

TG1

Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module

LOST TEMPLE OF IBHOLTNEG

Written by "Weird Dave" Coulson

An Adventure for Character Levels 3-5



MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD #1





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For use with Castles & Crusades

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*On the borders of the uncivilized Great Jungle lies the outpost of Kraden's Hill. Brave adventurers are needed to lead expeditions into the perilous jungle, facing cannibal monsters, dangerous flora, and worse, all in search of wealth and power hidden deep inside the jungle. Find this and more in the **LOST TEMPLE OF IBHOLTNEG!***

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Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module TG1
LOST TEMPLE OF IBHOLTHERG
MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD #1

For use with Castles & Crusades

Writer: "Weird Dave" Coulson

Editor: James Lund

Cover Art: Matt Morrow

Interior Art: Johnathan L Bingham

Cartography: Glynn Seal

Layout: "Weird Dave" Coulson

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LOST TEMPLE OF IBHOLTNEG

Far to the south, on the borders of the Great Jungle, brave caravans of merchants, traders, and settlers have begun to colonize the frontier. For several years now they've cut into the harsh wilderness, but stand on the brink of destruction from unknown, terrible forces. Just as rumors of a lost temple have surfaced, those same forces seem to be on the move.

TG1 Lost Temple of Ibholtneg is the first adventure in the Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module series **MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD**. It is designed for a party of four to six *Castles & Crusades* characters, levels 3 to 5. The GM should read the module thoroughly before playing to become familiar with the overall plot of the adventure.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: THE FRONTIER

THE MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD SERIES TAKES PLACE IN A FRONTIER TOWN ON THE BORDERS OF AN INHOSPITABLE AND DANGEROUS JUNGLE. DETAILS ARE GIVEN BELOW FOR THIS SPECK OF CIVILIZATION KNOWN AS KRADEN'S HILL, BUT LITTLE IS DETERMINED AS TO WHOM THE TOWNMASTER ANSWERS. FIND A PLACE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN FOR KRADEN'S HILL TO HELP ROOT THE CHARACTERS IN YOUR SETTING. YOU WON'T REGRET IT.

Adventure Background

The Great Jungle is a vast wilderness filled with equal parts terrible monsters and tales about them. Expeditions returning home from treks into the jungle tell stories about tribes of cannibal orcs, white-furred gorillas using tools for war, man-eating plants as big as a horse, and insects large enough to suck a traveler dry of blood in an instant. Some expeditions simply don't return at all.

But an abundance of natural resources in the Great Jungle and an overflowing population hungry for expansion has forced the rulers of the land to make a push to settle the area. Some years ago, a brave band of merchants representing Grimden House – owners of a large caravan network across the land – saw a profit in the venture and set forth to conquer the Great Jungle. They brought with them a sizable army of mercenaries, and before long they reached the edge of the jungle.

They fought for every inch of land, paying for it with the blood of the settlers and traders. Eventually they won a slice of land from the wilderness. Kraden's Hill was founded, named in honor of their leader, Kraden Grimden, who fell in battle against a horde of screaming black-skinned cannibal orcs. Even as their leader was lost, the brave settlers routed the orcish horde. The spot was perfect, located just a short distance from a tranquil freshwater lake. The orcs

fought hard and with unflinching desperation to repel the traders and mercenaries. They saw the lake as a holy site, but were forced to relent after that fateful battle.

Now, three years later, Kraden's Hill is seeing an explosion of new growth. A steady supply of rare plants and animals sent along the rough trade route linking Kraden's Hill to civilization has kept the meager colony alive, but now farmers and settlers have been making the journey southward as well. Eager to escape work under the control of greedy lords in high castles, many have come to see Kraden's Hill as a fresh start.

But that's not all. Many have been lured to Kraden's Hill; scholars, adventurers, thieves, and thrill-seekers have seen ample reasons to visit. Rumors of a great temple made of gold hidden deep within the jungle have spread by regular trade with several of the orc tribes who have ancient legends of the site. They speak of the place in hushed whispers and claim that it is a holy place, sacred to a toad god who once ruled over all of the jungle.

Kraden's Hill has now become home to several merchant companies looking to find this temple of the toad god and claim it as their own. Grimden House controls the majority of trade in the frontier town, but two others have begun to make inroads as well – the dwarves of Clan Ironstar and the humans of Noviorium House. These three companies seek brave heroes to venture forth into the dangerous jungle and find the golden temple before their rivals do.

It is a place ripe for plunder, and not just in terms of hidden treasures in the jungle.

Module Synopsis

The characters come to Kraden's Hill intent on finding their fortune within the great golden temple hidden somewhere in the jungle. They arrived with an independent merchant who was traveling south with a larger Grimden House contingent. They have an opportunity to search the frontier town and get a feel for the place. The Thirsty Serpent is the best tavern and inn in Kraden's Hill, although they cater to Grimden House interests almost exclusively.

The party's arrival marks them as potential employees, and they soon find that the three merchant companies are all interested in an audience with them. Grimden House is straightforward; offering a decent upfront payment but little compensation upon discovery. The dwarves of Clan Ironstar are shrewd negotiators but have little to offer now – instead they promise to make sure the characters are well taken care of should they

find the temple. The sorcerers of Noviorium House offer to share in the mystical secrets the temple contains.

Ultimately their decision to sign on with a merchant company or go on their own into the jungle is up to the characters. Finding the temple is going to be a bit more difficult, and involves first tracking down a tribe of black-skinned orcs that live nearby. These orcs, of the Goyega Zaa Tribe, have been trading peacefully with Kraden's Hill for several years, and the characters find that they are arriving at the advent of the Feast of First Fruits. Social occurrences outside the characters' experience are bound to occur, but if they can keep their wits about them, they can learn that they must seek out the hut of a blind orc shaman named Bula Goyega.

Bula Goyega tells the characters that they must find the Idol of the Squamous Toad, an unholy relic hidden in the jungle, before they can find the Lost Temple of Ibholtheg. He gives rough directions but the characters must navigate and survive tough encounters in the heart of the jungle to find the idol. There, they face off against degenerate toad-men and mutant frog demons known as cipactli; descendants of Ibholtheg's unholy brood. Upon investigating the idol they find the path before them clear.

The Lost Temple itself is hidden a short distance away, and within that unholy site of fabulous wealth the characters face madness-inducing fog, undead abominations, more cipactli, and more despicable monsters. An aspect of Ibholtheg itself still lingers over the site, but killing it triggers the collapse of the temple. With bravery, skill, and no small amount of luck, the characters will flee the crumbling temple and retreat to the jungle to see the ruins of the Lost Temple of Ibholtheg.

Future Modules

The **MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD** series of Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Modules detail the return to power of a squamous evil that once plagued the jungle. Known as Ibholtheg, this being is ancient, malevolent, and lies sleeping within the Pit of Black Gulfs into which it was cast long ago by greater powers. It stirs once more, awakened by the encroachment upon its sacred grounds, and only a brave band of adventurers can stand up and put a stop to it before it oozes over the land once again.

In **TG2 Tongues of the Screaming Toad**, an old sect of Ibholtheg's worshippers takes up residence in the frontier town of Kraden's Hill. People spiral into madness as their tongues blacken and eventually fall off. Researching this curse reveals hidden schemes between the merchants of the town. Eventually the characters will track down an ancient site in the jungle

known as the Swamp of the Screaming Toad. Therein lies the secret to stopping the plague and putting down this newly revived Ibholtheg cult.

The final adventure in the series is **TG3 Shadow Out of Sapphire Lake**. A lurking, living shadow rises from the depths of tranquil Sapphire Lake, wreaking havoc over Kraden's Hill, and it's up to the characters to rise up and put an end to it. They must descend into the depths of Sapphire Lake itself to find the source of the shadow. There they will discover the source is actually a crack in the planar prison known as the Pit of Black Gulfs. Only by passing into the Pit and sealing it from the inside can the characters finally put a stop to Ibholtheg's rise.

Involving the Characters

The adventure starts with the characters arriving in Kraden's Hill with the understanding that there are lucrative employment opportunities for adventurers willing to brave the dangers of the Great Jungle. You can print and cut out the rumors in **Player Handout 1** to give to the characters before they start to give them an idea of what they're after.

Adapting the Module

This module tries to use as many generic location names as possible to make it easy to port to nearly any fantasy campaign setting. Below are the elements of the module that would need to be mapped out to an existing setting along with notes of how they fit within the adventure.

The Great Jungle: A vast expanse of largely unexplored jungle wilderness on the edge (or even just beyond) of settled territories. Occupied by tribes of nomadic wild elves, savage shadow orcs, and native humans who were once part of a large Aztec-like civilization long ago.

Kraden's Hill: A frontier town settled a few years ago by enterprising members of Grimden House.

Grimden House: A powerful merchant family with trade connections across a wide area. Their interests lie in plundering the Great Jungle for valuables to be sold in other markets.

Clan Ironstar: Dwarven merchants with an eye for adventure and gold in the inhospitable jungle.

Noviorium House: A merchant family with ties to mystical powers in faraway lands. Known for using magic to further their ends, with a keen interest in arcane locations.



Ibholtheg: Squamous bat-toad entity of ancient antiquity. Worshipped by mutant bullywugs, some of which can fly on bat-like wings.

PART ONE: OFFERS IN KRADEN'S HILL

The characters arrive in Kraden's Hill seeking fame and fortune in the wild frontier town. It's likely they've arrived having heard of a golden temple somewhere in the jungle and the merchants willing to pay top coin for its discovery and plunder. Adventure has a way of finding the characters, and they don't have to wait long before offers come pouring in. Who can the characters trust? Who's talking straight and who's playing dirty?

Welcome to Kraden's Hill

The below text assumes the characters came into Kraden's Hill with the latest merchant caravan from somewhere in the north. Adjust the text if the characters are arriving via some other means.

For days now you've seen nothing but tall mountains and craggy hills as you made your trek south with a merchant caravan to the far frontiers of civilization. The going was rough at times, and slow, but now you're on the downward slope of the mountain range. You've caught brief glimpses of the deep emerald expanse known as the Great Jungle but so far all you've experienced is the weather getting hotter and stickier, causing your clothing to cling to you like a hungry leech. Finally, as the morning sun beats down, you see your destination – the frontier town of Kraden's Hill. It sits just south of a tall, barren hilltop that would offer a fantastic view of the surrounding area. Three dozen wooden buildings, separated by rough streets and the hill are enclosed behind a stout wooden wall, reaching twenty feet high. Beyond the wall, the huge green expanse of the Great Jungle waits like a lurking panther. Darkness the morning sun cannot dispel waits beneath the canopy of thick jungle leaves. About a mile east of town, you can see a glittering azure lake with a clear path between it and the town.

The merchant caravan takes the rest of the morning and early afternoon to make the trek to the gates of Kraden's Hill. The caravan master, **Baldred Invershaw**, requests that the characters stay with the caravan wagons until they enter the gates of the town. He

doesn't want any trouble and trusts the party to keep an eye out in case things take a turn for the worse.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: THE JOURNEY SOUTH

THE CHARACTERS JOURNEY TO KRADEN'S HILL THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS AND FROM THE NORTHERN LANDS CAN BE HAND-WAVED EASILY, BUT IF YOU WANT TO OFFER A LITTLE EXCITEMENT FOR THE JOURNEY YOU CAN USE THE MODULE TGO DEPTHS OF THE CROAKING GROTT. THAT MODULE INTRODUCES THE CHARACTERS TO BALDRED INVERSHAW, AN INDEPENDENT MERCHANT WHO IS BEING PAID TO LEAD THE GRIMDEN HOUSE CARAVAN BUT HAS HIS OWN REASONS FOR COMING TO THE FRONTIER TOWN.

The Frontier Life

The caravan wagons stop a hundred feet from the gates of Kraden's Hill as two armed men step forward from a small guard station. The men are lightly armored considering the heat, but wear tabards bearing the crest of Grimden House. Baldred steps forward and announces that Master Theodric Grimden is expecting their arrival. The two guards look over his offered paperwork for a moment, then announce their arrival and open the gates.

Inside, Kraden's Hill is a bustling frontier town. It is the hub for the entire region, as dozens of settlers have taken up offers to start cultivating the land on the border of the jungle. None of the settlements – small gatherings of farms really – have ventured deep into the Great Jungle and most are within three days ride of Kraden's Hill. They come into town on an irregular basis to trade, catch up on news, and for safety when jungle raiders and predators strike.

Baldred drives the caravan wagons to the center of Kraden's Hill, which sits just shy of the towering hill that gives the town its name. Merchant arrivals are always a big event, so swarms of people come out to see what kind of wares are for sale. Baldred tells the characters to stay at the Thirsty Serpent, which is where he'll be staying as well, before he gets caught in the rush of potential customers.

Purchases in Kraden's Hill

Because of its remoteness, buying gear and goods in Kraden's Hill is expensive. Unless otherwise noted, prices for items that can be found are 4x higher than normal. The merchants in town may be willing to cut a deal once the characters establish themselves somewhat or if they join up with one of the three mercantile powers in town (Grimden House, Clan Ironstar, or Noviorum House). Availability for items is up to the GM but a good rule of thumb is to assume there is a 75% chance that a given common item is available in town.

NPC Profile: Ereltris and Esysith Evenleaf, Thirsty Serpent Owners

The people of Kraden's Hill view the wild elves of the Great Jungle with great suspicion and distrust. Most of the wandering bands have dealt only with the occasional arrow and have crossed blades with the settlers, but for the most part the elves seem more content to protect the interior of the jungle than the fringes. Ereltris and Esysith were born into a lifestyle of constant moving, hunting and gathering for every meal, and their experience shows in their steely gaze and taut muscles.

But the two share a keen interest in the ways of civilization. They worked as little more than slaves after being captured in a raid on Kraden's Hill, a common fate for captured wild elves. The elves treat the past as a strange thing – except to a few, it is something to learn from but not hold grudges over. Ereltris and Esysith took work at the Thirsty Serpent and gained the trust of the original owner. But after only a few months the owner fell ill from a snake bite and the Evenleaf twins were able to purchase it from precious gems their people had gathered from the mountains (nothing of value to the elves but pretty to look at). The two have run the Thirsty Serpent for over a year now, quietly keeping it running for the merchants and travelers that come to Kraden's Hill.

The Thirsty Serpent

There are two taverns in Kraden's Hill – the Jewel of the Jungle, which caters to higher-end merchants and customers, and the Thirsty Serpent. The Thirsty Serpent also offers the only inn in town for travelers. Baldred stays there along with the other travelling merchants, although many of them dine and relax at the Jewel.

Read or paraphrase the following as the characters approach the Thirsty Serpent.

One of the largest buildings in Kraden's Hill, with at least three stories, the Thirsty Serpent bears a swinging sign depicting a mug of ale being dumped down the open mouth of a snake, its belly full. The doors inside are on swings and don't quite fill the doorway. Pushing through them, you see a wide common room with benches and tables of rough wood. Behind the bar hang dozens of snakes nailed to the wall like trophies. Most of them are exotically patterned and colored, and one of them is so large it is hung in the middle, dropping down ten feet on either side! An elf with bronzed skin stands behind the bar, and you see from the kitchen another elf, female, but otherwise with nearly identical features.

Ereltris Evenleaf, a wood elf, and his twin sister Esys this run the Thirsty Serpent. Ereltris talks abruptly, interrupting often, and has no social graces – the same goes for his sister Esys this. The two switch jobs irregularly and they employ a handful of other wood elves from their tribe to fill in the rest of the duties. Prices are NOT higher than normal in the Thirsty Serpent (which is considered a **modest inn**, costing 5 sp a night) as the Evenleaf twins are not particularly interested in wealth.

The menu at the Thirsty Serpent is not extensive, however. They offer mugs of sweetwater, a crystal clear sweet liquid, or fermented nectar wine for 2 sp each. Food consists of specialty salads with exotic greens and well-prepared snake meat for 5 sp each (available without the snake meat for only 2 sp).

Rumors About Town

A character seeking rumors, either in the Thirsty Serpent or elsewhere, can make a CL 3 Charisma check to learn one of the following items.

- The shadow orc tribes that inhabit the Great Jungle have become restless of late. Several of them trade with the people of Kraden's Hill but there are others that are little more than degenerate savages!
- Theodric Grimden is said to have at least three bastard children in the surrounding farms and settlements outside of Kraden's Hill. His wife doesn't know about any of them, though.
- The dwarves of Clan Ironstar are all crazy. They keep their armor on and march around as if they were an army! Their leader, Adbrek Ironstar, is a soldier first and a merchant second.

Offers for Employment

After the day winds down, Baldred Invershaw and the rest of the merchants that traveled with the characters close up shop, post their own guards, and head over to the Thirsty Serpent for rounds of refreshment and beds. Baldred finds the characters, pays them their wage of 30 gold each, and then tells them that they should expect to be hearing from the merchant powers of Kraden's Hill very soon. Baldred can provide a rough description of the three for the characters' benefit.

It's important that the characters meet with at least Theodric Grimden, as he has the most concrete information regarding the golden temple.

Grimden House Offer

As the characters are dining in the Thirsty Serpent (or if they've moved over to the Jewel of the Jungle), a messenger boy arrives at their table and delivers

a note. The note is from Theodric Grimden, head of Grimden House in Kraden's Hill, and invites the characters to join him at his personal residence for fine brandy and to discuss business. The boy who delivered the note was instructed to lead the characters back to Theodric's residence.

The sun is sinking low over the horizon as the boy leads the characters through Kraden's Hill. They walk down muddy streets beneath the shadow of many wooden buildings, most of which house the guards, merchants, and settlers that keep the town running. Theodric's residence is one of the largest, with two stories and grand doors, but otherwise appears much like the rest of the buildings. Theodric Grimden himself is sitting outside on a chair, attended by two guards.

Theodric Grimden is a handsome man in his late 30s, with an easy smile and clean-shaven face. He dresses simply and practically considering the humidity, but always is sure to keep a scarf over his shoulder that bears the symbol of Grimden House. He rises to greet the characters by hand, introducing himself and welcoming them officially to Kraden's Hill. He asks if any of them would like goblets of brandy before offering them seats outside around his table and getting down to business.

"I'm sure you've heard the rumors," Theodric begins, sipping on his brandy with a satisfied sigh. "Somewhere out in the Great Jungle is a golden temple, hidden amidst the vines. Well, let me tell you this – it is no rumor." He reaches behind him and pulls out a solid gold bar, nearly a foot long and half as wide. "This was found in the camp of shadow orcs just a few months ago after a raid. There's no gold to our knowledge in the mountains, leastwise not enough for the savage orcs to mine or smelt, so that begs the question – where did this come from?" Theodric's eyes gleam with avarice in the last light of the setting sun as he leans forward.

Theodric is telling the truth, and goes on to say that after some investigation he learned that the shadow orcs tell stories of a legendary golden temple somewhere in the jungle. They didn't build it, and by all accounts its existence predates their arrival to the jungle centuries ago. But some orcs have found golden blocks like these in their foraging.

On the back of the golden brick, which Theodric shows with a great flourish, is the stamped image of a squatting toad with bat-like wings over its shoulders. Characters can make CL 5 Intelligence checks to identify the symbol as an ancient being called lbholtheg, a squamous bat-toad thing that ruled over a primordial jungle in ages long past. Theodric confirms this as well, and assures them that they are seeking an ancient temple of lbholtheg somewhere in the jungle.

As far as business goes, Theodric is willing to pay the characters 500 gold each to lead an expedition to find the golden temple and secure it for Grimden House. All rights to the temple itself would belong to the merchants, though suitable compensation would be offered if jungle creatures that need to be cleared out inhabit the temple. Theodric would send a team of 10 native bearers and an experienced guide that the characters would assist in the journey. Theodric can be negotiated up to 750 gold per character, with successful CL 3 Charisma checks raising his offer by 50 gold.

Theodric understands if the characters don't agree right away, but cautions them that they must make their decision by dusk the next day. There are many other parties interested in claiming the treasures of the golden temple. Theodric doesn't reveal their plan of action until he has a signed and sworn agreement from the characters (see **Preparations to Set Out** below).

Clan Ironstar Offer

The dwarves of Clan Ironstar have a permanent residence in Kraden's Hill that doubles as their storefront. Early in the morning after the characters arrive, they find a contingent of four dwarves sitting around a table in the Thirsty Serpent waiting for them. They all bear the symbol of Clan Ironstar on their full armor.

The leader, Adbrek Ironstar, stands up to greet the characters by name. He is a burly dwarf, stout, with a full beard as black as coal and a wild mane of hair. A well-worn battle axe hangs at his side and he wears his armor with the comfortable ease of a soldier. He introduces himself and invites the characters to chat with him about the possibility of gainful employment in search for lost treasure in the jungle.

Assuming that they are amiable, Adbrek asks that the characters follow him outside.

Adbrek Ironstar and his dwarven companions lead you out of the Thirsty Serpent and up to the top of Kraden's Hill. The hilltop is bare and has been leveled off to create a thirty foot wide broad plain. Adbrek motions out to the jungle. "There's danger lurkin' in that jungle, that's fer sure," he begins with a note of excitement in his voice, "and treasure too if you've got the guts to get it! I know you've already spoken to Theodric, but hear me out before ya make up yer mind. That Grimden House is crooked, I tells ya!"

Adbrek begins to talk animatedly about how Grimden House has been trying to keep the treasures of the Great Jungle all for themselves, choking off the competition. Clan Ironstar, who have a stronghold in the mountains just to the north of the jungle, have

long sent scouts inside to keep an eye on the savage shadow orcs. It was many years ago when they first heard of the golden temple and they've been hunting for it ever since.

But now, renewed interest from the humans has forced them to redouble their efforts. Adbrek knows of the gold bar found by Theodric, and snorts about its significance. Clan Ironstar has been making inroads into the jungle for a long time now, and Adbrek feels now is the time to set out fully to find the golden temple.

Unfortunately, the coffers of Clan Ironstar are somewhat sparse. Adbrek can only offer 100 gold per character to help find the golden temple of Ibholtheg, but he offers to share in the profits from the temple's loot – 5% would go to the characters after the final tally is done. If the rumors of gold and treasure are true, even that amount is likely to set the characters up for life! Adbrek can be talked up to 10%, with successive CL 3 Charisma checks increasing the offer by 1%.

The characters would be accompanying a group of 10 native bearers into the jungle along with an accomplished guide who would act as Clan Ironstar's representative. Adbrek gives the characters until sundown to decide.

Noviortum House Offer

Around noon on the day after arriving, representatives of Noviortum House visit the characters. Wherever the characters are, they turn around to find three figures wearing heavy purple robes standing nearby, watching them. The middle one, a tall lanky man, steps forward and pulls down his hood to reveal a bald head, narrow eyes, and pale skin. He introduces himself as Natan of Noviortum House and asks if the characters have yet to sign on with an expedition into the jungle to find the temple of Ibholtheg. He nods sagely at their answer (he already knows the truth of the situation) and offers a cup of jungle flower tea to the characters if they are willing to listen to his offer.

Natan speaks slowly and deliberately, trying never to waste words. Assuming they agree, he leads them to their mercantile warehouse.

The robed man Natan leads you and his fellows quickly through the mud-packed streets of Kraden's Hill, past many buildings, until arriving at what appears to be a large warehouse. One of the robed figures steps forward and opens the door, which Natan enters and gestures for you to follow. Inside, boxes and crates are stacked nearly to the ceiling. An assortment of people, humans and wild elves, are working to open some of the crates, revealing strange objects and instruments. Natan leads you to a small office room and sits down on

an ornate rug in the center, gesturing for you to do the same.

Natan and Noviorum House are interested in plumbing the Great Jungle for its mystical secrets. They have gained much wisdom since arriving in Kraden's Hill, though their efforts are diminished by the greed and influence of Grimden House. Now, however, events are being set in motion to uncover the temple of Ibholtheg, and Noviorum House must take an active stance.

Natan does not seek the gold of the temple of Ibholtheg, but instead only the knowledge contained within. For the return of any ancient relics or items contained within the temple, Noviorum House is willing to pay 500 gold per piece. They are willing to provide 10 native bearers and a guide to assist in finding the temple and carrying away any suitable items. Once the temple is discovered and cleared of any hostile inhabitants, Noviorum House would have exclusive access to it to do with as they see fit.

Natan asks that the characters make up their decision before sundown, as the expedition must leave very soon into the jungle.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: THE THREE OFFERS

THE PLAYERS HAVE A CHOICE NOW TO GO WITH ONE OF THE THREE OFFERS, OR PERHAPS TO IGNORE THEM AND SET OUT ON THEIR OWN FOR THE GOLDEN TEMPLE. THOUGH THEY DON'T KNOW IT NOW, GRIMDEN HOUSE IS THE BEST OFFER CONSIDERING THE TEMPLE IS DESTINED TO COLLAPSE INTO THE EARTH ONCE THE AVATAR OF IBHOLTHEG IS DESTROYED, THOUGH NOVIORTUM HOUSE'S OFFER COULD STILL BE HONORED. CLAN IRONSTAR IS BANKING ON KEEPING THE GOLDEN TEMPLE FOR ANY REWARDS.

Preparations to Set Out

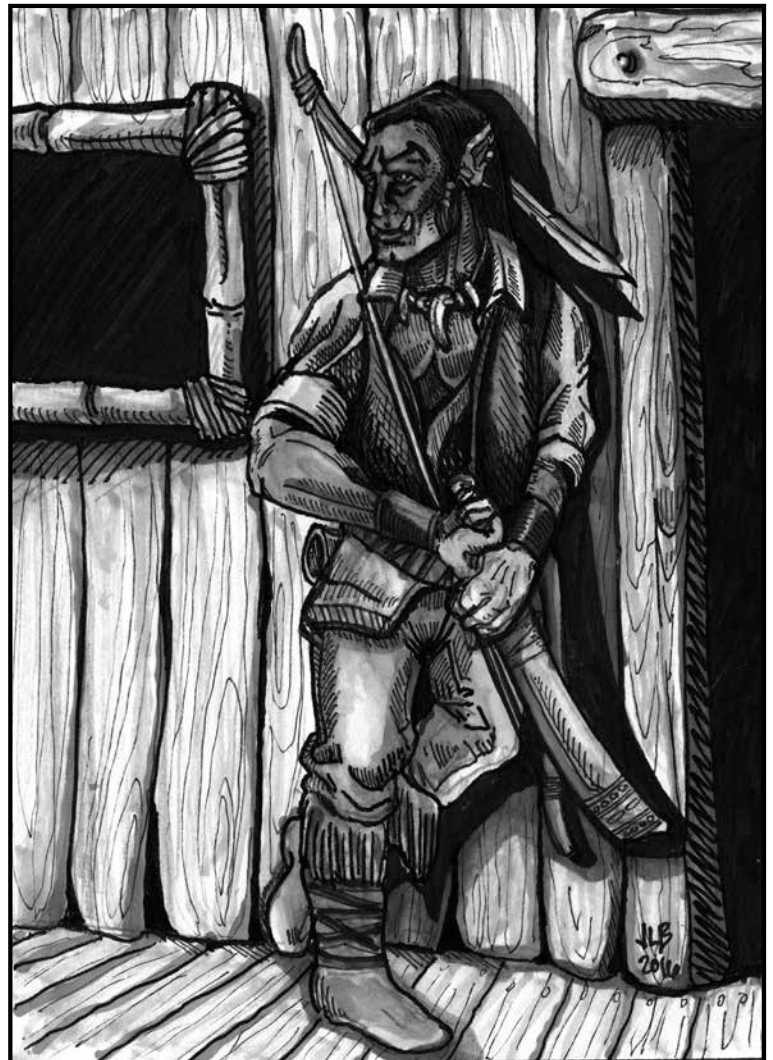
Whichever offer they accept, the characters should make their decision by sundown. Each of the merchant companies has offered to send the characters with 10 native bearers (humans and wild elves indigenous to the region who speak broken Common) and an experienced guide.

The characters meet their guide, **Jabu**, the morning they are to set out into the jungle. He is a half-shadow orc ranger with a crude sense of humor and practical jungle experience.

You head downstairs into the common room of the Thirsty Serpent before the full light of dawn breaks across the land, but you see you are not alone. Standing at the bar, picking his teeth with a small wooden stick is an impressive half-orc with dull ebony skin. A well-worn bow is slung across his back, a curved blade hangs at his side, and his open shirt shows a multitude of scars across his broad chest. He smiles upon seeing you. "So you must be the ones I'm taking into the jungle, eh?"

Jabu speaks Common competently and has been visiting the people of Kraden's Hill almost since Grimden House arrived. Many of the half-shadow orcs are hired as guides in the jungle or guards as they tend to have a better temperament than their full-blooded brothers and sisters. Jabu, however, has made a name for himself as a trustworthy guide who knows the jungle very well, as well as the region's shadow orc tribes.

Jabu speaks with the characters for a short while, asking if they need anything before they set out. The



NPC Profile: Jabu, Half-Shadow Orc Ranger

Raised in the jungle as a member of the Moronkula tribe, Jabu cut his teeth and earned his scars hunting great panthers, huge serpents, and other beasts growing up. As a half-orc, the child of a human slave mother and a shadow orc father, he had to work extra hard to prove himself. He distinguished himself quickly as a skilled tracker, with a reputation for moving silently like a shadow upon unsuspecting prey. The Moronkula tribe was the first to make peaceful contact with the human settlers, who had up to that point only encountered the shadow orcs when they were victims of their savage raids. A peace was brokered, and soon several other tribes came to trade with the strangers in Kraden's Hill.

Jabu made himself available as a guide and liked the respect given from the outsiders that came with his skills. He found himself staying in Kraden's Hill more and more, until he could finally afford a small shack inside the settlement. Now he is one of the more experienced guides in town, and though he never had much need for golden pyramids, he finds the high pay being offered by the merchant companies a great lure.

native bearers are waiting for them at the edge of town, and the sooner they leave the sooner they'll be back he says with a wink.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: USING JABU

JABU SHOULD BE USED TO OFFER INFORMATION TO THE PLAYERS AND TO GUIDE THEM IN THE WAYS OF THE JUNGLE, BUT NOT TO SUPPLANT ANY SPECIFIC CHARACTER. IF THERE IS A RANGER IN THE GROUP, JABU IS HAPPY TO CONSULT WITH THEM ON ANYTHING THEY FIND IN THE JUNGLE, ESPECIALLY IF THEY HAVE A FAVORED TERRAIN RELEVANT TO THE AREA (MOSTLY FOREST). DON'T OVERUSE JABU - HIS MAIN PURPOSE IS TO GET THE CHARACTERS TO GOYEGA ZAA SAFELY.

The characters' employer (whomever they chose) waits at the gate with the native bearers. They carry enough food and water for the whole trip, but the merchant makes sure to point out that the native bearers are not skilled in combat. They were hired for their skill in carrying things, not in fighting, so they are likely to flee if danger presents itself.

The employer pulls Jabu and the characters aside as they are preparing to leave to go over the route. The expedition will travel to the shadow orc village of Goyega Zaa, who are said to know the most about the jungle and its secrets. Once there, they must find out where the temple of Ibholtheg is located and then travel there with all haste. After the temple is found, it must be cleared of any hostile inhabitants and given

a rough accounting of its treasures and location. The characters are then to return to Kraden's Hill to report their findings and for final payment.

PART TWO: WELCOME TO THE GREAT JUNGLE

With Jabu and the native bearers ready to go, the characters can set out into the Great Jungle from Kraden's Hill. Their first destination is the shadow orc village of Goyega Zaa, whom Jabu explains are not the friendliest of shadow orc tribes. However, they are arriving during the Festival of First Fruits, a time of celebration, when warfare between tribes is not permitted by the orc gods. It is their safest method to finding out the location of the temple of Ibholtheg.

Your packs are ready and the native bearers, a combination of wild elves and humans who have lived in or near the jungle for generations, give the signal that they are ready to head out. Jabu smiles broadly and motions for everyone to start moving. The gates of Kraden's Hill, at the opposite end from where you entered, creak open ponderously, revealing the emerald, shadow-haunted Great Jungle beyond.

The jungle is too rough for animals so everyone must go on foot (or at least the native bearers and Jabu go on foot).

The Great Jungle

The journey to Goyega Zaa (home of the Goyega tribe) from Kraden's Hill takes the characters and bearers five days of hard jungle traveling. It's a hot, sticky, miserable journey, potentially filled with dangerous encounters.

For every half day of travel, there is a 30% chance the characters encounter something in the jungle. Roll on the random encounter table below. Choose a time for the encounter to occur, or you can roll 1d12 to determine the hour randomly. This could result in a night encounter!

d10	Jungle Encounter
1	Giant constrictor snakes
2	Savage shadow orcs
3	Swarm of poisonous snakes
4	Giant boar rivals
5	Cannibal natives
6-8	Heat wave



9	Troll ambush
0	Giant ape attack

Giant constrictor snakes

The jungle around the characters hides **2 giant constrictor snakes** eager for a quick meal.

Tactics: Any character with a passive Perception greater than the snakes' Dexterity (Stealth) check notices the creatures before they attack, but everyone else is surprised. The snakes go for the smallest characters first, eager to crush their opponents quickly.

Savage shadow orcs

The Great Jungle is filled with tribes of shadow orcs that are not friendly to outsiders. A hunting group of **8 shadow orc warriors** stumble upon the characters and decide to punish them for trespassing.

Tactics: Four of the shadow orcs charge forward while the other four hang back, shooting arrows at targets. The shadow orcs shooting bows have half cover where they are from the surrounding trees. The shadow orcs focus their attacks on the characters, but if they are

able to capture one or more of the native bearers the orc band flees with their captured slaves as quickly as possible.

Treasure: The shadow orcs carry the bodies of five dead brockets (jungle deer) that the expedition can use instead of their own food for five days.

Swarm of poisonous snakes

Giant constrictors are not the only serpent threat in the Great Jungle. Rustling in the nearby undergrowth alerts the characters to the presence of **3 swarms of poisonous snakes** that surge forward to attack.

Tactics: The poisonous snake swarms focus on the least armored character available.

Giant boar rivals

The characters come across **2 giant boars** that were fighting over a mate. They immediately turn upon the characters, seeing them as intruders.

Tactics: The boars charge in recklessly, intent on killing the intruders to their turf.

Cannibal natives

Like the shadow orcs, not all of the native humans of the Great Jungle are friendly. Many of the ones that lived in close proximity to Kraden's Hill were absorbed as slaves and taught the basics of civilization. But not too far from town, small bands of cannibals – barely recognizable as humans anymore – still live to hunt for flesh. A pack of **10 cannibal natives** attack the characters, eager to add their skulls to their belts.

Tactics: The cannibal natives are capable hunters, moving quickly through the jungle and as silently as possible. They use their blow darts at range to try drugging the characters with jungle tree frog poison.

Heat wave

The jungle is hot, but the characters hit a particularly bad spot of heat and humidity. Each character must make a CL 3 Constitution saving throw to avoid suffering from exhaustion (characters wearing 40 or more pounds of armor make the check at CL 5). Exhaustion imposes an additional CL 2 to any ability check until 8 or more hours of rest are completed.

Troll ambush

Trolls lurk in the Great Jungle, feasting on the lesser creatures. They hunt in a wide range, and anyone or anything that comes into that territory they view as their prey. Unfortunately, the characters stumble into such a territory. A single **troll** moves to attack the expedition.

Tactics: The troll uses a wounded brocket (a type of jungle deer) to lure the characters into a pit trap. The brocket can be heard plainly, crying in the jungle a

short distance away. Jabu wants to investigate but won't do it alone. Anyone that checks out the sound sees the wounded brocket lying against a fallen log, with a great gash in its side. Actively looking and CL 3 Wisdom check is needed to find the trap, which otherwise dumps unsuspecting characters 20 feet down into spikes. The fall deals 2d6 bludgeoning damage and the spikes deal 2d10 piercing damage. The troll, hiding nearby and spottable only by a character actively searching for it with a CL 5 Wisdom check, leaps out to attack in surprise.

If the characters do not take the bait, the troll attacks a short time later by simply leaping out the jungle.

Treasure: Finding the troll's lair requires a CL 5 Wisdom check. Doing so, the characters find its small treasure pile. The troll has accumulated a bag of 100 gold from various victims.

Giant ape attack

There are only a handful of giant apes in this section of the Great Jungle, which is thankful, as the beasts are ferocious and terrifying. The characters hear the **giant ape** bellowing a short distance before it shows up a few rounds later.

Tactics: The giant ape is not a subtle opponent, and bangs its massive fists down upon the enemy that deals it the most damage. If it is reduced to ¼ or less hit points, the giant ape retreats into the jungle to nurse its wounds. It does not pursue characters that flee more than 50 feet from it.

Jungle Living with Jabu

As the characters are traveling through the Great Jungle, they have some time to talk with their shadow orc guide Jabu. He knows quite a bit about the customs and traditions of the various jungle inhabitants and is happy to share them over an evening meal or as they break camp in the morning. You can use the below list of quotes and tidbits to help bring the Great Jungle to life in the eyes of the characters.

- There are many tribes of shadow orcs in the Great Jungle. Each has a permanent home somewhere, whose location is identified with the word "Zaa," meaning "home." So Goyega Zaa is the home of the Goyega tribe.
- The Goyega tribe are one of the most mysterious, and their shamans are known to be great spellcasters. This is why Jabu suggested traveling there during the Festival of First Fruits to try and get as much information about the golden temple as possible. If any tribe is likely to know anything about it, it's going to be the Goyega tribe. The tribe's chief is Mandla, a powerful warrior, but their shamans hold the

real influence.

- For as long as there have been shadow orcs in the jungle there have been wild elves. The wild elves have, as far as Jabu knows, never built a permanent settlement, instead opting to move quickly in bands among the trees. They are unfriendly and likely to kill intruders just for trespassing into the jungle, and they war constantly with the shadow orcs – even the peaceful ones like Jabu's tribe, the Moronkula.
- Strange creatures are known to lurk in the darkest depths of the Great Jungle. Tales of frogs and toads as big as a horse with the wings of bats and the jaws of a crocodile are told around shadow orc campfires to scare young orcs. Jabu has seen many monsters but nothing that matches that description in his journeys.
- Shadow orcs have been keeping the native humans in the Great Jungle as slaves for countless generations – the wild elves do the same. As a result, half-orcs like Jabu are common in the jungle.
- The native humans in the region are descendants of a once mighty civilization who built great pyramids in the jungle and worshipped strange gods. Jabu believes the golden temple is likely a remnant from this ancient time, if it exists at all, though none of the native bearers claim to know about it.

Goyega Zaa and the Feast of First Fruits

After five days of traveling (or longer if the characters need rest after some of the jungle encounters), they finally come upon Goyega Zaa.

On the morning before their arrival, they are confronted by a band of **10 shadow orc warriors** who appear out of the shadows of the jungle. Jabu speaks the native language, a primitive dialect of Orc, introducing himself and everyone else as travelers who have come to share to share in the Feast of First Fruits. The warriors seem leery at first, but Jabu hands them each a piece of cured, peppered jerky as a bribe that earns their trust.

In explanation, Jabu explains that the shadow orcs have a fondness for peppered jerky, a food item they do not have in the jungle. It can be used as a bribe in certain circumstances.

Goyega Zaa Introductions

The warriors lead the characters, Jabu, and the native bearers silently through the jungle for about a mile or so. As they approach Goyega Zaa the sound of drum beats gets louder and louder. Read or paraphrase the following as they come upon the shadow orc village.

NPC Profile: Bula, Blind Shaman of the Jungle

Bula is a gifted shaman with many divine abilities, all of which she bends for the good of the Great Jungle. She is nearly 100 years old, and though she was born in the Goyega tribe she considers all the tribes of shadow orcs to be her family. Her interests are in the preservation of the jungle as a living, breathing system, and she views her gods – the Snake God, the Crocodile God, the Ape God, and many others – as powerful spirits that share in her mission. In her old age, she has taken to referring to herself in the third person (“Bula knows what Bula knows” is a common phrase).

Bula knows that it is only a matter of time before the ancient temple of Ibholtheg, the Squamous Toad God, is found. Ibholtheg is a stain on the jungle’s history – a terrible otherworldly being interested only in spreading death and madness. She sees in the characters opportunity to destroy the temple for good, which Bula believes will end the threat of Ibholtheg. This is why she helps the characters.

The orc warriors you’ve been following through the jungle for the past mile grow visibly more relaxed as a great clearing opens up before you. Primitive huts made of mud, straw, and wood stand around the perimeter of the large circular clearing, in the center of which sits a great bonfire. Shadow orc men, women, and children move about the village, tending to various tasks, many of which seem to center around a large tent. Beneath the tent many orcs are cutting, peeling, and slicing fruits of all kinds from several huge baskets. The rhythmic pounding of drums fills the air and the savory smell of roasting meats wafts heavily around you. One of the warriors who led you here jogs into the village, returning moments later with two orcs. One of them is older and clearly stronger, with the countenance of a leader worn on his heavily scarred brow. The other is a woman, her features hidden by a brown robe. She leans heavily on her staff, which is topped by a rough-cut emerald clutched in the mouth of a crudely carved panther head.

The male is **Mandla**, chief of the Goyega tribe, and the female is **Omotayo**, their spiritual leader. Mandla steps forward and demands to know what the party is doing in Goyega Zaa. Jabu steps forward to introduce the characters but is cut short quickly by Omotayo. She steps forward and peers closely at each character in turn. Her staff glows if she approaches anyone with magical ability, which seems to interest the orc shaman greatly.

Finally, with a flourish, Omotayo steps back and pronounces that the “gods of the jungle and the sky

have delivered these strangers to Goyega Zaa, and the Goyega people will welcome them to the Feast of First Fruits!” This does not seem to go over very well with Mandla, who scowls bitterly, but otherwise lets the characters into the village. He takes them to a small hut nearby and tells them they can wait there until sundown when the feast will begin.

Any attempts to question Mandla or Omotayo are met with hand waving and a promise to speak during the Feast of First Fruits, as they still have much to prepare. The village is alive with movement, and Jabu recommends that they wait in their hut until sundown when the feast begins.

Mind Your Manners

As the characters interact with the Goyega tribe, they’re going to have to be on their best behavior. Social etiquette in the orc village is going to save their lives more than swords and spells. As the characters proceed through the Feast of First Fruits they will make a series of Charisma checks as a group. If more than half of the group fails the check they gain a **faux pas point**, and if they have 3 faux pas points the tribe rises up and forcibly ejects them from the village (though they do not resort to combat unless the characters spill blood first). If anyone rolls a natural 20 on their Charisma check in such a circumstances they remove a **faux pas point** from the accumulated pool (though they can’t have less than 0).

Jabu can be used to help smooth out rough edges or provide guidance, but remember the characters must suffer the consequences of their own actions.

Feast of First Fruits

The rush and activity of Goyega Zaa begins to settle down as the day winds down, as the sun begins to set a solemn presence has crept over the village. A group of four shadow orc warriors come to escort the characters and Jabu (the native bearers are left outside of the village along with most of the village slaves) to the table beneath the tent. Read or paraphrase the following.

The warriors lead you out of your hut and into the village as the sun sets and twilight blankets the jungle. The fire in the center crackles and burns brightly, illuminating much of the area, and together with the flickering torches set all around the clearing your vision quickly adjusts. You are led solemnly to the tent where you saw orcs peeling and cutting fruit earlier. Now, it is cleared except for a long table, at the head of which sits Mandla. He is dressed in exotic bones and feathers, marking him as the chief of the Goyega tribe, and at his right and left are four robed shamans, all women, their hoods down and their black hair stylized with flowers. Mandla stands as you approach and motions for you to sit at his table.

There are enough seats the table for Jabu and all of the characters. Once they are seated, Mandla claps his hands together and the entire tribe begins to chant in unison. Jabu whispers that they are invoking the gods of the jungle, the sky, and the water to bless the coming year and provide for the Goyega tribe.

Once the chant is over, Mandla addresses the crowd.

Mandla's clap signals the chant is over, and a hush falls over the village as two slave humans bring forth a great plate of fresh fruit. Delicate slices of a green melon, large chunks of a yellow fibrous fruit, long thin pieces of an orange-colored fruit, and many others decorate the plate. The slaves set the platter before Mandla, who stands and addresses the village. He speaks gustily, gesticulating wildly to the shamans at his side, then to the sky, then to the whole jungle around you. The orcs in the village clap and cheer wildly as the chief finishes his address, after which he sits down and Omotayo stands. All is quiet as she leans on her curious staff, her eyes scanning the crowd – until finally settling on you.

The shaman says nothing, but sits back down with a nod of her head to the chief. Everyone in the village raises their hands to the sky, including Jabu, who looks expectantly at the characters. If any of the characters do not raise their hands, the characters must all make CL 3 Charisma check to avoid a **faux pas point**.

After everyone has their hands to the sky, Mandla takes the first piece of fruit and devours it noisily, the juices running down his chin. Once complete, he shouts exultantly to the sky and the entire village takes up the cry, ululating and shouting. Again Jabu motions for the characters to do the same, and if one or more do not they must make a group CL 3 Charisma check or gain a **faux pas point**.

The Feast of First Fruits begins after that, and great platters of fresh delicious fruit are brought out by slaves for the entire village to enjoy. The shamans eat sparingly, picking at their food, but Mandla takes to the fruit with great gusto. He speaks of the Goyega ancestors, of great battles against razorback boars and huge constrictor snakes, and invites the characters to tell their own stories.

The Feast of First Fruits lasts all night, during which the characters should make three group CL 3 Charisma checks to avoid gaining **faux pas points** as the night progresses.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: STORY TIME

THE SHADOW ORCS OF THE GREAT JUNGLE ENJOY THRILLING TALES TOLD OF DARING ADVENTURES AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE FOES. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHARACTERS TO RELATE SOME OF THEIR PAST EXPERIENCES. AS LONG AS IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE GETTING INTO THE MOMENT, DON'T WORRY ABOUT A CHARISMA CHECK - LIKELY ANY STORY THE PLAYERS TELL IS GOING TO IMPRESS!

Shaman Talk

As the sun rises and the Feast of First Fruits draws to a close, Omotayo draws the characters aside. She asks what brings them to Goyega Zaa, and though she knows they seek the Temple of Ibholtheg, she wants to hear it from the characters. If they lie, she frowns and tells them that the gods have told her they would be coming seeking the ancient site of the Squamous Toad God. But she does not have the location.

However, she knows of one who does. Several miles away lives the blind ancient shaman of the Goyega tribe, **Bula**, who knows much of the hidden world. Omotayo gives the characters a large bird feather, green as jade with a decorative black eye in its center, and instructs them to give the feather to Bula as a token of their trust.

Saying Goodbye

Jabu is eager to leave Goyega Zaa as the Feast of First Fruits marks a sacred peaceful time, and now that it is over Mandla and the rest of the tribe might get into a violent mood. He suggests offering a gift to Mandla of some value in token for their stay – anything worth 100 gold or more would suffice. Failure to do so automatically incurs **1 faux pas point**.

Hut of the Blind Shaman

Once the characters receive directions to the hut of Bula, they can set out at any time. Their native bearers have not been harmed, and the journey takes several hours through the jungle. Read or paraphrase the following.

After hacking through the jungle for several hours, following the directions from the orc shaman Omotayo, you finally see your destination. Up ahead, through the mass of trees and vines, you see a small hut squatting amidst some thick underbrush. Despite the noonday sun overhead, the shadows cling to this area like a drowning man to a piece of flotsam and the darkness seems to center on the hut. The door is closed but a small window next to it shows flickering firelight from within.

As the characters approach they are confronted by **3 giant constrictor snakes**, which rear up from around them. If the characters have the feather from Omotayo and show it to the snakes, they back down

and slither back into the nearby jungle. Otherwise they attack to kill any intruders.

After dealing with the snakes, the characters see that a wizened old shadow orc woman now stands in front of the closed door to the hut. She is dressed in little more than rags and wears a variety of bone and flower jewelry around her neck and wrists. Coiled at her side is another giant constrictor snake, hissing softly at the characters.

Bula beckons the characters closer and asks them their business at her hut. If presented with the feather, she takes it gingerly and comments matter-of-factly that Omotayo may yet have use for the brains the jungle gods gave her. If asked about the golden temple or anything about Ibholtheg, Bula grows quiet for a moment before she speaks.

"What you seek is a dangerous place," the blind orc shaman begins, "full of anger and hate. It is a cancer on this land, a boil loathsome beyond measure, and must be removed. Bula knows where it is, but more importantly – Bula knows how to see it. Seek you the foul Toad God's idol and place your hand upon it. You will see then what Bula speaks of,

and you will know what Bula knows."

Jabu asks for directions and Bula speaks in their peculiar dialect for a moment. The half-orc nods and turns back to the characters, letting them know that they have a 10-day journey in front of them to find the Idol of the Squamous Toad.

The Idol of the Squamous Toad

The journey to the Idol of the Squamous Toad takes 10 days of jungle travel. Jabu helps lead the characters, finding water enough for the entire group every couple of days as they trek deeper into the Great Jungle.

Just as when they were searching for Goyega Zaa, every 12 hours there is a 30% chance the characters encounter something in the jungle. Roll on the random encounter table under "The Great Jungle".

On the 10th day, Jabu tells the characters that they're close to the site of the idol. About noon that day they find it. Read or paraphrase the following.



Jabu hacks away at the jungle foliage, sweat beading on his broad forehead, when he stops suddenly and raises a hand for silence. Your eyes adjust to the shadows of the jungle, which seem longer and more sinister this far in, and then you see it. About a hundred feet in front of you, covered almost entirely in choking vines, is a great stone statue. At least you think it's made of stone, but it appears to be porous and green. The statue is carved in the likeness of a toad, twenty feet tall, squatting down on its haunches. A pair of wings wrap around its broad shoulders and its mouth is more crocodilian than toad. But the eyes are not like anything you've seen before. A shiver runs down your spine and you feel a deep loathing towards this statue and you sense that you are not alone, that some presence above you – far above you – watches intently. No birds or animal noises break the silence that has subtly stolen over the entire area.

The Idol of the Squamous Toad is shunned by the tribes of shadow orcs and none dwell near it. Jabu has seen it once before, while tracking a wounded panther through the jungle. He did not stay long, and does not wish to linger now. The native bearers are genuinely frightened and none will draw any closer than where they are now.

Approaching the idol, the characters' sense of uneasiness grows as the hideous carved details become clearer. The idol is modeled after a toad, but its shoulders are too narrow and it stands too tall to be a regular member of its species. The wings don't belong, and sharp talons dig into the earth from its four legs. Its crocodilian mouth is closed but teeth jut out from its upper and lower lip. The strange eyes are wide open, and upon closer inspection are carved to resemble a night sky.

Anyone that touches the idol feels the unnaturally cold, porous stone beneath their fingers. After a moment, the eyes of the idol light up from within, shooting blazing yellow light from the holes that form the stars. The lights play upon the shadows of the jungle for a moment in a dazzling display of darkness and light before it fades away. Each character that touched the idol has, for the next 24 hours, a sparkle in their eyes that allows them to see a trail of pale yellow light heading off into the jungle. This is the way to the Temple of Ibholtheg.

Unfortunately, this action summons a brood of Ibholtheg's minions who descend with a screech two minutes after the lights die away. They shriek like the croaking of a dying frog, announcing the arrival of **2 cipactli** and **8 degenerate toad-men** that attack the characters immediately.

Tactics: The cipactli fly-hop between the trees to surprise their opponents, blending in with the shadows of the jungle before launching each attack while the degenerate toad-men rush forward with their spears. Their tongues lash out at any spellcaster in range and they are not afraid to engage armored opponents with fangs and claws. The cipactli have no language known to the world anymore and fight until destroyed while the degenerate toad-men have no thoughts but to punish and destroy the intruders in their sacred location.

PART THREE: THE LOST TEMPLE

With the way to the Temple of Ibholtheg now illuminated, the characters and the rest of their expedition can make their way to its location. Their path is blocked by two primary obstacles – a band of wild elves that have sworn to keep the temple from being repopulated again, and a thick madness-inducing fog that hides the temple itself.

Wrath of the Watchers

From the Idol of the Squamous Toad the journey to the Temple of Ibholtheg winds through the jungle for a total of 12 hours. The path created by the idol's vision cuts through dense jungle, down deep gullies, and across a swift-moving but shallow river.

After 10 hours of travel, the jungle becomes thicker and wilder. Toads croak incessantly in the darkness and the shadows grow closer, imparting a feeling of extreme isolation. But the characters are not alone at this point. A band of wild elves that call themselves the Shadow Watchers lurks nearby, always on guard to keep intruders from finding the Temple of Ibholtheg and preventing the release of its evil back unto the world.

Eight wild elf watchers led by **Duru**, their female leader, surround the characters. If the Watchers are not noticed, Duru calls for them to halt in an old dialect of Elven. Anyone that speaks Elven can understand the dialect with a CL 4 Intelligence check.

Duru and her kind do not speak Common, so if no one in the party can speak their dialect of Elven Jabu steps forward as an interpreter. Duru demands to know what the characters are doing in this part of the jungle. She is straightforward and blunt, telling them that access to the Temple of Ibholtheg is forbidden.

If the characters explain that they are here to destroy it (whether or not they believe that to be true), Duru can be convinced to step aside. She starts the encounter as hostile, and each successful CL 4

Charisma (Persuasion) check adjusts her attitude by one level (hostile to unfriendly, unfriendly to neutral). If the characters intimidate her, she orders her elves to attack without mercy.

Tactics: The wild elves keep their distance as much as possible, relying on the cover of the jungle (half cover) and their archery skills to take out the characters. Duru uses her ranger spells as best she can, focusing attacks on whomever is dealing the most damage. Duru and the wild elves will fight until death.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: BUT THEY'RE ELVES!

NOT ALL ELVES ARE GOOD. THE WILD ELVES OF THE GREAT JUNGLE ARE NOT FRIENDLY AS A RULE, AND MANY OF THEM ARE HOSTILE TO OUTSIDERS. THE SHADOW WATCHERS HAVE TAKEN A FANATICAL APPROACH TO THEIR DUTY, AND THOUGH NO ONE IN LIVING MEMORY KNOWS THE ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY THE WORSHIPPERS AND SPAWN OF IBHOLTHEG, THE SHADOW WATCHERS KNOW IT IS THEIR DUTY TO KEEP IT FROM RETURNING. THEY ARE RUTHLESS AND VICIOUS.

Veil of Ibholtheg

The Temple of Ibholtheg is protected by more than just its hidden location. A thick gray fog hangs around the sacred site, and as the characters leave the Shadow Watchers they find themselves in the thick of it. Read or paraphrase the following.

The jungle seems to close in around you as you move forward, but then you realize that something IS drawing closer. A thick gray fog seeps between the trees and heavy undergrowth, suffocating everything in its wake. Its tendrils tug at your clothing like a living thing before you find yourselves completely engulfed in it. Sight and sound become muffled within the fog and you feel yourself growing light-headed. You hear the native bearers screaming but it sounds far off.

The fog warps the minds of anyone inside, causing them to attack the nearest target with mindless ferocity. The native bearers fall upon one another savagely and the characters must make CL 3 Wisdom saving throws to avoid the effect. Those that fail fall under the *Confusion* spell, but the resulting behavior is always to attack the nearest creature. At the end of every turn an affected character can make another Wisdom saving throw to end the effect.

Unless the characters can act quickly, the native bearers kill each other in 2d4 rounds. If all of the characters saved against the fog, Jabu can be the one that is affected, forcing the party to deal with maddened half-orc. Otherwise you can assume Jabu made his save and works to assist the rest of the characters.

Once a target successfully saves against the fog they are immune to its effects for the next 24 hours.

The Lost Temple Outer Yard

After walking through the Veil of Ibholtheg for an hour, the characters finally come upon the golden temple. Read or paraphrase the following.

You've made slow progress through the fog, but finally you break free and find yourself standing in an enclosed clearing. The trees grow much taller here, and their thick leafy canopy creates a natural ceiling that blocks out the sun. In the middle of this natural dome squats a great stepped pyramid, several hundred feet high, made of dull gold and covered with grasping, tangled jungle vines. Though practically no light pierces the overhead canopy, the structure is illuminated by an unearthly green pallor as if it shed the light from its own surface. A half-circle of steps rises in front of the pyramid, leading up to a darkened archway flanked by two large green statues of squatting frogs similar to the idol you touched to find this place.

This is the Lost Temple of Ibholtheg, where a vestige of that once-great outer power broods in silence and awaits its time of resurrection. The temple is guarded by a **toadhemoth** that waits on the opposite side from the entrance. As the characters approach, the great beast lets out a deafening croak and launches itself into battle.

Tactics: The toadhemoth is a special guardian of Ibholtheg, living eternally as the guardian of this temple. It fights until destroyed but cannot pursue inside as it is too large to get more than a tongue attack into the entrance, and then only for the first 15 feet.

General Features

Walls: The outer walls of the Temple of Ibholtheg are made of gilded bricks, but beneath that layer the entire structure is composed of pale green, porous stones. The stones are as strong as any rock.

Archways: There are no regular doors in the Temple of Ibholtheg. Exits and entrances into the halls and chambers are archways decorated with the faded symbols of Ibholtheg (bat-toad-crocodile images).

Smell: Inside the temple the air is foul smelling as if a dead thing had lain too long in the sun.

Sounds: The curious green stone that makes up the temple dulls sound, so that any noise made in one chamber can only be heard in adjoining areas.

Secret doors: Secret doors in the temple are found with CL 4 Intelligence checks. The doors are on concealed hinges that push open.

Ceilings: Unless otherwise noted the ceilings are 10 feet tall throughout the Temple of Ibholtheg.

Light: There is no light in the temple. The characters must provide their own illumination if they also cannot see in the dark.

Pyramid's top: At the top of the Temple of Ibholtheg is a broad flat surface. Characters that examine it can make a CL 4 Intelligence check to determine that a part of it opens somehow, but no amount of budging or pulling gets it to move. The secret to opening it is in **area 16**.

The Lost Temple 1st Level

1. Temple Steps

The semi-circular stairs leading up to the entrance to the temple are flanked by two large statues, similar to the Idol of the Squamous Toad but not nearly as faded. Their stony gaze is fixed on the spot directly in front of the door. Though ominous, the statues do not animate and there is no danger within them.

2. Ascent of Suffering

Beyond the large archway, the hallway continues on into darkness, ascending with small flights of stairs every ten feet.

Each of the three flights of steps contains a trap that triggers when stepped upon. A billowing cloud of poisonous gas escapes upward and fills the area above the triggered steps. Anyone in the cloud must make a CL 3 Constitution saving throw or suffer 3d6 poison damage. The traps reset after pressure is removed from them.

3. Tales of the Squamous Toad

A large chamber opens up before you, empty except for grand murals along the walls. The murals are each 20 feet square and depict aspects of worship of a loathsome, gargantuan toad-bat-crocodile creature. Men and women in elaborate feathered headdresses bow in supplication in one mural; in another, they offer young women as sacrifices before a great altar. One of the images shows the temple as you saw it today, enshrouded beneath its natural canopy, with a handful of figures approaching the entrance. You realize you're not alone as the croaking grows louder and creatures hop out of the shadow of the corners!

There are **2 cipactli** and **6 degenerate toad-men** in this room, hidden against the walls by using their natural camouflage ability. They leap out to attack anyone that enters.

Tactics: The cipactli launch themselves into melee, attacking ferociously with bite and claw. They fight until dead.

If any character looks closer at the mural with the temple as it appears today, they notice striking similarities between the painted figures and the characters themselves! Ibholtheg's priests foresaw this day and painted it in the walls of this chamber, reflecting the final day of the temple – but not the last day of Ibholtheg.

4. Reliquary Storeroom

This small chamber was used by some of the elder priests to store sacred items. The room contains three chests, all of which are locked and trapped. Each requires a CL 4 Dexterity check to open.

Each of the chests has a poison needle trap detectable with a CL 3 Intelligence check. It deals 1 piercing damage if not detected and requires a CL 3 Constitution saving throw to avoid 2d6 diluted snake venom (half damage on save).

The first chest contains several mummified frogs and a *stone of good luck*. The second chest holds a small golden box with onyx figurines of a bat, a toad, and a crocodile (each worth 75 gold coins). The third chest contains several broken bottles along with an intact *potion of gaseous form* and a *potion of superior healing*.

5. Chapel of the Bat

A great statue of a bat, ten feet wide, stands in the northeast corner of this chamber. Its abnormally large head bears a wide-open mouth, fangs bared, with two rubies for eyes. It was clearly carved to capture the image of a fearsome creature about to strike at some unsuspecting prey. A cloud of larger than normal bats rises up from either side of the statue, their screeching filling the chamber.

The three aspects of Ibholtheg – toad, bat, and crocodile – were honored and worshipped by the ancient people who built the temple. The statue of the bat keeps the **3 swarms of vampire bats** alive in a perpetual stasis. The creatures move to engage the characters.

Tactics: The swarms engulf as many characters as possible, biting and clawing, attempting to drain the blood from their victims. They fight until death.

Treasure: The two rubies in the bat statue's eyes can be removed. They are each worth 250 gold.

6. Temple Library

This chamber is lined with shelves along the walls, though most appear to be empty. A handful of dusty books, a dozen at the most, seem to be the sole occupants of this once grand library.

Anyone that disturbs the books in this room trigger the release of its ancient guardian, a **wraith** dedicated to protecting the knowledge of the temple (what little is left at this point).

Tactics: The wraith attacks the person who touched the books first, but once summoned it does not rest until all intruders in the library are destroyed. It does not pursue characters out of the room.

Treasure: The dozen books on the shelf appear to be a treatise on worshipping Ibholtheg written in an ancient tongue lost to the world now. Rites, scriptures, commandments, and other religious iconography fill the pages. To the right buyer, the books can fetch 50 gold each. Alternately, Novium House would accept the books as fulfilling the characters' part of their bargain.

7. Grand Hall of the Squamous Toad

A long chamber stretches out before you, twenty feet wide and almost a hundred feet long. The floor is covered with a thin layer of slime and a horrendous odor of rotten meat fills the air. In a large alcove in the center of the south wall squats a statue, similar to the ones in front of the temple, depicting the toad-bat-crocodile form of Ibholtheg. A silver crown rests on the statue's head that doesn't appear to be made of stone. An archway on the north wall frames a set of steep stairs leading upwards.

This is where the lesser priests of old venerated Ibholtheg (only the senior priests were allowed to ascend to the higher levels). Now it is the home to **8 degenerate toad-men** and a **toad-man shaman** who worship at the statue. They leap forward to attack as the characters enter.

The slime on the floor makes movement difficult. The toad-men are immune to it, but any character that ends their movement in the slime (which coats the entire floor of this room) must make a CL 3 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Tactics: The toad-men focus their attacks on prone targets if possible while the shaman uses its spells to incapacitate targets. They are not afraid to leap about and lure the characters further in if possible.

Treasure: The crown atop the statue's head can be removed. It is engraved with loathsome symbols of Ibholtheg, but is worth 150 gold.

8. Chapel of the Crocodile

A round chamber opens up before you. Situated equidistant from one another along the walls are four large crocodile heads made of bronze, their mouths open to show rows of razor-sharp teeth. Each of the busts has gemstone eyes of a different hue – blood red, deep blue, emerald green, and pale white.

To the worshippers of Ibholtheg, the crocodile represents their god's bestial nature. This room is where non-believers would be taken for cleansing in the "jaws of the crocodile." Anyone not speaking the command word (now lost to time) when they enter, triggers the rise of **4 spectral crocodiles** that slither out of the wall (one from each head).

Tactics: The spectral crocodiles, though smaller than their largest living relative, fight ferociously and with intent to kill their target. The spectral crocodiles are immune to turning attempts as long as they remain in the Temple of Ibholtheg.

Treasure: The gemstone eyes in each of the bronzed crocodile heads are worth 25 gold (eight in total).

9. Chapel of the Toad

The north wall of this chamber is decorated with a grisly display of dozens of giant frog corpses. They are hung on the wall with their bellies exposed; their arms and legs are splayed out, held up with stone bands. The stench of death and decay is heaviest in here, but your eyes are drawn to the creature on the floor. It appears to be a giant toad, but it's composed of the flesh of dozens of other frogs and toads. It lets out a deformed croak before leaping forward.

Ibholtheg's priests venerated toads and frogs of all kind, and they believed they were doing their outer power's will by displaying the dead creatures in this room. It was a reminder to them of what came before and what was to come. The creature, a horrible **frogflesh golem**, was created to maintain the impurity of the chapel.

Tactics: The frogflesh golem is a relentless opponent but a simple one. It attacks whatever is dealing the most damage to it mercilessly.

The Lost Temple 2nd Level

10. Hall of Croaking

Monstrous croaking fills this rectangular chamber, drowning out all other sounds. Images of toads and frogs are carved into the walls, and scavenging around the floors are robed humans. Their clothes are in tatters, and their tongues loll out over sharpened teeth. They lurch forward with an ungainly hopping action, their claws outstretched, the flesh on their bodies pulled unnaturally tight.

There are **5 ghosts** here who were once priests of Ibholtheg. The croaking in the chamber is a result of Ibholtheg's movements and used to only occur on an infrequent basis. Now it never stops and it has called its priests back to the world of the living.

The croaking drowns out any voices, so any spell or effect that requires a target hear is nullified.

Tactics: The ghosts are happy to slake their thirst with the fresh blood of the characters. If any of the characters becomes paralyzed, the rest of the ghosts focus their attacks on that target. Due to the unholy nature of the temple the ghosts are immune to being turned.

Treasure: Each of the ghosts wears a pendant with the symbol of Ibholtheg upon it (worth 50 gold each).

11. Conversion Chamber

Skeletons hang on the walls of this square chamber, strung up by iron manacles attached to the ceiling. They show signs of broken ribs and cracked skulls; a foul odor permeates the air.

Priests of Ibholtheg would take prominent non-believers to this chamber and force them to convert to the worship of the Squamous Toad. If they did not, they were left here to rot and eventually be fed to some other temple guardian. The skeletons are all that remains of the people who held out against the priests of Ibholtheg long ago.

Treasure: One of the people brought here long ago managed to swallow a magical ring before being captured. In a pile of bones beneath one of the skeletons lies a *ring of mind shielding*.

12. Hall of Teeth

The ceiling of this long, narrow chamber is filled with teeth – monstrous teeth, some as large as daggers. Images of crocodiles adorn the walls, mostly pictured devouring humanoid creatures. At the far end, the bones of a massive crocodile jaw hang open, stretched wide enough to nearly encompass the entire wall, with a gleaming fiery jewel in its center.

The floor, though unmarked, contains a number of pressure plates that trigger specific teeth to be shot down upon the ground. Finding the pressure plates requires a CL 4 Intelligence check every 5 feet. There is a pressure plate every 10 feet in the hall.

Anyone stepping on a plate triggers the tooth above to be shot down. It strikes for 3d6 piercing damage but does not reset on its own.

Treasure: The jewel in the crocodile's mouth is colored glass – it is worthless. The teeth on the crocodile's jawbone, however, are well-preserved and rare, each worth 10 gold (there are 20 teeth in total).

13. Well of Dreams

The hallway takes a turn to the south and abruptly ends in a dead end, occupied only by a well. It's hewn of black stone and stands five feet high with no other accoutrements. A muted muttering punctuated by an occasional scream drifts lazily up from the depths of the well, which appears to hold only inky blackness to an unknown depth. Looking closer you can see ancient pitted ladder rungs carved into the wall of the well.

The priests used the well for extreme isolation. It descends down past the first level, into the depths of the earth, ending in a small chamber about 10 feet square. There, the priest would sit and dream about Ibholtheg, gaining insight from the whispers and screams of past priests who went insane.

Anyone descending into the well must make a CL 4 Wisdom saving throw or suffer 2d6 psychic damage for every 20 feet descended (the well is 100 feet deep). On a failure, the jolt of the psychic intrusion is enough to force a CL 4 Dexterity saving throw to hang on to the ladder, with failure resulting in a fall of the remaining feet (1d6 per 10 feet fallen).

Treasure: At the bottom of the well sits the skeleton of the last priest of Ibholtheg from that ancient era, who sat down here until he died. At his side, characters will find a +1 *scimitar*, its handle and pommel engraved with the image of the Squamous Toad.

14. Test of Black Tongues

A grotesque room opens up before you. Hanging from the ten foot ceiling are hundreds of elongated black tongues, several of which squirm and writhe on the hooks they are hung from. The hideous stench of decaying meat assails your senses but it appears as though these tongues are fresh, albeit long and black.

In order to pass to the highest chamber of the Temple of Ibholtheg, elder priests needed to first cross several rooms designed to test their faith. This room contains hundreds of magically animated tongues; a favored sign of Ibholtheg. It was said that if the priest were true to the tenets of the Squamous Toad the tongues would not harm them.

It is impossible to get through the room to the other side without going through the tongues. They can be attacked (AC 12, hp 10, half damage from bludgeoning and piercing damage) but that prompts them to lash out. The tongues attack anyone who have attacked them within a reach of 10 feet. One tongue attacks within each 5-foot square, they have an attack bonus of +7, and deal 1d8+4 acid damage on a successful hit.

If someone simply walks through the room without attacking, the tongues move forward as if curious about the intruder. They slap themselves against any available skin, leaving a tingling sensation and a slimy coating behind but do no damage. A character passing through must make a CL 3 Charisma saving throw to pass through unmolested. On a failure the tongues sense something wrong and lash out as above, though the character reaches halfway before this happens.

15. Blessings of Slime

The walls of this room are coated in a thick, translucent green slime that oozes slowly, pooling on the floor. Toad and frog images are carved into the walls, and it seems as though the slime originates from the mouths and eyes of these carved frescos. A handful of slime-coated humanoid figures turn towards you as you enter and lurch forward, raising their hands menacingly, dripping with the same slime.

To the elder priests of Ibholtheg, to fall in the service of the Squamous Toad was to become one of its faithful servants in the afterlife. There are **4 slime zombies** in this room, former elder priests that now protect the entrance to the vestige of Ibholtheg's chamber on the third level.

Tactics: The slime zombies shamble forward and attack without thought to advanced tactics. They are mindless undead, and in this temple they are immune to being turned.

The Lost Temple 3rd Level

16. Vestige of Ibholtheg

The steep stairs end abruptly in a large square chamber that must occupy most of this top level of the stepped pyramid. Several of the toad-bat-crocodile creatures lay prostrate before a huge, monstrous thing. It resembles the statues and idols you've seen in the temple only vaguely, as where those were carved images, this looks like the real thing. It stands twelve feet tall, hunched back on its large toad-like legs; a massive bulk squatting down. Its head is large and bulbous, but its mouth is filled with rows of razor sharp teeth. A thick black slime coats its entire body, which drips down from its four arms that end in ebony claws. The thing rises up, unfurling hideous slime-encrusted bat wings, and lets loose a terrible croak that seems to shake the very foundations of the temple – its minions rise and turn towards you at the signal.

This is the **Vestige of Ibholtheg**, a sort of avatar for the outer power that still dwells on the Prime Plane. It is served by **4 cipactli** and the creatures all launch attacks as the characters enter.

There is a secret opening in the 20-foot high ceiling that opens up to the top of the pyramid. A cleverly hidden lever on the east wall (detectable with a CL 4 Intelligence check) triggers the mechanism, which takes 2 rounds to open completely.

Tactics: The Vestige lets loose its croak first, attempting to stun the characters before it and its cipactli minions attack. The creatures in this chamber fight until death, though when the Vestige of Ibholtheg dies it triggers the temple collapse (see Temple Collapse).

17. Secret Treasury

If the characters take the time to search the room for a secret chamber as the Vestige of Ibholtheg dies, they have a chance to find this secret treasury before the temple collapses completely. Carefully monitor the characters action if they do find the secret room, as the temple is going down pretty quickly.

Treasure: In this chamber sits three closed iron chests, each of them locked but not trapped (CL 4 Dexterity check to pick the locks). The first chest contains a *potion of lesser restoration*, a *potion of cure serious*



wounds, and a spell scroll of *inspect plague*. The second chest contains a *potion of invisibility*, a *spell scroll of dispel magic*, and a *pearl of power*. The third chest contains a *spell scroll of hold person*, a pair of *boots of levitation*, and a *potion of remove curse*.

Temple Collapse

Once the Vestige of Ibholtheg is slain, it lets loose a horrendous croak that echoes throughout the temple and shakes it to its core. The shaking grows more

violent as the thing dissolves into a pool of black acid, and the shaking does not give up. It's obvious to the characters that they must get out quickly.

The Temple of Ibholtheg collapses into a titanic sinkhole in the jungle floor in **1 minute** and there isn't anything the characters can do to stop it. The quickest way out is the hatch in the ceiling, but if the characters aren't looking for that they'll likely miss it. As the shaking continues, the rooms that the characters passed through to get to the top are no longer a threat (the tongues writhe on the floor,

any undefeated creatures cower or are destroyed already, etc.), but the mad flight out doesn't leave much time for lollygagging. A straight run out from **area 16** to the exit at **area 1** is approximately 400 feet.

Characters with a base movement of 30 feet can escape in 7 rounds while those with a base movement of 25 feet can escape in 8 rounds. Anyone still in the Temple of Ibholtheg after a minute has passed has to make a CL 6 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 10d6 bludgeoning damage (half on a success) each round to make it out.

The whole temple sinks into the earth in a dramatic collapse, taking its gilded bars and secrets with it.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: MAKE IT DRAMATIC!

AS THE TEMPLE COLLAPSES AROUND THEM AND THE CHARACTERS FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES, YOU CAN SPICE THINGS UP A BIT BY HAVING THEM MAKE PERIODIC DEXTERITY SAVING THROWS TO AVOID FALLING DEBRIS. THE DAMAGE ISN'T THE PROBLEM; IT'S THE FACT THAT FAILING COSTS THE CHARACTER A ROUND OF MOVEMENT. TRY NOT TO OVERDO IT THOUGH - THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A CLIMACTIC MOMENT AFTER THE CHARACTERS KILLED THE VESTIGE OF IBHOLTHEG!

- Defeated the Vestige of Ibholtheg
- Escaped the collapsing temple with some treasure

Next Steps

The Great Jungle is still a dangerous place, filled with treasure, monsters, and opportunities for adventure. The characters can stay in Kraden's Hill and soak up a bit of renown from their exploits.

Things begin to take a sinister turn around town, however, as Ibholtheg's influence spreads out from the Great Jungle. Soon the characters are going to have to face the terrors of ...

TONGUES OF THE SCREAMING TOAD!

EPILOGUE

It's likely the characters' native bearers were killed when they first entered the Veil of Ibholtheg. With the temple gone, the veil has dispersed and is no longer a threat, though that can come as little comfort to the characters at this point. Their trek back to Kraden's Hill takes them 12 days of jungle traveling, and if they still have some fight left in them they can run into one of the random encounters. Otherwise it's simply a long journey back.

Whichever employer they went with is overjoyed at the discovery but despondent over the news of the temple's collapse. Jabu confirms the story, lending credence to the tales – the half-orc is known to be trustworthy to a fault and is known to be bad at telling lies.

Rewards

In addition to the experience awards for defeating their foes in combat (or cleverly avoiding combat), the characters can also earn bonus experience points for accomplishing story-centered goals. The list below offers examples of some that can be used, but create your own as you see fit!

- Made peace with the Goyega orcs
- Met with Bula without violence

TG1 Monster and NPC Information

Giant constrictor snake: Large Size Animal; Physical Saves; HD 6d8; hp 31; Move 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk bite (1d4) and coil (2d6); Special: constrict (the round after a coil hit, the victim must make a strength save or suffer 2d6 damage per round, -2 cumulative penalty to save after each round); AL N; XP 360

The **giant constrictor snake** is a massive predator, easily 30 feet long, with a wide mouth capable of biting nearly any creature in the jungle. This snake slithers through the lush underbrush, its green scales allowing it blend in easily with its surroundings, but it can just as easily be found in a tree waiting for a victim to walk by beneath it.

Shadow orc warrior: Medium Size Humanoid; Physical Saves; HD 1d8; hp 8; Move 30 ft.; AC 13; Atk crude axe (1d8) or javelin (1d6); Special: darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; XP 14

The **shadow orcs** of the Great Jungle have dark gray skin and keep their black hair cut into topknots. Ritualistic scarring is common among the various tribes, with each scar telling a story of the orc's deeds. Some tribes see peaceful relationships with the merchants of Kraden's Hill as a way to increase their standing in the jungle, while other tribes only concern themselves with which type of merchant tastes the best over an open fire.

Swarm of poisonous snakes: Large Size Swarm; Physical Saves; HD 4d8; hp 22; Move 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk bite (1d6); Special: swarm traits (occupies a 10-foot circular space, automatically hits any creature in its space each turn, can occupy same space as another creature, attacks against it that target individual creatures deal 1/2 damage), poison (bitten targets must make constitution save, 1d4 damage or half on success from poison, on a fail - suffer -1 to hit and on all physical attribute checks for 10 minutes, second save after 10 minutes, success negates poison, failure causes 1d4 damage and -3 penalty to attacks and physical checks, daily saves are required for 1 week, lose 1 constitution point each failure); AL N; XP 188

Great **swarms of poisonous snakes** are a common problem in the Great Jungle, as the smaller vipers have learned that they can live longer and feed on greater food by slithering together. A swarm encompasses an area 20' wide and wear down their victims with a dangerous venom.

NPC Profile: Ereltris and Esythis Evenleaf, Thirsty Serpent Owners

The people of Kraden's Hill view the wild elves of the Great Jungle with great suspicion and distrust. Most of the wandering bands have dealt only with the occasional arrow and have crossed blades with the settlers, but for the most part the elves seem more content to protect the interior of the jungle than the fringes. Ereltris and Esythis were born into a lifestyle of constant moving, hunting and gathering for every meal, and their experience shows in their steely gaze and taut muscles.

But the two share a keen interest in the ways of civilization. They worked as little more than slaves after being captured in a raid on Kraden's Hill, a common fate for captured wild elves. The elves treat the past as a strange thing – except to a few, it is something to learn from but not hold grudges over. Ereltris and Esythis took work at the Thirsty Serpent and gained the trust of the original owner. But after only a few months the owner fell ill from a snake bite and the Evenleaf twins were able to purchase it from precious gems their people had gathered from the mountains (nothing of value to the elves but pretty to look at). The two have run the Thirsty Serpent for over a year now, quietly keeping it running for the merchants and travelers that come to Kraden's Hill.

Giant boar: Medium Size Animal; Physical Saves; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; Move 40 ft.; AC 16; Atk gore (2d6); Special: twilight vision, aggression (attack as 5 HD creature); AL N; XP 20

That snorting in the underbrush might be a **giant boar**, and if so you want to make sure you don't let it charge you. The beast's powerful gore attack at the end of a charge has felled creatures much larger than itself, and for this purpose many shadow orc tribes in the Great Jungle seek to tame and ride the boars. The boars are as large as ponies!

Cannibal native: Medium Size Humanoid; Physical Saves; HD 1d8; hp 6; Move 30 ft.; AC 13; Atk spear (1d6); Special: tracking, pass without trace (in jungle terrain, can move without leaving a sign); AL CE; XP 15

Fallen descendants of once proud civilizations, **cannibal natives** of the Great Jungle are humans who have become dangerous and primitive. They communicate with grunts and gestures and generally don't have a sense of scale or self-preservation. A single cannibal native facing off against much larger or dangerous prey is undaunted.

Troll: Large Size Giant; Physical Saves; HD 6d8; hp 28; Move 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk 2 claws (1d4) and bite (2d6); Special: rend (if both claws hit, 1d4+1 extra damage), regeneration 2 (except fire and acid damage), darkvision 60 ft., twilight vision; AL CE; XP 438

The **trolls** that dwell in the Great Jungle are taller and lankier than their mountain kin, but their mottled green skin allows them to blend in with their surroundings easier. Generally hairless, a troll enjoys stalking its prey for miles before striking at the right moment.

Giant ape: Large Size Animal (12' tall); Physical Saves; HD 7d8; hp 49; Move 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk 2 claws (1d8) and bite (2d6); Special: rend (if both claws hit, 2d6 extra damage), twilight vision; AL N; XP 613

Few creatures in the Great Jungle can match the size and ferocity of the **great ape**. Standing around 20' tall, the great ape crashes ungracefully through the jungle and beats its chest as a warning to all that it's in the area. Its claws are capable of tearing boars and snakes in half, but if severely wounded the great ape is smart enough to flee to fight another day.

Cipactli: Large Size Aberration (10' tall); Mental Saves; HD 6d8; hp 31; Move 30 ft., jump 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk 2 claws (1d8) and bite (1d10); Special: regenerate 3 (as long as it has 1 hp it regenerates, stops regenerating when below 0), SR 8, immunity cold/fire/lightning (half damage, quarter save), pounce (if the cipactli jumps it can make a single claw attack, if it hits the victim must make a strength saving throw or be knocked prone and cipactli hits with bite attack); AL CE; XP 486

When the kingdom of Xilonoc stood in the Great Jungle, offerings were made to the favored servants of Ibholtheg the Squamous Toad – **cipactli**. These deep jungle monsters have the head and scales of a crocodile and the hind quarters of a toad, and are able to heal from most wounds. They are intelligent enough to understand speech but are only able to croak out a few phrases.

Degenerate toad-man: Medium Size Humanoid; Physical Saves; HD 3d8; hp 12; Move 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk spear (1d6); Special: darkvision 60 ft., hop (unaffected by difficult terrain), croak (once per hour can release loud croak, everyone in 60 ft. must make a wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1d6 rounds); AL CE; XP 66

Once, these foul creatures held a place of honor in the Great Jungle and commanded great respect. Now, the **degenerate toad-men** live in squalor in crude mud huts on the banks of jungle rivers, cowering in fear from the stronger shadow orcs and cannibals that have come to dominate the area. The croaking language of the toad-men is a very crude dialect of lizard-man so that people that speak that language can often pick up the words of a toad-man.

NPC Profile: Jabu, Half-Shadow Orc Ranger

Raised in the jungle as a member of the Moronkula tribe, Jabu cut his teeth and earned his scars hunting great panthers, huge serpents, and other beasts growing up. As a half-orc, the child of a human slave mother and a shadow orc father, he had to work extra hard to prove himself. He distinguished himself quickly as a skilled tracker, with a reputation for moving silently like a shadow upon unsuspecting prey. The Moronkula tribe was the first to make peaceful contact with the human settlers, who had up to that point only encountered the shadow orcs when they were victims of their savage raids. A peace was brokered, and soon several other tribes came to trade with the strangers in Kraden's Hill.

Jabu made himself available as a guide and liked the respect given from the outsiders that came with his skills. He found himself staying in Kraden's Hill more and more, until he could finally afford a small shack inside the settlement. Now he is one of the more experienced guides in town, and though he never had much need for golden pyramids, he finds the high pay being offered by the merchant companies a great lure.

Wild elf watcher: Medium Size Humanoid; Physical Saves; HD 2d8; hp 9; Move 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk longbow (1d6, range 100 ft.) or long sword (1d8); Special: twilight vision, enhanced senses, move silently, sleep resistance; AL LN; XP 33

Sworn to protect the temple of Ibholtheg from intruders, the **wild elf watchers** serve Duru, their leader, and are honor-bound to obey his every command. The watchers are fearless in their duty and ruthless in combat.

Duru: Medium Size Humanoid; Physical Saves; HD 5d8; hp 27; Move 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk 2 longbow (1d6, range 100 ft.) or 2 long sword (1d8); Special: twilight vision, enhanced senses, move silently, sleep resistance; AL LN; XP 295

When Ibholtheg's temple was found, a secret order of elves took it upon themselves to make sure no one discovered the golden site. That mantle of responsibility has passed from generation to generation, and now rests with **Duru**, a stern elf who is not afraid to put down anyone that attempts to cross the mists.

NPC Profile: Bula, Blind Shaman of the Jungle

Bula is a gifted shaman with many divine abilities, all of which she bends for the good of the Great Jungle. She is nearly 100 years old, and though she was born in the Goyega tribe she considers all the tribes of shadow orcs to be her family. Her interests are in the preservation of the jungle as a living, breathing system, and she views her gods – the Snake God, the Crocodile God, the Ape God, and many others – as powerful spirits that share in her mission. In her old age, she has taken to referring to herself in the third person ("Bula knows what Bula knows" is a common phrase).

Bula knows that it is only a matter of time before the ancient temple of Ibholtheg, the Squamous Toad God, is found. Ibholtheg is a stain on the jungle's history – a terrible otherworldly being interested only in spreading death and madness. She sees in the characters opportunity to destroy the temple for good, which Bula believes will end the threat of Ibholtheg. This is why she helps the characters.

Toadhemoth: Large Size Aberration; Physical Saves; HD 8d8; hp 44; Move 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk 4 tentacles (1d8) and tongue (1d10); Special: constrict (if it hits with a tentacle it constricts, victim must make a strength save or suffer 1d8 automatic damage each round), reach (tongue and tentacles can hit targets 15' away), immunity lightning (full); AL N; XP 623

In the time of Xilonoc, the priests of Ibholtheg the Squamous Toad would experiment with creating monsters that held aspects of their loathsome god. One of those results was the **toadhemoth**, a huge bulky, scaly monster with a crocodile's mouth and a trio of unblinking eyestalks on its head. It's forearms were replaced by four slimy tentacles that it could use to beat opponents into a bloody pulp.

Swarm of vampire bats: Large Size Swarm; Physical Saves; HD 3d8; hp 14; Move fly 60 ft.; AC 13; Atk bite (1d4); Special: swarm traits (occupies a 10-foot circular space, automatically hits any creature in its space each turn, can occupy same space as another creature, attacks against it that target individual creatures deal 1/2 damage), blood drain (bitten targets lose 1 point of constitution, returns at a rate of 1 point per day or with magic); AL N; XP 92

Parts of the Great Jungle have become perfect breeding grounds for **swarms of vampire bats**. These blood-sucking beasts, larger than a normal bat but only threatening in a large group, are able to move about during the day and night because of the thick jungle canopy.

Wraith: Medium Size Undead (Extraordinary); Mental Saves; HD 5d12; hp 34; Move 30 ft., fly 60 ft.; AC 15; Atk incorporeal touch (1d6); Special: energy drain (living creatures hit by incorporeal touch lose 1 level, wraith gains +5 hp), create spawn (can create wraith from killed target), incorporeal (+1 or better weapons to hit), darkvision 60 ft., unnatural aura (animals won't approach within 30 ft.); AL LE; XP 490

The spectral remains of Ibholtheg's human servants from Xilonoc, the **wraith** is a shadowy form of a near-naked man with an elaborate headdress. He protects the knowledge of the golden temple, what little remains, but does not interact with intruders.

Toad-man shaman: Medium Size Humanoid; Physical Saves; HD 6d8; hp 39; Move 30 ft., fly 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk spear (1d6); Special: darkvision 60 ft., hop (unaffected by difficult terrain), croak (once per hour can release loud croak, everyone in 60 ft. must make a Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1d6 rounds), spells (4th level druid, 4/3/2 per day); AL CE; XP 474

Spells: 0 – create water, detect poison, first aid, know direction; 1st – entangle, obscuring mist, shillelagh; 2nd – heat metal, summon swarm

The most blessed of the toad-men are the ones born with wings, who become **toad-man shamans**. They worship at foul altars and are smarter than their degenerate kin, though they are prideful to a fault. They call upon the power of Ibholtheg to smite their enemies but are not above flapping away to safety when a fight turns against them.

Spectral crocodile: Medium Size Animal; Physical Saves; HD 3d12; hp 21; Move fly 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk incorporeal bite (2d4) and incorporeal tail slap (1d12); Special: incorporeal (hit only by +1 or better weapons), strength sap (living victims bit must make a wisdom saving throw or lose 1d4 points of strength, return 1/day or with magic, reduced to 0 strength cannot move), darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; XP 113

The crocodiles of the Great Jungle have always been a sacred beast to the faithful of Ibholtheg (the creatures being one third of the Squamous Toad's being). When the golden temple was built, the spirits of several of the animals were bound to defend it, creating **spectral crocodiles**. They appear as regular crocodiles, roughly 8' long, but are able to move through the air as if it were water.

Frogflesh golem: Large Size Construct; Physical Saves; HD 7d10; hp 33; Move 20 ft., hop 40 ft.; AC 18; Atk 2 claws (2d8); Special: spell immunity (fire or cold spells act as slow, electricity spells heal, immune to all other spells); AL N; XP 546

Hideous experiments were done during the time of Xilonoc in Ibholtheg's name, and one of the more successful ones created **frogflesh golems**. These malformed creatures, about 10' long, are created from the skins of hundreds of toads and frogs. Their stomach cavities are large enough to hold and crush man-sized victims, and its powerful legs allow it to leap great distances.

Ghast: Medium Size Undead (Extraordinary); Physical Saves; HD 4d8; hp 18; Move 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk 2 claws (1d4) and bite (1d8); Special: stench (living creatures within 30 ft. must make a constitution save or suffer 1d4 subdual damage and -2 penalty on attack rolls), paralysis (living creatures hit by claw or bite must make a strength save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 minutes, elves are not immune), darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; XP 182

Human servants of Ibholtheg the Squamous Toad left to rot in the golden temple have devolved into **ghasts**. They are ravenously hungry and crave the flesh of living creatures, though they can live centuries without eating.

Slime zombie: Medium Undead (Common); Physical Saves; HD 3d8; hp 13; Move 20 ft.; AC 12; Atk slam (1d8); Special: greenish slime (slime eats away flesh, attacks deal extra 1d6 damage, weapons that hit the slime zombie dissolve in 1d4 rounds unless scraped away, armor worn by victim hit dissolves in 1d4 rounds unless scraped away, scraping deals 1d6 damage but only takes one round, magical weapons and armor last for +1 round per +1 magic), slow (never gains initiative, always acts last); AL NE; XP 69

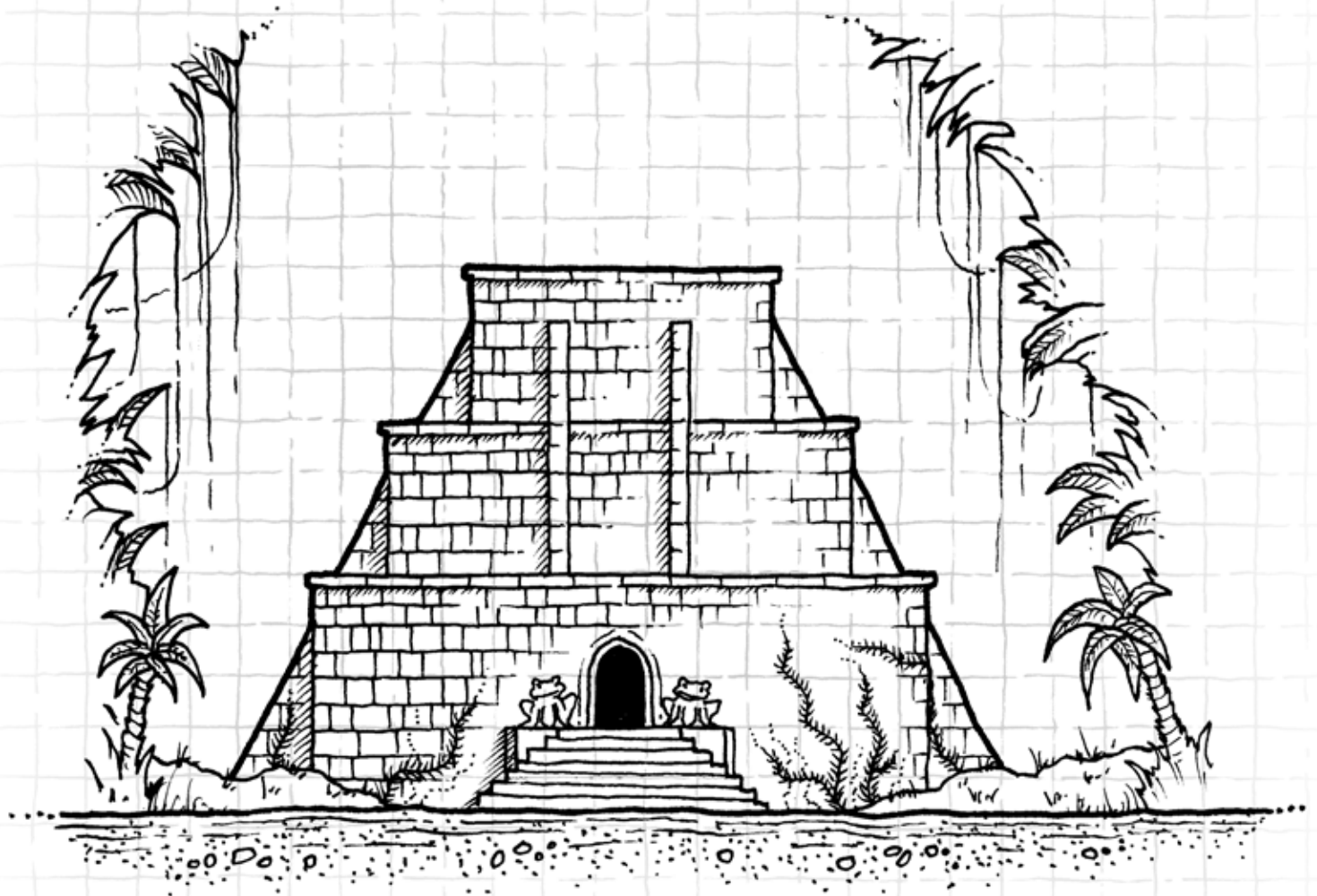
A **slime zombie** is the undead remnant of a Xilonoc resident who was not faithful to Ibholtheg. Now cursed with a vibrant green slime that coats their skin and oozes from their mouths, they exist only to serve the Squamous Toad.

Vestige of Ibholtheg: Large Size Extraplanar (14' tall); Mental Saves; HD 7d8; hp 52; Move 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk 4 claws (1d10) and bite (2d6); Special: poison (bitten targets must make constitution save, 1d8 damage or half on success from poison, on a fail - suffer -1 to hit and on all physical attribute checks for 10 minutes, second save after 10 minutes, success negates poison, failure causes 1d4 damage and -3 penalty to attacks and physical checks, daily saves are required for 1 week, lose 1 constitution point each failure), SR 10, immunity cold/fire/lightning (half damage, quarter save), stunning croak ((once per hour can release loud croak, everyone in 60 ft. must make a wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1d6 rounds); AL CE; XP 859

The **Vestige of Ibholtheg** is the only physical link the Squamous Toad retains to the Prime Plane from its once lofty perch in the days of Xilonoc. The vestige resembles Ibholtheg, if smaller, with four massive claws, a crocodilian jaw, and powerful legs. It is a mindless brute, however, and fights to protect itself and the sanctity of the golden jungle temple.

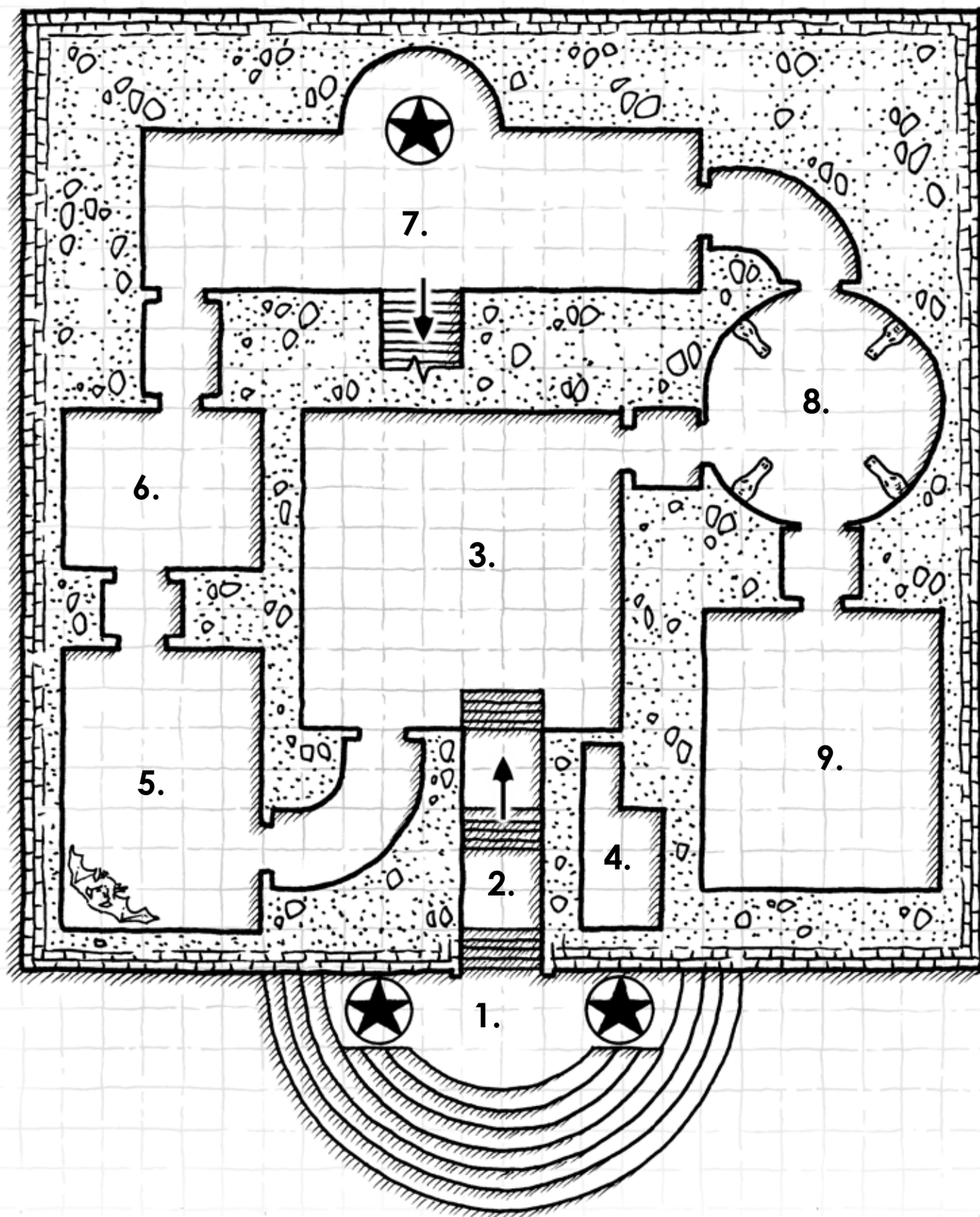
The Lost Temple

External View



The Lost Temple

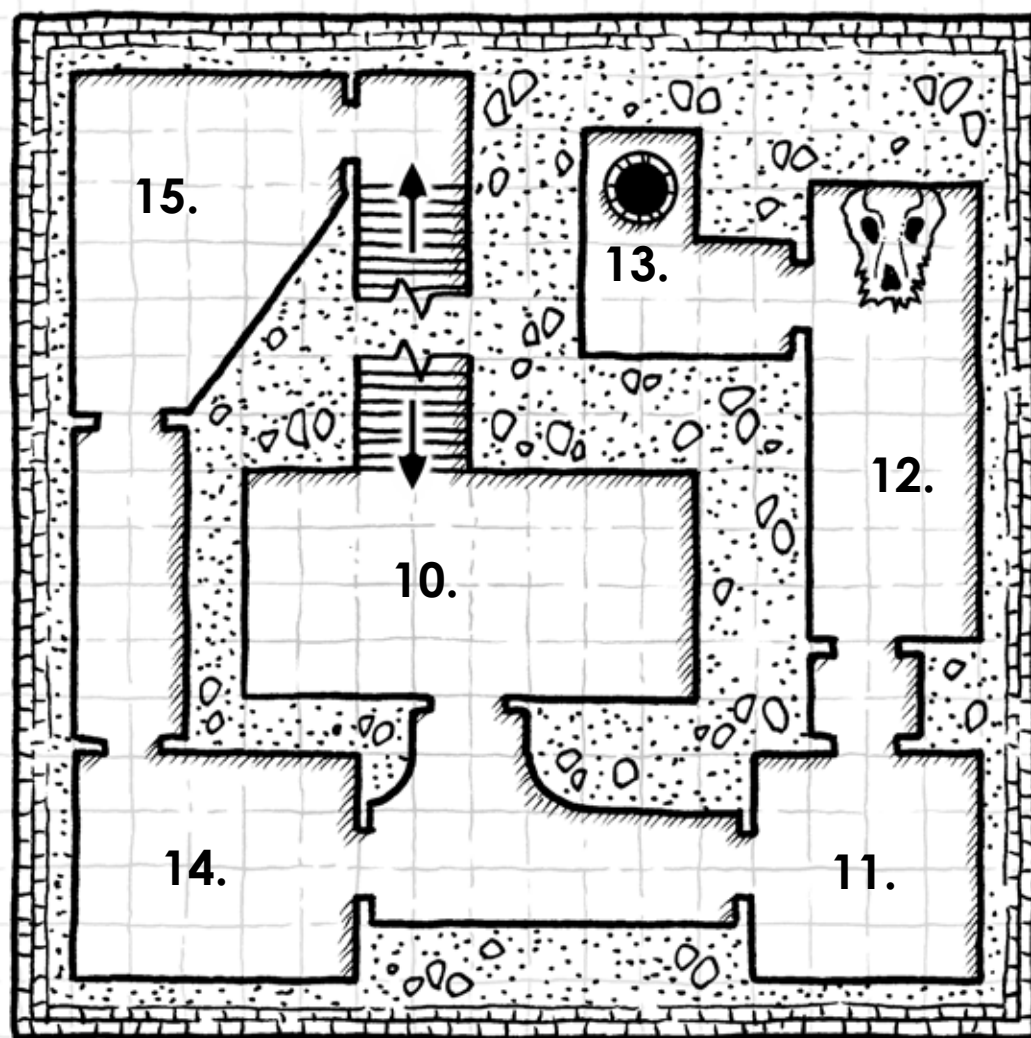
Level One



One Square = 5 feet

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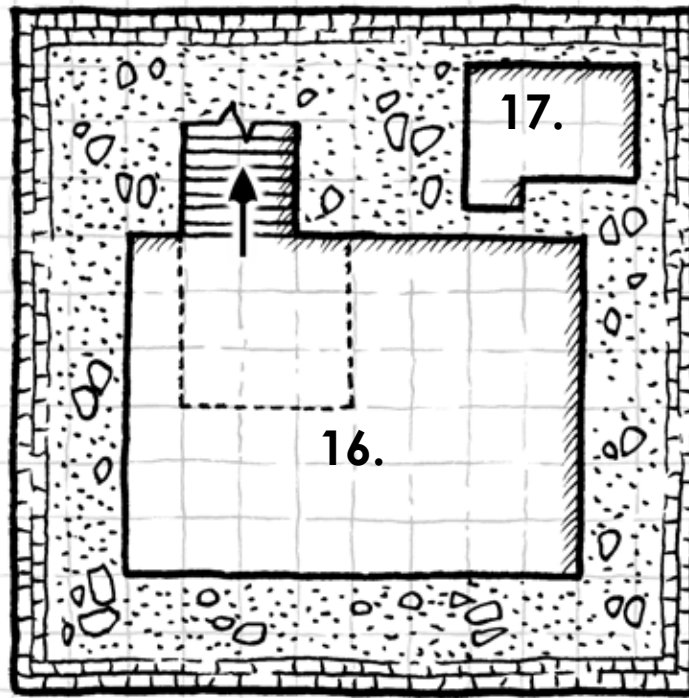
Level Two



One Square = 5 feet

The Lost Temple

Level Three



One Square = 5 feet

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