



SCOURGE OF THE TIKBALANG

BY ZZARCHOV KOWOLSKI

— AN ADVENTURE FOR —
NEOCLASSICAL GEEK REVIVAL
AND OSR ROLEPLAYING GAMES



A REQUEST

This adventure is far darker than it may appear at first glance. Really take a read through and appreciate the kinds of bad people and reprehensible behaviour that can arise in this adventure and be careful with your audience. Just as some people can play a game with the death of an infant and some people have suffered miscarriages and don't want to think about it in the middle of a social outing, you will need to make sure this adventure won't mortify anyone in your group and ruin their evening over a game. I am not going to spell out what in this adventure requires this veritable "trigger warning" because if it isn't obvious to you that is a good indication you may need to think on it a little more before deciding to run it.

SET UP

The village of Taal is nominally part of the Rhajanate; its distance from the capital makes it largely autonomous but also vulnerable to the local brigands, warlords, and pirates of the area. Most of the village lives by fishing or subsistence level farming, as the gold mine that served as the original cause of the village's foundation was played out over a generation ago. The flow of gold may have stopped, but the village still has a sizable stockpile saved for a future emergency – and that emergency may be at hand.

A vicious Tikbalang has been reported in the area and it is terrorizing

the village. The townsfolk are too frightened to attempt to hunt down the beast and the village elder is cautious about emptying the town of defences, since there are pirates in the neighbouring village. A heavy reward in golden treasures is offered if the rumours can both be proven true and solved by bringing the head of the beast to the elder. If the beast is not slain, the villagers may need to kill those it assaulted, lest they give birth to more Tikbalang. It is hoped that, if the original beast is slain, the children will be born as normal human children.

WHAT IS A TIKBALANG?

In folklore, the Tikbalang is either a mischievous spirit that helps lost travellers and/or a terrifying monster who rapes virgins to produce more Tikbalangs. It has the body of an ogre and the head of a horse. Usually, it is depicted as having hooves rather than feet. If you plan to switch this adventure to fit a different region, you will need to create a creature with the both the same behaviours and a culturally similar physical appearance.

THE VILLAGE

The village is a motley collection of stilted napa huts crafted from local bamboo and straw, partially shaded by an abundance of coconut trees. An 8' tall wooden fence cuts off the village proper from the jungle, but the beach is undefended. One can easily walk around the fence and it is more of a deterrent against animals and undetected thieves than a fortification. There is an ageing dock

that goes into the deeper waters, but it has not been properly maintained in years now that the Rhajanate no longer sends trading vessels to collect gold as tribute. There is also a prominent two story stone building with a heavy timber roof in the centre of town. This is a remnant of the village's more prosperous past.



Originally a combination garrison and smelting facility, it is now used as a granary and vault for the village's remaining gold.

DATU BAHANDI, THE ELDER

Datu is an ancient and gaunt figure, whose weathered face is dominated by more wrinkles than a dress shirt at the bottom of a laundry hamper. It is almost impossible to tell his demeanour, but one is always led to assume it is exasperation with a hint of belittlement. During his youth he was a decorated officer, but now he spends his days giving glares of vague disappointment at the village's children and pining for the glory of days gone by.

He did not see any of the events in question when they first occurred last month, but is very concerned about resolving them. He is offering the village's entire stockpile of treasure to any band of heroes who can bring him the head of the Tikbalang. He will honour this request by paying 1800 golden coins for the head. The town has 2400 golden coins in treasure, but he has hidden the other 600. If the bounty is paid, no one in the village will be suspicious (as far as they know all the treasure was granted in bounty) and he will leave for a random Imperial coastal city within a few weeks to live out his remaining years in rela-

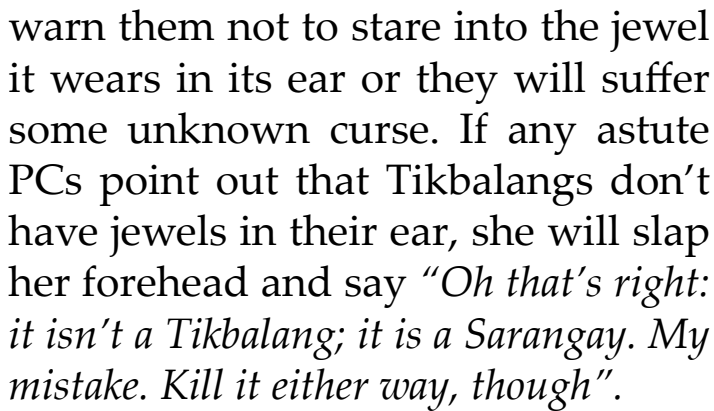
tive luxury. If the PCs figure out the mystery, he will be unhappy but will go along with their conclusions.

DAKILA MAGBANUA, THE MILITIA LEADER

Dakila is the leader of the local militia. He is a giant of a man in his mid twenties and acts as both civil peacekeeper and leader of the dozen men the village can call upon to defend itself against pirates and other vagabonds. Dakila employs a steel machete, a wooden buckler, and a two-handed oxtongue spear should he be called upon for battle. The rest of the militia is armed with hunting bows and clubs in case of emergency.

Dakila was the first on the scene of the first assault. He heard cries coming from his fiancée Mayumi as she was picking wild fruit and rushed to the scene. By the time he had arrived it was too late and the beast was already absconding deeper into the jungle. He wished to hunt after it immediately, but Datu forbade it, fearing his loss could put the entire village at risk of pirates.

If successfully pressed on his story,



NGR: 0th level 2 part priest. She is frail (4 strength) and sickly (5 health). She has 15 piety and the Miracles, Exorcism, and Dogma powers.

AS you may have deduced, there is no Tikbalang. Mayumi was having an affair with Makisig when a jealous Dakila tried to catch them in the act, barely missing his opportunity. Mayumi spun the first tale she could think of, but Dakila wasn't buying it as he dragged her back to town. Realizing what his dipshit brother had probably done and fearful of what Dakila would do not only to his brother but Mayumi as well, Magtanggol added his own support

Kiko, being a pathological attention seeker no longer able to gain the lime-light, quickly fabricated her own tale of woe to bring the spotlight back onto her. While normally her story would have been discounted, the heightened paranoia and the benefit her story provided to Datu and Magtanggol ensured no one doubted her. Makisig saw his brief window of opportunity to escape before Dakila wised up and killed him, so he took it and secretly moved into the abandoned gold mine. Unfortunately, Mayumi became pregnant. Datu added to the myth of the Tikbalang by claiming that, if it is slain, any unborn children it sired will revert to being human children

new saviours, venerating them first as folk heroes and then later as unofficial saints from half-remembered tales while under Western Colonial rule. If the PCs quietly sneaked in and killed the horse, Captain Yalung will blame the villagers and cut off all of their right hands the following morning despite their cries of innocence.

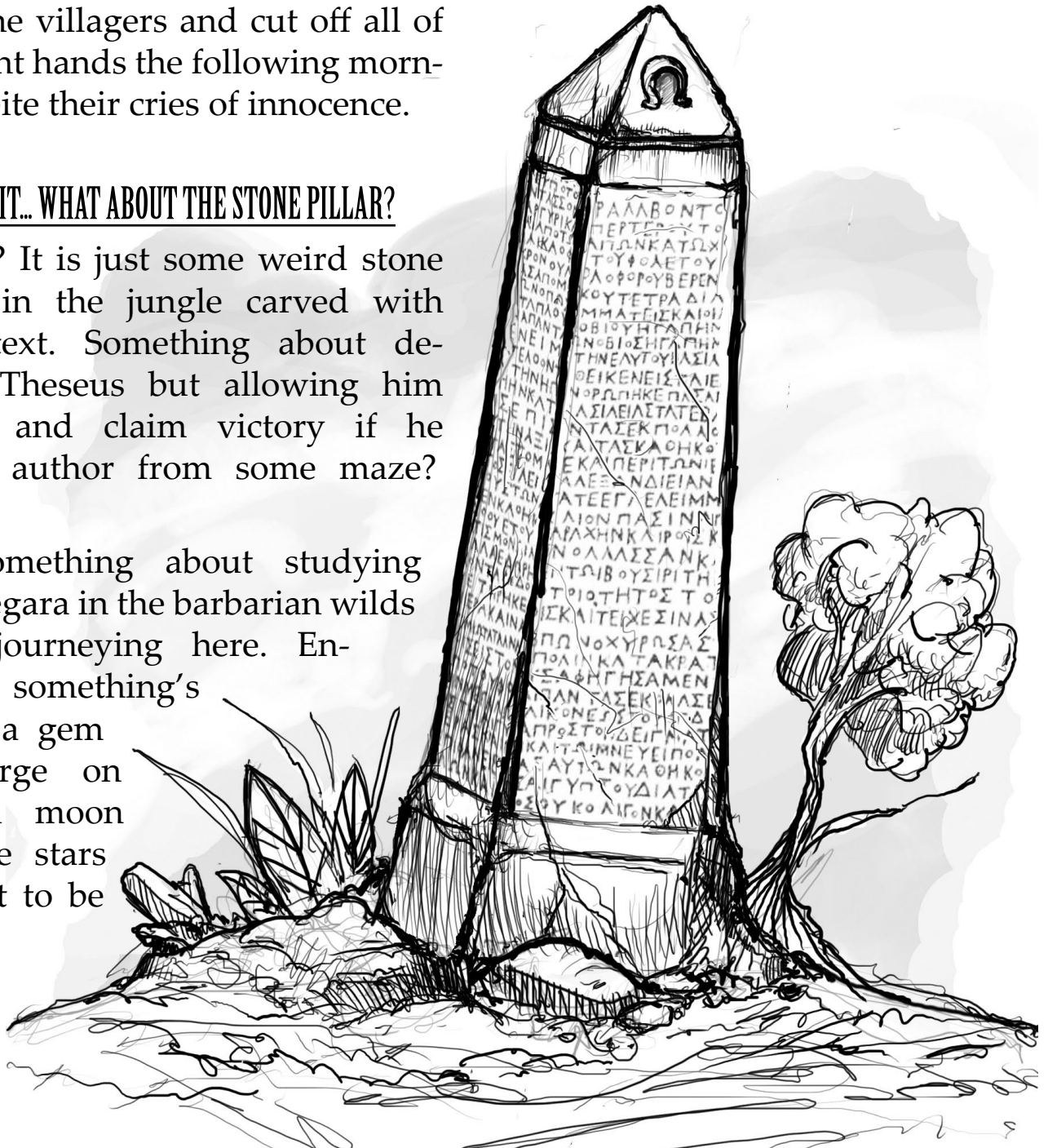
reborn as a living god?

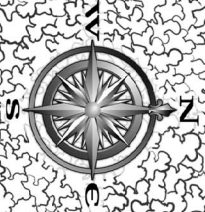
All gibberish really. Best to just forget about it.

HEY WAIT... WHAT ABOUT THE STONE PILLAR?

Oh that? It is just some weird stone obelisk in the jungle carved with Greek text. Something about defeating Theseus but allowing him to live and claim victory if he led the author from some maze?

Also something about studying
from Megara in the barbarian wilds
before journeying here. En-
tombing something's
soul in a gem
to emerge on
the full moon
until the stars
are right to be

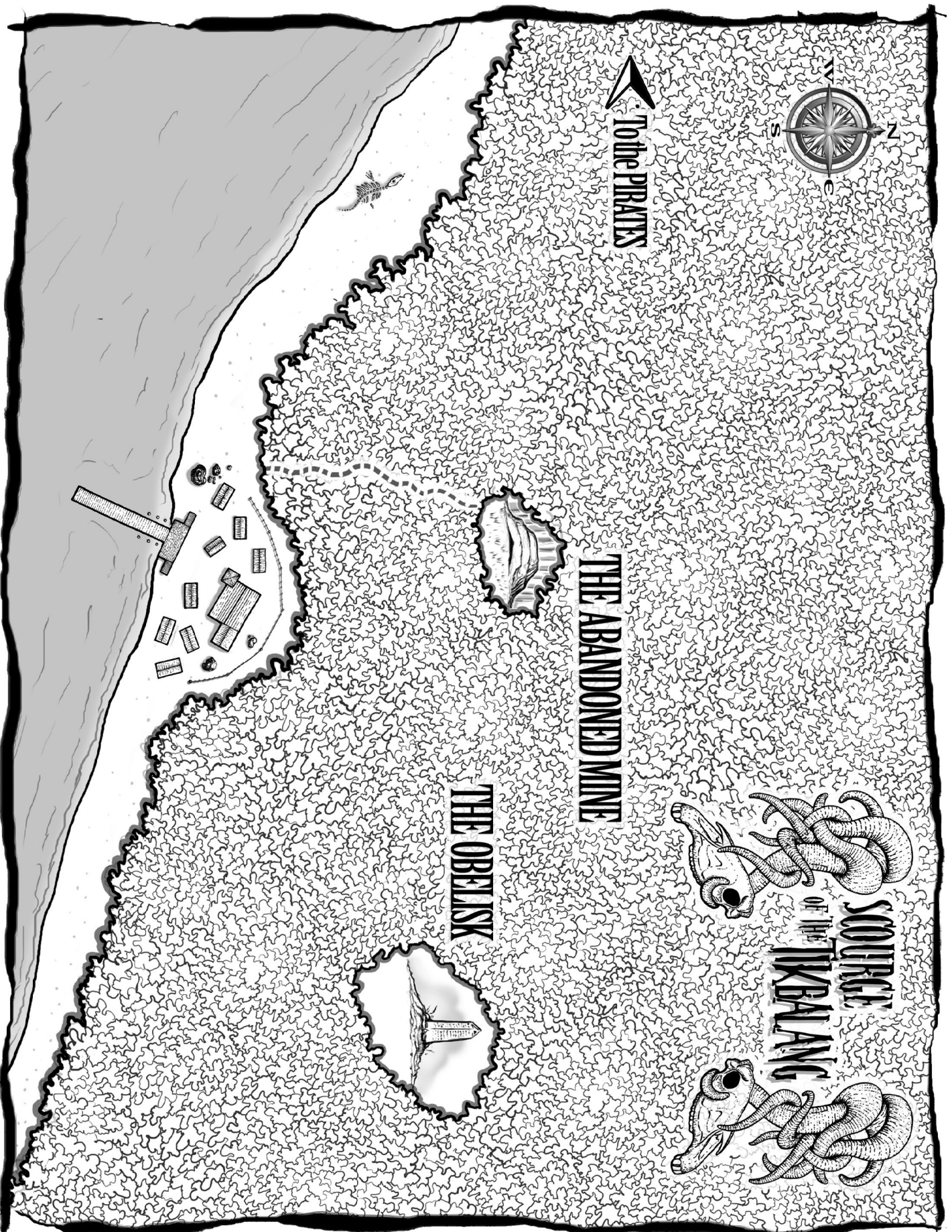




To the PIRATES

THE ABANDONED MINE

THE OBELISK



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