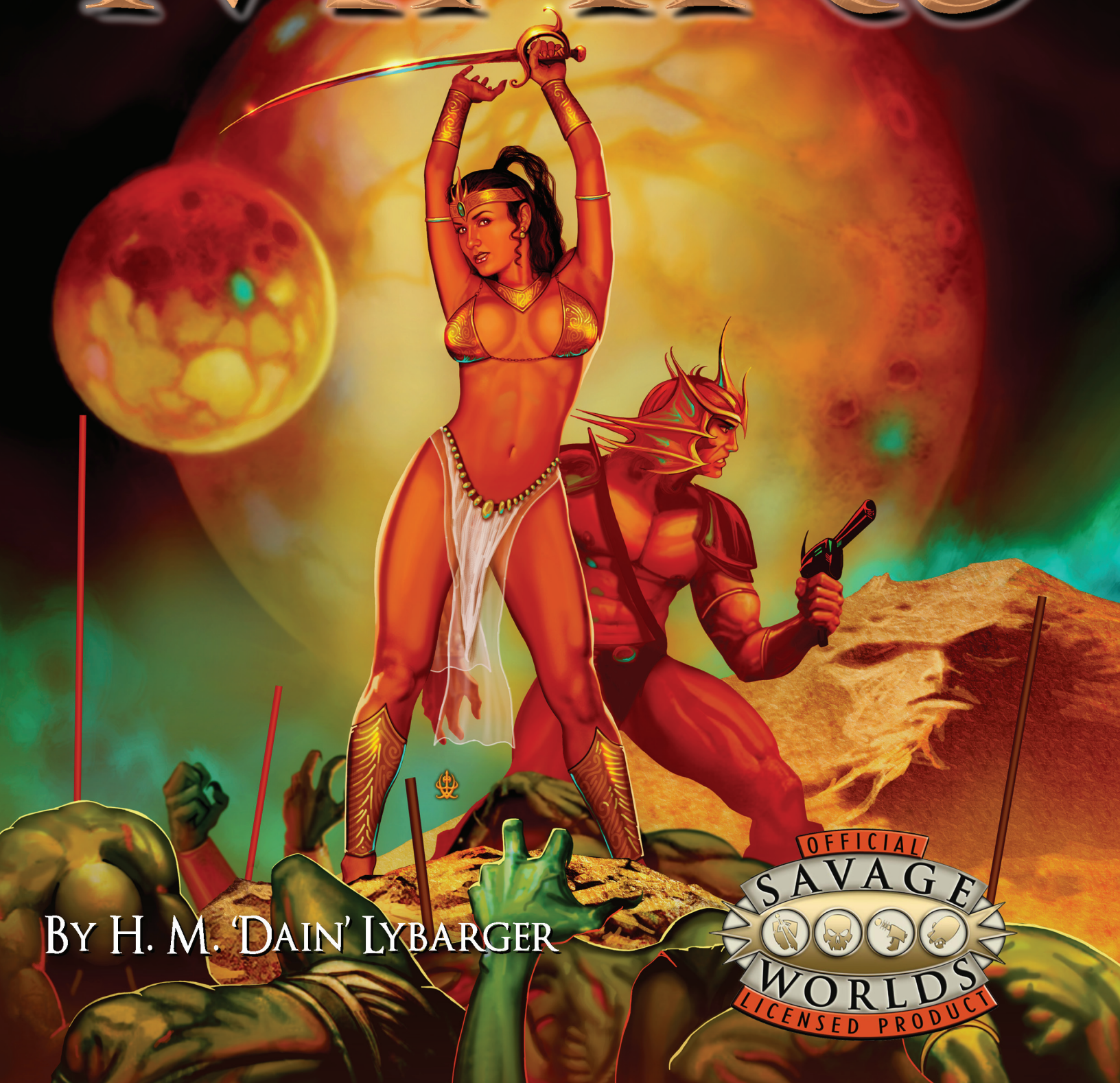


# FACE OF MARS



BY H. M. 'DAIN' LYBARGER





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**T**he garrulous old bargeman waited until his listeners were gathered on the deck, then he began to recount the ancient legend: "Once, before the canals were built, this was a great nation, a coastal nation, whose sea-ships fared far and wide across the world. It was ruled by mighty and wise leaders. The greatest of these Coast Lords was Noldes Bartarigan, called the 'Emperor Who Turned His Face Skyward', and the 'Lord Whose Voice Becomes the Sun'. He was entombed up there, on the plateau, in an ageless tomb, provisioned for all Eternity."

*He glanced around, and beckoned for his listeners to draw closer. "But the legends say that, just as Emperor Noldes was great in his power and wealth, like many great men, his appetites were equally vast. He sought far and wide across all of Mars, and partook of every pleasure imaginable. The finest foods, wines, and women were his to sample at his leisure – but also the finest arts and poetry, and the conversation of the wisest and wittiest courtiers."*

*"As he grew old on the throne, Emperor Noldes tired of pleasure. His appetites were unsated, yet he found no novelty anywhere, for he had experienced all. It was plain to him that final perfection had been attained. Thus he gathered his most valued and rarest goods together, and commanded his most noble and valued courtiers to attend him. He declared, by decree of his own Imperial will, that the magnificence of his court would live on beyond mortal death. His court itself would become eternal! He had a grand tomb built, fashioned in his own image, and when he breathed his last, he was interred there with all his goods -- and all his courtiers, sealed in with him, alive!" The bargeman cackled at his listener's shocked expressions.*

Like most legends, there is a core of truth to the tale – but more has been lost than has been retained, and the truth of Emperor Noldes Bartarigan's tomb is far stranger than the legend that is told!



# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCING THE PCS

This adventure is designed for a group of three to five characters. It works best if there is at least one Earthman in the group, but it will work with a group consisting of only native Martians.

**Part One:** The PCs can become involved in the adventure in one of two ways – as either passengers or crew aboard a canal trading-barge when it is hired by the scholar Angapan Ven to carry him to the enigmatic ancient monument known as the Face, or traveling in some other fashion in pursuit of Green Martians who hold a scholarly friend of theirs captive.

Arriving at the plateau, the PCs will encounter the Komali, a band of nomadic Red Martians, and discover that they and their ancestors have been looting the temples near the Face for generations. Two Komali tomb robbers, discovering Ven and the PCs interest in the monument, will offer to guide them up on the plateau. Naturally, they have their own intentions regarding the Face...

**Part Two:** Angapan Ven and the PCs, along with their guides, travel across the plateau, and establish a campsite among the temple pyramids near the Face. The PCs, exploring the area, will encounter not only the local fauna, but traps set by the ancient Coast Lords – and treachery by their native guides.

**Part Three:** The PCs attempt to solve the mystery of the Tomb's doorway, and most likely activate its guardian constructs! After a fierce battle, they will either defeat the constructs or retreat from the Face.

**Part Four:** Angapan Ven is not the only person on Mars interested in the secrets of Emperor Noldes' tomb. The Red King of the Green Men, Valish Borkan, desires the ancient wealth and weaponry he believes to be buried there. He has 'acquired' the services of two scholars, and dispatched one of his most capable Warlords, Tarvash Tajar, to raid the tomb. They will arrive, coincidentally, just after the PCs first attempt to enter the Tomb...

Caught between a Green Martian war party and the Guardian Menagerie of the Tomb, the PCs must outmaneuver both; and find a way to rescue Angapan Ven's friends from the vicious Tarvash Tajar.

**Part Five:** Fleeing from the Green Men, the PCs must think quickly, and solve the riddle of the Face's entrance. Within the monument, they will encounter further guardians, and the riches of the decadent Emperor Noldes.

**Part Six:** Trapped in the tomb by the besieging Green Martians, the PCs will discover an underground tunnel leading to the interior of the Five-Sided Mountain on the plateau, and possible escape. There, they will discover the truth behind the many mysteries of the Face of Mars!

If this is to be the first adventure for a group of characters, it should be easy to insert them into the plot. Characters of a mercenary bent might have hired onto a canal-trader's barge as guards – characters of a mercantile bent might be canal-traders themselves. Virtually any sort of character might be traveling between the Baltan Confederacy and the Kingdom of Callor Maralin on some personal errand. The PCs all find themselves, for their various reasons, aboard a canal barge transporting the Scholar Angapan Ven.

It is always best to connect the PCs directly with the adventure. If any of the PCs have an enemy, friend, or loved one who is a scholar or antiquarian, use that NPC rather than Angapan Ven, or instead of one of the scholars forced to accompany Tarvas Tajar. Likewise, if the PCs have had any direct dealings with the Green Men of Kor Va Krel, use their previous adversary instead of, or in addition to, Tarvas Tajar. A PC who is a Red Martian Nomad might be from the Komali tribe, or be a rival of theirs.

If you wish to include this adventure into an ongoing campaign, it is best to introduce its elements slowly, to create the illusion of a seamless setting. Introduce the PCs to the legend of Emperor Noldes as an element of 'background color', perhaps while they are traveling by barge between the nations of Baltan and Callor Maralin. Then, after some intervening time, allow the PCs to discover Tyi Shiasta's 'History of the Coast Lords' in some dusty library or desolate ruined city, and realize its potential...

For the remainder of the adventure, we will assume that the PCs have encountered the traveling scholar Angapan Ven aboard a canal barge on the Callor-Baltan Canal. If, instead, you choose to have the PCs begin in pursuit of the Green Men and their captive scholars, the timing of some of the encounters will be a bit different.

Angapan Ven is a scholar from the Academy at Avak Callor. He is of late middle age, and has a wiry build. His pate is bald, but he keeps the fringe of long grey hair growing across the back of his skull pulled back into a thick tail, bound with silver wire. He is unworldly, as one might expect from a cloistered scholar, and about as far as a Red Martian can be from being a 'man of action'. When he speaks, it is with a pedantic air – Angapan Ven has a tendency to lecture.

He has in his possession an old scroll – a bundle of machine printed pages, actually, carefully re-bound and re-cased by hand many times over the years. Written centuries ago by the historian Tyi Shiasta, the 'History of the Coast Lords' purports to translate some of the sigils and glyphs used to write the language of the Coast Lords. Angapan Ven has taken Tyi Shiasta's original work

# PART ONE: THE NOMAD ENCAMPMENT

and extended it, translating rubbings of some ancient inscriptions. He believes that the key to entering Emperor Noldes' tomb is contained in the ancient glyphs.

Engaging in conversation with the PCs, Angapan Ven will relate that he and another scholar, Kah Vukan, have been studying the Coast Lords language and culture for years. "We found the scroll together, in a ruined library, and began to piece together translations of inscriptions. Kah would travel to Coast Lord monuments or tombs, and make rubbings to send back to me. We've corresponded in that way for years. Kah Vukan traveled with his family to Marukal, a city that was once on the shores of a great sea, searching for more inscriptions, but I've lost touch with him since then."

PCs who are aware of local politics will know that Marukal is a city north of the Baltan Confederation, and that it was conquered by Valish Borkan two years ago, perhaps explaining why mail from Kah Vukan has not been received...

Angapan Ven will tell the PCs that he believes, based on his reading of Tyi Shiasta's 'History of the Coast Lords', that the key to the Tomb of Noldes is to draw the Coast Lord glyph for 'sun' -- a circle surrounded by wavy radial lines -- on some particular spot near the sealed doorway. Actually, this is incorrect, but Ven is on the right track.

He and Kah Vukan planned to make this journey together, to attempt to enter the Face and discover the secrets of Emperor Noldes. "But I haven't had a letter from him in two years, and I am not growing any younger -- so I decided to proceed with our work on my own."

Angapan Ven set out from the Academy without much thought for his own security; he is far too consumed with his quest for knowledge to consider the practical details of travel through dangerous lands. If any of the PCs comment on the hazards to him, he will realize that he may need help, and offer employment to the PCs.

## THE CALLOR-BALTAN CANAL

Even in these later days, there is brisk canal trade between the cities of the Baltan Confederacy and the Kingdom of Callor Maralin. The main canal between those nations flows through the Green Wastes, and both Green Martian tribes and Red Martian nomads -- and bandits -- raid the canal barges.

## CYDONIA

Crossing the highlands known to Earth astronomers as Cydonia, the canal runs through a deep cut in the

### ANGAPAN VEN

**Attributes:** Agility: d6 Smarts: d10 Spirit: d6  
**Strength:** d4 **Vigor:** d6

**Skills:** Fighting: d4 Guts: d6 Notice: d8 Persuasion: d6 Riding: d4 Climbing: d4 Knowledge (Ancient History): d12

**Charisma:** 0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:**

**Edges:**

**Gear:** cases of surveying equipment, binoculars, radium lantern, climbing gear, several scrolls and books (including 'History of the Coast Lords')

plateau, created at great cost in the long-ago age when the canals were first built. At one point, where the narrow, v-shaped gorge is at its deepest, there is a stairway cut into the stone. Although Martian architecture generally eschews the use of stairs in favor of ramps, in circumstances as extreme as this, steps are difficult but necessary. The stair runs in switchbacks, zig-zagging across the cliff face some eight hundred feet to the top of the crumbling gorge. Red Martian nomads use this stairway to reach the canal's edge, where they will occasionally trade with passing merchant barges. Of course, on other occasions, they attack unsuspecting merchants from vantage points high on the rock walls...

At the top of the stairs, the plateau stretches out north of the canal-cut. Halfway to the horizon, some hills can be seen -- several sharply pointed, and another, further away and to the right, that is a low, pale curve. Northeast of the canal-cut, the weathered cone of an ancient, extinct volcano can be seen against the sky.

Along the edge of the canal-cut are ranged the tents of a tribe of Red Martian Nomads called the Komali. Herds of small, semi-domesticated, goat-like thors graze on the sparse grasses of the plateau, under the watchful eyes of Komali youths. The tribe's pack and riding jalf are hobbled together nearby. The Komali, like some other Nomad tribes in the region, hold their personal names for use only within the family, clan, and tribe. They take epithet-names for use among strangers.

Most of the Komali wear cream- or sand-colored robes against the chill of the evening, and dress more lightly during the day. Red Martian nomads are known for wearing baroque jewelry, but the Komali are unusual in that much of their decorative work incorporates colorful ceramic tiles and mosaic bits.



## MEETING AT THE WATER'S EDGE

A few of the Komali have set up a small bazaar at the foot of the stair, hoping to trade with passing barges. Two colorful banners flap in the breeze, and three open-fronted tents face the water. Here, at the bottom of the eight-hundred-foot valley, the waters are shaded for most of the day, and the shadows are cool and inviting.

Consus Lui, the barge captain, will bring his vessel up to the Komali's makeshift dock. He plans on stopping here for two days, trading with the nomads.

The Komali merchant Generous Friend will be interested in trading with the PCs for radium capsules, well-made weapons, gold, or jewelry. In return he can offer rare animal pelts and hides, thorsh meat both dried and fresh – and he will hint at other rare goods to be had, which he has not brought down to the water because of their great value.

Generous Friend is a weathered old nomad, with glinting blue eyes that miss little. His leathery red skin is stretched taut over his bones, and he wraps himself in voluminous sand-colored robes. He is a sharp haggler, but will speak at length with possible customers, spinning tales about the plateau if asked. “The temples are ghost-haunted ruins, my friends – but the Face, that is even more dangerous! The Dreaming Emperor lies within it, and his spirit moves beneath the sands, slaying any who would disturb his sleep, or making them vanish, never to return! The eyes of the Face see all the world, reflected in the sky – and they spill forth curses like tears. I have seen it with my own eyes; men and thorsh struck dead by the Emperor's curse!”

## TRADE SECRETS

The other Komali swear by all the legends of Emperor Noldes the trader tells, and claim that it is far too dangerous to go upon the sands of the plateau. They but skirt its edges, fearfully, in order to reach the canal and its vital water and trade. At least, that is what they claim publicly. Privately, they have a brisk trade in pilfered artifacts and art objects...

Any PC with the Criminal professional Edge, or who is a Red Martian Nomad, or who succeeds at a Knowledge(Ancient History) roll will quickly realize that some of the Komali have been robbing the temples and lesser tombs of the plateau. Elements of their jewelry and décor are of ancient Coast Lord manufacture.

Angapan Ven will scoff at the Komali tales of haunted ruins and ancient curses. He will make no secret of his interest in the Face, and of his intent to travel to it and learn more about it. Even if the PCs do not show an interest in Generous Friend's 'special' wares, the scholar will.

Generous Friend will invite the scholar (and presumably the PCs) up to the encampment and to his tent. He will bring out several ceramic pots covered with Coast Lord glyphs, a set of gold armlets decorated with topazes, and a pair of strangely-formed brass-colored metal parts. When the parts are pressed together, the person holding them can hear faint, high-pitched atonal music. He also possesses a glow-globe which produces an actinic white light. It has no visible power source (but see the sidebar on Solar Energy on page xx). A success on a Knowledge(Ancient History) roll will identify the items as ancient, a raise



will identify them as of Coast Lord manufacture. Generous Friend will not part with any one of these items for less than a radium capsule.

The PCs, Angapan Ven, Captain Lui and his first officer will all be invited guests of the Komali at a feast that evening. Roast thorsh and an assortment of spicy vegetable dishes will be offered, as the nomad band gather around their campfires.

## NATIVE GUIDES

During dinner, two experienced tomb robbers of the Komali tribe, Open Smile and Two Knives, will make every effort to convince Angapan Ven that they will be good guides to the sites of interest on the plateau. In reality, they are much more interested in Ven's knowledge of how to enter the Tomb of Emperor Noldes...

Open Smile has a face that matches his epithet-name, and a shock of dark hair held back with tiny silver bangles. He wears Jewel Armor under the billowing cream-colored robes favored by the Komali.

Two Knives seems like a more forbidding and formidable individual. He bears the knives that give him his name, a matched pair of straight-bladed knives in jeweled scabbards, fastened hilt-downward to each upper arm. Beyond that, he wears only Jewel Armor and a red loin-cloth.

If any of the PCs are suspicious of the two Komali, have them roll Notice or Streetwise vs Persuasion against the two 'guides'. A success means that the PC's suspicions become certainties. Roll Notice vs Persuasion for the guides to determine if they are aware that the PC is on to them. If they are, that PC will become a particular target of the 'guides', once they are among the ruins.

Angapan Ven will agree to hire the two as guides, unless the PCs make an overwhelming argument against the idea: In which case, the two Komali will stealthily follow the group across the plateau, and ambush Angapan Ven when he is alone (probably while camped among the Pyramids, while the PCs explore).

## CROSSING THE PLATEAU

Angapan Ven wishes to set out for the Face at sunrise. He will load the PCs down with rope and climbing gear, and the cases of his surveying instruments.

Trekking to the Face will lead the PCs and their associates past other features of the plateau. The path taken by their Komali guides leads past a feature they call the Five-Sided Mountain. It is a natural conical stone outcrop, carved by the ancient Martians into a five-sided pyramid. Once its edges were crisp and sharp, now they are weathered and worn – except for a black ceramic block in the side facing the Face. The block is sixty feet high at its peak, and perfectly

### OPEN SMILE

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

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d6 Notice: d6 Shooting: d6  
Stealth: d6 Streetwise: d6 Intimidation: d6 Riding: d6  
Survival: d6 Knowledge(Ancient History): d8

**Charisma:** 0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 8 **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Cocky, Greedy

**Edges:** Explorer

**Gear:** Jewel armor, longslings, short sword

### TWO KNIVES

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

**Skills:** Fighting: d6 Guts: d6 Notice: d4 Shooting: d6  
Stealth: d6 Intimidation: d6 Riding: d6

**Charisma:** 0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Greedy

**Edges:** Two-Fisted, Riposte, Really Dirty Fighter

**Gear:** Jewel armor, longslings, two daggers

Treat these two as Henchmen, per the MARS rules, page 89. This gives them a certain amount of 'plot immunity', since they play a major part in the climax of the adventure, and should be kept alive (mostly) until then.

triangular. It slants backward, following the slope of the Mountain, and is unadorned except for a triangular spiral of silvery inlay. The inlay remains shiny and untarnished, untouched by time.

Open Smile and Two Knives do not know what the black triangle represents, but they do not believe it to be a door. "Perhaps it was made as a guidepost, to direct travelers to Emperor Noldes' final resting place." In actuality, it is an energy-transmitter, which keeps the defenses of the Tomb of Emperor Noldes functioning.

The Komali will lead the PCs toward a group of five sharply-pointed hills. As the party approaches, the PCs will realize that these are not hills, but immense buildings. The temple complex is still some five miles distant from the Face, but Angapan Ven will insist, although it is still early in the day, that he wishes to make camp here for the night.

# PART TWO: THE PYRAMID TEMPLES

Five pyramids, of different sizes, but each a perfect tetrahedron, are arrayed around a central plaza. The symmetry of triangular faces, four-sided-solids, and a pentagonal central plaza must have had some symbolic meaning for the Coast Lords, but that, like their language and culture, is lost to Martian history. For generations the Komali tribe have explored within these temples and looted them of valuables.

Angapan Ven (or any PC with a success on a Knowledge(Ancient History) roll) will discern that the five pyramids date from different time periods. At least three are older than the Face. The two which are newer may have been constructed over the ruins of previous temples – the lowest courses of their ceramic blocks are discolored and more heavily worn than the upper tiers. The plaza between the pyramids is pentagonal and paved with massive ceramic blocks in an intricate pattern of intersecting lines. The scholar will explain that he believes that the long straight seams between the rows of blocks align with various celestial events during the Martian year.

Angapan Ven will want to camp in the central plaza, so that he can set up a transit-like instrument and make measurements. He will insist on waiting until dawn the following morning to make his observations, in order to measure the sunrise over the Face. This will give the PCs most of a day to explore the pyramid complex. The scholar's gear includes several radium-powered lanterns of Calloran manufacture, each containing a chip of radium that can power its light for decades, if necessary. He will freely lend them to any PCs who wish to explore.

As he sets up his transit and measuring instruments, the scholar will explain the alignment of the Temple Pyramids with the Face. "On the longest day of the year, a person standing here, in the exact center of the plaza, can observe the sunrise beyond the profile of the Face. The sun will appear to rise out of the Mouth, as if the Emperor were speaking the sun into being. This gave rise in later eras to the legend that Emperor Noldes was so powerful that even the sun obeyed his every command, and would come into the sky if he but called for it." He will chuckle at the whimsical tale. "Actually, I believe that the symbolism is different. If my translations of the inscriptions Kah Vukan sent me are as accurate as I think they are, the connection between the sun and the Mouth represents the Emperor being nourished by the sun in some way..." If any of the PCs questions Angapan Ven further on that topic, he will wave them off. "My investigations are hardly complete, you know. Now run along, I have work to do..."

The PCs can, of course, enter any of the pyramids in any order they choose. For brevity's sake, the main features common to all the structures are listed only in

the description of the Funeral Pyramid, below. If the PCs take their Komali guides with them, the guides will willingly accompany the group, and fight by the PCs sides, if necessary. They will attempt to lure the PCs into exploring the Sea God's Pyramid if the PCs don't decide to do it for themselves. "Although it is widely known to be haunted by the dead, there may still be ancient riches within..."

## THE FUNERAL PYRAMID

The oldest pyramid has an open doorway, the door-blocks having been levered away years, if not centuries, ago. It is the largest structure in the group, five hundred feet high at its peak, and faced with ceramic blocks of a pale blue tint. A rectangular entrance door is flanked on either side by twenty foot tall marble figures, worn down by time to such an extent that it is not possible to determine if they are male or female. Within are colonnaded halls floored with marble and ceramic tiles, laid out in a triangular plan. Elaborate paintings have been fired onto the ceramic tile walls, which still retain some of their once-vibrant colors. Many have been defaced and entire sections have been stolen by generations of the Komali pot-hunters, but a few show scenes incomprehensible to modern Martians. What appear to be rolling blue sand dunes are depicted stretching to the horizon, dotted with buildings – or perhaps vehicles of some sort, though they display no wheels or treads... An Earthman will recognize these paintings as ocean scenes, and ships.

The ceilings inside the pyramid are blackened by soot, testament to the thousands of oil lamps carried here by Komali tomb robbers over the generations. Beneath the soot are the indications of intricate fretwork and designs, fired directly into the ceramic ceiling tiles.

This pyramid seems to have been intended as a funerary site. Beneath the pyramids are galleries carved into the rock of the plateau, accessible through low doorways that flank the three main halls. Each of the dozens of doorways leads to a separate sloping gallery, leading downward. Along these galleries are tomb-chambers of the ancient Coast Lord nobility. Many have been broken into and had their grave goods stolen. Others appear to have been emptied on purpose and with care, perhaps so that the chambers could be re-used by succeeding generations. Many of the galleries have Coast Lord glyphs and writings engraved into their walls, each glyph and sigil picked out in color. In two of the galleries, the remnants of ancient traps which triggered long ago can be seen; a section of floor that drops suddenly into a pit lined with narrow ceramic spikes, and a section of gallery wall slotted so that metal blades could swing out, slashing the unwary. The mechanism remains, but the blades have long since been scavenged.



Following the main hallway to the left or right from the entrance leads one around the entire triangular plan of the pyramid, and back to the entrance. One might initially have believed that there were no chambers within the upper section of the structure, and no way to access them – but the Komali tomb robbers were very thorough. On the inner wall of the hallway, around the corner to the right of the entrance, there is a badly damaged section of wall, where the fired-ceramic paintings have been removed completely, revealing a secret doorway. Beyond the doorway lies a spiral ramp, curling upward. There are signs that opulent fittings have been removed from the walls here, leaving only the enigmatic, colorful inscriptions of Coast Lord glyphs.

At the top of the spiral ramp is a marble slab door, which appears to slide up into a space within the ceiling. It is propped partially open by two broken segments of column looted from the hallways below. Beyond lies a circular chamber with a domed roof, tiled in deepest blue. Painted creatures are fired into the ceramic tiles – things that are beyond the comprehension of modern Martians. An Earthman will recognize the depiction of an undersea scene with schools of fish, seaweed, jellyfish, and other marine life of ancient Mars. In the center of the room is a stone sarcophagus, its cracked lid sitting askew. The sarcophagus is empty. Whatever king, priest, or dignitary once lay here is no more, and all the valuables with which he was entombed are long vanished.

## THE ROSE PYRAMID

The stone and ceramic blocks of this structure are rose-hued, and laid in alternate horizontal courses. The stone has weathered considerably, while the ceramic has endured. This gives the entire structure a fluted appearance. Internally, the Rose Pyramid is laid out nearly identically to the Funeral Pyramid, including the fact that it has been completely looted by generations of Komali. The singular difference is in the location of the secret door to the upper chamber. Here, it was concealed in the outer wall of the colonnaded hallway, just to the left of the main entrance. Beyond the secret door, a long straight tunnel runs upward at a steep angle for three hundred feet, then turns toward the center of the pyramid and levels out. The tunnel ends in a high-ceilinged triangular room, partially collapsed. Enormous stone blocks had been rigged as a deadfall trap for the unwary. Like most such traps, it worked well – once.

## THE DESOLATE PYRAMID

The pyramid closest to the Five-Sided Mountain has been stripped for generations. Even the marble statuary outside the main entrance have been removed, their stones harvested for other purposes. Now, feral

### GRUKAL

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

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Intimidation: d8  
Notice: d8 Stealth: d6 Tracking: d6

**Pace:** 10 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 7(2)

#### Special Abilities:

**Bite** Str+d4

**Armor** +2

**Pounce:** A grukal can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and +6 to its damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing this maneuver.

grukal lair within the pyramids depths. The grukal is essentially a Martian jackal – six-legged and scaly, but still a pack hunter with powerful jaws and a preference for operating at night. Six grukal have built a nest in one of the empty gallery-tombs below the main hallways. Their senses of smell are quite keen, and they will happily attack any intruder into the pyramid – they normally feed on whatever thorsh they can catch. Testament to this is the pile of gnawed thorsh bones in their tomb-lair.

The secret tomb within this pyramid is accessed by a vertical shaft that rises from the back of one of the gallery-tombs. Rusting metal brackets act as a ladder along one side of the shaft. Some appear to have torn loose over time. One of the brackets near the top is rusted nearly through. Allow a climber a Notice roll to spot the weak bracket before putting his or her full weight on it. If the weak rung is not avoided, it will give way. The PC should make an Agility roll to grab another bracket on the way down! Failure on this roll will result in a sixty foot fall to the bottom of the shaft, and 6d6 damage. Subsequent climbers will need to make an Agility roll to maneuver around the gap in the ladder, or fall themselves. At the top of the shaft, a triangular room with sloping walls contains an empty stone sarcophagus. There are curved metal loops on each wall, containing burned-out glow-globes similar to the one offered for sale by Generous Friend.

## THE RED TEMPLE PYRAMID

This pyramid is one of the newer, rebuilt pyramids. It is faced with dark red ceramic blocks, and is only 150' high at its peak. Its lower courses are of blackened ceramic, perhaps indicating that the previous temple on the site was destroyed by fire. The peak of the Red Temple is unfaced, and the stone beneath the ceramic has weathered badly. The entrance is a tall rectangu-



lar structure, half as high as the peak of the pyramid itself. Its floor plan is different from the others, consisting of only a short straight hallway, leading into a large tetrahedral room. Ramps along the walls of the room lead to three levels of balconies, twenty, forty, and sixty feet above floor level. The ramps can be climbed safely, but any attempt to run up their debris-littered surfaces will require an Agility roll each round. Failed rolls mean that the character stumbles, and falls prone on the ramp.

There are signs on the floor that there were once benches or seats in multiple rows, but they have long ago crumbled to dust. Any PCs looking upward at the balconies will notice what appear to be grey and white banners hanging in random fashions from their railings. Just as the PCs realize that they are in fact tattered spider-webs, grey-white man-sized spiders drop from the webs and attempt to seize the explorers! There is one lusker for every two PCs.

The luskers will initially attack separate targets, use their poison bite attacks, then web their paralyzed victims and climb with them back up to the balconies. The balconies are littered with the empty husks of small animals – the luskers usual diet, when they can't get tomb robbers.

The secret chamber of the Red Temple pyramid is reached from behind the railing of the topmost balcony. The concealed door is standing open, and behind it is a small chamber, barely big enough to hold a standing sarcophagus. The sarcophagus itself is ornately-engraved stone. Its lid is missing entirely. The High Priest who was once interred here must have believed that a small, obscure chamber would defeat the tomb robbers he knew would come to disturb his afterlife. He was, of course, wrong.

## THE SEA GOD'S PYRAMID

The fifth pyramid is obviously newer than the others, and built in a more baroque style. Its outer surfaces are only partially clad in dark green ceramic blocks. The rest is naked, dun-colored stonework, badly eroded. It dates from near the end of the Coast Lord civilization. As the oceans began to dry, the Coast Lords turned to splinter cults of their once unified religion, and in desperation began dark practices...

The doorway to this pyramid is open only a tiny crack – at least one raise on a Strength roll is required to pry it wide enough for a man to enter. Inside, a long hallway leads to the center of the pyramid, 100' long by 30' wide and 30' tall. Semi-circular 'half pillars' jut from the walls every 15', covered in intricate mosaics of tiny blue and green ceramic tiles. A Notice roll is required to sense the presence of an ancient trap. Failure on the roll indicates that the trap has Surprise. Small spinning blades launch from the top sections of the pillars, travelling in criss-cross patterns through the area

## LUSKER

**Attributes:** Agility: d10 **Smarts:** d4(A) **Spirit:** d6  
**Strength:** d10 **Vigor:** d6

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d6 Notice: d10 Shooting: d10 Stealth: d10

**Pace:** 4 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite** Str+d4

**Poison** (–4): The bite of the Lusker causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.

**Webbing:** Luskers can cast webs from their thorax that are the size of Small Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Anything in the web must be cut or broken free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at –4.

**Wall Walker:** Luskers can move on vertical or inverted surfaces at their full Pace

between four adjacent half-pillars! The trap's attack is rolled as Shooting d8, and it does 2d6 damage, ROF 3 (each target in the area faces three separate attacks).

At the end of the hallway, in the exact center of the pyramid's base, is a triangular room, 60' on a side. The walls rise straight up for 60', then angle inward matching the angle of the outer walls of the pyramid. This cavernous space was once a hall of worship for the Coast Lords. Across from the entrance, where the triangular room comes to a point, is a raised dais reached by ramps along either side wall. An ornate altar faced with gold filigree and Coast Lord glyphs sits at the front of the dais. Above it, filling that corner of the room, looms a statue unlike anything any living Martian has ever seen – a bulbous form, with saucer-like eyes, and eight tentacles flared out in decorative curves to either side of the central body. The statue is gold-leafed, and the enormous, staring eyes are of clear crystal, flecked with red.

Martians might theorize from this that the latter-day Coast Lords who built this place were in thrall to the Grey Men. An Earthman will realize that the statue is more likely to be representative of some sort of Martian octopus, long extinct.

There is a secret passage, beneath the altar. A Notice roll at –2 will reveal that the altar base slides aside, revealing a ramp.

The ramp beneath the altar is dark, and the walls are close, the air dank. Crusts of salt cover the exposed

stone. Unbeknownst to the PCs, although not to the Komali guides, there is a trap near the foot of the ramp. The entire floor of the passage is hinged, and will drop anyone stepping past its tipping point into a pit.

A Notice roll is required to spot the change in the floor, and an Agility roll at -2 is required to avoid falling in, due to the sloping surface of the ramp. The 20' fall will do 2d6+5 damage from the slender ceramic spikes sticking up from the bottom.

If the PCs have taken either Open Smile or Two Knives into the pyramid with them, this will be the ideal opportunity for the guide(s) to betray the PCs. They will hang back, carrying the expedition's gear, and indicating that the way forward is safe. This will allow the PCs every opportunity to spring the trap. If necessary, the Komali will shove any PC who looks like they are about to avoid the fall.

Once the PCs are in the pit, the Komali will use their superior position to bargain. "Give us the secret of entering the Face, and we will give you the rope!" Naturally, if the PCs tell the 'guides' Angapan's method for entering the Face, they will drop the rope to the PCs at the bottom of the pit – without attaching it to anything at the top first. Then they will run, before any vengeful PCs can climb out of the pit on their own!

## SECRET CHAMBER

PCs who have explored the looted pyramids will perhaps realize that there should be an above-ground tomb inside this temple as well. They are correct. A Notice roll will reveal a secret door just to the left of the statue, low to the ground. The door leads to a crawl-space; and a ramp leading upward into the pyramid's walls.

The ramp runs outside the central worship-room, angling more steeply upward as it wraps around each of the three walls. At the apex, the ramp ends in a ceramic door, covered with Coast Lord writing in diverse colors.

Any PC making a Notice roll will discover that the door is trapped. More than a slight pressure against the door will trigger spring-scythes which whip across the narrow hallway at ankle height above the floor. The trap's attack is rolled as Fighting: D10, and the blades do 3d6 damage.

The room inside is a long rectangular space, just big enough to contain the heavy ceramic sarcophagus of the High Priest of the Sea God. The sarcophagus is a figural design, its lid molded in relief so that it shows the High Priest in repose, dressed in the flowing blue and green robes and gold pectoral collar of his rank. The wavy-bladed gold daggers in each of his hands are studded with small rubies. Four light globes flicker

to life from gold stands in the four corners of the narrow space as the PCs enter, glinting off the ruby 'blood drops'.

It will take two raises on a Strength roll to slide the sarcophagus lid aside, and the odor released will be staggering. The High Priest was pickled in concentrated sea-brine before he was entombed here, but that was long ago... Now he exists as a dark layer of crusty salt on the bottom of the sarcophagus. His gold pectoral and daggers are exactly as represented on the lid, although the daggers are stained with real blood, not rubies.

A close examination of the daggers will show that they are heavy gold plate over a core of some much harder metal, and that they have compartments within the blade that can be filled with a toxin or venom, released through tiny slits in the tips. Originally, they were used with neurotoxins derived from sea life, but the PCs will certainly be able to come up with something...

## NEFARIOUS LOCALS

If the PCs leave Open Smile and Two Knives alone with Angapan Ven while they explore, the guides will knock the scholar unconscious and steal the scroll. They will then close the pyramid the PCs are exploring, and wedge the door. The PCs won't be aware of this until they return to the entrance and find it blocked! The wedged door-block can be forced by getting three raises on a Strength roll.

If the two tomb robbers achieve their ends and gain possession of the scroll or are verbally told how Angapan intends to enter the Face, they will head for the Face immediately. Because Angapan Ven doesn't actually have the correct method for entering the face, they will activate the guardians, and come to a bad end. Open Smile will be slain, and Two Knives will simply vanish (until reappearing in Part Five).

If the Komali fail in their plans, they will flee rather than face serious combat. The plateau is a dangerous place for two men on the run... They will still reappear in Part Five.

The PCs face a choice – either pursue their former guides now, or wait until dawn as Angapan Ven prefers.



# PART THREE: THE FACE AWAKENS!

## THE TOMB OF EMPEROR NOLDES

The tomb is fashioned in the form of the Emperor's title; a face looking upward: The Face of Cydonia! From ground level, it appears to be a neatly-formed hill, one-and-a-half miles from brow to chin, and slightly more than a mile wide. Its highest point is eight hundred feet above the surrounding plain. It is only from an elevated point of view, such as a flying ship, that the facial features become visible. The entire hill has been sculpted into a fine-featured Martian face, with a snubbed nose and slightly parted lips.

There is no indication of hair or ears; the Face appears to be wearing a helmet or head-dress that crosses the brow just above the eyes and flares out by the jaw on each side. The hill is sheathed with pale red ceramic blocks, each heavier than a man can lift. Over the millennia, grey-green lichens have gained a foothold in some of the seams, particularly near the right Eye. The trail of green growth resembles shed tears as it straggles across the Face's cheek. Examined in bright daylight, the Eyes flash bright blue from some angles, as light reflects off something deep within the sockets. The Mouth shows as a dark slash, but within it are paler spots that might represent teeth.

## THE ASSAULT ON THE FACE

The Face can be scaled with ropes and some effort.

The outer glaxis of the figure's headdress is relatively steep. All Climbing rolls here are at -2 due to the lack of effective handholds between the closely-set ceramic blocks, and at +2 due to the ropes and pitons provided by Angapan Ven, netting out to +0. Six rolls are necessary to clear the headdress. Failure on any Climbing rolls results in a slip, as the character bangs against the ceramic blocks and catches himself with the ropes. Characters that slip must make a Vigor roll to avoid taking 1 Fatigue from bumps and bruises. This Fatigue can lead to Exhaustion, but not Incapacitation.

Once the 'cheek' has been reached, the difficulty eases off. Walking across the surface of the Face is psychologically daunting due to its immense scale, but not physically taxing.

## TEARS OF THE EMPEROR

Examination of the Eyes reveals that they are large oval pits, two hundred and fifty feet across and approximately fifty feet deep. Their inner surfaces are covered with shiny blue crystal mosaics, tessellated in a hexagonal pattern. They gleam in the sunlight when it is overhead, and there are a myriad of internal reflections and refractions, mesmerizing in their complexity. Toward the inner corner of each Eye is a narrow groove on the curving wall of the pit, inscribing circles approximately twenty-five feet across. Unbeknownst to the casual observer, these mark the exit doors for part of the Face's Guardian Menagerie.



## THE MOUTH

Within the Mouth, which drops to a depth of eighty feet, the ceramic blocks are a much darker red in color, almost black. Some wind-borne sand has deposited here, drifted a few inches deep in the leeward end of the space. A single true-black surface six feet square is centered in the inlaid floor on the bottom of the Mouth, eternally shaded by the ceramic protrusions that represent the teeth. Directly in front of the square, beneath the carved upper lip, are what appear to be red-black ceramic doors. The doors have no visible hinges, knobs, or fittings, but grooves in the ceramic floor indicate that the two halves are designed to swing wide.

Rappelling down to the floor of the Mouth will require Climbing rolls from all the characters. The ropes and pitons used earlier to ascend the Face can be used here as well, providing +2 to all rolls. Since Angapan Ven has only a d4 Climbing roll, it might be necessary for the PCs to rig a rope chair and lower the Scholar, rather than letting him climb down...

If the 'guides' attempted to enter the Tomb at the end of Part Two, Open Smile's corpse is here, and no longer smiling – due to the fact that his head is entirely missing, cut off at the shoulders! His body and possessions, (including Ven's scroll if he stole it), are unharmed. Of Two Knives, there is no sign.

Angapan Ven will point out the black square in the middle of the inlay. "That must be the spot the stories speak of, where the sign must be inscribed!" The presence of Open Smile's body may be disheartening to the PCs – the guides must have tried what Angapan Ven is about to try, and look how well that turned out!

While the PCs and Angapan Ven are discussing the situation, the guardian constructs will activate!

## THE OUTER GUARDIANS

There are three constructs which guard the exterior of the Tomb. They activate when someone enters the Mouth, or tampers with the Tomb by attempting to force the door. Two are flying automata, metal-and-crystal 'creatures' which launch from silos concealed within the Face's eye sockets. They are referred to by the Komali as the 'Tears of the Emperor'. Their appearance is unlike any living Martian creature. They were fashioned in the time of the Coast Lords in the form of now-extinct sea life. They have lenticular bodies, made of clear blue crystal, surrounded by dozens of articulated brass tendrils which whip and coil through the air.

The 'Tears of the Emperor' start almost three-quarters of a mile away from the Mouth, and take approximately six minutes to arrive. They will immediately lash at living creatures with their tendrils, delivering repeated

## SOLAR ENERGY

The crystal mosaics within the Eyes are solar energy collectors. They absorb sunlight, and charge Solar Batteries beneath the Five-Sided Mountain. The black triangular 'antenna' set into the side of the Mountain transmits the collected energy to the Guardian Menagerie, enabling their mobility and intellect.

The power broadcast is received by the blue-glowing crystals on the ancient Coast Lord devices – but only within range of the transmitter. Any of the Guardian Menagerie or any of the solar weapons or devices found within the tomb complex will work only within a dozen miles of the Mountain. Beyond that, they become inert, as the PCs will no doubt discover.

A character with Weird Science might be able to modify one of the devices to run on radium capsules – but the wastage of capsules during the experimental process would be ruinously expensive...

Attempting to re-create the solar power collectors in the Eyes would be even more difficult. During the rule of the Coast Lords, solar power was common in their lands, but its use was supplanted by Radium after their fall. An ancient solar power collector would be a prize indeed, if such a thing could even be found.

electrical shocks. If reduced to a single Wound, the

'Tears of the Emperor' will fly back to their launch silos. The 'Tears' serve another purpose for the Face besides defense. They are also maintenance devices: When sandstorms fill the eye-pits with sand and block the solar collectors, the 'Tears' emerge and clear it away.

The third guardian is a gigantic brass-and-crystal construct in the form of an extinct Martian sea-creature. In appearance it is similar to both a serpent and a centipede; its body is broad and flat, covered in crystalline scales. Along its right and left sides, the brass-hinged scales are elongated and curved, forming rippling rows of 'legs' that propel the construct at great speed.

The serpent construct lurks beneath the plateau's sands, guarding the perimeter of the Face. Its multi-limbed nature allows it to scale the Face easily, so it will arrive at the Mouth within minutes of activation. The serpent's initial strategy is to attempt to trap intruders within the Mouth, preventing them from climbing out. It will then fire upon them with its Solar Eye Blasts. The construct will fight with its brass mandibles if engaged in melee. If reduced to a single Wound, the serpent construct will find the nearest loose sand and burrow in order to escape from com-



bat. So long as a construct of the Guardian Menagerie can return to its 'lair', the ancient machinery of the Tomb will repair its functions over time.

As soon as the ancient mechanisms of the Tomb detect the warmth of living creatures within the Mouth, the outer guardians will activate. They de-activate and return to their resting positions when the doors are opened.

Once the guardian constructs have acquired targets, they will continue to attack, even if the targets exit the Mouth. The three guardians will pursue fleeing targets until they are at least one mile away from the Face, then they will return to their inactive positions.

During any fighting, make certain to describe the effects of the PCs blows against the guardian constructs as knocking off gleaming scales, or sending crystal chips skittering across the Face. Those shiny crystals will be important to the plot later.

In all likelihood, the PCs will have to retreat from the Tomb at this point, pursued by the Guardian Constructs. They will likely head back to their camp at the Pyramids – the plaza there is surfaced with ceramic blocks, which may protect them from the burrowing guardian serpent.

### 'TEARS OF THE EMPEROR' GUARDIAN CONSTRUCTS

**Attributes:** Agility: d10 Smarts: d4 Spirit: d4  
**Strength:** d4 **Vigor:** d6

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Notice: d6 Stealth: d10

**Pace:** 12 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 4

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Construct** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease; No effect from Wound Modifiers)

**Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation

**Fear:** Anyone pursued by one of the 'Tears of the Emperor' must make a Guts roll.

**Flight:** Pace 12, Climb 4

**Tendrils:** 2d4, AP1. If a tendril attack causes a target to be Shaken or Wounded, the target must make a Vigor roll at -2, or suffer a level of Fatigue due to electrical shock. Multiple shocks may cause death.

### SEA SERPENT GUARDIAN CONSTRUCT

**Attributes:** Agility: d8 Smarts: d4 Spirit: d8  
**Strength:** d10 **Vigor:** d8

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d6 Notice: d8 Stealth: d10 Shooting: d10

**Pace:** 10 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 15(3)

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Solar Eye Blast:** 2d8+2, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP 3

**Mandibles:** Str+d6

**Armor** +3

**Construct** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease; No effect from Wound Modifiers)

**Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation

**Hardy:** If the Guardian Construct is Shaken, further Shaken results have no effect – they do not cause a Wound

**Fear** -2: Anyone pursued by this Guardian Construct must make a Guts roll at -2.

**Large:** Attacks against large targets are made at +2

**Size** +5: over 30' long

**Burrowing:** 8

**Fleet Footed:** Rolls a d10 Running die

# PART FOUR: THE LONG REACH OF VALISH BORKAN

Valish Borkan, the 'Slave King' of the Green Martians, is interested in the mysterious Face. He has heard the legends of Emperor Noldes; moreover, he has heard the legends of the great power and science possessed by the ancient Coast Lords.

A scavenger party sent by Borkan has penetrated the plateau, and is intent upon gaining entry to the mysterious Face. Tarvas Tajar, their leader, is tasked with finding the wealth and weapons of the ancient Emperor. He has two Red Martian scholars with him. Kah Vukan and his daughter Rillia are essentially slaves. They were captured and sent as tribute to Valish Borkan by the Green Martian warlord who conquered Marukal.

If the PCs are fleeing the guardian constructs, they will most likely attempt to return to their camp near the Temple Pyramids. As they approach, they will see that the campsite is in new hands – a band of Green Men twenty strong! They will also observe two Red Martians, a man and a young woman, held captive by the Green Men.

Angapan Ven, observing through his binoculars, will recognize his old friend Kah Vukan, and Kah's daughter Rillia. Once he is over his initial shock and distress, he will begin to theorize that the Green Men are forcing Kah Vukan to lead them to the riches of the Face. Politically astute PCs might then theorize that Valish Borkan is behind the Green warband. Angapan Ven will beg the PCs to rescue his friends from the Green Men.

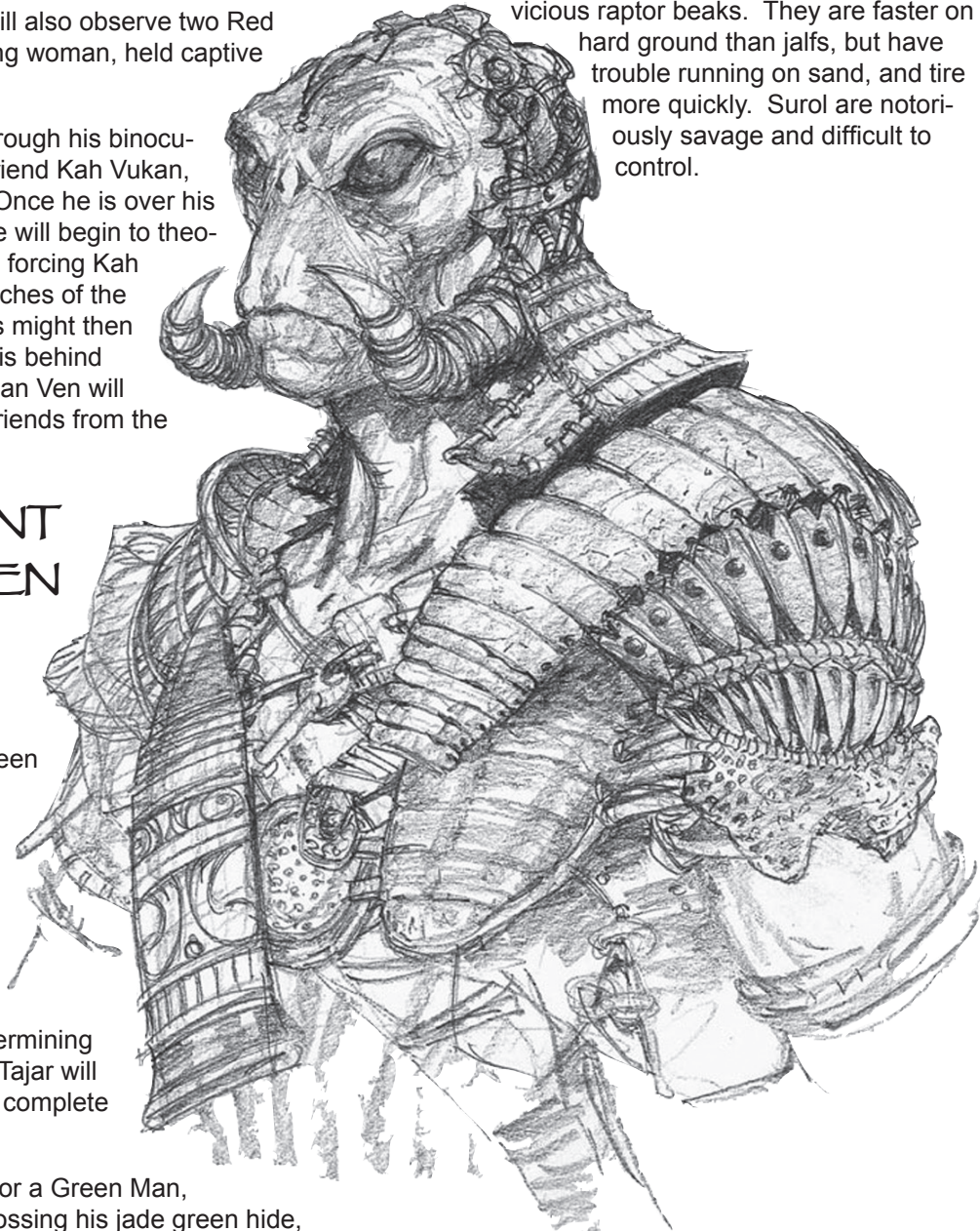
## ENCAMPMENT OF THE GREEN MEN

Tarvas Tajar, the captive scholars Kah Vukan and Rillia Vukan, and twenty Green Martian warriors mounted on vicious surol steeds, will set up camp in the plaza between the Temple Pyramids. Kah Vukan will, like Angapan Ven before him, need to make some observations of the Face at sunrise before finally determining how to make entry. Tarvas Tajar will allow this – after all, he has complete control of the situation.

Tarvas Tajar is large, even for a Green Man, and has grey scars criss-crossing his jade green hide,

relics of his many battles. His right tusk was broken off years ago, and has been capped with a hammered gold finial in the form of a dagger-blade. He carries a battleaxe decorated with tufts of hair cut from the men and beasts that he has slain.

Treat the twenty Green Martian warriors as Extras or Mooks, or a combination of both, depending upon the number and combat ability of the PCs. Use the stats for the Green Martian Tribal Warrior from p. 171 of the MARS book for the Extras, modified by the rules on p. 89 for the Mooks. The goal is to make the forces of Valish Borkan formidable enough that a straight-up fight will not be an option for the PCs. They are mounted on surol. Larger than the more commonly-ridden jalfs, surol are four-legged beasts of avian descent. They have three-clawed feet and vicious raptor beaks. They are faster on hard ground than jalfs, but have trouble running on sand, and tire more quickly. Surol are notoriously savage and difficult to control.





## TARVAS TAJAR

**Attributes:** **Agility:** d8 **Smarts:** d8 **Spirit:** d6  
**Strength:** d12 **Vigor:** d12

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Notice: d8  
Intimidation: d8 Stealth: d8 Survival: d8  
Climbing: d6

**Charisma:** -4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 10

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Alertness

**Edges:** No Mercy

**Gear:** Battleaxe Str+d8, keys to his slaves' manacles

## KAH VUKAN

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

**Skills:** Fighting: d6 Guts: d8 Notice: d6 Persuasion: d6  
Riding: d8 Climbing: d4 Knowledge(Ancient History): d12

**Charisma:** 0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:**

**Edges:** Connections

**Gear:** manacles fastened around his wrists

## SUROL

**Attributes:** **Agility:** d8 **Smarts:** d6(A) **Spirit:** d6  
**Strength:** d12+2 **Vigor:** d10

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Notice: d8 Intimidation: d12  
Stealth: d6

**Pace:** 8 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 11

**Beak:** Str+d6

**Size** +3: Surol weigh between 800 & 1000 pounds.

**Fleet Footed:** Surol roll a d8 Running die.

**Ornery:** Surol are contrary beasts. Characters riding a surol take a -1 penalty to their Riding rolls.

## RILLIA VUKAN

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

**Skills:** Fighting: d4 Guts: d6 Notice: d6  
Shooting: d4 Stealth: d6 Knowledge(Ancient History): d6

**Charisma:** +4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 4 **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:**

**Edges:** Very Attractive

**Gear:** manacles fastened around her wrists

## ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO

If the PCs enter the adventure in pursuit of the Green Men, the timing of some of the above events will have to be altered. Coming upon the plateau, they will see the Green Men camped in the plaza surrounded by the Temple Pyramids. They will also spot the Red Martian Nomad encampment by the canal cut. It is likely that they will make contact with the nomads, in search of assistance in rescuing the captives. Open Smile and Two Knives will certainly volunteer to 'assist' them.

In this version of the adventure, it is Kah Vukan who has the scroll – and the Komali tomb robbers will steal it during the rescue, if possible.

## RESCUING THE CAPTIVES

If the PCs approach with caution, they can use Angapan Ven's binoculars to observe the Green Men from a distance.

The Green Men built a fire as soon as the campsite was selected, and are roasting meat. After their meal,

they will pitch tents in a rough circle around the fire, and tether their surol for the night between the Rose Pyramid and the Red Temple.

The largest tent belongs to Tarvas Tajar – his thresh skull banner-pole holds up the awning in front of his tent. Both Red Martian prisoners are chained within that tent, mere feet from where Tarvas Tajar sleeps.

Six Green Men sentries will stand guard during the night. PCs that have spent time exploring the pyramids will have an advantage in attempting to sneak into the Green Men's camp. Their knowledge of the territory can be used against their foes. Attempting to lure sentries into the Red Temple and into the clutches of the luskers, or stampeding the Green Men's surol as a diversion, will certainly improve the PCs chances. Ultimately, though, it comes down to getting into Tarvas Tajar's tent and either using Lockpicking to release the captive's manacles, or Stealth to steal the keys from Tarvas Tajar himself. Unfortunately, Tarvas Tajar is a light sleeper...

## FLEEING THE GREEN MEN

The PCs will need to sneak out of the Green Men's camp with the freed prisoners. In the unlikely event that they manage to get away without rousing the camp, as soon as it is safe for them to whisper both Rillia and Kah Vukan will mention that Tarvas Tajar rarely sleeps through the night – and as soon as he wakes, he will notice their absence!

Thus, the PCs will most likely end up on the run from angry Green Men, crossing the plateau as the sun comes up. Tarvas Tajar will rouse his troops and lead them in pursuit of the fugitives mounted on surol (unless the PCs thought to scatter the beasts as part of their escape plan). If the PCs stole surol as part of their escape plan, they will still have to contend with the ornery animals' dispositions as they flee.

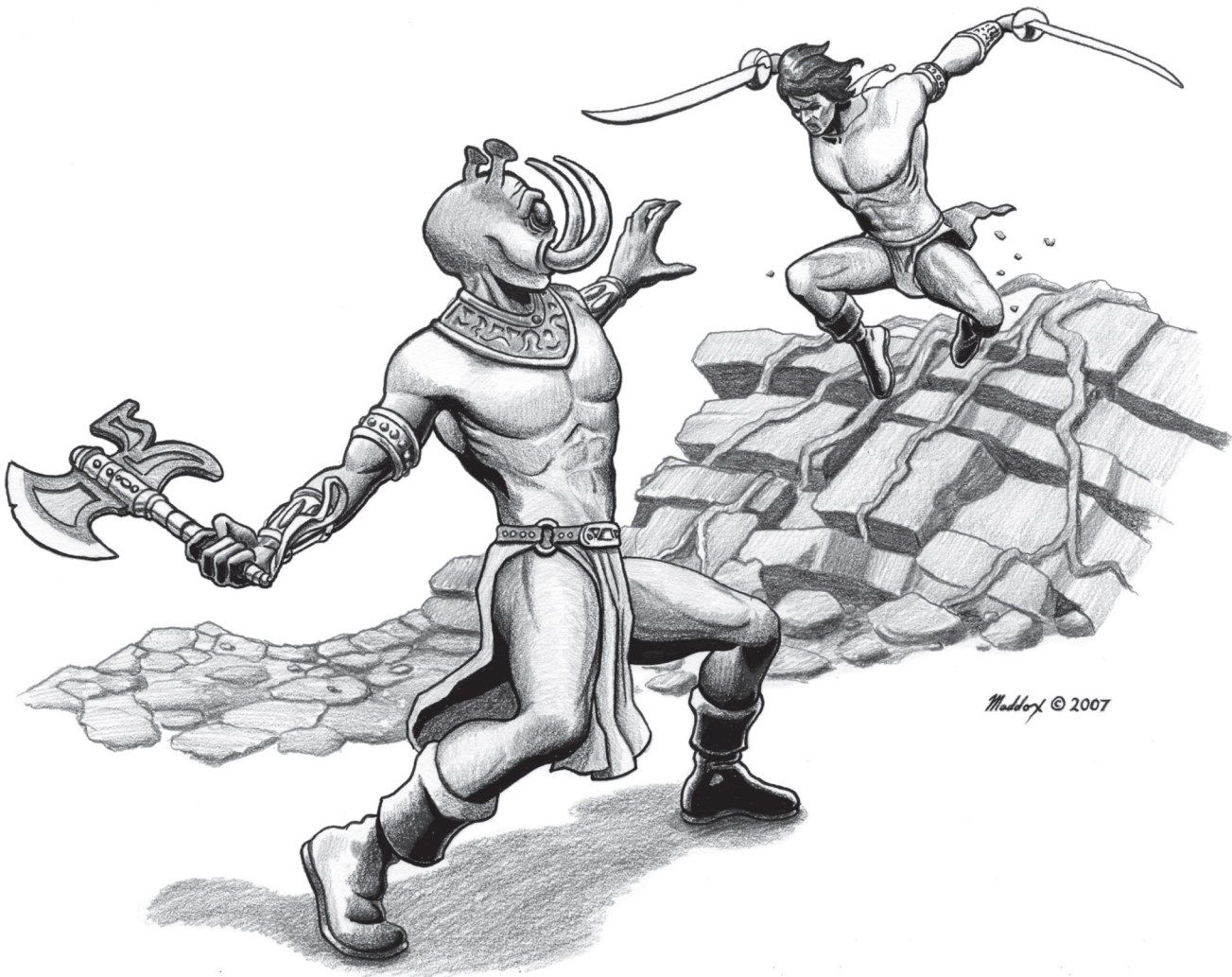
The Green Men will attempt to keep their quarry from

escaping by reaching the nomad camp or the canal cut – by herding them toward the Face! That's where Tajar wants his captives to wind up anyway, after all.

## ROMANCE IS IN THE AIR

If any of the PCs seem to be in need of romantic entanglements, Rillia Vukan could be a potential partner. Play up her acerbic speech and general scorn for her rescuer – after all, romances in this sort of fiction always have a rocky start! Alternatively, or in addition, a female PC might become interested in the urbane and witty widower Kah Vukan; and Kah is certain to be charmed by a vigorous and dynamic woman...

Regardless of the possibilities of romance, during any future combat scenes attach each of the NPCs as Allies to whichever of the PCs has shown the most interest in their welfare.





# PART FIVE: THE KEY TO THE TOMB

At this point, the PCs will realize that they are between the proverbial rock and hard place. They have at least two options. One is to intentionally activate the Guardian Constructs, in the hopes of then getting them to attack the Green Men. The other is to figure out the correct method of entering the Tomb.

If none of the PCs manage to put together the clues they have heard and seen, allow the collaborative efforts of Angapan Ven and Kah Vukan to solve the problem at the last second. "Aha! It's so obvious – I should have thought of it before! Not the symbol for sunlight – actual sunlight must shine on the black square!"

Now it's up to the PCs to make that happen: Possibilities include using a crystal shard chipped from one of the Guardian Constructs in an earlier battle, or the polished surfaces of part of Open Smile's jewel armor. There is no direct line of sight between the lips of the Mouth and the black square under the overhanging teeth. At least two people with reflectors are required to bounce a ray of sunlight onto the shadowed target. If the Green Men are close and time is critical, call for Agility rolls on the part of the PCs using the reflectors.

Ancient machinery will detect the light, and release the locks on the Tomb's doors. Their weight will cause them to swing slowly open, following the grooves in the pavement...

## THE BREATH OF THE EMPEROR

Stale air, locked inside for millennia, will sigh outward. The entry corridor of the Tomb is in darkness, but as soon as a living person has penetrated thirty feet into the gloom, faint bands of yellow light flicker into being in the corridor's ceiling. Translucent yellow strips run across the ceilings of all the passages within the Face. They are part of the ancient solar mechanism, and activate when the body heat of a living creature is nearby. Inert for millennia, they take a few minutes to reach their full brightness.

That brightness reveals a majestically-decorated passage. The corridor is 20' wide, and 20' high, its floor tiled in red marble, its walls decorated in elaborate ceramic mosaics depicting the life and times of Noldes Batarigan. As with the scenes painted on the walls of the Temple Pyramids, much of this will be incomprehensible to native Martians who have no experience of oceans or ships. The modern Martians will see scenes that they interpret as rolling blue sand dunes that extend to the horizon, dotted with tiny buildings or vehicles that bear no resemblance to anything they have ever seen. Still, it should be possible for anyone (with a successful Notice roll) to pick out the heroically-scaled male figure, wearing a smooth-domed head-dress, that recurs in scene after scene. The figure's features are strikingly like those of the Face.

The PCs can easily draw the doors closed from this side, delaying the Green Martians, or forcing them to face the Guardian Constructs.

## THE SKY DOME

The corridor slopes downward at a shallow angle, and as the PCs travel along it, faint music will fill the air – music unlike any they have ever heard, eerie and atonal. The corridor goes nearly half a mile to a circular, domed chamber. The entire ceiling of this chamber glows with a pale blue light. The walls are pale marble, deeply incised with bas-reliefs showing scenes of the pomp and circumstance of the Emperor's court at its height.

Two mighty four-armed swordsmen stand in the domed chamber, blocking the East and West Gallery passages. They are crafted of brass and glowing blue crystal, very reminiscent of the guardian constructs encountered outside the Tomb. They are both twice as tall as a Red Martian, and armed with heavily-engraved swords with wickedly curved blades. Although the figures are of human (if heroic) proportion, the heads are distinctly non-human – the figure to the west has the face of one of the White Apes, the figure to the east bears the visage of a Green Man.

Visitors to Noldes' tomb are permitted into the domed chamber, but no further. Any attempt to walk past one of these warrior constructs will cause it to activate and attack!

### GUARDIAN WARRIOR CONSTRUCTS

**Attributes:** Agility: d6 Smarts: d4 Spirit: d6  
**Strength:** d12+4 **Vigor:** d12

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Notice: d6

**Pace:** 4 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 14(2)

**Gear:** Four curved swords Str+d8

#### Special Abilities:

**Armor** +2

**Construct** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease)

**Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation

**Tireless:** Never suffers Fatigue

**Large:** Attacks against large targets are made at +2

**Size** +4: 12 feet tall

**Four Arms:** The construct has the Ambidextrous, Two Fisted, Florentine, and Wall of Steel Edges

## THE EAST GALLERY

Exiting the east side of the dome is a broad ramp, sloping downward and curving gently to the north. It is faced with more bas-reliefs, depicting scenes of sexual debauchery and excess. There is an ornate doorway on the north side of the ramp, halfway down. This leads to the Emperor's Seraglio. Tables and chests along both walls of the gallery contain the remnants of rich foods and wines which were given as offerings to the Emperor at his funeral.

## THE WEST GALLERY

Exiting the west side of the dome is an equally broad ramp, sloping downward and curving toward the south. The walls here are bas-reliefs showing scenes of a more funeral nature. They depict the grand procession of the mourners and the grieving courtiers as they approached the great Tomb. There is a screened passage on the south wall of the ramp, part of the way down. Tables at intervals down the length of the gallery contain statuary and art objects of inestimable value. Those of ivory and rare woods have become desiccated and fragile, but the stone and semi-precious gems have fared better.

## THE SERAGLIO

The doorway in the East Gallery leads to a large rectangular room, opulently furnished with baroque tables, couches, and fountains. The furnishings have decayed, and will fall to dust at a touch. The fountains are dry.

A dozen elaborately-coifed and skirted dancing girls stand frozen in graceful poses around the room. The blue crystals that stud their brass-colored bodies pulse faintly with light. They are wearing gold tiaras and arm bands, studded with diamonds, sapphires, and emeralds, as befitting the pleasure troupe of an Emperor.

Trapped here for eternity, they have gone mad. They will attack any living creature that enters the room, and will pursue any who leave until they are destroyed!

### GUARDIAN DANCER CONSTRUCTS

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

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Notice: d6 Throwing: d8

**Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 10(2)

**Gear:** Throwing Daggers Str+d4, Range: 2/6/12, ROF: 1

#### Special Abilities:

**Armor** +2

**Construct** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease)

**Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation

**Tireless:** Never suffers Fatigue





## THE HIDDEN TUNNEL

At the halfway point down the curving West Gallery ramp, the PCs will see a section of the wall which is offset toward the center of the ramp, screening a dark opening from view. The structure is built to allow a large blue crystal cylinder running across the ceiling to pass beyond the wall. The other end of the cylinder appears to lie beneath the domed chamber. There is a tunnel there, leading straight out into darkness, lit only by the faint glimmer of the pulsing blue cylinder in its ceiling. The music that fills the rest of the tomb as the PCs travel about it is silent here.

This tunnel leads to the Five-Sided Mountain, and the climax of the adventure.

If the PCs do not go down the West Gallery and notice the tunnel during their initial explorations, all is not lost. Naturally, when Tarvash Tajar enters the Face, he will follow the path the PCs took – the destroyed guardian warrior at the East Gallery will be an obvious clue as to their path. When the PCs hear the Green Men coming down the East Gallery, they will no doubt find going up the West Gallery to be an attractive proposition. The hidden tunnel will be an added bonus.

If at all possible, discourage the PCs from exploring down the tunnel before discovering the White Tomb. The blue pulsating light of the light globes at the far end of the West Gallery ramp should attract more attention than the dark and undecorated access tunnel, anyway...

## THE WHITE TOMB

The PCs will perhaps note at some point that they have not seen the bodies of any of the courtiers that the legend says were sealed in here. They may by now realize that the guardian constructs and the courtiers are one and the same.

The curving ramps of the West and East Galleries join together at a point beneath the Face's brow, directly beneath the domed chamber. A broad, shallowly sloping corridor extends downward from there, angled back toward the very center of the mound. The slope is lined on either side with ornate gold stands six feet high, which support spherical crystal light globes. The light globes glow a faint and pulsating blue. The walls are decorated with blue ceramic tiles and hammered gold plaques in a complex tessellated pattern, and the floor is made of lapis lazuli. Two large doors, faced with beaten gold and enameled with elaborate Coast Lord glyphs, lead to what must be the final resting place of Noldes Bartarigan!

The tomb chamber is small – particularly so in relation to the grandiosity of the rest of the passages and chambers within the Face. Its walls are unadorned, covered in rows of slender vertical white porcelain

tiles. The Emperor's sarcophagus is at the exact center of the room, on a raised platform. It is carved of deep red stone, and studded with precious gems. Gold fittings seal the lid, and thick glassy panels in the side permit the PCs to see inside. The sarcophagus is lined with tatters of white silken cloth, and contains dust and fragments of bone; the mortal remains of the Emperor.

Another set of beaten gold doors lies beyond the sarcophagus. These lead to the fantastical realm built for Noldes Bartarigan's eternal afterlife.

## THE CRYSTAL MAN

As the doors are opened, glow-globes in stands around the entire perimeter of the room slowly brighten, revealing a marvel of craftsmanship and opulence. The chamber within is oval, a hundred yards across, and has a smoothly-domed roof covered in ceramic tiles depicting a cloudy sky. The floor of the chamber is laid out as if it were a map – a map of a portion of Mars so much changed since the Emperor's time as to be unrecognizable now. Translucent blue glass was poured molten into the contours of the sculpted floor to represent seas and rivers. Bronze plains and mountains, green with verdigris, show the vibrant living Mars ruled over by Emperor Noldes. Ornate gold cities and towers stud the floor, marking the world ruled by the Lord Whose Voice Becomes the Sun. Each is a jeweled confection worth a small fortune – and there are dozens!

The smallest towers weigh perhaps six ounces; the largest cities are twelve to fifteen pounds of gold, studded with precious and semi-precious stones. Their true value is of course far more than their obvious weight in gold, or their exquisite craftsmanship: In place on the Emperor's map, they are guideposts to the locations of the cities and strongholds of the Coast Lords – treasure troves of lost science that could transform all of Mars!

Thirty yards from the door, a raised platform, elevated three steps above the map-floor, holds a baroque throne studded with sapphires. Seated upon the throne, its hands resting upon the carved arms, is a Crystal Man! Unlike the other constructs within the Tomb, this one is more crystal than brass. It is articulated by cunningly crafted brass joints, but its crystals are dark and inert, not glowing like the others.

In a semicircle around the perimeter of the platform are the Emperor's bodyguards, standing at rigid attention. There are eight soldiers crafted of brass and crystal. The crystals of their bodies glimmer faintly blue, indicating that they are active guardians. Four of the bodyguard constructs bear jewel-hilted long-swords, and four bear ceremonial daggers and pistols with long slim crystal rods in place of barrels.

The Emperor's bodyguard defends the throne, and the treasures of the room. They will activate and attempt to strike down anyone tampering with either. Any attempt to move, remove, or damage the contents of the room will be met with deadly force from all the bodyguard constructs.

PCs fighting in the room will be hampered by the uneven flooring. All Fighting and Shooting rolls made by a character are at -2 if the character moved as a free action during the round.

The PCs may take the Solar Beam Pistols of the defeated bodyguards. They are long blue crystalline wands attached to pistol grips. They have a simple firing stud, and no other apertures or controls. Unlike radium pistols, there is no way to insert a radium capsule or any other power source. This may puzzle the PCs, at first...

## THE SECRET OF NOLDES BARTARIGAN

The three Scholars, if given the opportunity to examine the various Coast Lord glyphs within the Tomb, can puzzle out from the inscriptions that Emperor Noldes Bartarigan sought to extend his life beyond death itself – and that he succeeded, in a fashion.

Not only is the mind of Emperor Noldes within the Crystal Man – the minds of his finest nobles, scholars, generals, and courtiers inhabit the Guardian Menagerie which defends his tomb!

## BESIEGED WITHIN THE FACE

Tarvas Tajar and his forces will be delayed by the Outer Guardians, but it will be obvious to the PCs that he will be waiting outside for them to exit.

Use the Green Men to provide a sense of urgency for the PCs exploring the interior of the Face. Once they have had a chance to explore the structure, remind them that the Green Men are still outside and angry. If the PCs delay too long, it is entirely plausible that Tarvas Tajar, will discover how to enter the tomb. How long it will take him to do so depends on what the PCs did when they entered. Did they leave the doors open? Did they leave the reflectors they used to direct the sunlight outside? Even if they did neither, Tarvas Tajar is not stupid, and he has questioned his slave-scholars thoroughly during their journey to the Face. He will figure out the secret.

The PCs may decide at this point to make a break for it, assaulting the Green Men besieging the Face with their new beam weapons. If they make the attempt, they will meet the Green Men who have entered the tomb!

## BODYGUARD CONSTRUCTS

**Attributes:** Agility: d6 Smarts: d6 Spirit: d8  
**Strength:** d10 **Vigor:** d12

**Skills:** Fighting: d8 Guts: d8 Notice: d6 Shooting: d8

**Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 10(2)

**Gear:** longsword, or Solar Beam Pistol 2d8+2, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP 3 and dagger

**Special Abilities:**

**Armor** +2

**Construct** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease

**Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation

**Tireless:** Never suffers Fatigue

## THE TUNNEL

The concealed tunnel leading southwest from the West Gallery will appear to the PCs to be the only way out of the Face.

The tunnel is circular in cross-section, and bores straight through the rock. At various points along the tunnel, it passes through rough-edged natural caverns. Along the ceiling of the tunnel is a crystal rod, the thickness of a Green Man's thigh, which pulses with blue light. It is held in place by brass-colored brackets every twenty feet. The pulsations travel slowly through the crystal, heading in waves away from the Face, and toward whatever lies at the far end of the tunnel...



# PART SIX: THE FIVE-SIDED MOUNTAIN

Astute PCs will realize that the tunnel is heading in the direction of the Five-Sides Mountain. After several miles, and after passing through a number of natural caverns, the tunnel begins to slant upward at a slight grade.

## SACRIFICED ON THE ALTAR OF SCIENCE

The tunnel ends in a set of hardened ceramic doors. Pulling the doors open will require a success on a Strength roll. Within lies a broad circular room, 160' across, with a domed ceiling and a silvery metal floor. Elaborate scientific equipment lines the walls. Glowing yellow and orange vacuum tubes stand in rows atop some of the boxy devices, and a dozen yard-long knife switches stand in a row along one console. Flat glassy panels are alight with multi-colored Coast Lord glyphs adorn the front of others. Lighting strips in the ceiling glow yellow, just as they do within the Face. Scattered across the floor of the room are tables with partially assembled brass-and-crystal constructs, not all of them humanoid. Other tables appear to be dissection tables, with the withered and desiccated bodies of animals and humans laid out upon them. There are also cages, with slim crystal bars and solid metal roofs and floors, some large enough to contain the guardian serpent, or one of the four-armed warrior constructs. Several of the cages contain crumbling bones.

Near the center of the room is a complex assembly of equipment. More vacuum tubes sprout from its top, and an elaborate console covered with buttons and levers faces the entry of the room. Two slotted-brass arms extend above the device, articulated with ball-joints. On the end of each arm is a shallow curving crystal hemisphere, studded with brass knobs. Beneath one hemisphere is a complex couch-like table. Beneath the other hemisphere is a heavy, throne-like metal chair, with metal cuffs that can close about a seated person's wrists and ankles. Strapped within it is Two Knives, the Komali tomb-robber! He is struggling violently against his bonds, and has bloodied his wrists, but he cannot escape.

As soon as the PCs enter, a trap is triggered. Slim crystal bars shoot up from the floor in a 40' by 40' area just within the doorway. A metal lid slides out from the wall of the room, effectively sealing the cage!

Give each PC a Bennie at this point, to ease the pain of being trapped by fiat.

It was here that the Guardian Menagerie was created – Solar-powered machinery drew the minds from the Emperor's courtiers, and implanted them in the amazing brass-and-crystal automata. The automata, and

the mind-transfer machine itself, are the work of Prash Tikala, the Emperor's most capable and most valued scientist.

As the cage bars lock the PCs in, voices can be heard, coming from behind the central machine. A reedy voice, a raspy voice, a feminine voice, and others – all speaking the same words, in perfect synchronization. "Intruders! Unexpected, but not unwelcome. Witnesses to my greatest triumph – or perhaps even participants!" With a grinding metallic sound, the source of these words steps into view!

Prash Tikala is a figure out of nightmare! The scientist wears a construct formed in the rough shape of a man, though it stands nearly ten feet tall. The legs are short and wide-spread, the arms disproportionately long and slender, ending in hands with extremely long multi-jointed fingers. The feature that makes him grotesque, however, is the wide circular metal ring at the neck of the construct which supports not one, but five human heads! Three are wizened and partially decayed, one has feminine features, and the last is the head of the Komali nomad Open Smile!

### PRASH TIKALA, THE ETERNAL MAN

**Attributes:** Agility: d8 Smarts: d12+4 Spirit: d8 Strength: d12 Vigor: d10

**Skills:** Fighting: d10 Guts: d10 Notice: d8 Intimidation: d8 Climbing: d8 Stealth: d4

**Charisma:** -4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7 **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:**

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Weird Science)

**Gear:** Boost Trait, Detect Arcana (Weird Science) (built into construct body)

**Construct** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease; No effect from Wound Modifiers)

**Fear -2:** Anyone facing Prash Tikala must make a Guts roll at -2.

**Weakness:** Called Shots to Prash Tikala's head(s) do cause +4 additional damage.

The mouths move in eerie unison, as Prash Tikala shambles into the laboratory. He will engage the PCs in conversation, interspersed as necessary with his mad monologue. Use the outbursts below or contrive additional ravings to answer any player's specific questions about the true history of the Face.

"Noldes was a fool! Tired of life, yet he demanded that I help him cheat death! He sought eternity, but he could not envision the future! He wished only to replay the past, like some endless mummer's show."

"My machine transferred the minds of his courtiers into the bodies Noldes had demanded – forms to suit his eternal fantasy – and he demanded a perfect crystal form for himself. He thought to live eternally in crystal, replaying the pleasures of his decadent life – to think he believed that I would waste precious solar energy on such pursuits, when I could use it for my experiments!"

"I subverted his plans from the first. The Emperor never realized that the wealth he used to finance his ridiculous fantasy was in fact funding eternal life – for me!"

"Minds transferred into crystal are as unchanging as the crystal. They cannot think thoughts they have not thought before; they lose their creative spark. I defied the Emperor after his death, and retained my genius! I retained my living brain!"

"Fools! Do you think that you are the first to have ever penetrated my sanctum? I have lured a thousand here before you – all destined for my experimentation! Noldes had been dust for generations before I developed a machine that could transfer a mind to a living form, rather than into a construct – and generations more before the recipients were capable of speech and action after undergoing the process! Still, the failures were at least useful as additional living brains to house my growing intellect! But now, at last, I am ready to leave this prison! My experiments are complete! No more will I be limited by the solar power gathered by the Eyes! Ah, to touch again, to breathe..."

As the Custodian of the Face, the construct has existed for thousands of years. Sometimes sleeping inert for centuries, at other times active for a generation without rest, he has replaced his flesh-and-blood head(s) many times, expanding his mind into multiple living brains.

Tikala's experimentation over the many centuries he has existed here has finally borne fruit. He believes that he can transfer his mind into a living body, and not end up a drooling idiot as the result. When the Komali tampered with the Face and activated the Guardians, Prash Tikala captured Two Knives to test his new machine.

If there is an Earthman in the party, Prash Tikala will determine that an Earth human's brain is most susceptible to the mind transfer device, and will be the perfect vessel for his return to human form. He will release Two Knives from the metal chair, and hold him by the throat, threatening to snap the Komali's neck if the PCs do not comply with his directions. He will activate a control on a wall console near the doorway, and cause three of the cage bars to drop into the floor. Prash Tikala will demand that the Earthman come out and seat himself in the metal chair and close the manacles around his ankles and wrists. If the Earthman complies, Tikala will throw Two Knives into the cage and trigger the bars to close once more.

If the Earthman refuses to be blackmailed, Tikala will toss the nomad aside and activate the energy trap within the cage. Lightning will flash from the cages metal ceiling to its metal floor, striking anyone within! The traps attacks are Shooting d8, and it does 2d6 damage, AP 1. It attacks each target in the cage once each round. This should encourage the PCs to break out as quickly as possible.

The bars of the cages (most specifically, the cage holding the PCs) are Toughness 12, and can be affected by Blunt or Cutting damage. Piercing damage, such as that produced by radium or solar pistols, can only destroy one bar at a time. At least two bars must be shattered in order for a normal-sized person to slip through the gap.

The manacles on the metal chair can be released with a Lockpicking roll, or by using a Weird Science roll to identify the appropriate switch on the console. If Two Knives is freed, he will be dazed and disoriented, almost in shock. He will join in the fight if directed by a PC to do so, and if he is given a weapon. (His signature knives and longsling have been tossed negligently on a dissecting table by Prash Tikala.)

If the PCs do not initially attempt to escape from the cage, Prash Tikala will conduct horrific and painful experiments on Two Knives (or perhaps the Earthman who traded places with him), testing the mind transfer machine. The mad construct's concentration on his work, and the sound of the Komali's screams, will provide ample cover for whatever action the PCs decide to take.

If the PCs attempt to shoot the construct, or the mind transfer machine, Prash Tikala will slam closed a switch on the console, and activate the energy trap to subdue the prisoners while he takes cover behind one of the crystal-barred cages.

Of course, there is also the matter of the Green Men. If they have breached the outer doors of the Face, they will eventually find their way through the tunnel to the laboratory. When Tarvash Tajar and a dozen or so surviving Green Men open the laboratory door, they will find themselves charging into the cage with the PCs!



This could be the opportunity for the PCs to unheroically flee – leaving Two Knives to his awful fate. It could also be the opportunity for the PCs to join in a jail break: Tarvash Tajar will not take kindly to being caged, and he and his axe are easily capable of shattering the bars.

If the PCs escape the cage and attack Tikala, they should be able to defeat the mad construct before the Green Men even show up. If they do, all it will take is a Weird Science roll, or a Notice roll at -2, to discover Prash Tikala's secret exit from his lair. Behind one of the tube-studded consoles is an elevator platform. Stepping on the platform activates it, and with a violent lurch it will shoot upward, past a valve-door in the rooms ceiling, and through a narrow, dark vertical shaft. The platform arrives at the back of a natural-appearing cavern on the upper slope of the Five-Sided Mountain.

Descending to the surface of the plateau will require three Climbing rolls. Failure on the Climbing roll results in a bad spill as the character tumbles down the Mountain. Such characters must make either an Agility or a Vigor roll (GM's choice, as appropriate to each character) to avoid taking 1 Fatigue from bumps, scratches, and bruises. This Fatigue can lead to Exhaustion, but not Incapacitation.

It may occur to the PCs at this point to sneak from the Mountain back to the Face, and ambush the remaining Green Men from behind, ending Tarvash Tajar's mission with finality. If they do so, they will find that Tarvash Tajar and his troops have entered the face, and are engaged with whatever members of the Guardian Menagerie that the PCs left in operating condition. If the PCs encountered Prash Tikala (and the climax of the adventure) before discovering the White Tomb, here is the ideal time for them to return to the Face. To maximize the excitement of this circumstance, see the sidebar 'The Dreaming Emperor Wakes!'

## THE DREAMING EMPEROR WAKES!

If the situation at the climax of Part Five does not seem sufficiently complex, allow one of the huge knife-switches on the walls to be thrown, reversing the solar energy flow along the conduit in the tunnel. The Crystal Man, the physical embodiment of Noldes Bartarigan, will awaken once more!

Emperor Noldes has been trapped by Prash Tikala for what seems like eternity. He is mad now, a bestial thing, destroying everything in sight. It would be a mercy to free him from this state...

The Crystal Man will realize, dimly, that his science advisor has betrayed him. He will begin stalking through the corridors of the Face, attacking every living creature he encounters, looking for Prash Tikala. He will probably encounter the invading Green Men on the way...

## THE CRYSTAL MAN

**Attributes:** **Agility:** d8 **Smarts:** d4 **Spirit:** d8  
**Strength:** d12 **Vigor:** d10

**Skills:** Fighting: d10 Guts: d10 Notice: d8  
Intimidation: d8 Stealth: d4

**Charisma:** 0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7 **Toughness:** 11(4)

**Gear:** longsword, Solar Beam Pistol 2d8+2, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP 3

**Armor:** +4

**Construct:** (+2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison & disease; No effect from Wound Modifiers

**Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation

**Tireless:** Never suffers Fatigue

After the climax of the adventure, and (presumably) the destruction of Prash Tikala, the PCs can return to the Komali camp. Consus Lui may have sailed without them, but canal traders know that the nomads camp by the canal at this time of year. Another barge will be along within a week, headed either to the Baltan Confederation or to Callor Marlin. Angapan Ven and the rescued scholars will be intent on returning to Avak Callor to publish their discoveries. Any budding romance between a scholar and a PC will have a little time to grow during the journey.

The scholars and the PCs will have access to at least some of the portable treasures of the tomb – but anything they don't carry away when they board a canal barge will most likely be stolen by the Komali during the following season, unless the Outer Guardians were left intact and functional. The information from the Emperor's map room will be lost forever if the PCs were unable to make accurate drawings.

And what of the mind transfer machine? The PCs have discovered a dangerous device, which is of inestimable value – yet is utterly immobile. It is also difficult to envision uses for the machine which are ethical and 'heroic'. If the PCs wish, their scholarly companions can be convinced to leave all mention of the device out of their journals, thus preventing the world at large from knowing that such a device exists.

## ADDITIONAL ADVENTURE SEEDS

It is possible that Two Knives has already had Prash Tikala's intellect copied into his mind by the mad scientist's experiments. Not transferred completely, not yet – only copied. The mad custodian of the Face was not willing to risk the entirety of his mind on an untested system. If you choose to use this option, Two Knives will steal a saddle-beast and leave the Komali camp the first night after his return. Now that the construct has been destroyed, Prash Tikala's copy is free to travel Mars as he wishes, and develop other mad plans in secrecy...

Among these plans might be returning Mars to the watery state he remembers by melting the polar ice caps, or perhaps finding a way to travel to Earth and rebuild Coast Lord civilization there!

Stat out the compound of Tikala's mind in Two Knives body this way: Use Two Knives' write up above, but with a d12 Smarts, all of Tikala's Skills and Edges in addition to his own, and full Wild Card status. The reborn Tikala could easily become a recurring villain – or even a temporary ally to an Earthman who wants to find a way to return home...

