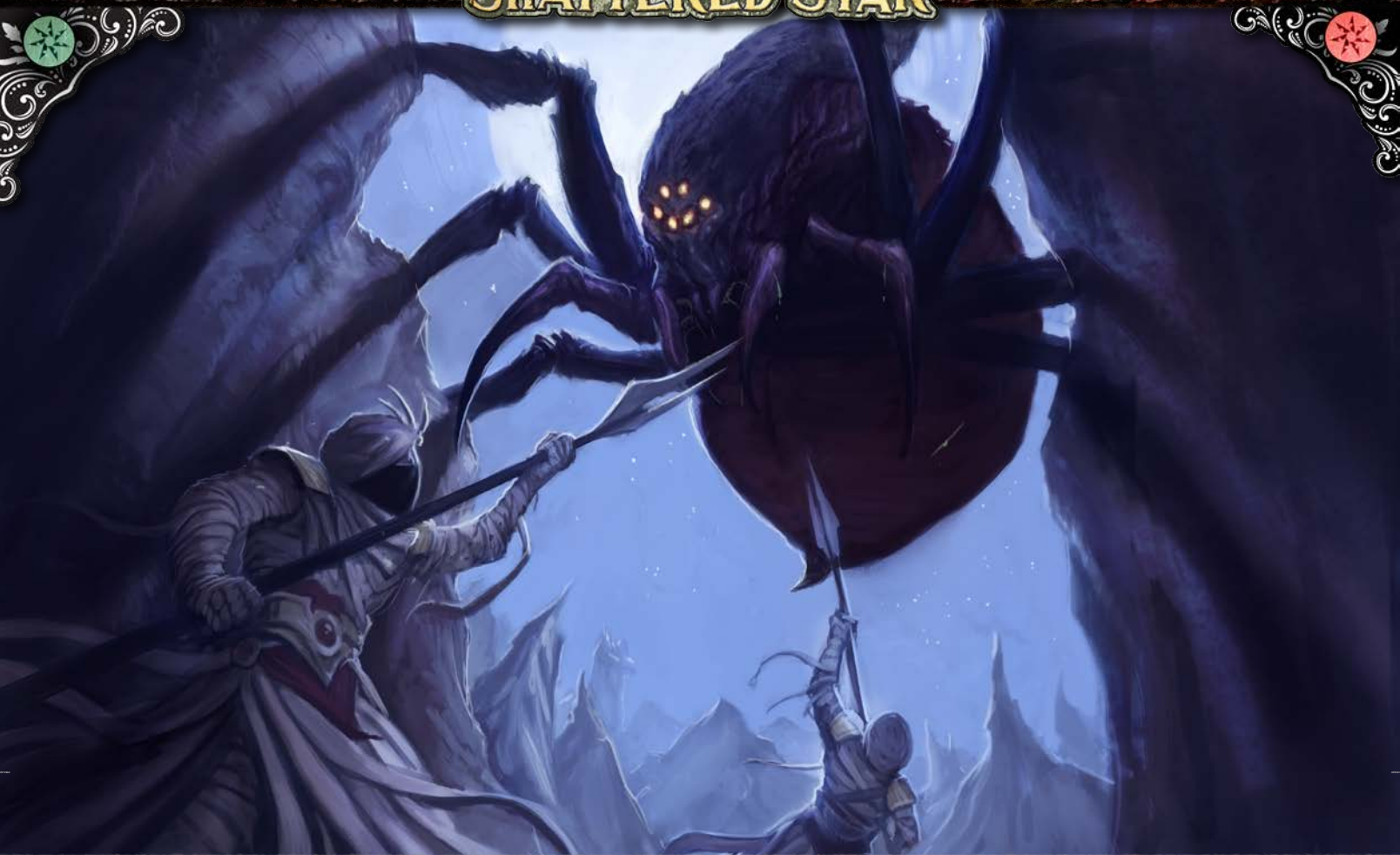


SHATTERED STAR



LENG: THE TERROR BEYOND DREAMS

THE SHANTAK NOW FLEW LOWER, REVEALING BENEATH THE CANOPY OF CLOUD A GREY BARREN PLAIN WHEREON AT GREAT DISTANCES SHONE LITTLE FEEBLE FIRES. AS THEY DESCENDED THERE APPEARED AT INTERVALS LONE HUTS OF GRANITE AND BLEAK STONE VILLAGES WHOSE TINY WINDOWS GLOWED WITH PALLID LIGHT. AND THERE CAME FROM THOSE HUTS AND VILLAGES A SHRILL DRONING OF PIPES AND A NAUSEOUS RATTLE OF CROTALA WHICH PROVED AT ONCE THAT INGANOK'S PEOPLE ARE RIGHT IN THEIR GEOGRAPHIC RUMOURS. FOR TRAVELLERS HAVE HEARD SUCH SOUNDS BEFORE, AND KNOW THAT THEY FLOAT ONLY FROM THE COLD DESERT PLATEAU WHICH HEALTHY FOLK NEVER VISIT; THAT HAUNTED PLACE OF EVIL AND MYSTERY WHICH IS LENG.

—H. P. LOVECRAFT, *THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH*

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The Dimension of Dreams lies somewhere beyond the conventional planes of the Great Beyond, a realm both created and fueled by the collective dreams of sentient beings from across the cosmos. And beyond its distant shore lies Leng. This windswept plateau between the arms of embracing mountain chains descends in an inexorable slope to the Dreaming Shore. Upon the blasted tableland sit scattered villages of stone huts, seemingly the remnant of some immeasurably ancient civilization that once held sway here. Usually long-abandoned, these dark ruins occasionally teem with foul semi-human denizens of Leng going about their own barbaric and unknowable purposes. The few inhabited villages can be recognized from afar at night by the evil fires that burn bright within them, though even villages known to be abandoned often show those same evil flames in the inky darkness of a Leng midnight.

None travel the wastes of Leng lightly, and its cursed villages are universally avoided. The tales that come out of Leng are usually the ravings of dream walkers struck mad by what they saw or the mumbling of vacant-eyed indigents upon the streets of dreaming lands' cities. These luckless souls talk of the cold and crumbling ruins, of horrific creatures that lurk among the stones, and of terrifying hunts ending in violent debauches perpetrated by the degenerate denizens. They speak of gruesome acts and rituals conducted to propitiate a yellow-robed monster known as the High-Priest Not To Be Described, and hint darkly at even worse rituals conducted by that same figure to propitiate who knows what horrors.

Leng exists at a crossroads of sorts, a realm all its own yet accessible from virtually anywhere via the Dimension of Dreams. These dream travelers can spend a lifetime learning the skill to walk lucidly among the streets of dreams or find that they simply have the knack as young, impressionable children, only to lose it as they age and mature beyond the fantasies of youth. Many seek strange drugs and unguents to enable them to achieve this dream-state, and some forfeit their waking lives altogether, choosing to instead inhabit a half-remembered fantasy realm of wonders. Yet when these dream travelers sink into the realm of nightmares or venture too far into the dreaming lands, they can find themselves upon the bleak shores of Leng, looking up into a seemingly endless plateau of ruin, and would be wise to find the means to awaken or seek egress back to safer lands before night falls and the inland fires light.

The geography of Leng is one of extremes. Interminable plains of desolate bleakness rise from a rocky coast of black boulders and cold sea spray, then climb to a cordon of impossibly tall mountain peaks hedging it in on both sides and acting as a funnel, guiding the unwary traveler to an unutterable fate in the valleys where they

LENG PLANAR TRAITS

Leng exists beyond the Dimension of Dreams where nightmares overlap into a strange reality spawned by no dreamer, except perhaps for the dreams of outer beings of primordial madness. It has the following traits.

Normal Gravity and Time

Finite Size: Leng is bounded by mountains on three sides and by a mysterious coastline on the fourth, giving it a finite size, but its appearance tends to change based on the point of origin of each traveler so estimates of its size can vary widely. In addition, Leng overlaps with various worlds on the Material Plane, and its size and other qualities extend farther in the regions where these convergences occur.

Divinely Morphic: Who or what powers can transform this realm to their whims is beyond the knowledge of even the most erudite sages.

Strongly Chaotic-Aligned, Mildly Evil-Aligned



meet. However, no two sojourners seem to describe the lay of the land quite the same way, as if the topography changes from the perspective of the viewer depending on from whence his journey began. In fact, some of the few Leng scholars speculate that it is a direct extension of countless worlds at once, and therefore has a unique lay of the land related specifically to each of its constituent waking-world connections. It may be that Leng is truly limitless, and that it is the Material Plane that is hedged in by its impossibilities, or that each time a new dreamer falls into a nightmare, those unconscious terrors work to extend Leng's borders just a little more.

The easiest method of approach is by sea, but a daring few who have managed to obtain local guides from some of the dreaming lands have been shown hidden pathways and passes that lead through the mountain wall. In addition, on nights when the mysterious moon sinks low and full over the plateau, black-hulled ships ply the skyways and can provide another means of entry for those with the bravado or ill-luck to try it.

The plateau rises ever upward as it travels away from the coastline, eventually encountering more barren mountain peaks (though not as tall as those that hedge the entire tableland) that must be somehow surmounted for a traveler to continue. And beyond these warding peaks stands the true horror of the demiplane—a mountain of impossible height spanning countless miles, dwarfing those found elsewhere within Leng, and upon whose summit rests the terrible unknown city of Kadath where dark gods are whispered to cavort and devour any who dare intrude upon their solitude.

DENIZENS AND DANGERS

Despite its cold and arid desolation, Leng hosts a surprising number of different creatures.

Bholes: These immense burrowing horrors are found only in the underworld deep below, and no reliable report of the appearance or habits of a bhole has ever been received. It is rumored that they are used as part of some great breeding project by powerful inhuman arcanists, but even that is only the barest conjecture. (See page 84.)

Denizens of Leng: The eponymous inhabitants of this nightmare land, these creatures have a largely humanoid shape that is kept firmly shrouded beneath voluminous robes, turbans, and veils. They ply the waters of Leng, the Dimension of Dreams, and the waking world alike in black ships, trading strangely flawless rubies for slaves and seemingly random goods of unknown purpose. But even these denizens have masters, and many are actually held in thrall to the hideous moon-beasts and serve them as diplomats, slave labor, and provender. (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 82.)



DENIZEN OF LENG

Ghouls and Ghosts: The ghouls and ghosts of Leng are different creatures than the relatively weak undead of the waking world. In Leng, the typical ghoul is a more bestial undead with a canine snout and hooved feet—Leng ghouls are more powerful than their waking world kin (see page 45 for a typical Leng ghoul's stats), and often take levels in alchemist, oracle, witch, or wizard. A Leng ghost is little more than a Leng ghoul with a few more racial Hit Dice and a stench aura, but deep under Leng, these two "races" are often at odds. Leng ghouls are known to sometimes be helpful to visitors in return for gifts of carrion, but the ghosts are more feral and violent.

Gugs: The four-armed giants of Leng's underworld maintain a hidden walled city somewhere within its dark reaches. Gugs often war with and feed on Leng's ghosts, but many have an unusual fear of the region's ghouls. A gug can easily destroy a handful of ghosts and guarantee itself a good meal, but for that reason the ghosts tend to travel in packs and attack gugs en masse, so the battles are rarely a sure thing for either side. Even though ghouls are physically weaker than their ghost cousins, gugs bear an irrational fear of them and almost always retreat when confronted by such creatures, regardless of numbers. (See *Bestiary 2* 151.)

Leng Spiders: These creatures were once the predominant inhabitants of the Plateau of Leng, until a genocidal war with the denizens of Leng untold ages ago pushed them to the brink of extinction. Now these gigantic arachnids lurk upon the fringes of Leng in shadow-haunted valleys. They are always on the lookout for humanoids who come too close to their lairs, snaring careless wanderers and torturing them in order to momentarily relive the feeling of dominance they once enjoyed. (See *Bestiary 2* 176.)

Moon-Beasts: The true masters of the denizens of Leng, the moon-beasts are bloated monstrosities with rolls of pale flesh culminating in faces composed of pink tentacles. They hail from the moon that hangs over Leng, and ply the many waterways of the moon, hidden within black galleys captained by their slave-thralls. The moon-beasts are consummate slavers, seeing all other races as lesser beings awaiting exploitation as laborers or victims bound for other, darker purposes. (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 195.)

Nightgaunts: Nightgaunts haunt Leng's mountains and Underworld, and have been known to kidnap lone travelers, carrying them upon night flights of great distances to unpredictable destinations. This is often done at the behest of some master, for nightgaunts are somewhat like dogs in their intelligence and can be trained to be intensely loyal. For some reason, shantaks have an intense fear of nightgaunts and flee from their presence. (See page 90.)

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Scarlet Walkers: Not all arachnid inhabitants of the Spider Vales are the purple Leng spiders. In some of the more remote valleys, high upon canyon walls, hang immense sacs made from coagulated blood and tissue. These are hives for the scarlet walkers. Unlike Leng spiders, these creatures hold no grudge against the humanoid races, but rather see them as food, for the scarlet walkers subsist on living blood. Equally at ease walking on earth or air, scarlet walkers have been known to make the lengthy trek from Leng to the moon by foot. (See *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 414.)

Shantaks: Shantaks dwell in great numbers upon the Plateau of Leng, principally in the mountainous regions. They can also be found dwelling in the shadows of the Great Quarry, where they hunt unwary travelers. The shantaks of Leng appear to be allied with the dwellers of Kadath and have been known to serve the High-Priest Not To Be Described. (See *Bestiary* 2 244.)

Other Denizens: In addition to these primary inhabitants, many other types of creatures also call the nooks and crannies of Leng home. Examples of these include ant lions, basilisks, and cockatrices upon the stony plains; belkers, manticores, and wendigos in the frozen heights; and shining children and winged urhags in the Cold Wastes and shadowed quarries.

GAZETTEER

Though Leng appears desolate and monotonous, enterprising explorers can find a surprising number of unique features and locations if they know where to look—and can survive long enough to reach them!

Cold Waste: Beyond the Watchers in the Waste, where the mountain walls of Leng converge toward Kadath, lies the Cold Waste, a stony desert forever shrouded by night. The sun never rises over the Cold Waste and Kadath beyond, and distances are tricky here, sometimes seeming only a short journey of a day or 2 to the northernmost point at Kadath's foothills and sometimes requiring a journey of many months or even years through the night-dark lands.

Dreaming Shore: A gray sea laps here at the edge of Leng, where the plateau descends from its mountain-bound heights, extending beyond the horizon and allowing one to travel directly into the dreaming lands beyond. Here the boldest ship captains from those same dreaming lands—realms with names like Celephais, Inganok, and Lomar—may come to test their luck or taste for adventure, but few return twice. The risks of landing upon Leng's shore are great enough to make such a trip rarely profitable, and the predatory black galleys of the moon-beasts that frequently ply these waters render the shore doubly hazardous.

VISITING LENG

While Leng can be reached through the Dimension of Dreams, you don't need to physically travel there in order to experience the place, as GMs can provide glimpses into Leng through PCs' dreams. These vignettes allow the players to see the strange horrors that await them without becoming stranded in an alien dimension or preyed upon by the threats therein. These fleeting visions of Leng can also be used to foreshadow a trip to the terrible realm so that PCs have some sense of where they have arrived once they step foot on the cold plateau that is Leng.



Kadath: Kadath, the impossible castle-city, is a vast fortified citadel that sits atop the highest mountain at the farthest extremity of Leng. The mountain of black stone itself is dozens of miles high, far taller and steeper than any natural geological formation should be. No known paths lead to its heights, so only flyers or those with formidable magic have any hope of making the ascent. Occupying the entire summit of this colossal massif is a fortress beyond imagining, built entirely of black onyx and seemingly grown from the precipices around it. This city is in itself several miles in height, brooding atop the mountain peak below with countless chambers and many miles of passages ranging in size from the most squalid goblin warren to cyclopean thoroughfares fit for the gods—for that is what resides within. Strange gods of unknown pantheons are said to cavort within Kadath. What they represent and what cultures worship them are great enigmas, though some purport to venerate them in their mystery. Whether their worship is noticed and rewarded is anyone's guess, for no one dares approach this impossible height to bring obeisance directly to these unknown deities. Those that have dared unflinchingly run afoul of their guardian and alleged caretaker—Nyarlathep, the Crawling Chaos, who it is rumored stands as door ward to the will of the primal chaos at the center of the universe. Few who have dared the Crawling Chaos's abominable presence have returned to tell of it.

One interesting note regarding Unknown Kadath is that the few who have braved some portion of its heights and avoided confrontations with elder gods or outer powers report that behind it the Plateau of Leng continues to extend down between hedging mountain walls to a gray coastline in no fewer than two different directions. It seems that Kadath looks down not only upon the dreaming lands of Golarion, but also upon those of other worlds as well. Whether the Plateau of Leng that extends towards these dreaming lands is a sort of mirror of that which is known to Golarion or whether it is entirely different in

its inhabitants and locales remains a great mystery, for these far reaches have only been seen from the vast heights of Kadath's upper slopes, and no one has yet been able to journey down to them to see firsthand.

Those who come too near to Kadath and look upon its shape are often granted visions of the horrors that wait within. The first time a sane mind gains a good view of Unknown Kadath, it must succeed at a DC 15 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom damage at the ominous sight—fully 25% of those who take Wisdom damage in this way also go insane (the type of insanity developed should be determined randomly from the list on page 250 of the *GameMastery Guide*).

Lelag-Leng: This crude village of huts of stone and wood houses a singular and primitive race of short, bald-headed humanoids with narrow eyes and brown, weathered skin. Many consider them to be a degenerate tribe of humans, but something about them seems otherworldly. They are known for the exotic silks they trade with the denizens of Leng and for the powerful sorcerer said to rule over and protect their isolated settlement.

Mhar's Fossa: This tunnel of gargantuan proportions opens at the end of a furrow descending from Kadath high above. It marks the route taken by the Great Old One Mhar when he attempted to bore directly into the Material Plane near the Storval Thinning before becoming trapped in a stony gestation. Numerous side passages branch off from this central tunnel, leading to various pocket dimensions and vaults. No one has dared plumb the farthest depths of this excavation for fear that Mhar still restlessly waits somewhere within.

The Moon: This ghostly white planetoid hangs placidly over the collective dreaming lands of the Dimension of Dreams—for some a romantic orb of soft silver light, for others a horrifying death's head or a trigger of lycanthropic madness. However, above the Plateau of Leng it gains its most sinister aspect as the destination for the slave-driven black galleys of the moon-beasts. Only by these strange craft or other more fantastical means can the vast gulfs separating this satellite from the lands below be traversed and the true horror of its darkened far side be revealed—cities of cyclopean gray-white stone built upon the shores of an oily sea.

Nameless Rock: This bleak rock rises from the sea several miles off the Dreaming Shore and serves as a citadel of the moon-beasts. When a passing ship dares to come close enough, the sides of the tapering rock reveal strangely proportioned architecture like that found in the moon-beasts' city upon the moon. At the summit of the island's lone peak stands a great temple to unnameable gods in which a bottomless pit is said to reach all the way to the underworld. The entire island swarms with moon-beasts and their slaves.

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Onyx Quarry: Cut into the base of the mountains that encircle Leng, this vast quarried pit is 5 miles wide, 10 miles long, and over 2 miles deep. It is said that the onyx stones from which the great citadel of Unknown Kadath was constructed were quarried here. Numerous smaller quarries surround this great quarry and are still used by the people living in the lands beyond Leng, who reach them with yak caravans over the low mountain passes.

Prehistoric Monastery: Atop the wind-swept tableland stands this squat, windowless stone building in a circle of stone monoliths. Below presides the High-Priest Not To Be Described, a nightmarish figure venerated by the denizens of Leng and many other inhabitants of the plateau, who always keeps his bloated, lumpish form swathed head to foot in a robe of yellow silk and his face covered by a blood-spattered veil of the same material. There he stands before a shadow-filled well and plays strange melodies upon his pipes as he waits for new victims to be delivered to him.

Sarkomand: A crumbling ruin of cracked stone and broken columns standing at the base of a tall basalt cliff, Sarkomand formerly served as the capital of Leng. At its center stand two oddly pristine sphinx statues guarding a pair of stairways that descend into the unknown and darkened depths of the plateau. Though the ruins are haunted by an air of abandonment, those foolish enough to camp here for the night find that when darkness falls, black galleys dock upon the ruined quays and the city fills with hordes of denizens of Leng in a ruthless carnival of trade, debauchery, and violence visited upon any trespassers they find within the ruins.

Spider Vales: These shadowed vales are the last refuge for the Leng spiders. Vast constructions of web and stone create villages for these arachnid horrors where they congregate in small groups and plot their vengeance upon the humanoid races and the eventual conquest of all planes.

Storval Thinning: Rugged foothills mark where the substance of Leng overlaps and comes very near to northeastern Varisia. Whether this condition existed before or because of Runelord Karzoug's alliances with Leng's denizens, no living soul can say.

Watchers in the Waste: Massive sculptures of two-headed wolflike guardians as tall as mountains crouch before the approach to the Cold Wastes. Shantaks are known to nest upon the watchers, but the true horror lies in the fact that these sculptures are themselves alive and possess a malign intelligence and the capacity to move to destroy any who dare to cross the benighted threshold that they guard.

Windswept Ridge: This ridge of bleak, knife-edged

stone stands at the farthest extremity of Leng, where its hedging mountains converge below Unknown Kadath. However, here the encompassing mountain ridge dips slightly to create a shallow saddle over which arctic winds blow in great storms and blizzards, making this the coldest portion of Leng. Anyone gazing upon this saddle notices strangely regular rock formations that seem almost cubic in their proportions and are stacked one atop another, as if some sort of intelligence placed them there. When the wind blows strongest over this ridge, its song seems to bear a mournful note, and one can almost hear an eerie piping that sounds something like "Tekeli-li... Tekeli-li..." in its dirge-like tones. Only two explorers have sought this ridge and lived to tell of it, and neither dared to pass beyond its leeward slopes. Strangely, their accounts of what they glimpsed upon the far side do not match, with one describing a seemingly endless range of mountains rife with ancient temples barely visible through the crystalline mist, and the other describing a vast frozen city spreading out in a valley, reflected in the sky above and thus made visible thanks to that same crystalline mist. Which of these vistas actually awaits an intrepid explorer—or whether both of them do, with the windswept ridge perhaps leading to different places at different times on different worlds—remains to be discovered.



HIGH-PRIEST NOT TO BE DESCRIBED