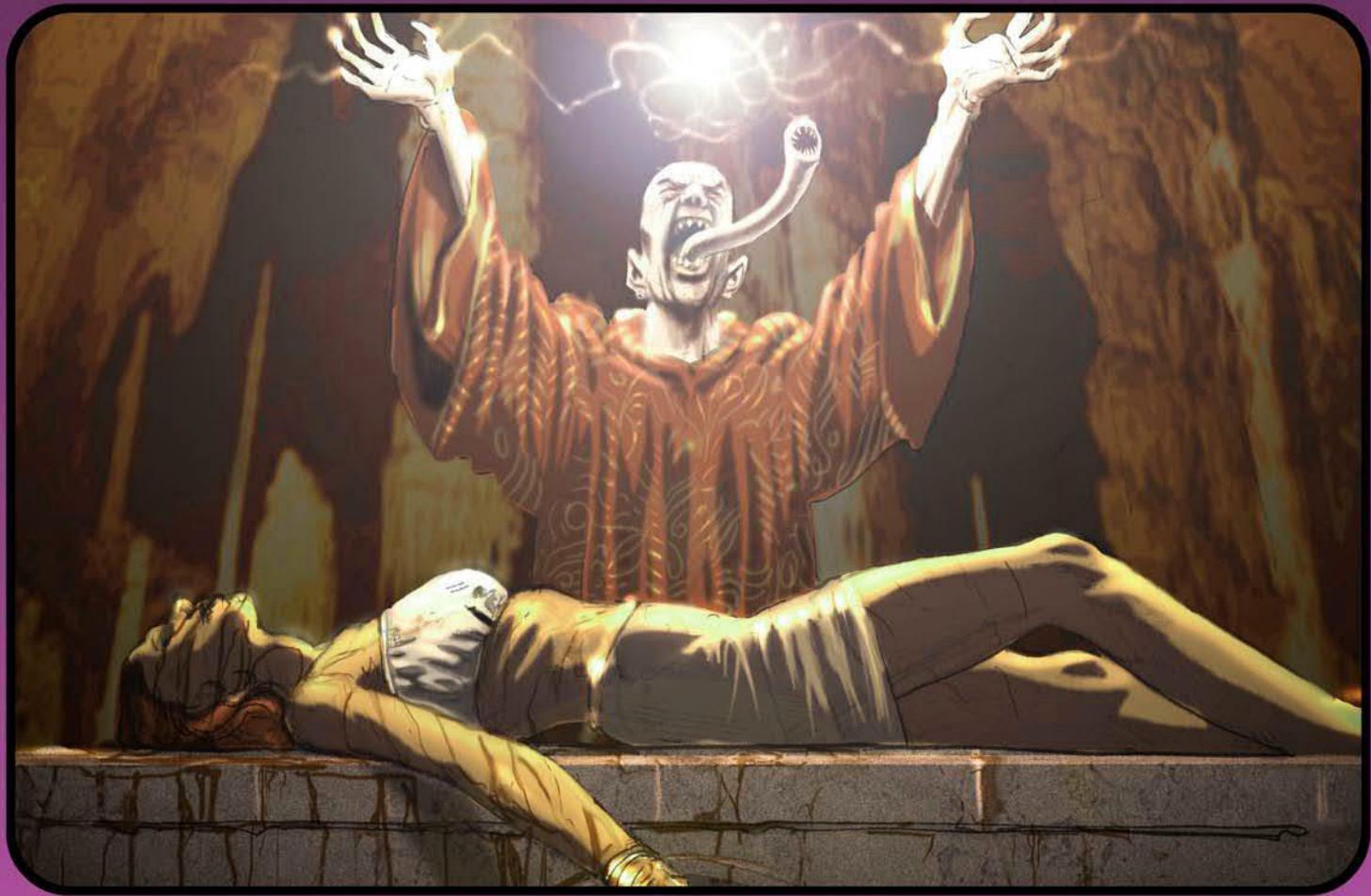


Advanced Master Adventures

Game Adventure

Blood Runs Cold

By Chad MacPhee and Greg Oppedisano



Many generations ago the land that is now the Blackened Fen was actually the thriving and warlike city-state of Shyyth. Populated by a race of evil humans known as Annelids, Shyyth was a religious center of dark renown where the Annelids held sacrifice to their vile god Hirudinea...



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Adventure Module for 4-5 Characters of Levels 10-12

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Production: Øone Games
Supervision Mario Barbati
Graphic Design O'Bully
Cartography O'Bully
Artwork Daniele Bigiardo

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Øone Games

www.Oonegames.com
master@Oonegames.com

Blood Runs Cold is a OSRIC adventure for four to six characters of 10th-12th level. The party should contain a mix of classes, with at least one fighter and one magic user. The setting for the module is in and around the generic town of Rivenwater. A good Referee can easily adapt it to any setting or plunk Rivenwater into an area in their campaign. The Referee is advised to carefully read the Appendix pertaining to Annelids, as they are new and unusual creatures with complicated abilities.

Background

Many generations ago the land that is now the Blackened Fen was actually the thriving and warlike city-state of Shyyth. Populated by a race of evil humans known as Annelids, Shyyth was a religious center of dark renown where the Annelids held sacrifice to their vile god Hirudinea. The Annelids worshipped the Drinker of Life, Lord of Slime and Leeches. They tattooed their bodies in leech-like patterns of mud brown and deep ochre and drank the blood of their enemies. As penance their priests would attach leeches to the exposed parts of their bodies, always feeding their essence to the Drinker in return for His granted powers.

Warlike and aggressive the Annelids frequently sent parties out from their fen to capture and return with slaves of other humanoid races to offer in sacrifice to the Great Devourer, the Drinker of Life. Champions of light marshalled powerful forces and drove the Annelids from Shyyth and later razed the city and the temple of Hirudinea. The last act of the dark followers of Hirudinea was to sink the vile altar of their god beneath the earth to hide it from the forces of good and preserve it for when their god and his followers would return. So broken and devastated were the Annelids that they fled into the depths of the fen, disappearing almost completely from the area.

Several priests of Hirudinea survived the destruction of their civilization and set about rebuilding the power of their people. Always were they sworn to secrecy, to never reveal themselves and risk further reprisals from the goodly races. In the seclusion of the fens they bred, becoming ever more feral and akin to their dark Deity. Through dark pacts and evil magic they began to assume the characteristics of the horror that was their God. Eventually they became more beast than man, merged irrevocably with the Lord of Blood. Years passed and the people forgot of the Annelid scourge, yet the fen remained

blackened because at its center was a buried altar to Hirudinea, a cancer in the heart of any land.

Today a nest of magically altered Annelids has nearly completed rebuilding their temple in the Blackened Fen. The Annelids are led by the evil and self serving Cleric Husstillis, who has fallen out of favour with their dark god. Husstillis has spent the last several years searching for the fabled Altar of Shyyth, knowing if he can raise it he will once again be Favored by the Drinker. Six months ago Husstillis found the black altar and raised it from the earth. Unfortunately the risen altar was still on the bottom of the fen and removal from its original position would anger the dark god. So Husstillis began the construction of a temple in the swamp that would allow the Annelids access to the altar. To meet this end he needed many slaves and so he began subjugating the local lizard folk and searching the surrounding countryside for hearty human slaves.

Husstillis sent his minion Sithanis forth to find slaves aboard the river barge Cottonmouth. Sithanis was very successful in his searching and creating a network of slavers amongst willing and greedy established thieves along the length and breadth of the River of Teeth. Over the past year dozens of people have been taken and sent up the river to toil on the temple at the heart of the fen. Presently Sithanis has moored their river barge Cottonmouth on the River of Teeth in the harbour of the degenerate trading town of Rivenwater. The temple is almost complete and the slaves that now reside in the bowels of the Cottonmouth are likely the last shipment to be sent to the fen.

The activities of the Annelid sect are not widely known in Rivenwater, though they have successfully established contacts with the local thieves' guild, the Obsidian Knives, to expedite the kidnapping of slaves.

Dekker Reeve is the increasingly bold guild head of the Knives, and very interested in making as much money off of Sithanis as possible. Reeve began taking only strangers and visitors to the town hoping they would be less missed than locals but of late he has begun kidnapping locals of low character. Furthermore, Reeve has grown as bold as to begin snatching strangers right off of the streets in Rivenwater in daylight. Baron Andrinor, the ignoble ruler of Rivenwater is well paid by the Annelids to look the other way. The Baron is ignoring the pleas of his people to find the source of all of the missing townsfolk, and worse has instructed his guard not to interfere with the Obsidian Knives or Sithanis' activities.

Adventure Synopsis

The first Act of our adventure has the characters arriving in Rivenwater and having a run in with Dekker Reeve and his slavers. Interrogation of the defeated slavers or questions asked of the local towns folk will lead the adventurers to the mysterious Cottonmouth moored out from the harbour in the middle of the River of Teeth.

Any investigation of the barge that is conducted prior to walking on its deck will reveal that the crew of the vessel is human. The party is likely completely unaware that it is Annelids that they actually face, thinking the band no more than a gang of uncommonly powerful slavers or thieves. Upon arriving at the docks the PC's may make their way to the barge by any number of means. If they choose they can procure a small skiff to take them to the barge Cottonmouth anchored out in the river. Unbeknownst to the party, if they attempt to board the ship by water a group of giant crocodiles will surround their boat and attack. Once they make it aboard the vessel, they will face an ambush at the hands of a formidable force of Annelids, Hirud's Chosen and of course, Sithanis himself. The boat is also guarded by many leeches and horrifying traps. The guardians of Cottonmouth must be defeated in order to free the slaves, discover the reason for the kidnappings, and find out about the temple being raised in the Blackened Fen.

Act two takes the party to the Blackened Fen to root out the slavers and destroy the infestation of Annelids before they desecrate their temple. After a perilous journey through the Blackened Fen, well guarded by Lizard men patrols from the Temple of Hirudinea and various wandering swamp horrors, the party will find itself in the heart of the Annelid base of power. An almost fully desecrated temple of Hirudinea is there, completely encased in hardened mud with below water entrances that must be found in order to be exploited. The above water entrances to the temple itself are guarded by alert defenders but a party with the sense to exploit the capture of the Cottonmouth or look for one of the underwater doors will have an easier time penetrating the structure's defences. Once inside the temple the party must overcome a force of mutated Annelids as well as a host of other evil allies in order to succeed.

The final battle with Husstillis the High Cleric of the Temple in the partly flooded unhallowed underwater ground of the temple amidst captured slaves and rising

undead horrors should provide a fitting climax to the daring adventurer's efforts. Oh and did we mention the leeches...

Character Hooks

Their blood is up!: The party is attacked by Dekkar Reeve and his gang of slaving thieves as they make their way through Rivenwater. All they need now is a push in the right direction and many locals are interested in giving them a nudge. Questioning locals will lead to the speculation that the source of the slavers is the barge Cottonmouth moored in the middle of the River of Teeth. See Act One: Section B "Psst... You should join us... no really join us!" for more details.

The merchants bade us do it: Merchants frustrated by the disappearance of fellow merchants and the inflated "protection" taxes being charged along the River of Teeth have decided to act before they are run out of business. The Merchants guild has heard rumors that slavers are operating on the River of Teeth and that the local Lord Andrinor is not responding. See Act One Section A "Lets not call it a tax lets consider it a protection fee..." for more details.

Necessity: The PC's are traveling through the area by riverboat and are assaulted by the slavers in an attempt to be captured and enslaved. Further investigation leads them to the Cottonmouth and the Annelid hideout.

Note on Ability Checks

At certain times in the adventure, characters may have to make an Ability Check.

The player rolls a d20. If the result is equal to or less than the PC's ability score in the area called for in the check (Strength, Wisdom, Dexterity, etc.), the check succeeds. A check may have a modifier (-1, -2 etc), the modifier is applied to the ability score before the check is made.

ACT ONE

A. Lets not call it a tax lets consider it a protection fee...

As the party travels upon the river road toward the trading town of Rivenwater they round a bend in the highway and encounter several wagons that have been stopped by town guard. The guard and the

caravan masters are arguing vehemently over paying an extra sum of "taxes" to Lord Andrinor to keep the highways safe. Apparently the cost of doing business here has risen abruptly and the merchants have lost patience. As the party approaches the scene, read or paraphrase the following. By the end of this encounter it should become apparent to the players that all is not well in the town of Rivenwater.

The sun is just rising over the treetops as the morning progresses on your journey. Travel in this country is relatively easy going as the roads seem fairly well maintained. The highway upon which you travel parallels the river and the sounds of its sometimes turbulent waters are interspersed with stretches of silence where all you seem to hear is the sound of the wind in the trees. Rounding a curve in the winding road you begin to hear the faint sounds of voices from ahead, voices that seem to be raised in anger. Shortly you are able to make out what appears to be a small caravan that has been stopped at a guard post in the road. The horses snort and prance nervously as several men clad in what appears to be the livery of a noble house rummage about the wagons. The caravan masters stand in a tight and agitated group, shouting and cursing wildly at several soldiers wearing the insignia of officers. One rather swarthy merchant wearing trail worn leathers steps forward and shoves one of the officers and before you can react he is on the ground, the point of a drawn long sword held steady under his chin.

If they approach they will overhear the conversation between the guard and the merchants, making it apparent that the guards want more money than the merchants are willing to pay. After a few moments several guards confiscate some sacks of wares from the wagons, and rudely bid the merchants be on their way. If the party attempts to resolve the issue with violence, the merchants will immediately beg them to stop, pay the fees and hastily depart. The merchants are not interested in being branded outlaws, nor do they wish for there to be bloodshed, they are simply angry at being overcharged.

Sergeant of the Guard: AL LN; MV 12"; hp 22; AC 4; HD 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (longsword) or 1d6 (shortbow)

Guard: AL LN; MV 12"; hp 5; AC 4; HD 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (longsword) or 1d6 (shortbow)

If the party chooses to interact with the merchants out of earshot of the guards to determine what has happened, they may learn any of the following rumors on successful Charisma check:

- Taxes have recently risen sharply in the town of Rivenwater, and along the river road. The cost of doing business in several towns is becoming prohibitive and the merchants fear they will be driven out of business.
- The fees have risen in tandem with the disappearance of visitors to the city. The merchants feel that the Baron is doing little to protect strangers to Rivenwater and the guards are doing less.
- Over the last several months local street people and derelicts have begun to disappear from the docks districts of various towns along the River of Teeth. When they disappeared no one looked very hard to find them.
- Baron Andrinor of Rivenwater is obviously under the influence of whoever is promoting the scourge of kidnappings, and he has done little to curb its effects on his population. Some even feel that the Baron himself a player in this nefarious scheme.

One of the merchants introduces himself as Rotherian Overhand, and informs the party that the merchants' guild in Rivenwater is quite concerned about the issues, but is not currently in good standing with the local Lord. He offers to pay the party 250gp if they can find out the source of the kidnappings and the put a stop to them. This is a small sum but the merchants are not well to do.

When the PC's approach the guard tower for inspection, they are asked to display their charter from the local Baron in order to pass. The PC's of course have none, nor is any charter they may hold considered valid by this particular set of guards. They are told that since they are traveling within the lands of Lord Andrinor without a charter they must register immediately and pay a processing fee of 300 gold pieces on the spot to receive their charter. The guards are in fact quite flexible and are basically interested in taking a bribe. They make it plain that they can cause this incident to be overlooked for a much smaller private fee of course. A successful Charisma check will take the fee down to 100gp, and a Charisma check at -2 penalty will reduce it to 50gp.

B. Psst... Wanna buy a golden dream...?

As the PC's enter town they may notice that the general bustling feel of a port town permeates the area. It is apparent, however, that there are a large number of seedy and unpleasant individuals simply hanging about. The party will be faced with hostile glances and furtive looks by passers-by as they progress through the town. Eventually they will be approached by a group of kidnappers intent on snatching up visitors and selling them to the slavers in the barge on the river.

The town of Rivenwater nestles in a wide loop of the River of Teeth, the waters in this area are fairly calm and deep, affording the town a safe anchorage for the ships that carry produce and goods to and from its port. A large docks district crowds the waterfront and numerous piers jut rudely into the river at several locations. A number of barges and small ships are moored in the harbour and at the docks. The smell that accompanies any port town hangs heavy in the air, perfuming the place with the stench of unwashed bodies and rotting fish. A maze of streets wind upward from the docks through several neighborhoods of crowded and rickety tenements, squat and crumbling inns and the greying warehouses of the merchants who base their operations in the town. Rising upon a low hill overlooking the town are several larger buildings made of hewn stone that appear to be the houses of the wealthy or the nobility. Atop the small hill encased in a high wall of grey granite squats Rivenwater Manor, a four storey structure with large arching gothic windows and fenced grounds. The press of the crowd is somewhat uncomfortable as many of the people eye you warily and either look away and quickly get to their business or stare at you disconcertingly as if they were taking your measure. As you pass a darkened and narrow alley you hear a voice call to you from within. "A few coins, all it will cost is a few coins to walk the Golden Dream...have ye not a few coins ye'd like to be spending?".

Regardless of whether the party stops to interact with the voice in the alley or not, they will soon make out several shadowy figures clustered about within. Several

people on the street have abruptly stopped what they are doing and left the area in haste. Several others are watching the party closely and with what appears to be great interest. If the party chooses to speak to the shadowy figure in the alley, they will encounter Choresh, a member of the local thieves' guild. Choresh will attempt lure the party into the alley way by offering to sell them something they will "be really interested in..." If they decide not follow him, he becomes even more aggressive and attempts to intimidate the party into doing so. Dekkar and his thugs would prefer to waylay the party in the alley but if they have to they will jump them in the street. Either way the party is in for a scrap. The thieves are severely overmatched in this brawl, and they begin to realize this after a very short combat. They will then attempt to flee into the warren of alleys and escape the PC's wrath. If the party gives chase, the band splits up and runs in different directions, attempting to use their Hide in Shadow skill to escape.

Dekkar Reeve: (Halfling Thief 7); AC 1, (bracers AC 4, DEX bonus); Att 1; DMG 1d6+1 (shortsword +1); SA backstab +4x3; HP 23.
PP 99%; OL 59%; FT 28%; MS 70%; HS 75%; HN 54%; CW 44%; RL 25%

Choresh: (Human Thief 3); AC 7, (leather armor, DEX bonus); Att 1; DMG 1d6 (shortsword); SA backstab +4x2; HP 10.
PP 84%; OL 38%; FT 16%; MS 30%; HS 30%; HN 38%; CW 48%; RL 10%

Thugs (6): (Human Thief 1); AC 8, (leather armor); Att 1; DMG 1d4 (dagger); SA backstab +4x2; HP 4.
PP 80%; OL 30%; FT 10%; MS 20%; HS 20%; HN 35%; CW 35%; RL -

Tactics: The thieves will hide in the alley and attempt to make surprise attacks on any PC's who enter. If the characters remain in the street the thieves will try to hide in shadows and backstab them. The minute 2 or more of them are down they will immediately flee.

Development: If the party kills or captures Dekkar they may find the letter he received from Hussitillis inviting him to the desecration ceremony at the temple. If the party captures one or more of the thieves they can interrogate them. A successful Charisma check will reveal that the thieves were trying to kidnap the adventures because they were new to town. The plan was to sell them to the slavers on the barge Cottonmouth on the river. The thieves will also tell the party that they were reckless in their attempt to capture them because the

barge leaves tomorrow morning and it was their last chance to make some "easy" coin.

Letter from Hussitillis (handout 1):

Master Dekkar,

The time is upon us for the beginning of the ceremonies. Long have we laboured in secret for the greater power of the Sleeping One. The culmination of our efforts is at hand. Be present three days hence with a new group of "devoted pilgrims". I have included brief directions for your party on the Cottonmouth.

Hussitillis

C. An old man intervenes

After the encounter has been played out the party is approached by an elderly gentleman who witnessed the encounter. He introduces himself as Berlin Threefingers and offers the party some useful information about the thugs.

As you pause to catch your breath after the tussle with the street thieves you notice an elderly man in rumpled clothing and a mud-stained apron looking at you intently from a shop doorway. When he sees that you have noticed him he approaches warily, eyes darting in all directions and motions you to the shadow of a building.

If the party decides to speak with Berlin Threefingers he introduces himself and issues a warning to the PC's.

The man bend close you, warily watching for movement in the street and begins to speak.

"Ye'd best be watchin yer back laddies if'n yer meaning to keep yer skins in one piece. Them toughs what ye just run of... well they be some o the scum what runs with that Dekkar Reeve. He's a nasty little piece o work that one is. Listen close now cuz I ain't got much time for chitchat. Those fellas be not just after yer purse, but the rest of ye too if'n ye take my meaning. People been dissappearin round here lately, and none every heard from again, no bodies found neither and it's not that we ain't been lookin for em."



If the party seems willing to listen he continues:

"That imp (he gestures to Dekkar) and his bullies are kidnapping people I tells ya, strangers new to town and travelers passin through. They thinks we don't notice, or mebbe that they have us scared enough not to poke our noses in, but I ain't gonna stand still for it much longer. There be a barge in the river, moored out of reach of the docks. I see boats comin and goin from it after dark and they gots strange bundles they loading on...man-sized bundles. Stranger yet in a tradin town...nuthin ever came off that ship...just "bundles" loaded on. Find Culthas at the docks ifn yer of a mind to get to the bottom of this mess. He can get ye a boat right quiet like. And if not...well watch yer backs cuz I'm guessin that little devil will be back with more of his friends. I best go now afore I'm noticed. You think on what ole Berlin sez now... think real hard."

The man quickly scuttles back into his shop and the door closes with a loud snap. You hear the sound of a bolt sliding home behind the door and shortly the shutters are closed from inside. Apparently this shop is now closed for the day.

Berlin Threefingers: (Human Fighter 3); AC 10; Att 1; DMG 1d4 (dagger); HP 12.

D. By The Riverside

If the PC's decide to search the docks district, they come across a man named Culthas, who can provide them with a skiff in which they can sail to the barge to investigate the rumors of slavers. Culthas is a rather shifty-eyed man with greying hair and an overgrown and scruffy goatee. He reeks of cheap beer and is obviously at least half-drunk. Culthas leads them to a secluded section of the docks and points out a small, flat-bottomed rowboat. He reminds the PC's that wearing heavy armor in a small boat is not the wisest course of action, but does not press the issue any farther. If the party pays him or gives him any alcohol he thanks them and tells them to be wary.

Surrounded by the inky blackness of deep night, you wander about the docks seeking your contact. A cold wind blows in gusts, tugging at your clothing and gear and sending a chill down your spine. Raucous laughter and squeals can be heard from the taverns that line the waterfront, along with strains of music that shift now and then from long laments and throaty ballads to jigs and reels for energetic dancing. Lights twinkle on the river from the ships docked just out of reach of the shore, as well as from a number of vessels moored at the docks themselves. After wandering about for some time your group is approached by a slender and shifty-looking man. Stooped and bent, he walks with a slight stagger as if not quite sober.

Culthas: (Human Fighter 1); AC 8 (leather); Att 1; DMG 1d4+1 (club); HP 6.

E. Silent Stalkers

Once the PC's manage to load themselves and their gear into the rickety skiff they can set off towards the barge waiting in the middle of the river. After a few moments of rowing the party is surrounded by a pack of giant crocodiles that attempt to grab party members and capsize their boat.

Out upon the river your skiff dips and bobs with alarming regularity as you row steadily out into deeper waters. Glancing overboard you can discern nothing beneath the inky black curtain of water that lies just inches below the gunwales. Water seeps in through cracks in the boat's planking and you may yet have to bail some to keep this craft afloat. The stench of rotting fish entrails hangs heavy about you, and the bottom and sides of your skiff are coated liberally with layers of flaking scales and dirty red and orange splotches that are slightly sticky when rubbed against. As you glance outward toward the waiting barge a curious ripple in the waves catches your eye, though silence is all you can hear.

Crocodile, Giant (5): AL N; MV 6"/12"; hp 31; AC 4; HD 7; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6/2d10; SIZE L.

Tactics: The crocodiles try to sneak up on the party unnoticed, and then proceed to make lunging bite attacks at the PC nearest them. If they succeed in their bite, they will grab onto an opponent and drag them into the water; after a crocodile successful hit the victim must make a Strength check or is dragged into water. There is a 1 in 10 chance that each PC's will capsize the boat each round if they enter melee combat with the crocodiles.

Development: If the PC's survive the battle by either slaying the crocodiles or driving them off they may approach the barge. There is a chance that the lookouts on the barge heard the battle sounds and have alerted the crew (1 in 6). If there is little chance of catching the Annelids on the deck of the Cottonmouth by surprise.

The Cottonmouth

A. All Aboard!

The crew of the barge is busily going about their routines, preparing to load their ill-gotten gains and maybe some more human

cargo at dawn. The Annelids try to keep their presence on the Cottonmouth a secret. They are wary and watchful, as they do not interact with the people in Riverwater if they can avoid it. The Annelid lookout in the rigging is more watchful as he is actively watching the river. The twelve common deck slaves want no part of the combat that ensues if the party tries to force its way onto the decks of the Cottonmouth.

As you approach the barge you can make out the muffled sounds of conversation drifting toward you on the night breeze. A mist wreaths itself about your skiff then passes on into the night, touching you with droplets of fine dew. The sounds of celebrating and noisy carousing can be heard from the city on shore, much of it emanating from the seedy taverns of the waterfront. The barge lies just before you in the mists, its three large masts pointing skyward, sails furled and at rest. The craft spins a lazy circle in the slow current at the far edge of its anchor line. Climbing to the deck may present some difficulty as there is no apparent ladder or docking platform. As you approach the barge a voice calls to you in common from aboard. "Hoi the skiff! Identify yourselves!"

Annelid (12): AL LE; MV 9"; hp 6 each; AC 6; HD 1+1; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (shortsword) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round

Deck Slaves (8): AL N; MV 12"; hp 3 each; AC 10; HD 1; #AT 1 (club); Dmg 1d4

Tactics: If the party takes no precautions to avoid being seen as they approach the boat they will be spotted and warned to leave immediately. The Annelids are expecting Dekker Reeve and will only allow him to board the vessel. If the party is clever enough to impersonate him and dress themselves up as kidnapped victims then the Annelids will allow them to board the vessel. If the party is spotted and continue to approach the vessel uninvited, the Annelids will hide on the deck. The deck slaves will avoid combat unless attacked directly at which point they surrender immediately. Once the party is on the deck the Annelids attack from behind some crates and barrels and begin using their hold person ability to keep the party at bay and wait for an opportunity to close on a held character and start draining blood. One of the Annelids will be in the rigging,

using the hold person ability on the party from above.

Developments: Combat on the deck of the Cottonmouth is likely to draw the attention of the Hirudinea's Chosen below deck in cabins C (first two). If they are alerted (1 in d4 chance) they will arrive on deck in three rounds. There is also 1 in d6 chance that Ssyanis or Aloyasth hears the combat and begin to prepare in the unlikely event that intruders penetrate to their lair in the lowest hold of the ship.

B. Into the Hold

The Annelids are waiting below decks so as not to alert the humans to their true nature. They normally make their lair in the two forward cabins behind the stair.

A dark and narrow stairway leads down into the recesses of the barge. No light emanates from below decks whatsoever, but you can hear the muffled cries of what must be the prisoners calling for aid. The barge rocks slowly in the current, and you must concentrate to maintain your footing. Waving up from below is the unpleasant odor of unwashed bodies and rotting excrement. The anguished calls from below are growing more frantic.

Hirudinea's Chosen (3): AL LE; MV 9"; hp 44 each; AC 4; HD 8+8; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2 or 1d6 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 2hp/round

Tactics: The Chosen will use their hold person ability once before closing on the nearest party member. The frightened prisoners scream constantly through the battle, calling to the PC's to free them.

Development: There is also a chance that Ssyanis or Aloyasth hears the combat (2 in d6) and begin to prepare in the unlikely event that intruders penetrate to their lair in the lowest hold of the ship.

C. Prison Cells

Crammed shoulder to shoulder within tiny cells is a ragtag assortment of sorry looking prisoners. They have obviously been mistreated as to a man they are wan and pale, staring at you from sunken eyes. The stench of unwashed bodies and human excrement floats thick in



the air. As you enter the room they clamor excitedly and begin to push and shove each other in a press to get through the door. Calls of "Freedom!" and "Flee for your lives!" echo all about you as the rabble clambers toward the exit. One man cries "Quickly, get above decks and seize a skiff! We must be gone from here!"

Development: If the PC's succeed in freeing the prisoners they beg to be taken ashore as soon as possible. They rush above decks and attempt to seize the rowboat. If the PC's attempt to calm them they will listen provided the party makes immediate allowance to have them ferried to shore. One of the prisoners asks the party if they got the "leech priest and his warrior lackey". If the party responds negatively they are instructed to search the stern of the ship below decks. If the party attempts to

block the prisoners in the ship they attack barehanded, some even jumping overboard to swim ashore.

If the party explores the forward hold they will discover a stash of loot collected by the slavers. It consists of the following: a silver tea service 250gp, a large tapestry depicting warriors riding to battle 350gp, three crates of rare oysters from the sea 250gp, 3 suits of chainmail.

D. Slippery Little Suckers

The large room marked D on the map is actually a pit spanning the entire width of the ship. The pit has a leech swarm living in it. They are companions of Ssythanis and he enjoys feeding them the occasional slave as amusement. The swarm strikes at any who enter the pit. The PC's will have to cross through this pit of leeches to get to Ssythanis. The clever cleric has also strung many threads of razor sharp wire across the room, so that if a character were

to attempt to walk across the room they would have to make a Dexterity checks each round or be cut for 1d4 points of damage every five feet traveled. Characters who are wear complete suits of metal armor receive a +2 bonus to this check. Combat in the pit is tricky as well, as the floor is liberally coated with a layer of thick, slippery slimy mud and water 3 feet deep. Combatants must make a Dexterity check each round or slip and fall prone. The leeches, of course, suffer no such penalties.

As you open the solid wooden door and peer within the sight before you is disturbing indeed. A large section of the ship's decking has been removed, leaving just a gaping pit near 10 feet deep. A ramp leads down into the pit, as well as up the other side, to a door just 20 feet distant. A quick glance reveals that someone of wicked intention has strung strands of razor sharp wire across the length of the boat in all directions. Crossing from this point to the door beyond would be treacherous indeed. The pit section is filled with thick, stagnant muddy water. The stench of rot and decay assaults your senses.

Leech Swarm (1): AL N; MV 6"; hp 33; AC 2; HD 6+6; #AT automatic; Dmg 1d10 (blood drain); SA swarm (see monster description in appendix); SD Fire / salt vulnerability

Development: There is also a chance that Ssythanis or Aloyasth hears the combat (3 in d6) and begin to prepare in the unlikely event that intruders penetrate to their lair in the lowest hold of the ship.

E. To Crush The Leech's Head

Before you is a large cabin taking up much of the stern of the barge. The dark wood paneled walls have been etched with strange sinuous sigils, which are difficult to decipher. A small shrine at the far back of the room is draped in purple cloth and bears a number of carvings depicting eels, lamprey and leeches that glitter with a golden glow. A brazier upon the small altar releases a thick cloud of smoke, which reeks of incense into the air. The forms of two figures are clear within the tendrils of smoke, one clad in studded leathers, rippling with muscles and

wielding a gleaming scimitar while the other one wears flowing robes over leather armor, a monstrous black Morningstar at his hip. You hear the sound of low chanting and hissing in some strange tongue.

This is the cabin shared by Ssythanis and Aloyasth. They have retreated here to make their stand. Unless the party has taken extraordinary precautions to muffle the sounds of combat the Annelids are aware of the party's presence and have been making preparations.

Tactics: Ssythanis and Aloyasth remain within their cabin waiting for the PC's to come to them. If the Annelids have heard the parties combats on the upper deck or in the hold then they ready to confront the PCs. They drink potions of invisibility and stand still until the PCs enter, then attack by surprise. Aloyasth stays back and hurls spells and cures while Ssythanis wades in melee. If reduced to less than 10 hp they both quaff *potions of gaseous form* and attempts to flee by seeping through the wooden planks that make the sides of the ship. Both Annelids will attempt to make use of their hold person abilities.

Ssythanis: AL LE; MV 9"; hp 40; AC 2; HD 6+6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (longsword +1) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round

Aloyasth: AL LE; MV 9"; hp 35; AC 0; HD 7+7; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (heavy mace +1) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round; Aloyasth casts spells and saves as a 7th level cleric:

Spells Memorized: (3/3/2/1):1- *Command*, *Cure light Wounds* x2. 2- *Chant, Silence* 15', *Spiritual Weapon*. 3- *Dispel magic* x2. 4- *Cure Serious Wounds*

Treasure: Stashed in canvas bags hidden beneath a plank are the following: 389 gp, 654 sp, 1130 cp, and a necklace of large freshwater pearls 600 gp. The two leech statuettes on the altar are made of pewter plated in gold and are worth about 150 gp as a set.

Development: If the characters defeat Ssythanis and his crew they will have effectively captured the Cottonmouth. The letter of introduction dropped by Dekkar Reeve and maps found upon the body of Ssythanis should provide ample



information to the characters about what their next step should be.

ACT TWO

A. The Blackened Fen

The party will require a mode of travel to reach the Blackened Fen. If they have defeated Ssythanis they should have use of the Cottonmouth for travel. If for some reason the party does not use the Cottonmouth then they should arrange to purchase or rent a flat-bottomed riverboat to travel to the Blackened Fen,

they will find that it is also an excellent mode of transportation for moving through the Fen itself. Walking in the Fen is extremely time consuming and difficult if not near impossible. Extremely spongy and infrequent high ground is utterly surrounded by black water of indeterminate depth and rich with vulgar life forms. Bloodsuckers, leeches, mosquitoes, snakes and countless other vermin, should discourage the party from trying to walk through the swamp. If they need more encouraging mention the damaging effect being soaked all the time has on skin encased in armor, or the effect of soaking all of their equipment for days.

If the party chooses to fly over the fen then some of the random encounters will not be able to be played as written and may be disregarded or modified as the Referee sees fit. As the PC's progress into the fen read or paraphrase the following:

The river slides lazily past muddy banks as you approach the entry to the Blackened Fen. Waters once clear and rushing now sluggishly meander past clumps of scraggly reeds and a few hardy shrubs that cling in desperation to the long shallow banks of the waterway. You notice that the land in this area is becoming increasingly flatter as you progress, and the waters appear to converge about the bases of ancient and gnarled tree trunks that cluster in ominous groupings to either side. A steady stream of black and brown leaf litter and peaty dust-like debris floats away you as your passage disturbs the glass-like surface of the still water. You can make out the slithering and sinuous forms of many small water creatures that slide and scuttle away from your passage, fleeing to the safety of darker waters. The ever-present stench of rotting vegetation permeates the thickened air of the bog, filling your nostrils with the odor of death and corruption. The further you progress into the swamp, the darker it becomes as the canopy of the giant trees surrounding you begins to interweave in a mesh that attempts to block out the light. The silence is cloying and heavy like the shroud of nothingness that often hangs about ancient tombs, or deserted and abandoned villages. Only the constant droning hum of the many thousands of flying, crawling and hopping insects pierces the silent gloom, a chittering and clicking of many tiny hungry mouths lost in the gray mists.

may be wise to have the lizard men lay an ambush since they are familiar with the layout of the fen. If so, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Sliding silently down the twisted waterways of the Blackened Fen is becoming more and more difficult as the tendrils of clinging vines and the twisted limbs of the massive trees clutch at you greedily as you pass. Many ways present themselves to you, as the waters coil and spin about clumps of grassy vegetation and clusters of shrubbery and ancient trees. The way before you narrows briefly into a smooth channel, humps of moss-covered vegetation rising up from about you to either side effectively block your view of the surrounding fen. Giant fronds from lush ferns and the tall spiky points of sedges rustle in the gentle breeze, bringing to you once again the fetid stench of rot and decay. Rounding a bend you see the waterway part in front of you to form a small round pool. Apparently the only way out is from whence you came, and you are forced to turn about and retrace your steps.

Raslish : (male lizard man): AL CE; MV 6" / 12"; hp 41; AC 3; HD 6+6; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+3 (*morning star +1*) or 1d8 (longbow); STR 18

Llaniis (female lizard man druid 6): AL NG; MV 6" / 12"; hp 25; AC 6; HD 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (quarterstaff); SA Spells; SQ druid's cant, +2 save vs lightning and fire, druid knowledge, wilderness movement. *Spells Memorized (4/3/2/1): 1- Animal friendship, detect magic, entangle, speak with animals. 2- Barkskin, cure light wounds, warp wood. 3- Call lightning, hold animal. 4- dispel magic*

Viper snake: AL N; MV 12"; hp 18; AC 5; HD 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 + poison

Lizard men (6): AL CE; MV 6" / 12"; hp 9; AC 4; HD 2+1; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear or shortbow)

Tactics: Llaniis uses her viper to scout well ahead of her patrolling party. The snake is good to hide but a wary party may still discover it. If the characters are on the Cottonmouth, Llaniis will use her snake to scout the boat. If the party notice it then Llaniis will lead her party to greet Ssyanis and the party will effectively have surprised the Lizard men. Llaniis is

in constant communication with her animal friend and if it spots the party the lizard men will submerge and move towards the adventurers, attempt to surround them and set an ambush. The Lizard men will use the waist deep water of the swamp for cover and initiate the attack on the party at bow range waiting for the characters to come to them. If the party charges the lizard men they will use their spears to full advantage by setting them for the charge. Raslish and Llaniis will stick together for the battle, and if forewarned of the parties approach Llaniis will cast barkskin on herself and Raslish. The Lizard men are devoted to Hirudinea, the deity of the Annelids and have been ordered to fight to the death to defend their swamp from interlopers.

Optional Encounter B: Wights in the Bog

If the referee decides to have the party encounter the wights, they may wish to read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Shadows play across the glassy ripples left in your wake as you travel ever deeper into the depths of the Blackened Fen. Suddenly the waters roil and foam, brown leaves and swirls of greenish slime spin away from the disturbance. Rising from the water abruptly amidst a horrible keening wail are several humanoid forms. Hairy heads with widely stretched mouths and eyes like tiny glowing coals fix unerringly upon you as the creatures advance in your direction.

Wights (8): AL LE; MV 12"; hp 30; AC 5; HD 4+3; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Energy drain; SD Silver or magical weapon to hit

Tactics: The wights are the undead remnants of those who have been destroyed by the touch of Hirudinea's absolute evil. They are the remains of prisoners who have been sacrificed to desecrate the unholy temple to Hirudinea that the Annelids are raising in the Blackened Fen. Wights will attack the party at night if possible. If they encounter the party during the day they will remain submerged in the blackened waters of the fen as much as possible. The wights hate all that is living but fear the Annelids who have released them into the swamp to guard the approaches to their temple.

Random Encounters:

The following random encounters can be utilized as the Referee sees fit and should be inserted at the Referee's discretion rather than rolled for. Each encounter should only occur once if the creatures are defeated.

Optional Encounter A: Raslish and Llaniis on Patrol

If the Referee chooses to have his or her party encounter Raslish and Llaniis, it

B. The Temple of Hirudinea Areas 1-21:

The temple of Hirudinea is a heavily defended bastion of evil in the middle of deep pool of dark water called Lake Blackwater in the heart of the Blackened Fen. The mound is constructed from wood and mud and is hollow on the inside, imagine a huge beaver lodge if you will. The mound is thick and extremely resistant to all types of damage. If someone wanted to break through the shell of the mound they would have to work hard for a lot of time and the sound created by such an endeavour would certainly draw an organized attack from the temples inhabitants.

The first level of the Temple is the only part of the structure that is completely out of the water and is accessible from the outside without going under water. The second level is air locked and completely enclosed – the only possible visible entrance is the docking point for the Cottonmouth, which is blocked by a wall of stone (see area 4a.). The party may also gain entrance to the second level by going through tunnels that are cut 10 feet under the water and rise up into the mound, but have no way of knowing about them unless they take the time to scout the temple.

The first challenge is finding the entrance. If the characters observe the comings and goings of the inhabitants in and around the temple they will notice Annelids and Lizard folk swimming up to the mound and diving under the water. They will also notice other folk appearing with a froth of bubbles at the surface of the water near the mound. From these observances it should be obvious that there are entrances to the mound under the water and that the entrances are located where the diving and bobbing is occurring.

The other challenge is getting into the mound. If an underwater entrance is found a character could easily hold their breath and swim into the mound. The underwater tunnels into the mound are only 30 feet long. Add that to the 10 feet the character must travel from the surface of the water to the tunnel entrance and the total underwater movement required is about 40 feet. The water around the mound is 30 feet deep and characters may sink to the bottom. Consider vision restricted under water to 10 feet because of the nutrient rich water of Lake Blackwater.

If the party arrives disguised as Annelids and in control of the Cottonmouth they will note a small mooring dock for the

boat at area 4a on the second level of the Temple. There is a pull rope protruding from the mound that can be reached from the dock. If the party pulls the rope a bell will ring in area 4 and the Annelid there will use his Wand of Transmute Rock to Mud in order to open the shipping bay door in the wall of the mound. The third level of the Temple is resting on the bottom of Lake Blackwater and is accessible from the second level and a tunnel that exits to the lake bottom from room 21. This level is also water locked and completely enclosed. Unfortunately the level is not completed yet and so there is much seepage in of lake water and many parts of this level are partially submerged. As the party gains sight of the temple proper read or paraphrase the following:

Creeping through the Fen silently searching for traces of your quarry, you pass a screen of trailing vines and emerge into an area less choked with underbrush. Through the remaining growth you are able to make out a very large and imposing structure of mud and sticks that seems to protrude from the landscape abruptly, as if it were not a creation of nature. A huge mud and wood mound rises out of the blackened silent waters to spiral several dozen feet into the air. Set into the structure in various locations are rows of tall sharpened stakes, pointing both upward and outward as if to serve as a crude defensive bulwark which could be defended from outside attack. A number of clumps of wilted bushes seem to have been purposefully placed about the surface in a half-hearted attempt at camouflage. You can make out some movement behind these rows of sharpened stakes, but cannot discern what lurks beyond. The noises of the fen that had assaulted your senses up until this point are now eerily silent and very little seems to move about the giant mound. As you watch several humanoid forms exit the underbrush on the other side of the clearing and swim quickly toward the mound. After giving a short, high-pitched call as if in greeting, the forms disappear beneath the waves, leaving a trail of bubbles that eventually dissipates as silence once again claims the Blackened Fen.

Level One – The Guard Towers:

Level one of the Temple of Hirudinea is the only level of the temple that is accessible from the outside without going underwater. This level is primarily used as a lookout and a defensible position. Approaching the Temple during the day gives the defenders better chances to spot the party and raise the alarm (3 in 6 chances). If the party approaches at night they have 2 in 6 chances to be spotted. Assaulting the temple through this level would be extremely difficult. Should combat occur in area one, two or three then all of the defenders of this level should have a chance to hear the noise (2 in 6 chances) and respond by raising a general alarm. Should a general alarm be raised the following table of events can be used to manage the action:

Sounding the Alarm Chart

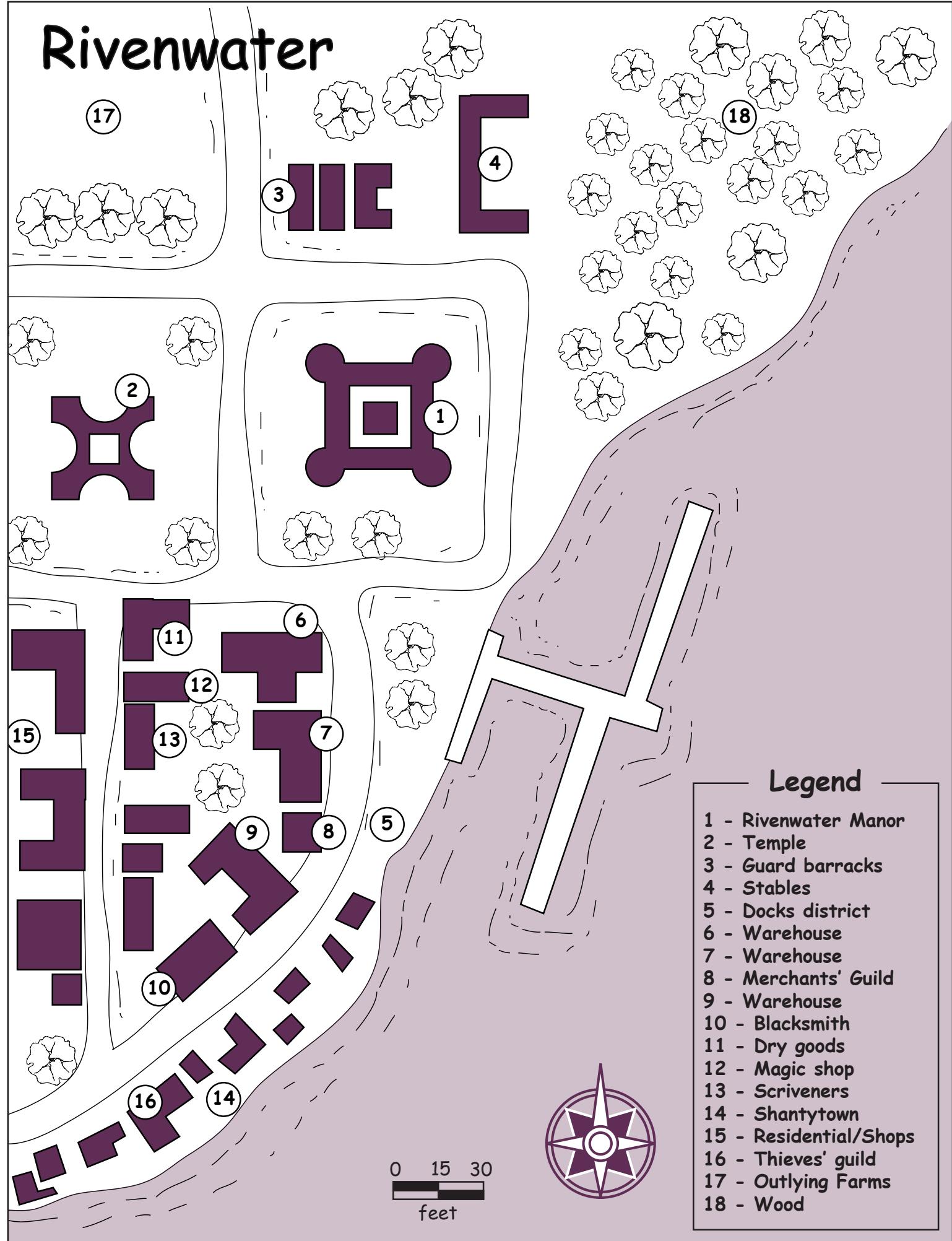
Round	Event
1	Characters hear alarm being sounded
2	All Defenders on level one move towards sounds of combat
5	One of the Nagas in room 14 arrives at top of ramp on level one. The naga will have cast Haste, on itself prior to leaving its lair.
10	Defenders from room 10 arrive at top of ramp on level one

Areas 1, 2 and 3. The Guard Rooms

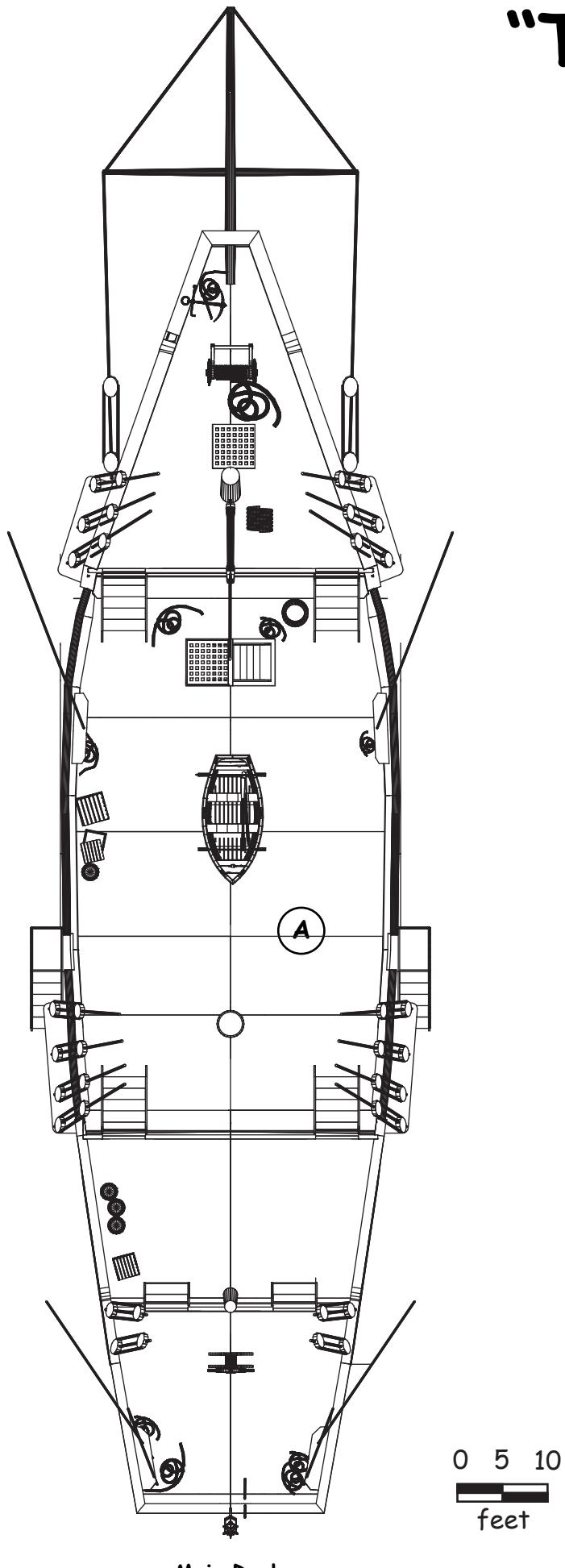
As the party enters this room read or paraphrase the following:

This small irregularly-shaped room with walls that are seemingly constructed of rows of rounded mud brick, plastered together. The walls themselves are smooth and slick, as water beads and rolls gently down the surface to rest on the floor of the chamber. Several niches have been carved out of the walls apparently to be used for the storage of various items needed by the occupants, as well as benches or beds on which to sit or lie. Nowhere in this place is there a rough edge or a pointed corner, as all seems to flow sinuously into rounded and spiralling forms, giving the entire room the startling

Rivenwater

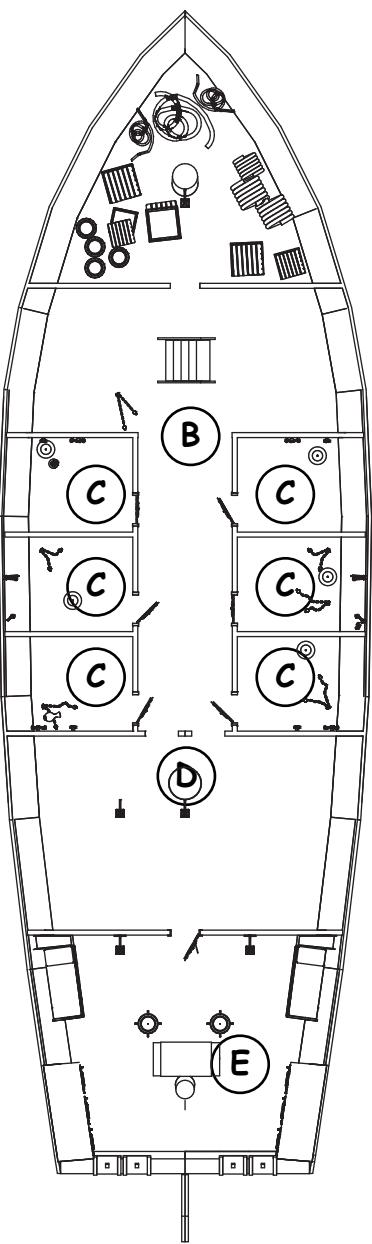


"The Cottonmouth"



Main Deck

- A - Main Deck (All Aboard)
- B - Staircase (Into the Hold)
- C - Prison Cells
- D - Empty Room (Slippery Little Suckers)
- E - Captain's Quarters (To crush The Leech's Head)



Lower Deck

Temple of Hirudinea

Level One, the guard towers

tunnel ramp
down to level 2

one square = 10ft



underwater tunnel
entrance

tunnel ramp
to level 3

dock for
Cottonmouth

15

tunnel ramp
to level 1

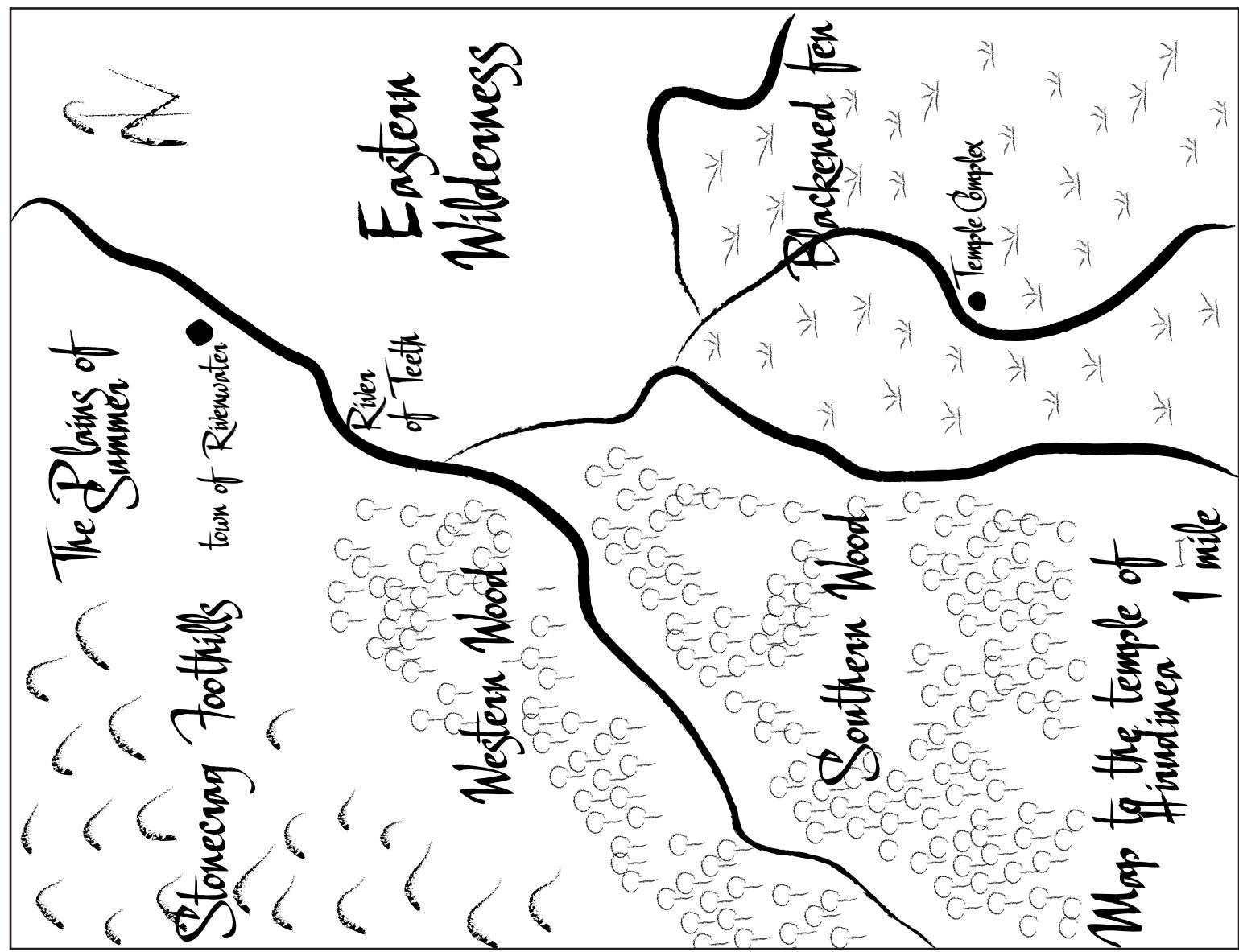
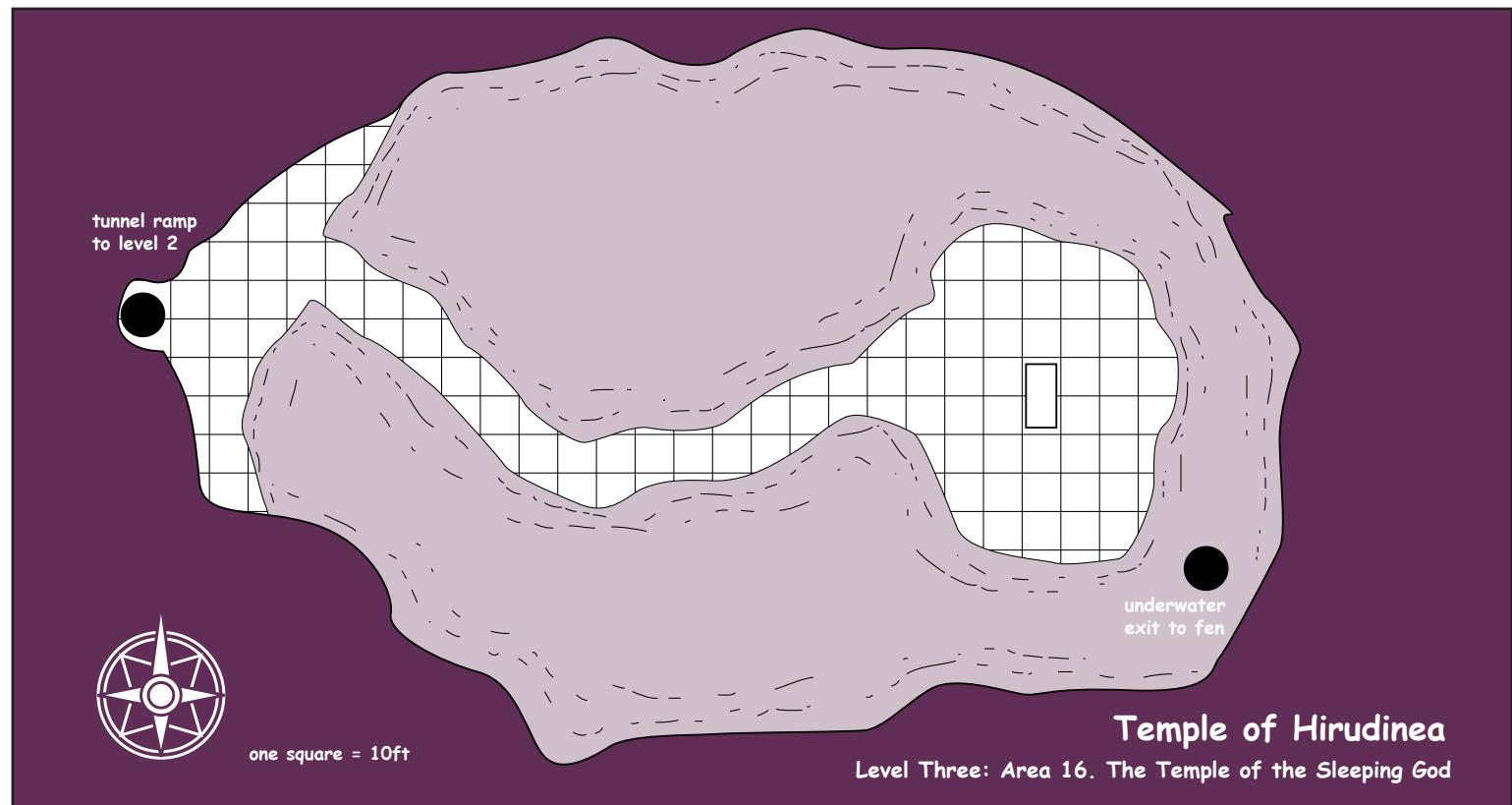
underwater tunnel
entrance



one square = 10ft

Temple of Hirudinea

Level Two, Slave Pens and living Quarters



effect of resembling the smooth, curved interior of a seashell. A rounded opening leads to the exterior and through it you can make out the shape of a wood palisade with a muddy walking ledge lining its base. A large brass gong and hammer hang near the wall suspended on a hook from the ceiling.

Each guard room is exactly the same. The room is heavily defended by Annelids and eight lizard men guards.

Annelid (6): AL LE; MV 9"; hp 6 each; AC 6; HD 1+1; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (shortsword) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round

Hirudinea's Chosen (1): AL LE; MV 9"; hp 44 each; AC 4; HD 8+8; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2 or 1d6 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 2hp/round

Lizard men (8): AL CE; MV 6" / 12"; hp 9; AC 4; HD 2+1; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear or shortbow)

Tactics: At the first sign of trouble the defenders will call out for their compatriots in the other two rooms on the first level and attempt to raise the alarm by ringing the large gong that is hanging near the wall. The round after they call out, or if there are obvious sounds of combat the guards in the other room will assign one lizard man to ring the other two bells and the rest will charge to meet the intruders. If an alarm is raised please use the "Sounding the alarm" chart to pace the Temple response to the intruders. The Annelids will order the Lizard men forward as shock troops, and then the Annelids will wade into the fray attempting to attack particularly powerful looking spell casters. The Hirud's Chosen will charge into the fray attacking a character that appears to have a higher armor class.

Treasure: The lizard folk and Annelids have assorted coins worth 500 gp. Each of the gongs is made of gold and worth 500gp.

Level Two – The Slave Pens and Living Quarters

Area 4. Shipping and Receiving

Inside the mud covered mound is a large dome shaped room with smooth sloping walls of hardened earth. Several piles of crates are lying

here in groups, most still sealed, but some with the tops pried off and discarded to one side. Along one wall are a number of crude cages made of poles tied together with rough hemp rope. Most are empty, but two hold shivering and filthy prisoners, lying on their sides. The doors to the cages have been left ajar as if the captors do not fear their prisoners' escape.

This room functions as the receiving area for slaves and other ill gotten goods that Sythanis and his crew bring back from their voyages up and down the River of Teeth. The dozens of crates and barrels in this room are filled with a variety of mundane items such as building supplies, foodstuffs, wine and beer, clothing and a variety of household items. The wall at 4a is stone, there is a small bell rigged to the outside of the mound so that the Cottonmouth can signal the Annelids to open the shipping bay. The Annelids use a wand of transmute rock to mud and a wand of transmute mud to rock in order to open their shipping bay to the Cottonmouth when it arrives. If the party arrives on the Cottonmouth, and disguised as the Annelids, the sentry will use his wands to open the tunnel for the party and order his slave crew to board the ship and start unloading it. If the party attempts to rescue the slaves they will leave with the party once they are sure that the Annelids are defeated and will not track them down and kill them. If combat should breakout the Cargo slaves will flee to area 5 the minute fighting starts and huddle with the slaves there waiting for the party to come to them and make their intentions known. The slaves are terrified of the Annelids and will make no move against them – nor will they flee until they are sure that all the Annelids are defeated.

Annelid (4): AL LE; MV 9"; hp 6 each; AC 6; HD 1+1; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (shortsword) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round

Cargo Slaves (4): AL N; MV 12"; hp 3 each; AC 10; HD 1; #AT 1 (club); Dmg 1d4

Tactics: The Annelid if confronted by a party from the underwater entrance will try fighting retreat to room 6. If he is unable to retreat he will attempt to call for help drawing the reinforcements from room 6 in two rounds. The reinforcements from room 6 will think that there has been a slave uprising and not make an effort to attract

further reinforcements before they leave for room 4. If the party can deal with the reinforcements quickly they may still hold the element of surprise. The Cargo slaves will flee to room five the minute fighting starts and huddle with the slaves there waiting for the party to come to them and make their intentions known. The slaves are terrified of the Annelids and will make no move against them – nor will they flee until they are sure that all the Annelids are defeated.

Area 5. Tunnel Crew

Entering this area of the complex you see the evidence of much work and tunnelling activity. Mud and roots form the walls of the tunnel, still rough cut and not yet polished smooth like the rest of the complex. A number of humans toil here with digging tools moving the hardened mud out of the tunnel in a series of small, wheeled carts. There is rubble strewn about the floor and the slaves, all scrawny and dishevelled, shovel clumps into the carts while others employ pick-axes to dig the tunnel further toward its intended completion. They look up startled at your entry and quickly move away from you to cower nervously against a wall.

The Annelids have a slave crew hard at work building a tunnel from area 5 to area 15, plus any slaves that have fled here from area 5. The partially completed tunnel is visible on the map as 5a. The party could expend a couple of well placed rock to mud charges from the wand that they could have found in area 4 to drill their way into room 15 and avoid the Temple denizens in rooms 6 through 14. The slaves are being worked dreadfully hard, they fear the party may get them in trouble with their Annelid masters and be punished or killed. The slaves are not interested in being saved but would prefer to be left alone by the party. If the party insists on helping the slaves a few of them (roll d4) will make a desperate attempt to run and warn their masters. The slave will run first to room 6 and then room 10 in hopes of finding an Annelid to come and kill the party. Remember that the Cargo room slaves are less depraved than the tunnelling slaves and will consent to be rescued by the party.

Area 6. Troll Guard Room

Entering this room your senses are assaulted by a particularly unpleasant stench. The room is round like the others but the floor is coated thickly with a wet layer of putrid green slime. Two large heaps of half-rotted vegetation makes what appear to be nests off to one side. The bones of what can only be past meals litter the floor, some with red and oozing strips of half-rotten flesh still attached. A fetid pool of water occupies one part of the room, its black surface unmoving in the still air.

This room is inhabited by 4 Scrag Troll mercenaries, who have decided to join the Annelids rather than risk trying to beat them. The Trolls are quite miserable that the majority of slaves are being used for labour and then sacrificed instead of eaten, so the arrival of the party is welcome from a culinary standpoint. If the trolls heard the party they are hiding in the pool with the hopes of surprising the PC's, otherwise they may be sitting or standing about according to the wishes of the Referee.

Scrag (salt water) (4): AL CE; MV 3" / 15"; hp 28; AC 3; HD 5+1; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d10+2; SA attack up to 3 different opponents; SD regenerates 3hp/round only in water; SIZE M.

Tactics: The Trolls will blindly rush the first character that they see. If the Trolls kill a character or knock a character unconscious they will spend a round tearing the character apart and eating before they attempt pay any attention to the rest of the party. This will of course trigger attacks by the party but the trolls are starving.

Area 7. Lizard men Common Room

This large room is also irregularly dome-shaped like most of the others in the complex. A number of bedrolls line the walls, with some sacks and a few wooden chests lying or stacked nearby. Several rickety tables and stools are scattered about, with the remnants of old meals and refuse lining the floor.

This room is full of sleeping rolls and personal belonging of the Lizard men who



reside at the Temple. The Lizard men are presently guarding level one of the Temple or out on patrol in the swamp.

Area 8. Annelid Room

This large room is also irregularly dome-shaped like most of the others in the complex. A number of bedrolls line the walls, with some sacks and a few wooden chests lying or stacked nearby. Several rickety tables and stools are scattered about. The smoothness of the south wall of the room is broken by a 24 inch diameter hole in the floor. Strange markings can be found on the floor in front of the hole.

This room is full of the sleeping nests and

the personal belongings of the Annelids that reside at the Temple. The Hole at area 8a is the sole entrance to the third level of the Temple (It drops out into Area A of Room #16). It is large enough to fit Mers'Till Alist the Hirudean Leech pet of Husstillis the High Cleric of Hirudinea. The third level of the Temple is designed to only be accessed by Annelids and that is why there is only a two foot entrance tunnel that winds down into the darkness. The Annelids can of course easily slither down to the third level. A Wisdom check will show that there is slimy residue crusted to the walls at the entry to the tunnel. The PC's will have to find another way to get down. Small PC's could try to crawl down, Medium sized PC's would need to take off armor in order to attempt to crawl through.

Area 9. Annelid Nest Room

These small rooms are all rounded and carved from the mound to be perfectly smooth. Each is connected to the others in a series of pods exiting to one room. In each is a pile of vegetation and cloth, curled up to form a sleeping nest. A few sacks of rough cloth drawn tight with ropes lie near each nest, bulging with what you suppose to be the belongings of the owners.

This room is comprised of 5 semi private rooms that the Annelids live in. There is nothing of value here.

Area 10. Meditation Chambers

Entering this room you immediately notice that it is the sleeping chamber of three persons. Bedrolls are scattered about amidst sacks and boxes of personal possessions. A number of wooden chairs and piles of pillows lie about amidst the trappings of everyday living. The walls have been decorated with brightly painted pictures of humans covered from head to toe with slimy crawling leeches. The paintings depict what appears to be some sort of rites where the humans are being repeatedly bitten and drained, seeming completely unconcerned, the humans continue eating and drinking from jewelled chalices as the horrid leeches feed. A brazier burns in the center of the room, emitting a cloying scent and a grey cloud that hangs just below the ceiling.

This room is full of the sleeping rolls and personal belongings of three high ranking Annelids who have been chosen to undergo the rites to cleanse their humanity forever and become Chosen of Hirudinea. They have been meditating and communing with their dark deity for many days, and will undergo their final transformations during the desecration ceremony, when they will drain the life from their hapless captives.

Lazulllist: AL LE; MV 9"; hp 25; AC 8; HD 6+6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (dagger +1) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round Lazulllist casts spells and saves as a 5th level magic user:

Spells Memorized: (4/2/1):1- Charm Person,

Magic missile, Shield, Shocking Grasp. 2- Invisibility, Web. 3- Lightning bolt

Viper snake: AL N; MV 12"; hp 18; AC 5; HD 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 + poison

Plakk: AL LE; MV 9"; hp 38; AC 2; HD 6+6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+4 (longsword +2) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/round

Jannuuzz: AL LE; MV 9"; hp 29; AC 5; HD 5+5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (shortsword +1) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix) backstab +4x2; SD regenerates 1hp/round; Saves as 4th level thief
PP 86%; OL 37%; FT 19%; MS 60%; HS 60%; HN 52%; CW 52%; RL 15%

Tactics: Lazulllist will first attempt to charm any fighter in the group and send his viper to warn Husstillis, while will immediately charge the party and flank, hoping to allow Jannuuzz to backstab either the party's wizard or cleric. Plakk will then concentrate his melee attacks on this person to bring them down and out of the fight as soon as possible. After his initial backstab, Jannuuzz will retreat and drink a *potion of invisibility*, hoping to make another backstab against a vulnerable party member (he will focus on wounded or spell casting PC's if possible.) If the fight goes poorly, Jannuuzz will drink a *potion of gaseous form* and flee to warn Husstillis of the party's attack. Whether or not the *charm person* spell takes effect, Laazulllist will next cast *invisibility* and move to where he can strike the most number of party members with a *lightning bolt*. He will continue to hurl spells at any available target while attempting to have anyone he has charmed protect him from harm.

Area 11. Treasury Vault

You enter a large room that is significantly different than the others you have seen in this complex. Neatly lining the walls are four chests of various sizes from a large trunk made of wood bound in iron to a small coffer of silver inlaid with a mosaic of obsidian. The walls of this chamber glisten with the sheen of slick mud, as does the floor. The scent of dampness and mildew pervades the area, and clusters of small mushroom like plants grow in the crevices of the uneven walls. Torches set into sconces in the walls shine with a flickering radiance, though they seem to emit no heat or burn up at all.

This room comprises the treasury vault of the newly desecrated temple complex. The chests, all locked and set with horrifying traps, contain the loot amassed by the Annelids in their campaign to recreate their base of power, as well as several ancient relics brought with them through the disaster that nearly destroyed them as a race. The room appears empty of life, though it is in fact very well guarded. A mud golem rests embedded in the walls of this room, and will coalesce to attack anyone entering this room if the password phrase "Through darkness we come, to avenge our ancestors" is not spoken aloud. The golem animates in the round immediately following the PC's entry to the treasury vault and attacks relentlessly and without tactics, battering down all who oppose it.

Mud Golem: AL N; MV 7"; hp 50; AC 7; HD 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d10; SA cursed wounds; SD immune to most spells (see appendix for more details)

Trapped Chests (all locked):

Chest #1: Small Wooden Chest
Protected by a Glyph of Warding exploding and dealing 20 points of fire damage in 5 radius upon a failed saving throw (save for half damage).

Treasure: 175 gold coins; Scrolls of Shocking Grasp, Feather Fall; Polymorph, Slow, Fear.

Chest #2: Medium Wooden Chest
Protected by a poisonous needle in the lock. Save vs poison or die.

Treasure: Necklace of fireballs Type 1; Elixir of Hiding; Goggles of minute seeing; Dust of tracelessness.

Chest #3: Large Wooden Trunk
Protected by a capsule of acid gas in the lock. The gas is released on a failed Open Lock and deals 3d10 hit points of damage in 5' radius (no save).

Treasure: 542 gp; 95 platinum coins; 10,873 silver coins

Chest #4: Small Silver Coffer (Coffer valued at 100 gp)
Protected by a Fire Trap (1d4+14 damage, save for half damage)

Treasure: Ring of Feather falling; Ring of Swimming; Pearl of power (1st level spell)

Area 12. Storage Room

This small room is obviously a storage chamber. It is cluttered with crates, boxes and barrels of supplies

as well as several large sacks. Shelves have been built into the walls as well as several huge wooden bins apparently for storage of certain bulk items.

The room contains foodstuffs and other mundane supplies.

Area 13. Shrine of Hirudinea

This small room is dark and quiet, tucked out of the way off the side of the passage. The walls have been polished to a smooth glossy finish, and water drips down them in rivulets to puddle on the wet floor. A few grass mats are spread across the floor in a row. Facing you across the chamber is a small carved idol resting upon a dais. The idol depicts a humanoid with the facial features twisted into a horrible parody of a leech or a lamprey. Rows of razor sharp teeth ring the powerful jaws, and two tiny jewelled eyes twinkle eerily in the flickering light of oil lamps set into the walls.

This alcove contains a small shrine to Hirudinea. The inhabitants of the temple who are not allowed to worship on the third level may do so here. The jewels set into the statue are tiny perfect rubies, each worth 50 gp if priced out of the idol. Anyone touching the idol triggers its trap to spring. If the PC's spring the trap, read or paraphrase the following:

As you reach out and touch the idol you hear an odd clicking noise. The mouth of the idol suddenly opens wide, spraying out dozens of tiny glittering darts!

The traps makes 1d20 attacks as a 5HD monster, dealing 1d3 hit points of damage per attack to the PC triggering it.

Area 14. The Dreaded Guardroom

You have entered into a much larger chamber than any of the others that you have encountered upon this level of the temple complex. The walls rise up around you in the darkness, glistening and wet with condensation. Several irregular pillars of mud and clay seem to support the vault of this chamber.

The ceiling appears to be nearly 20 feet high at its apex, gradually sloping to near 6 feet at the outside edge. The floor is completely covered in murky black water, the depth of which seems not to exceed 6 feet, although in the shadows it is difficult to tell precisely. There are no torches, lamps or other illumination whatsoever in this room and silence pervades the area.

There is no light in this room.

Spirit Nagas (3): AL CE; MV 12"; hp 48; AC 4; HD 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA poison, charming gaze, spells; Magic User Spells Memorized: (4/2/1) 1- Magic Missile x2, Light, Sleep. 2- Invisibility, Web. 3- Haste Cleric Spells Memorized: (3/2) 1- Cure Light Wounds x2, Sanctuary. 2- Hold Person, Silence 15'

Tactics: The nest of Spirit Nagas are charged by their master Husstillis to guard this room against all hostile intruders. The Nagas are intelligent and will use their spells to maximum effect to defend their lair. The Nagas hide in the dark at 14a watching the entrance to room. If they spot the party on the first round they will cast Haste on themselves and move. Once buffed up the Nagas will cast *hold person* on the party wizard and Cleric, hoping to disable them quickly. The Nagas will attempt to continue using their higher level spells until forced to engage in melee. The Nagas fight to the death never asking for quarter or granting any.

Area 15. The Shrine of Bones

Prominent in this area is a disturbing sight to behold. A large rack has been affixed to the wall and is crammed with rows of carefully stacked humanoid bones. Skulls in rows grin at you from their grisly resting place, some sporting fractures to the head and face that surely were fatal wounds. Each skull is painted with a strange glyph in blood on its forehead. The rest of the bones are stacked in cubby holes beneath the shelves of skulls, some blackened and burned, others broken and twisted, with scraps of leathery sinew still attached. A small altar is set here, graven with similar sigils to those inscribed upon the bones on the shelves.

The shrine of bones is constructed from the skulls and bones of various human, lizard men and Annelids. The shrine acts as a reminder to all the price of failing Husstillis and the dark god Hirudinea. The bones are inscribed with unholy symbols of. The altar itself bears a Glyph of Warding trap set upon it by Husstillis to punish the unfaithful.

The Glyph of Warding explodes dealing 20 points of fire damage in 5' radius upon a failed saving throw (save for half damage).

Level Three

Area 16. The Temple of the Sleeping God

The air within his cavern-like room is stale and smells sharply of some exotic incense. The chamber stretches away from you across a stagnant pool of brackish water, leaves and debris swirling about in the brown and fetid stuff. A narrow causeway leads from your position to a raised mud platform in the center of the room. Atop this muddy mound is affixed a large slab of moulded clay, glistening with a sickly red-brown color. The slab is clearly an altar to some foul deity, as several grinning humanoid skulls are positioned about it, their eye sockets set with glittering gemstones. Strange runes are carved into the rounded altar block. Atop the altar is the fresh corpse of horribly tortured humanoid creature. Behind the altar is a large man. He spits slime at you as you enter, hands already moving in the process of casting a spell.

This room is the Temple of Hirudinea and the rune covered slab at the back is the risen Altar of Shyyth. The corpse on the altar will rise as a wight in three rounds. The temple is also inhabited by the very special pet of Husstillis the High Cleric of the Temple. Husstillis found the vermin on the plane of slime and raised it. Mers'Till Alist has been fed only the finest morsels of human flesh and cared for with the strongest magic to grow it to its present size. The Altar is trapped with a Glyph of Warding.

The Glyph of Warding explodes and deals 20 points of acid damage in 5' radius upon a failed saving throw (save for half damage).

Tactics: Husstillis has positioned himself behind the altar at the furthest possible



distance from the invading party members, all the better to cast his spells as they attempt to come to him. PC's attempting to cross the causeway any faster than a walk need to make a Dexterity check due to the slippery nature of the mud or slide into the pool. Mers'Till Alist lurks beneath the waters, and will spring to attack any PC who moves onto the causeway or falls into the water. The leech will bite, grapple, latch and attempt to swallow its prey. The pool itself is an average of ten feet deep and its bottom is thick with sticky mud, making drowning a real possibility for anyone in heavy armor. If Husstillis has been warned in advance he will drink a potion of Flying in preparation for the battle. At the beginning of the battle he will attempt to *hold* the PC's, allowing the leech to kill them for him. Should this tactic fail he remains at his altar (which he has inscribed with a *glyph of warding*) as long as possible, casting *protection from good* on himself and casting ranged spells at the party.

Should the battle go poorly he will cast blade barrier followed by *word of recall* and disappears to his underground hideout.

Mers'Till Alist, Hirudinea Leech: AL LE; MV 3"/9"; hp 60; AC 6; HD 8; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6; SA latch, swallow; SD half damage

from bludgeoning and slashing weapons; MR 10%

Husstillis: AL LE; MV 9"; hp 66; AC -1; HD 12+12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 (heavy mace +3) or 1d4 (blood drain); SA spell like abilities and latch (see monster description in appendix); SD regenerates 1hp/ round; WIS 17

Husstillis casts spells and saves as a 12th level cleric:

Spells Memorized: (8/7/6/3/2/2): 1- *Bless, Command* x2, *Cure light Wounds* x2, *Light, Protection from Good, Sanctuary*. 2- *Chant, Hold Person* x2, *Silence 15'x2, Spiritual Weapon* x2. 3- *Animate dead, Continual Light, Dispel magic* x2, *Prayer, Remove Curse*. 4- *Cure Serious Wounds* x3. 5- *Flame Strike* x2. 6- *Blade Barrier, Word of Recall*.

Wight (1): AL LE; MV 12"; hp 30; AC 5; HD 4+3; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Energy drain; SD Silver or magical weapon to hit

Development: If the PC's defeat Husstillis they will have the opportunity to destroy the Altar of Shyyth. Husstillis was in the process of desecrating the altar and reawakening its ancient powers. He hoped that in doing so it would contribute to his dark god Hirudinea's reawakening.

If Husstillis is defeated, run off or killed the Altar will sink back down into the swamp in 24 hours. The altar is practically indestructible. The altar is immune to magic. The only way it can be damaged is if the PC's cast *remove curse, dispel evil*, and *bless* on the altar in order. If they do it will become like fine crystal and shatter with one point of damage. Searching the shards of the altar the PC's will find a diamond worth 25,000gp.

Treasure: Husstillis carries 100pp and 300gp on him. Behind the altar is a set of gold bowls, knives and tongs worth 1000gp, plus the gem in the altar if the PC's break it.

Concluding The Adventure

If the party completes the adventure, slays all of the Annelids and destroys the altar they will have thwarted Hirudinea's attempt to re-establish his followers. This should bring them to the attention of several powerful good-aligned entities. If one good aligned PC is particularly devout he or she may find him or herself contacted by agents of their deity to perform greater services in the future. If Husstillis or

other Annelids escape or the Altar in not destroyed the Annelids may be a force to be reckoned with again in the future. Husstillis in particular would gather forces and seek revenge on the party for disrupting his plans.

Appendix – New Monsters

Annelid

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
SIZE: M
MOVE: 9"
ARMOR CLASS: 10 (or by armor type)
HIT DICE: 1+1
ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE: 1d6+1 (shortsword) or latch
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Spell-like abilities, latch (see below)
SPECIAL DEFENCES: regeneration
MAGIC RESISTANCE: -
LAIR PROBABILITY: -
TREASURE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: high
ALIGNMENT: LE

This wizened old human appears utterly hairless, has piercing hunger filled black eyes and skin that is slightly moist or slimy.

The Annelids are a humanoid race evolved from the magical mixing of vile humans and Hirud leeches. Ancient worshipers of the Drinker of Life, Hirudinea, the Lord of Slime and Leeches gave up their humanity to more closely follow their sinister demi God.

Annelids are the stuff of pure nightmare and slain outright by followers of good deities and so must make their way in the world through means of stealth, trickery and careful plotting. Annelids appear human but for their slightly slimy skin and the hooked proboscis that extends out of their mouth from deep within their throat when feeding. When out of water Annelids wear long dark robes and cowls to hide their unnatural looking skin. They make generous use of their disguise skill to move amongst the general population. Tales of Annelids intelligence, sage behavior and guile are legendary.

An Annelid can ascertain all foes whom are warm blooded within 60 ft. The range of this sense is extended to 120ft. If the Annelid and the foe are underwater.

Combat

In combat annelids prefer to remain unseen and use their *hold person* ability in order to incapacitate their victims before moving in grappling them and draining them of their

blood. An annelid can choose to latch over an opponent instead of attacking normally. The victim must be close to the annelid in order to be latched over and make a paralysis saving throw. If the save fails the annelid can drain 1d4 hps of blood until the victim breaks free with a successful STR check. Annelids work as a team to isolate a single victim and concentrate on taking that victim down quickly and quietly. Annelids bodies are soft and their skin is thin and sensitive making them appear as easy targets, their damage regeneration ability affords them some protection allowing them to regenerate 1 hp per round.
Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *hold person, hold animal, water breathing;*

Hirudinea Leech

FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1
SIZE: L
MOVE: 3", swim 9"
ARMOR CLASS: 6
HIT DICE: 8
ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE: 2d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: latch, swallow (see below)
SPECIAL DEFENCES: half damage from bludgeoning and slashing weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 10%
LAIR PROBABILITY: -
TREASURE: None
INTELLIGENCE: low
ALIGNMENT: LE

This huge slime covered leech oozes unnaturalness and ravenous hunger.

Combat

The Hirudinea Leech inhabits the dark leech god Hirudinea's viscous plane of slime. They are ravenous pursuers of all things warm blooded. Once it has bitten its prey it will attempt to latch and drain blood on that round. The next round it will attempt to swallow its prey and then move hungrily on to the next target. If not dealt with quickly the Hirudean leech's blood drain ability can cause serious damage. An Hirudinea leech can choose to latch over an opponent instead of attacking normally. The victim must be close to the leech in order to be latched over and make a paralysis saving throw. If the save fails the annelid can drain 1d8 hps of blood until the victim breaks free with a successful STR check. On the second round of latching the Hirudinea leech can try to swallow whole its opponent (provided it is smaller) by making an attack roll. If leech hits it deals no damage and the opponent is swallowed. A swallowed victim survives

1d4 rounds then dies unless the leech is slain.

A Hirudinea leech has a thick slime that covers their entire bodies. This slime makes them harder to hit with none piercing weapons. Any non piercing weapon that strikes a Hirudinea Leech does half damage.

Hirudinea's Chosen (Annelid)

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
SIZE: M
MOVE: 9"
ARMOR CLASS: 4
HIT DICE: 8+8
ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE: 2d4+2 or latch
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Spell-like abilities, latch (see below)
SPECIAL DEFENCES: regeneration, Fire / salt vulnerability
MAGIC RESISTANCE: -
LAIR PROBABILITY: -
TREASURE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: low
ALIGNMENT: LE

This large monster appears utterly hairless, shiny slime oozes over the powerfully muscled frame of this abomination. Ravenous eyes are sunken in to a face that is dominated by a permanently open rounded mouth, the lips pull back to reveal a series of hooked razors designed to draw blood quickly from prey. The hands are fused and have many small sticky hooks on them for holding victims in place.

The Hirudinea's Chosen are a monstrous perversion of humanity. The Chosen are Annelids that have been changed by the touch of their dark and loathsome god. The Chosen are insane in their blood lust seek to serve Hirudinea.

Combat

The Chosen are direct in their methods. They will attempt to use their *hold person* ability as they approach their prey but quickly abandon rational thought and use latch ability to feed. The Chosen are relentless and will not release a victim until it is dead or they are dead. A Chosen can choose to latch over an opponent instead of attacking normally. The victim must be close to the Chosen in order to be latched over and make a paralysis saving throw. If the save fails the annelid can drain 1d6 hps of blood until the victim breaks free with a successful STR check with -2 penalty. Their damage regeneration ability affords them some protection allowing them to regenerate 2 hp per round. A Hirud's Chosen who is struck by salt or fire will immediately loose its latch. Fire deals +50% damage.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *hold person, hold animal, water breathing*;

Leech Swarm

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1

SIZE: M

MOVE: 6"

ARMOR CLASS: 2

HIT DICE: 6+6

ATTACKS: automatic (see below)

DAMAGE: 1d10

SPECIAL ATTACKS: swarm

SPECIAL DEFENCES: Fire/salt vulnerability

MAGIC RESISTANCE: -

LAIR PROBABILITY: -

TREASURE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: None

ALIGNMENT: N

This swirling mass of darkness roils and slides silently through the water.

Normally a grotesque nuisance, leeches occasionally form dangerous swarms. A Leech Swarm contains thousands of individual leeches.

Combat

The leech swarm is dangerous because it can swarm a creature; cover it in leeches and

move on to another creature. If not dealt with quickly the leech swarms blood drain ability can cause serious damage. If a leech swarm ends its turn over a creature it must make a saving throw versus paralysis. If the save succeeds nothing happens. If the save fails the leech swarm attaches on the victim and drain 1d10 hp of blood per round until removed. While swarmed a victim can move half of its movement and can't cast spells. A leech swarm can subdivide in as many swarms as its HD. A Leech Swarm that is covered in salt will immediately stop damaging the creature it is attached to. Fire deals +50% damage.

Mud Golem

FREQUENCY: Rare

NO. APPEARING: 1

SIZE: M

MOVE: 7"

ARMOR CLASS: 7

HIT DICE: 50hp (11 HD)

ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE: 3d10

SPECIAL ATTACKS: see below

SPECIAL DEFENCES: see below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: -

LAIR PROBABILITY: -

TREASURE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: None

ALIGNMENT: N

This large muddy automaton seems to flow across the ground with a liquid grace, features melding and oozing into one another fluidly. It is possessed of no head to speak of and its upper body appears hugely muscled, with massive hammer-like fists at the end of powerful arms. Both its squat legs appear to puddle into pools of mud at their base. A single clouded yellow eye stares out from the middle of its massive chest. Its smells of rank decay and the rot of the swamp.

Combat

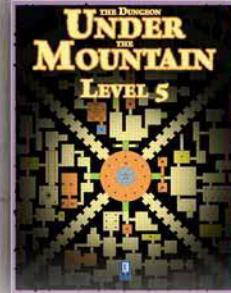
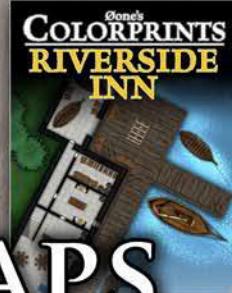
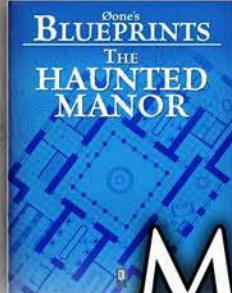
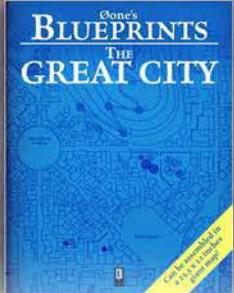
Mud golems can be struck only by blunt magical weapons such as hammer or maces. Other weapons do not have any effect. Mud golems are immune to most spells except: move earth will drive the golem back 12" and inflict 3d12 hit points of damage, disintegrate will slow the golem 50% and inflicts 1d12 points of damage, and transmute mud to rock cast directly at a mud golem will stop it for a whole turn and inflict 5d10 points of damage. Any character making a successful melee attack against the mud golem must succeed at a Paralysis saving throw or find their weapon stuck fast within the gluey substance of the mud golem's body. Any weapon so adhered may be removed Strength check.

Damage inflicted by a mud golem can be healed only by a cleric of 14 of greater level.

Master Dekkar,

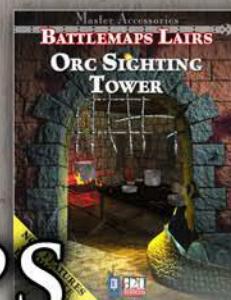
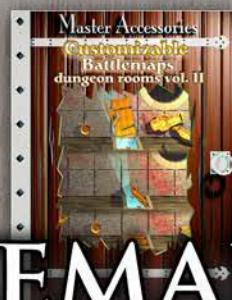
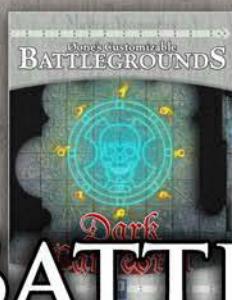
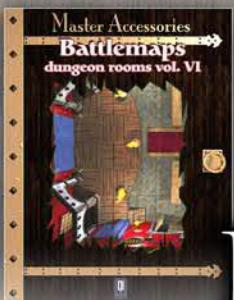
The time is upon us for the beginning of the ceremonies. Long have we laboured in secret for the greater power of the Sleeping One. The culmination of our efforts is at hand. Be present three days hence with a new group of "devoted pilgrims". I have included brief directions for your party on the Cottonmouth.

Hussitillis



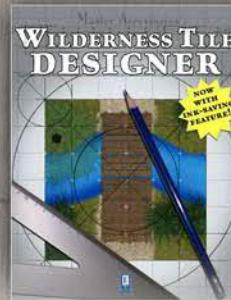
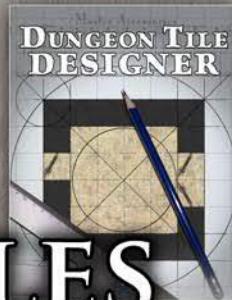
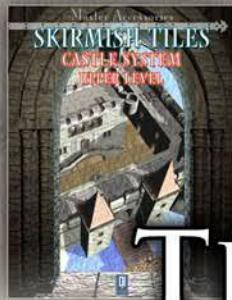
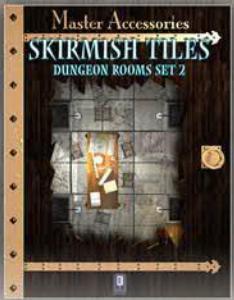
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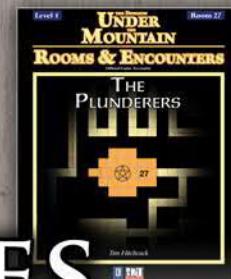
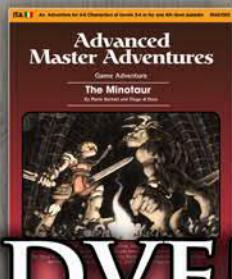
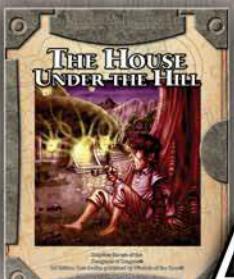
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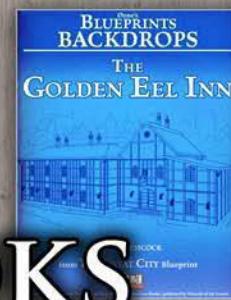
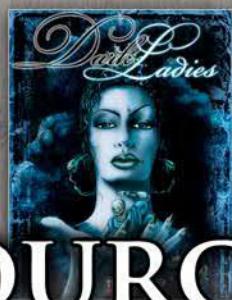
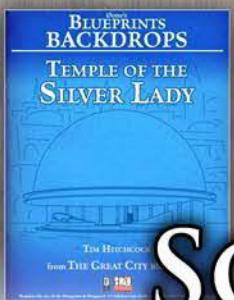
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Advanced Master Adventures

Game Adventure

Blood Runs Cold

By Chad MacPhee and Greg Oppedisano

Many generations ago the land that is now the Blackened Fen was actually the thriving and warlike city-state of Shyyth. Populated by a race of evil humans known as Annelids, Shyyth was a religious center of dark renown where the Annelids held sacrifice to their vile god Hirudinea...

Blood Runs Cold is a OSRIC adventure for four to six characters of 10th-12th level. The party should contain a mix of classes, with at least one fighter and one magic user. The setting for the module is in and around the generic town of Rivenwater. A good Referee can easily adapt it to any setting or plunk Rivenwater into an area in their campaign. The Referee is advised to carefully read the Appendix pertaining to Annelids, as they are new and unusual creatures with complicated abilities.

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