

The Tribulations of Kanah

An Introductory Adventure for the

TESTAMENT

Roleplaying in the Biblical Era Setting

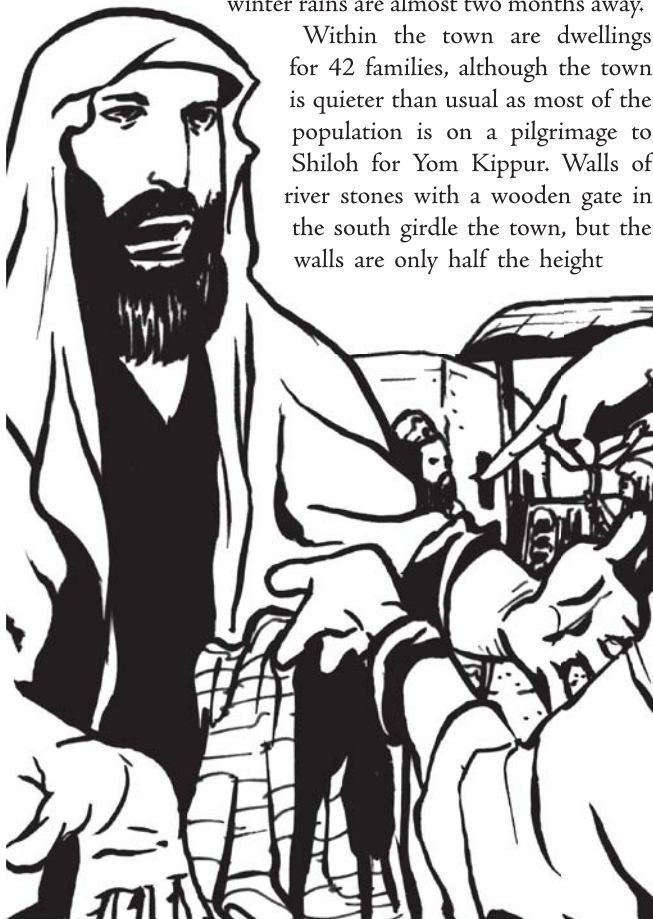
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The adventure takes place in Israel during the Judges era, after the time of Joshua, and is intended for a party of three to five player characters of 1st–4th level. The PCs are strangers who arrive in the town of Kanah prior to the Yom Kippur holy day. There they discover mysterious and disturbing incidents, including Philistines demanding compensation for a murdered merchant, the activities of a strange prophet, and a cult that's being urged on by a devil. This ultimately leads to a confrontation with the cult and its patron tempter.

Kanah

In the lands given to the tribe of Ephraim, 20 miles west of Shiloh, surrounded by low hills and near a small river, is a small town called Kanah. Currently the riverbed is dry because the winter rains are almost two months away.

Within the town are dwellings for 42 families, although the town is quieter than usual as most of the population is on a pilgrimage to Shiloh for Yom Kippur. Walls of river stones with a wooden gate in the south girdle the town, but the walls are only half the height



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of a man; more a livestock enclosure than a defense. Another 20 houses can be found scattered across the nearby farmlands.

Kanah's communal property includes a potter's yard (where potters throw aside broken pottery shards) and on the north side, a threshing floor (an open area where grain is threshed) on the south side, and a granary and a watch tower on the east side. The primary source of water for the inhabitants is a magical spring near the town's center, endlessly producing water that flows from a solid stone to an underground cistern.

The Spring at Kanah

A century ago, a prophet, Elishema of Gilgal, performed a number of feats in the area of Kanah. The greatest was to bind a demon in a cavern in the wilderness, but that story has been almost forgotten over the generations.

Elishema also created a magical stone from which a steady stream of water constantly flows for the benefit of Kanah. The stone functions as a *decanter of endless water*, except that the prophet warned the people of the town that moving the stone (weighing over 100 lbs), or using it to create more water than the town needs for ordinary purposes (which are usually fulfilled at the *stream level*) would cause the magic to disappear. As the water is a part of the everyday life of Kanah, this story is well-remembered.

On Yom Kippur last year, Kanah's priest, Abishur the Levite, cast *community protection* against plague and vermin, protections that are still in place.

Common trades in Kanah include winemaking, olive oil production, and pottery crafting. As it is close to Philistine-held territory, the town maintains a garrison of experienced warriors.

KANAH

Area: 9 square miles

Adult Population: 380

Power Center: Conventional

Power Center Alignment: Lawful good

Authority Figures: Nadab (Exp 5), Abishur (Lev 3)

Piety: 4

Defenses: Three Sides of 20 troops each (one Side Veteran, two Sides Trained), reduced to 15 Trained troops for this scenario.

- Kanah's leader is Nadab (Exp 5), a local olive grower, who is assisted by Abishur the Levite (Lev 3). Most of the able-bodied local men (including Nadab and Abishur) and many of the women and children have left for Shiloh; the most important people currently in Kanah are:

- Tamar (Exp 3/Psa 1), wife of Nadab, who is a relentless talker and capable organizer.
- Eshek the Lame (Ftr 8/Cmp 2), a respected but crippled old war hero who lies in his bed awaiting death, spending most of his time in a half-delirious state remembering his service for the Lord, and regretting some of his ancient misdeeds.
- Hanoch of Shiloh (War 4), leader of the garrison; he currently has 15 soldiers (War 2) under his command.
- Zoheth the Lorist (Psa 5), an old man and a bit of a recluse who mourns the death of his family in a fire five years ago. He knows many local legends, including the story of Elishema's binding of the devil there. He doesn't know anything about the current status of the devil.

Getting The PCs There

Kanah is a considerable distance from the main roads used by the Israelites and precariously close to Philistia. Reasons why the player characters might be in such an out-of-the-way location include:

- They are Israelite scouts patrolling the area near the Philistine border.
- They encountered a hermit who told them they'd be needed at Kanah at the time of Yom Kippur.
- They live in or near Kanah.
- They detoured and lost their way on pilgrimage to Shiloh.
- They are making a quick trip to Kanah to repay a debt or be paid by a debtor on the way to Shiloh.

If the PCs are not locals, they find the people of Kanah welcoming but distant. If they come from the region, they find them much more subdued and secretive than normal.

Arrival

Traveling through a well-farmed area, the heroes arrive at Kanah a few days prior to Yom Kippur.

At first glance, Kanah is quiet. Its gate is unwatched and the late summer sun reflects harshly off the dull brown walls of the houses. The party notices a few people milling around the area; their suspicious glances appear more frightened than hostile. If approached, they inquire whether the PCs are pilgrims and whether they need food and a place to stay. They're hospitable, but quiet when asked about what's happening locally.

Casual conversation should soon uncover the following information:

- Most men have already left on the Yom Kippur pilgrimage to Shiloh.
- The grape and olive crops were blighted, and most people believe the area's under some kind of a curse that they hope will be lifted on Yom Kippur.
- Three years ago, there was an agreement between the town and the Philistines of Joppa to leave each other alone. Both sides have honored it.
- Wild pigs have been seen nearby.
- A prophet, Zadok, son of Zohar, has arrived in town. He claims that the Lord has shown him a vision of a river of blood flowing in the riverbed, which he interprets as meaning the death of many townsfolk if they don't repent from some unspecified sins. He's seen and spoken of other visions, but that's the one that the locals remember.



The Philistines

Within a few hours of the PCs' arrival at Kanah two Philistines come to the gate of the town. They are large men (one of them abnormally so) mail-clad and bearing great swords. Although they traveled long in the summer heat, they show no signs of weariness. They stop before the gates of the city and call for the townsfolk to attend their words. And the people of Kanah, although fearful, come.

The larger of the two men, Ahizuth, son of Akiyush, strides to within 10 steps of the gate, and cries:

"Three years ago we swore oaths with the men of Kanah not to shed each other's blood, and we have been faithful. But in the riverbed, less than a league from your gates, the vultures now dance upon the body of Yamanu, son of Raphah, beloved son of Joppa. This death we place on your heads!"

"Heed the words of the widow and sons of Yamanu, people of Kanah! We demand recompense from you: money, stone, or blood."

"If you wish it to be money, you have until nightfall of the third day hence to present to us 2,000 shekels of gold."

"If it is to be stone, at the end of the third day you can present to us the source of the water you drink in the height of summer, the spring that comes from nowhere and never ceases to flow."

"If you refuse us gold or the stone, against the wrath of Joppa this place cannot stand. Your men are gone, and the armies of Joppa shall fall upon Kanah like the storms of Dagon, your walls shall be laid low, and no pit shall be deep enough to hide you from our swords. The god of Kanah will not protect you, for innocent blood has been shed."

"Heed the words of the widow of Yamanu, people of Kanah, and atone for your shame!"

It should be obvious that the town cannot stand against a determined assault from Joppa, and it's unlikely it would be able to gather sufficient forces in a mere three days to prevent the Philistines from destroying the town. However, with most of the men gone to Shiloh, it may prove difficult to raise 2,000 gp. And losing the stone of the spring would not only be a major hardship for Kanah but (unbeknownst to the townsfolk) if the stone is removed from its place, the magic on it is dispelled permanently.

The Philistines will reduce the guilt offering to a more reasonable 200 gp if the town surrenders Yamanu's killer (Mereb, a young girl of Kanah, although neither the townsfolk nor the Philistines knows she's the killer), but they won't negotiate any other terms.

The Philistines wait several minutes for an answer. If the PCs do not intervene, the townsfolk tell the Philistines that their leaders are in Shiloh and they should await their return. If this is the response, the Philistines return five days later with a force large enough to raze the town.

Ahizuth, son of Akiyush, male half-nephilim War 4: CR 5; Large humanoid; HD 7d8+27; hp 62; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 18); Atk +11 melee (2d6+6/crit 18–20×3, Large iron longspear) or +6 ranged (1d8, Large shortbow); AL LN; Piety 0; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13; Skills: Climb +3*, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +8, Listen -1*, Move Silently -1*, Profession (sailor) +1, Ride (chariot) +0*, Swim +7; Feats: Endurance, Weapon Focus (longspear); Flaw: Proud; Languages: Phoenician, Hebrew; Possessions: bronze scale mail, bronze helm, iron longspear, shortbow

*includes penalties for armor

Response to the Philistines

The immediate response of the frightened townsfolk is to dispatch a messenger to Shiloh. The heroes have a number of options open to them:

INVESTIGATION

The heroes can begin investigating the murders, in which case discussion with the people of Kanah reveals three pieces of relevant information:

- Five weeks ago, Benjamin, son of Caleb the Potter, flew into an uncharacteristic rage and stabbed a farmer named Jozibad, killing him. Benjamin was judged guilty and executed.
- Two weeks ago, a merchant from Mizpah named Onam was also found stabbed to death, several miles north of the riverbed. No one knows who was responsible; some blame the Philistines, a few blame the members of the neighboring tribe of Dan, who are known to be quick to take to the sword in defense of their territory.
- For the last several weeks, a number of young girls have been seen spying on travelers.

Their investigation is then interrupted by an attack; go to *Pigs*.

PAYMENT

The heroes can help pool the resources of Kanah, some 150 gp in silver and gold and another 500 gp worth of goods that could be sold for gold in Mizpah, Gezer, or Shiloh if the PCs could transport it there and then return within the three days. If the PCs take the goods for sale without offering to leave one of their number as a hostage or some good of their own as collateral, the suspicious Hanoch accuses them of being accomplices of the Philistines; go to *Wild Accusations* and modify Hanoch's accusations accordingly.

The PCs could make up the difference from their own pockets, in which case they would have to await the return of the rest of Kanah's population before they could be repaid. Hanoch will grumble, but won't make this his main accusation against the adventurers.

MASS COMBAT

The heroes can try rally the townsfolk and the garrison to fight the Philistines, but only Hanoch is foolhardy enough to think they could win such a battle. During the holiday period there aren't any allies in the area that could arrive in time to help the town. The PCs might have significant abilities to contribute, but the battle is still almost guaranteed to go against them.

SINGLE COMBAT

A hero might challenge Ahizuth to single combat, requiring a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 18) and an insulting or self-righteous tone to kindle Ahizuth's anger. If the PC wins the battle, the Philistine desire for retribution is increased, but the response is delayed enough for the majority of Kanah's men to have returned from Shiloh.

DECEPTION

A replica of the magical stone can be crafted with a bit of labor and *create water* and *everflow* spells or some combination of illusion spells. While this will satisfy the Philistines for a while, when they discover that they've been duped, they will return in force.

SLEEP

If the PCs are undecided about what to do, they can use the Dreamer feat to receive a vision from the god of Israel; go to *Miracle of the River*.

Miracle of the River

The following vision is received by any PC using the Dreamer feat in response to the Philistine challenge. If more than one PC uses the feat, the dream can be divided between them. If none of the PCs has the Dreamer feat, the prophet Zadok can receive this vision and then relate it to the townsfolk.

An old woman weeps over the body of a dead man. She crouches in a riverbed that is dry except for a brook that springs from a single rock. "Woe to Israel, mother of sorrows!" she cries. A herd of pigs stands on one riverbank looking down on her. Her kinsfolk sharpen their swords on the other as a jackal moves back and forth barking at them. The men seem oblivious to three vipers that slither among them, their tails stretching back over the horizon to the east.

Moses strides into view and stands on the riverbank. He throws silver into the riverbed, and the pigs rush into the river to eat it. As the pigs gorge themselves on the metal, the brook rises up into a flash flood that washes the pigs and the silver away. The flood subsides, but the stone from which the brook flowed is gone as well.

A Knowledge (dreams) check (DC15) is required to decipher each paragraph of the dream.

The first paragraph describes the situation facing Kanah: the pigs are obviously the Philistine army. The jackal is Hanoch the warmonger. The vipers are the three demon-possessed girls, their tails pointing the direction to the cloven altar.

The second paragraph describes one possible solution to the problem: If the Philistine army could be lured into the riverbed, a flash flood would drown them just as Pharaoh's army was drowned in the Red Sea.

If the dreamer discusses this vision with any Kanahite, he is told that the stone with water flowing from it sounds like the one in the town that miraculously provides all their water needs (the resemblance to the magic stone can also be noted with a Spot check: DC15). Building a dam across the riverbed and rerouting the flow of the stone's water to build a pool behind the dam could store enough water for a devastating manmade flood if the stone's water output is increased to maximum for two days. Unfortunately, once the water from the stone is used as a weapon, the magic of the stone is dispelled permanently.

Pigs

A few hours after the Philistine ultimatum is offered, another incident occurs. A herd of pigs comes barreling through the gate and rampages around the town, running through courtyards, scattering weaving equipment, and breaking into storehouses. Most people take shelter on the roofs of their houses.

After their initial chaotic circuit of the town, most of the herd leaves the town and heads for the wilderness. A third of the herd, six (demon-possessed) swine, remain in town causing trouble.

Demon-possessed wild pig: CR3; Medium-size animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 40 ft; AC16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atk +2 melee (1d8+2, gore); Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; SA ferocity (continues to fight even if disabled or dying), sin damage (adds opponent's Piety penalty (if any) as a damage bonus; if using traditional alignments, add a +2 damage bonus for every step the target is away from lawful good); SQ Acid and fire resistance 5, immunity to mind-affecting enchantments, can be turned, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4; Skills: Listen +7, Spot +5

None of the townsfolk are killed in the chaos, but many are injured. The prophet Zadok seems to be the primary target of the pigs, but instead of fleeing, he stands in place screaming "River of blood! River of blood!" as the swine charge him.

If the possessed pigs are driven out of the town, they can be followed back to the cloven altar. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC15) can also track them. If any possessed pigs are killed, the demons flee to the wilderness, where they possess other members of the herd.

Zadok, son of Zohar, human male **Psa 6/Prf 2:** CR8; Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d6+2d8-16; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC10; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d4, dagger) or +6/+1 ranged (1d4, dagger); SA Spells, SQ Consecrate ground, dispel possession, improved dream, worship circle, psalm of protection, selah 1/day; AL NG; Piety 8; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 7, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 17; Skills: Concentration +2, Diplomacy +7, Heal +2, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (dreams) +10 (+12 when interpreting portents received in dreams), Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +3, Perform +8, Profession (herdsman) +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +5; Feats: Dreamer, Mountain Born, Omen Reader, Scourging Spell; Flaw: Superstitious; Languages: Hebrew; Possessions: dagger

Psalmist Spells Known (4/3+1/2+1; saves are DC13 + spell level): '0'-level: create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, mending, purify food and drink, virtue; 1st-level: bless, battlefield oratory, command, cure light wounds, sanctuary; 2nd level: endurance, shield other, whispering wind

If the adventurers battle the pigs, a Spot check (DC15) made during the combat reveals a teenaged girl watching with unusually keen interest. She disappears during the later stages of the battle, but if a PC explicitly states that he's keeping an eye on her (a move-equivalent action every round thereafter until she leaves), he can attempt a Wilderness Lore check (DC20) later to find her; tracking without having watched her departure is DC25.



Many Questions

If the adventurers have done anything to earn the locals' trust, Tamar begs them to stay, offering them compensation for their troubles when her husband returns from Shiloh.

If they speak with Tamar in her home, the PCs may (Spot check: DC12) notice someone eavesdropping on the conversation: Tamar's daughter Athalia, the girl who was watching them in battle. If caught, she plays innocent, but if anyone threatens her, she gives him the Evil Eye and bolts out of town toward the cloven altar. If ignored, she sneaks around spying on the characters as long as they remain in Kanah.

If the heroes investigate the murder of Zozibad, the widow of Benjamin, the executed murderer, claims that her husband had acted strangely for several days prior to the murder "as if besotted by drink, although his lips had touched no wine." Benjamin's father, Caleb (who has a reputation for being suspicious), says that he saw two young girls, Mereb, daughter of Samuel, and Athalia, daughter of Nahab, following Benjamin prior to the murder.

Investigating the murders of the merchant Onam and the Philistine Yamanu is more difficult, as there were no witnesses when the girls killed them.

Accusations

The next morning (or earlier, if the PCs begin leveling accusations at townsfolk), Hanoch, the garrison leader, flanked by six of his men (2nd-level warriors) strides into the public square and shout accusations against the adventurers, trying to turn the townsfolk against them.

"The strangers are Philistine spies! They make slanderous accusations against the people! They come to foment dissent! They have told the Philistines of our weakness, and if we do not rise against them, they will continue to perform acts of sabotage and murder! These spies must be stopped at once!"

By the time the player characters hear the accusations, a large crowd has gathered in the square to listen to Hanoch. While he's known to be a belligerent sort, he's still a better-known quantity to the Kanahites than the newcomers.

Hanoch, human male War 4: CR3; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d8; hp 22; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, longsword), or +5 ranged (1d4, sling); AL LN; Piety: -4; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13; Skills: Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +6, Hide +2, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (military) +5, Profession (soldier) +2; Feats: Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword); Flaw: Warmonger; Languages: Hebrew; Possessions: longsword, bronze scale mail, bronze helm, sling

The player character with the best Diplomacy score must make a Diplomacy check against Hanoch; if they've won Tamar's trust, she'll speak out (giving the PC a +2 bonus); if they've won Eshek's trust, then he is brought out on a bier to speak up (giving the PC a +4 bonus); if Zoheth speaks for the PCs, it's worth a +1 bonus.

If the PC loses the check, the crowd turns on the heroes, either forcing them out of town or attacking them.

If the PC wins the contest, he can (if he desires) turn the crowd against Hanoch. If the heroes offer Hanoch an opportunity to repent, he draws his sword and attacks the PCs' leader. If other PCs join the fight, so do Hanoch's six bodyguards.

If combat occurs, the heroes see three young girls (Athalia, Mereb, and Tabitha) giving participants on both sides of the battle the Evil Eye or casting other spells. As before, they leave the scene before the end of the battle, and can be tracked to the cloven altar.

If the PCs are victorious in the battle, one of Hanoch's men who didn't fight informs the heroes that some local girl (he's not sure which one) whispered an allegation into Hanoch's ear that morning, before he set off on his tirade.

If the PCs saved Zadok during the wild pig incident, then following the confrontation with Hanoch and his men, Zadok comes into the square, looking disheveled but confident. He praises the PCs for putting the wild Hanoch in his place and proclaims: "*Kanah, treachery lurks within and without your walls. Cleanse yourself or you shall be swept away!*"

If the PCs didn't use the Dreamer feat during the night, Zadok reveals his dream of the night before, needing the help of the locals to interpret the details.

The Cloven Altar

Whether through tracking of the pigs or the girls, or at the urging of Zadok, the heroes should eventually make their way to a high hill a mile northeast of Kanah. A century ago, the prophet Elishema moved a huge blue-black stone to this place to commemorate a successful battle with a tempter devil. The hill is generally avoided by the townsfolk. Unknown to all but a few, Elishema didn't kill the devil; he only bound it to this world with a magical chain, using the stone to seal the devil in the cave behind.

A year ago, three girls sacrificed a pig on the rock, hoping to gain power from an unspecified deity. The makeshift altar broke in two when the blood spilled on it, and the imprisoned devil was once again able to work its will on the outside world. The devil promised the girls dark knowledge if they allowed themselves to be possessed by the demons who dwelt in that wilderness.

The girls are now demon-possessed, filled with sorcerous power, and protected by a herd of six demon-possessed pigs.

Athalia/Mereb/Tabitha, demon-possessed human Sor 1: CR1; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 1d4+2; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC10; Atk -2 melee (1d3-2, unarmed strike); SA Sin damage (add opponent's Piety penalty (if any) as a damage bonus; if using traditional alignments, add a +2 damage bonus for every step the target is away from lawful good); SQ Acid and fire resistance 5; AL NE; Piety -8; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 6, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 15; Skills: Concentration +8, Hide +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +1, Spot +2, Use Rope +1; Feats: Skill Focus (concentration), Spell Penetration; Flaw: Profane; Languages: Hebrew

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/3+1; saves are DC12 + spell level): '0'-level: *dancing lights, daze, detect magic, mage hand*; 1st-level: *charm person, magic missile*

The broken stone partially covers an entrance to a cavern roughly 20 ft high and 40 ft across. This is the prison of the tempter devil. With a Challenge Rating of 10, the devil is much too powerful for the heroes to face in open combat, even if aided by Zadok or other townsfolk. Luckily, Elishema's chain prevents the devil from using any of its powers except *suggestion*, Devil's Luck, and its spell-like abilities unless it's attacked. It may only move 5 ft from the wall to which it's bound.

The devil attempts to persuade people to break the chain (hardness 15, hit points 50), which will release it to the outer world. If any of the possessed girls are present and still possessed during the encounter with the devil, not only can they use their own abilities in the encounter, but they can (as a move-equivalent action) sacrifice Piety that the devil can use with its Devil's Luck ability to increase the strength of its *suggestions*.

If the Tempter devil is slain, or the cavern is sealed and the area is *consecrated*, the region will again be safe. There is 2,000 gp worth of silver bullion in the den, which triggers

a minor curse when touched by someone with the Greedy character flaw.

Concluding the Adventure

A prophet can expel the demons from the girls, although they committed a number of sinful acts *before* they were possessed and must atone for these sins on Yom Kippur.

If the Philistines are paid-off, they withhold their attack; if the cursed money found in the cavern is used, it wreaks havoc on the sinful in Joppa. Turning Mereb over to the Philistines as the killer of Yamanu would be a sin (-10 Piety), as it was a possessor demon that was truly responsible for the murder.

If the PCs succeed in killing or retrapping the devil and in preventing the Philistines from overrunning Kanah they gain reputations locally. Depending on how they performed these tasks, they may have made enemies (Ahizuth, Hanoch, or even some of the people of Kanah if they lost their possessions to pay the blood price or if the town's magical water supply has been destroyed) that can be incorporated into future adventures.

Tempter devil: CR10; Medium-sized outsider (Evil, Lawful); HD 8d8+24; hp 76; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft, fly 100 ft (average); AC21 (touch 13, flat-footed 18); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+5, +2 *unholy longsword*); Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft; SA Spell-like abilities, *suggestion*; SQ Devil's Luck, DR 5/+2, acid, cold, and fire resistance 15, SR 16, keen senses; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7;

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16; Skills: Bluff +9, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +11, Hide +9, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +12, Move Silently +6, Perform (chant, dance) +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12; Feats: Flyby Attack, Dodge, Mobility, Spell Focus (enchantment)



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