

PATHFINDER®



Strength of Thousands

ADVENTURE PATH

SHADOWS OF THE ANCIENTS

By Saif Ansari

MAGAAMBYA CAMPUS

500 FEET



• PROTEA PAVILION

• POWDERPILE

TIRELESS HALL •

• HERON ARCHIVES

• POTTING SHED

WARDEN HOUSE •

• INDIGO HALL

• ELEPHANT MUSEUM

PREDATOR MANOR •

• SHIFTING GREENHOUSE

• THE BARB

• THE CIRCLE

THE BETWEEN •

ARCHHORN LIBRARY •

• WHISTLE TOWER

VERDANT HOUSE •



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This book refers to several other Pathfinder products, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available for free at paizo.com/prd.

APG Advanced Player's Guide



SHADOWS OF THE ANCIENTS

SHADOWS OF THE ANCIENTS

Chapter 1: Unshadowed Academy4

The heroes are named the new Magic Warriors in honor of their accomplishments, joining the legendary figures who founded the Magaambya. Yet not everyone is pleased with their successes. Koride Ulawa has fallen under the sway of the *Vesicant Egg*'s magic, and the heroes must find her and stop her.

Chapter 2: The Endless Table26

The *Vesicant Egg* possesses strange powers, and to keep the heroes from interfering with its plans, it shrinks them, reducing their sizes to even smaller than an ant's. The heroes must navigate a laboratory table transformed into a strange land by the artifact's magic. When they claim the egg, they also return to their normal sizes.

Chapter 3: The Unborn King44

The *Vesicant Egg* holds fragments of the malevolent mind of the King of Biting Ants. Forced to hatch early, the egg produces a monstrous larva that rolls across the Magaambya, crushing buildings and endangering everyone present. After rescuing those they can, the heroes take the fight to the colossal larva and face down the King's psychic fragments to defeat their enemy for good.

PHENOMENAL FAME

The heroes have always been the stars of the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path. Even from their first adventure, they distinguished themselves among their peers and proved their right to attend the world's greatest magic school. As teachers, their fame grew even more. But now, they've accomplished something truly unprecedented: they've returned the most powerful wizard Golarion has ever seen to the school he founded. To honor this feat, Jatembe formally names them as new Magic Warriors, a title no living being has held for millennia. This Adventure Path has portrayed the Ten Magic Warriors as significant and legendary, not just to impart the Magaambya's deep history but so the players feel what an honor it is for the characters to join their ranks.

Old-Mage Jatembe is more powerful than the heroes, even at these high levels, but he's not the type to bask in the limelight. His nature is to guide and advise. Even when thronged by eager students and teachers, Jatembe is quick to highlight the heroes. They, he says, are the ones you should be honoring. Having someone as powerful as Jatembe be truly appreciative and respectful of the heroes—and rely on them—goes a long way toward making them feel important.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Shadows of the Ancients" is designed for four characters.

- 18** The heroes begin this adventure at 18th level.
- 19** The heroes should reach 19th level before venturing onto the alchemical table.
- 20** The heroes should be 20th level upon returning to their normal sizes.

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Academy

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Long ago, there was a man so old that even the rivers had forgotten when he was born. This man was called Jatembe, or just Old-Mage. One day, Old-Mage went to kill a tyrant who meant to cover all the Mwangi beneath a blanket of ants.

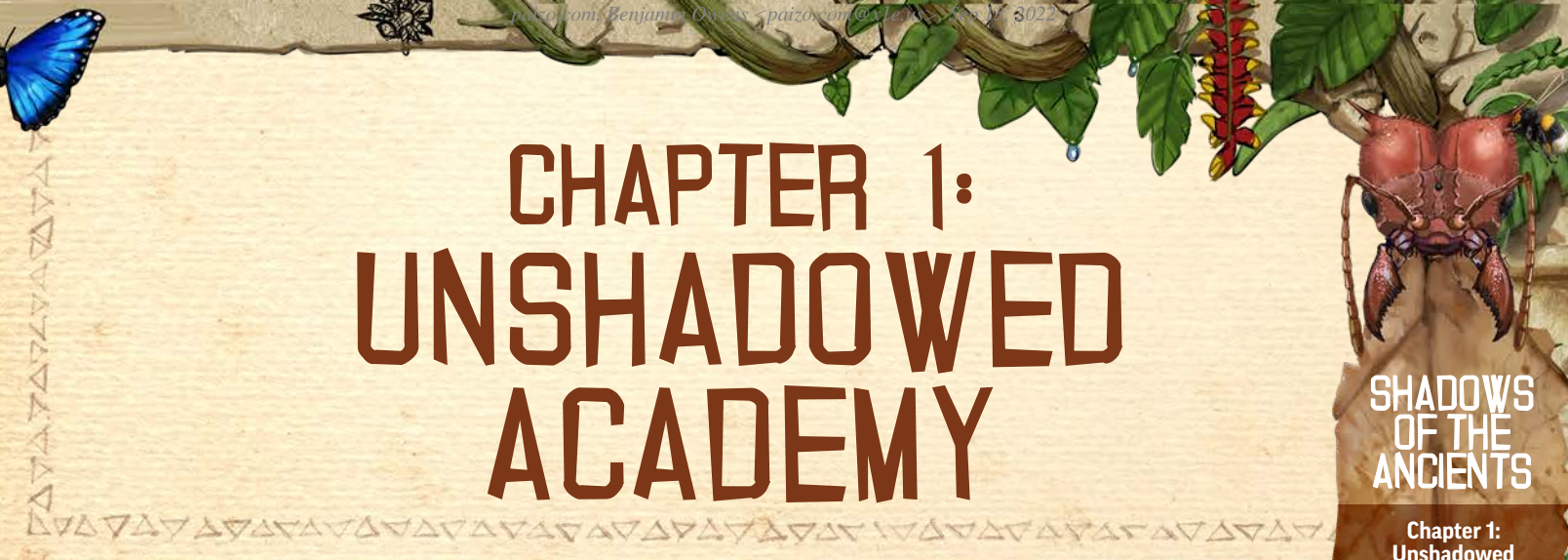
Many ages passed, jungles grew and died, rivers bent like snakes through the land, nations rose and fell, and Old-Mage returned in the company of heroes. These heroes had rescued Old-Mage and defeated the tyrant. They became a new generation of Magic Warriors. Each wore a mask to honor their spirit face, and Old-Mage gave them all new names.

But not all friends of the Magic Warriors were as honest. The sleek Jungle Cat kept many secrets, was quick of wit, and charming. Many admired her for these traits, and she invited those closest to her into her workshop inside a bramble hedge. She was so forgetful that she didn't attend Old-Mage's renaming ceremony, so the Magic Warriors had to get her.

The Jungle Cat had a foul object, a poisoned egg, in her possession. It was an evil thing that she had promised to dispose of, but in her arrogance, she changed her mind and wanted to crack open its secrets. The egg split and spilled a river of caustic yolk, and her shadow fell upon the poisonous acid and was cut to pieces. Her students came to help, but each fell to the same fate. With their shadows torn up, they were the Unshadowed: beings under the evil influence of the egg.

But deep inside, she remained vigilant, because she was clever, and she knew the virtue of patience. Her time would come, her vain Unshadowed self would falter, and then, the Jungle Cat would take back her body.





CHAPTER 1: UNSHADOWED ACADEMY

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The *Vesicant Egg* is more than just an artifact that calls insects and other vermin to gather. The King of Biting Ants created it to hold an echo of his psychic essence, amplified by the artifact's magic. If he were ever killed, the egg would hatch, and he could be reborn in an even more powerful form—or so he hoped. The egg's magic works in strange ways, and the psychic echo of the King of Biting Ants has not yet manifested as the sorcerer expected. Part of this is due to the meddling of Koride Ulawa, the teacher whom the heroes earlier asked to dispose of the *Vesicant Egg*. She had every intention of doing so but changed her mind before she could, falling under the artifact's thrall. She instead moved it to a private pavilion on the Magaambya grounds.

By the time the heroes arrive back from their journey to Akiton in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #173: Doorway to the Red Star*, Koride and some of her students have fallen completely under the egg's control as it has begun hatching. The egg exudes magical acid from a fracture that eats away any shadow that falls across it, compelling the creature who cast the shadow to serve the artifact as a loyal drone. These creatures are called the "Unshadowed."

Old-Mage Jatembe suspects the *Vesicant Egg* might be a problem, and he intends to look into it, but he doesn't yet understand just how quickly its danger is manifesting. He plans to first celebrate the heroes' successes (and his public return) with a ceremony to establish the heroes as the newest members of the legendary Magic Warriors. These activities occupy everyone's attention, allowing Koride to continue her work in hatching the *Vesicant Egg*.

The Ceremony

The heroes return to the Magaambya in triumph alongside Old-Mage Jatembe. Their arrival and the public reintroduction of Jatembe back to the Magaambya is a cause for major celebration. Jatembe is pleased that the school he built has grown into such a long-lived institution and continued to flourish without his involvement. He might even admit he's secretly returned to the Magaambya several times in the intervening millennia, merely to observe.

Jatembe holds several private meetings with dignitaries in the Magaambya and across Nantambu, including High Sun-Mage Oyamba and the Learned Ones of each branch (that is, each branch's leader). There's no end of students and fellow lore-speakers doing their best to catch the heroes' attention and ask about their fabled journey, so it's easy to give Jatembe the privacy he's seeking so he can find out more about the heroes and their backgrounds.

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

Old-Mage Jatembe wastes no time in proclaiming the heroes' good deeds on Akiton and names them his new Magic Warriors in a powerful renaming ceremony. Yet Koride, who has proven herself unreliable at best and possibly dangerous, isn't present at the ceremony. The heroes must investigate her disappearance. They first find several of their old friends performing odd research on Koride's behalf, and clues lead to the isolated Protea Pavilion on campus. There, the heroes find that the *Vesicant Egg* has tainted both Koride and many of their old friends.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows.

- +3 greater striking composite shortbow
- +3 greater striking orichalcum greatsword
- +3 greater striking mambele (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 120)
- +3 major striking major staff of nature's vengeance (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 263)
- greater brilliant rune (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 180)
- indestructible shield
- major potion of retaliation (*Advanced Player's Guide* 259)
- potion of undetectability
- wand of overflowing life (8th level; *Advanced Player's Guide* 265)



Before long, Jatembe invites the heroes to gather on the ceremonial grounds beneath the monument engraved with thousands of names, including the heroes', for a grand event. Jatembe, Oyamba, and the heroes stand on a small stage, leaving the rest of the area around the monument free for an audience, which is filling in more and more by the moment.

Among the dignitaries at the front of the crowd are several people whom the heroes haven't seen in a while, but who responded to Jatembe's invitation. They include Magistrate-Mayor Asanda of Nantambu, Father Heveril of Jula, Warder-Chief Mpondo of the Iobane, and Umanja-jinga of Osibu. Since all are likely to think fondly of the heroes from their previous adventures in this Adventure Path, they nod agreeably to the heroes from their honored places in the audience.

Also nearby are two people with whom the heroes started their academic careers. Esi Djana is now a busy teacher rumored to be well on her way to becoming the Learned One of the Tempest-Sun Mages; she gives the heroes a carefully appraising look, as though she's still a little skeptical that the initiates she met all that time ago could possibly have become the great heroes standing beside Old-Mage Jatembe today. Strands-of-Glowing-Dawn Tzeniwe has returned for the first time since her graduation from the Magaambya to cheer on the heroes. Her now-grown children, Zachva and Zanvi, join their mother in giving the heroes kindly smiles but spend a lot of time teasing each other behind her back.

Koride Ulawa isn't here, and neither are any of the other students who began at the Magaambya with the heroes; they're all currently elsewhere on campus, as the heroes will soon learn. The crowd is so large that a hero doesn't notice a particular person's absence unless they're specifically looking for them and succeed at a DC 35 Perception check.

The heroes are invited to stand next to Jatembe as he speaks to the crowd. His voice is low but strong, and after a few introductory remarks, he gets right to the point of why he has gathered everyone together. Read or paraphrase the following.

"I see the 'common knowledge' winding its way through the school like a swift river. It says I was tricked by the King of Biting Ants and imprisoned. But it's possible there is more to the story than has been revealed so far, and Akiton is very far away. Perhaps my friends here, who are your friends as well, will have more to tell of this someday.

"But now I would speak to them, and not speak of myself. My friends, you have done so much for me, for the Magaambya, and for the Mwangi Expanse. Your prowess is

obvious, and your friends and colleagues have nothing but praise for your actions. While some of your methods seem unorthodox, I've never been one to judge.

"I offer you a gift, but I know you are wise enough to see that it is a burden as well. In my wandering days long ago, I had the Ten Magic Warriors at my side. The world today needs Magic Warriors again, and I can think of no one better than you all to take up their legacy.

"Each of the Magic Warriors were legends in their own right. You can see their faces and deeds on the walls of the Magaambya even today. I know all of you have the same strength of arms, magic, knowledge, and wisdom they did. I invite you to demonstrate for us, especially our distinguished guests, what you are capable of so they all may see what I already know."

Presuming the heroes agree, Jatembe encourages each of them to make a demonstration in whatever manner they wish. This can be accomplished through an impressive show of magic, mastery of a weapon or fighting style, or by a moving performance or speech. Each hero should attempt a DC 28 check with a skill appropriate to their demonstration, such as Arcana or Nature to cast an impressive spell, Athletics to improvise a martial demonstration, and so on. Although any genuine attempt impresses the crowd, a character who succeeds receives a small gift from Old-Mage Jatembe: a simple bracelet with a red bead. More than a mere magic item, this bracelet incorporates a bit of luck imparted into the hero by the legendary wizard; see the Beaded Bracelet sidebar on page 7 for details.

Jatembe continues his speech, telling a few anecdotes about the Ten Magic Warriors and skillfully weaving in stories he's heard about or personally experienced with the heroes. It's clear he is equating the two groups to the crowd, making the heroes seem valued and valid bearers of the ancient tradition.

Next, High Sun-Mage Oyamba calls upon teachers from various branches to come forward and ceremonially greet each of the heroes. The first teacher he calls is Mafika Ayuware from the Tempest-Sun Mages. Mafika smiles as he greets the heroes, slips each of them a sun-shaped bead for their beaded bracelets (giving them a bracelet as well, if they did not already earn one from Jatembe). He whispers, "I have a feeling you'll need all the luck we can share."

Oyamba then calls upon Koride Ulawa from the Rain-Scribes, but she's nowhere to be seen. After a few moments of confusion, it soon comes out Koride hasn't been present for the entire ceremony, so Oyamba quickly dispatches some students to look for her and asks the aasimar archeologist Izem Mezitani



to greet the heroes on behalf of the Rain-Scribes instead. The ceremony gets back on track, and when the ceremonial greeting from a representative of each branch is complete, Jatembe concludes by performing a powerful ritual. Read or paraphrase the following.

"So, you are mighty, as were the old Magic Warriors: Shifting Frog, Verdant Spider, Elephant, and the others. But it's very important to wield power with humility. Those who lead with pride are doomed to be cut down. The humble creature who serves others knows no shame—they are the ones who truly live in the service of their people. So, be humble even as you wield your great power.

"The Magic Warriors of old gave everything to protect and preserve the world. It was a desperate time, and the tasks before you, though different, will be no less difficult. There is one thing I would lift from each of you, as I lifted from them, if you are willing. I would take your names. Commune with your mask, your spirit face, and tell me if there is a title within the face by which you would prefer the world know you.

"You may keep your name, of course. Being known by the title your spirit face gives you is tradition, but not an obligation. If you take a title, I will erase your name, the name from before you became a Magic Warrior, from all memory, replacing it with your new title instead."

Jatembe performs the renaming ritual for any hero who wishes it, with the help of the heroes together. Although there's no need for any skill checks for the heroes to assist with the renaming ritual, they can't quite follow its unusual, powerful blend of arcane and primal magic to learn it. Jatembe still has some secrets that he is not yet willing to share. The best the heroes can ascertain is that it follows a similar cadence and style to the First Masking ceremony that marked their induction from initiates to attendants long ago. This time, instead of crafting a mask to reflect their spirit faces, they are looking deep within their spirit faces to determine a proper title to replace their names.

Jatembe doesn't require that any hero take a new name; after all, he's kept his own name for a long time. He does expect a name associated with their nature and their masks, such as "Vigilant Rooster," "Shining Sun," "Citrine Hound," or otherwise. You shouldn't rush this decision if the heroes want to take their time. Jatembe raises a skeptical eyebrow to any title that seems silly or thoughtless, although he

BEADED BRACELET

The heroes might earn beads on a simple bracelet during this chapter; these beads are intended to remind them of the bracelets they were required to wear as initiates. Although they aren't properly magic items, these beaded bracelets possess luck their wearers can call upon in a time of need. A hero with a beaded bracelet can choose to expend the bracelet's luck before making a check to roll twice and take the higher result. This is a fortune effect. This use causes a bead to vanish, so the heroes should use these charms to tilt the scales of fate in their favor during a difficult moment!



Beaded Bracelet

doesn't believe even someone with his power has the right to deny anyone a title they choose for themselves.

Participating heroes' names are changed to their title in the memories of anyone who has ever heard of them, except in the memories of Jatembe and the other heroes. Everyone else, including their family and friends, remembers the hero only by the title they choose, even in old memories.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for participating in the ceremony. Increase this to 80 XP if at least half of the characters either succeed at the checks to demonstrate their prowess or replace their names in the ritual.

Building Bridges

After the ceremony, the heroes are invited to a luncheon with Jatembe, the honored dignitaries, and the rest of the faculty. The luncheon takes place in Oyamba's private dining room and is catered by Lumusi Yao and her staff. This lavish meal allows the heroes to experience a taste of their celebrity as they socialize with the elite leaders of the Mwangi Expanse, many of whom appreciate getting to know the heroes during a time of calm and celebration.

The luncheon is also an opportunity for the heroes to gain influence with the guests and transform personal friendships with the new Magic Warriors into professional sponsorship of the Magaambya through agreements of cooperation, defense, funds, and other aid. Oyamba privately asks the heroes to make a good impression on the four dignitaries whom they know best, strengthening their bonds with the Magaambya as much as possible. If the heroes need further motivation, you might also have Oyamba hint

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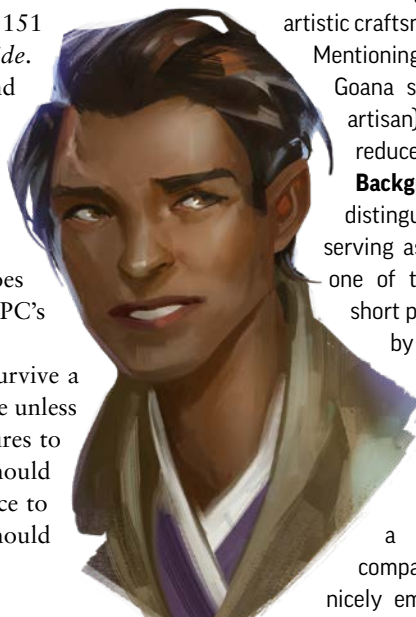
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that some dignitaries are believed to have brought gifts for those who impress them at the luncheon.

This social encounter makes use of the influence subsystem found on page 151 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*. It's recommended both the GM and players become familiar with these rules before playing out the rest of this encounter. The luncheon scene is broken into four "rounds," each lasting approximately a half-hour. Influence Points accrued let the heroes earn rewards as outlined in the NPC's stat block.

Of course, any NPC who didn't survive a previous adventure isn't in attendance unless the heroes took extraordinary measures to resurrect them. In this case, you should choose a different NPC of significance to the Adventure Path who the heroes should want to impress.



Asanda

ASANDA

N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Magistrate-mayor of Nantambu

Perception +28

Will +25

Discovery DC 30 Nantambu Lore, DC 34 Society, DC 36 Perception

Influence Skills DC 30 Nantambu Lore (to ask about the state of affairs in the city), DC 34 Performance (to remind Asanda of an earlier performance at the Speaker's Stage), DC 34 Society (to talk politics), DC 35 Crafting (to talk about repairs to his manor), DC 38 Diplomacy, DC 40 Deception

Influence 2: Magistrate-Mayor Asanda assures the heroes the government of Nantambu considers the Magaambya the city's greatest treasure and will protect it as best they are able.

Influence 4: Magistrate-Mayor Asanda agrees to a reciprocal program of government internships for Magaambya students and educational programs to educate civic leaders on magical opportunities. The heroes gain 30 XP.

Influence 6: Happy with an opportunity to become still closer to the Magaambya, and for the boost this interaction is certain to bring his own political career, Magistrate-Mayor Asanda gives the heroes his cherished *circlet of persuasion* in gratitude.

Resistances Although grateful for the heroes' help in rescuing him from the clutches of insidious serpentfolk several years ago, the magistrate-mayor is still uneasy with magical deceptions such as illusions or shapechanging. Using either type of magic while in his

presence causes him to withdraw, increasing the DC of the associated check to Influence by 5.

Weaknesses Magistrate-Mayor Asanda appreciates artistic craftsmanship, particularly in wood carvings. Mentioning wood carvings (or the woodcarver Goana specifically, who is Asanda's favorite artisan) in conjunction with a Crafting check reduces the DC by 2.

Background Asanda has had a long and distinguished career in Nantambu's politics, serving as the city treasurer before becoming one of the city's 11 magistrate-mayors. The short period of time where he was kidnapped by serpentfolk who were trying to infiltrate the city's leadership has only brought him greater fame, and he's parleyed that into an image of being a clever survivor.

Appearance Asanda is dressed in a surprisingly understated manner compared to the other attendees, with a nicely embroidered shirt under simple robes.

He knows he's among some of the world's greatest spellcasters, and he's no spellcaster himself, so he's opted to appear more as a "man of the people."

Personality Cunning, friendly, talkative

HEVERIL DAGAMBI

MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Champion of Erastil and leader of Julia

Perception +25

Will +24

Discovery DC 30 Sodden Lands Lore, DC 32 Perception, DC 33 Society

Influence Skills DC 30 Sodden Lands Lore (to ask about things back at his home), DC 32 Nature (to discuss the weather), DC 32 Erastil Lore or Religion (to discuss fine points of Erastil's faith), DC 35 Diplomacy, DC 35 Thievery (to ask about the affairs of Norgorberites still at large in the Sodden Lands)

Influence 2: Father Heveril agrees Julia will provide what aid it can to the Magaambya, although he's modest and humble about what his town can offer. He's reluctant to overcommit his people, who are working so hard to rebuild their community.

Influence 4: Overcoming his pride, Father Heveril agrees to accept aid the Magaambya sends to help rebuild his town. The heroes gain 30 XP.

Influence 6: Father Heveril agrees to help construct a permanent Magaambya satellite school in Julia so students and scholars can study the Eye of Abendego up close. He also provides the heroes with a treasure he recently found among his departed mother's effects:

an *indestructible shield* with Erastil's religious symbol on it. He expresses that it would mean much to him, personally, if the heroes were to have it.

Resistances Father Heveril is overwhelmed by the size of Nantambu and the age of the Magaambya. Interactions that make him feel like he's less important or intelligent due to his hardscrabble, small-town upbringing increase the check's DC by 5.

Weaknesses Recitations from any kind of religious book impress Father Heveril, reducing the DC of a Religion check by 2.

Background As leader of the town of Jula, Father Heveril's recent history depends heavily on how the heroes ultimately interacted with him in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #171: Hurricane's Howl*. If the heroes led Father Heveril to redeeming himself, he's more confident and optimistic (and is lawful good in alignment); otherwise, he remains a cynical man who expects misfortune as his lot (and is lawful neutral in alignment). In either case, being the center of so much attention causes him no small measure of discomfort.

Appearance Although his beard is neatly combed and his clothes are clean and patched, Father Heveril still wears the wide hat and rainproof cloak common in the Sodden Lands.

Personality Haggard, jaded, overwhelmed

MPONDO

LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Warder-Chief of the lobane

Perception +26

Will +27

Discovery DC 32 Magaambya Lore, DC 35 Perception, DC 36 Society

Influence Skills DC 32 Academia Lore (to discuss the academic traditions established by the Ten Magic Warriors), DC 32 Magaambya Lore (to explain the history of the venerable school), DC 35 Arcana (as relates to magus spellcasting and traditions), DC 35 Occultism (to discuss the Doorway to the Red Star), DC 36 Diplomacy, DC 37 Religion (to discuss the finer points of fighting undead)

Influence 2: Warder-Chief Mpondo is willing to forgive Koride's previous transgressions at the Doorway to the Red Star and establish a strong and lasting bond with the Magaambya.

Influence 4: Warder-Chief Mpondo allows the Magaambya to erect a permanent research station to study the Doorway to the Red Star. He agrees that the lobane will share what they know of the site with Magaambyan researchers in the future, so long as the researchers, in turn, share what they learn about the site. The heroes gain 30 XP.

Influence 6: To bind his alliance, Mpondo offers the heroes two items the lobane discovered in the ruins around the Doorway to the Red Star, which he believes were once carried by one of the original Ten Magic Warriors: a broken piece of a blade with a *greater brilliant* rune (*Secrets of Magic* 180) still intact and a short chain with as many crystal-shaped beads as there are heroes. When the heroes take these gifts, the beads fall off the chain on their own; they can then be strung on the heroes' beaded bracelets. If shown the broken blade, Old-Mage Jatembe cryptically says that Azure Leopard indeed carried it but only used it a single time, the day it was broken. Although Azure Leopard believed that to be very bad luck, it seems that her luck was simply held in reserve, waiting for the new Magic Warriors.

Resistances Any mention of Koride Ulawa sets Warder-Chief Mpondo off and reminds him he should be on his guard while at the Magaambya, increasing the difficulty of all DCs by 5.

Weaknesses Akiton is the source of much fascination for Mpondo, and he's eager to learn more about what lies beyond the Doorway to the Red Star. Incorporating stories of adventures beyond the gate reduces the Arcana or Occultism DC by 2.

Background Mpondo has worked up the ranks of the lobane to lead his fellow magi and is proud of his record in keeping the Doorway to the Red Star as safe as possible. Koride's trickery is the greatest blemish on his honorable record, and he still bristles at the thought of it. While he has gotten to know and trust the heroes over the time they spent near the portal to Akiton, he's still wary of being used by the Magaambya once again.

Appearance Regal in demeanor as well as appearance, Warder-Chief Mpondo holds his head high even in the company of Old-Mage Jatembe himself. His clothes are spotless, and even though he's many miles from other members of the lobane, he still wears his distinctive signal horn slung over his shoulder with pride.

Personality Carefully polite, stern, suspicious

UMANJA-JINGA

LG SMALL HALFLING HUMANOID

Uur Chyayu of Osibu

Perception +27

Will +29

Discovery DC 30 Osibu Lore, DC 34 Perception, DC 35 Society

Influence Skills DC 30 Osibu Lore (to remind her of her home), DC 34 Nature (to leverage her relationship with Dimari-Diji), DC 34 Performance (to demonstrate artistic culture unknown in her home city), DC 35 Occultism (to speak of the long history of spirits in Osibu), DC 38 Diplomacy, DC 41 Deception

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THE BARB
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Influence 2: Umanja-jinga promises the people from Osibu will share their secrets, on occasion, with the Magaambya.

Influence 4: Umanja-jinga agrees to host Magaambyan delegations in Osibu from time to time. The heroes gain 30 XP.

Influence 6: Pleased with all the Magaambya has to offer and eager to cement Osibu's relationship with the school, Umanja-jinga gives the heroes a token of Osibu's amity: an 8th-level *wand of overflowing life* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 265). She also gives each of them a bead in the shape of a leaf for their beaded bracelets, passing along Dimari-Diji's best wishes.

Resistances Umanja-jinga has little need for physical gifts or flattery. Attempts to give her gifts or praise her personally cause her to detach from the conversation and increase the check's DC by 5.

Weaknesses As a seer and protector of Osibu's ancient spirits, Umanja-jinga likes hearing stories about guardian spirits. Weaving these into a story with Performance reduces the DC by 2.

Background The Uur Chyayu of Osibu is the eldest of the Chyayup, the elected leaders of Osibu. As Uur Chyayu,

it's Umanja-jinga's honor and duty to tend the ancient arboreal Dimari-Diji. She has a clairvoyant ability to see into dreams and nightmares but, unlike other Chyayup, can't foresee her own death—a blind spot that concerns her.

Appearance Umanja-jinga is an old, stout halfling who is dressed in bright colors and shimmering sheets of golden cloth. She seems distant and detached in any conversation, as though witnessing a world of dreams from far away.

Personality Aloof, kindly, solemn

The Barb

After the luncheon, the students dispatched to summon Koride return empty-handed. Koride isn't in her office, her laboratory in the Hababe Building, or any of her other usual locations. Jatembe and Oyamba ask the heroes to find Koride and return with her so she can explain the *Vesicant Egg* in greater detail. Oyamba thinks she avoided the ceremony, and meeting Jatembe, so she wouldn't have to answer their pointed questions, but Jatembe is not so quick to judge the missing teacher. If the heroes are already suspicious of



Koride, they might have further cause to worry about her absence.

If the heroes question the staff or students, they learn that Koride was last seen in a research building on campus, directing several students in a project that seemed urgent. The research building is primarily for advanced studies on living organisms and their effect on the environment. The building is usually called the Barb, as shorthand for the Biological Advanced Research Building, but also because the decor features depictions of a number of animals with antlers, horns, talons, and claws.

It's no secret that over the last few weeks, Koride has been spending time immersed in some private experiments—something the teacher does quite often. This time, however, she needed more help than her usual cadre of favorite students could provide, so she quietly brought in several other Magaambyans to assist with key procedures. On a successful DC 36 Diplomacy check to Gather Information, a hero can learn that this additional aid came from Chizire, Ignaci Canterrells, and Noxolo. All three were still working on their assignments for Koride in the Barb the last time anyone had seen them.

When the heroes approach the Barb, read or paraphrase the following.

The usually busy paths of the Magaambya are surprisingly still as you approach the Barb. The benches and fountains where students normally debate, relax, or read are abandoned, as Jatembe's return has attracted anyone with free time to the center of campus to hear him speak and perhaps learn from the fabled wizard himself. The Barb is three stories high. Its lower floor is well-aired, with windows open and their wood-slat curtains rolled up and tied. Low stairs lead to walkways through the lower floor. Brightly painted walls feature images of deer, warthogs, falcons, and other animals.

Built within the last few years, the Barb incorporates many innovative features. Its encircling veranda has sandalwood blinds that may be lowered and doused with stored rainwater to cool the building during hot afternoons. Cross-ventilating passages circulate air through the building, which also carries the moisture away from the blinds. The Barb's lower floor is so comfortable, in fact, that students converted the western wing into six sleeping rooms where anyone engaged in long-term research in the building can stay when not at work. The sleeping room doors have simple latches that can be closed from the inside; when latched, the door handle vanishes to show that someone is currently occupying the room.

FEATURES OF THE BARB

The only people currently present are those students Koride compelled to help with experiments related to the *Vesicant Egg*, although none of them understand the role their individual experiments play. There aren't any other students or teachers here; those few whom Koride couldn't bully into leaving so her accomplices could work aren't here right now due to all the excitement on campus.

Ceilings in the Barb are 12 feet high, and the building is made of stone, wood, and elaborately painted tile. The Barb's upper floors consist of laboratories, storage chambers, and reading rooms that aren't relevant to this adventure. Although none of the rooms in the Barb have windows, there's plenty of light in the halls thanks to the open veranda.

The map of the Barb appears on page 10.

A1. CENTRAL HALL

MODERATE 18

Two doors lead from halfway down the central hall, one open and one closed. A pool of foul-smelling, bubbling green liquid has flooded half of the hallway. It's spreading down the passage in both directions at a slow pace, inching forward on grasping, liquid fingers. Everything else is quiet and still, save for a weak and infrequent knock that sounds from behind the closed door.

The creatures and hazard here are the results of a virulent sample Koride provided to Ignaci Canterrells to see whether separating the components would yield any insight into the nature of the acid seeping from the *Vesicant Egg*. Ignaci was successful in separating the samples, but the lingering malice of the King of Biting Ants and a remnant of the egg's potency animated the acid and began producing the poisonous pool that's slowly spreading throughout the area.

Hazard: The venom pool is a hazard that grows in size and emits a poisonous burst when disturbed. The heroes might find a way around this hazard by flying or climbing along the walls or ceiling, but the oozes lurking within it quiver when they sense creatures moving nearby, which activates the venom pool.

VENOM POOL

HAZARD 18

UNCOMMON COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD

Stealth +30 (legendary) to distinguish between the hazard and the oozes within it; DC 0 to notice the pool

Description A shallow, foul-smelling puddle of toxic acid blocks a narrow hall (marked with a dotted line on the map), and poison bursts from it when disturbed.

Disable DC 40 Crafting (master) or DC 42 Survival (legendary) to neutralize the acid while within reach

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
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of it. Three successes using either skill (or a combination of both) destroys the hazard.

Deadly Footing The area of the venom pool is difficult terrain, and each creature moving through it takes 10 acid damage for every square of its area that it moves into.

Poison Puff  **Trigger** A creature moves through any square in the hazard's space; **Effect** The pool produces a 9th-level *cloudkill* (DC 40) at its center. It then rolls initiative.

Routine (2 actions) The hazard uses its first action to spread 10 feet down the hallway in both directions. Once out of the hall, each side spreads in a random direction each round, but they don't go through doors. The hazard uses its second action to move the center of the *cloudkill* up to 20 feet in any direction to which any part of the pool has line of effect (normally, to encompass the greatest number of characters). If the *cloudkill* isn't present, it instead uses its second action to produce a new *cloudkill*, as *Poison Puff*.

Reset The hazard ends after 1 minute, contracting to its original size and keeping still until disturbed again.

Creatures: Two animate puddles of acid, chunky with bits of dissolved organic material, lurk in the venom pool. These crawling slurries quiver and lunge forward when they detect other creatures, which triggers the hazard's reaction. The heroes must therefore likely contend with the oozes and the hazard at the same time. Wholly mindless and always hungry, the crawling slurries fight until destroyed.

CRAWLING SLURRY (2)

CREATURE 16

Page 82

Initiative Perception +26

A2. IGNACI'S ROOM

This room looks like the rest of the simple student rooms in the Barb, except for a table in the middle holding various flasks, beakers, and other equipment appropriate for an impromptu alchemy lab. Some components are broken, and others have spilled, making a mess that leaks over the desk and bubbles onto the floor. This is the source of the venom pool, but fortunately, the catalyst that fed its animation occurred outside this room. The half-conscious Ignaci Canterells lies across a cot in this room, out of the puddle but splattered with burn marks across his arms and face.

Ignaci is both badly burned and drained 3; he can't be brought to consciousness until his drained condition is removed. The precise nature of his malady is difficult to determine, and restoring him without the use of magic is challenging. A hero tending to

him can attempt a DC 40 Medicine check to Treat his Wounds. Instead of recovering Hit Points, on a success his drained value is reduced by 1 (by 2 on a critical success). On a critical failure, his drained value increases by 1. If Ignaci reaches drained 4, he dies.

A look at the chemical reaction on the table shows that the dripping acid is being continuously created by the other ingredients here. Such perpetual production is a testament to Ignaci's alchemical skill, but it also poses a danger to the whole building. Left unchecked, the ongoing reaction will eventually eat through the floor and walls and likely bring down the whole structure. Luckily, the heroes have several hours before this occurs, during which they can try to halt the process. Doing so requires 10 minutes and a successful DC 40 Crafting (master) check. A character with the formula for an acid bomb of any level reduces the DC of this check by 5, as there are parallels in the chemical reaction. A success stops the reaction, but a critical failure deals 10d10 acid damage to the character.

Once Ignaci is free of the effect and healed enough to talk, he can explain the erroneous reaction if it's still ongoing. With Ignaci's direction, heroes with less than master proficiency in Crafting can attempt to stop the reaction, but Ignaci can't stop it himself.

Ignaci is eager to talk about what led to his experiment going awry. He received a dose of some kind of strange insect venom from Koride and was tasked with separating the powerful acid from the venom. He believes the venom came from some type of ant, but a very magical and likely monstrous one. Ignaci never had much to do with Koride, but he found the challenge interesting and set to work. He hasn't yet succeeded, and he admits the accident was the result of a desperate and misguided attempt to rush a risky process.

Once he'd completed the chemical separation, Ignaci was supposed to go to the Protea Pavilion on campus with Noxolo and Chizire. Those two are pursuing other experiments in the Barb, which is why Ignaci was forced to undertake his experiments in his room. He also mentions Koride has become paranoid in the last few days about others spying on her research and mentioned she was going to move the Protea Pavilion "elsewhere." Ignaci was given a dried protea flower that he was supposed to bring to the former location of the Protea Pavilion—Koride assured him no one could find it where she was going to move it—and burn the flower there. He was only to do so with Noxolo and Chizire, who had their own flowers, as all three had to be burned at once to return the pavilion to its original location.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for saving Ignaci.



A3. RESEARCH LIBRARY

This area is a well-stocked library used by researchers at the Barb, and the tables here are often lively places for intellectual debate or collaboration on theories regarding how living creatures interact with their environments, and how strengthening either makes the other stronger as well. When word reached the scholars here that Old-Mage Jatembe and the heroes had returned, people hastily put their research away to go meet the fabled legend and hear all about his adventures. As there's still much celebration going on around the campus, no one has yet returned to their studies here.

A4. VOID PORTALS

Koride tasked Noxolo with contacting Akiton. She hoped to find a method to create a direct path between Golarion and Akiton to ease the movement of the King of Biting Ants' allies here, but she didn't tell Noxolo this. Instead, she phrased the issue in a way to make Noxolo think it was a theoretical planar experiment rather than actual interplanetary transit. Noxolo miscalculated, assuming that erecting conduits through the River of Souls would serve as a shortcut. But the rifts she created as conduits quickly grew beyond her control. She can't close the rifts, and the magical energies are pouring into this room. So far, she's been able to keep them from opening wider through sheer force of will.

As she got closer to finding a solution, Noxolo blocked off the entrance to the lab by pushing some furniture against it. She didn't want anyone to get accidentally harmed due to experiments she knew to be risky, but now it means she's trapped inside. A successful DC 36 Athletics check is required to Force Open the blocked door. Once it's open, read or paraphrase the following.

The door opens into a room buffeted by cold winds and jagged, purple lightning. Most of the furniture has been destroyed and scattered. Arcs of energy radiate from a large mystical symbol in the middle of the room to the room's four corners. In each, a rift opens into an utter darkness spotted with strange stars.

Noxolo is the middle of the circle struggling to keep the rifts from opening further. Her clothes and her skin seem strangely brittle, as though her life energy has been drained away. "Help," she shouts, "I can't keep this up!" As she speaks, four purple orbs emerge from the rifts and creep toward her, pulling themselves along the floor with tendril-like arms emerging from their flickering outlines.

Each purple orb is a void orb, an ephemeral collection of negative energy. Each moves 15 feet toward the center of the circle where Noxolo stands per round, passing through obstacles as they move. If a void orb touches the center of the circle, it detonates, dealing 4d12 negative damage (DC 38 basic Fortitude save) in a 10-foot burst. This negative damage has weakened the objects in the room, making them cold and brittle, which is why all the furniture is broken. When a void orb detonates, a new one appears at its corresponding rift the following round and begins its inexorable advancement toward the center. The void orbs can't be affected or touched, as they're simply ephemeral lightning until they explode, but they can be slowed. A hero who succeeds at a DC 38 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check while in a void orb's square delays its advancement by 1 round (on a critical success, the void orb winks out entirely, but a new orb appears in its corresponding rift 1 round later).

Noxolo currently has 135 HP (out of 260 HP), and she fails her saves because she can't effectively resist the blasts while straining to keep the portals from opening wider. If Noxolo dies or moves from the center of the symbol, the rifts spring open to three times their size, and dozens of void orbs spill into the room and detonate, dealing 12d12 negative damage to all creatures in the room (DC 40 basic Fortitude save). The rifts then close, but the roof groans, and the entire room collapses into rubble 1 minute later, destroying the Barb's upper stories.

The rifts are all linked to Noxolo's mystical symbol on the floor. There's a flaw in the diagram, however, and a successful DC 36 Religion check or DC 38 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Knowledge identifies it. Once a hero knows the flaw is there, they can exploit it by expending any spell of 4th level or higher (or any necromancy spell of 3rd level or higher), channeling the spell's energy into the symbol instead of creating its usual effect. Doing so permanently closes a rift of the hero's choice.

Once all the rifts are closed, Noxolo collapses. Her strange snabble familiar crawls out from beneath an overturned chair to curl up in her lap. Noxolo explains that Koride instructed her to construct a portal directly to a distant place called Akiton. She had various coordinates and astronomical calculations to go by as well as notes that showed she—or someone else, perhaps—had cracked the code of teleporting a significant amount of mass from Akiton to Golarion. Noxolo's job was to figure out a way to open and maintain a portal for an extended period. Her attempt to find a shortcut through the fringes of the River of Souls was, she grudgingly admits, a mistake.

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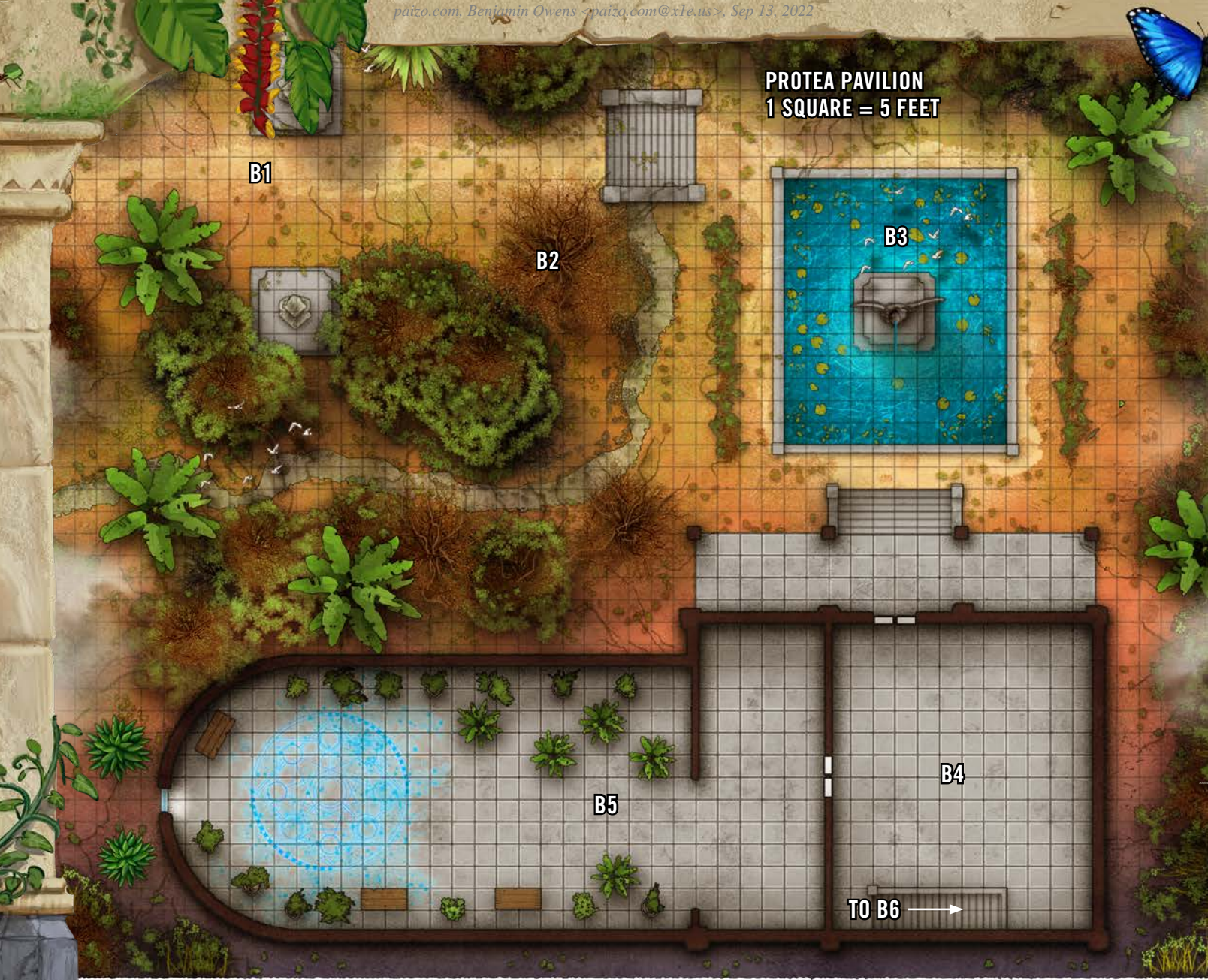
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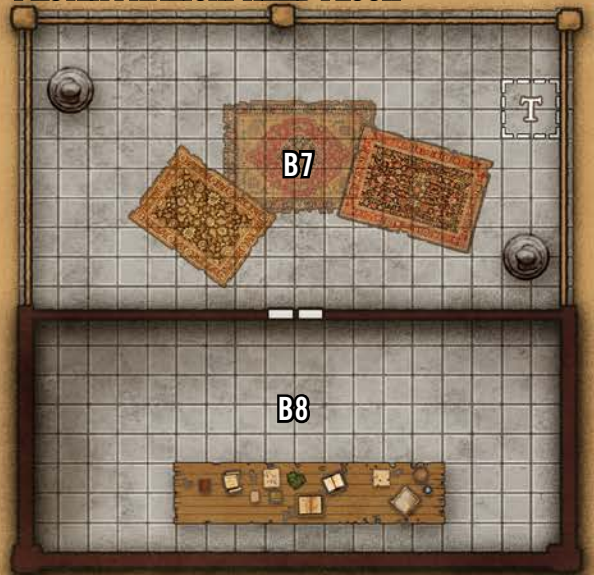
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PROTEA PAVILION: SECOND FLOOR



PROTEA PAVILION: THIRD FLOOR



Like Ignaci, Noxolo was given a dried flower and instructed to take it to the Protea Pavilion and report back to Koride.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 80 XP for saving Noxolo and closing the rifts. If Noxolo dies, grant them only 30 XP for surviving the detonation.

A5. BROKEN EGG

LOW 18

Koride gave Chizire the most morally objectionable task: to steal several magical reagents from the Magaambya's restricted collection. According to Koride, this was to bypass the school's irritating bureaucracy and let her find out more about a magical egg in her possession. Chizire doesn't like the effort involved with theft, but he likes irritating bureaucracy even less, so he agreed. But Chizire is more clever than Koride realized. Once he'd found the materials, he recognized they could combine to accelerate the growth of a creature within an egg. After leaving the restricted section, Chizire also swiped an egg of unknown origin along with the stash of reagents. Out of sheer curiosity, he then decided to use the reagents on the egg to see what would happen. He awoke the creature within the egg, now imbued with horrifying strength.

The egg had been laid by a gongorinan, a strange type of alien fiend from the Abyss who implants their victims with eggs that burst out in the form of aberrant monstrosities. This gongorinan egg was extracted from an ogre before it could hatch. Ever since, it has sat in a display case as an object of study for generations of Magaambyan students who have puzzled over its nature.

Creature: The creature that emerged from the gongorinan egg was far more powerful than an ogre; it has the power of the legendary brutal giant named Grendel. Chizire realized the danger he'd unleashed and leapt into a magically warded cage dangling from the ceiling of this room. The cage has been sufficient to keep the infused ogre out, for now, so the beast is toying with Chizire and describing the terrible things he'll do to the catfolk. The infused ogre immediately attacks anyone entering the room, fighting to the death, while a panicking Chizire tries to explain how this was absolutely not his fault.

INFUSED OGRE

CREATURE 19

Grendel (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 136)

Initiative Perception +35

Rescuing Chizire: After the infused ogre is defeated, Chizire needs someone to disable the ward he placed on the cage from the outside, which requires a successful DC 30 Arcana or Thievery check (fortunately for

UNSHADOWED

The *Vesicant Egg's* acid eats away at any shadow that falls across its surface, turning creatures whose shadows are damaged into the "Unshadowed." Unshadowed characters don't have normal shadows and instead leave spatters of acid where their shadow would otherwise fall. The condition grants the creature great powers (represented as a higher level), a cruel and sneaky demeanor, resistance to acid, and several other shadow-themed abilities included in their stat blocks. If captured and interrogated, Unshadowed creatures do their best to lie and trick the heroes into running afoul of other Unshadowed creatures or other dangers.

Several of the heroes' friends and rivals have become Unshadowed, and the heroes should realize these people are cursed or changed in some way that isn't their doing. If the players don't realize it themselves, you should impart that they should treat the Unshadowed with mercy when possible rather than slaughter them out of hand.



Chizire, it can't be Forced Open while the ward is in place). He sheepishly apologizes for his mistake, explaining that Koride must have been mistaken about the nature of the magical reagents he was supposed to acquire for her. He knows she was always a little bit careless, but this is far too unstable and dangerous even for her.

Like Ignaci and Noxolo, Chizire has a dried flower to be burned to bring the Protea Pavilion back and reach Koride.

Treasure: As thanks for rescuing him, and for keeping word of his embarrassing rescue a secret, Chizire offers the heroes an item he had "recovered" from the restricted stash for himself: a *potion of undetectability*.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for rescuing Chizire.

The Protea Pavilion

Few people would think to look for Koride Ulawa at the Protea Pavilion. It's an overgrown, little-known location on campus, a small building with pleasant surroundings but little in the way of academic resources. Koride's visits to the pavilion had always been made in secret, ensuring it was a place she could work without being disturbed. Now Unshadowed, Koride has the power to make the pavilion even harder to reach by pulling it slightly out of phase with the Magaambya. Where the Protea Pavilion once stood is

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now simply an area overgrown with vegetation—one that passersby would hardly recognize as different than the normal surroundings of the structure.

The students in the Barb gave the heroes the direction and clues they need to reach the Protea Pavilion. The three dried protea flowers, when burned at the pavilion's former location, causes it to snap back into phase with reality and become accessible once again.

The heroes shouldn't have any trouble locating where the Protea Pavilion is supposed to be, even though it's unlikely they've ever been there. In any case, the gardener Thema can point them in the right direction, but she remembers the place has a strange reputation, and she normally doesn't venture there.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for successfully making their way into Koride's hideout.

FEATURES OF THE PROTEA PAVILION

The Protea Pavilion was once the elegant home of a former head of the Magaambya. She kept its grounds neatly tended and filled with protea bushes. A mysterious scandal followed by an even-more-mysterious tragedy caused other Magaambyans to shun the building for many years. The protea bushes were gradually replaced by briars and other overgrowth found throughout the Magaambya. Since then, a few people have discovered the forlorn structure and used it for their own purposes, and Koride is the latest of these occasional inhabitants. She recently brought the *Vesicant Egg* here, and it's here Koride fell under its dread power and became Unshadowed.

The grounds around the building are overgrown, making the area feel distant from the bustling Magaambya. The stone tiles and fountain have been only sporadically tended to and show their age more than most buildings on campus. Ceilings within the building are 10 feet high. Windows and balconies provide good lighting throughout.

Use the map on page 14 for encounters in the Protea Pavilion.

B1. LIGNIFIED GUARDIANS

LOW 18

A sense of stillness and silence shrouds the grounds around the Protea Pavilion, which rises above hedges and brambles atop a low rise to the southwest. The building is three stories tall, with an open balcony at the top. Fallen leaves litter the area, some pitted or scarred as if from tiny droplets of acid. Two statues of wizards flank the entry path. Although primarily made of dark metal, uneven patches of the statues seem to consist of pale wood. Both statues depict the same man, who bears a solemn expression on one statue and a sad expression on the other.

Creatures: These statues are adamantine golems, although they sat idle for many decades. Koride recently reactivated them, and they're prepared to attack anyone who isn't Koride or one of the students working for her. They activated when the ta'apundo nearby ventured too close; although they managed to drive the strange plant creature back, it transformed parts of each golem into wood.

When intruders arrive, the golems first clink their staves together across the path to indicate the way is barred. Then they advance, fighting until destroyed. They don't pursue foes who flee, nor do they venture west, because they've been commanded not to leave the area. They also avoid area **B2** to the east because they know the danger the ta'apundo poses to their metal bodies; their blows are now much less effective against the creature.

LIGNIFIED ADAMANTINE GOLEMS (2) CREATURE 17

RARE **N** **LARGE** **CONSTRUCT** **GOLEM** **MINDLESS**

Variant adamantine golem (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 189)

Perception +26; darkvision

Skills Athletics +36

Str +9, **Dex** -1, **Con** +9, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

AC 40; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +25, **Will** +27

HP 255, repair mode; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, magic (see below), mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 15 (except adamantine)

Golem Antimagic harmed by acid (9d10, 2d10 from areas or persistent damage); healed by plant (area 2d10 HP); slowed by electricity

Repair Mode When the golem is at 0 HP, it isn't destroyed. Instead, it enters repair mode, during which it is slowed 1, can't take reactions, and can take only the Self-Repair action. Once it has more than 30 HP, it can use any type of action and can use reactions, though it remains slowed 1 and can't take any reactions until the start of its next turn. If a critical hit with an adamantine weapon reduces the golem to 0 HP, or if such a weapon hits it while it's already at 0 HP, then the golem is destroyed.

Vulnerable to Dispelling and Shape Wood The golem can be targeted by *disjunction*, *dispel magic*, and *shape wood*. If targeted by such a spell of 9th level or higher, the golem has its resistance to physical damage lowered to 10 and is slowed 1 (or slowed 2 if in repair mode) for 1d4 rounds. During this time, if the golem is reduced to 0 HP while already in repair mode, it is destroyed.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ staff +33 (deadly 3d12, magical, reach 15 feet),

Damage 3d10+15 bludgeoning plus destructive strike



Destructive Strike On a critical hit, the golem's staff Strike breaks the target's armor, if any, in addition to dealing damage to the target. If the target has a shield raised, the golem breaks the shield instead.

Inexorable March ♦ The golem Strides up to its Speed, pushing back each creature whose space it moves into and damaging them if they try to stop its movement. A creature can try to bar the way by attempting a DC 43 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature takes no damage and its armor takes no damage.

Success The golem halts its movement and cannot enter the creature's square.

Failure The resisting creature is damaged and its armor takes damage as if hit by the golem's staff.

Self-Repair ♦ (manipulate) The golem repairs itself, regaining 30 Hit Points.

Vent Splinters ♦ (arcane, evocation, fire) The golem vents a 30-foot cone of fiery splinters from its internal forge. This deals 13d6 piercing damage to all creatures in the cone (DC 38 basic Reflex save). Creatures who fail the save also take 2d6 persistent fire damage (4d6 persistent fire damage on a critical failure). The golem can't use Vent Splinters again for 1d4 rounds.

B2. THE DOLOROUS TREE

LOW 18

An enormous tree looms over the staircase leading up the ledge by the pavilion. Its trunk is covered in carved sigils, and numerous talismans and bits of red thread hang from its branches. Its bark is a sickly yellow and even its leaves seem to droop dejectedly.

Creature: This rare, plant-like fey is a ta'apundo, a First World creature who has lived at the Protea Pavilion for centuries. It's become increasingly angry over the years, adorning itself with talismans it's taken from others and wrapping itself in blood-red string as a veiled threat that no one other than the ta'apundo seems to understand. The ta'apundo doesn't like the adamantine golems and tries to provoke them from time to time, hoping to gradually transform them entirely into wood.

The ta'apundo doesn't interfere with anyone fighting the golems; it hopes the golems get the worse of such a confrontation. However, if someone approaches the stairs to the east, it blocks their way and states there's no admittance except for Koride and her authorized pupils. If the heroes simply leave, the ta'apundo lets them go, but if they debate or refuse to leave, it pivots to display its talismans and threads. If the heroes aren't terrified by this demonstration, the ta'apundo becomes puzzled. Frustrated, it then attacks.

If reduced to fewer than 150 Hit Points, the ta'apundo realizes the danger it's in and surrenders, fleeing through the overgrowth around the Protea Pavilion if necessary to escape.

TA'APUNDO

CREATURE 19

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Initiative Perception +35

Treasure: Two of the talismans are valuable—one is a diamond-studded necklace worth 2,000 gp and the other is a *dispelling sliver*.

B3. COURTYARD

LOW 18

This courtyard contains a wide fountain with a statue of a wistful fairy at its center. Hedges of thorns, cultivated into neat rows, line the east and west sides of the fountain, beyond which is the Protea Pavilion. The yellow limestone seems to eat the ambient light, and the domed glass roof looms over the courtyard like a dull eye.

After Okoro Obiyo fell under the *Vesicant Egg's* control, Koride asked him to come up with a way to transport an army of allies into the pavilion to await the King of Biting Ants's return. After significant effort to create a summoning circle on the pavilion's ground floor (area B5), he managed only to summon a single creature from the First World. The being he summoned, Shianshi Waymaker, isn't a First World native but rather one of the shadowy, extraplanar hunters known as *sumbreivas*. With soothing words, Shianshi convinced Okoro she could finish the summoning he'd been tasked with. She even offered to summon more of her people to await this "King." Shianshi sees no downside to bringing over more *sumbreivas*. If this soon-to-be-resurrected sorcerer is as powerful as anticipated, currying his favor in advance seems wise. If not, she and her fellow *sumbreivas* can undertake a hunt across the Mwangi Expanse that is sure to earn her accolades in the dim halls of her Night Lodge.

This was just as well for Okoro, for his attentions had already shifted to another project: reforming the magical hedges in front of the building into protective gear. By now, he's all but forgotten the summoning he was supposed to complete, which is just fine by Shianshi.

Creatures: Okoro is seated on the steps to the south of the fountain when the heroes arrive, weaving a handful of brambles into a complicated knot and inventing a sport to use it. The thorn guardian he created is lurking in the hedge nearby, ready to leap to his defense. Okoro brightens when he sees the heroes, but his grin is cold and cruel, not at all the jovial smile

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he usually bears. This uncharacteristic look, along with the strange, shredded nature of his shadow, should alert the heroes that something is wrong with Okoro.

"Visitors aren't welcome," he says through his cruel smile, "but I can't wait to show you how fast I can kill you with this!" His thorn guardian flies from the hedge and Okoro attacks. Okoro uses his spells to confuse and divide the heroes when possible. Okoro is chatty as he fights, demanding the heroes leave Koride alone because she's undertaking very important

work inside. He should make comments that give the players a sense of what's going on, such as, "The King will hatch from the egg, and we shall serve him!"

The thorn guardian fights until destroyed. Okoro fights intelligently and tenaciously until he's unconscious or dead, but he becomes progressively weaker as his injuries mount due to his Shadow's Displeasure ability.

UNSHADOWED OKORO CREATURE 18

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +30

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Terran

Skills Academia Lore +33, Athletics +31, Deception +35, Diplomacy +35, Games Lore +31, Performance +31, Occultism +35, Stealth +29

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items +3 *greater striking composite shortbow* (30 arrows)

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +33

HP 270; **Resistances** acid 20

Shadow's Displeasure When Okoro has fewer than 150 Hit Points, his shadow pulls at his essence to show the *Vesicant Egg's* displeasure. He looks pained and confused, and he becomes clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 until healed to 150 Hit Points or more. These conditions increase to 2 when below 100 Hit Points. When below 50 Hit Points, he falls unconscious.

Vesicated Shadow Okoro's shadow has become corrupted via the power of the *Vesicant Egg*. His shredded shadow grants him some control over acid and shadows. He gains a +4 status bonus to resist acid and shadow effects.

Speed 25 feet

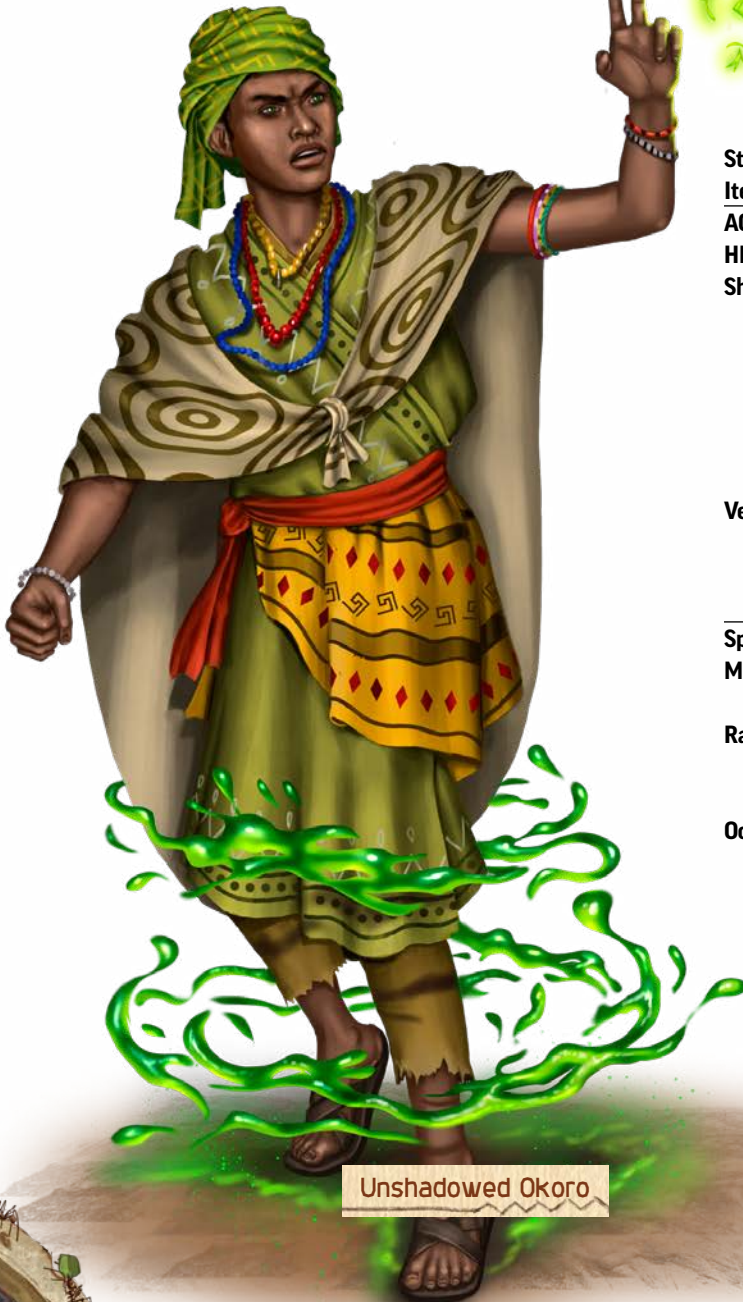
Melee ♦ fist +28 (agile, finesse, nonlethal, unarmed),

Damage 3d4+6 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *composite shortbow* +28 (deadly 2d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 3d6+22 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** (3 slots) *magic missile, prismatic sphere, telepathic demand*; **8th** (3 slots) *maze, prismatic wall, spirit song*; **7th** (3 slots) *grim tendrils, magic missile, prismatic spray*; **6th** (3 slots) *collective transposition, phantasmal calamity, vampiric exsanguination*; **5th** (3 slots) *black tentacles, magic missile, synaptic pulse*; **4th** (3 slots) *blink, fly, grim tendrils*; **3rd** (3 slots) *blindness, magic missile, vampiric touch*; **2nd** (3 slots) *blur, hideous laughter, sound burst*; **1st** (3 slots) *grim tendrils, magic missile, unseen servant*; **Cantrips** (9th) *chill touch, detect magic, guidance, mage hand, telekinetic projectile*

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** *shadow blast* (acid only, ×2), *shadow siphon* (×2)



Unshadowed Okoro

Observe Weakness ♦ (concentrate, divination, fortune, occult) Okoro studies a creature within 30 feet to find an opening to attack. On his next attack roll against the creature this turn, he rolls twice and uses the higher result, and his attack gains the fortune trait. The target becomes temporarily immune for 1d4 rounds.

Push My Luck ↻ **Trigger** Okoro targets a creature with an attack; **Requirements** The triggering creature was the target of Observe Weakness this turn; **Effect** Okoro draws upon his future luck to guarantee his attack. When he makes his attack roll, if he rolls lower than 10 on the die, he treats that attack roll as a 10 instead. This is in addition to rolling twice and taking the higher result from Observe Weakness. Afterward, Okoro's luck is temporarily spent, and he must roll twice and use the lower result of his next 3 checks; this is a misfortune effect. He can't use Push My Luck again until he's completed these 3 checks.

Rupture Shadow ♦♦ (acid, conjuration, occult, shadow) Okoro can create immense blisters on a creature's shadow, which immediately burst, dealing 20d6 acid damage. He targets a creature within 60 feet that is casting a shadow, which must attempt a DC 37 Will save. Okoro can't use Rupture Shadow again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and becomes temporarily immune for 1 day.

Success The target takes half damage. The bursting shadow deals 5 acid splash damage to all creatures within 5 feet of the target.

Failure The target takes full damage, and the bursting shadow deals 10 acid splash damage.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage, the bursting shadow deals 20 acid splash damage, and the target also takes 4d6 persistent acid damage.

THORN GUARDIAN

CREATURE 16

RARE N SMALL CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Variant tattoo guardian (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 262)

Perception +27; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +33

Str +6, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +2

AC 39; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +30, **Will** +35

HP 330; **Immunities** critical hits, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, grabbed, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, precision, prone, sickened, unconscious

Extra Reaction A thorn guardian gains an additional reaction each turn but can use this extra reaction only to Retaliate.

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Retaliate ↻ **Trigger** A creature within the thorn guardian's reach attacks the guardian's ward; **Effect** The thorn guardian makes a briar Strike against the triggering creature. If it hits, it deals an additional 2d6 persistent bleed.

Speed fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ briar +30, **Damage** 3d12+12

Bond with Ward ♦ (concentrate, move) **Requirements**

The thorn guardian is adjacent to its ward; **Effect** The thorn guardian enters its ward's space and encases the creature. This doesn't interfere with its ward's senses or actions. The thorn guardian occupies the same space as its ward and moves with its ward.

While worn, the thorn guardian establishes a constant *shield other* effect with its ward. Attacks that target the thorn guardian target the ward instead but use the higher AC or saving throw values between the thorn guardian and the ward. Area effects apply to both the thorn guardian and the ward, as normal for an area effect.

Fly Free ♦ (concentrate, move) **Requirements** The thorn guardian is Bonded with its Ward; **Effect** The thorn guardian removes itself from the ward and enters an adjacent space.

Interpose ♦ **Requirements** The thorn guardian is Bonded with or adjacent to its ward; **Effect** The thorn guardian interposes itself between the ward and its foes, granting its ward a +2 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of the thorn guardian's next turn.

XP Award: If the heroes defeat Okoro without killing him, award them 30 XP.

B4. STORAGE

LOW 18

The first floor of the pavilion is a rarely used mess of storage boxes, crates, old books, and furniture that has piled up over the years. Faded paint on the walls and a delicate marble pattern in the floor speak to the ill-kept state of the building. A set of well-carved wooden stairs in the back lead up to the second floor (area B6). The center of the room contains a strange device about 8 feet across that resembles an incomplete orrery. Instead of showing the relative motions of planets and moons, this device tracks the interplay of esoteric astrological forces.

Mariama Keitana discovered the device while investigating the secret, coded symbols left around the campus, which were left by this machine's long-vanished inventor. Mariama kept visiting this room in secret, working to understand the device and get it functioning once more. In fact, her visits often overlapped with Koride's, but neither realized the other was here. She has managed to set the machine into some form of working order.

When Koride came with the *Vesicant Egg*, Mariama noticed and was too curious to resist spying on the teacher to see what she was doing. When Mariama's shadow fell across the *Vesicant Egg*, she became

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Unshadowed and is now a thrall of the malevolent psychic fragments growing inside the artifact.

When Okoro summoned Shianshi in the next room, Mariama recognized how dangerous sumbreivas are and was quick to alert Koride. Koride didn't care, assuming any powerful ally is a useful ally, and ordered Mariama back to this room in the event her machine could aid the King of Biting Ants upon his return.

Although Mariama wanted nothing to do with the sumbreivas, in a twist of fate that is strangely typical of her life, one of the sumbreivas and Mariama fell quite suddenly in love. The sumbreiva spends his time here, working with Mariama on the machine he doesn't really understand just to be with her.

The Astrological Evaluator: The machine is fairly easy to operate now that Mariama has installed a simple switch to activate it. When a creature flips the switch, even from a distance or by magic, the machine emits sparks as it shudders, reads the creature's "astrological coordinates," and shoots it with a jolt of surprising but painless electricity.

The jolt bolsters the creature against a single condition. Roll a d4 to determine the condition: 1—clumsy, 2—drained, 3—enfeebled, 4—stupefied. For the next week, whenever the creature gains the condition, reduce the value by 1. Because this is based on immutable but unknowable coordinates related to the creature's birth or creation, the creature always gets the same result every time they use the machine.

Creatures: Mariama and the sumbreiva are together here. If the heroes were particularly noisy while fighting elsewhere in the pavilion (such as during their confrontation with Okoro in the courtyard), they're ready for danger and swiftly attack.

In a fight, the sumbreiva stays between Mariama and danger, allowing Mariama to cast her most destructive and disruptive spells. Neither the sumbreiva nor Mariama surrender, and they pursue foes who try to flee.

UNSHADOWED MARIAMA

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +30

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnoll, Sylvan

Skills Academia Lore +35, Deception +31, Intimidation +29, Occultism +35, Religion +31, Stealth +31

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +33

HP 270; **Resistances** acid 20

Shadow's Displeasure As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Vesicated Shadow As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Weird Astrology Perhaps because of Mariama's quirky nature, she has received all the effects of the

astrological evaluator. When she gains any of the clumsy, drained, enfeebled, or stupefied conditions, she reduces the value by 1. This means her Shadow's Displeasure doesn't affect her until she has fewer than 50 Hit Points, when she falls unconscious.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +28 (agile, finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 3d4+4 bludgeoning

Occult Prepared Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** foresight, synesthesia, unfathomable song; **8th** disappearance, spiritual epidemic, uncontrollable dance; **7th** duplicate foe, paralyze, warp mind; **6th** feeblemind, spellwrack, vibrant pattern; **5th** hallucination, synaptic pulse, synesthesia; **4th** confusion, dimension door, fly; **3rd** chilling darkness, hypnotic pattern, paralyze; **2nd** death knell, invisibility, paranoia; **1st** bane, fear, true strike; **Cantrips (9th)** daze, forbidding ward, ghost sound, read aura, telekinetic projectile

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** shadow blast (acid only, ×2), shadow siphon (×2)

Witch Hexes (Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide 237) 3 Focus Points, DC 40; **9th** blood ward, cackle, curse of death, malicious shadow; **Hex Cantrip (9th)** nudge fate

Bind Destinies ♦♦♦ (abjuration, curse, occult) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Mariama ties her fate with that of another creature within 30 feet. The creature must attempt a DC 40 Will save. Regardless of the result of its save, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 day.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The two fates are bound. Whenever Mariama takes damage, the creature takes damage of the same type equal to half the damage Mariama took (DC 37 basic Fortitude save). Immunities, resistances, and weaknesses still apply as normal. The creature can attempt to sever the bond by spending an action, which has the concentrate trait, to attempt another DC 40 Will save. On a success, the bond is severed, and the effect ends. The bond also ends when Mariama falls unconscious, or if she actively ends the effect herself as a free action.

Failure As success, but the creature takes damage equal to the full amount Mariama took. Severing the bond requires a 2-action activity, which has the concentrate trait.

Critical Failure As failure, but the basic Fortitude save is DC 40. Severing the bond requires a 3-action activity, which has the concentrate trait.

Rupture Shadow ♦♦ (acid, conjuration, occult, shadow) As Unshadowed Okoro (page 19).

SUMBREIVA

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 260

Initiative Perception +29

Astrological Evaluation When the sumbreiva gains the clumsy condition, it reduces the value by 1.

XP Award: If the heroes defeat Mariama without killing her, award them 30 XP.

B5. GARDEN PORTAL

MODERATE 18

This room is bursting with verdant life, including all sorts of potted plants with strange colors and shapes. The circle on the floor is a fitful and sporadic portal to the First World. While it sometimes allows creatures to come through (such as the ta'apundo in area B2), it mostly just leaks vitality that spurs plant growth. This is the primary reason the Protea Pavilion is surrounded by overgrowth, and it keeps the First World plants here in a constant state of good health. A western window admits ample light to illuminate this room, but a few leafy vines clinging to the window give the light a greenish filter.

Creatures: The sumbreiva spellcaster Shianshi Waymaker is hard at work bringing more sumbreivas to the Material Plane. It's difficult for her to reorient the fitful portal to the Shadow Plane, and she's thus far only been able to bring three sumbreivas. Two are here with her, sparring and preparing themselves for what they assume will be a legendary hunt. Their grunts and groans are audible to anyone who listens at the door or window, and it keeps the denizens of this room from hearing what's going on elsewhere in the pavilion.

When the heroes arrive, the sumbreivas are quick to identify them as intruders. Shianshi gestures to the other two sumbreivas to stand down for long enough to find out who the heroes are and why they've come to the pavilion. When it becomes clear the heroes are here for Koride, that they oppose the King of Biting Ants, or that they want to stop whatever's going on, Shianshi insists she can't let them and gestures to her companions to cloak the room in *darkness* and attack. Any sumbreiva reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points flees the pavilion, breaking the window to leave if necessary.

SHIANSHI WAYMAKER

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LE LARGE HUMANOID NEGATIVE

Female variant sumbreiva (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 260)

Perception +32; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril

Skills Arcana +35, Athletics +34, Intimidation +32, Occultism +31, Stealth +38, Survival +31

Str +8, **Dex** +8, **Con** +3, **Int** +9, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Items +3 greater striking orichalcum greatsword

AC 42; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +35, **Will** +29

HP 330 (negative healing); **Immunities** death effects, drained

Attack of Opportunity

Speed 50 feet

Melee ♦ greatsword +36 (death, magical, versatile P),

Damage 3d12+14 slashing plus huntblade brutality

Melee ♦ shadow whip +36 (agile, death, disarm, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 3d4+14

bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 40,

attack +32; **9th** dispel magic,

foresight, telepathic demand; **8th**



Unshadowed Mariama

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eclipse burst, maze, unrelenting observation; **7th** dimensional lock, plane shift, true target; **6th** collective transposition, disintegrate, teleport; **5th** dimension door, sending, shadow walk; **Cantrips (9th)** daze, detect magic, electric arc, produce flame, read aura
Arcane Innate Spells DC 40; **4th** darkness, earthbind

Rituals DC 40; imprisonment

Claim Trophy ◆ Shianshi claims the soul of a creature she killed within the last minute. This works like *bind soul*, except that no black sapphire is required and the soul is turned

into a glowing blue light called a *soul trophy*. Anyone who kills Shianshi can then free the soul from any *soul trophy* by touching it and speaking the word for "freedom" in any language.

Huntblade Brutality Shianshi's greatsword Strikes have the death trait and deal an additional 2d8 damage to drained, flat-footed, or frightened creatures.

Hunter's Leap ⤵ (occult, conjuration, teleportation) **Trigger** Shianshi kills a creature; **Effect** Shianshi teleports up to 30 feet and makes a greatsword Strike; on a hit, the target of the Strike is frightened 1 (frightened 3 on a critical hit).

Whip Drain ◆ (arcane, death, necromancy) **Requirements** Shianshi has a creature grabbed with her *shadow whip*; **Effect** The grabbed creature must succeed at a DC 41 Fortitude save or become drained 2 (drained 3 on a critical failure). If the creature is already drained, this increases its drained value instead, to a maximum of drained 4.

SUMBREIVAS (2)

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 260

Initiative Perception +29

Treasure: One of the plants here is growing two bulbous berries, one white and one blue, growing from the same stalk. They function as *major potions of retaliation* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 259) in cold and electricity, respectively.

B6. LOUNGE

The pavilion's second floor is a single large room with stairs leading both up and down. A low table carved from a single enormous block of wood sits in the center of the room atop a richly woven carpet scattered with pillows and cushions. Several scrolls and quills are spread out on the table. Two terrariums, one on each side of the room, have shattered, the sand inside them spilled onto the floor in conical piles.

Koride sometimes relaxes here with her favorite fellow Rain-Scribes, though those times are few and far between since she's become Unshadowed, as her fascination with the egg means she rarely leaves the pavilion's upper floor. The scrolls are notes that Anchor Root and Haibram Thodja have made describing the *Vesicant Egg* in great detail, noting its

Sumbreiva



acid runoff and the hairline fractures appearing along its surface.

The terrariums used to contain several ant colonies, but the artifact compelled Koride to shatter the glass so the ants could go free. The ants have since scattered across the Magaambya, and they undergo monstrous transformations during Chapter 3. The stairs in the northeast corner lead to a trapdoor (marked with a “T” on the map), which opens onto the pavilion in area B7.

Treasure: Some of the sand sparkles with diamond dust, a component Koride included in the terrarium sand to make certain rituals easier to perform on the ants. Separating out the diamond dust is a time-intensive chore, but the heroes can recover 6,000 gp of diamond dust from each pile.

B7. THE PAVILION

SEVERE 18

The top level of the pavilion is an open space featuring a decoratively crenelated railing and two statues of the same stern wizard depicted at the base of the rise. The tallest buildings of the Magaambya are just visible above the overgrown tangle that surrounds the Protea Pavilion.

Koride has summoned her Unshadowed Rain-Scribe allies, Anchor Root and Haibram, to her side to figure out what to do next for the *Vesicant Egg*. Koride has a good idea that the heroes are coming, and she’s discussing the best way to confront the heroes upon their inevitable arrival.

The ceiling of this room is a sturdy glass dome 25 feet high at its center.

Creatures: Regardless of how the heroes enter this room, the Unshadowed attack with a ferocity that’s unlike them (except for Haibram, who does everything with gusto). Anchor Root does her best to delay and debilitate the heroes without killing them, but Haibram uses his most damaging spells against them. Neither surrenders during their fight with the heroes, and they pursue heroes who flee even though Koride stays here.

Koride hangs back near the door to area B8 or takes cover behind the statues, hoping her Unshadowed allies take the brunt of the heroes’ attack. She casts *fated confrontation* to lock one of the heroes into a fight with Haibram and divide their numbers. She uses damaging spells to keep the heroes on their toes, and casts any spells needed to keep Anchor Root or Haibram in a fight.

When Koride first experiences the shadow’s displeasure, or when Anchor Root and Haibram are both dealt with, she experiences a rare moment of lucidity and ceases her attacks. What Koride knows is described on page 24.

UNSHADOWED ANCHOR ROOT

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE CE SMALL GNOLL HUMANOID

Perception +33, low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Amurrin, Common, Gnoll, Iruxi, Necril, Sylvan

Skills Academia Lore +31, Deception +35, Nature +35,

Occultism +35, Religion +31, Stealth +31, Survival +33

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** –1

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +33

HP 270; **Resistances** acid 20

Shadow’s Displeasure As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Vesicated Shadow As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ bite +28, **Damage** 3d6+5 piercing

Primal Prepared Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** lightning bolt, nature’s enmity, storm of vengeance; **8th** dispel magic, earthquake, horrid wilting; **7th** eclipse burst, fireball, volcanic eruption; **6th** dispel magic, lightning bolt, true seeing; **5th** cloudkill, fireball, wall of thorns; **4th** dispel magic, fly, wall of fire; **3rd** fear, lightning bolt, stinking cloud; **2nd** dispel magic, spider climb, ventriloquism; **1st** fear, grease, ventriloquism; **Cantrips** (9th) acid splash, disrupt undead, produce flame, stabilize, tanglefoot

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** shadow blast

Unshadowed Anchor Root

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(acid only, ×2), shadow siphon (×2); **5th animal form** (canine form only); **2nd augury** (×2)

Rupture Shadow ♦♦ (acid, conjuration, occult, shadow) As Unshadowed Okoro (page 19).

UNSHADOWED HAIBRAM

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +30, darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven

Skills Academia Lore +31, Acrobatics +33, Arcana +33, Athletics +35, Deception +29, Intimidation +31, Performance +31, Stealth +29, Survival +29

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -1

Items +3 greater striking mamebe (Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic 120)

AC 41; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +30, **Will** +27

HP 330; **Resistances** acid 20

Shadow's Displeasure As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Vesicated Shadow As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).



Unshadowed Haibram

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ *mamebe* +33 (disarm, deadly d8, magical),

Damage 3d6+16 slashing

Ranged ♦ *mamebe* +33 (disarm, deadly d8, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+16 slashing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 37, attack +29; **9th** *fireball*, *implosion*, *meteor swarm*; **8th** *boil blood* (Pathfinder Secrets of Magic 92), *disappearance*, *lightning bolt*; **7th** *energy aegis*, *fly*, *true target*; **6th** *chain lightning*, *flame vortex* (Secrets of Magic 106), *repulsion*; **5th** *fireball*, *mantle of the magma heart* (Secrets of Magic 115), *telekinetic haul*; **4th** *fly*, *gaseous form*, *wall of fire*; **3rd** *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *wall of wind*; **2nd** *endure elements*, *flaming sphere*, *obscuring mist*; **1st** *gust of wind*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *true strike*; **Cantrips** (9th) *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *produce flame*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

Occult Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **9th** *shadow blast* (acid only, ×2), *shadow siphon* (×2)

Rupture Shadow ♦♦ (acid, conjuration, occult, shadow) As Unshadowed Okoro (page 19).

Wind Step ♦♦ to ♦♦♦ (air, arcane, transmutation) Haibram draws air around him to aid his movement. He Strides up to his Speed, gaining the effects of *air walk* and ignoring difficult terrain while moving. He can increase the number of actions to 3 to Stride up to three times his Speed instead. Haibram begins to fall immediately after using Wind Step but treats the fall as 60 feet shorter thanks to the supporting winds.

Wind Touch ♦ (air, arcane, evocation)

Haibram imbues a weapon he's holding with the power of the wind until the start of his next turn. The wind's power allows Haibram to swing and hurl the weapon with great force, causing the weapon to deal an additional 2d10 damage. If the weapon does not have the thrown trait, it also gains the thrown 10 feet trait during this attack.

UNSHADOWED KORIDE

CREATURE 19

Page 90

Initiative Perception +33

Koride's Lesson: Koride hurriedly explains that her mind hasn't been her own for the past few days, since just before the heroes returned from the Doorway to the Red Star (that is, shortly after they killed the King of Biting Ants, although Koride doesn't know this). She doesn't know how much time she has before the *Vesicant Egg's* influence overcomes her yet again, so she urges the heroes to ask any questions they have. She agrees to be bound, give up her gear, or take any other protective measures the heroes suggest, but she can't bring herself to leave this room, even in her lucid state.



The heroes are likely to ask Koride the following questions; if they don't ask these questions exactly, you should still try to have her get most of this information across to them.

What's going on here? "I know I promised to get rid of the egg. But I thought I'd learned how to stop it from attracting vermin, so I kept studying it. I sensed something powerful hiding within, but I couldn't tell what it was. Recently, it began to show small cracks. The acid it always exuding was more potent, more fascinating. When I leaned over and my shadow fell across it, I felt my whole body burn. My shadow became torn and tattered, and with it my mind. The entity within the egg has been commanding me, and I'm powerless to resist it. Or them. I feel like there's more than one mind in there, all fighting each other for control but every one of them desperate and dangerous. Together, they'll bring back the King in mind if not in body, and I've been preparing for that with a focus that is, frankly, exhausting. But the egg won't let us rest."

How do we stop the egg from hatching? "If there is a way, I never discovered it. Some part of me was hoping the tasks I had assigned to Chizire, Noxolo, and Ignaci would provide some manner to delay or halt the process, but they never returned. It's possible some part of me knew that answer once, but it was burned away along with my shadow. You all are our only remaining hope. You must get close to the egg and recover my shadow so I can remember."

How can we restore you and the others? "My shadow was torn and discarded by the egg onto the table, like a physical piece of cloth. I have little hope of its recovery, as it was shredded into pieces. The others have lost their shadows, but they're whole, so there's perhaps better hope of recovering them. I can try to restore any shadows you recover."

How can we get close to the egg if its proximity is enough to shred our shadows? "I was proud and arrogant. I believed that my mind and willpower could overcome any danger. The egg used my pride against me and that proved to be my undoing. I beg of you not to underestimate the egg's power. Humble yourselves before the threat and approach it not as a striking fist or an exploding spell, but with the same humility you showed as students long ago. Remember this last lesson from an old teacher who didn't learn it until too late: the shadow of a giant stretches long, but the humble cast small shadows that can hide beneath their feet."

Once the heroes have learned what they can from Koride, she feels her control slipping away again. She fights against it, but the effort renders her unconscious.

XP Award: If the heroes defeat Anchor Root and Haibram without killing either of them, award them 30 XP.

B8. ALCHEMY LAB

The lab is a plain room stripped of all furniture save for a very long table at its far end. The table is covered in a huge jumble of objects, from drums and incense burners to plants and skulls, along with several trinkets that look magical. Scattered books, scroll cases, bundles of parchment, musical instruments, gourds, and various mementos are all stacked together in untidy piles. Dominating one side of the long table is large egg sitting a puddle of green liquid.

On one side of the table, the *Vesicant Egg* sits in a large puddle of greenish-yellow liquid that dribbles off the side of the table and puddles on the floor. Bright light fills the room, but it seems somehow dim and faded near the egg. The heroes can't move or affect the *Vesicant Egg*. The wicked intelligence within knows that rending shadows is its only way to gain more power, and the artifact's light can't be quenched. A character who casually or carelessly walks toward the artifact feels a strange sense of something malevolent pulling at their shadow, threatening to rip it apart. They still have enough time to withdraw before falling under the artifact's control.

The pieces of Koride's shadow aren't visible on the table. The shadows cast by the variety of objects on it overlap in confusing ways that strain the eyes unless the heroes get closer.

The heroes must approach the egg with humility to get close to it. If they weren't able to get the warning from Koride, their masks might echo Old-Mage Jatembe's words of "be humble even as you wield your great power." This humility doesn't require a check, as mere intent is sufficient, but the characters might want to bow, keep their heads lowered, or make some other sign of their intent.

The *Vesicant Egg* is temporarily stymied by this approach, as it hasn't experienced such humility before. The egg's shadow, rather than those of the heroes, begins to grow and loom large. A strange gravity yanks the heroes off their feet toward the table, which grows closer and much larger. The walls of the room fall back and vanish. Finally, the nauseating flow of gravity rights itself and deposits the heroes atop of the table, with the *Vesicant Egg* towering above them. Their humility has given the heroes their only chance to save the Unshadowed.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for successfully approaching the *Vesicant Egg*.

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I was telling you about Jungle Cat, yes? In her pride, she had her shadow burned off by an evil and clever king who was growing inside an egg. When the Magic Warriors came to find her and ask about the dangerous egg, the egg grew angry and cursed them all to be smaller than ants and trapped them on the table where it sat.

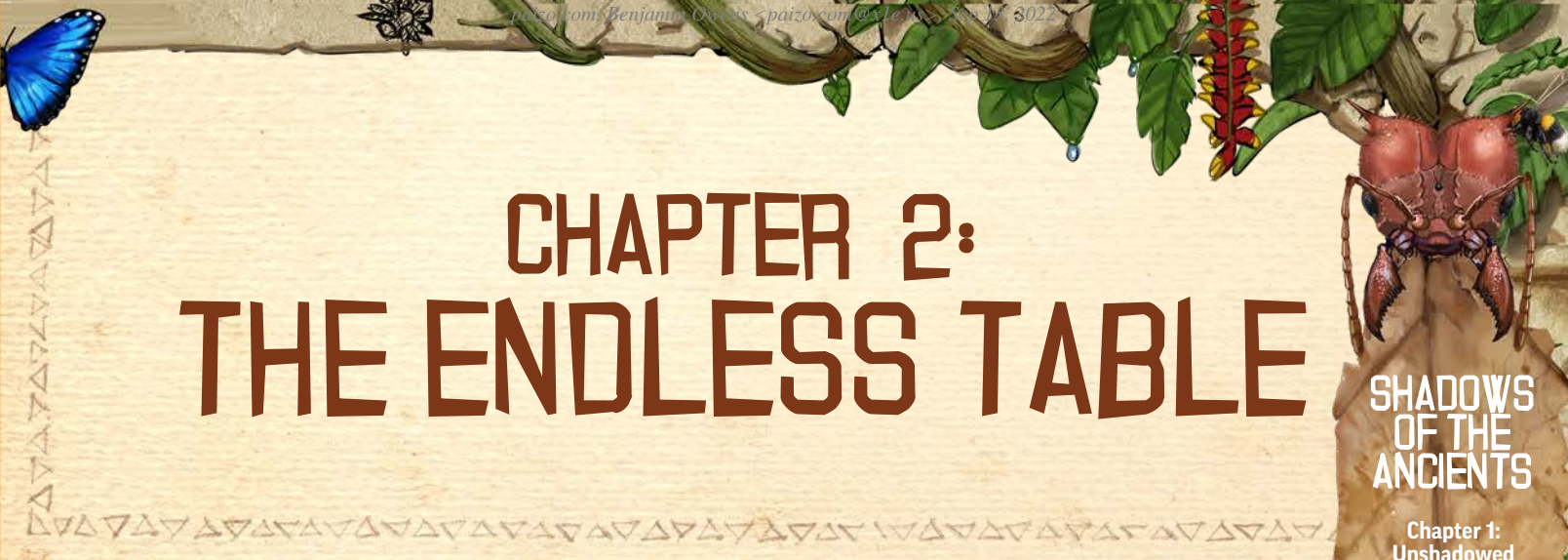
The table was full of the Jungle Cat's magical things: a bushy herb plant, a pot of ashes, a walking clock made of cogs and springs, a gourd that had gone soft and smelled bad, a painted drum, and more. But worse than all these ordinary things was the egg. It had cracked and leaked a lake of acid all over the table.

There were also ants upon the table—red ants who were a great danger to anyone small. The ants' Red Queen ruled over a fortress within the rotting gourd, and her soldiers roamed the table, angrily demanding shadows. You see, the Red Queen had heard whispers of a King of Biting Ants from within the egg and she wished to prepare a kingdom for him so they could wed when he emerged.

But a seamstress living under the herb plant knew that the unshadowed, who were made when their shadows were torn, could be stitched back together. The Magic Warriors set about to collect shadows and had many adventures in this strange, tiny world.

The seamstress sewed the shadows back and Jungle Cat was well again. All were happy, except for the egg. It seethed, writhing like a trapped insect, and its shell trembled with frustration. Whatever grew within wasn't pleased and would soon unleash another curse—this one as large as the Magic Warriors were small!





CHAPTER 2: THE ENDLESS TABLE

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The heroes have been shrunk down to a very small size, smaller than ants, and deposited on the table in Koride's lab. Yet the table contains much more than little objects that have become impossibly large to the heroes; the *Vesicant Egg's* magic has transformed the table into a strange wonderland with a variety of fantastical characters, creatures, potential allies, and threats. This chapter is presented as an open sandbox, enabling the heroes to explore as they gather the shreds of Koride's scattered shadow. They can find the shadows of their other allies as well.

For the purposes of scale and measuring distance, the table is roughly 2 miles long and 1 mile wide. It is surrounded by a gulf of empty air in all directions; unlike the table in the real world, it lacks legs. The table exerts a magical pull that makes it impossible to travel more than 100 feet from it in any direction without being drawn back, including flying up from its surface or dropping beneath it. The heroes' entire world is, for a time, bound by the tabletop.

The light comes from the windows of the room atop the Protea Pavilion, but these windows are impossibly far away and appear only as hazy shapes of illumination admitting natural light. Time functions strangely on the table, passing much more slowly than in the room they just left. The heroes might not realize this relative slowing of time right away, but after a few hours on the table you should note the light of the room hasn't changed at all—each hour that passes here is only a minute or so in the larger world. They might spend several days upon the table without more than a few hours passing at the Magaambya.

Several strange landmarks dominate the cluttered table. The closest is a potted juniper plant that rises like an enormous and ancient tree. Also nearby are a towering drum on its side, a broken tortoiseshell bowl full of ash, and an split, overripe gourd. In the distance, beyond a glowing lake of acid, the *Vesicant Egg* looms over everything like a half-risen moon.

The heroes should have some time to get their footing and get used to navigating the tabletop from this new vantage point. It also becomes abundantly clear that the tabletop is not simply a dead piece of wood laden with inanimate objects to be navigated but rather a world full of tiny inhabitants. Many of these, the heroes will learn, are intelligent and single-minded red ants who loyally serve their queen. This queen has heard whispers about the return of the King of Biting Ants, and she's determined to wed him as soon as he appears. The ants are frantically scurrying to serve their queen's capricious demands, and they're unwilling to let tiny heroes get in their way.

The map of the Endless Table appears on page 28.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, the *Vesicant Egg's* power has shrunk the heroes to smaller than ants and set them on a table with an array of unusual locations and strange creatures—including ants, which now tower over the heroes. This chapter should have the feel of a fable or fairy tale, as the heroes meet whimsical and outlandish creatures with improbable problems. By finding the four scattered pieces of Koride's shadow and earning the favor of a norn named Hlakana, the heroes can gain what they need to remove the Unshadowed condition from the misguided professor.

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows.

- *Indulgence's Wrap* (+3 major resilient antimagic shadow leather armor)
- *inexplicable apparatus*
- major quicksilver mutagen
- major serene mutagen
- *scroll of heroism* (9th level)
- *staff of the magi*
- true ablative armor plating (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 66)
- *true staff-storing shield* (*Secrets of Magic* 190)



Practical Research

As the heroes venture across the Endless Table, take care to show them all the wonders they can behold while at such a remarkably small size. Few adventurers have ever had such an unusual experience. By taking a break from their journeys to note their findings, the heroes can use the Practical Research downtime activity while anywhere on the Endless Table.

PRACTICAL RESEARCH ON THE ENDLESS TABLE

DOWNTIME

Requirements You are a lore-speaker who has been shrunk to an incredibly small size in the strange world of the Endless Table.

You carefully explore the miniature world of the table, expanding your understanding of how things work on a minuscule level and how creatures in it interact. Choose either your primary or secondary branch and attempt a skill check against a standard DC of the branch's level. You can use Nature or one of the branch's associated skills for this check. This activity takes 1 day.

Critical Success You reach a new understanding of the world! Increase the branch level of the branch you chose

by 2; you can increase it up to 20 regardless of your character level.

Success You discover some understandings that escaped your eyes when you were larger. Increase the branch level of the branch you chose by 1; you can increase it up to 20 regardless of your character level.

Failure You're unable to uncover anything useful to your studies. Your branch level remains the same.

Critical Failure You miscalculate based on erroneous assumptions about the larger world's rules applying in this miniature one. Your subsequent attempts at Practical Research on the Endless Table take a -2 circumstance penalty.

The Cat and the Clock Low 19

Most encounters in this chapter take place in specific locations on the Endless Table, but two enormous denizens roam the area. The heroes might encounter either or both as they travel between locations.

A few months ago, a well-meaning friend gave Anchor Root a kitten named Adanyini, hoping the animal would help with her anxiety. It did just the opposite, stalking her pet chicken at all hours and

making messes. Anchor Root felt she couldn't return Adanyini, so she encouraged Haibram to take him from her. Haibram initially resisted, but he eventually grew fond of the bold little animal, so he brought it with him to the Protea Pavilion.

Adanyini was swept into the world of the Endless Table while he was batting the pendulum of a mechanical desk clock back and forth. He kept his current size, but, although he was gargantuan from the perspective of the table's denizens, he was confused and frightened of the strange world in which he found himself. When he saw the regal lioness Issa prowling near the potted plant (area C1), Adanyini craved the lioness's confidence and bravery. Adanyini stole Issa's whiskers, hoping they would make him just as fierce and proud. They did so, transforming the kitten into a mighty leonine creature called a slana. Adanyini knows that giving up the whiskers means becoming a timid kitten again, which he knows is the right thing to do, but he hasn't been able to remove the whiskers.

Adanyini has made an enemy with his antics—not the lioness Issa, who lacks the confidence to venture far, but the clock he was bothering on the table. The desk clock has animated as a clockwork creature. Although it's a collection of gears and springs, the clockwork creature isn't quite mindless. It hungers for revenge against the kitten who pestered it so much when it was an inanimate object.

Creatures: Adanyini wanders the table, and the hunting clock pursues him. The few times they've tussled, Adanyini has found it hard to damage the clockwork, so he tries to keep away from the hunting clock instead. Adanyini can't rest anywhere for long, as the ticking of the clock pursues him everywhere he goes. He's therefore jumpy and irritable despite his mighty form.

How this encounter unfolds is up to you. The heroes might meet one figure or the other alone, or they might come across the two locked in a titanic battle. Adanyini is likely to talk with the heroes if they're friendly, but the hunting clock tries to quickly defeat any creatures that get in its way.

ADANYINI

CREATURE 20

Male slana (page 84)

Initiative Perception +36

HUNTING CLOCK

CREATURE 20

Clockwork clock tower (page 81)

Initiative Perception +34

Treasure: The inner workings of the hunting clock contain a true ablative armor plating (*Guns & Gears*

66), an *inexplicable apparatus*, and a gem-studded cog worth 17,500 gp that weighs 1 Bulk.

ADANYINI'S WHISKERS

The towering slana crouches down to talk with the heroes or lifts them up in his massive paws to look them in the eyes. Despite his fearsome appearance, Adanyini still has the general demeanor and outlook of a curious, wide-eyed kitten. Some questions the heroes might ask Adanyini are as follows.

Why is that big clock chasing you? "In the time before—when I was just a kitten and the clock was just a clock—I was, well, playing with it a little bit. Maybe a little rough. But its dangling pendulum was shiny and went swish-swish-swish when I pawed at it, so you can't blame me. Now it's mad and wants to kill me."

What manner of creature are you? / Did you steal a lioness's whiskers? "I didn't mean her any harm! I just wanted to see what that lioness's whiskers would look like on me, and they turned me into this lion-person. At first, I was glad to be so big and powerful, but it's not something I've earned or deserve. I know I should give the whiskers back, but I can't take them off. I tried!"

Can we help you take your whiskers off? "Yes, please, I know I shouldn't keep them even though they make me brave and strong and give me a mighty roar. If I get rid of them, I'll be a kitten again, which I think I've learned is fine enough. But can you help me? I don't know how."

Removing Issa's whiskers from Adanyini requires either the *atone* ritual (heightened to 10th level, using either Nature or Religion) or the *freedom* ritual, which the heroes can learn in area E1. The primary check DC of either ritual is 38. Learning which rituals are necessary requires a close examination of the slana's whiskers and a successful DC 35 Arcana or Nature check.

Either ritual, if successful, turns Adanyini into a very large kitten who's clever but can no longer talk. Issa's whiskers then fall lightly to the ground. Anyone can pick them up and carry them, and they don't have the ability to transform anyone else.

Because either ritual takes a day to perform, the hunting clock is certain to catch up to Adanyini while the ritual is occurring (that is, if the clock hasn't been defeated already). The heroes can pause the ritual to fight, but Adanyini can't participate in the fight without breaking the ritual, so he stays out of it.

Heroes who aren't participating in the ritual to remove Issa's whiskers can engage in other downtime activities, such as Practical Research on the Endless Table, described on page 28.

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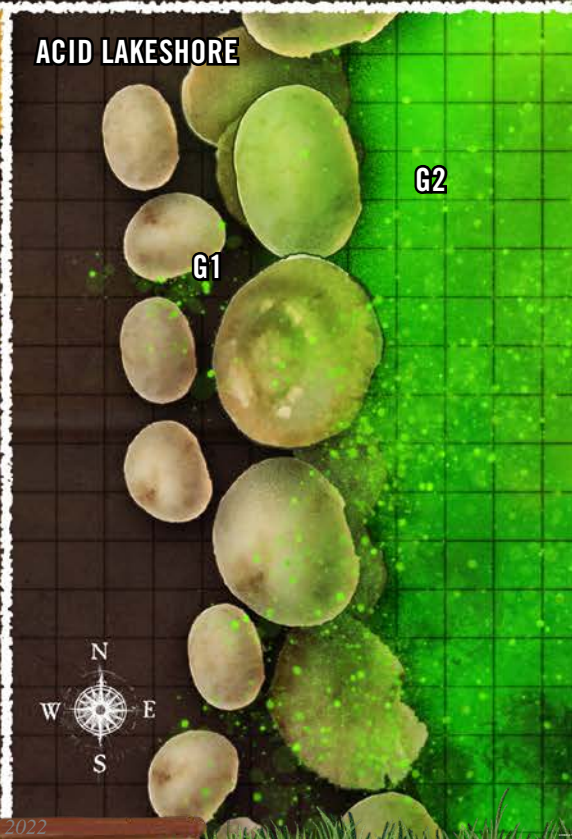
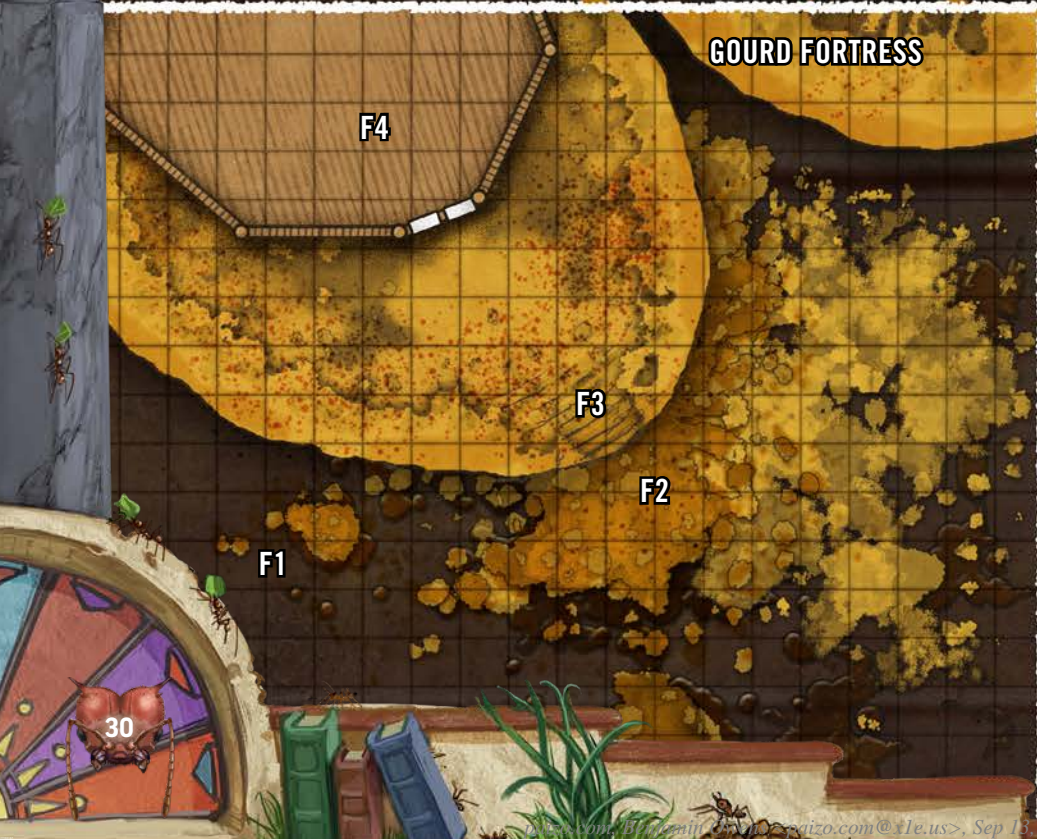
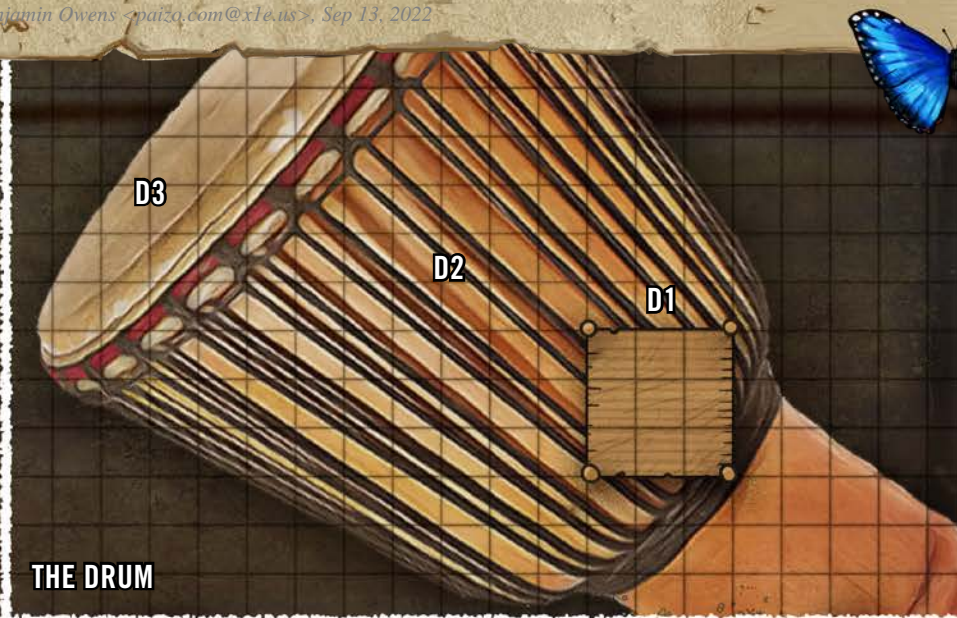
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Potted Plant

The closest feature to the heroes' arrival point is a clay pot with a juniper growing within it. The pot is 100 feet tall and the juniper much taller still, its branches spreading wide to fill the sky like an enormous tree. Smoke rises from beneath the tree as if from a campfire just out of view.

Use the map on page 30 for the Potted Plant encounters.

C1. COTTAGE

MODERATE 19

A small cottage sits in the shadow of the potted plant high above. It must be no bigger than a saltshaker to people of ordinary size, but with the new perspective on the table it looks just cozy enough for a single person. The cottage's chimney emits a lazy trail of smoke into the sky. The front door has been smashed open and several dishes and rugs have been scattered onto the ground.

This humble cottage belongs to Hlakana, one of the wisest creatures on the Endless Table. The Red Queen, leader of the insects on the tabletop, has commanded her minions to cleanse the table of those who won't bow down to her rule. Since Hlakana is a newcomer without much respect for the Red Queen (and, worse, she isn't shy about saying as much), the queen specifically decreed that the strange witch must die. When the Red Queen's minions recently arrived at her cottage, Hlakana simply retreated up into the juniper pot with her pet lioness, and she's now relaxing at the base of the enormous tree.

Creatures: Six red ants recently arrived to find Hlakana missing. They battered down the cottage door and searched through her things but have uncovered no clues. They don't know what Hlakana looks like; they only know that she's an impudent witch. They're currently milling about hoping for further direction or inspiration.

When the heroes arrive, the ants assume that the one of them who most looks like an "impudent witch" is Hlakana. They cry out and attack, focusing on that target in preference to any others. (If there isn't anyone among the heroes likely to fit this mistaken identity, they attack simply because outsiders on the table aren't welcome.)

The ants fight to the death, with battle cries full of devotion for the Red Queen that promise death to those who've failed to give their queen proper respect.

RED COMMANDER ANTS (2)

CREATURE 17

Page 73

Initiative Perception +30

ANT PATROLS

Red ant patrols like the one in area **C1** are scattered throughout the table, as they roam in search of intruders to arrest, threats to cull, or simply in pursuit of various tasks given to them by the queen (such as laying roads using grains of rice, tearing and folding pages from massive books into origami ants, or similarly strange directives). Most patrols consist of a single red commander ant and four red guard ants, which is a low-difficulty encounter for 18th-level heroes. Although the ants are serious about their work and quick to fight those who impede it, these encounters are intended to be somewhat farcical. The notion of giant ant soldiers following the dictates of a megalomaniacal queen ant should be framed in an amusing manner.

RED GUARD ANTS (4)

CREATURE 15

Page 72

Initiative Perception +27

C2. UPPER CAMP

As the fight ends, Hlakana calls down to the heroes, peeking over the side of the potted plant high above. "Thank you for taking care of those troublesome busybodies! You seem to still have your wits about you—won't you come up and join me? I've been weaving a ladder, hoping someone helpful might come along." When the heroes ascend, read or paraphrase the following.

A tidy campfire, colorful tent, and small cart make up this cozy camp beneath the enormous potted tree. The woman who lowered the rope sits behind a spinning wheel, snipping stray threads with small, golden scissors. She seems wholly unconcerned by the enormous lioness lying beside her, switching its tail in irritation. The lioness's face looks strangely bald, and it takes a moment to realize her whiskers are all missing. "Come, sit by our fire and rest, young ones. We're all trapped here by our circumstances. Let's see if we can't help each other."

Hlakana is a lawful good norn (*Bestiary* 2 184), a fey being who watches over the threads of fate, birth, and death. She and her loyal companion, a lioness named Issa, came to observe the fate-twisting nature of the *Vesicant Egg*, which the King of Biting Ants was using to bend the ropes of destiny.

However, they both fell victim to the egg's curse and are now trapped on the table. Hlakana avoided becoming Unshadowed by quickly weaving new

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shadows for both herself and Issa, but not before the egg's twisted magic infected her shadow and created a malevolent reflection calling herself Tatterthread. Tatterthread now wanders the table, inflicting pain and suffering on everyone she encounters.

Nor is Tatterthread the only trouble the pair has faced. An enormous kitten named Adanyini stole Issa's whiskers while the lioness slept, taking away her bravery and confidence. The lioness looks fierce, but she's too timid to venture far from Hlakana's side, and she's remarkably skittish for a full-grown predator. Wearing the whiskers, Adanyini has become a proud, muscular creature who walks on two legs and goes where he will across the table.

Hlakana hopes to get rid of Tatterthread and would appreciate the return of Issa's whiskers from the transformed kitten. In exchange, she's willing to aid the heroes in gathering the shredded shadows of their friends that are scattered across the table. She'll even stitch them back together so they can be easily reattached.

If questioned about shadows or the *Vesicant Egg*, Hlakana shares that the egg serves as a nexus for the threads of fate containing potential for both good and bad outcomes. The egg's potential was twisted by the King of Biting Ants, who put fragments of his psyche into the egg to grow and develop into his replacement or successor if something ever happened to him. Hlakana admits that the King of Biting Ants is known among the norns as someone who has cheated death many times. The essence he imbued into the *Vesicant Egg* is his final thread, and his last chance at claiming undeserved immortality.

Hlakana and Issa both witnessed Koride becoming Unshadowed. Her shadow fell across the table and was torn into four pieces, each taken by a different group. Some dancers came to entice one piece of shadow to dance with them. A caravan of beetle merchants carried off another to the ash desert. Ant soldiers took a piece into their gourd fortress to present to their queen. The last piece was eaten by a two-headed dragon that crawled away into the lake of acid around the towering egg. Hlakana doesn't know about anyone else's lost shadow, but she knows the

ants are scuttling all across the table seeking them, so they might have recovered others.

This gives the heroes several leads to pursue: the four pieces of shadow, the evil Tatterthread, and the thief who stole Issa's whiskers. It's up to the heroes to decide the order to tackle these leads, but Hlakana insists she won't weave the shadow pieces together until the heroes vanquish Tatterthread. (She doesn't strictly require the return of Issa's whiskers before stitching the shadows, but the heroes get a valuable treasure when they do.)

The heroes might spend several days exploring the table. Hlakana offers them use of this campsite; with the ants around her cottage vanquished, she returns there with Issa. If the heroes need advice or information, Hlakana is happy to provide it.

Treasure: If the heroes return Issa's whiskers, Hlakana quickly stitches the whiskers back on Issa's face. (If they've talked with Adanyini but can't perform either ritual to transform the cat back, Hlakana can make the primary check for the *atone* ritual.) Once Issa is returned to her normal self, she rewards the heroes by fetching a *true staff-storing shield* (*Secrets of Magic* 190) that she hid in the soil of the potted plant. This shield has a depiction of Issa's face when it isn't holding a staff. When holding a staff, its depiction is always leonine in nature, slightly altered depending on the type of staff it holds (such as a lion's face made of sigils and runes when holding a *staff of the magi*).

XP Award: When the heroes return Issa's stolen whiskers, award them 80 XP. Reduce this award to only 30 XP if they needed Hlakana's help to cast the necessary ritual.

RESTORING THE SHADOWS

Once the heroes bring all four parts of Koride's shadow to Hlakana, she asks the dancing shadow (area **D3**) to hold them while Hlakana carefully stitches each of them to her. As she does, she croons about how each piece of a person, no matter how kindly or malevolent, is required to make the person whole. Koride is more than the sum of ambition, capriciousness, pride, and recognition, and thus her shadow represents her as a whole person, not just individual fragments. This re-stitching takes a full day, so Hlakana encourages





the characters to relax or take downtime as they see fit. If they haven't already thought to perform Practical Research on the Endless Table, Hlakana encourages them to do so, and learn something useful during the time they're here.

If Tatterthread survived her encounter with the heroes, she returns to attack while Hlakana is busy sewing. Hlakana can't interrupt the sewing to help the heroes fight, so they're on their own to face her evil reflection. If the heroes already restored Issa's whiskers, then Issa can let out a Great Roar, as a slana (page 84), but the lioness is guarding Hlakana and otherwise stays out of the fight.

Once Hlakana is finished with her sewing, she sets several open stitches at the foot of each of the five shadows (including those of the heroes' friends; see area F4). She explains these open stitches mean the shadows will automatically reattach to their owners when the heroes return to their proper sizes and rejoin the world where they belong. She then returns all the shadows to the heroes; they are practically weightless.

LEAVING THE ENDLESS TABLE

Hlakana explains that to leave the table, the heroes must crack the *Vesicant Egg*, which they can do by simply touching it. If its evil is allowed to grow much longer, the fragments warring within will find a common ground and be all the stronger.

"It's like Koride's shadow, young ones," explains Hlakana. "When the fragments finally come together, they make something more. In this case, the something more is the King of Biting Ants reborn with greater power than he ever had before. This can't be allowed to happen, and you can stop it by opening the egg earlier, rather than letting it open on its own time."

The heroes may have already attempted to approach the *Vesicant Egg* in area G2 and found it impossible to reach. Hlakana tuts distractedly and says she can help with that. She produces a spool of golden thread, rolls a ball of it into a bead for each hero, and attaches one bead to each of their beaded bracelets. She explains as follows.

"This is for more than just luck—it's for fate. You can now touch the egg with the hand that wears this bracelet. Doing so will break the egg's magic, including the magic that binds you to the world of the Endless Table. You'll be free, but so will that which is growing within the egg. All birth is hard, young ones, and premature birth even more so. You'll find the marvel inside the egg is wondrous and dangerous, and you'll soon hold the fate of many people in your hands."

If the heroes don't have a way to cross the acid lake on their own, Hlakana casts *wind walk* upon them with an exasperated sigh of, "Ah, young ones! Must Hlakana do it all?" This spell isn't counteracted so long as the heroes are wearing their beaded bracelets.

Once they travel across the acid lake, it's a simple matter to touch the egg. When they do, their world is filled with the sound of cracking and tearing, then gravity shifts again and hurls them outward and upward.

XP Award: When the heroes crack the *Vesicant Egg*, award them 120 XP and go to Chapter 3.

The Drum

An enormous djembe drum looms over the table like a rounded, slanting mesa. The djembe is a carved wooden drum bound with leather strips and twine to hold the drumhead taut. The journey to the drum takes the heroes alongside books, scrolls, inkwells, huge pieces of chalk, and a low but long slate writing tablet stretching like a stony plateau for hundreds of yards. As they approach the drum, they can see several shadowy figures dancing on the slanted drumhead and a small group of ants building something closer to the drum's base.

Use the map on page 30 for encounters on the djembe drum.

D1. VIEWING BOX

LOW 19

A few red guard ants are constructing a wooden structure and platform under the supervision of a harried commander. Whatever they're trying to build doesn't seem to be coming together well, as every time one of the ants manages to get something upright, another one uses an odd-sized component on some other part and the whole thing comes crashing down. Each time the platform collapses, the ants squabble with each other and then start over again. Despite their focus on the project, they're keeping an eye on the path to the drumhead and won't let anyone pass because they don't want the shadowy dancers disturbed. Heroes who fly around them or climb up the side of the drum can easily avoid these ants, as they don't leave this location.

The Red Queen commanded these five ants to build a viewing box in which she and the impending King of Biting Ants can watch the dances. The plans they've been instructed to use are incomplete and incorrect, leading to their troubles.

The ants aren't openly aggressive unless they catch the heroes trying to sneak by, in which case they immediately attack. They're otherwise willing to talk, and the commander tersely explains why they're here.

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Helping with Construction: The ants eagerly accept any help the heroes offer. The heroes can help assemble the viewing box by earning Victory Points (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) called Assembly Points. The structure starts with 1 Assembly Point to reflect the ants' clumsy work so far. Each hero who wants to participate attempts a DC 38 Crafting or Thievery check or a DC 33 Engineering Lore check. Each successful check earns 1 Assembly Point. A critical success earns 2 Assembly Points, while a critical failure deducts 1 Assembly Point. You might permit spells or abilities that help create or assemble items (such as *creation*) and automatically earn 1 Assembly Point. After the heroes try, the commander

urges the ants to make another effort, following the heroes' example, but they automatically critically fail and deduct 1 Assembly Point. Each hero can then try again, followed by another ham-fisted attempt by the ants, and so on. If the total number of Assembly Points reaches 5 or more, the platform is complete, and the ants are pleased. They march away to inform the Red Queen, leaving the path to the drumhead open. If the total number of Assembly Points reaches 0, the commander becomes so frustrated with the heroes that he commands the ants to attack.

Creatures: If combat begins, the ants fight to the death—they're desperate to blame their abject failure on the heroes.

RED COMMANDER ANT

CREATURE 17

Page 73

Initiative Perception +30

RED GUARD ANTS (4)

CREATURE 15

Page 72

Initiative Perception +27

XP Award: If the heroes successfully construct the viewing box and don't fight the ants, award them 80 XP.

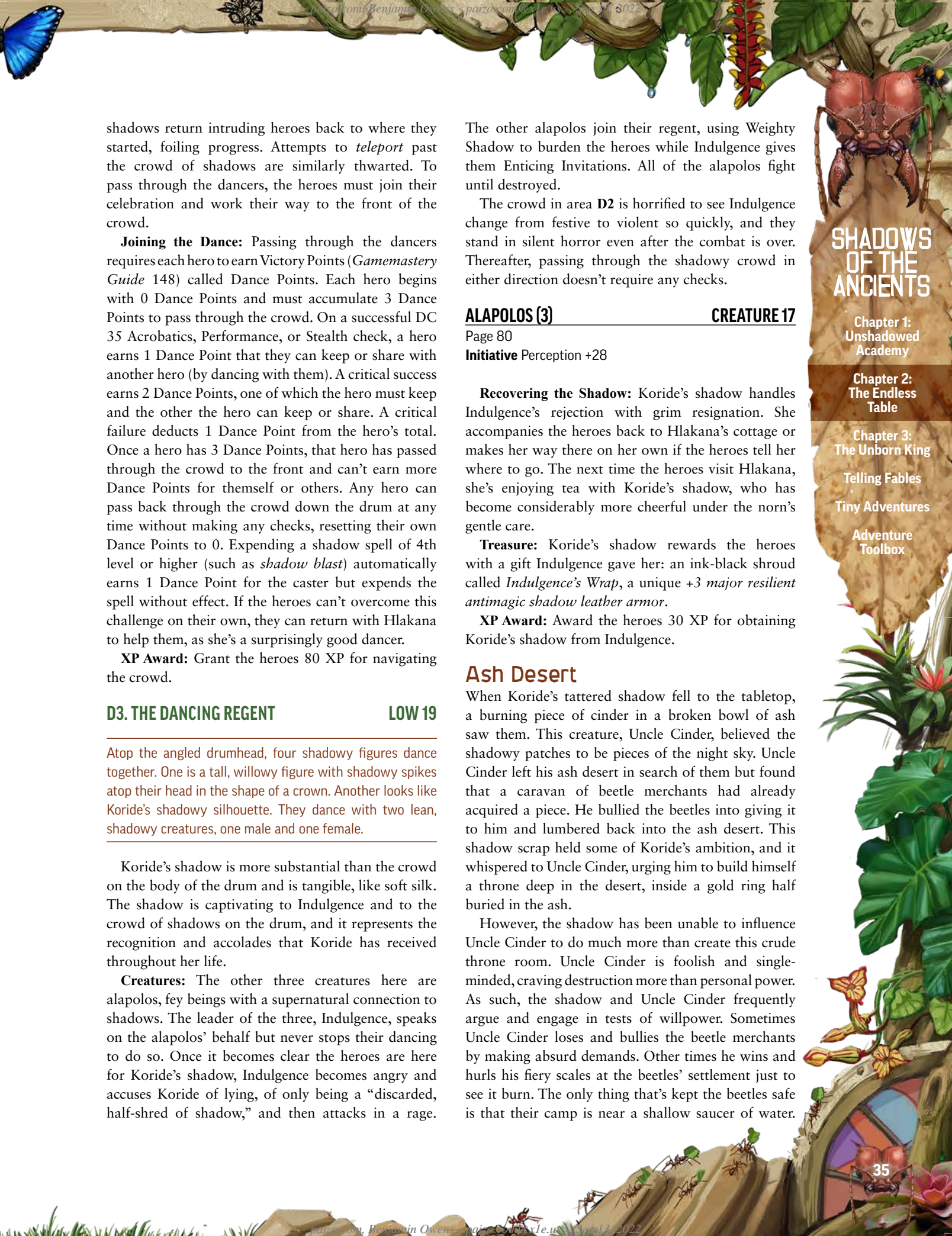
D2. SHADOW CROWD

The drum rises between the mesas formed from books and slates. Shadows move around the leather surface of the drum in a festive, carnival-like celebration, weaving back and forth in a spiral pattern while silently clapping and waving toward the drumhead. Seen up close, the figures are two-dimensional; they vanish when viewed from the side, like silhouettes or shadows come to life.

The shadow creatures are eerie but not hostile. They collected a scrap of Koride's shadow out of kinship rather than malice and brought it here. The regent of the shadows, an alapolo named Indulgence, invited Koride's shadow scrap to become one of their consorts and dance with them on the drumhead. Any of the shadows can tell the heroes this in whispered snatches of conversation, as they're proud of their foundling's high station.

The shadows weave back and forth along the body of the drum, giving only partial glimpses of the alapolos dancing in area **D3**. The celebrating shadows aren't bound by gravity and sail up into the air as well, blocking even heroes who try to fly over the celebrants to reach the drumhead. The shifting

Shadow Koride



shadows return intruding heroes back to where they started, foiling progress. Attempts to *teleport* past the crowd of shadows are similarly thwarted. To pass through the dancers, the heroes must join their celebration and work their way to the front of the crowd.

Joining the Dance: Passing through the dancers requires each hero to earn Victory Points (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) called Dance Points. Each hero begins with 0 Dance Points and must accumulate 3 Dance Points to pass through the crowd. On a successful DC 35 Acrobatics, Performance, or Stealth check, a hero earns 1 Dance Point that they can keep or share with another hero (by dancing with them). A critical success earns 2 Dance Points, one of which the hero must keep and the other the hero can keep or share. A critical failure deducts 1 Dance Point from the hero's total. Once a hero has 3 Dance Points, that hero has passed through the crowd to the front and can't earn more Dance Points for themselves or others. Any hero can pass back through the crowd down the drum at any time without making any checks, resetting their own Dance Points to 0. Expending a shadow spell of 4th level or higher (such as *shadow blast*) automatically earns 1 Dance Point for the caster but expends the spell without effect. If the heroes can't overcome this challenge on their own, they can return with Hlakana to help them, as she's a surprisingly good dancer.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 80 XP for navigating the crowd.

D3. THE DANCING REGENT

LOW 19

Atop the angled drumhead, four shadowy figures dance together. One is a tall, willowy figure with shadowy spikes atop their head in the shape of a crown. Another looks like Koride's shadowy silhouette. They dance with two lean, shadowy creatures, one male and one female.

Koride's shadow is more substantial than the crowd on the body of the drum and is tangible, like soft silk. The shadow is captivating to Indulgence and to the crowd of shadows on the drum, and it represents the recognition and accolades that Koride has received throughout her life.

Creatures: The other three creatures here are alapolos, fey beings with a supernatural connection to shadows. The leader of the three, Indulgence, speaks on the alapolos' behalf but never stops their dancing to do so. Once it becomes clear the heroes are here for Koride's shadow, Indulgence becomes angry and accuses Koride of lying, of only being a "discarded, half-shred of shadow," and then attacks in a rage.

The other alapolos join their regent, using Weighty Shadow to burden the heroes while Indulgence gives them Enticing Invitations. All of the alapolos fight until destroyed.

The crowd in area D2 is horrified to see Indulgence change from festive to violent so quickly, and they stand in silent horror even after the combat is over. Thereafter, passing through the shadowy crowd in either direction doesn't require any checks.

ALAPOLOS (3)

CREATURE 17

Page 80

Initiative Perception +28

Recovering the Shadow: Koride's shadow handles Indulgence's rejection with grim resignation. She accompanies the heroes back to Hlakana's cottage or makes her way there on her own if the heroes tell her where to go. The next time the heroes visit Hlakana, she's enjoying tea with Koride's shadow, who has become considerably more cheerful under the norn's gentle care.

Treasure: Koride's shadow rewards the heroes with a gift Indulgence gave her: an ink-black shroud called *Indulgence's Wrap*, a unique +3 *major resilient antimagic shadow leather armor*.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for obtaining Koride's shadow from Indulgence.

Ash Desert

When Koride's tattered shadow fell to the tabletop, a burning piece of cinder in a broken bowl of ash saw them. This creature, Uncle Cinder, believed the shadowy patches to be pieces of the night sky. Uncle Cinder left his ash desert in search of them but found that a caravan of beetle merchants had already acquired a piece. He bullied the beetles into giving it to him and lumbered back into the ash desert. This shadow scrap held some of Koride's ambition, and it whispered to Uncle Cinder, urging him to build himself a throne deep in the desert, inside a gold ring half buried in the ash.

However, the shadow has been unable to influence Uncle Cinder to do much more than create this crude throne room. Uncle Cinder is foolish and single-minded, craving destruction more than personal power. As such, the shadow and Uncle Cinder frequently argue and engage in tests of willpower. Sometimes Uncle Cinder loses and bullies the beetle merchants by making absurd demands. Other times he wins and hurls his fiery scales at the beetles' settlement just to see it burn. The only thing that's kept the beetles safe is that their camp is near a shallow saucer of water.

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Uncle Cinder won't venture too closely to it for fear of being extinguished.

When the heroes approach the broken tortoiseshell bowl, Uncle Cinder is deep in the desert, arguing with Koride's shadow. Ash is strewn across the table like a desert, blowing around a giant snuffbox and up to the bowl of water with the merchants' tents around it. The beetle merchants move to and fro in their camp. As Hlakana doesn't know Uncle Cinder took the shadow from the beetles (or even that Uncle Cinder exists), the heroes are likely to approach the beetle merchants first.

Use the map on page 30 for encounters in the Ash Desert.

E1. MERCHANT CAMP

A huge tortoiseshell bowl overfull with ash has broken, creating a large spill that forms a ridge leading up to the bowl and the sprawling ash desert within. An enormous incense stick stretches into the sky, smoking at its top end and occasionally shedding sparks that fall from the sky like enormous meteors and explode in brilliant fireballs. A shallow clay saucer of water with a wide lip shelters several tents beneath its rim. Beetles as large as ponies move along the ridge and between the tents. The small community shows signs of having been under attack; the saucer is cracked in a few places and some of the tents are scorched. Teams of beetles roll smoldering boulders away from the tents and into the desert.

There are more than a dozen beetles in the camp. Each is Small in size, speaks Common, and wears a bandolier of assorted trade goods, but they're otherwise ordinary beetles. They call their small community Elyrta and welcome creatures from across the table to view their wares and trade. Their wares are odd if not valuable: crumbs of cupcake, colorful pebbles, or small dollops of incense. Their water is always free—there's more of it than the beetles could use in years.

Elyrta's leader is a flower beetle named Ruikiya. His shell is decorated with beautiful symbols in graceful lines of color, but he nervously flickers his wings all the time, as he's never sure when Uncle Cinder will return with a bizarre demand or a brutal assault. Despite his nervousness, Ruikiya is unfailingly polite and friendly.

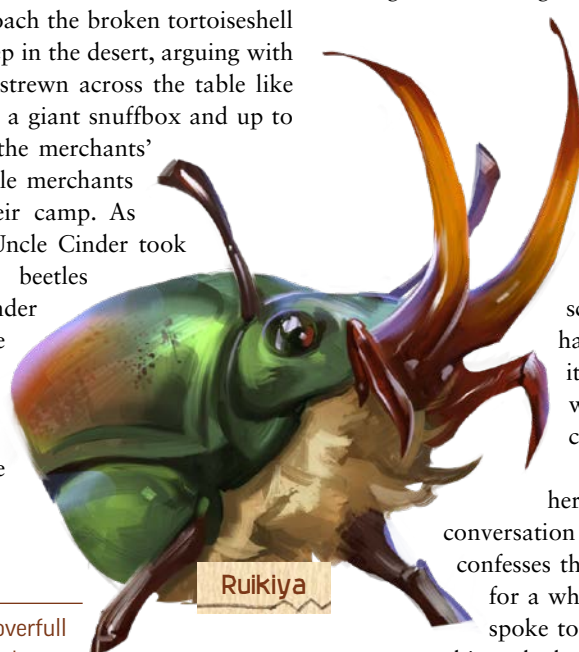
As the heroes approach, a red commander ant in charge of four red guard ants is talking with Ruikiya.

The commander is trying to interrogate the beetles' leader, but he must keep splitting his attention to prevent the other ants from wandering off to gawk at the various items in the vibrant stalls of the bewitching caravan. The commander is asking about the scrap of shadow the beetles once had and assumes they still have it. Ruikiya is trying to explain it was stolen from them, but the commander doesn't believe him.

It's a simple matter for the heroes to insert themselves into the conversation or to eavesdrop on it. Ruikiya confesses the beetles did have the shadow for a while. It was a curious thing that spoke to them of greatness and power, things the beetles don't much value. A huge, angry creature from the desert named Uncle Cinder stole it a short time ago. Ruikiya describes how Uncle Cinder occasionally appear from the desert to attack the village and has been acting even more erratically ever since he took the shadow and began using it as a sort of cloak.

If the heroes ask about the desert or otherwise admit their intent to hunt down Uncle Cinder, the commander confronts them. He insists the Red Queen has a claim on all shadows anywhere on the table, and that the shadow Uncle Cinder carries must be returned to him. The ant has no desire to confront a creature as dangerous-sounding as Uncle Cinder, and by this time his soldiers have once again abandoned him to explore Elyrta. The red commander ant can only bluster about the Red Queen's rights and can't really interfere with the heroes' plans.

Due to the unstable magic of this tiny world, the ash desert is significantly larger than seems from the outside and takes many days of difficult walking to cross on foot. Yet Ruikiya has a suggestion. The beetles recently opened the giant snuffbox at the ridge and found it contained several thin papers and matches the size of sturdy lumber. The clever beetles have been assembling a lightweight vehicle from the pieces—a sailboat that can skim across the surface of the ash desert with ease. None of the beetles are particularly skilled at piloting and are too afraid of Uncle Cinder to venture too deeply into the ash desert anyway. Ruikiya offers to loan the heroes the "sandsailer" and



give them other treasures besides, if they'll eliminate the danger posed by the erratic Uncle Cinder.

Treasure: If the heroes return after defeating Uncle Cinder, Ruikiya gives them a major quicksilver mutagen, a major serene mutagen, and a *scroll of heroism* (9th level). He also makes the merchants' more esoteric wares available to the heroes for purchase. They can purchase common items of 16th level or lower, scrolls of common spells of any level, and tomes detailing the *atone* and *freedom* rituals (which might be of interest to heroes who know the transformed kitten Adanyini).

E2. EXCAVATED SNUFFBOX

LOW 19

Ruikiya accompanies the heroes to the snuffbox at the ridge if they agree to take the sandsailer. A half-dozen beetles crawl over this ornate snuffbox. They've already carefully disassembled its latch and placed the pieces of the locking mechanism on the ground nearby. The beetles are pulling out enormous sheets of tobacco paper and matches, laying them out into the shape of a large, square sailboat.

Creatures: The beetles have attracted some unwanted attention by opening the snuffbox and crawling around inside it. The vibrations of their work have drawn a group of ash-loving marmmoras that want to burn anything they come across. The marmmoras erupt from the ash near the snuffbox, driving Ruikiya and the beetles into a panicked flight. Unless the heroes intervene, the marmmoras burn all the contents of the box before burrowing away, destroying the materials to make a sandsailer and congratulating themselves on their acts of arson. So long as the heroes pose a threat, however, the marmmoras concentrate their attacks upon them. A marmmora reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points flees through the ash.

MARRMORAS (6)

CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 171

Initiative Perception +27

Speed 30 feet, burrow 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Building the Sandsailer: The beetles can build the sandsailer in 2 days, but if any hero succeeds at a DC 39 Crafting or Engineering Lore check, this time is reduced to 1 day (8 hours on a critical success, or 4 days on a critical failure). Its vehicle statistics (*Gamemastery Guide* 177) are as follows.

SANDSAILER

VEHICLE 16

RARE **HUGE**

Price 29,000 gp

Space 15 feet long, 15 feet wide, 25 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 2 crew; **Passengers** 6

Piloting Check Athletics (DC 39), Driving Lore (DC 34), Sailing Lore (DC 34), or Nature (DC 39)

AC 36; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +24

Hardness 15; **HP** 200 (BT 100); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** fire 20

Speed 80 feet (wind)

Collision 10d12 bludgeoning (DC 32)

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for acquiring the sandsailer.

E3. CROSSING THE DESERT

Although the ash desert doesn't look particularly large from the ridge, the beetles warn the heroes that distance stretches out dramatically upon entering the ash sand. Indeed, anyone trying to cross the desert finds it stretching out to great distances before them. Reaching Uncle Cinder's golden throne room takes 3 days by foot but only 1 day in the sandsailer. The beetles consider the desert's heat a significant danger (creatures in the desert take 2d6 fire damage every hour), but 19th-level heroes almost certainly have many ways of reducing these environmental effects. Ruikiya advises the heroes not to fly over the desert, as the meteor showers from the smoking incense (which he calls the Nearby Sun) pose a constant danger. Once the heroes have a good sense of the desert's environmental dangers, Ruikiya wishes them luck.

Fiery Rain: The incense stick rising impossibly high above the ash desert continues to rain sparks and fireballs throughout the journey. If the heroes are traveling on the ground, at some point during each day of travel, falling sparks land at the heroes' location as a 10th-level *meteor swarm* (DC 42 basic Reflex save) targeting four random characters. A character who is Searching during travel can attempt a DC 42 Perception or Survival check to provide a 1-round warning about the incoming meteors. If the heroes are aboard the sandsailer, it's one of the targets. The pilot can attempt a Piloting check to engage in evasive maneuvers; if successful, the sandsailer's Reflex saving throw result improves by one step (from a success to a critical success, for example). With a critical success on the Piloting check, the Reflex save result improves by two steps; on a critical failure on the Piloting check, the Reflex save result decreases by 1 step. If the sandsailer is destroyed, the heroes must make the rest of the journey on foot—how many days of walking they've already covered by that point is up to you.

Flight across the ash desert is dangerous, as so many of the falling sparks burst in the air. Any heroes

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flying over the desert must deal with a *meteor swarm* every hour.

E4. THE GOLDEN RING

MODERATE 19

Uncle Cinder waits inside the towering ring of gold. Its golden surface gleams brightly and is worked with images of fighting warriors. The ring is partially buried in the ash, making a natural entrance on one side. Uncle Cinder sits on a boulder that he considers his throne.

Creature: If the heroes approach openly, Uncle Cinder is willing to talk and is full of questions. He's curious to know how the beetle merchants are faring and whether they're still terrified of him—a thought he finds amusing. He wants to know who the heroes are, how they've gotten here, and whether they might make good minions for him to extend his bullying influence beyond the desert. If the heroes seem willing to work for him, Uncle Cinder wants the beetles' pool of water emptied so he can smash up the settlement once and for all.

As Uncle Cinder talks, he keeps cocking his ear to a small scrap of soft black cloth on his shoulder. This is the piece of Koride's shadow that's been stoking his cruel ambitions. If the heroes ask about the shadow or suggest he give it up, he responds immediately with a bellowing roar and hefts his warhammer to fight. If they secretly steal it, it's a few moments before Uncle Cinder realizes

the voice that's been arguing with him in his head for so long is gone. At that point, his natural rage takes over and he does his best to find and crush the thieving heroes. Uncle Cinder has never lost a fight before, so he doesn't know when to quit; he fights until slain.

UNCLE CINDER

CREATURE 21

Male lerritan (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 159)

Initiative Perception +35

Recovering the Shadow: Koride's shadow is a scrap of cloth. Unlike the shadow that danced with Indulgence, this piece doesn't resemble Koride and can't move at all. Anyone holding it hears faint prompting to improve the wielder's reputation or standing at any cost—especially by putting down others. These words are whispered in Koride's voice, and no one other than the person holding the shadow scrap can hear them. The promptings are eerie but can't compel a hero to take any action they aren't predisposed to take anyway.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for obtaining Koride's shadow from Uncle Cinder.

Gourd Fortress

Koride left an open, hollow gourd out on the table after using its seeds in a ritual. The gourd became home to a small colony of ants, who have grown significantly in number thanks to the ready source of food. As the *Vesicant Egg's* influence spread, the queen of the ant colony heard the King of Biting Ants's psychic whispers. The wicked norn Tatterthread convinced her she could earn a position as the King's bride when he returns. She started sending her soldiers on erratic tasks that are half the product of her fevered imagination and half misunderstood dictates from the King of Biting Ants.

While the Red Queen awaits his promised resurrection, she's gathering the shadows she believes he values. She's collected the shadows of all four of Koride's assistants (Anchor Root, Haibram, Mariama, and Okoro) but only one piece of Koride's shadow. She hangs them all from a banner that a minion always carries in her presence.

Since her rise to power, the Red Queen has seen several new entities appear on her table. These creatures fed her paranoia, and she began to send her ants on patrols across the region while building up the slopes of the gourd to make defensive walls and allying with other insects to bolster her forces.



Uncle Cinder



FEATURES OF THE GOURD FORTRESS

The primary feature of the Gourd Fortress is the terrible stink produced by the rotting gourd and the moldy morass that's flowed out of it into area **F2**. The overwhelming stench means scent doesn't function except to help locate adjacent creatures—there's just too much pervasive stink to smell anyone further away. The Red Queen refuses to relocate from this defensible area and insists there's no bad smell at all, despite all evidence to the contrary. The other ants therefore do their best to ignore the smell and also pretend it doesn't exist.

Unfriendly Skies: The flying ants and enormous bombardier beetles in area **F3** are keeping a careful eye out for anyone attempting to avoid the swamp by flying overhead. The alate ants dart up to intercept flying heroes while the cataclysm beetles fire acid globs from their platforms.

Reinforcements: If the heroes make an attack on the gourd fortress and then retreat, the Red Queen replaces any lost troops within a few hours. She can't replace the terotricus in area **F2**, so she sends out six red guard ants (page 72) instead. Those ants don't like being in the swamp and remain huddled in place, so it's quite easy to sneak past or ambush them.

A map of the key areas of the Gourd Fortress appears on page 30. The gourd extends for quite a distance north of the key areas on this map, but those areas are simply ant warrens in the gourd containing immature ants too small and weak to pose the heroes any challenge.

F1. GOURD APPROACH

A titanic gourd lies on the table here, split in half and resting on its rind. The gourd's bottom rotted away and discharged noisome goo into a vast, mold-encrusted bog stretching across the table from the gourd to an enormous inkwell. To the north, the gourd's rind rises like a curving wall. Wooden walls are barely visible within the gourd, jutting up above the rind. The smell of decay is shockingly strong.

The side of the gourd is curved outward, but the rind is soft, so the climb is difficult but not impossible. A successful DC 35 Athletics check is required to Climb it. All but the best climbers leave marks in the rind, however, so if any character achieves less than a critical success in Climbing the gourd and then retreats, a later ant patrol spots the evidence and remains here in case

the intruders come back (see the Ant Patrols sidebar on page 31).

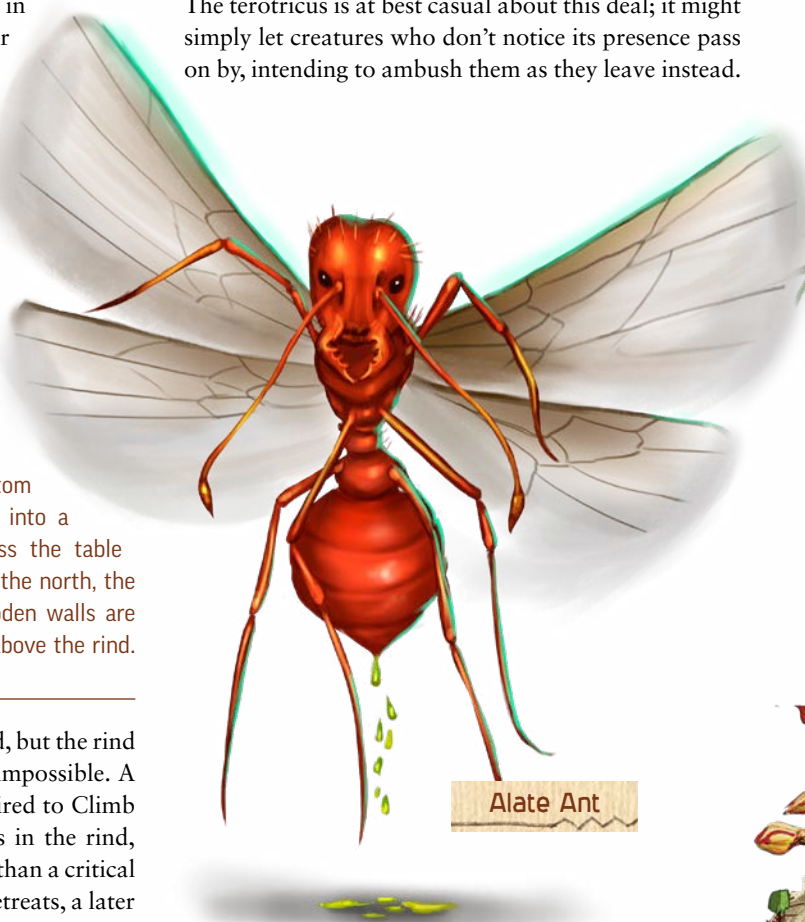
F2. MOLD BOG

LOW 19

The rot that's spilled from the gourd has created a sucking, stinking bog. A few hummocks made of less-decayed chunks from the gourd sport profusions of mold that resemble swamp plants. The rotted base of the gourd has been molded into wide steps, making a treacherous-looking staircase leading up inside.

The soft ground in this boggy area is difficult terrain. Close examination reveals that ants sometimes come this way, but they hurry to the steps leading to area **F3**.

Creature: Not all the rot and mold here is harmless. The bog has drawn a terotricus eager for nutrition of any sort. It lurks within one of the hummocks, waiting patiently for victims to get within reach of its spore cloud, then attacks. The terotricus has a loose arrangement with the ants; they don't mind its presence here so long as it keeps anyone who isn't accompanied by ants away from the stairs to area **F3**. The terotricus is at best casual about this deal; it might simply let creatures who don't notice its presence pass on by, intending to ambush them as they leave instead.



Alate Ant

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ELITE TEROTRICUS

CREATURE 19

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 311

Initiative Perception +33

F3. GUARD BASIN

MODERATE 19

The interior of the gourd, including the stairs leading up from the mold bog, are too soft to walk across without extreme difficulty. This area is greater difficult terrain for creatures without a climb Speed.

The lowest part of the gourd's interior is an enormous, shallow basin of rotten, soft material. A wooden palisade spans the gourd's interior from one side to the other, its large doors firmly shut.

The walls and gate are made of wood reinforced by concentrated enzymes and chitinous material that makes it harder than steel. The gate is stuck tight and requires a successful DC 42 Athletics check to Force Open. On a failed check, four of the red guard ants on the other side of the wall, in area **F4**, scramble over to see what the trouble is. Climbing the gate or the wall requires a successful DC 35 Athletics check to Climb, but each attempt (regardless of success) deals the climber 2d6 acid damage from the enzymes infused into the wood.

Creatures: Unless the heroes have been exceptionally stealthy, the guards posted here are likely to

spot them. The defenders consist of 4 flying ants that cling to the upper walls of the gourd basin where they can keep a close eye on anyone approaching by the air. Perpetually nervous about failing their queen, the alate ants are quick to intercept intruders, accuse them of being unwelcome troublemakers, and attack. The enormous bombardier beetles—called cataclysm beetles—hunch down on either side of the gate. They're much less concerned about serving the Red Queen diligently, since they're not part of the hive. They like to use their acid attacks as efficiently as possible, using their acid glob Strike against lone targets at range, their Bombardier's Spray only when they can catch at least three enemies in the cone, and their Burning Pool when they are hard-pressed in melee.

The alate ants fight until destroyed, but a cataclysm beetle reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points surrenders, insisting they're merely mercenaries and don't want to die for the Red Queen.

ALATE ANTS (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 72

Initiative Perception +28

CATACLYSM BEETLES (2)

CREATURE 18

RARE N HUGE BEAST

Perception +30; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +36, Intimidation +31, Survival +30

Str +10, **Dex** +2, **Con** +9, **Int** -3, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

AC 44; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +26, **Will** +30

HP 340; **Immunities** acid

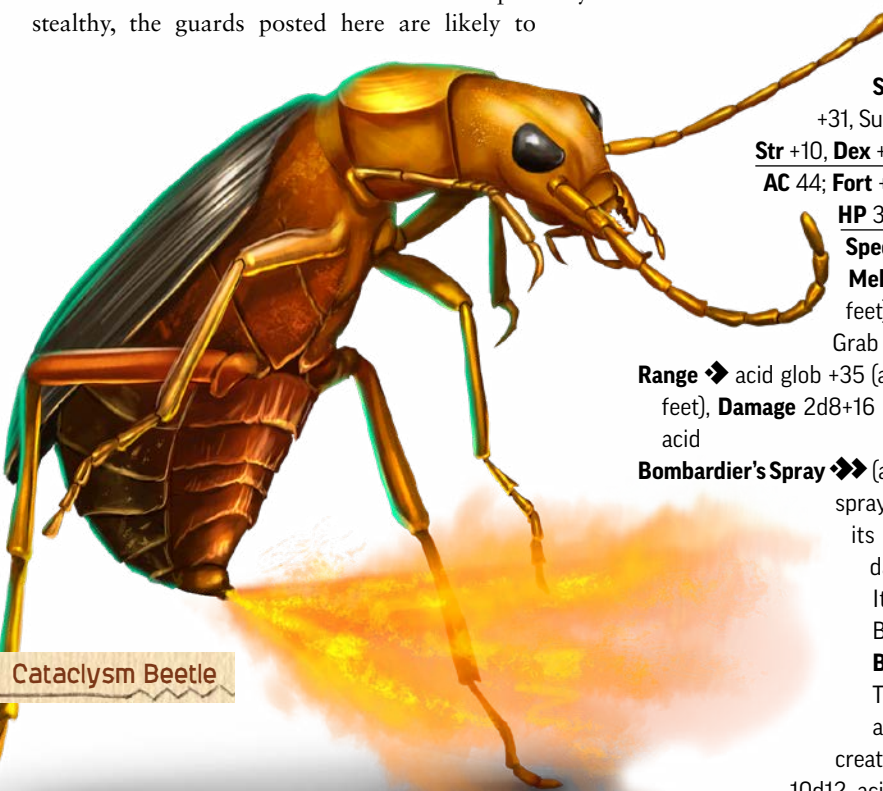
Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +35 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+16 slashing plus Grab

Range ♦ acid glob +35 (acid, brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 2d8+16 bludgeoning plus 4d6 persistent acid

Bombardier's Spray ♦♦ (acid, primal) The cataclysm beetle sprays a 60-foot cone of acid from its abdomen that deals 12d10 acid damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save). It can't use Bombardier's Spray or Burning Pool for 1d4 rounds.

Burning Pool ♦♦ (acid, primal) The cataclysm beetle spills acid directly from its abdomen, creating a wave of acid that deals 10d12 acid damage to all creatures in a 30-foot emanation (DC 40 basic Fortitude save).



Cataclysm Beetle

Creatures that fail this save are pushed back 10 feet from the cataclysm beetle (30 feet on a critical failure). It can't use Bombardier's Spray or Burning Pool for 1d4 rounds.

F4. RED QUEEN'S FORTRESS

MODERATE 19

The Red Queen remains behind the walls of her fortress with a few guards she bullies with demands. She usually has them shoring up the rotted mess inside the gourd, heaping it into piles along the sides of the gourd until it flows back down. If she knows the heroes are present but haven't yet opened the gate to area **F3**, she shouts a series of conflicting demands at them (she might insist they leave her gourd, then that they bring her a single mold flower from the swamp, then that they stay and tell her all they know about the King of Biting Ants, and so on). Getting the Red Queen to agree to speak with the heroes requires a successful DC 39 Diplomacy check to Request it of her. In this case, she has one of her red guard ants open the gate, if there are any left.

When the heroes can see into the area protected by the fortress walls, read or paraphrase the following.

The north side of the wall is a pulpy, rotten mass, where heaps of the decaying gourd are piled up against the curved sides, only to slide back down when the piles are too large. Several smaller ants run from hole to hole far to the north, feeding the young of the hive.

As with area **F3**, the soft and rotting ground is greater difficult terrain for creatures that don't have a climb speed.

Creatures: The Red Queen is constantly attended by a half-dozen red guard ants, one of whom is tasked with holding her banner. This banner is a long staff bearing several tattered shreds of dark cloth—these are the shadows torn from the Unshadowed people in the Protea Pavilion.

If the heroes want to talk, the Red Queen goes on and on about the King of Biting Ants, how upon his impending return he'll be her groom and they'll rule the entire Endless Table together. It shouldn't take too much discussion for the heroes to realize the Red Queen has no idea who the King of Biting Ants is or when his impending arrival will occur. A hero who succeeds at a DC 37 Arcana, Nature, or Occultism check to Identify Magic or a DC 39 Perception check to Sense Motive realizes the Red Queen has been misinterpreting psychic signals originating from the *Vesicant Egg*. On a critical success, the hero realizes someone has been prompting the Red Queen to make these mistaken assumptions, which has set off her flurry of erratic orders and

eroded her control over her hive. If questioned about this person, the Red Queen reluctantly describes her "helpful itinerant advisor," Tatterthread.

The heroes can tell the shadows on the banner bearer's staff resemble their friends Anchor Root, Haibram, Mariama, and Okoro. The fifth looks like little more than a black rag. This is part of Koride's shadow, and it contains much of her erratic nature. Keeping this shadow close by has resulted in the queen's recent mental state deteriorating even further.

The Red Queen believes the King of Biting Ants is going to want the shadows she's collected, and if she can't provide them, he'll refuse to be her groom. She therefore reacts with horror, and ultimately with violence, once she realizes the heroes want to take them from her. If driven into a fight, the red guard ants fight to the death, but the Red Queen surrenders if reduced to fewer than 80 Hit Points. She breaks down in histrionic sobs, demanding the heroes take what they've come for and leave her to her sorrow.

RED GUARD ANTS (6)

CREATURE 15

Page 72

Initiative Perception +27

Banner Bearer One of the ants serves as the Red Queen's banner bearer. It's forbidden from doing anything other than standing next to the Red Queen and holding up her banner. As long as it holds the banner, ants who can see the banner can't be controlled or frightened. The banner is magical, even though the banner bearer doesn't know it; see Treasure on page 42.

RED QUEEN

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE N HUGE BEAST

Perception +30; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +31, Deception +37, Diplomacy +33, Intimidation +33, Society +28, Survival +30

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9

Items ornate platinum and ruby jewelry worth 12,000 gp

AC 42; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +33, **Will** +29

HP 335

Attack of Opportunity ⚡ Stinger only.

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ✎ mandible +35 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+19 slashing plus Improved Grab

Melee ✎ stinger +35 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d8+19 piercing plus red ant venom

Lead by Example ✎✎ (visual) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The Red Queen Strikes a creature with a vicious display that inspires her allies. Allies who can see the Red Queen can use a reaction to Step or Stride to a space adjacent to an enemy, or to Strike.

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Practiced Subterfuge When the Red Queen makes a Deception check to Feint, she compares her result to the Will DC of each enemy within 30 feet to determine the effect against that enemy. On a critical success, the creature is flat-footed to all melee attacks, not just melee attacks from the Red Queen, until the end of her next turn.

Red Ant Venom (poison) As red guard ant (page 72), but DC 40.

Treasure: The banner pole holding up the shadows is a *staff of the magi*. None of the ants realize it's anything more than a long stick with odd markings.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for obtaining the shadows of Koride and the heroes' friends from the Red Queen.

Acid Lakeshore

The relatively whimsical nature of the Endless Table fades away as the heroes journey to the acid lake around the *Vesicant Egg*. Here, the air is filled with nauseating fumes and the table is corroded with splatters of acid. This is the most desolate part of the Endless Table, and it's where the norn Tatterthread keeps her lair when she's not out causing trouble elsewhere on the table.

Use the map on page 30 for lakeshore encounters.

G1. MUSHROOM FOREST

MODERATE 19

A thicket of twisted, pockmarked, and pimply mushrooms grows along the edge of the lake. A few have toppled into the slowly encroaching acid and are dissolving as they sink, producing a foul odor.

Creatures: Tatterthread hides inside the thicket of mushrooms, keeping watch over anyone approaching the lake out of fear they might try to claim some of the *Vesicant Egg*'s power she so desperately wants for herself. Unable to leave the Endless Table, Tatterthread reached out to the First World in search of aid. Two powerful ankous have answered her call, and they serve as her bodyguards and conspirators in planning mischief across the table. They hide up under the mushroom caps, lurking in the deep shadows beneath the canopy of this weird forest.

If Tatterthread realizes the heroes are in the forest—which is likely, considering her and the ankous' exceptional senses—she chooses to confront them rather than ambush them, so she can call them out for siding with Hlakana. She steps out from among the mushrooms, clicking her rusty, acid-dripping scissors with a wet clacking sound. "I saw you talking to Hlakana," she cackles, pointing a gnarled finger.

"You've chosen to side with her, which means you're against me. I'll drown you in acid and take your shadows for myself!"

Tatterthread gestures for the ankous to join her in the fight, but they create shadow doubles before flying around to claw at heroes who hang back from Tatterthread. Tatterthread uses her powerful spells like *power word kill* and *weird* right away, hoping to impress the heroes with overwhelming attacks so one or two survivors might be cowed into working for her instead of Hlakana. The ankous are loyal to Tatterthread and fight to the death. If Tatterthread is reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, she casts *time stop* to escape, promising the heroes they haven't seen the last of her yet.

TATTERTHREAD

CREATURE 20

Page 88

Initiative Perception +39

ELITE ANKOUS (2)

CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 19

Initiative Perception +27

G2. ACID LAKE

LOW 19

Once Tatterthread has been driven off or killed, the heroes can explore the shore of the lake at their leisure. The acid lake is both dangerous and magical. A touch of the acid deals 4d6 acid damage, and full immersion deals 20d6 acid damage each round. Anyone using a magical effect to travel over or through the acid must succeed at a DC 40 counteract check or the effect fails. Closer to the *Vesicant Egg*, such effects fail automatically, and anyone trying to reach the egg becomes caught in a dilation of space and returned to the shore of the acid lake. The heroes can't even reach, much less affect, the titanic *Vesicant Egg* until they've obtained the golden beads from Hlakana; then they can get close enough to the mountain-sized artifact to touch it.

Thankfully, the acid's dangerous effects and the uncomfortable sensation of being this close to the *Vesicant Egg* has kept the area free of any creatures except for a solitary linnorm. This linnorm ate a piece of Koride's shadow when it fell to the ground near here, and he consumed her sense of self-importance. The linnorm now considers himself the egg's last and most trusted guardian. He spends most of his time swimming in the acid lake, dreaming of a time when his new master will hatch from the egg and set the linnorm free to devour his enemies.

If the heroes search the shoreline, they can find plenty of signs of the linnorm's movement; he ventures



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in and out of the lake frequently to tear chunks from the mushrooms at the lake's edge. A hero can locate the linnorm's current location by looking at the tracks and the ripples in the lake and succeeding at a DC 39 Survival check to Track. The tarn linnorm considers himself to be unstoppable and is not particularly bright, so the heroes might have a good chance of tricking him if they come up with a clever plan.

Creature: The linnorm is making wide, slow circles in the waters of the lake when the heroes arrive. He keeps only his heads above water, giving him concealment as he swims. The linnorm has had recent conversations with Tatterthread; he recognizes the evil norn is trying to trick him into attacking her enemies but considers his guard duty here to be the more important job.

When the linnorm detects creatures other than Tatterthread, he first ducks beneath the surface of the lake. He knows he's unlikely to remain unseen but hopes to draw his opponents into an environment where he has an advantage. If the heroes don't fall for this, he comes to them, surging out of the lake to attack. The geyser of acid from his dramatic exit deals 8d6 acid damage (DC 38 basic Reflex save).

As he fights, the linnorm boasts about his role as the egg's protector. He fights to the death, spitting curses at whichever character lands the killing blow.

TARN LINNORM

CREATURE 20

Pathfinder Bestiary 226

Initiative Perception +35

Recovering the Shadow: The heroes should know from talking to Hlakana that the linnorm ate Koride's shadow. Heroes who dissect the dragon can find it with a successful DC 35 Medicine check or Perception check. On a failure, the hero finds the shadow but nothing else; on a success, the hero discovers a few other items the linnorm consumed, as described in Treasure, below.

The shadow is a soft scrap of oily black cloth that reflects light strangely. Anyone looking closely at the cloth sees their own reflection, magnified and altered to show a more regal bearing, finer clothing, or other indications of greater importance.

Treasure: The linnorm's stomach contains four large emeralds worth 2,000 gp each.

Where did we leave off? Oh yes, the Jungle Cat and the Magic Warriors had offended the great egg, and it was about to take its vengeance. The tyrant inside seethed. Pieces of his mind fought with each other. Trapped as he was inside a shell, there was nothing he could do. So, in his hatred, in his haste, he broke the shell and emerged too early. And he grew, and grew! Taller than a mountain, a wriggling larva fit to reach the sky!

Any who dared look upon it trembled in fear, for what could such a horror bring? The larva squirmed and writhed; it thrashed and wriggled and smashed the walls of the Magaambya. Its shadow stretched longer than buildings. All around it, people ran in a panic. Students of the Magaambya, the people of Nantambu—all feared it was the end of things.

When the creature screamed, the sound was evil enough to tear the very air asunder and turn ants into monsters and beetles into juggernauts. Worst of all, the larva kept squirming and thrashing, leaking acid everywhere.

And who would face this danger, you ask? It was the Magic Warriors, of course. Yes, they raced to save everyone they could, people of the Magaambya, citizens of Nantambu, strangers and friends, all the while throwing back any of the tyrant's servants they found. It was one thing to defeat his servants, but what was to be done about the larva? How could one defeat a mountain? The Old-Mage had the answer—to not defeat such a creature but trap it. Force it to defeat itself.

All night the spellcasters of the Magaambya labored, and the Magic Warriors prepared. By the time dawn broke, the larva was contained. Yet the tyrant still had one trick left. If his mind could do nothing inside the body of the larva, the three pieces of his warring mind would leave the larva behind and step out into the world.





CHAPTER 3: THE UNBORN KING

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The heroes have returned to their normal size, but a terrible new threat has burst forth from the *Vesicant Egg*. The King of Biting Ants has impressed his psyche into the creature, forcing its early hatching. The beast's mind now wars with splinters of the King's psyche that struggle to assert control.

At the start of this chapter, the heroes should reach 20th level. In addition to the normal advancement provided by their class, each hero should select a free archetype feat from their druid or wizard multiclass archetype. They can choose a feat for this archetype as normal, but the spirits of the Ten Magic Warriors from the past recognize their peers and infuse themselves into the heroes' masks. The heroes gain access to the feats presented in *Masks of the Magic Warriors* on page 78 and can choose from these options instead.

The Larva Spawns

These encounters pick up immediately after the heroes are ejected from the Endless Table and emerge outside of the Protea Pavilion. The fragmented mental aspects of the King of Biting Ants struggle to get their bearings, prematurely born from the *Vesicant Egg* and trapped in the form of a titanic larva curled up on itself. Read or paraphrase the following.

The thing that spawned from the egg is now a titanic larva that looms a hundred feet high, top-heavy and clumsy, writhing in its birthing throes, leaking yellow-green acid from hundreds of ruptures in its skin. The acid pools and runs in rivers, eating into the ground and releasing poisonous vapors. The Protea Pavilion is now mere rubble, destroyed by the squirming titan. A strange keening sound echoes off the Magaambya's walls as the larva struggles to uncurl itself from a tangled knot. Nearby, an outdoor class reels in a state of confusion and disarray amid a pool of acid, while bystanders stagger into the very buildings that will shortly be rubble beneath the larva's thrashing form.

The larva towers 100 feet high and hundreds of feet long. It's the central and most obvious danger to the Magaambya throughout this chapter, with its convulsive thrashing and the acid seeping from its hide. However, this massive creature is so colossal in size and so bolstered with supernatural power that attacking it with spells and weapons is ineffectual.

Instead, the heroes' attention should be focused more immediately on the people endangered by the larva's thrashing and the acid that drips from it. In a sense, the titanic larva functions more like a natural disaster or a backdrop—the heroes must first save the school and its people from the larva's effects before learning how to stop it.

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, the heroes have returned to their normal size, but they discover a titanic larva writhing across the Magaambya and dripping rivers of acid in its wake. As the creature is too large to fight directly, the heroes must stop the terror and tragedy in its wake.

This finale to the Adventure Path should feel like frantic action. The entire school is in danger. Yet there are many familiar faces to help the heroes—or who need their help—in this chapter. If you'd like, you can replace any of the indicated NPCs with those who might resonate more with your group of players.

Their efforts to contain the writhing monstrosity lead to a premature hatching of the fractured psyche of the King of Biting Ants. By vanquishing the three malevolent aspects of his mind, the heroes can end the threat that has plagued the Magaambya since they first arrived.

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 3 are as follows.

- +2 greater striking khopesh (*Gods & Magic* 120)
- +2 greater striking kukri
- black lotus extract
- major sturdy shield
- third eye
- true elixir of life
- wand of collective transposition (9th level)



The larva emitted a keening psychic wail that has deafened and disoriented everyone on the campus, affecting those closest to it most strongly. This includes Teacher Tahenkot's class on the open grounds, a delegation from Osirion in a nearby building, and the supply store run by the kobold quartermaster Xhokan. It's plain the writhing larva will soon crush the entire area, and the heroes must act quickly to help. They can tackle these three encounters in any order, or even split up to deal with them, but they don't have much time to rest in between.

INTERRUPTED LESSON

Tahenkot (NG female human defender 12) was teaching a class of nine aspiring Tempest-Sun mages in an open area near the site where the larva appeared. They've been most strongly affected by its psychic birth cry, and they're all slowed 2 for 1 hour as a result. Worse, the acid streaming from the larva has flowed around them in a pool, leaving them trapped on an island 20 feet in diameter, surrounded by a ring of slowly flowing acid 30 feet across. A touch of the potent acid deals 4d6 acid damage, and full immersion deals 20d6 acid damage each round. The acid has interacted with the powerful defensive magic Tahenkot was teaching at the time, making it difficult to move or bypass. The acid pool resists being diverted or destroyed; attempts to do so require a successful DC 40 counteract check or have no effect. Any magical effect used to travel over or under the acid similarly requires a successful DC 40 counteract check.

While Tahenkot would normally be able to get herself and her students to safety, she can only stagger about for as long as she's slowed. It's therefore up to the heroes to rescue Tahenkot and her class. Mundane methods of leaping across the acid might work best, but high-level heroes probably have any number of solutions they can devise. Even if the heroes can't negotiate the acid, effects that remove Tahenkot's slowed condition allow her to get everyone to safety.

Coming Late: The larva's thrashing eventually causes the acid to splash about dangerously. If this isn't the first encounter the heroes are attempting, acid splashes a random hero in the area each round, dealing 6d6 acid damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save).

If the heroes have already rescued Izem Meztani (see below), he wastes no time in soaring across the acid pool to rescue Tahenkot, declaring he's resolved to finally express his affection for her once they're safe. He can also help rescue the other students, but he needs 2 rounds to recover each one. Consider Izem a potential target for the splashing acid; when he's been splashed twice, his wings are too splattered with acid to

fly any further and he can't rescue anyone else. Once everyone is rescued, Izem's commitment wavers—he decides to keep his feelings to himself unless the heroes convince him to open up to Tahenkot at last.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for rescuing Tahenkot and her class.

THE DIPLOMATS

A nearby stone structure, luxuriously appointed in Osirian style, serves as quarters for four visiting Osirian dignitaries. **Izem Meztani** (NG male aasimar^{APG} human archaeologist 15) was entertaining the diplomats with tales of his adventures when the larva appeared. Izem knows the diplomatic building is warded against some mental effects, so he rushed the diplomats inside. As soon as he sees the heroes, Izem motions them into the building along with the diplomats.

The heroes can tell the structure isn't safe. The larva's thrashing grows ever closer, something that can't be seen from inside the windowless building. They must convince Izem and the diplomats to leave their safe haven before it's turned to rubble. This requires a successful DC 40 Diplomacy check to Request that everyone leave for someplace safer. Alternatively, a successful DC 38 Deception check or a DC 42 Intimidation check suffices. If the heroes have some method of evacuating Izem and the diplomats without requiring them to go outside, such as *teleport* or a similar effect, reduce the DCs by 10. If the heroes are on especially good terms with Izem (such as if they befriended him during the expedition to Mzali in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #172: Secrets of the Temple-City*), reduce the DCs by 5. On a failed check, that hero can't try again, but others can try; if any hero critically fails, no hero can try again because the group simply refuses to move.

Coming Late: The building's end comes more suddenly than expected. If this is the third encounter the heroes are attempting, the larva's writhing causes the structure to collapse after the heroes have made only a single skill check to convince the diplomats. If they fail, the diplomats die in the collapse. Izem survives but is unconscious for the rest of this adventure, and the heroes each take 20d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 40 basic Fortitude save) if they're still inside trying to convince the diplomats.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP for rescuing Izem and the diplomats.

THE MISTRUSTFUL QUARTERMASTER

The Magaambya's student supply store is affectionately referred to as the "Powderpile" for its vast selection of alchemical ingredients, enchanted dust, and other components necessary for a student's magical education.



The heroes already know the fussy kobold proprietor, **Khokan** (LN male kobold inventory manager 8), from their earliest days at the Magaambya. Khokan is barricading the building to defend his precious stock against any opportunistic students looking to take advantage of the chaos. Khokan refuses to come out, vowing to protect his stock with his life if necessary.

Takulu Ot recently provided the kobold with a magical disk that helps prevent theft. When the disk is placed on an interior floor, it adds 10 to the DC of Thievery checks to Pick a Lock and Steal within the structure. Yet this gift makes it hard to get Khokan out, as the superior lock on his reinforced door requires five successful Thievery checks at DC 50 to Pick the Lock. If the heroes get the door open, Khokan heaves an exasperated sigh and realizes that protecting the Powderpile is fruitless, so he heads somewhere safe.

Convincing Khokan to come out requires a successful DC 40 Diplomacy check or DC 44 Deception check. The kobold is entirely immune to bullying by students, current or former, so Intimidation checks to get him to leave fail.

Coming Late: The larva's thrashing does worse than mix up the carefully sorted powders that Khokan maintains; it jostles his delicate goods off their shelves. If this is the second encounter the heroes are attempting, he has only two true elixirs of life to give to them instead of three (see *Treasure* below); if this is the third encounter, then he has no elixirs remaining.

Treasure: If the heroes get Khokan out of the Powderpile, he departs with a few knickknacks in his claws, including the Powderpile's meticulous account books. After a moment of consideration and mental inventory, he offers the heroes a *wand of 9th-level collective transposition* and three true elixirs of life.

XP Award: Award 30 XP for rescuing Khokan.

The Unfurling

Once the heroes have dealt with the immediate dangers posed by the writhing larva, it unfurls and grows larger still, collapsing across the northeastern Magaambya. It destroys several buildings as it rolls across the campus. Acid splashed about by the creature's heaving bulk creates flowing streams and pools that smoke with acrid vapors. The heroes have just enough time to escape the area. Read or paraphrase the following.

The sound is like a mountain collapsing across the Magaambya. The titanic larva grows as it unfurls, its torn skin leaking a rain of acid and tiny legs wriggling as it thrashes. One building after another falls to its ponderous bulk: first the Heron Archives and then Indigo Hall, buildings that have stood for millennia.

The larva emits another psychic cry, but this one has a different effect. Insects across campus become hostile and many swell to immense size. Some transform into human-ant hybrid creatures with a magical curse that mimics lycanthropy, producing wereants that embody the larva's destructive impulses.

Heroes with insectile or arachnid natures, such as anadis, feel uncharacteristic rage from the larva's psychic cry and take 10d6 mental damage (DC 38 basic Will save) from the sudden mental assault. Regardless of the result of this saving throw, they also gain a +1 status bonus to saving throws against emotion effects, except those that inflame anger, for 1 day.

Any hero who succeeds at a DC 35 Nature check can tell the larva is suffering and seems to be lashing out in pain more than malice. It appears to be struggling for control over its own body as it twists and shivers, as if there are multiple minds fighting for control of a single body.

The Magaambya is in obvious danger, and level-headed teachers and students leap to its defense. Many attack the larva directly, but their actions have no effect. Others fight the aggressive insects and wereants, or rescue people in the path of the larva's erratic squirming. Old-Mage Jatembe isn't in sight, so everyone turns to his new Magic Warriors—the heroes—for aid as the Magaambya falls into chaos.

The following four locations detail the situations where the heroes' help is most needed. The heroes should nevertheless get a chance to rest up a bit (for no more than an hour or so) when moving between locations. If they are particularly pressed for resources, you can have a helpful NPC such as Teacher Ahassunu come by to cast *moment of renewal* on them.

Greenhouse Rescue

Thema (CG female elf gardener 8) was working at re-potting some plants in a shed, teaching several initiates about basic plant care. Ants amid the plants transformed into wereants, and Thema swiftly ushered the students into the building's back room. They are no safer there, however, as a river of acid is flowing into the area. The heroes hear their cries for help.

The river of acid poses an environmental danger in this area. Its acrid vapors limit sight to only 30 feet, and all creatures in the area gain weakness 10 to acid and poison.

The Greenhouse Rescue map appears on page 48.

H1. GARDEN EXTERIOR

LOW 20

The pleasant arrangements of shrubs and flowering plants in this area of campus have all withered from the

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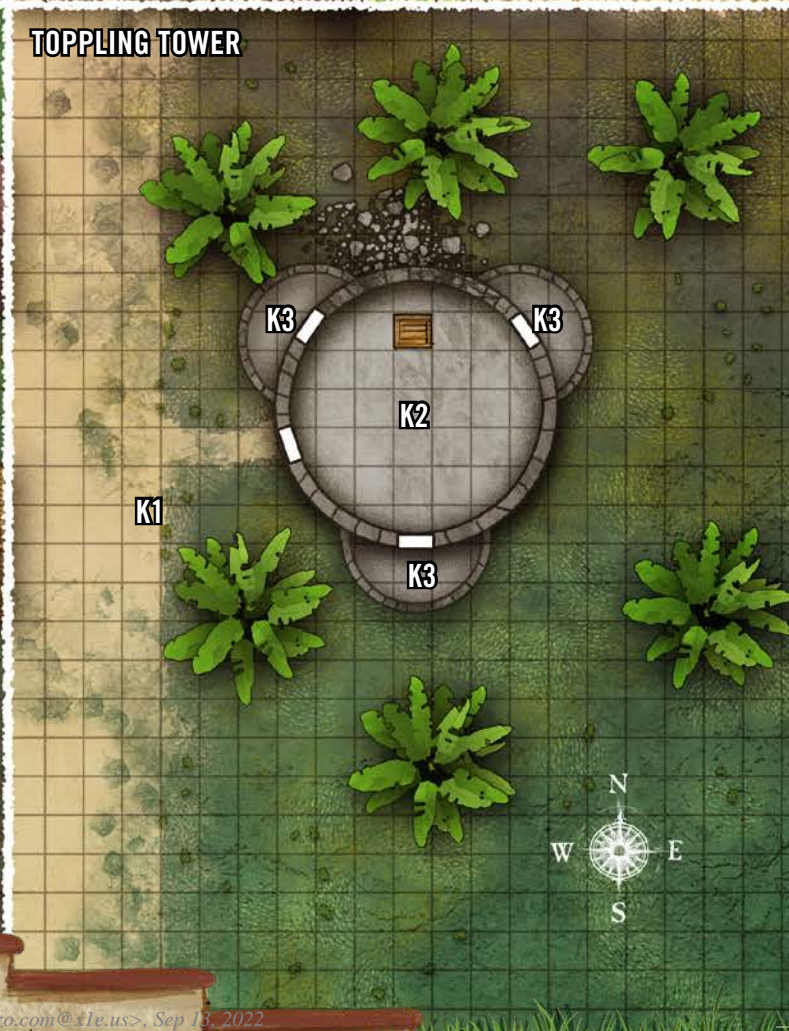
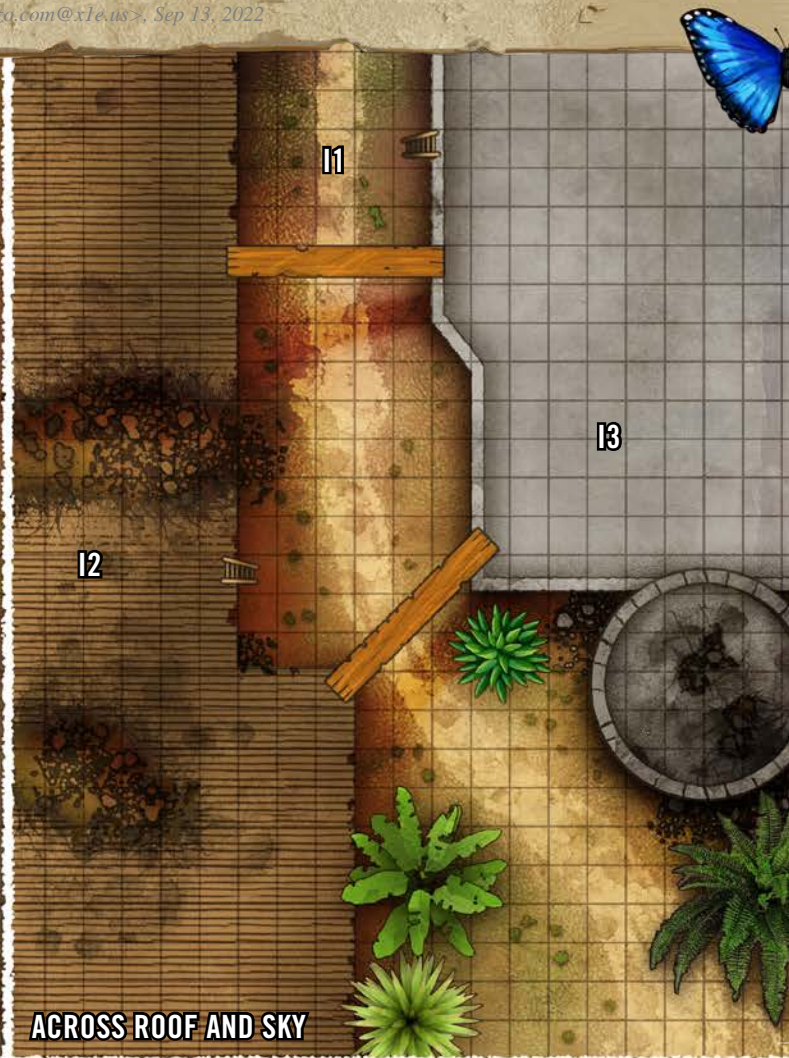
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noxious vapors. A nearby greenhouse made of stone and glass is crumbling and sits askew. Cries of help come from within the building. A pool of spreading acid slowly flows toward the greenhouse.

This area doesn't pose any danger to the heroes when they first come through. They can reach areas H2 or H3 easily.

Creature: When the heroes come back this way with Thema and her students, the ground splits open and a massive beetle emerges. Imbued with magical powers in addition to its great size, this ironclad annihilator beetle opens by using its Earthquake Stomp, then focuses on fighting the heroes before consuming the panicked students. It fights until destroyed.

IRONCLAD ANNIHILATOR BEETLE CREATURE 21

RARE N GARGANTUAN BEAST


Perception +36; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +36, Athletics +42


Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +10, **Int** -5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** -1


AC 49; **Fort** +38, **Ref** +32, **Will** +35


HP 400


Carapace Deflection  **Trigger** The ironclad annihilator beetle is targeted with an attack from an attacker it can see; **Effect** The ironclad annihilator pivots to place its tough carapace in the way of the attack, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to its AC against the triggering attack. If the attack misses, the ironclad annihilator can Step after the attack.


Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee  mandible +39 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d12+20 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee  foot +37 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d8+20 bludgeoning


Constrict  4d6+20 bludgeoning, DC 44

Earthquake Stomp  **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The ironclad annihilator beetle stomps the ground. All creatures within a 30-foot emanation must succeed at a DC 44 Fortitude saving throw or fall prone and become stunned 1 (stunned for 1 round on a critical failure).

Oviposit  **Requirements** The ironclad annihilator beetle has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The ironclad annihilator injects its ovipositor under the grabbed creature's skin. The creature takes 4d6+20 bludgeoning damage (DC 44 basic Fortitude save). On a failed save, the beetle implants an egg, and the target creature takes 4d6 persistent bleed damage that is unusually tenacious. The DC to stop the bleeding using Administer First Aid is 40, and healing the creature to full Hit Points doesn't automatically stop the bleeding. If the target creature dies from this bleed damage, its body is destroyed and unrecoverable except with powerful magic such as *miracle* or *wish*, and an

immature ironclad annihilator beetle (with statistics as a giant stag beetle; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 41) bursts forth.

Sunder Objects When an ironclad annihilator damages an item or structure, it deals an additional 2d10 damage to that item or structure.

Trample  Huge or smaller, foot, DC 44

H2. ADVANCING ACID

The building in this area is about to collapse into the advancing pool of acid, but quick-thinking characters can slow the acid's advance. (Unlike the acid that surrounded Tahenkot and her students earlier in this chapter, this doesn't have any magical resistance.) The most straightforward method is to collapse the building into the acid to slow it down. Doing so requires a successful DC 35 Athletics check.

H3. POTTING AREA

LOW 20

The stone foundation of this greenhouse has fared little better than its windows, which are all cracked and tinged green from the pervasive acidic mist. The stone potting tables within are in shambles. Cries of help come from behind a door to the north.

Thema didn't reach the storeroom with her students and now lies beneath a collapsed table. She's stuck under it and afraid to make noise for fear of alerting the creatures here to her presence, but she shouts encouragement to the heroes once a fight begins.

The storage room door is locked and barricaded from the other side. In addition, a quick-thinking student cast *lock* on the portal. Opening the door requires a successful DC 38 Athletics check to Force it Open, but the students within remove the barricade if they're convinced the danger has passed.

Creatures: The four wereant poisoners who transformed here in the greenhouse are finding the barricaded and magically locked door harder to get into than expected. If they hear the heroes making a lot of noise nearby, they hide to prepare an ambush; otherwise, they leap into the fight. They try to flank foes and take them out as swiftly as possible. When three wereant poisoners are defeated, the last one flees.

WEREANT POISONERS (4)

CREATURE 17

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Initiative Perception +29

Treasure: Once the wereants are defeated, the heroes can rescue Thema from underneath the collapsed table. She offers a single dose of black lotus extract in case they find it useful.

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H4. STORAGE ROOM

Seven initiates are huddled in this room, worried about the strange wereants that attacked them and nervous about the building crumbling around them. They're the ones who've been shouting for help.

Acidic Arrival: If the heroes didn't do anything to slow the flowing acid in area **H2**, when the heroes finally get the door open, the pool seeps under the wall and washes across the floor. After 1 round, the pool deals 4d6 acid damage to everyone standing on the ground in this room, which is more than an initiate can survive.

XP Award: If the heroes rescue the initiates before any of them succumb to the acid, award them 80 XP.

Across Roof and Sky

The people of Nantambu have counted on the Magaambya's protection for generations. Many citizens are eager to return the favor when the Magaambya is attacked. A team of construction workers came rushing across to the island as soon as the larva appeared, working hard to get students and faculty to safety while they shored up falling buildings, constructed impromptu barricades, and secured escape routes. They're led by a potter named **Amaechi** (NG male human potter 9) who, although not a construction worker by trade, is a pillar of the community and a good leader. The heroes might recall Amaechi from *Pathfinder Adventure Path #170: Spoken on the Song Wind*, when they helped repair his shop.

Amaechi and the workers realized the danger on the ground, so they built several ladders to evacuate students up to the rooftops. Amaechi sent word to the animal trader Oba Eze, begging her lend some of her flying creatures to aid the evacuation effort. She's bringing several pterosaurs, but a new danger has presented itself: flying wereants who plan to pick off the helpless students from the rooftops.

Use the Across Roof and Sky map on page 48 for this encounter.

I1. GROUND LEVEL

LOW 20

A narrow passageway leads between a tall dormitory to the west and a stout building to the east. The dormitory entryway has collapsed, as has part of its roof. The other

building seems like it's in better shape, but its heavy metal door is solidly closed with a sign reading, "Danger to Spellcasters, No Admittance." The action doesn't seem to be here on the ground, however; ladders lead to the top of each building and rickety planks cross the passageway to connect the rooftops high above. People atop the roofs shout and point at the sky.

The ladders and the planks look unsteady, but the construction workers who assembled them were skillful, and they don't break except under extraordinary weight. Both buildings are 30 feet tall.

Creatures: Although the heroes might be focused on the rooftops above, there's danger here on the ground as well. The eastern building is a wildlife research building where dangerous predators are temporarily housed for study. It's commonly known as Predator Manor, as students grumble that the creatures within have better accommodations than their own. The

only creatures there now are a pair of magic-eating leydroths. When the earthquakes rocking the academy cracked the containing walls, a wereant sentinel discovered the creatures and convinced them to take revenge on the Magaambya at her side.

When the heroes start ascending to the roof or they investigate the metal door, the door bangs open and two leydroths rush out. The wereant follows behind, using her Retributive Strike to defend the leydroths and keep them at the forefront of the battle. The wereant sentinel fights until slain, but a leydroth reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points lopes off to cause havoc elsewhere.

LEYDROTHS (2)

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 163

Initiative Perception +30

WEREANT SENTINEL

CREATURE 19

RARE **LE** **MEDIUM** **BEAST** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID** **WERECREATURE**

Perception +32; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common; insect empathy, telepathy 120 feet

Skills Athletics +37, Intimidation +33, Society +27

Str +10, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

Hive Mind (divination, primal) As wereant disciple (page 86).

Insect Empathy (divination, primal) The wereant can communicate with insects.



Items +2 greater striking khopesh (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 120), major sturdy shield (Hardness 17, HP 136, BT 68)

AC 43 (45 with shield raised); **Fort** +35, **Ref** +29, **Will** +32
HP 400; **Weaknesses** silver 20

Gnawing Retort ➤ As wereant disciple.

Retributive Strike ➤ **Trigger** An enemy damages the wereant sentinel's ally, and both are within 15 feet of the wereant sentinel; **Effect** The ally gains resistance 20 against the triggering damage. If the foe is within reach, the wereant sentinel makes a melee Strike against it.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ➤ mandibles +36, **Damage** 3d10+20 slashing plus Knockdown and curse of the wereant

Melee ➤ khopesh +38 (magical, trip), **Damage** 3d8+20 slashing

Change Shape ➤ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) As wereant disciple.

Curse of the Wereant (curse, necromancy, primal) As wereant disciple.

Hasty Reposition ➤ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The wereant sentinel Steps, moving up to 15 feet.

Moon Frenzy (polymorph, primal, transmutation) As wereant disciple.

Sentinel's Focus ➤ The wereant sentinel plants its feet in defiance of those who would move it. It gains a +2 circumstance bonus to defenses against being Shoved or Tripped, and its melee Strikes deal an additional 2d8 mental damage. These effects end when it moves from its square using anything other than Hasty Reposition.

12. DORMITORY ROOFTOP LOW 20

More than a dozen Rain-Scribe attendants and dormitory staff are on this rooftop, along with four construction workers. The roof recently collapsed over the dormitory entrance, creating a wide gap in the roof and splitting up this group.

Creatures: The people here are alarmed by the sound of buzzing wings, and for good reason: when the heroes arrive on the roof, six wereant disciples come into view from beyond a larger building nearby. The wereants swoop along the rooftops, splitting up to attack both groups. They focus their attacks on whomever is causing the most trouble, which is likely the heroes, and try to Shove them off the roof. If there's not a hero on hand, they focus on the students (use the statistics for a Rain-Scribe on page 124 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* if necessary) and the construction workers (use the statistics for a smith on page 245 of *Gamemastery Guide*). A wereant reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points flees, but the students and construction workers have nowhere to run.

WEREANT DISCIPLES (6)

CREATURE 16

Page 86

Initiative Perception +28

13. PREDATOR MANOR ROOFTOP TRIVIAL 20

Amaechi, three construction workers, and six students are atop this building. They're working to build a defensive area in a broken tower at the building's south end. Amaechi welcomes the heroes and tells them about Oba Eze's pending rescue.

Creatures: Three wereant disciples are crawling up the east side of this building to make a surprise attack. They ascend and launch this attack as soon as the heroes arrive on this roof. This encounter isn't particularly difficult, but it should trigger other encounters the heroes haven't yet faced—the flying wereants assaulting the dormitory roof, or the leydroths tearing their way up through the floor of the



Wereant Sentinel

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broken tower. This has an opportunity to bring this encounter from trivial to moderate or even severe.

As with the wereants in area **12**, these attackers focus on heroes and flee when reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points.

WEREANT DISCIPLES (3)

CREATURE 16

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Initiative Perception +28

OBA EZE ARRIVES

Once all the threats in this area are neutralized, Oba Eze comes in on the back of a quetzalcoatllus, with a train of pteranodons on long leather straps. She directs the pterosaurs to land on the roof and let the students and workers mount up. Seeing the heroes, she requests they promise that the Magaambya will reimburse her for any damage her valuable animals sustain.

XP Award: Once the people are rescued from this area, award the heroes 80 XP.

Holding the Line

Mafika Ayuwari (NG male human martial artist 17) quickly arranged for several Tempest-Sun Mages to stand together and repel a force of marauding wereants. Yet more of the determined creatures keep coming. The fighting is heavy as the master of defensive arts and his star students demonstrate their valor against waves of enemies. As the heroes evaluate the situation, another group of wereants rush forward to flank the Tempest-Sun Mage line. Mafika can't afford to redirect any of his defenders from the battle in front of him and asks the heroes to defend his flank.

Use the Holding the Line map on page 48 for this encounter.

J1. DEFENDERS' FLANK

LOW 20

This wide street between campus buildings is covered in blood, ichor, and spatters of acid. The fighting has been thick here, and is about to become even more fierce as the Magaambyans and the ant-headed warriors currently face each other across an open space in the street.

Here, a group of six Tempest-Sun Mages are holding off several wereants with a *wall of force* one of them cast from a scroll. The wall stretches from one building to the other across the street. Some of the wereant poisoners managed to climb the buildings to get over the wall, but this allowed the Magaambyans to assail them while they were scattered and off-balance. Three wereant sentinels are simply battering through the invisible wall, and it's likely to fall very soon.

Creatures: The Tempest-Sun Mages are counting on the heroes to know what to do in this situation; they can explain that going around the building to attack the flanking wereants directly will protect their line, but the heroes might have any number of other solutions to simply bypass the *wall of force* and take the fight to the enemy. Although the fighting nearby is fierce, there are currently only three wereant sentinels battering at the wall, so this is the best time to strike and disrupt the flanking forces. The students fight as well as they're able, even though they're significantly less powerful than the heroes; you can use the Tempest-Sun Mage statistics on page 125 of the *Character Guide* for them. This would be a Moderate encounter without the assistance of the Magaambyans; with their help, this is a Low-threat encounter instead. If you don't have or don't choose to use their stats, simply assume the Magaambyans can defeat one of the wereant sentinels.

Left alone, the wereants force their way through the *wall of force* in 3 rounds after when the heroes arrive and start attacking the Tempest-Sun Mages. Eager to break the Magaambyan flank, they fight to the death.

WEREANT SENTINELS (3)

CREATURE 19

Page 50

Initiative Perception +32

J2. INFESTED TREES

LOW 20

When the heroes have defeated the wereants, Mafika calls for the line to advance south. The Tempest-Sun Mages ask the heroes to advance down the street while they search buildings for survivors or stragglers.

Other than a few large trees and abandoned buildings, the way looks clear. A hero who succeeds at a DC 40 Nature check or DC 44 Perception check notices that the two largest trees are infested with hundreds of crawling ants.

Creatures: The ants have wholly infested two wise arboreals who live on this part of campus, normally spending months or even years in peaceful slumber but sharing their wisdom from time to time. The arboreals are now malevolent creatures with their heartwood filled entirely with swarming ants. They masquerade as ordinary trees until creatures get within reach or notice their ruse. At that point, they uproot themselves, unleash their swarm host aura, and attack.

HIVEBOUND ARBOREAL (2)

CREATURE 19

RARE **NE** **HUGE** **PLANT**

Variant arboreal regent (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 25)

Perception +33; low-light vision, tremorsense (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Arboreal, Common, Sylvan; *speaks with plants*

Skills Athletics +39, Intimidation +32, Nature +33, Stealth +24 (+34 in forests)

Str +10, **Dex** -1, **Con** +10, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

AC 44; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +26, **Will** +33

HP 400; **Weaknesses** axe vulnerability, fire 20; **Resistances** bludgeoning 15, piercing 15

Axe Vulnerability The hivebound arboreal takes 15 additional damage from axes.

Swarm Host (aura, primal) 20 feet. The hivebound arboreal is host to a cloud of flying ants that swarm around it and gnaw at any creature within the aura. Non-arboreal creatures that enter the aura or start their turn within it take 7d8 piercing damage from the bites (DC 38 basic Fortitude save). If the hivebound arboreal fails a saving throw against an area effect, the biting ants die off, and the aura is deactivated until new ants swarm out at the end of the hivebound arboreal's next turn (or after 1 minute, if the hivebound arboreal critically fails it saving throw).

Speed 25 feet; *freedom of movement*

Melee ♦ branch +36 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d12+16 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Melee ♦ root +36 (trip, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d8+16 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ rock +36 (brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 4d10+16 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 41, attack +33; **9th** *horrid wilting, nature's enmity*; **6th** *tangling creepers*; **3rd** *earthbind* (at will); **2nd** *entangle*; **Constant (4th)** *freedom of movement, speak with plants*

Constrict ♦ 4d6+16 bludgeoning, DC 41

Offered to the Swarm ♦ **Trigger** The arboreal Grabs or Constricts a foe; **Requirements** The hivebound arboreal's swarm host is active; **Effect** The arboreal offers up the triggering creature to its ants to feed. The triggering creature takes damage as from the swarm host aura, but thereafter gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Escape the Grab until it Escapes.

Throw Rock ♦

Treasure: One of the arboreals has a *third eye* entwined in its roots.

Toppling Tower

High Sun-Mage Oyamba (NG male human schoolmaster 15) knows many of the Magaambya's secrets. One of these is that Whistle Tower, the original building named for the Magic Warrior named Whistling Kite, is a magical warning system. The open aerie at the tower's top is not just a roosting place for hawks and other birds but an alarm that can alert lore-speakers across the Mwangi Expanse to trouble at the Magaambya. Triggering the alarm isn't

easy, and Oyamba has brought **Takulu Ot** (LG male human teacher 12) to help him activate it. Once the wereants realize what the wizards are trying to do, they converged upon the tower, attempting to bring



Hivebound Arboreal

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it down. The activity at Whistle Tower is obvious to anyone nearby, and an onlooker seeks help from the heroes right away.

Use the Toppling Tower map on page 48 for this encounter.

K1. GNAWING BEETLES

SEVERE 20

Whistle Tower is a delicate structure of pale stone that has stood improbably tall for millennia. Fluted columns line the top of the tower, and a tile roof serves as an aerie for hawks, bats, and other flying creatures. The sides of the tower show significant damage, its stones smashed and pulled aside.

Creatures: Two ironclad annihilator beetles are gnawing at the stone, one to the north and one to the southeast. They are each focused on bringing down the tower, which they're able to do in 12 rounds of gnawing (6 rounds, if both beetles are left alone). The damage is obvious, so the heroes know how many rounds are left at a glance; at your discretion, spells like *wall of stone* might add additional rounds.

When attacked, an ironclad annihilator beetle turns on its attackers to dispatch them before returning to its task. The beetles don't surrender or flee and don't venture more than a few dozen feet away from the tower if they can avoid it. Because the beetles don't attack as a coordinated pair unless the heroes intentionally assault both of them, this encounter is likely to play out as two Low-threat encounters in sequence rather than a single Severe encounter.

IRONCLAD ANNIHILATOR BEETLES (2) CREATURE 21

Page 49

Initiative Perception +36

Fallen Tower: If the beetles break the walls, the entire structure collapses with a crash. Oyamba and Takulu are both badly injured but manage to escape. Additionally, the three oozes in area **K3** survive. They slither out to attack anyone in the area right away.

K2. TOWER INTERIOR

The vaulted ground floor of Whistle Tower is an open room with a single large wooden entry door and three smaller stone hatches leading to the tower's supports. Carvings of birds in flight adorn the walls, and a hole in the ceiling above leads to the next level of the tower. This opening has no stairs or ladders leading to it, as the classrooms and study halls beyond are for pupils who already know how to fly.

This is the lowest of Whistle Tower's nine floors, each accessible through hatches. The hatches are about 2 feet square and open with a firm tug.

Oyamba and Takulu are engaged in the ritual to activate the mystical alarm, which must be performed here. They have 10 minutes left to perform the ritual, and they could use the heroes' help. Takulu explains what they're doing and why, then asks the heroes to stand nearby to contribute their skills as secondary casters. However, before the heroes can make any checks, the oozes in area **K3** slither into the room. The creatures come in earlier if any hero opens the hatches.

XP Award: If the heroes defeat the oozes, Oyamba and Takulu can perform their ritual without interruption and are able to send a mental signal to lore-speakers across the Mwangi that the Magaambya needs help. Few wield the necessary magic to arrive quickly, but those powerful spellcasters are just what the school needs now. Award the heroes 30 XP if the ritual succeeds.

K3. LURKING OOZES

LOW 20

The chambers within Whistle Tower's supports are used for occasional storage or even student trysts, though they're forgotten by most. They made a good place for Koride to hide some dangerous creatures she'd created while under the *Vesicant Egg's* influence.

Creatures: A chromatic ooze lurks within each of the three small rooms around the tower interior. The oozes remained inert until the magic of Oyamba and Takulu's warning ritual triggers their awakening (or when the tower collapses). They push through the hatches and spill into the room, rippling with color and eager to attack anyone present. Takulu and Oyamba can't contribute to the fight other than by shouting encouragement, as they must continue with the ritual or lose its effects. It's up to the heroes to face the oozes.

CHROMATIC OOZES (3)

CREATURE 18

Page 82

Initiative Perception +30

The Circle

Once the heroes have addressed the dangers in the locations above, the larva is momentarily still and there's peace for a few moments. The heroes can see that others have been diligently working to save people and buildings across the campus. If Oyamba and Takulu's ritual at Whistle Tower is successful, powerful Magaambyans from across the Mwangi Expanse arrive by teleportation or other means to lend what aid they can. Old-Mage Jatembe seeks out



the heroes with Koride, who has her stitched shadow reattached and is bearing an uncharacteristically contrite countenance. Jatembe leads the heroes to the Circle, the magical gazebo at the very center of the Magaambya campus. On the way, he explains that Koride has proposed a ritual to ensnare the monstrous larva so it can't do any more harm. "I know you don't have a lot of reason to trust me," Koride admits, "but I'm still the Magaambya's expert on bugs."

The Magaambyans have all arrived around the Circle to hear what Jatembe would have them do. He explains they must work on a combined ritual simultaneously, in separate locations along the outside edge of the campus. These participants will create a mystical net, which Jatembe will pull together around the larva, holding it immobile until its threat can be directly addressed. Each ritual location requires dozens of participants; to keep everyone focused and together, Jatembe has them assemble in teams at the feet of each of the statues of the Ten Magic Warriors that ring the campus. Friends and allies the heroes have made depart to coordinate these groups and disseminate the specifics of the ritual: Oyamba, Izem Mezitani, Takulu Ot, Ahassunu, and even their former peers like Esi Djana and Noxolo. Each takes a moment to wish the heroes luck—they know if the ritual fails to contain the larva, it might destroy them all.

A scowling Lesedi approaches to take Koride to help at one of the statues, taking her arm in a firm grip and assuring Jatembe and the heroes, "I'll be sure she's not causing any further harm." Koride allows herself to be led away without any comment.

Before long, only Jatembe and the heroes are left at the circle, and he explains his plan in more detail.

"In all honesty, while I'm not entirely the trickster the legends paint me to be, it's not strictly necessary to have so many magic users at each location. But I'm sure the entities battling for control within the larva will hurl the rest of their forces at them to disrupt the ritual. Most people at each site are there to provide protection. Similarly, I need you to provide me with protection while I undertake the focus ritual over the next hour. I'll be helpless, so if this is to succeed, you must serve as my guardians.

"But you must also help. I need you to contribute the knowledge you've learned throughout your time here. Whether you can help recite arcane theorems or help manipulate the natural energies of the circle, I need at

least one of you to contribute throughout the process—but it need not be the same person throughout the entire ritual. You all will do well. I trust you." Jatembe mounts the steps into the Circle, and the elemental forces around it flare. The ground shudders and thrums with power.

Use the Circle map on the inside back cover of this adventure for this encounter.

Creatures: The remaining enemies are fewer in number than Jatembe thinks, but they're all converging on the Circle from across the campus. Fortunately, the heroes need not confront them all at once, as they come in three waves a few minutes apart. They consist of wereants and huge swarms of gnawing ants that cover the ground like a writhing carpet. The ant swarms move to the closest and easiest targets they can, but the wereants fight with more cunning and strategy. They can't hurt Jatembe, and they know it, so



The Circle

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they focus their attacks on the heroes. These foes are all driven to fight to the death.

At least one hero must be in the Circle with Jatembe to help with the ritual. Between the fights, having a character who is at least an expert in Arcana or Nature (or at least a master in Occultism or Religion) is sufficient. During encounter mode, at least one hero must stand in the Circle and attempt a DC 35 Arcana or Nature check (or a DC 40 Occultism or Religion check) as a single action with the concentrate trait. At least one character must attempt at least one check each round.

At the end of the first round in which no hero succeeds at one of these checks, the ground rumbles, and a new apocalypse ant swarm burrows up to join the fight. After that point, any time a round passes in which no hero succeeds at one of these checks, an ironclad annihilator beetle joins the attack.

FIRST WAVE LOW 20

The first wave comes from the air; a cloud of biting ants and four wereant disciples fly in low over the surrounding buildings from different directions and assault the Circle from multiple sides.

WEREANT DISCIPLES (4) CREATURE 16

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Initiative Perception +28

APOCALYPSE ANT SWARM CREATURE 18

UNCOMMON N GARGANTUAN ANIMAL SWARM

Variant army ant swarm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 20)

Perception +30; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet


Skills Athletics +27

Str -1, **Dex** +9, **Con** +7, **Int** -5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** -4


AC 41; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +33, **Will** +27

HP 260; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind; **Weaknesses** area damage 20, splash damage 20; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10, piercing 20, slashing 20

Inexorable The apocalypse ant swarm recovers from the slowed and stunned conditions at the end of its turn. It's immune to penalties to its Speeds and ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain.

Cling  **Trigger** A creature leaves the swarm's space; **Effect** The swarm loses 2d8 HP as ants cling to the creature and continue biting, dealing 7d8 persistent piercing damage. High winds or immersion in water reduces the DC of the flat check to end this persistent damage to 5. Any area damage dealt to the creature destroys these clinging ants.

Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Swarming Bites  Each enemy in the swarm's space takes 7d8 piercing damage (DC 39 basic Fortitude save). A creature that fails its save against Swarming Bites becomes clumsy 1 for 1 round (1 minute on a critical

failure). If the creature attempts a concentrate or manipulate action while affected, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or the action is lost; roll the check after spending the action, but before any effects are applied.

SECOND WAVE LOW 20

The second wave arrives a few minutes after the heroes defeat the first wave. It consists of only three wereants who've come as quickly as they can, eager to join the battle rather than waiting for support.

As this encounter begins, the heroes can see a net of energy appearing between the towering statues of the Ten Magic Warriors that ring the Magaambya.

WEREANT SENTINEL CREATURE 19

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Initiative Perception +28

WEREANT POISONERS (2) CREATURE 17

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Initiative Perception +29

THIRD WAVE MODERATE 20

The final wave, arriving a few minutes after the heroes defeat the second wave, consists of the remaining forces. Two swarms arrive from opposite directions. One swarm is accompanied by a wereant sentinel, and the other is accompanied by four wereant disciples who remain spread out to avoid area attacks.

At the start of this wave, the net of energy begins to contract slowly toward the location of the larva.

WEREANT SENTINEL CREATURE 19

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Initiative Perception +28

WEREANT DISCIPLES (4) CREATURE 16

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Initiative Perception +28

APOCALYPSE ANT SWARMS (2) CREATURE 18

See above

Initiative Perception +30

AN UNEXPECTED RECOVERY

After the heroes defeat the last wave, Jatembe steps from the Circle to point at the net tightening in the sky. He is drained and utterly exhausted, but his role in focusing the ritual is done, and now it's a matter of waiting for the net to slowly close around its target. Jatembe produces a lightweight metal crown set with dimly glowing green and blue gems. It emits the smell of burnt copper and an off-tune hum that causes a subtle,



bone-deep ache in anyone near it. The item's appearance and effects are reminiscent of the rejuvenation capsule the heroes might have used on the *Mandibles of Fate* in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #173: Doorway to the Red Star*. Despite his obvious weariness, Jatembe smiles as he presents it to the heroes.

"We've done what we can and now have a little time. But here's a wonder! I certainly wasn't idle during my 'captivity' aboard the *Mandibles of Fate*. That old bug had several clever innovations. His rejuvenation capsules were the most benign of these and, frankly, the most useful. I inspected the capsules in great detail and, earlier today, created this device to replicate their effects. I'm quite certain it works, although you'd be the first to test it."

Jatembe's experimental crown accelerates mental and physical recovery through magical and scientific means. After being worn for 1 minute, the crown attunes to its wearer, and its lights grow brighter. When worn for 10 additional minutes, the crown gives the creature wearing it the benefit of a full night's rest, including fully restoring spell slots, Focus Points, and other limited resources. It's also possible to put the crown on a creature that's died within the last day; after 10 minutes, the creature is returned to life as though by an 8th-level *raise dead* spell. There's enough time to have each hero and Jatembe use the crown before the net tightens around the larva, but Jatembe insists the heroes go first.

Once the crown has refreshed each hero, the lights spark, and the crown becomes inert. Jatembe takes the loss of his experimental crown with good grace, resolving to craft an improved version at a later time. For now, though, he's expended his power and can't provide the heroes any further help. They must ensure that the larva is contained on their own.

MIND OF THE KING

SEVERE 20

As the web of elemental energy around the Magaambya touches the larva, it emits a keening wail of outrage and pain. It thrashes violently, shaking the earth and collapsing buildings already made unsteady by its earlier writhing. The net keeps it from rolling far, but the forces warring within the larva won't be so easily constrained. Read or paraphrase the following.

As the net of energy touches the larva, its central section, already taller than any building on campus, swells and bursts, releasing three monstrous figures. These creatures are momentarily ephemeral, like ghosts, but rapidly take solid form. One is a huge worm with a single massive mouth at its end. The other is a thrashing, multi-legged

monstrosity with three ant-like heads. The final figure is smaller yet more ominous than the other two: a red-cloaked skeleton with all the haughty arrogance of the sorcerer defeated on Akiton.

These figures represent the three warring aspects of the King of Biting Ants's psyche, made manifest by Jatembe's magic so they can be defeated once and for all. The worm is a manifestation of his endless, mindless hunger. The three-headed creature is the manifestation of his insectile nature, and the cloaked skeleton is the embodiment of his millennia-long victory over death.

The aspects each have weaknesses, however, and the heroes can discover these weaknesses by examining the aspects closely. You might want to remind them about Jatembe's guidance to look for advantages against these mind-born foes. During this encounter, the heroes can take the Evaluate Aspect action.

EVALUATE ASPECT

CONCENTRATE

Frequency once per round

You evaluate the magic around one of the aspects of the King of Biting Ants's psyche to determine its nature and special weakness. Choose one of the three aspect creatures and attempt a DC 40 Arcana or Nature check.

Critical Success You learn the key weakness of the aspect you examined and communicate this weakness to your allies. The aspect takes a -2 status penalty to its Armor Class and saving throws against its key weakness.

Success As critical success, but the aspect doesn't take any penalty; you have identified the weakness but not how to exploit it. If you get a success against this aspect again, it is a critical success instead.

Failure You're unable to learn anything about the aspect.

Use the Mind of the King map on the inner back cover of this adventure for this encounter.

Creatures: The Aspect of Hunger and the Aspect of Insects rush forward into melee with as many heroes as possible, attempting to consume them or rip them apart, respectively. They're straightforward combatants, and clever heroes might be able to trick them or lure them away from endangered allies with clever ruses. The Aspect of Immortality hangs back, preferably high above the battle, using its *finger of death* spells before entering melee. It's much cannier than the other aspects and can't be as easily fooled.

The three aspects don't work well together and don't count as flanking with one another, even if they end up on opposite sides of a foe by chance. The Aspect of Hunger and Aspect of Insects include the other aspects in their breath weapon attacks if

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convenient (that is, if they can do so without including any fewer heroes). The Aspect of Immortality's aura of misfortune applies to the other aspects, too, although it's unlikely to remain within 20 feet of them because it distrusts them so much. The aspects fight until destroyed. As an aspect is destroyed, surviving aspects give a roar of glee and are empowered by their rival's loss; each survivor immediately regains 100 Hit Points.

ASPECT OF HUNGER CREATURE 19

Variant crimson worm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 59)

Initiative Perception +25

Speed 40 feet, burrow 40 feet, fly 40 feet, swim 20 feet

Key Weakness The Aspect of Hunger is foiled by the bounty of natural magic. It has a weakness to divine spells and primal spells.

Essence of Hunger The Aspect of Hunger doesn't have the fire trait, immunity to fire, weakness to cold, or fire healing. It instead has immunity to mental effects, and its attacks deal mental damage instead of fire damage.

ASPECT OF INSECTS CREATURE 20

UNIQUE N GARGANTUAN BEAST

Variant mukradi (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 239)

Perception +31; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Athletics +41

Str +10, **Dex** +0, **Con** +10, **Int** -3, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +0

AC 37, all-around vision; **Fort** +39, **Ref** +30, **Will** +33

HP 420; **Resistances** acid 20, electric 20, fire 20

Key Weakness The King of Biting Ants has long used his force of will to keep his insectile form under control. It has a weakness to arcane spells and occult spells.

Partitioned Anatomy ♦ As mukradi.

Spitting Rage ↻ As mukradi.

Speed 60 feet, burrow 60 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ acid maw +40 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 piercing plus 3d6 acid

Melee ♦ flame maw +40 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 piercing plus 3d6 fire

Melee ♦ shock maw +40 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 piercing plus 3d6 electric

Melee ♦ leg +40 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+20 piercing

Melee ♦ tail lash +40 (magical, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d10+20 slashing plus Knockdown

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (evocation, primal) The Aspect of Insects breathes a blast of energy from one of its three heads; each creature in the area must attempt a DC 42 basic Reflex save. The Aspect of Insects can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

- **Acid Maw** (acid) 10-foot-wide, 60-foot line of acid dealing 16d8 acid damage.

- **Flame Maw** (fire) 60-foot cone of fire dealing 16d8 fire damage.

- **Shock Maw** (electricity) 120-foot line of electricity dealing 16d8 electricity damage.

Pull Apart ♦♦ The Aspect of Insects makes two Strikes with different maws against the same target. If both hit, the target takes an extra 2d12+13 slashing damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude save). On a critical failure, the creature is torn to pieces and dies. The Aspect of Insect's multiple attack penalty increases only after all the attacks are made.

Thrash ♦♦ As mukradi.

Trample ♦♦♦ Huge or smaller, leg, DC 42

ASPECT OF IMMORTALITY CREATURE 21

Variant grim reaper (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 196)

Initiative Perception +41

Key Weakness Jatembe's history of vanquishing the King of Biting Ants survives in the halcyon legacy of the Magaambya. The Aspect of Immortality has a key weakness to both arcane spells and primal spells.

THE NEW GUARDIAN

Once all three aspects are destroyed, their bodies decompose into a vast swarm of dead ants that collapse like sand. The King of Biting Ants is now permanently ended, with even the remnants of his psyche destroyed. The huge pieces of the dead larva begin to decompose quickly, flattening and drifting through the air in streaming plumes of flakes from the colossal body. As the heroes are collecting themselves and recovering from the fight, voices cry out in warning as something squirms within a single gargantuan white sack that remains behind. The thing inside the egg kicks with several legs, struggling to get free. Read or paraphrase the following.

A gigantic black ant breaks out of her egg and looks about with the confused glance of a newborn. Her antennae twitch and probe curiously. Her enormous chitinous body gleams as she stands, surrounded by countless teachers, warriors, and students in the Magaambya's central campus. She totters clumsily to Old-Mage Jatembe and chirps questioningly before lowering her enormous head. Jatembe's wary expression gives way to relief as he laughs and pets the creature's head, eliciting a contented sound from within the ant's thorax.

Jatembe says with a sigh, "From this disaster, we have gained something of true value. This was the potential corrupted long ago, a guardian of the Mwangi intended to be a force for good. She was the one I felt within the larva fighting the old bug's evil influence. Now, those who threaten the Magaambya will have a new defender



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to deal with. The Vesicant Guardian stands with us. Her strength joins ours, the strength of thousands."

Conclusion

The heroes are now legends themselves, alongside Jatembe. They would have made a name for themselves just by recovering the lost wizard, but in addition, they destroyed the King of Biting Ants and his army, protected the students and faculty of the Magaambya, and recruited a powerful and unique guardian that will be the academy's protector and mascot for generations to come. Vast sections of the Magaambya are in ruins and hundreds are injured; it will take time to rebuild, and the new Magic Warriors are the natural choices to oversee it. The new buildings will bear the names of the heroes—after all, it's a Magaambyan tradition to name the most significant buildings on campus after the Magic Warriors.

If the heroes find it necessary to bring Koride to some form of justice, Oyamba leaves it up to the heroes and Jatembe to pass judgement. Koride admits her mistakes and assumes responsibility, insisting that none of her students should have any blame or

punishment—it all belongs to her. Unless the heroes propose something exceptionally harsh, their decision as to Koride's fate isn't questioned. If asked for his opinion, Jatembe recommends an enforced sabbatical from the Magaambya, allowing her time to heal and reflect on the consequences of her carelessness somewhere far away.

Over time, Magaambyans grow used to the Vesicant Guardian, which casually wanders the boulevards and gardens of the campus, stepping carefully around or over buildings and munching from the occasional bit of foliage. It's hard to envision such a dainty, careful creature serving as a powerful guardian—but then, the Magaambya won't soon be tested by dangers that require her attention. The Vesicant Guardian rests near the monument to the strength of thousands, which now also bears the names of those who died fighting for the school or trying to save its people, whether lore-speakers or not. Many gave their lives, and their sacrifice is commemorated in stone.

This is the story of how the Magic Warriors defeated the King of Biting Ants. The further legends of the new Magic Warriors begin here.



TELLING FABLES

Storytellers spin tales across the Mwangi Expanse and throughout Golarion, and one of their most popular kinds of tales are fables. Fables are allegorical stories, somewhat different from folktales. Folktales are often exaggerated stories of characters—sometimes real people—used to entertain and teach moralistic lessons. A fable, on the other hand, features anthropomorphized animals, objects, or abstract concepts. Each character in a fable represents a specific trait like greed, honesty, or perseverance. The heroes of fables portray desirable moral traits, while villains have vices that illustrate immorality. The villains' inevitable downfall warns against the consequences of wicked behavior. A fable's setting also allows for magical occurrences and ridiculous solutions to problems, such as rowing a boat to the moon or stealing a lizard's legs.

Building a Fable

A fable's plot, characters, and challenges differ from typical fantasy stories, and this makes them excellent alternatives for standard Pathfinder adventures. Adding a touch of fable logic, or even an entire fable story, can make for a truly memorable game session!

FABLE PLOTS

Fables have straightforward, easy-to-follow narratives, and an adventure modeled after a fable should share this simplicity. The moral lesson taught by a fable should be obvious and clearly spelled out by the story's conclusion, but it should also appear throughout the narrative, tying the adventure together along a single unified theme, such as "lying creates more trouble than it prevents" or "grudges are best overcome." Fables can have subplots and smaller adventures within a greater whole, but each aspect of the adventure should share the same overriding moral narrative, coming together in the conclusion to reinforce a final lesson.

In most adventures, the heroes act and the world around them reacts to their choices, but a fable adventure reverses this dynamic. The role of the heroes

in a fable is to solve a problem at the core of the fable's narrative, either by mediating a conflict, bringing a missing tool or knowledge to someone who needs it, or giving the villains their comeuppance. Because the moral of your fable will dictate the problem that needs to be overcome, the moral you choose for the adventure will drive most of the narrative.

Your adventure will likely be instigated by the fable story's NPCs. Conflicts between powerful but equal beings like the sun and the moon could cause hardship for those around them, requiring the heroes to mediate before the conflict brings disaster down on everyone. Victims of a sneaky or covetous villain who steals from those around them might beseech the heroes for their assistance in setting things right. Or, an ordinary person whose ambition outreaches their abilities might agree to an extraordinary task for the likes of Baba Yaga or one of the Eldest and turn to the heroes for help surviving their quest.

Fable adventures are primarily made of set-piece events and social encounters, and the challenges in a fable are often larger than life, filled with whimsical and impossible solutions. The fable genre lends itself easily to a focus on roleplay and player creativity over the heroes' raw power. Combat encounters usually take a back seat in a fable. Where you might ordinarily insert a combat challenge in the flow of a session, consider replacing it with a test of skills or a social encounter instead.

Fables exist within their own realities and follow a different set of rules and logic than most adventures. The strange and impossible can be the norm inside the world of a fable. The heroes of a fable adventure might need to deal with people and problems of bizarre proportions, such as playing music that moves a mountain, stealing stars from the sky, or changing the course of a river. No matter how impossible a task might seem, wit, wordplay, and a liberal interpretation of the wording of their task places everything within a creative hero's capabilities.

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FABLE SETTINGS

Because the genre conventions of a fable are so different from the usual concepts of a roleplaying game, fable adventures are at their most effective when the setting of the adventure is distinct from the heroes' usual adventuring locales. Rather than setting a fable adventure in the next town down the road, set it inside a magical storybook or dream. Other planes make excellent settings for fables because the fundamental rules of their realities already differ from the Material Plane, and many planes in the Pathfinder multiverse are excellent choices for a fable's setting.

The Shadow Plane is a distorted reflection of the real world, and the differences between reality and reality's shadow are a great way to highlight moral differences. The shadow reflection of a library might be the home of a greedy villain with a lack of curiosity whose downfall teaches a lesson on the importance of remaining open to new knowledge.

The Dreamlands and the First World can both be shaped by the characters within the story. You can use the shapable nature of reality in these planes to set up the incredible realm or to reinforce a moral. As a prototype version of the Material Plane, the First World can also be used to highlight and exaggerate the moral of your story by having the heroes encounter early drafts of different story elements.

Your fable can also take place in a unique demiplane created intentionally by a character within your narrative to house the events of your fable. A villain could trap your heroes inside a snow globe, or perhaps they possess their own demiplane where they surrounded themselves with illusory sycophants who live shallow lives in never-ending loops. The Harrowed Realm is an example of a demiplane created to house fable adventures. It's inhabited entirely by storykin, artificial people who anthropomorphize the cards of the Varisian fortune-telling deck called the harrow.

FABLE CHARACTERS

As anthropomorphic representations of a single attribute, emotion, or idea, NPCs in fable adventures are usually narrow and two-dimensional. They can be silly, simplistic, and unrealistic when compared well-rounded characters like the heroes, but the way they wear their characterization and motivation on their sleeves is an important fable genre convention. Of course, they don't consider themselves to be simplistic or narrow, and might bristle at any such implication.

Some fable characters are archetypal and appear in many fables with the same role and combination of traits. Fable archetypes include the trickster, who uses their insight and wits to solve problems, disrupt conventions, and bring about social change; the child, who is misled or mistreated by those around them but uses their kindness and determination to win allies and escape their enemies; and the fool, a silly or unlucky character whose simple nature is used as a cover for wisdom or a shield to survive confronting powerful people with unpleasant truths.

All over the real world, characters from well-known fables have become associated with the traits they represent, leading to cultural associations like the wise owl, the steady turtle, the stubborn goat, and the treacherous scorpion. Similar stories from different cultures sometimes feature different archetypes, and these differences help drive cultural uniqueness. For example, the trickster archetype appears in many stories all around the world, but some fables feature rabbit or spider tricksters, while others use coyotes, foxes, or crows.

The NPCs you use in your fable are susceptible to manipulations that prey on their narrow personality traits, and your story will likely rely on these manipulations for the moral lessons to come to fruition. A hero who uses a skill to manipulate these focused traits (such as making a Deception check to convince a greedy NPC to accept a gift) should have a large circumstance bonus and might even simply succeed automatically.

The heroes can also take advantage of this genre convention if they'd like. If your adventure transports your players to a fable story, they may enjoy focusing on a single, dominant aspect of their characters (such as a dwarf known to be stalwart or a sorcerer known to be cunning) while they explore the fable, as if the heroes have been transformed into fable characters themselves. This allows a hero to take on a role of a single aspect. The heroes should represent virtuous and positive traits within the story, and the moral should never come by shaming the heroes for their personalities or choices. Even if a player chooses to emphasize their character's vices as a story beat toward growth and catharsis (as a greedy rogue might), you can expose their vice through an NPC who shares the hero's trait. Witnessing the NPC's downfall can warn the hero of what could happen if they don't change in a manner that fosters cooperation rather than positioning the players against each other.



FABLE FOES

Fables with combat often focus on boastful villains, or those who use their might or superior skills to bully and push other people around. If you want to include a significant set-piece combat in your adventure, take particular care that the combat feels like a natural consequence of the narrative by giving your villains a combative or violent vice.

The adventure's moral and villain's vice should play key roles in combats that occur, informing both the types of actions your villain uses and their weaknesses. A villain who is prideful might be especially susceptible to feints, while a villain who is quick but undisciplined might make a flurry of strikes that leaves them enfeebled or clumsy in the following round. The heroes' easiest path to defeat their foes should be to take advantage of the adventure's moral.

Consider using combat with multiple weaker minions who aid the villain and fill out the enemy actions. Your villain's minions should either suffer from the same moral failing as the villain themselves, or they should be redeemed when they witness the villain's downfall and learn the error of their old ways.

In addition to combat, villains can be defeated or embarrassed through skill challenges, where the heroes either outshine the villain or help an NPC best them. The Victory Point subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) is an excellent tool for setting up challenges in a fable story, which you can use to build up an important goal all your heroes can help overcome. Your players may also enjoy using the duels subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 166) for their final confrontations with the fable's villain. You can create your own dueling reactions tailored to the adventure's moral for the heroes to use in their duel, which will strengthen the connection between your villain's defeat and their vice in the fable.

Example Fables

The following examples of fable-themed adventure seeds put all this advice together.

THE HUMBLER ROSE

Rose is proud of their beauty, grace, and reputation as the best dancer in the garden. Everyone knows Rose will be crowned the Regent of Dance at the upcoming flower festival. Carried away by their vanity, Rose doesn't practice for the flower festival dance, believing their victory is certain. Unlike Rose, Dandelion has never been a talented dancer but desperately wants to prove themselves to the other flowers.

This adventure features roleplaying encounters with Rose, Dandelion, and the rest of the garden.

Ultimately, Rose is humiliated by their loss and Dandelion impresses everyone with their hard work and determination.

The heroes should quickly learn of Dandelion's plight and help Dandelion practice, or perhaps even enter the dance themselves to make Dandelion look good. The heroes have 1 week before the flower festival, which gives them each seven attempts, one per day. If the heroes teach Dandelion to dance, they can use Acrobatics, Athletics, Performance, or applicable Lore skills. Using skills like Acrobatics and Athletics can help Dandelion hone their body and build up the strength and endurance necessary for the long dance, while heroes with Performance or an applicable Lore skill might focus on planning Dandelion's lessons or scheduling their practices. If the heroes enter the performance at the flower festival, they will instead need to prepare costumes and train for their own dance routine with the same skills they would use to prepare Dandelion. Set your DC thresholds according to your heroes' level and have them work towards accumulating 20 Victory Points (*Gamemastery Guide* 148).

Intersperse each day of training with roleplaying encounters featuring creatures and other flowers around the garden, opening up new opportunities for roleplaying at 5, 10, and 15 Victory Points. For example, the heroes might get to know the Dedicated Bees, who stress the importance of hard work, or the Bad Weeds, who encourage indolence. The heroes may even choose to get to know Rose, but they should be put off by the flower's proud and disrespectful demeanor right away.

Whether the heroes train Dandelion or are crowned the Regents of Dance themselves, Rose's loss teaches them the importance of nurturing their own talents and respecting the efforts of others.

THE JEALOUS SUN

Blazing Sun looms huge and oppressive in the sky, looking down on everyone with spite and judgment. Sun is angry and jealous, always making petty remarks and comparisons about others. Sun's relentless resentment is scorching the land, spoiling crops, and igniting brushfires that won't go out. Sun's friends (Serene Moon, Whimsical Wind, and Loyal Mountain) have all tried to include Sun in their games, but Sun is too overcome by animosity and resentment to accept.

In this adventure, the heroes must mediate a conflict between the environmental forces of nature and quench the uncontrolled ire of Blazing Sun. The moral of this fable is that jealousy brings misery both to yourself and those around you, and that you can be a positive force in the world if you choose.

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The adventure can take place within a pocket dimension, in the heroes' dreams, or in the First World. The heroes interact with huge entities, like the sun and the moon—but, once approached, these enormous figures always appear to be not much larger than the heroes themselves. This extreme difference in sizes means the players can adventure up a mountain who is also a character in the fable.

Sun's angry rays blaring down on the landscape create an extreme heat temperature effect, dealing fire damage to everything they touch. If you include combat in the adventure, the heroes can face fire elementals or enraged animals driven to erratic behavior by the unnatural heat. Sun is also always overhead and can see everything the heroes do, constantly criticizing their actions.

The heroes must ascend Loyal Mountain to fetch cool waters from Serene Moon. Dangerous creatures like dragons or manticores might dwell upon the mountain, whom Mountain doesn't like because they are filled with rancor, but also to whom Mountain must be loyal anyway, because of Mountain's nature. Strange creatures of the air, like giant moths and air elementals, flit about trying to disturb Moon's unshakable serenity and become even angrier if they fail. Whimsical Wind can then rain down the water the heroes recover, putting out the fires and calming the charred meadows. With the effects of Blazing Sun's rage vanquished, Sun realizes that anger brought misery to themselves and their friends and learns to nurture the land instead of burning everything away.

THE TWO CATS

Two cats, Tabby and Calico, are barons of small farms on opposite sides of a river. Both cats have bountiful catnip fields tended by the farm cats from two nearly identical villages, Eastclaw and Westclaw. Greedy wolf raiders from the doglands downriver have been stealing from the farms and spoiling crops. Baron Tabby built a barricade to dam the river and stop the raiders' boats, but Westclaw's farm cats dismantled the barricade when it cut off irrigation to their fields. Baron Calico laid nets in the river to catch the wolves, but Eastclaw's farm cats cut apart the nets when they tangled in their waterwheels. Because the cats are continually undoing the other's efforts, neither can defend against the wolf raiders. Until they learn the value of teamwork, Eastclaw and Westclaw will never be safe.

When the heroes speak to Tabby and Calico, they have 3 rounds (using the influence subsystem on page 151 of the *Gamemastery Guide*) to discover what prevents them from cooperating and convince them to defend both villages together. Neither cat leaves the safety of their tower, and they endlessly scheme to defeat both the wolves and their rival on the other side of the river. They're foiled by each other as much as by plans that ultimately harm their own villages. Good influence skills for both barons include Deception, Diplomacy, Farming Lore, Intimidation, and Warfare Lore. In addition, quick-witted Tabby can be influenced with Games Lore and Performance, and quick-pawed Calico can be influenced with Cooking



Blazing Sun

Lore and Thievery. With 4 Influence Points, a cat agrees to let the heroes undertake a plan to help the village but objects to any plan that involves the other baron. With 8 Influence Points, the cat agrees to work with their rival.

If both cats can't be convinced to work together, crafty heroes can trick them into working together by only telling each cat a portion of their plan. Either way, it's up to the heroes to defend both villages from the next wolf raider attack. Setting traps or ambushes is likely to succeed, as the wolf raiders believe the farms ripe for plunder. When the wolf raiders are defeated, Tabby and Calico realize the hand they each played in undoing the other's defenses. They learn the value of teamwork and that Eastclaw and Westclaw are stronger when united, instead of divided.

THE WITCH QUEEN'S WAGER

Young Trickster is a clever spider who regularly wins improbable wagers with all manner of other beings. Young Trickster taught the bees to dance, stole a mortal's soul from an archdevil, and even out-drunk the Accidental God, Cayden Cailean. Young Trickster's most recent wager is with the Witch Queen Baba Yaga, to see who can pluck a star from the sky first. Young Trickster thought this would be easy, with his many legs and skill at climbing, but the Witch Queen's wager has proven difficult. Whoever wins gets to tell the other's story forevermore, and Young Trickster doesn't want Baba Yaga telling his tales for her own mysterious ends.

The adventure features a heist using the infiltration subsystem on page 160 of the *Gamemastery Guide* (and might make use of the chase subsystem on page 156 of the *Gamemastery Guide* when the heroes try to escape the Witch Queen in the conclusion). The fable's morals are a warning against boastful challenges and to be careful of whom you try to mislead.

In this adventure, Young Trickster contacts the heroes in their dreams and explains his dilemma. The adventure takes place in a dreamscape within the Dimension of Dreams, and Young Trickster's plan is to bring the heroes into the dreams of the Witch Queen herself and steal a star away from her memories.

Use the infiltration subsystem for Young Trickster's dream heist, though instead of performing preparation activities to accumulate Edge Points in advance, the heroes shape the dreamscape by attempting Arcana, Occultism, and Religion checks to gain the effects of the preparations—such as creating disguises using dream-stuff. Obstacles include finding an old observatory within the dream, bribing or sneaking

past its guards, identifying the star that's closest, and climbing the protruding telescope to reach the star. Awareness Points in the infiltration represent Baba Yaga's growing awareness that someone is in her dream. The witch notices the heist immediately once Young Trickster has plucked the star from her sky. If you like the Chase subsystem, you can choose to use it for your heroes' final escape from the Witch Queen, either inside the dream or after they wake with an angry witch standing over them. While Young Trickster gets away with his scheme, the heroes are left with a valuable lesson about trying to fool dangerous people like Baba Yaga.



Young Trickster





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After a certain point, not much can surprise a hero. They've faced titanic monsters, explored treacherous extraplanar swamps, and recovered long-forgotten artifacts from crumbling ruins. What adventures could still amaze such an experienced campaigner? The answer might lie not in traveling to even more distant locations but finding a new perspective on the places, objects, and creatures that surround them every day. Most heroes love to solve mysteries, and what could be more mysterious than being surrounded by a vast, invisible world only accessible through powerful magic? Heroes can go on big adventures by becoming very, very small.

While heroes might be familiar with magic that changes a character's size to Small, Large, or even Huge, rare effects that shrink heroes down to a miniscule height could open new vistas for adventure. The heroes might shrink themselves intentionally, perhaps to complete a goal that full-sized characters could not attempt, or their change in size might be the result of a magical effect that the heroes must seek to undo. Whatever the catalyst for transformation, heroes must survive challenges, find resources, and overcome foes in an environment filled with extraordinary new possibilities.

Tiny Hero Stories

Folklore, fairy tales, and popular stories are full of situations where characters find themselves in outsized danger. The following ideas provide examples of the types of stories you could tell with microscopic heroes. Each presents a description to whet the imagination, along with a list of hazards that heroes might face and enemies who might oppose them (to create some of these enemies, you can adjust existing ones; see Making Creatures on page 71).

Most of these tales have the heroes taking on a very small size willingly to accomplish an otherwise impossible mission. If your players are undertaking an adventure where their characters' size is changed

against their will, take care to establish such character changes as an acceptable scenario for your group. Some players dislike being surprised by dramatic changes to their characters, and becoming impossibly small is a very surprising shift!

HIDDEN SPRING

One of the legendary green men (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3118) contacts the heroes for assistance. Deep in the forest, a spring has become stagnant and toxic. Plants and animals around the spring are dying in droves, and even leshys created in the area are noxious and corrupted. The green man offers to shrink the heroes down to enter a hairline fissure near the spring's source, where he senses the origin of the pollution.

Hazards: Aquatic environment, poison gas, underground environment

Enemies: Amoeba swarms, carnivorous plants, titanic leshys, water bugs

INFERNAL MACHINE

Obsessed with the promise of a new technology, an inventor in Ustalav constructed an apparatus of copper, glass, and crystal and sealed it inside an impenetrable coffer. After activating the device, the creator disappeared without a trace, and catastrophic storms have raked Caliphas as the weather-pulling contraption sparks and hums. Attempts to move the box have caused minor earthquakes, but a rival inventor's miniaturizing machine can shrink the heroes so they can slip inside the mechanism and shut it down.

Hazards: Enormous mechanical traps, collapsing ceilings, fiery pistons

Enemies: Galvanic oozes, repair robots, spark and steam elementals

ISLAND ANOMALY

Floating in the impossible-to-map reaches of the Maelstrom, the archipelago city of Basrakal is a

chaotic gathering of islands where the laws of reality have, at best, a tentative hold. Recently, several citizens have disappeared while visiting an islet floating on the fringes of the city. A wayward arbiter aeon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 8) is obsessed with the disappearances and has hired the heroes to investigate. As soon as they step onto the island, the heroes are reduced to microscopic size and united with the travelers who were missing. To regain their usual size, the heroes must traverse the island and confront the miniature protean chorus that controls it.

Hazards: Altered gravity, navigation, reality warps

Enemies: Altered pests, proteans, warped wildlife

LOCKED IN WINTER

Displeased with a perceived slight from a local baker, one of the ruling Jadwiga of Irrisen ensorcelled the village of Lod, placing the entire settlement within a large crystal on her bookshelf. Queen Anastasia wishes to save the villagers, but she doesn't want a confrontation with the nobility, so she sends the heroes into the shrunken village to break the spell.

Hazards: Arctic terrain, cold weather

Enemies: Unusual animated objects, giant familiars, winter wolves

MAXIMUM SECURITY

Razmir's Divine Vault in Thronestep was built with unsurpassed security measures. Inside, the Living God stores not only his wealth but also secret documents outlining his plans for the expansion of Razmiran. This year's Outlaw Council in the River Kingdoms has offered a large bounty to anyone able to retrieve those plans, as the River Kingdom's leaders are desperate to know Razmir's intentions. While the security measures are daunting, they were built to keep out intruders of a typical size. After a Daggermark alchemist offers to sell the heroes a shrinking potion, they may have the means to infiltrate the impenetrable vault.

Hazards: Divination spells, electrified floors, doors with devious locks

Enemies: Giant guards, rats, tiny mimics

MEDICAL INTERVENTION

A close friend of the heroes has fallen deathly ill, and neither the local medic nor the town's priestess of Sarenrae has been able to counter the disease. With the illness rapidly progressing, the priestess offers one desperate solution: a Sarenite relic that will shrink the heroes small enough to fit inside veins and arteries, so they can fight their friend's infection from the inside. They must hurry, for the relic's magic only lasts from dawn until sunset.

Hazards: Aquatic environment, swift currents

Enemies: White blood cells, bacteria, virus cloud

Note: In this case, the heroes are going to be very small, even for tiny adventurers. In real-world terms, cells in the body are generally 5–15 microns across, with bacteria being as small as half a micron across and viruses smaller still. Ironically, being this small poses perhaps less of a change for players, as the walls of a blood vessel are not much different than those of a subterranean river, and the cells not much different from voracious oozes.

WISH FOR A RESCUE

An ill-worded wish has trapped one of Satrap Xerbystes II of Qadira's favorite advisors inside an enchanted jar. The satrap's wife, Shahiyan Deena al-Parishat, calls in a favor to send the heroes into the jar on a rescue mission. Deena has one condition before providing the magic to shrink the heroes small enough to enter the jar: they must also find and destroy the seal that binds the genie to the jar, for she finds the binding of genies abhorrent.

Hazards: Extreme weather effects, illusionary and maze-like terrain

Enemies: Dust elementals, genie-touched creatures, janni guards

Small Considerations

If you would like to introduce the idea of shrunken heroes without making too many mechanical adjustments to your game, you could change your heroes from their typical size to Tiny. With this change, the heroes can tackle novel challenges in the environment while still facing foes and hazards appropriate to their level. Tiny heroes can enter another creature's space, which is important because their melee Strikes typically have no reach, meaning they must enter a target's space to attack them. Like other Tiny creatures, they don't automatically receive lesser cover from being in a larger creature's space, but circumstances might allow them to Take Cover. The heroes can purchase weapons, armor, and other items for their size with the same statistics as normal gear—if the effect that shrinks them doesn't also shrink their gear—although melee weapons have a reach of 0 (or a reach 5 feet shorter than normal if they have the reach trait). Tiny heroes could be as little as 6 inches tall.

For dramatic changes in size, consider instituting a scale for your adventures, such that 1 foot in their typical environment is equal to 1,000 feet in their new environment. This would make a typical human adventurer only one-fourteenth of an inch (or less than 2 millimeters) tall! This change makes traversing a meadow or climbing atop the average table a daunting

prospect and leaves your heroes largely beneath the notice of typically sized adversaries. This allows you to introduce the unique challenges that should be the focus of this new environment.

If this type of adjustment would be too drastic for the story you want to tell with your miniaturized heroes, the rules presented here could be used with little adjustment in an adventure scaled to 1 foot equaling 100 feet. With adventurers at that scale (from half to three-quarters of an inch in height), environmental obstacles would be easier to overcome and distances could be more quickly crossed, but heroes would be more likely to attract the attention of gigantic foes.

BIG OPPONENTS

Creatures of typical size operate on such a different scale from exceptionally tiny heroes that they should not be able to target the heroes at all. Instead, treat their presence as an obstacle the heroes need to overcome. A stationary creature of typical size might form a mountainous barrier to travel, while a gigantic creature stomping through a room might cause the heroes to experience an earthquake. A titanic creature extinguishing a candle might unknowingly blow the heroes off a tabletop, or a creature sweeping up might cause a sandstorm or an avalanche!

In turn, the effects brought to bear by tiny heroes against creatures of typical size are usually so miniscule in scope that they are ineffective. A gigantic creature is unlikely to notice the pinprick of a tiny sword blade or even the explosion of a miniscule *fireball*. Even non-damaging magical effects are unlikely to be effective against typically sized creatures; a tiny patch of *grease* isn't likely to slow down a creature with a foot that is many times larger than the area of the spell. Resourceful heroes might use their environment, resources, or allies to deal with such foes, luring enemies into dangerous situations or employing clever sabotage.

Area Effects: If the heroes are caught in the area of a damaging effect from a typically sized source, you can substitute the usual effect with a basic damaging hazard appropriate for the level of the heroes, using the Simple Damage and Hard DC entries from Table 2–16: Offense on page 76 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. Non-damaging spells that affect an area containing the tiny heroes can typically be adjudicated normally.

BIG OBJECTS

Most objects sized for typical creatures would be too heavy for tiny heroes to use or even to move effectively. While a team of heroes might be able to move an object of negligible bulk, objects of light or heavier bulk should be treated as obstacles. With effort, tiny heroes might be able to destroy some typically sized items, though even the most fragile items are relatively sturdy to such characters. If a microscopic hero attempts to damage an item sized for a typical creature, treat the item's Hardness, Hit Points, and Broken Threshold as though they were multiplied by 10. Treat items that typically have Hardness 0 as having Hardness 5.



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EQUIPMENT

Tiny replacements for tools, weapons, and other gear create new options for adventure.

Gear: While adventuring in this new environment, tiny heroes might encounter unusual items easily substituted for adventuring gear. A shoelace, strand of hair, or piece of cobweb could serve as a rope or cable. Flowers could serve as buckets, a bumblebee's stinger could be used as a grappling hook, or a dewdrop could act as a magnifying glass. The more creative the heroes are, the more their adventure is going to stand out from their typical experience. Consider rewarding unusual ideas with Hero Points or showing miniature allies using such equipment if your heroes need inspiration.

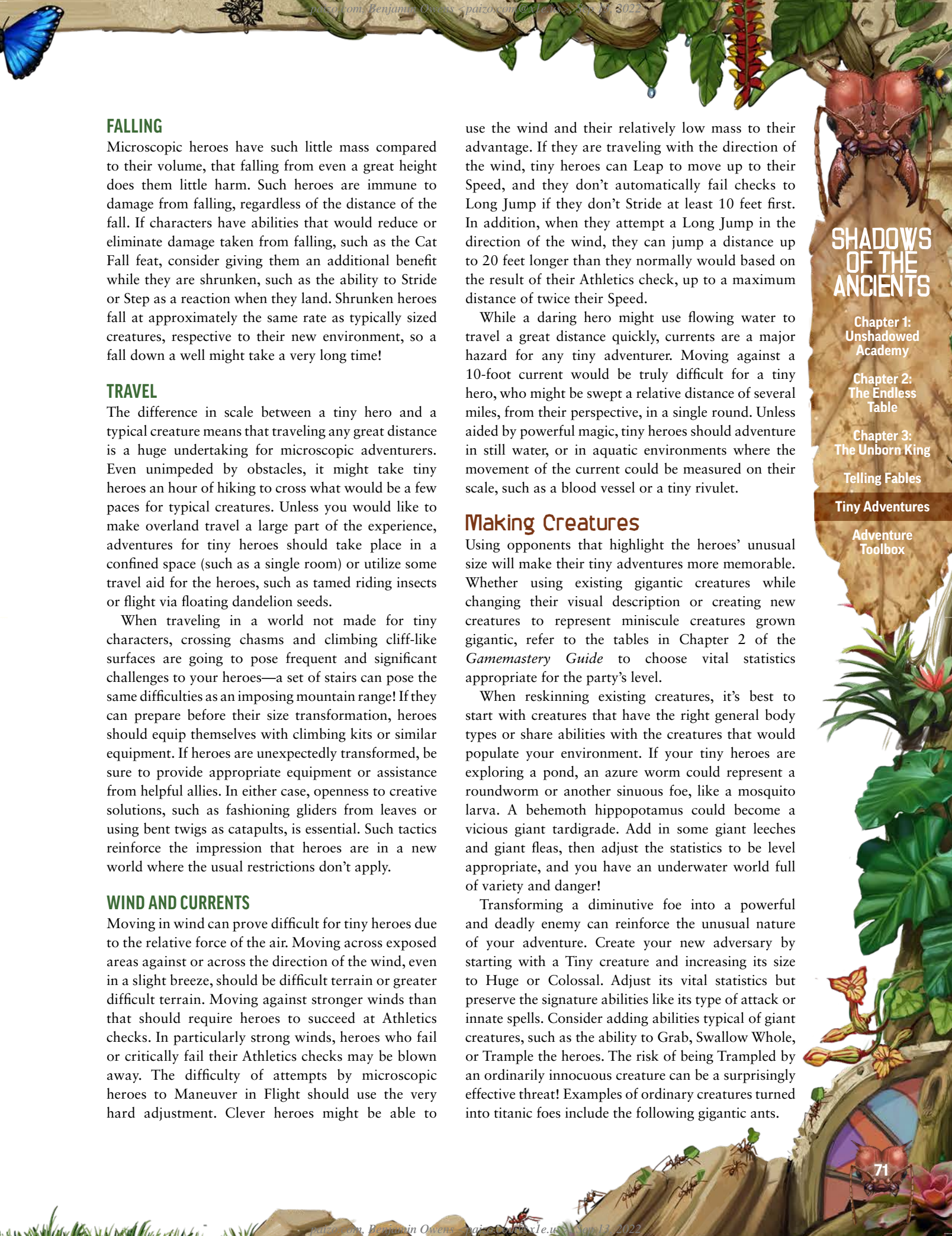
Consumables: Any consumable items, such as potions or elixirs, that resize with the heroes should have their typical effect. If heroes encounter consumable items sized for typical characters, consider presenting the items as narrative rewards rather than near-infinite resources. For instance, an elixir of life might hold 1,000 doses for a tiny hero, so it would make sense to have your heroes restore all their missing Hit Points should they gain access to it, rather than attempting to measure out careful doses. If typically sized consumables would be disruptive for your heroes, either don't include them in this environment or explain that quirks of their composition make it impossible to use them over and over.

Improvised weapons, shields, and armor: Heroes in a microscopic environment might find a pine needle to use as a dagger or a button to carry as a shield. To encourage clever use of the environment in this way, consider allowing heroes to use such items without taking the normal -2 penalty to attack rolls with improvised weapons. Decide the amount and type of damage dealt by the item based on its similarity to an existing weapon. If your heroes are adventuring at a level where they would have access to fundamental weapon runes, consider granting the found weapon an item bonus to hit or increasing its damage dice. A sewing needle blessed by a house spirit might be just as effective in combat as a *+1 striking lance*. For a found shield, create statistics corresponding to an existing shield based on its shape and material. Heroes would rarely stumble across items that would be effective as armor, but they might have armor of unusual material crafted for them by tiny allies or seize such armor from defeated enemies. You should determine the type of armor and its traits in this situation.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

Though a microscopic environment is as full of danger as any place a hero might venture, those dangers should look a little different from those encountered on a regular-sized adventure. Use the environmental damage guidelines beginning on page 512 of the *Core Rulebook* and your best judgment to determine the appropriate amount of damage based on how extreme you deem the danger to be. A hero splashed with hot tea might take minor environmental damage, while a hero who falls into a bowl of steaming soup should probably take moderate environmental damage every round. Venturing too close to an open fireplace might cause major damage, while being trapped under a solid falling object, like a fireplace log, might cause massive damage.





FALLING

Microscopic heroes have such little mass compared to their volume, that falling from even a great height does them little harm. Such heroes are immune to damage from falling, regardless of the distance of the fall. If characters have abilities that would reduce or eliminate damage taken from falling, such as the Cat Fall feat, consider giving them an additional benefit while they are shrunk, such as the ability to Stride or Step as a reaction when they land. Shrunk heroes fall at approximately the same rate as typically sized creatures, respective to their new environment, so a fall down a well might take a very long time!

TRAVEL

The difference in scale between a tiny hero and a typical creature means that traveling any great distance is a huge undertaking for microscopic adventurers. Even unimpeded by obstacles, it might take tiny heroes an hour of hiking to cross what would be a few paces for typical creatures. Unless you would like to make overland travel a large part of the experience, adventures for tiny heroes should take place in a confined space (such as a single room) or utilize some travel aid for the heroes, such as tamed riding insects or flight via floating dandelion seeds.

When traveling in a world not made for tiny characters, crossing chasms and climbing cliff-like surfaces are going to pose frequent and significant challenges to your heroes—a set of stairs can pose the same difficulties as an imposing mountain range! If they can prepare before their size transformation, heroes should equip themselves with climbing kits or similar equipment. If heroes are unexpectedly transformed, be sure to provide appropriate equipment or assistance from helpful allies. In either case, openness to creative solutions, such as fashioning gliders from leaves or using bent twigs as catapults, is essential. Such tactics reinforce the impression that heroes are in a new world where the usual restrictions don't apply.

WIND AND CURRENTS

Moving in wind can prove difficult for tiny heroes due to the relative force of the air. Moving across exposed areas against or across the direction of the wind, even in a slight breeze, should be difficult terrain or greater difficult terrain. Moving against stronger winds than that should require heroes to succeed at Athletics checks. In particularly strong winds, heroes who fail or critically fail their Athletics checks may be blown away. The difficulty of attempts by microscopic heroes to Maneuver in Flight should use the very hard adjustment. Clever heroes might be able to

use the wind and their relatively low mass to their advantage. If they are traveling with the direction of the wind, tiny heroes can Leap to move up to their Speed, and they don't automatically fail checks to Long Jump if they don't Stride at least 10 feet first. In addition, when they attempt a Long Jump in the direction of the wind, they can jump a distance up to 20 feet longer than they normally would based on the result of their Athletics check, up to a maximum distance of twice their Speed.

While a daring hero might use flowing water to travel a great distance quickly, currents are a major hazard for any tiny adventurer. Moving against a 10-foot current would be truly difficult for a tiny hero, who might be swept a relative distance of several miles, from their perspective, in a single round. Unless aided by powerful magic, tiny heroes should adventure in still water, or in aquatic environments where the movement of the current could be measured on their scale, such as a blood vessel or a tiny rivulet.

Making Creatures

Using opponents that highlight the heroes' unusual size will make their tiny adventures more memorable. Whether using existing gigantic creatures while changing their visual description or creating new creatures to represent miniscule creatures grown gigantic, refer to the tables in Chapter 2 of the *Gamemastery Guide* to choose vital statistics appropriate for the party's level.

When reskinning existing creatures, it's best to start with creatures that have the right general body types or share abilities with the creatures that would populate your environment. If your tiny heroes are exploring a pond, an azure worm could represent a roundworm or another sinuous foe, like a mosquito larva. A behemoth hippopotamus could become a vicious giant tardigrade. Add in some giant leeches and giant fleas, then adjust the statistics to be level appropriate, and you have an underwater world full of variety and danger!

Transforming a diminutive foe into a powerful and deadly enemy can reinforce the unusual nature of your adventure. Create your new adversary by starting with a Tiny creature and increasing its size to Huge or Colossal. Adjust its vital statistics but preserve the signature abilities like its type of attack or innate spells. Consider adding abilities typical of giant creatures, such as the ability to Grab, Swallow Whole, or Trample the heroes. The risk of being Trampled by an ordinarily innocuous creature can be a surprisingly effective threat! Examples of ordinary creatures turned into titanic foes include the following gigantic ants.

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Gigantic Ant

When the heroes are particularly small, an ordinary red ant can pose an impressive combat challenge. Against high-level heroes, though, simply making a mundane animal very large doesn't usually incorporate the quirks and tricks that make high-level fights so satisfying.

These ants are more than just mundane vermin expanded into a surprisingly large size. They've been magically infused with intellects and abilities beyond those of ordinary animals and have their own complex society. All are members of an ant colony that's dedicated to relentless expansion across a miniature world, serving the whims of a red ant queen who remains hidden from danger and protected by her loyal legions. They're dangerous not only because of their individual power, but because of their numbers and tenacity.

The ants presented below pose a threat to the heroes venturing across the alchemical table in Chapter 2 of this adventure.

RED GUARD ANT

The rank-and-file members of the ant colony are not much taller than a shrunken hero but are much more massive, at the relative size of an ox. They are somewhat intelligent but very focused, engaging in unquestioning toil if ordered by higher-ranking ants. Red guard ants nearly always attack in groups but might be encountered alone if, for example, ordered to perform solitary guard duty. They typically spray acid before marching into melee, but only when doing so doesn't pose a risk to their allies and won't jeopardize any other objective they've been ordered to achieve.

RED GUARD ANT

CREATURE 15

RARE N LARGE BEAST

Perception +27; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +31, Intimidation +27, Survival +27

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** -2, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

AC 37; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +23, **Will** +26

HP 275

Attack of Opportunity ⤴ Stinger only.

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +30, **Damage** 3d10+14 slashing plus Grab

Melee ♦ stinger +30 (agile), **Damage** 3d6+14 piercing plus red ant venom

Formic Acid Spray ♦♦ (acid, primal) The red guard ant sprays a 15-foot cone of acid from its abdomen that deals 10d10 acid damage (DC 34 basic Reflex save). It can't use Formic Acid Spray again for 1d4 rounds.

Haul Away ♦ **Requirements** The red guard ant has a Huge or smaller creature grabbed; **Effect** The ant Strides up to its full Speed, carrying the grabbed creature with it. It's encumbered if the grabbed creature is Large or larger.

Pack Attack A red guard ant deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to any creature within reach of at least two of the ant's allies.

Red Ant Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 36 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 4 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 6d6 poison and enfeebled 3 (1 round)

Swarming Flank If at least three red guard ants have a creature within their reach, they flank the creature, even if they can't draw a line to each other that passes through opposite sides of the creature's space.

ALATE ANT

Alate ants are no less devoted and powerful than red guard ants, but they are slightly smaller in size and have delicate wings that bear them aloft. Alate ants secrete pheromones that addle the minds of the hive's enemies. A hive deploys alate ants as both defenders from aerial threats and as advance scouts.

ALATE ANT

CREATURE 16

RARE N MEDIUM BEAST

Perception +28; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +32, Intimidation +28, Survival +28

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +6, **Int** -1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

AC 39; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +30, **Will** +28

HP 295

Darting Flight ⤴ **Requirement** The alate ant is flying; **Trigger** The ant is targeted with



an attack by an attacker it can see; **Effect** The ant gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +32 (finesse), **Damage** 3d8+10 slashing plus Grab

Melee ♦ stinger +32 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d4+10 piercing plus red ant venom

Pheromone Spray ♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, mental) The alate ant sprays a cloud of pheromones in a 15-foot cone. Non-ant creatures in the cone must succeed at a DC 37 Will save or become confused for 1d4 rounds (1 minute on a critical failure). It can't use Pheromone Spray again for 1d4 rounds.

Frenzy ♦ **Frequency** Once per day; **Effect** The alate ant enters a state of jittery agitation. It becomes quickened for 3 rounds and can use the extra action only to Fly or Strike.

Pack Attack The alate ant deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to any creature within reach of at least two of the ant's allies.

Red Ant Venom (poison) As red guard ant, but DC 37. While a creature is enfeebled from this poison, it is confused (this confusion is an emotion, enchantment, and mental effect).

RED COMMANDER ANT

Second only to the hive's queen, red commanders hold absolute authority over the hive's other ants. Although no red commander can give orders to another, they nevertheless work in an eerie coordination to fulfill their missions as effectively as possible. They have a sense of adaptability and self-preservation that might lead them to abandon a dangerous task, even if doing so costs the lives of lower-ranking ants. Red commanders tend to show glimmers of individuality that other red ants don't, such as by marking their chitinous exoskeletons with commemorations of past battles and martial victories.

RED COMMANDER ANT

CREATURE 17

RARE N HUGE BEAST

Perception +30; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +30, Diplomacy +32, Intimidation +32, Nature +29, Survival +29

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9

AC 40; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +28, **Will** +31

HP 315

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +33 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+17 slashing plus Improved Grab

Melee ♦ stinger +33 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d6+17 piercing plus red ant venom

Constrict ♦ 5d10, DC 38. Before using Constrict, the ant can choose to smash one creature that it has Grabbed or restrained against the ground. That creature uses the result one degree of success worse than its Fortitude save result against Constrict, but it is then no longer grabbed or restrained by the ant.

For the Queen! ♦♦ (olfactory) The red commander ant gives a pheromone signal to spur other ants into a fury. All ants within 30 feet who can smell this signal gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, reduce their frightened condition to 0, and are immune to the frightened condition for 1 minute.

Red Ant Venom (poison) As red guard ant, but DC 38.

The Queen's Enemy ♦ (concentrate) The red commander ant designates a single creature within 60 feet that it can see as its queen's enemy. All ants within 120 feet of the red commander ant deal an additional 1d8 bleed damage when they hit the target with mandibles Strikes. These effects last for 1 minute, or until the red commander ant uses The Queen's Enemy on a different creature.

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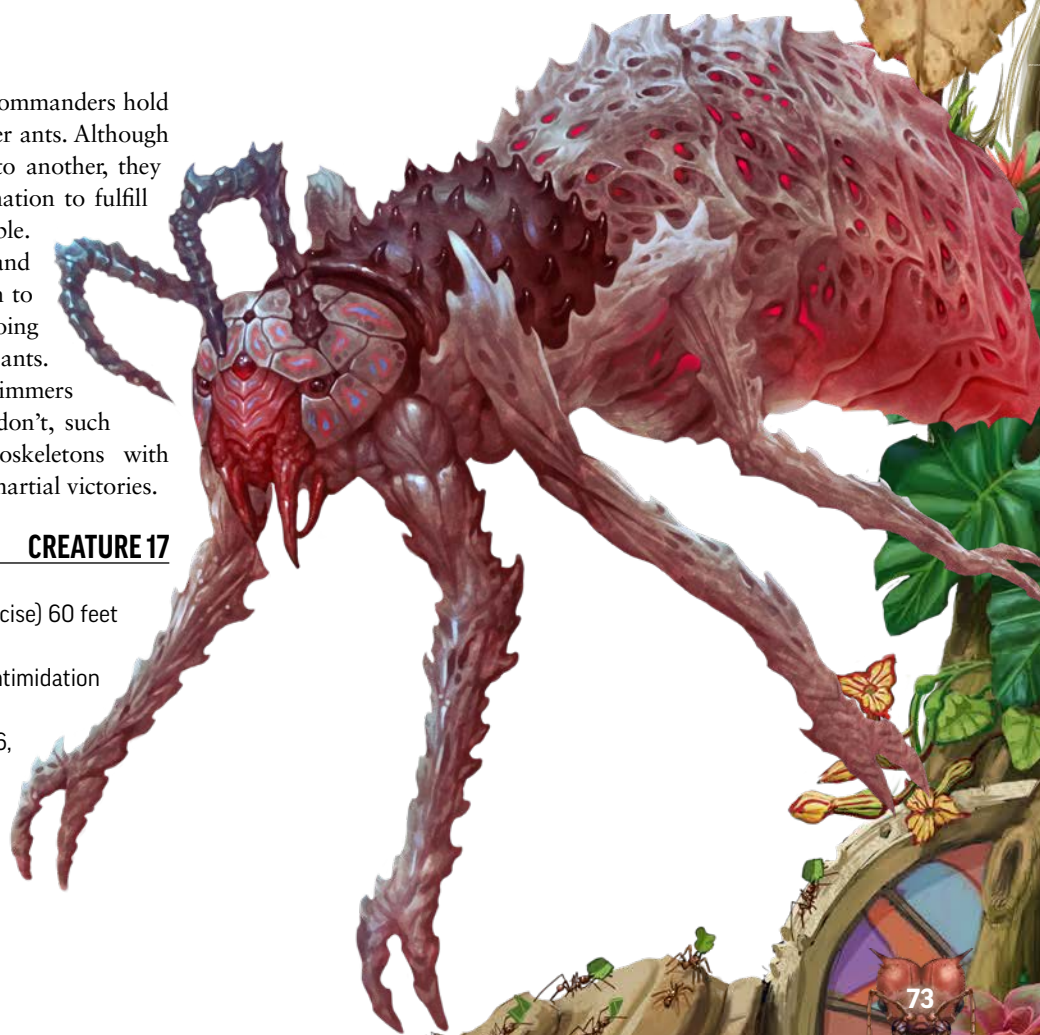
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Campaign Repercussions

Our story has been long but now is at its end. By the conclusion of the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path, the heroes have risen from humble initiates to respected lore-speakers. They have traveled far to come back home again and save the Magaambya from certain destruction. They have not only returned Old-Mage Jatembe to the world, but they might also have earned the Magaambya a very powerful protector in the form of the Vesicant Guardian. Still, your campaign could have a few loose ends and further opportunities for adventure.

Fellow Students: The ultimate fate of the heroes' many friends is left intentionally unresolved by this Adventure Path. Whether the slacker catfolk Chizire ever makes something of himself, for example, or whether the hot-tempered Fire-Pot Ubanu atones for his past misdeeds, is up to you and your players. Any of the heroes' old friends (or even old enemies) might call upon them if they come across a situation that's too big for them to handle alone.

Heroes of Akiton: The people of Seldo certainly remember the heroes. If anyone on Akiton is in need of brave heroes (for example, if warships from the enigmatic Dominion of the Black come from deep space to claim Akiton's resources), the characters might receive a call for help.

Jatembe's Plans: Old-Mage Jatembe has several old acquaintances to catch up with, including the witch Baba Yaga, and he'll want to check up on many of the current nations of the world. Jatembe is sure to make some of these visits in disguise so as to not draw attention to his movements (and to avoid the pomp and circumstance some countries may want to display to earn the legendary wizard's favor). Jatembe may ask his new Magic Warriors to accompany him on these clandestine visits.

King of Biting Ants: The King of Biting Ants is a cunning and careful foe, and it's likely that the *Vesicant Egg* wasn't his only contingency in the event

of his defeat. He might possess some other method of returning to seek revenge, likely in a different form. That is, if he was indeed truly destroyed on Akiton; it only takes one ant to have survived the battle aboard the *Mandibles of Fate* to restore the King of Biting Ants to his strange existence. The sorcerer isn't likely to seek out revenge right away, but to carefully plot a scheme that could ensnare even high-level heroes—and he won't let anything stand in his way.

Osibu's Dangers: Dimari-Diji knows that the heroes can be trusted when Osibu needs help. If the Nemesis Well at the heart of the city grows increasingly unstable, Dimari-Diji might enter it if the heroes agree to descend at his side. The dangers within the Nemesis Well should be enough to challenge both the heroes and the ancient arboreal working together.

Walkena's Machinations: It's only a matter of time before Walkena connects the events in Mzali and Osibu to the heroes' presence and blames them for some of his recent setbacks. Even though his city, likely more open to foreign trade, is currently prospering, the god-king isn't one to forget an insult. Walkena or his agents might seek revenge or, in a strange twist, the heroes' aid against some larger danger even a god can't handle alone.

Artifacts of the Magaambya

The following artifacts are in the care of the Magaambya. None have a specific place in this adventure, but feel free to give the heroes access to any of them to show the Magaambya's powerful magic.

ANCESTRAL EMBRACE

The most powerful and skilled warriors of Holy Xatramba created these suits of armor to harness their faith, a mixture of ancestor worship and worship of Pharamasma. One armor bearer escaped before the city fell to the demonic hordes of Rastel. Their injuries were too grievous to be healed, even in Nantambu, making this armor the only existing set of its kind.



ANCESTRAL EMBRACE

ITEM 26

UNIQUE **ARTIFACT** **DIVINE** **INVESTED** **NECROMANCY**

Usage worn armor; **Bulk** 1

This brightly colored +4 *major resilient leather armor* is inscribed with a spiral that has no end or beginning. Though it is a symbol of the ancient religion of Holy Xatramba, it also serves as a religious symbol of Pharamasma. When you invest the armor, you gain negative resistance 25 and can draw on the power of your ancestors. You gain an ancestry feat from your ancestry; the feat can be any level, but you must meet any other prerequisites of the feat. You lose the feat when the investment ends, and you can select a different feat each time you invest the armor again.

Activate **envision**; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You use an ancestry feat that has a limited number of uses per day; **Effect** You gain an additional use of the ancestry feat. If you do not use it before the next time you make your daily preparations, the use is lost.

Activate **envision**; **Trigger** You begin casting a *legend lore* ritual to learn legends about your ancestry or about someone of your ancestry; **Effect** *Ancestral Embrace* reduces the casting time of this ritual to 1 hour, and you don't need secondary casters for this ritual.

Activate **command**, **Interact**; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The armor casts *avatar*, granting these specific additional abilities instead of those associated with a deity: **Speed** 70 feet, *air walk*, ignore difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain; **Melee** **spear** (reach 15 feet, thrown 50 feet), **Damage** 6d6+6 piercing; **Ranged** **blowgun** (range 120 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing plus 5d6 poison.

Destruction *Ancestral Embrace* crumbles if its wearer intentionally and knowingly kills or desecrates the remains of six generations of their family.



Ancestral Embrace

you can take on up to a dozen passengers, which ride in your soul. While there, their bodies and equipment are absorbed into you—they are aware of everything you sense and can communicate telepathically with you or any other passengers, but otherwise can't act except to Recall Knowledge and use actions that require only the use of their mind (as determined by the GM). They can exit your soul, or you can remove any number of them using a single action—which has the concentrate trait—causing them to appear in a space adjacent to *Bunta*. If you leave *Bunta* or are killed, any creatures in your soul immediately exit your body into the nearest available space. If you leave *Bunta* after piloting it, you can use a single action, which has the concentrate trait, to store the boat in your soul. You can remove it from your soul into an adjacent square with another such action. If *Bunta* takes enough damage to destroy it, it bursts into golden mist, then reforms over 24 hours in its last pilot's soul.

Space 5 feet long, 5 feet wide, 3 feet high

Crew 1 pilot

Piloting Check Arcana (DC 30), Nature (DC 30), or Sailing Lore (DC 32)

AC 50; **Fort** +46

Hardness 25, **HP** 500 (**BT** 250); **Immunities** object immunities

Spirit Ship *Bunta* can be damaged by spells like *spirit blast* that damage a creature's spirit directly, and such effects ignore *Bunta*'s hardness.

Speed fly 40 feet (magical), swim 40 feet (magical), swim 20 feet (rowed)

Collision secret of souls

Activate (command, envision, Interact); **Requirements**

You are piloting *Bunta*; **Effect** A silver river flows from your heart, traveling forward in a line that flows around obstacles as if it were water. If *Bunta* travels at least its speed along the river each round for 10 minutes, you arrive at another plane as if you cast *plane shift*. You arrive in a destination you specify, or a random location if you don't have a choice. If *Bunta* ever does not travel at least its Speed in a round, you can disrupt this activation. If you continue, you have a 1% cumulative chance of ending up in a random extraplanar location for each round that *Bunta* did not travel at least its Speed, to a maximum of a 60% chance if *Bunta* didn't travel at least its Speed for the full 10 minutes. As long as you remain on *Bunta*, you are protected from any harmful effects of the plane's environment.

Secret of Souls You pilot *Bunta* into a creature's soul, finding and restoring its true nature. *Bunta* attempts to counteract all magical effects on the creature. Its counteract level is 20, with a counteract modifier of +40.

BUNTA

Legends tell of *Bunta*, the boat Old-Mage Jatembe wove to ride the rivers in his search for the Greatest Understanding. After he founded the Magaambya, Jatembe left the boat in its care, though it has at times disappeared briefly from the school's vaults. Those aware of such instances believe the boat was called by its creator for a mysterious purpose.

BUNTA

VEHICLE 24

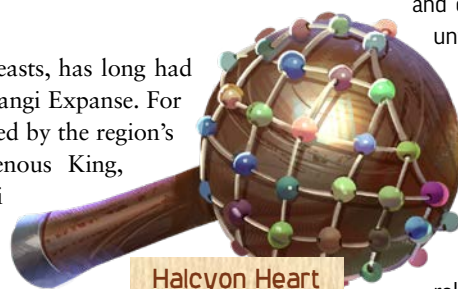
UNIQUE **ARTIFACT** **CONJURATION** **MAGICAL** **TELEPORTATION**

This hand-woven coracle appears large enough to hold only a single person. When you pilot the boat, however,

Destruction *Bunta* can only be permanently destroyed if Old-Mage Jatembe unweaves it, then submerges each reed in the River Styx at the base of Pharama's Spire.

HALCYON HEART

Angazhan, the Demon Lord of Beasts, has long had an interest in conquering the Mwangi Expanse. For nearly as long, he has been opposed by the region's inhabitants. To battle the Ravenous King, an ancient alliance of Mwangi denizens created the *halcyon heart*, a magical percussion instrument made from a hollow gourd grown by golomas and covered by an anadi-woven net of shisk-made beads. A precious few of these instruments have found their way to the Magaambya, but more remain lost in ruins hidden within the jungle.



Halcyon Heart

HALCYON HEART

RARE **ARTIFACT** **DIVINATION** **MAGICAL**

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 1

This shekere features carved prayers barely visible under a fine silk net of colorful beads. The handheld percussion instrument grants a +3 item bonus to Performance checks while playing music with it. In addition, when you Perform with it, you can make it heard by any number of creatures within 100 miles. You can specify one or more specific creatures, or otherwise describe those who will hear it, such as all humans, or all inhabitants of a village. You can send a message through the music that the targets understand. Demons and creatures connected to demons (such as a creature whose deity is a demon lord or a sorcerer with the demonic bloodline) can't easily understand any messages conveyed in this way, even if you wish to send the message to them. They must attempt a Society check against your Performance DC or against DC 40, whichever is higher. If your Performance DC is higher than DC 40 and you want demons to be able to understand the message, you can choose to use DC 40 instead.

Success They understand the message.

Failure They don't understand the message but are aware there was one.

Critical Failure They don't realize the sound of the *halcyon heart* contains a message.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Requirements** The *halcyon heart* has its net of beads; **Effect** You pull the net off the *halcyon heart* and throw it at a creature within 20 feet, using your attack bonus for a ranged

simple weapon. On a hit, the net grows and envelops the creature, which becomes flat-footed and takes a -10-foot circumstance penalty to its Speeds until it Escapes, and on a critical hit, it's also immobilized until it Escapes. The net also attempts to counteract teleportation effects and planar travel of the creature it's entrapping. The Escape DC is 44, and the net has a counteract level of 9 and a counteract modifier of +38. If the target is a demon or connected to a demon, they must roll twice and take the lower result on all attempts to Escape (this is a misfortune effect), and for counter act checks, the net rolls twice and takes the higher result (this is a fortune effect). You can't Perform with the *halcyon heart* while it doesn't have its net. So long as the net doesn't contain a creature, you can restore it with a single action, which has the concentrate trait.

Destruction If the Gorilla King plays a *halcyon heart* in front of Angazhan's totem, the gourd decomposes, the net frays, and the beads shatter.



Shadowed Scale

SHADOWED SCALE, THE JUNGLE SECRET

This mask dates to the same era as those of Old-Mage Jatembe's Ten Magic Warriors, but has never publicly been worn. Few know of its existence beyond campfire tales: stories of a mask no one earned the right to wear, or that can be donned only by those willing to suffer its curse. Yet, other stories tell of wearers through the years who briefly claimed it to undertake some secret mission of great importance to the Magaambya.

SHADOWED SCALE, THE JUNGLE SECRET ITEM 22

UNIQUE **ARTIFACT** **CONJURATION** **INVESTED** **MAGICAL** **PRIMAL**

Usage worn mask; **Bulk** L

This gold-inlaid wooden mask depicts the reptilian visage of a mokele-mbembe, a jungle predator seen by the Mwangi as embodiments of nature's strength and majesty. If you're a Magaambyan who already has a mask, you can use *Shadowed Scale, the Jungle Secret* in lieu of your own mask for the purposes of mask-related abilities, such as Magic Warrior Dedication (*Lost Omens World Guide* 95). When you wear the mask, you are always concealed while in a jungle.

Activate ♦ envision; **Requirements** Your last action was a melee Strike that killed a living creature or destroyed an undead creature; **Effect** You cause the body to decompose into a pile of fertile soil. The creature's

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body is completely destroyed at the start of your next turn, and it can only be returned to life with the use of powerful magic such as *miracle* or *wish*.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per hour; **Requirements** You are adjacent to the body of a creature you killed that has decomposed into soil; **Effect** You pull a seed from the mask and throw it into the soil, where it sprouts. You cast *summon plant or fungus*; the spell is heightened to a level equal to one-half of the slain creature's level, rounded up. When the spell's duration ends, the plant creature returns to the soil, where it roots itself and becomes a non-creature piece of flora.

Destruction If the progenitor of all mokele-mbembes stomps on the mask, it is crushed to splinters.

Masks of the Magic Warriors

In becoming Jatembe's new Magic Warriors, the heroes have unlocked secrets of magical potential that none have reached since the earliest Ten Magic Warriors walked the plazas of the Magaambya.

On reaching 20th level, the heroes should have the option of taking one of these archetype feats, based on the type of animal they chose for their mask when they first created it in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic*. These options are each themed to one of Jatembe's magic warriors, but if a hero's mask doesn't fit with a specific animal from this list or the player feels their animal embodies a different effect from the list, feel free to re flavor the feat names to fit the hero's spirit face. For instance, the Cunning Trickster mask could easily be a rodent or a fox, not just a spider.

CUNNING TRICKSTER MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask carries the legacy of Verdant Spider, the Speaker of Needs, allowing you to deceive and outwit your foes. You can attempt to Feint a target from up to 30 feet away, and if you succeed or critically succeed in your Feint attempt, the target of your Feint takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saving throws against your spells until the start of your next turn. If you don't have the Conceal Spell feat, you gain it as a bonus feat, allowing you to disguise your spellcasting from others' eyes. If you already have the Conceal Spell feat, you can use Conceal Spell once per round as a free action instead of as a single action.

EMANCIPATOR'S MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask grants you the abilities of Whistling Kite, the Vigilant Seer, who emancipated thousands. When you are

attempting a check to free someone else from an effect that immobilizes, paralyzes, or controls them, roll twice and take the higher result; this is a fortune effect. The GM might decide that this fortune effect applies when attempting checks to remove other conditions or effects to free another. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only one creature, you can choose to permit the target to make an attempt to Escape

GRAND MEDIC'S MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask is infused with restorative magic associated with Ibex, the Flourishing Field, so it constantly repairs itself. You gain fast healing 5. If you lose a limb or other body part, it regrows within 1 day. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only one creature, you can choose to have the spell also give that creature temporary Hit Points equal to the spell's level until the start of your next turn.

PROTECTIVE SPIRIT MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask carries the protective instincts of White Bull, the Horn Forger, and no one will hurt your allies while you have anything to say about it. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only one ally, you can choose to have the spell also give that creature a +1 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of your next turn. You also gain the Protector's Interdiction reaction.

Protector's Interdiction ⤵ **Trigger** An adjacent ally is hit or critically hit by an attack; **Effect** You interpose yourself between your ally and the attack. The attack hits you instead, or critically hits you if it critically hit your ally.

SKY MASTER MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask holds the legacy of Black Heron, the Wings of Knowledge, who united the aeromancers of the Shory Empire. You can harness residual magical power to fly. You gain a fly Speed equal to your Speed. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only you, your fly Speed doubles until your next turn.

STALKING FELINE MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Like Azure Leopard, the Patient Warden, your mask makes you most at home in the night and teaches you how to use the darkness to hunt. You gain greater darkvision.



Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell with the shadow or darkness trait, you can attempt to Hide or Sneak as a free action. You must still meet the usual requirements of the action you choose, such as having cover or concealment to Hide and being undetected or hidden to Sneak.

STORYTELLER'S MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask remembers the stories of Shifting Frog, Storyteller of the Past and Future. You can cast *foresight* once per day as an innate spell, either arcane if you have Wizard Dedication or primal if you have Druid Dedication, but the duration is 10 minutes instead of 1 hour. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only a single foe, you can Recall Knowledge about that foe.

THICK HIDE MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask grants you the toughness of Elephant, the Conjured Chronicle. Increase your maximum number of Hit Points by 20. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only you, you gain resistance 10 to all physical damage until the start of your next turn.

TIRELESS GUIDE'S MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask hosts the legacy of Golden Snake, the Tireless Guide, allowing you to guide others with ease. Your allies can use Follow the Expert to follow you for any of your trained skills, in addition to skills in which you are an expert or better. When they follow you when you use a trained skill, their circumstance bonus is +1. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell that targets only one ally, that ally can Stride as a free action.

VIGILANT MASK

FEAT 20

RARE ARCHETYPE DRUID WIZARD

Prerequisites Druid Dedication or Wizard Dedication

Your mask grants the extraordinary magical senses of Carmine Jaws, the Hyena who Looks Between. You gain scent as a precise sense to a range of 60 feet. If you

already have scent as a precise sense, increase its range by 60 feet. You can sometimes catch a faint whiff of magic itself. Immediately after you Cast a non-cantrip Spell, your scent extends between worlds, like Carmine Jaws's own. This causes you to be able to smell ethereal creatures, those in an extradimensional space with an aperture that's within your scent range, incorporeal creatures and objects, and other creatures and objects that are insubstantial or not fully in phase with reality. Unlike your normal scent, this is an imprecise sense.

SHADOWS
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Sky Master Mask



SHADOW DANCERS

Even fey avoid alapolos, for their dancing is both captivating and exhausting. When a potential dance partner resists their swaying invitations to dance, an alapolo becomes sulky and usually stomps upon the refuser's shadow, giving it a supernatural weight. Avoiding both the dance and the stomp requires incredible diplomacy.

Alapolo

Short-lived, strange creatures called alapolos cling to the shadows in eerie moonlight, inviting others to dance. Although these “shadow dancers” aren’t actively malevolent, they become petulant when others won’t dance with them.

ALAPOLO

CREATURE 17

RARE CN MEDIUM FEY SHADOW

Perception +28; low-light vision

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +30, Deception +30, Diplomacy +30, Performance +30 (+36 dancing), Shadow Lore +30, Stealth +36

Str +0, **Dex** +9, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9

AC 41; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +34, **Will** +29

HP 310; **Immunities** darkness, light, shadow (see one with shadows)

One with Shadows The alapolo isn't affected by darkness, light, or shadow effects that target it unless it chooses to be. It can choose the degree of its saving throw result against darkness, light, or shadow effects that require it to make a saving throw.

Cloying Pull **Trigger** A creature within the alapolo's reach attempts to move away from the alapolo; **Effect** The triggering creature must succeed at a DC 36 Reflex save or its movement ends before it leaves the alapolo's reach.

Speed 40 feet

Melee shadow claw +33 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 slashing damage

Enticing Invitation (enchantment, incapacitation, mental, primal) The alapolo whispers an invitation to a creature within 30 feet. The creature must attempt a DC 38 Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and temporarily immune to all Enticing Invitations for 24 hours.

Success The target must spend 1 action on its next turn dancing in place.

Failure The target becomes drained 1. It is also fascinated by the alapolo for 1 minute and can't attack the alapolo as long as it's fascinated. While fascinated, the target must spend 2 actions on each of its turns dancing in place.

Critical Failure As failure, except the target is drained 3 and must spend 3 actions on each of its turns dancing in place.

Shifting Shadows An alapolo's movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Weighty Shadow (primal, transmutation) **Requirements**

The alapolo is adjacent to a target creature, or the GM determines the alapolo is adjacent to that creature's shadow;

Effect The alapolo petulantly stomps on a target's shadow, making it incredibly heavy to drag around. The creature takes a -20-foot penalty to its Speeds for 1 minute. As normal, this penalty can't reduce a creature's Speed below 5 feet. Any creatures fascinated by the alapolo due to its Enticing Invitation are freed from their fascination when the alapolo uses this ability, jarred by the graceless stomping.



Alapolo

Clockwork Clock Tower

Clockworks are machines built by engineers and augmented with magic. A clock tower reconfigured as an animated clockwork can rotate slices of time. Complete rules for clockworks appear on page 48 of *Bestiary 3*.

CLOCKWORK CLOCK TOWER

CREATURE 20

RARE N GARGANTUAN CLOCKWORK CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +34; darkvision

Skills Athletics +38

Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** -5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** -5

Wind-Up 1 week, DC 40 (*Bestiary 3* 48)

AC 48; **Fort** +36, **Ref** +33, **Will** +31

HP 325; **Immunities** death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** electricity 20, orichalcum 20; **Resistances** physical 20 (except adamantite or orichalcum)

Durable Exterior When a clockwork clock tower is reduced to fewer than 200 HP or is damaged by a critical hit, its exterior shatters to reveal internal mechanisms, reducing its AC to 44 until it recovers enough HP to reach 200 HP or more.

Doleful Tolling ♦ (arcane, auditory, incapacitation) **Trigger** The clockwork clock tower rolls initiative; **Effect** The clock tower chimes, and all non-clockwork creatures within 300 feet who can hear it must succeed at a DC 42 Will save or be slowed 1 for 1 round (slowed 2 on a critical failure).

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ fist +36 (reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d12+18 bludgeoning plus stutter time

Melee ♦ foot +36 (agile, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d8+18 bludgeoning

Overclock ♦ The clockwork clock tower loses 1 day from its winding time and becomes quickened for 3 rounds. It can use this extra action to Step, Stride, or Strike. This quickened condition ends immediately if the clock tower is damaged by orichalcum.

Stutter Time (arcane, incapacitation, transmutation)

A creature struck by a clockwork clock tower's fist must make a DC 40 Will save as time flows unevenly around it.

Critical Success The creature is quickened for 1 round and can use this extra action to Step, Stride, or Strike.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is stunned 3.

Critical Failure The creature is knocked out of time, which ceases to flow around the creature for 1 round. It is invulnerable to all damage, it can't be targeted or affected by anything, and no rounds elapse for any timed durations, conditions, afflictions, and other effects it has. The target can't act and remains fixed in place, defying gravity if applicable. After time begins to flow again for it, the creature is stunned 3.

Trample ♦♦♦ (attack) Huge or smaller, foot, DC 42



ENEMIES ACROSS TIME

Engineers who develop clockwork clock towers often draw unwelcome attention from creatures who protect the flow of time and don't like mortal machines meddling with it. These inventors might be attacked by hounds of Tindalos (*Bestiary 2* 146) or even ravagers of Tindalos (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #173: *Doorway to the Red Star* 40).

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Clockwork Clock Tower



ACCIDENTAL OOZES

Crawling slurries are almost always by-products of toxic waste or alchemical runoff into areas with a high concentration of acid, magic, or both. The first quickening pulses of animation in acid-pitted flesh are easy enough to end with counteracting chemicals or even isolation and starvation, but most crawling slurries are left to fester for a long time and become as large as a person. Left untended in a vat of nutritive acids and organic matter, a crawling slurry might become truly immense, but the power such a slithering horror holds is beyond comprehension.

Ooze

Oozes arise from a variety of sources, but these new oozes are unusual in both their creation and their composition.

CRAWLING SLURRY

Acid damage can scar stone and reduce flesh to pitted chunks, but some organic compounds are resistant to acid and respond by combining into a mass of roiling, living slurry. These scarred clumps hunger to consume anything they can sense. They move with quick, darting contractions that surprise those used to facing slow-moving oozes.

CRAWLING SLURRY

CREATURE 16

RARE N MEDIUM ACID MINDLESS OOZE

Perception +26; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Athletics +35, Stealth +30 (+34 in acidic surroundings)

Str +5, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Motion Sense A crawling slurry can sense nearby motion through vibration and air movement.

AC 30; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +31, **Will** +20

HP 300; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, mental, poison, precision, unconscious, visual

Splatter **Trigger** The crawling slurry takes bludgeoning damage from a creature it can sense within 10 feet; **Effect** The crawling slurry ejects a splash of acid onto the creature, dealing acid damage equal to the bludgeoning damage dealt to the crawling slurry (DC 37 basic Reflex).

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee **Damage** 3d10+11 bludgeoning plus 2d8 acid and Grab

Constrict 2d10+3 bludgeoning plus 2d8 acid, DC 37

Crawling Slurry Acid A crawling slurry's acid damages metals and organic materials but not stone.

Engulf **DC** 37, 5d10 acid, **Escape** DC 37, **Rupture** 20. A crawling slurry regains 30 Hit Points if a living creature it is engulfing dies.

CHROMATIC OOZE

Chromatic oozes result from the worst kind of alchemical mishaps: attempts to combine as many types of elemental damage as possible into a single alchemical substance. Although the source of these alchemical concatenations are as varied as the alchemists who attempt to distill them, one of the most common methods for creating them involves combining the essences of multiple types of chromatic dragons together using eldritch alchemical processes.

When this type of experimentation goes dangerously wrong—as it often does—the result is a combination of terrible elemental power with the mindless destructive power of an ooze. A chromatic ooze is a rippling,



Crawling Slurry



seething substance that shifts through several different colors, but chemical reactions within the ooze can lock its energy and its color into a specific phase for a short time. Whether a chromatic ooze's destructive urges derive from the frustrated ingenuity of an alchemist creator or from the hunger of the chromatic dragons that so often constitute these oozes' forms, the best way to deal with a chromatic ooze is to stay out of its way.

CHROMATIC OOZE

CREATURE 18

RARE N LARGE MINDLESS OOZE

Perception +30; motion sense 240 feet, no vision

Skills Athletics +35

Str +9, **Dex** -5, **Con** +10, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Motion Sense A chromatic ooze can sense nearby motion through vibration and air movement.

AC 28; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +16, **Will** +20

HP 550; **Immunities** critical hits, mental, precision, unconscious, visual

Caustic Aura (alchemical, aura, olfactory) 90 feet. The chromatic ooze emanates noxious chemicals into the environment. A creature that enters the aura or starts its turn within it is sickened 1 unless it succeeds at a DC 37 Fortitude save. Creatures with the scent ability or a particularly heightened sense of smell are sickened 2, or sickened 1 on a successful Fortitude save. Creatures in the aura can't recover from the sickened condition.

Chromatic Shift ➤ **Trigger** The chromatic ooze takes acid, cold, electricity, fire, or poison damage; **Effect** The chromatic ooze changes its color based on the triggering damage (to dark green, pale blue, dark blue, red, or light green, respectively) and gains resistance 20 to the triggering damage. If it already had resistance to another damage type from this ability, it loses the resistance to that damage type and gains weakness 20 to it. If it already had weakness to another damage type from this ability, it loses that weakness. After 1 minute, the chromatic ooze returns to its usual rippling, multicolored hue and loses the resistance and weakness from this ability.

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ pseudopod +35 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+17 bludgeoning plus chromatic slam and Improved Grab

Chromatic Slam The ooze's pseudopod Strikes deal an additional 2d10 damage of the same type it resists from its Chromatic Shift ability, if any.

Greater Constrict ♦ 3d10+13 bludgeoning, DC 40

Pseudopod Eruption ♦♦ The chromatic ooze concentrates its mass into several pseudopods, increasing its reach to 30 feet until the end of its turn. It then Strikes at up to four different creatures within its reach. This counts as two attacks for the ooze's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after it makes all the attacks.



DANGERS OF HUBRIS

Spend enough time among alchemists and you'll likely hear tales of bombs capable of producing multiple elemental effects at the same time. The process for making these bombs requires specialized ingredients and the utmost skill. Few alchemists manage to combine two damage types, much less five. These the latter efforts, when mishandled, create chromatic oozes.

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THE THUNDER LION AND THE RAIN

The hours before an immense storm are hours to be feared, for it is said that this is when the thunder lion hunts. No mere hare or ibex can slake his great hunger; only large and ferocious creatures like elephants or dinosaurs will suffice. The rain won't come until the thunder lion eats, as it is the spirit of its kill that releases such precipitation as it flees into the sky.

Slana

The rolling thunder before the rain provides the massive, leonine humanoids known as slanas with a tremendous power. These solitary and nomadic creatures primarily dwell in the jungles and savannas of the Mwangi Expanse, but they can range into nearby areas in search of prey or when drawn by strange primal forces only slanas can recognize. Slanas view each other as rivals who test each other's prowess, so when drawn together by this strange calling they nearly always fight to the death. A slana's roar echoes like thunder across the countryside, and denizens of the Mwangi fear a slana's approach whenever an oncoming storm's thunder seems more ferocious than its rain.

SLANA

CREATURE 20

RARE CN GARGANTUAN HUMANOID

Perception +36; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +38, Nature +35, Stealth +33, Survival +37

Str +10, **Dex** +7, **Con** +7, **Int** +2, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +6

AC 45; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +33, **Will** +33

HP 380, fast healing 20; **Immunities** frightened; **Resistances** sonic 30

Speed 60 feet, climb 30 feet, swim 30 feet; *freedom of movement*

Melee ♦ jaws +38 (magical, reach 20 feet, sonic), **Damage** 4d10+20 piercing plus 2d8 sonic and Improved Grab

Melee ♦ claw +38 (agile, magical, reach 20 feet, sonic), **Damage** 4d6+20 piercing plus 2d8 sonic

Ranged ♦ thunderclap +35 (magical, range 120 feet, sonic), **Effect** thunder trap

Primal Innate Spells DC 40, attack +32; **10th** *earthquake*, *storm of vengeance*; **9th** *dispel magic*, *storm lord* (×3, *Core Rulebook* 400); **1st** *obscuring mist* (at will); **Constant (4th)** *freedom of movement*

Great Roar ♦♦ (evocation, primal, sonic) The slana emits a deafening roar. All creatures within a 100-foot cone take 16d8 sonic damage (DC 44 basic Reflex saving throw).

On a failed save, a creature is also deafened for 1 minute and stunned 1 (or deafened permanently and stunned 3 on a critical failure). The slana can't use Great Roar again for 1d4 rounds.

Pounce ♦ The slana Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. If the slana began this action hidden, they remain hidden until after the ability's Strike.

Thunder Trap A creature hit by the slana's thunderclap attack is immobilized and held in place by reverberations of sound until it Escapes or Forces Open the bonds of thunder that constrain it (DC 44). The target is deafened as long as it is immobilized by a thunder trap.



Slana



Ta'apundo

The First World still holds the first rough draft of many creatures in the Material Plane, but it's hard to tell what sort of creature the ta'apundo was ever intended to be. Its bark poses significant danger to metallic objects, as it converts any metal touching it into wood as fibrous and as flexible as its own body. Capricious and skittish, ta'apundos make friends easily but consider anyone who wields or wears metal to be a hated enemy.

TA'APUNDO

CREATURE 19

RARE CN HUGE FEY PLANT

Perception +35; low-light vision, greensight

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +35, Nature +33, Stealth +35, Survival +37


Str +6, **Dex** +10, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +10, **Cha** +6

Greensight Vegetation doesn't impair a ta'apundo's vision and doesn't provide a creature cover or concealment from a ta'apundo.

AC 45; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +35, **Will** +33


HP 440; **Weaknesses** cold iron 20, fire 20; **Resistances** wood 20


Wood Resistance (abjuration, primal) A ta'apundo has resistance 20 against wooden objects and unarmed attacks from creatures made mostly of wood (such as arboreals).

Lignification  (primal, transmutation) **Trigger**

a non-cold iron metal object damages the ta'apundo; **Effect** The ta'apundo emits a jolt of magic into the object, transforming it into wood with an unlimited duration. A thrown weapon, ammunition, or other unattended item automatically transforms; the wielder of an attended object can resist this effect with a successful DC 41 Fortitude save. *Dispel magic* can end the effect. While a weapon is wood, the ta'apundo's resistance applies. Once transformed, a formerly metal item's Hardness and HP change to those of wood. This typically inflicts a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls made with metal weapons and a -2 circumstance penalty to AC for those wearing metal armor; the GM might determine a different penalty for a specific weapon or armor.

Speed 20 feet; woodland stride

Melee  branch +24 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d8+12 bludgeoning

Branch Whip  The ta'apundo makes four branch Strikes against different targets, increasing its reach to 20 feet for these Strikes. These attacks count toward its multiple attack penalty, but this penalty doesn't increase until after all four attacks.

Woodland Stride The ta'apundo ignores difficult and greater difficult terrain from foliage.



SEED SURVIVORS

The Green Mother, one of the erratic fey deities known collectively as the Eldest, planted the seeds for several ta'apundos across the world long ago. With the devastation of Earthfall and the destruction of natural places across much of the world, most ta'apundo seeds were destroyed. In the Mwangi Expanse, however, many seeds took root. Most ta'apundos that exist on Golarion—which are far fewer than the number in the First World—can be found in the Mwangi jungles.

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COMMUNITY SEEKERS

A creature might be cursed as a wereant, but lone wereants don't remain on their own for long. Their hive mind calls out to other wereants, and they soon join with others in a psychic communion, working toward goals together. In their human forms, wereants might leave their lives behind to join other secret wereants as a band of traders, a construction crew, an entertainment troupe, or other group that sticks close together. They often keep giant ants (*Bestiary* 2 20) nearby as pets or guardians.

Werecreature, Wereant

Insectile werecreatures, such as wereants, only come about in unusual circumstances, such as powerful curses from inhuman gods or transformative magic run amok. Wereants work together with a natural cohesion that's rare in other types of werecreatures. The wereants presented here are more powerful than most wereants, as they've been warped by the forces contained within the *Vesicant Egg*. Full rules for werecreature abilities appear beginning on page 328 of the *Bestiary*.

WEREANT DISCIPLE

Some wereants have a religious zeal about training to protect their community and gladly give their lives for the hive.

WEREANT DISCIPLE

CREATURE 16

RARE LE MEDIUM BEAST HUMAN HUMANOID WERECREATURE

Perception +28; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common; insect empathy, telepathy 120 feet

Skills Acrobatics +31, Athletics +28, Stealth +29, Survival +28

Str +6, **Dex** +9, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Hive Mind (divination, primal) Wereants operate with a shared hive intelligence.

While within telepathic range of at least one other wereant, a wereant disciple gains a +2 circumstance bonus to initiative checks, Perception checks, and saving throws against mental effects. If one wereant is aware of a combatant, all members of the hive mind within telepathic range are aware of it.

Insect Empathy (divination, primal) The wereant can communicate with insects.

AC 39; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +30, **Will** +25

HP 305; **Weaknesses** silver 15

Gnawing Retort ⤵ **Trigger** A creature adjacent to the wereant critically misses the wereant with a melee Strike; **Effect** The wereant makes a mandibles Strike against the triggering creature.

Speed 40 feet, fly 60 feet

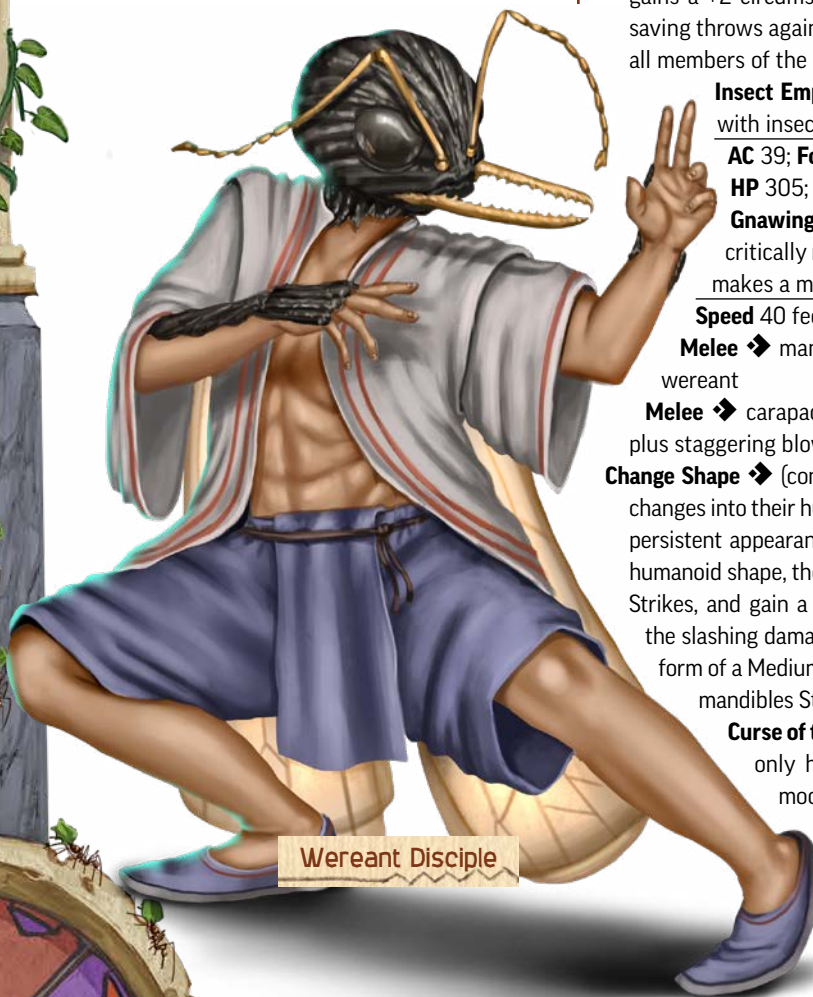
Melee ⬥ mandibles +29, **Damage** 3d10+14 slashing plus curse of the wereant

Melee ⬥ carapace fist +32 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d8+14 bludgeoning plus staggering blow (page 87)

Change Shape ⬥ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) The wereant changes into their humanoid, hybrid, or animal shape. Each shape has a specific, persistent appearance. A true wereant's natural form is their hybrid shape. In humanoid shape, they use their original humanoid size, lose their jaws and claw Strikes, and gain a melee fist Strike that deals bludgeoning damage equal to the slashing damage dealt by their mandibles. In animal shape, they take the form of a Medium giant ant, gain a climb Speed of 20 feet, gain Grab on their mandibles Strike, and lose their weapon Strikes.

Curse of the Wereant (curse, necromancy, primal) This curse affects only humanoids; **Saving Throw** DC 34 Fortitude. On each full moon, the cursed creature must succeed at another Fortitude save or turn into a wereant until dawn. The creature is under the GM's control and goes on a rampage for half the night before falling unconscious until dawn.

Flying Leap ⬥ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The wereant disciple Flies and makes two Strikes against



Wereant Disciple

different targets at any point during that movement. These Strikes deal an additional 2d6 precision damage if the disciple is above the target. If the wereant began this action hidden, they remain hidden until after this ability's Strikes. Both attacks count toward the disciple's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after both Strikes.

Moon Frenzy (polymorph, primal, transmutation) When a full moon appears in the night sky, the wereant must enter hybrid form, can't Change Shape, becomes one size larger, increases their reach by 5 feet, and increases the damage of their mandibles Strike by 2. When the moon sets or the sun rises, the wereant returns to humanoid form and is fatigued for 2d4 hours.

Staggering Blow A creature damaged by the wereant disciple's carapace fist Strike must succeed at a DC 35 Fortitude save or become stunned 1 (stunned 2 on a critical failure). If the Strike is a critical hit, a creature that fails the save is also paralyzed for 1 round.

WEREANT POISONER

When overwhelming force is inadvisable, a wereant hive sends a poison-dripping assassin for murderous work. These poisoners love to terrify those dying in agony from their toxins.

WEREANT POISONER

CREATURE 17

RARE LE MEDIUM BEAST HUMAN HUMANOID WERECREATURE

Perception +29; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common; insect empathy, telepathy 120 feet

Skills Acrobatics +33, Athletics +30, Intimidation +30, Society +25, Stealth +32, Survival +30, Thievery +30

Str +6, **Dex** +9, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Items +2 greater striking kukri (2)

Hive Mind (divination, primal) As wereant disciple.

Insect Empathy (divination, primal) As wereant disciple.

AC 40; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +32, **Will** +29

HP 350; **Weaknesses** silver 15

Gnawing Retort ⚡ As wereant disciple.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +31, **Damage** 3d10+12 slashing plus 2d6 persistent poison and curse of the wereant

Melee ♦ kukri +33 (agile, finesse, magical, trip), **Damage** 3d6+12 slashing plus 2d6 persistent poison

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) As wereant disciple.

Curse of the Wereant (curse, necromancy, primal) As wereant disciple.

Envenomed Weapons Weapons the wereant poisoner holds deal an additional 2d6 persistent poison damage as poison seeps from the wereant's hands onto the weapon. Weapons cease to deal this persistent poison damage once the wereant lets them go. The kukri Strikes above include this persistent poison damage.

Moon Frenzy (polymorph, primal, transmutation) As wereant disciple.

Poisonous Flurry ♦♦ The wereant poisoner makes two kukri Strikes and a mandibles Strike in any order.

Vitriolic Strikes If the wereant critically hits a creature with a melee Strike, that creature can't recover from persistent poison damage for 1 round.



CREATING WERECREATURES

Wercreatures are complex monsters capable of shifting between three different forms and inflicting their condition upon other humanoids. Full rules for building wercreatures, along with how to apply the wercreature's curse, appear on pages 328–329 of the *Pathfinder Bestiary*. Rules for heroes or NPCs with wercreature abilities are found on page 81 of the *Pathfinder Lost Omens Ancestry Guide*.

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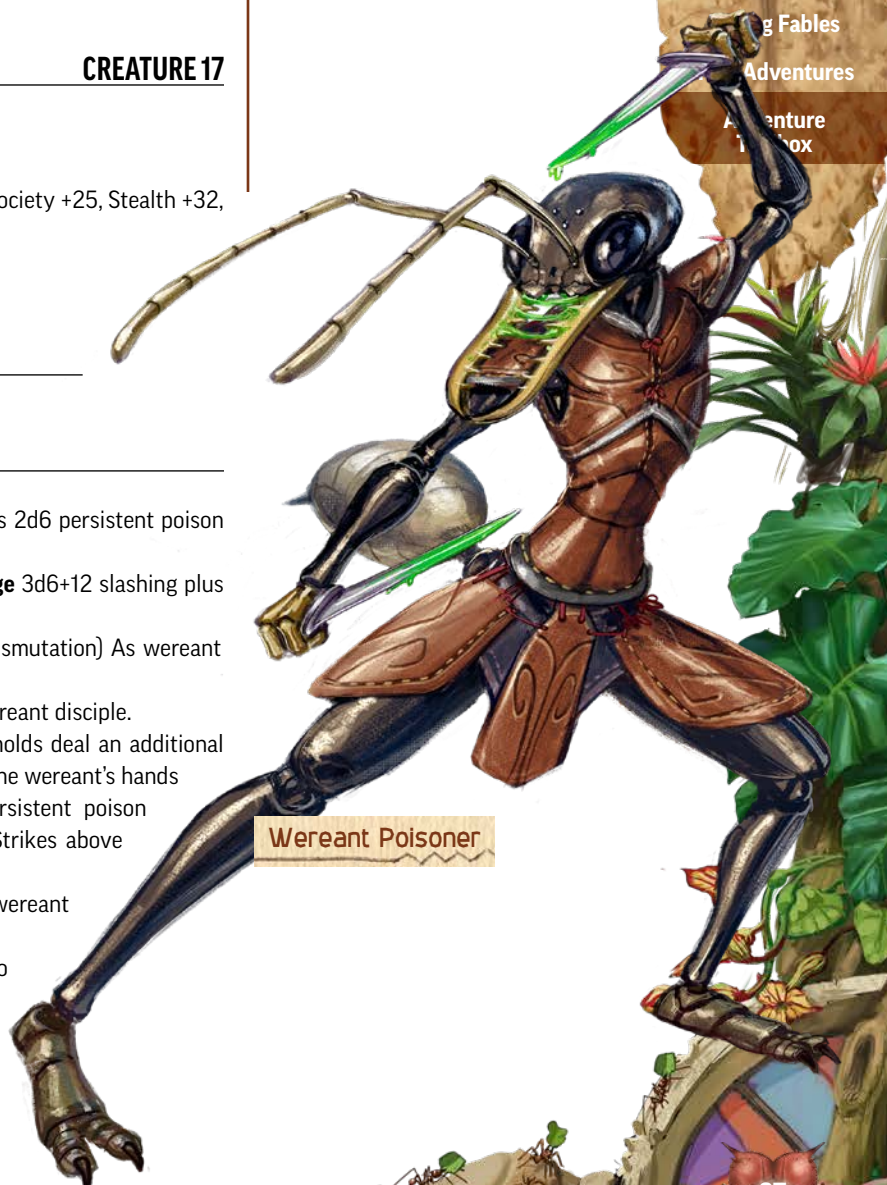
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Wereant Poisoner

TATTERTHREAD

Evil Reflection of a Compassionate Norn

Born of Hlakana's shadow, Tatterthread is in many ways a reflection and an inversion of everything the norn represents. Jealousy and selfishness boil within Tatterthread as Hlakana's memories flicker in and out of her mind—experiences she never had but remembers as her own. Trapped on the Endless Table by her connection to the *Vesicant Egg*, she's unable to reach the First World, where she wants to prove herself a capable replacement for Hlakana to Magdh so that she can assume her place in the reckoning of things.

Worse, she fears that perhaps she is condemned to remain forever in the literal shadow of the *Vesicant Egg*, knowing that the being it contains is more powerful than she will ever become. The thought rankles Tatterthread, and she wonders if she will have to bow before this thing when it hatches forth. Like Hlakana, she can see the threads of fate wound around the egg and knows that it is a locus of change. Something big is coming, and she intends to exploit it.

Tatterthread can't understand Hlakana's feelings of compassion and kindness, so she rejects them with vehement animosity. She sees Hlakana as a weakened and ineffectual creature that has lost the coldness and cruelty necessary to carry out the tasks set before the norns. Where Hlakana snips fate with kindly shears, Tatterthread rips through destiny with scissors of acid and a heart full of hate.

Since escaping from Hlakana, Tatterthread has traveled over the table to sow conflict and paranoia. She whispered into the mind of the Red Queen, convincing her to start her table-wide subjugation while making her think it was the King of Biting Ants whispering to her. She magically urged Uncle Cinder to seek out the shadow scrap that put him in conflict with the beetle merchants. She set the clockwork goliath after the strange feline creature, watching the clumsy thing for a while before growing tired of the sport.

Tatterthread learned too late that powerful heroes have arrived at the table. By the time she became aware of the heroes, Hlakana had already acquired their aid, so Tatterthread has lost the opportunity to sway them to her side and trick them into killing Hlakana. Tatterthread knows that she needs a

powerful ally to overcome first the heroes and then Hlakana, so she's come with uncomfortable reluctance to the shores of the acid lake around the *Vesicant Egg*. There, she was pleased to encounter the tarn linnorm. This ally could ensure the death she longs to deliver. Unfortunately, the creature has proven more resistant to her compulsions than other denizens of the Endless Table. Yet she knows that it's only a matter of time before she's able to trick the linnorm as thoroughly as she's fooled the other creatures around her.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

In her awful cruelty, Tatterthread represents the dark mirror of Hlakana. Instead of fate being a possibility that can be molded to ensure the proper outcome for the world, Tatterthread intends to mutilate fate and set it on the course to aid her own ambition and drive for cruelty and revenge.

Tatterthread serves as a background villain for the most part, someone spoken about among the creatures of the table as a legend, a witch capable of great evil who haunts the skies and threatens nightmares with her rusting, acid-dripping scissors that she uses to cut and mangle the threads of life. She is the frightening witch figure in opposition to Hlakana's role as a kindly seer. Her speech is a deep, grating cackle.

If Tatterthread survives her initial encounter with the heroes, she does her best to seek out others on the Endless Table who hold a grudge against the heroes and stoke their desire for revenge. She ultimately hopes to put someone else in the path of the dangerous heroes, but she's willing create another confrontation on her own terms if she's unable to secure aid.

TATTERTHREAD

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE CE LARGE FEY

Variant norn (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 184)

Perception +39; *detect magic*, greater darkvision, lifesense 120 feet, *true seeing*

Languages Common, Jotun, Sylvan; *tongues*

Skills Deception +35, Intimidation +37, Lore (all) +32, Occultism +38, Religion +32, Stealth +36, Thievery +34

Str +7, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** +10, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +7

Deny Fate (misfortune) When Tatterthread rolls initiative, enemies she can see within 120 feet that are also rolling initiative automatically roll a 1.

AC 46; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +30, **Will** +36; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 400, regeneration 15 (deactivated by cold iron); **Immunities** flat-footed, negative; **Weaknesses** cold iron 20; **Resistances** acid 20

Speed 35 feet, fly 35 feet

Melee ♦ caustic shears +38 (deadly 2d12, magical, reach 10 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 4d6+15 slashing plus 5d6 acid and shadow corrosion

Melee ♦ acid stream +38 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d10+15 acid plus shadow corrosion

Occult Innate Spells DC 42; **10th** *shadow blast* (acid only), *shadow siphon*, *time stop*; **9th** *power word kill*, *weird*; **8th** *maze*, *wind walk*; **7th** *dispel magic* (at will), *read omens* (at will), *spellwrack* (at will); **Constant (10th)** *detect magic*, *mind blank*, *tongues*, *true seeing*

Rituals DC 42; *geas*, *legend lore*

Fated When a creature is subject to a fortune effect from a norn and a misfortune effect from any source other than a norn (or vice versa), the norn's effect automatically counteracts the other effect and then takes place normally, rather than the two effects canceling each other out. If both the fortune and misfortune effect are from a norn, then the two cancel each other out as normal. At the GM's discretion, powerful entities related to fate or luck, like Desna, Magdh, or Pharasma, count as a norn for the purpose of this ability.

Shadow Corrosion (acid, necromancy, occult) When Tatterthread deals acid damage with a Strike, she regains 10 Hit Points. The target must succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude save or become doomed 1 (doomed 2 on a critical failure).

Shadow Snip ♦♦ (acid, death, manipulate, necromancy, occult)
Frequency three times per day;
Effect Tatterthread produces a scrap of shadow linked to the fate of a creature within 100 feet of her, then snips it with her caustic shears. The target takes 100 acid damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude save). If the target is reduced to 0 Hit Points from this damage, it melts into a puddle of fetid acid and dies immediately. If the target failed the saving throw, it loses any acid resistance it has for 1 minute (1 day on a critical failure). A creature slain by Shadow Snip can't be restored to life except by *miracle*, *wish*, or similarly powerful magic, or by divine intervention. Regardless of the outcome of its save, a creature targeted by Shadow Snip becomes temporarily immune

for 24 hours. The norn can't use Shadow Snip again for 1d4 rounds.

Shift Fate ♫ (divination, occult) **Trigger** A creature within 120 feet attempts a saving throw; **Effect** The creature rolls the save twice, and then Tatterthread decides which result applies. If she chooses the lower roll, this is a misfortune effect; if she chooses the higher roll, it's a fortune effect; if they're the same, she decides which trait to apply.



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UNSHADOWED KORIDE

Misguided Professor Cursed with Curiosity

Sometimes it is not cruelty but indifference that results in the greatest disasters. So it was with Koride Ulawa. Every time she did something without questioning her instinct, it resulted in disaster—and usually to others rather than herself. Koride's position in the Magaambya is evidence enough of her capability and talent. But unlike so many others who struggled for what they had, things came easily to Koride. Some of it had to do with her natural charm and wit, and some with the privilege of being born into a family that cherished their daughter and indulged her every whim. As a result, she grew up without understanding compromise or temperance, and with advantages that she took entirely for granted.

Koride was always popular with her peers as a child, though she sometimes acted cruelly or, even at her best, simply lacked compassion. But she knew that those traits could get her into trouble, so she covered them up enough that adults looked the other way. When she made decisions that led to trouble for other children or created situations that required someone else to clean up after her, the adults around her figured this couldn't have been because Koride was cruel or wanted others to suffer. She was called impulsive, precocious, or thoughtless. Her indulgent parents and their long-suffering servants made excuses for her and cleaned up whatever Koride left behind.

As she grew older, Koride developed a keen social instinct that she used to drop out of relationships and friendships just before they soured for good. She seldom stuck around long enough to take responsibility for broken hearts or abused friendships. Someone else was stuck with bitterness or confusion while Koride moved on, taking only good memories with her.

This instinct has not served her well in the long term. Though she's earned every accolade of her distinguished academic career, Koride's personal life is a string of failed relationships and brief friendships that last a season or a year before fading. When she came to the Magaambya, she became attached to the Rain-Scribes because so many of them, like her, kept an emotional distance from others. For many Rain-Scribes, this is a well-honed skill, practiced to

become a good observer of culture and society. Koride successfully covered up the fact that her emotional distance resulted from a fundamental absence, a sense of compassion for others that never truly developed. She developed charm and magnetism she could wear as a mask even more powerful than the feline mask she crafted as an attendant.

Though Koride was among the most popular students and her cohort was large, few truly knew her. She used her peers for her own sake, expending them like loose change because there was always a new set of students to pick through for replacements if necessary. When she became a teacher, she kept the same serial favoritism, showering the obvious favorites among her students with privileges and indulgence until they weren't useful or interesting any longer. There were always more students, more favorites.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Koride serves as an example of carelessness and pride leading to terrible consequences. She's not evil in the sense of the world's great villains; she's simply oblivious to the effects of her actions and careless when it comes to considering consequences. Her casual disregard for rules, her blatant favoritism, and her reckless push toward dangerous outcomes are all well known by the time the heroes arrive at the Magaambya. The heroes can learn a bit about Koride at the start of the campaign, but she's learned a bit about them, too. The heroes are a new generation of students: smarter, more generous, and as adventurous as she was in her prime. They're not just dedicated to carving their names into history, but they're so successful at doing so that Koride can't mask her dislike of them. She's their foil as a professor: the one who is quick with a biting comment and who accepts their successes with great reluctance. It's expected that the heroes won't like Koride much as students, and that this mutual animosity remains while they're teachers, as well.

Deep inside, beneath the witty and sometimes biting veneer, Koride worries that she's increasingly irrelevant. She can cover up her minor cruelties and shallow relationships with practiced ease, but she doesn't know

if she can make a permanent mark on the Magaambya or on the world. This anxiety is what led Koride to conceal the *Vesicant Egg* and continue studying it after she'd promised to stop. Its secrets called to her, promising a lasting legacy if only she could unlock its mysteries. In this drive to be remembered, Koride has far more in common with the villainous King of Biting Ants than she can ever realize or accept.

The malevolent intelligence within the *Vesicant Egg* found Koride easy to control at first; her desire to understand and reveal everything about the artifact was just what the fractured psyche inside of it wanted anyway. Yet Koride's strength is greater than the egg has guessed. When faced with certain defeat, she's able to put aside her facade and speak to the heroes about what she's done and why, all with brutal honesty and remarkable self-awareness. She's willing to discard everything the *Vesicant Egg* can offer her when they're in true danger, showing Koride's genuine character for perhaps the first time.

The statistics below don't reflect Koride's abilities throughout most of the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path; rather, they incorporate the effects of being Unshadowed by the *Vesicant Egg*, when the heroes confront her.

UNSHADOWED KORIDE CREATURE 19

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human naturalist

Perception +33

Languages Common, Draconic, Gnoll, Iruxi, Necril, Orc, Sylvan

Skills Academia Lore +37, Crafting +37, Deception +33, Diplomacy +33, Medicine +35, Nature +33, Stealth +31, Survival +33

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +6, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items +3 major striking major staff of nature's vengeance (Advanced Player's Guide 263)

AC 40; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +29, **Will** +35

HP 290; **Resistances** acid 20

Shadow's Displeasure As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Vesicated Shadow As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ staff +30 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 4d6+20 bludgeoning

Primal Prepared Spells DC 41, attack +33; **10th** fated confrontation (Secrets of Magic 105); **9th** implosion, shapechange, chain lightning; **8th** dispel magic, moment of renewal, polar ray; **7th** finger of death, regenerate, sunburst; **6th** flesh to stone, nature's reprisal (Secrets of Magic 117), true seeing; **5th** banishment, blazing fissure

(Secrets of Magic 91), healing well (Secrets of Magic 110); **4th** dispel magic, fly, freedom of movement; **3rd** fear, slow, wall of wind; **2nd** darkvision, entangle, web; **1st** feather fall, fear, gust of wind; **Cantrips (10th)** detect magic, electric arc, prestidigitation, ray of frost, tanglefoot

Occult Innate Spells DC 41, attack +33; **10th** shadow blast (acid only, ×2), shadow siphon (×2)

Rupture Shadow ♦♦ (acid, conjuration, occult, shadow) As Unshadowed Okoro (page 18).



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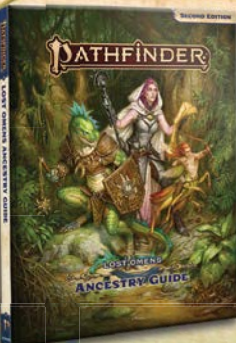
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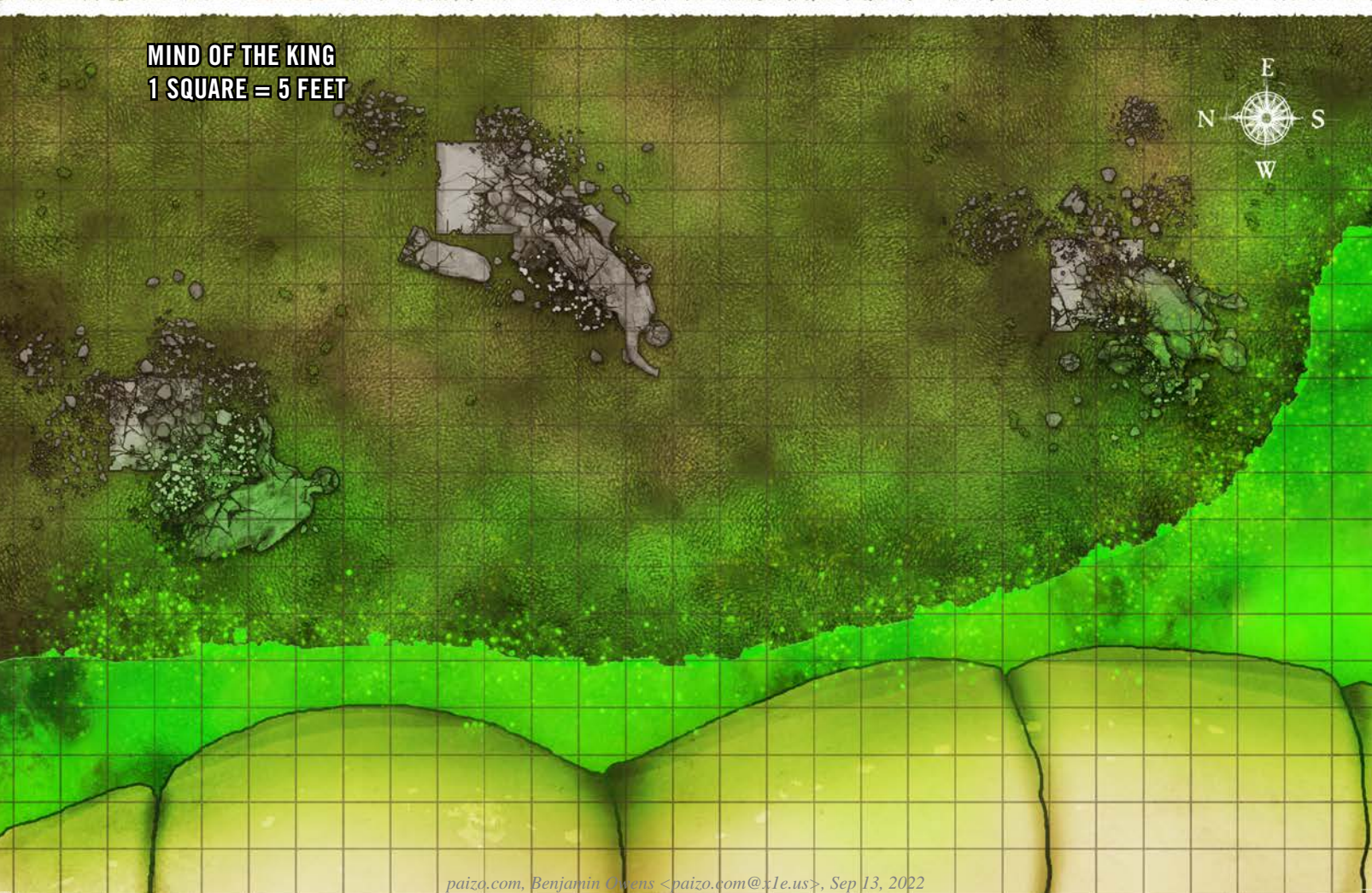
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