

RUNNING “THE BULLYWUG GAMBIT” IN THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

by Eric L. Boyd

Conversion notes for Tashluta (Sasserine) and Shaundakul (Fharlanghn) are given in the Realms conversion notes for “There Is No Honor.”

Blood Bay and Kraken’s Cove lie east of Tashluta, halfway between the capitol of the Tashalar and the ruined city of Procalith (just south of the label “Tashtan Coast” on this map: http://www.wizards.com/dnd/images/mapofweek/Dec2005/02_SerpentKingdoms_72_ppi_cv2891.jpg). Assume the coastline matches the description given in the adventure.

Slaves captured by the Crimson Fleet are eventually sold in the slave markets of Calimshan (Scarlet Brotherhood ports).

An indifferent (or better) Harliss flees east to the ruins of Procalith (Scarlet Brotherhood fort), where Crimson Fleet pirates periodically anchor and she can secure passage.

The Age of Worms concluded in Mintarn (Alhaster).

Kaskui Kiel was enslaved by a Calishite pasha.

The statuery in area V2 depicts a couatl.

The diary in area V3 is written in Loross (Suel). The unusual key opens doors in an exotic dungeon of metal hidden in the mountains surrounding Halruaa.

The Rundeen were provided as a replacement affiliation for the Scarlet Brotherhood in the Realms conversion for “There Is No Honor.” PCs affiliated with the Rundeen can win an affiliation award by the same criteria as given for the Scarlet Brotherhood in this adventure.

Savage Tidings: Beyond Sasserine

The environs of Tashluta (Sasserine) are fully detailed in *Serpent Kingdoms*. However, a Realms-based Savage Tide campaign can still make use of the regional details presented in DRAGON #349.

Regional conversions include the Black Jungles (Amedio Jungle), the Peaks of Flame (Hellfurnaces), and the Shining Sea (Jeklea Bay). Local areas, including Blood Bay, Crab River, Emerald River, Kraken’s Cove, Skyfroth River, and Thunder River, all lie within the Tashalar Basin, roughly in the same configuration as shown on the map of the environs of Sasserine. Thunder River runs south-southeast, leading into the depths of the Black Jungle. Likewise, Tashluta’s holdings,

including the Black Road (Amedio Highway), Blisterwall (built of rock mined from the Peaks of Flame), Castle Rakin, Fort Fendawor (built by a Shoonite garrison), and the neighboring plantations all lie within the Tashalar Basin in roughly the same configuration as well. Finally, the dungeons and ruins of the Tashalar (Sasserine region), including Beroarak’s Maw, Carver’s Pit, Chekitewan, Dungeon of Rust and Fire, Evermire, Fiddler’s Cave, Magalarve, and Mashwan lie in the same positions relative to the aforementioned regional landmarks. The Spire of Long Shadows lies far to the west, amidst the dense jungle of the Chultengar, and Hookface’s Lair lies beyond that, in the depths of the Peaks of Flame. Many of these locales date back to the Thinguth and Lapal (Olman) tribes who inhabited the region in the period between –2,809 DR and –289 DR. (See *Serpent Kingdoms*, page 131, for further details on this historical period.)

Replacement PCs might be drawn from the Jade Ravens, the Tashluta Military (Sasserine Military), individual swamper, or individual thieves, as noted. Alternative PCs might be drawn from the Jungles of Chult (Olman natives), Lapaliya, Samarach, Thindol, the wild dwarves of Chult (grugach), or House Se’Sehen, the yuan-ti tribe with the strongest influence in the Tashalar. Se’Sehen-affiliated PCs might be humans with the Snake Blood feat (detailed in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* and updated in the *Player’s Guide to Faerûn*), tainted ones (detailed in *Monsters of Faerûn* and *Savage Species*), or pureblood yuan-ti. A new regional affiliation for House Se’Sehen is detailed below.

Finally, the Crimson Fleet is rumored to have covert ties to House Se’Sehen (Scarlet Brotherhood), and one day soon both will descend upon Tashluta in a bloody coup. It’s also rumored that the threat of the yuan-ti is all that keeps the Crimson Fleet from conquering Tashluta.

House Se’Sehen

Symbol: Twin fangs.

Background, Goals, and Dreams: The yuan-ti of Faerûn are divided into seven great tribes (called houses) and one intertribal, not-so-secret society. The allegiance of any particular yuan-ti is based primarily on blood ties, but can be modified by deliberate choice. House Se’Sehen is currently the largest and

most powerful in the Black Jungles. After centuries of somnolence, the reappearance of the avatar of Sseth during the Time of Troubles caused House Se’Sehen to begin to stir again. Members of this tribe seek to reestablish their control over the Tashalar and extend their reach into all the human-held territories bordering the Shining Sea. They exchange exotic spices and poisons for slaves and a means to transport their spies to ports in the north.

Enemies and Allies: House Se’Sehen is allied with House Extaminos and House Sauringar. They also recently forged an insidious alliance with the Rundeen. House Se’Sehen openly fights with House Eselemas and House Jennesta. They have hostile relations with the Coiled Cabal and the Crimson Fleet.

Members: Many members of House Se’Sehen are rangers, rogues, or scouts; many of these eventually take levels in the assassin or fangs of Sseth’s prestige classes. Within the tribe, each subtype works to maintain its position in the hierarchy at the expense of those with a smaller fraction of snake blood. As a result, the tribe is highly stratified, with abominations dominating most halfbloods, halfbloods dominating most purebloods, and purebloods dominating most tainted ones^{II} or humans with the Snake Blood* feat.

Type: Tribe (racial).

Scale: 12 Multiregional/kingdom.

Titles, Benefits, and Duties: As you advance in the tribe, you gain access to the poisons, grafts, and historical memory of the yuan-ti.

Affiliation Score Criteria: Only yuan-ti or creatures with the Snake Blood* feat are eligible to join the tribe. Creatures who become yuan-ti, such as broodguards^{II} and tainted ones^{II}, can also join the tribe.

Affiliation Scores and Benefits

3 or less No affiliation.

4-10 **Entwined:** You are considered a member of House Se’Sehen. You may purchase yuan-ti poisons and ossra oils.

11-20 **Scale of the Serpent:** As bonus feat, gain Forked Tongue (see *Serpent Kingdoms*, pages 145–146), Improved Familiar, or Spit Venom (see *Serpent Kingdoms*, page 147). You must meet the prerequisites of the bonus feat you choose. Improved familiars must come from the list given in *Serpent Kingdoms*, page 146.

21-29 **Fang of the Serpent:** You may acquire

yuan-ti grafts at two-thirds the listed price. (Yuan-ti grafts are detailed in the *Fiend Folio*, page 207, and *Serpent Kingdoms*, pages 146 and 154.)

30 or higher **Voice of the Serpent:** You may claim an audience with an allied sarrukh (see *Serpent Kingdoms*, pages 54–61, 80–81) once per year. During such an audience, you can request one form modification (see *Serpent Kingdoms*, pages 80–81) or you can ask questions giving you a +10 insight bonus on one subsequent Knowledge or Spellcraft check.

Executive Powers: Assassinate, Plague, Shadow War. ☞

| Criterion | Score Mod. |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Snake Blood* feat | +1/8 PC's level |
| Broodguard [¶] or tainted one [¶] | +1/8 PC's level |
| Ranger or rogue or scout | +1 |
| Speak Yuan-ti | +1 |
| Yuan-ti pureblood or guardian [†] | +1/2 |
| Yuan-ti halfblood or mageslayer [†] | +1 |
| Yuan-ti abomination | +2 |
| Yuan-ti anathema [‡] | +4 |
| Wealth | +1/40,000 gp |
| Assassin prestige class | +1 |
| Fang of Sseth prestige class | +1 |
| Completes assigned mission | +1 |
| Humiliates rival yuan-ti tribe | +1/2 |
| Infiltrate affiliation | +1/2 |

* *Player's Guide to Faerûn*, pages 43–44.

¶ *Monsters of Faerûn*, pages 94–96, or *Savage Species*, pages 140–142.

† *Serpent Kingdoms*, pages 88–91.

‡ *Fiend Folio*, pages 193–195.

¥ *Serpent Kingdoms*, page 147.

RUNNING "THE BULLYWUG GAMBIT" IN EBERRON

by Keith Baker

In "The Bullywug Gambit," adventurers have their first encounter with the savage tide itself, the dark influence of Demogorgon, reaching up from the abyss of Khyber to corrupt the world above.

One goal of these conversions is to minimize the changes required on the part of the DUNGEON MASTER. A DM who is deeply familiar with *EBERRON* may wish to draw more of the threads of the world into the adventure path, making greater use of the dragonmarked houses or the leaders of the Five Nations. However, as the current action takes place on the fringes of Khorvaire, it is simple enough to keep these as local events dealing with bandits and regional guilds instead of the great powers of Khorvaire.

Many of the forces at work in this adventure have been discussed in the initial conversion notes for Sasserine.

The Source of the Savage Tide

The influence of Demogorgon raises one of the primary challenges of converting this adventure path to Eberron. The cosmology of Eberron is quite different from that of the Great Wheel, so where does Demogorgon reside in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*?

Many demons can be found in Shavarath, the eternal battleground. It is certainly possible to place Demogorgon in Shavarath as one of the generals of this endless conflict. However, the spirits of Shavarath are ultimately spirits of war; the demons of Shavarath may be creatures of chaos and evil, but they are still spirits of battle.

But there is another alternative for the DM who wants demons to be spirits of pure evil, unbound by any ties to Shavarath or the outer planes: Khyber, the Dragon Below. Legends say that in the dawn of time, the vile dragon Khyber spawned fiends in the darkness, monsters that tormented the children of Eberron. The rakshasas are the best-known native fiends, and to this day it is the rakshasa that have the strongest presence in the world above. But Khyber's children take many forms, and there is nothing preventing the Dragon Below from creating its own variations of the spirits found in Shavarath and Fernia. Balors, mariliths, and even demon princes; all could be children of Khyber. Like the rakshasas, these Khyber-spawned demons are native outsiders, but they possess most

traits of true outsiders; they do not need to eat or sleep, they are immune to the ravages of time, and the most powerful among them are truly immortal.

As spawn of Khyber, the demons of Eberron are not tied to any planar agenda, nor bound to the great war of Shavarath. Instead, they embody Khyber's wrath and hatred of the world above. They seek to corrupt and destroy the children of Eberron. Some may seek to free the Overlords of the Age of Demons, and these fiends usually join with the Lords of Dust. But many are spirits of pure chaos and evil, and seek only the pleasure of sowing discord and pain across Eberron.

And what of the Abyss? Again, it could be grafted onto Shavarath, with each layer being one more battlefield. But it can also be bound to Khyber. Eberron is a magical world, and it does not have to obey the laws of logic. An adventurer who ventures too far beneath the surface of Eberron will be amazed by the horrors that lurk below. A deep cavern can open into the endless maze of Baphomet. A whirlpool can draw unwary travelers into the abyssal ocean. Many people think Xen'drik is the ultimate destination for the pulp adventurer. But the most exotic and terrifying realms are not across the water; they lie beneath it, in the very heart of the Dragon Below. While these are not outer planes, they exist beyond normal space and cannot be reached by normal forms of teleportation; travelers must either find the proper path between the realms or employ planar magic to step into these demiplanes.

This is the path that these conversions will follow. Demogorgon is one of the lords of the worlds within the world. While he is weaker than the great Overlords of the Age of Demons, he is one of the mightiest spirits that remains unbound. He stands apart from the Lords of Dust; he seeks to claim the power of the rajahs for his own, not to free these ancient spirits. He is a patient being, and his plans take centuries to unfold. Now his latest scheme is coming to fruition, as the savage tide begins to rise.

The Bullywugs of Khorvaire

Few citizens of the Five Nations have encountered a bullywug. The frog-folk live along the eastern coast of Khorvaire, ranging from the

warmer regions of the Lhazaar Principalities to the fringes of Khorvaire, where they have ancient feuds with the dominant lizardfolk. According to bullywug legends, the ancestors of the frog-folk were humans (or possibly goblinoids; the tales are woefully unclear). These stories say that a god known as the Lord of the Murky Waters transformed his faithful followers into bullywugs, granting them inhuman endurance and mastery of the swamps. Most modern theologians see this Lord of the Murky Waters as a variation of the Shadow and the Devourer, but some believe that the bullywugs are actually a creation of a daelkyr lord, hobgoblins twisted to serve as amphibious troops during the Dhakaani War. Whatever the truth of their origins, many bullywugs seem to have an instinctive bent towards cruelty and aggression that often brings them into conflict with the humans that they encounter, and the bullywugs of the Trub Glorp tribe fall into this unfortunate stereotype.

Characters can make a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or bardic knowledge check to recognize these strange humanoids and recall these legends. Characters from the Lhazaar Principalities or Q'barra receive a +5 bonus on these checks, and can make the Knowledge check untrained.

Odds and Ends

Diamondback: Should a DM wish to add a hint of the Dragonmarked Houses to Sasserine, a bard or other performer could recognize the battle dancer Diamondback as employing the techniques of the Carnival of Shadows, the wandering circus of House Phiarlan. Due to her exceptional talents, Diamondback managed to earn a place in the Carnival, a rare thing for one of human blood. However, her race held back her advancement, and this was one of the factors that drove her away to her life of crime. She despises elves, especially dragonmarked elves, and goes out of her way to target elf characters.

Jade Ravens: Mercenaries from Q'barra, the Jade Ravens took service with the Vanderboren family during the Last War. The Ravens have a haughty attitude about the war, taking the view that Q'barra alone held to the values of Galifar, and this ribbing may prove grating to any PC who served on the front lines. Kaskus Kiel was born Kaskus Mroranon, but set aside

his clan title to study the druidic mysteries. He has yet to align himself with any of the existing druidic sects, and currently works a path of his own.

The Family Shrine: The shrine in the manor (area **V18**) is dedicated to the Sovereign Olladra.

The Effects of the Savage Tide: In *EBERRON*, the daelkyr are known for twisting flesh, and players may assume that the savage tide is a manifestation of daelkyr power. A Knowledge check (either nature or arcana) will reveal the following information:

- 10 This could be the work of the daelkyr.
- 20 These creatures lack certain telltale signs of daelkyr flesh-shaping. There is certainly some foul magic at work, but it may have an unusual source.
- 25 Khyber itself is known to be a source of corruption. These are more of a match with legends of beings twisted by the power of Khyber than those altered by the lords of Xoriat. 