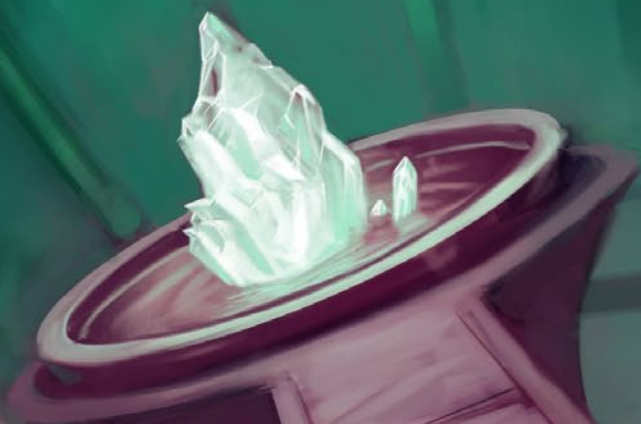


Ruins of Lemuria

CAMPAIGN SOURCEBOOK

BOOK 4 OF THE NEW WORLD CAMPAIGN SETTING



ROLEPLAYING PUBLIC RADIO

Ruins of Lemuria

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Introduction

The New World is the grave of Lemuria, the greatest of all nations. The barbaric tribes that live in the New World now walk upon its bones, the ruins of temples and palaces, ignorant of the wisdom and power buried beneath their feet. When colonists from a distant continent settle on the shores of the New World, whispers of Lemuria flutter through the winds. Adventurers from the colony find the ruins and marvel at their beauty. Scholars listen to the legends told by tribal elders and connect them to ancient stories of a lost empire. Native warriors and mystics commune with spirits awoken by the colony's arrival. The Ruins of Lemuria stir the blood of the ambitious and curious. Soon expeditions will be mounted to crack open dusty tombs to learn their secrets and plunder their treasures. Little do these adventurers know that the doom that befell mighty Lemuria waits to greet them.

The Ruins of Lemuria describes a massive network of ruins that spread across the entire continent of the New World, the remnants of a powerful civilization more advanced in science and magic than any other in the history of the world. Fragments of their knowledge lie deep within the ruins, along with powerful magical items and vast amounts of treasure. Needless to say, if the knowledge or magic items are found and brought back to civilization, it could change the course of history. Lemurian magic and technology is still more advanced than anything else the world has ever known. A few adventurers armed with this power can end wars, curse diseases or doom their own civilization. Not only are the Ruins a perfect locale for a fantasy campaign, the implications of its rediscovery can also affect the world. The heroic player characters can use their findings to improve or even save the world. Of course this also means that others will vie for the power of the Ruins. This supplement provides a framework to incorporate the Ruins into most high fantasy RPG campaigns.

A Lost World

The goal of this supplement is to help you add a hidden civilization to your campaign. Ever since the first tales of Atlantis, storytellers have conjured up empires and nations that outshone all others before or since. A civilization more advanced, wiser and more knowledgeable than any modern nation. This archetypal myth has appeared countless times in fiction perhaps because audiences are enthralled with the idea. Some are reassured that the world was better once and may yet become enlightened once again. Others love the idea of lost temples filled with treasure, that the world still holds glorious secrets. A few fear that the secrets of the lost world would only corrupt or destroy modern civilization. After all, legends often obscure the truth. Perhaps the vanished empire was incredibly decadent and evil. An evil civilization led by dark forces where virtue was weakness and vice was strength. Whatever the case, we keep coming up with new lost civilizations: Atlantis, Mu, Lemuria, El Dorado and Shangri-La among others. This supplement will use the name Lemuria to describe the lost civilization but you can easily exchange it for whatever name you wish to use.

Introduction

The History of Lemuria

The History of Lemuria

Three stories are told of Lemuria's history. Each version depicts a different Lemuria: the Light, The Dark and The Esoteric. Each version accords a unique ruling philosophy and style of governance to the Lemurians, but all three histories share some commonalities.

Lemuria was the most advanced civilization of all time. No other nation or empire has surpassed its knowledge of the sciences and magic. The nation of Lemuria rose and fell long before recorded history began. They were at their most powerful when most of the other sapient beings of the world were mere primitive hunter-gatherers. Lemuria had cities far more marvelous than can be imagined. Great temples and palaces reached towards the sky and hundreds of thousands or even millions of citizens lived in each city.

The religion of Lemuria was unique. No other people ever worshipped as they did. Perhaps their gods were forgotten by time, or the people worshipping them call the gods by different names or the Lemurians did not worship gods at all.

Lemuria fell because of a single massive cataclysm. This apocalyptic disaster wiped them off the face of the world in a matter of months or days.

The History of Lemuria in your campaign

Each history paints a different picture of Lemuria, especially their ideology and practices. As with so many other legends and stories, these histories often reflect more of the storyteller's beliefs than the subject of the story. It is entirely possible to use all three versions in a single campaign or simply have one history. If your campaign features conflicting stories of Lemuria's history, then each version should reflect some truth and something about the storyteller. Lemuria represents a lost ideal world, a utopia achieved by mortals. A storyteller's beliefs about what a utopia is and whether it is even possible to achieve will be reflected in their version of the story.

For example, a bard from a brutal and warlike barbarian tribe would probably tell the Dark history of Lemuria, describing their military conquests in great detail and ascribing their fall to a rise in decadence as the Lemurians grew complacent and weak in peace. This reflects the bard's personal beliefs that eternal vigilance is necessary, even after a successful conquest. Enemies always lurk in the shadows, waiting to strike at a weakened foe. However, a historian from an aristocratic city-state would trust the old written accounts of the Light history. To the historian, peace and order are the ultimate goals of civilization so the most advanced nation must have achieved them. It's only logical. Finally, a wizard's guild would obviously believe in the Esoteric history, thinking that only magical enlightenment could explain how Lemuria became so powerful.

The actual history of Lemuria can be one of these histories, a combination of them or none of them. You can also make the history an ongoing mystery for your campaign. Let the players learn about one 'official' history and then gradually reveal that

another history is the real truth.

Each history is presented in an overview format, so details or specific events can easily be added. The Rise describes how Lemuria came to power. At Its Height lists some of the glories achieved by Lemuria. The Fall describes what caused Lemuria's fall from power and invited its destruction. The next section, The Doom that came to Lemuria, provides examples of what physically caused the end of Lemuria.

Three Histories of Lemuria

The Light

A benevolent and peaceful civilization, the people of Lemuria had transcended. They knew not war, hate, crime or violence. All were happy and content. They sought to enlighten and bring peace to all other nations of the world.

The Rise: Lemuria was a simple nomadic tribe, peacefully coexisting with the natural world. A barbarian clan attacked the Lemurians, seeking to enslave them. The Lemurians chose not to fight back and fled from the clan. The barbarians pursued the Lemurians relentlessly, chasing them across the world for years. The Lemurians never strayed from their beliefs and remained peaceful despite the atrocities the barbarians visited upon them. Finally, a Lemurian mystic had a vision of a sanctuary that would shelter them from the clan. The mystic found a tunnel leading into a mountain and led the remnants of his people through them. The tunnel led to a valley surrounded by the mountains on all sides and the source of the mystic's vision. The exact nature of the source varies depending on the tale. Sometimes it is a god or powerful spirit that sought to teach and guide the Lemurians. Other times it is a powerful mortal mystic from an alternate reality. In some tales, it is a naturally occurring source of mystical power such as a ley line nexus. In whatever the case, the Lemurians quickly rose to enlightenment from this power. The barbarian clan that chased after them became lost in the tunnels and never found a way to return to the surface. They devolved into brutish monsters that plagued the Underdark for countless years.

At Its Height: After its humble beginning, Lemuria soared to unprecedented heights. Each citizen was perfectly enlightened, totally in tune with nature and each other. They built towers that loomed over the mountains. Some say the towers flew on their own accord. Others say entire cities sailed through the skies. Their knowledge of medi-

cine allowed them to conquer disease and even death. The few monsters and hostile nations that attacked them were either pacified through skillful diplomacy or neutralized by incredible feats of power. Forests would sprout overnight, rivers rerouted and mountains sprang out of the ground to impede armies. No foreign force would dare to attack a foe that could alter the face of the planet at a whim.

The Fall: The Lemurians fell from grace because they became corrupted. The source of this corruption is unknown, but most storytellers have their own theory. It could have been a foreign influence. Perhaps a cult from a distant land seduced the Lemurians into worshipping false gods. The corruption could have been internal. A sense of malaise or ennui could have upset the enlightenment of the Lemurians, leading them down a dark path. Given that they were probably immortal, the Lemurians might have just gotten bored. Finally, they might have given into hubris, believing themselves to be as perfect as the gods, thus upsetting the natural balance of the universe. In any case, the corruption caused them to fall out of balance. They lost their powers over nature and life. In their weakened state, the Doom that destroyed them was impossible to resist.

The Dark

A conquering empire that viewed the rest of the world as their rightful territory. Their armies were invincible on the battlefield as they swept through the other nations as a wildfire. Their science and magic surpassed all other mortal races before or since. They did not view themselves as evil, but they also did not value life, freedom or peace. The Lemurians thought only to advance the glory of their own empire. The value of anything was viewed only in regards to how they benefited Lemuria. If an individual did not contribute, he was exiled or executed. The forests, fields and mountains were plundered for their resources. All for the greater glory of Lemuria.

The Rise: Lemuria began when a single tribe united a dozen warring tribes under their banner. Led by a charismatic leader, the Lemurians overcame impossible odds to achieve their first victories. The leader slew dragons, not through individual might or magical prowess, but by ambushing the beasts with superior tactics, numbers and traps. In one famous battle, the Lemurians baited a notorious elder dragon by manipulating a village of innocent tribesmen into insulting the dragon. The beast was proud and would not stand such an insult so it flew to the village and slaughtered them all. While this happened, the Lemurians set up an ambush

at the entrance to its lair. When the dragon returned, the Lemurians killed the creature easily. In this way, Lemuria cleared the wilderness of dangerous monsters and brought many tribes under their banner. A few rival nations banded together to defeat Lemuria, but after a long and brutal war, Lemuria triumphed over their enemies. They had conquered the known world.

At Its Height: Lemuria became a mighty empire that extended their reach to the skies above and the sea below. They tamed flying beasts to use as mounts and even experimented with underwater colonies using magic. They bound extraplanar spirits and monsters to do their bidding. Tribes that bowed to Lemuria were given limited rights and protections. Those that resisted were slain or enslaved. As an orderly nation, they developed incredible transportation networks, able to move armies quickly and efficiently. Their crowning achievement was their weapons, though. Magical items of great power were given to the generals and rulers of Lemuria. Their destructive power was legendary. With these items, and their willingness to sacrifice anything for the sake of the empire, the Lemurians seemed invincible.

The Fall: Pride led to the downfall of the empire. Each general and aristocrat eventually came to believe that they alone should lead Lemuria. Infighting between the factions divided and weakened their armies. The slave and plebeian population drastically outnumbered the true citizens of Lemuria and resentment grew as the citizens took more and more liberties with their position. Slave rebellions broke out and were put down with mass executions and other atrocities. The people stopped caring about the nation as a whole. In this beleaguered state, Lemuria was vulnerable to the Doom that befell them.

The Esoteric

A nation of mystics and philosophers so far removed from the rest of the world as to be incomprehensible. Indifferent to the outside world, the Lemurians focused on exploring the mysteries of the universe. They learned the secrets of the outer cosmos and inner space, secrets only they uncovered. No other nation or people knew as much as the Lemurians.

The Rise: Lemuria began with a sage that wanted to be free from mortal distractions. Mere survival took too much of the sage's time and energy. Food had to be gathered and prepared. Shelters built and monsters warded off. The sage made a pact with a village. In exchange for sharing his knowledge, the villagers would allow the sage to study,

uninterrupted. The pact worked marvelously as the villagers were quick learners. The village became a town and the town became a city-state. Lemuria's power rose in accordance with the knowledge of its citizens. The wiser they became, the more powerful Lemuria became. A nation of scholars, Lemuria did not expand or conquer rivals, unless they attacked Lemuria first. However, in those ancient barbaric times, many nations tried to seize Lemuria. Lemurians used their knowledge to outthink their foes, defeating rival nations through innovative uses of magic. Eventually a dozen kingdoms banded together to destroy Lemuria, fearing its growing might. Lemuria responded by summoning a horde of extraplanar entities and building a legion of golems to fight for them. When the two hosts met in battle, the very world shook as hundreds of thousands of warriors and primitive shaman fell to the unprecedented might of Lemuria. Yet, even after this stunning victory, Lemuria did not sweep through the world. They merely sent couriers to explain that they withdrawing from the mortal world to pursue their studies. Those that attack Lemuria will die. Thus, a strange peace settled over the world.

At its height: As the years went on, the Lemurians became more reclusive and inwardly focused, yet their mastery of magic and philosophy improved to unprecedented heights. It was thought they were second only to the gods themselves in terms of raw magical power and skill. They created new species, built sapient constructs, forged artifacts, established outposts on many distant planes and learned how to become immortal. They were only limited by their imagination and morality.

The Fall: Lemuria withdrew into itself. With each passing generation, the memories of the outside world grew fainter. The other nations forgot Lemuria and turned to other matters. The Lemurians became debased, forgetting honor and virtue. They secretly kidnapped mortals from the world to use as fodder for vile experiments in necromancy and other dark arts. They created undead and magical servants to cater to every decadent whim they could imagine. They even forgot to pursue scholarship, as many gradually became hedonists. Lemurians lost some of their knowledge as well, losing magical power as a result. The few Lemurians that remained devoted to their studies became alienated from society, growing mad as a result. Eventually, the magical slaves outnumbered the Lemurians. In this weakened state, the Lemurians were ripe for a fall. The hedonists too lax and weak to stop the Doom and the scholars too mad to care.

The Doom that came to Lemuria

What happened to Old Lemuria? Several possible apocalypses are listed along with its impact on the current world. Perhaps the doom was a onetime occurrence, a freak accident that has no significance in the current world. Perhaps the gods struck down Lemuria for their hubris with a horde of demons. Perhaps Lemuria collapsed from internal strife. The cause of Lemuria's downfall is usually still important because those that plunder the Ruins might bring the Doom back without realizing it.

This section focuses solely on the apocalyptic cataclysm that destroyed Lemuria and wiped out the Lemurian people. The cataclysm is independent of the history of Lemuria, so you can mix and match histories and cataclysms. As with the history, there can be multiple stories and legends about the nature of the cataclysm that conflict with each other.

How the cataclysm affects your campaign: The nature of the Doom that came to Lemuria will determine what kind of threats are left behind in the ruins the player characters explore, in terms of enemies, traps and hazards encountered. These are meant as the average composition of any given section of the ruins and exceptions always exist. You can always add in unusual or atypical encounters to fit your campaign. Use these sections as the baselines for random encounters and the like. Each cataclysm gives the ruins an overall theme and a unified feel and look.

Rebellion/Civil War

An internal war in Lemuria between rival factions tore the nation apart. Either the slaves or servant class rose up to overthrow the masters of Lemuria or political factions split the government in a dispute. Given Lemuria's power, an internal war must have been brutal and long. Both sides committed atrocities, desperate to win. This kind of war caused the economy and government to collapse in an orgy of violence. Much of Lemuria must have burned to the ground. When the dust settled, there was nothing left to claim but burned out husks and ruins. If any survived, they fled Lemuria after the war because there was nothing left of the old nation. They were absorbed by other kingdoms and their stories were retold through the generations.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: The war splintered the people of Lemuria into warring factions, turning neighbor against neighbor, brother vs. brother. As a result, every building became a military stronghold. Temples and libraries were turned into garrisons and blockhouses to rally the forces. Even simple homes were fortified to protect against raiders and scouts. Furthermore, countless war crimes were committed. Mass executions, torture, and other brutalities were part and parcel of the war.

Today, the ruins reflect the years of warfare and atrocities. Evidence of past battles can be seen on the remaining structures. Scorch marks from errant fireballs mar the walls. Skeletal remains of Lemurians that fell in battle litter the floors. Graffiti supporting one faction and decrying the others are scrawled on many surfaces. Hidden torture chambers reveal horrors; broken and shattered bones, dried bloodstains and ancient torture

The Doom That Came to Lemuria



devices lie scattered about. Mass graves of dissidents speak to the violence inflicted in the final days of Lemuria. As the war drew on, famine and plague swept through Lemuria, causing more deaths and misery. What is left of Lemuria reveals this tragic past.

Monsters left in the Ruins: Undead dominate the ruins. Many Lemurians died in agony from torture or battle and, as a result, have arisen as restless undead monsters. The mass graves birthed unspeakable horrors that slumber lightly. These undead are maddened by their pain and seek only to carry on the war they died fighting. Of course, these aren't the only monsters. The subsequent plagues and famines spawned fungal creatures from the bodies of dead Lemurians. Furthermore, depending on Lemuria's level of magic, golems and other constructs may still remain, waiting for orders that will never come. Finally, the survivors of the civil war or their descendents may have returned to Lemuria to reclaim some of their lost heritage. Most would either die in the ruins or leave after looting some trinkets, but a few dedicated scaven-

gers lingered. They were obsessed with reclaiming the lost glory of Lemuria. Today, a strange clan of inbred, deranged and vicious scavengers stalks the ruins. They are canny enough to avoid the undead and hazards yet too mad to simply leave.

Traps and Hazards: During the war, many Lemurians took to setting traps. Most of those have already been triggered, but many still remain. The ones that remain are typically magical in nature, as the mechanical traps either rusted or rotted away centuries ago. They are meant to kill attackers and cover the entrances to buildings and important rooms. They are also practical traps, as the people setting the traps intended to use the buildings they trapped, so elaborate death traps that make a building unusable would not have been built. Other hazards are common. Despite the skill of Lemurian architects, the civil war and countless centuries of neglect have made the ruins extremely unstable. Walls and ceilings may collapse without warning. Floors give way. Rockslides and tremors are also common.



Natural Disaster

A volcano, earthquake, flood or another natural disaster of epic proportions wiped out the Lemurians in a few hours or days. The cause of the disaster could be natural, divine or arcane, but the effects remain the same nonetheless. Most of the citizens perished in the disaster and the few survivors fled to other nations or died of starvation or disease in the weeks that followed. The disaster made the ruins uninhabitable for years and nature overtook them. Vegetation grew over the cities and nature reclaimed the land. After a few centuries, only the largest and most prominent ruins would even be visible to the naked eye.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: The speed and power of the natural disaster meant that Lemurians did not have time to prepare or pack their things. Those that died, did so as they went about life. The few that lived through the initial event fled in a panic, leaving all of their worldly goods unattended and their beloved dead unburied. Those that explore the ruins will see glimpses into the average life of the Lemurians, at least in the intact sections. Meals left uneaten, the food now dust or petrified. Dead scribes in the middle of transcribing a scroll sit at their desks, covered in dust. The sections ravaged by the disaster show the fury of nature at its most primal state. Massive stone columns and adamantium doors are no match for the sheer force put out by the disaster. No building directly hit by the disaster survived intact. At best, small sections remained durable enough for adventurers to explore in.

Monsters left in the Ruins: The natural disaster infused the ruins with latent elemental energies due to the sheer magnitude of the event. As a result, elemental creatures have been drawn to the ruins and it is possible that gates to the elemental planes have naturally opened deep in the ruins. Furthermore, the elemental energies mutated other creatures in or near the ruins. For example, if the disaster was a hurricane and flood of epic proportions, water elementals and water weirds wander the ruins while scavenging lizards would gain water breathing and other elemental powers.

Traps and Hazards: The most obvious hazards come from the unstable conditions of the ruins, but more subtle dangers lurk within. The damage caused by the disaster and years of neglect have created countless dangers for unwary explorers. However, the greatest dangers come from the abandonment of civilization by the Lemurians. Alchemists died while they were working in their labs, leaving these rooms time bombs waiting to

go off. Wizards and priests did not have time to safely banish their extraplanar servants or disarm the sigils and wards they laid down.

Wrath of the Gods

Lemuria angered one or more gods and so they were visited by agents of divine vengeance. Perhaps an evil god opened a gate to the lower planes, releasing a horde of countless demons. Gods of the upper planes could have sent a host of angelic warriors to dispatch Lemuria. A god might have destroyed Lemuria himself in a night of unprecedented destruction. The wrath of the gods takes many forms, but in this cataclysm, supernatural beings sent by divine powers were responsible for the destruction of Lemuria. The exact nature of the wrath depends on the nature of the deity or deities angered by the Lemurians. A war god would send an army of divine warriors obviously, but a god of nature might send an endless plague of insects while a god of healing could curse the Lemurians by removing their ability to heal any damage. A god of magic might nullify or dispel all spells and enchantments, thus causing a cascade failure, as Lemuria was dependent on magic. This cataclysm requires some customization, as each god is a unique being. No matter what form the wrath took, one thing is certain: all of Lemuria knew why they were being destroyed.

The RPPR New World Campaign used this cataclysm. Lemuria angered a pantheon of gods so they sent an elder god of chaos to wipe out the nation. After Lemuria was destroyed, the pantheon imprisoned the elder god beneath the ruins, in case another nation of mortals followed the same path of Lemuria.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: Since every citizen knew why they were being wiped out, many Lemurians attempted to bargain or reason with the divine agents of vengeance. Short lived cults sprang up in a desperate belief that the gods could be appeased. Of course, nothing could sway the deities completely, but it is possible that a few were granted mercy – spared, transported to another plane or land or transformed into a new divine agent. As a result, the ruins show many signs of these cults such as religious graffiti, impromptu cult gatherings and battles between the old faiths and new cults.

Depending on the nature of the divine destruction, the physical state of the ruins could be very good. If the agents simply killed the Lemurians and departed, then many of the structures would still

remain intact, as the architecture of the Lemurians was extremely robust. Obviously, the centuries of neglect would leave the buildings covered in dirt and vegetation, but they would remain stable overall. However, if the wrath took the form of a pillaging army, then the ruins would suffer incredible damage.

Monsters left in the Ruins: When divine powers order a civilization destroyed, they mean it for all of eternity. Guardians and sentinels would no doubt be left in place to ensure that no one would ever attempt to rebuild the nation. These guardians could be former citizens of Lemuria, damned to protect the bones of their former nation from all trespassers. These guardians may have specific orders to only attack certain types of explorers. The guards of a nature god, for example, would not harm normal animals and beasts. Because of this, the ruins have become a kind of nature sanctuary, where all of the forest's creatures are free from mortal hunters and trappers. A war god might allow questing knights to venture alone into the ruins to retrieve specific items, if he proves his bravery. It should be noted that no matter what divine power destroyed Lemuria, tomb raiders and adventurers searching for loot and glory would not be allowed in.

Traps and Hazards: Deities are fond of traps that act as crucibles, wherein the faith of the trapped is put to the test. Most traps can only be solved by following the ideology of the god in question. A god of strength emphasizes traps that kill the weak while gods of evil demand cruel sacrifices in order to proceed. These traps can be outthought, though. Clever mortals can subvert the ideals of a god with trickery and cunning. The traps of a god of strength demand brute force. However, with a bit of engineering, a mortal could simply build a machine to apply the necessary force. Take care though. The gods do not appreciate their rules being subverted and may seek revenge for such embarrassments.

Magical Experiment Gone Awry

Lemuria achieved unprecedented heights in magical prowess, but their own skill led to their downfall. By pushing the boundaries of magical research, the spell casters of Lemuria created a threat that ended their civilization. This threat can take many forms, either immediate and obvious or subtle and long lasting. The easiest scenario to imagine would be a new creature or race of monsters - meant to be slaves or warriors, these newly spawned beings rebelled and slew their creators. Alternatively, a single monster is created accidentally and wipes out the civilization. Other possible scenarios could focus on the unintended consequences of long term magical experimentation. The waste products of such experiments could build up, mutating and poisoning Lemurians until they grow too weak and die, a process taking years to complete. An experiment could open a portal to another plane that proves lethal to mortal life. A ritual releases a psychic shockwave that drives most Lemurians mad in a single night.

Regardless of the specifics, the excesses of magical experimentation doomed Lemuria. Perhaps a few Lemurians fled in time. Certainly some citizens would have objected to the experiments either for religious or practical reasons. These protestors might have sabotaged or fought against the experiments, thus saving part of Lemuria from complete destruction. Furthermore, the focus on research provided many benefits to Lemuria. Magical artifacts of incredible powers and spells with unique properties can be found within the ruins.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: The extensive nature of the magical experimentation required massive investments in infrastructure for Lemuria. Workshops, forges, labs and gardens were needed to make the tools, herbs and components necessary for the experiments. Massive furnaces, aqueducts and other large scale engineering projects were constructed as well. These structures would form the ground zero of any experiment gone awry. They would either be totally destroyed or completely intact, depending on the exact nature of the cataclysm.

The rest of the ruins would most likely suffer minimal to moderate damage from the cataclysm, as it was an unfocused and accidental event. Still, the experiment had many side effects that linger. Unexplainable vortexes and nexuses of magical energy appear randomly throughout the ruins. Stone structures transmuted to glass or crystal. Fireballs explode for no reason in empty corridors. A Lemurian wizard stands frozen in terror, caught in a never ending time stop spell. The ruins are

haunted with these mystical accidents and hazards. These unique phenomena give the ruins an other-worldly look and feel. In some places, the ruins resemble an alien world more than an abandoned civilization. Wonders of unnatural beauty and horrors beyond comprehension lie within. Adventurers will never know what to expect.

Monsters left in the Ruins: Before the cataclysm, the spell casters of Lemuria built many constructs and magical servants. Golems last until destroyed and doubtlessly many still remain, possibly damaged or altered by latent mystical energies. Biological creatures such as artificial servant races or hybrid monsters may have spawned and evolved into entirely new races in the centuries after the cataclysm. Gates to random planes dump extraplanar entities. The energies and waste products of magical experiments spontaneously create new species or singular entities.

Traps and Hazards: The spell casters of Lemuria undoubtedly set many traps to protect their magical treasures and research. As magic traps do not fall apart with age, many still rest within the ruins, waiting for the unwary. These can be extremely elaborate death traps that are nearly impossible to bypass or disarm. Unintentional hazards exist as well, mostly in the form of rogue magical spells. Beautifully crafted illusion spells bewilder or hypnotize the weak-willed, paralyzing them until they starve to death. Haste spells enhance speed, but also take away years' worth of life force from those foolish enough to accept their power. These spells appear as flying spheres of magical energy and may be found throughout the ruins.

Invasion

Lemuria was peerless when it was at the height of its power. This attracted the envy, fear and hate of every other nation in the world. Eventually, the other nations formed an alliance to invade and conquer Lemuria. Despite their combined strength, Lemuria would have bested the alliance had it not been for a fatal flaw. Perhaps the Lemurians were simply so arrogant that they believed they could never be defeated. They grew complacent and weak. A Lemurian general might have betrayed his nation to further his own ambitions. Whatever the flaw was, it worked. After a long and brutal war, Lemuria fell to the invaders. The cities were pillaged and the people slaughtered or enslaved.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: The invasion took months or even years to destroy Lemuria. No matter how Lemuria was before the war, it became a military-dominated nation by the end. All civilians were conscripted to aid the war effort one way or another. Every city became a fortress meant to expel the invaders. The invaders also left their mark. Every city they took they either razed or claimed for their own use: the temples rededicated to the gods of the invaders, garrisons refitted to supply their armies and local populace forced to work for the invaders. These events all left their mark on the ruins. Scholarly characters will be able to see history unfold through the ruins. The ongoing nature of the war meant that many structures were damaged and repaired several times. On occasion, one side would damage a building only to later repair it after capturing it. The invaders lacked the architectural skills of the Lemurians so their repairs were crude and inadequate to completely fix Lemurian fortifications. They might have lasted enough for the war, but in the years since, the repaired sections have become unstable.

The war brought warriors from virtually every land to Lemuria's borders. Soldiers from tribes and civilizations from every corner of the world fought in the war and carried with them their weapons, beliefs and knowledge, occasionally depositing them in what are now the ruins of Lemuria. Explorers today can find jewelry from nations long since forgotten by scholars and exotic weapons that have not been used in battle for centuries. The foreigners undoubtedly left behind many other symbols of their culture as they passed through Lemuria. Entire villages or fortresses built in styles alien to Lemurian architecture might have been raised, given the length of the war.

Monsters left in the Ruins: The war brought forth vast numbers of bizarre creatures to Lemuria. Some were mercenaries while less fortunate ones

were either mindless war beasts or slave fighters. While almost all of them were slain in the war or simply passed away in the intervening centuries, it is possible a few ageless or immortal warriors were left behind in the ruins. Driven mad by the isolation, these warriors will usually lash out at anyone that finds them. A few might retain enough of their sanity to talk and reason, but remain no less dangerous. They may try to trick or coerce explorers into helping them escape the ruins or fulfill their dark agenda. Other foreign creatures may have settled in the ruins. Seeds or eggs caught in the clothing of a foreign warrior fall in Lemuria growing and evolving over the centuries into new species unique in the world. An insect species that was harmless on the surface evolves into a lethal predator in the ruins, killing even man sized creatures with poison.

Traps and Hazards: Exotic war machines and traps left behind by the invaders still remain armed and waiting to kill. Powered by magic, these war machines will never rust or fall apart. An armor piercing ballista remains pointed at a corridor, part of a battle plan never enacted. Yet if anyone passes through the corridor, it will launch an enormous bolt at the unfortunate explorer. Similar machines are scattered throughout the ruins.

Plague

In a world of magic, plague and disease aren't quite as dangerous – most of the time. Certainly Lemuria had many talented healers with mystic powers to cure diseases. Just as diseases become resistant to antibiotics and other treatments, perhaps one disease became resistant to magic. Isolated outbreaks were easy to contain, but as the plague became more virulent, it swept through the nation. The faith citizens had in their gods and government failed and panic took over. Chaos and anarchy was loosed upon Lemuria. Society collapsed within months.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: As the plague spread, Lemurians attempted to quarantine the disease many times. At first, these quarantines were orderly rational events in which possibly afflicted citizens were asked to relocate to outer villages or temporary quarters. But as the plague grew worse, the quarantines became more chaotic and quicker. Towns shut their gates to visitors. Spell casters isolated affected villages with trenches. By the end of the plague, afflicted citizens were literally walled in their homes or dungeons by wall of stone spells and similar magic. Explorers will find many remnants of these quarantine measures

that block off parts of the ruins. Other signs of the plague's effect on Lemuria include stockpiling of vital supplies as the citizens began to hoard what they had left and increased decadence. Gold and jewels were discarded carelessly in exchange for food and other essentials. The citizens, knowing that they could die at any time, threw off the shackles of morality and gave into their vices. Aristocrats barricaded themselves in secluded mansions and hosted lavish parties and orgies. Commoners reveled in the streets, cavorting and indulging every appetite they felt. The faithful became fanatical, engaging in zealotry. These new zealots conducted bizarre and esoteric rituals to appease their gods, to no avail. There was no room for moderate or calm behavior in the last days of Lemuria. All were filled with passionate intensity.

Monsters left in the Ruins: The plague changed the ecosystem of Lemuria. Scavengers multiplied with the abundant supply of corpses to feed on. Predators similarly exploded to prey upon the scavengers. New organisms migrated to the ruins to take advantage of the cornucopia presented by the fall of civilization. The plague also affected the creatures present. While most of the creatures were immune or resistant, many were mutated or changed by it. New subspecies with plague-connected powers were created. Predators that infect prey with the plague with their bite or scavengers that emit a miasma of disease as a defensive mechanism are just a few examples of these new creatures. The plague itself could create new species of creatures. Microorganisms cluster the walls of the ruins, coalescing into massive super-organisms. Plague slimes, jellies and other shoggoth-like monstrosities lurk in the depths.

Traps and Hazards: In the last days of Lemuria, the few remaining citizens built traps to keep the afflicted away from them. These traps were hastily constructed, but many still remain intact. Many of the exotic slimes can be considered hazards as well. They remain stationary, preying on creatures that pass near them.



Exodus

Lemuria ended with not a bang, but a whisper. The people of Lemuria simply left their nation for parts unknown. Perhaps the mystics of Lemuria had found a new world to occupy, a new plane of existence more suitable than the prime material plane. Perhaps the gods claimed the Lemurians, letting them ascend to the upper planes. Whatever the reason, the people left peacefully, abandoning their cities and most of their possessions. Within weeks, the once mighty nation was a ghost kingdom. The neighboring tribes and nations were terrified and bewildered at the sudden disappearance of the Lemurians. They never learned the complete truth so they created legends and myths to explain the exodus. The cities were never fully resettled, if at all. Rumors of visitors to the vacant cities disappearing themselves or worse kept most

away. Eventually the structures of Lemuria fell into ruin and disappeared from sight. They sank into the earth or were swallowed by the wilderness. Generations passed and legends of Lemuria were remembered through oral tradition. These legends reveal more about the beliefs of the storyteller than any facts about Lemuria. The mystery behind the exodus has terrified and intrigued scholars and sages ever since.

Legacy of the Cataclysm: Lemuria was left intact as a result of the exodus. Perhaps a few temples or key structures were locked up, modified or destroyed to prevent them falling into the wrong hands but, other than those few buildings, the rest of the nation was left as it was. Furthermore, the strange and sudden nature of the exodus terrified and awed neighboring kingdoms so they mostly left Lemuria alone. A few border villages might

have raided the ruins for stone for their own use, but that was about it. Time, weather and nature did damage the ruins over time, but they have remained nearly intact. Explorers that visit the ruins get the eerie sensation that the Lemurians left only a few moments ago and will return shortly.

Monsters left in the Ruins: The strange nature of the exodus precluded many monsters from inhabiting the ruins. Savage humanoid races such as orcs and ogres were too superstitious to venture near the ruins, as they feared disappearing in the same manner as the Lemurians. As there was no death or violence in the exodus, the undead were not attracted to the ruins. Extraplanar entities were also not drawn to the ruins. This does not mean that the ruins are vacant though. Far from it. Aberrations with high intelligence were fascinated by the mystery of the exodus and were not deterred by mere rumor or superstition. Mind flayer archeologists with teams of mind controlled thralls excavated the ruins seeking answers. Beholders made lairs in the ruins, preferring the isolation and splendor of Lemurian architecture. Other aberrations have crawled or shambled into the ruins for inscrutable reasons. Eventually these strange creatures found each other and being the anti-social monsters they are, waged war for control of the ruins. Over the centuries, several cycles of immigration, exploration, excavation and war have repeated in the ruins. Explorers will encounter many signs of these endless cycles – abandoned mind flayer encampments, battlefields between warring beholders and so on. They will also encounter the current inhabitants of the ruins – none of whom are eager to see adventurers.

Traps and Hazards: These aberrations have left countless traps for each other – ranging from simple mechanical traps to powerful mystical wards. These traps were designed to fool the inhuman intellects of other aberrations so they are well hidden and extremely lethal. While the ruins may be mostly empty aside from the aberrations, the traps are common. On the positive side, there are few hazards, as the aberrations were careful not to damage the ruins whenever possible. They wanted to occupy them so they did not compromise the structural integrity if they could help it. In fact, it is possible they might have even repaired some of the Lemurian buildings.

The Wisdom of the Ancients

Just how far advanced was the magic and science of Lemuria? Instead of presenting a single view, the knowledge of Lemuria is divided into several categories, with varying levels of accomplishment. You can determine just how powerful the Lemurians were when they fell and how much of an impact their knowledge would have if it were rediscovered. In general, the knowledge of the Lemurians can be divided into two categories: magic and science – each with three levels of proficiency:

Low science

Only a basic understanding of the natural world and mathematics. The Lemurians could not accomplish much through mundane methods – no more than a primitive civilization in a typical fantasy world. They could not design or build large structures, create iron or use sophisticated agricultural practices. Their knowledge has been surpassed by other civilizations.

Low magic

The Lemurians had only a basic understanding of the principles of magic. If they even had spellcasters, they would have access only to lower level spells and rituals. More likely, the Lemurians knew that magic existed and how to counteract it through mundane means, but had no spell casting ability. In other words, they knew magic when they saw it, and had common sense skills when it came to dealing with magic, but had little or no magical power themselves.

Moderate science

The Lemurians had a great understanding of the natural world and understand mathematics quite well. In terms of the campaign world, the Lemurians were at least equal to the most advanced civilization of the current era if not slightly ahead of them. In most fantasy worlds, this means they had a level of knowledge equal to the late Renaissance – able to forge iron and steel, build impressively large structures and buildings and able to sustain large populations with advanced agricultural innovations.

Moderate magic

The magical prowess of the Lemurians was approximately equal to the magical power of the current age of the campaign world. They could cast spells, perform rituals and create magical items as well as anyone in the current campaign world.

High science

The scientific knowledge of the Lemurians exceeded that of any other civilization in the history of the campaign world. Perhaps they had steam powered automatons and clockwork thinking machines or 21st century style technology powered by nuclear reactors or even futuristic science straight out of science fiction – starships and true AI. For intents and purposes though, at this level, Lemurian science was virtually indistinguishable from magic in the eyes of current explorers and adventurers. For the player characters of your campaign, Lemurian science should be

The Wisdom of the Ancients



seen as a school of magic with unique properties and powers. When designing Lemurian artifacts made with high science, simply create them as magic items and spells in terms of game mechanics. You may design them so that they can't be dispelled through magic and that items have a limited number of charges – whatever works for your campaign.

High magic

The spell casters of Lemuria had incredible magical power, greater than any current civilization in the campaign world. Epic spells and rituals created by the Lemurians were only exceeded by the divine power of the gods. The artifacts of Lemuria were true artifacts, with the power to shake kingdoms. The power of old Lemuria's magic means that it is still dangerous to even approach it today. Explorers will face many risks when they draw near a Lemurian artifact or spellbook.

Unique Knowledge

Aside from their general level of scientific and mystical knowledge, the Lemurians might have had unique knowledge that has never been relearned. This can be as simple as a particular spell or the knowledge of how to build a specific tool or weapon (such as gunpowder or aqueducts), but it can also be entire fields of knowledge. For example, perhaps only the Lemurians held the secrets of a school of magic or psionics. This can motivate the characters to learn the secrets of Lemuria. For example, let's say Lemuria held the secret of psionics. The player characters discover the ruins and learn about psionics. Allow them to start taking class levels in psionic character classes or psionic feats if they recover certain tomes or scrolls from the ruins or complete some other mission.

Other fields of knowledge could represent esoteric skills that mix science and magic. Taming and breeding dragons, building floating castles, traveling to distant planets on the same plane, transferring minds to different bodies, maintaining eternal youth through healing magic or creating new species are just a few examples.

Unique knowledge can also be specific facts or secrets, which can either be trivial or vital to the campaign. A single fact can change the face of the world, after all. Some example secrets could include the true names of demons or gods, the resting places of powerful artifacts or a prophecy that will dictate the future of the world.

For your campaign

The Lemurians should have at least high science or magic or both moderate magic and science. Otherwise, the Lemurians would not be a glorious lost civilization. On the other hand, even if the Lemurians only had low or moderate science and magic, their unique knowledge could still let them be the most powerful civilization of their age. For example, even a relatively primitive Lemuria could be viewed as the most powerful and glorious civilization of all time if they had hundreds of flying castles and fortresses dotting the skies and flew tamed dragons to travel between them.

Conversely, the Lemurians should not be masters of all things magical and scientific. They must have some weaknesses and holes in their knowledge-base, but these flaws should make sense in the context of your campaign world. For example, one obvious flaw is to make them either highly scientific or highly magical, but their flaws could more subtle as well. They might not have known how to destroy a particular type of monster or how to protect their food supply from changing environmental conditions.

In general, it is best to think of a single theme for the Lemurians and apply that to their knowledge-base. If they are faithful acolytes of a powerful god, then they would have sophisticated theologians and priests but lack wizards or scientists. If they were unwholesome necromancer-scientists that built armies of flesh golems, then their accomplishments in botany, druidic magic or architecture would have been fairly unimpressive.

The Ruins of Lemuria:

“Happy is the tomb where no wizard hath lain, and happy the town at night whose wizards are all ashes.”

Entire ecosystems of strange creatures, magical constructs and undead have evolved in the ruins. Damaged magical artifacts irradiate certain sections with hazardous energies. Untouched archives of knowledge just wait to be discovered. There is great splendor and greater danger lurking in the depths far below the surface.

This section provides advice on designing dungeons set in the Ruins of Lemuria. It is not necessary to design all of the ruins because they are meant to be vast. An entire civilization built them, so it shouldn't be easy for a single party of adventurers to map them out entirely. The previous sections provided guidelines for describing Lemuria, its downfall and its accomplishments. These are necessary to design a good dungeon. By knowing Lemuria's history, the abilities of its people and how it fell apart, a good designer can integrate them seamlessly into a dungeon. Too often dungeons are designed without regard to the campaign setting, which detracts from the quality of the adventure and breaks suspension of disbelief in the players.

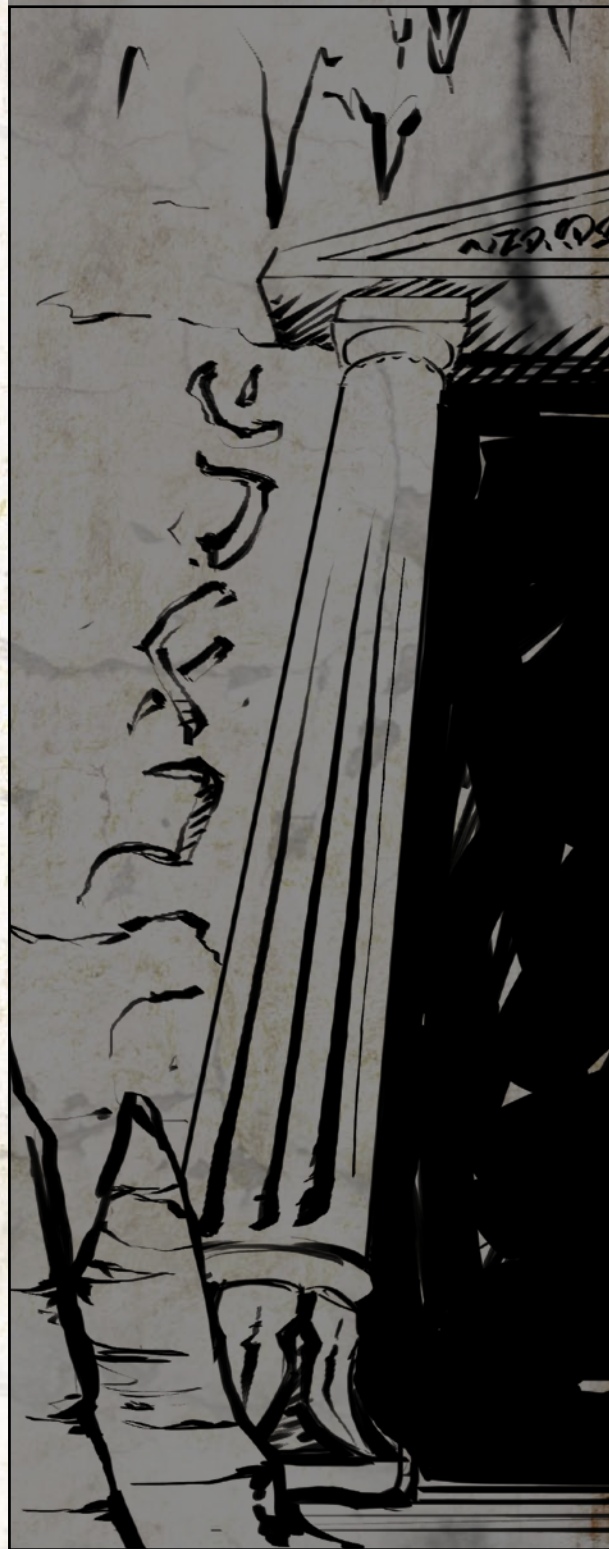
Imagining the Ruins: Before writing and mapping out a dungeon set in the ruins, you should first determine what is unusual or unique about that particular dungeon and what you need from it in terms of the campaign. As mentioned before, the Ruins of Lemuria are vast and the players will only see a small fraction of them in their adventures. So, what is special about the part they are exploring? If nothing is unique about this dungeon, why are you bothering to include it in your campaign?

One way to make the dungeon unique is to give it a specific history. Determine what happened in the dungeon, both when it was part of Lemuria and in the years afterward. Think of how the Lemurians used the place. A forge and armory would function differently than an aristocrat's estate or an alchemist's lab and library. The history should not only include what creatures inhabited the ruins and what they did, but also the natural history of the dungeon – earthquakes, floods and other events that changed the geography of the place. Creatures can also modify the dungeon. A beholder might have carved tunnels for its own use with its disintegration beam or a demon might have erected an altar to its dark god centuries after Lemuria fell.

It also helps to picture the dungeon in your mind, imagining what sights and sounds a visitor would encounter. Focus on the sensory aspects of the dungeon, considering all five senses. If the dungeon is wet and slimy, consider why it would be like that – is it near an underground river, which would raise the humidity? Many times, a designer starts creating a dungeon by dreaming up a specific set piece or central trait.

Example: A broken, ornately carved marble pillar lies over a crevasse in the middle of a gloomy cavern. Stalagmites surround the pillar's ends. Magical torches highlight an arched entrance to a tunnel past the pillar. A fine greenish mist pours out of the cre-

The Ruins of Lemuria



vasse, clinging to the ground. Broken pieces of stone scattered throughout the cavern reveal beautifully painted, but faded, faces and images. This image becomes the starting point for a Lemurian ruins based dungeon. The GM decides that the pillar and painted stones (a shattered wall fresco) were part of a temple in Lemuria. In this particular campaign, Lemuria was buried under the earth, resulting in parts of this temple falling apart. Other parts remained intact (the tunnel past the pillar leads to the intact section). Monstrous bats hide in the ceiling of the cavern, magically charmed by the current inhabitant of the temple ruins. The bats are sick though, as they were brought from a distant land with differing environmental conditions and have not been fed well. Characters with strong nature skills can break the charm effect by feeding or healing them. The presence of the bats has attracted a native predator of the Lemurian ruins and it will arrive shortly to attack them and the characters. The green mist comes from a massive fungal colony at the bottom of the crevasse. When Lemuria fell, hundreds of corpses were piled in the temple, an impromptu mass grave. The bodies fell into the crevasse and led to the creation of the fungus colony. The mist is harmless, but any that pass through it will become covered in spores that will then spread the fungus throughout the world. The broken stone bits can be reassembled with enough time and patience to provide vital clues about the secrets of the temple.

The designer could have started with the history of the dungeon (temple – mass grave – buried – imported bats) or with the mental image of the pillar over the crevasse. Either way, the dungeon is off to a good start with a unique and interesting opening room.

Common Features

Unless you only plan for the player characters to explore one part of the ruins and never return, you should develop some common features that link every dungeon that make up the ruins. This can be divided into the aesthetic of the dungeon (its look and feel) and shared physical traits.

The architectural and artistic style should be the same for all of the ruins, but it is possible to allow for variations in the style for specific locations. For example, the palace of a king could feature a different decorative style than a temple for the commoners, but they should both be recognizable as Lemurian crafted. The aristocratic style could favor exotic and rare materials while the commoners use locally available building supplies. While an art style might have many variations and permutations, any individual piece should still be recognizable as being from that style.

Aside from the look of the dungeon, Lemurian buildings should share common physical traits. For example, in the real world, many modern buildings share some common traits – indoor plumbing, electrical wiring and outlets and ventilation for heating. The Lemurian architects would ensure that every building was equipped with whatever they deemed as essential features. A high magic Lemuria might have had an elaborate network of teleport chambers to allow its citizens to travel freely. A moderate science Lemuria could have aqueducts for all homes. A military based Lemuria would have private armories for all households so that every family could defend themselves from attack. Of course, specific dungeons might lack these features, but only for a reason. A prison might not have teleport chambers or indoor plumbing.

The goal should be to develop a common logic for all dungeons placed in the Lemurian ruins so that the players can eventually figure out the reasoning themselves, like solving a mystery. For example, when they first find a teleport chamber, the players will spend a great deal of effort to figure it out. Then the next time they encounter another chamber, they can apply what they've learned from the first one to overcome the current challenge facing them. This should be extremely satisfying to the players and reinforces the idea that the ruins are all connected, part of a vast network of dungeons linked by history.

Example common features:

Teleport chambers between important buildings and sites

Hitches for riding animals (horses, dragons, etc)

Aqueducts and sewer connections between all buildings

Lava-ducts for transporting lava to provide heat and so forth

Roads and signage for travelers

Religious decorations/shrines/chapels

Slave quarters/chains/collars etc to control slaves

Watch or signal towers on all important buildings

Mundane anti-magical features such as lead bars embedded in walls to prevent teleportation and scrying or holy symbols to ward off undead

Designing the Ruins

A dungeon is not only a place in the campaign world, it is the setting for an adventure in your campaign and, as a result, there should be story reasons for exploring it. Dungeons are often testing grounds for player characters, guarding an important item or NPC, plus other assorted treasures. Furthermore, dungeons should reinforce the themes of the campaign. The dungeons of a high fantasy/pulp adventure campaign will be quite different than a gothic horror campaign.

Example: *Using the stone pillar room from the earlier example, the GM decides to use it in his horror-themed fantasy campaign. He wants to use Lemuria as a source of knowledge of Things Man Was Not Meant to Know and that by trespassing in Lemuria, characters risk their lives and souls. In the campaign, the characters are trying to stop a vampire wizard from enacting a dark ritual. They have tracked him down to the temple dungeon. The vampire brought the bats from his native land, but they are dying of a disease they caught in Lemuria – making them temporarily more dangerous, as they can infect the player characters with the disease. The native predator drawn to the bats is monstrous and unnatural – a Lovecraftian aberration that reinforces the idea that the characters are in a place they should not be in.*

Once they push past the initial room, the rest of the temple features wall frescos that glorify dark gods until they encounter the vampire wizard preparing the ritual. Once the player characters start to fight the wizard, the temple begins to resonate with magical energy. The wards once placed by Lemurian priests to protect the temple from outside

attack have become damaged and triggered when the battle began. Extraplanar beings are summoned by the wards and attack both the player characters and the vampire wizard. The battle becomes a vicious three way fight.

Populating the Ruins

Memorable NPCs and monsters are essential for a good dungeon. There are several approaches to populating dungeons, such as the Gygas school of naturalism, which entails creating an ecology for the dungeon and populating it with a reasonable mix of prey and predators and so on. Of course using the word naturalism to describe the ecosystem of a dungeon populated by supernatural creatures imbued with magical powers might be a bit of a stretch.

Instead, you might simply pick whatever monsters fit your dungeon and storytelling requirements the best. If the monster wouldn't make sense in the dungeon but you still want to use it, simply reskin the monster. Take the statistics for the monster and give it a new description – possibly modifying a few powers or keywords to have it make sense. A frost giant becomes an evolved albino ape – cunning but cruel. With this in mind, it's possible to use virtually any monster available to you in a Lemurian dungeon.

Be careful about overpopulating the dungeon with too many different species and unique monsters. If you stick to a few dominant monster types, each with a few variations, you will have a stronger dungeon. A zoo-like dungeon with no two monsters being the same can be fun the first time, but using nonsensical groupings of monsters breaks immersion. Again, the goal is to build up an internal logic for the dungeon that the players can learn and use to overcome challenges. A dungeon where the players can gradually learn how the dungeon works by deducing clues from the nature of its inhabitants is better than one where monsters are placed without rhyme or reason. In the above example, once the players kill or tame the bats, they should have an opportunity to realize they are not native to the dungeon, which informs them that someone must have brought them here – most likely the vampire they seek. This is more satisfying than throwing in a randomly rolled monster that offers no insight into the campaign or plot.

The Legend of Lemuria



The Legend of Lemuria

What happens in your campaign depends on how many characters actually know about the Ruins and are able to act upon that knowledge. Perhaps only a few sages or tribal elders have any understanding of Lemuria, in which case the adventurers can exploit the Ruins without fear of rivals. But if word gets out, there could be a gold rush of sorts, as treasure hunters, mercenaries and adventurers from around the world descend upon the Ruins in order to stake their claim.

The danger of unleashing the secrets of Lemuria: More than anything else, Lemuria represents power previously lost to the world. This will inevitably upset the balance of power if it is reintroduced to the civilizations of the current era. This is not necessarily a bad thing. If the current era is dark, where each kingdom is ruled by a tyrant and savagery is the normal order of the day, then the power of Lemuria could enlighten and alleviate the suffering of the people. The power could heal illnesses, end wars and stop famines. Conversely, the power of Lemuria could lead to war, start plagues or bring about an apocalypse. Thus, while any explorers that find at least some of the secrets of Lemuria could become rich and powerful, they should at least consider letting the secrets stay buried.

This dilemma can be presented in several ways in a campaign, depending on when the players first gain access to the ruins and their knowledge of other possible explorers. If the group has the luxury of discovering the secrets without any competition, they can decide what to do: bring them to civilization, bury them or destroy them once and for all. However, should they have competition in the form of other adventurers exploring the ruins, the players must deal with them one way or the other. They no longer have the luxury of making the decision on their own timetable. They must beat the competition to the punch by getting to the secrets first or taking it from them after they find it. Both of these hypothetical scenarios assume the players are the first or one of the first explorers. If others found the ruins before them, then the players will no longer be able to solely dictate how the secrets of Lemuria will be used. They must gain control of the ruins in order to control the secrets of Lemuria.

Controlling the Ruins

As a resource of incredible value, many will seek to control them. The players may want to control them for their own reasons – either to exploit and loot them or to prevent the secrets of Lemuria from ever resurfacing. But controlling them isn't a simple matter. Even though they are a physical place, a group of adventurers can't simply raise an army to occupy it. The ruins are vast, unmapped and dangerous. The best way for the characters to control the ruins is through information and access.

Information

Hoarding information about the ruins is essential to controlling the ruins. This entails not only learning as much about the ruins as possible, but also denying this information to others. Information can take many forms. Maps, translations of ancient writings or journals of expeditions into the ruins are common sources of

information. Any group that controls vital information, such as how to bypass a lethal trap or the location of the entrance into the ruins, will have a great deal of power if they maintain sole control over this information. If others learn it, then no one will be able to exert total control over the ruins. Thus, a group seeking control will be motivated to steal or destroy information belonging to others.

This can pose interesting moral dilemmas to player characters. Do they kill an innocent scholar that knows how to access a powerful artifact? Even if the scholar is trustworthy, a villain could kidnap and torture him to learn the information. Can they burn the ancient scrolls containing the history of Lemuria to ensure that no one learns the location of its golem forges? Conversely, if NPCs hold the information the players need, then they will have to take it from them – through violence, larceny or trickery usually. If these NPCs are not villains, but good or neutral explorers, can the players justify committing these crimes against them? Given the importance of this information, it is extremely unlikely any NPC, no matter what his alignment, would easily share it with the player characters, if they would at all.

Access

All the information about the ruins is useless unless you can actually get to the ruins. Access can be limited not only through information (preventing others from learning where the entrances are), but through physical means as well. The ruins can be disguised or concealed through illusionary magic or physical camouflage. Traps can be laid to stop intruders. Clever adventurers can plant disinformation to mislead others searching for the ruins. Militant characters could even raise garrisons to guard the ruins – ranging from simple armed camps of warriors to elaborate fixed fortifications with well-trained armies.

Once a group becomes the gatekeeper to the ruins, they will be challenged. The gatekeepers must be prepared to face ruthless opportunists willing to lie, cheat, steal, torture and kill to get to the ruins. They must face the objections of well-meaning innocents that pressure them to compromise or give up. It is a daunting task that may be impossible. If they fail to control the ruins though, then word will spread and countless numbers of treasure hunters will swarm the ruins looking for a chance. The gold rush will be on.

Gold Rush

If no one group can control the ruins then when news of the discovery reaches civilization a gold rush will be on. Hordes of amateur treasure hunters, explorers and other vagabonds will journey to the ruins. Since the ruins are almost certainly located in the wilderness or a region far from civilization then whatever law and order was upheld there will crumble apart. Anarchy and chaos envelops the region. The new wave of explorers will despoil the local environment as they build shantytowns near the ruins. Violence will become commonplace, as treasure hunters kill one another to protect their claims and skirmishes between the explorers and natives of the region are fought over food and territory. Everyone is in a hurry to make a fortune and get out, except for those addicted to the constant excitement and lack of law.

As depraved as it is above the ruins, it's worse in them. Bands of explorers compete with each other for treasure and battles between rival bands are common in the ruins. Explorers turn on each other on a regular basis, betraying and killing their allies for their share of the treasure. The paranoia and stress drives each treasure hunter into becoming more ruthless and amoral. In such a lawless territory, a lawful good explorer would find it nearly impossible to stay alive and make a profit without breaking his alignment. This stateless violence would cause an uproar backed in more civilized kingdoms and tempt the rulers of many nations into sending an army to take over the ruins, thus causing a resource war.

As an alternative, you may want to set a campaign in a gold rush. The chaos, lawlessness and excitement make great material for adventures. Create a shantytown near the ruins filled with taverns, equipment shops and merchants looking to buy the latest finds from the ruins. Let the player characters use that as a base, but make sure they understand the shantytown is nearly as dangerous as the ruins. Thieves try to steal treasure from dungeon delvers returning from the ruins, while bands of explorers ambush rival bands in order to thin down the competition – the Wild West meets fantasy role playing.

Resource War

Once a gold rush starts, a resource war is almost certainly inevitable. Even if the ruins are squarely within the territory of one kingdom, the lure of magical artifacts and buried knowledge will be too great for most nations. Even normally peaceful kingdoms may be drawn into it. Many rulers will reason that whoever claims the most power

from the ruins may be able to upset the balance of power. No nation can afford to ignore the Lemurian problem. Several armies will be sent out to claim the ruins for themselves or deny them to everyone.

The crisis can go in several directions. If the powers that be are rational and pragmatic, they may hold off on actually declaring war and negotiate a truce where they share access to the ruins in a mutually agreed format – perhaps one adventuring party from each nation is allowed to explore the ruins while the armies guard the borders of the ruins from unwanted trespassers. On the other hand, total war could break out if negotiations fail. Most likely, each of the nations involved in the war would take sides, forming alliances to improve their odds of victory.

A war fought over the ruins would be disastrous. The monsters inhabiting the ruins would attack the armies and more likely than not grow more powerful. If the ruins were populated with undead, their ranks would swell with the recently slain soldiers. Aberrations could enslave the soldiers with magic and demons would feast on their souls. Furthermore, the ruins would undoubtedly take damage from the war – possibly collapsing large sections of them or unleashing nightmarish creatures from beyond time and space. Either way, the war will cost thousands of lives or more. Heroic characters should do everything they can to stop such a war. This may mean destroying the ruins so that no one will fight over them.

Destroying the Ruins

The sheer power offered by the ruins may be too much for anyone in the campaign world to handle so some player characters might decide to destroy or at least cut off all access to them. Given the size of the ruins, this may be hard or impossible to accomplish. If the location of the ruins is still secret and the player characters can control this knowledge, then it's easy to make sure no one else will gain access to them – except that they must make sure it stays a secret forever. They have to guard against someone else finding the ruins and alerting civilization to it – in which case they must destroy the ruins.

The easiest way to destroy the ruins is to activate a self-destruct mechanism, assuming there is such a thing. The mechanism need not be an intentional self-destruct device – it could be some artifact or natural feature that can be rigged into destroying the ruins. A river of lava could be diverted into the ruins. A magical crystal spire could be triggered to unleash a massive explosion. This would be an adventure in and of itself and the players would be

opposed by the inhabitants of the ruins and possibly other explorers that want to keep the ruins intact.

If there is no readily-accessible self-destruct mechanism, then the players must get creative. They could collapse all known entrances into the ruins, populate the ruins with implacable guardians such as golems or undead, lure the Tarrasque to the ruins or petition the gods for help. These are just a few possibilities, but the GM should decide if destroying the ruins is possible at all and what kind of challenges the players will have to undertake in order to accomplish this goal.

Protecting the Ruins

If the ruins can't be destroyed and the players have decided to keep the secrets of Lemuria from ever being reintroduced into the world, then they must protect the ruins from trespassers. While setting traps and luring monsters to the ruins can help, only eternal vigilance can truly ensure that the ruins remain safe. Even if the player characters retire from adventuring and devote the rest of their lives to protecting the ruins, explorers could rediscover them after the PCs die. In order to guarantee the protection, the characters must either set up an organization to carry this mission or recruit immortal beings to do it.

An organization dedicated to the protection of the ruins would most likely take the shape of a monastic order – guards devoted to their job out of a sense of duty and faith in their ideology. The exact nature of the organization is up to its founding members though. Building it will be no easy task and is a good subject for an adventure or a campaign in and of itself.

Immortals would also be suitable guards for the ruins. Undead, angels, demons and dragons are the most likely candidates, but any immortal would do. These guards would need intelligence and patience, as mindless constructs or undead could be outmaneuvered by cunning trespassers. Of course, getting such powerful beings to agree to perform this mission would be a major quest, assuming the characters could find such beings they could trust.

No matter how the characters establish a defense for the ruins, it would likely become their greatest legacy as adventurers – even if it must remain a secret.

Bringing Lemuria to Life

Even if you don't use the New World as your campaign world, you can easily place the Ruins in nearly any fantasy setting or even take elements from this sourcebook and use them for another lost civilization. This section provides advice on using Lemuria in your campaign.

Adventure or campaign? Before you design even one Lemurian ruins based dungeon or adventure, you should decide if this will only be a minor or major part of the campaign you plan to run. This should give you an idea of how much work to do when designing the ruins. A one off adventure set in the ruins means that you don't need to spend much time developing the back story of the ruins or what kind of features all of the ruins have in common. You just need to design that one specific dungeon. But if you want to use the ruins for more than one adventure, more work should go into their creation. This guide does provide a lot of short cuts to streamline the design work. You can just pick one of the histories and cataclysms and modify them to suit your campaign. Then it's only a matter of placing the ruins in the campaign world, figuring out what themes you want to use in the campaign and writing the adventures.

Placing the Ruins in your campaign

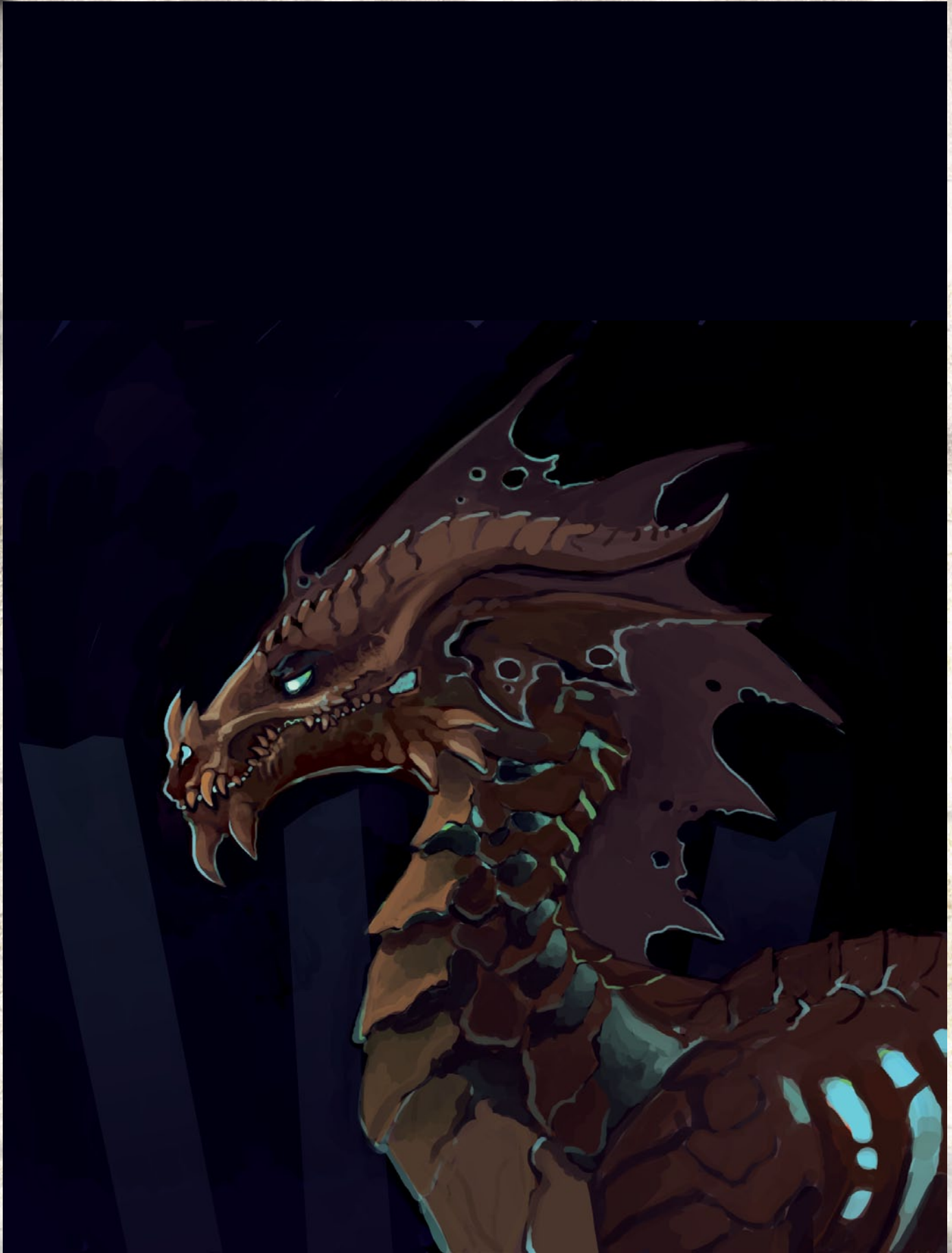
The geography of the region surrounding the ruins affects its nature and inhabitants. An arctic region will attract different monsters than a jungle environment and will impact the ruins themselves differently. Keep in mind that in the centuries between the time Lemuria fell and when explorers first discover the ruins that the region could have changed drastically. The jungle of ten thousand years ago might now be an arid wasteland with active volcanoes. This means that the Lemurians built their structures with certain environmental considerations which may no longer be true. A home built for the freezing tundra would become a sweltering hothouse in the jungle, not to mention the wear and tear damage an unprepared structure would face in such an adverse environment. It's best to place the ruins in a region that you or your players will stay interested in even after the first few adventures. A flat desert might be exotic and new the first time the players experience it, but after they've crossed it several times it may become boring.

Ideally, the ruins should be far from civilization, deep in the wilderness or a desolate wasteland. It could be sparsely populated with minor tribes or kingdoms, but for the most part, the region should be wild and unexplored. This will explain why no one has found the ruins until now. It also makes the journey part of the adventure. Not only will the explorers have to navigate the wilderness to find the ruins, they will have to escort any treasure they discover back through the same territory.

On the other hand, it is possible to place the ruins near civilized lands if there is a reason why no one has found them until now. Magic could have concealed the ruins or a recent earthquake could have unearthed them, for example. However, close proximity to civilization will speed up the cycle of exploration and exploitation as explorers can delve into the ruins and return with their

Bringing Lemuria to Life





loot more quickly. If an unwary explorer releases a powerful ancient undead abomination or opens a gate to the Nine Hells within the ruins, civilization could fall as a result.

Theme

The discovery of a lost civilization is a major event in a campaign, but its implications can be good or evil. Decide if you want the ruins to be a source of good or evil. If it's good, then Lemuria's secrets will trigger a Renaissance in the campaign world, as the state of science and/or magic advances dramatically, bringing great benefits to the masses, ushering in a new era of progress and enlightenment. On the other hand, Lemuria's secret could fall under the category of Things Man Was Not Meant To Know. By pulling these secrets from the ruins into the light of day, the explorers could unleash a new cataclysm on the world. By deciding what the implications of unearthing the secrets of Lemuria, you can decide what kind of themes you want to use in your campaign. If Lemuria's secret are good, then a high adventure themed campaign is more appropriate than a gothic horror themed campaign. Similarly, if the secrets of Lemuria offer nothing but woe then a grim and gritty theme fits better than a comedic, light-hearted theme.

Structuring a Lemurian themed campaign

The overall structure of the campaign should be based on what kind of role you want the player characters to have. If they are the primary movers and shakers of the campaign, then they should make all the primary decisions – discovering the ruins, exploring them and then deciding what to do with the secrets of Lemuria. It's also possible to have them as just one part of a grand campaign-shaking event, where they do not decide the fate of the world, but instead play a smaller role. In that case, narrow the focus to one part of the cycle of discovery, exploration and exploitation or destruction. It is possible to have an entire campaign where the players search for the ruins and only find and explore them in the last few adventures. It's also possible to set a campaign where the characters are caught up in a gold rush wave of exploration, trying to find as much treasure as possible before other explorers do. Finally, a campaign where the ruins have already devastated the world and the characters must seal them off or destroy them once and for all can be an exciting campaign as well. The possibilities are limitless!

Here Be Monsters



Here Be Monsters

These are inhabitants of the ruins, tribal dungeoneers, mercenary explorers hired by the princes of the Old World and even a few immortal citizens of Old Lemuria. This section focuses on their personalities and background instead of game mechanics so they can easily be used in any system.

The Silent Monk

Encountering the NPC: The Silent Monk appears as a thin humanoid figure wrapped in a thick cloak caked with dust. The chamber the monk resides in is empty, although dust hangs heavy in the air. At first the monk is perfectly still, a corpse by all appearances. But once a character draws near to investigate, the monk stirs and removes the hood from the cloak. The monk is bald, wrinkled and calm, but appears to be living. The monk silently regards the characters, but does not interact with them unless prodded.

Background: The monk is an esoteric sage and occultist, imbued with strange mystical powers from extraplanar sources. Neither good or evil, the monk is so focused on obscure philosophical and metaphysical studies that he has lost all connection to the mortal world. He is immortal and requires nothing to survive. He has spent the last century meditating in the ruins, after arriving through an extraplanar gate.

Plans and agenda: The monk is currently contemplating the end of Lemurian civilization and its implications in the greater scheme of things. He is totally indifferent to the player characters and will not speak to them unless he finds them sufficiently interesting. If they ask him profound questions (an extremely difficult skill challenge), show him artifacts from Lemuria or demonstrate unusual supernatural abilities, he may become sufficiently interested to rouse himself from his meditative trance to talk to them. He will explain himself and what he is doing then resume meditation. He will only converse with characters if he feels that he will gain a tiny bit of enlightenment or material for further contemplation from talking with them.

Conversation is extremely difficult, as he tends to speak in riddles or with statements that sound nonsensical at first but are, in fact, wise and accurate observations. He is beyond coercion or trickery though. He is far too sophisticated to fall for any con and too far removed to be afraid of anything.

If he is attacked, he summons forth powerful arcane abilities to defend himself. His powers can be modeled after anything – he could be a true monk with martial arts abilities, a wizard or perhaps he has learned how to mimic the powers of a strong monster such as a mind flayer.

GM notes: The Silent Monk is a way to introduce exposition into a ruins adventure and present a neutral NPC the players can talk with without fear of attack or betrayal. The monk is a focused philosopher, not an evil villain bent on gathering power. The monk can also add a sense of wonder to the ruins, as the monk can explain the significance of Lemuria's fall and what kind of potential its buried secrets holds.

Salenath, the Damned Priest

Encountering the NPC: Salenath is a priest of a Lawful Good deity, dressed in well-worn armor. He is covered in fresh cuts and scars from recent battles and looks exhausted. When he first encounters the player characters, he rushes towards them, glad to see other living creatures. He asks to join them as he is lost within the ruins and wants to get out. He seems open and honest, but a high Sense Motive check reveals that he is nervous and on edge, a fact he is trying to conceal.

Background: Salenath is an adventurer, the last of his party. They were exploring a dungeon when they accidentally unleashed a powerful demon. The demon was a parasite and took Salenath as a host. It told the priest that it would spare his life and grant him power if he would let it kill the others in his party. At first Salenath resisted, but the parasite eventually convinced the priest that his life was more important than the others, that with the new power he would get, he could save many more lives than they ever could. Salenath waited until they slept and slaughtered them all. The demon fed on their life force and Salenath went mad.

Plans and Agenda: Salenath wants the characters to trust him so he can eventually feed them to his demonic parasite. He still retains his clerical abilities, as the parasite has not possessed him or removed his free will and Salenath does want to use his powers for good. He just believes the ends justify the means. He will do whatever he can to gain the trust of the characters then try to kill them when they are at their weakest. He may wait until the end of a battle or when the characters are sleeping. If Salenath is slain, the parasite attempts to bargain with the characters for survival, offering them the same deal as he did with Salenath.

GM Notes: The exact nature of the demonic parasite is left up to you. It may be a true demon or an aberration or some other kind of creature entirely. Furthermore, Salenath might be a rival explorer of the Lemurian ruins or perhaps he was teleported to them by the parasite or he might even be Lemurian himself – the parasite having placed him in a deep sleep until recently.

Cognate the Lemurian Construct

Encountering the NPC: Cognate is a rusted humanoid automaton wearing a few scraps of ragged Lemurian clothing. As it moves, it shakes and trembles, affecting the mannerisms of an elderly human. It was exquisitely crafted, but has nearly broken from centuries of neglect. It calmly greets the characters, at first in the Lemurian language, but after listening to the characters for a few minutes, it begins to speak in their language.

Background: The personal servant of a great sage and artificer, Cognate was given free will after decades of faithful service. After it outlived its creator, some Lemurians thought to dismantle it, but its humble personality ensured that the majority of Lemurians viewed the construct as a non-threat. Cognate was educated as a scholar and a gentleman, a magically powered butler. After its creator died, it served aristocrats for a while. Then Cognate offended a powerful noble by correcting him on a basic factual matter and was thrown out of the service of the aristocracy. The construct taught the children of commoners, the lowest of the low in Lemurian society, before the cataclysm took everything away from it. Through luck, Cognate survived Lemuria's downfall, but it took centuries for the construct to dig itself free. The years of isolation and apocalypse have driven it slightly mad as a result.

Plans and Agenda: Cognate has come to terms with Lemuria's downfall but wants to reach the surface and find out what happened to the world. It is still polite when dealing with adventurers, even rude and barbaric ones. Once it learns about the current state of the world, Cognate will develop some plans of its own. These plans are up to the GM, but could be anything from getting revenge on the aristocrats of the world, building more of its kind, escaping to the Astral Plane or it may decide to serve the player characters as a butler.

GM Notes: Cognate is meant as a role playing focused encounter. While it is a durable and well built construct, Cognate was not built to fight and a group of armed adventurers should be able to destroy it without too much trouble, if they choose to attack it. However, it presents a potential goldmine of information about Lemuria and could become a plot device in the campaign. Multiple NPC groups could try to kidnap Cognate for their own purposes, forcing the characters to choose between defending the hapless immortal butler or destroying an innocent intelligent being in order to keep its information from reaching the wrong hands.

Shoggothic Colossus

Encountering the NPC: The Colossus is unique in that the player characters will only meet part of it at any given time. It appears as a mass of vile, gray-green ooze that protrudes feelers and unidentifiable organs, which push through and wrap around parts of the ruins like kudzu. When the characters draw near, the Colossus changes color to a bluish-white and sends out its feelers to examine them. If the characters attack the Colossus, it lashes out at them, but if they let the feelers examine them, they find the Colossus is only curious and withdraws the feelers after a few moments. As they keep exploring the ruins, they will find more patches of the Colossus until they find the main body deep in the depths. It is an absolutely titanic creature that spreads out across much of the ruins. It appears as an enormous mass of ooze that fills a crater larger than most cities. Attacking the main body is folly as it can absorb any punishment the characters can deal out. Anything short of deific intervention is unlikely to slay the Colossus.

Background: The Colossus began as a simple experiment in an alchemist's lab with exotic sea life. The alchemist attempted to make a chimera out of several deep ocean dwelling creatures and sea weed. The end result was a bit of oozing flesh able to survive on just about anything. It was stored in a vial and forgotten. When Lemuria fell, the vial broke and the creature escaped. It sustained itself by feeding on lichen, mold, and a form of chemosynthesis – converting chemicals found in the ground into oxygen. Through this process, the Colossus expanded to its present size by snaking itself through the ruins. It will eventually stop growing, but it has decades of growth left.

Plans and Agenda: As a mindless organism, the Colossus has no agenda. But as a massive organism that spans through most of the ruins, some inhabitants of the dungeon have learned how to use and manipulate the Colossus for their own purposes. Certain magic spells trigger reflexive sprays of poisonous liquid that can be then gathered to coat weapons. Sections of the Colossus slough off on occasion and can be turned into a leather-like material. Fire causes tentacles to lash out, which can be used as a trap to kill the unwary. As an intruder moves by a patch of the Colossus, a single flaming arrow shoots out, striking it. The tentacles then attack the intruder. Some inhabitants use the Colossus to navigate the ruins, reading the minute differences in color and texture to determine where they are.

GM Notes: As the Colossus is too big to kill permanently, treat each section of it as a separate

monster. It can have varying defense mechanisms for differing parts of the ruins. The part of the Colossus near the lava forge has become resistant to fire and heat and can actually release noxious fumes it gathers from the lava. The submerged section of the Colossus is bioluminescent and has poisonous feelers like a jellyfish. The Colossus is more of a natural resource than NPC, so treat it as such.

Staging A Dramatic Dungeon Crawl

A series of potential encounters, plot hooks, scenarios and campaign models that use the ruins. Cryptic puzzles, gory battles, daring rescues and cunning intrigue can all happen in the Ruins. Adventurers not only have to be wary of the guardians and traps of the Ruins, but also other colonists and natives envious of whatever treasures the adventurers find. Life is cheap compared to the priceless value of the knowledge of Old Lemuria.

Microcosm Lemuria

Set up: The adventurers crack open the door to the wizard's laboratory, a door that has not opened since the fall of Lemuria. They expect golems or undead guardians, mystical traps and a hoard of arcane treasures. Instead, they are blinded by sunlight and find themselves in a pastoral glade. At first it seems as though they have been transported to another plane, but divination magic reveals they have not been plane shifted or teleported. Peasants dressed in Lemurian-style clothing greet them warmly in the Lemurian language.

If the characters are peaceful, they can interact with the peasants without trouble, but only for a few moments. A noble leading a sizeable force of heavily armed guards arrive with a few wizards in tow. Using magic to communicate with the explorers, the noble asks the explorers where they come from and what they intend to do. After learning as much as he can from the player characters, the noble demands that they leave and never return. It should be obvious by now that some kind of society has lived here for several generations, untouched by the outside world.

Background: During the last days of Lemuria, a powerful wizard sought to keep his civilization. He spent his remaining days creating a type of Lemurian time capsule colony to survive the ages. He expanded his underground lab and used magic to create an artificial ecosystem that simulated Lemuria aboveground. A magical globe of gold that levitated in a fixed cycle filled the colony with true sunlight while programmed illusions functioned as the stars and moon. Bound elementals provided the weather and endless water and fresh soil. Constructs with limited intelligence saw to the other details of the colony. The wizard took infants as the first generation – raised by him and the constructs. The wizard died of old age, but sealed the colony up so that the colonists could not breach it, teaching them that the outside world was dangerous and full of vicious monsters. The colony is self-sustaining, but the arrival of outsiders has shown the colonists that the wizard's warnings were not true, and they are now curious about the outside world. Just by their arrival, the adventurers have thrown the colony into chaos.

Resolving the adventure: Evil characters can freely attack and pillage the colony – treat it as a dungeon in of itself. The golden sun globe is worth a fortune by itself, not to mention many other valuable authentic Lemurian treasures to be had.

Staging a Dramatic Dungeon Crawl

Staging A Dramatic Dungeon Crawl



Neutral characters could sneak in and start a revolution to take the colony over for themselves. Good characters could try to teach the naïve colonists about the outside world, protecting them from evil. They have the chance to shape a society into what they believe is best. If they leave the colony alone though, their arrival will eventually start a power struggle between colonists that want to leave and those that want to lock the door again. A civil war is likely, which would destroy the colony.

Rewards: The players could loot the colony or coerce, trick or demand treasure from the colonists if they are selfish or evil. Good aligned characters that help the colonists will be given great gifts. Charismatic player characters may even recruit the colonists as their personal army.

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage

Set up: The adventurers learn of a priceless Lemurian treasure within the ruins, a crystal bird sculpture of incredible craftsmanship. A powerful merchant lord also hears of the crystal bird and has placed a large bounty on it. Unfortunately, a minor sect of a god of nature has a prophecy regarding a 'jeweled eagle' and the current head priest, having decided that the crystal bird is one and the same, has commanded his followers to get the bird by any means necessary. Finally, a divination spell has stated that the crystal bird is essential to understanding the secret of a deadly guardian deep within the ruins. Who will get the bird first and will they be able to keep it?

Background: The crystal bird is not a piece of artwork, but a living bird that was transformed into crystal by a variant basilisk created by a Lemurian wizard. Instead of turning any that gaze at it into stone, the basilisk turns them into crystal. The bird was merely one of its first victim and the only one to survive the fall of Lemuria. All of the victims have shattered. The bird is not the jeweled eagle of the prophecy.

Resolving the adventure: The player characters will need to take the bird to two experts in order to learn its secrets. If the bird is examined by a sage knowledgeable in Lemurian magic and by a master jeweler, then the characters will learn the truth behind it. The sage will also deduce that the basilisk is probably made of living crystal and would be extremely vulnerable to sonic damage – a clue that would make fighting it much easier. Of course, in order to learn this knowledge, they must

protect it against greedy mercenaries and religious fanatics looking to steal it. This can take several adventures, as all three groups vie for the bird.

Rewards: Once the characters learn the secret of the crystal bird, they can give it to the mercenaries or zealots for a favor (perhaps they want the mercenaries to help them fight the basilisk or the zealots to raise their dead) or they can sell it to the merchant lord themselves and gain the hatred of both groups. Honest and moral character may wish to tell the zealots the truth, but the zealots may or may not believe them.

Assassins from the Depths

Set up: As the characters rest from their latest excursion into the ruins, perhaps at a tavern, inn or camp site, they talk to a friendly NPC. Without warning, a dark void forms around the NPC and blades of negative energy eviscerate him or her. The NPC dies from the wounds and the dark void vanishes. All of this happens within a few seconds, before the characters can react. Even if the characters have contingency spells or other powers that trigger automatically, they fail to stop the assassination or the void from disappearing. The NPC can be raised from the dead though.

Background: when the player characters explored the ruins, they triggered a powerful ward that was designed to summon an extraplanar assassin bound to kill the trespassers. However, the sigils on the ward were damaged in the cataclysm and the magic is not working correctly. The assassin is linked to the player characters and cannot harm them directly. Nor can it manifest for more than a few seconds at a time. However, it is compelled to hurt the characters any way it can. It will attempt to kill anyone it perceives as an ally of the player characters.

Resolving the adventure: The assassin can dimly perceive the characters when it is not manifesting on the prime material plane and hopes the characters either discover the link and banish it or return to the ruins and destroy the ward, which would free it. Of course, if all of them are slain, it is freed as well so it will not intervene on their behalf in battle. It is compelled not to communicate with the characters but, as it eavesdrops on them, it may decide to spare certain NPCs if it will nudge them in the right direction.

The first part of the adventure will be extremely perilous to any NPCs that meet the players, as the players must first figure out the rules of the assassin – what it can and can't do.

Destroying the assassin is extremely hard. At best, the characters have only 1 round to slay it, and it is extremely durable and resistant to all forms of damage. It is possible, though, but the assassin is only summoned when the player characters are near a NPC that is friendly or neutral to them. Furthermore, the assassin is able to observe them, so it will be aware of any ambush plans. It must strike whenever possible, as it is being magically compelled. It can manifest within line of sight of any of the player characters that were in the vicinity of the ward when it was first triggered. The assassin heals all damage between manifestations and can only appear once every 24 hours.

Banishing the assassin requires mystical research, divination magic and knowledge of the planes. Once the characters identify the basic nature of the assassin, they can attempt to banish it either with the proper abjuration spell or by finding the ward and destroying it. The trick is that studying the assassin requires either samples from it, which necessitates letting it manifest again, or a sojourn into a dangerous section of the ruins to learn more about Lemurian magic.

Rewards: Banishing or destroying the assassin gives no monetary reward, but the characters may develop unique powers or insight from their temporary connection to the extraplanar assassin. Perhaps they gain a power comparable to a magic item, such as resistance to negative energy or the ability to detect invisibility. Another alternative is that the characters learn how to replicate the magic of the ward, thus allowing the characters to summon the assassin to kill their enemies for them. A final option may be the assassin's treasure trove. As a killer for hire, the assassin has built up a sizeable hoard of treasure over the centuries. However, this hoard is hidden away in a distant extraplanar site and well guarded. The players can retrieve a map from the assassin's corpse and recover the treasure. However, what the assassin considers treasure greatly differs from the player characters. Contracts for souls, pure elemental essences, the bones of dragons and other more esoteric items lie in wait for the characters to find. Each of these items can be a plot hook in of itself – determined characters can try to find a way to sell or somehow profit from them while others might find relics long since considered lost.