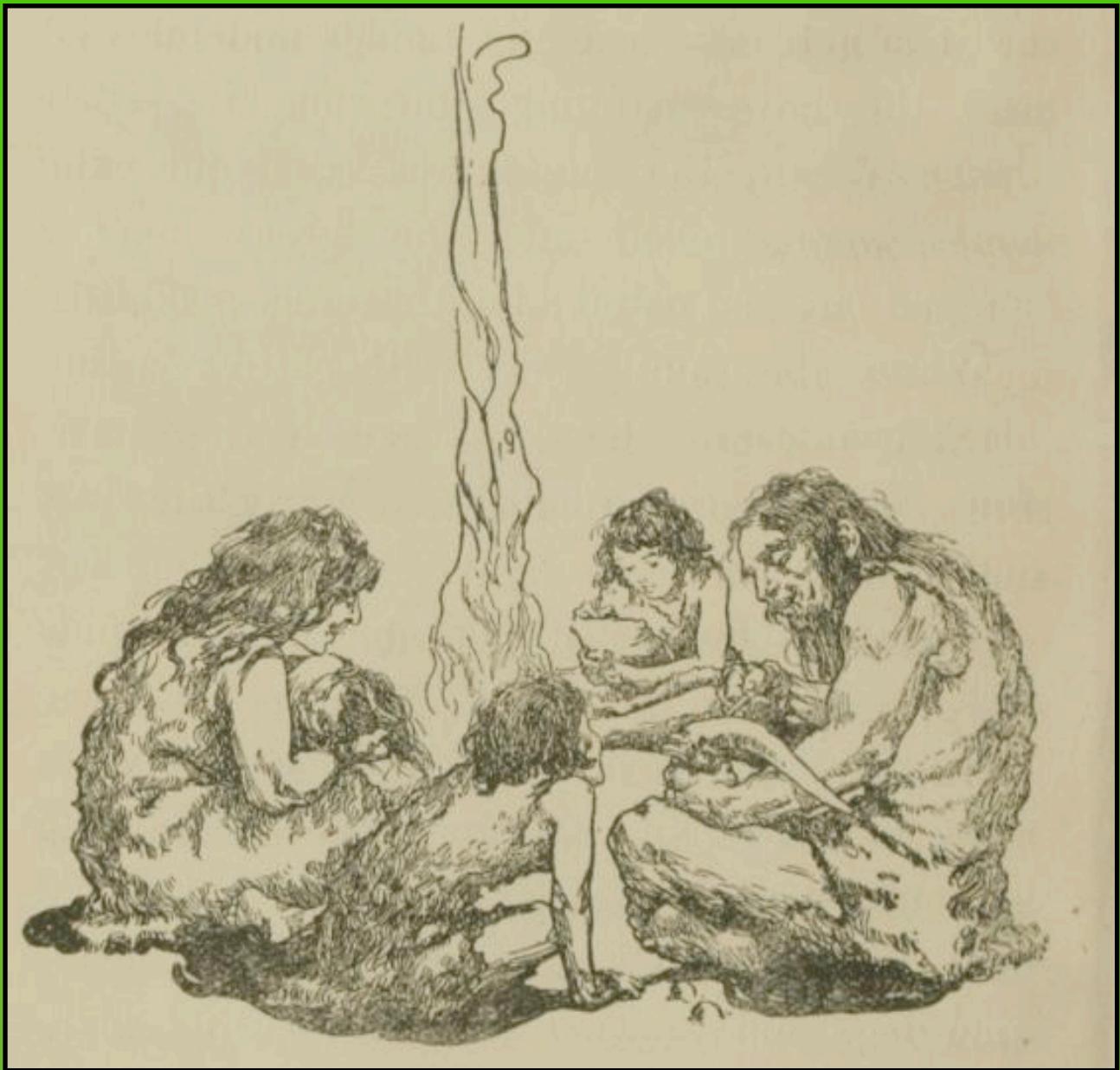


Shrine of the Scaled One

GEMS OF CHAOS - PART I



Tribe of unusually brave man-eating cavemen terrorizes the countryside. What dark secrets are discovered in their lair and are the heroes brave enough to face the cultists of the Scaled One? A First Edition adventure module for low-level characters.

Gems of Chaos 1

Shrine of the Scaled One

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Lone travelers have been vanishing, small caravans and out of the way farms have been sacked and a hamlet raided by an unusually brave band of cave-dwelling neandhrethals. The PCs are hired by someone in power (be it government, church, or private persons is of no issue) to put a stop on these attacks and find out what is causing the usually only mildly dangerous cavemen act this cravenly.

An agent of the hiring party will lead the player characters to the site of the latest attack - a farm that has been burned to the ground. Butchered and partially eaten cattle lies here and there and everything that can be broken is broken, and those things that cannot be broken have been tried.

The agent is able to tell that from the eleven people living on this farm, eight have been confirmed killed and three (two of the sons and a little girl) are still missing, probably taken captive by the attackers. He will point northwards where there be mountains. After that

the agent will wish the party good luck and hastily depart back to civilization.

Tracking the attackers is not too hard a task, and if the party has a ranger, this is a good place to let him (or her!) shine. It will be a six hour trip following the trail through the forest and a random encounter is possible, if the party runs into something roll a d100:

- 1-20** Goblin Raiders (3-18) up to no good
- 21-40** Giant Spider setting up ambush for edibles
- 41-60** Wolves (1-3) searching for easy prey
- 61-70** Nonaggressive animal minding its own business
- 71-80** Bear relieving itself in the woods
- 81-90** Orc Scouts (2-8) on a mission from some evil meanie
- 91-99** Stirges (3-18) that want to suck your blood!
- 100** Hans the Lazy Zombie propped against a tree

But at the end of the day the trail should lead the party to a hill. There is a 45% chance that there is smoke rising from the top of the cave when the party enters the area and if they scout or wait around there is a 5% chance each full turn that smoke will appear (smoke comes from the fire at area 3).

Scouting around the cave will sooner or later lead the party to the main adventuring site (see the map at the end of the module).

1 - Entrance

This natural cave leads into the caverns of a man-eating neandrethal tribe that has fallen under the spell of a lizard man priest of Evil Chaos. Two lazy guards dwell here, sleepily leaning on their bone-tipped spears and picking their noses every now and then.

Stealthy individuals should have no trouble sneaking up on these guards, but a noisy entrance is enough to alert the duo. If this happens, one immediately attacks while the other tries to escape via the southern exit to warn the tribe n area 3 of intruders. (skull alarm?)

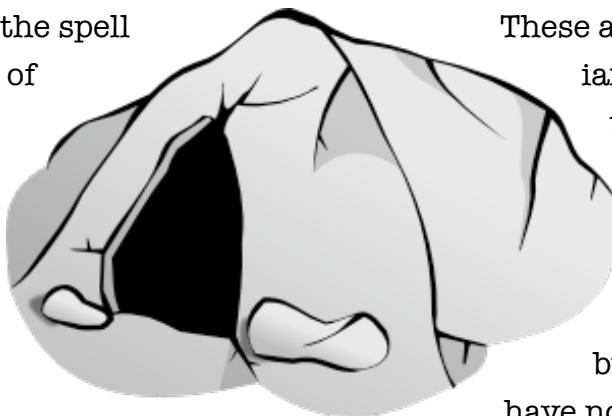
Cavemen (2) - AC 8 MV 12" HD 2D8
HP 15, 13 **#AT** 1 **DMG** Spear (1-6+1)
XP 150

2 - Hall of the Idols

Three extremely crudely carved stone idols are found in this cave. They are between one and one and a half meters tall, fat and bloated figures vaguely resembling something that might be a humanoid frog or a lizard.

Anyone who has even rudimentary training in art will have hard time not laughing out loud when witnessing the

lousiness of the work, unless the character in question is of pretentious sort - in this case he will appreciate the purity and form of the primitive art.



These are the tribe's "guardian idols", representing their lizard-man priest and his acolytes. The cavemen think they protect them from harm, but in reality the idols have no power whatsoever -

they are just stone. Breaking or defacing the idols will drive any cavemen who witness the act into berserker rage, tho.

The corridor leading southeast from this chamber is recently dug - the lizardman cultists have forced the tribe to dig it to gain entrance to a part of a lost pre-human citys.

3 - Tribal Living Area

This is the largest cave in the whole system, and the living are of most of the caveman tribe. Eleven males, eight females and three younglings live here with their pet sabretooth tiger. A natural hole at the top of the cave allows a fire to be built in the middle of the cave, and if the tribe is not ready for combat it is quite likely that something that looks very much like a human leg is roasting on a spit when the party enters the area.

While it is possible to try to parley with the cavemen, the evil influence of the Cult of Chaos has turned these already dangerous man-eaters into truly evil and irredeemable beasts that will only barely bother to talk with the party to buy time to grab their weapons.

A fight is pretty much guaranteed barring some very unusual plan by the players.

Cavemen (11) - AC 8 MV 12" HD 2D8
HP 9(x4), 8(x3), 7, 6(x2), 2 **#AT 1**
DMG Spear (1-6+1)(x2), Stone Axe (1-8+1)(x8) Club (2-8+1)(x2) Spear (1-6+1) **XP** 690

Female Cavemen (8) - AC 8 MV 12"
HD 2D8; **HP** 7(x2), 5, 4(x3), 13, 15
#AT 1 DMG Stone Axe (1-8)(x5) Club (2-8)(x2) Spear (1-6) **XP** 450

Caveman Kids (3) - AC 10 MV 12"
HD 1D6 **#AT 1 DMG** Biting & Scratching (1-2) **XP** 15

Sabre-Tooth Tiger - AC 6 MV 12"
HD 7D8+2 **HP** 26 **#AT 3 DMG** 2-5(x2)/2-12 **SA** Rear Claws (2-8/2-8), +2 to hit
SD Surprised only on a 1 **XP** 810

If the tribe has been alerted, they will immediately attack any intruders but one of the younglings has ran to warn the chieftain at area 4.

In one corner is a pile of discarded bones that have been gnawed on, from

the poor victims of these evil subhumans. On the other side are the pelts that the tribe uses as mattresses and at the back is their loot - various trinkets of little worth (about 25 GP altogether) and a handful of common everyday items the cavemen have not understood the function of - including a spork.

4 - Chieftain's Cave

The chieftain of the tribe, Mgruk the Meanest lives in this cave. He's the half breed son of the last chieftain and his human slave, something of a missing link really. Smarter and ever so slightly more attractive than his tribesmen he walks tall and carries a very big and sturdy club carved from oak which he used when he beat his father to death sixteen moons ago. The cudgel is still covered in blood of the old chieftain, which Mgurk thinks forces the spirit of his father aid the wielder of the club in combat - surprisingly he is correct.

Mgruk (Level 5 NE Fighter) - **AC** 5
MV 9" **HD** 5D10 **HP** 37 **#AT 2/3 DMG**
Bloodstick, +1 Club (2-8+4) **SA** Specialized in Club **THAC0:15** **XP** 372 **EQUIP**
Leather Armor, Club +1, Knife, Potion of Healing

Bloodstick is a +1 club, but will lose all its magic if the dried blood covering it is ever washed off.

The cave has a large bunk covered by the most precious hides the tribe has hunted. On the bunk lounge the two charmed concubines of Mgruk - a gift from the lizard man priest to win over the trust of Mgruk.

Both women would be something of beauties in the real world, but here their physically beat up and malnourished bodies clad in crude hides and dirt and lifeless eyes make them seem very much less. They are obedient to Mgruk, but nonviolent and if freed from their charms they basically fall apart mentally from the physical and psychological horrors they have had to endure as wives of the caveman chieftain.

Brunette - AC 10 HP 4 CHA 15

Redhead - AC 10 HP 5 CHA 17

Beside the bunk is a stolen treasure chest, with a poison needle trap (but the poison has dried: only 1 point of damage) that houses the chieftain's treasure, all the good stuff captured by the tribe:

- 342 GP
- 1100 SP
- three gems (10, 65 & 100 GP)
- a silver dagger
- unopened bottle of dwarven brandy
- half-empty bottle of dwarven brandy
- a deed to a supposed haunted house somewhere on the eastern coast

5 - Holding Cell

Eight captives (four men (one is of man-at-arms capacity), two children and a middle-aged woman) from the latest raids by the cavemen are locked up in this small cave. They are fed berries and roots until they are sacrificed and eaten and they have to live in their own filth.

Man-at-Arms (Level 1 NG Fighter) -
AC 9 MV 12" HD 1d10 HP 7 SA Specialized in Short Sword **SD** awesome Tom Selleck style moustache

There are no young or attractive females in the group as they usually are taken, used and then discarded by Mgruk the Meanest. They might live longer than the rest, but it's not easy living.

6 - Pool of Black Water

This cave is dominated by a large pool of pitch black water. There is no way to see what lies beneath the surface of the water, which is in all likelihood a good thing because the black as night amphibious ball of goo that sleeps at the bottom of the pool is something that would probably unnerve even the most stalwart of adventurers.

The blood from the sacrifices done in area 8 flows in the small channels that have been carved in the floor and on the stairs down to this cave, and into the

pool - sustaining the control the lizard man priest has over this monster from beyond the realms of sanity.

The true name of the goo-creature is not known on the Prime, but the tribe cavemen calls it the Black Beast and the clergy of chaos refers to it as the Lurker in the Pool. It needs at least one sacrifice every week in order to stay on the Prime Material Plane and if the cavemen are unable to provide a sacrifice in time, the clergy takes one of their members instead. This has happened a few times, but fear of the beast and Mgurk's uncaring leadership both contribute to the tribe accepting their lot in life (and death).

When the beast is fed and the lizard man priest has the Chaos Gem, he is able to mentally control the beast.

The Lurker in the Pool is a pitch black ball off bloody goo with two pairs of glowing red eyes that float around the main body of the creature. It usually attacks by vicious strikes by tentacles it can form from its body and a vicious bite.

Lurker in the Pool - AC 4 MV 6"/12"
HD 7D8; HP 36 #AT 2 DMG 3-18/2-20
SA Spit Blood (see below) **INT** Low **AL** CE **SIZE L THAC0 13 XP 740**

It can also spit blood three times after being fed. Anyone hit with the attack will be blinded on a failed save against

poison and in any case will suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls and saves for 2-12 rounds because of the horrible stench and the burning sensations caused by the corrupted blood.

Wading into the pool is not smart, and anyone doing that has a good chance (65%) of catching some vile disease or another, but there is a good amount of treasure at the bottom of the cesspool:

- 421 SP
- 628 GP
- 3 Gems
- Rusty Longsword +1/+3 against Rust Monsters

The corridor leading south from this chamber soon ends in a cave-in - it would lead deeper into the lost city and if the players wish to clear their way through, further adventures at this site are left to the DM to create...

7 - Chamber of the Acolytes

This is the spartan chamber of the two acolytes serving the lizard-man priest, both lizard-men (one is actually a female, but with these guys it's usually very hard to tell) clad in purple robes trimmed with gold.

They are armed with unholy ceremonial daggers and wield them with vicious professionalism.

Acolytes (Level 1 Lizard-Man Cleric)
(2) - AC 7 MV 9" HD 2D8+1 HP 11, 13
#AT 1 DMG Unholy Dagger +1 (1-4+1)
INT Average AL CE SIZE M THAC0 20
SPELL(S) Cause Light Wounds and Bless XP 160

The walls of the chamber have various unholy scriptures written on them with blood, and the skull of a young child sits on the table between two beds. On the table is also a book written in some unearthly language and bound in human skin - it is about the horrible rituals used to control the Lurker in the Pool.

A small footlocker hidden under the table contains the meager treasure of the acolytes:

- 33 GP
- Evil Clerical Scroll with Hold Person
- Vial of Unholy Water

8 - The Shrine

The Shrine has an Evil aura, very much so.

Any character of Good alignment will feel uneasy there and clerics of Good religions and especially Paladins will get a feeling of physical nausea (just for role-playing purposes, no mechanical effects).

The Black Altar at the eastern wall is covered in blood from numerous vile sacrifices conducted at the shrine, in

the northwestern corner a finely carved black statue of a demon stands and watches the room with its green gemstone eyes (worth 200 GP each).

The statue is a Living Statue that animates either via the commands of the chaos clergy or if someone tampers with the altar. If it animates on its own it will attack whoever messed with the altar first and his companions after that. If it is animated by clergy, it will follow verbal commands and will keep on fighting the designated enemies if the commands end.

Mr. Statue - AC 5 MV 6" HD 6D10 HP 45 #AT 2 DMG Fists (d10) SD +1 or better to hit THAC0 :15 XP 400

9 - Chamber of the Scaled One

The private chamber of the leader of the cult, the lizard man priest named L'zzz'y is pretty much like the chamber of the two acolytes. But a bit more stylish. And has a black skinned lizard man with golden eyes in it. She's as evil as they come.

She is the last boss of this adventure.

L'zzz'y (Level 3 Lizard-Man Cleric) - AC 5 MV 9" HD 4D8+1 HP 23 #AT 1 DMG Unholy Dagger +1 (1-4+2) INT Average AL CE SIZE M THAC0 19 SPELL(S) Cause Light Wounds (x2), Protection from Good and Hold Person XP 360

When defeated, L'zzz'y has time to curse the party before finally dying. There's a 10% chance per PC that they actually get cursed. Be amusing, but cruel if this happens.

In a trapped chest (shoddily hidden trap, +20% to find it, but the poison is potent - 5d10 damage, save for half) is the priests personal treasure:

- 108 GP
- Prayer Book of Evil Chaos, worth 500 in right circles (but should be hidden from paladins and such)
- A rude ebony figure, worth 200 GP

and the Green Gem of Chaos.

The Green Gem of Chaos

This gemstone size of a man's fist is one of the six Gems of Chaos that alone give their users some useful magical powers and as a set are the key to releasing a demon prince who was trapped long ago on a distant demi-plane.

The green gem gives power over the minds of both mortal men and also creatures summoned from the realms of chaos.

Anyone charmed by the owner of the gem will not get a new saving throw to see if the charm is broken as long as the gem is possessed. Any Chaotic Evil creatures with less than 8 Hit Dice summoned by the owner will be auto-

matically under his control, as long as a blood sacrifice is made to the creature once every seven days.

The owner of the green gem of chaos can also use the following powers once each day:

- charm person
- friends
- hold person
- protection from good

While the gem doesn't possess any intelligence, it has a Chaotic Evil alignment because it is tied to the will of the imprisoned demon, and will only work for owners of CN, NE or CE alignment - in the case of CN and NE the gem will function only if the user does things that will promote Chaos or Evil.

Concluding the Adventure

The survivors get to enjoy their loot, the huge gratitude of the two women held captive by the chieftain - especially if there are dashing shwasbuckler types of high charisma in the party (the redhead likes gnomes too) and a nice quest experience bonus of 250 each if they get all the remaining captives to safety.

Credits and Whatnot:

Writin, Mappin and PDFin done by Olli Björkqvist. Arts are public domain. You can do whatever you want with this.

