

# LANKHMAR

NIGHT OF BLOOD AND TEETH



SAVAGE  
WORLDS



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## A NIGHT OF BLOOD & TEETH

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# INTRODUCTION

Corruption, incompetence, and piracy have drained Ilthmar's coffers. Harbors stand empty where trading ships once fought for berths. Ore, spices, cloth, and other goods from around Nehwon now prefer the markets of their rival, hated Lankhmar.

A recent acquisition by the Shark Cult has given Overlord Tonapax Valakos cruel inspiration to right this "wrong."

The cult has come into possession of a powerful "penate" of sunken Simorgya. The small statuette offers protection and good fortune when housed in its proper shrine. When taken from its native resting place, however, it causes terrible chaos and mischief.

Valakos believes that the penate, with some agitation and provocation by his agents in the Shark Cult, will cause Lankhmar to descend into chaos. If so, trade will once again steer toward Ilthmar's ports and gold into the Overlord's purse!

Valakos has the perfect agents in Ilthmar's Shark Cult, who have long desired a presence across the Sinking Lands. Several months earlier, the cult dispatched agents and architects to purchase land and begin creation of a new temple in Lankhmar.

Now the temple is almost complete and the penate is on its way to Lankhmar. Once the blood flows, Ilthmar will once again overshadow Lankhmar — if there's anything left of it!

Overlord of Lankhmar, Pulgh Arthonax, is sadly clueless about his rival's schemes. His focus is on his own fat coffers and various plans and schemes to secure his own personal power. The city will get no help from him, unfortunately.

The player characters are unlikely heroes, but if they don't get involved the city will burn, and as the head of the Thieves' Guild once said, "There is no money in ruined stone."

*A Night of Blood & Teeth* begins with **Grim Tidings**. The vessel bringing the Simorgyan penate into town crashes on the rocks and the heroes are rewarded for rescuing what's left of the startled crew.

In *Lankhmar Burns*, a series of events demonstrates the power of the penate to cause hatred and violence throughout Lankhmar.

*Feeding Frenzy* continues the theme and introduces the rogues to the Thieves' Guild, who have figured out the penate is the source of the city's current troubles.

The scoundrels must steal the penate from the Shark Cult in *The Heist*, battling powerful priests and other terrors deep inside their almost-completed temple.

The climax of the adventure, *A Night of Blood & Teeth*, takes place in a chase across the waves to sunken Simorgya. There the heroes must complete a ritual to return the penate while the Shark Cult desperately battles to regain their priceless treasure.



## PART ONE: GRIM TIDINGS

It is a cold, gray night in the city of Lankhmar. Rain drizzles from the sky. The heroes, scoundrels, warriors, and rogues of the party mournfully pass the night in the Black Kettle, a tavern near the water, between the North and South Docks. Most are deep in their cups, musing over love spurned, gambles lost, or the glory of battles long forgotten.

Tell the players this, and that their mood is melancholy. Ask them why, and let each of them tell their own tale of woe. Reward those who do with a Benny at the end of their performance (this is like an Interlude but the focus is on something that's making them sad and depressed).

Once everyone has had a chance to tell their story of misfortune, read the following.

*It's odd. When you entered the Black Kettle several hours ago you were laughing and congratulating each other on your last misadventure. Now just a few short hours later, armed with better food and ale than the place lets on, you find yourself — and your friends — seeped in melancholy.*

*Something feels...wrong. Unnatural.*

*Suddenly the door bursts open and two seedy-looking rogues enter, carrying a third man bleeding viciously from the thigh. His clothes are torn and even in the gloom you can see chunks of meat and the glint of bone.*

*"Thazzi!" one of the men yells to the one-eyed, one-handed former marine who owns the place. "We need your help!"*

The rogues clear plates and mugs violently from a long table and throw their dying friend atop it. Thazzi grimaces but grabs a towel and a bucket of water to help.

Thazzi has Healing d4 but Glib's wounds are beyond his meager skills. If the player characters get involved, they can, however. If they don't, Glib continues gushing blood onto the tavern floor until he shudders and expires.

Either way, everyone in the party makes a Notice roll. The highest roll sees the glint of something gold clutched tightly in Glib's hands. The other rogues notice it a heartbeat afterward and tuck his hand up into his chest, hiding whatever treasure he's found without taking it from him (yet).

### RESCUERS OR ROGUES?

If the adventurers save Glib, one of the other rogues, a rough but comely lass named Lyssa, tells the group what led to her friend's dire predicament. If the group doesn't help Glib, she comes to them and phrases the following in the spirit of a bargain rather than gratitude.

*"Me and Punt 'ere wuz out by the rocks just pas' the South Gate when we heard what sounded like thunder. But there weren't no rain and no storm. One's comin', but t'aint*



here yet, y'see. So, bein' the curious sort, we head up the shore a bit more and see this little sloop all crashed up in the shoals. Don't know why it didn't pull into the docks, proper-like.

We saw some survivors swimmin' to shore but most wuz all cut up and bloody and didn't make it. We figured they'd been attacked by pirates. Or maybe they wuz pirates. Maybe that's why they avoided the docks, eh?

One of 'em almost made it. Crawled right up into the surf, holdin' up a hand for help. Glib waded in and took his hand but then this big shark rose up and bit 'im! We yelled at Glib to run for it — we ain't no swimmers, see — but he got bit too! We dragged Glibby out and ran here — we know Thazzi's stitched a few cuts in his day as a marine.

That wreck's still there. Help us, uh, rescue the survivors and maybe we can gather up whatever goodies those who didn't make it left behind, eh?"

## THE WRECK

Lyssa and Punt lead the group south from the Black Kettle, about 100 yards south of the South Docks to a short and rocky shoal. The vessel is the *Voyager* out of Ilthmar, and unknown to its crew, was carrying a most dangerous and precious cargo — the Simorgyan penate. This is the source of the sudden feeling of oppression washing over Lankhmar.

The wreck is 30 yards off-shore and surrounded by a shiver of frenzied sharks. A number of survivors thrash about in the water, screaming for help. Glints of rings, necklaces, and other jewelry are spotted on the swimmers with a Notice roll — there's money to be made here at least if the rogues aren't interested in heroics.

Those with noble intentions can attempt to wade in and help the struggling survivors. Those of a more selfish bent can do the same but for the reward they plan to extort from





them! Either way, the only way to save or salvage is to enter the bloody surf.

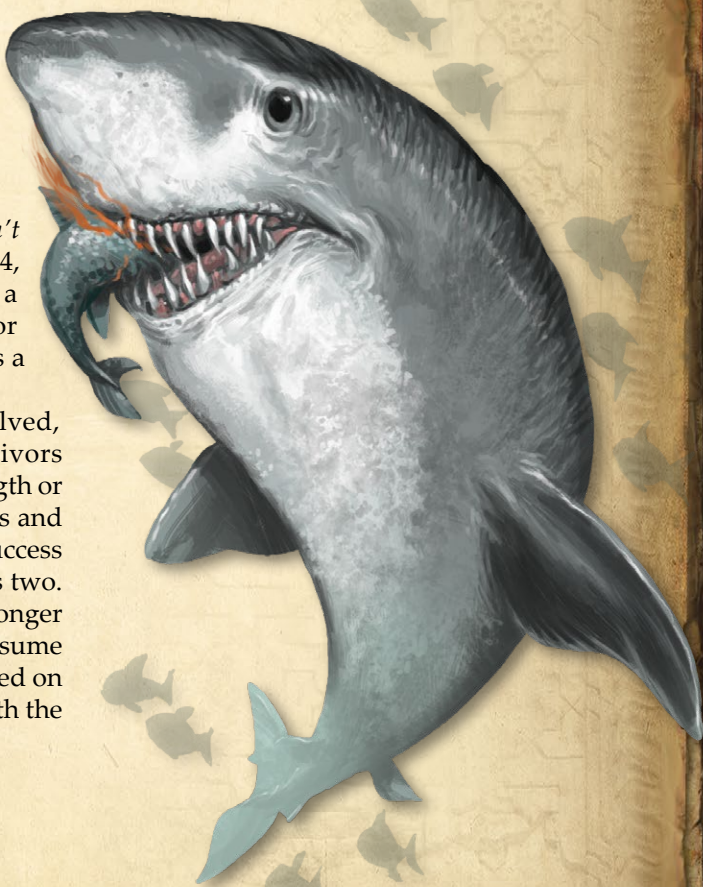
## GOOD SAMARITANS

The survivors are a mix of sailors and lesser merchants from Ilthmar. Pulling the exhausted and panicked survivors from the sea is a modified Dramatic Task. Here's how it works.

- There are 12 possible survivors and three rounds before a pack of six sharks devours them all. (There are actually quite a few more but six are in the immediate vicinity.)
- At the start of each round, each player decides if he'll fight off sharks or save a survivor. Make sure this is clear to the group so they can choose or all the merchants may die quickly!
- Those fighting off sharks must enter the surf and make a Fighting roll (Spellcasting and Shooting won't help here as the sharks are underwater). A success stops one shark attack, and a raise stops two. (Don't roll damage — the hero prevents the sharks from attacking someone this round but doesn't kill the frenzied beast.)
- For each of the six attacks that *isn't* stopped that round, roll a d6. 1–4, it kills a survivor; 5–6, it bites a player character in the water for 2d6 damage (ignore Parry — this is a Swarm attack).
- After the shark attacks are resolved, those who attempt to save survivors must make the lower of their Strength or Swimming rolls to battle the waves and haul in a struggling swimmer. A success saves one victim, and a raise saves two. Once saved, the survivor can no longer be harmed by the shark attacks. Assume Lyssa and Punt tend to the wounded on the beach while the party deals with the more dangerous threat.

After five rounds, the Dramatic Task ends. Any survivors who weren't saved sink beneath the waves in a froth of red.

Of those who remain, roll a d6. On a roll of 1–4, the character is a sailor who has 2d20 silver smerduks worth of minor jewelry on his person. On a 5–6, he's a merchant with 2d20 gold rilks worth of coins or jewelry. The victims are happy to give up half of the wealth on their person if they're rescued from the terrible savagery of the sharks. Of course if the heroes are truly scoundrels, they might threaten, pilfer, or cajole more from those they rescued. This is up to the rogues... this is Lankhmar, after all.





## ENTER THE BLADES

As the heroes lie panting on the sand, healing the wounded, or extorting cash from the merchants, one of the survivors tells the group what happened.

*"I'm Nestor. We're all merchants from Ilthmar. Most of us are just agents of larger houses, really. No one of import. We were supposed to berth at the South Docks as we had a thousand times before but this one stranger, a bald man who kept to himself the whole way, paid the captain 100 rilks to let him off on these shoals before putting in. He had a small pouch he guarded carefully. It was hidden beneath his cloak but he checked it constantly and I saw it a time or two. Must have been something important — and something he didn't want the customs house to know about.*

*The man had just loaded up on a dinghy for shore when something massive hit us from below. The ship couldn't move and started to sink, so we grabbed what we could and went into the water. The only small boat was the one the bald man took so we swam for it. That's when...they came..."*

Nestor points out to the sea and the fins still circling through the settling chum. He knows little else of use. The captain died early, but if any sailors survived one says that the bald man seemed to know exactly where he wanted to disembark — as if he'd done it before. The sailor also confirms the entire crew was struck by a terrible melancholy the moment he boarded.

The bald man is Kuleg, one of the priests at the new Temple of the Shark God in Lankhmar. He carries the penate to Lankhmar, but he did not go undetected. A Simorgyan agent named Sirene followed the *Voyager* as it approached Lankhmar and used a massive whale called a deep rusher (see *The Savage Foes of Nehwon*) to breach the ship and wreck it upon the shoals.

Kuleg, realizing his plight, took the lone dinghy and summoned a pack of maneating sharks to cover his trail (by eating the survivors of the *Voyager*!) and delay his undersea attackers.

Both Kuleg and Sirene escape the scene this dark and rainy night, but both will be encountered later in this tale.

## THE WORST KIND OF ESCORTS

Soon after rogues hear Nestor's tale, a group of 12 brigands, the Bloody Blades, show up and walk carefully but confidently down the short slope to the beach.

"What happened here?" says the leader, a crafty rogue named Karstan. He wants the story and gets it from Nestor if the party holds back for some reason. If it doesn't come out that the bald man jumped ship and vanished, Karstan asks specifically. "We're looking for a bald fellow. Kind of rough-looking. You see what happened to him?"

The Blades were paid to escort Kuleg to the Temple of the Shark God.

What happens next is up to the group. The Blades aren't looking for a fight for no reason, but if they sense they're being lied to, see too much of the merchant's treasure, or Karstan feels his authority is on the line, he demands half of whatever salvage the rogues found and will fight to get it. Otherwise, the Blades can be convinced to leave with some convincing roleplaying and a Persuasion (or Intimidation) roll since Kuleg isn't here and they have little interest in standing on the cold beach in the drizzling rain.

- **Bloody Blades (12):** Use the Bandit profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. Karstan is a Wild Card with Agility d8, Fighting d8, and the First Strike Edge. All are armed with short swords (Str+d6).

## A BRIEF RESPITE

Lyssa and Punt, also rewarded by some of the survivors or loaded with a bit of salvage, suggest the group return to the Black Kettle and warm up by Thazzi's fire. Assuming they do so, the owner buys them the first round if they attempted any sense of rescue. Thazzi was a mercenary marine and knows the terror of a shipwreck in dangerous waters.

The respite is well and needed, for Lankhmar is about to burn.



## PART TWO: LANKHMAR BURNS

The Simorgyan penate continues to work its curse on Lankhmar. The city has always been ridden with violence, but things are particularly grim while the penate works its dark magic.

Run any or all of the incidents below to reinforce the totem's effects on Lankhmar. You should also add your own events, especially if you have recurring enemy or friendly nonplayer characters the group has previously interacted with to personalize the tale.

Finally, remember that the player characters are likely scoundrels and rogues rather than traditional heroes. They don't *have* to help the victims in any of the unfortunate events described here, but if they don't they'll find Lankhmar becomes a much more dangerous and inhospitable place.

### THE TATTERED PAGE

Two middle-age men, Arvin and Questimilo, fight with fists in the street. They wear worn cloth breeches and shirts. A Common Knowledge roll recalls they run a book shop called *The Tattered Page* on Cash Street.

Arvin screams at Questimilo that he always wants things his way, from the books they purchase to the way they're organized.

"By author! Every other book merchant in Nehwon organizes by title!"

Questimilo retorts that Arvin is a "money-grubbing pig unfit to suckle at a swine's teet."

If left alone, the two beat each other bloody before eventually going to their separate homes. The book store remains closed for a week thereafter.

There's little the group can do if they intervene. There's no real issue to be resolved — the two partners have simply had enough of each other over the years and want out. The oppression of the penate has pushed them to their final limit.

A clever scoundrel might arrange a buyout, however, and cut himself in on the action. Arvin has 700 gold rilks he'll spend to get rid of his former friend once and for all. An arbiter might get as much as 10% of that if the situation is resolved quickly.

Questimilo might also prove grateful if the party contains a dabbler in the black arts. One of his older books contained an old spell encoded on a parchment. He's deciphered the text but has no talent with magic himself, so he gives it to someone in the party if the situation warrants. Allow the recipient to pick a new power to add to his repertoire!

- **Questimilo and Arvin:** Use the statistics for Merchants from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.



## LORD OF THE LIES

A group of children hurls rocks at a smaller child huddling at the end of a dirty alley. They scream things like "You're always messing things up, Piggy!" and "No one wants you! Even your parents didn't want you!"

Left to their own devices, "Piggy," a meek and rotund boy with squinty eyes, is left unconscious in the alley. He has no real future and will eventually become yet another of Lankhmar's unfortunates.

Should the group decide to get involved, the children eventually admit they were selling fake religious icons on the Street of the Gods. Their leader, a rough-looking street urchin named Jack, explains:

*"The priests are buying up anything that might be from old Simorgya. You know, that city that supposedly sunk somewhere in the Outer Sea? Jenny there does right good carvings and we've been making a fortune selling them to anyone looking for a little 'gift o' the gods.' Then ol' Piggy here has to go and blab on us."*

Piggy responds.

*"Ain't right sellin' hope to them that needs it most, Jack. Jenny don't want to but you keep makin' 'er!"*

There are 13 children from ages 8 to 14 in the group of street rats. They've piled up a dozen silver smerduks from their scam, so far.

Jack is pure trouble and mischief. He'll eventually become one of the toughest miscreants in the Thieves' Guild. The rest will likely end up serving him there or begging for the Beggars' Guild.

The children live in the basement of an abandoned home near the Marsh Gate. None of them have parents or caretakers, or much of a way to make a living besides begging and thieving.

The point of this Savage Tale isn't to turn the group into crusaders for the poor (though that's certainly fine too!). Sometimes a tale like this can be used to justify their *bad* behavior as well. Without any sort of organized care there really *isn't* much for

children, the elderly, or the infirm in the city to do besides beg, borrow, or steal. All that said, we recommend you use the tale to reinforce the "City of Thieves" aspect of Lankhmar and avoid laying on the social commentary *too* thick.

- **Children (14):** Use the statistics for Street Rats below. Jack has Intimidation d4. Piggy, whose real name is Jacob, also has the Obese Hindrance.

### STREET RATS

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d4

**Cha:** —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Poverty, Small, Young

**Edges:** Luck (each child has one Benny he or she can use, though none of them are Wild Cards!)

## FOLLOW UP

The scoundrels might want to find out why the priests are suddenly buying up Simorgyan relics, or may even want to buy out (or take!) Jenny's fakes. Here's how to handle each of these subplots.

### A MARKET FOR RELICS

Through guile, Intimidation, or Persuasion, a priest named Saul (of whatever religion you choose) tells the following tale.

*"A lone noble woman came through the Street of the Gods a few days ago, promising handsome 'donations' should anyone turn up Simorgyan relics. She purchased a few trinkets right away and promised to return at some point, but I haven't seen her since."*

*She tried to hide herself beneath her cloak, but I got a good look. She was beautiful. Gold hair, green eyes, and the most perfect alabaster skin the gods ever created."*

The priest knows nothing else, and the lady (Sirene of Simorgya) doesn't reappear on the Street of the Gods in this adventure. She was attempting to gather up any relics she could while she waited on Kuleg to arrive with the penate and make contacts in case it wound up among the vendors there



## JENNY'S FAKES

Jenny has five wooden relics she'll sell for four silver smerduks each (or 10 if Jack's still around!). They're fairly convincing to the uninitiated because she's talented and they're made from a rare almost silver wood she's been sneakily pulling from a crawlspace beneath the Temple of the Gods of Lankhmar!

Jenny slips into a tiny crack in the street and takes the old wood from what used to be an altar, then carves it to look like rays, skates, sharks, or other sea creatures. The Simorgyans did have such totems of this same rare wood eons ago. They weren't usually religious in nature but neither Jenny nor the priests on the Street of the Goods know that.

With a successful Persuasion or Streetwise roll and a d4 hours working the various temples, each statue can be sold for 20 silver smerduks (10 gold rilks).

There's enough wood left in the crawlspace to make about 10 more, and each one takes Jenny a day to carve.

## A MOST SAVAGE CHOR

Kuleg, the priest of the Shark Cult who slipped off the *Voyager* in **Grim Tidings**, has recovered from his ordeal. Now he stands on the Street of the Gods preaching the "Way of Predation." The group might even see him there as they go to investigate the trade of Simorgyan idols detailed in **Lord of the Lies**, above.

The priest wears an expensive robe of mottled blue lined with gold trim and struck through with erratic gray ribbons. All together the effect is of the glistening blue ocean. Kuleg is bald with shark-like features, and wields an obviously expensive spear carved with images of sharks and the sea upon the haft.

Allow the heroes to listen in if they choose. Kuleg is a dynamic speaker. He begins slowly, almost as if *hunting* with his words; then quickens his tempo when summing up a point (written in **bold**). All together, the cadence and volume of his voice is much

like that of his Shark God, lurking and stalking its prey before suddenly making a bloody strike!

*"There is no God. There are only **THE GODs**. They watch us, but they don't watch **OVER** us. They don't help the needy, but they give their blessings to those who fend for themselves...**AS THEY INTENDED**.*

*The gods have given you all you need to survive in this world. Your hands, your mind...**YOUR TEETH!***

*Look around you, seekers. There is no eternal reward for your kindness. No afterlife for the pure. There is only now. There is only...**TODAY**.*

*Seize it! If those around are you weak, they violate the gods' law of nature. And there is no god more pure than the Great Shark! He is real! He is watching you! He is...**TERROR INCARNATE!***

*Do you wish to be the prey...or the predator? Come to our meager temple. Savor the bounty of the sea. Weed the weak from the pool! Take what is yours as nature intended! And give thanks to the mighty shark for your savagery!*

*This is the Way of Predation! This is the way of the **SHARK!**"*

**Lucarro the Pickpocket:** A pickpocket named Lucarro works the scene too, taking advantage of the rapt listeners.

Lucarro attempts to lift something of value from the player characters while they listen to Kuleg. He chooses either the most obviously wealthy target or the GM can roll randomly among the rogues. If he is successful, someone else notices the act and alerts the victim. If Lucarro fails, the character catches him red-handed. Kuleg and the crowd, of course, urge the Way of Predation — death for the unsuccessful thief.

Let the group argue as they may, perhaps using the Social Conflict rules to debate with Kuleg. The crowd "decides" the winner, and if they side with Kuleg, they attempt to take the thief from the heroes and administer "justice" on the spot.

✧ **Kuleg the Shark Priest:** See page 30.

- **The Crowd (40):** Kuleg has attracted a crowd of about 40 people. Use Tradesman from *Lankhmar: City of*



*Thieves* for their profiles. Those who aren't armed with knives (Str+d4) can pick up rocks or other improvised weapons in a pinch.

- **Lucarro the Pickpocket:** Use the statistics for Bandits from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. Lucarro is armed with a dagger (Str+d4) and has the Thief Edge.

## "YOU"

One of the player characters, preferably someone with the Enemy Hindrance, or one who has made an enemy in your campaign, spots his rival at the same time the rival spots her!

The rival is accompanied by his own companions and the penate has their blood up. They move toward the player character looking for a fight. It starts as a nonlethal brawl (unless the relationship is already murderous), but might devolve if the foe is beaten quickly or one of the player characters resorts to lethal force.

## FRESH FRUIT

The thieves of Lankhmar pride themselves on their stealth and subtlety. But the penate, combined with the Shark Cult's "Way of Predation" has made some of the city's street rats far too bold.

As the scoundrels pass a market stand of fresh fruits and vegetables, three young toughs start loading up a bag with the best of the produce. The shopkeeper cries for help from the city watch but none comes.

The leader of the group is the female, Larissa. She wears a shark pendant on a leather tong and has become enamored with the Shark Cult. She has little interest in fighting an obviously stronger party, so she lies, runs, or whatever makes the most sense to avoid being the prey rather than the predator. The group can help her if they want, or they can take advantage of the tumult to pocket some fresh fruits for themselves.

If questioned about the pendant, Larissa says the following:

*"Free food every seventh day. We was hungry so we went. No questions asked. The priests just feed you. Sure, they preach a little about the Shark God. Mostly Kuleg, the mouthy one, does the talking. But it makes sense to us. It's the natural order. Nature. Kill or be killed. Predator or prey. We choose predator."*

*My favorite though is Seala. She's the most dangerous, I think. True spirit of the shark, that one."*

Larissa idolizes Seala. If at least a day passes between this encounter and **The Heist**, Larissa is one of the acolytes encountered within the temple.

- **Thieves (3):** Use the Bandit statistics from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. There are two men and one woman (Larissa), all human. All three are armed with daggers (Str+d4).

## AVID READER

The heroes are traveling through the city when they come to Arvin and Questimilo's book store, *The Tattered Page*. If it's closed, they see a man standing in front of it, looking in through the dirty windows. If it remains open, he's just going inside. The man wears the same mottled blue robe they saw on Kuleg in **A Most Savage Choir** but has deep black hair and a well-groomed goatee. This is Mako, the most senior priest of the cult, out looking for information on his various studies.

There's no specific encounter here, but it's a chance for the heroes to see and perhaps engage with the studious Mako.

✦ **Mako:** See page 30.



## PART THREE: FEEDING FRENZY

The Shark Cult has become the fastest growing group in Lankhmar. They preach the “Way of Predation,” which they claim is the law of nature — one should take what one wants when one can. Incidents of violence and mayhem have erupted all over the city as new followers take the cult’s message to heart and prey on the weak.

The stolen Simorgyan penate has also heightened tensions and acted as a catalyst for the Shark Cult’s message. The atmosphere in Lankhmar is oppressive and goad on any feelings of anger present in the scoundrels or the citizens they encounter. Random meetings with old friends erupt into arguments over who paid for the last round, shopkeepers are quick to cheat their customers, and the agitated members of the city watch are eager for violence. In short, Lankhmar is a powder keg, and Kuleg the shark priest may be about to provide a spark.

Kuleg has been tasked with toppling the city’s various power-holders while the penate does its business, including the Thieves’ Guild. It is as-yet too strong to attack directly, but its partner, the Beggars’ Guild, is not.

To incite the mob, Kuleg cornered a “blind” beggar named Tomas and exposed his fraud by berating him in front of a large crowd. At the height of the fervor, the clever priest tossed Tomas a dagger — which the “blind” beggar caught. Armed with the “revelation”

that the beggars have been fleecing the locals for years, Kuleg and his mob marched on the master of the Beggars’ Guild.

Some of the mob are recent converts planted in the crowd to ensure the mob’s furor, but most are simple Lankhmarts angry at their lot in life and spurred on by the cursed Simorgyan penate. Kuleg doesn’t truly care about getting “justice” for the people by overthrowing the Guild Master — his task is to see how the powerful Thieves’ Guild and City Watch respond to the attack so he and his cronies can factor it into their larger schemes.

The Guild Master of the Beggars’ Guild, Boris the Lamé, is in his house on Cash Street when Kuleg and the mob arrives. A half-dozen Bloody Blades (Karstan and the same mercenaries encountered in **Grim Tidings**) have been hired to guard him in these dangerous times but are caught off-guard by the outnumbered and hostile crowd outside.

### YOU SCRATCH MY BACK...

The adventurers are enjoying a drink or lounging in their own dwellings when they’re visited by a small woman wearing a dark cloak. A Notice roll detects the unmistakable signs of a ratling.



*"My name is Hisvia. I work for the Thieves' Guild. Our friend, the Guild Master of the Beggars' Guild, is being...detained...by rabble roused by a priest of the Shark Cult. Boris has asked for help from those who have occasionally caught his attention, and you were my first stop.*

*He will pay 20 gold rilks to each of you if you will help him disperse — or otherwise 'eliminate' — this threat before they do him bodily harm."*

Hisvia isn't empowered to negotiate further. If the group says no she simply skulks off into the night to find aid elsewhere. At least for a while. She returns 30 minutes later with a new (and final) offer as she could find no other takers. This time the offer is forty gold rilks.

If the scoundrels pass again, hint that they might want to at least watch from a nearby vantage point and see what happens. They can then get involved if they like or just watch the carnage. Without their help, some of the Bloody Blades fall and some escape. Boris the Lame does not survive, however, and his house begins to burn. Neighbors rush frantically with water to douse the fire but are prevented by the greedy mobs. If the group continues to stay out of the affair, three square blocks burn to the ground and several dozen locals perish in the flames.

- **Hisvia:** Use the Bandit profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves* with the Ratling racial traits. Hisvia keeps a pet white rat named Snow under her cloak. It runs across her shoulders at times, creating a strange and unsettling bulge. If she talks long enough, Snow eventually pops its head out looking for treats or a head scratch.

## MOB RULE

The mob consists of about 100 angry citizens of Lankhmar, angered by the penate and whipped up by Kuleg and a few other supporters planted in the crowd. They're split evenly between the front "courtyard" entrance and the back, where the guards have bolted the doors shut.

There's no one way to save Boris here — the scoundrels can use whatever means

works best for them. A few of the most likely are discussed below.

- **Fight:** There are six members of the Bloody Blades in Boris' house, including their leader, Karstan. (If Karstan was slain in **Grim Tidings**, use another mercenary of your own creation.) Most of the crowd stays out of an actual fight with trained warriors, but Kuleg manages to rally 20+2d20 into combat.
- **Sneak Boris Out:** Stealthy types might use Stealth and a distraction to get Boris out. This residence is relatively new to the Guild Master and doesn't have the customary secret doors or other exits yet. That leaves only the front or back door, windows, or roof. Kuleg has stationed four followers on the roofs of neighboring buildings to alert him should anyone attempt to use these exits, so these sentries must be taken out before the group can sneak their way out of the confrontation. If they're caught in the street, however, they'll be quickly surrounded.
- **Take out Kuleg:** The heroes could slip into the crowd and attempt to assassinate or disable Kuleg. If the crowd sees this happen, however, their frenzy breaks and 2d20 of them attack immediately. Kuleg isn't foolish enough to fall for a one-on-one fight or challenge. *"Your strength is in your blade. Mine is in the power of the people!"* he retorts.
- **Talk to the Crowd:** A group with a clever orator might be able to sway the mob. Salient points include preventing a gang war in Lankhmar, protecting the "weakest" of the offenders (the Beggars' Guild), or the consequences likely to occur when the overlord's troops or members of the Thieves' Guild seek retribution. Use the Social Conflict rules to determine the results of the plea. Kuleg argues from the cult's side, reminding the citizens that they've suffered too long under the corrupt and greedy guilds and now is their time for payback. Like the shark, they will "cut their teeth" on the weakest of their enemies — the isolated Boris — then move on to the larger threats.



Whatever the party chooses, take your time, think through the various consequences, and run with it!

✧ **Boris the Lame:** The Guild Master is terrified at being torn to pieces by the mob. He trusts the player characters more than the Bloody Blades unless given reason not to.

✧ **Kuleg:** The priest is eager but not suicidal. If he loses he retreats to fight another day. See page 30.

- **Bloody Blades (12):** Use the Bandit profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. Karstan is a Wild Card with Agility d8, Fighting d8, and the First Strike Edge. All are armed with short swords (Str+d6).

- **The Mob:** Use the Beggar profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. There are about 100 present, but only 20+2d20 take part in an armed fight.

## ✧ BORIS THE LAME

Boris is a heavy, older man with a club foot. He wears a simple brown robe to emphasize his poverty, though he's anything but.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8, Throwing d4

**Cha:** —; **Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 4;

**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Lame, Obese, Vengeful (Minor)

**Edges:** Luck, Rich

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4). Boris has about 1000 gold rilk on hand. The rest of his fortune is stashed around the city.

## AFTERMATH

If the group fails and Boris is taken by the crowd, he's torn to pieces and his house and several blocks around it burn. If they're successful, Boris pays them as promised. If the operation went particularly smoothly, or Boris feels indebted for

some reason, he also promises a one-time "favor" from the Beggars' Guild whenever his rescuers ask for it.

## BUT THAT'S NOT ALL

Whatever Boris' fate or the outcome of the night's activities, Hisvia returns to the group afterwards, playing with her pet rat as she contemplates how best to convey her message.

*"There is some...debate...as to who leads the Thieves' Guild at present. Those skulking traitors Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser have... upset the natural order. But for the moment, my mistress Skyllar runs the house. She has discovered certain information you may find useful. Or valuable. Or both.*

*These...disruptions...in Lankhmar are not without purpose. Someone seeks to create a new order...and rule it. That might not surprise you. What might is that they have help from an artifact of ancient Simorgya. It was smuggled into the city by ship a few days ago. Recover it for my mistress and you will be handsomely rewarded."*





# BORIS' HOUSE

Ground Floor

Living Room

Kitchen

Dining Room

Parlor

Master Bedroom

Guest Room

Servant Quarters

Storage

Cellar

Second Floor

Attic



## PART FOUR THE HEIST

The Thieves' Guild has learned of the penate through one of its spies in the Shark Cult. They also know it is ensconced in an altar on the lowest level of the Shark Cult's temple. The building is still under construction at the western end of the Street of the Gods, along the waterfront of the North Docks. Retrieve it, Hisvia promises, and the guild will pay 5,000 gold rilks *and* owe the group a favor that may be redeemed at some point in the future (a true prize!)

If Hisvia is asked about the "noble woman" who's been buying Simorgyan artifacts on the Street of the Gods, she acknowledges they've heard of her and even reveals that her name is "Lady Sirene." The guild knows nothing else, however, and she hasn't been seen since her first curious appearance. (Sirene's true identity and role in this tale are revealed in the next chapter.)

### PLANS & SCHEMES

Assuming the heroes are interested in the promised reward, they must then decide how they'll raid the Temple of the Shark God.

Some observation and a Streetwise roll turns up the following information:

- There are two levels to the temple. Anyone may visit the ground level by day. At night the doors are closed and admittance is only by special request.

- A set of locked double doors lead down to the lower level. A rotating shift of Ilthmar sell-swords and the senior priests have the keys (acolytes do not).
- There are six sell-swords, all from Ilthmar. Two of maintain security by day and four by night.
- The sell-swords don't know all the acolytes personally, so they are given a daily watch-word to gain entrance. The sell-swords are no fools — strange behavior or obvious thieves are just as likely to get one caught as a mistaken watch-word.
- There are three senior priests: Mako, Seala, and Kuleg.
- There are about 20 acolytes. Becoming an acolyte requires several weeks of deeds for the priests.
- The temple's construction is not entirely finished. A dozen different sculptors and masons continue to work on the upper level daily. They are watched over by a foreman who knows each man or woman by name, but he typically takes lunch for a half hour at a nearby tavern and might be careless about security during that time. The man *can* be bribed if approached and someone makes a successful Persuasion roll, but only for 1,000 gold rilks.





Armed with that information, let the players come up with their own plan to retrieve the penate. The most likely ideas are listed here to give you some guidance, but don't restrict the group to these ideas, encourage their creativity and let them play to their character's own unique strengths! Encourage them to think like the rogues they are — this is the "City of Thieves," after all!

## STEALTH

The group can simply try to sneak in. It's easiest in the daylight when only two of the sell-swords are present and a number of craftsmen, food vendors, and acolytes are coming and going.

A night raid is actually more dangerous as there are more sell-swords on duty and the priests are more likely to be in their rooms rather than the streets of Lankhmar.

## DISGUISE

If someone in the party has the ability to disguise themselves they might be able to walk through the ground level unmolested. The lower level requires a bit more guile since they must know the watch-word or look like one of the acolytes the sell-swords have come to know.

The rogues might also disguise themselves as the sculptors, masons, or their apprentices finalizing the ground level, but then must figure out how to enter the lower area.

## BLUFF

The scoundrels could try making up some plausible excuse to enter the grounds. An inspection from the Masons' Guild, protection money from the Extortionists' Guild, or even soldiers of the Overlord might work given a clever story and a few good Persuasion rolls.

Even then though, one of the sell-swords insists on accompanying any strangers who find a way below.

## BRIBES

Acolytes can be bribed for the watch-word (for 20 gold rilks and a Persuasion roll), but the sell-swords and priests are absolutely loyal to their cause (or masters).

## FRONTAL ASSAULT

A strong group might decide to battle their way in. This is a perfectly viable option. A combat-heavy party might be able to defeat the cult's limited numbers long enough to get the penate and escape.

The trouble, of course, is not just the priests and followers at the temple, but the dozens of followers who might be summoned to help should anyone escape. Should the rogues linger or take too long, 2d20 angry citizens are attracted to the commotion and enthusiastically respond to "a reward of 10 gold rilks to anyone who captures the thieves who robbed our sacred temple!"



## THE TEMPLE OF THE SHARK GOD

The Shark Cult was born in Ilthmar, a sleek and ferocious alternative to the Rat God worshiped by most of its citizens.

One of its most notable followers is Tonapax Valakos, now the Overlord of Ilthmar. He remains in close contact with the powerful and deadly priests of the cult, and it is this alliance that alerted him to the discovery of the penate and put the events of the adventure in motion.

Construction on the temple in Lankhmar began more than half a year earlier. It is now almost complete and its priests have begun to proselytize in earnest. The discovery of the Simorgyan penate was a happy coincidence.

The facade and interior walls are carved from crushed coral reshaped into a kind of dark gray concrete. The walls of the lower level are carved directly from Lankhmar's bedrock, here and there buttressed or divided by the coral mixture. A map of the temple's ground and lower levels is found on the next page.

### PRIESTS

Three priests run the church. All are actually sea sorcerers, the preferred profession of the cult. The senior priest is **Mako**, a quiet and cunning schemer who spends most of his time in the lower level researching the local sea life. He is an academic more than anything with a great curiosity for the sea and its great secrets.

**Kuleg** is the rabble-rouser of the group. The party should have encountered him in **A Most Savage Choir**, and once again as he led the mob against Guild Master Boris the Lame in **Feeding Frenzy**.

Kuleg is in his mid-thirties, eager, and aggressive. He believes the Shark God is a fast way to get the power he's looking for. If that changes, he'll jump at the next opportunity and never look back.

*Kuleg should not be present during the raid — save him for the final chapter of this adventure.*

**Seala**, a ghou, is the most dangerous of the priests. She truly believes what she

preaches. Raised on the streets of Ilthmar and ill-abused for her strange beauty, she is anxious for payback. The Way of Predation justifies her vengeful nature and turns it into a holy cause.

Below the priests are a coterie of 21 **acolytes**. About a third truly believe in the Way of Predation and another third use it to justify their own cruelty and bullying. The final third are simply looking for a home and the cult made them feel welcome. They aren't really believers in the ways of the Shark God but are loyal to the priests who gave them a home, particularly Kuleg.

About two hundred citizens of Lankhmar now consider themselves followers of the Shark Cult. They visit every seventh day for the free seafood feast, or occasionally to make small offerings for their personal prayers. Most are of little worth as laborers, warriors, or patrons. About 2d20 can be summoned within five minutes or so should the temple find itself in need, and another 100 arrive within 20 minutes.

## GROUND LEVEL

### 1) MAIN FLOOR

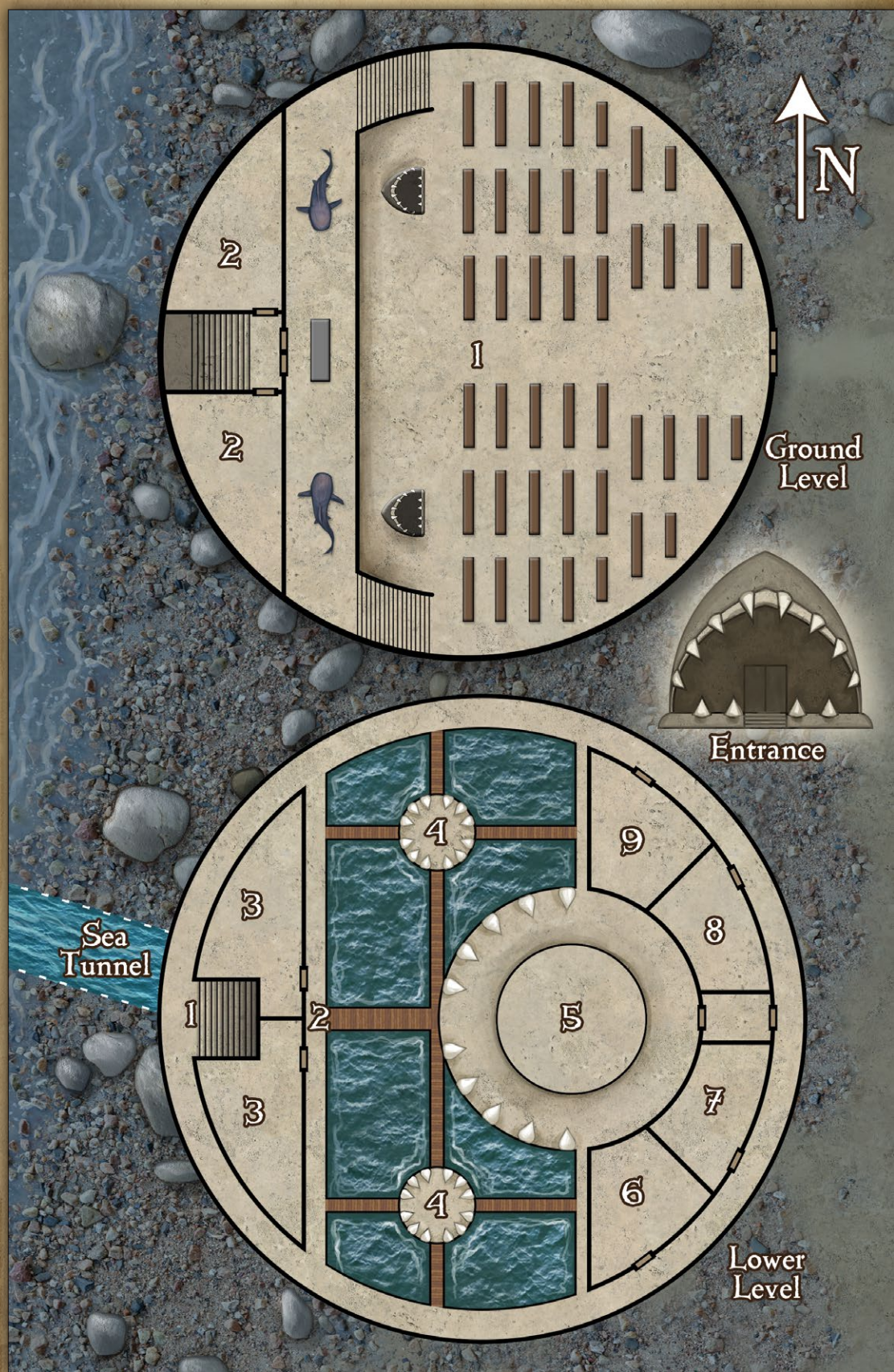
Every seventh day the cult throws a feast purchased from the local fishermen and farmers to convince the locals of their success. The meal is called the Shark's Bounty. Any and all are invited to have a plate while Kuleg speaks on the virtues of the cult and the Way of Predation.

The floor is open to the public until nightfall. After that, either the sell-swords or any acolytes who happen to be there will come to the door to listen to visitors, but have orders not to let anyone in after dark.

Requests to see a priest are typically declined — it's the acolytes job to bring the priests into it when they feel it's truly necessary. The usual message they give, however, is for the petitioner to help himself. That is the way of the shark, after all.

- **Acolytes (2d6):** Some of the acolytes are usually here cleaning or meeting until midnight or so. Then they retire to their rooms to sleep.







- **Sell-Swords:** Two of the sell-swords are on duty by day and four by night.

## 2) PREPARATION ROOMS

The priests and their servants use these rooms to prepare the weekly feast, meditate before a sermon, or store props for their various services.

They occasionally hold meetings with local merchants or followers in these rooms as well.

## 3) STAIRS DOWN

The double doors feature artistry of Lankhmar's master sculptors. Each features half of a massive shark devouring the world. The handles are pectoral fins, jutting out to cover a traditional handle beneath.

The lock is on the right-hand side, ensconced below the handle in a carving of rushing water. Picking it requires a Lockpicking roll at -4. Each attempt takes about a minute.

## LOWER LEVEL

Kuleg is rarely found here other than to sleep or scheme. He spends most of his day in the city, giving speeches to small crowds or seeking opportunities to push the Way of Predation (and his own prestige).

Mako is present about half the time. He likes to use his *environmental protection* spell to swim out through the sea cave and explore the Outer Sea around Lankhmar. So far he's found a number of old wrecks and a significant amount of treasure down there. He also spends a lot of time attracting and gathering sharks for the "aquarium" in area 4.

Seala is the acolyte's primary teacher and is almost always present by day. At night she slips out into the city to look for trouble. Her favorite ploy is to pose as a relatively wealthy lady, attract a couple of criminals, and slay them. She revels in blood and slaughter and the surprised looks on her victim's faces when they realize her true power.

## 1) SEA TUNNEL

A 10' diameter tunnel hewn from the earth runs 30 yards to the open sea. There are no bars or gateways on it — the priests use it to

## ACOLYTES

Twenty-one acolytes currently serve the cult in total.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Spellcasting d4, Stealth d4, Swimming d6, Taunt d6

**Cha:** —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Loyal, Vow (Major — Serve the Shark Cult)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sea Magic)

**Powers:** *Confusion, elemental manipulation, environmental protection.*

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4), blue robe with white collars, components.

## LANKHMAR SELL-SWORDS

When not on duty, the sell-swords are usually out gambling or drinking somewhere in Lankhmar.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Mean, Loyal

**Edges:** Block

**Gear:** Long sword (Str+d8), four throwing daggers (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d4), chain mail hauberk (+2).

draw sharks and other predators into the pools at area 2.

## 2) THE POOLS

The pools are cut roughly from the earth below and feature natural coral formations carefully harvested and transplanted by Mako. There are always sharks in here, drawn by the frequent sacrifices the priests throw into the pools. The priests can control them with their magic, but the acolytes have no such protection and are fair game should they slip into the deadly waters.



- **Sharks (2d6):** The toothy residents of the pools range from five to eight feet long. Use the **Shark, Maneater**, profile found on page 31.

### 3) ACOLYTE DORMITORIES

The cult's acolytes live in the dormitories. Males and females are housed separately (males on the south side, ladies to the north) though they intermingle otherwise.

Each dorm contains 16 beds, simple wooden chests carved with the image of the shark god, and a wooden table with eight chairs.

The dorms are not full at this point — there are nine males and seven females. Unless she was slain, one of the acolytes is Larissa, the thief encountered in **Fresh Fruit** on page 12.

### 5) TRAINING CIRCLE

Daily invocations, terrible rites, the reading of blood-filled passages, and most importantly, arcane training take place here.

The senior priests take turns teaching the acolytes or subjecting them to various trials designed to reinforce the Way of Predation, though Seala is the most frequent instructor. The acolytes have learned to dread her.

### THE ACOLYTE'S SCHEDULE

The acolytes rise an hour after sunup and breakfast together, taking turns buying food from the local markets with their supporters' donations. Meals are prepared and served in the Preparation Rooms on the upper level on simple ovens.

After breakfast, half the acolytes train while the other half attend to personal business, tend to followers if there happen to be any, use *elemental manipulation* to explore the Outer Sea, or perform upkeep and other manual labor for the priests.

Chores or training continue until dinner time. The acolytes are typically left to themselves afterwards, then switch roles the following day.

Seala's lessons are often sadistic and cruel even by the cult's standards, and several acolytes have not survived them!

**The Penate:** The stolen Simorgyan idol sits on a carved, wave-shaped pedestal at the center of the room. Two acolytes are assigned to watch over it, armed with spears and instructions to scream for help should anyone but the senior priests attempt to touch the magical totem.

There is a 75% chance Mako is here as well, studying it or attempting minor dweomers to learn more of its fantastic secrets. So far he has been able to cleanse his people from its curse, but that is a daily struggle made possible only by recitation of certain obscure Simorgyan enchantments.

### 6) KULEG'S ROOM

Kuleg's quarters are fairly spartan, though he has allowed himself a few fine things. A silver shark decanter, tray, and four cups sit on a table in his room, and he has a few nice rings and a bag of 2d20 gold rilks secreted inside his mattress.

Lockpicking the door to his room requires a minute per attempt and is made at -2.

Kuleg's statistics can be found on page 30. Remember that he should *not* be present during the raid so that he can lead the attack on the heroes in the final act.

### 7) SELL-SWORDS BARRACKS

The Ilthmarts sleep here, but otherwise spend time within. Each of the six men has a bed, footlocker, and numerous personal possessions. The place is smells terrible due to the lack of ventilation and the body odor the mercenaries work up in their heavy chain mail.

### 8) SEALA'S WARD

The priestess' room is a mess born of rage and frustration. Various outfits used for her nightly escapades, her victims' possessions, and presents from unfortunate suitors all lie sprawled across the floor, placed haphazardly on a set of shelves, or draped across her desk or bed.

A Notice roll and 10 minutes of searching nets 2d20 gold rilks worth of loot, or 3d20 with a raise.



Seala has the same door as Kuleg — Lockpicking it requires a minute and is made at -2.

### 9) MAKO'S LAIR

The most senior priest in residence keeps tidy quarters. Most of his possessions remain in Ilthmar, but he has collected a fair amount of treasure from the sea floor around Lankhmar using *environmental protection*. He keeps it in a locked trunk (-4 to Lockpicking, weight is about 200 pounds). The entire contents within are easily worth 400 gold rilks with

a little time and energy to find the right buyers. A quick handful of loot gathered in haste nets 3d20 gold rilks worth of gems, jewelry, statues, or old coins; and weighs half as much in pounds.

One of the rings in his chest is that of a carved turtle's eye. It adds +2 Armor to whoever wears it, but reduces Pace by 2 as well.

Lockpicking the door to Mako's room requires a minute per attempt and is made at -2.

## THE SIMORGYAN PENATE

A penate is a minor deity who lives in a totem of his or her likeness. As long as it is given proper respect and housed in an appropriate household shrine, it offers protection and well being to the home of its owner and even his neighbors (as they long as they don't intend him harm).

If a penate is stolen from the home, the thief is stricken with the *curse of ill will* that causes the thief and his companions a -2 modifier to *all* Trait rolls. Though it may take a while, clearly such a constant penalty eventually proves fatal.

Mako has learned how to hold the curse at bay by placing it in a specially-crafted shrine. No one else knows this, however, and since the shrine is extremely heavy (300 pounds), it's very unlikely the heroes will take it with them. The penate itself is about palm-size and weighs only a pound.

This particular penate once belonged to a high priest of Simorgya. It is far more powerful than most, and if not in Simorgya itself, incites the city it resides in to violence and mayhem.

When the rogues take possession of the penate, they gain its more personal curse as well. About ten minutes after they take it, all of them suffer the -2 action penalty to *everything* they do. The curse can only be lifted by returning the penate to Simorgya — a tale told in the final chapter of this adventure.





## PART FIVE: A NIGHT OF BLOOD & TEETH

The heroes now have the Simorgyan penate. As they travel back from the Temple of the Shark God to their apartments, hangout, or favorite tavern, have everyone make Notice rolls. Those who succeed feel like they're being watched. A raise pinpoints the source of the feeling — a small group of people lurk in the shadows a block or so away. If no one succeeds, the lurkers surprise the rogues for the first round of combat.

The mysterious group of thieves was hired to intercept the party, but perhaps not for the reasons they might think.

The heroes now realize the penate's curse of ill will. They find themselves clumsy, forgetful, and generally incompetent. From this point forward, *all* of their rolls are made at -2. This stacks with any penalties for Wounds and Fatigue as well.

- **Thugs (5):** Use the Bandit profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. The group is armed with light clubs (Str+d4) and led by a burly man named Rettig (who has the Brawny Edge).

### "WE DON'T KNOW NOTHIN"

When questioned after their inevitable beating, the thieves don't know anything about the penate, the curse, or the party's recent raid. They were hired by a mysterious woman. Most surprising of all is that she's right there, watching from a nearby alley!

### ILL MET IN LANKHMAR

As Rettig reveals who hired them, a woman in a long gray cloak and hood steps from the dark alleyway.

*"Hold, strangers. That was but a demonstration. I needed you to see that the object you stole tonight has come with a terrible price — the curse of ill will."*

*At that the woman drops her hood and reveals her face. She is incredibly beautiful, with hair the color of sunken gold, green eyes like phosphorescent coral, and pale alabaster skin.*

*"You may call me Sirene. My true name is unpronounceable...above the surface."*

Allow that to sink in for a moment.

*"Yes, I am one of the last inhabitants of ancient Simorgya."*

Sirene steps forward and tosses a bag of coins (20 gold rilk worth of ancient gold and silver) and waves for them to be gone. If the group objects to the thugs' exit, Sirene doesn't intervene. She paid her debt to Rettig's gang and no longer has any obligation to them.

*"I suppose you have many questions. I will be happy to answer them...on our voyage. Yes, I'm afraid you must head to the Outer Sea if you hope to rid yourself of the curse. And bring peace to your city. Otherwise it*





*will continue to grow and most certainly lead to your death."*

Assuming the group doesn't object, Sirene motions for them to follow her to the docks. Her hope is to get them on board a small sloop she's "purchased," the *ArLynn* right away, but if they need to (quickly) take care of business, refresh supplies, etc, in Lankhmar, she'll wait nearby then lead them to the ship.

Once the group is finally on the way to the ship, Sirene explains the situation further.

*"Simorgya sank many eons ago, but some of us live on. We have...adapted...to our new environment, but the cost was high.*

*That has little to do with the statue you stole tonight, however. It is called a 'penate,' and it is usually a minor charm that protects our homes. Each one contains a spirit, however, and since Simorgya sank, some of the spirits have grown...powerful.*

*This one is particularly potent. It resents being taken from Simorgya, likely by one of the shark priests in Ilthmar and transported here. Some of them transform*

*into sea creatures and prowl the ocean floor, you know.*

*It curses those around it, which is why your city burns. It also curses those who come into contact with it."*

*Sirene looks at you, ensuring you realize the nature of your curse. Satisfied, she continues.*

*"We must return it to Simorgya or both you and this city are doomed. Once there, I must purify it above water. Then I will return it to the city and we can part company. What do you say, humans?"*

Sirene implores them, and with a successful Persuasion roll even offers a reward of 100 gold rilks (200 with a raise). She has access to far more back in Simorgya, but she knows she only has to wait to reclaim the penate for all the trouble it causes.

It's also fine if the party decides *not* to go. The Thieves' Guild offered more, of course, but giving the penate to them *won't* remove the curse of ill will. In fact, several high-ranking members of the Thieves' Guild will also contract the curse and blame the party for their misfortune! Sirene then contacts Master



Thief Scylla with the same information she conveyed to the rogues. Scylla then threatens the heroes with accompanying Sirene to Simorgya or face her wrath.

Either way, the curse is very real and very permanent until the penate is returned to Simorgya. Another encounter or two with the *curse of ill will* in effect should convince them of the journey. When it does, Sirene finds them and makes the *ArLynn* ready once again.

## THE VOYAGE

If the party leaves more or less immediately after stealing the penate, they might hear shouts from the Temple of the Shark God. Kuleg has begun to gather up what remaining acolytes and guards he can to chase the thieves.

Within an hour, they question someone at the docks who saw the *ArLynn* leave port. An hour after that, Kuleg, his remaining sell-swords, and twelve acolytes board their galley, the *Tiger Shark*, and set off in pursuit.

If the party doesn't board the *ArLynn* that night, perhaps attempting to bargain with the Thieves' Guild, a similar chain of events occurs. The Shark Cult survivors prowl the streets for the thieves but don't manage to find them until the *ArLynn* departs and someone at the docks recognizes the party from Kuleg's description.

## A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT

The voyage to sunken Simorgya takes five days aboard the *ArLynn*. If none of the characters have Boating, Sirene instructs the group through any necessary maneuvers.

When not engaged in running the ship, or if one of the heroes is a competent captain, she slips overboard during the day and swims lazily beneath the hull in her other form, enjoying the fresh sea water on her skin and protecting against any errant sea creatures. She stays aboard the vessel by night to help with navigation and ensure the vessel heads directly to her home.

This is an excellent time for an Interlude. You might want to draw a card for Sirene as well. She has lived a violent life at the bottom of the Outer Sea, fending off the many terrible beasts that dwell there and

battling in an unfortunate and bloody civil war among her surviving people. The details aren't important, so feel free to tell whatever story you can imagine about living in a half-ruined city that occasionally and violently rises above the waves.

Finally, on the fifth day of travel, just as the sun sets on the distant horizon, the *ArLynn* arrives over drowned Simorgya. A violent storm has been building for hours and is just about to reach its zenith.

Read the following as you begin the climax to this adventure.

*A storm has been building for hours. Just as Sirene signals for you to drop sail the sky breaks open. Fierce rain slams down onto the ArLynn, filling the deck in ankle-deep cold water in minutes. Winds howl and waves toss the small vessel about like a toy.*

*Whatever Sirene must do to rid you of this penate, you hope it is quick!*

Ask the group what they'd like to do while they wait on Sirene. At least two individuals need to tie off the lowered sails but the rest are free to do as they please. It's too deep to drop anchor here and too dangerous with the storm anyway, so the ship spins and tosses, making movement or complex tasks difficult.

After a few minutes of preparation, Sirene asks for the penate and holds it before her. "*This will not take long,*" she barks over the maelstrom.

Read the following as Sirene begins her ritual.

*The Simorgyan holds the penate before her and begins to say a prayer in a strange, gargling language you've never heard before. Lightning crashes behind her — a coincidence, surely, and yet you can feel raw power in the air.*

*Waves slam into your vessel knocking some of you to your knees but still Sirene continues, yelling over the howl of the storm.*

*You look about anxiously, hoping the ArLynn, will hold, and notice a terrifying site. A shark fin erupts from a wall-like wave almost perpendicular to your railing! Another wave rises and you see three dark shapes writhing beneath the frothing surface! No, five! The water is literally teeming with sharks!*





*Another massive wave slams into you, rocking the ArLynn to port. When it falls heavily back into the water you gasp in horror as another vessel emerges suddenly from behind it—a blue galley with the figurehead of the Shark God. It slams directly into the side of the ArLynn and cracks it open like an oyster!*

The ArLynn cracks in the middle, rammed by the sudden and surprise attack of Kuleg's Tiger Shark! The two ships are now hopelessly entangled—neither can move and both are taking on water.

Somehow, Sirene manages to maintain her position at the back of her ship and continues to pray. Kuleg's acolytes and sell-swords attempt to swarm the shattered ArLynn and regain the penate.

The battleground is a fierce and rapidly changing surface as waves toss the two ships, masts splinter and crack, floorboards break, and sharks drawn by Kuleg frenzy the roiling surface looking for meat!

## THE CLEANSING RITUAL

Sirene needs ten rounds to complete the final part of the cleansing ritual. She can continue if interrupted (Shaken or Wounded), but if she is slain or rendered unconscious (Incapacitated) the ritual stops and must begin again.

The moment she starts, the *curse of ill will* is negated. It returns a day later if the penate is not within Simorgya by that time.

Sirene has complete cover from the Tiger Shark by the sloop's railings, so Kuleg sends his acolytes and sell-swords across. He remains on his galley to cast spells on them or the player characters and direct the action. The cultists' goal is simple—retrieve the penate at all costs. Killing everyone in their way is the easiest method to get it, but the moment they get the idol they attempt to flee.

(They *can't* escape, however, for Kuleg's reckless action has ruptured his galley as well! See page 28 to resolve the action if the cult manages to take the penate from Sirene.)



## A DARK AND ANGRY SEA

Each round, whoever has the *highest* Action Card also suffers an Event. Roll on the table below to determine what happens.

### d6 Event

1 **Collapse:** The floor gives way, trapping the hero's foot. He cannot move until he makes a Strength -2 roll as a free action at the beginning of his turn.

2 **Flying Rope:** A taut rope snaps and whips across one of the decks. The hero must make an Agility roll or take Fatigue from Bumps & Bruises

3 **Shark Attack:** Water rushes over the broken masts and railings — revealing a thrashing tiger shark within! The fish makes a biting attack before vanishing back into the angry sea.

4 **Swinging Boom:** A boom or other part of the ship snaps or swings at the character. He must make an Agility or Strength roll (his choice) at -2 or be thrown into the sea! See **Into the Drink**, below.

5-6 **Wave:** A massive wave slams into both vessels! *All* characters, friends and foes alike, must make a Strength or Agility roll (their choice) or be knocked into the water (see the **Into the Drink** sidebar.)

## CLEANSING THE PENATE

If Sirene is "slain," she utters the last few words with her dying breath, completes the ritual, and slides into the sea.

Otherwise, once the ritual is completed, Sirene looks to one of the player characters nearest her and says. *"These ships are sinking but do not despair. Hang on to something. Survive the night. Though I have no love of surface dwellers I will return with aid."* Then she hisses at any of the surviving Shark cultists and dives into the sea with the penate.

Whether Kuleg and the crew are alive or not, both the *ArLynn* and the *Tiger Shark* have indeed suffered irreparable damage and

## INTO THE DRINK

There are a dozen maneaters in the water, ranging from tiger sharks to hammerheads and other fish indigenous to the Outer Sea.

Each round a hero is in the water during the combat (not afterward), he must make a Swimming roll as usual (see *Savage Worlds*) and is attacked by d4 sharks. Each attempts a single bite then swims on. The statistics for Sharks, Maneaters, can be found on page 31.

begin to sink. The *ArLynn* goes first, about ten minutes after the ritual is complete, but drags the breached *Tiger Shark* with her to the watery depths.

In the aftermath, the survivors must cling to whatever detritus they can find — masts, sails, barrels, or the like. Any remaining cultists or their oarsmen fight for these precious life-savers. There are enough items to float on for all but three of the total survivors, so both parties must figure out how to settle this dire dilemma.

The party must survive a grueling ten hours at sea, staying afloat in the storm-tossed waves. Every half hour, each character must make a Swimming roll (see *Savage Worlds*). The first two hours, the roll is made at -2 for the storm. Then it abates and the penalty is negated. Anyone who has something to float on may add +2 to their Swimming roll.

If Kuleg is still alive, he can use the summoned sharks to attack the heroes, or he can keep the predators at bay. This is a powerful negotiating tool for the priest! If Kuleg is dead and the heroes don't have a way to control them, the sharks continue to attack throughout the long night. Roll a d4 attacks each hour, then roll between all possible targets to see who's bitten. Each victim takes 2d6 damage (no Fighting roll is necessary — this is like a Swarm attack).



## THE BLESSED SUN

When dawn breaks, a strange golden shape can be seen rising from beneath the party, surrounded by weird ray-like creatures (Simorgyans in their aquatic form!). A few moments later, the golden object burst forth from the surface — a ship painted the color of the sun! It is old but well-cared for, and though its sails and rigging have been beneath the waves for centuries they are somehow still pristine (protected by minor magics while in sunken Simorgya).

One of the weird ray-like creatures rises with the ship, standing at the prow, and transforms into Sirene.

*"This vessel belonged to my people long ago. You have done us a great favor and we Simorgyans always pay our debts."*

Sirene looks over the scattered survivors, then points to you.

*"The ship is yours. But do not return here. My people are voracious and vengeful hunters."*

*With a final nod, Sirene dives into the water, transforming into a large ray with jet-black skin even before she hits the water. Several of her people swim beneath you for a moment, considering. You see white flashing teeth and slashing tails...then they are gone...vanishing into the darkness of the Outer Sea to return to their long-ruined home.*

The vessel is unnamed — the heroes may call it what they like! It's not actually made of gold but an incredible sandalwood grown magically in the gardens of sunken Simorgya.

### SIRENE'S GOLDEN VESSEL

The ship has two-masts and is far lighter than anything created elsewhere in Nehwon. It's an incredibly rare and valuable prize that can be used to sail the savage seas to new adventures or sold for a handsome price to one of the nobles of Lankmar.

**Acc/TS:** 5/20, **Toughness:** 13 (2), **Crew:** 1+11, **Handling:** +2, **Cost:** 20,000.





# CHARACTERS & CREATURES

## ✧ KULEG THE SHARK PRIEST

Kuleg revels in the mischief of the Shark Cult and is entirely devoted to its cause because it justifies and embraces his cruel streak. He's sly and cunning when it comes to whipping up the crowd, goading them on over every provocation he can come up with.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d8, Taunt d8

**Cha:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5 or 6 (spear); **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Vow (Major—Serve the Shark Cult)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sea Magic), Charismatic, Rapid Recovery, Sorcerer, Strong Caster

**Powers:** *Beast friend* (aquatic animals), *blind*, *confusion*, *elemental manipulation*, *environmental protection*, *tempest*.

**Gear:** Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1), mottled blue robe, components.

He's a competent fighter but prefers to lure his foes into the water if possible. There he can *shape change* into a great white shark and securely tear his prey to shreds.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d8, Swimming d12, Taunt d6

**Cha:** —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Vow (Major—Serve the Shark Cult)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sea Magic), Level Headed, Rapid Recovery, Sorcerer, Strong Caster

**Powers:** *Beast friend* (aquatic animals), *blind*, *confusion*, *elemental manipulation*, *environmental protection*, *shape change* (preferred form is a great white shark), *tempest*.

**Gear:** Tooth-lined blessed short sword (Str+d6+4), mottled blue robe of the sea mottled blue robe of the sea (+2, ignores Armor Piercing, +2 Swimming), components.

## ✧ MAKO THE SHARK PRIEST

Mako is quiet and thoughtful, and utterly devoted to the Shark God. People are as minnows to his deity's insatiable appetite and Mako is honored to serve them up.

## ✧ SEALA THE SHARK PRIEST

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10, Swimming d10



**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Vow (Major — Serve the Shark Cult)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sea Magic), Very Attractive, Rapid Recovery, Sorcerer, Strong Caster

**Powers:** *Beast friend* (aquatic animals), *blind, bolt* (jets of water that cut like shark's teeth), *confusion, elemental manipulation, environmental protection, obscure, tempest.*

**Gear:** Blessed dagger (Str+d4+2), blessed mottled blue robe mottled blue robe of the sea (+2, ignores Armor Piercing, +2 Swimming), components.

**Racial Abilities:**

- **Living Skeleton:** +2 to Intimidation; -4 to Charisma (-2 if completely covered).
- **Transparent Flesh:** +2 Parry if wearing no armor or any covering more than a cloak.

## SHARK MANEATER

These statistics cover most medium-sized mankillers, such as tiger sharks and bulls.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d12, Swimming d10

**Pace:** —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.

## SHARK GREAT WHITE

These statistics cover great whites, 18 to 25 feet long. Larger specimens surely exist. Great whites often trail vessels at sea for days and wait for sailors to go into the water where they strike suddenly and without warning. They might also nudge ships when they see crewmen hanging over the railing, such as when making repairs.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d12, Swimming d10

**Pace:** —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Hardy:** Second Shaken does not cause a wound.

- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a great white due to its large size.

- **Size +4:** Great whites can grow up to 25' in length.

## LADY SIRENE

*...her skin grew more silvery still — scaly silvery — and her elfin face narrowed and her green eyes swam apart, while from her head and back and shoulders, and along the backs of her legs and her hands and arms, razor-sharp spines erected themselves in crests...*

— *The Mer She*

Long ago, the ancient nation of Simorgya sank beneath the sea and was considered lost by most residents of Nehwon. In truth, the residents of that sunken realm changed themselves to survive. The citizens of the sunken kingdom of Simorgya are now carnivorous, sea-dwelling beings sharing little in common with humanity. Once, the Simorgyans ruled a vast empire, and they have never forgotten that the surface dwellers are now residing in lands that were once claimed by Simorgya.

The residents of Simorgya have a hatred for most surface dwellers, in part because many men of Nehwon have attempted to raid sunken temples and treasure-houses belonging to the Simorgyans. In their natural sea-dwelling form, Simorgyans are fishlike humanoids with silvery-scaled skin, webbed hands and feet, and spiny crests along their limbs. Through ancient magic, Simorgyans can assume two other forms: that of a beautiful human being or a ferocious shark. Simorgyans guard their treasures jealously and typically brook no interference from surface dwellers.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6 or 7 (spear); **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Gear:** Simorgyans occasionally use weapons lost to the seas such as tridents or harpoons. Treated these weapons as spears (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.



- **Armor +1:** Simorgyans have tough, scaly skin.
- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Dependency (Salt Water):** Simorgyans must immerse in salt water at least one hour out of every 24 or suffer Fatigue each day until they perish.
- **Low Light Vision:** Simorgyans suffer no penalties from Dim or Dark lighting.
- **Shape Change:** Simorgyans can shape change into a beautiful human (gaining the Attractive Edge) or a shark. As a shark the Simorgyan retains her Smarts, Spirit, and linked skills but otherwise has the same characteristics as a medium maneater shark.
- **Sea Lords:** Simorgyans possess the *beast friend* and *summon beast* powers. Both powers only affect aquatic animals. The Simorgyan uses her Spirit for the arcane skill.
- **Weakness (Light):** Simorgyans disdain bright light preferring the darkness of the sea. When exposed bright light (daylight or brighter), the Simorgyan suffers a -2 to all Trait rolls.

### SIMORGYAN CLOAKER

Bizarre creatures native to Simorgya, these sinister manta-ray like beings guard the secret treasures of the sunken kingdom. It is unclear whether these slimy creatures are servants of the Simorgyans or perhaps simply another citizen of that vanished realm. What is known for certain is that they are inimical to natives of the surface world, engulfing and devouring any intruders into Simorgya.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

#### Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Armor +1:** Simorgyan cloakings have tough, rubbery skin.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Envelopment:** Simorgyan cloakings attack by enfolding a target in their huge, rubbery wings. These creatures gain a +2 bonus to attacks and damage rolls against a target they have entangled.

Simorgyan cloakings automatically inflict Bite damage upon an entangled target (no opposed roll is necessary).

- **Low Light Vision:** Simorgyan cloakings suffer no penalties from Dim or Dark lighting.

