

ASIAN OSR

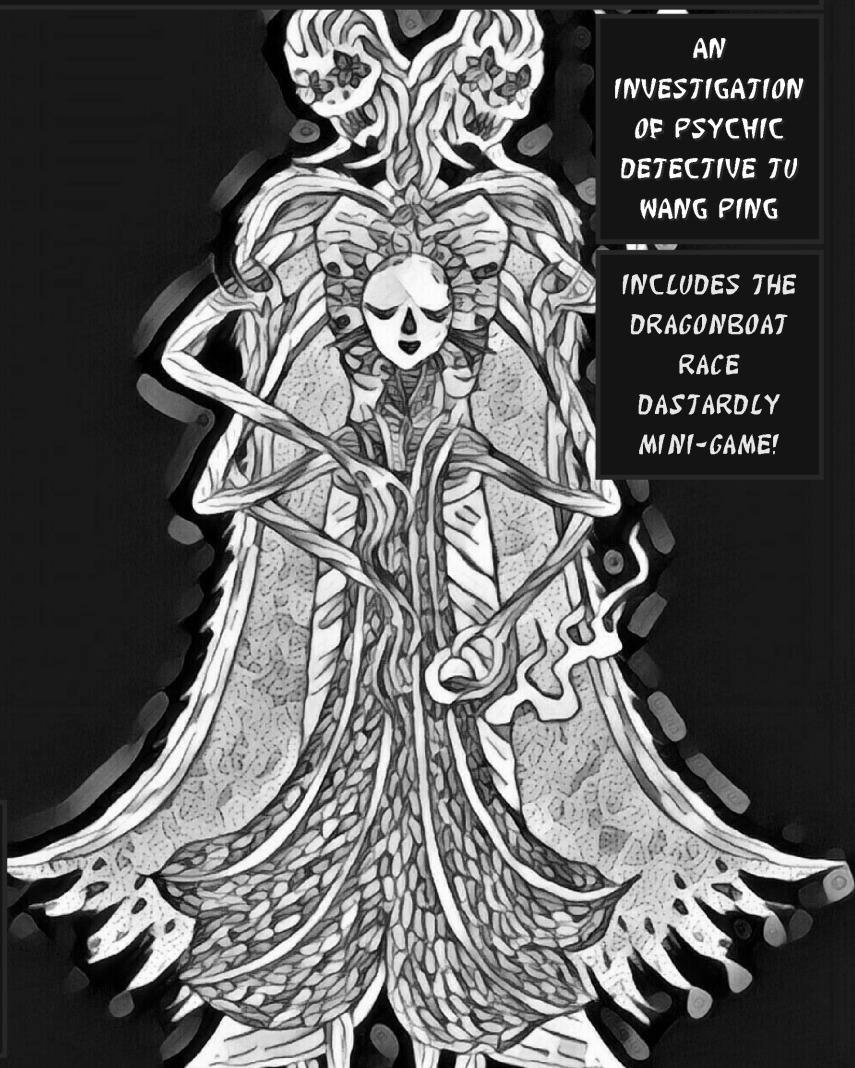
FLOWER LICHES OF THE DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL

A WUXIA GHOST STORY, AN INVESTIGATION
ADVENTURE, SETTING & A GAZETTEER
COMPATIBLE WITH EVERYTHING OSR

AN
INVESTIGATION
OF PSYCHIC
DETECTIVE TU
WANG PING

INCLUDES THE
DRAGONBOAT
RACE
DASTARDLY
MINI-GAME!

KABUKI KAISER





FLOWER LICHES OF THE DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL

This adventure has been designed to maintain compatibility with all Old School Renaissance game systems, retro-clones and quasi-clones. Since it describes an Asian backdrop setting, it is best suitable as an extension to the original edition *Oriental Adventures* or Old School Renaissance Asian releases such as *Mad Monks of Kwantoom* (MMoK), *Qelong*, *Yoon-Suin*, *Red Tide*, *Valley of the Five Fires*, or even *Narcosa* on the psychedelic side. It includes both several locations such as the House of the Sound of White Jasmine, and series of events such as the curious case of the Great Priest PIN LUNG's suicide by lich, which all can easily be ripped off and taken whole into other games with a little bit of adaptation. While specifically meant to be played with one player playing the psychic detective TU WANG PING in the tradition of the classic Judge Dee investigation stories and one Dungeon Master, it provides materials for all kind of adventures, from lowly 1st level introductions to the high-level displays of incredible might. It may be adapted in any way you like to cater for solo play or vast adventuring parties as you see fit. The stat blocks you'll find here are consistent with both **Labyrinth Lord** (LL) and the **Labyrinth Lord Advanced Edition Companion** (AEC). If you use other Armor Class systems and need to convert them, just use the description given in brackets following the AC and make the conversion yourself. We use skills systems from both LL and **Lamentations of the Flame Princess** (LotFP). You can find no-art versions of both of these publications online for free.

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COLOR FIRST

Flower Liches of the Dragonboat Festival is a Chinese ghost story, a Kung-Fu action movie adventure, and a detective story. It features both location- and event-based sequences built upon sets of tables which encourage the action to derail and to switch between martial arts displays, thoughtful inquiries, and high octane dungeon action with spirits, monsters with giant bloated tongues, and porcelain faces. They're meant to be grotesque, picaresque, and gross; they're spirits and liches, after all. Like in all classic Kung-Fu and Chinese ghost stories, magic and philosophical whatnot alternate seamlessly with flurries of fists and things that croak and go bump in the dark.

WHERE?

The Dragonboat Festival takes place in a big Asian city, close to a river. This could be the 7th century Peng-Lai on the shores of the Gulf of Bohai where mirages shimmer upon the sea (featured in R. Van Gulik, *The Lacquer Screen*), or any other city you have in mind. Don't try to be too specific because the setting is a mashup of everything East Asian with little consideration for the real world.

Boxed sections in red and yellow (like the one describing TU WANG PING's stats on the right) are used to run this adventure as-written, that is, for one person playing the psychic detective and one DM. If you plan otherwise, you'll find plenty of advice about what you can run and how to run it for parties of different character levels.

TU WANG PING

5th level

Thief/Specialist

STR 12 INT 16 WIS 14

DEX 11 CHA 9 CON 14

AL Lawful Neutral

AC 9 (No armor)

Hp 23

Save T5

Skills Standard

(LL/AEC) or

Architecture (2) Climb

(2) Languages (2)

Search (5) Stealth (3)

Tinker (4)

EQUIPMENT

Chime of opening (7 charges)

100GP in a purse

Spyglass, Powder horn

10' silk rope & grapnel

Flintlock pistol (1d8)

Shortsword (1d6)

Powers, 3/day, for 5

rounds each, choose

on the spot: ESP

(allows to read the

surface thoughts of another being. Doesn't

allow to understand

them if in another

language), *Read object*

(detects psychic

impressions left by the previous owner),

Sensitivity to psychic

impressions (allows to

read the psychic

impressions left upon

a place by events).

WHEN?

When omens portend ill fortune for the city, the priests call upon a Dragonboat Festival: a racing competition gathering swift boatmen from all over the continent. Their ancient chants call forth the powers of the undying, waking the Flower Liches from their distant graves and conjuring them to the temples. For a week, the liches roam the city freely, and oversee the race.

They take the losing crews as tributes and sacrifices before going back from whence they came. Upon returning to their ancient tombs, they fall into a morbid perpetual trance—at least, until the next Dragonboat Festival. Celestial decrees prevent the Flower Liches from interfering directly with anything and anyone but the race and the racers. In those two spheres they have absolute power and authority. The decrees don't prevent the Flower Liches from interfering indirectly with the city, which makes the Dragonboat Festival an interesting time. When the race is over and the prizes claimed, the prophesized bad fortune is averted, and the city thrives and rejoices once again.

HOW TO USE THIS PDF

A quick foreword for all of you lucky *Mad Monks of Kwantoom* owners: the Shadow Lord has risen (MMoK p209), and taken over the city, imprisoning the Jade Empress in a forlorn dimension. All cults have been replaced by evil East Asian deities from a variety of different pantheons (try Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Southeast Asian, Korean, etc; while not Asian, beings from the Cthulhu Mythos also fit well here), and undead guards roam the streets — zombie and skeleton patrols led by wraiths.

Death squads of Tengu assassins serve the Shadow Lord; they run amok, kill those who pose a threat to him and squelch rebellions. If you don't own MMoK, either use a city from a supplement you own exactly as is or use a medieval map of a Chinese city, a little bit of internet research, and improvise on it.

Make sure there's a river flowing through the city, and add heaps of street food stalls, lanterns, kites, burly guards, soldiers on the loose, and prostitutes of both genders. You don't need to make the city an evil place just yet if it isn't to start with: let things unfold naturally as evil takes root.

HIGHLIGHTS

Think of this PDF as both a setting encapsulated in time and an adventure. There are multiple locations described herein, none of them tailored to a specific level so that they can keep your players on their toes. Along with the locations, several event-based plotlines run their course through the adventure. Some of them start with a haphazard random encounter, others occur during the race or the exploration of the locations in the city. Since this adventure is a sandbox, the player characters are not supposed to break all the city's houses open and slaughter everyone inside like in a bad *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* session, or the first time I ran *Vault of the Drow* when I was 11 years old. There are encounter tables, a few locations, and some planned events: all you need to use to create a somewhat convincing portrait of a Fantasy-Asian-Probably-Chinese medieval city. As usual in a sandbox, everything is up to the players and their choices, though they'll find hooks everywhere if they're willing to take the bait.

DURING THE FESTIVAL

During the Festival, all your usual encounter tables are waived — if you use any — and replaced with the Encounters & Events During the Festival table (page 6). Check this table once every day and once every night by rolling 1d6. If you roll a 1 or 2, an encounter or event happens. All the usual shops of the city are closed for the Festival's duration, and are replaced with street vendors and traders who have traveled here specifically for the Festival. You'll find the Dragonboat Festival Equipment List on page 15 of this PDF. For the Festival's duration, you don't use your standard equipment list, and the characters don't need to search for specific shops because traders are all over the place, hawking loud enough for them to locate them all. Because there's so many of them, you don't need to keep track of the items in stock either, just assume there's an infinite supply of everything. Likewise, hirelings, and mercenaries found during the Festival are unique. You'll find them on page 18.



THE PUZZLING CASE OF THE SOUND OF WHITE JASMINE

She's Lil'ling, the *Sound of White Jasmine*, the purest lady in the city, her heart good and genuine. He's Nightshade, the Flower

Lich of Many Tendrils, decay wrapped in patchouli with a venomous soul (all about him on page 42, and 78). One night, Lil'ling was gone, and her servants sent for the District Judge, their eyes wide with terror, their mouths babbling of ghost stories becoming true. As the Judge was about to wave it all away with a haughty gesture, TU WANG PING, the famous psychic detective, decided to take the case. The next day, Lil'ling was back, and the servants laughing at their own drunken stupidity. Case closed, then?

Using necromantic magic, Nightshade has swapped bodies with Lil'ling on the first evening of the Flower Liches' arrival in the city. He now haunts Lil'ling body, and is about to marry the eldest son of whoever's the leader of the city on the 7th day of the race. If he does, he'll give birth to a demon lord by the end of the week after a 9 hours long pregnancy and a 9 minutes labor — an eight-years old child, and the next in line for the leadership of the city. Meanwhile, Lil'ling's soul is trapped in Nightshade's body (see page 42), hidden in plain sight, and kept under control by Nightshade's accomplice, Datura (she's detailed on page 36), with powerful *domination* powers. If nothing's done to thwart Nightshade's plan, Lil'ling's body will be destroyed in labor at the end of the week. The servants are all dead, their bodies loaded with heavy stones and dumped into the river (that's page 82). They have been replaced with *simulacrums* of their former selves — magically constructed creatures with a semblance of life, and about half the memory and personality of the creature they copy.

Remember that the Flower Liches are forbidden from interfering with anything outside of the race (more details on page 33) so, Nightshade's plan must be kept secret. If what she's done can be proven, the Flower Liches will be put on trial in front of the gods, and Nightshade and Datura will be destroyed.

ENCOUNTERS & EVENTS DURING THE FESTIVAL (1d20)

1. Black day (1).
2. Bountiful catch.
3. Buddhist monks (2).
4. Bullywugs.
5. Camel race.
6. Collective hallucination.
7. Day of the masks.
8. Dead body (3).
9. Death by drowning.
10. Drunk poets (4).
11. Drunk officials.
12. Flower ghouls.
13. Penanggalan hunt.
14. Kite competition.
15. Loveboat (5).
16. Miwo Nu.
17. Mantis erudite (6).
18. Mysterious pouch (7).
19. Touhou wraith.
20. Yu-Shentong (8).

When running the adventure for TU WANG PING, roll 1d8 on the Encounters & Events During the Festival table instead of 1d20, and check the scores between brackets after the encounter or event's name.

1. BLACK DAY (1). The forecast has been made in the ancient astrological system of the Flower Liches, and the omens scrutinized. This day is a black day, where all activity must cease. The Dragonboat race doesn't take place on this day, all shops are closed, and there are no mercenaries to be found. If a character goes out nevertheless, all reaction rolls and Charisma checks performed while interacting with the population thereafter receive a permanent -2 penalty unless the character is entirely clad in black when doing so.

2. BOUNTIFUL CATCH. Today's catch has been extraordinary. There are rock fishes, giant koi carps, translucent lobsters, and black catfishes laid out on the river's bank everywhere. The Flower Liches have ordered a gigantic fish soup to be set up and distributed to everyone. The soup is delicious, but a character eating it must save versus Poison every day or lose 1 Wisdom point per day until they succeeds at a save. Lost points are regained at a rate of 1 point per week. When a character reaches 0 in Wisdom, they turn into a giant blobfish forever.

3. BUDDHIST MONKS (2). 2d4 monks are begging for alms in the streets. Roll 1d6, they are either 1st level assassins in disguise (1-3), or 0 level novices with no armor, no weapons, and 3hp each (4-6). When given alms, the assassins will study the characters and disguise themselves as the characters at a later, preferably inappropriate, time. Giving alms to 0 level novices is nice, but has no effect. Assassins: AL CE, MV120', AC7 (high Dexterity only, like leather & shield), HD1, 4hp each, 1 dagger (1d4), Save T1, Morale 8, Assassination, Backstab (+4, x2), disguise, XP13.

4. BULLYWUGS. 2d4 bullywugs, grey-skinned frog-men, wander the city. They're not necessarily aggressive, and speak a smattering of Common, though they'll likely try to loot, torture, and kill anyone stupid enough to trust them. They wear yellow tattered robes with brocade shoulderpads and leather armor. They all carry wicker shields and barbed spears. Each bullywug has about 2d6GP in a pouch. Bullywugs: AL CE, MV30' on land, 150' underwater, AC4 (natural armor, leather, and shield ; like chain & shield), HD1, 6hp each, 1 barbed spear (1d6+1), Save F1, Morale 8, +1 to hit & x2 damage on the first attack when hopping down on enemies, camouflage 75%, surprise on 1-3/6 when in camouflage, XP16.

5. CAMEL RACE. An impromptu camel race has been launched by the Flower Liches and is stampeding through the streets. All the camels are black, taller than usual, and trained for war. All characters must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or receive 1d6 hoof attacks (roll To Hit for each attack). The camel's riders are 0 level humans with 4hp, a scimitar, and chainmail. If the characters interfere or fight, they won't be punished. War camel: AL NE, MV180', AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD3, 17hp each, 1 bite (1d4), 1 hoof (1d6), Save F2, Morale 8, XP20.

6. COLLECTIVE HALLUCINATION. A silvery blue haze falls upon the whole city for 3 days. Each character must succeed at a save versus Magic/Spells or believe they've been turned into a random intelligent man-sized animal-humanoid hybrid, along with all the inhabitants of the city (roll 1d12 for each character: rat (1), ox (2), tiger (3), rabbit (4), dragon (5), snake (6), horse (7), goat (8), monkey (9), rooster (10), dog (11), pig (12)). While in hybrid form, they gain all the natural attacks and powers the giant (or ordinary if the animal's already man-sized) version of the animal possesses, even when attacking people who aren't subject to the hallucination. At the end of the 3 days, there is a 1 in 20 chance that the change becomes real and permanent for every character affected.

7. DAY OF THE MASKS. This day has been marked as a celebration in the ancient astrology system followed by the Flower Liches. All inhabitants must go naked with a mask, and all other rules are off, except the rule forbidding the liches to interfere with the city. If a character wanders out with clothes on or without a mask, they will be forbidden to compete in the Dragonboat race ever again. There's a loophole in the rule, which may be found with divination spells, player's intuition, or a proper research (roll under Intelligence/2, or a Knowledge or History skill roll against DC20 if your game features any): the character can still compete if they compete naked and wear a mask during the race.

8. DEAD BODY (3). The characters find a dead bloated body washed ashore by the river. The body is of a young man wearing grey clothes, and a small signet ring. It bears horrid slashing wounds, from which he seems to have died. A thorough investigation (player's description, roll under Intelligence/2, or First Aid/Medicine skill check DC20) reveals that the wounds were inflicted post-mortem, and that he died from poison. The poison may be identified by an alchemist (such as the Mantis erudite, see page 12) as a concoction brewed by the Yu-Shentong (see page 14). Reading the psychic impressions left upon the signet ring brings up visions of men clad in bright orange and wearing golden conical hats, and of the hand wearing the ring clenching the firm breasts of a young woman. An investigation in taverns or with tailors about these strange clothes, a successful roll under Charisma/2 or a Streetwise/Information Gathering DC25 check allows to identify these men as servants of a very small Barony, the Tunshang Barony (see page 83). The man was hired by the mandarins of the Tunshang Baron to kidnap the Great Priest PIN LUNG's secret daughter (see page 30). His ring leads to the assassin's guild of a distant city, from which he was summoned to help the Tunshang (any level 9 or above Assassin can identify the ring). He completed his mission and locked the daughter away, but he raped her as well, and was poisoned by Yu-Shentong thugs upon the orders of the Barony. The assassin's guild isn't willing to avenge his death.

9. DEATH BY DROWNING. Eight criminals have been sentenced to death by the Flower Liches for having tried to tamper with the Dragonboat race's roster. They are locked up in wicker cages high above the river, and plunged underwater repeatedly until they die, some 20 minutes later. The 7th has been mistaken for the real criminal and is actually innocent. If the characters can prove his innocence before he dies, the Liches reward them with a single 1,000GP silver crown with tall pointed spikes.

10. DRUNK POETS (4). 2d4 poets came back from the bamboo forests and drink wine in the streets, sing merry songs, and practice the Immortal Tao. They're all level 3 Monks with AC7 (no armor, class and Dexterity bonus; like leather & shield), and 12hp (use the AEC Monk class, the Monk class from *Mad Monks of Kwantoom*, or the Thief/Specialist class — in that case, give them a martial arts attack for 1d8 damage). With a friendly reaction roll, they sing a unique and meaningful song when meeting the player characters.

THE STRAWBERRY SONG

The snow, soft and low
The forest like a garden,
Strawberries like blood.

Meet me by the gate,
Well met, well met, Bagicha,
At the garden's dusk.

On this very night,
With a breadth's full of flowers,
Got my hint I guess?

This being sung, the poets run away abruptly (they're fast, and they know the city). There's a garden called Bagicha Garden in the city, of which most inhabitants know. The song is a rendez-vous: that very evening the encounter happens at the garden's gate at dusk. If the player characters get the hint and go there with flowers, the drunken poets become their henchmen as long as the Dragonboat Festival lasts. If they go there empty-handed, the poets attack them.

11. DRUNK OFFICIALS. A dozen officials and examination candidates celebrate in the streets. They carry along all kinds of legal documents, which they drop around them in their drunken clumsiness. 1d4 of these documents have some administrative relevance (roll 1d6: property document (1), tender note worth 100GP (2), nomination as a sergeant in the city's militia (3), proof of imperial citizenship (4), letter of incarceration (5), letter of tax clearance (6)) and might easily be forged once the original document is in the characters' possession (roll under Intelligence or Forgery skill DC15).

12. FLOWER GHOULS. Followers and guards of the Flower Liches, flower ghouls wander into the streets during the festival in bands of 2d3 members. They look like purplish-skinned ghouls with tiny fanged tubular mouths, and crimson, and blue flowers of flesh erupting on the surface of their skin. While they have been ordered not to interfere with the city's people, they will fight back when attacked, and might even attack characters when meeting them in isolated, witness-free areas. Flower ghouls: AL CE, MV90', AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD2+2, 13hp each, 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1), Save F4, Morale 9, characters hit by their bite attack must save versus Magic/Spells or their entire flesh will instantly either boil (1-3) or freeze (4-6) on the spot. When a character's flesh boils, they suffer 2d4 damage and becomes unconscious for 1d4 days. When a character's flesh freezes, they lose 1d4 hp, and one of their extremities — determined randomly — is frostbitten and must be amputated, XP47.

13. PENANGGALAN HUNT. A penanggalan is being hunted down in the city. The authorities are offering 300GP for its death, and 500GP for its capture. The penanggalan's body has been destroyed, and all that remains, its flying head, and bleeding internal organs, hover, and drift helplessly in the streets. The creature cannot attack, but seeing it *causes fear* for 3 turns. Further, it drips with blood, and digestive fluids that inflict 1d4 points of damage to anyone getting close to it, or fighting it in melee. Penanggalan: AL LE, MV120' (Flying), AC8 (Dexterity, like leather armor), HD4, 24hp, Save F4, Morale 9, turned as wraith, XP135.

14. KITE COMPETITION. The kite competition happens on an evening of the Dragonboat Festival after the race is over for the day. Many kites are imbued with magic to look better and fly higher. A prize of 1,000GP rewards the winner of the Most Wonderful Display contest. Standard kites are sold at 5SP for the most simple to 25GP for the most exquisite. Kites imbued with one or more spells are sold with their command word for the following amounts: *fireworks* cantrip (replicates a small firework, but destroys the kite, blinds target for 1 round when flown at someone's face if they fail at a save versus Petrification/Paralysis) 50GP, *levitation* spell 200GP, *pyrotechnics* spell 250GP, *hypnotic pattern* spell 325GP. Clever characters may use kites to their advantage. For example a character could ride a sturdy kite imbued with a *levitation* spell in a future adventure. The winner of the Most Wonderful Display contest uses an exquisite kite imbued with all the spells together (if the player characters purchase a kite with the same properties, use 1D20 with Intelligence and Dexterity modifiers added up together to determine the winner).

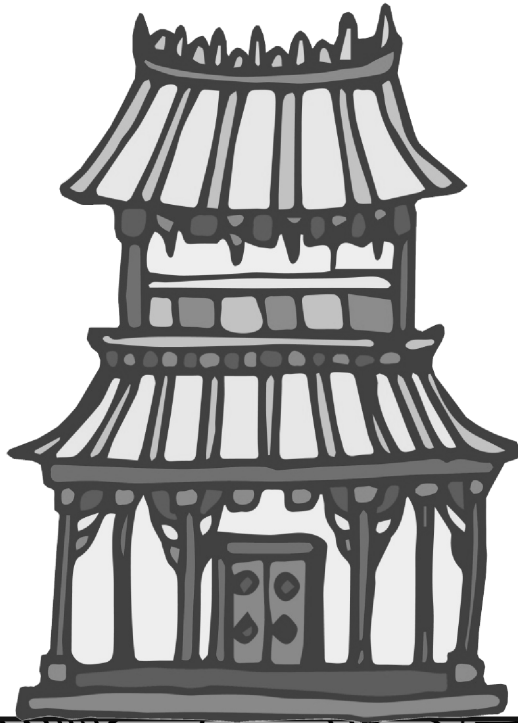
15. LOVEBOAT (5). The player characters are invited to a party on an illusionary loveboat sailing down the river after the day's race. There are 2d4 courtesans, all of them expert dancers and musicians, wandering about half-naked and carrying yellow lanterns; 2d4 guards in leather armor with a turban and a pair of scimitars, carrying red lanterns; and 2d4 petty officials and travelers — all of them level 0 commoners without armor or weapons with 2hp each. The illusion is so powerful that it affects all senses, including smell, touch, taste, etc. Spells such as *detect illusion* will reveal that something's afoot, and both *dispel illusion* and *true seeing* allow one to see through it. Disbelieving or studying the illusion without magical aid has no effect. When midnight comes, the illusion dissipates: the "boat" is but a tangle of rotten bamboo, algae, mud, and dead fish; the "courtesans" are giant fireflies; and the "guards" are fire beetles. The petty officials and travelers are hapless victims of the illusion. The giant fireflies speak a little bit of Common and may become characters' companions if all went well before the illusion dissipated and the characters keep their cool. The beetles obey the fireflies. Giant fireflies: AL CN(G), MV30'/150' (Flying), AC4 (size, and Dexterity bonus, like chain & shield), HD1+2, 1 bite (1d2), Save F3, Morale 6, shed light like a torch, greenish light beam 1/turn at 15' for 5d4 damage if it hits exposed flesh, XP21. Fire beetle: AL N, MV120', AC4 (natural armor, like chain & shield), HD1+2, 1 bite (2d4), Save F3, Morale 7, shed light in a 10' radius, XP15.

The giant fireflies speak a bit of Common, so *ESP* reveals surface thoughts such as shyness, fear, gossip about food and love, a desire to be loved, and occasional visions of fishes, and small insects. Using *ESP* on the beetles shows hunger, dung, and carrion. Using *read object* on board the boat or on the boat itself reveals its true nature (a delicious crabcake is a rotten dead crab; a silky dress is really a dried, thin patch of algae, etc). *Sensitivity to psychic impressions* shows the murder of a previous group of revelers who went into a panic and attacked when the illusion stopped. The fireflies have seen strange people throwing bodies into the river, and will tell TU WANG PING (see page 82), leading him to where they've seen it happen should they become friends.

The illusion's source is a glowing red gem that's stuck into the stomach of a weird abyss fish caught at the bottom of the "boat". If the gem is taken out, it sheds a different illusion in a 60' radius after 24 hours, changing the appearance of people and surroundings for 12 hours a day (to whatever the DM chooses). It isn't cursed, so the characters can just throw it out, walk away, or plant it someplace else. The giant fireflies don't know about the gem; the "boat" is just their drifting home.

16. MIWO NU. The Miwo Nu are natives of northern mountains a week's ride from the city. They know how to ride deer, skin muskrats, and weave the silk of snow spiders. The Miwo Nu usually wear fur and silk tunics strong as boiled leather. There are $1d4+1$ of them in the streets, caught in a quarrel with foreign traders (Indian, Westerners, Arabian, anything you want). They may consider joining the player characters as henchmen if the characters intervene to defend them (see page 18). Miwo Nu: AL CN, MV120', AC8 (leather armor), HD2, 1 barbed spear ($1d6+1$), Save F2, Morale 10, XP20.

17. MANTIS ERUDITE (6). A spectacled praying mantis/human hybrid erudite has set up shop in a small abandoned pagoda after having escaped his home region, where he's wanted as a serial killer and organ collector. He has vast knowledge on specific topics, and will answer truthfully when given the right price. Mantis erudite: AL LE, MV180', AC5 (natural armor & Dexterity bonus, like chain), HD6+3, 34hp, 4 claws ($1d4$), 1 bite ($1d4+1$, and the target must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or be paralyzed for 2d8 rounds), Save F9, Morale 10, *neutralize poison* (or *poison*) 1/day, has 75% chance to answer questions about alchemy, and undead creatures in 1d4 days. The erudite requests 200GP per question. He asks for a body part of the recipient for the casting of his *neutralize poison* spell, XP680.



18. MYSTERIOUS POUCH (7). The characters find a mysterious green leather pouch with a pair of black leather drawstrings adorned with tiny gold lotus flowers. The pouch is smeared with blood, nearly soaked through. It contains a heap of red herring clues: a tiny silver button engraved with a gaping catfish, a red porcelain spoon, an official stamp of the Excise Office, and a black pearl. A thorough investigation, a successful roll under Charisma/2, or a Streetwise/Information Gathering check DC20 allows a character to trace an item back to its source. The silver button belongs to the captain of a trading junk ship, a LN level 3 Fighter; the porcelain spoon belongs to a wealthy family in town (a CE spouse, a CN husband, 3 CN 8, 12, and 16 year-old daughters, all three with a Charisma of 16, and 4 guards, all LN level 1 Fighters with leather armor, and scimitars); the stamp comes from the Excise Office (a level 2 Thief/Specialist, and 12 level 0 guards with leather armor, shield, and broadswords); and the pearl has been fished from a specific pool in a coastal village nearby, around which 2d10 divers, all level 0 commoners, live. None of these places, people, or items have any significance; they've just been stolen haphazardly by the pouch's previous possessor while training at picking pockets. The pouch, once cleaned of the blood and laid flat, is a map leading to a lonely place into the scrubland nearby (see page 81), where a body has been buried.

19. TOUHOU WRAITH. The wraith overseer creeps about the streets after dusk. It looks like a gaunt veiled woman clad in a white bloodstained gauze dress, and surrounded by purple faerie fires. The dress is empty but for a black smoke silhouette, and the creature's face, a starlit void. The wraith won't attack unless it is attacked first, or it finds itself in a desolate, lonely place with the player characters. It can project *faerie fires* on the characters every other round. Roll To Hit for every character: if the fires hit, the characters are now engulfed in purple flames which don't burn but outlines their bodies and befuddles them (+2 To Hit against them for 1d6 rounds, and they automatically lose their initiative rolls for the same duration). In addition, the wraith can conjure flower-shaped *shooting stars* once a turn, which cause 12hp of damage to all the targets they hit (here again, a To Hit roll is required, save versus Petrification/Paralysis halves). If the wraith is destroyed, it turns into a small obsidian flower, allowing its possessor to *summon* it once for 1d4 rounds. Touhou wraith: AL CE, MV120'/240' (Flying), AC3 (partial uncorporeality & Dexterity bonus, like plate), HD4, 21hp, 1 chill touch (1d6, and drains 1 energy level), Save F8, Morale 12, immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *charm*, and normal weapons (silver weapons inflict one-half of their usual damage) XP410.

20. YU-SHENTONG (8). The Yu-Shentong are morbid natives of nameless jungles. While they usually wear standard clothes, their scarred, pale faces and dented thin blowguns which double up as daggers (1/1d4) set them apart. The Yu-Shentong use many poisons, including a potent sleep poison from the Underdark (save or sleep for 1d20 days), and a deadly ingested poison made with rare flowers (save at -2 or die in 1d4 turns). They respect the Tunshang Barony (see page 83), and have killed the assassin (see page 8) for them. They won't tell unless charmed or seriously tortured. When the player characters meet them, there are 2d6 Yu-Shentong, each carrying a single dose of each poison and a tiny bullion worth 15GP. Yu-Shentong: AL LE, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 blowgun (1 or 1d4 if used as a dagger + poison), Save F1, Morale 9, XP13.

Read object used on the Yu-Shentong poison vials will reveal their poisoning of the assassin. *Read object* used on the bullions brings images of Tunshang servants paying the Yu-Shentong. Clever questions and *ESP* will eventually provide the same information.



DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL EQUIPMENT LIST

ARMOR

Lamellar lacquered mail	70GP	AC4 (like chain & shield)
Ring mail	35GP	AC7 (like leather & shield)
Silk cord armor	5GP	AC8 (like leather)
Shield, round, bronze ¹	25GP	
Shield, wooden planks ²	3GP	
Leather helmet	2GP	
Pony barding, leather	50GP	AC8 (leather)

¹(+3 vs. missiles, +1 vs. melee attacks)

²(roll after each hit sustained, breaks on a roll of '1')

WEAPONS

Bohemian ear-spoon	15GP	1d6 damage
Broadsword	15GP	2d4 damage
Club, morningstar	20GP	2d4 damage
Dagger	5GP	1d4 damage
Darts, shuriken	1GP	1d6 damage
Harpoon ³	10GP	2d4 damage
Maul, huge	25GP	1d10 damage
Nunchaku ⁴	7GP	1d6 damage
Pick, military, horseman's	15GP	1d4+1 damage
Short stick	5SP	1d4 damage
Shortbow, bamboo, recurved ⁵	35GP	1d6+1 damage
Spear	8GP	1d6 damage

³(if the To Hit roll scores 5 or better above the required target, the harpoon is stuck and will cause 1d6 further damage when yanked out)

⁴(requires martial arts)

⁵(sold with 10 arrows)

ANIMALS

Bat in a cage	5GP
Coi carp, giant	500GP
Fancy dog	100GP
Goats, 12	20GP
Lantern frog ⁶	35GP
Rat, tamed	3SP
War dog	30GP
War pony	75GP

⁶(sheds light on a 5' radius)

TRAVELS

Cart, single pony	50GP
Cart, 2 ponies	150GP
Junk boat, 2 people	200GP
Junk boat, 6 people	800GP
Junk boat, royal (16 people)	5,000GP
Palanquin, bamboo, 1 seat (1 footman)	75GP
Palanquin, bamboo, 2 seat (2 footmen)	125GP
Palanquin, bamboo, 4 seat (4 footmen)	200GP

FOOD & ACCOMODATION

Ale, barrel	5GP
Ale, mug	3SP
Average inn, 1 night	1GP
Caramel Ham, full leg	5GP
Chili, 1 pouch	2SP
Crab cakes, 12	1SP
Dried meat (fish & beef), 1lb.	7SP
Fancy inn, 1 night	5GP
Fancy restaurant, 1 meal	1GP
Fish sauce, jar	5SP
Garlic, 12 cloves	2SP
Palm wine, bottle	3SP
Pork rolls, 12	2SP
Rice wine, 1 bottle	1GP
Rice wine, superior, 1 bottle	10GP
Rice, pot	3SP
Salt, pouch	1GP
Shoddy inn, dormitory, 1 night	3SP
Shoddy inn, private bedroom, 1 night	5SP
Street food, 1 meal	3SP
Tavern, standard, 1 meal	5SP
Vinegar, bottle	8SP

ADVENTURING GEAR

Banner, custom	20GP
Barrel, empty	2GP
Book	5SP
Boots, high, hard	2GP
Boots, low, fur-trimmed	2GP
Boots, low, soft	1GP
Calligraphy, average	5SP
Calligraphy, superior	15GP
Chest, small, ivory & silver	100GP



Chest, teak wood	10GP
Coal, bucket	7SP
Conical hat	5SP
With silk veil	2GP
Crested hat	1GP
Diary, blank	9SP
Dress, silk, transparent	25GP
Fire beetle gland, preserved	5GP
Flute	1GP
Hood	3SP
Ink block	1GP
Inking stone	5GP
Jewelry, gold	150GP
Jewelry, silver	50GP
Jewelry, wood, tribal	25GP
Khol, small box	3GP
Lipstick, black	5GP
Nails, a dozen, 9"	1GP
Oil flask, pint	10GP
Painting, average	5GP
Paper lantern	5SP
Paper, 12 sheets	3GP
Perfume, jasmine	25GP
Porcelain cups, pair	1GP
Pouch	1GP
Quill	2SP
Quiver, 10 arrows	10GP
Rope sandals	1SP
Saddlebag	5GP
Shirt, brocade	25GP
Shovel ⁷	5GP
Sikkimi tea, brick	5GP
Silk rope, 10'	5GP
Silver mirror	35GP
Stamp, custom	5GP
Straw cape	5SP
Torch	5SP
Trousers, leather, pair	3GP
Trousers, cotton, grey, pair	5SP
Tunic, silk	5GP
Vest, silk, black	10GP
Wah-Tung matchbox, 12 matches, 4" long	1GP
⁷ (can be used as a weapon for 1d4 damage)	

HIRELINGS & MERCENARIES OF THE DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL

An offer of at least ten times the minimum wage, a very convincing speech, a successful roll under Charisma/2, or a Persuasion check DC20 all allow characters to hire followers in the city. The characters can try to recruit followers only once a day regardless of the type of follower, except if they make a public announcement and gather them in a tavern, in which case they can try once for every type of follower on this day.

The announcement and tavern fees are of 100GP.

ASHIGARU. The ashigarus are all level 0 Fighters with Bohemian ear-spoons, 5hp, a Morale of 8 (which drops by 1 point for every ashigaru missing from the original squad), a straw cape, a conical hat, and no armor. They will join the characters' party only if hired as a squad of eight. Their wage is 5GP a day per ashigaru (40GP for the entire squad).

BOATMEN. Boatmen can compete in the Dragonboat race along with the characters for a fee. They are level 0 Fighters with clubs, 4hp, a Morale of 9, and no armor. Their wage is 7GP a day.

MIWO NU. The characters can recruit Miwo Nu natives only if they have met them before and taken their side. The Miwo Nu are level 2 Fighters with barbed spears (1d6+1), 12hp, a Morale of 10, furs, and a leather armor. Their wage is 10GP a day.

SCOUNDRELS. The street crooks, disputable *"guides, and torch-bearer lot"* are all level 0 Fighters with daggers, 2hp, a Morale of 4, and no armor. When they join a party, they look for the first opportunity to steal valuables, lure the characters into an ambush, or simply walk away if they've been paid up front. Their wage is 1GP a day.

STORYTELLER. The characters may consider hiring a wandering storyteller to record their adventures. The storyteller is a level 1 Thief/Specialist with a knack for languages and writing. He has no weapon, no armor, 5hp, and a Morale of 12. Every time a character levels up in an adventure recorded by the storyteller, he gains 1 point of Fame. Each time the character meets someone new thereafter, there is a chance equal to his Fame in 1d20 that this someone has heard a random bit of the character's adventures. Fame can also be used, with the same chances of success, to receive loans or invitations, to escape justice, and to gain favors. The storyteller's wage is 250GP for every adventure session.

THE DRAGONBOAT RACE

SETUP

This section describes the race itself, and none of the events, or locations connected to it in the city such as where do the Flower Liches take their bath, or who killed the General BAO DWER. The race is a self-contained instance, a game unto itself, which the player characters may elect to join or skip altogether.

It happens no matter what, and polarizes the attention of the whole city while it lasts. Every day, the race begins at noon, and stops a few hours later. During this time, the city goes silent and the shops close as the people gather on the riverbank, pushing and shouting into the crowd until they get a good view of the racing boats. The Flower Liches, all five of them, are gathered together on a copper-plated stand under silk canopies at the starting and ending point of the race; their thrones, which they reach with bamboo ladders, are some 30' off the ground. The Touhou wraith (page 13), the Chancellor (page 44), a dozen flower ghouls (page 10), and 10d20 zombies stand in front of the canopy. The liches have no right to interfere with anything of the city, but full authority over the race. They can kill, torture, bind, or imprison whoever disturbs the race at a whim, and they will. From afar, they look like old ladies wrapped in silk and brocade upon which blood-soaked garlands of flowers have been heaped. When they move, a chill suffuses the air, and all the shadows of the city and its people grow taller. The undead in front of them look, well, like undead, ghosts and ghouls joining a zombie parade. The whole riverbank smells of salty rotten fishes, of umami¹, of the rotting dead, of sour decaying flowers in full blossom, of the bitter sweat of lovers, and of the sweet corruption of water-gorged fruits. There are bleachers everywhere in the narrow streets, and people cheering the racers with tiny flags and crackers. Most of the people have put their most elegant clothes on so that it's all somewhat glamorous in spite of the all-pervading grotesque.

¹. One of the five basic tastes. The umami, brothy, meaty, or savory taste feels good on the tongue, both mouthwatering and coating.

JOINING THE RACE

Every day for a week, a new race begins that anyone (including both newcomers and race veterans) is free to join or ignore at their discretion. Every day has its own winning and losing team, but the more days a specific team wins in a row, the better the rewards for that team winning the day. Since losing teams are taken as tributes by the Flower Liches at the end of each race, the pool of competitors dries slowly until the last day. There are no rules for the teams' composition; they typically comprise 6 members, but nothing prevents anyone from competing with a team of 8, or of entering with only a single member. However, a couple of limitations apply. The teams, first of all, can't include any new members as days go by, else they lose the benefit of the better rewards they would have been eligible for when winning several days in a row. Competitors are allowed to form new teams every day if they wish to, but they will start at the bottom of the rewards' ladder every time they do so. Further, teams are all given the same type of dragonboat, a rowboat fitted for 6 people. Registrations for the next day's race are taken at midnight sharp by the Chancellor (see page 44), escorted by 20 flower ghouls, in front of a copper-plated stand.

WHEN THE RACE IS ABOUT TO START

When the race is about to start, Japhet, the fourth Flower Lich (see page 41) comes forward and touches the competitor's foreheads. By doing so, their minds empty of all the spells they might have memorized for the day. It feels like vomiting magic in the form of a rainbow jelly from all facial orifices, though it is invisible for anyone other than the victim. The Chancellor then steps forward with a **wand of magic detection** and scans the teams and their boats, locking anything radiating magic in a large ebony box adorned with small rubies. The box sits at the feet of the Flower Liches, and is enchanted with a *secret chest* spell. Once the box is closed, Hyacinth, the third Flower Lich (see page 39), casts the spell while holding a tiny replica of the box, and sends it to a secret location on the aethereal plane. He conjures it once again when, and only when, the Dragonboat Festival ends, and gives all the items back to their owners. Anything that escapes the scan is considered legitimate to use in the race.

WINNING & LOSING THE RACE

Losing the race is real bad. Every day when a team finishes last for the day's race the losers become free game for the Flower

Liches. Don't pull any punches at this point: if the player characters are the losing team, they're as good as dead. Attack them with 200 zombies, 40 flower ghouls, 50 city guards, and all the Flower Liches at once if need be. Find them with **crystal balls**, *contact other plane*, and *find the path* spells, and kill them — they deserve it. Once captured, they will either be sent naked into the river Vaitarna¹, or sacrificed to the elder gods on the spot, their soul eaten by the demons of the spirit underworld, their bodies beyond the reach of magic.

¹. A river of the lower planes in the Hindu mythology. The Vaitarna is full of blood and pus with heaps of bones on its banks, and mud of blood and flesh. It has the same forgetfulness power the Styx river has.

Winning, on the other hand, brings lofty rewards as follows:

WINNING 1 DAY. 100GP each.

WINNING 2 DAYS IN A ROW. 500GP each.

WINNING 3 DAYS IN A ROW. 1,000GP each.

WINNING 4 DAYS IN A ROW. A **random magic item** each.

WINNING 5 DAYS IN A ROW. 5,000GP each.

WINNING 6 DAYS IN A ROW. A **magic item** each, character's choice (except unique items such as artefacts, and relics).

WINNING 7 DAYS IN A ROW. A *wish* spell each.

RULES OF THE RACE, OR THEIR LACK THEREOF

Once the race has started, there are no rules. Shooting at competitors; boarding their boat; turning into a fish if a character can do this without spells or magic items; using magic items smuggled past the **wand of magic detection**; and even non-magical technology such as dynamite, are all allowed. After all, everybody's body and soul is at stake. Spectators, on the other hand, aren't allowed to interfere, though they may get away with it if they're fast enough or well hidden. If caught, they will swiftly face an angry mob, but their actions won't disqualify the racers, whatever their impact may have been. Angry mob: AL LN, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD10, 10 club attacks (1d6), Save F10, Morale 7, the angry mob attacks, defends, flees, and dies as a single monster, XP1,000.

THE DRAGONBOAT RACE MINI-GAME

The dragonboats are propelled by four paddlers with the help of a drummer who sets the pace and of a sweeper who steers the boat. The race is divided **into 5 turns**, each equivalent to a game turn in duration. Every turn, the DM rolls 1d10 in the open. This is the number that everyone on board has to beat. The drummer rolls 1d20, adds his Charisma bonus to the roll, or a +2 bonus if he succeeds at a Performance check DC15. The sweeper rolls 1d20, adds his Wisdom bonus to the roll, or a +2 bonus if he succeeds at a Navigation check DC15. All the paddlers roll 1d6, to which they add their Strength bonus. When there are more than 6 people on board, all the players' rolls have a -1 penalty for each character above the 6th, but all the characters on board, including those above the 6th, can paddle, and roll 1d6. When there are less than 6 people on board, all the players' rolls have a -1 penalty for each character below the 6th. If there are only 2 characters, they both roll 1d20 and 1d6 as they're both paddling and steering or drumming. If there's only one madman on board, he rolls 1d6 and 2d20.

For every adjusted roll the paddlers score above the DM's roll, the boat gains 1 Pace point. The Pace points measure the distance, roughly equivalent to 50 meters, covered by the boat.

They add up every turn, and the boat scoring the highest number of points wins the race. The boat scoring the lowest number of Pace points loses the race. When either the drummer or the sweeper rolls below the DM's roll, the boat rocks, and everybody must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or fall into the river. If the boat waits for them, all Pace points gained this turn are lost. In addition, the characters have a standard chance of drowning. If both the drummer and the sweeper roll below the DM's roll, the boat capsizes, and the race is over for them. They still keep whatever Pace points they have gained so far when determining which team is the last. When two boats have the same number of Pace points at the end of a turn, they are considered at a close distance, and each team can board the other with a roll of 1d20 under the sweeper's Dexterity/2 or with a Navigation check DC20. After the turn is resolved, the drummer can slow down to the Pace of the boat following it, and the team can board it with a successful roll, but all the Pace points above the score of the slower boat are lost.

CONVENTION PLAY & REAL LIFE

In real life, the dragonboats have 20 paddlers, not just 4. Now, if you run the race for a convention or as a part of a Funnel adventure, nothing prevents you from running it with 22 player characters per boat and making it a big thing. In that case, apply penalties only when the crew gets below 10 members, and forbid them to let any more than 22 characters on board — there's just not enough space.

THE DM'S DIE

Roll 1d10 on each of the five turns to determine the overall conditions of the race. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the random encounter detailed for the corresponding d10 result occurs this turn for the player characters' boat. Random encounters happening to other competitors are dealt with differently (see page 28).

RESULT	CONDITIONS	ENCOUNTER
1	Still	Crocodiles, normal (1d4)
2	Easy curves	Muckdwellers (4d4)
3	Slight current	Toad, giant (1)
4	Curves	Kapoacanth (1)
5	Heavy Rain	Kappas (2d4)
6	Strong current	Gar, giant (1)
7	Rapids	Kelpies (2)
8	Sharp curves	Lacedon (2d4)
9	Cascade	Nymph (1)
10	Typhoon	Storm Giants (2d6)

CROCODILES, NORMAL. Since the water is still, the crocodiles attack the characters if they can catch them unaware. They have 3/6 chances to surprise them on the first round, and attack with a -4 penalty since the characters have cover. On the next round, the characters can huddle together in the middle of the boat to avoid further attacks provided they win the initiative. Crocodiles: AL N, MV30'/90' Swimming, AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD2, 1 bite (1d8), Save F1, Morale 7, XP20.

MUCKDWELLERS. These small bipedal iguanas climb on the boat and gang up on the characters. Muckdwellers: AL LE, MV30'/120' Swimming, AC5 (natural armor & small size, like chain), HD1/2, 1 bite (1d2), Save F1, Morale 6, water jet at 10' (blinds for 1 round, save versus Wands/Magical Device to avoid), XP7.

TOAD, GIANT. The toad tries to catch a random dwarf-sized or smaller character from the river's bank while the boat moves. It won't attack if everyone is too big for it. There are 12 pieces of malachite worth 25GP each, and a dead koi carp inside the toad's stomach. The carp itself has swallowed a **ring of protection +1** engraved with the word ELUKTAN; speaking this word while wearing the ring causes a white light to shine forth at 5' when the word is pronounced. Any evil humanoid caught in this light will appear like a shadow to the ring's bearer. Toad, giant: AL N, MV90'/30' Swimming, AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD2+2, 1 bite (1d4+1), Save F4, Morale 6, surprises on 3/6, swallows whole halfling-sized or smaller characters on a To Hit roll of '20' (swallowed whole victims lose 1d6 hp per round when digested inside the toad's belly), XP71.

KAPOACINTH. A water gargoyle, a kapoacinth, flies on board and wreaks havoc out of sheer cruelty. Kapoacinth: AL CE, MV90'/150' Flying, AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD4, 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6), 1 horns (1d4), Save F8, Morale 11, immune to non-magical weapons, XP500.

KAPPAS. These kappas, their cranial cavities filled with water from the river, stand on the bank with grapnel hooks and will try to halt the boat and kidnap one of the player characters for a ransom. When the kappa misses a saving throw versus Petrify or Breath weapon, the water from its cranial cavity is forced out and the kappa is dazed until the cavity is refilled. Kappas: AL CN, MV120'/120' Swimming, AC8 (natural armor, like leather), HD1, 2 claws (1d3), Save F1, Morale 8. If they manage To Hit AC8 at least 3 times in the same round, then the kappas have immobilized the boat, in which case all the Pace points for this turn are lost, and they can board the boat, XP10.

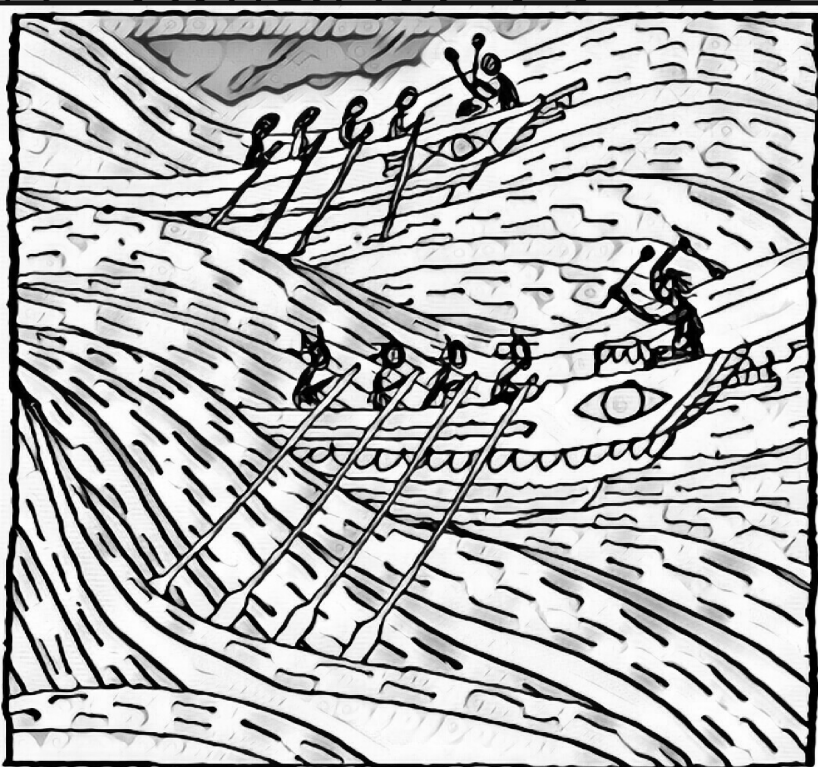
GAR, GIANT. This huge fish will attack characters only if they fall into the river. It swallows them whole on a To Hit roll of 20. Swallowed victims have a 1 in 20 chance of dying every round and a 1 in 6 chance of taking the same amount of damage the giant gar takes for every attack. If the character swallowed has an edged weapon in hand, they can attack from the inside, and will be freed if they inflict more than 10 hit points of damage to the gar. Gar, giant: AL N, MV300' Swimming, AC3 (natural armor, like plate), HD8, 40hp, 1 bite (5d4), Save F8, Morale 10, XP1,000.

KELPIES. The kelpies, malign and intelligent algae monsters, have assumed the shape of lovely young women to lure hapless victims into the water of the rapids. They can cast a *charm* spell once a day (save versus Spells/Magic at-2) on male victims. Affected victims jump into the water, and drown themselves in the kelpies' embrace (suffering 2d10 hp of damage per round). Kelpies: AL NE, MV90'/120' Swimming, AC3 (natural armor, like plate), HD5, no attack, Save F5, Morale 8, XP350.

LACEDON. Water ghouls. The lacedon climb on board and attack. Lacedon: AL CE, MV90'/90' Swimming, AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD2, 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6), Save F2, Morale 12, characters hit by the lacedons' claws must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or become paralyzed for 1d6 turns (except elves and kitsunes), XP47.

NYMPH. A nymph dwells in a water-filled cave behind a cascade, her silhouette outlined behind the water's veil. She will hide underwater, and leave if the characters ask for her permission before crossing the cascade, but she stands still if they don't. Anyone seeing her must save versus Spells/Magic or become blind permanently. If attacked, she strips down, and all characters seeing her naked must save versus Spells/Magic or die. Nymph: AL N, MV120'/120' Swimming, AC9 (no armor), HD3, Save F3, Morale 5, 3 chances in 6 of resisting any kind of magic, XP80.

STORM GIANTS. Storm giants wade into the water, and play in the typhoon. They cast down *lightning bolts* everywhere (8d8, save versus Petrification/Paralysis halves) and laugh heartily at their own antics. The bolts have a 1 in 6 chance to hit the boat and everyone on board each round for 6 rounds. The giants have a 1 in 6 chance every round to notice the boat and to stop their game while it sails through.



RUNNING THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Roll 3d4: this is the number of Non-Player Character (NPC) boats joining the race on the first day. Take out 1d20 and 1d6 for every NPC team, and another d20 — bigger or in a specific color — for the player characters' boat. NPC teams gain Pace points individually and automatically every turn depending upon the DM's die for this turn, and their boat has a fixed chance of staggering accordingly. When it does, roll 1d6 — on a result of 1-4, the team loses this amount of members, on a result of 5-6, it capsizes entirely and the race is over for that team. In addition, there's a 1 in 6 chance every turn that an encounter happens. When it does, the team loses 2d4-2 members.

DM'S DIE	PACE POINTS	STAGGERING	ENCOUNTER
		<i>Roll 1d6, lose 1-4 members or capsize (5-6)</i>	
1	2d6	—	
2	2d4	1 chance in 20	
3	2d3	1 chance in 12	
4	2d2	1 chance in 10	
5	1d4	1 chance in 8	
6	1d3	1 chance in 6	
7	1d2	1 chance in 4	
8	1	1 chance in 3	
9	—	1 chance in 2	
10	—	Automatic	

1. Roll the DM's die (1d10).
2. Roll for the pace points of every NPC boat.
3. Have the PC roll for their boat, and deal with random encounters as detailed previously.
4. Check individually whether a NPC boat staggers or capsizes.
5. Check individually whether a NPC boat faces an encounter.
6. Flip all NPC, and PC d20 so that they show the number of Pace points they have accumulated.
7. Flip the NPC d6 so that they show the number of members remaining in their team.
8. Arrange the dice nicely on the table.
9. Rinse, and repeat 5 times to complete the race.

Each d20 represents a boat, and each d6 its crew. Once the first turn is resolved, flip each d20, including the d20 representing the player characters' boat, so that it shows the number of Pace points it has accumulated this turn. Arrange the dice vertically in order someplace on a table so that it shows who's winning and who's losing, putting the dice side by side when they have the exact same number of Pace points. Put down 1d6 for every boat on the side of the d20. Adjust it so that it shows how many members remain in its team at the end of the round.

When a boat has but 3-4 members, the Pace points it gains every turn are divided by 2 (rounded up). When it has less than 3 members, the race is over for it. Once the first turn is resolved, roll the DM's die and start the same process for the second turn, adding up the Pace points and removing team members and so on until the race is over. As long as a team isn't reduced to less than 3 members, it competes again on the next day. Regardless of the losses, 1d4 more teams will join on the next day every day until the festival is over.

DEFAULT CREW

All NPC teams are considered the same: they all start with 6 members on the first day, they all try to board and attack whoever has the exact same amount of Pace points as them, and they never stop to help their fallen members back on board when their boat staggers. They have a 3 in 6 chance of successfully boarding another boat. Boatmen: AL CN, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC7 (leather armor & shield), HD1+2, 1 spear (1d6), Save F1, Morale 9, XP10.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS FOR NPC

The encounters for the NPC aren't detailed. We simply assume that they will be seen at a distance, and that the DM will describe the encounter freely instead of rolling a gazillion dice. If the PC join into the fray, the DM will have to find a proxy in whatever Monster Compendium his system features.

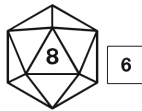
Aquatic tentamort, bandits, electric eels, fish-faced hill giants, flying sharks, hangman's tree, khargas (flying earth elementals), kuo-toas, lamia, lizard king, manticore, marid, mud golem, ningyos (half-fish, half-monkey sirins), porcupine-shark, river hag, supotco (a nilbog shadow octopus, the only way to kill it is to heal it), tiger-headed giant carp, water weirds, zombie whale.

COMBAT

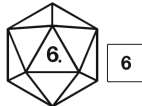
Resolve combats between player characters and NPCs as you always do: detailed rounds, initiative, To Hit rolls, etc. When NPCs attack other NPCs, just roll 1d6 for each side and subtract the lowest from the highest to determine how many members the losing team has lost this turn. When the next turn starts, the teams move on and will resume their combat only when their dice come side by side again. It is entirely possible that a team has to face both another team and an encounter on the same turn.

EXAMPLE — END OF THE FIRST TURN

Boatmen: AL CN,
MV120'/60'
Swimming, AC7
(leather armor &
shield), HD1+2, 1
spear (1d6), Save F1,
Morale 9, XP10



.....card for optional
custom teams (see on
the opposite page)



the player characters'
dice are of a different
color, and/or size



the player characters
have started the race
with 5 members on
board. As a
consequence, all the
players' rolls have a -1
penalty

both these boats
have the exact
same number of
Pace points, and
have been fighting
— the crew on the
left has lost 4
members. With
only 2 members
left, the race is
over for this team.



this team faced a random
encounter, and lost 3
members: the Pace
points it will further gain
will be divided by 2
(rounded up), but the
team is still in the race.

CUSTOM TEAMS

If you want to spice things up, roll 1d20, and check the table below for every NPC boat. Write down the stat blocks of each team on a paper card, and place it next to the d20 representing their Pace points. Since their minds have been emptied, they can't use their spell-like abilities, and powers.

- 1-2. Beggars. AL CN, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 club (1d6), Save F1, Morale 5, XP10.
- 3-7. City's militia. AL CN, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC7 (leather armor & shield), HD1+2, 1 spear (1d6), Save F1, Morale 9, XP10.
- 8-9. City officials. AL LN, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC4 (chain & shield), HD1, 1 broadsword (2d4), Save F1, Morale 10, XP10.
10. Hobgoblins. AL CE, MV90', AC7 (leather armor & shield), HD1+1, 1 morningstar (2d4) or 1 crossbow (1d6), Save F1, Morale 8, XP15.
11. Lizardfolk. AL CN, MV60'/120' Swimming, AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD2+1, 1 trident (1d10+1), Save F2, Morale 12, XP47.
12. Mongrelmen. AL LN, MV90', AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD1, 1 claw (1d4), Save F1, Morale 6, camouflage, mimicry, XP13.
13. Ogre magi. AL CE, MV90', AC4 (natural armor, like chain & shield), HD5+2, 1 great katana (1d12), Save M5, Morale 9, XP260.
14. Oriental dwarves. AL LE, MV90', AC5 (chain & shield), HD1+2, 1 naginata (2d4), Save F4, Morale 10, XP27.
- 15-16. Peasants. AL NG, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 fork (1d4), Save F1, Morale 6, XP10.
17. Qullans. AL CE, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD2, 1 **non-magical broadsword +3** (2d4+3), Save F2, Morale 11, irradiate *confusion* at 5' (save versus Spells/Magic every round), swords have a 20% chance to lose their bonus per successful attack, XP38.
18. Red lanterns. AL CN, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 shortsword or 1 oil flask (2d4), Save F1, Morale 11, XP10.
19. Tax office. AL LN, MV120'/60' Swimming, AC9 (no armor), HD1, Save F1, Morale 4, smoke bombs (as fog cloud), XP10.
20. Tengu. AL CN, MV120'/120' Flying (1 round per turn), AC8 (leather armor), HD1, 2 claws (1d3), Save F1, Morale 9, disguise, *feather fall*, XP13.

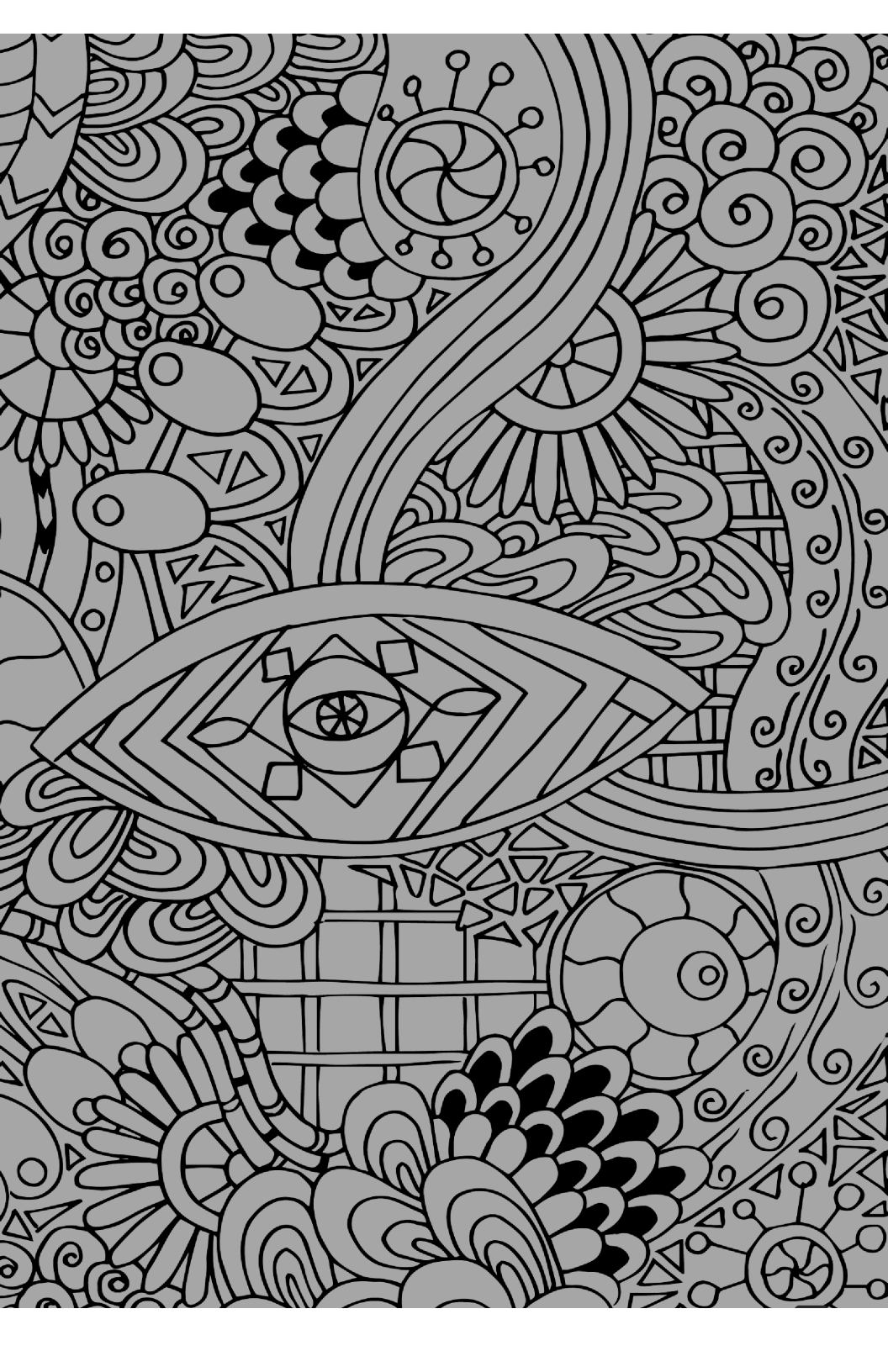


DEATH BY LICH

When the player characters find the dead body (see page 8), PIN LUNG, the Great Priest of the Temple of the Horse God (see page 87) joins the race alone the next time they attend it. Run the race as detailed on the pages 22-28. There's a chance that PIN LUNG will lose the day, and that he will be sacrificed by the Flower Liches.

He's been blackmailed into racing by officials of the Tunshang Barony (see page 83) who have taken control of the Temple of the Horse God and want him out of the picture. In order to do so, the Barony has sent an assassin to kidnap PIN LUNG's secret daughter — her existence in itself is rather scandalous, since priests of the

Horse God are supposed to be celibate — and to threaten PIN LUNG to reveal her openly. PIN LUNG won't talk, but *ESP* reveals that he is blackmailed by the Tunshang. PIN LUNG: AL LN, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD9, 1 mace (1d6), Save C9, Morale 11, XP1,000.



THE FLOWER LICHES

The Flower Liches were powerful and cursed wizards of an ancient Llemurian Empire which spanned thousands of miles between Thracia and Kithai. There, beneath the shade of the tall walls of Gilgit-the-Former and the evil winds of the Scythian tundra, cities thrived under the cruel, twisted smile of the Elder Gods. The Empire has now crumbled to dust, and the haughty cities have been buried under the sands of the Seven Deserts. The Elder Gods have been forgotten, and nothing much remains of the past splendors of the Empire — a pouch of red-colored conches, a shaligram fossilized shell, or the riddle of a moldy, wide-eyed tattered mummy with blonde hair and a broken kopesh sword. The memory of the Flower Liches, to which a small, mist-robed shrine has been built in the mountains towering at some distance of the city, has been kept by a few priests, passing their knowledge to their disciple until today. When the time comes, they know of a certain conjuration spell, the *feast of flowers*, which can gate the lichs to the city. There, they take their rightful place as rulers for the time of the Dragonboat Festival, collect their tributes, and fade back into nothingness. The *feast of flowers* is more a ritual connected to the city than a standard spell: it works only in the city this adventure takes place in, and must be cast by priests of the Shrine of the Flower Liches in order to operate. Since the lichs cease to exist when the spell is over, people speculate whether the conjuration spell actually creates them, summons but a figment of the long-destroyed undead creatures, or reaches into a dimension so alien that it can't be found in the known planes of the Multiverse. Whatever the case, the lichs are real once conjured. The ritual transforms five locations of the city as well, traditionally connected to the Flower Liches, into miniature planes to serve as the lichs' temporary abodes (see *Places to Go*, page 46). Once the Dragonboat Festival is finished and the lichs disappear, the city's prosperity is magically replenished: the treasury is filled up with 100,000GP, the harvest ripens at once, the river teems with savory fishes, and all the monetary wealth the citizenry had before the festival — player characters included — is doubled.

INTERFERENCE

By the god's decree, the liches have no right to interfere with the city, and the city has no right to interfere with the race. Yet, the gods are distant, and it is the mortal's task to prove such interferences should they happen. If the city authorities can prove that one or several liches have interfered with the city's affairs¹, the gods will destroy the culprits at once, letting the remaining liches — if any — run the race. Liches thus destroyed will not be conjured again when the spell is cast in the future, though the Festival will still happen as long as there's at least one lich left. If all the liches are proven guilty, the spell ends with their trial, and the city's prosperity is replenished on the spot for the last time. If the Flower Liches can prove that the city's authorities have interfered with the race, the spell is broken, and will have no effect upon the city's prosperity once the race ends and the last tributes have been reaped.

¹. *This curious trial takes place like any other, at the city's magistrate court, but statues of the city's gods attend to it so that the gods can bear witness of what's being said.*

POWERS, AND WEAKNESSES OF THE FLOWER LICHES

While the Flower Liches were powerful Magic-Users, they remember but a few spells of various power. Since they are conjured into being for a limited duration, they have no phylactery, no spellbook, and are considerably weaker than they were at the height of the Llemurian Empire. In addition, they can't memorize their spells again in the city, so that any spell they cast will be gone for the remainder of the adventure. In combat situations, they will use their spells first for a couple of rounds if any of them can prove of help, and resort to secret melee martial arts techniques for the rest of the fight. Yes, that's right, they are Kung-Fu Flower Liches. Each of the liches has its own personality, and motives, all of them detailed in their individual sections. Don't think of them as a tightly-knitted team of enemies, for they will, more often than not, delight in the downfall of another lich instead of trying to defend or to help them. The Flower Liches are immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, cold, electricity, insanity, *death spells* and *symbols*, paralysis, poison, and non-magical weapons. Their martial arts attacks cause 1d8 cold damage.

Likewise, the mere sight of a Flower Lich doesn't cause fear as the sight of lichs usually does. On the other hand, all Flower Liches can cast *dweomer of rage* (AEC p61) once per day as a free action, which improves their AC by 4 factors, doubles their Hit Points, and allows them to attack twice a round with a +2 damage bonus. The spell lasts for 2 full turns, during which they can't cast spells anymore, and won't retreat from a fight, like a barbarian flying into a fit of rage. As long as the spell lasts, all damage the lich sustains comes first from the magical hit points gained through use of the spell; thus, if damage doesn't exceed their original hit points, none is actually taken, but if damage beyond the additional amount gained is sustained, it is doubled. The stat blocks for lichs under the influence of the *dweomer of rage* are given in **red** and between brackets.

CARNATION

The slender, tall Carnation is clad in glaucous, grayish-blue tattered robes which hide her long, smooth tail. Her skin is bright pinkish-purple with streaks of indigo. She wears two malas (necklaces of prayer beads) around her neck, both of them adorned with miniature skulls. Carnation has four nipples, and a tiny fanged mouth from which rotten petals cascade when she speaks. Her smell is sweet like caramelized onions, raspberry, and fresh coconut.

AL CE, MV60'/Flying 60', AC2 (-2) (magical luck, like plate & shield), HD11, 22hp (44), 1 (2) chill touch (1d8+2), 1 tail sting (1d4+2, and save versus Poison or die in 1d3 rounds), Save C11, Morale 12, lich immunities, spells, *dweomer of rage* 1/day, XP2,800.

Spells. *animate dead**5, *commune*, *plane shift*.

Possessions. **necklace of prayer beads** (karma, blessing), **necklace of strangulation** (no effect on undead).

Powers. Permanent blindsight, and sense life at 60'.

Style of the Bat (Martial arts). Carnation can shed a *darkness* zone at 15', and fight inside with no penalties. While she does, she screeches, preventing spellcasting in the same area.

Carnation took no part in Nightshade's plans, and is totally unaware of them. She would oppose them out of wisdom in the hope of seeing many more Dragonboat Festivals, but could be easily bribed if anyone played on her gluttony for human flesh — anyone. The other lichs consider her a little dumb, and generally avoid her outside of official functions.



DATURA

The porcelain-faced Datura is little more than a sinewy skeleton wrapped into a yellowish bell-shaped dress made of intertwined rotting vines. When a character looks directly at her, her face changes into the face of someone they love, making it hard to attack her. Once every turn, her body changes into the gorgeous, splendid, naked body of a young, plump princess for 1 round, making her especially vulnerable. Her smell is unctuous, like whipped cream, magnolias, and palm trees. AL NE, MV60', AC2 (-2) (magical luck, like plate & shield), HD16, 32hp (66), 1 (2) chill touch (1d8+2), Save M16, Morale 12, lich immunities, spells, *dweomer of rage* 1/day, XP3,300.

Spells. *charm person**5, *contact other plane*, *entangle*, *suggestion*, *symbol of insanity*, *wall of thorns*.

Possessions. *philter of love*.

Power. Datura is protected with a permanent sanctuary when characters look directly at her. They can avoid looking and attack, but not cast spells with a -3 penalty.

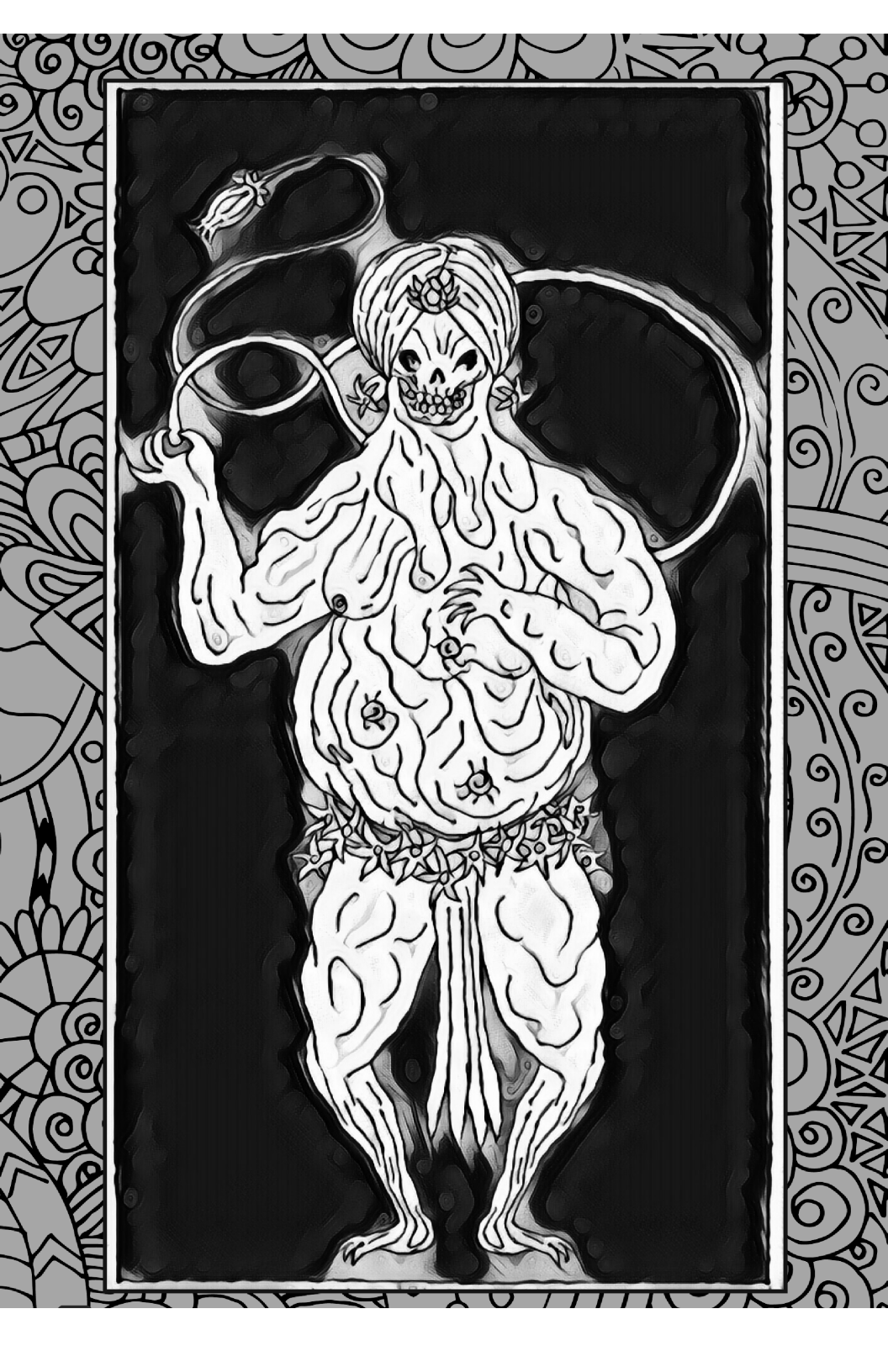
Weakness. When Datura is hit during the round she's changed into a princess, she takes double damage. When hit during this round and the damage is already doubled because of the *dweomer of rage*, the damage is instead tripled.

Psionics (optional, give Datura unlimited *charm person* spells if you don't play with psionics). 126/126 — B, C, E/F, I, J ; *domination*, *levitation*, *dimension door*.

Style of the Spitting Cobra (Martial arts). The hands of Datura change into spitting cobras when she's under the influence of the *dweomer of rage*. Each cobra can spit its venom at 10', and bite (1d3, and save versus Poison or die in 1d10 turns) at another target on the same round. A victim of the spit is entitled to a saving throw versus Poison to avoid being permanently blinded.

Datura was Nightshade's lover before they both went into undeath. Her attachment lingers, and she shares Nightshade's plans and secrets. She keeps Lil'ling under the control of her charm spells and domination powers so that she plays her part as a Flower Lich (see page 42). With Nightshade, she's the only one who knows about Lil'ling. Datura is extraordinarily vain, and can be easily bribed with flattery, submission, cosmetics, and love letters, but she'll never betray Nightshade. Japhet hates her, and will go to any lengths if provided with a plan for her downfall.





HYACINTH

Hyacinth's fat body is covered with white, yellow, and salmon pink bulbous buboes which erupt continuously into a sap-like blood and spread puddles in his wake. He wears an orange turban tipped with an eight-faceted fiery agate worth 5,000GP, the Zerm-Y-Zeroon, and a cashmere paisley-patterned loincloth. All his teeth have been replaced with rubies worth 300GP each (that's a total of 9,600GP for 32 teeth). His smell is earthy, like beetroots, ozone, and guano.*

AL LE, MV60', AC2 (-2) (magical luck, like plate & shield), HD12, 24hp (48), 1 (2) chill touch (1d8+2), Save M12, Morale 12, lich immunities, spells, *dweomer of rage* 1/day, XP2,800.

Spells. *forget, fumble, secret chest*4, wizard eye.*

Possessions. *rope of entanglement, 3*pearls of power (5th level).*

Power. Hyacinth's body secretes a powerful glue which sticks to weapons, fists, and feet hitting him. Attacks thus inflict one-half of their damage (rounded down) before the weapons or the limbs get stuck. Fire, boiling water, salt, and vinegar dissolve the glue in 1d4 rounds. If Hyacinth is destroyed, the glue, which is magical in nature, instantly dissolves.

Style of the Nether Toad (Martial arts). Hyacinth's mouth enlarges to phantasmagoric proportions when he's under the influence of the *dweomer of rage*. Every round, he gets an extra bite attack for 1d12+2 hit points of damage, and an extra tongue attack that he can unleash at 30' for 1d6+2 damage. If he scores a natural 20 with a bite attack, the target is swallowed whole and annihilated as if with a **sphere of annihilation**.

In his madness, Hyacinth thinks he can still feel the lust he felt when he was alive, which is now nothing more than a crave for power, and domination. He is, for this reason, particularly cruel with the tributes he takes, as well as prone to weird fantasies which inevitably end up in blood, and death. He has no idea of Nighshade's plans, and would remain neutral if he had.

***The Zerm-Y-Zeroon** is a cursed gemstone, which renders its possessor extremely vulnerable to fire — all fire damage he sustains is multiplied by 4, and all his saves versus fire are always a failure. On the other hand, it allows him to cast *hypnotic pattern* as a free action at will. The Zerm-Y-Zeroon doesn't irradiate magic.



JAPHET

Japhet's greenish-white sickly body is wrapped in robes made of flower petals, peacock feathers, and dried leaves sewn together. He has two identical zygomorphic heads and four arms ending in twisted claws. He is 8' tall and carries two balls of black crystal in his left claws. His smell is pungent, like ashes and roasted garlic, with a hint of clove.

AL CE, MV60', AC2 (-2) (magical luck, like plate & shield), HD18, 36hp (72), 4 (8) chill touch (1d8+2), Save M18/C11, Morale 12, lich immunities, spells, *dweomer of rage* 1/day, XP4,250.

Spells. *find the path, flame strike, imprisonment, mirror image, plane shift*2, repulsion, wish.*

Possessions. **ring of spell storing** (*monster summoning V*), the first black ball is a magical **crystal ball**, the second is a **ball of fireball** that the lich can throw at 60" once (12d6 damage, save versus Petrification/Paralysis halves).

Powers. Japhet can forfeit his standard attacks to touch a target's forehead, ignoring the target's armor AC bonuses. By doing so, their minds empty of all the spells they might have memorized for the day. It feels like vomiting arcane and divine magic in the form of a rainbow jelly from all facial orifices, though it is invisible for anyone other than the victim. The victim is helpless for this round. Since Japhet has two heads and four arms, he can cast two different spells every round unless he engages in melee combat.

Style of the Thousand Petals (Martial arts). Whenever Japhet scores a natural 20 with a To Hit roll, his round restarts, and he can take another action, including attacking again. Doing so casts rose petals and incense powder everywhere within 60', which acts as a potent *sleep* spell (save versus Spells/Magic or sleep for 1 day regardless of the HD/Level of the victim). Japhet keeps attacking again and again if he rolls more natural 20s on top of the first.

Japhet was a mutant Barsoomian thark eons before shifting to this reality and joining the Llemurian Empire. Japhet hates Datura and despises Nightshade. He believes, perhaps rightly so, that he's the strongest of the Flower Liches, and their leader. He may ignore necessary precautions and act recklessly, expecting to be obeyed by everyone, and deems himself above all threats. If a mortal hurts Japhet's pride, there are no lengths he won't go to exact revenge, which may well be his greatest weakness.

"NIGHTSHADE"

Nightshade's twisted body is infected with tendrils and thorns from which bloom hundreds of purple passion flowers. His puce, bewildered face towers up above, wearing a crown made of flowers. Nightshade's whole bloated, spongy body rots and decays, oozing and bubbling as it does. His rotten smell, with hints of durian, tobacco, and ripe mangoes, mingles with a whiff of sweet patchouli and vanilla. AL (NG), MV60', AC5 (flower crown, like chain), HD1, 6hp, Save F1, Morale (6), XP10.

Possessions. **crystal ball**, **flower crown** (gives a +4 bonus to AC, and allows to cast *speak with plants*, *plant growth*, and *plant door* 1/day each).

Power. Nightshade's skin oozes a substance poisonous to both human and animal flesh, inflicting 1d4 points of damage to any creature touching it.

ESP reveals the horror of Lil'ling situation as well as her identity. She knows that Nightshade occupies her body but it won't show in her surface thoughts unless she's questioned and probed at the same time. She has no idea of Nightshade's further plans. If probed about them, she also knows that something's amiss about her servants (see page 75), but doesn't know what. She knows that the flower crown has powers, and can think about its command words, which have been given to her by Datura.

Lil'ling's soul is trapped within Nightshade's body (see page 5) under the control of Datura's *charm* spells and *domination* power. Since she's been told to stand VERY still and to stay quiet, she will neither talk nor move unless she's attacked or directly spoken to, in which case Datura will dictate her actions and answers through her powers. She might call forth the power of the **flower crown** or use the **crystal ball** if commanded to do so. If she's killed, Nightshade will be trapped forever inside Lil'ling's body (see page 78). Lil'ling tries her best to comply with Datura's instructions, but her loathing of Nightshade's body and her transfixed horror shows in her eyes (a player stating that he scrutinizes her, and looks intently into her eyes, or succeeding at a roll under Wisdom/3, or at an Insight check DC30, will realize this self-loathing).



THE CHANCELLOR

The Chancellor appears either as a shadowy shroud with three fiery amber eyes; a giant black lobster; a gorgeous, naked, gold-skinned androgynous athlete; or a swirling, writhing mass of flesh and muscles with 8 pseudopods.

The Chancellor, shadow form: AL CE, MV90', ACN/A (immaterial), HD9, 72hp, Save F9, Morale 12, immune to physical attacks, and damage, *charm, sleep, hypnosis, domination*, and cold, cause *darkness 15'* at will, 5 chances in 6 to surprise opponents, regenerates 1hp per round, XP3,100. While in Shadow form, The Chancellor sustains 1d6 damage if a *light* spell is cast at it, 3d6 damage if a *continual light* spell is cast at it, and is destroyed (no save) with a *dispel evil* spell.

The Chancellor, lobster form: AL CE, MV60'/120' Swimming, AC2 (chitin armor, like plate & shield), HD9, 72hp, 2 claws (2d6+6 each) Save F9, Morale 12, immune to *charm, sleep, hypnosis, domination*, and cold, XP3,100.

The Chancellor, human form: AL CE, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD9, 72hp, 1 longsword (1d8+6), Save F9, Morale 12, psionics, XP3,100.

Wand of magic detection (Full), psionics (give The Chancellor unlimited *levitation* spells, a permanent *mind blank*, and immunity to all elemental attacks if you don't play with psionics). 111/111 — C, D/F, H ; *body equilibrium, aura alteration, mind bar, energy control.*

The Chancellor, swirling flesh form: AL CE, MV60', AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD9, 72hp, 8 pseudopods (1d4 each, and drain 1 point of Strength if a save versus Poison is failed), Save F9, Morale 12, immune to *charm, sleep, hypnosis, domination*, and cold, XP3,100.

The Chancellor appears whenever the Flower Liches are conjured, serving them. It's not a lich, but a demon dedicated to their help, and perhaps surveillance. It usually appears in human form during the race, assisting with the administrative duties. It can switch shapes in 1 round, during which it can take no actions, and is considered to be assuming the current shape before the switch happens. It will assume the lobster shape underwater; the shadow shape at night, when in danger, or when wounded and the swirling flesh form when in combat.



PLACES TO GO

GULISTANS*

The city always has had places dedicated to the Flower Liches within its walls: ruins, derelict manors, and abandoned gardens — all shunned by the inhabitants and equally loathed. Festival after festival, the Flower Liches attuned these places to their power and transformed them into their dimensions and domains, one week at a time. When the festival is over, their evil energy still lingers, but the denizens vanish and the ambient magic wanes, leaving little trace of their presence behind. These places, the Gulistans, are the location where the Flower Liches appear when the feast of flowers is cast. If a Gulistan is destroyed, the lich to whom it belonged can choose **FREELY** where to appear in the city, and claim this place as their own, whatever it is. For this reason, the city's authorities preserve and maintain the Gulistans between festivals. These places have no Level or challenge rating. They may be far too powerful for the player characters, or far too easy; they're not meant to be balanced dungeons to explore, loot, or die for; but instead as flavorful locations where interesting things can happen — be it a petty burglary, or a total party kill. Nightshade has a Gulistan as well, the 18^{Ter}, Curzon Street, but he isn't inside since he's currently haunting Lil'ling's body. He is currently found at her house, The House of the Sound of White Jasmine, which is considered a Gulistan for this reason.

**Gulistan is an Urdu word, which means House of Flowers. Of course, it could also mean House of Ghouls when mixing Urdu and Persian.*

LICH

GULISTAN

CARNATION	PAGODA OF THE NECTAR ETERNAL	
DATURA	TEMPLE OF THE FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN	
HYACINTH	THE GATEHOUSE IN YELLOW	
JAPHET	TOWER OF THE	PURPLE TYRANT
NIGHTSHADE*	18 ^{Ter} , CURZON STREET	
NIGHTSHADE	THE HOUSE OF THE SOUND OF WHITE JASMINE	

**Nightshade's Gulistan, which he has deserted.*

WANDERING MONSTERS

The wandering monsters are the same in each and every Gulistan including the 18^{ter}, Curzon Street, but excluding The House of the Sound of White Jasmine (which is not really a Gulistan, but Lil'ling's house). There is a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter every turn.

1. 2d4 storkmen.
2. Fungi king with 2d4 purple zombies.
3. Fungus men patrol (2d4) with 1 fungi hallucinator, and 1 fungi pacifier.
4. 2d3 flower ghouls.
5. 3d6 zombies.
6. 2d8 vegepygmyies.

Storkmen. *Tall, evil birdmen with red-brown heads, black necks, and black legs.* AL NE, MV120'/120' Flying, AC3 (pure speed, like plate), HD4+4, 19hp, 4 beak attacks (1d4 each), Save F8, Morale 9, *audible glamor, change self, spook* (save versus Spells/Magic or flee at full speed. Although the storkman does not actually pursue the fleeing creature, a phantasm from its own mind will do so. However, each round after the initial casting of the *spook* spell the creature is entitled to another saving throw until the subject successfully saves versus Spells/Magic and the spell is broken) each of them 1/day, +1 versus fire, and -1 damage per die of fire-based attacks, XP390. The storkmen are evil, and like shiny items. They will be disguised as humans using their *change self* ability when the party first meets them.

Fungi king. *Bloated purple humanoid toadstool.* AL LN, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD6, 48hp, 1 clubbing hands (6d4), Save F6, Morale 11, unlike standard fungi men, the Fungi king has no other spores than animator spores with which he can infect dead animals and humanoids 6/day. The infected turn into purple zombies 1d4 days later, XP320. The Fungi king controls the purple zombies and will protect the Gulistan from thieves and invaders, but is not necessarily aggressive. **Purple zombies:** *Walking dead covered with purple spores.* AL N, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD2, 2 bony claws (1d3), Save F2, Morale 12, they aren't undead and cannot be turned by a Cleric, they always attack last, XP20.

Fungi men: *Small grey humanoid toadstools.* AL LN, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD2, 8hp, 1 clubbing hands (2d4), Save F2, Morale 7, XP20. **Fungi hallucinator:** *Man-sized rainbow-colored humanoid toadstool.* AL LN, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD5, 23hp, 1 clubbing hands (5d4), Save F5, Morale 9, shoot spores at 1 creature 5/day, if that creature fails its save versus Poison, it will suffer violent hallucinations for 5 turns (roll 1d20: 1-10. Cower whimpering, 11-15. Stare into nothingness, 16-18. Flee shrieking in a random direction, 19-20. Attack closest creature to kill), XP350. **Fungi pacificator:** *Man-sized pale white humanoid toadstool.* AL LN, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD4, 19hp, 1 clubbing hands (4d4), Save F4, Morale 8, shoot spores at 1 creature 4/day, if that creature fails its save versus Poison, it will become totally passive, unable to do anything, even to defend themselves, for 4 rounds, XP135. The fungi men will defend the Gulistan, but will not attack physically if they aren't forced to.

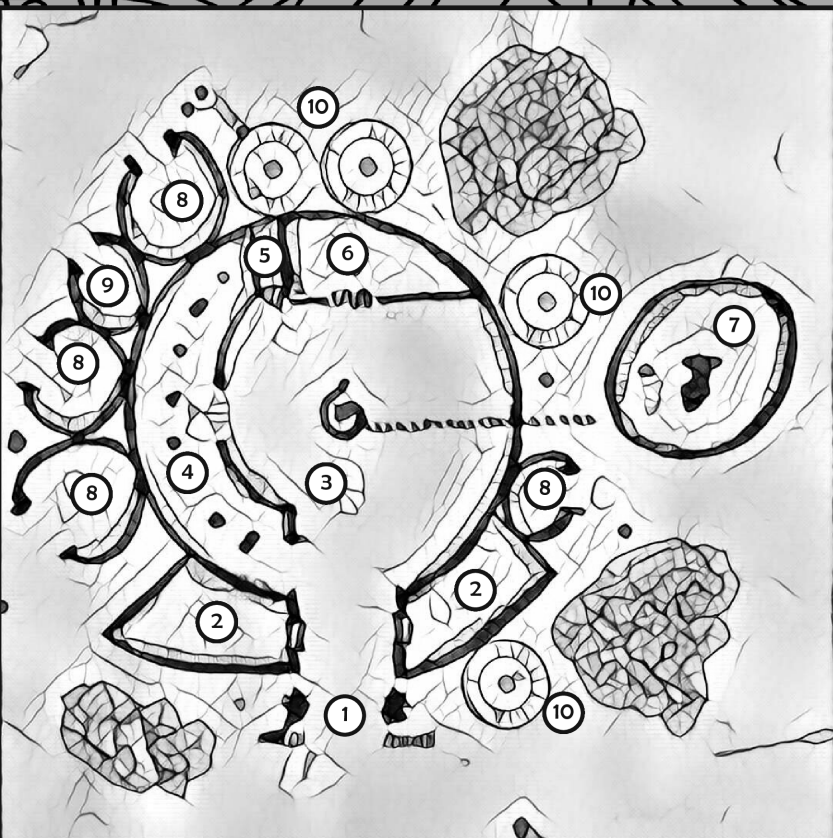
Flower ghouls: AL CE, MV90', AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD2+2, 10hp each, 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1), Save F4, Morale 9, characters hit by their bite attack must save versus Magic/Spells or their entire flesh will instantly either boil (1-3) or freeze (4-6) on the spot. When a character's flesh boils, they suffer 2d4 damage, and becomes unconscious for 1d4 days. When a character's flesh freezes, they lose 1d4 hp, and one of their extremities — determined randomly — is frostbitten, and must be amputated, XP47.

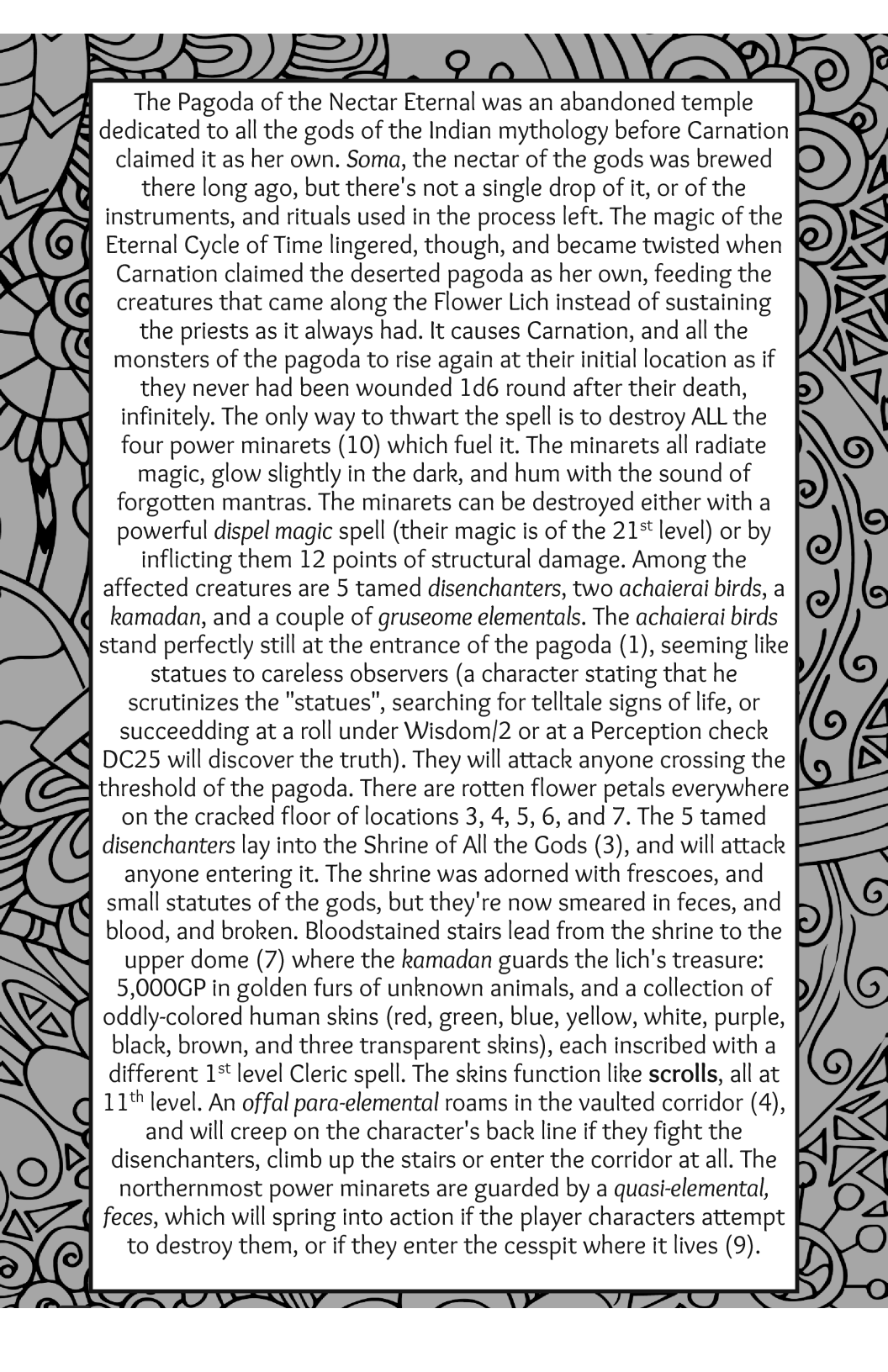
Zombies: AL CE, MV90', AC8 (natural armor, like leather), HD2, 1 claws (1d8), Save F2, Morale 12, immune to charm, and sleep, zombies always attack last, XP20.

Vegepygmies: *Short humanoids with sharp thorn-like claws, leaf-like tendrils, and russet blossoming flowers.* AL N, MV12', AC4 (natural armor, like chain & shield), HD1d4, 1 claw (1d6), Save F1-4, Morale 4, attacks from piercing weapons such as arrows and spears do only 1 point of damage to vegepygmies, immune to electricity, *charm*, and *enchantment* spells except those that affect plants, XPVariable. The vegepygmies are supposed to serve the Flower Liches, but are afraid of them, they will flee or accept meat as a bribe if given a chance to do so instead of guarding the Gulistan.

PAGODA OF THE NECTAR ETERNAL

This pagoda rises above the old districts and the city's streets of packed mud like a gigantic wedding cake. Its vaults and domes, baked yellow and wrinkled by years of disrepair, still retain a tinge of fallen splendor. Half-rotten trees bend upon it, their erection wilted by a corruption that's almost palpable. Thorny crops of wild raspberries have crept in, forming a fruitless, shadeless grove. Somewhere in the background, mantras echo in an endless litany, as if they were sung from the depth of a sunken cave. The pagoda smells of feces, and of caked blood.





The Pagoda of the Nectar Eternal was an abandoned temple dedicated to all the gods of the Indian mythology before Carnation claimed it as her own. *Soma*, the nectar of the gods was brewed there long ago, but there's not a single drop of it, or of the instruments, and rituals used in the process left. The magic of the Eternal Cycle of Time lingered, though, and became twisted when Carnation claimed the deserted pagoda as her own, feeding the creatures that came along the Flower Lich instead of sustaining the priests as it always had. It causes Carnation, and all the monsters of the pagoda to rise again at their initial location as if they never had been wounded 1d6 round after their death, infinitely. The only way to thwart the spell is to destroy ALL the four power minarets (10) which fuel it. The minarets all radiate magic, glow slightly in the dark, and hum with the sound of forgotten mantras. The minarets can be destroyed either with a powerful *dispel magic* spell (their magic is of the 21st level) or by inflicting them 12 points of structural damage. Among the affected creatures are 5 tamed *disenchanters*, two *achaierai* birds, a *kamadan*, and a couple of *gruseome elementals*. The *achaierai* birds stand perfectly still at the entrance of the pagoda (1), seeming like statues to careless observers (a character stating that he scrutinizes the "statues", searching for telltale signs of life, or succeeding at a roll under Wisdom/2 or at a Perception check DC25 will discover the truth). They will attack anyone crossing the threshold of the pagoda. There are rotten flower petals everywhere on the cracked floor of locations 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The 5 tamed *disenchanters* lay into the Shrine of All the Gods (3), and will attack anyone entering it. The shrine was adorned with frescoes, and small statutes of the gods, but they're now smeared in feces, and blood, and broken. Bloodstained stairs lead from the shrine to the upper dome (7) where the *kamadan* guards the lich's treasure: 5,000GP in golden furs of unknown animals, and a collection of oddly-colored human skins (red, green, blue, yellow, white, purple, black, brown, and three transparent skins), each inscribed with a different 1st level Cleric spell. The skins function like **scrolls**, all at 11th level. An *offal para-elemental* roams in the vaulted corridor (4), and will creep on the character's back line if they fight the disenchanters, climb up the stairs or enter the corridor at all. The northernmost power minarets are guarded by a *quasi-elemental*, *feces*, which will spring into action if the player characters attempt to destroy them, or if they enter the cesspit where it lives (9).

PAGODA KEY

Roll 1d20 and check the numbers in red below to find the location of Carnation at the start of the exploration. If the score is above 12, or if exploration happens during a race, Carnation isn't there.

1. STATUES at the gate. 2. *achaierais*.
2. SIDE TEMPLES & ablution rooms.
3. SHRINE of All the Gods (1-4). 5. *disenchanters*.
4. Vaulted CORRIDOR (5). *Offal para-elemental*.
5. MEDITATION ROOM (6).
6. VESTRY (7).
7. Upper DOME (8-12). *Kamadan*.
8. Small SECONDARY SHRINES.
9. Former SHRINE, current CESSPIT. *Quasi-elemental, feces*.
10. Power MINARETS.

Achaierai (2): *15' tall flightless birds with long brass legs, a huge spherical scarlet head-body with deep red blotches, a cruel crooked beak, and a pink crest.* AL CE, MV180' (90' with two legs left, 20' crawl with a single leg or less), Body AC9 (no armor), legs AC2 (natural armor, like plate & shield) — man-sized humanoids cannot reach the body, and must attack the legs unless they can fly. Hit as HD4 with its legs, Hit as HD9 with its beak, 2 claws (1d8), 1 beak (1d10 — *achaierai* can't attack man-sized targets with their beaks unless they fly at their level), the legs have 15hp each, and the body has 40hp, Save F9, Morale Special: *achaierai* will automatically flee if they lose a leg. Upon losing a third leg or being otherwise incapacitated, the *achaierai* releases a cloud of black toxic smoke at 10' (save versus Poison or feeblemind for 3 hours), 2 chances in 6 to resist any spell or magical effect, XP1,700.

Disenchanter (5): *Pale electric-blue, translucent, and pulsating dromedary-like animals.* AL N, MV120', AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD5, 1 snout, 5' reach (no damage, targets magical items from the most to the least powerful, draining them of all magic with a hit), Save F5, Morale 8, permanent detect magic sense, can only be hit by magical weapons, XP350.

Quasi-elemental, feces (1): *A pillar-like gooey mass of fecal matter from the Demiplane of Waste, splashing and trashing decaying, repugnant blobs of feces as it whirlwinds slowly.* AL CN, MV60'/60' Flying, AC2 (natural armor, like plate & shield), HD6+6, 48hp, 1d8 tendrils (1d2), blob (1d4 at 30' range, save versus Poison or the smell renders the target helpless for 1d6 rounds), Save F12, Morale 12, can only be hit by magical weapons, its horrible smell inflicts a -4 penalty on the attack rolls of all enemies in melee range (save versus Poison negates, roll once at the beginning of the combat), if a character who had previously sustained one or several open wounds (such as slashing or piercing wounds) which haven't been healed is hit by the elemental with either attack, infection spreads, and the character sustains 1d8 points of damage per round for 10 rounds or until the wounds are dressed with bandages. When the quasi-elemental is inflicted fire damage, it ignites, and the damage of all its attacks are doubled, XP820.

Kamadan (1): *Slick, furless white leopard mottled with purple. Four black cobras sprout from its shoulders.* AL N(CE), MV180', AC4 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD4+2, 19hp, 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6), 4 snake heads (1d4), Save F6, Morale 10, breath a 10'x30' cone of sleep dust (indigo, and snow-like) 1/day which also reveals invisible and hidden creatures (characters below the 4th level don't get a save, others must save versus Breath to stay awake), XP390.

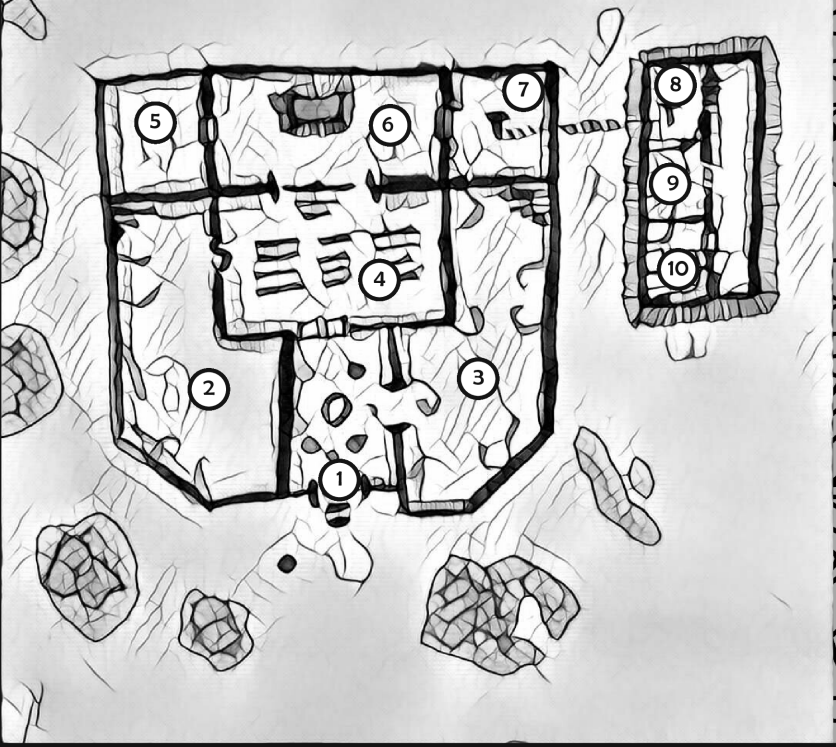
Offal para-elemental (1): *A throbbing, nauseous mass of offal, grease, and blood coming straight from the Half-plane of Meat.* AL N, MV30', AC3 (natural armor, like plate), HD12, 96hp, Save F12, Morale 12, can only be hit by magical weapons, permanently emanates a zone of grease (any character moving inside the zone must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or slip, and fall), and stinking cloud (characters caught in the zone are helpless, incapable of anything except vomiting) at 30', smothers helpless characters with entrails, killing them one by one (a smothered characters dies in 4 rounds), XP2,000.

TEMPLE OF THE FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN



Facing east atop of a rugged hillock, the temple's gold-painted roof tiles glisten in the morning sun, casting bedazzling reflections in all directions.

The square, squat building is painted in vivid red, its walls cracked with vines, creepers, and fronds from a yellowish tree that seems to be devouring it from the inside out. The stairs leading to its gate are covered with a pale glowing moss. There's silence as if a great predator were prowling, shutting down the cries of birds and the chirping of insects alike. All around, tall palm trees sway gently, the first breeze of the day bringing about the sweet scent of magnolias in full bloom, their dusty pink petals dancing in the air.



TEMPLE KEY

Roll 1d20, and check the numbers in red below to find the location of Datura at the start of the exploration. If the score is above 10, or exploration happens during a race, Datura isn't there.

1. INNER COURTYARD. 6 *purple deaths*.
2. MUSIC CHAMBER. *Vampire vine (small)*.
3. MAIN HALL. *Vampire vine (huge)*.
4. Small THEATER HALL. 16 *porcelain puppets*.
5. DRESSING ROOM. 2 **charmed** *foo dogs*.
6. STAGE (1-4).
7. BEAUTY PARLOR/TRAP ROOM (5-9).
8. SECRET LODGE (10).
9. GLASSTEEL PRISON. *The Prince of Mokhpur*.
10. Cramped SERVANT'S QUARTERS. 8 *slaves*.

Little remains of the former splendor of the temple where were performed the rites of the First Light of Dawn. The First Light of Dawn was a syncretic deity merging together a heretical worship of Ushas — The Dawns Which Dispel Evil — performed exclusively by the *aravani*¹, and the cult of the Rising Sun: Amaterasu-omikami, She Who Shines in Heaven. Since the cult was led by dancers and actresses, the temple itself was designed as a small theater with a stage (6), a theater hall for the followers and the audience (4), a music chamber (2), a dressing room (5), and a beauty parlor (7) instead of the usual shrine, a nave, a choir, a vestry, and prayer room. There are frescoes and mosaics in rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. The frescoes show the Goddess of Dawn riding a red cow into the sun and casting golden-pink rays unto the abyss, scorching devils and demons away from the face of the world. When Datura chose the temple as her domain for the first time, all the priestesses became her slaves. The priestesses are now huddled together, *charmed* and half-famished in an underground servant's quarters: a single room with rotting mattresses and soiled clothes (10). The eight slaves are all 1st level Clerics with 4hp, no weapons, no armor, and a random memorized spell. They all have a Charisma of 16 or above and know how to perform, chant, dance, and play several musical instruments. There's a grove of *purple deaths* — tremor-sensitive poisonous plants — in the inner courtyard (1), the only exit from the temple. This death trap has already claimed the lives of 5 of the priestesses. The *purple deaths* aren't the only plant horrors that appeared with the Flower Lich: *vampire vines* — monstrous bloodsucking trees — have grown into the music chamber (2) and in the northern portion of the main hall (3), effectively locking down all access to the temple's theater. Since the *vampire vines* are attracted by warm blood, they won't attack undead creatures such as liches or skeletons. The temple's theater (4) and stage (6) are connected by a short flight of stairs. There's a dressing room backstage (5) with stage costumes for the slaves, and Datura's diamond-studded robes (6 robes worth 1,000GP each), which she's left under the vigil of 2 *charmed* and *dominated* *foo dogs* in a twisted mockery of their innocence and purity. Being charmed, the *foo dogs* consider Datura as a friend, and will protect her beloved robes. However, that doesn't turn them into evil creatures unless Datura is present to *dominate* them. The *foo dogs* speak Common, and will communicate if talked to.

1. A caste of male-to-female transgender performers.



In the theater hall itself (4), 16 *man-sized porcelain puppets* sit on velvet-covered benches, all of them still and silent, unless Datura performs an audience-less “representation” on stage with her slaves. During this “representation,” the puppets stand, sway, cheer with a mechanical voice, and applaud. They won’t attack unless commanded to do so by Datura or attacked first. There are 1,000GP worth of rare cosmetics in the beauty parlor (7), 5 doses of **dust of appearance** in face powder boxes, and a trap door on the floor, leading to the secret lodge (8) (thorough search, or Search skill check, roll under Wisdom/2 or Perception check DC20 to find it). From this lodge, the *glassteel* prison (9) of the Prince of Mokhpur, who lies naked and maimed, is visible through its transparent walls. There is but a 3” wide opening in the *glassteel* through which he’s fed. If the characters manage to break the *glassteel* and to free and escort him home at some 2,000 miles of the city, they will be rewarded with 3 war elephants each.

Foo dogs (2): *Indigo lion-dogs with multicolored manes, large, blunt clown-like heads with big bulging eyes, and huge smiling mouths.* AL CG, MV270', AC2 (luck and Dexterity bonus, like plate & shield), HD7+7, 2 claws (1d4+1), 1 bite (1d12), Save F14, Morale 12, 3 chances in 6 to resist any spell or magical effect, become invisible at will, attack evil creatures as a 10HD monster, +1 To Hit, and damage versus LE creatures, and evil creatures attack them with a -1 penalty on both To Hit, and damage rolls, XP900.

Man-sized porcelain puppets (16): *Expressionless, the porcelain puppets are all feminine, and wear make-up.* AL N, MV30', AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD2, 12hp, 1 slam (1d3), Save F2, Morale 12, damage inflicted by the puppets can only be healed by a cleric of at least 17th level, immune to all magic except *disintegrate* and to all weapons except blunt magical weapons.

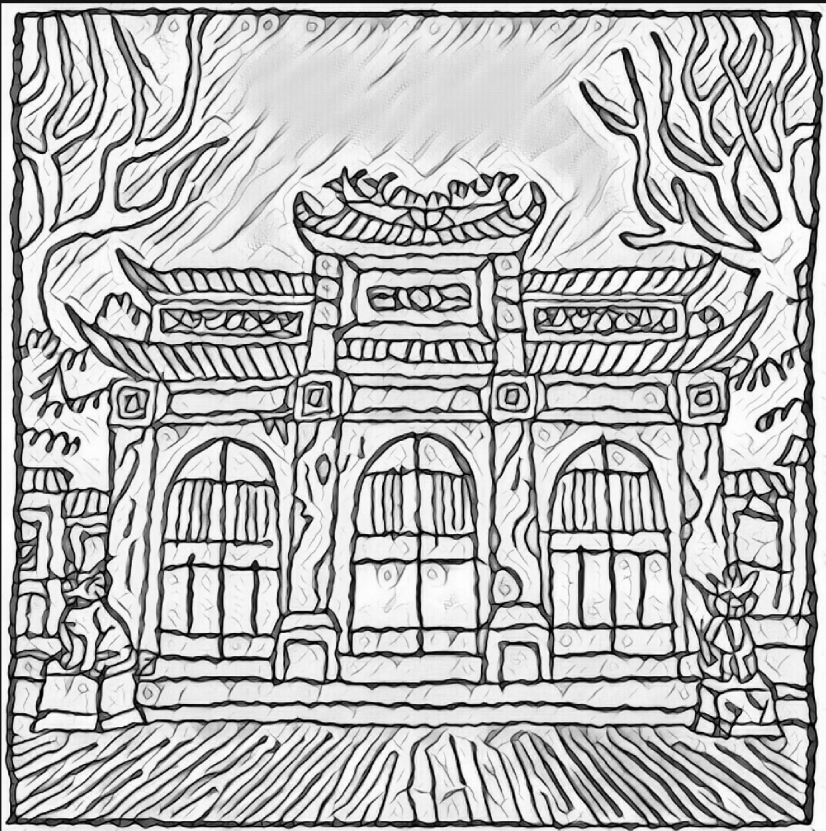
Purple deaths (6): *Tall, scaly branchless trees with fronds and purple flowers pointing upwards.* AL N, MV None, AC8 (natural armor, like leather), HD3+8, Save F11, Morale 12, the vibrations of any creature passing beneath the flowers will cause them to tilt gently and drip a syrupy poison. There is a 1 in 4 chance that the creature will be struck by the poison (save versus Poison, or instant death). Since the courtyard is small and the trees everywhere, characters crossing it will get in the zone of 1d3+1 trees if they are cautious, and of all 6 if they aren't, XP100.

The Prince of Mokhpur (1): *The once-beautiful Prince of Mokhpur has been mutilated by Datura, who has cut his tongue and hands to prevent him from casting spells ever again.* AL LN, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD As MU level 16, 29hp, Save M16, Morale 3, XP750.

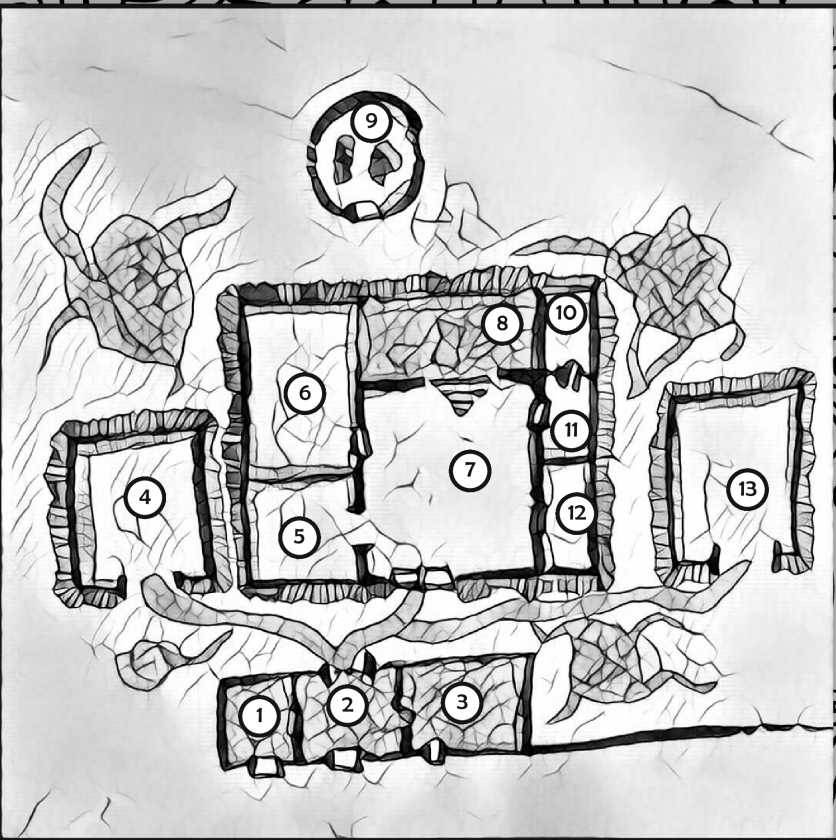
Vampire vine, small (1 — room 2): *Smooth yellowish tree with pale white vines and creepers spreading everywhere.* AL N, MV None, AC4 for the tendrils (natural armor, like chain & shield, AC3 for the trunk (natural armor, like plate), HD5 (attack as a 3HD monster), 5 tendrils, reach 5' (every hit drains blood for 1/4 of the victim's total initial hit points), Save F5, Morale 12, tendrils have 5hp each, but severing them doesn't affect the main plant, XP350.

Vampire vine, huge (1 — room 3): HD30 (attack as a 5HD monster), 12 tendrils, reach 7', Save F30, tendrils have 10hp each, XP5,000.

THE GATEHOUSE IN YELLOW



After burnt fields and rotten mango trees along the road to the ancient nameless village where the city began ages ago, the manor appears at the corner of a sharp curve. The gatehouse's joyful yellow paint is long-gone, the sides now smeared with blood and soot. The manor itself is nowhere in sight, its bulk hidden by a faded yellow wall under a faded yellow sun, a mystery of a manor — maybe there's just a gatehouse standing there, hinged unto nothingness. And yet there are squeals, roars and trumpets, life, weapons clanging, and shouts coming through. The place smells of charred meat and of beetroots.



GATEHOUSE KEY

Roll 1d6, on a 1 or 2, or if the exploration happens during a race, Hyacinth isn't there. Otherwise, he will be in 7.

1. Slime-covered GUARDROOM.
2. Slime-covered ENTRANCE GATE. 2 *whip-sword* guards.
3. Slime-covered SECRET GUARDROOM. *Demon boar*, *Mbali*.
4. HALL OF SCROLLS. *Demon boar*.
5. HALL OF RECORDS.
6. BANQUET HALL. 4 *scarlet lotus* zombies.
7. AUDIENCE CHAMBER. 25 *bats*, 12 *scarlet lotus* zombies.
8. Vine-choked THRONE ROOM. *Colossal scarlet lotus creeper*.
9. MINIATURE ELEPHANT STABLE. 2 *minimal Asian elephants*.
10. SECRET VAULT.
11. SPY ROOM.
12. STORAGE. 4 *scarlet lotus* zombies.
13. BAT-RIDDEN HALL. 100 *ordinary bats*.

Once the official residence of Judge Wan-Yeo, the gatehouse stands 3 miles outside of the city among the ruins of abandoned houses, dried paddy fields, and long-deserted settlements. At the death of Wan-Yeo, Hyacinth claimed the place and hired two *demon boar* lycanthropes as his lieutenants. The lycanthropes rule over the place between Dragonboat Festivals. The *demon boars* have charmed a couple of *whip-sword kalaripayat*¹ artists and an Asian-African adventurer, Mbali, who had lost her way a couple of years ago. The four of them watch over the gatehouse from its entrance, from the guardrooms (2 and 3), and from the Hall of records (4). Since the guardroom in 1 offers no access inside, it's abandoned. The *demon boars* usually remain in their fat, grotesque, and naked human form, trying to *charm* whoever dares trespass before resorting to sheer violence. If violence breaks out, the other guards, either in 2 or in 3, will spring upon the characters' back line, or shout for help. The main building is all about the *lotus zombies* and their plant master, the *colossal scarlet lotus creeper* which has invaded the throne room (8). When characters enter, the *lotus zombies* will remain motionless until they can gang up on the characters from 6, 7, and 12, and push them slowly towards the throne room. The *lotus zombies* and the *lotus creeper* have no interest in either plant or undead creatures. *Bats* in 7 and 13 are a nuisance and have covered the floor with guano, but they're not a real threat. Likewise, the *miniature Asian elephants* in 9 aren't any more aggressive than standard elephants, and won't attack unless the characters do something stupid. If Hyacinth is present and hears combat outside, he will rush to 11 to spy on the characters when they enter, and attack only when the *lotus zombies* have them cornered, using the *hypnotic pattern* power from the **Zerm-Y-Zeroon** every round as well. All the scrolls in 4 have been defaced and burnt, but a few intact records, worth 100GP to the city's court, are preserved in 5. Mutilated womens' bodies have been thrown in 13, and heaps of butchered human meat are piled up in 6. There's a huge treasure at the bulbous root of the scarlet lotus creeper buried 1' below the surface: 8 tourmalines worth 500GP each, 3 fire opals as big as a clenched fist, worth 1,250GP each, a **vorpall longsword**, and a **ring of delusion** (*invulnerability*). The secret vault shelters a small teak box with 21 ivory plates depicting erotic pictures worth 200GP each, and a book written by the late Empress Xji worth 2,000GP.

1. An Indian martial art, which uses Chuttuval whip-swords — 7' long flexible swords.



Bats, ordinary (125): AL N, MV10'/240' Flying, AC8 (small size, like leather), HD1/4, 1hp, 1 bite (1), Save F0, Morale 4, sonar sense, if scared, bats will scatter, putting out torches and confusing spellcasting (roll under Dexterity/2 or the spell is failed), XP5.

Demon boars (2): *Either bloated, grotesque, naked humans; or huge red-skinned furless boars.* AL CE, MV120' (180' in boar form), AC9 (no armor) or AC3 in boar form (natural armor, like plate & shield), HD9, 1 Bill Hook (2d4), or 1 gore in boar form (2d6), Save F9, Morale 10, only affected by silver and magical weapons, contagious lycanthropy, charm 3/day (save at -2), XP3,800.

Mbali: *A tall, charmed Asian-African woman warrior, her eyes circled with khol.* AL N, MV240', AC3 (silk cord armor, tower shield, Dexterity bonus, **sandals of speed**), HD8, 1 Footman's flail (1d6+3), Save F8, Morale 9, **sandals of speed** (like boots of speed), XP1,000.

Miniature Asian elephants (2): *Miniature elephants, the size of horses.* AL N, MV90', AC5 (natural armor, and fat, like chain), HD2+4, 2 tusks (1d4), 2 stomps (1d3), 1 trump (1d3), Save F5, Morale 9, +2 to all saves, +4 to saves versus charm, XP47.

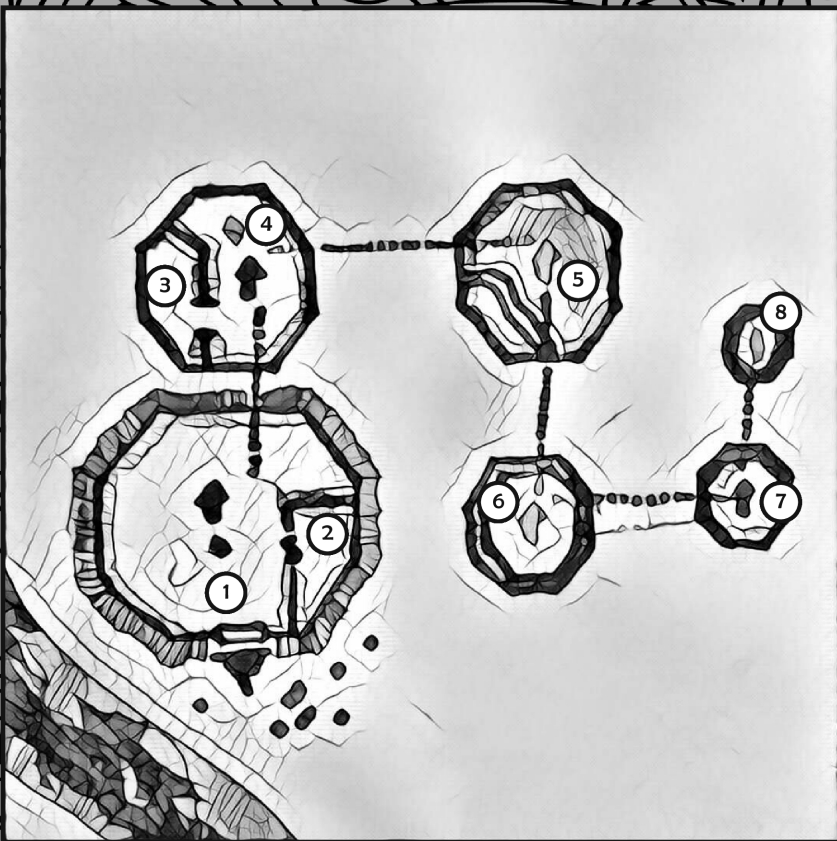
Scarlet lotus creeper, colossal (1): *A huge patch of white ivy creeping over everything in the room, including the throne. The ivy has 10 orchid-like scarlet flowers.* AL N, MV None, AC5 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD6 (the HD applies only to the buried root of the plant, any damage caused to the aerial roots is ignored since there are thousands of them), 48hp, 10 flowers (the flowers try to puff a jasmine-smelling dust at whoever comes at less than 10' of the plant: the target enters a feverish trance, and walks into the mass of the plant at all costs if he doesn't save versus Spells/Magic — lasts until the plant is destroyed — once there, aerial roots destroy his heart at the rate of 1d4 Wisdom points per round), Save F6, Morale 12. The only way to kill the creeper and stop the Wisdom drain is to destroy its buried root. If the drain reduces the victim's Wisdom to 0, the victim dies and becomes a *scarlet lotus zombie* on the spot. The points drained are permanently lost, XP2,820.

Scarlet lotus zombies (20): *Stern soldiers in full formal attire with long, pointed tower shields and spears (illusion). Rag-tag zombies with vivid scarlet-colored skin and red glazed eyes (reality).* AL NE, MV90', AC4 (chain & shield), HD Always hit as 2HD monsters, Hit Points 30 each, 1 longsword (1d8+1), Save F5, Morale 12, XP200. Scarlet lotus zombies are veiled by a powerful illusion which makes them appear consistent with their surroundings — such as soldiers and guards in the gatehouse. The illusion can be dispelled, detected, and seen through with *true seeing*, but normal examination and even physical contact won't reveal it. The zombies aren't undead creatures, and can't be turned.

Whip-sword martial artists (2): AL LN, MV180', AC5 (martial arts, like chain), HD5, 1 chuttuval (1d12+2, and a 1 in 6 chance to entangle the target, which loses his action this round if any was remaining), Save T5, Morale 11, surprised only on 1 in 6, feather fall, deflect missiles or dodge direct damage spells, XP350.

TOWER OF THE PURPLE TYRANT

This tall, six-storied octagonal tower rises above a bustling market, its yellowish silhouette robed with billowing purple clouds. When the wind scatters the mist for a fleeting second, the eyes of the tower emerge: red, huge, and bulging, scouring the space in all directions at once. Loon-like cries, air-sucking baby screams, and weird hoots echo from the tower's walls, mingling with the sound of crashing water from the river nearby. The ground around is littered with crimson leaves and has turned to a brittle smoky rose quartz; cracked and dented. The air around is suffused with the smell of clove, cinnamon, and rotten shrimp.



TOWER KEY

Roll 1d20 and check the numbers in red below to find the location of Japhet at the start of the exploration. With a roll of 20, a *demi-shadow clone* of Japhet is present in another randomly-determined room (in addition to the clones in 2, or 8).

If the roll used to determine this room comes up with a 20 again, another *demi-shadow clone* is present. Rinse, and repeat. If the exploration happens during a race, Japhet isn't there.

1. ENTRANCE HALL. 4 *diakka*, tall.
2. AUDIENCE CHAMBER (1-4). (*Demi-shadow clone*, Japhet).
3. GUARDROOM. *Sword Tyrant*.
4. ROOM OF TENTACLES. *Portuguese man-o-war*, *giant*, *flying*.
5. POOL CHAMBER. *Crab*, *giant*; *carp dragon*.
6. ROOM OF THE HIVE (5-6). 3 *garbugs*, *violet*.
7. MIST MACHINE (7-10).
8. OBSERVATORY (11-19). (*Demi-shadow clone*, Japhet).

When Japhet was first conjured by the *feast of flowers*, he took over the city's oldest watchtower overlooking the river right in the middle of the city market. That very night, a purple mist engulfed the tower, driving everyone in the vicinity insane. The mist stayed for the whole duration of the race, and comes back every time the

Festival is gathered again. It expands to 100' of the tower in all directions, and anyone breathing it must save versus Spells/Magic

every round or become insane permanently (consider insane characters as *confused*). Since the mist doesn't flow in the tower itself, crossing it is a matter of holding one's breath or using an air bladder. Under the cover of the foul mist, warped creatures from the river flocked to the tower to guard it. The *flying giant*

Portuguese man-o-war in 4, the *giant crab*, and the *carp dragon* in 5, and the *violet garbugs* in 6 all come from the river's vicinity. All these creatures operate in synergy, driven by the malign influence of the lich. Likewise, they won't hurt Japhet's lieutenant, the *sword tyrant*

in 3, or his precious *diakka* in 1, and coordinate with them in combat as far as their limited Intelligence allows. The mist itself is created by a pair of gigantic bellows made of purple conch in 7, which can sustain 6 points of structural damage each before being destroyed, which puts an end to the mist. The tower grew eyes darting in the eight directions of its octagonal shape on every floor.

From the observatory (8), where a giant purple eye lies on a crystal pedestal, it is possible to see through each of the tower's eyes by looking into it. This vision grants *clairvoyance*, *clairaudience*, *know alignment*, and *ESP*, but characters looked, listened to, or probed at will automatically know they're being observed. A *demi-shadow clone* of Japhet usually holds audiences on a wooden throne adorned with orchid flowers in the audience chamber (2), except if Japhet occupies the room, in which case the clone will be in 8. The garbug's 'hive' is a mass of coral, algae, mud, and leaves, which holds 4 doses of garbug "honey," a paralysis contact poison (save versus Poison or become paralyzed for 1 turn) used as a delicacy, in tiny measures, in the local food. The "honey" can be sold for 200GP per dose. The bottom of the pool chamber (5) leads to an extra-dimensional tunnel which goes straight at the bottom of the river 1 mile away where a lead chest containing 1,000GP, a **potion of sweet water** with 1 dose, and a ruby worth 2,000GP has been hidden by Japhet. When the Festival is over, most of the magic and weirdness of the tower wears off (see page 67).

Carp dragon (1): *Giant mottled koi carp, golden and red, with a dragon's head and two human-like clawed forelegs.* AL N, MV60'/180' Swimming, AC3 (natural armor, like plate), HD7, 35hp, 2 claws (1d4), 2 bite (2d6), Save F8, Morale 9, continual ESP 25', aura of *fear* (creatures with less than 1HD flee in panic for 4d6 turns when seeing the dragon, creatures with less than 3HD must save versus Spells/Magic at +5 or be paralyzed with fear for 1 turn, creatures with 3-5HD will fight with a -1 penalty if they fail at a save versus Spells/Magic at +5), the carp dragon can breathe out of the water for 1 hour maximum, XP440.

Crab, giant (1): AL N, MV60', AC2 (natural armor, like plate & shield), HD3, 24hp, 2 pinchers (2d6), Save F3, Morale 7, XP50.

Demi-shadow clones (Variable): Characters must save versus Spells/Magic when seeing a clone or the clone will perform exactly as the original Japhet (see page 41) for all characters failing at the save. They get another save when first hit by a clone, or when first hitting it. *Dispel illusion* destroys them. AL CE, MV60', AC8 (solid shadow, like leather), HD4, 14hp, 1 chill touch (1d4), Save F4, Morale 12, XP80.

Diakka, tall (4): *Huge stork birds with bills, human-like heads and faces, and human-like arms. Their feathers are orange, pea green, teal, and sickly yellow; their faces and arms are baby-like and black as soot.* AL NE, MV210', AC2 (natural armor, and speed, like plate & shield), HD6+6, 1 beak (1d12), Save F12, Morale 7, the diakka will encircle isolated characters, giving out loon-like odd cries and baby screams while attacking, which affect all the characters inside their circle with *enfeeblement* (save versus Spells/Magic or the character's Strength is halved for 13 rounds) after 4 consecutive rounds of such clamor. They can cause *weakness* (save versus Spells/Magic or lose 1d6 Strength points for 1 hour) with a successful touch attack 1/day that they deliver with their tiny arms, cast *jump* 2/day, and cast *audible glamer* 1/day. Diakka are somewhat wary, and won't attack obviously powerful-looking characters, XP680.

Garbugs, violet (3): *Uniform violet tentacle-mouthed flying lobsters with wasp-like bodies, flimsy wings, and deep yellow pinchers.* AL N, MV60'/90' Flying, AC5 (natural armor, like chain), HD3+1, 2 pinchers (1d6), 6 tentacles, 2' reach (save versus Petrification/Paralysis or paralyzed for 1 turn), Save F4, Morale 8, XP100.

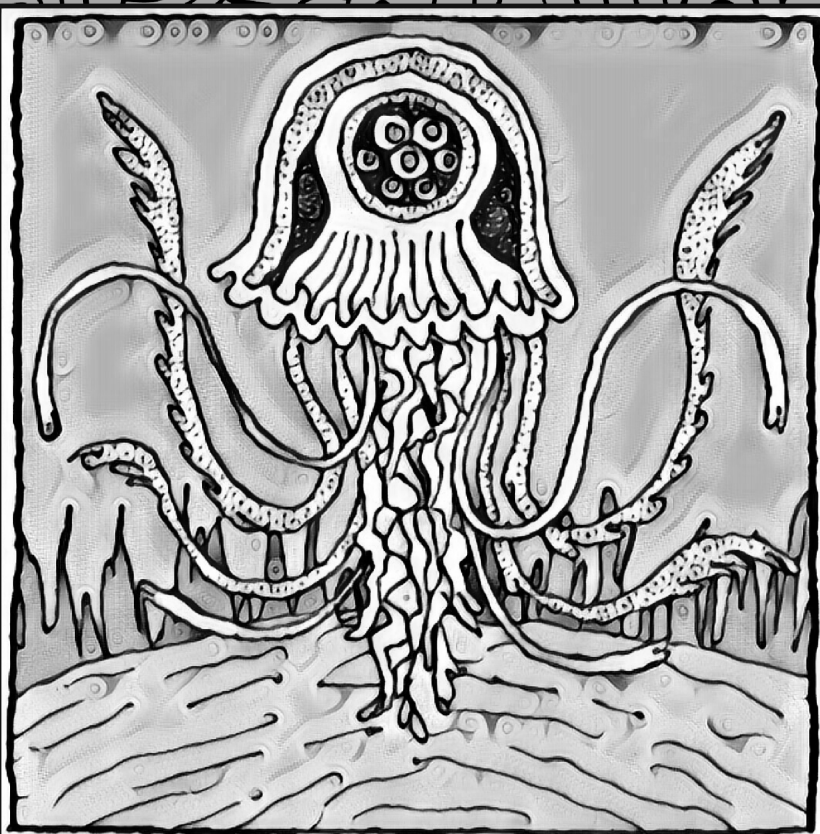
Portuguese man-o-war, giant, flying (1): *Gigantic levitating man-o-war, its body 10' diameter, and its tentacles 40' long.* The Portuguese man-o-war is vivid orange, but its true colors cannot be detected unless seen with magical detection. The creature is extremely passive, and doesn't attack consciously, but it will devour anything paralyzed by its tentacles. It has long stopped bothering about the sword tyrant next door, the demi-shadow illusions, or the lich, all immune to its poison and paralyzing touch. AL N, MV10' Flying, AC9 (no armor), HD4, 32hp, 40 tentacles (1d10 poison damage, and the victim must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or be paralyzed for 6 turns), Save F4, Morale 10, the Portuguese man-o-war is nigh invisible (there's only 1 chance in 10 to notice it if the characters aren't using *detect invisibility* spells or devices). Each tentacle requires but a single point of damage to sever, but this doesn't inflict damage on the creature itself. Once paralyzed, victims are slowly pulled into the creature's body, where they will be devoured in 3d4 turns, XP190.

THE TOWER AS A LOW-LEVEL ADVENTURE

You can strip the tower of the context of the Festival and run it as a low-level adventure while most of its magic has waned. Since a lot of time has likely passed after the last Festival, the tower is now abandoned by creatures from the river, and is used as a base for a group of 7 *pseudo-ghoul* cannibals. The *pseudo-ghouls* have set a makeshift barrack in rooms 1, 2, 3, and 4, but never wander upstairs because they fear the “ghost” which haunts the upper floors. The pseudo-undead, all female, were prostitutes in the lower neighborhoods of the city before choosing another way of life and freedom through this fake undeath. They can be talked to, though they will probably try to devour or convert the characters at some point. As a potential hook, their former brothel, the Ruby Peak of Delight, will pay 150GP per “ghoul” captured. The “ghost” upstairs is a *shadow magic* clone of Japhet (less powerful than a *demi-shadow magic* creature), a lingering effect of the lich's former and future presence. The clone appears for 1d6 rounds every night at midnight in room 5, and whenever a spell is cast or a magical effect is triggered in rooms 5, 6, 7, and 8. The pool in 5 is now dry, but the dimensional tunnel still exists and operates, though there's no treasure at the other end. The rooms 6, 7, and 8 are empty save for a flickering illusion of the purple eye in 8, which causes *fumble* and *fear* on all onlookers the first time they arrive in the room. Since it is a magical effect, it triggers the *shadow clone's* apparition as well. Looking through the eye's illusion allows a character to see distant places, as if the character were using a **crystal ball**, but all such visions are delusional and false. The pseudo-ghouls have scrapped 800GP, which they keep in leather bags in room 4.

Pseudo-ghouls (7): *Sinwey half-naked women with fanged mouths, long black-painted nails, oily pointed tongues, and black makeup.* AL CE, MV90', AC7 (natural armor, and Dexterity bonus, like leather & shield), HD2, 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d3), Save F2, Morale 9, pseudo-ghouls aren't undead, XP900.

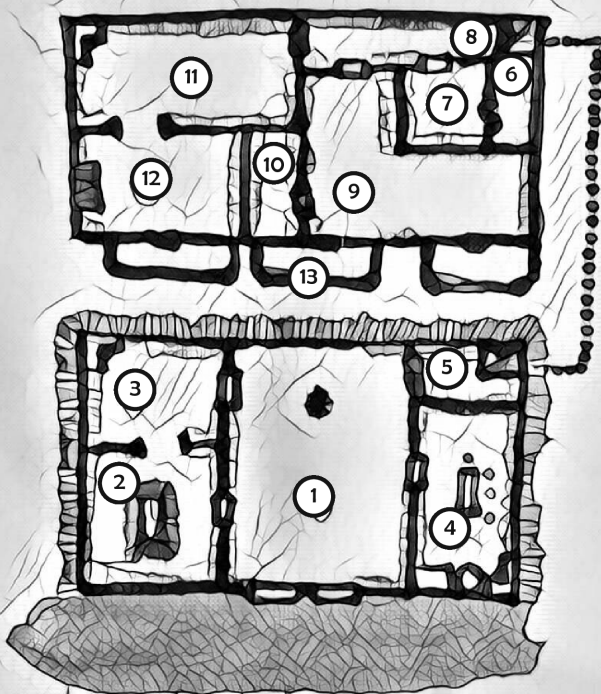
Shadow magic clone, Japhet (1): Characters must save versus Spells/Magic when seeing the clone, or the clone will perform exactly as the original Japhet (see page 41) for all characters failing at the save. They get another save when first hit by the clone, or when first hitting it. *Dispel illusion* destroys it. AL CE, MV60', AC9 (no armor), HD2, 7hp, 1 chill touch (1d2), Save F2, Morale 12, XP20.



Sword tyrant (1): *This humanoid creature has a giant black, pulsating eye where its face should be. It wields a crystal sword, in the hilt of which a gray lidless eye is embedded, and an amber eye throbs in the palm of its open left hand. AL CE, MV120', AC2 (natural armor, like plate & shield), HD8, 48hp, 1 **longsword, magical +4** (1d8+4), Save F8, Morale 9, immune to paralysis, and poison, the “face” eye projects a permanent zone of *negation* at 30', which has 4 chances in 6 to negate spells and magical effects. The creature can both fight and activate its two other eyes during the same round, every round. The “sword” eye casts a *ray of pain* at 40' (save versus Spells/Magic or -2 Dexterity, -4 to To Hit rolls for 2d6 turns), and the “palm” eye projects a ray of *antipathy* at 30' (save versus Spells/Magic or the victim will leave the place, never to return. If successful, the character will lose 1 Constitution point per round as long as they remains in the vicinity of the sword tyrant). The tyrant can be bribed, XP2,060.*

18^{TER} CURZON STREET

A large townhouse stands out in the middle of Shui Tsa street. A tin plate hangs loosely on a single rusty nail by the copper double door's side, indicating a weirdly different address — 18^{Ter}, Curzon Street. Where all the other houses feature gracious slanted roofs, lanterns, and fantastical wooden decorations, this gloomy, lackluster building, made of red- and yellow-painted bricks now blackened by dirt, is devoid of any such decorative touches. Up above, three wind-swept balconies overhang the street below. There's a striking absence of sound, absence of life, and absence of joy seeping from the house, and the faint smell of a deep forest.



HOUSE KEY

1. LOBBY. 2 *shadow goblins*.
2. KITCHEN.
3. PANTRY.
4. DINING HALL. 4 *zombies*.
5. STAIRS.
6. STAIRS, FIRST FLOOR.
7. CLOAK ROOM. **Cloak of poisonousness.**
8. CORRIDOR. *Magic mouth*.
9. OFFICE. 4 *hobgoblin* leaders, and 4 *warhorses*.
10. STORAGE ROOM. *Sigil of drowning*.
11. BEDROOM. *Phase panther*.
12. LOUNGE. *Magic mouth*.
13. BALCONIES.

Unlike the other Flower Liches, Nightshade's domain came along with him the first time he was conjured, and stayed. Not only does his house come from another dimension, but from another time as well since it corresponds roughly to the kind of houses one may have found in the Westerner part of Shanghai in the 1920s, albeit not a very opulent one. The house from beyond space and time is now stuck in the middle of an important street of the city where it contrasts wildly with the sturdy but carefully decorated medieval buildings around. In spite of the monsters and creatures mentioned in the HOUSE KEY, the house is unoccupied since all these monsters are conjured creatures that specific conditions will summon. Once conjured, none of these creatures can leave the house unless Nightshade is present, and orders them to do so. The entire place is under the influence of a *guards & wards* spell which has the following effects: the whole house radiates magic; all the rooms, and corridors are misty, reducing visibility to 10'; all the doors are covered by an illusion which make them seem like a plain wall; all the doors are *wizard locked*; the stairs in 5 and 6 are covered with *webs*; and there are *magic mouths* in 12 and 8. It is possible to detect the illusions or to dispel them by magic, or by checking the walls and succeeding at a save versus Spells/Magic. Setting the *webs* in the stairs on fire will set the whole house ablaze in 1 turn as well. Not a good idea. The house is still a Gulistan since it was claimed by Nightshade long ago, and there are wandering monsters like in any others.

ANACHRONISTIC ITEMS

A tricycle in the LOBBY (1).

3 Modern umbrellas, maroon in the LOBBY (1).

Black oiled trenchcoat in the LOBBY (1).

Grandfather Pendulum Clock in the OFFICE (9).

The *Theory of Colors* by Wolfgang von Goethe, in the OFFICE (9). Contains the spell *color spray* (a Magic-User can roll under Intelligence/2 to learn it).

24 pages of elephant hide paper in the OFFICE (9).

A Colt Dragon Revolver 1848 with 12 bullets in the STORAGE (10) (1d8+1 damage, 1 shot/round, 1 round recharge after 6 shots have been fired).

A cylinder phonograph in the LOUNGE (12) with the following records: *My Lady Lu* (Walter van Brunt), and *Flower Song* (Lange).

4 red packets of Prosperity king size cigarettes in the LOUNGE (12).

A deck of 32 Bicycle playing cards in the LOUNGE (12). The deck contains three isolated cards from a unique **deck of many things**: the Bishop, the Limbo, and the Forgotten. When drawn, the Bishop card confers a loyal follower, a 4th level Cleric to the character. The Cleric has +1 in all his or her abilities (no maximum). When a character draws the Limbo, his alignment becomes Entropic. Entropic characters roll every day to determine randomly their alignment for this day. Regardless of their current alignment, they will always be detected as Chaotic, and suffer all magical effects as Chaotic characters. A character drawing the Forgotten is instantly forgotten by anyone he knows, including other player characters, who retain no memory of him, and will not recognize him.

There's a black crystal chair opposite the door in the lobby (1). When a character sits on it, they become stuck to the chair, which is itself stuck into the floor. Two *shadow goblins* will appear to serve them, and attack only when attacked first. The goblins can bring canned food and stale water from the pantry (3) to their “*master*” for 3 days, after which there will be no food left. The curse tying the character to the chair can be lifted with a *remove curse* spell, which frees the *shadow goblins* as well, leaving them with hate for their former “*master*”. Killing the shadow goblins also ends the curse.

Shadow goblins (2): *Small reptilian kobold-like horned grinning creatures with pitch-black skin and long shredded ears.* AL CE, MV140', AC7 (small size, and Dexterity bonus, like leather & shield), HD2+3, 1 scimitar (1d8/1d8+1 — the second goblin wields a black-bladed +1 scimitar), Save F5, Morale 8, the first goblin can cast *darkness*, *wall of fog*, and *mirror image* 1/day, the second goblin can cast *hypnosis*, *dancing lights*, and *blur* 1/day, XP47.

There is a huge unlit oven at the southern end of the dining hall (4). If the oven is ever opened, it will burst into flames as if it had been burning for hours, spitting 4 flaming zombies into the room. The burst will cause 2d6 points of damage to anyone standing at less than 20' in front of the oven when it is opened (save versus Petrification/Paralysis halves).

Flaming zombies: AL CE, MV90', AC8 (natural armor, like leather), HD2, 1 blazing claws (1d8, and targets hit will sustain 1d2 points of fire damage at the beginning of every round until the flames are put off), Save F2, Morale 12, immune to fire, *charm*, and *sleep*; zombies always attack last, XP29.

The red woolen **cloak of poisonousness** in the cloak room (7) kills anyone wearing it (no save). Victims can be raised or resurrected only after *remove curse* and *neutralize poison* spells are cast on them, else they'll die again within seconds of their new life.

The *magic mouth* in the corridor (8) is a thin mouth wearing golden lipstick. It speaks Avestan, an ancient Iranian language, and recites the names of flowers with a deep voice. Characters listening to it for more than 3 rounds will receive a *suggestion* to leave the house at once (save versus Spells/Magic negates).

Four miniature *hobgoblin* horsemen rush into the room from the grandfather clock every time the clock rings, shouting battle cries. As soon as they step into the office (9), they enlarge to their real size, and attack if anyone's in the room. 2d4 rounds later, they reduce and spring back into the clock unless ordered to stay by Nightshade, and the clock closes shut behind them. If a hobgoblin or a horse is killed, it won't come up again when the clock rings further hours.

Hobgoblins (4): *Tall humanoids with blue simian faces, heavily slanted eyes, and long powerful arms.* AL LE, MV90', AC4 (chain & shield), HD1+1, 5hp, 1 broadsword (2d4+1), Save F2, Morale 9, infravision 60', XP15.

War horses (4): AL N, MV120', AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD3, 1 hoof (1d6, the horses attack only once, with a -4 To Hit penalty, in the cramped office), Save F3, Morale 9, XP50.

Boxes and chests of all kind are stashed in the storage room (10). They mostly contain old musty suits of little value save for three of them. The first one, a copper barrel, contains 10,000 lotus seeds.

The second is a long rectangular ivory box, which contains both the Colt Dragoon Revolver 1848 and its 12 .44 bullets. The third is an old navy blue doctor's bag made of a slick, oily leather.

Examination, a successful Search check, a roll under Wisdom/2, or a Perception check DC20 reveals a sigil depicting parallel waves on the bag's side. The sigil radiates magic, and *read object* shows its effect: when a character opens the bag, they must save versus Spells/Magic or drown for 1 turn, their lungs filling with water (a character drowning dies in 3 + Constitution bonus rounds) unless the magic is lifted with a *remove curse* spell. There are 86 jade fragments in the bag, each worth 20GP, and a **wand of predict weather** with 16 charges usable by all classes.

A fresco of a slick, deep red furless panther decorates the bedroom (11). Two 20' long barbed black leather ribbons hanging from its side lead up to a four-poster bed. If a living creature comes within reach, the ribbons attack (as 4HD monsters, 2d4 damage each), slashing through the air. The first 5hp of damage caused to the ribbons with any attack are ignored due to their hardness. The ribbons have 10hp each. They stop moving when there are no more living creatures within reach. After the ribbons have attacked for 3 consecutive rounds, the painting springs to life into the room until killed, which causes the fresco to vanish forever.

Phase panther (1): AL N, MV210', AC4 (speed, like chain & shield), HD4, 2 tentacles (2d4), 2 claws (1d4), 1 bite (1d8), Save F6, Morale 8, since the panther is slightly out of phase, To Hit rolls have a -3 penalty against it, XP190.

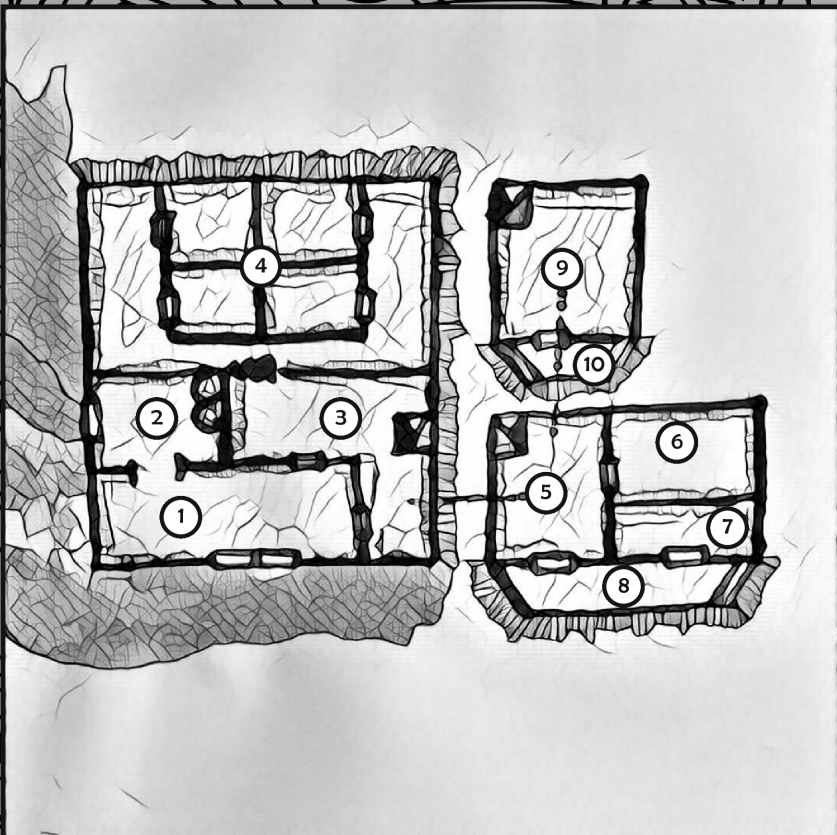
The *magic mouth* in the lounge (12) is cherry-red and glossy. While it moves as if it were speaking, it is utterly silent. This mouth always replays the five last minutes of spoken conversation nearby. A very careful examination, AND a successful roll under Intelligence/2, a successful Languages check, or an Insight or Read lips check DC25 allows a character to understand its meaning (see on the next page). If anyone speaks within hearing distance of the magic mouth (either in 11 or 12), their sentences becomes the new mouth's replay instead.



Using *read object* on any of the house's items will show Nightshade, the anachronistic nature of the house, and the fact that the lich has been absent for the last several days. *Sensitivity to psychic impressions* reveals that Lil'ling was here with the lich, bound, gagged, and panicked, but doesn't show any more details. This power can also be used to show where the doors are in spite of the illusion covering them. When used in 11 or 12, *sensitivity to psychic impressions* shows Lil'ling being prepared for a ritual in the bedroom (11), her hands tied with the leather ribbons, crying and moaning with panic as a blurred silhouette bends over her, reciting eldritch incantations. Reading the *magic mouth* in 12 with *read object* forces it to repeat and mimic Nightshade's last words as he gloats about his plans, smirking and laughing. This allows a character to learn that the lich has swapped bodies with Lil'ling, and that he intends to use her body as a gate for a demon lord, whose manifestation will shred Lil'ling body to bits at the end of the week (see page 5). If TU WANG PING or anyone else speaks while within hearing range of the mouth, the mouth's message will be lost.

THE HOUSE OF THE SOUND OF WHITE JASMINE

Sitting on the edge of a howling, cave-ridden cliff, the house stands in the middle of a thick, overgrown grove of jasmine shrubs. Tiny bells attached to the vines tinkle and chime in the wind, perpetually shrouding the house in an echoing metallic chorus. Balconies overlook the grove on the first and second floor. A silhouette paces back and forth on the first floor. There's a small cart in front of the house's double entrance door, the bare feet of its sleeping driver jutting outside, a pair of white ponies grazing nearby. The smell of jasmine is omnipresent, with an eerie tinge of patchouli.



HOUSE KEY

Roll 1d20, and check the numbers in red below to find the location of 'Lil'ling' at the start of the exploration. Lil'ling doesn't attend to the races, and stays in the house all the time.

1. LOBBY.
2. KITCHEN. DAMSEL HUI JIANG.
3. DINING HALL (1-4). NI WAYAN.
4. SERVANT'S QUARTERS.
5. ANTECHAMBER (5-6). STRONG LIU.
6. OFFICE (7-9). NOBLE MING JIN.
7. BOUDOIR (10-12).
8. BALCONY, FIRST FLOOR (13-17). ASSISTANT FAI.
9. BEDROOM (18-19).
10. BALCONY, SECOND FLOOR (20).

Lil'ling's house, the House of the Sound of White Jasmine, is famous in the whole city for the splendor of the white jasmine groves that surround it. While modest in size, it attracts a lot of noble gentlemen who come almost every day to catch a glimpse of Lil'ling. Sometimes, they're invited inside, and talk with the noble maiden. Such is the son of the city's great leader, which the Flower Lich Nightshade, now possessing Lil'ling's body, will marry at the end of the week on the 7th day of the race. The very same day, their intercourse will lead to a 9-hour long pregnancy followed by a 9-minutes long labor that will destroy Lil'ling's body and give birth to an 8-years old child, a demon prince (see pages 5, page 73, and page 91). All the house's servants were taken away by the hobgoblins from the Gulistan of 18^{Ter} Curzon Street, and killed by the river (see page 82). During the night, Nightshade replaced them with *simulacrums*, magical creatures which will obey him. The *simulacrums* have retained some memory and personality of the servants, though the spell fails to mimic it entirely, and wild discrepancies will show under interrogation. Only ASSISTANT FAI (on the balcony in 8), and the coach driver SI LIM (waiting outside) remember having been killed, and still struggle with this memory. Most *simulacrums* remember how their colleagues were before, and will either point at the incoherence in their behavior, or think about them when interrogated — which *ESP* reveals. *Detect magic* or *true seeing* shows the creatures for what they are. Since the house is not a Gulistan, there are no wandering monsters.

SI LIM: *Unkempt young coach driver with a large blue hat and crooked teeth.* AL N (formerly CN), MV120', AC8 (leather armor), HD1, 3hp, 1 whip (1d2), Save F0, Morale 6, XP5.

SI LIM is fatalistic, and always has been. He stays outside the front gate of the house day and night, sometimes sleeping inside the covered cart, keeping watch on Lil'ling's pair of white ponies. He wonders why Lil'ling hasn't left the house, not even once, since the 1st day of the race. He remembers confusedly having been killed by blue-faced monkey-men, but fears he's going insane, and won't talk about it.

HUI JIANG: *Drunk plump lady with too much make-up.* AL N, MV90', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1hp, 1 knife (1d3), Save F0, Morale 4, XP5.

The real DAMSEL HUI JIANG was a teetotaller, and had a chronic cold. Her *simulacrum*'s an alcoholic in perfect health. She couldn't be happier.

NI WAYAN: *Dark-skinned woman with porcine small evil eyes.* AL NG, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 2hp, 1 club (1d6), Save F0, Morale 6, XP5.

NI WAYAN is very suspicious, which makes her seem a little bit evil in spite of her good nature. She's worried about the changes in the house. The *simulacrum* is bigoted, following the rites of a tribal faith involving the feeding of parrots with maroon rice cakes that the original didn't follow.

STRONG LIU: *Tall, wary man with an imposant mustache.* AL NE (formerly LN), MV90', AC5 (chain), HD2, 16hp, 1 scimitar (1d8), Save F2, Morale 3, XP20.

STRONG LIU'S *simulacrum* is a coward, which STRONG LIU wasn't. He's afraid of violence, and will do his utmost to avoid verbal or physical confrontation.

NOBLE MING JING: *Mandarin with a black cap and long flowing ocre robes lined with brocade.* AL CN (formerly LN), MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 7hp, Save M2, can cast sleep once, Morale 7, XP13.

NOBLE MING JING'S *simulacrum* is sly and scheming, while MING JING was loyal and dedicated.

ASSISTANT FAI: *Haughty young man.* AL LE (formerly LN), MV120', AC8 (leather), HD2, 12hp, 1 spear (1d6), Save F2, Morale 8, XP20.

Unlike the original, the *simulacrum* is capricious and arrogant. He's still dedicated and reliable, though. He remembers dying, and will talk about it if pressed or bribed.

"LIL'LING"

The Most Beautiful Maiden of the city always dress in white, gauzy, half-transparent robes adorned with golden lace. Feigning shyness, she often covers her mouth with a bright yellow fan, and never leaves the house, without a magnificent scarlet umbrella tipped with a golden bulb-like symbol. She smells faintly of patchouli and jasmine.

AL CE, MV120', AC9 (7) (no armor), HD21, 43hp (86), 1 (2) silver dagger (1d4+2), Save M21, Morale 12, immune to charm, sleep, enfeeblement, and insanity, spells, *dweomer of rage* 1/day, XP5,000.

Spells. *Color spray**3, *gruesome gate* (see below), *haste*, *levitation**2, *message**2.

Possessions. An umbrella worth 100GP, a silver dagger, an ivory chest worth 250GP with 1,250GP worth of jewelry inside.

Power. Nightshade's mind itself is venomous, killing anyone attempting to connect to it through either magic or psionic powers instantly (save versus Poison negates).

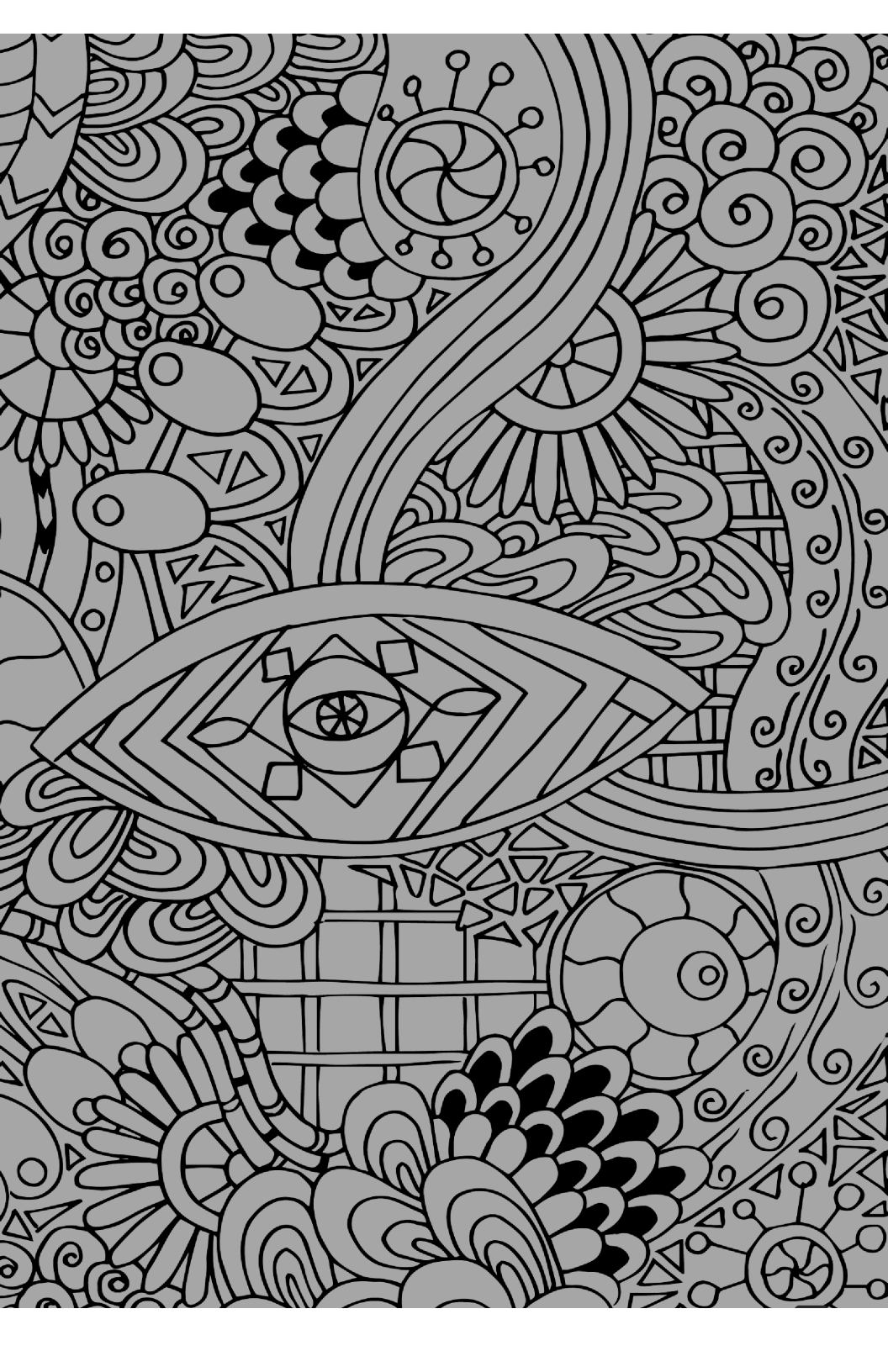
Style of the Flickering Crane (Martial arts). Nightshade's damage dice always explode (roll again and add up the damage of the new die when scoring the maximum damage — rinse and repeat). When they do, the lich becomes *blurred* (the first attack has a -4 To Hit penalty and further attacks a -2 penalty) for 5 rounds, and can *jump* as if with the Magic-User spell at will for the same duration.

Nightshade isn't as attached to Datura as she is to him; he's merely using her to fulfill his plans. He's risking much if caught, and will try to destroy evidence and kill witnesses if things become too heated. Otherwise, he just plays Lil'ling's role to his best ability until the demon lord is "born."

GRUESOME GATE

Magic-User spell Level 7

This spell may only be cast by a female spellcaster. It must be cast within 1 turn of the climax of a sexual intercourse, causing the spellcaster to become pregnant. This pregnancy lasts for 9 hours, at the end of which she will enter into a 9-minute long labor. When the labor ends, a full-fledged 8-years old child is born, ripping the spellcaster's body from the inside and destroying it (permanent death, *raise dead* or *resurrection* will have no effect). The child is the manifestation of a demon lord (spellcaster's choice) which can remain physically present indefinitely if he chooses so. Being a manifestation, and a child, the demon lord has only 50% of the powers (roll individually for each power) and HD of the original demon lord.



OTHER PLACES

Several side investigations and clues may lead to different locations in the city as the Festival unwraps. Following trails from the dead body (page 8), the Yu-Shentong (page 14), or directly from PIN LUNG (page 30) leads to the Tunshang Barony, a very small estate in the city. Discovering the map from the mysterious pouch random event (page 13) leads to the location of the tomb of an ancient revered general, now ransacked. Talking with the giant fireflies (page 11) or with the servants of the House of the Sound of White Jasmine (page 76) leads to the discovery of the bodies of Lil'ling servants, which lay at the bottom of the river after having been killed by Nightshade's hobgoblins. Characters may want to explore the Temple of the Horse God as well either because their investigation of the Tunshang Barony (page 83) is complete, or because they follow a hunch after having seen PIN LUNG's ordeal. None of these places feature wandering monsters.



KILL WITH A BORROWED SWORD

The map leads deep into the scrubland, the trail nigh-invisible, crossing over hillocks and steep rocky slopes. In this direction from the city, far from the river and its diversions, there are neither hamlets nor villages, just a barren land of crags and thorns. At long last you come in sight of your destination: a high barrow mound tipped with a wooden triangle candle-holder, 10' high. There's a tunnel which leads inside, gaping into the darkness.

Once laid out and cleaned, the mysterious pouch (see page 13) can be used as a map which leads to a barren scrubland uphill at some 5 miles of the city. There's a wind-battered barrow mound at the location marked on the map, which opens into a single tomb at the end of a 30' long tunnel dug into the earth. There had been a slabstone to shut it down, which now lays broken. The tomb itself has been ransacked recently, and there's blood splattered on the dirt floor. There's a skeleton, now splintered, wearing a ragged ceremonial dress, a turban, and chain armor. Just beside the tomb, three swords are stuck in the floor: the left and right ones old and rusty; the central one as good as new, casting a slight silvery sheen over the place. When anyone comes close to the swords, the pair of rusty swords animate and attack for 3 rounds (they hit as 4HD monsters for 1d8 damage, but the wounds they cause cannot heal naturally, and cause 1hp of damage per day after the combat until healed by magic). The swords won't follow trespassers outside the tomb, and take their position back once the room is empty or 3 rounds have passed. If a character touches the central sword, the general's spirit rises as a *wraith*. The sword is a **+3 sword** which confers *true sight* 2/day for 1 turn each.

Wraith: *The spirit of the general, BAO DWER, now a hateful amber-eyed shadow.* AL CE, MV120'/240' Flying, AC4 (partly incorporeal, like chain & shield), HD4, 21hp, 1 chill touch (1d6, and drain 1 experience level — no save), Save F4, Morale 12, immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *charm*, and non-magical weapons; silver weapons deal half-damage to the wraith, XP300.

DOWN THE RIVERBED

Jutting, ivy covered flat rocks stand above the river's curve. The water is muddy, as a light back draught stirs it. Dragonflies by day and fireflies by night gather at this place, feasting on minute yellow insects, so many that their continual buzzing merges with the river's sound. The mud flows at the surface only; the riverbed, some 20' below, is clear, littered with small pieces of mica, beautiful but of little worth.

This is the place where the *giant fireflies* (see page 11) have seen bodies being thrown into the river. Some servants of the House of the Sound of White Jasmine may remember it as well, being the place where they were killed by the *hobgoblins* (see page 71). The dead bodies of Lil'ling's servants are tied up to big rocks 20' down the riverbed. If touched or inspected a little bit too closely, 6 *river creepers* will attack. There's a tiny bell upon which a white flower is painted in the pockets of Ni Wayan's body, a short, dark-skinned girl. Most people in town will identify the bell as one of the bells of the House of the Sound of White Jasmine's garden.

River creepers: 2' long slug-like sickly white worms with vivid crimson heads and tubular, tiny fanged mouths. AL N, MV30'/60' Swimming, AC8 (natural armor, like leather), HD1, 3hp, 1 bite (1, and the worm will attach to the character, draining 1hp per round until killed. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the slug aims at the face, in which case a hit blinds the victim as well until the creature is removed), Save F1, Morale 12, vinegar inflicts 2d6 points of damage to river creepers, XP10.

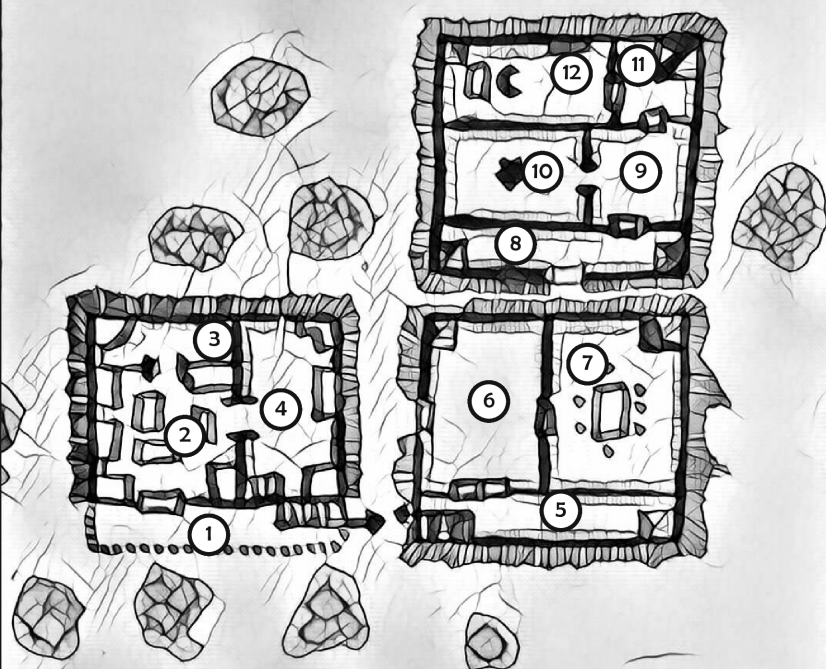
Read object used on the dead's possessions or on the bell allows a character to identify the dead as servants of the House of the Sound of White Jasmine.

Sensitivity to psychic impressions shows clearly their murder at the hands of the hobgoblins, and that they were tied before reaching the river.

TUNSHANG BARONY



Three buildings of lacquered wood, like a hamlet, stand at the edge of the city amid ruins of other structures, all burnt and crumbled. The lingering traces of past mayhem mar the surroundings: the earth itself scorched and cracked all around as though by fire from Heaven. All around their walls, jagged stones and black mud has been piled in heaps. There's smoke rising in the air from the first building, which rises above a stone fence, and movement here and there about the eucalyptus grove encircling it — playful white foxes and crimson squirrels. Sometimes, the jagged stones block the way, reducing the path leading to the buildings to an uneasy 2 foot wide trail.



MANOR KEY

Roll 1d6 to determine the location of the Tunshang Baron when the player characters explore the Barony.

1. STONE FENCE.
2. DOMESTIC'S DORMITORY. 4 *domestics*.
3. DOMESTIC'S BATHROOM. 2 *domestics*.
4. KITCHEN. 6 *domestics*.
5. SHUTTERED ENTRANCE.
6. RECEPTION.
7. DINING ROOM.
8. GUARDROOM. 4 *Yu-Shentong tribesmen*.
9. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE. 2 *Tunshang mandarins*.
10. HEAD OFFICE. *Kwanok, the Tunshang Baron* (1-3).
11. Bodyguards' WATCHROOM. 2 *bodyguards*.
12. BARON'S BEDROOM. *Kwanok, the Tunshang Baron* (4-6).

Since the Tunshang have fallen in disgrace, their once-prosperous Barony, which spanned vast marches at the edge of the jungle, is now reduced to a purely symbolic estate of about 225 square feet. Technically and legally, the estate is still a “Barony,” albeit a very, very small one. The 12 *domestics* of the Baron all live in the first building (1, 2, 3, and 4) where they cook, wash, and iron for their master. The second building (5, 6, and 7) is often deserted since its only function is to receive guests and entertain them with delicacies. Most of the time, the player characters will find it empty. KWANOK, the Baron lives in the third building (8, 9, 10, 11, and 12) under the protection of Yu-Shentong *tribesmen* (in 8), learned *mandarins* (in 9), and *bodyguards* (in 11). The Barony's officials, *mandarins*, and *bodyguards* wear the traditional Tunshang attire: bright orange clothes with golden conical hats. The Baron's brother, JAE MING, lives at the Temple of the Horse God, which he will entirely control should PIN LUNG die. There are letters written from JAE MING to KWANOK locked in a drawer of the head office (10) that a crowbar, a successful Tinker or Open Lock roll, or skill check DC15 will open. The letters are too vague to incriminate them, but mention the Temple of the Horse God (see page 87). A full study of the Barony's ledgers kept in the administrative office (11), which requires either the scrutiny of a character with an Intelligence of 13 or more or a successful Decipher Script check DC20 AND 2d4 hours, reveals that the amount of 2,000GP is missing from the ledgers. This was spent to pay the assassin who kidnapped PIN LUNG's daughter. *ESP*, *charm*, convincing threats, a roll under Charisma/2, or an Intimidation check DC15 will extract this information from the *mandarins*, as well as the location where PIN LUNG's daughter has been kept: a dry 20' deep well in the hills above the Barony 3 miles away. The *mandarins* are aware of the Baron's plans to take over the Temple of the Horse God, and will reveal them, provided the same kind of incentive. The Barony's treasure is kept in the Baron's bedroom in an iron chest. There's another, similar chest next to it, which is empty and trapped with a poison gas which inflicts 20 points of damage to anyone in a 10' radius around if the trap isn't found and removed, or disabled (save versus Poison halves). The treasure chest is locked, and will open only with a Tinker check, an Open Lock roll, or skill check DC20. It contains the Baron's spellbook, 1,800GP, a pair of silver katanas (1d10 damage) worth 1,500GP each, and a bubbly yellow *potion of clairaudience*.

Bodyguards (2): *Bare-breasted amazons with large girdles of red satin, long black orange pants, golden conical hats, vicious mancatchers, and razor-thin scimitars.* AL LE, MV120', AC7 (Dexterity bonus, like leather & shield), HD2, 1 mancatcher (no damage, but the victim must save versus Petrification/Paralysis or become helpless, as is the bodyguard pinning him while the other bodyguard attacks) or 1 **non-magical +2 razor-thin scimitar** (1d8+2, the scimitar breaks on a To Hit roll of '1'), Save F2, Morale 10, XP20.

Domestics (12): *Maids and knaves wearing raggedy outfits.* AL LN, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 improvised weapon (1d3), Save F1, Morale 6, XP10.

Kwanok, the Tunshang Baron (1): *Smiling fat mandarin wearing imposing brocade robes and a tall, pointed, gold-painted hat.* AL NE, MV90', AC8 (thick robes, like leather), HD5, 22hp, 2 daggers (1d4), Save M5, Morale 9, the Baron can cast the following spells: *hold portal, shield, mirror image, phantasmal force, Kwanok's golden cage* (see below), XP350.

KWANOK'S GOLDEN CAGE

Magic-User spell Level 3

Duration. 1 round + 1 round/level

Range. 30' +10'/level

Comp. A tiny gold cage worth 500GP

The spell's target must save versus Magic/Spells or be caught in a 4' wide, long, and tall gold cage extending from the floor. As long as he stays in the cage, he is healed 1hp/round. The cage is soft like gold, and will be forced open at +2, or with a roll under Strength, or a Strength check DC9. The cage doesn't preclude spellcasting, or the use of small missile weapons.

Tunshang mandarins (2): *Classic mandarins with thin beards and mustaches. They wear orange robes, weird glasses whose prismatic lenses are shaped like pyramids, and conical gold hats.* AL LE, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 3hp, 1 dagger (1d4), Save M1, Morale 9, the first mandarin can cast *shocking grasp*, and the second *sleep*. Their glasses allow them to **see invisible**, but they attack at -2 To Hit while wearing them, XP13.

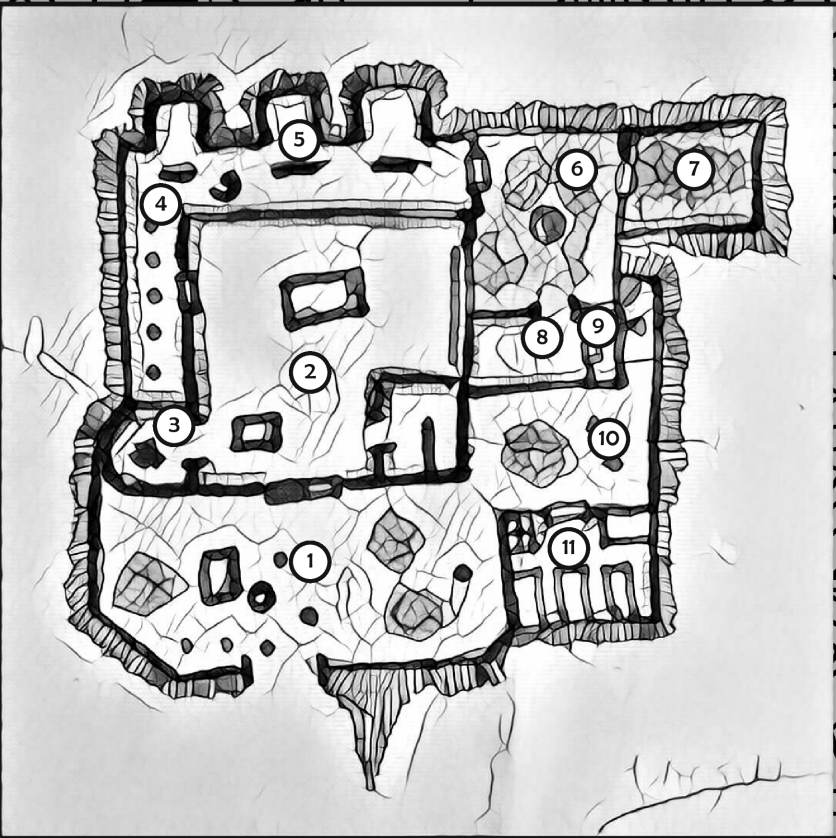
Yu-Shentong Tribesmen (4): *Pale barbarians with spiral blood-red tattoos and dented weapons.* AL LE, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 blowgun-dagger (1 or 1d4, and save versus Poison or sleep 1d20 days), Save F1, Morale 9, XP13.

TEMPLE OF THE HORSE GOD



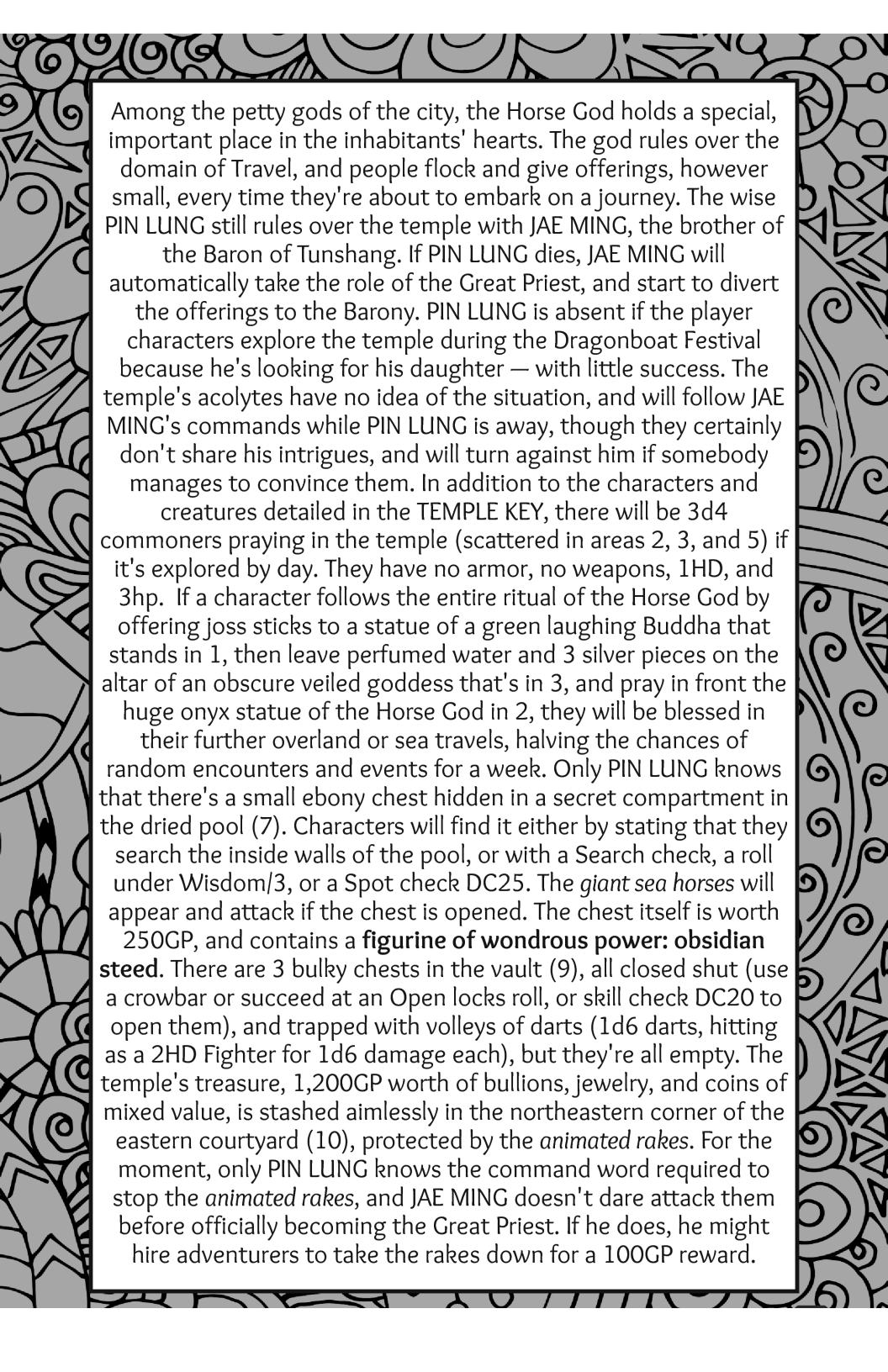
The temple stands at the end of the road on the side of a steep cliff.

The cliff's landing is littered with the broken tea pots and paper wrappings the worshippers have left over the years, piling up to the temple courtyard's entrance. Incense fumes, resounding gongs, and mumbled prayers fill up the air. When the priests sing in the morning, using the secret techniques of the temple, they make their flutes neigh like horses in heat, their high-pitched voices mingling with them, reaching a catastrophic clanging climax together. When the door is open, the huge statue of the Horse God, all onyx and darkness, stares at the temple's door menacingly.



TEMPLE KEY

1. COURTYARD. *Acolyte.*
2. MAIN TEMPLE HALL. *4 acolytes.*
3. SIDE SHRINE. *Acolyte.*
4. CORRIDOR with columns.
5. SHRINE OF THE THREE IMMORTALS.
6. COVERED GARDEN.
7. Dried POOL. *2 Sea horses, giant, flying.*
8. GREAT PRIEST'S OFFICE. *JAE MING.*
9. TEMPLE VAULT.
10. EASTERN COURTYARD. *2 animated rakes.*
11. ACOLYTE'S QUARTERS.



Among the petty gods of the city, the Horse God holds a special, important place in the inhabitants' hearts. The god rules over the domain of Travel, and people flock and give offerings, however small, every time they're about to embark on a journey. The wise PIN LUNG still rules over the temple with JAE MING, the brother of the Baron of Tunshang. If PIN LUNG dies, JAE MING will automatically take the role of the Great Priest, and start to divert the offerings to the Barony. PIN LUNG is absent if the player characters explore the temple during the Dragonboat Festival because he's looking for his daughter — with little success. The temple's acolytes have no idea of the situation, and will follow JAE MING's commands while PIN LUNG is away, though they certainly don't share his intrigues, and will turn against him if somebody manages to convince them. In addition to the characters and creatures detailed in the TEMPLE KEY, there will be 3d4 commoners praying in the temple (scattered in areas 2, 3, and 5) if it's explored by day. They have no armor, no weapons, 1HD, and 3hp. If a character follows the entire ritual of the Horse God by offering joss sticks to a statue of a green laughing Buddha that stands in 1, then leave perfumed water and 3 silver pieces on the altar of an obscure veiled goddess that's in 3, and pray in front the huge onyx statue of the Horse God in 2, they will be blessed in their further overland or sea travels, halving the chances of random encounters and events for a week. Only PIN LUNG knows that there's a small ebony chest hidden in a secret compartment in the dried pool (7). Characters will find it either by stating that they search the inside walls of the pool, or with a Search check, a roll under Wisdom/3, or a Spot check DC25. The *giant sea horses* will appear and attack if the chest is opened. The chest itself is worth 250GP, and contains a **figurine of wondrous power: obsidian steed**. There are 3 bulky chests in the vault (9), all closed shut (use a crowbar or succeed at an Open locks roll, or skill check DC20 to open them), and trapped with volleys of darts (1d6 darts, hitting as a 2HD Fighter for 1d6 damage each), but they're all empty. The temple's treasure, 1,200GP worth of bullions, jewelry, and coins of mixed value, is stashed aimlessly in the northeastern corner of the eastern courtyard (10), protected by the *animated rakes*. For the moment, only PIN LUNG knows the command word required to stop the *animated rakes*, and JAE MING doesn't dare attack them before officially becoming the Great Priest. If he does, he might hire adventurers to take the rakes down for a 100GP reward.

Acolytes (6): *Priests in long flowing robes wearing blue skull caps.* AL LN, MV120', AC9 (no armor), HD1, 1 quarterstaff (1d6), Save C1, Morale 9, each acolyte can cast a random 1st level Cleric spell, XP13.

Animated rakes (2): AL N, MV90' Flying, AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD4, 18hp, 1 rake (1d3), 1 'bald head end' (1, and stun for 1d4 rounds), Save F4, Morale 12, XP135.

JAE MING (1): *Arrogant bald man wearing a long ochre tunic and silver-colored slippers.* AL CE, MV90', AC5 (chain), HD2, 1 mace (1d6), Save C2, Morale 8, *command* and *sanctuary* 1/day, XP100.

Sea horses, giant, flying (2): *Black-colored half-translucent sea horses with tiny red horns.* AL N, MV210' Flying, AC7 (natural armor, like leather & shield), HD3, 1 butt (1d4), 1 dented tail (2d4), 1 bite (2d4), Save F3, Morale 9, XP50.



CLIMAX: THE BIRTH OF A DEMON LORD

On the seventh day, Nightshade, possessing Lil'ling body, will engage in sexual intercourse in the bedroom of the House of White Jasmine with the elder son of the city's leader, a level 0 aristocrat with no armor, a broadsword (2d4), and 4hp. He'll then cast *gruesome gate*, and leave in a rush, joining Datura and the real Lil'ling — whose soul is now trapped in Nightshade's original body — on the stage of the Temple of the First Light of Dawn (6) where he'll enter into labor for 9 rounds. On the very last minute, he cancels the possession, and Lil'ling dies as her soul returns to her body, from which a full-fledged eight-year old demon child emerges, tearing it apart beyond recognition in the process. The child is a Demon Lord, *The Besmirched Sporelord* **THYULLOY**, who can remain physically present, on the material plane, but whose powers are weakened. Having been “born” on the material plane, **THYULLOY** can remain indefinitely through the magic of the *gruesome gate*, and has no demon amulet. On the other hand, “killing” him will only send him back to the Abyss he comes from, and will not destroy him. If nothing is done to prevent it, the “child” will rule over the city 9 years later.

THYULLOY, The Besmirched Sporelord

*When he first emerges, **THYULLOY** appears as a bald, sick 8 year old child with pointed bat-like ears, a thin fanged mouth, and cruel porcine black eyes. He wields a black jagged dagger with which he's torn apart his mother's belly. There's a white hunch streaked with purple on his back, from which emerge a pair of long gracile arms.*

AL CE, MV90', AC2 (magical luck, like plate & shield), HD9, 49hp, 1 **shadow dagger** (1d4, and drain 1 energy level for 1 turn), 2 gracile arms (save versus Petrification/Paralyzation or paralyzes for 4 rounds), Save F9, Morale 12, immune to weapons below a +2 enchantment, 5 chances in 6 to resist any spell or magical effect, takes half-damage from cold, fire, electricity, immune to poison, and gases, *speaks with plants*, spell-like powers, XP4,500.

THYULLOY can breathe a cloud of spores 3/day in a 40' long and 10' wide cloud which performs as a *stinking cloud*, a *confusion* spell, and a *fog cloud* (save individually against each effect). The Demon Lord can *gate* a hoard of Fungi monsters: 1d4 *Fungi kings* (see page 41), 1d4 *Fungi hallucinators*, 1d4 *Fungi pacificators*, and 2d6 *Fungi men* (see page 42) 1/day with a success chance of 65%.

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Reference pictures from the Imperial City of Hue, and the village of Hoi An (Vietnam), the Aquaventure Water Park of Dubai (United Arab Emirates, photography by Zoë de Melo), Kotchachiwadi (Bombay), Alexandre Laemlein's painting - La Charité, Musée de la Vie romantique, Paris (France, photography by David Papier).

APPENDIX N

Ching Siu-Tung, *A Chinese Ghost Story*

Grimes, *Dream Fortress*, *Official/Unofficial Video* by Anastasia Shulepova

He Ta-Sha, Chen Chia-Hua, Kan Shang-Shih, et al. *Flowers and Butterflies*, *Cantonese Music*, China Records Company

Lynn Sellers, *Lichlords*

Robert Van Gulik, *The Chinese Lake Murders*

Robert Van Gulik, *The Lacquered Screen*

Stephen Chow, *Kung Fu Hustle*

Tsui Hark, *Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame*

William Hanna & Joseph Barbera, *Dastardly and Muttley in their Flying Machines*

Unknown, *The Thirty-Six Stratagems*

THE WILD CARD

Find the video, watch it, and use the wild card in any way you want to turn this adventure head over heels — maybe it never was about Asia.

Goran Bregovic, Emir Kusturica, *Ederlezi: Time of the Gypsies OST*.