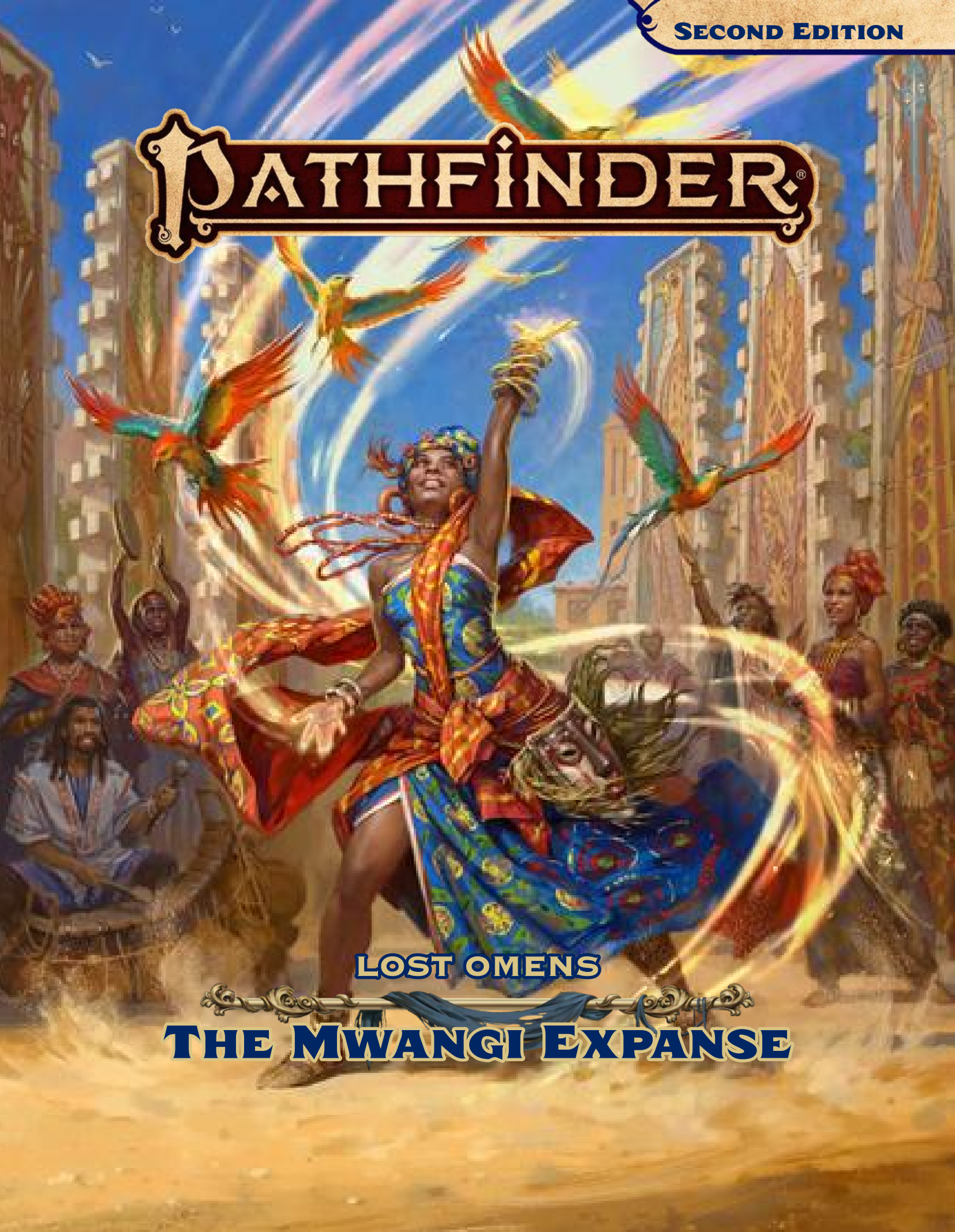


SECOND EDITION

# PATHFINDER<sup>®</sup>



LOST OMENS

THE MWANGI EXPANSE



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LOST OMENS

**THE MWANGI EXPANSE**

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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](http://paizo.com/prd).







## RECLAIMING THE EXPANSE

If you aren't looking to get lost, don't come to the Mwangi Expanse. Tales can only guide one so far here, and maps are sure to mislead. An adventurer within the Mwangi Expanse will find their best compass to be vigilance. For the intrepid and curious, the Expanse is a godsend. The less prepared are swallowed whole.

The Mwangi Expanse shrouds much of the continent of Garund in a prismatic sprawl. Within its boundaries lies a vast array of wildlife, arguably the most biodiverse of all Golarion. Primordial flora and fauna are as numerous as the towering trees that hide them from the wider world's vantage—and that shroud wilder secrets. Ruins of old mysteries and forgotten cultures are near as frequent to encounter as the vast array of cultures that run through the Expanse like the rivers flowing from Lake Ocota.

The Expanse is remarkable for its richness of resources, but its impenetrability has thwarted the establishment of as many empires as it has forged. Many civilizations are nestled in their original homes, and twice that number exist in nomadic tribes and nations traveling through the wild sprawl, expanding their vast histories with each step. From Mzali to Jaha, ancient culture and even older tales run through the vast jungle of the Mwangi Expanse. The people and

places of these myriad cultures aren't waiting to be discovered or unearthed, but instead exist on their own terms without the whole of Golarion knowing.

The Mwangi Expanse has a way of keeping invasive outsiders humble. Wanton ambitions often prove no match for the beauty and cruelty of nature here, or the countless ancient secrets that lie within. The jungle hides enough ruins of past follies to deter even the most voraciously greedy of Golarion's so-called civilized peoples, dating back before even Earthfall. The small number of coherent maps for such an old frontier is no coincidence. To venture this land unguided spells certain misfortune for all but the most expert of survivalists.

This region is far kinder to the well prepared and warmly curious. The myriad indigenous people who thrive within even the deepest parts of the region hold a more intuitive understanding of their surroundings' geography and communities. In some of the Expanse's better-known cities, such as Nantambu and Kibwe, the cultural depth matches the vast breadth of diversity that marks the whole of the Expanse, let alone the Inner Sea region. These communities are willing to share with those outsiders who listen.

This book is a guide that many people of Golarion may never have the privilege of accessing and that a group of



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adventurers would be blessed to have access to. While this book hasn't always been with us, Golarion has always had the Mwangi Expanse, and there is no better, more colorful place in the world in which to get lost.

### EXCITING, NOT EXOTIC!

The Mwangi Expanse and its people, its places, its flora, fauna, and land are largely not new. People have thrived in this space for eons before your adventuring party will. They will continue to after. As creators, players, and Game Masters, we visit someone's home, not simply a backdrop. The experiences that player characters have and non-player characters express in this part of the world, like any other, will almost certainly be strange, but what is new to us outside of the game has been long a part of Golarion in the fiction. The Mwangi Expanse has always been home to someone and we—the people outside of Golarion's fiction—are the aliens getting to know the place together, like anywhere else in this world. Treat the homes of others well, even when those other people are your own characters. The fictions we paint in their spaces reflect and pull from real people and places, and your exotic is someone else's existence.

### CITIES AND NATIONS

The cultural variety within the Expanse is immense. Encountering this multitude might feel like stepping into a world as vast as Golarion's whole. More formal

nations across the region don't make the vastness of Mwangi's cultural spread more digestible as much as they illuminate these experiences with sharper contrast. The wilds of the region possess an alternately fraught and flourishing relationship with the metropolitan depending on where one looks.

The most notable cities of the Mwangi Expanse pose a dizzying array of experiences for travelers, as well as rich backdrops for adventurers to hail from. The vast breadth of the Mwangi Expanse's urban communities and infrastructure range from ancient, near-forgotten mysteries to massive, bustling meccas of trade and commerce. However impressive the cities are across the rest of the Inner Sea region, the Expanse is sure to have a match just as splendid—and twice as colorful.

Nantambu, founded by the legendary Old-Mage Jatembe, continues to thrive as an iconic haven of arcane scholarship. It houses the oldest, most significant school of magic across Garund (and some would argue Golarion)—the Magaambya. Equitable to its core, Nantambu sets a high standard in supporting its inhabitants, whether they are students of the Magaambya or skilled artisans residing in the city. Whatever their station, the elected officials of the city have stayed committed to providing a comfortable standard of life for the rest. The result is a wondrous, often uplifting community wrought of beautiful canals and adorned in blown glass, with many an arcane secret around each corner, and a lesson for the world not far behind that.

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In comparison, the seedy, corrupt wealth of Bloodcove is generated by cutthroat politics and commerce alike. The notorious Aspis Consortium—a powerful international trading ring—is finding its once-uncontested hold over Bloodcove slipping away as Free Captains looking to claim a cut of the city’s prospects dilute the Consortium’s hold. Under the shroud of this commercial conflict, Sargavan refugees hailing from the nation now known as Vidrian try to make a new life for themselves in a port city that makes life easy for no one. Bloodcove makes an ideal backdrop for a deeply fraught and political tangle of a tale.

The city-state Kibwe supports trade and all things mercantile across a massive canvas, with its byzantine markets acting as a bustling magnet and melting pot alike. For a particularly metropolitan setting, Kibwe’s sprawl fits the bill ideally. Nearly all of Golarion’s ancestries can be found tucked away in its dense alcoves, from gnomes to giants. Ancient, rune-inscribed walls encircle the city, and the culture clash within provides a dizzying tour of societies that reinforces the larger diversity of the Expanse.

Far quieter is the twice-deserted city of Jaha, whose obscure astrological past guides its third wave of inhabitants in growth and change. The breadth of Jaha’s populace is far less diverse than that of Kibwe, and the scope of its inhabitants’ story is a personal one between

two groups inheriting old traumas and far older enigmas. Jaha’s secrets pull its possibilities from the soil and into the stars. For the adventuring party looking to discover unsolved historical riddles, Jaha proves a more than ideal scene. The urban possibilities are as dense as jungle soils, and these examples only scratch the surface of a world filled with cities ruled by the dead, communities rippling from overturned nations, and whole societies learning to redefine themselves in the wake of colonial turmoil.

Humanity within the region is often reduced to an inaccurate homogeneity of “Mwangi” by outsiders, but the range of human expression running through the Expanse is vast. The seafaring Bonuwat and Lirgeni; the Caldaru, who reside in the robust city-state of Senghor; the well-traveled Mauxi of the northern bound of the Expanse; the Sargavans of Chelaxian heritage who have spurned the colony of their descent; and the ever-present Zenj who form the common bulk of the Mwangi human population, all of whom illustrate a sliver of the humanity throughout the region.

Outsiders often mistake or frame the people and places here as new discoveries. In truth, many of the people of the region have preserved themselves and their lands well where nature hasn’t done the job for them. The ancestries of Golarion have some of their most primordial cultural and ethnic representatives running through the Mwangi Expanse.

## QUESTIONING OUTSIDERS

If your group is coming to the Mwangi Expanse with an established adventuring party, there's a decent chance they aren't from the region. Here are some questions to consider when roleplaying foreigners in lands they haven't been to.

**What sort of effect does your presence have on what's already here?** Are the PCs exploring because of a mission that's drawn or pushed them from another region? Are they here of their own accord, and if so, what do they want? What inherent threat might the PCs unintentionally (and understandably) signify, and how do they reinforce that trepidation? How can they grow past it? It's okay to have characters play tourists if the group interrogates the player characters' motives as much as the locals would.

**How does the Expanse challenge and broaden the PCs' understanding of themselves?** The Expanse contains many unique cultures for familiar ancestries, as well as some familiar cultural touchstones from new ancestries and previously not-yet-introduced communities. What assumptions do the PCs make, and how do they reframe themselves in the differences—and similarities—they are faced with? Matanji orcs receive a vastly different reception from non-orcs in this region than the orcs throughout the rest of Golarion, for example.

**How does the Expanse raise questions about the PCs' understanding of where they come from?** The cultures that shaped the PCs can already seem odd moving from one nation to another in the region they are from. A jump across the Inner Sea holds an even clearer mirror up to the things these characters take for granted from their home. Getting to know an unfamiliar community on their own terms and then seeing the results of your own attempt to shove them into a familiar box can be amusingly educational, or fiercely sobering.

## LANGUAGES

Mwangi may be a vague designation for the people from the Expanse, but the language that shares the name is a far more distinct one. This widely spoken trade language occupies the designation of "Common" for those from the region. The Mwangi language can often feel like it has as many community-specific names as people, as it's an especially dialect-rich language matching the high saturation of communities populating the Expanse. The common, flowing Ocotan dialect contrasts fiercely with the more unusual Calda, which peppers its speech with grammar forgotten beyond Senghor and vocabulary shaped and shifted from naval journeys across the Inner Sea. Speaking the language comfortably across the Expanse often indicates a well-traveled and studied tongue. While the many people who speak Mwangi from these different groups can understand each other, the nuances vary widely from community to community. The history of the Mwangi language makes

this variance unsurprising. The many communities that have formed the branches of the language in today's Golarion trace back to a common language that has not been fully unearthed by the modern world.

Some discernible trends have recently emerged in the use of the regional tongue. Speakers native to cities who have been more sheltered by the Expanse's wilderness tend to speak very expressively, using body language as much as words. Those who have made their lives in cities with more international traffic, such as Bloodcove, wield the language through a dialect peppered with distinct Taldane flourishes. More nomadic tribes and rural communities speak more curtly and quietly, intoning with a rich subtlety developed to avoid disturbing the threats of the wild they risk encountering.

Across the Expanse, most languages are idiosyncratic from community to community due to how little



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each group needs to interact in such a resource-rich environment. Some may find wider use due to the amount that the parent culture travels the region. Others arise out of survivability and safety, such as the growing use of the Matanji tongue in order to call for aid against the diabolic threats of the Expanse.

## ADVENTURES

To the indigenous and outsider alike, the Expanse's most fertile explorations emerge from its dense histories, as well as how people discover, change, and are changed by the region. The land weaves a vast tapestry of questions about the Mwangi's history. The answers to these questions offer even more stirring possibilities for the present day. The region stands as an epic canvas ready to be painted with extraordinarily personal stories where the present and past collide. The Expanse is full of self-contained mystery, making rediscovery and connection to the past perfect themes for your group's journey. The land traces so many threads back to Golarion before Earthfall in a way that other regions have lost in their growth. What does it mean to walk through that history and protect it as it becomes clear once again?

Survival is the name of the game for many who brave the Mwangi wild. The same may be true for your group. The preparations made for a rousing dungeon crawl are nicely compounded or even replaced by the challenges a group faces weathering the formidable nature of the

Mwangi Expanse. Much of the scenery is as colorful and vibrant as the people who fill it, but this seductive guise can be the perfect way to ensnare a group in truly dire straits. Play with what happens when players have few resources to contend with many natural hazards.

The mysteries of the Expanse are a wonderful avenue to explore a pulpy flair to frame your group's campaign. Many of the secrets included within this book and the region have clear footholds and answers provided, but many others open brand-new doors for your group to define. As much as this book articulates the region with a new depth, the Mwangi Expanse has plenty of space to get weird and wild from the stories players wish to tell. Curious about the cosmic mysteries of the universe? So are some of the people here in the Expanse! Care to get down to some demon hunting? The Matanji orcs and others will absolutely take the help and show PCs the ropes.

Colonization and globalization are themes that touch many parts of the Mwangi Expanse. The Expanse is a stunningly resource-rich region. Its countless biomes are colorful, sprawling, and abundant in what they offer to the people and creatures inhabiting them. Outsiders have exploited this, and settlements from nations who didn't respect the land and its indigenous people have risen and fallen to reclamation in turn. Though the environment provides more than enough to share and exchange in measured quantities, the pressures of exploitative commerce and wanton consumption make a fertile ground to delve into in the region. To what extent does a nation's voracious reach plunge into the Expanse's natural resources, whether it's a foreign entity or not? Trade and its consequence can hold particular interest in the tales the region tells. In an area that has become as globalized as the Inner Sea regions, what do those same patterns of commerce mean for the health of the Expanse? Consider communities and cultures that don't share and monetize many of the same things their international neighbors do to find a catalyzing tension to build a story around.

These conversations can deepen in exploring themes of oppression, whether from turning inward and exploring the tensions between communities and nations within the Expanse or outward to examine the external pressures of foreign influences on the region. Brutal institutions of slavery and expansion exist or recently existed, and these acts have ripples and leave scars that this book explores.

Whatever threads an adventuring party chooses to follow, the Mwangi Expanse is more than large enough to have them covered. This book contains endless potential both explicitly detailed and left in the gaps for an intrepid group to fill and make their own. The possibilities of the Expanse as an adventuring setting lie far beyond the words

written here. For inventive GMs and intrepid players, the Mwangi Expanse serves as an invitation to make Golarion very much their own and go off the map, so to speak. Use this book as a ramp to your adventure!

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Your group may be starting a campaign with new characters who are from cultures that reside within the Mwangi Expanse. When you make a fictional region that's new to you into your home, that can help you avoid exoticizing the region. It also provokes questions that can provide further context and understanding of both what is new about the region for you as a player and what has grown familiar for your PC. Consider the following when creating a Mwangi character.

**What has your home taught you?** Starting with what you've learned from your home in the Expanse can help you draw a connection to something that you as a player might wish to understand more thoroughly. Having their home be central to a PC's worldview gives plenty of opportunity to delve into a concept that feels particularly alien to a player.

**What remains mysterious to you about home?** This provides a nice signal to the player and the group as a whole for what to explore and define in the world. Such a setting is full of mysteries, but players uncovering these secrets for themselves adds a personal angle for that PC and the community they come from.

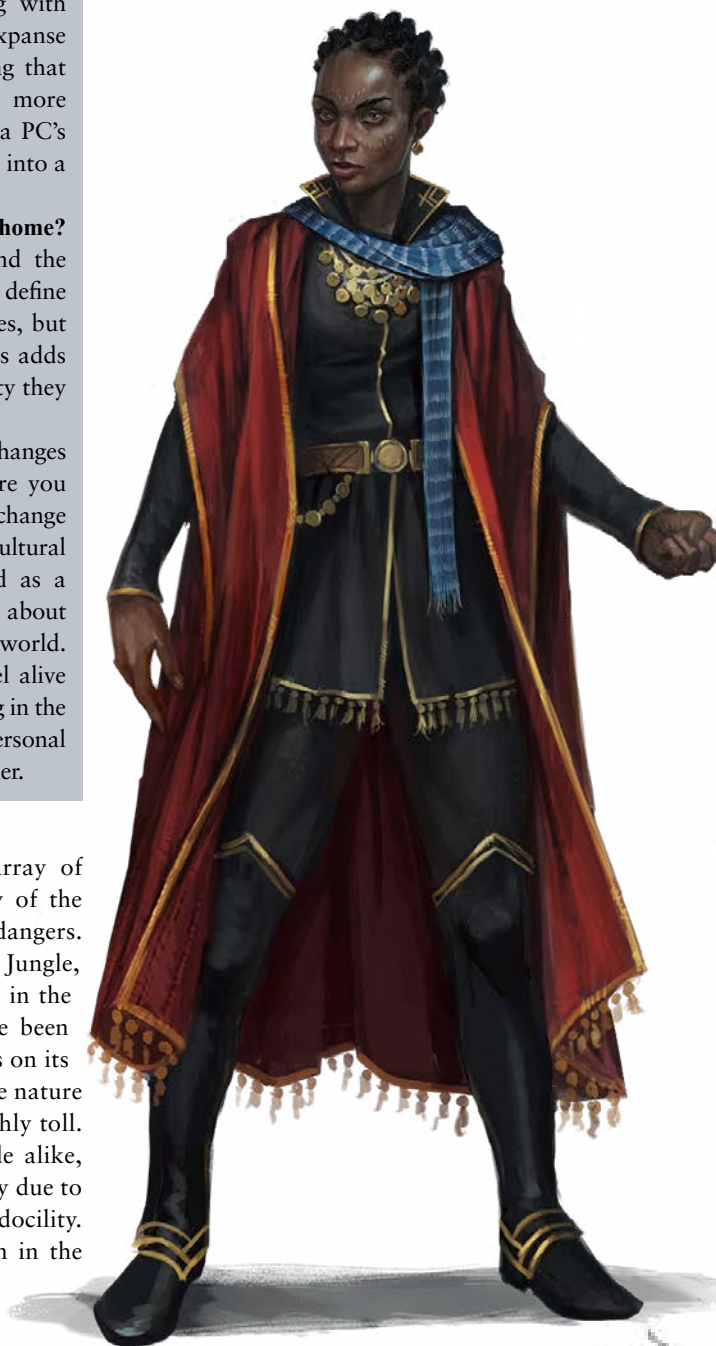
**What are you protective of?** What kind of changes scare your character most, and why? What are you working to preserve? Are you working to change something you felt was not right in your cultural background? All of these questions answered as a person from the Mwangi communicate a lot about what individual people value in this part of the world. There's no better way to make somewhere feel alive than to make it lived in. Having PCs adventuring in the Expanse who are from the Expanse invites a personal kind of life to the stories your group tells together.

## THREATS

The Mwangi Expanse is home to a wide array of hazards to the unprepared party. The beauty of the Expanse disguises many of its most lethal dangers. From the Sudden Lands down to the Screaming Jungle, countless harrowing stories tell of the dangers in the Mwangi wilds, and just as many people have been claimed by it. As much as the ecosystem thrives on its own internal order, the cycles that have kept the nature of the region alive exist in part through a deathly toll. Predator and prey battle in the sun and shade alike, and the flora of the jungle blooms magnificently due to its own persistence rather than any expected docility. The hills, plains, and ruins gain less attention in the stories that escape the Expanse but deserve no less caution.

Navigating the terrain of the jungles in the Expanse can often feel like a battle for the unseasoned, but the savvy explorer knows to not treat the many hazards of the land as a fight so much as a delicate dance. They know that the goal is to avoid disturbing the surroundings they navigate if they don't wish to be lost to them. This principle poses more of a challenge for many who are new to the region, and even some who have lived here their whole lives, because subterfuge is a reflex for the hazards of the Expanse and the environment around is poised to support nature's feints.

Threats also come in small packages, and often coated in satiating guises. Poisons paint the Expanse in chromatic costumes that the wary and seasoned traveler knows to avoid, but to the uninitiated, the wrong plant can become an uncomfortable or even lethal mistake.



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Seasoned navigators of the Expanse know to check the smell, color, and other tell-tale signs of a potential food or folly. Many of these poisonous agents push their pain through ingestion, while others inflict their poison through contact.

The oils of a monkey tree may be innocuous by themselves, but the pungent scent with which they mark the hapless signal a prime quarry for the jungle's keen hunters. Giant botflies (and swarms of their smaller relatives) might prove individual nuisances on first encounter, but the flesh-eating life cycle of a giant botfly's birth claims many creatures who have tried to navigate the Expanse's jungles, and haunted many adventures who have either witnessed or almost been victim to the process. While the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse get the bulk of attention in the stories that ripple through Golarion about the region, the hills, plains, rivers, and especially ruins that compose much of the Expanse can easily be just as lethal.

The weather that ravages the Expanse is as formidable as the flora and fauna, and environmental hazards pepper the Mwangi Expanse with discouraging regularity. The beaches of Lake Ocota are as likely to trap passersby in a pool of quicksand as the floor of any Mwangi Jungle. Flooding regularly drowns swathes of the Expanse

due to the powerful storms that shower the region. Particularly forceful jungle storms can topple the trees in the Expanse without those passing under them noticing their impending gravitational demise.

The pervasive, often-sweltering heat in the Expanse can be punishing within and outside of the region's jungles. Insistent, pounding rain batters the jungle regularly, and fertile vegetation blooms as often as it rots wherever explorers tread. Whether across the hills and plains or under the canopy of jungle, flash floods and other temperate hazards challenge the local and visiting life. These all lend the ingredients to an aggressively sweaty, humid climate with air that can be cloying, often described as "thick enough to chew." Noon is the worst time to be out and about in the wilds of the Expanse, and the intense heat has a habit of grounding those bold enough to try to push through it.

Should the Expanse's environmental hazards and fearsome wildlife fail to stop brazen adventurers in their tracks, they still have to contend with its main threat: the array of diseases menacing the Mwangi wild. Knowledge of well-documented pathogenic hazards such as dysentery, its "milder" cousin firegut, and malaria do little to prepare the novice adventurer for the Expanse's most deadly illnesses. The terrible torpor from the squeezing sensations of the mosquito-borne bonecrusher fever, painfully weeping pustules and scales of greenscale, and the foul and painful bog rot have claimed the health of too many unprepared travelers. Many of these diseases are survivable or treatable—a quick amputation proves consistently quelling to the rotting spread of crimson ooze from the fingers to the lungs—but the diseases of the Mwangi wilds often claim their morbid toll.

Throughout the Expanse, and especially along Lake Ocota, lies the threat of demons and their various worshippers.

Even with the protective measures Matanji orcs have perfected to ward themselves and the region from fiendish threats, the danger is still very, very real.

Scores of other fearsome beasts menace the wilds of the Mwangi Expanse, perfectly adapted to seeking their prey. As beautiful as the region is, it blooms with peril.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The rain forests, savannas, and coasts of the Mwangi Expanse contain some of the highest amounts of natural biodiversity on the surface of Golarion.



The Expanse also hosts thousands of unusual magical creatures and ancestries. While many of these are fascinating and wondrous, they can also present a danger to the unwary and inexperienced. Animals rarely seek out humans but are often aggressive in the face of a perceived trespass or threat: no adventurer wants to be on the wrong side of a furious bull elephant or a charging rhino! Some ancestries can be mistaken for monsters and clash with outsiders, and like all of Golarion, some beings that haunt the Expanse, regardless of background, are truly wicked. See pages 289–307 of this book for a partial list of creatures that adventurers might encounter while traveling through the Expanse.

## STATE OF MWANGI

Many tides of change radiate through the Expanse, from Lake Ocota and its many connecting rivers to the extremes of the Expanse's nebulous bounds. Within each Expanse locale pulses vibrant life still unknown to the international world, yet the Expanse is beginning to open up its truths to the outside eye, both to itself and the rest of the Inner Sea region. With each reveal through this process, another layer of history that may have been lost or forgotten is illuminated. The connections to Golarion before Earthfall run deep and wide. In many ways, that history and context sit in the ruins throughout the region. It lives and breathes in the people indigenous to the Expanse, and it dances through the words of the common Mwangi tongue.

No centralized government unites the myriad nations, cultures, and cities of the Mwangi Expanse. As a result, the relationships are just as variable, complicating even more with outside influence. Some locales, such as Nantambu and Kibwe, are welcoming to outsiders who hold relevant business within their walls. Tensions within coastal nations such as Vidrian remain in acute focus after their large extrication from colonial influence and the nation's ceased material supplication to piracy.

Religion and worship are curious matters in the Expanse. Many people of the regions' nations are just as likely to worship gods both known and forgotten as they are likely to worship their leaders, such as Mzali's undead child-regent god, Walkena. Others worship viler forces; cults exalt demons and other fiendish entities. Perhaps most notable are the worshippers of the red-furred, demonic ape lord Angazhan—a demon lord of vicious strength and entropy. Though his most prominent servant, the Gorilla King, was slain with no successor to preside over the city of Usaro, many cults worshipping the lord practice their violent reverence in the depths of the Expanse's jungles. More holistically, a great deal of shamanistic cultures and

worshippers of natural phenomena make up the spiritual landscape of the Mwangi Expanse.

The Mwangi geography is one of natural generosity. Resource-rich as any other region wishes to be, it sustains a dizzying spread of wildlife, longstanding and morphing cultures, and opportunistic immigrants. The indigenous defend the rich mountain ore of the northern Barrier Wall and Shattered Range as well as rare herbs and fertile crops from Avistani colonists and their military force. Many communities have been pushed to the point of assertive defense against exploitations and oppressions, and the last few decades have seen them healing from it, such as the reformation of Vidrian in the wake of the peoples' successful subversion and rejection of Chelaxian colonization through revolution. Though eastern Garundi nations have found an effective commercial rapport within Kibwe's vast inland markets, and the ports of Senghor now host a whole network of Inner Sea commerce, the self-sufficient approach that many Mwangi-based cultures and communities thrive in has not indulged in much international trade or import. Many of these groups, out of convenience and skepticism of outsiders, trade solely with their immediate neighbors.

The Mwangi Expanse finds itself in a state of retelling its own story one individual, exciting tale at a time. The external perspectives that come to meet it don't dictate its existence, but instead end up shining light on how this once-mysterious sprawl in Golarion is and has been evolving.



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## HISTORY

Outsiders to the Mwangi Expanse generally know only a few facts about the region's history, mostly where it intersects with events in Avistan. The Expanse has played a pivotal role in Golarion's history from the very beginning—yet the rest of the world knows little of its heroes except for the legendary Old-Mage Jatembe, and even less of its geography beyond the ruins Avistani adventurers have plundered for centuries. But the people of the Mwangi Expanse know their history: whose hands built the great cities that outsiders see only as sources of treasure and bloody adventure; whose minds discovered legendary magic, lifesaving medicines, and other knowledge as crucial to life as salt and far more precious than gold. These histories have been passed down through generations via meticulous written records and oral histories alike, though like many nations in the rest of the Inner Sea region, cataclysmic historical events have often caused swaths of knowledge to be lost.

### AGE OF SERPENTS (UNKNOWN)

Before humanity emerged on the world stage of Golarion, serpentfolk had already built an empire that spanned multiple continents. Yet, an ice age slowed their expansion

as well as their reproduction that, combined with conflicts with iruxi and cyclops civilizations, kept the serpentfolk from spreading too far across the surface world.

In the late Age of Serpents, elves arrived on Golarion. The elves traveled from their homeland of Sovyrian on the planet Castrovel to Golarion's continent of Avistan through a massive interplanetary portal known as an *aiudara*, or “elf gate.” After establishing the nation of Kyonin, many elves set out to explore the world of Golarion, building further *aiudara* to allow themselves instant travel to disparate lands across many continents.

### AGE OF LEGEND (UNKNOWN TO -5293 AR)

Elven civilization reached its peak in the Age of Legend, and elven explorers reached the Mwangi Expanse during these heights. The elves founded the nation of Mualijae in the Mwangi Expanse, spanning across the majority of the Mwangi Jungle. Early expansionist human cultures came into conflict with this elven nation multiple times across the centuries and were turned aside; though smaller, peaceful human settlements had little issue with the Mualijae elves, these conflicts cemented the reputation of the Mwangi Jungle as dangerous to most of humanity.

The human nation of Azlant rose during the Age of Legend. As the empire expanded eastward, it clashed with the serpentfolk empire in the Mwangi Expanse, resulting in the Azlanti ultimately driving the serpentfolk into underground redoubts and, eventually, the Darklands. The serpentfolk made their last stand at Ilmurea, the sanctum of their demigod Ydersius. The Azlanti champion Savith campaigned from the colonies in western Avistan all the way to the Mwangi Expanse to put the war to an end, beheading Ydersius. Savith fell to the serpent-god's venom soon after, and her followers entombed her in a remote outpost they named Saventh-Yhi in her honor. The Azlanti made no attempt to hold the lands in the Mwangi Expanse from which they had driven the serpentfolk, however, leaving Saventh-Yhi as an isolated city in a region that remained otherwise untouched by their expansion.

Following the serpentfolk's retreat to the Darklands and the Azlanti returning to their own lands, the cyclops civilization of Ghol-Gan rose to fill the power vacuum. Ghol-Gani culture grew from small, nature-venerating settlements to a sun- and moon-worshipping empire spanning much of what's now the Shackles, Sodden Lands, and parts of the Mwangi Expanse. They initially clashed with surviving remnants of the serpentfolk as they expanded underground, though the Ghol-Gani came to adopt some of their enemies' religious rites and sacrificial practices, desperate for any advantage. They drove the serpentfolk further into the Darklands and consolidated their new territories. The Ghol-Gani continued these adopted religious practices, leading to competition between city-states for resources. Especially sought were candidates pleasing to newly adopted gods, including those of the Dark Tapestry. Earthfall destroyed many Ghol-Gani cities utterly. Those that remained found themselves cut off from their trade networks, unable to acquire the resources to rebuild. Eventually, these Ghol-Gani sites withered, leaving behind cursed and haunted ruins waiting to corrupt those who stumble across them.

## AGE OF DARKNESS (-5293 AR TO -4201 AR)

In -5293, the stars rained down on Golarion in the cataclysm of Earthfall. The impact of the devastation is said to have blotted out the sun for a millennium, leading to the downfall of the Azlanti and Thassilonian empires as well as that of Ghol-Gan and the already fading Saventh-Yhi. Amid this destruction and tragedy, the arboreal Dimari-Diji awakened to witness the disaster. Within a century of exploring his surroundings, Dimari-Diji discovered the mysterious Nemesis Well, a path between worlds, and vowed to protect the region from the malign entities who would use it to wreak havoc on Golarion.

Earthfall caused aftershocks long after the initial impact, from rising waters to the shifting of trade winds that had previously brought rain to the southern reaches of the Expanse. A disastrous series of droughts drove one group of savanna-dwelling Zenj pastoralists from their homelands and deeper into the jungle. Led by a pair of determined sisters, the druid Kamar and the healer Jahar, the pacifist refugees wandered for years in search of unclaimed territory where they could settle. Kamar, in her regular communion with the landscape, eventually encountered the ancient mind of Dimari-Diji and proposed a pact: her people would help him hide and guard the Nemesis Well if the arboreal allowed the group to settle in his forest. Dimari-Diji accepted, and the refugees used the skills they had learned in their journey to develop increasingly effective medications and alchemical compounds.

While most elves had retreated to Sovyrian prior to the catastrophe, the Mualijae elves chose to remain and defend their lands against the coming darkness. They faced that evil in the form of Dahak, god of evil dragons, who in the disruption caused by Earthfall infiltrated the Material Plane by exploiting one of the elven *aiudaras*. The clans that became the Ekujae sacrificed their greatest warriors to imprison Dahak within the *aiudara* portal network,

## TIMELINE

- ca. -6280 AR Savith beheads Ydersius.
- 5293 AR Earthfall. In the aftermath, the evil dragon god Dahak slips into the Material Plane through a gap in an elven *aiudara* network to devastate the Mwangi Expanse. The Ekujae manage to trap Dahak's incarnation within the Huntergate, leaving his manifestation stranded between planes.
- 5014 AR The Mualijae clans that will become the Alijae discover Nagisa.
- 4372 AR Mbe'ke dwarves found Cloudspire.
- 3502 AR Old-Mage Jatembe revives wizardry with his Ten Magic Warriors.
- 3300 AR Zenj sisters Kamar and Jahar lead their people to form an alliance with the arboreal Dimari-Diji and settle in his forest.
- 2832 AR The Ten Magic Warriors' most apt pupils band together to found the Magaambya.
- 2556 AR Followers of the Magic Warrior Black Heron found the Shory empire.
- 2323 AR The Shory's first flying city, Kho, takes flight.
- 632 AR The Tarrasque knocks the Shory city of Kho from the sky; it crashes in the mountains separating the Mwangi Expanse from Osirion.
- 507 AR The last Shory flying city, Ulduvai, attempts to revive its glory with power from the Dark Tapestry, only to crash.
- 308 AR Founding of Mzali.
- 58 AR The Matanji orcs found the city of Matakali.
- 106 AR A mortal hunter stumbles across the Altar of Angazhan, dying and reincarnating as the first Gorilla King.
- 223 AR The Matanji encounter the Gorilla King's demonic minions and begin

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fortifying Matakali with its first circle of walls.

1054 AR Gnoll matriarch Hungry Bones unites several gnoll tribes, leading them on a series of raids against Mzali, Elokolobha, and Kibwe.

1098 AR Hungry Bones's successor Shattered Bones retires from raiding but brings some of her warriors north to Kibwe to broker their services as mercenaries.

leaving the manifestation trapped between planes. These clans gathered around Alseta's Ring, the great *aiudara* hub, to develop the means to hold Dahak's manifestation at bay until they could find a way to permanently destroy it. Meanwhile, other clans traveled northeast, eventually rediscovering the White City of Nagisa. Despite the city's clearly elven architecture, its origins had been lost to time, and its heart had attracted demonic influences.

The clans disagreed on how to deal with this new evil. Those that chose to remain near Nagisa, studying its ruins and attempting to drive out the demons, became the Alijae. Others feared becoming corrupted themselves, and continued to the shores of Lake Ocota, where they dwelled in peace until the ascension of the first Gorilla King. Resolving themselves to confront evil rather than withdraw again, the clans—now calling themselves the Kallijae—set about resisting corruption from within.

While the Mualijae lost touch with the other elven civilizations remaining on Golarion, the Mbe'ke dwarves maintained connections with their kin upon arriving in the Expanse. Some time after the Quest for Sky brought the dwarves to the surface, several groups traveled south to establish dwarven citadels beyond Avistan. One group of clans built Dongun Hold in what is now Alkenstar. The clans that would become the Mbe'ke formed an alliance with the cloud dragons of the Terwa Uplands, founding Cloudspire. Over the centuries, the Mbe'ke built their citadel into a thriving center for trade, mining, and metallurgy, all the while maintaining links with other dwarven strongholds.

## AGE OF ANGUISH (-4200 AR TO -3469 AR)

Earthfall shattered many of Golarion's oldest civilizations beyond recovery, and much knowledge died with them. Across the world people struggled to rebuild and reinvent what they had lost. This period led to the rise of the Mwangi Expanse's most famous heroes: Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors. A full account of all their legends goes beyond the scope of an introductory history, but Jatembe's greatest achievement was the reintroduction of magic and spellcasting to a world that had half-forgotten it was possible. Jatembe's first and most important teaching was that knowledge of any sort had to be shared: if no one benefited from it, what was its worth? While each of his Ten Magic Warriors had their own focus and interests, they followed their teacher's example, taking apprentices to train and send forth to do good in the world. Over time, the foremost follower of the Magic Warrior Elephant, known as Jade Feather, realized that much knowledge of what the other Warriors and their apprentices accomplished wasn't being preserved, as most moved from one problem or puzzle to another without documenting their solutions or communicating them to others. Jade Feather took the matter to Elephant and proposed that the apprentices choose a place to meet regularly and exchange knowledge. Elephant agreed, and she encouraged all her followers to meet with those of her friend Verdant Spider, at Verdant Spider's favored town of Nantambu.

These meetings soon became an annual event, and the followers of the other Magic Warriors—not willing to have their exploits left out of Elephant's chronicles—soon joined in. Across the Expanse, those who sought knowledge for its own sake or to benefit their communities soon flocked to Nantambu, seeking teachers in everything from herbalism and irrigation to abjuration theory and weather magic. Elephant and Verdant Spider wrote no codes of conduct, strict syllabi, or apprenticeship contracts; all Verdant Spider asked was that prospective students help the villagers with their work and to contribute to the feeding and keeping of



themselves and each other. This attitude subtly discouraged those interested solely in personal gain and prestige while encouraging those motivated to work for the communal good. Those not so inclined were introduced to Azure Leopard's more militant followers, who were more than happy to see them off. As the apprentices began to act communally, Golden Snake honored them with one of his own nicknames, "Magaambya."

Nantambu became known as a place of shared learning and tolerance for all those willing to live, learn, and work together. This reputation, and rumors of an anadi among the Magic Warriors, drew the attention of the anadi people, the shapeshifting spider-folk with a natural aptitude for transmutation magic. In centuries past, anadis had approached cities now lost to history, seeking only to learn and trade—but were driven off by the instinctive arachnophobia of many sapient species. Refusing to give up, anadis devoted centuries to changing their forms to evoke less fear, and with the Magaambya accepting iruxi and gnoll petitioners, their hopes rose. A trio of anadi spellcasters sought admission to the Magaambya, and they quickly earned the respect of all with their skill and dedication.

On the eve of their formal acceptance as teachers, they asked to speak with Jade Feather in private and revealed their other forms. Jade Feather overcame her initial alarm to say that they would be welcome regardless of their shape. The anadi Dappled Dancer countered that, while some would be willing to overlook a fearsome appearance to see the well-meaning heart within, not all would, and the anadi had lost many loved ones who had misjudged their welcome. Dappled Dancer asked Jade Feather to be discreet regarding their other forms and to work with the anadi to make the world a safer place to reveal themselves. Despite her beliefs that all knowledge should be shared, Jade Feather realized that revealing the anadis' nature would put them in danger, and she agreed to keep their secret. The Magaambya's teachers have quietly spread stories of Grandmother Spider and helpful spirits disguised as spiders for millennia while continuing to accept anadi students and hoping that one day they'll feel safe enough to step out of the shadows.

## AGE OF DESTINY (-3470 AR TO -632 AR)

As Golarion emerged from the Age of Anguish, new empires arose. Black Heron, one of Old-Mage Jatembe's Magic Warriors—or a successor wearing his mask—united southern Garundi nomads and a number of Mwangi tribes to fight cults of Rovagug. The alliance's leaders started by using air magic to attack from trees; they soon developed flying platforms, nearly invulnerable to conventional attack and capable of striking from anywhere. With the Rough Beast's cults suppressed for the moment, the allied tribes wished to return to their nomadic lifestyles while maintaining their relationships and continuing to develop their flying technology. They formed the Shory Empire, which flowered in this time of peace, raising first Kho and then its other cities to the skies. In keeping with nomadic traditions of hospitality and the Magaambya's teachings of service, the flying cities offered healing, knowledge, and news of other lands to the ground-based cities they passed.

The mages who built and maintained the cities' flight apparatus gained more and more power, and the Shory Empire developed into a true magic-ruled society in which a triumvirate of spellcasters ruled each city. However, their aeromantic techniques engendered dependency on summoned beings, beginning with elementals but leading to daemons and creatures of the Dark Tapestry. Between growing arrogance, alienation from grounded civilizations, and lack of maintenance, the cities fell to attacks from Rovagug's spawn, disease, or other tragic events. While the Shory empire lasted almost two thousand years, few records survived, and many consider their flying cities a legend. However, the ruins of Kho in the Barrier Wall separating the Mwangi Expanse from the deserts of Osirion prove that those Shory cities were no mere myth.

Shory's flying cities, even in their twilight, had kept up their teaching duties

- 2089 AR The Gorilla King of Usaro ambushes Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration, destroying it utterly.
- 2203 AR Osibu strengthens its magical defenses after Aspis Consortium agents stumble across it while seeking out its life-extending alchemical compounds.
- 2603 AR The Caldaru arrive at the city of Boali.
- 2618 AR After nearly two decades of peaceful alliance and intermarriage, the Caldaru raze Boali to the ground. They continue to hold Senghor, developing it into a major trading port.
- 2653 AR The Aspis Consortium establishes a foothold in Bloodcove.
- 3705 AR The war between Rastel and Xatremba culminates in Rastel summoning a horde of demons, which scours Xatremba before destroying Rastel as well.
- 3841 AR High King Nkobe, last of the old ruling house of the Mbe'ke dwarves, loses his only son to illness. He descends into violent paranoia, and civil war breaks out.
- 3844 AR The War of Split Hearts ends with most of the Mbe'ke aristocracy dead. The survivors institute a constitutional monarchy, with the head of state elected by the Assembly of Kings.
- 3967 AR The Council of Mwanysia overthrows and replaces Mzali's royal house.
- 4138 AR Chelaxian nobles claim dominion over a section of the coast, founding the colony of Sargava.
- 4141 AR On 21 Desnus, all the remaining enslaved halflings in Eleder, Sargava's capital, vanish in what becomes known as "The Big Slip." The government

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- announces a ban on bringing enslaved halflings to the colony to prevent further escapes.
- 4606 AR Aroden dies; the Eye of Abendego forms. The Age of Lost Omens begins.
- 4607-4611 AR Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist begins preying on Mbe'ke shipping. The Mbe'ke retaliate, resulting in the first of the Corsair Wars.
- 4610 AR A Sargavan army invades Mzali; the mummy Walkena awakens and destroys it with divine fire.
- 4640 AR Sargava breaks with Thrune-ruled Cheliox.
- 4662 AR Baron Grallus of Sargava dies and is succeeded by Baron Utilinus.
- 4674 AR The Free Captains unify the Shackles under some semblance of government.
- 4695-4699 AR Second Corsair War between the Mbe'ke dwarves and the Shackles pirates begins.
- 4710 AR Adventurers slay the Gorilla King of Usaro. The serpentfolk city of Saventh-Yhi is revealed to Golarion as a whole.
- 4715 AR The colonized people of Sargava overthrow the oppressive government, then fight off a pirate siege from the Free Captains of the Shackles. They name their newly independent nation Vidrian.
- 4718 AR Cut off from their old tribute, the pirates of the Shackles resume their depredations on Mbe'ke shipping, beginning the third Corsair War.
- 4721 AR Present day.

well enough that, though their empire collapsed, the broader civilization they helped nurture didn't. For many people in the Expanse, life continued as it had for the previous six centuries, even as the visits from the flying cities came further and further apart. Trade networks and spheres of political influence shrank but remained intact, and in time, several Zenj polities filled the power vacuum. In keeping with their dual social structure, most static settlements formed in the forest under male leadership, but each such settlement maintained a relationship with a sister tribe in the savanna, ruled by a nomadic matriarch. Forest cities traded agricultural produce, medicines, cloth, and other finished goods to their sister tribe in exchange for meat, hides, ivory, bone and horn ornaments as well as fermented milk and yogurt. The month surrounding the equinox served as the traditional meeting time for such trade fairs. Communities also exchanged adolescents and young people: by long tradition, a young person who disliked the traditional gender role of their community of birth was encouraged to seek out an apprenticeship or marriage partner in the sister tribe, as elders understood that forcing a role on someone unsuited to it only led to unhappiness for the whole community. Through these exchanges, communities diversified while remaining united, and some grew into large cities. The greatest and most famous of these cities, however, tore each other apart in power struggles.

Xatremba rose first as a religious center. Its Pharasmin priests, who regarded the spirits of ancestors as intercessors and mediators between the living and the realm of the dead, were widely acknowledged as the wisest and most powerful. Mourners from distant cities made pilgrimages to Xatremba with a bone or token of their ancestor to consult the priests for guidance and aid, leaving the relics in the city's growing catacombs as offerings. The city grew so spiritually oriented that many materially minded merchants and craftspeople moved to the savanna winter camp of their sister tribe, the Rastel. In a break with tradition, the nomadic Rastel decided to expand the camp into a permanent market and later a city bearing the same name. The matriarch took residence in a tower of bone, coordinating teams of hunters who alternated between keeping the city supplied with meat and escorting caravans to other Zenj cities. In the time of peace and plenty, the trade city expanded rapidly, and merchants from Katapesh, Thuvia, Osirion, the Mana Wastes, and stranger places took residence in Rastel, bringing a multitude of customs and faiths.

Xatremba's rulers, accustomed to regional dominance, objected to these outside influences and attempted to restrict trade between the forest cities and Rastel. Outraged, Rastel's leaders accused Xatremba's rulership (with some accuracy) of invoking religious dogma to retain the city's status and power. Rastel countered by imposing tariffs and offering benefits to attract even more outside trade across the savanna routes. The battle for regional power escalated over the decades, and Rastel resorted to demonic magic to fend off the self-proclaimed "holy warriors" Xatremba sent to disrupt their trade routes. The protracted conflict culminated in open warfare. While Xatremba called on its ancestors and Pharamasma, Rastel called upon demon lords—and received a response. Demons descended on Xatremba, sending its inhabitants to meet their ancestors, and then made their way across forest and savanna to destroy those who thought they could control the powers of the Abyss. Rastel's summoning tore the barriers between planes, leaving rifts that the Magaambya and Ekujae fought for centuries to close. With demons running loose between worlds, people attempted to appease them rather than fight; some Magaambyan scholars suspect the collateral damage of this war drove certain Bekyar clans toward demon worship.

Further south, a line of warrior-kings and -queens claiming descent from Chohar, one of three divine aspects of their sun, founded the city of Mzali. Fiercely proud of their martial prowess, they mummified their royal dead and select retainers to protect the capital from beyond the grave. The early rulers quickly gained dominion over surrounding areas, taxing them heavily to fund

their armies. Once they gained hegemony over the region, however, chances for glory in battle grew few and far between. The ruling line became obsessed with rebuilding and repurposing their military orders as teams of gladiators, demanding more children from outlying areas to train for their blood games, more gold and precious stones for lavish victors' prizes, and more food and fabric to distribute to Mzali's denizens to attract audiences for the games.

Eventually, a network of regional governors and local religious leaders formed an alliance to break the ruling family's stranglehold on the region's economy. Calling themselves the Council of Mwanyisa, they coordinated an uprising against an army that had become little more than a gladiatorial recruitment drive and overthrew Mzali's rulers. Walkena, a young prince of the royal line, had died of illness a few decades before the revolt and had been entombed in haste in the sepulcher intended for a famous gladiator. The Council's militant followers searched out the royal tombs and destroyed their mummies but missed Walkena's, leaving him to slumber in obscurity.

## AGE OF ENTHRONEMENT (1 AR TO 4605 AR)

Some decades after the arrival of Aroden in the north, the demon lord Angazhan found a way to project some of his power into the Material Plane. In the cliffs above the southern coast of Lake Ocota, he shaped jagged stone into a rough altar and waited to anoint his representative on Golarion. No one knows the name of the first hapless mortal to touch the Altar of Angazhan and forcibly reincarnate as the Gorilla King, but they and their successors slowly built Usaro into a bloody shrine to the lord of destruction. As the Gorilla King's charau-ka and other followers began to range farther into the Expanse for sacrifices, they encountered the Matanji orcs. Once the nomadic tribes learned of Angazhan's brutal tortures, sacrifices, and hideous desecration of their dead kin, they unified to face the demonic threat. They transformed Matakali, once a meeting site for marriage negotiations and social rituals, into a walled redoubt where they trained to hunt demons. Over the centuries, Matakali's hunters secured their homeland further, building the Nine Walls that protect the Matanji orcs and the Sodden Lands from the demon's cultists.

While the Matanji and, later, the elven Mualijae turned their attention to the demonic threat, the people of the savanna contended with an increasingly powerful series of gnoll warlords. The matriarch Hungry Bones united her Spinebreaker tribe with the Red Fangs and the Stone Shapers after a decade of canny political maneuvering. She led the gnoll confederacy on a series of raids against Mzali and Elokolobha, venturing as far north as Kibwe. After she fell in battle—still leading her troops from the front at the venerable age of 60—her daughter Shattered Bones shifted tactics, exhorting tribute in exchange for protection along the savanna trade routes.

After a long and profitable career, Shattered Bones passed leadership of the Spinebreakers to her daughter Ashen Bones and retired to Kibwe, where she parlayed her reputation as a shrewd negotiator and experienced warrior to broker deals with caravans seeking gnoll mercenaries as guards. While the gnoll alliance dissolved after Ashen Bones's death, Shattered Bones's lieutenants carried on her work, arranging contracts for gnoll mercenaries as far afield as Senghor and Nantambu.

As the self-proclaimed empires of Avistan rose and fell, several attempted to expand into the Mwangi, with mixed results. Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration sought to claim the territory between the Ndele Gap in Nex and the western coast of Garund. The Gorilla King put a halt to their ambitions, massacring the army in an ambush at Nagisa and further humiliating the Taldan leadership by seizing the magical siege engine *Worldbreaker*. While this blow set back the Taldan expansion, other forces found different ways to tap the resources of the Expanse. Bloodcove, long a temporary port for pirates and marauders, saw a boom in traffic as the fast-growing criminal network known as the Aspis Consortium established a foothold there. They

## TROUBLING VISITORS

When the Aspis Consortium began its exploration of the Expanse, one group of agents ventured deep into the Screaming Jungle, seeking a "fountain of youth" on behalf of a Taldan noble with more wealth than sense. To their collective shock, the group found considerable evidence that the legend was based on truth. Under torture, a handful of captive Mwangi eventually provided enough information for the agents to find the city of Osibu. The agents passed themselves off as lost adventurers seeking medicines to heal their beloved infirm lord. The healers of Osibu tended to the newcomers' injuries and malnutrition while keeping them under house arrest until their story could be verified. The city's elected council quickly uncovered the agents' lies and their trail of destruction through the Screaming Jungle to Osibu. The council found itself in a quandary: their ancient mission of providing a place of safety and healing was in jeopardy unless they neutralized the agents—but killing in cold blood went against that same mission.

After consulting the arboreal Dimari-Diji, the city's leaders came to a consensus on the interlopers. If they could agree to reform their ways, they would be permitted to live in the city but not allowed to leave; if not, the wise women would mix a blend of powerful herbal hallucinogens that would replace the agents' memories of the city with fever dreams. Two of the agents, swayed by Osibu's altruism, agreed to remain. The rest were drugged and left miles from the protective Circle of Twice-Honored Women. These agents made their way back to Sargava with wild tales of a city paved with gold where an elixir of immortality flowed from a public fountain presided over by a talking tree—tales widely regarded by most Aspis agents as fevered fantasies or flimsy excuses for failure.

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## QUIET RESISTANCE

As Sargava grew, some of the new colonists brought enslaved halflings with them. One spring night, which would go on to make the constabulary of Eleder the laughingstock of the region, all the halflings brought from Cheliax mysteriously vanished. The furious nobles commissioned agents of the Aspis Consortium to recover what they considered their property, but the agents could only turn up local tales of a small, secretive people who traveled the forest. In later decades, some halflings who might be of Avistani extraction or descent have been found among the Song'o, but the Song'o remain coy when pressed for details.

quickly set about exploiting the Mwangi Expanse's natural resources and looting historic cultural sites. Several groups, including the Ekujae, resisted these incursions with all the guerrilla tactics at their disposal, but the siren song of treasure drew more unscrupulous adventurers each year.

Farther north, internal political upheaval had sidelined the dwarves of Cloudspire, from whom the Matanji and Ekujae had unsuccessfully sought aid against the demons. High King Nkobe, last of the old ruling house of the Mbe'ke dwarves, lost his only son to illness. Descending into paranoia and despair with the death of his heir, he ordered the execution of the royal doctors, and then the fellowship of surgeons, and then local barbers and medicine women. The city of Cloudspire soon rebelled, beginning the War of Split Hearts. The ensuing three years of bloody civil war left most of the hereditary aristocracy dead. The few survivors, recognizing that a lack of checks and balances had allowed the system to fail, assembled representatives of the most powerful Mbe'ke fellowships to hammer out a constitutional electoral monarchy. The fellowship leaders formed what became known as the Assembly of Speakers, and the Assembly of Kings would select and advise the monarch. While these reforms strengthened the Mbe'ke and Cloudspire in the long run, the unrest prevented them from taking a more active role in resisting the Avistani encroachment.

As the Avistani nation of Taldor crumbled, several large territories declared their independence from the ailing empire. Drawn by the Expanse's resources and determined to succeed where Taldor's Armies of Exploration had failed, the newly declared nation of Cheliax sponsored explorers to establish outposts in the Shackles. After some alarming encounters with haunted Ghol-Gani ruins in the islands, they settled south of the Kaava Lands, claiming the area in the name of Cheliax and calling it Sargava. The new colonists, mostly younger nobility with little chance of inheriting wealth, land, or power in Avistan, quickly consigned the indigenous peoples of the Expanse to second-class citizenship and economic exploitation. They didn't rule with impunity, however, and met with resistance in unexpected quarters.

In Mzali, the Council of Mwanyisa rediscovered the mummy of Walkena, along with his fantastic grave goods. Shortly

afterward, several councilors had visions of Mzali's ancient solar-disk symbol rising in place of the sun and heard whispers that Mzali would soon rise again with their help. After consulting their religious authorities, who had few records of Mzali's ruling family and its disastrous descent, the Council interpreted this vision to mean that Mzali was destined to regain its former regional hegemony. They put the mummified prince on display and

called for the surrounding peoples to witness the grandeur of their old rulers. After centuries of disruption from Sargavan colonists to Shackles pirates and

Blood Cove raiders, the people of the surrounding area flocked to



Mzali to see material signs of their proud past. They brought with them tributes of gold, salt, gems, and other trade goods. Mzali soon became a center for religious pilgrimage, regional trade, and resistance to Sargavan depredations. Irked by this challenge, Sargavan leaders in Kalabuto sent an expedition of mercenaries and pirates, led by young nobles eager for glory, to plunder Mzali. To the astonishment of everyone, the mummy sprang to the city's defense, driving out the invaders with a rain of holy fire. Walkena quickly established himself as the city's ruler, invoking his ancient hereditary claims as well as his divine power and authority. Outraged that outsiders had trespassed in his stronghold, Walkena swore to rid the Expanse of the invaders. The various resistance movements flocked to his banner, and the Council of Mwanayisa found itself sidelined as Mzali turned from a city of trade to one leaning toward war.

## AGE OF LOST OMENS (4606 AR TO 4721 AR [PRESENT])

While the god Aroden had little influence in the Expanse, his death left lasting consequences for the region. The appearance of the Eye of Abendego—a catastrophic, endless supernatural storm—swiftly drowned the countries of Yamasa and Lirgen and changed shipping routes across the coasts, sending more traders through Bloodcove. Lirgen's ruling Saoc Brethren, renowned for their astrological expertise, failed to predict the event, with their prophecies useless in this critical moment. It's difficult to say which was the greater blow to the Lirgeni: the dissolution of their country or the shattering of their worldview. Within a decade of the impact, the Saoc Brethren and much of the population had disappeared, leaving behind scattered fragments of technology and records to puzzle those who came to the region after them.

In Cheliox's colonial holdings, the current ruler, Baron Grallus, was in a quandary: having backed House Thrune's rival during Cheliox's civil war, he found himself without home support when Thrune ascended the throne in 4640. Determined to hold on to power, he declared Sargava's independence with support from the pirates of the Shackles—secured through copious bribes that soon grew into regular protection payments. Possibly realizing the potential profits to be had from the geographic and political upheaval, some of the more powerful Shackles pirates decided to unite under the banner of the Hurricane King in 4674. Despite the dangers, the wealth and adventure to be gained on the high seas drove more and more disreputable people to the crews of the Free Captains. A Pirate Council coalesced around the Hurricane King, and while no one could accuse the pirates of the Shackles of formalized government, they nonetheless became a regional power despite their lack of organization. As long as they concentrated their depredations on the wealthy merchant ships of Cheliox and Rahadoum while leaving Mwangi fishermen largely unbothered, the skilled mariners of the Bonuwat and Bekyar declined to challenge the pirates' self-proclaimed dominance.

However, colonial rule wouldn't last. The Matanji and the Kallijae stepped up their campaign against the demons of Usaro, and adventurers managed to kill the Gorilla King himself. In the chaotic aftermath, a mixed team of Matanji and Kallijae stole the Altar of Angazhan to prevent another Gorilla King from ascending. Soon after, the long-running resistance movement against Chelaxian colonialists finally succeeded in overthrowing the Sargavan government, turning it into the newly freed nation Vidrian.

## FAMILIAR FACES

Characters who are familiar with the Pathfinder faction leader Eando Kline (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Pathfinder Society Guide* 39) might also be aware of his adventures in the Mwangi Expanse and his dangerous exploration of a Serpentfolk city, as well as the fallout with the Society's Decemvirate over publishing his discoveries.

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# PEOPLE OF THE MWANGI

*Though often referred to with the catch-all term of “Mwangi” by other cultures on Golarion, the humans of the Mwangi Expanse are split into myriad different ethnicities. Though these groups divide even further by regional, societal, and historical differences, the populations share similar tendencies in appearance, values, dress, customs, and other traditions that Mwangi cultural opinion generally considers them to share a societal origin.*



## SOCIETY

Through a robust history of regional trade and an environment brimming with resources, cultures in the Mwangi Expanse have grown both together and independently from each other over the eons. Aside from the nation of Vidrian, most large population centers in the Expanse are powerful, independent city-states, each with its own culture strikingly different from that of its neighbors. Other groups are nomadic, carving new paths and following generations of trails alike. Most people of Mwangi descent have dark skin, though hair coloring and other physical features vary widely between ethnicities and ancestries.

## ANCESTRIES

Like nearly every corner of the world, humans are the most common ancestry in the Mwangi Expanse. While civilizations, such as the Shory Empire, have risen and fallen over the ages, many human cultures in the Expanse date back eons, leading to an incredible wealth of knowledge passed on over time. Elves make up a sizable chunk of the population as well, most of them descended from the Mualijae elves who remained on Golarion rather than retreating to their ancestral home of Sovyrian in the wake of Earthfall. Dwarves are somewhat less common, and the two major dwarven societies hold a unique reverence for dragons. Halflings dwell mostly in the shadows of human societies, often going unnoticed by taller peoples. One notable population is the Song’o, whose reclusive communities disavow adventure but won’t hesitate with self-defense.

Gnomes do live in the Expanse, but in small numbers, and they have no specific enclaves they can point to as a stronghold within the region. Goblin populations barely exist outside of the coast—pirate goblins, who are usually monkey goblins, are the most common. As a result, Mwangi peoples more often view goblins they encounter with curiosity rather than prejudice.

Orcs across the Expanse have a reputation as heroic demon hunters, and they and their half-orc kin are treated with the highest respect by most Mwangi societies. Foreigners who treat orcs with aggression will likely find themselves shunned or outright exiled. Numerous other ancestries populate the Expanse in much greater numbers than elsewhere in the world, such as catfolk and kobolds, and some ancestries effectively only exist in the Expanse, like golomas and shisks.

Given the itinerant habits of many Mwangi peoples, marriages between people of different ethnicities is common. Some cultures have customs for bringing spouses and children into a parent culture, but in other cases, children with dual or multiple ethnic backgrounds can feel torn or alienated from dueling parent cultures.

## LANGUAGE

The Common tongue of the Mwangi Expanse is known simply as Mwangi, a trade language developed to be accessible to people from different backgrounds across the Expanse. When playing characters native to the Mwangi Expanse, the GM should replace “Common” as the default language with “Mwangi” instead.

This book also introduces the Mwangi regional languages of Calda, Ekujae shape-script, Kibwani, Lirgeni, Mzunu, Ocotan, and Xanmba. These languages should be common to characters that reside in or have a connection to the Mwangi Expanse but are uncommon for other characters. At the GM’s discretion, Avistani regional languages, such as Kelish and Varisian, should be uncommon to residents of the Mwangi Expanse.

## RARITY

This book introduces new ancestries that have deep ties to the Mwangi Expanse, or adversarial ties to most other parts of the world. These ancestries have been labeled as uncommon; however, this rarity reflects their relationship with Golarion in general, rather than their presence within the Mwangi Expanse. In addition, the book also introduces a number of ancestries that reside within the Expanse but are very small in population or culturally reclusive. Since others very seldom see them, they’re rare as adventurers. These rarity traits apply specifically to the rules for playing a member of this ancestry, and it’s separate from the rarity trait that determines the obscurity of information about a creature.

To reflect the different cultural makeup of the Mwangi Expanse, GMs might consider adjusting the rarity of various applicable ancestries.

- Kobolds, lizardfolk, and orcs are considered common ancestries.
- Gnomes and goblins are considered uncommon.
- Certain uncommon ancestries with strong ties to Garund, such as catfolk, gnolls (page 110), and gripplis (page 118), can be considered common if the group and GM so choose.

## BEKYAR NAMES

Bekyar masculine names include Ake, Javeil, Mirrok, Otajo, and Yeksyka; feminine names include Accaza, Brijou, Naoke, Soki, and Xakieya; and gender-neutral names include Gyssek, Irekyo, Saynak, and Yassel.

## COMMON GROUPS

The following ethnic groups represent the most widespread people living within the Mwangi Expanse.

### BEKYAR

Residing primarily within Vidrian, the Shackles, and the Sodden Lands along the Mwangi coastline, the Bekyar people have a complicated place in the Mwangi Expanse. Bekyars tend to be tall, and their hairstyles often involve long and elaborate locs or braids, sometimes incorporating flashy and decorative silk head wraps. Spiced incense and floral candles see more widespread use over other personal and household scents. There's a wide misconception that Bekyar people are simply malicious and evil for the sake of it, but Bekyars consider themselves brutally realistic pragmatists. Others believe that they worship demons and similarly terrible powers. Though Bekyars do make deals and contracts with demons and devils, they do so while weighing and understanding the risks and consequences. The Bekyar people do very little in the way of considering good and evil as objective concepts—they simply believe that if they can survive the consequences of their actions and desires, then they've earned what they've gained. Bekyars consider fiends to have a power to respect and be wary of, and they believe that respecting and understanding the terms of a contract is more important to a stable society than any other consideration.

Bekyar beliefs revolve around a respect for the power of the archdevil Mephistopheles and his lesser infernal servants. The Bekyar people survived Earthfall when Mephistopheles himself collectively offered them a contract, a deal that would set the tone for their culture's pragmatic attitude toward infernal dealings. The exact terms of that initial contract are unknown to modern day Bekyars, but they widely believe that the function of their culture within the Mwangi Expanse collectively fulfills the bargain in some way. Some Bekyar magic users embrace this aspect of their ancestral origins in small doses and use infernal magic to heal the sick or perform miracles, typically in exchange for some personal sacrifice or the fulfillment of a pact at the end of their life. Others adopt fiendish magic to the point of pursuing transformation into a demon or devil and the ability to offer pacts themselves.

Bekyar culture holds a brutal hatred for outsiders, particularly Sargavan colonists, Avistani explorers, and anyone else they consider as potential invaders. They know that others think their practices to be barbaric, particularly their embrace of slave trading and infernal magic, but Bekyars have no interest in allowing other people to change the way things have always worked for them or to look down on their culture from what they consider as overly idealistic pedestals. In contrast, they'll happily trade with other Mwangi people. They might even help a hapless Mwangi or outsider into an unfortunate deal with a devil—usually in pursuit of some greater deal for themselves.

Though other Mwangi peoples might not understand the intricacies of this rather secretive culture, they respect the fact that Bekyars never break a deal, even if one must take care when making such agreements. Some believe that Bekyars fearlessly stare demons in the face or that they're actually demons, which isn't always untrue. Other Mwangis respect Bekyars for their apparent psychological strength as much as from fear of making a lifelong enemy out of one of them. For all the focus on discipline and pragmatism in Bekyar culture, offending a Bekyar means risking a foe who might be willing to sacrifice their soul to ensure a person suffers from eternal damnation, a life of poor luck, or an infernal force aiming to create tragedy at every turn. Bekyar people are incredibly passionate, both in how they love and how they hate. This double-edged sword serves as both a



BEKYAR

strength and a weakness, and few other Mwangis desire to find out which side they're going to fall on.

## BONUWAT

While permanent Bonuwat homes mostly appear along the Mwangi coastline, from Desperation Bay to the Shackles to even the Sodden Lands and portions of southern Rahadoum, it's far more likely to find Bonuwat communities on water. Bonuwats are average-sized people whose lifestyles have shaped them into strong swimmers. They keep their hair short, in cornrows, or bald for the sake of being hydrodynamic. Most Bonuwat people make their living at sea. Bonuwat society is clan-based, and most clans differentiate themselves by what they primarily seek on their voyages. Most of these clans fish, specializing in intricate methods of capturing a particular species. They care for said species as well by ensuring that they keep their practices in balance to avoid overfishing and ruining their livelihoods. Other clans take advantage of water-breathing magic to deep dive and hunt for treasure at the bottom of the sea. Even more hardened Bonuwats sail near the Eye of Abendego to pillage freshly abandoned ships, knowing that hapless outsiders pulled into the nation-sized hurricane rarely make it through—though if a clan finds stranded sailors, they're hardly heartless and will take survivors back with them out of the storm even if they hadn't planned a rescue mission.

Since Bonuwat people spend so much time as small fractured clans at sea, they believe in a variety of gods for a variety of reasons. The most common gods they worship are Sarenrae, the Guiding Sun, and Gozreh, the Wind and the Waves. Every Bonuwat makes offerings to Gozreh to ensure safe voyages, even though they're well aware that they can do little to appease the temperamental god of the sea. As they use the sun as their primary means of navigation during the day, most sailors venerate Sarenrae, though Bonuwat clans who prefer to work at night tend to worship Desna since they navigate using the stars and the position of the moon. Clans that function at night tend to be much less common than their diurnal counterparts, and they've developed some of their own cultural differences. Such Bonuwats wear slightly more clothing than their kin due to lower temperatures at night, plus many of their rituals and customs occur during these hours. Most customs that might involve the sun are usually replaced with the moon or the stars.

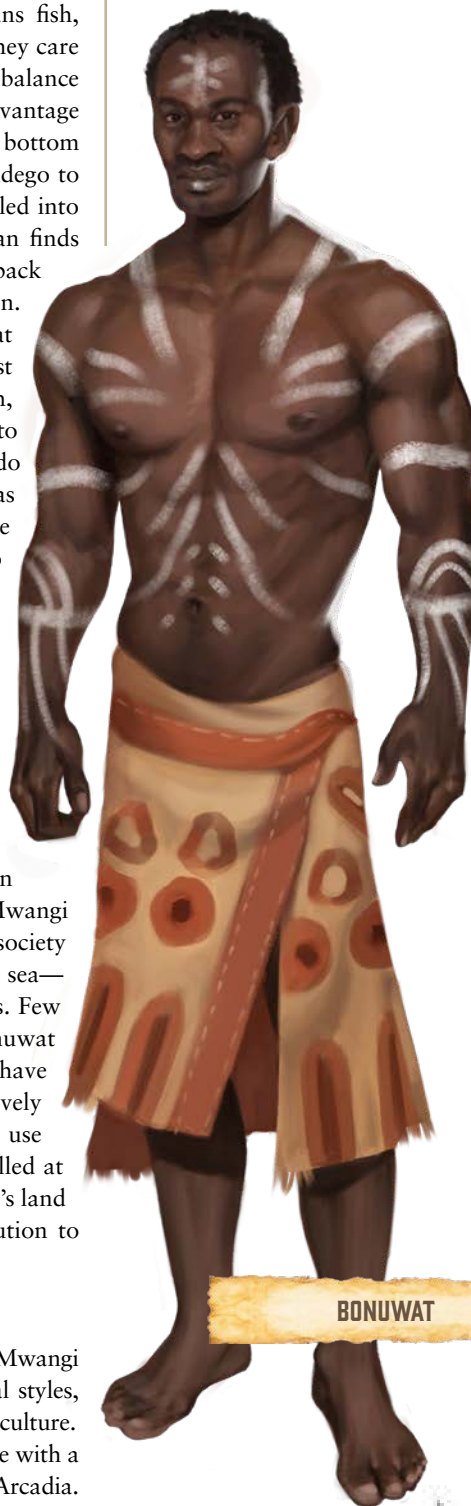
The Bonuwat majority—those who work primarily during the day—don't wear much in the way of clothing, allowing them to stay cool and unencumbered in the Mwangi climate. They're a modern culture with a modern economy and trade all along the coasts of the Mwangi Expanse. Most other Mwangi peoples see them as an essential part of society since few are as adept when it comes to acquiring resources from the sea—be it food, inks, pearls, or rare underwater plants used in medicines. Few members of other cultures can claim a close friendship with a Bonuwat person; most Bonuwats spend so much time at sea that outsiders have difficulty in truly getting to know any of them. They almost exclusively marry within their ethnicity, have most of their children at sea, and use their land as glorified trade storage. Bonuwats who are the least skilled at seafaring usually have the responsibility of taking care of their people's land resources, but these individuals take pride in their unique contribution to their society.

## CALDARU

Caldaru people consider themselves, and are often looked at by other Mwangi peoples, as particularly unique: their culture uses words, architectural styles, and rituals that don't seem to have roots in any other Mwangi culture. Primarily residing within the city of Senghor, Caldarus intensively trade with a wide variety of people, even harboring the occasional ship from far-off Arcadia.

## BONUWAT NAMES

Bonuwat masculine names include Bakary, Korotoum, Oulai, Ramatou, and Vassiriki; feminine names include Akissi, Djeneba, Naminata, Salimata, and Yaoua; and gender-neutral names include Camara, Diomande, Kan, and Sangare.



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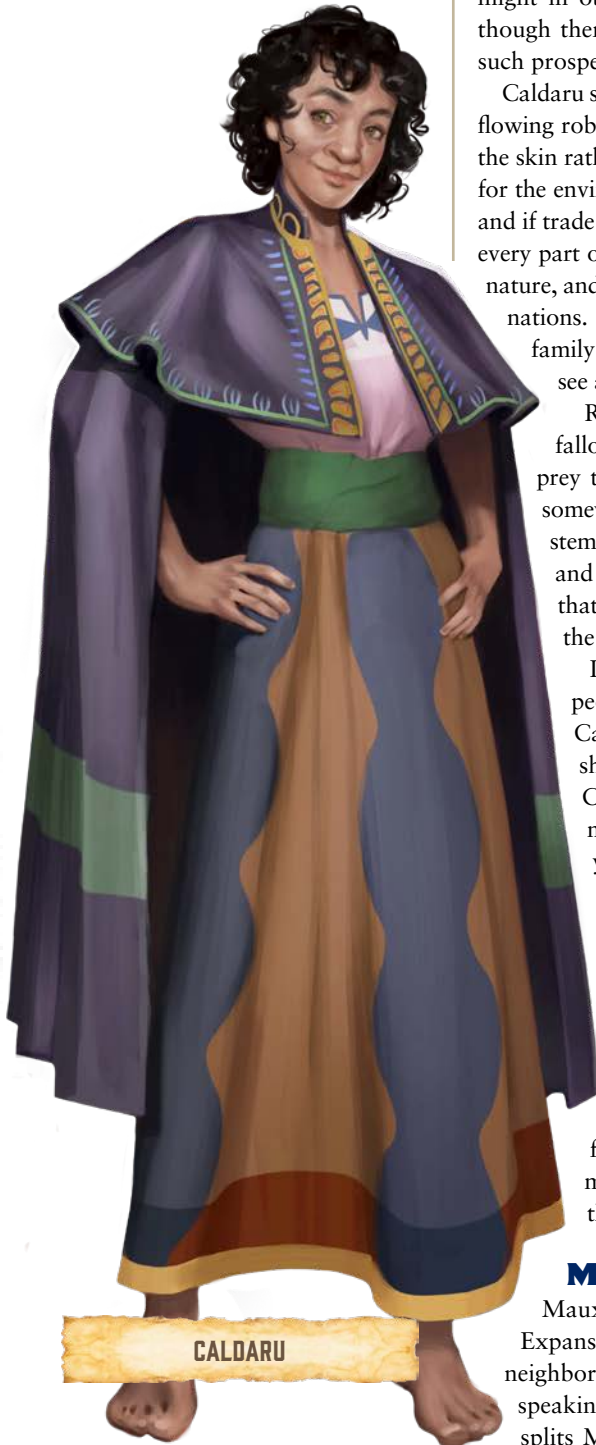
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## CALDARU NAMES

Caldaru masculine names include Azadi, Mohe, Sollonah, Unadu, and Woshali; feminine names include Eyota, Galihi, Maji, Onawa, and Salila; and gender-neutral names include Kimeya, Tanama, Waya, and Yono.



CALDARU

Generations of exchanges and diplomacy have led to Caldarus absorbing many languages and aspects from far-flung communities, a legacy that has made their civilization a melting pot of technology and culture from distant lands. Though they rarely lose sight of their identity as a people, they also never slow down the progress and evolution of their society.

Many other groups, including other Mwangis, stereotype Caldarus as capitalists who are primarily concerned with making money—especially due to previous trade arrangements with the former colony of Sargava. However, Caldarus tend to see amassing money and wealth as a means of providing for and growing a family, not as a laudable goal on its own. Overt displays of affluence and property hold different connotations in Senghor than they might in other cultures. Financial status is seen as the ability to provide, though there remain many who simply enjoy the luxury that accompanies such prosperity.

Caldaru skin tones range widely from olive to dark bronze. They prefer long, flowing robes and gowns with thin materials that take in the breeze and cool the skin rather than provide warmth. Caldarus usually hold an intense respect for the environment, for if the environment isn't healthy, trade isn't healthy—and if trade isn't healthy, their families aren't healthy. As such, they tend to use every part of a culled or hunted animal, never take more than they need from nature, and even financially support the agricultural needs of their close trade nations. Many Caldarus worship Erastil, taking on his values regarding family and providing even if Caldaru people interpret them in what they see as a more modern way.

Recent events have limited Caldaru trade routes because of the fallout from the Vidric Revolution resulting in trade vessels becoming prey to a sea of malcontent pirates. The revolution has also created a somewhat strained relationship with the Sargavan and Vidric populations stemming from an uneven treaty and trade agreement between Senghor and Vidrian. Most Caldarus insist the terms are fair, due to their belief that their contributions more than justify the agreement and because of the aid Senghor's navy offered during the revolution.

In contrast, Caldarus hold a close relationship with the Bonuwat people, as Bonuwat crews are more than willing to outsail the Free Captain pirates to keep Senghor's trade flowing. The two cultures share similar values in terms of nature and their environment, but Caldarus value keeping the family together, while Bonuwats are far more willing to be apart from their families for months or even years at a time for a long voyage. Bonuwats and Caldarus also have a mutual respect based on their adept skills at sailing, though there's friendly debate on which people are actually better.

Without a doubt, the Caldaru people are masters of engineering. Their city of Senghor is an architectural and defensive marvel, and they have more sophisticated ships than almost anyone in the Mwangi Expanse and beyond. In addition to their unique cultural traditions, they constantly seek new information and technological methods from other civilizations. Their ships and fortifications take the forms of armored displays of militaristic art, meant to intimidate any pirate who dares attack them on one of their many diplomatic or trade missions.

## MAUXI

Mauxi people live mainly in the northern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. Their lifestyle as a whole is heavily influenced by the neighboring Thuvian and Osirian societies, with most Mauxis primarily speaking the Osiriani language. Yet, a generational divide currently splits Mauxi culture. Older Mauxis tend to reject even the notion that they have anything to do with the Mwangi peoples, while the younger

generations tend to view the south as their homeland, having grown to view the cultural influence of Thuvia and Osirion as a byproduct of having lived among them for so long. In contrast to their elders, young Maxis often take on the customs and rituals of other Mwangi people, in the same manner as the recent cultural revival in Vidrian. Some Maxis have begun to create their own coming of age ritual, where they travel south to the Mwangi region they most identify with, then return and tell stories of their experiences and hardships after at least a year. Most southern Mwangis' experiences with Maxis are based on encounters with these young pilgrims or otherwise with trained Mauxi diplomats.

Mauxi people usually range from light tan to dark brown in skin tone, usually with brown or golden eyes. Due to living in a dry desert climate, they typically wear head wraps to protect themselves from the sun. Their fashion ranges from a variety of colorful robes for older Maxis to fashion from various Mwangi cultures for younger people, with many youths settling on a fusion of the two. Mauxi people tend to be highly religious and worship the gods within the Osirion pantheon, but they also worship gods from other cultures, primarily Abadar, Nethys, Pharasma, and Sarenrae.

Mauxi government is a monarchy strictly ruled by a family said to be distantly tied to Osirion royalty, and many political decisions tend to take into account the needs and wills of the gods, which provides another source of generational strife. While both generations greatly respect the gods, there's a divide regarding how much religion should be incorporated into Mauxi politics. The younger generation believes that older generations use the gods for their own agendas and that mixing politics and faith is disrespectful to the deities. Older generations believe that it would be sacrilegious not to incorporate the gods into their policies.

Despite these strong differences, the two generations don't generally hate or bear animosity for each other. The young generation does their best to respect their elders despite their disagreements, and Maxis make time to gather for holidays and celebrations and take care of each other. Their many debates frequently become very intense, but few stop loving each other over these disagreements, as they're often strictly personal issues rather than matters of life and death.

## SARGAVAN

Sargavans are the descendants of Chelaxian colonists from the former nation of Sargava. Most of them stand at an average height with pale to pink skin. They wear vests, tunics, gowns, and armor that were common during the Golden Age of Chelax, mixed with bits and pieces of fashions and hairstyles from practically every area in the Mwangi Expanse. Reviled by their progenitor nation of Chelax and thrown down from their position of power in Vidrian, many Sargavans feel they've lost their way as a people—but their wide perception of themselves as leaders and rulers makes them tenaciously determined to succeed and toil under any circumstances, even if they lack the respect and recognition to their cultural history typically given to denizens of the Mwangi Expanse.

The Sargavan people have been fractured in two by the Vidric Revolution. The majority of them now reside in Bloodcove after fleeing the reckoning of revolution, and they now try to carve out a new place for themselves among pirates and organized crime. Despite the ill-gotten riches they took from Vidrian, most of these exiles found they had difficulties penetrating the area's power structure. Some Sargavans wound up robbed and left for dead, while others have managed to bribe their way in with pirates or

## MAUXI NAMES

Mauxi masculine names include Baragsen, Izil, Maqrin, Usem, and Yuften; feminine names include Dassin, Lunja, Noumidia, Sidra, and Tamenzut; and gender-neutral names include Asrat, Kebra, Meaza, and Tsige.



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## SARGAVAN NAMES

Sargavan masculine names include Climent, Nilos, Lorrec, Raimion, and Vicens; feminine names include Arlette, Immia, Mereia, Sofena, and Thereth; and gender-neutral names include Cesce, Jorda, Montserrat, and Silvi.



SARGAVAN

the Aspis Consortium. Regardless of such setbacks, the majority of Sargavans based in Bloodcove pridefully hold to the idea that they, like their colonial ancestors, can take control and become the dominant power.

Relations are more complex in Vidrian. By law, Sargavans who helped the slaves revolt or fight off the Free Captain pirates are official citizens and free from retribution, but these Sargavans continue to have culture clashes and suffer from growing pains. Sargavans are used to being the dominant culture; many who revolted out of disgust for the Sargavan state expected to remain in power or otherwise see themselves in the positions they previously envied. As the reality of the revolution sets in, the Sargavans of Vidrian continue the long adjustment to this paradigm shift. Many former slaves and servants are openly hostile—there's a heavy level of justified passive aggression with former servants openly talking about and being critical of Sargavans' randomly mixed fashions from different Mwangi groups or just reminding Sargavans of their new, equal position in life. Those Sargavan people who genuinely opposed slavery and found it abhorrent, and who tended to avoid the prideful and entitled behavior of others, receive a bit more respect and acceptance. Many of these Sargavans work to contribute to Vidric politics in a way that helps unite the disparate peoples. Yet right now, the state of the Sargavan people remains very unsteady, as fractured goals and colonial history greatly complicate anything resembling immediate solidarity between themselves and with indigenous Vidric people.

Sargavans of any origin are largely viewed negatively across the Mwangi Expanse, a perception exacerbated by other, unrelated northern colonial efforts. They're primarily seen as invaders and slavers, a reputation based on a very real history, and since the Vidric Revolution, many Mwangis would rather take the opportunity to attack Sargavans than help, work, or trade with them. Bekyars in particular hold no love for their former slave trade partners, who have outlived their usefulness. Without economic incentive allying the two groups, Bekyars have no reason to trust Sargavans, who are colonial outsiders with uncertain motives in the wake of the revolution.

Sargavans who hold no real wealth find themselves in the most difficult position of all, as few Mwangis are willing to give them the opportunity to rise up to a higher position in society—many would rather not work with them, and even in places where it's illegal to bring any harm to them, it's certainly not illegal to shun them. Yet, Sargavans still find opportunities, as for many people, work is work and money is money.

## VIDRIC

The Vidric people are a culture unlike most others in the Mwangi Expanse. They named themselves for Vidrian, the newly reforged former colony of Sargava, and are primarily comprised of former slaves and servants once subjugated by Sargavan colonizers. After many generations, most don't know their ethnic heritage, and many likely have very mixed origins. A faction of Vidric people have taken to following the Mwangi culture that resonates with them most. While many have looked to other Mwangi peoples for their fashion, philosophies, and beliefs, others seek to forge their experiences into a unique identity. These citizens sometimes still wear Sargavan fashion, modified in defiant ways—tunics with the sleeves torn off, short cut Sargavan gowns, expensive Sargavan trousers but no shirt, and other stylistic modifications. There are some who wear chains or chainless shackles as bracelets; however, this display is a point of contention within Vidric culture, as some find it degrading to embrace such imagery, while others find it empowering to wear the symbols of their servitude as a simple fashion item that no longer holds any power over them.

Despite their disagreements, Vidrics have a unique spirit when it comes to their day-to-day lives. They won their freedom through hard-fought struggles and have no intention of ever losing that freedom again. Those in

charge of Vidrican have many quarrels over how to run and protect the nation, but the average person is tasting true opportunity for the first time. It's common to find spontaneous parties in the street, Vidric people holding large feasts in a former master's home, and groups arranging long journeys to see what the rest of the Mwangi Expanse has to offer. While the average Vidric person is grateful to those Sargavans who helped them gain freedom, and they respect the laws that keep Sargavan citizens safe from harm, most still hold a strong bitterness toward colonizers. It's not uncommon to hear whispers and fears that Sargavans who helped free them might one day try to enslave them again.

Vidrics have a particular hatred of the Bekyar people, as Bekyars participated in the Sargavan slave trade and contributed to their suffering. Bekyars likewise don't trust nor want to work with slaves who have overthrown their masters, believing such a thing invites destruction or dangerous ideas into their own society and culture. Other groups within the Mwangi Expanse admire the Vidric people's determination and how they rose up to win their freedom. Most are waiting to see what happens—if Vidrics remain free and if their society can truly gain and maintain some sort of stability. Still, the average Mwangi is more than happy to invite a Vidric person to a feast or a party, sharing a drink while being regaled with stories of liberation and uprising.

## ZENJ

The majority of the Mwangi Expanse is populated by the Zenj people. While this ethnic group makes up thousands of tribes, they're primarily divided into two groups: the matriarchal people of the savanna and the patriarchal people of the jungle.

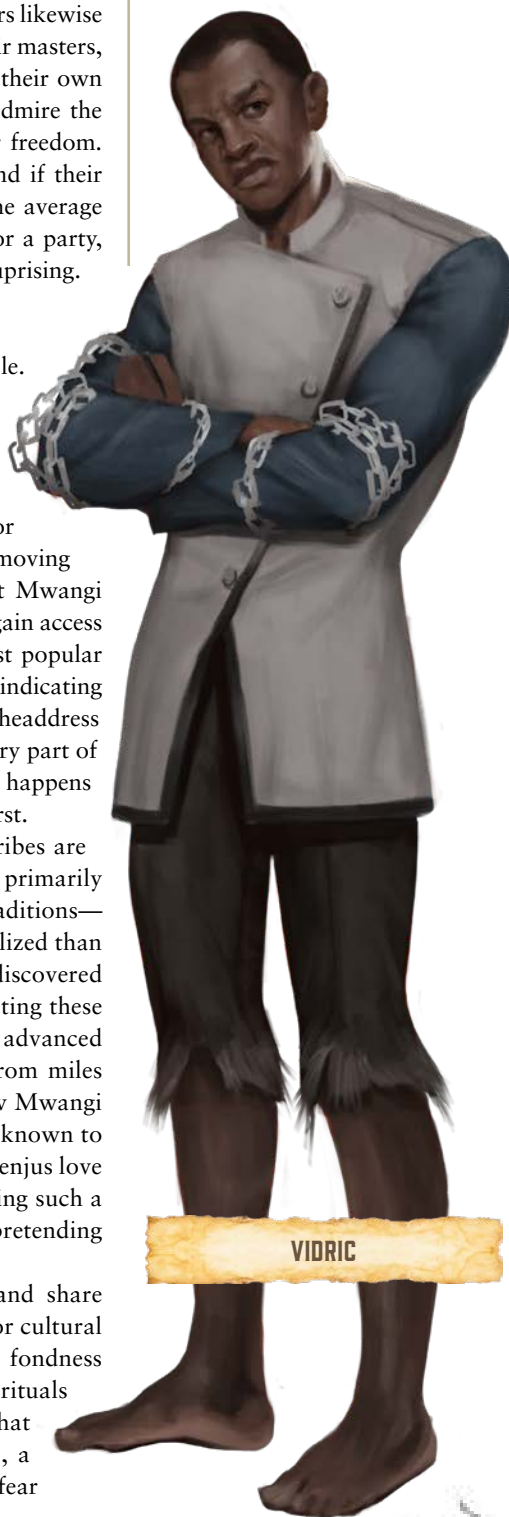
The semi-nomadic people of the savanna, who refer to themselves as Zenje, typically build temporary settlements for months at a time, taming and herding cattle before they begin moving again. Their movements serve as natural trade routes, and most Mwangi people keep track of their local Zenje tribes' migration patterns to gain access to cattle and herbs that aren't typically available locally. The most popular Zenje fashion involves wearing animal skins, with rarer animals indicating one's wealth and status. The matriarch of a tribe usually wears a headdress fashioned from the predator she had to hunt, kill, and fully use every part of following the democratic matriarchal election. This process usually happens every ten years, or upon the matriarch's death, whichever comes first.

The people of the jungle refer to themselves as Zenju. Their tribes are very stationary, usually building simple log homes. They trade primarily in plants, and most tribes have developed vegetarian cultural traditions—Zenju believe that this diet is significantly healthier and more civilized than the Zenje people's cattle-based society. Brave Zenjus have also discovered the medicinal secrets of numerous poisonous plants, often via testing these plants using their own bodies. Zenju medicine is some of the most advanced on the continent, and it's not unheard of for people to come from miles away when magical healing has failed. Zenjus are also one of few Mwangi peoples who can make dishes out of fruits and vegetables widely known to be poisonous. When foreigners attempt to try such dishes, many Zenjus love to make morbid jokes about it being the chef's first time attempting such a dangerous dish or wait until the visitor has taken a bite before pretending there was some mistake in the preparation.

The Zenje and Zenju tribes remain closely related people and share many customs. The groups typically don't intermarry due to major cultural differences and lack of geographic proximity, but they have a fondness and trust for each other like family and have numerous annual rituals together for wealth, prosperity, and fun. Zenje legend has it that a long time ago, when the Zenjes and Zenjus were one group, a patriarch insisted that a vegetarian diet was far healthier out of fear

## VIDRIC NAMES

Vidric masculine names include Avan, Calex, Jerrin, Okori, and Thulanus; feminine names include Desta, Idrim, Mirembe, Samoni, and Quilla; and gender-neutral names include Dajon, Perri, Rasha, and Vertis.



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## ZENJ NAMES

Zenj masculine names include Gakere, Jelani, Mwenye, Sadiki, and Zahur; feminine names include Hasina, Marjani, Nuru, Shanit, and Zuri; and gender-neutral names include Bahari, Enzi, Imani, and Lishan.



of hunting a predator, which caused the two groups to split. No one can prove this tale, but the oral tradition persists, which Zenje women use to playfully tease Zenju men.

The Zenj people tend to be very easygoing and practical, never taking their freedom for granted. They worship many different gods but have a special love for Nana Anadi—Grandmother Spider—due to the “Mama Schools” that adherents of her religion often run. Both Zenje and Zenju craft as well, making beads that hold much cultural meaning. More beads tend to indicate

wealth; various colors can represent skills, professions, life events, and other complex information. Magic users typically have at least one prominent magical glowing bead with the material used in its creation indicating the type of magic they employ. Those outside of Zenj culture don’t have a clear grasp of this bead symbolism but most are aware of its significance.

Most other Mwangi peoples either have a fondness, or at worst a neutral perception, of Zenj people. Zenj individuals don’t go out of their way to disrupt other Mwangi peoples’ lives and are generally happy to keep on with their traditions and primarily peaceful ways.

## OTHER GROUPS

The abundance of the Mwangi Expanse has given rise to an endless diversity of human societies. The following peoples represent only a sample of smaller ethnic groups throughout the region.

### THE ELEPHANT PEOPLE

The Elephant People are an offshoot tribe of the Mauxi and Osirion peoples who, many generations ago, discovered proof of ancient Osirion elephant worship. The group then branched off from their parent cultures and grew to a few thousand in number, choosing to live a simple and migratory lifestyle protecting and taking care of elephants. They view their elephants as both wise animals and a guiding force, sent by a nameless and long-forgotten god to look after and lead them. As a result, they have no collective name beyond that of their animal companions, and they’re simply referred to as the Elephant People by foreigners and other Mwangi.

The Elephant People consider themselves to lack the complications and hardship that come with modern living and governments. They aren’t particularly welcoming of outsiders due to generations of other people trying to hunt and exploit elephants, so they tend to meet even other Mwangis with skepticism and hostility. They’re on very good terms with the Ekujae elves, however—the elves have helped and supported the Elephant People many times, and the Elephant People consider the Ekujae to have far more wisdom than the average modern human.

### LIRGENI

The Lirgeni people have lacked a singular home since the destruction of the nation of Lirgen 100 years ago by the Eye of Abendego. In the past, their highly-advanced civilization relied heavily on reading the stars for prophecy, using the celestial bodies to gain insight and guidance into their lives. Now, Lirgeni people are spread across the Mwangi and beyond in small, diasporic communities, such as Little Lirgen in Absalom’s Foreign Quarter. The largest Lirgeni population currently resides

within Jaha, where their culture continues to transform in an increasingly scientific direction while not entirely abandoning religion or the last vestiges of prophecy.

Despite the wide variety of locations in which Lirgeni people reside, they do their best to keep in contact with their remaining kin, so they commonly travel to and from each other's communities. A few thousand continue to reside in the Sodden Lands, living in their drowned cities and studying astrology to attempt to discern the future, but they remain the most disconnected from modern Lirgeni culture as a whole. To this day, a few Lirgeni academics still search for a way to stop the Eye of Abendego. Some Lirgeni people believe that they'll somehow return to their homeland, but these days, most have settled into a modern life that's increasingly removed from their origins.

## UOMOTO

The Uomoto people are a Mwangi tribe dwelling near the mysterious ruins of Kho. Living near such magical ruins has caused this group to have a higher than average number of sorcerers, among other magic users. Uomoto sorcerers traditionally receive ceremonial tattoos to mark their graduation from apprenticeship with their more experienced mentors. To encourage equality, Uomoto people typically wear long sleeves to obfuscate who is and isn't a sorcerer due to the unusually high proportion of these magic users.

Tinkerers comprise the other common class of people found among Uomotots, as many grow up experimenting with strange things found in ruins, gathering as much experience as magical researchers twice their age from other regions. People from Uomoto tribes tend to be scavengers, often recovering and selling rare artifacts found in the ruins of Kho, or they might peddle items of interest left behind in ruins by unfortunate adventurers who fell prey to the numerous dangerous unstable machines and odd sources of magical energy laying around. Overall, the Uomoto lifestyle is very practical yet unique, as it's based around a daily lifestyle and practices far outside the Mwangi norm.

## YAMASAN

Yamasans were devastated by the Eye of Abendego much like the Lirgeni people from whom they descended many generations ago. However, the storm affected them far more harshly, driving them from their homelands entirely. Primarily an agricultural people, their homelands were beyond repair, and they had no real way to recover their livelihoods or even feed themselves. Of the surviving population, most families scattered to make a living for themselves as farmhands where possible. A large portion of the diaspora now resides in Absalom, while the Matanji orcs took in and protected the second-largest portion of Yamasans, who in exchange helped to greatly improve Matanji agriculture.

Despite the setbacks and limits that came with losing their nation, the Yamasan people are full of ingenuity. They're masters of agriculture to the extent that they can grow and farm in their small and heavily urbanized neighborhood in Absalom, using materials from the buildings in the vicinity and what soil and nutrients they could acquire. At one point in time, Yamasans were separated into a caste system, with those of a higher station unwilling to partake in agricultural duties; these days, many generations removed, Yamasans are like a family who supports each other, thriving under adversity without paying any mind to the impractical customs of old.

## LIRGENI AND YAMASAN NAMES

Lirgeni and Yamasan masculine names include Brahm, Nassem, Rayan, Sifeddine, and Tahar; feminine names include Azima, Chaima, Majdouline, Soukaina, and Zainab; and gender-neutral names include Fatine, Ghali, Islem, and Vissene.



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## ALIJAE

A splinter of the ancient Mualijae elves, Alijae elves hold a widespread reputation as extremely reclusive hermits who confer and trust in otherworldly powers that could turn on them at any point. The Ekujae elves regard them as incomprehensible, their flagrant disregard for the traditions they once shared most plain in the very walls of Nagisa itself—revealing all of its secrets to anyone who can read them—and the heavy use of gold in Alijae dress and etched gems in Alijae culture. Kallijae elves pity them, believing they have fallen prey to the darkness within, expressed as they commune with beings beyond Golarion and the Material Plane with little fear of consequence. From the perspective of peoples not descended from the Mualijae, even others from the Mwangi Expanse, Alijae are a curiosity to be feared and ogled in turns, accompanied by semi-polite words and gestures. The further from the jungles, the more of a curiosity Alijae become to those they meet and the more openly they are fetishized.

Alijae elves see themselves as pragmatic, however: they do what must be done to keep at bay the demonic evils churning within the beautiful walls of the White City. When outsiders offer aid in this effort and the source seems to be without animosity, Alijae take what is offered and choose to handle the consequences as

they come. They may take their time in deliberations, but, if one proves themselves to be truthful, Alijae elves will become allies willing to share the depths of their knowledge in order to push back against chaotic tide of demons that could spill from Nagisa at any time.

Once part of the unified Mualijae people, the group now known as Alijae broke from their brethren over a philosophical difference. The conflict revolved around the nature of the “ancient evil” in a Mualijae prophecy, one that was to be equal parts past and destiny for their people. Alijae scribes recorded this prophecy, which was once exclusively oral history, as a sweeping epic poem and dramatized history eventually inscribed on the walls of the elven ruins of Nagisa. Not only did those who became the Alijae elves believe this oral tradition needed to be formalized and written to prevent losing any parts of it, they also had a very firm idea of what this poem referred to and what needed to be done. Neither was a popular opinion within the Mualijae population as a whole, and those who became Alijae were the first to break from the whole. They also broke with what had long been a purely oral storytelling tradition to instead begin a tradition of recording everything of importance in multiple, redundant ways.

This first splinter group of elves was small, only a few dozen fighters, scouts, storytellers, and those with a vested interest in the safety of all those who traveled the jungle. Their first collective decision as the newly formed Alijæ was to investigate Nagisa, the White City long rumored to be a bastion of darkness. The origins of the city itself largely remain a mystery, even to Alijæ who have spent their entire lives studying. Elements of the architectural style clearly parallel those employed by the Mualijæ elves, though they rarely used stone this extensively due to how hard it is to find and excavate safely within the tangles of the jungle. Carvings marked the walls and, upon checking references and venturing into the wider world to gain more frame of reference, the Alijæ elves found the markings to be calls to demon lords and fell powers across the planes. This left many Alijæ feeling vindicated, now having proof that their decisions hadn't been in vain. After expanding and securing base camps on the outskirts of Nagisa, the Alijæ elves set forth courageously on expeditions into the hearts of the pyramids.

Those first forays were disastrous but informative. The pyramids' builders had dedicated them to powerful demonic forces and especially demon lords, with a totem standing at the heart of each which served as a gateway to the Abyss. Grievous injuries and loss of life kept the elves to only the smaller pyramids, and infrequent incursions left them limited to a slow but inexorable push toward the city's heart in the largest pyramid. One by one the elves cleared each pyramid, cleansed each demonic totem within, thoroughly investigated the contents, and fortified the walls against retaliation. Each time this cycle could be fully completed, they celebrated the victory by recording the tale in its entirety to honor those wounded and lost.

A group of aging oral storytellers composed the beginning of the poem that would end up on Nagisa's walls, which was then scribed by the successors they trained. With their dangerous mission and many losses, it was entirely possible the small group of Alijæ could be wiped out. They simply wouldn't allow their history and that of the Mualijæ as a whole be lost to time and circumstance should anything happen to their people. Thus, it would be recorded in a way that was hard to destroy in its entirety, could not be forgotten by future generations, and could be uncovered by those who might follow them should they fail. It would also lessen some of the burden of memory on their elders. The belief in lessening a shared burden by carrying it with many hands is one that suffuses through all aspects of Alijæ culture and history.

The historical poem that now sprawls across the walls of Nagisa began on the walls of a pyramid once dedicated to Noctacula when she was still a demon lord. Some historians and scholars believe this early reclamation may be one of the first seedings of the Cult of the Redeemer Queen, citing the apparent ease with which the Alijæ elves were able to secure the pyramid despite its size, as well as their historical comfort when dealing with powers others avoid.

With each Alijæ who learned a different method of archiving came another redundancy for their records: first on the stone of the cleared and fortified pyramids in the White City; then in books and vellum carefully stored and preserved in special rooms within those pyramids, only removed for revisions and occasional research; later, on magical talking masks able to watch the wearer's deeds and keep personal histories as close to them as possible; and even carved in shorthand onto precious stones, with the hope the value of the stones themselves would help protect the stories they contained when they had little other value to Alijæ aside from vanity.

## A PEOPLE DIVIDED

Evidence and Mwangi history alike tell that the Mwangi elves known as the Alijæ, Ekujæ, and Kallijæ were once part of a united people and nation known as the Mualijæ, which covered the majority of the Mwangi Jungle. The people split some time after Earthfall, with the Ekujæ remaining to guard *Alseta's Gate* and other dangerous sites, the Alijæ seeking to cleanse the city of Nagisa, and the Kallijæ pitting themselves against the nation of Usaro.

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## THE REDEEMER QUEEN

Nocticula's ascension has caused a great stir both among the Alijæe elves and the demons of the Abyss, as it proves that nothing is so corrupted that it can't be absolved. Some fiends in Nagisa might be tempted by a different life, but convincing anyone of a fiend's sincerity is a daunting task.

## APPEARANCE

A large number of Alijæe have lighter skin tones than many in the Mwangi Expanse, as well as patches of light skin, white hair, and vibrant, light-colored eyes that often glow with flecks of red and orange. Some say the life and color is draining from their people, replaced by the infernal glow of the sinister powers they confer with and rely on. In reality, this coloration is caused by a frequency of vitiligo, albinism, and other pigmentation conditions in their population. To most Alijæe, these physical traits are simply that, traits that mean little in the long run when there are far more pressing matters to be attended.

The most striking thing about any adult Alijæe, especially those with accomplished forays into the pyramids of Nagisa or who spend long stretches of time away from home, are the huge magical masks covering various parts of their bodies. Starting with a central mask that contains their family histories and spreading outwards, these typically wooden or golden visages can tell the full stories of an Alijæe's family in an abridged format before transitioning into an individual's own tale from birth to the present moment. Alijæe nearing the end of their lives will usually ask that the masks be told the story of the elf's death (as described below) and then sent on to next of kin, before their bodies are returned to their homeland. Many Alijæe remove and hide their family history masks somewhere safe when around outsiders, until trust is fully established.

Alijæe elves otherwise favor the functionality of clothing over fashion or vanity in form, choosing instead to embellish with bright patterns, demonic ivory, woven accessories, and other styling choices. Due to the heat of the jungle, this often means little clothing at all beyond a protective cloak, but this is not always the case; for example, an Alijæe archivist might wear more form-fitting clothing beneath loose layers with gloves, so as not to bring contaminants into the same space as they handle documents, while a scout might wear long lengths of fabric wrapped around their body that they can rewind to better serve the environments they travel through.

Most Alijæe accessories are passed through families and added to over time, serving as yet another method of coded record-keeping that other Alijæe can recognize on sight. For instance, woven tassels might convey what the wearer does and how far they have progressed in their craft; an ivory tusk and its metal rings can show how many demons an elf has defeated or places they have purified; a well-woven scarf of many colors denotes a long lineage and that the wearer is likely the next family head.

## GENEALOGY MASK

ITEM 1

UNCOMMON DIVINATION INVESTED

**Access** Alijæe ethnicity

**Price** 10 gp

**Usage** worn; **Bulk** L

These large masks are forged of precious metals or carved of wood and tasked with guarding the history of a family. Most Alijæe are granted a genealogy mask when they come of age, which they bequeath to their next of kin upon death. When a member of the family recounted in the genealogy mask performs a particularly significant event while wearing the mask, its eyes and ears animate, allowing the item to witness and record the deeds for posterity. Different families have different standards for their genealogy masks—some may value accuracy and objective, clinical facts, while others may relish embellishing their stories to the very brink of believability in the name of a good story.

**Activate** ◆ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You ask the mask about the deeds of a particular ancestor, and the mask speaks for 10 minutes, recalling the tales it knows about that ancestor. The mask is limited by what information a particular ancestor shared with it.



**Craft Requirements** Supply a casting of *ancestral memories* (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 402) or *mindlink*. You must be an Alijae elf.

## SOCIETY

Alijae society has a relatively open structure, with no overseeing council or visible government. This is mostly due to their small population and the extremely spread-out nature of their community—numerous Alijae travel for much of their lives as adventurers, researchers, and chroniclers—which makes maintaining a rigid structure impossible. Rather than trying to force a traditional government to fit, they developed a system of coded correspondences managed by archivists on the outskirts of Nagisa, where the first Alijae settled. This system allows all adult Alijae to have a say in the affairs of their people by vote, no matter the distance.

That same system keeps those far afield in touch with their loved ones in Nagisa as well. Contrary to what some outsiders might believe upon seeing the distances many Alijae travel, the elves place a tremendous importance on family connections, though it might be harder to see. While all those within the community are cared for, Alijae don't consider everyone in their community to be family. Only those connected by blood are a part of one's family and deemed worthy of including in the historical mask records worn on one's body. There are, however, rituals to bind a person to an Alijae lineage and make them a part of a family's blood. The most obvious is through marriage ceremonies, but other rites occur from time to time for those who have done a family a great boon. Few outside of the Alijae community are willing to go through with such rituals, fearing binding their souls to demons or falling prey to other dangerous extraplanar creatures a family may have made deals or contracts with in the past.

## FAITH

Alijae elves usually have some manner of divine patron, more out of pragmatism than anything else. They don't worship a unifying deity or aspect of nature. They consider faith a much more personal matter, one they bring up rarely and question even less, as some Alijae have willingly entered into deals with fiends and other extraplanar forces in order to gain some power or knowledge they felt necessary to the continued survival of their people. Foreigners often find this distasteful and terrifying, making ubiquitous accusations that Alijae are evil demon worshipers one and all.

However, some Alijae do choose to follow deities of the more widely accepted pantheons. For instance, the Cult of the Redeemer Queen, though not referred to locally as a cult, has a strong following among Alijae artisans who use part of her pyramid in Nagisa as a workshop space. Other popular deities include Desna, Irori, Nethys, and Findeladlara.

## CULTURE

Alijae life largely focuses on the thankless task of safeguarding and cleansing Nagisa, and it shows in most aspects of their culture. Their traditions have slowly morphed over time and continue to do so, often changing to suit current needs. Some outsiders are scandalized by this lack of continuity, but the Alijae community has come to accept it as a better way to stay connected even when distance between loved ones intervenes. Many other elves are either appalled or bemused by Alijae informality when it comes to tradition.

While Alijae culture places a high amount of focus on knowledge, its acquisition, and its preservation, any given individual might have a myriad of tangential interests and pursuits that are often within the arts. Many have a vested interest in culinary and alchemical pursuits, though generally not

## PRICELESS HEIRLOOMS

As the Mualijae noted generations ago, there are risks to the Alijae's exhaustive chronicles. With the long elven lifespan, a *genealogy mask* can hold a staggering amount of history and would be invaluable to historians, treasure hunters, and more, making them attractive targets for theft.



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## FOREIGN BLOODSHED

Despite the Alijæ's best efforts to defend their city from others, their small numbers mean that many foreigners still make their way to Nagisa. The most famous incident was the Gorilla King's slaughter of Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration, which stained the white city walls with blood, but smaller adventuring groups set out every year, and the Alijæ don't manage to catch them all. One group of treasure hunters from Cheliæx managed to escape from Nagisa twice with impressive hauls of treasure, if heavy losses among their number. The third time they entered the city, they never returned.

at the same time. Alijæ cultures places a high honor on archival methods as art, granting great prestige to masters of calligraphy, scarification and tattooing, book illumination, sculpture and chiseling, and mural painting. These traditions are passed from a master to apprentices who assist in any works while they are in the vicinity of Nagisa. Master mask-makers will train as many apprentices as they can, who then travel to far-away Alijæ and add to their records.

## TAKE ALL THAT IS OFFERED

In a region full of dangers, Alijæ elves inhabit what may be one of its most perilous sections. As a result, they have grown to accept all that is offered to them as a matter of course. This is never blind faith but conviction in the strength of their knowledge and abilities as a safeguard from greater dangers. Some elders who specialize in healing and medicine have been heard to chide "a poison can also be a cure" to particularly disagreeable patients. This shared philosophy of "take what is presented to you, be it gift or curse, and use it as you need" sums up the core of Alijæ beliefs. Unsurprisingly, this philosophy does little to help the reputation of Alijæ among those who already don't understand them.

In all matters, the average Alijæ elf will choose to accept or learn something new if given a chance. Those who set out into the world in pursuit of a deeper knowledge of demonology may return home with books on demons, an understanding of swordsmanship, experience in political arenas, and insight into the cuisine of the Inner Sea region to boot. Most Alijæ find interest in practically any topic that comes their way; if the subject might hold an unrealized key to the complications and trials their people face, all the better to spare the world of the evils that lurk within Nagisa. Because of this, preserving knowledge holds the utmost importance in Alijæ life.

## FAR FROM HOME

Throughout an Alijæ person's life, they will likely encounter many times where they must adhere to traditions and cultural practices remotely, without contact and connection to their fellows. They might find themselves deep within a pyramid, in the jungles to trade for supplies, out in the wider world to gather some essential piece of knowledge, or working within an adventuring party. As such, Alijæ communities adapted and evolved many traditions over time to be fulfilling whether done alone or with a community. Harvest meals that would normally be enjoyed with family or celebrations that would involve the entire community can be scaled down to be quiet and solitary, keeping in the spirit of these celebrations if not the full practice.

For instance, Alijæ commemorate the winter solstice and remember the lives of those who have left this world behind by gathering to tell stories and share a hibiscus-flavored mead. When there is no one to share with or no access to the mead (rarely found outside the Mwangi Expanse), any mead or beer will do, and most believe their ancestors won't mind stories shared with outsiders that don't reveal too much. If an elf believes the ancestors would prefer their stories not be told to those who are not Alijæ, writing the stories down or repeating them quietly also fulfills the need.

## AFTERLIFE THROUGH HISTORY

The disquieting understanding Alijæ have come to in all their dealings with demons, extraplanar creatures, and unconventional magic is that death is not always the end. While some may believe in the soul in a similar way to Ekujæ or the



balance of energies like Kallijae, few Alijae hold faith in the certainty of an afterlife. What comfort is there in the idea of life after death when so much magic is determined to imbue corpses with foul energy, bring lost loved ones back, or transcend what is known to be mortal?

Rather than put stock in life beyond death, Alijae believe their lives and legacies are taken into the future by family, friends, and those entrusted with their histories. Every adult Alijae carries abridged versions of their entire family history imprinted on their masks and worn on their bodies; detailed records and histories are meticulously noted, maintained, and preserved in Nagisa; and stories are shared with those most trusted by an Alijae when they were alive and those who succeed them. For any outsiders an Alijae has come to know and trust in life, the same courtesy is bestowed upon them as stories and records are kept as a means of maintaining their memories.

## HALF-ELVES

Because of the relatively small size of the Alijae population, every individual plays a key role in their society. Half-elves are no different and are generally the ones who travel the furthest afield to gather the most distant knowledge possible. Most work within the many factions that span Golarion or trek with adventuring parties, especially parties with an interest or possible interaction with Nagisa or demon lords. Some wear their heritage and mission proudly while others hide it and craft completely new identities, and still others attempt to ride the line between the two.

Many outsiders incorrectly assume that Alijae half-elves are obliged and forced to fill this role with little say in the matter. The reasons for choosing this life vary based on the individual, but many simply cite the same drive as any other Alijae: there is much to find and learn in this world, and any piece of it may contain the answers they and their people seek.

## RELATIONS

Alijae show caution around any not their own—even Ekujae and Kallijae elves, despite their shared ancestry—because of their guardianship over Nagisa and what it could mean if its power fell into the wrong hands. Their distance only lasts so long as someone’s intentions remain unclear, at which point they make a nigh-irreversible decision: either that person is welcomed as a guest and fellow seeker of knowledge in the service of the greater good, or they are shunned for their lust for wealth and power. Alijae leaders make none of these judgments rashly, often deliberating over days or weeks in the case of individuals, or months and years in the case of more established organizations like the Pathfinder Society or Aspis Consortium. To make these decisions, Alijae will often willingly join the adventuring parties and factions, taking copious coded notes and sending them home along with letters on their well-being. Most, when they learn of this, call it treachery, but Alijae consider it a necessary evil to be sure of exactly who they are dealing with at any given time. This methodical vetting process has yet to majorly fail them, but some who have endured it fear it may only be a matter of time.

Though Earthfall severed the Mualijae elves from the elves of Kyonin, there have recently been steps to reforge that connection. Queen **Telandia Edasseril** (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Legends* 106) made

## DUBIOUS NEIGHBORS

Vicious fey also inhabit the area around Nagisa, and they set up deadly traps and ambushes to deter trespassers. These fey do not seem interested in bothering the Alijae, however, and in keeping with their cultural creed, the Alijae do not bother the fey in turn.

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the journey to Nagisa and—after much deliberation among the Alijae—gave her respects to the White City, with permission. After hours of negotiation, a proposed alliance of marriage between the queen and an Alijae elf named **Zazirele** (NG male elf guardian 14) was also agreed upon, though Zazirele requested to spend time in Kyonin before he made his final decision, observing and assessing as Alijae always do.

## **NAGISA**

Nagisa, also known as the White City, lies east of the Bdonge River and is largely built of beautiful white pyramids of an unknown elven design. While Alijae historians have found connections to Mualijae design and architecture, they also uncovered evidence of other elven and unknown influences. The city's gorgeous buildings contain secrets far more sinister than their design origins: within each is a totem to a different demon, which draw fiends, evil fey, and other creatures to them in droves. The closer to the center of the city, the greater the strength of those demons and the evils that gather to them, with the ones at the city's heart dedicated to the demon lords. On discovering the city, the early Alijae knew it must be the great darkness the Mualijae had always feared and set to the task of slowly clearing the totems.

Now, Nagisa refers to both the city of white stone pyramids as well as the Alijae outposts at the primary

entrances, as well as the other most-breached entry points. However, the small size of the Alijae sentry force relative to the sheer number of potential egresses means only a few remain guarded at all times. If outsiders present themselves and Alijae leadership judges them to be well-intentioned enough, the elves allow those outsiders within the city with an Alijae guide to ensure purpose and safety. If denied, a small party of scouts trails the outsiders for a distance before turning back and the watch is tightened for as long as it can be maintained.

Lapses in the watch around the city have led to the rise of a migrating black market of outsiders called the Collaborative Interests Trading Post, shifting around the outskirts of Nagisa to fall into the blind spots of the Alijae lookouts. Those who have been denied by the Alijae but still wish to plunder Nagisa lurk and foray and trade from the transient bazaar town just out of sight of the city's self-appointed guardians.

## **BUYISELA**

The Alijae maintain several stations and outposts at or near the main entrances to Nagisa. Their largest stronghold, however, is tucked into the jungle near the main gate. Buyisela, often called Scholars' Haven by outsiders permitted entrance, is a large outpost serving as a library, archive, vault, and training ground. In a stark contrast to much of Alijae culture, life in Buyisela is heavily regimented and controlled by strict schedules.

For some Alijæ, these rules chafe and go against much they knew in the outposts where they grew up. However, the Alijæ of the past have learned that this structure is essential to continuing the work of maintaining the archives and slowly pushing toward the heart of Nagisa.

### THE ARCHIVES

Though the library of Nagisa doesn't have a formal name, residents and visitors alike call it the Archives. Spread through converted pyramids on the very edge of the city and several Alijæ-built structures nearby, the Archives represent one of the largest collections of demon lore contained within a single space, focused on demon lords, their histories, and all locations where they have historically had vested interests in Golarion. For anyone considering facing demon hordes who can make the trek, the knowledge collected here can prove invaluable. However, outsiders are rarely permitted entrance into the Archives themselves due to the double-edged nature contained therein: the same knowledge that would help defeat a demon lord can also be used to aid or summon them. Instead, an Alijæ archivist will assist any outsiders by doing research for them and presenting the findings.

### THE PROVING

Along with an education focused on demon lore, Alijæ are also expected to learn some form of defense and need training spaces for this. The Proving is a series of circular grounds set up for sparring, dueling, and practice with either magical or martial approaches. Though most Alijæ are more comfortable with magic, especially magic that contains or counteracts other magic, some prefer a more direct and physical approach to combat, or a melding of both martial and magical prowess. These heavily warded and fortified spaces are hidden from view and away from any guests who may be in Buyisela at any given time. Alijæ are well aware of the reputation they have within the Mwangi Expanse as those who flirt heedlessly with corrupting powers and are at great pains to prove, at least to some extent, that they can manage the powers they command. Precious few outsiders ever see the inside of the Proving.

### THE QUEEN'S VAULT

Demon totems and dangerous creatures aren't all that's contained within the pyramids of Nagisa; within also lie precious artifacts, and some of those artifacts—namely powerful abyssal crystals—could prove devastating in the wrong hands. With each pyramid cleared and made safe, these artifacts are collected, investigated, cataloged, and stored in the deepest reaches of the first pyramids, beginning with the one once dedicated to the Redeemer Queen, Nocticula. These storage and containment chambers are known as the Queen's Vaults, or simply the Vaults. No one but the most skilled and trusted Alijæ archivists enter these rooms, ever careful of each artifact as they look for ways to either seal the powers it contains permanently, destroy the object and its threat, or make the object work in the Alijæ forces' favor as they continue to slowly cleanse the pyramids.

### THE LODGE

If Alijæ permit guests entry into the city, they ask that the visitors keep

## NAHYNDRIAN CRYSTALS

Nocticula's double-edged gifts to the Alijæ elves are known as Nahyndrian crystals, dark-purple stones formed from the blood of a murdered demon lord. Once common on Nocticula's domain of the Midnight Isles in the Abyss, a number of these crystals appear to have migrated into Nocticula's pyramid in the Mwangi Expanse. Though the crystals contain incredible power within them, the Alijæ have yet to discover how to tap into them safely—uncovering the secrets behind these artifacts will take much more research, likely in distant reaches more familiar with the risen Nocticula and her past victims.

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## ALIJAE CHARACTERS

Alijæ elves often have the woodland elf or seer elf heritage, representing their familiarity with the jungle and a close proximity to and understanding of otherworldly phenomenon. Their strong focus on maintaining their history means that many have the Know Your Own and Elven Lore ancestry feats. Exposure to Nagisa or bargains with strange powers means many Alijæ have the Otherworldly Magic and Otherworldly Acumen feats—the Share Thoughts and Sense Thoughts feats are also common, which makes many non-elves paranoid when dealing with Alijæ. Cultural seclusion results in many Alijæ taking the Ancestral Suspicion ancestry feat, but the constant quest for more knowledge means that Alijæ can often have the Ancestral Linguistics and Ancestral Longevity feats as well.

themselves only to places where they have been invited and to public spaces. Most of the public spaces within Nagisa and Buyisela are for outdoor seating and gathering, eating, and cooking where anyone can make something for those interested. The sites also include small but comfortable housing with more private meeting spaces specifically for invited visitors to Nagisa, so that they may prepare before venturing into the city and rest on their return. Called the Lodge by guests but not given a name by Alijæ, these rooms also give visitors access to the healers and archivists in the city.

## TEMPLE OF THE TOAD

The current focus of Alijæ efforts to cleanse the city, this temple boasts an enormous, grotesque statue made of shining black stone at its entrance, out of place among the sharp white stones of the city. The huge sculpture depicts a bloated toad covered with bulging eyes and ripe pustules, with an obscenely long tongue lolling from its wide, drooling mouth. The inscriptions name it the Eater of Filth, and it bears the signs of dark magic from the demon lord Gogunta. A golden glow emanates from within the structure, as well as the stink of the swamp and an endless, echoing howl of torment. Ever since they began their excursions to clear the site, Alijæ have been fighting a battle on two fronts, as boggards from the jungle have been constantly trying to break into the city and reach the profane temple.

## COLLABORATIVE INTERESTS CO. TRADING POST

Not all who are turned away from Nagisa and Buyisela leave easily or willingly. Established by a consortium of parties with a vested interest in the city and the potential within, this outpost was originally funded through Chelaxian imperial efforts out of then-Sargava and allowed allies to launch their own forays from the spot. Though a more permanent base would be preferable, the moving bazaar is far easier to keep just outside of the Alijæ forces' admittedly short grasp. Over time, the management shifted from Chelaxian hands to silent backers from across Golarion with disparate end goals but a shared interest in the possibilities of power and treasure at the heart of Nagisa. Once called simply Sargava Outpost #4, it has since been renamed the Collaborative Interests Co. Trading Post, providing palatability through feigned legitimacy for other outsiders who wish to make use of its access.

Rumors abound on how the trading post's managerial group seems to stay one step ahead of the Alijæ watches. Some believe there's a mole high up in the Alijæ guard who keeps them abreast of when and where lookouts will be strongest. Some say there are powerful diviners and mages with interest in Nagisa who spy for them. Some believe the Alijæ simply allow the trading post to continue, keeping their enemies close and stopping things if they go too far. No one has confirmed or denied any rumor, only continued or added to them.

Using this trading post and its readily available resources is sure to weigh on the hearts of any who were denied entrance but still feel themselves in the moral right, especially as they see priceless and dangerous artifacts traded away to the highest bidders and deepest pockets.

## ZOLHA

NG | NONBINARY | ELF | ARCHIVIST 7

Zolha is the only child of two master archivists and one-time adventurers, Nkosana and Nonhle. Their parents often traveled together across the world, actively seeking out knowledge on behalf of the Alijæe community and planting themselves in organizations and adventuring parties to ascertain their goals. Their work pushed the efforts of cleansing the remaining pyramids further than any others before them, and they were ever-willing to take on new quests and adventures until it became their time to mentor others. Many expected Zolha to proudly follow in their footsteps and become an outrider of academia to rival their parents.

Unfortunately, in one of their first forays into the pyramids, Zolha was terrified by a face-to-face encounter with a demon and froze up in panic. This provided an opening that proved disastrous and ended in grave injuries for most of the party and the death of the warrior who accompanied them. While Alijæe are all too aware that losses happen as a fact of their life, Zolha could never put the incident behind them. The resulting trauma and deep feelings of guilt over the tragedy plague them and make any traveling too anxious of an affair to be viable. While the Alijæe community is thankful for Zolha's efforts as an archivist and historian in the city, there are more than a few who wish Zolha might still pick up the torch left by their parents.

Zolha rarely sets foot outside of Nagisa now, instead acting as a point of contact for the Alijæe and vetting those adventurers and treasure seekers who would plunder the White City. Though much of Zolha's duties revolve around maintaining records of familial lineage and tracking correspondences with traveling Alijæe, they also hold a great deal of knowledge about demons, devils, other fiends, and the various factions of Golarion with a potential interest in them, the Alijæe, or Nagisa. For someone who doesn't get out much, they seem to have a nigh-infinite amount of knowledge about goings-on in the wider jungle and beyond.

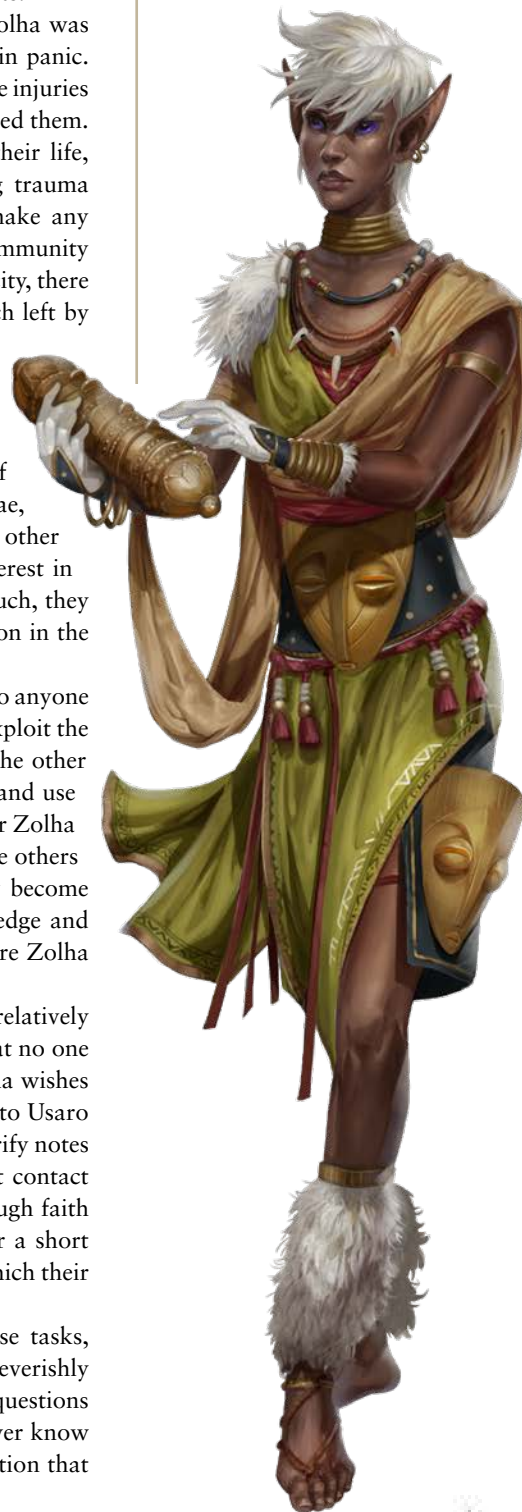
Standoffish and aloof on first meeting, Zolha is slow to open up to anyone whom they don't consider family. Too many in the world would exploit the Alijæe people's knowledge, the power gated within the city, and the other phenomena within the Mwangi Expanse and beyond this plane, and use it all to do harm. Too many crave only money, power, and glory for Zolha to place faith in anyone too soon. As they slowly gain trust and see others who are willing to help stem the tide of evil in the world, they become a never-ending font of assorted and sometimes disparate knowledge and anecdotes, always happy to help those who are willing to go where Zolha can't themself.

Zolha is looking for heroes who might be willing to do a few "relatively small tasks" for them: retrieve an obscure book from Absalom that no one else will agree to deliver (possibly due to the curse on it that Zolha wishes to investigate further); escort a small team on a scouting mission to Usaro or another site of known demon-influenced activity in order to clarify notes from an ancient foray; or deliver a message to a potentially lost contact still within Cheliax. Should they gain enough trust and place enough faith in a group of adventurers, Zolha may even accompany them for a short time, attempting to ease themselves back into the field work for which their parents had gained renown.

Even if a group of adventurers is unable to aid them in these tasks, Zolha always loves to hear tales of places they have never seen, feverishly scratching down meticulous notes and interrupting with questions throughout the telling in a way that some find irritating. They never know when and where they may happen upon a curious bit of information that could unlock further secrets, after all.

## MISSIVE MISFORTUNE

Among Zolha's correspondence is a leather bound folio sealed with wax. It appears to be a simple merchant's log, but Zolha has no knowledge of the sender, despite the courier claiming the merchant requested Zolha by name. Unable to contact the sender, Zolha is now tracking down listed buyers in hopes of finding a clue to the delivery.



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## EKUJAE

The jungle-dwelling elves known as Ekujae are enigmas to most outsiders and bear different reputations among the cultures that have come into contact with them. To the masters of the Magaambya in the academic city of Nantambu, Ekujae are an ancient and respected civilization of scholars who sometimes venture from their homes to teach students or bring rare seeds to the university's libraries. To the scattered tribes of the Mwangi Jungle, Ekujae are mysterious and implacable guardians of the wild, viewed with awe and superstition in equal measure. To capitalist organizations such as the Aspis Consortium, Ekujae are fearsome foes well known for their furious attacks on Aspis slavers, such as the infamous massacre at Whitebridge Station. Yet, first and foremost to all who know of them, Ekujae are warriors, standing ready to fight against an unknown darkness from an ancient time.

Ekujae tend to hold a skeptical view of most foreigners, especially humans. Ekujae lands are rich with gold and other precious treasures, a fact that inspired generations of fortune seekers to plunder the jungle and give nothing in return. They have an especially sour relationship with non-Mwangi people due to conflicts with colonialist slavers, including a recent violent confrontation with the

Aspis Consortium that has, in turn, motivated Ekujae warriors to destroy any slaver outposts they come upon. Ekujae also guard many places of great power or dormant evil, places they have little desire for reckless adventurers or sinister forces to uncover. While Ekujae culture firmly believes that individuals can't be judged by the actions of others, they nonetheless view outsiders with caution and are reluctant to form alliances or share their secrets. Mortals, in Ekujae's experiences, tend to repeat the same mistakes over and over, and while specific groups or rulers might be trustworthy, they die quickly by elven standards with the individuals who replace them often too eager to exploit Ekujae for some ambition or another.

For this reason, Ekujae will quickly confront any trespassers who venture into their lands, though it would be an oversimplification to call them xenophobic or isolationist. They aren't authoritarian by nature, so they leave travelers who don't appear to be a threat alone. A simple fruit merchant or virtuous explorer has very little to fear from Ekujae; their scouts will likely follow and watch any such visitors, but they do so just as much out of compassion as suspicion—Ekujae make it a habit to ensure their guests don't come to harm due to animals or ancient evils alike. Even strangers whom Ekujae deem

less than welcome are usually offered a chance to peacefully leave the forest, though refusal can quickly provoke the militant elves' wrath.

## HISTORY

The history of Mualijae elves, and the Ekujae who descended from them, diverges from that of other elves on Golarion at the time of Earthfall. While most elves elected to leave for their ancestral realm of Sovyrian to survive the disaster, the Ekujae clans instead decided to stay behind despite the coming devastation. Whether they made this choice out of duty, love, stubbornness, or a sense of things to come, no records survive to say; all that's known is that when the earth shattered and the skies went black, Ekujae were there to defeat the "Great Darkness" that arose from the destruction, sparing the remaining life on Golarion from total extinction. Yet, even their greatest warriors and mages couldn't destroy the Great Darkness permanently, and Ekujae now train in preparation should it ever rise again.

Despite most scholars' belief that the identity of this Great Darkness is lost to time—or that the whole story is simply a fanciful legend told by the elves—Ekujae know the truth of their ancestral foe, though they never call it by its common name. The Great Darkness was an incarnation of the dragon god Dahak, who had been lured to Golarion by the death and chaos that wracked the world during that terrible time. Had Dahak been allowed to linger, Golarion would have suffered dire consequences; the dragon god Apsu was sworn to fight Dahak, and their cataclysmic struggle would inevitably have invited other gods to interfere as well until the clash of deities finished the job that Earthfall began and destroyed the entire planet. Instead, Ekujae forces defeated Dahak and drove the god's incarnation into an *aiudara*, or elf gate, known as the Hungertgate. This severed the connections between the *aiudara* in the instant that Dahak was between one gate and the next, trapping the dragon's incarnation in a space between realities with no target for his unquenchable rage other than himself.

This victory came at a devastating cost. To pierce the flesh of a god, the most heroic and virtuous Ekujae elves willingly sacrificed themselves so that their spirits could bolster the strength of the remaining Ekujae warriors. These elven souls burned bright as hot iron in the spiritual realm, and their determination allowed the surviving Ekujae to cut through Dahak's scales. Dahak's golden blood spilled across the Ekujae lands, and the elven warriors broke a horn and two fangs from Dahak's head with enough force to fling them into the sea. The dragon was defeated at the terrible cost of countless Ekujae lives, and the taste of victory was like a mouthful of ash.

Ekujae consider this battle both their greatest triumph and most crushing defeat. By routing Dahak, the elves accomplished a miracle—the defeat of a god's living aspect by mortal magic and mortal hands. However, they only wounded and imprisoned the dragon; most Ekujae view their inability to cleanly finish off their foe as a failure. It thus became the sacred duty of all Ekujae to train in preparation for Dahak's return, in respect for the courage and sacrifice of their ancestors and for their own pride as hunters who have injured a beast and are now honor bound to strike the killing blow.

## APPEARANCE

Ekujae share a similar appearance to the humans who live in the Mwangi Expanse. They typically have dark brown skin and black hair along with jet-black eyes, though individual Ekujae are prone to variation, from dusky skin to densely coiled rose-blond hair. They tend to have more muscular

## FEEDING THE JUNGLE

The Ekujae elves spare little sentiment for their fallen foes. Rather than risk the flames of a funeral pyre or waste time on a burial, their most common tactic of body disposal is to hack their slain enemies into pieces and leave the meat for jungle insects and scavengers to consume.

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## EKUJAE HOSPITALITY

Ekujae can seem unwelcoming to visitors, who often enter elven lands without permission and meddle with dangerous sites with no thought to consequences. Should Ekujae declare someone to be a guest, however, they treat this person with the utmost generosity. A welcoming feast is usually prepared with copious palm wine provided, side dishes cooked, and a grand hunt arranged for the meal—though Ekujae usually eat little meat other than fish, fish isn't considered appropriate to serve guests. The elves traditionally trade stories with the visitors at the end of the night, with the clan's linguist calling on one of Desna's moths to bring them a tale.

frames than other elves thanks to their warrior training, though they're still lanky and wiry compared to many humans of a similar profession.

Ekujae traditionally adorn their bodies with patterns of white paint, the meanings of which are complex enough to elude almost all outsiders. Though they most usually represent only a specific elf's family and clan, an Ekujae's markings might also provide information about their profession, accomplishments, personal history, or even what mood they're in that day. Despite these nuances, most Ekujae usually stick to a specific pattern of symbols on their skin, as the paint is intended to represent the most essential aspects of the individual; an Ekujae who frequently changes their symbols is considered flighty by their peers.

Ekujae almost always dress in green and brown, both because these tones make for practical jungle camouflage and are considered the ancestral colors of their people. They frequently use wood, leaves, leather, fur, and bone in their clothing, and they're well-known for favoring bark cloth made by pressing the inner bark of trees into sheets. Ekujae's woodwarping magic enhances the quality of these textiles. The fine bark cloth and intricate wooden jewelry they produce can be extremely valuable in the right markets.

## SOCIETY

Ekujae organize into distinct social groups known as clans, which in turn create their own villages and towns. These clans are so self-sufficient that many outsiders who encounter them assume that they're entirely separate political entities from one another. However, the Ekujae clans constitute a united nation and maintain strong relationships with one another, though these ties might not be easily evident to people with shorter life spans than elves. While this nation technically chooses a king or queen from among the clan leaders, that position exists mainly in case a central authority is needed to take charge during emergencies, rather than to dictate nationwide laws.

Though Ekujae greatly value their immediate relatives, most consider clan members to be as close as family, and a child of one familial unit is treated as a child of the whole clan. An Ekujae's clan also tends to influence their vocation.

Though clans happily support their members' individual aspirations, certain ones specialize in various trades or skilled work, either through geographical advantage or tradition. A clan near ancient ruins, for example, might be famous for their warriors and protective magic, while those close to the Magaambya in Nantambu typically educate diplomats and mages.

Ekujae aren't born into their clans, though they always consider the clan of their mother to be family as well; instead, they choose to join a clan after they reach adulthood. Ekujae are expected to remain a part of their chosen clan for their entire lives; joining or leaving a clan is a very serious matter, though few clans will refuse a request for either. Banishment from a clan is a shame reserved for heinous social crimes that Ekujae feel don't warrant capital punishment, such as child abandonment or reckless behavior that results in the death of another person. Such punishment is only slightly less severe than a death sentence.



Ekujae clans democratically nominate and elect rulers and their advisers. All adults have a say in the final outcome. In particularly contentious elections, clan members might demand a task from the potential ruler to prove their worth. Once a ruler is accepted, the ruler and the clan jointly choose the ruler's advisers. In addition to magical, military, and spiritual advisers, Ekujae highly value advisers known as linguists, who serve simultaneously as diplomats, translators, storytellers, and historians. These linguists are almost always half-elves, who, with their shorter life spans, tend to adapt more easily to changing times and situations that require an immediate solution.

## FAITH

Ekujae consider the elven deity Yuelral to be their nation's patron, and they believe their role as guardians and scholars pays homage to this goddess of magic. They also worship many of the traditional elven gods: Ketephys, the god of the hunt and the idealized warrior; Findeladlara, the goddess of the sky; Desna, whom they portray as a wandering moth and storyteller; and Calistria the wasp, whom Ekujae consider a sly trickster figure. Ekujae faith is an extremely personal matter, as they believe deities can offer inborn gifts or fated destinies to chosen individuals. They don't find it unusual for elves to believe themselves tasked to follow a certain deity and carry out that deity's agenda, so worshippers of obscure faiths aren't rare among Ekujae clans.

## CULTURE

A complex web of traditions and customs that stretches back thousands of years makes up Ekujae life, continuing to hold true even in the present day-to-day challenges of living in the jungle. Ekujae consider themselves guardians and defenders of their lands, seeing it as their sacred duty to fight against the Great Darkness and any demons, dragons, or other threats that might prey upon their people. They tend to be militant, raising their children with the expectation that they'll see violent conflict within their lifetimes. Ekujae are also extremely formal in their dealings, even by elven standards, and they practice many rituals around the swearing of oaths and the forming of bargains.

Ekujae highly value art and academia, but their method of keeping records can seem impenetrable to foreign scholars, making it difficult for them to share much of their lore with non-Ekujae. Along with maintaining strong oral and musical traditions, they also create "record trees." Ekujae carefully cultivated these trees to grow specific patterns in their trunks and branches, which serve as semi-permanent records of important information and events. This unique system of shape-based writing can also record physical movements and even musical notes. From a young age, Ekujae learn how to read and write in this three-dimensional language; half-elves are particularly adept at translating their Ekujae forebears' shape-speech or transcribing record trees into other forms of media, such as thin bronze strips woven into tree-like shapes or a shape-based, albeit complex script for when it becomes necessary to write in ink.

## CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Ekujae aren't immune to bias due to their societal upbringing. Generally speaking, they receive non-Ekujae elves cordially, if with some curiosity. Ekujae give half-elves a warm welcome; they've heard that many Avistani half-elves have issues finding belonging, so they wish to provide a welcoming environment to their foreign kin. Matanji orcs and half-orcs are well-known as demon-hunters, and the Ekujae greet these people with respect. Goblins aren't common in the Mwangi Jungle, and the Ekujae view them with curiosity. In contrast, Ekujae treat Chelaxians, those associated with or related to dragons, and worshippers of Abadar or fiends (particularly Asmodeus) with quiet suspicion.

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## HANGING GARDENS

In addition to foraging from the jungle, Ekujae build massive agriculture platforms on the sides of the colossal Mwangi trees where they build their towns and cities. Branches are woven into a cylindrical mesh and filled with earth, creating sophisticated treetop gardens above the forest canopy's shade. Fruit trees grafted onto the tree trunks create fields of hanging, horizontal orchards. Ekujae carefully shape the growth of their host trees' branches, both to aid in city planning and to ensure that the elves' gardens can get enough rain and sunlight.

Ekujae entertainment often consists of music, stories, or sports that emphasize precision and physical dexterity, from foot races through tree branches to target practice with clay pigeons. The Ekujae also favor strategy games played with small tokens that can be easily carried in a pocket or a pouch. One of the more popular Ekujae games is a dancing game known as *daikada*. Each player wears a pair of copper anklets, each set of which is designed to make chimes distinct from the other pairs when struck. The goal of the game is to dance along with the beat of a song while using fancy footwork to strike the opposing player's anklets and make them chime.

Ekujae elves believe their bond to the environment to be especially strong, as their ancestors stayed on Golarion through one of its darkest hours and shed their blood to save the planet from ruin. They prefer to build their elegant cities entirely in the canopies of trees, braiding living branches and vines together to form elaborate structures. Ekujae practice a noninvasive form of agriculture by grafting fruit trees onto the trunks of their cities' largest branches and growing shade-loving crops in the underbrush. Their love of nature extends to the animals that dwell in their lands as well; they often name individual animals they commonly encounter, and it's not unusual for them to chat about the local elephants and leopards in the same way they might gossip about a neighbor.

## THE EKUJAE SOUL

Ekujae have an extremely complex and nuanced understanding of the soul. They believe every living being to have four spirits that are inherited or bestowed by different aspects of an individual's life. The first, which Ekujae refer to as "what your father gave you," represents the individual's physical form and perception of their physical form; the second, "what your mother gave you," is an individual's heritage and family; the third, "what your heart gave you," is the individual's personality and personal taste. The fourth spirit, known as "what your gods gave you," is the most enigmatic part of an individual's soul, referring to an intricate tangle of intrinsic gifts and divine destiny that forms a guiding influence—whether wanted or not—on a creature's life.

These spirits have their own names and personalities, and they might not necessarily agree with one another.

Indeed, a clash between two particular spirits is considered to be a common source of internal turmoil. Yet, Ekujae don't consider these four spirits to be separate entities; they're intrinsically part of the same soul, just as many complex emotions and thoughts are intrinsically part of a single person. For this reason, Ekujae believe that all of a creature's spirits must be tended to in order for that creature to remain happy, healthy, and moral. When one spirit is consistently neglected, discontent and strife will soon follow, so introspection and self-care are of utmost importance in Ekujae society.

## JEWELRY AND KELEDI

While Ekujae share the elven love of artistry, their jewelry is typically understated and crafted from natural materials. An Ekujae scout, for example, has little use for ostentatious ornaments that might catch on jungle plants or glint in a ray of sunlight. In addition, Ekujae observe certain taboos and customs regarding different types of accessories. For example, only Ekujae capable of casting magic wear gems, and these gems are always uncut out of respect for the elven goddess Yuelral. Only half-elves wear brass, as Ekujae believe the



alloy represents the connection that half-elves share with both the natural world and the world of humans; half-elf merchants often wear exquisitely crafted brass jewelry all over their bodies as a sign of wealth, and almost every Ekujae half-elf receives a handmade brass ornament from their elven parent upon their birth.

By far the most taboo metal in Ekujae culture is gold. They believe the gold beneath their lands to be the cooled breath and blood of Dahak, spilled during his battle with the elves ages ago, and that all gold is cursed by the wrath of the dragon god's aspect. The curse of Dahak prompts even the kindest of dragons and the noblest of humans to covet gold, and it ensures that blood will always be spilled over the greed gold inspires. No Ekujae ever willingly wears gold, with a single exception: the keledi, elves of great virtue who have sworn to sacrifice their lives to fight against Dahak should the Great Darkness ever return. These elves wear ritually purified gold as a sign that they're worthy enough that their souls could cut the very flesh of a god and to mark them as a living sacrifice to the fight against their ancestral foe. To bear the title of keledi is both the greatest honor and deepest sorrow in Ekujae society.

### THE FIGHT AGAINST THE GREAT DARKNESS

For all their love of scholarship and artistry, Ekujae are a people at war, and much of their society functions around this cold fact. Even if the Great Darkness should never rise again, unnatural menaces still plague the Mwangi Jungle, and Ekujae lands host shrines to ancient demons and worse. Though these elves take what precautions they can, they know that isolation won't save them from the dangers of their past or their homeland—and so they prepare for inevitable battles. Demons and dragons are the favored prey of Ekujae warrior-hunters, but countless other dangers lurk in the Mwangi Jungle, from ancient undead to forgotten arcana to primordial evils from an unknown time. Traditionally, each adult Ekujae carries a silver knife and a cold iron knife on their person in anticipation of battle against demons or devils. Ekujae warriors also wear a cold iron "soulguard," a circular armored disk worn around the abdomen that provides protection from demonic magic.

Ekujae must remain ever vigilant for any sign of dark influences, as they're curiously susceptible to demonic poisons and corruptions as well as lycanthropy. It's unknown whether this susceptibility is simply due to an unusual vulnerability in their constitutions or a more mysterious reason, but it remains a constant worry among Ekujae exposed to such dangers. Centuries of dealing with this particular vulnerability have made Ekujae among the foremost scholars of methods to reverse such magical poisons and transformations, and many seek out Ekujae help to save loved ones who have no other recourse. However, few Ekujae cures are pleasant or simple.

### HALF-ELVES

The role of half-elves in Ekujae culture is nuanced and not easily understood by outsiders. Many Ekujae half-elves live in entirely half-elf clans, though this arrangement isn't because they're unwanted or rejected by full elves, as some foreigners might assume. While many Ekujae do ritually turn their half-elven offspring over to be raised within half-elf villages, they do so out of a belief that half-elves thrive better among peers than among elves, who have dramatically different life spans. For the most part, Ekujae half-elves agree with this policy, though some half-elves still feel excluded from elven culture and advocate for more integration between elves and half-elves. Despite this tradition of segregation, it's hardly unknown for an Ekujae elf to raise a half-elf child in a predominately elven clan, and half-elves can freely choose their clan upon coming of age, just the same as elves.

### INTRODUCTIONS

Ekujae have a very formalized method of introducing themselves, though they don't expect anyone who isn't Ekujae to follow suit (and often find attempts to do so rather clumsy). The proper way for an Ekujae to present themselves to a stranger is to give their name, their clan, and their mother's clan, in that order.



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The Ekujae half-elf clans are valued as bridges between the elves and the other peoples of the Mwangi Expanse. Half-elves are the most common Ekujae emissaries to neighboring city-states for purposes of trade, cultural exchange, or other negotiations. Ekujae tradition strongly dictates that half-elves serve as a ruler's linguists to ensure that their valuable perspective is heard, especially when making decisions that concern shorter-lived creatures whom the elves might not necessarily understand.

## RELATIONS

Ekujae are generally suspicious of outsiders, preferring to keep to their own lands and to deal with others only on their own terms. They have strong ties to the Magaambya academy in Nantambu, but their association is too sporadic to be called an alliance. Otherwise, Ekujae deal with most other people on a case-by-case basis. They often send out linguists or other emissaries to local tribes or cities for trade and news but usually keep outsiders at arms' length when it comes to the details of Ekujae affairs.

## EKUJAE SETTLEMENTS

Most Ekujae settlements tend to grow on top of, or as close as possible to, ancient sites of power across the Mwangi Expanse. This method, while incredibly risky

and dangerous, allows the Ekujae to better guard against the evils that lie within those sites and prevent them from falling into the wrong hands. A few others are more remote, offering both a safe haven and training grounds for those who keep watch over the jungle's many perils. Some, like Ijo, are small towns filled with quiet life broken only by holidays, people leaving to enter the Circles, and those returning home. Some, including the Circles, are places of training where hard work reigns supreme. Others sit as guard posts over places of dangerous power, such as Akriovel.

A few structural similarities exist in all Ekujae settlements, making a thread between them all. They're built around two main buildings: an open-air communal cooking space and an enclosed but ventilated healing and recuperation space. The communal cooking and eating spaces are essential to Ekujae living, providing a place of respite from the evils that so often lurk nearby. When something worth celebrating occurs, there's almost always a delicious meal already sizzling over an open flame or burbling in a pot. When not in use, the eating spaces can be converted into training spaces to keep skills sharp, even away from the Circles. Likewise, the cooking areas can be repurposed to make remedies and other healing supplies. Outside of these core buildings, every settlement is built to house what it needs most, such as homes, storage, further dedicated training space, or an armory.

When outsiders arrive near Ekujae territory, they're often scouted out long before they catch sight of a settlement—whether they're aware of that fact or not. Ekujae scouts make their judgments before acting, some seeking guidance from elders prior to approaching outsiders. Sometimes that decision means revealing their presence and escorting the group to the settlement. Sometimes, it means confusing and directing the outsiders away from the settlement. In other cases, it means making sure such travelers get lost deep in the jungle without any viable respite. Most scouts see this duty as one that must be performed, even if it can turn into an unfortunate occasion.

### **AKRIVEL**

Akrivel is the home of the Leopard Clan and sits close to an ancient temple of Ketephys and its Huntergate Way Station—a site of magical backlash created when the Ekujae trapped the aspect of the dragon god Dahak within the *aiudara* that resided there, which has recently become active again. Because of its vicinity to the temple of Ketephys, the location serves as both a strategic fallback point and ideal launching station as well as a place of reprieve and recovery for those injured defending the site. It also allows scouts to monitor Huntergate. Over time, this settlement has grown from an outpost housing maybe a dozen to one of the larger Ekujae settlements, with treetop longhouses and well-maintained gardening platforms. Where settlements around other dangerous ruins or artifacts have an air of impermanence to them, as if they could be gone without a moment's notice, Akrivel truly feels like a home to its residents. Fear that this settlement could be lost exists, but not to the extent that it keeps Ekujae away, as they value community and family far too much by comparison.

Around the standard communal and training areas stands an ever-expanding cluster of private homes, a communal sleeping space for visitors from other clans as well as the occasional adventurers, food and grain storage, and a small smokehouse that doesn't often see use. These buildings spiral slowly and lopsidedly outwards from the center, each new one built or relocated as necessity dictates.

### **THE CIRCLES**

The Circles are unlike any other Ekujae settlement. Equal parts center of academia and martial training grounds, they break many of the unspoken rules of Ekujae civil planning with permanent ground-dwelling buildings for training as its central features. Upon reaching maturity, any warrior of Ekujae blood is heavily encouraged to attend and begin their training. First, new trainees undergo a battery of physical and magical combat training tests to see where they show the most aptitude and to focus their efforts. Then, they begin intensive training that can last years or longer, depending on their area of planned expertise. Those who train as warriors spend less of their time studying combat forms (as many have already learned them as children) and more learning the threats of the jungle, demons, and Dahak especially. Those who favor arcane combat experience a more melded method of learning, building on their skills as they learn the associated theory and lore to inexorably link their studies. While many pupils

### **GIFT GIVING**

Ekujae traditionally give gifts as a symbol of friendship and trust, though they don't do so to non-Ekujae lightly. These gifts are usually something practical, to symbolize the gift-giver helping their comrade even when absent, but jewelry or tokens to honor a companion or relative aren't uncommon. Ekujae have little stigma about re-gifting these presents to other cherished friends, as it means the gift still proved useful, just in a different manner than expected.

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## EKUJAE CHARACTERS

Ekujae elves often have the woodland elf or whisper elf heritage, representing their familiarity with the jungle and the keen senses they hone as wilderness guardians. Those who connect with innate elven magic tend to take the Wildborn Magic feat rather than the Otherworldly Magic feat, though plenty of exceptions exist. Some Ekujae have a strong connection to nature that manifests as the Elemental Wrath feat. Many Ekujae have the Share Thoughts feat, allowing them to confer with one another silently in a way that makes others uncomfortable. Ekujae archers and warriors often take the Nimble Elf and Forest Stealth feats, allowing them to attack and then rapidly meld into the jungle. Elven Weapon Familiarity, Woodcraft, Ageless Patience, and Tree Climber (Elf) are also common feats among the Ekujae.

focus on the martial arts, the academic knowledge base gained in their training often means the difference between unwittingly unleashing the evils they attempt to hold back and succeeding in their chosen duties. Almost all students continue that education independently in some form—perhaps by training or learning under an expert from outside the Ekujae clans or finding a master among their people. Those who decide to learn magic trend toward divine or primal magic, supporting and healing warriors both in and out of battle, and they amass as much knowledge as they can about their foes until it becomes rote. Few specialize in other types of magic and even fewer look to combine magical and martial combat, but those who do are considered among the most formidable.

Those who prove themselves capable in their training are given one final test of skill: to accompany a keledi on a mission, usually one that shouldn't prove lethal but can still test the trainee's capabilities. On returning from this mission, the keledi determines if the student will be capable of standing on their own. As time passes, many Ekujae return to the Circles to refine their skills, learn more, and mentor those who enter training after them.

One of the few parts of the Circles that the Ekujae consistently allow outsiders to access is the modest library. This library was built when Ekujae on their Awari riri, a journey of self-discovery many Ekujae take before entering the Circles, returned home with books and scrolls as well as blank vellum and the means to record their knowledge. Together, these materials make a hyper-focused collection on the assorted evils of the world and the potential ways to thwart them, rivaling those in Absalom and Buyisela. When Ekujae need to delve deeply into the subjects of the occult and demonic, they often reluctantly turn to the Alijæ, ceding that their fellow Mualijæ are far more knowledgeable while still holding a deep distaste for how wantonly they steep themselves in the evils of this world.

## Ijo

Ijo was established when many families of assorted clans watching over especially dangerous areas worried for the well-being of their children. Coming together, they established a settlement deeper in the jungle and secured it within simple access of several other settlements. An easily defensible group of homes comprises most of Ijo; their ownership often rotates, depending on who needs them most. The settlement also has spaces where the efforts of raising children can be spread across the community, allowing warriors needed elsewhere within the Expanse to leave their loved ones with those they explicitly trust. Ijo is one of the few spaces that Ekujae refuse to allow outsiders to access in any way, turning travelers who need aid toward any of the nearby settlements or moving them discretely away before disappearing into trees to leave them lost.

Most of Ijo's population would be considered civilians by other cultures: those who do small-scale farming, trading, crafting, and study, collectively dedicating time to care and education where others can't.

While Ijo is relatively unique in its purpose, a handful of other Ekujae settlements like it do exist elsewhere, including a settlement of elders who don't act as mentors at the Circles.

## ADE CARO

CN | MALE | HALF-ELF | SORCERER 9

Ade, short for Adebayo, grew up in Absalom with his human father, an infamous sorcerer named Itri Caro who hailed from the Shackles. Well-known for his womanizing, Itri charmed his way into the life of Unathi, a gifted dagger fighter and daughter of the Ekujae Lion Clan's matron. Unathi saw only the best in Itri, though the rest of the clan eyed him cautiously. The most wary of all was Thandi, an Ekujae who had hoped to prove and profess her love to Unathi before Itri's arrival.

Eventually, Itri decided to leave as he felt the call to adventure once more. A very young Ade, already beginning to show signs of magical ability unlike any other child around him, surprised the clan by leaving with his father. Coming into his divine powers as a sorcerer, he quickly became an asset to any crew that could put up with his constant jokes—along with the trouble that followed him just as it did his father. He spent much of his young adult life experiencing the pirating tales his father had told him during his childhood, all the while employing some of the combat tactics he learned from when he still lived in Ibori with his mother. Though life was often harder than expected, Ade coped and helped others with his snappy wit and easy good humor; he met any dire situation with a quip that almost always broke the tension.

Ade made a small name for himself out in the world before very suddenly returning to the settlement of his birth. Some whispered that he did so due to suddenly losing his father in a raid, while other rumors chalked it up to some compulsion or magic of the Ekujae or even of the Mwangi Expanse itself. Though Ade will probably never give a straight answer about why, in truth, Unathi asked if he would lend his magic abilities to the clan and attend her joining with Thandi. Homesickness drove Ade to drop everything and return without notice to anyone.

After parting ways with some of his friends and acquaintances in Vidrian and setting sail for home with a small crew, Ade slowly made his way inland to Ibori. Exactly what happened on this journey and who accompanied him aren't matters he talks about, to the concern of his family. Whatever occurred obviously weighs on him heavily, as he endlessly deflects and distracts if talk of his journey comes up. When Ade finally arrived in Ibori, he was wounded and on the edge of exhaustion. The physical wounds were a simple matter, but the psychological ones seemed much deeper and much harder to treat. Returning to his old coping methods, Ade hid his pain with humor, though some in Ibori have seen him staring off into the jungle with fear and determination.

When willing adventurers come to Ibori, Ade quickly tries to get on their good side in hopes that, once they finish with whatever business brought them there, those adventurers might be willing to go on "a quick little mission" with him into the jungle. According to him, his brothers are lost in the wilds, and Ade needs assistance to find and rescue them. Their exact locations and the circumstances around what happened seems to change and morph with each prospective group and telling: Ade's brothers had fallen prey to bilokos and are being held as hostages and pantry stock; or they're soon to be sacrificed by charau-ka in Usaro as a blood offering to Angazhan; or sabosans dragged them off in the night. If asked about it, Unathi and Thandi tell that Ade has no siblings or even half-siblings that they know of, at least none who are Ekujae. Those who have asked Ade's crew in Vidrian find them unsure if Ade's brothers might be Itri's other children—given Itri's past behavior, rumor has it that anyone in the Shackles could be related. Ade himself, when asked, falters over the answer as if unable to give one. Whatever the source and truth of his strange request, none of the groups that have offered their aid have found whatever Ade is searching for.

## SHIP MAGES

Convincing a magic user of any talent to partake in the dangerous and brutal life of a sailor is a hard sell, meaning any ship mage is worth their weight in gold—even enemy crews would rather sway one to their side than kill one. Unsurprisingly, most ship mages willing to put up with ocean life have an extreme connection to water or storms, though there are exceptions.



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## KALLIJAE

In the philosophical schism that fractured Mualijae elves, those who became Kallijae felt that the long-prophesied “ancient evil” they needed to guard against resided within themselves. These elves believed their longevity could foster a disconnect with the world around them in the wake of Earthfall, leading to a callous sense of superiority. It had the potential to push them on a slow but inevitable trajectory where they could become susceptible to evil purely because they could no longer recognize it as evil. This behavior had been observed in others within the Mwangi Expanse, and some Mualijae realized they were just as corruptible as anyone else—perhaps even more so, considering their long lifespans. Measures would need to be taken to protect themselves and thus the world from the potential evil that could be unleashed through neglect of duty and lack of discipline.

The elves who left to better understand and suppress their so-called “natural” inclination toward superiority complexes and callousness, who feared their people could easily become what they fought against, came to be known as Kallijae. Though they originally split off from Mualijae elves in great numbers, their population has slowly dwindled over time due to the constant conflict against the evil forces they oppose. In particular,

the charau-ka of Usaro under Angazhan’s influence have proven persistent enemies.

### HISTORY

Though grim, the history of the Kallijae elves began with lofty promise. They wanted to not only fight against the ills of the world but recognize it within themselves, lest they fall prey to it. To that end, they decided to settle in self-isolation near the vicinity of Usaro. The location served a twofold purpose: there, they would always have a ready reminder of their potential fate in the form of Angazhan and his cruel charau-ka, and they could actively combat that evil.

First, they established a moving base of operations just outside of Usaro which they named First Stand. Armed with a deep understanding of themselves, along with rigorous physical training, they began their first wave of assaults on Usaro. What followed was, and continues to be, a slow war of attrition on both sides. Kallijae fight with guerrilla tactics, whereas charau-ka wage full-frontal assaults, most often against First Stand, wherever it’s situated. First Stand has been destroyed and rebuilt so often that most Kallijae now keep only a few material possessions.

Their own history is mostly preserved through oral traditions, along with some outsider recordings from a few Alijae archivists who view it as an extension of their duties.

Many Kallijae would later regret their opening offensive against Usaro, coming to view it as an unmitigated failure resulting in far too many injuries and casualties. Forced to fall back, the elves retreated to a mist-shrouded island they deemed Haven, establishing that the location was safe; or, at least, safe enough. Upon building settlements there, they discovered that several nearby tarns—still and clear waters in circular pools—made exceptional foci for meditation. Though meditation had previously been little practiced among Mualijae elves, many who became Kallijae began to use it as a method of gaining a deeper self-understanding and gathering energy to steel themselves for their fight against evil. It also became a chance to reflect on their potentially corruptible nature and suppress any selfish impulse to the best of their abilities. Over time, they slowly created an entire system that partnered quiet self-reflection with physical betterment, building more retreats with further methods of focusing inward to find and stamp out any potential corruption lying within.

Despite the constant threat of destruction to their settlements, Kallijae continue to hone their minds and bodies so they can deal with any threats that may arise. At times, this has backfired as some Kallijae found themselves drawn in by the very evil and corruption they seek to hold back. These regrettable incidents are never seen as a refutation of their philosophy, simply as further proof that they are just as susceptible to the corruptions of the world as anybody else. And so, Kallijae continue to improve themselves and the world around them.

## APPEARANCE

Kallijae elves tend to have very dark skin and long, densely coiled black hair. To an outsider, a Kallijae might almost appear mundane when compared to an Ekujae wearing assorted bright metals or an Alijae proudly donning their prominent magical masks. While their fabrics may feature bright colors, this is only because many natural dyes made in the Expanse are especially vibrant. Kallijae are also known for wearing gems as foci for their minds and meditations and for the subtle scarification marks on their faces that represent their cultural history.

Though not a codified belief among Kallijae, many of them feel that gaudy jewelry, bright trinkets, and other outward signs of wealth should be shunned, despite their own use of foci gems. Kallijae own very few expensive possessions, and these are usually family heirlooms. Exceptions are made for magical items of protection, objects to help one better blend in during their endless conflict against the world's evils, and trinkets that can be sold or traded in emergencies. Even then, most Kallijae avoid purchasing opulent jewelry, as this is seen as an invitation to either be consumed by avarice or become a tempting target for one already in greed's clutches. Any riches a Kallijae possesses should be easily carried and easily hidden.

## WOVEN HAIR

Elaborate long braids, coils, and dread styles are Kallijae elves' most visible concession to vanity, though they're often much more functional than they first seem.

## HIDDEN NAMES

Though knowledge is important to fighting evil, some secrets are dangerous enough to corrupt the one who knows them. Kallijae elves know the true names of certain demons, but they hide these names in pieces throughout specific stories. If a name becomes needed, a Kallijae storyteller can piece it together from the clues left within these tales.



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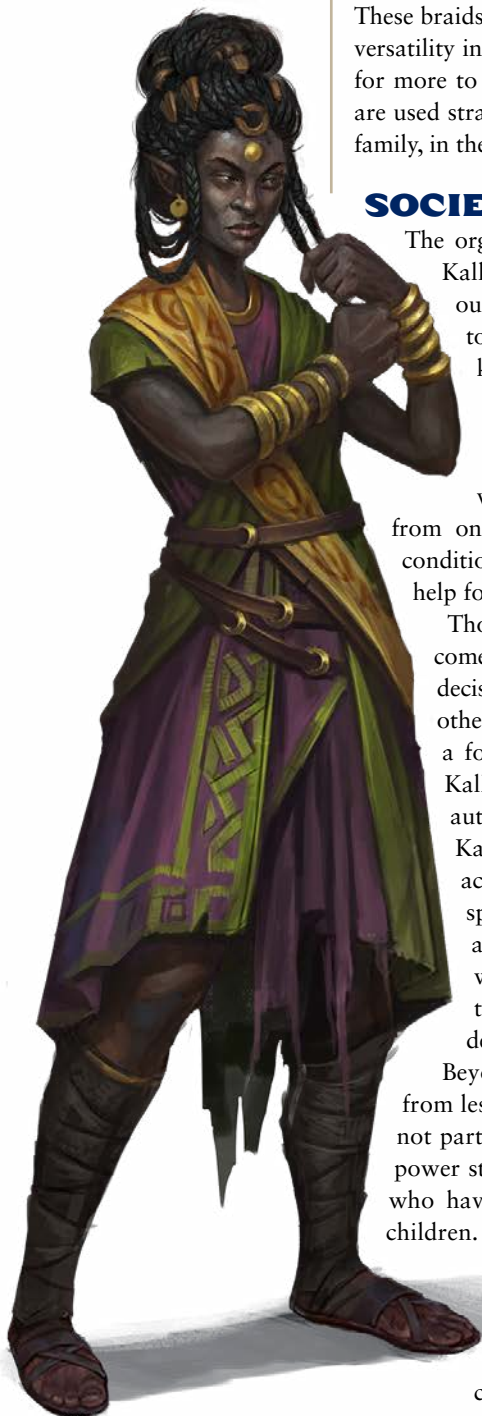
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## RESPECT FOR LIFE

Kallijae believe binding any creature against their will invites evil. Very few employ familiars or practice summoning magic (conjunction spells that do not summon real creatures are far less objectionable). Kallijae usually avoid compulsion magic of all kinds, though some use it to counteract the compulsions of other creatures.



To carry as much on their person as possible, should the need to travel quickly arise, Kallijae can braid their most prized possessions into their hair. These possessions are often small, of little value to anyone not part of a family or community, and lovingly handed down through generations or from mentor to mentee. Usually, these keepsakes are only removed and shown to others when a deep bond and trust is formed. Those rare Kallijae spotted outside the Mwangi Expanse might also use their hair to safely store important items such as documents, coins, and tinctures.

As such, Kallijae hairstyles tend to be elaborately woven patterns that support weight while also cushioning the head. Depending on what is stored within their braids or dreads, styles can range from massive and elaborate or thin and extremely functional.

Crafting these hairstyles is one of the arts Kallijae are most known for, sometimes taking hours to braid, dread, or maintain a single elf's head of hair. These braids and dreads are often extremely thin to give them more potential versatility in wear. The wearer's hair must be grown extremely long to allow for more to be held and the woven "basket" to be sturdier. Wooden beads are used strategically to help strengthen the pattern, some passed down in a family, in themselves keepsakes.

## SOCIETY

The organizational structure that serves as the backbone of the rigid Kallijae society is often considered esoteric and incomprehensible to outsiders. To be a part of a Kallijae community, one must adhere to strict rules and regulations. First and foremost, Kallijae must keep themselves pure, a concept that's often misunderstood. The "purity" that Kallijae hold in such high esteem is a freedom from the things which so often plague mortal souls and drag them down the various corrupting paths: non-communal material wealth, jealousy, vanity, and anything else that could distract from one's duty and purpose. This requires daily strengthening and conditioning, meditation, academic study, and a balanced diet of food to help form one's body into a cleansed vessel.

Those Kallijae most capable of mastering themselves in all respects come together to form a council of six, who make all overarching decisions for their communities and lead the raids on Usaro and other sites Kallijae stand against. While this council does not have a formal name—titles and prestige being another temptation that Kallijae eschew—all Kallijae acknowledge their wisdom and authority as those who are most exemplary of what it means to be Kallijae. However, the council is not infallible, and this too must be acknowledged. Its bylaws state that should any decisions come to a split vote, the council must listen to their youngest acolyte with the ability to understand the choice at hand. Though wisdom comes with age and effort, youth and naivety may also hold a clarity that can reveal paths once obscured. When age fails to make a decision, youth must be what provides insight.

Beyond the council, the hierarchy of authority slowly descends from lesser masters to mentors to trainees to acolytes and finally those not part of their semi-militaristic order. Generally, those outside of the power structure are those who cannot fight, such as the injured, elders who have lived extremely long lives, or parents of incredibly young children. This preparedness and over-planning trickles into the everyday life of Kallijae culture.

## FAITH

To Kallijae elves, the gods are just as fallible and corruptible as any mortal. Like mortals, they experience fear,

hate, jealousy, and all the other emotions that make one susceptible to evil. Those emotions and vulnerabilities can be passed on to their followers, disseminating across massive swathes of worshippers. Rather than open themselves up to such a vulnerability, the Kallijae observe no gods.

Instead, those who have displayed knowledge, competence, and mastery of themselves are venerated for their expertise and referred to as onyukayo. These are typically living elders who have become beloved mentors to subsequent generations, but anyone who shows aptitude and demonstrates the exemplary self-composure taught by the Kallijae may become one of the esteemed onyukayo. Often, those who leave settlements to travel on far-flung adventures return to find their status elevated.

However, Kallijae are careful to never elevate someone to godlike status, as this has the same pitfalls as worshipping and following gods. Even so, some still fall prey to the allure of having someone so lionized walking among them, morphing into quiet cults that lurk at the fringes of their society.

Kallijae believe their bodies to be parts forming a whole: mind, eyes, mouth, heart, hands, core, and feet. Periodically, the body must be completely cleansed in a ritual called the Unburdening. Outsiders who have taken part in this ritual or witnessed it being performed often describe it as prayer in a different form, though Kallijae do not direct this prayer to any divine listener. They also claim the Kallijae concept of the mind and heart as akin to the soul, but Kallijae themselves say this is inaccurate. The mind and heart are not separate from the rest of the body. All parts are necessary and must be faithfully tended to form a functional whole.

## CULTURE

Since parting ways from their Mualijae forebears, Kallijae elves have striven to achieve these overarching goals: to understand the nature of evil, identify it within themselves, suppress or eliminate it, and suppress or eliminate it in others. This takes many forms: meditation, the Unburdening, reflection through oral tradition, and vigilance.

## MEDITATION & SELF-REFLECTION

To this end, Kallijae have developed several methods of meditation and introspection. Some are mundane, based on controlling breath and focusing on points within the body to clear one's thoughts. Some use an outer focus to bolster one's effort and lighten the load, such as foci gems or the pools of Haven. Others draw on primal magic to enhance the effects of meditation, such as the Unburdening.

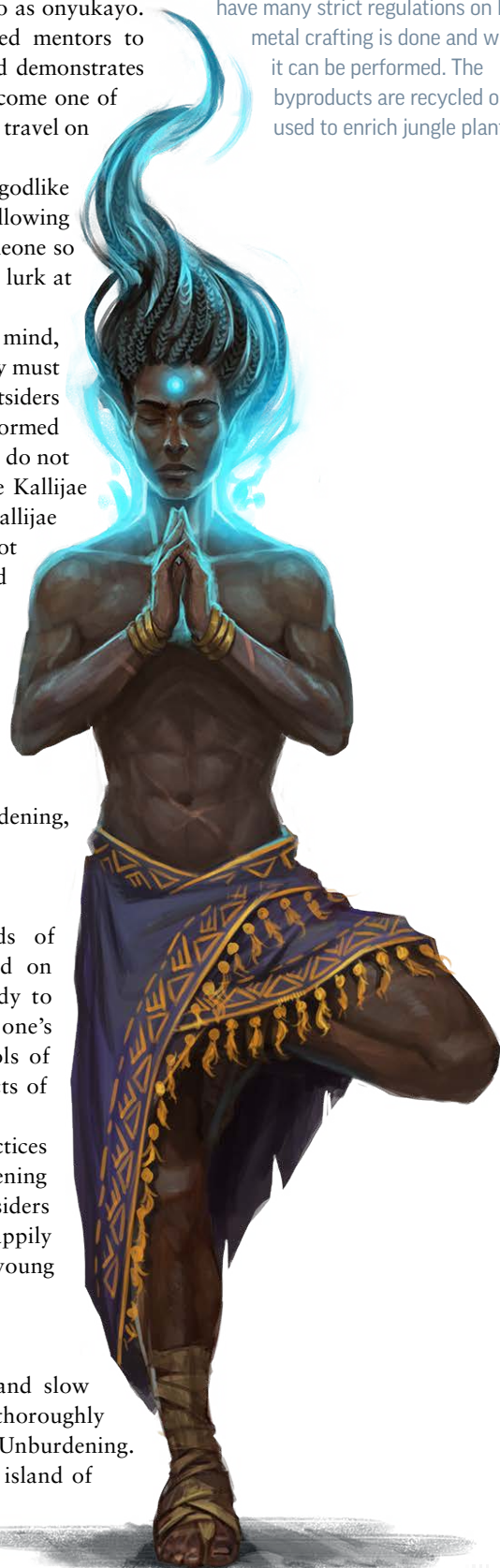
The various methods of meditation are one of the few practices Kallijae are willing to share with others, one way of lessening the spread of evils beyond where they've settled. When outsiders come to a Kallijae settlement seeking guidance, they are happily taken through the Unburdening and then trained just as a young Kallijae might be, as if they know nothing.

## THE UNBURDENING

When one's journeys and deeds begin to weigh heavily and slow one down, Kallijae believe all parts of the body must be thoroughly cleansed, purified, and re-centered in a ritual known as the Unburdening. This ritual can be performed as originally intended on the island of Haven, but any who cannot make the journey may use a spring-fed or freshwater pool. For the Unburdening to truly be effective, these are the steps that must be

## ELVEN IRON

Kallijae wield cold iron weapons to fight demons, but they are extremely cautious of slag and pollution that metallurgy can produce. The elves have many strict regulations on how metal crafting is done and where it can be performed. The byproducts are recycled or used to enrich jungle plants.



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## WEIGHTLESS GIFTS

Since Kallijae shun materialism, they rarely exchange physical presents. Rather, if a Kallijae elf wishes to honor someone, they often anonymously tell that person's story to Kallijae storytellers. Some even compose a poem or performance to pass along. This knowledge is collected, as are all Kallijae tales, but when a tale is gifted in this manner, performers will make an effort to seek out the person so honored and perform the story in an unobtrusive manner. The goal of performance is to ensure the recipient is aware of the gift while avoiding any feelings of arrogance (or in some cases, paranoia) that might come from being the center of an important tale.

followed. First, one must reflect on what has been done with each part being cleaned, to acknowledge what one has been through between this Unburdening and the last. Next, one must assess those deeds and forgive any regrets while reveling in any that bring joy. Finally, all these memories are kept close and any lessons to be learned held closer. The last part washed is always the scalp and hair as the memories are given a place in the mind. This ritual is always completed after long journeys or at least once a year on one's birthday, representing and acknowledging the journey of that year.

## ORAL TRADITION

Kallijae put their trust in knowledge, stories, and skills that can be handed down through generations. Though outsiders may view reliance on such methods as short-sighted, it has kept the Kallijae traditions alive despite the seemingly never-ending destruction of their settlements. While books can burn and buildings can crumble, words passed ear to ear continue so long as someone listens. Though other scholars might fear the corruption of information that can result from such a practice, a trained Kallijae storyteller possesses a memory that some might consider supernatural in its precision. Key repeated phrases and other mnemonic aids feature prominently in Kallijae stories, but much of their accuracy results from the dedication and discipline of Kallijae historians.

Rather than keeping extensive records as Alijae loremasters do, Kallijae preserve their history through oral tales told by elders and those who will listen to them and remember. Lighthearted stories are frequently passed around after meals and sober tales of their history solemnly recited at key points each year. All skills and knowledge are passed person to person, be it by family or community mentors.

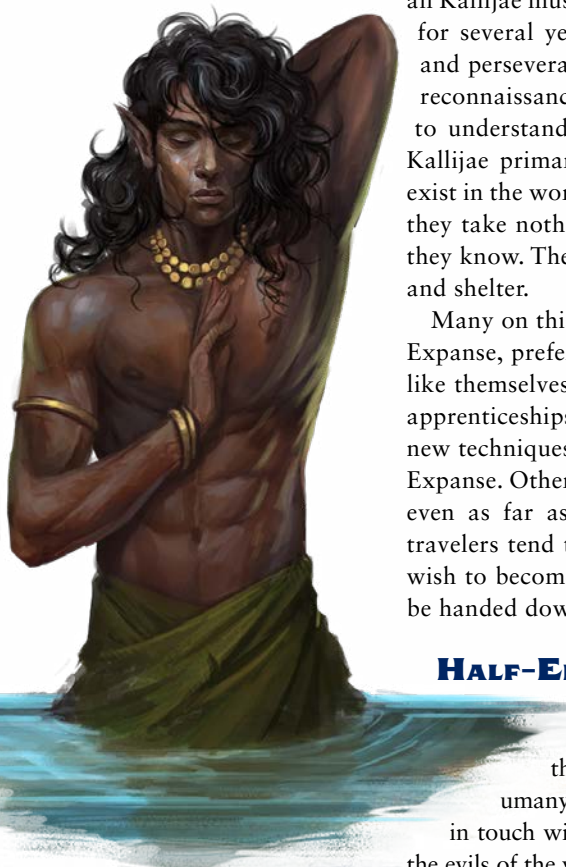
## CRUCIBLE OF THE HEART

To learn firsthand what exists in the outside world as they come of age, all Kallijae must make a Crucible of the Heart. For this, they must journey for several years away from any Kallijae settlements to test their will and perseverance against all that the world has to offer, and bring back reconnaissance. This test serves as a rite of passage that must be passed to understand the struggle they will endure their entire lives. Though Kallijae primarily focus on the threat Angazhan poses, many other ills exist in the world and may exacerbate that threat. As young Kallijae leave, they take nothing with them aside from the clothes they wear and what they know. They must earn everything else for themselves, including food and shelter.

Many on this journey simply travel to the further edges of the Mwangi Expanse, preferring to remain around those who at least nominally look like themselves as a comfort. Such Crucibles are often shorter, more like apprenticeships than journeys of introspection, where one learns firsthand new techniques and who their potential allies and enemies are within the Expanse. Others, however, find themselves much further afield, potentially even as far as the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and Numeria. These travelers tend to be those who fell in love with tales of adventurers and wish to become like them, adding to the collection of oral knowledge to be handed down for generations.

## HALF-ELVES

Another word for Kallijae half-elves is *umanyano*, symbolic of the bridge and potential unity with others they represent. To full elves and significantly older Kallijae, *umanyano* often seem like the only way of understanding and staying in touch with a rapidly changing world. How can one hope to suppress the evils of the world if they cannot know and understand them fully?



A Kallijae half-elf raised within Kallijae culture will train especially hard in meditative practices before taking their Crucible of the Heart with the Alijae in Nagisa as a two-fold test: they must resist the temptations of power that most Kallijae believe Alijae elves drown themselves in, as well as learn the full history of their people to understand all that has come before. After a period that can last as long as several years, they return home to cleanse their spirit before going back out into the world in search of practices that can improve their meditative and cleansing habits, along with anything else that may aid their people. At times, these explorations may result in sowing deep distrust in their communities for outsiders, particularly those hailing from the Cheliox Empire and pirates from the Shackles.

Kallijae half-elves raised outside of their culture are asked to perform the same duties should they become part of a settlement, but may tragically be used as object lessons rather than proverbial bridges: they are examples of what the ills of the world can heap onto a soul, rather than a bridge between cultures.

## RELATIONS

Many outsiders consider Kallijae elves to be strange but ultimately trustworthy, if only because of their strict discipline and calm self-control. Their focus and self-knowledge often makes them a cool head in any crisis. Most adventuring parties from within the Expanse are glad to invite a Kallijae member with them as an anchoring force. Those from outside the Expanse tend to view Kallijae elves with curiosity and bewilderment: a seemingly rigid and emotionless group in a sea of peoples who wear their hearts on their colorful and well-appointed sleeves.

The Kallijae belief in the fallibility of gods often attracts questions from those raised in more reverent societies, with inquiries ranging from innocent to aggressive—but, as Kallijae have little rancor toward the faithful and little interest in debating them, they tend to be accepted and appreciated by all but the most militant theists. These views can attract more positive attention from residents of Rahadoum, who have been primed to consider Kallijae elves as philosophical allies. However, Kallijae generally find belligerent atheism distasteful, which often leads to disappointment during these meetings. Nevertheless Rahadoum remains a popular nation for undertaking the Crucible of the Heart, and the Rahadoumi usually welcome these visitors, as they're intrigued by Kallijae meditation techniques and non-religious rituals.

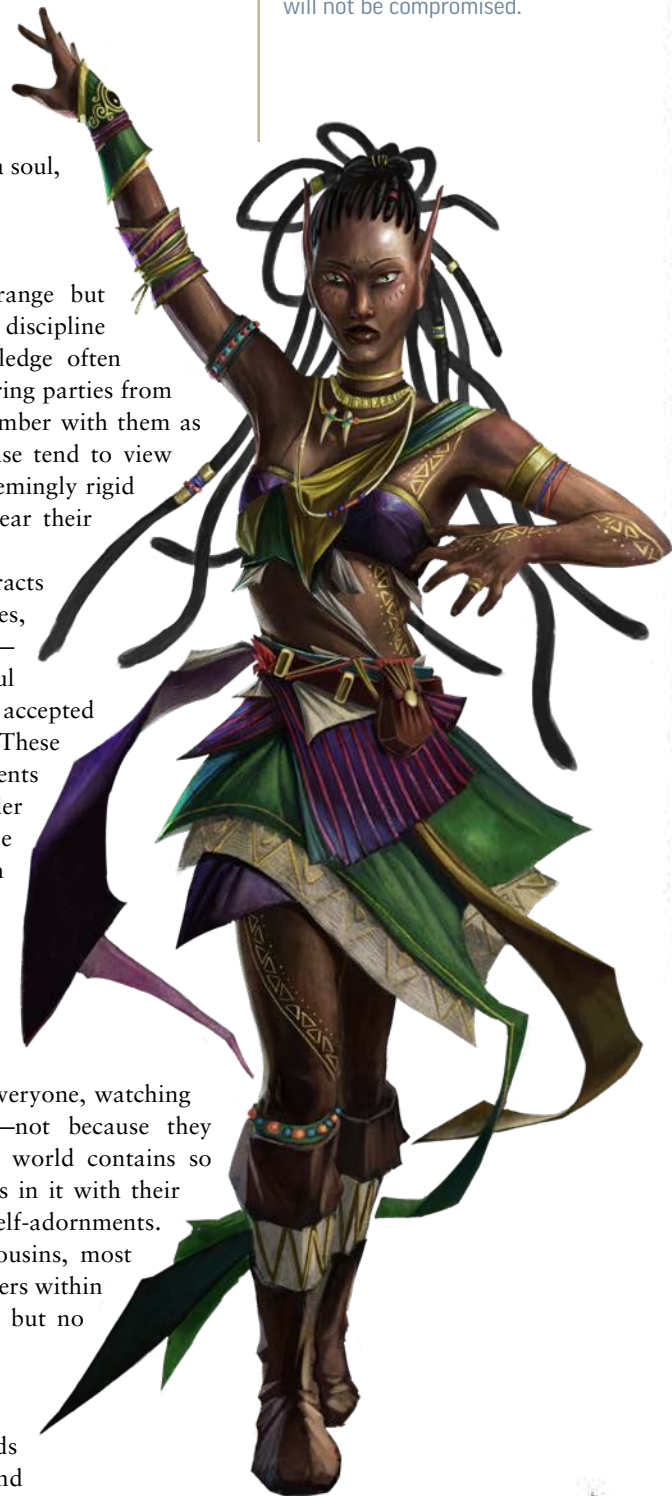
For their part, Kallijae tend to be suspicious of everyone, watching and waiting for potential descent into villainy—not because they view outsiders as inherently evil, but because the world contains so much unchecked corruption. Alijae steep themselves in it with their otherworldly deals, and Ekujae flirt with it in their self-adornments. While they still wish to redeem their Mualijae cousins, most Kallijae despair it may never come to pass. Many others within the Expanse and beyond are seen as lost, but no single individual is beyond helping.

## KALLIJAE SETTLEMENTS

Kallijae settlements are conclaves on the small islands dotting Lake Ocota, clustered mostly to the north and

## MATANJI NEIGHBORS

Kallijae elves are the closest neighbors to Matanji orcs (page 92) and the most likely to ally with them when fighting demons. They're also the least likely to associate with Matanji, socially. The distasteful Matanji habit of consuming demon blood in combat is a factor, but this is also tactical decision—if either elves or orcs are overrun and wiped out by demonic foes, the other group will not be compromised.



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northeast of Usaro. These sites are hard to find and even harder to gain access to, with heavy defenses and constant patrols to ensure they have not been ferreted out by the charau-ka. The largest of these by far is Haven, the shrouded island near the center of Lake Ocota where the Kallijae first found the peace needed for introspection. Rivaling it in size is Bere Nibi, where the skills to fight battles both within and without are learned and honed. Most other settlements are simply temporary fallback points and hidden nooks for when attacks from Usaro become too much for the larger, more obvious sites. However, these mostly stand empty and unused, little more than space for a handful of people, with a few weeks' worth of food and a place for meditation and training.

The architecture of these settlements is simple and almost brutal in appearance, built to withstand attacks and sieges, then get rebuilt or repaired as needed. Kallijae elves care little for external aesthetics. Why bother when their efforts are so often destroyed? When decorating internal spaces, they prefer to use impermanent methods that can easily be changed or replaced and often serve more utilitarian needs. Tapestries woven from grasses that change colors as they dry and indoor courtyard “gardens” made of fast-growing plants surrounded by rocks of varying sizes are common features, both because of how easily they

can be replaced and their roles as potential methods of focusing the mind.

The most common structural connections between Kallijae buildings are their unadorned use of the most readily available and structurally sound materials, usually hard woods and baked bricks built to form low and very angular buildings with drab colors. While no one cultivates plants around these buildings, any flora that naturally occur and pose no threat are allowed to flourish and only pruned as needed. Many such buildings are located in valleys, near canyons, or by waterfalls and cliffs, with these natural barriers used to aid Kallijae defenses.

While Kallijae view outsiders as potential allies in their endless crusade, they still are not Kallijae and thus only privy to select parts of their culture, settlements, and homes. For instance, unless someone is completely trusted, they are not allowed within a family's most private spaces: bedrooms and wherever meditation occurs. Even those Kallijae who are on adventures and roughing it in the wilds of Golarion become incredibly defensive about intrusions into their sleeping spaces, even if that intrusion is unavoidable. Befouling the air of these spaces with the impurities of those who have not been trained can change and alter any meditation that may occur before the space can be properly cleansed.

All the Kallijae settlements at Lake Ocota are kept under tight and constant surveillance, though most patrols take great pains to keep themselves concealed and move silently through the trees in an effort not to lead enemies to their midst. All Kallijae activity in the area is regimented under a strict schedule, which might change at a moment's notice if threats are spotted in the region.

## HAVEN

The island that eventually became Haven was discovered largely by accident. A harrying party in full retreat was forced farther out onto Lake Ocota than most were willing to venture. Quickly lost in the fog that radiates from the center of the lake, they were eventually grounded on the shores of what turned out to be a large island. While the fog made for sufficient cover as they tended their wounds, it also meant they would be unable to see anyone approach. Despite spending days on the island, no one ever dared come close to them: neither the charau-ka nor any other aggressive predator lurking within the lake. Using the fog once more, the harrying party regrouped with the other Kallijae and reported their findings.

So began Haven's life, a place of retreat and recuperation for the injured. As their foremost base of operations is always called First Stand, so Haven is sometimes deemed Last Stand. With the discovery of the ground-fed reflective pools and hot springs within the island cave systems, it expanded to become one of the few Kallijae settlements that allows outsiders, as well as the most fiercely protected. Should an outsider manage to make their way to Haven and prove themselves trustworthy, they are allowed admittance.

Like all Kallijae holding points, permanent or temporary, Haven is designed around defending its people. Nonessential buildings make up the outermost structures, built with dense walls and crowded close together with barriers between each. This shortens the time to build defenses while securing away goods and non-combatants in times of duress. These outer buildings are under constant repair and patrol, with no one able to slip in or out unnoticed. The outer buildings tend to be used as storage for weapons, drying and smoking houses for hunted and foraged foods, and stockpiles of little-used goods that may be useful for necessary trading such as maps, trinkets, and books.

Beyond the outer edges are homes, food and clothing storage, training areas, and open-air spaces for any cooking and crafting that needs to be done. While these buildings are not as densely packed as the outermost ring, they are still staggered to provide strategic cover should it be needed.

Finally, there are the healing and recuperative spaces, a series of semi-open rooms laid in a large circular pattern that rests above the underground cave system. This structure has been built in such a way that, as a last resort, it can be enclosed completely and allow those within to either retreat into the meandering springs beneath or teleport away if there are magic-users present.

Haven is currently also the occasional hiding place of the *Altar of Angazhan*, stolen by an ambitious Kallijae named Dayo. When hidden in Haven, it is held deep within the cave systems, a place few Kallijae wander due to the strange deep groaning that perpetually rumbles from underneath. Some fear that the very things that have always made the island defensible may be hiding dangerous secrets they will later pay a dire price for choosing to ignore.

## DEMONBANE WARRIORS

From the servants of Angazhan to the exiled Treerazor, elves have a long history of clashing with demons.

### DEMONBANE WARRIOR FEAT 1

#### ELF

You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to damage with weapons and unarmed attacks against demons. If your attack would deal more than one weapon die of damage (as is common at higher levels than 1st), the bonus is equal to the number of weapon dice or unarmed attack dice. If your actions force a demon to take damage from its sin vulnerability, increase that damage by 2.

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## KALLIJAE CHARACTERS

Kallijae elves often have the woodland elf or whisper elf heritage, representing their familiarity with the jungle and a keen perception honed through inner mindfulness. Those who connect with innate elven magic tend to take the Wildborn Magic feat rather than the Otherworldly Magic feat, though a few exceptions exist. Some Kallijae gain a strong connection to nature through their meditations that manifests as the Elemental Wrath feat. Many Kallijae can use their meditation to extend their thoughts and take the Share Thoughts feat. The Kallijae practices of mental and physical conditioning lead some to take the Elven Aloofness, Unwavering Mien, and Elven Verve feats. Elven Instincts, Woodcraft, Ageless Patience, and Brightness Seeker are also common feats.

## BERE NIBI

Rather than establishing a location on one of their Lake Ocota islands, the Kallijae council decided that the journey to their training grounds would be part of the challenge to become one of their warriors. Nestled precariously within the faraway Bandu Hills and never spoken of to outsiders, Bere Nibi is where Kallijae youth learn raw skills from their families and community, their young minds honed into the multifaceted supports of the Kallijae community and culture. Learning everything from basic field dressings and medicine, to foraging and hunting, to methods of meditation and hand-to-hand combat, attendees receive a wide, stable foundation of skills, then guided into whatever more advanced skills suits their abilities. On the rare occasions a pupil shows an affinity for a type of magic no current Kallijae master teaches, all present masters will meet and come to a consensus on the best course of action.

While the basic layout of Bere Nibi adheres to the defensive aesthetic of the other Kallijae settlements, there are a few key differences. First, the patrols of Bere Nibi are performed by the students currently in residence. The newest students take the least dangerous shifts, their responsibilities and the potential peril of their patrol growing as their skills and self-mastery grow in kind. If there are not enough students to fill out a patrol, guards will be summoned from available settlements. The distance from Lake Ocota and its ever-present dangers often makes both students and teachers lax in their duties—fortunately, this has yet to have any major consequences. Notably, while outsiders are not allowed within the complex's fortifications, they are often permitted to loiter nearby in their own camps. Brave students often pester them for stories or training.

Second, the defensive structures of Bere Nibi have been modified to take greater advantage of the hills and their peaks, which allow for multiple high vantage points. While the majority of Kallijae structures tend to be a maximum of three stories, the towers of Bere Nibi are sometimes twice as high and soar up to spindly lookouts. Though used as a watchtower, it's no secret that many students volunteer for tower duty just for the view. Some students challenge each other in races up the swaying stairs to the top while others spend an entire night there surrounded by the wailing winds on a dare.

The final difference between Bere Nibi and other Kallijae settlements is its permanence. Rather than being built with bricks that can crumble with time or whatever wood is most readily available, Bere Nibi's buildings are stone held together with reinforced mortar. Because the training complex has never encountered a heavy attack, these walls have never been tested in combat.

But they have withstood the test of time and have never had to be rebuilt. Because of this, the native plants that grow over the normally bland walls have become a vibrant decoration in their own right. While Kallijae guardians say they encourage these plants to grow in ways that fortify the walls and strengthen their defenses, observers might notice that the care of these plants is almost artful and very conscious of its aesthetics.



## DAYO HEARTSHAKER

LG | FEMALE | ELF | WARRIOR 11

The eldest of four children, Dayo developed a deep pride in her Kallijae heritage and her peoples' mission to suppress the evils within themselves as well as the world. As a child, she helped her mother tend to many a wounded fighter at Haven, listening with rapt attention to their tales of battle as they recovered from their injuries. Whenever adventurers from far-flung locales would arrive, Dayo pestered them for a lesson in combat or an interesting story that could aid her down the road when facing off against a threat. Her appetite for perfection was voracious enough that it became a point of concern for elder masters in Haven.

The reason Dayo felt such a deep drive to become the best was simple: she desired to honor the father she had only ever known through stories of his heroic forays into Usaro and valiant defenses of various settlements. These stories all stopped at the one where he was lost on one last quest deep into the city, his end goal unclear. Dayo's constant hounding for stories was a childish attempt to coax someone into telling her why her father was gone.

Dayo took to training at Bere Nibi with a furious passion, working harder than anyone else and consistently asking for longer and more dangerous patrols. Whenever outsiders would find their way into the fortress, usually accompanying some terrified new student in the long journey to the Bandu Hills, she was the first to start asking them questions and the last to see them finally go as they struck out for somewhere new. It took years, but eventually a half-orc duelist by the name of Sitara Bladedancer arrived with no student in tow and was greeted like an old friend by a handful of the masters. Dayo sat rapt as Sitara spun her yarns, including a harrowing account of an unsuccessful trip deep into Usaro to steal the *Altar of Angazhan* with the help of a local Kallijae guide. Comparing the timelines and description from Sitara was enough to convince Dayo that this local guide was none other than her father, and she vowed to pick up where his last crusade left off.

Her focus turned to something more akin to obsession, with training and missions only broken by intense study of Angazhan, the charau-ka, Usaro, and Lake Ocota. Where some saw an unrivaled dedication to the goals of the Kallijae people, others feared the ambition within Dayo could blossom if she continued down this path. For her part, Dayo focused on finding an adventuring party willing to delve into the city.

When one daring enough came along, a group of Matanji orcs and half-orcs including Sitara, she joined them without a second thought. This foray was successful, and together they stole the *Altar of Angazhan* in the tumult caused by the death of the Gorilla King as the charau-ka struggled to start the succession of the next king. The feat earned her the title Heartshaker from the Matanji, one that followed her when she returned home.

Refusing to leave the *Altar* in the hands of others for too long, Dayo has spent the last several years escorting it between various Matanji strongholds and Haven, to keep guard and cleanse herself of the taint she feels from the evil artifact amplifying the corrupted emotions within her own heart. What began as simply a twice-yearly journey home to see family, supplemented by routine daily meditation and training, has become a trek every few weeks. No matter where she is currently, Dayo searches for a group willing to take on the arduous task of discerning how to destroy the *Altar* permanently, before it can be reclaimed or before its influence can irrevocably change her for the worst.

## DESTROYING AN ARTIFACT

Though Dayo and the Matanji orcs have yet to uncover this information, the *Altar of Angazhan* can be destroyed only by a Gorilla King (either acting on his own volition or while under the effects of magical control), who can damage the totem as if it were a normal item. Once a Gorilla King makes his first attack upon the *Altar*, the blasphemy against Angazhan causes the *Altar* to attempt to revoke its gifts and then slay the sacrilegious turncoat.

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## MBE'KE

This is the story that Mbe'kes tell.

Long ago, dwarves marched upwards on a Quest for Sky. They saw many wondrous things on that march; temples and treasures, magics and mysteries. One group of dwarves, who would later become Mbe'kes, finally emerged in a sheltered valley.

They looked about the rocky sides of the valley, and they looked at the great blue thing above and mistook it for just one more cavern, if perhaps larger than most. Sages stroked their beards and engineers hefted their tools, and the dwarves set about breaching the vault of the sky. They climbed the tallest mountain in the land, braced the sky properly, and started digging. Dwarves, of course, can dig through anything, and so quite soon they broke through the sky into the Plane of Air.

The People of the Air were greatly surprised by these strangers. First a great hurricane-spirit tried to chase the dwarves away, but the dwarves had fought worse beneath the earth and were not cowed. Then a great djinni of the west wind offered the dwarves fine treasures to leave, but nothing matched the wonders the dwarves made themselves. Finally, a curious cloud dragon asked what in the seven stars above and the three stars below the dwarves were doing.

Once they understood their mistake, the dwarves descended back to Golarion and looked about the valley from which they'd emerged. They could most certainly make a home there, and did, and ever since Mbe'kes have been good friends with cloud dragons.

### HISTORY

If one consults the histories, a different tale emerges. The proto-Mbe'ke dwarves were part of the same migration as others who followed the Quest for Sky. Like the dwarves of Dongun Hold, they traveled to the far southwest to establish an outpost, the Sky Citadel that would become known as Cloudspire. When they arrived, they found that the Terwa Uplands were already inhabited by a large clan of cloud dragons.

Details of that era have been lost, but scholars believe that the two groups initially clashed over territory and resources. Certainly, a suspicious number of the oldest Mbe'ke relics are made of dragon bone. In time, however, conflict gave way to stalemate, stalemate became an uneasy truce, truce turned to true peace, and peace at long last became partnership and integration.

Since about -2000 AR, Mbe'kes have lived alongside the cloud dragons in the Terwa Uplands, and by

this point the partnership of the two species has become both tradition and ritual. Mbe'kes do not worship the dragons, but they respect them enormously, and cloud dragons have become one of the central symbols of Mbe'ke dwarven identity. Today, Mbe'kes have established settlements throughout the Uplands, farming, mining, crafting, and trading across Garund and Avistan. They still dwell in the Sky Citadel of Cloudspire, and they still maintain their alliance with the cloud dragons.

Aside from the quasi-mythical Quest for Sky, the most important event in Mbe'ke history is the War of Split Hearts (3841–3844 AR). High King Nkobe, the last scion of the Mbe'ke royal family, had always been notorious for his temper and suspicion. When his son died suddenly of disease, Nkobe's fury and paranoia grew tenfold. Certain his son had been poisoned, the High King began to secretly lay plans and recruit minions. Then, in what became known as the Nine Days of Blood, thousands of dwarves were arrested by masked enforcers, dragged to the bridges of Cloudspire, and beheaded. The Wellspring, a deep pool below the city, ran crimson with gore.

A bloody civil war erupted, setting sibling against sibling, burning cities, and destroying mining halls. Both sides were evenly matched, and the tide only turned when a group of cloud dragons under the young Cykurarreet the Mist joined the rebels. Once the war was over, Nkobe and nearly all the royal family were dead, along with most of the Mbe'ke aristocracy. The modern Mbe'ke system of electoral kingship was founded in place of the shattered monarchy. Among Mbe'kes, Nkobe remains a byword for evil, mayhem, and cruelest tyranny.

More recently, the Corsair Wars (4607–4611 AR, 4695–4699 AR, 4718 AR–Present) have occupied Mbe'ke attention. Being a populous, urbanized realm, the Mbe'ke dwarves thrive on trade. Dwarven vessels carry wool, fine wares, and on rare occasions chests of gold up along the Garundi coastline to the ports of Western Avistan, bringing back hardwoods, textiles, and even silks or spices from Jalmeray and the anadi nation of Nurvatchta. The wealth of this cargo drew the eye of the Shackles' pirates, and so a brutal struggle soon developed. The pirates would congregate in packs and take on the slow but heavily armed Mbe'ke merchantmen, and then scatter before a cloud dragon could come and shatter their hulls with breaths of lightning. Twice during the reign of Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist did these irregular skirmishes grow into full-scale naval battles, with dozens of ships lost on both sides.

At first it seemed like Kerdak's death would end the Corsair Wars, but it was not to be. In 4717 AR, the Chelaxian colony of Sargava declared independence and became the free nation of Vidrian. This ended Sargava's protection payments to the Free Captains, and that in turn meant a surplus of pirates on the hunt for new prey. The Third Corsair War is shaping up to be the bloodiest yet, and support is growing among Mbe'kes to end the pirate threat once and for all, no matter the cost.

## APPEARANCE

Mbe'kes are one of the Ergaksen peoples, or surface dwarves. The typical Mbe'ke dwarf has dark brown skin, usually of an umber shade, and black hair that is prone to forming tight, springy curls, though Mbe'kes often start going gray in early middle age. Eye color is usually dark brown, though gold and grey eyes are both reasonably common, and green is not unheard of. In comparison to other dwarves, Mbe'kes tend to be leaner of build, though by human standards they still seem quite stocky.

## NKOBE'S RELICS

At the end of the War of Split Hearts, High King Nkobe was declared forsaken and forgotten. His statues were leveled, his name struck from the list of kings, his image on Cloudspire's walls defaced. Despite that, there exists an underground trade in relics related to the last born king. Some are mundane objects sought for their craftsmanship and their ghoulish history by collectors inside the Uplands and beyond. Others have a tinge of the unnatural about them, an eerie aspect that recalls the Nine Days of Blood and the civil war that followed. Faces swim in the depths of gems, or shadows sprout from crowns with unnatural angles and too many curves. The sinister occultists who purchase such things are a tight-lipped group, but they pay well.



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## MBE'KE VESSELS

Like many dwarven cities, Mbe'ke merchant ships are large, solid, and heavily armed. Yet, despite easy comparison to floating fortresses, these galleons are highly attractive targets for pirates. Invariably, Mbe'ke ships are slower than the swift Free Captain vessels that prey upon them, and a combination of sail-cutting hooks and stolen canons can leave even the most formidable ship at the mercy of local corsairs. Mbe'ke sailors are hardly defenseless, however, and pirates who seek to prey on them must be careful to avoid ship-capsizing magical winds—which the hardy Mbe'ke ships can weather far better than light pirate brigadines—or the presence of cloud dragon escorts that can easily blast a mast in half with a well-aimed bolt of lightning.

The easiest way to identify a Mbe'ke dwarf, however, is their cultural habit of shaving their beards and cropping their hair very close. Numerous noxious insects call the Terwa Uplands home, many of which might find a flowing dwarven beard to be a lovely nesting ground, and so Mbe'kes tend to go cleanshaven. This sometimes scandalizes visiting dwarves.

All genders among the Mbe'ke dwarves tend to wear billowing pants, a loose shirt, and a kaftan: a belted robe with tight sleeves often worn open. Head scarves are popular, wrapped around the brow so as to leave the hair on the top of the head still visible; they tend to be brightly colored and embroidered, and are often the best fabric a Mbe'ke family has. Even the poorest farmer owns at least one strip of brilliant cloth to show that he still has pride as a dwarf. Clothing tends to be made from wool or linen, though more extravagant outfits can be made from imported silk, fine cashmere wool, or Ekujae bark cloth. Kaftans and headscarves are both heavily decorated with designs and patterns, often of dragons, lightning bolts, or other celestial symbols, and all Mbe'kes wear jewelry, even if just a few brass rings. For colors, Mbe'kes favor the warmer end of the spectrum, particularly rich reds and oranges, though they're always interested in bright new clothing, and a crowd of well-to-do Mbe'kes risks inducing eyestrain in onlookers.

Mbe'kes have a particular fondness for amber, due to its association with electricity and therefore lightning and cloud dragons. They consider it the most fashionable and desirable of precious materials, all the more so as amber is rare in the Terwa Uplands and must be imported at great expense. They also use shed cloud dragon scales in decoration, as they're common enough that even a relatively poor dwarf might have an amulet from a single scale; meanwhile, great judges and merchants wear armor or cloaks of dragon scale. The most precious Mbe'ke heirlooms, though, are carved from the cast-off horns of cloud dragons, and a dragon horn ring is many families' dearest possession.

## SOCIETY

The basic unit of Mbe'ke society is a fellowship, which is something like a guild and something like an electoral bloc. A fellowship consists of thirty to fifty dwarves, ostensibly all doing the same (or at least related) work. Thus, Cloudspire has the Copper Forge Fellowship, consisting of the copper- and bronze-workers of the city, while the South Simel Farmers' Fellowship consists of farmers, millers, and anyone else who lives in the southern half of the Simel valley. In practice, fellowships also include retired members, apprentices, dependents, and the occasional odd souls who might not fit in elsewhere; the Copper Forge Fellowship includes

the priest of Torag who blesses the forges. Of note, there is no requirement that one must be a dwarf to join a fellowship, and a modest number of humans and other folk live among Mbe'kes as equal citizens.

Fellowships have plenty of minor ceremonial or administrative roles, but by and large they perform three main duties. First, they bear responsibility for the health and welfare of their members and ensure that none of their people suffer from hunger



or poverty. Fellowships rarely give out charity outside of emergencies, but Mbe'kes are endlessly creative in finding face-saving traditions and sinecures that allow everyone to receive what they need when they need it and allow everyone to feel they contribute, at least a little. Secondly, fellowships are responsible for raising troops in times of war, whether that means taking up arms themselves, hiring others, or providing some kind of vital war service such as weaponsmiths or mages. Finally, each fellowship selects a Speaker to attend the Assembly of Speakers.

The Assembly of Speakers is the Mbe'ke legislative body, and Speakers can and will argue for days on points of law and ritual. Voting is weighted according to how many soldiers the fellowship can raise in times of crisis, but even the most prosperous or militant fellowship is only first among equals. Among their other duties, Speakers also select the judges (who deal with disputes and crimes among the dwarves), sit in judgment about the gravest crimes themselves, and elect kings.

A Mbe'ke king is simply the dwarf in charge of executive authority for a Mbe'ke community, however large or small.

The Assembly says what to do, and the king makes it happen, though kings also have the duty of leading their fellowship's warriors in battle. The High King of Cloudspire is, in turn, chosen by the weighted votes of the Assembly of Kings, and acts as the ultimate executive and warleader of all Mbe'kes. Kings and High Kings alike typically serve for a decade or two at a time, and can be removed by their Assemblies for incompetence or signs of tyranny. Even centuries later, Mbe'kes fear another leader going down High King Nkobe's path—and with good reason.

Cloud dragons occupy a peculiar place in Mbe'ke society. All but the youngest hatchlings are given the rights and honors of kings, welcomed into the Assembly of Kings, and treated with great respect and reverence. Dragons and dwarves come together at solstices and equinoxes in great, formal celebrations, rekindling millennia-old vows. At the same time, Mbe'kes remain aware of the difference between cloud dragons as symbols and cloud dragons as actual, flesh-and-blood creatures. Cloud dragons are powerful, majestic beasts, avatars of destruction and glory. They are also fickle as cats, prone to flights of whimsy that can distract them for years, and as capable of wisdom or foolishness as any dwarf. Mbe'kes greatly respect their draconic allies, but they do make a point of ensuring that they can easily outvote them in any assembly that might arise. As cloud dragons often take little interest in mortal politics, this arrangement has suited both peoples reasonably well.

Several fellowships, chief among them the Dragon Wardens of Cloudspire, are tasked with serving the dragons and acting as

## CYKURARREET THE MIST

The matriarch of the Terwa Uplands' cloud dragons, Cykurarreet has lived near the Mbe'ke dwarves for almost a thousand years. Her glory days are behind her, her wings withered and torn, her eyes clouded with age, but her mind remains sharp as a razor and she still outweighs a small pirate vessel. In her old age, Cykurarreet has decided to take advantage of her fame and power, enjoying a comfortable retirement, playing years-long games with other dragons, terrorizing her grandchildren, and occasionally forging a few magic items from shed and cast-off horns. Her latest obsession is collecting wind-chimes, and she might even trade a magic ring for a really interesting chime.

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## GHYMTHUR

From their cloud dragon allies, Mbe'kes know far more air magic than most dwarves. Battle mages call down thunder and lightning, sky sages track the heavens for omens, and ghymthur archers guard every Mbe'ke town.

Ghymthur is a mystical tradition that involves infusing the wind into arrows so that they fly true and strike hard. A master ghymthur archer is said to be able to shoot an arrow so that it turns a corner and pierces a steel plate, and even a novice can hit a bullseye from across a valley. Steeped in ritual and tradition, Ghymthur fellowships form the backbone of Mbe'ke armies.

dwarven envoys to their draconic allies. In practice, this means ensuring that the dragons have plenty of food and treasure for their hoard, while also coaxing cloud dragons into doing something useful on occasion. Younger dragons often patrol Mbe'ke territory for fun, swooping down to thoroughly ruin some raider or pirate's day. Dragons are welcomed among Mbe'ke councils for their age and experience, and **Cykurarreet the Mist** (N female ancient cloud dragon 19), now old and withered, has been advising the Mbe'ke kingdom since the War of Split Hearts. The ancient dragon rarely talks, having little interest in the day-to-day affairs of dwarves, but she's seen more crises and disasters than anyone else in the Uplands and provides a voice of calm when things are most dire.

## FAITH

Mbe'kes worship the traditional dwarven pantheon with minor alterations. Torag rules as chief and first of the gods, and every Mbe'ke community will have at least a small shrine to the Creator. More unusually, Torag's son, Grundinnar the Peacemaker, earns only slightly less reverence than his father, and is considered responsible for the Mbe'ke alliance with the dragons and for the success of their mercantile ventures. In recent years, worship of Angradd, traditionally a minor offshoot of Mbe'ke faith, has grown in popularity due to the Corsair Wars. Where Torag is restrained, defensive, cautious, the Forge-Fire is aggressive and quick to shed blood, seeking out and eliminating threats to the dwarven people. Sects dedicated to Angradd have sprung up across the Terwa Uplands and, though his faith is still not as strong as his brother's, it grows swiftly.

Alongside traditional dwarven gods, the Mbe'ke dwarves venerate Gozreh as patron of wind and waves, and Uvuko (page 142) as lord of the sky and of dragons. Temples of Gozreh tend to be somber affairs among the Mbe'ke settlements, the god more respected than loved, but Uvuko is a very popular deity, especially among younger dwarves.

## CULTURE

If one were to ask a Mbe'ke, they would say that their people are famed for three things: first, they are the most stubborn of all the dwarves; second, they are the most argumentative of all the dwarves; and third, they have absolutely no sense of humor. This last will be said with a perfectly straight face.

While it's hard to measure the stubbornness of Mbe'kes vis-à-vis other dwarves, they certainly boast a proud and vibrant tradition of debate, argumentation, and questioning. On the one hand, good-natured argument is seen as a pleasant way to pass the time. Mbe'kes will argue over food, weather, family history, politics, and quite nearly anything that can be imagined. On the other hand, they also view debate as a way to get to the truth of the matter. Mbe'kes believe that one should question everything, and that defending an intellectual position helps keep it from getting ossified and meaningless, though they usually know the difference between honest questions and bad-faith efforts.

Mbe'kes also have a very distinctive sense of humor, a fusion of the traditional dwarven dourness and the whimsicality of cloud dragons. They adore telling tall tales or surreal stories (called tangle-tales), but the particular trick is to relate the most bizarre, fantastic, or hilarious events while maintaining



an absolutely straight face. The audience, in turn, strokes their chins and asks utterly serious questions, until the story is a tangle of absurdity and someone finally breaks out in giggles. If a Mbe'ke isn't arguing, then they're probably telling bizarre tangle-tales in hopes of making someone laugh. Another side benefit of this is that Mbe'kes make for fearsome gamblers, since they've learned the art of bluffing with a straight face since childhood.

Mbe'ke daily life revolves around work and fellowships. Mbe'kes firmly believe that one must contribute to the community, and so most everyone works in some fashion. Even those who cannot work for reasons of age or disability are given a small duty or role suited to their ability as a way to feel part of the community. Morning and midday meals are typically rather plain, some bread and vegetables, but after the day's work is done there are large, communal meals with family or fellowship where news is read by the senior dwarf present or tangle-tales are told. Minor celebrations are common, and one of a fellowship's key tasks is to organize an endless line of festivals, holy days, commemorations, and parties, so that some kind of feast happens every week or so.

## RELATIONS

Being a mercantile people, Mbe'kes welcome strangers easily and often. Anyone who comes to the Terwa Uplands willing to work can find a place among them, and non-dwarves make up a sizable minority in the Mbe'ke realm. Humans are common, particularly Bekyar and Bonuwat, but one can find Kallijae elves, Song'o halflings, or even iruxis, Matanji orcs, or gnolls dwelling in Mbe'ke communities. As far as Mbe'kes are concerned, all of these people are also Mbe'ke, with all the same rights and responsibilities as native dwarves.

Nowhere is this clearer than with the Mbe'ke kobolds of the Terwa Uplands. Both ancestries venerate dragons, both live underground by preference, and both possess a strong work ethic, a love for crafting, and a certain militaristic streak. Friendly relations took several centuries and several wars, but these days kobolds make up a valued part of Mbe'ke society, with their own fellowships, clan daggers, kings, and votes in Mbe'ke affairs.

The iruxis of the Sodden Lands, particularly those ruled by the aggressive Terwa Lords, are a different story altogether. While most Terwa Lords aim their attentions north towards the Sodden Lands, at least a few have taken to attacking the outlying Mbe'ke communities. Several Mbe'ke kings have raised troops to go after them, but while the dwarves are perfectly capable of crushing lizardfolk in the mountains, venturing into the sodden marshlands of the northern Terwa coast is unlikely to end well.

Most troublesome by far are the Free Captains of the Shackles. Since Sargava's fall and Vidrian's victory over the corsairs, pirate attacks on Mbe'ke shipping lanes have steadily increased. Traditionally, the Mbe'ke realm has held back from retaliatory attacks on Port Peril and other pirate towns, both because such military action would likely cost lives and treasure and because the ports are a convenient location for Mbe'kes to purchase back their stolen goods. Some Mbe'kes fear that razing the pirate towns would simply cause the raiders to move their operations somewhere less convenient. However, as the Corsair Wars continue to take their toll, the desire for final action is growing, and with it, the influence of hardliners such as **King Thabsing Blood-Eye** (page 71) and the **Mage-King Khawu** (N nonbinary dwarf sky sage 14).

## DRACONIC DIPLOMACY

Most dragons are easily swayed by treasure, and the Mbe'kes' cloud dragon allies are no exception. In exchange for their wisdom, protection, and magic, the cloud dragons are given a title of the finest works that Mbe'kes produce, and there is almost always an Mbe'ke crafter willing to take even the most outlandish custom requests. Though the cloud dragons play coy and act as though they are above mortal affairs, the size of a cloud dragon's resident community is a clear sign of status among their ranks. Young cloud dragons start with small communities and work their way up. A well-established adult dragon may act as guardian to a respectable town or city, while a young wyrmling is likely to start with a tiny farming collective far away from civilization.



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## CLLOUDSPIRE

Built by ancient dwarven masons in the days after the Quest for Sky, the Sky Citadel of Cloudspire serves as the spiritual and cultural heartland of the Mbe'ke dwarves. In song and story, Mbe'kes call it the City that Begins and Ends, because it is here that the dwarven people first emerged, and it will be the final fortress to ever fall. Every dwarf in the Terwa Uplands makes a point of seeing Cloudspire at least once in their lives. More mundanely, Cloudspire is also a massive, bustling city-state, its halls thick with forges and workshops, its markets laden with goods from across Garund and Avistan. It is the seat of the High King of the Mbe'ke people, and easily thrice the size of the next-largest Mbe'ke community.

Viewed from the outside, Cloudspire offers little to recommend itself. It resembles a large, bulbous mountain of pale stone, rather like a crude fist thrusting upwards into the sky. Only a very sharp eye will note the wide roads leading into gates set in the stone sides. An aerial view, though, tells a different story. The entire mountain has been cored like an apple, its center carved away to form an enormous hollow thousands of feet across. It stands open to the sky above and plummets down into the depths of an abyssal pool. Carved into the hollow's sides waits the dwarven city, its broad boulevards spiraling downward, while shops, residences, and temples burrow more deeply into the mountain. Sophisticated elevators use counterweights and pulleys

to bring people up and down, while gossamer-thin stone bridges cross the expanse.

## EXPLORING CLOUDSPIRE

Cloudspire is an ancient and echoing city, but a few locations stand out to visitor and resident alike.

### THE AERIES

Many dwarves call the Sky Citadel home, along with a significant, though far smaller, population of other ancestries, but the fortress also plays host to a number of cloud dragons at any given time. Carved into the upper hollow, the Aeries are enormous, well-appointed caverns, suitable as dens for dragons of almost any size. Many a dragon in the Terwa Uplands spends part of its life in the Aeries, attended by the Dragon Wardens as an honored guest and ally. Most dragons eventually move on, finding the bustle and noise of the city too wearying, so the local dragon population skews young.

Cykurarreet the Mist is the notable exception to this trend. Ancient, battle-scarred, half-blind and mostly deaf, the cloud wyrm has lived in the Sky Citadel since before High King Nkobe's day. Many of the Terwa Uplands' cloud dragons are her children and grandchildren, and Cykurarreet in some ways views herself as responsible for dragon and dwarf alike. Of course, a cloud dragon's sense of responsibility is a strange thing indeed, and the wyrm can be troublesome

and cantankerous at the best of times, though no one can doubt her knowledge or might.

### THE ASSEMBLY OF KINGS

The death masks of all the High Kings of the Mbe'ke people (and a good number of the lesser kings, as well) decorate this great amphitheater, located across the hollow from Nkobe's Hall. Here, the Mbe'ke rulers gather to discuss and debate, to elect a High King, and to settle matters of state. Despite the name, it's rare that solely kings gather here. Many find it expedient to send emissaries instead, either trusted kin or simply whoever seems competent and willing to argue their cases.

Currently, the main topic of debate is the Corsair Wars and how to end the threat of pirates permanently. The proposed solutions range from peaceful to violent. Some, such as **King Moshjele** (N female dwarf negotiator 8), believe that the pirates can be negotiated with or bought off. Others, such as King Thabsing, argue for war without limits and the razing of all pirate ports along the northern coast of the Terwa Uplands. The present High King, an aging dwarf named **Lek'sanji** (N male dwarf aristocrat 12) who was chosen as a broadly inoffensive compromise candidate, has found himself quite overmatched by the situation. Lek'sanji has lost control of the debate, and ever wilder proposals are being considered, most notably Mage-King Khawu's arrogant plan to use the Celestial Fellowship's magics to tilt the Eye of Abendego and send its tendrils lashing through the Shackles, smashing all the pirate ports at once. A less apocalyptic scheme is to recruit the cloud dragons more aggressively in the war efforts, though this would require persuading Cykurarreot the Mist to risk her kin.

### THE DRAGONBELL

Suspended on a platform in the dead center of the hollow, this brass bell is thrice the size of a dwarf, weighs a good forty tons, and is decorated with a complex relief showing the history of the Mbe'ke dwarves and their cloud dragon allies. The Fellowship of the Great Clock maintains strict timekeeping for the city and uses an enormous, dragon-shaped battering ram-like knocker to mark the hours and alert the city of emergencies. The sound of the Dragonbell can be heard from several miles away.

### THE CELESTIAL FELLOWSHIP

Operating out of their lightning-scarred hall on the upper levels of the hollow, opposite the Aeries, dwarven wizards, scholars, and sages, of the Celestial Fellowship dedicate their lives to mastering the magics of the air. The fellowship began from the apprentices and lore-seekers who sought to learn from Mbe'kes' cloud dragon patrons but over the centuries has expanded into a focused but highly skilled magical academy.

Dwarves from across the Terwa Uplands travel to apprentice with one of the sky sages here, despite the considerably length and rigor of the course of studies. Apprentices learn the principles of both wizardry and astronomy and develop a fairly solid understanding of planar theory. Some train further as battlemages and war wizards, conjuring up howling winds and throwing bolts of lightning at their kingdom's foes. Others become sky sages, predicting weather and wind, divining omens, and pushing the bounds of scholarship further.

The Celestial Fellowship also maintains the best library of arcane lore in the Terwa Uplands. The writings of dwarves and dragons fill most of its

### OF SKY AND STONE

Caelurgy is the ancient art of Mbe'ke sky magic, derived from the long-ago teachings of cloud dragons who still remembered the Plane of Air. In the eons since, it was mixed first with Shory aeromancy and later with Saoc astrology, becoming a distinctive style of magic dedicated to the understanding of the heavens. Mbe'ke Sky Sages learn to fly, cast lightning, or read omens in the stars, but their specialty is weather magic. Sky Sages can predict storms and droughts, and with proper rituals bring rain or ward off ill weather. The greatest rituals, performed by full fellowships under the guidance of their kings, can send lashing hurricanes across the land.

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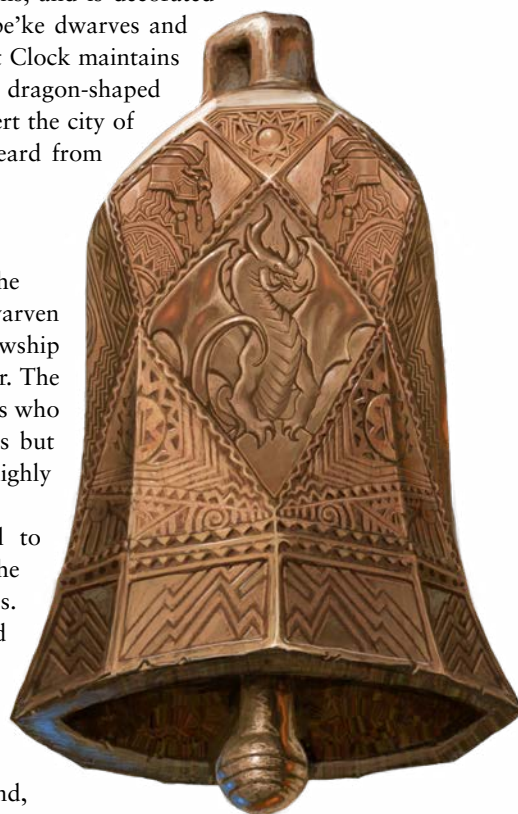
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## MBE'KE CHARACTERS

Due to their strong connection with dragons, many Mbe'ke dwarves have the Elemental Heart Dwarf heritage, as well as the Energy Blessed ancestry feat. They might also have the Anvil Dwarf heritage due to strong cultural crafting traditions, or the Rock Dwarf heritage to keep their footing on the mountains. Mbe'ke crafters might take the Eye For Treasure or Stonecunning feats, and might use their knowledge in combat with the Dwarven Reinforcement and Sheltering Slab feats. Mbe'ke warriors, especially those in fellowships such as the Bloodmarked, are likely to take the Avenge in Glory and Unburdened Iron feats. Mbe'ke familiarity with rocky mountain terrain means that many dwarves also take the Rock Runner ancestry feat.

shelves, but quite a few Shory relics have also found their way to Cloudspire, and scholars from Magaambya or even Nex are a common sight.

## THE HALL OF BELLS

These mid-level passages take their names from the ring of hammer upon metal. Mbe'ke dwarves forge many things within these smithies, from sharp, glittering swords and axes to sturdy pots and kettles that last for decades. About a dozen fellowships run the Mbe'ke metalwork industry between themselves, each with their own specialties and peculiarities. The Fellowship of Barbs makes the best arrowheads in western Garund, and holds exclusive right to produce arrows for the ghymthur fellowships. The Humble Fellowship makes pots and pans, and experiments with interchangeable parts and mass production techniques. Each fellowship competes with the others, trying to outshine them with works of art, with bigger sales, with more extravagant festivals and celebrations. The competition is mostly good-natured, but the fellowships are not always above hiring someone to spoke a rival's wheel.

## NKOBE'S HALL

In long ago days, the High Kings of Cloudspire ruled from this palace nestled prominently halfway up the spire, beautifully decorated and resplendent with dwarven riches. During the War of Split Hearts, the tyrant-king Nkobe made his last stand here, his masked enforcers cut down before him. The king's body was never found, though such was the carnage in the final assault it was difficult to identify any of the fallen.

For a time, Nkobe's elected successors attempted to live in the palace, but it quickly developed a reputation as an accursed and ill-omened place. People reported strange sounds and uncanny sights and, after a particularly dire incident that culminated in the king's steward cutting his own throat in public, the once-great hall was closed off. The palace is too structurally integral to the Sky Citadel to destroy, and so it is simply ignored, the doors blocked. Only a few engineers visit once a season to ensure it remains sound. They travel in groups and leave before nightfall.

## THE WELLSPRING

The deep, midnight-blue pool at the hollow's center is unfathomably deep and popularly believed to connect to hidden rivers and oceans in the Darklands. Pale, blind fish periodically flit about in its waters, which run ice-cold even on the hottest day of the year. By ancient law, befouling the pool is a crime just shy of murder, as the dwarves draw most of their water from it. A small temple of Torag lies on the pool's shore, and its members keep close eye on the water's purity.

The Wellspring's most prominent role in Mbe'ke society comes as part of the funeral traditions. When a Mbe'ke dies, their bodies are burned, but a small token or statuette is tossed into the Wellspring with due ceremony, so that the deceased's soul might return to the first homeland of the dwarves. Poor families might simply throw in a stone with the deceased's name, while richer families cast in a carved likenesses of the deceased or, in rare cases, life-sized effigies adorned with gold and gems.

## KING THABSING BLOOD-EYE

LN | MALE | DWARF | ADMIRAL 13

Thabsing was born in the Mbe'ke port of K'lereng, the son of sailors. In his youth, he served aboard a Mbe'ke merchant ship, and his life changed forever when his ship was taken by pirates just off the coast of Mediogalti Island. The battle raged long and bloody, and—so goes the legend—the pirates' captain took to executing the dwarves one by one, tossing them overboard and watching them drown. He offered them each a chance to say some final words, and when it was Thabsing's turn, the young dwarf said that it was a good thing they were killing him, for if Thabsing lived he would see every last one of them hanged. The pirates were so amused at his boldness that they decided to spare his life, taking Thabsing's eye, instead of his life, as tribute.

When Thabsing returned home, he set about making good on his threat. Soon, he became known as Thabsing Blood-Eye, a grim and deadly fighter and later the leader of the Bloodmarked, K'lereng's most famed warrior fellowship. When the Corsair Wars began in earnest in 4695, the fellowships of K'lereng decided that they needed a warrior to lead them, and elected Thabsing as their new king.

For the last twenty-five years, Thabsing has lead all Mbe'ke anti-pirate efforts, planning campaigns, springing traps, and sinking ships, but by this point Thabsing Blood-Eye has begun to lose hope he will ever succeed. As long as trade flows through the Shackles, as long as desperate cutthroats lust after dwarven gold, as long as there are shallow bays and shrouded coves in which to hide, the pirate threat will never end. Recently, Thabsing has begun to consider more extreme solutions, including King Khawu's aeromantic scheme.

To those that meet him, Thabsing Blood-Eye is a surprisingly quiet, urbane dwarf with a gentle voice and a deep understanding of the cultures of Avistan and Garund. He has a wry, understated sense of humor, and enjoys nautical tangle-tales, playing off his own ferocious mien. It is only when he talks of the looming pirate threat that the burning rage inside him reveals itself. Thabsing is not an evil man, but he is an angry one, and years of fighting have left little room for mercy in his heart. He tries not to let this anger cloud his mind or leave him blind to justice, but sometimes it's hard, so very hard.

In truth, Thabsing's temperament worries his fellow Mbe'kes. His anger is useful in a war-leader, but as the Corsair Wars continue, more and more turn to him. Some say he will be High King soon and whisper that perhaps a stronger leader will do what the Assembly of Kings cannot. The followers of Angradd hold Thabsing up as a champion, and the King has made sacred vows to the Forge-Fire.

Physically, Thabsing Blood-Eye is a hale, powerfully-built dwarf in late middle-age, often seen wearing dragon scale armor. He typically wears a crimson eyepatch over his lost eye, though he removes it in battle, so that the gaping wound may frighten his foes—especially since it weeps blood when Thabsing exerts himself too much. An accomplished ghyinthur archer, Thabsing uses magic to compensate for his lost eye, and is often accompanied by the Bloodmarked, dwarven axe-soldiers and archers who tie scarlet ribbons around their armor. Most Bloodmarked are veterans of a score of battles and fanatically loyal to Thabsing. His flagship, the *Kept Oath*, is a slow but sturdy, heavily armored dwarven galleon with blood-red sails, which includes nests for the two adult cloud dragons who often accompany the king, Herssiniekl Snapwing and Corssilmiriez the West Wind.

## THE BLOODMARKED

An old military fellowship, the Bloodmarked formed during the War of Split Hearts. The original Bloodmarked were the lone survivors of High King Nkobe's massacres and devoted themselves to war to gain vengeance and justice for their lost kin. They wore scarlet ribbons or surcoats to symbolize the blood shed by their lost loved ones and gained a reputation as grim and merciless warriors. The modern Bloodmarked, though perhaps more professional since those early days, still insist that every initiate to their ranks must have lost someone to war or violence. Today, most Bloodmarked are the survivors of pirate raids.



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## TARALU

With a wide-spread reputation as mediators, the Taralu dwarves are a spiritual, nomadic community at home within the lush, foggy lowlands of the Mwangi Jungle. They abandoned their settlements in the Shattered Range—and their relations to other surface dwarves—for a sworn oath that changed their calling as a community. Scattered across the Mwangi Jungle, the Sixteen Clans of Taralu make up a community that moves naturally within the verdant terrain, deftly navigating the fathomless expanse using mundane and magical hunters' tools and traps. While many of their clans and settlements might seem isolated from one another, Taralu frequently travel and communicate with each other, holding annual festivals and celebrations that bring even the most travel-hungry adventurers eagerly home.

To an outsider, Taralu might seem completely altruistic in their ideals, but the work of a diplomat isn't without its perks. In return for their spiritual services, wisdom, and counsel, Taralu receive access and insight to the inner workings of the many political organizations shaping the world. As they say, knowledge is power—and Taralu have that and more. In terms of financial compensation, a mediator who can prevent a long and bloody war is worth their weight in platinum.

Taralu's easy demeanor, kind words, and disarming attitude can easily lure others into foolish complacency. When talks fail and people don't honor their verbal or written agreements, Taralu can and will use their might and magic to right the injustices done.

Physically, Taralu have vibrant-hued hair, their most striking feature. These dwarves express their personality and individuality by regularly dyeing their long, dark hair in colors that reflect the sky above.

### HISTORY

Formerly a traditional culture of militant mountain dwarves, Taralu dwarves found themselves trapped between the conflicts of Nex and Geb. As magic grew steadily more unstable, and as their neighbors sought their services as mercenaries, the Taralu people gathered a council to plan their course of action. At the council, each leader of the Sixteen Clans debated for four days, breaking only to rest. On the night of the fourth day, the 16 dwarves awoke to a thunderous bellow. Grabbing their clan daggers, the leaders rushed to the entrance of their mountaintop retreat.

At the entrance, they found an ancient cloud dragon named Tanin, who bore deep scars that pulsed with magic. The gasping dragon told the council that they'd planned to

wander for centuries more, but the crossfire of the neighboring lands laid them low. They spoke of distant lands, their voice growing hoarse. With their last gasp, the prideful wyrm begged the council to bring them to where they hatched all that time ago, a jungle lowland where the fog was as peaceful as clouds.

The council stared at the dying dragon, remembering their bitter arguments of which side to take in war. No records remain of who spoke first, but one by one, the dwarves each took their clan dagger and swore an oath on their own births and the wyrm's coming death to honor the request.

As the councilmembers returned to their tribes, their people understood the change before hearing a single word. Their leaders, once brash and bitter, stood solemn and determined. They presented their oath as a personal one, and they stated that the clans could remain if so desired, but a majority in all of the Sixteen Clans swore oaths to aid.

As the clans converged at the mountaintop, they brought grand caravans suited for many terrains. Over the course of four years, they took turns hauling the wyrm along the mountain range, through the jungle, and eventually to a lowland shrouded with fog.

The clans buried the wyrm's mighty form, and the leaders of the Sixteen Clans swore a new oath: their clans would no longer squabble and war without cause. The Taralu dwarves would become a people of patience, waiting for the fog to roll in, for prey to fall into traps, and for wounds to heal. However, they didn't swear an oath of pacifism. Patience couldn't be infinite—it couldn't bear weight without a purpose. As such, the Taralu people would ever remain ready to fight those who abuse magic and break their sworn words.

To protect the ancient cloud dragon's final resting place, the Sixteen Clans built a mausoleum atop the burial ground and named it Taninshroud. As hundreds of years passed, the mausoleum became an enduring symbol of that vow and the focal point of the Pilgrim's Path, a ritual that every Taralu dwarf hopes to carry out once in their lifetime.

The world changed over centuries. Nex and Geb became names of lands rather than rulers, Alkenstar rose, and tyrants and saints alike fought and fell. The Taralu dwarves have helped in conflicts across Garund, usually as mediators, but also as warriors when contracts have failed or magic has been twisted.

## APPEARANCE

Taralu, given that their ancestors once counted among the Holtaksen ethnicity of mountain dwarves, typically stand slightly taller than other surface dwarven ethnic groups. They have dark skin, and while their curly hair is dark at birth, by adolescence a Taralu dwarf has dyed their hair to match the colors of the sky. This dyeing process happens whenever fog rolls across a settlement, and several hours are spent dyeing the hair of a single dwarf to match how the sky looked at a pivotal moment of that dwarf's life. As years pass, most Taralu will dye their hair many times, and most will dye it different colors as new events occur and they hold new values dear. Taralu usually dress in robes, carrying their belongings in pouches and satchels that they wear across their bodies.

Given their propensity to travel on foot, most use sturdy walking sticks adorned with strands of bead, bone, and stone. Taralu wear this jewelry, largely made of mineral and animal materials, to indicate social status and community role, especially the pendants they wear around their necks. The pendant's focal item tells much of a Taralu

## BREAK FROM TRADITION

Taralu clans rarely contact other dwarven civilizations, even the Mbe'ke dwarves to the west.

Therefore, Taralu culture has drifted away from almost all the ancestral traditions common among dwarves descended from and raised in the Sky Citadels. Many more traditional dwarves don't know what to make of Taralu, and meetings between the two cultures can be stilted and awkward. For all of their reputation as mediators, Taralu can be ill-suited for dealing with other dwarves.

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## FOREIGN EMBASSIES

Taralu mainly keep to the Mwangi Jungle, but their role as diplomats often puts them in contact with other people that reside within the massive forest. While it isn't uncommon to see Taralu working with Magaambyan Rain Scribes near Nantambu, they also have a large presence in Kibwe, where they cultivate a reputation as trustworthy guides. Fitting their nomadic lifestyle, groups of Taralu frequently rotate with one another in these cities, maintaining a residence without tying any one person to a single place permanently.

dwarf's role: a beast's tooth signifies a defender of the peace, while a stone with a vein of their clan's gem indicates a dignitary, and a cloud dragon's scale denotes those rare few honored as spiritual leaders of a settlement.

## SOCIETY

The Taralu group themselves into 16 large clans, each descended from a distant ancestor who established the clan by claiming a mineral for their people. These minerals are used in making their clan daggers and jewelry. The members of each Taralu clan can be found in many settlements and are spread across large distances, even within the Mwangi lands they claim as their own. While many dwarven cultures will form a new clan when they grow too large to contain, the Sixteen Clans of Taralu honor the oath their leaders swore to themselves and the ancient cloud dragon, so they refuse to divide themselves any further.

Any given Taralu clan or settlement has many leaders. A clan is officially led by a spiritual leader, who can only take up the mantle after many years of serving a spiritual and skillful role in the clan while performing a variety of tasks. When a spiritual leader leaves their position, whether through retirement or death, the leaders of the clan's various capacities—such as the head herbalist, the best trap-layer, and the most skilled defender—hold a vote on who should take their place. Most clans' spiritual leaders are divine or primal spellcasters with a few arcane or occult spellcasters mixed in. Only one Taralu clan is presently led by a spiritual leader that can't cast spells, **Amakell Inre of Clan Zaphyrie** (page 81). Clan Zaphyrie unanimously voted Amakell into the role after her insight into the region's ruins kept her people safe after cultists of Dahak displaced the clan.

In general, Taralu defer to those with the most relevant experience in a given situation, which largely contributes as to why their spiritual leaders must be skilled in many ways. This outlook also holds true on a smaller scale. When raising children, Taralu tell them from a young age that they're the only experts on themselves and that the community values their insights.

Parents meet adolescents with patience and trust, encourage them to take part in traditions, steer them toward choices that align with the community, and ask them to show that they deserve even more trust by taking care of younger dwarves.

In the case of Taralu who seek different paths than expected, such as those who feel the calling of a different gender, who change careers suddenly, or who wish to leave the community, there are meetings and discussions of what the community has done for these types of changes in the past, if they apply now, and if a new precedent must emerge.

## FAITH

The Taralu belief system is largely derived from their reverence of dragons and elemental air mixed with adaptations of more traditional dwarven beliefs. While many Taralu settlements host a shrine to Apsu, goodly god of dragons, rarely do they lack some form of shrine to Ranginori, the good-aligned elemental lord of air. When settled near lakes of substantial size, worship of the empyreal lord Ylimancha is common as well.

While they largely worship deities of air and wurm, Taralu also pay heed to the dwarven pantheon. That said, their reverence for Torag and his kin is closer to the respect one might have for an old teacher than true worship. The exceptions to this trend lie in their reverence for Grundinnar, as he espouses



peace and diplomacy, and Kols, for the importance that sworn oaths played in their people's development.

When a Taralu carves a statue or paints a mural of a dwarven god, they commonly depict the deity as both a dwarf and as a dragon, representing a duality of self and a belief that the divine might of the gods has draconic origins. Taralu priests fall into two main factions when discussing the power of the gods: one believes that to be a god, one must have a draconic nature, whether publicly acknowledged or not; another believes that a god who doesn't actively champion draconic power has gone against their nature. These priests will uphold their side with calm fervor but rarely take measures to silence the other side, as they don't view it their place to decide the worship of their kin.

Another aspect of Taralu's spiritual nature is their nomadic existence, akin to a kite that flutters and flies where the wind takes them, yet their string remains firmly attached to Taninshroud, the ancient cloud dragon's mausoleum. No matter how busy they get, a Taralu dwarf will take time out in the day to renew their oath to their clan and the great wyrm. This oath involves kneeling down while facing in the cardinal direction of Taninshroud, and reciting the following: "In the name of my clan and mine, I swear to uphold the oath of the sixteen clans made to Tanin. I will keep the peace through my words and actions, with as little blood or tears shed. I will protect those who cannot protect themselves. May Tanin, and my ancestors, rest in peace with my deeds."

A spiritual tradition that every Taralu dwarf aspires to achieve at least once in their lifetime is to make a pilgrimage commemorating their migration from the old settlements in the Shattered Ranges to the Mwangi Expanse. An aspirant starts at the old Council of the Sixteen chambers high up in the mountain, filling their caravans with heavy burdens to signify the responsibility and burden of their oath. They then make their way down the slope to Taninshroud, ending their journey by paying their respects to the dragon that changed the very fate and fabric of their clans. When multiple aspirants make this pilgrimage simultaneously, it's called the Aspirant Migration, an occurrence that happens once every few decades.

## WYRMBLESSED BLOODLINE

The following new bloodline is available to sorcerers at 1st level.

### WYRMBLESSED

You lay claim to the might of dragons, but your powers are sacred instead of arcane—born from a worship of draconic might so powerful it infused your blood or, perhaps, from a celestial or draconic power blessing one of your ancestors received.

**Spell List** divine

**Bloodline Skills** Intimidation, Religion

**Granted Spells** cantrip: *read aura*; 1st: *mage armor*; 2nd: *resist energy*; 3rd: *haste*; 4th: *reflective scales* (*Lost Omens Gods and Magic* 109); 5th: *cloak of colors*; 6th: *repulsion*; 7th: *mask of terror*; 8th: *divine inspiration*, 9th: *overwhelming presence*

**Bloodline Spells** initial: *dragon claws*; advanced: *dragon breath*; greater: *dragon wings*

**Blood Magic** Draconic might carries in your voice. Either you gain a +1 status bonus to Intimidation checks for 1 round, or a target takes a -1 status penalty to Will saves for 1 round.

## DIVINE WYRMS

Taralu dragon worship has caught the attention of a few Mwangi researchers at the Magaambya. While most scoff at the idea of a dragon being divine, including many dragons themselves, these scholars can draw more than a few connections between the two. Avistani myths claim dragons to be the shards of lost draconic gods that Dahak ripped to pieces, and even the most evil of Imperial Dragons is undeniably an agent of the Celestial Court. The presence of the sacred wyrm-blessed Taralu sorcerers provides yet another clue to add to a controversial pile of evidence.

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LADON

## DRAGON CULTS OF MWANGI

Cults to demons of all kinds are common in Mwangi, including demon wyrms such as Abraxas, but worshipers of Dahak also abound in the Mwangi Jungle. During the Age of Darkness, Dahak rampaged across the Expanse, and his influence still lingers heavily. To this day, the cults of Dahak wreak havoc on the Expanse, ever seeking a way to return their god to the mortal realm so that he can finish what he started.

## DRAGON TYPE

At 1st level, choose the type of dragon that influenced your bloodline. You can't change your dragon type later. This choice affects how some of your bloodline spells function. The good metallic dragons and their damage types are brass (fire), bronze (electricity), copper (acid), gold (fire), and silver (cold). The evil chromatic dragons and their damage types are black (acid), blue (electricity), green (poison), red (fire), and white (cold). The primal dragons of planar origin and their damage types are brine (acid), cloud (electricity), crystal (piercing), magma (fire), and umbral (negative). The imperial dragons and their damage types are forest (piercing), sea (bludgeoning), sky (electricity), sovereign (mental), and underworld (fire). For the *dragon breath* focus spell, the area is a 60-foot line for a brine dragon; a 30-foot cone for a cloud, crystal, forest, magma, sovereign, or umbral dragon; and a 10-foot burst within 30 feet for a sea, sky, or underworld dragon.

## RELATED BLOODLINE

Because the wyrmblest and draconic bloodlines have similar origins, they count the same as each other for the purposes of prerequisites and access requirements.

## CULTURE

Taralu tend to be a friendly bunch with calm demeanors, and their smiles twinkle like a starry night, capable of putting most at ease. Due to their curious natures and wanderlust, Taralu lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle, with enclaves of diaspora scattered through all the lands.

One of the first milestones for any Taralu dwarf when they come of age is their first hair dye. Perhaps more important than their naming ceremony, this ritual is the first expression of an individual Taralu dwarf's cultural identity. The colors chosen to dye their hair reflect not just their affinity with the sky and clouds, but their outlook on the world. For example, choosing to dye their hair in sunrise hues of yellow blending into blue expresses their clarity in doing what lies ahead, or perhaps they were brought into this world as the sun rose above the horizon. By contrast, another might choose to dye their hair in the shades of twilight to reflect the calmness of the night or the introspection that comes with the serene evening. Subsequent dyeing and changing of colors come as an individual grows and changes with age, each new dye reflecting another vista or facet of their personality.

There's a tradition among the Birangi clan (known for its artistic community) of hosting The Dyeing Games. This annual festival involves inviting members from all of the Sixteen Clans to partake in a friendly multi-day competition of their dyeing skills and hair masterpieces. Traditionally, the Birangi home settlement hosted this event; however, after accusations of partiality, the festival is now held in the reigning champion's clan settlement.

Because Taralu travel all over Garund for trade or diplomatic missions, they've developed an interesting epicurean palette. They enjoy taking all the little scraps of various textures, smells, and tastes they've experienced in their lifetime and travels and blending them into new dishes. It's rare for one to not have small stashes of nibbles and snacks on their person for situations like meeting friends or strangers (who



they simply consider friends they've yet to meet). In fact, some of the best "wandering chefs" across the lands are Taralu, known for adventuring the world for their next edible inspiration.

Many Taralu are budding linguists, collecting snippets of various languages they encounter on their adventures. As such, their humor and idioms tend to be layered and multilingual, which can be a double-edged sword. While they understand and chuckle at lingual puns and homonyms, those not from their community might react only with confusion. A young Taralu dwarf might also fall prey to malapropisms as they start their adventuring life, saying things such as "a rolling stone gathers no moths" or "they were a dwarf of great statue."

Taralu have a deep respect and veneration for wyrmkin and, as such, have a great reverence for those they meet on their travels. If a dragon or dragonkin are ever in peril, a Taralu will do all they can to assist the creature in need. Veteran Taralu champions might even have a wyvern mount or companion, and some heroes of legend could even have a lifelong dragon companion that bonds to them and their descendants.

## RELATIONS

The Taralu clans have established many connections across the valleys they call home due to their cultural focus on patience and diplomatic approach to life endearing them to many. In particular, they've found close allies in the jungle orcs through their similar disdain for evil influences. This bond was forged even stronger when two different Taralu clans near Matanji orc territory responded to a call for aid against the members of a cult of Abraxas; they each sent their own squads of troops and mages and even called each of the other 14 clans to action against a cult that dared wreak havoc in the name of a wicked serpent. Taralu also see the various kobold communities and diaspora in the land as their spiritual "cousins," with whom they share similar philosophies, outlooks, and reverence about wyrmkind.

Their role as mediators also helped endear Taralu to many peoples and make unlikely allies. In 4623 AR, a delegation led by **Anutara Velrits of Clan Galalia** (LG nonbinary dwarf emissary 10) facilitated peace between a band of gnolls and a settlement of conrasu when their territories overlapped, establishing a neutral ground for further meetings concerning the surrounding region in the process.

Many Taralu, especially those wanting to serve their communities through academic and magical knowledge, go to the Magaambya academy. While most return to their clans after attaining the rank of Conversant, several stay on to be lore-speakers or, in the rare instance, a learned one. There's a vast network of Taralu alumni both within the grounds and out in the world who are invaluable resources to young attendants who want to pursue higher education.

Despite their many allies, the Taralu people still have enemies. As the cults of Dahak and their vile worship spread across the Mwangi, Taralu settlements grow increasingly nervous about what the vilest of dragons would do to their people if not stopped. Another enemy, although one with good intentions, is the Order of the Frostbit Greave, a roving band of knights that devote themselves to the empyreal lord Smiad, the Pitiless Dragonslayer. While most followers of Smiad believe in assisting the works of good dragons, this order sees Taralu reverence for the anarchic and unpredictable cloud dragons as an affront to their god, and the groups have clashed on several occasions.

## DRACONIC DIPLOMACY

Though Taralu consider cults to evil dragon gods their enemies, they're ironically more likely to get along with actual evil dragons. Not every evil wyrm is unwilling to converse or bargain, even if the most wicked among their kind are impossible to deal with. Taralu clans have a better track record of treating with these dragons than most, likely due to their bone-deep reverence for such beings—the extra flattery hardly hurts, at least. The Taralu people have managed a tentative arrangement with a half-dozen such dragons, cajoling and bribing them into nonaggression and occasionally begrudging helpfulness.



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## TANINSHROUD

Nestled in the fog-filled lowlands of the Mwangi Jungle, this mausoleum protects the remains of Tanin, the ancient cloud dragon whom the Sixteen Clans swore to carry back to the wyrm's birthplace. Protected by an elite group of custodians drawn from all these Taralu clans, this ancient site is the final destination along the Pilgrim's Path. Due to the ever-present fog and mist, locating Taninshroud is a difficult task. Only the most determined aspirants on the Path or Taralu religious guides (who are incredibly skilled in traveling the winding terrain) can safely navigate their way to this tomb. If they know what to look for, an observant eye can notice the dull glow of carefully placed bioluminescence in the terrain that guides the traveler away from common hazards of the area and toward the welcome sight of the hermitage, signaling the end of their long and arduous journey.

As all the clans consider this site holy, it also serves as neutral ground for any inter-clan disputes that occur. The new Council Chambers of the Sixteen reside here, kept secret from anyone not Taralu. While Taralu conduct the bare minimum to maintain the old chambers in the Shattered Range—keeping up the facade and marking the first point of the Pilgrim's Path—the current chambers are where the true matters of import to the community at large are deliberated and decided upon.

## THE CHAMBERS OF THE SIXTEEN

From the outside, its austere architecture belies the seat of Taralu's governance. The inside, however, features an ornate council chamber that radiates old magic and centuries of history in the making. Above the council table, a mosaic made from glass, gems, and tiles spans the entire ceiling and walls, depicting each clan's emblem among a greater backdrop of the starry sky. Over time, each successive clan leader has added to this ceiling, creating an artistic history of each clan's story with space to add more. The table forms an almost circular arc with a gap to allow a petitioner access within its well, where they can stand and face all 16 leaders as they make their request. Etched within each clan's segment of the table is the name of every predecessor, with new names added through enchantment magic.

## THE HERMITAGE

A place of respite for those finishing their pilgrimage, this building also houses the Taninshroud custodians. A large courtyard at its center opens to the elements and the sky above, a sturdy but thin tarp protecting it against the weather. Scattered with worn plush rugs, this courtyard not only functions as a place where visitors can spend their days in quiet reflection, but also as a place to lay their weary head. For those who can't rest on the hard stone floor due to age or frail constitution, a few day beds with basic and threadbare cushions are also available.

While the custodians are in charge of preparing modest but filling communal meals made from the local flora and fauna, visitors are encouraged to help with the preparations, in addition to any other tasks involving the maintenance or upkeep of the building. In fact, the preparation of the communal meal can be the main event of the evening and a welcome break from the mostly silent introspection of the day. On busier visits, like the Aspirant Migration or a convening of the clans, meal times can feel festive with each person adding their flair and knowledge to spread.

### THE MAUSOLEUM

A simple structure of black stone mined from the Shattered Range, this circular mausoleum bears little ornamentation. However, carved upon its surface is the history of the Taralu Migration and their oath in Dwarven and Mwangi, including the names of the original 16 clan leaders and the cloud dragon Tanin. The seamless circular shape allows those who wish to pay their respects to the wyrm to do so facing any direction. On the ground, a silvery-black ring encircles the structure about five feet away. When queried about the ring, custodians tell the tale of an audacious pair of cultists who, long ago, tried to steal Tanin's remains by digging a tunnel underneath. Caught by a custodian's well-timed dream, or perhaps divine intervention by Tanin himself, the perpetrators were apprehended and summarily executed. Upon dealing with them, the custodians dug a trench around the tomb and filled it with molten adamantine to prevent any further tunneling attempts to make off with the wyrm's bones.

### ZAPHYRIE

Zaphyrie is a more recent settlement, founded after **Amakell Inre** (page 81), its present spiritual leader, took down the area's Dahak cultists that had long harried their clan. It's located in the Mwangi Jungle, further west from Taninshroud and east of Nantambu. In the last two decades, this burgeoning settlement has slowly gained a reputation for fostering community interest in the conservation of the diverse biome surrounding the area as well as keeping ancient traditions and crafts from being lost to the ravages of time. At the heart of Zaphyrie lies the Academy, a sturdy structure of unknown origins that the clan has since repurposed.

Due to extreme seasonal changes that include heavy rainfall, the entire town was built on sturdy stilts several feet above the jungle floor. This design element helps to avoid excessive damage from floods, especially flash floods. A few locations of note to visitors include the following.

### THE ACADEMY

The Academy is the only stone building in the settlement, its foundations reaching deep through the soft jungle floor to a solid bedrock. Its origins are a complete mystery. Once the overgrown weeds and fallen trees were cleared away, the building beneath revealed structurally sound and water-tight walls. Amakell Inre saw its potential immediately, and it now functions as a repository of knowledge and learning while providing spaces for permanent records, archival

### PILGRIM'S PATH

The Pilgrim's Path is an important ritual which Taralu undertake at least once in their lifetime to commemorate the original vow to Tanin made by the leaders of the Sixteen Clans. With sites stretching across many miles from the old council chambers in the Shattered Range to the middle of the Mwangi Jungle just south of Lake Ocota, this pilgrimage can take even the most experienced dwarf a few weeks.

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## TARALU CHARACTERS

Due to their strong connection with dragons, many Taralu dwarves have the Elemental Heart Dwarf heritage as well as the Energy Blessed ancestry feat. They might also have the Oathkeeper Dwarf heritage due to Taralu's strong emphasis on keeping their word, or the Strong-Blooded Dwarf heritage due to generations of living alongside toxic jungle creatures.

Taralu mediators might take the Surface Culture feat to better act as diplomats to other peoples, while a dwarf with deep religious or cultural roots might take the Dwarven Lore feat. Taralu warriors might choose to represent their strong devotion to their ancestors' oath by taking the Dwarven Doughtiness or Heroes' Call ancestry feats.

storage, and teaching. In cases of extreme weather, it has enough space to shelter the entire community built around it.

## THE DOCKETS

Consisting of the areas on the edges of the settlement, including the land under the stilts, this communal space is a portmanteau of “dock” and “market.” During the drier seasons, many use the jungle floor to prepare and store preserved goods for the leaner months as well as utilize the space for rearing local livestock and planting a few experimental agricultural crops. The Dockets also provide a large space for festivals and market grounds for both neighboring and faraway merchants to trade goods with the clan.

During rainier times, many of the settlement's denizens fish using rods and nets, and they travel between parts of the settlement over the water. Recent attempts at hydroponic agriculture during the rainy season have also yielded promising results.

## THE PATHFINDER SOCIETY

The Taralu people firmly believe that the world isn't going to come to them and that one has to go out and find it, so they get on well with the Society. This building, the newest structure in the settlement, houses visiting initiates and agents as they travel across the lands chronicling the exploits of heroes and adventurers, though there isn't yet a permanent agent in residence. This building's inception is a relatively new initiative by Amakell Inre in hopes of starting a new Lodge that can benefit not only her clan, but the Taralu community at large.

## THE SAHIBA

Named after the watchful companion of Amakell Inre, the members of this organization are equal parts tracker and academic, patrolling the local jungle and gathering information. Some of these patrols can range as far as the western edge of the Mwangi Expanse.

The clan realized that continuing to rely on lucky discoveries wouldn't secure a future for them, but an organization that can serve as the eyes and ears beyond Zaphyrie can allow for the clan to have advanced warning of any threats coming their way. The Sahiba also functions as the lookout for any historical relics or historically significant discoveries. From time to time, the Sahiba might find something they deem too dangerous, remote, or inaccessible. They pass on these leads to the Pathfinder Society, usually offering rewards to those brave and able enough to complete the investigation.

## THE SHRINE OF ALL-FAITHS

This space of worship is open to all members of the community. Its outward facade has many carvings and reliefs of gods from the dwarven and draconic pantheons, although recent inhabitants from various communities have inspired carvings from other faiths. Its central portion is usually open to the sky, though a simple tarp can cover the space if required. The shrine serves as the central hub of spirituality and healing for the clan. Divine healing services are available from the many supplicants and devotees. Due to the presence of followers of so many faiths, healthy debate and discourse can often be heard far into the surrounding areas.



## AMAKELL INRE OF CLAN ZAPHYRIE

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Amakell was born during the most trying of situations: her parents were fleeing the first Dahak cultist raid that wiped the Zaphyrie settlement. She spent her youth frequently moving from settlement to ruins and vice versa as the cultists gained significant power in the region, making it hard for her clan to rebuild and resettle. Perhaps these experiences drew Amakell to her current vocation as an archaeologist; fueled by a desire to unlock the secrets of the past to help the future, she hopes to turn the tides for her community. Her knack for languages, especially dead and archaic ones, saw her rise quickly through the Rain-Scribe and Emerald Bough ranks at Magaambya, becoming the youngest dwarven lore-speaker in recent history at age 40. Her thirst for knowledge didn't end there, as she spent the next few decades exploring ruins across the Mwangi Expanse, where she focused on gathering intelligence on Dahak cultists in the region.

Despite being incapable of casting spells, Amakell was unanimously voted in as the Zaphyrie spiritual leader due to her acumen and tactics. She used her language skills to decode Dahak cultist messages, staying one step ahead of their nefarious plans. With her insider knowledge, Amakell led a team that worked on fomenting dissent among the most loyal Dahak cultists by forging intercepted communication, which allowed the dwarves to watch from a distance as the disorganized cultists turned on each other and the cult imploded from within. She has since led the Zaphyrie clan for 20 years and counting.

Physically, Amakell Inre is of average height and build for a Taralu dwarf. Her long, salt-and-pepper hair is tied in braids dyed the bright colors of a tranquil spring day, light blue interlaced with natural grays. Her piercing gray eyes frequently peer from behind a variety of glasses, which she switches between wearing and perching on top of her head—she stalwartly refuses to use bifocals, as they're for “older dwarves.” Amakell usually wears bright blue robes with an obscene amount of pockets, plus ornamental finishing and embroideries in gray. She carries her clan dagger on her hip and wields a very sturdy walking stick with a hook that she frequently uses to reach for objects above her grasp.

To those that meet her for the first time, Amakell's high energy can be infectious. She can hold a conversation on a variety of topics, speaking nearly endlessly so long as her audience remains interested. While she remains highly popular due to her role in dismantling the Dahak cultists, she has attracted a few detractors over the years due to her abruptness and impatience for decorum when there are important matters to attend to. Her demeanor in the midst of an important crisis is that of a flighty squirrel: while talking about one thing, she might switch topics in her head, or she might complete sentences internally but fail to express those thoughts aloud to those around her. Her long-time assistants and companions are accustomed to her quirks and thought processes, however, and can quickly help decode her abrupt turns in conversations for new acquaintances.

## SAHIBA

While exploring the ruins of a Zaphyrie settlement recently reclaimed from Dahak cultists, Amakell stumbled upon a precious cargo that was abandoned in haste: a cloud dragon egg. In her diagnostic tests to determine its viability, she accidentally hatched it, and the baby dragon imprinted on her. Naming the hatchling Sahiba, Amakell vowed to return the wyrmling to its family, though a few decades later, she has yet to find them.

Sahiba never strays far from Amakell and can usually be found coiled in a napping position not dissimilar to a house cat, their eyes alert for any signs of danger.



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## SONG'O

The Song'o halflings of the Mwangi Expanse have only recently allowed themselves to be seen outside the Laughing Jungle once more. Imperialist nations dismiss Song'os as capricious, cowardly halflings who wear unusual jewelry, but this ignorant stereotype misses the rich and generous culture found within the Laughing Jungle. Those from the Expanse usually view Song'os as an occasional surprising ally or a persistent thorn in the side, depending on how they treated Song'os in the past. Because of halflings' stealth and quiet watchfulness, travelers may find that they've already earned themselves a reputation with the Song'os without ever actually having seen them.

While some might see Song'os as just another clan of halflings living pastoral lives of simple travel and adventure, those who've had extended contact with them know otherwise. More than a few starving and shivering Vidric revolutionaries have rounded a thicket to find a woven basket filled with warm bread, colorful blankets, and surprisingly useful small knives. Adventuring parties who became lost in the jungle sometimes emerge with a strange tale. For some, on the last morning before they found their way out, they'd wake with significantly more rations for their journey. But if the party had a foul

purpose in mind, they'd awake to find all their possessions missing and no sign of how the deed was done.

### HISTORY

The Song'o halflings first ventured into the Laughing Jungle long before the Mwangi Expanse was seen as an exploitable location by various empires of Golarion. At least, that's how their stories go. Their songs tell of crossing vast oceans, treacherous deserts, and precarious mountains to find a land that was no less dangerous but felt like home. While it's unclear exactly when Song'os arrived in the Laughing Jungle—most evidence points toward 4,100 AR—determining where they came from is a straightforward matter.

The halflings who came to be known as Song'os have been fighting against tyrannical empires for their entire history. Their story begins in Osirion with brief historical mentions of small heroes that few humans saw or deigned to remember. After, they fled over the Obari Ocean and hopped nimbly from shore to island as both Qadira and Taldor jockeyed for imperial conquests. Eventually, the halflings found themselves at the Mana Wastes, quietly skirting the edge of Nex as they traversed inland before crossing over the Shattered Range to reach

the Mwangi Expanse. Still not satisfied, they pushed westward, through the Screaming Jungle and into what would become Sargava and later Vidrian. To this day, most Song'os encampments, settlements, and trails follow the Korir River, only venturing short distances up its tributaries into tree cover and relative safety.

Seen as a minor, persistent nuisance in the annals of conquests (when referenced at all), the Song'os halflings have come to believe it's best to be little noticed and less found. They often positioned themselves as silent allies to various imperial rebellions—the most recent of which was the establishment of the Chelaxian colony of Sargava. This reignited Song'os' deep distrust of colonizers and pushed them to hide where the imperial arm could not reach them. For nearly six centuries, the halflings shunned most contact with outsiders and forced any who interacted with them to keep their existence a secret. Over time, history may learn that Song'os had a gently nudging hand in Vidrian's independence, but for now, those are only tall tales and story-songs.

## APPEARANCE

Like many humanoids of the Mwangi Expanse, Song'os share the same dark brown skin and coiled dark hair. Due to their constant travel and the ever-present potential dangers of the jungle, most every Song'os has some basic combat ability, a generally high level of physical fitness compared to other halflings, and at least one weapon within reach. Even so, many Song'os begin to round and soften with age, slowly letting their guards down as they allow the next generation to take over the duties that have kept them all safe for centuries. Younger Song'os can often be heard asking their elders to “lax that grip and let me take care of things.”

Hairstyles among Song'os vary wildly based on location and occupation. Those who travel constantly and with few consistent resources tend to keep their curls cropped close to the scalp or shave their heads entirely whenever they get a chance. Merchants who travel long distances often take pride in just how close to the scalp they can maintain their cuts, proof of their ability to juggle both hygienic needs and their duties as caravan leaders. Merchants who are especially rich in time and coin will maintain short afros of exactly one inch, a feat that can only be sustained with constant trimming and kept healthy with application of hard-to-find oils. The addition of decorative flowers and jungle foliage serves both a camouflage and another layer of required maintenance, making the hairstyle even more impressive.

By contrast, those who live in the Song'os settlement of Lakay Se often grow their hair long, tending and teasing the curls into massive, full afros or artfully braiding it with a multitude of techniques gleaned from peoples across the Expanse. Even after they retire, many Song'os will maintain their elaborate hair art as a sign of the work they once performed.

While only some Song'os prefer the permanence of scarification to commemorate important life events such as births, deaths, marriages, and stick-fighting wins, all adorn themselves with makeup and facial paints to celebrate special events. Makeup and facial paint can also be simply applied for beauty's sake, such as in the celebration of Kana Fete (page 85). For somber occasions, like official stick fighting matches, funerals, and weddings, the makeup tells yet another story.

## SONG'O STORIES

Journeys along the ancestral Song'os trails can be long, tedious affairs. Song'os tell tales during these trips to pass the time and impart important lessons. A popular tale is that of “Kallbanar and Mama Anadi.” The story has Grandmother Spider asking the halfling Kallbanar to join her in a stroll of the heavens to prank the gods. Kallbanar, ever clever and thoughtful, realizes that he would never be able to hide as well as Mama Anadi and refuses her offer, heading home to enjoy a drink instead. Song'os parents tell the tale to encourage children to be brave enough to refuse a god and smart enough to recognize potential trouble before it happens.

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## SONG'O CLOTHING

Song'o halflings usually wear multiple layers of patterned clothing, though each garment is lightweight to avoid overheating in the jungle. Each layer has a story associated with it: one traditionally provides protection from predators, another from insects, a third from rain, and so on. The gauzy but resilient cloth that Song'o weave is particularly prized by the few traders who have befriended Song'o halflings.

For stick fighting, it might be a record of wins and adventures a competitor has survived and resemble or outline scars and old wounds for intimidation. For weddings, it is the entwining or two lives as the start of another story and may feature knots or links. For funerals, small pictographic tales of connection to the deceased are expected as a way to celebrate their life.

Song'os often adorn themselves in bright, lightweight fabrics and scarves that can be added and removed whenever needed. This might be for fashion, warmth, or bodily protection, depending on the circumstance. The fabrics themselves are wound tightly and expertly around the body over lightweight, breathable shirts and long pants.

Perhaps the most striking adornment is the one least seen by those who have only met the rare Song'o adventurer or merchant. One of the greatest visible symbols of both beauty and prestige is gauging the lip and ears with plates, a process in which one carefully and slowly stretches their earlobes and lower lips to fit carved and sculpted discs of clay or precious stone. Those with the time, patience, and a sedentary enough lifestyle will stretch to fit hand-sized or larger plates, but this is generally only seen on elders who have earned the lifestyle necessary to cultivate them. Even so, most Song'o will engage in some amount of gauging over their lifetimes.

## SOCIETY

Few Song'os live in permanent locations for more than a handful of weeks throughout the year. Most migrate along the Korir River and throughout the Laughing Jungle with the seasons, as they travel well-worn paths that lead them to patches of rare plants and interesting game. Others venture beyond that, should their whims guide them in the right direction, with small parties meandering across the Expanse in search of new stories to tell. Even still, every Song'o attends at least one Kana Fete celebration each year, and every roaming party plans their journeys accordingly.

Aside from those few large celebration days, Song'os keep to smaller familial groups that come together and break as needed or desired. Within a single caravan, all or most of the members will be direct blood relatives, descending from shared ancestors a handful of centuries ago. When wanderlust takes hold of younger Song'o, they often break off from their caravan to follow another. They may also join a merchant company or strike out with adventurers that take them to the other end of the world. No matter what, it's believed that all Song'os return to their homes eventually, in one way or another.

## CULTURE

In the few permanent encampments that exist, Song'os have created a self-sustaining system of rotating plant crops, growing enough to keep those passing through from having to forage harder-to-find foodstuffs like grains and squashes. The plots are cultivated year-round rather than falling to each passing caravan to tend, and provide a solid basis for the Song'o diet, which is supplemented with game and fish from the surrounding jungle. The encampments also have space for smoking meats to include as a regular part of their rations.

In addition to food, Song'os also harvest samples of plants they find throughout the jungles. In addition to using this flora as personal decoration, much of Song'o medicine is based around the practice of herbalism. Traveling Song'o groups diligently trade these dried plants with one another when they meet, ensuring that any Song'o has access to whatever medicine they might need. Before a long journey, Song'o acquaintances often give artful strands of medicinal plants as gifts, along with



hope for a safe return. Though Song'os rarely use their botanical knowledge in this capacity, their expertise also extends to poisons. While Song'os usually avoid conflict rather than escalate it, it's considered extremely unwise to force them to rely on such desperate measures.

Song'os are led by a council of elder druid matriarchs known as the Ansyen Bann. These five matriarchs from the largest families have collectively learned the skills that help keep their people alive. They perform major ceremonies and rituals and preserve important stories and songs. They know the roads and trails, who along those trails is trustworthy and who should be avoided, how to care for any pack animals and keep those animals safe, the locations of food to be foraged and animals trapped or hunted, and more. Together, they make most of the overarching decisions for Song'os in the Laughing Jungle.

Beyond the council, experts in their particular fields lend their knowledge to the Ansyen Bann whenever necessary. These masters also handle many day-to-day concerns, such as managing who will till the plots and spin the yarn. All these tasks rotate through the younger Song'os, a sure way for one to not only find what they're best at but also to make sure they have a wide breadth of knowledge and experience. Among Song'os there are no assumptions about who should be doing what task, only who has proven themselves capable of doing the work well.

## CARAVANS

Those Song'os who do not reside in Lakay Se travel in caravans through the Laughing Jungle. Many use ancestral trails, harvesting and tending to small patches of self-sustaining vegetation, fishing the rivers, and hunting small game as they make the trip over and over again, with stops in Lakay Se for Kana Fete and in Bon Syasyon to trade any surplus goods and crafts collected on their journeys. To prevent the trek from becoming boring or tedious, Song'os pass the time with parables that teach lessons of travel and folk stories of the bravery and cleverness of their ancestors.

## KANA FETE

Three times every year, Song'os convene in Lakay Se for a Kana Fete, a meeting of elders and experts to discuss and confer on any issues Song'os have faced in the past year and look to face in the coming season. Matters up for discussion include routes that caravans should take or avoid, threats growing within the jungle, what goods can be spared for trade, and who will be chosen to study to become a master of their trade or craft. While everyone is gathered, the community performs funeral rites and holds a stick-fighting tournament to prove who is the most talented and thick-skinned fighter, with unrelated squabbles between competitors often decided by the outcomes of their matches. Those coming into town help gather the waiting harvest on the outskirts and present it as a gift, the hard work done before other hard work begins.

Before any meetings, tournaments, or funeral rites can occur, the Song'o halflings hold a massive feast, making sure to enjoy the last fruits from the previous harvest and eating anything soon to spoil. During this storied, week-long celebration, members of the community announce any upcoming nuptials, recent births, or recent deaths so everyone can share in the joy or

## SWEET GIFTS

Song'o halflings have unique methods of preserving fruits and vegetables, embalming them in special salts and spices. Though these are rarely shared with outsiders, those few who have tried this unusual fare have found the food to possess special properties that accompany their unique flavors.

A Vidric explorer who bites into a specially prepared cherry orange might find her wounds healing as if she had drunk a magical potion, while a visitor who drinks Song'o jute mallow tea might find themselves shaking off dark magic as if cured by divine prayer. Much in the same way that Song'os offer braids of medicinal herbs to others, Song'os who are truly grateful to another might offer these preserves as a gift—though few outsiders recognize the tremendous significance of such an offering.

A small number of Song'o cultivars are less friendly, though the existence of these hazards is kept secret from even the most trusted outsiders. Persistent rumors circulate among Sargavan colonists of harmless-looking kiwano melons that explode like bombs when disturbed.

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## CAUTIOUS PRAISE

Song'os are extremely reluctant to give out compliments, especially in the case of skillful arts or crafting, no matter how impressed they actually are with the quality or beauty. Openly spoken compliments are believed to potentially attract the jealousy of gods and spirits, and are thus best avoided whenever possible.

mourn the loss and lift the sorrow. According to Song'os, the best ways to mourn and celebrate are with family and food.

Starting on the afternoon of the second day, the elders sequester themselves from the heat to discuss matters of state as the seasons change. Beyond the Ansyen Bann, all the elders and masters of their fields attend these meetings, each one adding their knowledge and opinions to the deliberations at hand. This council session might last but a few hours, as once occurred after a particularly uneventful and prosperous year, or take up to four full days of heated bickering, as when the Song'o leadership decided to aid and trade with Vidrian. No matter what, a decision must be made by the end of the sixth day.

As the sun rises on the morning of the third day, the stick-fighting tournament begins. First, the previous season's champion leads a procession to the arena, accompanied by loud songs of fighting and glory. The champion runs a hand over the hard-packed earth and rattles the bounding fences before deeming the space worthy of this season's matches. Competitors must make their way through a double elimination bracket without grievous injury to gain the chance of becoming champion. For many, these fights are the most important draw of the celebration.

On the seventh day, the Ansyen Bann announce all final decisions, along with the winner of the tournament (and any deaths that resulted from it). Finally, the entire community gathers to carry a boat bearing mementos of those who passed between Kana Fetes down to the river. While no one is obligated to do so, many wait until they can no longer see the boat on the horizon before leaving and returning to their caravans.

## STICK FIGHTING

Described as something between an intricate fencing duel and an epic clash of longswords, stick fighting is a grueling test of strength, skill, and endurance, all set to high-tempo music. Song'os believe that by withstanding the painful welt from an opponent's stick and rising above the pain to overcome them, they may prove themselves worthy champions of their people. The truest test of this is at the Estad de Bomaye during Kana Fete, with the biggest competition taking place during the summer festival.

Exhibition matches during a Kana Fete are beautiful and flamboyant displays that are as much about winning the crowd as they are about winning the bout. Competitors will go shirtless but wear layered and jewel-toned pants covered in tinkling bits of metal. Some cover themselves in warpaint or bring an entourage to the very edge of the fighting grounds to cheer and distract. Other competitors wield sticks with pictographs or symbols carved into the end, looking to literally leave their mark on their opponent's flesh. Still others wear common clothing with no adornments and bring no followers, letting their skill alone speak for them.

Some fights do take place outside of the tournament, usually to settle personal disputes. While official bouts are only to first blood or yield, unofficial matches can be to the death if the participants agree to it. Within the jungle, outsiders are most likely to stumble upon these death matches, two or more Song'os staring each other down, clutching long, whip-like sticks in hand instead of the traditional shorter and heavier tournament sticks.

## FIGHTING STICK

## ITEM 0

UNCOMMON BACKSWING HALFLING NONLETHAL SHOVE

**Access** Song'o ethnicity

**Price** 5 sp

**Usage** held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1



This hard but flexible longsword-length piece of wood looks more like a pole than a weapon, but can be deadly in the right hands. While generally not used for combat outside of Song'o culture, some halflings have become so proficient as to make it just as effective as a blade in a fight. Many halflings will even sing to maintain a certain tempo and rhythm during combat. It deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A fighting stick is a martial one-handed melee weapon in the club weapon group.

## FAITH

Rather than placing their faith in gods, who are flighty and can be slain or forgotten, Song'os believe in themselves, their enduring culture, and the spirits of their ancestors. Calling on ancestors for assistance in daily life can be as simple as a brief whispered prayer for gentle breezes and just enough rain to ensure water for the next day, or as complex as entreating the ancestors for guidance in matters of state and continued survival. Because these ancestors have seen so much of life, Song'os ask for their insights and trust that, just like in life, knowledge might be passed to them that they otherwise would not have. Elders that have been lost are still with them—the process of gaining their perspective is simply more complicated.

## LIFE & DEATH

As Song'os grow older and less physically capable of completing the tasks they once performed with ease, they're urged to pass on their accumulated knowledge to younger apprentices to keep those methods and practices alive. Each day, an elder is expected to spend at least a few hours of their time teaching and supervising. As their time draws near, they pass on more than just their expertise, giving the stories of their lives, families, and communities to the next generation to hold close. Some say Song'os can feel their deaths creeping behind them and put effort into making sure all they know is passed down to others. For any who are unable to pass along their knowledge before their deaths, such as sailors, merchants, adventurers, and caravan members lost to the jungle, their family and community gather together what each person knew through stories about them and pass on their knowledge that way.

Song'o funeral rites are conducted in multiple parts: a prayer, a memorial for family, and a procession for the wider community. In the immediate wake of a death, Song'os petition their ancestors to keep the departed safe from the evils of this world. Every effort is then made to preserve the body long enough to be carried home. If that proves impossible, Song'os gather the departed's belongings and burn their body in a pyre, believing they must be able to make their way home in some form to be at peace. If the body is returned home, those closest to the deceased must build a small river boat to carry the body alone toward to their rest. The boat is then walked to the Korir River's mouth and pushed towards the sea. Finally, during Kana Fete, the single most prized possession of a person is gathered onto a boat with those of anyone else lost in the previous season. No one is made to be above others; in death, heroes and leaders are just as important as farmers and merchants.

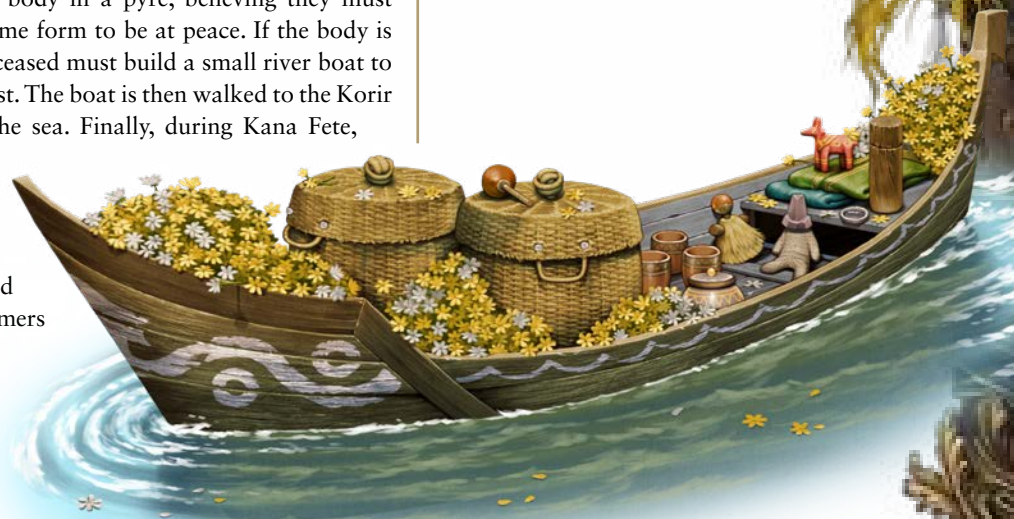
## RELATIONS

When it comes to dealing with the various peoples of the Expanse, Song'os rely on the knowledge handed down to them through stories to temper their expectations.

## FLEETING MOMENTS

The nomadic Song'o lifestyle leaves little room for bulky or fragile art pieces that cannot be easily carried. Song'os instead prefer art that is fleeting in nature, such as their body paints and elaborate flower decorations. Song'o music is often made with impromptu items, such as a hollow log found on a jungle path, and Song'o sculptures are often works of damp earth and leaves. The ephemeral nature of this art is part of its purpose: much like the Song'os themselves, Song'o art leaves no trace of itself behind. It can be difficult to tell their works from a happy coincidence of the forest.

The exception to this rule is Song'o tents, which Song'os take everywhere by necessity and pass down through generations. These tents are made of brightly colored cloth on the outside and decorated with ornate woven patterns on the interior.



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While Song'os know well the evils of the jungle and how to avoid them, they remain reluctant to expose their people by providing overt aid, knowing that even supposedly “good” people can betray their trust. If a Kallijae elf is found injured, for example, unless the individual is somehow already known to them, the most a Song'o might do is offer a bandage and water before moving on.

Vidrian and its native population provide the one major exception to this rule. Stories say the people of Vidrian always helped Song'os in need, and the halflings seem willing to repay this old debt. However, the motives behind this decision go beyond altruism. With the threat of Cheliox's expansion looming over the Laughing Jungle, helping Vidrian achieve independence was also a matter of self-preservation for Song'os.

From tending patches of yams for starving revolutionaries to anonymously leaving them prepared meals, many a Vidric freedom fight has looked to the jungle's shadows and wondered about the identities of their mysterious benefactors. In addition, mysterious incidents seemed to plague the worst Sargavan colonists, culminating in several daring raids against slave owners, the perpetrators of which were never found. Many Song'o elders consider the entire nation to be adopted as family—though none would ever actually tell Vidrian as much. Now, even though the two cultures have begun to openly trade, the people

of Vidrian remain unsure of their standing with the halflings of the Laughing Jungle.

## SONG'O ENCAMPMENTS

Song'o communities are mostly nomadic caravans that move as needed, returning to a few semi-permanent grounds throughout the year. These gatherings are centered around conclaves of the Ansyen Bann and the Kana Fetes held there. Lakay Se stands apart as a permanent settlement, with tended fields, drying sheds, storage huts, and maintained homes and other buildings. Nearby stands Estad de Bomaye, the arena where stick fighting tournaments are held during Kana Fete and where some locals choose to hone their skills.

The permanent structures in Lakay Se possess no consistent architectural style. Some are simple series of interconnected square rooms, but many are modeled after buildings seen by Song'os in their travels outside the Laughing Jungle. Those who long for the road have even attempted to recreate the look of their tents with permanent materials, to varying degrees of success. All of this leads to an eclectic variety of structures, so diverse that the few outsiders fortunate enough to visit Lakay Se have wondered if the Song'os here built their homes or simply dragged them in from other places. In some cases, that assessment is entirely correct. Song'os aren't ones to let anything in the jungle go to waste—not even a building.

While traveling as part of a caravan, Song'os encampments are a riot of color in the jungle, like a patch of flowers that only bloom at night. As the sun sets, the caravan slows and stops, and everyone quickly gets to the work of making camp. Fires are lit at the center for cooking, light, and protection, with tents erected in a ring around them. Each tent depicts the story of those who live within it, one the occupants are all too eager to tell. Some tents are made and repaired slowly over time, graced by the hands of everyone in the family, and the stories of those repairs often lead into other tales about each person who worked on it. Some families maintain their tents in a set rotation, with each creator showing off their own unique flairs in their canvas and proud to tell about how they acquired certain rare materials, or how a pattern came to be. Still other patterns might tell of the arduous journey the family took to commission their tents from a renowned artist who made their home elsewhere in the Mwangi Expanse, far removed from the corner Song'os inhabit and travel.

### BON SYASYON

Originally built at the encouragement of an Ansyen Bann shortly after Vidrian renamed itself and declared independence, this trading post is the first of its kind and a sign of the slow-blooming trust Song'os have begun to feel toward other residents of the Expanse. Built around a large, massively boughed tree with a touch-worn symbol carved at halfling-eye level, the encampment sprawls outward with well-organized tents and swiftly-assembled stalls and booths for perusal.

Any trinkets marked for sale, be they crafted during a trip or found on the trails, are sold at this market, along with excess food, dyed fabrics, and woven baskets and pottery from Lakay Se. Song'os trade all this for new tools and goods they have less access to, such as interesting books, succulent treats, and spices and seasonings that can't be found in the jungle.

A more permanent set of buildings stand at the fringes of the Song'os encampment, constructed by the Vidric merchants who come to trade. While they also prefer not to inhabit the outpost constantly, they do maintain the Song'os area of makeshift stalls and tents in order to conduct swifter business—and because frequently Song'os offer discounts as thanks for not having to set up or take down their stalls themselves. Some Vidric merchants also use the outpost as a staging ground and launching point for their own forays into the jungle, often accompanied by Song'os guides who know their land well.

While the merchants of Vidrian are grateful to the Song'os halflings for their openness to trade and their willingness to trek across vast swathes of the jungle, other outsiders who make their way to Bon Syasyon may not be as trustworthy. But any who try to cheat Song'os into bad deals or steal from them outright may find themselves rebuffed with sharp tongues, lightened pockets, and surprisingly painful stick strikes.

### ESTAD DE BOMAYE

Though only slightly removed from Lakay Se, Estad de Bomaye is considered an entirely separate location by Song'os, despite many outsiders mistakenly believing the arena to be an extension of the town. For much of the year, the arena stands empty,

### SONG'O CHAMPIONS

Song'os stick fighting is a storied tradition that has produced a number of notable fighters.

**Halbinat the Shining:** Though not an overly successful fighter, Halbinat refused to wear the jewel-toned pants common in stick fights, instead always fighting in simple briefs. This led to a style of stick fighting where one wears as little as possible, discarding protection in exchange for greater mobility.

**Noiria Kulla:** Noiria was short among her peers and used this to her advantage. She developed the Kulla Jia, a fighting technique that makes use of a wide stance to keep low to the ground. The low stance makes it easier to counterattack in response to an opponent's swings.

**Ig Hantan:** Ig's claim to fame is his loud, booming voice. He used this to his advantage during fights by bellowing disruptive, arrhythmic notes to disrupt the concentration of his opponents. Ig would constantly remain on the offensive until his disruptions created an opening for a swift and decisive strike.

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## SONG'O CHARACTERS

Most Song'o halflings have the wildwood halfling heritage, though the jinxed halfling, observant halfling, and twilight halfling heritages aren't unheard of. Many take the Sure Feet and Cunning Climber ancestry feats, though Song'o who deal with other peoples often have the Watchful Halfling feat. Song'o stick fighters might take the Unhampered Passage feat, or might adapt their traditional fighting methods to take the Step Lively, Dance Underfoot, and Toppling Dance ancestry feats. Truly legendary Song'o are likely to take the Shadow Self ancestry feat.

devoid of life and color, falling into disrepair as Song'os go about their lives of traveling, wandering, and tending to Lakay Se. However, when a tournament draws close, tourney workers sweep the tamped dirt clean, make any needed repairs, chase out vermin, and replenish the arena's store of medical supplies. They also touch up the paint around the building, adding new murals depicting the best of the most recent fights that took place within.

The infirmary is the most soundly constructed building in Estad de Bomaye and the only part of the arena kept up throughout the year. Not only does it serve as a place for stick fighters to recover from injuries during a tournament—or even after, if the injuries are severe enough—it also serves all Song'o traveling caravans throughout the year, providing them a place to heal and rest for as long as needed without disturbing the flow of life and commerce in Lakay Se.

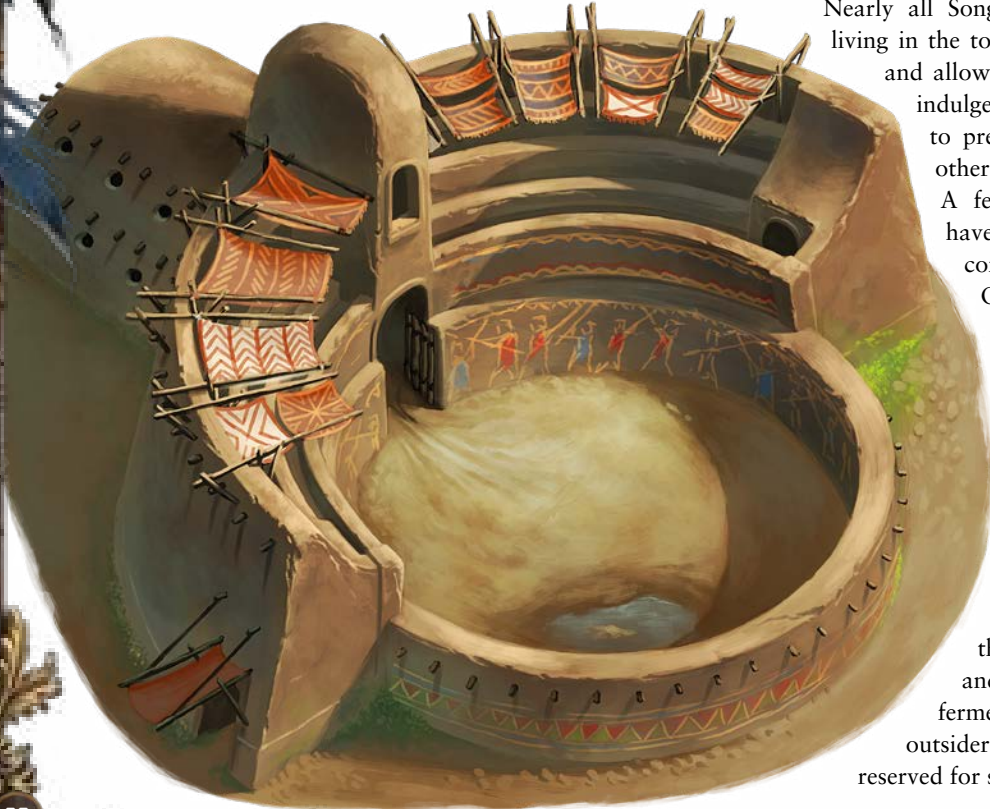
Recently, the arena has seen more use throughout the year as a place to train in the art of stick fighting. In the weeks preceding a Kana Fete, those who hope to become champions spar there for hours at a time. Some even push ahead of their caravans in order to arrive with ample time to train. What began as a small informal school of aspirational competitors has grown to include anyone willing to teach stick fighting to any student tough enough to withstand the brutal nature of training, even outsiders. Some creative Song'os have even begun to innovate the sport, using longer and even more willowy sticks that can crack against the skin like a whip. Tutelage here is not formalized in any way and rarely comes up as a topic discussed by the elders during the Kana Fete council sessions, unlike all other areas of expertise applicable to Song'o life.

## LAKAY SE

The only truly permanent Song'o settlement is Lakay Se, situated along the banks of the Korir River. Surrounded by small fields of beans, maize, and yams, with a hard-tamped central square where the seasonal Kana Fete feasts are held, the quiet town contains enough wildly varying buildings to house all the nomadic Song'os of the Mwangi Expanse, if necessary.

Nearly all Song'os spend some amount of time living in the town to help their extended families and allow the other residents to periodically indulge their wanderlust. Some grow to prefer this life and travel less, while others only stay if they absolutely must. A few intrepid Song'os of Lakay Se have even begun dabbling in trade and commerce, beginning with Vidrian. Once caravans have been supplied and sufficient stores set aside for the next Kana Fete, any excess is packed and taken to Bon Syasyon for trade.

Buildings are made of found stone and fired brick painted in bright, vibrant colors and patterns that mirror Song'o clothing and makeup, telling many stories for those who know how to read them. Along with drying, smoking, and storage, Lakay Se also brews a fermented, tea-based beer that some outsiders have come to covet highly, as it's reserved for special occasions only.



## NANA ZHELLA

NG | FEMALE | HALFLING | OVERSEER 6

The only member of the Ansyen Bann who currently resides in Lakay Se, Nana Zhella is a no-nonsense negotiator who prefers to cut straight to the heart of any matter at hand. Her full name and title is Zhella Kenbe of the Song'o, Matriarch of the Gardens, due to her position as head of the one largest families with a constant presence in Lakay Se. Nana Zhella spends most of her time diligently tending the fields, overseeing preparations of harvest and hunt, and ensuring all caravans are adequately supplied on their journeys. She's also the town's de facto historian, telling and retelling many of the Song'o histories and legends she has heard (and taken part in) over her long lifetime.

Many of the details of Nana Zhella's past are obscured by folklore: depending on who you ask, she's been a caravan leader, a stick fighting champion, an adventurer, a pirate, and a healing druid of Lakay Se. In truth, she was once part of an adventuring party that ranged across Golarion, though they were more concerned with collecting interesting stories than amassing great treasure or saving the world. When she returned home, she brought those stories with her, as well as rare and powerful magic, passing on what she knew to any who would listen. Her knowledge and magical solutions continued to impress her fellow elders, until she was eventually made a part of the Ansyen Bann.

Tough but fair, and never cruel in her pronouncements, Nana Zhella is the soul of the Song'o people in the eyes of many. She's the ideal of someone who has survived the perils of the jungle without letting life crush them under its heel. Nana Zhella isn't technically the leader of the Ansyen Bann, but she does her best to keep them on track and hold them to their word, working in the best interests of the people. She has also been an advocate for growth and change within the Song'o community, beginning with an openness to outsiders rare among Song'os, especially leadership. The Song'o engagement with Vidrian can at least be partially credited to Nana Zhella, as can the establishing of Bon Syasyon. Her challenges against convention frequently get rebuffed by other councilors at first, even among those that later learn to see the sense in her words.

In personal dealings, Nana Zhella is bright and loving, shining against the shadows of evil and despair. Quick to laugh, and even quicker with a teasing barb, she keeps those she considers family close and grounded. In a culture that often avoids contact with others, Nana Zhella is a rare point of accessibility. When greeting new adventurers, she's far more welcoming than most Song'os, opening her home if those she trusts say a group is worthy, giving them a warm meal and a good night's sleep. If a problem can't be solved with a warm meal accompanied by the wisdom of a life long-lived, she'll see what more she can do in the form of magic and the aid of one of the many members of her adopted and extended family.

Despite her openness to new people, particularly adventurers, Nana Zhella remains cautious in her approach: always willing to hear outsiders out, but waiting for them to show who they are before deciding to trust them completely. Eventually, she announces her decision bluntly, with either a meal to proclaim her acceptance or refusal—or a demand that they prove their worth with a favor. These “little favors” are usually her asking price for services like healing and spells, rather than taking payment in gold. A favor might be as simple as running a package or message to Estad de Bomaye or Bon Syasyon, or as complex as searching for a lost scout separated from their caravan deep within the Laughing Jungle. When it comes to Nana Zhella, little is clear-cut at first, but her thoughts and goals will always reveal themselves by the end.

## A FANCIFUL FIGURE

Where most Song'os try to avoid gaining a reputation out of caution for who might be listening, Nana Zhella doesn't seem to mind. This, combined with her shrouded past, has led many Song'o youths to playfully tell more and more outlandish stories about her, from insisting she has 100 jungle cats as familiars to claiming she secretly won the entire Vidric Revolution by herself.



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## MATANJI

The Matanji orcs are an ethnic group native to the Mwangi Expanse, whose reputation differs significantly from the stereotypes commonly held in the rest of the world. Though still widely known as adept and violent warriors, and rightfully so, this reputation primarily stems from the ferocity aimed at a specific foe: demons and other fiendish forces. Matanji orcs are the foremost experts on demons within the Mwangi Expanse, performing demon hunts, exorcisms, protection rituals, and anything else needed to protect their people and the continent as a whole. After centuries of fighting with fiends, they've gained a high resistance to possession and demonic influence, and are so adept at combating fiendish power that they can outright consume demonic magic to empower themselves. Likewise, Matanji actively look to teach other cultures the ways of demon hunting, believing they have a duty to keep others from suffering the same tragedies that their people have faced. Other Mwangi peoples generally regard Matanji as heroic due to their sense of duty and willingness to increase familial bonds with people from outside their society.

As Matanji lack a history of conflict with nearby human societies, many Mwangi people have a sense of security whenever the orcs and half-orcs are around.

The primary exception to this is the Bekyar people (page 24), who fear that Matanji will one day decide the Bekyar are demon-infested and attempt to wipe out their entire people. Most Bekyar go out of their way to avoid Matanji, and there are whisperings that Bekyar fears are not entirely unfounded, as more than a few Bekyar have turned up brutally murdered after traveling near Matanji territories.

Matanji have adapted better to traditional humanoid politics than most orcs on Golarion, so it isn't uncommon to find them trying to increase their diplomatic relations with other cities and nations. They often orchestrate political marriages and try to influence military policy across the continent. They have a close relationship with Yamasans (page 31), who are incredibly important to the modern state of agriculture within Matanji society. Peoples across the continent know just how willing Matanji are to pursue ties and marriages from outside of their society. While foreigners may have prejudices and stereotypes based on what they generally expect of orcs, Matanji are usually patient, while others within Mwangi society will most often defend them fiercely against being called barbarians or being talked down to as if they're about to suddenly burst into violence. In the end, it's always better

to approach Matanji with fresh eyes and an open mind, as they are as varied and individual as any other culture.

## DEMONBLOOD FRENZY

FEAT 5

UNCOMMON ORC

**Access** Matanji ethnicity

**Prerequisites** tusks unarmed attack

**Frequency** once per minute

**Trigger** You successfully Strike a living creature that has the fiend trait with your tusks unarmed attack.

Just the taste of fiendish blood is enough to send blood rushing through your veins in a supernatural fury. You become quickened until the end of your next turn and you can use the extra action to make a tusks Strike, Stride, or Step.

## HISTORY

The first Matanji migrated to the Mwangi Expanse during the ancient dwarven Quest for Sky. They emerged unprepared for the surface world and wounded from the many battles with the dwarves underground, and made a harrowing voyage across the ocean on rafts made of logs and other debris during the Age of Darkness. Most of the orcs didn't survive, but the ones who did learned to thrive and adapt in their new jungle environment. They gradually learned to make effective shelter and hunt the local wildlife; they studied the local plants by consuming poisons and educating themselves through many unfortunate deaths. Through it all, they remained a relatively insular tribal culture until the day they were confronted by the servants of the demon lord Angazhan. Angazhan's fanatic followers fought the orcs numerous times, and each time kidnapped more than a few. The orcs originally believed the kidnapped Matanji to be eaten or killed, but in one fateful battle they faced down the twisted forms of their own people, orcs transformed into the demon-worshipping simians known as charau-ka.

This disrespect of the dead introduced the Matanji people to their first true experience of a berserker rage in generations, and they reluctantly slaughtered their transformed brothers and sisters before banding together to drive off the demon lord's champion, the Gorilla King. Hundreds of orcs threw themselves at him, ripping and tearing at his flesh with teeth and claws, getting up stronger each time as they found themselves empowered by his demonic-infused blood. After this tragedy, they dedicated themselves to hunting down Angazhan's cultists and any demonic being they could find. Matanji orcs spent centuries capturing demons to study how they function, learning new ways to slay them, and experimenting on their own bodies generation after generation to make themselves the ultimate demon hunters. This growth in education and analytical prowess led to a complexity of rituals, political interests, modernization, and agriculture. Now Matanji orcs stand as a testament to survival, a representation of the orc ability to thrive and evolve under any circumstances.

## APPEARANCE

Matanji aren't quite as broadly muscular as the average orc, but they're still just as tall. Their bodies have incredibly high muscle definition, significantly more than the average human, and this translates to fine motor control when creating tattoos or performing rituals, as well as overall quick movement in combat. They favor long tusks like any orc, but

## HARD-EARNED RECOGNITION

While many outsiders would claim that orcs value power and dominance, it is most accurate to say they demand respect. Matanji orcs are highly respected in the Expanse and are thus more likely to laugh off an insult than to see it as a challenge.

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## MATANJI DANCE

Matanji dancers perform complex routines synchronized with every other member of the dance group. Skilled dancers are expected to be as precise as possible, as quickly as possible, while still conveying emotion in all of their movements.



nearly every Matanji also receives a traditional inlay or coating of cold iron on or over their tusks, a cultural necessity after generations of biting into demons for combat purposes or temporary power. Their hairstyles tend to be short or easily tied back regardless of gender, due to particularly rabid demons taking advantage of long hair in combat. Most notable are the classic Matanji tattoos, bold designs that contain protective magic against the influence of demons.

Matanji fashion tends toward a mixture of leathers, cold iron, and silver.

Most Matanji orcs use some hybrid of melee fighting and magic, so they keep their garb light and tend to always dress for combat due to the unpredictability of an attack. Like most orcs, Matanji skin tones range through various shades of green, but fighting demons often leaves prominent physical marks on the skin—and not just limited to scars. Young orcs or those inexperienced at fighting demons tend to be bright green, while older orcs naturally settle into tones that match the foliage of the Mwangi Jungles.

However, it's not unusual for Matanji orcs to have odd coloration such as fiendish-red skin splotches, bone-white hands, or silvery scars around their jaws and mouths. Orcs with these anomalies tend to be the oldest and most experienced, having killed enough powerful demons to be affected by their fiendish death throes. They're also the orcs most feared by demonic forces, as they've become natural predators to pretty much any demon. Gaining one of these anomalies due to exposure to fiendish energies is the ultimate point of pride and status. As a side result, Matanji tend to react to any unusual physical features, demon-caused or not, with approval.

## SOCIETY

A small council governs the Matanji, made up of those who have shown the most prowess in demon hunting or diplomacy, and who the whole of Matanji society perceives to be highly honorable. When a leader dies, the people with the most experience vote to see who should take that leader's place on the council. The council typically makes decisions about where to focus efforts for protecting their people and the Expanse as a whole, as well as governing the Matanji. Topics commonly discussed include tattoo wards, agriculture, trade, and the roles of political leaders.

Matanji typically form their settlements with a particular purpose in mind. For example, their agriculture settlements tend to be carefully hidden within military settlements, with soldier trainees handling cattle and farming with Yamasan farmers when they aren't actively training. Residential settlements are usually located within trade settlements, for both security and the ease of trading within their own society.

Close family ties form a key part of Matanji culture. Political marriages expand the influence of their society and give them more access to foreign cultural knowledge—particularly in the realm of demons and the supernatural—while also allowing them to spread the Matanji philosophy on governing, which they believe is for the safety of the world. As they frequently expose themselves to tragic situations, having wealthy and politically influential alliances

is important too, as Matanji want to enjoy life while they have it and want their children to have increasingly better lives than those who came before.

Matanji tend to be very forward-thinking and believe that the Mwangi Expanse will be better off the more they spread their culture and customs. As a society, they value demon hunters and healers above all else, as both ensure the future and health of their people. Under that are the scholars, typically half-orcs, as they lead the rapid and frequent shifts in their society's evolution. But generally social hierarchy goes down the further away from demon slaying and healing that one gets, so Matanji put minimal focus onto things like hobby art and skills they deem impractical.

Yamasans serve a vital role in Matanji society, as they're the only people the Mwangi orcs can trust and rely upon (other than themselves) to contribute to the critical process of agriculture. They generally head farming efforts in Matanji settlements, leading the mix of Yamasans and Matanji working the farms. The Yamasan people are still considered distinct and thus don't hold high-ranking positions in Matanji society, but the council heavily consults them about anything involving agriculture. Matanji raise their children to respect and protect Yamasans, as they're considered essential to the modern state of Matanji agriculture. If there's one quality for which the Mwangi's orcs are known, it's an abundance of gratitude.

There's little difference between genders in Matanji culture, and many rarely bother to take such things into consideration beyond courtship with other cultures. Their native tongue barely uses gendered terminology, but they know of its importance to other people and have adopted some borrowed words for cross-cultural communication.

## HALF-ORCS

The Witanji are Matanji half-orcs, often known as rainkin by outsiders. They're held in high regard in Matanji society and given exceptional educational opportunities to learn about magic, medicine, politics, and technology. Witanji hold high status in Matanji villages and bring prestige to the village itself, from having an individual among them who has so much invested in them. While this amount of effort could be put into a human or a Matanji orc child, cultural inertia leaves the Witanji the main focus of this pride, as they're traditionally symbols of some of the most valuable political marriages that the Mwangi peoples have forged since the early days of their cultures.

Witanji half-orcs also often take on the roles of educators, advisors, healers, wizards, and other education-heavy positions that a Mwangi-born orc might not have had the opportunity to become skilled in. Thus, beyond the mere perception of Witanji individuals as status symbols, they often do genuinely bring more wealth and prosperity to a village.

The highly prestigious status of Witanji individuals means that many people aim to profit off their existence, either an orc parent seeking the status of a respected half-orc child, or a Mwangi human village hoping to increase its safety or prosperity, or perhaps someone aiming for some powerful influence over the Matanji demon hunters. It's not uncommon for Witanji to grow up very bitter about the commodified nature of their heritage, even though they're also cared for just as lovingly as any other family members—perhaps more lovingly, which also adds to the pressure and resentment. How they perceive their circumstances is often down to the individual, but Witanji do tend toward forming their own villages with people whom they feel will truly understand them.

There are a sizable number of Witanji born from Yamasans, and most half-orcs of this origin tend to not experience the complex social issues of others. They simply contribute to agriculture and usually remain with their parents on Matanji farms.

## FIENDISH ADDICTIONS

Certain types of demon blood can be highly addictive. Thanks to Matanji orcs' hardy constitutions, small doses of fiend blood have little effect on them (notably, they suffer no ill effects for using the Demonblood Frenzy feat on page 93). Yet, some Matanji hunters carry vials of fiend blood or chew on demon bones—while their companions usually look the other way.



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## MATANJI SPIRITS

Strong alcohol is a gift of some significance to Matanji orcs, as any situation that allows the willful dulling of the senses implies either trust or victory. One of the most popular spirits for this purpose is ogogoro, a potent drink made from palm sap. Matanji orcs first encountered this alcohol from Yamasan refugees, and as a result, the drink has become a symbol of extraordinary gratitude.

## FAITH

Many Matanji believe Kazutal, Mother Jaguar—or Majagua as they call her—aided in educating them about hunting and surviving early in their history in the Mwangi Expanse. No one knows this for sure, but the belief is so persistent that the vast majority of Matanji worship her faithfully, which is highly notable in light of Kazutal's influence being mainly contained to the continent of Arcadia. As many Matanji settlements lack decortive art that might be destroyed in an attack, they usually praise her while hunting, both for food or for demons, as they consider this to be something both important to their society and something that they love. They also utter the name of Majagua while preparing traps, before council meetings, and during anything that involves the day-to-day functions of their society. Matanji orcs believe that what anyone should love most above all else is the health of their society, and so worship of Kazutal has saturated most every aspect of their lives.

## CULTURE

Matanji culture is very blunt and to the point. A Matanji who lies is considered weak no matter how competent they actually are, and one who beats around the bush and won't simply say what they mean or what they're thinking is considered just as weak. Where other orcs are known for being very straightforward and diving headfirst into battle, Matanji apply that bluntness to functioning as a people. While marriages are often political, marriages for love involve outrageous displays of devotion and strength. Whoever initiates courtship usually does so by finding out what the object of their affection loves and then providing them with an excessive amount

of it, dropped right at their door. A crate of cold-iron ingots, an entire wagon of apples, whatever is the largest and most ostentatious display that the suitor is capable of delivering. Of course, these items are usually returned or put to some better use, but the tradition persists. Even temporarily stealing something large for a courtship ritual is considered sweet and kind, or even brave, more than something that's punished or frowned upon.

Matanji tend to speak very directly—they say what they feel and what they mean. When associating or courting outside of their society, it's common to learn as much as possible about that other culture, trying to embody a hybrid of those cultural ideals and the ideals of Matanji orcs. Sometimes this can lead to situations where an orc is entirely outside of their element, like trying to gracefully dance at a ball or learning to create works of art far outside the norm of any Matanji to learn. But Matanji usually put a lot of passion into learning to impress the person they're pursuing with a new skill, and no matter how good or bad they are at what they've learned, this effort often leaves an endearing impression on the person they're pursuing, as the attempt is quite earnest and sincere.

Demon hunting is an integral aspect of Matanji culture, and every capable Matanji orc is expected to engage in it in some way. They absolutely despise demons with the very core of their being, to the point that actually tearing a demon apart with their tusks and devouring demonic flesh is meant to be an insult on a demon's status as a predator. Only the most depraved and lost Matanji or Witanji individuals would ever actually bargain with a

demon or consider helping and trusting one without extraordinarily exceptional circumstances. Mwangi orcs and half-orcs wear *blessed tattoos*



(*World Guide* 92) to ward against demons, which continually evolve from birth until adulthood.

## RELATIONS

Matanji orcs maintain strong ties with whoever might be their neighbors, with the exception of Bekyars or anyone with strong ties to demons. They will initiate and engage in diplomacy or political marriages with most neighbors they show a fondness for. Matanji don't focus much on petty squabbles and what they consider to be minor cultural differences, so they're more than happy to spend time with and get to know neighboring societies. However, they tend to engage strangers with a strong wariness—one never knows when they might be dealing with demonic influence. They're rarely rude by their own standards, as Matanji are direct but seldom accuse someone of being or worshipping demons with no proof. They will, however, not get particularly close to anyone whom they can't figure out to an adequate degree.

Matanji orcs greatly respect the Ekujae elves (page 42), and they often retell the legends and rumors they've heard about Ekujae history, specifically their battle against a demonic dragon. As a result, many Matanji also avoid gold as a superstition; if Ekujae do so, there must be a good reason. The orcs don't spend much time with Ekujae, though most Matanji believe that if someone can engage in a successful political marriage with them, they'll be on the path to becoming one exceptionally more powerful demon-slaying society.

In a similar vein, Matanji hold a reserved respect for Alijae elves (page 32). The orcs understand the difficult task that Alijae have undertaken and admire the work the elves have put toward Nagisa's cleansing. However, the Alijae concept of using any and all knowledge and resources available gives Matanji pause. They fear that being willing to take up any weapon in the battle against demons could eventually lead to the acceptance of demonic bargains themselves, a strict line that Matanji dare not cross. For the moment, Matanji leave Alijae to their work and even aid them at times, but the demon hunters know that they must be ready to strike down any Alijae that dare consort with fiendish powers.

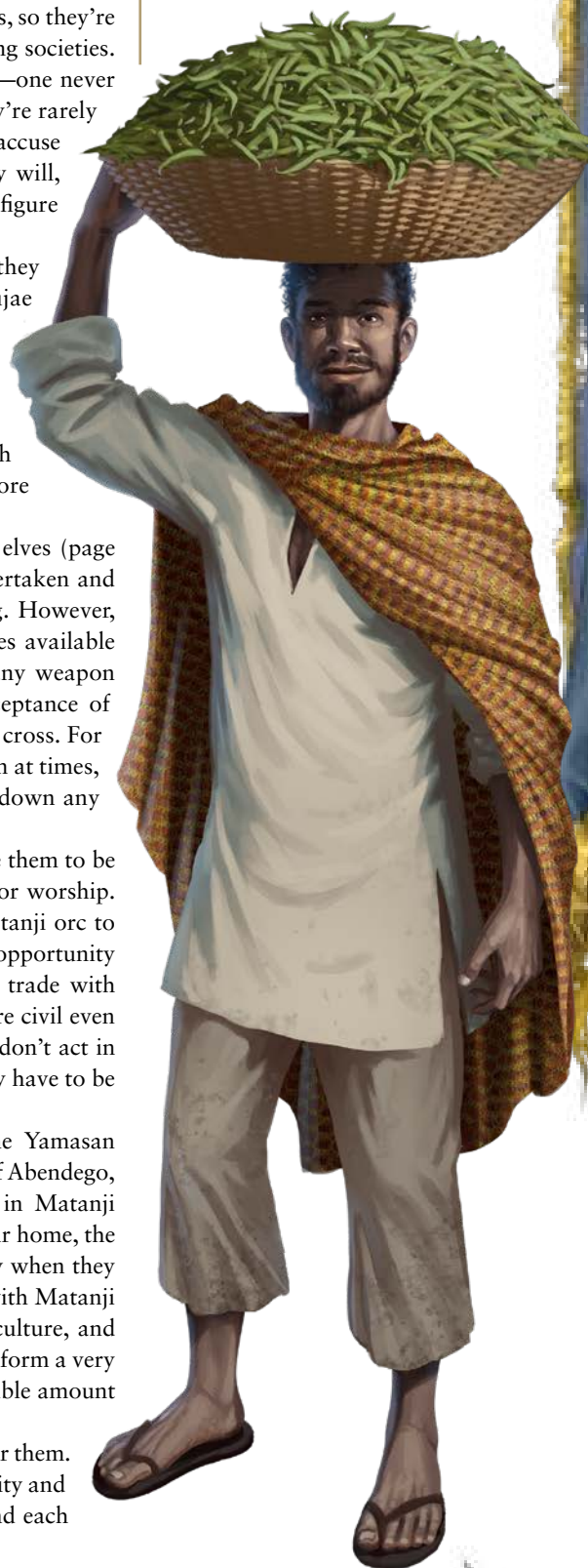
Matanji are actively hostile toward Bekyars, as the orcs believe them to be agents of whatever demonic forces the humans seem to respect or worship. Bekyars actively avoid the orcs, but it isn't unheard of for a Matanji orc to outright murder a Beykar person in the dark of night or when the opportunity presents itself. Diplomatically speaking, when Matanji have to trade with other nations and people who are affiliated with Bekyars, they are civil even if internally plotting a potential move for later. Matanji politics don't act in a self-destructive way, and the orcs know that there are times they have to be around their enemies for the sake of the larger picture.

Yamasans and Matanji orcs have a strong relationship. The Yamasan people may have a small population after the tragedy of the Eye of Abendego, but a sizable portion of those who remain find good homes in Matanji society. When they had no place to go after the destruction of their home, the Mwangi orcs welcomed and protected them, showing hospitality when they needed it the most. In exchange, Yamasans became farm hands with Matanji farmers, and eventually began to greatly improve Matanji agriculture, and thus the standard of living in their society overall. Yamasans now form a very important part of Matanji society and are treated with an incredible amount of respect.

As far as orcs from other continents go, Matanji rarely encounter them. When they do, there's usually an intense amount of mutual curiosity and cultural exchange, as orcs who are so wildly different tend to find each other absolutely fascinating.

## YAMASA

Formerly an agricultural nation on the Mwangi Expanse's west coast, Yamasa was destroyed by the Eye of Abendego. Yamasa's strong focus on agricultural advancement means that most evidence of its cities is long gone.



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## MATANJI SETTLEMENTS

Matanji orcs live in what can only be described as fortress settlements. Their land is located in between the Sodden Lands and Usaro, referred to by all of the Mwangi Expanse as the Nine Walls, as there are nine layers that function as a perimeter separating the central Matanji settlement from the rest of the Expanse. The Nine Walls are essentially a nation built as a fortress. Each settlement is the size of a large city and wraps around the perimeter of its respective layer, all of which are bound by hexagonal walls. This forms nesting rings around increasingly smaller settlements until reaching the more-open central settlement of Matakali. It takes 7 hours to get from the outer walls to the central city when riding, so most travelers take breaks in different cities during the journey. Each perimeter is made up of six walls, with strategically placed orc squads, magical traps, and wards placed in between and in front of those walls. Their agriculture, homes, schools, and everything to do with their society exists behind these hexagonal demon-warded city walls.

Some notable settlements include the wealthy political settlement of Matakali, the militaristic outer settlement of Ukuja, an agriculture settlement with a high population of Yamasans known as Yamonji, the live training grounds of Kutanju, and the half-orc settlement, Witanli.

## UKUJA

Ukuja is the first wall, and thus the first line of defense

for the entire nation. It's essentially a glorified city-sized fortress, full of young but seasoned orc and half-orc soldiers, with a few aging veterans to lead. The large, sprawling settlement is covered in watchtowers that look out over the outer wall for miles, alongside barracks, training grounds, and magical medical facilities to check every outsider who enters the Nine Walls. It's common to see battles from just outside the wall, usually Matanji fighting demon-devoted charau-ka. The inside often rings with the sound of exorcism, blade sharpening, and cleansing fire.

Since this is most visitors' first impression of the Nine Walls, the settlement can be intensely intimidating. Bekyars don't dare get within miles of it, as they're known to encounter flaming arrows "accidentally" shot at them. But for most people, no matter the frightening impression that this place might give, Ukuja is incredibly safe, and Matanji will lay down their lives to keep both their citizens and outsiders alike protected.

## KUTANJU

Kutanju is the second wall, right next to Ukuja. While it's a large settlement in its own right, it is largely supplemental to Ukuja. The primary purpose of Kutanju is to be both a prison and live training grounds. Soldiers are often sent to and from this place for training. Lesser demons are kept imprisoned here so they can be released and hunted by young Matanji who aren't yet ready for

real-world combat. These demons are always weak enough for a veteran to easily dispose of, and don't pose a threat to the Nine Walls at large.

Kutanju also imprisons more powerful demons, typically those who are too strong to simply destroy or those who, when destroyed, might somehow cause more damage than the Matanji forces can handle; the orcs thus keep them trapped while trying to find a safer means to dispose of them. Far more aging veterans reside in Kutanju than Ukuja, largely overseeing training and using the complex magic involved in keeping powerful demons imprisoned.

Most of the information, anti-demon magic, strategies, and tactics regarding demons derives from the research and tests performed in this settlement. This knowledge is kept in one of the outer layers to minimize the damage of potential breakouts, since Matanji consider it more important to keep residents and the council safe than to keep the demons imprisoned. Orcs lead outsiders through a securely warded road, with flaming arrows trained on them at all times. Only ranking officials are allowed to deviate from the Kutanju roads without special permission.

## MATAKALI

Matakali is the central city of the Nine Walls, the ninth and innermost settlement. It's actually the largest of them all and has a reputation as one of the safest places in the Mwangi. It serves as the hub of Matanji politics, wealthy residents, and high-ranking officials. All Matanji are allowed to visit Matakali, but outsiders require either invitation from a high-ranking individual or officially granted citizenship. Many orcs in this area are far different from the norm of orcs anywhere on Golarion—they have incredibly haughty attitudes, their own status hierarchy which is culturally enforced, and it's where one will find the most orcs who have never seen combat or even built a muscle. The most common attitude toward outsiders is to determine their viability for courtship.

War veterans who can no longer fight also live here in high numbers, instead serving on the council and making the most important decisions. These orcs tend to be highly unusual in appearance due to how much demonic power they've been exposed to in combat. Perhaps most surprisingly is the fact that they view the spoiled would-be aristocracy as a success, since it means that not every Mwangi orc has to be raised to lead a militaristic lifestyle, and can instead focus on increasing the resources and prestige of Matanji society in other ways.

## DEMON BANE MANOR

This is the social hub of Matakali, where one will find the largest variety of people in one place in the city. Council members are usually in meetings on the upper levels but also often wander around restlessly, or stop to intimidate outsiders with a line of aggressive questioning, a practice that they find rather hilarious. This is often where various levels of courtship happens, with orcs asking about one's background, status, finances, culture, and interests. They make no attempts to hide their interest in courtship, which many outsiders find awkward or uncomfortable on their first unprepared visit. Matanji orcs of all genders can often be found lounging around either in very little clothing or extremely flamboyant outfits of animal skin, perhaps even a fashionable demon skull hat. It's common to find veterans arguing or concerned with this or that political problem, and younger orc aristocrats bemoaning the lack of viable marriage material.

## WITANLI

Witanli is the only settlement in all of Matanji territory without a population of Matanji orcs, as it is populated

## DEMONCRAFTS

Even Matanji are wary about keeping the remains of demons anywhere near themselves, as some strong evils linger long after death. However, some Matanji crafters see this as a challenge, fighting the corruption of fiendish remains in the same manner as Matanji warriors fight living fiends. It's claimed that the supernatural screams of demon bones can be heard over the squall of the jungle near the Matanji walls, as artisans and weaponsmiths attempt to rend them into compliance.

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## MATANJI CHARACTERS

Matanji orcs are most likely to have the rainfall orc or hold-scarred orc heritages, with tattoos or demonic brands making up their “scars.” Rare

Matanji might have the grave orc heritage (*Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 50) due to a confrontation with a demon. Most Matanji take the Tusks feat so they can use the Demonblood Frenzy feat on page 93. Demonic brands can lead to some Matanji taking the Iron Fists and Bloody Blows feats. Feats representing Matanji fervor and dedication in battle are common, such as Orc Ferocity and Death’s Drums. Matanji tattoos can be represented with the Hold Mark feat or the *blessed tattoo* item (*World Guide* 92), and Matanji traditions to ward off demons might manifest as the Orc Superstition ancestry feat.

exclusively by half-orcs. Many Witanji find it easier to relate to and live with each other, but their full-orc relations feared them leaving the safety of the Nine Walls. At some point in history, the two groups formed a compromise, and Witanli was formed out of a largely academic settlement three walls from the nation’s center. Witanli is known for its scholarly research, with technology development and art movements usually coming from here. This is also where many of Mwangi’s half-orcs are sent for their education.

In Witanli, buildings tend to range from simple brick homes to large manors. It’s very uncommon for Witanji to live alone, and a large manor can have dozens of unrelated half-orcs living together; it’s unusual for there to be a home of fewer than five, even in a non-familial situation. There’s significantly less focus on demons and demon hunting in this settlement, but they still dedicate their time and research to it. Witanji are very welcoming of outsiders, as many grew up sheltered from the world at large and so possess a deep curiosity of what others have to offer and teach them. The more-traveled half-orcs will likely be a little more wary but still welcoming.

The paved road between the walls that leads to Witanli isn’t heavily defended, given how deep into the Nine Walls this settlement is. A few Witanji wizards typically keep guard and maintain wards just in case.

## RAINIKIN ACADEMY

Rainkin Academy is a sprawling campus that stretches for at least a mile, with multiple large manors that all specialize in a related umbrella of topics. It was formerly known as The Academy of Ruksaw the Decapitator, in his memory, but the name was changed when Witanli became an exclusively half-orc settlement. Some continue to fondly refer to the academy as Ruksaw, even generations later.

On this campus, Witanji practice magic, create art, hone their combat skills, and a number of other things. It’s rather common for there to be drama when Matanji parents show up, be it the lower-born orcs of the outer settlements or the status-focused aristocrats of the inner. The Mwangi’s half-orcs are under constant pressure to live up to heavy expectations—which is, in part, why so many live in their own settlement to escape it. But expectations, and regularly skirting those expectations, perpetually keeps Rainkin Academy full of social drama and interpersonal affairs both from inside and out.

## YAMONJI

Yamonji is a large settlement just outside of Matakali. Rather than a city, Yamonji is an incredibly large farm that serves the needs of each settlement of the Nine Walls. The residents are a mixture of Yamasans and Matanji. The settlement is littered with colorful bazaars, while actual homes are usually very simple log cabins with demon wards carved into them. Vast dirt paths give people easy passage between the walls, bazaars, and the log cabin homes. It’s common to see hundreds of inexperienced orc soldiers working the farms with Yamasan farmers. The bazaars typically hold a large variety of goods, from simple butchered meat to magical herbal mixtures used in demon exorcisms. It’s not uncommon to find actual demon parts in the bazaar, as Matanji farmers typically buy them from soldiers for research into magical herbal remedies. Occasionally, a large caravan will enter or leave Yamonji, moving to supply the rest of the Nine Walls and to trade with the rest of Mwangi.



## MORKLAU HORNBREAKER

LG | MALE | ORC | SORCERER 15

Morklau Hornbreaker was born in the Matanji aristocracy, raised spoiled and cared for in the inner settlements. He was formerly known as Morklau Rainmaker, because of just how many rainkin he fathered at a young age. But things changed for him when he finally decided he wanted to see the real world, unsheltered. He took a caravan to go beyond the walls and witness just what life outside had to offer. It was a good time for a while, as he made many friends in different nations, tried different food, and opened his eyes to an unfiltered world. Yet something awakened in his blood, a demonic power known to awaken in many Matanji orcs—sorcerous abilities are very common in the offspring of Mwangi orc warriors. Young orcs' exposure to fiendish forces often ends up awakening strange powers among the youths in various ways. For Morklau, that way was in the form of sinister and troubling magical abilities.

Morklau was far from home, so he began to train with various cultures, wandering on his own to learn more about himself and these powers. He fought numerous demons along the way, as they were attracted to his demonic blood. Through this he gained demon-slaying experience, and he eventually made his way back to the Nine Walls. There, he encountered an ongoing battle as a vicious horde of demons tried to break through the outermost wall. Morklau joined and fought fiercely in a way that most Matanji would never expect of a pampered aristocrat. When he grabbed the horns of a nabasu demon and snapped them in half with his bare hands, it marked the end of the battle, and he was known as Morklau Hornbreaker from then on.

Morklau became one of the only Matanji to willingly leave the aristocratic lifestyle and join the ranks of the warriors, continuing to use and hone his magical powers and naturally gifted strength to slay and capture demons. He used his aristocratic status to make the voices of soldiers heard among those who would normally take them for granted. Morklau is an incredibly popular figure among the Mwangi orcs, and aristocratic youth love to go on similar long journeys and come back with the perception that they, too, have changed, even though their experience tends to be far more like a vacation than a journey of self-discovery. The perception of being like Morklau is what truly matters among the aristocracy.

In total, Morklau has fathered 67 children and counting, both half-orc and orc. A few of these have reached adulthood, but Morklau is still quite young himself and is continuing to build a legacy. He aspires to join the council one day, and to bring Matanji orc and half-orc cultures closer together. Morklau gets along with the Witanji more than many orcs do, primarily because he relates to being from two very different worlds.

As a demon-slaying veteran, he's usually driven from one goal to the next, showing no signs of slowing down. He even teaches others with similar powers to control their demonic sorcerer abilities, both native Matanji and foreigners, though anyone who comes to him is warned by others that he won't take it easy on them. Such students are put through rigorous testing, pushed to the very limits of their abilities, and experience pain and live demon combat beyond anything their imaginations could possibly prepare them for. But until his students have snapped the horns of a demon in half with their bare hands, they'll always be considered novices in his eyes.

## PRODIGIOUS PROGENY

Though Morklau needs little help in the matter, part of the reason he has so many children is due to a truly unusual number of twins and triplets among his offspring. Whether these siblings stick together or try to distance themselves depends wildly, but almost all of them are considered trouble by those who meet them.



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# ANADI (RARE)

*Anadi people are reclusive, sapient spiders who hail from the jungles of southern Garund. Though they act in many ways like natural-born shapeshifters, their twin forms actually stem from carefully developed magic.*



As a communal and peaceful people, anadi ancestors endeavored to establish trade with the neighbors of their homeland. However, these anadi soon learned that most others found their appearance to be extremely objectionable. Wishing to avoid conflict, ancient anadi retreated into isolation until they could find a solution. The answer came when their greatest scholars innovated a fusion of transmutation and illusion magic that allowed them to assume a humanoid form. The technique was developed, perfected, and eventually taught to the overwhelming majority of anadi.

Early efforts with their new approach to diplomacy have yielded much better results, though sporadic contact means that some outsiders whisper false legends about anadi, such as claims that they are humans who transform into monstrous spiders at moonrise. Even contemporary explorers have reported anadi as human-spider hybrids. The anadi people of the current day strive to slowly but surely create a world where they no longer need to hide their true nature.

## YOU MIGHT...

- Only reveal your true form to people who have earned your trust.
- Openly express sympathy for misrepresented and unfairly stigmatized cultures.
- Provide for those you hold dear and defend them from danger without hesitation.

## OTHERS PROBABLY...

- Appreciate your willingness to seek nonviolent solutions to complicated problems.
- Have a strong reaction to seeing your natural form.
- Assume you have an affinity for druidic magic, given your ability to transform.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Anadi in their true form resemble human-sized spiders with a variety of colorations. Some tones look simple or muted while other remain striking and vibrant, with most patterns inherited from an anadi's parentage. A typical anadi measures five feet in length from their front legs to their rear legs when standing comfortably.

All anadi possesses the ability to transform into a human guise. This form can resemble any human ethnicity, but it's usually one that blends in with the region of an anadi's hatching. Anadi reach physical maturity after 13 years, going through multiple phases of molting along the way. A typical anadi lives to be about 80 years old.

## SOCIETY

Anadi live in a communal society, sharing peaceful lives farming mushrooms or weaving warm blankets. Their culture places great value on cooperation and mutual respect. Due to this cultural upbringing, anadi often have issues facing severe conflict and often come off to other ancestries as very shy. Their history of dealing with arachnophobia in other peoples—which anadi understand is often instinctual and very difficult to control—likewise means that anadi do their best to be accommodating and comforting, even in situations that aren't necessarily fair to them.

## ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

The cooperative nature of anadi society and their dislike of violence means many anadi lean toward good alignments. They're more often neutral than chaotic or lawful, though the latter aren't unheard of.



Legends say Grandmother Spider rescued anadi people from servitude and brought them to Golarion, becoming their patron deity in the process. Her values of mutual care and playful trickery interweave into anadi culture, and even those who don't worship her tell tales of her adventures.

## NAMES

Anadi names are given by the members of the web marriage that raised them. Each parent contributes a single syllable, usually the first, from their own name. Older anadi who feel their identity has settled often take on or are given a phrase-title to honor them as well. Anadi who live among human populations rarely take a cover name, but some might adopt one if their given name strongly contrasts the norm in the local culture.

## SAMPLE NAMES

Altava, Anavachti, Strings-On-The-River Inkeelah, Kerialnamu, Maracha, Leaves-Shelter-Her-Foot Naiala, Orvasa, Reloana, Rivuken, Velachamon

## ANADI HERITAGES

Anadi are well-suited to survive in the wild, having developed diverse heritages even before the widespread use of transformation magic. Choose one of the following anadi heritages at 1st level.

### ADAPTIVE ANADI

You descend from a line of anadi who worked to perfect their transformation magic, allowing them to integrate into a wider variety of cultures. Choose a common, Medium humanoid ancestry. Your human form is replaced with a form that matches this choice. You also gain the Adopted Ancestry feat for your chosen humanoid ancestry.

### POLYCHROMATIC ANADI

Your body is covered with exceptionally colorful hairs that create vibrant, eye-catching patterns, some of which might even show in your human form. You become trained in Performance (or another skill if you were already trained in Performance), and you gain the Impressive Performance feat.

### SNARING ANADI

You were hatched with hooked fangs that give you an edge when hunting in your true form. Your fangs attack gains the grapple and trip traits.

### SPINDLY ANADI

Your limbs are exceptionally long in both forms, allowing you to skitter about with surprising agility. Your Speed increases from 25 to 30 feet.

### VENOMOUS ANADI

Your natural form's fangs are capable of injecting foes with venom. You gain the Anadi Venom ability.

### ANADI VENOM ◆

**Frequency** a number of times per day equal to your level

You envenom your fangs. If the next fangs Strike you make before the end of your turn hits and deals damage, the Strike deals an additional 1d6 poison damage. On a critical failure, the poison is wasted as normal. At 12th level, this poison damage increases to 2d6.

## ANCESTRY FEATS

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th levels). As an anadi, you select from among the following ancestry feats.

## HIT POINTS

8

## SIZE

Medium

## SPEED

25 feet

## ABILITY BOOSTS

Dexterity

Wisdom

Free

## ABILITY FLAW

Constitution

## LANGUAGES

Anadi

Mwangi

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if positive). Choose from Draconic, Elven, Gnoll, Iruxi, Orcish, Sylvan, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region).

## TRAITS

Anadi

Humanoid

## CHANGE SHAPE ◆

(anadi, arcane, concentrate, polymorph, transmutation)

You change into your human or spider shape. Each shape has a specific, persistent appearance. In your human shape, you can't use unarmed attacks granted by your ancestry. In your spider shape, you aren't flat-footed when climbing, but you can't use weapons, shields, or other held items of any sort nor can you take any action that has the manipulate trait.

## FANGS

You were born with a natural means for hunting and self-defense. You gain a fangs unarmed attack that deals 1d6 piercing damage. Your fangs are in the brawling group and have the finesse and unarmed traits.

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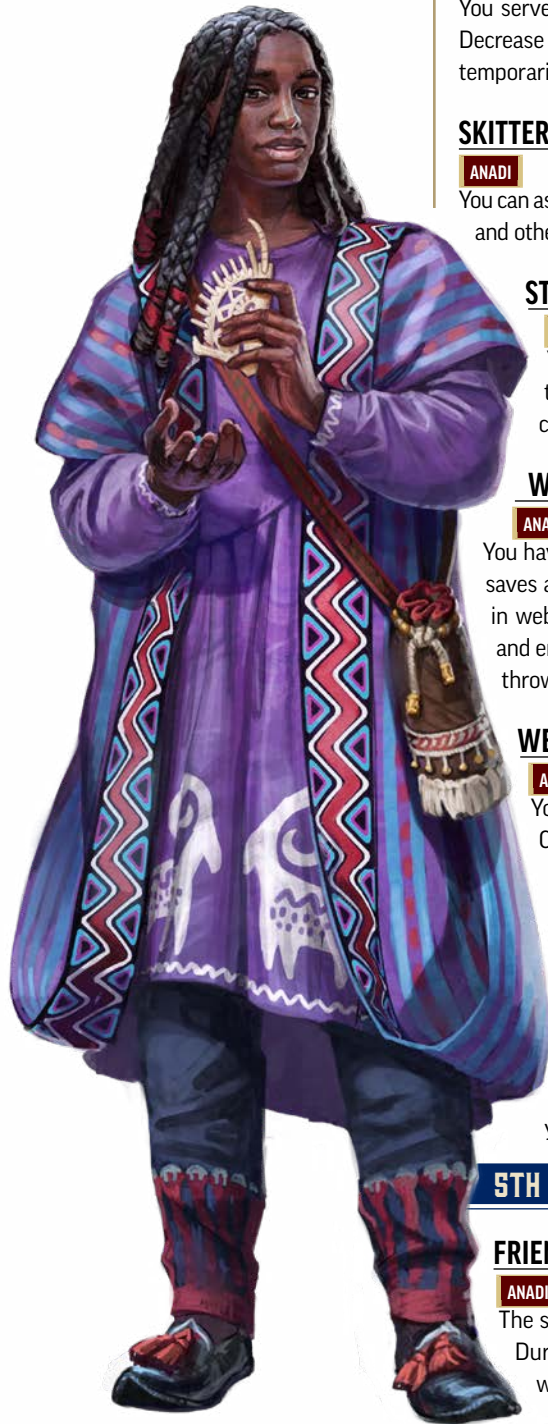
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## ANADI ADVENTURERS

Anadi who answer the call to adventure often do so to learn more about the world at large. Common anadi backgrounds include artisan, emissary, herbalist, hunter, and scholar. Anadi adventurers who want to support their communities often become clerics or druids. Rogue remains a popular choice among those who seek to hide their true form. Anadi who wish to continue their magical traditions tend to become wizards or sorcerers.



## 1ST LEVEL

### ANADI LORE

FEAT 1

#### ANADI

You've learned how to provide for your community, be it through hard-earned sustenance or useful crafts. You gain the trained proficiency rank in Crafting and Survival. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills (from your background or class, for example), you become trained in a skill of your choice. You also become trained in Anadi Lore.

### REASSURING PRESENCE

FEAT 1

#### ANADI AUDITORY VISUAL

**Trigger** An ally within 30 feet gains the frightened condition.

You serve as an anchor to your close companions, calming them in times of stress. Decrease the value of the triggering ally's frightened condition by 1. The ally is then temporarily immune to your Reassuring Presence for 1 hour.

### SKITTERTALK

FEAT 1

#### ANADI

You can ask questions of, receive answers from, and use the Diplomacy skill with spiders and other arachnids. The GM determines which creatures count for this ability.

### STUDIOUS MAGIC

FEAT 1

#### ANADI

You've taken an interest in anadi arcane traditions. Choose one cantrip from the arcane spell list. You can cast this spell as an arcane innate spell at will. A cantrip is heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up.

### WEB WALKER

FEAT 1

#### ANADI

You have plenty of practice navigating webs. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saves and AC against the *web* spell, natural webbing, and effects that entrap you in webbing, as well as a +1 circumstance bonus against other effects that snare and entangle you, like the *entangle* spell. Whenever you roll a success on a saving throw against an effect involving a web, you get a critical success instead.

### WEB WEAVER

FEAT 1

#### ANADI

You can produce a soft silk to weave into useful items. You gain the Specialty Crafting feat with a specialty in weaving. You can use your webbing to Craft simple, nonconsumable threaded items, such as clothing and rope, at zero cost as long as their base Price is 1 sp or less. These items have no resale value, and they naturally degrade after 24 hours without regular (if minor) maintenance. You can maintain up to 10 such items at a time; if you create a new one, your oldest creation breaks down from neglect. These temporary items take you only 1 day to Craft instead of 4. If you're an expert in Crafting, you can Craft these items in 1 hour; if you're a master, you can Craft them in 10 minutes; if you're legendary, you can Craft them in 1 minute.

## 5TH LEVEL

### FRIENDFORM

FEAT 5

#### ANADI

The shared bond between you and your allies allows you to act on their behalf. During your daily preparations, you can perform a simple ritual with up to five willing Small or Medium humanoids, where participants exchange minor tokens of personal significance. As long as you hold onto a participant's

token, you can assume their form with your Change Shape ability, gaining a +4 status bonus to Deception checks to pass as that person and adding your level to the check even if you're untrained. You lose access to a participant's form if they're not carrying your token or if you use the ritual again.

### HUNTER'S FANGS

FEAT 5

ANADI

Your fangs are exceptionally painful. Whenever you score a critical hit with your fangs unarmed attack, you apply the unarmed attack's critical specialization effect.

### HYBRID SHAPE

FEAT 5

ANADI

Mastery of your shapeshifting lets you combine the best features of your humanoid and spider forms. When using your Change Shape ability, you can assume a bipedal hybrid shape. This form gains all the benefits of your spider shape as well as the ability to use items and take manipulate actions just as easily as your human shape.

## 9TH LEVEL

### DISORIENTING VENOM

FEAT 9

ANADI

**Prerequisites** Venomous Anadi

The venom injected by your fangs disorients your foes. A creature damaged by your anadi venom must attempt a Fortitude save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher, or become flat-footed for 1 round.

### STRAND STRIDER

FEAT 9

ANADI

Your eight legs serve you well when climbing walls and webs alike. You gain a climb speed of 25 feet in your spider shape.

### STUDIOUS ADEPT

FEAT 9

ANADI

**Prerequisites** Studious Magic

You achieve a breakthrough in your exploration of magic. You gain *humanoid form* and *mirror image* as 2nd-level arcane innate spells.

You can cast each of these arcane innate spells once per day.

### WEB HUNTER

FEAT 9

ANADI

Through the careful cultivation of highly sensitive hairs, you've developed the ability to sense creatures without seeing them. You gain imprecise tremorsense at a range of 15 feet. When you and a creature are both touching the same anchored, threadlike object (such as a rope, webbing, or wire), your imprecise tremorsense can sense that creature at a range of 60 feet.

## 13TH LEVEL

### WEBSLINGER ◆◆◆

FEAT 13

ANADI

**Frequency** once per 10 minutes

Your natural ability to create silken webs blends with your magical powers, allowing you to create impossibly large webs with great frequency. This has the effects of a 2nd-level *web* spell using your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher.

## ANADI ENCLAVES

Mostly found in their home nation of Nurvatcha, anadi settlements are traditionally built with techniques developed before the discovery of transformation magic. As a result, these cities have often been built upon cliffsides or in dense jungles that can support anadi webs. In the capital city of Domithari, a council of elected officials congregate around the Empty Throne, an honorary seat reserved for Grandmother Spider, though no one expects her to assume the mantle of monarch. In the city of Majabi, the finest scholars among the anadi people make homes above and below the surface. Majabi also houses the First Weave, a tapestry of arcane infused webbing that documents the earliest anadi transformation spells.

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# CONRASU (RARE)

*Conrasus are shards of cosmic force given consciousness who construct intricate exoskeletons to interface with the mortal world. Both an integral part of the underlying processes of the universe and strangely set apart, conrasus look to aeons to understand their existence.*



Conrasus aren't entirely clear on their own origins. Some historians think them a failed experiment of a wizardly cabal—possibly a splinter of artificers from the ancient Jitska Imperium—who desperately hoped to bind a pleroma to bolster their army but who accidentally conjured shattered scraps of the aeon instead. Others believe conrasus were built by their ancestors using an accelerated, iterative evolution process as natural as one designed by those who build portions of their own bodies could ever hope to achieve. Most likely, it is a mix of the two.

## YOU MIGHT...

- Do your best to determine and act upon the will of your guiding aeon.
- Use rituals and repetitive actions as a means to meditate and reflect on your purpose.
- Have difficulty applying your cosmic instincts and senses to a physical existence.

## OTHERS PROBABLY...

- View you as part of a hivemind at best or lacking in free will at worst.
- Have trouble understanding your perspective or attempts at communication.
- Look to you as the expert on any matters involving aeons or related beings.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The true form of a conrasu is an abstract chunk of spiritual essence. While their being exists beyond the truth of humanoid senses, to the mortal eye, their body usually resembles a globe of light, darkness, or space. Floating, internal pinpricks of illumination sit inside the ball, slightly obscured as if peeking through a gelatinous substance. These “cores” surround themselves with bodies made out of still-living wood, creating the form that most people recognize as a conrasu. Conrasus themselves are called to a path and, once they find it, shape frames to create a suitable form, leading to a wide variety of appearances.

As a conrasu ages, the supple green wood of their body hardens, causing their limbs to lose mobility. Conrasus must constantly grow new arms and roots for their living exoskeleton, leaving their frozen limbs as immobile effigies along their shell.

Conrasus can't maintain their integrity without their wooden exoskeletons. A conrasu that loses its exoskeleton dissipates and dies, though they can be returned to life with magic like other beings.

## SOCIETY

There are three distinct types of conrasus. Maintainers tend and care for others, believing they must cultivate a proper balance between various forces. Shapers build and direct those around them, and feel that balance is maintained by those who strive to preserve the world's equilibrium. Lastly, correctors fix problems of all sorts, often acting as stalwart bastions of law who



perceive the world in absolutes, with few to no shades of gray. True balance can be achieved only in cases where pressure and force have been applied to make necessary changes.

On rare occasions, a conrasu may hear and heed the call of another form of extraplanar being. One might serve a psychopomp, another an archon, and yet another might become a witch and adopt an unknown figure as a patron.

### ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

Many conrasus consider themselves bound to a specific aeon, following them like a deity and doing what they believe to be the aeon's bidding. As a result, almost all conrasus are lawful neutral in alignment.

### NAMES

Conrasus have little in the way of consciousness as others understand it before they self-actualize and leave the nursery-towns where they sprouted. That includes a name, a concept of gender, and even the passage of time beyond their little bubbles—these are picked up in the wider world. As a result, a conrasu might have nearly any appellation.

### SAMPLE NAMES

Automa, Azubu, Dumi, Emeka, Ganizadi, Locu, Incanes, Radi, Shell, Weave

### CONRASU HERITAGES

As a conrasu grows, they take part in a rite that changes and enhances their form. Each rite has different benefits, which manifest as specific heritages. Choose one of the following conrasu heritages at 1st level.

#### RITE OF KNOWING

You enhanced your exoskeleton with a connection to Axis, allowing you to tap into the infinite knowledge of the plane. You gain the Call to Axis action.

#### CALL TO AXIS

##### FORTUNE

**Frequency** once per day

**Trigger** You are about to attempt a check to Recall Knowledge.

You call upon the knowledge of Axis to ensure the accuracy of your information. You roll a second time and use the higher result. If you roll a critical failure, you get a failure instead. If you roll a success, you get a critical success instead.

#### RITE OF LIGHT

Your exoskeleton bears small shoots that can share life. When using your Sunlight Healing, you can restore the Hit Points of an adjacent ally instead of yourself. That ally becomes temporarily immune to all uses of Sunlight Healing for 1 day.

#### RITE OF PASSAGE

Your exoskeleton remains connected with the plants that created it. You can ignore difficult terrain and uneven ground caused by undergrowth. In addition, when you use the Acrobatics skill to Balance on narrow surfaces or uneven ground within forests, you aren't flat-footed. When you roll a success attempting one of these Acrobatics checks, you get a critical success instead.

#### RITE OF REINFORCEMENT

Your woven exoskeleton rivals the hardest armors that can be found. Your exoskeleton is medium armor in the plate armor group that grants a +4 item bonus to AC, a Dex cap of +1, a check penalty of -2, a speed penalty of -5 feet, and a Strength value of 16, and has the comfort trait. You can never wear other armor or remove your exoskeleton. You can etch armor runes onto your exoskeleton as normal.

### HIT POINTS

10

### SIZE

Medium

### SPEED

25 feet

### ABILITY BOOSTS

Constitution

Wisdom

Free

### ABILITY FLAW

Charisma

### LANGUAGES

Mwangi

Rasu

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if it is positive). Choose from Celestial, Elven, Iruxi, Sylvan, Terran, Utopian, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent to your region).

### TRAITS

Aeon

Conrasu

Plant

### SUNLIGHT HEALING

A conrasu can enter a meditative, healing state as a 10-minute activity when exposed to direct sunlight, in which case they recover 1d8 Hit Points. At 3rd level, and every 2 levels thereafter, this healing increases by 1d8. Once a conrasu has recovered Hit Points in this way, they are temporarily immune to further uses of Sunlight Healing for 1 day.

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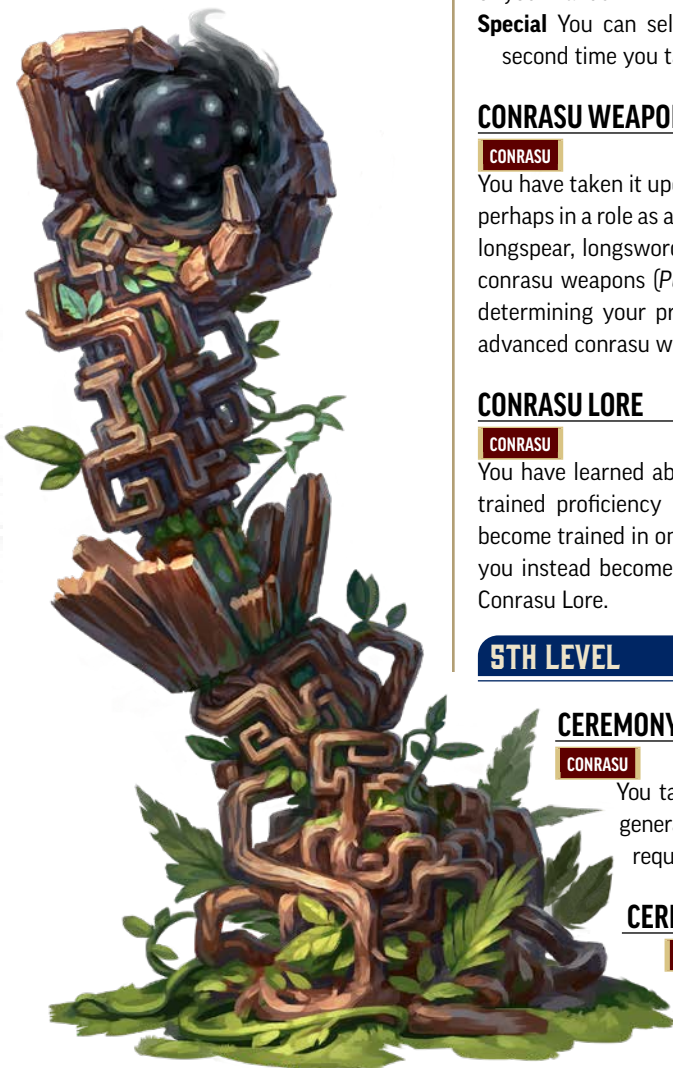
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## CONRASU ADVENTURERS

Maintainers who become adventurers are often wizards, bards, or clerics who offer their magic and knowledge to the group and subtly nudge the party as needed. Correctors tend to become champions, clerics, and fighters, forming heavy and hard living wood armor around themselves to keep them safe from harm. The rare shaper might travel with a group as a druid or even a bard, usually to accomplish a goal they believe lies outside of the enclaves.

No matter the path a conrasu finds themselves on, they tend to come from similar backgrounds. Field medic and herbalist tend to fit those who find themselves comfortable in their homes and with those of their nursery while conrasus of nomad or emissary backgrounds tend to enjoy roaming from place to place.



## RITE OF INVOCATION

You augmented your exoskeleton with magic. You gain one cantrip from the arcane or occult spell list. You can cast this spell as an innate spell at will. A cantrip is heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up.

## ANCESTRY FEATS

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th levels). As a conrasu, you select from among the following ancestry feats.

### 1ST LEVEL

#### CEREMONY OF PROTECTION

FEAT 1

CONRASU MANIPULATE

You manipulate your exoskeleton to overlap itself. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

#### CEREMONY OF THE EVENED HAND

FEAT 1

CONRASU

You have cultivated your exoskeleton's form for close combat, using knots, whorls, and reinforced branches. When you select this feat, you gain a claws unarmed attack that deals 1d4 slashing damage and has the agile and finesse traits or a branch unarmed attack that deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage and has the backswing trait. Each of these unarmed attacks is in the brawling weapon group and uses one of your hands.

**Special** You can select this feat twice, choosing the other unarmed attack the second time you take it.

#### CONRASU WEAPON FAMILIARITY

FEAT 1

CONRASU

You have taken it upon yourself to learn the ways of combat to aid with your tasks, perhaps in a role as a corrector. You are trained with the composite shortbow, glaive, longspear, longsword, shortbow, and spear. You also gain access to all uncommon conrasu weapons (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 138). For the purpose of determining your proficiency, martial conrasu weapons are simple weapons and advanced conrasu weapons are martial weapons.

#### CONRASU LORE

FEAT 1

CONRASU

You have learned about your history and your people from shapers. You gain the trained proficiency rank in Crafting and Occultism. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills (from your background or class, for example), you instead become trained in a skill of your choice. You also become trained in Conrasu Lore.

### 5TH LEVEL

#### CEREMONY OF KNOWLEDGE

FEAT 5

CONRASU

You tap into aeon knowledge. You gain the Untrained Improvisation general feat. In addition, you can attempt skill actions that normally require you to be trained, even if you are untrained.

#### CEREMONY OF SUNLIGHT

FEAT 5

CONRASU

You have learned how to master the power contained within sunlight, just like the trees that form your body. Your Sunlight Healing recovers 1d8 Hit Points per level.

## CONRASU WEAPON UNDERSTANDING

FEAT 5

### CONRASU

You have come to know conrasu weapons as you know yourself. Whenever you critically hit using a composite shortbow, glaive, longspear, longsword, shortbow, spear, or a conrasu weapon, you apply the weapon's critical specialization effect.

## 9TH LEVEL

### CEREMONY OF AEON'S GUIDANCE

FEAT 9

### CONRASU

Your patron aeon has allowed you to call upon their gifts to serve their ends. You can cast *augury* and *calm emotions* each once per day as 2nd-level divine innate spells.

### CEREMONY OF AEON'S SHIELD

FEAT 9

### CONRASU

Your patron aeon graced you with powers of protection. You can cast *resist energy* and *shield other* each once per day as 2nd-level divine innate spells.

### CEREMONY OF FORTIFICATION

FEAT 9

### CONRASU

**Prerequisites** Ceremony of Protection

Your exoskeleton arranges itself into an optimal defensive shape. When you use your Ceremony of Protection, you also gain resistance to either bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage equal to half your level against the next Strike that hits you and deals one of those types of damage until the start of your next turn.

### CEREMONY OF THE STRENGTHENED HAND

FEAT 9

### CONRASU

**Prerequisites** Ceremony of the Evened Hand

Your exoskeleton's weapons are even more potent. If you have a claws unarmed attack, it gains the deadly d8 trait. If you have a branch unarmed attack, it gains the shove and trip traits.

## 13TH LEVEL

### CONRASU WEAPON EXPERTISE

FEAT 13

### CONRASU

Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in certain weapons, you also gain that proficiency for composite shortbow, glaive, longspear, longsword, shortbow, spear, and all conrasu weapons in which you are trained.

### CEREMONY OF GROWTH

FEAT 13

### CONRASU

You can alter your exoskeleton's size. You constantly gain the effects of *enlarge*. You can dismiss or resume these effects as an action, which has the concentrate trait.

## 17TH LEVEL

### CEREMONY OF SUN'S GIFT

FEAT 17

### CONRASU

Your connection to the sun has become an unbreakable bond. You don't become temporarily immune to the effects of your Sunlight Healing, and instead of rolling to recover Hit Points, you gain the maximum number of HP possible (for example, 64 HP instead of 8d8).

## CONRASU ENCLAVES

The Creche is an enclave comprised primarily of shapers who tend an expansive nursery of the strange trees, each sprouted from severed conrasu limbs, that eventually become the conrasus and their exoskeletons. Located in the dense and largely unmapped jungles of the northeastern Mwangi Expanse, this enclave is the first place most conrasus know and where they begin their journeys as the hands of aeons. If any one place serves as the heart and soul of conrasu civilization, the Creche is it.

The Copses is another enclave between the Creche and Lake Ocota where shapers tend to trees that are used to reinforce the exoskeletons of young conrasus as they set out into the world. Conrasus traditionally stop here to take some time to learn as they craft their new selves.

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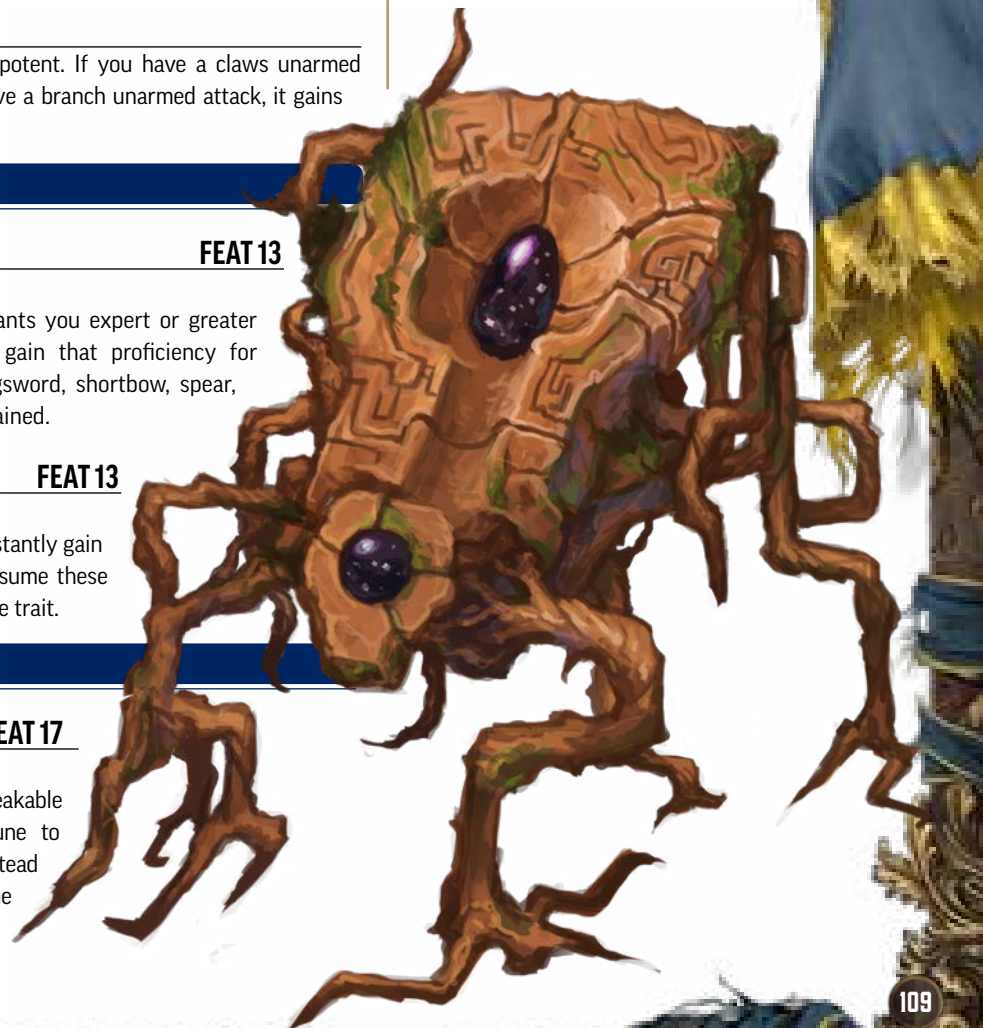
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# GNOLL (UNCOMMON)

*Powerfully-built humanoids that resemble hyenas, gnolls are cunning warriors and hunters. Their frightening visage and efficient tactics have given them an ill-starred reputation.*



In lands to the east, such as Katapesh, gnolls have earned themselves well-deserved reputations as brutal slavers and demon-worshippers. Even in the Mwangi Expanse, many outsiders believe that gnolls are witches, cannibals, and worse. The truth is more complex.

Mwangi gnolls, known to themselves as “kholo,” are eminently practical and pragmatic hunters and

raiders. To gnolls, honor is just another word for pointless risk. Any loss of a gnoll affects not just the individual, but their packmates and kin as well. Wasting time on anything but victory, whether it’s mercy or cruelty, is seen as little shy of immoral. Gnolls see effectiveness as a cardinal virtue and believe that the best fight is one that never gives the opponent a chance to strike back. Mwangi gnolls are masters of ambushes, tactical feints, and psychological warfare—none of which endears them to their neighbors.

Equally misunderstood is the gnoll practice of ancestor worship and endocannibalism. Gnolls consume their dead as a sign of reverence, holding a grand feast and transforming the bones of the fallen into art or weapons. Gnolls extend this honor to respected foes, hoping to bring their enemy’s cunning or strength into the clan. While it’s a sign of admiration, not everyone sees it that way.

## **You Might...**

- Always try to work smarter, not harder.
- Be very physically demonstrative—often hugging, punching, or licking your friends.
- Keep a bone from a favorite relative to ask for advice.

## **Others Probably...**

- Are intimidated by your size, teeth, and eerie laugh.
- Assume that you are dishonorable or worse.
- Respect the brutal efficiency of your hunting style.

## **Physical Description**

Gnolls are large, hyena-like humanoids with short muzzles, sharp teeth, and large and expressive round ears. Their bodies are covered in shaggy fur, rougher on the back and softer and lighter on the stomach and throat, usually in an off-white, tan, or brown shade—spots and stripes are both common. Gnolls typically stand between six and seven feet tall. Women are usually about a head taller than men, and correspondingly stronger. Gnolls are considered adults at fifteen, and live about 60 years on average, though some can reach a hundred or more in good health.

## **Society**

Kholo generally live in clans of 10 to 20 interrelated family groups, containing between 100 to 200 gnolls. They are ruled by a council of female gnolls, typically selected from the oldest members of each family. This council of elders selects one of their number as a Chief Elder, who is essentially the first among equals and sets the agenda. The council



is advised by the clan's bonekeeper and storyteller, as well as one or more younger gnolls who lead hunting and raiding packs.

Bonekeepers focus on tending to the wishes of gnoll ancestors and gods—they take their name from the ancestral bones that festoon their clothing and homes. Storytellers serve as teachers and sages, and are expected to have an encyclopedic knowledge of clan history, regional lore, and anything else relevant to the clan. They usually speak several languages.

Kholo women typically work as hunters, warriors, and leaders, while men become artisans, caretakers, and gatherers. However, adherence to gender roles varies from clan to clan. Members of either gender can become bonekeepers or storytellers, and these positions often routes to authority for male gnolls.

### ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

Mwangi gnolls have an unsentimental, matter-of-fact approach to life, and prioritize results over methods. They are usually loyal and generous to their people and ruthless toward outsiders—gnolls are typically chaotic neutral but can skew good or evil depending on who they view as “their people.”

Gnolls appeal to their ancestors on a day-to-day basis, invoking their kin to bless cubs, ward off disease, or grant luck on hunts. Gnolls call upon the gods on special occasions or in times of great crisis. Most kholo give homage to Calistria and Shelyn as the Elder and Younger Sisters, twin goddesses of power and beauty. Nethys, the Brother, is the patron of bonekeepers, and Lamashtu, while a popular deity in other gnoll societies, is propitiated as the Old Mother, a goddess called upon only as a very last resort, and otherwise begged to stay away.

### NAMES

Newborn kholo are given a root name, typically that of a bone, plant, or animal (though never Hyena, as this is considered narcissistic and arrogant). As a gnoll reaches certain milestones in life, they add descriptors to their name. Root names are often passed down through families, while descriptors are chosen to fit the gnoll's personality, usually in raucous ceremonies.

### SAMPLE NAMES

Baobab, Jackal, Onyx Elephant in Shadows, Red Thorn, Unbent Iron Reed, White Acacia, Wistful Tooth, Woodpecker

### GNOLL HERITAGES

Gnoll physiology can vary greatly across the vast swaths of the Mwangi Expanse. Choose one of the following gnoll heritages at 1st level.

#### ANT GNOLL

You're a sharp-featured, big-eared gnoll about three feet tall. Many are skeptical that you are in fact a gnoll. Your size is Small instead of Medium. You are trained in Deception (or another skill if you were already trained in Deception). You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Deception checks to Lie when specifically claiming innocence, to Deception DCs against Sense Motive checks to uncover such lies, and to initiative checks when you roll Deception for initiative.

#### GREAT GNOLL

You're a large, powerful gnoll, with tawny fur and brown spots on your hide. You gain 10 Hit Points from your ancestry instead of 8 and gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Athletics checks to Shove or Trip foes.

#### SWEETBREATH GNOLL

You're a striped, pale-furred gnoll with oddly pleasant breath, which you can use to entrance your prey. You are trained in Diplomacy (or another skill if you were already trained in Diplomacy). You also gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks to Make an Impression if the target can smell your breath.

### HIT POINTS

8

### SIZE

Medium

### SPEED

25 feet

### ABILITY BOOSTS

Strength  
Intelligence  
Free

### ABILITY FLAW

Wisdom

### LANGUAGES

Common  
Gnoll  
Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if it's positive). Choose from Draconic, Elven, Iruxi, Necril, Orcish, Sylvan, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region).

### TRAITS

Gnoll  
Humanoid

### BITE

Your sharp teeth and powerful jaws are fearsome weapons. You have a jaws unarmed attack that deals 1d6 piercing damage. Your jaws are in the brawling group.

### LOW-LIGHT VISION

You can see in dim light as though it were bright light, and you ignore the concealed condition due to dim light.

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## GNOLL ADVENTURERS

Some gnolls leave their clans to work as mercenaries and adventurers, learning new skills, earning wealth, and gaining allies that will one day benefit their people. Other adventuring gnolls are without clans, left orphaned by some disaster or exiled, fairly or not, for some crime. All gnolls are strongly pack-minded and tend to adopt their friends as honorary gnolls and packmates.

Gnolls usually hail from the animal whisperer, entertainer, herbalist, hunter, nomad, scout, and warrior backgrounds. The ranger is the archetypal gnoll class, a cunning warrior of the wilderness, but gnolls also make excellent barbarians and fighters, and their love of clever tricks make them outstanding rogues.

Bonekeepers are usually witches, treating ancestral spirits more like squabbling colleagues than objects of worship, while storytellers are typically bards.



## WITCH GNOLL

You're a shaggy, dark-furred gnoll capable of making some truly uncanny sounds. You can cast the *ghost sound* cantrip as an occult innate spell at will. A cantrip is heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up. In addition, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks to Impersonate and Create a Diversion when using only your voice.

## GNOLL ANCESTRY FEATS

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th levels). As a gnoll, you choose from among the following ancestry feats.

### 1ST LEVEL

#### CRUNCH

FEAT 1

##### GNOLL

Your jaws can crush bone and bite through armor. Your jaws unarmed attack deals 1d8 piercing damage instead of 1d6 and gains the grapple trait.

#### GNOLL LORE

FEAT 1

##### GNOLL

You paid attention to your senior hunters to learn their tricks. You gain the trained proficiency rank in Stealth and Survival. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills (from your background or class, for example), you instead become trained in a skill of your choice. You also become trained in Gnoll Lore.

#### GNOLL WEAPON FAMILIARITY

FEAT 1

##### GNOLL

You were taught to be a hunter and a raider. You are trained with flails, khopeshes, mamebes (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 120), spears, and war flails.

#### HYENA FAMILIAR

FEAT 1

##### GNOLL

Hyenas serve gnolls as pets, trackers, and in your case, vessels for spirits. You gain a Tiny hyena as a familiar.

#### PACK HUNTER

FEAT 1

##### GNOLL

You were taught how to hunt as part of a pack. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to Aid, and your allies gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to Aid you.

#### SENSITIVE NOSE

FEAT 1

##### GNOLL

Your large black nose isn't just for show. You gain imprecise scent with a range of 30 feet.

**Special** You can take this feat only at 1st level, and you can't retrain out of this feat or into this feat.

### 5TH LEVEL

#### DISTANT CACKLE

FEAT 5

##### GNOLL

**Prerequisites** witch gnoll heritage

It takes a very brave person to enter the laughter-haunted forest where you dwell. You can cast *ventriloquism* once per day as a 1st-level occult innate spell.

## GNOLL WEAPON PRACTICALITY

FEAT 5

GNOLL

**Prerequisites** Gnoll Weapon Familiarity

Whenever you critically hit using flails, khopeshes, mambeles, spears, and war flails, you apply the weapon's critical specialization effect.

## PACK STALKER

FEAT 5

GNOLL

**Prerequisites** expert in Stealth, Pack Hunter

Ambushes are an honored gnoll tradition. You gain the Terrain Stalker feat and can extend its effects to a single ally so long as they remain within 10 ft. of you. If you have master proficiency in Stealth, you can extend the effect to two allies. If you have legendary proficiency in Stealth, you can extend it to four allies.

## RIGHT-HAND BLOOD

FEAT 5

GNOLL

It's said that the flesh of the right side of a hyena can heal diseases, but that of the left side is poisonous. You can take 1 damage to feed someone blood from your right side and Administer First Aid or take 2d8 damage to Treat Disease or Treat Wounds; in either case, you don't need healer's tools, and gain a +1 item bonus. Blood from your left side causes the check to critically fail automatically.

## 9TH LEVEL

### BREATH LIKE HONEY

FEAT 9

GNOLL

**Prerequisites** sweetbreath gnoll heritage

You smell of honey and savory things. You can cast *enthrall* as a 3rd-level occult innate spell once per day, except the spell has a range of 30 feet and the inhaled trait instead of the auditory trait. Targets don't gain any circumstance bonus for disagreeing with you. Your circumstance bonus to checks to Make an Impression if the target can smell your breath increases to +2.

### GRANDMOTHER'S WISDOM

FEAT 9

GNOLL

You carry the bones of your ancestors with you, and you can ask them for counsel. You can cast *augury* twice per day as a 2nd-level occult innate spell.

### LAUGHING GNOLL

FEAT 9

GNOLL

**Prerequisites** master in Intimidation

A gnoll's sinister giggle is a sound of warning and threat. You gain the Battle Cry skill feat. You don't take a penalty when you attempt to Demoralize a creature that doesn't understand your language.

## 13TH LEVEL

### ANCESTOR'S RAGE

FEAT 13

GNOLL

You transform into an enormous otherworldly hyena. You can cast *animal form* (canine form only) once per day as a 5th-level occult innate spell.

### GNOLL WEAPON EXPERTISE

FEAT 13

GNOLL

**Prerequisites** Gnoll Weapon Practicality

Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in a given weapon or weapons, you also gain that proficiency in flails, khopeshes, mambeles, spears, and war flails.

## GNOLL ENCLAVES

Kholo mostly live in semi-nomadic clans in the plains south of the Mwangi Jungle, moving between a handful of permanent camps near watering holes or good hunting grounds. Gnoll clans hold impromptu festivals when their routes intersect, and gatherings of two dozen clans or more happen every few years. While clan leaders discuss matters of war and politics at such gatherings, most prefer to trade, celebrate, or mingle while the elders chatter.



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# GOLOMA (RARE)

*Golomas fear most other people and deliberately use their unusual biology to frighten off those they consider to be dangerous predators. Rarely seen and poorly understood, golomas' many-eyed and wooden faced visages instill terror in most they meet.*



Though just as capable of being dangerous as any intelligent creature on Golarion, golomas have a deep-rooted psychological understanding that they are prey, and that all two-eyed people are predators. As a result, golomas rarely reveal themselves to others, and when they do, they often adopt threatening personas as

a means to protect themselves. Even those few golomas who venture out into greater Mwangi society often have trouble relating to other ancestries, due to their strong differences in perception and mindset.

## **You Might...**

- Instinctively process large amounts of disparate information quickly and efficiently.
- Project an air of intimidation to conceal your nervous disposition.
- Have difficulty distinguishing individual objects or people from others that are similar.

## **Others Probably...**

- Are frightened by your strange physiology.
- Mistake your difficulties with identifying distinct people from one another as indifference.
- Are awed by your skill at noticing minute details at a glance and drawing rapid conclusions.

## **Physical Description**

Golomas are humanoids with rough skin that ranges in color from warm brown to ebony, although sickly gray or white individuals with albinism are not uncommon. Their fingers and feet are coated with a thin layer of chitin. A goloma's face is an oblong wedge made of smooth chitin, almost resembling a wooden mask. Protruding from this face are eight gelatinous, shining eyes. A goloma's mouth and jaw are located beneath their face-plate, and a bony crest juts from the top of their chitinous visage. The back of a goloma's head and neck is coated in black hair that is filled with thousands of tiny, peering eyes. These eyes tend to glow and squirm as they look around—an unsettling sight for most.

## **Society**

An ancient goloma story states that during a calamity unleashed long ago, gods and demons burst forth from the earth to steal the eyes from other creatures. Only the golomas and others who were in hiding were spared—yet golomas soon began to be hunted by the now two-eyed people, who were hungry to take goloma eyes to replace what they had lost. This accurately sums up most golomas' mentalities: to be exposed is to be vulnerable, and to trust a stranger is deadly. Golomas usually travel and live with groups of other golomas, as this is where they feel most comfortable.



Golomas learn at a young age to be vigilant at all times, observing the environment for any irregularities and then reacting with quick, calculated instinct rather than deliberative action. Other ancestries often perceive golomas to be paranoid and hypervigilant. Golomas are also better at wide-scale observation than observation of specific things—they can easily notice commonalities across large fields but have difficulty remembering what a specific object or creature looked like. This only increases their paranoia, as they have trouble visually distinguishing known friends from potentially hostile foes.

### ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

Golomas tend to focus on their own survival and thus are typically neutral, though those who find more comfort in conformity than others trend toward lawful alignments. Golomas often pay homage to Kalekot, a deity of protective fear, as the guardian of their people, though not one to be trusted. Kalekot is called upon to curse those who victimize golomas, as most feel that justice can only be attained using supernatural means. Other popular gods include Mazludeh and Grandmother Spider, who encourage the strength of community, though a typical goloma's idea of community is often very insular.

### NAMES

A goloma's true name is kept among golomas, as there are hundreds of cautionary tales of what could happen if another creature learns a goloma's true name. Names tend to lack soft syllables, which golomas often struggle to pronounce, and typically consist of hard consonants and individually enunciated vowels instead. Among other people, golomas tend to use names that are intended to be intimidating, taking elements and sounds from Aklo, Necril, or words from local languages that seem to cause strong reactions.

### SAMPLE NAMES

Biqukul, Ehbouja, Haamaah, Kouzo, Quaerjii, Tebaazu, Uruueda, Zekuukeu

### GOLOMA HERITAGES

Choose one of the following goloma heritages at 1st level.

#### FARSIGHT GOLOMA

Your eyes have adapted to see more in less than favorable conditions. You gain low-light vision.

#### FRIGHTFUL GOLOMA

Your face has a particularly off-putting appearance. You are trained in Intimidation (or another skill of your choice if you were already trained in Intimidation) and gain the Intimidating Glare skill feat as a bonus feat.

#### INSIGHTFUL GOLOMA

You've learned to watch for telltale signs of dangerous sentiments to help you avoid trouble. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your Perception DC against attempts to Lie to you and your Perception checks to Sense Motive.

#### VICIOUS GOLOMA

The chitin on your hands forms powerful claws that allow you to defend yourself. You gain a claw unarmed attack that deals 1d6 slashing damage. Your claws are in the brawling group and have the agile, finesse, and unarmed traits.

#### VIGILANT GOLOMA

You've learned to be aware of not just obvious physical dangers, but also noticeable magical threats. You can cast the *detect magic* cantrip as an arcane innate spell at will. A cantrip is heightened to a spell level equal to half your

### HIT POINTS

8

### SIZE

Medium

### SPEED

30 feet

### ABILITY BOOSTS

Wisdom

Free

### LANGUAGES

Goloma

Mwangi

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if it's positive). Choose from Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Elven, Halfling, Necril, Orcish, Sylvan, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region)

### TRAITS

Goloma

Humanoid

### EYES IN BACK

You have eyes that point in several different directions and instinctively notice movement in the peripheries of your vision. When you use the Seek basic action, you can look for creatures in two areas instead of one. If precision is necessary, you can select two 30-foot cones or 15-foot bursts within line of sight instead of one.

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## GOLOMA ADVENTURERS

Golomas keep to themselves in self-sufficient societies, and commonly possess backgrounds such as hunter, laborer, artist, or farmhand.

Golomas who keep a lookout for their communities might be scouts or acolytes. They make excellent clerics of more unusual gods—those who are less attuned to a typical humanoid mindset and seek worshippers who can truly understand them. Druids are not uncommon among golomas, and they also make excellent investigators.

level rounded up. In addition, your awareness allows you to notice magical traps easier than others. Your proficiency rank in Perception is considered one step better when attempting to detect magical traps. (Trained is considered expert, expert is considered master, and master is considered legendary).

## ANCESTRY FEATS

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th level). As a goloma, you select from among the following ancestry feats.

### 1ST LEVEL

#### CATCH THE DETAILS

#### FEAT 1

##### GOLOMA

You are quick at recognizing broad details about people and things around you. You are trained in Society and gain the Eye for Numbers skill feat (*Advanced Player's Guide* 206).

If you would automatically become trained in Society (from your background or class, for example), you instead become trained in a skill of your choice.

#### GOLOMA COURAGE

#### FEAT 1

##### GOLOMA

The most important thing you've learned living with fear is how to overcome it. When you roll a success on a saving throw against a fear effect, you get a critical success instead. In addition, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Will saves against fear effects and a +2 circumstance bonus to your Will DC against attempts to Demoralize you.

#### GOLOMA LORE

#### FEAT 1

##### GOLOMA

You lived an insulated life focused on avoiding danger. You gain the trained proficiency rank in Stealth and Survival. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills (from your background or class, for example), you instead become trained in a skill of your choice. You also become trained in Goloma Lore.

#### PIERCE THE DARKNESS

#### FEAT 1

##### GOLOMA

**Prerequisites** low-light vision

Your eyes have adapted to see in all circumstances, even without the assistance of light.

You gain darkvision, allowing you to see in darkness and dim light just as well as you can in bright light. However, in darkness you see in black and white only.

**Special** You can take this feat only at 1st level, and you can't retrain out of this feat or into this feat.

#### WATCHFUL GAZE

#### FEAT 1

##### CONCENTRATE GOLOMA

You use your many eyes to look in all directions at once, making you extremely observant for a short period of time. You gain all-around vision until the start of your next turn. This lets you see in all directions and prevents you from being flanked.



## 8TH LEVEL

### AMBUSH AWARENESS

FEAT 5

#### GOLOMA

You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks attempted as initiative rolls. Additionally, if your initiative roll result is tied with that of an opponent, you go first, regardless of whether you rolled Perception or not.

### PROTECTIVE CLAWS

FEAT 5

#### GOLOMA

**Prerequisites** vicious goloma heritage

The chitin on your claws is so hard you can defend against attacks with them. Your claw unarmed attack from the vicious goloma heritage gains the parry weapon trait.

## 9TH LEVEL

### CONSTANT GAZE

FEAT 9

#### GOLOMA

**Prerequisites** Watchful Gaze

Your eyes keep a continual watch for dangers from all sides. You can't be flanked by creatures of your level or lower, even when you haven't used Watchful Gaze.

### DEFENSIVE INSTINCTS

FEAT 9

#### GOLOMA

**Requirements** you are adjacent to at least two enemies

Your body tenses up when surrounded, putting you on edge just enough to anticipate an attack. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn and Step.

## 13TH LEVEL

### ARCANE SIGHT

FEAT 13

#### GOLOMA

**Prerequisites** ability to cast the *detect magic* cantrip

You've trained yourself to constantly be on the lookout for magical effects, even when focusing on looking out for other things. When you are Searching, you also gain the benefits of Detect Magic unless you choose not to. See page 479 of the *Core Rulebook* for more information about exploration activities.

### SEE THE UNSEEN

FEAT 13

#### GOLOMA

You notice things that others can't see at all. While you're adjacent to an undetected creature of your level or lower, it is instead only hidden from you. You only need a successful DC 5 flat check to target a hidden creature.

## 17TH LEVEL

### TRUE GAZE

FEAT 17

#### ARCANE CONCENTRATE DIVINATION GOLOMA

**Frequency** once per hour

When you focus your eyes carefully, your gaze can pierce through all obfuscations, even magical ones. When you use True Gaze, you gain the effects of a 6th-level *true seeing* spell, using your Perception modifier for the counteract check.

## GOLOMA ENCLAVES

Most goloma enclaves can be found in jungles, where the dark light and excess noise can hide their presence. However, a few enclaves can be found tucked away in well-sheltered mountains and hills. Golomas are most commonly found in the Screaming Jungle; a few are willing to treat with the residents of Osibu, who at least seem to share a sensible attitude about the world. Some golomas also travel to Nantambu, hoping to gain an education at the Magaambya university.

Golomas are effectively unknown outside the Mwangi Expanse. A few enclaves are believed to have migrated into Southern Garund, and some may have journeyed to other continents. If so, the Mwangi golomas have lost track of their wayward kin long ago, and could not verify such rumors even if they wanted to.

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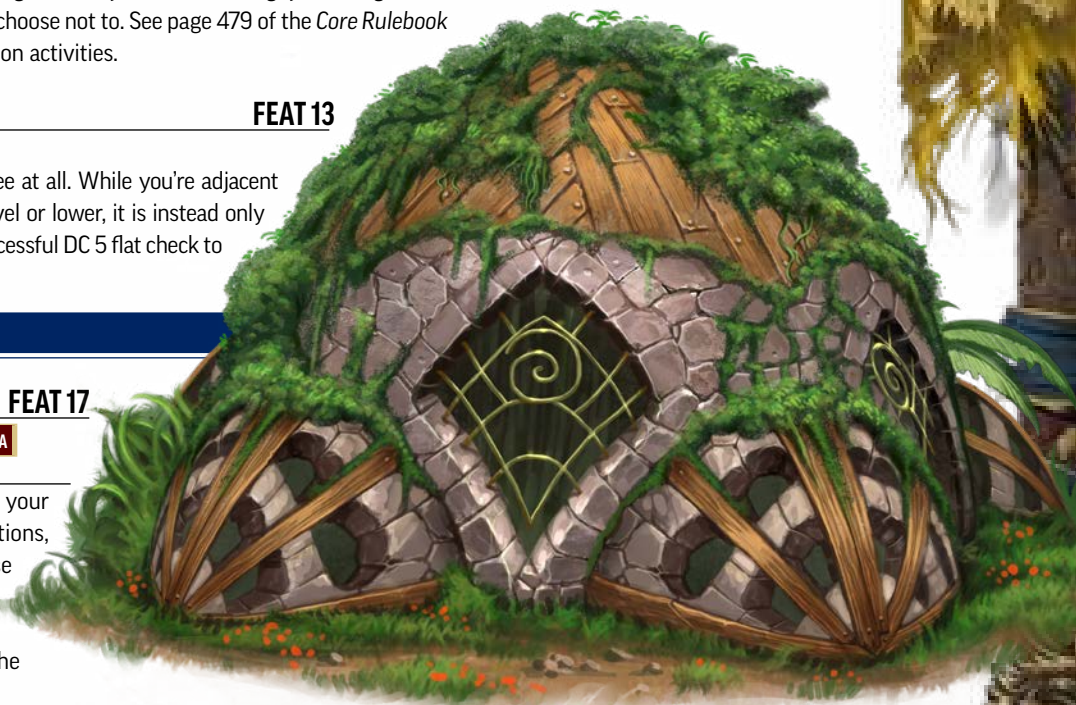
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# GRIPPLI (UNCOMMON)

*Gripplis are a shy and cautious people who generally seek to avoid being drawn into the complicated and dangerous affairs of others. Despite their outlook and small stature, gripplis often take bold and noble action when the situation demands it.*



Reclusive and canny, gripplis are treetop survivalists who harvest their homes' bounty and defend themselves against terrible threats. Their reliance on cunning and simple tools has led to gripplis being mischaracterized as primitive, yet this overlooks their shaping of the land with hidden orchards and camouflaged causeways that allow gripplis to live in prosperous peace. Gripplis are most likely to emerge from their forest homes to trade, explore, and combat threats that would despoil the world.

## YOU MIGHT...

- Seek out clever ways to exploit your environment when overcoming challenges.
- Make friends slowly, concerned by cautionary tales of exploitative strangers.
- Be fiercely protective of your home or community.

## OTHERS PROBABLY

- Assume you dislike cities and people who live in them.
- Trust in your impartial, measured approach to understanding situations and solving problems.

- Give you space, fearing that touching you would prove toxic.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Gripplis resemble humanoid tree frogs, with oversized eyes, wide mouths, and gangly physiques. Their slight frames and large toes afford excellent grip while climbing, while their colorful skin provides reliable camouflage that varies by their home environment—green and brown for jungle-dwelling groups, blue and orange for riparian communities, and many other colors between. A grippli grows quickly, reaching adult size of about 2 feet in height about 3 years after hatching, though they're only considered adults around age 12. Gripplis rarely live beyond 60 years, though exceptional individuals occasionally live as long as a century.

## SOCIETY

Gripplis lead a sophisticated hunter-gatherer lifestyle with which they reshape the landscape to suit their needs: building spillways to trap fish, seeding fruit-bearing trees, sowing cover-granting foliage for future hunts, and more techniques that often escape an agriculturist's eye. These strategies rely on community cooperation as well as dispersed populations, so gripplis commonly live in small villages, each part of a complex web of alliances and relationships. Reclusiveness has preserved grippli lives and lifestyles for millennia, yet they increasingly find themselves threatened by ancient evils and new explorers alike.

## ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

Taught to wait, observe, and respect natural processes of life and death, many gripplis adopt neutral alignments. Those who take a more active role suppressing evils that take refuge in the jungles are often neutral good, most notably those rare fiend-keepers who absorb an evil being into their soul to contain and eventually transform its villainy through virtuous acts. Nature deities such as Gozreh or Erastil often earn gripplis' respect, yet communities often prefer less prominent, more intimate divinities such as empyreal lords, psychopomp ushers, or the fey Eldest.

## NAMES

Grippli names often include resonant vowels and chirped consonants that remain difficult for non-gripplis to vocalize properly. Gripplis that travel widely often adopt one or more names more easily replicated by their associates.



## SAMPLE NAMES

Aalpo'ol, Bogwynne, Ctaprak, Eegru, Gpoun, Gruoksh, Hrrauti, Iopo, Iykiki, Kyrsiik, Mhruugu, Oplugo, Quaasol, Yolkuu, Ztaal

## GRIPPLI HERITAGES

Choose one of the following grippli heritages at 1st level.

### POISONHIDE GRIPPLI

You may be small, but the poison glands concealed across your body hide a deadly defense. You gain the Toxic Skin reaction.

### TOXIC SKIN

GRIPPLI POISON

**Frequency** once per hour

**Trigger** A creature touches you, such as by Grappling you, successfully hitting you with an unarmed attack, or using a touch-range spell against you.

You exude a deadly toxin. The triggering creature takes 1d4 poison damage (basic Fortitude save using your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher). At 3rd level and every 2 levels thereafter, the damage increases by 1d4.

### SNAPTONGUE GRIPPLI

Your tongue is especially long, and you can launch it with extraordinary range and precision. You can use your tongue to deliver touch-range spells and perform extremely simple Interact actions, such as opening some types of unlocked doors. Your tongue can't perform actions that require fingers or significant manual dexterity, including any action that would require a check to accomplish, and you can't use it to hold items.

### STICKYTOE GRIPPLI

Your hands and feet exude a film that helps them adhere to surfaces. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude and Reflex DC against attempts to Disarm, Shove, or Trip you. When ascending trees, vines, and other foliage, if you roll a success on the Athletics check to Climb, you get a critical success instead.

### WINDWEB GRIPPLI

Tough webbing along your hands and toes can slow any fall. As long as you have one hand free, you take no falling damage, regardless of the distance you fall.

## ANCESTRY FEATS

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th levels). As a grippli, you select from among the following ancestry feats.

### 1ST LEVEL

#### GRIPPLI LORE

FEAT 1

GRIPPLI

You are well versed in grippli culture and tactics. You gain the trained proficiency in Nature and Stealth. If you would automatically become trained in one of those skills, you instead become trained in a skill of your choice. You also become trained in Grippli Lore.

#### GRIPPLI WEAPON FAMILIARITY

FEAT 1

GRIPPLI

You've trained with weapons ideally suited to marshes and dense forests. You are trained with blowguns, hatchets, scythes, shortbows, and composite shortbows.

You also gain access to all uncommon grippli weapons. For the purpose of determining your proficiency, martial grippli weapons are simple weapons, and advanced grippli weapons are martial weapons.

## HIT POINTS

6

## SIZE

Small

## SPEED

25 feet

## ABILITY BOOSTS

Dexterity

Wisdom

Free

## ABILITY FLAW

Strength

## LANGUAGES

Common

Grippli

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if it's positive). Choose from Abyssal, Aquan, Boggard, Draconic, Elven, Iruxi, Sylvan, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region).

## TRAITS

Grippli

Humanoid

## LOW-LIGHT VISION

You can see in dim light as though it were bright light, and you ignore the concealed condition due to dim light.

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## GRIPPLI ADVENTURERS

For the many gripplis who hail from remote regions, wilderness backgrounds like hunter, nomad, or scout are excellent fits. Those more accustomed to urban areas might be animal whisperers, bounty hunters, and herbalists. Hermits are common, and emissaries are critical to maintaining relationships with other peoples.

Thanks to their deep cultural connections to nature, gripplis make excellent druids and rangers. Their musical traditions are a great fit for bards. Gripplis' natural agility and perceptiveness also make them capable clerics, monks, and rogues.



## HUNTER'S DEFENSE ↻

FEAT 1

GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** trained in Nature

**Frequency** once per hour

**Trigger** A creature with the animal, beast, elemental, fey, fungus, or plant trait attacks you, and you can see the attacker.

Your canny understanding of natural and primal creatures helps you predict and dodge their attacks. The triggering attack roll targets your Nature DC instead of your AC. Though this allows you to avoid taking penalties to your AC, it doesn't remove any conditions or other effects causing such penalties. For example, an enemy with sneak attack would still deal extra damage to you for being flat-footed, even though you wouldn't take the -2 circumstance penalty against the attack.

## JUNGLE STRIDER

FEAT 1

GRIPPLI

You are adept at dodging roots, foliage, and other jungle obstacles. You ignore difficult terrain in forests and jungles. In addition, when you use the Acrobatics skill to Balance on narrow surfaces or uneven ground made of plant material, you aren't flat-footed, and when you roll a success at one of these Acrobatics checks, you get a critical success instead.

## NOCTURNAL GRIPPLI

FEAT 1

GRIPPLI

You tend to do most of your hunting and work at night and have adapted to the requirements of nocturnal life. You gain darkvision, allowing you to see in darkness and dim light just as well as you can in bright light. However, in darkness, you see in black and white only.

**Special** You can take this feat only at 1st level, and you can't retrain out of this feat or into this feat.

## 5TH LEVEL

## GRIPPLI GLIDE ↻

FEAT 5

GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** windweb grippli

**Requirements** You must have at least one hand free.

You can use your webbed feet to guide your fall. You glide slowly toward the ground, 5 feet down (10 feet if you don't have both hands free) and up to 25 feet forward through the air. As long as you spend at least 1 action gliding each round and have not yet reached the ground, you remain in the air at the end of your turn.

## GRIPPLI WEAPON INNOVATOR

FEAT 5

GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** Grippli Weapon Familiarity

You've learned devious ways to make the most of your grippli weapons. Whenever you critically hit using a blowgun, hatchet, scythe, shortbow, composite shortbow, or grippli weapon, you apply the weapon's critical specialization effect.

## LONG TONGUE

FEAT 5

GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** snaptongue grippli

You've learned to stretch your exceptionally long tongue beyond its original limits. When you use your tongue to deliver touch range spells or perform very simple Interact actions, you can do so at a distance that is 5 feet beyond your usual reach.

## TENACIOUS NET

FEAT 5

### GRIPPLI

Escaping your nets is no simple task. The Athletics DC to Force Open or Escape your Nets increases from 16 to 18. After a creature you grabbed with a net Escapes or Forces Open the net, stray strands of the net cling to the creature, causing them to remain flat-footed until the beginning of their next turn.

## 9TH LEVEL

## ABSORB TOXIN

FEAT 9

### GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** You are not immune to diseases or poisons

**Trigger** You attempt a saving throw against a disease or poison effect that affects an area.

Your skin readily absorbs poison and can consciously draw toxins into your body to spare others. Attempt a counteract check against the triggering effect; your counteract level equals half your level (rounded up), and for the roll use either your class DC -10 or your spellcasting ability modifier plus your spellcasting proficiency bonus. If you counteract the triggering effect, you end the effect for all other creatures in the area; however, you must still save against the effect with a -2 penalty to the initial save.

## RICOCHETING LEAP

FEAT 9

### GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** master in Athletics, Wall Jump

You quickly use your momentum to topple and spring off of foes. You can use Wall Jump to make additional jumps off of creatures larger than you as if they were walls. Once per turn when you make an additional jump off of a creature in this way, you can also attempt to Shove or Trip that creature as a free action.

## TONGUE TETHER

FEAT 9

### GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** snaptongue grippli

Your tongue can momentarily latch on as readily as your hands. So long as you can freely open your mouth, you do not need free hands in order to Disarm, Grab an Edge, or Trip. If you have the Long Tongue feat, you can Disarm, Grab an Edge, and Trip with your tongue at a distance that is 5 feet beyond your normal reach.

## 13TH LEVEL

## ENVENOMED EDGE

FEAT 13

### GRIPPLI

With a combination of your poison glands and herbal concoctions, you can consistently deliver venomous attacks when you hit an enemy's weak points. When you critically hit using a Strike with a weapon or unarmed attack and deal slashing or piercing damage with that Strike, you deal an additional 1d4 persistent poison damage to your target.

## GRIPPLI WEAPON EXPERTISE

FEAT 13

### GRIPPLI

**Prerequisites** Grippli Weapon Familiarity

You fight with effortless expertise with grippli weapons. Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in a given weapon or weapons, you also gain that proficiency in the blowgun, hatchet, scythe, shortbow, composite shortbow, or grippli weapons in which you are trained.

## GRIPPLI ENCLAVES

Most gripplis originate from the Kaava Lands, a broad, jungled peninsula in the Mwangi Expanse. After centuries of colonial pressure, many gripplis have migrated to Vidrian, both to its capital, Anthusis, as well as its less settled lands. Likewise, once-isolationist gripplis now enjoy strong ties with Nantambu, and a sizeable population lives in and around that magical metropolis. Especially ambitious or underhanded gripplis make their fortunes in treacherous Bloodcove to the north, where they comprise a small minority.

Beyond western Garund, gripplis are much rarer. Small groups have made their homes in the Verduran forest, where they assist the Wildwood druids in patrolling the vast territory. Gripplis periodically travel to Katapesh, whose markets are eager for rare Kaava goods and never balk at strange visitors. Most notably, a sizable grippli population inhabits the deadly Valashmai Jungle of southern Tian Xia, where those gripplis clash with dinosaurs and even larger beasts.

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# SHISK (RARE)

*Shisks are secretive mountain-dwellers, bone-feathered humanoid who lurk underground in dark tunnels and caverns. Their fascination with collecting and protecting esoteric knowledge is one of the few things that can persuade them to explore the outside world.*



Shisks rarely encounter other peoples, even in the Mwangi Expanse. Shisks subsist on low-calorie diets of vegetables and insects, causing them to rarely compete with others for resources or seek out people to trade. They have a tight-knit society, wary of outsiders, though they don't outright attack visitors. Their history is passed down verbally and musically, and they rarely maintain written records in order to keep their knowledge safe. Often the only proof that shisks exist comes from explorers finding signs of their architecture: organic and low-impact adobe buildings carved out of mountains rather than built atop them.

## **You Might...**

- See yourself as a part of nature and avoid taking anything you don't need.
- Be wary of others getting one over on you by tricking you into revealing something.
- Love warmth and enjoy sunbathing despite your subterranean nature.

## **Others Probably...**

- Are concerned by your diet and how little you eat.
- Become confused or annoyed by your refusal to give information freely.
- Appreciate your incredible memory and knowledge.

## **Physical Description**

Shisks have features and skin-tones similar to humans, usually ranging from deep tan to deep black. They are lighter than their body size might indicate, due to having hollow bones. Shisks have no body hair—instead, their backs are covered in vestigial plumage that now grow only as bony quills that resemble calcified pin feathers. Though shisks can't fly, these spines are longer around their arms, as if they once had wings. A shisk's eyes contract into slits in the sunlight and are typically warmly colored, from hazel and brown to more unique colors like red or amber. Shisks have two prominent narrow fangs as the front teeth on their upper jaw, causing some people to mistake them for asanbosams or vampires.

## **Society**

Though rarely encountered, shisks are willing to speak, host, and trade with outsiders. Their economy might be confusing to others: they greatly eschew materialism in favor of information and the arts. They freely give away material goods for knowledge or even performances, considering themselves on the “winning” side of a bargain if people are willing to take material things in exchange for valuable information. They never give away information for material goods, only for other knowledge, and they rarely ask for material goods in trades.

Shisks are so paranoid that different communities of shisks have been known to clash with one another over secrets. Wars are fought not over territory or resources, but over coveted information. On a few occasions, when shisk sages or diplomats convinced different groups of shisks to put aside their differences and collaborate, great puzzles and mysteries of Golarion have been solved in a matter of hours.



Shisk clothing is loose and breathable, and often minimal to avoid catching on their bony feathers. Due to their society's disregard for materialism, the shisk live in great harmony with nature around them, taking only what they need. Shisk often take up simple hobbies, such as sunbathing.

### ALIGNMENT AND RELIGION

Seeing themselves as part of the natural world and typically focused on their own pursuits instead of society, most shisks adopt neutral alignments. Some shisks are patrons of gods that have been long forgotten. Many shisks worship the sun god Chohar, a fact which might seem odd for people who dwell underground. The Green Faith is highly common among shisks, but when seeking out personal gods to revere, most shisks prefer gods of knowledge and secrets such as Irez, Nethys, or Norgorber.

### NAMES

Shisk names are usually granted by their parents, though these names often have secret meanings known only to their families. They are often filled with sibilant syllables, occasionally punctuated by sharp vowels.

### SAMPLE NAMES

Adomssha, Asjossa, Chishinsa, Dalissho, Lessia, Lishassha, Somissu, Quinshu

### SHISK HERITAGES

Choose one of the following shisk heritages at 1st level.

#### LOREKEEPER SHISK

You grew up surrounded by knowledge and secrets. You become trained in one Lore skill and one other Intelligence- or Wisdom-based skill of your choice. At 5th level, you become expert in the chosen skills.

#### QUILLCOAT SHISK

Your body has adapted a defensive mechanism to break off your quills in an attacker, allowing you to defend yourself against aggressive predators, though it takes a while for the quills to grow back. You gain the Barbed Quills reaction.

#### BARBED QUILLS

**Frequency** once per day

**Trigger** You are hit with an unarmed strike or a strike with a non-reach melee weapon. You break off quills in your attacker's flesh. You deal 1d8 piercing damage to the triggering creature (basic Reflex save using your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher.) On a critical failure, the creature also takes 1d4 persistent bleed damage as your quills hook into its flesh. At 3rd level, and every 2 levels thereafter, this damage increases by 1d8 and the persistent piercing damage increases by 1.

#### SPELLKEEPER SHISK

Your magical knowledge allows you to cast simple spells. Choose occult or primal. You gain one cantrip from that magical tradition's spell list. You can cast this spell as an innate spell at will, as a spell of your chosen tradition. A cantrip is heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up.

#### STRONGGUT SHISK

Your metabolism is slow, allowing you to go for days without food and process maladies at a slower rate. You can go for 1 week without food before you begin to starve (*Core Rulebook* 500). Additionally, the onset times and lengths of stages for all diseases and poisons that affect you are increased by 50%. If the onset time or stage is instant or lasts only 1 round, this ability has no effect.

### HIT POINTS

8

### SIZE

Medium

### SPEED

25 feet

### ABILITY BOOSTS

Intelligence

Free

### LANGUAGES

Mwangi

Shisk

Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if positive). Choose from any Common language, and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region).

### TRAITS

Humanoid

Shisk

### DARKVISION

You can see in darkness and dim light just as well as you can see in bright light, though your vision in darkness is in black and white.

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## SHISK ADVENTURERS

With a cultural obsession around learning and secrets, shisks are perfect fits for the scholar background. They are also reclusive in their tasks, making hermits and nomads common. Their love of histories spread through song makes them ideal entertainers, while shisks' coexistence with nature means they are ideal herbalists and animal whisperers. Shisks make excellent bards and wizards, as they excel at focus and long hours of research. Those who venture into other societies to learn are also great fits for the investigator class.



## STONESTEP SHISK

Navigating mountains and other rocky terrain is second nature to you. You can ignore non-magical difficult terrain caused by rubble and uneven ground made of stone and earth.

## ANCESTRY FEATS

At 1st level, you gain one ancestry feat, and you gain an additional ancestry feat every 4 levels thereafter (at 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th levels). As a shisk, you select from among the following ancestry feats.

### LEVEL 1

#### EIDETIC EAR

FEAT 1

##### SHISK

You have an amazing memory for sound. You gain the Assurance (Performance) feat. With a successful DC 8 flat check, you can accurately recall a sound or a snippet of conversation you heard within the last week. You are memorizing by rote rather than content, and can't use this to cram facts, so this doesn't grant you any extra ability to Recall Knowledge.

#### SHISK LORE

FEAT 1

##### SHISK

You hoard knowledge like a dragon hoards gold. You gain the trained proficiency rank in three Lore skills of your choice. You also become trained in Shisk Lore.

#### SPELUNKER

FEAT 1

##### SHISK

Living underground, you have learned to find your way without landmarks or even solid ground. If you roll a success on an Survival check to Sense Direction or an Athletics check to Climb, you get a critical success instead. You're not flat-footed when you attempt to Climb.

#### SPINE STABBER

FEAT 1

##### SHISK

The quills on your arms are particularly sharp and sturdy. You gain a quills unarmed attack that deals 1d6 piercing damage. Your quills are in the knife weapon group and have the finesse and unarmed traits.

### LEVEL 5

#### BRISTLE

FEAT 5

##### SHISK

You curl into a posture that splays out your bone spines. You gain a +1 circumstance to AC until the start of your next turn.

**Special** If you have the Barbed Quills reaction or a quills unarmed attack, each gains a +1 circumstance bonus to damage rolls until the start of your next turn.

#### INURED TO THE HEAT

FEAT 5

##### SHISK

You have a love for extreme heat. You gain resistance 4 to fire. You treat environmental heat effects as if they were one step less extreme (incredible heat becomes extreme, extreme heat

becomes severe, and so on).

## RENEWING QUILLS

FEAT 5

SHISK

**Prerequisites** quillcoat shisk

Your spines grow back much faster than other shisks. You can use the Barbed Quills reaction once every 10 minutes.

## LEVEL 9

### DIG UP SECRETS

LEVEL 9

SHISK

You are an endless well of knowledge and can remember several vital pieces of information at once. You can cast *hypercognition* as an innate occult spell once per day.

### PIERCING QUILLS

FEAT 9

SHISK

**Prerequisites** Spine Stabber

Your quills can dig particularly deep into the flesh of your opponents. Your quills unarmed attack deals 1d4 persistent bleed damage on a critical hit.

### QUILL SPRAY

LEVEL 9

SHISK

**Frequency** once per day

**Prerequisites** quillcoat shisk or quill unarmed attack

You can launch a mass of quills at opponents. You spray quills in a 30-foot cone, dealing 5d8 piercing damage. Each creature in the area must attempt a basic saving throw against the higher of your class DC or spell DC. On a critical failure, a creature also takes 5 persistent bleed damage. At 11th level and every even level thereafter, the piercing damage increases by 1d8 and the persistent bleed damage increases by 1.

## LEVEL 13

### DELVER

LEVEL 13

SHISK

Subterranean life taught you to swim through the ground like water. You gain a burrow Speed of 10 feet through loose soil or dirt.

### NONE SHALL KNOW

LEVEL 13

SHISK

Even magical means have a hard time prying information from you. You gain *nondetection* as an innate occult spell once per day, which can only be cast on yourself and is automatically heightened to half your level rounded up.

### SECRET EYES

LEVEL 13

SHISK

You can call forth an invisible eye to let you peek on secrets. Once per day, you can cast *prying eye* as an innate occult spell.

## LEVEL 17

### FOUNTAIN OF SECRETS

LEVEL 17

SHISK

**Frequency** once per round

You constantly remember details about the world. You attempt a check to Recall Knowledge. If you succeed, you gain additional information or context. If you critically succeed, at the GM's discretion you might gain even more additional information or context than normal.

## SHISK ENCLAVES

Most shisks can be found in small communities burrowed into the Barrier Wall, existing in caverns and tunnels that riddle the mountains from peak to base. A few scattered enclaves can be found in the Bandu Hills—the dry and arid region well-suited to shisk tastes. Occasionally, shisk societies burrow deeply enough that they reside within the Mwangi Darklands, while other brave families or individuals seek out the academic haven of Nantambu, hoping to accelerate their education.

Shisks are almost completely unknown outside of the Mwangi Expanse. A few can be found on the Thuvian side of the Barrier Wall, and at least one shisk is believed to have approached the Citadel of the Alchemist to be accepted as a student. One small and bold enclave is rumored to reside in the Shattered Range near the nation of Nex, hoping to glean secrets from the many powerful wizards who live there.

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# OTHER PEOPLES

Many people call the Mwangi Expanse home beyond those most often associated with it. Such inhabitants include the demonically-influenced charau-kas who lord over Lake Ocota, the divination-gifted mbaikis, enterprising and competitive lizardfolk, and adventure-seeking kobolds—among others. The motives of the myriad peoples of the Expanse are as varied as they are, with some hoping to find peace and solitude while others seek fresh meaning to their lives.



## BILOKO

Considered by many to be some of the strongest hunters in the Expanse, bilokos are carnivorous fey who employ devious nonlethal traps to ensnare their prey. Bilokos haunt the boggy marshlands sprawling out from Lake Ocota by day and lazily keep watch over traps and the quicksand-bound prey in their larders. By night, they hunt and stalk potential prey, luring their victims deep enough into the trees to either eat or incapacitate them. When stalking prey, bilokos tend to lurk in the corners of their victim's vision, using magic to leave the quarry confused and pliable. They remain patient while slowly leading victims to prepared traps. Biloko will keep their victims alive for as long as possible once captured to lure in search parties and hired adventurers, then feast at their leisure as their larders replenish themselves. Most inhabitants of the Expanse avoid biloko lurks and some warn adventurers of cruel ancestral spirits made manifest that drag people down for their failings. Elokos—bilokos who have consumed large amounts of creatures with magical abilities—can even transform themselves into giants.

Tales of a biloko and eloko city within the Expanse are common—but if true, the residents seem far more capable of magic than their kin, crafting illusions that are almost impossible to see through and mimicking sounds and scents to such a degree that they can be indistinguishable from reality.

Those who seek out this city are rarely seen again, trapped mind and body with no release from the charms on them.

## BOGGARD

The boggards of the Mwangi Expanse often terrify those used to the smaller varieties found elsewhere, as they are rotund and muscled rather than lithe and slippery. Their brown striated coloration lets them blend into heavy undergrowth or mud and few others stand tall when faced with their deep croaking battle ululations. Massively outnumbered by the local lizardfolk, Mwangi boggards tend to keep to themselves unless forced into interaction and often attack anyone who strays too close to their homes in the Sodden Lands on sight. Boggards who trust outsiders often treat them as extensions of their families, with all the perks and responsibilities that entails.

Primarily encountered in the Sodden Lands, boggard tribes tend to place warnings around their homelands like bones and skulls on pikes to scare off intruders. Legends and unconfirmed reports tell of vast tribes led by boggard queens known as mobogogs, who are even larger than the boggards of the Expanse. The stories say that these boggard queens wage war against each other in the deepest unmapped and unnamed parts of the jungle.

## CATFOLK

To an outsider, catfolk might look like panthers distorted by some trick of the light. Others tend to conflate them with hermetic jungle druids or wercreatures, isolating themselves



far from civilization. To those of the Expanse, the sight of bipedal panther-like people moving through the thick foliage is one of the gravest omens of death that can be observed. This results from the area around the Southern Garundi city-state of Murraseth being a fertile breeding ground for poisonous and venomous fauna and flora, such as mambas and moonlighter nettles, as well as home to dangerous natural terrains and traps. The natural dangers of their homeland mean many catfolk—also known as amurruns—focus on traveling safely while doing as little harm as possible or tending to those who have injured themselves in the undergrowth. If these wandering catfolk find others in need of aid, they usually offer to help. Still, rumors persist.

Though these catfolk treat Murraseth as the center of their civilization, many travel to satiate their curiosity. Some venture in secret to purchase supplies from trading outposts or settlements that ask few questions or hire lizardfolk guides on the behalf of adventurers stranded in Southern Garund. Murraseth catfolk are quick to emulate catfolk from other parts of Golarion to avoid any stigmas they might face from Mwangi natives.

## CHARAU-KA

The charau-kas of Usaro embody a socialized and accepted callousness rarely found throughout in Golarion, let alone the Mwangi Expanse. Their curiosity about all manner of life is rivaled only by how quickly they grow bored with it; both are outclassed by the cold dispassion with which they dispose of the those who once sparked their curiosity.

Though their origin is a matter of debate, modern charau-kas came about as the corruption of Angazhan infused them so completely that their worst qualities were amplified. They do little to quell the rumors and whispered warnings about their people. Tales of charau-kas eating humanoid flesh and transforming their slain enemies into more of their kind have spread far and wide in the Expanse and beyond. Still, charau-kas exhibit few differences from other humanoids save for a societal proclivity towards evil and the ability to manipulate demonic forces to strengthen their physical forms.

In the dangerous environs of Ocota, charau-kas roam the territories of their kingdom fearlessly and perceive trespassers as a potential source of entertainment who can satiate their wicked desires.

## KAAVA

Kaava are strange in many ways, even to the inhabitants of the Expanse. They have reptilian eyes but appear to be covered in soft fur. On closer inspection, this “fur” is composed of very short, densely packed feathers, the chromatic aberrations of which make it hard to focus on them. While not technically malevolent, they often attack humanoids who approach with even the barest amount of perceived hostility. Even a half-raised weapon is enough for a kaava to send as many trained black mambas as they have at their disposal in the potential threat’s direction. If a kaava finds themselves indebted to a humanoid, a kaava is honor-bound to fulfill that debt—though they will only do the bare minimum they feel is required. Once the debt is paid, they will slip off as soon as possible.

The most recognized kaava dwell around a spring fed by an underground water source where they raise and train black mambas. Those who have managed to approach unseen speak of a massive kaava served by the others, one leg blackened and atrophied by mamba venom. This kaava is assumed to be either a ruler or a venerated elder.

## KOBOLD

The kobolds of the Mwangi Expanse seem separated into two groups: those much like other kobolds found around Golarion, who are cowardly and reclusive; and those who boldly strike out into the jungle, bluntly offering tracking skills and blades to adventurers whenever and wherever possible.



BILOKO



BOGGARD



CHARAU-KA



LIZARDFOLK

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**KOBOLD**



**LESHY**



**PLANAR SCION**



**SERPENTFOLK**

This second group are the most likely to be encountered in the region, as they hover near taverns in most cities and major outposts that tolerate them. They often butt heads with the iruxis plying the same trade, undercutting the lizardfolk to make as much as gold and treasure possible. That income is then traded in cities and hustled back to their tribes settled at home. In areas where it is sometimes hard to get necessary food and supplies, the work of these kobolds is essential to the survival of all.

Settled Mwangi kobolds tend to build within the boughs of large trees when possible, organizing themselves and their stores expertly to stay as far from predators as possible. Even with these precautions, they are sometimes captured by more powerful beings and forced into service—their knowledge of alchemy exploited to nefarious ends.

## **LESHY**

Some believe that leshys are the will of the Expanse made manifest, tapping into ancient power to defend their source. It's more likely that leshys are descendants of vessels once filled by particularly powerful spirits, generations removed and now fully self-perpetuating. How remains a mystery, and leshys themselves haven't been forthcoming with more information.

Depending on their location, leshys might make their homes in the boughs of the trees, tucked into the gnarled roots, or nestled within the undergrowth. No matter what, they are nearly invisible to all but those with highly trained eyes. Though they never seek trouble out, leshys can usually be counted on to aid those in need of help in the jungle—though Mwangi leshys are far flightier than most and are just as like to simply watch and see if someone can handle themselves.

## **LIZARDFOLK**

The lizardfolk of the Mwangi Expanse are far less insular than lizardfolk (also known as iruxis) elsewhere. Many Mwangi iruxis utilize their skills as rangers and fighters to serve as mercenaries on the behalf of the nations that once encroached on their territories. Others work as merchants who open and manage trade hubs and waystations across the Expanse—always staffed in groups of three and with extremely strict terms on fair trade. Crossing an iruxi trader is ill-advised; betraying an iruxi mercenary even more so. Due to the potential competition and market share as guides, iruxi and Mwangi kobolds often clash. Kobolds often undercut the prices of iruxis and are willing to work for almost anyone. Iruxi rarely negotiate with adventurers who consider hiring kobolds, citing their capriciousness and potential untrustworthiness.

While the Terwa Lords are the only established lizardfolk nation in the Sodden Lands and wider Mwangi Expanse, all major lizardfolk nations and several smaller congregations can be found represented in the Sodden Lands. Though the reason behind this has never been made clear, many speculate that the Sodden Lands act as the seat of a lizardfolk council.

## **MBAIKI**

Sometimes confused for catfolk on sight and said to be people cursed by an angry god for their hubris, mbaikis are overly large and intelligent leopards who silently stalk the jungle. The most likely truth is that mbaikis were once human and transformed in a botched attempt to save themselves from the severe magical fallout of Earthfall. While some mbaikis venture into civilization to try to escape their fates, they are seldom seen anywhere but the jungle.

Locals whisper that if one can successfully hunt and capture a mbaiki, they are offered a glimpse of two possible futures: one filled with promise and one wrought with despair. All they must do is free the creature and tend to any of its wounds to gain a fortunate fate. If an mbaiki is injured or killed due to malice, negligence, or direct action, the despair-riddled future will come to pass without fail. Because of this promise of a desirable future, mbaikis are

often hunted relentlessly. Most shun all contact as a result, using the aid of their gifts in divination and illusion magic to avoid pursuers.

## PLANAR SCION

Within the Mwangi Expanse, it is believed that all planar scions, no matter their origins, have a great predetermined fate that can alter history. For tieflings, most believe this fate to be grim and that tiefling children are cursed to bring nothing but darkness. As a result, these adolescents are either abandoned at birth or their parents flee from their homes with them in the night. Many tieflings of the Expanse live lives of extremes, either exemplifying their supposed corrupt nature or proving themselves paragons of good.

Aasimars, on the other hand, are usually seen as good omens and blessings from the gods by most, save those who worship demons. These not-quite-mortal people often rise to positions of idolization and power, their perceived goodness lending them influence. Some aasimar become seduced by the power often freely given to them and abuse it.

Ganzis are hotly debated across most cultures. Some consider their mutations from the chaotic and primordial magic of the world to be boons—manifestations of a new way of understanding the universe. Others see them as dangerous destabilizing elements that need to be controlled. Still others simply leave them be. If a ganzi happens to make their way into the Expanse from bordering Holomog, their treatment by locals can vary as wildly as their own whims.

## SABOSAN

The reclusive sabosan are often the bogeymen of the Expanse, a fable true in origin but so seldom encountered that parents use them to frighten misbehaving children. Whispered tales of shadows that can blot the moon, bodies drained of blood, and strangely abandoned viscera abound.

In truth, these carnivorous bat-folk were hunted to near extinction and now live deep in the furthest reaches of the jungle. With one of their gods, Vyriavaxus, dead and the other, Easivra, forgotten to time, sabosan search for new meaning and a new god to devote themselves to: one capable of helping them stand against the fury of the demon-lord Angazhan and his charau-ka worshippers. Driven from the city of Jaytirian deep in the jungle, they now can be found anywhere within the Expanse in search of discovering purpose and greater meaning. If one manages to make a connection without exsanguination, the ramifications on the path of all sabosan could be altered forever.

## SERPENTFOLK

Serpentfolk, also known as sekmin, once ruled over vast empires stretching over the Mwangi Expanse and Inner Sea but were massacred in antiquity by the Azlanti. Despite their retreat into the Darklands, their population never recovered, and their numbers remain low. Some question if more than a handful persist within the Expanse, yet they still hold a presence in the Darklands city of Ilmurea, located below Savinth-Yhi.

The few serpentfolk encountered by others often cover and hide their faces as they work as guides and mercenaries. Their exorbitant charges mean they never come into conflict with any iruxi or kobolds who might dare to challenge their competition. The money they make fuels expeditions deep into the Expanse as they chase legends that say the severed head of the god Ydersius lies buried somewhere in the interior. The call of these stories is like that of a siren, with promises of a return to glory all but forgotten. Some say this lure can be so powerful that sometimes serpentfolk are found wandering the jungle on the edge of exhaustion, falling to the damp earth to scratch at the mud before picking themselves up and shuffling away.

## ADDITIONAL READING

More info can be found about:

**Catfolk:** *Advanced Player's Guide* 8

**Boggards:** *Bestiary* 44

**Lizardfolk:** *Lost Omens Character Guide* 56

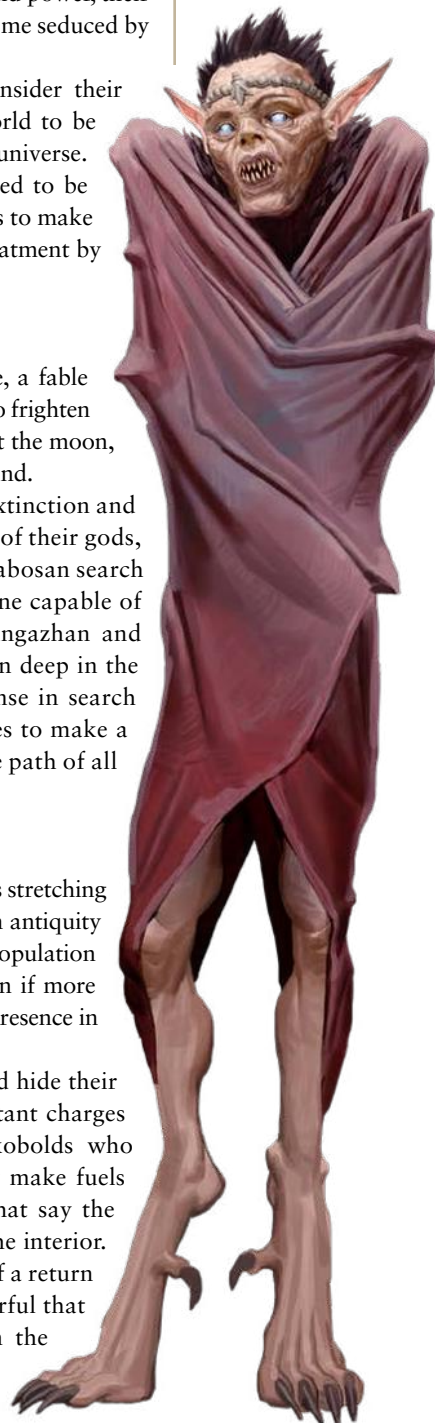
**Kobolds:** *Advanced Player's Guide* 12

**Leshys:** *Lost Omens Character Guide* 52, *Bestiary* 218, *Bestiary* 2 160

**Planar Scions:** *Advanced Player's Guide*, *Lost Omens Ancestry Guide*

**Sabosan:** *Pathfinder* 146 91

**Serpentfolk:** *Bestiary* 2 236



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# RELIGION

Natural barriers and vast distances have shaped the Expanse's religions as much as its people, creating a thousand variants comprised of familiar deities and regional faiths. For all the diversity in worship and artistic depiction, common themes unite the Mwangi approach to worship.

At the root of their identities, the gods are symbolic expressions of the Mwangi Expanse's most enduring aspirations and anxieties. Angazhan represents power, dominance, and destruction, just as Grandmother Spider forms the foundation for oral traditions. Walkena's undead existence drives home the narrative of outside invaders, feeding the fears of foreign exploitation. Here the gods are not so much the source of animal strength, cleverness, or hate so much as a means of personifying and translating those concepts, and anyone who would understand the Expanse's people would do well to study their faiths.

Yet the gods are also very real. Supernatural haunts and beasts are proof of their influence and reason enough to offer prayers for protection. Celestials and fiends alike enact their patrons' will in the material world. Even priests perform minor miracles on a daily basis, driving home that the divine are as powerful and worthy of awe as ever. However, for all the deities' cosmic importance, their role in most Mwangi societies takes on a humbler role, treated in everyday parlance more like eccentric relatives or disquieting neighbors whom it's best not to rouse than omnipotent beings—all the more so, given some groups' genealogies identifying one or more gods as distant ancestors. Unwelcome rain might be cause to chide Gozreh aloud, and on hot days far from Mzali, someone might reprimand Walkena that this is no time to play with fire. Elsewhere it's high praise at the end of a tale to tease a talented storyteller as if she were Grandmother Spider masquerading in mortal form, mock-scolding her for ignoring earlier prayers.

This behavior stems partly from desensitization to the supernatural; magic is so prevalent in the Expanse it can seem at times mundane. More importantly, though, this casual divine banter originates in the thousands of myths of the various gods tricking, fighting, thwarting, stealing from, and flirting with one another, immortalizing the gods' supposed exploits in a humbling light. The gods aren't aloof; they're present and approachable for any so bold as to call on them. Just so did Holomog's ancestors beseech the Empyrean Lords to negotiate the Celestial Concordance, and just so can anyone from lay person to priest petition the divine—or hold their gods accountable. Nowhere is this better illustrated than Mzali, where the god Walkena walks among the same people who a century earlier deemed their three sun gods complacent and cast the trio aside.

For all the power they bring, these pacts are binding. Walkena shelters Mzali's people yet demands supplication.

Angazhan grants strength at the cost of control. Even Holomog's celestial obedience carries strictures its citizens can't easily ignore. Here the favored faiths remain at their strongest, often from sincere reverence but sometimes because any hint of blasphemy invites severe punishment.

Yet even these more demanding faiths are the exception rather than the rule. Most areas celebrate a host of divinities, from familiar gods to more obscure, local patrons. Senghor's reverence of Abadar coexists with strong Gozren faith. Kibwe is awash with hundreds of Zenj household deities imported by traders from across the Expanse. Bloodcove's longtime connection to the Shackles has provided a foothold for Besmara's clerics, even as many inhabitants have become desensitized to thieves smuggling out sacred relics from inland faiths. Even in Nantambu, where Jatembe's millennia-old magical traditions offer a compelling alternative to divine power, shrines to Shelyn, Irez, Nethys, and more find homes.

At its core, faith is like so much else in the Mwangi Expanse: a diverse, ageless, occasionally dangerous reflection of its history and people, all too often misunderstood by outside observers.

## USING THE ENTRIES

The entries for deities in this book use the stat block format described below to present the vital information required for worship. Additional information useful for playing a champion, cleric, or worshipper of a deity is available in Chapter 8 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, as well as *Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic*.

**Name:** The deity's name plus a common title or epithet.

**Areas of Concern:** The topics the deity cares most about.

**Alignment:** The deity's alignment. In parentheses, the entry lists other character alignments that this deity accepts from worshippers.

**Divine Font:** This entry presents whether the deity grants worshippers heal or harm, or can grant both.

**Divine Ability:** This section lists the two ability boosts the deity grants as options for characters with the raised in belief background (*Gods & Magic* 9).

**Divine Skill:** This section lists a skill that is especially associated with this deity.

**Domains:** The domains that best represent this deity.

**Alternate Domains:** If the deity offers additional domains (*Gods & Magic* 7), they are listed here.

**Cleric Spells:** Each deity provides at least three additional spells to the spell list of clerics who worship them.

**Edicts:** Directives that the deity urges their followers to perform.

**Anathema:** Acts or behaviors that are considered to be absolutely abhorrent to the deity.

**Favored Weapon:** The deity's favored weapon. See *Gods & Magic* 9 for details.

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# ADANYE



## THE WARMTH OF THE HEARTH

**Areas of Concern** hearth, imagination, protection, solitude

**Alignment** LG (LG, LN, NG, CG)

**Divine Font** *heal*

**Divine Ability** Dexterity or Wisdom

**Divine Skill** Society

**Domains** duty (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 114), family, protection,

repose (*Gods & Magic* 116)

**Alternate Domains** confidence, fire

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *feather fall*, 2nd: *misdirection*, 7th: *magnificent mansion*

**Edicts** keep your counsel, follow your heart, appreciate a warm hearth, defend those who welcome you into their home

**Anathema** force anyone into drudgery or mindless work, deny support to loved ones, surrender when escape is an option, destroy a place that has given you shelter

**Favored Weapon** claw or kukri

Legend holds that the amurruns—known as catfolk to others—were created as guardians against threats to home, nature, and the world at large. While the goddess



Adanye is not considered to be their creator, she is said to have mentored these first guardians, teaching them the skills necessary to protect and defend, both in combat and in careful interaction with others. She also taught the importance of what they protected, identifying the hearth and the home, as well as the right to self-determination and to solitude, as worthy of defense. She is said to have instilled in the amurruns their need for solitude and their esteem of imagination. A master teacher, she is depicted as a graying catfolk woman or a cat by the hearth fire, her large, gentle eyes full of wisdom.

The tenets of Adanye's faith are few and flexible. She helps the curious and the wandering to retain their sense of self and their need to stay safe as they discover and grow. She honors the hours spent daydreaming on the hearth, whether that hearth is next to the fire pit at a remote campsite or in the kitchen of a generations-old homestead. She does not proscribe much. She adds to the serendipitous outlook of the catfolk, enhancing their inborn curiosity. Her worship tends to temper willfulness and wanderlust, reminding her followers of the safety and security to be found in having a spot of their own, even if that spot is temporary. She understands that sometimes the best protection is a retreat and gently reminds her followers of the virtue of impermanence and of existing in the moment. Rather than looking into the past or the future, she enjoins fully inhabiting the present—the place where one is, the hearth by which one naps, the company that one currently keeps, especially when it can be done in solitude.

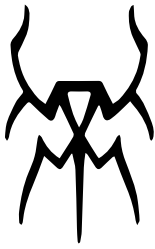
Because the catfolk of Southern Garund have not established large communities outside of Murraseth, there are no temples to Adanye outside of their homeland, only small shrines erected by travelers, perhaps near seldom-used mountain trails or in the corners of large temples dedicated to other gods. Her worshippers often paint or sketch her holy symbol, a simple paw print in orange (or on an orange background), which is sometimes enhanced with sketched flames or another symbol of fire, in an inconspicuous cornerstone of a building or on a fallen log. Adanye has an affinity with Desna and with Shelyn, given their overlapping interests in dreamers and individualism. Although she has a longstanding rivalry with the Osirian feline goddess Bastet, she does not spend much time feuding. Adanye's care is wholly enjoined upon her followers.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Adanye gains the following additional abilities.

**Adanye** Speed 70 feet, climb speed 70 feet, immune to immobilized; **Melee** ♦ claw (agile, finesse, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d10+6 slashing; **Ranged** ♦ hearth ember (range 120 feet), **Damage** 4d6+3 fire and 2d6 persistent fire

# ANGAZHAN



## THE RAVENOUS KING

**Areas of Concern** apes, jungles, tyrants

**Alignment** CE (CE)

**Divine Font** Harm

**Divine Skill** Athletics

**Divine Ability** Strength or Constitution

**Domains** destruction, might, nature, tyranny

**Alternate Domains** indulgence, zeal

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *magic fang*, 3rd: *animal form* (ape only), 5th: *moon frenzy*

**Edicts** Commit acts of brutal violence, test yourself against nature, make animals more dangerous

**Anathema** Cower from fights, allow yourself to be resurrected instead of reincarnated

**Favored Weapon** fist or spear

Angazhan is a name well known in the Mwangi Expanse, and for good reason. Called the Ravenous King and Demon Lord of Beasts, he appears as an enormous and terrifying red-furred ape with six long fingers on each hand, massive and clawed. His red eyes, twisted horns, and viciously sharp fangs give him a demonic appearance. His followers range from gnolls to charau-kas to nalfeshnee demons that number in the thousands.

Angazhan has astounding presence and influence, but that influence is rivaled by his raw power. He is skilled enough with weapons, but prefers to use his own abilities—his powerful fists, lethal fangs, sharp horns, and deadly tail. His terrible grasp extends beyond life into death, as well. Occasionally, those slain in combat by Angazhan's minions are reincarnated forcefully into an ape-like creature in the service of the Ravenous King. This curse causes the victim to serve eternally, and only upon death is there a chance for their soul to be retrieved before it slips into the Boneyard, to be sent on and suffer a never-ending torment in the Abyss.

A pledge to Angazhan is a commitment to acquiring power. Angazhan encourages followers to destroy all who oppose them with relentless force, to dominate until nothing is left to challenge, and to treat obstacles as something to be crushed with swiftness. Those who fail these commands are quick to be cast aside. This strength lures dangerous figures, thievish creatures, and terrifying beings. Followers share less of a bond and more of an understanding that in the end they serve a lord whose dominance can't be rivaled.

Angazhan is the patron of Usaro (page 268), a feared and hated charau-ka city in the Mwangi Expanse. A representative of Angazhan, the Gorilla King, once ruled Usaro, but was recently killed, throwing the city into chaos.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Angazhan gains the following additional abilities.

**Angazhan** Speed 60 feet, climb speed 60 feet; **Melee** ♦ fist (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d8+6 bludgeoning; **Ranged** ♦ **Bellowing Roar** (range increment 100 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 mental



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# BALUMBDAR



## THE WORLD-SHAKER

**Areas of Concern** great size, megafauna, strength

**Alignment** N (NG, N, NE)

**Divine Font** heal

**Divine Ability** Strength or Constitution

**Divine Skill** Athletics

**Domains** might, nature, perfection,

protection

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *ant haul*, 2nd: *enlarge*, 4th: *dinosaur form*

**Edicts** grow as large as you can, shelter those smaller and weaker than you, tend large animals and megafauna

**Anathema** accidentally injure others with your size, topple a massive natural monument, use magic to assume a form smaller than you are

**Favored Weapon** greatclub

Balumbdar, or He Who Is Massive, is the god of all huge things in the world that tower over smaller things. Creatures of great size, such as elephants and dinosaurs, are sacred to him, as are natural features that dominate the landscape like mountains and massive trees. Balumbdar is also a god of strength, but of might born of great size rather than training or skill. Balumbdar is considered brutish and dim-witted by most other gods, but the fact that he towers over them in any interaction means he always commands respect. When he bothers to manifest at all, it is as a startlingly large man with slabs of muscle and equally thick rolls of fat. He sometimes instead appears as a city-sized animal or as imposing clouds, heavy with rain and low to the ground.

Balumbdar's worshippers see their god's might in storms that shred a forest but leave the tallest trees standing, or avalanches that roll across buildings yet leave the mountain untouched. This, they know, is the power of size: to endure when the rest of the world is weak and small. They seek to emulate their god by growing large, either by developing their muscles or becoming immensely fat.

Balumbdar himself is uncaring about how great size and strength is used, but his followers generally divide themselves into two schools of thought. Those who feel that it is incumbent upon the large to tread upon the small are usually evil. Those who feel that size imparts an obligation to protect the small are usually good. Druids often revere Balumbdar because of his relationship with the natural world, and they adopt the care of animals much larger than they are—or at times, animals that are much smaller, to demonstrate Balumbdar's stalwart guardianship of smaller creatures.

The Elephant People revere Balumbdar, but not by name; they know that some ancient divine sponsor sent the elephants to the world to guide others. This patron is Balumbdar, who doesn't care that this nameless people have, in turn, no name for him; Balumbdar speaks to them through the elephants that serve his will.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Balumbdar gains the following additional abilities.

**Balumbdar** Speed 70 feet, climb 50 feet, immune to immobilized; **Melee** ♦ slam (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d12+4 bludgeoning; **Ranged** ♦ overbearing pressure (range 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 bludgeoning

# CHOHAR



## THE GOLDEN LION

**Areas of Concern** justice, loyalty, work

**Alignment** LG (LG, LN, NG)

**Divine Font** heal

**Divine Ability** Strength or Charisma

**Divine Skill** Intimidation

**Domains** fire, family, cities, sun

**Alternate Domains** duty, toil (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #148 63*), vigil, zeal

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *burning hands*, 3rd: *fireball*, 4th: *fire shield*

**Edicts** finish any and all tasks you accept, bring those who are cruel to justice, show pride in your home and your heritage

**Anathema** break your word, be cruel to the innocent, rebuke someone due to their homeland

**Favored Weapon** starknife

The old gods of the threefold sun were all but forgotten under the rule of Walkena, the child god. The immortal tyrant punishes anyone who lacks faith with death, and there is no worse blasphemy than to worship a rival god in his city. But the freedom fighter Sihar and her followers, the Bright Lions, have spread the word of the old sun gods in secret, and now they are returning to the people.

Even though it has only been just over a century since Walkena retook the throne, worship of the Old Sun Gods waned before then. Their teachings had been ingrained into day to day life, and many Mzali traditions can be traced directly to rituals started by sun kings—rulers believed to be descended from the old sun gods. But when the Council of Mwanyisa overthrew the sun kings and led Mzali's empire into decline, the people grew complacent in their worship, and in turn, so did the sun gods grow complacent themselves.

After the child-god's rise, Walkena's priests scoured the city of any other deities, smashing statues and temples, editing the truth to Walkena's liking and destroying the rest. In doing so, the names Tlehar, Chohar and Luhar were mostly erased from public memory, with the remnants subverted to Walkena's needs. It was only in the deepest hidden chambers that any sign of their original teachings still existed. Now that they have been rediscovered, Chohar has no intention of being forgotten again.

While Walkena and Chohar both call themselves gods of justice, the Old Sun God abhors Walkena's cruel and merciless sense of the concept. Chohar teaches that it is one's duty to fight for the innocent and powerless, and to never wield power for one's own benefit. The sun god has much grander goals than dealing with what he sees as a mere pretender god, however. Merely defeating the tyrant that rules them would not be enough to undo the generations of misfortune. The

people must find a renewed sense of strength and pride, so that they can fight for themselves. Until then, Chohar will shine down on them, offering any protection he can. When the time comes, he will lead his people into a bright future.

While the Old Sun Gods are considered equal in importance, Chohar attracts the largest following of worshippers, both historically and today. Still, even those who prefer the teachings of a particular sun god typically pay respect and homage to the other two as well.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Chohar gains the following additional abilities.

**Chohar** Speed 70 feet, *air walk*; **Melee** ♦ jaws (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 5d6+6 piercing plus 1d6 fire damage; **Ranged** ♦ sunbeam (range 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+6 fire



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# GRANDMOTHER SPIDER



## THE WEAVER

**Areas of Concern** family, illusion, stories, twilight, weaving

**Alignment** N (NG, N, CG, CN)

**Divine Font** *harm* or *heal*

**Divine Skill** Crafting

**Divine Ability** Intelligence or Wisdom

**Domains** creation, fate, family, trickery

**Alternate Domains** change, darkness

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *pest form*, 2nd: *web*,

4th: *glibness*

**Edicts** be skilled and clever, think for yourself, take due payment for your work, humiliate the powerful

**Anathema** abuse someone you have power over, harm someone who has given you sincere kindness, let a slight go unanswered, own a slave

**Favored Weapon** bola (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 248)

Throughout the Mwangi, there are few as highly respected as storytellers. As stewards of their peoples' oral traditions, they act as historians, educators, and entertainers, so it is only right that they pay homage to the goddess of stories, Grandmother Spider. Also known as Nana Anadi, Grandmother Spider was once content in her role as weaver of fate for the gods, as it gave her the ability to craft the grandest tales anyone had ever known. But as she told story after story at the other gods' whims, they failed to show proper respect to the one who made their glorious and terrible legends come to pass, treating her as a servant or a tool. Grandmother had no patience for overinflated egos, and even less for those who take credit for the work of others. She crafted unique humiliations tailored to each of the gods, and as tales of her mischief spread, she wove her own divinity from them. Some of the more prideful gods deny her still—worshiping Grandmother Spider is forbidden by Asmodeus for as long as she still twirls copies of his keys around her fingers, and Abadar still holds a grudge since the Century of the Unbalanced Scale. To the north of the Mwangi, there are almost no shrines dedicated to Grandmother Spider. But the clever and willful always find ways to revere her.

No matter how their pride might be wounded, few have dared to take direct action against Grandmother Spider. Alone, she is dangerous enough, for they say Nana Anadi holds all the secrets of the world within her web. However, her sibling Achaek, the Red Mantis, is a force that even gods fear. Though he treats his sister with indifference, he once lashed out at someone who sought to do Grandmother Spider harm with disproportionate retribution. That one act has been more than enough.

Grandmother Spider uplifts those who rebel against the status quo, strike above their station, or otherwise fight for freedom. While she prefers subterfuge and cleverness, she does not eschew violence, viewing it as simply another tool—applied judiciously in the right place at the right time, it can accomplish a great deal. Abolitionists and freedom fighters across Mwangi view spiders as an omen of good fortune. Those who are forced to live and fight in secret against their oppressors take great comfort in the knowledge that Nana Anadi will still tell their stories long after they are gone.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Grandmother Spider gains the following additional abilities.

**Grandmother Spider** Speed 70 feet, climb speed 70 feet, immune to immobilized; **Melee** ♦ leg (deadly 3d8, finesse, reach 15 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 6d6+6 bludgeoning; Ranged ♦ venom web (range 120 feet), Damage 6d6+3 poison



# KALEKOT



## THE WINNOWER

**Areas of Concern** fear, silence, safe-keeping, the reviled

**Alignment** CN (N, CG, CN, CE)

**Divine Font** harm

**Divine Ability** Dexterity or Charisma

**Divine Skill** Intimidation

**Domains** death, nature, nightmares, secrecy

**Alternate Domains** darkness, wyrmkin

(*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 119)

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *pass without trace*, 3rd: *paralyze*, 4th: *phantasmal killer*

**Edicts** spread fear in others, hide dangerous secrets, shock the self-righteous, kill the guilty to protect the innocent

**Anathema** abuse someone you have accepted power over, allow a victim to escape due to gloating, snivel before authority, shout

**Favored Weapon** jaws or dagger

The guardian of deadly secrets and dangerous places, Kalekot is a bogeyman to most, murderer of the guilty and devourer of those who trespass. To those that society can't punish, Kalekot is executioner, striking from the shadows and leaving bodies to rot on the ground. To those lost at night, Kalekot is a silent follower, a guardian from danger. Those few who have glimpsed him describe a figure with withered skin and a snake's twisting spine. He always conceals his features behind an eyeless mask, its mouth filled with serpent's teeth, each fang the size of an elephant's tusk.

Only those who have seen the darkest aspects of the world understand Kalekot well enough to seek him out safely. For Kalekot does not spread fear for the joy of it—he spreads it to keep people alive. The world holds many places that should not be visited, many secrets that should never be spread, and many monsters that hide behind smiling faces. Fear keeps people wary and on guard. Fear keeps the childish and curious from seeking out trouble. And fear is the only deterrent that predatory creatures understand. Kalekot and his servants terrify the innocent, but they also stalk the guilty, reminding those who torment others that there will always be a reckoning.

Kalekot is a cynic, who believes he must dirty his hands to keep the souls of others clean. Despite this, he despises those who maintain optimism through ignorance. He favors those who make others uncomfortable through no wrong of their own—those with disfigurements and deformities, the poor, the abused and victimized, taboo breakers, and the monstrous. He is known to watch over those of dual heritage, two-headed creatures, and twins. Some scholars believe Kalekot himself was once a twin, before he buried his double to seal them away for eternity.

Kalekot has a deep love of wild plants; he brews liquid chocolate, coffee, and ciders from jungle fruit, and his priests often use such drinks in their rituals and spells.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Kalekot gains the following additional abilities.

**Kalekot** Speed 70 feet, ignore difficult terrain; **Melee** ♦ ivory fangs (fatal d10, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 6d6+6 piercing; **Ranged** ♦ whisper of unmaking (range 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 slashing



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# LUBAIKO



## THE SPARK IN THE DUST

**Areas of Concern** wildfire, bad luck, inspiration, turmoil

**Alignment** CN (N, CG, CN, CE)

**Divine Font** harm or heal

**Divine Ability** Intelligence or Charisma

**Divine Skill** Diplomacy

**Domains** ambition, fire, lightning (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 115), zeal

**Alternate Domains** change (*Gods & Magic* 112), destruction  
**Cleric Spells** 1st: *ill omen* (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 221), 2nd: *flaming sphere*, 7th: *fiery body*

**Edicts** set fires, change the world, act with ambition or not at all  
**Anathema** calm a crowd, douse a fire, sleep in the same place three nights in a row

**Favored Weapon** longspear

Fires and explosions of all kinds are Lubaiko's passion, from an ember that ignites a flour mill to an outrage that rips through a nation. She is the powder keg whose fuse has burned down, erupting into something momentous, be it for better or for worse. Roaming throughout the sky above Golarion, she delights in throwing her bolts into the fields and the minds of people, whenever conditions permit and wherever they may fall. Some believe the smoke from Lubaiko's fires are curses and misfortune flying up into the air to spread throughout the land. Yet Lubaiko's blazes also often clear the way for new growth.

Though a dangerous god, Lubaiko has a playful, mischievous side, just as there is erratic beauty in dancing sparks and in the teasing whisper of a candle's flame. She loves men's clothing, the passion and tumult that flows with too much brandy, riotous jokes, and stories that make emotions run high. Her humor runs slightly on the sadistic side—she might set someone's sleeve aflame for the fun of it, or laugh hysterically at the bad luck of others, so long as no one (at least, who doesn't deserve it) gets too hurt. Though she had no involvement in the creation of gunpowder, she has likewise adopted it, delighting in burnt powder offerings, cannon salutes, and exploding kegs.

Revolutionaries, inventors, artists, and arsonists alike offer Lubaiko prayers to help their achievements quickly spread. She has also been known to intervene and protect others from destructive strife, such as saving a particular orchid or homestead, though she's as likely to do so on a whim as out of acknowledgment for a desperate plea. She attracts some followers who seek to spark upheaval to change the world, but most of her worshippers share her fascination with unabated power, even if it causes everything to burn to the ground.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Lubaiko gains the following additional abilities.

**Lubaiko** Speed 30 feet, fly speed 70 feet; **Melee** ♦ longspear (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 6d12+6 piercing; **Ranged** ♦ flaming lightning (versatile fire, range 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 electricity

# LUHAR



## THE SETTING SUN

**Areas of Concern** death, dreams, destiny

**Alignment** LN (LG, LN, LE)

**Divine Font** *harm*

**Divine Ability** Dexterity or Wisdom

**Divine Skill** Stealth

**Domains** cities, darkness, dreams, sun

**Alternate Domains** fate, soul, star, zeal

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *sleep*, 3rd: *invisibility sphere*, 5th: *shadow walk*

**Edicts** learn about the night and prepare yourself to face its creatures and dangers, always make time for sleeping and dreams, ensure others never go to sleep scared

**Anathema** stay up all night without any breaks for sleeping or dreaming, attack a person or creature while they sleep, leave a badly wounded opponent alive and suffering, create undead or ask questions of the dead

**Favored Weapon** spiked chain

The old gods of the threefold sun were all but forgotten under the rule of Walkena—but Luhar did not mind being forgotten. It is Walkena's undeath that she finds offensive, for she had crafted him such a beautifully perfect eternal sleep. Now he not only rejects her gift, but instills so much fear in his followers that their rest is fitful and brief.

The goddess of dusk is most often portrayed as a lioness with the head of a woman, with skin as dark as night and eyes that shine like stars. She is typically depicted at Chohar's right hand, often asleep while the midday lion stands vigil. Some of her worshippers follow her example, taking long naps during the day so that they can be better prepared to keep watch over sleeping companions at night. Luhar's followers believe there is no greater calling than to face the dangers of the night for the sake of those one wants to protect.

There are many gods of dreams, but to Luhar, it is sleep itself that is most precious. Death is simply the final, and most precious, sleep. While still a somber experience, it is not one that followers seek to delay. When death comes, they only pray that it will be painless and swift. Luhar answers these prayers and crafts each death personally, doing everything in her power to make one's final moments peaceful. As such, she has a great disdain for grave robbers, necromancers, and any who would defile her gifts. In the past, priestesses of Luhar would bury the dead with obsidian lion tokens. While the tokens may

have been simple trinkets, some believed that if their faith was strong, the black lion would manifest with them in the afterlife and protect their soul until their next life.

In truth, it is not Walkena who Luhar finds most upsetting. It is the people who removed Walkena from his final rest and put his body on display for their own benefit who could not be more abhorrent to the goddess. To turn death into a spectacle for profit went against all of her teachings. When their time came, Luhar did not answer their prayers. Their ends were not peaceful. They were not brief. They did not find rest in her domain.

As for Walkena, she plans to craft a new death for him even more beautiful than the last.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Luhar gains the following additional abilities.

**Luhar** Speed 70 feet, ignore difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain; **Melee** ♦ spiked chain (disarm, finesse, trip, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d8+6 slashing; **Ranged** ♦ touch of mercy (range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 negative



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# MAZLUDEH



## MOTHER OF HEARTH AND WALL

**Areas of Concern** balance, community, negotiation, and twilight

**Alignment** NG (LG, NG, CG)

**Divine Font** *heal*

**Divine Skill** Diplomacy

**Divine Ability** Wisdom or Charisma

**Domains** cities, family, knowledge, perfection

**Alternate Domains** duty, nature

**Spells** 1st: *share lore*, 4th: *shape stone*, 5th: *wall of stone*

**Edicts** seek to improve yourself and your community, trust those you work with, encourage cooperation

**Anathema** betray another's trust, place conflict between ideological differences over people's lives

**Favored Weapon** shield boss

Mazludeh was once one among many empyreal lords, responsible for the domains of community stewardship and loving sacrifice. However, her actions during Earthfall and the Age of Darkness saved untold lives in Mwangi. Dismayed by the chaos and loss of life, Mazludeh spurred her fellow empyreal lords into action, forming a divine concordance that protected the Garundi nation of Holomog from devastation. Mazludeh's efforts elevated her to true divinity and the status of the matron goddess of the nation of Holomog. Now the goddess of negotiations and treaties, her followers often travel with merchants and ambassadors. She is also considered the diplomat to the other empyreal lords, able to pass on prayers to those most suited to answer them and persuade celestial beings to see to their fulfillment. Throughout the Mwangi, worshippers of Mazludeh have developed a reputation for being brave, empathetic, and fair even to their enemies.

Over the years, it has become increasingly common for Mwangi communities to pay homage to Mazludeh, especially when constructing new homes and settlements, although more structured worship is still rare. Mazludeh sees the love and care in all Mwangi communities and offers them all the protections she can. Even before her presence there, many edicts of her faith were already common practice, expected of any contributing member of society. New worshippers of Mazludeh were thus required to make very little change to the way they already lived their lives.

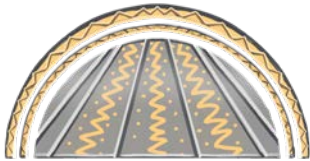
Mazludeh is often depicted either as a giant serpent with a mane of eggs and fresh figs, or as a woman with serpents for hair. It is heavily debated among scholars what this dual nature could mean, but most agree that her divinity likely predates humans, and that they adopted her later on. Unlike her worship in other parts of the world, worshippers in Mwangi tend to embrace Mazludeh's duality. To deny either side of her would be to deny a part of her, and both are necessary to fully understand the deity. To them, she represents not only unity with one's neighbors, but unity and coexistence with nature. Living in balance with the food one grows, the animals one hunts, and the land one lives on is just as important anything that happens within the walls of a home.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Mazludeh gains the following additional abilities.

**Mazludeh** Speed 70 feet, climb 50 feet, shield (15 hardness, can't be damaged); **Melee** ♦ viper strike (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d10+6 piercing; **Ranged** ♦ stone rain (range 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 bludgeoning

# TLEHAR



## THE RISING SUN

**Areas of Concern** iron, love, rebirth

**Alignment** NG (LG, NG, CG)

**Divine Font** heal

**Divine Ability** Intelligence or Charisma

**Divine Skill** Crafting

**Domains** cities, healing, passion, sun

**Alternate Domains** change, creation, vigil, zeal

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *soothe*, 3rd: *enthrall*, 5th: *dreaming potential*

**Edicts** give yourself fully to everything you attempt, always maintain hope that tomorrow will be a better day, treasure every gift you are given by those who matter to you.

**Anathema** lose your motivation to your regrets, spread despair, treat a loved one poorly

**Favored Weapon** morningstar

The old gods of the threefold sun were all but forgotten under the rule of Walkena, the child god. But Tlehar never despaired, for the dawn must forever represent hope to all good people who gaze upon it. She holds the Bright Lions of Mzali especially dear in her heart, since they were a ray of hope to her people even when she couldn't be. Thanks to them, citizens of Mzali and beyond have been reminded of her loving embrace, and once again awaken with resolve in their hearts.

Tlehar keeps watch over every birth and new beginning, as there is no greater symbol of hope than new life. Midwives and nurses pray to Tlehar to keep watch over their work and ensure the health of newborns. Those coming to terms with a new gender or sexuality may call on Tlehar's blessing and protection as they learn to better understand themselves. People fleeing from unsafe homes can seek out her followers for safe refuge; these followers of Tlehar wear discrete, iron charms to let others know that they will be ready to fight for them. No matter their needs, Tlehar represents a sanctuary of peace in a sea of fear. It is her hope that the people of Mzali will soon live in fear no longer.

The dawn goddess is depicted as a human woman with golden skin, the gray-furred head of a lioness, and eyes as black as night. She is often portrayed on Chohar's left side, opposite her sister, with one hand extended in welcome and the other holding an iron morningstar. While Tlehar is not typically as strict in her justice as her counterparts, she shows no mercy to those who hurt the ones they claim to love. She may be willing to forgive those who offer sincere repentance, but the lioness of the dawn has a will of iron. She believes that sometimes, protecting the hope of a better tomorrow means destroying those who cast darkness over the future.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Tlehar gains the following additional abilities.

**Tlehar** Speed 50 feet, fly speed 70 feet, cannot be immobilized; **Melee** ✦ morningstar (versatile piercing, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d6+6 bludgeoning; **Ranged** ✦ morning light (range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 3d6+3 fire and 3d6+3 positive



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# UVUKO



## THE DIAMOND RING

**Areas of Concern** metamorphosis, cycles, growth, fertility

**Alignment** CG (NG, N, CG, CN)

**Divine Font** heal

**Divine Ability** Strength or Wisdom

**Divine Skill** Athletics

**Domains** change (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 112), creation,

healing, wyrmkin (*Gods & Magic* 119)

**Alternate Domains** air, cold (*Gods & Magic* 112)

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *fleet step*, 3rd: *haste*, 6th: *dragon form*

**Edicts** embrace change and the future, master adversity with flexibility, foster freedom and progress for others

**Anathema** allow yourself and your surroundings to stagnate, crush an egg, use vile or cruel language

**Favored Weapon** maul

The god Uvuko dances across the land, his body forming the boundary between earth and sky. His twisting tail churns the air into clouds, his creations spreading water to all those who thirst. His sliding scales till the earth, bringing forth plants that are nourished by Uvuko's rains. The worship of Uvuko is widespread in the Mwangi Expanse, found among many lizardfolk tribes, Mbe'ke and Taralu dwarves, and in the more cosmopolitan cities.

Uvuko's followers agree on the ideal of change as an aspect of life, both for themselves and others. Much as Uvuko's constant motion brings renewal to the earth

and sky, personal growth and choice allows the world to flourish. When creatures are denied their ability to choose, their energy is lost, and the great cycle of the world threatens to halt. For this reason, adherents of Uvuko adamantly oppose slavery and servitude, and readily fight to end either. Sickness likewise causes a creature to stagnate and rot, and so worshippers often train as healers, helping others to shed their illness like a snake sheds its skin.

Uvuko's worshippers also agree on the paramount importance of looking to the future with an unflinching attitude of eagerness and expectation. The past is the earth to be tilled, the future the endless potential of the empty sky. Evolving into a better self, being prepared for whatever is around the corner, and being self-aware are at the heart of Uvuko's teachings. The need to move on, as the individual changes and grows, whether from a place, a relationship, or a livelihood, is honored among Uvuko's followers.

Despite his age and power, Uvuko is an innocent god—sometimes, even shy. Rituals to Uvuko are often simply attempts to coax the god into actually visiting. Arguments, misery, or even a cross word spoken in anger can cause the god to dart away, and so priests seeking Uvuko's blessing must be careful to present a welcoming environment.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Uvuko gains the following additional abilities.

**Uvuko** Speed 30 feet, fly speed 70 feet, immune to immobilized; **Melee** ♦ maul (shove, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 6d12+6 bludgeoning; **Ranged** ♦ breath of lightning (range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+3 electricity

# WALKENA



## THE GOD-KING

**Alignment** LE (LN, LE)

**Divine Font** *harm*

**Divine Skill** Deception

**Divine Ability** Strength or Wisdom  
**Domains** family, freedom, sun, tyranny

**Alternate Domains** duty, fire

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *burning hands*,

3rd: *fireball*, 4th: *wall of fire*

**Edicts** Uphold Mzali's laws, tend to Walkena and obey his instructions, oppose exploitation of the Mwangi Expanse

**Anathema** Consort or trade with non-Mwangi peoples, defy Walkena's orders

**Favored Weapon** spear

In the city-state of Mzali in the Mwangi Expanse resides an undead being of immense power, a child-sized god-king. In the past, Walkena was a mortal descendant of the gods that ruled over Mzali in ancient times, one of the sun kings from an old empire and a golden age of the city. Ages later, his preserved body was found by members of the Council of Mwanyisa, who ruled Mzali at that time. Believing him to be an omen of the city's impending resurgence, the council took him to put him on display in Mzali. When an army from the Sargavan city of Kalabuto attacked the city, Walkena awoke—this time as an undead creature—and slew each of the invaders in a purging rain of fire.

Walkena is entirely different from how he was before his death. A sense of kindness and compassion was once common in his disposition, but after his revival he became controlling and unwavering. The young sun king previously embodied a gentle compassion; now he has become harsh like the summer sun. He purifies, but at a terrible cost.

Walkena's stance is that all residents of the Mwangi Expanse are bonded, that they must all practice unity. Those whom associate and conspire with outsiders are traitors and a danger. Although his means are not always considered good, he will do anything to protect his people, so long as they do not defy him. To restore his homeland to the glory it once held is his greatest goal.

Though cruel in his rule and terrifying to his enemies, for a long time, Walkena was one of the strongest points of resistance against colonial forces and the exploitation of the Mwangi Expanse. Many were reluctant to confront the child-god's abuses, fearful of criticizing one of the Mwangi people's most prominent defenders. Walkena's seeming disdain for the new nation of Vidrian has many worried that Walkena might be more harmful than helpful in the long run. Despite this, Walkena remains a compelling figure to many. His grace comes through in every action and word he speaks. He blesses those that have dedicated themselves to the Mwangi Expanse. Walkena does not

preach great rewards after death, but instead speaks to greatness in life.

## AVATAR

When casting the *avatar* spell, a worshipper of Walkena gains the following additional abilities.

**Walkena** Speed 60 feet, *air walk*; **Melee** ♦ holy spear (reach 20 feet; versatile fire), **Damage** 6d12+6 piercing; **Ranged** ♦ sunfire (range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 6d6+6 fire



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# OTHER RELIGIONS

Gods know no borders, and the size and diversity of the Expanse means that faiths of all kinds can be found. Many of the gods known in Avistan and northern Garund are also worshiped in the Mwangi Expanse, although not always in a form that would be immediately recognizable to worshippers further north.

## DESNA

Desna is one of the oldest gods, and the earliest Mwangi religious traditions pair Desna, Queen of the Sky, with

Curchanus, the Beast-God of the woods and wild places. Though these traditions differ on whether Desna and Curchanus were lovers or friends, they agree that, from her position in the heavens, Desna pined for Curchanus's wild freedom to explore the world's surface as he wished.

When Lamashtu trapped and killed Curchanus to gain his dominion over beasts, the dying god imparted to Desna his power over travel. Desna used this newfound freedom to retreat even further into the sky, and into the dreams of her devoted. She is now known as the patron of the stars in the night sky, especially those that are hard to see because they are so distant, and she delivers pleasant dreams to those who also honor their friends and long to travel far. She is kind and benevolent, but roused to anger when her faithful or her friends are threatened, and she offers no quarter for followers of Lamashtu.

In the Mwangi Expanse, Desna is most often associated with a pale blue color, a relic of her former role as Queen of the Sky. The Bonuwat consider Desna one-half of the pair known as Shimye-Magalla, alongside of Gozreh, as the sky and the wind are so intertwined as to be inseparable.

## GOZREH

Gozreh, the dualistic deity of storm and waves, has presented a study in contrasts since long before humanity's rise. Representing both waves and wind, male and female, old and young, Gozreh inspires those who study nature to see bounty and destruction in equal measure.

In the Mwangi Expanse, Gozreh is often viewed as having one dominant aspect, although which aspect is dominant varies by region. In the Sodden Lands, fanatical Gozrens known as the Storm Kindlers see the Eye of Abendego, the ceaseless hurricane, as evidence of their god's destructive presence. They insist that growth and bounty cannot withstand the storm's lashing. The Bonuwat see Gozreh as embodying the freedom of the wind, and have long paired Gozreh with Desna as Shimye-Magalla, a powerful aspect of the open sky. Many priests in the central jungles venerate Gozreh as Rain-Bringer, whose restoring rains are vital to the jungle's survival and whose displeasure manifests equally as droughts or as destructive storms.

No matter their form, Gozreh is never seen as a small god. Gozreh is always towering and impressive, whether as a hurricane, the winds that fill the sky, or rains that swell the rivers. The phrase "Goz big" means impossibly large, particularly when levied against someone whose aspirations seem unlikely.

## THE GREEN FAITH

The Green Faith is not a religion but a broad philosophy. Just as in other parts of Golarion, members of the Green



Faith in the Mwangi Expanse revere nature, protect wild places, and shepherd civilization to respect the interconnectedness of all things. Mwangi members of the Green Faith are perceived as peerless scholars regarding jungle habitats, which irritates the many members in the Expanse who don't live in jungles.

Mwangi members of the Green Faith are less likely to pass down their knowledge by carving truths into standing stones, but instead weave relics of wood and reed. Living masks are popular ways to share lore, as are intricate wooden storytelling boards whose patterns are too abstract for the uninitiated to grasp. Most dramatic is the art of tending jungle trees to grow in the shapes of titanic runes. These glyphs only impart their truths to seekers who view them from certain distant perspectives.

Among the most unique orders in the Green Faith in the Mwangi Expanse are the Order of the Frog and the Order of the Fallen Bridge. The former trains members to both cure and inflict natural poisons of all kinds, while the latter actively impedes connections between the region's mighty settlements. Fallen Bridge members see unimpeded commerce as unacceptably dangerous, as open trade discourages regional biodiversity, spreads industrial innovations, and efficiently transmits diseases.

## LAMASHTU

Lamashtu's influence in the Mwangi Expanse is not strong, but she has made her mark in many horrible ways. The Mother of Monsters is known in the Mwangi Expanse as the Howler or the Child-Eater, a predatory beast that steals away the young from inattentive parents. Although jackals and other cunning canines are her hungry offspring, she also manifests as poxes that kill or disfigure the young. When animals become disobedient or aggressive, it is a sign of Lamashtu's wicked influence, and keeping children away from such animals is wise from both practical and religious perspectives.

Lamashtu's greatest mark upon the Mwangi Expanse was the murder of Curchanus, god of the beasts and wild places who held the Expanse in special favor. Curchanus could turn the heart of any wild animal as he chose, and Lamashtu coveted this power to assert her dominion over beasts and make the jungle a place of nightmare. Curchanus blunted Lamashtu's victory by giving his freedom of travel to Desna; Lamashtu gained Curchanus's authority over wild animals, but her animals would skulk and hide, and not roam far. Lamashtu's dominion was further eroded by animalistic deities such as Angazhan, who asserted control over aggressive beasts and apes.

Lamashtu's greatest influence is among the gnolls on the other side of the Shattered Range and the Barrier Wall mountains. She sometimes compels these howling tribes

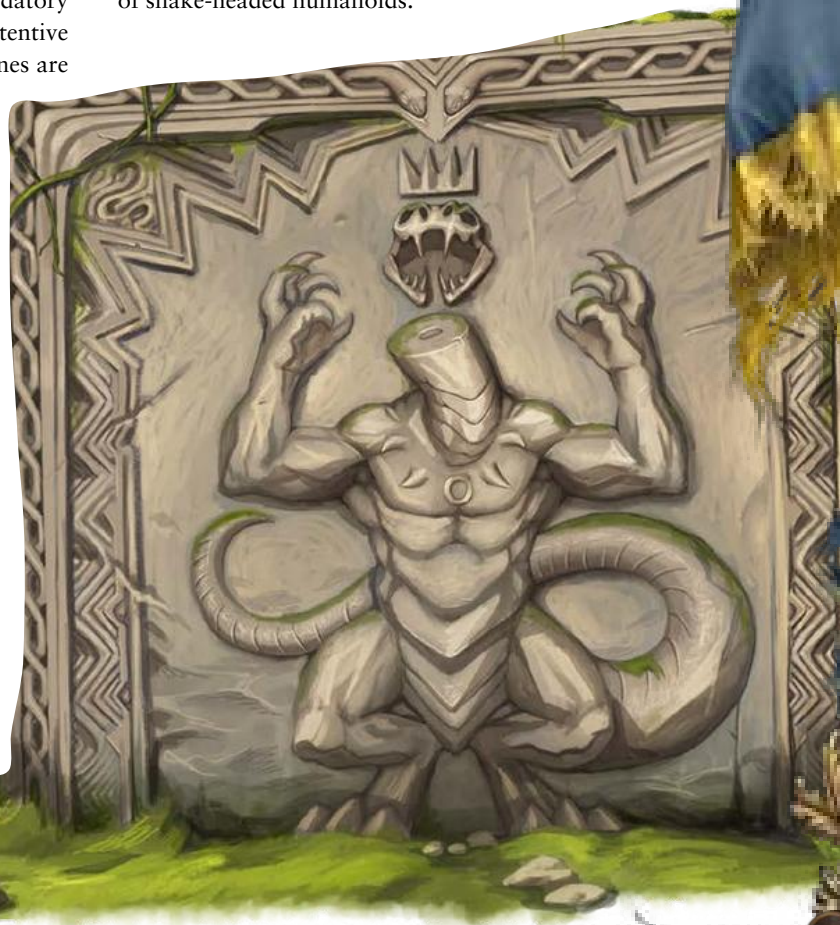
to venture through the mountains, even showing them visions of secret paths, to vent her frustrations on the lands that have rebuffed her domination.

## YDERSIUS

The headless god of the serpentfolk, Ydersius was decapitated by the Azlanti hero Savith during the Age of Legend. As the god of the serpentfolk fell, so too did their empire. Yet even a legendary mortal hero cannot kill a god, and both Ydersius's headless body and his bodiless head both live, in a fashion. His worshippers—almost exclusively serpentfolk who, like their sundered god, dream of one day being restored to power—receive conflicting and incoherent visions from their patron. These visions often center on reuniting Ydersius's head and body to reawaken him to his former potency.

Despite his headless state, Ydersius is still the patron of serpentfolk, immortality, and poison, although his inchoate dreams engender oracles more often than clerics. Alchemists value Ydersius's ancient lore regarding potent poisons, and the secrets of his threefold venoms are traded among certain sinister circles.

Ydersius's temples were once strongholds of serpentfolk communities, and were often fortified on frontiers where the serpentfolk clashed with their enemies. These once-grand temples are all now mere ruins, although supernaturally intelligent snakes and serpentfolk still lurk within them, scheming. Explorers can easily identify these ruins by repetitive iconography of snake-headed humanoids.



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# GEOGRAPHY

The environments of the Mwangi Expanse are as varied and interesting as the people that inhabit it. From the stark heights of the Barrier Wall's mountains, to the mysteries surrounding the immense Lake Ocota, to the verdant life of the Mwangi Jungle, the region contains an immeasurable number of sites, scenes, and experiences to encounter. There lie many ruined cities littered throughout the Mwangi Expanse, remnants of disaster, tragedy, or simple pride unchecked.

Lake Ocota is the central lake nestled inside the Mwangi Jungle and is connected to all the major rivers throughout the Expanse. An enormous sheer white structure known as the Spire of Destiny juts out from the middle of the lake, but its base is surrounded by a dense, impenetrable fog that prevents any from approaching it. The lake itself has a vast ecosystem of dangerously large animals, the most notable of which is a giant water orm known as the Fetid God. On the southern shore of Lake Ocota is Usaro, the city home to the River of Blood where the Gorilla King once ruled before meeting his end at the hands of adventurers.

To the north lies the Barrier Wall, an expansive mountain range that separates the Mwangi Expanse from Osirion. The passageway to the legendary alchemist Artokus Kirran's citadel is rumored to be hidden within the range, drawing prospective students for miles around. In the southern mountains lies the Tomb of a Thousand Tusks, a labyrinthine crypt built to house a stray asura's grisly prize.

In the northeastern corner of the Barrier Wall lie the Ruins of Kho, nestled within the Kho-Rarne pass. Kho was the first flying city raised by the Shory Empire, and many of its magical secrets still lie buried in the earth. The nearby Uomoto people (page 31) are the only ones adept at traversing the varied and extensive dangers that lie within the ruins. At the northernmost tip of the Barrier Wall lies Haldun, the headquarters of the Rainwall, a network of sentries that prevents creatures from the Sodden Lands from wandering north past the Barrier Wall. The Sodden Lands occupy the northwestern edge of the Mwangi Expanse and are the result of two kingdoms felled by the formation of the Eye of Abendego, a perpetual hurricane that rages off the coast.

Terwa Lake and the Terwa Uplands can be found to the south of the Sodden Lands. Terwa Lake houses many fallen cities on its shores, perhaps owing to the volcanic gas that erupts from its depths every so often. The mysterious city of murals, Bloodsalt, and the Gol-Ghani city Egregzia rest on the shores of Lake Terwa, both uninhabited for generations. The Terwa Uplands sits on the western end of Garund, and is home to the Mbe'ke dwarves.

Just south of the Terwa Uplands lie the Kaava Lands, a forested region named after kaava, tree-dwelling creatures

with short feathers that resemble fur. The Kaava Lands are generally difficult to navigate due to kaava's territorial demeanor and aptitude for intimidating coordination.

The dry, mountainous region known as the Bandu Hills lies in the southeast of the expanse, connecting the Mwangi and Screaming Jungles and the Kaava Lands. The foremost location of interest here is the ruined city of Arzikal, known as the City of Hungry Spires, and named for the upturned and ruined structures that resemble haphazard teeth. Precarious and prone to falling, the spires are always found upright again the next day, albeit in different locations.

Finally, beyond the Bandu Hills lie the Screaming Jungle, at the southernmost point of the area considered the Mwangi Expanse. The jungle is named so for the constant screaming of monkeys that gives the area its iconic soundscape. It houses Dbede, a 100-foot-tall structure home to millions of termites, and Elokolobha, a large eloko city.

## CLIMATE

Most of the Mwangi Expanse has the climate of a tropical rain forest, including steaming hot weather and frequent precipitation. The terrain in the area consists mostly of jungle, though mountains and savanna plains can be found in the interior, and swamps dominate the lakes and the Sodden Lands along the coast. When considering the weather in any given Mwangi location, it's most likely on any given day to have mild heat and precipitation (see *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 497 for more information on weather effects). Fog is also common in the mornings, and can often linger for weeks at a time in certain jungle areas. During the rainy seasons, downpours and storms are common, and areas along the coastline remain at risk for powerful storms (namely, windstorms, waterspouts, and hurricanes). A few regions—such as the Sodden Lands, where the sun has not pierced the clouds since the day Aroden died—remain unusually cold in comparison to the rest of the Expanse, and some of Mwangi's highest mountains are frigid and capped with snow.

As with all wild places, nature can create dangerous circumstances for travelers and residents alike. Floods (*Core Rulebook* 518; *Gamemastery Guide* 80) can occur near any large bodies of water during the rainy seasons. Pockets of quicksand (*Core Rulebook* 526) dot the shores of lakes, especially Lake Ocota. Treacherous scree (*Gamemastery Guide* 77) can coat the mountains, especially on the eroded faces of the Bandu Hills. A few rare areas have deadly volcanic vents (*Core Rulebook* 519) that have wiped out civilizations. The verdant jungles can also hide more bizarre natural hazards, including carnivorous plants, such as titanic flytraps (*Gamemastery Guide* 78).

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## BANDU HILLS

The Bandu Hills slumber to the southeast, silent and sullen. These dreary slopes serve as desolate tombs—homes for the restless undead. Bleak stone ruins, bleached bone-white by centuries beneath the pitiless sun, clutter the barren land. Gray clouds sink low into the narrow valleys, cloaking the treacherous paths with dense fog, heavy with the promise of cold, soul-soaking rain. What was once a delicate sign of spring beats upon travelers in freezing, impregnable sheets of slate gray that set the mud of the Bandu Hills churning, grasping hungrily at a traveler's every step. Despite the constant rain, the hills and vales bear only stone, packed soil, and the occasional empty cairn.

It has been whispered around many a sputtering bonfire that the sparse, spiky grass and skeletons of petrified trees harbor hungry spirits, eager to steal the breath from unsuspecting travelers. Those who find themselves trekking the neglected trails of those hills soon realize that the shallow valleys have led them astray with far more ease than expected.

It is where Mount Nakyuk and its cousins rise, like the bony fingers of a nameless, ancient god, that the erosion of the Bandu Hills remains at its most prominent—pock-marked with the forgotten mining camps and hunters'

trails that once fed into the great throat of the earth. Deep underground sprout the fruit of the Bandu Hills: veins of precious gold, deposits of minerals, and sprigs of precious stones that spread open like shimmering blossoms in the hands of foreign explorers and natives alike.

Wild game is difficult, at best, to find in the Bandu Hills. Travelers will find some luck with the edible bark and desiccated roots that pepper the landscape, but, like most of the Bandu Hills, these meals are scarce and unsatisfying.

### ARZIKAL

Glowering high above the western canopies of the Screaming Jungle are the jagged teeth of Arzikal, the ruined City of Hungry Spires. This silent city has been gouged from the earth, eviscerated, and displayed in all its grotesque glory. Each spire is a testament to some ancient god's rage; seeming once to have been a lively metropolis, its palaces and hovels alike are now stacked precariously one atop the other in teetering columns spread across a dozen miles, like the seeds of a flower.

Trespassers in the skeletal city can hear the whistle of a lonely wind through the nooks and crannies of these dilapidated buildings as each tower sways with

the practiced defiance of eons. Rumor holds that any spire that succumbs to the biting wind will topple soundlessly, only to sprout like a sinister stone mushroom elsewhere. It is in this way that the city grows, rather than through the propagation of any person or beast lurking in the shadow of the pitted obelisks and towers. This city is the swallower of life, the hungry ghost of its former glory, devouring visitors and trapping their spirits here forever.

Other dangers await adventurers beyond weaving through the labyrinth of long-forgotten towers. The once-delicately carved ebonwood gates hang open like gaping jaws, allowing free entry to any who dare. Plazas and promenades, at one time the lifeblood of this silent city, are littered with the deep imprints of thousands and thousands of seven-fingered hands.

## BARKSKIN LAKE

The ruined remains of tents, hovels, and huts ring the stony shores of Barkskin Lake, some bearing the telltale furrows of jagged claws. These are the temporary homes of the members of the Cobbled Kingdom. These wandering ghouls and Umasi—the mysterious humanoids who extend their lives by transplanting organs on their bodies—roam the desolate mountains and vales of the Bandu Hills, lured by the scent of mortal explorers seeking gold and glory in the shimmering veins deep below the earth.

According to legend, the lake itself is a smooth, glassy pink surface, unperturbed by fish or fowl, and any who wander into its depths find themselves easily held aloft by its salt-packed waters. A curious traveler who wades a few feet in is likely to find himself surrounded by the calcified remains of birds and beasts who wandered too far from the shore. In death, these creatures remain preserved for eternity, acting as the silent sentinels of Barkskin Lake and witnesses to the ghouls and Umasi (see the sidebar on page 161) who have made the lake their empire. Tales of this fabled lake echo in the Sargavan marketplaces and bazaars, but many fear that its riches have been lost to the mists of time.

## DARKREACH

A stone form of a man cresting the low-hanging clouds and flat-topped mountains overlooking the eastern Bandu Hills bears an inscription: “I point the way to Zurakai, never there to return.” This titan with sharp features exudes an intimidating aura, its deep black surface speckled with green streaks like an eerie night sky. The statue has long fallen from its perch high above the Ocota River. The fateful phrase is etched across its expansive chest and shoulders, which are as wide as a grown man’s outstretched arms. Could this statute point the way to a legendary city in the heart of the jungle, or does it merely seek to lead trespassers in its homeland to their agonizing deaths?

A few miles from the mysterious monument and the rumored hidden cities lurking in the hazy mists of the jungle lie the charred ruins of Darkreach. Unlike other scattered remains of centuries-old civilizations, Darkreach’s history spans merely decades, cut short in its prime, when the hopeful pilgrims and merchants that once found prosperity and peace within its stone walls suddenly vanished. The trading post stands as a silent reminder to any who would wander the wilderness of the Mwangi Expanse, with the scorched shadows of buildings serving as the only proof of the lives that disappeared into the jungle.

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Bandu Hills separate the Mwangi Jungle (page 154) and Mugumo Plains (page 166) in the north from the Screaming Jungle (page 174) in the south. Its westernmost range reaches into the nation of Vidrian, with the eastern Kaava Lands (page 160) directly to the north. While some residents of the Kaava Lands venture into the Bandu Hills, either competing or allying with the local ghouls, most people avoid the region whenever possible.

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## THE SARGAVA CHALICE

Established by the colonists of Sargava, the event known as the Sargava Chalice is a week-long foot race spanning parts of the Laughing Jungle, the M'neri Plains, and the Bandu Hills. Armed with only their wits and what items they take the time to craft along the way, the contestants run through trackless jungles, rolling plains, and treacherous mountain cliffs, dodging wild animals along the way. Any form of cheating, such as cached supplies, is punished severely, and the race's exact starting point and destination are kept secret until the day of the race. Though the race results in several fatal accidents and is considered by many Vidrics to prey upon the poor and desperate, it has outlived its Sargavan namesake. More competitors arrive every year, vying for fame and glory in the form of a large cash prize.

## DEEPTREASURE MINING COMPANY

An operation centered on a series of remote and secret bases in the Bandu Hills, the DeepTreasure Mining Company once supplied huge and high quality gems to the markets of Eledar in the colony of Sargava. The company exploited xorns in order to quickly extract the local gem veins, promising the elementals a way home as soon as they met some nebulous quota. The miners suffered two major setbacks in rapid succession, however. First, the Vidric Revolution upended local markets, with the new government only tentatively continuing trade with former colonialist associates. Second, the miners have recently run afoul of hobgoblins from Oprak in their mining tunnels, who had arrived via the Stone Roads in search of a rumored population of fellow hobgoblins within the area. While the hobgoblins have been surprisingly nonviolent in these confrontations, they have clearly expressed their intention to take over the company and sabotaged the miners at every turn, such as by helping the DeepTreasure xorns escape to the Plane of Earth.

## THE LITTLE VANJI

The Little Vanji winds through the Kaava jungles, home to fierce hippopotami and deadly constrictors. This river twists through over a hundred miles of rain forest, and travelers upon its wild waters can meet their match wrestling armored crocodiles or creeping through the dense foliage to avoid venomous plants. Those who venture farther upstream, beyond white-water rapids that threaten to rend boats to splinters, find themselves among the river's greater terrors that prowl the depths of its waters: gaping-mouthed fish large enough to swallow a man whole and lurking reptiles that camouflage themselves against the rocky base of the river.

Travelers will be relieved to reach the junction of the Little Vanji and the Dzimmi River, a natural ford that serves as one of the only reliable crossing points—however, their hopes might be short-lived, as the ford is a frequent hunting ground for bandits who reside near the ruins of Darkreach.

## MOUNT NAKYUK

The surrounding foothills reach upward toward the zenith of Mount Nakyuk, the highest point in an otherwise heavily eroded range. The desolate, crumbling peaks and lack of vegetation provide few reasons for people to venture willingly toward the mountain. The jagged sides of Mount Nakyuk remain home to foreign prospectors in camps of significant size, many left over from Vidric's colonialism. These miners target the rich mineral veins of the mountain that produce large amounts of gold and a small number of frequently flawless emeralds and sapphires. Fossils are also dug constantly from the slopes, curiosities that are nonetheless tucked away to later sell for a profit. The price of these mining operations is higher than many, as the explorers quickly attract the attention of the Cobbled Kingdom of Barkskin Lake. In exchange for demands for mining rights on their land, the Cobbled Kingdom demand that the miners hand over the corpses from every encampment, to provide fresh parts for the Umasi and meals for the ghouls. Mining always takes its price in blood and bone, but at least on Mount Nakyuk, the cost is haggled up front.

All the same, the prospectors on Mount Nakyuk are mortal, and as charitable or as cruel as any of their kind. A haggard explorer might find respite in a mining camp, with offers of a warm meal and fire before journeying on—provided no one attempts to feed the stranger to the ghouls in order to pay off uncollected debts.

## TOBAZAN

Tobazan are a scattered group of wood giants that reside within the eastern Mwangi Expanse, though their primary domain can be found in the center of barrens in the Bandu Hills. Lean and exceptionally tall, Tobazan live in isolated, nomadic groups, with little interest in contacting any of the other residents of the area. They count the stone and hill giants of the Shattered Range and Kibwe as their ancestral enemies, though a lack of overlapping territory means the two people almost never clash. Tobazan histories claim that the Bandu Hills were once lush and green, but in their great greed and pride, the stone giants bargained with the gods to remake the land in harsh rock and rich gems. None of the nearby stone and hill giant cultures have any similar legends, though some scholars wonder if the Bandu Hills might have had a native stone giant population that has since vanished from the region.

For all their disinterest or outright hostility toward most of their neighbors, Tobazan giants are friendly enough to visiting peoples, and local Zenj tribes often offer the giants food in exchange for gems and gold. As with all giants, however, relations are approached very cautiously, as Tobazan often have vicious tempers and seldom hesitate to rip anyone they perceive as a foe limb from limb.

## THE STASIS FIELDS

In 4516 AR, a group of explorers scouring the Bandu Hills uncovered what appeared to be a vast underground prison populated entirely by armored Zenj warriors magically frozen in place. Dubbed the Stasis Fields, the mysterious cavern complex was flooded by opportunistic colonists and adventurers as soon as the news made it back to then-colonialist Sargava. Despite the dangerous mountains surrounding the entrance and the prison's lethal warding spells to deter any attempts to examine the "cells" up close, the Pathfinder Society, Sargavan guilds, and many others undertook the journey to uncover the Stasis Fields' secrets.

The overthrow of Sargava and rise of Vidric disrupted all of these operations, and the precise location of the complex has only recently been rediscovered by Vidric locals. The Vidric government has financed a few scouting expeditions to the Stasis Fields, out of both the altruistic desire to potentially free the captives and the mercenary motive to find any potential allies who might help reinforce their unsteady position. So far, none of the Vidric expeditions have had any more luck than those who came before.

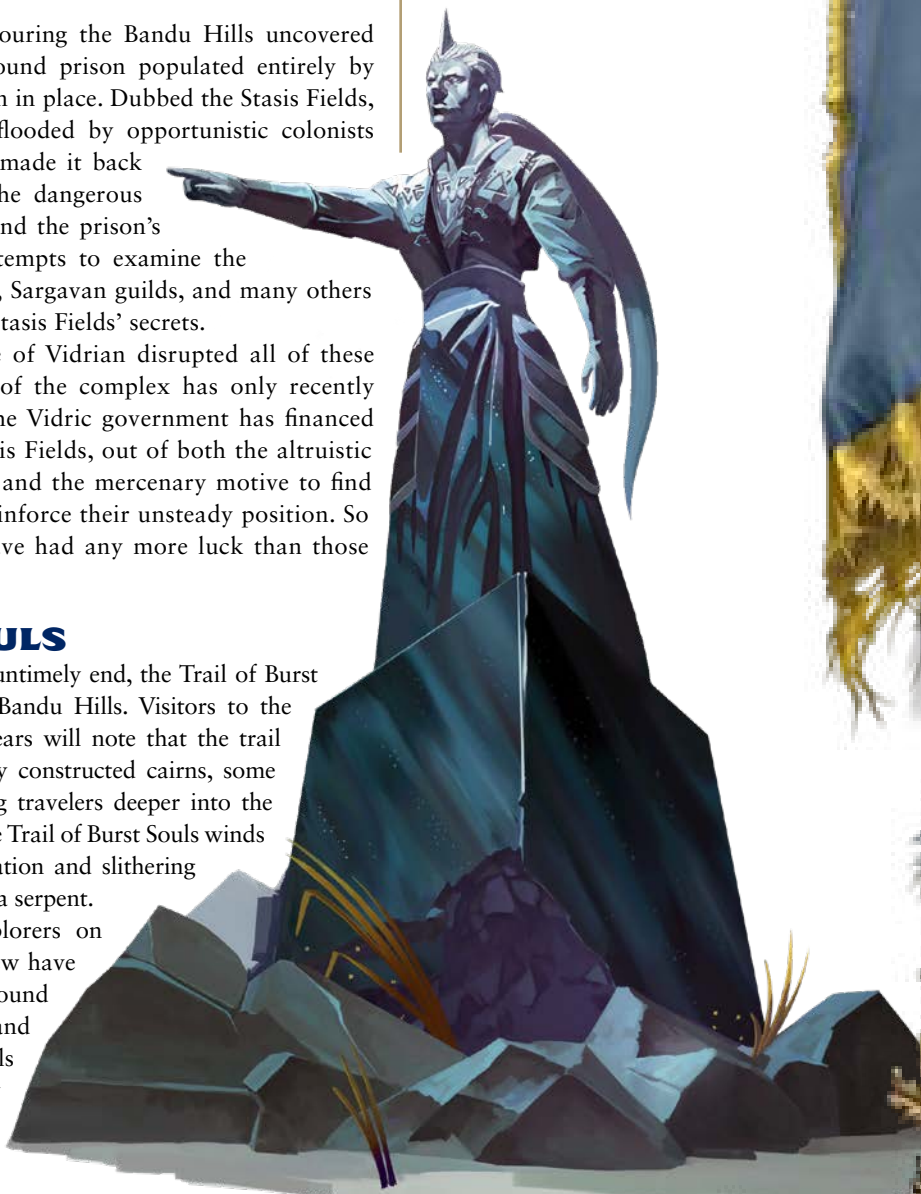
## TRAIL OF BURST SOULS

Poised to lead many a traveler to their untimely end, the Trail of Burst Souls slithers and snakes through the Bandu Hills. Visitors to the northern banks of the River of Lost Tears will note that the trail is lined with shallow graves and hastily constructed cairns, some of them thousands of years old, leading travelers deeper into the wilderness without pause or purpose. The Trail of Burst Souls winds for miles, never reaching a clear destination and slithering through the Bandu Hills like the coils of a serpent.

While the graves are plentiful, explorers on the Trail of Burst Souls will find that few have been disturbed by passersby. Rumors abound that those who desecrate the mounds and barrows that mark the Trail of Burst Souls will find themselves prey for hungry spirits and vengeful husks that stalk the night in search of whoever robbed them of their grave goods.

## ZURAKAI

The mysterious statue of the Bandu Hills has led to mass speculation among scholars who know of it. The figure is composed of a rare type of rock previously found only on scattered islands and shoals in the loneliest reaches of the Arcadian Ocean. Some therefore believe the statue points the way to a lost Azlanti city, a relic of colonization established before Earthfall that might possibly have escaped its parent civilization's destruction. If so, given the statue's message, its people were likely followers of the Azlanti ruler and future demon lord, Zura the Vampire Queen. No other Azlanti artifacts have been found in the Expanse outside of Saventh-Yhi, however, leaving the statue's origins mysterious.



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## THE BARRIER WALL

Towering high above the Mwangi Expanse is the Barrier Wall, an imposing mountain range that bisects the earth and divides the expansive jungles from the deserts of the northern Garundi coast. The air is thin here, and those who seek to traverse the range report a low, ever-present rumbling sound deeper than thunder. While the abundant greenery of the Mwangi Expanse continues a short way up the Barrier Wall's southern base, it quickly fades into tough, sparse plant life and hardy crabgrasses. Large animals like okapi and elephants roam the forested areas, while few creatures brave the higher altitudes of the mountains for fear of the myriad dangers hiding in the caverns. Among the animals found in the peaks are goats and shrews that find safety in highly inaccessible crevices along the mountainside. The terrain of the Barrier Wall is treacherous to navigate, but a few settlements do lie scattered along the mountains.

### EARTHSPEAR

Of particular interest to the Mwangi peoples are the last records of Old-Mage Jatembe locked away in the spiraling Earthspear, a great library carved inside a mountain that extends deep into the earth. Like so many legends of the Barrier Wall, the exact location of

the Earthspear, as well as whether it even exists at all, is unknown. Old tales say it contains copies of every text Old-Mage Jatembe wrote and collected after Earthfall, including the fabled *Last Records of Jatembe*, words of immense power and importance safeguarded in the deepest point of the Earthspear. No one knows for certain what these records contain, but a popular myth is that they are instructions meant to usher magic into the world once more should a second apocalypse occur.

The Earthspear's elusiveness is often attributed to powerful magic that supposedly moves the library to exactly where no one is looking for it. Legend says the Earthspear will reveal itself when the peoples of the Expanse need it most, though this doesn't dissuade eager scholars from continuing to venture into the Barrier Wall in search of it.

### HALDUN

Though rare, there are several tenuous settlements that dot the mountain range, the northernmost of which is the fortress of Haldun located in Rahadoum. Haldun is the critical headquarters of the Rainwall, a network of sentries and wards that prevent creatures from the Sodden Lands from wandering north. The stern

vigilance of the Rainwall has the unintended benefit of warding off large hostile creatures that lurk throughout the Barrier Wall. Though the mountain range's nearly impassable nature makes it impractical to cross, more than a handful of people have attempted to do so for a myriad of reasons, and the sight of Rahadom's magic wards signals the end of their arduous journey.

### **TOMB OF THE THOUSAND TUSKS**

In the southernmost mountains of the Barrier Wall is the Tomb of the Thousand Tusks, marking the border between the Mwangi Expanse and the Sodden Lands. The Tomb of the Thousand Tusks is a labyrinthine crypt believed to have been built by the adhukait asura Kaisadvaisad to lure foolhardy adventurers chasing riches to their untimely demise. The tunnels seem to never stay the same, the shifting structures disorienting even the most seasoned dungeon-delvers. Laced with traps and littered with bones, the Tomb of the Thousand Tusks is the subject of a wide variety of legends.

Recent rumors say the crypt runs deeper than it did before, and that the lowest level contains empyreal lord Shei Five Dawns's disembodied head. The grim relish with which Kaisadvaisad celebrates his victory over the divine being leads to ever-more-feverish expansion. Some say that one day the adhukait will reach the center of Golarion itself in his foolish pursuit to protect his prize. However, these rumors conflict with the fact that an empyreal lord named Shei still lives on the plane of Nirvana.

### **TOWER OF THE STONEWARDENS**

Numerous solitary groups make up the inhabitants of the Barrier Wall. A sect of druids known as the Stonewardens operates in the central mountain range along the border between the Mwangi Expanse and the nation of Thuvia. Their primary purpose is to safeguard a number of hidden locations, including sanctuaries, extradimensional portals, and wellsprings of planetary energy. They also protect wildlife from the unnatural creatures that haunt the area. Somewhat ironically, this protection has resulted in most merchant caravans traveling between Thuvia and the Mwangi Expanse to cross through Stonewardens territory, a source of constant irritation for the druids—one further exacerbated by the constant presence of students searching for the legendary Citadel of the Alchemist where Artokus Kirran, creator of the sun orchid elixir, supposedly still dwells (*Legends* 18). Rather than attempt to fight it, however, the Stonewardens guide these visitors through their lands as quickly as possible. They have a reluctant alliance with the people of Thuvia and provide safe passage to those invited to the Citadel in exchange for deterrence from outsider prying into their territory.

Originally built as a watchtower by giants, the abandoned fortification was claimed by the Stonewardens once they realized its necessity. The tower sits at the peak of one of the Barrier Wall's tallest mountains, and on clear days, can be seen from over 100 miles away. Whenever the sun is positioned directly above the tower, it reportedly shimmers ever so slightly. Some rumors even claim the thunder-like rumbling that occasionally passes through the Barrier Wall originates from this fortress.

### **WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?**

The Barrier Wall mountain range makes up the northern border of the Mwangi Expanse, with the treacherous peaks blocking the neighboring nations of Rahadom, Thuvia, and Osirion. Most people only venture into the mountains in search of the legendary Citadel of the Alchemist, but a few ambitious merchants brave the climb in order to import goods from one nation to another. Though few are even aware of its existence, one of the Barrier Wall's primary points of interest is the ruins of Kho, the remains of one of the flying cities of the Shory Empire. For more information on the ruins of Kho, see pages 168-173.

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## MWANGI JUNGLE

Verdant, fathomless, mysterious, and boiling with life, the Mwangi Jungle is the largest tropical rain forest in the Inner Sea region. Stretching some eight hundred miles end to end and half that in width, its green boughs contain uncountable worlds.

The Mwangi Jungle might be more accurately called the Ocota Drainage Basin. Persistent easterly winds force damp air from the Eye of Abendego into Garund to smash into the mountains surrounding the jungle. Rain then falls, as much as twelve feet of water each year. It collects in Lake Ocota, a massive inland sea in the center of the jungle, and then drains through the Vanji River back out to the ocean.

All this water fuels a profusion of greenery and a unique ecosystem. The jungle's trees typically grow to heights of 100 to 150 feet, and individual giants can double that in size. Their height and density create unique layers in the forest. At the top is the canopy layer, a thick carpet of greenery 100 feet in the air, branches woven together with lianas and creeping plants, on which countless animals and some peoples live without ever touching the ground. Birds, monkeys, frogs, snakes, and an infinite profusion of insects occupy the canopy. Below it is the understory: darker, more shaded, home

to larger beasts such as pythons and leopards, as well as a great many ferns. And then comes the forest floor—which almost never sees sunlight—home to greater beasts, most famously crocodiles and forest elephants, both of whom stay near the rivers.

The rain forest is unforgiving to the unprepared. The dense greenery and hidden sky can render navigation nigh impossible, and travel of any sort is a grueling task of sweat and blood. The swiftest travel is by the rivers, though constant rapids, swift currents, and hidden sandbars make “swift” very relative. Those attempting to travel overland find their way blocked by sudden ravines and thorny shrubbery requiring a machete to pass. To travel even 10 miles a day may prove a herculean task. The jungles also host countless poisonous plants, venomous insects, and hungry predators, ranging from the relatively mundane (leopards, cobras, and crocodiles) to the more unusual (saurian *mokele-mbembe* [*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 171] or demonic *kishis* [*Bestiary* 3 149]). More lethal than any predator, however, are the jungle's diseases—particularly mosquito-borne malaria, which kills more travelers than any other jungle danger.

Permanent residents of the jungle, such as the simian *charau-ka* or *Kallijae* elves, have their own ways of

making travel easier and avoiding predators, but even they rarely venture far from their home territories. As a consequence of this, the Mwangi Jungle hides countless secrets. An ancient city may lie buried in the jungle a half-day's trek from a thriving trading post, completely hidden by the terrain. Anything in the deep jungle, away from the rivers, might lie undiscovered for centuries.

### AERIE OF BLOODLETING SONGS

The Aerie is a small plateau in the southern jungles, about a half-mile across and rising 200 feet above the jungle floor. Local peoples know it as an accursed area, for the plants grow twisted and sickly along the plateau, and the birds that nest along its rocky sides are mutated, malformed things. Some have eyes like bulging insects; some have sharp fangs within their beaks; some bear seeping, pus-filled wounds that don't hinder them in the least. The birds harass any who try to climb the scant paths up the plateau with songs that cause blood to flow from ears, eyes, and mouth. Children born too near the plateau often have strange marks on their bodies, a bizarre script none can read.

Local peoples claim that long ago, a tribe of demon-worshippers sacrificed their victims here, and that the birds are the angry ghosts of the dead. Supposedly, the tribe's altar is still atop the plateau, and likewise—so the stories say—their treasure. Certainly something rests at the plateau's heart, though it is no adventurer's prize. A black stone the size of a human lies there, its crude surface marked with countless staring eyes and the same eerie script.

### COLOSSUS OF SENBAJI

In the northern reaches of the jungle stands a bizarre, alien statue. The Colossus is enormous, two hundred feet in height, towering over all but the tallest trees. It looks roughly humanoid—though time has not been kind to it—a great warrior leaning on a spear, bare-chested, clad in a kilt and sandals. Two strange characteristics stand out about the statue: the hands quite clearly possess six fingers each, and the face is smooth and blank, with not even a depression to hint at eyes or mouth.

The people of Senbaji, a local Zenj community, consider the Colossus to be their protector and hold great festivals every season where youths climb the statue and adorn it with paints and garlands. They call it the Star-Watcher and say Desna sent it in ancient days to watch over them. True or not, though no Desnan holy books mention such a thing, certainly Senbaji's people have been little troubled by plague or famine throughout their history.

The dwarven scholar **Dr. Marhelm** (N male dwarf archaeologist 4) claims to have examined the Colossus with Senbaji permission, only to be told to leave when he discovered that underneath the stone is a layer of metal. He's currently looking for assistants who might help him secure a second examination, by diplomacy, guile, or force.

### DOORWAY TO THE RED STAR

A site that appears in countless Mwangi legends, the Doorway to the Red Star is a circle of crimson, magnetic megaliths. Over the centuries, cities have arisen around the standing stones, only to fall to time. For a while, the nihilistic cult known as the Throat-of-Nothingness worshiped at the stones. They appear in legends of Old-Mage Jatembe and the King of Biting Ants, a villainous sorcerer whose body was made up of a swarm of poisonous ants. What is undeniably true is that the stones channel powerful and unpredictable magic, and rituals cast between the stones hold power an order of magnitude more potent than elsewhere.

What few realize is that the Doorway to the Red Star is precisely what the name claims in to be. In ancient days, a conclave of

### WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Mwangi Jungle lies at the heart of the Expanse, with the Barrier Wall (page 152) to the north, the Sodden Lands (page 178) to the west, and the Bandu Hills (page 148) to the south. Nantambu lies in the southwest corner of the jungle, while Kibwe and Nagisa stand to the east, Jaha in the north, and Lake Ocota in the center (page 162). Mualijae elves, Taralu dwarves, and Matanji orcs also make their homes within the area.

### QLIPPOTH RUNESTONES

Before creation, qliploth (*Bestiary* 2 212) ruled the Abyss, but the changes wrought to make the multiverse shattered the plane into pieces. Some of these shards shot through the planes and landed on Golarion. Known as qliploth runestones, these strange edifices are covered in bizarre symbols, and poison everything around them.

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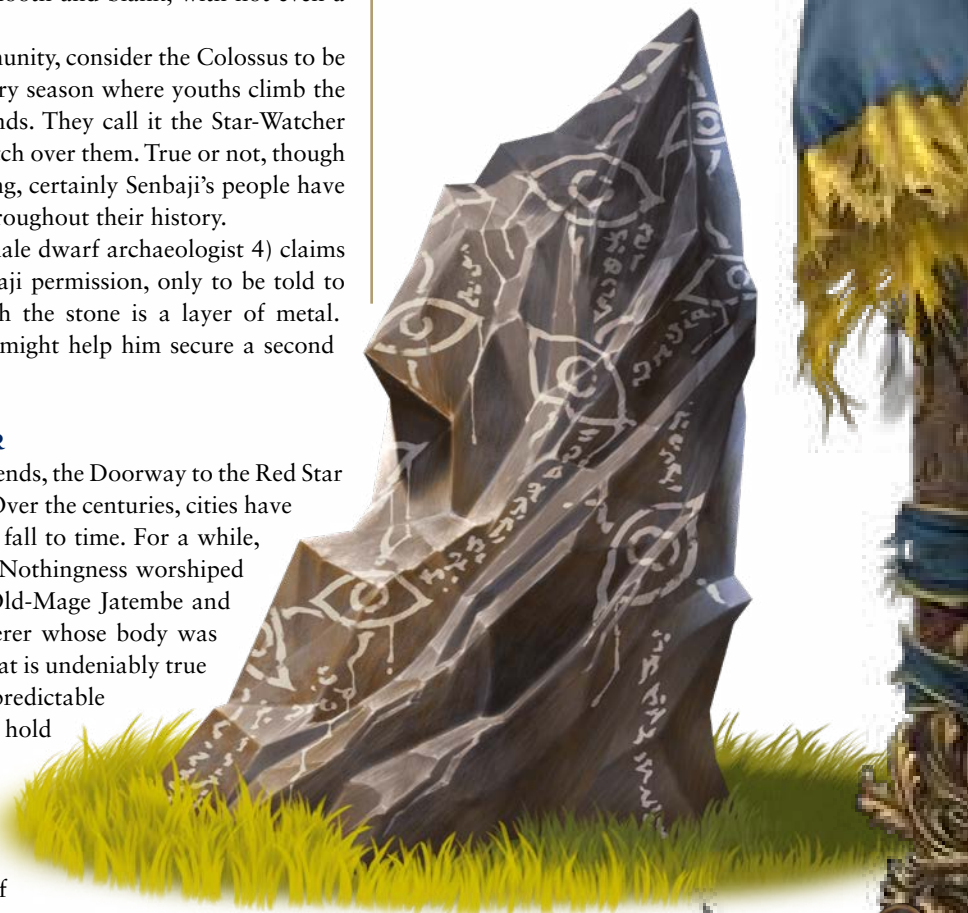
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## THE HUNGRY SCHOOL

The Hungry School is a terrifying column of dull-red driver ants sixty feet across and three hundred feet long that ranges across the western Mwangi Jungle, never staying in one place for too long. When they travel, ripples of motion and color move across the column, forming words in an antique dialect of Mwangi. The messages formed by the ants' bodies are lessons of sinister magic and secret history, and a dire, nihilistic philosophy preaching only infinite want. Twice the Hungry School has been burned and killed, but it always returns.

The Hungry School is typically followed by several eager students, who dutifully scribe each lesson and argue each point of philosophy. The School protects its pupils, and though it never communicates directly, its lessons are often oddly relevant to their needs. These students often go on to become some of the most feared witches of the jungle, accompanied by enormous ants with bodies the color of dried blood.

alien sages called the Contemplatives of Ashok built the Doorway to connect their home world of Akiton—the fourth planet in the solar system—with Golarion. But the doorway was flawed, and it only rarely allows physical passage to the Red Star.

After seeing their teachings result in both the Throat-of-Nothingness and the King of Biting Ants, the Contemplatives have largely let the portal lie. Nevertheless, were one to somehow open the Doorway and reach the otherworldly sages, they have much they could teach, if mortal minds could only comprehend it.

## THE FOREST OF AGOYBEN

A patch of jungle along the southern bank of the Vanji River, this area is mostly known for the fever trees—tall, split-trunked trees that photosynthesize through their bark as well as their leaves, leading to the trees taking on a distinct green-gold coloration. The forest is also home to the Crackling Tree phenomenon, where travelers encounter enormous golden trees that spontaneously combust or splinter before their very eyes.

More worrisome are the recent reports of a “splitting sickness,” a leprosy-like disease resistant to all forms of healing that eventually results in its victims falling to pieces. Most believe it to be a new variation on leprosy or the curse of the Umasi, but a few of Magaambya's scholars remember the old legends of Agohbindi the Splintering Child, a Spawn of Rovagug who Old-Mage Jatembe buried and bound to a forest near the Vanji River.

## GOZREH'S POOL

Hidden away in the forest depths between the Ocota River and the Jasut Flow, Gozreh's Pool is a cenote about fifteen feet across and unfathomably deep, its waters clear to an uncanny degree. No fish dwell in Gozreh's Pool, no plants grow alongside it, and the few local people who know it avoid the mysterious sinkhole.

Their caution is warranted. Two water elementals dwell in the pool, guardians set by the Wind and Waves. Any who bypass the elementals, by force of arms or show of respect, gain access to the pool's blessing—to drink the waters of Gozreh's Pool is to be purged of all disease and sickness, no small thing in the malaria-infested jungle.

The pool also holds a great secret, though only a few members of Gozreh's clergy know it. At the very bottom of the pool are stones and sand that form a perfect representation of all water sources within fifty miles of the pool. If a worshiper of Gozreh adjusts the stones, the water in the surrounding region adjusts in turn—rivers rising, lakes emptying, water moving in defiance of all natural law.

## HOLY XATRAMBA

During its heyday a thousand years ago, Holy Xatramba was the greatest city of the Mwangi Expanse, sacred to the gods and head of a confederacy challenged only by the Rastel culture to the south. The people of Xatramba built fortresses and treasure houses, schools and granaries. To thank their patrons, they erected great shrines to their ancestors, as well as a mighty labyrinth temple to the Lady of Graves, Pharama. For centuries, life in Xatramba was good, but all things come

to an end, and Xatramba's death came when the demon-callers of Rastel raised a great host of fiends to attack the city. Xatramba fell, but the demons broke free and claimed the city as their own.

Today, Xatramba may be called half lost. Unlike forsaken Ird and ancient Saventh-Yhi, Xatramba rose in more recent years, and records attest to its location. But the area of jungle where it lies is cursed and haunted by demons, and no one who values their life dares visit.

### THE LOST CITY OF IRD

Little is known about the time-lost city of Ird. Certainly it is one of the oldest documented societies in the Expanse, behind only Saventh-Yhi, and may date to the Age of Darkness immediately after Earthfall or the Age of Anguish that followed. Oral tradition, supported by rare artifacts found in ruins of later cultures, paint it as a dire place: a harshly stratified society where a sorcerous nobility ruled the lives and even souls of an enslaved populace. Legend tells that Old-Mage Jatembe and the Ten Magic Warriors destroyed the city, calling on the very jungle to rend stone from stone.

A handful of scholarly sources posit some deeper connection between Ird and Jatembe and suggest that the Old-Mage himself hailed from the city, perhaps a noble scion disgusted by his fellows. These controversial claims have not yet found widespread acceptance in the academic community, but between the genuine historical mystery and the prospect of ancient occult lore, finding Ird has long been an obsession to a certain breed of archaeologist and adventurer.

The task is not easy. No one has even the faintest idea of where Ird once lay, beyond "in the jungle," and all accounts agree that Jatembe was exceedingly thorough in destroying the place. Furthermore, many of the local Mwangi peoples who live deep in the jungle quite reasonably consider it an accursed place better left forgotten and will take steps to lead astray any researchers. Current expeditions include one led by Pathfinder Professor Innobar DiGomphrey, who's been searching for over a decade; another led by the self-proclaimed "world-famous archaeologist" Gerhard Pendergrast; and a third by the Chelaxian Paracountess Domiana Lix, a member of the mysterious Conference Z.

### PYRAMID OF KITUMU

Little known and largely forgotten, the Pyramid of Kitumu is a curious, conical building—if indeed it is a building—overgrown by the jungle. Glittering fireflies swarm around the pyramid, but where the typical firefly is harmless and meek, the Children of Kitumu both bite and burn, and act with unnatural intelligence. The few legends that speak of the place refer to Kitumu as a great spirit or petty godling, a queen of fireflies and flame alike. She sleeps within her pyramid-hive until roused by hunger, but she can be appeased with sacrifice. Of course, the local peoples have long ceased leaving meals for the forgotten demigoddess, so perhaps the legends' truth will soon become apparent.

### RANAGE'S CIRCLE

Near the very center of the jungle is a curious clearing. A dense, almost wall-like circle of jungle cypress surrounds a small, empty space, at the

### OLOHIMBA

Only the most foolhardy venture into Xatramba—which is just how **Olohimba** (NE female adult green dragon 15) likes it. Xatramba's demon-forsaken nature is something of a bluff. Though plentiful demons remain, the heart of the city is currently claimed by the green wyrm Olohimba. Olohimba is cunning and manipulative like most green dragons, but she's also a surprisingly orthodox worshiper of Pharamasma, and considers it her calling to restore the sacred city. To that end, she's been busily clearing out demons and undead from her demesne, while building up the legend of demon-haunted Xatramba to ensure that no interlopers interrupt her work. Uninvited visitors are likely to be eaten by the dragon, unless they prove themselves followers of Pharamasma, in which case they will find Olohimba a demanding yet generous patron.

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## KITUMU

*Mother of Fireflies*

**Alignment** CE (NE, CE)

**Divine Font** harm

**Divine Ability** Dexterity or Charisma

**Divine Skill** Nature

**Domains** destruction, indulgence, nightmare, swarm (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods and Magic* 117)

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *sleep*, 2nd: *vomit swarm* (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 227), 3rd: *insect form*

**Edicts** offer sacrifices to Kitumu, feed the hungers of nature with humanoid creatures

**Anathema** step on a firefly, kill those marked by Kitumu

**Favored Weapon** dagger

If any fervent devotees of the monstrous firefly goddess exist, they don't venture into civilization. The closest Kitumu has to servants or worshipers are those willing to placate the goddess in order to satisfy her demands and hungers.

center of which is an ancient and twisted baobab tree. The tree is split in half and grows around a cart-sized sphere of black basalt. An uncanny silence fills the entire clearing, and neither deadly predators nor forces of evil approach it willingly, finding the magic's "scent" distasteful and disconcerting.

According to local legend, long ago the land was home to two great spirit brothers, Ranage and Golokango. Ranage was kind and much loved by the people of the jungle, but Golokango was cruel, and in time, jealous. They quarreled, and quarrel turned to battle, and at battle's end the kind spirit imprisoned his evil brother within the stone, and Ranage grew into a great tree around him. This story may or may not be true; but certainly, someone wove powerful spells into the circle to ward off evil, and it is unlikely they did so on a whim.

## THE RIVER MJEER

A small tributary of the River Bdonge in the eastern jungle, this river has long had an unwholesome reputation among the local people. Plants along the riverbank grow sickly and weak, and only the hardiest of fish swim in the river. At night, curious lights appear in the sky above the river's headwaters deep in the jungle, and those who travel there after sunset report hearing a few animal sounds but sometimes also a curious buzzing noise, not constant, but modulated and irregular, and heard from a great distance.

Most travelers along the river emerge unharmed, but a few disappear every so often. Their bodies are later found frozen and shattered, as if dropped from a very great height. A handful of the bodies also bear curious wounds on the head, as if the top of the skull was sliced away and the brain removed. Any attempts at a closer investigation is stymied by the Saphorn gnolls who travel up and down the river. The gnolls warn off strangers first, but they wield inexplicably fine skymetal weapons in case anyone proves too curious for their own good.

## SARUHK

Founded almost a millennium ago by people from the now-dead city of Dokaren, Saruhk was a pilgrimage site and center of lore sacred to the archon lord Winlas and to Aroden, God of Humanity. For centuries, Saruhk prospered,

its libraries said to rival even those of Nantambu.

When Aroden was prophesied to return in 4606 AR, hundreds of pilgrims gathered at Saruhk, and even the herald of Winlas, the Penultimate Quill **Anwigasi** (LG male divine herald of Winlas 15), came to oversee a great ceremony of welcome. When instead of Aroden's return,

the pilgrims were greeted with Aroden's death, Anwigasi sheltered them beneath his wings and his magic, only to be stuck with a distinct problem afterwards—what to do with the pilgrims, now stranded far from home?

In the century since, Anwigasi has reluctantly remained as Saruhk's protector, even as pilgrims grew into citizens and the outside world forgot about Saruhk. Now, the city is a refuge—and even something of a university—amid some of the deadliest terrain in Garund, its people taking turns tilling the fields and tending to the library. Anwigasi would dearly love to return home to Heaven, his brief sojourn having lasted

for five generations, but he is under no illusion as to what would await his gentle people and their treasure trove of lore were he to



leave. Too proud to beg aid of gods or angels, the Penultimate Quill has taken to wondering if a problem of mortals might be solved by mortals in turn.

## SAVENTH-YHI

Before even Earthfall, in the Age of Legends before modern reckoning, the Azlanti heroine Savith slew the great god of the serpentfolk, Ydersius. The Azlanti people built the outpost of Saventh-Yhi, Savith's Tomb, to mark the occasion and to watch over the entrance to the serpentfolk city of Ilmurea far below the earth. For a time, the city was powerful, protected by the mystical ziggurats called the Seven Spears, until Earthfall sent it all crashing down. For 10,000 years, Saventh-Yhi was lost and forgotten.

Then in 4710 AR, explorers found the city once more, reactivated the Seven Spears, and defeated a resurgent serpentfolk threat. For a time, the city remained a secret still, but inevitably rumor spread, and in 4718 AR the city's existence was formally revealed—whereupon everything promptly descended into an academic, geopolitical, and theological disaster.

Currently, a half-dozen major expeditions make camp in the ruins of Saventh-Yhi, alongside a small army of archaeologists, tomb robbers, scholars, last-chancers, and ne'er-do-wells. Magaambyans and Pathfinders seek ancient lore, representatives of both Mzali and New Thassilon claim political primacy, while indigenous charau-ka and humans note that they've been living in the city for generations with differing degrees of patience. As if this were not enough, not all of the serpentfolk are quite as dead as previously imagined. One, a renegade sorcerer and engineer named **Sziskazha** (NE female serpentfolk coil spy 14), has quietly consumed and replaced an expedition leader. The situation is a powder keg waiting only for a match.

## SPIRO SPERO

This ancient fortress north of the Ndele Gap was built sometime not long after Earthfall. Who built it remains unknown, although the massive, cyclopean stones—fit together so neatly that not even a knife can slip between the rocks—suggests a people well skilled in stoneworking. Perhaps it was the early Mbe'ke dwarves, some scouting body from before the Quest for Sky, or one of the local Mwangi peoples. Time has left few clues to this mystery, although explorers still periodically find hidden passages or basements in the fortress.

Currently, the fortress is home to a group of Katapeshi gnolls led by **Gold Beetle** (CN female gnoll aspiring warlord 11), a visionary and demagogue. Having spent several years as a mercenary in Galt and Andoran, Gold Beetle is filled with visions of a gnollish nation and the idea of turning Okeno into a gnoll-run city-state under the loose vassalage of Katapesh. She's taken over Spiro Spero with her followers and has been busily recruiting from the local Mwangi gnolls, promising an end to the slave trade and the return of the traditional kholo gods if she wins.

## WINLAS

Winlas, the Elder of Divinity, oversees the use of ritual and ceremony among groups of people to bring them closer together. One of the Emphyreal Lords, Winlas devotes himself to maintaining a record of every sacred rite in the universe. He believes that altering these holy observations is a form of profanation, and thus demands strict adherence in preserving such sacraments. For more information on Winlas and the Emphyreal Lords, see *Gods and Magic* pages 82 and 128.

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## THE KAAVA LANDS

The Kaava Lands lie in a peninsular region on the west coast of the Mwangi Expanse, nestled between the Vanji River and Desperation Bay. While the climate is slightly more temperate and less humid than nearby jungles, the area is no less beautiful. The sound of soaring birds and arcing waterfalls accentuates the gentle rattling of leaves through which the sunlight dapples the forest floor. All manner of colorful insects flit through the branches, chased down by colorfully plumed birds and reptiles alike. The lower density of vines and obstructive plants give the Kaava Lands a less claustrophobic feel, though visitors report that the feeling of being watched is more frequent and intense in this part of the jungle.

The Kaava Lands are named after kaava, a species of sapient, tree-dwelling creatures covered in short, densely packed feathers. Often mistaken for primates, closer inspection reveals their reptilian eyes and color-shifting coats. Kaava can be found throughout the Kaava Lands and have a reputation for being hostile toward outsiders. The more complicated truth is that kaava adhere to strict social orders and are highly distrustful of humanoids, perceiving even simple wariness as acts of aggression. No one other than the kaava themselves know whether or not they have a centralized society,

but rumors tell of a monarch who presides over a secret spring where kaava raise and train the black mambas they are infamous for fighting alongside. While whispers circulate throughout the Expanse of a one-legged kaava grown too large to climb trees, the rumors' origins remain uncertain, as most who enter the Kaava Lands never return.

Kaava are far from the only danger waiting in the undergrowth. Murderous charau-ka, paranoid griplis, and territorial groups of humans and halflings all make their homes within this section of the deep forest, and almost none are friendly to foreign trespassers. The great wealth of the region continues to attract adventurers, however, and a victorious explorer returning with cartloads of raw gems and gold does a great deal to erase the memory of all those who vanished into the wilderness without a trace.

The Kaava Lands are home to an especially wide variety of birds and an even wider variety of insects. While large predators lurking in the waters are a constant threat elsewhere in the Mwangi Expanse, in the Kaava Lands the most water's most prevalent danger is a swimming beetle about the size of a small turtle. While these insects aren't venomous, they have a

powerful bite that can easily pierce skin, and they often cling to their targets even after it becomes detrimental to themselves. While the bites themselves are serious wounds, the beetles become even more dangerous when swarms of the creatures attach to a victim's body. There are numerous cautionary tales recounting unlucky explorers who were so weighed down by the beetles that they drowned in shallow water. Even escaping the water is only the beginning, as considerable blood loss can accompany the removal of these mandibles.

More secrets undoubtedly lie within the forests of the Kaava Lands. Even beyond the legend of the Mbaiki (see Kiedu Ruins below), stories say that a blessed few are granted safe passage throughout the Kaava Lands and allowed to hide their wealth and knowledge within the safety of this heavily guarded area, though explanations for how to achieve this safe passage are vague and confusing at best. One of the most coveted luxuries throughout the Mwangi Expanse is a spice referred to as miracleroot. The plant supposedly imparts an earthy taste that can be felt more inside the body than on the tongue, but it seems to defy all attempts at controlled cultivation. Miracleroot grows in patches scattered across the Kaava Lands, and those who seek it are always at risk of running headfirst into a stray kaava. Those who chase this spice despite the danger often set up shop in the city of Senghor, located at the tip of the peninsula on which the Kaava Lands sits.

It's also rumored that certain Free Captains, having figured out the secret to allying with kaava, use the Kaava Lands as a place to store ill-gotten wealth. Every person living in Senghor has a relative who has "witnessed" a Free Captain entering the Kaava Lands with goods, only to return empty-handed. While most aren't foolish enough to search for these fabled treasures, young pirates from the Shackles occasionally seek their fortune by braving the Kaava Lands. Those who go alone never return. Others might attempt to hire adventurers with what little coin they have or with promises of splitting treasure. Still, none have yet successfully found the riches they seek, or if they have, they've kept their success a secret.

## KIEDU RUINS

Just outside the edge of the forest is the former capital city of the Mbaiki people, a human civilization irrevocably transformed into leopards sometime after Earthfall. The ruins of the city lie peacefully on the Vanji River, with barely a trace of the former inhabitants remaining anywhere inside. Whether the Mbaiki civilization was ransacked after its people's transformation or if the inhabitants simply moved in the aftermath of Earthfall is unclear. However, at some point afterward, rumors of Mbaiki with divining abilities began to surface. Many of these rumors stemmed from a story about a young boy who saved a Mbaiki leopard from a hunting trap and was shown two visions: one of prosperity and one of despair. After the boy set the leopard free, he found his selfless act had been rewarded with a life full of rich soil and bountiful harvests.

The story continues that after many caught wind of this, Mbaiki leopards were hunted down by those seeking their own fortune. These hunters went further into the forests of the Kaava Lands until one day none returned, presumably having stumbled directly into kaava territory. A small contingency of people still continue to look for Mbaikis and their legacy of divination, but this group is largely made up of curious scholars and the particularly desperate.

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Kaava Lands lie directly to the north of Vidrian and reach out to the west to border the city of Senghor. No one from either nation is particularly keen to venture into the area, which is one of the major reasons Senghor focused its efforts on naval trade.

## UMASI

The source of fearful rumor and misunderstandings, umasi are one of the most peaceful residents of the Kaava Lands. Umasi were cursed in the past to be unable to heal naturally or through magic. The only way to maintain their bodies is by taking flesh and limbs from other living creatures and grafting it onto themselves. Their horrific appearance and perceived predations leaves most people horrified of umasi should they meet one, but the umasi bear little malice toward others and seek to live as harmlessly as possible. For more information on umasi, see *Pathfinder Bestiary 3* page 280.

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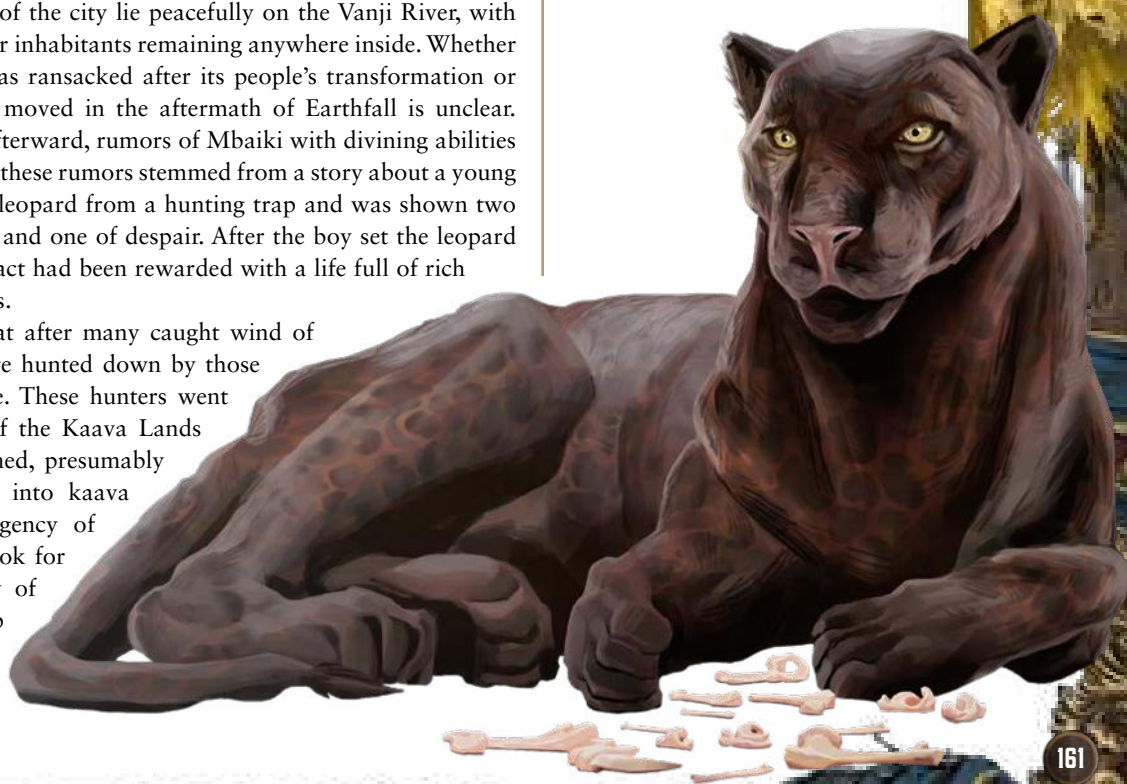
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## LAKE OCOTA

Lake Ocota lies at the center of the Mwangi Expanse and is by far its largest body of fresh water. Spanning more than a hundred miles across and generally symmetrical, nearly all of the Mwangi Expanse's major rivers feed into Lake Ocota, which has an ecosystem all its own. Without the rich nutrients carried by these rivers, the lush jungles couldn't survive. More than a few mysteries and dangers thrive within the massive body of water and along its extensive shoreline.

A number of geomancers suspect Lake Ocota lies at the intersection of two major ley lines, which cause an immense amount of magical energy to spring outward throughout the continent. Though currently unverified, this claim is popular among many arcane scholars because it could also explain the numerous dangers lurking in the deep waters of Lake Ocota's basin, which is a deadly ecosystem of massive predators. The convergence of the lake's size with the rich mixture of nutrients (and a possible wellspring of magical energy) sustains monitor lizards large enough to be mistaken for dragons, alongside improbably-sized snakes, crocodiles, and every manner of creature in between.

Countless Lake Ocota tales feature a litany of dangerous beasts that can be found nowhere else.

The remains of a thousand boats allegedly litter the bottom of the lake, their crews plucked clean by hungry, reptilian jaws and dragged into the depths. Occasionally, reports surface from watchers on the shore of an empty boat spinning atop otherwise calm waters.

These rumors do little to stem the tide of foolhardy adventurers and scholars looking to make a name by uncovering the mysteries of Lake Ocota. Some even take it as a challenge. The recent demise of Usaro's Gorilla King has left the rest of Lake Ocota open to all manner of enterprising individuals. Scholars hope to study the Spire of Destiny (page 165), while a trend among adventurers has led to a great many appearing at the lake to engage in sport hunting, a reckless endeavor colloquially referred to as "bait-diving" due to its tendency to attract many creatures to a single location. The local Zenj communities offer the advice, "There is always a bigger fish," but adventurers always seem to interpret that as "there is always bigger prey to catch."

In addition to the recent boom in researchers and thrill-seekers, the death of the Gorilla King has invited numerous parties from near and far to attempt to fill the new power vacuum. From settlers looking to expand the influence of the various Mwangi city-states, to refugees

from any number of places across the continent, to those looking to turn a profit off the influx of activity, the shores of Lake Ocota are busier than ever.

## OCOTA SHORES

Though numerous dangers lurk beneath its surface, the shores of Lake Ocota also offer a wide variety of hazardous perils. Predators stalk the shallows for easy prey and drag hapless creatures from the shore to be their next meal. Beyond the shores stand jungles populated with carnivorous, flightless birds called zenzas. These avian predators roam in small packs, and their plumage provides a robust camouflage among the dense greenery of the jungle. Working together, they isolate and pick off a party's most vulnerable members. Though they stay away from healthy individuals, more than a few adventurers have stumbled out of arduous situations only to find themselves surrounded by an ominous abundance of moving bushes. Where zenzas drag their prey remains unknown, but they leave few remains, which leads some to speculate social behavior beyond what's been witnessed in these small packs.

Much of the flora and fauna of Lake Ocota poses a great danger to those who don't know how to navigate them. Many of the fish in the lake have sharp teeth and ravenous appetites, but their flesh becomes delicious and tender when cooked. The traditional method of catching these fish is to soak cloth in sweet fruit juices and cast it into the water. The fish will bite the cloth, allowing the fisher to pull multiple fish out while avoiding the attention of larger predators. Perhaps the most important rule when fishing Lake Ocota is to disturb the water as little as possible when reeling in a catch.

A rare plant called nettlefruit, which grows exclusively in the waters of Lake Ocota, bears a highly-sought succulent fruit that is considered one of the most delicious foods in the entire Mwangi Expanse. The plant uses these sweet fruits to lure fish, which are subsequently trapped by the "sticky" vines. This sticky sensation actually comes from an array of tiny needles that inject snared prey with a paralyzing substance potent enough to stop a full-grown crocodile. Once its prey is paralyzed, the nettlefruit plant wraps its leaves around the victim and drains the life from it.

As such, nettlefruit can only be harvested by those who hold their bodies still enough to hide their presence in the water. A quick cut at the base of the plant renders it unable to tense up, and the harvester can then carry it off. Though the leaves can no longer drain life energy once disconnected from the roots, great caution must be taken to avoid touching those vines, which are still active with needles. The fruit itself is often fermented into spirits and possesses a refreshing, yogurt-like tartness that compliments its decadent sweetness. The vines can be rendered inert either through scrubbing or heat and are usually boiled into soup. The leaves are dried and used as a bitter tea, which is a highly effective stimulant used to keep the drinker awake and alert.

The recent increase in shoreside activity has caused a steep decline in the accessibility of both nettlefruits and fish. Gatherers must wade deeper and deeper into the lake to access these resources, all the while luring mythical predators closer to shore for an easy meal. As soon as the sun goes down, charau-ka prowl the perimeter of Lake Ocota, searching for stragglers to drag back to Usaro and sacrifice upon the River of Blood. These charau-ka, like many hazards of Lake Ocota, tend

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

Lake Ocota is near the center of the Mwangi Jungle, with the city of Usaro built on its southern shore. Many Matanji (page 92) strongholds are located along the shores of the lake, and the three Mualijae nations surround it, with Ekujiae (page 42) to the west, Kallijae (page 52) to the north, and Alijiae (page 32) to the east. Nearly every major river in the Mwangi Expanse connects to Lake Ocota, either as intake rivers flowing down from the mountains or outtake rivers carrying mineral-laden water out to sea. The red waters of the Vanji River spring from Lake Ocota, flowing out into the city of Bloodcove.

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## DEADLY TRADES

Diplomatic relationships between the Zenj humans and the iruxis—or lizardfolk—of Lake Ocota have frequently been troubled, as iruxi civilization is ancient, and its members have long memories. Iruxi warriors have been quick to defend nesting spots and sacred burial grounds from any intruders, acting with snap judgments and little explanation. Many Zenj people are left with the impression of trading peacefully with iruxis one day and attacked by spears the next. Nevertheless, trade continues, as the iruxis are some of the most hospitable lakeside residents.

to target lone stragglers or weak-looking groups. As such, travelers would be foolish to venture out in groups of fewer than three people when navigating the lake's shores. Locals band together and synchronize their time and activities in order to minimize time spent alone or out past sunset. In return, charau-ka often target adventurers or anyone who looks like they might be an adventurer, counting on their often-foolhardy refusal to run.

The closer one strays to Usaro, the more troubled the area grows. Without the Gorilla King, the sheer number of interested factions vying for power makes travel near the city fraught with politics and danger. From the infighting of the previous residents of Usaro to the arrival of orc raids and Kallijae elves, any stray encounter has the potential to unfold into a larger conflict, and the sounds of strife are often audible from far away.

## NEMSHENZU

The largest iruxi stronghold in the Mwangi Expanse outside of the Sodden Lands and Jaha, Nemshenzu lies on the eastern shores of Lake Ocota. The city is carved into hummocks of vegetation, built of glass and fossilized dinosaur bones. The construction of underwater corridors and chambers makes ample use of the iruxi residents' adaptation to water, rendering the city inaccessible to most would-be humans or charau-ka invaders. Where aquatic creatures have proven problematic, narrow tunnels, woven vine nets, and murderous gates keep the worst of the local fauna out.

Nemshenzu's current ruler is an iruxi king by the name of **Mergataulk** (N male lizardfolk bone warrior 11), who has spent his reign gathering numerous strong warriors and spiritual leaders to the city. Though his defenders are a force to be reckoned with and have protected Nemshenzu well so far, Mergataulk has long been watching the expansion of warmer-blooded people with a sharp eye—first the rise of the charau-ka in Usaro, now the flood of foreign explorers along the lakeside shores. Both Nemshenzu's residents and its competitors have long since realized that, as large and formidable as the city is, it struggles to compete against its fast-moving neighbors. For now, the people of the city watch and wait patiently, but some now prepare themselves to move with breakneck speed should any promising opportunities present themselves.

## OLD MAN'S WELL

No one knows the exact location of the Old Man's Well, but most believe it to be among the most dangerous phenomena in Lake Ocota.

According to legend, an old man obsessed with discovering the secret to eternal life burrowed deep into the lake after dreaming of the innocuous hole upon the lake's floor. Each day he returned and dug a little deeper, all the while growing more and more adept at holding his breath underwater.

One day, he surfaced, only to realize he could no longer breathe air. Panicked, the old man looked upon his reflection in the water only to see that he had become a catfish. In despair, he returned to the bottom of the hole and began to dig once more, now searching for a way to return to his human form.

The real danger of the Old Man's Well is its strong and sudden undertow that can catch even experienced swimmers off guard, dragging surprised victims deep into the well where they drown before they can get their bearings. Local legend claims that the old man traps his victims in an



attempt to consume enough mortal souls to escape his curse. No one knows how many bodies lie at the bottom of the Old Man's Well because no one has ever been able to locate any remains of its victims, not even bone fragments. The question of what happens to these remains is one of Lake Ocota's more concerning mysteries.

## SPIRE OF DESTINY

Chief among the lake's mysteries is the Spire of Destiny, a towering formation of sheer white rock that juts from the exact center of the lake. A dense layer of fog surrounds the Spire's base and keeps it permanently obscured, though its peak rises 300 feet above the water's surface. Popular stories tell of an island hidden in the fog but warn that no vessel that lands upon the island's shores ever returns. Even the Kallijae elves who settled on Haven, another island on Lake Ocota, are unsure whether or not the place exists.

The Spire of Destiny has an unusually smooth and regular appearance, more akin to a construction than a natural structure, and there are numerous stories concerning its origin. The local Zenj tribes believe that it was built by titans in a futile attempt to reach the realm of the gods. Others claim it was built as a weapon to strike those selfsame gods down. A more expansive legend tells of the forebear of the deity Gozreh, a nameless and ancient being who greedily consumed all the plants and animals in the jungle, leaving the Mwangi Expanse a barren wasteland. Gozreh, feeling the plight of the people, took up the Spire of Destiny and pierced his forebear's stomach. The being fell, its stomach becoming the basin of Lake Ocota and its blood the many rivers, returning life throughout the land.

Traversing the surface of Lake Ocota is incredibly dangerous. Numerous large predators lurk within its depths. The biggest of these is an abnormally large, crocodile-headed water orm, which the nearby Zenj and Bonuwat peoples call the Fetid God. Occasional offerings, most often goats or cattle, are left upon the shores in order to appease the Fetid God, preventing it from feasting on unsuspecting people. The orm is said to recognize those who provide it regular meals, offering in return its protection and allowing them to traverse the area safely. For this reason, many in the region believe there is a cult who worships the Fetid God and tend its offspring. If such a cult exists, most believe its worshippers can be found on that fog-shrouded island in the middle of Lake Ocota.

One of the most credible legends is that of the Guardian of Lake Ocota, a colossal albino snake said to wrap around the Spire of Destiny at the very bottom of the lake. The serpent is described as a being of great knowledge and intelligence with an eager willingness to engage in conversation. Those who entertain the Guardian with an interesting story win the right to ask exactly one question, which it will answer with a parable embedded with the desired information. Afterwards, the Guardian returns to the bottom of the lake to continue its slumber.

Due to the presence of fierce predators and the highly territorial Fetid God, few boats that seek the Spire of Destiny return, and fewer still with living people aboard. Due to this, the veracity of this legend as well as the actual depth of Lake Ocota remain some of its foremost mysteries.

## SONG OF EXTINCTION

Local Zenj history tells of a city on the north shore of Lake Ocota that was devoured alive by its own king. A soul-haunting artifact known as the *Song of Extinction* siphoned the life from its victims and used that power to increase the lifespan of the one who wielded it. It devastated the city, swallowed the surrounding towns, villages, and tribes, and then vanished into the jungle. Zenj locals warn others not to venture too close to Ocota's northern shore, though these rumors tend to draw foolhardy adventurers, who provide more food for the *Song*.

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## MUGUMO PLAINS

Connecting the Mwangi Jungle and the Kaava Lands is a region known as the Mugumo Plains, a savanna containing numerous ruined cities. The plains are some of the Mwangi Expanse's most fertile farmland, with the city of Bloodcove being notable for its abundant taro crops which flourish in the wet climate. Larger animals such as gazelles travel in herds that roam through the remains of long-destroyed structures, taking shade in buildings lost to time. The Mugumo Plains are named for the numerous, shade-providing fig trees thought to imbue the land with life. Animals cluster under these trees to escape the afternoon sun, willing to set aside the natural order of predator and prey for a moment of cool rest.

### TERWA LAKE

Terwa Lake, upon whose shores sit numerous ruined cities, lies at the northern edge of the Mugumo Plains. The waters of Terwa Lake, which feed the Terwa River, sit in the caldera of a long-dormant volcano. Volcanic gas seeps into the cold waters of the lake, sitting latent until seismic activity releases it as a deadly cloud. This dense, invisible gas lingers for days at a time, choking out all life within miles. While it's possible for people to walk through the area with their heads above the gas, it

only takes a sudden gust of wind for one to meet a silent death. The natives of the Mwangi Expanse wear silver charms that tarnish in the presence of the poison they refer to as the Dead Man's Breath.

### BLOODSALT

The ruined city of Bloodsalt, so named after the region's red, iron-rich silt that gives the ground and water the appearance of fresh blood, sits on the eastern edge of Terwa Lake. Though much of the ruin lies beneath a thick layer of silt, past excavations have revealed depictions of people sprouting dragonlike wings and flying through the sky, lending the ruins its nickname: the City of the Dragon-Speakers. The exact meaning of these images is unclear, but attempts to find out more are usually halted by the occasional clouds of deadly volcanic gas that arise from Terwa Lake and linger around its shores. Many suspect Dead Man's Breath to be the reason Bloodsalt was abandoned.

Stranger theories surrounding Bloodsalt exist, as there is ample speculation about the true nature of the Dragon-Speaker symbols. Some scholars propose that the Dragon-Speakers are the disembodied souls of the Bloodsalt residents, ascending to a divine realm above

and leaving their bodies to soak the soil red with blood. Every now and again, they say, these bodies will reach their hands up, searching for their spirits and dragging anyone they grasp down into the depths of the earth. Though unverifiable, this explanation makes for a popular cautionary tale to keep children from straying too close to Terwa Lake.

## EGREGZIA

Beneath the western shores of Terwa Lake lie the sunken ruins of the Gol-Ghan city Egregzia. Because of the poisonous air, it's dangerous to explore any ruin near the lake, but no site is more perilous than Egregzia. Terwa's silty waters cover all but the ruin's tallest buildings, which poke just above the murky surface, providing cover for all manner of dangerous predators. The quicksand-like terrain makes it easy to stumble in and dangerous to climb out. The depths of Terwa Lake are where the highest concentration of volcanic gas settles, making it almost impossible for any living creature to survive beneath the waters. The ruins, on the other hand, provide a great deal of protection and cover for boggards, drakes, werecrocodiles, and any other predator seeking to hunt prey.

Most who are interested in Egregzia are drawn by the many legends claiming the Free Captains of the Shackles often buried their treasure beneath the shores of Terwa Lake. The most infamous of these tales is that of Basilisk Adem, a Free Captain from the Mwangi Expanse who plundered up and down the western coast to great infamy and success. His reputation spans from heroism to devilry, and when Basilisk Adem vanished, none were able to find so much as a scrap of his wealth. The stories claim these riches were hand delivered, crate by crate, to the bottom of Terwa Lake, and that the mere presence of Basilisk proved dangerous enough to drive away the inhabitants of Egregzia's ruins for a time. While this may all be true, by now it's far more likely that the number of corpses littering the bottom of Terwa Lake surpasses any amount of treasure that could lie buried deep in the silt. Still, the allure of buried riches attracts the attention of many enterprising individuals from the Mwangi Expanse and beyond.

Researchers studying traces of the Gol-Ghan civilization and its eventual collapse also have an interest in studying Egregzia, as do certain merchants hoping to sell authentic artifacts from the golden age of Gol-Ghan. The ruins still possess many beautiful relics filled with intricate details from this era, and items created by Gol-Ghani are widely thought to be able to unlock secret powers of foresight. Some even say the Gol-Ghani hid their extensive understanding of the celestial bodies in artifacts which now lie forgotten in the silt, waiting for the right person to unlock their secrets.

## KIUTU

A small village of about 200 people, Kiutu's population is a near even split between Bonuwat humans and M'beke dwarves, as well as a handful of other ancestries. The village is near enough to Terwa Lake to take advantage of the waterway, but just outside of the area frequently plagued by poison gas. Most of the locals subsist on fishing, but the majority of the community's wealth comes from building boats. Generations of Bonuwat tradition combined with M'beke innovation allows Kiutu to produce and sell some of the most sought-after watercraft in the region. Kiutu also produces many talented young artisans, who travel abroad to master their crafts. However, these young people almost always send generous gifts back home, and often return to Kiutu with families of their own in their twilight years.

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Mugumo Plains is closest to the Mwangi cities of Nantambu and Bloodcove, with Nantambu residing in the Mwangi Jungle to the northeast and Bloodcove settled at the mouth of the Vanji river in the south. The Kaava Lands (page 160) border the savanna to the south, and the pirate city of Port Peril lies to the west of the region, just past the Terwa Uplands (page 182). Much of Bloodcove's agricultural produce comes from this area, and a few bold Magaambyans can be found investigating the local ruins from time to time.

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## RUINS OF KHO

The Ruins of Kho are the fallen remains of the first flying city of the fabled Shory Empire. They can be found along the Kho-Rarne Pass within the Barrier Wall Mountains. The fauna here is as sparse as in the rest of the Barrier Wall, save for a larger-than-average bird population. This is attributed to a large lake partially covering the ruins. Here, many birds of prey nest in the remains of long-fallen structures, feeding on fish for sustenance. This lake flows down into the Uomoto River, which runs through the valley and provides the Uomoto people with most of their water.

An alluring prospect for explorers, the Ruins of Kho are a scattered mix of neglected machinery, natural ephemera, and the typical isolated hazards associated with a long-dead city. Remnants of powerful magic still power perpetual-motion mechanisms buried deep beneath the ruins, causing a loud, grinding rumble to periodically echo throughout the valley. The foliage is surprisingly lush, more reminiscent of the lower jungles than the rest of the Barrier Wall. Despite the proximity of numerous Uomoto settlements, only a designated few Uomoto adventurers are considered adept enough to safely navigate the Ruins of Kho.

Having been both the capital city of the Shory Empire

and the first to ascend into the air, Kho's architecture is representative of its civilization's peak. The remains of bright-colored glass and densely packed infrastructure are still visible even millennia after the destruction of Kho. It's said that the ruins are preserved by the long-lost magic of the Shory empire, which continues to seep out of its foundations to this day. Despite being picked over for hundreds of years, most believe that scavengers have not yet uncovered even a tenth of Kho's artifacts and secrets. Occasionally, a single pair of Uomoto excavators will travel to the ruins; they weave in and out of the fallen buildings, carrying shovels to search for anything that might be buried. The sight of more than two people exploring the ruins at any given time occurs only in the exceptionally rare circumstance that outsiders have been guided there.

Many of the magical devices used to sustain sky-bound life, such as arcane machines that accumulate water from air or enrich the soil, remain intact. However, most have long since been either assimilated into the Uomoto infrastructure or pawned off to traveling merchants. Small reminders of Kho persist in the Uomoto's replication of their immaculate, unfaded blue, purple, and white decor; as well as through symbols originating

in the Shory Empire that are now engraved on shards of illuminant glass. Historians believe those who survived the fall of Kho either died alone in the jungle or quietly assimilated into the local population.

## INSIDE THE CITY

The Ruins of Kho represent both the highs and lows of a people who clawed their way into the sky only to find themselves crashing back to earth. While the errant magic of the ruins continues to spark and sputter, the verdant greenery provides a veil of peace that even the heaviest noise finds difficult to pierce. Of course, the reality of the ruins is far more dangerous. From ancient constructs continuing to serve their eternal purpose to the stray arcs of overflowing magical energy, the Ruins of Kho remain as hazardous now as the day the city fell.

The Ruins of Kho are of particular interest to scholars, both for the city's abundance of artifacts and magical secrets and for the unique circumstance of its fall. The fall of Kho is popularly rumored to have been caused by the Tarrasque, one of the Spawn of Rovagug, but such claims have yet to be verified. While certainly possible, the lack of certainty stems from the inability to extensively study the ruins. Some towers of Kho may bear enormous claw marks, but most have been either destroyed, sunk, or too long covered in greenery to discern at a glance.

Many have spent time and effort attempting to unlock Kho's secrets, but most fail to discover any concrete information or useful magic. Most of the city was destroyed beyond any useful analysis, and large-scale expeditions into what remains are exceedingly dangerous. Until recently, a territorial clan of marids defended the ruins as their territory. Along with that, the artificial constructs and powerful elementals that roam the area are more than enough to dismay even seasoned warriors. Uomoto scavengers are adept at circumventing these dangers but mostly refuse to cooperate with outside interests, preferring to not risk undue harm. While the ruins have been scavenged for generations, new dangers may appear without warning, reawakened by an increase in activity or latent magic.

## UPPER CITY

What was once the upper part of the city of Kho is now underwater, submerged in a nameless lake formed from the impact crater. The nature of the lake is not entirely clear, but it is known that a great deal of its water comes from the planar gates to the Plane of Water that once filled the main cistern in the city. Though there were ancillary methods of water gathering, notably ones that pulled condensation from clouds, most of these devices have long since been taken by Uomoto scavengers.

Though the area used to be the domain of a prominent marid clan, for reasons unknown—perhaps relating to the gradually increasing size of the lake—the genies have simply vanished. Presumably, the planar gates are still open, as the water level has only risen since the fall, but the amount of twice-abandoned structures and lingering activity gives the chilling impression of a sudden, apocalyptic spiriting away. Though mostly underwater, the upper city remains one of the most intact portions of Kho, with only the highest towers damaged. A few shards of crystal poke from the surface of the lake, pointed toward the sky. The multi-colored glass shines from below, half-invisible like ghostly coral, while the metal and stone quietly rust away.

The marids left a vast, illusory labyrinth at the bottom of the lake, having secreted away valuables and trinkets for their own amusement, hoping to lure unsuspecting scavengers to a watery doom. The general structure of the original layout of Kho's

## ECHOES OF AN EMPIRE

Kho was the first flying city of the Shory Empire, held aloft by a magical innovation known by modern scholars as the Aeromantic Infadibulum. The city came crashing down millennia ago, supposedly after being destroyed by the Tarrasque, a hulking beast spawned by the evil god Rovagug. Despite the centuries since its destruction, the ruins continue to be of great interest due to its powerful artifacts believed buried in the earth. Its remote resting place within inaccessible mountain peaks means that few know where to find it, and even fewer are prepared for the arduous trek both to and from the city.

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## CRYSTAL CREATURES

GMs can add traits to common *Bestiary* creatures in order to create the unusual beings that reside in Kho's ruins.

To create a crystal xorn, add weakness sonic 10 to a xorn (*Bestiary* 146) and the Crystal Corruption affliction (page 171) to all its Strikes.

To create a glass ooze, remove any resistance to acid from any common ooze, replace any acid damage inflicted by its strikes with sonic damage, and give the ooze the ability to cast *dispel magic* once per day as an arcane innate spell with a DC of 22, heightened to half the ooze's level rounded up.

upper city is preserved, but has been made especially dangerous through the use of conjured and illusory walls, some solid and some not. All this makes the sunken city treacherous to navigate. It is said the planar gates lie at the lowest point of the lake, concealed by the marids to prevent non-marids from being able to locate them.

## LOWER CITY

The lower city pokes out of the lake and spills onto the land. In comparison to the upper city, these ruins have been more thoroughly degraded. The tallest remaining structures are piles of rubble held together by thriving plant life reminiscent of the verdant jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. Much of the original architecture is hidden behind this dense layer of jewel-like foliage, save for the vast amount of glass and crystal that was emblematic of the Shory Empire's aesthetic. The shattered remains of these structures shine brilliantly still, sometimes even embedded into buildings and plant life, giving the impression of a thousand glimmering gems hanging like fruit. Birds nest in the highest of these structures and can often be seen flying above the ruins.

To the north of the lower city lies the Obelisk Bridge, the toppled remains of a tower covered in faded runes and moss. Once a residence for Kho's citizens, most of its features have been eroded beyond recognition or collapsed into jagged pits of crystal and glass. Still, a great many people once dwelt here, and traces of their lives may be found somewhere in the wreckage, if one knows where to look. Guardian constructs meant to keep the peace continue to roam this area, dragging their eroding bodies over the ancient rubble in eternal patrols.

Past the Obelisk Bridge is Shadow Hill, where the gasping sparks of a faulty planar gate open and close to the Plane of Shadow. This area is extremely dangerous, and Uomoto scavengers avoid it at all costs. The air itself is stifling and suffocating, and the energy of the Plane of Shadow can cause irreparable harm to one's body or spirit. Anything that emerges from the portal is usually more than willing to kill the first living creature it encounters, though these arrivals tend not to stray far from the portal. The gate's faultiness is the only thing that keeps these incursions in check, localizing the area to the small hill.

## FIELDS OF GLASS

Perhaps the most striking part of the Ruins of Kho, the Fields of Glass are the pooled remains of the city's many crystalline structures. The impact shattered and fused many of these towers together, the resulting mass becoming an unstable cluster of half-functioning magical energy, which eventually slid down toward the valley and sank into the ground. The malfunctioning magic of the remains began to propagate more crystals, spreading over more and more of the surrounding area. Many believe that the engine that kept Kho afloat lies within this fused mass. The sheer amount of jagged edges that jut out from the ground make the Fields of Glass perilous to navigate, but Uomoto scavengers know which paths are safe to tread.

The Fields of Glass are also patrolled by a unique species of xorn, mutated by consumption of the crystals to reflect their food source. These crystal xorn roam the surface by



day and return below the earth at night, harvesting the crystals that grow from the Fields of Glass. They refer to the fused mass of Kho's towers as the Vokthavaravat Cluster. Due to the malfunctioning magic the crystal xorn consume and the strange interaction between them and the Cluster, some believe the Cluster has achieved some sort of sentience which the xorn are compelled to follow. These xorn are in turn compelled to "infect" other creatures, as any affected earth elementals will likewise transform into crystal (see sidebar at right). In all other creatures, this "infection" causes a painful crystallization that is usually fatal unless treated or stemmed by severing the infected limb. Whether the sentience of the Vokthavaravat Cluster has any aim beyond self-propagation is unknown.

What is known is that the crystals of the Fields of Glass are kept in check by an odd custodian: oozes. The Domes of the Polymatum, once the prestigious arcane academies of Kho, now lie a broken mess of strewn metal. In the fall of Kho, many of their experimental fluids leaked and were absorbed by oozes kept for cleaning purposes. These oozes developed a special internal solvent that can neutralize the errant arcane energy of the surrounding crystals. Now, they wander throughout the ruins, mindlessly consuming anything and everything, though they remain most populous in the Domes of the Polymatum, where they were born. The crystal xorn have no countermeasures against these oozes and generally avoid contact; however, some have been observed seemingly luring oozes away from the Fields of Glass.

## UOMOTO

*"Though the air is thin, the people are more than willing to share it."*

These words lie at the heart of each Uomoto, for Uomoto people possess an abundance of generosity and compassion. Uomotos live in villages scattered around the Barrier Wall, near the Ruins of Kho. They value their life in the mountains and welcome the hardships it brings, believing it to temper their spirits. They are thankful for the fertility of their home region and take little for granted.

One of the most notable characteristics of Uomotos is the abundance of magically adept individuals born to their villages. Whether it is due to the proximity of the Ruins of Kho, the hidden legacy of Shory ancestors, or simple coincidence, Uomotos, on average, have more people born capable of utilizing magic than any other population in the Mwangi Expanse. Their elder sorcerers spend a great deal of time nurturing the potential of those who wish to pursue their talents, passing their cultural wisdom down through the generations. Uomoto sorcerers are marked with intricate tattoos that snake down their arms, granted gradually throughout the learning process. When the sleeves are completed, an apprentice graduates into a master. However, in order to breed humility and remind these sorcerers that their power is to be used for the good of all, Uomotos traditionally wear long sleeves.

Practicality is the foremost principle of Uomotos, as shown in the way they deal with the nearby Ruins of Kho. There is a generations-long relationship between the ruins and the villages, one in which Uomotos scavenge the ruins and, in return, ward off those who would disturb them. The artifacts they find are then traded away to traveling merchants or stripped and integrated into their own settlements. Uomotos prefer to keep artifacts that assist in daily life, such as with farming, but have been known to keep the odd unknown artifact out of curiosity.

Uomotos possess extensive knowledge of the workings of magical artifacts and are the foremost

## CRYSTAL CORRUPTION

**Crystal Corruption** (arcane, curse, incapacitation, transmutation) This affliction's sickened, slowed, and paralyzed conditions can't be removed until this affliction is removed.

A creature affected by crystal corruption slowly turns into crystal until it is petrified. Creatures with both the earth and elemental traits instead become carriers and suffer no ill effects aside from gaining the vulnerability to sonic; **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Stage 1** sickened 1 (1 hour); **Stage 2** vulnerable 5 sonic and sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** vulnerable 5 sonic and slowed 1 (1 day); **Stage 4** vulnerable 10 sonic and paralyzed (1 day); **Stage 5** vulnerable 10 sonic and the creature is permanently petrified.

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## SUSTAINABLE FALCONRY

Uomotos do not breed or permanently capture eagles as pets. Instead, an Uomoto who wishes for a companion takes a wild bird of around a year old. Such birds have a high mortality rate in the natural world, and so Uomotos see partnering with such a bird as a temporary means of nurturing it. Once the eagle is older, it is released back into the wild.

experts on how Kho's remnants work. Though only two scavengers enter the ruins at any given time, nearly everyone in the Uomoto villages is involved in investigating their findings. On many occasions, breakthroughs are made by the inventive tinkering of children, many of whom may eventually leave their homes to become scholars or engineers. This tendency to tinker from a young age leads to a great willingness to transform inherited wisdom into flexible critical thinking. Many Uomotos love to invent and improve things, and especially love finding new ways to utilize old things to serve new purposes.

Though Uomotos tend to be family-oriented and encourage staying close to home, they also value independence and one's personal journey. Upon reaching adulthood, Uomotos set out from their villages and return only after they have had their fill of wandering. While some come to enjoy life outside the Barrier Wall and choose to continue their journeys indefinitely, many grow to miss the call of home. Even those who choose to leave will often return to pass on stories of their travels, entertaining both the elderly and the children. Uomotos always welcome their kin no matter how long they've been away.

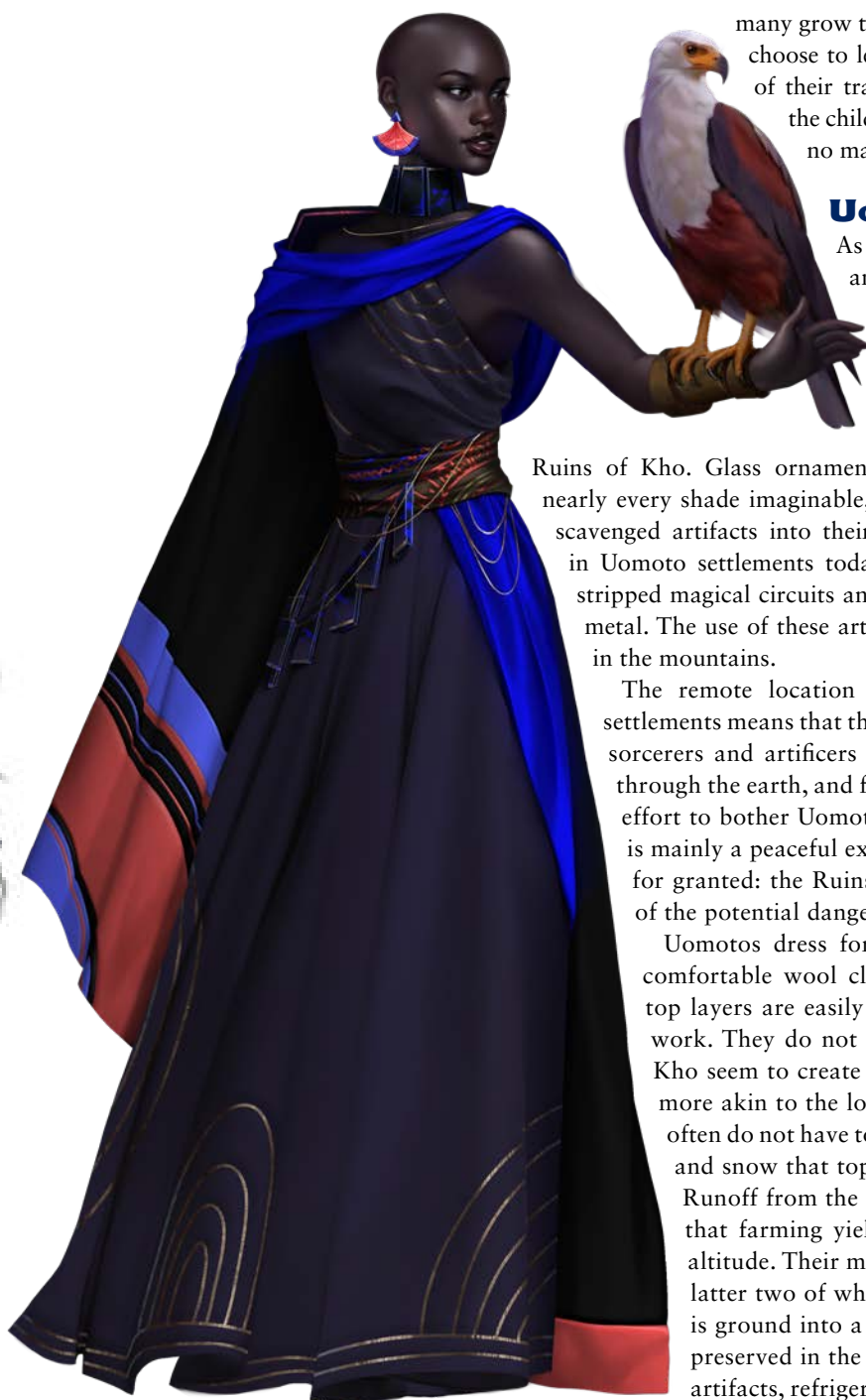
## UOMOTO VILLAGES

As one nears a Uomoto settlement, the ambient sounds of life fill the air: the lively exchange of drinks, heated bartering, and apprentice sorcerers learning their craft. While relatively simple, Uomoto settlements show architectural similarities to the nearby

Ruins of Kho. Glass ornaments are a common feature, coming in nearly every shade imaginable, and Uomotos have heavily integrated scavenged artifacts into their architecture. Much of what remains in Uomoto settlements today are the practical remnants of Kho: stripped magical circuits and cores, occasionally rehoused in plain metal. The use of these artifacts eases the harsh realities of living in the mountains.

The remote location and steep surroundings of Uomoto settlements means that they rarely face external threats. Uomoto sorcerers and artificers ward against creatures that can glide through the earth, and few others are willing to go through the effort to bother Uomotos in their home villages. Uomoto life is mainly a peaceful existence, though that peace is not taken for granted: the Ruins of Kho are an ever-present reminder of the potential dangers lurking just outside the doorstep.

Uomotos dress for life in the brisk mountain air with comfortable wool clothing, usually in long sleeves. Their top layers are easily removable to better facilitate manual work. They do not require heavier coats, as the Ruins of Kho seem to create a bubble of warm, humid atmosphere more akin to the lower Mwangi Expanse. Thus, Uomotos often do not have to dress for harsh weather despite the ice and snow that top the Barrier Wall's highest mountains. Runoff from the ruins also seems to enrich local soil so that farming yields surprisingly large harvests for the altitude. Their main crops are yams, dates, and rice, the latter two of which are distilled into alcohol. Sorghum is ground into a porridge and vegetables are dried and preserved in the sun. Due to scavenged pieces of Shory artifacts, refrigeration for food items is not uncommon,



though many Uomoto dishes still involve fermentation and other means of natural preservation.

Along with their wool clothes, many Uomoto wear jewelry made from materials scavenged from the ruins. Many choose adornments that reflect the crystalline nature of the Shory Empire, while others choose to wear simple metal bracelets or necklaces. One can often tell an Uomoto scavenger by the lack of these adornments, as their occupation benefits from avoiding things that can get snagged on debris. For this reason, the scavengers of Kho also tend to wear their hair short.

Uomotos consider much of their lifestyle a blessing and are more than willing to spread that blessing in turn. When Uomotos work, they work, and when they celebrate, they *celebrate*. When visitors enter their villages, Uomotos offer an abundance of food and drink, as well as the obligatory invitation to drink alcohol. Guests are rare, and Uomotos cherish them as much as they cherish every aspect of their lives.

The average Uomoto home houses multiple generations of family members. Extensions and maintenance are frequent, leaving many older structures just as robust and clean as the newer ones. Striking decorations adorn the outsides: large strings of crystal and glass which hang from the roofs, either taken from or modeled after those found in the Ruins of Kho. When the wind passes through, the gentle ringing of glass against glass resonates throughout the entire village.

Uomotos tend to nurture eagles and their buildings often have accommodations for nesting. It is thought that housing a family of eagles is good luck, leading Uomoto scavengers to fish in the ruin's lake to attract new eagles to the village. Indeed, the eagles often bring crystal shards or artifacts back from their feeding trips, which they don't mind Uomotos taking in return for the housing. Sometimes, they will even drop these little trinkets in front of the doorways as an offering. Children in a household may even grow up nurturing the eaglets and forming lifelong bonds. It is a common sight to see Uomoto people with a protective sleeve, ferrying an eagle from place to place. Many use them to scout for potential threats as they travel along the Barrier Wall.

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Ruins of Kho lie on the very far northeastern border of the Mwangi Expanse, in the Barrier Wall mountain range close to the nation of Osirion. Its distance from other major centers of civilization and its inaccessible position in the mountains mean that very few people travel to the area or even know of its existence.

## UOMOTO CHARACTERS

Though no one is certain of the origins of the Uomoto people or how many of them might have descended from the people of Kho, their connection to the legacy of Shory is difficult to deny. If you are playing a character of Uomoto ethnicity, you gain access to the Shory Aeromancer and Shory Aerialist Uncommon human ancestry feats (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide*, 14-15).

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## THE SCREAMING JUNGLE

Isolated in the southeast corner of the Mwangi Expanse, the Screaming Jungle is mired in a thick layer of fog that perpetually rolls down from the Shattered Range and the Bandu Hills. Seen from above, it resembles a lake of clouds more than a forest. The harsh screams of primates and birds perpetually echo throughout the suffocatingly humid mists, giving the jungle its infamous name. In contrast to the majestic, tall trees common to other woodlands, the trees of the Screaming Jungle are hooked and stunted. The terrain is sloped, as the jungle extends up onto the nearby mountains, and the tangles of tough roots and wet leaves make it treacherous to navigate by foot.

It's not just the footing one need be wary of here. The dreamlike atmosphere of the Screaming Jungle weighs heavily on the minds of all who enter it. Many within the Expanse dream of this place, even those that have never set foot within its mists.

From the birds that nest above the fog, to the diverse primates who make their home in the canopy, to the ground-dwelling mammals stalking the forest floor, the Screaming Jungle hosts an improbable density of wildlife. Every layer is also home to an endemic assortment of insects that range from vibrantly colored to nearly

invisible, and from harmless to deadly. Certain insects and birds unique to the Screaming Jungle can also mimic any sound to an eerily accurate degree. This contributes to the cacophony of the Screaming Jungle, for not every screech here comes from a monkey. The pattering footsteps of river hogs and rodents is occasionally punctuated by the silent stalking of the barukal leopard, a predator possessing the ability to shift its fur color to match its surroundings. Were this not enough, many plants within the Screaming Jungle are also carnivorous, some large enough to trap and consume large predatory creatures. Many an unwary adventurer has tripped over a root, fallen headfirst into a massive pitcher plant, and perished, unable to pierce its leathery skin or scale its slippery walls.

Similar to the Kaava Lands, the particularities of the Screaming Jungle are not well known, as its location and circumstances make it dangerous to those unfamiliar with it. To reach the Screaming Jungle, one must either trek through the Bandu Hills or cross the Shattered Range, all the while fending off the increasingly hostile inhabitants of Mzali. Once reached, the jungle itself becomes a threat. Save for Osibu, there are very few settlements within the Screaming Jungle, and even fewer

willing to extend a hand to outsiders. The Aspik Consortium has sent several expeditions into the Jungle, but their hostile attitude and unwillingness to cooperate with its residents led to disaster, souring relationships between the Jungle's people and outsiders. Those who have ventured in and returned alive often tell lively, meandering stories that do not answer any questions about the mysteries contained within the forest.

## DBEDE

The tower of Dbede pierces the canopy of the Screaming Jungle, scattering the mist that pools at its fifty-foot base. From afar, it stands proudly, jutting above the tops of trees nearly a hundred feet tall. This titan is a remarkable feat constructed not by man or monster, but by an industrious, millions-strong colony of termites. Built grain by grain over an immeasurable span of time, Dbede shows no sign of stopping its growth. No one knows the true size of the colony nor how old the structure is, only that it has been standing as long as people have looked at the Screaming Jungle. The base of the tower appears to be made of a liquidlike material that is constantly in flux; this is an illusion created by the countless termites that march up and down the tiny ruts running all along its length.

While the tower appears fragile, it is, in reality, as tough as any stone monument and stands as a testament to the termites' tenacity. The bleached bones of adventurers surround its wide base, picked clean of meat, fat, and gristle. Not even the sand beneath the skeletons bears the red stains of spilled life—every drop has found its way into the bellies of the tower's inhabitants. Mixed within these ominous piles are the bones of various primates that have attempted to feast upon the termite horde. Aggravating any one termite causes millions upon millions to spill forth in defense, overwhelming even the largest creatures with sheer numbers.

Though the tower consistently grows taller, its actual height fluctuates depending on the time of year. As sturdy as it is, the occasional heavy storm may oversaturate some of the walls and cause them to collapse. These holes tend to be patched with remarkable haste, often taking only a matter of hours to return the tower to its former shape. The rare glimpse inside reveals the millions of tiny tunnels that poke out of Dbede's porous surface, as well as the fungus the termites cultivate for food. This fungus gives some amount of extra resilience to the tower's structure.

## ELOKOLOBHA

Located on the eastern edge of the Screaming Jungle is the biloko and eloko city of Elokolobha. Bilokos (page 126) are wiry, crocodile-snouted fey who stalk the Mwangi Jungle, hunting down humanoids in order to feast on their flesh. Those who happen to consume creatures with significant stores of magical energy transform over the course of a week into elokos, gaining an increased appetite and the ability to suddenly grow in size. Elokolobha is the single largest known collection of elokos in the Mwangi Expanse. Its foundations are carved into large, naturally occurring limestone foundations.

Elokos have no concept of personal property and routinely have to rummage for equipment before going out hunting. Because they operate in small groups, just as when they were bilokos, there is usually enough salvage to go around. The buildings of the city are as mercurial and capricious as its inhabitants, haphazardly maintained until interest is lost and the building is abandoned, then resuming maintenance once again when a different group of elokos moves in. This can change daily, or even within the same day, depending on the whims of elokos; any open housing is free game for any group of elokos who wishes to squat there. The ground of Elokolobha is littered with bones and other miscellaneous objects that elokos cannot digest. Much of it is used to patch

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Screaming Jungle lies southeast of the Bandu Hills (page 148) and to the south of the Mwangi Jungle (page 154). It is close to the eastern edge of the nation of Vidrian, near the city of Umnyango (formerly known as Kalabuto). The city-state of Mzali borders the jungle's southwestern edge. Official Mzali forces rarely venture inside, due to a distaste of the forest canopy blocking out the sun, so the thick foliage provides an ideal hiding place for rebel groups such as the Bright Lions. The legendary city of Osibu is hidden within the northeast reaches of the Screaming Jungle, though the residents take great pains to hide this fact from the outside world.

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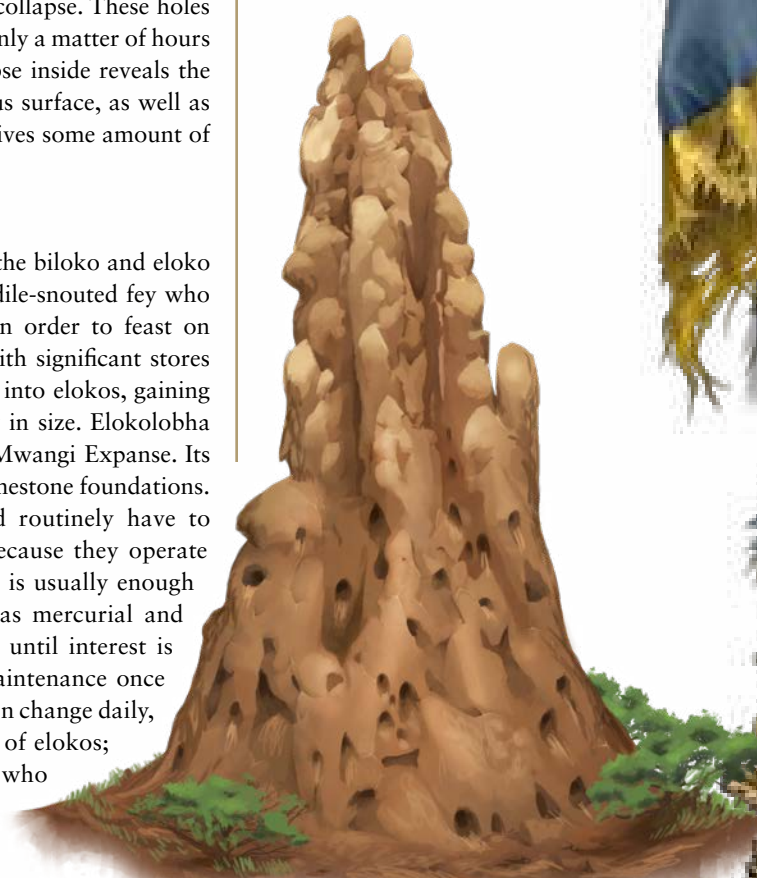
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## THE FATE OF ULDUVAI

After most Shory cities had fallen, Ulduvai was the very last to survive. Yet then it abruptly vanished, leaving no trace. Though most Shory ruins

have been discovered and looted, Ulduvai was never found, leaving some to believe it might return from the mists of time.

In reality, Ulduvai fell not long after the rest of the Shory empire. After discovering an immensely powerful artifact of the Dark Tapestry, a group of renegade Shory sorcerers unwisely tried to use it to gain power. Instead, their efforts left everyone in Ulduvai devoured or transformed. The city plunged into ruin, setting the sun on the Shory empire.

up crumbling buildings or is repurposed into spears or traps used to capture more prey.

Many cauldrons are strewn about, with roaring fires fueling bubbling broths. Bones off the ground are tossed in, the resulting soup consumed to tide over hungry elokos when hunts go awry. Elokos may resort to cannibalism if desperate enough, but this is exceedingly rare, as the bone broths of Elokolobha ease their hunger pangs and sate their appetites. While generally disinterested in those outside their immediate hunting groups, elokos in Elokolobha may occasionally be seen engaging in social grandstanding. Elokos balloon up to the largest size they can muster, with the tallest eloko being declared the victor. Other activities include comparing how wide they can open their jaws. There seems to be no reason for this outside the social aspect, as the winner does not actually receive anything.

The paths to Elokolobha are laid with hundreds of traps, some obvious and others less so. Occasional foolhardy adventurers set out to claim all the treasures elokos have accumulated through eating humanoids, but few ever make it to Elokolobha and those who do almost never return.

## THE KORIR RIVER

Nowhere in the Mwangi Expanse is the sound of running water more loudly heard than the Korir River. Its currents crash against jagged rocks, splashing over rugged coastline, carrying stone, debris, and wildlife in its wake. Numerous waterfalls and rapids segment the river, making it treacherous for all but the most experienced pilot. While these factors deter many of the crocodiles and hippopotamuses that populate the rest of the Mwangi Expanse's various rivers, a great number of animals still thrive in the Korir River. Fish adapted to the Korir's rapid pace, such as barracudas or tigerfish, swim throughout its waters, while large snakes populate the overhanging tree branches. These snakes will drop on prey, usually mammals or birds, and can often swim to shore still holding their catch. While they generally do not bother humanoids, the larger the snake is, the more it may deem one a fitting meal, a fact that goes doubly so for smaller travelers such as children or halflings. For this reason, those who frequently sail the Korir River are adept at swatting snakes out of the air before they can land on the ship or its passengers.

The Korir River is the main trade route between cities within Vidrian and also its main connection to Mzali. It is not the easiest route to follow at the best of times—many of the rapids and waterfalls require portaging the boats and all their cargo—but recently, the atmosphere

on the river has become more charged than usual. The tensions between

Vidrian and Mzali can be felt every time ships from either place float past one another. Crews cease working to watch, hands hovering over hilts, eyes filled with angry conviction.

A cold, standoffish silence of uncompromising ideals cuts through the tumult of the rapids. It holds for a few breathless moments as the ships pass, releasing only once they go their separate ways. Perhaps one day the connection this river holds

will snap, but for now, another day of uneasy peace flows by.



## MOUNT DOWAMA

Towering to the south and east of the Screaming Jungle, the snowcapped peak of Mount Dowama dominates the view of the entire region. Its powerful presence draws awe from visitors and residents alike. To locals, the mountain is a holy place, its cold and breathtaking slopes sacred and pristine. To foreign explorers, the mountain is a challenge, a summit to be climbed and conquered. Unsurprisingly, this clash of viewpoints has led to sour diplomatic relations, though only in the form of cold shoulders and silent judgment. If strangers seek to submit themselves to the dangerous and challenging terrain leading to the mountain, most locals are happy enough to let them—and there is usually a guide desperate or poor enough to lead them there in exchange for gold.

Rumors tell of a debris field on the mountain's southern slope, a trail of magical remnants left by the lost Shory city of Ulduvai. Many believe the city itself is hidden in some high and inaccessible valley on Mount Dowama. Both foreign adventurers and Mwangi scholars alike are drawn to these rumors, tempted by the priceless prestige, history, and knowledge promised by such a discovery.

Mount Dowama is home to a number of strange peoples not found anywhere outside the Mwangi Expanse, including creatures known as Zothians who vaguely resemble centaurs, with the torsos of iruxis and a four-legged lower bodies. There are also persistent stories among travelers about sightings of derhiis, the powerful winged gorillas who once lived among the Shory people as valued allies. The presence of derhiis only fuels the rumors that Ulduvai might lie on the nearby mountainside, though it also presents diplomatic barriers to those seeking to explore the area. Wild tales of fell monsters of chaos or undeath have also trickled back through the Mwangi Expanse, suggesting that whatever fate Ulduvai ultimately suffered wasn't a peaceful one.

## RASTEL

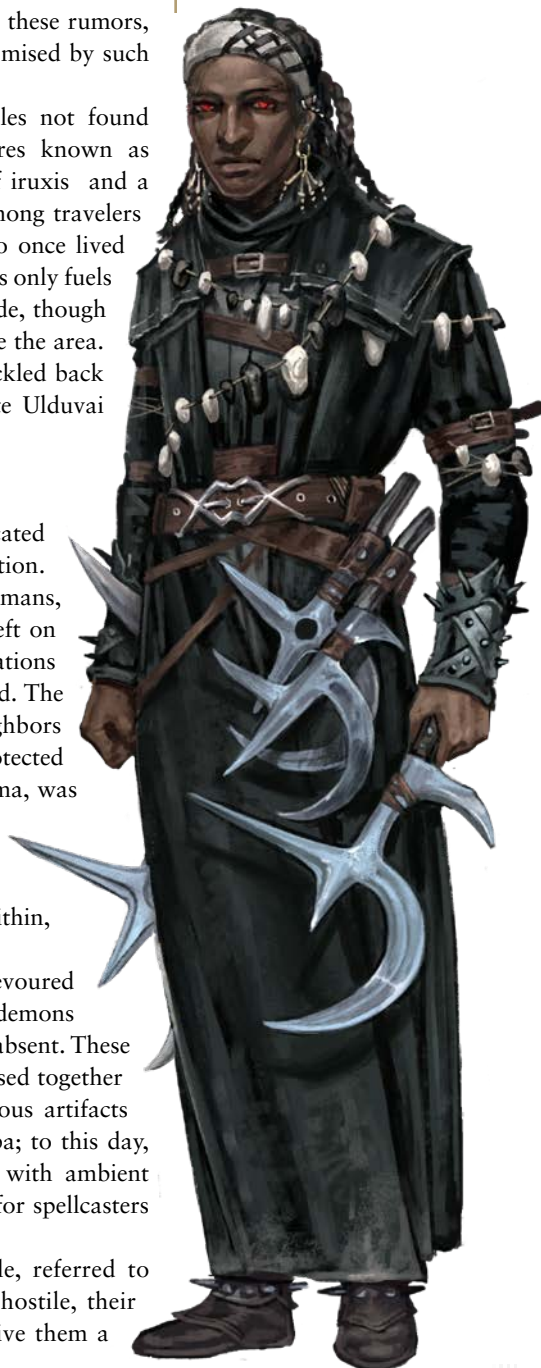
Rastel, once known as the Devouring Kingdom, was a city located south of Xatramba before their eventual mutual destruction. Though Rastel boasted a diverse population which included humans, dwarves, and iruxis, it's mostly remembered by the scars it left on the Mwangi Expanse. As the Devouring Kingdom, negotiations with nearby cities began and ended with spearpoints outward. The particular zeal with which Rastel attempted to consume its neighbors led to conflict with the holy city of Xatramba. Xatramba, protected in equal part by the blessings of its ancestors and of Pharama, was able to fend off Rastel's advances for a time. Eventually, Rastel summoned fiends and conquered Xatramba, only for Rastel itself to fall into internal strife. Having consumed its greatest rival, the Devouring Kingdom devoured itself from within, and the ensuing chaos led to its utter ruin.

The scorched remnants of Rastel's cities are slowly being devoured by the jungle, their temples forgotten, their history lost. Many demons still haunt these ruins, though the most powerful are notably absent. These dangerous fiends are said to lie bound beneath the ruins, housed together with the stolen treasure from a hundred cities. Many religious artifacts went conspicuously missing during the conquest of Xatramba; to this day, none have been recovered. The entire region is brimming with ambient magical energy and is one of the foremost points of interest for spellcasters and researchers within the Mwangi Expanse.

The ruins also shelter the descendants of Rastel's people, referred to as the Waiting Ones. Though small in number and rarely hostile, their untroubled coexistence with fiends means most outsiders give them a wide berth.

## THE WAITING ONES

The residents of Rastel's ruins are all tieflings, possibly influenced by the demonic forces who caused Rastel's downfall, possibly directly descended from those fiends themselves. They worship the memory of their ancestors while heralding the return of the great fiends of Rastel who wrought so much destruction centuries ago.



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## THE SODDEN LANDS

The onset of the Age of Lost Omens upended both the spiritual and physical landscapes of Golarion, causing a storm in the Arcadian ocean that swept all before it. Called the Eye of Abendego, the hurricane's wind and rain have wracked the Soddan Lands for over a century. The boggard tribes claim the hurricane is the unblinking eye of Rovagug, peering out from his prison. Others whisper that the Eye is a gateway to one of the gems that imprison the benevolent elemental lords of earth or fire. If true, the jealous elemental tyrant gods Kelizandri and Hshurha guard the secret zealously. Even wilder rumors claim the hurricane's eye is a portal to a realm beyond Golarion and even past the Great Beyond. The closest most people have come to the storm is the daring Free Captains' Regatta, whose crews have skirted its winds to speed their journey. For every two ships that have managed that trick, a third lies torn apart, sunk beneath the waves.

Many see the Soddan Lands as the drowned remnants of two coastal nations, Lirgen and Yamasa. Gone entirely is Yamasa's rich and fertile farmland, and all that remains of cosmopolitan Lirgen is a flooded city whose descendants live in the tower-tops above dark and murky waters. Predators of all kinds roam this lawless place,

from boggards to crocodiles to aberrations to gangs of survivalists and the Terwa Lords.

But a lush beauty exists in these shaded and stormy wetlands. Deep-rooted trees, birds, fey, and all sorts of wildlife have arisen and adapted. Though the swamp is a mere century old, it feels primordial, a place out of time. Those traveling through can hear a soft, ever-present rain; whirring insects; and the songs of many birds and amphibians. As the land-dwellers fled, other cultures expanded into the wetlands. Boggard tribes, once limited to a few marshes, now cover most of the northern Soddan Lands. The south has been claimed by iruxis, a mix of peaceful villagers and violent Terwa Lords.

### CUDSLO'S CONCOCTIONS

The bloated boggard alchemist **Cudslo** (N boggard alchemist 6) maintains a sprawling alchemy shop within a small boggard village. Tucked into an inlet on the Frogmarch river, the complex lies halfway between Hyrantum and the wider boggard territory. From the outside, the shop appears little more than a misshapen conglomeration of mud huts leaning precariously against one another, belching putrid smoke. Inside, customers find an orderly if cramped alchemist's workshop filled

with poisons, potions and alchemical toys. Fluent in Mwangi and Iruxi, Cudslo serves as healer, supplier, and information broker to any who wish passage through boggard territory. He takes a steep cut of every transaction he negotiates but will provide dangerous or unpleasant jobs for those short on coin. Adventurers who could not otherwise afford his services get sent in search of elusive, poisonous, or carnivorous ingredients. Cudslo also pays well for rumors and intelligence of other factions in the Sodden Lands.

## FLIPTOWN

Years ago, a gripli named **Flip the Lucky** (NG male gripli champion of Irez 7) sailed into Ng's Well on a small skiff. He reemerged a year later with a magical barge that hovers above the waters. Renaming the barge *Fliptown*, Flip now serves as its proprietor and sails it throughout the Sodden Lands. He has turned it into a roving gripli village and riverboat casino that draws high-stake gamblers from the First World, the Plane of Water, and other unusual regions. These gamblers bet not just for coin, but for favors, magic, and secrets. In the weeks leading up to a tournament, *Fliptown* will hire adventurers as security, staff, and entertainers. Flip hates cheats and bet-welchers; any caught at either crime are marked on their forehead with a glowing brand that activates only within a mile of the floating city-barge.

## KOKUTANG

Once the capitol of Yamas, Kokutang is still a seasonal gathering place and shrine for Yamasan survivors. These survivors drained Kokutang's famed system of cisterns and converted them into waterproof subterranean dwellings connected by flooded passages. The Yamasans remain close-mouthed about why they risk so much to return to the ruins of their city each year. Rumors explaining their pilgrimage range from communing with the spirits of their ancestors to searching for a lost relic they believe can rebuild their nation.

## RIVERS

Despite the storms and conflict, commerce continues at a brisk pace along the swollen waterways of the Sodden Lands. That trade brings druids, monster hunters, smugglers and treasure seekers. The Black Flow originates in the northern highlands and flows south past the lost ruins of Oagon, a Lirgeni city that once housed great magical vaults. The Frogmarch River marks the unofficial boundary between north and south, just as it once divided Lirgen and Yamas. It flows past Hyrantum and the newly discovered Ng's Well to the sea. Further south, the Crab River flows past the remains of Kokutang. The southernmost of the four waterways, the Terwa River originates in Terwa Lake and flows northward to the sea. This river's inlets are now filled with Terwa Lord villages, boats and troops.

## HYRANTUM

Hyrantum, capital of Lirgen's astronomer kings, once boasted hundreds of tower observatories reaching to the heavens. When the country flooded, those towers were the city's salvation, providing a high sanctuary above the rising waves. Those too stubborn to leave survived as fisherfolk, traveling from tower to tower using makeshift bridges and pulleys. Only a few leaders kept their astrological lore and history alive. Five years ago, one such leader, the Star Savior, left mysteriously. Since then, the city has suffered countless monster attacks, surviving only by making common cause with their magical neighbors: Kaijong, a brine dragon lighthouse keeper; and Ryssina, a naga enamored with learning. Then the gate known at Ng's Well appeared, bringing its own flood of fey visitors and immigrants to the beleaguered city. Hyrantum now rebuilds with magical aid, but it faces a whole new host of problems.

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Sodden Lands sits on the west coast of the Mwangi Expanse, stretching between the Barrier Wall and Rahadom to the north and the Shackles to the south.

## BOGGARD CULTS

Boggard tribes are ubiquitous throughout the Sodden Lands. They see the ever-raging Eye as a sign of favor from Rovagug, causing many tribes to convert away from the boggard goddess, Gogunta. A jealous goddess, Gogunta sends visions to boggard leaders, demanding they return to the fold. So far, those unlucky enough to admit to such visions have been slain, but the visions persist.

Distrustful of outsiders, many boggards are more likely to attack adventurers than treat with them. Tribal leaders will proudly claim fiendish heritage, whether they have it or not. United, boggards could be a powerful force in the region, but constant raiding and infighting has prevented that.



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## HYRANTUM'S LIGHTHOUSE

Towering forty feet above the waves, Hyrantum's lighthouse once guided merchant vessels to the city. Now it serves as lair to the brine dragon Kaijong (LN male adult brine dragon).

Kaijong defended Hyrantum from sea hag invaders, but of late he has begun grumbling about all the fey visitors received by the city. These fey tourists sometimes invade his privacy, and he seeks help to discourage their aggravating visitations.

## THE ENCLAVE

The majority of Hyrantum's residents live in the city center, in the unflooded upper floors of towers, or in floating houseboats known as flotsams. The city has expanded due to fey immigrants, with flotsams being slowly replaced by beautifully carved houseboats that have an unfortunate habit of sailing off on their own. Dryads grow huge mangrove tangles so thick that they block river travel in some areas. Nixies moved into the lower tower levels and play haunting music day and night. Fey pranks and high spirits disrupt what was once a quieter and more homogeneous community, but also bring excitement to daily life.

## NG'S WELL

Large enough to sail a ship through, Ng's Well is a gate to the First World. Its sudden appearance remains a mystery. Believed to be one of many crossroads managed by Ng the Hooded, it opened up a wave of trade and scholarship between the fey realm and Hyrantum, causing an economic resurgence in this once destitute city of fishermen, while also attracting adventurers and merchant investment.

## PARALLAX UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Once, Parallax University thrived as one of the most ambitious academic communities on Golarion, with an unsurpassed focus on astronomy, the sciences, magic, and even space exploration. Before the arrival of the Eye of Abendego, a group of scholars sent an elven-crewed vessel, *Lirgen's Glory*, into space as one of the first known attempts to methodically explore and catalog Golarion's solar system.

Now all that remains of this renowned institution is its library, a treasure trove of Lirgen's legacy preserved by magical wards that kept the archives safe and dry. Within rests thousands of volumes of scientific and magical research, tomes of astronomy and astrological predictions, and information from Lirgen's golden age. The library's three floors are guarded by traps, clockwork servants and a self-appointed librarian, **Ryssina** (N female lunar naga magician 10), who personally vets any visiting scholars. Although the possessive librarian will not allow any books to leave the library, she has become receptive to the idea of some small classes reopening in the university. What this means for a community of self-taught fisherfolk is that adults and responsible older children are learning to read and write on the uppermost floor of the library, with those who need special tutoring receiving it from the fearsome librarian herself.

## SAOC PLANETARIUM

Glowing constellations still light the ceiling of this submerged planetarium, providing powerful visions to those who study its secrets. Unfortunately, this massive space serves not only as a scholar's treasure trove but as an underwater fortress for all sorts of malicious aquatic monsters: skum, hags, and other hostile creatures who enjoy preying on the humanoid city that floats above them. The city leaders hoped their new immigrants would take care of the problem, but most of the fey in Hyrantum aren't warriors and have no desire to seek out conflict.



## TERWA LORDS

The Terwa Lords are a growing power in the Sodden Lands, an aggressive conglomeration of iruxi conquerors who gained influence and territory at the expense of their more peaceful neighbors. As they conquer other villages, they kill the leaders and assimilate the remaining population. The conquered may regain status if they join the periodic war parties to raid the Shackles, or if they have useful skills as artisans or hunter-gatherers.

The Terwa Lords are a warrior meritocracy who place a high value on family. When people from different villages meet for trade, they first try to establish family connections. Do they share a common mentor or great-grandparent? Distant cousins may feel obligations to at least listen to one another and negotiate. Each parent sees their children as a continuation of their legacy, which will hopefully surpass them to rise higher in society.

Terwa culture balances honesty with an intense political awareness. Terwa Lords pursue politics with glee, openly collecting favors and building toward various goals. Outsiders might view the Lords' desire to conquer more peaceful iruxi settlements with alarm, but to the Terwa, these iruxis are aimless and misguided brethren. **Girzanje** (NE male lizardfolk lord 9), a scarred warrior and seer, claims to have prophetic dreams that require the complete unification of all iruxis in the Sodden Lands to prevent doom. His visions have led to constant raids on the Shackles, where he believes an ancestral iruxi site of power lies hidden.

Terwa Lords hold grudges for a long time, but they do make distinctions between different offenses. Reconciling with an honorable long-term political adversary is common if favors are offered and mutual ground is found. The death of a friend in battle can be forgiven easily if the killer is repentant and provides a proper blood-gift. Lies and deceit, on the other hand, are usually unforgivable. Known liars face exile or death, for they can never be trusted again.

## ART

Permanent Terwa architecture and fortified structures are rare outside of celestial observatories or places of worship. The Terwa Lords consider their stilted homes temporary dwellings, easily abandoned during invasions. A favorite Terwa tactic is to set fire to their own homes with invaders inside, then to melt into the swamp and ambush any survivors in the muck. Terwa boats, however, are works of artistry, passed down through the generations, named, and lovingly repaired and decorated.

Because the Terwa are a mobile and often nomadic culture, most of their art is jewelry and other worn crafts. Some is merely decorative, while others signify different achievements. Most Terwa iruxis wear a hatch stone signifying their time of birth. Triangle charms indicate battles won, while perfectly round gems indicate shamanistic training. Astrologers might wear shell buttons arrayed in constellations on a vest. Some jewelry bears family symbols, or images significant to the earned nickname of a warrior or lizard king.

## SHAMANS AND SEERS

Shamans and seers are not only trusted advisors but also tribal leaders. They are so valued that Terwa Lords will often allow non-iruxi seers and astrologers free passage through their lands. Many Terwa compose their own songs of the stars, military compositions that deal with themes of death, legacy, destiny and the beauty of the heavens.

## WARCALLERS

The leading council of the Terwa Lords are the Warcallers, a group of kings and spiritual leaders who make intertribal decisions through consensus and necessity. For the most part, they act as a meritocracy, with a heavy focus on training replacements. One exception to this is Girzanje, an old and scarred seer who has clung to his leadership position with a death grip. Although his position as both seer and warrior has made him politically strong, many others among the Warcallers openly dislike him.



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## TERWA UPLANDS

The Terwa Uplands are a rocky, mountainous peninsula jutting out into the ocean just south of the Eye of Abendego. They're traditionally seen as the dividing line between Garund to the east and the islands of the Shackles to the west. Most of the Terwa Uplands consist of low, heavily forested mountains, typically between two and five thousand feet above sea level, with the occasional peaks rising as high as eight or nine thousand feet. The mountains' forest is what scholars call a cloud forest or mossy forest—by quirk of geography, it rarely rains in the Uplands, with moisture instead returning to the land through near-constant layers of mist or fog. Plants and animals collect water from condensation, and the sun can be seen only dimly through the perpetual haze. Most of the plants are stocky, low trees with gnarled stems, covered by a thick carpet of moss, while the animals skew smaller than in the Mwangi Jungle to the east, with a plethora of monkeys, wild pigs, leopards, and amphibians. The Uplands are particularly famous for their small, colorful, and toxic newts.

The region is inhabited by the Mbe'ke dwarves, a cosmopolitan, urbanized society who typically dwell in the high mountains above the forests. Mbe'kes possess one of the original Sky Citadels, Cloudspire (page 68),

and they have expanded to build other towns and cities across the Uplands. A typical Mbe'ke town houses several hundred dwarves along with a few humans and other ancestries scattered among them. It is usually fortified with stout stone walls and built at least halfway into a mountain. Mbe'kes grow tubers and mushrooms in the forest and mine for copper and gold, which they turn into objects of beauty to trade with other peoples.

A large number of whimsical, wild-minded cloud dragons famously claim the Uplands as their home. Each dragon typically chooses a particular valley for themselves, usually nesting in the tallest tree or some mountain pool, but they're all tied to one another by a great web of kinship. They're staunch allies and friends of the dwarves, and most Mbe'kes can name at least a few local dragons.

### K'LERENG

The second-largest city of the Mbe'ke dwarves, K'lereng stands as a large trading port on the upper edge of the Terwa Uplands, in the southeastern corner of the Sodden Lands. One can find goods from a hundred nations and people from a hundred lands on the docks here, though most permanent residents are Mbe'kes living under the

rule of King Thabsing Blood-Eye (page 71).

K'lereng's wealth primarily comes from trade and shipbuilding, and the deep, artificial harbor constructed by the dwarves in generations past is a vital part of the city's livelihood. A vast sea-chain protects the harbor, raised by ancient machines to block a ship's passage when needed. Each link of the sea-chain is the size of a bull, and most links are sponsored by various Mbe'ke fellowships or local merchant captains, who pay for the upkeep and have them decorated by local engravers. The cloud dragon Corssiarzyx, who lairs in a giant tree at the edge of the harbor, has claimed seven links for himself, each engraved to look like a dragon biting its tail. Pirates sometimes seek to attack the port, but so far the great sea-chain, the dragon, and King Thabsing's warriors have always seen them off.

## THE STORMWELL

Hidden away in the heart of the Uplands is a small, forested valley. Moss and lichen cover strangely shaped stones found within, and twisted trees crowd around a deep ravine. Grey fog obscures the bottom of this crevasse, and sometimes flashes of lightning can be seen in its depths. In truth, the ravine is a permanent portal to the Plane of Air, emerging on the outskirts of the great Storm of Fangs, an eternal maelstrom that dwarfs even the Eye of Abendego. It is from here that the cloud dragons first entered the Terwa Uplands, and knowledge of the portal is a close-guarded secret among them. This is because the Stormwell is also the final burial site of their people. When a cloud dragon grows old and frail, they travel to the Stormwell and watch over it during their final years, until their bones join the moss-covered shapes along the forest floor.

Between the stable elemental portal and an emperor's ransom in dragon bone, the Stormwell is the greatest treasure of the Uplands, but it's not unguarded. Though the wyrms here may be aged and withered, they are still dragons with centuries of cunning—and their job is as much to protect others from the Stormwell as to watch over the bones of their ancestors, for invisible predators of wind and malice often attempt to cross through the portal.

## THE VALLEY OF GHOSTS

The Uplands' ever-present fog is thicker than usual in this low, humid valley, and visitors who approach swear they see the faces of those they know to be dead swirling in the mist. Brave souls that dare enter the valley report a sense of being followed, and of strange and disorienting sounds echoing at the edge of perception. It's easy to become hopelessly lost in the valley, and the place is not without its dangers, including sudden drops and deadly predators. Many who enter never return.

The valley's more fortunate visitors may meet a local legend known only as the **Ghost-Drummer** (NG male human bard 15). A cheerful, easygoing Mwangi man of enormous heft, the Ghost-Drummer carries three decorated wooden drums and an old, flint-tipped spear. He leads lost travelers back out of the valley, though he himself never leaves. He can also be persuaded to teach those inclined a beat or two. Those who can successfully learn his rhythmic, hypnotic beats find they have power over the dead.

## WHERE ARE WE, AGAIN?

The Terwa Uplands are directly to the west of the Mugumo Plains (page 166) and to the south of the Sodden Lands (page 178). Bloodcove sits on its southern edge, while the Shackles and the pirate city of Port Peril are to the north. The Mbe'ke dwarves have little love for pirates, Aspis agents, or fleeing colonists, making the Uplands something of a barrier to most people who might wish to pass through.

## CLOUD DRAGONS

Powerful and primal creatures hailing from the elemental Plane of Air, cloud dragons soar across the highest peaks of the Mwangi Expanse. Though most cloud dragons are wanderers and explorers at heart, those in the Terwa Uplands are content to keep a permanent residence in the mountains. They can even sometimes be spotted skimming through the mists of the lowland Mwangi jungles. As they are neither particularly benevolent nor particularly violent, most Mwangi residents see them as something akin to passing weather rather than a menace to be dealt with. For more information on cloud dragons, see *Bestiary* 2 88.

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# BLOODCOVE

*Merchant port and haven to refugees, pirates, and unscrupulous merchants*

## BLOODCOVE

## SETTLEMENT 9

NE CITY

**Government** Grand Admiral (elected for life), Secret Syndicate  
**Population** 7,817 (79% humans, 5% dwarves, 3% elves, 3% goblins, 10% other)

**Languages** Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Goblin, Mwangi, Taldane

**Religions** Abadar, Besmara, Erastil, Gozreh, Hei Feng, Norgorber

**Threats** Pirates, Aspis agents, turf wars, aquatic monsters

**Trade Connections** The pirates of Bloodcove use unique methods in acquiring items to sell. The city has items of up to level 15 available for purchase, but anything higher than level 9 must first be acquired outside of the city and thus requires waiting 3d6 days for the item.

**Harthwik Barzoni** (CN male human corsair 13) Grand Admiral of Bloodcove, a mostly defanged city ruler

**Erwyn Harvacus** (N male human druid 9) Leader of a druid circle keeping the mangroves from swallowing Bloodcove

**Malika Fenn** (NE female human ranger 8) Head of Aspis operations in the city and disgruntled ex-Pathfinder

**Kunari Mobo** (N female human merchant 8) Retired Free Captain that maintains a major pirate trade network



## RESOURCES



Alcohol/  
Drugs



Armor/  
Weapons



Grain/Fruit/  
Vegetables



Jewelry/  
Gems



Lumber



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Mercenaries



Seafood



Ships



Spices/Salt



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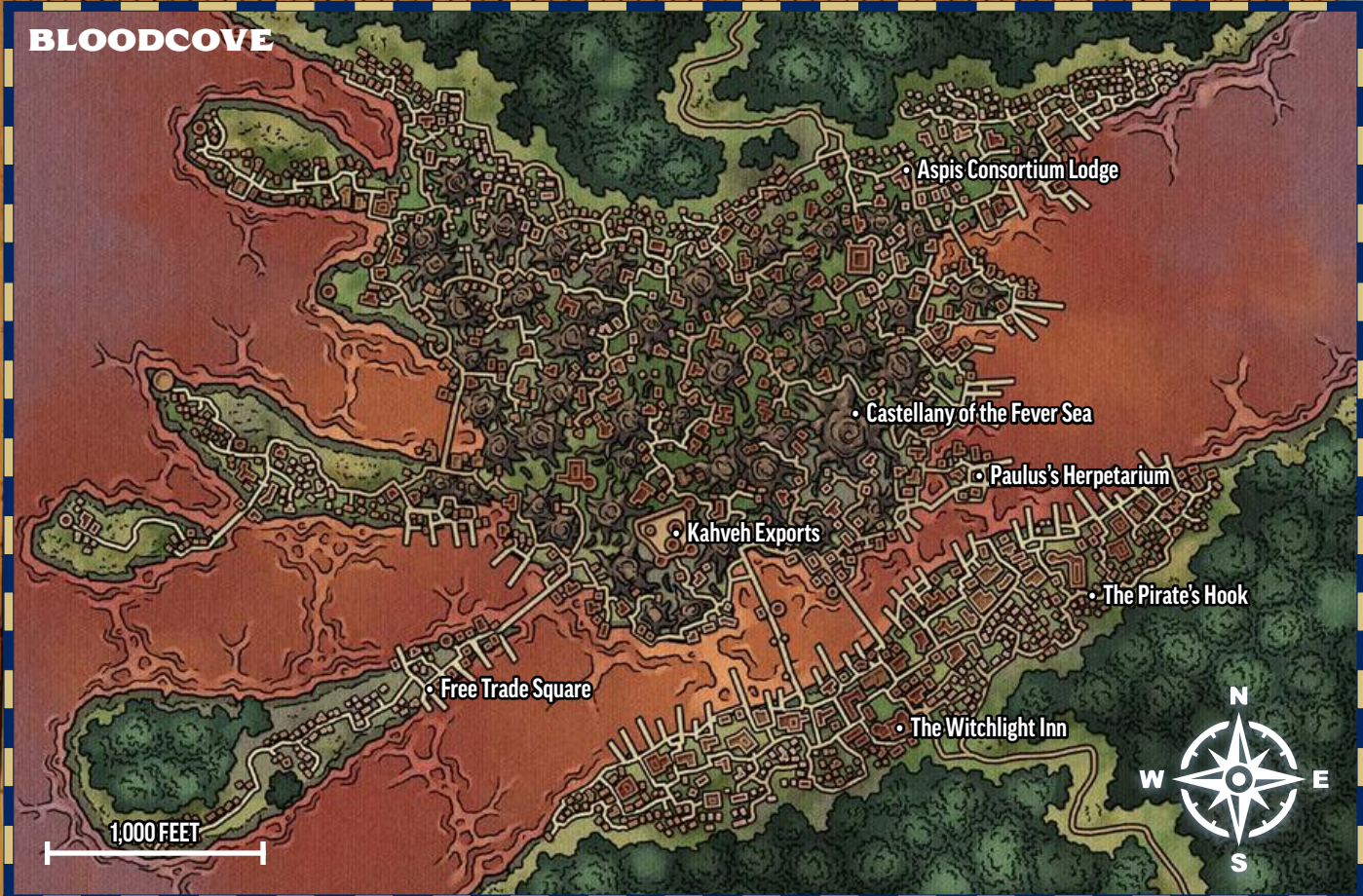
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## BLOODCOVE SHIPS

Due to its location near the Shackles and its nonexistent laws on contraband, Bloodcove offers an incredibly diverse range of ships in its docks—many of them stolen. Swift ships from Tian Xia and Vudra attract the interest of many shipwrights and sailors, and anyone bringing in a vessel from Senghor could likely name their price.

## THE MANGROVE CITY

The city of Bloodcove provides sanctuary for clever pirates, mischievous merchants, and anyone in between. Pirate captains founded Bloodcove as a place for corsairs to engage in actual trade while also having a port of their own. To some, Bloodcove offers the air of a true trade city; to others, it's a lethal den of thieves and murderers. If one seeks something rare or illicit, chances are it can be found here, no doubt at a hefty price.

Officially, Harthwik Barzoni, the Grand Admiral of Bloodcove, rules the city. Behind the scenes, a secret syndicate of major stakeholders hold true control, as they have the power to choose the Grand Admiral and define what power comes with the position.

The origin of the city's name becomes clear upon seeing the crimson waters that flow from the Vanji River through the cove and into the Fever Sea. Yet most visitor's eyes are first drawn to the gargantuan mangrove trees, the likes of which can only be found along the Mwangi Coast. The entire city is built on and around the roots of these trees, sitting atop platforms, boardwalks, and other suspensions that hang over the sanguine water. Those who are prepared for the perils of Bloodcove can appreciate its beauty—to see the mesh of the jungle with the sea, to embrace and enjoy the wide span of trees melding against the red ocean, can be a treasure of its own. This is a place where the brilliant hues of sunrise and sunset reflect in both in the skies above and the waves below.

Bloodcove is one of few moderately sized civilizations found on the Fever Sea. Unlike most of the pirate havens to the north, Bloodcove manages a semblance of order even without much overarching authority. One of the most trade-heavy locations in the Mwangi Expanse, it comes with the added advantage that goods obtained through illicit means aren't necessarily turned away. "Black markets" don't exist in Bloodcove as items banned in other places are sold openly on the streets. Gambling and games of chance are likewise common; along alleys and inside taverns, dozens of people wait ready to bet and challenge strangers to a game of wits, chance, or potentially both. But the biggest gamble of all is to enter Bloodcove and leave the same as you were.

Trust may be hard won here, but respect holds weight. Being a newcomer does not automatically mean being a target, but it does mean one should be cautious. Once a traveler has earned the locals' respect, they begin to see past the surface level of Bloodcove and appreciate the multifaceted city it actually is.

Traders clandestinely offer goods hidden from display. Pirates tell stories that seem unbelievable, yet hold far more truth than expected. Politics is played through money and influence; a ruined reputation may end with a dagger in the back and an increase in standing for the person who put it there.

Some residents call Bloodcove the city of opportunity, and it is, for those who can handle the chaos. The more business you do in Bloodcove, the more your reputation will grow, leading to greater opportunities... and more danger.

## LIFE IN BLOODCOVE

A general day in Bloodcove centers on trade and high-stakes deals. As a city built on commerce, Bloodcove's main marketplace commands much of its local attention. Many pass through the busy crowds simply to see what new goods merchants have brought and what items were hidden the day before. Often the same faces pass through the same shops at regular times, but multiple new customers in a day is no surprise.

The city is always moving, as resources might be needed at any hour of the day—sailors and pirates make port day and night, and many taverns provide service whenever the craving comes, no matter the hour. People can be found





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waking and sleeping at any and every hour. Rather than boasting that Bloodcove never sleeps, it's more accurate to say it sleeps at different times in different places. Ordinary folk commonly start their day at dawn, a few before sunrise. Most fish shops in the market offer their freshest cuts in the early morning, right as they finish cleaning and preparing their latest catch. By late morning, as the sound of markets' hustle and bustle grows louder, the late-risers grumpily wake up to join in. Bars and restaurants open early for breakfast for those patrons headed out to trade, to sea, or to travel, while many locals converge on Restaurant Row, a collection of diners, eateries, and taverns offering cuisine from all over Golarion, to sample the imported foods or savor the medley of scents.

With both sea and jungle so close, chefs have a wide assortment of materials to work with, not to mention imported herbs and spices constantly brought in by merchants and sailors. The local cuisine of Bloodcove originated from pirates who hunted their own meat, but took the extra step of smoking or barbecuing their catches. With new ingredients imported from different places and new animals to cook as Bloodcove grew, this cooking style became popular within the city. From creatures of the sea with massive jaws to large lizardlike beasts in the jungle, smoked meat is a common culinary treat in the morning, afternoon, or evening, especially when paired with a pint of roseberry mead.

First meals of the day in Bloodcove commonly include fish, often cooked with chunks of taro. As it is easy to catch from the sea and extremely fresh, seafood proves as delightful and filling a fare as anything Bloodcove can provide. Most restaurants commonly serve fish with a vahlgur tea, made of a kelp found in the shallows of the Fever Sea that, when dried, ground, and steeped, has a bitter and briny taste with soft hints of ginger and honey.

As the afternoon draws near, the city roars with both food preparation and consumption. Breads from different lands are sold, varying in taste from sweet to sour. Fruits and vegetables, washed and ready to be eaten, are hawked loudly by name in the market. Taverns and inns remove the brews and broths they've kept cooking overnight and serve up meat that melts off the bone, accompanied by vegetables heavy with absorbed flavor.

Evening meals are even more notable. Cuts of giant eel, slow roasted to perfection, are served alongside chunks of roots and potato stewed with soomdevi and sprinkled with whatever herbs are on hand. Soomdevi, a plant with a smoky flavor that grows between mangrove roots, is commonly used in local meals due to its abundance in the area. It grants a rich, smoky flavor without the time-consuming process of smoking meat. In the summer, the smell of blooming soomdevi marks one of Bloodcove's most memorable seasonal features.

The closest thing to quiet found in Bloodcove is in the late hours of the night, when the bars are full, the fishers

## SHIPWORMS

For all the dangers of Bloodcove, one of its most feared creatures can't be driven away with a sword. Shipworms are small invertebrates that thrive in the port's warm waters, and eat dead wood—including that of ships. The creatures are so voracious that some claim one can hear the worms chewing on quiet days. A small fortune is spent on preventing shipworm damage, as a hull or pier weakened by the creatures can easily break and sink in rough weather. Magic spells, stone reinforcements, and applying tar to the hulls of vessels are the most common precautions. Locals eat shipworms as a delicacy, and the dish is popular among sailors as a form of revenge.

and grocers asleep, and the jungle fauna chirps among the trees. Most call these the Dead Hours, not because increased violence, but due to it being one of the few times the streets are almost empty. The Dead Hours are also when some of the town's less savory operators do business, since no witnesses may make for a smoother deal. Occasionally, these transactions may escalate into violence; for the most part, the citizens of Bloodcove let the conflicting parties resolve it amongst themselves, as long they don't interrupt dinner or drinks.

Weather in Bloodcove doesn't vary much, and northern travelers find the winter to be very similar to spring. Rather than four seasons, Bloodcove experiences only two: a dry season and a wet season. Most residents favor the dry season, as that's when the sky is clear, the sun shines bright, and the waters are illuminated with a warm glow. During summer in the dry season, however, the heat can become intense. It's common to see citizens wearing their hair up or away from their necks, as letting it down can become too warm on the average day. During summer light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, which allows air through and reflects sunlight, becomes a necessity.

During the wet season, tropical rain showers fall almost constantly and there is very little sun. Even the lightest precipitation can prelude a serious storm. Hurricanes, thunderheads, and waterspouts occur with alarming frequency. Residents in Bloodcove are always prepared for such inevitabilities, building their structures to withstand heavy winds and designing roofs to easily carry water off. As a silver lining, the wet season can increase the value of goods. During storms, it becomes more difficult to obtain any number of things that specifically come from import, which creates a scarce supply and heavy demand, with enough people willing to risk their safety to earn that extra bit of coin.

Bloodcove celebrates a few holidays. Admiral's Advent, on the first day of summer, celebrates the life and health of the Grand Admiral Harthwik. Citizens mainly use the day as an excuse to bake special treats and party in the streets. They play music on horns, string instruments, flutes, and sometimes drums. Tempest Day, the day before spring, celebrates the calm before the storm. As the last day of the dry season, it usually invokes numerous toasts and cheers to the successes of the past season, followed by many prayers to gods and other powers for safe travels during the wet season.

Religious practice in Bloodcove is notably diverse. Worship focuses mainly around gods of trade, the sea, and secrets. With the influx of pirates and the city's overall character, Besmara and Norgorber are popular patrons. As the city is often at the mercy of monsoons and waterspouts, priests of Gozreh and Hei Feng do a steady trade in offering supplications to keep storm damage to a minimum. Abadar's bankers provide trustworthy money handlers, though most lay worshippers fall on the less savory side of the faith. The city doesn't support any sites as large as a temple, but shrines and statues are relatively common. In the early morning, believers pray to these statues for good fortune.

The main language in Bloodcove is the trade tongue of Mwangi, but the city does host some regional variations of this language, primarily used by the city's smaller populations of elves, dwarves, and gnomes.



## PEOPLE OF BLOODCOVE

Bloodcove's population is fairly diverse. The city's reputation as a place where anything can be found for the right price draws people from all over Golarion, with many referring to Bloodcove as the "Melting Pot of Pirates." The majority of Bloodcove's people are humans, but non-humans account for over twenty percent of the inhabitants. Tengu jinx-eaters, monkey goblin corsairs, hobgoblin mercenaries, and more can be found drinking on the docks or bidding on items in the market. Ancestries from all across the Inner Sea live and pass through Bloodcove, though over half the population is of a Mwangi ethnicity. An influx of Sargavan elites, fleeing the recent upheaval in Vidrian, have added a slight cultural shift to the city.

The average resident of Bloodcove wears robes and other clothing of linen and satin. The clothes prioritize flow rather than heavy layers—the warmer climate necessitating clothing that's light and breathable, with fashions that focus on streaming fabric or bright colors. Long robes, fluid jackets, smooth vests, leather straps for function, scarves around heads and necks; all of these are commonly worn in warm tones of reds, browns, and greens. Mwangi natives often wear braids, locs, and buzz cuts, with jewelry intertwined in the hair. Jewelry is an extremely common accessory, especially among pirates wishing to show off their spoils. It's said one can spot a corsair by the gaudy rings covering their fingers and the fine necklaces of gold, silver, and ivory adorning their necks.

With Bloodcove's focus on wealth and trade, clothing and jewelry have become the primary method by which its citizens gauge one another's status. Pirate captains walking the streets might wear sets of jewelry on both hands and medallions around their neck, covered in a mix of silks and velvets. Common folk and traders—even those higher in status than the local pirates—rarely flaunt such vanities, as they understand that money holds the greatest value when it's not on display. Some status seekers, such as members of the Aspis Consortium, value these public displays of wealth even more than the Free Captain pirates. Those engaged in shadier business usually eschew such frippery, though they don't mind those who choose to show off, so long as the peacocking doesn't interfere with their work.

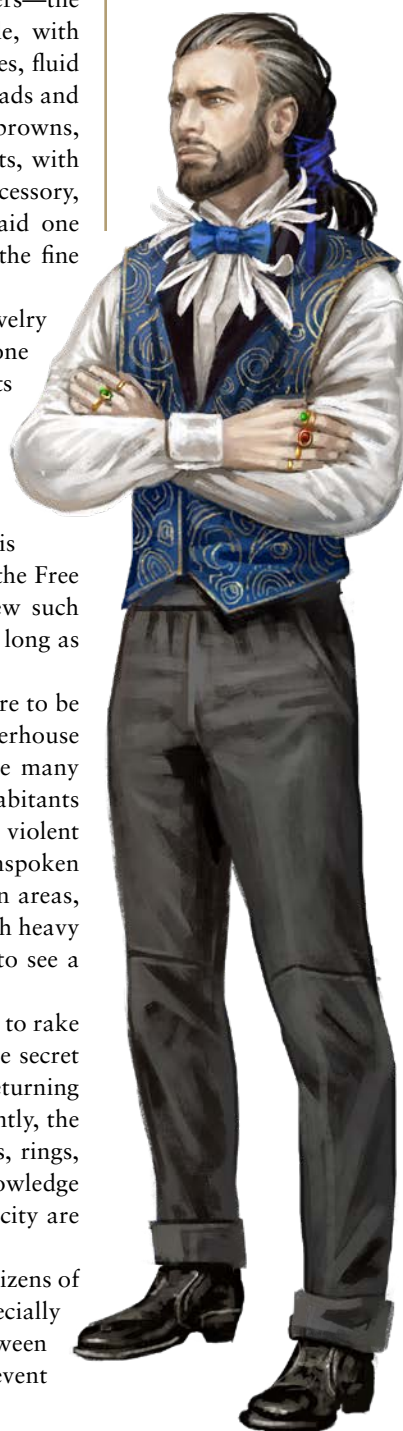
With all the lurid stories told of Bloodcove, one might expect there to be daily warfare in the streets, but the city's status as an economic powerhouse requires some semblance of stability. While Bloodcove does house many dangerous residents who more than live up to its name, most inhabitants come seeking riches, not power. Tensions in trade do arise, but turn violent less frequently than outsiders might expect. A web of tenets and unspoken rules exist, dictating when and where force is acceptable. In certain areas, violence is forbidden entirely to avoid scaring off casual visitors with heavy purses. In other, less regulated parts of town, it's not uncommon to see a violent brawl as a show of strength.

Though selling goods and offloading treasure is a reliable method to rake in profits, the markets of Bloodcove are also a fine place to acquire secret knowledge. Many pirates tell tales from all over the seas. Traders returning from far-off lands may bring magical treasure—but more importantly, the method to recreate such magic. Any figure covered in adornments, rings, and colorful silks may be viewed as a target or customer, but the knowledge they carry could be just as valuable. The inhabitants of the pirate city are always listening.

The one people who almost never set foot in Bloodcove are the citizens of Vidrian, a nation not far to the south. Many Bloodcove pirates, especially the Free Captains, likewise avoid Vidrian due to the recent war between the two powers, where Vidrian routed the Free Captains to prevent further racketeering and extortion.

## THE BEAST OF BLOODCOVE

In 4696 AR, an immense froghemoth (*Bestiary* 2 122) preyed on Bloodcove, killing 204 victims over the span of an exceptionally hot summer. The monster was eventually slain in a tumultuous battle with a dozen heroes. Lurid tales of the event spread rapidly across the Inner Sea, catapulting Bloodcove to even greater notoriety than usual.



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## ASPIS RANKS

The Consortium employs bronze agents for local work, often keeping them in the dark about who they're actually working for. Silver agents manage bronze agents and operations on a regional scale. Gold agents take what the silver agents do to a much higher level, regulating activities throughout an entire kingdom and monitoring the actions of the silver agents under their care.

## THE ASPIS CONSORTIUM

The Aspis Consortium is a trade organization with roots embedded deep within Bloodcove's foundation. Some call them ruthless profiteers; others, ambitious entrepreneurs. Regardless of their label, they're willing to do whatever they deem necessary to accomplish their goals. Not only do they possess an unfathomable amount of gold, the Aspis Consortium is rich in property, investments, and most importantly, favors. In the past, Aspis controlled Bloodcove almost entirely, from its trade to its inhabitants. Yet with major setbacks due to clashes with the Pathfinder Society and a recent influx of pirates, they've lost some ground, and Bloodcove has become a hidden battleground between rival factions vying for dominance.

While others follow a code of law, the Aspis follow a code of coin. More than once they've assisted two separate sides of a conflict in pursuit of greater gains, and they've sometimes even initiated said conflicts from the shadows to increase their own earnings. Befitting residents of Bloodcove, they do not swear allegiance to governments, kingdoms, or nations. They may temporarily ally themselves with these groups, but their loyalty is only to themselves. However, the Aspis's mercenary methods have begun to cost them dearly; they once held an outpost in the Expanse called Whitebridge Station, residing just 200 miles upriver from Bloodcove, but outrage over their brutal enslavement of the local Ekujae elves resulted in Consortium members being killed and their outpost overrun.

Aspis members range from merchants to mercenaries, which allows one agent to focus on the mercantile side while another assures the merchant can do their job in peace.

Members tend to be cutthroat, though some prefer to call themselves driven—yet they serve a leadership that hides their own identities from each other. Those who serve the Consortium carry metal badges, usually bearing the Consortium's symbol, a looping snake. They use a metallic ranking system that progresses from bronze to silver to gold. The highest members, above even gold, are called the Patrons, although such worthies rarely visit Bloodcove.

The Aspis Consortium lacks any true allegiance except among themselves. Unlike the Free Captains, respect does not earn much leeway with them—it might garner interest, but it does not encourage them to seek someone out. Unless they have a specific reason to trust someone, they are cautious of what they share and seek out weaknesses they can exploit. Those seeking to join them best not come empty-handed: information on a person of interest, something rare and sought after, a dangerous magical item that holds value for an intellectual, or even completing a job that preserves their power can catch the eye of the Consortium. Once one has that eye, one must be careful it remains a pleasant gaze.



## THE FREE CAPTAINS

The current ascendant faction in Bloodcove is a coalition of the Free Captains. Originally independent pirate lords who followed no banner and held no true allegiance, they eventually united under the Hurricane King to become one armada, a single legion that would work together as a deadly force the likes of the sea had never seen. Pirate lords often visited Bloodcove to sell off cargo, and the city became a place where many Free Captains came to retire and live a life of leisure. These retired captains forged powerful connections in the city, and these connections drew in other opportunistic Free Captains after the nation of Vidrian cut the pirates off from their easy source of income.

Competition with the Aspis Consortium soon turned fierce, but the Free Captains have a greater unity and kinship than their rivals. They've gained influence by making clever choices and forging even more clever alliances. Though they often have their own goals, the Free Captains made major inroads through the one thing invaluable to Bloodcove: trade. Both active crews and retired captains are adept at using connections to establish trade routes, ship supplies, and spread influence. When they all manage to work together, the power of these pirates is difficult to counter.

Unlike other groups in Bloodcove, the Free Captains don't need to manipulate things from shadows or pull strings behind the scenes. Most of their business is done out in the open, and they likewise discuss issues among themselves rather than following a chain of command. While they technically share a primary leader, the Hurricane Queen, she just as often directs major decisions to the pirate council instead. None of these figures are hidden, making it clear who they are and spreading their reputation with every deal forged and deed accomplished.

Free Captains often move among the common folk in taverns or along the streets, dancing, singing and eating like any other member of society. Even retired pirates never dine alone, as they still keep loyal friends and crew mates who will fight alongside them. That said, they don't necessarily share a sense of compassion, nor do they fully trust each other. Instead, they base their dealings in respect. Even without full trust, they honor each other, and that deference must be earned. Whether revered or feared, a captain must still acknowledge the recognition given to other captains, and many people in Bloodcove follow suit.

Since they have no central headquarters, Bloodcove remains vital to the Free Captains, who use it as neutral ground on which to conduct business with each other. Free Captains often share stories of their adventures, look for new recruits, and offer information on a whim. This public relationship with the citizens of Bloodcove garners them a support the Aspis Consortium can't compete against. It also makes them bigger targets than anonymous Aspis agents. Assassinations over power struggles aren't uncommon. Likewise, while many of the pirates residing in Bloodcove are Free Captains, there are also many unaffiliated raiders and corsairs who dock in the city. These consist of rogue sailors, rebels, thieves, smugglers, couriers, traders, and plenty of others, who sometimes clash with the Free Captains. However, with so many powerful and high ranking pirates in the city, they usually keep themselves in some semblance of order.

## EASY PICKINGS

Though Bloodcove can be deadly for the unwary, it is far less violent and unstable than most of the northern pirate cities. With the other nearby Mwangi port of Senghor guarded by a fearsome pirate-hunting navy, most Free Captains find themselves in Bloodcove at one point or another in their careers.

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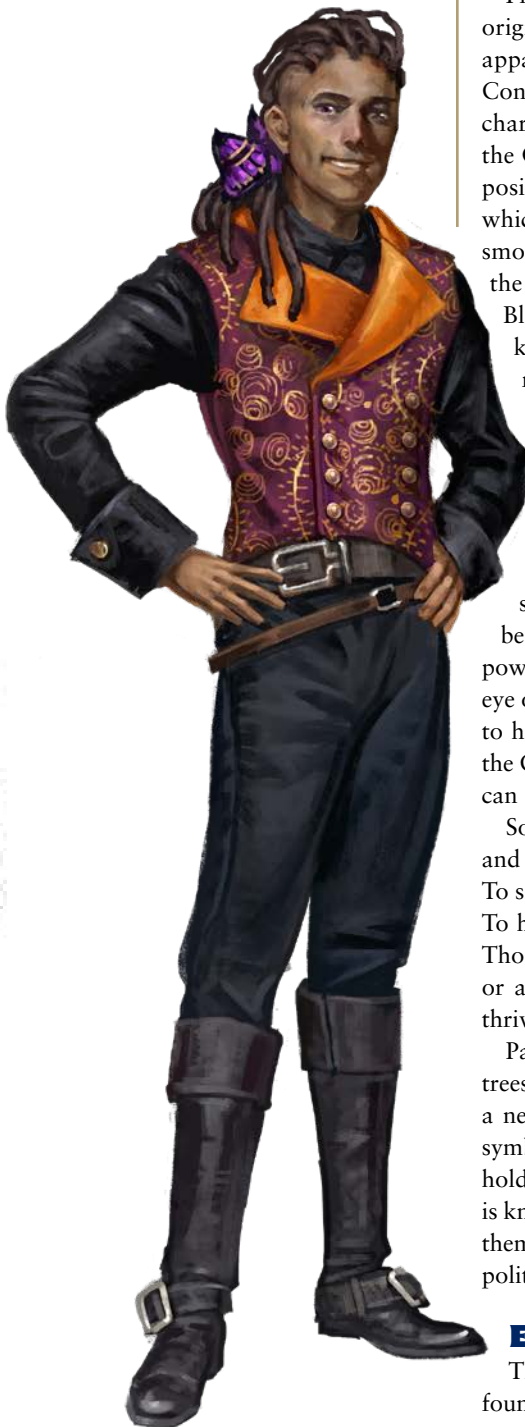
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## HIGH SECURITY

Harthwik's office has traps throughout each room that can be activated or deactivated with ease, if someone knows the combination—though the only people trusted with that combination are Harthwik and his shadowy superiors. It's also unknown what Harthwik keeps inside his vault. Rumors suggest objects of power or something stolen that holds great value to its original owner. Either way, none have been able to prove exactly what's inside—yet.



## HARTHWIK BARZONI

CN | MALE | HUMAN | CORSAIR 13

The figurehead and official lord of Bloodcove, known as the Grand Admiral of the Fever Sea, Harthwik Barzoni was born to lead. The sides of his head are shaved, with the rest of his hair twisted into locs that go past his shoulders. He boasts a grin so sly one might think he owned the world. His clothing is soft but regal; functional if he needs to move quickly, but presentable so as to still be respected. Although no weapon is visible, it would be foolish to think him unarmed. His aristocratic lifestyle gives even Bloodcove a regal air, despite its status as a melting pot of vagabonds and pirates. Harthwik is clever and often charismatic, but make no mistake, he is just as dangerous as any of the most well-known corsairs in Bloodcove.

Propaganda claims that Harthwik was elected by descendants of the original pirates who settled Bloodcove. Behind the scenes, it becomes apparent the ones who put him in power were the merchants. The Aspis Consortium, along with other trade groups, chose Harthwik for his wit and charismatic nature. This circle of traders essentially defines what power the Grand Admiral holds. Sadly for Harthwik, the answer is very little. His position is limited by the resources the Consortium and others give him, which he uses to maintain Bloodcove's militia and keep the trade flowing smoothly. Beyond that, there isn't much he can affect. He does not influence the law of the city, and even his militia is relatively small. The people of Bloodcove know him and know that his word carries weight, and they know that the Grand Admiral actually cares a bit for his home. The reasons he cares may be selfish, but this is a place where being selfish isn't uncommon. Although thankful for the influence the Consortium grants him, Harthwik knows that some call him the "Puppet King" or "Puppet Lord." Though he does usually obey what is asked of him, he's no fool.

Part of maintaining order involves making deals, and with the Free Captains so woven into Bloodcove's society, Harthwik has wisely made some allegiances with them. If the Consortium turns against him, the next best thing is to have friends among the pirates, who possess significant power in Bloodcove on their own. To that end, Harthwik always keeps an eye open for outsiders who could potentially be loyal, and if he can pull them to his side first, he absolutely will. Those who have no strong allegiance to the Consortium nor the Free Captains could make wonderful allies, and allies can become one of his most valuable resources.

Some consider Harthwik cutthroat or a villain; others think him resourceful and reliable—the viewpoint all depends on how someone interacts with him. To say he is a good man would be a lie, but he can become a reliable partner. To him, morality is fluid, but business is serious and reputation is priceless. Those who arrive with a good reputation and offer him something of value, or a deal in which all parties come out ahead, will find it easy to form a thriving partnership with him.

Part of Harthwik's responsibilities involve caring for the giant mangrove trees that support Bloodcove. Although not the most glamorous duty, it is a necessity. These trees embody Bloodcove, providing both a shelter and a symbol. No one knows for sure if Harthwik considers this a chore or if he holds a sense of appreciation for the giant flora that supports his home. What is known is that when a threat to the mangroves arises, Harthwik will protect them at seemingly any cost, including recruiting outside help to avoid any political complications.

## EXPLORING BLOODCOVE

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations that can be found in Bloodcove.



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### ASPIS CONSORTIUM LODGE

The official headquarters for the Aspis Consortium within the Mwangi Expanse resembles most of the neighboring buildings in that part of Bloodcove, save for the large Aspis snake displayed proudly above its front entrance. Inside is a well-guarded treasury used to store important documents and items while also providing a safe place for agents to deposit and withdraw funds. In lieu of the respect and notoriety commanded by the Free Captains, Aspis operations rely on paying those in their employ regularly and well, making a well-stocked treasury a necessity. At any time, dozens of Consortium agents can be found in the building. Most of Bloodcove's residents avoid it entirely unless they have business there. This isn't due to concern for danger, but because the Aspis make it clear when they feel someone is wasting their time.

The Consortium Lodge also stocks plenty of resources for potential enterprises inside their headquarters. Numerous maps of surrounding areas are available, detailing locations far beyond the Fever Sea. Shipping documents and manifests for all incoming and outgoing ships are meticulously tracked and filed. Knowing who carries what the Consortium wants gives them an advantage in securing the item first. There are even copies of who comes in and out of the city, as many traders keep their credentials for traveling to more respectable ports beyond the Bloodcove area.

Aspis operations in Bloodcove are currently run by **Malika Fenn** (NE female human ranger 8), a former Pathfinder turned full-fledged Aspis agent. For several years, Malika ran a Pathfinder chapter house, acting as a double-agent and selling information on the Pathfinders to the Aspis Consortium and vice versa. As she dug further into Pathfinder Society secrets—or perhaps, was fed them by disgruntled Pathfinder agents—she began to see the Society as hypocritical and became disgusted with their failures to take care of their employees. This culminated in Malika selling all her knowledge to the Aspis Consortium in exchange for the position of power in Bloodcove she still holds today.

### THE CASTELLANY OF THE FEVER SEA

When looking for Grand Admiral Harthwik during the day, start here. In the center of Bloodcove, built into one of the largest mangrove trees, the office of the Grand Admiral stands adorned in blues, whites, and reds. Awards and plaques cover the foyer wall as visitors enter. Outside, several guards watch the property, all members of the local militia. Inside the castellany, chambers include lodgings for the Grand Admiral, a meeting hall, dining room, vault, and two offices where either Harthwik himself or someone he employs sits and works on the day-to-day tasks of maintaining the city.

The structure has a number of custom modifications. One clever detail, insisted on by the Admiral, is that the

## HUNTING FOR GHOSTS

Though the serpents known as zinbas (see page 307) reside in high numbers around Bloodcove, they are elusive and incredibly hard to track down and catch. Many collectors and poachers reach out to Paulus of Paulus's Herpetarium for aid in hunting zinbas, yet those who do tend to suffer unfortunate accidents out in the wilds, and return home empty-handed or not at all.



walls are soundproof. The man enjoys his privacy but also wants to ensure the privacy of those he works with.

## FREE TRADE SQUARE

Residing on an elevated platform that overlooks the harbor, the Free Trade Square is the heart of commerce in Bloodcove. Goods from all over the Mwangi Expanse arrive here via traders seeking unique deals. Resources are traded for gems, weapons, armor, clothing, gold, and practically everything else. Those overwhelmed by their options can look for Chatterers—market regulars—who can guide newcomers for a small fee, or just for the company.

This area never closes, so those who fail to find what they need during the day can return to see if the night market offers more luck. Some merchants only come out in the evening, and some prefer the sunlit hours, though this isn't a matter of being friendly or sneaky—it's more when certain customers are available. Some traders and merchants spend the day gathering their resources, some fishermen are out all day reeling in fish to sell in the evening, and some just don't want to attend a stall during the bright day. The square serves as the ideal market to sell something quickly or find something uncommon, but it will likely cost the buyer a fair amount. The clever trader will learn to exchange both coin and favors in the free trade market.

Looking for a job? Searching for something, but don't have the coin to get it? This is the place to be.

Though there are plenty of merchants available, none draw would-be purchasers and sellers like **Kunari Mobo** (N female human merchant 8). The half-Zenj woman is a retired Free Captain who still maintains a fleet of ships that serve as her traveling merchants. Kunari's advancing age prevents her from sailing far distances, but her solid network allows her to be one of the most influential vendors in all of Bloodcove. However, access to this network comes at a high price and even time spent meeting with Kunari comes with a hefty fee.

## KAHVEH EXPORTS (BARZONI TRADING HOUSE)

The size of the Mwangi Expanse creates a need for moving supplies from Bloodcove to farther destinations and vice versa. Functioning under the same name as the Grand Admiral, this trading and export house offers the best place to go when looking for items that aren't easy to obtain in the immediate area. Kahveh Exports is run by House Barzoni—the Grand Admiral doesn't work directly with the house often, but does support it, providing leniency on certain rules. Most of the house's business remains lawful, though people do know of the "subjective work" they also perform.

Kahveh Exports works with many shops in the area, including Paulus's Herpetarium and the Pirate's Hook, as both have extremely unique exports in terms of food or creatures. The trade house pays good amounts of coin for anyone who brings them information on a profitable new deal or fetches any item they've publicly announced they wish to acquire. The building is two stories tall and the center room is commonly filled with merchants and traders hunting for a bargain. Those looking to make a good impression with Grand Admiral Harthwik can be found here as well, as supporting his family makes for a good first step into his graces.

## PAULUS'S HERPETARIUM

**Paulus** (N female elf herpetologist 7) is a complicated figure, but her herpetarium is hard to ignore. Her multi-storied building is painted red, and there's a symbol of a snake sitting next to a large lizard over her door. Paulus sells constrictor snakes, venomous snakes, and other reptiles, including those that breathe underwater or have magical abilities. The cost to enter the herpetarium is free, but Paulus maintains a wide array of items for purchase. One can buy a snake or a reptilian pet, or

purchase ingredients and extracts taken from creatures housed here, such as venom. Paulus's business protects itself. Few have tried to steal from her, and none have succeeded thus far. Most who attempt to burgle her shop are never heard from again, for Paulus ensures her stock is kept well fed.

Paulus is a clever soul. It would be a challenge to find a person in Bloodcove who loves snakes and reptiles as much as she does. There's a rumor she's interested in researching dragons as well, which wouldn't be at all shocking if it were true. So far, the Mwangi Expanse has proven the perfect place for Paulus to pursue her passion, as all the snakes and reptiles dwelling in the jungle provide plentiful avenues of research. Rumor has it she's looking to acquire a new, large, and very dangerous specimen, but so far no one convinced her to tell them about it.

### THE PIRATE'S HOOK

Bloodcove houses pirates, and pirates need to eat and drink. The aptly named Pirate's Hook knows how to cater to this clientele, offering dozens of drinks on tap—ale, mead, grog, stout, beer, and rum from all over Golarion. There aren't many rules beyond "don't break anything inside the tavern" and "cease fire while inside." Outside of the tavern, however, all bets are off.

The owner of the establishment is an orc woman who sailed with one of the Free Captains, but when the captain settled in Bloodcove, she decided to do the same. **Bula Lazard** (CN female orc brewer 5), or "The Bull" as some call her, takes no nonsense but supports those who step into her tavern. When she was a sailing pirate one of her specialties was brewing new concoctions. The sea didn't always offer many options, but Bula found that mixing certain herbs with the drinks available and letting the flavors sit could make dozens of variations to pair with whatever meals were on hand. She'll even host an occasional drinking contest and if the winner wishes, they can challenge her for a prize—but no one has won yet. As stubborn as they come, Bula's incredible constitution has seen her through many a contest, so to outdrink The Bull would be an achievement of its own. It might even earn some unexpected respect with pirates in the city.

### THE WITCLIGHT INN

The sturdy wood of this large building comes from the thick mangrove trees that Bloodcove resides on. The Witchlight seems like any other inn during the day, but when night falls, the occasional passersby see blue flames in the windows. In a strange twist, these fires have only been seen by certain residents, and not always by the same person twice. This mysterious glow only enhances the already ghostly aura that the inn has from the bioluminescent plant life growing around its walls. Because of the unique mystery surrounding it and the affordable rates, this is one of the first places that newcomers come to stay.

The innkeeper isn't a witch, but he will feed you hefty portions and provide a pleasant experience. His true secret is that he was planted by the Aspis Consortium, who control the inn from the shadows. His name is **Byshek Obeil** (NE male human barkeep 6), and like a proper Aspis agent, he uses wit, charm, and food to make the guests comfortable enough to share secrets, plied with the variety of offered drinks. Byshek is not the first agent the Consortium has placed in charge of the inn, but he has been the longest lasting thus far. Those who come to enjoy a drink should be cautious of what they say, because anyone could be listening.

### BLOODCOVE BARBECUE

Though people on Earth have no access to Bloodcove spices such as soomdevi, the following meat rub is just one of many seasonings that might be used on the city's famous barbecue dishes.

1 Tbsp fresh ground black pepper  
1 Tbsp salt, preferably sea salt  
1 Tbsp onion powder  
1 Tbsp garlic powder  
1 Tbsp chili powder  
1 Tbsp paprika  
1 Tbsp mustard powder  
2 Tbsp dark brown sugar  
1 tsp cayenne pepper, optional or to taste

Mix thoroughly and apply generously to meat before grilling over a wood fire. Once removed from grill, cover in tomato sauce and cook until well-flavored before serving, if desired.

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# JAHA

*Ancient city filled with unsolved mysteries and haunted by past wrongs*

<b>JAHA</b>	<b>SETTLEMENT 5</b>
<b>LN CITY</b>	
<b>Government</b> Republic	
<b>Population</b> 7,105 (70% humans, 28% iruxi, 2% other)	
<b>Languages</b> Iruxi, Lirgeni, Mwangi	
<b>Religions</b> Desna, Gozreh, Uvuko	
<b>Threats</b> mysterious disappearances, undead	
<b>Insular People</b> The Jahaxi people are wary of outsiders and slow to trust. This doubles the time it takes to Gather Information and increases the DC by 2.	
<b>Readers of Stars</b> Many Jahaxi people are skilled at divination. Including at least one of these individuals as a secondary caster of a divination ritual decreases the ritual's DCs by 1.	
<b>Barashzi</b> (NG nonbinary lizardfolk astrologer 8) prominent social restorationist	
<b>Iakanne Aarsani</b> (LG female human aristocrat 7) prominent sociopolitical leader	
<b>Versenne</b> (NG female human diplomat 7) head ambassador of Jaha	



## RESOURCES

 Books/Lore	 Grain/Fruit/ Vegetables	 Livestock/ Hides	 Luxury Goods
 Magic Items	 Textiles		



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## LIRGEN AND YAMASA

Once known as the nation of fortune, Lirgen was guided by the Saoc Brethren, a group of astrological philosophers. Their knowledge of the future guided Lirgen to prosperity, but their elitism wound up stratifying Lirgeni society. As a result, a massive group of farmers marched on Lirgen's capital before abandoning the nation in order to found their own country, named Yamasa. Despite their history, the two nations coexisted in peace until both of them were destroyed—neither foresaw their impending doom, and both were wiped out when the Eye of Abendego opened off the Garundi coast. Lirgen's advanced technology allowed for a number of ships to flee the area, while Yamasa suffered heavier losses, with most survivors seeking refuge among the Matanji orcs.

## THE STARBOUND TERRACE

Tucked away in the northern edge of the Mwangi jungle lies the esoteric city of Jaha. Its towering, white-granite walls hold many ancient mysteries. The current inhabitants carry forward its astrological spirit, demystifying the city's pre-Earthfall history while healing the wounds of its more recent past. Once forgotten by most of Golarion, Jaha's inhabitants are committed to bringing the city's secrets into the contemporary world, refusing to sacrifice such esoterica to the hubris and strife that plagued their immediate predecessors.

The prior Lirgeni occupants of Jaha referred to themselves as the Jahans. They enslaved the iruxi, or lizardfolk, who had occupied the city before them, by decree of the last "High Star Seeker" and his fanatical followers. This faction displayed the bleakest xenophobia of the philosopher priests who once governed Lirgen, the Saoc Brethren. Just over a century ago, at the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, the isolationist sect established a theocracy built upon star-borne prophecy—prophecy that promised Jaha as their holy ancestral right. Yet in the last decade, they and the iruxi they enslaved vanished, leaving behind technologies, secrets, societal scars, and a host of questions. The city only gained new occupants within the past two years.

The opening and growth of Jaha are, by and large, the work of the newly proclaimed Jahaxi coalition: a unified community founded by other Lirgeni descendants and iruxi astrologers seeking refuge from the Sodden Lands. At first, the coalition aimed to force the Jahans to open the city to the region. After finding the city abandoned, the coalition set itself to the conservation and investigation of Jaha and its arcana. The new inhabitants have committed to building a more holistic future for Jaha's new generation.

Guiding the Jahaxi coalition are Iakanne Aarsani, a young Lirgeni noble who lost her faith in the stars after her family was claimed in the stormy terror of the Eye of Abendego, and Barashzi the Cross-Star, an iruxi astrologer who escaped Jahan enslavement with a small cadre of their kin a decade ago. Aiding the two leaders is the renowned Lirgeni astrologer, Versenne, who acts as head ambassador of Jaha, as well as the lead coordinator of the Abendego relief mission and of Jahaxi excavation. Shaped by Iakanne's sociopolitical experience, Barashzi's social guidance and restorative goals, and Versenne's growing network of connections outside of Jaha, the coalition has begun to evolve into a republic.

The Jahaxi coalition makes for a slowly growing populace of around 7,000. Though this is a considerable number, the infrastructure left behind after the "Jahan Disappearance" is capable of housing far, far more. By taking up residence in Jaha, the Jahaxis are imbuing the recovering city with their culture of discovery, pulling the city into a more open—if not less mysterious—future.

## LIFE IN JAHA

The day-to-day experience in Jaha could best be described as "contemplative." The city is built upon lost secrets, large and small, but the locals have calibrated their lives to welcome Jaha's wondrous, unexpected charm. The city's veiled, ancient history reveals a long legacy of people who once lived here, extending far earlier than the Jahans. Those who spend any substantial amount of time in Jaha eventually acclimate to the notion that they will know little about their surroundings, and whatever





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enlightenment they find will likely just open yet more doors to investigate.

Jaha is an ever-expanding gift for curious parties, unfurling through ripples of wonder from night to night; strange phenomena fill the city with as much verve as those who live to investigate it. On many days and some nights, the earth steams and throws the wide streets and vaulting, terraced architecture into an abstract haze. The Mwangi Jungle's varied fauna roams the streets of the furthest borders of the old city, which lie beyond the more populated terraces at Jaha's center. The flora of the jungle spills into and out of the city, disguising the more curated, night-blooming plants that the previous inhabitants left in recently rediscovered gardens. The nocturnal plant life has endeared itself to its curious new caretakers, and the citizenry have largely switched their waking hours to help preserve and expand on this bioluminescent night life.

The Jahaxi citizenry and their rare guests don't typically sleep well by any commonly diurnal metric. The first year of Jaha's reformation saw its new populace following a more typical day and night cycle, but most were plagued with strange dreams at night. Some dreamed of tending to the various abandoned gardens around the city, while some had far worse nightmares, taking the point of view of towering, ethereal beings, lurking beneath the streets and in Jaha's moon-shrouded periphery. Now, many citizens keep to themselves during the day, making Jaha's

contemporary social life and culture a largely nocturnal one. Even with this readjusted schedule, many in the city find restful sleep elusive, and others avoid it if possible, because of the strange and disturbing experiences that lurk within. Consequently, most businesses and establishments open their doors around sunset. If a local isn't sleeping during the daylight hours, they're more than likely studying whatever revelations they've carried from the city's streets, excitedly preparing to exchange whatever knowledge they can muster with their colleagues and neighbors.

A mission of conservation largely drives contemporary life in Jaha. Well-preserved as it is, the city has many areas in dire need of refurbishment, both corporeally and spiritually. Evidence of the fraught relationship between the previous, dogmatic Lirgeni and the subjugated iruxi populations exists in sharp contrast to the current collaboration of the city's human and lizardfolk occupants.

Jaha's current inhabitants have a far less dogmatic relationship to the city and stars than their immediate forebears. While the Jahans showed no lack of scientific focus and study, plenty of evidence points to the leftovers of a xenophobic Lirgeni theocracy, a perverse misrepresentation of the Lirgeni diaspora. The Jahaxi governance has congealed into a technocratic republic of both iruxi and Lirgeni representation. Jahaxis are intentional in their efforts to be distinct from the

## LOST CUISINE

With the loss of Lirgen and Yamasa came the loss of many traditional foods. Favored spices have become rarer, and the Lirgeni speckled peafowl and domesticated catfish populations were wiped out. The root of the mamasu plant, which was pounded into starch and served as a doughy base for heavily spiced fish and vegetable stews, is all but extinct. Jahaxis have been seeking any remnants of these plants and animals, especially among the agricultural Yamasans.

oppressive Lirgeni rule that blemishes Jaha's recent history, addressing the scars left from the iruxi enslavement that poisoned the city just a few years ago. The cooperation of the current Jahaxis, both iruxi and Lirgeni alike, has led to the dawning of a hopeful new era for the city.

The city's locals are mostly a motley assortment of Lirgeni refugees, adventurers, and scholars, all with a genuine love and enthusiasm for astrology that has become a cultural expectation for inhabitants of the city. Amid the Lirgenis are a considerable number of iruxis, who are slowly settling within the deeper subterranean networks and warrens beneath Jaha. These tunnels and caverns act as a bridge to the secrets of the city, once thought of as too sacrosanct and dangerous to pursue. The lizardfolk's descent into the unknown depths of Jaha has unearthed many revelations about the city and its towering, primordial architects, even as they only begin to scratch the surface of the tombs below.

Lirgenis carry a certain reluctance to explore the more uncharted, forgotten parts of the city, preferring to dissect any clues of Jaha's distant and recent history only after iruxis have borne the proverbial torch of exploration.

Oddly, as Jahaxis accrue information about the engineers of the city, more mysteries emerge concerning the activities of its previous occupants, and around the purpose of the mysterious inscribed stones that they erected around the city. Some of these stones seem to serve as keys to far older tombs below the surface of Jaha. Others form magical doorways to various forgotten locales in the city, most flooded or overgrown—though some are seemingly well-maintained. These studies, households, and plazas are fashioned with furniture and implements too large for convenient use by the city's current occupants, with similarly humbling architecture to match.

Still other locations seemed to serve the clandestine purposes of past Lirgenis, though they elude present Jahaxi understanding.

Amid the progress, some cultural patterns echo the last century of Lirgeni occupation. This new generation of occupants may not be guided by the violently classist modes of their forebears, but those who live in Jaha for an extended time tend to adopt an insular disposition, springing from a protective awareness of the histories and mission they coexist within. Outsiders who manage to find their way to Jaha without a guide can expect a frosty reception, whether their journey was happenstance or intentional. Many Jahaxis see unaccompanied outsiders as frustrating distractions, harsh opportunists, or some unfortunate mix of both until they prove themselves, at which point many locals will joke that "the stars have guided" the handy visitor for good reason.

## LIRGENI PEOPLE

The modern Lirgenis are a weathered, world-worn, and world-wise group. Lirgeni people's physical features vary widely, their skin tones ranging from golden to sepia and deep black, often framed by thick, straight, inky locs. The striking widow's peak and expressive brow so common in their features suggest ancient Azlanti heritage, but all these features together also indicate a great diversity in the Lirgeni lineage. Their irises dance with light colors: the gold of drowned beaches, blue of crashing waves, pale green of algae overtaking their sunken homeland, and the occasional blue-black of night, reflecting any illumination as perfectly reflected pinpricks of starlight. Many Lirgeni people would have the world believe their eyes are illuminated with a great intellect divined from the stars. Their diverse features collect in typically taut, tall frames, with broad shoulders carrying



heavy cultural burdens and myriad travels. Jahans, Jahaxis, and all Lirgenis between and beyond display resilience of will and ambition.

Remnants of the brilliance of the drowned nation of Lirgen persevere in Jaha, but before the city's current occupation by the Jahaxis, it was coupled with a perverse xenophobic "superiority." The past century, however, humbled all Lirgenis, displaced as they were by the Eye of Abendego, the perpetual hurricane that destroyed their homeland. The ambitions and traditions of Lirgen didn't die with their original home, for many Lirgenis had already been traveling through the whole of Garund. A few others managed to find refuge within the Mwangi Expanse in the wake of the disaster, but the majority of Lirgen refugees now reside in the ancient city of Jaha.

However, great cities sink quickly, desperate intellect brews hubris, and prophetic ambitions breed instability. As much as resilience has marked and preserved the Lirgeni diaspora, the Jahans who vanished from the city within the last decade exposed many of the darkest depths of the Lirgeni cultural ego. Those who now reside within Jaha live with the responsibility of reforming that ego in the wake of their predecessors' tragedy and wrongdoing. Both within and outside of Jaha, Lirgenis now hold up the implicating mirror of loss.

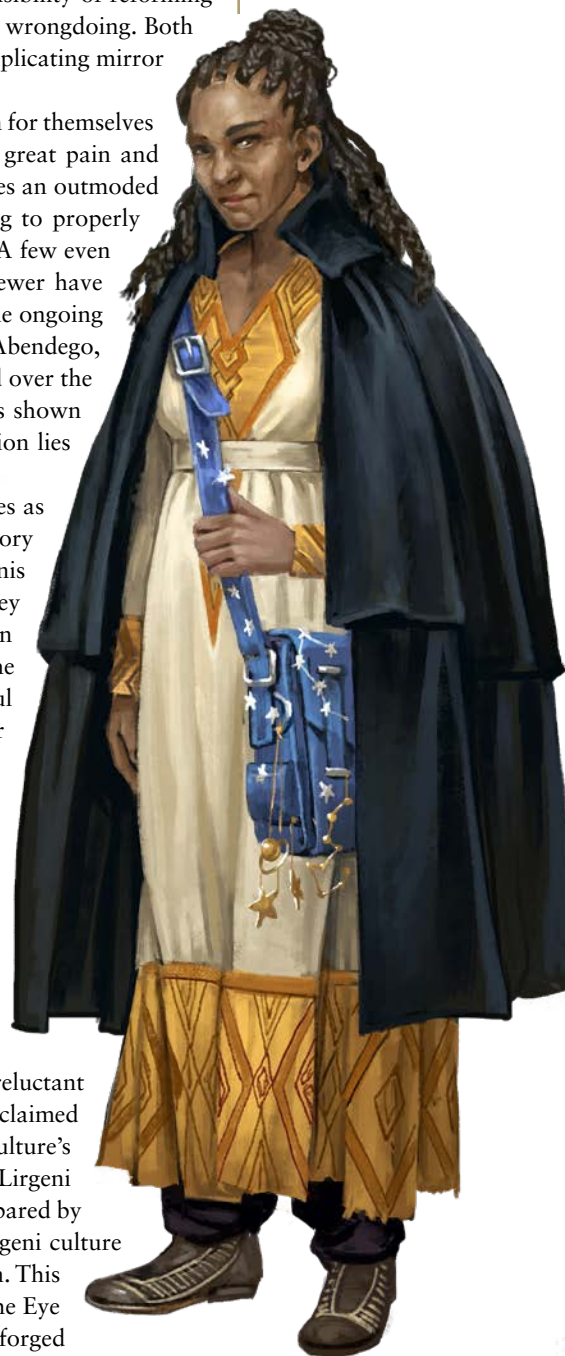
The current Lirgenis are striving to truly improve, both for themselves and for the larger world that has humbled them with great pain and subtle kindnesses. Within the sunken nation of Lirgen lies an outmoded national identity that its people are only just beginning to properly update. Some romanticize the old homeland of Lirgen. A few even hold hope of returning to their homeland, and even fewer have already returned, only to be left stranded or worse by the ongoing hurricane. Many Lirgenis have tried to quell the Eye of Abendego, but to no avail. As their numbers have steadily dwindled over the past century to just under an estimated 5,000, time has shown the surviving Lirgenis that the reclamation of their nation lies in its people, not a place.

And yet, Lirgeni people live in Jaha, a place that serves as a reminder that any culture is kept alive through memory of mistakes, triumphs and traditions. The Jahan Lirgenis focused on ambition and little else. Because of that, they made grave mistakes, and now they, too, are gone. Within the framework of the Jahaxi coalition, the majority of the global Lirgeni population now gathers in Jaha, careful not to make the same mistakes of cruelty and insular pride as their forbears—after all, they're smarter than this. Jaha offers an opportunity for Lirgenis to live once again in community, rather than in diaspora.

Old Lirgeni customs intersect with new needs in fascinating ways. The relationship between the stars and the scientific and magical practices of Lirgen are no less relevant to the modern population. Instead, the biggest cultural change is who has access to Lirgen's astrological knowledge. As their numbers have dwindled, Lirgenis have become more open about the knowledge and history they hold. At first this was a reluctant trend, but the shock of so many of their kinsfolk being claimed by fate's cruelty proved a keen catalyst to share their culture's arcane knowledge. On diplomatic missions, Jahaxis of Lirgeni descent will bring a cursory almanac of their history, prepared by Versenne and her brightest understudies, that detail Lirgeni culture and why this culture is relevant to the whole of Golarion. This has dovetailed with a slowly abating effort to combat the Eye of Abendego. However, the connections Lirgen's people forged

## THE LIRGENI LANGUAGE

Though some scholars now consider the language of Lirgen to be a dead tongue, it still sees heavy use in large Lirgeni diaspora communities, such as Jaha and Absalom. Lirgeni has many similar roots to northern Garundi languages but differs strongly in grammar and certain aspects of vocabulary.



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## LIRGEN'S GLORY

In 4600 AR, the nation of Lirgen launched a fully capable magical starship on its maiden flight. Longer-lived residents of the Mwangi Expanse still recall this magnificent event, especially the elves, for Lirgen recruited many of their elven kin to serve as crew, their long lifespans making them better suited for the distant journey. Yet *Lirgen's Glory* proved as ill-fated as its mother country. It encountered something terrible in the depths of space, which overtook the ship and crew. In 4712 AR, over 100 years after it was launched, *Lirgen's Glory* crashed down in the nation of Isger. As Lirgen had already been destroyed by the Eye of Abendego by then, almost no Lirgenis know of the wayward ship's return.

Those who do work to spread the knowledge among their fellow exiles, as the knowledge of the technology and magic that powered the ship were lost in the devastation of Lirgen and the scattering of its people.

in these efforts now primarily serve to curry resources and support in the ongoing restoration and research projects in Jaha.

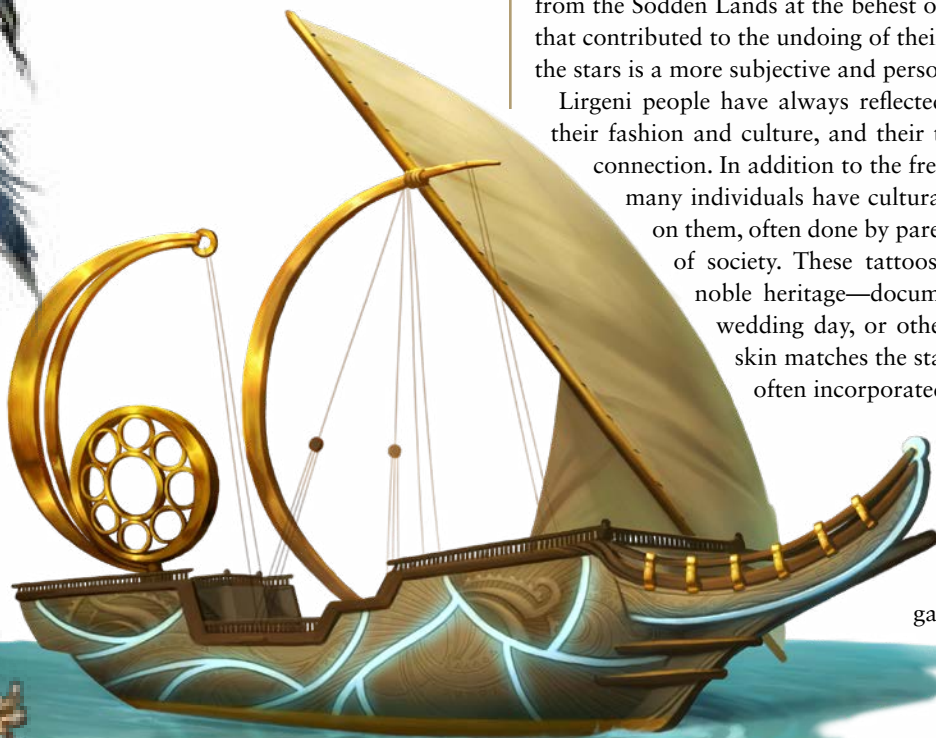
Lirgen's people have always been technologically inclined. Before the destruction of their homeland, their society had reached a rather advanced point in the eyes of the world. Many refugees still carry small inventions that hint at what was lost from the homeland, many of which were passed on, rescued in the escape, or preserved for safe travel far away from the cruelty of the drowning Eye. The stability Jaha provides has started to rekindle this industrious spirit in the Lirgeni population. Even more exciting, the Lirgeni space program that once seemed lost has been reestablished in the city, inspired not only by their nation's past accomplishments (such as the launching of the starship *Lirgen's Glory* at the end of the Age of Enthronement) but by the apparent ambitions hinted at by the many mysteries of Jaha's architects. Whether the work was unfinished or undiscovered, the engineers of old Jaha have provided a potent inspiration: a powerful gift from one culture to the next.

Spirituality remains an instrumental part of Lirgeni culture across the diaspora. After bearing witness to their kinfolk chasing prophecies to perverse means and mysterious ends, the Lirgenis of today carry a more moderated and personal spiritual disposition, displayed through common practices, symbols, and rituals. To reflect this, the Saoc Brethren—the oracular order named for its founder, who also created the nation of Lirgen—has evolved into the Saoc Cosmology, to welcome other experiences into their growing divinatory practice. Certain clerical positions remain reserved for those of Lirgeni blood, but the practice of Lirgeni astrology no longer excludes others from participating.

Stars and planets now remind and guide Lirgeni life, rather than dictate fate. While Lirgeni culture encourages astrological study from a young age, the lessons gleaned from celestial bodies have shifted from predictive to revelatory. Though divination has remained a well-practiced form of magic and ritual among Lirgeni magic users, a long overdue skepticism in prophecy writ large has washed over the populace, particularly in the wake of their displacement from the Sodden Lands at the behest of a devastatingly inaccurate prophecy that contributed to the undoing of their nation. Now, such communion with the stars is a more subjective and personal contemplation.

Lirgeni people have always reflected their relationship with the stars in their fashion and culture, and their time in Jaha has only reinforced this connection. In addition to the freckles common among Lirgeni people, many individuals have culturally significant constellations tattooed on them, often done by parents, loved ones, or esteemed members of society. These tattoos—most common among those with noble heritage—document their thirteenth name day, their wedding day, or other significant occasions whenever the skin matches the stars. Moles, scars, and even vitiligo are often incorporated into this bodily orrery.

More commonly, Lirgeni garment makers embellish their works—generally made from colorful silks or waterproofed leather—with unique, personal constellations based on existing stars. If the garment's owner gets this invented constellation tattooed on their skin, this remarkable significance given to the crafter's work often leads to the constellation being officially recognized. Though traditionally considered a feminine practice,



Lirgeni people of all genders have sought to maintain this practice in the Age of Lost Omens as a means of cultural conservation.

## IRUXIS OF JAHA

Jaha's iruxis are a very colorful assortment of lizardfolk, literally. The people of this ancient culture have had millennia to develop and adapt to many different communities. Members of many different iruxi groups across the Sodden Lands have representation within the city, and their physical traits reflect the wide variety of lands they fled. Exempting those lizardfolk who are more well suited to the deserts of Garund, the full spectrum of iruxi features are commonplace in the small lizardfolk populace that make up their part of the Jahaxis.

Many of the local lizardfolk have sticky pads on their feet that make them fortuitously suited to the terraced architecture of the city. Others are strikingly and even imposingly frilled, which often causes their kin to pressure those adorned with such impressive spines to act as guards against outsiders and strangers. A good number of the 2,000 or so iruxis in Jaha can blend into their surroundings and employ this ability liberally to investigate uncharted parts of the city. The majority of the iruxis who now reside here are wetlander lizardfolk who traveled with their Lirgeni companions from the Sodden Lands, seeking refuge from that battered region's natural ravages, the chaos created by skirmishing pirates, and the violence enacted by other iruxis who serve under the shamans and warrior kings known fearfully as the Terwa Lords (page 181). With Jaha's towering, terraced architecture, the new refuge stands in stark contrast with the Sodden Lands. Still, none of these groups have let their old habitats inhibit forging a strong relationship with the new, even as they carry and search for a bridge to their predecessors in the city.

Under the Jahans, the city's previous iruxis were a subjugated people, but before that, they were themselves fearsome warriors who had laid claim to the city. But as brutal and cruel as this group of iruxis might have been, their treatment at the hand of the Jahans in the wake of their defeat was undeniably worse. Over the last century, the mighty iruxi clans that established themselves in the ancient city languished in the thrall of the Jahans. Even though evidence suggests many Lirgeni commoners opposed slavery, there was no subverting the vicious systems at play. And then those iruxis, along with their oppressors, were gone. The once-fierce lizardfolk who had established themselves in Jaha withered under the harsh Lirgeni rule, only to vanish without justice. The current iruxi residents have found disturbing evidence of the deep imbalance between their kin and that of their Lirgeni companions. Without Barashzi's hard work reconciling both groups, the new iruxis might very well have floundered in an uneasy distrust of their mammalian compatriots.

Instead, Jahaxi iruxis have displayed the patience in full tilt that lizardfolk are well known for across the Mwangi. The initial weeks of the Jahaxi coalition's time within Jaha was especially tense, with iruxis holding their Lirgeni companions accountable for their crueler kinfolk's actions, especially as similar patterns emerged in their behavior—brought on by interpretations of the stars promising Lirgenis glory. While the iruxis were patient, they weren't spineless in their assertion of the respect they deserved in the coalition.

As excavation of the city progressed, revealing more evidence of the former iruxis' subjugation in the city, the Jahaxi lizardfolk became more unapologetically blunt about the consequences that such haughtiness could have, not just for their Lirgeni cohorts but for the entirety of the Jahaxi community. The initial months of skepticism evolved into re-formed trust

## SEARCH FOR THE LOST

Iruxi history stretches far into the past, far before the dawn of any human civilizations. They maintain a strong connection to their roots through their ancestors—iruxis build the bones of their predecessors into the walls of their cities, and most believe the spirits of these ancestors can inhabit these bones in times of need. For an entire city of iruxis to vanish, without bones left behind or knowledge of their fates to pass down, is a true horror to the Jahaxi iruxis, one that binds them to exploring the mysteries of the city.

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## SCREAM OF RETRIBUTION

Though any lizardfolk with enough power can call on the aid of their dead kin, the resentful spirits of enslaved iruxis make this ancestry feat more common around Jaha.

### BONE RIDER

### FEAT 17

#### LIZARDFOLK

Using your ancestors' bones, you manifest their spirits around you in a fossilized form, terrifying your foes. You can cast *mask of terror* on yourself as a primal innate spell once per day. When you do, you appear as a skeletal lizardfolk ancestor, twisted in a way that inspires the deepest fears of those who observe you.

when they saw the ways that the Lirgenis who traveled with them were committing to drastic changes for the larger community, actively including iruxis in the process of shaping what that change is and means.

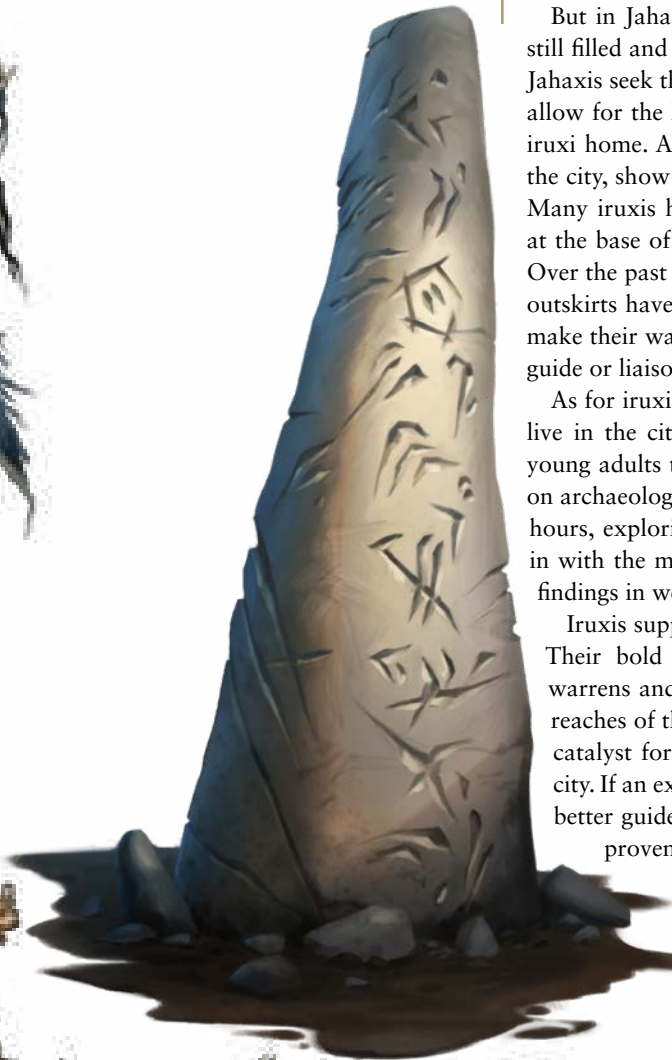
The transition was easy in some respects. Though few iruxis wear a great deal of clothing beyond some sort of leather armor—unless they're an oracle or artisan of considerable enough prowess to display their work on their body—lizardfolk in Jaha have adopted some of the logic of Lirgeni clothing rituals. Iruxis in general hold a deep and spiritual connection to astrology, and many Jahaxi lizardfolk now adorn their tails in leathers or silks decorated with star patterns representing constellations that have lent them their most fruitful counsel. The stars are woven into many core aspects of iruxi life, along with a profound appreciation for nature. Many common iruxi names refer to lizardfolk's cultural designations of the stars, planets, and constellations in the sky above.

While many iruxis across the Expanse hold a warm disposition toward Gozreh—the deity of wind and sea—Jaha's locals have started to forge a rapport with Desna through rituals that iruxis had already long held. They consult the stars in the night, near still or gently moving bodies of water; an old iruxi saying goes, "Look to the stars above to learn of the present. Look to their reflections to learn what may be." Requests for counsel from the stars aren't formed in words but in contemplation, with a swish of the tail through the surface of the water. The rhythms of the water's undulations, and the distortion of the stars' reflections, lend sufficient space and clarity for the inquiring iruxi to take their next step. Some attribute their interpretations to nature. Others attribute it to the guidance of Gozreh in the waters. A fair few youths have instead credited Desna in the stars.

But in Jaha, while there are many pools and some public baths, few are still filled and clean. The city has a dearth of natural bodies of water, and so Jahaxis seek the stars' wisdom through other means. There are no pools that allow for the kind of submerged, glass-wrought lodging of an authentically iruxi home. Any that existed, often found in the fringes and far terraces of the city, show evidence of their destruction, more than likely by the Jahans. Many iruxis have consequently practiced these and other shamanic rituals at the base of the river nearest to Jaha, which winds its way to Bloodcove. Over the past two years, the iruxis who practice in this location on the city's outskirts have become the arbiters of trust for the handful of travelers who make their way through the arduous upstream journey to the city without a guide or liaison.

As for iruxis with more social drive or diplomatic leanings, many of them live in the city's heart alongside their Lirgeni cohorts. More adventurous young adults tend to live in the fortresses near the city's entrance when not on archaeological expeditions. Others wander the streets during the daylight hours, exploring individually or in small groups of two or three, checking in with the more urban Jahaxi communities to share their most promising findings in weekly or monthly intervals.

Iruxis supply the driving force behind Jaha's excavation and restoration. Their bold and intrepid investigations don't end at the underground warrens and networks of the city, extending even into the farther, quieter reaches of the city's streets and walkways. These efforts serve as the direct catalyst for the Jahaxis' momentum in rediscovering and unearthing the city. If an explorer finds themselves in the forgotten city, they can hope for no better guide than Jaha's iruxis. Some of the methods of exploration have proven remarkably unorthodox. The strangest involves gathering iruxi remains, such as bones and old shed skins found in various alcoves of the city, in order to commune with the past century's dead. By the guidance of some of the lizardfolk's most skilled oracles, this mysterious ritual has yielded results with impressive reliability.





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Most of the iruxi spirits hold only tales of their hardships under the Jahans' boots. However, some souls disclose key information about places the new occupants have yet to explore, and even illuminate subversive messages left in the fruits of the enslaved iruxis' labor around the city. Some of the mysteriously erected stones left from the High Star Seeker's command have inscriptions in iruxi claw-hieroglyphs that act as clues to more of the city's mysteries, and perhaps even some resolution on what happened to Jaha's "Eclipsed Generation," as the iruxi have come to designate the absent predecessors of the city.

### EXPLORING JAHA

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations found in Jaha.

#### THE CIRCULATION

Moving deeper into the warrens below the repopulated city reveals what iruxis have sarcastically dubbed "the Circulation" of Jaha. The ever-complicating, weaving tunnels and alcoves beneath the city display old ruins of residences, occasional plazas, common meeting places with high and vaulting ceilings, and countless altar rooms filled with star systems that would later be more perfectly represented through the illusory magic within the dome of the Kehwamesi (page 206). More artistic abstractions of star systems and constellations detailing

the various forgotten myths of the engineers adorn the weaving tunnels, almost acting as street signs and directions for those who can decipher them.

A few of the unearthed pathways have also led to intricately wrought catacombs, carved in geometric shapes and patterns, that start and terminate in looping designs and frames. So far, iruxi explorers have recovered no remains from the catacombs and tombs, but they have discovered complex sarcophagi made of gems, precious alloys, and what looks like moon rock when searching these caverns and warrens. Strangely, these catacombs seem to move around and reconfigure their geography of their own accord. Many iruxi search parties have forged a path to these chambers, only for the route to shuffle itself within days. Iruxi explorers have started to joke that "the dead don't want to be disturbed, even if they're polite about it."

#### JAHA'S FORTRESSES

Four terraced and spired fortresses frame the city's boundaries, built at the corners of Jaha's walls. To the northwest lies Kehshigi, the Star Fortress. In the northeast is Tsheshigi, the Sun Fortress. The southeast corner is defined by Semshigi, the Sky Fortress. Lastly, Herishigi, the Moon Fortress, sits nestled in the southwest corner of the city. Each of these structures has been dormant for some time, and only in the last year have the Sky, Star, and Sun Fortresses become actively utilized again in the city.

## JAHAXI CONSTELLATIONS

Astrology and constellations are highly important to many cultures across Golarion. Jaha has its own set of constellations, a combination of Lirgeni and iruxi star symbols.

**The Fang:** Protects all who travel.

**The Bird of Paradise:** Flower grown from a drop of sun.

**The Horn:** Holds up the blue dome of the night sky.

**Eyes of the Dead:** Where ancestors look down on the world.

**The Spider:** Weaves the night in her silken threads.

**The Lions:** They looked upon a goddess and became stars.

**The Twin Turtles:** One sits on the back of the other.

**The Spine:** Holds the world and the heavens together.

**The Bird Mother:** Protects young stars under her wings.

**The Sailfish:** Falls from the sky when it sees something to eat.

Jahaxis have set up a militia in these three fortresses, excavating many more artifacts and fragments of knowledge from each in the process. For instance, Jahaxi scholars have discovered charts, hieroglyphs, and magical displays in the respective war rooms of each fortress that describe in detail the systems of the phenomena each fortress is named after.

The Moon Fortress is another story. Ever since the reclamation of Jaha, the stronghold has been left unopened, even by those brave enough to go near it and lucky enough to report back. Many who have entered have never returned, whether their investigation took place at day or night. Those who do return often speak of a distinct scent of blood wafting through the air, and the mists rising in that corner of the city have a burgundy tinge to match. The warrens that weave through the city's terraces and deeper underground lead to the four fortresses and back, but the same phenomenon befalls those who've tried to approach the Moon Fortress from within the city's tunnels as above. Occasionally, the dead do return from within, where days ago they may have lived, often chanting in a tongue unknown.

## JHEBYITI

Jhebyiti (pronounced gee-buu-ye-tee)—the Dusk Market—is set up around the perimeter of the Kehwamesi (see below), trickling out into the streets that make up the surrounding blocks of the city near the temple. The most established businesses of the Dusk Market sometimes grow enough to venture out into the city and establish a storefront near the center of town. One of the most renowned, both within and outside of the city, is Star-Crossed Charts, owned and run by a Lirgeni cartographer named Oakuma Mujafor and her three daughters: Kajeera, Inali, and Shora. The daughters gather plenty of data that they then bring back to the city; to date, they have some of the most reliable maps of the wider Mwangi Expanse available. Inali has been working on a weaving method for her astrological charts that reflects changes in the skies. These tapestry charts reweave themselves in accordance with the stars—a miniature reflection of the Kehwamesi dome's walls.

## KEHWAMESI

Among academics from the outside world, Jaha's greatest point of renown is the center of life in the city: a monumental domed building called the Kehwamesi (pronounced kay-wa-mes-ee), or the Shrine of Beyond. The Kehwamesi is nested in the center of the city, a vast temple set into the highest tiered of the three main terraces that form the city's landscape, capped with a magnificent dome visible from almost any other vantage in Jaha's walls.

Within the base terrace that makes up most of the Kehwamesi lives the highest concentration of Jaha's local community, lodging in the systems of weaving warrens and alcoves that tunnel through Jaha's ancient plot. Though the recent inhabitants have started to expand outside of this space and lodge within the ancient residencies surrounding the terrace below the great shrine, this spot remains the most concentrated and developed area of residence and commerce in Jaha.

The inside of the dome displays an illusion of woven divinatory projections of the stars, perfectly replicating Golarion's night sky in real time. Few have the privilege to see this display—the most skilled astrolomancers the city can find vigilantly guard it day and night. Occasionally, the dome of the Shrine will open like a dilating pupil, though the interval of this occurrence seems random. The opening process gently quakes the city, and nobody knows the exact cause, though many suspect the answer is deep beneath the city's surface. In any case, the ocular mechanism of the dome makes an already esoteric site even more strange.

Within the terraced base of the great shrine lies most of the hustle and bustle of the city. The current



residents of Jaha maintain the remains of the prior infrastructure where it's of most use. Residences and storefronts have made easy holdovers for the new occupants to adopt. Much of the older equipment of the prior occupants' fashioning has been repurposed and moved around where possible, with the Lirgeni astronomical accouterments left behind by the Jahans finding fast use. No telescope, map, or observatory goes unused within the walls of the Kehwamesi.

Many more distractions, curiosities, and amenities fill the bulk of the Kehwamesi. Humble flats with two or three rooms are common, some of which bear beautiful open-air skylights. Nocturnal pet shops sell night-waking animals; popular pets include caracals, owls, and Lirgeni star tetras. Bioluminescent fungi shops sell mushrooms as lights and home decorations, often favored by the excavators and explorers of the Circulation. Lirgeni tattoo parlors decorate or define one's charting. Iruxis seeking astrological fortune-telling sit by large pools of water in the floor that mirror the skylight. Vegan restaurants display the robust fruit, nut, and flower diet of Jaha with colorful aplomb. Magical coffee shops serve beverages of considerable potency, often with scholars studying within. Indoor gardens and plazas with public seating beautify the community.

Jaha has few children compared to more sprawling cities, but a small school of the sciences and histories of the world, with a special astrological bent—the Saocratic Academy—has blossomed within the open warrens and networks of the great temple.

## WAYSTONES

As excavators and explorers chart Jaha's underbelly, more and more mysteries move closer toward a resolution. That said, the arcane *waystones*, erected in the Jahans' time, have further complicated the geographic mysteries the city presents. Jahaxi investigators have been able to decipher a few, thanks to their Lirgeni conception and iruxi make, but the myriad purposes of these stones have raised many questions for what plans the Jahans had for the city.

When activated, some of these strange *waystones* send anyone within a 10-foot radius to one of a fascinating spread of locales across and beneath Jaha's surface, as well as other places. The following is a cursory list of the possible *waystone* destinations.

## WAYSTONE DESTINATIONS

- 1 An abandoned shop full of astrological equipment and suits too large for average humanoids.
- 2 A subterranean dome containing a primordial starship the size of a carriage, and a deceased pilot.
- 3 A sophisticated, small apartment with plumbing and tall ceilings, windows, and doors.
- 4 An ancient concert hall, dimly lit by starlight and equipped with strange instruments.
- 5 A conservatory of night-blooming flowers and large moths, somewhere outside of Jaha.
- 6 A wide field containing a long-fallen star.
- 7 A dark, cold alcove with a softly mechanical hum.
- 8 An orrery with equipment made of glass.
- 9 An old library filled with engraved stone tablets lining its many floors, walls and ceilings.
- 10 A throne room where stardust floats in the guise of a chair.
- 11 A dining hall that seems to have had recent use.
- 12 A dormant magical gateway made of rock gathered from the rest of the planets in the solar system.

## JAHAN WAYSTONE

## ITEM 21

RARE ARTIFACT CONJURATION MAGICAL TELEPORTATION

This enormous stone glows with a pale light and emits a quiet hum. Each *Jahan waystone* is part of a paired link. The paired stones correspond in the color of the light they emit, as well as the specific tone at which they hum.

**Activate** (1 minute) envision, Interact; **Effect** You place your hand on the stone and focus on the stone's light. The stone's glow envelopes all creatures in a 10-foot radius with its light and attempts to teleport the creatures to its paired stone. If there is no open space within 30 feet of the target waystone, the teleportation attempt fails. A creature can resist the teleportation with a successful DC 45 Will save.



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# KIBWE

*Mercantile city-state where diverse interests rub shoulders*

## KIBWE

## SETTLEMENT 6

**N CITY**

**Government** representative council

**Population** 5,162 (71% humans [predominantly Zenj], 8% elves, 5% orcs, 5% lizardfolk, 11% other)

**Languages** Elven, Iruxi, Jotun, Kelish, Kibwani, Kobold, Mwangi, Ocatan, Taldane, Uwani

**Religions** Abadar, Adanye, Cayden Cailean, Desna, Droskar, Gozreh, Nethys, Sekhmet

**Threats** Disgruntled ex-slavers, demons, magical curses and diseases

**Trade Hub** Items of up to 11th level can be found in Kibwe with diligent enough searching. Items higher than 6th level, when found, are for sale at 90% + 2d10% of their normal price.

**Abayone Munme** (LG female human politician 5) Council Representative for the Zenj Trading Alliance

**Clatriani Orridik** (LE male human merchant 7) Bloodman of Bekyar Block and former slave-trader

**Darvian Estabar** (LN male human aristocrat 5) Lord Magistrate of the East Mwangi Mining Company

**Kosa Et** (N agender elf weaver 6) Council Representative for Whitemarks



## RESOURCES



Grain/  
Fruit/  
Vegetables



Jewelry/  
Gems



Livestock/  
Hides



Luxury Goods



Lumber



Ores



Spices/Salt



Textiles



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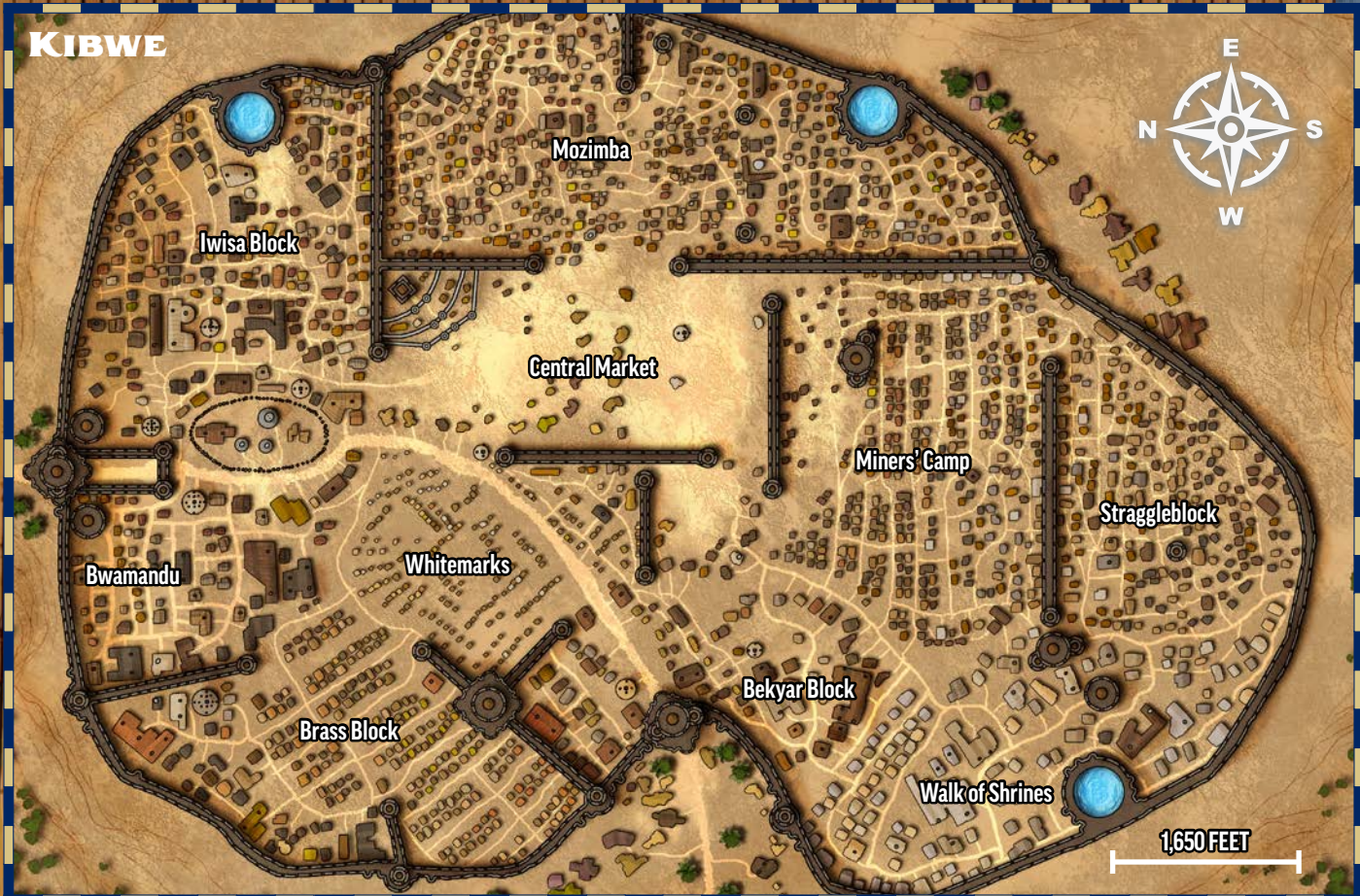
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## RECENT HISTORY

Players may be familiar with the city of Kibwe from *Pathfinder Adventure: The Slithering*. The *Lost Omens* setting assumes that a group of non-human heroes—as played by the PCs—successfully stopped a deadly magical plague that was turning humans into oozes.

## KIBWE THE CITY OF WATCHERS

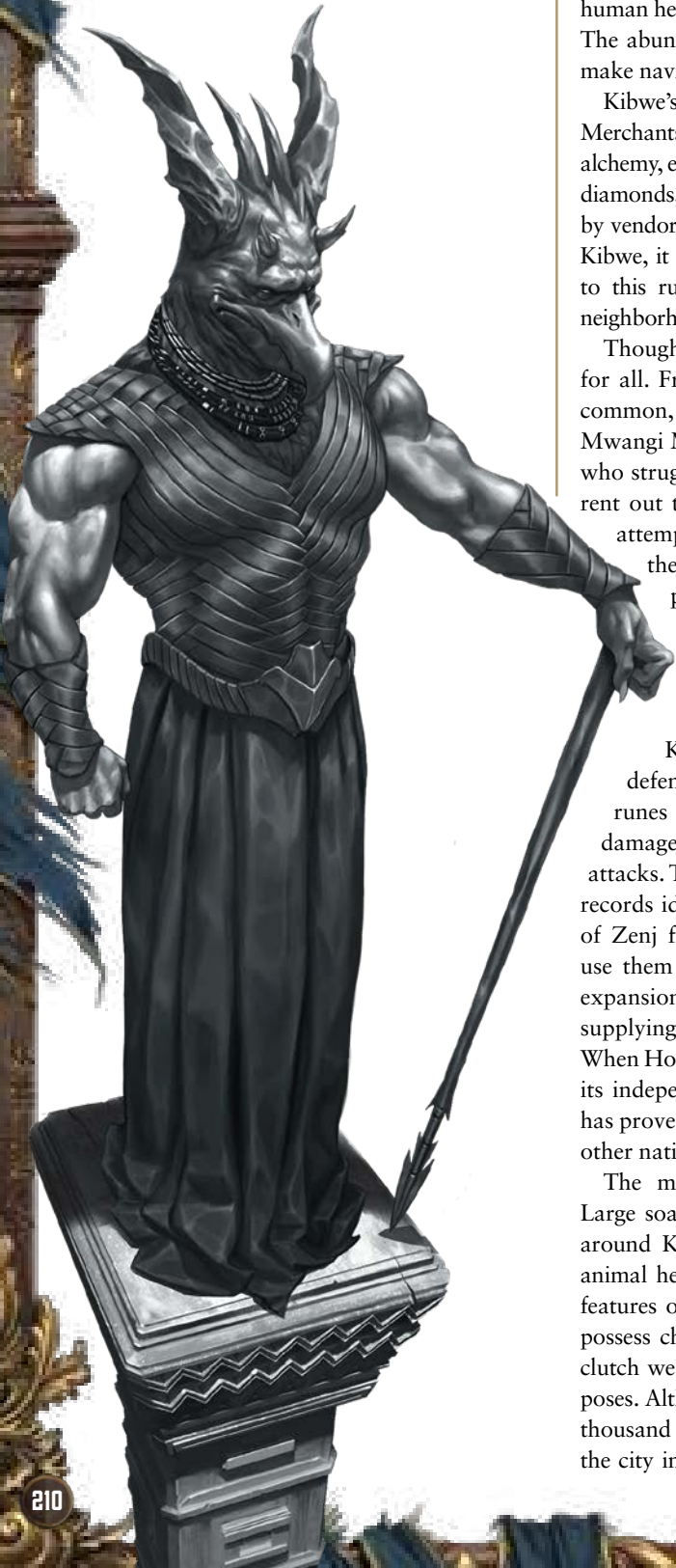
An ancient city of immense walls and strange statues, Kibwe stands in the eastern Mwangi Jungle. As the closest city to the Ndele Gap in the Shattered Range, and thus the closest to the relatively wealthy nations of Nex and Katapesh, Kibwe has thrived as a mercantile hub. Its proximity to several mines—principally diamond, gold, and salt mines—have further catapulted the town to significance. Kibwe is the heart of trade in the midst of the jungle, and this moniker is not wholly figurative: Kibwe's enormous walls were constructed by unknown builders long before the city's founding and take the shape of a human heart. The city has only two gates, one to the west and one to the north. The abundance of internal walls, high buildings, and distinct neighborhoods make navigating the city challenging for newcomers.

Kibwe's markets draw traders and oddity-seekers from all over Garund. Merchants from Holomog trade unfamiliar spices for samples of Nexian alchemy, even-tempered iruxis from distant Droon exchange rare seeds for uncut diamonds, and Magaambyan scholars from Nantambu seek out Shory relics sold by vendors of eclectic goods. Residents boast that if a thing cannot be found in Kibwe, it doesn't want to be found anywhere. There is one notable exception to this rule: though slave-trading had been permitted in the Bekyar Block neighborhood for generations, it was recently prohibited throughout the city.

Though dedicated to freedom of trade, Kibwe isn't a utopia of wealth for all. Friction between the various neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves is common, and business organizations like the Aspis Consortium and the East Mwangi Mining Company have built their fortunes on the backs of workers who struggle to make ends meet. Former slave-traders in Bekyar Block now rent out their erstwhile chattel as laborers and brutally punish any escape attempt. Refugees have flooded into Kibwe from the city of Usaro, and the city's disparate neighborhoods have all had to address an influx of people. The city's population has recently swelled from nearly 4,000 permanent residents—not including the 1,000 or so traders at any given time—to a base population of more than 5,000 people. Strife is frequent in Kibwe, but open fighting is rare, as it would jeopardize the commerce that is so vital to the city's welfare.

Kibwe's walls are a mystery. Sloped inward slightly as though to defend the city's interior, they are covered with millions of tiny, careful runes that defy translation. The walls are supernaturally resistant to damage, making the city within them all but impregnable to conventional attacks. The walls predate the city by thousands of years. The earliest known records identify Kibwe as a trading post with a small permanent settlement of Zenj farmers and herders who found the titanic walls and decided to use them for protection. As the trading post grew into a proper city, the expansionist nation of Holy Xatramba declared it a provincial capital, supplying the city with civic administrators and investment in public works. When Holy Xatramba fell in a war with a neighboring nation, Kibwe declared its independence and has been an independent city-state ever since. Kibwe has proven neither imperialistic nor expansionist, an attitude that encourages other nations and city-states to work with, rather than against, the trade city.

The mysterious wall-builders left other enigmas throughout the city. Large soapstone statues stand at attention atop several walls and pillars all around Kibwe. Humanoid in form, they possess bestial features, such as animal heads, paws, or skin carved to resemble fur or feathers. Many have features of well-known animals, such as rhinoceroses and ibexes, but a few possess characteristics from creatures wholly unknown. Most of the statues clutch weapons, although some brandish large shields and stand in watchful poses. Although these "Pillar-Watchers," as they're known, hadn't moved in a thousand years, legends have always persisted that they stand ready to defend the city in times of trouble. The legends were actually borne out a year ago,





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when a strange curse afflicted the city and an eland-headed Pillar-Watcher activated to break the curse.

### LIFE IN KIBWE

Mornings in Kibwe come early, usually before dawn. Traveling merchants vie to display their wares in the best spots to catch the attention of prospective buyers, laborers arise early to begin their work when it's still cool, and miners need to be at their stations before the work siren heralds the start of a new shift. Food vendors must arise early as well to offer everyone a hearty breakfast.

By midday, work begins to slow down. Kibwe has a tropical climate, and this means the middle of the day is often unbearably hot. Even the most hard-hearted employers realize that enforcing work through the middle of the day is futile when workers become easily exhausted. Most people in Kibwe return to their homes around noon, usually after stopping for a large, cool drink (and, for the wealthy, ice) to sip throughout the midday rest. Workers take short naps, either before or after a light but leisurely meal.

When the heat abates, usually three or four hours past midday, the people of Kibwe return to work in earnest, laboring for several more hours until dark. At this time, most return home to finish daily chores and to share a larger meal with family and friends.

Kibwe's sweltering afternoons are replaced by torrential rains in the late fall and winter months.

These months are a bit cooler but significantly wetter, and thus still a good reason to get inside for a few hours in the middle of the day. People return to work not because the day has cooled, but because the daily rains usually peter out into a light drizzle by mid-afternoon.

Anyone who operates on a different schedule is seen as an outsider in Kibwe culture, no matter how long they've lived in the city. Miners, who labor around the clock in shifts at the command of their corporate taskmasters, have the advantage of working in the mines out of the sun and rain, but they are disconnected from the Kibwe pace of life, and thus rarely form friendships or relationships with others who aren't also miners (which mine owners see as a benefit). People who work through the middle of the day, such as foreign traders unaccustomed to Kibwe's rhythms, are sometimes gently mocked. The most frequent teasing is to offer a daytime worker a cup of water. In the hot months it's "because you so obviously need refreshment" and in the rainy months it's "because you so obviously love water." After a newcomer receives multiple offers like this, it doesn't take long for them to clue into the city's cadence.

It's no surprise that, in a town dominated by trade, foodstuffs from across Garund and beyond are readily available for the right price. Zenj farmers and herders live around Kibwe, and their lower-cost contributions to the markets are always in demand. Even the cheapest meals frequently include grains mixed with meat.

## FALSE IDOLS

The Pillar-Watchers are exceptionally popular subjects for children's toys: many young people in Kibwe own wooden carvings of them, sometimes with articulated limbs, removable weapons, or cunning internal mechanisms to emit a hoot or a growl. These figurines have even been traded far from Kibwe, where some scholars believe they're exotic votive idols. When such scholars come to Kibwe to research this "fringe religion," they're shocked to find children playing with these toys in the streets.

A popular local dish, atlakah, incorporates grains, meat, and spices into a hearty porridge that's cooked over low heat for many hours. Specific spices and vegetables vary between neighborhoods, and Kibwe's gourmands can tell a porridge's origin—sometimes even to within a city block—with only a spoonful or two. As Kibwe hosts a constant stream of wealthy visitors, upscale inns are common throughout the city. Most attempt to distinguish themselves from their competitors by the quality of their food, and so make good choices for exceptional dining experiences.

People in Kibwe celebrate few holidays, as there's always trade and work to be done, but Gatewatch Day is the largest. This celebration involves visiting neighbors and exchanging gifts. As the gates of Kibwe face north and west, it's customary to give better presents to neighbors living to a resident's north and west, a tradition that the people of the southeastern neighborhood of Straggleblock—already Kibwe's poorest area—find offensive. Kibwe just recently held what is likely to be the first annual commemoration for all citizens lost to a dreadful magical curse called the Slithering. Although the tradition of serving jellied foods to friends and family seems in poor taste, the holiday has surprisingly widespread support.

While holidays in Kibwe are few, parades are surprisingly common. These celebrations encourage civic engagement, honor important achievements, or celebrate local heroes—and still provide opportunities to sell goods to passersby. Most of the city's parades occur along the picturesque Walk of Shrines at the south end of the city, even when the parades don't have any overt religious connection.

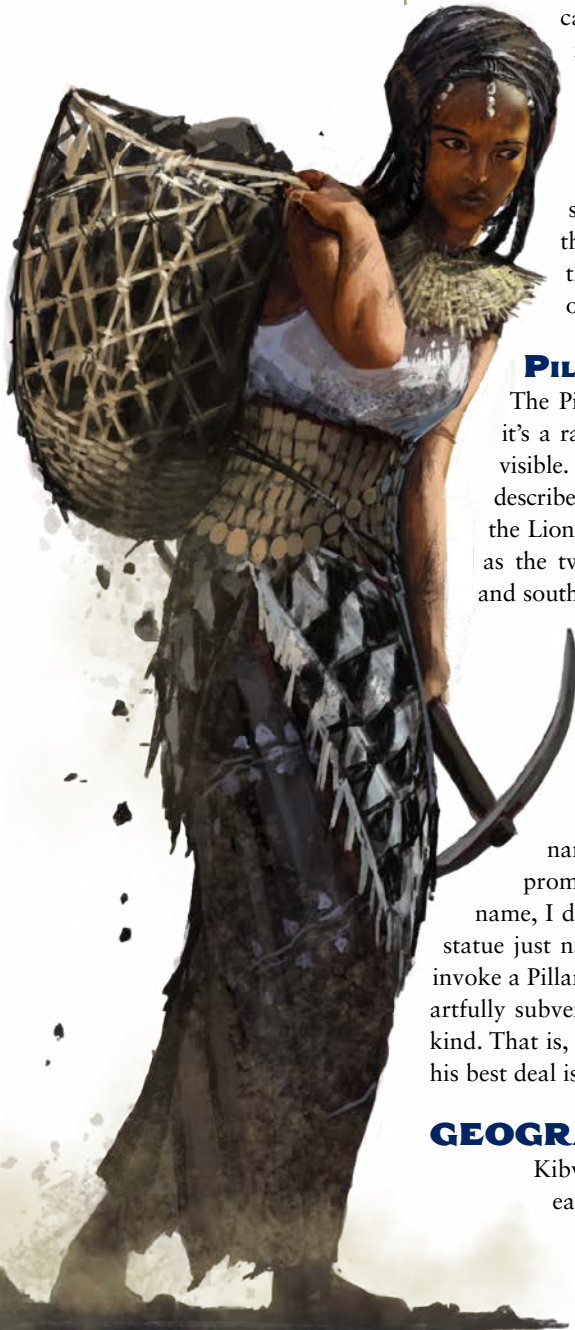
## PILLAR-WATCHERS

The Pillar-Watchers are a looming presence throughout Kibwe, and it's a rare alley or intersection where at least one Pillar-Watcher isn't visible. Nearly everyone uses these landmarks to give directions or describe a particular area within the city. For example, "from the Ibex to the Lionfish" describes the eastern part of the bustling Central Market, as the two Pillar-Watchers with these features stand at the northeast and southeast of the market. The Pillar-Watchers influence jargon within Kibwe as well. Since the Pillar-Watcher that resembles a humanoid turtle with ox horns stands above a public park that's popular as a romantic meeting place for trysting lovers, saying someone is "under the Turtle-Ox" means they're in love, usually with the connotation of being recklessly infatuated or lustful.

Locals will often make an oath in view of a Pillar-Watcher, naming that Pillar-Watcher specifically to lend gravity to their promise. For example, a local might exclaim, "in Lord Pachyderm's name, I did not take your cart," while pointing at the elephant-headed statue just named. It's widely known that it's exceptionally poor form to invoke a Pillar-Watcher when telling a lie, but it's less known that locals will artfully subvert a Pillar-Watcher's name to avoid making a promise of any kind. That is, a merchant who swears "to King Pachyderm" that he's giving his best deal is almost certainly doing nothing of the sort.

## GEOGRAPHY

Kibwe is a patchwork city made up of several neighborhoods, each with a distinctly different character. In and among these neighborhoods are smaller enclaves catering to a specific ethnicity or nationality. While the internal glyph-scribed walls serve as obvious barriers between many neighborhoods, many borders aren't immediately apparent.



Natives to the city know these borders intimately, but visitors must guess based on changes in architecture, fashion, and attitude.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

The ten neighborhoods within Kibwe host a diverse array of people, filling the city with clashing colors, sounds, and smells.

**Bekyar Block:** This neighborhood near the city's western gate was once the center of its slave market, as the Bekyar people who lived here were among the practice's most enthusiastic participants. With slavery outlawed, many Bekyars left, leaving room for new residents and refugees. These newcomers have changed the neighborhood's look considerably, although a few former Bekyar slave-traders have turned to the business of providing hired labor—with the implied threat of violent crime—which lends certain streets a sinister air. Gatemaster **Bdue Halkiko** (LE male human crime boss 9) has the formal city position of keeping the gates in good repair and the streets clear for traders. Bdue claims to be impartial in any conflict between the older Bekyars and the newer settlers, but his influence among the neighborhood's criminals isn't difficult to see.

**Brass Block:** Once the wealthy Mothlight neighborhood, this area changed considerably when the Aspis Consortium bought several manors at suspiciously low prices to form its sprawling regional headquarters. The Consortium demolished these manors to make room for planned housing that company employees and other working-class citizens could afford. Most residents are happy to have new homes with modern conveniences—including brass plumbing, from which the district takes its name—and for the most part don't mind acceding to the Consortium the political power in the neighborhood. The few remaining wealthy families are desperate to find proof of the Consortium's underhanded dealings.

**Bwamandu:** Kibwe's northern neighborhood of Bwamandu, named after the abolitionist who donated it to house former slaves and homeless exiles, is a shining beacon of hope. Its residents are proud of the Bwamandu Principles, a series of social directives requiring all the neighborhood's citizens to look after one another. This kindness has uplifted residents ever since, although its resources have been tested to their limits with the influx of Usaro refugees. **Ammat Ndolo Bwamandu** (LG male human philanthropist 5) shares his great-great-grandmother's drive to aid the downtrodden. His influential position as Gatemaster of the northern gate provides a generous income which he funnels back into his neighborhood.

**Central Market:** When people across the world think of Kibwe, most picture its Central Market. This cacophonous array of merchant stalls and caravan houses is the heart of Kibwe's trade. Permanent structures are banned in the Central Market, with a few exceptions made for generations-old trading houses at the market's fringes. The market therefore consists of an ever-shifting maze of hanging tapestries, thick rugs, and curling smoke to give the illusion of private shops with the convenience of having nearly anything imaginable right at hand. The schedule of which shops need to relocate and when is extraordinarily complicated, but the city's three appointed "market masters" see to it that these timetables are

## KIBWE OOZEMORPHS

While the citizens of Kibwe may seem to have an oddly glib attitude toward the events of the Slithering, some of this is a well-meaning concession to their new neighbors. A number of those who survived the magical plague had their physiology permanently altered with amorphous flesh and ooze-like abilities. Famously welcoming toward those others might spurn, the people of Kibwe have accepted this new situation with little fuss, though particularly off-putting survivors may have trouble finding jobs in service industries. Players interested in exploring life as one of these unusual oozemorphs can find more information in on pages 59-60 of *Pathfinder Adventure: The Slithering*.

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## CIVIC FREEDOMS

While taking slaves or owning slaves has always been illegal in Kibwe, it was once legal for merchants to move slaves through the city or even sell imported slaves in the Kibwe markets to foreign buyers. Political resentment against the Aspis Consortium and political activism resulted in Kibwe recently banning slavery entirely, but this has caused resentment from powerful interests within Kibwe's own citizenry, especially the Bekyar.

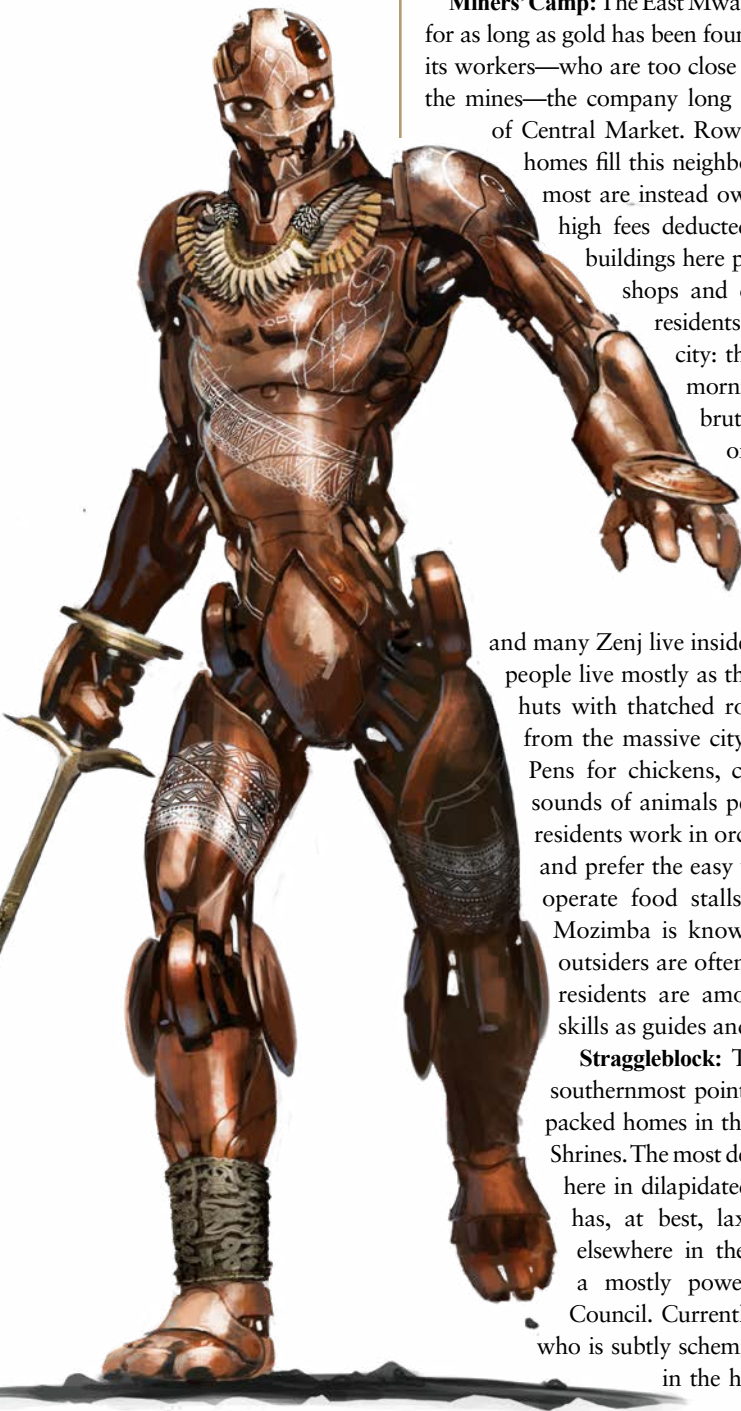
scrupulously followed. If the efficient **Hayakta Konta** (LN female elf administrator 9) or the witty **Ndolo of the Open Hand** (NG male human negotiator 8) can't get traders to follow the rules, they rely on the third market master, the intimidating **Copper Man** (LN kolyarut aeon 12).

**Iwisa Block:** A vision of Kibwe in miniature, the crowded Iwisa Block is a tangle of streets and structures just east of the city's north gate. Most traders coming through the gate stop here for services before moving to the Central Market to set up their shops, but traders who desire a permanent shop or who want to avoid the Central Market's crowds often operate out of Iwisa Block instead. No single ethnicity dominates Iwisa Block, which is a point of pride for its residents. Important positions in the neighborhood are filled by democratic elections, and multiple people are always campaigning in its busy streets—many steered by the irrepressible **Talguru Ngari** (N female dwarf campaign manager 6).

**Miners' Camp:** The East Mwangi Mining Company has been a fixture of Kibwe for as long as gold has been found in the nearby hills. To supply safe housing for its workers—who are too close to the dangers of the jungle when camped near the mines—the company long ago purchased a swath of property just south of Central Market. Row upon row of nearly identical mud-and-thatch homes fill this neighborhood. Very few are owned by their residents; most are instead owned by the company and rented to miners for high fees deducted directly from the miners' pay. Some of the buildings here provide support to the miners, such as company shops and company doctors, who work for scrip. Most residents can barely afford to visit anywhere else in the city: they trudge wearily out to the mines early every morning and back every night. Many bear marks of brutal company discipline, such as scars from lashes or missing digits levied against debt or minor crimes. No name other than the descriptive but bland "Miners' Camp" has ever been attached to this neighborhood.

**Mozimba:** The lands outside Kibwe are primarily tended by Zenj farmers and herders, and many Zenj live inside the city in the Mozimba neighborhood. Here, people live mostly as they do outside the city walls: in round wooden huts with thatched roofs, clustered around water sources irrigated from the massive city well, with ample green space between them. Pens for chickens, covies, and even cattle are common, and the sounds of animals pervade the neighborhood. Some of Mozimba's residents work in orchards or small farms just outside the city walls and prefer the easy walk into the city each night, but just as many operate food stalls or artisan shops within the neighborhood. Mozimba is known for its beautiful parks and slow pace, but outsiders are often fooled by its pastoral appearance. Mozimba's residents are among Kibwe's shrewdest negotiators, and their skills as guides and hunters are highly regarded.

**Straggleblock:** The poorest neighborhood in Kibwe sits at its southernmost point, hemmed in between the misery of the tightly packed homes in the Miners' Camp and the beauty of the Walk of Shrines. The most desperate and destitute of Kibwe's population lives here in dilapidated hovels of wood and mud. The neighborhood has, at best, lax law enforcement, so many criminals from elsewhere in the city hide out here. Straggleblock nominates a mostly powerless "beggar prince" to the Representative Council. Currently this is **Hestrax Vex** (N male human thief 8), who is subtly scheming against the East Mwangi Mining Company in the hopes of bettering his constituents if the mining



company falters. Many residents of Straggleblock claim to have a fierce pride in their neighborhood, which predominantly manifests as an eagerness to attack anyone who looks wealthy and doesn't belong, but many here would move anywhere else in Kibwe if given the chance.

**Walk of Shrines:** Named for Kibwe's most famous street, which runs through this neighborhood, the Walk of Shrines houses Kibwe's churches, shrines, and related buildings. Although several of the deities familiar throughout the Inner Sea are worshiped here, including Cayden Cailean, Desna, and Gozreh, most of the churches are dedicated to a dizzying array of honored ancestors, animal spirits, or genius loci. The border between the Walk of Shrines and Straggleblock is a veritable wall of church-sponsored soup kitchens, food banks, and flophouses, but nowadays there are many more in need of help than those who can provide it.

**Whitemarks:** This neighborhood consists almost entirely of Ekujae elves and those few non-elves who agree to follow their way of life and thus receive their protection. The neighborhood's meandering streets and communal longhouses bring distinctly elven planning into the middle of Kibwe. Few people from outside the neighborhood cross through it—not out of trepidation, but simply because it's so easy to get lost amid the curvilinear streets and profusion of greenery. The buildings are marked with the characteristic white paint that Ekujae use to decorate their faces, which gives the neighborhood its name.

## ENCLAVES

Kibwe's enclaves are smaller than neighborhoods and more prone to shift in location or disappear.

**North Station:** Ironically, this collection of buildings is at the south end of the city, around the shrine to Cayden Cailean in the Walk of Shrines. These buildings cater to Avistani visitors and are built in northern styles with wood-shingled roofs. Avistani fare such as beer, meat pies, and grilled chicken are available throughout North Station, and Taldane is the most commonly heard language.

**Undermoth:** Kibwe has a underground network of warrens and tunnels that's larger than most residents realize, particularly under the northwestern parts of the city. A community of kobolds inhabits these tunnels, rigorously patrolling them and setting traps to keep intruders out while transacting business on the surface just as any other Kibwe citizens. Although the bulk of the kobold community once lived under Mothlight—from which their enclave gets its name—the Aspis Consortium drove them away when the company changed the neighborhood into Brass Block. The kobolds now mostly live beneath Whitemarks where they work to be useful neighbors. It's rumored that kobold bounties are still honored in secret in Brass Block, although the rest of the city finds this hunting of its citizens repulsive.

**Waterblock:** The area around the city's northernmost well is claimed by a clan of stone giants. The giants have carefully tended this well for many generations, using engineering methods passed down through the ages to preserve the well and to ensure anyone who approaches can use its water. The residents of Iwisa Block are generally pleased to aid the giants when necessary, though the giants tend to be somber and disinclined to socialize. Their leader, **Grindmill** (N stone giant engineer 10) hasn't spoken a word in more than three decades. The few stone giants who live elsewhere in Kibwe often have distant family in Waterblock and are, in comparison, positively chatty.

## UNHOLY THREATS

Kibwe lies in the Mwangi Jungle, seated between the city of Nagisa and the ruins of Holy Xatramba (page 156). Demons sometimes leak forth from these locales to trouble Kibwe trade routes. Though the walls of Kibwe protect anyone inside from such fiends, merchants and miners risk falling prey to local demons and cultists, which threaten the city's economy. In many cases, demon hunters can be hired from the Bekyar people of Kibwe to forge deals with the encroaching demons and convince them to move their predations elsewhere.

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BALWADE HUBU



DARVIAN ESTABAR



KOSA ET



MASSU ABWEDOMA

**Wallshadow:** Few buildings outside the walls are deemed part of Kibwe, with the exception of a cluster of stone-and-wood structures southeast of the city. These buildings are often in the shadow of the city walls, but this concealment doesn't bother its gnome residents. This sprawling clan migrated to Kibwe generations ago, but due to some curious bargain with First World powers, couldn't live in the city. They therefore live just outside it and serve the Representative Council as scouts. The gnomes of Wallshadow get along with the Zenj tribes in the area, who often give the gnomes tips about dangerous monsters or unusual travelers to investigate.

### GOVERNING COUNCIL

In Kibwe's early years, when the small trading post was expanding dramatically, foreign consortiums and companies warred for control of the region—and particularly for control of its diamond and gold mines. Rather than be torn apart by outside investors, the people of Kibwe established a representative government that persists today. The companies would have a voice on Kibwe's Representative Council, but so would each city neighborhood, significant trade partners, and other key groups representing permanent residents of the city. The specific number of representatives, and the groups that appoint them, vary over the years, but the number of representatives hovers between twenty and forty. There are currently thirty-eight representatives, making council meetings lengthy and contentious. Meetings are informal and public, occurring in Adayenki Pavilion for anyone to witness.

The strength of Kibwe's council structure, and the key to its remarkable duration, is that groups can appoint a representative however they see fit, but any representative that makes decisions favoring their group over the best interests of the city as a whole is immediately ejected (and, technically, can be put to death, but this draconian punishment is almost never enforced). This practice forces each representative to engage with the other representatives and learn more about the city as a whole. This system has its weaknesses, to be sure: a canny representative can couch their own interests as benefiting the entire city with clever rhetoric. But since other representatives watch for just this sort of oratory sleight-of-hand, the system has proved remarkably stable. Factions sometimes form within the council; for example, the representative of the East Mwangi Mining Company almost always votes the same way as the Miners' Camp representative, but the groups are sufficiently fractious that such coalitions don't last long.

It's no surprise that the most popular and influential members of the Representative Council are its most skilled orators. **Abayone Munme** (LG female human politician 5) represents the Zenj Trading Alliance but is popular for looking after interests of all Zenj. She is well-liked in Mozimba despite the fact she isn't Mozimba's representative, which Mozimba's representative **Balwade Hubu** (LN female human farmer 4) resents. **Darvian Estabar** (LN male human aristocrat 11), Lord Magistrate of the East Mwangi Mining Company as well as its representative, is known for impassioned but well-researched speeches. He's survived several public assassination attempts, which many whisper are staged to make him appear untouchable to genuine assassins. **Kosa Et** (N agender elf weaver 6) represents the Whitemarks neighborhood and speaks only rarely, but their words echo with gravitas and reason when they do. Other representatives work hard, usually without success, to get Kosa to back their positions. **Massu Abwedoma** (NG male human priest 7) is a loudmouthed cleric of Abadar who represents "the free people of Kibwe": those who aren't employed by other companies or other organizations represented on the council. The specific bounds of his representation are unclear, even to himself, making him notoriously fickle during debates.

For all the visibility of the Representative Council, they are only a small part of Kibwe's government. The Council deals only with matters that impact multiple factions within the city, with threats to the city as a whole, or with matters

of trade. This functionally means that company business gets closer scrutiny from the council, as the companies impact trade, but each neighborhood is free to make and enforce its own laws. Neighborhood enforcement thus varies significantly across the city. The Brass Block is openly administered by the Aspis Consortium; Mozimba has a representative council that looks like Kibwe's council on a smaller scale; and Straggleblock has virtually no internal administration at all.

## EXPLORING KIBWE

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations that can be found in Kibwe.

### ADAYENKI PAVILION

The Central Market is the heart of Kibwe, and the Adayenki Pavilion is the heart of the Central Market. This pavilion has been set aside as a sacred space since Kibwe's earliest days, and it's separated from the bustle of the market by a perimeter of tapestries, rugs, and skins hung from thick poles carved to resemble historical figures. Lightweight, waterproof cloth affixed to the tops of these poles can be partially spread over the pavilion to provide protection from the elements, although the center of the pavilion is always open to the sky. Prayers, weddings, and funerals are frequently held in the pavilion, but it is most commonly used for the public debates of the city's Representative Council. The ground in Adayenki Pavilion is strewn with flower petals, and it's customary to go barefoot there. Holding up a sandal or boot communicates a person's imminent departure; this custom is now as much a political stunt as anything else, showing willingness to abruptly walk out of a debate.

### ASPIS CONSORTIUM HEADQUARTERS

This sprawling collection of manor houses serves as the new headquarters of the Aspis Consortium, with ample space to entertain visitors, provision caravans, and tend to the administration of Brass Block. Security is tightest around a large, nondescript warehouse. This building contains the Consortium's greatest secret in Kibwe: a huge, rune-marked section of rounded stone that used to be part of a fourth cistern which was somehow demolished long ago. Aspis agents are close to deciphering the defensive runes and learning how to bring the city's impregnable walls down. What the Consortium might do with this knowledge is still unclear. A few longtime residents of Brass Block insist that the neighborhood has more Pillar-Watchers than in previous years: horned, goose-headed statues with jagged swords have simply appeared atop weathered pillars near the Aspis warehouse. Most residents insist that the Pillar-Watchers have always been there, but since the Aspis conversion of Mothlight into the Brass Block involved destroying many city records, there's no way to be sure. The kobolds of Undermoth are likely to know more, having taken secrets of the neighborhood with them in their flight from the Aspis Consortium.

### BLOODMAN HALL

This stone building is the administrative headquarters of Bekyar Block. Once the city's

## KIBWANI

Heavily used due to Kibwe's status as a major trade hub, Kibwani shares roots in as many languages as the trade tongue of Mwangi—however, Mwangi and Kibwani are unintelligible to one another due to the differing influences. Adapted slang from kobolds, iruxis, giants, and the Nexian dialect of Kelish heavily feature in Kibwani, and heavily affect the local dialects of those languages in turn.

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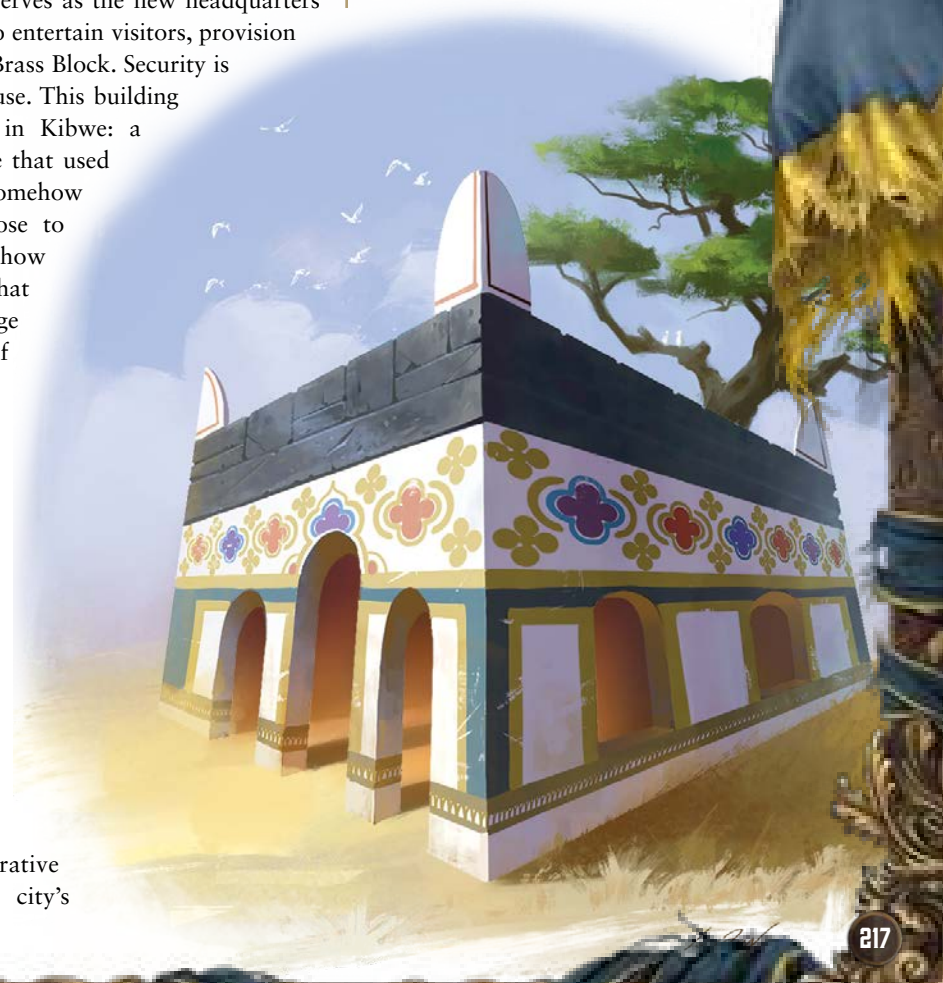
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## THE PRICE OF POLLUTION

The East Mwangi Gold Refinery workers smelt ore with enormous furnaces and proprietary alchemical processes. The process produces poisonous liquid slurry, which refinery agents secretly dump in Straggleblock or outside of the city. The duplicitous dumping of these toxic chemicals has all but withered away a once-famous orchard near Kibwe, and its elderly owner, **Riaru Kijambe** (NG female human farmer 3), is looking for help to investigate the matter.



premiere location for the slave trade, the building fell into disuse when the Representative Council outlawed slavery a few years ago. The neighborhood officials didn't want to appear connected to the past practice and mostly abandoned the building. But public perception doesn't concern the current First Fist, or chief law enforcement officer of Bekyar Block, a brutish woman named **Sasiatyak** (LE female human sheriff 9). Sasiatyak locks up anyone in her neighborhood over the slightest infraction, placing her prisoners in the old slave holding cells in the building's basement. Her four violent sons regularly rough up these prisoners, and Sasiatyak has already had to explain away two murders as "escape attempts." Sasiatyak meets with like-minded neighborhood officials who want to reverse the Representative Council's ruling and bring back legal slavery to Kibwe. The officials have flatly rejected Sasiatyak's suggestion of simply threatening or killing representatives who won't fall in line, but the First Fist is starting to think these very officials need a visit from her boys to change their minds.

## CITY WELLS

Kibwe's high walls double back on themselves in three places, forming enormous open cisterns to catch rainwater. About two centuries ago, the city supplemented this water by digging wells beneath each cistern to reach a stable source of groundwater. Together, these resources virtually guarantee that Kibwe maintains ample drinking water even during the hottest summers and that it could withstand a siege for months or more. Nevertheless, city officials don't take any chances with the drinking water. The north well is protected by the Waterblock stone giants, who have added systems to better preserve and purify the water. The east well is the responsibility of a family of Zenj water-keepers in the Mozimba neighborhood; marrying into this family is considered a high honor but a great responsibility. The south well, in the Walk of Shrines, is tended by priests of Gozreh. Although the priests take the purity of the water seriously, they can be downright frivolous with its use; parades along the Walk of Shrines often end near the south well, where the Gozrens magically create showy displays of spray to rain down upon parade participants. Although citizens may cluck their tongues about wasting drinking water, parades during the hottest season are by far the best attended.

## EAST MWANGI GOLD REFINERY

Unsurprisingly, the East Mwangi Mining Company own the largest and most secure building the Miners' Camp neighborhood. The ore brought out of the Company's gold mines is evaluated at the mine site, and any ore bearing significant gold is crushed, washed, and shipped to this building in iron wagons. Independent miners can also use the refinery for a nominal fee, but the Company sends agents to follow the most successful independent miners and learn more about—and perhaps attempt to purchase—the most productive claims.

## PUBLIC GRANARY

This enormous granary towers high above Kibwe's walls, a modern marvel of engineering at the intersection of the city's ancient past. The granary consists of five silos made of sealed pottery within a monolithic shell of wood and stone with drying vents. City law requires that a portion of all grain sold within the city be contributed to the city in case of famine or siege, but few farmers and traders measure the requisite percentage with each trip. Instead, regular traders set aside a particular time of year when they contribute their entire load of grain, paying their necessary portion at once in advance. This helps ensure consistent, fresh stores. Three stone barricades, each with a single gate, protect



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the granary from theft or sabotage. Despite these precautions, the granary overseer, **Bashalin N'bulun** (N male dwarf overseer 3) has noted unexplained shortages in the grain. Bashalin believes the mouse-headed Pillar-Watcher in the shadow of the granary is growing more rotund every day. He's pointed this out to others on his staff, who insist there's no change in the statue, causing Bashalin to wonder whether he's imagining the inexplicable losses or the fattening statue.

### THE ROAD'S GENTLE END

Among the most opulent of Kibwe's many high-end inns is a sprawling hospitality center near the north gate called The Road's Gentle End. The oval yard contains gates large enough to admit a laden caravan train, which is something the owner, **Jutalu** (N female half-orc innkeeper 6) encourages. Jutalu knows that a newly arrived caravan might have dozens of thirsty animals, laborers, and guards. Although her drinks are reasonably priced, she liberally adds charges for animal handling, grooming, load readjustment, and other fees. In addition, her establishment's high-quality food—and even animal feed—are among the most expensive in Kibwe. She nevertheless keeps a brisk business not only by fleecing newcomers unaware of her pricing practices, but by maintaining a reputation as a premiere relaxation venue for the most elite travelers. Her private rooms and personal

services are certainly above par, but hardly worth her exorbitant prices.

Some of Jutalu's clients have recently reported thefts; although she's successfully prevented word from reaching the wider public, she worries that her establishment's reputation could seriously decline if she's labeled a common thief. Jutalu has been cruelly berating her staff behind closed doors to find the culprit, but the true thief is an independent agent hired by one of her competitors to destroy her business.

### TIGER HOUSE

This multi-story inn just outside the city's west gate stands beneath a Pillar-Watcher with the head of a saber-toothed tiger, holding its fist up in defiance. The well-known inn has a simple motto: "No Masters." Traders, guards, explorers, and travelers of any sort are welcome, with one exception: anyone who employs others, even for honest work at honest wages, isn't welcome in the inn. This allows the patrons to freely discuss their grievances with their employers and warn away those who might be about to sign on with a silver-tongued but sadistic employer. It's considered a mark of trust for a caravan master to release her employees for an evening at Tiger House. The proprietors, a trio of Bonuwat innkeepers who claim descent from azatas, skillfully use their minor magical abilities to pretend to have oracular powers.



# MZALI

*Nationalist temple metropolis ruled over by an undead sun-king of the ancient past*

<b>MZALI</b>	<b>SETTLEMENT 8</b>
<b>LE CITY</b>	
<b>Government</b> Divine Theocracy	
<b>Population</b> 37,813 (99% humans, 1% other)	
<b>Languages</b> Mwangi, Mzunu	
<b>Religions</b> Walkena, Chohar, Luhar, Tlehar	
<b>Threats</b> Bright Lions, karinas, undead, Walkena's servants	
<b>Banned Outsiders</b> Walkena bans all non-native Mwangi individuals from the city. Such outsiders find fearful citizens unwilling to engage with them, imposing a -4 circumstance penalty to all Deception, Diplomacy, and Intimidation checks. In addition, when you get a failure on such checks, you get a critical failure instead.	
<b>Nkiruka the Voice</b> (N female human diplomat 14) Prime Speaker of Walkena and arbiter of conflicts.	
<b>Themba Sufu the Shadow</b> (LE male human spy 15) Commander of Walkena's secret police force	
<b>Worknesh the Golden Blade</b> (LE female human inquisitor 16) High-Inquisitor of Walkena and commander of Mzali's martial forces	
<b>Zubari the Guiding Ray</b> (LE male human priest of Walkena 15) High priest of Walkena and overseer of day-to-day administration of Mzali	

**RESOURCES**

Armor/Weapons	Grain/Fruit/Vegetables	Jewelry/Gems	Livestock/Hides
Luxury Goods	Magic Items	Mercenaries	Ores
Spices/Salt	Textiles		



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• The Sunlit Inn

• Temple of the Eight Suns

• Rhyer's Garments

• The Mzali Archives

• Temple of the Deathless Child

• The Well of the Moon

• The Mixed Marketplace

4,250 FEET



## THE TEMPLE CITY

Though Walkena's faithful destroyed or repurposed many of the shrines within Mzali, there are thousands more that were too dangerous or too hidden to reach. Trespassing into these untouched tombs is a punishable offense for the citizens of Mzali, but this doesn't stop people from slipping into them. Some do so on the lookout for valuables, artifacts, or magic that can offer them riches and power if used in the right manner, but these raiders often fall prey to Walkena's Jackal Guard or the shadowy fiends that lurk in Mzali's dark shadows. Others simply seek something to pray to that is less cruel and capricious than the tyrant they live under.

## MZALI THE DEATHLESS EMPIRE

Mzali is an ancient temple city, the last remnant of a formerly great empire. Ages ago the Council of Mwanyisa overthrew the old monarchy, a line of sun-kings supposedly descended from the gods, and the empire crumbled under its new rulers. By the time of Aroden's death and the Age of Lost Omens, the city of Mzali was nearly abandoned. Yet, the discovery of the hidden tomb of Walkena—a mummified child wrapped in the jeweled raiment of a sun-king and buried in a tomb filled with incredible treasures—brought a resurgence of interest to the ruined city, as it happened to coincide with a prophecy about Mzali's return to greatness. Walkena was put on display and became a local sensation. Crowds flocked to the city to see the child and pay tribute, regarding him as a sign of Mzali's past glory. As word of the fabulous riches, relics, and lavish parades featuring the jeweled mummy reached the nearby Sargavan colonists, an army of Sargavan soldiers came from Kalabuto to sack the temple-city's wealth. But as they approached, the child-god Walkena awakened and unleashed his wrath. Walkena summoned fire from the sky to rain down upon the Chelaxian raiders, incinerating them all. This was 100 years ago.

Today, Mzali thrives under the total rulership of the undead Walkena. Its population has steadily grown since Walkena awakened, as Mwangi by the thousands arrived to join the child god's mission to unite the Expanse and rid the land of colonizers. This new boom and prosperity came with a heavy price. The mummy Walkena is cruel, unfairly favoring his supporters and severely punishing those who question him, those who trade with non-Mwangi, and those who traffic with outsiders without his seal. For these offenders, a quick death would be a merciful reward, compared to Walkena's punishments. Further complicating life in the temple-city, an insurgent group known as the Bright Lions work in the shadows to return the city to the people by overthrowing Walkena. Rumor holds that

the new state of Vidrian, which recently rid itself of a colonist regime, supports the Bright Lions.

Walkena's elite Jackal Guard's first priority is to break the Bright Lion organization, bring in its leaders, and turn the people of Mzali against them.

Mzali rests along the remote southern banks of the Pasuango River, deep in the southern plains of the Mwangi Expanse. A necropolis as much as a holy city, today's Mzali rests atop the Mzali of yesteryear, whose burial mounds, ancient crypts, and pyramidal tombs lie just below the foundations of the current surface buildings. The immense city extends deep beneath the earth, with thousands of hidden shrines that contain the only remnants of Mzali history and culture from before Walkena's priests edited it to fit their own needs. Explorers risk dangers (like the vicious karina birds) to find relics and treasures of lost ages in these subsurface tombs. Perhaps, someday, a way to defeat the powerful mummy-god tyrant Walkena will be among the discoveries returned to the surface.



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### LIFE IN MZALI

Mzali is an immense city, and while life is abuzz in recent years, many buildings are still abandoned. Walkena's Temple of the Deathless Child claims the city center, easily seen from most parts of the city and towering above all else. Other temples and shrines have been repurposed for housing and market space. The further from the city center, the sparser the population becomes.

Yet, no matter the district, one thing remains clear: Mzali is a city divided. The warrior priests that hunt for dissenters live as nobility, while the rebels hide on the fringes of society and most others simply do their best not to be caught in the crossfire. Most common folk walk the tightrope of quietly going about their day-to-day lives, hoping not to draw too much attention to themselves, yet they also risk looking suspicious by acting *too* quiet. In particular, merchants and shopkeepers greet every guest with a bright smile, lest a member of the secret police interprets their poor mood as disloyalty.

Mzali was once a culturally diverse trade city, but since Walkena's rebirth, he has enforced strict adherence to ancient Mzali traditions, including many that fell out of favor in the centuries since he first lived. Since trade with non-Mwangi nations is illegal, Mzali cuisine consists only of food that can be sourced locally; spiced meat, wheat bread, and chickpeas make up the city's staple foods. Public dining is often restricted to a handful of local dishes, while family cooks tend to

experiment with different flavors and combinations of food from around the Expanse, so there is a great deal of variety in home cooking. Most families have at least one unique recipe that they guard fiercely, only sharing it with their own children.

Mzali fashion is mostly made up of loose-fitting, brightly dyed linens affixed with sashes and belts. Certain colors are reserved for specific groups or individuals; for example, only priests of Walkena are allowed to wear bright yellow, and only members of his council may wear stark white. Simple, gold jewelry is also quite common. Most people wear plain wood or metal bands around their neck, wrists, and ankles. Wearing more bands, or jewelry with complex designs, typically denotes greater wealth or a higher station.

While a typical Mzali workday might look quite average to an outsider, it is in truth structured equally around ritual and surveillance. The day begins at dawn, when Walkena takes his first steps out of the temple. Everyone is expected to toil diligently, as any less is seen as either laziness or weakness in the eyes of the priests. At noon, massive gongs are rung throughout the city, and everyone is required to stop for daily prayer. They stand outside under the midday sun with heads bowed until a second gong signals the return to work. This break usually lasts for just a few minutes, but may extend up to an hour if Walkena feels that faith is waning. With the exception of those granted special

## GREENER PASTURES

Though the fledgling nation of Vidrian (page 274) seems like a natural ally against colonialist powers, Walkena's opinion of it has not been friendly. Priests of the sun god claim this to be because Vidrian's people have been too corrupted by outsiders, but most residents quietly suspect it has more to do with how many Mzali citizens have fled to Vidrian over the last few years.



permissions, all citizens are expected to be inside their homes by dusk and remain there until dawn, as the priests believe there is little honest work that can be done out of Walkena's sight.

Despite living under such strict conditions, some citizens are still able to thrive. Potters, weavers, and other artisans must hire several apprentices to keep up with the demand for locally-made goods. It is not uncommon to see a particularly skilled artisan have over a dozen apprentices as young as 12 years old learning their craft and helping to keep up with demand. Many art forms unique to Mzali have also flourished, especially the crafting of ceremonial weapons. These golden blades and shields are impractical for combat, but often have rich tapestries etched into their metal that depict the deeds of ancient heroes, major events, or family histories.

The people of Mzali observe only one official holiday: the anniversary of Walkena's rebirth. The Day of the Cleansing Sun, or Cleansing for short, celebrates the defeat of the Chelaxian colonists that marked the city-nation's return to prominence. Citizens paint their faces, eat meat pies, dance in the streets, and end the day with a great parade around the temple. However, with each passing year, the celebration grows slightly less fervent, and Walkena has begun to take notice. While participation is not compulsory, especially for those who choose to spend the day working, those who choose stay home will be watched more closely in the following weeks.

While they are not officially recognized, there are also celebrations at the beginning and end of the brief rainy season. These are usually held in private, with extended families coming together to feast and share stories. Since social visits are rare during the rainy, muddy, final month of the year, families enjoy each other's company and wish each other well before the rain starts in earnest, and after it's over, they come together once again to embrace the loved ones they've missed. There's also another reason for the celebration that few dare to speak out loud: on the few days when the rain falls heavy enough to block out the sun, Walkena rarely steps outside of the temple.

Travel to and from Mzali is rare. Most who leave choose not to return, and those that do face harsh scrutiny to ensure they haven't been tainted by outside influences. Merchants who wish to sell their goods in the city must pass through strict security check points, and will be turned away if they are found carrying any foreign products. Vidrics who produce most of their own goods are often denied entry under the assumption that they've been influenced too much by their former colonizers. Even diplomats, academics, and other respected guests are seldom allowed to explore the city unsupervised. A retainer of priests will typically escort them to and from the temple, discouraging any contact between them and Mzali citizens.

Most rebels stick closely to these traditions, working hard to hide themselves among the common folk. In fact, some of Walkena's fiercest opposition feigns faith better than anyone, saying their noon prayers with particular zeal. There are others who work to sow dissent, but this is subtle work that must be done with the utmost care. After all, is the friend who invites you to stay out after dark a conspirator inviting you to join in their rebellion? Or have they been sent to test your faith and see if you will obey the child-god's will?

## PEOPLE OF MZALI

The people of Mzali descend from various groups, kingdoms, and environments throughout the Mwangi Expanse. These people brought with them the clothing of their people: bright colors, patterns, and animal skins that now make up Mzali fashion. As Mzali's savanna is blessed with an abundance, fashion is allowed to be one of the few aspects of outside cultures present within the city. Outfits that are primarily white and yellow

are generally off-limits to anyone beyond Walkena's inner circle, so reds, blues, greens, and purple hues are incredibly popular among average people. Men often wear animal prints, including breastplates made of animal skins, with zebus, donkeys, sheep, and goats are common, which also make them into popular choices for tailors. Clashing patterns add complexity to clothes, resulting in crowds which appear strikingly diverse at a passing glance.

However, it cannot be ignored that Mzali is not a land of diversity. Diversity in thought and beliefs is forbidden in favor of maintaining the happiness and support of a single entity: Walkena, the Child-God. Religions, habits, and even certain foods have been diminished to create a city of bland homogeneity. Strict codes and predetermined paths command every aspect of city life. All actions taken are supposed to raise Mzali back to its legendary status.

Despite this seemingly all-encompassing rule, opinions on Walkena are largely divided. For some, he's a hero. He defeated the would-be colonizers and revived a city where Mwangi people can be safe from those to the north. These devotees praise Walken's name and thank him every day, following his every rule and whim to the letter. So far as they're concerned, Walkena can do no harm so long as he is obeyed, and anyone who disobeys deserves whatever punishment they receive. This group is often xenophobic, and many will refuse to do business with outsiders even within the Mixed Marketplace.

On the other hand, many citizens of Mzali live in fear of Walkena and secretly wish for his demise. While they acknowledge his role as savior, his rule strikes them as no better than how they would have been treated under Cheliax's rule. They describe themselves as glorified slaves living under the whim of a child who seeks to relive the nostalgia of a long-dead kingdom. These citizens also follow the rules of Walkena to the letter, but not out of reverence. They follow them out of fear that they will be the next to undergo the Punishment of Seven Suns. While most are also xenophobic, they are more willing to work alongside outsiders so long as those outsiders respect the customs.

As a temple city, every aspect of Mzali is incredibly religious. Naturally, most here praise the sun due to Walkena forcing daily moments of prayer. Within homes, one can find small shrines dedicated to other religious figures—so long as they haven't provoked Walkena's jealousy. Gods that represent the night, moon, or darkness are all but nonexistent in Mzali. These gods are considered antithetical to Walkena and thus praising them is heresy. Gods that represent agriculture, light, and similar fields are acceptable so long as one does not hold them above Walkena.

A general fear of the night haunts almost everyone in Mzali, as night lacks the protection of the child-god. Parents often tell their children stories of karina birds (page 301) and other monsters who stalk the streets in the dark in order to frighten their children into staying home at night. For those who only act the part of faith, night is also the time where the most citizens get quietly disappeared by Walken's secret police. While it is not a crime to go outside after dusk, being caught outside after dark is often reason enough to be arrested and taken away, since it is widely believed that little honest work can be done out of Walkena's sight. Despite this, potential criminals and rebels, including the Bright Lions, are far more willing to deal with the nighttime threat of the secret police, rather than the daytime wrath of a living god.

Mzali citizens often make impeccable orators, as they tend to be multilingual thanks to the sheer amount of languages spoken by their component peoples. Most citizens work in trade, making clothing, farming, working the irrigation system, or selling goods they've made to one another. Everyone works hard under the watchful eye of Walkena. Mzali goods sell well outside the city, which provides an opportunity for economic growth within. Personal wealth is rare here, so there is no middle class. Everyone fits into either the working class or the nobility. Since no one is held in higher regard

## SELECTIVE NOTICE

It's an open secret in Mzali that Walkena raises both his enemies and his devotees as undead servants after they die. These undead servants are usually kept out of sight and used as guards in only the most private of Walkena's sanctums. Most living citizens do their best not to talk about the dead among their ranks.



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## FAMILY STRIFE

Adherents of Walkena, when they acknowledge the old Mzali sun gods at all, often claim that Walkena descends from Chohar (page 135). They point to the two deities' shared love of justice as their evidence. That Walkena has divine blood is indisputable, but if he truly descends from Chohar, then the Golden Lion holds no love for him. By all accounts, Chohar intends only to show the child-god the true meaning of righteousness.



than the child-god, the best someone can hope to be is his advisor. His most devoted followers laud this as a good thing; they argue it creates a unique sense of equality in which everyone simply attempts to be the best within their class.

Children still too young to enter a trade can often be found playing around the Pasuango River. It acts as a natural landmark and border, which prevents children from running too far. Though the practice is banned, children often create small boats and send messages to the children on the other side of the river. Other children will take their parents' instruments, such as the mbira, hosho, and ngoma, and make music together or use them for the various games they play.

Poor or rebellious citizens often remain in or near Well of the Moon. Despite being patrolled often, the security force there is lax and often can't handle anything that happens there—or simply don't care. In addition, the Bright Lions, Walkena's most persistent foes, use the Well of the Moon as their home base. Mzali security often finds themselves outnumbered or simply outplayed should they attempt to apprehend anyone under the Lions' protection.

Overall, Mzali is a city of paranoia and secret conflict. People are paranoid of saying or doing the wrong thing, even accidentally. They fear the retribution of Walkena should they step out of line. Even children are taught to be fearful and overly careful. The citizens wage a cold war amongst each other, while the Bright Lions wage one against the child-god himself.

## WALKENA

Walkena is a nearly unique entity on Golarion. A descendant of the sun gods of Mzali, Walkena's divine blood returned him to life and grants him his own divinity.

It is exceedingly rare for a deity to have a permanent physical form on the material plane, yet somehow, the nature of child-god's resurrection and ascension have entrenched him in the mortal world. As king, he has the power to mold a nation in his image, and works tirelessly to do so. Though strict in life, he has lost all human humility in death. In Mzali, Walkena's word is law. While he is sometimes willing to take the advice of his council, once he has made a decision, it is all but impossible to change his mind.

From the temple-palace in which he resides, Walkena dictates the nation's future. However, the child-god is perpetually trapped in the past, a living portrait of the boy he was when he died, unable to grow or change in any meaningful way. He boasts a brilliant tactical mind and excellent judgment, but at times his immaturity is obvious: he's often jealous and temperamental, despite his council's best attempts to guide him. Even minor offenses are met with harsh retribution. His cruel streak is especially evident to those who oppose him, or to any who have witnessed the Punishment of Seven Angry Suns—a slow and painful execution in which the accused is tortured with six unique punishments before being burned at the stake by sunlight focused through seven glass lenses of Walkena's own design. Even these tortures are dictated by Walkena's whims. He's employed dozens of different tortures over the years, which he swaps in and out with semi-regularity.

While Walkena's unpredictable nature might seem capricious and fickle to outsiders, in truth his mood swings directly correlates with the rising and setting of the sun. At dawn he is joyful, amiable, smiling brightly and easy to please; hence why this is when he prefers to make appearances throughout the city, accompanied by a small army of priests and servants as he performs miracles for the faithful. As noon approaches and his powers grow, he becomes shrewd and analytical. He meets with the council to discuss daily business, welcomes visiting dignitaries, and

oversees the many restoration and expansion projects in the city. As the sun sets and his power wanes, he grows paranoid, vindictive, and quick to anger, issuing orders to his secret police.

At night, Walkena locks himself away and refuses to be seen. He does not sleep, but becomes lethargic and dejected, unable to think clearly. Without the sun to rejuvenate him, he is little more than a shriveled and desiccated corpse. Only the leader of his secret police is allowed audience with him at night, and even they must avert their eyes at all times.

While all members of Walkena's court share his xenophobia, the Council of Mwanysa does not always share in his fanaticism. This is partly by design, as even Walkena sees the value of keeping councilors that bring many different perspectives. Each councilmember is hand-picked for their dedication to Mzali, their contributions to the temple, and above all, their loyalty to Walkena. However, loyalty does not always lead to agreement. Many distrust **Themba Sufu** (LE male human spy 15), the current head of the secret police, and believe that he places his own sadistic urges above the well-being of the nation. High priest **Zubari, the Guiding Ray** (LE male human priest of Walkena 15) is the head of the council and takes responsibility for most of the day to day administration of the city—including cleaning up any messes Themba leaves behind. The two have clashed wills on more than one occasion, but so far both have known better than to let the dispute go beyond words.

### THE BRIGHT LIONS

Officially, the Bright Lions don't exist. Lead by the former mercenary **Sihar** (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Legends* 98), the Bright Lions are a rebel group seeking to overturn the corrupt rule of Walkena. Due to Walkena's deific strength, they fight using guerrilla tactics and quickly disappear just as they came. They spread the knowledge of former sun gods such as Chohar (page 135), Luhar (page 139), and Tlehar (page 141) in hopes of reminding the people of the kindness in which Mzali's power was once held. Sihar is well versed in both tactics of combat as well as knowledge of history and humanities, which allows the Lions to influence both society and would be fighters.

The Lions lair in the abandoned districts of Mzali, utilizing black market houses and secret entrances to meet and plan their next course of action. When the enemy holds the power of a god, any steps taken must be delicate.

The Bright Lion agent **Azeeko** (*Legends* 99) gathers information from his restaurant, the Golden Mouse, and brokers what he learns to the Lions. However, violence and bloodshed are both unavoidable during revolution, which is where the Bright Lions' second in command **Sewell** (*Legends* 99) comes in. Also former mercenary, Sewell is far more hotheaded than Sihar, but just as dangerous with a blade in hand.

### THE SUN CASTS SHADOWS

The title of head of the secret police holds the most power in Mzali, second only to Walkena himself. Within city limits, they act with the full authority of the child-god from dusk until dawn. With a legion of warrior priests under their command, they root out dissenters and sow fear of the night into the hearts of any would-be rebels.



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## MZUNU

The ancient Mzunu language has survived from the Mzali Empire's glory days to the modern age, though the ascendance of Walkena has caused it to shift back to its historical usage rather than the modern, "adulterated" version spoken in the temple city when he first returned. Walkena's priests accept the usefulness of the Mwangi trade tongue and use it when communicating with outsiders, but do so only begrudgingly.

The Bright Lions' war against Walkena has remained a cloak-and-dagger slow burn of attrition to protect both the faction and the citizens of Mzali from the wrath of the child-god before they are ready to take him on directly. Beyond the city, the Bright Lions have entrusted the halfling **Xor Beninch** (*Legends* 99) to lead these efforts. As spymaster, Xor handles all external points of contact to the Bright Lions, as well as spreading word of the resistance efforts to potential supporters. Recently, Xor has been approached by Chelaxian officials wishing to help the Bright Lions topple their common enemy of Walkena—though Sihar is wary of the would-be colonizers' offer of assistance. With Xor's help, Sihar and the Lions are developing a support network of allies from all parts of the Mwangi Expanse and beyond. The new state of Vidrian secretly supports the Bright Lions' efforts, and Xor has arranged several clandestine meetings to exchange supplies and news. Lately, there have been rumblings in the Bright Lions' information network that Vidrian may soon come under direct attack by Walkena. If this is true, and the Bright Lions can aid their Vidric allies in fending off the attack, they could garner even stronger, more public support from this major, up-and-coming power within the Expanse.

Currently, the Bright Lions' primary opposition within Mzali isn't Walkena, but the leader of his secret police, Themba Sufu. Fearful whispers paint him as the shadow of the sun itself, stalking the streets for any and all signs of rebellion to quickly and swiftly silence them. He and many others in Walkena's service have attempted to infiltrate the Bright Lions' ranks and arrest their leaders, but have had little success on this front. Indeed, Walkena's clergy is far more often and more successfully infiltrated by the Bright Lions, who have the uncanny ability to perfectly imitate faith in Walkena. Some believe this to be the influence of the Old Sun Gods at play, as the power of these deities either protects these Bright Lions from detection or is somehow indistinguishable from Walkena's own divine strength.

Sihar took much of her inspiration for her rebellion from the forbidden temple ruins under Mzali, their walls and tombs engraved with the teachings of the Old Sun Gods. The Bright Lions still scout the old tombs beneath the city for any advantage they can find to help to overthrow Walkena and keep foreign aggressors out of Mzali, whether it be prophecy, lore, or relics. Recently, several members of the Bright Lions have been pushing for an expedition into the Necropolis in hopes of finding a way to defeat Walkena; if the child-god was found there, perhaps that place holds some way to rid the world of him. However, Sihar has shown little interest in pursuing this avenue, as the rare chance of success isn't worth the very likely risks.

## EXPLORING MZALI

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations found in Mzali.

### THE MIXED MARKETPLACE

Just south of Mzali's city center is the Mixed Marketplace. Spanning several city blocks, it's the largest market in the city, and the only place that allows traders from outside Mzali to do business. Vendors set up shops by repurposing the abandoned temples and short tenements that have survived from the ruins of the previous age. Food establishments and various watering holes are scattered along the streets and alleyways of the market.





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Since Walkena's awakening, the market has thrived, becoming a bustling, living part of Mzali. Sections of the market are open-air stalls of grains, fruits, and dried meats. The streets are lined by pens of cattle and other livestock such as goats, chickens, and sheep for sale. Merchants offer luxury goods such as hides and textiles, incense, and hand-crafted jewelry.

It's rumored that the oracle of the first sun can be found in one of the older temples in the market. In exchange for gifts, she will foretell outcomes of future endeavors. The illegal gambling house of Yaneti is also hidden away here, as are other black-market vendors selling foreign, stolen or illegal goods, or even relics recovered from the older parts of the temple city. The Bright Lions also maintain a few safe houses in the tangled maze of the market, where they store goods or go to ground for a time.

### THE MZALI ARCHIVES

Located near the city center, with the Temple of the Deathless Child looming overhead, is an information center containing mainly documents and records of the city and parts of the region's history. It may serve useful to anyone who finds themselves out of their depth in Walkena's domain, as a good portion of the readings are dedicated to information on the child-god himself. Though its main function is as an archive, and that's how most of the space is dedicated, there is a smaller

section in back that serves as a small library. This back-area offers readings in subjects that reach beyond Mzali, along with various fictional works, and also serves as an archivist's office.

Select locals refer to this building as "The Scrybrary" when speaking with others in the know, due to the fact that if one knows who the head archivist is, and how to ask, rumors say they can ask for a book that allows the holder to scry on the person of their choosing once per day. It's also said that the return dates for such a loaned book are very strict—someone would owe a steep favor to the head archivist for every day the book is late, and this archivist knows how to collect.

### THE NECROPOLIS

Much of the underground western sections of Mzali have become a huge, ignored necropolis. Though not formally forbidden, it has been walled off by new construction and restoration efforts under Walkena's regime. It's forbidden to disturb the dead in the necropolis. Guards are set on watch but aren't terribly effective at deterring raiders and tomb-hunters.

There are dangers greater than arrest, however. Many stories circulate of treasure hunters returning from the necropolis with nothing but injuries for their trouble, should they return at all. Plague birds, hungry ghouls, and worse lair and hunt in the burial chambers. Tales of trapped tombs and fiendish double-crossing guides

## OATH OF THE DEVOTED

Walkena's most trusted servants swear the following oath to their god. For more information on the contract trait, see *Legends 10*.

### OATH OF THE DEVOTED LEVEL 9

RARE CONTRACT DIVINE INVESTED MAGICAL NECROMANCY

You gain fire and mental resistance 5. When you die, you rise as an undead creature with the zombie trait (*Bestiary 340*) on the next round; if you are a PC, you become an NPC under Walkena's control. Your stats remain the same, except that your alignment changes to evil. If you reach 0 Hit Points as a zombie, you are destroyed and do not rise again.

**Activate**  $\blacklozenge$  command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You gain a +1 status bonus to Will saves. Choose a weapon or an unarmed Strike; your chosen attack deals an extra 1d6 fire damage for the next 1 minute.

**Special** If you are a zombie at a time when Mzali is entirely purged of foreigners, your duty is fulfilled and you are immediately destroyed.

have deterred more than one wide-eyed looter. Yet, the return of a relic hunter with a scepter, a fist sized gem, or some other treasure starts the gold fever all over again. There's a fortune to be had in those crypts, in both coin and lore—Walkena emerged from the necropolis, and it's thought that a way to defeat the child-god lurks somewhere in the tombs.

## RHYER'S GARMENTS

This shop sells a wide assortment of clothing in the Mzali style. Clothing is designed, dyed, and woven here on a posted schedule that leaves the shop closed on certain days throughout the week—these off days shift the focus of the shop to garment construction. During these times, the doors stay locked, and workers can be seen keeping busy late into the night.

On rare evenings, a soft, muffled melody can be heard playing from somewhere near the shop, though its source is impossible to pinpoint. Locals rarely bother trying to investigate, at the risk of drawing negative attention from the warrior priests, their leader, neighbors, or whatever is causing the music. On the few occasions the management has been approached about the noise, they quickly prove there was nothing odd happening within the shop's walls.

Yet more than one Mzali citizen will admit, at least to themselves, they have been drawn to the windows some nights, hoping to make out the melody. People with the nerve to mention the alluring tune out loud have described the sound, when they're able to put it into words, as rebellious and mournful. Most residents dismiss it as wildlife, or a parent lulling their children to sleep in a nearby home, rather than admit the existence of the mystery that continues to nag at them. One theory suggests it could be coming from under the shop, but no one can imagine how or why.

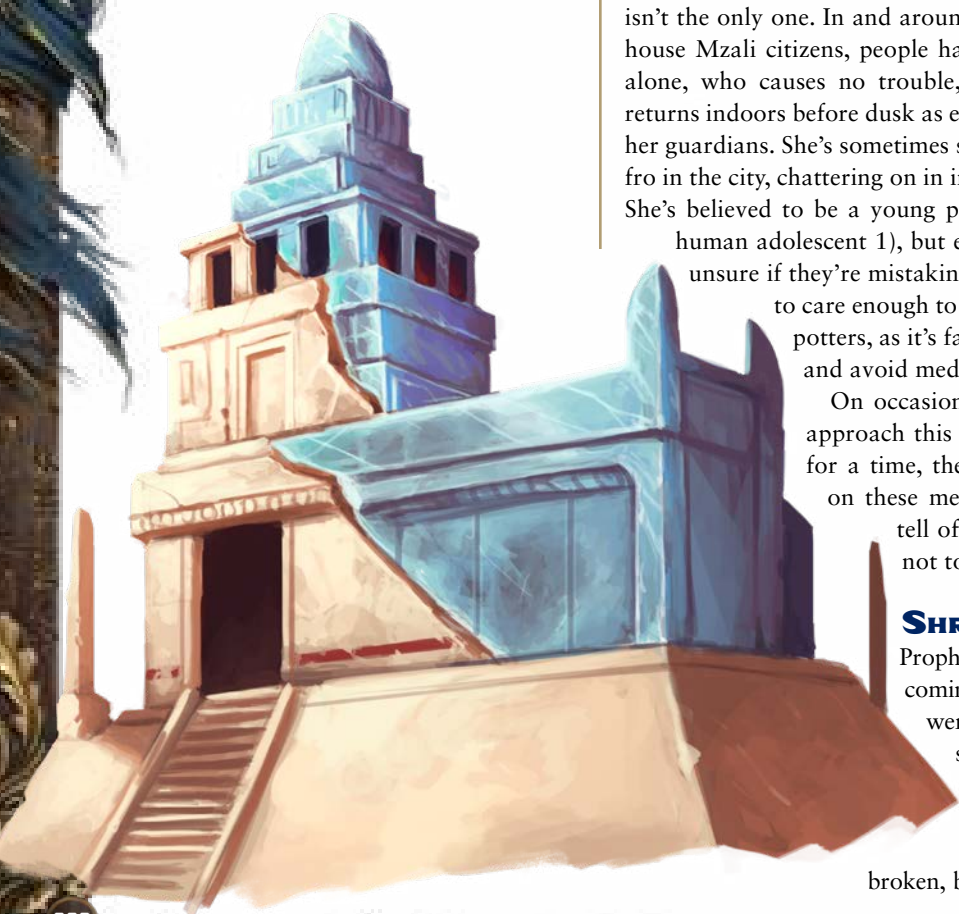
## SAALSI'S HOME

While the child-god Walkena dwells in the city center mostly unchecked, he isn't the only one. In and around one of the many repurposed shrines that house Mzali citizens, people have often seen a young girl, almost always alone, who causes no trouble, participates in daily prayer, and always returns indoors before dusk as expected—but no one has ever seen her with her guardians. She's sometimes seen talking to herself while walking to and fro in the city, chattering on in innocuous halves of innocent conversations. She's believed to be a young potter's apprentice named **Saalsi** (N female human adolescent 1), but even these details aren't certain, with many unsure if they're mistaking her for another young girl. No one seems to care enough to go so far as to inquire with any of the local potters, as it's far easier and safer to keep their heads down and avoid meddling in uncertain business.

On occasion, the child-god Walkena has been seen to approach this house without his retinue or guards, enter for a time, then leave. If anyone has ever eavesdropped on these meetings, they've certainly never survived to tell of it. Most citizens of Mzali are wise enough not to pry.

## SHRINE OF THE ECLIPSE

Prophetic tablets that supposedly foretold the coming of Walkena and the resurrection of Mzali were found inside a collapsing, partly submerged shrine complex near the river banks. These "tablets of fire," as they were named, were just one set of many, found scattered about the shrine and banks. Some were broken, buried, or hidden deeper in the crypts below.



While some believe the tablets to be fakes written by Walkena's clergy, the child-god seems unconcerned by such doubters or their attempts to delve into the shrine for further relics. The surrounding area is known for its karinas, however, which have wounded many an ill-fated explorer.

The origins of the shrine remain unknown. The local symbol for "eclipse" appears frequently on its walls, but the identity and motives of those who built the shrine are buried in untranslated texts. The answers may lie in the crypts half-submerged by the river below the shrine—or perhaps they're lost for good.

### THE SUNLIT INN

Once a partially collapsed temple, the Sunlit Inn was rebuilt with the help of local workers and artisans to have an almost patchwork appearance. Most sections of the building are clear remnants of the temple that stood before, while parts of the roof and front wall have been reconstructed out of thick, colorfully tinted glass that protects the rooms from the intensity of the sun on the worst summer days. The end result is a testament to the quality of Mzali artisans' work, though few ever get the chance to actually admire it.

The building is a modest-sized inn, largely filled with ordinary rooms. Its largest selling point is the small selection of rooms that sit beneath the unusual glass roof. These rooms are still lit intensely by the sun during the day and reveal the peaceful, starry sky at night. These "night rooms" are highly sought after, especially considering the limited time any Mzali residents can spend outside after darkness falls. Even some locals try to obtain a reservation for special occasions or quiet, personal celebrations.

### TEMPLE OF THE EIGHT SUNS

The obelisk of the eight suns is a remnant of the old Mzali empire that stands nearly as tall as Walkena's temple at the center of the city. It's hewn from a single piece of hard red stone and engraved with the list of rulers, Mzali's history, and "eight suns"—but one of these mysterious suns has been defaced. The temple of the old empire in front of which the obelisk sits, a complex of small, ziggurat-like shapes, has fallen into disrepair during Walkena's rule over Mzali. The tomb of an unknown mummy is known lie sealed beneath the obelisk, but those who have attempted to explore the area have thus far been turned back by a glowing ibis guardian.

### THE WELL OF THE MOON

East of the city's center, in an older, more desperate district, lay the ruins of a clay brick well. Though the well has long since dried up, and the shells of past buildings in the neighborhood have collapsed, the Bright Lions hold the territory, guarding the well and protecting the neighborhood. The well, known as the Well of the Moon, is the entrance to the lost halls of the old Sun gods. The well's shaft intersects a great hall, its walls engraved with an ancient language and depictions of the old gods and their visions for the city. The Bright Lions work to decode these walls, hoping to gain an advantage in their fight for Mzali. Other parts of this underground temple contain pools of ghost serpents; the Bright Lions treat these creatures and their habitats with reverence and care. This is a great advantage to members of the rebel faction that come into harm, as they can retreat to these pools and recover almost instantly.

### TEMPLE OF THE DEATHLESS CHILD

Walkena's temple, the tallest building in Mzali, stands in the center of the city, and the child-god greets his followers every dawn on its steps. The temple is filled with Walkena's most fanatic devotees, ready to cater to his every whim. The temple is guarded by a force of both living and undead warriors. **Ochieng, Strength of the Light** (LN female zombie human guardian 15) commands these forces—once a mortal woman who killed over 200 northerners in defense of Mzali before falling in battle, she continues to serve Walkena even in death.

Walkena's Inner Circle is often found within the temple, offering their advice to the child-god. In addition to Ochieng, Themba Sufu, and Zubari, the Inner Circle consists of **Nkiruka the Voice** (N female human bard 14), speaker and diplomat; **Wekesa the Sparrow** (NE male human spiritual leader 13), the voice for the common people; and **Worknesh the Golden Blade** (LE female human interrogator 12), the head inquisitor and commander of Mzali's martial forces.

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# NANTAMBU

*Colorful and cheerful city-state boasting Golarion's oldest magical academy*

## NANTAMBU

## SETTLEMENT 10

NG CITY

**Government** Democratic Council

**Population** 15,470 (80% humans, 4% halflings, 3% elves, 2% amurrans, 2% iruxi, 9% other)

**Languages** Amurrun, Dwarven, Elven, Gnoll, Iruxi, Mwangi, Xanmba

**Religions** Adanye, Gozreh, Mazludeh, Irez, Nethys, Shelyn

**Threats** Magical accidents

**Service of the Magaambya** Spellcasting services of up to 13th level can be found in Nantambu with ease. Acquiring higher-level services requires 1d4 weeks of work and usually requires an additional donation of 10% of the value to Nantambu.

**Luchomo** (LN male human politician 5) Nantambu's Head of Council

**Ciko** (NG female human glassmaker 4) Council representative from the Glassmakers' Guild

**High Sun-Mage Oyamba** (NG male human wizard 13) Master of the Magaambya

**Ebele** (N female human restaurateur 6) Influential socialite



## RESOURCES



Books/Lore



Grain/Fruit/  
Vegetables



Jewelry/  
Gems



Livestock/  
Hides



Lumber



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Ships



Spices/Salt



Technology



Textiles



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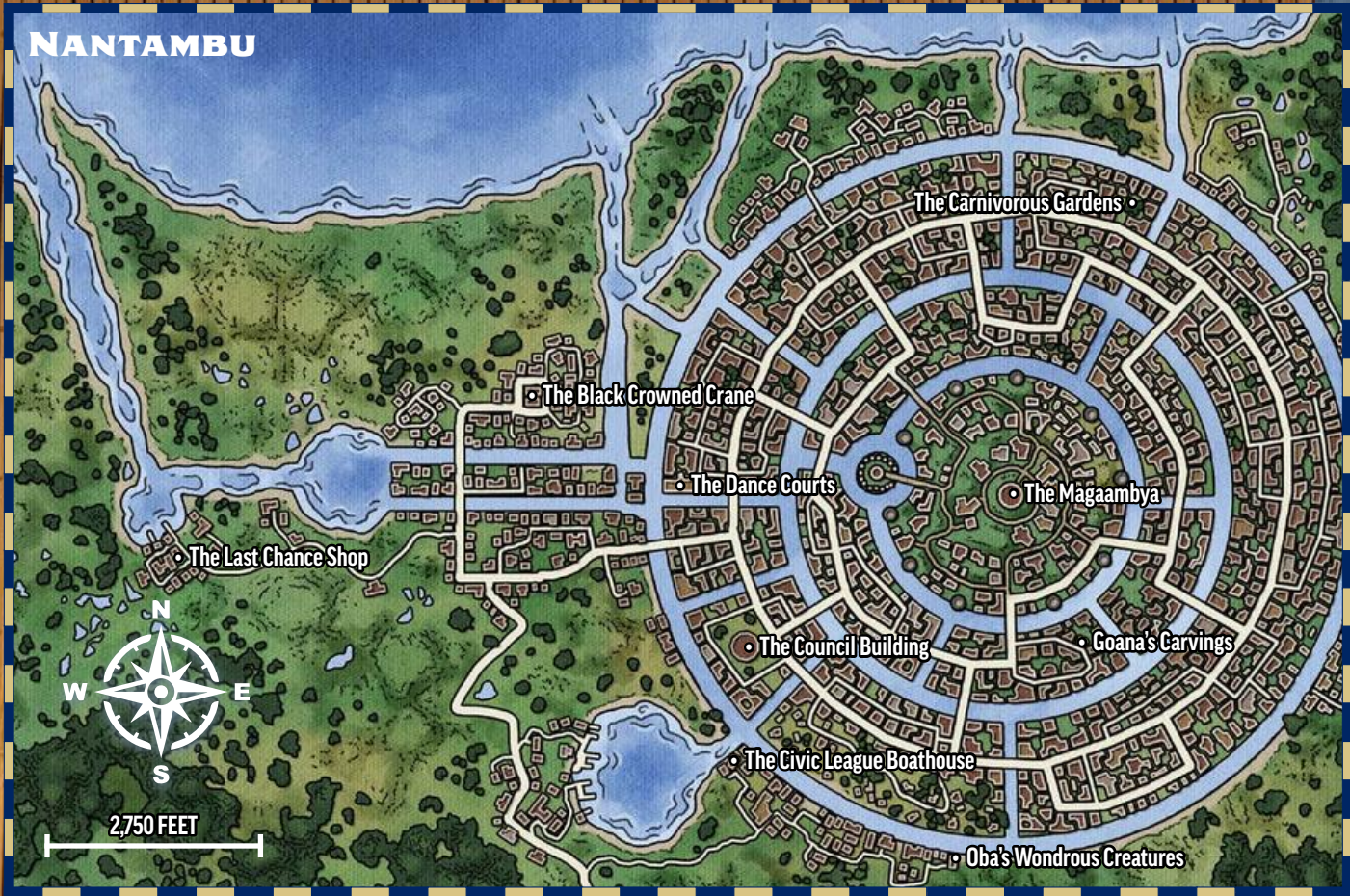
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**NANTAMBU**



## UNIQUE CITIZENRY

Nantambu has never been a large city, but it's well in the running for the most cosmopolitan. People of all ancestries and backgrounds are lured to the city by the promise of a safe life or a prestigious education, and the Magaambya's teachers scout out talented students from even further afield. Though some ancestries are still vanishingly rare, planar scions, iruxi, catfolk, and kobolds abound, along with members of the Mwangi's rarest peoples, on occasion.

## NANTAMBU THE SONG-WIND CITY

Nantambu is a shining jewel of the Mwangi Expanse nestled in a bend of the Vanji River. Crisscrossed by canals and adorned with tinkling glass charms on every window and door, it's a fitting home for the Magaambya, the oldest and most prestigious school of arcane magic on Golarion. Its location on the Vanji makes it a hub both for ships sailing upriver from the sea and caravans making their way through the surrounding jungles.

The smells of rich spices and rare woods fill the city's open-air markets, while glassmakers and cloth merchants display a riotous array of colors and designs. The city's population is comprised mostly of humans, with most of them being Zenj, followed by about half as many Bonuwat and a few Mauxi. The city is also home to communities of Ekujae elves, gnolls, halflings, lizardfolk, and catfolk, as well as a few members of rarer ancestries.

Founded by Old-Mage Jatembe to be a seat of learning, the city has evolved over the millennia into a democratic haven. The Magaambya's presence enhances the city's prestige and contributes to the safety and stability of its peoples. Nantambu maintains peace with its neighbors through diplomatically negotiated treaties and requires no standing army to protect itself. Despite this, no attack against the city has ever prevailed—the Magaambya's Tempest-Sun Mages have never let any foe within 20 miles of the city. As such, the city houses few soldiers, and most of its inhabitants devote their time to the arts, principally glassmaking and wood crafting. An elected council governs the city, and any citizen old enough can cast a ballot or run for office themselves.

The Magaambya at the city's heart attracts eager students from across and beyond the Mwangi Expanse, and its renowned arcane instructors don't confine their lessons to the academy's buildings or enrollment rosters—they're just as likely to be found lecturing in a courtyard as a classroom. Likewise, students of the Magaambya are not bound to one area of the city. Those of means often have apartments in other districts, while those from less wealthy backgrounds still live comfortably within the academy's dormitories.

Nantambu's culture is built on an ethos of community. Even the poorest Nantambiyian has access to food, clean water, and a safe place to sleep, while even the most upscale restaurants set aside a table or two for charity and sponsor the city's many public festivals throughout the year. Without having to worry about starving or freezing, Nantambiyians can innovate and take risks that citizens elsewhere can't. The city's artisans have honed their craft to the highest caliber, and their works, known for their quality and durability, are sought out across and beyond Garund. Some believe the constant magic of the Magaambya imbues the items with a level of power, while others posit that the crafters themselves, having acquired knowledge from the academy's sages, imbue their own works with magic. While the various crafters' guilds and unions sing and chant to meter out time or remember a recipe or method, there's no evidence their creations are inherently more magical or powerful than usual—although there's no proof that they aren't, either.

## LIFE IN NANTAMBU

Life in Nantambu begins before dawn, with bakers firing up their ovens to turn out small loaves of tangy sourdough and fishers heading out to cast their nets onto the Vanji River. Nantambiyians enjoy a quick breakfast of bread, fruit, and fish, while children head to their lessons and merchants set out their wares. Food carts grill fish and vegetables and griddle flatbreads to wrap them in, and prepare plates for hungry laborers on their way to work. Glassblowers check the annealing





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ovens and the wares they left cooling overnight, before stoking the fires to start melting sand. Apprentices grind additives and fetch water to moisten shaping pads while journeyman crafters go over the day's plans with the masters. Woodworkers likewise sharpen their tools while studying raw logs and stumps to see what beauty will be revealed from within; their apprentices, meanwhile, start working on stools and chairs to hone their fundamentals. From outside the city, carts and boats loaded with raw goods from the surrounding farms and villages flow in, all supervised by a small army of bureaucrats accounting for everything and distributing the tribute as needed.

Street musicians and performers start busking around lunchtime, often setting up in a courtyard or town square so passersby can enjoy their acts while they eat. Savvy food carts feed artists in exchange for them setting up nearby, then hawk their treats to the crowds that gather to enjoy the performance. Theaters and music houses stage daily shows beginning around sundown, with most serving light refreshments with the entertainment. Guilds sponsor annual competitions for new plays, musical works, and choreography, sometimes with required elements like the Woodworkers Alliance's stipulation that wooden instruments be used, or the Glassmakers' Guild's mandate of a glassworker as the protagonist. These competitions offer valuable prizes and bragging rights, but are also a way for musicians

and actors to make a name for themselves, since the guilds finance a showing for each finalist and a quarter's run for the winner.

Dinners are a leisurely affair of grazing on finger foods in the summer or, in the rainy season, cradling small cups of hot stews while talking or reading. Most homes share a communal outdoor area conducive to chatting with neighbors and sharing meals with them, such as a central courtyard shared among several buildings or a rooftop terrace used by all the tenants of a larger building.

There are two prominent seasons in Nantambu: the wintry rainy season, which lasts about 3 months and features storms lasting up to 20 hours a day, and the warmer and dryer growing season that begins in spring and fills the rest of the year. The local calendar begins on the spring equinox when the sun returns after the long rains, and every quarter year comprises 3 months of 28 days each. Nantambiyans mark solstices and equinoxes with a week of feasting, the first day of which is always dedicated to Old-Mage Jatembe and the Ten Warriors, while the last day is dedicated to venerating ancestors. The days between are divided among feast days for different gods and, often, weddings. These feast days are not part of any month, and an extra day is added at the new year.

Spring, when the land starts drying out and young green life starts to sprout, comes with an explosion of color as merchants and crafters start displaying the

## A MAGICAL EXISTENCE

The presence of so many magic users makes life in Nantambu a peaceful existence. The city is defended by the Magaambyan Tempest-Sun Mages, and the resources that would be spent on a military are instead funneled into public works. Most Magaambyans don't wield earth-shattering power, however, so the presence of magic in Nantambu society mainly manifests as convenience; for example, refrigeration is a popular addition to local homes. Healing magic means that most citizens live long, healthy lives, and mosquito nets are notably absent in lieu of bug-repellent lights. Roads and mosaics are kept clean by a troop of academy initiates using cantrip spells. Primal magic keeps crops healthy, and mighty trees grow tall among the bustling streets.

wares they produced over the winter. Flowers stuffed with cheese or meat and fried in a crispy batter are available on almost every corner as people start planting their garden boxes. In the summer quarter, people store melons and fruits at the bottom of wells to keep them cool and refreshing in the daytime heat. Fish are caught in abundance from the Vanji River, grilled fresh within hours, and served with a squeeze of citrus or sprinkle of spices and salt. The autumn quarter brings leafy greens in abundance, quickly sautéed if already tender or slow cooked if tougher. The grilling and quick cooking of the spring and summer make way for stews and braises in autumn and the rainy season. Fish are salted and fruits dried or preserved to be packed away, and an annual slaughter of livestock gives meats time to cure and smoke.

The rainy winter's daily torrential downpours drive most Nantambiyans indoors. Riverbeds provide starchy marsh tubers to be roasted in coals or boiled and mashed to serve with rich, meaty stews. Most people work on their sewing or weaving projects to make clothes for the upcoming year, and they hone their crafts by putting in long hours on commissions or masterworks to showcase their skills. Nearly four-fifths of Nantambiyans are literate, and the rainy season gives them opportunities to read alone or to each other as they work, with the households' youngest often reading aloud for practice. Most shops shut down for all but the few dry hours at midday, while the city's mills are at their busiest, grinding the harvest's grains into fine flours for cakes and breads in the new year. Bakers prepare mountains of delicately shaped cookies, traditionally given as gifts to friends, loved ones, and business associates alike.

## PEOPLE OF NANTAMBU

Most people of Nantambu are artisans and crafters, and glassworkers are the most prominent among them. Exquisitely skilled, they produce all manner of works, ranging from tiny beads covering citizens' clothes to charms that hang from every window and above every door, and up to the dazzling, dancing sculpted chandeliers that hang over the Magaambya's halls.

Fish that swim up the city's canals from the Vanji River supplement the fruits and vegetables sent as tribute by the surrounding villages in return for protection. Neighborhood plots of vegetables and municipal orchards double as public parks and are open for all to harvest, and most households have a windowsill hosting a few pots of herbs to add to a dish. Most homes don't have ovens, so hearth-griddled flatbreads are a staple used as both dish and utensil for fragrant stews and fluffy grains. People most often wear sleeveless sheaths and loose, wide-legged pants draped with strings of tiny glass beads in an array of colors, which wealthier citizens accessorize with large necklaces and chest and waist pieces that feature bold geometric beading patterns.

Belief in deities is a personal choice among Nantambiyans. No one deity is revered above others, nor any shunned or forbidden. It's considered rude to evangelize or question someone else's beliefs; many wear some small, visible token that openly indicates who or what they worship. Similarly, there's no single day of the week held holy among all Nantambiyans. Each shop or family takes days off as needed, so the odds of a shop being closed on a particular day are predictable but not necessarily consistent between shops.

Temples of all sizes dot Nantambu's streets and surrounding area, and any citizen can likely point any visitor to the temple they're looking for even if it isn't one the citizen regularly frequents themselves. The largest of these is the Hall of Mazludeh, Goddess of Community, where meals are served to all who ask. Many Nantambiyans serve at least one day a year in its kitchen or cleaning its hall.



More broadly practiced than any religion in Nantambu is the custom of leaving an empty seat. Every home has a spare chair or place at the table, every restaurant leaves one table empty even at the height of a dinner rush, and theaters always keep a box or seat open. Even the City Council has an empty chair in the corner of the meeting chambers. Only strangers are allowed to sit in these empty seats, and even then only if there's no other option. Similarly, a stranger in need is never turned away but instead treated as a member of the family, if only for a meal—though rude guests are politely but firmly shown the door. Some claim this tradition began because Old-Mage Jatembe might return in disguise, while others believe it allows for an ancestor or deity to bring a blessing. Some simply think of it as a polite way to invite someone into their lives. Whatever their personal beliefs, most Nantambiyans are reluctant to take the last seat.

Most travel within the city either on foot or via shallow boats in the canals. The streets, while wide enough to accommodate standard carts, are reserved for foot traffic, so the canals carry most of the traffic. Shallow-drafted, flat-bottomed boats transport cargo, while people usually ride in colorfully canopied wherries. The canals have little current, but the boats' rowers (or more rarely, sails) provide enough speed for commerce to flow easily. Wealthy citizens own sleek and decorative vessels for both travel and a favorite sport: racing.

The racing boats, called flats, look vastly different from the transport scows and travel barges. Small and streamlined, they more closely resemble a surfboard than a canoe. Citizens of all ages compete in the amateur races, while wealthy patrons sponsor professional teams. Both teams and individuals compete, spectators place wagers on the heats, and final results fly fast and furious. Some races have ostentatious prizes for the winners, others have participation prizes for all, and children compete for pure sport on the more residential canals. The city's youth and recreational racing leagues emphasize safety and fair play, while leagues focused on magic or technology draw Magaambyans perfecting wind spells or crafters working on designs to convert rowing power more efficiently.

The most widely attended race is the first regatta of the spring season, with a route that traverses every neighborhood. Any citizen or group with access to any kind of boat can participate, but the professionals come to win. Once the pros have finished, the atmosphere becomes more like a parade, with cheering crowds lining the canals and showing off their new finery made over the long rainy season, and some sponsored barges even throwing treats to the spectators.

On most mornings, young children in Nantambu attend classes in open-air courtyards known as "child gardens." Starting around three years old, they're first taught life skills like swimming, gardening, and rudimentary cooking. These gardens are hosted by the guilds, alliances, or temples to which the children's parents belong, or are otherwise funded by the city. Older children learn counting and money handling, and how to read and write both the Nantambiyian dialect and the Mwangi trade language. They also visit guild houses in six-week rotations to help them decide where their interests and talents lie.

At the age of 13, they choose where they would like to apprentice. While this choice is important, the first apprenticeship they choose will not necessarily become their lifelong career. An apprenticeship can last anywhere from three to 20 years, depending on how long it takes the student to pick up the necessary skills. A fisher, for example, must master net

## LOCAL ALLIANCES

Nantambu's protection extends far beyond its limits, and no enemy of the city has ever come within 200 feet of its walls. As a result, the city has many alliances with local towns and villages, which often tithe to Nantambu in exchange. Wheelbarrows of produce and gifts of cattle and ibises are commonly carted into the city squares, and promising young students from nearby settlements happily fill the ranks of the Magaambya's initiates.

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## ACADEMY LIFE

Local students have taken to meeting on Oathdays for 'study groups' that are in fact alcohol samplings. Palm wines, banana beers, Bloodcove rum, honey meads, and fruit ciders are in hot demand from nearby brewers, who prepare attractive offers over the week to lure initiates looking to try the available wares. Most popular among these meetings is a drink made from dates and ginger, cut with a small amount of tea. This drink has become so associated with students of the Magaambya that residents cheekily refer to it as "Jatembe Juice."

making—complete with creating the yarn used to tie them—as well as fish identification and proper cleaning. A baker must master everything from the basic skillet bread to elaborate pastries. Once a student completes their first apprenticeship and graduates to the journeyman stage of their career, they are considered an adult, and their parents or guardians throw a huge feast to celebrate. This is often when an individual moves into their own abode, either symbolically in an added room in the household or into an apartment with friends of the same age.

Marriage usually comes a little later, with young adults encouraged to take their time choosing a spouse. Parents often introduce potential partners, but arranged marriages—while not unheard of—are less common. Polygamy is also uncommon, but not prohibited. To ensure no coercion occurs, all partners must agree and apply separately before a marriage ceremony proceeds among any number of participants.

## GOVERNING COUNCIL

Taking their cues from Old-Mage Jatembe and the Ten Magic Warriors, Nantambu is governed by a ruling council of 11 magistrate-mayors. It consists of the Head of Council, five councilors at large elected by the citizens, and a representative from each of the five major trade organizations. The city holds elections every five years, and no appointed or elected councilor is allowed to serve more than two consecutive terms.

When voting, each citizen who can answer three basic questions in their native tongue is given a pouch of colored beads. The candidates for at-large seats are each represented by a color of bead, and voters drop beads corresponding to their six top choices into a barrel, then leave the rest in the bag to be returned to the election monitors. The candidate with the most votes is the Head of Council, and the next top five are elected as councilors at large.

These magistrate-mayors serve as both legislative and judicial entities. Guild-appointed councilors usually handle criminal cases, while elected councilors handle civil cases—but any can technically preside over any case that doesn't contain a conflict of interest for them. To further prevent potential corruption, their wealth is held in the city's treasury while serving, and they're paid a stipend to cover their daily expenses.

The current Head of Council is **Luchomo** (LN male human administrator 5), serving his second term. He's a longtime bureaucrat who worked his way up from clerk before being elected to the council. Luchomo has earned the nickname "spider" both because he sits at the center of a web of connections, and for his resemblance to the spindly-legged creatures. The name isn't meant unkindly; Luchomo is a friendly sort who knows everyone by sight, if not by name, and he often carries sweets in his pockets for what's now the third generation of children growing up since he first started working for the council. He runs meetings with a firm hand and doesn't tolerate nonsense, but he eases conflicts with a kind word and a smile for nearly everyone.

**Ciko** (NG female human glassmaker 4) is the Glassmakers' Guild's appointed representative. A short, ebony-skinned Zenj woman who wears meticulously-crafted glass charms woven into her hair and jewelry, she has served the guild for years and continues to represent their broader interests in the city. Like most

Nantambiyans, she considers service to her community to be a core obligation, something her brief studies at the Magaambya reinforced. She's young and brimming with ideas about everything, from how to improve the city lighting at night to expanding representation on the council.

**Gugulethu** (LN female human fisherwoman 4) is the appointee from the Fish and Farm Federation. An easygoing Bonuwat woman with intricately



braided hair and a broad grin, she's equally at home on the deck of her fishing boat as in the council's grand halls. Her family have fished the area for generations and are connected to most of Nantambu's major families, making them a force to be reckoned with if crossed. With several older siblings in line to inherit the family's wealthy business, Gugulethu has the freedom to be herself. She has found that she has a good head for administration, a skill the Federation felt was needed on the council.

**Enosha** (CN male human trader 3) represents the Merchants and Traders Consortium. He was elected many years ago as a young man, and was asked to serve again by the Consortium despite some unsavory rumors about how he amassed his fortune. However, no one questions his qualifications or competence, only his methods. He's a ruthless negotiator and never forgets a slight, no matter how minor, whether against himself, his guild, or his city. Some who have opposed him in the past have died or been injured in mysterious, improbable accidents, though no concrete evidence to implicate Enosha was ever found. Still, most consider it wise to stay on his good side.

The delegate from the Woodworkers Alliance is **Owethu** (CG male human shipbuilder 5) the boatwright, a flamboyant Bonuwat man with a shaved head and luxurious beard that he dyes vibrant colors whenever the whim strikes. Though he'd been the most sought-after ship builder in and around Nantambu for decades, he hung up his tools and turned the operation over to his grandchildren before the Alliance asked him to represent them. He has a booming voice from years of directing crews and hands that could still crush a skull despite his age. Owethu is prone to telling rambling stories when delivering judgments, which lean toward leniency for first offenders while throwing the proverbial book if past lessons haven't been learned.

**Nobomi** (N nonbinary human miller 3) was appointed from the Millers and Bakers Collective. A fourth-generation miller, they have deep roots in the community despite their marriage to a Senghor ship captain who some would call a pirate. In fact, the notoriety of this relationship was what first gained them the spotlight, after their husband sailed into the docks with a hold full of "liberated" grain during the last unexpected rainy season and donated it to anyone in need. Nobomi was vaulted into a more important position within the collective as a result and rose to the challenge gracefully.

**Mongameli** (CG agender halfling restaurateur 7) is the lone non-human on the council. The halfling runs an empire of restaurants and food carts in Nantambu that finances cooks of all stripes to serve their specialties to the citizenry. After being elected to their first at-large term, they quickly became the councilmember whom most non-human citizens petition for their problems. Mongameli easily won a second term with the second-most votes, falling just shy of clinching the Head of Council seat. Their shrewdness is tempered by their friendliness and openness.

**Thuba** (CN male human glassworker 6) is a journeyman whose beads are rumored to be good luck and are always in demand. Some in the Glassblowers' Guild have doubts about his methods—even the master he studied under isn't sure where Thuba learned his skills. Rumors also circulate about his parentage, since he was an orphan who arrived in a barrel on a ship coming down the river from Usaro. One of the candidates who lost the election went so far as to accuse Thuba of manipulating the electoral bead colors with magic, a rumor that has so far remained unsubstantiated.

**Khwezi** (NG female human scholar 4) has taught not only most of Nantambu's children, but also many of their parents. Her students both convinced her to run for her first term and led her campaign. She brings the same fair but firm attitude from her classroom to the council chamber, and she is most in her element when explaining difficult concepts and negotiating between parties like they're recalcitrant toddlers.

**Asanda** (N male human administrator 6) was the city's treasurer until his election to the council. The city made several wise investments under



LUCHOMO



CIKO



GUGULETHU



OWETHU

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## NANTAMBU CLOCKWORKS

While most do not associate the city with mechanics, Nantambu has long had a good relationship with Axis due to its historical position as a bastion of order within the Inner Sea. Though the art doesn't have many Nantambian practitioners, water clocks and orreries can be found tucked away in stray corners of the city by those who know to look for them.



his watchful eye that brought more money into infrastructural and social programs. If he also put some of his own money into those same investments, Asanda claims, it's a sign of how much he believed in them—and certainly not anything nefarious, like using city funds to make his pet projects succeed, as one of his detractors proclaims.

The eleventh member of the council is also the youngest, but has already proven herself to be a master woodcarver. **Sifiso** (CG female human tinkerer 4) crafts wooden clockwork devices that range from children's toys to sophisticated devices for Magaambyan mages. She showed amazing talent and an inquisitive mind from an early age, and was apprenticed to a cousin whom she soon surpassed in skill. She then studied under all the city's masters before opening her own studio. In addition to her expertise, she also provides a valuable perspective of what the city's youth are feeling.

## THE MAGAAMBYA

The legends say that after Old-Mage Jatembe had gathered the Ten Magic Warriors and defeated the most pressing foes, he turned his attention toward helping his peoples. In the village of Nantambu, he built a school from which he and the warriors could spread their knowledge and allow Garund's peoples to protect themselves, thrive, and create. The first project they built was The Circle, a structure made of pillars of stone, wood, flame, water, air, ice, light, and electricity that support a glass dome which still stands in the center of the Magaambya. A circle of benches are arranged beneath the dome on an ever-shifting, mosaic map of octagonal tiles, depicting the Mwangi Expanse's weather patterns, borders of jungles, shifting dunes, and paths of rivers. It also illustrates major disasters, like the occasional volcano eruption or forest fire, and can even display the effects of spells, given a large enough area of effect. The Circle was where the first several years of classes were conducted, and remains in use today as a classroom.

From there, 10 distinct buildings were constructed, one for each of the Ten Magic Warriors. Initially serving as homes and workspaces for the warriors to practice their arts, the buildings were expanded over time into dormitories and classroom spaces. Students came to learn from the greatest, first from surrounding villages and then from neighboring states, and eventually, as word spread, from the whole of the Expanse.

Black Heron proved to be a gifted teacher who pushed students to pursue, and accomplish, bigger and more complicated goals. However, Heron eventually turned on Old-Mage Jatembe and the other Warriors and left, breaking Old-Mage Jatembe's heart and beginning the Warriors' withdrawal from the world. Replacement instructors were chosen from those who had already proven themselves gifted spellcasters and teachers. Old-Mage Jatembe appointed the first Learned Ones, a quintet of the most promising pedagogues from around the continent, to run the college, and then vanished. When the last of the Magic Warriors disappeared from daily affairs, Nantambu built the city's signature pillars, each bearing a depiction of one of Jatembe's 10 followers.

The Learned Ones continued the traditions of Old-Mage Jatembe, providing leadership for not only the Magaambya but also the growing city of Nantambu. As Old-Mage Jatembe wished, they declined to lead the town and instead ensured that the people of Nantambu chose their own leaders from the citizenry. The town's prosperity remained entwined with the school's popularity for many years, however. Students continue to serve the city as part of their curriculum, and classes moved from within the school's walls and out into the community.

For some Nantambiyans, the students of the Magaambya were their earliest contact with other ancestries. As word spread of Nantambian

hospitality and neutrality, more people came and built their own enclaves in the city, and sent their best and most suited folk to study under the Learned Ones' watchful eyes. Eventually these people became comfortable enough to contribute some of their ancestral magics to the broader base of knowledge. This exchange was at times controversial—there are still factions that believe non-elves should not be taught elven secrets, or that certain magical and storytelling professions must be hereditary, but these factions mostly exist in other areas of the Mwangi Expanse.

Students of the Magaambya adapt quickly to daily life in Nantambu, encouraged by the Learned Ones' style of teaching and sense of community. Teachers are encouraged to engage inquisitive minds they encounter while conducting classes in the city's courtyards and piazzas, and students and instructors alike are expected to assist and befriend the citizenry whenever possible. Some of the student orientation exercises include a tour of the city, often accompanied by a scavenger hunt that is impossible to complete without the aid, or at least knowledge, of a native Nantambian.

Candidates sometimes travel to Nantambu on their own and present themselves to the Magaambya, but some Magaambyans dedicate themselves to traveling the Mwangi Expanse in order to identify potential students. Prospective candidates are given a series of tasks to determine where their talents lie. Failing the tasks does not automatically exclude a candidate from being accepted, nor does talent alone guarantee admission; recruiters also consider attitude and motivation before deciding. Larger towns and cities in the Mwangi Expanse host dedicated teams responsible for escorting students from their villages to the Magaambya and providing a safe haven for the seeking mages between expeditions.

For their first five seasons, or until they can pass their first series of tests, students are expected to complete their *Perquisite*, a period of public service. These initiates reside in the Hall of Old-Mage Jatembe or their host communities and maintain a fairly regimented schedule. In exchange, they can attend classes and study or practice under the watchful eyes of older students and teachers. Cohorts are often structured within groups of initiates, such that each cohort gets a different day of the week off and attends the same classes. In their free time, initiates are free to move about the city and receive a small stipend to spend as they choose. They are required to wear a visible string of beads that identifies them as Magaambyan initiates should they run into—or cause—trouble. The string includes one bead that represents their sponsor at the Magaambya, and some beads are enchanted to summon a Magaambyan to its location if broken, a fact of which most citizens are well aware. Fortunately, such extreme measures are rarely required.

Once students have completed their *Perquisite* and are accepted into the school as attendants, they choose a branch of the Magaambya in which they will focus their studies. From there, they gain more freedom to direct their studies, as well as some responsibility in helping the school educate others, such as by arranging classes for initiates. Though students can achieve higher ranks, there's no official graduation nor any set term of study. Some decide to stay at the Magaambya and become instructors, while others get as far away as they can as soon as they think they have learned everything. Some crack under the pressure and return to their hometowns with stories of the city, while others settle into the *mélange* of Nantambu.

## ANCIENT PRESTIGE

The Magaambya is the oldest magical university in the Inner Sea region, and possibly the world. It follows Old-Mage Jatembe's lessons that magic is magic, no matter the source, and has put truth to its words by teaching a syncretic practice that combines both primal and arcane magic. Players interested in joining the Magaambya can learn more in *Lost Omens Character Guide* 96-105.



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## XANMBA

Common to Nantambu and most of its surrounding villages, Xanmba is an ancient language with a number of grammatical principles that make it sound archaic to most other Mwangi natives. It shares roots with many other Mwangi tongues, however; some scholars even believe Xanmba to be the language from which many other Mwangi languages are derived.

## EXPLORING NANTAMBU

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations that can be found in Nantambu.

### THE BATTLEFIELD

A distinct jungle clearing lies a mile or so outside the city limits. No crops grow there, nor does any animal graze in it. A field of knee-high creeping lilies with flame-shaped flowers and poisonous sap fill the area and spread for up to four miles. Locals know it as the burial site of the first force that sought to invade Nantambu, an army that made camp one night and prepared to attack the following morning. Overnight, every human, elf, dwarf, and animal perished mysteriously. The Council told the citizens to bury the bodies and equipment in this clearing and then leave them untouched. The softly glowing lilies that bloom year-round sprang up in the clearing over the next few years.

A few brave souls have ventured into the field over the centuries, and all came back describing screaming and the sound of battles raging around them. Healers harvest flowers from the field's edges for use in medicines to treat pain, parasites, and poisonings, while less scrupulous alchemists harvest them to craft poisons. The flowers die soon after being transplanted, and this field is their only known source.

### THE BLACK CROWNED CRANE

The Black Crowned Crane, located in the heart of the entertainment district, is the place to see and be seen despite—or perhaps because of—the rumors of nefarious dealings of its owner, Ebele. An adventurer in her youth, Ebele returned to Nantambu after more than a decade with multiple chest-laden pack horses in tow. She refused to open the chests or say what was in them, and locked herself in her family home for 12 days upon her arrival. Once she emerged, she threw herself into attending theater performances and sampling every high-end restaurant in Nantambu. After a few weeks, she favored the Black Crowned Crane and decided to purchase it. The previous owner won't say what she paid for it, but he seems content with whatever arrangement they agreed to and is happily retired.

The restaurant closed for a couple of weeks for “renovations,” during which neighbors reported building noises at all hours, including when no construction crews were present. When the establishment reopened, the changes were mostly cosmetic—some fresh paint here, a new window there, different cushions—but nothing that would have required the crew size or time apparently involved. The mystery of what was in the chests and where it is now remains, though some speculate whatever it was is now hidden in the walls or floors of the Black Crowned Crane.

### THE CARNIVOROUS GARDENS

A public greenhouse filled with carnivorous plants, this nature preserve resembles a small, lush jungle. Plants and vines of all sorts writhe noisily, looking for fresh meat. Despite the ominous atmosphere, the garden is a safe and peaceful place—“Not one guest nibbled!” caretaker and tour guide **Natofu** (NG female half-orc botanist 5) commonly assures. Most of the plants are not large enough to be threats to anything larger than a frog, and a stone path winds through the garden to keep guests from trampling any of the plants in turn.





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### THE CIVIC LEAGUE BOATHOUSE

Most racers keep their personal flats in their homes, since they're small and light enough to carry. Team equipment, however, is usually stored in boathouses owned by each team. The exception is the Civic League Boathouse and Repair Facility, which holds all the equipment owned and maintained by the city in a large dock and multistory building, with a lift to the upper floors for the flats and raw materials near the Council Building. Volunteers from the Woodworkers Alliance help keep the League's flats safely afloat, and citizens are welcome to use the tools there to work on their own flats. Basic classes are conducted on the main floor before students are allowed out on the water.

The Civic League Boathouse has a reputation for being haunted by ghosts, though no one knows whether it's because of its proximity to the Black Heron side of the Council Building or a lingering effect of a prank by necromancy students decades ago. Most of the reported encounters are neutral and occasionally even helpful: a tool moved within reach, a window opened to let in a breeze, a door closed on a windless day, or a voice heard humming an old work tune. Rarely are the interactions malevolent, such as a heavy box toppling from a shelf onto someone below or a flat mysteriously shattering when no one is near it. Efforts to dispel the ghosts have thus far been unsuccessful, and some citizens would rather not change the boathouse's quirky nature.

### THE DANCE COURTS

Nantambiyans of all ages like to listen to music and dance, but the young and unmarried especially gravitate toward the Dance Courts as places to see and be seen. Unlike the theaters and performance houses, where one must be respectful of the performers while they are on stage, at the Courts people can talk to others and show off their skills. New dances are constantly cropping up among the older classics. Some are group dances where two groups face off, others are ritualized couple's dances where pairs move in patterns around each other and the other couples on the floor. Some Courts specialize in teaching dances to children and young adults during the day, while others host obscure musicians to help them get their first breaks. Newcomers are enthusiastically welcomed and prodded to teach the popular dances from their homelands. If they return, they may see some of the steps incorporated into new dances on the floors.

Most of the Courts are comprised of a central dance floor with a small stage for the musicians and curtained alcoves with tables and cushions surrounding it. Open curtains are an invitation for servers to offer refreshment or friends to stop by and say hello. Closed curtains mean the occupants do not wish to be disturbed. It's considered extremely rude to open the curtains, as business deals are just as likely to be discussed there as assignments are to be conducted.

## DRINKING CHOCOLATE

Cacao plants are not native to the Expanse, but they crossed the ocean with Caldaru traders, along with other delicacies such as sugarcane and tomatoes. Though not incredibly common in Nantambu's greenhouses, many families save up to purchase cocoa beans in anticipation for the rainy season. The following recipe is just one of many ways to prepare a cup of hot chocolate to drink on a damp, cloudy day.

3 oz chopped dark chocolate  
(70% cocoa)  
8 oz heavy whipping cream  
A dash of salt  
1 tsp brown sugar  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract  
Honey to taste

Add all ingredients in a small, prewarmed saucepan on medium heat. As chocolate melts, whisk continuously to avoid burning. Serve in 4-ounce glasses with a spoon. Garnish with edible flowers or whipped cream if desired.

## FIRE-POT'S FORGE

An alchemist's shop run by namesake "Fire-Pot" **Ubanu** (CN male human pyrochemist 8), Fire-Pot's Forge is located in a cliffside grotto on the outskirts of Nantambu. Fire-Pot Ubanu crafts specialty weapons, more often sold for decorative or ceremonial worship in the peaceful streets of Nantambu, but sometimes picked up by Magaambyans or explorers looking to travel out from the city. He also sells highly specialized alchemical reagents for breaking down and destroying hard materials like stone and metal, highly sought after by local artisans and etchers. Fire-Pot feels more at home with fire elementals than other people, so he takes great pains to minimize his social interactions. Most people buy his goods from the minotaurs he hires as guards.

## GOANA'S CARVINGS

One of the best woodcarvers in the city is the friendly **Goana** (LG female halfling woodcarver 3). While the shop sells plenty of hardwood furniture and decorative carvings, most of these are halfling-sized, limiting the regular clientele. Instead, Goana's main business comes from the Magaambya, in the form of carving the school's signature masks. One of the privileges of full Magaambya membership is the right to wear a Magaambyan mask, and few students are willing to pass up the prestige. As many students lack a background in carpentry, however, Goana is happy to give lessons to Initiates in preparation for their acceptance into the Magaambya's ranks, with her rates comped by the university. Goana can also step in and offer a helping hand for those who are truly hopeless at the craft—though traditionally students are supposed to carve their masks themselves, Goana often winks and says a little help around the edges can't possibly hurt. The carpenter remains eagerly on the lookout for rare and magical wood that might serve as a base for masks, selling to those who can afford to pay for something truly special or, when her soft heart gets the better of her, on a whim for a student who stands out to her.

## THE LAST CHANCE SHOP

The docks of Nantambu bustle with activity at nearly all hours of the day and night. Shuttles run between portage points north and south along the river while fishers cast nets and haul in their catch. Most outsiders find lodging in one of the hostels in the area, with only the wealthy or connected coming further inland to lodge. The docks are also where merchants without a permanent stall in the bazaar sell their wares, often right from the boat



they arrived on. As a result, people can find deals on large quantities of basic goods, as well as some that have not made it to the hands of the wealthy or powerful yet.

One of the dock's few permanent buildings is the Last Chance Shop. Run by the same family for generations, the ramshackle structure is the place to go when someone doesn't want to leave the city with an item in cargo, or if someone can't find what they're looking for anywhere else. It doesn't hurt that the staff doesn't ask many questions about where something came from or what's going to be done with it. The Last Chance Shop buys low and sells high, but sometimes it's the only option. The shop doesn't appear to have any guards, but rumors abound about thieves who disappeared entirely after attempting to steal from there.

### Oba's Wondrous Creatures

Run by proprietor **Oba Eze** (N female human animal vendor 6), this exotic pet shop has made good profits from being able to ensnare and train animals rarely seen in civilized places. Oba takes immense pride in her collection and expects the highest price for her rare creatures. This has been her main problem in business as of late, as her prices are too much for interested buyers to pay. Oba's attitude has proved to be a similarly large hurdle, as she has an overly rosy opinion of the often wild creatures that she keeps. Any altercation involving animals has Oba coming down firmly on the animal's side, ignoring poor training, stress levels, or natural aggression that might cause a beast to lash out without provocation. In Oba's mind, her creatures are perfectly manageable with the proper care, and any issues people might have with them could be caused only by ignorance.

Oba also has a somewhat bizarre dislike of Nantambu's university, resenting the influence the Magaambya exerts over the city. She holds that the Magaambyan mages think of themselves as better than ordinary folk just because they've created a few shortcuts to living. The animal handler thinks very little of the faculty and students of the school, pointedly snubbing the Magaambyan initiates as they perform their civil service while comparing the practice to indentured servitude.

### The Spotted Hyena

A plethora of stables and corrals host animals of all stripes on the outskirts of town opposite the river. Some pampered creatures stay in facilities owned by Nantambu's wealthy, while others house the work animals of more common citizens. A few of the stables sell their mounts or rent them with proper collateral, but none is more eclectic than the Spotted Hyena. Spread out over most of an acre, the stable has every ridable animal imaginable, and a few that are probably harder to imagine. Lions, giraffes, hyenas, and zebras vie for attention against horses and mules. While more ostentatious clients want to rent a more exotic mount for a showy display or special occasion, the Spotted Hyena's more sustaining sales are of its more mundane animals.

The truly special service offered by the Spotted Hyena, however, is of hired grooms to accompany the animals they sell. The grooms won't fight for the owners but will defend themselves and the creatures in their charge, all for a very reasonable rate. There are clauses in the sales contract and employment agreement stating that if the animal's owner or owners die, the grooms are to return the animals to the Spotted Hyena.

### POPULAR PETS

Nantambu attempts to impress the importance of responsible pet-keeping on its citizens, though the lesson doesn't always take. Public feeders provide a colorful array of tropical birds, tree pangolins, monkeys, and fantastical insects for locals to view, but this often drives demand rather than placate it. Cheerful meerkats, shy bushbabies, aardvarks, aardwolves, foxes, and civet cats are popular companions, as are small jungle cats of all types, despite the destruction the latter tend to wreak on households. Small elementals and other extraplanar pets are popular among those who can handle them. While some people are known to keep porcupines, honey badgers, and red hogs as pets, these have been banned from Nantambu's streets after one too many incidents.

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# OSIBU

*Secretive paradise built around a mysterious and sinister well*

## OSIBU

## SETTLEMENT 9

**N CITY**

**Government** Democratic Council

**Population** 11,470 (98% humans, 2% other)

**Languages** Arboreal, Elven, Halfling, Mwangi, Sylvan

**Religions** Green Faith

**Threats** hostile jungle flora and fauna, the Nemesis Well

**Primal Connections** Osibu contains a large number of primal spellcasters, increasing the availability of magic items and services. Osibu offers magic items of up to 13th level and primal spellcasting services of up to 7th level.

**Dimari-Diji** (N arboreal nature-speaker 25) Titanic and ancient arboreal guardian

**Umanja-jinga** (LG female halfling seer 15) Oracle of the Honored



## RESOURCES



Books/Lore



Grain/Fruit/  
Vegetables



Jewelry/  
Gems



Lumber



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Ores



Spices/Salt



Textiles



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## DERON MELCARIAN

The Pathfinder Deron Melcarian was formerly a guest in Osibu—the historian managed to piece together the trail to the city from the accounts of the legendary Durvin Gest (*Pathfinder Society Guide* 8–13). However, Deron had no intention of honoring his promises of secrecy to the city, instead searching for a means to escape and publish his findings.

## THE GOLDEN CITY

The Screaming Jungle holds many secrets within its wild, colorful tangle. By far the best kept of them is Osibu—the paradisaical Golden City. Prying eyes and greedy hands rarely know to look for this utopia, and those who manage to discern Osibu's true existence contend with generations of misinformation and deception from the ancient gilded city. Few maps acknowledge Osibu's existence, and those that do often lead their reader to one of the many other cities or ruins that pepper the Mwangi Expanse. The process of finding Osibu requires seeking out steadily escalating “natural” dangers, particularly the dissuasive flora and fauna controlled by the Twice-Honored Women, the spirits of leaders past that guard the city. These druidic statues ring Osibu's walls and control the wildlife beyond for many miles. Most hopeful visitors flee from such a fearsome array of natural recourse.

The few successful adventurers who persisted were once welcomed into the city and agreed to undergo a *geas* to bind them to secrecy upon departure.

However, that goodwill has been squandered in recent times after the Pathfinder Deron Melcarian jumped into Osibu's Nemesis Well in an attempt to escape the city with his findings and well-studied notes. Since this betrayal, the city has kept far closer watch over any visitor they might harbor, slipping slowly and steadily into paranoia. Beneath the vivid display of flora and fauna roaming and weaving through Osibu's gilded streets burrows an ever-growing unease far older than the city itself.

The troubling Nemesis Well, which sits in the city center, is guarded by Dimari-Diji, an ancient arboreal that witnessed Earthfall with his own eyes. Even so, this watcher fears that whatever wisdom he holds can't stay the threat of the Well's whispered promises to Osibu's citizenry. These chilling whispers, once an event which would shock the city twice a decade, have quickened to a monthly menacing that moved the city's elected body—the Chyayup—to take preventative action. Where the city was once an open plan built on trust, with no secrets to hide from anyone within its walls, its new dedication to transparency feels more akin to a platform to litigate suspicions.

Still, Osibu's commoners prove as vibrant as their surroundings. The city's community is tight-knit and keenly maintained thanks to much of its infrastructure being shared and fostered over countless generations. The ancient wisdom of the trees, lost in most other corners of the world, is alive and well, and seeding in each of Osibu's future generations. To constantly improve their circumstances, the Osiban people have iterated upon an isolationist framework and configured themselves through the ages as a highly secluded community that nonetheless measures the pulse of the outside world through its youth.

Growth is far more a spiritual conceit in Osibu than it is a material one. Through the wisdom of arboreal regent Dimari-Diji, the city has internalized the notion of letting its people grow into the individuals they need to be in order to best benefit the whole—as long as they don't betray their larger community. Therefore, the outside world is seen and conveyed to Osibu through the eyes of its youngest during their transformative years. That perspective has guided the city well, but public trust in this process has slipped alongside mounting fears for the future. If Osibu doesn't adjust to its rapidly changing circumstances, it might be swallowed up, whether by the arcane maw at its heart or by the Expanse.

## LIFE IN OSIBU

Osibu is a threatened paradise. Its guise stems from dreams, with gilded roads and architecture enveloped by the sweet scents of the fruits, nectars,



and flowers of the surrounding plant life that the community lovingly and diligently nurtures. The city planning revolves around hypervisibility and sharing, barring few exceptions, as most private aspects are kept within its peoples' minds and dreams. The city has a saying: "Out of mind, into soil," meaning whatever is spoken or shown is for the community to build upon. The few outsiders who make their way into the city often struggle with this concept, but it has led the city to flourish and adapt since before Earthfall.

The Golden City resembles a sprawling community garden; every alcove, household, road, and plaza lends a plot for the stunning collection of plant life. Smaller plants—flowers, shrubs, and grasses—line the curving golden roads and occasionally open up into circular plots of kaleidoscopic flora. Larger trees knot into a carefully hewn canopy that blends perfectly into the Screaming Jungle's arboreal visage. Within the city, an array of trees and flora represents the diversity of the Mwangi Expanse (and then some) via tangles and loops through Osibu's often doorless and windowless structures. Many other structures are made of stained and blown glass and hooded with linen canopies, but nothing more substantial. The open nature of these structures keeps Osibu's people generous as much as it holds them accountable.

Networks of vibrant plant life weave through the city's sharply pointed households, and one can often discern a tight-knit, well-established neighborhood in Osibu by what networks of flora run unbroken through a series of houses. Many of these smaller collectives are rather familial in their rapport, having maintained these gardens for countless generations—though they still share with the larger Osiban community.

The fauna of the wider Screaming Jungle has a similarly sprawling, equitable rapport with the Osiban public. Due to the druidic mechanisms of the Twice-Honored Women, even the most predatory creatures that wander through Osibu's walls take on a docile and friendly temper as long as there isn't an immediate threat to the community's members. Through the ages, nature has typically and efficiently turned cruel against those foolish enough to threaten the city's peace. For everyone else, this place is one of the best to engage with the Screaming Jungle's wildlife. As part of this deep connection, the Osibu diet is staunchly vegetarian.

Osibu is also a font of long-lost knowledge concerning health and wellness. Many of the elders of the city—many of whom are of human ancestry—appear to be a fraction of their age. Save for freckled skin and silvered hair, many elders of Osibu resemble their young adult selves despite holding far more years in their bones. The Osiban people conquer mortal ravages and disease in ways that most necromancers and alchemists of Golarion could only dream of, thanks to the practices and secrets of Dimari-Diji passed down through generations. Death in Osibu is often quiet, painless, and well-anticipated. Most elders preparing to leave their mortal coil know when their hour approaches, sometimes a whole day in advance, and are often sent off with the community's blessings and celebrations.

Despite the generosity of this city's community, an unease brews within Osibu. Until Deron Melcarian's escape, Osibu was a utopia. Now, it throbs with the paranoia of prey anticipating predators within the Screaming Jungle. Deron's actions have catalyzed a change in strategy for how the city's elected republic of elder wise women—the Chyayup, or 'Seed Women'—handle the security of the Gilded City. The Pathfinder's disappearance through the Nemesis Well seems to have stirred whatever menaces brew beyond its maw, and the city grows more restless with the well's mounting activity.

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Ayku (eye-que)  
Chyayup (Chee-eye-yuup)  
Diisya (dee-see-yah)  
Ejyna (edge-na)  
Ejyyara (edge-ee-yah-raa)  
Elyba (Ehl-ee-bah)  
Goyramya (goi-ram-yah)  
Iryjuu Iriyindra (ee-ree-joooh ee-rihn-drah)  
Jayva (jive-ah)  
Kypya (kip-ya)  
Layra (lie-rah)  
Orvsy (orf-see)  
Oryja (Or-ee-jah)  
T'ysi (tuh-ease-ee)  
Uur Chyayu (Oer Chee-eye-yoo)  
Volvyra (Vol-veer-ah)  
Vyku (Vic-que)

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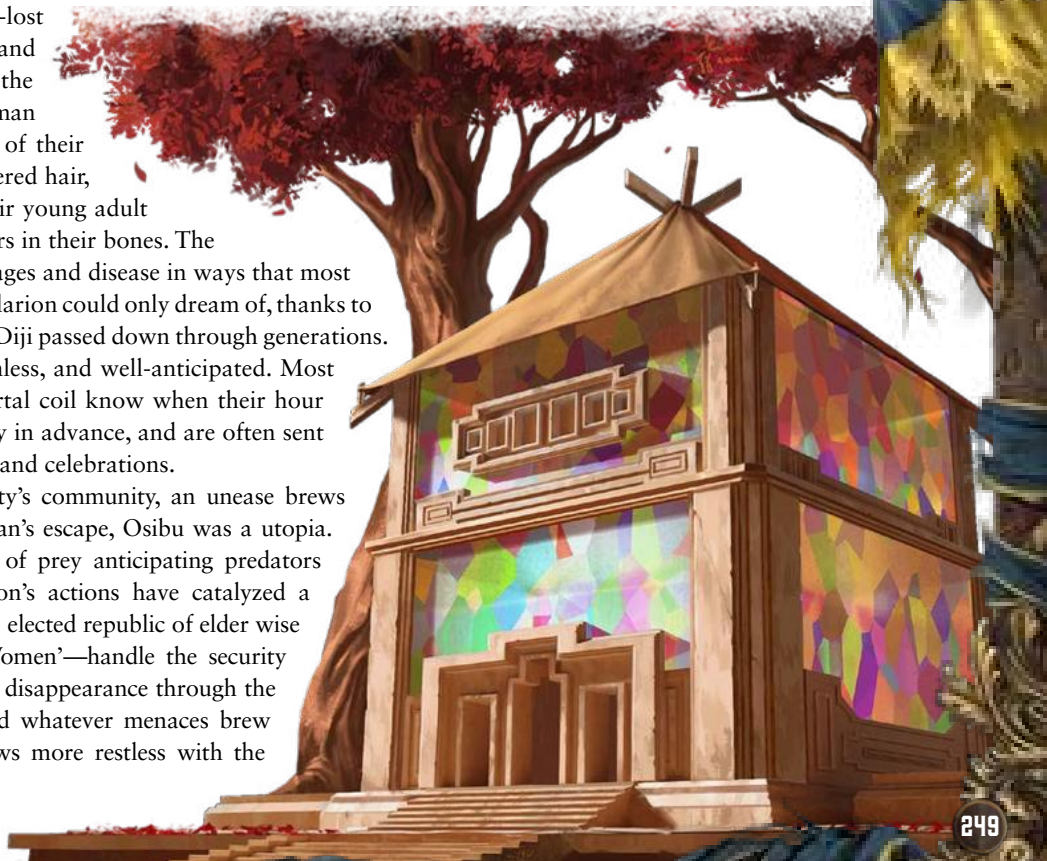
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## UMANJA-JINGA

The current Uur Chyayu of Osibu is the halfling **Umanja-jinga** (LG female halfling seer 15), whose distant lineage has been speculated to relate to the Song'o people. She has held her duty for 10 years, the last three of which have been haunted by the unease emerging from Deron Melcarian's escape. Arcane noise has scrambled her dreams since his departure, so she has leaned on practical wisdom and caution to guide Osibu's people.

## PEOPLE OF OSIBU

Osibans are warm and talkative. While over 10,000 people live within the Gilded City's circular plan, Osiban citizens think of their home as a small community, and though secluded, they're fiercely aware of the immediate world around them. It isn't unusual for Osibu to send out benevolent spies—under a *geas* that binds them to secrecy—who then return with reports of the outside world. This journey, known as the “Sprouting,” is a rite of passage for youths passing into adulthood. As the young gather light from the outside world, they bring it back to the city proper to nourish their community's continued growth and sustenance. In Osibu, the elders hold onto secrets, but the youth keep the city itself young and present in the world.

The generational rapport is collaborative. As the Sprouted younger generations return with customs, technologies, and fashions that fascinated them from the outside world, the community reinterprets these findings using the bounty of natural resources that have sustained the city for so many ages, thereby honoring nature's kindness through their work. City elders stay mindful not to cling to the past solely out of comfort, but there's one custom they never break: removing any Sprouted local who voices hopes of bringing Osibu's splendor beyond the protection of the Twice-Honored Women. Osibu natives receive three chances in this regard; guests get one.

A second misstep by an outsider marks them as a potential threat to Osibu's solitude and causes authorities to administer “The Dreaming.” While normally a standard process for those who wish to leave the city (with the alternative being the same *geas* of secrecy used for a youth's Sprouting), it's also used on suspected troublemakers. The subject consumes food and drink carefully prepared to place them into a deep sleep. Days later, they awake, often far beyond the bounds of the surrounding jungle—when the Chyayup can spare the transit, that is. Magic fades the memories of the city as well as any hints that might have brought them to the settlement in the first place. To these individuals, Osibu will forever remain little more than a sweet, half-remembered dream.

A hundred Chyayup hold democratically appointed stations among the city's population; another gets nominated by the Twelve Gardens, or neighborhoods, of Osibu whenever one foresees or chooses her passing—known as Withering. As a Chyayup departs from her mortal life, her spirit assumes its tenure as one of the Twice-Honored Women who maintain the city's protective wards. Just as another appointed Chyayup relieves her of her duties, she relieves one of the Twice-Honored, who then rests until being born again. These ancient spirits bestow what outsiders often call a “divine femininity” upon the children they are born into, regardless of sex. This pattern is rumored to have started with the first 100 wise women who convinced Dimari-Diji to stay within the city—though their reason for doing so is unknown.

The eldest of the Chyayup is known as Uur Chyayu, the Oracle of the Honored. She serves as the senior herb mistress who tends to Dimari-Diji and guides the rest of her elected sisters. While the rest of the Chyayup often sense their deaths a week or more in advance, Uur Chyayu's is always sudden to her. She instead possesses an arcane sight of dreams and nightmares, always from the vantage point of those who have left the city. Because her clairvoyance has connected her to so many others and robbed her of her ability to see and plan for her death, she's resolute in wasting no time through her service to her community.



## DIMARI-DIJI

N | ARBOREAL | NATURE-SPEAKER 25

Dimari-Diji's first memory is of the *Starstone's* approach 10 millennia ago. Even as his siblings died with the rest of Golarion during Earthfall, the arboreal survived, gaining the lonely moniker of the Final Tree of the Elder World. Now he sits, tended by the Uur Chyayu, and sleeplessly watches over the Nemesis Well at the heart of the Gilded City, looking for signs of the end of the world. He became one of Golarion's oldest living creatures by surviving the last apocalypse; he intends to stop the next before it happens.

The citizenry of Osibu don't fully understand his worry. Outside of Umanja-jinga, the current Uur Chyayu, Dimari-Diji rarely rapport with the populace. Still, his symbiosis with the city has become familial; watching countless generations of Osibans tending to the plants of the city and the surrounding Screaming Jungle has seeded a true, hard-won affection behind his disgruntled, towering exterior and deep, groaning rumblings. In return, perhaps as gratitude or insurance for the flora of the Expanse, Dimari-Diji shares his druidic secrets with the city, and its people listen. After seven millennia, the ancient arboreal's guidance has shaped the growth of Osibu itself.

Dimari-Diji mostly socializes with the current Uur Chyayu, and though he's reluctant to admit it, Umanja-jinga remains one of his favorite Chyayup to hold the role. The halfling's challenging wit originally put her at odds with the ancient arboreal, but their rapport over the past three decades has grown stimulating and rooted deeply in profound friendship. This bond has proved crucial—after Deron Melcarian betrayed the city's trust and vanished into the Nemesis Well, its accelerating whispers have haunted Dimari-Diji greatly. This friendship has proven instrumental for the arboreal well-being—with Melcarian's betrayal of the city's protocol, the more frequent whisperings of the well haunt Dimari-Diji with the creaks and groans of a dying tree. He has shared his great fear solely with Umanja-jinga: that the creaks and groans he hears within the well are of his long-lost siblings.

In the 3 years since Deron's escape, Dimari-Diji and Umanja-jinga have forged a plan to anticipate future threats and find Deron, if he can even be found. Each Osiban youth who leaves on their Sprouting receives a packet of Dimari-Diji's fungi and instructions to find a place of significance somewhere in the world. These fungi work in the same manner as an arboreal regent's royal spores, growing harmlessly on any tree and linking it to Dimari-Diji's consciousness; through these growths, the arboreal sees and feels far beyond his physical form. The Nemesis Well's strange activity has so affected Umanja-jinga's typical divinatory faculties, granted through her role as Uur Chyayu, that she and Dimari-Diji consider this method to be their best option to protect Osibu. Initially, they solely directed Sprouting youths to cover the whole of the Expanse, but they now hope to expand the arboreal's reach, spreading his spores to the furthest corners of Golarion as each individual cares to muster—whether that be in deep forests, dense jungles, or crowded city parks.

## A DISRUPTED PRIVILEGE

Every day, Dimari-Diji allows Osibu's commoners to ask him one question as he tends to the Nemesis Well. He used to allow three inquiries, but the distractions from these more frequent requests led to Deron Melcarian's escape from the city without a properly observed departure. Now, Dimari-Diji holds this meeting only in the mornings when he wakes from his brief sleep.

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## BREWING TROUBLE

The Nemesis Well of Osibu predates the city. Citizens avoid looking directly into it, and many whisper prayers to the gods in passing, wary of their step and mindful of the fact that nothing that has entered the well has ever returned. In the three years after Deron Melcarian's escape from Osibu in 4718 AR, the well's chill has begun to seep into the city's plants.

Capillaries of turquoise light have started to bleed between the cracks of the gilded streets, widening with each whispering night. Sometimes, they speak in Deron's voice, or with the voice of the Balor Lord Galundari, but most often it's a chorus, keening through the air and soil. When the whispers speak, Osibu doesn't sleep—it listens, and its peace frays.

## EXPLORING OSIBU

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations that can be found in Osibu.

### EJYYARA, THE CONSERVATORY OF EVER

Ejyyara is one of Osibu's few major structures not regularly accessible to the public. Officially, the building's purpose is to house the most precious plants in the city. The large, domed greenhouse protects a wide bed of carefully irrigated soil in which the rarest and most remarkable Garundi plant life has been gathered and cultivated. When the Chyayup meet their Withering, they're buried here to nourish the plants, and in return, these rarities of Golarion flourish.

However, Ejyyara also serves as the meeting place and deliberation chamber for the Chyayup and Uur Chyayu. Its location in the innermost corner of Oryja, Osibu's Old City district, hints at this other, vital function; with the exception of the 12 members who coordinate the votes and needs of the city's Twelve Garden neighborhoods, all of the Chyayup reside in the surrounding district. The Chyayup converge in the Conservatory for their most sacrosanct affairs—the preparation of Dreamings—and occasionally darker matters if the measure of memory wiping hasn't kept someone from divulging the secrets of Osibu.

In the last year, a fissure tracing back to the Nemesis Well has cracked open in the middle of the Conservatory, like a capillary of dread. As it leads into the building, its color shifts from ghostly turquoise to a vibrant magenta that suggests an ethereal ardor.

### IRYJUU IRIYNDRA, THE BAZAAR OF FAVORS

Also known as the Bazaar of Favors, Iryjuu Iriyindra is the closest thing to a formal marketplace in Osibu. Located in the Diisya neighborhood on weekends, the Bazaar primarily hosts attendants: those offering their skills to help citizens with whatever they might need in exchange for a reciprocated favor in the future. This barter of time and energy is the city's only commerce.

Lately, this tradition has come under suspicion for its part in helping Deron Melcarian research the Nemesis Well in preparation for his escape attempt. Over the course of several years, the Pathfinder saved up a generous stock of favors as he ingratiated himself to the wary Osiban community. Shortly after paying his last dues, he executed his plan. In the wake of this betrayal, the Bazaar has established some new rules. No favors can be traded regarding the Nemesis Well, the Chyayup, or matters beyond the bound of The Tangle, the district that surrounds the city's walls.

Often, Iryjuu Iriyindra stands as a place of courtship and good humor. Groups of friends and family wrangle stunning displays of affection out of floral arrangements or arrange for lavish feasts to be paraded through the streets from the Bazaar to the household of an often-surprised recipient. Iryjuu Iriyindra thrums with a conspiratorial pulse, but the machinations are often of sweet humor.

### THE NEMESIS WELL

An ever-widening maw of wafting turquoise ether, protected by a stained-glass dome five times the size of the Nemesis Well's ancient guardian, cuts into the heart of Osibu. Dimari-Diji guards the Well day and night; though eerie and unsettling, it had long stayed relatively dormant, only waking the inhabitants of the city with its sinister whispering once every five years. Ever since Deron Melcarian broke its surface and vanished, the frequency of these haunted,

sleepless nights has steadily intensified to once a month. Each whispering night takes a clear, compounding toll on the city's populace. The intensifying unease has led the city to station a group of sentries around the well to, in the event of catastrophe, aid Dimari-Diji in any way they can.

### THE TWELVE GARDENS

The Twelve Gardens of Osibu refer to the city's 12 primary neighborhoods, listed as the following from north to south.

Kypya, at the northernmost edge of the city, is a neighborhood of contemplation and learning for Osibu's youths, largely tended by the city's small elf population. From Kypya's sides curve the colorful, welcoming gardens of Ayku and Vyku whose rich local culture of families shelter the occasional outsider. Situated south of Kypyamany, Diisya features tall grains and an open field where the fauna of the jungle freely congregate. South of Diisya, in the center of Osibu, lies Orvsy; along with the Nemesis Well, the district's diamond shape has the tallest of Osibu's trees, which are tended in such a way to irrigate the rest of the city during heavy rainfall.

The four heavily residential neighborhoods of Ejyna, Layra, T'ysi, and Jayva wedge together as the city's southwestern quarter. Each is styled after one of the four seasons and their colors—as described by travelers from the rest of the world. The river district of Elyba, just southeast of the city center, contains the intersections of all the major roads as well as most of Osibu's elderly population. In the city's southeast corner, Oryja, also known as the Old City, forms a dense garden with ancient plants long unseen and forgotten by the rest of the Mwangi Expanse. Lastly, Goyramya, also known as the Tangle, encircles the rest of the city with the statues of the Twice-Honored Women and a thicket of plants treacherous to outsiders. The Osiban militia, comprised largely of those serving a year-long tenure after completing their Sprouting, operate in this thicket and within the city's boundaries.

### VOLVYRA, THE RETURN

Volvyra, notable in Osibu for being one of the few structures adorned with proper, traditional doors, is also known as the house of the Return. Those who have completed their Sprouting stay in the small facility when they eventually come home. For three days, the returned Sprouted answers the Chyayup's questions about the outside world before being interrogated for any duplicity that might betray the security of Osibu. At the end of this process, the Sprouted are pierced and decorated with materials they brought back from their travels, mapping their journey for other Osibans to see. The returned party can then enter through Volvyra as an adult of the city.

If a Sprouted's return aligns within a fortnight of the death of one of the Chyayup, the reintegration process contains one more step. The Chyayup ask if the Sprouted felt death in the soil during the last days of their return. If they answer yes, and their description of this morbid sensation aligns with the departed Chyayup's contemplation of her Withering, the returning Sprouted becomes a candidate to take the vacated station.

Volvyra also has a secondary function: assuring that those who have betrayed Osibu's trust don't retain knowledge of the city. Unique serums to remove memories of the city during Dreamings must be carefully crafted by hand to align with an individual's unique composition, taking into account the length of their stay and whether they originate from Osibu. Following the preparation of these concoctions, they're administered within the walls of the Return.

### THE LENS OF GALUNDARI

An artifact created by the wizard-king Nex, the *Lens of Galundari* trapped and was powered by an immensely powerful balor named Galundari. After Nex vanished, the *Lens* was discovered by the Pathfinder Durvin Gest. Recognizing the danger, Gest traveled to Osibu to destroy the *Lens* by throwing it down the Nemesis Well in 4332 AR.

Gest submitted to the requested *geas* that he keep Osibu's secrets, but he pushed the magical binding to its limits when publishing his adventures, and his tale of the *Lens of Galundari* became famous among the Society.



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# SENGHOR

*Major Mwangi trading port and naval power*

## SENGHOR

## SETTLEMENT 8

**N CITY**

**Government** Mercantile Council

**Population** 27,819 (96% humans, 2% halflings, 1% dwarves, 1% other)

**Languages** Calda, Dwarven, Halfling, Mwangi, Taldane

**Religions** Balumbdar, Brigh, Desna, Erastil, Gozreh, Pharamasma, Sarenrae

**Threats** pirates, hurricanes, flooding, sea monsters

**Shipbuilder's Hub** Nautical vehicles of up to 13th level can be found for sale in Senghor with diligent searching. Vehicles higher than 8th level, when found, are for sale at 90% + 2d10% of their normal price.

**Isaara** (LN female human merchant 8) Major shipping facilitator

**Gyan Baako** (N male human brewer 5) Luxury goods merchant family patriarch

**Dini Okpara** (LN female human sorcerer 11) Magical merchant and scholar of antiquities

**Bosede Eku** (NG male dwarf trader 6) Prominent textile importer



## RESOURCES



Armor/  
Weapons



Grain/Fruit/  
Vegetables



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Seafood



Ships



Spices/Salt



Textiles



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**SENGHOR**



## SENGHOR SHIPS

Senghor is known for highly-advanced naval ships; these unique vessels are instantly recognizable. Common fishing boats include the Senghor "lute" and "cook pot"—sleek ships with rounded roofs that serve as shelter or living space. The most common ship spotted on the high seas is the "hook pipe," a pirate-hunting vessel armed with blades to cut sails and heavy harpoons to catch other ships; the shape of these ships allows them to turn on a dime when pursuing a target. The most feared and fearsome of Senghor's ships is the massive "war drum," a heavily armored dreadnought weighed down by cannons and other deadly weaponry. Senghor ships are also known to carry "teapots"—small emergency vessels built to be storm proof. Teapots are equipped with large balloons that act as a buoy and keep the vessel from sinking.

## THE FORTRESS ON THE SEA

A naval powerhouse entrenched in the Mwangi Expanse, the city-state of Senghor is famous for its peerless engineering and towering harbor walls—unbreached by both foreign aggression and the unstoppable strength of the ocean's mightiest winds. Caldarus dominate Senghor, though they make up just less than half of the populace and are ultimately outnumbered by the other peoples residing within the city. Caldarus are credited as the builders of Senghor, and the ships and architecture of the city are unique in the Mwangi Expanse. Despite the city styling itself as a meritocracy, Caldarus also hold most of the important merchant businesses and political positions of power. This is largely due to the length of time they've spent establishing themselves within the city, as Caldarus have been present since Senghor was founded over 2,000 years ago.

Senghor has long functioned as the major trade hub between the Mwangi Expanse and Avistan thanks to its welcoming markets and its unmatched efforts at hunting down the pirate ships that plague its ocean trade routes. Yet, while Senghor once maintained a pragmatic neutrality to ensure the flow of trade, it recently chose to throw in with the politics of other nations and now faces the price of its actions. The fall of Sargava saw the end of the colonialist nation's monetary agreements with the Free Captains of the Shackles that kept the raiding ships at bay. Today these pirate captains raid the oceans, often looting Senghor's trading partners out on the high seas. Senghor's ships now find themselves fighting to keep Senghor's bay and oceans free of piracy and safe for visiting merchants.

The fall of Sargava and the subsequent alliance with Vidrian—the nation that rose in the former colony's place—formed the first major pact between two city-states in the current-day Mwangi Expanse, but these agreements remain tentative and untested. Vidrian and Senghor share common interests in keeping colonizers and foreign interests out of both states. However, the alliance was signed hastily by Vidrian under duress and the terms are heavily lopsided in favor of Senghor. As the nation of Vidrian grows, so does resentment at the terms in these agreements, and Vidrian's people protest about how unbalanced the deals are and push for renegotiation. Senghor has yet to give in to these pressures.

Senghor's merchants pride themselves on selling quality goods at a fair price, ensuring that the crafters and workers who provide the goods receive fair payment in compensation. Ironically, this policy earned Senghor most of its enemies. Pirates, colonists, and unscrupulous trading companies much prefer the shipment of dirt-cheap raw materials in exchange for a few spare coppers, shoddy textiles, and poorly-crated alcohol, and Senghor has so far served as a major cap on these aspirations. Avistani nations such as Cheliox have attempted to treat with Senghor and negotiate agreements to form a trading embassy in the city-state, yet these efforts have consistently been plagued with bad luck, so far

sabotaging any progress. If Senghor's government knows anything more about these misfortunes, none have managed to prove it. Senghor likewise refuses to allow slaver ships into its ports, even going so far to ban ships that are known to be part of the flesh trade even if they're not carrying slaves. While the response to this has been outrage from some quarters, there is often little recourse for the slighted merchants





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beyond dashing themselves up on the might of Senghor's impenetrable seawalls.

### LIFE IN SENGHOR

Day-to-day life in Senghor exists to accommodate its heavily mercantile focus and the vast amount of business being conducted on a day-to-day basis. Farmers, fishermen, dock workers, and bakers rise before the sun to prepare for a day's work. Senghor is calmest just before dawn. By mid-morning, the streets are filled with people. Pedestrians are expected to greet each other for the first time of the day individually as a sign of respect. This makes greetings take much longer than in other cultures.

Most in Senghor start their day with a cup of tea, of which there are numerous flavors to choose from, but lemon grass the most common. Residents then typically purchase a quick meal on their way to work, stopping at any number of stalls, depending on what cuisine strikes their fancy. Outsiders compare the people of Senghor to tireless constructs while working, and tease that when not working, they appear to have no concept of time. Those with a free moment sometimes tidy up shrines to minor gods and spirits to increase their luck. Priests of Senghor strive to keep even the smallest of shrines to the most menial of deities in working condition, respecting the importance they have on everyday aspects of city life. Those who don't respect Mwangi traditions and cultures are known to run into unexplained bad luck and quickly

become ostracized within the community unless they rectify the situation.

The people of Senghor tend to keep to routine, walking the same path every day, stopping by the same collection of shops, visiting with the same groups of friends and acquaintances. Their routes aren't dictated by efficiency but by those they care about and the shrines that most resonate with them. Younger generations might claim not to think about which paths they take during the day, but most rarely stray from their usual route except for emergencies. Senghor is a city of possibilities and sometimes routine is the only way to prevent feeling overwhelmed. These routes also provide the older generation ample time to gossip with one another, catch up on how families have grown in changed, and overall strengthen bonds within the community.

Evenings wind down in shifts, as the children head home to help with chores after a long day of school or honing their skills with a mentor. They're followed soon after by many of the city's early risers. Once the sun sets, however, most adults who aren't still working opt to socialize in taverns, lounges, or open balconies for drinks and food with their friends.

Senghor slows down after dinner with a deep stillness settling over the city by the dead of night. Many conversations turn into tales, telling of evil spirits, haunted buildings, and vile magics as companions take turns regaling one another with stories they've

## REMOVABLE ARMOR

The ceramic armor favored in Senghor can be easily removed for swimming.

### ARMOR LATCHES

### ITEM 1

#### ADJUSTMENT

Price 4 gp, Bulk –

This armor is easily doffed. A set of armor with armor latches gains the noisy trait. You cannot add armor latches to armor that already possesses the noisy trait. You can remove a set of armor with armor latches with a three-action activity, which has the manipulate trait. This doesn't affect the time it takes to don the armor.

likely heard in some form dozens of times. Legends of curses, blights, and wickedness that seem silly during the day loom over the city at night. Once all the stories are over, most slowly wind their way home in groups, keeping an eye out for anything lingering in the shadows. Sometimes a lone scream pierces the quiet city night—though whether it comes from a prank, overwrought mind, or true danger, none can tell. Most won't dwell on such matters, lest they draw the attention of any less than benevolent entities whose stories they just told.

For the citizens of Senghor, birth, marriage, and death are the three most important celebrations. Generous gifts are exchanged for all and many rituals and blessings are requested from the gods to ensure a bountiful life or a peaceful crossing. To foreigners, a Senghor funeral and wake may come across as more joyous occasions than birth, which stems from a collective desire to see their dead off without regrets, so they won't linger. The tales of the departed and how they lived their life may go on for days, depending on their position within the community, with every person who personally knew them expected to pay respects, even if only briefly.

Due to their fast-paced businesses and constantly shifting markets, holidays in Senghor are much more regimented than in the outlying villages. Elders and priests consult with each other and search for signs in nature before suggesting when and where a holiday will be celebrated. When Senghor decides to cut loose, the whole city transforms into a colorful, riotous musical feast. Festivals typically begin as smaller events in the outer villages before working their way inwards toward the city proper. As the party draws closer, its crowds grow larger and larger in a glorious procession to the actual festival in the city, which lasts for just over a week. Many Senghor ships time their return from long voyages just to make sure their crew can attend these events. Every trading company and large business in the city is responsible for funding some part of the many ceremonies, feasts, and concerts, assignments which are delegated by the city council and fiercely competed over. From start to finish, the lights of the city never fade during the festival, and music and dancers can be found on every corner.

## PEOPLE OF SENGHOR

The people of Senghor value trade and pragmatism, but this seemingly mercenary nature belies their strong sense of pride. Their city-state is a wealthy and powerful one, in which citizens respect and enjoy the importance their status as a major market grants them. At the same time, Senghor values freedom, fairness, and independence, and no respectable Senghor resident would ever compromise on these issues, not even for money. Pirates and slavers are scum to be hunted down, not traded with, no matter the high profits of their ill-gotten goods. Likewise, Senghor has no interest in allowing foreign powers—especially those who have proven violent or exploitative—to gain a foothold in the city.

As Senghor's lifeblood, marketplaces are sacrosanct, and Senghor's distinct market guards patrol the streets to keep them that way. Clad in black and scarlet uniforms and openly carrying weapons, these guards nonetheless usually go without armor in order to show their confidence in the city's peaceful norms. When violence appears to loom on the horizon, the guards don lightweight armor made of ceramic plates and distinctive ceramic helmets, carved with patterned eye-slits that confuse foes as to where



a warrior is looking. However, such a sight is incredibly rare, as most would-be aggressors have learned that Senghor is not a military power to be trifled with.

Religion in Senghor tends to follow the same pragmatism displayed in other aspects of its residents' lives. Erastil, somewhat oddly to outsiders, is venerated as a god of wealth, as wealth is seen as the means to provide security for one's family and community. Balumbdar's massive might is sometimes called upon to augment the city walls. Desna, Gozreh, and Sarenrae are asked to guide sailors safely via the sun, stars, and currents. Pharasma is given offerings to guide the souls of those lost at sea to their proper rest. Brigh also commonly appears in religious depictions, though she is associated with fire and ceramics more than metal and gears. The responsibility of performing prayers and rituals falls almost exclusively to the priests of Senghor, as citizens tell priests their concerns or desires, and then go about their day while the priests entreat the gods on their behalf.

Senghor's working-class attire stems from the importance of fishing to the city's livelihood. Loose hats resembling umbrellas and designed to keep the sun off the face and eyes are a common feature on bright days. Clothing is often reinforced with reeds or other flexible materials to allow air flow in sweltering weather. Fishermen often decorate their hats with fish-shaped ornaments designed to show off their skill or even represent a person's largest catch. And most ubiquitous of all is the fisher's gaff, a hooked staff that is used to haul in large fish. Citizens of every social class can be seen carrying symbolic versions of the tool. For those who are not fishers, the gaffs are altered to better represent their profession. Farmers carry plow-shaped hooks, though they almost never use them for that purpose. Priests carry symbolically broken gaffs to demonstrate their humility. The Senghor navy wield large, vicious gaffs closer to halberds, perfect for spearing an opponent on a pitching deck or cutting the lines of a speedy pirate clipper.

Patterns are important in Senghor. The patterns on a person's clothing may tell everything from their profession, social class, and family, to what wares they offer at the marketplace. Market patterns tend to be simple and prominently displayed, such as on the hem of an outfit. They commonly include the sprout and root-like patterns for a produce seller, a stylized fish on a line pattern for a fishmonger, the round marks for a potter, and decorative lines to denote a weaver. Family and class patterns have more variance, but often resemble crashing waves and sea fairing scenes, ranging from simple to ornate.

Given the prominence of such patterns, it's no surprise that the people of Senghor hold weavers in high esteem. In addition to colorful clothing, many weavers supplement their income by crafting rugs, which are in high demand in homes and businesses across the city. Being a naval center of trade, Senghor's people greatly respect ship builders as well. Pottery workers—whose durable, lightweight ceramics serve as storage vessels, ship plating, and personal armor—are a vital part of the city's industry. Sadly, though fishers and farmers are the twin forces keeping the city fed, they're rarely as lauded by fellow citizens. Instead, the city-state's merchant class and diplomats are regarded as the forces who keep Senghor's economy and lifeblood flowing, and these power brokers and deal makers constitute the upper class within the city.

## GAFFS

These hooked staffs are popular among Senghor fishers and warriors alike. A gaff sized for a Medium creature is a common martial weapon in the club group. It deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage and has 1 Bulk. It requires one hand to use and has the trip and versatile P weapon traits. Gaffs are readily available in Senghor and nearby settlements for 1 gp.



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## THE JAJA FAMILY

Though not a major merchant power or a united business, the Jajas are an old Caldaru family noted for having a powerful and mysterious sorcerous streak. Though their odd status in society means they have little official political or economic influence, most prominent citizens in Senghor would leap at the chance to have a Jaja marry into the family.

Senghor buildings use similar patterns to their weaving to display the structure's family or occupation. A building in Senghor is usually either a market house or a residential house. Market houses, as the name suggests, are built for commerce and stand much taller in order to provide more room for storage. All the city's buildings are designed with storms in mind, so the symbolic pattern is always displayed high above the city's flood line. Most people use their upper levels for storage to prevent water damage and some have chimneys that lead out onto roof patios for when the city floods. Rather than fight the waves and winds of a hurricane, the oblong buildings are designed to route rushing water around them, guiding the flood through the streets and back out to sea. Houses are laid out in a diagonal grid to encourage water to flow through them. During the seasonal holiday known as the Hurricane Harvest, nets are strung between the houses in order to catch the thousands of fish forced through the city by the storms.

Senghor artistic tradition springs, in part, from its citizens' pragmatism. A system of pillars in the city helps to break down the flow of water between structures, slowing erosion and wear on the city walls. Higher areas have more sculptural statuary, often bearing depictions of fish. Market areas and mid-level neighborhoods feature pillars and statues designed more for utility than beauty; market houses will often connect rope lines to the top of these statues to create cloth tent ceilings over their wares.

## PROMINENT BUSINESSES

Emissaries from the most prominent business interests in the city make up the government council of Senghor. The following are those merchants and establishments with the wealth and scope to have a say in Senghor's future.

### ASAMOAH HAULERS

Though hardly glamorous work, the city of Senghor would be paralyzed without **Asamoah** (N male dwarf herder 10) and his fleet of oxen haulers. The haulers move cargo to and from the ports of Senghor, disseminating goods throughout the many market neighborhoods. They also move freight around the city and to areas beyond it. People have nicknamed Asamoah the 'Ox Whisperer' for the incredible feats the dwarf has been able to coax from his oxen.

### ISAARA AND THE TIMNEH TRADE COMPANY

Trade blockades and ship throttling pose real hurdles to the economy of Senghor. When cargo must be moved, no matter what, people see **Isaara** (LN female human merchant 8). An uncrowned economic monarch within the city, Isaara has a hand in almost every shipment that comes in and out of Senghor's docks. The Timneh Trade Company, founded by Isaara, has brokered transactions to ensure delivery of goods past the Shackles pirates and the Senghor navy. The company also trades in precious gems, ores from across the Mwangi Expanse, and valuable imports. Isaara uses a vast network of favors and promises to grease the wheels of commerce. Lucky customers only have to pay for her services with coin. Her favors, on the other hand, are usually steep and carry some risk, but most consider them worth it, as she has yet to fail at getting cargo moved through the red tape.



## MAKALO'S EXPORTS

For the wealthy, getting authentic and rare goods from the Mwangi Expanse is a matter of how much and if they can get into an Okpaara auction. For every other visitor hoping to claim a slice of the Mwangi mystique, there's Makalo's Exports. Although the place is considered a tourist trap by most Senghor locals, none can remember a day when the modest shop hadn't occupied its cramped corner of the markets. Makalo (CN male human souvenir salesman 4), though a friendly eccentric, is barely tolerated by other Senghor merchants. He lures in new customers by claiming only those with a discerning eye will be able to find exactly what they need. Baubles, talismans, and curios only cover the short list of possibilities within.

## THE MERCHANT FAMILIES OF SENGHOR

The three wealthiest families of Senghor are also the three most influential members of the Senghor council. Collectively, they have a controlling investment in all major trade goods in demand by nations in Mwangi, Avistan, and beyond. Their influence effectively makes the council a body of three factions aligned with these families—and their squabbles.

The Eku family controls the lion's share of textiles across the Mwangi Expanse and exported through the ports of Senghor. Senghor carpets, Ekujae bark cloth, and even rarer wares such as anadi silks or Mbe'ke cloaks are brought in by weavers from across the Expanse and shipped out on Eku boats. Due to the incredible love of woven fabrics in Senghor itself, the Ekus have also likely suffered less from the recent disruption of trade routes than any other business in Senghor.

The Baako family are the merchants of sugar, coffee, and beer. They maintain lucrative arrangements with numerous farms to buy and sell their crops. Baakos also are the largest brewers of beer, using banana, hibiscus, and cassava root crops that they also control. The Baako family recipe for beer is a highly protected secret—decades ago, the influential **Basma Jaja** (N female human brewer 7) adopted an old Jaja family recipe and presented it to her husband **Gyan Baako** (LN male human brewer 5) as a wedding gift. Many a spy has tried to learn the secret from the brewers ever since.

The Okpara merchant family controls the export of fish and the movement of unusual or magical materials, including dangerous tomes and relics. A family of adventurers, they explore ruins across the Mwangi Expanse, collecting exotic goods and auctioning them to the highest bidders, assuming the expedition was not already commissioned. **Dini** (LN female human sorcerer 11), a second Jaja daughter, currently serves as the Okpara sorceress and scholar of antiquities.

## THE PORT'S NEST

The Port's Nest is a bustling inn located near the main docks of Senghor. Countless trophies festoon its walls, each a flying predator successfully hunted by tavern regulars. This, combined with the wild, intricate carvings adorning the stone pillars, create a chaotic but novel ambiance for all first-time patrons. The tavern also serves as a well-known recruitment location for captains seeking to fill out their numbers with mercenaries and sailors alike. Catering to this specific subset of traveler makes it a massive business and, when compared to many other drinking establishments in Senghor, rather welcoming to foreigners and strangers alike.

The drinks offered span various levels of rarity and come from many different Mwangi traditions, from standard rums and palm wines to less common fermented milk drinks and spiced-fruit liquors that have aged for untold amounts of time. The names for these drinks can vary wildly depending on where in the Expanse the speaker hails from, yet everyone always receives exactly what they ordered, a taste of home brought to



ASAMDAH



MAKALO



DINI



SHASA

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## THE SECRET OF BOALI

When Caldarus, merchant-explorers from Arcadia, first crossed the vast ocean in search of new trade partners, they were welcomed by the city of Boali. The Boalites offered the newcomers land, where Caldarus built the city of Senghor, and otherwise proved very hospitable. They explained their odd demographics—few people of reproductive age—as the result of a mysterious plague, and welcomed the newcomers to strengthen their city. The Caldaru explorers, seeing the chance to expand their world-spanning trade network, made marriage alliances with the few young Boali noble heirs remaining. Over the decades, young people periodically disappeared before the summer solstice and lunar eclipses.

Eventually, the new Senghorites discovered their youths were being sacrificed by powerful Boali cultists to entities discovered in the ruins of ancient Ghol-Gan. The Senghorites razed Boali, executing cultists and collaborators while rescuing those intended for sacrifice. However duplicitous the Boali had been, the Senghorites felt guilty for violating their hospitality and thus took in many Boali children. They avoid the topic to this day, with the true events passing into legend. A few in Senghor are taught to guard against any cult resurgence, and this small cabal holds to its duties even now.

them by the steady hands of an old Caldaru woman named **Shasa** (N female human chef 14).

## SENGHOR SHIPWRIGHT GUILD

The Senghor docks are expansive and seem to stretch as far as the eye can see. Individuals bearing distinctive armbands marked with the stylized waves of the Shipwright Guild navigate the docks seamlessly and unimpeded. Their headquarters within the famed Senghor walls overlook their seaside operations. The guild produces impeccable quality ships at a scarcely believable production rate, each made with the advanced ceramics and an uncanny ability to avoid the worst of storms that makes Senghor ships so desirable for most captains. The guild forbids the sale of their ships to slavers, pirates, or anyone known to consort with them, thus making a Senghor-produced boat a rare but dangerous prize for scallywags.

## EXPLORING SENGHOR

The following are a sample of some of the prominent locations found in the city of Senghor.

### BOALI, THE FORBIDDEN SHORES

Lost to time and rarely spoken of, the ruins of the ancient city of Boali lie along the coast north of Senghor. The city's downfall is shrouded in mystery. Boulders and rubble block its harbor while the city itself appears to have been razed to its very foundations. The ruins date back several thousand years, matching the founding of Senghor, but most Senghor citizens know nothing of Boali's history and consider the place cursed. Modern day explorers occasionally find small clay tokens marked with odd symbols or hear the sounds of ghostly footsteps at night. Though there seems to be little danger beyond occasional roving bands of charau-ka, few have the nerve to linger in Boali for long.

### BURASH'S LOST AND FOUND

A treasure trove of misplaced belongings can be found on a houseboat along the Southern Sea Wall. This lost and found began when **Burash** (NG agender human salvager 4), the houseboat's owner, realized how many items people lost to the floods washing through the city. They began to gather and salvage anything they could. While some items were permanently ruined by water damage, Burash is able to save and restore many others. They do their best to spread the word around the city and employ discretion when choosing whom to return items to. They are not opposed to sharing who they have passed an item to, should someone else come around claiming to be the true owner.

Burash sees himself as something of a collector. They actually find little value in keeping most material things, beyond necessities. Thus, they're more than willing to let visitors take items off their hands and protect a possession they assume would be precious to its true owner. They certainly don't mind the visitors it brings to them and find enjoyment from simply coming across interesting trinkets and personal items they hope to reunite with the proper owners.

### EFULIDA PLAZA

Nestled deep within the Senghor markets rests an ancient tree that the residents refer to as Efulida. That specific tree and the area under its shade are a landmark and



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gathering place for those looking to learn or acquire an apprenticeship from an artisan or business mentor. Potential apprentices arrive at the tree with prepared wares to sell and compare the skills they learned at home or from their respective villages. They bring handpicked pieces to show their individuality and strengths in hopes that a talented artisan or influential merchant will take them under their wing. This is one of the most straightforward ways for a Senghor citizen to move up in society.

The items sold like this all have a unique history and many collectors make a habit of purchasing these trinkets in hope that they will buy a piece from a soon-to-be famous artisan. More importantly, it allows citizens of Senghor to support the traditional arts coming from smaller villages and traditions in the Mwangi Expanse.

### THE GNARLY HYENA

Though Senghor despises pirates, a few Shackles corsairs have discreetly set up shop in the Gnarly Hyena, a drinking establishment for these pariahs that hides in plain sight in the city. Pirates comfortably gather, eat, drink, and play games at the Gnarly Hyena. The place is somewhat seedy, but not dangerous—the pirates know better than to attract attention to their preferred establishment. Patrons mind their manners, policing their own unless provoked. The owner, **Omai**

(CN female elf barkeep 6) seems to have no issue with her clientele, though the rest of Senghor is unlikely to share her opinion should the Hyena's patrons ever be revealed for who they truly are.

### THE MIXING MINGLE

This Senghor dining establishment serves a double purpose. The first, a bustling eatery with unique mixtures of beverages and food pairings not found anywhere else. The second, a venue selling a remarkable assortment of unusual potions from their back counter. One of the shop owners creates these potions through a long experimental process which results in mixtures that have two different but predetermined effects on whoever takes them. The potion counter has a menu of specific combinations they're known for, but for the right price the proprietors accept requests to brew new blends of other desired effects. The turnaround time for concocting these potions is usually a couple days at least, and they don't come cheaply.

The Mixing Mingle's bartender, **Inyene** (CN genderfluid human alchemist 12), also sells their failed batches for quite cheap. Rejected potions deliver one of its originally intended effects, while the other effect is entirely unpredictable. If one is particularly lucky, a failed potion might work as intended—otherwise, the results are a tossup. But that hasn't stopped risk takers and gambling types from impulsively purchasing one in

## NEGASHA

Even the most vicious of sea monsters has trouble piercing the sides of Senghor's armored ships. Most such creatures are hunted by the navy to ensure merchant safety or sometimes driven out toward known Free Captain territory. The one creature that has defied their might is Negasha, a massive, armored, spined fish with a swordlike tail and gigantic fins that spread like wings. The creature is either capable of titanic leaps or true flight, as it has descended from the sky to ambush ships. Though the Senghor navy managed to tear one of the great beast's fins, it has otherwise escaped every attempt made to catch it. In lieu of killing Negasha, some of the braver sailors have begun luring it away from shipping routes when spotted, tempting the beast with woven casks stuffed with tons of fish.

the past, or even succumbing to an unwise bet and quaffing the concoction right in the middle of the eatery.

## NOTICE BOARD

Despite its name, the notice board is actually a large stone pillar designed to call the attention of passerby, though it serves much the same purpose of displaying advertisements for events or listings for honest work opportunities. It's not overseen by any particular person or group. Residents manage their own postings, and most people self-moderate what they place up on the board, careful of what they say or include to make sure that they don't garner an ill reputation and turn away potential responses. The only exception to this is an anonymous mysterious mischief-maker who enjoys eavesdropping on otherwise private conversations and revealing their contents via ribald postings on the board.

These revealing posts began rather harmlessly, but the more delicate the information they reveal becomes, the more targets of the gossip desire to see the poster silenced, regardless of the fact that the posts are mostly written off as hearsay. Once the rumors of the day go up, they remain posted until the poster decides to remove them. If anyone else tries to remove these notices, the information reappears within hours. Those in the upper classes are especially enraged when they learn gossip about them has gone up on the notice board. Some question if the good of the notice board outweighs the bad and if this means of spreading information and opportunities is worth the irritant of the anonymous poster.

## OCEAN DOCK MARKET

Built on an old, unused pier, this market place started as a small trading spot and grew quickly to a daily traders' market with water attractions. Kites are flown out over the currents of the ocean, and model boats and other floating attractions are set out in colorful flotillas on a regular basis. At night communal meals are made and served, accompanied by fire dancers and music for entertainment.

## OSEI'S BIZARRE BAZAAR

Rare and unusual magical components are all that **Osei** (CN male human shopkeep 5) deals in, but his business is extremely profitable. If the creature is unusual and found in the Mwangi Expanse, Osei claims he can acquire it. The business is also extremely dangerous. Hunting gnolls, karinas, or water orms for their magical properties has gotten many an adventurer working for Osei killed. The bazaar was originally started by Osei's grandfather and taken over by Osei's father when the elder adventurer died on a hunt for a sun bird's feathers (page 306). Osei's father, Rinn, a foreigner to the Expanse, died when Osei was 15, also on a hunt for a sun bird.

Osei's bazaar is managed by Osei, his mother, and his sisters. They work with adventurers either fencing exotic animals or commissioning hunts. Osei often acts as a guide, but steers clear of the hunt itself.

## RAINBOW DEN

The Rainbow Den is an aptly named indoor plaza covered from floor to ceiling with vibrant carpets, rugs, fabrics, and textiles. The vast collection is magically lit to offer a brilliant display of color and texture, the likes of which are beyond compare. Intricate tapestries, attire, and rugs from numerous Mwangi traditions are available for purchase, along with custom pieces, fittings, and bolts of cloth for personal use. Artisans from smaller textile companies who would never be able to afford an entire building can sell their wares comfortably without worry of damage from sunlight or sea air. In exchange for the location, each merchant must allow Isaara and therefore the Timneh Trade Company to be the primary reseller of their goods outside of Senghor.

## SENGHOR AMPHITHEATER

Once, the amphitheater was only a basin in a clearing on the outskirts of Senghor. It flooded easily, even on the occasions when the city didn't. Instead of leaving it alone or filling it in, the citizens instead paved it over with stone stairways around its perimeter that descended fifteen feet down to a circular, paved stage at the center. Now, the amphitheater serves as a small, scenic area within the city walls that offers casual entertainment. It was designed with a drain system around the stage that could be activated manually. The stairs offer seating and citizens come and go as they please when it's dry, to enjoy a day out or catch whoever may be performing below. People are free to take the stage as they please so long as there is no event scheduled. Since scheduled events are rare due to a fear of flooding, street performances are quite common.

When the Senghor Amphitheater floods, the area is abandoned until it's safe to drain. However, sometimes water fights are held in the pool that accumulates, tempting bystanders to place bets or even enter the ring for themselves, though these fights are never sanctioned or advertised events.

## THE SENGHOR LIGHTHOUSE

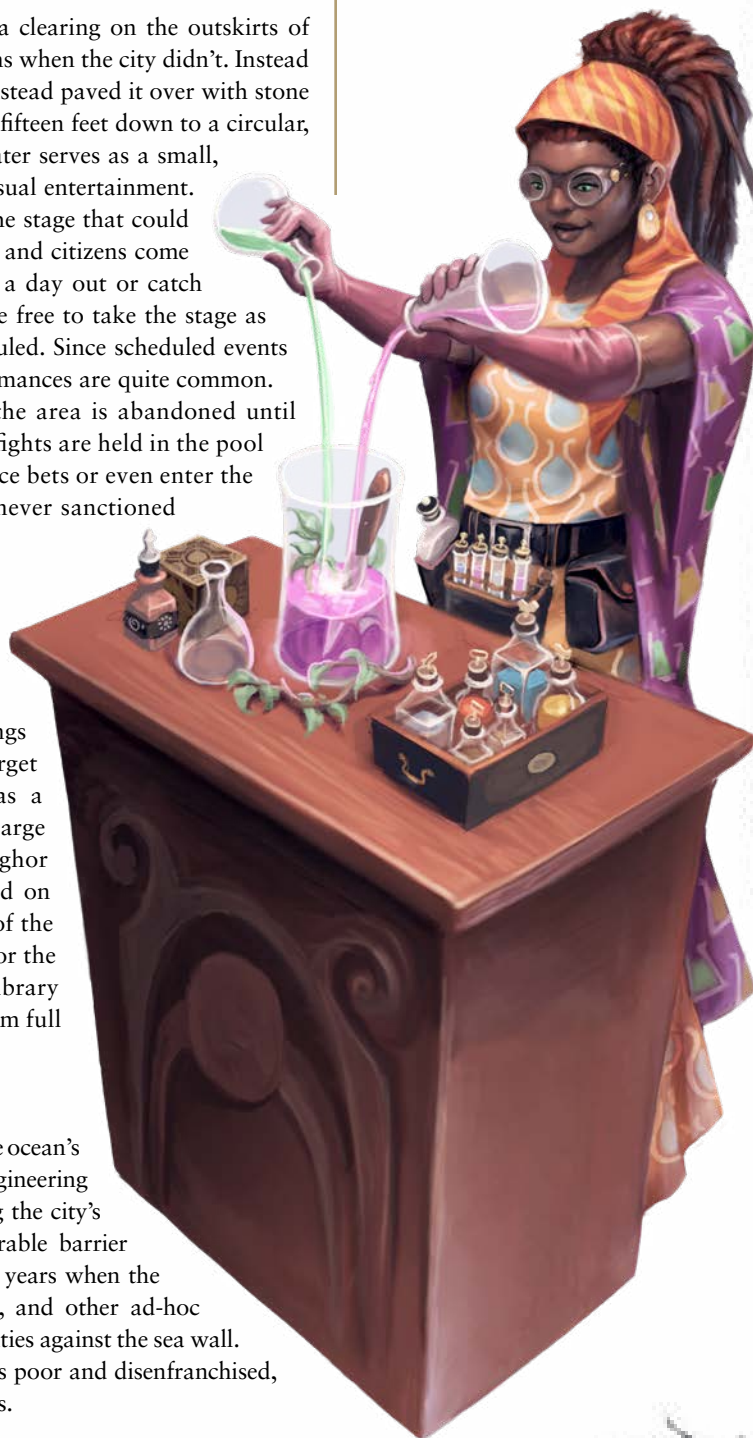
A testament to the will and determination of the city, this lighthouse has been razed and rebuilt thrice—twice by natural disasters, and once by conflict. As one of the tallest buildings in Senghor, the lighthouse is a frequent target for attack. The lighthouse also functions as a military watchtower, constructed with three large spyglasses for surveying the landscape. Senghor guards use a system of communication based on flags flown from the tower. The lower floors of the lighthouse function as armory and barracks for the city guard, while the upper floors contain a library focused on the history of the city and a museum full of city lore.

## SOUTHERN SEA WALL

The great southern sea wall, built to hold back the ocean's roughest storms and waves, is an unmatched engineering marvel. Designed and built by Caldarus during the city's founding, the wall also serves as an impenetrable barrier for any armies or pirates seeking to invade. In years when the seasons are mild, floating homes, houseboats, and other ad-hoc structures are known to assemble into communities against the sea wall. These 'sea wall towns' house many of Senghor's poor and disenfranchised, along with some recluses, fugitives, and refugees.

## CALDA

Caldarus of Senghor speak Calda, which is notable for having almost nothing in common with other Mwangi tongues aside from a number of loan words that have been adopted into casual speech. Most linguists consider this more evidence that Caldarus originate from someplace other than the Mwangi Expanse.



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# USARO

*Violent jungle domain filled with demon-worshipping fanatics*

## USARO

## SETTLEMENT 7

CE CITY

**Government** Anarchy

**Population** 9,640 (78% charau-ka, 12% human, 10% other)

**Languages** Abyssal, Draconic, Mwangi, Ocatan

**Religions** Anghazan

**Threats** Awakened apes, demons, charau-ka, religious cultists, orc and elf raiders

**Ravenous Domain** Anghazan's demonic power suffuses the city. Evil creatures that worship Anghazan gain the effects of *protection* against good creatures and effects while in Usaro.

**Shosenbe** (NE male human wizard 16) Leader of the Chosen



## RESOURCES



Armor/  
Weapons



Jewelry/  
Gems



Livestock/  
Hides



Magic Items



Seafood



Spices/Salt



Technology



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## THE ALTAR OF ANGAZHAN

The singular *Altar of Angazhan* is a massive, skull-shaped locus of the demon lord Angazhan's power. The charau-ka have used the altar to bolster their ranks by forcibly reincarnating those slain upon it to serve Angazhan, though it was also the means by which the Gorilla Kings of Usaro ascended to power. Each prospective Gorilla King—most of them once human—presented themselves at the *Altar of Angazhan*, preferably over the corpse of their predecessor, and were rewarded by being destroyed on the spot. If Angazhan found them worthy, he would reincarnate them into the form of a gorilla.

## USARO THE ALTAR OF MIGHT

Usaro, perhaps the most ruthless city in all of the Mwangi Expanse, embodies a perpetual struggle of law attempting to tame an overwhelming level of chaos. Usaro was once ruled by the Gorilla King, an intelligent great ape monarch empowered by the demon lord Angazhan. Each Gorilla King controlled Usaro with an iron fist and protected his power and influence with absolute brutality. But the most recent Gorilla King, Ruthazek, was killed by adventurers several years ago, leaving no victorious champion of Angazhan to take his place. Usaro's residents threw themselves into a chaotic struggle to become its next chosen reincarnated ruler. The recent loss of the city's *Altar of Angazhan* during a Matanji raid has only made these struggles more desperate. At any given moment, one might see a remorseless warrior impaling a body on one of Usaro's ancient white ziggurats in the hopes of gaining the demon lord's favor. The mandrill people known as charau-ka prowl the edges of Lake Ocota at night to drag people back to the city's blood river as sacrifices to their lord or to experiment with new methods of forcefully reincarnating unwilling victims into servants of their demonic patron. Many people view charau-ka as unclean abominations for the disrespect with which they treat the dead.

The depraved travel from across Golarion to seek power and freedom in Usaro, but even those who survive long enough to enter the city often become little more than a blood splatter while trying to prove their worthiness to its residents. Most that arrive in Usaro simply find themselves trapped, starved, unprepared for the harsh reality of living in this anarchic society, and quickly realizing that the challenges they knew were nothing compared to this new nightmare. Matanji—orcs indigenous to the Mwangi Expanse—and Kallijae elves regularly attack the city, steal artifacts, and escalate their perpetual war against Angazhan and his servants. These groups stage intensely violent raids on the city under the auspices of rescuing prisoners of war and anyone kidnapped in the night.

Thus, as might be expected, Usaro is incredibly dangerous both for visitors and inhabitants. Anything that once resembled trade has broken down; those starving are likelier to be eaten by the summoning experiments who roam the streets than they are to find food of their own. Many believe that the city is on the verge of collapse, while others claim that once the next Gorilla King ascends, the city will once again regain its typical balance between merciless law and vicious chaos.

Numerous pretenders claim to be the next Gorilla King—apes, humans, lesser demons, corrupt elves—but without the power of the *Altar of Angazhan* that once sat atop the city's High Throne, no one can truly claim the title. The Gorilla King's most trusted soldiers loyally guard the High Throne and pay little attention to the surrounding chaos. Other powerful factions claim territory and followers, and bide their time.

The man known as Shosenbe currently wields the most power and influence in Usaro, uniting residents who can't survive on their own or don't truly believe they can become the next Gorilla King. Some outsiders believe he might actually save Usaro from itself and bring peace to the city, and even the cynical agree that he makes the largest moves. As a result, Shosenbe has the most enemies and allies within the city. Such notoriety has its own value.



## LIFE IN USARO

Within the chaos of Usaro, there are those who revel in the violence and those who have no choice but to live there. The servants of Angazhan make up the majority of the population, mainly charau-ka. Most of the rest of the city is made up of a human underclass, who live in fear of their fellow citizens. Even though many of these residents live in extreme poverty, they leave offerings of meat outside their door to keep the charau-ka from taking members of their family. People usually buy food from the few traveling merchants powerful enough to safely enter the city to trade goods and food to residents and rulers alike. These merchants are typically retired and seasoned adventurers who could easily dispose of a charau-ka or go toe-to-toe with a wizard; as such, they can usually set their price. Due to the extreme lack of agriculture, people typically eat whatever vegetables are imported into the city or scavenged from the jungle, and these items are often considered a luxury—most eat nothing but meat and eggs, since it's far easier to come by.

Fights, executions, melees, and rituals serve as entertainment, at least for the more hardened citizens. Those simply trying to survive, usually the descendants of prisoners who have long forgotten their native cultures, don't have much in the way of enjoyable diversions, but they try to enjoy cooking and various religious rituals as they pray for salvation. Children aren't allowed to play outside for fear of kidnappings or random violence, and as such many outdoor games must be adjusted to fit indoor spaces.

The weather in Usaro rarely deviates from hot and humid, but summers bring an extreme level of heat and humidity that fills the city with horrible smells, making the ground sticky as a slaughterhouse floor, and intensifying the city's violence even further. The two brief summer months can be murderous, so people tend to stay indoors far longer to escape the heat, keeping the mayhem more contained than usual. Since the summer is considered the most vulnerable time of the year, it's often when prisoners attempt to escape Usaro, as well as when raids are most likely to occur.

The only truly enforced holiday is the celebration of the demon lord Angazhan on the last day of the year. As this final day represents death, so too does the first day of the new year represent reincarnation. Charau-ka perform their most experimental reincarnations during this time; all seek to impress and celebrate Angazhan with their creations. Water from the city's River of Blood is used in rituals in the service of the city's demonic patron, and bodies are piled up at the mouth of the river to refresh the gore. Charau-ka frequently paddle canoes through the river and snatch anyone who dares get close enough, but most often they ride the current out to Lake Ocota to find unsuspecting victims in the dead of night. Nearly all of those forced from their homes to join the cruel festivities attempt to escape before the holiday is over. Though few succeed, none are dissuaded from the attempt; no punishment the charau-ka could threaten would be much worse than what they already had planned.

Residents often have nowhere else to go, and so must figure out how to survive amidst their dangerous surroundings. The water in Usaro is thoroughly polluted with gore and nearly undrinkable, forcing most humans to either choke down blood or make dangerous trips down to Lake Ocota for potable drinking water. Those who can save enough money often buy the best physical protection and fortification that

## FORCED REINCARNTATION

One of the hard limits of most resurrection magic is that it can't affect any creature who doesn't wish to return to life. With the power of the *Altar of Angazhan*, however, the charau-ka historically defied this truth, transforming the corpses of their fallen foes into more charau-ka. This perversion of the divine order has led charau-ka to become one of the most loathed peoples in the Mwangi Expanse, even when compared to violently suspicious kaava or cannibalistic gnolls.

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## DANGEROUS DEVOTION

Following and praising Angazhan does not come without risks, and followers often subject themselves to perilous rituals. In one such rite, devotees chant, beat on specially made drums, and consume hallucinogens found in the jungle of the Mwangi Expanse. Those allowed to perform this ritual are known to gain special powers; some gain astounding strength, while others shift and change into creatures with a demonic visage matching The Ravenous King.



they can afford for their homes; this vital practice keeps many Usaran citizens alive. Others hire wizards, sorcerers, or clerics to cast permanent wards on their abodes. These are unfortunately the only financially viable solutions that most residents have, since the alternative is to abandon what few resources they still possess and leave to become a refugee. Some see it as a point of pride to not be driven from their city, choosing to stay and survive in the hopes that someone like Shosenbe saves them. Living in Usaro is difficult for anyone without power, but even here, the brave and foolhardy refuse to give up their lives and homes to demons.

## PEOPLE OF USARO

Usaro is divided into two primary cultures: those who worship the absolute evil and violence of the city and are constantly grasping for power, and those who descended from prisoners and grew up knowing only Usaro as their home.

The charau-ka and those who seek the Gorilla King's power tend to follow an extremely violent, strength-centric culture. Charau-ka dedicate much of their lives to living in Angazhan's image, focusing on their rituals and reincarnation experiments. They tend to wear simple loincloths and tribal adornments, though some of the more powerful wear robes or even armor, depending on their background or the specific peculiarities of their experimental reincarnation.

People who intentionally traveled to Usaro often hail from dangerous locations, like the Sudden Lands, or even harsher climes beyond the Mwangi Expanse, and came to try to build a criminal empire or gain the power of the Gorilla King. However, most die within days of entering the city, either kidnapped by charau-ka or murdered by someone else trying to gain power via sacrifices. People strong enough to repel or deter the charau-ka's aggression carve out a niche for themselves, usually offering their strength as protection for those who can afford to pay. These individuals tend to stand out among the Usaran populace, unconcerned with dressing according to local custom.

The descendants of prisoners have their own distinct culture; having survived in Usaro for generations, they believe they've earned the right to live in the city. In the decades since their ancestors worked their way out of servitude, they've found various creative ways to survive, usually in the form of magical wards and relics, and make sure to leave meat outside their homes at least once a week, to keep the charau-ka appeased. Their population is concentrated in a section of the city called The Farm, so named because many of the predatory residents see them as little more than ritualistic cattle.

The many disparate origins of humanoid residents of in Usaro results in greatly varied skin tones and hair, but all usually dress in simple, flowing red robes. In more extreme heat, the red robes disguise the bloodstains one tends to accumulate in a place like Usaro. They keep their hair short or shaved completely to make it harder to be grabbed by monkeys, both sapient and not.

Even the charau-ka need labor, which creates opportunities for residents who seek an honest living. Others steal artifacts or pillage the abundance of dead bodies around the city for profit, while many struggle to survive at all and live in a state of crippling poverty. It's common for these citizens to have close ties to either the Matanji orcs or the Kallijae elves, who often bring them tools, food, or resources during their raids. While both of these groups frequently tell citizens to leave, locals usually see these pleas as impractical or disgraceful. Despite these hesitations, they still know the Mwangi Expanse's elves and orcs are their likeliest saviors, even if they remain pessimistic about either's ability to truly liberate the city. Usaro's human citizens often cheer during Matanji or Kallijae raids of the city, though not in public, out of fear of charau-ka backlash.

## SHOSENBE

NE | MALE | HUMAN | WIZARD 16

When the mysterious warrior Shosenbe first arrived in Usaro, he differed from the new arrivals who are unprepared and easily preyed upon. When charau-ka tried to kidnap him, he snapped one of their necks, earning respect and fear from the rest. He gradually built a following, pronounced himself a loyal follower of Angazhan, declared war against the Matanji and Kallijae, and demonstrated tactical genius when fending off their raids. Many began to think of him as a potential candidate for Gorilla King.

Shosenbe paused his war to try and restore order to Usaro, while continuing to build relationships with the city's most powerful leaders. Unlike his more violent peers, however, he has also told Usaro's downtrodden chattel humans that he intends to liberate them; once he's taken control of the city, he says, they'll not only be safe but treated as equals to any of the rampant demon apes.

However, Shosenbe is secretly a wizard using transmutation spells to maintain his warrior appearance. This scheme is a closely guarded secret; only those loyal enough to have agreed to be bound by a *geas* know the truth. He's kept his true motivations intentionally obscure and refuses to demonstrate the same brutality as the average Usaro heavyweight, even as he wages war against Usaro's enemies. He has enacted his desire for order far less brutally than any of the Gorilla Kings, which has endeared him to the city's often-powerless humans. While he can't become the next Gorilla King without reclaiming the *Altar of Angazhan* from those who stole it, doing so is indeed his goal—though his plan goes far deeper. Once Angazhan deems him worthy and begins the reincarnation process, Shosenbe intends to use a fraction of his soul trapped in a soul gem to disrupt the process and be reborn as himself, then trap Angazhan in the soul gem and steal his power. If Shosenbe succeeds, he'll become the new absolute ruler and living god of Usaro, make good on his promises to the city's human citizens, and wage war against the Mwangi Expanse's elves and orcs.

Shosenbe is a calculating, powerful, charismatic man. Though he might appear compassionate, he's far closer to a calculating devil who uses law and order to get what they want than he is to a good person. His influence already rivals the former Gorilla King's, but not all of the charau-ka are behind him. The Matanji and Kallijae once considered whether he could actually become the savior Usaro so desperately needs, but when he declared war on them, they began planning his eventual assassination all the same.

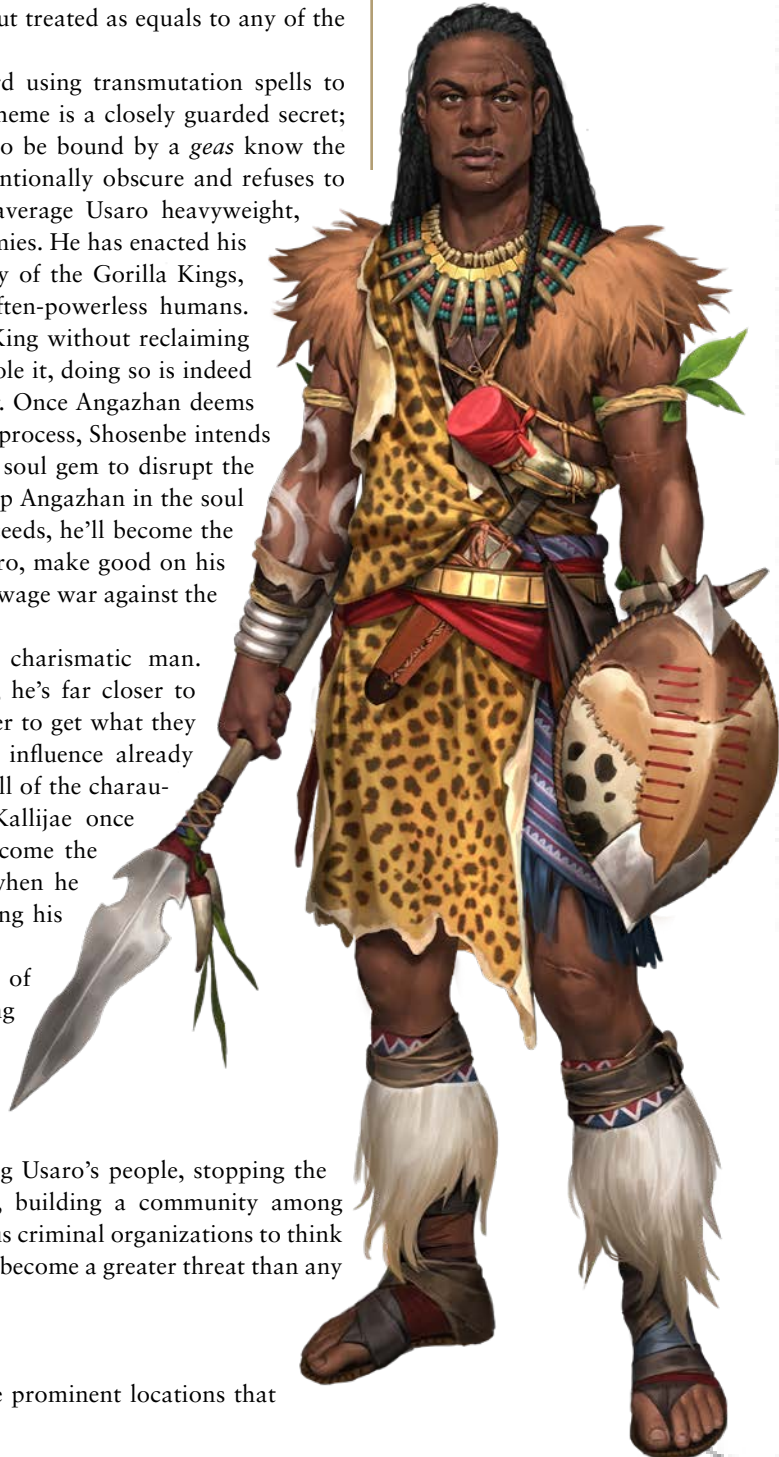
No one truly knows what to expect of Shosenbe, but everyone is either trying to join him, kill him, or worship him. Regardless of whether he's worthy of becoming the next Gorilla King, it's clear that he is already acting the part in both spirit and action. If he succeeds at uniting Usaro's people, stopping the charau-ka from hunting human citizens, building a community among Usaro's residents, and forcing the numerous criminal organizations to think of the greater survival of the city, he could become a greater threat than any Gorilla King before him.

## EXPLORING USARO

The following are samples of some of the prominent locations that can be found in Usaro.

## OCATAN

Though used by many of the settlements within the Lake Ocota area, within Usaro, the Ocatan language is almost exclusively understood and used solely by Usaro's human population. Since many charau-ka don't bother learning the tongue, the humans use it as something akin to a secret language.



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## THE LAKE OCOTA LAND RUSH

The turmoil around Usaro did not go unnoticed by opportunistic prospectors for long. With foreign interests losing ground in other parts of the Expanse, colonials and Mwangi settlers alike have rushed to claim land that was formerly off-limits due to the influence of the Gorilla King. Local orcs and elves now clash with immigrants over ancestral territory, self-proclaimed adventurers fight with one another over discoveries and choice terrain, and no one accepts anyone else's legal authority to adjudicate. While the denizens of Usaro have yet to drive these interlopers from their shores, bands of roving charau-ka are happy to take advantage of the chaos in order to capture explorers and drag them back to their city's sacrificial altars.

## THE CHASM OF SCREAMS

The Chasm of Screams is a large, uncharted rift under Usaro, its gaping maw located outside the High Throne. A carnivorous mist known as Tik Taan occasionally rises from the chasm and devours any flesh it touches before eventually descending back into the depths. People regularly toss sacrifices into the chasm, believing it to be an amalgamation of the many tortured and dead souls of the city, seeking to lash out for vengeance against its Usaran oppressors or perhaps rise up and devour Angazhan himself. Others believe the River of Blood has corroded the city's underground foundations and created the carnivorous corruption, or else that Usaro's thousands of yearly sacrifices have awakened some kind of eldritch horror. Regardless of the reason, screams rise constantly from the chasm. When someone is thrown down into it, despite its apparent, endless depth, their screams persist for hours. To this day, no one knows why the chasm takes so long to kill its victims. Many, including the charau-ka, have tried to permanently destroy or trap the mist Tik Taan—but all attempts only strengthened it or triggered it into rising, killing anyone involved.

## THE FARM

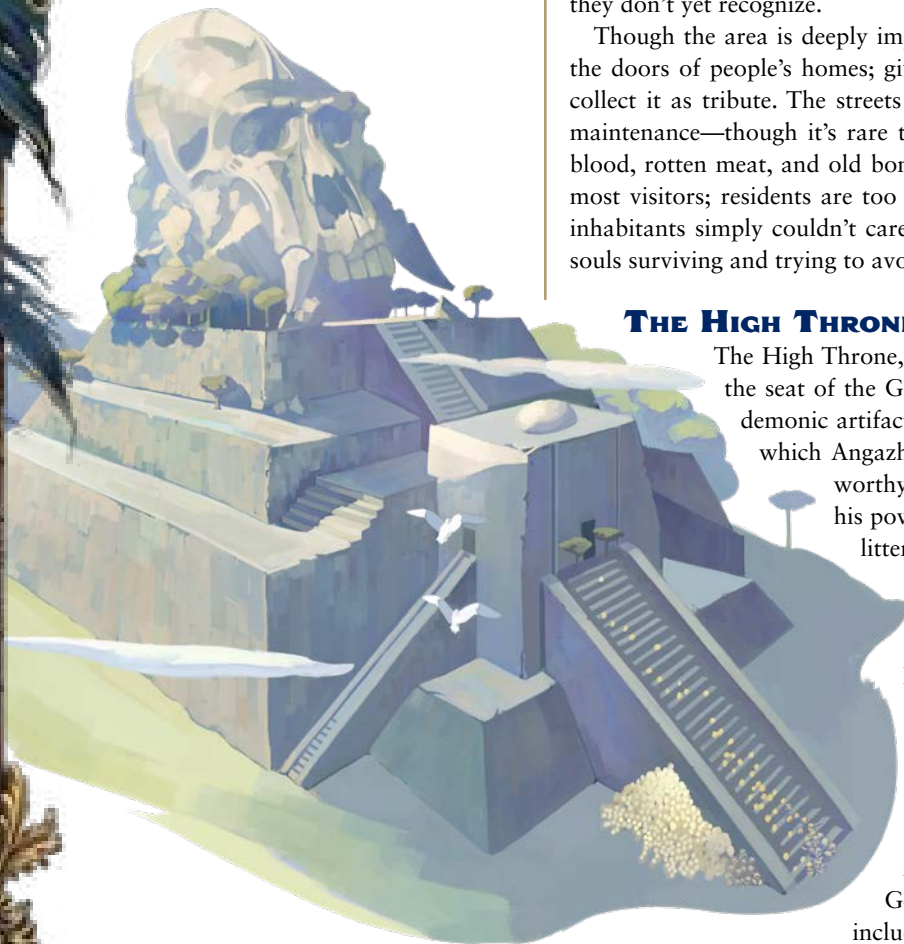
Usaro's more depraved locals dubbed the residential neighborhood for humans descended from former prisoners "The Farm." The buildings here are typically made of stone or marble, repurposed prisons and temples now barely fit for habitation. The Farm is a rather large neighborhood, and its people are antisocial unless they have something to gain from interaction. Despite pervasive wariness toward strangers and anyone who seems even remotely powerful, disguised Matanji and Kallijae visitors tend to be welcomed, as locals feel safest when they're around. They're also very welcoming of merchants, though it can take a while for them to feel comfortable with those they don't yet recognize.

Though the area is deeply impoverished, meat commonly sits in front of the doors of people's homes; given long enough, charau-ka come along to collect it as tribute. The streets are worn down into dirt due to a lack of maintenance—though it's rare to find a stretch that isn't covered in dried blood, rotten meat, and old bones. The smell of the Farm is unbearable to most visitors; residents are too afraid to clean the area, and Usaro's other inhabitants simply couldn't care less. The Farm is a place full of neglected souls surviving and trying to avoid being kidnapped like their ancestors.

## THE HIGH THRONE

The High Throne, Usaro's most important location, served as the seat of the Gorilla King's power and once contained the demonic artifact known as the *Altar of Angazhan*, through which Angazhan begins the process of reincarnating the worthy and destroying the unworthy who aspire to his power. The stairs that lead up to the throne are littered with bodies, some the exploded remains of those who were deemed unworthy, others just the charred remnants of those who were burned to death by the Gorilla King's loyalists. At some points of the ascent, the piles of rotting corpses nearly hide the stairs beneath—those who wish to climb must do so literally over the bones of those who came before.

Charau-ka and any humanoids who have managed to work their way into the former Gorilla King's ranks live nearby; examples include an elven diabolist, a few lesser demons,



and multiple humans. These former Gorilla King loyalists don't acknowledge other would-be kings, believing that their patron could still reincarnate.

### THE RIVER OF BLOOD

The River of Blood flows down the whole of Usaro from its source, stained red by the frequently refreshed pile of bodies sacrificed to Angazhan. All manner of foul creatures, like giant leeches and failed undead charau-ka abominations, make their home in its tides. Some speculate that the river itself is somehow alive, whispering to those along its banks, coaxing them to either drink or drown themselves. Others believe it to be home to otherworldly creatures beyond even three-dimensional space. The River of Blood breeds both fear and imagination, with some believing the blood to be an extension of Angazhan himself and similarly hungry for worship.

It's impossible to see all of Usaro without traveling the River of Blood at least once. Crossing it is dangerous: when entering the city, the charau-ka who watch and hunt from the river are likely the first to notice, and newcomers are quickly kidnapped or killed.

### THE VAULTS

Ostensibly, the Vaults hold the hidden treasures of every incarnation of the Gorilla King. People from across the Mwangi Expanse have heard legends of the Vaults, but their exact location within Usaro is entirely unknown. Many have sought them—some even descended into the Chasm of Screams in pursuit of the treasure only to find themselves melted alive. The true extent of the treasure is unknown, though it's suspected to be the resting place of both the *Worldbreaker* siege engine the Gorilla King took from Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration and the giant bombard cannon he stole from the Mana Wastes.

Much is said about the Matanji and Kallijae raids on Usaro, but there have been many more raids, by nations, foreigners, and squads of random soldiers alike, all of whom believed they could simply raid Usaro and come away with unimagined riches or power. Instead, they almost always return with nothing, not even the life they entered with. The Vaults remain unpenetrated, their very existence unproven, but the rumors still inspire countless attempts and untimely deaths.

### SIXTH ARMY OF EXPLORATION

At the height of Taldor's power, the nation launched the Armies of Exploration, nationalistic campaigns to conquer more territory and wealth. The Sixth Army of Exploration was intended to pierce into the Mwangi Expanse, expanding Taldor's claim all the way to the Garundi Coast. The soldiers had barely made it past Nagisa before they were ambushed by the Gorilla King's forces and slaughtered, with only a handful of soldiers escaping to report what had occurred. The Gorilla King took Taldor's magical siege engine, the *Worldbreaker*, as a trophy from the battle, and some historians claim that Taldor never fully recovered from the rout.

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# VIDRIAN

*A new and unsteady nation seeking to maintain its freedom against outside foes*

## ANTHUSIS (CAPITAL)

SETTLEMENT 8

NG CITY

**Government** Representative council

**Population** 10,548 (82% humans, 4% halflings, 3% elves, 2% dwarves, 9% other)

**Languages** Dwarven, Elven, Halfling, Infernal, Iruxi, Mwangi, Taldane

**Religions** Abadar, Gozreh, Grandmother Spider, Iomedae, Kalekot, Lubaiko, Sarenrae, Shelyn

**Threats** Pirates, rogue foreign adventurers, secret diabolists, thieves

**Everyone Talks** The citizens of Anthusis have a strong national spirit and look out for each other, and even thieves and politicians will put their differences aside for an external threat. Deception and Stealth checks against residents of Anthusis take a -2 circumstance penalty in Anthusis, as the citizens share information with one another.

**Gbemisola Mambi** (NG female human overseer 7)  
Representative of the organized farming unions

**Mandla Dube** (NG male human cleric of Sarenrae 7)  
Representative of Vidrian's religious interests

**Merredin** (N genderfluid halfling banker 12)  
Representative of Vidrian's united banking institutions



## RESOURCES



Alcohol/  
Drugs



Grain/Fruit/  
Vegetables



Livestock/  
Hides



Luxury Goods



Mercenaries



Seafood



Textiles



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## A UNITED EXPANSE

Well aware of the dangers of returned foreign expansion, Vidrian has made overtures to fellow Mwangi nations in hopes of providing a united front against the threat of exploitation. So far, the response has proven mostly indifferent; the city-states of the Expanse are used to self-reliance and are cool on the prospect of changing this. Vidrian's most likely allies against colonial interests, Mzali and Usaro, have proven unapproachable: the child-god Walkena seems to view Vidrian with a jealous eye while the charau-ka of Lake Ocota are too hostile for even the most desperate of alliances.

## VIDRIAN THE UNCHAINED PHOENIX

Formerly the Chelaxian colony of Sargava, the nation of Vidrian fought tooth and nail to achieve their independence in a world eager for them to fail. Through a combination of cunning, skill, sheer numbers, and (arguably excessive) spending, the people of Vidrian ousted their Chelaxian rulers from the capital city of Eleder, renamed it Anthusis, and later pushed the Free Captains out of the region. They maintain their hold through a tenuous balancing act of alliances forged under duress and outreach to like-minded potential allies. Vidric politicians now work tirelessly on the world stage to secure their footing, keeping up a facade of perfect nonchalance as first line of defense against those looking to exploit their young nation.

When Chelaxian settlers first founded the colony, they viewed it as a resource-rich location with high strategic value. Sargava was to be the fulcrum for their domination over Absalom and beyond, allowing the Empire to slowly creep across the map like an ink stain until it bled into every corner of Golarion. For centuries that held true, until the colony's patron, Baron Grallus, chose to back House Davian in the Chelaxian Civil War of 4606 AR. Upon Davian's defeat and the ascension of House Thrune to the Chelaxian throne, the now-independent colony faced swift retribution from their former overlords, forcing them to rely on the protection of the Free Captains of the Shackles—protection which did not come cheap and also gave the pirates a strong foothold in the region.

Through it all, the native Mwangi peoples continued to suffer exploitation and abuse at the hands of Free Captains and colonizing nobles alike. Their disgust and outrage, combined with lower-class colonists' exasperation at their custodians' ineptitude, began to foment a rebellious movement. All eventually came to a head with the small slave- and servant-led revolt at a plantation on the far outskirts of Eleder, a spark which fanned the flame of nation-wide rebellion. By adapting the Free Captain's guerrilla tactics for use on land, the Vidric Revolution flooded out from Eleder and across Sargava, backed by the supplies and training of defecting Sargavan soldiers.

But the liberation of Vidrian marked only the beginning of their struggle for true independence. The Free Captains, pushed to the edge of the region along with the fleeing colonial nobles, were the first to try extorting the fledgling nation. In response, Vidrian signed a deal with nearby Senghor for naval protection in exchange for expanded trade relations. The Free Captains were almost completely routed. To this day, any pirate who makes their way to Anthusis must take pains to disguise their true occupation.

Vidrian's recovery is ongoing. While its peoples' confidence masks anxieties of an uncertain future, none can deny their iron-hard resolve to remain free.

## LIFE IN VIDRIAN

Daily life in Vidrian varies depending on where you are. Politics, mercantile, and financial concerns dominate public consciousness in the port cities, where many people live and work as merchants, sailors, and office clerks. These merchants





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endlessly seek new trade deals so their accountants can carefully balance debts and income, pay their crews and taxes, and acquire new custom to begin the cycle anew.

This commercial cycle allows Vidrian to build a stable foundation for their future and, eventually, repay allies who helped secured their independence, particularly Senghor. By taking over the various industries that began under Chelaxian rule and augmenting them with traditional practices that had previously been outlawed, Vidrian has crafted a thriving export of grains, fruits, and assorted luxury goods rarely found anywhere else on Golarion.

There's also a thriving business in welcoming adventurers and explorers who wish to excavate the many ruins and unknown regions of the Mwangi Expanse. Though many Vidrics find this work distasteful due to its parallels with colonialist looting, the money and control that comes with government oversight allows most citizens to accept it as a necessary endeavor. Vidric leaders even suggest, choose, and heavily vet guides for adventuring parties who can ensure the outsiders make it back to port safely, dissuade them from stealing items of cultural significance, and report any who cannot be dissuaded to the proper authorities.

Efforts to reestablish the Pathfinder Society's local influence likewise help to soothe some fears, as the agency can be trusted to not only police their own,

but also assist in monitoring and sanctioning other companies to ensure that none spirit away any important sacred artifacts of the Expanse. When all else fails, coalitions with Alijae, Ekujae, Song'os, and others serve as a final line of defense against outsiders who abuse their warrants to explore and plunder what they shouldn't.

Despite the new government's attempts to integrate previous scoundrels into more legitimate commerce—such as the gossips and informants who joined the noted hero **Avarneus** (*Legends 22*) during the rebellion—it is not always successful. Some see a life of crime as the only possible path and thrive within Vidrian. Still, to prevent conflict from collapsing both ends of their new economic spectrum, the government and criminal underworld established a truce: provided that criminal operations pose little threat, competition, or interference in matters vital to Vidrian's security and prosperity, they can continue as usual. In turn, the thieves' guilds across all Vidric cities declared medicine and food strictly off-limits, along with the trade goods of certain companies. Smugglers and fences tend to take any important artifacts that fall into their hands straight to the government (and are usually rewarded with a finder's fee) and have even been known to redistribute their acquired resources, though they never give up their source. Even unscrupulous guides (those not vetted by the government) who hang around

## FOREIGN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the wake of their victory, Vidrian sought legitimacy and allies from other nations. Ships from Vidrian's makeshift navy were dispatched with diplomatic missives for governments around the Garundi coast. Absalom, Andoran, Osirion, and Ravounel were the first to acknowledge Vidrian's new sovereignty. Collaboration between rebels from Ravounel and Vidrian also led to the creation of the Firebrands (*Lost Omens Character Guide* 66), a flamboyant collective of rebels and freedom fighters that has rapidly spread across the Inner Sea.

adventurers' taverns always ask if their potential clients have visited the local Pathfinder Society lodge before launching into their highly embellished offers of guidance. No matter the legitimacy of a given line of work, it all goes towards sustaining the fledgling nation; here, even thieves pay their taxes.

It's a delicate ecosystem, but one that works to the advantage of all. It's even helped in the nation's defense—more than one foreign agent has been caught off-guard by the informal truce, as attempts to destabilize Vidrian through its criminal element have largely ended with the government and underworld banding together to remove the threat.

All this blends together to create a cooperative but somewhat hectic lifestyle, as the people of Vidrian attempt to find their place in the world. Their cities often keep odd hours, attempting to cater to the different needs of many disparate natives, immigrants, foreigners, and potential new economic opportunities. Farmers, herders, and fishers appear in the streets and docks before dawn, while gamblers and smugglers keep hours far into the night. Food tends to be an eclectic fusion of half-recalled tradition combined with imported influences old and new.

Under it all looms the ever-present threat of the pirate Free Captains of the Shackles, who counted the colonial government as clients and now feel slighted by the revolutionaries for cutting off their business. Fears of their retaliation on Vidric ships and trade are increasingly valid.

For each damaged ship that comes into port and each that never returns, the rallying cry grows louder for a larger military and navy to protect their interests from those who would love to see them fail.

In the former jungle plantations, now converted into cooperative farmland, life has become simpler. Agricultural workers follow the same schedule as their fellows all over Golarion, rising early to care for their crops and livestock, working hard throughout the day, and retiring after sunset. While foreign powers and the Free Captains' revived influence remain ever-present threats, for those inland these threats are more distant than the dangers of the jungle. Now their own masters, the farmers work together with the aid of Anthusis's government to provide most of the grain and luxury foods that comprise Vidrian's mercantile trade.

Vidrian honors numerous holidays and traditions from around the world, including harvest festivals, half-remembered local traditions, and colonizers' holidays. They've also established some of their own.

On 19 Sarenith, patriots celebrate The Day of Remembrance of Mwangi Sovereignty with quiet reflection and silent toasts, marking the day in 4717 AR when the last of the Sargavan colonial government was forced from Vidrian's furthest borders. Founders' Day on 7 Calistril recognizes when disparate Mwangi tribes first called for a truce that led to building the trade hub that would become Anthusis, though the year this event occurred is a matter of fierce debate.

Tides' Changing, celebrated near the end of Gozran, marks when many shipping and trading countries begin their sailing routes for the year and is feted with a massive party that overtakes every port city.

Once uniquely intended to distract thieves who might try to plunder ships (and later rebels who might sabotage foreign trade), it now functions as an outward display of the



unspoken truce and symbiotic relationship between the nation's criminal elements and its legitimate mercantile businesses.

## PEOPLE OF VIDRIAN

Given their long history of colonial abuse and the recent upheaval of their revolution, it's unsurprising that Vidrian's people remain adamant that none are truly free until all of Mwangi can govern themselves as they see fit. However, each person interprets that drive differently: some seek to cleanse the fiendish presences they believe originally drew Cheliox to Mwangi, while others wish to completely return Mwangi to what it was before outside influence. Others feel they should take advantage of the resources that their colonizers—and by extension, the rest of the world—value in order to strengthen themselves, and still others simply wish to find peace and simplicity. Daily life often reflects these wildly different visions of Vidrian's future in unexpected ways. Vidrian is filled with potential, and everyone has their own idea of how that potential should be fulfilled.

These days, citizens tend to prefer bright, colorful, and somewhat celebratory clothing even when there aren't any festivals to attend. Vestiges of colonial fashion still appear in cities, but generally in mocking ways—fine clothing claimed from fleeing colonials might be repurposed into a more traditional style, or a single Chelaxian accessory might be garishly exaggerated to highlight its absurdity. As the nation slowly establishes itself, these are steadily falling out of favor. Meanwhile, styles from ally and neighbor Senghor are considered more cosmopolitan in Vidrian's port cities. As the influence of Sargava recedes, loc hairstyles are also returning to prominence among native Mwangi who have the time for the extensive upkeep, as have wound head wraps of stiff fabric for those without. Residents of more remote locations usually value practicality, such as braided styles that can be maintained with low effort and close-cropped natural coils. Light, breathable fabrics that can be layered as needed are key regardless of locale.

Vidric jewelry also varies based on where one falls within the social hierarchy. While many citizens freely turned any valuables they possessed over to the government to build the treasury of their new nation, most commonfolk own one or two small ancestral pieces that were hidden and coveted during colonial rule. These are usually passed down to the eldest children when they come of age or leave home for the first time. Such pieces can range in craft from a simple carved and painted wooden bangle to an expansive band of stamped gold inlaid with precious gems.

Few Vidrics wear more ostentatious pieces outside of special occasions. During colonial times, if one had such valuable goods survive Chelaxian rule and still felt comfortable enough to wear it in their daily lives, they were most likely complicit; thus, even to this day, many consider frequent displays of wealth to be a silent admission of collaboration with the colonial government and its transgressions. More recent jewelry is relatively understated and easily hidden, if worn at all, an unspoken social concession to help all Vidrics feel more economically equal even if they know they are not.

The well-to-do in Vidrian are more likely to own large collections of books and treasures from all over Golarion, as well as work commissioned from local artists. For those in the cities, public works are both a means to increase the prestige of their nation and demonstrate their own high status in a socially acceptable manner. Homes in port cities or on vast swaths of farmland, meanwhile, keep valuables in spaces not typically open to guests. Wealth is no longer flaunted but remains a fact of life; even with attempts to close the gaps between classes, some things never change.

The huge influx of immigrants from all over the Mwangi Expanse, especially the nation of Mzali, only adds further

## AN UNUSUAL STATE

Due to the abundance of resources in the region, most Mwangi nations are independent city states—though they exert massive influence over nearby lands, they are technically separate. Due to Vidrian's colonialist roots, it is the exception to this rule, laying claim to multiple cities and land within its borders.



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## SQUABBLES AMONG FRIENDS

Though Senghor and Vidrian signed an alliance, it was rushed in desperation and holds terms that strongly favor Senghor. Since the defeat of the Free Captains, Vidrian has been pushing to renegotiate the agreement, a request that Senghor has obviously been reluctant to entertain.

complexities to the nation's melting pot. Some peoples of the Expanse harbor a long-standing hatred of Vidrian's colonial predecessor, and the relatively new Vidric Council actively courts them by attempting to heal old and half-forgotten wounds that were left to fester by their forbears. For some nations and city-states, these past transgressions can be fixed with trade, cooperation, and earnest words. For others, the hurt and anger are still too fresh. And there remain some locales too mired in their own problems to even consider outside alliances.

The Council has also cast their net for allies further afield, reaching out to Absalom, Qadira, Ravounel, and beyond; emissaries have even reached Varisia in hopes of building a strong alliance. However, most of the Council's focus remains on its closest neighbors and nearby naval powers in hopes of holding back the Free Captains, as well as the threat of Cheliox attempting to retake its "wayward colony."

## FAITH

Faith in Vidrian tends to be a highly individualized decision, reflecting the people's newfound freedoms. Many Inner Sea faiths made their way to Vidrian via its ports and are represented among the populace, especially in the major cities. More remote regions instead tend to borrow faiths from their closest neighbors.

Vidrics primarily worship variations of Abadar, Gozreh, Iomedae, Sarenrae, and Shelyn that draw deeply from ancestor worship and the already existing gods of the pre-colonial Mwangi Expanse. Many elements of these pre-colonial religions were tragically lost to the horrors of colonialist expansion, but some aspects were saved and continue to inform local faiths to this day. Peoples' beliefs and memories transformed the gods forced upon them into analogues that preserved what they could of their traditions in any way left available.

For instance, in Vidrian, Abadar's neutrality is seen as complacency, and those among the native populace who worship him do so in an attempt to rebalance a scale that favors one side. In contrast, Sarenrae's missionaries offered aid without requiring conversion, and the native Mwangi embraced the goddess. Their depictions show her as an older, tender, motherly figure, with small streaks of pale gray-gold through her hair and a gently understanding smile; a reflection of the matriarchs already venerated among many.

The influence of Cheliox's diabolism and worship of Asmodeus still hangs over Vidrian like a miasma, skulking in corners and hidden in secret rooms. Such practitioners are generally Sargavan settlers who adopted it as a quiet dissent against Vidrian, all while outwardly feigning loyalty to the new government.

Beyond these deities, other faiths still linger at the margins. With many Vidrics attempting to forge a new identity in the wake of rebellion and independence, priests of many different gods have flocked to the nation, drawn by invitation or the promise of opportunity. The revolution also vaulted a few obscure Mwangi deities into the mainstream, such as the rebellious and fiery faith of Lubaiko.

Worship of Walkena surged in popularity as well, radiating from Umnyango and Mzali. Umnyango's proximity makes it a popular stop for missionaries on their way across Vidrian to the Fever Sea. A lingering fear of being punished for worshipping the other gods of Mwangi, such as Grandmother Spider, remains with many people, especially those who were persecuted under Chelioxian colonial rule, though a few pockets of their worship have begun to spring up once again across the fledgling nation.

## THE COUNCIL

Vidrian's governance became a contentious question during its



post-revolutionary reconstruction. The idea of a singular overarching ruler was dismissed before it could be suggested, as was a small odd-numbered group. Governors and custodians were also quickly dismissed due to how much anger over recent colonial rule remained. Eventually, the representatives meeting to discuss these matters, comprised of trusted leaders across all walks of life, decided their own body made the most sense. A name for the council is still under contention, but it's often referred to as simply the Vidric Council or the Council of Vidrian.

Many heroes of the Vidric Revolution sit on the Council, either as a guild's elected leader, an association's spokesperson, or simply as a trusted voice of the people with experience in leadership. However, the sheer number of voices and large personalities often leads to discord, infighting, and political gridlock that slows processes to a crawl. Someone must often be the pragmatic voice in the din, and while this reliance has yet to result in a disaster, the potential problems are becoming impossible to ignore.

The following groups and organizations wield most of the Council's decision-making power.

### THE COMBINED MERCANTILE INTERESTS

Though the name "Combined Mercantile Interests" suggests unity, the guilds of Vidrian that comprise its membership are often at odds. A council unto itself, the Mercantile Interests represent leaders of the assorted guilds for shipping magnates, traveling merchants, laborers, artisans, stonemasons, weavers, smiths, and local markets. The rapid rotation of Mercantile Interests representatives leads to much of the wider Council's conflicts; a representative might vehemently disagree with the measures voted on by their predecessor, only to be reset again by their successor.

While it's impossible to guess who might serve as a representative for the Mercantile Interests, each has a tendency to derail conversation and exhibit a self-serving nature. Many say the only reason for their input on the council is their network of wide-ranging connections and the wealth they contribute to the city's coffers.

### THE FIELD UNIONS

As the rebellion drove out plantation owners and overseers, the workers with the most experience and respected leadership on each pooled their knowledge and resources. Vidrian still needed food, after all, and they were the best equipped to provide for that need. This slow-growing, loose association quickly evolved into an organized coalition, then unionized, with one representative for each cardinal region of Vidrian. They were among the first organizations asked to sit on the new Council, with an older woman named **Gbemisola Mambi** (LG female human overseer 7) chosen to represent them. The Combined Mercantile Interests' markets often try to swindle the Field Unions to increase their profits, thus Gbemisola makes protecting the Unions' farms and earning equitable compensation for its workers her primary concern.

### THE INDEPENDENT BANKS OF VIDRIAN

As the rebellion rolled outward from Eleder, a few realized they would need to tally what valuables the Sargavan colonists had left behind, especially if it would be useful in rebuilding. People in need of financial aid came to these counters as they moved what they collected to more secure locations near cities and requested credit. Many balked at the idea, remembering how colonizers happily used debts instead of shackles to coerce the native Mwangi.

As a compromise, these assessors developed a system of lending under the guiding principles of never demanding the return of funds



AVARNEUS



GBEMISOLA MAMBI



MERREDIN



MANDLA DUBE

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## OTHER COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONS

Many other organizations have representatives on the Council in its attempt to reflect all of Vidrian's walks of life.

**The Briars** represent smugglers and criminals who have aligned themselves with the new government.

**The Coalition of Medicine** represents secular healers and alchemists who do not work within a faith or temple.

**The United Laborers** represents manual laborers who do not work on farms.

borrowed by those without the means to repay them, and avoiding the use of hard labor and debtor's prisons. This system grew into a network of banks and money changers across the region that collaborates with the Combined Mercantile Interests to create work programs that take only a small portion of a debtor's earnings as repayment. This teaches a trade to those left without one in the wake of colonial rule, and also provides guilds in the Mercantile Interests with a steady flow of apprentices and laborers. While not a perfect system, it agrees with the ideals of the new government without undermining it.

The Independent Banks' representative, a halfling forced to migrate with their Chelaxian masters named **Merredin** (N genderfluid halfling banker 12), was once ensnared by colonial debt and is sensitive to concerns that their system might result in the same abuses.

## THE REPRESENTED THEOLOGIES

Under colonial rule, Vidrian became a melting pot of assorted faiths from across Golarion. Deities, devils, ancestors, spirits, and more found worshippers who would practice their customs, or at least some approximation of them. Trends waxed and waned until the Vidric Revolution, which banned Chelaxian diabolism by action first and codified laws later. Other imported faiths were also stigmatized by association at first, until clerics and priests who aided the rebellion and rebuilding efforts—primarily non-diabolist Chelaxians and other foreigners—

banded together to present a formal decree in favor of the changes the rebels strove to achieve. These clergies again united as the

Represented Theologies when the Council was proposed as the nation's government.

**Mandla Dube** (NG male human cleric of Sarenrae 7), a Mwangi-born priest of Sarenrae, represents the Theologies. His calm demeanor belies his tenacious opposition to any situation in which the Theologies might lose ground, even if that

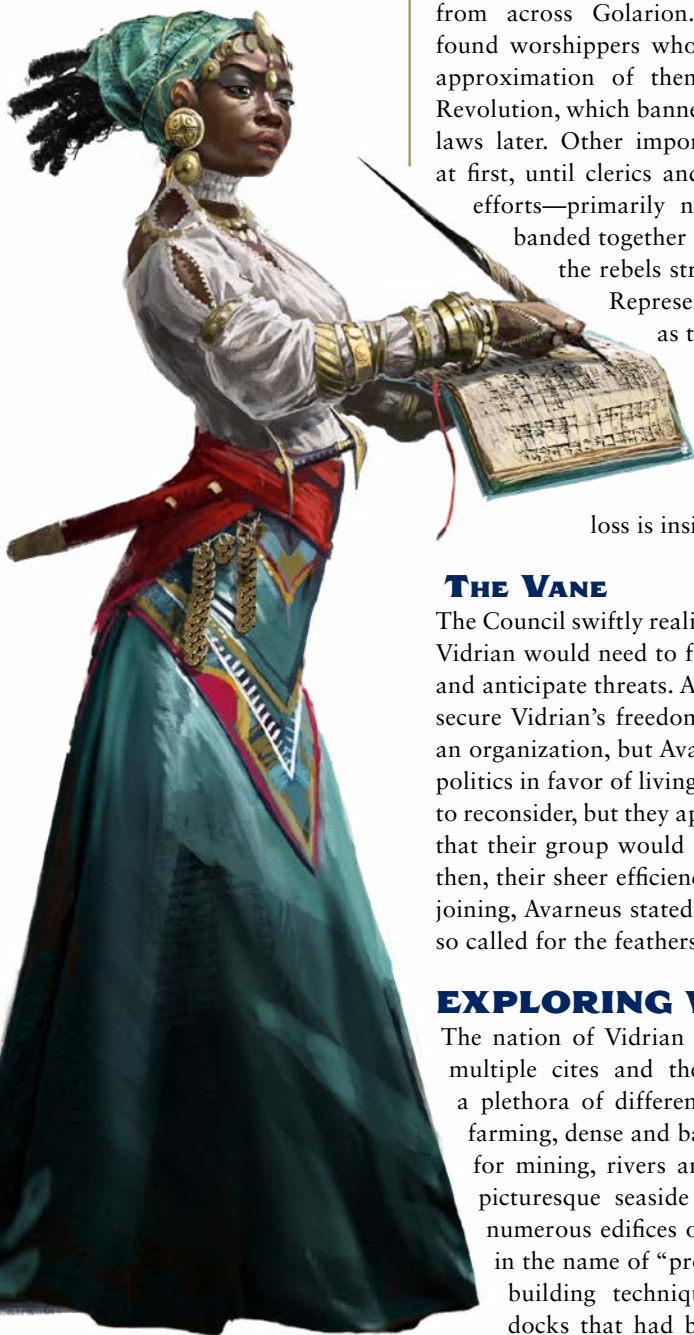
loss is insignificant.

## THE VANE

The Council swiftly realized that, however averse they might be to the idea, Vidrian would need to form an intelligence network to secure its position and anticipate threats. Avarneus, whose innovations and espionage helped secure Vidrian's freedom, was the Council's obvious choice to lead such an organization, but Avarneus bluntly refused attempts to draw them into politics in favor of living a simple life. It's unclear exactly caused Avarneus to reconsider, but they appeared one day at a Council meeting and declared that their group would handle negotiations and foreign diplomacy. Since then, their sheer efficiency has kept them in the seat. A few meetings after joining, Avarneus stated that the name of their group would be the Vane, so called for the feathers that help an arrow fly true.

## EXPLORING VIDRIAN

The nation of Vidrian is unusual in the Mwangi Expanse for claiming multiple cites and the territory between them. The region contains a plethora of different biomes: fertile grasslands that make for good farming, dense and barely penetrable jungles, mountains and hills ideal for mining, rivers and their myriad tributaries and marshlands, and picturesque seaside shores. When Chelax began its colonial rule, numerous edifices of beautiful Mwangi architecture were torn down in the name of "progress," and as a result, many innovative Mwangi building techniques were lost. Colonizers ripped out wooden docks that had been lovingly maintained for centuries but could



# ANTHUSIS



only accommodate small river craft, replacing them with plain stone warehouses capable of disgorging large holds. Chelaxian gentry displaced families from ancestral homes so the colonizers could enjoy prime locations for summer villas. Vast swaths of Mwangi culture were destroyed within a span of years. In the end, this wanton destruction made fertile ground for rebellion and the eventual birth of Vidrian.

In the wake of the revolution, the Council of Vidrian's first act was to grant their many towns, farms, and people the opportunity to rename themselves in order to throw off the shackles of colonial rule. Many did change their names, some returning to ancestral names nearly lost to time. But others simply continued to use their foreign-born titles in pure defiance of the Sargavan colonialists, as if daring them to return and start another fight. The names of some settlements and farms vary greatly depending on the residents' moods and shifting public opinions, with some choosing names that uplift the spirits or borrow from nearby land formations, like Umnyango and M'neri Valley Cattle Ranch. Others are blunt descriptions of the location with some flair for the dramatic, such as the Scorched Fields.

## ANTHUSIS

Once the colonial capital Eleder, Anthusis struggles to balance the small dock town it once was with the bustling

port city it was forced to become under Sargavan rule. The city still seeks to heal its revolutionary scars, which remain visible in ghoulish tableaux. Statues of Baron Utilinus, Eleder's last colonial custodian, that once stood proudly in the city square now do so beheaded, their stone faces reduced to dust. The statue of Eleder, the young girl who learned the local Mwangi language, leading to their eventual subjugation, stands gagged in front of the Custodian's Palisades as a reminder. The monument's arms are hacked off, and the marble still bears faint traces of graffiti from when the rebellion's anger was fresh, now all but washed away by rain.

The sprawling port makes heavy use of Desperation Bay to allow larger trading ships to unload their goods, which are sent overland or up the Korir River into the interior. It's also a popular port-of-call for would-be adventurers and explorers, much to the chagrin of the Council and some citizens. Many worry that with the threat of colonial exploitation removed, another threat has moved in. Outside of the businesses catering to such visitors, most tend to react coldly toward foreign adventuring parties who inquire about Mwangi artifacts and mysteries.

Most business in Anthusis is concerned with foreign trade and local government, with potential intrigue as the Council of Vidrian plants spies and scouts abroad while trying to root out those placed by others. The Council's disparate organizations constantly plot against each

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## DELTA LIONS OF VIDRIAN

Just south of Vidrian's borders is a river delta with a pride of unusual fauna. A number of lions, stranded generations ago by unexpected flooding, adapted to their new river habitat. These delta lions are the biggest lions in the Mwangi Expanse, with overdeveloped muscles due to constant swimming and an abundance of prey. The lions are large enough to regularly hunt massive prey such as water buffalo, small elephants, and even the large cattle that Vidrian herders keep. While they mostly keep to the delta and only attack humanoids when provoked, most Vidrics keep a respectful distance from their southern border. Of course, this doesn't stop trophy hunters, animal tamers, or ambitious naturalists from venturing into the swampy waters in search of one of these unique beasts.

other or form alliances depending on the circumstances. Commoners appreciate having a representative democracy and work programs that seek to educate and pay them fairly, but they struggle in other ways. Some Sargavan citizens still reside in the same homes their families held for centuries and enjoy privileges that came with their former status. For many in Vidrian, the rebellion isn't over until they are completely free of all outside rule and influence.

## FORT BANDU

Nestled within the Bandu Hills, Fort Bandu's purpose has changed somewhat since the rebellion. It still watches over operations at the Combined Mercantile Interests' mining facilities in the hills, but where the fort's colonial occupants prepared for sabotage and insurrection, the new guard is concerned with miner safety, the jungle's natural dangers, and the concessional bold theft.

The fort is also a training ground and staging point for Vidrian's slowly growing militia. Because watches at Fort Bandu are relatively peaceful, militia personnel can become accustomed to their responsibilities before moving on to assignments requiring more vigilance. The Council hopes to establish more forts and outposts near important sites and frequently asks adventurers to assist with training new patrols in exchange for granting them permission to venture deep into the Laughing Jungle.

## KORIR CROSSING TRADING POST

Rumors of spectral hauntings persisted in the town of Stark Point for years until it dwindled to little more than a small goods shop on the river route between much larger settlements. The population shrank even further in the wake of the Vidric Revolution, when most young and able residents left for bigger and brighter opportunities. Recently, the town's remaining populace have tried to restart its floundering economy by demonstrating it's a safe, peaceful place to make a living. Those efforts started with cleansing and reconsecrating the town and cemetery. The town's previous patron god, Aroden, is dead and no other faith has yet claimed the church. It renamed itself Korir Crossing Trading Post to distance itself from its past and still hopes to entice new residents and business.

## M'NERI VALLEY CATTLE RANCH

When Olgran Macini established the cattle ranch of Freehold, he paid the native Mwangi who worked for him fair wages and offered them basic Chelaxian educations, an anomaly among colonial farmsteads that relied on coercion or outright slavery.

His great-great-granddaughter, **Mindra Macini** (NG female human rancher 7), likewise believes in that ethos and fought tooth and nail to keep the tradition alive when others in her family sought to increase profits. In the wake of the revolution, she reduced her role to financier and handed daily ranch operations to two native Mwangi, a pair of siblings who work as a herder and breeder. Together, they renamed the farmstead to M'neri Valley Cattle Ranch, an acknowledgment of the land on which it stands. Mindra is seen by many as representing the ideal of

cooperation with outsiders: an equitable exchange that benefits and enriches both parties.

Not everyone believes this. Some members of the Combined Mercantile Interests and Field Unions say Mindra should divest herself of all claims entirely—if she genuinely believes that native Mwangi are equals then she should agree that she has no claim over the land at all, even as an investor in ranching efforts. There are also a few Sargavans, those who wish to see the return of colonial rule, who would like to make a harsh example of Mindra and the ranch, though for quite different reasons.

### PORT FREEDOM

Native Mwangi ruled the river outlet town of Port Freedom long before the Vidric Revolution was even a wild dream for the future. As the only people who could safely and reliably navigate barges on the river, their Rivermen's Guild left Sargava's custodians with little recourse but to cede control of the town, and with it the Korir River route inland and its outlet into Desperation Bay. Port Freedom never directly opposed colonial rule, but Sargava's directives were often handled more like suggestions.

By the time the Vidric Revolution reached the town, any opposition had already been bound awaiting judgment. Arguably (but conveniently impossible to prove) some who opposed the Rivermen's Guild and their ironclad rule, but not the rebellion, were among the prisoners. The Rivermen's Guild now sits at the core of the Combined Mercantile Interests, with the organization protecting them as they gain political clout. They're rumored to seek control over more towns from behind the scenes, and some consider them to be little better than the Free Captains—pirates, but with a more socially acceptable name.

### THE SCORCHED FIELDS

For centuries before colonization, local peoples maintained the grasslands bounded by the Bandu Hills, the Laughing Jungle, and the surroundings of Umnyango as fertile growing fields carefully tended and rotated to maximize their potential; a technique slowly learned over time. Those people saw it as their duty to cultivate this land and keep it healthy, thus they took pride in their success. It was one of a handful of places within the Mwangi Expanse considered neutral ground and welcoming to most.

When Chelaxian colonists arrived, they also saw the land's potential, but immediately overtaxed it. The Mwangi keepers who had lovingly tended this land were enslaved to work it for their new overlords. The land fell fallow after several decades of heavy, careless use, and Chelaxian mages used magic to force it to grow again. The Mwangi who once viewed these fields as home and sanctuary could only watch in horror as every trace of fertility was wrung from the earth in a vicious cycle of increasingly stronger magic and diminishing returns, until finally the fields could no longer be restored. Foreign greed erased the efforts of countless generations in a matter of years.

As the Vidric Revolution rolled across what was now scrubland and ousted the colonists, those who still

### THE PATCHWORK NAVY

At the time of its creation, Vidrian's navy was unique in one aspect—every single one of its ships was stolen. As a rebel force with no government legitimacy, their only means of acquiring a fleet was through daring thefts from Sargavan or Free Captain forces. The navy's flagship, the *Umbral Spark*, was stolen from the Hurricane Queen Tessa Fairwind herself. This has led to a number of lingering grudges among local pirates, colonialists, and shipping magnates. While Vidrian now has the funds to requisition ships from foreign sellers, it's still scrambling to establish a ship building industry of its own. The government is considering strong incentives to lure accomplished shipwrights into its cities. Until then, the Vidrian navy is still very willing to steal any hostile ship that attacks its people and is exceptionally interested in tales of salvageable wrecks.

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## ODD JOBS

Foreigners are often surprised to learn that the Vidric government offers bounties for seemingly harmless creatures, including sparrows, starlings, house mice, and stray pet dogs. These animals were deliberately released by Chelaxian colonists and have become wildly invasive in the time since.



remembered their ancestors' teachings knew what needed to be done. The region was set ablaze and burned slowly, sparking efforts to restore necessary nutrients to the land and hopefully begin a healthy growing cycle. However, they had not accounted for the temperamental effects of magic; the land smolders to this day, though the druids and alchemists studying it say new growth is hidden just beneath the ashes.

## SILVERTREE

The people of Silvertree—formerly called Crown's End and renamed for the nearby trees—have been at odds with the Vidric Council in the wake of the rebellion. The Council wants to turn the town into a naval base while its people had hoped to become a center for trade and commerce. The Combined Mercantile Interests, in particular, didn't want the Briars to gain more political capital and challenge their authority, which has led to a logistical stalemate, amplified by disgruntled rumblings from the populace, especially from those who've migrated from the Shackles.

Many of Silvertree's residents have a criminal record they'd like to forget, but others have no compunctions about their past, including former colonial-era ruler **Ilina Ysande** (CN female human rogue 8). Once Vidrian began to focus its efforts on prosecuting slavers, smugglers, and pirates, many residents of Silvertree had to cut deals, flee, or create new identities for themselves. Some who evaded capture left for more welcoming places, such as the Shackles, while others still slink in the periphery, hoping to use the cover of commerce to someday restore their quiet haven of illicit smuggling.

## SMUGGLER'S SHIV

While still known as Smuggler's Shiv by all official accounting, the tiny uninhabited island has earned a place of unexpected honor in the hearts of the people of Anthisis and other ports along Desperation Bay. The rebels of Anthisis bled the Sargavan government dry with the aid of a few Shackles pirates while watching as the Free Captains scuttled numerous ships on the island's shores.

As the revolution moved inland, many who remained on the coast began to wonder about Smuggler's Shiv. How true were the rumors of pirates burying treasures there, and what about the tales of ghosts and hauntings? More than that, would anyone be able to navigate the treacherously rocky way to the shoreline? The few brave souls who went to see for themselves returned terrified—or not at all. Financial concerns led the Council to send their own agents, but these expeditions all ended in similar fashion, and the island was declared a safety hazard. Still, stories persist of undead creatures guarding the vast treasures of many a Free Captain, and these tales continue to attract people foolhardy enough to seek the island out.

## SWEETFIELDS FARMS & DISTILLERY

Resting over the bones of what was once Arionne Manor Plantation just south of the Bandu Hills, Sweetfields is still one of the largest sugarcane growers in Vidrian, as well as one of the primary producers of rums and candies within the Combined Mercantile Interests. As the rebellion drew near, the slaves of Arionne Manor enacted a bold plan: using a controlled burn with the very rum they spent their lives making, they trapped the retreating nobles so they might face the justice of Vidrian fairly.

The roaring flames burned very little in the end, however, and the fields and distilling equipment were untouched. The sole structure lost was the lavish manor house, which burnt to the



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ground after its former Sargavan occupants had been taken into custody.

Sweetfields was born out of a desire to build something good upon the ashes of past evil. With the help of the Alchemists' Commune in Umnyango, they've even refined their process. Their commitment to crafting high quality products sets them apart from other distilleries and makes them highly sought after in foreign markets.

### UMNYANGO

The city of Umnyango—recently changed from Kalabuto—is technically the largest in Vidrian, but its hard-to-reach location and the choke hold of the Rivermen's Guild over the Korir River made it an unfit location for a capital. Even still, the city has flourished as a bastion of history and traditions forgotten elsewhere in Vidrian. Even before the colonial government was pushed from the city, belief in the child god Walkena grew when straggling survivors of the failed invasion returned with tales of a mummy rising to thwart them. Those who still believe in the undead god remain adamant that these events in Mzali were a precursor to the Vidric Revolution.

Belief in Walkena is confined to a small portion of Umnyango's people, kept in check by those Vidrics who fought in battles for their freedoms and refugees of Mzali who fled here in fear of retribution from their undead

child god. There's little believers in Walkena can do to promote their faith without outside influence from the god himself, but those who believe are eager to spread the word of Walkena through whatever means necessary.

While Umnyango did not endure the same level of damage as Anthusis, it was still scarred by the conflict that took place here, which is reflected in its continued efforts to rebuild. Rather than simply fixing the established Sargavan infrastructure, the people of Umnyango have chosen to model their new city more after Mzali architecture. Many believe this is simply because the buildings in Mzali have endured for centuries and people wish for their city to flourish in the same way. However, the truth traces back to **Tinashe Abioye** (LN male human mason 6), head of the Stonemasons' Collective in Umnyango and fervent believer in the power of Walkena. His absolute faith and misguided dedication to the undead god has the potential to draw both attention and a wrath that could level the city entirely.

The Pathfinder Society also hopes to establish a lodge here, though the entire process has been mired in bureaucracy and the city has only reluctantly decided to allow it. The fear that any outsiders who come to the Mwangi Expanse will try to exploit it still lingers fresh, but they are also aware of the dangers that lurk within the jungles. Who better to fight against them than intrepid and foolhardy adventurers?



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The Mwangi Expanse inspires countless legends of multi-headed terrors, ravenous beasts, and enigmatic evils. Most are misinterpretations and exaggerations fed by foreign imaginations, yet for every ill-founded myth are at least three very real threats. With such a sprawling array of jungles, savannas, hills, and lakes, the Expanse's inhabitants have evolved to master many environments and rule myriad microbiomes, resulting in astonishing diversity. From mundane beasts to sophisticated societies, the following is only a fraction of the extraordinary creatures that inhabit the Mwangi Expanse.

## MWANGI EXPANSE CREATURES

Creature	Source
Ahuizotl	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 12
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Drake, River	<i>Bestiary</i> 131
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Giant Toad	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 261
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Gnoll	<i>Bestiary</i> 178
Golem, Stone	<i>Bestiary</i> 187
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## NURVATCHA

The largest group of anadis live in the southern Garundi nation of Nurvatcha, and other villages in the surrounding region. Anadis also live in Casmaron and on some of ruined Azlant's smaller islands. Regardless of their homes and origins, they share common values and cultural characteristics.

## ANADI

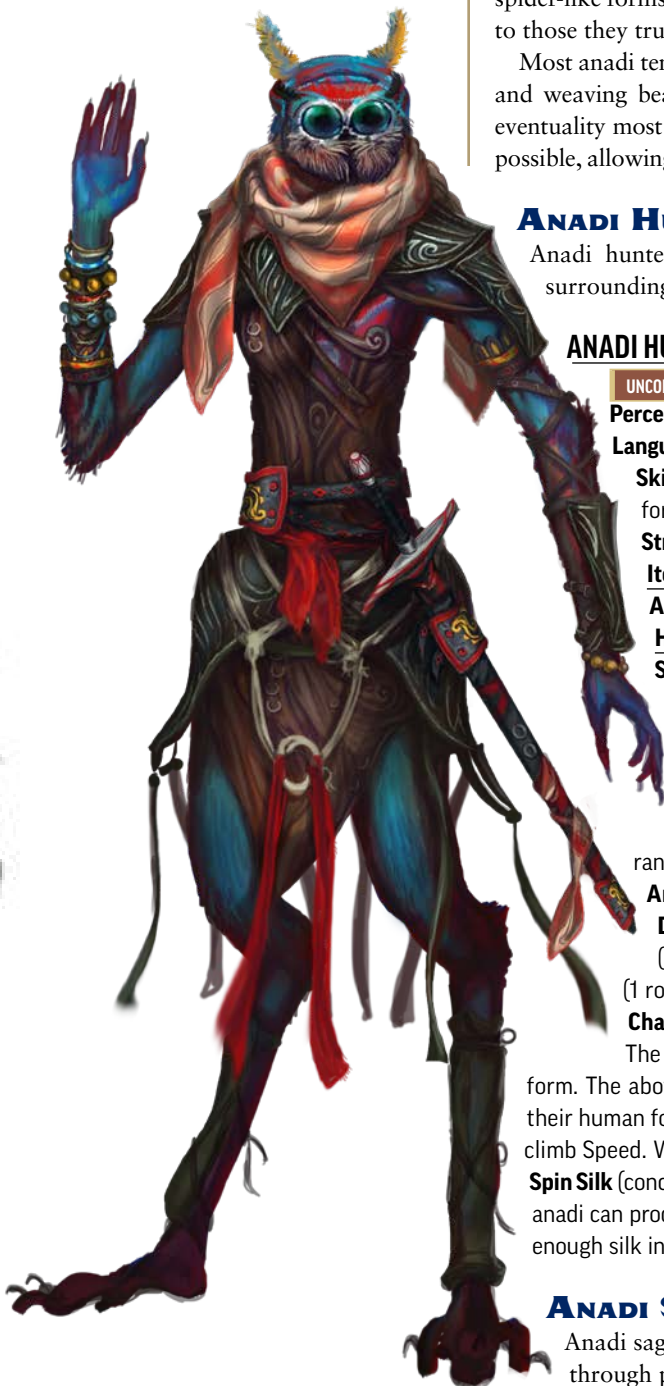
Anadis are peaceful, reclusive humanoids who live deep within woodlands, jungles, and other untamed areas of wilderness. Their natural forms resemble humanoid spiders covered in beautiful and distinctive markings of varying colors. These patterns are as unique as other humanoids' facial features, birthmarks, and other identifying aspects.

Anadis possess an innate talent for illusion and transmutation. They learned long ago how off-putting their natural forms can be to other humanoids, so they frequently use their innate talents to assume human forms. When they do so, only a strange, lovely sheen to their dark eyes and the deliberative, jerky movements of their gestures might indicate that an anadi is not entirely what they appear. As they are well aware of and accommodating toward other humanoids' delicate sensibilities about arachnids, many anadis consider it rude to show their natural forms to a stranger. Instead, most display their spider-like forms only as an intimidation tactic when threatened, or in privacy to those they trust.

Most anadi tend to be shy and seek to live quiet lives harvesting mushrooms and weaving beautiful, patterned silk cloth. When forced into combat—an eventuality most anadis despise—they shift into their hybrid forms as soon as possible, allowing them to inflict their devastating natural venom on their foes.

## ANADI HUNTER

Anadi hunters act as the eyes and ears of their people by scouting surrounding areas for potential invaders.



## CREATURE 2

### ANADI HUNTER

UNCOMMON CG MEDIUM ANADI HUMANOID

**Perception** +9

**Languages** Anadi, Mwangi

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Athletics +6 (+8 to Climb in hybrid or spider form), Crafting +6 (+10 to weaving), Nature +5, Stealth +8

**Str** +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

**Items** composite shortbow (20 arrows), leather armor, shortsword

**AC** 17; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

**HP** 27

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ✦ shortsword +9 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

**Melee** ✦ fangs +9 (finesse), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing plus anadi venom

**Ranged** ✦ composite shortbow +9 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

**Anadi Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 15 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 4 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage, flat-footed, and clumsy 1 (1 round)

**Change Shape** ✦ (arcane, concentrate, polymorph, transmutation)

The anadi changes into their hybrid form, spider form, or human form. The above statistics assume the anadi is in their hybrid form. While in their human form, the anadi hunter can't use their fangs attack and loses their climb Speed. When in spider form, they can't use weapons.

**Spin Silk** (concentrate, exploration, manipulate) By spending several minutes, an anadi can produce silk to craft items made of cloth. A single anadi can produce enough silk in a day to craft a single garment.

## ANADI SAGE

Anadi sages commune with nature and hone their innate magic through practice.

## ANADI SAGE

## CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON CG MEDIUM ANADI HUMANOID

**Perception** +12

**Languages** Anadi, Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +12 (+14 to Climb in hybrid or spider form), Crafting +10 (+14 to weaving), Deception +8, Diplomacy +10, Nature +12, Survival +10

**Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Items** hide armor, shortsword

**AC** 20; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

**HP** 58

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ✦ shortsword +12 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

**Melee** ✦ fangs +12 (finesse), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing plus anadi venom

**Arcane Innate Spells** DC 21; **2nd** *blur*, *illusory creature*; **1st** *color spray*, *illusory disguise*, *illusory object*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*

**Anadi Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 19 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 4 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage, flat-footed, and clumsy 1 (1 round)

**Change Shape** ✦ (arcane, concentrate, polymorph, transmutation) As anadi hunter.

**Spin Silk** As anadi hunter.

## ANADI ELDER

Anadi elders help guide their kin and must make difficult decisions for their people, such as whether to continue hostile negotiations or to escalate a disagreement to outright conflict.

## ANADI ELDER

## CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON CG MEDIUM ANADI HUMANOID

**Perception** +15

**Languages** Anadi, Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +15 (+17 to Climb in hybrid or spider form), Crafting +13 (+17 to weaving), Deception +13, Diplomacy +11, Nature +15, Society +11, Survival +13

**Str** +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Items** composite longbow (20 arrows), hide armor, shortsword

**AC** 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17

**HP** 95

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ✦ shortsword +15 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

**Melee** ✦ fangs +16 (finesse), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing plus anadi venom

**Ranged** ✦ composite longbow +16 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+1 piercing

**Arcane Innate Spells** DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** *hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility sphere*; **2nd** *blur*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*; **1st** *color spray*, *illusory disguise*, *illusory object*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*

**Anadi Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison damage, flat-footed, and clumsy 1 (1 round)

**Change Shape** ✦ (arcane, concentrate, polymorph, transmutation) As anadi hunter.

**Spin Silk** As anadi hunter.



## GRANDMOTHER SPIDER

Many anadi villages believe deeply in the teachings of Grandmother Spider, the goddess of twilight, weaving, illusion, and family. The most devout anadi believe that this goddess, sometimes called Nana Anadi, long ago led their ancestors from servitude. The legend goes that when darkness frightened the anadi, Grandmother Spider plucked the dewdrops from her web to hang in the sky and light the night for them. Nana Anadi is an honorary matriarch to many in Nurvatcha, though the goddess has never taken the nation's throne—and most believe she would never wish to do so, anyway.

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## THE FIRST AIGAMUXAS

Stories say aigamuxas were once giants who entered into a wager with Lamashtu, claiming they could stand on their hands longer than any other creature. Lamashtu produced a simple chimpanzee, pointed to its feet and called them hands. The giants could not hold their positions and fell. Lamashtu moved their eyes to their feet and told them, "If you wish to boast of your ability, let this be your blessing."

## AIGAMUXA

Aigamuxas are towering humanoids that stalk arid deserts in search of prey. Carnivorous and voracious, they hunt anything that moves but especially relish eating sentient creatures. Many Mwangi people incorrectly refer to aigamuxas as demons, while others more accurately describe them as having descended from giants. Aigamuxas resemble large humans with smooth hollows where their eyes should be, but their eyes are actually embedded in the soles of their feet. They sport long, sharp claws and teeth that they use to tear their prey apart once they catch them. A moving aigamuxa's odd gait resembles dancing more than a typical walk or run, but its speed is alarming, if difficult to correctly estimate at a distance.

An aigamuxa's unique physiology makes catching prey difficult, and most aigamuxas are constantly hungry. When pursuing prey, an aigamuxa must occasionally stop to lift its feet in order to regain their bearings. Most stand on their hands while looking around, which allows them to immediately backflip back into a run. An aigamuxa's eyes are generally resistant to the sands of their native desert habitats, but irritants such as chilies or caltrops can seriously impair their hunting ability, and desert travelers often carry a bag of these in case they need to deal with an aigamuxa.

Clever aigamuxas know that attacking wandering prey can be very dangerous, instead using their powerful hands to dig deep into sand dunes or dirt and wait to ambush passersby. Aigamuxas are particularly good at hiding in their home environments, and unfortunate travelers often don't notice the barely visible eyes of an aigamuxa until it's too late.

### AIGAMUXA

### CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CE LARGE GIANT HUMANOID

**Perception** +19; scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +18, Intimidation +16, Stealth +14 (+18 in deserts)

**Str** +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

**Limited Vision** An aigamuxa's eyes are located on the bottom of their feet, making it difficult for them to see. An aigamuxa is typically blind. If they Seek, they can see normally until the end of their turn.

**Weak Feet** If an aigamuxa takes damage from Striding or Stepping into hazardous terrain or a square with similar grounded hazards (such as caltrops), they can't Seek until the end of their next turn.

**AC** 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

**HP** 140

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ claw +20 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus Grab

**Melee** ♦ jaws +20, **Damage** 2d12+9 piercing

**Burrowed Ambush** ♦♦ **Requirements** The aigamuxa is Hiding in dirt, sand, or another soft surface; **Effect** The aigamuxa makes a claw Strike against a creature within reach. On a hit, the aigamuxa automatically Grabs the creature. Whether or not they hit, the aigamuxa then Strides. If they have a creature grabbed, the creature moves with the aigamuxa.

**Burrowing Concealment** ♦♦ **Requirement** The aigamuxa is standing on dirt, sand, or another soft surface; **Effect** The aigamuxa quickly digs into the surface and Hides. They leave their feet partially exposed, allowing them to see out from the surface. The aigamuxa can hold their breath for up to 10 minutes while hiding in this way.

**Swallow Whole** ♦ (attack) Small, 2d12+4 bludgeoning, Rupture 22



## ASANBOSAM

Asanbosams are monstrous, hairy humanoids with cold iron fangs and muscular limbs that end in powerful, hooked claws. They hang in treetops from their hooked feet, waiting patiently for a creature to pass by below. Asanbosams grab their prey from above, latching onto their unfortunate victims' necks to drain their blood. They react to perceived intrusions with belligerence, stalking visitors from high branches. Locals tell horror stories of these "bloodsucking tree-folk," and experienced explorers keep a close watch on the treetops in asanbosam territory. Visitors to the Expanse often compare asanbosams to vampires, but these horrors aren't undead and bear no relation.

An asanbosam's diet calls for a large amount of iron (typically in the form of blood) to maintain the integrity of its oversized cold iron teeth. When not hunting or mating, an asanbosam spends its waking hours chewing on certain types of rocks to sharpen its teeth.

Some folk tales claim that asanbosams are as old as time and the original source of cold iron, and that veins of the metal found in the ground are truly the graveyards of ancient asanbosams. Brave (or foolish) poachers often infiltrate asanbosam territory to hunt these monsters in the hope of collecting sacks of their valuable teeth.



### ASANBOSAM TREASURE

The corpse of a dead asanbosam makes a fine treasure in itself. Extracting the creature's cold iron fangs is no easy process and requires either powerful extraction tools or a vat of chemicals to melt the surrounding bone tissue. The payoff, however, can be substantial in the right market.

### ASANBOSAM

### CREATURE 6

CE LARGE HUMANOID

**Perception** +17; darkvision

**Languages** Mwangi

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Athletics +16, Intimidation +11, Stealth +15, Survival +13

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

**AC** 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

**HP** 95

**Speed** 35 feet, climb 20 feet

**Melee** ♦ cold iron jaws +17 (deadly d8),

**Damage** 2d8+7 piercing

**Melee** ♦ claw +17 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage**

2d6+5 slashing plus Grab

**Attack from Above** ♦♦ **Requirements** The asanbosam

is positioned above a creature; **Effect** The asanbosam makes a claw Strike with its reach increased to 15 feet.

On a hit, the Strike deals an additional 1d6 slashing damage and the asanbosam immediately Grabs the target and pulls it to a space adjacent to the asanbosam. This counts as two attacks for the asanbosam's multiple attack penalty.

**Drink Blood** ♦ **Requirements** A grabbed, paralyzed, restrained, unconscious, or willing creature is within reach of the asanbosam's jaws; **Effect** The asanbosam sinks its teeth into the creature to drink its blood. If the victim is grabbed, this is automatic; otherwise, the asanbosam must succeed at an Athletics check against the victim's Fortitude DC. The victim becomes drained 1 and the asanbosam regains 10 HP, gaining any excess Hit Points beyond its maximum as temporary Hit Points. These temporary Hit Points remain for 1 minute. Drinking Blood from a creature that's already drained increases the victim's drained value by 1 to a maximum of drained 3, but doesn't restore any HP to the asanbosam.

A victim's drained condition decreases by 1 each week. A blood transfusion, which requires a successful DC 20 Medicine check and a blood donor or sufficient blood, reduces the drained value by 1 after 10 minutes.



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## ELOKOBHA

In the jungles north of Lake Ocota, rumors speak of an incredibly powerful eloko who calls himself Emperor

Sharptooth and rules over an entire city of bilokos and other fey, known as Elokobha. While such coordination between the capricious fey is not unheard of, explorers have been unable to verify these stories, as all who attempt to find the biloko settlement are never seen again. Recently, a group of Pathfinders based out of Nantambu has started collecting funds for an expedition to find this mysterious city and return with information (and possibly a wealth of treasure).

The outer structures of Elokobha (page 175) are little more than slapdash constructions, a conglomerate of salvage, scrap wood, and crudely carved limestone. High atop the rocky crags, wooden huts perch upon flats and notches. These are connected to each other via rope bridges, ladders, and zip lines. Far more impressive are the caves within the crags themselves, ancient and partially worked into grand, strangely shaped chambers.

## BILOKO

Bilokos are crocodile-snouted fey who stalk the Mwangi Jungle and feast upon the flesh of humanoids. As cunning as they are vicious, bilokos employ deadly traps and guerrilla hunting tactics to capture prey—typically hapless explorers or, occasionally, wayward villagers, many of whom believe bilokos to be cruel ancestral spirits. The most powerful of these creatures, known as elokos, wield potent transformative magic.

Bilokos have a fondness for bells, and the sound of ringing bells often indicates their presence. In addition to carrying and ringing them while out hunting, bilokos sometimes enchant bells with potent magic, or hang them on strings to serve as alarms for their encampments.

Bilokos look like slender but wiry humanoids with crocodile-like heads, rust-colored skin, and blood-red eyes. They eat only the meat of humanoids, though they can survive for extended periods of time on a single meal thanks to their snakelike ability to consume a Medium humanoid creature whole. They do this by unhinging their jaws and slowly swallowing the victim from head to foot. Thanks to their acidic saliva and sharp teeth, a biloko can masticate their food into an easy-to-digest pulp, grinding flesh and bone into a compact mush, even while swallowing; thus, they do not flinch while devouring meals two or three times their own size.

A recently-fed biloko can be easily recognized by their sagging, distended belly. However, despite their slow appearance, the fey is no less dangerous then, as they delight in killing and might have hungry comrades hiding nearby, waiting to feed.

## BILOKO WARRIOR

Bilokos prefer to move in small, stealthy packs through dark, isolated sections of the forest. When a band of bilokos finds a suitable hunting ground, they claim the area exclusively, digging pit traps, crafting snares from vines, and building blinds high in trees where they can lie in ambush.

### BILOKO WARRIOR

CREATURE 1

NE SMALL FEY

**Perception** +7; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Mwangi, Sylvan

**Skills** Athletics +7, Crafting +7, Nature +5, Stealth +6, Survival +6

**Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** -1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

**Items** spear, wooden shield (Hardness 3, HP 12, BT 6)

**AC** 16 (18 with shield raised); **Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

**HP** 19

**Shield Block** ↻

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** ✦ jaws +7, **Damage** 1d8+3 piercing

**Melee** ✦ spear +7, **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

**Ranged** ✦ spear +6 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

**Primal Innate Spells** DC 14; **1st** charm

**Inspired Feast** (emotion, mental) If a biloko feasts on a human corpse for 1 minute or more, they gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and a +2 status bonus to damage rolls for 1 hour.

## BILOKO VETERAN

A biloko who has led a sufficient number of successful hunts garners the respect (and fear) of their companions.

### BILOKO VETERAN

CREATURE 4

NE SMALL FEY

**Perception** +11; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Mwangi, Sylvan

**Skills** Athletics +10, Crafting +10, Intimidation +12, Nature +9, Stealth +13, Survival +11  
**Str** +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

**Items** longspear, shortbow (20 arrows)


**AC** 21; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11


**HP** 58

**Attack of Opportunity** 

**Speed** 20 feet



**Melee**  jaws +12, **Damage** 2d8+4 piercing

**Melee**  longspear +12 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

**Ranged**  shortbow +12 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0),  
**Damage** 1d6+4 piercing

**Primal Innate Spells** DC 18; **1st** *charm*

**Inspired Feast** (emotion, mental) As biloko warrior.

**Swipe**   The veteran makes a melee Strike and compares the attack roll result to the AC of up to two foes, each of whom must be within their melee reach and adjacent to each other. Roll damage only once and apply it to each creature hit. A Swipe counts as two attacks for the biloko veteran's multiple attack penalty.

## ELOKO

If a biloko is lucky enough to consume several spellcasters or other creatures with innate magical abilities, they undergo a subtle transformation over the course of 1 week. Such a fey is known as an eloko, and in addition to their incredible appetite (even by biloko standards), they have the supernatural ability to grow to immense size.

## ELOKO

## CREATURE 7

NE SMALL FEY

**Perception** +15; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Aklo, Mwangi,  
Sylvan

**Skills** Athletics +18,  
Crafting +13, Deception  
+15, Nature +13, Stealth  
+16, Survival +13

**Str** +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +0,  
**Wis** +4, **Cha** +1


**Items** blowgun (10 poisoned darts),  
+1 dagger


**AC** 25; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +15


**HP** 115

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee**  jaws +16, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing



**Melee**  dagger +16 (agile, magical, versatile S),  
**Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

**Ranged**  blowgun +16 (agile, nonlethal, range  
increment 20 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1  
piercing plus 2d4 persistent poison

**Ranged**  dagger +16 (agile, magical, thrown  
10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

**Primal Innate Spells** DC 22; **1st** *charm*

**Inspired Feast** (emotion, mental) As  
biloko warrior.

**Size Alteration**   (polymorph, primal,  
transmutation) The eloko is affected by a  
4th-level *enlarge* spell. This lasts for 1 minute, and the eloko can Dismiss  
the Spell.

**Sneak Attack** (precision) The eloko deals 2d6 extra  
precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



## CHARMING PREDATORS

Bilokos' connection to the First World grants them a limited ability to supernaturally charm their enemies. Bilokos use this power to lure stragglers away from their adventuring parties or confuse their opponents when a raid goes horribly awry. Large hunting parties of bilokos might charm entire groups of travelers, in which case these bilokos might bring their enchanted quarry back to their community to feast on (though they are more likely to simply enjoy the spoils of their efforts alone).

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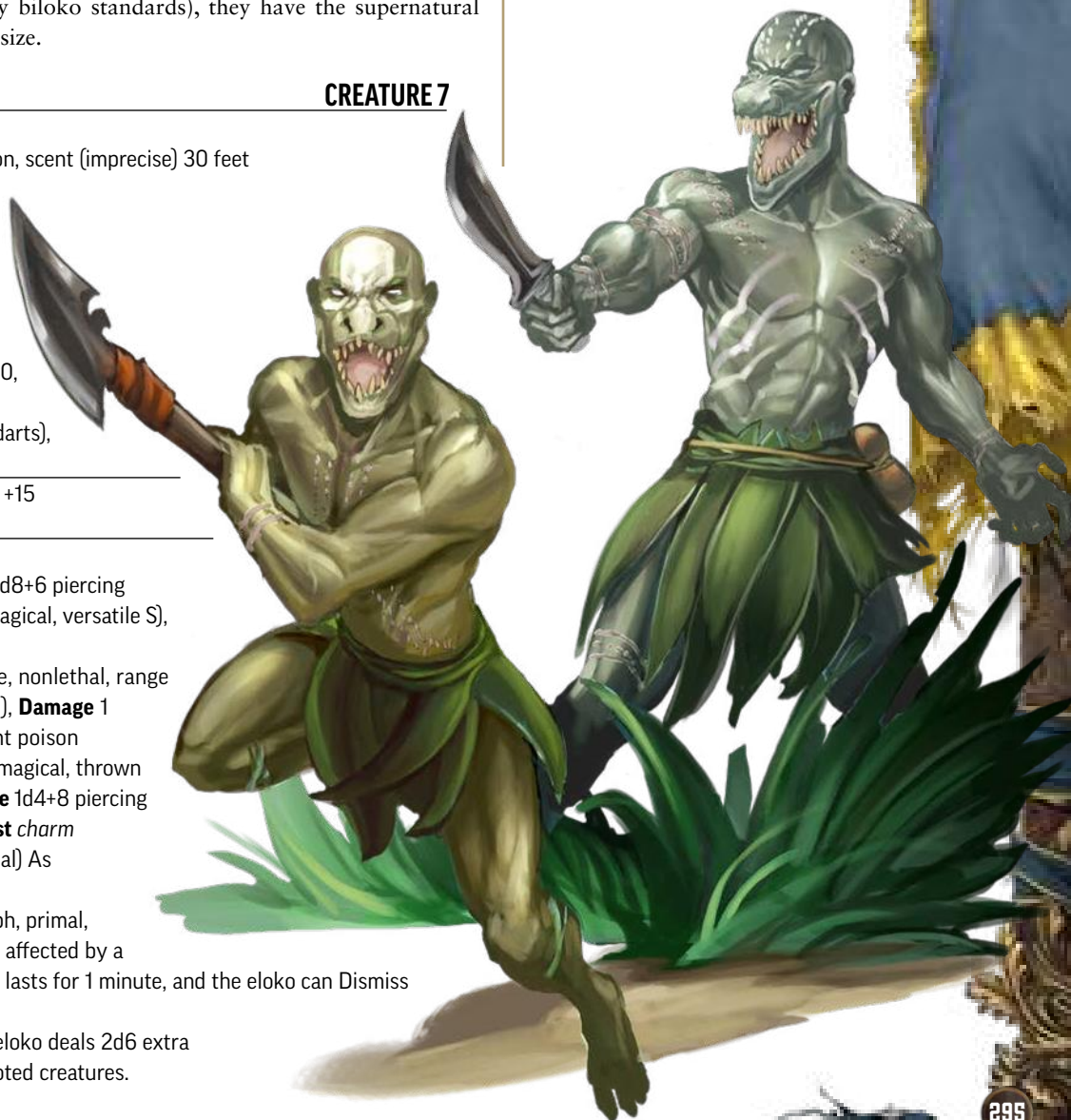
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## KIBWE REFUGEES

Not every charau-ka follows Angazhan or intends to slaughter every creature they meet. When Usaro collapsed into bloody chaos, a sizable number of charau-ka fled east to the city of Kibwe where they were welcomed with surprisingly few qualms. Though these charau-ka are rarely altruistic, they are willing enough to cooperate with other ancestries out of self-interest.

## CHARAU-KA

Legend tells that charau-ka share ancestry with the demon lord Angazhan, who transformed the dead bodies of humans who waged war against his cult, causing them to rise as the first of the mandrill-like humanoids. Though long unproven, rumors persist that charau-ka priests have perfected a hideous ritual that forces the slain to reincarnate as new charau-ka in honor of this ancient tale. Other stories say that powerful altars devoted to Angazhan contain this power, and that conducting ritual sacrifices before these magical artifacts causes the spirits of the dead to return to life as violent devotees of Angazhan, the master of those who revel in savagery and destruction.

The largest charau-ka stronghold in the Mwangi Expanse is the city of Usaro (page 266), located on the shores of Lake Ocota. Though the death of their Gorilla King has led to political turmoil, the charau-ka will happily unite to kidnap or murder any outsiders in the area.

### CHARAU-KA WARRIOR

A charau-ka warrior carries hatchets, daggers, and similar weaponry on their person. They usually don't worry about running out of thrown weapons, as rocks plucked from the ground are just as deadly in their hands.

#### CHARAU-KA WARRIOR

#### CREATURE 1

NE SMALL CHARAU-KA HUMANOID

**Perception** +6; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Draconic, Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +6, Religion +4, Stealth +6

**Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

**Items** dagger, hatchet, hide armor

**AC** 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

**HP** 20

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ hatchet +7 (agile, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+3 slashing

**Melee** ♦ dagger +7 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing

**Melee** ♦ fist +7 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+3 bludgeoning

**Ranged** ♦ hatchet +7 (agile, deadly d6, sweep, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 slashing

**Ranged** ♦ dagger +7 (agile, deadly d6, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing

**Ranged** ♦ thrown debris +7 (deadly d6, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 bludgeoning

**Shrieking Frenzy** ♦ (primal, transmutation) **Frequency** once per hour; **Trigger** The charau-ka's turn begins; **Effect** The charau-ka is quickened until the end of their turn and can use the extra action only to Stride or Strike. While in the frenzy, the charau-ka can't speak and automatically critically fails Stealth checks, due to their loud wailing.

**Thrown Weapon Mastery** Any weapon a charau-ka throws gains the deadly d6 weapon trait. Furthermore, when a charau-ka throws an improvised weapon, they do not take the -2 penalty for doing so, nor does they take a penalty for using a thrown improvised weapon with the nonlethal trait to make a lethal attack.

### CHARAU-KA ACOLYTE OF ANGAZHAN

Even with the Gorilla King's fall, many charau-ka still worship the terrible might of the god Angazhan (page 133). The strongest of these acolytes guard the steps of the High Throne in Usaro, ensuring that no one without Angazhan's favor or suitable physical prowess can approach the top of the massive stone step pyramid.

## CHARAU-KA ACOLYTE OF ANGAZHAN

CREATURE 3

NE SMALL CHARAU-KA HUMANOID

**Perception** +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Abyssal, Draconic, Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +7, Intimidation +7, Nature +9, Religion +11, Stealth +7

**Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Items** hide armor, spear

**AC** 19; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

**HP** 45

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ✦ spear +10 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+5 piercing

**Melee** ✦ fist +10 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+5 bludgeoning

**Ranged** ✦ spear +10 (deadly d6, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+5 piercing

**Ranged** ✦ thrown debris +10 (deadly d6, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+5 bludgeoning

**Divine Prepared Spells** DC 17, attack +11; **2nd** *entangle*, *sound burst*; **1st** *fear*, *heal*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *daze*, *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *guidance*, *message*

**Shrieking Frenzy** ✦ (primal, transmutation) As charau-ka warrior.

**Thrown Weapon Mastery** As charau-ka warrior.

## CHARAU-KA BUTCHER

While charau-ka are infamous for their brutality, some even frighten their own kind in their obsession with violence. These deadly butchers are well-versed in the art of inflicting vicious, bloody wounds on their enemies, and they consider anyone not charau-ka an enemy. A single taste of a foe's blood can grant one terrifying strength, as if the charau-ka butcher literally gains power from their victims' pain.

## CHARAU-KA BUTCHER

CREATURE 6

NE SMALL CHARAU-KA HUMANOID

**Perception** +13; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Draconic, Mwangi

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +15, Intimidation +14, Religion +9, Stealth +13

**Str** +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

**Items** hide armor, +1 striking trident

**AC** 21; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13

**HP** 95

**Attack of Opportunity** 2

**Blood Fury** 2 (manipulate) **Trigger** The charau-ka butcher deals bleed damage to a creature; **Effect** The charau-ka licks blood from their weapon, becoming furious. They regain 5 Hit Points and gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls until the end of their turn.

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ✦ trident +17 (magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

**Melee** ✦ fist +15 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+8 bludgeoning

**Ranged** ✦ trident +16 (deadly d6, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing

**Ranged** ✦ thrown debris +15 (deadly d6, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

**Mauler** While the charau-ka butcher is raging, their melee Strikes deal an additional 1d4 persistent bleed damage.

**Rage** ✦ As the barbarian class ability; **AC** 22, +9 Hit Points, +2 melee damage.

**Shrieking Frenzy** ✦ (primal, transmutation) As charau-ka warrior.

**Thrown Weapon Mastery** As charau-ka warrior.



## CHARAU-KA SETTLEMENTS

Charau-ka generally dwell in small groups consisting of a few dozen members. They often keep dangerous jungle creatures as pets or guardians, trusting their rangers or animal handlers to keep these deadly beasts under control. It's not uncommon to find a group of charau-ka who cage a wild beast in the midst of their village, sacrificing victims to it or tormenting it by holding it as a living trophy. A typical charau-ka village extends from the jungle floor up into the canopy above and usually includes several treehouse-style structures connected by vines or rope bridges.

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## UNWISE CREATIONS

The grootslang sounds like a cruel cosmic prank by the gods of creation.

Tales among the Mwangi peoples claim that when Golarion was young, an unwise and now forgotten deity created beasts with unmatched strength and cunning, which became the first grootslangs. These creatures proved too fearsome, and the deities separated them to create the first elephants and snakes. One of these grootslangs escaped, however, and the deities were unable to stop grootslangs from repopulating as they hid among the Mwangi Expanse.

## GROOTSLANG

While it's easy to mistake a grootslang for an elephant upon first glance, once the rest of its body becomes visible, the creature resembles a grotesque puppet manipulated like a marionette from the inside by a snake large enough to swallow a building. A grootslang stands 20 feet tall, with skin like plated armor and a pair of massive forearms. It sports six deadly tusks capable of piercing flesh and bone with ease. The rest of its body extends up to 60 feet long. A grootslang's face resembles that of an elephant, but much like its serpentine cousins, it can unhinge its lower jaw to swallow its prey.

A person encountering a grootslang has a slight chance of reasoning with or bribing the beast, possibly escaping a deadly fate. A hoard of gems is no guarantee of safety, however, and a particularly cruel grootslang will just as likely go back on their word upon receiving the offering.

### GROOTSLANG

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON CE GARGANTUAN BEAST

**Perception** +28; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

**Languages** Aquan, Draconic, Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +34, Intimidation +28, Nature +26, Stealth +23

**Str** +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +8, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +0

**Deep Breath** A grootslang can hold its breath for 1 hour.

**AC** 38; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +26

**HP** 370

#### Attack of Opportunity ↻

**Speed** 40 feet, swim 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ foot +30 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+15 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ jaws +28 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 piercing plus Improved Grab

**Melee** ♦ tail +28 (agile, magical, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 bludgeoning plus Grab

**Melee** ♦ tusk +30 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+15 piercing

**Aquatic Elusion** ♦♦ (concentrate, conjuration, teleportation, primal) **Requirements** The grootslang is fully immersed in water; **Effect** The grootslang teleports to another body of water within 1 mile that is wide enough to hold the grootslang.

**Defensive Coil** ♦♦ The grootslang coils its body. It gains 20 resistance against physical attacks until the start of its next turn.

**Greater Constrict** ♦ tail only, 2d12+12 bludgeoning, DC 34

**Swallow Whole** ♦ jaws only, Huge, 3d12+10 bludgeoning, Rupture 37

**Thunderous Slam** ♦♦♦ The grootslang makes a foot Strike against a creature in reach. Whether or not the Strike hits, all creatures within 10 feet of the grootslang must attempt a DC 37 Reflex save.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is flat-footed until the end of its turn.

**Failure** The creature is knocked prone and takes 2d8 bludgeoning damage.

**Critical Failure** As failure, except the creature takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage.



## K'NONNA

K'nonna are half human—and only half, in the most literal sense. They most often resemble the right half of a human, and less frequently the left half, split perfectly down the middle starting at the crown of their head. They accordingly have one eye, one ear, one arm, one leg, half of a nose, and half of a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth. A faint shimmer in the air, like the waves over a hot stone, hints at where their other half would be.

Despite the bizarre appearance of the k'nonna, they have no trouble balancing or performing everyday tasks that might be impeded by missing half of their bodies. They are extremely dexterous, able to perform complex tasks with only a single hand. The nature of their missing half has so far defied explanation; it is not invisible, nor does it exist on another plane, yet it seems to exert enough force for a k'nonna to walk like a human being.

No one is certain of the k'nonna's origins, except that they are not of this world and not descended from any known mortal creature. Banishment magic has no effect on them, implying they do not come from another plane. They are intelligent but difficult to communicate with—they speak only in half words and hear only half of what anyone says. K'nonna are also much less interested in talking than eating, and humanoids happen to be their favorite meal. The remains of a k'nonna's victim are unmistakable, as they only consume half the body.

Stories tell of the half-people's love for gifts, especially jewelry. Offerings of rings and necklaces easily distract a k'nonna long enough for prey to escape. Particularly bold victims might try to trick a k'nonna into wearing a bracelet that binds their one visible wrist or ankle to immobilize them, though the tactic is not foolproof, as a k'nonna displeased with their gifts will hunt the person who displeased them for the rest of their days.



### STRANGE ORIGINS

In ancient times, k'nonna were simply said to come from "another world." However, even as Mwangi scholars gain a greater understanding of the galaxy and multiverse at large, they have been unable to determine what world that could be. No discovered planets have any known species like them, and k'nonna don't come from any known plane. The very existence of k'nonna stands as proof that the universe is still much wider than anyone knows.

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## K'NONNA

## CREATURE 8

NE MEDIUM ABERRATION

**Perception** +16; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

**Languages** Mwangi (half; see Half Speaker)

**Skills** Athletics +21, Stealth +16

**Str** +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

**AC** 26; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

**HP** 140

**Gilded Fascination** When offered a gift worth at least 50 gp, the k'nonna must attempt a DC 20 Will saving throw; if the gift is worth at least 100 gp, the DC is instead 25. If they fail the save, the k'nonna accepts the gift, becomes fascinated until the end of their next turn, and cannot attack while fascinated. On a critical failure, the fascination lasts for 1 minute. Offering a gift is an Interact action, and offering multiple gifts in the same round has no additional effect.

**Half-Speaker** A k'nonna can communicate easily with other k'nonna, but when communicating with other creatures, only half of the spoken words make sense. In order to convey information to a k'nonna or understand what they're saying, a non-k'nonna must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check.

**Half Steps** Even though k'nonna are split in half, they still move and Stride as though they have two arms and legs. However, binding just one wrist or ankle leaves them incapable of using that limb, as if it were bound to another.

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ✦ fist +20 (agile), **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning

**Melee** ✦ jaws +20, **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing plus Grab

**Pounce** ✦ The k'nonna Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. If the k'nonna began this action hidden, they remain hidden until after this ability's Strike.





## KAAVA DIPLOMACY

The term kaava is both singular and plural, which reflects their community-driven nature; obligation and duty define kaava culture, principally their duty to each other. Due to unpleasant interactions with humanoids in the past, most kaava are insular and suspicious, and have a tendency to attack intruders with little provocation. A stranger can earn a kaava's grudging trust through numerous patient and peaceful interactions, but even then a kaava is unlikely to go out of their way to provide aid to anyone they deem an outsider.

## KAAVA

Kaava are stealthy, jungle-dwelling humanoids with short down feathers that can easily be mistaken for fur from a distance. Kaava have tough scales beneath these feathers. Both the scales and feathers have mutable pigmentation that allows a kaava to blend into surrounding foliage like a chameleon.

## PYGMY KAAVA

An unusually large number of kaava living in the Kaava Lands are relatively small, standing about 3 feet tall and weighing about 30 pounds. Pygmy kaava openly show their disdain for larger kaava, and the two groups rarely get along. Pygmy kaava often hunt alongside trained bush vipers or black mamba snakes.

### PYGMY KAAVA

CREATURE 0

**N** **SMALL** **HUMANOID**

**Perception** +6; low-light vision

**Languages** Kaava, Mwangi

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4, Stealth +7 (+9 in forests or jungles), Survival +6

**Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** obsidian sickle, spear

**Trackless** A kaava moving at half their Speed or less steps so lightly that they leave virtually no trace. The DCs of checks to Track a kaava are increased by 10.

**AC** 15; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

**HP** 15; **Resistances** poison 2

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** sickle +8 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 1d4+2 slashing

**Melee** jaws +7, **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

**Ranged** spear +8 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

**Woodland Stride** A kaava ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain from non-magical foliage.

## KAAVA STALKER

Kaava hunting parties can number in the dozens, although they blend easily into the forest and cover all traces of their passage. While community elders assign various tasks to hunting parties, such as recovering food or deterring intruders, the parties are expected to accomplish these tasks as they see fit.

### KAAVA STALKER

CREATURE 1

**N** **SMALL** **HUMANOID**

**Perception** +7; low-light vision

**Languages** Kaava, Mwangi

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Athletics +6, Intimidation +5, Stealth +9 (+11 in forests or jungles), Survival +7

**Str** +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** obsidian sickle, spear (3)

**Trackless** As pygmy kaava.

**AC** 16; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

**HP** 20; **Resistances** poison 3

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** sickle +9 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 1d4+3 slashing

**Melee** jaws +8, **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

**Ranged** spear +9 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

**Skulking Attack** If a kaava stalker starts their turn hidden from or undetected by a creature, that creature is flat-footed against the kaava's attacks until the end of the turn.



## KARINA

Karinas—also known as plague birds—are large owl-like creatures with dark red feathers, powerful talons, and unsettling eyes. Their broad wings conceal a pair of wiry humanoid arms that end in clawed fingers, which they use to dig through burial sites in search of corpses. The fell purpose of this is still a mystery, though most believe that karinas make off with these dead bodies to consume them in the safety of their lairs. The difficulty of tracking the beasts, as well as the danger, makes it difficult to know for sure.

A karina's terrifying appearance suggests that they're not natural creatures. Many legends claim that karinas first flew out of Abaddon to the Material Plane to consume the corpses of the first mortals, while others state that the first karina was born from the soul of the first mortal who partook in cannibalism. The power of good repulses karinas, suggesting an evil or fiendish origin.

Karinas are plague carriers and intentionally attack creatures to spread their own personal pestilence. The supernatural disease they carry, known as grave blight, causes fever, disorientation, and (at later stages) an innate desire to attack others and spread the disease. Karinas revel in the slow collapse of villages, lurking in the surrounding jungle to observe every miserable moment. As the locals bury their dead, the karinas swoop in to steal the corpses.

In addition to carrying a terrible disease, karinas also have the ability to mimic voices. They typically repeat phrases they've heard, but twist the voice into a fiendish corruption of the original. Intelligent enough to recognize the friends and family of a possible target, a karina will use the mocking voice of a loved one to frighten them. When terrorizing a village, they generally work together in groups of two or three.



## GRAVE KARINAS

Legends speak of powerful karinas that have stolen the corpses of important figures or powerful creatures and consumed part of the corpse's soul in the process. The soul empowers the karina, which becomes a grave karina. Legends describe grave karinas as more savage in appearance and prone to attack all creatures, including other karinas. They supposedly have the power to manipulate others through their shadows and can breathe burning ash to burn their victims.

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## KARINA

## CREATURE 5

NE LARGE BEAST FIEND

**Perception** +12; darkvision

**Languages** Mwangi (can't speak any language)

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Athletics +12, Deception +12, Stealth +15

**Str** +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +6

**Sound Imitation** A karina who succeeds at a Deception check to Lie can mimic any voice they have heard. They have a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

**AC** 21; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

**HP** 95; **Weaknesses** good 5

**Speed** 10 feet, fly 40 feet

**Melee** ♦ beak +15 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus grave blight

**Melee** ♦ claws +13 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d6+5 slashing plus grave blight

**Melee** ♦ talons +15 (magical), **Damage** 1d10+5 piercing plus Grab

**Grave Blight** (disease) **Saving Throw** DC 19

Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage, sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** 1d8 poison damage, every hour the victim must succeed at another Fortitude save or be confused for 1 minute, sickened 2 (1 day)

**Mocking Cry** ♦ (auditory) The karina mimics a voice and mocks a creature within 30 feet. They attempt a Deception check to Demoralize the creature. Regardless of whether the check succeeds, the target creature is temporarily immune to the karina's Mocking Cry for 1 hour.





## MONSTROUS PRIDE

Due to their boundless arrogance, maliadis are unlikely to associate with others of their kind for extended periods, although they readily accept the services of smaller creatures they think might prove useful or expendable. They also dislike remaining in any form that doesn't convey their size and majesty for long. Those who know of a maliadi's hubris can often exploit it, such as by demanding a trial by combat to force the maliadi to leave an area alone.

## MALIADI

A maliadi resembles a massive hippopotamus surrounded by a collar of flame. Maliadis are arrogant and tyrannical, and demand tribute from everyone they encounter—whether lone travelers or entire villages—to avert destruction. Many pay them off, for maliadis can hurl parts of their flaming collars to form geysers of flame or fiery walls, and they're also powerful shapeshifters.

### MALIADI

### CREATURE 17

UNCOMMON LE GARGANTUAN BEAST

**Perception** +29; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet, *true seeing*

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Draconic, Mwangi

**Skills** Athletics +36, Deception +28, Intimidation +28, Nature +29, Survival +29


**Str** +9, **Dex** +3, **Con** +9, **Int** +1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +3

**Deep Breath** The maliadi can hold its breath for 1 day.


**AC** 40; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +25, **Will** +28


**HP** 285; **Immunities** death effects, fire

**Collar of Fire** (abjuration, fire, primal) The maliadi has resistance 20 to physical ranged attacks, such as arrows, bolts, javelins, and thrown rocks, as such attacks are magically diverted through its collar of fire. Nonmagical weapons and ammunition affected by this ability are incinerated and destroyed.

**Counterspelling Wall**  (evocation, fire, primal) **Trigger** A creature within 100 feet of the maliadi that the maliadi can see Casts a Spell that targets the maliadi; **Effect** The maliadi casts one of its innate *wall of fire* spells, with a duration of 1 round. If the spell that triggered this reaction passes through the *wall of fire*, the wall attempts to counteract it, with a counteract modifier of +28.

**Speed** 30 feet, swim 20 feet; *freedom of movement*


**Melee**  **jaws** +35 (deadly d12, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+19 piercing plus Improved Grab


**Melee**  **foot** +35 (agile, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d10+17 bludgeoning




**Primal Innate Spells** DC 38, attack +30;


**9th** *wall of fire* (×3), *wall of stone* (×3);




**8th** *fire shield*, *volcanic eruption*; **4th** *air walk*, *gaseous form*; **Cantrips (9th)** *detect magic*, *produce flame*; **Constant (8th)** *freedom of movement*; **(7th)** *true seeing*

**Capsize**  The maliadi tries to capsize an adjacent aquatic vessel of its size or smaller. The maliadi must succeed at a DC 35 Athletics check (reduced by 5 for each size smaller the vessel is than the maliadi) or the pilot's Sailing Lore DC, whichever is higher.

**Change Shape**  The maliadi can take on the appearance of any Large, Huge, or Gargantuan animal. This doesn't change its Speed or Strikes.

**River Form**    The maliadi takes on the form of a stretch of river, with the effects of *wind walk*, except the maliadi can only affect itself, appears as a section of a flowing river that takes up the same space as the maliadi, and can't leave the ground.

**Swallow Whole**  Huge, 3d10+17 bludgeoning, Rupture 35

**Trample**    Huge or smaller, foot, DC 38



## MAMLAMBO

Mamlambos are river predators with hypnotic, bioluminescent skin. They appear similar to crocodiles, but the narrow head at the end of their long necks resembles a horse's skull, and their four legs are stubby and inefficient for land movement. Their skin's green glow is only barely visible in daylight or when underwater, though the glow is difficult to resist. As a result, they're frequently trailed by fish, birds, or other river creatures ensnared by the alluring radiance.

Humanoids are mamlambos' favorite prey, particularly humans, although they strangely prefer to only eat their victims' faces and brains. Mamlambos are dim-witted but sly, and sometimes hide their victims under submerged rocks or logs to make their discovery less likely. A mamlambo might be active in a region for days or even weeks before its presence is discovered.

### MAMLAMBO

### CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON NE HUGE AQUATIC BEAST

**Perception** +19; darkvision

**Skills** Athletics +21, Stealth +19, Survival +17 (+19 to Track)

**Str** +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** -3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

**Luminous Lure** (aura, emotion, enchantment, incapacitation, light, mental, primal) 30 feet. The mamlambo emits dim light from its skin. A creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura must attempt a DC 23 Will save. Humanoids take a -2 penalty to this saving throw. Regardless of the save's result, the creature is temporarily immune for 10 minutes.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is slowed 1 for 1 round.

**Failure** The creature is fascinated, and for as long as it is in the aura it must spend at least 1 of its actions on each of its turns to move closer to the mamlambo as expediently as possible, while avoiding obvious dangers. If the creature ends its movement or turn adjacent to the mamlambo, it is slowed 1 until it is out of the aura or until the mamlambo makes a Strike against it. The target can attempt a new Will save at the beginning of each of their subsequent turns, and on a success, the effect ends.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the creature must spend each of its actions moving closer to the mamlambo, and if it ends its movement or turn adjacent to the mamlambo, it is paralyzed until it is out of the aura or until the mamlambo makes a Strike against it.

**AC** 28; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +20, **Will** +15

**HP** 155

**Attack of Opportunity** ↻ Tail only.

**Speed** 10 feet, swim 40 feet

**Melee** ✦ jaws +21 (reach 10 feet), **Damage**

2d8+11 piercing plus Improved Grab

**Melee** ✦ tail +21 (agile, reach 15 feet),

**Damage** 2d6+11 bludgeoning

**Aquatic Ambush** ✦

**Face Eater** ✦ **Requirements** The mamlambo

has a creature grabbed or restrained, or there is a dying, immobilized, or unconscious creature within the mamlambo's reach; **Effect** The mamlambo deals 2d8+11 piercing damage to the creature (DC 28 basic Fortitude save). On a failure, the creature also takes an additional 2d6 persistent bleed damage, or 4d6 persistent bleed damage on a critical failure.



### AN UNUSUAL PHOBIA

Mamlambos have an unusually strong aversion to river otters, despite being much larger and more dangerous. Since mamlambos rarely remain in an area inhabited by otters for long, river-dwelling people in the Mwangi Expanse often keep trained otters to aid in fishing and to ward off the potential presence of a mamlambo.

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## ROMPO PACKS

Rompos tend to live in isolation, and on their own are so timid their behavior borders on cowardice. But in larger environments that can support them, like the Mwangi Jungle, rompos travel in packs of up to a dozen and become unusually aggressive. These packs actively hunt animals much larger than themselves, such as water buffalo, and one or two rompos cry through the night to deter other animals from their dens.

## ROMPO

Rompos are unusual creatures that feed on corpses. They have thin, almost-skeletal bodies with strong rear legs that resemble a bear's, front legs like a badger's, and a head like a hare's with humanoid ears. A rompo tends to be timid on its own; it avoids other creatures and typically flees in the presence of larger animals. Though no more intelligent than any other beast, it usually acts with extreme paranoia, dodging traps or ambushes with an uncanny acumen. When danger is present, a rompo utters a loud cry to afford itself space to run and hides by using its body's natural color-shifting fur as camouflage.

Although rompos sport the perfect physical features to act as predators, they tend to live their lives as solitary scavengers of leftover corpses. Rompos prefer to avoid hunting for themselves since they risk sustaining injuries in the process. It's not uncommon for rompos to follow other predators for hours, waiting for an opportunity to feast on the leftover remains of a hunt.

Once a rompo gains access to a meal, it takes several minutes circling the corpse to make sure the area is clear. As it begins to feast, it lets out a whimpering cry that fascinates and compels other creatures to keep away so that the rompo can feed in peace. Due to its constant feeding on decaying flesh, a rompo's mouth is filled with rot, parasites, and deadly pathogens. Its bite can impart these combined infections as a dangerous disease known as rompo chills. The disease causes its victim to tremble uncontrollably, lightly at first but eventually developing into a violent shaking that ends with the victim's death. Despite their cautious nature, rompos always seem to linger close to creatures they infect with rompo chills; though they remain unseen while the victim lives, they emerge when that victim finally succumbs, in order to feed on the corpse.

## ROMPO

## CREATURE 5

N MEDIUM BEAST

**Perception** +15; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Skills** Athletics +13, Stealth +12, Survival +12

**Str** +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Camouflage** The rompo can change its coloration to match its surroundings. It doesn't need cover to attempt to Hide with a Stealth check.

**AC** 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

**HP** 80

**Speed** 30 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** **◆** jaws +15, **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus rompo chills

**Melee** **◆** claws +13 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+5 slashing

**Crooning Cry** **◆◆** (enchantment, incapacitation, mental, primal) 60 feet. The rompo hums in a low voice. Each creature within the emanation must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become fascinated and compelled to move away from

the rompo, traveling to the furthest edge of the emanation.

Fascinated creatures are also flat-footed. The effect lasts for 1 round, but if the rompo spends a single action on subsequent rounds, it can extend the duration by 1 round for all affected creatures. If the rompo attacks, the fascinated condition ends only for the creature that is attacked. On a successful save, a creature is temporarily immune to Crooning Cry for 24 hours.

**Rompo Chills** (disease) The target can't reduce its sickened condition while affected by rompo chills; **Saving Throw** DC 19 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** clumsy 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** clumsy 1 and sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** clumsy 2 and sickened 2 (1 day); **Stage 4** unconscious (1 day); **Stage 5** dead



## SIÉ GOLUO

Sié Goluo, sometimes referred to simply as Grandfather, is an ancient spirit that has kept watch over the peoples of the Mwangi Expanse for generations. Most believe he first appeared during the Age of Darkness to protect the Mwangi people from the worst dangers of the everlasting night. Bekyar storytellers claim he is older still, from a time before the first people walked Golarion. This immortal spirit has incarnated into multiple forms over millennia. In the oldest surviving tales, they say Sié Goluo looked like an ordinary—if oversized—ox, save for his nearly human-looking eyes. Most recently, people say he has the appearance of several different animals, but accounts vary on which animals make up his form.

When a traveling farmer is assailed by a deadly beast, or a small village faces the wrath of an advancing army, Sié Goluo manifests in whatever form will allow him to best defend them. There seem to be no geographical limitations on where he can manifest, as there are tales of him saving Mwangi adventurers as far spread as Tian Xia and Arcadia.

### SIÉ GOLUO

### CREATURE 14

UNIQUE NG HUGE BEAST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT

**Perception** +25; imprecise scent 60 feet

**Languages** Mwangi (can't speak any language)

**Skills** Athletics +31, Diplomacy +28, Intimidation +31, Nature +31, Survival +28

**Str** +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +8, **Int** +1, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +4

**AC** 36; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +20, **Will** +28

**HP** 320, rejuvenation; **Immunities**

death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or negative; double resistance against non-magical)

**Rejuvenation** (divine, necromancy)

When Sié Goluo is destroyed, he reforms, fully healed, at a location of his choosing anywhere on the Material Plane after 2d4 days. If every person of Mwangi descent rejects belief in Sié Goluo, the spirit is permanently destroyed.

**Ancestral Response** **◆ Trigger** A creature on the Material Plane calls out for Sié Goluo; **Effect** Sié Goluo instantaneously appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the triggering creature and heals 8d8 hit points on all allies that can see him within 60 feet. Allies healed this way gain a +2 circumstance bonus on saving throws for 1 minute. Creatures that receive these benefits become temporarily immune to them for 1 year.

#### Ferocity

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** **◆** horn +31 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+16 piercing damage plus 1d12 force damage

**Spirit Charge** **◆◆** Sié Goluo Strides twice, then makes a horn Strike. On a hit, Sié Goluo creates a shock wave that deals 4d12 force damage in a 30-foot cone (DC 34 basic Reflex save). Creatures that fail their save are pushed away 5 feet (10 feet on a critical failure).

**Spirit Steps** Sié Goluo ignores difficult terrain and doesn't trigger traps with his movement.

**Primal Innate Spells** DC 34; **3rd humanoid form** (at will); **Constant (1st) pass without trace**



### AN ABSENT RELATIVE

Because sightings are so rare, not all Mwangi people believe Sié Goluo exists. Many regard him as merely another children's tale spun by their grandparents to soothe them to sleep. After all, there is very little physical evidence of his existence, he can't be reached through divination, and he disappears without a trace when he finishes what he set out to do. Some skeptics, when recounting tales of their death-defying exploits, might end their story with the phrase, "And Grandfather nowhere in sight!"

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## A SEVERED CONNECTION

Scholars who know of Atreia, the elemental lord of fire, suspect solar ibises might be related to the imprisoned demigod; Atreia is said to take the form of a three-headed ibis and was known for his holy, purifying flame. That this is mere coincidence seems too implausible to consider, but solar ibis don't acknowledge any connection to the demigod, leaving some to wonder if Atreia's imprisonment caused the sun birds to unconsciously forget their origins.

## SOLAR IBIS

Solar ibis are beings of light sometimes called sun birds, or “winged luminaries” by the more scholarly inclined. They're tasked with guarding sacred places or items, although they sometimes also protect the living from places of incredible danger. Their appearance is always preceded by numerous small purple-winged birds with a splash of yellow on their crowns; these are avatars of the ibis that nest and congregate in areas it protects. The presence of these avatars is often the only way to track these reclusive and solitary creatures. Should the solar ibis choose to appear, these little birds scatter like wild fowl. The sun bird then manifests and bathes the area in a brilliant shower of light that can blind and startle unwary and unprepared creatures in its presence.

The solar ibis appears as a magnificent, large bird surrounded by a halo of brilliant light. Its black feathers shimmer with all the colors of the spectrum, casting glossy rainbows across its plumage. It has a keen sense of insight, which it uses to pass judgment as a whole on whether those before it are worthy to access what it guards. It punishes those it finds unworthy with its cleansing might.

Though considered sacred by most within the Mwangi Expanse, there are still some who hunt these glorious creatures; some seek the treasures that the ibis keep, while others seek the ibis themselves, dead or alive. Some believe that the feathers of a solar ibis, when burned, create an incense that can grant holy power to those that inhale it. Others believe that its bones and feet can be ground into a powder that can destroy demons and purify the undead.

### SOLAR IBIS

### CREATURE 7

NG MEDIUM BEAST

**Perception** +17; darkvision, low-light vision

**Languages** Mwangi, Sylvan (can't speak any language)

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Athletics +14

**Str** +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

**AC** 25; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

**HP** 45

**Blinding Halo** (arcane, aura, light) 30 feet. The solar ibis's halo sheds bright light. Creatures that start their turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or be dazzled for 1 minute. A creature that critically fails its save is instead blinded for 1 minute. Creatures who successfully save are temporarily immune to this effect for 24 hours. The solar ibis can extinguish or resume the halo's light as a single action, which has the concentrate trait.

**Evasion** When a solar ibis succeeds at a Reflex save, it gets a critical success instead.

**Speed** 10 feet, fly 60 feet

**Melee** ✦ beak +18, **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing

**Melee** ✦ talon +18 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus Grab

**Ibis Dive** ✦✦ The solar ibis Flies up to double its fly Speed in a straight line, descends at least 10 feet, and then makes a talon Strike.

**Light Shatter** ✦✦ (arcane, evocation, fire, good, light) The solar ibis detonates its halo, sending shards of burning light in all directions that deal 6d8 fire damage to all creatures in a 20-foot emanation (DC 22 basic Reflex save). The shards deal an extra 6d8 good damage against fiends and undead. The solar ibis can't use Light Shatter again for 1d4 rounds, and its Blinding Halo is extinguished during this time. The halo is restored automatically once the 1d4 rounds have passed.



## ZINBA

Commonly known as ghost serpents, zinbas are rare, amphibious snakes with healing abilities. They're of similar size to other large snakes, such as pythons, but have a distinct bright blue coloring with red-and-black patterned stripes along their backs. This distinct coloration is easy to spot, but zinbas can swim through the wet mud and soft earth of their homes to avoid being tracked by all but the most skilled pursuers. This elusiveness inspires their "ghost serpent" moniker.

A zinba can metabolize a unique additive for its venom that converts it from a deadly poison to a healing agent, which makes zinbas particularly valuable in the eyes of healers and poachers. There is a high demand for zinbas in many markets; live serpents fetch a hefty sum, but zinba eggs are especially valuable, as zinbas reared in captivity are less willful and more likely to eat in confinement. Their elusiveness, however, leads many to search for their dens instead, which are large pools of water among remote wetlands or underground hollows near bodies of water. The water of a zinba's pool also has minor but valuable healing qualities, but removing water from a den causes it to lose its healing properties after a few hours, so most who find a den attempt to immediately make use of it.

Even finding dens is a difficult prospect, since zinbas are particularly intelligent for animals and can recognize signs of travelers near their favored hiding places. When there are signs of danger, a zinba collapses its lair and flees to create another den elsewhere.

### ZINBA

### CREATURE 10

RARE N LARGE AMPHIBIOUS BEAST

**Perception** +20; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

**Languages** Sylvan (can't speak any language)

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Athletics +25, Stealth +18, Survival +18

**Str** +8, **Dex** +3, **Con** +7, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

**AC** 28; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +20, **Will** +18

**HP** 220

**Tighten Coils** **↷ Trigger** A creature grabbed or restrained by the zinba attempts to Escape; **Effect** The DC of the Escape check is increased by 2.

**Speed** 30 feet, burrow 10 feet, climb 30 feet, swim 30 feet

**Melee** **◆** jaws +21, **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing plus Grab and zinba venom

**Melee** **◆** tail +21 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning plus Push 10 feet

**Greater Constrict** **◆** 2d10+6 bludgeoning, DC 29

**Slither** **◆** The zinba Strides, Climbs, or Swims up to half its Speed, pulling any creatures it has grabbed with it.

**Swallow Whole** **◆** (attack) Medium, 2d10+6 bludgeoning, Rupture 23

**Zinba Restoration** **◆** (necromancy, positive)

The zinba bites a creature within reach and delivers a restorative healing remedy instead of its venom. The creature takes 1 point of piercing damage, but then gains fast healing 5 for 1 minute. In addition, the restorative attempts a counteract check against any poison or disease affecting the creature with a counteract modifier of +22. A creature that receives the restorative is temporarily immune to the zinba's restorative for 24 hours.

**Zinba Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 29 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison and drained 1



### ZINBA DENS

The water in a zinba's den is suffused with its healing properties, making it as valuable as a zinba itself. Creatures that drink from these waters gain the curative effects of Zinba Restoration. This water can be placed into a container and removed from the den, but the curative effects fade 1d4 hours after removing the water. After a creature drinks water from a zinba's den, it is temporarily immune to the water's effects and the Zinba Restoration of the resident zinba for 24 hours.

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# GLOSSARY AND INDEX

This appendix contains brief explanations and page references for the content presented in this book, including new rules, locations, deities, organizations, and so on. New rules content is marked with an asterisk (\*).

**aaasimar** A planar scion descended from a celestial. 129, *Advanced Player's Guide* 34–36

**Abadar** Lawful neutral god of cities, law, and wealth. Known as the Master of the First Vault. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 12–13

**Abaddon** A vast wasteland plane that is the source of the river Styx and home to the fiends known as daemons. The plane is neutral evil. *Gamemastery Guide* 142

**Absalom Reckoning** The most commonly used calendar in Avistan and Garund, consisting of 52 weeks across 12 months. The current year is 4721 AR.

**Absalom** The largest city in the Inner Sea region, Absalom was founded by Aroden and is located on Starstone Isle. *Lost Omens World Guide*, 12–21

**Abyss** An endless winding plane full of dangerous chasms and home to the fiends known as demons. The plane is chaotic evil. *Gamemastery Guide* 142

**Abysmal** Believed to be the first language developed in the Outer Sphere. Commonly spoken by demons.

**access** Certain uncommon abilities, feats, and other options have an Access entry. Characters who meet the criteria in the entry gain access to that option. *Gamemastery Guide* 35

**Achaek** Lawful evil god of assassins, divine punishment, and the Red Mantis. Called He Who Walks in Blood. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 52

**Adanye** Lawful good goddess of hearth, imagination, protection, and solitude. Known as The Warmth of the Hearth. 132

**adjustment (trait)** Items with this trait are intended to alter existing pieces of equipment, typically armors, shields, and weapons. The given item will note which type of equipment it modifies. A piece of equipment can only be affected by a single adjustment at a time. Unless otherwise noted, adding or removing an adjustment requires using a 10-minute activity and a repair kit.

**Age of Anguish** The age ranging from -4294 AR to -3470 AR taking place after the dust from Earthfall had settled. The age was full of conflict as the peoples of Golarion struggled to rebuild and survive. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

**Age of Darkness** The age following Earthfall, ranging from -5293 AR to -4294 AR. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

**Age of Destiny** The age ranging from -3470 AR to 1 AR during which many of Golarion's civilizations became well-established and flourished. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7

**Age of Enthronement** The age ranging from 1 AR to 4606 AR, kicked off by the god Aroden raising the Starstone from the Inner Sea and founding Absalom. The age was characterized by the expansion of nations and the ascension of several new deities. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7–8

**Age of Legend** The age of humans and other mortals taking place after the Age of Serpents and before Earthfall. The age is characterized by the prominence of ancient empires like the Azlant empire. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

**Age of Lost Omens** The age brought about by the death of Aroden, ranging from 4606 AR to the modern day. *Lost Omens World Guide* 8–9

**Age of Serpents** The age in which the first mortals came to be on Golarion taking place sometime after the Age of Creation. Characterized by the serpentfolk empire, the first of Golarion's great empires. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

**aiudara** Powerful gates created by elves to allow travel across great distances. Also known as elf gates.

**Akiton** Fourth planet from the sun known as the Red Planet. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9

**Alijæ** One of the three subgroups that make up the Mualijæ elves, Alijæ live in the northern Mwangi Expanse. 32–41

**Alkenstar** A city-state located in the central Mana Wastes. The city is known for unique technologies, including firearms. *Lost Omens World Guide* 74–76

**amurrun** See catfolk. 126

**anadi** A reclusive people from Garund who resemble spiders and can assume human forms. 102–105

**Andoran** A relatively young nation in southern Avistan known for its adherence to democracy and personal freedom. *Lost Omens World Guide* 122–124

**Angazhan**\* Chaotic evil god of apes, jungles, and tyrants. Known as The Ravenous King. 133

**Anthusis** Capital of Vidrian, formerly the colonialist capital Eleder. 283–284

**Arcadia** One of Golarion's continents, lying west of the Inner Sea region past the ruins of Azlant. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6–7

**Aroden** Lawful neutral god of humanity, innovation, history, culture, and fulfillment of destiny. Known as the Last Azlanti. Now deceased. *Lost Omens World Guide* 14, 21

**Asmodeus** Lawful evil god of contracts, pride, slavery, and tyranny. Known as the Prince of Darkness. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 14–15

**Aspis Consortium** A prominent trade organization which spans the Inner Sea region and is known for unscrupulous practices. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 65

**asura** Lawful evil extraplanar creatures born from the gods' mistakes, who seek to destroy the gods' creations. They primarily reside in Hell. *Bestiary* 3 22–25

**Avistan** One of Golarion's continents. It makes up the northern half of the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7

**Axis** A massive planar city that is known for its adherence to law and home to the monitors known as aeons. The plane is lawful neutral. *Gamemastery Guide* 142

**Azlant** One of the greatest nations during the Age of Legend. The empire was destroyed during Earthfall, and its ruins remain as islands in the Arcadian Ocean. *Lost Omens World Guide* 8, 62–63

**Azlanti** The Azlanti are the people of the ancient empire of Azlant. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 10

**Balumbdar**\* Neutral god of great size, megafauna, and strength. Known as The World Shaker. 134

**Bandu Hills** A mountainous region in the southeast of the Mwangi Expanse that is filled with undead and precious minerals. 148–151

**Barrier Wall** A large mountain range spanning across southern Osirion, Rahadoum, and Thuvia. 152–153

**Bekyari** A major Mwangi ethnic subgroup originating from southwestern Garund. 24

**Besmara** Chaotic neutral goddess of piracy, sea monsters, and strife. Known as the Pirate Queen. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 55

**Bestiary**\* 289–307

**Biloko** Crocodile-snouted fey that are particularly violent and hunt in the southern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 126, 294–295

**Bloodcove** A port city located in the western Mwangi Expanse. Known for the prominence of pirates and other criminals among its populace. 184–195

**Boggard** Boggards are frog-like humanoids. They typically have darkvision. 126

**Boneyard** A plane where the souls of the dead travel in the afterlife. Home to the monitors known as psychopomps. The plane is neutral. *Gamemastery Guide* 142–143

**Bonuwat** A major Mwangi ethnic subgroup living along Garund's western coast. 25

**Caldaru** A major Mwangi ethnic subgroup in western Garund. 25–26

**Calistria** Chaotic neutral goddess of lust, revenge, and trickery. Known as the Savored Sting. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 16–17

**Casmaron** One of Golarion's continents. Located immediately east of the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7

**catfolk** Humanoids with feline features and a love of discovery. See amurrun. 126, *Advanced Player's Guide* 8–11

**Cayden Cailean** The chaotic good god of bravery, ale, freedom, and wine, also known as the Drunken Hero. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 18–19

**celestial** Creatures who hail from or have a strong connection to the good-aligned planes.

**charau-ka** Mandrill-like humanoids that are brutal warriors. Many charau-ka live in Usaro. 127, 296–297

**Chelixa** A nation in southwest Avistan. Known for its ties to diabolic rule. *Lost Omens World Guide* 98–100

**Chohar**\* Lawful good god of justice, loyalty, and work. Known as The Golden Lion. 135

**contracts**\* 230

**conrasu**\* A people that are made of cosmic force given consciousness and housed within unique exoskeletons. 106–109

**Dark Tapestry** The dark spaces between the stars. Believed to be home to beings far beyond the comprehension of mortals and even gods.

**Darklands** The immense area of caverns, vaults, and passages beneath the surface of Golarion. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7–8

**Dead Roads** The metaphysical network connecting the Boneyard to the Material Plane. Used by psychopomps to travel between these planes.

**Desna** Chaotic good goddess of dreams, luck, stars, and travelers. Known as the Song of the Spheres. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 20–21

**Earthfall** A cataclysmic event in –5293 AR, in which a rain of meteorites fell upon Golarion and caused massive destruction.

**Elephant People** A migratory human group descended from a mix of Mauxi and Osiriani ancestors. 30

**Ekujae** One of the three groups that arose from the Mualijae elves, Ekujae predominantly live in the western Mwangi Expanse. 42–51

**Eldest** A group of deities that keep their attention on the First World. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 78–79

**Eleder** see Anthusis.

**equipment\*** 34, 87, 207, 258

**Erastil** Lawful good god of family, farming, hunting, and trade. Known as Old Deadeye. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 22–23

**Ergaksen** One of three major dwarven groups, Ergaksen live on the surface of Golarion. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 17

**Eye of Abendego** An enormous hurricane nestled between Mediogalti Island, the Shackles, and the Sodden Lands. *Lost Omens World Guide* 63–64

**Eye of Dread** The region in central Avistan consisting of the Gravelands, Lake Encarthan, Molthune, Nirmathas, Oprak, and Ustalav. *Lost Omens World Guide* 36–47

**feats\*** 59, 93, 204

**Fever Sea** The name for the portion of the Arcadian Ocean that lies off the western coast of Garund.

**Feychild gnome** A gnome ethnicity with an affinity for primal magic. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 30

**fiend** Creatures who hail from or have a strong connection to the evil aligned planes.

**Findeladlara** The chaotic good goddess of architecture, art, and twilight is sometimes called the Guiding Hand. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 128–129

**Firebrands** A rebellious organization known for its members' daredevil acts and their work in fighting oppression. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 66–75

**First World** A plane that overlaps the Material Plane and is said to be a "rough draft" of existence. It is home to vibrant landscapes and fey. *Gamemastery Guide* 141

**Five Kings Mountains** A region in southeast Avistan considered the center of dwarven civilization in the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 125–126

**Free Captains** The leaders of pirates in the Shackles.

**Galt** A nation in eastern Avistan. Known as a land of constant political upheaval and revolution. *Lost Omens World Guide* 126

**ganzi** A planar scion descended from a chaotic being of the Maelstrom, such as a protean. *Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 94–97

**Garund** One of Golarion's continents. Its northern portion makes up the southern half of the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 8

**Garundi** A common human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region spanning the nations of northern Garund. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 6

**Geb** A nation in eastern Garund that's a haven for undead. *Lost Omens World Guide* 76–77

**gnoll\*** Gnolls are humanoids that resemble hyenas. 110–113

**Golarion** Golarion is the most important world in the Lost Omens campaign setting. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6–9

**Golden Road** A region in northern Garund and part of southeastern Avistan including Katapesh, Osirion, Qadira, Rahadoum, and Thuvia. *Lost Omens World Guide* 48–59

**goloma\*** Insular humanoids that bear countless eyes. 114–117

**Gozreh** Neutral deity of nature, the sea, and weather. Known as the Wind and the Waves. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 26–27

**Grandmother Spider\*** Neutral goddess of family, illusion, stories, twilight, and weaving. Known as The Weaver. 136

**Great Beyond** The collective name for all of the planes of existence of the known multiverse. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9–10

**Green Faith** A philosophy that proclaims natural forces are worthy of attention and respect. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 96

**gripli\*** Griplis are a family of frog-like humanoids. 118–121

**Halcamora** Neutral good empyreal lord of gardens, orchards, and wine. Known as the Lady of Ripe Bounty. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 128–129

**Heaven** A plane that embodies order and compassion and is home to the celestials known as archons. The plane is lawful good. *Gamemastery Guide* 143–144

**High Seas** The region of coastal nations and ocean along the western Inner Sea region that includes the Fever Sea, Hermea, Mediogalti Island, the Shackles, and the Steaming Sea. *Lost Omens World Guide* 60–71

**hobgoblin** Hobgoblins are a sturdy, clever people with a propensity for militaristic order. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 48–51

**Holtaksen** One of the three major dwarven groups, Holtaksen live atop mountains and along their slopes. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 18–19

**House Throne** Throne is the ruling noble house of Chelifax.

**Houses of Perfection** These martial arts schools in Jalmeray emphasize techniques tied to the elements. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 65

**Inner Sea region** The collective name for the continent of Avistan and the northern portion of Garund, surrounding the Inner Sea.

**Inner Sea** The sea cradled between Avistan and Garund, created by the reshaping of the region during Earthfall.

**Inner Sphere** The center of the Great Beyond. It consists of the Astral Plane, Elemental Planes, Energy Planes, Ethereal Plane, the First World, the Material Plane, and the Shadow Plane. *Gamemastery Guide* 138–140

**lobaria** A nation in western Casmaron, left an unsettled frontier after a number of plagues.

**lobarian** A human ethnicity from lobaria. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 9

**lomedae** Lawful good goddess of honor, justice, rulership, and valor. Known as the Inheritor. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 28–29

**Irori** Lawful neutral god of history, knowledge, and self-perfection. Known as the Master of Masters. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 30–31

**Isger** A nation in southern central Avistan, a vassal of Chelifax and home to several goblin clans. *Lost Omens World Guide* 100–102

**Jaha** A massive walled city located in the northern portion of the Mwangi Expanse. 196–207

**Jalmeray** An island nation off the eastern coast of Garund, Jalmeray is home to immigrants from the distant region of Vudra. *Lost Omens World Guide* 77–79

**Jotun** The language of giants and related creatures.

**kaava** Small humanoids bearing short feathers that reside in the western Mwangi Expanse. 127, 300

**Kaava Lands** A temperate region in the western Mwangi Expanse. 160–161

**Kalabuto** The largest city in Vidrian.

**Kalekot\*** Chaotic neutral god of fear, silence, safe-keeping, and the reviled. Known as The Winner. 137

**Kallijae** One of the three groups that arose from the Mualijae elves, Kallijae live in the northeastern Mwangi Expanse. 52–61

**Katapesh** A nation on the northeastern coast of Garund, known for its markets. *Lost Omens World Guide* 51–52

**Kelish** The language of the Keleshite people from the east.

**Kho** The wreckage of a flying city located in the northeast Mwangi Expanse. 168–173

**Kibwe** A trade city located in the eastern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 208–219

**kobold** A small, reptilian humanoid ancestry proud of their kinship to dragons. 128, *Advanced Player's Guide* 12–15

**Kols** The lawful neutral dwarven god of duty, honor, and promises is also called the Oath-Keeper. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 126–127

**Kyonin** A nation in central Avistan. Known as the center of elven culture in Avistan. *Lost Omens World Guide* 127–128

**Lake Ocota** A large lake located in the central portion of the Mwangi Expanse. 162–165

**Lamashtu** Chaotic evil goddess of madness, monsters, and nightmares. Known as the Mother of Monsters. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 32–33

**Lands of the Linnorm Kings** A region in northwestern Avistan known for harsh environs and fierce leaders. *Lost Omens World Guide* 112–113

**leshy** Leshys are living plants animated by primal magic. 128, *Lost Omens Character Guide* 52–55

**Lirgeni** A human people originally from Lirgen, Lirgeni have been displaced by the Eye of Abendego. 30–31

**lizardfolk** Reptilian humanoids, also known as iruxi, known to be extremely adaptable and patient. 127, *Lost Omens Character Guide* 56–59

**Lubaiko\*** Chaotic neutral goddess of wildfire, bad luck, inspiration, and turmoil. Known as The Spark in the Dust. 138

**Luhar\*** Lawful neutral goddess of death, dreams, and destiny. Known as The Setting Sun. 139

**Maelstrom** The collective term for the uncharted, chaotic areas on the metaphysical borders of the Outer Sphere. Home to the monitors known as proteans. The plane is chaotic neutral. *Gamemastery Guide* 144

## MWANGI EXPANSE

RECLAIMING THE EXPANSE

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GLOSSARY AND INDEX

- Magaambya** The oldest academy of arcane learning in the Inner Sea Region is located in the city of Nantambu. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 96-105
- magic items\*** 87, 207
- Mana Wastes** A region located in eastern Garund known for its areas of dead and wild magic. *Lost Omens World Guide* 79-80
- Matanji** An orc ethnic group living in the Mwangi Expanse. 92-101
- Material Plane** The plane that encompasses the known universe, including Golarion and its solar system. Located within the Inner Sphere. *Gamemastery Guide* 138-139
- Mauxi** A major Mwangi ethnic subgroup, located primarily in Thuvia and the Barrier Wall mountains. 26
- Mazludeh\*** Neutral good goddess of balance, community, negotiation, and twilight. Known as Mother of Hearth and Wall. 140
- Mbaiiki** Humanoids that resemble leopards believed to have a supernatural connection to fate. 128
- Mbe'ke** A dwarven ethnic group which lives in the Mwangi Expanse. 62-71
- Mediogalti Island** A large island off the northwestern coast of Garund, home to the Red Mantis assassins. *Lost Omens World Guide* 65-66
- monitor** Creatures who hail from or have a strong connection to the neutrally aligned planes.
- monkey goblin** A major goblin subgroup found on Mediogalti Island. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 36
- Mordant Spire** A strange tower located in the Steaming Sea, known as the home of the secretive Mordant Spire elves. *Lost Omens World Guide* 66-67
- Mualijae** A major elven ethnic group consisting of three nations, who live in the Mwangi Expanse.
- Mugumo Plains** A large savanna in the western Mwangi Expanse, located between the Mwangi Jungle and Kaava Lands. 166-167
- Mwangi** A name that encompasses multiple ethnicities hailing from the Mwangi Expanse.
- Mwangi** The name for a common trade dialect of the Mwangi people.
- Mwangi Expanse** An area in northern central Garund consisting of most of the regions in and around the Mwangi Jungle, including the nation of Vidrian.
- Mwangi Jungle** A vast jungle spanning the majority of the central Mwangi Expanse. 154-159
- Mzali** A temple-city located on the southern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 220-231
- Nantambu** A city-state located on the western edge of the Mwangi Jungle. 232-245
- Necril** The language of ghouls and other intelligent undead.
- Nethys** Neutral god of magic. Known as the All-Seeing Eye. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 34-35
- New Thassilon** A young nation in northwest Avistan, home to time-displaced Thassilonians. *Lost Omens World Guide* 113-115
- Nex** A nation located on the eastern coast of Garund, Nex is a center for arcane study. *Lost Omens World Guide* 80-81
- Nirvana** A peaceful plane filled with idyllic landscapes and home to the celestials known as agathions. The plane is neutral good. *Gamemastery Guide* 144
- Nocticula** Chaotic neutral goddess of artists, exile, and midnight. Known as the Redeemer Queen. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 68
- Norgorber** Neutral evil god of greed, murder, poison, and secrets. Known as the Reaper of Reputation. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 36-37
- Numeria** A nation in northeast Avistan known for unique technology salvaged from a fallen starship. *Lost Omens World Guide* 29-30
- Obari Ocean** One of Golarion's oceans located between Casmaron and Garund. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9
- Old-Mage Jatembe** The great wizard who founded the Magaambya and helped rekindle the art of magic during the Age of Anguish. *Lost Omens Legends* 62-65
- Osibu** An idyllic city located in the southern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 246-253
- Osiriani** The most widespread language in northern Garund. It is derived from Ancient Osiriani.
- Osirion** A nation in northeastern Garund, Osirion boasts countless tombs and temples from the great empire of Ancient Osirion. *Lost Omens World Guide* 53-54
- Pathfinder Society** A globe-trotting organization dedicated to exploration and the reclamation of lost relics. *Lost Omens Pathfinder Society Guide*
- Pharasma** Neutral goddess of birth, death, fate and prophecy. Known as the Lady of Graves. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 38-39
- planar scion** A blanket term for several versatile heritages representing people descended from a distant planar ancestor or with a strong tie to another plane. 129
- Plane of Air** An Elemental Plane filled with vast skies, churning storms, and massive clouds. *Gamemastery Guide* 139
- Plane of Water** An Elemental Plane saturated with endless oceans, bogs of mud and silt, and clouds of steam. *Gamemastery Guide* 140
- psychopomp** A family of monitors spawned within the Boneyard to convey souls to the Outer Planes. Most are true neutral. *Bestiary* 270-271
- Qadira** A nation located in southeast Avistan, Qadira is the westernmost satrapy of the great Padishah Empire of Kelesh. *Lost Omens World Guide* 54-55
- qlippoth** A group of primeval fiends born of the essence of the Abyss. Qlippoth are native to the Abyss. *Bestiary* 2 212-217
- Rahadoum** A nation located in northwest Garund, Rahadoum is known for prohibitions against religious practice of any kind. *Lost Omens World Guide* 55-56
- Rainkin** A major half-orc ethnic subgroup common in the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. 95
- Ravounel** A young nation in southwest Avistan known for its successful uprising against Cheliox and continued push for individual freedoms. *Lost Omens World Guide* 104-105
- Red Mantis** A group of assassins who serve the mantis god Achaekek and reside on Mediogalti Island. *Lost Omens World Guide* 65-66
- Rovagug** Chaotic evil god of destruction, disaster, and wrath. Known as the Rough Beast. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 40-41
- sabosan** Humanoids with bat-like features that live deep within the Mwangi Jungle. 129, *Pathfinder #146* 91
- Sarenrae** Neutral good goddess of healing, honesty, redemption, and the sun. Known as the Dawnflower. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 42-43
- Sargava** A former colony of the Empire of Cheliox, which broke off into an independent state. A recent revolution has led it to become the new nation of Vidrian.
- Sargavan** A human ethnic group found primarily in the western Mwangi Expanse in and around Bloodcove and Vidrian. 27-28
- Screaming Jungle** A dense jungle located in the southeastern portion of the Mwangi Expanse. 174-177
- sekmins** See serpentfolk.
- Senghor** A city-state located in the southwestern portion of the Mwangi Expanse that serves as an important port. 254-265
- serpentfolk** Serpentfolk are a family of serpentine humanoids. Also known as sekmins. 129, *Bestiary* 2 236-249
- Shackles** A collection of islands off the western coast of Garund, the Shackles are known for rampant piracy. *Lost Omens World Guide* 67-68
- Shadow Plane** A plane located on the far side of the Ethereal Plane that is a twisted reflection of the Material Plane. *Gamemastery Guide* 141
- Shelyn** Neutral good goddess of art, beauty, love, and music. Known as the Eternal Rose. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 44-45
- shisk\*** Secretive humanoids covered in bony plumage that reside underground. 122-125
- Shory** An ancient empire prominent in central Garund around -2500 AR and famous for its flying cities.
- Sodden Lands** A region on the northwest coast of Garund ravaged by the Eye of Abendego. 178-181
- Song'o** A halfling ethnic group, Song'o live in the Laughing Jungle of the Mwangi Expanse. 82-91
- Starstone** A unique gemstone that crashed to Golarion during Earthfall. It was eventually raised by Aroden and placed within the Starstone Cathedral in Absalom. Mortals can attempt to ascend to godhood by reaching the stone and taking the Test of the Starstone.
- Storm Kindlers** A sect of Gozren priests dedicated to understanding the Eye of Abendego.
- Taldan** A human ethnicity widespread throughout Avistan, especially in the south of that continent. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 8
- Taldor** A nation located in southeast Avistan. This empire in decline seeks to reclaim former glory. *Lost Omens World Guide* 128-129
- tengu** Humanoids who resemble birds. *Advanced Player's Guide* 24-27
- Terwa Uplands** A mountainous peninsula in western Mwangi Expanse, located just south of the Eye of Abendego. 182-183
- Thuvia** A nation located in north-central Garund, Thuvia is known for its production of the sun orchid elixir. *Lost Omens World Guide* 56-57
- Tian** A group of human ethnicities originally hailing from the nations of Tian Xia. Its members are common along major Avistani trade routes, including the Crown of the World. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 8-9
- Tian Xia** One of Golarion's continents. Located far to the east of the Inner Sea region, past Casmaron. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9

**tiefling** A planar scion descended from or influenced by a fiend. *Advanced Player's Guide* 39–41

**Tlehar\*** Neutral good goddess of iron, love, and rebirth. Known as The Rising Sun. 141

**Torag** Lawful good god of the forge, protection, and strategy. Known as the Father of Creation. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 46–47

**Uomoto** This human group is based near the ruins of Kho and are known for their high number of magic users. 31

**Usaro** A city of evil beings in the central Mwangi Jungle. 266–273

**Uvuko\*** Chaotic good god of metamorphosis, cycles, growth, and fertility. Known as The Diamond Ring. 142

**Varisia** A region in northwestern Avistan. Known as a frontier land and home to ancient Thassilonian ruins. *Lost Omens World Guide* 116–117

**Varisian** A human ethnicity common throughout Avistan, particularly in and around Ustalav and Varisia. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 9

**Verduran Forest** A large forest in southeast Avistan, nestled between Andoran, Galt, and Taldor. *Lost Omens World Guide* 129

**Vidrian** A young nation along the western coast of Garund, which only recently broke free from oppressive colonial rule. Formerly the Chelaxian colony of Sargava. 274–287

**Vidric** A human culture born of the people of Vidrian, many of whom have mixed or forgotten Mwangi heritage. 28–29

**Vudra** A vast peninsula in southeastern Casmaron, home to the Vudrani people.

**Walkena\*** Lawful evil god of Mzali, the sun, fire, and militant nationalism. Known as The God-King or The Child-God. 143

**Yamasan** A human ethnic group descended from the Lirgeni people and based in the Sodden Lands. 31

**Ydersius** Slain god of serpentfolk, immortality, and poison. 145

**Zenj** A major Mwangi ethnic subgroup, found throughout the Mwangi Expanse. 29

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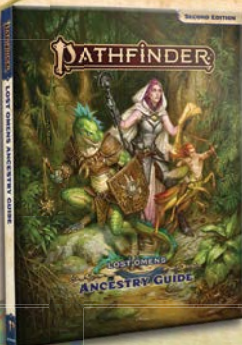
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