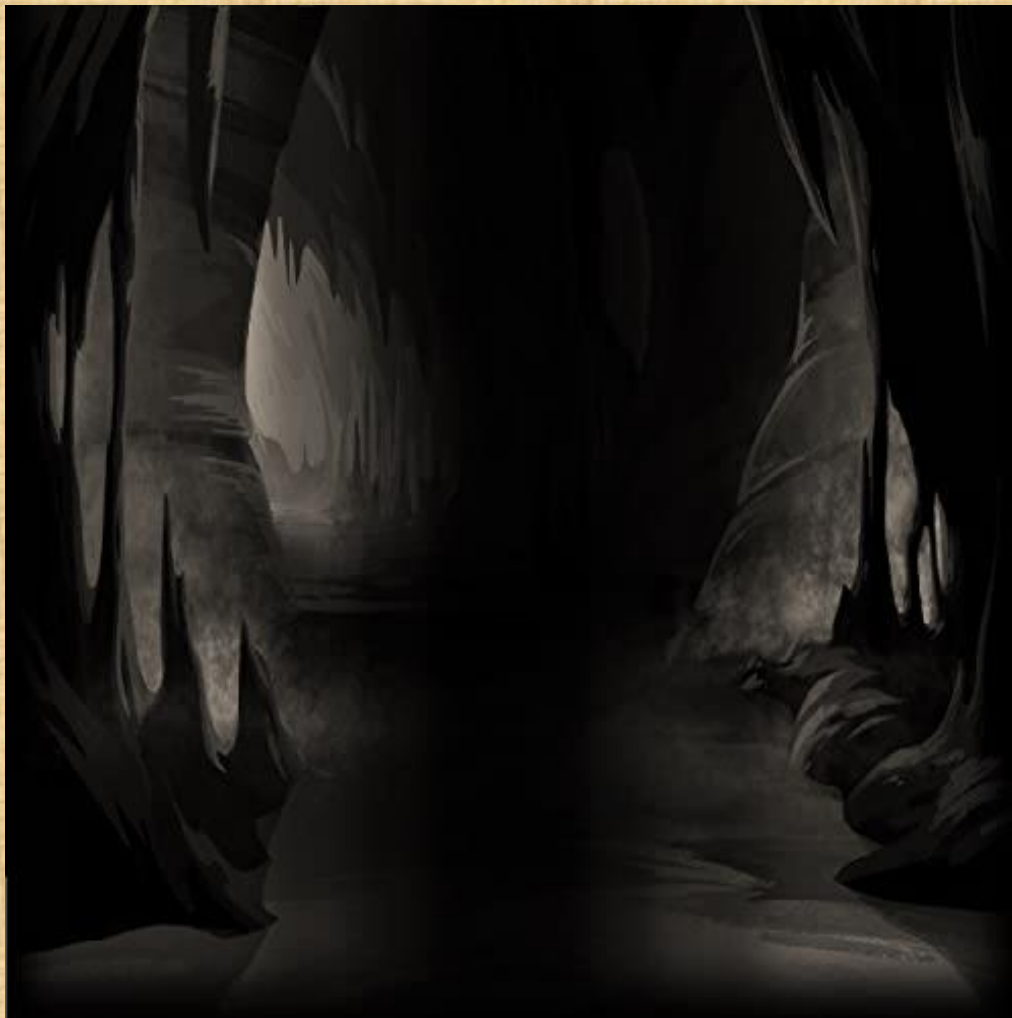


Legends  
Of  
Shadow World®

Chapter 3: The Caverns of Charon



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**Special Contributions:**

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**Chapter 3: The Caverns of Charon.** Chapter 3 follows Gorang to Charon, where he is betrayed and captured by another Dark God who wants the *Lense* for himself. With the inadvertent help of the PCs, Gorang will escape and flee to the *Cavern of Portals* to gain access to the Pales and the protection of the gathering forces of Nynaku.

## Notes:

This Chapter is the third part to a 5-part high level adventure in Shadow World®. While it can be a stand-alone adventure it is meant to be part of an ongoing adventure; we recommend that a GM is familiar with the other parts of the series.

## Introduction:

In Chapter 2 Gorang was able to elude the PC's and escape through the *Charonic Gate*—a portal that leads to the moon Charon and home of the Dark Gods. Gorang made a deal with Andaras to utilize the Gate and eventually make his way to the Sixth Pale where he would deliver the Lense to the Priests of Nynaku.

The chapter is predicated on the assumption that the player group followed Gorang through the Gate. Although the PC's are some of the most powerful people on Kulthea, Charon is not only the home of the Dark Gods, but it is a strange and dangerous place. It is unlikely that any PC has travelled to Charon (or Orhan for that matter!)

Upon Gorang's arrival on Charon he quickly realizes that Andaras has betrayed him and wants the Lense for himself. (Can you really trust any Dark God!). Trapped with the PCs, Gorang will appeal to the players to work together so they can all escape the trap. Gorang will be persuasive, but ultimately this Chapter will reply on roleplaying with another running chase and battle at the end. This might be an opportunity for Gorang to provide some background to the players, so they start to understand what they have gotten themselves into.

## **Playing Notes for Gorang.**

Facts that Gorang could disclose:

1. His plan to steal the Lense. The use of the Portal and the need for the Seer's to lower the defensive shield around the Observatory.
2. He was hired by Priests of Nynaku to steal the Lense. (he does not know why—only that it is a powerful artifact)
3. He needs to deliver the Lense to Priests of Nynaku.
4. Andaras is the God that has set the trap.

One option that might add some fun is to make Gorang a PC for this chapter of the series. Gorang will provide just enough information to secure the assistance of the PCs—he will not offer critical specific information and will not specify the realm he needs to deliver the Lense.

- Gorang will also pretend that he is less skilled in zero-G environments. Not blundering, but he will not show that he is highly skilled and can maneuver in zero-G without penalty.
- Gorang has a *Wayfinder*, that will direct him to the Sixth Pale. Generally, it works as a vague feeling but will also direct him towards the right Gates/Portals as needed.
- Gorang will relinquish his bracers and other reasonable equipment but insist upon carrying the Lense. If he must give up the artifact, he will need grab it in the future as they near the gate to the Sixth.

## The Environment of Charon

Charon is a dark, cold barren moon that is riddled with tunnels and caverns. Cold, with only a thin atmosphere underground, there is little gravity. The Dark Gods have manipulated some aspects of the environment, and those areas may have gravity a comfortable environment, but the areas traversed in this adventure module will primarily be poorly lit tunnels and caverns with zero gravity.

*Atmosphere:* Unless otherwise noted, the air is breathable but very thin. Add -25 to exhaustion rolls.

*Gravity:* There is no gravity, so the PCs will be challenged to move through the adventure. Spells like "Wall Running" or "Ceiling Running" should allow the PC to adhere to the surface and move normally. Flying will allow the PC to move normally at will.

*Temperature:* The average temperature is just above freezing.

*Lighting:* Most of Charon's underground complex is lit by a cold, weak light provided by lichen that grows on the rocky walls. The lichen is flammable,

and if ignited, will burn out immediately, plunging the area into darkness.

### The Phases of the Moon and the Essaence

Charon's access to the Essaence Flows is dependent on its position between Kulthea and Orhan. Because it has a polar orbit, Charon has distinct "Essaence Phases", that ebb and flow in a slightly irregular cycle. The cycle varies between virtually no Essaence bathing the moon to an abundance of Essaence when Charon is transitioning between Orhan and Kulthea (the Night of the Third Moon).

Upon the players arrival on Charon, Essaence will be at 60% and increase 5%/hr to a maximum of 80% and then the power will begin to drop again. The GM should adjust PP expenditure accordingly.

### The Trap!

Unfortunately, Andaras has a cruel, playful streak (naughty kitty) and decided to capture Gorang and take the Lense for himself. He redirected the Charonic Gate to deposit Gorang into a holding cavern, sealed with a powerful 60<sup>th</sup> lvl. Sphere of Force. To keep an eye on the treacherous thief, Andaras has one of his giant cats guarding the cave. The players arrival will complicate the situation; while Andaras is a God and in his own realm, the PCs represent several of the Lords of Orhan. Killing them might invoke a holy war or direct retaliation. While Andaras ponders the situation, the players with Gorang's help should be able to escape.

### The Escape.

If the players and Gorang come to some mutual aid arrangement, Gorang will be able to use his bracers to open a hold in the Sphere of Forces. The cat, while a giant and formidable creature will make a morale check. There is a 70% chance that it will hiss at the group and then flee down the tunnel.

Gorang will lead the group to the best of his ability, through the tunnels to the Cavern of Portals. There will be numerous encounters with denizens of the moon, but most of them will be reluctant to engage the powerful PCs. The GM should create an aura of fear, paranoia, and worry: this is Charon which is populated by the Dark Gods!

### The Maze.

The only exit from the Sphere is down a dark smooth bored tunnel 25' wide. Given the lack of gravity, there are no obstructions or obstacles to smash into. If players examine the walls, they will note small protuberances (like a climbing wall) covering the walls that can be used to propel oneself down the tunnel quickly. Soft light is provided by patches of glowing moss on the walls. The tunnel will begin to branch out after a mile or so, so the PCs will need to have some control, so they do not float down the wrong path! The total distance to the next encounter is around 5 miles. Use the Encounter Chart every 5 minutes.

### The Cave of Crystal Death

The tunnel opens up to an expansive (1000') round cavern covered in glittering faceted jewels lit by a large patch of moss on the "ceiling". A single opening across of the room can be seen. Once the players are in the room, clicking and chittering sounds will start to reverberate throughout the room. It will immediately be obvious that the "crystals" along the walls are some type of creature. They are Chrys'thil—a crystal spider like creature with a small 1' body and long 8-12' legs. The Chrys'thil are highly adapted to zero G and will curl into a ball and push themselves off the wall towards a target. Right before impact, they will unfold their legs and envelope and wrap up their prey.

There are thousands of Chrys'thil that will launch 10-20 attacks/rnd. spread amongst the players randomly. Each Chrys'thil will get one initial attack {think of it like a missile attack} and will then try to grapple the target or push off the target to return to a wall surface to launch again.

### The Forest of Charon

Once again, the tunnel opens to a huge cavern deep in Charon. Over 5 miles across, the natural cavern has low gravity (100%). Light is still provided by lichen growing on the ceiling 500' overhead. The floor of the cavern is filled with a growth of mosses, pods, giant mushrooms, and other growing things. Most are dark colored and ominous, but some provide a splash of color in the dreary underworld

of Charon. A variety of creatures: Demons, Lugroki and even humans tend to the crop that supplies much of the food on the moon. A wide roadway leads through the center of the cavern, with paths leading off to either direction at regular intervals.

The cavern thrums with Essaence power—easily detectable by the PCs who could assume that the power is used to sustain this food production facility.

In the middle of the caverns, lies a large, paved square, in the center is a black obelisk inscribed with symbols. (This is a guide stone, pointing out path destinations).

Sitting, hunched over around the guide stone are 5 figures: large, physically imposing warriors with thick matted hair, covered in leathers, fur and patchwork chain and plate armor. All have massive, oversized weapons strapped to their sides or backs. Four of the figures do not move or even seem to notice the PCs approach, but 1 of the warriors, the largest, slowly stands and faces the group. Holding his hand up he addresses the group in a deep voice that reverberates with power. Despite his unruly and savage appearance his voice is cultured and clear. This is a Dark God of Charon and the players should recognize him as Z'taar, God of War!

*“Wayfarers you may go no further. While your travels through our world has been relatively unimpeded, I cannot countenance further progress without adequate challenge.*

*I will stay my own hand, many of you are beloved servants of my brothers and sisters on Orhan. I will broach no agreement or accord for my petty amusements.*

*However, my most faithful, the highest of my Battle-Priests have been given a boon. Long have they slumbered awaiting true glory and I have woken them from their crèches to roam anew in the mortal worlds. But before they range, they have requested a true trial by battle; and you have arrived here presenting yourselves for such a challenge. This has the auspices of foretelling.”*

Z'taar pauses, and slowly looks over the group, his gaze lingering on Kroger, then without looking further, he slowly points to another...

*“Jan Jo'drin”, Z'taar's gaze finally swivels to the Changramai Master. “Long have my followers hoped for such an adversary as you. While ancient themselves, my Priests are young compared to the skills of your Xio masters. You among your group represent the purest form of combat in this lesser age and they challenge you to trial by combat.”*

*“If you defeat my Priests, your group will proceed unharmed. If you lose, the remainder can still proceed at the cost of your life. Eissa holds no sway on Charon; your death will be final. Any interference will be dealt with by me.”*

Z'taar then turns and walks away, while his Priests rise as one, shrugging their furs and cloaks off broad shoulders and reaching for their weapons...

### Trial by Combat

It should be clear by Z'taar's words that the combat will be between his High Battle-Priests and Jan. They should only speculate on the punishment if others attempt to interfere. The GM should decide if the Priests will challenge Jan individually, one at a time, or all 4 of them at once. Jan should be allowed to use multiple attacks, kata and 360 combat attacks.

Win or lose, the group will need to proceed with Gorang's guidance. He will urge the group haste and warn them that Andaras is mustering his forces to retrieve the Lense.

### The Race to the End.

Gorang will lead the group straight through the cavern. If Jan has won, the battle they will be left alone. If he loses, then the party will be subject to frequent attacks. {check every 5 minutes}. It is 15 miles to their destination, but the group will be travelling a main thoroughfare: a 50' wide tunnel with 25% gravity and adequate lighting. Side tunnels and doorways branch off to either side and there is steady traffic of humans, Lugroki, Demons going about their business. They will shy away from the group, hugging the side walls and casting their eyes down.

### The Cavern of Portals

After following the main “road” for 15 miles the tunnel opens into one of the largest caverns found in Charon, this naturally formed space is found in the center of the moon and is several miles in diameter. Massive stalagmites, outcroppings and floating rocks fill the space in confusing and disorienting jumble of jagged peaks and glistening crystals. Embedded into the rocky surfaces are glossy black geodes, each one cut precisely in half with glowing crystalline interiors. Each of the geodes are portals to other worlds, dimensions and even to the Pales.

This cavern is the realm of Shreyach the Gatekeeper, who guards and controls access to the Portals. Shreyach will remain out of sight, but an array of Andaras’ forces should be here to wrest control of the Lense from the party. Here too, will Gorang try and take the Lense and flee through the Portal to the Sixth Pale.

### Battle to the Gate

The cavern is without gravity and while there are large open areas there are also floating rocks with razor sharp surfaces slowly spinning through the chamber. Combat maneuvering will be dangerous with a small but real chance of collisions.

The Gate that Gorang is planning on transiting (and will point out to the players if asked) is approximately ¼ mile away from where the group emerges. Between them and the Portal is a small but potent force of followers of Andaras. They include:

1. 2 High Priests
2. 20 Huge Cats of varying types.
3. 15 Cult of Andaras “Paladins”. (mixture of humans and Dyar).

All of Andaras’ forces are adept at the weightless environment and will launch themselves once the players travel vectors are established.

Sometime during the battle, if possible, Gorang will attempt to grab the Lense (if he is not carrying it) and flee to the Portal. Otherwise he will maintain

his act of cooperation and hope that the Demon Warlords and Nynaku Priests on the other side of the Portal will save him.

Unless Jan was defeated and killed by Z’taar’s Priests, the group should be able to win this battle. The point of this challenge is to reduce the groups resources for the last, final battle in the Sixth Pale.

**ON TO CHAPTER 4! The Plains of Dread.** The pursuit brings the players to the Fifth Pale. There, a formidable host is being marshalled for an attack on Kulthea. The army is being led by a powerful Demon-Warlord and the High Priest of Nynaku. With a victory, the players should be able to recover the *Lense*, but will realize that Nynaku is behind the theft.