

CONAN[®]

AND THE REAVERS OF THE VILAYET



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Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
THE STINGING SANDS	5
THE BLOODY OCEAN	10
THE ISLE OF THE MISTS	16
WAR FOR THE ISLE	23
THE HORROR REBORN	27
NEW MONSTERS	30
LICENSE	32

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Introduction

The tongue was Nemedian, but the voice was not human. There was a terrifying resonance about it, like a bell tolling at midnight.

'There was no life in the Abyss, save that which was incorporated in me,' it tolled. 'Nor was there light, nor motion, nor any sound. Only the urge behind and beyond life guided and impelled me on my upward journey, blind, insensate, inexorable. Though ages of ages, and the changeless strata of darkness I climbed.'

Ensoircelled by that belling resonance, Conan crouched forgetful of all else, until its hypnotic power caused a strange replacement of faculties and perception, and sound created the illusion of sight. Transported beyond his age and his own individuality, he was seeing the transmutation of the being men called 'Khosatral Khel which crawled up from Night and the Abyss ages ago to clothe itself in the substance of the material universe.

- Robert E. Howard, The Devil in Iron

THE INLAND SEA of the Vilayet is controlled by the navy of the mighty Hyrkanian navy. Armies march from the cities of Agrapur and Khawarizm to pacify the surrounding lands. Only the ragged kozak buccaneers and freebooters dare defy the might of Turan and Hyrkania, and those bands of wanderers and thieves are little more than an irritant. King Yezdigerd can confidently call himself the master of the Vilayet in addition to his thousand other noble titles.

It was not always so. In ages past, entities from the Outer Darkness beyond the world filtered down from the sky and up from the abyss, ruling and ravaging the primitive folk who dwelt on the shores of the sea. Mercifully, those horrors are gone now. Some were slain, like Khosatral Khel on the isle of Xapur. Others, like the strange divinity that made the Island of Iron Statues, returned to the hellish and unfathomable otherworlds from whence they came. Now, it is well known that even the most inhuman horrors share some of the same lusts and desires as mortal men, and that strange gods mated with the daughters of the tribes; that children were born who were part human, and part other.

One such entity was a nameless horror that dwelt on the fabled Isle of the Mists. The horror ruled for uncounted years, then the stars changed and it slept once more. Its power did not ebb away, but it lost the ability to attune itself to the matter of this world,

becoming nothing more than a demonic spirit of hate.

One of the bloodlines sired by the horror has survived down through the years. For centuries, the bloodline endured among the primitive folk of the Yuetschi in the south, but when the Hyrkanians came sweeping in from the east, one of their nobles became entranced by the atavistic beauty of one of the fisherwomen, and took her as his concubine. Thus, the inhuman bloodline passed into the Hyrkanian nobility as the Azar family.

The three brothers Fuat, Gazi and Vahit are the current heirs to the bloodline. All three have a little magic in their blood, a legacy of their divine heritage. Fuat, the elder brother, is the lord of a province in Turan. Gazi quarrelled with his kin,

and was exiled many years ago; his brothers presume him dead. The last brother, Vahit, was more scholarly than his elder siblings. Through long years of research in dusty scrolls, and through questioning and torturing the wisewomen and sages of the Yuetschi tribes, Vahit learned the nature of their bloodline.

The ancient inhuman sire of the bloodline slumbers on one of the lost islands of the Vilayet sea, the Isle of the Mists. Surely, reasoned Vahit, one of the bloodline could tap the power of the demon and become something close to a god. His brother Fuat discovered Vahit's research, and attempted to steal it. The race for the isle is on...

PREPARING TO PLAY

This scenario is heavily influenced by the stories *The Devil in Iron* and *Shadows in the Moonlight*, both of which deal with ancient horrors haunting islands in the Vilayet sea. Like those tales, *Reavers of the Vilayet* brings the characters face to face with a demon from the ancient world on a lost island. Where it differs, though, is that their fate is bound to that of the three brothers. In addition to using their own skills with the blade and their own cunning, the players will have to play the brothers off against each other, to ensure that none of the three is able to fully grasp the power of the horror.

A copy of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, a notepad, pencils and a full set of dice (at least one of each of the following: d20, d12, d10, d8, d6 and d4) will be needed to play *Reavers of the Vilayet*. Players and Games Masters may also find a copy of *Conan: Road of Kings* or *The Pirate Isles* and a few miniatures of use, but these are not essential.

Reavers of the Vilayet combines situations and encounters that will require a mix of skills to survive and overcome. Players will find that a party of adventurers from a wide variety of character classes of particular use. Games Masters should read, and become familiar with the entire adventure before attempting to run it to fully understand how each encounter fits with those which surround it.

ONE BRIDE FOR THREE BROTHERS

Vahit is travelling with a beautiful slave-girl called Zuleyeh. He believes that he stole the girl out of his brother's seraglio, and that by some incredibly good stroke of luck, her old folk tales contained the missing pieces of the puzzle, allowing him to find the trail that leads to the Isle of the Mists. In truth, Zuleyeh is not human at all – she is a psychic projection of the horror that waits on the Isle of the Mists. Zuleyeh was awoken by Vahit's early researches; the ancestor horror wants to be found, for it can use any of its descendants to reattune itself to the material world. While Zuleyeh pretends to be an ordinary mortal woman, she is nothing more than dust and light, arranged and directed by an ancient and alien mind. Eidolons of Zuleyeh are accompanying each of the three brothers, whispering to them and guiding them towards the Isle.

While Zuleyeh may be more dreams and dust than flesh and blood, she appears perfectly real even to the touch. However, as much of her solidity is mere illusion, brought on by the psychic pressure of the horror, she can only appear to a limited number of people at once, and having physical contact with more than one or two is extremely difficult. The players should not immediately suspect Zuleyeh's inhuman nature – she initially appears to be nothing more than a slave girl with some mystic ability, who defers in all things to her lover Vahit – but as the scenario continues and the interaction between the three brothers, each of whom has their own version of the girl, then it should not take the players long to realise what is going on.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

Reavers of the Vilayet is designed for a group of four 7th to 8th level characters. If you have more players, you will need increase the number and strength of the opponents to compensate; fewer players or lower levels means a proportional reduction in the challenge. Regardless of the characters' levels, though,

they will either face overwhelming odds or be able to pick foes off in small groups, depending on how they handle the interactions between the three brothers.

The scenario begins with the characters encountering Vahit and Zuleyeh in a sandstorm in the deserts west of the Vilayet sea. It is assumed that the characters are travellers and wanderers – perhaps they were escorting a trade caravan that was destroyed by kozak thieves. If your characters are not the sort to be found wandering in the wilderness of the east, then they could be contacted and hired by Vahit in any of the civilised cities of the Dreaming West. Vahit has need of both bodyguards and scholars to help him investigate his heritage.

Vahit

Medium Human Turanian Noble 3/Scholar 3; HD: 3d8+3d6 (24 hp); **Init:** +4; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 12; **Parry DV:** 12; **DR:** 0; **Atk:** Scimitar +5 melee; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +5 melee; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8, 19–20/x2, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Sorcery; **SQ:** Hyrkanian qualities,

Rank Hath Its Privileges, Special Regional Feature, Independent Sorcerer; **SV:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills & Feats: Bluff +10, Concentration +6, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcane)+6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Ride +7, Search +8, Spot +6; Mounted Combat, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive

Possessions: Scimitar, Scrollcase with ancient scroll

Power Points: 5

Magic Attack: +4

Spells: *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Ill-Fortune*, *Warding*, *Incantation of Amlaric's Witchman*

Zuleyeh

Medium Outsider

Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 17 (Base +3, Dex +3, Dodge +1)

DR: 0

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+2

Attack: Dagger +2 melee (1d4-2)

Full Attack: Dagger +2 melee (1d4-2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None.

Special Qualities: See Below.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +6

Abilities: Str 6, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18

Skills: Bluff +13, Climb +5, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Spot +9.

Feats: Dodge, Persuasive

THE NATURE OF ZULEYEH

The woman is not a creature of flesh and blood, but is in essence a dream spawned by the unconscious mind of the horror that sleeps on the Isle of the Mists. Without mortal flesh to serve as a frame and a conduit to the material world, the horror can only dream – but its alien mind creates dreams with a measure of ‘realness’ to them. Physically, Zuleyeh is made up of scraps of meats, a few fish bones, dust and insect husks, all comprising no more than a pound or two of matter.

All those who look at her see the illusion of the dream, of course – she appears to be a beautiful woman of Hyrkanian blood. The illusion and her demeanour are unconsciously shaped by whichever one of the three brothers she is attuned to. When she is accompanying Vahit, for example, she is much more independent and somewhat more modest than the wanton slave-girl of Fuat’s dreams, or the assassin and spy that she is when serving the middle brother, Gazi.

Her mind, too, is a strange mix of memories of the horror and what the brothers believe her to be. Zuleyeh never existed

before Vahit discovered the existence of the Isle of the Mists and so attracted the attention of the sleeping Elder (she is the attention of the sleeping Elder!), but because Vahit believes her to be a slave captured from the border tribes west of Turan, then she acts and has some of the memories of a slave-girl from the western deserts. Her overriding motivation, though, is to get one of the brothers, any one, to the Isle of the Mists. She cannot fully understand this compulsion, but it is as irresistible as the desire of the salmon to swim upriver.

In game terms, Zuleyeh’s strange nature has the following effects:

- ❖ She takes no damage from most attacks – they simply pass right through her. Magical attacks or massive physical damage (being thrown into a bonfire, crushed in a landslide) destroy her, but she reforms 4d6 hours later near one of the three brothers.
- ❖ She has a Strength score of only 6, but can use her Wisdom score as Strength if she is willing to sacrifice the integrity of the illusion – anyone looking at her sees that her bones are just garbage caught up in a whirlwind and that her flesh is illusory.



The Stinging Sands

READ THE FOLLOWING to the players:

The storm blew up with unnatural suddenness. Hot desert winds whipped up the golden sands of the desert, spitting at your eyes and tearing at your clothes. An hour ago, you could see the sun glittering on the distant waves of the Vilayet to the east; now, you can barely see five feet in front of you. Every exposed inch of your skin feels like it is being scoured down to the bone by the howling sandstorm.

One of you stumbles over something on the ground, half-buried by the sands. It's a corpse, a man, freshly killed. Spilled blood mixed with sand is caked on his Turanian-style clothing, and his hands are clasped around the short sword that killed him.

Suddenly, the winds die down for an instant, and you can hear the ringing sound of steel on steel as swords clash a short distance away. Somewhere in the storm, a woman screams.



In the sandstorm, the characters suffer the following penalties:

- ❑ The range of vision is cut to 1d10 x 5 feet – roll every three rounds, reflecting the shifting state of the storm.
- ❑ Concentration, Listen, Search and Spot checks suffer a -4 penalty.
- ❑ Characters must make a Fortitude save (DC15) when moving against the wind or be checked. The wind is coming from the south.
- ❑ All melee attacks suffer a -2 penalty; ranged attacks suffer an additional -4 penalty for a total of -6.
- ❑ Characters also take 1d3 points of non-lethal damage every hour; the characters have been in the storm for an hour when the scenario begins.

Vahit and Zuleyeh and their two servants are in the remains of a small camp to the north-east (see map). They were ambushed by five assassins sent by Vahit's brother Fuat. The two servants and one of the assassins have been slain

– the characters stumbled upon the corpse of the assassin a moment ago. Zuleyeh actually killed the assassin, melting away when Vahit was not looking at her and materialising behind her victim. Two other assassins are struggling with Vahit – they are under instructions to drag him back to his brother's estates in the far south. The last two assassins are just outside the camp, lost in the storm.

Assassin

Medium Human Turanian Borderer 4; HD: 4d10+4 (26 hp); **Init:** +5; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13 (15 in desert); **Parry DV:** 14; **DR:** 4; **Atk:** Tulwar +7 melee; **Full Atk:** Tulwar +7 melee; **Dmg:** Tulwar 2d8+3, 18–20/x2, AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** –; **SQ:** Turanian qualities, Favoured Terrain (desert) +2, Combat Style (archery); **SV:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Handle Animal +4, Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +5 (4 in armour), Ride +5, Search +3, Spot +6, Survival +5; Track, Endurance, Alertness, Weapon Focus (Tulwar)

Possessions: Tulwar, dagger, leather jerkin

The assassins will assume that the characters are also servants of Vahit and attack them on sight. This should be a chaotic, bloody fight; the assassins want to find shelter from the storm as soon as possible, so they just want to butcher the characters swiftly. As soon as he sees the characters, Vahit will shout and demand that they help him against these assassins; if the characters hesitate, then have Zuleyeh beg for their aid.

As soon as the characters engage the two assassins at the edge of the camp, one of the pair wrestling with Vahit runs to help his comrades. This gives Vahit and Zuleyeh the chance to overcome the remaining attacking.

Once the assassins have all been dealt with, the immediate order of business is getting some shelter from the storm. One of Vahit's tents is still standing, but is in danger of collapse. A successful Survival check (DC15) saves it from falling over in the teeth of the howling wind.

VAHIT'S TALE

In a small, cramped and ragged tent, with the unnatural sandstorm whistling and tearing at the canvas, Vahit spins a strange tale indeed for the characters. The luminously beautiful Zuleyeh stays silent and seems afraid of the characters, speaking only when spoken to.

'My name is Vahit, of the noble lineage of the Azar. The assassins that attacked you, and I suspect the storm too, these were sent by my elder brother Fuat. He is a lord of Turan, and a sorcerer of some power. I am a humble scholar and historian. I became fascinated by tales of our ancestors – most of my blood is Hyrkanian, but my forefathers were lords here even before the horse-lords came from the depths of the east.'

Some months ago, I discovered a crumbling scroll in the family archives, which spoke of an ancient treasure now lost to us. I began making preparations to recover this treasure, but my brother Fuat grew jealous. He is the oldest brother, and therefore he claims everything as his. He promised to aid me in finding the treasure. Then, Zuleyeh came to me. She was one of Fuat's concubines, but she was born in this region to one of the wandering tribes. By combining her folk-tales with my scholarly investigations, I was able to determine the location of an ancient tomb said to contain the key to the treasure.

When Fuat suspected that I was close to a solution, he tried to lock me in my tower. Zuleyeh, my love, aided me in escaping, and we fled to the harbour and took ship. It is my fondest desire, o my new friends, to find the treasure of my family and use it to take revenge on cruel Fuat.'

The characters presumably have questions for Vahit:

What is this treasure you speak of?

'The old tales are evasive, but I believe that one of my ancestors was a wizard of great power, who wrapped his island home in spells to defend it. If those spells remain unbroken, then all the wealth of elder days must be waiting there. Look, I have this scroll.'

At this point, Vahit shows the characters the scroll (see below).

What about this tomb?

'I have, I think, all the secrets I need save one – the location of the isle containing the treasure. Darling Zuleyeh told me of the legends of her people, which spoke of a tomb exposed by the shifting desert sands in recent years. The writing on the tomb are similar to that on the scroll, so I believe they are of like origin. I'm sure I'll find the route to the isle in the decorations on the tomb.'

Tell us more of Fuat? Why is he trying to kill you?

'My brother is a man of singular cruelty. Our father died young, and so Fuat became a lord when still a child. He acquired a taste for malice and the degradation of others for his amusement. The middle brother, Gazi, quarrelled with Fuat and so was exiled. I, on the other hand, was a quiet boy and was careful never to offend Fuat.'

When Fuat discovered the existence of the treasure of our bloodline, he tried to imprison me so he could take the secret. When I escaped, he must have flown into a rage, and sent these assassins after me to force the location of the treasure from my lips by pain of torture.'

What do you want of us?

'My guards and servants are dead, and the desert is dangerous. If you will aid me in digging up the tomb, then I'll pay you well. I have a ship waiting a day's travel away along the coast, and the money I took from my brother is there.'

THE SCROLL

If the characters ask about the scroll, Vahit produces it from a hardened ivory scroll-case decorated with leaping tigers. The scroll is ancient and yellowed, but is quite well preserved. The scroll shows a dancing six-armed figure, surrounded by small blocks of text. Vahit can translate the text for the characters, in case none of them have Decipher Script (the DC for an independent translation is DC25)

Notably, the scroll mentions that only the 'Elder's most trusted seneschals' might look upon the Isle of the Mists. Vahit believes that the tomb mentioned in Zuleyeh's folk tales is the tomb of such a seneschal, and so should contain the location of the Isle.

The players might also notice that the scroll's texts are arranged in a circle, implying that the cycle is a recurring one

– the Elder descends on the world, causes terrible suffering, then mates with mortals so it can cling to the material world during long aeons of enforced slumber by the changing universe.

PLAYING ZULEYEH AND VAHIT

Vahit is a rather sheltered scholar, but he has the confidence born of a lifetime of having every whim catered to by slaves. He only grows nervous when discussing his elder brothers, especially Fuat. He has a pleasant demeanour; he is not a raging egotist like some nobles. However, when pressed, Vahit's inhuman heritage comes to the fore, and he grows cruel and malicious. Of the three brothers, though Vahit is the easiest to deal with in every sense.

As for Zuleyeh, she will concentrate on getting the characters to the tomb – the horror lacks the ability to dispel the protective enchantments on the Isle, so she needs the characters to aid in getting at least one of her descendants there.

FINDING THE TOMB

After about four hours, the sandstorm dies down naturally. Most of the bodies have been buried by the sands, but the remains of the other tent still poke out of the desert landscape like the ribs of some ancient creature. Zuleyeh tells the characters that the tomb lies another half-a-day's travel to the north-west, deeper into the desert.

If the characters do not have sufficient supplies, then Zuleyeh mentions an oasis en route. If any of the characters are familiar with the deserts of western Turan, then they are unlikely to have heard of such an oasis; a Survival or Knowledge (history) check (DC30) reveals that there was once such an oasis, but it dried up centuries ago. Enough water has collected deep under the sands, though, to refill the characters' water-skins.

The tomb itself is easy to find – the characters trek across the rolling dunes under the cloudless blue skies; the wind carries the occasional taste of salt when it blows from the east. There are no signs of any other travellers or even any animals bar the occasional circling bird, far above. The sun is merciless. Eventually, the characters come across a rocky outcropping above another long-dead oasis – Zuleyeh tells the characters that in the tales of her people, the tomb is located somewhere beneath the rocks. A successful Search check (DC20) finds a place where the sands slope into a hollow underneath the outcropping, which is the entrance to a cave.

A serpent coils in the cool darkness of the hollow, and will strike at anyone who disturbs its nest. The serpent is a Medium viper (see *Conan* rulebook, page 310).



Serpent: HP 9.

Digging away the sand allows a character to wriggle down the sand slope into a buried cave. The sand slope is unstable, so Balance check (DC15) are required to avoid causing a small landslide and burying the entrance once more.

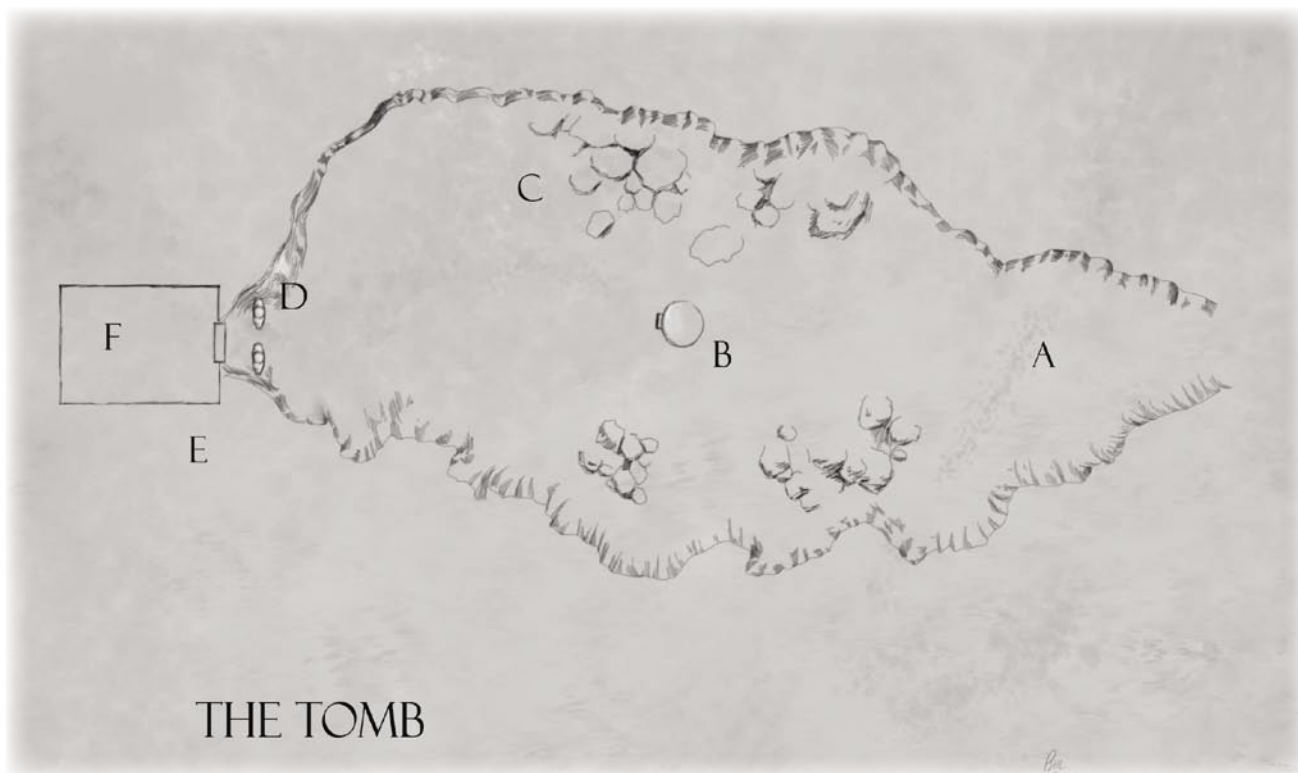
THE TOMB

'You raise a torch, and the cave explodes with light reflected off thousands of glittering crystals embedded in the rocky walls. Parts of the cave have obviously been cut and worked by the hands of man, as there is a regular doorway on the far wall. There are also two statues carved in alcoves flanking the door. The sandy floor shifts treacherously, and you hear the hiss of more snakes from the shadows around you.'

Unsurprisingly, the tomb contains hundreds of medium vipers, all of whom are remarkably willing to bite the characters. The characters can cross the floor either by hacking their way through the crowds of snakes, or by scaring them off using fiery torches.

A: The sand slope.

B: Cavern floor. Characters crossing this area without taking precautions are attacked by 1d3 snakes each, every round. There is a small dais in the centre of this room, with a torch-holder at the centre. There is a single step up to the dais on the side facing E. Directly above the dais, on the ceiling, is a carving of a cruel and eerie face. This is the key to the puzzle of the location of the Isle of the Mists.



THE TOMB

C: Rocks. If the snakes are drive back or scared, they retreat to these rocks. Also, a character could avoid the snakes by jumping from rock to rock, out of reach of the serpents' strikes. The walls of the cave are dotted with quartz crystals; a successful Search check (DC15) reveals that several of the larger ones have been deliberately mortared into place on the walls in specific locations.

D: Statues. These are two stone reliefs, each one eight feet tall, cut into the cave wall. Both depict multi-armed warriors carrying a variety of ghastly-looking exotic weapons and trampling on the skulls of fallen foes. One hand of each warrior emerges from the bas-relief and is obviously a lever of some sort. These levers are connected to a trap in the next room. To disarm the trap, a weapon must be placed in the hand of each warrior, to act as a counterweight. A Search check (DC5) finds that the arms are indeed levers; a DC25 check finds the pressure plate under the threshold.

If the statues are examined closely, their faces do indeed bear a strange resemblance to Vahir's own features.

E: Entrance into the tomb proper. There is a pressure plate underneath the threshold for this room. If a character steps on this pressure plate without there being a proper counterweight (a weapon in each of the statues' hands in the outer room), then the trap is activated. Twelve seconds (two rounds) later, a slab of stone grinds down from the ceiling, blocking anyone from leaving the inner

chamber. Characters standing next to the door may make Reflex saves (DC15) to jump out before they are trapped.

Another six seconds after that, shafts in the ceiling of the inner chamber open, allowing thousands of tons of sand to fill the chamber. The inner room takes two minutes (twenty rounds) to fill, killing anyone inside. The vents can be blocked, slowing the flow of sand, but they cannot be easily stoppered.

The door requires a Strength check (DC20) to lift even an inch. The higher the Strength check result, the easier it is to make an Escape Artist check to wriggle under. The Escape Artist DC begins at DC25 each round, reduced by an amount equal to the Strength check's margin of success. For example, a Strength check result of 28 (eight point margin of success) would result in an Escape Artist DC of 17 (25-8).

F: The tomb. The tomb is a simple stone sarcophagus containing a mummified corpse. The sarcophagus is decorated with a frieze, showing ships laden with tribute sailing under a brightly shining star to a great castle on an island. The corpse has a few pieces of jewellery – a ruby pendant and six silver rings – worth about 300 silvers altogether if sold in some suq in Turan or a western market. The corpse also has a mariner's kamal, a primitive form of sextant consisting of a string and a board with markings. The sailor holds the string in his teeth and takes readings by sighting along the string and reading the result off the board. A Profession (sailor) check at DC10 (or Survival at DC20) allows a character to recognise and use the item.

And so it remained, for an age of the world. Blood calls to blood, death to death, like to like as the great wheel turns.

In the beginning, the Elder wandered in the realm of chaos, beyond reason and form. The people called to him, that he would bring them wisdom and strength.

The Elder came to the people, and the enemies of the people were as chaff before the hurricane of his passage.

The enemies of the people rose up once more, and the sea once again ran red with blood and slaughter, for the strength of the Elder was gone.



And the enemies of the people wept, and their homes were dust, and their children's children would be slaves to the people.

The Elder took for his home an isle in the west of the great ocean, and with his sorcery he made of it a paradise.

In time, the Elder grew tired, and desired to rest. He cloaked the Isle in mist, so that only his most trusted seneschals might look upon his tomb.

And the people served the Elder in all the ways they knew, and their blood was commingled, and the sons of the Elder were as many as the stars.

The final item is a pottery mask. The mask's features also resemble those of Vahit. The eyes of the mask are very odd – instead of being holes in the mask, they are domes of pottery pierced with several tiny random holes.

THE SECRET OF THE TOMB

To find the location of the Isle of the Mists, a character must wear the pottery mask, stand on the step of the dais at (B), and place a torch in the holder on the dais. The light from the torch reflects off the quartz crystals in the walls, especially the larger ones that were deliberately placed. The character wearing the mask can only see a few of these reflected lights due to the tiny slits in the mask's eyepieces. If the character looks straight up at the face in the ceiling, he sees the reflected

light as stars – specifically, stars used in navigation. This reveals a configuration of stars that can be used by a navigator to determine the location of the isle.

If the characters get stuck, then remember that Vahit is a scholar, and therefore inquisitive and smart enough to provide clues. Mentioning the carving on the side of the tomb itself should put them in mind of stars, which should get them started.

If it looks as though the characters are all going to die due to the trap and poor dice rolls then Zuleyeh can rescue them by 'fortuitously' finding a hidden catch that stops the sand flow and raises the stone block.

The Bloody Ocean

HAVING DISCOVERED THE location of the Isle of the Mists, Vahit insists that the characters accompany him to his ship, where he will repay them for their aid in finding the Tomb's secrets. The boat is about a day and a half's travel to the east, through the dunes and scrubland on the edge of the Vilayet. The journey is a hard one, but there is the occasional brackish stream winding its way down to the island sea where the characters can refill their water-skins before continuing. They cut the trail of kozak raiders at one point, a score of horses or more riding south, but there is no sign of any other men in the wilderness.

When the characters make camp for the night, Zuleyeh offers to make a cooking fire. She follows the trail of the riders, searching for droppings to use as fuel. She never returns to the camp; attempts to search for her prove fruitless. A character with the Track feat may attempt to follow her trail (Survival, DC15), but it vanishes about five hundred feet outside the camp. A successful Search check at DC20 allows the character to find Zuleyeh's golden necklace lying in the sand, with some dust and debris caught in the fine links. The demon-dream has dissolved her current body and has moved her attention to another brother, Gazi.

Vahit is initially upset, like a petulant child whose favourite toy has gone missing. This is an excellent opportunity to show that Vahit is not the most pleasant or stable of individuals under the surface. However, with no way to find Zuleyeh, he curls up in his tent and waits for the dawn. She does not return in the morning, so the characters may continue on to the coast.

Vahit's ship, Moon over Heaven, is waiting at anchor in a cove. It is a small pleasure-boat, of the sort that throng the harbour of Agrapur, with a crew of a dozen people, all mercenaries and servants loyal to Vahit. As the characters approach, the crew are obviously nervous, initially mistaking them for kozak raiders. The captain of the pleasure-boat is an old man named Jiangir, who has served the Azar family all his life. He knew all three of the brothers when they were children, and is fond of all three, although he knows that all of the brothers are capable of great cruelty.

While Vahit is washing the dust of the desert off himself and gathering whatever pay he promised the characters, Captain Jiangir sidles up to the characters and questions them about the

events in the desert, asking what happened in the tomb and what became of Zuleyeh. The characters may wish to ask old Jiangir a few questions of their own:

What do you think of Vahit's tales of some treasure belonging to his family?

The family of Azar is an ancient one, wealthy and powerful. I have served them all my life. They have cast away more treasures than can easily be counted.

Why did you aid Vahit in escaping the family palace?

I recall a day, many years ago. The three sons of my lord were on my ship, we were out watching the troops riding from Agrapur to Samara. Their numbers could not be counted; the whole coast road as far as the eye could see was thronged with horsemen.

The wind shifted, and we had to turn the sails. The boom swung across the deck, but one of the crew was a fool and did not pay attention. It caught him here, at the back of the skull, and knocked him out, and he fell overboard and began to drown. None of the others noticed, except for the children. Vahit was like a new-born foal, barely able to walk. Gazi might have said something, if it were not for Fuat. The oldest body was standing at the rail. We thought he was watching the marching troops, but he was watching the man who had fallen overboard.

He was watching him drown.

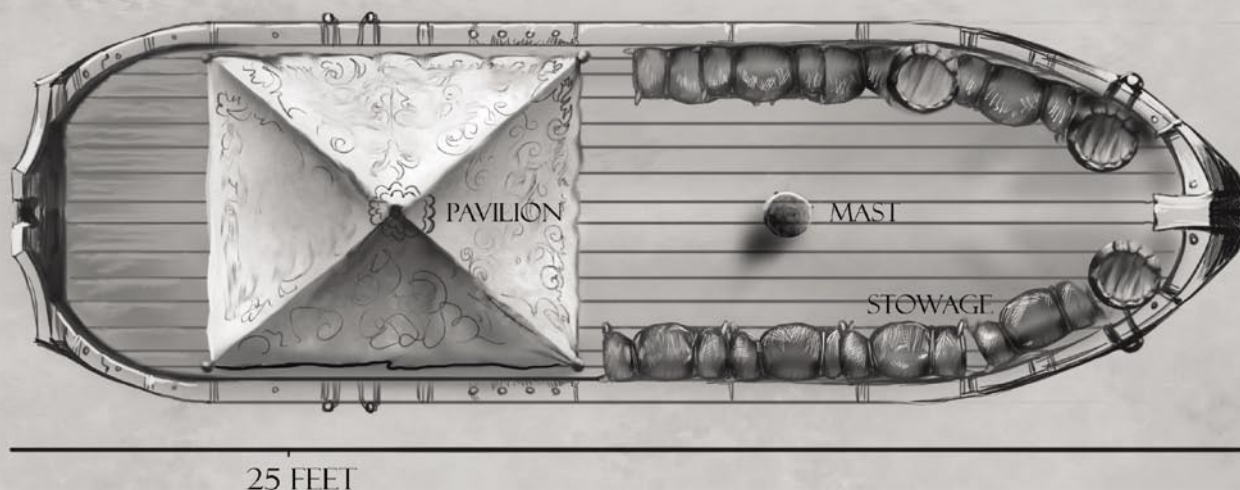
I helped Vahit because Fuat al-Azar is a cruel man. That cruel man is my lord, just as his father was and my father bowed to his grandfather. I will serve him loyally as I can, but I will not indulge his cruelties if I can avoid it. Vahit came to me, asking that I bring him out to the desert, and so I have done so.

I aided Gazi too. He was the middle brother. (Jiangir flexes his shoulders at this point; he was whipped after helping Gazi escape.)

What about Gazi?

Gazi, ah, he loved the sea, and he was like a son to me. Vahit was always with the scribes and storytellers, and from a young age Fuat was groomed to be a lord and attended on his father's court when he was not in the whorehouse. Gazi, though, was a born sailor. He and Fuat grew to hate each other, as brothers do.

THE MOON OVER HEAVEN



When Gazi was fifteen, Fuat became lord. One of his first acts was to give his brother command of a fort on the southern border, as far from the sea as can be. They quarrelled, and Gazi struck his brother. Fuat would have killed him, but Gazi fled. I saw to it that he got to a merchant's ship heading for Khorosan – from there, I'd wager he went upriver along the Nezvaya to Brythunia and the dreaming west.

What about the girl, Zuleyeh?

Some concubine from Fuat's seraglio. Stealing her away from Fuat was as brave a deed as I've ever seen Vahit manage. She's an odd one, though, not much like a desert nomad to my mind. She never left Vahit's side while she was on board ship, so I've no idea why she'd have slipped off in the desert.

MEANWHILE...

The demon-dream Zuleyeh flies across the sea, bodiless and invisible as the wind, to one of the hundreds of pirate coves from where the Red Brotherhood set sail. There, she fashions another body, this time attuning herself to the first mate of the pirate ship Sea Ghul – Gazi al-Azar. This time, she takes the form of a beautiful thief, a shape and demeanour more pleasing to the mind of Gazi, and whispers to him of a great treasure to be won on the high seas.

Zuleyeh's words are seductive and convincing; the Sea Ghul leaves with the morning tide, heading to intercept Captain Jiangir's.

LIFE ON MOON OVER HEAVEN

Jiangir's boat, Moon over Heaven, is a small one, with only a small crew. It is a coastal vessel, and the isle is deep in the wide Vilayet Sea, so it is rocked by the waves and suffers from flooding. It is an uncomfortable voyage, an odd contrast to the luxurious furnishings of the pleasure-boat. Vahit grows increasingly impatient, and complains about missing Zuleyeh. He also becomes more abusive towards the characters, treating them as hired mercenaries, servants or even slaves.

Moon Over Heaven

Small Turanian Vessel

Dimensions: 25 ft x 10 ft

Crew: 4/12

Hardness/HP: 5/100

Speed (Rowed): 1

Speed (Sail): 4

Tactical Movement: 3

Modifiers: +1 to overland movement and +1 movement point when closing in favourable winds

Max. Cargo: 1

Components: Turanian Rigging, Passenger Room

Captain Jiangir is a sensible and diplomatic man, who is quite capable of seeing Vahit's cruelty and even madness. However, he is utterly loyal to the Azar family; he will not disobey Vahit's commands, but he tries to be a moderating influence on board ship, keeping the characters from angering Vahit.

Captain Jiangir

Medium Human Turanian Pirate 5; HD: 5d8+10 (32 hp); **Init:** +6; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 15; **Parry DV:** 13; **DR:** 4; **Atk:** Scimitar +4 melee; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +4 melee; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8+1, 19–20/x2, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack; **SQ:** Turanian qualities, Seamanship +1, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Subdual, Uncanny Dodge; **SV:** Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills & Feats: Appraise +6, Balance +7 (6 in armour), Bluff +4, Climb +6 (5 in armour), Intimidate +4, Knowledge (geography) +10, Move Silently +6 (5 in armour), Profession (sailor) +7, Spot +5, Survival +9, Swim +5 (3 in armour), Use Rope +7; Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mobility

Possessions: Scimitar, Leather Jerkin

The crew consists of a dozen well-trained sailors; while Jiangir's ship is just a pleasure boat made for short trips around the islands near Agrapur, the fractious nature of Turanian politics means that the crew have had to fight off assassins and pirates on occasion. Notable members of the crew are:

- ✦ **Kerun:** A whipcord-thin sailor, quiet Kerun is Jiangir's nephew and acts as first mate on board ship. Kerun has always been secretly jealous of his uncle's loyalty to the Azar brothers, and considers Vahit, Fuat and the rest to be spoiled and monstrous brats. If the characters start to conspire against any of the brothers, then quiet Kerun is their best ally on board ship.
- ✦ **Nias:** The ship's cook and unofficial entertainer, he is always first with a joke or a song. Nias is increasingly worried about this strange errand, fearing retribution from Fuat for aiding Vahit and stealing the ship.
- ✦ **Alafa:** Alafa is a young sailor who dreams of being a hero. In any fight, he will leap into the fray. In the confrontation with Gazi's pirate ship (see below), the characters will have to keep a close eye on him.
- ✦ **Uthan:** Uthan knows how dangerous the rages of Lord Fuat can be, and fears that everyone on the ship will be killed by Fuat as punishment for disobeying him. Therefore, Uthan will take any opportunity to win Fuat's favour or to turn the ship against Vahit.

Use the same statistics for all the crew:

Sailors

Medium Human Turanian Commoner 3; HD: 3d4+9 (16 hp); **Init:** +1; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 11; **Parry DV:** 12; **DR:** 0; **Atk:** Scimitar +2 melee or Hyrkanian Bow +3 ranged; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +2 melee or Hyrkanian Bow +3 ranged;

Dmg: Scimitar 1d8+1, 19–20/x2, AP 3 or Bow 1d10, 19–20/x2, AP2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** –; **SQ:** Turanian qualities,

Illiteracy; **SV:** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills & Feats: Balance +3, Climb +3, Listen +3, Profession (sailor) +3, Ride +3, Spot +3, Swim +3, Use Rope +3; Toughness, Far Shot

Possessions: Scimitar, Hyrkanian Bow

SEARCHING FOR THE ISLE OF MISTS

Even with the best navigation, it takes some time to find the Isle. Jiangir must sail around in circles, taking navigation readings each evening. Finding the correct location requires a successful Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) at DC30 – only one check can be made each night. The DC falls by DC5 each night, so Jiangir will almost certainly find it within four nights. Characters with a higher Profession (sailor) check may find it faster.

Eventually, the stars sighted match the configuration from the tomb. The ship is now somewhere near the fabled Isle of the Mists. The next morning, one of the characters on board the ship spots a grey-white cloud on the horizon.

Gazi's ship, the Sea Ghul, may catch up before the characters make it to the Isle – see below. When the ship reaches the Isle, move onto the Isle of the Mists section on page 16.

THE SEA GHUL

Now, Gazi's ship has been closing on the location of the Moon over Heaven for three days. Guided by Zuleyeh, the Sea Ghul catches up with the Moon over Heaven at some point. Depending on when the characters locate the Isle of the Mists, the conditions in which they face the Sea Ghul differ.

Sea Ghul

Medium Turanian Pirate

Dimensions: 60 ft x 15 ft

Crew: 4/12 + 40 pirates.

Hardness/HP: 5/200

Speed (Rowed): 0

Speed (Sail): 3

Tactical Movement: 3

Modifiers: +1 to overland movement and +1 movement point when closing in favourable winds, -3 to resist boarding, +1 base speed from thin lines

Max. Cargo: 1

Components: Boarding Deck, Cargo Hold, Thin Lines, Turanian Lines

The sails of the Sea Ghul are easily spotted on the horizon. Jiangir recognises it as a pirate ship. His tactics vary depending on where the ship is encountered. If on the open sea, then he orders his ship to flee, but Vanit commands it to head toward the Isle. If in the mists, then the ship tries to hide from the pirates. If on the beaches, then the Sea Ghul comes alongside the Moon over Heaven while it is anchored offshore.

Encountering the Sea Ghul

Characters have...	Location
Not located the Isle	Open Sea
Located but not landed	The Mists
Located	The Beaches

The Sea Ghul is a Red Brotherhood dhow (see *The Pirate Isles*, pg. 54). She carries around 40 pirates on board. Her captain is a Brythunian-born kozak called Massimo; the pastoral Brythunians rarely make good sailors, but he has a gift for leadership and relies on Gazi for advice on seamanship. The towering Brythunian is unfailingly good-humoured; many of the crew suspect he has some Asgardian blood in his heritage, although their main evidence for this is the huge battle-axe he wields in battle.

Massimo

Medium Human Hyborian Pirate 9; HD: 9d8+18 (58 hp); **Init:** +8; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 18; **Parry DV:** 18; **DR:** 6; **Atk:** Battleaxe +10 melee and Short Sword +10; **Full Atk:** Battleaxe +10/+5 melee and Short Sword +10; **Dmg:** Battleaxe 1d10+4, x3, AP 4, Short Sword 1d8+2, 19-20/x2, AP1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Ferocious Attack (additional attack), Sneak Attack +3d6; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Climb, Survival), Seamanship +2, To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Subdual, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Bite Sword, Poison Resistance +1; **SV:** Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills & Feats: Appraise +5, Balance +6 (8 on ship, -3 in armour), Bluff +8, Climb +11 (8 in armour), Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +11 (8 in armour), Knowledge (geography) +7, Perform (sing) +7, Profession (sailor) +4, Spot +8, Use Rope +6 (+8 on board ship); Athletic, Brawl, Cleave, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Combat, Mobility

Possessions: Battle axe, short sword, mail shirt, steel cap

The Sea Ghul is currently undermanned; if it were hunting Turanian or Hykanian merchants, then it would carry another score or three of pirates. Zuleyeh told Gazi that time was of the essence, so the ship left without its full complement. Her crew is a motley mix of Turanian exiles like Gazi, escaped

slaves, tribesmen from the borderlands between Hyrkania and the dreaming west and wanderers from across the world.

Crew

Medium Human Turanian Pirate 2; HD: 2d8+2 (11 hp); **Init:** +5; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13; **Parry DV:** 12; **DR:** 5; **Atk:** Scimitar +2 melee or bow +3 ranged; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +2 melee or bow +4 ranged; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8+1, 18-20/x2, AP 2 or Hunting Bow 1d8, x2, AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Ferocious Attack; **SQ:** Turanian Traits, Seamanship +1, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags); **SV:** Fort +4, Ref +5, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Climb +7 (+6 in armour), Knowledge (geography) +5, Profession (sailor) +4, Use Rope +7; Far Shot

Possessions: Leather Jerkin, Steel Cap, Hunting Bow, Scimitar

Finally, there is Gazi al-Azar. The middle brother of the three, Gazi lacked the scholarly bent of his brothers. He loves action. Gazi is always in motion, always restless. At first, his lust for thrills and combat was sated by travel, but he soon discovered a taste for bloodshed. While Fuat's cruelty is legendary in the courts of Agrapur, and Vahit never really gets a chance to indulge the malice born of his demon heritage, Gazi has channelled his bloodthirst into combat. He resembles his brothers, but his features are thinner and more weather-beaten. The characters are unlikely to notice this at first glance, though, because Gazi customarily wears a flap of cloth across his mouth and nose when in battle. He carries an antique sword he stole from the Azar treasury.

Gazi

Medium Human Turanian Pirate 8; HD: 8d8+8 (44 hp); **Init:** +; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 19; **Parry DV:** 16; **DR:** 5; **Atk:** Masterwork Tulwar +9 melee or Hyrkian bow +10 ranged; **Full Atk:** Masterwork Tulwar +9/+4 melee or Hyrkian bow +10/+5 ranged; **Dmg:** Masterwork Tulwar 2d8+3, 18-20/x3, AP3 or Hykanian Bow 1d10, 19-20/x2, AP3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Ferocious Attack (Additional Attack), Sneak Attack +2d6; **SQ:** Turanian Traits, Seamanship +2, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags), Sneak Subdual, Bite Sword, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance 1; **SV:** Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills & Feats: Balance +8, Climb +8, Intimidate +6, Hide +3, Jump +8, Knowledge (geography) +8, Move Silently +8, Profession (sailor) +8, Spot +7, Survival +6, Swim +7, Tumble +8, Use Rope +6; Power Attack, Cleave, Light-Footed, Mobility

Possessions: Leather Jerkin, Steel Cap, Hyrkian Bow, Masterwork Tulwar

He is accompanied by Zuleyeh. She wears somewhat more modest garb than she did when serving Vahit; she resembles a legendary pirate queen like Belit now, carrying a sword and wearing a light tunic and a veil. Zuleyeh will stay out of view of the characters and Vahit initially, to avoid revealing her dual nature.

OPEN SEA – THE CHASE

Both ships can make roughly the same speed in the wind, but the Moon Over Heaven cannot cope with the deeper waters of the open sea. Each swell rocks the little pleasure boat, threatening to overturn it. Sea Ghul is built for the wilds of the open Vilayet, and is considerably more stable.

Mechanically, the chase is resolved by opposed Profession (sail) checks. Both ships have a movement of 3; each round, they make opposed checks, and the winner may adjust the distance between them by an amount equal to the ship's movement.

Each round, roll for the effects of the wind on the ships: Finally, the heavy swell gives the Moon Over Heaven a -5 penalty to Profession (sail) checks. Characters can aid Jiangir, either by just making Aid Another checks, or by heroic actions like shooting bows at the approaching ship to throw off pursuit.

Effects of the Wind

Roll (1d6)	Result
1-3	No effect
4	+1 to Moon over Heaven's movement
5-6	+1 to Sea Ghul's movement

The ships begin 1d3+1 spaces apart; if the distance is reduced to 0, then the pirates can leap aboard. If the distance between the two reaches 8, then the Moon over Heaven has escaped.

If the ship is boarded, then the characters will have to fight the pirates off. They are massively outnumbered, and even the most heroic slaughter on the part of the characters will likely result in the Moon Over Heaven being captured. As Gazi and Massimo are hunting for the location of the Isle of the Mists, then they do not want to kill the characters, Vahit or Jiangir. If overwhelmed, the characters will be captured and imprisoned on board the Sea Ghul. See Imprisoned!, below.

If the ship escapes, then the characters still need to make it

to the Isle of the Mists. The Sea Ghul will continue to search for the Moon Over Heaven. One option is to have Zuleyeh show up again, clinging to driftwood. She will claim that she was captured by the pirates, who tortured her until she revealed what Vahit was looking for.

THE MISTS – HIDE AND SEEK

If the ships meet in the mists surrounding the Isle, then the Moon Over Heaven has a much better chance of reaching the Isle of the Mists. The chase works just like the chase above, but there is no penalty to the Moon Over Heaven's sailing checks (the seas are less violent close to the isle), and the distance to escape is only 6, not 8.

Danger on the High Seas

Roll	Hazard
1	Lost in the mists – the pilot must make a Profession (sailor) or Survival check (DC20) or the distance between the ships is reduced or increased by 1d4, depending on which ship failed the check.
2	Treacherous current – the ship suffers a -5 penalty to its next Profession (sailor) check.
3	Rocks – spotting the rock requires a Spot check (DC20); avoiding it calls for Profession (sailor) check (DC15). If failed, the ship suffers 3d10 points of damage.
4	Man Overboard – someone falls overboard. Turning back to rescue him gives a -10 penalty to the next Profession (sailor) check in the chase.
5	Reefs – as rocks, above, but running into the rocks does 6d10 points of damage and automatically ends a chase.
6	Horrors in the Mist - Six Swamp Demons (see page 30) clamber onboard the characters' ship on a raid for food. They will each try to grab a crewman and leap overboard with him, drowning them on the return trip to the island. This is an opportunistic raid and they will flee in the face of determined resistance.

However, the thick mists hide other dangers. There are treacherous reefs and currents around the island. A ship that is carefully making its way through the mists to the Isle can avoid these reefs, but a ship that is charging headlong trying



to escape the Sea Ghul runs the risk of driving itself around. If either ship rolls a natural 1 or 2 when making a Profession (sail) check, then roll on the following table for the threat it encounters.

THE BEACH – BLOODY TIDE

If the Sea Ghul does not reach the Moon Over Heaven until the Isle has been reached, then the fight takes place on the beach. Skip onto the Isle of the Mists section for the Moon Over Heaven's initial landing and investigation of the island, then have the Sea Ghul arrive later. The characters can avoid being imprisoned, and may be able to thin Gazi's pirates out by ambushing them in the jungles instead of facing them all at once.

IMPRISONED!

If the Moon Over Heaven is caught, then Gazi leads the attack on the ship, leaping onto the deck of the pleasure boat with drawn sword. He shouts and orders his men not to kill Jiangir or Vahit, mentioning them by name. He then neatly decapitates one of the crew, sending the body tumbling over the rail.

Characters who surrender or are knocked unconscious during the fight wake up in chains on board the Sea Ghul. Vahit is also imprisoned there. Both Captain Massimo and Gazi al-Azar are waiting to interrogate them. Captain Massimo begins, asking them about what Vahit told them

about a treasure on the island. Massimo is reasonable, and may even try to recruit the characters onto his crew – they are presumably not very loyal to Vahit, and he is always willing to bring good fighters on board.

If the characters are not willing to co-operate, then Massimo gives way to Gazi. Gazi is willing to torture the characters to get the information he wants, and will probably torture Vahit just because he can, for old time's sake. The characters can speak to Gazi while he is questioning them.

ZULEYEH

If the characters glimpse the mysterious thief who shares Gazi's bedroll on board the Sea Ghul, then they will recognise her as Zuleyeh, but her demeanour and attitude is quite different. However, if they can draw her over to where they are imprisoned, her attitude and body language change and become more familiar, more submissive, more like the slave-girl they met in the desert. Zuleyeh reflects whichever one of the brothers she is attuned to.

Zuleyeh will not answer questions about where she came from or what she is doing on board the ship; give the impression that this might be a twin sister or a grand conspiracy of some sort. If the players assume that Zuleyeh is only working with Gazi so she can betray him, then do not confirm this one way or the other. Make them paranoid, but try to avoid making them assume that Zuleyeh is an out-and-out villain at this point in the scenario.

The Isle of the Mists

THE ISLE OF THE MISTS



ON BOARD THE Sea Ghul or the Moon Over Heaven, the characters sail through the thick shroud of vapours surrounding the isle, and look for the first time on its basalt shores and obsidian beaches. The isle is craggy and volcanic, with strange jungles cascading in torrents of fetid green from the hunched shoulders of the central mountain. A ruined old harbour is the obvious place to dock.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISLE OF MISTS

Locations marked in bold have more detailed descriptions later in this chapter.

The Isle is surrounded by rocky shores or cliffs, making it almost impossible to land a ship anywhere along it. The

cliffs average one hundred feet in height, and require a Climb check at DC20 to scale. The one natural harbour is at the southern end of the isle (1). It looks like the cliffs here collapsed millennia ago, creating a rough slope of broken rubble and scree up to the island proper. There are several ruined buildings clustered around the harbour, and the remains of jetties and wave-breaks can be glimpsed, poking out of the water like rotten black teeth.

The slopes north of the harbour are choked with even thicker mists than those that surround the island. The harbour is in an eerily clear 'eye' surrounded on all sides by impenetrable mists. A road (2) leads north out of the harbour area. It was once a wide, stone-paved highway, but the flagstones are worn, shattered or pushed aside by landslides from the high slopes, and it is covered by matted vegetation. The road soon splits in two, with both branches running uphill. The **left-hand branch** winds through the mists to the north, while the **right-hand branch** goes up along the top of the vertiginous coastal cliffs like a suicidal mountain goat.

Steam and smoke belches from the **hot-springs and swamps** flanking the left-hand path (3). The road runs on a mighty causeway over these swamps, but the causeway has collapsed in several places. There are underwater tunnels from the deeper pools leading out into the open sea. The swamp is home to a breed of half-blooded swamp demons, the results of the summoned guardians in the vale breeding with the native wildlife.

The road leads into a thickly wooded valley, the **Vale of Guardians** (4). These forests are home to various unnatural beasts, guardians summoned by the horror millennia ago to defend the Isle against foes who were not rebuffed by the mists. The valley is surrounded by three steep-sided hills. The **Smoking Hill** (5) is volcanically active, with smoke tendrils wreathing its peak. The heat here is intense, and the slopes are prone to landslides. The **Hill of Statues** (6) was once cleared of all trees and vegetation, to leave room for the titanic faces carved into its basalt cliffs. Only small statues can be seen from the vale of guardians, but there is a huge face on the eastern side, visible from the sea road.

To the north of the vale of horrors is the **Tomb Hill** (7), where the horror sleeps. The cliffs here are incredibly difficult to climb (Climb DC30) due to their steepness and strange bulges and overhangs. From the rest of the island, a narrow path can be seen winding its way up and around the hill (10).

The eastern branch of the road (8) runs along the top of the sea-cliffs. A misstep could send a character plummeting to his death on the rocks below. The road runs right underneath

the eastern face of the Hill of Statues, where a massive face can be seen staring out into the night. It also passes the ruins of an observatory tower. The road ends in the **Ruined City** (9) where the servants and worshippers of the horror once dwelt.

From the far side of the ruined city, there is another road, a **sacred road** (10) that runs all the way up to the **Tomb of the Horror** (11).

ENCOUNTERS AND EVENTS

There are several events that can happen almost anywhere on the Isle – see below for details.

THE LOST HARBOUR (I)

Wooden stumps that once supported a jetty poke like rotten black teeth from the water. You are sailing between two towering black cliffs, but the harbour is in a cleft where the slope up to the island is merely steep, not utterly unclimbable. You can see several ruined structures surrounding the harbour, and an overgrown road leads deeper into the island's thick mists and jungles. From the look of the harbour, no-one has been here in centuries.

No-one has dared to come here.

A: The ruined jetty.

B: The harbour.

C: Ruined buildings. The buildings are made of roughly hewn stone. Their roofs have all collapsed in on themselves, and the passing centuries have toppled the walls. From the look of the buildings, they were once a boathouse, a storehouse and a guard post.

D: Warning. There are some bone fragments lying in the shelter of this wall, as well as what can only be the remains of a rusted sword. Something is carved into the stones above the skeleton. Recreating the message requires searching through the fallen stones for the other blocks bearing parts of the message. Once the whole inscription is reconstructed, a successful Decipher Script check (DC15) reveals that the message is written in an old dialect used by the Yuetshi fishers of the southern Vilayet, and reads THIS PLACE IS CURSED. LEAVE AND NEVER RETURN.

E: The start of the road.



THE LOST HARBOUR

THE ROAD (2)

The swirling mists part to reveal a figure squatting by the side of the ruined and overgrown road. It is a statue of some sort of frog-thing, three feet tall and hewn from black stone. While the massive flagstones of the road have crumbled and cracked over the centuries, the ugly statue seems almost unweathered by the passing years.

A successful Search or Survival check (DC20) confirms that no-one has used this road in centuries. There are markers every few hundred feet along the road; these markers are ugly statues, three feet tall, that resemble humanoid frogs. Many of the statues are missing, although the holes where their bases once rested can still be seen. It is as if the statues had come to life and waddled off into the swamps (players tend to be suspicious of statues that look like they might come to life), but these statues were just taken by the swamp demons, who worship them as idols.

The northern road crosses the swamp via a crumbling causeway. As the characters try to cross this causeway, they are ambushed by lesser swamp demons (one demon per character, see page 30). Fighting on the causeway requires a Balance check at DC10 each round to avoid falling into the swamp.

Characters in the swamp must wade

through the hot, waist-deep mud; their movement is reduced by 10 feet per round, and their Dodge is reduced by -4.

Swamp Demons: HP 22 each.

THE SWAMPS (3)

The mist is more like steam here, boiling off bubbling pools, and the mud is painfully hot in places. The dimensions of this hellish swamp are hard to determine; to the north, you can see the central hills of the island rising out of the mists, but you can not tell how much of the fetid swamp lies between you and solid ground.

The swamps are pock-marked with bubbling hot springs and steam vents. Inattentive characters may stumble into a hot spring and scald themselves for 2d4 damage (Reflex save, DC14 for half damage). In the centre of the swamps is the nest of the demons. There are twenty of these inhuman horrors. The little tribe survives by hunting fish in the seas below the island. The creatures are clever enough to use basic tools, but they are no more intelligent than apes.

The swamp demon nest is a tangle of intestine-like tunnels dug into the swamp, and lined with a vile sticky goo vomited up by the demons. The tunnels are only two feet wide, so characters who want to investigate the tunnels will have to wriggle and crawl their way in there. The larger nesting chambers inside are big enough to stand and swing a sword in. There are no young demons – they are the product of the unnatural union of the guardians with slaves or native wildlife on the island. Characters who bother to crawl down into the nest and slaughter the other swamp demons find little more than fish bones and other debris, although there are some pieces of ancient and shiny jewellery buried in a cache beneath one of the stolen road markers. This jewellery is worth 250 silver pennies if sold.

THE VALE OF GUARDIANS (4)

A strange jungle fills this entire valley. You can see the occasional ruin covered by vines and curious trees whose names you do not know, but for the most part, this vale seems untrodden by the feet of men.

This lush valley is filled with a riotous jungle of strange plants and trees. The characters will recognise most of them as being native to the lands around the Vilayet sea, but some are bizarre species, bulbous and many-coloured, their fronds waving as if blown by an imperceptible breeze that affects none of the more familiar plants. The road through the Vale quickly vanishes in the undergrowth.

In the centre of the Vale of Guardians is a small domed structure, made of green stone. There is a single entrance through an archway. This dome contains the Amulet of the Shifting Sky, a magical device left by the horror when it felt the stars beginning to change. The Amulet of the Shifting Sky is a potent magical device in the right hands – the right hands being those of either Fuat, Gazi or Vahit al-Azar, for the talisman allows one of the three brothers to merge with the horror and resurrect it.

The Amulet of the Shifting Sky

The Amulet is a fist-size piece of greasy green stone, studded with patterns of sunken dots resembling constellations. It hangs suspended from a chain of silvery metal that is oddly warm to the touch. The primary purpose of the Amulet is to attune the descendants of the horror's bloodline to the horror – see *The Rebirth of the Horror* on page 27.

The Amulet does have some lingering magical properties, even for those who are not descended from the inhuman horror. A character wearing the Amulet has his base Power Points increased by +4.

The building containing the Amulet is protected by the Guardians, a pair of demons summoned and bound by the horror in ancient days (see page 31). Anyone trespassing in the Vale will be stalked and killed by the demons. One demon roams at random through the Vale, the other lurks in the trees near the dome.

Guardians: 67 hp.

THE SMOKING HILL (5)

Clouds of sulphurous gas and ash roll down the slopes of this tortured hill.

Curiously, this volcanic hill, rife with steam vents, gas jets, sharp rocks and the occasional pool of lava, is actually one of the safer places on the island as there are no swamp demons or inhuman guardians to threaten the characters. The Smoking Hill is an excellent place for the characters to hide or to make a stand against the pirates or Fuat's forces when they arrive. Rocks can be rolled down on approaching forces, and the boulders and crevasses provide plenty of places to hide.

THE HILL OF STATUES (6)

Climbing this steep hill, you see faces peering out at you from between the trees. Once-beautiful statues are scattered across the hillside, as if the garden of some wealthy noble had been spilled on this primeval landscape.

The statues depict a mix of creatures. Some are horrific demons, like the guardians, others are human figures. These are divided into two sets: some show humans in states of terror, being tortured or menaced by alien horrors. Others depict handsome, heroic figures, dressed in finery. Their faces all resemble the al-Azar family.

The massive face on the eastern side of the hill is carved from basalt. Any characters travelling around the eastern road will have to pass through its terrible stare. Again, it resembles the features of the al-Azars.

A character looking into the eyes of the face sees the stars reflected in those polished obsidian orbs, even during the daytime. Strangely, the stars reflected are not the same stars as those that hang in the sky above the island.

TOMB HILL (7)

The northernmost hill on the island is foreboding and very steep indeed. Some trick of perspective makes it seem taller than it is, for it seems to touch the very sky.

This hill is difficult to climb (DC30) except by the road which snakes around it. The path of the road is marked by more of the frog statues, which glow with a faint witchfire in the night. The path is only wide enough for a pair of travellers to pass abreast, and turns so sharply that line of sight is limited to twenty feet at best. This means that the road up to Tomb Hill is an excellent place to hold back an attacking army.

THE EASTERN ROAD (8)

In several sections, the Eastern Road runs along very narrow ledges, many of which have partially collapsed into the sea a hundred feet below. Moving along these ledges requires a Balance check at DC12; failing by more than 5 sending the character plummeting down into the sea.

At the easternmost extreme of the road, just where it turns along the coast to reach the Ruined City, there stands a tower. Of all the island's ruins, the tower has survived the best, and is still largely intact. The tower is three stories in height, topped with a dome. The two lower floors are largely empty, although there are a few shards of broken clay tablets. Putting the tablets back together reveals that the tablets are some sort of astrological calculation, but too much of the tablet has been destroyed to work out what the final result of the calculation was.

The third floor of the tower is especially dangerous, as the floor is cracked and on the verge of collapse. The next storm to hit it will likely destroy the whole top half of the tower. Ribs of weathered brass arc over the third floor, with the occasional broken



THE RUINED CITY

pane of crystal still attached. Once, centuries ago, this was an observatory of the heavens. The observatory is an excellent place for the characters to spot Fuat's ships (the ships arrive; see below) or encounter the ghost (see below).

THE RUINED CITY

(9)

This is a city of black stone, now crumbled and destroyed. The jungle has reclaimed much of it. All around you, though, you can hear scraping and scratching noises. Some instinct tells you that this place is haunted.

This city was once magnificent yet ghastly, a city designed by an alien intellect and built by slave labour. The jungle has mercifully covered the worst of the city's excesses, and the elements have scoured away most of the blood that once stained its stones. All the buildings marked on the map below are ruins – the roofs have all collapsed, and the walls are overgrown with ivy and trees. All the buildings save the temple (F) are made of black basalt hewn from the bedrock of the island. The temple is made of strange green stone.

A: The eastern road. The ever-present frog statues along this road have all been shattered or toppled.

B: The main plaza. Characters in this area hear the scraping noise of stone on stone. Looking around, they see several small fragments of stone moving across the plaza, pulled by some invisible force. The impending return of the horror is

causing the buildings of the city to rebuild themselves, brick by brick. This slow reconstruction can be seen everywhere in the ruined city. Dust clouds swirl, carrying specks and tiny fragments to fill tiny holes in the walls. Shards and stone fragments skitter like insects across streets, or struggle to climb up slopes so they can fit themselves into the walls.

C: The Sacred Road, leading around the northern side of the island to the Tomb.

D: Ruined palace. Of all the buildings, this is the most intact. Whole walls are slowly reconstructing themselves, rebuilt by unseen hands. It is obvious that this palace was looted at some point in the past; there are places where golden fittings have been torn away.

Characters exploring the palace come across one very odd thing – one corridor in the heart of the palace has footprints in the dust on the floor – recent ones. A successful Search or Survival check (DC10) discovers that these footprints are those of a woman, and are unnaturally light. The characters could come to the correct conclusion that Zuleyeh manifested here. The footprints suddenly start and stop.

Investigating the point where the footprints stop with a Search check (DC15) reveals that the flagstone there can be levered up. This is the secret entrance to the only one of the treasuries that was not looted when the Isle of the Mists was abandoned. The vault below the corridor contains a king's random in treasure and gold, mostly in the form of necklaces, headpieces, jewelled knives and curiously ugly idols.

Lifting the trapdoor requires a Strength check (DC20). The vault's floor is fifteen feet below, and there is no ladder or other way to get down other than jumping.

Taking the treasure is dangerous, as the very walls will attempt to stop the theft. The moving stones abruptly stop moving towards the walls they were dislodged from, and instead start trying to bury the thieves alive. Firstly, the trapdoor itself starts trying to crawl back into place. It takes three rounds to move back into position; characters can restrain the trapdoor by making DC20 Strength checks. Secondly, smaller stones pelt the characters. Each character in the vault or in the corridor above is attacked by 1d3 stones each round, on his or her initiative. Each stone has an attack bonus of +5, and cannot be parried, only dodged. Each stone deals 1d6 damage, and a character struck by a stone suffers a -2 penalty to any skill checks made that round. A character grabbing random treasures gets 1d6x100 silvers worth of treasure per round of theft.

Even if the characters get out of the vault, the stones of the palace continue trying to kill them until they leave the ruin. It takes three rounds to run out of the palace. Each round, roll on the following table to see what danger threatens the characters.

E: House of the Ghost. A bearded figure can be seen peering from one of the windows of this once-proud structure. If the characters have not yet encountered the ghost, then run that encounter here.

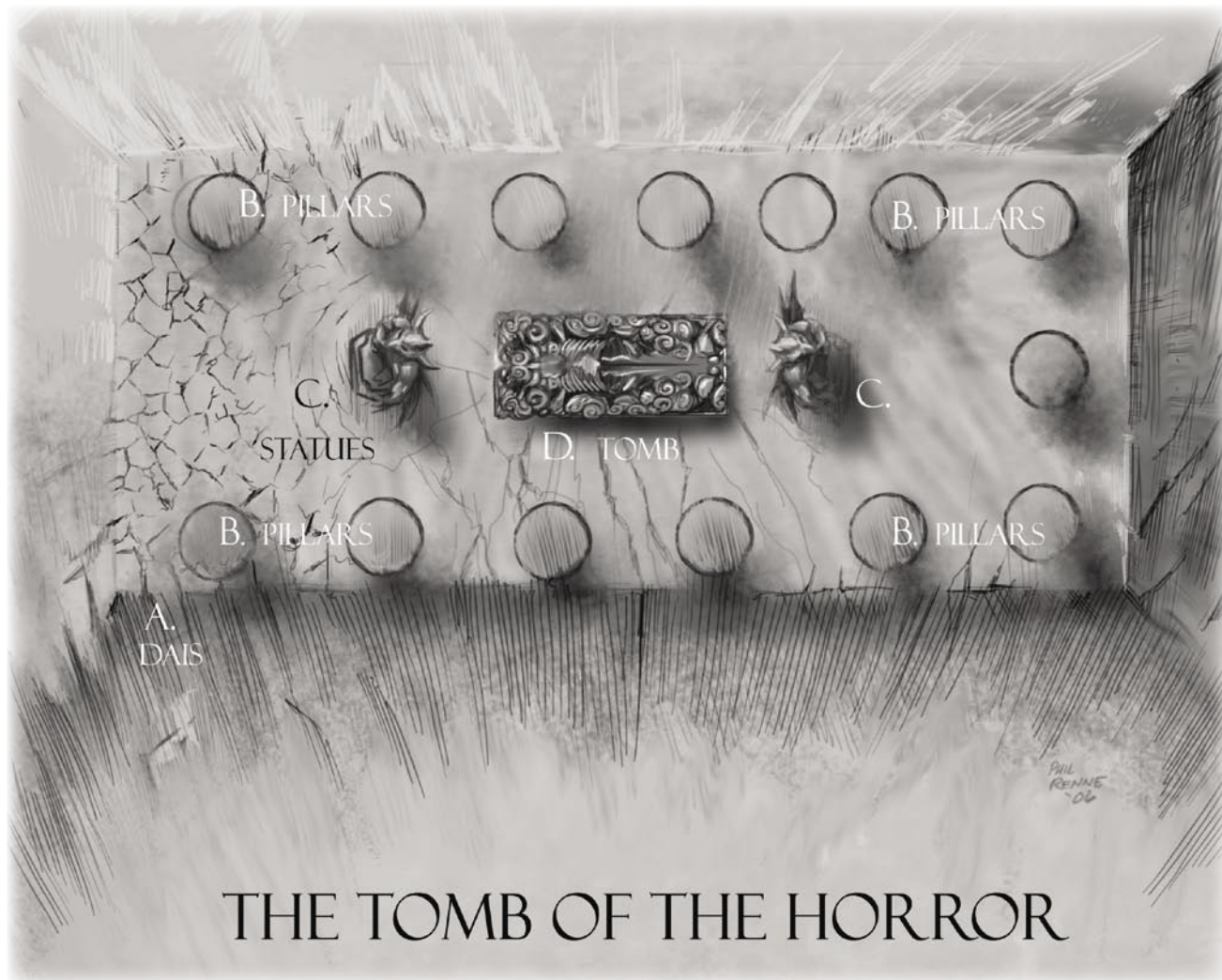
Robbing the Vault

Roll	Hazard
1	More flying stones, as described above.
2	Moving walls. The characters' exit is blocked, adding another 1d3 rounds to their time to flee.
3	Collapsing walls. All characters must make a Reflex save (DC15). Those who fail suffer 2d6 points of damage and are knocked prone.
4	Giant rolling boulder following the characters. The slowest character in the group must somehow avoid the boulder or be crushed for 4d6 damage.

G: Temple. This is the most intact of the structures in the ruined town. Unlike the other buildings, it is built of green stone. The temple is a larger version of the dome found in the Vale of Guardians (see page 18). Inside, the temple is decorated with a series of pictograms that recount the coming of the horror and how it came to rule over the people of the isle – a glorified version of the tale on page 9). The pictograms also show how the stars will one day come right again, and the horror will return using the Amulet of the Shifting Sky.

THE SACRED ROAD (10)

The road from the ruined city is in better condition than those elsewhere, being less cracked and worn than the others on the island. As with the ruined city the road is slowly being repaired as stones broken or moved over the centuries are replaced as if by invisible hands.



THE TOMB OF THE HORROR

THE TOMB OF THE HORROR (II)

The Tomb of the Horror can be seen from anywhere on the island, as it sits on the highest point of the central hill. It is an open building – the roof is supported by huge pillars, but there are no walls. Despite this, it has suffered less weathering than any of the other buildings.

A: Dais. The Tomb's floor is five feet higher than the surrounding ground. The whole structure is made from green stone that is strangely greasy to the touch.

B: Pillars. These massive pillars support the ornate roof of the tomb. The pillars on the south side of the tomb are cracked and damaged, but are still sturdy. It is

possible to crack them and collapse the roof of the tomb, but this would require dealing 100 points of damage to each pillar (the pillars have Hardness 10) or making a DC30 Strength check.

C: Statues. These statues are stone representations of the guardians from the Vale below. In fact, they are petrified demons, who awaken if the remains of the Horror are disturbed. The statues take 1d3 rounds to transform; during this time, they cannot move or attack, but their DR is increased by 5 points.

D: The Tomb. This is a simple stone sarcophagus, almost identical to the one in the tomb in the desert. If opened, it is found to contain nothing but foul-smelling gooey black mulch. Attempting to remove the slime from the tomb is fruitless – anything put into the tomb passes straight through the slime, leaving only a foul black stain on the object.

War For the Isle

THE FOLLOWING EVENTS can happen almost anywhere on the island, and will likely occur in something like the following order.

THE CHARACTERS ARRIVE

Whether they are arriving on board the Moon Over Heaven or the Sea Ghul, as proud warriors or in chains as captives of the pirates, the characters still arrive at the harbour to the south of the island. The characters' choices – explore or fight – will likely be dictated by how they arrive. Those who are fleeing the pirates or trying to escape may find the jungles and hills of the inner island more suitable for a confrontation or hiding.

BLOODY TIDE

The Sea Ghul arrives in the harbour, and the pirates send boats to capture the Moon Over Heaven if they have not already done so. If the characters stand and fight, they will likely be overcome and imprisoned (see page 14). The characters can however fight a guerrilla war from the jungles, stalking the pirate scouting parties that are sent out later (see below) until Fuat's ships arrive.

ZULEYEH VANISHES

Soon after the characters arrive on the island, Zuleyeh vanishes once more, just like she did in the desert earlier. The demon-dream is fleeing to the far south, to guide the third brother Fuat to the island. Characters examining the place where Zuleyeh was last seen find nothing but some dust and dried leaves where she was standing. If the pirates have already landed, then they assume that Zuleyeh either ran off or was captured by something living on the island, and go in search of her.

THE PIRATES ON THE ISLE

Captain Massimo sets up camp in the ruins of the town – even if Zuleyeh's tales of a lost treasure turn out to be false, a hidden island like this makes an excellent base for piracy. Virtually the entire crew goes ashore, leaving the Sea Ghul with only five crew on board. Massimo sends two scouting parties of five pirates up the road, to look for the treasure promised by Zuleyeh.

The pirates who go along the left-hand branch, through the swamp, get attacked by the swamp demons – only one makes it back alive, the others are captured, drowned and eaten. The pirates who explore the eastern road make it as far as the ruined city before turning back in terror. If the players are captured, then Massimo offers them their freedom if they will explore the island – he does not want to risk his crew against such horrors.

ATTACKED!

Eventually, either the pirates or the characters are going to run into either the swamp demons or the Guardians themselves. If the pirates are attacked, then they try to flee back to the camp in the harbour, and may be followed by the attackers. A demon attack on the pirate camp makes an excellent distraction if the characters are imprisoned and need to free themselves.

AMULET OF THE SHIFTING SKIES

The Amulet of the Shifting Skies is found in the centre of the Vale of Guardians. As the amulet is the key to the finale of the scenario, it is imperative that it comes into play as soon as possible.

If the characters head into the Vale of Guardians, then they will likely discover the domed building and the amulet themselves. However, if the characters do not think of heading into the isle's heart, then have Vahit point them that way, or have Captain Massimo ask them to investigate the swamp and forest.

If the characters never go after the Amulet, then eventually Gazi and a band of pirates will recover it – soon after Gazi's expedition departs the base camp, Fuat's ships arrive. Optionally, have the Amulet fall into the hands of one of the pirates, who then dies in a place where the characters can recover the talisman from his corpse – having the Amulet of the Shifting Skies in the hands of the player characters gives them a much bigger sway in the outcome of the scenario.



THE GHOST

All the people who once lived on the Isle are dead, but one lingers on as an unquiet spectre. His name is Asadin, and he was once the astrologer and adviser to the horror. He was also the leader of the resistance who conspired against the horror, although few of their efforts bore fruit in any way – the sorcerous powers of the alien entity were far too powerful. When the horror began to fade, the resistance planned to seize the Amulet of the Shifting Skies in order to prevent the horror's eventual resurrection, but the horror's last act was to move the amulet to the Vale of Guardians. The few conspirators left were too weak to defeat the summoned demons.

Now, with the return of the al-Azar bloodline to the isle, the ghost has been awoken. Asadin focuses on the player characters as the most likely tools for defeating the horror. He manifests either when they are in the ruins of the observatory, or in the ruined city; if the characters never make it to either location, then have the ghost contact them elsewhere on the island in desperation. The first

time the characters encounter the ghost, they must make a Horror check (DC15), but Asadin has no ability to affect the physical world.

Asadin manifests as a translucent spectral figure, wearing rags that were once the fine robes of a vizier. He is bearded, with keen eyes that still sparkle even though they are long dust. If possible, contrast Asadin with Jiangir; both were once loyal to an evil and cruel lord, but where Asadin waited too long before listening to his conscience, Jiangir has an opportunity on the island to turn on the al-Azar.

Asadin quickly fills the characters in on what happened on the isle centuries ago, and where the al-Azar bloodline came from. He also tells them what will happen if any of the three brothers manage to recontact the horror. If the Amulet of the Shifting Skies has not yet been found, then he suggests that they get that. If it has, then he urges them to stop any of the brothers from bringing the amulet to the tomb.

The characters may have questions for the ghost.

Where did the Horror come from?

Who can say, who can say? From the Outer Darkness, no doubt. It ruled over this island in the time of my grandfather's grandfather's grandfather. The tides had been red with spilled blood for a score of generations at least. Maybe such horrors filtered down from the sky when the Earth was young, and this one lingered on...or maybe some fool of a sorcerer called it out of the abyss with his magic.

What will happen if one of the brothers makes contact with this horror?

The horror will attune itself to the material world once again. Creatures like the horror come from the Outer Dark, beyond the band of light that surrounds this world. They cannot exist here easily. Some wrap themselves in bodies of iron, to weigh their airy matter down. There are other methods, though. The horror sired a bloodline who have traces of the Outer Dark in their blood, a bridge to the material world.

If a scion of this bloodline awakens the horror, the two will become one, and the horror will walk again, clothed in mortal flesh once more.

What is the Amulet used for?

By the laws of the cosmos, the horror should not exist on this world in this age. It is an aberration, a blasphemy, until the stars change. The Amulet lessens the arcane pressure on the horror, making it less stressful to exist in the material world. The horror can still merge with a host, but the Amulet makes such a merger much less stressful.

How can we stop it?

The horror can be lured out from its tomb, into the material world. Then, it can be destroyed – but that is very perilous. If none of the brothers made it to the tomb, then the horror would remain trapped for another age.

Why are all three brothers here? Doesn't it only need one of them?

Aye, any one of the bloodline could serve as host to the horror. I suspect that it brought all three here to ensure that it would have at least one vessel for its evil. Perhaps it will then devour the others, like a newly-hatched lizard eating the rest of the brood.

Who is Zuleyeh/who are the other girls?

Zuleyeh is the horror, an emanation of its sleeping mind. She does not truly exist, but is a physical manifestation of the horror's attention. I sensed her moving through the psychic realm I am trapped in; she is dark and terrible. She will try to thwart whatever you do to stop the rebirth of the horror.

THE SHIPS ARRIVE

When Vahit fled his brother's keep, the sorcerer Fuat began using the *vision* spell to search for his brother. Fuat has launched two ships from her personal navy, with the intention of claiming the treasure of the Isle of the Mists. Fuat's ships arrive a day or so after the characters reach the isle.

Of all the brothers, Fuat is the only one that the horror fears. It can easily overwhelm the minds of Gazi or Vahit, but Fuat has such discipline and strength of will that he might be the dominant part of a merger between horror and mortal. Therefore, the horror tried to ensure that Fuat never learned of the Isle of the Mists, but the *vision* spell ruined that plan. In an attempt to delay Fuat from finding the Tomb, Zuleyeh goes to Fuat soon after his ships come close to the isle, telling him of the Amulet of the Shifting Skies and how he needs the Amulet to claim the power of the horror.

The characters will see the sails of the approaching ships from any high point on the island, through a gap in the mists. From the moment the sails are seen, the characters have about three hours to prepare.

FUAT

The oldest of the brothers, Fuat was born to rule. Of all three, he is the closest by nature to the horror, with a talent for sorcery and a boundless taste for cruelty. Fuat is a monster in human form. He considers his cruelty to be a mark of his nobility; he believes a ruler should be absolutely feared by his subjects, so his vast estates in Turan are founded on terrible suffering and oppression. Fuat wields considerable influence in the court of King Yezdigerd; he has no friends and few allies, but he is wealthy and feared for his sorcery.

Fuat

Medium Human Turanian Scholar 10/Noble 1; HD: 10d6+1d8+22 (61 hp); **Init:** +4; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 14; **Parry DV:** 13; **DR:** 0; **Atk:** Scimitar +7 melee; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +7/+2 melee; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8, 19–20/x2, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Spells; **SQ:** Turanian qualities, Independent Sorcerer, Knowledge is Power, Rank Hath Its Privileges; **SV:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +13; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 14

Skills & Feats: Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +11, Craft (herbalism) +11, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +11, Heal +11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Sleight of Hand +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Search +12, Sense Motive +12; Tortured Sacrifice, Ritual Sacrifice, Toughness, Dodge, Iron Will

Possessions: Scimitar

Power Points: 9

Magic Attack: +7

Spells: *Divination (Astrological Prediction, Mind-Reading, Visions, Sorcerous News), Hypnotism (Entrance, Domination, Hypnotic Suggestion), Necromancy (Raise Corpse, Death Touch), Prestidigitation (Conjuring, Burst Barrier, Telekinesis)*

Soldiers (70)

Medium Human Turanian Soldier 2; HD: 2d10 (11 hp); **Init:** +0; **Spd:** 20 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 11; **Parry DV:** 11; **DR:** 7; **Atk:** Scimitar +3 melee or Bow +4 ranged; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +3 melee or Bow +4 Ranged; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8+1, 19–20/x2, AP 2 or Bow 1d10, 19–20/x3, AP3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** –; **SQ:** Turanian Qualities; **SV:** Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Climb +3, Ride +4, Search +4; Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (bow)

Possessions: Mail Hauberk, Steel Cap, Hyrkanian Bow, Scimitar

Officers (8)

Medium Human Turanian soldier 4; HD: 4d10+8 (33 hp); **Init:** +2; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13; **Parry DV:** 15; **DR:** 7; **Atk:** Scimitar +7 melee or Bow +7; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +7 melee or Bow +7; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8+2, 19–20/x2, AP 2 or Bow 1d10, 19–20/x2, AP3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** –; **SQ:** Turanian qualities, Formation Combat (skirmisher); **SV:** Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills & Feats: Bluff +5, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +2, Spot +2; Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bow)

Possessions: Mail Hauberk, Steel Cap, Hyrkanian Bow, Scimitar

The Factions on the Isle

Faction	Wants	Resources
Vahit	The Amulet/To get to the tomb	Sorcery; Jiangir and the crew of the Moon Over Heaven; possibly the player characters
Gazi	Once he learns of it, the Amulet/to get to the tomb/to kill Fuat	Twenty pirates who are personally loyal to him
Fuat	The Amulet/To get to the tomb	Two ships; 80 soldiers; sorcery
Massimo	To escape with any treasure he can find	Thirty pirates; the Sea Ghul if it is freed
Asadin	To stop the horror from being reborn	None
Zuleyeh	The rebirth of the horror, preferably through Vahit or Gazi	None
The Player Characters	?	?

Turanian Naval Dhows

Medium Turanian Naval Vessel

Dimensions: 55 ft x 15 ft

Crew: 4/12 + 38 marines

Hardness/HP: 5/200

Speed (Rowed): 0

Speed (Sail): 4

Tactical Movement: 4

Modifiers: +1 to overland movement and +1 movement point when closing in favourable winds, -2 to resist boarding, +1 base speed from rigging

Max. Cargo: 1

Components: Barracks, Thin Lines, Turan Rigging

The troops he brought with him are from his personal forces, more used to hunting down kozaks and Red Brotherhood pirates. Their loyalty is based on fear of their lord – he has used his hypnotic powers to control the officers, who are fanatically loyal to him, and they punish any dissent or disloyalty with instant death. Fuat has brought with him two naval dhows, each carrying fifty men.

The crew of the dhows consist of 20 sailors who are very superstitious and fearful of both Fuat and his soldiers. They will not leave the ships unless Fuat's position becomes desperate. They can be considered the equals to the crew of the Moon Over Heaven and use the statistics of the sailors on page 12.

WAR FOR THE ISLE

As soon as Fuat's dhows reach the isle, one blockades the entrance to the harbour and fires arrows at the Sea Ghul to keep it pinned down. The other ends up sending its troops ashore via

the swampy ground to the west, where they run afoul of the swamp demons. With Fuat's sorcery and the fanatic discipline of the soldiers, they manage to push through the southern edge of the swamps and reach the harbour, capturing the Sea Ghul and forcing the pirates to flee. Captain Massimo leads his men to the forested southern slopes of the Hill of Statues, trying to stay clear of the Guardians while ambushing and battling Fuat's soldiers within the forest, when they cannot use their superlative bows to bring his pirates down from afar.

From that point on, there are essentially seven factions working on the isle, all struggling for dominance (see the table above).

If the characters do nothing, then this is what happens: Zuleyeh guides Vahit to the dome in the centre of the Vale of Guardians, and he recovers the amulet. However, Gazi and his pirates follow and kill Vahit. Gazi then tries to reach the tomb, but is severely wounded by the Guardians. He flees through the forest, until Zuleyeh manifests near him and inspires him to keep going. Poor Jiangir is the only one of Vahit's men to survive, and he is left trapped in the dome at the centre of the Vale of Guardians.

Meanwhile, Massimo's pirates battle with the Turanian soldiers. Using his sorcery, he captures the ghost Asadin and interrogates the spectre. Leaving his troops to slaughter the pirates, Fuat takes a small bodyguard and heads along the eastern road through the ruined city to the Tomb of the Horror.

There, in that tomb on the hill, the brothers meet again. Gazi tries to use the Amulet to bond with the horror, but his injuries are too great. Fuat murders him and becomes the horror. See the Rebirth of Horror for details on what happens when one of the brothers merges with the horror.

The Horror Reborn

THE FINALE OF the scenario is triggered when one of the three al-Azar brothers reaches the Tomb of the Horror. If the player characters do not intercede, then by the time Fuat merges with the Horror, he has the Amulet of the Shifting Skies and the other two brothers are dead.

There are three ways the characters can stop the horror:

- ❖ If all three brothers are killed before any of them reaches the Tomb, then the horror cannot be reborn in this age of the world.
- ❖ The characters might be able to trigger a damaging war of souls if two or more of the brothers are present at the tomb when the horror is revealed, and none of the brothers have the Amulet of the Shifting Skies.
- ❖ Finally, the horror is not so powerful that it cannot be defeated by sheer force of arms. Honest steel and strength can overcome even its alien sorceries.

THE REBIRTH OF THE HORROR

If the tomb is opened when one of the brothers is present, then Zuleyeh appears if she is not already present. She wraps her arms around the chosen brother and begins to kiss him passionately. Even if the chosen brother has grown to mistrust Zuleyeh over the course of the scenario, then he finds himself unable to resist her kiss. Her body begins to warp and undulate, as if she was nothing but a bag of loose skin and something huge and terrible was trying to break free from inside. Then, grotesquely, the brother's throat begins to bulge as the horror flows through Zuleyeh's body like a hollow reed, pouring into the brother's body.



The horror and the brother make opposed Will saves, one per round, for three rounds. The horror has an effective Will save bonus of +7. The winner becomes the dominant partner in the merger between the two. If the brother is dominant, then the personality of the merged horror is like that of the brother before the merger, although the brother is much more cruel. This is hardly



noticeable in the case of Fuat, but both Vahit and Gazi lose whatever honour or sympathy they had. If the horror is dominant, then the result is even worse – the brothers might be cruel tyrants, but at least they are essentially human. The horror is a demon from the Outer Dark, who delights in malice and torture for their own sake.

My Brother, My Sacrifice

If the merged horror kills one of the other brothers, then it counts as an especially efficacious sacrifice for regaining magical power, giving the horror one power point for every six hit points the killed brother would normally have.

If the Amulet of the Shifting Skies is being worn by the host, then it makes it much easier for the horror to merge with that host, giving the horror a +4 bonus to all its Will saves.

IF MULTIPLE BROTHERS ARE PRESENT

...then they must engage in a War of Souls (see the Conan rulebook, page 220). Each round, each brother makes a Will save. The brother wearing the Amulet of the Shifting Skies (or a brother nominated by the bearer, if the Amulet is present but not worn by any of the trio) gets a +4 bonus to his Will saves in this War of Souls. The losers are drained of 1d6 power points (if they have no power points left, they take Wisdom damage instead). The war continues for five rounds, or until only one brother is still alive or conscious. At that point, if one brother won all the rounds of the War of Souls, then he merges with the horror. If the victories were divided between brothers, though, then the horror is torn apart, with some of its power residing in each of the brothers. This is the best possible situation for the characters, as the brothers will fight each other at the same time they battle the characters.

Roll one Will save for each brother, opposed by the horror, to see which personality is dominant.

THE HORROR

Mechanically, the horror is represented as a template – two templates in fact, one for when the horror merges with a single brother, and the second for when it merges with two or more of the brothers.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to outsider. Do not change Hit Dice, base attack bonus, or saves. Size is unchanged.

Speed: As the base creature.

Damage Reduction: Natural DR improves by +5. (+2 if the horror is divided among two or more brothers.)

Attacks: As the base creature.

Special Attacks: As the base creature. Merging with the Horror also increases a character's Magic attack by +5 (+2 if the horror is divided among two or more brothers.)

Special Qualities: All of the special qualities of the base creature and the following special qualities.

☒ Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

☒ The merged horror has Fast Healing 5, healing itself of five points of damage each round (Fast Healing 1 if the horror is split among several bodies.)

Spells: The Horror gives access to all Necromancy, Hypnotism and Divination spells.

Favoured Class: Change to scholar.

Base Power Points: Increase by +4.

Abilities: Adjust from the base creature as follows: Strength +4, Constitution +4, Dexterity +4, Intelligence +8, Wisdom +4, Charisma +4 (In the case where the horror is divided among multiple brothers, the bonuses are reduced to Strength +2, Constitution +2, Dexterity +2, Intelligence +2, Wisdom +2, Charisma +2.)

Fate Points: Reduce by -2.

Languages: The horror gains the Demonic language.

BATTLING THE HORROR

In all the statistic blocks below, values after the slash indicate abilities in the case when the horror is divided among two or more brothers.

Vahit: As the horror, Vahit may initially try to be conciliatory, claiming that he has mastered the demon and is in control. If the characters aid and protect him, he can use his magic to destroy Fuat's legions. He will betray them, of course, turning on them as soon as they have broken Fuat's forces. Of all three, Vahit is the easiest to deal with.

Vahit

Medium Human Turanian Noble 3/Scholar 3; HD: 3d8+3d6+12/+6 (36/30 hp); **Init:** +6/+5; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 14/13; **Parry DV:** 14/13; **DR:** 5/2; **Atk:** Scimitar +7/+6 melee; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +7/+6 melee; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8+2/+1, 19–20/x2, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Sorcery; **SQ:** Hyrkanian qualities, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Special Regional Feature, Independent Sorcerer; **SV:** Fort +4/+3, Ref +6/+5, Will +8/+7; Str 14/12, Dex 15/13, Con 15/13, Int 23/17, Wis 14/12, Cha 18/16
Skills & Feats: Bluff +12/+11, Concentration +8/+7, Decipher Script +12/+9, Diplomacy +12/+11, Intimidate +15/+14, Knowledge (arcane)+10/+7, Knowledge (history) +10/+7, Knowledge (religion) +10/+7, Ride +9/+8, Search +12/+9, Spot +8/+7; Mounted Combat, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive
Possessions: Scimitar
Power Points: 11/10
Magic Attack: +9
Spells: *Lesser Ill-Fortune, Ill-Fortune, Warding, Incantation of Amlaric's Witchman*

Gazi: The pirate uses hypnotism to divide foes before charging into battle. If any of Massimo's pirates are still alive at this point, then Gazi may try running to them instead of facing the player characters at the Tomb. If not, then he charges at the characters with his sword, trying to cut them down as quickly as possible. If the characters are winning too easily, then bring in any of the surviving Guardian demons.

Gazi

Medium Human Turanian Pirate 8 ; HD: 8d8+24/+16 (60/52 hp); **Init:** +10; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 21/20; **Parry DV:** 18/17; **DR:** 10/2; **Atk:** Masterwork Tulwar +11/+10 melee or Hyrkanian bow +12/+11 ranged; **Full Atk:** Masterwork Tulwar +11/+10 melee or Hyrkanian bow +12/+11 ranged; **Dmg:** Masterwork Tulwar 2d8+6/4, 18–20/x3, AP3 or Hykanian Bow 1d10, 19–20/x2, AP3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Ferocious Attack (Additional Attack), Sneak Attack +2d6; **SQ:** Turanian Traits, Seamanship +2, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags), Sneak Subdual, Bite Sword, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance 1; **SV:** Fort +9/+8, Ref +11/+10, Will +5/+4; Str 18/16, Dex 20/18, Con 17/15, Int 22/16, Wis 17/15, Cha 14/13
Skills & Feats: Balance +11/+10, Climb +10/+9, Intimidate +8/+7, Hide +5/+4, Jump +10/+9, Knowledge (geography) +12/+9, Move Silently +11/+10, Spot +9/+8, Survival +9/+8, Swim +10/+9, Tumble +11/+10, Use Rope +9/+8; Power Attack, Cleave, Light-Footed, Mobility
Possessions: Leather Jerkin, Steel Cap, Hyrkanian Bow, Masterwork Tulwar
Power Points: 6/5
Magic Attack: +7
Spells: *Lesser Ill-Fortune, Ill-Fortune, Warding, Incantation of Amlaric's Witchman*

Fuat: Fuat is arrogant and hateful, with or without the demon's influence. He will use Necromancy to attack the characters directly. He has the toughness and power points to let off a defensive blast to drive the characters back before he starts hurling spells at them.

Fuat

Medium Human Turanian Scholar 10/Noble 1; HD: 10d6+1d8+44/33 (94/83 hp); **Init:** +6/5; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 16/15; **Parry DV:** 15/14; **DR:** 5/2; **Atk:** Scimitar +9/8 melee; **Full Atk:** Scimitar +9/8 melee; **Dmg:** Scimitar 1d8+2/+1, 19–20/x2, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Spells; **SQ:** Turanian qualities, Independent Sorcerer, Knowledge is Power, Rank Hath Its Privileges; **SV:** Fort +6/5, Ref +6/5, Will +15/14; Str 14/12, Dex 16/14, Con 16/14, Int 25/19, Wis 19/17, Cha 18/16
Skills & Feats: Bluff +8/7, Concentration +16/15, Craft (alchemy) +15/12, Craft (herbalism) +15/12, Decipher Script +15/12, Diplomacy +13/12, Heal +13/12, Intimidate +12/11, Knowledge (arcana) +17/14, Knowledge (nature) +17/14, Knowledge (the planes) +17/14, Knowledge (religion) +17/14, Knowledge (nobility) +17/14, Sleight of Hand +13/12, Listen +14/13, Move Silently +13/12, Search +16/13, Sense Motive +14/13; Tortured Sacrifice, Ritual Sacrifice, Toughness, Dodge, Iron Will
Possessions: Scimitar
Power Points: 16/15
Magic Attack: +14/13
Spells: *Divination (Astrological Prediction, Mind-Reading, Visions, Sorcerous News), Hypnotism (Entrance, Domination, Hypnotic Suggestion), Necromancy (Raise Corpse, Death Touch), Prestidigitation (Conjuring, Burst Barrier, Telekinesis)*

IF THE HORROR IS DEFEATED...

Then Fuat's marines are forced to obey whichever of the brothers is still alive. The characters are unlikely to have won favour with any of the al-Azars, but if Captain Massimo is still alive, then he might offer them places on board the Sea Ghul, especially if Gazi is dead.

The characters can flee the isle on any of the ships. Alternatively, they can build a boat easily enough and sail for more welcoming shores.

If the horror is not defeated, then it returns to Aghrapur in the guise of whichever brother it has consumed. The world has changed greatly since it last walked amongst men, but it is quick to learn. Within a few years, the horror begins to call other demons from the abyss, ushering in a new age of sorcerous horror on the shores of the Vilayet.

New Monsters

LESSER SWAMP DEMON

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 ft., Swim 40 ft.

DV: 14 (Base +3, Dex +1)

DR: 2

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+6

Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d6+3)

Full Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d6+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ambush.

Special Qualities: Amphibious, Slippery, Scent.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 3

Skills: Hide +3* (+8 in swamps), Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Survival +3, Swim +14*

Feats: Blind Fight, Improved Grapple

Environment: Swamp

Organisation: Tribal

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Medium), 9-12 HD (Large)

Though the creature is covered in slimy mud and gore and wreathed in steam, you can make out some of its twisted features, the product of some hideous miscegenation of animal, man and demon. Red eyes filled with hate stare wildly out at you from a mask of filth.

These creatures are spawned by the mating of the bound demons of the Vale of Guardians with the animals and slaves which once dwelt on the Isle of the Mists. They are

a degenerate tribe of horrors, subsisting on a diet of fish and each other's flesh. Occasionally, when the fish stocks run low, the tribe swims out en masse and storms some unfortunate passing ship like a pack of two-legged sharks.

Combat

Swamp demons are at home in the mud of the steamy fen, and use the terrain to their advantage by dragging their foes into the mire.

Ambush (Ex): When a swamp demon attacks from concealment, it gains a Sneak Attack of +1d6 damage for that surprise round only.

Amphibious (Ex): Swamp demons are equally at home on land or under water, and can breath in both elements. They must keep their skins damp, though, so they never go too far from the swamp of their birth.

Slippery (Ex): The demons are especially slippery. They gain a +2 bonus to Grapple checks, and do not lose their Dodge bonus when fighting in muddy terrain.

Scent (Ex): Swamp demons have the Scent ability, as described on page 299 of the Conan rulebook.

Skills: Swamp demons have a +10 racial bonus to Swim checks, and a +5 racial bonus to Hide checks made when in muddy terrain.

GUARDIAN OF THE VALE

Large Outsider

Hit Dice: 9d8+27 (67 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft, Fly 40 ft.

DV: 17

DR: 3

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+15

Attack: Claw +11 melee (1d8+4)

Full Attack: Two Claws +11 melee (1d8+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft/5 ft.

Special Attacks: Blood Drain

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Stalk

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +8

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 1

Skills: Climb +15, Hide +9, Jump +14, Listen +14, Move Silently +13, Spot +14, Survival +14

Feats: Improved Grapple, Crushing Grip, Track

Environment: Vale of the Guardians

Organisation: -

Advancement: -

Not bats, not moles, nor ants, nor decomposed human beings, but partaking of all these things and more. The creatures have wickedly sharp beaks, and fetid tattered wings, and rugose hides, slimy and vile. They move with an insect certainty.

These are the demons summoned by the horror to protect its tomb and the Amulet of the Shifting Skies. They are a common form of monster in the Outer Darkness, where million-strong flocks of the creatures are not unheard-of. On the Isle of Mists, there are two of these demons in the

Vale of Guardians, and another two in the form of statues in the Tomb of the Horror.

While the Guardians can fly, the ones on the Isle are bound by magic not to leave, and so do not fly except over very short distances. They prefer to keep their wings tightly folded, and stalk their prey through the forest like monstrous insects. The two Guardians are the progenitors of the race of Swamp Demons dwelling in the nearby marshes. The Guardians mated with both humans and animals to create the demon-blooded monstrosities.

Combat

The Guardians prefer to stalk their foes, waiting until they are vulnerable before striking. However, as the Guardians are bound to protect the Amulet of the Shifting Skies, they do not always have the luxury of waiting, and are sometimes compelled to charge into the fray.

Blood Drain (Ex): If a Guardian is grappling a target, it can bite and drain the target's blood as a free action. This deals 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. The Guardian heals itself of 5 points of damage for every point of Constitution damage dealt.

Darkvision (Su): A Guardian has Darkvision with a range of 60 ft.

Stalk (Ex): At the start of each round, the Guardian can nominate a Stalk target. The Guardian gets a +4 bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks that oppose the Stalk target's Spot or Listen checks.

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CONAN[®]

AND THE REAVERS OF THE VILAYET

The Vilayet Sea is home to many small islands, some of which act as havens for small bands of buccaneers that defy the might of the Hyrkanian navy. Before the rise of that mighty nation some of those very islands were home to far darker inhabitants than mere pirates. These were alien to the world, having been spawned in the Outer Darkness and worshipped by the primitive folk that once inhabited the Vilayet's shores. Not all of these entities have gone completely, although with the passing of the centuries they become fewer in number and lessened in power.

A Hyrkanian noble, Vahit of the Azar family, has discovered the legends relating to one of these beings and now seeks out help to find and use its power. He is in a race against his elder brother, a powerful and cruel sorcerer, who would augment his own abilities and become able to unleash a horrific reign of terror. Without the aid of heroes, Vahit's cause would be doomed, for his brother's reach is long.

This quest will take the heroes from the desert wastes to the high seas before concluding upon the lost Isle of the Mists, where amongst the jungles and ruins the object of Vahit's quest can finally be discovered. With both the soldiers of his brother and pirates to contend with, overcoming the dangers of the Isle will be no small task.

Conan and the Reavers of the Vilayet is a scenario designed for four Player Characters of 7th to 8th level. Besides the opportunities for battle, the Player Characters will have to uncover the truth about the entity that resides on the fabled Isle of Mists and use a wide array of skills as well as good judgement to overcome a great evil.

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