

The Temple of the Unknown God

"They say that at the Temple of the Unknown God you can be granted any wish, but they also say that the price for this favour is high. Now, I heard from a friend who heard from his cousin that he knows a fellow who can tell you where to find this temple, but if you take my advice, you'd leave well alone. Me, I'll have another jinka rum. I prefer to kill myself in a good honest fashion."

- Dashakra Vlotin, overheard in The Catfish.

Background

Down a dark alleyway in the shady quarters of an old and decadent city lies a doorway in an unassuming wall. Beyond the doorway, a set of steps leads down into a small room lit by two flaming bowls. In the centre of the room is a pool of water held in a raised stone circle. At the back of the room, a curtain blocks another doorway.

The Temple

The temple is in a dark but dry cellar, roughly 10 feet underground. It is a rectangular chamber with brick walls and a flagstone floor, approximately 10 feet wide by 30 feet long. In the centre of each long wall stands a broad, flat torch, each burning with a dull orange flame that provides just enough illumination to a 10 feet radius each, leaving the corners of the temple dark. In the centre of the room, a circular brick structure like a well rises 3 feet from the floor and is full to the brim with dark but clean water. At the rear of the temple, opposite the staircase, a heavy curtain hangs from a simple iron rod, blocking a doorway. The curtain appears to be made of some sort of dark, tough leather and is unadorned apart from smoke stains.

The Priest

Few people notice the priest of the Unknown God at first, since he (she? it?) usually lurks in the shadows in one corner. It is a figure draped in heavy black robes, standing about 5 feet tall with a stooped posture. The priest's face is hidden in the shadows of its hood, and its hands, when they emerge from the folds of its sleeves, are emaciated with grey, almost scaly skin. Sometimes it seems as if strange movement occurs underneath the priest's robes, as if another creature were hidden therein, or if an unnatural number of limbs were concealed.

The priest speaks in dry, piping tones, making it hard to judge gender, if any. It invariably asks visitors what it is that they wish but does not engage in unnecessary chatter. Communication is otherwise conducted in two ways. The priest can make images appear in the pool, or a deep hollow voice rings out from behind the curtain.

Dealing with the Temple

The priest, or the disembodied voice, will grant one wish per group of visitors, in exchange for a favour, usually unsavoury or dangerous. The details of the favour are shown in the pool as images, sometimes with further explanation from the disembodied voice. Sometimes the wish is granted before the favour is returned, at other times the favour must be performed before the wish is granted. Anyone attempting to cheat the Temple by not returning the favour is affected by a *geas/quest* spell of caster level 25th to perform the task (sometimes the task is changed to a harder or less savoury one as punishment).

Should anyone attack the priest, attempt to remove its hood or look behind the curtain, the torches flare and go out and the priest vanishes. Once the perpetrator leaves the Temple they will never again be able to find it. Behind the curtain is a small, empty, alcove.

Using the Temple

The Temple of the Unknown God can be inserted anywhere in a campaign that can handle ancient cities and a slightly Lovecraftian feel. In the World of Conclave it would fit equally well in the dark alleyways of Llaza or the slums of Reflected Glory, for example. Sooner or later most adventuring parties end up needing a *wish* fulfilled, or a need to learn hidden lore, a high-level curse removed and so forth, and the Temple of the Unknown God is a place that can offer

all those services. The price is up to the gamesmaster to decide, but it is the perfect opportunity to set up the next adventure. Preferably it ought to be one that the player characters (and players) will find slightly disagreeable, but not so antithetical to their nature that they will refuse outright. For a lighter-hearted version, the tasks set by the Unknown God could be whimsical and slightly ridiculous in tone.

Denizens of the Temple

There is only the priest, and perhaps the entity behind the curtain, that are ever to be found in the temple. Since the priest vanishes if attacked, it does not have a full statistic block. Relevant values would be:

Priest of Unknown God. CR ?. Medium Unique Entity (extraplanar); **Init** +10; **Spd** 30ft; **AC** 16 (+6 Dex) touch 16, flat-footed 16; **SA** geas; **SQ** mysterious nature; **AL** N; **SV** Fort +16, Ref +16, Will +16; **Skills and Feats:** Hide +20, Move Silently +20, Sense Motive +25; Improved Initiative

Mysterious Nature (Ex): The Priest of the Unknown God, although possibly extraplanar and some form of outsider, does not conform to any known type or subtypes, and thus any effect that works on a specific type (be it bane weapons, spells or ranger abilities) does not work against the Priest.

Geas (Su): If attacked or molested in any fashion, the priest vanishes and the person responsible is affected by a *geas/quest* spell of caster level 25th.

Skills: The skills and feats listed are ones that the Priest is likely to exhibit, but it probably possesses others that never come into play.

Mysteries of the Temple

The exact nature of the Temple and the Priest are for the gamesmaster to decide, as is how likely it is for the player characters to unearth them. Some players dislike the idea of a creature that they cannot affect and so the gamesmaster might like to flesh out the stats of the Priest a bit more. It should remain a challenge worthy of high-level characters, however.

Is the Voice Behind the Curtain controlling the Priest? Does the Priest produce the Voice? Is the whole temple one aspect of some strange extraplanar entity? These questions can be answered, or not, at the gamesmaster's discretion.