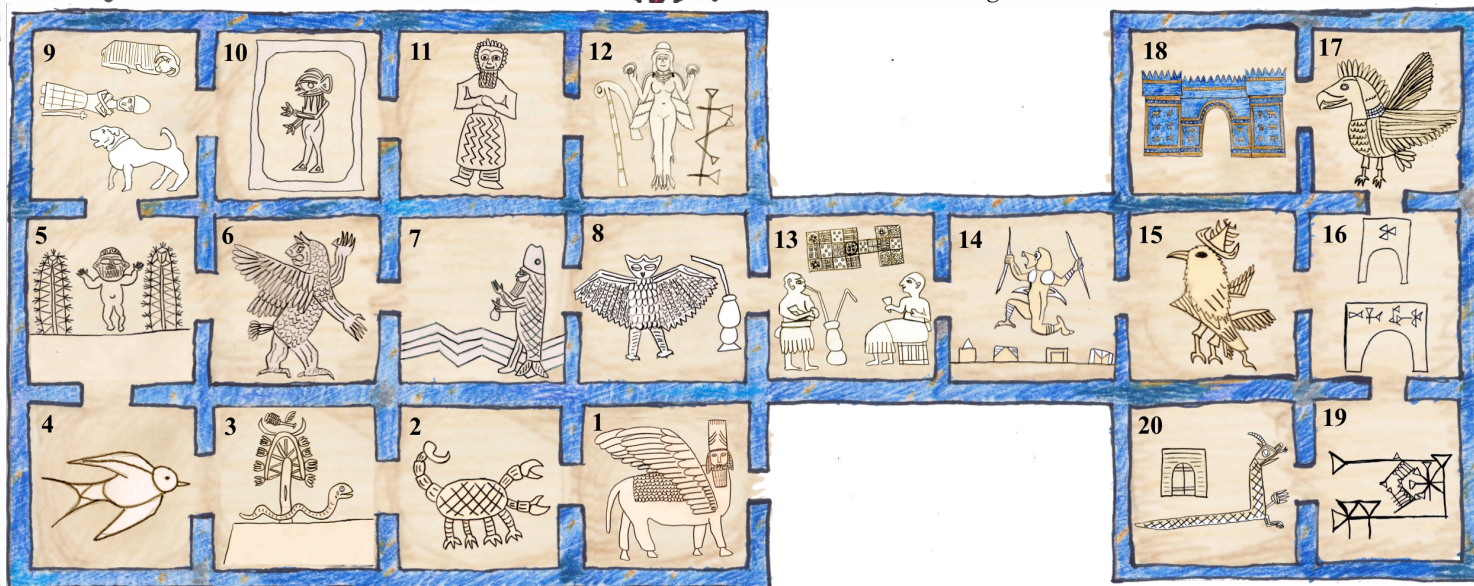


A Royal Game of Ur



On the surface, it looks to be nothing more than a worn-out board game. How the party gets ahold of it is up to you; maybe it was a gift from a traveling merchant, or perhaps it was just another art object left amongst the dungeon's treasures. Regardless, upon throwing the dice, the party is pulled into a world of forgotten gods and ancient demons.



The board is made up of 20 "Houses"—demiplanes which may be anywhere from several miles across to the size of a small room. Each House has at least one ornately decorated Gate, which allows passage between the Houses. Upon being pulled into the first House, the party will see a Gate disappear behind them. They are trapped in the board game until they can find a means of escape.

House 1 is a stone room in which sits a friendly, if somewhat proud, *Lamassu*, who is more than happy to explain the mechanics of the Gates and Houses, and to answer any other questions the party may have.

House 2 is a narrow pass between two mountains with giant scorpions on each side. The scorpions are not immediately hostile, but will taunt and goad the party mercilessly.

House 3 is a tree with an empty eagle nest atop it. Behind the tree, a deep ravine blocks the gate to exit. At the tree's base is a crying, but mute, serpent. If treated with kindness, it will grant the party *Sharur*, an enchanted mace capable of speech and flight. If treated with disrespect the serpent will attack, and attempt to throw them into the ravine.

House 4 is the nest of the Swallow. The Swallow is the fastest and most deadly of the birds. Flirtatious by nature, if befriended the Swallow will be a staunch ally and bring good luck to the party.

House 5 is a large forest of cedar trees, and home to the vicious giant *Humbaba*. Whoever kills the *Humbaba* shall be cursed by them with their final, dying breath.

House 6 is the nest of the storm-bird *Anzu*, breather of fire and water. He is obsessed with war, death, and famine. If he takes a liking to the heroes, he'll bring them a hearty meal.

House 7 is the realm of *Abzu* - a great, brackish sea. The party will need to find a way across, such as by building a boat. It's home to *Apkollu*, the wisest of the fish-men, and a carrier of *The Water of Life*, which when sprinkled on a corpse will bring them back to life.

House 8 is the nest of the fowl-demon *Siris*. An unpredictable drunkard, she will offer a favor to those who drink with her.

House 9 is a field in which 5 wild dogs made of silver and 5 wild dogs made of gold attack the party and each other. Elsewhere, the remains of sheep lie alongside the body of their shepherd, *Dumuzid*.

House 10 is a dark cave in which 1d6 *Rabisu* vampires lurk. They like to ambush their prey and can be repelled with salt.

House 11 is the home and workshop of *Mummu*, a great craftsman who can build anything large or small, so long as it's not magic.

House 12 is the palace of *Ishtar*, goddess of love, war, and justice. She is waiting for her husband *Dumuzid*, the shepherd, to return.

House 13 is a tavern, serving hearty food and beer. A group of drunken patrons gambles over a game of 20 Squares, much like this one in layout. The bandit *Bilulu* and her son *Girgire* are hiding out here, having killed *Dumuzid*.

House 14 is a graveyard, haunted by 1d4 *Edimmu*, the discontented wind-spirits of people who were laid to rest improperly. Unless properly laid to rest, they haunt the graveyard and possess those who show them disrespect.

House 15 is the nest of the broken-winged raven, *Tammuz*—he spends half the year in the underworld and can tell the party all about it. Once a king, he was turned into a raven by his ex-lover *Ishtar*.

House 16 is a bleak stone room with two clay Gates on which are written the words "*Kur*" and "*Tiamat*", leading to Houses 17 and 19, respectively.

House 17 is the nest of the Eagle. The Eagle is a fearsome carnivore, who ate the children of the crying serpent. He can be satiated with sufficient meat.

House 18 holds a grand lapis Gate. This is the first of the *Seven Gates to the Underworld* and is guarded by the meek-mannered god *Neti*. To pass into the Kur, the Land of Dust, one must remove all their clothes and possessions. Every day the sun god *Utu* passes through these gates. Once one enters the Underworld, one can never leave unless they have access to *The Water of Life*.

It is possible for the party to become trapped in the Underworld, and this too may become the setting of many adventures. Its denizens include the souls of the dead and a wide variety of demons, as well as *Humbaba's* brother *Pazuzu* and *Queen Ereshkigal*, twin sister of *Ishtar*.

House 19 is a large mountain on which lives *Azag*, a giant demon so foul that water boils in his presence, as well as in his earth-demon children's.

House 20 is the lair of the glistening *Tiamat*, the dragon goddess of the primordial sea. She is the only being capable of opening the final Gate, and thus the only one capable of granting the party exit from her royal game.