



# **TONGUES OF THE SCREAMING TOAD**

**Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module TG2  
For use with Savage Worlds**

An Adventure for Seasoned Characters

Written by "Weird Dave" Coulson

## **MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD #2**

*The frontier outpost of Kraden's Hill has been having problems lately with people going insane. Signs point to long dead religious rites honoring a horrendous god of the jungle, but who or what is behind the madness? Can a brave band of adventurers face the utter horror of the ...* **TONGUES OF THE SCREAMING TOAD?**

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Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module TG2

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### **For use with Savage Worlds**

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# TONGUES OF THE SCREAMING TOAD

Buried secrets have a way of finding a path back to the surface to reveal themselves to the world again. Sometimes it may take a long time, and during that time it's likely that the world has forgotten about the secret. But if the secret is the loathsome Ibholtheg the Squamous Toad, an outer power of ancient evil, it certainly hasn't forgotten about the world.

**TG2 Tongues of the Screaming Toad** is the second scenario in the **MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD** Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module trilogy. It is designed for a party of four to six Seasoned characters. The GM should read the module thoroughly before playing to become familiar with the overall plot of the adventure. A copy of the *Fantasy Companion* is suggested for play.

**WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: THE FRONTIER**  
THE MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD SERIES TAKES PLACE IN A FRONTIER TOWN ON THE BORDERS OF AN INHOSPITABLE AND DANGEROUS JUNGLE. DETAILS OF THIS BLOT OF CIVILIZATION KNOWN AS KRADEN'S HILL ARE GIVEN, BUT NOT MUCH IS DETERMINED AS TO WHOM THE MASTER'S ANSWERS TO. FIND A PLACE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN FOR KRADEN'S HILL TO HELP ROOT THE CHARACTERS IN YOUR SETTING. YOU WON'T REGRET IT.

## Adventure Background

Ibholtheg, a loathsome but powerful creature, cast its shadow upon the world thousands of years ago. In its time it was one of many outer powers that lived and ruled, coming from other realms to conquer and dwell on the Prime Plane. Known as the Squamous Toad, Ibholtheg's influence spread across the vast territories of the south, encompassing most of the ancient human society of Xilonoc.

Eventually, the people of Xilonoc fell to worshipping the foul creature, offering blood sacrifices in its name. Ibholtheg fed on the power of those sacrifices and offered boons to the high priests of Xilonoc. These boons included long life and magical secrets unknown to the world at large, and using these gifts the priests ruled Xilonoc.

Eventually, the society collapsed when Ibholtheg was banished by a band of jaguar knights. With the departure of the Squamous Toad's loathsome influence, cities fell to ruin and were claimed by the fierceness of the jungle. Many secrets were lost.

Over the centuries there have been many attempts to reclaim the lost treasures of ancient Xilonoc. Treasure hunters, fortune seekers, and more have plumbed the depths of the jungle in search of Xilonoc's lost secrets. But in a desert kingdom, one man has turned to more arcane sources to uncover the treasures of Ibholtheg's influence.

Natan il-Hasa Basswa was born into a rich merchant family in the desert kingdom. Given every possible advantage in life, Natan still craved more, and so he pursued arcane studies against his parents' wishes. The young desert nobleman was drawn to forbidden, dark magic, and learned that mastery over such power came easily to him. Natan studied in secret, but when he was discovered by his parents he accidentally killed them with the dark magic at his disposal. Already a young man, Natan easily masked the deaths as an accidental tragedy and took over the family's business.

He sought more and more dark power, and to that end he founded a merchant company called Novioirtum House. Natan quickly gained a reputation as a dealer in magical curiosities and historic artifacts, but secretly he traded in the blackest of black markets. He learned of Xilonoc and Ibholtheg and hungrily sought every scrap of information he could uncover about the Squamous Toad and the boons it could bestow upon worthy worshippers.

The research proved slow, but over the years Natan never gave up. He played the long game, never wanting to tip his hand to his real goals in purchasing books, scrolls, and trinkets. When a rival and more prominent merchant company, Grimden House, announced the opening of Kraden's Hill on the edge of the Great Jungle itself, it was too good an opportunity to pass up. Natan committed Novioirtum House resources and moved his own abode to the frontier town in order to move first hand on any information regarding Ibholtheg or Xilonoc that would be uncovered.

In Kraden's Hill, Natan used his magic to penetrate the mysteries of the Great Jungle in search of Ibholtheg's lost power. He stumbled upon a band of degenerate natives, ancient descendants of Xilonoc, who kept up the worship of the Squamous Toad. Natan learned more rites of sacrifice from these natives, who painted themselves in specially treated green pigment that provided a measure of the Squamous Toad's protection.

Natan began to split his time between his duties in Kraden's Hill running Novioirtum House and his new realm in the Great Jungle, which the natives referred to as the Swamp of the Screaming Toad. In the swamp, the merchant wizard has been researching a powerful rite called the Ritual of Rising that can be used to crush enemies and move the land. Natan has plans to use the summoned monster to help cleanse Xilonoc ruins, but he is growing paranoid. In Kraden's Hill, the more travelers and merchant arrive the harder it is for Natan to keep up his secret research.

He puts into motion a plot to use the shells of cipactli, ancient jungle monsters descended from Ibholtheg's influence, to weaken Grimden House's influence and drive people away from the frontier town. The town's sheriff, a northern woman named Karolina Lomen, has had her hands full dealing with the influx of strangers, so Natan is not worried about investigations into the strange events.

Those that came into contact with the shells of the cipactli eggs develop a madness as their tongue blackens and elongates to a monstrous length. Already several people in Kraden's Hill have fallen victim to this malady, which Grimden House is trying to keep under wraps. Unfortunately for Natan, a band of adventurers happen to stumble into the mystery while slaking their appetites at the Thirsty Serpent Inn.

## Module Synopsis

The adventure begins with the characters in the frontier town of Kraden's Hill, which sits on the very edges of the dangerous and inhospitable Great Jungle. Perhaps they've come seeking fame and fortune in the borderlands, helping to fight off incursions from wild elves, shadow orcs, and cannibal natives, or perhaps they are in the employ of one of the three major merchant companies. The Thirsty Serpent is the only inn in town, so the characters start there.

The troubles begin when a man bursts into the Thirsty Serpent, grasping at his throat. He mutters and mumbles nonsense and the characters notice the man's tongue is black as coal. After a few moments the man flies into a homicidal rage, intent on inflicting as much harm as possible to everyone, forcing the characters to intervene. The sheriff of Kraden's Hill, an experienced northern warrior named Karolina Lomen, gets involved and tells the characters that things like this have been happening lately.

Karolina and her small team are pushed to their limits trying to keep the peace in Kraden's Hill. She offers to deputize the characters to bolster her ranks and to assist in tracking down whatever is happening with the madness that turns people's tongues black. The man who staggered in, Lambert Glover, is their best lead, and following his trail takes the characters to the warehouses of Grimden House and then to another outbreak of madness.

Theodric Grimden, de-facto town master and highest ranking representative of Grimden House's merchant interests, claims to know nothing about the outbreak. Investigation into shipping and receiving records shows that there are extra crates in Theodric's warehouse that should not be there. The crates contain egg sacks of cipactli, monstrous toad-bat-crocodile creatures who worship Ibholtheg.

The trail of how the crates appeared in Grimden House's warehouse takes the characters into the surrounding settlements of Kraden's Hill. There they learn that one of the settlements has been stripped of any inhabitants and is now occupied by native cannibal cultists of the Squamous Toad – working in league with Novortum House, a mystical merchant company with a strong presence in Kraden's Hill. An assault on Novortum House's warehouse turns up more cannibal cultists, but their leader Natan is nowhere to be found. Below the warehouse sits a sealed vault guarded by magical creatures, inside of which the characters find Natan's journal. The journal points the characters to a site in the Great Jungle called the Swamp of the Screaming Toad.

The characters must head out into the jungle and find the swamp in order to clear it of Ibholtheg's cultists and Novortum House saboteurs. Once located they face Natan, a powerful sorcerer, and a host of cipactli, along with monstrous swamp creatures who do the bidding of its master.

## Future Modules

The **MEMORIES OF THE TOAD GOD** adventure trilogy focuses on Ibholtheg, a loathsome outer power from an ancient epoch, who has decided now is the time to rise again. The trigger was the destruction of its Vestige in a golden temple (**TG1 Lost Temple of Ibholtheg**) which freed much of its essence. Now, in this adventure, its influence has spread to create a cult of the native cannibals and ensnare one of the powerful merchant companies in Kraden's Hill, Novortum House.

The third adventure in the trilogy, **TG3 Shadow Out of Sapphire Lake**, pits the characters against the machinations of Ibholtheg directly. A terrible entity rises out of Sapphire Lake and the characters must move quickly to defeat it. Tracking it back to its source reveals an underwater cavern system beneath Sapphire Lake. At its heart is a portal to the Pit of Black Gulfs, the prison where Ibholtheg currently resides, and to re-seal it the characters must venture into it, risking life and sanity to keep the Squamous Toad from rising fully into the world.

## Involving the Characters

The adventure starts with the characters in Kraden's Hill staying at the Thirsty Serpent. If they played through **TG1 Lost Temple of Ibholtheg** they are likely recovering from their ordeal in the jungle, but if they did not they could have arrived in the frontier town with the promise of gainful employment and adventure. Trouble soon





finds them, regardless of why they came to seek it.

## Adapting the Module

This module tries to use as many generic location names as possible to make it easy to port to nearly any fantasy campaign setting. Below are the elements of the module that would need to be mapped out to an existing setting along with notes of how they fit within the adventure.

**Great Jungle:** A vast expanse of largely unexplored jungle wilderness on the edge (or even just beyond) of settled territories. Occupied by tribes of nomadic wild elves, savage shadow orcs, and native humans who were once part of a large Aztec-like civilization (Xilonoc) long ago.

**Kraden's Hill:** A frontier town settled a few years ago by enterprising members of Grimden House.

**Grimden House:** A powerful merchant family with trade connections across a great area. Interested in plundering the Great Jungle for valuables to be sold in other markets.

**Clan Ironstar:** Dwarven merchants with an eye for adventure and gold.

**Noviortum House:** A merchant family with ties to mystical powers in faraway lands. Known for using magic to further ends with a keen interest in arcane

locations.

**Ibholtheg:** Squamous bat-toad entity of ancient antiquity. Worshipped by mutant bullywugs, some of which can fly on bat-like wings.

**Swamp of the Screaming Toad:** A section of the Great Jungle known for its loud toads, now the base for the cannibal natives who worship Ibholtheg and Noviortum House.

**Xilonoc:** Ancient society of humans that fell mysteriously thousands of years ago. Descendants are now barbaric natives of the jungle, many of whom are cannibals.

## PART ONE: CATCH THE FEVER

Strange things have begun happening in the frontier town of Kraden's Hill. For the past week, several people have gone insane and tried to murder their friends and family, and the only link between them all is the victim's tongue turns black just before the madness takes hold. So far the constable of Kraden's Hill, Karolina Lomen, has managed to keep the incidents wrapped up so as not to cause a panic, but things are about to get out of hand for her.

Luckily, a group of capable heroes happens to be in the middle of the latest incident.

A Quiet Night at the Thirsty Serpent

The characters begin having already arrived in Kraden's Hill. The only place for travelers to stay in the frontier town is the Thirsty Serpent. In addition, it serves the cheapest ale and wine available – the twin elven siblings that run the place don't seem interested in making a profit.

Read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as necessary to fit the characters' backgrounds and reasons for being in Kraden's Hill.

Another day draws to a close in the frontier town of Kraden's Hill. You make your way through the cramped, mud streets, watching merchants close down their shops and people rush home. To the south, looming like a massive phantom, waits the Great Jungle, the tall boughs of its trees reaching over the one hundred foot wall that encircles the town. The hill that gives the town its name is situated near the center, and its flat top offers a good vantage over the surrounding area. You see a handful of guards, relatively unarmored considering the heat and humidity, make their way up the hill to take their watch for the evening. People have been on edge lately, it seemed – strange rumors have been floating around Kraden's Hill about dark dealings.

The only inn for travelers is the Thirsty Serpent, and you arrive with little pause in the crowded common room. The twin wild elves that run the place, Erelaris and Esysith Evenleaf, move about constantly, setting plates of meat, goblets of wine, and flagons of ale down at various tables as they wind their way around. On the back wall behind the bar are nailed dozens of snakes of various sizes, shapes, and colors – a curious tradition for the frontier tavern.

Allow the characters a chance to mingle in the Thirsty Serpent, soaking up rumors and asking around. Erelaris or Esysith comes by their table to take orders – the special for the night is a roasted boar flank and a mug of fermented viper fruit (a local specialty that resembles spicy apple cider) which sets back a traveler 7 sp. Mugs of fermented viper fruit and imported dwarven ale can be had for 3 sp each.

Rumors in Kraden's Hill

Asking around the common room of the Thirsty Serpent (or cornering one of the Evenleaf twins) can turn up some interesting tidbits going on around town. Choose from the below list or roll randomly to see which clue a character picks up in their inquiries.

Bands of savage wild elves have been seen close to Kraden's Hill lately. These aren't the friendly kind – they seem intent on shooting first so far anyone that tries to get close.

1d12 Rumor

- 1
- The native men and women of the jungle say a terrible plague is coming as punishment for Kraden's Hill pushing too far into the jungle. [This is a common rumor in town and has no basis in actual fact.]
- 2
- The merchants of Grimden House, who own most of the town, are said to have uncovered a great treasure in the jungle and they're trying to find a way to get it out. A golden temple! [This is in reference to the events of **TG1**, when the golden temple was found and subsequently destroyed.]
- 3
- Adbrek Ironstar and his dwarves are planning on leaving Kraden's Hill soon. Apparently they're getting the short end of the stick, with Grimden and Noviorum House recently pledging an allegiance. [Clan Ironstar is on the losing end of the allegiance, which is far from sealed, but they're not about to cut their losses yet.]
- 4
- The wizards and sorcerers of Noviorum House have been seen moving around at night lately. Never trust a magic-user! [Noviorum House sorcerers have been moving around at night to make arrangements regarding the hidden egg sack that causes the black tongue.]
- 5
- Recently, shadow orc tribes have begun to get restless. The word is that something deep within the jungle has been awakened and they want no part of it. Some of the tribes have actually fled into the mountains north of the Great Jungle! [The shadow orc tribes, perhaps more sensitive to the feelings of the jungle, know something is afoot. They don't have specific details about Iboltheg though.]
- 6
- A merchant who came in with the last caravan was murdered by his own brother two days ago. The sheriff has kept everyone quiet about it but something is up. [This is true – the merchant went mad and killed his brother and several guards before Sheriff Lomen arrived.]