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THE
SLAYER'S
GUIDE
TO

MINOTAURS

Shawn McKee



Toughened skull, thickened spine
to carry weight of horns

Clawed
fingers with
opposable thumb



Strong legs thick
heavy tail for balance

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INTRODUCTION

Many adventurers are familiar with the minotaur, at least in general terms. It is quite common to hear stories about dashing, heroic fighters battling a fierce minotaur to the death at the heart of the foul creature's dark labyrinth. Some of these stories, no doubt, have some truth to them. However, it is the vast amount of untold stories that truly tell the tale of the minotaur.

These tales tell of a more dangerous beast, one, which does not merely sit at the centre of its labyrinth waiting to be slaughtered. They speak of a creature that utilises the darkness and the confusion inherent to its labyrinthine home to torment those foolish enough to venture into this den of evil. They tell how the creature uses savage cunning to destroy an adventuring party one at a time, even going so far as to steal the bodies of its victims to entice their companions to venture more deeply into the minotaur's lair. They describe in gruesome detail the overwhelming smell of death that clings to the very walls of the minotaur's home. They even depict the vast bone altars built from the remains of the minotaur's prey, abominable shrines to the minotaur's murderous god, The Horned One.

Minotaurs are much like feral animals, made all the more dangerous by their enormous strength and comparatively high intelligence. Any adventurer who seeks to write his own story about these savage monsters had best prepare himself properly, or risk becoming merely another piece in one of the beast's bloody altars of bone.

THE SLAYER'S GUIDES

This appendix and others like it are intended for use in any fantasy-based d20 campaign. The Slayer's Guide Appendix series takes a deeply detailed look into the cultural, social and martial practices of hitherto unexamined monstrous races. Unlike the Slayer's Guides, these races are not necessarily used as fodder for experience, but rather they are the victims of underestimation by players and Games Masters alike. The Appendix series challenges misleading preconceptions about these races, giving Games Masters the chance to integrate a minotaur within a campaign as more than a mere obstacle to be overcome.

MINOTAURS – SAVAGE BEASTS, DANGEROUS PREDATORS

Each of the Slayer's Guide series focuses on a specific race, in this case the minotaur. In the next few pages, you will discover a plethora of information on minotaur physiology, society and habitat, as well as a detailed analysis of minotaur martial strategy and tactics. In addition, tips are provided on how to better employ these impressive beasts within a campaign.

Also included is a detailed look into one particular minotaur's labyrinth, examining the traps and obstacles that players must overcome to survive their journey into the den of such a vicious monster.

Utilising this information will give you a glimpse behind the curtain of one of the rarest and most dangerous races ever to walk the planet. Not only will it allow Games Masters to give their minotaurs a more dangerous edge, it might even allow players to survive the experience.



Erh-tzu held up a gloved hand, halting his companions. Something had been bothering him since they had resumed their journey at daybreak. His unease had first manifested itself as a tingling at the base of his scalp that would not go away no matter how often he rubbed his neck. The tingling had become a headache as he tried to force his consciousness to grasp what was bothering his senses.

'What is it, Erh? You've been jumpy as a cat all morning,' Igil, the ranger's diminutive companion was silenced by a hurried wave of the raised hand.

'I think, most esteemed comrade, that I may have finally discovered what has set my humble senses against me,' Erh-tzu replied, bowing slightly to the gnome. 'There is an absence of sound which I did not readily recognise as something out of the ordinary. I wished to be sure of the suspicion of which I now speak.'

'Babble, rather... spit it out man, gods take your caution and humility, just say it!' cursed Strom, chewing his moustache sullenly.

The ranger bowed to his other companion. 'As you will, dwarf-friend. I believe there must be some great evil residing in this portion of the hills. We have been beset by all manner of small inconveniences while travelling in these woods. These inconveniences have been absent for the latter half of yesterday and all of today. There have been none of the usual forest sounds this morning either. In my limited experience this indicates that there is most likely a greater evil residing here that has driven away the lesser.'

Strom barked a laugh, 'Understated as usual, easterner. *You* may call hobgoblin patrols 'inconveniences', but you're right, there haven't been any.' A loud popping noise sounded, making Strom visibly flinch. 'Gods weep, Igil, stop that infernal knuckle popping or I'll break them for you.'

The gnome grinned sheepishly. 'Sorry Strom, I forgot. I just do it when I'm nervous,' Igil confessed, shrugging and tucking his hands into his sleeves.

Erh-tzu inclined his head and waited for silence so he could continue. 'In the legends of my people there are several creatures that could illicit such a silence by their mere presence, though I have never heard them mentioned outside of my lands. I would hesitate to attempt to name that which draws this unnatural silence over these woods. I am admittedly unfamiliar with the evils of your lands – it is a shortcoming which I hope does not serve us ill. Though, were I at home, I would perhaps suggest that a moon-bull is in residence somewhere in this vicinity.'

'A *what*?' queried Strom, shaking his head, 'I think you lost me somewhere in all that talking.'

'He means a minotaur.' The fourth member of the small party joined the circle of his companions. 'That's what we call them hereabouts anyway.'

Erh-tzu nodded. 'I believe you are correct, Lord Captain. I was searching for the word, but could not call it to mind. Many of the creatures of your land have different names with which I am not familiar. I offered only an imperfect approximation based on the title of the creature in my native tongue. Many thanks, honourable captain, for your assistance.'

'I'm neither a lord nor a captain. Call me by my name if you must call me something.'

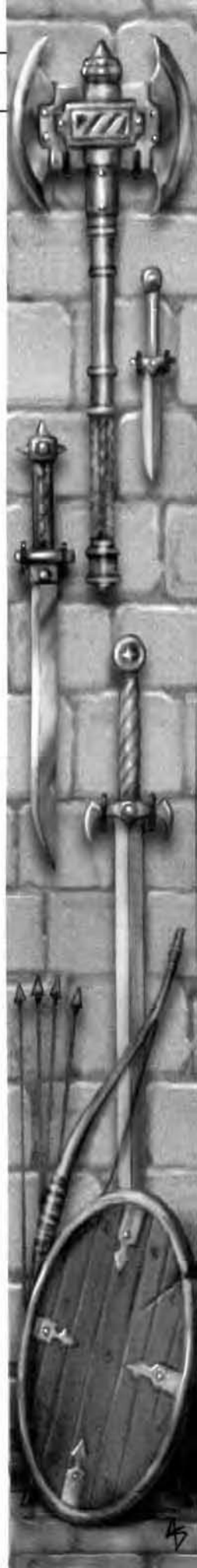
'As you wish, Drak.'

'So, how do we get around it?' Igil's question was punctuated with small popping sounds from his nervous hands.

'We don't. They're ten miles of bad tunnel shored with evil intent. If there's one around here we need to do something about it. I'll keep an eye out for an entrance and we can take care of it,' muttered Strom, frowning deeply.

Erh-tzu smiled and bowed to the dwarf. 'This is a rare and happy occurrence; I agree completely with our esteemed dwarf-friend. Such an evil creature cannot be suffered continued existence.'

'I think that's as close to a 'let's go' as we're going to get out of the ranger. Keep an eye out, Strom. You know what you're looking for.' Drak smiled as Igil tucked his hands further up his sleeves and followed after the dwarf and ranger.



MINOTAUR PHYSIOLOGY

The minotaur's unique physiology is often compared erroneously to that of other unrelated species, such as the centaur, the lamia or the gnoll. In fact, though the minotaur indeed looks like a cross between a powerfully built human and a bull, its true nature is markedly different from either of these base species.

The average minotaur stands some seven feet tall, though some extraordinary specimens have been reliably recorded upwards of ten feet high. Upon first glance, the minotaur's most striking feature is its magnificent set of horns, usually located on either side of its overly-broad skull. The shape of the horns varies somewhat between the different subspecies of minotaur, though they all share one common denominator – all are well suited for melee combat. All minotaurs are covered in a coat of coarse hair as well, though the length, colour and pattern of this hair varies from subspecies to subspecies. In addition, minotaurs possess a set of wicked looking, if non-functional claws, located on the four digits of each massive hand. These claws, among other physical traits hint at a racial heritage originating beyond the prime material plane.

Minotaurs, due to their intrinsically animalistic nature, have greatly heightened senses. As a result, it is very difficult to approach a minotaur without alerting it to your presence. In addition, minotaurs seem to have great inherent navigational abilities. Consequently, it is practically impossible for minotaurs to become lost or disoriented. This species-unique skill makes minotaurs deadly and efficient hunters, more than compensating for their lack of stealth.

MYTHS AND ORIGINS

There is a great deal of speculation about the origins of the minotaur species, though it is conclusively known that they are not one of the true elder races. Regardless, minotaurs have walked the earth for many thousands of years, evolving from a completely uncivilised animal race to a somewhat more canny species of predatory killers.

Popular mythology describes the creation of minotaurs as the product of an unnatural union between a human and a bovine, citing this abomination as the origin of the minotaur's inherently evil nature. Others claim that minotaurs were the product of an obscure magical ritual, though this theory has never been verified. Most recently, however, evidence has been uncovered linking

the origins of the minotaur species to some manner of blending between an as yet unclassified type of outsider and one or more of the many species of giants that inhabit the prime material plane.

Minotaurs believe themselves to be the chosen race of The Horned One, whom they say created the minotaurs in his own image. Whether this The Horned One is the name of an extra-planar entity or merely the result of minotaurian mythological yearning may never be known, though the existence of minotaur clerics, however rare, cannot be denied.

OF APPETITE

Contrary to popular belief, minotaurs are omnivorous, preferring a mixed diet of meat and vegetables to a purely carnivorous existence. They will readily eat cave mushrooms or fish, even venturing out of their lairs occasionally in search of fruit. However, minotaurs are more than willing to devour any creature that dares intrude upon their privacy. They even seem to prefer some creatures to others.

Minotaur Dietary Preferences

I admit that my fascination with minotaurs is a dangerous, oft-times foolish obsession, but I cannot help but be fascinated by the habits and actions of these magnificent beasts. Recently, in an attempt to determine which humanoid races minotaurs prefer to eat, I carefully tracked a well-diversified adventuring party into a minotaur's lair. To my surprise, they hardly put up much of a fight at all. Though I was somewhat dismayed at their nearly instantaneous death, I pressed on in the name of research.

From my observations, minotaurs have definite preferences when it comes to eating humanoid flesh! The small halfling was devoured first; the minotaur seemed to quite enjoy his meal. Next came the elf, then the human. Strangely, either because the minotaur had eaten his fill or simply because he did not like the taste, the dwarf's body was de-boned and flung into a nearby swamp. It seems that dwarf meat is as tough as one would expect.

(from the field notes of Femerus "Bones" Putin, gnomish necromancer and researcher)

BREED AND DEMEANOUR

As previously stated, minotaurs are believed to have closer ties to giants than to other humanoids. Much like giants, minotaurs are actually comprised of several subspecies, each of whom share different physiological traits. However, no researcher has yet penetrated minotaur society to the point of discovering the native names for these subspecies. Instead, they have been given descriptive names to help the casual observer distinguish them from each other.

- † The most common type of minotaur is called the Brown minotaur, though colours vary from individual to individual. These minotaurs are usually a dark, uniform colour such as brown, grey or even black. Their horns have a wide sweep, the points of which face forwards when the minotaur stands upright. As a result, they must continually show their face to an opponent when attempting to bring their horns into play during combat.
- † The Shaggy minotaur is the largest of the various types, averaging nearly nine feet in height. Stronger than any other species of minotaur, the Shaggy variety can perform feats of strength nearly incomprehensible to other humanoids. Apart from their great size, they are easily distinguished from other minotaurs by their coat of long, rough hair that they do not bother to keep groomed. Their horns, unlike the Brown's, originate from the top of the skull and travel down and behind the head to a small degree. The points of the horns face upwards when the minotaur is upright, giving the minotaur extra protection, if lesser accuracy, during a charge.
- † The Bearded minotaur, named for its unique excess of long facial fur, is an extremely rare variety of minotaur, displaying markedly less savagery than other minotaur species. However, despite its tendency not to partake in wanton destruction, the cruelty of this breed far exceeds even the most wicked acts conceived by other minotaurs. The few minotaur clerics are nearly always Bearded minotaurs, though it is unclear why this is so. The Bearded minotaurs have short, dark, curly hair that stays thick around their bodies. They sport a pair of simple, yet effective horns on the sides of their head which curve upwards, nearly meeting in the middle.
- † The last known subspecies of minotaur is perhaps the most visually impressive. The Noble minotaur has a magnificent rack of horns which arch high over its head, making it appear taller even than the Shaggy minotaur (though the Shaggy variety are still quite a bit larger). Apart from its regal bearing

and appearance, the Noble minotaur has no real claim to its title, being equally as vicious as any other type of minotaur. In fact, the Noble minotaur is perhaps even more territorial than other varieties, killing intruders without any mercy whatsoever. The Noble minotaur has an extremely short coat of hair, emphasising its musculature and bringing it one step closer in appearance to other humanoids. Some Noble minotaurs even have coloured patterns in their fur, though these are even more rare than traditional Nobles.

MINOTAUR PSYCHOLOGY

It is difficult to understand the mind of a minotaur without first quantifying its need for violence. Minotaurs are a powerful race of creatures, seemingly built for combat. Even an unarmed minotaur is more than a match for most adventurers, capable of incapacitating the unwary with a single blow from one of its massive fists. Some individual minotaurs even favour this method of attack, preferring to eat their meals warm.

A minotaur's penchant for mayhem is quite possibly the result of its giant heritage, as many species of giant are undeniably destructive. It is also possible that minotaurs inherited their violent tendencies from their unnamed extra-planar ancestor, though this theory understandably cannot be proven. In either case, one must consider violence as an inherent part of the minotaur's psyche, at times overwhelming nearly all other physical needs.



HABITAT

Minotaurs are a hardy race, capable of surviving in a variety of inhospitable climates, including those lands controlled by some of world's less savoury creatures. However, like any sentient being, minotaurs prefer some climates to others.

Primarily, minotaurs are a subterranean species. They may be found in nearly any underground environment, often claiming vast networks of caves as their own. Eventually, however, the minotaur can adapt such a series of tunnels into a true labyrinth, custom made to suit both the individual minotaur's defensive needs as well as its hunting preferences. For example, some minotaur lairs have been specifically designed with an obvious solution in mind, making any would-be invaders overconfident. The minotaur living in such a dwelling would likely attempt to lure any invaders towards a series of pre-constructed traps. Afterwards, the minotaur would have an even greater chance of defeating and devouring its victims. A different type of minotaur however, would be more likely to create as large and confusing a maze as possible, seeking not only to bewilder its foes but to sow the seeds of panic and hopelessness in their hearts. Such minotaurs often take a great deal of pleasure in tormenting their victims before killing them, so it is not surprising that the most complicated and incomprehensible labyrinths are often found to be the work of Bearded minotaurs.

SELECTION AND ADAPTATION

Instinct has a great deal of influence upon a minotaur's choice of dwelling, though necessity often takes a hand as well. Due to the minotaur's lack of social proclivities, minotaur young are expected to be self-sufficient after an extremely short period of time. As a result, one of the minotaur's first ordeals involves finding a suitable spot in which it can construct its first labyrinth.

The Migration of Minotaurs

It is possible, however rare, to encounter a minotaur while it is searching for a new spot in which to construct a home. Away from a labyrinth, these minotaurs have only their straightforward combat abilities with which to defend themselves, making them somewhat easier to defeat. However, should a group of adventurers be the unwary prey of such a creature, they had best take heed - minotaurs can hunt as well outdoors as they can inside their twisting homes.

Adult minotaurs usually construct between three and four labyrinths during their lifetime, creating more complicated and structurally impressive mazes with each iteration. As a result, a minotaur gains a +5 bonus to its Craft (labyrinth) check with each successive labyrinth. A young minotaur, however, must rely solely upon instinct to perform this feat, which is why most choose to inhabit relatively complicated networks of tunnels or caves. This preference allows them to minimise their work while maximising the functionality of their new home.

Fully-grown minotaurs are more adept at adapting their environment to suit their needs, often using improvised or acquired tools to carve additional tunnels and passageways through the stone walls of their home. Such a project takes a great deal of time and energy; even given a minotaur's prodigious strength, this accomplishment is no simple task. Luckily, most minotaurs are more than capable of putting any previous inhabitants of the tunnels to work; be they orcs, goblins or kobolds, most creatures are willing to serve the minotaur for as long as it takes to avoid being devoured. When at all possible, minotaurs prefer to inhabit abandoned umber hulk dwellings, though finding these complex networks of burrowed caves is difficult at best. Beholders also carve out fairly complex networks of tunnels, though minotaurs rarely, if ever, challenge beholders.

DEFENCE AND DECEPTION

The minotaur's labyrinth is more than merely a home, it is a tool with which the minotaur protects its territory and hunts its prey. In much the same way a spider hopes to catch unwary insects in its web, a minotaur depends on trespassers for food and sport. As such, exploring a minotaur's labyrinth is exceptionally dangerous even if the minotaur itself is not present. A minotaur does not rely solely upon its raw strength or wicked horns to defeat intruders. Rather, it constructs an array of traps of varying lethality throughout the maze, all of which are brutally efficient.

Depending on the minotaur, traps within a labyrinth can vary from simple snares to great slabs of falling stone. In any case, the resultant victim is immobilised and helpless. Minotaurs are not prone to creating traps which merely injure or stun an opponent. Instead, their traps are designed to either incapacitate an intruder or kill them outright. Luckily, magical traps are all but unheard of in minotaur labyrinths, despite the tall tales of various un-blooded adventurers.

The uniformity and complexity of the maze itself is another key component of the minotaur's strategy. A shoddily constructed labyrinth will not so easily hide traps, giving any potential prey a chance to escape unharmed. Also, should a labyrinth's walls not appear to have consistent colour and texture, a canny adventurer might be able to navigate the maze more easily. Well-crafted labyrinths, on the other hand, sport traps which are so concealed within the rock face that they are rendered all but indistinguishable to anyone but a skilled rogue or an alert dwarf. As for the walls, only the most observant adventurer will be able to navigate a minotaur's labyrinth without leaving some markings by which to navigate.

Minotaurs have a great deal of impact upon the ecosystems they inhabit. It is said that a truly skilled ranger can sense his proximity to a minotaur's lair simply by noticing the subtle yet unavoidable signs of minotaur occupation. Not only are areas usually devoid of other evil sentient species, but nature itself seems to shy away from the entrance to the minotaur's home, recognising it for what it truly is: the gaping jaws of a ravenous beast. Eventually, this effect can cause a minotaur to abandon its labyrinth in favour of new hunting grounds, ones in which its presence is not yet feared or understood.

Clever Explorer or Easy Prey?

Many an adventurer has ventured into the depths of a minotaur's labyrinth armed with little more than a ball of twine and some chalk to see him out again. The string may be followed back to the mouth of the cave, while the chalk may be used to mark walls so the explorer does not find himself walking in circles. Minotaurs find these tricks particularly amusing. There are several recorded instances where minotaurs have actually moved the end of the string to another location, luring the explorer into a carefully conceived ambush. Other reports tell of minotaurs erasing chalk marks on walls or creating new ones, deriving great pleasure from the confusion which ensues. Though not extraordinarily intelligent, minotaurs are quite a bit more dangerous than simple animals, especially to those who underestimate them.

Strom pointed to a rubble-strewn fissure in the side of the hill before them. 'I bet that's it. It has the look that you described.'

The jagged rocks around the fissure brought to mind the gaping maw of some large, toothy beast. The bones of small creatures littered the ground in front of the cave. Some were easily recognisable as those of typical woodland creatures though others appeared to have once belonged to more sentient beings.

'That's from a kobold. And that one's most likely off a goblin,' indicated the dwarf, rather smugly, indicating a pair of skulls near the entrance that now housed a growing family of rats.

'It stinks, I know that much,' added Igil, covering his sensitive nose with one hand.

'I would suggest that you become accustomed to the smell, esteemed gnome-friend. It is most probable that the aroma will become more robust as we venture deeper inside,' advised Erh-tzu, handing Igil a cloth, thoughtfully. 'Perhaps this will assist you?'

'I'll go first. You lot can't see your hands before your faces or find your way out of an open sack,' barked Strom, grinning as he thumbed the edge of his axe.



MINOTAUR SOCIETY

By the standard definition, minotaurs cannot be considered social creatures. In addition to being hugely territorial and destructive, they cannot even stand the company of other minotaurs, preferring to live, hunt and die alone. Only the instinctual minotaur breeding cycles can force two of the creatures into a type of coexistence, though it never lasts for longer than it takes the new-born minotaur to be weaned onto solid food. In fact, only one true minotaur social group is known to exist, and even it is rife with instability.

LIFE'S FIERY CYCLE

The boundary between male and female minotaurs is a fair bit less pronounced than with other species. From a purely anatomical standpoint, the minotaur's coat of fur and upright bearing make it nearly impossible to determine the sex of an individual until after it has been killed or otherwise subdued. Both sexes are equally capable of defending themselves, though the females of the species tend to have slightly smaller horns. Psychologically, the two sexes are nearly identical, though the females are perhaps a bit more reclusive than territorial.

To remain viable as a species, minotaurs must keep their birth rate above their death rate, as is true for any creature. Unfortunately for the race, minotaurs find the very idea of shared living repulsive, entering into it only when forced. As a result, minotaur females have an internal fertility clock which compels them to seek out a mate during the fertile portion of their biennial cycle. Due to the minotaur's territorial disposition, this urge often involves a long, exhaustive search. This migratory process is difficult for the female, as it exposes her to a great deal of danger and hardship. Also, given the female's more pronounced tendency to shun other species, encountering a female during this journey is an unspeakably dangerous experience.

Minotaurs have a complex set of mating rituals, all of which must be carried out to the female's satisfaction before a mate is chosen. First, the female inspects the male, making sure that he is physically fit, without any trace of disease or other weakness. An impressive set of horns also serves as an attraction for females, while minotaurs unlucky enough to have lost a horn are usually doomed to die

without ever procreating. After the male has passed his physical inspection, the female begins to attack him mercilessly, determining whether he is a strong enough warrior to provide for her while she is in the later stages of her pregnancy. Finally, she inspects the labyrinth itself, deciding if its design and quality are worthy of her continued presence. If the male minotaur passes on all points, the female attempts to conceive a child at every opportunity until she is certain that she has been impregnated. Life returns to normal at this point, with both minotaurs ignoring one another until the female has become so burdened with her pregnancy that she can no longer adequately provide food for herself. It is then the male's job to ensure that his hunts provide more than double a normal yield, so that all parties involved have enough food to sustain them.

Encountering the Migratory Female

During their fertile season, minotaur females are even more violent and dangerous than usual. Any female minotaur encountered above ground has a 75% chance of being in season. She gains the following traits when encountered in combat:

- † She gains all benefits and detriments of a barbarian rage, regardless of any class levels she may already have.
- † Damage from melee weapons, gore attacks and charging gore attacks each increase by +2 (this bonus stacks with the increased damage gained by raging).
- † All gore attacks gain a threat range of 19-20/x3 for the duration of combat.

Once the pregnancy is complete, the male continues to provide food and water for the female until the young minotaur has been weaned from milk onto solid foods. Fortunately, minotaur young grow rapidly, often moving from milk to meat in a matter of six months. Minotaurs walk early as well and are capable of great feats of endurance from a young age. The young minotaur's situation changes, however once it learns to eat meat. The parents, having grown increasingly hostile towards one another in the months following the birth, must determine once and for all who will raise the child. A fierce battle ensues, similar to the battle waged before conception. However, unlike the previous combat, the two minotaurs will fight nearly to the point of death, until one or the other emerges

triumphant. If the victorious minotaur is the male, then the female is immediately banished from the labyrinth, forced to travel back to her point of origin. If the female wins, on the other hand, the male must leave his own lair and create a new labyrinth outside of his old territory. In either case, the winner retains possession of the child.

Regardless of the victorious parent, childhood is short. The minotaur learns the rudiments of language, hunting and religion in a very short time and is expected to provide food for itself within eighteen months of its birth. Physically, minotaurs mature fully by their fifth year, though they have a tendency to reach their full height well before this time. Minotaurs are forced to leave their home at around the age of two, when they will seek out a location for their first labyrinth.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

The worship of The Horned One is an ancient practice, touching the life of every minotaur in some way. His expectations and virtues are taught to minotaurs from a very young age through an ancient oral tradition. Also bequeathed upon young minotaurs are the methods through which The Horned One's complicated bone altars may be constructed. Many adventurers are surprised to find that minotaurs have religious beliefs, believing that religion only has a place within the more 'civilised' races. Though The Horned One is generally revered by the entire minotaur race, there are those who are chosen to pursue this devotion with more dedication; they are the members of the Cult of The Horned One.

The Cult of The Horned One is composed almost entirely of Bearded minotaurs, though an occasional misfit from one of the other subspecies has been spotted in the cult's company from time to time. However, membership in the cult is not something which may be sought. Rather, initiates are chosen by existing cult members through a process called the 'Kiem Gheen', which roughly translates to 'thinning the herd'. Moderately powerful adepts are charged with the task of recruiting potentials into the ranks of the cult, which is always seeking new members. Due to the cult's relatively small size, some adepts spend their entire tenure with the cult leading Kiem Gheens in remote areas of the world.

The cult itself is composed of a central council, over which the most powerful adept presides.

Occasionally, occurring perhaps once every two or three centuries, a true cleric of The Horned One emerges from the minotaur populace to lead the cult in The Horned One's name. At these times the cult's membership often swells by two or more orders of magnitude, making them a genuine threat to any civilised nation. Luckily, this event occurs rarely. For the most part, minotaur adepts and clerics alike choose to prepare destructive or harmful spells, such as the various *Inflict Wound* spells. It is important to note that minotaur adepts have access to these spells, even though they are not on the standard adept list.

There are a vast number of religious rituals and ceremonies performed by the members of the cult, ranging from simple altar construction to blood sacrifices. Many of these utilise magical components unique to the worshippers of The Horned One. Though there are no temples to The Horned One, *per se*, the cult is primarily located in a single labyrinth, the breadth and scope of which is nearly impossible to comprehend. Given that it has been the product of generations of Bearded minotaurs, the cult's stronghold, or 'The Horned One's Labyrinth' is quite possibly the single most confusing and dangerous labyrinth in the world.

The construction of The Horned One's bone altar is perhaps the most important of all rituals. Though all minotaurs honour The Horned One through the creation of bone altars, only the cult's altars hold more than a simple religious symbolism. First, neophytes are given the task of collecting and preparing bones for the altar; nearly any bone can be used in the construction, so long as it is undamaged and cleansed of all remaining flesh. The bones are then woven into a complex pattern, using skulls and socket joints as hinge points. Initiates are in charge of the construction as well, the successful completion of which is seen as one of the first steps towards becoming a lesser member. Once the altar is completed, it looks like a gruesome, yet sturdy pile of bones. Instead of having a flat surface however, the top is dominated by sharp protrusion of bone as well as the skullcaps of different races. Even after its initial assembly, the altar is not yet ready to be used in the cult's ceremonies. First, the presiding adept spends an entire night of unholy meditation in front of the new altar, imbuing it with awful magical energies. Unbelievably, this makes the altar even more terrible to behold; it is said that merely glancing at an altar prepared in this way can drive the most stable individual mad.



Even more terrible than the construction of the altar is its intended purpose. To aid the cult in any activities it or its members may undertake, live creatures are sacrificed on the altar as offerings to The Horned One. Victims are impaled upon the altar's upper spikes while still alive, as it is believed that their screams are pleasing to The Horned One's ears. The blood then drains out of the victim's body, collecting in the skullcaps embedded in the altar's surface. Due to the magical nature of the altar, the blood can be transformed into an ointment which has one of a variety of effects on those to which it is applied.

TERRITORIALITY AND RACE RELATIONS

Much has been made of the minotaur's extreme territoriality, though in fact there are some creatures that coexist with minotaurs quite successfully. Subsequently, a more detailed analysis of minotaur behaviour has revealed a pattern in this previously baffling arrangement.

For the most part, minotaurs are unconcerned with creatures that pose no threat to them unless they are large enough to hunt. As a result, minotaur labyrinths often have a disproportional number of rats and insects that not only enjoy the added protection of having a minotaur nearby but also benefit from a ready supply of available food in the form of carrion from the minotaur's kills. The minotaur, for its part, benefits as well. The rats and insects help to keep the labyrinth free of debris, leaving it looking less threatening to any curious animals that might wander inside. Bats often inhabit a minotaur's domain as well, though they feed mostly upon the insects that dwell there. Curiously, there have also been several reports of cats loitering near minotaur caves. Some adventurers even tell of cats leaving offerings of food for resident minotaurs, as though to a devoted master. Minotaurs actually find this devotion amusing and are willing to tolerate the animals since they help to keep the rat population at a reasonable level. Interestingly, minotaur adepts have a definite tendency to summon cats as their familiars, preferably choosing cats with colouring similar to their own.

Minotaurs have little or no patience with other sentient creatures, other minotaurs included. Though they are willing to make use of other races for occasional forced labour, for the most part minotaurs gladly kill any intelligent creatures that wander into their lair. It makes little difference whether the intruder's alignment is compatible with that of the minotaur, nearly all intelligent species are potential prey for the minotaurs.



METHODS OF WARFARE

So far as history is concerned, minotaurs have never banded together to form armies, nor have they ever created a stable nation under which to organise themselves. Thankfully, both instinct and habit seem to be keeping such a dreadful event well at bay. However, even without formal organisation, minotaurs are extremely formidable fighters in their own right. Therefore, it is prudent for the sensible adventurer to study their martial habits, to gain a better understanding of how these powerful creatures prefer to fight.

ARMS AND EQUIPMENT

Minotaurs have very little skill where weaponcraft is concerned, generally lacking the intellect necessary to construct complicated weapons. However, due to the stockpile of weapons 'donated' by visitors to their labyrinths, minotaurs have a great deal of raw material with which to work. As a result, minotaurs can often be seen wielding massive versions of typical weapons, the product of several standard weapons melted down and reforged into something more suited to the minotaur's great size. Typically, young minotaurs prefer large, double-headed axes because of the stylistic similarity between the two axe heads and the horns that all minotaurs possess. Other weapons may be used, though to lesser effect. It is not until the minotaur advances in class levels that he gains more weapon proficiencies. However, minotaurs always have the added advantage of having two powerful horns atop their heads, giving them a powerful advantage in combat.

BATTLING INTRUDERS

Though the various subspecies of minotaur prefer to hunt their prey in different ways, all of them tend to attack their victims in much the same manner; that is, brutally and without mercy.

For naked horror, few experiences can compare to the sight of a charging minotaur, unless perhaps it is a charging minotaur armed with a five-foot greataxe. Minotaurs prefer their initial gore attack to be unexpected, so that their enemies stand a greater chance of being impaled upon their deadly horns. However, another benefit of the charge is that it brings the target within range of the minotaur's melee weapon of choice, be it a huge greataxe or

a standard greatsword, the minotaur equivalent of the longsword. Some minotaurs are even skilled at using two weapons simultaneously, again imitating with steel their magnificent horns. Often, a minotaur will attack the closest available target until it is dead, unless another opponent strikes with a particularly powerful blow. Sometimes, if its opponent is alone, a minotaur will attempt to grapple him, bring his formidable strength into play as well as his horns. Few creatures survive such an encounter.

COMBAT BETWEEN MINOTAURS

Despite their reliance upon melee weapons to destroy intruders, minotaurs eschew any such toys when fighting amongst themselves. Such battles occur often, usually whenever two minotaurs meet. They begin with a prolonged period of eye contact, as both minotaurs attempt to size up their opponent's strengths and weaknesses. Once the minotaurs are satisfied with their observations, one or the other drops into an aggressive crouch and displays its horns to the other minotaur. Once the other minotaur follows suit, the battle begins with a simultaneous charge by both minotaurs, resulting in a thunderous clash of horns and fists. Even Bearded minotaurs are challenged in this manner, though they rarely lose due to their greater cunning. Preferring to use horns and fists, battling minotaurs rarely ever fight to the death, contenting themselves instead with brutal injuries and broken bones. A defeated minotaur is one that can no longer fight, due either to fatigue or unconsciousness. One of the rare times minotaurs are willing to kill one another is if a minotaur attempts to wrest control of a labyrinth from its current resident. This is considered the greatest insult imaginable, often resulting in the brutal death of one of the two combatants. Regardless of the outcome, however, the winner gains control of the labyrinth. It is said that Bearded minotaurs wronged in this way leave their opponents alive, preferring to break off the defeated minotaur's horns rather than slaying it outright.

DEALING WITH MINOTAURS

Fighting minotaurs is a risky proposition at best, though there are some tried and true methods which take advantage of the minotaur's inherent weaknesses. These techniques have been compiled and proven by adventurers who have survived their encounters with these savage, dangerous creatures.



METHODS OF WARFARE

The minotaur's greatest weakness is his reliance upon melee combat. Even classed minotaurs tend not to use bows or other ranged weapons, preferring to feel their enemies break beneath their powerful charge. Luckily for the adventurer, this puts the minotaur at a disadvantage if he is spotted before combat begins. Not only can archers usually sink several arrows into the minotaur's body before melee combat begins, but any mages can attack the minotaur with ranged spells, further weakening it. Also, if a party expects to encounter a minotaur in their travels, they would be well advised to keep lances handy, to set against the minotaur's charge. Weapons with reach are effective as well, since every little bit helps when battling one of these monsters.

However, if one must fight a minotaur face to face then there are other options that a clever adventurer would do well to pursue. First, try to engage the minotaur on as steep an incline as possible. Minotaurs have a tendency to be very top heavy, gaining a -2 balance penalty to attacks and damage while on an incline of greater than 40°. Make sure, however, that the minotaur is facing downhill during this combat, as being uphill of a minotaur merely brings its horns even closer than normal. Second, minotaurs are not strong swimmers. Though they have phenomenal strength, their hooves are not made to cut through water, giving them a 10-foot speed penalty when submerged, as well as a -2 viscosity penalty to damage, as it is more difficult for them to put their weight behind any attacks. Third, minotaurs depend heavily upon the charge as a means of combat. To keep them from using

this ability to their advantage, consider fighting a minotaur from around a corner. While you will both gain partial cover, the minotaur will not be able to bring his gore attacks into play as effectively as in a long, straight cavern. Finally, avoid grappling with minotaurs at all costs. Not only can they easily squeeze the life out of nearly any humanoid creature, their horns are quite accessible as weapons during close combat of that nature.



What was that?'asked Igil, whirling around nervously. Despite reassurances from his companions, the gnome was sure that they were being followed. He did not believe that Strom knew where they were and could find his way out of the maddening maze that they had been winding their way through for the past several hours. He tilted his head to the side, unsure of what he was seeing.

'Was that wall there before?' He continued. The gnome was sure they had not turned a corner recently. He had a sinking feeling that the maze was changing as they moved through it. He popped his knuckles quickly, taking comfort in the familiar sound.

Strom shook his head at Igil's muffled questions. 'You need to calm down Igil. And stop making that infernal noise!'

Igil nodded and tucked his hands back up his sleeves. He was sure that the wall behind them had moved. He hesitated for a moment, debating with himself whether or not to press the issue when he heard a low, rumbling chuckle from the other side of the wall. With a bleated yelp he raced to stand close to Drak, the human's imposing size failing to make him feel safe for the first time in their travels.

ROLEPLAYING WITH MINOTAURS

The story of Theseus and the Minotaur of Crete is one of the single most recognisable mythological stories in the world. Not only is it familiar to adults, children of a remarkably young age can dutifully recite the details of the myth, from King Minos' folly to Theseus' cold abandonment of Ariadne. In fact, Theseus' descent into the labyrinth may very well be the most well known dungeon crawl of all time.

Taking this into consideration, it seems unfortunate that minotaurs have been relegated to the status of merely another monster to be slain. To the people of Crete, the minotaur was a creature of nightmares, an embodiment of terror living below the city. It is important for Games Masters to take this ancient fear into consideration when bringing minotaurs into their campaign; when used properly, minotaurs have the potential to put the fear of god into any party of player characters, regardless of level.

To most player characters, minotaurs are simply another monster. Ideas of minotaur culture, society and religion do not even cross the minds of most adventurers, who see minotaurs simply as hulking beasts. This is a dangerous outlook to have. Though minotaurs are not exceedingly intelligent, they are more than capable of outwitting overconfident adventurers. However, unless the player characters have done some research into the race, either by reading this guide or by other means, they have no rational reason to think of minotaurs as anything other than simple animals. If this is the case, then we recommend the introduction of a minotaur into the campaign to teach the player characters the error of their ways. A properly orchestrated encounter, taking into account the information provided in this guide, will likely send the player characters scurrying for the nearest friendly temple. More importantly, it will teach the player characters the dangers of overconfidence.

Should the player characters make a concerted decision to go minotaur hunting, we suggest pitting them against a powerful classed minotaur, possibly one or two encounter levels higher than their party level. Minotaurs are versatile enough to be made challenging for nearly any adventuring party.

MINOTAURS AS NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Though minotaurs are far too powerful for standard player characters, they can be adapted into exceedingly dangerous Non-Player Characters. Each subspecies has specific racial traits, as well as differing favoured classes. Make sure to take this into account when advancing your minotaurs by class level.

Minotaur Names

The significance of minotaur names is completely unknown, even to those researchers who have dedicated their lives to studying the proud beasts. Though their syntax and grammar sound similar to the language of giants, the meanings are all but incomprehensible. Though it is possible that minotaur names are merely conglomerations of sound, somehow this seems unlikely. It has been surmised that perhaps they are derived from a hidden minotaur dialect of which the world has no knowledge. However, given the minotaur's tendency to eat researchers, the truth may never be known. Some examples of minotaur names are included below.

Furghan	Dhurtaq	Noordek
Ghunot	Jarnesh	Kursool

MINOTAUR RACIAL TRAITS BY SUBSPECIES

Brown

+8 Strength, +4 Constitution, -4 Intelligence, -2 Charisma

Browns are identical to the minotaurs presented in the *Core Rulebook III*. They have no special abilities or detriments due to their subspecies. The Brown minotaur's favoured class is Fighter.

Shaggy

+10 Strength, +6 Constitution, -6 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -4 Charisma

Shaggy minotaurs do not suffer -2 to AC during a charge, but likewise do not gain +2 to attacks.



ROLEPLAYING WITH MINOTAURS

Shaggy minotaurs are prodigiously strong, but suffer from an even more pronounced lack of intelligence than do typical minotaurs. As a result, they are crude, violent and unpredictable. The Shaggy minotaur's favoured class is barbarian.

Bearded

+4 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom

Though not nearly as strong as other minotaurs, Bearded minotaurs are noted for their cunning and cruelty. It is not uncommon for Bearded minotaurs to intimidate other minotaurs into submission merely by reputation. In addition, Bearded minotaurs tend to live longer than the other subspecies; this is generally credited to their comparative intelligence. Also, unlike other minotaurs, the Bearded minotaur's standard alignment is neutral evil. The Bearded minotaur's favoured class is adept, though the occasional cleric has been known to exist. Clerical domains associated with The Horned One are Chaos, Evil and Destruction.

Noble

+6 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -4 Wisdom, +4 Charisma

The Noble minotaur is a majestic creature, blessed with an impressive musculature and a magnificent rack of horns. It is also the most territorial of the subspecies, attacking any creature that enters its labyrinth. Unfortunately, the Noble minotaur is not adept at determining whether or not an enemy is conquerable. This trait stems from the fact that the Noble minotaur is not particularly observant in contrast with others of its species. It is, however, slightly more dextrous than other minotaurs; the tales of Noble minotaurs wielding dual greatswords are not mere exaggerations. The Noble minotaur's favoured class is ranger.

General

- † Minotaurs are Monstrous Humanoids and have 6 HD of 'Monstrous Humanoid' levels. This gives them a base attack bonus of +6, a base Fortitude save of +2, a base Reflex save of +5 and a base Will save of +5.
- † As Large creatures, minotaurs receive -1 to attacks and AC, a -4 penalty to Hide checks, but +4 to grapple checks.

- † All minotaurs receive a +4 racial bonus to Search, Spot and Listen checks, as well as an inherent +6 bonus to Intimidate.
- † Minotaurs have +5 natural armour.
- † All minotaurs receive Craft (labyrinth) and Craft (altar) as class skills, regardless of their actual class. Note: the minotaur portrayed in *Core Rulebook III* is an unclassed minotaur, and so has neither of these skills. Due to the fact that these are instinctual skills instead of trained skills they use the minotaur's Wisdom score, rather than Intelligence, to determine the ability score modifier.
- † Minotaur base speed is 30 feet.
- † Charge: A minotaur can make a gore attack during a charge. Minotaur horns are considered a 1 1/2 Str damage attack. As such, a Shaggy minotaur with a Strength score of 25 would deal 4d6 + (Str mod 7 x 1.5), or 4d6+10 damage.
- † Natural Cunning: Minotaurs cannot become lost within mazes or labyrinths. As a result, they are immune to *Maze* spells and cannot be caught flat-footed.
- † Scent: Minotaurs can track creatures by scent alone.
- † Bonus Feats: Great Fortitude and Power Attack. Minotaurs are extremely resilient and their power makes them fearful opponents..
- † Darkvision: Minotaurs have darkvision at a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white, but otherwise functions as normal sight. Minotaurs are equally adept in low-light or lightless conditions.
- † Automatic Languages: Minotaurs speak Giant, though some more intelligent individuals occasionally learn to speak other languages as well. Bonus Languages: Goblin, Orc, Common, Undercommon and Abyssal.

SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

Minotaurs have the advantage of being extremely adaptable. For the Games Master, this means that they can be placed within nearly any campaign at any time. A hidden labyrinth can be inserted into any mountain, forest or swamp setting. Moreover, classed minotaurs can become powerful enough to challenge almost any player group.

Below are several basic ideas for Games Masters. Using one or more of these suggestions can enhance the inclusion of a minotaur in a campaign.

Kidnapped!

A young girl from a nearby village has gone missing; it seems likely that the minotaur which lives several miles outside the village may have captured her. Though the minotaur has lived there for a long time, none of the townsfolk have been courageous enough to try and exterminate it. Now, they are regretting their complacency. This adventure should be carried out with a sense of urgency, as no one knows when the minotaur may eat its hostage! In addition, Games Masters can make the entrance to the labyrinth as easy or as difficult to find as they like.

The Balance of Nature

For the last few years, game has been growing ever more scarce. If the hunting ceases completely, the town is doomed. A passing ranger suggested that a minotaur might be draining the forest's resources with its ravenous appetite. The player characters are hired to track down and destroy the cause of this disturbance.

Rampage

While hunting in the woods, a poacher shot a wandering female minotaur with a poisoned arrow, hoping to kill it as a trophy. Instead of killing it, however, the poison drove the minotaur mad. For days she has been menacing the woods outside

the town, but now it is rumoured that she is approaching the town where she may very well destroy everything in her path. The player characters must stop her before she destroys any more of the village.

Lost Treasure

The player characters manage to acquire an ancient treasure map from a somewhat shady merchant. The map points to a vast sum of gold and jewels in a nearby cave system, though the player characters are unaware that these very caves have been converted into a minotaur's labyrinth. The players must weigh their greed against their sense of self-preservation as they willingly venture forth into the minotaur's maze of death.

Dangerous Mysticism

Bloodless bodies have been turning up near a cave entrance at the foot of a nearby mountain. The villagers are convinced that a band of ravenous vampires live in the mountains and hire the player characters to investigate and slay the creatures. However, the player characters get more than they bargained for when they uncover a Cult of The Horned One on the very doorstep of the town!



KUROON'S LABYRINTH

The innocuous entrance to Kuroon's Labyrinth hardly prepares a party of adventurers for the dangers which lurk inside. Riddled with traps, dead-ends and narrow hallways, this maze is both the home and the hunting ground of Kuroon, a very large male minotaur with an even larger temper. Parties who venture inside this death-trap will be lucky to emerge intact, if they emerge at all.

Kuroon's lair is intended as an example of a powerful minotaur's labyrinth in terms of complexity, size and lethality. Though other breeds of minotaur will create varying types of mazes, Kuroon's home is a good template on which to base other labyrinths.

Traps and Hazards

Kuroon is a fully-grown Brown minotaur fighter of enormous size and strength. He has already lived in two previous labyrinths, giving him a great deal of experience when constructing his current home. Like many labyrinths, Kuroon's current lair is a modified system of natural caves and tunnels, though it is hardly recognisable as such now. Using tools and weapons gathered from defeated prey, Kuroon has spend many months perfecting the details of his deadly home.

There are a variety of traps prepared throughout the labyrinth, ranging from simple, spiked pits to collapsing corridors and flooding hallways. In addition, over three-quarters of the labyrinth is composed of dead-end passageways designed to frustrate adventurers and expose them to more of Kuroon's traps. There are also several pressure-plate triggered sliding walls that serve to block player characters from travelling down passageways.

In addition to the mechanical hazards, Kuroon's labyrinth is also home to many dangerous creatures. Dire rats, giant insects and feral bats are common, though the number and ferocity of these should be at the discretion of the Games Master.

The most dangerous obstacle, however, is Kuroon himself. When using this labyrinth in a game setting, the Games Master should keep track of where Kuroon is in relation to the players, keeping in mind that he can likely smell the player characters



before his presence is detected. Moreover, Kuroon can navigate the labyrinth at a full run if necessary, without exposing himself to any of his own traps. Should the player characters pursue Kuroon through the labyrinth, he tries to lure them into as many traps as possible before turning on them and attacking.

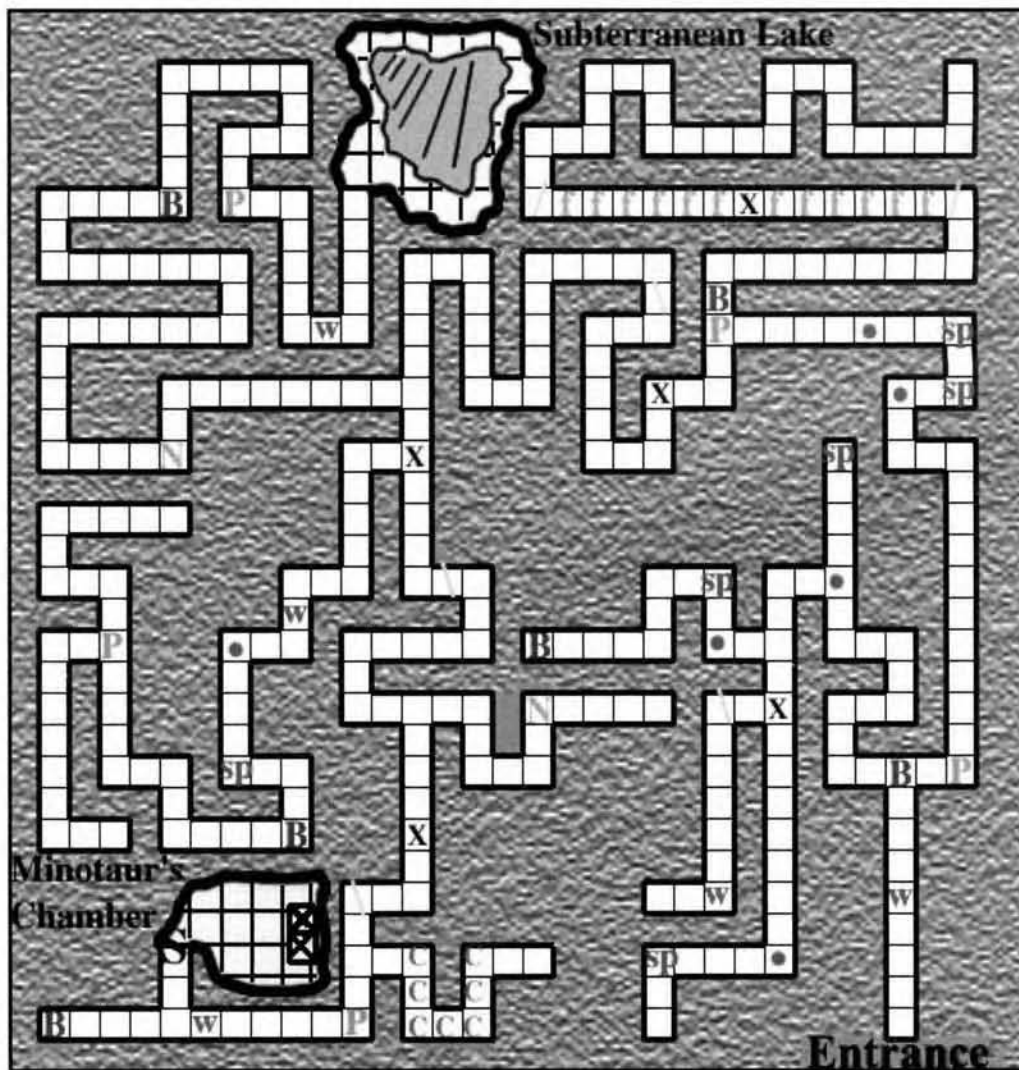
The Lake

The northern lake is Kuroon's water supply. Though it is unlikely that the player characters will live long enough to find the chamber, their discovery of it should be treated as an important event. Unscrupulous parties might even attempt to poison the water supply in an attempt to kill Kuroon without a fight. However, the lake holds more than merely water. Dwelling at the bottom of the lake is Zydenkyl, a young adult black dragon, whose continued presence has as yet gone unnoticed by Kuroon. This is largely by design, as the dragon knows that Kuroon would likely best him in a fair fight. Because of the danger inherent in the labyrinth, the black dragon does not always live at the bottom of the lake. Instead, he uses a network of underwater passageways to covertly enter and exit the labyrinth without attracting Kuroon's attention. He does keep his treasure hoard of ancient coins at

the lake bottom though, gambling that the lack of light in the cavern will not reflect upon the coins and attract Kuroon's interest. Thus, the introduction of torches into the cavern would immediately place the dragon's hoard in jeopardy, compelling the dragon to act.

A fight within the lake chamber would be brutal and messy. There is very little room for the dragon to manoeuvre aerially, giving a party of adventurers (or Kuroon himself) a decided advantage. Truly clever parties could even force Kuroon and the dragon into conflict with each other, though such a trap would be exceedingly difficult to stage.

- B = Falling Block Trap
- P = 40 ft. Pit Trap
- W = Crushing Wall Trap
- F = Flooding Room Trap
- X = Flooding Room/Shifting Wall Trigger
- Sp = Spear Trap
- = Spear Trap Trigger
- \ or / = Shifting Wall
- N = Large Net Trap
- C = Collapsing Tunnel
- * = Collapsing Tunnel Trigger
- S = Secret Door



Kuroon's Chamber

If the player characters should locate Kuroon's chamber, near the south-west corner of the labyrinth, they will find one of the fabled bone altars of The Horned One as well as the remains of Kuroon's last meal. A crude straw sleeping mat lies on the floor. The most powerful aspect of Kuroon's chamber, however, is the smell. Player characters must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to avoid being nauseated for one minute. However, this stench can also work to the player characters' advantage. Though a secret door guards Kuroon's chamber, the smell has a tendency to seep out into the hallway. Accordingly, some player characters may be able to determine the entrance to Kuroon's chamber by scent alone.

Kuroon, Brown Minotaur Fighter

Large Monstrous Humanoid

9th Level Fighter

Hit Dice: 6d8+30 + 9d10+45 (193 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 16 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural)

Attacks: Huge greatsword +22/+17/+12 melee, Gore +17 melee

Damage: Huge greatsword 2d8 + 12, Gore 1d8+6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Scent, Darkvision, Natural Cunning, Charge

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +8

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Craft (labyrinth) +6, Craft (altar) +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +12, Listen +8, Search +6, Spot +8

Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Juggernaut, Power Attack, Run, Toss Aside, Great Fortitude

Challenge Rating: 13

Treasure: 12,000 gp in gear

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Zydenkyl

Large Dragon (Water)

Hit Dice: 16d12+48 (152 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.

AC: 24 (-1 size, +15 natural)

Attacks: Bite +19 melee, 2 claws +14 melee, 2 wings +14 melee, tail slap +14 melee

Damage: Bite 2d6+4, claw 1d8+2, wing 1d6+2, tail slap 1d8+6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, frightful presence

Special Qualities: Water breathing, immunities, DR 5/+1, blindsight, keen senses, SR 17

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +11

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +17, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +17, Escape Artist +16, Listen +17, Search +17, Spellcraft +17, Spot +17

Feats: Hover, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Cleave, Snatch

Challenge Rating: 8

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): Line of acid, 80 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 10d4, Reflex half DC 21.

SA—Frightful Presence (Ex): Dragons can unsettle foes with their mere presence. This ability takes effect automatically (radius 150 ft.) whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. A potentially affected creature (one with less than 16 HD) that succeeds at a Will save (DC 19) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with more than 5 HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of other dragons.

SA—Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day - *darkness* (radius 50 ft.).

SQ—Immunities (Ex): Immune to acid, sleep, paralysis.

SQ—Water Breathing (Ex): This dragon can breath underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapons, spells and other abilities while submerged.

SQ—Blindsight (Ex): Dragons can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues); this dragon's range is 150 feet.

SQ—Keen Senses (Ex): Dragons can see four times as well as humans in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. They also have darkvision (range 500 feet).

Spells Known (cast 5/4; as a level 1 sorcerer): 0—*detect magic, resistance, detect poison, read magic*; 1—*endure elements, mage armour*.

MINOTAUR REFERENCE LIST

Minotaur Specific Skills

To successfully create one of The Horned One's bone altars, a minotaur must have taken ranks in the Craft (altar) skill. Craft (altar) is a class skill for any classed minotaur. Since it is a skill which relies mostly upon instinct however, its primary ability score is Wisdom rather than Intelligence. In a similar vein is the Craft (labyrinth) skill, a class skill for all classed minotaurs that taps into their instinctual ability to construct labyrinthine lairs.

Craft (altar) (Wis; Trained Only; Minotaurs Only)

Those possessed of this skill have the knowledge and experience necessary to create one of the infamous bone altars of The Horned One.

Check: The Horned One's altars have differing levels of complexity, the most intricate being eligible for enchantment by adepts of The Horned One. Results of the check are as follows:

DC	5	rudimentary altar
DC	10	simple altar
DC	15	moderately complex altar
DC	20	superior altar (counts as a masterwork item, is enchantable)

Craft (labyrinth) (Wis; Minotaurs Only)

This skill allows any classed minotaur to build a labyrinth with a greater level of aptitude. It is based upon instinctual knowledge and individual experience. In addition, it also includes the requisite skills for adding traps to a labyrinth.

DC	10	basic alteration of existing caves
DC	15	simple labyrinth, fairly easy to navigate
DC	20	complex labyrinth
DC	25	exceedingly difficult and dangerous labyrinth

MINOTAUR SPECIFIC SPELLS

Though minotaurs are not renowned for their magical prowess, minotaur adepts and clerics nevertheless have a small, unique repertoire of spells in their inventory. The spells tend to focus specifically upon improving a minotaur's combat abilities or aiding mystical rituals.

The enchantment of The Horned One's unholy altar requires an adept or cleric capable of casting at least third level spells. In addition, the altar itself acts as a material component for the blood sacrifice spells, though it is not consumed by the casting. The following spells may be used by minotaur adepts and clerics devoted to The Horned One only; they may not be used by a member of any other race or religion under any circumstances.

Defile Altar

Evocation

Level: Adp 2/Clr 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 8 hours

Range: Touch/close (25ft. plus 5ft./lvl)

Target: Bone altar/target creature

Duration: Permanent/until target is removed from sight of the altar

Saving Throw: None/Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell imbues a bone altar with an unholy aura. Not only does it become available as a material component for related spells, it also has the power to drive mad any creature (except minotaurs) who so much as glances at it. Treat this effect as a *confusion* spell, but with the following effects:

1d8	Behaviour
1 – 2	Target is panicked for 1 round
3 – 4	Target cowers for 1 round
5 – 6	Target attacks the nearest creature for 1 round
7 – 8	Target acts normally for 1 round

This effect causes any afflicted creature to imagine their own bones within the altar. The shock is often unbearable. Any creature about to be sacrificed upon the altar also receives a –2 morale penalty on this saving throw.

Material Components: Bone Altar of The Horned One (not consumed in the casting).



MINOTAUR REFERENCE LIST

The Horned One's Favour

Transmutation

Level: Adp 3/Clr 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Area

Targets: 1 creature/level

Duration: 10 rounds

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

This spell has the potential to produce a variety of effects, though different effects require additional castings of the spell.

Ability Enhancement: 'The blood of the enemy grants strength, speed and vitality' (targets gain +3 to any physical ability score or +1 to all three)

Power Enhancement: 'The soul of the enemy increases spiritual strength' (targets gain +2 to their effective caster level for the duration of the spell)

Material Components: blood from the altar of The Horned One

Focus: holy symbol of The Horned One (a bone crescent, representing horns, pierced through by a small iron knife, representing the head of the minotaur)

MINOTAUR FEATS

Juggernaut (Minotaur)

You cannot be stopped once you are moving.

Prerequisites: Improved Bull Rush, Run.

Benefits: As a full-round action, you are capable of barrelling through any number of enemies so long as they are all within range of a standard charge. Each enemy is allowed a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid your stampede, but any enemy who fails this save is knocked to the ground and lies prone. Enemies more than one size category larger than yourself cannot be targeted by this action. Enemies who make their Reflex save are entitled to attacks of opportunity against you. This feat is similar to the trample ability, except that it can target multiple creatures and deals no damage.

Nose Breaker (Minotaur)

You know how to use your skull to its best advantage while grappling.

Prerequisites: Str 13+, base attack bonus +3.

Benefits: During a grapple, a successful opposed grapple check allows you to bash your opponent's nose with great force. Make a standard attempt to damage your opponent: if it succeeds, roll damage. Maximum damage stuns your opponent for one round, effectively ending his part in the grapple.

Running Tackle (Minotaur)

You can throw an enemy to the ground by using your own weight and momentum.

Prerequisites: Improved Trip, base attack bonus +3.

Benefits: You can bring a creature up to one size category larger than yourself down to the ground on a successful charge. After successfully charging an opponent, you can make a trip attack as a free action, adding the charge damage dealt to your trip roll. If you succeed, you are considered grappled with the opponent (no opposed grapple check needed). Attempting to tackle a creature larger than you incurs a -2 penalty, while tackling a creature smaller than yourself grants a +2 bonus.

Stranglehold (Minotaur)

You possess a powerful, effective grappling technique.

Prerequisite: Str 14+.

Benefits: If you pin an opponent during a grapple, you can choose to attempt a stranglehold. A character who has no air to breathe can hold her breath for 2 rounds per point of Constitution. After this period of time, the character must make a Constitution check (DC 10) in order to continue holding her breath. The save must be repeated each round, with the DC increasing by +1 for each previous success. When the character fails one of these Constitution checks, she begins to suffocate. In the first round, she falls unconscious (0 hp). In the following round, she drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, she suffocates. The pin must be maintained for the stranglehold to be successful. However, you gain a +1 to your opposed grapple check for each round in which you maintain the pin. This technique cannot be used on creatures more than one size category greater than you, nor does it effect creatures that are not normally effected by critical hits.

Toss Aside (Minotaur)

You can throw enemies aside with your horns.

Prerequisite: Str 16+.

Benefits: After successfully striking an opponent

with a charging gore attack, you can choose to attempt to fling them away from battle with your horns. You and your opponent make opposed Strength checks. If you prevail, you may throw the opponent to the right or left. All targets thrown in this way travel 10 feet, unless hindered by another object, such as a wall, tree, etc. Thrown opponents suffer 1d6 subdual damage upon impact and lie prone until their next turn. If they collide with another object before travelling 10 feet (including another player character), then they receive 2d6 subdual damage. In the event of a collision with another character, both are knocked prone.



Brown Minotaur Fighter

Large Monstrous Humanoid

5th Level Fighter

Hit Dice: 6d8+18 + 5d10+15 (88 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 14 (-1 size, +5 natural)

Attacks: Huge greataxe +16/+11/+6 melee, gore +12 melee

Damage: Huge greataxe 2d8+9, gore 1d8+3

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.

Special Qualities: Scent, Darkvision, Natural Cunning, Charge

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +5

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 9, Cha 6

Skills: Craft (labyrinth) +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +10, Listen +7, Search +5, Spot +7

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greataxe), Power Attack, Track,

Weapon Focus (gore)

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: 4,300 gp in gear

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Noble Minotaur Ranger

Large Monstrous Humanoid

3rd Level Ranger

Hit Dice: 6d8 + 3d10 (44 hp)

Initiative: +2

‘How will we know if we’re lost?’ Igil did not want to venture any further into the maze without verifying that they would be able to find their way out again.

Strom frowned, ‘You doubting my ability to find the way out?’

‘No, no, nothing like that,’ the gnome replied, rather too quickly. ‘But what if you aren’t with us, or are unconscious or something?’

Erh-tzu nodded. ‘A most wise and valuable point of view to consider, is it not?’

Strom ground his teeth. ‘I’ll carve marks into the walls as we go, then you can follow them out if you need to. Fair enough?’

Igil nodded, seeming somewhat mollified. *And I’ll put my mark over yours, though none but me can see it.*



MINOTAUR REFERENCE LIST

Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 16 (+2 Dex, -1 size, +5 natural)
Attacks: Greatsword +10/+5, greatsword +10
melee, gore +12 melee
Damage: Dual greatswords 2d6+6 melee, gore
1d8+3
Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.
Special Qualities: Scent, Darkvision, Natural
Cunning, Charge, Favoured Enemy (humans)
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +4
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 6, Cha
12
Skills: Craft (altar) +0, Craft (labyrinth) +0,
Intimidate +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Search
+6, Spot +6
Feats: Ambidexterity, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Power
Attack, Quick Draw, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: 2,500 gp in gear
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil



Shaggy Minotaur Barbarian

Large Monstrous Humanoid
1st Level Barbarian
Hit Dice: 6d8+30 + 1d12+5 (67 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft.
AC: 16 (+2 Dex, -1 size, +5 natural)
Attacks: Huge greatclub +14/+9 melee, gore +9
melee
Damage: Huge greatclub 2d6+12, gore 1d8+4
Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.
Special Qualities: Scent, Darkvision, Natural
Cunning, Charge, Rage
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +4
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 7
Skills: Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Listen +7, Spot +7,
Search +7
Feats: Power Attack, Track, Cleave, Great Fortitude
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: 900 gp in gear
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Bearded Minotaur Adept

Large Monstrous Humanoid
9th Level Adept
Hit Dice: 6d8+18 + 9d6+27 (111 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 14 (-1 size, +5 natural)
Attacks: Huge quarterstaff +14/+9 melee, huge
quarterstaff (as double weapon) +10/+5// +6 melee,
gore +9 melee
Damage: Huge quarterstaff 1d8/1d8 +8, huge
quarterstaff (as double weapon) 1d8+7 // 1d8+3,
gore 1d8+2
Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.
Special Qualities: Scent, Darkvision, Natural
Cunning, Charge, Divine Spells
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +13
Abilities: Str 20, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha
12
Skills: Concentration +8, Craft (altar) +8, Craft
(labyrinth) +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (religion)
+8, Listen +10, Search +7, Spot +10
Feats: Extend Spell, Empower Spell, Great
Fortitude, Improved Initiative Power Attack, Scribe
scroll, Track
Challenge Rating: 13
Treasure: 12,000 gp in gear
Alignment: Usually neutral evil
Spells Per Day: 3/4/3/1
Spell DC: 12 + spell level

'Perhaps, most knowledgeable companions, this lair is deserted. It is known to happen with the minotaurs of my homeland. These dishonourable creatures migrate once they have exhausted their chosen area of its resources.' Erh-tzu shrugged. 'It is only a humble suggestion.'

Igil, peeking from behind Drak, said, 'It's not deserted. I've heard things.'

Strom snorted, 'Not that again. If my guess is right, we should be just about to the centre of this gods forsaken maze. If we don't find any creature or any signs of recent occupancy, we'll leave.' The dwarf did not like the odd light shining in Igil's eyes. Though it was against his nature and better judgement, he patted the gnome on the shoulder in a gesture of reassurance. 'Everything will be fine. We'll be on our way in no time.'

Drak nodded. 'Don't worry Igil, just stay close to me.' Igil quickly nodded back and shoved his shaking hands further into his sleeves. Strom resumed his place at the head of the party and continued onward.

Igil swallowed heavily as he heard the echoing noise again. His ears tried to tell him it was the sound of hoofbeats on cobblestones, but it was somehow twisted, wrong. He stopped and listened closely. The realisation that the sound was of a two-hoofed creature walking, not of the more natural four-legged variety nearly made him scream. He ground his teeth and clenched his fists. He repeated Strom's words to himself *Everything will be fine.*

'I think we made a wrong turn somewhere.' Drak stopped and stared at the wall. 'That's one of your marks, isn't it Strom?'

Strom cursed and blinked disbelief at the mark. 'But it don't feel like we've doubled back.'

Igil whispered shakily, 'May I see it?' He glanced at the mark and sighed with relief. 'That's not your mark. I'm sure of it.'

'Then I guess we're not alone after all.' Igil's relief fled at Drak's ominous words.

After several more turns through the labyrinthine passage a violent gust of wind suddenly extinguished the torch Erh-tzu was carrying. Muttered curses sounded from the darkness as the ranger fumbled for his flint and steel and Strom waited for his eyes to adjust to the pitch darkness. A loud popping noise sounded from the blackness.

'Gods save you if I find you, Igil. Stop that popping right now!' Strom's whisper grated menacingly in the dark but the popping sound continued.

'It's not me.' Strom flinched as Igil's voice came from the opposite direction to the cracking sound. With a whispered exclamation the ranger ignited his torch.

Towering in the centre of the chamber was an organised jumbling nightmare of bone and gristle that throbbed and writhed like a severed serpent. Bones of a thousand shapes and sizes had been joined into a monstrous altar that dominated the room. Blood wept from the eye sockets of the skulls in the construction and glistened wetly, like rubied tears, in the torchlight. The skulls seemed to turn toward the intruders and their fleshless jaws gaped open in silent, anguished screams. The cracking sound came from the joints of the altar as it gyrated in what would have been described as tortured agony had it been a living creature. From behind the undulating horror stepped a fresh nightmare.

The minotaur walked slowly around the altar, studying the four figures before it. Its hoofsteps echoed hollowly off of the walls of the chamber, somehow turning the ear with their cadence. Dark, curly hair covered its entire body and did little to hide its imposing musculature. Gleaming ebony horns curved from either side of the minotaur's head, arcing upwards, the steel-capped tips nearly meeting above its head. The creature's long beard was intricately braided in a mockery of the current dwarven style. A huge, jaggedly toothed greatsword hung at the creature's side. Malignant intelligence shone in the dark eyes of the beast as it smiled and drew its weapon.

'Ghajoon welcomes your addition to his altar,' it said in slow but clear Common. 'I shall pave the road to glory with thy skulls.'

'That'll be nice,' said Igil, deciding that elsewhere was now the place to be.



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THE
SLAYER'S
GUIDE
TO

MINOTAURS

Masters of the Labyrinth

Many adventurers are familiar with the minotaur, at least in general terms. It is quite common to hear stories about dashing, heroic fighters battling a fierce minotaur to the death at the heart of the foul creature's dark labyrinth. Some of these stories, no doubt, have some truth to them.

However, it is the vast amount of untold stories that truly tell the tale of the minotaur.

These tales tell of a more dangerous beast, one, which does not merely sit at the centre of its labyrinth waiting to be slaughtered. They speak of a creature that utilises the darkness and the confusion inherent to its labyrinthine home to torment those foolish enough to venture into this den of evil.

Inside You Will Find:

Minotaur Physiology	Habitat
Minotaur Society	Methods of Warfare
Roleplaying with Minotaurs	Scenario Hooks and Ideas
Kuroon's Labyrinth	Minotaur Reference List

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