

THE FISH, THE IDOL, AND THE HAG

The Fish, the Idol, and the Hag is a game-ready dungeon designed for level 3. It features a group of Kuo-toa, the animated idol of their bizarre god, and a cruel sea hag pulling all the strings.

The dungeon is built so that its entrance can be easily fit anywhere in your campaign. All you need to do is place the entrance at the shore of the ocean, in an underground lake, or in the depths of a sewer.

This dungeon uses content from the *Monster Manual* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

A tribe of Kuo-Toa has invented a new god out of the detritus that has washed up in their partially submerged home. Their fanatic belief in their strange idol infused it with a semblance of divine life. Unfortunately for the Kuo-Toa, their creation cannot speak and interpretation of its actions is hotly debated. Now a civil war is brewing between Kuo-Toa following a fanatically zealot with a hate for the surface, and those who have fallen for the trickery of a cruel sea hag. Meanwhile, the silent god just wants peace.

WHO IS PRESENT?

- The **Kuo-Toa** are a weird and paranoid group of mad fish-people. Their wandering minds have arbitrarily settled on a collection of trash as the manifestation of a new god, Gibbidubbus. They are fanatically faithful to Gibbidubbus, but are split on interpreting his desires. This tribe of Kuo-Toa can speak broken common.
- Rubadindum is the **Kuo-Toa Monitor** that has taken over as the tribe's chief and religious leader after the death of the previous archpriest. He believes the actions of Gibbidubbus' idol are proof that their god seeks a holy crusade on the surface world, but he is struggling to whip his congregation into a manic frenzy. Rubadindum is not pleased that Mathilda Toestealer is distracting his people from his own preachings.
- Mathilda Toestealer is a **Sea Hag** who has infiltrated the Kuo-Toa society using her Illusory Appearance ability. She seeks nothing more than to cause strife and conflict. She is pretending to be a seer blessed by Gibbidubbus, causing a rift between those faithful to her and those faithful to Rubadindum.
- Gibbidubbus is an old broken armchair placed atop a stout barrel as its torso and a pair of rakes for arms. It wears an old moldy rug as a cape and has a necklace of beetle shells made by the Kuo-Toa. It has been animated by the fervent faith of Kuo-Toa but cannot speak, leaving its desires open to interpretation. Gibbidubbus actually wants peace with the surface and has been making nightly trips above ground trying to find a way to communicate. Mechanically, Gibbidubbus uses the statistics of a neutral **Scarecrow**.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- **Strange Attacks:** The idol of Gibbidubbus has been seen on recent nights, jumping out and scaring workers returning to their homes after a day of work. While no harm has come to anyone yet, people are getting scared. Moreover, nobody is able to accurately describe or recognize the bizarre "beast." They turn to the party, begging them to put a stop to the bizarre harassment.
- **Treasure in the Muck:** The party comes across an old smuggler's map to a treasure stash hidden in Room 3 of the dungeon. It leads the way to the dungeon's entrance.
- **Cockatrice Cure:** The most reliable cure for petrification can be made from the blood of a cockatrice, and an apothecary would like to have some extra on hand. The apothecary hires the party to travel to the dungeon, a known haunt of the creatures.
- **Curious Scholar:** Donral Easelheart is a bespectacled religious anthropologist with a fascination for kuo-toa theocracy. Hearing of a tribe in the area, he hires the party to investigate the cult and bring back a thorough description of any religious idols and rituals they observe.

1. GUARDS

The entrance to this room is half submerged in 4 feet of water. There are two exits from this natural chamber. The eastern exit is also half submerged, while the western exit is dry.

Creatures: There are three **Kuo-Toa** and two **Kuo-Toa Whips** standing watch in this room. They are all faithful to Rubadindum. At the sight of the party, the Whips point their Pincer Staffs at the characters and demand in broken common "*You come worship great Gibbidubbus?! Or you come be kill?!*"

If the party asks about Gibbidubbus, the Kuo-Toa babble at length about his great and awesome powers, then demand to know if the party has come to worship him.

If the party plays along, the Kuo-Toa believe them easily. One Kuo-Toa and one Whip escort the party to Room 4 then to Room 6a before finally bringing them before their leader in Room 7.

If the party denies worshipping Gibbidubbus or mocks it in any way, the Whips cry "**HERETICS!**" and attack. The Kuo-Toa use nets or do nonlethal damage, trying to knock the characters unconscious before dragging them before Rubadindum in room 7. The regular Kuo-Toa flee to room 6 if reduced to below half their hit point maximum. The Kuo-Toa Whips fight to the death.

2. THE FISH'S FISHING FARM

This natural cave has a 30-foot diameter pool of murky water, blocked off by a small dam of stones from the stream that feeds into it.

Creatures: Three **Swarms of Quippers** live in the stone-lined pool. The Kuo-Toa breed the fish for food. The quippers are ravenous and attack any creature that enters the pool.

3. MUD PITS

This cave has numerous pits filled with warm mud. The mud is warmed by geothermal activity and is extremely therapeutic. If a creature takes a short rest bathing in the mud pits and expend hit dice to regain hit points, they regain an additional 1d10 hit points.

Creatures: Ten Tiny Kuo-Toa Children are in the pools of warm mud. They resemble two-foot tall naked bipedal fish. They are non-combatants with 10 AC and 1 HP. They watch any non-kuo-toa with wide, fascinated fish eyes, ducking down beneath the mud at any sign of danger. Small tunnels lead to pockets of air in side caves that they can retreat to if needed. The tunnels are too small for any player character to fit down.

The children don't speak aside from a few basic nouns, but they might be able to answer simple questions in a general affirmative or negative. The children are very scared of the hag Mathilda Toestealer, believing her to be evil (as in fact she is).

Treasure: Hidden beneath the mud of one of the pools is a buried metal casket left by a smuggler long ago. Inside the casket is 128 GP, a ring set with an opal worth 200 GP, and two *Potions of Healing*.

The appearance of this treasure is an exciting surprise to the Kuo-Toa children. They crowd around to stare with their weird fish eyes. They like the shiny coins.

4. FROG PENS

This cave is only 10 feet high. The southern portion of this natural cave is blocked off by a floor-to-ceiling wooden fence. A 10-foot wide gate is tied in place by twine. Inside the penned area are several large nests made from straw and standing pools of water in shallow depressions.

Creatures: Three **Giant Toads** live in the pens. They are bloated, lazy creatures kept as beasts of burden and emergency rations. They fight only to defend themselves from attack, or if driven to a frenzy by a Kuo-Toa.

5. HAG'S POOL

This cave is almost entirely submerged in 15 feet of murky water. A creature fully submerged in the water is lightly obscured to creatures outside of the water.

The northwestern alcove is fully submerged underwater. The submerged alcove has numerous carved stone shelves filled with bones, bottled organs, and other strange items. A pile of Kuo-Toa skulls creates a horrific altar in the alcove's center.

A dry bank on the southern side of the room has three Medium wooden cages resting on the ground.

Creatures: The **Sea Hag** Mathilda Toestealer lives in this cave. She uses her Illusory Appearance ability to take on the form of a hideously bloated and pale Kuo-toa with eyes like a dead fish and a rancid smell.

The three cages around the edge of the room each contain a **Cockatrice**. They are enchanted to open at a word from Mathilda, no action required by her. The cockatrices are bewitched to act as Mathilda's allies in combat.

Mathilda spends most of her time in her underwater lair, performing strange divinations with the entrails of fish and reptiles. If alerted the party's arrival, she half emerges from the dark waters, crooning "*welcome, welcome! How can Mathilda help you, my dear new friends?*"

Mathilda can offer to help the party in various ways, but only if they first commit a dubious or outright evil act. Mathilda considers making the adventurers commit a cruel or evil act well worth the exchange.

The following are examples of tasks she might give the party in exchange for something they want, such as information, cockatrice blood, or for her to acknowledge Rubadindum as the tribe's true leader.

- Add a concoction of Mathilda's creation to the stew in room 6. It is a special hallucinogenic that will give the entire tribe horrific nightmares.
- Torment Rubadindum, preferably by posing as a divine message from Gibbidubbus expressing its displeasure with him.
- Bring her one of the children from room 3. She'll keep it locked in a cage, enjoying its terror and the fear of its parents.

Tactics: Mathilda prefers conversation and veiled threats over actually fighting, but she will defend herself if attacked. On her first turn she uses her bonus action to drop her *Illusory Appearance*, causing the party to have to contend with her *Horrific Appearance* trait. She then speaks a word to release the cockatrices and retreats under the water, taking the Dodge action. The following turns she targets any frightened creatures with a Death Glare. She uses her Claw attack only on creatures that end their turn within 5 feet of her, or if no creatures are frightened.

Treasure: The hag has a number of odd magical items in her lair, the function of which is beyond the player characters. They all have lingering traces of magic, but the *Identify* spell fails to provide any information about them. Nevertheless, they could be sold to the right collector for a combined total of 550 GP. Consider using the tables in *Volo's Guide to Monsters* for descriptions of these strange items.

If the party is here due to the **Cockatrice Cure** adventure hook, the corpse of one cockatrice has enough blood to satisfy the apothecary.

6. KUO-TOA VILLAGE

This complex of natural caves form the homes of all the Kuo-Toa in this tribe. There are a total of 20 **Kuo-Toa** and 2 **Kuo-Toa Whips** present in these rooms.

If the players arrive in this area without the guards in Room 1, the Kuo-Toa all grab weapons and back away, clearly signaling wariness but not open hostility. See the tactics section below for if a fight breaks out.

Players can prove their nonhostility by placing their weapons on the ground, making an offering worth 50 GP, or succeeding on a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

If the players communicate nonhostility or are escorted by the guards, about half the Kuo-Toa are bluntly curious about the strange intruders. They crowd around, asking questions about the surface world. The other Kuo-Toa, however, hang back. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that these Kuo-Toa are suspicious and hostile towards the outsiders.

A conversation with the friendly Kuo-Toa will eventually reveal the source of the rift: Rubadindum wants to lead a crusade on the surface world. Some of the Kuo-Toa, however, have yet to accept Rubadindum as a true representative for their god because he cannot cast any spells. The hostile Kuo-Toa, on the other hand, believe in Rubadindum and await the holy crusade.

Tactics: If alerted to a hostile attack upon the village, the Kuo-Toa quickly mobilize. The Kuo-Toa separate into groups, each moving to one of the following locations:

- Room 3: 4 **Kuo-Toa** that defend the Kuo-Toa young.
- Room 4: 1 **Kuo-Toa** that releases the 3 **Giant Toads**.
- Room 6a: 6 **Kuo-Toa** and 1 **Kuo-Toa Whip**
- Room 6b: 9 **Kuo-Toa** that hide underwater. They will ambush unwary enemies.
- Room 7: 1 **Kuo-Toa Whip** that tries to support Rubadindum

6A. COMMON AREA

Numerous rough tents surround the edges of this space. A large iron cauldron rests atop a fire in the cave's center, filled with a thick brown sludge.

Creatures: When not on alert for intruders, 12 **Kuo-Toa** are in this room. They spend much of their time weaving nets and baskets and cooking a community stew in the pot on the fireplace.

6B. LAKESHORE

This wide underground lake is dark and murky. Its bottom has a large population of cave crabs, blind and pale creatures that make up much of the Kuo-Toa's diet.

Creatures: When not on alert for intruders, 5 **Kuo-Toa** are in this room. They spend much of their time swimming in the lake, collecting shells or cave crabs.

6C. WHIPS' RESIDENCES

This room has several large tents along its perimeter. The walls of this cave are painted with crude depictions of kuo-toa worshipping what appears to be an armchair.

Creatures: When not on alert for intruders, 2 **Kuo-Toa Whips** and 3 **Kuo-Toa** are in this room. The 3 Kuo-Toa are servants of the whips.

7. ARCHPRIEST'S CAVE

This cave is almost a proper room. There is a mouldering old bed crammed against the western wall with a small wooden footlocker placed at its foot.

In the northwestern corner there is a heaped pile made from dozens of gnawed-on fish skeletons. Two barrels rest against the southwestern wall.

A passage to the west is decorated with strings of hanging beads.

Creatures: The **Kuo-Toa Monitor** Rubadindum lives in this cave. Until recently a different priest lived here and ruled this tribe. A few months ago, however, Mathilda Toestealer successfully poisoned him to death. Rubadindum has since taken over the tribe and is struggling to be recognized as its religious leader.

If the party is willingly brought to speak to Rubadindum, he is secretly thrilled. Rubadindum is trying to convince his tribe to lead a holy crusade on the surface world, but is struggling to establish himself as a leader due to his inability to cast spells. Half of his tribe has begun to look to Mathilda Toestealer as their spiritual leader, for although she cannot cast traditional spells she can make use of strange and horrific divinations. Rubadindum does not willingly tell the characters about his proposed holy crusade.

Rubadindum proposes a bargain to the players characters: they are free to explore the dungeon in return for removing Mathilda from being a thorn in his side. Whether they do this through violence or diplomacy does not matter to Rubadindum. If the party needs further convincing, he offers the contents of his footlocker (see Treasure section).

Tactics: If the tribe was alerted to a hostile attack by the party, Rubadindum is accompanied by a **Kuo-Toa Whip**. In either case, Rubadindum fights like a fanatic, throwing himself into the fray and attacking the strongest-looking opponent. He goes for shock-and-awe tactics, fighting while singing a battle-hymn to Gibbiddubbus of his own creation.

Treasure: The footlocker is locked. It can be opened with a DC 13 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, or broken open with a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. Inside is 700 GP in various coins and four pieces of quartz worth 50 GP each.

8. IDOL OF THE FISH GOD

This round cavern is filled with random detritus. There are old pots, broken bottles, coiled ropes, moldering crates, and filthy furniture, all piled in random heaps.

Creature: The center of the room is dominated by the bizarre sight of Gibbiddubbus (use the **Scarecrow** statblock). The armchair glows from within with divine light, filling the room with bright light.

Gibbiddubbus cannot speak, but can roughly move. He can drag himself around on his two "arms" (old rakes) and rotate the armchair atop his barrel torso.

Each night Gibbiddubbus travels to the surface and attempts to communicate his peaceful intentions with random passersby. Unsurprisingly, this has met with very little success.

Gibbiddubbus hopes the player characters will be able to be his agents of peace between the Kuo-Toa and the surface, but being unable to speak, it will be up to the player's cleverness to see this through.

POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

THE PATH OF VIOLENCE

The party may well slaughter the entire village. If so, Mathilda Toestealer is delighted beyond words by the bloodshed. Without a congregation, Gibbiddubbus loses his divine spark and becomes an inert pile of trash. Mathilda does her best to avoid the party until they depart. She loots whatever is left behind. In particular she is fascinated by the "corpse" of Gibbiddubbus. If left to her own devices, she will eventually learn how to partially recreate and duplicate him, creating an army of Trash Golems under her control (use the statistics for a **Scarecrow**).

WORKING WITH RUBADINDUM

The party may work with Rubadindum. If they slay Mathilda Toestealer or convince her to acknowledge Rubadindum as the tribe's true leader, Rubadindum is extremely grateful to the party. He offers them a place in his upcoming holy crusade on the surface. He'll even allow them to leave in peace if they refuse. This may give the party a chance to warn the nearby settlements of what is to come.

THE PATH OF PEACE

Rubadindum can be convinced not to attack the surface world if the party can figure out how to communicate with Gibbiddubbus. Magic such as *detect thoughts* might work on the silent construct. Alternatively, the party could figure out a simple system of gestures that would allow Gibbiddubbus to express his disagreement with Rubadindum's plan.

However, this drastic shift in stance spurs many of his once faithful Kuo-Toa to violently defect and move to Mathilda's camp. Mathilda uses this opportunity to attempt to take over the village and kill Rubadindum - and the obnoxious player characters.

The civil war can be prevented if the Kuo-Toa gain faith in Rubadindum, perhaps by the player characters fooling them into believing he has magic powers. It can also be stopped by revealing Mathilda's true form, which causes the Kuo-Toa to realize her deception. Remember, her true form is revealed if Mathilda dies.



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