

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

## JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF AERETH

#91: A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE  
BY HARLEY STROH



# LOST AGHARTA

1 HEX  
= 3 MILES

Amaghun

WATER LINE  
Bleak Shores

Spine Ridges

Kostij



BLOOD  
HEATHS

Jogu



Bleak Shores

The  
Inner  
Sea

Spine Ridges



Stemah

BLOOD  
HEATHS

Players  
Start



Gartaula

Bleak Shores

To The Sunken City

Barako



Spine Ridges



Caliskan

Bleak Shores

Tarik To



BLOOD  
HEATHS

Ishtna



Spine Ridges



Ozokan





# JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF AERETH

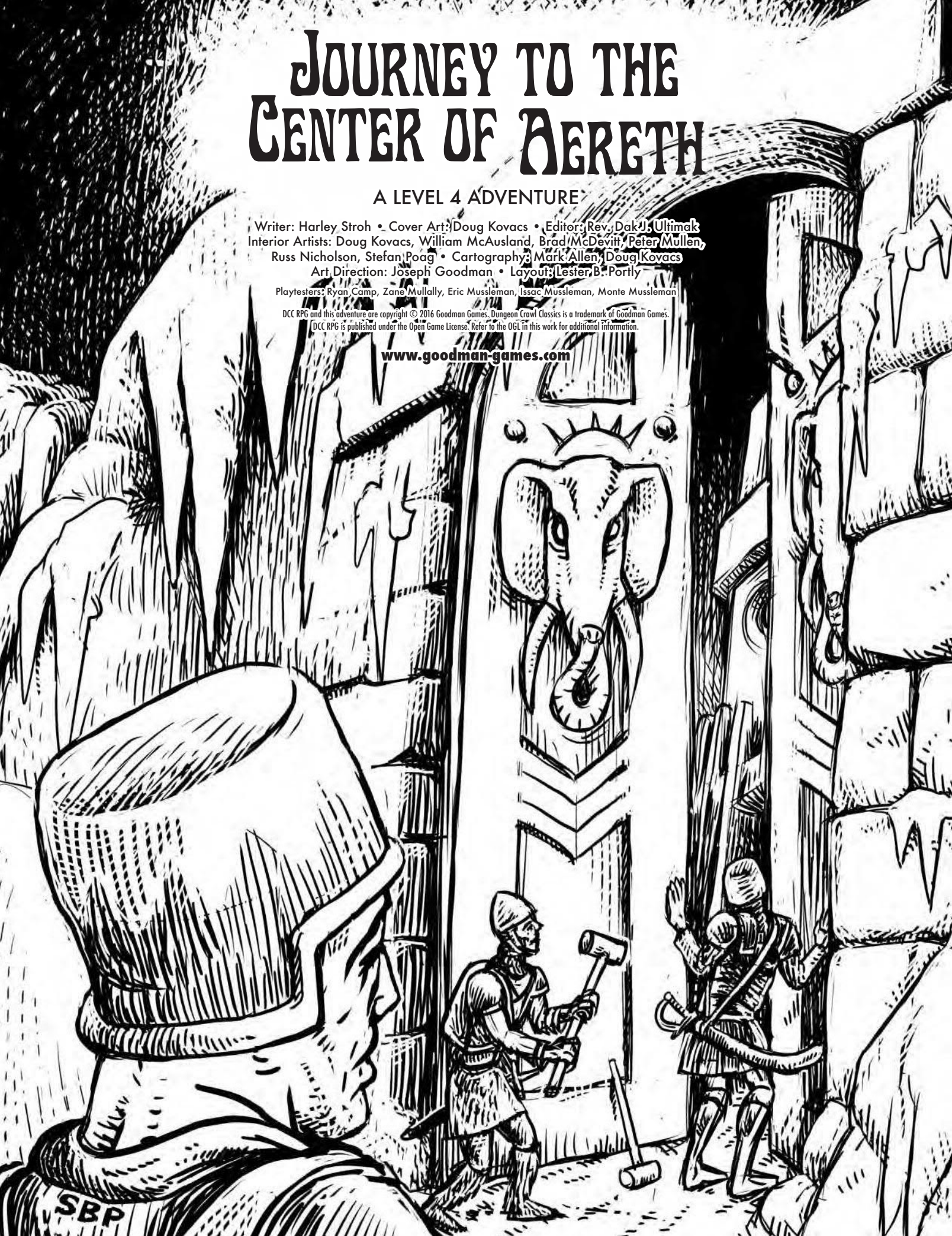
A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

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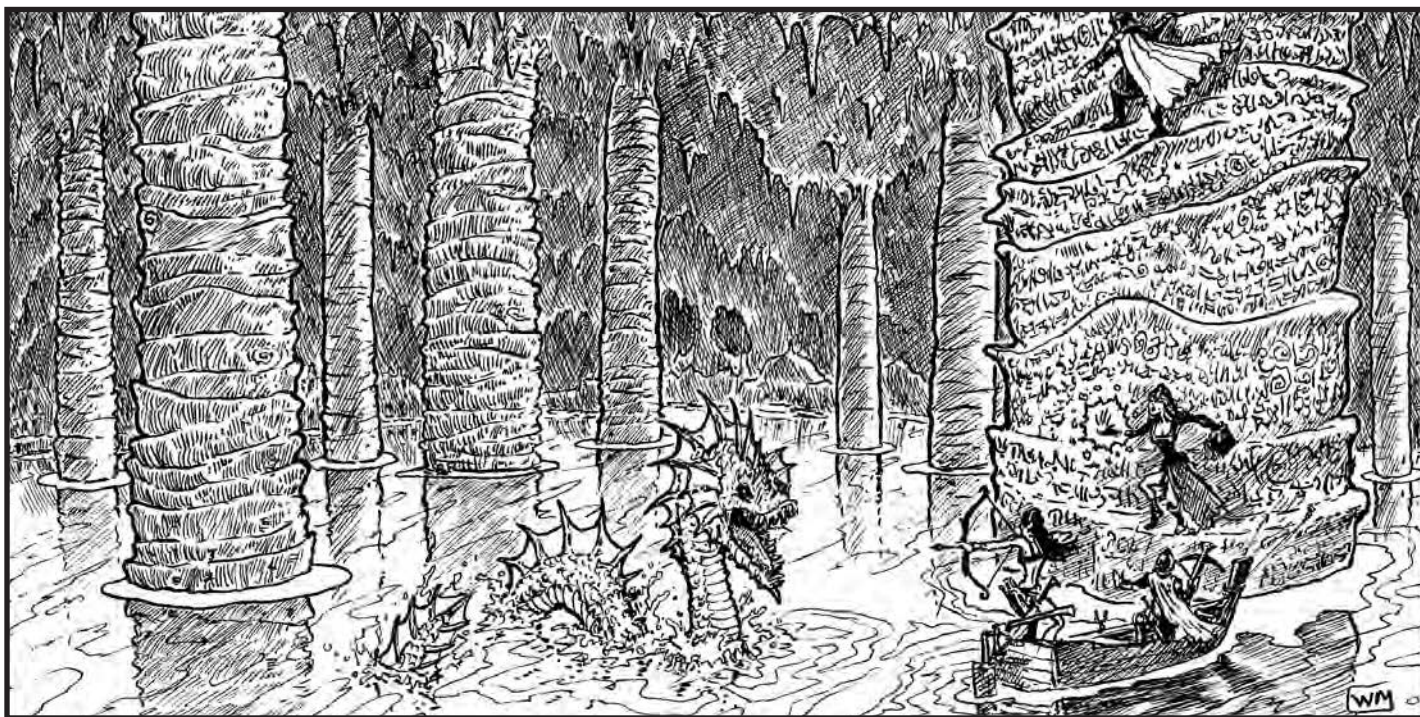
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## INTRODUCTION

**R**emember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Journey to the Center of Áereth sends the characters deep into Áereth's underworld, questing in search of the mythic cities of Lost Agharta. Weird foes, strange locales, and lost magic await explorers bold enough to dare the lightless realms. The focus is specific to the journey: what the PCs discover upon their arrival in Lost Agharta is left to the judge.

The adventure draws its inspiration from a range of Appendix N sources. The Aghartan slavemasters owe a debt to the tragic Yag-kosha from Robert E. Howard's *Tower of the Elephant*; while the befouled Aghartan slaves were inspired by the fallen creatures in *Worms of the Earth*, also by REH. Lost Agharta itself, hidden deep inside the world's core, echoes with traces of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Pellucidar* and H.P. Lovecraft's *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*.

The adventure was designed for parties of 6 or more 4th-level PCs. The strengths of each class will be tested throughout the adventure, and wise parties will "double up" on critical classes like warriors, thieves, wizards and clerics, in anticipation of the death of their comrades-in-arms. Likewise, hirelings and henchmen are encouraged, if only to give players a pool of characters that can be advanced to full PCs.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

**T**he Lost Cities of Agharta is a tale well-known to both sages and alehouse sots: A world beneath our own, lit by a brilliant sun and inhabited by wisemen beyond compare, where magic has replaced the spoken word, the weakest slave is like unto a superman, gems are used as cobblestones, and the domes gleam with hammered gold.

The grim truth is less fantastic. There is indeed a world mirroring our own, but it is lit by a smoky sun – often obscured by the roving, malefic, intelligent thunderstorms. The ancient, elephantine Aghartans do possess unmatched wisdom and psychic powers, but use their gifts for wicked, trivial ends. And wealth does abound, but no explorer has ever returned with his hard-won gains.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

**T**he Cities of Agharta once maintained contact with the surface world through a network of temples and trade routes, built and maintained by slaves. Though the temples are abandoned and the byways have fallen into disrepair, they still offer a point of connection from the surface to the underworld. However, after centuries of neglect, the Old Paths have become home to hosts of dangers.

The PCs' adventure begins outside a ruined temple-city, set in the distant north, and awash in the crush of glacial ice. However the city is not wholly abandoned – degenerate descendants of the former slaves still haunt the outskirts of the city, savages bent on ensuring that the ancient ruins are left undisturbed, lest they call back their ancient masters.



In the center of the city is a vast pit, and at the base of the pit, a great stone gate and its titanic defenders of ice and fire. Beyond the gate is the Old Way: Agharta's road into the heart of the world.

The second chapter of the adventure details the PCs' path into the heart of the gloomy underworld. The PCs encounter deadly monsters, ancient ruins, and the dangers that come with adventuring hundreds, and then thousands of miles beneath the surface of the earth.

The PCs may receive unexpected aid on their quest, in the form of new allies, lost magic, or hitherto unknown talents. And the deeper they press into the deeps, the stronger (physically) they become. Whether this is due to some freak aspect of gravity, or the weird gloom-rays that emanate from ancient rock, deep in the world's core, none can say.

Finally, the PCs win free to the inner world, on the shores of an alien sea, where fell Aghartans wage pointless wars with their hordes of slave-warriors. What the PCs discover when they venture towards the smoky cities is left to the fevered imagination of the judge.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS & RUMORS



ales of the Lost Cities of Agharta are ubiquitous amongst professional fortune hunters but none can claim having seen the lost world, or even tracing the route. Despite this absence of hard evidence, or perhaps because of it, rumors of Agharta abound.

Prior to the adventure, judges are encouraged to seed the imagination of the PCs with some or all of the following. Adventurers are unable to track down the veracity of the rumors; each comes third-hand, from dubious sources of even more dubious morals.

1. Our world, the upper world, is hollow, like the shell of an egg. This underworld is home to the Seven Lost Cities of Agharta.
2. In Lost Agharta, they no longer communicate with words. Instead, they speak with their minds, employing sorceries unknown to the surface world.
3. In Lost Agharta, even the weakest man is endowed with mighty strength.
4. There is a library in Agharta which holds every spell known – and unknown – to man.
5. In the underworld, gems litter the shorelines, and gold is so common the masters use it to pave their streets.
6. Death is unknown in the underworld; men and beasts alike live until they grow weary of existence, and then pass into an endless slumber.
7. There are two known entrances into the underworld, each set at the very ends of the earth.

## ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	P	Glacial Rift
1-2	C	5 savages
1-3a	C	Savage champion 1d5 savages
1-3c	C/P	Cutter the Matriarch 3 sabertooth lions
1-3d	T	4 door traps
1-3e	T	Collapsing chamber trap
1-4	C	Lotus moths (var.)
1-5	T/C	Titan of Wave Titan of Flame
A-2	Var.	Way Gates
A-3	C	Chthonian fireworm
A-4	C	3 cave trolls
A-4a	C	Troll Mother Cave troll champion
A-5	P/C	Hzarer the Craven
A-6	T	Collapsing chamber
A-6a	C	Hot ooze
B-1	C	Mantis-men
B-1a	C	Queen mantis
B-2	P	River
B-2a	P	River crossing
B-2b	T	The Pinch
B-3	C	Sea serpent Dragon turtle
B-3a	P	The Falls
B-4	P/C	Pteranodon flock
B-4b	C/P	Various saurians
B-5	P	Waterfalls, lava pools
C-1	P/C	2 Aghartan slave masters 100 giant slaves



## PLAYER START



For weeks you and your companions have been battered by the icy north winds. The cold has wormed its way into your bones, your lungs sting with every breath, and your fingertips, cheeks and toes are blackened and numb.

The driving snow parts for a moment, revealing a towering stone wall, rising towards the cloud-darkened sky – the first evidence

of civilization you've seen in hundreds of miles. How such a city could exist, so far beyond the bounds of the Known World, is a mystery you must solve.

The wall seems without gate or portal, or any means of egress, save one: A massive glacier, crushed against the face with the cumulative force of a thousand long years. Like a frozen wave, the glacier crests over the peak of the wall.

# PART 1: CITY BEYOND THE NORTH WIND

**Area 1-1 – The Sundered Wall:** A towering stone wall rises from the drifting snow and ice pack. A massive glacier has crept down the mountain slope, crushing up against the face of the wall like a frozen wave, driving a great crack down the face of the wall.

The wall has no apparent portal (the gate being buried beneath several thousand tons of ice at the foot of the glacier). The obvious means of egress are scaling the wall, or climbing the glacier to the crack.

**Climbing the wall** is not difficult (DC 15) but the near-perfect stone work makes it impossible to place any sort of anchor or spike. To successfully scale the wall, a climber must succeed on three consecutive climb checks; a failure on any of the three checks results in a fall. Additionally, in order to assist his or her allies, the thief must devise a way to suspend a rope from atop the 150' high, anchor-less wall. (Hanging from the far side, and serving as a counterweight, is the most practical solution, but PCs are sure to come up with wilder ideas.)

**Crossing the glacier** has its own risks. The glacier is cut with deep crevasses concealed beneath a crust of snow. Any weight of 50 lbs. or more collapses the snow, pitching the character into the crevasse (DC 15 Reflex save to catch the lip of the crevasse). If the PCs are traveling close together, the judge may rule that additional PCs may need to make DC 10 Reflex saves to avoid falling after their comrade.

Characters slipping into any of the narrow icy crevasses drop 30' into the icy pool in the heart of the glacier (area 1-2) taking 3d4 damage.

Characters can avoid the ravines by probing the snow with poles, roping themselves together, or taking similar precautions. Characters taking the time to clear away the snow and ice about the ravine discover crude steps carved into the ice wall, descending to the ledges above area 1-2.

Characters gaining the top of the wall are treated to a view of the frozen ruins of the temple-city (area 1-3g). Show players Handout C. Descending the wall on the far side is a mere 75' climb.

**Area 1-2 – Flooded Cavern:** A stream of frigid water courses from somewhere deep within the glacier, pooling within the vaulted ice cave. Scintillating walls of blue ice wend their way into darkness.

The water is 4' in depth, soaking most characters to their chest and threatening to drown shorter halflings and dwarves. Soaked characters must attempt DC 15 Fortitude saves every three rounds or succumb to the first stages of hypothermia, suffering a -1d penalty to all their actions. Once a PC has failed the check, the penalty increases by -1d every 5 rounds until the PC is dried and warmed. Characters reduced to less than a d3 action die fall unconscious, and must make a DC 20 Fortitude save every 5 minutes or perish.

Five waxy-skinned savages – degenerate descendants of Agharta's slaves – lurk atop high ledges cut into the walls of the cavern. If the PCs attempt to climb the ice cave walls (DC 20), the savages rain down with their stone-tipped spears. If the PCs succeed in reaching either ledge, the savages summon their allies from the nearest common room (area 1-3a).

If the PCs opt to press deeper into the crevasse, the savages track them from above, then descend into the base of the cavern, doing their best to keep the PCs within sight.

Each savage wears a belt of braided hair and a quiver of 1d5 short bone spears. The savages are protected by thick coats of furs and carry torches that cast flickering shadows through the icy blue halls.

**Savages (5):** Init +1; Atk club +3 melee (1d4+2) or bone spear +3 ranged (1d4); AC 13; HD 2d8+2; hp 10 ea.; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to cold attacks; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

**Area 1-3 – Passage:** A squat, small passageway is bored into the ice. The walls, floor and ceiling of the cave are scored with marks, matted with coarse white hairs and smeared with frozen blood.

The air is heavy with the stink of animals and blood. Carved from the heart of the glacier, each ice passage is home to the small band of the degenerate savages.

Hints of their lost civilization are hung from the walls with frozen spittle. Broken tiles, small coins, strands of braided rope, and the like accent the walls and ceilings. Astute PCs may note that all of the tokens have been worn smooth by the Aghartans' worship.



**1d7****Relic**

- 1 Broken tile depicting an elephant-headed god
- 2 3' rope of braided flesh
- 3 A scrap of cloth stitched with gold thread (5 gp)
- 4 The pommel of a shattered Aghartan sword
- 5 A platinum coin bearing the image of an elephant head radiating power
- 6 An Aghartan spear-tip
- 7 6' iron chain running to a large shackle

The savages refuse to attack any PC bearing a relic. For this tactic to be effective, the PCs must boldly brandish the token before them. Deterred, the savages howl with fury, trailing just a few yards behind the PCs, hoping for the chance to retrieve their sacred relics.

**Area 1-3a – Common Room:** *The rounded chamber is matted with bloody strips of fur and bits of broken bone. The air is thick with the stink of frozen blood and fatty smoke.*

Several mounds of matted fur and hide lie scattered throughout the ice cave, clustered around a crude skull lamp.

The common room is home to a band of savages; unless they have been called to aid their kin, there are 1d5 savages and 1 champion resting in the chamber.

Disturbed, the savages leap to the attack in defense of their home, hurling their spears before closing to do battle with their crude clubs. If half their number fall, the savages retreat to area 1-3b to defend their matriarch.

**Treasure:** Some of the savages hide their treasures inside their sleeping mounds:

**1d8****Treasure**

- |       |                                    |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 1 - 5 | No items                           |
| 6     | 1d20 gold Aghartan coins           |
| 7     | 1d5 stone spear-tips               |
| 8     | An Aghartan dagger (see area 1-3c) |

The “oil lamp” is the hollowed-out skull of a cave bear, filled with rendered fat. The charred skull is scored with simple runes signifying fire and light. The flame (and its heat) is sacred to the ice tribe and vital to their survival. If the PCs threaten to extinguish the flames, the savages withdraw in fear. However, if the PCs follow through on their threats (or accidentally put out the flame) the savages’ wrath knows no bounds.

**Savage champion:** Init +3; Atk club +4 melee (1d4+4) or bone spear +3 ranged (1d4+3); AC 15; HD 4d8+2; hp 16; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20 and 1d16; SP immune to cold attacks; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

**Savages (1d5):** Init +1; Atk club +3 melee (1d4+2) or bone spear +3 ranged (1d4); AC 13; HD 2d8+2; hp 10 ea.; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to cold attacks; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

**Area 1-3b – Cold Stores:** *Massive slabs of frost-blackened meat hang from the walls and ceiling of the small chamber. The floor is thick with pools of frozen blood.*

The chamber holds 7 slabs of mastodon meat, 3 mastodon hides, and a mound of partially worked bones. There is little of use to the PCs, unless the characters are hoping to disguise themselves as savages.

Three pools are dug into the icy at the rear of the chamber. Each pool is filled with rendered fat (presently frozen). Melted, the fat is slick and flammable.

**Area 1-3c – Apse of the Matriarch:** *A pot-bellied savage sits atop a mound of frozen hides, chanting in a low voice. The elder's long, mangy locks are woven into tight braids and hung with tokens. She rocks back and forth as she chants, a shining sword clutched to her chest.*

*A pair of enormous lions crouch before the mound, their massive, saber-like fangs dragging on the icy floor.*

The seated woman is the Cutter, a warrior-queen feared for her prowess in battle. She is defended by three sabertooth lions: the two stationed before the mound, and a third, hidden atop an ice ledge cut above the door. All three fight to the death in the defense of the Cutter, the third dropping down onto the party's rears ranks. (If the hidden lion is able to achieve surprise, treat its first attack as an automatic critical hit.)

If two or more of her lions are slain, or if the PCs seem intent on slaughtering her tribe, the Cutter tries to parlay for her life – but her pleas are unintelligible unless the PCs speak the corrupted Aghartan tongue. If communication is established, the Cutter offers her blade to the PCs, indicating that she knows where more like it can be found. The blade is an Aghartan longsword (inflicting 1d10 damage, as below).

## AGHARTAN BLADES

The storied blades of Agharta are forged of purified metals found deep within the world's core. While not magical, the blades are impossibly strong and hold a much sharper edge than terrestrial blades.

Aghartan blades inflict +1d damage. (Example: An Aghartan longsword would inflict 1d10 damage, compared to the 1d8 of normal longswords.)

The blades can be recognized by their blued blades, shot through with veins of silver. Exceedingly rare – even in the gloomy underworld – the metals were seldom (if ever) used in the creation of “disposable” weapons like arrows or quarrels. Attempts to reforge the blades without the aid of magic inevitably causes the alloys to separate and run like quicksilver. Sold in the overworld, the weapons fetch 10 to 30 times the worth of their mundane counterparts.





If the PCs accept her offer, she leads them to area 1-3d. However, no amount of threats can convince the warrior-queen or her people to enter the forbidden passage.

**Cutter:** Init +3; Atk sword +5 melee (1d10+5) or spear +3 ranged (1d4+3); AC 12; HD 6d8+2; hp 26; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20 and 1d16; SP immune to cold attacks; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

**Sabertooth Lion (3):** Init +5; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6+2); AC 14; HD 4d6+3; hp 18, 21, 27; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL L.

**Area 1-3d - Taboo Passage:** *The entrance to the ice tunnel is crudely carved to resemble an archway. The way is obscured frozen skins and hides, broken shards of clay and bits of hair.*

The long hall is the receptacle of the tribe's collective memory of fell Agharta. After building the effigy at the far end of the hall, they walled off the incarnation behind a series of protective wards.

Each "door" is constructed of several hides, wetted, then frozen together and embedded in the tunnel walls. Despite their haphazard appearance, the hides form an effective barrier. Stiff as boards and resistant to cutting, they can only be brought down by a total of 20 or more points of damage, or a heat sufficient to melt the ice.

A DC 10 find traps check, or inspection by any wizard or cleric, reveals each of the four doors carries a curse or ward. Subsequent remove traps checks (no matter how accomplished) fail to remove the ward, but a check of 15 or better reveals that breaking down the door releases the

ward. (While the traps cannot be solved through mere remove trap checks, they can be negated via clever play. Using ropes to pull down the doors, casting spells from afar, setting them alight with burning oil, and the like, can all work towards safely destroying the doors.)

The nature of the each door's ward is indicated by crude runes marked on the hides in ink, soot and chalk. A DC 15 read languages check offers a rough translation of the rune, but does not reveal the specific effects of the ward.

**Door A: Ill Fate.** Breaking down the door inflicts a -2d penalty on all characters within 10' of the door. The curse lasts 1d4 hours, or can be removed by being blessed by a priest (as per the cleric spell, DC 15).

**Door B: Death.** Three spectral warriors erupt through the sundered door, charging the PCs. The incorporeal warriors wield swords of ancient design; in addition to damage, each blow from the sword ages the target by 1d10 years. The sight of the un-dead warriors inspires terror in NPCs and animals, causing them to flee. Finally on a critical hit (18-20) the ghost warrior attempts to possess the target: The target receives a DC 15 Willpower save; on a failure, the ghost takes over the character's body. The possessed character can attempt to reassert control of its body once per hour thereafter with another DC 12 Willpower save. If the possessed creature is killed, the ghost is expelled from its body, but the target is slain.

The ghosts can be laid to rest by returning the door to its original position, but re-opening the door releases the ghost once more.



**Ghost Warriors (3):** Init +2; Atk spectral blade +4 melee (1d8 + ages target 1d10 years); AC 10; HD 5; hp 20; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons, terrify, critical drain; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

**Door C: Sun.** Opening the door triggers a wash of heat and flame. Adjacent characters are incinerated for 3d8 damage (DC 20 Reflex save for half) while those further down the corridor are simply licked by flames (2d5 damage, DC 10 Reflex save to avoid).

The rolling heat causes the ceiling, walls and floor of the passage to begin to melt. The melted ice water pools 8" deep, not a threat unless the fourth and final door is opened before the water clears the passageway. It takes 10 rounds for the water to drain from the hall.

**Door D: End World.** The final trap has three parts: First, opening the final door draws in a long draft of icy air from the glacier. While covering characters in frost, this in-breath inflicts no damage. However, the chill instantly freezes any water remaining in the passageway from the previous trap (door C). Characters standing in the water find their boots frozen in place (DC 15 Reflex save, or immediate character actions to avoid). An instant later, a polar blast erupts from within the inner chamber for 3d12 damage. Unimpaired characters can readily attempt to avoid the blast (DC 10 Reflex save to avoid) but those frozen in the ice can only hope to weather the cold (DC 20 Fortitude save for half).

**Area 1-3e – Lord of Ice:** Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach the end of the hall:

*A stone cairn sits at the end of the passage. An icy, elephantine form sits atop the cairn, like an arrogant regent atop a rocky throne. Frosted iron shackles hang loose around the figure's neck. The elephant-thing holds a massive greatsword in its icy fist, rising floor to ceiling.*

Show the players Handout A. The form is an effigy depicting an Aghartan slavemaster. The effigy is carved from ice, but the shackles and sword are both real: the shackles once held slaves, and the sword is a famed Aghartan blade (see sidebar on page 5).

The effigy itself poses no threat. The sword, however, does. The blade's tip is buried in the icy floor, and its pommel supports the ceiling. With the passageway weakened from rapid heating and cooling, the ceiling is stressed nearly to the point of collapse. Removing the sword is the final straw. (If the PCs managed to come this far without triggering traps C or D, the sword can be removed without collapsing the chamber.)

An easy DC 10 find traps check, or investigation by the PCs, reveals fissures running the length and breadth of the ceiling. If the party maintains absolute silence, they feel and hear deep, shifting rumbles reverberate through the halls – the cries of the glacier tearing apart above them.

Removing the sword causes the ceiling directly above the effigy to collapse, crushing the effigy (DC 10 Reflex save or Death to any character adjacent to the effigy) and hurling

shards of ice throughout the chamber (DC 5 Reflex save or 1d5 damage). The crash triggers the collapse of other slabs, first in the immediate chamber (DC 10 Reflex save or 3d10 damage) in the second round, and then down the corridor (DC 10 Reflex save or 3d5 damage) on the third round. The collapse seals the passageway with hundreds of tons of ice; even if trapped PCs survive the collapse, they may perish due to asphyxiation and exposure.

The collapsing ceiling cannot be disarmed in the traditional sense, but creative characters are sure to come up with other solutions. Following are some guidelines to help judges adjudicate possible scenarios:

- **Replacing the sword:** A suitably nimble character might attempt to replace the greatsword with an object of similar length. The ubiquitous 10' pole alone is not strong enough, but a bundle of 3 or more poles can support the load. Trading out supports requires a DC 15 Reflex save or a DC 10 pick pockets check, and places the character directly in line for the first collapse.
- **Dwarven Engineering:** Inquisitive dwarves and their under-kin will be quick to note danger presented by the fractured ceiling. A dwarf succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence check can place "chocks" in the fractures, preventing collapse. Iron spikes, daggers, arrow and quarrel-heads can all be used to prevent collapse, but must be left in place. If even one of the chocks is removed, the entire chamber collapses, as above.

Concealed behind the effigy is a narrow crawl way. Characters slithering on their bellies through the tunnel arrive in area 1-3f.

**Area 1-3f – The Crushed Gate:** *The icy passage ends before a massive gate cut from stone blocks in the likeness of two rearing mastodons. The gate is locked behind a thick sheet of ice.*

Show the players Handout B. The gate was once a secondary entrance to Upper Agharta. However, the crush of the glacier and centuries of heat from the pit (area 1-4) has produced a sheen of 1-foot-thick translucent ice covering the gate.

The gate stands 30' in height, and is topped by bas-relief carvings of rearing mastodons. The portal is fashioned of great timbers, each 2' thick and banded in ancient iron. The face of the gate is covered in a massive sheet of hammered copper depicting a triad of elephant-headed gods or demons.

In order to open the gate, the PCs must first remove the sheet of ice, an onerous task requiring at least 25 man-hours and appropriate tools (wooden mauls being the most appropriate for shattering the ice). The ice can also be melted away by dealing more than 250 points of heat damage to the gate.

Freed of its icy prison, the gate can be forced aside by 2 PCs simultaneously succeeding on DC 20 Strength checks (up to 10 characters can force the gate at once, but at least 2 must succeed on the Strength check).

Passing through the gate brings the PCs to area 1-3g.





**Area 1-3g – Upper Agharta:** *A dozen or more temples rise from the deep banks of drifting snow. The great domes and glittering spires shimmer and shift in the hazy light.*

In the center of the city is a gaping pit, hundreds of feet across. Mists swirl from the pit, rising to freeze in long, draping icicles that hang from the temple spires.

Show the players Handout C. The wind-swept courtyard is thick with drifting snow, forcing characters to fight their way through massive drifts. All of the temples are covered in a 1' thick sheet of ice, frozen from the constant clouds of mist rising from the pit. Characters hoping to gain access to the temples must chip away the ice; the clever use of spells can reduce this time dramatically. There are sixteen temples in all, each dedicated to a different Lord of Chaos.

**Area 1-4 – The Living Pit:** *The vast pit extends down into curling mists. The smell of decaying lotus blossoms and the stink of rot rise from below, born aloft by warm breezes.*

The walls of the pit are hidden beneath thick mats of creeping vines and black moss. The long, ropey vines glisten and shimmer in the dim light.

The pit is nearly 500' deep, though the hot mists obscure any sight beyond 100'. While the vines are strong enough to support the weight of even fully-armored PCs, the slick

mold makes climbing a challenge (DC 10 climb, or DC 15 Agility check every 50'). At 250' down, PCs discover an ancient stone stairway making its way around the circumference of the pit.

The steaming pit stands in sharp contrast to the icy ruins above. The temperature and humidity threatens to boil characters alive. While there needn't be mechanical adjustments for the short encounter, judges should use their descriptive skills to make PCs (especially those in metal armor) uncomfortable, at the least.

Hyperborean lotus blossoms dot the vines. Characters randomly encounter 1d3-1 blossoms on their descent, or can traverse the vines to reach specific blossoms with additional climb checks. Each of the legendary blooms possesses properties unique to the bloom, as listed below. The weirdling properties are activated by eating the bitter-tasting petals.

#### 1d5

#### Hyperborean Lotus

- 1 **Black:** The PC must make a Luck check. If successful, the character permanently gains 1d12 hp. If failed, the PC loses the same amount.
- 2 **Blood:** The character gains 1d4 Intelligence and must make a DC 20 Will save or lose 1d4 Stamina.
- 3 **White:** The character grows 1d50 years younger.
- 4 **Violet:** The character is struck for 1d20 damage; if he survives, he receives sufficient experience to come 1 XP short of his next level.
- 5 **Emerald:** The character's Strength, Agility, and Stamina increase by +3 for the next day. However, if the PC does not consume another emerald blossom in the following 24 hours, he begins to waste away, permanently losing 1d5 points from all three stats scores (DC 20 Fort save, per stat, to avoid).

There are 1d14 of each type of lotus flower blooming on the vines, and PCs are free to pick as many as they like. With the exception of the emerald blossoms, there is a cumulative 13% chance per blossom consumed that the PC incurs a major corruption, per Table 5-4: Major Corruption in the DCC RPG rulebook..

As the PCs descend the vines, they attract the attention of enormous lotus moths. There are 6 moths initially, but every additional 5 rounds the PCs spend in the vines, another 1d3-1 moths appear, harassing the PCs until they reach the base of the pit.

The moths employ two tactics. First, following a successful claw attack, the moth attempts to haul the character into the air (DC 12 Strength check to resist). The following round the moth drops the target to the base of the pit. If the lift-drop tactic fails, the moth then opts for plunging its sword-like proboscis into the target, liquefying its internal organs. Targets successfully hit with the proboscis are automatically dealt an additional 1d10 damage every following round until the moth is dislodged or the target is



liquefied. The moths are stationary during this secondary attack, worsening their AC by -4. A moth can be dislodged by killing it, dealing 8 or more hp of damage in a single round, or besting the moth with a DC 12 Strength check.

The moths break off their attacks when the PCs reach the base of the pit (area 1-5), or after 4 PCs are killed. (The moths break away to lay eggs in the corpses.)

**Lotus Moths (6 + 1d3-1 every 5 rounds):** Init +0; Atk grab +3 melee (1d4+2) or proboscis -4 melee (1d6); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 ea.; MV 20' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP grabbed targets are hoisted into the air, liquefy target for 1d10 dmg; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

**Area 1-5 – The Great Gate:** *The base of the pit is awash in choking mists that curl around your limbs and obscure all sight. The sunlight above is muted to a dull red haze, casting your companions in a crimson light.*

*A mighty stone gate looms above you, carved from the walls of the pit. To either side of the gate stands the form of a giant armored warrior, recessed into the stone wall. Water trickles down the first titanic counter-relief, while the second radiates a searing heat.*

Show the players Handout D. Each of the counter-reliefs stands 50' in height. The wet form bears the relief of a warrior-king armed with a spear and net. The hot form bears a sword and shield. Both counter-reliefs have been cut from the stone wall.

The massive gate is composed entirely of stone, and barred from the pit side – pinning the entrance to the underworld closed. Removing the great stone bar is a herculean task: the gate must be scaled to a height of 25' and then the bar lifted or pushed free (a single DC 30 Strength check, or three DC 20 Strength checks).

The bar is marked with runes that pulse with arcane might. Moving the bar, disturbing the gate, or attempting to dispel the Aghartan rune-magic, instantly causes the runes to flare, blinding all within 30' that fail DC 15 Reflex saves. The blindness persists for 1d3 rounds.

Simultaneously, the titans stride free of the walls, attacking any that dare disturb the protected gate. The titans use Giant critical hit tables. Additionally, a critical hit by the titan of wave forces the target to succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude save or begin drowning. Targets struck by a critical strike by the titan of flame are set ablaze and burn for 1d5 rounds, taking an additional 1d5 damage per round.

If the titans crash into one another (by a 4+ Mighty Deed of Arms, or cleverness on the PCs' part), the titans inflict maximum damage upon each other. If either smashes into the gate, the blow opens a crack in the stone, permitting human-sized or smaller PCs to pass.

Defeated, the titans collapse into un-formed washes of water and lava. Characters within 20' of the collapsing lava titan must succeed on DC 10 Reflex saves or take 1d12 damage as they are caught in the splatter of molten rock and flame.



Characters searching through the mud of the water titan discover a large, fist-sized diamond worth 500 gp. Those digging through the cooled lava find a brilliant ruby worth the same. Both jewels, when incorporated into a wizard's staff per the spell, grant +2 spell checks to water and fire spells, respectively.

**Titan of Wave:** Init +3; Atk spear +15 melee (3d8+12) or hurled wave +12 ranged (2d8+10, range 300'); AC 20; HD 17d10; hp 90; MV 50'; Act 2d24; SP immune to cold or water damage, special crit on 20-24; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +8; AL C.

**Titan of Flame:** Init +3; Atk sword +24 melee (5d8+12); AC 20; HD 17d10; hp 100; MV 50'; Act 2d24; SP immune to fire damage, special crit on 20-24; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +8; AL C.

**Area 1-5a – Beyond the Gate:** *You pull back the massive gate to reveal a wide, worked-stone passageway descending into the underworld.*

*The rough ceiling is caked with the soot of ancient brands, and the ramp is worn smooth by the tread of thousands. Surely, this must be the way to the Lost Cities of Agharta.*

The ramp descends down into darkness. Refer to the Underworld Map, and Levels A-C to track the PCs' progress.



# PART 2: THE JOURNEY



he PCs' passage consists of an arduous trek through the gloom of the underworld, punctuated by dangerous encounters and mysterious locations. But while rappelling down cavernous chimneys, scaling great boulders, and route-finding in the darkness is riveting in the real world, at the gaming table the work of spelunking risks devolving into a series of rolls and checks, repeated ad nauseam.

The work of the judge is to establish the mood of the expedition: how the days without sunlight or stars blur into meaningless shifts in the gloom; how the crags and cracks seem to descend forever; the crushing presence of the cold, damp stone overhead. All the while, the judge must gloss over the tedium in favor of the exciting. It is not inappropriate to conflate entire weeks' worth of event-less trekking into a single narration.

However, these days and weeks may not be not entirely incident – some of which can play to a party's favor, and others which may spell their doom. Once per week, roll on the Random Encounters & Events Table (**Appendix A**).

## TRAVEL

The underworld map is broken into 50-mile hexes.

Characters hewing to Old Paths can expect to cover roughly 15 miles a day, and an average 100 miles a week. The passageways of the Old Paths are uniformly 20' wide, with arched ceilings supported by columns cut from the walls.

When the PCs leave the Paths, their progress slows dramatically. The natural caves are mazes of fallen boulders, flowstone formations, and cliffs – all canted at a steep angle towards the center of the earth. Hours must be spent climbing, crawling and squeezing around rock formations, and the finding correct way “through” the natural caves requires the investigation of multiple dead-ends and false leads. At best, characters can hope to cover roughly 7 miles a day (averaging 50 miles per week), though exploration parties led by dwarves can travel 10 miles, plus the dwarf's Luck modifier, in the course of a day.

Finally, riding the river allows PCs to cover up to 50 miles per day, though the dark waters present their own unique risks (see area B-2 for details).

## CHARACTER STRENGTH WITHIN THE WORLD'S CORE

As the PCs plunge deeper into the underworld, the effective mass “beneath” them dwindles while that above them increases, resulting in a lower-gravity environment where objects are effectively “lighter.”

The journey takes place in three relative depths represented as “levels” on the Underworld map. Bonuses to Strength-related tasks correspond to the PC's depth..

The benefits are – obviously – not cumulative, and are already factored into the stats of the underworld's monsters.

<b>Level A</b>	Strength Score +1
Speed +5	Jump distance +5'
<b>Level B</b>	Strength Score +3
Speed +10	Jump distance +10'
<b>Level C</b>	Strength Score +5
Speed +15	Jump distance +15'

**Area A-1 – The Old Ways:** *The worn, stone steps plunge into the darkness ahead. The stairs are seemingly endless, leading you deeper and deeper into the earth.*

As above, so long as the PCs stick to the Paths, they make good time. The Paths are worn from the tread of thousands of slaves, but mold, rock dust and moisture make any new tracks apparent.

The Paths are irregularly bisected by natural caves, fissures and cracks. These imperfections allow PCs (and denizens of the underworld) to enter and exit the Paths. These side-portals always bear signs of use; the stone is invariably scored and worn to rough polish, and caked with dried slime, mud or blood.

**Area A-2 – Way Gate:** *You spy something at the edge of your light, a welcome change from the endless stairs: a short landing, and a door, carved from black stone in the shape of a chaos-rune, and set into the wall.*

The way gates were built by the original Aghartans to provide caravans with points to resupply and rest. All are uniform in their presentation: a stone portal opening to simple gallery set with three small vaults. The portals were originally locked, sealed with wax, and occasionally trapped, but few have survived undisturbed.

The condition of a way gate's cache depends on whether or not the portal has been breached. Any time the PCs encounter a new way gate, consult the following tables:

<b>1d10+ Luck mod.</b>	<b>Way Gate Condition</b>
<b>1 or less</b>	<b>Collapse</b> – The portal is sealed and locked (DC 10 pick locks check) but collapses on the PCs upon entering (DC 15 Ref save for first 3 PCs; on a failed check 1d20 damage).
<b>2</b>	<b>Sealed</b> – The portal is sealed and locked (DC 15 pick locks check). However the vaults have been broken into from <i>within</i> by a primordial ooze that now lurks on the ceiling. Unless spotted by PCs, the ooze surprises the first character entering the chamber, dropping from above.
	<b>Ooze:</b> Init (always last); Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d5); AC 10; HD 9d8; hp 36; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 9d20; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons; SV Fort +6, Ref -8, Will -6; AL N.



	<b>Inhabited</b> – The portal is broken open, and the way house is now home to 1d5 cave trolls.
3	<b>Cave Troll (1d5):</b> Init +6; Atk bite +10 melee (2d8+8) or claw +8 melee (2d6+6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6; hp 42 ea.; MV 40' or swim 30'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to fire, sensitive to light; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.
4	<b>Portal destroyed</b> – The way house has been ransacked and naught but dust and rubble remain.
5	<b>Portal broken</b> – The portal is breached, and the passage of time has ruined all the contents.
6	<b>Breached</b> – The portal is open, but can be sealed again from the inside. All the food-stuffs have been ruined but the vaults still hold three sealed casks of potable water.
7	<b>Locked</b> – The portal's wax seal is broken, but the portal remains locked (DC 10 pick lock check). The vaults contain 1d5 casks of potable water, several lengths of rope (1d6x100' total), and 1d3 dried salves. (If wetted with water or wine and applied to open wounds, the salves heal 1d10 hp.)
8	<b>Sealed</b> – The portal is sealed and locked (DC 15 pick locks check). The vaults contain 1d5 casks of potable water, 1d5 sealed coffers containing edible grains and hardtack, and a single velvet lined box containing a small carved chaos idol.
9	<b>Sealed</b> – The portal is sealed and locked (DC 20 pick locks check). The vaults contain 1d10 casks of potable water, 1d8 dried salves (as above), 1d10 sealed coffers containing edible grains and hardtack, and 1d10 arrowheads.
10+	<b>Sealed</b> – The portal is sealed and locked (DC 25 pick locks check). The vaults contain 1d10 casks of potable water, 1d10 dried salves (as above), 1d10 sealed coffers containing edible grains and hardtack, and an Aghartan weapon of the judge's choosing.

**Area A-3 – Ten Thousand Tongues:** *You've lost sense of day or night; so far beneath the earth, time itself has no meaning. Instead you descend the seemingly-endless stairs until you are exhausted, then sleep atop the cold stone steps, and then wake, only to do it all again.*

*The gray drudgery is shattered by tremors underfoot. Dust and soot from a thousand torches shake free from the ceiling, the stone stairs beneath you buckle and shake for the first time in eons.*

The PCs are under attack by a chthonian fireworm. Twenty feet in diameter and hundreds of feet long, the worm comes at the PCs through the ceiling, then dives down through

the floor. The worm is covered in fiery "tongues," feelers that extrude superheated chemicals that instantly melt the surrounding rock, while propelling the worm along.

The sightless worm relies on vibrations to locate its prey. The judge should call for PC actions; if the PCs remain motionless, the worm bores through the passageway from above, accidentally targeting the PC with the lowest Luck. If the PCs move, or take other actions that cause vibrations in the stone, the worm attacks the source of the greatest disruption – this may be a wizard calling a spell out of the cosmos, or a warrior in fullplate armor, fleeing down the stairs.

The worm attacks from above, breaking through the ceiling of the tunnel, and showering the PCs with molten rubble (DC 10 Reflex save or 1d10 damage from the searing rocks). The worm's flame-tongues inflict 1d12 damage on any character coming within 5' (DC 15 Reflex save to avoid), and on a successful attack, the snake swallows the target; swallowed characters are subjected to horrific temperatures, suffering 1d20 damage per round (DC 15 Fortitude save for half).

The fireworm's internal organs are constantly under great pressure. A character surviving long enough to cut his way free from inside a fireworm need only inflict 20 hp damage to cause the worm to detonate. The resulting explosion of burning liquids inflicts an additional 1d20 damage to all PCs outside of the worm (DC 10 Reflex save to avoid).

If the fireworm is reduced to half hit points or less, it dives down through the stone floor, leaving a gaping hole in its wake. The tremors continue as the superheated rock begins to cool and shatter, causing entire leaves of stone to flake off and fall from above (DC 10 Reflex save or 1d16 damage). The rockfall increases in violence until the passageway collapses 1d5 rounds later, crushing anything within 50' of the fireworm's tunnel.

Characters beneath the collapsing tunnel must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or be crushed by the falling debris.

**Treasure:** Characters cutting open a dead fireworm's gullet discover 1d8 bright rubies worth 250 gp each.

**Chthonian Fireworm:** Init +4; Atk bite +10 melee (1d14 + swallow); AC 16; HD 10d8; hp 40; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP flame-tongue aura 1d12, immune to heat damage; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

**Area A-4 – River Crossing:** *The worm steps finally reach an end: an open, un-hewn cavern bisected by a swiftly flowing river. Fallen blocks rest where a bridge once stood, creating turbulent rapids topped with whitecaps.*

The drone of the crashing water drowns out conversation, forcing PCs to shout to be heard. The air is chill with moisture, and nearly every surface is wet with spray from the rapids. At its narrowest, the river is 40' across; characters standing across the river from each other cannot hear each other, and can only scarcely make out figures through gloom and spray. Judges are within their rights to require players communicate with one another via tugs on a rope (or whatever means their PCs devise). The river is 10' deep at its center, with steep banks.



A trio of cave trolls lurk among the stalactites and pillars on the far side of the river. Horrific creatures, with pale skin that hangs in folds, blackened claws and teeth like daggers, the trolls ambush the first character crossing the river. If the trolls are detected prior to the crossing, they shrink into the darkness, returning to attack with surprise. The trolls are extremely sensitive to light, shying from torches and lanterns, and retreating in the face of bright, magical light.

The steep slope leading down to the river is slick with spray; incautious characters, or those with a Luck of 5 or less, must succeed on DC 5 Reflex saves or slip and fall into the water.

The waters are incredibly swift. Characters caught in the current have but a single round to succeed on a DC 15 Strength check; those failing the check are swept from the chamber into darkness (see sidebar and area B-2), towards area B-3.

Little is left of the bridge, save the massive stone blocks hidden among the rapids. The waves constantly surge over the stones, threatening to wash away any PCs so foolhardy as to attempt leaping from stone to stone. Characters attempting the feat must make five DC 15 Agility checks; on a single failure the character tumbles into the rapids, taking 1d8 damage, and is swept from the chamber as above.

**Cave Troll (3):** Init +6; Atk bite +10 melee (2d8+8) or claw +8 melee (2d6+6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6; hp 29, 38, 45; MV 40' or swim 30'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to fire, sensitive to light; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.

## ON THE RIVER

The river is at once the swiftest and most dangerous means of travel in the Aghartan underworld. If the PCs are able to conceive a river-worthy vessel, they can traverse a great portion of the deeps without risking encounters. However, wherever the river squeezes to an airless chute (areas B-2b) the PCs' vessel will be destroyed, often with deadly results.

In most places, the river speed averages 10 miles per hour, and is 10' deep with shallow, rocky banks. There are no predators large enough to threaten the PCs, though this does not hold true with the larger lakes and seas. See area B-2 for more info.

**Area A-4a – Troll Nest:** *While scarcely 3' across, the passage is over 10' in height. The walls, ceiling and floor are scored with deep grooves and scratches, and the floor is littered with broken bones, bits of rotting flesh and bloody clumps of hair.*

Dwarves immediately recognize that the passageway was dug entirely by troll tooth and claw. The nest is filthy with remnants of the trolls' victims, making it impossible to move through the narrow, twisting passages without disturbing the rubbish. The crack of bones underfoot and the clank and creak of PCs slipping along the stone walls alerts the trolls. Unless the PCs send thieves to scout ahead (requiring three DC 10 sneak silently checks), or employ magic, the trolls cannot be surprised.

(Ask the PC with the worst Luck to attempt a Luck check as the PCs enter the nest. If the check fails, an additional 1d3+1 trolls return from the hunts five rounds after the PCs enter the nest. The trolls have returned empty-handed and hungrily attack the PCs, heedless of their own safety.)

The massive troll mother lurks in the very center of the caves. Fully 14' in height, she hunches her way through the dark passages. The mother knots her





stringy hair in long greasy braids, matted with blood and gore, and wears a belt hung with femurs around her waist.

The mother is attended by her lover, a hulking champion with six arms (though one pair are vestigial, merely flexing and grabbing blindly when the champion is excited). He lurks with the mother amid their mound of bones, fighting to the death in the defense of his lover.

The troll mother is far more intelligent than her progeny, and willing to parlay with the PCs. The troll is unable to speak any of the PCs' modern languages, and so any communication must be done with grunts and gestures. Permitted to escape, she rallies her brood and stalks the PCs from a distance, attacking with surprise once the odds are in her favor.

**Treasure:** A careful search of the mother's mound uncovers a pair of Aghartan gladii (treat as short swords), and a trio of *dwarf rings* (intended to be worn in the beard). Each of the rings grants a wearer the ability to attempt a d16 casting of *Second Sight* (as per the cleric spell), once per day. If all three rings are worn by a single dwarf, the delver also gains the ability to make a d20 casting of *Bless* on himself, once per day. (If the PC already possess additional *dwarf rings*, these benefits stack.)

**Troll Mother:** Init +6; Atk bite +10 melee (2d8+8) or claw +8 melee (2d6+6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6; hp 68; MV 40' or swim 30'; Act 2d24; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to fire, sensitive to light; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.

**Cave Troll Champion:** Init +6; Atk bite +10 melee (2d8+8) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6+6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6; hp 53; MV 40' or swim 30'; Act 4d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to fire, sensitive to light; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.

**Cave Troll (1d3+1):** Init +6; Atk bite +10 melee (2d8+8) or claw +8 melee (2d6+6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6; hp 29, 38, 45; MV 40' or swim 30'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to fire, sensitive to light; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.

**Area A-5 – The Cross:** *The night-endless steps descend into a vaulted gallery, open on four sides. The high, vaulted ceiling is supported by elaborately carved buttresses that arch to the ceiling.*

An intersection of two Old Paths, the Cross is defended by a minor demon of the Seventh Pit: Hzarer the Craven. Bound to defend the crossroads against non-Aghartans, the demon has the ability to animate up to three gargoyles at a time, with new gargoyles joining the fray even as their brethren-in-stone are destroyed.

The stone gargoyles peel themselves from the buttresses and drop from above as the PCs pass through the chamber. In lieu of inflicting damage on a successful attack, a gargoyle can elect to seize the PC, haul the target to the ceiling, and then drop them 50' to the floor at the end of the following round. A character can escape a gargoyle's stony grip with a DC 13 Strength check, though this may only worsen their situation. Characters can attempt to catch, and cling to, the leering gargoyles carved into the walls and ceiling, but may find the gargoyles animating in their grip.

**Treating with the Devil:** After centuries of service, Hzarer has no interest in his assignment, yet is unable to shake free his shackles. While he must obey the letter of his geas ("Permit none but Aghartans to walk these halls.") he is eager to entertain any plans to win his freedom.

In return, Hzarer promises the PCs a single wish – but no time frame in which to fulfill the wish. (The minor demon has no ability to make good on his promise, but with an eternity to grow in power, there may come a day when he can.)





The demon can be freed by a suitably powerful casting of *dispel magic* (spell check of 20 or better). The gargoyles can fly the PCs across the space, but this solution doesn't free the demon from his bond. However, if the hall is destroyed and collapsed (ensuring that none may pass) the demon's geas is lifted. While the demon is bound by its geas against suggesting solutions, it gleefully endorses any workable plans the PCs might propose.

For all his vices, Hzarar's pride refuses to allow him to accept the PCs' help without some reward. While he might not be able to grant the promised *wish* for some time to come, the demon does take the form of a large housefly and follows the PCs, interceding on their behalf at a critical juncture. This favor can take the form of distracting an opponent, blocking what might have been a critical hit, or transforming back into a demon in time to catch a falling PC. The demon aids the PCs as long as he finds it entertaining, and especially delights in coming to the aid of Law-aligned PCs (especially clerics and holy warriors), placing them in his debt.

**Hzarer the Craven (Type II Demon):** Init +6; Atk poisoned tail stinger +8 melee (1d4+2 plus DC 15 Fort save or *sleep*) or claw +8 melee (1d8+2) or bite +10 melee (1d6); AC 18; HD 6d12; hp 52; MV 30' or fly 45'; Act 2d20; SP polymorph self at will, *detect good* (+6 spell check), demon traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +6; AL C.

**Gargoyles (up to 20 total):** Init +0; Atk claw +4 melee (1d4); AC 21; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP resistant to non-magical weapons, stand still; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

**Area A-6 – Collapse:** *Massive boulders and mounds of fallen rubble block the passageway. The air is warm and dry, and a coating of dust hangs over all.*

Several hundred tons of rubble block the way. Without the aid of magic, or a small army of miners, there is no way for the PCs to pass.

Dwarfs and other denizens of the deep instinctively know that the collapse has not fully settled, and that disturbing the mound comes with great risk. Characters investigating the base of the rubble can detect a faint stench of brimstone; some of the stones at the base of the mound bear a white, mineral crust from the same.

If PCs scale the mound, call for Luck checks by all would-be climbers. On a failed check, the mound collapses, spilling rubble throughout the chamber (DC 17 Reflex save or 1d16 damage). After the dust settles, the PCs discover that they remained blocked as before: the mound remains unstable, and there is no passageway through to the far side.

Characters taking the initiative to explore the nearby side caverns discover a narrow crawl way which may offer a solution (area A-6a).

**Area A-6a – The Seam:** The crack is hidden in a niche in the wall; PCs will not take notice of the hidden side passage unless they are explicitly searching the walls.

If the PCs do discover the side passage, read or paraphrase the following: *A narrow cleft opens into a slender seam in the rock, just wide enough for an unarmored human. A hot sulfurous stench leaks out through the crack, leaving the stone coated in white mineral crust.*

The seam is just wide enough for a large, unarmored human. Descending down through the seam requires PCs to squirm, crawl and pull their way along the sharp, mineralized rock.

A primeval slime lurks among the cracks and crevices of the seam. The searing ooze drops down onto PCs as they pull themselves through the crawlspace. Unless the PCs are taking extraordinary precautions, the ooze attacks with surprise the first round, sliding free of the cracks to engulf the lead delver. Characters in the seam are treated as prone and can only attack with one-handed weapons. The unintelligent ooze continues to attack so long as the PCs remain within the passage.

After 50 yards, the seam opens onto the wall of the Great Rift (area B-4).

**Hot Ooze:** Init (always last); Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 16; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 2d20; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons; SV Fort +6, Ref -8, Will -6; AL N.

**Area B-1– Crystal Caves:** *The passageway opens to a vast cathedral of spires. Massive crystals, some 10' in width and hundreds of feet long, span the chamber like glittering bridges. The floor of the chamber is lost in the shimmering darkness somewhere below, while the ceiling is obscured by a hundred more crystals, cast at weird angles by a mad-architect god disdaining all reference to up or down.*

The chamber ranges from 50' to 100' in height, with massive beams of gypsum spanning the abyss. Characters can move from one end of the other without ever needing to touch the ground, and changing elevation is as simple as leaping up (DC 10 Strength check) or dropping down (DC 10 Agility check). Characters falling from the crystalline perch can attempt DC 15 Ref saves to catch lower crystal bridges; a character can make two such attempts before accelerating beyond any hope of safely arresting his fall.

While atop the crystals, PCs can make their full movement (but only up and down the crystals). Characters retreating to the cavern floor move at half speed due to the rough, uneven rock.

A species of semi-intelligent man-sized mantises makes its home in the caverns, preying upon the rock spiders, rodents and – given the opportunity – the PCs. The mantises wear a makeshift armor of crystal plates, glued to their thoraxes. The scintillating crystals render the mantises nearly invisible. (This benefit is lost once the mantises attack, though the dazzling armor still works to obscure sight). Similarly, the mantis-men glue sharpened crystal shards to their forearms to create razor-like scythes capable of punching holes in the stoutest breastplate.





Unless the PCs proceed with exceptional caution, the mantises attack with surprise, leaping from adjoining bridges, striking the PCs, and then springing away. A mantis-man can make a second move any round that it only makes a single attack.

Any character atop a crystal when struck for 5 or more points of damage must make a DC 5 Reflex save or be knocked from his perch, falling as above. Mantis-men only risk falling from critical hits or Mighty Deeds of Arms, but have no chance of catching themselves.

Three bands of mantis-men prowl the crystalline lattices, each numbering 3d4 mantis-men. The bands lurk about the entrances to the caverns. If a PC is slain or rendered unconscious, two of mantis-men immediately break from combat to carry the body to their mother (area B-2a).

**Mantis-men (3d4 per band):** Init +3; Atk forearm slash +3 melee (1d10+2); AC 15; HD 2d8+2; hp 11 ea.; MV 40' or leap 30'; Act 2d20; SP Invisible prior to attack, second move action after a single attack; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

**Area B-1a – The Queen's Grotto:** *The worn passageway slopes down to a low chamber. Weird, globular sacks hang from the ceiling and are glued to the walls. At the rear of the chamber, atop a mound of broken bones, is an enormous mantis, watching you with its wide, faceted eyes.*

The queen mantis is massive in size, her 20' thorax nearly filling the grotto. Wedged into the rear of the chamber, she has no ability to move about the cavern. Instead the queen mantis relies on her servitors delivering her meals. She is unaccustomed to having to kill her own food and is perplexed by the PCs at first, attacking only once provoked.

In combat the queen can launch a globe of foaming glue at targets within her line of sight. On a successful hit, roll 1d5 and consult the following table for effects. The PC can break free of the sticky, hardened spittle with a DC 15 Strength

check. (If a PC's arm is bound, the effective Strength check to free oneself is increased to DC 20.)

1d5	Hit Location & Effect
1	Head, suffocation.
2 - 3	Arm, -1d to attack
4 - 5	Leg, no movement.

The queen can also attack targets up to 20' away with her long, scythe-like arms. On a critical hit, the target is impaled on her forearm and drawn to the mother for a bite attack the following round. Targets can escape impalement by drawing themselves off the forearm (inflicting an additional 1d12 damage) or by somehow snapping off the forearm and crawling free (DC 30 Strength check, or a Mighty Deed of Arms).

**Treasure:** Characters inspecting the mound of bones beneath the queen discover 1d7 gems (worth 50 gp each), 1d4 gems (worth 100 gp each), several corroded weapons and a corroded breastplate (worthless), and 3 blackened Aghartan daggers).

**Mantis Queen:** Init +3; Atk forearm slash -3 melee (1d16+2) or glue-glob +2 ranged (special); AC 10; HD 5d8+5; hp 30; MV 0'; Act 2d20; SP glue target as above; SV Fort +6, Ref -3, Will +4; AL C.

**Area B-2 – Underground River:** *A great river rushes by, the inky waters broken only by the occasional whitecap as it courses into darkness.*

The river is at once the swiftest and most dangerous means of travel in the Aghartan deeps. If the PCs are able to construct a river-worthy vessel, they can traverse a great portion of the deeps without risking encounters. However, wherever the river squeezes to an airless chute (see areas B-4a) the PCs' vessel will be destroyed, often with deadly results.





In most places, the river speed averages 10 miles per hour, and is 10' deep with steep, worn banks. There are no predators large enough to threaten the PCs, though this does not hold true with the larger lakes and seas.

Characters attempting to moor their vessel (or pull themselves free of the chill waters) must rely on the whims of fate. The walls and banks of the river are scoured smooth from centuries of rushing currents. Characters scrambling against the wall in hopes of finding a crag, ledge or bank may attempt a Luck check once every ten minutes on the following table:

1d20+ Luck mod.	Result
3 or less	Character is pinned underwater against the rocks. If on a vessel, character is pitched overboard and pinned beneath craft. The PC must succeed on a DC 15 Strength check or begin to drown.
4 - 6	Character is smashed against the rocks! If on a vessel, character slips into the water and is crushed between craft and wall. In both cases: DC 10 Reflex save or 1d12 damage.
7 - 9	Character dashed against the rocks (1d4 damage), but scrambles for a hold (DC 15 Strength check)!

10 - 13

Character catches a secure hold on a rock, pulling himself out of the water or swinging the vessel into the eddy. There is no shore along the smooth rock walls, but at least he is free of the water.

14+

Character pulls himself free of the current to a rocky shore! If traveling on a vessel, the character poles the craft free of the current into the shallows.

Attempts to move upstream are nigh-impossible, and can only be accomplished through magic.

**Area B-2a - Ford:** The river-passage widens here, allowing the current to slow. The river is 5' at its deepest, and gently rising to a mere ankle's depth at the shore. The shore has been scoured by the river waters, leaving naught but barren stone.

Parties attempting to cross the river risk being swept downstream (DC 13 Strength check), but may make three attempts before they are pulled from the chamber. (Tying a character off with a rope eliminates this risk entirely.)

Characters traveling on the river similarly have three tries to pull themselves into the shallow eddies (DC 10 Strength check). Additional members of the party can aid in the attempt.

**Area B-2b - The Pinch:** *The sounds of the river builds to a roar! At the edge of your light you see the height of the ceiling shrinking and then vanishing altogether beneath the roiling black waters!*

Characters traveling via the river have just one chance to find mooring before their vessel is swept into the pinch. Those failing to apprehend the danger have their vessel crushed and dragged beneath the inky waters. Any gear secured to the vessel is lost (save for judge's discretion), and the PCs must attempt DC 10 Fortitude saves to avoid drowning as they are swept into the airless, light-less tunnel.

On a failed check, a PC begins drowning. On a successful check, the PC manages to hold his breath while jostled through the frigid darkness.

Survival is reduced to a matter of luck. The pinch continues for 1d10 rounds before shooting the PCs out into an open passageway. However, any natural flames will have been long since extinguished, PCs will likely be separated in the darkness and vital gear lost or ruined.

Characters that manage to arrest their vessel only forestall their fate. However, working back upstream is nearly impossible without the use of magic, making it only a matter of time before the PCs are sucked into the pinch.

**Area B-3 - The Black Sea:** *Still, black waters stretch out beyond the reach of the light. The air is chill and silent, save for the droning crash of water somewhere in the distance.*



The sea is vast on a scale that dwarfs PCs and their craft. It stretches for hundreds of miles, with gray, lonesome shores bereft of life. A constant, nearly imperceptible current draws PCs at the rate of 10 miles per hour towards the circular falls (area B-3a) located in the center of the sea.

The waters are punctuated by immense pillars that rise to the ceiling. Over 100' in diameter, and 300' to 600' in height, the pillars stand like great monoliths rising into darkness. Each is scored with hundreds of runes and cut with depictions of monumental, elephantine forms of the Aghartan slave lords. It is relatively easy (DC 7 climb check) for characters to ascend the pillars, climbing up along the carvings. Wizards and elves studying the massive runes (DC 15 Intelligence check) realize that each of the columns records a single spell.

Studying the columns in order to learn a spell is a monumental task in every sense, taking 1d5+5 weeks simply to record a single column, after which the caster can attempt to learn the spell (see page 315 of the DCC RPG rulebook). The spells range from 2nd to 4th level and can be selected by the judge or rolled at random.

Any time a character successfully casts a spell or uses magic while on the dark waters, that character must attempt a Luck check. On a failed check, the adventurer inadvertently summons one of the sea's great serpents. The serpent rises from the dark waters 3d100' from the PCs' location, and makes directly for adventurers with the intent of devouring the magic-user.

On a critical hit, the serpent destroys the PCs' vessel, spilling the adventurers into the water. On a subsequent critical hit, the serpent successfully devours the magic-user and dives back beneath the black waters.

Every round the PCs are in combat with the serpent, have the same magic-user make a 1d20 roll modified by their Luck. On a 20 or higher, a monstrous dragon turtle emerges from the deeps, aroused by the conflict. The turtle attacks the serpent and the two vanish beneath the waves in a conflagration of violence. The resulting, titanic waves threaten to swamp the PCs' vessel (Luck check, by the ship's "captain"); if the craft survives, the PCs are propelled 20 miles away; if the shoreline is within 10 miles, the vessel is driven aground.

The dragon turtle can only be summoned once in this way, but the PCs risk summoning a serpent each time a spell is cast. Use the DCC RPG rulebook's dragon entry to generate additional serpents.

**Black Waters:** The sea is saturated with arcane energy leeched from the mighty pillars. Characters drinking from the waters risk much, though the effects are seldom the same. If a character elects to drink from the befouled waters (as opposed to the rivers that feed the sea) call for a 1d20 roll, modified by Luck, and consult the following table. Corruptions are rolled randomly on the appropriate tables, per the DCC RPG rulebook. Note that Luck cannot be spent to modify this roll.

**1d20+  
Luck mod.**

**Result**

<b>0 or less</b>	PC suffers 1d5 Greater corruptions. He can no longer die, but also no longer benefits from magical healing. Instead the PC heals at the normal rate. Exceptional damage which would have otherwise caused the PC's death instead renders his body broken and ruined; trapped within, unable to take actions, the PC suffers in agonizing torment for all eternity.
<b>1 - 3</b>	PC suffers 1d3 Greater corruptions. He receives +1d to one spell check per day.*
<b>4 - 6</b>	PC suffers 1d3 Major corruptions. His Luck improves by 1d7.
<b>7 - 9</b>	PC suffers a Major corruption but gains a +3 bonus to saves against spells.
<b>10</b>	PC suffers 1d3 Minor corruptions. Once per day the effects of a cast spell improve by +1d.*
<b>11</b>	PC suffers a Minor corruption, and immediately acquires vast knowledge of the multiverse. The character's player may ask the judge up to 5 yes/no questions.
<b>12</b>	PC suffers a Minor corruption and may nullify one spell per day. The PC must be the spell's target, or within 5' of the target.
<b>13</b>	PC suffers a Minor corruption. The spellcaster receives +3d to his next spell check.
<b>14</b>	PC suffers a Minor corruption and gains the ability to see invisible objects. This does not apply to hidden objects (thieves hiding in shadows, secret doors obscured by illusions) but does include astral creatures and the like that are otherwise beyond sight.
<b>15 - 19</b>	No effect.
<b>20</b>	PC must attempt a DC 15 Willpower save. If successful, he instantly apprehends one new spell (chosen at random, or the judge's choice).*
<b>21</b>	PC must attempt a DC 10 Willpower save. If successful, his 1d3 highest attributes improve by 1d5 points.
<b>22</b>	PC must attempt a DC 5 Willpower save. If successful he gains +1d to all saving throws against magic.
<b>23</b>	PC is rendered unconscious for 1d4 days. When he awakens, he has gained +1 level.

\*If not already a spellcaster, the PC gains the ability to cast a randomly determined level 1 spell with a d16 spell check die.

**Sea Serpent;** Init +9; Atk bite +10 melee (1d16); AC 19; HD 9d12; hp 66 hp; MV swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP see below; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +9; AL L.



**Breath Weapon:** Type (Sleep gas); Save (Fort, DC 19); Damage (Fall asleep for 1d6 hours, no effect with save); Shape (Cloud, radius 1d4×10', aimed up to 60' away)

**Color Spray:** The serpent's scintillating scales act as *color spray* spell (d20 spell check).

**Death from Below:** When fighting from the water, the dragon's first-round bite attacks receive an additional +4 attack bonus and +d8 damage.

**Dragon Turtle:** Init +11; Atk claw +12 melee (1d8) or bite +12 melee (1d20); AC 21; HD 11d12; hp 85 hp; MV 50, swim 65'; Act 2d20; SP see below; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +11; AL C.

**Breath Weapon:** Type (Poison gas); Save (Fort, DC 21); Damage (Death or no effect with save); Shape (Cloud, radius 1d3×10', aimed up to 90' away)

**Martial Power:** Throw spines. The dragon turtle's hide is covered with barbed spines that can be hurled as an attack. This takes the place of one claw attack, and the attack is made at the same attack and damage roll with a range of 100'. A dragon has enough ammunition to throw up to 4 spine attacks per day.

**Unique Power:** Wall of fog (1/hour). The dragon turtle can summon a wall of fog at will. The wall is up to 100' x 20' x 100'. Within the fog, targets suffer -4 to all attacks and move at half speed.

**Area B-3a – The Falls:** *The distant droning slowly grows louder. It seems as if the current has picked up, drawing you and your companions towards the center of the strange, dark sea.*

Set in the center of the sea is great circular rim; the waters of the sea slowly pour over the edge from all sides, vanishing into the darkness below.

The droning crash of water is not from the rim, but from the impact thousands of feet below (area B-5), so

judging the location of the falls by the proximity of the "noise" presents great risk. Visually, the falls simply appear as a great hole set in the water. The hole is fully one-half mile across.

The stone rim rises up out of the depths. It is possible (though very perilous) for PCs to stand on the lip, water rushing about their legs, and peer out over the edge. A constant rush of water falls down into darkness. Those failing a DC 10 Strength check are swept over the lip to their doom.

**Area B-4 – The Great Rift:** *A dull red glow emanates from somewhere in the far distance, casting the great cavern in crimson light. On either side you can make out sheer rock walls, that fall away to a mist-shrouded jungle far below.*

*The hot air is choked with the stink of sulfur and brimstone, as if the rift is cut all the way to hell. Enormous winged reptiles circle lazily in the air below, and in the distance you can hear the roar of bellowing monsters.*

The Rift is cut into the underworld like a jagged, gaping wound. Thousands of feet in depth, hundreds of feet across, and miles in length, it spans the lower portion of level B to level C. The flying saurians are massive pteranodons; fortunately, the great beasts are focused on hunting the forests below, and take little notice of the PCs *above* them.

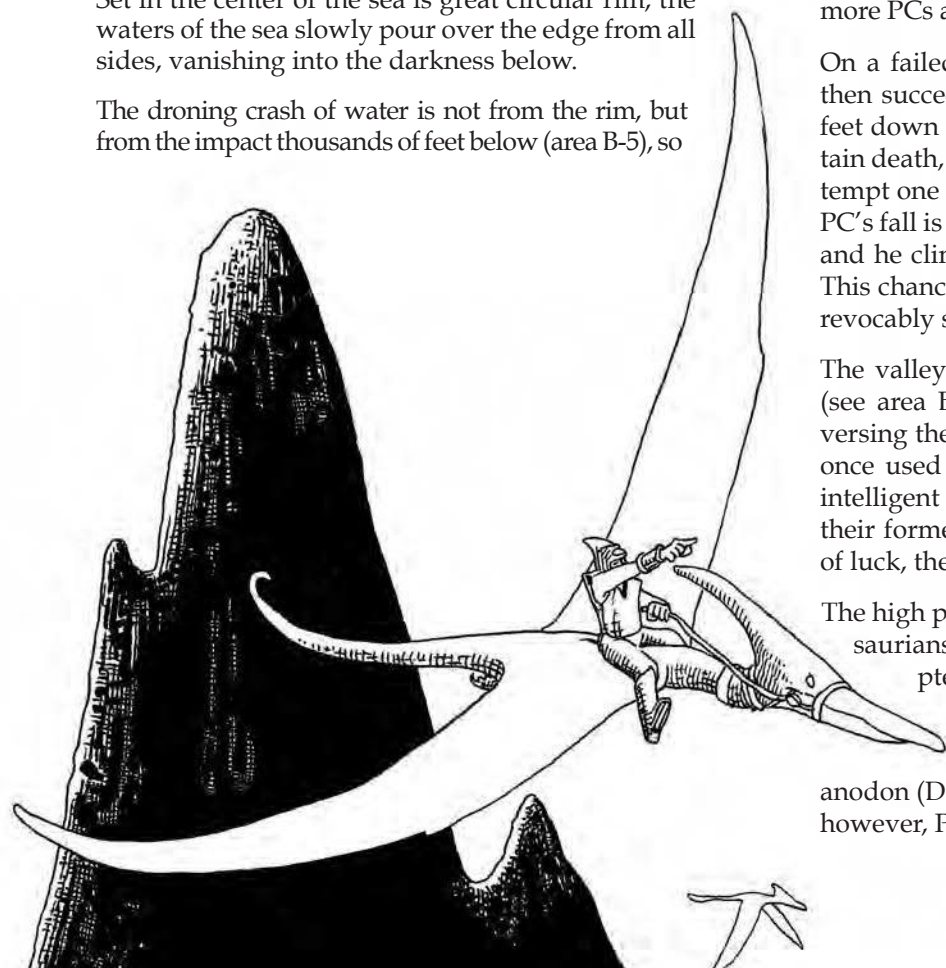
Character entering the Rift from the seam (A-6a) find themselves on the platform directly across from the cliff dwellings. An ancient bridge of woven sinew is suspended across the cavern. Every PC crossing the bridge must attempt a modified Luck check (as a standard check; 1d20 modified by Luck); if one PC crosses at a time, the check is DC 10; if two PCs cross at a time, the DC increases to 15. If three or more PCs attempt to cross at a time, the DC increases to 25.

On a failed check, the bridge tears free. Characters must then succeed on DC 10 Reflex saves or pitch hundreds of feet down to the valley floor. The fall results in almost certain death, but gracious judges can permit falling PCs to attempt one final modified Luck check: on the roll of 20+ the PC's fall is broken by the strange flora at the base of the rift, and he climbs free of the debris, miraculously unharmed. This chance only applies to PCs; all other characters are irrevocably slain on impact.

The valley below is rife with monsters from another age (see area B-4b). However, there is another means of traversing the valley: astride the great pteranodons that were once used as mounts by escaped Aghartan slaves. Semi-intelligent and nearly immortal, the pteranodons still recall their former masters. With courage, and no small amount of luck, the sky-beasts can be mastered once more.

The high perch serves as an ideal location for capturing the saurians. Characters can leap onto the back of a passing pteranodon with a DC 15 Agility check, but those missing the jump plummet to their doom.

A less risky alternative is roping a passing pteranodon (DC 15 Agility check, or 3+ Mighty Deed of Arms); however, PCs must be prepared to be hauled into the air.





The pteranodons are not quick to submit, diving down through the forest, climbing up to the rift ceiling, and doing everything in their power to shake free the rider. This stalemate cannot last forever: if the PC can manage to hold on for 1d5+3 rounds, the pteranodon submits.

Each round the PC clings to a pteranodon he must attempt a DC 15 modified Luck check. (If the PC has secured a set of reins from area B-5a, the DC drops to 10.) On each failed Luck check, the pteranodon willfully smashes the PC against some obstacle for 1d10 damage – either diving through the debris at the base of the rift, scraping the rider at high speeds against the rift, or even trying to clip the rider off on the sinew bridge. If the would-be rider rolls a 1 on the Luck check, he is stripped free from the pteranodon and tumbles earthward.

Once a pteranodon submits, it is remarkably docile and obedient, but only to one master. Each pteranodon can carry up to two human-sized riders 75 miles over the course of a day.

**Pteranodon:** Init +2; Atk bite +8 melee (1d10) or claw +2 melee (1d4); AC 15; HD 6d8; hp 27; MV 10' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; AL N.

#### **Area B-4a – Cliff Dwellings**

**of the Sky-Riders:** *A mass of mud-brown hovels cling to the side of the high cliffs. The mud walls, floors and ceilings are cracked and broken, revealing thatch and dried sticks – the rotting bones of the ancient dwellings.*

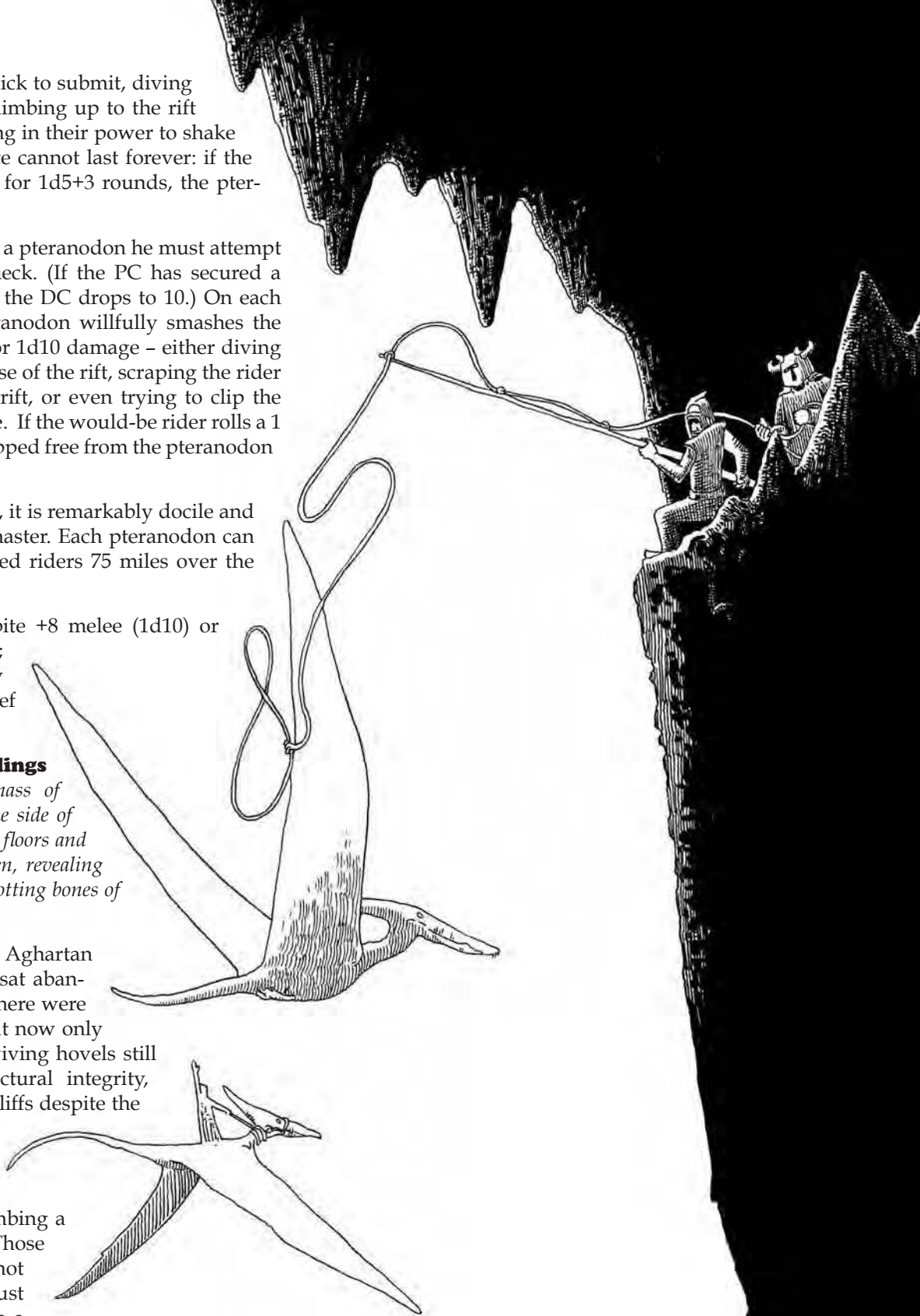
Once inhabited by escaped Aghartan slaves, the mud huts have sat abandoned for centuries. Once there were dozens of the structures, but now only a handful remain. The surviving hovels still retain much of their structural integrity, holding to the sides of the cliffs despite the passage of years.

The hovels are accessed by scaling the rough wall (DC 10 climb check) or climbing a series of ancient ladders. Those trusting the ladders need not make climb checks, but must roll simple Luck checks. On a failed checks, the ladder collapses beneath the PCs, spilling him back to the ledge where he must attempt a DC 10 Reflex save; on a failed save the PC pitches from the ledge to his doom.

Inside the hovels the PCs discover three large clay pots, stopped with wax, and five pairs of enormous reins, woven from sinew. The reins, intended for the pteranodons, are nearly ruined with age; any time they are used to har-

ness a pteranodon, the rider must succeed on a Luck check or watch the harness fall to bits. (This doesn't prevent the PCs from making their own reins and harnesses, using the sinew reins as models.)

The clay pots are filled with ancient grains and pressed leaves; hydrated, they can serve as rations for desperate PCs.





**Area B-4b – Valley Floor:** *The weird jungle is lit by a faint, crimson light emanating from the far distance. Large pale fronds droop limply, white leaves lay on the ground, and sickly vines litter the loamy ground.*

*Violent roars and the snap of great teeth on bone can be heard through the crimson mist.*

Once a towering rainforest, the antediluvian jungle and its inhabitants were swallowed by the earth, eons past. Lit only by lava pools, the self-contained ecosystem has been slowly dying ever since, until now only the jungle’s understory and floor remain. A mere handful of the great saurians haunt the forest floor, feeding off one another in a shrinking cycle of violence.

Traveling the valley floor invites great risk. The encroaching lava has driven the already-starving beasts into a frenzy, and they mindlessly attack the PCs without thought of their own survival. Adventurers are left to press through the fog-shrouded ghost jungle, dealing with the beasts as they come.

Not all the beasts need be fought. Characters exercising caution may have just enough forewarning to hide themselves or take other actions.

Every 4 hours the PCs spend on the rift floor, have the least-lucky PC in the party make a 1d20 roll, modified by Luck, and consult following table. Characters taking special precautions (hiding, disguising their presence through magic, and the like) can avoid encounters altogether, at the judge’s pleasure.

1d20+ Luck mod.	Encounter Setup
1 or less	The PCs are surprised by a lurking monster from a forgotten age; the beast gets one free round of actions before the PCs can react.
2 - 4	The PCs spot the beast, just as they themselves are spotted: cold eyes looming above the dead trees, movement in the mists, or just the ground, trembling beneath them. Roll initiative as per normal.
5 - 7	A beast has caught the PCs’ scent and begins to track them through the ghost forest. It will catch up to the PCs in 1d3 (+ Luck mod.) hours.
8 - 9	The PCs spy a monster moving towards them through the mists. They have only 1d5 (+ Luck mod.) rounds before the beast comes across them. The PCs can attempt to hide, set an ambush, or take other actions, but fleeing draws the beast’s attention.
10+	No encounter.

**1d8+  
Luck  
mod.**

**Encounter**

1 or less	<p><b>Tyrannosaurus Rex:</b> The towering specimen stands higher than any of the dying flora, and every step sends tremors through the cavern.</p> <p><b>Tyrannosaurus Rex (1):</b> Init +0; Atk bite +12 melee (2d12+4); AC 15; HD 10d10+6; hp 75; MV 60'; Act 2d24; SP rend; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.</p> <p>If both attacks strike a single target, the t-rex rends the victim for an additional 1d16 damage.</p>
2 - 3	<p><b>Sarcosuchus:</b> An enormous crocodile, the sarcosuchus launches from one of the many pools or undergrowth, dragging victims away to be devoured at its leisure.</p> <p><b>Sarcosuchus (1):</b> Init +2; Atk bite +10 melee (3d6+6); AC 17; HD 8d10+2; hp 42; MV 35', swim 60'; Act 1d24; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.</p>
4 - 7	<p><b>Deinonychus:</b> The feathered horrors hunt in packs of 1d5+1.</p> <p><b>Deinonychus (1d5+1):</b> Init +3; Atk talons +4 melee (1d8+3 plus pin); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 18 ea.; MV 35'; Act 1d20; SP pin; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.</p> <p>On a successful attack the deinonychus leaps atop the target (DC 10 fort save or be driven to the ground). Attacks against prone or pinned targets inflict an additional 1d6 damage.</p>
8+	<p><b>Pteranodons:</b> A flock of 1d3 spot the party and dive to the attack.</p> <p><b>Pteranodon (1d3):</b> Init +2; Atk bite +8 melee (1d10) or claw +2 melee (1d4); AC 15; HD 6d8; hp 27 ea.; MV 10' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; AL N.</p>

**Area B-5 – Lava Pools:** *A great, constant stream of water pours down from above, instantly vaporizing into searing red mist as it strikes roiling pools of lava. The two elements are locked in battle: water from above, earth from below, with magma carrying the day.*

The base of the rift is a series of lava pools, interspersed with bridges of cooled magma, all fed by a river of fire. The lava is overtaking the rift, consuming the foliage, forcing back the last of the saurians, and building up layer after layer of blackened gabbro and granite.





The waterfall (originating in the Black Sea) has only served to slow – not stall – the process. Great gouts of superheated steam, crimson in the dim light, fill the cavern where the lava and water collide.

Characters attempting to pass through the falls are faced with a difficult choice. Those attempting to cross on foot must navigate the pools of lava via the interlaced bridges of cooling magma, while being blasted by plumes of superheated steam.

Meanwhile, those attempting to fly over the lava pools (either astride the pteranodons, or by other means) are pummeled by sheets of falling water. The lucky withstand the hammering deluge, while the unlucky are driven down into the same lava pools below.

**Walking the Pits:** Crossing the lava pools “simply” requires PCs to cleave to the blackened bridges and ledges of cooling magma, an act further complicated by blasts of steam that erupt every time a sheet of water strikes the magma. Characters falling into the molten lava 10’ below are instantly slain, and all their equipment reduced to fiery slag.

The black crust that forms the “bridges” is fragile; a single bridge collapses beneath the weight of two or more human-sized characters. Characters crossing individually pose no risk, unless the judge deems their actions might cause the crust to break.

Each round spent atop a bridge, a PC must make a Luck check. On a failed check, a sheet of falling water strikes nearby, blasting the unfortunate soul with scalding steam (1d20 damage, DC 10 Reflex save for half). If the PC takes more than 9 damage from the steam, he is also hurled to his death in the lava pits, below.

**Flight:** Every round spent flying over the pits the characters and their mounts suffer 1d5 damage from the sheets of falling water; riders atop beasts must make DC 10 Reflex saves or be knocked from their seats, plummeting to the lava pits below.

Those utilizing spells to cross must make additional spell checks to maintain their flight, per the judge’s adjudication.

**Area B-6 – The Squeeze:** *You look to your companions in shock, for surely you must be dreaming: the faintest hint of fresh, warm air, emanating from a slim cleft running along the passage floor.*

The PCs have discovered the sole surviving passage to the lost land of Agharta. Adventurers crawling into the cleft discover it opens into a wide vertical shaft, nearly 1000’ in length, but only a few feet across, like a great seam or fissure in the earth. Characters can easily descend by bracing off both walls and slowly lowering themselves down.

After the first 200’, the PCs notice the descent growing notably easier; less exertion is required to prevent a fall and the PCs are even able to slowly scoot down the fissure. At the 500’ point the PCs actively have to begin forcing themselves down. At 1000’ the PCs realize they are upside down: gear hangs from below, helmets threaten to pull off, swords slide out of scabbards and the only way the PCs can safely proceed is by inverting themselves and climbing up what was once down.

At this point the PCs have passed through gravitational core of their world and are crawling *up* into Agharta. Dim light shines above them, the air grows more fresh, and the sounds of battle can be heard above. After a final 300’ the PCs emerge from the fissure into area C-1.



# PART 3: THE TWILIT SHORES

**Area C-1 – Twilit Shores:** *To both your left and right stand great lines of gaunt, sallow giants. The twin armies face off across a cold gray shore, seemingly ignorant of you, crouched among the rocks between them. A pair of great, decorated palanquins, stand in reserve behind the warbands.*

*A pair of warhorns sound their mournful tones. Dark clouds swirl overhead, lightning cracks the sky, and both bands march towards you to do battle!*

The PCs' fissure exits onto a low ridge of rocks, directly between the twin forces of giants. This places the characters at the center of the battlefield.

Ten feet in height, with loose, pasty skin that hangs over their lanky frames, the feeble-minded titans are little better than fleshy puppets to their psychic Aghartan masters. Sent into battle for their masters' amusement, the slaves fight to the dull-eyed death, with no thought of their own survival.

At first the giants are ignorant of the PCs' presence. And so long as the adventurers avoid drawing the notice of the Aghartans – in repose inside the palanquins – they have little to fear from the giants. Any harm inflicted is due to ill-luck rather than intent, as the giants clash above them. Every round a PC is hidden on the battlefield, he must attempt a Luck check; on a failed check the PC is accidentally struck or crushed by a falling slave for 1d5 damage. This is even true of PCs crouching within the fissure: falling rocks threaten to strike PCs, or worse, seal them within the rocky seam. Remaining within the battlefield is a sentence to a slow death.

The moment the PCs reveal themselves, the tenor of the battle shifts. While the majority of the slaves continue in their mindless, pointless battle, any giant adjacent to the PCs cease their fighting and attempt to seize the characters. On a successful grab attack, the giant crushes the PC and pins his arms to his body; in order to escape, the trapped character must succeed on a DC 20 Strength check. Captured PCs are forcibly carried back to the palanquin of the giant's master to be interrogated and then dominated.

The Aghartan slavers are massive, obese humanoids, with the heads of elephants. Roused to stand (an exhausting effort which might happen only once in a millennia) an Aghartan would be 10-15' in height. However, they much prefer to be carried about in lavishly decorated palanquins by their enslaved giants.

Aghartans are masters of psionics, and employ their mental powers to maintain dominance over their slave armies. The Aghartans enjoy the following powers, which mimic spells of the same name. The powers are listed below, with their DCC RPG rulebook page numbers for reference:

Charm Person (131), ESP (166), Force Manipulation (143), Forget (170), Lotus Stare (276), Magic Shield (146), Mind Purge (252), Sleep (155), Slow (228), Word of Command (268).

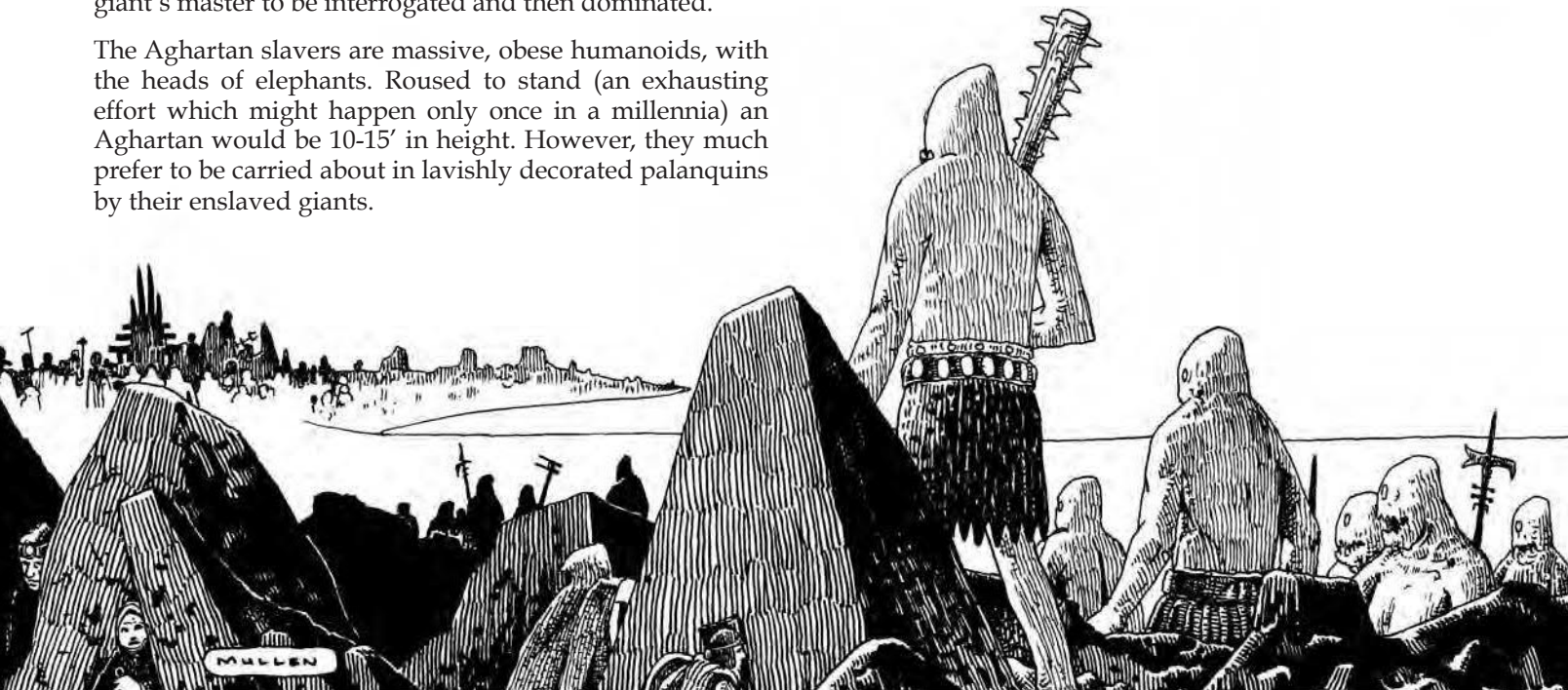
All "spells" are cast with a 1d24+5 spell check. Treat the Aghartans as clerics, mimicking the disapproval mechanics: on a failed casting the spell or power is not lost, but the likelihood of the exhausted psionist being unable to summon the mental powers increases by +1 with each failed casting. Additionally, due to the great mental strain required, each failed attempt inflicts 1 hp damage on the psionist.

Finally, the initiative modifier listed under the masters' stat block is for mental powers only. If the masters try to physically rouse themselves, they suffer a -5 penalty to initiative.

The Aghartans are intrigued by the PCs and have no interest in seeing the adventurers killed. The elephantine slavers are far more interested in enslaving the PCs as exotic pets. If the PCs are captured, they are brought to one of the city arenas (area D-1) and forced to fight for the amusement of the Aghartans.

**Aghartan Masters (2):** Init +3 mental (-5 physical); Atk fist -5 melee (1d3); AC 5; HD 10d12+10; hp 70, 95; MV 10'; Act 1d10; SP psionic powers as spells: Charm person, ESP, Force manipulation, Forget, Lotus stare, Magic shield, Mind purge, Sleep, Slow, Word of Command (all spell checks at 1d24+5); SV Fort +5, Ref -5, Will +7; AL C.

**Slave Giants (100):** Init +2; Atk grab +5 melee (1d6+6 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +5 melee (1d10+6); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.





## ADVENTURING ON THE TWILIT SHORES

From the loamy battlefield, PCs can see distant cities set along the barren, alien shores. Great domes, tall spires, and forbidding walls stand in silhouette against the dark skies. Above, a maelstrom of sickly violet clouds circle a smoky sun. Below, an inky sea crashes against stone shores.

The lands at the center of Áereth are home to scores of shining city-states scattered along the bleak shores of a great sea. Bands of slave giants roam the bloody-soaked heaths, doing battle for the pleasure of their obscene, ageless masters, while sentient, sooty clouds swirl about the smoky sun that hangs above the black sea.

Whereas the first half of the adventure was a tightly constrained crawl, the second half opens to an expansive world. The characters' principle challenge is avoiding the notice of the Aghartan slave lords. So long as the PCs remain hidden, they can pursue their own goals unmolested. But once the slave lords take note of the strangers on their shores, they stop at nothing until the PCs march in their slave armies – or adorn their trophy walls. Avoiding capture by the slave lords will require cunning, courage, and no small amount of luck. For those unable to escape the clutches of the slave lords, all that awaits is numbing mental domination, and a brutal death in the blood-soaked arenas of the dread Aghartans.

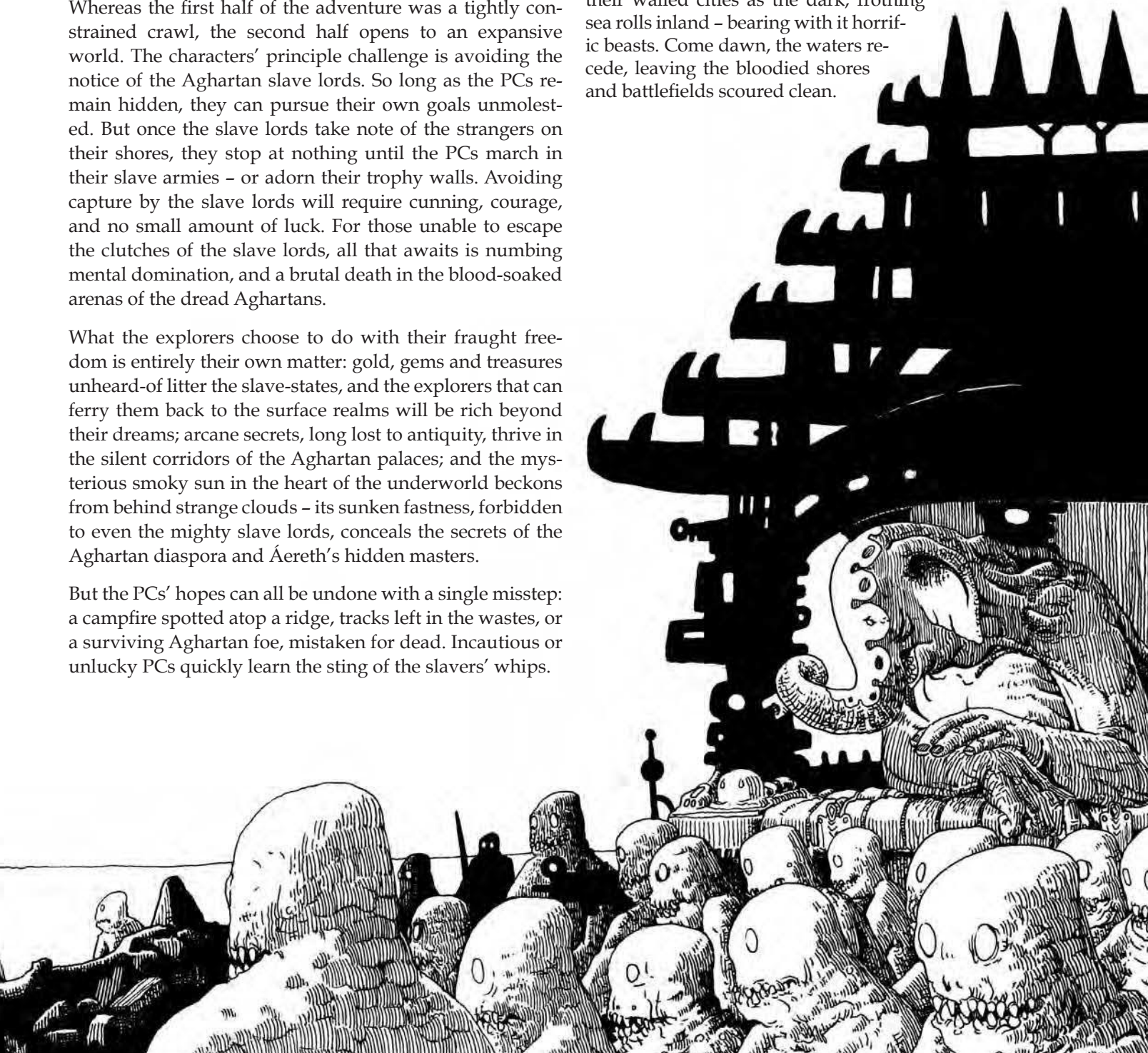
What the explorers choose to do with their fraught freedom is entirely their own matter: gold, gems and treasures unheard-of litter the slave-states, and the explorers that can ferry them back to the surface realms will be rich beyond their dreams; arcane secrets, long lost to antiquity, thrive in the silent corridors of the Aghartan palaces; and the mysterious smoky sun in the heart of the underworld beckons from behind strange clouds – its sunken fastness, forbidden to even the mighty slave lords, conceals the secrets of the Aghartan diaspora and Áereth's hidden masters.

But the PCs' hopes can all be undone with a single misstep: a campfire spotted atop a ridge, tracks left in the wastes, or a surviving Aghartan foe, mistaken for dead. Incautious or unlucky PCs quickly learn the sting of the slavers' whips.

## GENERAL FEATURES & GEOGRAPHY

While there is no true day or night, the underworld cycles between 8-hour periods of shadowed gloom and absolute darkness. During the "day," the smoky orb hovering above the central sea flares in intensity, mimicking the long shadows cast in the surface realms at sunset. The air is sweltering and thick with the smell of the sea. The slave lords march forth their mindless armies like tin soldiers, leaving mounds of bloodied slave soldiers dying on the bloody heaths and shores.

After eight hours, the sun dims and dies, leaving the Aghartan underworld in absolute darkness. Temperatures drop precipitously, and the Aghartan slave lords retreat within their walled cities as the dark, frothing sea rolls inland – bearing with it horrific beasts. Come dawn, the waters recede, leaving the bloodied shores and battlefields scoured clean.







The inner sun is shrouded in perpetual storm clouds that swirl and flash with lightning. In rare instances, these strange, quasi-sentient storms spiral out from the sun, hammering the ridges and cities with lightning strikes and deafening thunder.

It is assumed that characters can walk 3 miles (one hex) per hour. See the Overland Speed table in the DCC RPG rulebook (pg. 308) for specifics on forced marches and other travel speeds.

The lands surrounding the inner sea are composed of four general environs, summarized here. Each of the environments generates its own random encounters and potential discoveries. (See the **Twilit Shore Random Encounters in Appendix A.**)

**Bleak Shores:** The “beaches” of the Aghartan underworld are naught but stone slabs rising from the water. Scoured by eons of rolling waves, the slabs are slick with slime and the weird pale algae that inhabits the sea. The waves roll in to the shores with curious – almost sinister – irregularity, and the more powerful waves threaten to swamp unlucky souls and suck them into the deeps.

At night, the black waters rise precipitously, swamping the shores with powerful, icy waves. Strange creatures are washed ashore, riding the waves inland in hunt of prey, then slithering back into the depths.

**Spine Ridges:** Towering ridges of broken stone run to the shores from the arching cliffs, bisecting the shores like long, ragged cairns, or fallen, cyclopean walls. While offering shelter and a place for PCs to hide, the ridges are also home to underworld monsters that emerge in the night to stalk the heaths.

The ridges are pocked with caves and crevices, some that run the entire width of the spines. Those nearest the shore are flooded at regular intervals, leaving rich pools when the sea water retreats. In the gloaming hours at dusk and dawn, the ridges howl and moan as air is expelled from, and then drawn into, the lower caves.

Incautious explorers caught within the lower caves at dusk quickly find themselves trapped by the rising waters. For

such unfortunate souls, their only hope is stumbling upon a chamber with trapped air, or risking a desperate swim through the inky waters. See **Appendix B** for sample cave maps and generators.

The spines run to the foot of a towering subterranean mountain chain. Rising several thousand feet into the darkness the sheer granite cliffs would present a daunting climb in the full light of the surface realms, let alone the gloom of the Aghartan underworld.

**Blood Heath:** Saturated with the remains of the dead, churned underfoot by the sandals of a thousand armies, the loamy heaths have served as the Aghartan’s battlefields since time immemorial. The “soil” of the heaths is composed of sand worn down from the ridges, bone fragments, and shards of metal and wood shorn from the harness and weapons of fallen Aghartans.

Frothy blood pools in sunken footprints, and shards of bones pierce the heath like thorny weeds. A sickening, heavy miasma hangs over the heaths – rotting flesh mixed with the strange sea water.

The heaths are largely barren, save for a species of slug that lives off the rotting corpse-meat. Ranging from the size of a marble to larger than a terrestrial elephant, the horned slugs attack only if disturbed, preferring to subsist off rancid fluids drawn from beneath the loam. The beasts that do stalk the heaths descend from the Spine Ridges during the night and retreat back to their caves during the gloom-hours.

**The Inner Sea:** At once the most abundant and deadliest of the underworld’s environs, the surging waters lick at the walls of the slave citadels and scour its shores. The cold waves – ink black and stinking of rotting meat – are home to a variety of creatures, large and small, that prey on the Aghartans.

In the center of the sea is a large city, half-sunken beneath the waves. The smoky sun looms directly above, a blazing, sooty orb wreathed in perpetual storms. Those seeking to reach the partially submerged towers and rooftops must contest with the storm-wracked waves, furious lightning and sooty beasts that prowl the lost city.

The half-sunken city and its mysteries are left to the judge to conjure. Perhaps the wave-swept city is great necropoli, home to a thousand drowned gods of Chaos. Or is built of infants' night terrors, calcified by the dedicated labors of dream hunters. Or the city is the outpost of Dis, and stands to welcome the explorers into the first pit of Hell. Regardless of the judge's inclination, any adventure in the sunken city should be transformative, to both the PCs and the campaign world.

## THE SLAVE CITIES OF LOST AGHARTA

The cities of legend – with domes of gleaming gold and gemstone cobbles, of noble minds and gentle despots – exist, but only as decadent echoes of a lost past. The wide promenades, high towers, and labyrinthine palace-temples have succumbed to the wearying passage of time: fallen roof tiles litter the streets, great swaths of plaster have peeled off the soiled walls, and the tottering palaces lean against each other like drunken pikemen.

Their denizens are no different: legions of mutated, humanoid giants, numb from decades of absolute mental domination and their obese, elephant-headed slave lords – who wield untold mental powers, and bask in centuries of decadence and ruin.

Dozens of cities litter the shores of the inner sea, each roughly 24 miles apart – the distance of a giant's lumbering march in the brief, 8-hour day. The cities all conform to a similar model: towering, defensive walls masterfully built to ward off armies and the rising waters; sharp-spined towers, replete with high, arching catwalks and perilous byways; and mazes of steps, ramps and promenades, funneling explorers towards the domed palace-temples where the Aghartans slave lords make their home. Elephant motifs abound, and depictions of the Aghartans adorn pedestals, mosaics and statuary.

The cities are home to the obese, elephant-headed slave lords, and their giant, mutated humanoid slaves. The slaves hail from dozens of different humanoid races – both familiar and alien to the PCs – but they have all been transformed into towering, sickly giants with dull eyes from decades of mental domination. Only those deemed “beautiful” are permitted to remain untransformed – though what is construed as becoming to the elephantine slave lords is best left to the imagination of mad sages.

The self-worshipping slave lords ensconce themselves in pleasure-palaces erected within the heart of the cities. Every Aghartan lord regards itself a mighty god – above all judgment, law or consequence – with an army of soldiers and devotees sworn to their worship.

When they desire to leave their pleasure sanctums, the obese slave lords are borne aloft on elaborate palanquins, carried on the backs of giants. Padded with cushions and strewn with brilliantly colored banners and pennants, the palanquins can be seen for miles across the desolate, gray heaths and stoney shores.

The Aghartans wile away their days waging little wars with their legions of slaves. Their nights are spent huddled inside their temple-palaces, throwing mad fetes in a vain effort to ignore the thunder of leviathans beating against their city walls.

When the slave lords weary of their endless days of tedium and leisure, they host raucous festivals where slaves are pitted against each other in orgies of perverse violence, while their guests dine on organs cut from the dying. When – after weeks or months – even these diversions prove tiresome, the slave lords bid their final surviving slaves to carry them aboard enormous death barges, and the Aghartans and their slaves ply the ships towards the dim sun hovering over the heart of the Inner Sea. It is unknown what they find there – divinity, salvation, or smokey death – but neither the Aghartans nor their slaves are ever seen again.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS & EXPLORATION

Starting with a d12, roll once for random encounters once each day and night on the **Twilit Shores Random Encounter Tables** found in **Appendix A**. As the PCs draw the notice of the slave lords, the size of the random encounter die decreases along the dice chain, making it more and more likely that the PCs run afoul of the Aghartans. If the PCs take pains to conceal their presence, they can increase the size of the die, though never greater than d20. (There is always a chance, no matter how small, that a war party of slave giants might stumble across the PCs.)

In general, the more audacious the PCs' actions, the more likely they alert the slave lords to their presence. Judges should use the following guidelines to determine when to increase (or decrease) the underworld encounter die, but never ignore their own common sense.

Both penalties and bonuses are cumulative, and carry over from day to night, and back again. Judges should note that many of the encounters do not take place immediately, allowing the PCs to take action (or inaction, as the case may be), influencing the outcome of the encounter. Finally, certain encounters risk betraying the PCs' presence.

Encampment	Modifiers
On the heaths	-1d
Fire, at night	-1d
In the Spine Ridge caves	+1d
For each additional night spent in the same hex	-1d
Concealing campsite (with occupation skills, thief abilities, or magic)	+1d

Encounters	Modifiers
PCs employ dramatic magic (fireballs, lightning bolts, lights and explosions)	-1d
Survivors alert Aghartan slave lords	-3d
Traveling with light during the night hours	-1d





THE BAND RESISTS THE PSIONIC ASSAULT OF THE AGHARTAN MASTERS BELOW.

*Example:* The PCs enter Lost Agharta with their beginning odds of a random encounter (1d12). They spend the first night on the open heaths (d10). They remain on the heaths – and woe! –at the same site, a second night (d8, then d7) until they realize they are drawing the attention of the slave lords’ war parties. The party thief eliminates all traces of their campground (d8), and the party withdraws to a cave in the spine ridges (d10). The party takes pains daily to conceal their site (d12), but after the first night any further gains from stealth are negated by remaining in the same location night after night.

Their luck finally catches up to them in the form of a party of Aghartan scouts; the PCs foolishly permit a handful of survivors to escape back to their masters (d7), nearly ensuring the party’s encounter with a war party. If the PCs move their camp nightly between different ridge caves (d8) and conceal their camp and movements (d10) they can slowly begin to lose their pursuers.

**Treasure:** Some of the randomly encountered possess treasure, and have entries referencing treasure types. The Aghartan treasure tables and item descriptions are detailed in **Appendix C**.

AREAS OF THE MAP

**Player Start:** If the PCs are captured by the slave lords, they are stripped of all their gear and belongings, and lowered to the bottom of the pits (area D-1). During the “day” hours, the PCs are left alone, but come night, the courts fill up with Aghartans, their slaves and their guests, and the PCs are expected to entertain their masters.

**Area D-1 – The Slave Pits:** *The stone-walled pit is easily 100’ in depth and half as wide. Broken bones and the bodies of decomposing slaves litter the loamy floor.*

The walls of the pit have been worn smooth by the desperate clawings of a thousand slaves. Thieves and extremely agile imitators have a chance of ascending via the thin cracks and worn holds (DC 20 climb check) but all others

need aid to escape. (Ropes can be found in area D-5 and the iron gibbets lowered from area 1-2, but PCs are certain to come up with even more clever and desperate plans.)

There are no exits from the pit, save the opening above. Digging about the walls and floor reveals nothing but hard stone. The larger bones can be used as crude clubs (1d3 damage) but break on any critical hit or fumble.

There is little else to aid desperate PCs. Each character may make one exhaustive search of the pit, but additional searches yield nothing.

1d20+ Luck mod.	Search Results
1 - 17	Nothing
18	1d3 Aghartan coins
19	Iron spike (1d3 damage, +1 to climb checks)
20+	Broken short sword (1d4 damage)

Come evening, the Inner Sea rolls inland, bringing with it the scourge of leviathans. Icy water percolates into the pit through cracks in the walls and floor, rising to a level of 1d4 feet. Above, in area D-2, carousing Aghartans and their court peer over the lip of the pit, eager for the night’s diversions.

Foes are lowered into the pit via great, rusted iron gibbets hung from massive chains. The mind-controlled beasts spring to the attack and gibbets are raised back out of the pit.

The slave lords host 1d3 pit duels each night. The battles increase in difficulty as the nights go on. Pick or roll on the following table, crossing referencing the night to determine the number of foes appearing. Note that both the untransformed slaves and slave giants have had their weapons secured to their bodies with iron pins; characters will be unable to loot the bodies for weapons without first dismembering their foes.

		NUMBER APPEARING (BY NIGHT)						
1d7	Foe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
1 -2	Slave, untransformed	1d10	1d12+3	1d14+3	1d16+5	1d20+5	1d24+7	1d30+10
3	Bone roach	1d8	1d10+2	1d12+5	1d14+7	1d16+10	1d20+10	1d30+10
4	Man-bat (wings shorn)	1d5+1	1d6+3	1d7+5	1d8+7	1d10+10	1d12+10	1d14+10
5	Funnel wolf spider	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d5	1d6	1d7	1d8
6	Slave giant	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d5	1d6	1d7	1d8
7	PCs are instructed to fight one another until...	One character is slain	Two characters are slain	Three characters are slain	Four characters are slain	Five characters are slain	Half the characters are slain	Until only one remains





**Slave:** Init -2; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL varies.

**Bone Roaches:** Init -1; Atk pincher +2 melee (1d5+2); HD 2d6; hp 6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

**Man-Bat (shorn wings):** Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP carry off prey; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

**Funnel wolf spider:** Init +5; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6 plus poison on following rounds); AC 12; HD 8d6; hp 25; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP anchoring bite, poison (1d12 dmg / round); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -2; AL C.

**Slave Giant:** Init +2; Atk grab +5 melee (1d6+6 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +5 melee (1d10+6); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

The Aghartan court always roots for the party's foes, but delight in PC brutality. Any time a PC scores a critical hit or especially brutal attack (most commonly a Mighty Deed) the court roars with delight and cast down tributes of weapons and armor – hoping to spur the PCs on to even greater feats of violence.

**1d8+  
Luck mod.**

**Pit Tribute**

<b>1 or less</b>	Wooden sword (broken – shatters on hit, dealing 1d3 damage to target and PC)
<b>2</b>	Wooden sword (1d4 damage)
<b>3</b>	Bronze shield (+1 AC)
<b>4</b>	Staff (1d6 damage)
<b>5 - 6</b>	Flask of snail milk, Green (heals 3 HD damage)
<b>7</b>	Aghartan dagger (1d6 damage)
<b>8</b>	Breastplate (+1 AC)
<b>9</b>	Aghartan shortsword (1d8 damage)
<b>10</b>	Aghartan battleaxe (1d12 damage)

At the end of the battle a dozen slave giants are lowered into the pit. They toss the survivors simple crusts of bread and rotting mushrooms, and load the corpses back into gibbets.

Once the gibbets are put into motion, they can't be stopped until arriving at area D-2. This offers PCs a chance to escape the pits, by leaping onto, or seizing hold of a rising gibbet. However, escaping characters must then contend with the full court. (See area D-2, following.)

**Area D-2 – Court of the Slave Lords:** *The great palace chamber is adorned with overwrought testaments to the slave lords love of decadence and suffering. Thick tapestries depict the mighty elephant-headed, crushing the weak.*

During the daylight hours there is a 1-in-6 chance that the bored slave lord has marched his slaves to battle, in which case the courtroom is empty. Otherwise the court is composed of:

- 1d3 Aghartan Slave masters
- 1d12 + 5 Slave giants
- 1d5 Champion-Mediums
- 1d12-1 Ythoth slave traders
- 1d24+5 Slaves (untransformed)

**During the day** – when not playing at war – the courtiers sleep. The braziers burn low and the courtiers laze about the chamber like drunken dolls.

Sneaking through the court is a simple task for thieves (DC 15 sneak silently) but all others will need to succeed on Luck checks. On a failed check, the PCs awaken one of the untransformed slave – chained to the throne of the slave lord. How the PCs comport themselves, and whether or not they free the slave before fleeing the chamber, determines if the slave awakens the balance of court.

(The slave can be freed from its chains with a DC 15 pick lock check – though the DC increases by 5 if the thief lacks lock picks. If befriended, the NPC demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the slave city and surrounding lands.)

**During the night hours**, the PCs face a far more deadly prospect. The raucous court is alive with drunken laughter, the cries of tortured slaves and the roar of wrestling slave giants. All eyes are on the pit during the battles, and attempts to escape draw the ire of the of the entire court.

**Gibbets:** Several massive iron cages hang about the chamber. All can be rotated and lowered into the pit, but the ensuing clank of metal on metal alerts (or awakens) the entire court. Half the gibbets contain beasts for future combats.

Presently the gibbets hold:

- 12 Bone roaches
- 4 Funnel wolf spiders
- 10 Man-bats

The beasts have all been starved by the slave lords in hopes of increasing their ferocity. Released, they attack Aghartans and the PCs alike, at random.

**Ythoth Slave Traders:** The blue-skinned reavers are a wildcard in battle. While the slave traders have a vested interest in seeing the Aghartans survive, the ythoth have no interest in dying for their elephantine patrons. Pressed, the slave traders retreat to area D-5 and board their longship, fleeing to the astral realms. (Quick-thinking PCs can beat the slavers there and steal their ship.)

**Aghartan Slave Master:** Init +3 mental (-5 physical); Atk fist -5 melee (1d3); AC 5; HD 10d12+10; hp 85; MV 10'; Act 1d10; SP Psionic powers as spells: Charm person, ESP, Force manipulation, Forget, Lotus stare, Magic shield, Mind purge, Sleep, Slow, Word of Command (all spell checks at 1d24+5); SV Fort +5, Ref -5, Will +7; AL C.

**Slave Giants:** Init +2; Atk grab +5 melee (1d6+6 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +5 melee (1d10+6); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

**Champion-Medium:** Init +3; Atk grab +7 melee (1d8+7 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +6 melee (1d10+7); AC 16; HD 8d8; hp 35; MV 30'; Act 1d24; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +7; AL C.

**Ythoth Slave Trader:** Init +3; Atk cutlass +6 melee (1d8+3) or dagger +6 melee (1d4+3); AC 15; HD 3d8+2; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 1d20 and 1d16; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +5; AL N.

**Slave:** Init -2; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL varies.

**Area D-3 – The Cauldrons:** *The vaulted chamber is lit red with hellfire and thick with the stench of boiled blood. A dozen towering cauldrons – blackened from flame – sit about the chamber. Several massive giants tend the great cauldrons, stirring the boiling stew.*

*A handful of terrified slaves stand trembling in the center of the chamber.*

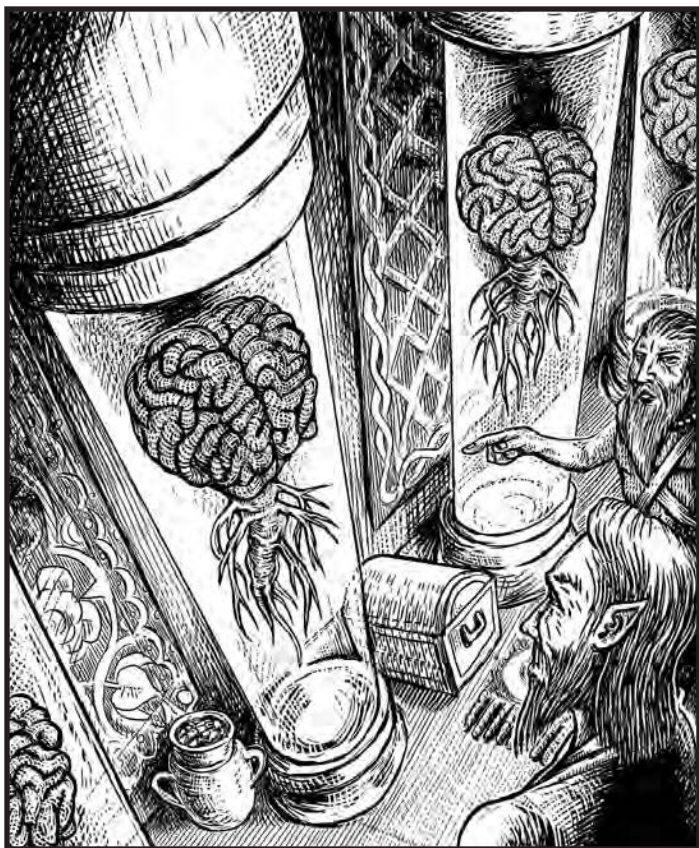
At any time there are 8 slave giants tending the various cauldrons. Occasionally the giants pick out one of the untransformed slaves and plunges the unfortunate soul in the red sludge, tamping down the screaming, struggling victim with their great sticks. A few hours later the slaves fish out the transformed slave – now an enormous, lanky slave giant.

The slaves are composed of any number of humanoid races, shorn from a hundred home worlds. They can provide little aid to the party, unless the judge is seeking to replenish the store of PCs.

Characters caught and pinned by the giants are hurled into the cauldrons the following round, taking 1d14 damage per round. Any character slain by the burning ichor immediately arises the following round as a monstrosity of half-transformed bones, elongated limbs, distended skulls and bellies. Wild with pain, the partially transformed half-giants hurl themselves into battle with the PCs.

If pressed in battle, the giants up-end the cauldrons, spilling searing red ichor throughout the chamber. Every character on the chamber floor takes 1d10 damage (DC 10 Reflex saves to avoid). As above, characters slain by ichor rise the following round as half-giants hurl. In addition to the PCs, there are the 12 untransformed slaves on the chamber floor, for 12 possible half-giants.





Each suit of animated armor is tied to a specific leviathan brain; animated through psychic power, the suits are incredibly resilient to destruction. However, destroying the corresponding brain causes the corresponding arms and armor to fall clattering to the ground.

**Violet brain / Bronze armor:** Init -2; Atk trident +8 melee (1d12+5) or hooked net +4 ranged (1d8 and target loses next action); AC 14; HD 10d8+30; hp 90; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5.

**Blue brain / Full plate armor:** Init +0; Atk polearm +8 melee (1d14+5); AC 16; HD 10d8+30; hp 100; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5.

**Green brain / Dried flesh-suit armor:** Init +2; Atk longsword +8 melee (1d12+5); AC 12; HD 10d8+30; hp 70; MV 35'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5.

**Red brain / Wyrmscale armor:** Init -1; Atk two-handed sword +10 melee (1d14+7); AC 17; HD 10d8+30; hp 110; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5.

Any blow to a glass pillar dealing 8 hp damage or more shatters the glass, destroying the leviathan brain and spilling glowing mucus throughout the chamber. The mucus befouls cloth and leather (ruining the rugs, tapestries and spices), and corrodes metals.

**Treasure:** A casual inspection of the gloomy chamber reveals a vast Aghartan horde, enough wealth to ransom an entire empire. The challenge of this treasure is twofold:

First, releasing the leviathan brain mucus destroys the platinum, spices, tapestries, rugs and lotus blossoms. (The gold survives so long as it remains protected by the clay urns.)

Second, transporting the statues (each 100 lbs or more) and the massive jars of leviathan mucus requires a crew of dedicated hirelings.

4 urns containing a total of 3,200 gp

100 platinum orbs (50 gp each)

30 small casks of rare underworld spices (250 gp each)

25 gems (variable)

12 large statues of Aghartan slave lords

5 tapestries and 4 rugs

4 jars of distilled leviathan mucus

10 dried lotus blossoms

See **Appendix C** for details and valuations of the platinum orbs, gems, spice, distilled mucus and lotus blossoms.

Finally, the PCs may loot whatever armors and weapons that aren't destroyed by the mucus flood. Taken from foes, the armors can be worn by humans, and similar-sized creatures.

**Slave Giants (8):** Init +2; Atk grab +5 melee (1d6+6 plus victim is pinned) or large staff +5 melee (1d8+6); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 24 ea.; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

**Half Giants:** Init -2; Atk grab +3 melee (1d6+3); AC 7; HD 3d8; hp 13 ea.; MV 15'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort -1, Ref -3, Will -2; AL C.

**Area D-4 – Treasure Hold:** *The high-walled chamber is cool and quiet. Brilliant gems lay scattered in piles atop thick rugs, and bright coins spill from massive clay urns. Dark, obscene tapestries hang from the high walls and the arms and armor from a hundred forgotten cultures hang on the walls.*

*Along the walls are tall glass pillars. The pillars radiate a lambent radiance – blue, violet, green and ruby – casting the treasure hold in weird gloom-light. Massive, fleshy gray brains float within the pillars, rising and falling of their own accord.*

The towering glass pillars hold leviathan brains suspended in spell-saturated mucus. The brains possess a faint awareness of their surroundings; disturbed by the PCs the brains churn the mucus of their prisons into a violent froth. More pressing to the PCs, the brains are able to psychically animate the armor and weapons.

So long as the PCs leave the treasures and pillars undisturbed, the brains present no threat, slowly rising and falling within their glass prisons. Stealing from the mounds of uncounted treasure, threatening to damage the pillars, or similar actions cause the brains to awaken. The first round they churn the mucus into a bubbling froth. The second round, the suits of armor animate, take up arms and defend the treasure hold.

Armor	AC Bonus	Check Penalty	Speed	Fumble Die
Bronze plate	+6	-4	-5'	d12
Full plate	+10	-5	-5'	d14
Dried flesh-suit*	+5	-	-	d6
Wyrm scale**	+11	-5	-5'	d12

\* +2 to Luck checks, not including "Roll the Body"

\*\* +2 to Fort saves

**Area D-5 – The Skydock:** *The stairs rise to to a high, open-air tower. A great longship hangs in the air, tethered to the tower by a heavy chain.*

The floating vessel is a ythothian longship, capable of traveling across dimensions and sailing the high astral. The ship is guarded by a trio of slave traders, while the balance of the crew lazes about in the court of the Aghartan overlords (area D-2).

The weight of PCs scaling the chain is sufficient to disturb the floating vessel, alerting the guards. At the judge's discretion, clever PCs can anticipate and mitigate the risk with careful planning. For all their wickedness, the slave traders are not exceptionally cunning; a ruse as simple as, "We toss a stone onto the far side of the boat," is sufficient to distract the slavers for a round or two.

However, if the PCs attempt to board the ship during combat (and if the slave traders from area D-2 make it back to the ship) the PCs are faced with a more difficult battle:

Non-thieves take two combat rounds to climb the chain to the ship. Thieves can accomplish the same feat in a single round with a DC 10 climb check, and warriors can charge up the links and make an attack the same round with a 3+ Mighty Deed of Arms. Failing the Deed or climb check forces the PC to take two rounds to reach the ship.

The slave traders surrender if they are outnumbered by characters that make it to the deck. Fearful of being trapped in the underworld, they plead with the PCs to take them on as a crew; and indeed, without a navigator, piloting the ship is a risky feat.

**Navigating the Aurore:** The aft of the ship is dominated by an elaborately carved *pedestal-of-worlds*. Any character placing his hands near the top of the pedestal (for example, searching the pedestal for traps) invokes a spinning, multi-colored orb – Áereth.

This orb is **not** their planet in miniature; instead – astrally – the PCs and their ship have grown quite large. The PCs are looking down on their planet from the astral plane. The PC can reorient the ship in relation to the planet, draw out to the solar system, their galaxy, or beyond.



Characters can navigate the planes via Luck checks or spell checks. Thieves can also attempt Cast from Scroll checks. The DC of the check depends on the distance the navigator wishes to travel: DC 15, for a location within 1000 miles (possibly returning the PCs to the surface realms), DC 20 to anywhere on Áereth, or DC 25 to another planet.

Note that while PCs (and their players) cannot know the DCs of a warp jump, they will immediately experience the difficulty of fine navigation. The slightest mis-gesture and the globe expands to vast galaxies, planes and multi-verses – and all star clusters look alike from a distance.

A successful check brings the PCs to their chosen destination. On a failed check the ship drops violently into the city below. Every PC aboard must make a DC 5 Reflex save or take 1d12 damage as they are hurtled through the wreckage. Both the ship and its pedestal are ruined on impact.

**Treasure:** Characters searching below decks find a sickening slave hold. The bodies of slaves that died in transport slowly rot through the rusted iron cages, stain the hull of the ship, both physically and psychically. At the rear of the hold is a heavy iron lockbox (DC 20 pick locks to open). Inside the coffer are the wages of the slavers' sins: 3,000 gold Aghartan coins, 50 polished platinum orbs, and 10 dried lotus blossoms. (See **Appendix C** for details on the orbs and blossoms.)

**Ythoth Slave Trader (3):** Init +3; Atk cutlass +6 melee (1d8+3), dagger +6 melee (1d4+3), or javelin +4 ranged (1d4+3); AC 15; HD 3d8+2; hp 20 ea.; MV 30'; Act 1d20 and 1d16; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +5; AL N.



# APPENDIX A: RANDOM ENCOUNTER & EVENTS TABLES



Roll on the following table once per week during the PCs' exploration of the underworld. If the PCs send scouts ahead of the main party, modify the roll by the scouts' average Luck modifier. If the PCs are traveling in a single group, adjust the roll by the PC with the worst Luck modifier.

In general, low rolls indicate encounters where it is likely the PCs are surprised, whereas high rolls indicate that the PCs have the opportunity for surprise or can avoid the encounter altogether.

**Roll  
3d7**

## THE JOURNEY'S RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

**3 Lava!** A seismic tremor washes over the passageway and the walls, ceiling and floor of the passageway are torn asunder by fiery veins of magma. Call for initiative; characters acting on a 10 or better are able to take action before lava sprays the passageway. Those that manage to make it more than 30' distant are spared any danger. However those that act on a 9 or less, or are unable (or unwilling) to flee, must attempt DC 15 Fortitude saves or take 1d20 damage from the spray of molten rock. On the second round, call for initiative again, with the same results, save that PCs that are unable to beat the initiative count are caught on the far side of the lava flow. Attempting to pass through the rupture without the aid of magic results in instant death.

**4 Cave-in.** A tremor passes through the caves, causing rocks and rubble to fall from the ceiling. Call for initiative and actions; on the count of 1, massive blocks begin to fall from the ceiling, forcing all PCs that haven't taken an action to make DC 10 Reflex saves or suffer 1d10 damage. At the end of the second round, the entire ceiling collapses, blocking off the passageway. Characters caught beneath the falling rubble must make DC 15 Reflex saves or take 2d20 damage from the falling rubble.

**5 Giant Slugs:** The PC are attacked by a pack of 1d3 giant slugs. One of the massive creatures blocks the passageway before the PCs, while up to two more attack from the rear. The slugs slide through the caverns with a stealthiness that belies their great size; the lead and rear PCs must take specific precautions (judge's determination) or successful Luck checks to avoid surprise.

**Giant Slug (1d3):** Init -6; Atk acidic touch +3 melee (1d4 plus slime); AC 18; HD 3d6; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP slime; SV Fort +5, Ref -6, Will -2; AL C.

**6 Remains of the dead:** The PCs discover the skeleton of a large quadruped. The bones of the skeleton are covered in a brittle, yellow crust. Experienced explorers (at the judge's discretion) recognize the crust as the remnant of a slime attack. Clinging to the ceiling, nearby, is a primordial slime, ready to drop on any creature coming within its range. The slime has been transformed by the wash of chaos magic, and is able to absorb spells with a DC 10 Fortitude save. The slime gains 1d12 hp for every level of spell absorbed (so a second-level spell would increase the slime's hp by 2d12).

**Ooze:** Init (always last); Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d5); AC 10; HD 11d8; hp 50; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 9d20; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons, absorb spells with DC 10 Fort save; SV Fort +6, Ref -8, Will -6; AL N.

**7 Man-Bats:** The PCs are set upon by a colony of 1d20+5 man-bats. Intrigued by the PCs' gear, the fell creatures try to abduct a smaller PC, and then ransom the unfortunate in return for shiny objects. If the ransom is surrendered even once, the PCs then are plagued by the man-bats.

**Man-Bat (1d20+5):** Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 9 ea.; MV 20', fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP carry off prey; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

**8 Crystal trail:** The PCs discover handful of scattered crystals, with tracks leading down a short side passage. A hunting party of 2d8 mantis-men lies in wait down the corridor, hidden behind stalagmites and flowstone formations.

**Mantis-men (2d8):** Init +3; Atk forearm slash +3 melee (1d10+2); AC 15; HD 2d8+2; hp 10 ea.; MV 40' or leap 30'; Act 2d20; SP Invisible prior to attack; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

9 - 15 No encounter



16

**Mold:** The PCs encounter a cavern or passageway blanketed with mold. Unless precautions are taken not to disturb the fungus, the spores infect the PCs' foodstuffs, ruining them within a week. Each PC must make a Luck check; on a failed check, half of the PC's food is ruined.

17

**Trail of slime:** The PCs discover a thick trail of slime, smeared along the passage floor and walls. If they opt to follow the trail they discover a mammoth giant slug (an even larger version of the underdark slug). Avoiding the beast requires finding another route through the deeps.

**Mammoth Slug:** Init +0; Atk acidic touch +6 melee (1d16 plus slime); AC 20; HD 8d6; hp 30; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP slime, critical hit on 20+; SV Fort +7, Ref -3, Will +3; AL C.

18

**Cave Trolls:** The PCs spot a band of 1d7 cave trolls, before being detected. The adventurers have the choice of tracking the trolls, or avoiding them by finding a different route. (As long as the PCs can track the trolls without revealing their presence, the trolls incur any wandering encounters intended for the PCs.)

**Cave Troll (1d7):** Init +6; Atk bite +10 melee (2d8+8) or claw +8 melee (2d6+6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6; hp 42 ea.; MV 40' or swim 30'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to fire, sensitive to light; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.

19 - 20

**Cache:** The PCs stumble upon a hidden cache left by previous explorers. Hidden within a concealed niche in the cave wall the PCs discover 1d3 barrels of potable water, 1d3 casks of hardtack, 1d10 spears, 1d4 quivers of 20 arrows, 1d100 torches, 1d12 flasks of oil, and 1d3 x100' of rope. Finally there is a 25% chance of each the following: (1) a pouch containing 1d20 rough gemstones; (2) an Aghartan two-handed sword; (3) a magic item of the judge's choosing.

21+

**Magical Spring:** The PCs discover a clear spring that flows from the rock walls. Roll 1d3: 1) The sediment-laced waters impart the ancient dweomers of stone. The first time a character drinks the waters, he must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or suffer 1d5 points of permanent hp damage. However, on a successful check, the PC gains 1d3 points of Strength, +1 AC, and his skin takes on a granite hue. Characters drinking from the spring more than once risk the hp loss, but garner no additional benefits. This stream can only be encountered once; subsequent rolls should be treated simply as potable. 2) The first character to drink from the silvery spring gains enough XP to advance one level. After the first draught, the spring immediately turns black and is henceforth treated as poisonous (DC 20 Fortitude save or death). This stream can only be encountered once; subsequent rolls should be treated as potable. 3) Lucky spring. Drinking from the waters increases the PC's Luck score by 1d3 points. The stream can be drank three times before losing this power and becoming poisonous (DC 15 Fort save or death). This stream can only be encountered once; subsequent rolls should be treated as potable.

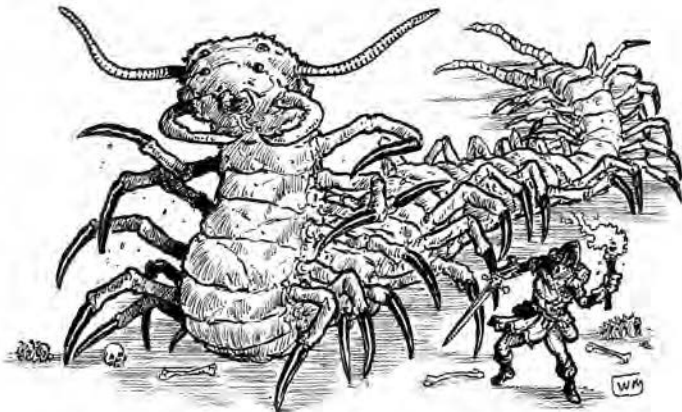


## BLEAK SHORES ENCOUNTER TABLES

During the nighttime hours, the shores flood to a depth of 1d10+5 ft.

Roll (Variable)	Day	Roll (1d12*)	Night
1	Aghartan warband	1	Aghartan warband, trapped
2	No encounter	2	No encounter
3 - 4	Aghartan scouts	3	Leviathan, Greater
5	Cinder cloud	4	No encounter
6	No encounter	5	Leviathan, Major
7	Carcass	6 - 7	No encounter
8	Sword crab cast	8	Leviathan, Lesser
9 - 11	No encounter	9	Carcass
12 - 13	Flotsam	10	No encounter
14	Death barge	11	Glow worms
15+	No encounter	12	No encounter

\*Night encounters on the Bleak Shores are always rolled on a 1d12, regardless of the PCs' current encounter die.



## BLOOD HEATHS ENCOUNTER TABLES

During the gloom-hours that pass for daylight, foes can be seen up to 6 miles distant. During the intense night, this is reduced to a mere 10 yards. Judges should use their best judgment in regards to light sources: e.g., parties traveling during the night with blazing torches can expected to be spotted, stalked and slain.

Roll (Variable)	Day	Roll (Variable)	Night
1	Aghartan warband	1	Aghartan warband
2	No encounter	2	No encounter
3 - 4	Aghartan scouts	3	Aghartan scouts
5	No encounter	4	No encounter
6	Giant slugs	5 - 6	Mammoth centipede
7	No encounter	7	Funnel wolf spider
8 - 9	Bone roaches	8	No encounter
10 - 11	No encounter	9 - 10	Giant slugs
12	Slave battle	11	No encounter
13	No encounter	12 - 13	Cinder storm
14	Megalith	14 - 16	Aghartan scout encampment
15	No encounter	17+	No encounter
16	Cinder storm		
17	No encounter		
18+	Treasure train		

## SPINE RIDGES ENCOUNTER TABLES

The creatures native to the spines are predominantly nocturnal, emerging from the caves and ravines to hunt during the night hours. Aghartan war parties seldom venture into the ridges, save when in pursuit of prey (e.g., the PCs).

Roll (Variable)	Day	Roll (Variable)	Night
1 - 2	Aghartan scouts	1	Aghartan scouts
3	No encounter	2	No encounter
4 - 5	Aghartan scout encampment	3	Man-bats
6	No encounter	4	No encounter
7 - 8	Funnel wolf spider	5	Mammoth centipede
9	No encounter	6	No encounter
10	Cinder storm	7	Giant slugs
11 - 13	No encounter	8	No encounter
14	Megalith	9	Bone roaches
15+	No encounter	10 - 11	No encounter
		12	Cinder storm
		13	No encounter
		14	Aghartan scout encampment
		15+	No encounter

## INNER SEA ENCOUNTER TABLE

Encounters always are rolled on a 1d12, regardless of the PCs' encounter die.

Roll 1d12	Day or Night
1	Death Barge
2	No encounter
3 - 6	Leviathan
7	No encounter
8 - 9	Carcass
10	No encounter
11	Glow worms
12	No encounter

### TWILIT SHORES RANDOM ENCOUNTERS & EXPLORATION TABLES (base die of 1d12)

Encampment	Modifiers
On the heaths	-1d
Fire, at night	-1d
In the Spine Ridge caves	+1d
For each additional night spent in the same hex	-1d
Concealing campsite (with occupation skills, thief abilities, or magic)	+1d
Encounters	Modifiers
PCs employ dramatic magic (fireballs, lightning bolts, lights and explosions)	-1d
Survivors alert Aghartan slave lords	-3d
Traveling with light during the night hours	-1d



## TWILIT SHORES ENCOUNTER LIST

Soldiers of the Aghartan armies appear in multiple random encounter entries. The stats for the most commonly encountered slaves are listed here. Without exception, all the giants refuse PC efforts to parlay, and obey their master's orders to the death.

**Slave Giants:** Ten foot tall giants clad in bits of ancient armor and wielding crude cleavers like swords. Their pale skin hangs off their bones in loose rolls, and their eyes are like glazed marbles after decades of mental domination and mind control. They move with a slow but unceasing gait, and display neither fear nor pain in battle.

**Slave Giants:** Init +2; Atk grab +5 melee (1d6+6 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +5 melee (1d10+6); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

**Scouts:** Smaller and more agile than the common slave giant, the scout still loom over most PCs, reaching 7' in height. Each scout carries a brace of 5 short spears that serve as both melee and ranged weapons.

The slave scouts are preternaturally stealthy, with a 1-in-3 chance of surprising the party (unless extraordinary precautions dictate otherwise).

Further, the scouts have been blinded by their masters, and grafted with the ears (and inner ears) of giant bats; in melee combat, the scouts issue a cacophonous series of loud clicks, disorienting foes (-1d to foes' actions). The deafening clamor is easily combated with earplugs or similar defenses. The scouts suffer no penalty for their blindness, but zones of silence reduce their actions by -1d.

**Slave Scouts:** Init +3; Atk spear +3 melee (1d8+3) or +0 ranged (1d8+3); AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics, 30' dark vision, stealth, deafening clamor; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.

**Champion-Medium:** Mediums can establish a direct link to their masters, receiving orders and sharing simple reports. The mediums are larger and quicker than their more common brethren, but any hints of sentience are only the wisps of mental commands sent by the slave lords. There is one medium found for every 10 slave giants.

**Champion-Medium:** Init +3; Atk grab +7 melee (1d8+7 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +6 melee (1d10+7); AC 16; HD 8d8; hp 35; MV 30'; Act 1d24; SP immune to enchantment / charm magics; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +7; AL C.

**Aghartan encampment:** The PCs spy an encampment of 4d12 + 10 slave giants and their mediums, some 1d6 miles distant. The pale-skinned giants erect crude earthworks, a short tower, and set blazing torches around the perimeter of their camp.

The encampment sends out regular bands of scouts to scour the nearby lands. Every 4 hours the PCs remain within 2 hexes of the camp, roll the party's current encounter die; on a 1, the PCs are discovered by 1d12 Aghartan scouts.

**Aghartan warband:** The PCs spot a warband of 1d100 slave giants, 1d20 scouts, and their mediums, 1d4 miles distant. The party is being tracked by the warband; unless the PCs are on the move or take pains to conceal their location, the warband runs the PCs to ground within the hour.

The warband was formed explicitly to hunt down the PCs – ideally, to capture them. This places the PCs in a difficult position: even if the PCs slaughter the entire band, their random encounter die worsen by -3d, as the slave lords assume (rightly) that the PCs present a deadly threat. The best case the party can hope for is to outrun the warband and hide all trace of their tracks. Alternately – though far more dangerous – the PCs can try to flee through the flooded shores at night, in the hopes that the leviathans make short work of the band.

Failing this, the warband remains doggedly on the PCs' trail, until the PCs are captured or the warband is slain.

**Aghartan war party, trapped:** Only encountered at night, in the submerged shores, the trapped warband is caught by the rising waters on a narrow strip of high land, 1d4-1 miles from the PCs. The band is fighting desperately against three leviathans – each round giants vanish beneath the frothing, bloody waves.

The shrinking warband is composed of 1d20+10 slave giants and their mediums. They pose no danger to the PCs unless the party hopes to retreat to their rocky highlands. Otherwise the doomed fight is a boon to the PCs: all nearby leviathans are distracted by the feast of giant-flesh and pay no attention to the characters.

**Aghartan scouts:** A band of 1d5+5 Aghartan scouts happen upon the PCs' trail. If the PCs have set up adequate precautions (per the judge's discretion) they spy the scouts. Otherwise the scouts succeed in ambushing the PCs – likely resulting in the PCs' demise or capture.

**Aghartan scout encampment:** The PCs spy an encampment of 1d20+5 scouts, encamped some 1d5 miles distant. The camp is simple and small, with little in the way of defenses save for simple spears used to create a crude cheval-de-frise. Sentries sit "watch" along the wall, awakening their companions at the first signs of danger.

Every 4 hours the PCs remain within 2 hexes of the camp, roll the party's current encounter die; on a 1-3, the PCs are discovered by a band of five scouts.

**Bone roaches:** The party encounters 1d20+5 large roaches. Easily mistaken in the gloom for human heads scurrying across the sands, each roach is armed with a large, dagger-like pincher on its rocky abdomen.

The roaches subsist off carcasses of leviathans and giants, and perceive the PCs as easy prey. If the PCs succeed in killing half the roaches before one of their own characters fall, the remaining roaches flee. However, if the roaches succeed in bringing down a character first, a blood frenzy ensues and the roaches refuse to retreat, regardless of the odds.

**Bone Roaches (1d20+5):** Init -1; Atk pincher +2 melee (1d5+2); HD 2d6; hp 6 ea.; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

**Cinder Storm:** The PCs are beset by a swirling cloud of blinding soot, issuing forth from the dim sun at the center of the underworld. Roughly 200' in diameter, the cloud moves at a rate of 45' per round, and tracks with the PCs as best it is able, preferring to encompass spellcasters.

The black cloud crackles with lightning, temporarily blinding any PCs caught in its area (DC 10 Fortitude save each round to resist). Additionally the cloud inflicts 1d12 points of electric damage, per round, to any non-spellcasters (DC 10 Reflex save to avoid), as constant waves of lightning roll over the PCs. Both effects can avoided if the PCs find shelter.

Wizards, elves and clerics are protected from physical damage, the sooty clouds and flashing bolts circling the caster like the eye of an unholy storm. However the cinder clouds take a different, sinister interest in the spellcasters.

Spellcasters caught within the cloud must attempt a DC 20 Willpower save, followed by a roll modified by Luck as the maelstrom attempts to pick through the PC's thoughts, selecting ones to keep and others to discard, and new thoughts and memories to insert.

If the PC succeeds on the Willpower save, the caster is able to overcome the cinder cloud, and draw knowledge and power from the maelstrom. But if the PC fails on the save, he is subjected to a brutal mental assault that leaves the caster reeling and dazed.

Apply the modified Luck roll to the following table, as dictated by the success or failure of the Will save.

1d20+ Luck mod.	Will save: Success	Will save: Fail
1 or less	Re-roll Luck check on Will save: Fail.	Caster falls into coma for 1d4 days, and begins to take cinder storm damage (1d12 damage / round).

2-4	No effect	Character blasted into unconsciousness for 1d10 rounds and loses the ability to cast any spells for 1d8 hours. (Secondary spell-like abilities – such as healing or Turn unholy – remain unaffected.)
5-7	Caster gleans glimmer of knowledge regarding Lost Agharta. Player may ask three yes/no question of the judge.	Character loses the ability to cast 1 spell (randomly determined) for 1d4 hours.
8-12	Caster emerges from the storm crackling with eldritch energy. +1d to all spell checks for next 1d4 hours.	Character dazed for 1d4 hours, and all spell checks at -1d.
13-15	For the next 1d6 hours, the caster may cast lightning bolt (spell check 1d30+level). During the period, the spell may fail, but is not lost.	No effect.
16-17	For the next 1d8 hours, the caster is treated as +1 level.	Caster suffers 1d12 dmg, but gleans insight into the nature of Lost Agharta. Player may ask three yes/no question of the judge.
18	Caster acquires 1 new spell (determined at random).	Caster lures the crackling cinder cloud into his being. For the next 1d5 hours all spells are cast at +1d.
19	Caster gains +1d3 Luck.	Caster draws on deep reserves to fend off the mental assault and emerges stronger for the effort. After the storm recedes, caster has gained +1d3 Stamina.
20+	Character is illuminated by the forgotten wisdom of the Aghartan Ancients. Character gains +1 level and an extra hit die. (If rolled a second time with the same PC, re-roll result.)	Re-roll Luck roll on Will save: Success.



The cloud can be dispersed by powerful winds or a successful Turn Unholy or Dispel Magic check of 20+. Otherwise the storm breaks after 1d10 rounds.

**Carcass:** The PCs happen upon the carcass of a great leviathan on the rocky shores (or, at night, awash in the inky waves). The massive corpse is already beset by scavengers, willing to fight for their meal. Roll 1d5: 1) 1d10 bone roaches; 2) 1d20 glow worms; 3) 1d5 man-bats; 4) 1d14 horned slugs; 5) 1d3 giant slugs. Note that both the bone roaches and glow worms will have burrowed inside the body, and launch themselves at the PCs in a violent explosion of gore at the first disturbance.

The half-eaten carcass offers resourceful parties the same raw materials as more recently slain leviathans:

- The ravaged body leaks a glowing green bile that repels Aghartan slaves (-1d to slaves' actions against PCs slathered in the bile). The effects of the bile wear off after 1d3 days.
- The enormous stomach cavity is a reservoir of highly acidic juices that dissolve most organic materials. Any character splashed with the foul smelling liquid suffers 1d12 damage for 3 rounds.
- Characters brazen enough to consume the leviathan's spell-saturated brain, must make DC 20 Fortitude save or suffer a major corruption, per the wizard rules. If the character succeeds on the check, he gains the ability to cast a single, randomly determined level 1 wizard spell (d14 spell check). If the character is already able to cast the same spell, he receives +1d for attempts to cast.

**Death barge:** The PCs witness a slave master and his retinue boarding an enormous barge. Decorated with bright flags and pennants, the death barge serves as a grand "final throne," built to ferry the Aghartan to the afterlife.

Boarding takes nearly an entire "day," as the enormous slave lord and its treasures are carried aboard and then secured atop the highest deck. The last remnants of the lord's favorite slaves join their master, as slave giants haul the barge into the icy waters, marching the barge forward until the giants are swallowed by the inner sea and drown. Finally, scores of slave giants take to the oars and row their master to the heart of the inner sea.

There are 1d100+50 slave giants boarding the vessel, with another 1d20+15 remaining on land to launch the barge into the sea. The Aghartan master is near the end of its existence, spilling out like a wave of pale flesh over a great platform, and must be carried by several giants.

Additionally, the master is accompanied by 1d20+20 slaves that have not yet been mutated or transformed. Once freed from their master's mental domination, these slaves can bolster the PCs' ranks as 0-level NPCs, or replace fallen characters at the judge's discretion.

The barge is vast and unwieldy. Parties find it nearly impossible to sail on their own without the aid of magic or slave giants to row the banks of oars.

The slave lord's remaining wealth is displayed on the top deck for the his pleasure, treasure type E on the Aghartan treasure table.

**Flotsam:** The party discovers wreckage from a Aghartan barge washed up on the shore. Roll 1d7 and apply the party's average Luck modifier on the following table.

1d7+ Luck mod.	Flotsam
1	Massive wooden beams and shredded cloth from a wrecked death barge. A single massive tooth the size of a scimitar is lodged in one of the beams.
2	A broken clay pot, glazed with images of a sunken city resting atop the head of an enormous Aghartan.
3	A painting, ruined from seawater, depicting a portion of the lands surrounding the inner sea. (Give the players a copy of the Lost Agharta overland map.)
4	The broken body of a Aghartan champion-medium in ceremonial half-plate armor decorated with gems and precious metals. The enormous suit is worth 5,000 gp or more to a learned sage.
5	A large, water-logged chest containing 3d6 ingots of gold (worth 100 gp each).
6	A waterlogged crate filled with moldering straw. Packed amid the straw is a large jade idol, carved in the likeness of an Aghartan slave lord (worth 1,000 gp or more to a knowledgeable sage).
7	Several broken planks and a small cask containing holy oil. Anointing a Chaotic-aligned character with the oil grants the PC +1d to all saving throws for 1 day. The oil burns the skin of Neutral or Lawful characters for 1d12 damage. There is sufficient oil for 5 applications.
8	A black, silken death banner, stitched with gold and silver thread. Worth 400 gp or more to knowledgeable sages.
9+	A watertight cask – sealed in wax – containing a leviathan brain preserved in violet mucus. If consumed, the mucus grants +1d to all spell check for the next 1d4 hours. There is enough fluid for 5 quaffs, but if a character drinks an additional dose while the first is in effect, the PC must make a DC 20 Willpower save or suffer 1d20 temporary Intelligence loss. If a PC's Intelligence is reduced to 0 or less, the imbibor suffers brain death.

**Funnel wolf spider:** The PCs stumble across the hidden pit of a massive funnel spider. The lead rank must make DC 15 Reflex saves or pitch 15' down the webbed funnel, where they are pinned in the tight, sticky confines of the webbing (all actions at -2d). Those trapped within the funnel can only wield small weapons (short swords, daggers) but can cut themselves free by dealing 15 points of damage to the webbing. Otherwise the PCs must be hauled up out of the webbing by their companions (and woe to the lone traveler).

Alerted by the trap, a gigantic spider emerges from its burrow below. A successful bite through the webbing, anchors the unfortunate soul with its long fangs. The following round, the spider pumps poison through its fangs, inflicting 1d12 damage (DC 15 Fortitude save for half). The spider continues to poison its prey, inflicting 1d12 poison damage per round, until dislodged or the character is liquified from the poison.

The spider can be dislodged by a single attacking that deals 5 hp or more damage. If the spider takes more than half its hp, it scrambles into burrow below, back-filling the pit with sand and rocks to prevent pursuit.

Characters that succeed in unearthing the spider from its burrow discover the liquified corpse-sacks of 1d3 slave giants, their weapons and armor.

**Funnel wolf spider:** Init +5; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6 plus poison on following rounds); AC 12; HD 8d6; hp 25; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP anchoring bite, poison (1d12 dmg / round); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -2; AL C.

**Giant slug:** The PCs spy a group of giant slugs (1d100 yards distant on the heaths; 1d100 feet distant on the ridges). If more than two are encountered, additional slugs will be attempting to flank the party to attack. If the encounter takes place on the spine ridges, there is a 1 in 3 chance that the flanking slugs achieve surprise (subject to the judge's discretion and the PCs' precautions).

The slugs leave a trail of hallucinogenic slime. Characters struck by the slugs in melee must succeed on DC 15 Will-power saves or perceive their companions as slugs (attacking the PC) for the next 1d12 rounds. Characters caught in the hallucination cannot discern true slug from their allies; the judge should roll a secret Luck check to determine where the hallucinating characters direct their blows.

**Giant Slug (1d5):** Init -6; Atk acidic touch +3 melee (1d4 plus slime); AC 18; HD 3d10; hp 15; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP hallucinogenic slime; SV Fort +5, Ref -6, Will -2; AL C.

**Glow worms:** Ranging from 3' to 5' in length, the aquatic worms glow with a bright green phosphorescence, intentionally drawing the attention of predators and foolish foes alike. When bitten by a leviathan (or cleaved by a weapon dealing 5 or more hp damage) the worm is cut in twain – into two wholly viable versions of its former self, each with half the “parent worm’s” hit points. Damage dealt by blunt weapons or magic do not split the worm, save for the judge’s ruling.

Glow worms attack by burrowing into their target (or, if consumed, borrowing *out* of their target). Character in full plate armor are fully immune to these attacks. All others suffer 1d5 damage per round once a glow worm’s succeeds on an initial attack. The worm spends three rounds burrowing into its target (automatically dealing 1d5 damage each round) and another three rounds burrowing out – all the while leaving eggs in its wake.

Eggs left to incubate in a victim’s body hatch in 1d3 weeks into 1d20+5 glow worms that explode free from their warm, fleshy nest.



**Glow worm (1d5):** Init +1; Atk bite +2 melee (1d3 plus burrow); AC 10; HD 3d6; hp 9; MV 15', swim 45'; Act 1d20; SP split; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

**Leviathan:** The inner sea is home to a vast array of titanic creatures, collectively known as leviathans. There is no recognized lineage amongst the leviathans – each is a unique apex predator at the top of the food chain. However, all are united in their hatred of the Aghartan slave cities. Every “night” as the sun dims and inky waves roll in over the shores, the leviathans rise from the deeps to batter themselves against the city walls.

Freshly slain leviathans offer resources to uniquely desperate (or creative) parties:

- The ravaged body leaks a glowing green bile that repels Aghartan slaves (-1d to slaves' actions against PCs slathered in the bile). The effects of the bile wear off after 1d3 days.
- The enormous stomach cavity is a reservoir of highly acidic juices that dissolve most organic materials. Any character splashed with the foul smelling liquid suffers 1d12 damage for 3 rounds.
- Characters brazen enough to consume the leviathan's spell-saturated brain, must make DC 20 Fortitude saves or suffer a major corruption, per the wizard rules. If the character succeeds on the check, he gains the ability to cast a single, randomly determined level 1 wizard spell (d14 spell check). If the character is already able to cast the same spell, he receives +1d for attempts to cast.

Provided are three generic leviathans for quick use, but judges are encouraged to dream up their own monstrous creations.

**Leviathan, Minor:** Init +1; Atk bite +5 melee (1d12+5) or spew acid +3 ranged (1d8+3); AC 10; HD 10d10; MV 25', swim 50'; Act 3d20; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

**Leviathan, Major:** Init +3; Atk bite +7 melee (1d14+7) or hurl spikes +5 ranged (1d10+4); AC 13; HD 15d10; MV 15', swim 75'; Act 3d24; SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will +7; AL C.

**Leviathan, Greater:** Init +5; Atk bite +10 melee (1d16+10) or tentacle +10 ranged (1d16+10); AC 15; HD 20d10; MV 15', swim 100'; Act 3d30; SV Fort +8, Ref -5, Will +10; AL C.



## LEVIATHAN STATISTICS BY TYPE

Type	Initiative	Attack mod.	Bite damage	AC	HD	MV	Action dice	Saving throws
Minor	+1	+5	1d12+5	10	10d10	25', swim 50'	3d20	Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5
Major	+3	+7	1d14+7	13	15d10	15', swim 75'	3d24	Fort +6, Ref -2, Will +7
Greater	+5	+10	1d16+10	15	20d10	10', swim 100'	3d30	Fort +8, Ref -5, Will +10

### Leviathan Base Type (roll 1d8)

- 1 Octopus
- 2 Crocodile
- 3 Turtle
- 4 Eel
- 5 Jellyfish
- 6 Crab
- 7 Shark
- 8 Ray

### Physical Traits (roll 1d20)

- 1 Barbed / spines
- 2 1d100 tentacles (1d10 damage)
- 3 Covered in algae
- 4 Scaled
- 5 1d7 prehensile tails (1d10 damage)
- 6 Horns (1d16 damage)
- 7 Antennae
- 8 1d7 heads
- 9 Armored: Immune to physical attacks dealing less than 5 hp damage.
- 10 Scaled
- 11 Wings (MV fly 60")
- 12 Reflective skin (+5 to saves versus magic missile-like spells and lasers)
- 13 Translucent (+1d to all critical hits against leviathan)
- 14 Covered in flames (melee combatants take 1d8 dmg per round, Fort save DC 10 to avoid)
- 15 Headless, but 1d10 maws (Dmg 1d16)
- 16 Tusks (Dmg 1d20)
- 17 Glows brightly (Melee attackers must make a DC 10 Fort save or be blinded for 1 round)
- 18 Invisible (easily seen by displaced water)
- 19 Roll twice, keep both results
- 20 Roll three times, keep all results

### Special Powers (roll 1d20)

- 1 Regenerates 1 HD of hp per round. Can only be slain by reducing to 0 hp and then applying fire.
- 2 Anything touched by the leviathan must make a DC 10 Willpower save or be turned to stone.
- 3 Magic resistance. All spells cast against leviathan subject to 50% chance of failure before saves are rolled.
- 4 Curse (1/day). The leviathan can curse one creature with a -1d penalty to all rolls for 24 hours.
- 5 The leviathan's armor is so thick that it takes half damage from mundane weapons. Magical weapons do normal damage.
- 6 Leviathan's touch ages target 1d20 years (DC 15 Willpower save to resist).
- 7 Horrid appearance. Simply glimpsing the leviathan causes 1d4 damage and potential fear (DC 12 Willpower save to resist). A frightened creature runs away for one hour; if cornered, it can fight only at a -2d penalty to all actions.
- 8 Metal digestive. Any metal weapon touched by the leviathan or that strikes the leviathan is damaged. A weapon's damage is reduced by -1d after each touch, and metal armor loses one "plus" to Armor Class every round of contact. Magic items receive a DC 12 save (add the weapon's "plus" to the d20 roll).
- 9 Mild poison. The bite of the leviathan is poisonous (DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d12 damage).
- 10 Immune to non-magical weapons or natural attacks from creatures of 3 HD or less; half-damage from fire, acid, cold, electricity, or gas.
- 11 Gust of wind (1/day). The leviathan can generate powerful hurricane-strength wind, blowing in a single direction originating from the leviathan in cone shape up to 100' wide at termination. Creatures must make DC 15 Fortitude saves or be blown backward a distance equal to the leviathan's HD x 10 in feet, taking 1d4 damage for every 10 feet blown.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>12 Sticky. Any creature touched by the leviathan must make a DC 15 Strength check to pull away. Stuck creatures attack at a -2 penalty to attack rolls and are dragged along by the leviathan until they pull free.</p> <p>13 The leviathan can hypnotize targets with its gaze. The leviathan can gaze into the eyes of one target per round by using one action die. A creature that meets the leviathan's gaze must make a DC 15 Willpower save or stand stupefied as long as the leviathan holds its gaze.</p> <p>14 Deadly poison. The bite of the leviathan is poisonous (DC 10 Fortitude save or death).</p> <p>15 Darkness (at will). The leviathan can cloak an area of 30' radius into absolute darkness. Target any spot within 100'.</p> <p>16 Heat metal (3/hour). The leviathan can heat one metal object to painful levels. This ability inflicts 1d8 damage per round to characters holding heated objects or 1d10 damage per round to characters wearing heated armor.</p> <p>17 Fell caster. Leviathan knows 1d7 randomly determined wizard spells (spell level 1d3, 1d24 spell check).</p> <p>18 Draining touch. Any creature touched by the leviathan loses 1d4 points of Stamina.</p> <p>19 Roll twice, keep both results</p> <p>20 Roll three times, keep all results</p> | <p>3 Aversion to light (-1d when exposed to torch-light or stronger). Flees from equivalent of surface daylight.</p> <p>4 Has hole in shell / carapace / skin. Successful attacks against AC 20 automatically inflict critical hit.</p> <p>5 Easily distracted by food.</p> <p>6 Takes triple damage from electricity attacks.</p> <p>7 Easily distracted by movement and bright colors. Motionless PCs are not targeted.</p> <p>8 Has irrational aversion to a specific race, suffering -3d when targeting. Roll 1d4: (1) humans; (2) elves; (3) dwarfs; (4) halflings.</p> <p>9 Can be turned as Unholy.</p> <p>10 Craven: Retreats after taking quarter hit points in damage or a critical hit.</p> <p>11 Has irrational aversion to a specific race, suffering -3d when targeting. Roll 1d4: (1) humans; (2) elves; (3) dwarfs; (4) halflings.</p> <p>12 Unworthy foe: Leviathan grows tired of the PCs, and moves on to stronger foes after 1d12 rounds.</p> <p>13 Craven: Retreats after taking quarter hit points in damage or a critical hit.</p> <p>14 Has irrational hatred of a specific race, and will target these PCs to the exclusion of all others. Roll 1d4: (1) humans; (2) elves; (3) dwarfs; (4) halflings.</p> |
|--|---|

#### **Weakness (roll 1d16)**

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <p>1 Captivated by beauty (cannot attack creature of 15+ Personality).</p> <p>2 Takes triple damage from Aghartan weapons.</p> | <p>15 - 16 No weakness.</p> |
|--|-----------------------------|



**Mammoth centipede:** Call for a Luck check. If a PC succeeds, the character notices tremors originating beneath other ground. A massive, 50' centipede erupts from the ground 1d3 rounds later.

If all the PCs fail the check, the centipede gains a surprise round before initiative is rolled.

The centipede's bite risks poisoning the target (DC 10 Fortitude save to resist). On a failed save the target suffers succumbs to a slow-acting paralysis, cumulatively losing -1d to action dice each round for 1d5 rounds. The paralysis can be combated with magical healing or wears off after 1 hour.

**Mammoth centipede:** Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d16 plus poison); AC 14; HD 8d8; hp 32; MV 60'; Act 1d24; SP poison; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will -1; AL C.

**Man-Bats:** A colony of 1d20+10 man-bats descends upon the party. Intrigued by the PCs' gear, the fell creatures try to abduct a smaller PC, and then ransom the unfortunate in return for shiny objects. If the ransom is surrendered even once, the PCs then are plagued by the man-bats.

The man-bats are driven by a cruel curiosity, not bloodlust. If half the colony is injured or slain, the rest retreat. If the PCs track the man-bat back to their lair (a simple cave complex rich with man-guano) they discover an additional 1d20 man-bats and their treasures (treasure type B).

**Man-Bat (1d20+5):** Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 8; MV 20', fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP carry off prey; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

**Megalith:** The PCs discover one of the several great standing stones – a remnant of the Aghartan's fallen culture. The massive, translucent crystals tower up to 30' in height, with another 60' buried within the heath. Frozen within the heart of each crystal is a mummified Aghartan.

The crystals mark powerful eldritch ley lines radiating from the sunken isle in the center of the Inner Sea. The potency is so great that spellcasters and thieves feel a quickening as

they cross the line. Wizards and elves standing along the invisible lines receive +1d to their spell checks (save Invoke patron and any patron spells). Clerics standing in the same eldritch line suffer -1d to their spell checks and are unable to turn unholy or lay on hands. The effects last so long as the PCs remain within a ley line hex.

**Judges:** When PCs discover a megalith, trace a ley line from the direction of the sunken city through the megalith hex, out to the edges of the map. Judges should also feel free to add additional lines where the powers interact, negate and magnify one another.

**Slave battle:** The PCs witness a slave battle between two Aghartan forces. Each army is composed of 1d100+50 slave giants and headed by a slave lord atop its grand palanquin. The two armies battle for the cruel pleasure of the slave lords, but if the PCs make their presence known, both armies attempt to capturing the PCs for the glory of their masters.

**Sword crab cast:** The PCs encounter a group of 1d10+2 sword crabs. The crabs are notable for their spittle, which acts like an adhesive; the crabs glue broken bits of metal and sharp stones to their shells, creating a spiked, armored mass up to 6' across.

The crabs are driven by hunger, and are easily distracted by offerings or bright, shiny objects.

**Sword crab (1d10+2):** Init -1; Atk pincher +3 melee (1d8+3); AC 18; HD 3d8; hp 12; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.

**Treasure train:** The PCs spy an Aghartan treasure train being marched across the black wastes, 1d6 miles distant. The train is composed of 1d20+10 slave giants, five champion-mediums, and 1d100 slaves in shackles, hauling sledges laden with treasure. Unlike the giants, the shackled slaves are not yet transformed; freed from their chains they can bolster the party's ranks or replace fallen PCs.

The train bears treasure type E.

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE CAVE MAPS



he Spine Ridges are riddled with caves, some occupied and others empty. Perhaps the greatest threat is not their monstrous inhabitants, but being caught within the caves after "nightfall" when the Inner Sea rushes inland, flooding the lower caverns.

Use the following table to stock the sample caves – or caves of the judge's own devising! Note that, during the day, water drains out of the submerged chambers, permitting easy (though muddy) passage.

Roll 1d14	CAVE CONTENTS
1 - 5	Empty
6	<b>Forgotten Relics:</b> Treasure type D is hidden in the largest submerged chamber. Other chambers show signs of use (discarded bones, crude walls and sooty ceilings).
7	<b>Mammoth centipede:</b> The enormous beast lairs in the largest dry chamber. All other chambers are littered with castings from previous meals. Rooting through the chalky castings reveals treasure type A.

**Mammoth centipede:** Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d16 plus poison); AC 14; HD 8d8; hp 32; MV 60'; Act 1d24; SP poison; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will -1; AL C.

The centipede's bite risks poisoning the target (DC 10 Fortitude save to resist). On a failed save the target suffers succumbs to a slow-acting paralysis, cumulatively losing -1d to action dice each round for 1d5 rounds. The paralysis can be combated with magical healing or wears off after 1 hour.

8 **Man-Bats colony:** Each of the dry chambers is home to 1d5+3 man-bats. The floors and walls of the caverns are stained with man-guano. The colony hides their treasure (type B) in the largest dry chamber.

**Man-Bat:** Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 8; MV 20', fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP carry off prey; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

**Bone roach nest:** The largest dry chamber is home to 1d20+15 bone roaches.

9 - 11 **Bone roach:** Init -1; Atk pincher +2 melee (1d5+2); HD 2d6; hp 6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

12 **Giant slugs:** The walls and floor of the submerged caverns are thick with the hallucinogenic slime of the 1d12 slugs lairing in the wet caves. Characters crossing into the slime or struck by the slugs in melee must succeed on DC 15 Will saves or perceive their companions as slugs (attacking the PC) for the next 1d12 rounds. Characters caught in the hallucination cannot discern true slug from their allies; the judge should roll as secret Luck check to determine where the hallucinating characters direct their blows.

**Giant Slug (1d5):** Init -6; Atk acidic touch +3 melee (1d4 plus slime); AC 18; HD 3d10; hp 15; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP slime; SV Fort +5, Ref -6, Will -2; AL C.

**Funnel wolf nest:** The walls and ceilings of dry caverns are shrouded in dusty gray webs, heralding the spiders' next in the largest of the dry caves. A total of 1d12+3 spiders lair here.

13 There is a 10% chance of discovering treasure type A, the remnants of the spiders' previous victims.

**Funnel wolf spider:** Init +5; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6 plus poison on following rounds); AC 12; HD 8d6; hp 25; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP anchoring bite, poison (1d12 dmg / round); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -2; AL C.

#### **Special: The PCs discover (roll 1d7):**

1) A pool of opaque, silvery liquid; beside the pool is a man-bat statue cast from the same, silvery metal. Ingesting the liquid grants the character an additional class die of hit points. Ingested a second time, the liquid suffuses the PCs' body with a hardening chill, granting +1 AC. Ingested three times or more, the liquid petrifies the character (DC 20 Fortitude save to resist).

2) A squat, fat-bellied demon idol, resting atop a soot stained altar stone. Burning an offering worth 100 gp or more before the altar grants the PC +1d3 Luck. If the PCs remove the idol, the entire party suffers -1d4 Luck.

3) An escaped slave. If the party needs an additional PC to bolster their ranks, the slave may be of any character class, level 1d3+3. Otherwise, the escaped slave is a 0-level character, quite insane, with the following stats:

**Slave:** Init -2; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL C.

14 4) A deliberate mound of rocks, walling off the furthest chamber. Characters investigating the mound find a holy symbol of a god of Law. The holy symbol glows brightly in the presence of Chaos or Chaotically-aligned creatures, and grants Lawful bearers +1d to saving throws and melee attacks against the same.

5) A battered wooden pedestal-of-worlds (see area D-5). However, in order to pass between worlds and planes, the pedestal must be installed on a seafaring vessel. (Any vessel will do, pending the judge's approval. Exceptionally large vessels – i.e., death barges – may add +5 or +10 to the navigation DC.)

6) A painting, ruined from seawater, depicting a portion of the lands surrounding the inner sea. (Give the players a copy of the Lost Agharta overland map.)

7) A watertight cask – sealed in wax – containing a leviathan brain preserved in violet mucus. If consumed, the mucus grants +1d to all spell check for the next 1d4 hours. There is enough fluid for 5 quaffs, but if a character drinks an additional dose while the first is in effect, the PC must make a DC 20 Will save or suffer 1d20 temporary Intelligence dmg. If a PC's Int is reduced to 0 or less, the imbiber suffers brain death.

**Cross out results as they are rolled and supply new entries.**



# SPINE RIDGE CAVE COMPLEXES

SCALE  
CAN VARY

← UNDER →  
WATER  
AT NIGHT



AKZ<sup>20</sup><sub>16</sub>

# APPENDIX C:

## AGHARTAN TREASURE TABLES



he treasures of Lost Agharta are as plentiful as the legends tell, but returning the treasures to the surface is no trivial task. Moreover, Aghartan art objects – statuary, weavings and the like – all bear the sickening taint of their creators (or rather, the masters that oversaw the slave artisans). Once carried to the surface realms and sold to sages and collectors, the objects work a subtle

corruptive influence on their new owners; each week that passes there is a cumulative 1% chance that the collector is inflamed with the need to possess more of the taboo works. Driven by envy and an insane certainty that the PCs possess even more wicked and debauched works of art, the collectors marshal their considerable forces and wealth against the PCs, in hopes of gaining the (likely) imaginary relics.

Treasure Type	100s of Aghartan Coins (Gold)	10s of Platinum Orbs	Spices	Gems	Statuary	Weavings	Weapons	Armor	Other
A	10% 1d2	10% 1d2	10% 1d3	20% 1d3	20% 1d2	–	5% 1	–	5% 1d3 lotus blossoms
B	10% 1d3	5% 1d	25% 1d3	25% 1d3	–	–	50% 1 weapon	1 shield	–
C	50% 1d10	25% 1d5	50% 1d10	35% 1d12	25% 1d3	–	25% 1d7	25% 1 suit and 3 shields	25% 1d5 lotus blossoms
D	15% 1d8	15% 1d3	15% 1d8	15% 1d6	25% 1d3	–	13% 1d12	5% 1 suit	50% 1d10 lotus blossoms, 1d5 leviathan jars
E	65% 1d10	50% 1d6	75% 1d12	35% 1d20	75% 1d6	50% 1d6	25% 1d10	1d10 shields, 1d3 suits	50% 1d10 lotus blossoms, 1d5 leviathan jars
F	75% 2d16	60% 2d10	80% 2d20	75% 2d24	80% 1d12	75% 2d6	75% 1d14	1d12 shields, 1d5 suits	75% 1d20 lotus blossoms, 1d10 leviathan jars
G	25% 2d24	15% 2d20	50% 3d30	25% 3d50	25% 1d24	–	–	–	1d30-1 ancient tomes, 1 homunculi
H	13% 1d12	5% 1d6	95% 2d24	–	–	–	–	–	1d2-3 ancient tomes, 2 homunculi





**Aghartan Coins:** The common Aghartan coin, passable as a gold coin to most non-discriminating moneychangers. Sages and numismatists, however, rightly ascribe the value of 5 gp to each "gold piece."

**Platinum Orbs:** Small orbs of polished platinum, each is worth 50 gp by metal alone.

**Spices:** Underworld spices are rare enough to be used by Aghartans as currency. Held in small, ornate boxes, or woven metal bags, the strange spices have varying degrees of worth to the slave lords, but are uniformly valued at 250 gp each in the surface realms. Ingested, the spices have varying effects upon the PCs. Characters ingesting the strange, bulbous growths, must make a Fort save and apply the total on the following table:

Fort save	Effect
1 - 15	PC suffers 1d24 dmg as his Strength, Agility and Stamina are temporarily reduced to 5. The stat loss can be recovered by magic or healing.
16	Character gains 1 dice of hp for 24 hours. These hp are lost first in case of injury and cannot be healed or regained once lost.
17	As above, character gains 2 class dice of hp for 24 hours.
18	As above, character gains 3 class dice of hp, and all physical stats improve by 1d3 for the next 24 hours.
19	As above, character gains 4 class dice of hp and all physical stats improve by 1d4 for the next 24 hours.
20	As above, character gains 5 class dice of hp and all physical stats improve by 1d5 for the next 24 hours.

**Gems:** Ranging in value from 100 to 500 gp each. If more than 10 gems are discovered in a horde, the first 10 gemstones are valued as above, and the remainder at 1,000 to 5,000 gp each.

**Statuary:** Aghartan statuary always depicts the slave lords as noble despots and masters of sorcery. Statuary is most often carved from black marble, shot through with green

veins, and set with rare underworld gems and metals. The statues range in value from 1,000 to 10,000 gp, and inspires envy and greed as Aghartan relics.

**Weavings:** Whether tapestries, rugs or smaller hangers, weavings always depict horrible acts of cruelty and debauchery. Masterfully woven, and incorporating threads of precious metals and exotic dyes, the weavings range in worth from 500 to 5,000 gp, but are incredibly bulky transport. Weavings inflict the curse of envy and greed as above.

**Weapons:** Typically short and longswords and spears, and always of Aghartan make (+1d to damage). If more than 5 weapons are discovered in a cache, the additional weapons are two-handed swords and exotic polearms.

**Armor:** Aghartan armor is stylized full plate armor and shields. However, the armor is forged for the slave giants, and of little use to any except the largest of PCs.

**Other:** Leviathan jars are large clay vessels, sealed with oiled leather cinched with a silver cord. Inside each vessel is the brain of a slain leviathan preserved in a thick, oily mucus. Distilled with the might of the ancient leviathans, the mucus can transmit great knowledge and strange powers. Of course, neither of can be gained without risk.

Whenever a new vessel is opened, pick or roll on the following table. There is sufficient mucus in one vessel for 1d5 quaffs.

If a character drinks an additional dose while the first is in effect, the PC must make a DC 20 Willpower save or suffer 1d20 temporary Intelligence dmg. If a PC's Intelligence is reduced to 0 or less, the imbiber suffers brain death.

Roll 1d5	Distilled Mucus color and qualities
1	<b>Violet:</b> +1d to all spell check for the next 1d4 hours.
2	<b>Blue:</b> Character regenerates 1 hit point per round for the next 1d4 hours.
3	<b>Red:</b> +1d to all non-spell check action dice.
4	<b>Green:</b> +1d to all saving throws for the next 1d24 hours.

- 5 **Translucent:** The mucus has gone rancid. The imbiber must make DC 20 Fortitude save or suffer 2d24 damage.

Lotus blooms can be found as dried petals, vials of powder, or wrapped bundles. Their powers are similar to the live flowers (found in area 1-4) but are far more potent. When blooms are indicated, the judge should choose from, or roll on, the following table. In each instance, if the PC consumes a second bloom within 24 hours, the character must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or die. Finally, there is a cumulative 25% chance per blossom consumed that the PC incurs a major corruption, per the wizard / elf corruption table.

## Roll 1d4

### Hyperborean Lotus Blossom (dried)

- 1 **Black:** Roll 1d20 versus the PC's Luck. If the roll is lower or ties, the character permanently gains 1d20 hp. If higher, the PC loses 1d20 hp.
- 2 **Blood:** The character gains 1d7 Intelligence and must make a DC 20 Willpower save or lose 1d7 Stamina.
- 3 **White:** The character grows 2d50 years younger.
- 4 **Emerald:** The character's Strength, Agility, and Stamina increase by +5 for the next day.

# EPILOGUE: MYSTERIES OF THE INNER SEA



With swords and sorceries sated in the blood of the wicked Aghartan overlords, do the PCs retreat back to the lit-realms? Or do they press on, risking life, fortune and soul in the sunken-city in the heart of the Inner Sea?

Reaching the half-sunken city should be no simple task, with the threat of hateful leviathans, the semi-sentient cinder storm, and the curious currents of the Inner Sea. Whatever powers first sunk the city yet remain, slumbering beneath the inky waves. The Aghartan diaspora was not without cause; yet, even while their empire was reduced to ruin, the foul overlords remained shackled to the water's edge.

Plumbing the half-sunken towers plunges PCs into the heart of the Lost Aghartan empire. What the PCs discover there is left to the judge's devising, but at the very least it should be transformative – to both the PCs and their campaign world.

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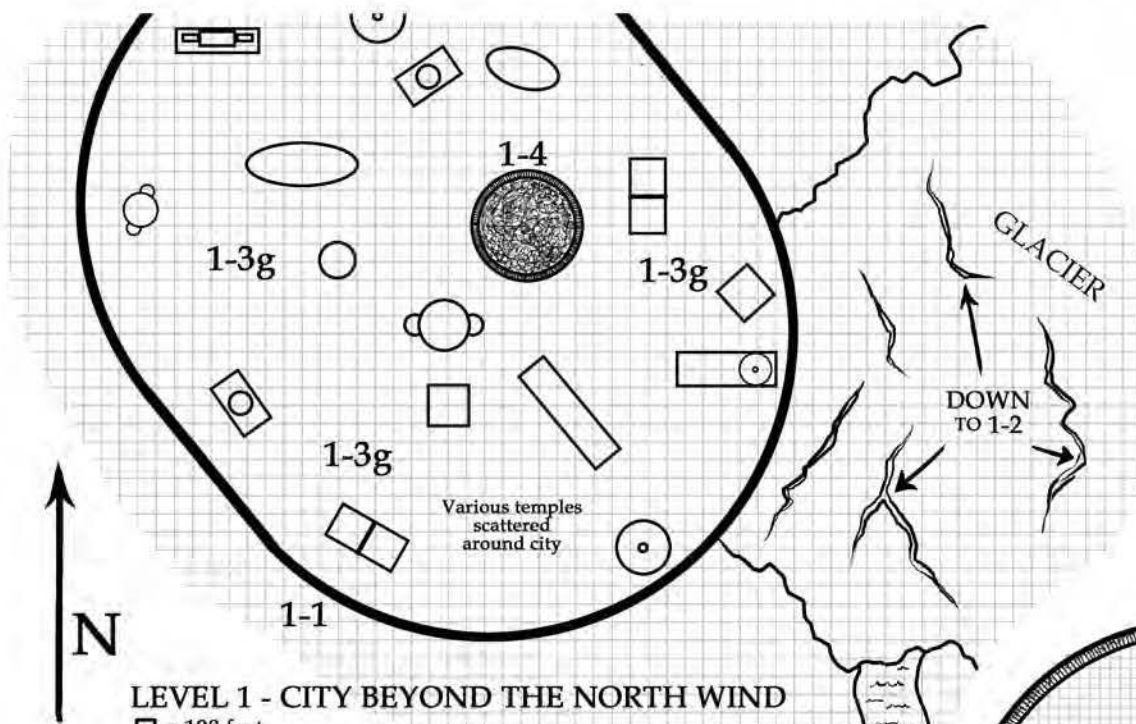
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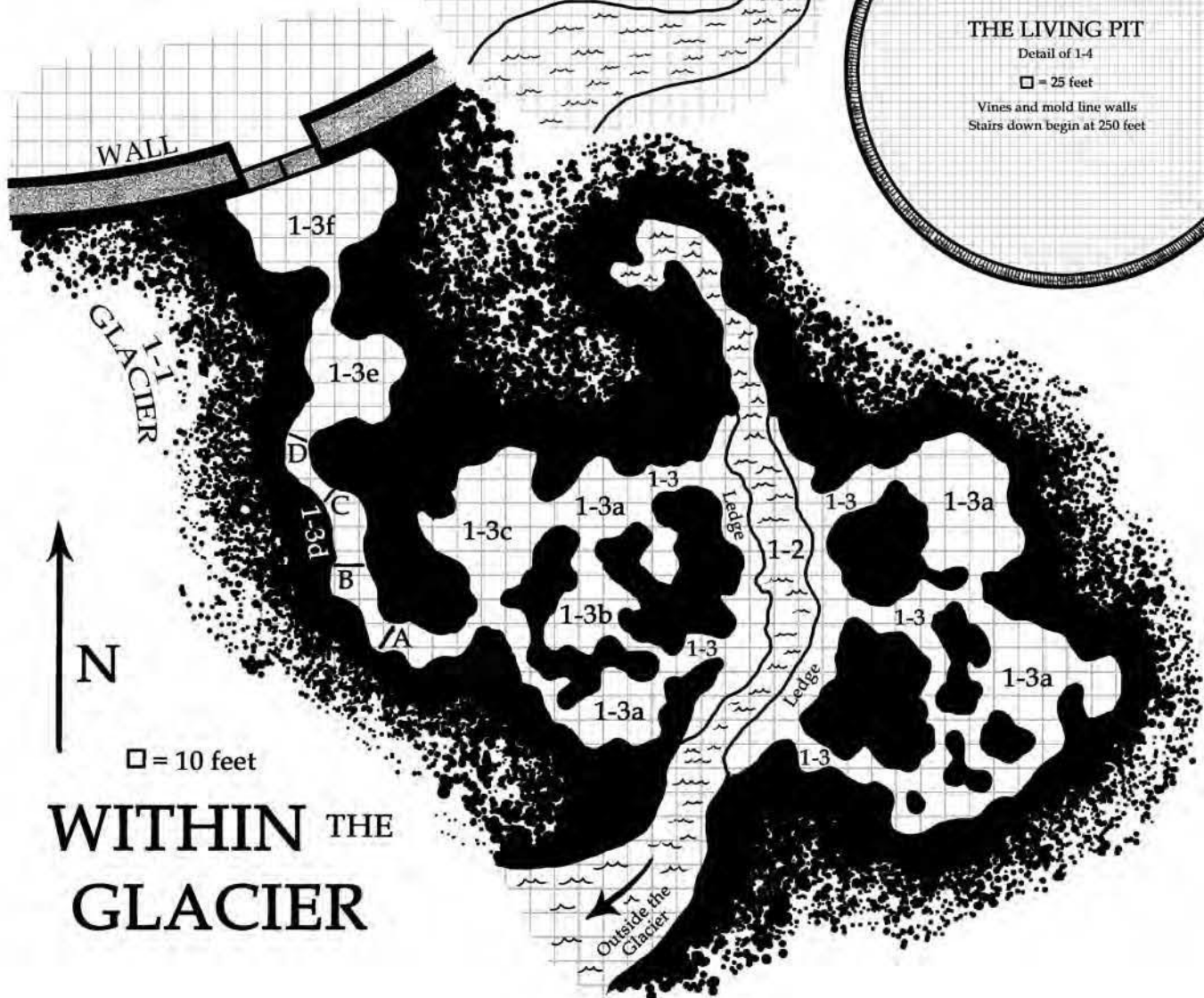
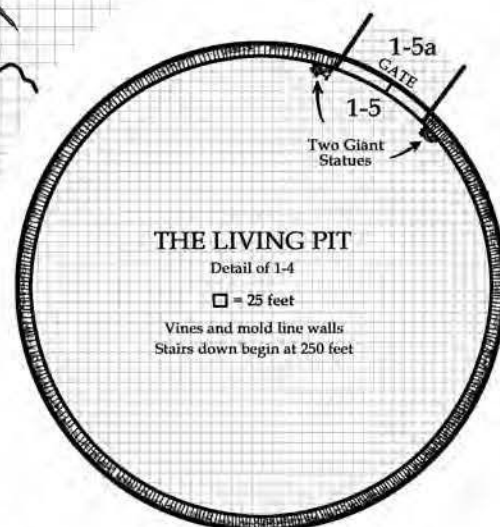




LEVEL 1 - CITY BEYOND THE NORTH WIND

□ = 100 feet

1-4  
THE LIVING PIT



WITHIN THE  
GLACIER

# The AGHARTAN UNDERWORLD

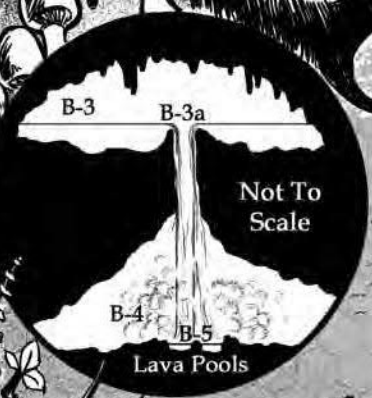
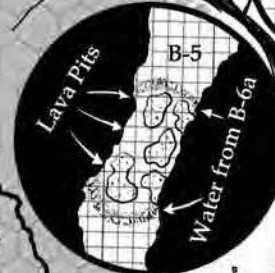
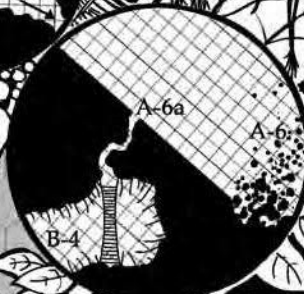
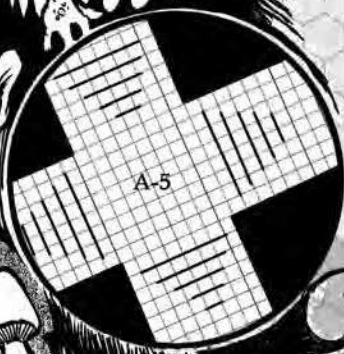
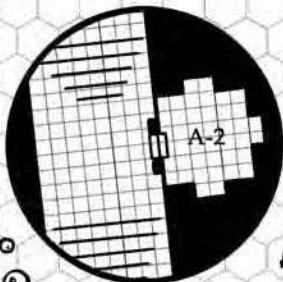
## LEVELS A - C

- = 50 Miles
- = Old Ways
- = Natural Caves
- = River
- = Rift
- = Aghartan Slave City

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

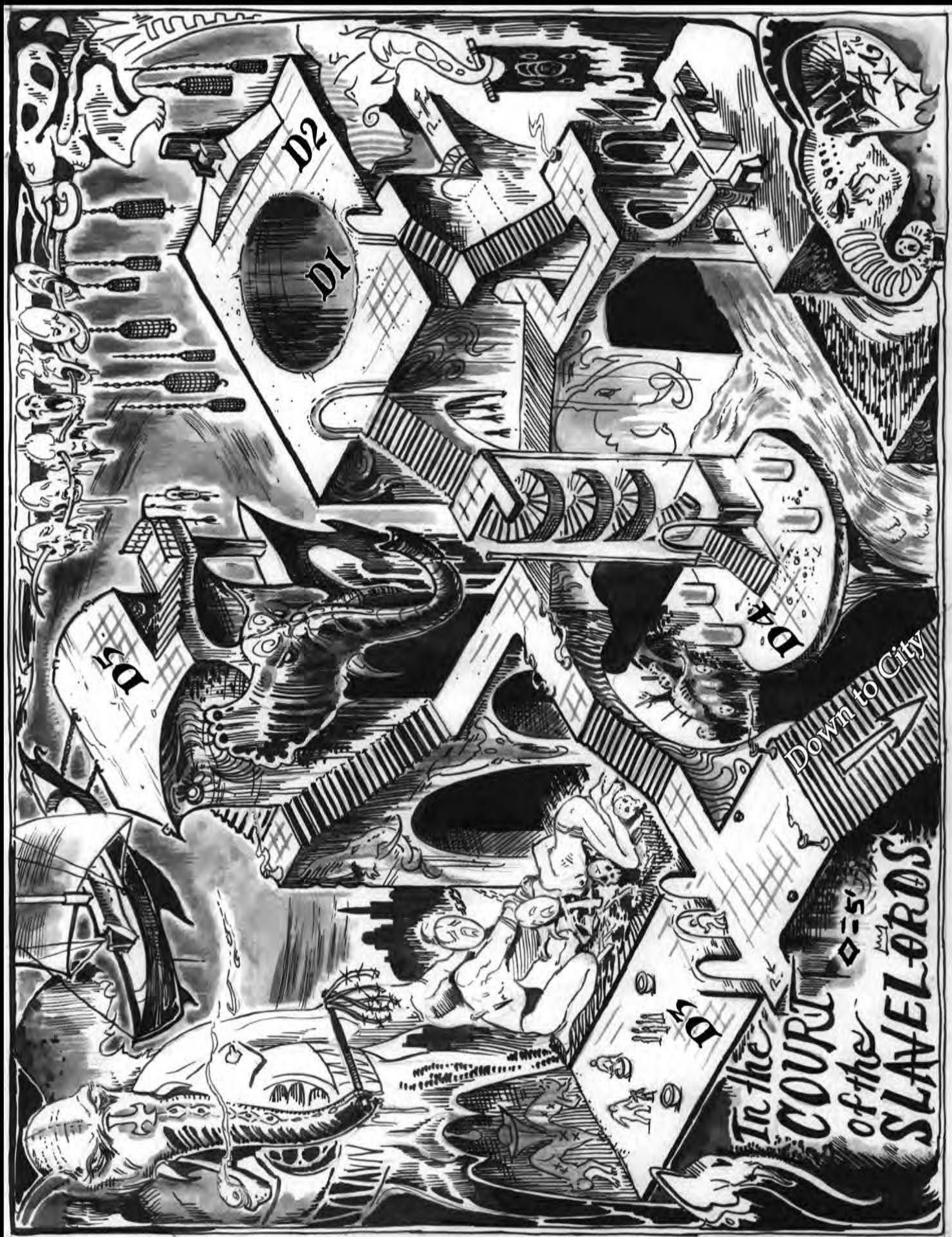
LEVEL 3



SHORE

Allen 2016



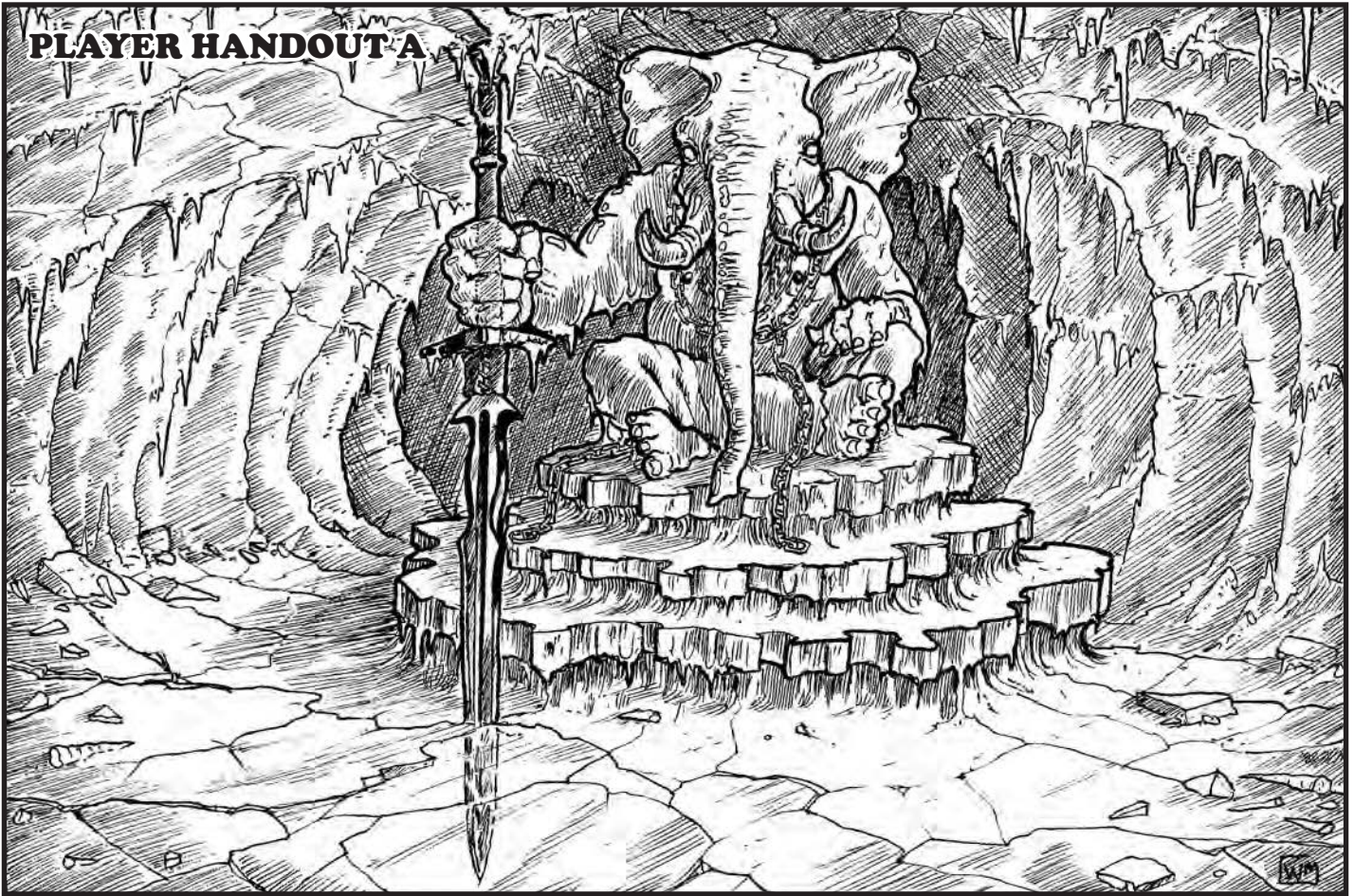


In the COURT of the SLAVELORDS

Down to City



**PLAYER HANDOUT A**



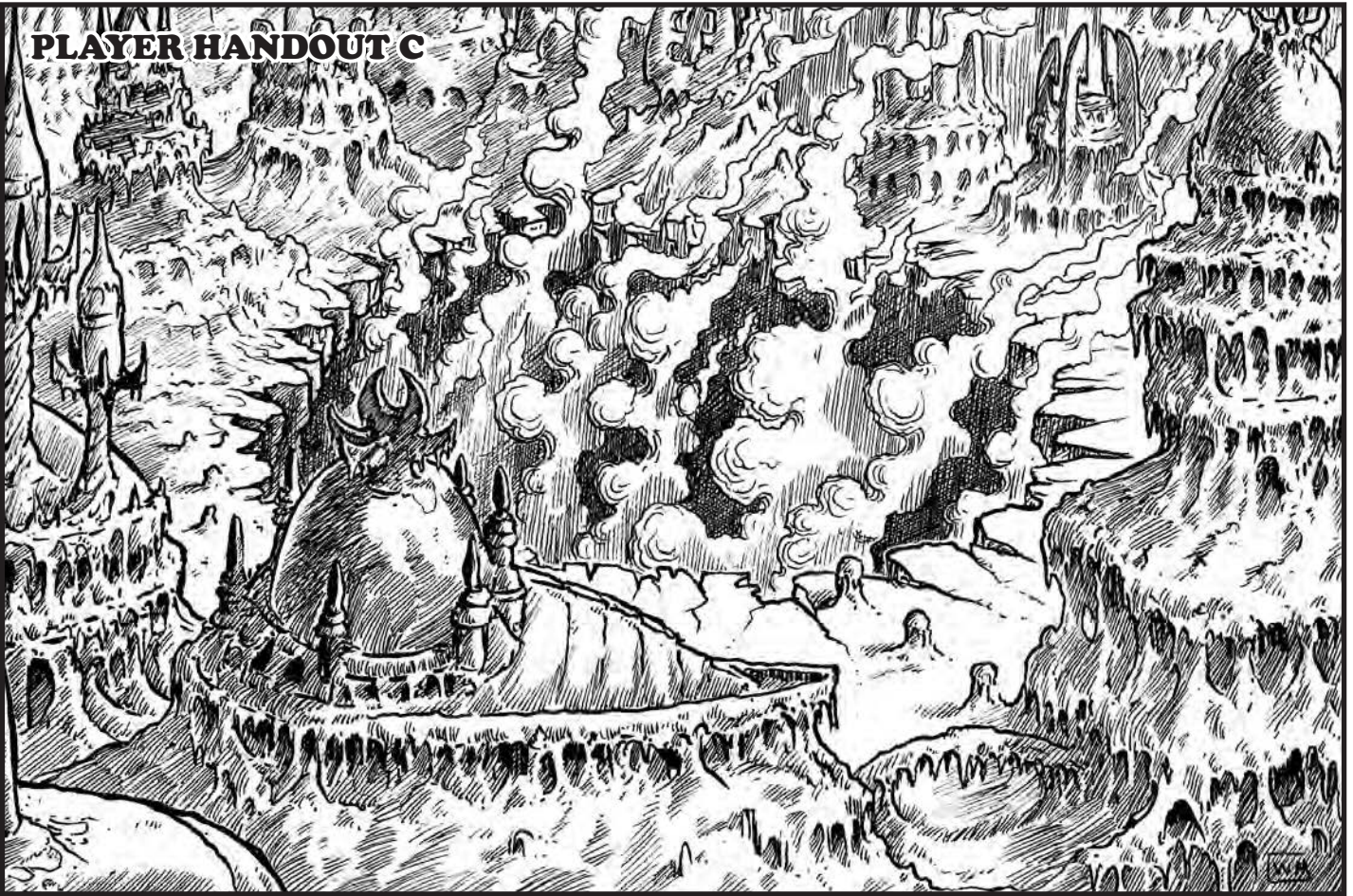
**PLAYER HANDOUT B**



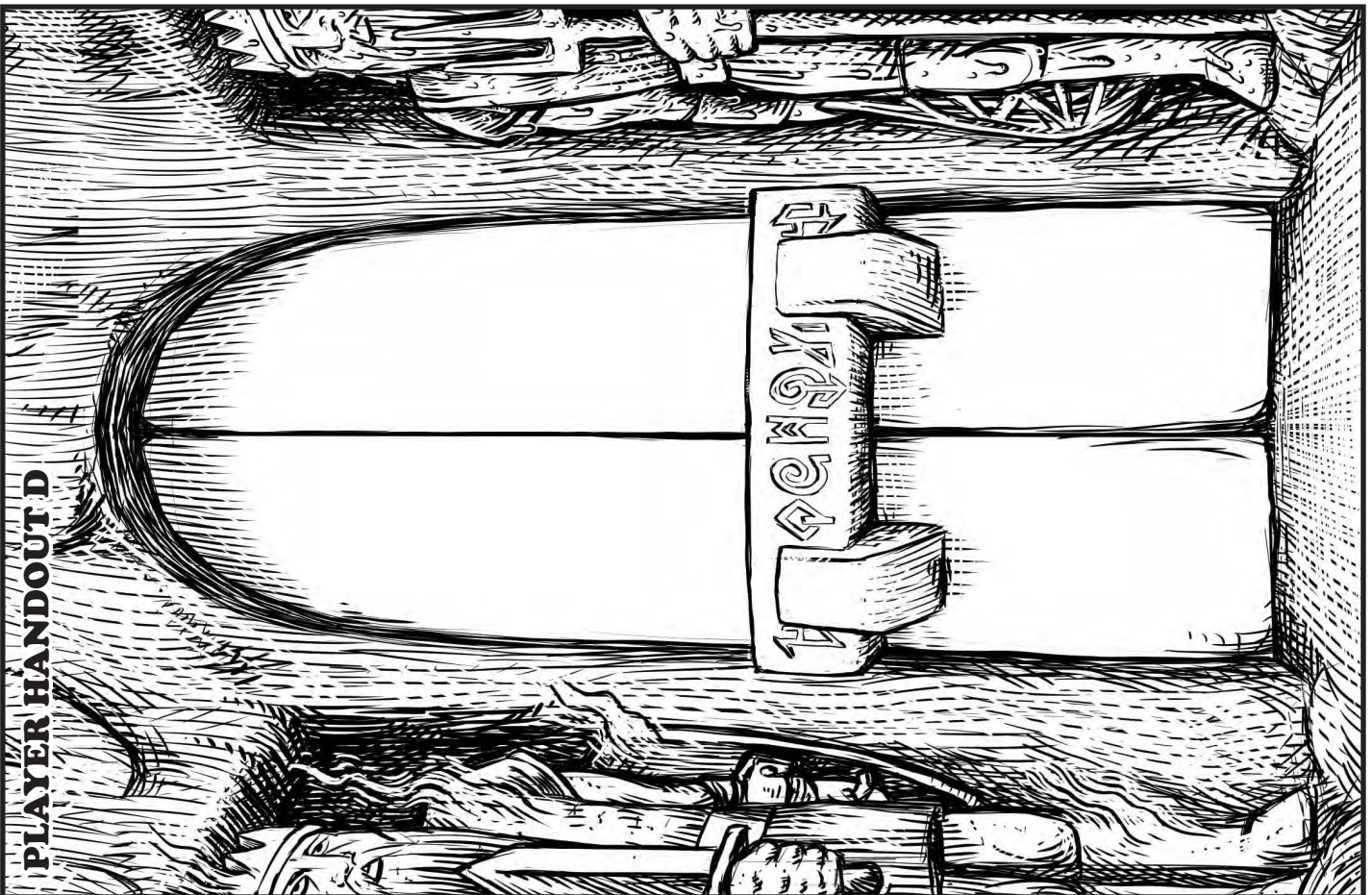
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PLAYER HANDOUT C



PLAYER HANDOUT D





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