



Book Two: Savage Steel: Four Adventures on the Orc's Head Peninsula

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Introduction

Savage Steel: Prelude to Adventure

Savage Steel consists of four linked adventures, all of which concern the hunt for a fantastic "treasure." Unknown to the characters the objects of the quest they undertake are the controlling mechanisms for the Star Device detailed in "Nimmur and the Manscorpions" in the Orc's Head Peninsula Sourcebook. This destructive artifact could tip the balance of power currently in force on the peninsula, and could conceivably become a threat to the rest of the Savage Coast as well.

Each adventure takes the characters to a section of the peninsula and introduces them to the native populations and cultures of the area (details may be found in the accompanying sourcebook). The characters have to use diplomacy and subtlety in many areas, guile and fighting ability in others. They are given the chance to accept a "native" guide to help them in their travels, but may ultimately be betrayed by this guide, who in actuality is the ancient vermilion dragon known as Pyre. The final adventure, in which the characters have the chance to obtain the controlling devices, presents the characters with a moral dilemma—Do they destroy the devices, sacrificing so much potential power in the process? Do they attempt to claim power for themselves? Or, do they aid those who seek to reclaim their homeland?

The Strangers' Game

In many ways, these adventures will be more exciting and potentially difficult for characters who are not natives of the Orc's Head Peninsula. They will have more to discover about the various areas and the people who live there. Situations that call for diplomacy will demand good role-playing since the PCs are presumably ignorant of local customs and they may have more interest in learning the history of the treasure they seek. Finally, outsiders will have loyalties and affiliations outside the Orc's Head region, which may color their decisions during the adventures.

Strangers should ideally be from the other areas of the Savage Coast: this means they will have had Legacies and cinnabryl. Since leaving the area of the Red Curse results in the loss of Legacies and the problems that causes (see the SAVAGE COAST™ campaign setting), the PCs may begin on the Colony of the Horn as patients in the clinic at Bom Jardim. If they are continuing characters rather than starting ones, the DM may wish to play out what the loss is like for them. In any case, they should be very low on funds since paying for their treatment and hungry for adventure to increase their finances.

Alternatively, they might have arrived in the Colony of the Horn after a storm at sea forced their ship away from their intended destination and foundered it, depositing them in the area. Much of their nonessential equipment and wealth might have been lost overboard and they must barter to rearm themselves.

The Native Game

Natives can be any of the character races found along the Savage Coast so long as they have lived in the Colony of the Horn or Porto Escorpião for at least a year. Failing that, they must be one of the new character races introduced in the Orc's Head Peninsula Sourcebook. The main advantage of using characters native to the Orc's Head region is that they have some knowledge of one or more areas and the prevailing customs there. Additionally, the characters will have loyalties that may influence their choices.

Of course, having such prior knowledge robs the characters of the chance for new discoveries and potential role-play. This is most true for wallara characters, as the interaction between the wallara and the outsiders provides much of the enjoyment of that particular adventure. On the other hand, enduk and ee'aar characters would have a great stake in the events unfolding and they are only technically "natives." Some care must be taken if enduk or ee'aar characters are used because in Nimmur they would be marked for immediate capture and interrogation or death. A magical disguise aids in avoiding that; the early portion of that adventure makes provisions for disguise acquisition.

It is also possible to have a mixed party, some being natives, the rest not.

Bom Jardim

However the characters come to be in the area, they begin the adventure in the small village of Bom Jardim. There is little more in this rustic outpost than the clinic, a single store that sells basic supplies, an inn and tavern, and a few rough shacks. Prisoners from the nearby fort are often marched through town to pick up supplies before heading out to work the fields or cut wood in the small forest on the eastern edge of the Horn.

Though most adventurers on the Orc's Head Peninsula start in Porto Escorpião, some few come through this area as well. Many such are fortune hunters out to make quick money. Most are lazy, inept, cruel, violent, greedy, and have little or no respect for law. Because of their own shortcomings or unpleasant personalities, many could find no work in the more civilized communities of the Savage Coast; others are fleeing from justice.

Bom Jardim is a strange mixture of a placid, boring outpost, experimental clinic for Red Curse victims, and staging area for adventures used by this assortment of evil-tempered cutthroats and mercenaries. Those who live in the town are justifiably wary of strangers, while soldiers and guards from the fort are likely to add troublemakers to their prison without much thought about actual law or justice. Whatever their reasons for being in the town, the characters must deal with all of these before starting their actual adventures.

They have to weigh the consequences of their actions when making decisions. If they are ee'aar or enduk, they

are not at all native to the area; they will cause comment at the least and may be harassed for their difference. Other character races that might cause comment are manscorpions, wallaras, phanatons, or any of the lizardkin. Though these are native to the Orc's Head Peninsula, the human colonies have seen very little of them and will naturally be curious. If any of the characters are savages or shamans, this is a perfect opportunity to bring out the strangeness of the class and compare their ways of doing things with the so-called "civilized" manners and customs of the colonists.

I. Tales of Fame and Glory

This adventure is for six to eight characters of 4th to 6th level. It is possible to use lower level characters by reducing the hit points and Armor Class of their opponents. Doing the opposite allows the DM to use higher level PCs. If psionics is used in the home campaign, DMs are free to give the villains those powers as well.

Adventure Background

In order to fully utilize these adventures, the DM should be familiar with the information provided in the Orc's Head Peninsula Sourcebook. Information given in that supplement explains a great deal of the political maneuvering and background to the adventures.

In brief, the history that led up to the PCs' current quest is as follows: When the manscorpions turned against the enduks and drove them out of Nimmur, the enduks disabled the great magical apparatuses called Star Devices, so that the manscorpions would not gain control of them and misuse them.

Er's device was not wholly destroyed, but one of the priests made it out of the city with two objects needed for the device to function correctly: a controlling key and a viewing crystal. Wounded and dying, he managed to reach an old abandoned manscorpion outpost, a place he thought was safe, and he hid the devices there. Before dying, he entrusted the knowledge to a friendly wallara who passed by on walkabout. The wallara thought it best to separate the two items and took the viewing crystal with

him after sealing the body of the priest within the cave that held the key.

He passed the story on to his successor and over the years, the tale was honed and passed down until it was told to an old sea captain. By then, the viewing device had passed into the keeping of the dragon, Pyre. The captain sought the "fabulous treasure" and made many notes, which the PCs now begin to discover. As he searched and discovered more, however, the old captain began to fear the treasures he sought, realizing what he had stumbled upon. In the end, though he didn't have the heart to destroy his maps and notes, he split them into sections and hid them in various parts of the peninsula.

Rumor being what it is, speculations as to the "great manscorpion treasure" abound. Interested parties, from adventurers to enduk freedom fighters to a certain ancient dragon, search for clues and watch the party (and in some cases interfere with them). If they are lucky, the PCs discover the nature of the objects they seek and destroy them rather than succumbing to the lure of power or letting them fall into the wrong hands.

A Cry for Help

The PCs should be given a brief time to wander around town noticing how little is there and what sorts of people they encounter. Guards appear occasionally, townspeople go about their business and try to avoid the nastier looking strangers, and various brawls and impromptu gambling sessions break out now and again. Most of the talk in town centers on the escape of a notorious murderer known as The Beast. Rumor has him hiding around every corner and murdering people in their beds.

As they are walking down the street, however, they hear a cry for help. It comes from an alley up ahead and to their left. Assuming they investigate, they find a pack of

thugs attacking an old man who attempts to hold them off with his cane. He yells, "If I was still in my youth you scum would tremble!" They laugh and one replies, "Just give us what you have, old man, and we may let you live."

Thugs (8): AC 7 (leather, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 37 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (long sword, Str bonus); SZ M; ML steady (12); Int average (10); AL NE; XP 240 each.

Notes: The thugs have leather armor, long swords, a few basic adventuring items and the equivalent of 20 gp in various coins.

If the characters are a match for the thugs, the fight may continue to its completion before the arrival of the town guards. Should the thugs be winning, however, the guards may arrive just as the PCs are in danger of losing. They demand that the fight be stopped and that an explanation be given. There are too many for either side to defeat. If the PCs are troublesome, more guards arrive until they all surrender. After the thugs and the PCs tell their stories, the old man speaks for the PCs, explaining that they tried to rescue him from the thugs. The thugs (sailors from a ship in port) are arrested. They should not be killed as they figure into the story later.

The old man, who introduces himself as Alvaro de Liberio, asks the PCs to accompany him to the inn. Once there, he asks them to wait downstairs in the dining area, goes upstairs and returns with a packet bound in waterproof skins. He tells them,

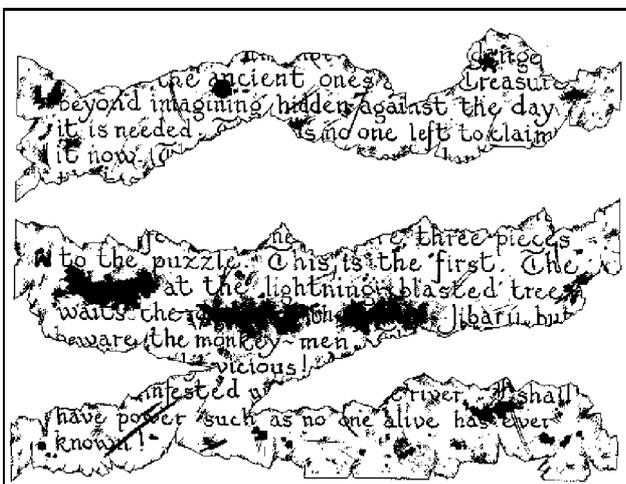
"When I was younger, I stumbled across the information in this packet. I always wished I had the courage to pursue it, but profits were good at sea and one thing after another prevented me from following my dream. For your bravery in defending me, I give this to you. Promise me that if you go where this takes you, you will take along a guide. I would not want to see you harmed by my gift."

With that, he bows to them and retreats upstairs. Should the PCs follow, he explains he knows no more and is very tired. If they seek him out later, he is gone.

The Gift

Inside the packet is part of an old book and a section of a map. Much of the book is too water stained and faded to make out, but the following is legible:

... the ancient ones ... Treasure beyond imagining hidden against the day it is needed ... no one left to claim it now ... three pieces to the puzzle. This is the first ... at the lightning blasted tree waits the ... Jibarú, but beware the monkeymen ... vicious ... infested river ... I shall have power such as no one alive has ever known ...



The map shows a route up the Xingá River. Unfortunately it is mislabeled as the Jururu River.

Should the PCs not look for a guide, one literally stumbles across them, tripping over an overturned chair and sprawling out on top of the map. The well-dressed gentleman apologizes and exclaims, "Oh, Jibarú! I know that area! Beautiful country. Allow me to introduce myself," he bows to all, "I am Don Vicente de Ramiro."

He tells the PCs that he is a merchant-adventurer, second son of an important landowner of Teixeiras. Vicente claims to have traveled through most of the lands of the Orc's Head Peninsula and asks if the PCs intend to do the same. He would be happy to guide them, he says, as he is waiting for his ship to be repaired and misses his old adventuring days.

The "Don" is actually Pyre in disguise. Should the PCs accept him, he will faithfully guide them in order to acquire all the clues he needs to locate the "ancient Nimmurian treasure." He has heard rumors that the treasure contains an artifact that would give its wielder absolute power over the entire peninsula. Pyre is determined to acquire that treasure for himself, but he is not averse to having the PCs take most of the risks and face the dangers for him.

If they do not accept him or confide in him, Pyre follows them secretly wherever they go, adopting many disguises along the way. When he knows enough, he will go for the treasure and attempt to kill the PCs should they get in his way.

In his human guise as Don Vincente, he is just under 6 feet tall, with dark hair and beard and a ruddy complexion. His eyes are a greenish-gold. He wears well-made, but not too expensive clothing and carries a sword and dagger. He retains his toughness and hit points, but does not fly or use his breath weapons. He also retains his Legacies while in human form. Pyre does nothing to cause overt suspicion while traveling with the PCs. His goal is to find out information that can lead him to an artifact; he isn't overly concerned with intimidating or showing up the characters. From his point of view, they are a means to an end and he can always crush them later.

Don Vincente de Ramiro (Pyre, vermilion dragon 21, human form): AC %11; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Jp 3; hp 145; THAC0 %1; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d10/1d10/3d10; SA breath weapon 90'; SD Spells, Legacies; MR 65%; SZ G (176' with a 165' tail); ML Fanatic (18); Int Genius (17); AL CE; XP 28,000.

Notes: SA: Pyre's breath weapon is a cone of fire 90 feet long, 5 feet wide at the dragon's mouth and 30 feet wide at the base. It does 24d10+12 damage.

Jibarú

The PCs can acquire adventuring supplies if they so desire. Vincente can advise them to purchase mosquito netting and fishing line and hooks. They may even rent a boat with which to travel up the river (so long as they don't tell the owner where they are really going) for 20 gp, or buy one for 40 gp. Though it needs attention to keep from springing a leak, the boat is basically sound. They have to row the boat (or put up its modest sails) to get around the tip of the Horn, then follow the coast back to the river once they are in Trident Bay.

Unless the DM wishes this portion of the adventure to be without incident, random encounters from the saltwater tables can be used to spice up the journey. Also, the sailors the PCs fought earlier have been released back to their ship after paying a stiff fine. They spot the PCs' craft and attempt to ram them for revenge. The PCs' little boat is no match for the merchant ship, so their best recourse is to run for shallow water where the bigger ship cannot follow.

If PCs choose to make the journey on foot, they have several days of hiking through the empty Shifting Dunes to reach the river. There is no game or edible plant life here, and no water fit for drinking. The PCs' waterskins each carry enough water for that person for two days. If they brought along no extras, they must travel for three more days with no water, suffering penalties for dehydration of %1 to Strength and Constitution cumulative for each day they have no water. Spells such as *create water* need large containers (such as a tarpaulin spread out in a hollow in the sand) to hold the water, or most of it drains away into the sand. Whatever is not scooped up

Special Equipment: *Ebon eye* (detailed in the Orc's Head sourcebook), *ankle bracelet of shapechange* (allows him change to any intelligent creature 2x per day), and a *ring of teleportation*.

He also carries 5 ounces of *cinnabryl* with him in case he needs to consume any as he moves around in disguise.

Spells, 21st level:

Detect magic, magic missile, invisibility, stinking cloud, slow, suggestion, improved invisibility, solid fog, chaos, dream, geas, cure light wounds, faerie fire, and charm person or mammal. Additionally, because of his great age, he is able to use the following spells three times a day: *affect normal fires* and *pyrotechnics*. He can use *heat metal, suggestion, and hypnotism* once a day. He is also able to detect *cinnabryl* when within 100 feet of it three times a week.

Legacies: Anti-Missile, Displace, Duplicate, Feel Magic, Phase, Regeneration, Repel Metal, and Spell Shield.

Should the PCs attempt divinatory magic to discover more about him, Pyre is protected from such by the obscuring properties of the *cinnabryl* that permeates his system. Detect magic, detect evil, know alignment, and all such magic give neutral results similar to a white-out or static.

into containers evaporates quickly. Once they start up the river, they find no wildlife for two days as they cross the Shifting Dunes and the outer edge of Mosquito Land. Those sleeping without netting have a 60% chance of being infected with "the fever," a debilitating disease mosquitoes transmit. On the third day, they enter true forest. The descriptions of Jibarú given in the sourcebook should be used to describe the scenery to the PCs. Starting on this day, if the PCs step into the river to bathe, wash clothes, or get water, they are subject to attack from piranhas. A roll of one on 1d6 indicates an attack. Piranhas are detailed in the *Monstrous Manual*.

Those camping in the area have a chance to notice large human footprints in the mud near the river.

Turtles, frogs, and ducks are plentiful along the river and can be trapped. Fish may be caught using lines or nets. Boar and deer come to the river to drink, as do rabbits, foxes, and badgers. Twice more as they travel, the PCs come across footprints or broken foliage that shows someone passed along the river before them. If someone successfully uses the tracking proficiency, he or she can tell the tracks are those of a single, large humanoid.

The Theft

The night following the last sighting of footprints, while most of the PCs are asleep, "The Beast" attacks whoever is on guard for the second watch. He sneaks up behind the PC and tries to silently choke him. The Beast wants

boots, clothing, food, water, and weapons. He isn't interested in killing anyone, he just wants to better his chances of living through his escape from prison. If he renders the guard unconscious, he takes what he needs and departs. He has made no plans for a second guard and is surprised if there is one.

The Beast (Henri Jeneau), Escaped convict F7: AC 9 (Dex bonus); hp 65 (48 at present); THACO 12 (due to Str); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d2+5 (hands); ML steady (10); Int low (6); AL CN; XP 420.

Notes: S 18/93; D 16; C 15; W 10; Ch 7

The Beast has no weapons, but is proficient in unarmed combat. If he gains a choke hold on the guard, he attempts to maintain it long enough to render the guard unconscious. He is innocent of the murders he was said to commit, but was sent to prison anyway. His *cinnabryl* was confiscated and he went through the changes associated with losing his Legacy, leaving him with even less Intelligence than he had before. Prison frightens him, he doesn't like people much and he will not allow himself to be confined again. If the PCs awaken and capture him, he screams to be released and tries to throw himself on their weapons rather than being returned to prison.

Surprise Confrontation

The PCs may not be aware of it, but they have been under surveillance by the phanatons. If one of their number is a phanaton, wallara, or an elf (winged or not) among them, the PCs are accorded a much better reception. They are also treated more kindly if they have not unduly disturbed the forest (that is, making fires with dead wood, trapping or hunting only what they need to eat, and so on). The night after dealing with the Beast, as the PCs camp, they will begin to notice many, many gleaming eyes staring at them from the surrounding foliage. If they do not attack, a lone phanaton steps forward and speaks with them, using Common. Preparing to defend oneself is not seen as an attack by the phanatons.

If Pyre is with them in his guise as Vincente, he fights with a singular lack of success and surrenders at the first opportunity, relishing his role as "helpless human." He advises the party to talk rather than fight since he realizes the phanatons' cooperation can be very helpful to the party's quest.

Uí-Xingí (River-Soul) is both queen of her people and a powerful druid. She wants to know what the PCs want in Jibarú and how far they are prepared to go to get it. Her staff is decorated with two shrunken heads - araneans she slew personally when they attacked her tribe. The 30 phanatons with her are prepared to fire poisoned needles at the PCs if they attack or harm Uí-Xingí. They are the elite warriors of the tribe and include a 6th-level wizard among their number.

Uí-Xingí, Phanaton D8: AC 7; MV 9, GI 15; hp 50; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (staff); SZ S; ML elite (14); Int exceptional (15); AL TN; XP None—the party should not be fighting the phanatons. Uí-Xingí has no treasure of any interest to the party.

Notes: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Wis 18, Cha 18

Spells: *Bless, cure light wounds x 2, entangle, faerie fire, charm person or mammal, messenger, obscurment, slow poison, warp wood, snare, spike growth, summon insects, tree, neutralize poison, plant door, and sticks to snakes.* She carries a bundle of sticks in her hand. If the PCs begin a battle, she uses *faerie fire*, then *sticks to snakes*. She then retreats and fights as best she can with spells and weapons.

Tirigi, Phanaton W6: AC 6; MV 9, GI 15; hp 16; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 + poison (blowgun) or by spell; SZ S; ML steady (12); Int genius (17); AL CG; XP none.

Notes: S 11; D 16; C 12; W 13; Ch 12

Spells: *Audible glamer, magic missile, phantasmal force, wall of fog, invisibility, levitate, hold person, and spectral force.*

Special Equipment: Blowgun, 1d6 Class A poison darts.

Tirigi's fighting strategy is to cast *audible glamer*, mimicking the sounds of more phanatons on the way. The next round, they appear courtesy of his *phantasmal force* spell. Then he uses *hold person*, followed by *levitate* on an enemy fighter. *Magic missile* is reserved for any spellcaster he sees. He saves his other spells for help in getting away if necessary.

Phanaton warriors (29): AC 6; MV 9, GI 15; hp 14; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ S; ML 14; Int average (10); AL CG; XP none. See above.

Notes: S 14; D 16; C 15; W 10; Ch 10

Special Equipment: The warriors are each armed with a spear and a blowgun and six needles dipped a paralyzing poison.

They fire the blowguns first, utilizing their positions in the trees to better the angles of their shots and prevent the big folk from reaching them to engage in combat.

Assuming that the PCs choose to talk rather than fight (or after they have been defeated, they should not be able to win this encounter), Uí-Xingí asks for their story. If they tell her the truth (including the part about the lightning blasted tree), she looks puzzled and tells them they must come with her to Itucuá, where the High Queen lives. She assures them that there is no such tree on this river. She does not agree to them going any further up

the river and insists that they see the High Queen. To emphasize her point if there is any argument, she knocks a hole in their boat and sinks it.

The PCs may choose to accompany the phanatons to Itucuá or they may be carried there. If they go freely, Uí-Xingí and six warriors go with them.

The Journey

The journey across Jibarú is mostly uneventful except for the sightings of various animals, birds, and beautiful flowers. Random encounters may be used to add excitement if the DM wishes. The phanatons tell stories of the prowess of their ancestors. Many of these stories feature battles against the "evil spider-spirits" of Herath. The PCs should get the idea that the phanatons are basically good people who protect nature but that harming their environment or members of their tribe brings swift retribution from a race that is almost (but not quite) civilized.

After several days travel, the group reaches Itucuá. The largest city of Jibarú is almost invisible from the ground. It lies at a great bend in the Xingá River, but the platforms and huts that constitute the city are cleverly hidden among the trees.

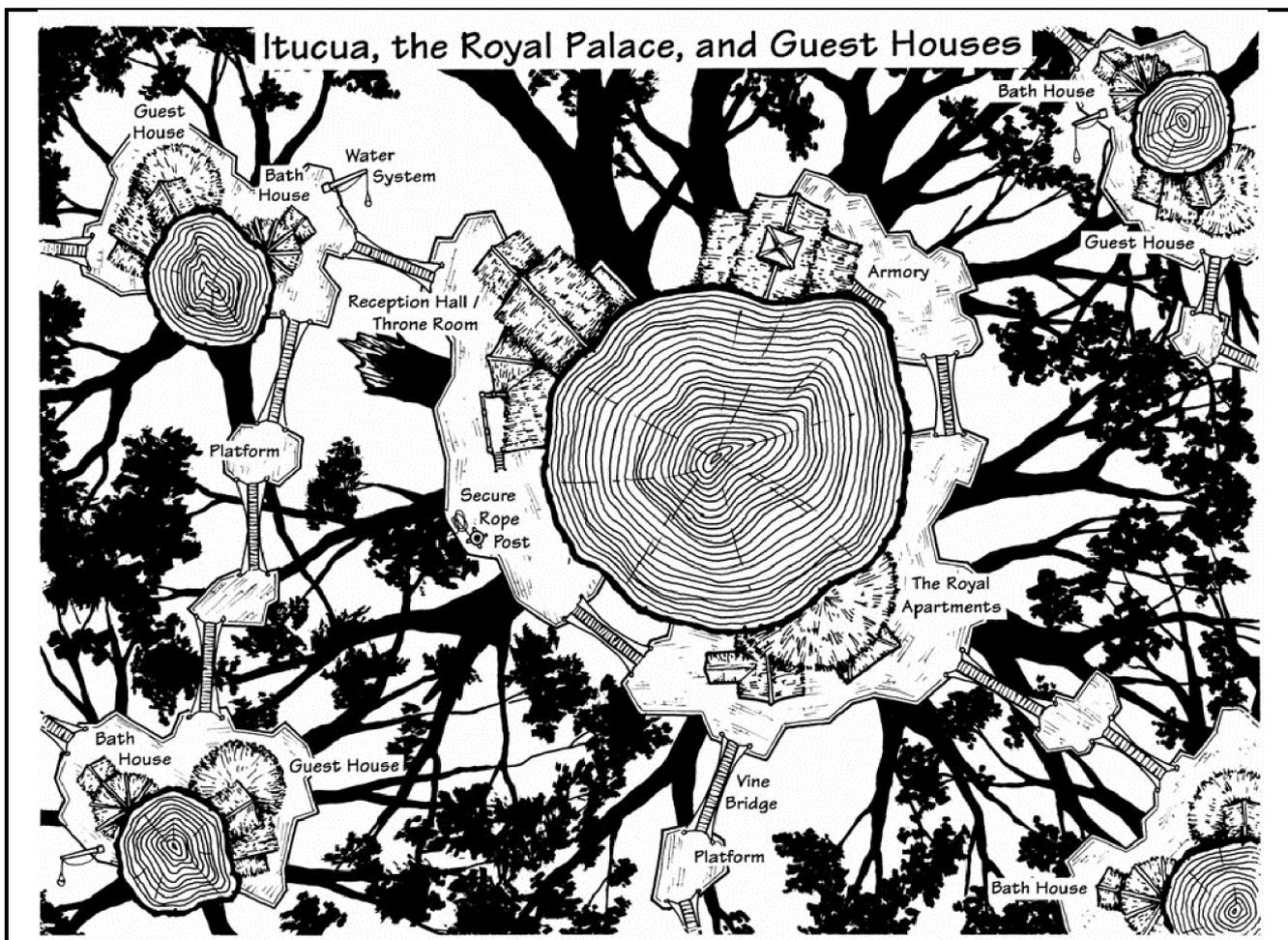
Spider Wrangling

The first hint that they are within the actual city comes when a young phanaton glides down from above, almost on top of the party. He is in pursuit of a runaway giant spider that scampers down the trunk of a huge tree, drops a line, and lands at the PCs' feet. The young phanaton whistles and hoots, and Uí-Xingí translates. "Don't kill it! Capture it!" she yells. The PCs are about to learn spider-wrangling.

The spider really just wants to escape, but is evil-tempered enough to attack anyone that gets in her way. The phanatons all spread out into a ring and attempt to herd the spider, prodding her with the blunt ends of their spears. A few grab vine ropes and attempt to lasso her. Without the party's help, they are unsuccessful. Frustrated, the spider turns and grasps a young phanaton, preparatory to biting him. This is a good chance for the PCs to step in and save the youngster, putting the phanatons in their debt.

Giant Spider (1): AC 4; MV 3, WB 12; hp 22; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (plus poison); SZ L (10' diameter); ML Elite (13); Int Low (5); AL CE; XP 650.

Notes: Dmg: The spider's bite is deadly. Anyone bitten must save vs. poison or die.



To Meet the Queen

Once the spider has been contained or killed, Uí-Xingí leads the party to the palace, a large series of platforms high in the trees, where they meet Queen Barana-Uí(Orchid-Soul). Vine ropes are dropped to the ground from approximately 100 feet above and the PCs are expected to climb them. Smart PCs will tie the ropes around themselves before attempting the climb.

Phanatons at the top will help pull up the rope as the PCs climb. Two successful Dexterity checks are required to reach the top. Failed checks result in a fall. If secured by the rope, the fall is only 10 feet and does 1d2 points of damage. Those not secured around the waist fall 10 to 30 feet before they check again to see if they managed to catch the rope and stop their fall. This results in 2d4 points of damage. If this check is missed, the PC plummets toward the ground. If the party can do nothing to stop the fall, an alert phanaton wizard passing below casts *feather fall* on the first one to suffer this fate, saving the individual from certain death at the last instant. She then shakes her head, hooting and clicking at the PC, grabs the vine, and ties it around his waist.

The queen meets the PCs in her throne room, a large area with an elaborate fan-back wood and reed chair. They are offered fruits, nuts, and clear water and asked to tell the queen their story. If they tell all of it, the queen says,

"You are the guardians. It was foretold that someday you would come. You must travel up the river for half a day. There you will find a small waterfall that spills into a deep pool before returning to the river again. At the top of that falls is a tree that was hit by lightning many years ago.

If you are brave enough, you must dive into the pool and swim toward the bottom. Many lengths down is an opening in the rock face behind the falls. Go into it. Then you must find the rock that is not a rock. That is what you seek. Remember the dangers of power and be wise in its use."

She nods and stands, expecting the PCs to depart.

The characters are free to explore Itucuá. Much of it may be inaccessible to them, however. Uí-Xingí can lead them to a large hut within the palace complex where they can rest for the night. Itucuá holds many family huts, several storage areas for food, workshops where the young are taught to make weapons and other items they will need, and the spider breeding pens. Uí-Xingí explains that they must leave in the morning and wishes them luck in their further journeys. She gives a necklace of polished wooden beads to whichever PC was most responsive and friendly to the phanatons or most polite to the queen.

At Last, The Treasure

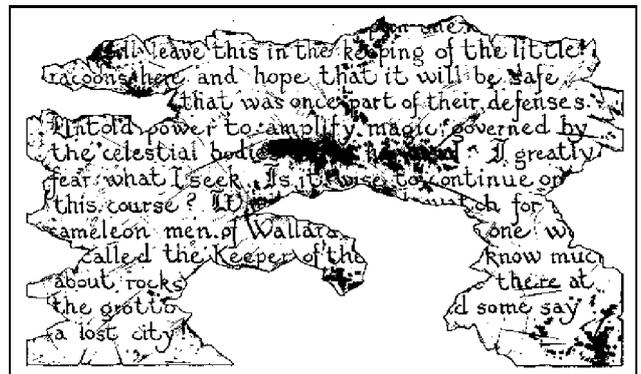
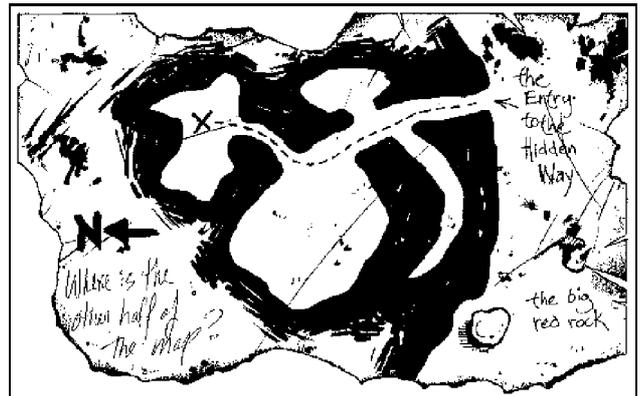
If they follow the queen's directions, the PCs come to the spot she described. The waterfall is small, falling only 10 feet or so into a pool of almost black water, churning up white foam across the surface. The characters need two things to succeed—some way to breathe underwater and both a magical and normal light source. The pool is about 30 feet deep and the entryway into the cave is 20 feet

down. Without a light, the water is quite murky and finding the entrance requires a successful attempt to find secret doors or a thief's find traps roll. Small fish nibble experimentally at the characters in the water (this may cause some panic if PCs believe they are piranhas). Something long and slow brushes past beneath them (a huge old trout).

Once they find the way in (using *water breathing* or holding their breaths), they enter a completely black cavern. Assuming they have a *light* or *continual light* spell going, it is canceled by the *continual darkness* spell that was cast inside. They need either another *light* spell or a lit dry torch in order to see. While still in darkness, however, they hear a dreadful moaning sound. As soon as a light is available, they see a repulsive looking, rotting ghostly form arise and move toward them menacingly, moaning and screeching.

It is only a *programmed illusion*, but the characters have no way of knowing that. They may scare themselves into serious damage. If he's with them, Pyre fights bravely from the rear while looking for the "rock that is not a rock."

Once they overcome the illusion, the PCs may locate the old chest that has been disguised to look like a rock. Inside is another section of the diary and a portion of the map they need to find the treasure they seek. A few other items are also inside.



The map shows a portion of a town or an outpost and is obviously only half a map. It is labeled as "The Hidden Way."

The diary entry reads:

... leave this in the keeping of the little raccoons here and hope it will be safe ... that once was part of their defenses . . . untold power to amplify magic, governed by the celestial bodies . . . I greatly fear what I seek. Is it wise to continue on this course?... chameleon men of Wallara . . . called the keeper of the . . . know much about rocks . . . the grotto . . . some say a lost city . . .

Both map and diary entries are written in faded ink. If the characters don't want to lose them both to the water, they need to be placed in something waterproof when the PCs leave.

Random Encounters in Jibarú

The Deer

As the party is camping one night just before dark along the river (before their encounter with the Beast), a deer springs through their encampment and rushes off into the woods. The deer was frightened by a predator, but has long since outdistanced it. If the characters wish to hunt the deer and bring it down to add to their store of provisions, they may do so. The DM should remember, however, that it is almost dark and PCs could easily become lost.

Storm on the River

It has been gray and drizzling all day. Unknown to the characters, farther upriver a heavy thunderstorm has caused the river to overflow its banks and sent a surge of water downriver in a raging torrent.

As the characters make their way upriver, the thunderstorm breaks over them and as they fight to bring the boat under control, they see a wall of water rushing down between the banks right at them. Besides the danger of a lightning strike from the storm, the boat becomes a wild, bucking bronco that they must wrestle to shore and tie off before they are overturned or swamped or the boat is smashed to splinters on the rocks in the river. The PCs have gone from a lazy paddle across a lake to white water rafting in a matter of moments.

Characters who are manning the oars must make a successful Strength check to hold the boat on course or steer it to one bank or the other. At least two characters must succeed to control the boat. If nobody is manning the oars, the boat is swept back down the river with the rushing water. Sails that were raised when the storm began are torn to shreds by the wind and lashing rain.

Manscorpion Patrol

A manscorpion patrol, sent to scout out the perimeter of Jibarú's jungles, has become hopelessly lost and is traveling in circles trying to find their bearings in the seemingly never-ending forest. They may meet the characters almost anywhere. They are tired, discouraged, hungry, and frightened that the wetness will remove their

The other items in the chest are a stoppered gourd, a carved wooden drum, six small opals, and two finely chiseled flint spear heads. The gourd holds a sweet-smelling liquid that tingles on the tongue of anyone tasting it. It is a *potion of extra healing*.

The opals are worth 50 gp each. The carved drum is of phanton make and might be worth 40 gp to the right collector. The spear heads were chipped by a particularly fine craftsman among the wallaras. Any of them would make a fine gift and would be much appreciated by the wallaras. If any character uses spears, they would also make good replacement heads.

protective makeup, leaving them vulnerable to the sun. They are also fearful of discovery by the phantons.

The DM should roll for surprise. If no one is surprised, the two parties see each other simultaneously, suddenly emerging from foliage. If the PCs are surprised, the manscorpions have heard them coming and hidden themselves, hoping to capture them and force the PCs to tell them how to get out of the seemingly cursed forest. If the manscorpions are surprised, the PCs see them wandering back and forth, gesticulating and arguing about which direction they should take.

The DM should feel free to utilize the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM sheet for manscorpions in the Appendixes and the section on them in the sourcebook to make this patrol as strong or weak as it needs to be to challenge the characters. It is up to the DM whether they are civil and merely ask directions or whether they feel they must cover their presence by silencing the PCs.

If this encounter is used and the characters help the manscorpions find their way back toward the Nimmurian border, the same group might be met again when the characters travel to Er. Though they will probably be in disguise when they go to Er, if their disguises wear off at inopportune times, it is possible that one or more of the manscorpions they helped could be in the vicinity and speak up on their behalf.

Should they be caught doing something and taken into custody, they might find that one of the manscorpions they helped get back home is on duty as a guard. He could leave the keys to their cell within easy reach "by accident," allowing them to escape. The manscorpion would, of course, warn them to leave Er and not come back on pain of death.

Herathians

As the characters travel on toward Wallara, they come upon a hidden encampment of "humans." The people treat them with caution and seem a little put out by the party's discovery of them. If the PCs have a phanton among them, the humans seem almost hysterically fearful of the character (or NPC). They try to avoid contact with the phanton, visibly flinching and trying quite unsuccessfully to cover their aversion.

They claim that they are traders from Vilaverde who lost their way and wandered into the Forbidden Hills.

They also claim that they are in the woods to find one of their children who strayed from their encampment and has become lost. This last part is true.

The people are noble araneans from Herath. One of the family's more headstrong children has indeed disappeared. She was out roving in the woods near their dwelling when the phanatons staged a raid into the area.

She was swept up along with the spiders. Her father, his brother (the child's uncle), the child's older sister and a friend of the family (female) are following the trail of the phanatons and hope to recover the child before she is "killed and eaten by the savages." The DM is free to detail the family. They are all wizards and would appreciate the PCs' help in regaining their child.

III. Corroboree and Custom

This adventure deals heavily with the customs and taboos of the chameleon men of Wallara. It is suitable for six to eight characters of levels 5-7; assuming the same characters take part in the adventures, the story awards are enough to allow them to gain one level in a single class from each prior scenario. Adjustments may be made for parties of lower or higher level. In order to maximize both DM and player enjoyment, the DM must be familiar with the various practices and superstitions detailed in the sourcebook.

In brief these are: Strangers should wait to be recognized before entering a village; they should not smile when approaching. Challenges and warfare are intended to be nonlethal and are fought according to certain rules. Wallaras do not take kindly to those who allow their shadows to fall on another person. Pointing a short stick or bone at someone means the individual is casting a terrible hex on that person. Only initiates may attend a corroboree; if initiated while attending, great respect must be shown for sacred objects, dances and songs. Everything must be performed correctly.

The Outback

Once across the Xingá River, the forest of Jibarú gradually gives way to the open plains of Wallara. If the characters traveled due east, they would come out into the Kookaroo Forest, but having to detour around tangled clumps of nettles and finding the easiest way through leads them more northerly, and they should emerge somewhere around the site of the Battle of Wee Waa.

The Village

The next day's travel brings the characters to a wallara village. They are supposed to announce their presence and wait, unsmiling, to be met outside the village. Most likely, the PCs do not know this. If one of the characters is a wallara, he knows the proper things to do, but assumes that the rest of the party knows as well.

The DM should take the player aside and explain the customs, but emphasize that wallara beliefs focus on individual choice. If his friends choose to break taboos or don't check with him first to see if there are any, he is free to sit and await a welcome without telling his traveling companions anything—or even calling attention to the fact that he has been left behind as they approach the village. This is known to wallaras as a learning experience.

Naturally, the village warriors take great exception to anyone strolling into the village, especially if they are smiling! If the PCs do wait outside to be noticed, the

The details of the land can be found in the sourcebook. When they reach the site, it is time to camp for the night. Once they are settled, the characters are attacked by a huge band of wild dingoes (feral dogs).

Wild Dingoes (10): AC 7; MV 15; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ S (3' long); Int Semi (4); AL N; ML Steady (11); XP 35 each.

The dingoes are large tan dogs that look unkempt and fierce. They can pull down a kangaroo or deer and have no fear of humans or demihumans. They do not fear fire, even leaping in to attack those standing close to a blazing campfire. They hunt in packs using both guile and sheer numbers to overcome their prey. They are led by a dominant male that has 2 HD and 9 hit points. They want food and will depart (but trail the party in hopes of more) if enough food is thrown to them.

warriors are far less menacing. Instead of vanishing and popping into a circle around the party with spears ready, they approach at a walk with their spears held point down. In either case, if the party doesn't start a fight, the wallaras do not either. They do make threatening motions with their spears, jabbing them toward the characters, but stopping short of harming them.

The party needs a translator, as these folk speak only Risil, their own language. Miming and broad gestures help. Pyre does not help, though he understands every word they say, as he enjoys "staying in character" in his role as guide. Though he is treated as an outsider as well, the wallaras react to Pyre somewhat differently than the rest of the party. They sense that he is somehow different, and show him slightly more deference.

If a fight begins, the wallaras expect the characters to choose one or two from among them to fight the village

champions. The wallaras fan out into a large circle and present boomerangs, spears, nulla-nullas, and shields to the characters so they may choose their weapons. They do not understand if the PCs begin a real battle; for them the matter must be decided in a fair fight with specific rules.

Pretty much anything the PCs do may be grounds for calling for a fight. They might smile or let their shadows fall on the warriors or commit some other social blunder that calls for a battle to restore order. The PCs may find the wallaras' actions utterly unfathomable. While seeming threatening, this first meeting should actually have comedic overtones as each side tries to figure out what the other side is doing and why. It should give the characters some insight into wallaran society and beliefs.

Kookana and Baluku, Wallara champions F7: AC 9; MV 12; hp 55 each; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; ML champion (15) Int average (10); AL LG; XP 975 each.

Notes: S 15, D 13, C 14, W 12, Ch 10

Special Equipment: Both carry shields, two spears with a wommera (spear thrower), a boomerang, and a nulla-nulla (club).

They fully expect a fair fight by the rules with which they are familiar. When someone is badly hurt (20 hp damage for them, half their opponent's hit points), they are more than happy to stop the fight.

Wallaras F2 (12): AC 9; MV 12; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; All other stats average; AL LG or NG; XP 120 each.

Notes: These have the same equipment as the champions.

The DM should be familiar with the fighting customs detailed in the sourcebook in order to run this section correctly. The PCs should gain no experience from killing any wallaras.

Once the fight has been resolved (or during it, if the PCs are not stopping), Kankiroo the Mendoo (medicine man) returns from an herb gathering expedition. He knows some Common and a little elvish, and can sort out any disagreements if given the chance. If the PCs behave themselves once he arrives, they are invited to the village where they can rest and eat. Dinner for the evening is roast kangaroo and yams.

Over dinner, they are encouraged to tell the story of their journey. Kankiroo translates as best he can and all the others nod and look at one another knowingly. If they mention a keeper, a grotto, or a lost city, Kankiroo tells them they must seek out the lost city of Risilvar and ask there for the Keeper. Most of the wallaras know the way and offer their services as guides for the PCs.

By studying the wallaras, PCs may learn to interpret what they are saying from their changes of color. This is also a good way to gauge subtleties in meaning. A darkening of color indicates that the subject is important to the speaker. Slow swirling hues mean that the topic is not of great importance or is uninteresting at present. Faster swirls mean the wallara is excited or disturbed, and quick changes in the direction of the patterns indicate that the speaker is being humorous or telling a tall tale. Blanching of coloration may mean the speaker is tired, disillusioned, or sad.

Stampede

The next morning, a guide leads them to Risilvar. As they cross the dry plains of tall grasses, they suddenly hear quick pounding noises and feel the ground shaking. They have one round to declare actions before an enormous clutch of emus (large, flightless birds) is upon them. The panicked emus are running from the dingoes that harried the PCs earlier. Those caught in the stampede suffer 1d8 damage per round until able to extricate themselves or until the stampede is no longer in the immediate area (roll 1d6 for how many rounds the stampede takes to pass).

There are no trees nearby. The wallara who is with them simply *vanishes* and reappears in a safe area, forgetting that the PCs have no such talent. *Flying*, *levitating*, or running away and to the side of the area are all viable options. Falling to the ground and covering their heads is another. Those running must make a successful Dexterity check to escape. Failure indicates that they remained within the area. Falling and covering the head reduces damage to half. Emus are fully the size of humans, being 6 feet tall and weighing about 130 pounds.

Emus (20): AC 7; MV 18; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (trample); SZ M (6' tall); ML Average (9); Int Semi (2); AL N; XP 65 each.

Emus are described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL under the Bird entry. PCs attempting swashbuckling maneuvers such as leaping onto an emu to ride it (and thus avoid being trampled) must make a successful attack roll and a Dexterity check. If the PC weighs more than 100 pounds, the emu runs a few feet and then collapses under the PC's weight—both are automatically trampled. If the PC weighs less, the emu carries the individual out of the general stampede and the PC can safely jump off. Trying to fight the emus to turn them aside results in being trampled; there are just too many of them and they are running at full speed.

Risilvar

Their guide leads the PCs up into the foothills of the Forbidden Highlands, heading for a large rock outcropping that looks like a series of giant heads poking

out of the ground. In and around the heads are other weird formations that stretch eerily upward. Some look almost like houses carved into and out of the native rock. Cave openings dot the faces of the rocks.

As they get closer, the characters can see that the houselike things really are homes. Wallaras come and go among the cave openings and some stand atop upthrust spires of rock. Many of the rounded head-shaped domes have openings into them as well. The PCs have arrived in the lost city of Risilvar.

Dozens of curious wallaras turn out to greet the characters, who should know by now to announce their presence and wait to be invited in. Talking among themselves and pointing at the PCs, the wallaras shepherd the PCs into the city, leading them into a large central cavern.

Light gleams from crystals set into the walls and illuminates hundreds of strange paintings done in ocher. Markings of swirls and slashlike symbols adorn many surfaces as well. Opals and gold nuggets gleam from ledges and chinks in the rock. Escorted to the center of this huge cavern, the PCs are soon surrounded by a thousand wallaras, so many the very air seems to thicken with their presence. The throng of wallaras sits as an old Trader comes forward. He sits across from the PCs and asks in Common what they seek in Risilvar. The correct answer is knowledge. All wallaras come to Risilvar to gain knowledge of their past. However long it takes for the PCs to say they seek knowledge, the wallaras simply sit and stare at them, waiting for them to learn wisdom.

If they ask about a keeper or a grotto, the Trader assumes they have answered correctly and a runner is sent to fetch Jikaru, the Keeper of Tales. Bakaloo "Sunskin," leader of all the wallaras, does not show himself to be any different from the thousand other wallaras present. He wishes to wait and see what the strangers do. Jikaru, the Keeper of Tales, is an old Mendoo. He leans upon his staff and peers down at the seated PCs before lowering himself to sit facing them. Speaking in Common, he asks why they need the Keeper of Tales.

Once they have answered with the tale of their quest, he suggests that they go to some quiet caves nearby and rest while he and his people prepare for a corroboree to initiate them. He explains that he can tell them nothing unless they become initiates. Guides are eager to take them to adjoining caves.

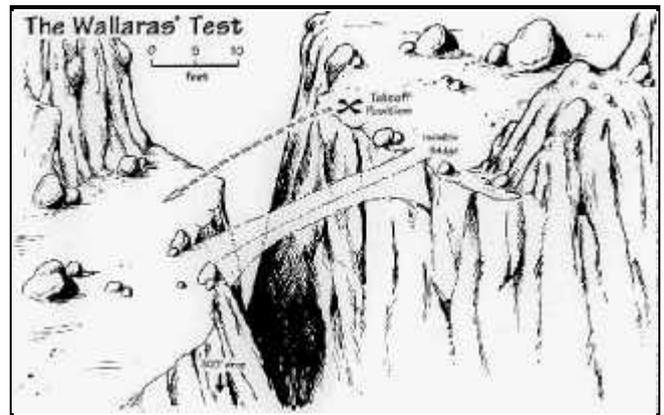
PCs are free to wander about, but quickly become disoriented and lost in the vast cave system. Helpful wallaras guide them back to their caves. When it is dark, the Keeper comes for them and leads them outside and up to the top of one of the spires.

Initiation

The spire towers over 200 feet into the air and is matched by its twin that stands about 15 feet away. They are roughly the same height, though the one the PCs stand upon is about a foot higher. Around 100 wallaras crowd the tops of each tower. The characters are asked to swear an oath of friendship with the Wallaran people. The

oath is sealed by drinking a bitter bark tea. Since the PCs lack the ability to shift colors, the wallaras paint intricate designs on their faces, arms, and legs with ocher pigments. Each is given a boomerang, a spear and wommera, and a nulla-nulla. All the wallaras begin swinging bull roarers around, creating a terrible racket as the rising and falling tones combat one another. Suddenly all fall silent.

The Keeper then nods to a few young warriors who run toward the edge of the spire, obviously preparing to jump to the companion peak. The PCs may or may not notice that each winks out momentarily in midair and lands safely on the other spire. The PCs are expected to follow suit. This is the part of the initiation that tests their bravery. If they refuse to even try the jump, they fail and cannot be told the secrets of the tribe. Each PC must make an attempt to jump, successful or not.



A successful Strength check at %2 followed by a successful Dexterity check allows a PC who has at least a 13 Strength to leap the distance without falling. The PC will just catch the other side and must clamber up and over the top. To those with Strength lower than 13, it is obvious they cannot possibly make the jump successfully. Fortunately, the wallaras have no objections to people using magic to help themselves across—after all, they use something similar to *dimension door* themselves.

Other solutions are possible as well. To some extent, this is a test of Wisdom as well as bravery. Climbing back down the path to the spire and up the path to the other one is perfectly acceptable. So is having a strong character carry a weaker one across (at a further %2 penalty to Strength). If all else fails, clever PCs may notice the *invisible* rock bridge that connects the two and utilize it to reach the other side.

The Keeper will not allow weaker PCs to try a suicidal jump in the name of being initiated. He tells such individuals about the bridge. Once all the PCs are on the other side, the wallaras there escort them down into the central cavern again. There they are the guests of honor at a corroboree. They are shown the sacred objects (carved sticks and rocks, a large smoothed opal, and an old dragon scale), are each given a bull roarer to indicate that they are considered adults within the tribe, and taught the sacred dances and songs. Finally, a feast is laid out and all eat heartily.

The Great Tookoo

After the meal, the Keeper asks the PCs to come with him to see the Great Tookoo (sacred site) of Risilvar. Bakaloo and eight guards go with them. The Keeper leads them to the tookoo, the Grotto of the Glistening Stars. This large cavern holds a pool, the water of which bubbles up and splashes merrily out as a slender waterfall that sprays down the cliff face outside. Standing in the pool is a great monolith of crystal with veins of gold shot through it. The area directly above the crystal is open, allowing the moon to shine down into the cavern. Thousands of tiny lights glow throughout the cave, other bits of crystal reflecting back the light that is reflected by the crystal monolith.

The Keeper motions for the PCs to sit and begins his tale.

You have asked about things that are very old. This story was told to me by the one who was Keeper before me, who had it in an unbroken line of Keepers before him. This is how I heard it told. I now tell it to you.

Once there was a kingdom. They had powerful magic that could be used either to heal or to destroy. Then strangers came to their land pretending to be friends. The strangers were wanderers, nomads who looked fierce and strange. They said that in their homeland all hands were turned against them, for the people feared that they sought to take their lands and pushed them ever more westward. The good people of the kingdom welcomed them as friends and together they fought the dark tribes of the jungle.

But the newcomers coveted the good peoples' magic. They plotted and schemed and then attacked, driving out the good people of the kingdom. The people destroyed all but one of their powerful magic devises, hoping the strangers would not gain control of such power and misuse it. Only the one device was not destroyed. A priest took items away with him that controlled the magical device, however, so the strangers could not use it properly.

That priest was dying. He met one of our kind and told the story to him. When he died, the wallara took one of the controlling items away with him and left the other with the

body of the priest—these he sealed in a cave. At some later time, the controlling device was stolen from him. No one now knows where it might be. The other, so far as I know, still lies sealed in the cave. I know only that he called it "the Hidden Way." To my knowledge he never told anyone where the cave was.

I have seen the records of those times, and possibly information on this hidden way may be found in the archives of the city of Er in Nimmur. If you go there be very careful, for it is said that the manscorpions of Nimmur were those very strangers that drove out the original people of the land.

I tell you this as you now are our friends and allies, but I think that this treasure may bring more harm than good if it is uncovered. Of course, once such a thing is known about, the knowledge may not be shut away again. It may be that you have been given the chance to recover the items so that they do not fall into the wrong hands. Consider well what you will do.

For now, we have gifts for you, things you have more need for than we do.

Bakaloo signals to his guards who bring forward a kangaroo skin bag. He tells the PCs that they may each put one hand in the bag and draw forth whatever they first touch.

There has not been much treasure in the adventures thus far. This is an opportunity for the DM to customize treasure for the party, awarding one good item to each character. If the DM prefers a magic-poor game, the gifts may be special crafted items that are worth money; otherwise, each item should be a magical item for which the character has a particular need. Red steel swords, armor, or bracers, or a useful miscellaneous item might help the PCs through the rest of the adventures. The items should not be too strong, nor should they be single-use items like potions or scrolls. The DM should keep in mind that sooner or later the party is likely to have to face Pyre and they will need at least some magic if they are to survive. They are also given 300 gp in opals.

Though the characters are welcome to remain, they will probably want to continue their journey within a day or two.

Intrigue in the Outback

The characters have been being followed. The thugs who attacked the old man in Bom Jardim caught him again as he prepared to leave the town and forced him to tell them the location of the packet they were sent to retrieve. He told them he gave it to the characters. The thugs are mercenaries hired by a powerful Herathian wizard living in Nimmur.

Having discovered through his spies that the old sailor held the means to find the missing parts to the Nimmurian Star Device, he sent the thugs to acquire the documents. Failing that, they tracked the PCs through Jibarú and Wallara. They have been joined by a Herathian wizard and instructed to get the packet and anything else the characters have discovered.

The wizard casts *seeming* on them each day so they can pass for wallaras from a distance. They don't speak the language, can't shift colors, and know nothing of wallaran customs. The ruse becomes obvious to anyone who knows about the culture. They attack when the PCs leave Risilvar, running away if they can't win within three rounds, but try again in later scenarios. If they grab the information, the PCs will have to chase them down to recover it. The thugs were detailed earlier.

Gior, aranean wizard: AC 3 (bracers); MV 18, Wb 12; 9th-level wizard; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Poison, spells; AL N; All stats are 10 except Dex 14, Int 18.

Notes: S 10, D 14, C 10, W 10

Special Equipment: *Bracers of defense AC 3 and dust of tracelessness* (4 doses).

Spells: *Color spray, magic missile x2, wall of fog, detect invisibility, ESP, web, dispel magic, hold person, vampiric touch, improved invisibility, stonewall, and seeming.*

Gior is not stupid and if an encounter is going against him, he turns *invisible* and flees, changing shape if necessary to make certain he gets away. Thugs are easy enough to come by, and he will abandon them at need. He uses his *dust of tracelessness* to mask his trail, making it impossible for the characters to follow him and finish him off. Should the PCs find some clever way to locate him, he is more than willing to tell them what he's after in return for his life and freedom. The DM needs to determine his employer's identity and whereabouts. If Gior is taken out of the action, he can be replaced with another wizard (using his stats) in subsequent attacks.

III. The Archives of the Ancients

This scenario deals with Nimmur, especially the cities of Um-Shedu and Er. It is for six to eight characters of levels 6-8. Story awards allow continuing PCs to gain one level in one class. If any characters are ee'ar or enduks, it is vitally important that they go to Um-Shedu, where they can obtain magical disguises, before traveling to Er.

The wallaras warn the PCs not to go through the Forbidden Highlands to reach Nimmur, but Pyre as Vincente declares that he has often traveled through the area and not come to any harm. Unless the characters backtrack through Jibarú, any path through the Forbidden Highlands snakes back and forth, detours around chasms, and finally leads them to Um-Shedu. If the

characters insist on avoiding the Forbidden Highlands, allow them to choose another route. Though they lose some possible assistance in this way, the characters should not be forced to go to Um-Shedu. Just go to the section leading to Er. Descriptions of Nimmur, Er, and Um-Shedu may be found in the accompanying sourcebook.

Um-Shedu

Um-Shedu is under siege. The city has been fortified and readied. The PCs arrive above and behind the city, following a track down from the hills. Below they can see and hear a pitched battle. Hundreds of creatures, half man-half scorpion, driving chariots assault the mud brick barricades and attempt to hurl fire against them.

The barricades are defended by other manscorpions who rush to fill any breach in the wall and winged creatures who swoop down near the chariots and drop rocks, nets, and what looks like debris on the attackers. The light flashes of spells arc the sky. As they take in the scene below, a winged figure pauses in midair and points to them. Several of the manscorpion defenders turn and charge toward them accompanied by winged, bullheaded men.

The enduks and manscorpions believe the characters are attacking from the rear, which they had thought was secure. After Nessaria calls out a challenge, they move to fight unless the PCs have ee'ar or enduks among them or show that they come in peace. The PCs may have already moved to attack the manscorpions who are assaulting the city. If such is the case, one enduk (Gilmun) stays to watch them (being distrustful of new allies), while the rest return to the battle. Should the PCs attack the defenders, those sent to face them are as follows:

Gilmun and Nessaria, enduk F8: AC 6; MV 12, FI 12 (C); hp 60 each; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6+2; ML steady (12); Int highly (14); AL LG; XP 650

Notes: S 16, D 13, C 16, W 12, Ch 12

Special Equipment: They carry footman's maces.

Manscorpion fighters F6 (4): AC 7; MV 12; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 3d2%1/3d2%1/1d4 (claw/claw/tail) or 1d6 (short sword); SA stinger; Int average (10); AL NG; ML steady (12); XP 270.

Notes: S 10, D 10, C 10, W 10, Ch 10, SA: If hit with the tail stinger, the victim must make a successful save vs. poison at %2 or fall asleep for 2%16 rounds.

If the characters fight the manscorpions, they should encounter foot soldiers. These have the same statistics as the defender manscorpions. The PCs are outnumbered three to one, but the attackers are basically cowardly due to fighting in sunlight and run away if given an open wound (6 or more points damage from a single

blow). This is the PCs' first look at the effects of the sun on manscorpions.

Should the PCs help the defenders drive off the manscorpions, they are cautiously welcomed. Should they wish, the enduks, ee'aar, and defender manscorpions tell them the history behind their presence and the attack (detailed in the sourcebook) and explain that they are trying to reclaim the kingdom for the enduks. The characters may explain their mission, which will cause much excitement and speculation among the defenders. If they do so, Gundaluk (an enduk War Priest) steps forward. He assures himself that the PCs are not evil and he tells them what the Star Device (he calls it a Celestial Power Collector) actually is and what it was intended to do. He says they have to go to Er for information on the Hidden Way and says they must consult the archives.

Elessa, an ee'aar wizard offers to provide the PCs with magical items that will disguise them as manscorpions in return for a favor. The defenders of Um-Shedu would like to make an assault on Er but know that thousands of manscorpions can come screaming up out of the underground tunnels. Their main objective in an assault would be to penetrate the temple and use their engineering skills to seal off the tunnel inside the temple. They suspect it is in the main sanctuary. If the PCs will confirm the tunnel's location, she will give them *disguise rings*. She explains that unless they look like manscorpions, they won't be allowed into the temple where the archives are kept. The rings have only three charges and must be used sparingly. Each change lasts for three hours. In addition, they are each awarded a *potion of invisibility* or a *potion of healing* for their help against the attackers.

If they agree, the defenders urge them to travel to Er as quickly as possible. Gilmun goes along to bring back the information. They suggest that the PCs go through the woods and cross the Ganlil River below Ennamasur. Then they should travel north until they sight the road and

Into the City

The great ziggurat of Er towers above the flat countryside like a mountain. A long canal surrounds the city wall and provides irrigation for the fields beyond. Hundreds of workers of all races work the fields, overseen by fierce looking manscorpions.

If they are disguised as manscorpions, the PCs pass through one of the gates in the wall with no trouble. Otherwise, they are treated with great suspicion, questioned at length about who they are and what they intend to do in the city of Er. If they don't get the answers they want (the PCs are lost merchants or some such tale), the guards do not allow the PCs in at all. In such a situation, the PCs will have to sneak in under cover of darkness later.

One of the first things the party notices is a pair of carved stone monuments with large four-pointed, flat, star-shaped crystals set into the tops. They may also be surprised by the number of races besides the

pick a way through the woods just to the south of the road as long as they can, avoiding the cities. When they reach Er, they should use their rings. From that point on, they have nine hours to find the information they seek and the tunnel in the sanctuary. Pyre-Vincente is also anxious to go. Though he enjoys showing his skill as an actor, he is tiring of the limitations of his chosen role and even more eager to acquire control of the Star Device now that he knows more about it.

Ambush on the Road to Er

If they have not been killed by the party, the thugs and the wizard attack the PCs once again as they travel toward Er. This is their last chance to fulfill their mission and they go all out. The wizard begins the fight by casting *web* and anchoring it to various trees. Though he hopes to catch some PCs in it, his real goal is to cut off retreat from the area. The thugs then fire arrows at the PCs for two rounds before closing for the attack. They concentrate fire on PC spellcasters.

On the second round of arrow fire the wizard casts *color spray* on the party. Using his *improved invisibility*, he spends the rest of the battle moving around and casting spells where they will cause the most damage and confusion. If his people are obviously losing, he moves back among the trees, changes to spider form, and runs away. The thugs fight to the death or until only one or two are left. The PCs can learn what they were after from the survivors. They don't know their employer's name, only that he pays well and wants what the party has acquired. Each thug has 25 gp worth of coins and his weapons (swords, bows, and arrows).

The rest of the journey may be uneventful or the DM may use random encounters to keep the party on their toes. Pyre-Vincente becomes more impatient and arrogant the closer the PCs come to Er.

manscorpions in the city. Vilaverdians from Porto Escorpião and Herathian settlers move through the streets. Dozens of other strains, collared as slaves, carry on their appointed tasks.

Painted manscorpions in hideous masks and tunic shawls walk or ride by, shaded by huge parasols. As the PCs travel toward the ziggurat where the archives and the temple can be found, they notice more monuments like the first ones. If they spoke with the enduks, they know these are all part of the Celestial Power Collector. Alert PCs may notice a humming noise underscoring the general din of the bustle of the city.

With only that small warning, the monuments all over the city suddenly erupt with beams of fiery light. Manscorpions caught in the beams scream and burst into flame. The PCs must make successful Dexterity checks to leap for cover behind buildings or into recesses. If unsuccessful, they are grazed by the beam and take half

damage from it. A successful save vs. spell reduces the damage to one quarter. The beam does 10d6+10 points of damage (5d10+5 for half). Panicked manscorpions rush everywhere. The beam plays across the nearby streets, then winks out. Crisped bodies litter the street.

The PCs should take this opportunity to go to the temple while the manscorpions are disorganized and fearful. If they do so, they may enter with no problems. Otherwise, they must explain to the guards what they want with the archives and why they brought no offering to the temple.

The Archives

The archives are arranged by subject. What the PCs want is in the history section. It is a book by an old sohktar (manscorpion) general called *The Hidden Way: An Account of the Surprise Invasion of Nimmur*. The PCs should recognize part of the title. The book is dusty and rambles on about the conquest of the foolish Nimmurians. It also provides the second half of the map entitled the Hidden Way and pinpoints the location of the cave system. The PCs can take the whole book. No one will notice in the wake of the burning beams.

The Sanctuary

The sanctuary is a different matter. Hundreds of manscorpions crowd the sanctuary hoping to appease the Immortals, especially their patron Menlil. Scribes note what offering each supplicant brings before allowing them into the temple. The PCs must provide some sort of offering to be allowed inside. Fresh food, fine cloth, opals, finely made weapons, and similar tribute are all accepted. So are offers of service to the temple or scribing skills (a PC is given a wax tablet and stylus and set to work immediately).

Once inside, it is difficult to search the area with so many manscorpions packed into it, but if they wait for an hour until a service to Menlil is concluded, most leave and the PCs can look around the sanctuary. It requires a successful find traps or secret doors roll to spot the tunnel entry. It is a highly decorated circle within many other circles on the floor. A concealed lever on the wall

drops the circle open and reveals a ramp leading downward. Once they know where it is and how it works, the PCs should leave. Exploring below leads to death. At some point during the search, the PCs should realize that Pyre-Vincente is no longer with them. Having recognized the four-pointed crystals in the tops of the monuments as twins to his own, he waited only to find the location of the key before leaving to acquire it for himself. Gilmun returns to Um-Shedu.

The Key

The Hidden Way is quite close to the city, but Vincente has a head start. As fate would have it, in a show of power, the King of Er has ordered that his magical *flying chariot* drawn by four enslaved pegataurs be made ready. It awaits just outside the temple when the PCs emerge. Only one guard stands watch (use standard stats given

earlier). The characters can take the chariot and fly to the site. Their disguises are wearing thin and the pegataurs agree to take them in return for being freed once they arrive. Pegataurs are detailed in the MYSTARA MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix. The pegataurs can tell them that a manscorpion ran out of the temple earlier, changed into a huge red dragon and flew away.

The Hidden Way

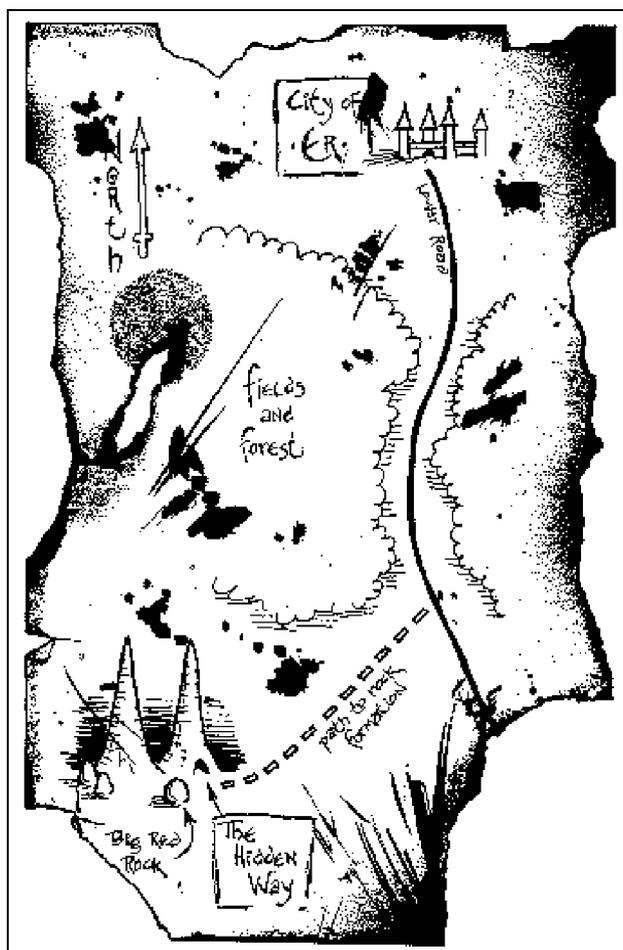
When they arrive at the Hidden Way, they find the entryway broken open. Following the map, they come to the chamber where the enduk priest was laid to rest. Inside are scattered bones. As the characters enter, the ghostly figure of a noble-looking enduk rises from the bones and looks at them sorrowfully.

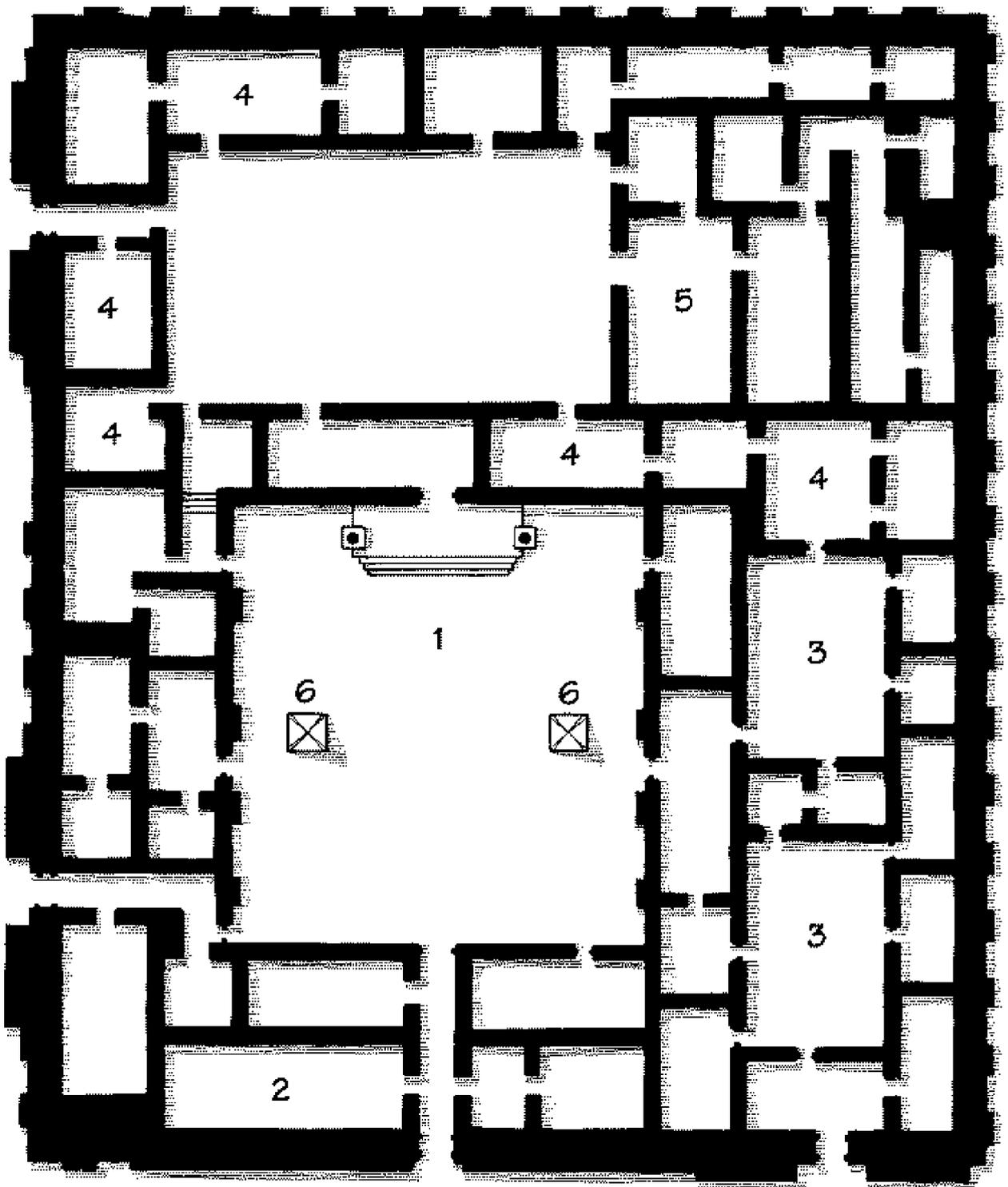
"See what has been done," he says in Common.

"The key that controls the celestial power collector has been taken by a thing of great evil. This brings great danger upon all.

"Even now he takes the key and moves to fetch the viewing crystal that he keeps in his lair in the Dark Jungle. With both, he can activate and control the monuments. You must prevent that. Only if you bring both the key and the crystal to the temple in Er, may they be destroyed. This I ask you to do."

The figure points to a wax tablet and fades.





The Temple in Er

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Main Courtyard | 4 Priests' Rooms |
| 2 Archives | 5 Main Sanctuary |
| 3 Lesser Sanctuaries | 6 Star Device Monuments |

IV. Into the Jungle of Darkness

The final adventure takes the characters into the Dark Jungle in search of Pyre's lair. Story awards from the prior scenario allow the PCs to gain one level in a single class. This adventure is for six to eight characters of 7th%9th level and begins immediately following the last adventure.

The Wax Tablet

The text of the wax tablet is as follows. The DM should read it in the old enduk's voice or allow the players to read it aloud:

I, Sarshurgon, high priest of the great Immortal Idu, here inscribe my last words. Though I have failed in my task, I hope that what I have done can prevent the cursed manscorpions from using Idu's gift to us, the Celestial Power Collector. May this serve as a warning to those who come after - trust not the stranger who comes to you with gifts but covets your goods. To our eternal regret, we trusted the manscorpions.

They came among us and offered their help to defeat the orcs from the Dark Jungle who waged war upon us. Gladly we welcomed new allies. If we had only known that they would turn against us, driving us out as thousands of them poured from dark, secret tunnels beneath the cities! They had even made a tunnel that reached into the great temple in Er itself. Thus we were betrayed from within as we attempted to destroy the Celestial Power Collector. We knew that the city would fall to them; we hoped we had time to destroy the device that augmented our healing spells but that would be used as an engine of great destruction by the power-hungry manscorpions.

Alas, there was no time to go through the steps to destroy it and so I fled with the controlling key and the viewing crystal, knowing that without them the manscorpions could not use the device. Without the key the power cannot be safely drained into the collector in the temple. Without the viewing crystal the beams of fiery light that can be fired from the various monuments that serve as power collectors throughout the city cannot be aimed. My fellow priests who stayed behind to insure my escape are much in my thoughts. I hope that they died quickly and painlessly, but I fear this was not their fate.

I begin to wonder if I should not try to return to the temple to destroy these controlling devices. While still intact, they represent a terrible danger. If the monuments that collect the energy of the sun, moon, and stars were placed upon wagons and sent out ahead of an army such as the manscorpions possess, and if the key and crystal were carried along, all in their path could be destroyed in an

instant! Immortal Idu, guide my thoughts. Would you wish your peaceful gift to us to be put to such a use?

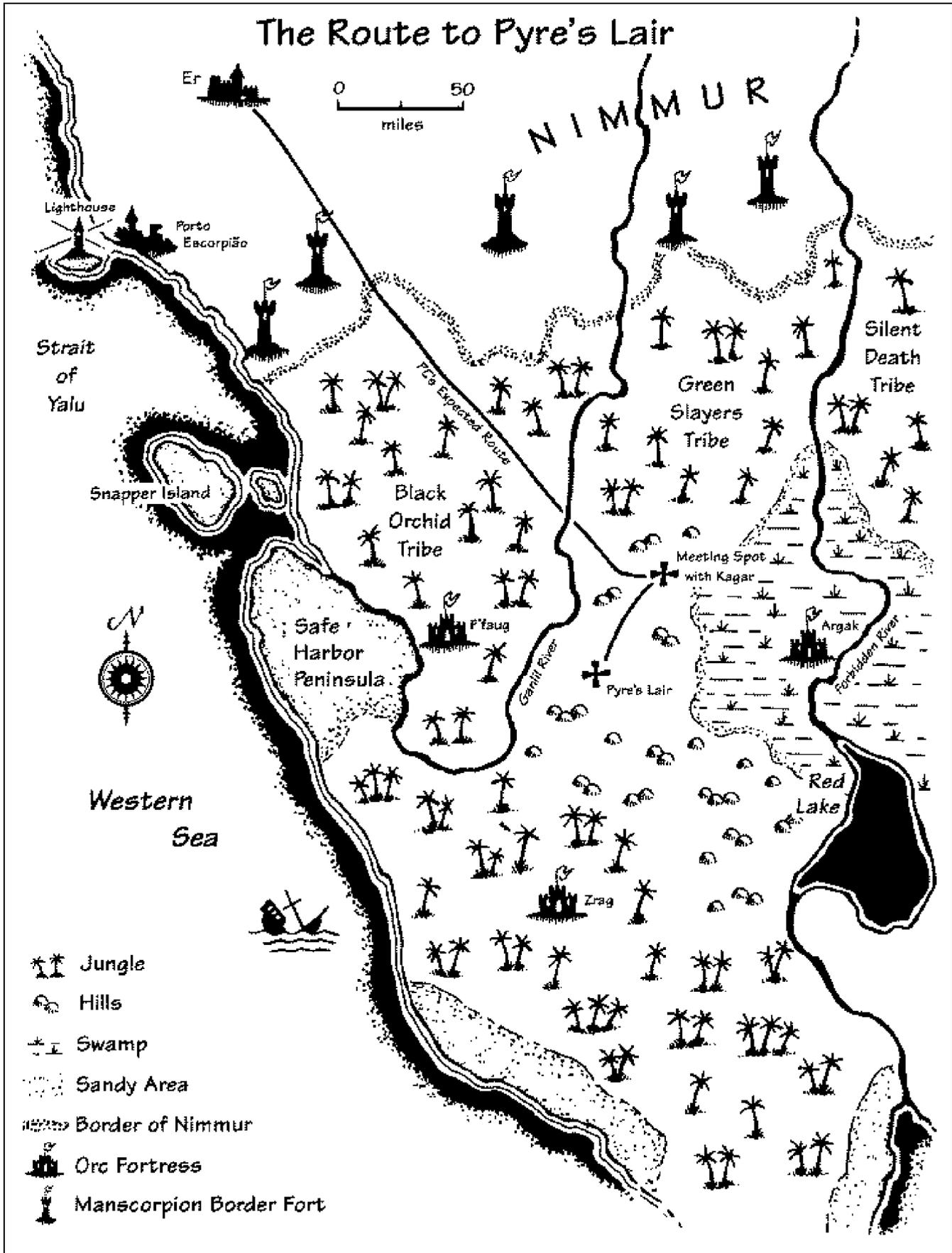
My thoughts lead me to wonder if the Celestial Power Collector was not the prize sought by the orcs of the Dark Jungle as well. Though savages themselves, I have heard it said that they are ruled by an ancient, evil dragon who makes his lair among the hills near a vast swamp at the center of the Dark Jungle. Could their attacks against us have been to acquire the device for his use? I pray not.

I am torn in my duties. Should I preserve what may be the last collection device among my people or try to destroy it? It is not so hard a thing to destroy the device. The two monuments that stand before the great ziggurat have symbols carved into their bases. These symbols represent two horns hovering over a sun symbol. Pressing upon them causes a panel to slide open. Inside is a small wheel. If the wheels in both monuments are turned to the left three times simultaneously while both the key and the crystal are within the city, the monuments will crumble and the key and crystal shatter. There are those who say that this will cause the other monuments throughout the city and the collector within the temple to explode, but I do not know that this is true. Turning the wheels when both controlling devices are not within the city has no effect.

The kindly chameleon man who tended my wounds sits against the wall watching me as I scribe this. I think I must tell him my story and place the matter into his hands, for I fear that my time is short, and these are indeed the last words I will . . . ever . . . write.

The PCs may conclude that following Pyre into the jungle is a waste of time since he will undoubtedly be returning to Er with both the crystal and the key. The DM might hint to the players that the dragon's hoard may hold some items or information that could help them defeat him. If they choose to skip this section of the adventure, the DM should allow it. The confrontation in Er will have to be adjusted slightly to account for the characters being in the city before Pyre arrives. They might have a charge left in their disguise rings; if not, they must explain their presence in Er and move around the temple area on their own. If they befriended a patrol of manscorpions (a random encounter in the first adventure), they might find sanctuary with one of them for a brief time.

The Route to Pyre's Lair



Getting to the Jungle

PCs may travel to Porto Escorpião and hire a ship or march directly south of Er until they reach the jungle. If they choose to take a ship, the DM may arrange a reception in the form of orc war canoes who harry the PCs' ship and damage it enough that it must land along the coast. Their information on Pyre's lair seems to suggest that it is in some hills near a central swamp. The characters have to pass through Black Orchid and Green Slayer lands and get across the Ganlil River to reach the hills.

The river provides another opportunity for war canoe encounters. Information on these (as well as descriptions of the jungle) is given in the sourcebook. All encounters with groups of orcs in the Dark Jungle should utilize the following statistics for orcs. The orcs of the Dark Jungle are considered to be savage warriors and shamans. As such, they are considerably tougher than normal orcs, a fact that may surprise the characters.

Orc warriors (8d10): AC 6; MV 9; hp 6 per each HD; THAC0 Varies; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (weapon); SZ M; ML 12; Int Average; AL LE; XP 1 HD: 15; 2HD: 35; 3HD: 65; 4HD: 120; 5HD: 175.

Notes: All carry shields.

Special Equipment: Black Orchid orcs coat their arrows with a black paste (save vs. poison or become fevered for 1d6+4 days, during which the victim is amnesiac and follows any orders given). Green Slayer orcs have ballista-fired javelins to which are fastened jars containing three 2%HD slimes. These are fired before they enter combat. They also carry normal javelins, spears, and clubs.

All orcs use the camouflage of the jungle to make surprise attacks upon intruders.

Orc leaders (1 per every 10 orcs): AC 6; MV 9 (12); hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML elite (14); Int Average (10); AL LE; XP Fighters: 175; Shamans 270.

Notes: One of every two orc leaders is a Shaman (see the Shaman entry in the sourcebook).

Villages and forts have more orcs than those listed above. The DM should feel free to use the orcs to harry the characters as they move through the jungle and bring them on in hordes if the PCs are moving in the wrong direction or delaying too much. In such a case, the PCs should be encouraged to flee through the jungle with dozens of savage, screaming orcs in pursuit. Whether they escape depends on their cleverness in eluding the orcs. Captured PCs are taken to the nearest village.

Because the orcs will want to question the captives, then take them to Pyre to use as slaves, it is possible to arrange escapes aided by members of the party who got away. If all were captured, they can be taken as slaves to await Pyre's personal guard and from there escorted to Pyre's lair. Their goods, weapons, and magical items are sent along as tribute to Pyre, so once inside the caverns, they can arrange an escape, grab their gear, and be no worse off than if they had discovered the lair.

Encounters on the Trail

Several encounters are detailed here. Only one of them, the meeting with Kagar, is a set encounter. The others may be placed wherever the DM wishes.

Encounter One: At the River

As the PCs prepare to cross a stretch of river (smaller ones crisscross the jungle every mile or so), they notice a greenish slime on the embankment. If they cross through, the slime covers their feet. Should they detour to a clear area, as the first PC prepares to cross, a caiman (a black crocodile over 20 feet long) rises out of the water and attacks, trying to drag the PC in and under. The PC receives a %2 penalty to his or her surprise roll. If others follow to help, its mate attacks them.

Green Slime (6): AC 9; MV 0; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg see below; SZ S (2%4'); ML Average (10); Int Non-(0); AL N; XP 65 each.

Notes: Green slime attaches itself to living flesh and in 1d4 melee rounds turns the creature into green slime (no resurrection possible). It can be scraped off quickly, cut away, frozen or burned. A *cure disease* spell kills it, but other attacks including weapons and spells have no effect.

Caiman (2): AC 4; MV 6, Sw 12; hp 50 each; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6/2d10 (bite/tail lash); SA surprise; SZ H (21%30' long); ML Steady (11); Int Animal (1); AL N; XP 1,400 each.

Encounter Two: Monkey Business

As the PCs travel along, they are suddenly pelted by a rain of small branches and coconuts. Monkey laughter shrieks down from the canopy above. If the characters do nothing to drive them off, the monkeys follow them, hooting and shrieking as they go. When the characters camp for the night, the monkeys sneak down and try to steal food or small items left lying about.

Encounter Three: Orc Hunting Party

While moving through the jungle, the PCs are ambushed by twelve 3rd-level Black Orchid orcs. Arrows with the amnesia poison are fired among them, then the hunters rush in with spears. Use the stats given above.

Encounter Four: Ebony Statue

The PCs are momentarily startled as they round a bend in the game trail they are following. Crouched in the center of the trail is a black orc. After a moment, it is clear that this is only a statue apparently carved of ebony with a horrified, tormented look on its face. If the PCs have not run across any villages, this is their first look at the results of Pyre's displeasure. If they have bypassed villages, they have seen similar statues used as part of the walls.

The Valley of the Mists

What Kagar has actually discovered is the diamond mine where Pyre's hundreds of slaves labor. The area is heavily guarded by 60 4th-level orc overseers. One out of every 10 is a 5th-level leader. They are sworn directly to Pyre's service and never leave the area. The mine is in a misty valley, a seemingly haunted place where the sun never penetrates through the mist and overhanging trees. Part of the mist is caused by the series of hot springs that dot the valley.

The PCs' best bet if they wish to enter the mines is to disguise themselves as slaves and slip by the guards. Since the slaves wear nothing more than loincloths or shifts, they will have to find some way to secure their weapons beneath the empty cart they must push into the mine.

Fighting is an option as well. Though they are greatly outnumbered, only 20 orcs guard the outside entrance. The rest are scattered throughout the mine. If the characters start a battle with the guards, at least 10 of the slaves attempt to help. They are the equivalent of 1st-level fighters with AC 10 and 5 hit points. They wield rocks or their bare hands and can distract at least seven orcs, though half of them die while in action.

The Mines

Three tunnels snake down through the mine. The first leads to an area where active mining is taking place. Miserable slaves on hands and knees fish about in murky water or tap at the walls in search of diamond-bearing crystals. Whips crack repeatedly as orc overseers urge them on. There are 10 guards here.

The second tunnel leads to the orcs' quarters and the slave pens. Off-duty orc guards lounge about or sleep.

Encounter Five: Kagar

Kagar is a Shaman of Karaash. He is from the Tribe of the Silent Death. He was spying in another tribe's territory when he noticed the PCs. He has been following them and listening to their conversation, having learned other languages from captured prisoners. Kagar knows the PCs are looking for Pyre's lair, and sees this as the best hope for getting rid of the dragon once and for all. He hopes that by helping to kill Pyre, he will be instrumental in establishing his tribe as overlords of the jungle.

As the PCs travel, he calls out to them from some thick foliage saying, "I know where the lair is. What will you give me to guide you there?" If the PCs don't kill him and if they offer anything worth at least 50 gp or something exotic that he's never seen before, Kagar takes them to Pyre's lair. The characters may expect a trick but he is honestly trying to help them. He disappears back into the jungle as soon as they reach the area, however.

There are 20 orcs currently in this area. They grab weapons and attack, if disturbed.

The slave pens are located around a bend in this tunnel. The slaves who are on the second shift are kept here, where they fitfully sleep or talk quietly among themselves. A cage has been fashioned of stout bamboo poles and the door is secured with a heavy crossbar. Three orcs guard the prisoners and occasionally lash one for talking too much. If they have been alerted, they wait with ready weapons, including a bowl of hot grease they were melting over a fire. This causes 2d6 points of damage and heavy blistering. Unless promptly treated, the blisters can easily become infected, leading to a fever and permanent loss of 1 point of Charisma from scarring.

Tunnel three leads off at an angle and immediately makes a sharp bend, hiding the rest of it from view. There is a crude skull carved on the wall just outside the tunnel. Just around the bend is a sort of fortress of boulders and outward-pointed sharpened stakes. Seven orc defenders shelter behind the structure, ready to fire poisoned darts at anyone attempting to pass. Six jars with green slimes in them are kept handy as well. The orcs defend the tunnel with their lives.

The Lair

Following a twisting path downward once they get past the guards, the PCs finally come to a maze of tunnels. Each leads down into a sliding trap triggered by a flipping rock or a tripwire. The slides end in pools of stagnant water 15 feet deep. The sheer sides are coated with green slime. The actual entry to the lair is through a secret door between two of the tunnels.

Opening the door reveals a mound of treasure located halfway across a large, well-lit cavern. Steam

from several hot pools obscures some of the details of the cavern, but a huge, red, gleaming dragon is clearly visible atop the mound of treasure. The dragon appears to be sleeping. Where his left eye should be, there gleams something black, carved into the semblance of an eye.

They may believe they are seeing an illusion, but the characters have actually caught Pyre in his lair. The dragon's disadvantage has caught up with him. After traipsing all over the peninsula, he had to rest rather than immediately returning to Er with his prizes. Now he sleeps, the two objects clutched to his breast and grasped securely in his claws.

The Dragon Awakens

Whatever the PCs decide to do, they probably make some noise doing it. If they cast *silence* on themselves, the dragon will awaken in three rounds anyway. Approaching within 20 feet of him awakens him, as will casting spells or firing ranged missile weapons at him. Awakened, he says, "You? I would have thought that you'd give up!" The characters have no prayer of defeating the dragon, even though it takes him two rounds to fully awaken. Luckily for them he has no interest in fighting them; he wants to go to Er and test out his new magical item.

He breathes at the PCs as he prepares to leave, then slips out one of the hidden tunnels on the far side of the cavern, taking the key and viewing crystal with him. The PCs can mostly avoid Pyre's breath weapon by ducking behind the treasure pile or throwing themselves in the hot pools. Those attempting to get out of the way, but not throwing themselves into the pools receive a +4 bonus to their saving throws and suffer only $\frac{1}{2}$ damage if they fail. Those who succeed take only $\frac{1}{2}$ damage. Those who voluntarily jump in the pools take no damage from the breath weapon if they save, and only $\frac{1}{2}$ damage if they fail. The pool is not hot enough to cause any damage. Any character who is not bright enough to take evasive actions is probably dead.

Because the tunnel is barely wide enough to accommodate his bulk, Pyre cannot turn and attack the characters, though he can use his tail slap to stun them and keep them away. Each such maneuver damages the tunnel walls and threatens to bring down the whole structure (10% cumulative chance). If he causes a cave-in, Pyre is unharmed, as it occurs behind him.

Pyre, Great Wurm, vermilion dragon W21: Int Genius (17); AL CE; AC $\frac{1}{2}$ 11; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Jp 3; HD 23; hp 145; THAC0 $\frac{1}{2}$ 1; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d10/1d10/3d10; SA breath weapon 90', spells, magic items; MR 65%; SZ G (176' with a 165' tail); ML Fanatic (18); XP 28,000.

Notes: SA: Pyre's breath weapon is a cone of fire 90' long, 5' wide at the dragon's mouth and 30' wide at the base. It does 24d10 +12 damage.

Spells Memorized: *Detect magic, magic missile, invisibility, stinking cloud, slow, suggestion, improved invisibility, solid fog, chaos, dream, geas, cure light wounds, faerie fire, and charm person or mammal.* Additionally, because of his great age, he is able to use the following spells three times per day: *affect normal fires* and *pyrotechnics*. He can use *heat metal, suggestion, and hypnotism* once per day. He is also able to detect *cinnabryl* when within 100 feet of it three times per week.

Special Equipment: *Ebon eye, ankle bracelet of shapechange* (allows change to any intelligent creature twice per day), a *ring of teleportation*, the *controlling key* (a long black crystal rod that controls the Celestial Power Collector), and the *viewing crystal*. Aside from their other functions, the key acts as a *rod of rulership* and the viewing crystal acts as a *crystal ball with clairaudience*.

Legacies: Anti-Missile, Displace, Duplicate, Feel Magic, Phase, Regeneration, Repel Metal, and Spell Shield.

As soon as he is free of the tunnel, Pyre takes to the air and circles around to see if he was followed. Any PCs emerging from the tunnel are subject to a *magic missile* attack and one of them receives a blast from his *ebon eye* (save vs. petrification or be turned into an ebony statue). He uses his Legacies to prevent himself from being harmed. After his attacks, Pyre wings away northward and abruptly disappears in midair.

Pyre's treasure pile holds some interesting items. The DM should customize the treasure according to what the characters need. Defensive items against fire and petrification, magical weapons or armor of some kind, and a few useful potions or scrolls would probably be welcome. There should be a considerable amount of portable wealth in the form of excellent diamonds (his lair is, after all, part of a diamond mine), and exotic items sent from the orcs who prey upon passing ships. Among them is a small, flat box of aromatic wood. Inside is a thin, coiled ribbon of sinew. Carved inside the box are the following words:

The Going Rope. Lay on ground in a circle. All who are to go, step inside. Go.

This item *teleports* those inside it to whatever spot the one who placed the rope thinks about. The rope goes with them. It has only three charges left. If all the PCs are not standing within the rope when it is used, they are left behind. If they go to the wrong location on the first jump, they can go back and try again. After three jumps, the rope frays in half and becomes useless.

Back to Er

The PCs should arrive back in Er just in time. Landing in the sanctuary would be best, but they can get into the temple from anywhere else due to the panic spreading through the city. Pyre appeared in midair and charged

into the temple a few moments ago. Then several winged figures flew swiftly over the city walls and into the temple compound. Ten of the defenders of Um-Shedu have come to help the PCs stop the dragon. Use the endurk stats given earlier.

The PCs know how to destroy the Star Device, and some of them should move to do so while Pyre is engaged in battle with the others. He is assisted by 10 charmed manscorpions. If the PCs succeed, Pyre breathes at them and departs. He will remember them unkindly. Escape from Er is easy in the ensuing explosions, but the characters have made several

powerful enemies who might make life interesting for them in the future.

Manscorpions (10): AC 7; MV 12; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 3 (claw/claw/tail); Dmg 3d2%1/3d2%1/1d4; SA Class C Poison; SZ L; ML 15; Int Average (10); AL NE; XP 1,400 each.

What next?

You have completed this quest. New adventures on the Orc's Head could occur in several areas:

Nimmur

These adventures can be political in nature, attempting to resolve some of the furor in Nimmur as a result of the attack on Er and spying for the defenders of Um-Shedu. The various dominion heads may become aware of the PCs and try to enmesh them in plots and intrigues without their knowing who is behind them.

The Herathian wizard who hired the thugs may want revenge for their destruction of the Celestial Power Collector. Certainly the manscorpions are on the lookout for the PCs to question them about their part in the attack. Those caught by them face torture and slavery at best. Rescuing companions caught while off guard could provide an adventure that takes the PCs below, into the great caverns and tunnels of the manscorpions.

The Dark Jungle

Many sailors and treasures are captured by the orcs. Since they now have some knowledge of the Dark Jungle, the PCs might be hired to rescue prisoners or recover lost treasures. A fleet of ships from Vilaverde might hire them as guides to the lairs of the orcs in order to exterminate these troublesome raiders. Again, Pyre may send some orcs to capture some of the PCs so he can exact his revenge.

In any case, Pyre is worried that they know the location of his lair. He may bait some sort of trap to lure

them to the jungle where he can dispose of them more easily.

Wallara

A wallara on walkabout might find the party and tell them they are needed in Wallara, they did swear an oath to the Wallaran people. The matter might be serious (some new and unforeseen threat) or lighthearted (new wallaras are being initiated into the tribe and all of them should be there to witness it, or the Keeper of Tales sends someone to fetch them to tell him the whole story of their journey). Severe drought could devastate the land and it is revealed to the Mendoo that the PCs are the ones to end it through a great quest.

Jibarú

The Phanatons, who regard the PCs as friends and heroes, ask for their help in fighting a border dispute with Herath. An influx of manscorpions bent on cutting down the forest could call for PC intervention, especially if the dreaded beings manage to kidnap their druid friend Uí-Xingí and threaten to send her back piece-by-piece unless the phanatons stop fighting them. They could return to Jibarú at the behest of Don Jorge of Porto Escorpião to acquire some of the paralytic poison the phanatons make.