

Tower of the Elephant

Short Story by Robert E. Howard

Adaptation for D&D by Thulsa, edited by Wesley Connally

Please send suggestions and comments to: wes@cw.edu

This series of adventures that I created are based on Robert E. Howard's Conan short stories (or with some exceptions, Carter/de Camp). I've changed a few things here and there, and fleshed out places like abandoned palaces etc. for a true dungeon crawling experience. There should be a few surprises for those who have read the short stories. Almost all of the text boxes for you, the DM, to read are taken directly from Howard's own writing. This provides a great atmosphere for your players. You may warn them that some are lengthy, but just sit back, relax, and allow the text to paint the world for them. This will enrich their experience.

I have modified Howard's text to represent plural adventurers and rewrote all text for the present tense. I had to add a few dialogue boxes of my own writing to fill in important roleplaying gaps in the original story lines.

All adventures are written for D&D 2nd edition, but could easily be adapted to more modern versions. I highly recommend my other handouts and rules to create a more full Conan-World experience. I also recommend familiarizing yourself with the original Howard/Carter/de Camp story.

*For this adventure, I have only added the Howard flavor text. Thanks to Thulsa for the great adventure!

Levels: 5-6

Reputation: 15, Zamora (Country Reputation is based on a 1-5 scale from barely known (1) to heroic status (5). For every 5 points of Adventure Reputation the characters earn, based on a successful adventure, their score for the Country Reputation in the country where the adventure takes place, goes up by 1. Reputation will affect NPC reaction rolls, prices, jealousies, women etc.)

Adventure Summary

In the temple district of Arenjun, Zamora's notorious City of Thieves, stands a glittering tower said to house a fabulous jewel called the Heart of the Elephant. The city's thieves avoid the tower and the jewel, fearing its master, the sorcerer Yara, who is said to be 300 years old. The PCs, being brave or foolish (or both), have no such hesitations. They set out to steal the jewel from the wizard. Inside the tower, the PCs learn why the jewel is called the Heart of the Elephant and how it turns out to be their key to destroying Yara. The PCs should have little trouble getting directions to the Tower. At the same time, they hear rumors of Yara's dark powers, his incredible age, and how his power is drawn from the magical jewel. No unwanted visitor has ever returned from the tower.

World Map

At any appropriate time, you can show players Figure 0: World Map—Zamora and let them know this is

To capture the spirit of the Conan world, I offer a “Babe-In-Distress bonus (BID).” As there is almost always a BID in the stories and thus these adventures, I have the characters “compete” for her favor. If you wish to do this, when the characters first meet the BID, have characters average their Comeliness and Charisma scores. Then have them roll a d20. The one who comes closest *without going over* their averaged score has struck the fancy of the BID for whatever reason (“he’s not the best looking, but he has kind eyes”). He then becomes responsible to oversee her safety. If the adventure is completed and she is still alive with only a few nicks, that character is awarded a 10% experience point bonus, not to mention her undying gratitude in the bedroom. Of course, this can apply to female player characters as well. The BID perhaps is intimidated by men and seeks the safety of female protection, or perhaps the BID “just swings that way...”

where they will be adventuring.

Part 1: In the Maul

Show players “Figure 1: A Bar in the Maul”

Torches flare murkily on the revels in the Maul, where the thieves of the east hold carnival by night. In the Maul they could carouse and roar as they liked, for honest people shun the quarters, and watchmen, well paid with stained coins, do not interfere with their sport. Along the crooked, unpaved streets with their heaps of refuse and sloppy puddles, drunken roisterers stagger, roaring. Steel glint in the shadows where wolf preys on wolf, and from the darkness rises the shrill laughter of women, and the sounds of scuffings and strugglings. Torchlight licks luridly from broken windows and widethrown doors, and out of those doors, stale smells of wine and rank sweaty bodies, clamor of drinking-jacks and fists hammer on rough tables, snatches of obscene songs, rush like a blow in the face. In one of these dens merriment thunders to the low smoke-stained roof, where rascals gather in every stage of rags and tatters – furtive cut-purses, leering kidnappers, quick-fingered thieves, swaggering bravoos with their wenches, strident-voiced women clad in tawdry finery. Native rogues are the dominant element – darkskinned, dark-eyed Zamorians, with daggers at their girdles and guile in their hearts. But there are wolves of half a dozen outland nations there as well. There is a giant Hyperborean renegade, taciturn, dangerous, with a broadsword strapped to his great gaunt frame – for men wear steel openly in the Maul. There is a Shemitish counterfeiter, with his hook nose and curled blueblack beard. There is a bold-eyed Brythunian wench, sitting on the knee of a tawny-haired Gunderman – a wandering mercenary soldier, a deserter from some defeated army. And the fat gross rogue whose bawdy jests are causing all the shouts of mirth is a professional kidnapper come up from distant Koth to teach womanstealing to Zamorians who are born with more knowledge of the art than he could ever attain. This man halts in his description of an intended victim’s charms, and thrusts his muzzle into a huge tankard of frothing ale. Then blowing-the-foam from his fat lips, he says, “By Bel, god of all thieves, I’ll show them how to steal wenches: I’ll have her over the Zamorian border before dawn, and there’ll be a caravan waiting to receive her. Three hundred pieces of silver, a count of Ophir promised me for a sleek young Brythunian of the better class. It took me weeks, wandering among the border cities as a beggar, to find one I knew would suit. And is she a pretty baggage!” He blew a slobbery kiss in the air. “I know lords in Shem who would trade the secret of the Elephant Tower for her,” he said, returning to his ale.

The fat Ophirian bragging about his slavery prowess is none other than Hamadras, the evil slaver the

characters worked for and were betrayed by in ‘Slavers Caravan.’ (Please see Craig Tidwell’s adventure). No doubt, the PCs have a score to settle with him. In his company sitting about the tavern are three of his guards including Dinak if he is still alive. Substitute a different name if he died in the former adventure. If able, Hamadras will escape leaving the fighting to Dinak and his guards.

Hamadras, (Ophirian) Rog1/Nob8; Size M (6 ft., 2 in. tall); 51 years old;

(AC: 3 (+3 Dex +4 armor) hp 42 Init +3 Th: 12 Str 13, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 16)

Languages Spoken: Aquilonian, Argossean, Ophirian, Zamoran.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge

Possessions: Light chain shirt, masterwork dagger, masterwork hand crossbow, 12 bolts, platinum ring inlaid with rubies (550 gp), gold chain necklace with deep blue spinel amulet (825 gp), thin 3' steel chain with locking clasp.

Dinak, male human (Zamoran) Ftr4 Size M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); 35 years old

(AC: 0 (+4 Dex +2 armor +3 shield); hp 46; Init +6 Th: Str 15, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 14)

Languages Spoken: Zamoran, Corinthian

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +2

Feats: Expert/Specialized Scimitar 3/2 +1/+2, +2 Shield Bonus, Improved Initiative

Possessions: Breastplate, large steel shield, scimitar, dagger

Male human (Zamoran) Ftr4 (2) (1 in 3 chance of one being the guard who warned the party)

(AC: 4 (+1 Dex, +3 armor, +2 shield); hp 31; Init +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14)

Languages Spoken: Zamoran, Corinthian

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +2, Swim +4

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave

Possessions: Studded leather armor, large wooden shield, longsword, dagger

The party can either pick the fight in the bar or wait to see what happens when Hamadras leaves. If they wait, they see him and his guard wait and attack the Brythunian wench who was with the Gunderman in the bar. Hamadras binds her and throws her over one of their light horses. If they party still does not act, he retires with his retinue to a nearby inn, taking the Brythunian with him. Her name is Shylico and is the BID. Make competitive checks for her favor if the party saves her.

[Shylico AC: 10 HD: 1 hp: 5 Th: 20 Mv: 12 D: d2 Sz: 5'3" 106lbs]

S: 11 C: 14 D: 9 I: 15 W: 9 Ch: 10 COM: 16 PER: 11

Vitals: Age: 17 Measurements: 32C 20 31 Hair: Dishwater Blonde Eyes: Light Blue Skin: Brown

Shylico has the Allure trait as well as Cooking and Sex.

Four light horses with Hamadras’ symbol on the backpacks are hitched outside the tavern. For complete revenge, it is not hard to spot where they stay. In a nearby inn, 3 more horses and the giant riding lizards are in the stables. It would take less than 1 hour to track down where they stay.

Rumor Table

Allow the characters to partake of the nightlife to gather clues about the tower: hiring prostitutes, engaging in drinking games, and gambling are all ways to gather clues as well as using Gather Information skills. This should make for some fine roleplaying -- be sure to play up everyone's great fear of the evil Yara.

Die Description
Roll

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The wizard of the Elephant's Tower, is over 300 years old.
(True) |
| 2 | The Elephant's Tower was built in a single night using magic.
(True) |

- 3 Undead guardians stalk the gardens of the Tower. (False)
- 4 Yara came to Zamora from Khitai, where he lived in a great jade palace with a hundred servants. (Partly true)
- 5 Even the king of Zamora fears Yara's power. The king drinks heavily to dampen his fears. (True)
- 6 The wizard has one known weakness: He can only die if he is slain with a silver dagger blessed by a priest of Ishtar. (False)
- 7 Yara once killed a foreign prince by turning him into a spider, and then crushing the spider under his heel. (True)
- 8 The Tower's name is derived from a gem so large that it is the elephant of the gem world (True)

Part 2: The Tower, Outer Gardens

The shimmering shaft of the tower rises frostily in the stars. In the sunlight it shines so dazzlingly that few can bear its glare, and men say it is built of silver. It is round, a slim perfect cylinder, a hundred and fifty feet in height, and its rim glitters in the starlight with the great jewels which crusts it. The tower stands among the waving exotic trees of a garden raised high above the general level of the city. A high wall encloses this garden, and outside the wall is a lower level, likewise enclosed by a wall. No light shines forth; there seems to be no windows in the tower – at least not above the level of the inner wall. Only the gems high above sparkle frostily in the starlight. [\[Show players “Figure 2: The Tower”\]](#)

The Tower itself is surrounded by two circular walls. Starlight or sunlight is reflected in a great jeweled dome. It is said that Yara built the tower in just one night, using powerful magic.

Each story is about 25 feet tall (including the stone in floor and ceiling; inner height is about 18 feet), and there are six stories, although this is not apparent from the outside. There are cleverly constructed doors and windows, but they are closed and not visible from the outside. The occupants of the tower breathe air that comes from above.

Entering the Tower from the ground: Of course, the PCs might also choose to enter the tower from the ground. They have to fight, neutralize or sneak past the gate guards and the guards on the lower floors. If the guards manage to sound the alarm, Yara is alerted and responds in force, after preparing himself with protective spells.

Human guards patrol the outer garden day and night. **Every ten minutes, there is a 1 in 4 chance that the guardians come across the PCs.** They do not bother with questions before they attack, although at least one guard attempts to retreat to the tower to warn Yara of the intruders.

The guards are equipped with silvered corselets, jeweled sword-hilts and plumed helmets. There are 24 guards within the tower.

Tower Guardians, Fighter 2 (2d4 -- 24 total): HD 2d8+2 (11 hp); AC 5 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small steel shield); Atk Longsword +4 melee; Dmg Longsword 1d8+4; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Part 3: The Tower, Inner Gardens

The garden is a vague pool of shadows, where feathery bushes and low spreading trees wave darkly in the starlight.

Scaling the Tower: The walls of the tower are smooth and cannot be scaled without rope and grappling hook. A ranged attack roll against AC 2 is required to throw and fasten a grappling hook to the balcony. Climbing up to the dome balcony then requires several climbing checks. The PCs must make three climbing checks: at 50, 100 and 150 feet, respectively. Failing a check means that the character drops down and suffers normal falling damage. PCs scaling the tower end up on the tower balcony (see area 5-2). If successful, read the following:

Up and up you go, silently, the lights of the city spreading out further and further to your sight as you climb, the stars above you more and more dimmed by the glitter of the jewels along the rim. You climb over the sparkling rim. The level of the tower's top is some feet below the gemmed ledge. It is flat, composed of some dark blue substance, set with gold that catches the starlight, so that the whole looks like a wide sapphire flecked with shining gold dust. Across from the point where you have entered there seems to be a sort of chamber, built upon the roof. It is of the same silvery material as the walls of the tower, adorned with designs worked in smaller gems; its single door is of gold, its surface cut in scales, and crusted with jewels that gleam like ice.

During the day, lions are kept in caves beneath the tower garden. Human guards patrol the inner garden from sunrise to sunset, after which the lions (see below) are released from their cages.

Should the tower come under attack during the day, the guards attempt to warn Yara, and the wizard responds to intruders in force (by first releasing the dire lions in the garden, and then attacking with spells -- levitating above the party if they are outdoors, trapping them within a *wall of force* if they are indoors).

During the night, there are no human guards in the Inner Gardens, but instead a far more insidious threat; a pack of dire lions. Yara has enchanted these lions with a permanent *silence* spell, making them completely silent. They attempt to move silently and attack with surprise. Spellcasters who come too close find it impossible to cast spells with verbal components.

Dire, Lion (1d3 -- 5 total): HD: 5+2; hp: 37; Thaco: 13; Init: +2 (Dex); Move: 15.; AC 6; AT: d4/d4/d10; SA Pounce, improved grab, rake 1d6+3; SD: Move Silently, Listen

Taurus, the Prince of Thieves: If the PCs are in the inner gardens at night, they encounter Taurus, the Nemedian Prince of Thieves, on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. Taurus knows much about of the tower's background history (he knows 1d4+2 rumors from the rumors table). The master thief is initially distrustful towards the party. He won't simply stand aside and let the PCs steal all the treasures of the tower for themselves, but neither will he join a party unless he feels he is properly compensated. If the party offends or threatens him, he leaves, but if sufficiently provoked, he might wait for the right moment to sneak attack and use his black lotus dust against the offenders.

Part 4: The Tower, Dungeon Level

0-1. Stairway

The stairs down from the entrance hall (area 1-1) lead into this chamber.

0-2. Hall

This great hall is the living chambers of Yara's guardsmen. A large wooden table stands upon a floor of lapis-lazuli; upon the table are half-empty wine goblets and food plates, as well as dice and a few coins (2d10 sp).

Unless the alarm has been roused, there are 2d4 guards in this room (and unless it is night, they are wearing armor and keep weapons within arm's reach).

0-3. Barracks

Sixteen beds are arrayed along the walls of this room (all guards never sleep at the same time). Under the beds are small chests and bags containing personal items such as combs, mirrors, a few coins (1d8+2 gp) and a 5% chance per chest examined to find something of greater value (roll on a random nonmagical treasure table in the DMG).

0-4. Toilet

The guards' latrine stinks of stagnant urine and dirt. The sturdy door is kept closed most of the time.

0-5. Armory

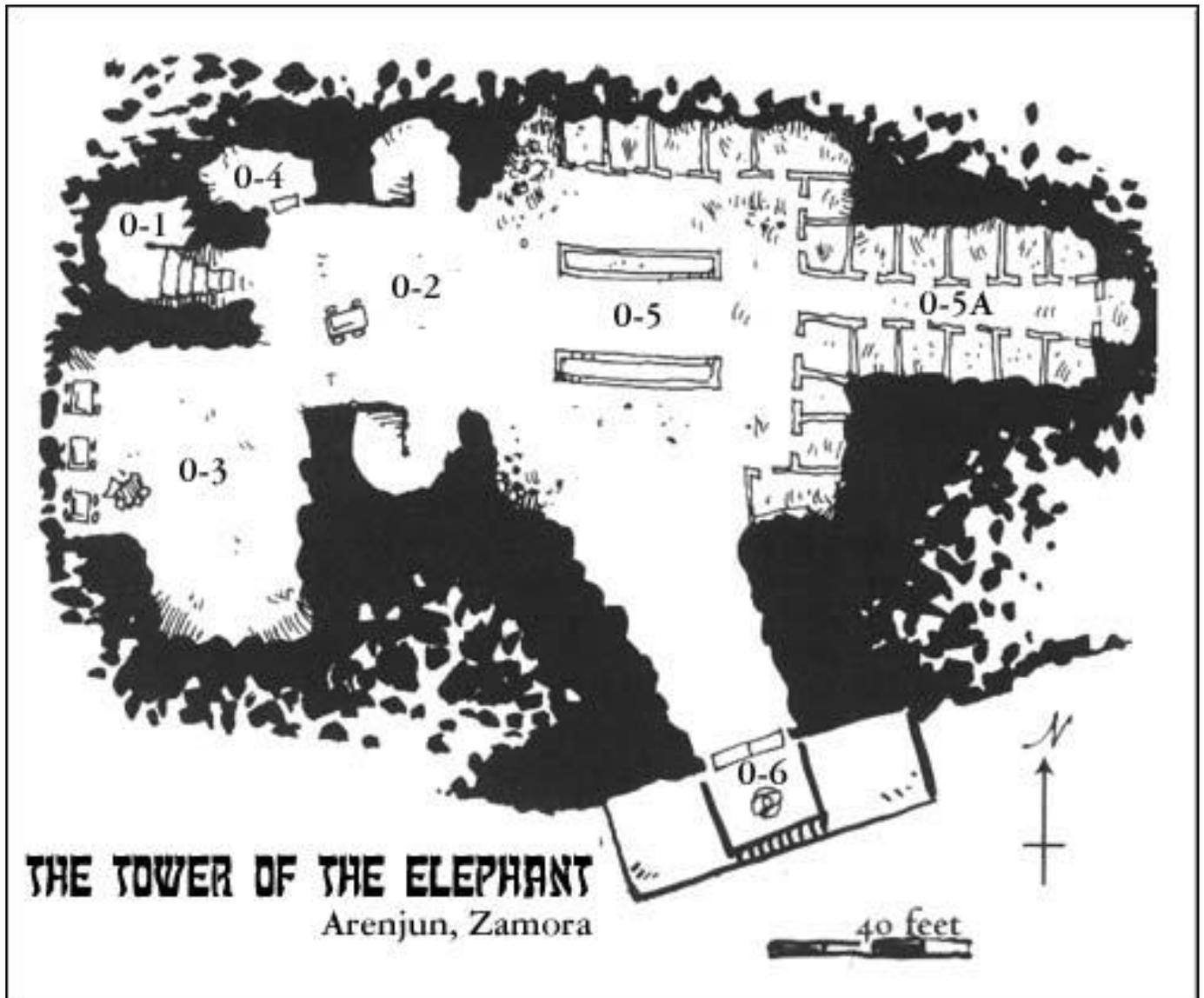
Several weapon racks are stacked with melee and ranged weapons, including 12 daggers, 10 longswords, 2 battle-axes, 4 halberds, 7 shortbows and 80 arrows. A masterwork battle-axe with a silvered handle can also be found.

0-5 a. Cells

These cells serve a dual purpose. In addition to keeping his prisoners here, Yara uses some cells as cages for the dire lions which patrol the gardens at night. If attacked in the dungeon during the day, the guards attempt to free the dire lions. The prison cells currently contain nothing but empty chains and a few skeletal remains with cracked, yellowed bones (but see below). The DM might wish to place NPC prisoners in the cells to be used as seeds for further adventures. For each cell examined, there is a 1 in 8 chance that the PCs encounter a violet fungus. It attacks without provocation. It is a recent inhabitant of the dungeon;



Tower of the Elephant: Dungeon Level



not even the guards know about it yet.

Violet Fungus: (AC:7 HD:3 hp:18 Th:17 D: AT: d4 SA: SD: Mv:1 S:m ML:12 EX:175)

This fungus attacks with d4 branches with a 1' to 4' range. Rots flesh in one round unless Cure Disease or save vs poison;

0-6. Forbidden Vault

Yara has forbidden his guards to enter this room. The double bronze doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28, Open Lock DC 25) are green with age, covered with cobwebs, and feature strange designs and carvings of demonic spiders.

Inside the dark and unlit chamber, covered in more cobwebs, is a strange idol, 9 feet tall, representing a man of eastern appearance. It appears to be of a greyish stone, but if the stone is damaged (5 hp or more), it is revealed that the idol is actually made of gold but encased in stone. The origin, history and true value of the statue is unknown (and is left up to the DM to decide).

If anyone lingers in this vault, they are attacked by a pair of undead who appear to be the shades of Khitan warriors, judging by their ancient armor and weapons.

Spectres (2): (AC:2 HD:7+3 hp:45 Th:13 D:d8 SA: level drain SD:+1 to hit Mv:15,fl30 S:m ML:15 EX:3000)

Part 5: The Tower, Lower Levels

1-1. Grand Entrance Hall

The main doors to the tower are 9 feet tall and made of bronze (2 in. thick; hp 60; Open Lock -10%). Three guards are always stationed outside the doors. In the event of an attack, two remain to fight intruders while the third attempts to escape to warn Yara.

Inside the entrance hall, the western set of stairs lead down to the dungeon level (area 0-1). The eastern set of stairs lead up to the first floor (level 2-1). Rich tapestries adorn the walls, but the room is dominated by a black stone statue of a giant spider which stands on a low dais to the north. The statue is non-magical.

2-1. Stairway

The western set of stairs lead to the grand entrance hall (area 1-1); the eastern stairs lead up to area 3-1.

2-2. Empty Room

This chamber is empty.

2-3. Yag-Kosha's Prison

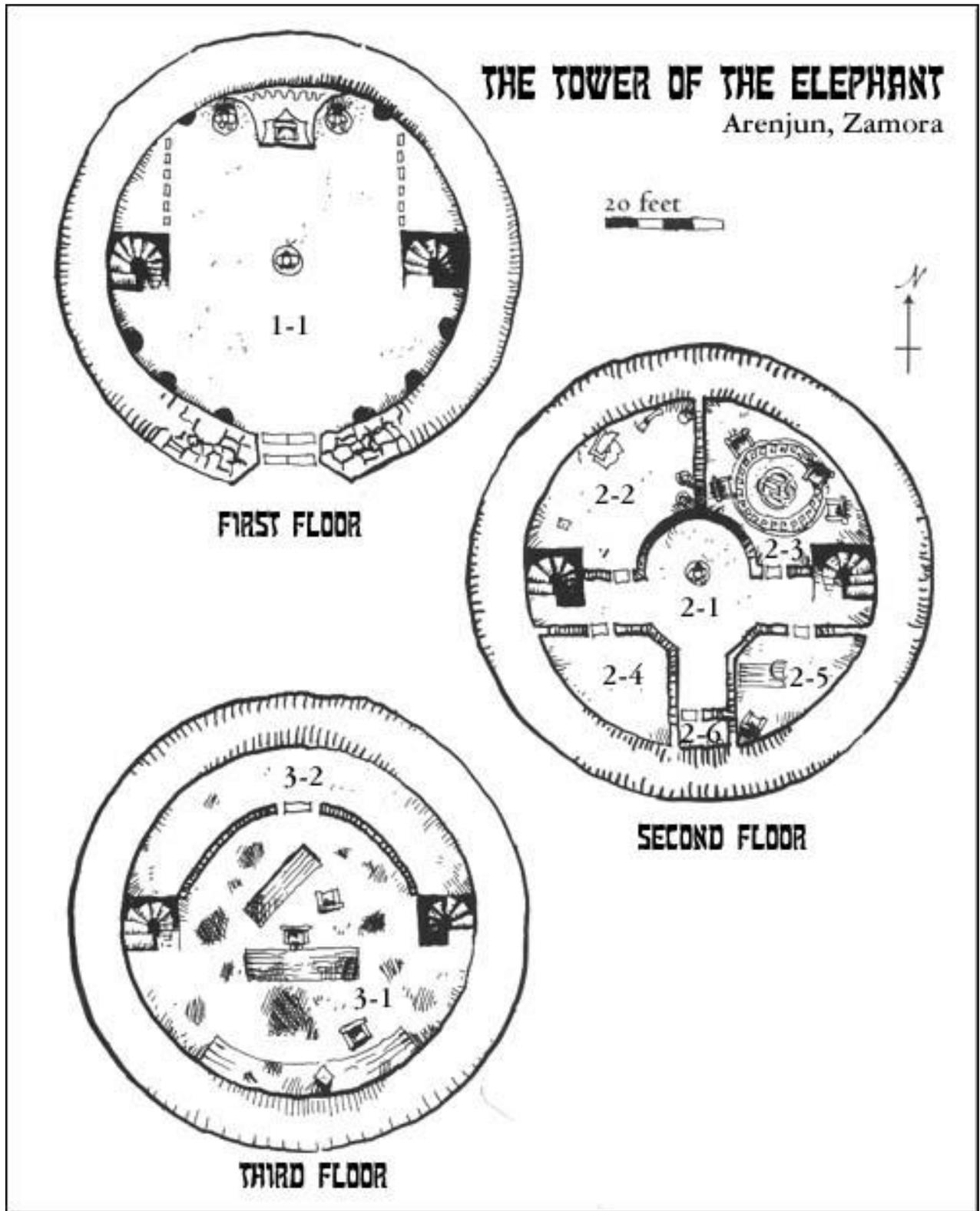
You are looking into a large chamber with a domed golden ceiling; the walls are of green jade, the floor of ivory, partly covered by thick rugs. Smoke and exotic scent of incense floats up from a brazier on a golden tripod, and behind it sits an idol on a sort of marble couch. You stare aghast; the image has the body of a man, naked, and green in color; but the head is one of nightmare and madness. Too large for the human body, it has no attributes of humanity. You stare at the wide flaring ears, the curling proboscis, on either side of which stand white tusks tipped with round golden balls. The eyes are closed, as if in sleep. On a gold and ivory altar beside statue is a huge crimson crystal, the Heart of the Elephant.

[Allow the party to move around a bit. As they approach the Heart..]

The eyes of the thing open suddenly! You freeze in his tracks. It is no image – it is a living thing! [Show players “Figure 3: Yag” and the Title Page]

This is the prison of Yag-Kosha, the elephant-being of Yag. In his current state he is mangled, blinded and broken.

Tower of the Elephant: Lower Levels



Several outcomes of the party's encounter with Yag-Kosha are possible. If the party approaches the elephant-being with respect, allowing Yag-Kosha to "identify" them with his proboscis, and he feels they can be trusted (using *detect thoughts* to find out whether they intend to simply steal his gem and leave, for example), the elephant-being begs the party to kill him. This will empower the "sorcery of the Blood and the Jewel" (a *trap the soul* spell), allowing the PCs to attempt to imprison Yara in the gem.

On the other hand, if the PCs attacks the elephant-being or behave disrespectfully, Yag-Kosha ignores them (killing him simply ends his misery, but if slain in combat he will obviously not help the party by enchanting the Heart).

Note: Yag-Kosha's stats differ from those presented in the bestiary; he is blind, weak from torture (41 hp), and has long since lost the ability to fly, since his wings withered when his race first came to earth. As such his CR should be reduced by 4 if it becomes relevant.

“Oh men, listen,” said the strange being. “I am foul and monstrous to you, am I not? Nay, do not answer; I know. But you would seem as strange to me, could I see you. There are many worlds besides this earth, and life takes many shapes. I am neither god nor demon, but flesh and blood like yourself, though the substance differ in part, and the form be cast in different mold. I am very old, oh men of the waste countries; long and long ago I came to this planet with others of my world, from the green planet Yag, which circles forever in the outer fringe of this universe. We swept through space on mighty wings that drove us through the cosmos quicker than light, because we had warred with the kings of Yag and were defeated and outcast. But we could never return, for on Earth our wings withered from our shoulders.

Here we abode apart from earthly life. We fought the strange and terrible forms of life which then walked the earth, so that we became feared, and were not molested in the dim jungles of the east, where we had our abode. “We saw men grow from the ape and build the shining cities of Valusia, Kamelia, Commoria, and their sisters. We saw them reel before the thrusts of the heathen Atlanteans and Picts and Lemurians. We saw the oceans rise and engulf Atlantis and Lemuria, and the isles of the Picts, and the shining cities of civilization. We saw the survivors of Pictdom and Atlantis build their stone age empires, and go down to ruin, locked in bloody wars. We saw the Picts sink into abysmal savagery, the Atlanteans into apedom again. We saw new savages drift southward in conquering waves from the arctic circle to build a new civilization, with new kingdoms called Nemedias, and Koth, and Aquilonia and their sisters. We saw your people rise under a new name from the jungles of the apes that had been Atlanteans. We saw the descendants of the Lemurians who had survived the cataclysm, rise again through savagery and ride westward, as Hyrkanians. And we saw this race of devils, survivors of the ancient civilization that was before Atlantis sank, come once more into culture and power – this accursed kingdom of Zamora.

All this we saw, neither aiding nor hindering the immutable cosmic law, and one by one we died; for we of Yag are not immortal, though our lives are as the lives of planets and constellations. At last I alone was left, dreaming of old times among the ruined temples of jungle-lost Khitai, worshipped as a god by an ancient yellowskinned race. Then came Yara, versed in dark knowledge handed down through the days of barbarism, since before Atlantis sank.

First he sat at my feet and learned wisdom. But he was not satisfied with what I taught him, for it was white magic, and he wished evil lore, to enslave kings and glut a fiendish ambition. I would teach him none of the black secrets I had gained, through no wish of mine, through the eons.

But his wisdom was deeper than I had guessed; with guile gotten among the dusky tombs of

dark Stygia, he trapped me into divulging a secret I had not intended to bare; and turning my own power upon me, he enslaved me. Ah, gods of Yag, my cup has been bitter since that hour!

He brought me up from the lost jungles of Khitai where the gray apes danced to the pipes of the yellow priests, and offerings of fruit and wine heaped my broken altars. No more was I a god to kindly jungle-folk – I was slave to a devil in human form.”

Tears stole from the unseeing eyes.

“He pent me in this tower which at his command I built for him in a single night. By fire and rack he mastered me, and by strange unearthly tortures you would not understand. In agony I would long ago have taken my own life, if I could. But he kept me alive – mangled, blinded, and broken – to do his foul bidding. And for three hundred years I have done his bidding, from this marble couch, blackening my soul with cosmic sins, and staining my wisdom with crimes, because I had no other choice. Yet not all my ancient secrets has he wrested from me, and my last gift shall be the sorcery of the Blood and the Jewel.

2-4. Map Room

This room contains several large maps of Zamora, Shem and Turan, including maps of major cities, caravan routes and oases. A few maps contain the suspected locations of lost cities, tombs and treasure hoards.

2-5. Trapped Chamber

The door to this chamber is trapped with a poisonous needle trap. The chamber itself contains little of value.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 4; +8 ranged (1 plus deathblade poison, Save vs Poison for ½ or take 2d6 points of Con damage).

2-6. Empty Room

This small chamber is empty.

3-1. Yara's Study

The archetypical wizard's study, this room has a white marble floor and is furnished with rich silvered tapestries (320 sp), two wooden divans with silken cushions (50 sp), and a large ivory table (200 sp). In a secret compartment in the eastern wall are two small wooden boxes. Both are trapped (see below). The first box contains a scroll of *bestow curse* and *magic jar*. The second box contains a bronze circlet, set with an amber in the form of a spider, inscribed with ancient Zamoran letters (500 sp).

Poison Needle Trap: 1 hp, plus greenblood poison: 1 Con/1d2 Con

3-2. Library

Yara's library contains a medium-sized collection of sorcerous tomes, among them titles such as *The Seven Curses of Khrosha*, *The Book of the Spider-God*, and *The Invocations of Zath*. The books mentioned each have 1d3 random spells within their pages, as well as much interesting information regarding the spider-cult of Yezud and their god, Zath.

Part 6: The Tower, Upper Levels

4-1. Stairway

The western set of stairs lead down to area 3-1; the eastern stairs lead up to area 5-1.

4-2. Failed Experiment

Yara used this room to attempt the construction of a flesh golem. He was only partly successful; his rituals have produced a hideous amalgam of dead body parts with a small spark of unintelligent life. The creature is in effect equivalent to a juju-zombie. The wizard has no control over the creature, so he has locked it away in this room (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 20); the flesh golem-zombie attacks anyone entering the room.

Juju-zombie: (AC:6 HD:3+12 hp:40 Th:15 D:3d4 SA:climb walls SD:blunt and piercing 1/2 Mv:9 S:m ML:EX:975) Turned as Specters

4-3. Yara's Chambers

Unless roused by the alarm, Yara, the wizard of the Elephant's Tower is here, slumbering in evil dreams induced by the black lotus. Since the door to his chamber is locked (2 in. thick; hp 20), however, he probably wakes up and prepares himself to face any intruders should someone attempt to breach the doors. The doors are *arcane locked* at 10th level of ability.

The outer door is of ebony, with a silver grinning skull in the center.

The chamber itself is lavishly furnished with rich Iranistani carpets (100 sp), silken tapestries from Khitai depicting demons and devils (200 sp), and gold-decorated wooden chairs and divans (140 sp).

Note: If the PCs have successfully negotiated with and/or freed Yag-Kosha from his terrestrial prison, Yara becomes the target of a *trap the soul* spell cast by Yag-Kosha. This means that if a character has the gem prepared by Yag-Kosha (easily worth 10,000 gp), and can get within short range of Yara, he can complete the spell by speaking its final word as a standard action (SR and Will save applies, but if Yara's name is spoken, SR is ignored and the Will save DC increases by 2). If Yara fails the save he is captured inside the gem. If the wizard makes the save the PCs are in for trouble!



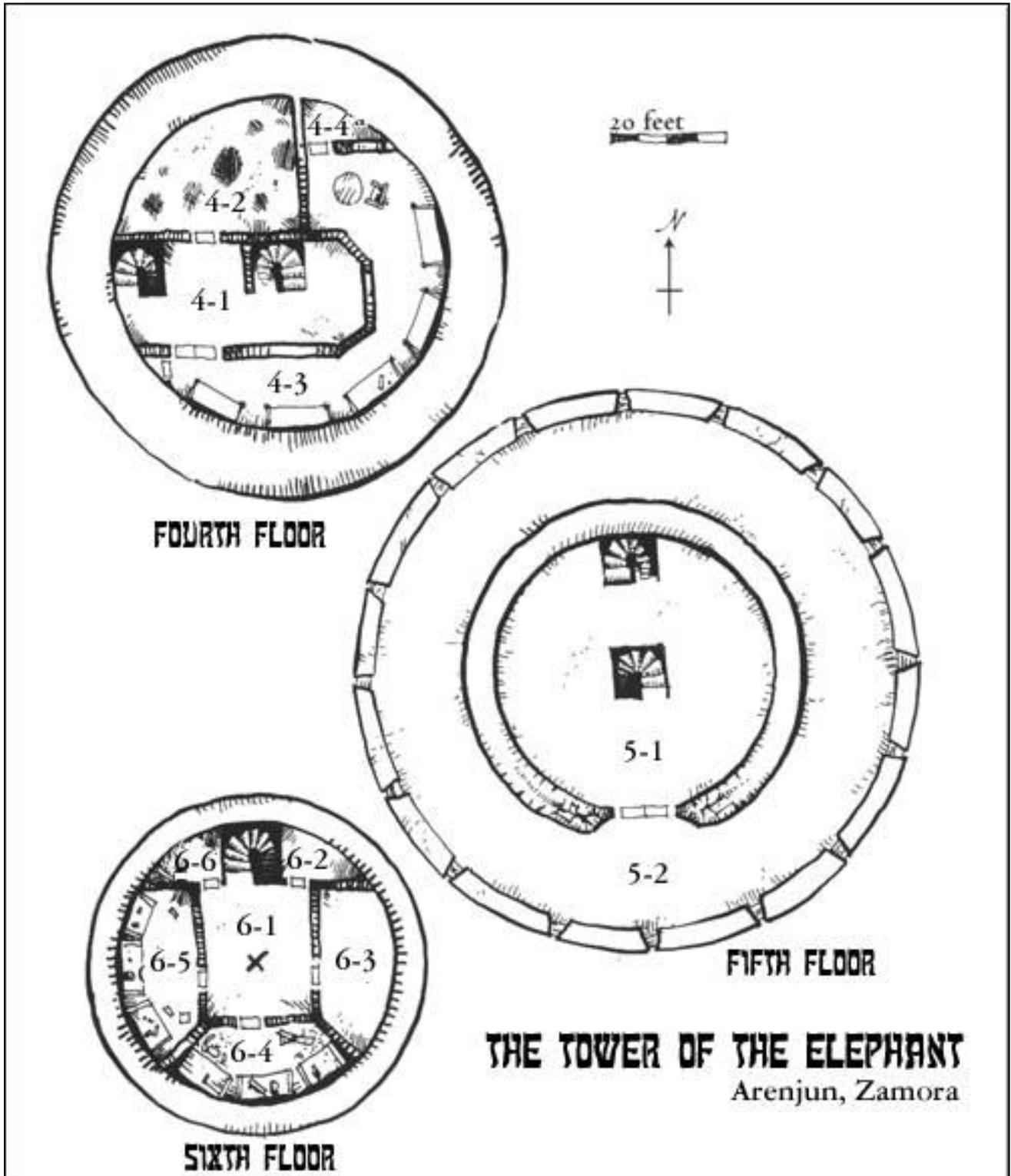
5-1. Trapped Treasure Chamber

There are no chairs or tables in the chamber, only three or four silken couches, embroidered with gold and worked in strange serpentine designs, and several silver-bound mahogany chests. Some are sealed with heavy golden locks; others lay open, their carven lids thrown back, revealing heaps of jewels in a careless riot of splendor to the your astounded eyes.

Massive double doors of iron-reinforced wood prevent entry to this room (2 in. thick; hp 20). The doors are *arcane locked* at 10th level of ability. Inside is a great chamber filled with wealth; Iranistani carpets (400 sp), fine silks from far-off Khitai (700 sp), and several chests containing Kothian silver coins (400 sp) and gold from the mines of Ophir (700 gp). One chest contains two *potions of cure moderate wounds* and one *potion of heroism*. A giant spider guards this treasure room. Initially, it hides in the ceiling, and jumps down on unwary intruders (Spot vs. Hide checks).

A set of stairs lead up to the top floor (area 6-1); another set of stairs lead down (area 4-1).

Tower of the Elephant: Upper Levels



Monstrous Spider, Large: (AC:4 HD:4+4 hp:36 Th:15 D:d8 SA:Poison Save or die SD: Mv: S:l 8' ML:13 EX:650)

5-2. Outer Terrace

Attempts to scale the tower, if successful, are likely to end up on this terrace which juts out 20 feet from the main tower walls.

6-1. Hallway

The stairs lead down to area 5-1.

6-2. Storage

The room contains various supplies, such as candles, chains, chalk, ink and paper, oils and powders, wax, spare clothes and so on. A thorough search PER -4 reveals a silvered dagger (100 sp) and 1d3 thunderstones.

6-3. Observatory

Several large windows in this chamber provide a great view of Zamora's night sky, allowing Yara to study the movement of the planets and the stars. Through magically enhanced telescopes he has been trying to discover the green planet Yag (which according to Yag-Kosha circles on the outer rim of space), but he has so far been unsuccessful.

6-4. Laboratory

This is a complete alchemist's lab.

6-5. Shrine to the Spider God

Yara is a worshipper of Zath, the spider-god of Yezud. This chamber contains an evil shrine to that god. A black, three-pronged pedestal stands in the middle of the room, surrounded on all four sides by curtains of filmy, finely-spun cobweb. This web affects those attempting to pass through it (without first speaking a command word, "ia! zathar!") as a double-strength *web* spell (double the penalties for being entangled).

Atop the pedestal is a silver amulet set with a yellow amber stone. Inside the amber is a tiny black spider. For a priest of the spider-god, the amulet functions as a *necklace of prayer beads* with the *bead of karma* special bead. For a non-follower of Zath, wearing the amulet has the same effect as that of a *periapt of foul rotting*. Yara cannot use it himself and keeps it for future bargaining with a priest of Yezud.

If the amulet is removed from the pedestal, a swarm of tiny spiders jump at the offender from within a hidden hollow in the pedestal.

Monstrous Spider, Tiny (2d6): (AC:8 HD:1-1 hp:6 Th:20 D:1 SA:Poison Save or -1 die rolls, -3 DEX, for 2-5 rds SD: Mv:12 S:t ML:10 EX:65)

6-6. Storage

Similar to area 6-2, this room contains supplies of little value.

Part 7: Epilogue

Yara is a powerful wizard and could possibly kill the PCs whether they have Yag-Kosha's enchanted heart or not. The outcome of the adventure depends on the PCs' tactics, luck and timing.

At the DM's option, the Yara's tower might collapse if the wizard is killed, since it was built using sorcery. The ruins might also become cursed (or haunted by strange monsters) to prevent player characters (and others -- after all, Arenjun is the City of Thieves) from plundering the gem-set outer walls.



If they escape with their lives, award PCs with Xps or if you use a simplified system like I do, this adventure should be worth 1/3 of a level for each 4 hour playing session (but no more than 1 level per adventure in any case).

I also keep track and award the following bonuses, each worth 1/10 of a level:

- ♣ Most Damage in a single blow/spell
- ♣ Coolest Critical Hit by a PC
- ♣ Weirdest/Funniest Happening
- ♣ Scribe (one player must write all notes including monsters killed and treasure gained)
- ♣ BID if she is alive and relatively unharmed
- ♣ Best Idea

"Taurus, called a prince of thieves, was tall as the Cimmerian, and heavier; he was big-bellied and fat, but his every movement betokened a subtle dynamic magnetism, which was reflected in the keen eyes that glinted vitally, even in the starlight. He was barefooted and carried a coil of what looked like a thin, strong rope, knotted at regular intervals." -- Robert E. Howard: "The Tower of the Elephant"

Physical Appearance: Tall and muscular (although with a big belly), but with lightning reflexes. Taurus has shoulder-length black hair and a wild, ungroomed beard.

Background: Although Taurus is a Nemedian, his skills rival those of the Zamoran master-thieves. He has traveled far in the Hyborian world and (somewhat exaggerated) tales of his escapades can be heard in the drinking-dens of major cities such as Belverus, Messantia, Asgalun and Shadizar.

Taurus will always carefully plan his thievery. He sometimes accepts missions to retrieve precious items for people who pay the right price -- with few questions asked.

Role-Playing Notes: As befits a Prince of Thieves, Taurus often swears by Bel, the Shemitish god of thievery.

Taurus

Male Nemedian Rog 7

Medium-size humanoid

Hit Dice: 7d6-7 (20 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 13 (+3 Dex)

Attacks: Dagger +7 melee

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +4d6

Special Qualities: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC and cannot be flanked)

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 17

Skills: Hide +13, Move Silently +13, Tumble +13, Open Lock +15, Listen +12, Spot +12, Search +12, Appraise +12, Disable Device +14, Climb +9

Feats: Improved Initiative, Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Blind Fighting



Equipment: One dose of black lotus powder (equivalent to *dust of sneezing and choking*) stolen from a caravan bound for Stygia, 150 ft. of rope made from dead women's hair, thieves' tools.

Notes: Taurus strikes from the shadows, usually with strange and esoteric weapons. Otherwise, he strangles his victims.

"I am very old, oh man of the waste countries; long and long ago I came to this planet with others of my world, from the green planet Yag, which circles for ever in the outer fringe of this universe. We swept through space on mighty wings that drove us through the cosmos quicker than light, because we had warred with the kings of Yag and were defeated and outcast. But we could never return, for on earth our wings withered from our shoulders. Here we abode apart from earthly life. We fought the strange and terrible forms of life which then walked the earth, so that we became feared, and were not molested in the dim jungles of the east, where we had our abode." -- Robert E. Howard: "The Tower of the Elephant"

Large Outsider

Hit Dice: 11d8+33 (83 hp)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

AC:4 (-1 size, +7 natural)

Damage: Gore 1d4+5, fist slam 1d8+5

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 21, Wis 18, Cha 16

Skills: Alchemy +8, Animal Empathy +17, Concentration +17, Decipher Script +19, Diplomacy +17, Heal +18, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +19, Wilderness Lore +18

Feats: Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Spell Penetration



Appearance: The elephant-beings of Yag are a race of winged, elephant-headed humanoids from another planet or dimension. They have green skin, topaz eyes, wide flaring ears, a curling proboscis and white tusks.

Elephant-beings of Yag, due to their extreme longevity, usually learn to speak and understand most human languages.

Combat: The elephant-beings of Yag rely primarily on their magical abilities in combat, although they will not hesitate to use their considerable physical strength if it seems appropriate to the situation.

- ⤴ **Smite (Su):** Once per day, the elephant-being can make a normal attack and deal +11 points of additional damage to a foe.
- ⤴ **Spell-like abilities:** At will -- *arcane mark, cause fear, detect thoughts, dispel magic, shield, ray of enfeeblement*; 7/day -- *fabricate, major creation*; 1/day -- *limited wish*. Special -- *trap the soul* (requires the sacrifice of a sentient creature of equal or greater Hit Dice than the target; note that the elephant-being can sacrifice itself to employ this power). These abilities are as the spells cast by an 18th-level sorcerer (DC 13 + spell level).
- ⤴ **Resistances (Ex):** Acid, cold, and electricity resistance 15.
- ⤴ **Darkvision:** The elephant-being has darkvision to 60 feet.

Habitat/Society: Originally from the green planet Yag on the outer rim of space, a number of their race rebelled against their kings, but were defeated and cast out. They fled through space on great wings which carried them quicker than light, and came to earth before the rise of Atlantis and Valusia. They witnessed the Cataclysm and were worshipped as gods by the jungle-folk of the East.

Ecology: The elephant-beings of Yag are not immortal, although their lifespans are claimed to be "as the lives of planets and constellations." Upon coming to earth, the race lost their wings and could not escape from the planet. As such it is a dead or dying race; Yag-Kosha was the only known specimen left alive before he asked Conan to kill him, thus releasing him from his earthly prison.

"Then came Yara, versed in dark knowledge handed down through the days of barbarism, since before Atlantis sank. First he sat at my feet and learned wisdom. But he was not satisfied with what I taught him, for it was white magic, and he wished evil lore, to enslave kings and glut a fiendish ambition. I would teach him none of the black secrets I had gained, through no wish of mine, through the eons. But his wisdom was deeper than I had guessed; with guile gotten among the dusky tombs of dark Stygia, he trapped me into divulging a secret I had not intended to bare; and turning my own power upon me, he enslaved me. (...) No more was I a god to kindly jungle-folk -- I was slave to a devil in human form." -- Robert E. Howard: "The Tower of the Elephant"

Physical Appearance: Yara is a tall, gaunt old man. His eyes are cold and cruel when the sorcerer is awake; dilated and far-staring when he is intoxicated with the fumes of the yellow lotus. He dresses in silken robes and his voice is like the hiss of a cobra.

Background: Although Yara is well-versed in arcane lore and magical spells, it is the magical jewel known as the Heart of the Elephant which is his true source of power.

Yara had traveled far and wide, learning black and forbidden magic, when he came upon a yellow-skinned people worshipping an elephant-headed being in the jungles of Khitai. Through trickery and magic he turned this godling, Yag-Kosha, into his slave and brought him back to Zamora in chains of steel and sorcery.

It is said that Yag-Kosha built Yara's tower in a single night, and that the Heart of the Elephant keeps Yara immortal -- he is already over 300 years old.

Role-Playing Notes: Yara is driven by a fiendish ambition. He is feared by all in Arenjun; even the king of Zamora fears him greatly.

Yara, the wizard of the Elephant's Tower

Male Zamoran Wiz 10

Hit Dice: 10d4+20 (50 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

AC: 8 (+2 Dex)

Attacks: Dagger +5

Damage: Dagger 1d4

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 15

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Move Silently +5, Scry +17, Spellcraft +17, Speak Language (Zamoran, Shemitish, Kothian, Kambujan)

Feats: Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Spell Penetration



Spells prepared (5/5/4/3/2): Spectral Hand, Ray of Frost, Protection from Good; Cause Fear, Charm Person, Armor, Magic Missile, Shield; ESP, Levitate, Web; Dispel Magic, Hold Person, Lightning Bolt (x2); Dimension Door, Polymorph Other, Scrying, Stoneskin; Dominate, Wall of Force

Figure 0—: World Map—Zamora



Figure 1: A bar in the Maul



Figure 2: The Tower



Figure 3: Yag

