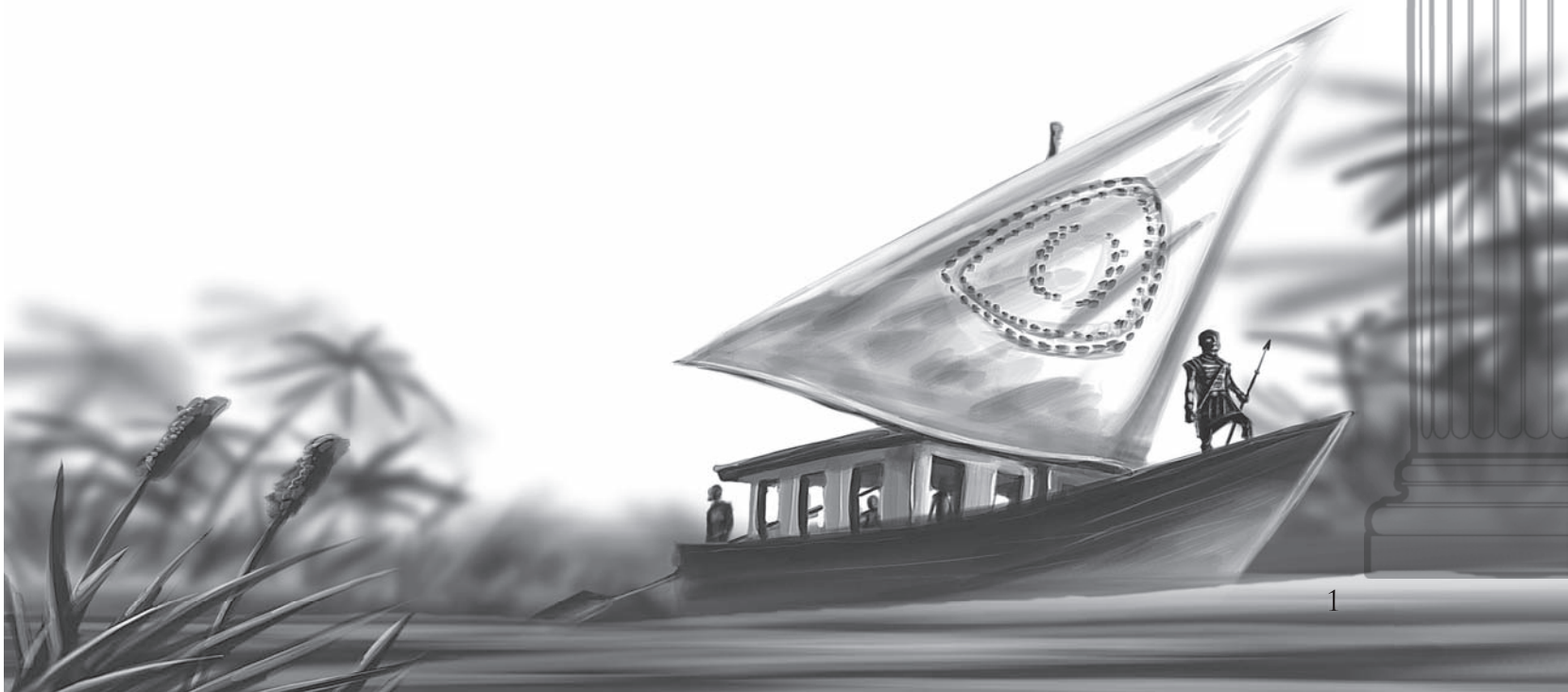


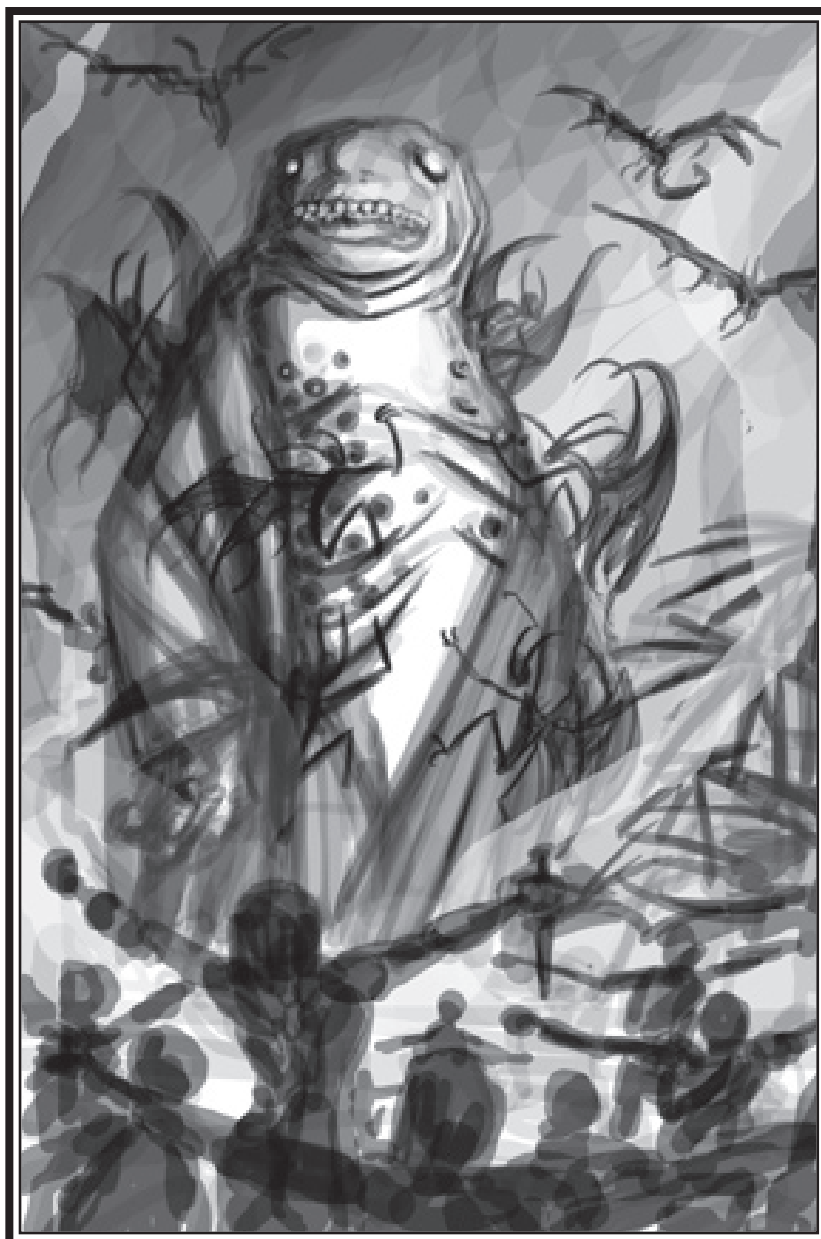


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# THE CTHULHU INVICTUS COMPANION

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# THE CTHULHU INVICTUS COMPANION

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**CHAOSIUM IS**  
LYNN, CHARLIE, DUSTIN, WILLIAM, FERGIE,  
MEGHAN, ANDY, NICK & A FEW CURIOUS OTHERS



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AS ROME'S INFLUENCE SPREADS throughout the known world, so too spreads the worship of its gods. Roman leaders know that converting the people of conquered regions to the state religion will make them easier to control. But some gods have been worshipped longer than Rome has existed, and their supplicants won't easily change allegiances.

*The Cthulhu Invictus Companion* is a set of three scenarios for *Call of Cthulhu* pitting investigators against cults from different regions of the Ancient Roman Empire. "Morituri te Salutamus" and "Chuma Invictus" originally appeared in the *Cthulhu Invictus* monograph published in 2004. They've now been separated into their own book, along with a new scenario and details about five new cults and three new Mythos deities.

Those with the will to survive being dragged through time and space by Wep-Wawet's arrow can learn to harness the power to their own needs – provided they offer the appropriate sacrifice to The Opener of Ways. The Lords of Abydos are among those who have.

The Akeru have long lived in seclusion at the base of Mount Serbal, protecting the world from a horror that would destroy humanity if ever released. As the cult of Apep spreads, however, the

Akeru find they must abandon their ascetic lives if they are to keep the world safe.

Initiates who wish to join the Teutates must first survive a grueling journey to the Severn Valley – and then undergo a ritual that leaves them undead.

Holda offers solace and protection to the frail and grieving, but visits vengeance on any who prey on those weaker than themselves, unleashing her Hulden in a Wild Hunt that destroys anything in its path.

Although their Roman conquerors have returned the Shining Trapezohedron to Egypt, the followers of Tanit in Numidia and Africa Proconsularis still use it as a divination tool in their fight against Ba'al Hammon, the relic's image burned forever in their minds.

The Vagi have devoted themselves to the Black Wind, bringing death and destruction to all they encounter as they travel the North African deserts.

In "Bacchanalia", investigators must eliminate a threat to Carthage that was previously believed destroyed when Rome sacked the city during the Third Punic War.

And, of course, in "Chuma Invictus" investigators stumble into the Dreamlands while escorting a scholar to Meroë, while in "Morituri te Salutamus" they must figure out why slaves are disappearing from Rome.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THESE ADVENTURES FOR THE  
 CTHULHU INVICTUS SETTING OF THE CALL OF  
 CTHULHU HORROR ROLEPLAYING GAME.  
 LUDI INCIPIENT!





**A**egyptus is much older than Rome, and hides more secrets than almost any other place in the Empire. Investigators will find potential allies and mysterious agendas in the land of the Nile.

## THE AKERU

Although the men who inhabit the granite structures around the base of Mount Serbal seem like nothing more than religious ascetics to the people in the more civilized towns nearby, in reality the Akeru have protected the world from an unspeakable horror since the earliest days of Egyptian civilization. Gates on the eastern and western faces of the mountain lead to the underworld to which Apep has been banished. To the uninitiated, the gates look like simple stone archways, the landscape on one side no different from that on the other. But the Akeru know that to pass through them leads one into a dark underground cavern, a river at its center and Apep blocking the way with his coils. The Akeru protect the unwitting from death at Apep's hand, and prevent his worshippers from using the gates to liberate their god.

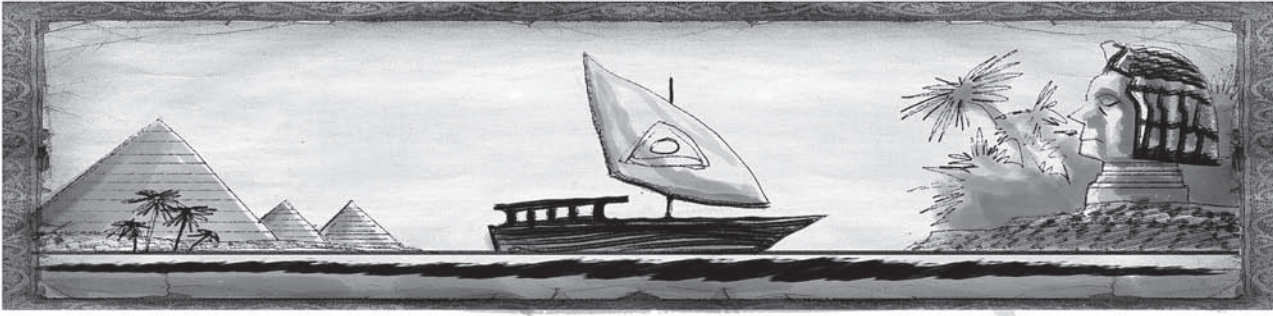
At first, the Akeru never left Mount Serbal, which they call Bakhu. As the threat of Apep's followers spread, however, they began working with the priests at the Temple of Amen-Ra in Thebes, sharing with them the spells from the Book of Apophis to prevent Apep's return and protecting them as they perform the rituals each day. Of late, the Akeru's forces have ranged even further, no longer waiting for Apep's followers to strike, but hunting them down and stopping them where they find them. Though they work in secret and in groups of no more than two or three, the Akeru find one another by the twin lion statues that they place outside their doors.

The Akeru are found in Egypt, Arabia Magna, Judea, and Syria.

## LORDS OF ABYDOS

Before the Egyptians erected pyramids to safeguard the dead of the royal houses, they placed them in mastabas, flat structures built of mud-bricks or stone. The city of Abydos contains many of these. The people consider them holy, the houses of the dead. Grave robbers covet the gold and jewels sealed inside. But only the Lords of Abydos know the nature of the true power within.





Mastabas had long been used by Egyptians, long before the Lords of Abydos existed. In those days, these men were merely funerary priests conducting rituals to ease the deceased's way through Duat. During one such rite, however, a priest transposed two words in the text and inadvertently contacted Yog-Sothoth. The Outer God transported him a hundred miles away to the city of Asyut. After making his way back to Abydos, he told his fellow priests about the wolf-headed Egyptian warrior who had pulled him through duat as he performed the rites for Kemnebi, a functionary in the Pharaoh's court. The other priests were amazed at the priest's story, although skeptical – the nobleman he claimed to be preparing for duat had only been born the day before, and was healthy and strong.

But the priest had brought Abydos to Yog-Sothoth's attention, and over the next few years more and more priests reported being transported to places far away, although no others were moved through time. Recognizing the power of the god they had encountered, they called him Wep-Wawet, The Opener of the Ways, and began to incorporate his hieroglyphs into those used in mastabas.

In time, the priests learned that Wep-Wawet could not only open paths for the dead, but could also transport the living – even whole armies – across vast distances. As their understanding and control of Wep-Wawet's gift grew, so did the priests' power and influence in Egyptian politics. Their scouts brought back information that helped defend Egypt from its neighbors. The pharaohs' armies, no longer constrained by travel, expanded Egypt's holdings into an empire. For their service, the priests earned not only the pharaohs' gratitude, but also the title of Lords of Abydos.

When Imhotep built Djoser's pyramid in Saqqara, moving the royal necropolis from Abydos, the Lords followed. But whether it was this new tomb design or simply being so far from Abydos, Wep-Wawet would no longer answer the Lords' call. Eventually they moved back to Abydos, but

being so far removed from the pharaoh and his advisors their influence waned – and with it Egypt's empire.

Now all but forgotten by the Egyptian ruling class, fewer than a dozen Lords of Abydos remain. Much of their knowledge has been lost over the centuries, but they still travel Wep-Wawet's pathways, exploring other places, gathering information should the pharaoh ever call on them again. Perhaps because of their prolonged exposure to Wep-Wawet, the Lords of Abydos are unnaturally long-lived, some claiming to have been born centuries ago.

The Lords of Abydos are found in Egypt.

## WEP-WAWET

Those who encounter Wep-Wawet find themselves face-to-face with an Egyptian man whose head is that of a gray wolf. He wears a soldier's attire, and in his right hand he carries a mace. In his left, he raises a bow. Drawing back an arrow, he fires it into the distance. Anyone who has sought the Opener of the Ways or who lacks the will to resist the god finds himself dragged by Wep-Wawet's arrow toward the distant horizon. The world passes by more and more quickly until the petitioner loses consciousness. When he awakens, he finds himself far from where he started, both in distance and, possibly, in time as well. Wep-Wawet, the wolf-headed avatar of Yog-Sothoth, is nowhere to be found.

## THE OPENER'S ARROW.

Wep-Wawet fires an arrow toward the horizon. Anyone who sought Wep-Wawet or fails a POW vs. POW roll on the Resistance Table loses consciousness as the world flies quickly by. When the person awakens they find themselves in the time and place of Wep-Wawet's choosing. Those who petition Wep-Wawet can ask that the god transport them to a



particular place or time. Anyone transported in this way loses 1/1D8 SAN.

**Wep-Wawet, Avatar of Yog-Sothoth**

STR 29 CON 50 SIZ 20 INT 25 POW 75  
DEX 20 APP 16 Move 8 HP 35

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

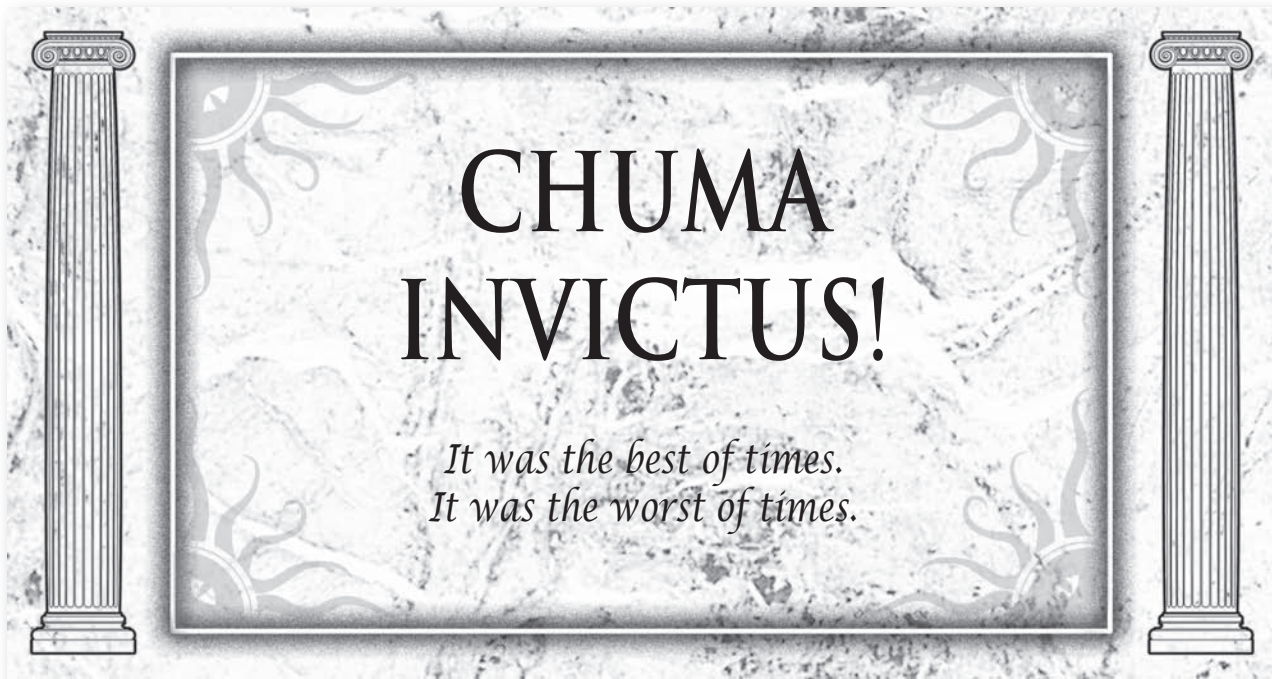
**Weapons:** Mace 100%, damage 1D6 + db  
Bow 100%, 1D8

**Armor:** Wep-Wawet appears in armor reminiscent of the Ancient Egyptians, but he cannot be harmed by non-magical attacks. If reduced to zero hit points, he travels to another time, pulling anyone near him into that time as well.

**Spells:** The Opener's Arrow and any others as desired by the Keeper

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8 points to see Wep-Wawet





The year is 47 CE and Claudius sits on the throne of the greatest empire the world has ever seen. The capital city, Rome, boasts a population nearing one million people. Built upon the backs of slaves and enriched by trade routes, the Empire feels safer than ever. Providing that safety is the Roman Legion, the most feared military force in the world.

Because of those legions, the Roman Empire stretches from the newly subdued Britannia in the north to Egypt in the south and from Mauritania Tingitana in the west to Cappadocia in the east. Home to thousands of nationalities, the Empire is a melting pot of cultures, ideas and beliefs.

All is not as it seems, however. Having just crawled out of a vicious civil war and threatened by barbarians in Germania and Britannia, the Legion is forced to augment its ranks with more and more barbarian mercenaries. To compound its troubles, the Sarmatians to the north, Parthians to the east, and Kush to the south press against the Empire's borders, testing how far they can encroach before Rome presses back.

## KEEPER'S INTRODUCTION

Egypt is one of the richest provinces in the Roman Empire. Even though arable farmland is in short supply in relation to the total available land, it produces more grain for Rome than Gaul. Beyond that, Egypt is a source of architectural inspiration with pyramids and obelisks. Egypt also provides a contact point with the kingdom of Kush, which not only serves as an intermediary for contact with Sub-Saharan Africa but also has connections there that Rome uses to acquire gold, ebony, ivory, and exotic animals. Both Rome and Kush benefit from this trade, so relations remain relatively peaceful in the first century, but the Romans are wary of their neighbors to the south. After resisting a Kushite invasion into Egypt in 23 BCE, the Romans maintain a strong presence in Egypt in the form of the Legio III Cyrenaica.

Ostensibly, a mission is being sent to Kush to trade for ivory. The players are to serve as guards for the delegate Strabo. Although a pompous, self-serving bastard, the Greek is a member of a secret society, the Custus Notitiae, which rescued numerous scrolls from the Royal Library at Alexandria



# AHNWEY AND THE DREAMLANDS



Ahnwey traces his family back to the days before Stygia. High priests of Yibb-Tstll, they came to Stygia from the ivory city of N’Kraal in the Jungle of Kled. His family fled N’Kraal when the ancient cities of Kled were emptied and preserved by the Great Old Ones. After arriving in Stygia, his family operated a lucrative gold mine in the territory of Ophir.

Ahnwey’s family is cursed with the inability to dream, meaning they can only return to their home physically, or bring N’Kraal to them. During the early years of Thoth-Amon’s rule of Stygia, they attempted to summon their god from the Jungles of Kled and merge the Dreamlands with the waking world. They failed. The mighty sorcerer Thoth-Amon crushed the family, and only Ahnwey and his brothers survived.

Thoth-Amon seized the family’s library, including a powerful work called the *Sixth Book of Dharsis*, which contained the rituals for summoning Yibb-Tstll. Carved from N’Kraalian ivory, the *Sixth Book of Dharsis* was lost after the fall of Stygia and its successor states. A cult of Sub-Saharan sorcerers later found the book, began worshipping the deity mentioned within as Chuma, and used the powers inherent in the ivory scrolls to travel between the Dreamlands and the waking world. Over time the sorcerers stayed in the Dreamlands, but left the scrolls in the waking world.

Now that the scrolls have been uncovered, Ahnwey and his brothers will stop at nothing to bring N’Kraal to them. Ahnwey traveled to Alexandria to join Strabo’s mission to steal the *Chuma Scrolls* from the Parthians. His brothers remain in Syene preparing the ritual grounds.

The closer that Ahnwey is to the *Chuma Scrolls*, the more the Dreamlands will invade the waking world. At first, the changes will be subtle. Investigators might have visions of a far off jungle or spy a voornith flying above the Nile. By

the time the party reaches Meroë, the Dreamlands presence will be obvious. Elements of the forsaken ivory city of N’Kraal will be interspersed with the architecture of the Kushite city. Until the ritual is completed, however, the contamination of the waking world by the Dreamlands is only transitory. As Ahnwey moves on, the world returns to normal.

## POSSESSION

**Range:** Line of Sight

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Cost:** 10 MP

**Sanity:** 1D6

**Resistance:** Yes

Ahnwey and his brothers have the ability to possess humans. In effect, their minds jump from one body to the next, ensuring their long lifespans. The high magic and sanity point cost, however, means that Ahnwey uses the ability sparingly, preferring to stay in one body as long as possible. The caster must be in line of sight with his intended target, but does not have to make eye contact. The spell can be used on sleeping or unconscious victims to take possession of their bodies. The caster must be able to speak the words of power that invoke the possession. The caster opposes his POW against his target’s POW on the Resistance Table.

When the possessor leaves a body, the victim has no recollection of anything that happened while possessed. However, the possessor is not able to access any of his victim’s memories while in his body.

This ability is intrinsic to Ahnwey and his family. Others can learn the rituals necessary to possess others by studying the *Chuma Scrolls*.

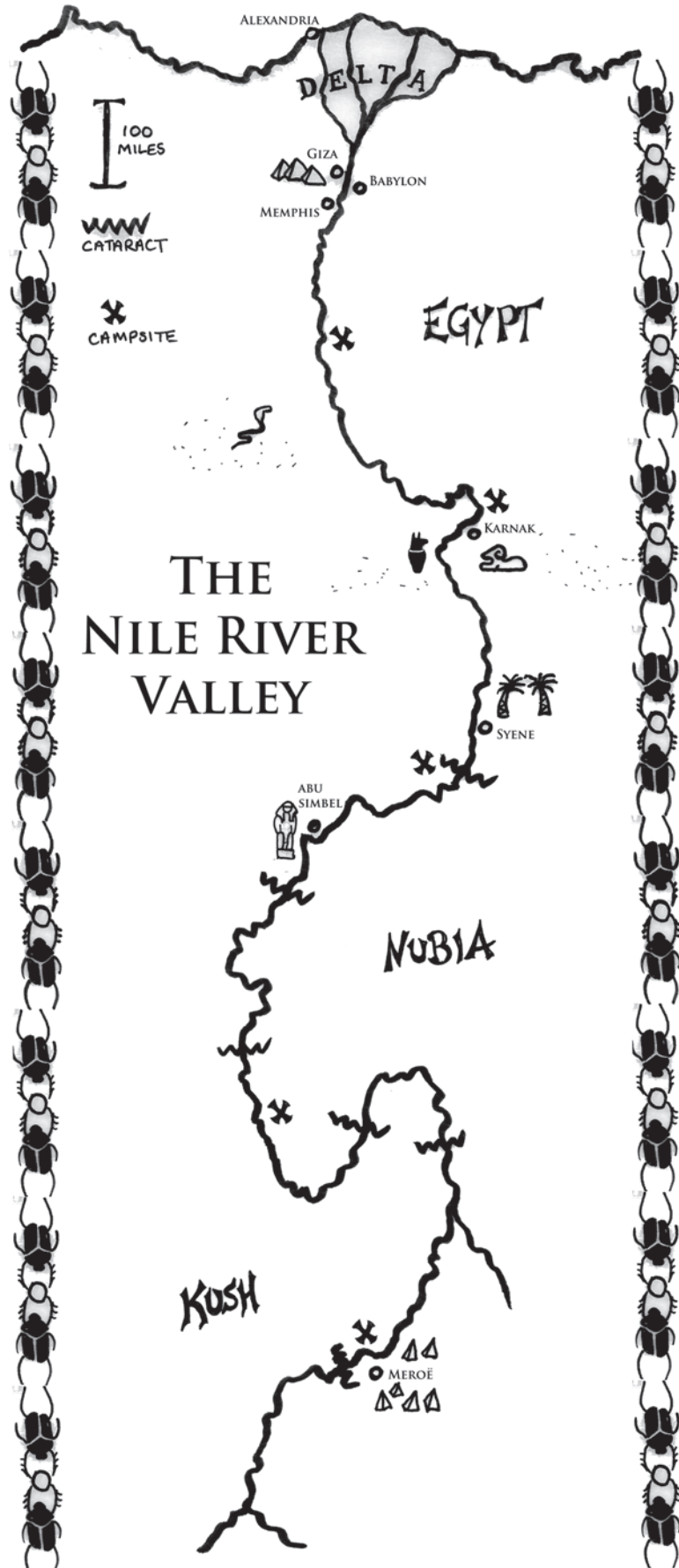


when it burned in 47 BCE. To this day, the Custus Notitiae still gathers books, scrolls, and papyri and hordes them in a secret library under Alexandria. The society has heard that a rare book, the *Chuma Scrolls*, will be passing through Meroë in the hands of Parthian traders and has worked to have Strabo appointed as delegate to Meroë so he can be there to intercept the book and bring it back to the library. The other members of the society believe that the book contains primary accounts of a sub-Saharan fertility god known as Chuma, a deity whose true name is Yibb-Tstll.

Ahnwey, an Egyptian sorcerer, has other plans, however. His family has been part of a secret cult of Yibb-Tstll since the days of Stygia and plans to use the scrolls to bring about the god's return from the Dreamlands. Yibb-Tstll's cult has searched for the *Chuma Scrolls* for millennia but has only recently found them. With only five members of the family still alive and an armed Parthian entourage in possession of the scrolls, the cult is unable to retrieve the scrolls itself. Therefore, Ahnwey has possessed Teritaqas, one of Strabo's Kushite translators, and plans to use the legionaries to seize the scrolls before he returns to Syene, a city in southern Egypt.

Ahnwey's plan is complicated when his party is attacked by Aksum raiders who want to foment war between Kush and Rome. They hope that open war between the two powers will enable Aksum to take control of Kush's territory along the Nile. The Aksumite attack leaves the party wounded and its numbers severely diminished. Ahnwey goads the party onward, but with fewer legionaries he's not sure how he can take the scrolls from the Parthian traders.

Even though he needs them, Ahnwey can't help but indulge his sadistic desire to toy with the legionaries, causing confusion and fear among them. The cultist also has no real need





for Strabo after the Greek gets the final details on the location of the Parthian caravan, so if he can sow discord between the legionaries and their leader, he will.

## INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

A Roman delegation is being sent to Meroë to meet Amanikhabale, Kandake of Kush, to negotiate for ivory that Kushite traders are importing from sub-Saharan Africa. The detachment consists of the investigators; eight guards; ten hired boatmen; a Kushite translator named Teritaqas; two young scribes, both Ptolemaic Egyptians, named Lysippus and Opites; and the dignitary, a self-important Greek named Strabo. The group will travel up the Nile. For the majority of the trip, traveling will be smooth, with sails propelling the barge. A one-way trip will take approximately five days. The first three days will be easy sailing, but the barge will still need to be pulled ashore each evening since it's too dark to safely navigate the river after nightfall. Additionally, at the first through fifth cataracts the boatmen and some of the legionaries will have to disassemble the barge and port it across the shore to avoid the treacherous rapids. Meroë, capital of Kush, is located at the sixth cataract, where the journey will end and negotiations for the ivory will begin.

The investigators can be of any occupation. Legionaries, auxiliaries, archers, and other military occupations might be assigned to augment protection. Scholars, finders, and other academics might purchase space on the barge for the opportunity to see the wonders of Kush. Caravaneers and merchants might go to expand their trade routes. For others,



TERITAQAS

## INTEGRATING THE DREAMLANDS

The closer Ahnwey gets to the scrolls, the more the Dreamlands interfere with the waking world. At first, the changes are subtle and should only occur when the investigators are asleep. In the beginning they should think they awaken, but instead find themselves standing in a hybridization of Egypt and the Dreamlands. When they wake up, everything looks normal.

Once Ahnwey has the scrolls, the mixture of Dreamlands and the waking world is constant. The investigators experience the fantastical nature of the Dreamlands even while awake.

The Keeper is encouraged to tailor the weirdness to his group's taste, adding in the fantasy as quickly or as slowly as necessary to achieve the desired effect. He should remember that the Dreamlands aren't merely a fantastical realm, but are a deadly, foreign world as well.

such as nomads and sailors, the barge might just be heading in the same direction they are.

If the Keeper needs a hook for a pre-existing group, the investigators could be tasked by a patron to deliver a talent of gold to Nastasen, a renowned Kushite metal worker, in exchange for twenty swords. Nastasen is in Meroë and the order is ready; he is merely awaiting payment. If the investigators do not arrive soon, Nastasen has stated his intent to sell the swords to another buyer. The only boat travelling to Meroë is Strabo's barge. Strabo is willing to lease space on his boat for twenty sestertii a day for the entire party. That's a bargain compared to renting their own barge, which would not only cost them six hundred sestertii, but would also be the investigators' responsibility to return safely.



# DEPARTURE

The scene unfolds at the docks in Alexandria. The investigators are boarding the barge while a burly Gaul named Centrix explains to seven armed men that they are providing protection for a Greek named Strabo along the route from Alexandria to Kush and back again. They will provide any service the Greek requires. He stresses that the men are not responsible for any other passengers on the boat.

At this point, a Greek in his late forties with a thick, white beard and balding pate emerges from a nearby building. He squints in the bright light and dabs sweat from his brow. Even though his left eye is missing and an age-whitened scar slices the rest of the way to his jaw, the Greek still manages to look imperious. He's followed by a dark-skinned boy, apparently a Kushite, who's faring little better in the heat. Two other boys, about the same age as the Kushite but with olive skin, follow, their arms loaded with scrolls. Centrix introduces the Greek as their charge, Strabo, and the Kushite as his translator, Teritaqas. The other two boys are Opites and Lysippus, Greeks who are training to be scribes.

Strabo looks the guards up and down disapprovingly. A successful **Listen** check picks up Strabo muttering under his breath that he "hopes the group isn't attacked, otherwise they're all doomed."

The boatmen are already aboard the barge, waiting to set sail. Teritaqas walks around as the guards settle in, looking at their weapons and armor, asking numerous innocent questions about what each piece does. He then moves to

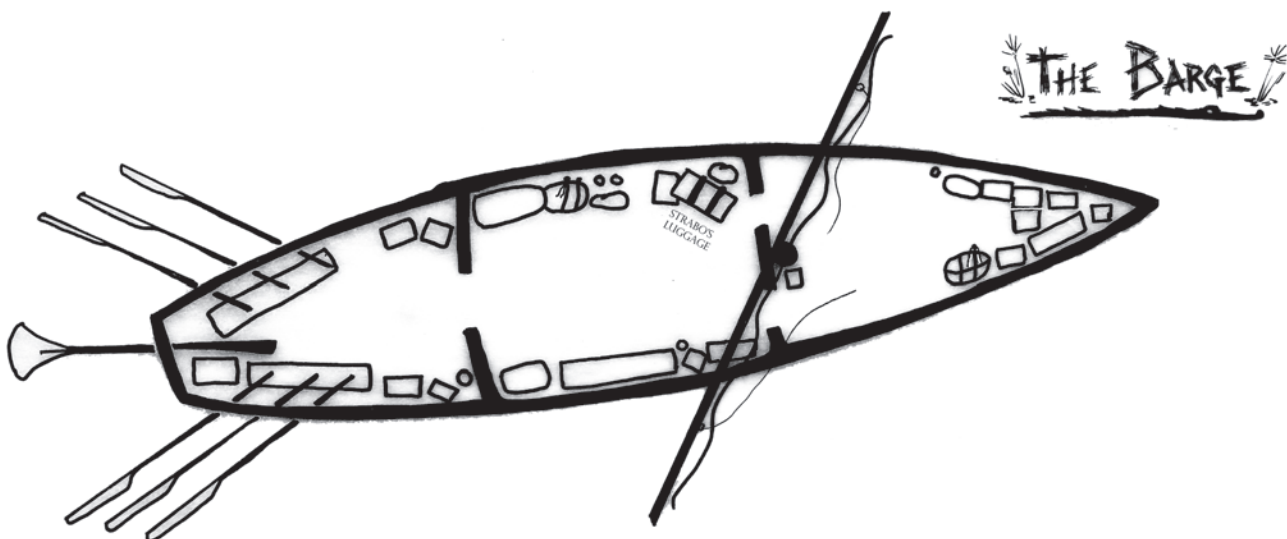
the investigators, inquiring about who they are, why they're traveling with the group, and what any interesting gear they have is used for. He's only twelve, and very inquisitive. Lysippus is a nervous Greek boy, always watching over his shoulder. Determined investigators can win him over by asking him about his duties and reassuring him about the voyage. Opites despises being a scribe. His whole life he has wanted to be a warrior and will tell anyone who'll listen about his battle prowess.

## SETTING SAIL

On the barge are Strabo, Teritaqas, the investigators, eight guards, the two young scribes, and ten Egyptian boatmen. The boatmen are hired workers, not slaves. Plus, they're very superstitious. The first time something goes wrong, they begin muttering about curses.

As the barge is rowed away from the docks, the boatmen unfurl the sail and a northerly breeze fills it, pushing the boat upstream and toward their destination. In the first few minutes of the voyage, the guards strip off their armor and lounge around, joking about how great it is to be out of Alexandria for a while and not being sent to Judea to suppress the insurrections or guard some fat patrician. Once everyone is settled, Centrix produces a skin full of beer. He offers it first to his men, and then the investigators. Several of the guards soon become drunk.

The guards' increasing rowdiness attracts Strabo's attention. The Greek walks up from the covered aft and berates all the legionaries,



particularly Centrix, for unprofessional behavior. Strabo grabs the beer and throws it overboard. A **DEX** check against Strabo's DEX on the Resistance Table will successfully wrest the beer from Strabo before he can toss it into the river. If Strabo is unable to throw the beer overboard, he *harrumphs* and heads back to the covered area, sitting down with his scrolls.

For the first day of the journey, when the guards aren't on active watch, they play dice, tell stories and entertain Teritaqas with tall tales. Strabo stays to the aft, reading. If anyone approaches Strabo, he'll answer questions gruffly. A successful **Insight** roll makes it painfully obvious that he's not interested in conversation. A successful **Sneak** roll enables a player to glance over Strabo's shoulder while the Greek is reading; if the investigator is literate, he sees a missive ordering Strabo to make contact in Syene. It's signed C.N. If the investigator is caught peeking, Strabo quickly rolls the scroll up and puts it back in its case, then tells the investigator to rejoin the others, he doesn't have time for games.

## NOCTURNAL INTERLUDE

The first night out of Alexandria, everyone sleeps on the barge. The investigators awaken in the middle of the night. As they look around, they see everyone standing along the side of the barge, looking toward shore. One of the guards calls out, pointing down river. With a successful **Spot Hidden** check, the investigators see several small humans sneaking along the bank. These are Kledians, pulled into this world from the Dreamlands. They are hunting voornith. If approached, the Kledians will flee inland.

Centrix and two of his guards set out along the riverbank, whether any investigators join them or not. When they reach the place where they spotted the small men, something rears out of the water, entangling Centrix. Two more of these beasts lie in wait, and anyone who travelled with the guards will have the opportunity to fight them. Investigators from the region or who make a successful **Natural World** roll recognize the creatures as crocodiles. Anyone still on the barge who races to the scene will see the beasts pull Centrix and two of his guards under water. A search of the river does not turn up their bodies.

## THE NEXT MORNING

The investigators wake up the next morning, surprised to see Centrix and the two missing guards lying on the barge. Any attempts to wake them fail; they are dead. The investigators find no signs of injury on the bodies. Strabo, like everyone else, is confused. He vividly remembers seeing the men pulled into the Nile by the crocodiles. The Egyptian boatmen begin speaking of curses and urge Strabo to return to Alexandria. Strabo refuses and orders the boatmen to burn the bodies before moving on. He also orders that no one wander away from the boat.

## THE SECOND DAY

It's another slow day on the Nile. The boat continues to make good progress, driven by the northerly wind. Strabo is continually uncommunicative. Teritaqas, Lysippus, and Opites act in accordance with their personalities.

At one point, investigators who state they are watching either Teritaqas or Strabo's collection of scrolls sees the boy wait until Strabo wanders to the back of the barge and then dart up to take a look at the scrolls. Other investigators are allowed a **Spot Hidden** or **Listen** check to see if they notice the boy's actions.

If approached, Teritaqas jumps in surprise, but acts like he was just curious. He says he doesn't understand most of the languages he sees there anyway. He then walks over to the edge of the barge and trails his hand in the water.

Investigators are free to look at the scroll Teritaqas was reading. It's in Latin. It describes an ancient race of slavers that periodically raided the Kingdoms of Stygia and Khem. The slavers are described as short men who wore turbans to cover their satyr-like horns and robes to cover their backward-bending legs.

If Strabo catches the investigators reading his scrolls, he becomes irate and threatens to kick them off the barge, even if they've paid for passage. He can be calmed down, but it should require work on the investigators' part. If the Keeper wants to expedite the roleplaying, he can have an investigator roll **Persuade**.

If the investigators turn Teritaqas in to Strabo, the Greek beats the boy severely. If not interrupted,

he leaves the boy a bloody mess. In a voice that sounds much older than normal, Teritaqas threatens the man, telling Strabo that he'll regret attacking him. Strabo acts unconcerned.

## THE SECOND NIGHT

The investigators awaken again and notice strange, broad-leaved plants growing along the shore. A sickly sweet odor emanates from the dark purple flowers on the plants. The plants have grown up around the area where the boatmen pulled the barge ashore for the night. Flowers brush up against the barge's hull, close enough for the investigators to lean in and examine them. If any investigators do, the flower snaps open, revealing rows of sharp teeth, and lungs. If no investigators look at the flowers, one of the boatmen does. Investigators will hear a sharp scream, but by the time they determine its source, a large section of the man's abdomen has been ripped away. His body topples to the ground, and the plant feeds on it. Four more plants begin to stir, their mouths rising up on tendrils.

In the morning, anyone killed by the plants fails to wake up. Close inspection reveals they are dead, but with no obvious signs of trauma.

## THE RIVER RUNS RED

An hour after setting sail, Lysippus starts yelling. He's on the prow of the boat and pointing up river. About that time, the first faint whiffs of smoke reach the investigators. Anyone who looks overboard notices that the water is stained red. Three hundred yards ahead, the water is churning violently and the remains of a wrecked boat burn on the riverbank.

A successful **Spot Hidden** check reveals that eight or ten Nile crocodiles are thrashing in the



water, ripping human bodies to pieces. Seeing the violence causes a 0/1 SAN loss. Everyone on the barge, even Strabo, runs forward to watch the carnage.

If none of the players suggest stopping, Strabo orders the barge to sail alongside and the guards to chase off the crocodiles. A flurry of stones and arrows is enough to discourage the massive reptiles, which swim a short distance off, waiting for a chance to swoop back in and reclaim their meal. Strabo then orders the investigators to burn the dead and determine what happened.

With a successful **Natural World** roll, the investigators realize that although crocodiles are efficient predators, they almost never attack boats. Plus, crocodiles could not have set fire to the barge.

The investigators recover the remains of at least ten Egyptians. Because of the damage caused by the crocodiles, it's hard to know exactly how many



people were killed. The boat, a barge like the one the investigators are on, has been burned, but ten amphorae of olive oil are still on board, intact, and the deceased are still wearing their jewelry.

A **Spot Hidden** roll reveals many sets of footprints leading from the boat back into the reeds along the river.

If an investigator is searching the boat or the area around it, a **Spot Hidden** roll turns up one arrowhead. An investigator who makes a successful **Tactics** roll can determine that the arrow is of Kushite design. A search of the reeds and surrounding environment doesn't turn up anything else.

If the Keeper wants, a surly crocodile or two hoping for fresh meat could launch an attack against the group while they search the reeds and wreckage.

After the bodies are burned, Strabo orders the barge back on the river.

## RENDEZVOUS IN SYENE

At midday on the third day, the investigators can see the outline of a city, Syene, on the horizon. Strabo informs the boatmen that they'll be stopping in the city briefly. Anyone who has been to Syene before notices that it looks slightly different, but can't pin down exactly what has changed. The streets seem narrower, and the buildings loom precipitously over them.

When the barge pulls up to the shore, Strabo tells the investigators that they are free to explore the city while he goes with Teritaqas, Opites, and Lysippus to inform the magistrate of the attack downriver. Strabo suggests at least one of the investigators make contact with the Roman Legion garrison in Syene to report the guards' deaths. If the investigators are not back in an hour, however, they're on their own. The Greek also plans to stop by a brothel to meet a fellow member of Custus Notitiae who has more detailed knowledge about the Parthians in Meroë and the location of the scroll.

## FOLLOW THAT GREEK!

Anyone who wants to follow Strabo can make a **Sneak** roll to move through the crowds unseen. Strabo stops in the marketplace and confers with

a pottery monger. Investigators who make a **Spot Hidden** check recognize that Strabo greeted the vendor with a different type of handshake from normal. The din of the market is too loud for the investigators to hear what Strabo is saying, but they see the vendor point down a side street. Strabo then motions for Teritaqas, Opites, and Lysippus to stay with the vendor and heads off down the street.

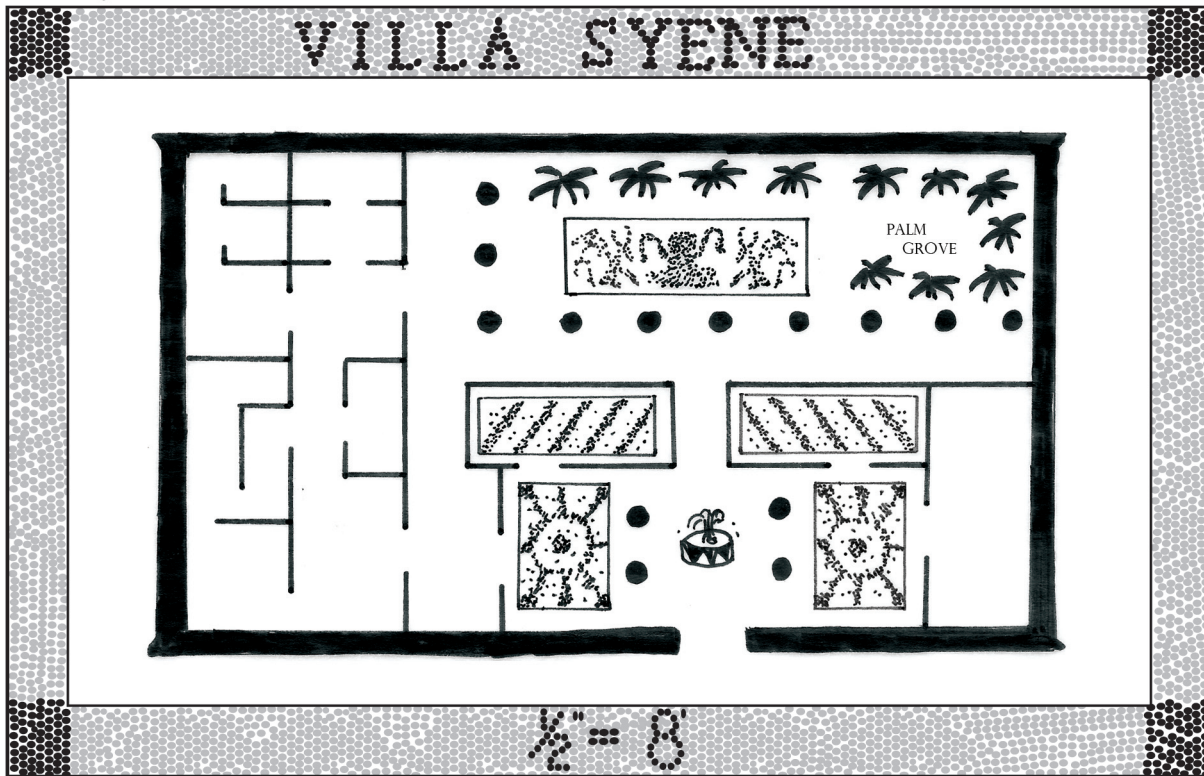
Another successful **Sneak** roll is necessary to get past the boys and keep up with Strabo, who disappears into a disreputable building. Several seedy-looking men and women mill about outside. As the investigators approach, men and women alike offer the investigators the pleasures of a lifetime.

If they push inside, the investigators find themselves in a gaudy entryway. Red, purple, and gold fabrics cover the furniture, and the walls are plastered with frescoes of people engaging in every deviant sexual behavior imaginable, many with mythical beasts. It costs 0/1D2 SAN to take in all the paintings.

As the investigators enter, a corpulent Egyptian woman in silver and gold robes comes forward and asks what they desire. As she talks, the woman runs her hands over both her body and the investigators'. If the investigators ask about Strabo, the woman will refuse to give out any information. If they slip her some money, however, she'll tell them what room he went into. A successful **Listen** check will enable the investigators to hear Strabo saying good-bye and footsteps coming down the hallway. If any investigator takes the woman up on her offer of a good time, they will experience ecstatic pleasure, but will not return to the barge in time.

The investigators will need to hide fast to avoid being seen by Strabo. A successful **Hide** check enables them to jump behind furniture or duck under the fabric covering the lower part of the wall.

If Strabo sees the investigators, or they refuse to hide, the Greek asks the investigators what they're doing at the brothel. If the investigators say they're just seeking a diversion, Strabo tells them to be back at the barge in an hour. If they ask Strabo what he's doing at the brothel, he shrugs and says he's unwinding before going to tell the magistrate about the attack. Strabo then leaves to collect Teritaqas and visit the magistrate.



## KEEP AN EYE ON THE TRANSLATOR

Another option would be for the investigators to keep an eye on Teritaqas. The boy doesn't stay at the pottery merchant's for long. As soon as Strabo is out of sight, Teritaqas slips into the crowd, leaving Lysippus and Opites to fend for themselves. A **Sneak** roll is necessary to keep tabs on the boy. He heads to an opulent section of town and enters a villa. As the investigators approach, Teritaqas stops inside the villa's portico and meets with a lanky Egyptian. A successful **Insight** check indicates that the Egyptian is being very deferential to the boy. A **Listen** check reveals tidbits of the hushed conversation, and the investigators can make out the words "glorious," "ceremony," "Tstll," and "six."

## WATCH THE BOYS

Both Lysippus and Opites stand around the pottery vendor for three minutes longer than Teritaqas. They then split up and go their separate ways. Lysippus wanders from food stall to food stall, buying every sort of food he can and eating it on the spot. Opites goes to a vendor and purchases a long knife.

## READ

If the investigators decide to search Strabo's documents instead of following the Greek into Syene, they have about two hours to do so. The other legionaries won't bother them, and the boatmen are securing additional supplies in the city. Strabo has numerous scrolls and other documents in his collection. Most are works detailing the natural history of the Nile and the Kingdom of Kush. One serves as an introduction from the Governor of Egypt to the King of Kush. A few others may perk the investigators' interest.

A successful **Library Use** roll -10% is necessary to find each document. The -10% is because the scrolls are not organized and the investigators are in a hurry.

One scroll is the note that Strabo was reading earlier. It is signed C.N. and directs Strabo to meet with Gaius Ptolemicus in Syene about Chuma. (see Handout 1)

A second scroll details a sub-Saharan fertility cult dedicated to a god called Chuma. (see handout 2) They also find a drawing of Yibb-Tstll with night-gaunts suckling at its breasts. Yibb-Tstll appears on the scroll as a corpulent, decaying humanoid with several large, pendulous breasts that are at times covered in a cloak, but not at others. A gaping maw



filled with razor sharp teeth dominates the face, and one eye hangs loose from the socket. Suckling at the monstrosity's breasts are several black, winged humans devoid of faces. The fronts of their faces are perfectly smooth. As the investigators look at the picture, the artwork appears to rotate and something writhes under the god's cloak. Seeing this requires a **SAN** check with a 1d2/1d4 loss.

The third scroll of interest, also signed C.N., informs Strabo that he is to recover the *Chuma Scrolls* through whatever means are necessary. (see Handout 3)

## CHECK IN

If the investigators decide to check in with the local garrison and report the guards' deaths, they may do so. The garrison is easy to find; it's not too far from the port. Originally a Legion camp, the garrison still maintains a camp's strict orthogonal layout. The first thing investigators notice is that the arms and armor of the legionaries is out of date. It is more in line with what soldiers used during the earliest days of the Roman Kingdom. However, the weapons and armor don't appear old or worn out. Several troops are practicing combat with wooden weapons in the yard, but pay no attention to the investigators when they enter. The camp commander, a gray-haired veteran of numerous campaigns, can be found in a squat, mud-brick building. Several attendants stand near him.

When informed about the guards who died during the crocodile attack on the investigators' barge, the commander looks dismayed and orders an expedition to search the Nile and thin the crocodiles.

If asked how things are in Syene, the commander tells the investigators it has been fairly calm, but there have been rumors of Kushite attacks in the region. He has asked the Legion commander in Alexandria to send more troops to fortify the border.

If told about the attack on the Egyptian trade barge, the commander orders an attendant to prepare an expeditionary mission to the location provided by the investigators.

## THE FIRST CATARACT

There are a series of six cataracts, or impassable rapids, on the Nile between the river's source and the Mediterranean Sea. The first cataract is the farthest

north and serves as the boundary between Roman Egypt and Kush. The second through sixth cataracts are in Kush. To bypass a cataract, the barge must be moved across land in a technique known as portage. In portage, a boat is either carried or moved on rollers across the land and put back in the river on the other side of the rapids.

None of the guards have been this far south before, so navigating the cataracts will be a new experience. About a mile before the cataracts start, a **Listen** check enables the characters to hear a faint crashing sound – the cataract.

About a quarter mile from the rapids, Strabo orders the barge put ashore and the rollers laid down. The boatmen unpack the rollers and set up pulleys to assist in moving the boat. It's a slow, arduous process, and Strabo orders half the remaining guards to stand watch while the other half help move the barge. At the first cataract, the investigators are ordered to help push the barge. If they refuse, Strabo will be furious, but there's not much he can do to force them. However, he will remember their disrespectfulness.

## NIGHT VISITORS

That evening, when the investigators awake, they find the jungle has overtaken the river bank, stretching all the way to the water itself. Strange whirrings, murmurings, and moans can be heard from within the jungle's dark foliage.

The trees and ground cover make entry difficult. An investigator will have to use an axe or a sword if he wants to explore. The jungle stretches inland for miles. The only creatures the investigators see are zoogs, darting in and among the branches.

## THE SECOND AND THIRD CATARACTS

These two cataracts proceed much the same as the first, with the investigators standing guard on the second cataract and pushing the boat on the third. At the second cataract, call for **Listen** and **Spot Hidden** checks. If someone succeeds, they see reeds rustling along the river. If they investigate, they may find cranes or crocodiles.

At the third cataract, one of the NPC legionaries sees something moving and goes to investigate.

A crocodile lunges out of the marshes and attacks, pushing the guard to the ground. The party has to fight back the crocodile to protect Strabo, the three boys, and the boatmen.

## AMBUSH!

At the fourth cataract, the investigators are once again on guard. It is up to them whether they wear their armor.

As the boat is being pushed along, have the investigators make a **Spot Hidden** check. Success means that they see the reeds along the river move as though an animal was traveling through them. If the investigators approach, Aksumite warriors jump up, scream, and attack with their swords. If the investigators do not move toward the reeds, the twang of bows heralds a rain of flaming arrows.

At that point, twenty Aksumite warriors charge out of the reeds and attack. The battle should be violent and bloody. If anyone wonders what Strabo is doing, he can glance around to see the Greek wielding a sword, battling the warriors. Teritaqas is running through the battle, throwing sand in the Aksumites' faces. Lysippus is hiding in the boat, and Opites charges into battle with his knife, but is cut down by the first Aksumite warrior he encounters.

Halfway through the battle, an Aksumite warrior stabs Teritaqas. Ahnwey jumps from the boat to possess Lysippus instead. Investigators who succeed at a **Spot Hidden** roll see Teritaqas make eye contact with Lysippus immediately before he is cut down. Teritaqas' lips were moving right before he fell. A successful check against half an investigator's **Listen** skill enables him to hear Teritaqas mutter a foreign phrase. If the investigators quiz Lysippus about it later, he claims not to have heard or seen anything. He was too busy hiding.

When the battle is done Strabo, Lysippus, and at least four boatmen survive. Seven of the Aksumite warriors should be able to run away as well. Several of the flaming arrows should have hit the boat and ignited it, causing enough damage to force repairs before the group can proceed. A **Repair** roll and several hours of repair are necessary to make the barge seaworthy again.

A **Tactics** role indicates that the warriors' weapons and clothing are of Kushite origins, but Lysippus adamantly states that the warriors who attacked them are not Kushite. He explains that these warriors are not dark like Teritaqas was, but instead swarthy

like Egyptians and other Mediterranean people. Lysippus' sudden argumentative nature and knowledge about Kushite affairs might strike the investigators as odd. If questioned, Lysippus explains that his earliest days as a scribe were as part of a mission to Napata and Meroë.

Strabo declares the argument academic and says they need to get back on the river in case of another attack. He sets two guards and orders the rest to get working on the boat.

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

As soon as the boat is repaired, Strabo orders it launched. At the fifth cataract, the remaining seven Aksumite warriors fire arrows as the barge lands. The party has to fight its way off the boat to exterminate the remaining Aksumite warriors. Of the NPCs, only Strabo, Lysippus, and one boatman survive. The investigators will now have to man the boat under the boatman's guidance. While they don't have to make any boating rolls, they must spend most of their time performing small tasks such as trimming the sail or manning the rudder.

If the investigators refuse to help the boatman, the barge drifts with the current down the river away from Meroë until they either decide to help or the barge crashes into the fifth cataract.

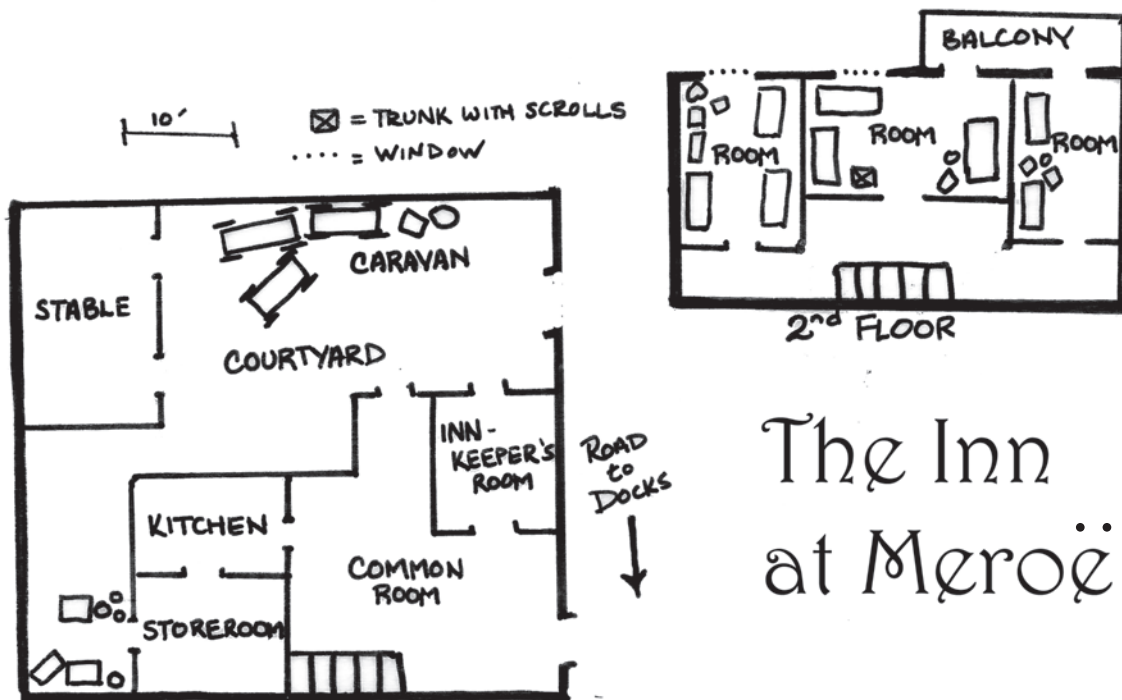
## MEROË OR BUST!

After negotiating the fifth cataract, the last stop is Meroë. Meroë is an impressive city of stone and clay buildings that rise high above the cliffs north of the sixth cataract. The walls shine in the midday sun. At the dock, Strabo shows the introductory letter to the customs agents, and they let the group pass through unmolested.



AKSUMITE WARRIOR





## The Inn at Meroë

As they walk through the streets toward the Palace, Strabo heads down an alley shrouded in shadows. If the investigators do not follow, he turns back and motions for them to come with him.

Once out of sight from the street, Strabo faces the investigators. “I was hoping not to get you involved in this, but there’s a rare scroll passing through Meroë that I have to take back to Alexandria. It contains a record of a heretofore unknown fertility ritual practiced in the southern jungles. My library needs that scroll for its collection and sent me to retrieve it. A Parthian trading caravan staying at an inn by the docks has the scroll, but they do not realize its significance. I learned in Syene that the caravan is more heavily guarded, not because of the scroll, but because the caravan’s also carrying gold. I had not previously anticipated this and now need your assistance to steal the scrolls and take them back to Alexandria.”

If the investigators hesitate, Strabo tells them that the safety of Egypt hinges on retrieving the scrolls. If the investigators still balk, he offers to pay them 500 sestertii each for their help. If that still isn’t enough to convince the investigators to help, Strabo offers each member enough land that they could retire. Lysippus even jumps in, say-

ing it’ll be a great adventure. One more mighty success for the Eagle of Rome!

Once the investigators agree to help, Strabo leads them back to the docks and shows them the seedy inn where the Parthians are staying. He believes the scrolls are in a lockbox in a room on the second floor.

If the investigators are adamant about not stealing the scrolls, Strabo hires thugs off-stage instead, and they deliver the scrolls to him at the barge the next day as it is preparing to depart for the journey back to Alexandria.

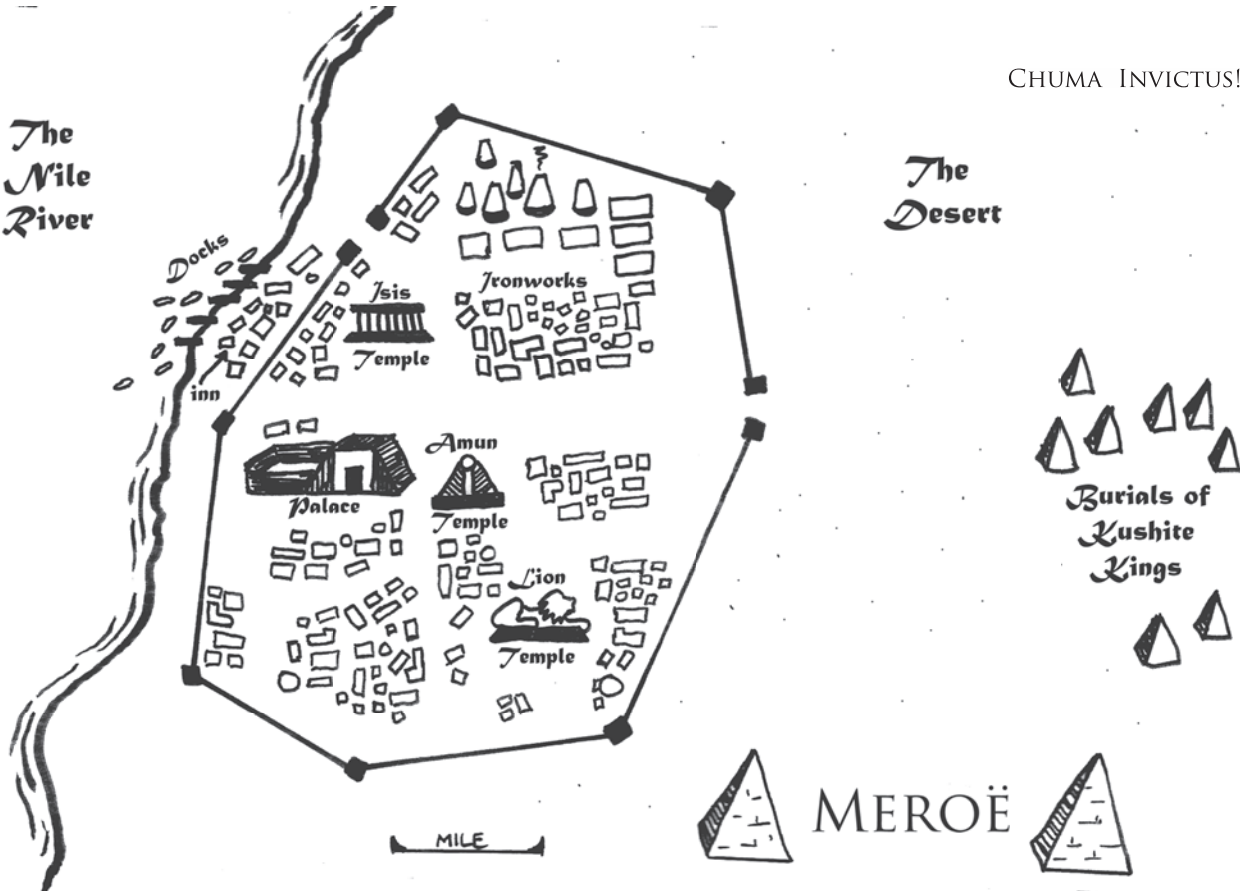
Whatever the investigators decide, Strabo tells them that he must go meet with the Kandake and her delegates to secure ivory for the return trip. Before he walks away, Strabo tells the investigators to be back at the boat in the morning.

## THE IRON FORGES

The iron forges of Meroë are an impressive sight. The foundries cover more than a square mile of territory, and the din can be heard from the docks, even though the foundries are a mile inland. Even with the additional task of stealing the scrolls, the investigators should have enough time to meet Nastasen, give him the gold for the swords, and return to the barge by morning.

The Nile River

The Desert



Nastasen is easy to find. Even if the investigators do not speak Meroitic, speaking Nastasen's name is enough for someone to point them in the right direction. Nastasen himself speaks whatever language is necessary to complete the deal. There are no secret agendas surrounding the transaction. The investigators hand over the money, and Nastasen gives them a wooden crate containing twenty of the finest swords they've ever seen. The crate is so heavy it takes two investigators to carry it. Alternatively, a cart can be hired for five denarii, complete with a slave to pull it.

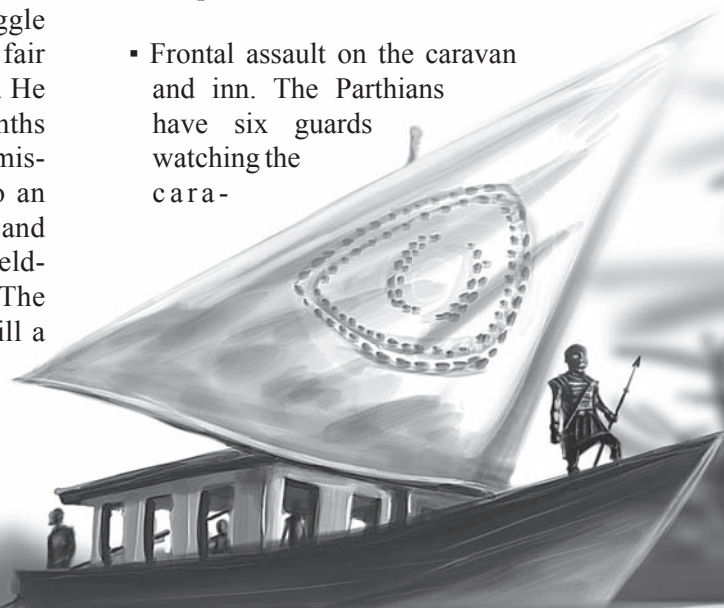
Nastasen is a very fit, strong Kushite with a demeanor that's all business. He will not haggle with the investigators, but will offer them a fair price for additional swords if they want them. He asks six aurei per sword and requires two months to make each one. If an investigator commissions a sword from Nastasen, it will do an additional 4 points of damage and provides +15% to the wielder's Sword skill. The weapon is still a

mundane sword, however, and does not qualify as a magical weapon.

## BREAKING IN IS HARD TO DO

The scrolls are inside the inn, in a lockbox. The Parthian trader has a buyer in Ctesiphon who will pay top money for them. Exactly how the investigators break in to steal the scrolls is up to them, but some possible scenarios are:

- Frontal assault on the caravan and inn. The Parthians have six guards watching the caravan.





## DESTROYING THE SCROLLS

The investigators might be tempted to destroy the scrolls or keep them for themselves. Since the scrolls are made of an unknown material textured like a cross between wood and stone – and with the strength and durability of each, but fashioned thin and flexible enough to be rolled – the scrolls won't burn or break. They also cannot be chipped or cracked by weapon blows. The words are not carved into the material, but are instead written in an ink-like substance that can't be scraped off.

If the investigators toss the scrolls into the river or one of Meroë's forges, Strabo will do everything within his power to retrieve them. He'll dive into the river to fish the scrolls from the water or snatch tongs from an iron worker to rescue them from the flames.

If the investigators keep the scrolls for themselves, the world around them will never return to normal. Since the investigators have visited the Dreamlands through Ahnwey's proximity to the scrolls, they too are now tainted. If the scrolls are given to someone who has never experienced the Dreamlands, they have no effect.

van and another four inside the inn. Not only do the Parthians outnumber the investigators at this point, but Kushite guards would also respond to the sound of fighting.

- Climb to the roof and descend to a window via a rope. If the investigators can procure a rope and break into an adjoining building, this might work. However, the Parthian trader will be in his room and must be subdued before he'll give up the lockbox. The trader's first reaction will be to yell for help.
- Cause a commotion and sneak in. If the investigators cause a commotion, such as setting fire to the building, everyone will run out of the inn,

including the Parthian with his lockbox. It might be possible to ambush the trader at that point, but all ten guards would also be outside the inn.

- Bribery. The guards may, at the Keeper's discretion, be susceptible to bribes. However, they are carrying a lot of gold for the trader, so if they really want gold they could just steal that. The trader does not respond to bribes. One form of bribery the guards would be very likely to accept would be prostitutes. Prostitution was common in the ancient world, and it would be very easy to procure women for the guards. Once the guards are occupied, the investigators can take the building.
- Be prepared for anything. Players are inventive. The scrolls should be hard to get, but not impossible.

## SLOW BOAT TO SYENE

When the investigators return to the barge in the morning, they find ten Egyptians loading boxes of ivory aboard. Strabo has hired these workers to replace the boatmen killed during the attacks on the trip from Alexandria.

As soon as the investigators arrive, Strabo walks forward and asks to see the scrolls. If the investigators have them, Strabo gives a shout. Not only did he secure the ivory, but he also got the scrolls. He doesn't even wait to get back to his covered area on the barge before he starts examining them.

The investigators will notice that Lysippus is not around anywhere. If they ask Strabo, he tells them that the boy decided to stay in Kush. Since he wasn't that skilled of a scribe, Strabo saw no harm in letting the boy stay. In truth, Ahnwey has jumped from Lysippus' mind to Strabo's. He had the boy killed and tossed in the river so that Lysippus couldn't betray Ahnwey's secret by mentioning that he didn't remember the last few days.

The investigators also see three new passengers, Kushite women wearing slave collars. If the investigators ask Strabo, he explains that he bought the women for his pleasure, as a reward for a job well done. In reality, he purchased them to be sacrifices at a ritual to summon Yibb-Tstll in Syene. The women only speak Meroitic and are unaware of their fate.

The trip back to Alexandria is slightly faster because the crew is now going with the current, but

the northerly breeze prevents them from using the sail. The investigators should constantly be on the lookout for Aksumite raiders, though, and successful **Spot Hidden** checks can reveal people watching the boat from the reeds, just to heighten the tension. It takes two days to reach to Syene, the first stop on the way back to Alexandria.

## ATTACK!

As the barge moves downriver, a massive Voonith bursts from the water, rearing above the boat. It looms overhead, threatening to crush the barge and everyone on it. The investigators will have to fight off the beast as it constricts around their vessel.

For every round that the investigators fight the Voonith, the creature does damage to the barge requiring ½ hour worth of repairs once the fight is over. A **Repair/Devise** check is required to successfully complete the repairs.

If the Voonith is not destroyed or driven off in ten rounds, it crushes the barge. Everybody and everything onboard fall into the Nile.

### Voonith

STR 22 CON 16 SIZ 26 POW 10 DEX 8

Move 6

Hit Points 21

Average Damage Bonus +2D6

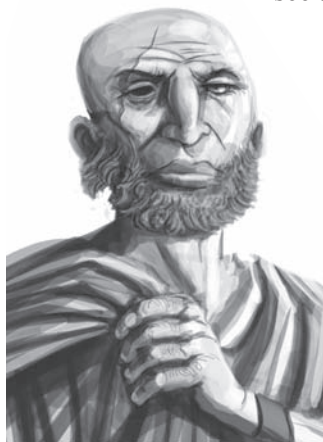
Weapons: Bite 75%, Damage 1D6+db

Constrict 50%, damage 1D6 + suffocation

Armor: 5-point tough skin

Skills: Listen 50%

Sanity Loss: Costs 1/1D6 to see a voonith



STRABO

## SYENE NIGHT FEVER

It is already growing dark when the barge arrives in Syene. The city, however, looks completely different. A massive black stone

## MEDU

This character is completely optional, but can demonstrate the weirdness of the Dreamlands. Medu is a talking cat, originally from Ulthar. He was on a sailing vessel near the Jungle of Kled when the area around N°Kraal was pulled into the waking world. Medu was swept off the boat and into this world. He's very confused and wants to go back to Ulthar.

Medu is a short-haired black cat with a regal air. He's talkative, particularly in regard to himself. He can help explain the Dreamlands to the investigators, or at least understand what's going on.

Medu speaks an archaic form of Egyptian when he meets the investigators. If they don't respond, he tries Greek, Aramaic, and finally Latin, searching for a common ground.

It is up to the Keeper what role Medu plays in the summoning of Yibb-Tstll. The feline doesn't want to see the god summoned, primarily because he suspects that if the ritual is successful he won't be able to go home. If the summoning is stopped, the Keeper should decide whether Medu returns home or stays with the investigators.

wall surrounds the city and towers made of ivory and basalt loom overhead. Strabo is unconcerned by the changes. If questioned, he merely states, "Isn't it glorious?" Several long, low, evil-looking ships manned by squat men in turbans are moored at the quay. Bound men and women are whipped fervently by the short men as they are led onboard the ships.

When the barge docks in Syene, a lanky Egyptian walks up to the boat and looks around, slightly confused and very anxious. Strabo approaches him and whispers into his ear, however, and the Egyptian visibly relaxes. If any investigator had followed Teritaqas the first time they were in Syene, they recognize the Egyptian as the one Teritaqas met at the villa.

Strabo turns to the investors and orders them to guard the ivory. He has one brief visit to make with his friend, and then they will be on their way.



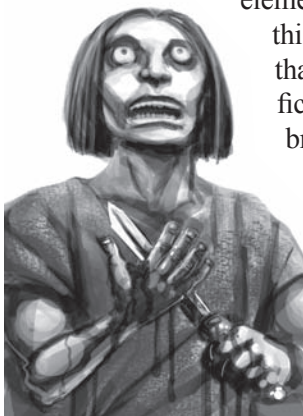
At that point, Strabo and the Egyptian leave the dock with the slave women and head into the city, taking a path to the villa that the investigators can follow easily. Strabo wants them to be at the villa as unwitting sacrifices.

Should the investigators follow, they will want to do so surreptitiously, so ask for **Sneak** rolls. The city is unlike anything they've seen before. All the buildings are made of ivory and a strange black stone that is smooth and cool to the touch. Anyone who has seen the **Chuma Scrolls** recognizes that both they and the buildings are made of the same material. The bazaars are full of mysterious sights and smells. The vendors all wear flowing robes and speak in strange tongues. Investigators fluent in Babylonian, Hittite, Predynastic Egyptian, or any other ancient language will understand a smattering of words here and there. At the Keeper's discretion, some of the city's strange residents will speak Greek or Latin.

The original Syene still exists, but N'Kraal is overlaying it. Many of the residents have been captured by the Men of Leng for sale in the slave markets of the Dreamlands. A few, however, remain. They are frightened by what's happening, and if encountered by the investigators will explain that this happened overnight. They went to sleep, and when they woke up the world was different.

When the investigators arrive at the villa, Strabo and the Egyptian are in the back garden, along with ten other worshippers of Yibb-Tstll. A stone mosaic of the god covers the ground, rotating slowly in the mind of anyone who sees it. Investigators who gaze upon the mosaic lose 1D3/1D6 SAN. Two nightgaunts titter in the trees lining the garden. A successful **Spot Hidden** check reveals the nightgaunts and results in 0/1D6 SAN loss.

Strabo opens the lockbox and unfurls one of the scrolls. "We now have the final element to return Yibb-Tstll to this world," he says. "All that remains are the sacrifices." The three slaves are brought forward.



YIBB-STLL CULTIST

At the same time, have the investigators make **Listen** or **Spot Hidden** checks; if successful, they notice ten armed Egyptians coming up from behind. The investigators can engage them in combat,



but Strabo will begin the summoning spell as soon as he hears the sounds of fighting. In addition, the nightgaunts will assist the guards. If defeated, the investigators are disarmed and hastily tossed into the summoning circle. If the investigators beat the guards, they can charge in and fight the worshippers to try to stop the spell.

If the investigators fail the **Listen** or **Spot Hidden** check, they're surprised when they feel spear points in their backs and are ordered into the garden to stand on the mosaic. The investigators are disarmed and their weapons thrown in a pile to the side. The guards then retreat outside the circle of worshippers.

Strabo welcomes the investigators into the ritual. He tells them it's nothing personal, but Yibb-Tstll requires a sacrifice – and the needs of his god outweighs the needs of the Empire. Strabo begins casting a spell; the other worshippers follow suit. As the investigators stand on the mosaic, it spins faster and faster. A black snow falls out of the sky, slowly but assiduously covering the investigators. If they allow the black snow to cover them, the investigators will suffocate per the drowning rules. It takes fifteen minutes for Strabo to complete the summoning.

# THE LEGIONS



If the investigators go to the barracks, they are surprised by what they see. The men all wear hoplite armor and carry round Greek shields. The men themselves are the same men the investigators might have met when they first visited Syene. The Men of Leng have not tried to enslave the legionaries yet.

The legionaries are confused by what happened between last night and today, and many are out in the



city trying to determine the cause. Unknown to the troops at the barracks, skirmishes between the Men of Leng and the legionaries have broken out, but no legionaries have survived those fights. The legionaries at the barracks know only that those soldiers have failed to report in.

The primus pilus will supply sixteen legionaries to the investigators if requested.

An investigator could reach any of the worshippers or the pile of weapons before the guards can stop him. If someone successfully tackles Strabo, the snow stops falling.

The fight to stop the ritual can be bloody and deadly if the investigators did not bring backup. Although the worshippers are only armed with knives and have poor fighting skills, the real threat is from the nightgaunts and the guards, if the investigators haven't already defeated them.

If the legion is brought to the villa, the worshippers will be arrested and hauled away. If they arrive after the fight has already begun, they will join the fracas with the intent to subdue and arrest any non-legionaries there.

If the investigators are successful, they each regain 1D6 SAN for stopping the ritual. Interrogation of Ahnwey will reveal that the real Teritaqas and Lysippus are dead.

The investigators can take the scrolls if they want. The word of the legionaries is enough to convict the cultists. However, the Custus Notitiae has eyes throughout the Empire and will track down the scrolls to get them from the investigators, whether by simply asking, or buying, or even resorting to theft.

## FAILURE

If the investigators fail to stop the summoning of Yibb-Tstll in time, the god appears over the city and the Dreamlands presence on earth is cemented. Any sane investigators will have to deal with

any remaining cultists as well as Yibb-Tstll and his nightgaunts.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**Strabo—Arrogant Greek and leader of mission with a secret agenda**

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 12  
DEX 14 APP 12 EDU 10 SAN 60 HP 11

**Idea 55**

**Luck 60**

**Know 50**

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Weapons:** Gladius 25%, damage 1D6

**Skills:** Egyptian 50%; Greek 85%; Latin 60%;  
Library Use 80%; Insight 55%; Listen 50%;  
Occult 45%; Persuade 60%; Write Egyptian  
45%; Write Greek 90%; Write  
Latin 90%; Spot Hidden 45%.



AHNWEY

**Ahnwey – Powerful sorcerer, leader of cult, cannibal, and all-around bad guy**

STR 10 CON 14  
SIZ 14 INT 17  
POW 18 DEX 10  
APP 12 EDU 11  
SAN 25 HP 16

**Idea 85**

**Luck 55**

**Know 90**

**Damage Bonus:** None



**Weapons:** None

**Skills:** Science: Religion 40%; Science: Divination 50%; Science: Augury 75%; Cthulhu Mythos 15%; Kushite 65%; Latin 70%; Egyptian 95; Library Use 75%; Listen 45%; Occult 70%; Write Latin 75%; Write Egyptian 75%; Persuade 80%

**Spells:** Call Yibb-Tstll, Consume Likeness, Contact Yibb-Tstll, Mental Suggestion, Nightmare, Summon Nightgaunt, Wrack

**Akumite Raiders (20)**

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 9  
DEX 13 APP 11 EDU 9 SAN 45 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Khopesh 50%, damage 1D8+db; Bow 60%, damage 1D6 + fire (when arrows are lit)

**Cultists of Yibb-Tstll (10)**

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 10 POW 18  
DEX 10 APP 8 EDU 16 SAN 15 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Weapons:** Dagger 50% 1D4+2+db



**Ceremony Guardians (10)**

STR 14 CON 13  
SIZ 13 INT 10  
POW 17 DEX 13  
APP 11 EDU 9  
SAN 35 HP 13

**Idea** 50

**Luck** 85

**Know** 45

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Longsword 50%, damage 1D8+db

**Legionaries (16) – Trusty backup**

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 13  
DEX 14 APP 13 EDU 12 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Sword 50%, damage 1D6+db; Spear 50%, damage 1D8+1+db

**Armor:** 8 points of scale + large shield

**Nightgaunts (5) – The Faceless**

STR 11 CON 11 SIZ 14 DEX 13 INT 4  
POW 10 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Weapons:** Grapple 30%, damage held for tickling; Tickle 30%, immobilized 1D6+1 rounds

**Armor:** 2 points of skin

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** Hide 90%, Sneak 90%

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a nightgaunt.

In the final battle, nightgaunts will swoop in and attempt to grapple a foe, then fly upwards before dropping their prey.

**Crocodile -**

**Crocodylus niloticus**

STR 26 CON 18  
SIZ 26 POW 10  
DEX 23 HP 23

**Move** 6/8 swimming

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Weapon:** Bite 50%, damage 1D10 +db

**Armor:** 5 points of hide

**Skills:** Glide Stealthily Through Water 75%; Hide 60%; Sneak 50%



**Medu, cat of the Dreamlands**

STR 02 CON 14 SIZ 02 INT 15 POW 15  
DEX 28 APP 13 HP 08

**Damage Bonus:** -1D6

**Weapons:** Bite 75%, Damage 1D6-db  
Claw 80%, Damage 1D6+1-db  
Rip 70%, Damage 3D3-db

**Spells:** Like all cats Medu is capable of leaping through space

**Skills:** Dream Lore 60%, Hide 70%, Listen 70%, Other Language (Aramaic) 20%, Other Language Egyptian 55%, Other Language (Greek) 45%, Other Language (Latin) 45%,

Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 75%



NIGHTGAUNT



# CULTARUM

*After Caesar conquered Gallia, most of its inhabitants quickly embraced Roman culture and rule. At least in the cities. The wilderness between them was another matter entirely.*

## THE HULDEN

Those who live in the lands where Germania Magna and Gaul meet know well the destruction wrought by Holda's Wild Hunt. Although it occurs only once a decade – or even as infrequently as once a century – the devastation mars the landscape for years afterward. Forests are ravaged and trees felled as Holda and her followers race through in single-minded pursuit of their prey. Fields are churned as thoroughly as if with horse and plow, crops destroyed in the process. Cattle are trampled underfoot. Loved ones are lured from their beds.

“Cover your eyes when Wilde Jagd draws near,” fathers warn their children. “To see the Wild Hunt is to join it.”

Although the Wild Hunt is led by Holda, her followers forge the way, both selecting the prey and tracking it. The nature of that prey – those who have tortured and subjugated the weak – reveals much about the Hulden themselves.

Holda's hunters are both men and women, the living and the dead. But all share one thing in common: a great loss, and grief more crushing

than any mortal should be asked to bear. Husbands who have lost wives in childbirth and been forced to hold a stillborn babe as well. Mothers who have buried children who died too young from accident, disease, or a soldier's sword. Unable to face the world in their grief, they turn to Holda, and she leads them to her court on the Horselberg mountain. As they enter the shadow of its forest, other Hulden approach these newcomers, surround them, and lead them deeper into the trees. In the darkness and the companionship, they find, if not an end to their pain, at least a kind of peace.

Those who have not suffered an unbearable loss, who have not come to Holda's court for solace, cannot follow where the Hulden go. If they try, they lose the trail after a short distance. If they pry too often, the Hulden lead them to their death off a cliff's edge.

Although they only leave the Horselberg for the Hunt, the Hulden somehow stay connected to the world outside. Some say they do so through magic, others that new Hulden bring news when they come to Holda's court. Still others believe that the Hulden commune with the dead and use the spirits of Hulden who have long since died to spy upon people both near and far. Whatever their methods, when the Hulden determine a great evil has occurred against children or those too weak to

defend themselves, they petition Holda to engage the Hunt.

At the sound of her Horn, the Hulden burst forth, raging through field and forest, sweeping over rivers and through villages and towns in their relentless pursuit. They do not stop; even if their bodies fail them, the Hulden's spirits rise up to continue the Hunt, chasing their prey to the land of the Dead where the culprit will forever pay for his crimes.

Although they don't become Hulden themselves, anyone who sees the Wild Hunt is caught up in the fervor and feels compelled to join in the carnage. Many who do never return home, and those few who manage to are never the same.

The Hulden are found in Gaul and Germania Magna.

**Hulden, living followers of Holda**

Use these stats for living followers of Holda who engage in the Hunt.

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 10 POW 18  
DEX 10 APP 8 EDU 16 SAN 45 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Dagger 50% 1D4+2+db

**Sanity Loss:** No SAN loss to see individual human members of the Hulden. 0/1D8 SAN loss to see the Hulden *en masse*. 1D3/1D10 SAN loss to see the Hulden destroy a foe.

**Hulden, spectral followers of Holda**

For the spectral followers of Holda, use the statistics for ghosts from either the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook or the *Malleus Monstrorum*.

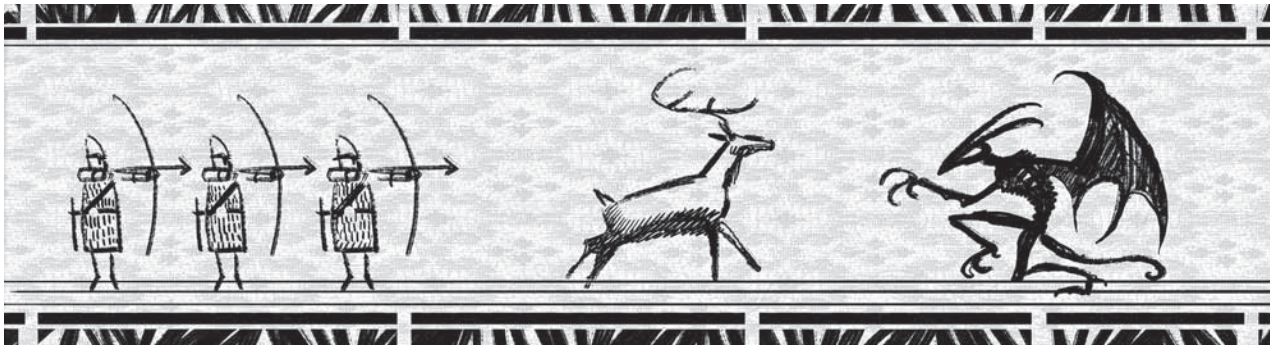
## HOLDA

Holda, also called Perchta, is feared as Mistress of the Wild Hunt, but also revered as a protector of children and the patron of spinning, childbirth, and domestic animals. Though she is known to have no children of her own, many a young mother or nursemaid has told of waking to see a silver-haired maiden rocking an infant's cradle – and fathers tell of finding the prints of a wolf the next morning, stopped short outside the child's window. If not for Holda's protection, the beast would likely have slain the infant where it slept.

Those who have seen the Wild Hunt and withstood its call tell that the Huntress rides surrounded







by the spirits of children. The Hunt itself is a fearsome thing, full of noise and chaos, but these witnesses felt only peace from the children's ghosts. Many say this urge to help these lost children was the hardest call to resist.

An ageless spirit of the Rhine, Holda watches over the people along its length from her court in the Horselberg mountain. She offers solace to those who grieve and protection to those who cannot defend themselves, but wreaks vengeance upon any who prey upon the weak.

**Holda's Horn:** Holda sounds her horn to signal the start of the Hunt. Those who hear it say it sounds like the scream of a woman during childbirth or the cry of a newborn babe. As its sound reaches their ears, they're filled with uncontrollable grief and rage, and can immediately sense their prey, even if it's hundreds of miles away. The horn is heard within a mile of Holda's court in the Horselberg mountain. Those who hear Holda's Horn lose 0/1D2 SAN.

**Joining the Hunt:** Anyone who hears Holda's Horn or sees the Hunt pass by must succeed at a **POW vs. POW** roll against Holda's POW or be compelled to join the Hunt. Those who fail must succeed at a **CON x 5** roll after one hour of running with the Hunt. After each subsequent hour, the CON modifier is reduced by one. Anyone who fails a CON roll loses 10 HP and 1 point of CON permanently. Anyone who sees the Hunt, whether or not they join, loses 0/1D8 SAN. If someone watches the Hunt catch its prey and rip it to shreds, he loses 1D3/1D10 SAN, even if he is part of the Hunt.

#### Holda, Vengeful Mistress of the Hunt, Unique Entity

STR 25 CON 40 SIZ 20 INT 30 POW 80  
DEX 25 APP 22 HP 30

Move 8

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Weapons:** Spear 100%, damage 1D10 + db

**Armor:** Holda cannot be harmed by non-magical attacks. If reduced to zero hit points, she returns to the Horselberg and cannot venture forth for three months.

**Spells:** Any as desired by the Keeper.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 points to see Holda.

## THE TEUTATES

In Pharsalia, Lucan writes about savage tribes who drown people in vats of an unknown liquid, sacrificing them to a god they call Teutates. Like so many others who came to a new land and feared what they did not understand, Lucan got it wrong. These people were not sacrifices to a god named Teutates. They *were* the Teutates, followers of Glaaki and protectors of their tribes.

Although far removed from Glaaki's lake in the Severn Valley, Celts as far away as Gaul and Germania Magna have long known of its existence. Some say it was Glaaki's call that first drew their ancestors from their homes in Asia to journey to Britannia. Others believe they encountered Glaaki only after reaching the Severn Valley, but brought his protection back to those of their people who could not complete the journey. However they came to worship the Great Old One, Glaaki has kept these tribes safe for centuries.

The Teutates are usually men, and almost exclusively warriors. Upon deciding to make the ultimate sacrifice to defend his family and his tribe, the warrior travels to Glaaki's lake in the Severn Valley. There, he fills an ancient vat with water, and then returns home. If he survives the journey, the other Teutates in his tribe tie a rope in intricate knots around his ankles and suspend him, head-first, from a tree. As the initiate proclaims his devotion both to his tribe and to Glaaki, he's lowered into the vat of



water, there to remain until the sun rises at dawn. Human nature will drive even the bravest man to struggle as water fills his lungs, but if the initiate is worthy, he will soon hear Glaaki's call and it will calm him as he drowns.

In the morning, the head of the tribe's Teutates pierces the initiate with one of Glaaki's spines. Resurrected as an undead slave to the Great Old One, he becomes a tireless guardian of his tribe, although he must remain under cover of the forest to avoid the Green Decay.

Despite the power Glaaki grants them, the Teutates have been pushed back by the overwhelming numbers of the Roman army, and many tribes have been slaughtered. Those in Britannia have fared better, even going so far as to resurrect fallen Roman soldiers to aid in their defense. In Germania Magna and Gaul, however, the Teutates have been forced to lead their people ever deeper into the regions' forests, growing their numbers slowly as they make the long journey to the Severn Valley to replenish the water necessary to their worship and defense.

The Teutates are found in Britannia, Gaul, Germania Magna, and Scythia.

Stats for Glaaki can be found in the *Malleus Monstrorum*.

**Teutates, Servants of Glaaki and protectors of their tribes**

Char.	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6x2	20-22
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	1D6	3-4
Move 5	HP 17-18	

**Weapons:** Grapple 20%, damage special  
Sword 40%, damage 1D8 + db

**Armor:** 2 points of leather

**Spells:** Retains any known when alive, plus any new spells taught by Glaaki

**Skills:** Sneak 35%

**Sanity Loss:** No Sanity point loss if human-seeming. 1/1D8 Sanity points if in living-corpse aspect; if dead from Green Decay, 1/1D10 Sanity points to see.

# ADVENTURE TWO: MORITURI TE SALUTAMUS

*Morituri Te Salutamus*  
(We Who Are About to Die Salute You)

## SYNOPSIS

It's late summer, and Rome is a hot, dusty city. Although many people are enjoying the sunny weather, the city is under siege. Young women are disappearing from Rome. At first, no one in power noticed, or cared, because the women were prostitutes or low class denizens of the Suburra. But now the palaces that cover the Palatine Hill have seen daughters and wives go missing.

For the past week, the prefect of Rome has been inundated with pleas from families who've lost members. It's not uncommon for prostitutes to wind up in the gutters or young girls from poorer families to strike out on their own, looking for wealth. In most cases, they end up prostitutes. But now women have been disappearing from the households of Equestrians and Senators, and the prefect is under a great deal of pressure to locate the missing women – at least, the wealthy ones.

## KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

A priest of Magna Mater named Gaius Mons has become convinced that he is Attis, the legendary consort of the goddess Cybele. He is looking for his lost love and kidnapping any woman who bears the slightest resemblance to her. Mons knows the women aren't Cybele but hopes that sacrificing them to the goddess will enable her to return to him.

Mons' agents are scouring Rome, kidnapping any woman who comes close to fitting the profile defined by their boss. The women are tied up and hidden in a warehouse in Ostia, awaiting transportation to Gaul.

Mons is a Latinized Gaul who loves the power that courses through the ancient city of Rome but despises the iniquities he sees among the citizens. He plans to convey the women to his estate on the Rhone where they will be sacrificed in a violent ceremony to a Dark Young. He currently has 20 women already in Gaul and another 10 at the warehouse. Several powerful Equestrians and Senators in Rome are backing Mons because he's promised to use his power to overthrow the Emperor and restore the Republic.

Mons' plan was proceeding perfectly until his men made the mistake of trying to kidnap the wife of one of his wealthy backers.

## PLAYER INFORMATION

Women have been disappearing from Rome. At first it was only a few, but rumors are circulating that almost fifty women have been taken from their beds or off the streets never to be seen again. The best locks of the wealthy are providing little defense; even women of Equestrian and Senatorial rank are disappearing in the night.

Regardless of how the investigators first came to hear of the abductions, which have been common knowledge for the last week, they are all at the Circus Maximus enjoying a day of chariot racing when the scenario begins. At this point, they do not need to know each other.

The investigators can come from any background. Some could be family members of the abducted. Others may be paid Finders, looking into the disappearance of an Equestrian's daughter. Still other investigators may be centurions or auxiliaries tasked by the prefect of Rome with putting this matter to bed.

## THE HIPPODROME

Chariots kick up thick clouds of dust as they dart around the track in the last race of the day. The crowd jumps to its feet cheering as the Green driver narrowly avoids flipping as he cuts past the Blue chariot to win the race. It's Green's third victory of the day, and anyone who wagered on that team is likely to take home a lot of money. The crowd remains standing while Claudius descends from his booth to place a wreath on the Green driver's brow.

As the crowd calms, the organs and trumpets start playing a slower, more mellow song indicating to the spectators that it's time to settle bets and go home. The setting sun casts long shadows on the bleachers, and most people start collecting their belongings so they can get home before dark.

As the investigators leave, they hear a woman scream for help. Most of the crowd pointedly looks the other way, and many reverse direction to avoid the commotion. A **Spot Hidden** check reveals a woman, dressed in the clothing of an Equestrian, racing down the street pursued by two burly men. The setting sun glints off a knife in one of the men's hands.

The investigators can intercept the men with little trouble, but have to enter a shaded side street to do so. The two men will put up a fight, but will not fight to the death. They will also try not to engage any female investigators unless there are no male investigators or the thugs incapacitate all of them.

When reduced to less than half their total hit points, the attackers try to flee. The men can lead the investigators on a merry chase through the alleys of the Suburra, but they should either escape or be killed. If the investigators manage to successfully capture the assailants, the men will refuse to talk. Each is carrying a small jar of hemlock, which he will drink at his first opportunity.

If one or both of the men are killed, the investigators can search the body. Other than the plain tunic, indicating a lower-class lifestyle, and a dagger, only a few things will interest the investigators. The attackers were well muscled and heavily scarred, as though from a lifetime of fighting. One of the men was shirtless and lays in such a way that his skirt has risen up. The first thing the investigators notice is that the man has been recently castrated. Second, they find a small branding at the base of his spine in the shape of an upper case theta (Θ). The investigators can use an **Empire** roll to determine that castration can be done for a variety of reasons, including to punish criminals, to ensure that slaves stayed away from Imperial women, and even as a religious practice. The theta is a mystery, even with a successful **Empire** roll, unless the investigator is a gladiator. A gladiator recognizes the brand to be similar to one used by one of the gladiatorial schools in Rome to keep track of its participants.

Alternatively, one of the attackers is shirtless and a successful **Spot Hidden** check by one of the investigators during the combat or chase will enable the investigator to see the theta.

If both men are killed, ignore the scene at the Hara where one of them is seen by the investigators.

The woman is grateful to the investigators and promises that her husband, the Equestrian Junius Silanus, will reward them richly for saving her life. A **Civics** roll clues the investigators in to the fact that Junius is a wealthy Equestrian who made his money importing grain from Egypt and Gaul. Rumors persist that he will become a Senator before the year is out. If asked, the woman explains that she was at the Forum Boarum shopping for fish when these two men asked her to come with them. She refused and tried to back away. One of the men pulled a knife and told her that he apparently wasn't clear – she be coming with them. At that point, she ran.

The woman, Livia, will not take no for an answer and insists that her rescuers come with her.

## AT A PALATIAL ESTATE

Livia leads the investigators through the streets of Rome and up the Palatine Hill to a large two-story construction. The whitewashed walls and tiled roof are a sight to behold, as are the armed guards and thriving garden. Even wealthy investigators are impressed by the money on display.

As the investigators enter, they pass over a seemingly new mosaic of a fierce dog with the words 'Cave Canem', or Beware of Dog, spelled out under the beast's claws. Livia guides the investigators into the atrium and asks them to wait by the fountain while she finds Junius. If they need anything, they only have to ask one of the slaves.

After about fifteen minutes, a muscular man in the robes of an Equestrian enters the atrium, followed by Livia and a floppy-eared puppy. The man looks the investigators up and down and asks if they're responsible for saving his wife. If they respond in the affirmative, he offers his thanks and 500 sesterii each, which they can pick up from one of his slaves on the way out. Junius turns to leave. He takes about five steps before pausing for a moment and then turning around.

He asks the investigators if they'd like to make a lot more money. He says that they're among the only people he knows who have had any dealings with the kidnappers and are therefore in a unique situation to save all of Rome. He offers 5,000 sesterii plus expenses to the investigators if they can stop the kidnappings once and for all. An **Insight** roll

makes it obvious that Junius has ulterior motives. If questioned about his agenda, he tells the investigators that being the man who helped stopped the spate of kidnappings will only improve his standing in the eyes of Claudius.

If the investigators describe the attackers to Junius, he cannot explain the branding or castration.

He then offers to let the investigators spend the night, since it's now dark out and the streets are even less safe after dark than they are in the light.

## NEEDED INFORMATION

When the investigators leave Junius' home, regardless of whether it is at night or the next morning, they each receive 500 sesterii for saving Livia.

As they pass the wall surrounding the estate, call for a **Listen** check. Successful investigators hear someone whistling, trying to get their attention. One of the atrium slaves is about 50' away in the shrubbery, motioning for them to approach. If the investigators ask why he's hiding, he tells them that Junius doesn't want him to leave the estate because he's only 500 sesterii away from having enough money to purchase his freedom. Of course, if the investigators could provide him with that last 500 sesterii, he could repay them with information about the men who tried to kidnap Livia.

If the investigators pay the bribe of 500 sesterii, the slave tells them that brand they described to Junius is put on slaves sold to the gladiator trainer Carnifex. Due to his proclivity for beating his charges, Carnifex was kicked out of the traditional gladiatorial schools in Rome and has since set up his own training center in the Suburra. To find Carnifex, the investigators should go to the Hara, an inn in the Suburra.

Instead of paying the bribe, the investigators can use **Intimidate** to intimidate the slave into giving them the information, or they can beat it out of him. After taking 5 HP of damage, the slave tells them about Carnifex and the brand.



## THE GLADIATORIAL SCHOOL

If the investigators recognize the brand on the kidnapers' backs as the type given to gladiators, they will most likely head to the gladiatorial school in Rome. It is only open during the day and is closed at night, so the investigators can only visit during the day. As they approach the area, they hear the sounds of combat and men grunting and groaning. Groups of men practicing their skills with wooden weapons move back and forth across a dusty forum under the watchful eye of armed trainers. If anyone asks a trainer for his boss, the man points in the direction of a portico. A short, bald man leans against a column in the shade there, watching the events. The man is Aurelius, the school master. Although a trained fighter, Aurelius is a businessman first and foremost, and a smarmy one at that.

The first thing he'll do is look the investigators over. If any of them are in good physical condition, he'll offer to train them and put them in the arena, at no cost, because the crowd always loves it when a freeman steps onto the floor. Of course, Aurelius would keep 85% of anything earned.

If asked about the branding, Aurelius is tight-lipped and instead continues to try to sell the investigators on becoming gladiators, or at least sponsoring one "for only a couple thousand sestertii." If they continue to press the issue, he starts to become agitated and vocal, yelling at the investigators. When he starts yelling, all the trainers and gladiators turn their attention to the portico.

A successful **Persuade** or **Fast Talk** roll is necessary to get Aurelius to divulge what he knows. Yes, he brands gladiators who are troublesome, but he's never used the theta. That particular symbol was used by one of his trainers, Petellius, but he no longer works for Aurelius. The school master caught Petellius skimming a percentage off the top. Although his initial reaction was to kill Petellius, in the end Aurelius agreed to let the embezzler simply leave instead. Aurelius says he felt sorry for Petellius, so he let him live. Petellius left the school about a year ago. The last Aurelius heard, Petellius was eking out a living as a sausage vendor in the Suburra.

If the investigators approach the other trainers, they all remember Petellius and are glad he left. As a group, they felt he was a sadistic monster

who took more delight in killing gladiators than in training them. If they didn't live up to his expectations, Petellius would beat them to death. This brutality earned him the nickname Carnifex, the executioner.

## THE HARA

The information provided by Junius' slave leads the investigators to the Hara, a rundown tavern in the Suburra. During the day, street urchins and dogs play in the streets. The children swarm around the investigators, using Sleight of Hand to try to lift anything of value from them. Oppose the investigators' **Spot Hidden** against the children's **Sleight of Hand** to see if the investigators can stop them.

The streets of the Suburra are filthy, narrow, cobblestone pathways barely wide enough for a wagon to slip through. The tenements that line the streets are in disrepair, and many look to be held together more by hope than nails. Falling effluent is a constant danger when walking near the tenements. The poor empty their chamber pots over the street so it will get washed into the sewers; some, however, take aim to hit passersby.

If the investigators come to the Suburra at night, prostitutes and muggers will abound, and it will feel like invading a hostile territory.

Anyone can point the investigators to the Hara, if paid a sesterce or two; otherwise they will be unable to recall exactly where it is. The squat, wooden structure is stuck between two towering tenements that both look ready to collapse.

Regardless of the time of day, the Hara is crowded with people dressed in the tunics of the lower classes. They sit at tables or stand in clusters, eating sausages and vegetables and drinking watered down wine. The investigators have to muscle their way through the mob. One sesterce will buy an investigator a plate of food and cup of wine.

No one, not even the tavern workers, will recognize the name Petellius. If the investigators ask for Carnifex however, the room grows deathly quiet. After a moment, one of the men drinking in the far corner looks the investigators up and down and says, "Some of his friends are in the back room. It'd be best if you checked with them." He jabs a thumb toward the rear of the building before going back to his wine.

If the investigators walk toward the back room, the crowd parts for them, allowing easy access. If

they try the door, they find it locked from the other side. If the investigators knock on the door, it opens outward quickly. A pair of arms shoots out of the darkness, grabs the lead investigator, and pulls him inside before pushing him down a set of stairs. The attack happens so quickly that the investigator can only avoid the grapple with a success roll against ½ his **Dodge** skill.

The rest of the investigators are free to enter. The person who grabbed the lead investigator, a well-muscled man in a loincloth, opens his arms expansively, smiles, and declares, “Let the games begin!” The investigators hear shouting and cheering from downstairs. The stone staircase is dark, but a lantern in the room at the bottom casts enough light that the investigators see their companion picked up by two more men and pushed forward into the room.

## FIGHT CLUB

The investigator who was thrown down the stairs finds himself unharmed, having landed in a pile of straw. As soon as he lands, he’s grabbed by two men and thrown forward into a ring of screaming, stomping, yelling people. A large man in nothing but a legionary skirt stands opposite the investigator. Coarse, black body hair covers the fighter, Pilosus, from head to toe. He steps forward and throws the first punch.

If the investigator tries to leave the circle, he’s pushed back in by the throng of people. If his companions try to push their way into the ring, the crowd of about 50 intoxicated Romans tells them to wait their turn. An officious looking man walks up to the investigators and asks if they’d care to place a wager on the fight. If either of the men who attacked Livia survived, a **Spot Hidden** check reveals him to be part of the crowd. A **Civics** roll tells the investigators that



PILOSUS

underground gladiatorial combats such as this are illegal.

The fight is strictly unarmed, even though the investigators are not told that. If the investigator in the ring draws a weapon, Pilosus stops and yells, “No fair, boss!” and the crowd starts booing and throwing vegetables. If the investigator then drops the weapon, the crowd cheers and Pilosus lets out a whoop – and then throws a punch. The fight continues until one of the combatants falls and doesn’t get back up. The house fighter will only stay down if knocked unconscious.

If the investigator insists on keeping the weapon, the crowd starts to disperse and the fighter goes over to a stool and sits down, calling the investigator a cheater.

If the investigators ask about Carnifex during the fight, people tell them he doesn’t like to be disturbed while a fight’s going on. If they ask about Carnifex after the fight, someone tells the investigators that he’s at the far end of the room.

## MEETING THE ORGANIZER

After the fight, the crowd mills around snacking on vegetables and dipping cups into barrels to get wine. Carnifex is at the end of the room in a shaded alcove, and the meeting can go one of two ways:

- If the investigator fought Pilosus, regardless of the outcome Carnifex is welcoming and will tell them what he knows.
- If the investigator refused to fight, Carnifex is offended and orders the investigators out of his sight.

As the investigators approach the alcove, a shape comes into focus. A corpulent man easily weighing 500 lbs. sits propped up against pillows. His stubby arms are folded across his chest, and his feet project straight out from under his bulk. He wears the tunic of a common citizen. As the investigators watch, two attractive young women emerge from the crowd and begin wiping the man’s face and brow with napkins.

If the investigator fought Pilosus, Carnifex will entertain the investigator’s questions while his slaves feed him. He will relate the following

information, if the investigators ask the appropriate questions. An **Insight** roll by the investigators, opposed against Carnifex's **Fast Talk**, will indicate that he's not telling the full truth, particularly in regards to whether or not he knows why his gladiators were chasing Livia.

- He will confirm that he uses the theta brand to mark his gladiators.
- He denies knowing why his gladiators were chasing the woman, but he doesn't force them to live in slavery like the other gladiatorial schools do. His gladiators are free to come and go as they please.
- He denies knowing why the gladiators were castrated.
- If asked about his nickname, Carnifex tells the investigator that he used to push gladiators as far as they could go, and then a little farther. Many were not strong enough to make it.
- Yes, he used to go by Petellius, but Carnifex had such a nice ring to it that he kept it.

If the investigators succeed at their **Insight** roll and either threaten Carnifex with telling the authorities about his illegal fight ring or offer a substantial bribe of 1,000 or more sestertii, the fight organizer opens up and tells the investigators that some of his gladiators were hired recently to guard a warehouse in the Forum Boarum, but he doesn't know by whom. If the investigators want to go to the warehouse, Pilosus knows where it is. The money for the gladiators was paid by a messenger whose tongue had been cut out.

Pilosus can be found enjoying wine. He's currently so drunk that he will tell the investigators everything he knows without any need for persuasion. If asked, he can tell the investigators where the warehouse is. Pilosus has never been there himself because when he was hired he was told to report to the house of a surgeon. When he arrived, the surgeon attempted to castrate him. Pilosus beat

the surgeon severely and ran back here. Pilosus can also direct the investigators to the surgeon's house.

## THE HOUSE OF THE SURGEON

According to Pilosus, the surgeon, Calpurnius Ligus, lives in Ostia. The investigators can either walk the 15-mile causeway to Rome's port or hire a carriage for 1 sesterce per traveler.

The house described by Pilosus looks like almost every other house on the street. It's a one-story stone construct with a wooden front door and shutterless windows. Anyone on the street can direct the investigators to the exact house.

A knock on the door goes unanswered. A successful roll of **STR x 4** will force the lock and push open the door. The investigators enter into an open-air atrium. The house follows the same layout as other Roman houses but is sparsely decorated. In addition, the two tabernae on the front of the house are unoccupied. One of the bedrooms has been converted into an operating room, and a blood-covered wooden table stands in the center. A stone counter on the south wall is home to the tools of the surgeon's trade. Scalpels, forceps, and other tools are laid out, some of them crusted in blood. A large, wooden chest occupies the west wall. Any investigator who opens the box loses 1/1D3 SAN when he sees that it contains the results of several hundred castrations.

The second room of interest is the tablinum. In addition to natural histories, medical treatises, and charts of accounts, with a successful **Library Use** check the investigators find a note. See Handout 1 for the note. A second **Library Use** check unearths Handout 2. A third **Library Use** check reveals Handout 3. The handouts are included at the end of



SPECTRAL HUNTER







the scenario and are not numbered. The Keeper is encouraged not to hand them out in the order they're printed. Mixing them up will force the players to try to place them in chronological order.

If the investigators snoop around the house for longer than an hour, call for **Luck** rolls. A failure indicates the surgeon returns, through the main entrance; the investigators might hear him enter, if they make **Listen** checks. If the surgeon returns and finds the investigators, he's initially surprised to find people ransacking his house. He orders them to leave, or else he'll summon the guard. The surgeon is a small, weaselly man whose face is swollen and covered in bruises. His left arm is in a sling. If forcibly questioned, he'll tell the investigators that he's been performing castrations for several weeks now and has been saving the 'waste' for an

upcoming ceremony to Magna Mater where they'll be burned in the temple by the priestesses. He assumes the men are fellow worshippers of Magna Mater seeking to hasten their ascension. If the investigators find the letters and ask who his brother is, he'll say nothing more than Vibius, his brother's praenomen, which is only used in intimate family settings and not known to people outside the family. Only if reduced to 3 hit points will the surgeon reveal his brother's full name is Vibius Junius Silanus. However, attacking and injuring a man who did not attack them first should cost the investigators a 0/1 SAN loss.

## THE WAREHOUSE

If the investigators decide to look into the warehouse, they find it off the Forum Boarum, just as Pilosus said. Whether they go during the day or night, the events transpire the same way. Approached from the street, the warehouse is just one among many. It's a tall, rectangular building made of tufa with windows cut high in the walls, 20 feet above the street. Double wooden doors large enough to drive a four horse wagon through front it. Two men stand watch outside the doors, lazing casually against the wall. If the

investigators move to the back of the warehouse or approach from a rear alley, the building is basically the same, except the door is a smaller, man-sized door watched by only one guard.

A 200-sesterce bribe is enough to convince any guard to look the other way. Alternatively, a guard or guards could be overwhelmed by the investigators, but doing so would most likely attract the attention of the guards on the other end of the building. Since their induction into the Cult of Magna Mater, with its requisite castration, sexual ploys will have little effect on the men watching the doors.

Once inside the warehouse, the investigators find a barren building with six amphorae of olive oil in one corner, three crates containing figs, and two statues of women in sheer clothing. If it's night when they come to the warehouse, the inside will

be pitch black, and the investigators will need to supply their own light source. As the investigators move about the warehouse, call for **Spot Hidden** checks. A success indicates that the investigators notice heavy scratch marks on a couple of stones near the amphorae. If the investigators move the amphorae, a second **Spot Hidden** check uncovers handholds cut into one of the flagstones. Call for **Listen** checks. If more than one investigator succeeds, half of the successful group hears movement and mumbled talking coming from under the flagstone. The other half hears scuffing coming from behind them. If only one investigator succeeds at the **Listen** check, he hears the scuffing noise.

Anyone who hears the scuffing noise and turns around sees a large, hideous creature hovering over the ground as it moves toward the investigators. Those who see this monster lose 1/1D6+2 SAN. The spectral hunter will prefer to remain invisible, but if the investigators have a fish-oil lamp, the creature is visible whenever it's in the lamp's range. The spectral hunter only recognizes its summoner, Gaius Mons, and will attack anyone who is not accompanied by him. The sounds of combat will draw the guards' attention, who will investigate. When they see the spectral hunter, they will need to make SAN checks, too, and will be just as likely to attack it as they are the investigators.

## OPENING THE DOORWAY

After defeating the spectral hunter and the guards, the investigators can open the trapdoor in the floor by lifting the flagstone. Two investigators will have to succeed at **STRx3** checks to heave the slab out of the way. A rickety wooden ladder descends into darkness. Occasionally, a flicker of light illuminates the stone floor ten feet below.

Once down the ladder, the investigators find themselves in a tunnel with a stone floor, ceiling, and walls that go straight for ten feet before turning sharply right. Some sort of guttering light beyond the corner illuminates the hallway. With a successful **Listen** check, the investigators hear scraping and mumbling from ahead.

Around the corner at the end of the hall, the investigators find a fifteen-foot by fifteen-foot room lit by torches. Ten women of various ages and nationalities have been gagged and bound; some are

dragging themselves across the floor, trying to get their feet under them so they can stand. When they see the investigators, the women cower and back into the corners. If the investigators try to touch them, they start thrashing around. An investigator who reaches for one of the women and fails a **Luck** roll could get kicked in the head or shins—or worse.

A **Persuade** or **Fast Talk** roll can be used to calm the women down enough for the investigators to untie them.

## FREED CAPTIVES

Each woman tells a similar story, and as one is speaking the others will talk over her and interject details. Each was ambushed by two or three rough-looking men armed with knives. After being beaten, the women were tied up, blindfolded, gagged, and dragged off. Once they were tossed down here, the blindfold was removed by a thin, bald man dressed in dark robes who calls himself Attis. He brings the women food and water once a day and tells them how they are going to help destroy the Empire. The women agree that Attis is not a native of Rome and speaks with an accent one might expect from a native of Britain or Gaul. The women were never molested, but they were beaten if they spoke out.

When they first arrived, twenty other women were in the room, but they were taken away a while ago. The women think it's been two days because Attis has visited them twice since then, but being trapped in a cave underground they're not sure.

An **Empire** roll is sufficient to tell the investigators all they need to know about Attis. In the early days of the world, the goddess Cybele fell in love with a mortal shepherd with that name. Unfortunately, Attis' fragile mind could not comprehend being loved so deeply by a goddess, and he fell into insanity. Attis then castrated himself and committed suicide. In Rome, Cybele is worshipped as the goddess Magna Mater. Her worship is uncommon but secretive. Male followers of the goddess are castrated, and on most holy days only women are allowed in the temple. A temple to Magna Mater is located near the Forum Romanum.

The women are eager to return home. The longer the investigators question them, the more agitated and snappish they become.

If the investigators decide to free the women and then wait for Gaius to return, he won't. If he sees

the dead guards and destroyed spectral hunter, he will send ten of his guards into the tunnel to make sure everything is clear and then return to his estate in Gaul to prepare for the ritual.

## VISIT THE CULT OF THE GREAT MOTHER

Based on the story told by the women, the investigators may want to visit a temple to Magna Mater. The nearest is at the Forum Romanum. It's a large tufa building with a columned entrance and a domed roof.

As the investigators near the door to the temple, a woman steps from behind the colonnade and raises her hand telling them, in Greek, to stop. If they do not respond, she switches to Latin. She asks them their business at the temple.

If the investigators ask about Attis, the priestess, Diana, claims not to know him. A successful **Insight** roll by an investigator indicates she's hedging. A **Persuade** roll made against ½ the investigator's skill level convinces Diana that she should reveal more, and she tells the investigators that, yes, she knows the man. He's a galli, or priest in the Cult of Magna Mater. Originally from Gaul, he only recently came to Rome and goes by the name Gaius. Diana does not know where he is staying.

If the investigators ask why the man told the captive women that his name was Attis but Diana knows him as Gaius, the priestess explains that he chose Attis as his galli name within the cult of Magna Mater. He would use that name when performing official duties for Magna Mater.

If the investigators ask Diana about the kidnapped women, she denies knowing anything about it. An **Insight** check doesn't suggest she's lying.

If the investigators do not elect to enter the temple, a



**Listen** check reveals male voices chanting, "Io, Io, Cybele. Io, Io, Magna Mater." If asked, Diana tells the investigators that they could not understand the intricacies of the worship of Magna Mater.

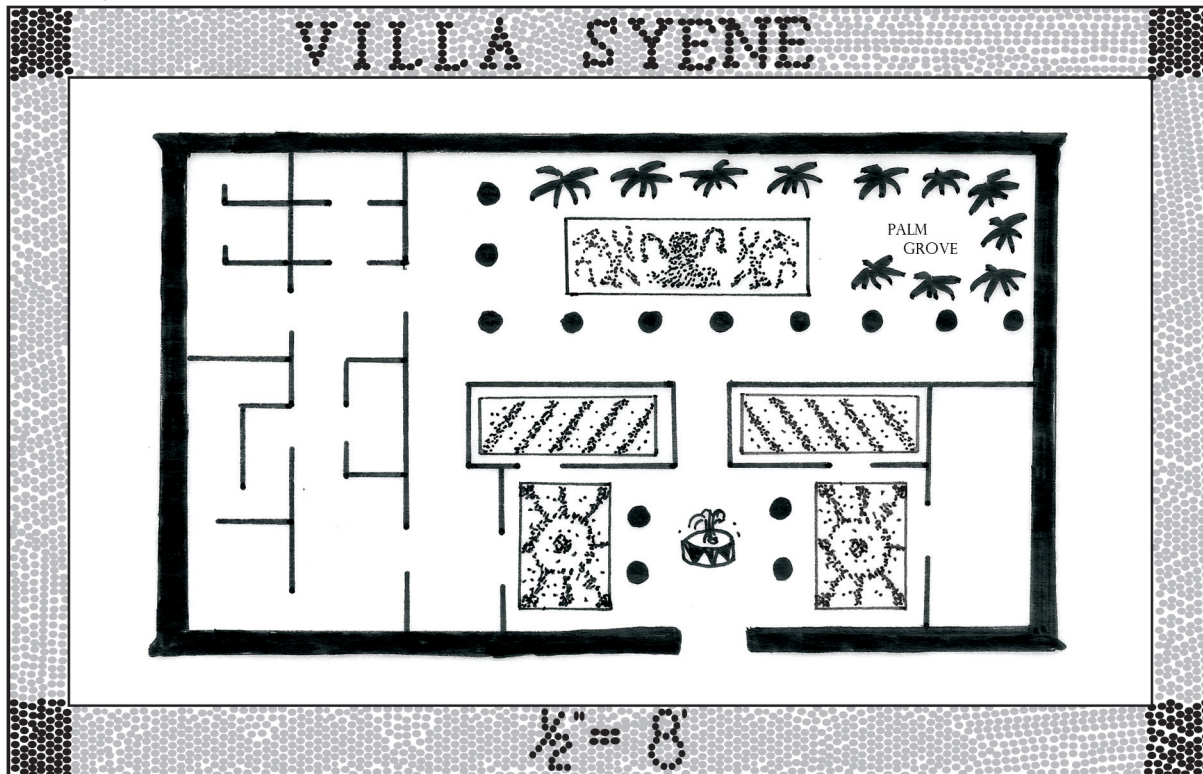
## ENTERING THE INNER SANCTUM

If the investigators want to enter the temple, Diana informs them that women are free to enter, but uncastrated males may not, lest they defile the sanctity of the temple.

If female investigators choose to enter, or a male investigator decides to become an initiate, Diana leads them inside. Any male who enters the temple will be directed from the marble vestibule down a hallway to an alcove that houses a statue of Magna Mater carved out of black, reflective stone. Magna Mater appears as a many-headed, many-breasted creature with no easily definable shape, but an investigator can see his past, present, and every desire reflected in the stone. Seeing the statue results in a 1D3/1D6 SAN loss. As the male investigators stand there, one man per investigator emerges from the shadows and grapples him, forcing the investigator to the ground. Another man with long, black hair dressed in dark brown robes forces a drink down the investigator's throat, cooing that it will make the sacrifice less painful. If the investigator spits the drink back up or turns his head, the man simply states that the drink was for the investigator's benefit, not his. He then pulls out a wickedly curved knife and lifts the investigator's tunic. The investigator will need to make a STR check to escape the grapple and avoid being castrated.

Any female investigator or castrated male can pass through the large double doors that separate the marble vestibule from the interior. The inside looks like a massive, natural cave lit by torches and fires in braziers. The walls are rough hewn, and the humidity is palpable. Twenty naked, castrated men bearing reeds stand at the far end of the temple, 300 yards away, facing a larger version of the statue from the vestibule. They chant, "Io, Io, Cybele. Io, Io, Magna Mater," and wave the reeds. Seeing the statue either for the first or second time results in a 1D3/1D6 SAN loss. As the investigators stand there, several leopards walk toward them and weave among them.





If the investigators don't attack or otherwise act in a threatening manner, they are free to leave the Inner Sanctum at any time. If, however, they try to force their way in or, once inside, attack people or try to deface the statue in any way, they will be attacked by all the worshippers and the leopards.

## A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

The letters in the surgeon's house mentioned Mancinus Sura, a colleague of the mysterious Vibius. A **Civics** roll indicates that Mancinus Sura is a very wealthy member of the Senatorial class and lives in a villa about half a day's ride north of Rome. If the investigators do not have horses or other transportation of their own, they can rent a mule team, wagon, and muleskinner for 20 sester-tii per person, round trip. Because of bandits, the muleskinner refuses to be on the road at night. He will leave in the morning, and then spend the night at the villa.

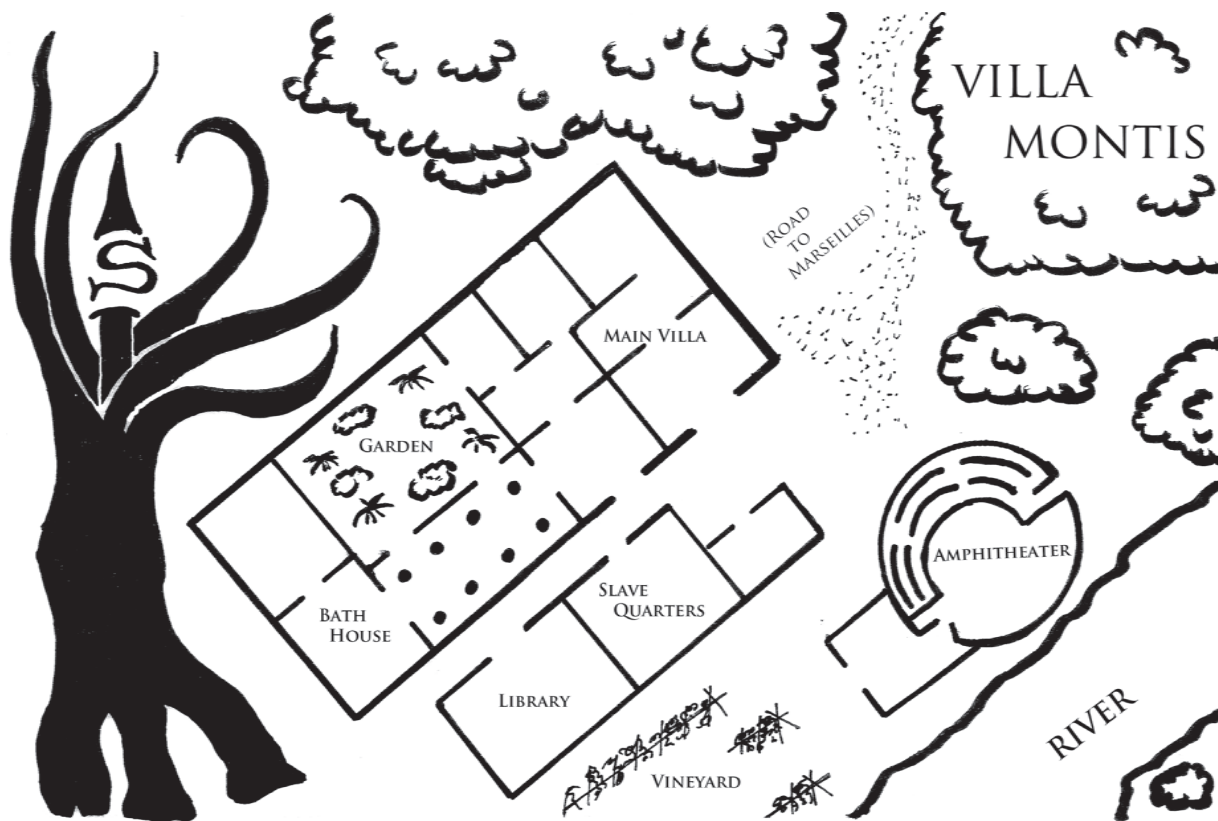
Regardless what time they leave the city, the Via Triumphalis, the road leading north from Rome, is packed. The journey is slow and tedious, but uneventful.

As the players near the villa, call for **Spot Hidden** checks. Successful investigators notice

tendrils of thick, black smoke rising into the air. When they crest the last hill, the investigators see that the villa is fine, but a large, amorphous shape is burning. About 100 legionaries stand around the villa and the fire. Investigators notice that five people dressed in tunics are being tied up. Ten dead legionaries are being loaded into a wagon.

A centurion named Valerius Ahenobarbus, his rank evident by his plumed helmet, walks toward the investigators as they disembark from the wagon. He gruffly asks why they've come to the villa, and then proceeds to interrogate the investigators for over an hour. If the investigators tell the truth, have Ahenobarbus roll against his **Insight** skill. If he succeeds, he believes them. If the investigators lie, oppose their **Fast Talk** against his **Insight**. If they succeed, they pull a fast one on Ahenobarbus; if he succeeds, the centurion realizes the investigators are lying and arrests them for being conspirators against the Emperor.

If the investigators convince Ahenobarbus they are not conspirators, he takes down their names anyway and explains that Mancinus Sura and several other wealthy Romans were conspiring against the Emperor in an attempt to restore the Republic. The conspirators are being taken back to Rome for trial and execution. If asked about the burning shape, Valerius tells the investigators that Sura



had an elephant that attacked the troops. The cohort lost several men, and many more were traumatized by the massive beast, but in the end the legionaries killed the elephant. Ahenobarbus' men were burning the carcass to keep it from rotting and attracting scavengers.

If the investigators look at the conspirators, they notice Junius Silanus among them. If the investigators talk to him, he only whispers one thing—*“Beware of the dog.”*

## THE VILLA

The villa is one of the most expansive and richly decorated residences the investigators have ever seen. Every floor is covered with mosaics depicting historical scenes like the fall of Troy or the defeat of Carthage. Each wall is adorned with frescos depicting centaurs, the Minotaur, and other fantastical creatures. The tablinum, or office, features the same frescoed walls and a small desk, which is devoid of paper. In the middle of the villa a sumptuous garden is resplendent with vegetables and flowers. A mosaic in the center shows a fierce barking dog with the words *Cave Canem* below it. If the investigators have not received the clue from Junius, or do

not think of it on their own, call for an **Idea** roll. Success indicates that the middle of a garden is an odd place for such a mosaic.

Close examination of the mosaic reveals that the center tiles are not mortared in place, but are merely set there. Beneath the tiles, the investigators find a small recess containing an iron box that holds several notes written in Latin. See handouts 4, 5, 6, and 7 for the notes. Once again, the keeper is encouraged to hand the papers out in a random order.

The legionaries have removed anything else even remotely incriminating.

By the time the investigators finish reading the letters, the elephant carcass in front of the villa has been reduced to ashes and the legionaries have left for the journey back to Rome.

## GETTING TO GAUL

At this point, the investigators will likely want to go to Gaul to track down Gaius Mons. While they could hire the muleskinner at 20 sestertii a person per day to carry them there, it would take several weeks to complete the trip. Returning to Ostia and hiring a ship would be much faster, as an **Idea** roll

reveals. Sailing by ship will take 3 days and cost 75 sestertii per investigator.

The Mediterranean is relatively calm during the journey, and the ship makes good time, but any investigator who has never been on a ship before will need to make a **CON x 5** roll or be seasick for the duration of the journey. All physical skills for an investigator are at ½ normal skill percentages when seasick.

## MASSILIA

Massilia is a coastal city filled with gleaming white buildings, the smell of fish, and Roman legions. Not only is a legion garrison located in Massilia, but many retired legionaries choose to live there as well.

The luxuries of Massilia, including very nice baths, await investigators who want to lounge and relax. Any investigator who asks around for Gaius Mons or a route to his villa should make a **Luck** roll. Failure indicates that an agent of Mons has overheard and reports the investigators' activities to Mons.

A successful **Fast Talk** or **Persuade** roll gets the location of Mons' estate out of a resident, as well as directions. Mons lives a two-hour walk northeast of the city.

One of the people the investigators talks to will mention that "a big religious festival is getting underway at the villa." The man, a farmer, tells the investigators that he was near the villa a couple days ago and overheard two men talking. One of the men mentioned that the ground would be prepared in time for the sacrifice on II Nones August. That's today.

If the investigators seek out the legion garrison in Massilia to ask for assistance, and can provide proof of Mons' illicit activities such as the letters from his Roman villa or the notes from the surgeon's house, the centurion in charge of the garrison takes their complaint very seriously. He tells the investigators that the legions are currently in the field, but he will dispatch a runner; they should arrive at the villa late tomorrow or early on the second day to investigate.

If the investigators don't have proof, the centurion promises to

investigate when the legions return. A successful **Insight** roll indicates that the man isn't concerned and likely won't follow up. A successful **Persuade**, **Status**, or **Fast Talk** can convince the centurion to take the matter more seriously and to dispatch a runner to the legionaries in the field.

## THE ESTATE

The estate is completely encircled by thick, dark woods, and Mons has guards who are members of the Cult of Magna Mater posted in their shadows. If the investigators failed their **Luck** roll, the guard will be doubled and will be actively searching for the investigators instead of idly biding their time. **Sneak** checks will be required to get past the guards. Between Massilia and the estate, the investigators will have to sneak past three sets of four guards.

From a distance, it's clear that Mons' estate rivals Sura's in size, but not luxury. A small amphitheater has been built near the villa, an uncharacteristic feature. As the investigators approach, they hear roaring, yelling, and screaming coming from it.

Walking into the amphitheater, the investigators are greeted by the sight of a large, mobile, tree-like creature with goat hooves attacking two lions. The big cats are desperate to escape, but all exits are barred. Investigators lose 1D3/1D10 SAN for seeing the dark young. At the far end of the amphitheater, a slim, bald man in dark robes claps gleefully at the carnage. He's surrounded by four armed guards. Another forty people occupy seats in the amphitheater, leaving a large area empty.

The dark young makes short work of the lions and stands in the center of the field restlessly. Mons rises and addresses the crowd, telling them that now is the time they've been waiting for. The next sacrifice will bestow upon him enough power to defeat the Emperor and ensure his place as undisputed master of the Empire. Mons slams a hammer against an iron drum. One of the gates opens, and 4 armed men lead 30 scared women into the dusty arena, then retreat and bar the gate.





The dark young tears into the women, killing one instantly. The others start screaming and running around the arena, trying to get away. If the investigators jump into the arena, the dark young will remain focused on the women until the investigators inflict damage. Once injured, the dark young focuses its attention on its attackers.

If the investigators defeat the dark young and turn toward Gaius' booth, they see him running away. At the same time, the gates to the arena open and four guards rush the investigators. At the keeper's discretion, the women may attack these guards, taking inspiration from the investigators. Otherwise, the women swarm through the open gateway to freedom.

Once out of the arena, a **Track** roll can tell the investigators that Gaius Mons slipped into the forest. Once again, at the keeper's discretion, some women may elect to help the investigators, armed with weapons taken from the guards.

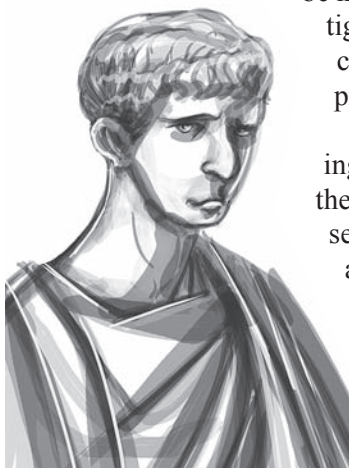
After a half hour of chasing through the woods, the investigators find Mons in a small cave, his four guards posted outside. Chanting can be heard coming from inside. Gaius Mons will not leave the cave, which he views as his own personal temple to Magna Mater, but he will fight back with every spell he has.

## EPILOGUE

With the defeat of Mons and his cohorts, the villa is now ownerless. The investigators can claim it as a reward or sell the slaves, art, and supplies. Although the villa still belongs to Mons, or to his heirs if he

was killed, legal action can be instigated by the investigators in Rome to lay claim to it, if they can prove Mons' crimes.

A hasty ransacking of the villa will net the investigators 2,000 sesterii in cash, plus artwork and slaves that can be sold for another 7,000 sesterii. The artwork, primarily statues, weighs over 1,000 libra, so the investigators will need a



JUNIUS

vehicle to transport it. Luckily, a wagon is nearby, but one of the wheels is broken. A **Repair** roll will get the wagon rolling again.

Another source of income could be Mons' library. He had an extensive library, consisting of 125 scrolls. While none of them are Mythos tomes, several works might interest the investigators, including the *Pharmaceutria* and Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*. With the right buyer, which requires networking among the educated in Rome, the entire library can be sold for 4,000 sesterii.

Gaius Mons also had a copy of the Greek *Sapienta Magorum* on him in the arena for use during the ritual. When he fled, he took it with him. If he was killed, the investigators can lay claim to the scroll.

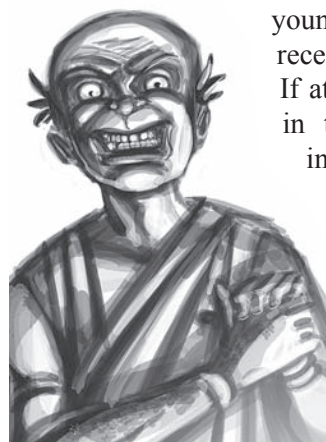
After the surviving investigators have been in Rome for a few days, they receive an invitation to the house of Junius Silanus. If they answer the invitation, they find Junius and his wife, Livia, in the atrium talking to Valerious Ahenobarbus. As a slave announces the investigators' arrival and leads them into the atrium, all three people look up and stand. Junius informs the investigators that he was asked by the prefect to infiltrate the Republican group because his brother, the surgeon Calpurnius, was a member. The prefect wanted to play on Calpurnius' fondness for Junius. The equestrian then rewards the investigators with 5,000 sesterii and offers his sincerest thanks. Valerious also offers the investigators his thanks on behalf of the city of Rome and tells them that should they ever need the assistance of the legions, they only need to ask.

## RESOLUTION

Any investigator who survived the combat with the dark young, the guards, and Mons receives 1D10 SAN points.

If at least 20 of the women in the arena survive, the investigators receive an additional 1D8 SAN.

Encountering the Mythos creatures, and the men and women who serve them, nets the investigators 5% to their **Cthulhu Mythos** skill.



GAIUS MONS



CARNIFEX



CALPURNIUS



VALERIOUS

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

**Guards – Gaius Mons' army of castrated gladiator wannabes.**

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 17  
DEX 13 APP 11 EDU 9 SAN 85 HP 13

**Idea** 50 %

**Luck** 85 %

**Know** 45 %

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Longsword 50%, damage 1D8+db

**Skills:** Spot Hidden 40%

**Junius – betrayed Republican**

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 12  
DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 14 SAN 85 HP 14

**Idea** 75 %

**Luck** 85 %

**Know** 70 %

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Dagger 55%, 1D4+db

**Skills:** Civics 65%; Empire 56%; Fast Talk 45%;  
Insight 55%

**Carnifex – obese master of an underground gladiatorial school**

STR 18 CON 17 SIZ 20 INT 13 POW 11  
DEX 7 APP 6 EDU 10 SAN 55 HP 18

**Idea** 65 %

**Luck** 55 %

**Know** 50 %

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Dagger 50%, 1D4+db;

Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db

**Skills:** Art (Oratory) 35%; Empire 40%; Insight  
40%

**Pilosus – hairy gladiator**

STR 17 CON 17 SIZ 16 INT 8 POW 9  
DEX 15 APP 10 EDU 6 SAN 45 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 85%, 1D3+db;  
Grapple 65%

**Calpurnius – emasculating surgeon**

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 13  
DEX 10 APP 8 EDU 16 SAN 65 HP 14

**Idea** 80 %

**Luck** 65 %

**Know** 80 %

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Weapons:** Dagger 50% 1D4+2+db

**Skills:** First Aid 65%; Insight 35%; Medicine 60%

**Valerious – centurion of the legions**

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 13  
DEX 14 APP 13 EDU 12 SAN 65 HP 13

**Idea** 70 %

**Luck** 65 %

**Know** 60 %

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Gladius 50%, damage 1D6+db;  
Spear 50%, damage 1D8+1+db

**Armor:** 8 point scale + large shield

**Skills:** Civics 45%; Empire 65%; Insight 35%;  
Tactics 70%

**Legionaries – backbone of the Empire**

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 13  
DEX 14 APP 13 EDU 12 SAN 65 HP 13

**Idea** 70 %

**Luck** 65 %

**Know** 60 %

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Gladius 50%, damage 1D6+db;

Spear 50%, damage 1D8+1+db

**Armor:** 8 point scale + large shield

**Gaius Mons – insane priest of Magna Mater**

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 17 POW 18

DEX 10 APP 12 EDU 11 SAN 25 HP 16

**Idea** 85 %

**Luck** 90 %

**Know** 55 %

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Weapons:** none

**Skills:** Civics 30%; Cthulhu Mythos 35%; Empire 45%; Insight 45%; Latin 45%; Library Use 75%; Listen 45%; Occult 70%; Persuade 80%; Potions 35%; Write Latin 45%

**Spells:** Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Become Spectral Hunter, Bind Dark Young, Chant of Thoth, Look to the Future, Mesmerize, Shriveling, Summon Dark Young, any others the Keeper desires

**Dark Young – servant of Shub-Niggurath**

STR 44 CON 17 SIZ 44 INT 14 POW 17

DEX 16 HP 30

**Move** 8

**Damage Bonus:** +4D6

**Weapons:** Tentacle 80%, damage db+STR drain; Trample 40%, damage 2D6+db

**Armor:** Hand-to-hand weapons do normal damage; ranged weapons do 1 point of damage, unless they impale, which does 2 points of

damage. Attacks dependant on heat, blast, corrosion, electrical charge, or poisoning have no effect

**Sanity Loss:** 1D3/1D10 Sanity points to see a dark young.

**Lions – victims of Gaius Mons' depravity**

STR 19 CON 10 SIZ 16 POW 13 DEX 19

HP 14

**Move** 10

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Weapons:** Bite 40%, damage 1D10; Claw 60%, damage 1D6+db; Ripping 80%; damage 2D6+db

**Armor:** 2 points of fur

**Leopards – pets of Magna Mater**

STR 16 CON 10 SIZ 15 POW 11 DEX 19

HP 13

**Move** 12

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Bite 30%, damage 1D10; Claw 50%, damage 1D6+db; Rake 80%, damage 2D6+db

**Armor:** 1 point of fur

**Spectral Hunter – monstrous guardian**

STR 21 CON 8 SIZ 18 INT 13 POW 17

DEX 14 HP 13

**Move** 8

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Pincer 50%, damage 1D6+db; Bite 30%, damage 3D6

**Armor:** 1 point of hide

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D6+2 Sanity points to see a spectral hunter.



LEGIONNAIRE





# CULTARUM AFRICAE

*Africa is the frontier of the Empire. The ebb and flow of barbarians from outside the borders continually bring in new ideas and beliefs. Rome might assimilate some of them, but not all.*

## TANIT

Ancient Phoenicians traveling through Egypt discovered a box that contained the Shining Trapezohedron, an artifact of the Yuggothian mi-go. Mesmerized by its non-Euclidean angles, they carried it reverently to the edge of the Mediterranean, where they founded the city of Carthage. Placing the Shining Trapezohedron in the largest temple in the city's center, they worshipped it as Tanit, Lady of the Harvest and Defender of Ba'al Hammon. In time, Tanit's worshippers outnumbered even those of the Lord of the Two Horns.

Much like Ba'al Hammon's cults, Tanit's devotees honor their goddess with sacrifices. Goats, bulls, and other animals are sufficient for everyday rituals, but true honor demands the sacrifice of children. Near-pitch-darkness marks Tanit's rituals, with even torches extinguished at each ceremony's start.

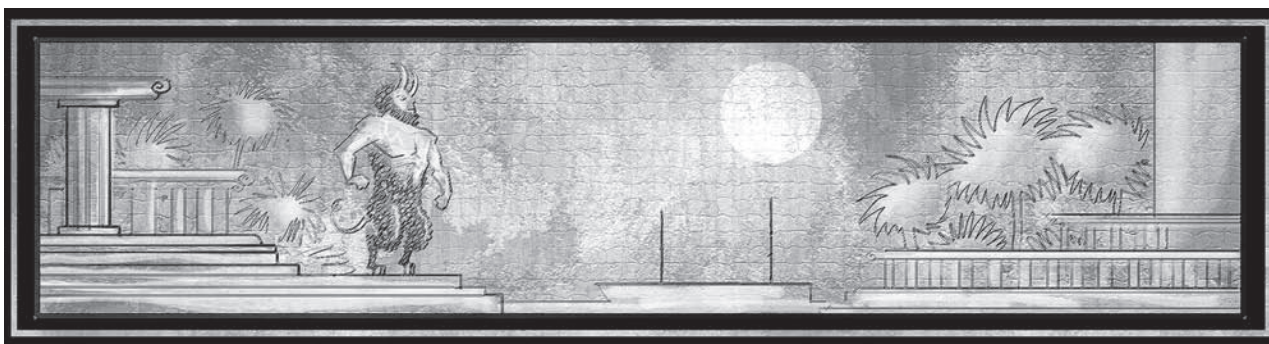
In their constant struggle with Ba'al Hammon against Mot, followers of Tanit rely on the Shining Trapezohedron as a tool of divination, ascribing meaning to the glimpses it gives them of far-off worlds. In times of great need, the relic summons the Haunter of the Dark to defend Tanit's worshippers against the Lord of Death and his cultists.

When the Romans attacked Carthage during the Third Punic War, followers of Tanit attempted to summon the Haunter of the Dark to defend them. However, the Romans set fire to Tanit's temple during the ritual, forcing the creature back to its native plane. The Romans then re-claimed the relic, returning it to the ruins in Egypt where the Phoenicians originally found it. Tanit's cult still thrives, however, the image of the Shining Trapezohedron forever burning in the minds of her worshippers.

**Cult:** Despite the best attempts of the Romans, Tanit is still worshipped in Africa Proconsularis and Numidia, especially in Carthage. Other cults to Tanit are found in Egypt and among the nomadic tribes outside of Roman control.

**Glance into the Future:** A worshipper who gazes into the Shining Trapezohedron for five rounds is offered a glimpse of his future that shows either his demise or visions of far off worlds.

**Mind Blast:** If a non-worshipper attempts to gaze into the Shining Trapezohedron, a burst of power flies from the object to the viewer, causing 1D6 points of Sanity loss.



### Tanit, Avatar of the Shining Trapezohedron

STR N/A CON N/A SIZ 4 INT N/A

POW 60 DEX N/A HP N/A

Move N/A

Damage Bonus: N/A

Weapons: N/A (but see “Mind Blast,” above)

Armor: Immune to non-magical attacks.

Spells: N/A.

Sanity Loss: N/A.

Territory: Egypt and Northern Africa (Numidia and Africa Proconsularis).

## VAGI

The Black Wind has plagued the deserts of North Africa for centuries, contributing to its desertification and the disappearance of many tribes and settlements. When it appears, it brings famine, plague, and destruction – and death at the hands of the Vagi for anyone who tries to escape.

The Vagi were originally one of the Tuareg tribes that wandered the deserts south of the Mediterranean coast. When the Phoenicians came, the tribes moved further inland, only to be displaced yet again by the arrival of the Greeks and, later, the Romans.

It was while in these trackless deserts that a Tuareg tribe was overcome by the Black Wind. As the tempest howled around them, whipping sand hundreds of feet in the air and revealing demonic faces in the roiling clouds, the members of the tribe cowered and prepared to die.

Sand tore flesh from their bodies, and they dropped to their knees, swearing undying servitude to the demons within the wind if only the creatures would spare their lives. Whether or not the Black Wind heard – let alone understood – the supplicants, it soon dissipated. Those Tuareg left standing abandoned their dead and headed into the desert, horribly scarred and forever changed.

Abandoning the name Tuareg, these survivors called themselves Vagi and dedicated their lives – and the lives of their children and their children’s children – to the Black Wind. They believe the Black Wind has tasked them with following it across the desert, and they surround the villages and settlements in its path, cutting down those who try to flee the Black Wind’s devastation. The Vagi revel in the shadow of the whirling sand, as chaotic and destructive as the Wind itself.

Although it’s rare for anyone not of the Vagi to survive the Black Wind, when someone does, he is cared for by the Vagi until he is well enough to travel. Once healed, the survivor is given the option of joining the Vagi in their devotion to the Black Wind. Those who accept are welcomed into the tribe. Anyone who refuses is tied to a stake in the middle of the destroyed settlement and the skin flayed from his body. The scars left by the Black Wind are marks of honor, and the Vagi will not suffer anyone to wear them who will not devote his life to their masters.

When children of the Vagi turn thirteen, they must stand alone in the midst of the Black Wind. If they survive, they are given weapons and allowed to marry, procreate, and participate as full members of the tribe. If they die, their bodies are abandoned along with those of the villagers who fell during the Black Wind’s onslaught.

Although the Vagi can’t summon the Black Wind, they sense where it will appear next and race across the desert to be there when it does. The Tuareg have learned to fear the sight of the Vagi as a portent of the Black Wind’s arrival. The Romans believe the destruction is wrought by the Vagi themselves and have taken to using the tribe’s name as a derogatory term for any of the nomads wandering the African desert.

Stats for the Black Wind are found in the *Malleus Monstrorum*.





## ADVENTURE THREE: BACCHANALIA

### BACCHANALIA

Although supposedly destroyed by Rome, a cult in Carthage has resumed practicing its ancient rites.

### KEEPER'S INFORMATION

When Rome's rulers razed Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War, they believed they destroyed not only the city but also the child-sacrificing, debauched cult of Ba'al Hammon located there. However, when Augustus rebuilt the city to punish Utica for siding with his enemies, the followers of Ba'al Hammon returned to their ancient grotto under the remains of the cult's former open-air sanctuary.

The new leader of the cult, Vispania, is holding a bacchanalia to celebrate its re-emergence. While

female cultists employed at brothels have been implanting Carthaginian citizens with seeds of *gof'nn hupadgh*, others have been stealing infants to be sacrificed during the revelry.

The intent of the bacchanalia is not to summon Ba'al Hammon but to announce the return of the cult as a political power in the city. The investigators will have to stop the cult and, if possible, rescue the children.

### INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

The scenario begins at the ninth hour during *cena*, a Roman dinner. If the investigators are guests of the host, Equestrian Titus Domitius Orestes, they can be upper class members of Carthaginian society invited because of who they are, not because they know Orestes well.

Alternatively, investigators could have been invited to the dinner because they helped Orestes in the past. Even if they aren't upper class, they can be rewarded for their help with a lavish meal. Other investigators might be household slaves of Orestes or his guests, guards hired for protection, actors or



## HOW DID THAT FIT IN THERE?

Players might wonder how a gof'nn hupadgh can fit inside a human. The short answer is that Mythos magic is not constrained by physics and whatever is needed for the plot can be accomplished in short order. If players require a more detailed answer, however, explain that once a gof'nn hupadgh seed is implanted, it begins to consume the host's internal organs, using its own nascent organs to supply necessary functions to the host. Once the gof'nn hupadgh reaches about three-quarters of full growth, it breaks free.

At this point, it has some limitations. It does not know any languages, but can learn them quickly. It also has no knowledge of what it is supposed to do. Its initial instinct is to reach a wooded area where it will attempt to commune with Shub-Niggurath or one of her avatars.

musicians who perform before the dinner begins, or prostitutes brought in to indulge the guests.

## DINNER

The investigators are at Orestes' in-city residence, taking part in a lavish *cena* to celebrate the victory of one of Orestes' chariots in a recent race. Six couches and two tables fill the triclinium. The pre-dinner entertainment is a reenactment of the founding of Carthage, complete with a scene depicting Dido falling on Aeneas' sword. During dinner, poets recite Virgil's *Eclogues* and native Africans dance around the tables. Guards, slaves, performers, and other non-diners are free to move about the room throughout the evening. All of the wealthy guests are arrogant and self-serving, typical of upper-class Romans.

Five different conversations take place in the room. Some are red herrings, while others are entry points into the plot. Red herrings have been marked with an asterisk. Details on investigating the dif-

ferent conversations will follow the scene Coming Out.

- **Chariot Victory.** Orestes spends a great deal of time talking about his most recent chariot race victory, his tenth in a row. Despite the good fortune, other teams are not taking the defeats well. One horse was found dead this morning, of either poison or witchcraft. Orestes has doubled both his personal guards and stable guards.\*
- **Prostitutes.** Caeso Norbanus Asiaticus, a local merchant who imports goods from Egypt and Cyrene, is talking about the prostitutes he's visited lately. A braggadocio, he spends the evening one-upping everyone.
- **Basilisk.** Lucius Claudius Marcellus, Tribuni Angustclavii of the Roman Legion in Carthage, is telling eager listeners that one of his men was attacked by a basilisk while on patrol west of the city. The man was badly burned and is currently in the garrison receiving treatment. Somehow, Marcellus seems more upset that the legionary failed to kill the basilisk than that he was injured.\*
- **Grain.** Quintus Scribonius Caecus owns large grain farms outside the city. He spends the dinner complaining about the increased demand for grain from Rome. He thinks something should be done to curb the demand. He has to export so much grain that he can't meet his local commitments. Rome was never this greedy during the Republic.\*
- **Children.** Vispania, wife of local magistrate Gaius Marius Rufinus, is vociferously complaining about her slave Cybele, who spends more time moping around the estate than working since her baby disappeared. Rufinus thinks the child likely died and Cybele hasn't told anyone yet. Vispania says that she doesn't care what happened to the baby; it would have just become another household slave, and right now she needs the one she has to do her work.

## COMING OUT

As *lena*, or the main course of fish and vegetables, winds down, slaves come in and remove the tables. Before they return with the tables for *secundae mensae*, or the dessert course, Asiaticus grabs his stomach and moans loud enough for everyone to hear. He slumps off the couch and starts writhing on the ground. His stomach and torso burst open, showering anyone within five feet in gore. Everyone who witnesses this scene loses 1/1D6 SAN, regardless of whether or not they wind up covered in blood.

A squat, bestial creature with goat-like back legs, human arms, and short horns on top of its humanoid head stands amidst Asiaticus' remains. With a successful **Occult** roll, investigators think they are dealing with a satyr. If investigators have **Cthulhu Mythos** and have encountered Shub-Niggurath, they can use that skill instead to attempt to determine the creature is really a *gof'nn hupadgh*, a servant of Shub-Niggurath which gave rise to the satyrs of myth and legend.

The creature attempts to run from the villa and escape into the city. Non-player character guards are too stunned to do anything. Player characters can attempt to fight the beast, which will defend itself if cornered. If it escapes, it tries to lose any pursuers by leaping from building to building. Investigators

## VOLUBILIS



*Volubilis*, or oleander, is a highly toxic evergreen shrub with fragrant white, pink, or purple flowers and whorled leaves. Its long follicles contain numerous seeds that each end in a tuft of silky hair. The plant is common throughout Eurasia. Pliny the Elder believed *volubilis*, when mixed with wine and rue, cured snakebites.

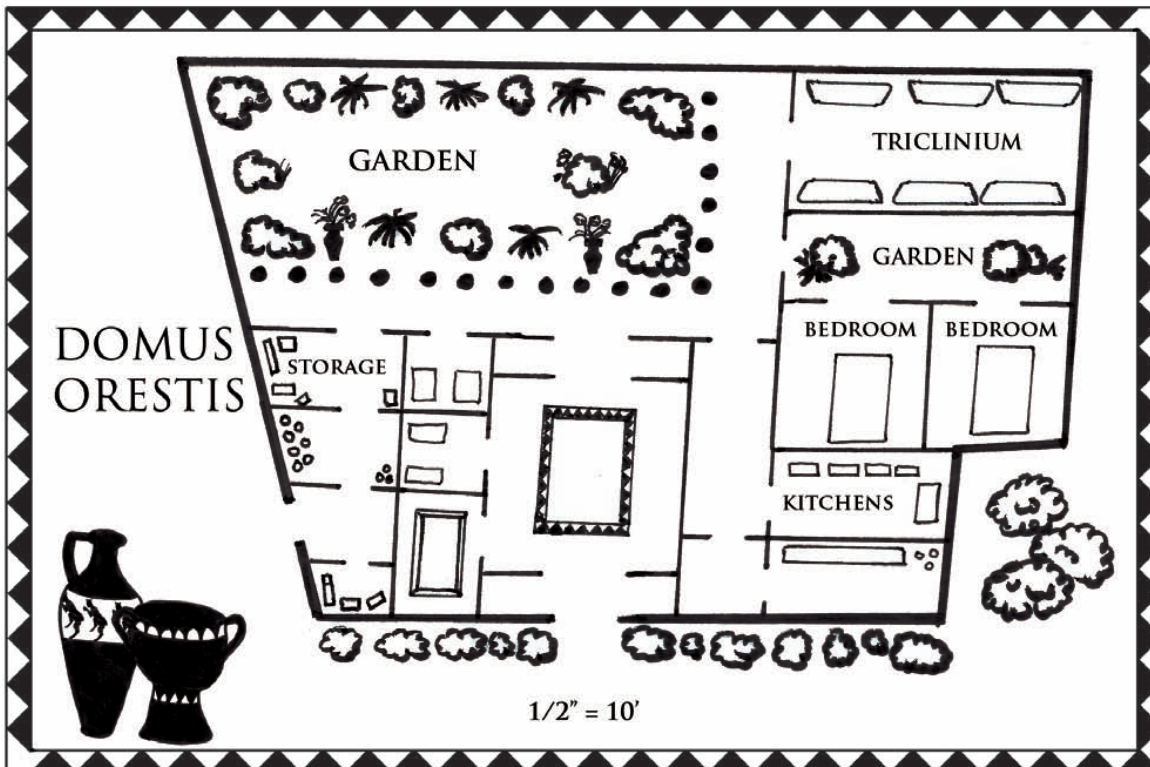
will have to succeed at a Track -30% roll to follow the *gof'nn hupadgh*. Those who succeed at a **Spot Hidden** check will see similar creatures also bounding across the rooftops. Investigators who succeed at a **Navigate** roll believe the creatures are running in the direction of Carthage's commercial harbor. If the investigators reach the harbor, however, they only hear splashing in the dark.

If the *gof'nn hupadgh* at Orestes' party is subdued, the investigators will not be able to get any information from it. For one, it doesn't know any human languages at this point. If they question it over a period of several hours, it will learn whatever language the investigators are using, but will

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only speak in nonsense rhymes. It will also spend the entire time trying to escape.

At this point, the investigators do not have to be able to kill or capture the *gof'nn hupadgh*. They don't even have to follow it anywhere. It is merely an *outré* element to get the investigators involved. Even if they kill it, other *gof'nn hupadgh* will appear later in the scenario.

## INVESTIGATIONS

Different avenues of investigation are listed below. The investigators don't need to follow them all to reach the conclusion. Some, such as the basilisk, are red herrings. Since the dinner party is at night, the investigators should have to wait until morning to conduct some of these investigations.

## DINNER GUESTS

Most of the dinner guests and attendants are in shock. Several of the guests are screaming hysterically. Others are inducing vomiting in the belief that the food was poisoned. Before the investigators can

garner any information from the guests, they need to calm them, either through **Persuade** or **Status**. In this case, **Status** is used to remind the guests of who they are and what role they serve in society.

- A furious debate erupts between Orestes and Etrusco. Orestes believes the creature was a satyr. Etrusco is adamant that satyrs are not created that way. If the investigators do not intervene, the two men will come to blows.
- Marcellus is unable to organize the guards. If the investigators want their assistance, they can use **Persuade** or **Tactics** to marshal them. If the investigators help Marcellus with the guards, he will be a good ally and will provide them with troops later in the scenario if asked.
- Caecus is muttering that the augur he consulted said it was beneficial to come to this dinner. If asked, he curses the augur. She was practicing a Carthaginian form of augury that involves the reading of tossed bones. If the investigators ask where to find this augur, he says she usually plies her trade in the forum.



- Vispania is nowhere to be seen. Her husband, Rufinus, says she left in disgust at the sight of the creature.

## INVESTIGATING THE DEAD HORSE

Orestes' staff is willing to let the investigators visit the stable where the dead horse is being stored pending immolation. The horse is on its side, dried foam covering its muzzle. A black paste stains the horse's teeth and gums. A **Spot Hidden** finds shredded leaves and plant stems on the floor of the stall. A **Natural World** or **Medicine** roll indicates the plant is volubilis. In very small doses, it cures snake bites. In larger doses, it's deadly. The horse was poisoned.

If the investigators ask the stable hands about the horse, they all say it was fine one minute and collapsed the next. A successful **Insight** roll reveals that one of the men, a slave named Duro, is uncomfortable. If the investigators exert their **Status** or **Persuade** him, he admits to poisoning the horse. Atilus, a stable hand from the Red team, offered Duro 200 sesterii if he'd poison the horse. Atilus even provided the volubilis.

If the investigators take this information to Orestes, he orders Duro executed. He also begins to plot revenge against the Red team. Since the investigators uncovered who was behind his horse's death, Orestes will ask them to take part in any revenge he plans.

## ASIATICUS' DINNER PARTNERS

Sextus Attius Etrusco spent most of the dinner listening to Asiaticus brag about prostitutes. If asked, he will tell the investigators that Asiaticus spoke highly of a raven-haired prostitute named Adelina. If he remembers correctly, she works at a brothel run by Felicitas. Etrusco doesn't know where the brothel is, but suggests that one of Asiaticus' servants or guards might be able to provide directions.

## THE BASILISK

If the investigators want to hunt down the basilisk, they need to talk to Derog, a Gallic legionary who was attacked. The soldier can be found in the garrison infirmary. His leg is badly burned and covered in bandages. He and another legionary, Rogasian, were patrolling the road about five hours west of Carthage as part of a larger force. When Derog sat down on a fallen log to take a rest, a basilisk wriggled out from underneath it.

In the ensuing battle, Derog's leg was severely burned by the basilisk's scorching breath. The creature slithered away as Rogasian turned to help his friend. Several other men from their unit searched for the beast, but no one could find it. This happened three days ago.

The investigators are free to explore the region, but they will find no signs of the *gof'nn hupadgh* or the missing child in the area described by the legionary. It is up to the keeper whether or not the investigators encounter a basilisk.

## RESEARCH

The investigators might want to research the creature they encountered at Orestes' party. There are unlikely to be any books in Carthage the investigators can read on the subject. Instead, they will have to rely on philosophers and possibly augurs.

If the investigators look for an authority on the creature, they will find a Carthaginian philosopher named Yaroah. He has a reputation in Carthage for knowing more about the natural world than Pliny himself. Although he is loquacious, the investigators will need to pay Yaroah for his services. He will accept no less than 500 sesterii. If the investigators mention Orestes' belief that the creature was a satyr, Yaroah will immediately discount it. He explains that satyrs are the result of a satyr raping a nymph; they don't burst full-grown from men. Upon hearing a description of the beast and the events surrounding its birth, Yaroah says it sounds like a priest of the old god Ba'al Hammon. He's skeptical, however, because the Romans tore down the temple in the center of the city and killed all of Ba'al Hammon's worshippers more than a century ago. However, the timing would be appropriate. The new moon is tomorrow, and Ba'al Hammon's worshippers always engaged in debauched sex

rites and child sacrifices on the night of the new moon. If the investigators ask Yaroah for the location of the old temple, he points them toward the forum. The Romans built their forum directly on top of the temple's ruins. However, the worshippers also had an open-air temple near what is now the commercial harbor – but that was burned by the Romans as well.

If the investigators go to the forum, they find it filled with people conducting all sorts of business. An investigator who succeeds at a **Spot Hidden** check sees an elderly woman tossing bones. From a distance, nothing is amiss. Up close, however, the investigators can succeed at a **Medicine** roll to recognize the bones as human, probably from an infant. The woman offers to provide the investigators with an augury. She refuses to give up the bones, however, holding them to her chest if the investigators try to take them. If the investigators ask where she found the bones, the old woman tells them she found them down by the harbor.

Alternatively, if the investigators seek out the augur, the same will happen.

If the investigators search the forum for a day, they find no signs of the temple to Ba'al Hammon. It was completely destroyed.

## THE MORNING AFTER THE PARTY

As the investigators go about their business the morning after the party, many of the residents are talking about the strange creatures that burst from people's chests throughout the city the night before. If the investigators ask around, they learn that it happened to men from both the upper and lower classes. Talking to the families involved, the investigators learn that each killing unfolded just like the one they witnessed. With successful **Persuade** or **Status** rolls, the investigators will learn that each man had visited prostitutes some time in the past. However, not all of them visited the same brothel as Asiaticus. All the deaths happened around the tenth hour.

## THE SLAVE CHILDREN

If the investigators want to talk with Vispania's slave Cybele about her missing baby, they can visit her at Vispania and Rufinus' estate outside the city.

Vispania is not there, but Rufinus will curtly greet the investigators. If asked about Vispania, he says she's in the city somewhere. If asked about the child, he reiterates his belief that the child probably died. He appears unconcerned.

Rufinus will point the investigators in the direction of the slave. The young woman is about eighteen years old. She introduces herself as Cybele. Her master and mistress disregarded her concerns, and she is glad to finally have someone who's willing to listen. Her infant daughter was stolen two nights ago. The baby was healthy and showed no signs of weakness. Cybele will show the investigators the spot where the baby slept. A **Spot Hidden** roll outside the window reveals a set of goat-like prints in the dirt. The trail, however, is far too faint to follow for more than a few *pes*, the roman equivalent of a foot, which measures approximately 11.5 inches.

Cybele has asked around, and slaves on other estates also had their babies stolen. If the investigators offer to help, Cybele provides them with another slave's name. The story there is the same. A healthy baby was taken in the middle of the night. This slave can in-turn provide another slave's name. By the end of the circuit, the investigators learn that fifteen slave children have been stolen over the past two nights.

## THE BROTHEL

Finding Felicitas' brothel is not difficult. Any of Asiaticus' servants or guards can provide the investigators with directions. Without at least a 100 sestertii bribe, however, Felicitas will not give them access to the prostitutes – unless the investigators purchase their services, that is. The investigators can try to **Sneak** into the brothel through a window, but they'll have to avoid guards armed with cudgels to do so. As the investigators move throughout the brothel, those who succeed at a **Spot Hidden** roll notice dirt collecting in the corners. Closer inspection reveals it to be beach sand, not common street muck.

If the investigators visit the brothel during the day, Felicitas tells them that Asiaticus' favorite was a girl named Adelina. However, she works in the evening, so the investigators will need to return then if they want to speak with her. In the meantime, they are free to talk to any of the brothel's other women – or men – provided they pay for the time, of course. If an investigator chooses to take



advantage of the services of any prostitute at the brothel, it's up to the keeper to decide if he is implanted with a gof'nn hupadgh seed.

If the investigators visit the brothel in the evening, Felicitas tells them that Adelina is already with a client. For a bribe of 300 sestertii, or with a successful **Persuade** -20% roll, Felicitas will point them toward the girl's room. As they enter the hall that leads to it, the investigators hear what sounds like two women arguing. One is demanding to be given something while the other refuses to give it up. With a successful **Listen** check, an investigator is certain he recognizes the voice of the woman demanding the item. A **Know** roll reveals it to be Vispania. Continuing down the hall, the investigators see a guard standing outside the furthest chamber. As they draw near, the guard steps aside to let a hooded woman carrying a small bundle leave the room. He follows her down the hall. As they pass the investigators, anyone who succeeds at a **Spot Hidden** roll recognizes the woman as Vispania. The bundle she carries is an infant that looks to be no more than three months old.

If the investigators try to stop Vispania, her guard intervenes. At first he simply orders the investigators to let the lady pass. If they persist in

trying to stop her or talk to her, however, he will brandish his cudgel. If the investigators engage him in combat, four brothel guards will come to the aid of Vispania's guard.

For all that Felicitas bragged about Adelina being such a favorite of the upper class men in Carthage, the prostitute's chamber is no better than that of anyone else at the brothel. It's just large enough for a cot and is blocked off from the hall by a curtain.

When the investigators enter her chamber, they find Adelina sitting on her cot sobbing. She immediately wipes her eyes and bats her lashes at the investigator who appears to be the wealthiest. If the investigators ask Adelina why she's crying or who the woman was, she coyly answers that her services are available to anyone with enough coin – either man or woman. With a successful **Persuade** roll, Adelina explains that the woman, Vispania, took her baby to be sacrificed to Ba'al Hammon. At first Adelina accepted Ba'al Hammon because he protected those in her profession. But when the leaders insisted she sacrifice her baby to the ancient god, she wanted out. However, Vispania needed the baby for the bacchanalia tonight and took him by force.

Although she will admit to having served Asiaticus and many others – including others who



were killed at the same time as the merchant – Adelina will vehemently deny any knowledge of the creature at Orestes’ party or where it came from. A successful **Insight** roll suggests that she is hiding something. If the investigators offer to help Adelina get her baby back, she admits that Vispania had her perform a special ritual before servicing certain clients, including Asiaticus. Vispania never told her what the ritual was for, just that it was vital to the bacchanalia the cult will be holding tonight.

Adelina still fears the cult’s leaders, but will lead the investigators to the entrance to the grotto where the ritual will be held.

If the investigators **Sneak** after Vispania and her guard, the pair lead them to the commercial harbor. Once they reach the harbor, a **Spot Hidden** -30% is necessary or the investigators lose Vispania and her guard in the crowd. Otherwise, the investigators see the two of them rent a small boat and head across the harbor before turning north up the coast. If the investigators rent a boat, too, they will need to succeed at a **Pilot Boat** roll to stay out of sight. If they fail, Vispania’s boat turns out into the Mediterranean, and they lose sight of it in the darkness. If the investigators succeed at their **Pilot Boat** roll, they follow Vispania’s boat until it puts in on a small beach a few miles north of the city. The beach is at the base of the cliff. Vispania and her guard disappear behind a large rock.

The investigators can choose to split up, with some of them following Vispania while the others talk to Adelina. They cannot, however, first speak to Adelina and then try to follow Vispania. Too much time would have passed, and they would be unable to find her trail in the crowded streets.

## VISPANIA’S HOUSE

If the investigators visit Vispania’s estate after encountering her at the brothel, both Rufinus and Vispania are gone. The slaves are busy with routine chores, cleaning floors, patching walls, and tending to livestock. If the investigators ask any slave where Rufinus or Vispania are, the slave tells them that Vispania left for Carthage in the morning and hasn’t been seen since. Rufinus left about an hour ago after loading a wagon with small bundles. For a bribe of 100 sestertii, the slave will let investigators snoop around the estate. In a modest building behind the main villa, the investigators find a pile of straw and a couple of swaddling blankets. If the

investigators ask any of the slaves about the building, they will say that only Rufinus and Vispania were allowed in there. If a slave tried to go in there, he was beaten.

## THE GROTTA

The grotto where the cult practices its rituals is accessible from a small beach a few miles north of the city. If the investigators search the beach after talking to the augur, with a successful **Spot Hidden** they see what appears to be a narrow, four-pes-wide tunnel under the surface of the water near a cliff. If they inquire about the tide, it is currently in. It should recede by this evening.

Since the tunnel entrance is completely filled with water, the investigators will have to **Swim** through it. After a stadium, the tunnel opens into a large cavern. This cavern is where the cult of Ba’al Hammon practices many of its rituals, and where the *gof’nn hupadgh* stay. Even with the tide in, the water in the chamber is only three pes (Roman feet) deep, so the creatures do not drown.

The tunnel leads to a small pool in the middle of an enormous cavern. It is here that the cult worships Ba’al Hammon. No light enters from outside, so the investigators will need their own light source. Even with torches, the investigators will not be able to see all the way across the chamber. Stagnant water collects in puddles on the ground giving the room a fetid air. That odor mingles with the distinct smell of wet animal. The ceiling is not visible in the darkness, but the walls stretch up for at least thirty pes. A rectangular stone dais covered in ash sits in the center of the room. Carved into the back wall is a ten-pes-high relief showing a tall man with a curved beard dressed in the Phoenician style. The man wields a sword in his right hand and a club in his left. Two horns are carved into the wall above his head. If the investigators **Listen**, over the crashing surf they can barely discern the sound of something tapping on stone from a shadowy corner of the cavern. It’s two *gof’nn hupadgh* circling the room to sneak up on the investigators. They will try to grapple the investigators, charging from across the chamber, trying to force the intruders from their home. They will also utter cries that draw the attention of three other *gof’nn hupadgh* outside the chamber. Those three will arrive in two to four rounds.

If the investigators defeat the gof'nn hupadgh, they investigate the grotto, but other than the carving, a few charred human bones, and some empty wine vessels, they find little of note. Vispania and the rest of the cultists will arrive shortly after nightfall.

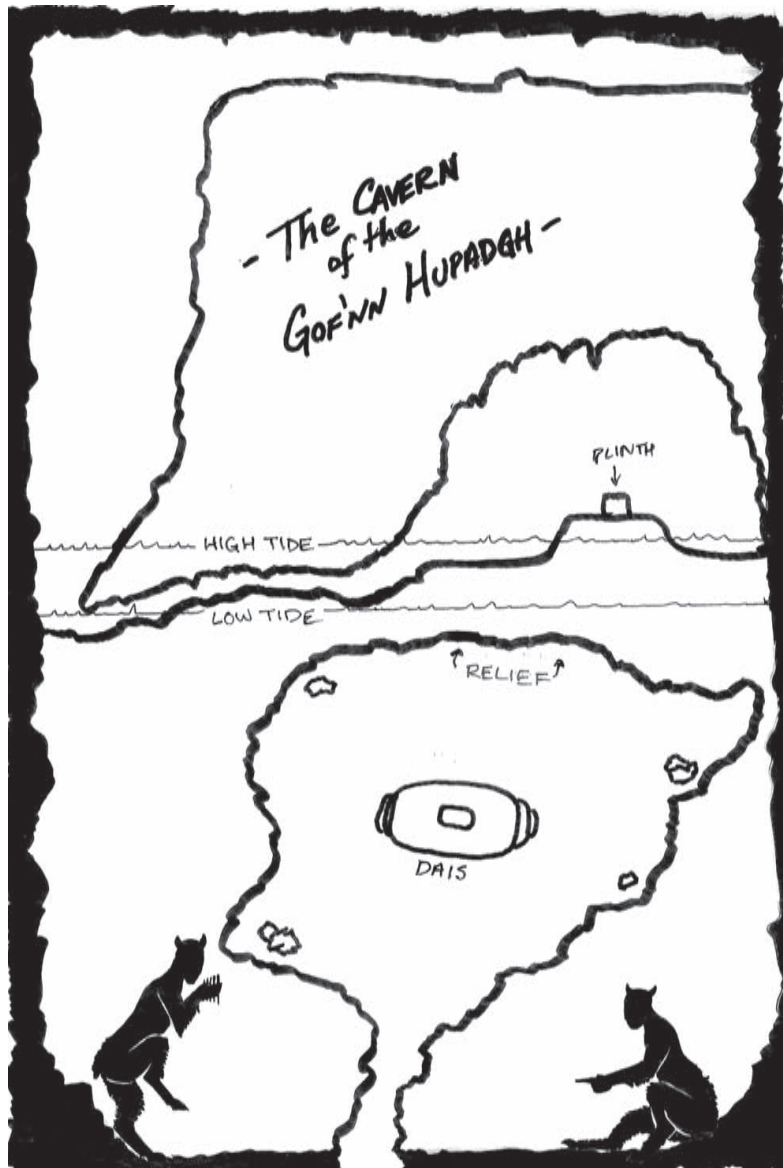
If the investigators follow Vispania to the beach or are led there by Adelina, they reach it when the tide is out and can easily spot a small cave entrance. The investigators have to crouch to crawl through the opening but, although the tunnel is damp, it is not filled with water so they don't have to swim through it. However, other revelers are making their way to the grotto as well, so the investigators will need to avoid them or find some way to blend in.

## THE BACCHANALIA

As the investigators near the tunnel entrance, cries and moans emerge. Exiting the tunnel on the other side, the investigators find themselves in a huge, torchlit chamber. The flames cast bizarre shadows on the grotto walls and on the people inside. Men, women, and gof'nn hupadgh all engage in every imaginable sex act. Investigators lose 0/1D4 SAN.

If they want, the investigators can choose to join the orgy. The revelers are too far gone to distinguish between other cultists and interlopers. However, any investigator who does so loses 1/1D6 SAN. They will also need to make a CON check to avoid contracting a social disease.

The investigators can hear the sound of crying infants coming from the back of the chamber. More than a dozen of them are lying on a raised dais, arranged in a circle around a stone plinth. Four gof'nn hupadgh stand guard over them. Vispania steps onto the dais completely naked, her husband beside her, and calls for attention. She lights kindling on the plinth, and one of the gof'nn hupadgh hands her the first baby. Unless the investigators intervene, she places the infant in the flames. As



its screams fill the chamber, the investigators suffer a 1/1D3 SAN loss. Vispania then reaches for another baby.

If Adelina brought the investigators to the grotto and followed them inside, she will run to the dais to grab her baby. A gof'nn hupadgh will attack her as soon as she reaches the dais.

## CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

If the investigators interrupt the bacchanalia but fail to save the children or to eliminate the cult and the gof'nn hupadgh, they've done little more than anger Vispania and Rufinus. The investigators are

now *persona non grata* in Carthage, and Rufinus will use his power as a magistrate to make sure any visit the investigators make to the city is a lethal one. Orestes and Marcellus can do little to protect them. The investigators receive no SAN reward.

If the investigators rescue any or all of the kidnapped infants, they have enough proof to take to Marcellus or another high-ranking member of the Roman government to launch an official investigation into the resurgence of the cult of Ba'al Hammon. Vispania, Rufinus, and the other cultists are quickly rounded up and executed. The gof'nn hupadgh will plague the city for years to come, with the legionaries hunting and killing them one by one. The investigators receive a 1D6 SAN reward.

If the investigators destroy the grotto with the cultists and the gof'nn hupadgh inside, but fail to evacuate the children beforehand, they receive 1D4 SAN. If they manage to rescue the children before destroying the grotto, they receive 1D8 SAN.

If the investigators destroy the cult but not the grotto, they receive 1D6 SAN. Rumors of the cult's re-emergence will begin to spread again in a few years' time.

## STATS

### Gof'nn Hupadgh

char.	rolls	averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	3D6	10-11

**MOV** 8

**HP** 11-12

**Av. Damage Bonus:** N/A.

**Weapons:** Claw 30%, damage 1D6+ db

Bite 30%, damage 1D4

Grapple 65%; on a successful grapple, the gof'nn hupadgh might attempt to molest his opponent, causing no damage but is very distracting during a fight

**Armor:** none. Regenerates 1D6 hit points each round until dead.

**Spells:** all know Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Body Warping, Become Spectral, Scarlet Circles, plus 1D3 other spells.



GUARD

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4 Sanity loss to see a gof'nn hupadgh .

### Guard/Collegium Member

These stats can be used for any armed friend or foe the investigators encounter. They are applicable for guards, collegium members, or citizens.

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 13  
DEX 14 APP 13 EDU 12 SAN 65 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Cudgel 50%, damage 1D6 + db

**Armor:** 2 points of leather.

### Adelina

Adelina is a slave imported from Hispania to serve as a prostitute. After arrival, she quickly converted to the worship of Ba'al Hammon. When her own baby was chosen as a sacrifice, however, she had a change of heart. She might be willing to aid the investigators if they offer to rescue her child.

STR 10 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 13  
DEX 14 APP 17 EDU 10 SAN 65 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Weapons:** Large Knife 25%, damage 1D6 + db

**Armor:** none



**Vispania**

Vispania is the wife of a notable Equestrian in Carthage. She is also the leader of the cult to Ba'al Hammon. She is conniving and distrustful of everyone.

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 16  
DEX 14 APP 15 EDU 10 SAN 45 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Weapons:** Large Knife 25%, damage 1D6 + db

**Spells:** Contact Ba'al Hammon, Summon Gof'nn  
Hupadgh, Red Circle.

**Armor:** none

**Gaius Marius Rufinus**

A noble Roman citizen, Rufinus has dedicated himself to the worship of Ba'al Hammon. He has used his immense wealth and power to entice others to join the cult. He's a charismatic, well-spoken man who dislikes resorting to violence, but will when necessary.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 12  
DEX 14 APP 14 EDU 12 SAN 50 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Gladius 45%, damage 1D6 + 1 + db

**Spells:** Contact Ba'al Hammon, Summon Gof'nn  
Hupadgh, Red Circle.

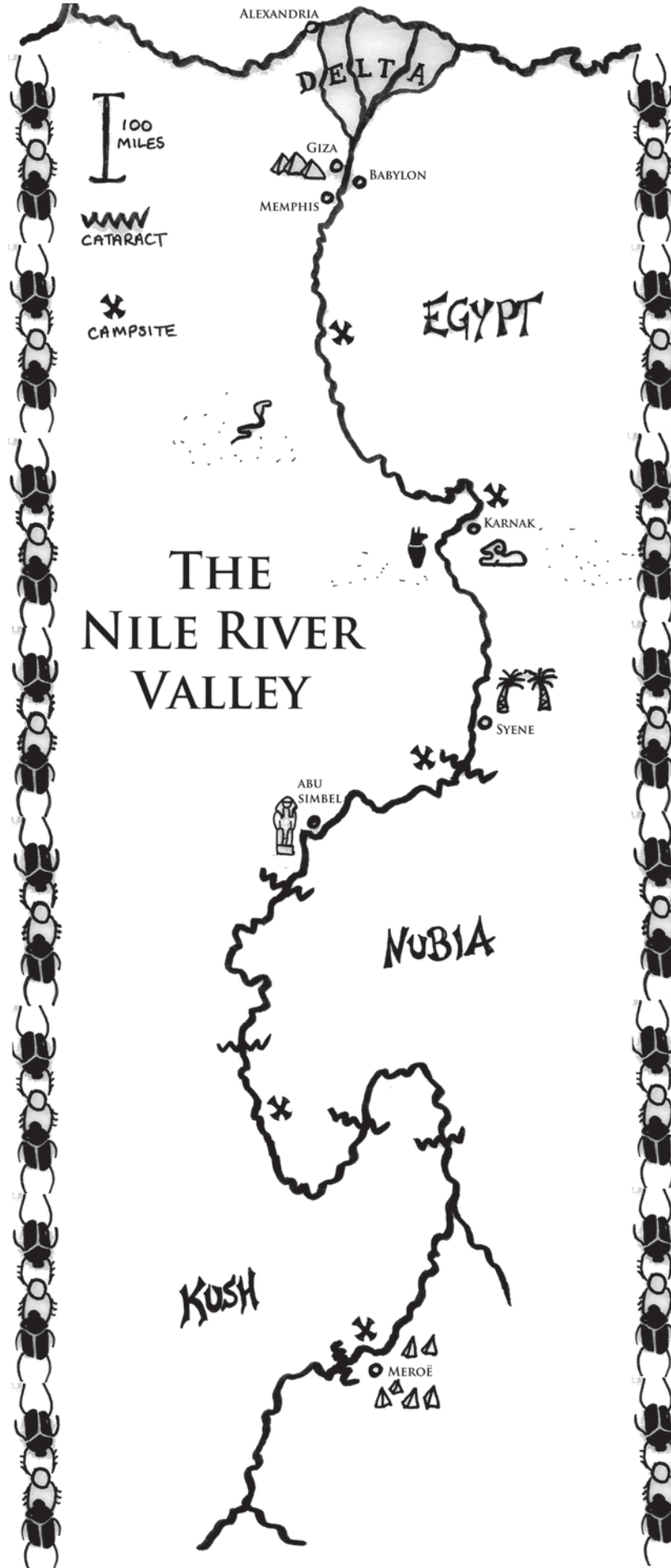
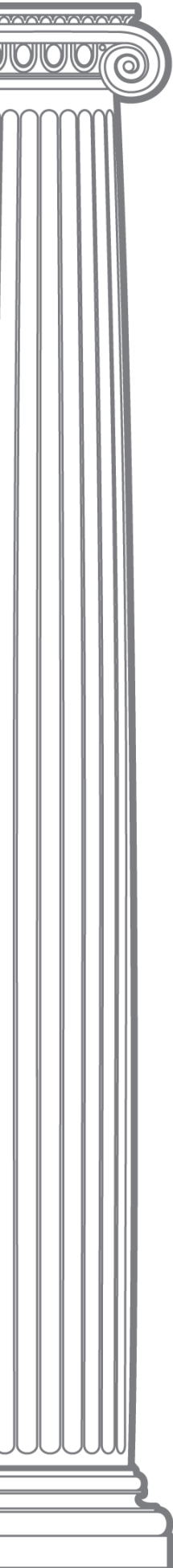
**Armor:** none

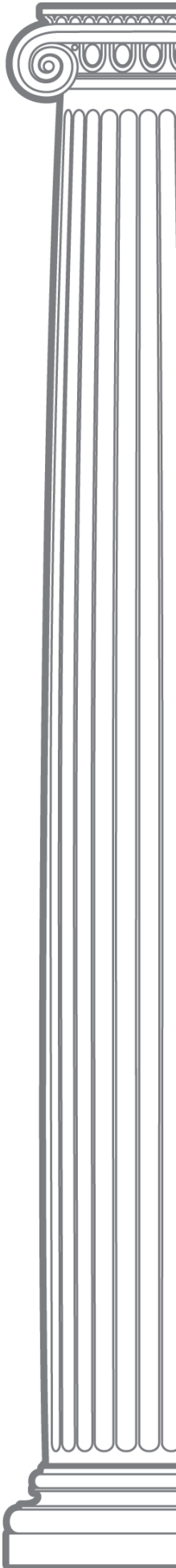
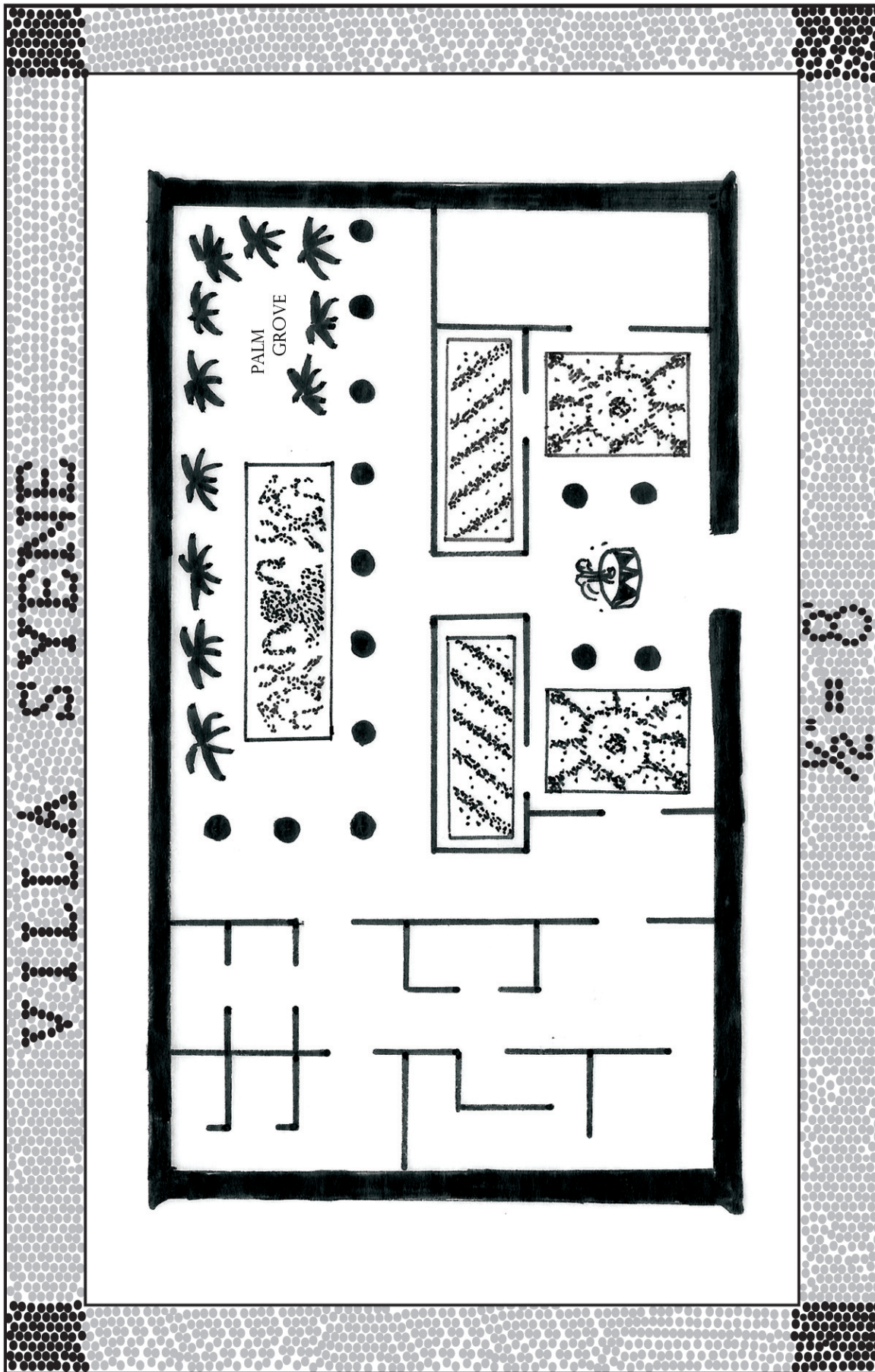


GAIUS MARIUS RUFINUS

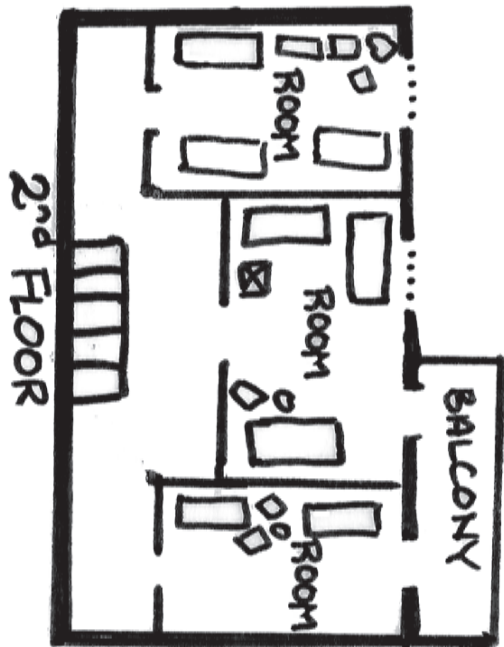
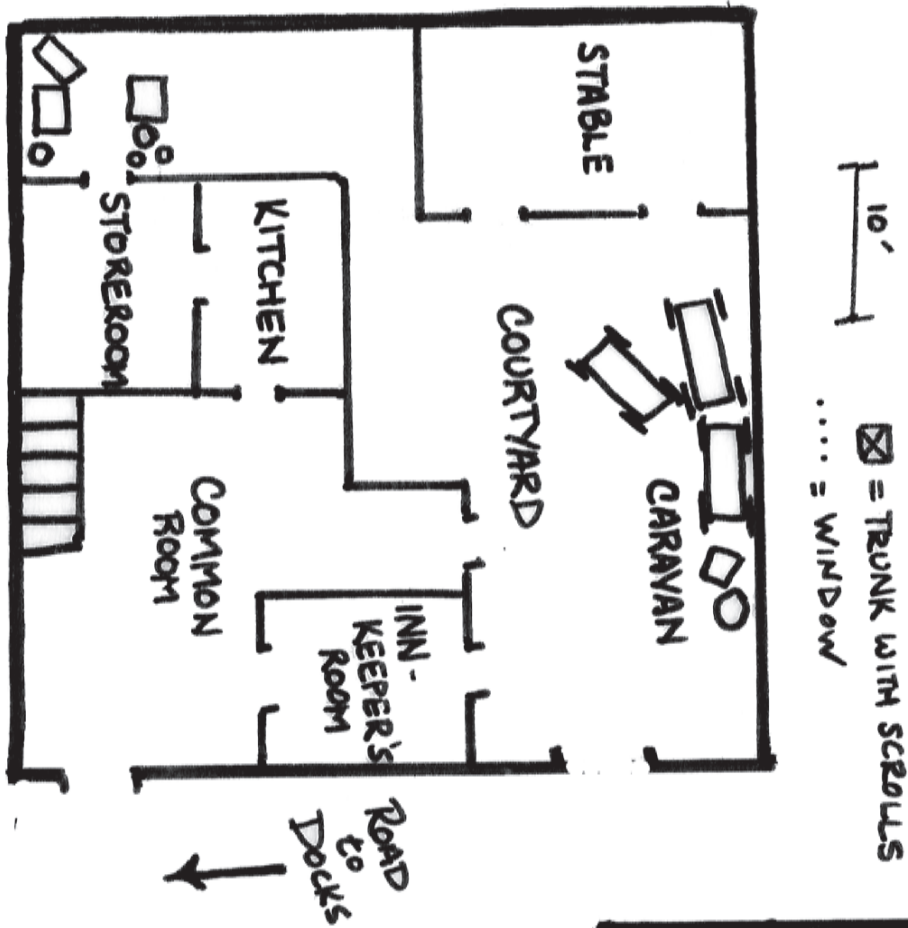


ADELINA

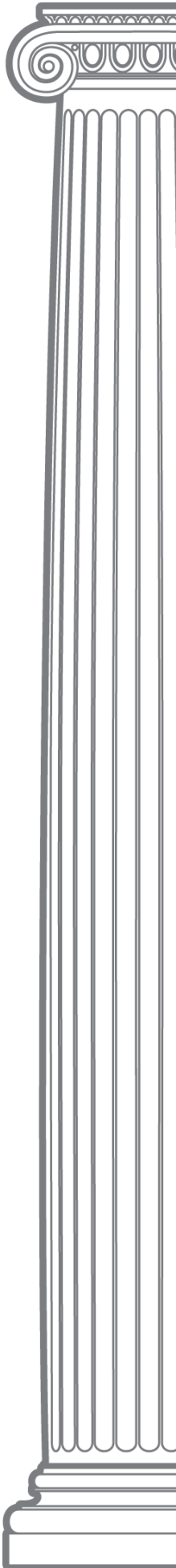
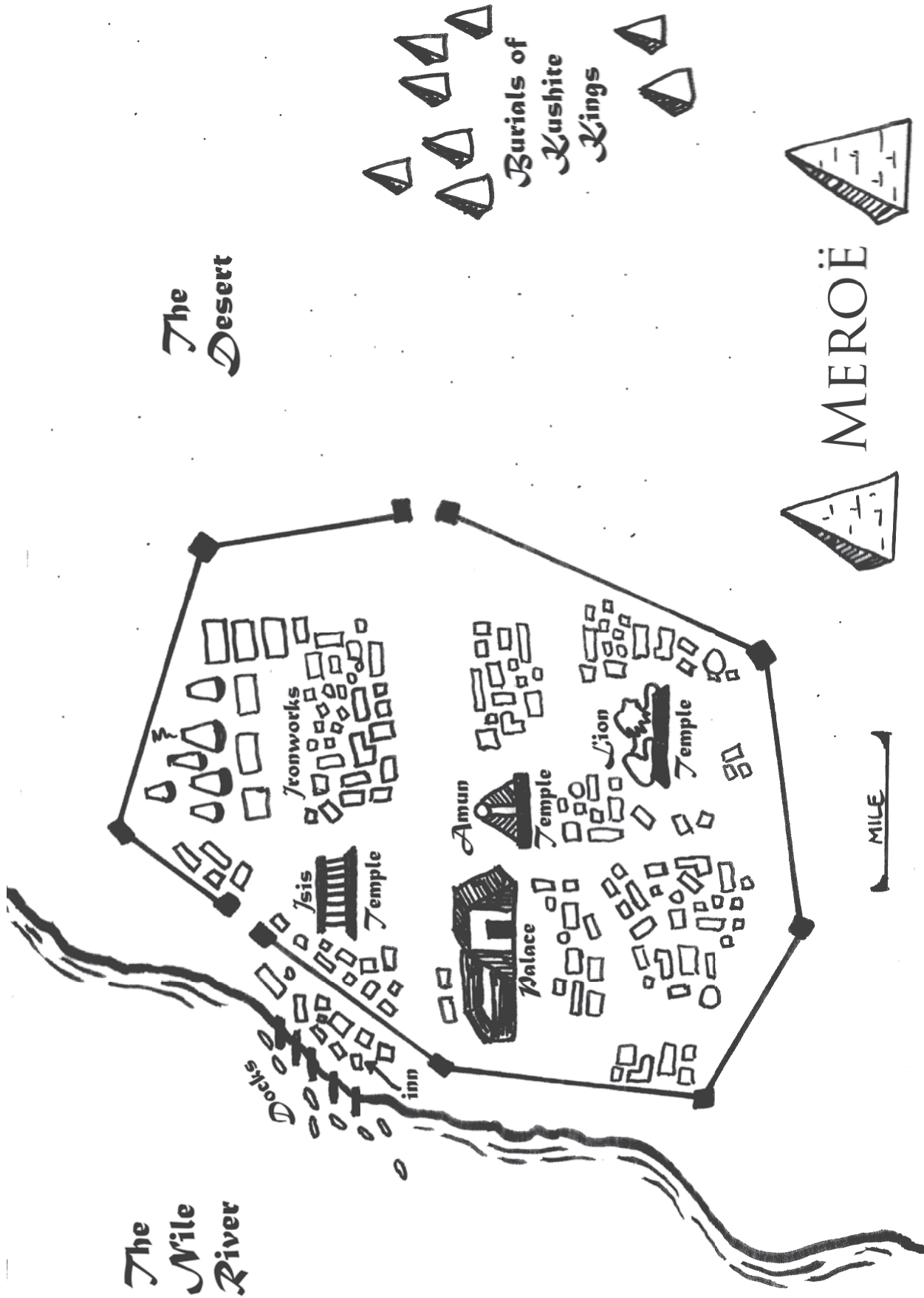


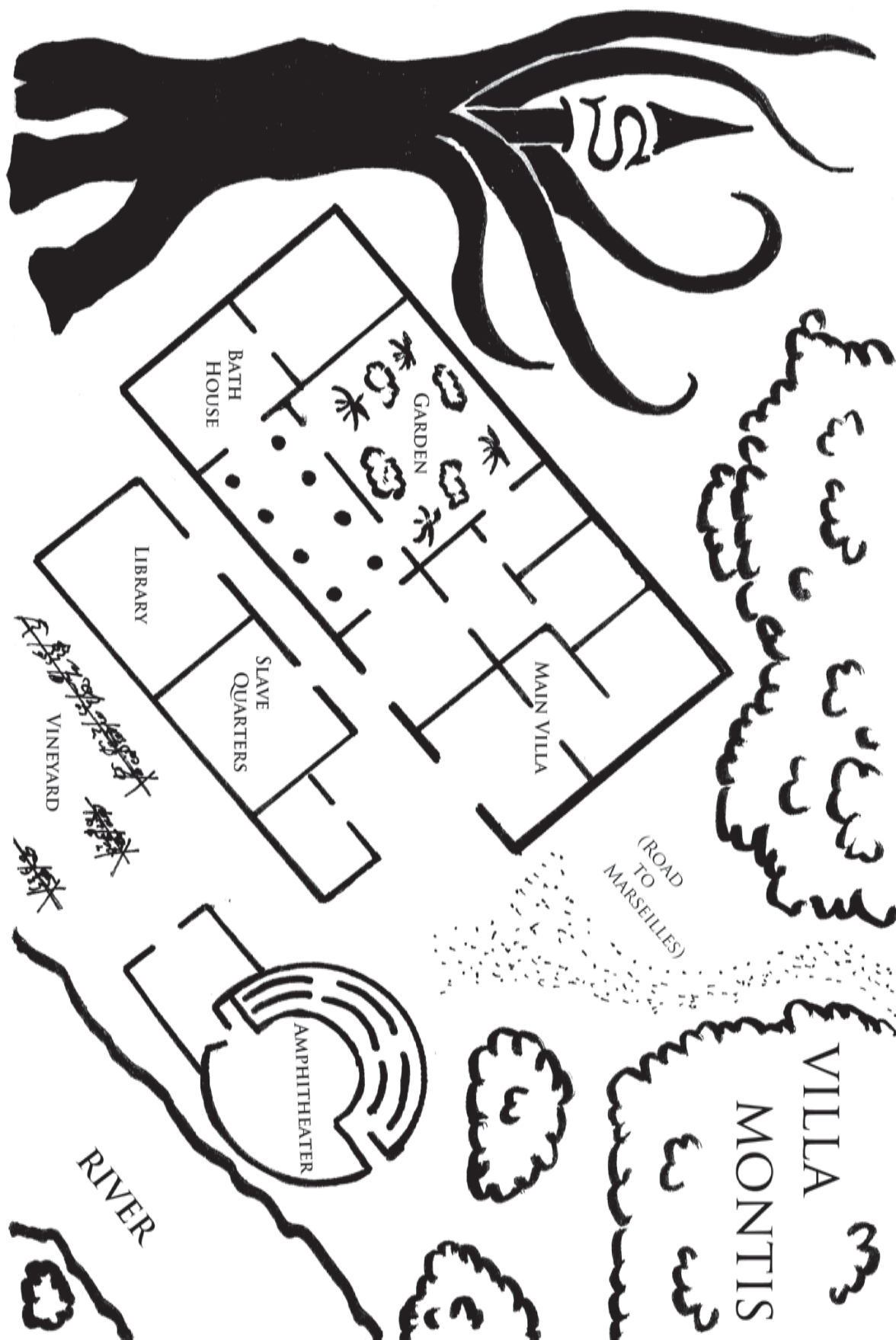




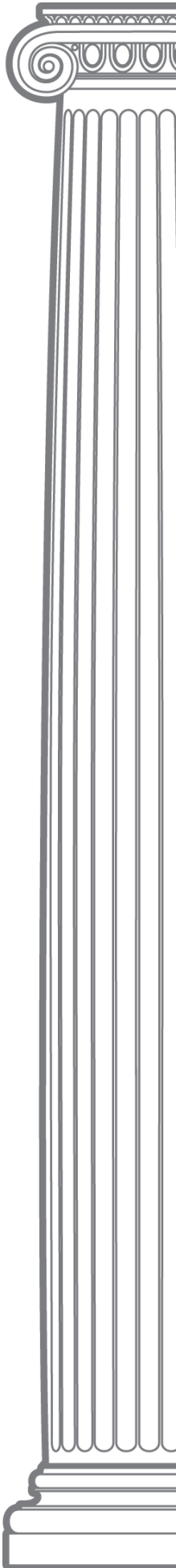
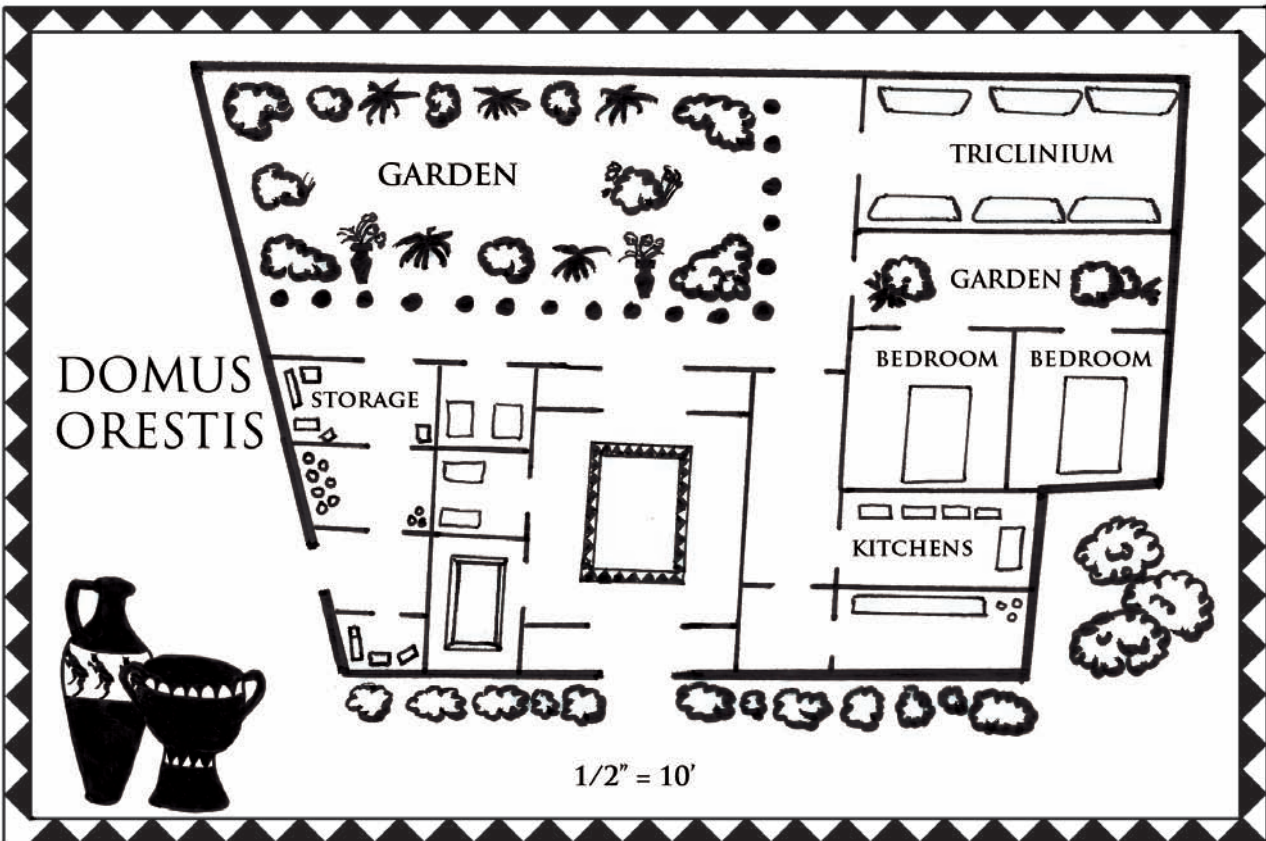
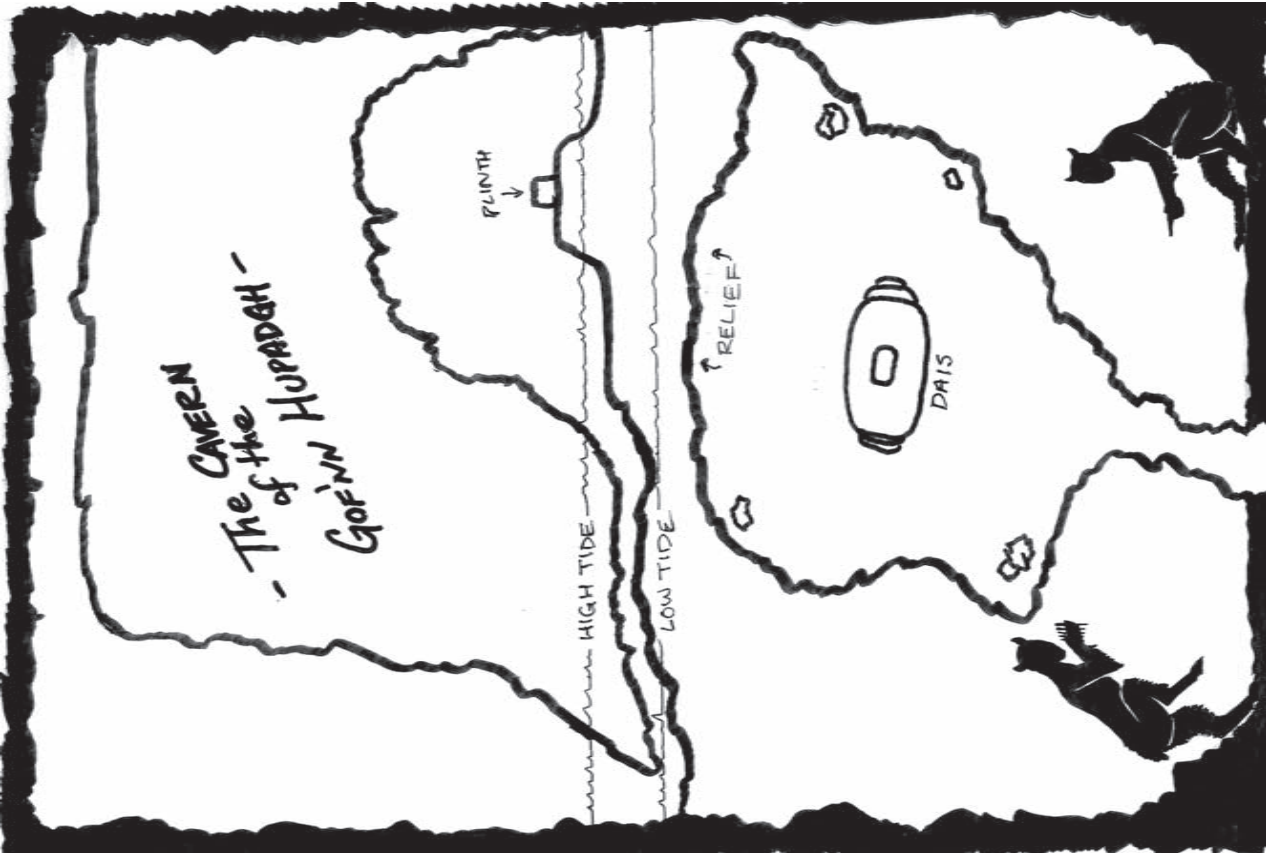


# The Inn at Meroe











*"In the last centuries of the Fifth Cycliad, a great malaise began to descend upon the lands of humankind. The great civilizations of Urth, which for Aeons had seemed on the verge of slumber, now finally began to rot from within. From the edges of the world the ever-present enemies drew close, their hungry claws poised to tear apart the delicate flesh of a fruit a hundred millennia in the harvesting. And all around, a cry arose for Heroes, to stand against the dying of the light and save the world from the sins of its past.*

*"Some said that it was the end of days. Some said that it was only the beginning. These pages tell the history of that time yet to come. These are the Chronicles of Future Earth."*

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# CTHULHU INVICTUS COMPANION

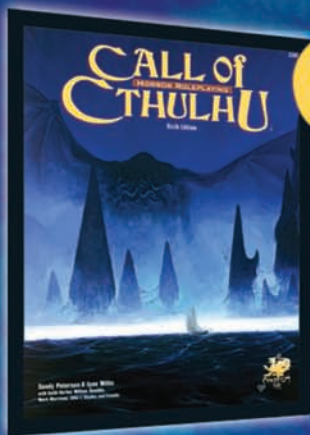


AS ROME'S INFLUENCE SPREADS across the known world, so too spreads the worship of its gods. Roman leaders know that converting the people of conquered regions to the state religion makes them easier to control. But some gods have been worshipped longer than Rome has existed, and their supplicants won't easily change allegiances.

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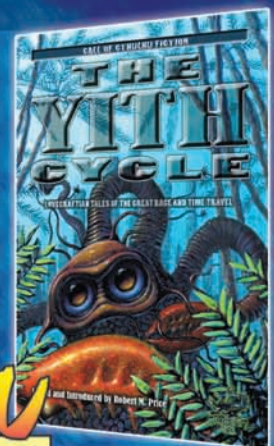
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