

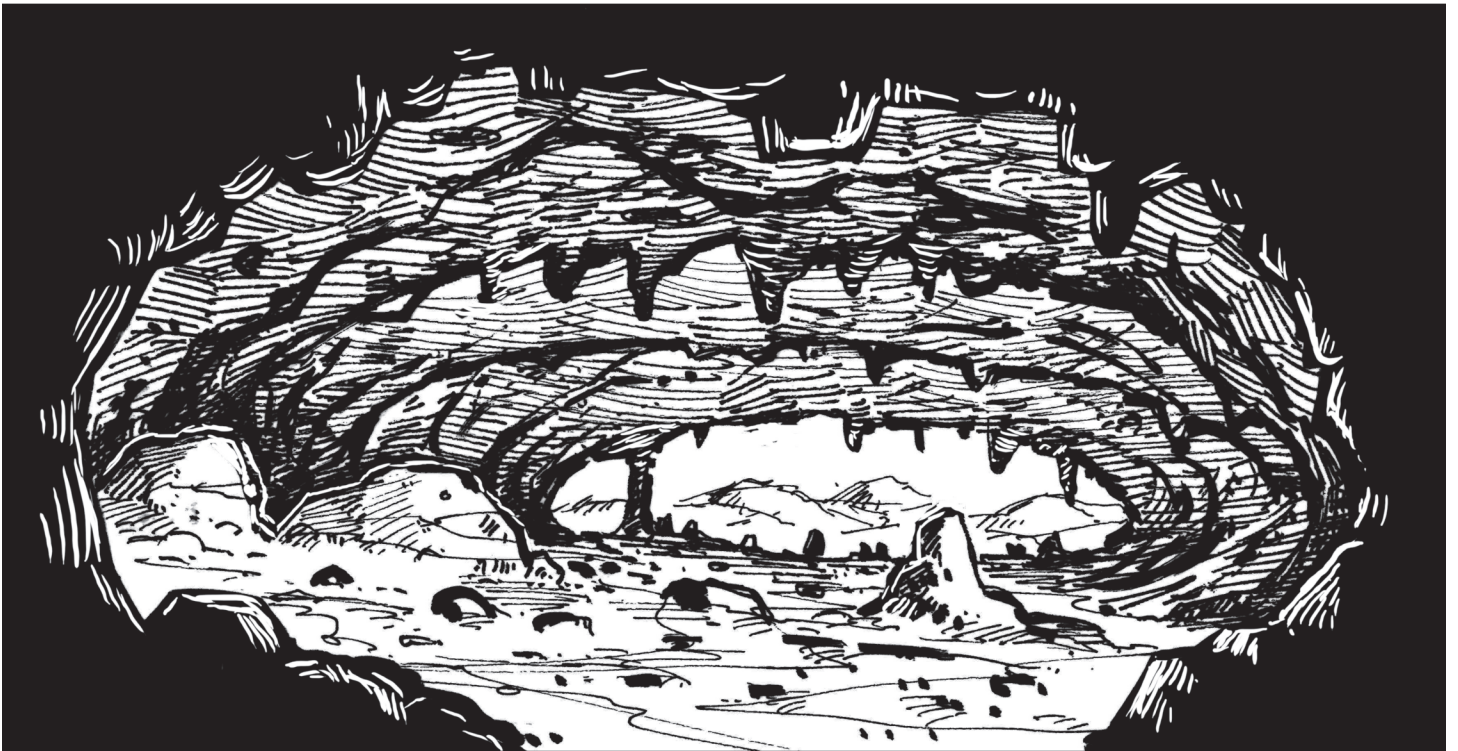
THE SCREAMING CAVERNS

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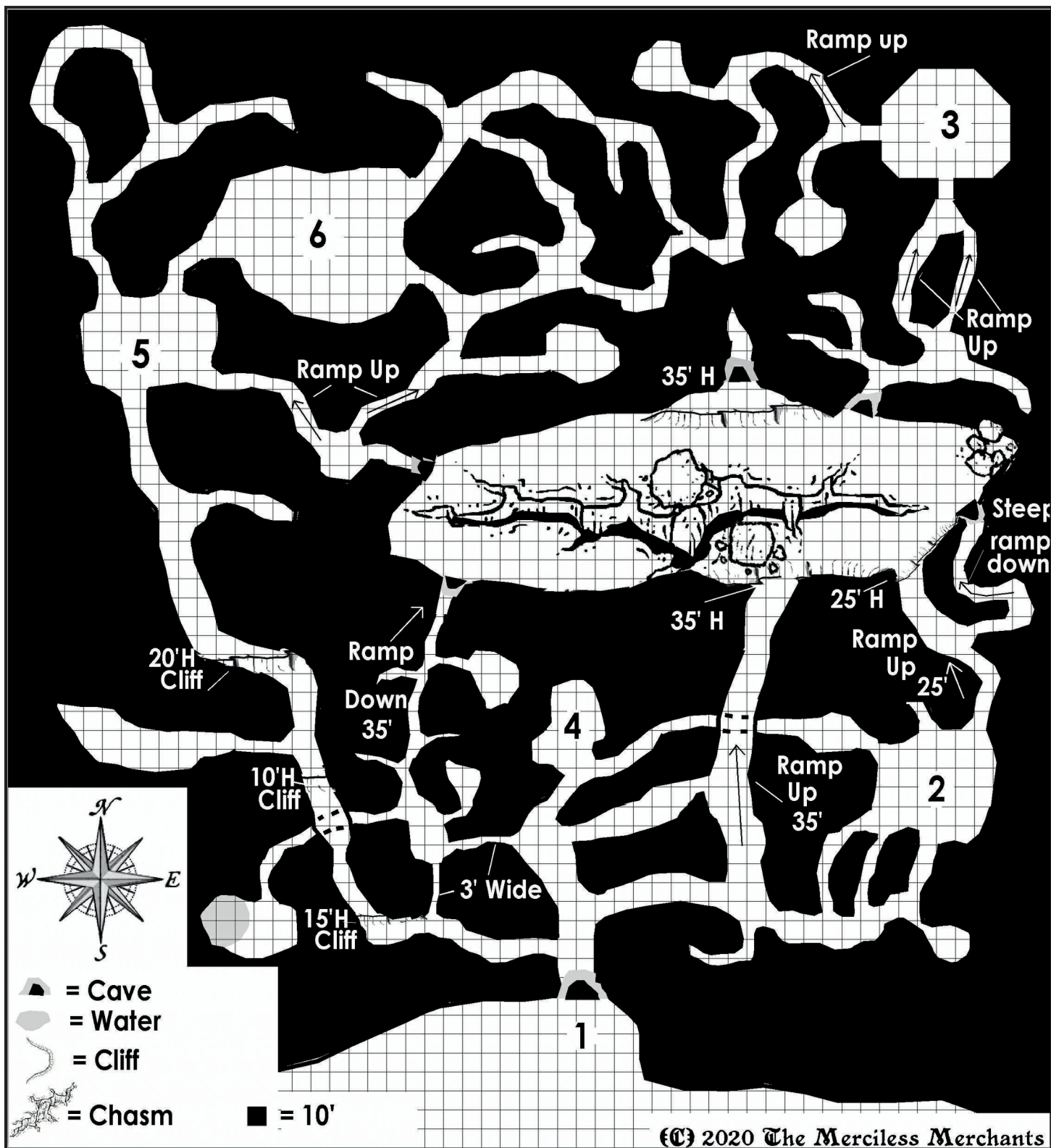
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THE SCREAMING CAVERNS

An Adventure for 4-8 characters of Level 3-5

Introduction: For decades, Iotha has known a terrible foe. The Maimed One, a horror of blackened gold and half-molten talons, plagues the desert, unearthing tombs and carrying off travelers to its horrible Screaming Caverns. Each year the city appoints champions to deal with the horror. Thus far, none have succeeded.

Summary: This adventure is about hunting and slaying a formidable foe in its den. However, this is more than just a simple monster hunt! There are two complications; There is a second creature in the caverns, and each of the creatures can ONLY BE HARMED IN ONE SPECIFIC MANNER (see New Monster section at end). The PCs will need to be on their guard, piece together rumors, clues and riddles to figure out the weakness of each specific creature. One possible source of information is the legendary Hero SHIGEK THE PURPLE, who fought the creature many years back and was supposedly slain after a grievous battle.

Getting the PCs Involved:

1. In the streets of Iotha they are accosted by the beggar Alheem. He is a Mazhurian, outcast for his crippled physique, and he has seen the creature's weakness in a vision. **Only those wearing imperial purple can split its impenetrable hide.** The Elders spit at his council. Desperate, he seeks the help of outsiders to slay the creature that plagues his tribe. Success would mean he gets to be Elder, and the tribe would owe a favor to the PCs.

2. The famous courtesan Jain the Beautiful, fair beyond the dreams of mortal men, rumored to carry the blood of Sybarrese emperors in her veins, has offered to share the bed of anyone who brings her the head of the Maimed One. Already dozens have marched into the wastes, and none have returned.

3. Blood debt: Within decrepit drinking halls a haggard drunk accosts the characters. He and his comrades faced the Maimed One, and only he survived. His wits have been all but destroyed by palm wine and Lotus dust, and his formidable arms have been pawned off for mere silver, but he yet retains his knife of Sybarran Steel (treat as +2), which he will give away if the PCs swear to avenge his comrades, so he may die peacefully. **Give the characters two extra rumors. He swears (wrongly) the knife can harm the Sial-Atramentar.**

4. After the PCs have been imprisoned (this will happen sooner or later, trust me) they are visited by the Vizier of Tasheek Val Amaranth the Ever-Glorious, Emir of Iotha! He promises them freedom if they will consent to slay the creature and bring him its indestructible body, for the Emir's coronation day is coming up, and those without a suitably impressive gift risk execution. He is willing to pay them 1,000 gp each if they are successful and threatens immersion in boiling lead if they fail or refuse.

Rumor Table (2d8):

Information is more important in Screaming Caverns than in other adventures. Feel free to dole out an extra rumor to put the PCs on their toes if you feel they have earned it. Every character starts out with one rumor, and for every 5 gp the PCs spend carousing they get another one.

ROLL	RUMOR
2	Twenty years ago the terror came to Iotha. Some nights it digs up corpses in the tombs outside of the city. Those that are brought back destroy all that they hold dear in life! (T)
3	Every year they send seven men, but they never return. Only Shigek the Purple succeeded in wounding the creature outside of the city walls, or so he claimed. When he laid down to rest after his battle at sundown, he was carried off in the night. (T)
4	The creature is actually two bandits, dressed up in golden armor! You fools! The people that are brought back from the tombs do not look dead! (F)
5	No mortal weapons can harm the Maimed One. Shigek knew of a way, but all other ways fail. It is invulnerable! (T)

Continued

6	It is simple! The creature is not harmed by steel weapons and tears through metal like papyrus! Only wood can harm it! (F)
7	The creature lairs nearby, in a cave filled with the screams of dying men. (T)
8	Shigek the Purple blinded the creature when he fought it at sundown, that is why it only goes out at night! (T/F)
9	I tell you there are two of them! How could Shigek wound it direly yet be carried off in the night? (T)
10	The Vizier's wife is a real slut. You can get her for only coppers. (F)
11	The Mazhurians send warriors to kill it too, around this time. Even in this they seek to better us. (T)
12	The Cavern is a doorway to hell. Do not enter it! (F)
13	The Screaming Caverns must be filled with riches. Even if it had nothing, the armor of twenty times seven men! A king's ransom! (T)
14	The Oracle of Iotha answers all questions. (F)
15	Only the bravest youths of Iotha are selected to become Champions. (F)
16	Water is so scarce in the waste, if you spit in a Mazhurian's face he will take it as a compliment. (F)

Finding More Information: It is quite feasible the PCs are stumped in their initial attempts to destroy the creature. If they find sufficient hints as to the true nature of the creature from inside the cavern (**Area # 4** or **5**) they can learn enough details from a seer or sage who is sufficiently well versed in ancient legend to identify things (standard consultation fees apply!).

"The creature is one of the Sial-Atramentar, a servant of the Gods. Maimed and driven mad by the wounds it sustained on the Plains of Sriatus, it lives a cursed immortal existence. It is said the fearful gods gave each a single weakness so they could never turn against them. But what that weakness is, only the gods know, and where they are no one knows!"

If the PCs copy the writing on the mural in **Area # 5**, the Sage Ioranthus will recognize it, but reveals the weakness of the Maimed One only, for an equal share of the treasure.

"This one was once Asiremdishibon, a great teacher and a healer, who walked these lands when they were still green. He was said to surpass men in all deeds, mental and magical. Only in the hours of twilight was he ever bested by men in games of physical or mental prowess."

If the PCs ask about Shigek instead, they learn that he was indeed a warrior of almost legendary prowess, but that he too consulted the Oracle, and after that spent nearly all his fortune on a cloak of the finest imperial purple.

Consulting the Oracle: If the PCs are feeling divinely inspired, they might try their luck at the **Oracle of Iotha**. The Oracle, after receiving a donation (minimum 25 gp) and inhaling the burned vapors of the desert lotus, offers the following prophecy:

*Sriatus's Misbegotten Progeny,
Once loyal servants now set free,
More than it seems yet less than three,
One blinded by Man, one crippled by Calamity*

*Doom on those who fight in the sun,
Death on those in night's dark abode,
All but the colors of Emperors shun,
Only then on the warrior is victory bestowed*

*One of these methods is sure to bring weal,
One of these methods will bring certain defeat,
But which is one is which I shall not reveal,
Yet each of these ways you will have to repeat*

There are two bits of information that might be relevant. 1) The Oracle has revealed the same prophecy to Shigek. 2) Sriatus is the field where the gods met the Tzyanese in battle (any scholar or priest will know this).

The Champions of Iotha: Seven heroes have been selected to deal with the threat. They are promised an outrageous sum (4,000 gp each) if they succeed. Failure means death. They know where the creature lairs. If they are unimpressed by the PCs they refuse their assistance, but might hire them as drovers or baggage-carriers (Personality DC 10). A bribe (say 100 gp or more) **always** convinces them to let the heroes sign up.

If the PCs are hostile, the Champions might threaten violence. Iotha takes the death of its champions on the onset of the hunt VERY SERIOUSLY and will insist that the PCs take their place. A retainer, beloved mount, or prized possession will be held hostage to ensure the PCs do not run. If all else fails, remind the PCs that Iotha is the only civilized settlement within weeks of travel.

The Champions leave in two days. If the PCs do not ally with them, they will surely meet them at the entrance of the Caverns. If the PCs elect to await the outcome of the confrontation, all of the Champions except Tion the Archer and Dingol the Lame die in the first confrontation.

#	CHAMPIONS	NOTES
1	Dingol the Lame: Init -2; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; (3 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N. Equipment: Rags, club	Watery eyed beggar. Signed on for a bottle of date-wine (with the promise of a second bottle).
2	Khalid Shigh: Init +2; Atk scimitar +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 17; HD 3d8; (19 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; AL L Equipment: Chain mail, shield, scimitar, spear, dagger. Special: three doses of blade venom (save vs. death or die in 3 turns), two doses of blade venom antidote.	Arrogant young braggart. Quick to challenge characters to a duel, calling them cowards if they refuse. Offers the anti-dote in exchange for a sworn oath to serve him if he succeeds in poisoning one of the PCs. Wears an embroidered purple cloak (1,000 gp) that he swears is the only way to harm the creature. If the Maimed One is killed, he attempts to leave early and claim all the glory for himself.
3	Hazraman the Stone Man: Init +2; Atk halberd +6 melee (1d10+3); AC 18; HD 3d8; (16 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; AL L Equipment: Plate mail, halberd.	Good-natured Karashite. Elaborate caste-tattoos cover skin. Gold rings in nose, brows, lips (50 gp). Was picked for being a foreigner. Is content to follow orders.
4	Hadran the Wise: Init +0; Atk punch -2 melee (1); AC 9; HD 1d4; (3 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will +2; AL N Equipment: Robes.	Sage. (Falsely) Sentenced for Necromancy. Does not know any magic but can supply 1d4 rumors worth of information.
5	Tion the Archer: Init +1; Atk longbow +4 missile fire (1d6+1); AC 17; HD 2d8; (11 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C Equipment: Banded armor, longbow, longsword, dagger, six arrows of Sybarran Steel (+1) .	Cheerful sociopath. Volunteered. Never takes off grinning demon mask. Offers to knife Shigh in his sleep if the PCs take charge.
6	Arhdan the Wise: Init +0; Atk dagger -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 10; HD 3d4; (7 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AL C Special Cast Spells: 2/day cast <i>Shriveling Death</i> (3d4 damage) at any foe within 30' (no save). 1/day cast <i>Invisibility</i> spell that lasts one turn. Equipment: Robes, dagger, Potion of Gaseous Form .	Hedge-sorcerer. Bald, piercing grey eyes. (Correctly) sentenced for Necromancy. Offers to join up with the PCs if they can think of some way to get out of the ordeal. Knows just enough to be terrified.
7	Settra the Fearless: Init +2; Atk Two-handed sword +3 melee (1d10+1); AC 15; HD 1d8+2; (8 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; AL L Equipment: Chain mail, two-handed sword and dagger.	Supremely Confident. Beautiful man. Impetuous. Joined on a dare. Unlike any other henchman, he gladly volunteers for any suicidal idea the PCs can come up with.

IOTHA

Some Judges might want to get right down to the action, others like a little bit of fleshing out. Feel free to alter this or tailor it to fit your home campaign setting.

Iotha is constructed around a lush oasis and is situated on the trade route between the city states of Gal'Alor in the south and the Free City of Muir in the north. It serves as the primary hub for all traffic between the two regions, which has made it scandalously wealthy. Almost 20,000 souls make Iotha their home, surrounded by golden minarets, marble domes and terraced gardens.

It is ruled by a succession of despots who care nothing for the huddled masses that make up the bulk of its population and use brute force and cruelty to keep order. While no one bats an eye if the adventurers kill a commoner (as long as it is not in broad daylight), anyone harming a merchant, especially a foreign merchant, is punished harshly. All goods from the rulebook are available, at 150% of the listed price. Rations are double the price, unless the merchant knows and is friendly with the buyer.

THE SCREAMING CAVERNS

A week's travel by foot from Iotha lie the Screaming Caverns. There is a 1 in 6 chance for each day of travel of an encounter from the Screaming Caverns Encounter Table.

The Mazhurians avoid the Caverns except on holy missions. The clearing around the entrance is littered with bent swords, rags, splintered pole arms and all manner of detritus from many hard fights. There are no bodies. The irregular winding passages can be anywhere from 10' wide and 20' high to as little as 3' wide.

Fighting the Sial-Atramentar: A PCs first instinct might be to enter the caverns, heedless of preparation, and trust on luck and daring to win the day. While this means they have their heart in the right place, this behavior is dangerous in this adventure. If the Maimed One is rolled on the Wandering Encounter Table, it means it has heard the PCs and always approaches them from a direction nearer to the entrance, so as to cut off escape. Consider the following:

- At least three dead bodies or loud noises (war horns or drumming) lures the creature out (morale check). In its madness it has forgotten its weakness so this WILL work during twilight.
- 50% chance it leaves its lair after sundown (it has forgotten its weakness but it keeps to its habits). 15% chance it leaves on a long journey for the tombs outside the city walls.
- Anyone wearing a purple cloak will be the focus of its ire. It was Shigek, garbed in purple cloak, who wounded its mate.

- If the party faces the Maimed One with overwhelming numerical superiority and it knows it can be hurt during twilight it must check morale or flee, attempting to avoid confrontations during twilight hours from thereon.



Wandering Monsters Table (1 in 6, roll every Turn):

ROLL	ENCOUNTER	NOTES
1	Half-mad screaming prayers for deliverance resound through the caverns.	<i>"Tree of God, please deliver us. Let us die! Give us mercy etc. etc."</i>
2	Wandering resurrected ones, in a daze. (roll type: 1. Sybarran Empire men 2. Mazhurians 3. Mercenaries 4. Adventurers).	These men have attempted to fight the Horrors and have fallen, only to be brought back by the Maimed One. They act as <i>Hasted</i> for every two rounds and as <i>Slowed</i> for every other 2 rounds, the obscene nature of their rebirth having misaligned them with this plane. They seek to destroy what they valued most in life, once they achieve this they will collapse into a pile of goo.
	1. 1d6 Sybarran Empire Men: Init +1; Atk sword +4 melee (1d8+2); AC 17; HD 2d8; (11 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; AL L Equipment: Sybarran Steel mail (as Chain +1), Sybarran Steel sword (as Sword +1), 1d10 pp each.	<i>Tall, dressed in tattered robes, with faces caked with old gold-leaf and braided beards. The Sybarran Steel Mail and weapons they bear is still as keen as the day it was forged. They bear their suffering with dignity.</i> They plead with the PCs in their Ancient Tongue to fall back or suffer their own fate, but will not otherwise take violent action. If the characters seem civilized, they ask that a pyre be prepared for them, so they may be destroyed utterly, and their nightmare can finally end. Anyone armed with weaponry crafted by the Great Sybarran Empire causes them to attack, howling with uncontrollable rage. Their empire has long since fallen, and thus their torment continues. This ENCOUNTER OCCURS ONLY ONCE.
	2. 2d6 Mazhurians: Init +2; Atk club, stone +2 melee (1d4+1); AC 10; HD 1d8; (8 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L Equipment: Rags, stones, clubs, and 1d6 sp each.	<i>Wiry. Dressed in stained, filthy robes. Eyes stained with kohl. They clutch stones and broken weapons. They wander as if in a daze.</i> If they encounter the party they demand a weapon or piece of intact armor, but allow them to pass unmolested if they do so. If there are Mazhurians present they fall on them with great hatred, seeking to tear them limb from limb. These men retain no memory of their Clan and thus wander these cursed caverns, seeking for some clue to their ancestry. If the PCs somehow figure out where they are from, they can persuade them to leave the caverns, to seek out those from where they came from, and destroy them.
	3. 1d10 Mercenaries: Init +0; Atk sword +1 melee (1d8) or halberd +1 melee (1d10); AC 12; HD 1d8; (5 hp); MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N Equipment: Tattered leather armor, rapier or longsword, halberd, stones, hammers, and 1d6 gp (forgotten).	<i>Tattered Leather. Masks of tarnished bronze. Wherever epaulettes or ornaments were they have ripped them off. They wield bent hammers or rocks. Fine weapons dangle at their sides, forgotten even in the fray.</i> They seek gold, and to destroy it. They allow PCs to pass unmolested if they give any gold they have to them, so they can smash it with their weapons, or melt it over their fires, and spill it in the sand. They break off pursuit to smash any coins the characters leave behind.

Continued

	4. Adventurers (see Notes).	Familiar faces, locked in torment, in tattered rags, bearing broken weapons. Use this encounter if the PCs have previously lost henchmen, retainers or any other type of NPC, or have discovered and defeated a rival NPC party. It is 50% likely the adventurers retain any special equipment they possessed. If this is not applicable, they encounter Shigek the Purple instead (see Area #4).
3	Mazhurian Hunting Party (2d6 led by Champion): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+1) or dart +1 missile (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d8; (6 hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L Equipment: Padded robes, short swords, darts, and 1d6 gp each. Champion: Init +4; Atk shard knife +7 melee (1d4+4); AC 15; HD 2d8; (16 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AL L Equipment: Suit of tanned dusk stalker hide (Leather +1), shard of indestructible black glass (as Dagger +1), scrimshawed bone jewelry (species unknown, 150 gp).	<i>Wiry men, almost desiccated beneath thin brown robes the color of the waste, with skin grey as ash and eyes of flint. Voices are guttural rasps.</i> <i>The leader walks with his face uncovered. Eye-sockets are painted with red kohl. Ritual scarring on cheeks.</i>
4	The Maimed One (see New Monster).	If this result is rolled it attempts to (75%) approach from the direction of the entrance.

1. Hell's Doorway: Screamed prayers on the wind. A great mouth set within the rock, the stone around it is shaped into unsettling geometric shapes. From the **stone** protrude hands, heads, and arms.

- Smashing the **stone** reveals bones and scraps of rotting flesh/meat inside.

2. Battle site: Torn bodies, splintered shields, bent swords and stones painted red with viscera are scattered about the area. The outline of monster footprints, like the talons of a vast eagle can be dimly spotted in the clotted gore.

- In their pouches is collected a scattered 35 sp, and 14 gp. In a man's right boot still holding one half-rotted foot is a gemstone worth 50 gp.

3. The "Hive": Every inch of the cavern is a disjointed, sculpted mess of cubes, tetrahedrons, and dodecahedrons. Not a single formation of natural rock remains. Screaming **men** are entombed in the stone, only glimpses of naked flesh, faces and arms, are observed amid and protruding from the rock. They moan piteously or cry out for deliverance.

- Most of the **men** are mad, but some still retain enough sanity to communicate.
- One, the merchant **Kismet** (Init +1, Atk sword +2 melee (1d8); AC 9; HD 1d8; (5 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL L), tells PCs what he knows of the Maimed One, but only if they chisel him free (takes three turns and makes so much noise it doubles the chance of a random encounter). He urges the party to flee, but joins them if they insist on staying. He pays them 100 gp each upon his safe return in Iotha.
- Kismet's discussions with other inmates have taught him much. He reveals two things: **1)** The Maimed One has dragged many men dressed in robes of purple to be entombed here. The creature never had any visible injuries. **2)** There are two creatures, the Maimed One who can bring men back from death, and the Many-Faced One who can shape stone like water.



4. Shigek the Purple: A solitary figure stands in the middle of the cavern, illuminated by a single candle. A crude art piece of a great tree is painted on a cavern's rock face with viscera. **Torches**, candles and flasks of oil lie strewn throughout the cavern.

- 13 **torches**, 34 candles and 8 flasks of oils are strewn throughout the cavern. No other possessions remain.

Once a Slayer of Monsters, now a protector, twisted in half-life. His gold-embroidered cloak of purple is tattered and threadbare and his eyes are glazed. His smile is kind. Atrocity has become a close companion to him, and he has learned to accept it as one would a mad child. He attacks ferociously, with complete disregard for defense.

Shigek the Purple: Init +2; Atk **Singer** +8 melee (1d8+4); AC 9; HD 5d12; (35 hp); MV 30'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +4; AL L

Special: Shigek gets a +2 bonus to attack and damage and is always AC 9 when he attacks.

Equipment: **Singer** (+1 scimitar, every blow is an ululating prayer to Old Gods), threadbare purple cloak (gold embroidery worth 75 gp), dried

Scorpion Amulet (negates three *Polymorph* spells on the bearer, then turns to dust).

This is the legendary hero Shigek the Purple. By the hideous inversion of the resurrection process, he must protect both Sial-Atramentar with his life, but is under no obligation to kill to do so. **He will ask the characters to leave and only resorts to violence when all other options are exhausted.** He does not hurry overmuch and gladly converses with the characters if that gets them to leave without violence. Though he never directly reveals the weaknesses of his masters, he answers any questions of his fate or anything that is in the cave.

Continued

If **Shigek** is killed, there is a flat 25% chance he will be returned to life every day as long as **The Maimed One** is still alive. He does not resent the PCs for his death if they meet again.

5. Shrine: A magnificent **bas-relief**, partially obscured with thick **dust**, covers the east and western walls.

- The craftsmanship is super-humanly precise.
- **East:** A hundred god-like figures; tall and glorious, lead their million-strong legions of animal-headed soldiers against hordes of wretched men and sorcerers, driving them before them.
- **West: Dust** covers most of the carving. The **bas-relief** shows a terrible fire devouring the gods and the bulk of their host, and only a few of the host remain, terribly maimed, fleeing into the depths of the earth. One falcon-headed statue bearing a hook-shaped staff is prominently among the survivors, limping and malformed.
 - If the **dust** is brushed away; a second figure, four handed, many headed, is unveiled.
 - The information on this mural should be enough to learn the true nature of the adversary if a sage is consulted. A rubbing of the key elements or a very careful description suffices for a sage to glean the information.
 - If the west **relief** is removed in full and transported, while protected from the elements, it would fetch a considerable sum (2,000 gp). A trained stone-mason and at least ten man-hours would be needed to chisel it free, with 50% - each point of dexterity of the highest score among the workers that the bas-relief is destroyed in the process. Those thinking of cutting it out in smaller slabs lower its value by 25% but reduce the base chance to 30%.

6. Inner Sanctum: The entire cavern has been sculpted into grotesque cubic shapes. No stalactite or boulder is left untouched. Strewn throughout are countless **coins**, segments of masonry, broken pillars and pieces of statues.

- **The Many-Faced One** is here and attacks immediately.
- Every round of combat has a 25% chance of bringing **the Maimed One** into the fray in 1d4 rounds if it is still alive. If the Many-Faced One is slain before the Maimed One arrives, it enters the chamber 1d10 rounds after its death, and gains +2 to hit and damage due to berserk fury.

- If the party takes the time to gather all the **coins**, they find a total of 5,000 cp, 15,000 sp, 2,000 ep, 2,000 gp and 500 pp in the denominations of empires, many long gone. Mixed between the coins can be found a several cut amethysts (50 gp, 100 gp, 250 gp, and 500 gp) and a torque of Sybarran Steel worth 1,000 gp. Other treasure includes a broken two handed sword with an ornate hilt (100 gp) that is actually set with a precious stone that acts as a **Scarab of Protection**. A **+1 Spear** made from the tooth of some long-extinct behemoth, a knife of purple glass (as **Deiophage** weapon), the **Golden Mail of Isarithon** (Cursed chain mail, always AC 9) and a set of jade platters (300 gp and any poison set upon them are neutralized).

CONCLUSION

In the event that the heroes discover the weakness of BOTH the creatures and slay them, they gain great fame, and can expect the gratitude of the city from thereon out. Not only do they receive 1000 gp per person, but from thereon out all merchants within Iotha will offer them a 10% discount on anything they buy within the confines of the city.

If the heroes only manage to slay the Maimed One they can expect a similar reward, as the city only knows of one of the creatures. However, at some later date, when it is most inconvenient, the Many-faced One will show up to avenge its mate. If the heroes are so foolish as to slaughter the Many Faced One but leave the Maimed One alive it will hunt them to the ends of the earth. Put it on any overland encounter table and dungeon table until it is dealt with.

NEW MONSTERS

The Sial-Atramentar

The Gods are dead but their presence lingers. When they burned on the plains of Sriatus, now a terrible desert of Glass, their million-fold host of golden servants burned with them. They were the Sial-Atramentar, however not all perished with their masters. Maimed and maddened, they fled yowling into the depths of the earth to nurse their wounds and their bitter rage. Great statues of unbreakable adamant, with heads of beasts and heroes and graceful long limbs, now they are corroded, deformed, their chiming voices like tearing metal. Horrors all but a few have forgotten.

The Aegis: So that they could be their invincible soldiers, the Gods gave unto each of the Sial-Atramentar the Greater Aegis, rendering them proof against all harm. But fearing rebellion, each of them was given a single flaw in their impenetrable defenses.

The Sial-Atramentar have 100% magic resistance and can only be wounded by Deiophage weapons, divine creatures or weapons of +4 enchantment or above. **If the conditions of their flaw are met, these protections do not apply.**

Very often the Sial-Atramentar are not privy to their flaws. Only 1 in 10 knows its weakness and retains enough sanity to act intelligently upon it. It is often the doom of such creatures that they give hints to their weakness in the very actions they take to protect themselves. Otherwise divination or some very rare few scholars are able to find the weakness. It is up to the GM to arbitrate if any particular case meets the conditions.

#	Sample Flaws
1	May only be struck by men of royal blood (specific bloodline for high-ranking Sial-Atramentar).
2	May only be struck by siblings, man and woman, striking simultaneously.
3	May only be struck by those facing the creature naked.
4	Only impious men can harm the creature.
5	May only be wounded by men under the effect of strong drink.
6	Only cowards can harm the creature.
7	May only be struck while immersed in the water of the seas.
8	Can be struck while neither inside nor outside.
9	Can only be struck while it is under conditions of extreme emotion (reverence, awe, anger).
10	Can only be wounded by the extremely beautiful (or people that appear to be so).
11	Can only be wounded by those who are ugly.
12	Only during a full moon can it be slain.
13	Can only be harmed in sequence, by people riding or carrying various exotic animals (i.e. tiger, then dromedary, then elephant. If an error is made the cycle resets).
14	Any two conditions, even if seemingly contradictory.
15	Can be wounded but those slaying it must profess sincere regret at the deed or else they turn into the creature over a period of 1d10 days.
16	Can only be entombed in molten gold, will remain dead for as long as condition persists.
17	Every blow or spell must be accompanied by several sentences of ritual denouncement, in Old Sybarrese, in iambic pentameter.
18	Immune, but any mistletoe thrown at it acts as a +5 Spear . Displays general antipathy to forests.
19	Can only be wounded by another of its kind. Hates its kind.
20	Can only be killed by a meteor.

Special Attacks: The Sial-Atramentar were once the servants, warriors, bodyguards, healers and scholars of the gods. Most retain the abilities that they were endowed with to carry out those tasks, often twisted or damaged in the Calamity that took their masters from them. Unerring arrows of light, visages that turn men to stone, skin hot like the surface of the sun or the ability to raise great storms, these are but a smattering of the powers at their disposal.

The Maimed One (Asiremdishibon)

Init -1; Atk crushing blow +6 melee (1d8); AC 15; HD 5d8+5; MV 15'; Act 2d20; SP see below; Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N

Once a great healer and scholar, now a maimed monster that brings ruin to those it once healed. 14' tall, with skin of blackened gold, one side is deformed like molten wax. It limps and lumbers, and its graceful limbs lash out with the force of a battering ram.

The Maimed One can only be harmed in the hours of twilight, from the second that the sun touches the horizon to the moment the last sliver of sunlight falls upon the earth in whatever region it dwells. It is vulnerable both outside and inside while structures last, it does not need to see the sunlight.

It retains parts of the gift of healing. **It may return any creature back to life with the following changes:** the creature loses one point of Stamina, its alignment is reversed (L now becomes C), it acts as if *hasted* for two rounds and *slowed* for the next 2 rounds and it attempts to destroy or undo anything it valued in life, be it people, objects or even an abstract concept. If it ever achieves this goal it dissolves into a puddle of protoplasm, its unlife at an end. **Note:** These creatures are not considered undead and can't be turned.

In addition, it may inflict 2d8+2 points of damage by direct physical contact, as a reversed *Lay on Hands* effect at will. There is a 15% chance this effect heals the target instead.

The Many-Faced One

Init -3; Atk crushing blow +3 melee (1d4); AC 15; HD 4d8+4; MV 15'; Act 2d20; SP see below; Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +6; AL N

Once a great builder, with the power to shape-stone with a thought, it stands 12' tall. Its silver skin is unblemished, its six arms and three faces are those of heroes. Its eyes have been marred by vicious cuts that split the silver. It moves very carefully, cocking its head to catch the faintest noise.

The Many-Faced one can be harmed only by those wearing robes or cloaks of imperial purple. No other color will suffice. Purple is an expensive dye, and depending on the region such an object costs at least 100 gp to procure, or might be unavailable entirely!

The Many-faced One wields the Gift of the Anagakhorem, shaping stone like wax. It can use Transmute Earth at a DC of up to 25 at will (it does not need to roll). If it hits a target with a physical attack it will immediately attempt to entomb them in a nearby rockface.

The target may make a Fort Save DC 15 to avoid the effect. "It requires 1d4 turns to free those so entombed (1 turn per character working on it or one character working for consecutive turns). Creatures that are entombed can still be dimly heard through the rock but cannot take any other action. Every hour they remain entombed they must make a Fort save DC 13 or take 1d6 points of damage."

In addition to its vulnerability, the Many-faced One is blind, taking a -2 penalty to all attack rolls (already included in the above statistics), with an additional -2 penalty if it is deafened (loud noises or a *Silence* spell will suffice).

Not for us the quiet dwindling of old age
Not for us the gentle death in bed
Mankind dies on its feet
Screaming and bellowing.

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