Among the mystics of Punjar, there is known a miraculous cave where any question can be answered if you're willing to pay the price. Seekers of knowledge must enter the cave with a bag of gems as tribute, burn exotic herbs and sleep. The answer to their enigma will come in dreams. Of course, there are those who never wake; Sometimes knowledge is a double-edge sword.

“The One Who Watches From Below” is an adventure designed for a party of level 3 adventurers that evokes the supernatural horror of H.P. Lovecraft. An aspect of the elder god, Shigazilnizthrub, lurks below the Cave of Dreams in a secret temple, collecting tribute and furthering the incogitable goals of the elder gods.

There are many ways to get the players involved in the adventure. Those driven solely by greed may wonder where all the tribute goes after hearing tale of the cave. Other adventurers may be at a dead end with a quest. The Cave of Dreams may be offered up as a solution to their problems. Those who offer tribute and obey the rules may visit the cave many times without ever discovering the cave’s terrible secret. Those who disobey the rules or start poking around the cave may find themselves in for more trouble than they bargained.

Here’s a brief outline of important adventure locations:

The Cave of Dreams (Areas 1-3,7): The entire cave reeks of an opium den. Resting niches are cut into the walls. Some niches contain emaciated figures with eyeless faces deep in a ceaseless slumber. A one-eyed idol (Area 2) watches over the dreamers, emitting a somnolent drone. Short, squat creatures with featureless faces tend to the dreamers after they fall asleep. The small humanoids serve as the temple protectors.

A jewel encrusted portal (Area 7) begs to be despoiled, but looters are in for a nasty surprise. The portal is booby-trapped. When triggered, a looter immediately feels nauseous. His or her eyes drift from their sockets, swimming over flesh until they reach the rock floor or wall. While the thief’s body falls to the floor unconscious, the eyes and consciousness become trapped in the rock. The bodiless character will discover they are limited to a new set of actions. Disembodied eyes can travel like fast-moving slugs over any non-living surface (e.g. rock, metal, wood) and reach normally inaccessible areas of the map, but they cannot be picked up. They also gain the ability to see in complete darkness. At this point, the game master should hand a piece of paper with an eye slit cut out to the affected player (Fig. A). The game master can give notes to disembodied characters that describe what that character sees. Though the affected player can no longer speak, they can still roleplay their character’s eyes by placing the eye slit over their face. The player can blink codes and use descriptive eye movements to communicate with the rest of the party.

Eyestalk Pillars (Area 11): Initially appearing to be columns, the two large structures in this room are giant eyestalks. The eyestalks were placed here as guardians and will pummel anyone who attempts to cross the room.
Kennel (Area 13): The room is filled with various guardian beasts. One such beast (Fig. B) is the vilehund, a demonic hound that has been dominated by a giant medusa follower of Shigazilnizthrub. Those who meet the gaze of the medusa eyes must make a DC 12 Fort save or turn to stone. The gaze attack can only target characters with open eyes.

Dominated Vilehund: Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d8), AC 16; HD2d6; hp 6; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP petrifying gaze (see text); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

Ritual Chamber (Area 14): A stone altar and cases stacked with books fill this room. A large tome on a stand next to the altar is open to a page containing a ritual to reunite disembodied eyes with their former masters. The ritual takes 1 hour to complete. Unauthorized use of the ritual chamber is sure to attract the attention of Shigazilnizthrub.

The Vault of Eyes (Area 19): In the furthest depths of the temple, the aspect of Shigazilnizthrub watches and waits. The aspect is an enormous living eye from some primordial titan that ruled Aereth eons ago. The eye peeks from the floor of a huge chasm, surrounded by piles of treasure and his followers, thousands upon thousands of eyes in every conceivable size and species. The aspect speaks telepathically, demanding complete submission. Characters who drop all their valuables onto the treasure pile will be allowed to leave with their lives. Information will provided for characters who wish to abandon their patrons and accept Shigazilnizthrub as their new patron. Stat blocks will also be provided for those foolhardy enough to attack. The adventurers can attempt to bring the stalactites on the ceiling down or even jump down on the eye to attack hand-to-hand. The aspect returns attacks by dominating characters and forcing them to attack each other, as well as by attacking via its thralls; “face bats” fly down and latch onto characters’ faces to suffocate them, and eyes on the walls shoot beams of frost and flame. In the unlikely scenario that the characters emerge victorious, the death throes of the giant eye trigger a cave-in leaving them with little time to grab loot. For their troubles, they will win the everlasting enmity of “The One Who Watches From Below” whose legions are without number.