

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THE LOST CITY OF BARAKO



#91.1: A CITY AT THE CENTER OF AERETH
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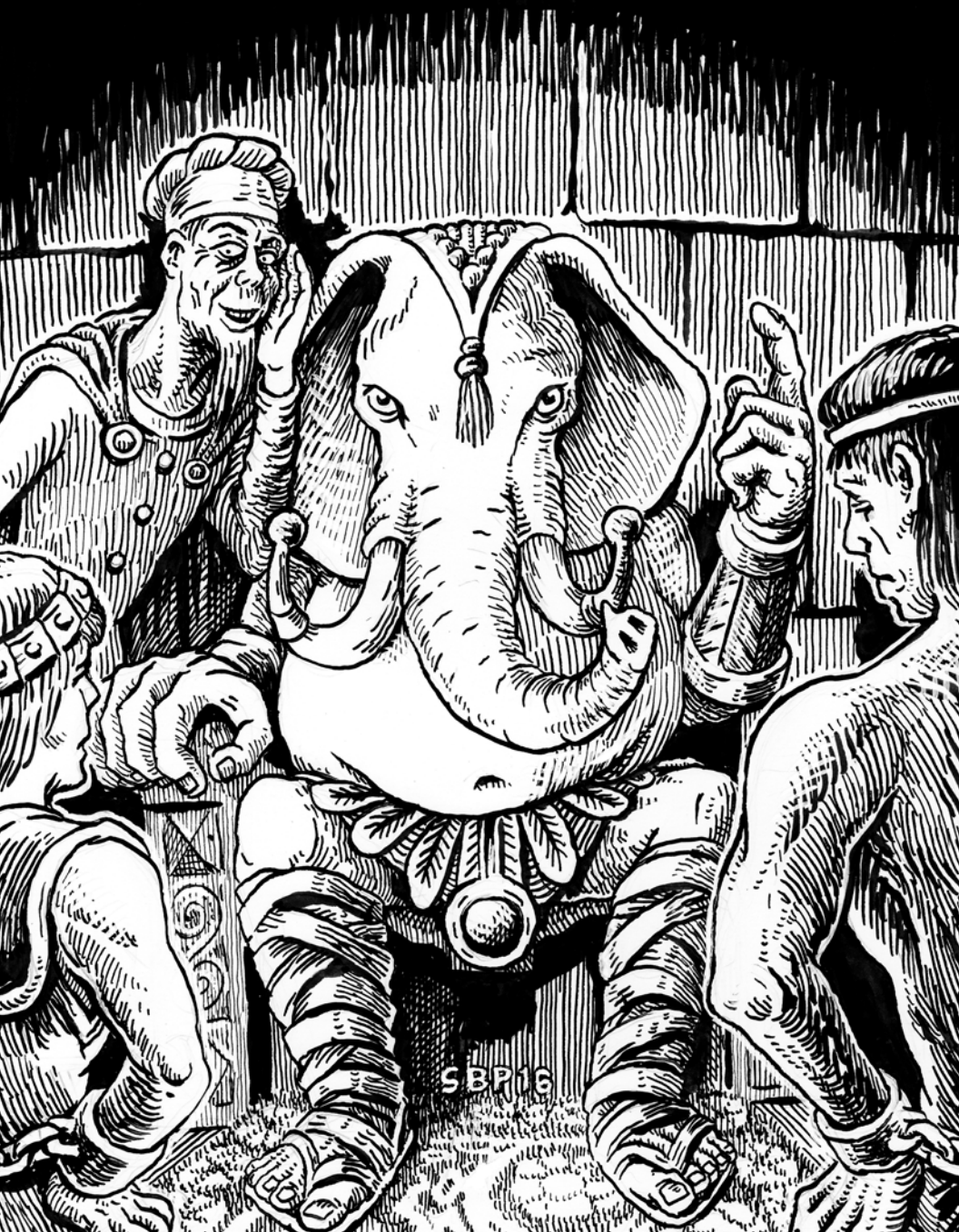


JOURNEY-TO-THE-CENTER-OF
AERETH

THE LOST CITY OF BARAKO

A CITY AT THE CENTER OF AERETH

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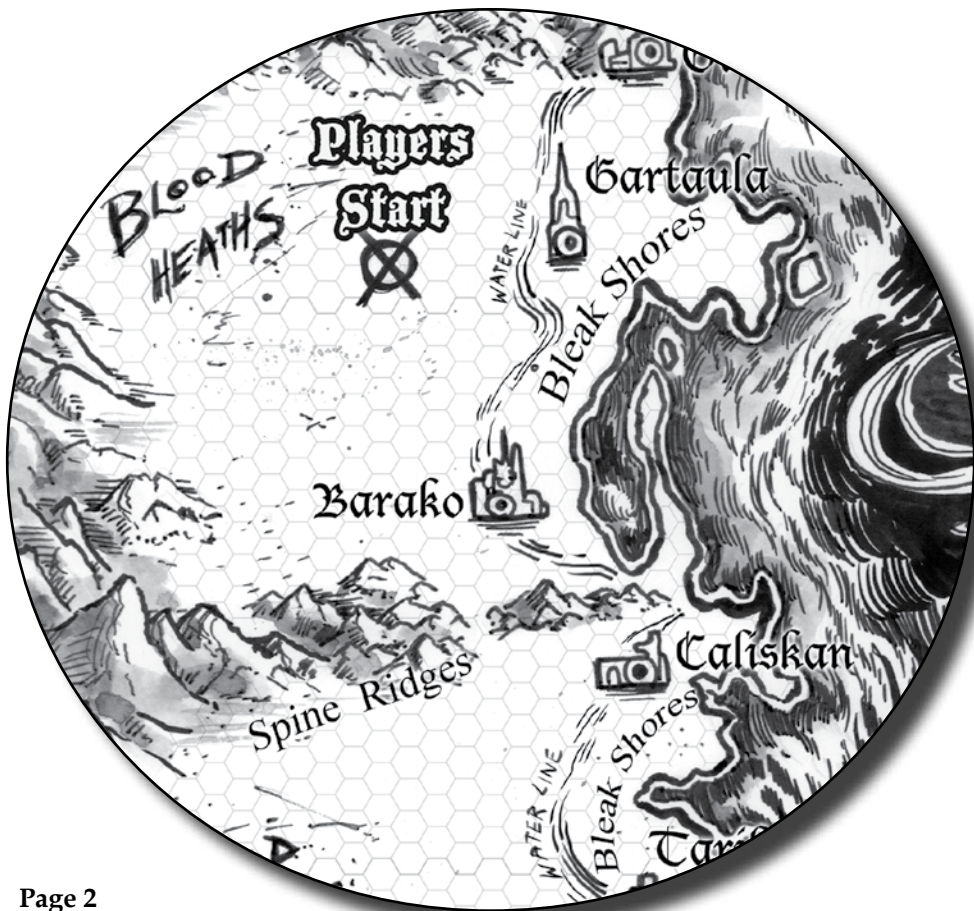




he pleasure palace of Barako rises above the Bleak Shores atop enormous stone pylons. The gloomy palace and golden domes are lit by a thousand lanterns fueled by rendered flesh. Within the city, hellish figures dart and whirl about in the flickering light, prostrating themselves before Aghartan masters to sounds of a cacophonous, alien symphony played by lamenting slaves. The City of Choruses is never silent, the eerie and horrific songs sounding across the shores and heaths long into the night.

The city is approached by a winding stone staircase rising from the rocky shore to a pair of high bronze gates. The stairs are set with mighty stone braziers that are filled with oil and lit every "dawn." As dusk falls and the waters of the great Inner Sea roll in, the braziers are extinguished and vanish beneath the waves, step by step.

The towering bronze gates have been worn smooth from centuries of nightly assaults. Though battered, dented and scarred, the gates remain in good repair. During the brief daylight hours, the portals are drawn open by teams of slave giants in harness, permitting the crimson-bannered warriors of Barako to march down to the heaths, and then hauled closed again at dusk.



Woe to the city should the nightly ritual be interrupted: the inky waters of the Inner Sea would roll up the steps and past the might gates, bearing a host of foul leviathans to a very door of the slavers' palaces.

Each half of the gate lays claim to its own slave-captain and army, responsible for opening, closing and defending the massive portals. The rivalry between the captains and their armies is so great that one force will wait until the other is on the brink of defeat before coming to their aid.

The slave armies of Barako bear slender silken banners into battle. Dyed a deep crimson, and strung with bronze bells, the banners depict three triangles set in a circle – the triumvirate of slave lords presiding over the fell city.

Slave-Captain: Init +4; Atk grab +7 melee (1d10+7 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +7 melee (1d12+8); AC 16; HD 10d10; hp 50; MV 30'; Act 1d24; SP immune to enchantment / charm magic; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +7; AL C.

Gate Army (50 slave giants per gate): Init +2; Atk grab +5 melee (1d6+6 plus victim is pinned) or great cleaver +5 melee (1d10+6); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP immune to enchantment / charm magic; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

The promenades and byways of the city are typical of Lost Agharta – insofar as any of maddening pleasure palaces can be deemed typical – rising in a maze of overpasses, catwalks, alleys and elevated streets to the city's center: the palace of the slave lord.

The city is dominated by wide domes, punctuated with needle-like spires. Plated in the sheets of hammered gold and ringed by candle-lit arches, the domes glimmer like pools of fading sunlight in the dim gloom. The tower-spires are connected by high, narrow walkways, and seldom used by any save the slave lords' demonic servitors. Explorers traversing the high spans find themselves hundreds of feet above the city floor, on a stone span scarcely three feet wide, with neither railing nor rope to prevent a fall.

Like most cities perched on the edge of the Inner Sea, Barako is dying, slowly succumbing to the nightly assaults. Many of its towers and domes stand empty or collapsed; beasts and refugees lair in the ruins, carving out a desperate existence in the shadow of the slave lords.

As the PCs explore the city, roll on the following tables for inspiration on developing the maddening city. As always, common sense (as much as that term applies to the alien cities) trumps any roll, and judges should always defer to their imaginations.

General Notes: Floors are not necessarily standard, as surface dwellers have come to expect. A tower floor allows at least 20' of clearance for the slave giants and their wicked overlords, but can range to 60' or more.

Waste (including the bodies of dead slaves) is dumped out over the ramparts onto

