

SPIDERBITE

A Scenario for Basic D&D and AD&D for 1st-2nd Level Characters by Oliver Johnson

DUNGEON MASTER ONLY

This scenario should be virtually read out to the players as it is. Those portions of text that are boxed and labelled **DM**, however, should not be read out and are for your eyes only! The scenario is presented initially for *AD&D*. The Basic *D&D* equivalents of *AD&D* are given in brackets, where necessary. Other information is clearly labelled for *Basic*.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

You have been employed by Gorling Grislgum, an ageing cleric, to explore an ancient tomb complex located somewhere in the tropical forests to the south of your country. For days your ship has been sailing up the Mosquito River. You passed the last mark of civilisation a week ago, a settlement 200 miles downriver. The jungle on either side of the shimmering river is unnaturally quiet, save for the occasional squawk of a brightly hued parrot or the tortured cries of monkeys. Sometimes at night a ghastly howl will break through the gloom and continue its sad ululation for minutes on end. The river-folk believe these to be the songs of departed souls, but Gorling maintains that they are merely the cries of a sloth.

One morning, you see, set into a thinly wooded basalt knoll protruding from the jungle, a creeper-entwined head staring sightlessly out over the trackless expanse of green.

Gorling comes out on deck. 'The head, he tells you, 'is a representation of Krakata, who ruled a jungle kingdom here centuries ago. According to legend, his final command was that his head should be carved in rock over the lair of a giant spider. This spider, weaving a cocoon around the king's body, would keep it sleeping until he should one day return to rally his people in times of trouble.

'I think we can discount this legend. All that remains of that jungle civilisation today is a small tribe of savage cannibals who worship the spider-god Hlo-hlo as their totem deity. Like many degenerate peoples, they have woven a tangled web of superstition and folklore that harkens back to former, greater days. However, since the natives of the region believe that Krakata sleeps within the tomb and will one day emerge in all his regal finery, they are extremely hostile towards any strangers. Consequently we must be circumspect.'

The ship is left anchored in midstream with a small crew while Gorling and yourselves row to the bank and disembark on what appear to be the lichen stained stones of an old wharf. The jungle is a thick green curtain in front of you. Every step forward is impeded by choking creepers and the thick boles of trees. You cannot now see the monolith because of the canopy of foliage overhead, but an old track leads in the general direction you wish to go. Gloriously coloured parrots flutter about through shafts of sunlight above you; you can almost believe they mock you with their cries as you set out. The old trail is marked every few yards by weather-worn, moss covered idols on either side.

Gorling Grislgum

5th level Cleric; AC6; HP18; Alignment: Lawful Neutral.

Str: 8; Int: 13; Wis: 13; Con: 6; Dex: 8; Cha: 13.

Spells: 1st: *Bless*; *cure light wounds* x2; *sanctuary*.

2nd: *Hold person*; *slow poison*; *spiritual hammer*.

3rd: *Prayer*.

Equipment: Studded leather, shield, hammer, holy symbol, material components, *potion of healing*.

Gorling might have advanced further in his Temple, but he has always been more interested in his academic pursuits (history, archaeology, etc) than in the rituals and tenets of his faith. He is physically not a brave man, and prefers to leave the business of melee to his hirelings (the PCs) while he assists with his magic. Although many think him just a bumbling, absent-minded old duffer, he actually possesses a shrewd intelligence and tremendous moral courage.

Jungle Encounter Table

(roll d20)

1-5	Natives (1-6 <i>kasha</i> + 0-2 <i>ushok</i> , see later)
6	Snake (constrictor [rock python], poisonous [pitviper] or spitting [cobra])
7	1-4 jungle stirges
8-9	1-4 giant ticks (robber flies)
10	Giant lizard
11-13	2-8 large spiders
14	Wild boar
15-18	Non-harmful/nuisance encounter (monkeys, parrots, brightly patterned dragonflies, etc)
19	Jaguar (tiger)
20	Couatl (sabre-toothed tiger)

The chance of an encounter is usually 25%; check every twenty minutes.

DM: Roll once on the random encounter table for the party's journey to the monolith. This will take them almost an hour of enervating slog in the drenching jungle heat. Any character stepping from the ancient track has a chance (85%; check every 10 feet he moves from the track) of sinking in quicksand. Roll d8 for any character who wanders into quicksand: 1-5, sinks knee deep; 6-7, waist deep; 8, up to the character's chest. A trapped character will sink at 2 feet per round unless thrown a rope. It will take a single character 1-6 segments to pull a sinking colleague to safety.

Any character sinking in quicksand will be attacked by 1-3 giant leeches of the 1 hit dice variety [*MM Basic*: treat as lowest dice stirge]. The character will not be aware of this until, and if, the leeches wound him and he starts to lose blood. This will then lead to a further, greater threat when the character extricates himself from the quicksand, for the smell of fresh blood will entice down *jungle stirges* from the upper branches where they bask in the sun. Jungle stirges are treated in most respects as normal stirges except for their appearance – they are noxious, ragged beings with membranous batwings, tinted green by the lichen which clumps their fur.

The path is dotted with mantraps, of which there are three kinds (roll d6):

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | 6' pit with wooden stakes at the bottom; a character will take d6 damage from the fall and d4 from each stake that hits him – |
| | Character's AC: 10-8 7-5 4-3 2 |
| | No of stakes: 3 2 1 0 |
| 3-4 | 10' pit with 2-8 vipers at the bottom; a character will take d6 damage from the fall itself. |
| 5-6 | Snare – a trapped character will be caught by the foot and whipped up to the top of a tree. His comrades will take 1-6 rounds to get him down, during which time he has a 70% chance per round of attracting the attention of 5 jungle stirges unless he specifically states that he is not struggling in the snare. |

There is a 25% chance of the character at the front of the party stepping into a trap for every ten minutes they proceed along the track. Once thus warned, the chance of setting off further traps is only 10% every ten minutes.

Finally you reach the edge of a clearing about 35 yards across. The sheer cliffs of the knoll rise up before you on the other side of the clearing. The crudely carved face seems massive at this proximity; the eyeslits 80' above the ground appear to be small caves etched into the limestone. It is covered by a thick drapery of creepers. Across the clearing you can see a rough stone altar, and beyond that a large boulder daubed with curious red and mauve glyphs. This apparently blocks a cave entrance. This cave entrance seems to correspond to the 'mouth' of the monolithic stone head.

DM: If the characters enter the clearing without looking around first, they will be attacked by the native guards, (who will have surprise) left to watch over this sacred place. If the characters think to investigate the perimeter of the clearing before stepping from the cover of the undergrowth, they will have a normal surprise chance on the native guards.

The group of native guards consists of seven *kasha* and one *ushok* (see *Natives*, later), standing guard in pairs around the clearing.

ushok: AC7; HP8; first level; Move: 12"; No of attacks: 1; Damage: 1-6. (Morale: 9.)

kasha: AC8; HP1, 3, 2, 6, 4, 2, 2; 0th level; Move: 12"; No of attacks: 1; Damage: 1-6 (club) or 1-3 + poison (dart). (Morale: 7.)

ENCOUNTERS

1: Pit Trap

DM: There is a deep pit covered by thin rush matting behind the altar stone. Anyone running (eg fleeing from the fight with the natives) towards the blocked cave mouth will automatically plunge into this pit – although by rolling dexterity or less on 2d10 they can seize hold of creepers around the pit's edge and then drag themselves out again. If a character falls, refer to **10**. If the characters are not fleeing from combat, they will easily spot the trap and can give the pit a wide berth.

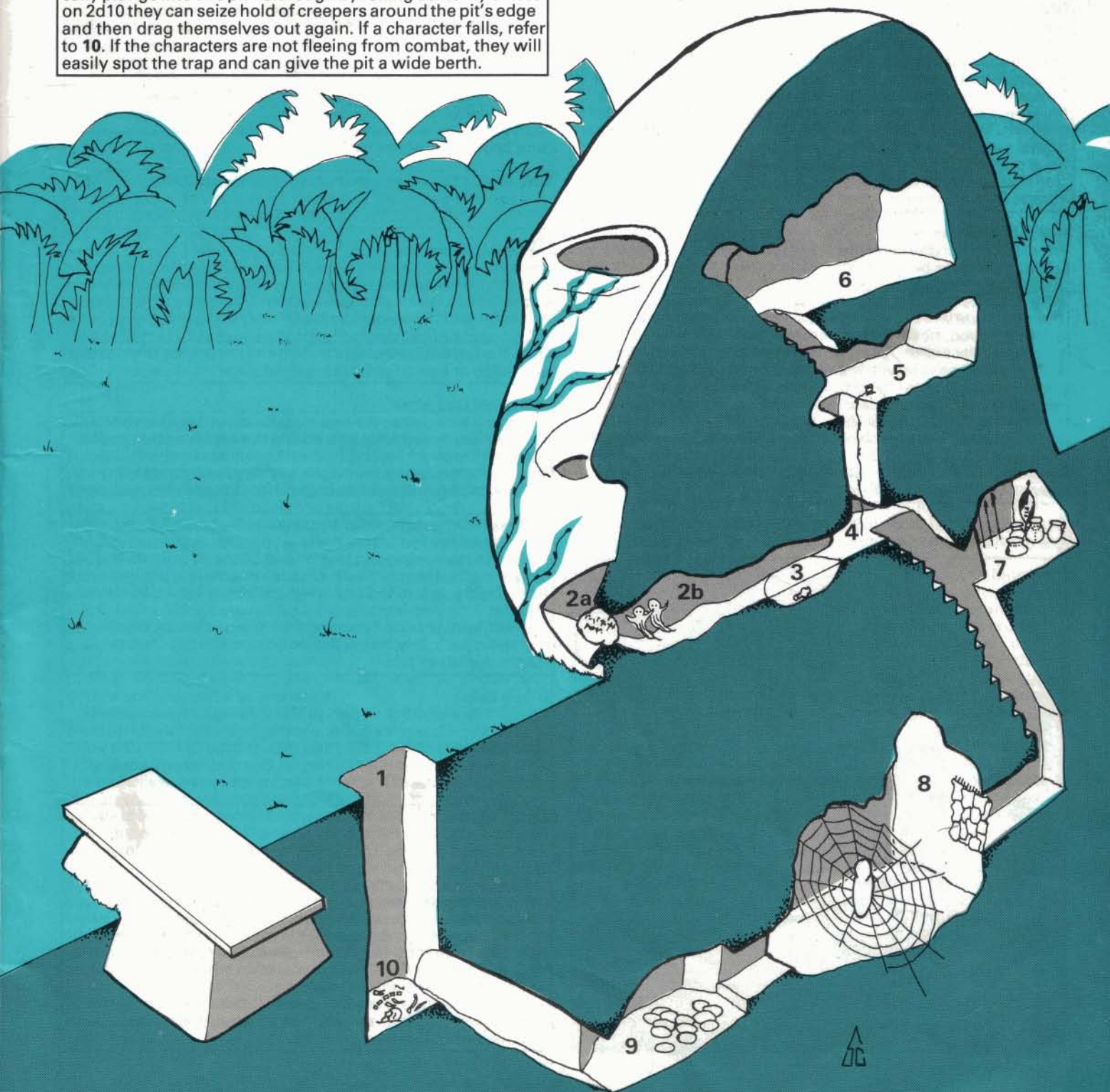
2a: Boulder

The boulder blocking the king's mouth is carved with native glyphs which have been painted in with sticky coloured dyes.

DM: If Gorling is still alive he will be able to provide a halting translation of the glyphs – 'Angry...something...of ancestors...wait within Krakata's maw...mouth, rather. The glyph daubed in purple is the one corresponding to Krakata's name, by the way.'

A total of 40 strength points is required to roll the boulder aside. The red paint is in fact some vile bacterial culture prepared from the body fluids of jungle stirges. There is a 40% chance if the characters moving the boulder don't take precautions (and a 25% chance if they do) that they will contract a connective tissue disorder which will begin to show after 4-5 days.

(If the boulder is rolled aside:) You are terrified by a loud wailing that issues from the dark cave mouth. This is followed by the flitting white spectral forms of ancestral spirits racing▷



▷towards you out of the blackness.

DM: The characters must save vs *fear* as if cast by a 6th level MU (save vs magic or flee for 6 rounds); this saving throw is at +5, but even if the save is made the effects are equivalent to a *scare* (fall into a fit of trembling – if forced to, will fight at -1) spell. If any characters turn and flee, don't forget the pit immediately behind them – they will forget all about this in their terror. If any characters run into the jungle don't forget that they may blunder into traps, quicksand or random encounters!

The ancestral spirits pose no further threat – once out into the daylight they will flit over the treetops, dissipating with a thin, faint howl as they make their way to their place on the Outer Planes.

2b: Entrance Tunnel

A cavern leads from the mouth into the monolithic head. Primitive paintings of hunting and battle scenes adorn the walls.

DM: If the boulder (2a) is still in place – that is, if the characters are returning by this route after entering the complex via the pit trap (1) – then the spirits will still be trapped here. A swarm of wailing, white figures will surround the party like moths around a light; saving throws must be made as detailed in 2a. However, the spirits do no physical damage, yearning only for egress that they might depart to their ancestral hunting grounds. Panicked characters will thus be pursued down the tunnel to the boulder and harrassed by the spirits until they have pushed it aside. These spirits cannot be turned by a cleric because of their fanatical centuries-long desire to escape from this place.

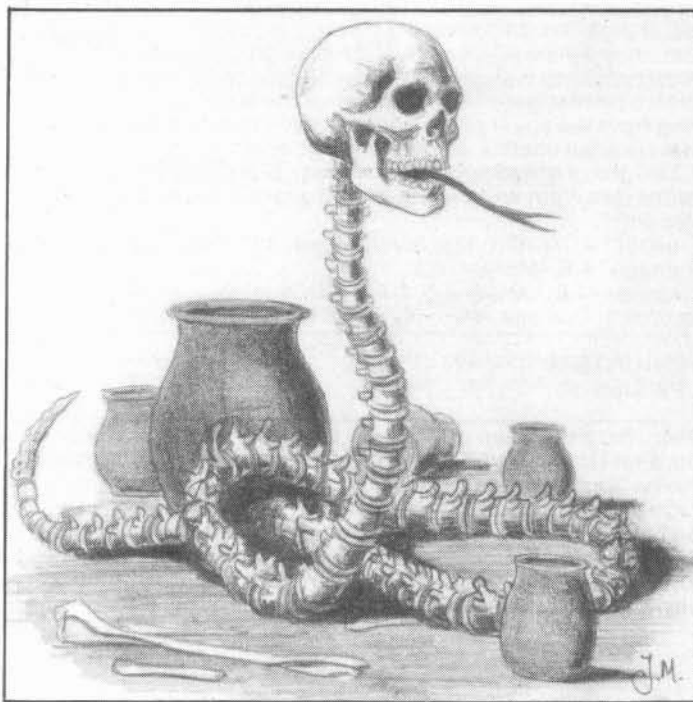
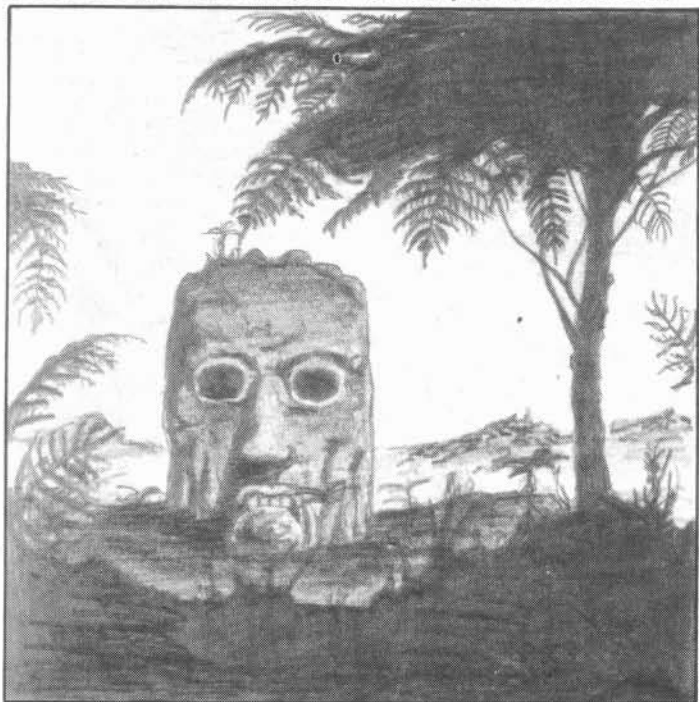
3: Pool Chamber

There is a pool in the centre of this large limestone cavern. The liquid appears to be clear, fresh water.

DM: Anyone remaining within 10 feet of the pool for more than a minute will be subject to a *sleep* spell (saving throw vs spells allowed, however). Whether the players fall asleep or not, the surface of the pool will start to come to life and begin to creep and ooze towards any slumbering characters, eventually enveloping them completely unless they are woken or moved by their colleagues. It is in fact a giant amoeba.

Amoeba: (for *AD&D & Basic*) AC9; HP14; HD3; Move: 4"; No of attacks: 1; Its touch acts an acid causing 2-8 points of damage. (Morale: 11.) Because of its amorphous form the amoeba will only take ½ damage from edged/pointed weapons.

(Once the 'liquid' has left the pool:) A stone urn is now visible on the dry bed of the pool. You can just make out some-



thing brown and shiny with the urn.

DM: Within the stone urn is a brown onyx amulet in the shape of a squatting demon. The amulet functions as a *Scarab of Protection*. (*Basic D&D*: treat as a *Ring of Protection*.)

4: Ways Up and Down

There is a hole in the ceiling of the tunnel. A piece of rope, made of loosely plaited creepers, leads up into the darkness. A set of steps, hewn from the rock and cluttered with rubble, leads down to the north.

DM: The rope is quite safe if used by no more than one person at a time.

5: Charnel Chamber

You thrust a torch into the room as you climb up. Even before you have seen anything, you notice the horrible stench. The room is littered with gory, half eaten remnants of a savage feast. In the guttering torchlight you see a rough stairway on the far wall; a glimmer of daylight filters through from above!

DM: As the characters climb up in turn, there is a 30% cumulative chance per round that the bull ape sleeping behind a slab of rock to the north will awaken and attack. It will automatically surprise the party as it charges out, bellowing insanely. Ape: (for *Basic & AD&D*) AC7; HP9; HD1+1; Move: 9"; No of attacks: 3; Damage: 1-3/1-3/1-4. (Morale: 9.)

If the fight goes on for more than 3 rounds then the rest of the ape tribe in 6 will hear the noise and descend the steps from their lair to join in.

6: Ape Lair

Sunlight streams in through shafts leading to the colossal head's eyes. On a granite block in the centre of the room lies a large golden facemask studded with shards of coloured volcanic glass. The sunlight falling on this throws extraordinary patterns of scintillating colour on the limestone walls.

DM: This is the lair of the apes, and if they have not already descended to battle the party they will be encountered here. Apes: (*Basic & AD&D*) AC7; HP5, 5, 4, 6, 3; HD1+1; Move: 9"; No of attacks: 3; Damage: 1-3/1-3/1-4. (Morale: 7.)

The face mask was part of the royal regalia of Krakata. It is an object much venerated by the apes, who will fight to the death to retain it. The mask is worth about 200gps in a purely financial sense, but it may cost the characters their lives if left behind (see *Getting Out Alive*, below). Because of its size and shape, it has an effective encumbrance value of 45 (equivalent to 450gps weight).

If the characters leave by means of the eyeslits then the climb to the ground is an easy one because of the vines covering the monolith's face.

7: Krakata's Treasure

The room is strewn with earthenware urns, tribal artifacts, animal-skin shields and barbed spears, of superior workmanship to those used by the natives outside.

DM: The guardian of this treasure is a Necrophidius (*Fiend Folio*):

AC2; HP8; HD2; Move: 9"; No of attacks: 1; Damage: 1-8 + paralysis.

For *Basic D&D*, the guardian is a crystal living statue (see the rulebook for further information), set here when the monolithic head was built:

AC4; HP10; HD3; Move: 10"; No of Attacks: 1-6/1-6. (Morale: 11; immune to *sleep*.)

The main treasure can be found within the urns, and consists of the following:

A *bone wand* which, when waved over a surface or between two objects, will cause a layer of cobwebs to appear magically. These webs are only as strong as a normal cobweb – they will not entrap a being (except for flies, of course). The usefulness of the item to the characters will lie in its trickery value – to deceive an enemy into thinking that a certain chest had not been opened for years, perhaps, or in covering an archway so that pursuers didn't think anyone had passed through it...

A *jade bust*. There is a bowl-shaped depression in the plinth of this artifact, and if a character allows 1hp worth of his blood to fall into the bowl, the bust will open its lips and speak cryptically of future events in a manner equivalent to an *augury*. The device will work each time it is given blood, up to a maximum of three times a day.

Numerous items of jewellery worth some 15000 silver pieces.

8: The Web of Hlo-hlo

A frieze of cured animal skins is stretched across the northern end of this vast subterranean cavern, which accommodates a thick-stranded web of stupendous proportions. The upper moorings of the web are invisible in the darkness, but you are able to see some of the pale objects caught in it. To your horror you realize they are human bones. Enshrouded in a cocoon at the centre of the web, some 30 feet above you, is what appears to be a purple bundle. Gold gleams dimly from it in the torchlight.

DM: The 'bundle' is in fact the mummified body of King Krakata, protected by the giant spider Hlo-hlo which has for centuries been worshipped as a god. The purple shroud in which Krakata is wrapped is the other item the characters will probably need in order to survive [see *Getting Out Alive*]. The gold ornaments on his body are worth 120gps.

To dislodge the body, one or more characters will need to climb up into the web. Anyone but a thief or assassin has a 10% chance per round of climbing of becoming enmeshed in the web, and will then need 2-10 rounds to cut or burn the strands away. Perhaps surprisingly, a character under *spider climb* (*AD&D* only) cannot become enmeshed.

As soon as anyone touches the web – it is next to impossible to cross the floor of this chamber without doing so – the spider will edge down from an upper recess, scuttle across the web and drop onto anyone climbing it. Allow 3 rounds before anyone notes its presence.

Hlo-hlo the Spider: AC4; HP14; HD4+4; Move: 3" (12" in web); No of attacks: 1; Damage: 2-8. (Morale: 10.)

9: Spider's Eggs

The air here is warm, damp and stifling. There is a cluster of pale, translucent spheres lying together on the ground. Bringing your torches close to one, you can make out a squirming spidery form within.

10: Bones

DM: Unless characters have climbed down using the creepers or else come here from 9, they will have fallen 30 feet and thus taken 3d6 falling damage. This is reduced by 1d6 if the falling character lands on the neat pile of human bones stacked at the bottom of the shaft (85% chance of this), as the bones will break his fall. Some ceremonial robes and necklaces on the skeletons seem to suggest that these people have been the victims of some kind of ritual sacrifice to the 'god' Hlo-hlo.

Getting Out Alive (For the DM only)

By the time the party come to leave Krakata's tomb complex, the rest of the native tribe will have learned of their presence – either directly from surviving guards or by discovering the slaughtered bodies around the monolith. A large force will come to deal with any who manage to survive the tomb and consist of the witchdoctor, eight *ushok* and twenty *kasha*:

Witchdoctor: 7th level cleric with some MU spells; AC7; HP14; Alignment: Neutral; fights as a 2nd level owing to age and consequent infirmity.

Spells: 1st: *Cause/cure light wounds; spider climb; cause/remove fear*. 2nd: *Web; hold person; silence 15' radius*. 3rd: *Speak with dead; cause/cure disease*. 4th: *Poison/neutralize poison*.

For *Basic D&D*, the Witchdoctor is a 6th level magic-user/cleric, other stats as *AD&D*. His spells are: 1st level: *Cause/cure light wounds; cause/remove fear*. 2nd level: *Web, hold person, silence 15' radius, levitate*. 3rd level: *Dispel magic*.

Ushok warriors (for *Basic & AD&D*)

	Level	AC	HP	Weapon
First	1st	8	5	spear
Second	2nd	8	9	spear
Third	3rd	7	14	club & shield
Fourth	1st	7	3	club & shield
Fifth	1st	8	6	spear
Sixth	1st	8	2	spear
Seventh	2nd	7	8	club & shield
Eighth	2nd	8	7	spear

Kasha warriors (*Basic & AD&D*)

AC8; HP6, 3, 3, 1, 6, 2, 1, 4, 3, 3, 4, 1, 6, 2, 3, 5, 2, 2, 5, 5; 0th level; Move: 12"; No of attacks: 1; Damage: 1-6 (club) or 1-3 plus poison (dart). (Morale: 7. *Ushok's* morale: 9.)

This probably looks like the end of the party but there is an easy way out, if the characters recall what Gorling told them about Krakata's prophesied return from the dead. By donning the purple robe and golden facemask, a character can step out of the monolith and simply by gesturing can cause the natives to prostrate themselves in adoration. It will be simple then for the party to walk past the natives, who wait patiently to hear the commanding voice of their revenant king, and hurriedly return to the ship. Using this stratagem to escape should be worth at least as much as actually overcoming all the natives in a straight fight – half of the experience going to the character(s) who had the idea in the first place, and the other half going to the single individual who has the courage to actually go out and try it.

After returning to civilisation, Gorling (if alive) will establish the intrinsic value of all items and artifacts brought out of Krakata's tomb and pay the surviving characters 10% of this amount to divide between them, as a bonus for the danger they encountered. This will be in addition to the regular amount he is paying them, of course. If Gorling is dead, the division of spoils is up to them, though they will have to pay the sailors if they wish to return home.

Native Warriors. Most of the warriors of the tribe are 0th level, primarily hunters whose favoured weapons are clubs and dart javelins. (Against human opponents they will coat these darts with an aromatic resin; anyone struck by the dark will have to save against poison at +3 (*Basic*: +6) or lose 4hp per round until they are either dead or else saved by a *neutralize poison* spell.) They called in their own tongue *kasha*.

The special champions, or *ushok*, of the tribe are fighters of 1st level or higher. They are specialised warriors of the tribe in its dealings (ie battles) with outsiders. They disdain the use of missile weapons and the trapping skills which the hunter-warriors develop, preferring to fight their enemies at close hand with poison-tipped spear or shield and obsidian-edged club. *Ushok* are readily distinguished from the lower-status *kasha* by their hair (which they wear plaited into eight thick strands which hang down to their shoulders), the 'spiders eyes' warpaint design and the russet, furry cloaks which are designed to spread out into eight sections when the *ushok* is leaping and running through the jungle towards his prey.

Special note: The poisoned darts used by the *kasha* are quite effective at a distance (as in clearings, from boats, etc) but are almost useless in thick undergrowth. The close proximity of the trees makes it difficult to get a clear shot in. Apply a 'to hit' penalty of -3 at medium and -7 at long ranges. A clever party will realize this and use it to tactical advantage. □