

The Frozen Tomb of Za'at

The Noh, pre-human savages of the time before history have survived for millennia away from civilising forces, in the deep tundra. They live out their lives in service to debase and terrible alien gods, and dedicating themselves to hunting for the mega-fauna of their frozen homeland.

The Tomb of the Za'at, is the final resting place of one of the Noh's greatest Shaman, Za'at the Mad. It is hidden within a deep cave, hundred feet up a steep cliff in the frozen wilds, and is a place of dark wonder, filled with the malignant lore and riches of the Noh.

Rooms

1. Lip of the Waterfall.

Getting access to the cavern requires climbing up a 100' of rock and ice, for the stream that formed the cave falls from the cave mouth, and freezes quickly against the rock. This climb requires a number of difficult climb checks, made all the more unpleasant by the rain of freezing water from the waterfall. This is complicated by the fact that a nightgaunt (or other similar winged horror) has been bound to guard the entrance.

There is a 50% chance that it is nearby, and swoops in to attack a randomly determined adventurer, as they climb the ice.

Just out of sight of the cave entrance, a Noh tomb guardian (wight) lurks ready to attack. It will lunge at the first member of the party shortly after they clamber over the lip, and do it's best to kill the adventurer, or throw them from the cliff.

2. Chamber of the Wives of Za'at:

This cave is tomb of the twelve wife-slaves of Za'at, powerful magic users in their own right, they were sacrificed on the death of Za'at the Mad. They have been interred here, wrapped in fine linen, and adorned with a small fortune in amber, ivory, and jet jewellery of primitive but fine craftsmanship. Should an adventurer loot their corpses, along with the random treasure they take from the bodies, they find themselves under a curse.

The whispering accusations of the dead wives disturb their sleep until the curse is removed, interfering with all activities that require sleep.

3. Cave of visions:

This cavern is filled with jars containing dried Psychotropic mushrooms. The jars have had the description of a dream quest ritual scribed into them in Akdo, explaining that the consumption of the mushrooms in this cave, meditating in the darkness will result visions of the gods. If an adventurer undertakes the vision quest, they witness great horrors and vile truths during the experience. The character may raise by one, a spell casting stat of their choice, but should roleplay being mortally terrified of the stars from now on.

4. Tight Squeeze:

A tight squeeze through a narrow gap in the rock. The stream rushes here, battering the adventurers as they squeeze through. Any adventurer wearing heavy armour (such as plate) will need to remove it to squeeze through here.

5. Sump Chamber:

The cave appears to end here, in a blank wall with a deep pool at its base. This is a sump of freezing water and mud, where the tunnel has flooded. The adventurers must dive under the water, swimming through 30' feet of pitch blackness. Success requires an intelligence or appropriate skill check to navigate through without panicking and a successful strength or skill check to swim through.

6. Guardians of the tomb:

Another pair of tomb guardians(wights) can be found here, but the floor of this chamber is slick with silt. Combat here requires a dexterity check each turn by all combatants, lest they fall prone during the fray.

7. Pool of quicksilver:

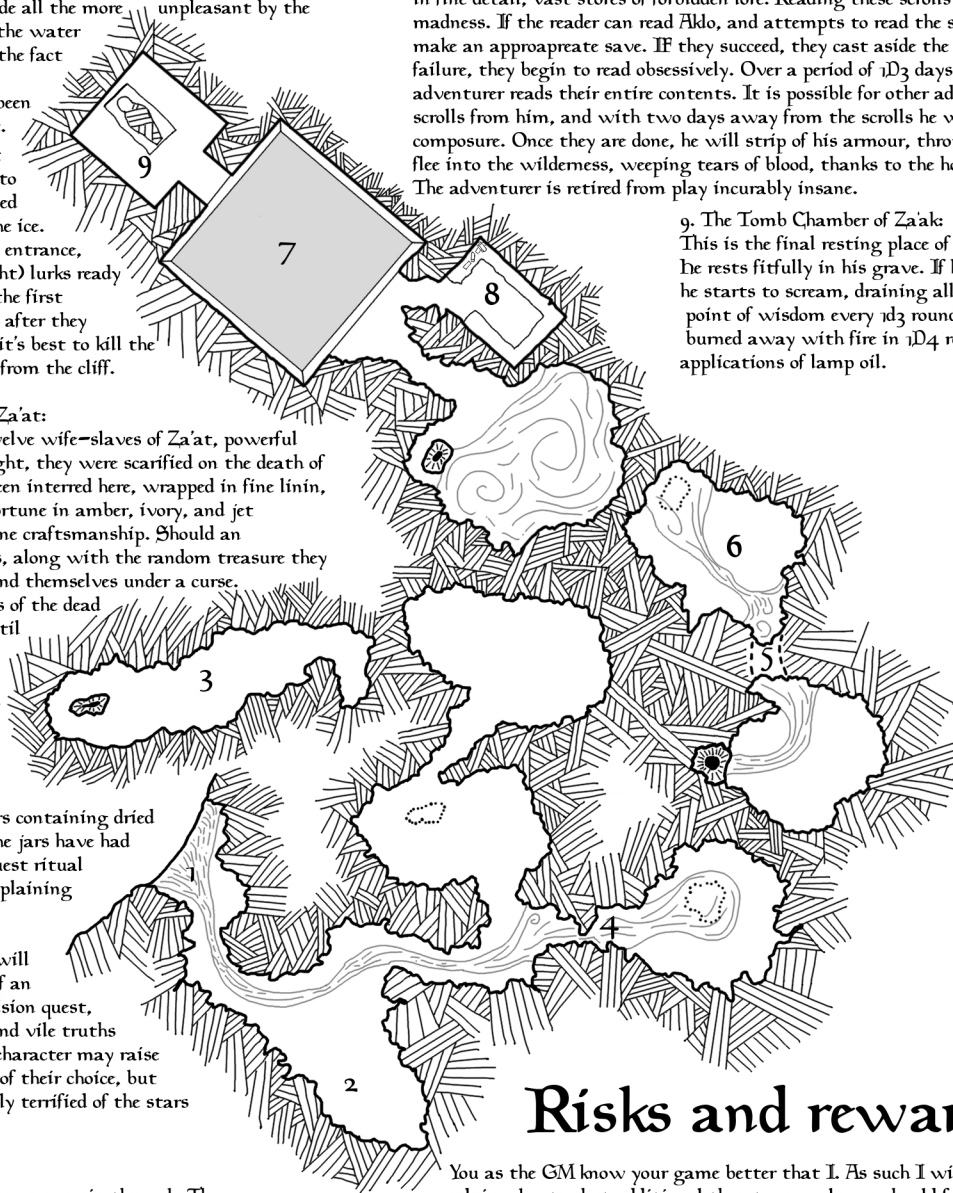
This large chamber contains a cistem (4' deep) of mercury. There is no obvious way across, though there is a tomb obviously visible on the other side.

8. Library of the dread shaman:

Here, ten perfectly tanned human skins are rolled up. Their surfaces have been tattooed in fine detail, vast stores of forbidden lore. Reading these scrolls is a sure path to madness. If the reader can read Akdo, and attempts to read the scrolls the reader may make an appropriate save. If they succeed, they cast aside the scrolls in disgust. On a failure, they begin to read obsessively. Over a period of 1D3 days per scroll, the adventurer reads their entire contents. It is possible for other adventurers to take the scrolls from him, and with two days away from the scrolls he will recover his composure. Once they are done, he will strip of his armour, throw aside his weapons and flee into the wilderness, weeping tears of blood, thanks to the horrors he has witnessed. The adventurer is retired from play incurably insane.

9. The Tomb Chamber of Za'ak:

This is the final resting place of Za'ak the mad. He rests fitfully in his grave. If his grave is disturbed, he starts to scream, draining all who hear the noise of one point of wisdom every 1d3 rounds. The body may be burned away with fire in 1D4 rounds, with the applications of lamp oil.



Risks and rewards

You as the GM know your game better than I. As such I will offer only general advice about what additional threats your players should face and what rewards they should receive. The cave and the cold should be the primary threat that the adventurers face. Skill checks and attribute checks for climbing, swimming and resisting the cold should be regular. The cold especially should be a real enemy to the adventurers.

Treasures found in the caves should take the form of Noh Jewelry, made from amber ivory. Enchanted flint headed weapons are also a possibility. Keep in mind that the Noh are a stone age civilisation, and that their crafts while skilled, are technologically limited.

Lastly, to get the feel of this adventure right, be sure to check out the work of Clark Ashton Smith.