

Issue Five | Summer 1995

History is Bunk!

This scenario would suit either the group of city militia described in Eye of All-Seeing Wonder No.3 (bringing some interesting questions of loyalty into play) or possibly another group of adventurers of similar level either from the same clan (preferably) or the same temple.

The Job

The group are summoned before a council of clan elders. The senior elder present ushers all the slaves from the room, and then reveals to the group that a theft occurred the previous evening from the clanhouse. The only thing stolen was an elaborate scroll-case containing a document of some antiquity (believed to be Engsvanyali). The elder reveals that owing to the embarrassing nature of the contents of the document he is unable to file a full report with the Palace of the Realm. If pressed he will divulge that the document contained information which brings into question the heredity and provenance of the Clan of the White Crystal, who are very powerful locally. The clan was retaining the document for use as a possible lever in future business ventures. The elders Or the clan would like the group either to retrieve the document, or at worst make sure it is destroyed.

The item was taken from a secure room deep within the building, which, although not guarded, was in a well-frequented part of the building. There is no sign of forced entry into any part of the building. Careful study of the room from which the document was stolen will reveal an oily patch approximately 6" across soaking the plaster of the wall close to the door. It may be recognised as being Salaryvani hair oil.

The clan chief has also heard rumours that other similar thefts have taken place from various temples and clanhouses around the city. These rumours point to thefts from one or more of the following: another clan, a temple, at least one government department, and the Foreigner's Quarter.

Initially the group will only be aware of the theft from their own clanhouse. They will have approximately 1 month to conclude their investigations before the final robbery takes place.

The Truth

There have been five other robberies over the past few months: from the Palace of the Realm, the Palace of Foreign Lands, the Temple of Vimuhla, the Clan of the Moon of Evening, and the House of Fulfilment of Dreams.

The burglars are a small group of Salaryvani, who enter the underworld via the cellars of the mansion of Donmikayel hiGangasa, without his knowledge, though one of his slaves is being handsomely paid to let them in through a back entrance after dark. They have been getting about using the less well-known sections of the city's underworld. There are exits from this into each of the buildings robbed.

The other stolen items are as follows:

Temple of Vimuhla:

A fragment of a stela from the Dragon Warriors, purported to be from the Old Citadel of Ch'ochi. It is part of a description of a battle involving the use of "dragons", describing the use of ancient weapons.

How to find out about the theft:

- i) Coming across Korazunu during the investigation
- ii) A. member of the temple might have enough influence to get. the information directly.

Palace of Foreign Lands:

From the office of Ektunaz hiMnari, the Livyáni affairs specialist, an ancient High Cartography stone. It is actually defunct. though the owner was not able to tell that. (Llyani).

How to find out about it:

- i) Knowing the official
- ii) Bribery
- iii) Palace of the Realm (this has been reported partially to the Office of the Recovery of Stolen Materials. It is low on their priority list as he has refused to give enough detail about the theft to be of help.

Palace of the Realm:

A gold box, crusted with jewels, covered in stylised glyphs of various demons, containing an 'Eye' and several fragments of metal leaf inscribed with writings from the early Second Imperium. The inscription is in Classical Tsolyáni.

How to find out about it:

- i) Report has been made (easy if the group are militiamen)
- ii) Bribery

House of Fulfilment of Dreams:

An emerald-studded phallic wand of Bednalljan provenance, which has the ability to cast a spell of Potency once a day. It is reputed to have belonged to Queen Nayari. (Bednalljan)

How to find out about it:

- i) Rumours that certain regular and aged clients have stopped frequenting the establishment
- ii) further investigation of the Foreigners' Quarter criminal element will reveal that a big reward has been offered for its recovery

Moon of Evening Clanhouse:

A steel astrolabe reputedly belonging to Hagarr of Paranta, from the Time of No Kings.

How to find out about it:

- i) rumour
- ii) Clan postpones an ocean-crossing trade expedition
- iii) Agents planted in the household return vague information that Benshatun is in somewhat of a state

The day after the intelligence is received the agent is found floating in the harbour with a Black Y talisman around his neck

It may be noticed when the extent of the robberies has been discovered that each item comes from a different major period in history (Llyani, Three States of the Triangle, Dragon Warriors, Time of No Kings, Fishermen Kings, Bednalljan, Engsvanyali, Second Imperium) The two periods missing thefts are the Fishermen Kings, and the Three States of the Triangle The item from the period of the Three States has yet to be stolen, and the item from the time of the Fishermen Kings was in the hands of the thieves originally as they are descendants of Gamulu, the first Fisherman King. They require one item from each of the periods for the recital of a ritual of summoning, for a demon who is thought to have charge of one of the Keys or Wards of the Blue Room. This is not true, but the thieves fervently believe if.

When more of the thefts are uncovered, several common features will be observed, the most significant of which is the fact that the robberies all occur when Gayel is full. Also, none of the thefts were discovered until several hours after the event when any trail was too cold to follow. On at least two occasions people had been allowed into the room where the stolen artefacts were kept, though they had proper permits etc.

The item from the time of the Three States of the Triangle, which the thieves intend to steal is a book in an unknown script owned by Jedusane hiTlakotani. It is written on leaves of beaten copper and is illegible using any form of magic, owing to a type of warding on it. It is the only item in the city which is verifiably from the time of the Three States of the Triangle. Any collectors of historical curios will probably (moderate "Collector" skill check) be aware of the existence of the book in the possession of Jedusane as he often displays his extensive collection at social occasions. If the group work out that the book is the thieves' next target, they will still need to do some sweet-talking to get to see Jedusane. He will be very interested in the historical aspect of the robberies and will discuss it at great, great length. He is quite capable of keeping the characters for hours and he is far too high-status to cut short in full flow.

If the party can find some way of cutting Jedusane short and ask to see the book, they will find the robbers in mid-theft. If they are delayed in any way they will go down to the vault to find the book gone. The thieves will have gone sufficiently recently for their psychic traces to remain. The trail will lead to a well-concealed secret entrance, which leads to an unfrequented part of the underworld. The trail down the corridors is quite easy to follow. If the characters hurry they may manage to reach the robbers before they get to the outside world. If they don't they will follow the trail back to Donmikayel's mansion.

The Pala Jakálla Underworld

The complex of tunnels and hidden chambers can be subdivided into four major parts: the first is the series of corridors that are used by various government agencies to get about the city unseen—many of these are guarded by traps, human sentinels and the occasional non-human guardian. The second section is used by the Temple of Sárku to get from their temple to the City of the Dead across the river—this area is guarded by various Undead and other more hideous denizens. The third is a series of short passageways between various temples. The fourth is a deeper, largely unexplored section which features several very old areas, and some underground storage cisterns. It is this part that the robbers have been using.

Donmikayel's Mansion

Following the trail of the robbers Through the underworld can be tricky (i.e. feel free to add in the wandering denizens) as they are using the older sections. Eventually the party will come to a dead end, but will see that the dust and debris against one section of the wall has been swept away in an arc as though a door has opened. It is also quite easy with the use of levers to prise the door open.

The group will emerge into a dark cellar. In the torchlight it will be possible to see row upon row of bottles, of all shapes and sizes, containing a wide selection of wines and liqueurs. More careful inspection will reveal a heap of empty bottles with their necks broken off. There is only one door to this cellar. If the robbers are aware that they have been followed they will attempt to set an ambush to gain themselves enough time to get away into the city. They may well leave their hired thugs to delay the party. If any of these are captured they will readily divulge whatever information they have. (This is not much—see description of slave below.)

If the ambush is sprung, quite a din will ensue, waking the household up. First to appear on the scene will be a grizzled Pachi Lei who will weigh in indiscriminately until he spots the uniform of the City Militia (if the group are wearing it). He will then concentrate his efforts against anybody not in uniform.

After the skirmish it might be best for the group to try and slip away into the underworld again rather than face the wrath of the householder. The Pachi Lei is well-known in militia circles—he is the personal bodyguard of Donmikayel hiGangasa, a wealthy and influential member of the Clan of the Might of Ganga, who would not be pleased to have his night's rest disturbed.

If the group do insist on seeing him there and then rather than coming back later, he will be outraged that his privacy has been invaded in this way. He may even threaten to sue the militia for shamtlá. He has no idea that the robbers had been using his cellar as an entrance to the Underworld. It is all the work of one of his slaves. Needless to say this man will have fled.

If the characters fail to intercept the robbers before they reach Donmikayel's mansion they will lose them in the city streets.

The Following Day

Donmikayel will have calmed down, and will provide as much assistance with enquiries as possible starting with the description of the missing slave. It will not be difficult to track him down, as he was caught everything that have aboard a barge heading up-river just before dawn. He is so terrified that he will divulge everything that he knows. He will be able to tell that the people who paid him were foreigners, probably Salaryvani by the look of their greasy beards, and will be able to give a brief physical description of each and the dates on which he had let them into the house. He will also know that they asked him to be available to let them in again when Gayel and Kashi were both full (three days time). He had the impression that they were going down to perform some sort of ritual rather than steal something. Clearly they will not use the same entrance if they are aware that their man has been caught. This is all he can remember. However, if more sorcerous techniques are used he will be able to recall more details about the appearance of the robbers: each of the Salaryvani wore a cloth band around his head with a diagram painted on it which he describes quite accurately. Sorcerers may recognise the diagram is a glyph of Kurritlakal.

Once the characters have discovered that the glyph is of Kurritlakal, they may wish to do further research into his summoning. They will need to enlist the aid of a competent demonologist. They will be able to find out the physical requirements of the summoning—the room, accoutrements etc.

They may be able to find a real expert who knows enough about the underworld to come up with an exact location for the summoning. They may then be able to set a trap of their own. Otherwise they may have to rely on a less expert guide, who may only know of several potential locations. In this case, they have a couple of days to try and investigate, and they may in the end have to rely on their sense of smell to guide them to the ritual—there is a phenomenal amount of incense used in it. If they use this method they will arrive at the ceremony just before the completion of the incense.

The Eater of Skins

The robbers will return to the underworld later, with all their surviving, bodyguards to conduct the ritual of summoning The demon they are trying to summon is an avatar of Prince Kurritlakal, the Eater of Skins. His powers are those of Gifting, Consuming, Communion, Sundering and Desecring. It is the Gifting and Desecring that the robbers wish to use. The formula for the ritual of summoning they are going to use is perfectly correct, but there are some major flaws in their understanding of it, the main one being the number of souls to be sacrificed. This means that after the demon appears and consumes the first sacrifices (three slaves and the hired thugs) it will start to bargain for a deal including the souls of four of the five ringleaders (without mentioning that this is part of the bargain).

The second major flaw is that the Demon Prince does not have possession of the secret of the Ward of Ksarul, though if the deal is struck he will use his powers to assist the surviving summoner in some other matter (this will be a random one of the robbers).

When the party come across the summoning they will find the following scene:

They will perceive a glow and a strong scent of incense from some distance down the passages, and eventually will find a large circular room (100' across). There is a line of charcoal drawn around the outside of the room some 5' in from the edge. All around this line are small crucibles of burning incense (approx. 200 of them). There are two distinct groups of people in the room—the slaves and thugs inside the circle, and the ringleaders outside the circle. All the people are wearing strange leather masks in the semblance of fantastic beasts, and fur or hide robes Of the five outside the circle two are carrying drums, one a flute, one brass castanets, and the last (Turzaq) a torch in one hand and a copper dagger in the other. They are all in the midst of a chant in a strange language (Llyani), whilst walking around the perimeter of the circle. As the group watch they will come to a halt at a point west of the room, and the floor in the centre of the circle will appear to buckle and its surface become liquid and boil.

Turzaq will now say a single word and the sacrifices will wake up and be aware of their peril. Unfortunately for them it is too late, and they will be sucked screaming into the floor, their extremities burning away as though in acid.

Soon after the disappearance of the sacrifices the surface will rise again and the Demon Prince will manifest himself, eventually filling the room up to the limit of the charcoal circle. The noise of his breathing will be like a great wind, and anyone looking upon the demon must make a -5 Psychic Reservoir check or become afraid. A critical failure means that the character will collapse into a quivering catatonic heap. In form, the Demon is almost like a huge spider though with an enormous number of limbs sprouting from all over the body. The front end has a number of slits and holes which open, letting foul vapours escape in clouds. The body is also covered in small hanging globular appendages, and the whole being is surrounded by a bluish corpse-light When the demon speaks it will do so in Salaryvani, which will be very difficult for anyone to understand who is not a native speaker.

If the party disturbs any part of the ritual after the demon has started to manifest it will break through the circle and start sending out viscous extrusions towards the people around the edge of the room. These tentacles may be fought off, and each has a Melee Value of 18; 12 hit points; armour 2/2, and damage D6+2 They are dripping with a corrosive substance, and anyone fighting a tentacle must make a weapon breakage roll any time they either parry or attack successfully. Anybody who takes damage must also take a further 1D6 damage which will continue to burn at 1 point less each round. Washing will have no effect. If a person goes down, the floor will flow out towards them and draw their bodies down. The demon will continue to extrude tentacles until it has either taken four more bodies or there is nobody left in the room.

Once he has taken the souls he will shrink back within the circle, and speak to any survivors, asking what it is they wish. In recompense for his services the demon may ask for almost anything, from something simple to something impossible. After a deal is struck, the demon may disappear (this will certainly happen if Turzaq is still alive and can recite the formula of dismissal). In any case the demon is confined for the moment within the circle.

Dramatis Personae

Korazanu hiYriddi: (See Eye of All-Seeing Wonder No. 3) Social Status 15 He has been assigned to the theft by the Temple of Vimuhla, partly because he is ruthless and has a good chance of getting the job done, and partly because his reputation is becoming an embarrassment and his demise might be convenient. If he encounters the party he may ally with them, though this will not be an easy alliance—he will try to dominate proceedings and will treat the party as his personal servants. (Typical Yriddi!)

Donmikayel hiGangasa: (See Eye of All-Seeing Wonder No.3). SS 15, VII Circle. It is his house which is being used as an entrance to the underworld by the thieves, though without his knowledge. If the group approach him with their findings in a civilised manner he will be helpful, but if the party take an accusatory stance he will be obstructive. He has the advantage of high social position on his side, as well as immense wealth.

Benshatun hiZamck: (See Eye of All-Seeing Wonder No. 3). SS 10. The astrolabe stolen from his clanhouse is a magical device which means that a ship will never become lost whilst at sea. The device is normally only used for major clan ventures involving ocean crossings. (The absence of any fixed heavenly bodies in the sky makes navigation by astronomical means extremely difficult. Usually, ships stick to coastlines if possible, or use magical means if they can afford them). If the group discover that the astrolabe was stolen he will see them, though he will be very eager about the true properties of the instrument.

Arkut hiFerShéna: SS 9. Age 51. Clan of the Grey Wand. Official of the Palace of the Realm, Office of Marketplaces (VI C). He is the official from whom the jewelled casket was stolen. He is blind and has been for 30 years, since just before he started working in the Office. He has an eidetic memory, and can remember the details of every permit he has ever Issued. (Name, date, purpose of business, whether the permit was renewed, etc.) He has even followed every one up to check on the success of the business. He will be only too pleased to speak to the investigators.

Ektuaz hiMnari: Age 40. Clan of the Red Flower of Dawn SS 8. Livyáni affairs expert at the Palace of Foreign Lands (VIII C) . It is his his cartographic stone that has been stolen. Despite the name he isn't actually Livyáni. He affects a number of tattoos, which look effective enough to the untrained eye, but any Livyáni would spot them as fakes immediately. He is an enthusiast for all aspects of Livyáni culture—religion, language, politics etc.

Zekkumet Ssamadan: Age 30. SS 10 Brother-in-law of Majjaq Skendruzhzha the "godfather" of the Foreigner's Quarter. He runs the House of the Fulfilment of Dreams for his bother-in-law. In appearance he is the complete antithesis of Majjaq: tall, slender and good-looking (for a Salaryvani). He does not wear the archetypal Salaryvani thick, oiled beard, but has a well-barbered one, much in the style of Khirgar. He married Majjaq's sister for the money, and has done quite handsomely out of the arrangement. He is extremely worried about the loss of the phallic wand, as it is a personal possession of Majjaq, who has a foul temper. Zekkumet is aware of thepresence of the Salaryvani group, though he is unaware of the purpose of their visit.

The Chief Robbers

Turzaq Gamulu Diqqushsha: The ringleader of the robbers. He is 42 years old, lean, mean and ferret-faced. He wears his hair in the traditional Salaryvani style. He is a 15th level sorcerer of Ksarul. He is totally ruthless about recovering the items for the ritual. He is probably a member of the Ndalú Clan.

Ziggutu Gamulu Ga'uzu: He is the muscle of the operation. He is 24 years old, a worshipper of Ksarul, and is built like the proverbial brick house (6' tall, 100 kg). He is also pretty smart. He is the most recognisable of the group, and the one the slave is able to describe best.

Ma'assa Gamulu Beshshayana: A weasel of a man, and a member of the Salaryvani Thieves Guild. He is the expert on stealth and disguise. He can pick almost any lock or ward, and can pass unnoticed almost anywhere, without leaving a trace. Unknown to the group he is included on a list of suspect characters at the Registry of Malefactors (his name was recognised at the Port of Entry as being a member of the Thieves' Guild). He has not been arrested as he has been in disguise most of the time.

Baggu'azu & Ta'akata Gamulu Diqqushsha: aged 21. Twin brother and sister—clan relatives of Turzaq. They complete the group of ringleaders. They are essentially young idealists, fanatical followers of Turzaq.

In addition to these five there are five hired thugs. All of them are foreigners and/or non-human (one is a Shén) picked up on the cheap, and will be expended at the end of the mission as part of the ceremony.

Character Statistics							
Mel = Melee, Wpn = Weapon, Dmg = Damage, HP = Hit Points, Evd = Evade, Arm = Armour, MR = Magic Resistance.							
	Mel	Wpn	Dmg	HP	Evd	Arm	MR
Korazanu	36	Sword	+1	14[3/5/8]	11	3	8
Pachi Lei	36	Sword x2	+2	20[5/8/11]	8	3	9
Baggu'azu	20	Sword	0	14[3/5/8]	8	4	6
Ta'akata	21	Arruche	+1	12[3/5/7]	12	3	5
Ma'assa	24	Poison Dagger	0	12[3/5/7]	15	1	8
	16	Blowgun					
Ziggutu	36	2H Sword	+3	24[5/9/13]	7	5	9
Turzaq	12	Dagger	0	10[3/4/6]	15	0	14
Shén Thug	34	Axe	+3	24[5/9/13]	7	6/1	7
Thugs (4)	22	Sword	+1	15[4/6/8]	7	4	4
Kurritlakal	18	Tentacle	D6+2	12[3/5/7]	6	2/2	12
Turzaq has 300 spell points and has 15 levels of Sorcerer. His Spell Phyla are Evocation (+5), Disenchantment (+7), Geomancy (+3), Involution (+5), Occultation (+5) and Psychethesis (+5)							
His favourite spells are Enantiomorphy (Involution), Translucence and Shadows (Occultation), Silver Halo (Psychethesis)							