

EYES UNCLOUDED

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PRODUCERS NOTES

“You must see with eyes unclouded by hate. See the good in that which is evil, and the evil in that which is good. Pledge yourself to neither side, but vow instead to preserve the balance that exists between the two.”

— **Hayao Miyazaki**

We may be biased, but we feel comfortable stating that the works of Hayao Miyazaki have an above average density of lessons for how to be a better human being, regardless of the age you're fortunate enough to experience them. The curriculum shows us that it's noble to have respect for your planet and sometimes you need to step up and defend it. It says that women can do anything, and that nothing is as important as believing in yourself. It says that magic is everywhere if you know where to look, even if tanuki are straight up terrifying. There is wisdom in taking those lessons with us wherever we go.

Running a project like this always has its difficulties, doing so in a global pandemic definitely added to them. We can't thank the entire team enough for bringing these beautiful worlds to life in a time where it's increasingly difficult to not see hate wherever you look. We believe, in fact, that “a time like this” is when it is *most* important to make these types of art. We hope you can find some solace and escape in these worlds of magic and whimsy. Afterwards, If you feel up to it, you can even fight some villains who you agree with, make some grey choices you'd rather not, and try to see with eyes unclouded.

We hope you try the recipes too!

- **Bridie and Joe**

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How To Use This Book

Most of the adventures in this book can be run using the *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Any creature written in bold can be found in the *Monster Manual*, any item that is italicised is from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The source of any creature, item or spell not found in these books is indicated in parentheses directly after its name. Original or reskinned creature stats are featured in the appendices of each adventure.

This anthology features two adventures that are set in Eberron. For these we recommend you have a copy of *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*.

Below are some examples of headers used in this book and what they are used for:

Adventure Titles

CHAPTER TITLES

ENCOUNTERS OR AREAS

ENCOUNTERS OR DETAILS OF AREAS AND ENCOUNTERS

DETAILS OF AREAS AND ENCOUNTERS

SIDEBAR HEADING

Read Aloud Text

Where read aloud text is followed by normal text, the sentence "End of read aloud text" has been added.

Tier 1

Cinderling Herding

By Tineke Bolleman

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Cinderling are small, roughly round balls made from the soot and ash left in chimneys, fireplaces and furnaces of old and abandoned houses. When moving about, they leave a little ash in their wake. If the place the cinderlings reside becomes inhabited, they observe the new residents. If the new inhabitants are nice, the cinderlings leave. If not, they cause mischief, hoping to drive the inhabitants away.

Being made from ash and soot, a cinderling's color ranges from pitch black to light grey. Depending on what kind of ash or soot, their texture can be super fine, or quite coarse. They have white eyes with black pupils. Their usual mode of transportation is levitating, but they can extend black, wiry arms and legs from their bodies to accomplish certain tasks, and are strong enough to lift objects many times their own weight. If crushed they dissolve into ash, but quickly reform themselves shortly after. If captured however, they irreversibly return to ash.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is designed for a party of 3-6 1st to 2nd level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1.

Cinderling Herding is all about **cinderlings** (appendix A). The adventurers encounter cinderlings in a derelict farm. Though cinderlings can't talk, they can communicate with gestures. Needing a new home, Bop, the leader of the cinderlings, asks if the adventurers can assist them to reach a new fireplace deep in the forest. If the adventurers agree, the cinderlings need protection while traveling through the forest to their new home, the ruins of a mansion. Due to leftover magic, the fireplace of the mansion is guarded by fire spirits. With the fire spirits defeated, the cinderlings can move into their new home, and reward the adventurers with magical candy.

HOOKS

The cinderlings have lived in an old abandoned farm house, reclaimed by the forest over many decades. The adventurers can stumble upon the ruin naturally, as it is a good place to set up camp for the night. Although the roof is gone, the walls provide shelter. Alternatively, they may also be curious and want to sift through the rubble, looking for something valuable left behind.

PART 1: ENCOUNTERING THE CINDERLINGS

The adventurers meet the cinderlings at an abandoned farm. The farm will not remain standing much longer, and the cinderlings need a new home. They enlist the help of the adventurers using squeaks, arm gestures and other pantomiming. The forty cinderlings are led by Bop, the oldest cinderling.

EX-QUEECKS-ME?

Paraphrase or read the following:

In a clearing, off the beaten path, stands a long abandoned farm. The forest has started to reclaim the area: young trees and shrubs stand where there once were vegetables and an overgrown stone wall is all that is left of what would have been a paddock for livestock.

End of read aloud text.

As the adventurers approach the farm read or paraphrase:

The farm house itself is in bad shape. The roof has collapsed. Its windows and doors are broken, the remains of the wooden frames are soggy and moldy. The stone walls are sagging. It is clear the building is on the verge of collapse. There are old rings of campfires inside the walls, evidence that other travelers found shelter here.

End of read aloud text.

After a while of looking around the farmhouse, the adventurers have the feeling of being watched. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check sees movement out of the corner of their eyes. This effect can be repeated several times to build up tension. Once the atmosphere of being watched has been created, a final

successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a pair of white eyes staring from the depths of the chimney.

The eyes approach, coalescing into a **cinderling** (appendix A) confidently walking forward on its stalk legs. This is Bop, the leader of the cinderlings. Bop is an older cinderling, which can be deduced by his size and color. Bop is considerably bigger than other cinderlings and grey in colour. After carefully observing the adventurers, Bop attempts to communicate with them.

Bop tries to address the adventurers in the squeaky language of the cinderlings. When it's clear the adventurers don't understand this, Bop starts mimicking things, using legs, arms, and some dance moves.

CINDERLING NAMES AND SOOT SPEAK

Cinderlings have their own language, most of which is too high pitched for humanoid ears. The cinderlings are aware of this, and try to enhance the sounds they make with gestures.

Someone observing a conversation between two cinderlings may occasionally hear a squeak. While for the cinderlings this could be a nuanced conversation, for non-cinderlings, communication between cinderlings appears to be very subdued, while communication to other species appears very outgoing and animated.

Names of individual cinderlings are based on one sound. Bop for example takes his name from a low and hard squeak. Other cinderlings have names like Bip, Eep, Teep, Iek, and Piep.

BOP'S STORY

The adventurers can make DC 12 Charisma (Performance) or Insight (Wisdom) checks to interpret the story Bop tells. Anyone who gets a 15 or above understands the cinderling leader nearly word perfect. Those that get a 10 or below have a hard time, interpreting some sections incorrectly. Bop understands the adventurers perfectly, and squeaks emphatically if they misinterpret his story, shaking his little shooty head.

The cinderlings have lived in this farm for a long time, and they have not had any visitors for many years. Bop is happy the adventurers are here now. There is not much left of the farm, and they fear that the chimney is on the verge of collapse. If that happens, it is the end of the cinderlings. Bop wants to relocate the cinderlings to a different ruin in the forest.

They ask the adventurers if they would help relocate the cinderlings to this new home. Bop and the cinderlings can sense where it is, but they cannot get there on their own. The adventurers would have to protect them from the elements, and maybe other creatures along the way. Bop offers magical treasure as a reward. When asked, Bop will not reveal the nature of the treasure. Just that there is a lot.

If the adventurers agree, Bop tries to shake hands on the deal. Motioning to the chimney, forty cinderlings emerge. They are all smaller than Bop and very curious about the adventurers. If it is still early in the day, Bop wants to leave as soon as possible. The cinderlings don't need to pack anything. If the adventurers arrived at the farm in the evening and intended to stay the night, the cinderlings patiently wait until morning, observing the adventurers as they prepare for sleep. They dance around any fire the adventurers might light, climb into sleeping bags, leave ash prints on pillows, and try to get a bite of whatever the adventurers eating, not even pretending to be subtle about it.

PART 2: CINDERLING HERDING

The cinderlings need guidance to travel through the forest, and help overcome obstacles. This chapter provides numerous obstacles, small and large, to overcome. They can be mixed and matched as you see fit. Consequences of failure should be moderated depending on the players. Having a cinderling die due to failure on the adventurer's part might be hard to cope with for younger players. Having a cinderling be 'injured' instead is a better solution. Healing cinderlings can be done with magic, or for younger players, a kiss could also work. Of course, kissing a cinderling better gives a soot stained face.

For older players the death of a cinderling might sting, but serves to drive the consequences of failure home.

INTO THE FOREST, INTO THE UNKNOWN

When leaving the farm, the cinderlings cling close together. Bop leads the group, knowing where the ruins are by feel. Anxious at first, the cinderlings begin to relax once under the trees. They start to talk amongst themselves, wander away from the group and become distracted. Every half hour the party is traveling, an adventurer must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, to spot a straggler. If a straggler is not spotted, they might get lost or even killed. Regular counting of the cinderlings also prevents losing one of the cinderlings.

Here are a few reasons the cinderlings might wander off, they present minor complications and illustrate the nature of the cinderlings:

- Stopped to examine a flower.
- Fascinated by its reflection in a puddle.
- Wandered off after a butterfly.
- Hitched a ride on a snail.
- Conversing with a mouse.
- Is hiding with a bit of food so they don't have to share with the other cinderlings.
- Found a shiny rock they want to keep but it's too heavy to carry, slowing them down.

Scooping the cinderlings up and carrying them in a sack or pack might make the trip easier but cinderlings can not be captured. This breaks the magic that animates them, and they are reduced to pure soot and ash. Even when this is done for helpful reasons, the magic is still broken. If someone tries this, the cinderling starts squeaking. Bop comes running over, waving and squeaking, clearly in distress. Other cinderlings will rush over, and if an adventurer does not stop, the cinderlings will physically grab on to them. While one cinderling is not strong enough, the whole group together is more than capable of physically restraining a humanoid.

The cinderlings can hitch a ride on a shoulder or a head, but they are heavier than they look, and they leave fine prints of ash behind. The cinderlings also have little concept of human anatomy and will hang on to ears and hair, unaware that this might be painful. Any adventurer who tries to carry over half of the cinderlings risks becoming encumbered as the cinderlings are a lot heavier than they look. Being encumbered drops an adventurers speed by 10 feet. If an adventurer becomes heavily encumbered, for example, when even more cinderlings cling to them in fright, their speed drops by 20 feet and they have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws that use Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

ENCOUNTERS

These encounters can happen in any order. They are examples of what can happen during travel. For a shorter adventure, run only one or two encounters. These encounters are meant to be more freeform, and have more than one way to solve them.

For younger children, when an encounter calls for a check or they have trouble coming up with a solution themselves, consider letting them work together. All players

roll dice to help and whilst the player with the highest roll finds a solution, narrate the others as also contributing to the solution in some meaningful way. This way the adventure flows quicker, and makes them feel more accomplished.

CROSSING A RIVER

As the adventurers make their way through the forest, they come to the banks of a fast flowing river. The cinderlings are absolutely terrified of the water and need to be calmed down before they even dare to come closer to the riverbank.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

River. The river flows fast, indicating that it's deep. It averages 20 feet across.

Tall trees. Trees growing on the edge of the river reach up to 30 feet in height. With an appropriate tool and some time, an adventurer can cut a tree down so that it bridges the river.

Troll Bridge. 80 feet downstream there is a bridge that crosses the river.

CREATURES

The troll bridge is inhabited by a **young troll** (appendix A).

TACTICS

The troll will ask the adventurers for a fee to cross off 25 gold pieces per person. Or they can answer a riddle if they do not want to pay. If the adventurers refuse or answer the riddle wrong, he will attack. The troll will focus on the strongest or toughest looking character, or the character that hurts him the most. When reduced to 8 hit points or less (or in danger of it), the troll will jump off the bridge to swim away down the river to safety.

Riddles can be hard in games. If it's not a well known riddle or one that is easily deductible by the players, they might become frustrated. Allow them to work together to come to the solution. For younger players, if they seem eager to solve it, consider accepting the answer, even if it is wrong. The troll could accept it because it is impressed by creativity, or if the answer is funny.

A classic riddle to use:

"What is that which in the morning goes upon four feet; upon two feet in the afternoon; and in the evening upon three?"

Answer: Human beings, a person aging etc.

DEVELOPMENT

When the cinderlings make it across the river they do a little victory dance.

ENCOUNTERING AN ANIMAL

Cinderlings might not be edible, but this is not readily apparent to the local wildlife. Animals that the adventurers encounter might try and take a bite out of a cinderling, only realizing they are inedible when it is too late. Roll a d4 and consult the table below or choose what encounter works best for your narrative.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Open space. All animals favor fairly open terrain to make their attacks, like a clearing or a path.

Additional complications. A single animal might not be a challenge for the adventurers. Terrain can be utilized to create additional complications.

CREATURES

Roll a d4 and consult the Animal Encounter table to see what animal the cinderlings attract.

d4	Animal Encounter
1	A hawk swoops down, mistaking a cinderling for a mouse. Hawks are visual orientated animals and obscuring its sight, either by disguising the cinderlings or covering them with leafy branches make the hawk lose interest. Give the adventurers room to come up with other creative solutions. But if the players are stumped how to do this, it can easily be substituted with a Survival (Wisdom) check.
2	A wild boar smells the smoky aroma of the cinderlings and thinks to have a hearty meal. Strong disgusting scents will make the boar lose interest, or distract it by offering it some actual food. Give the adventurers room to come up with other creative solutions. But if the players are stumped how to do this, it can easily be substituted with a Survival (Wisdom) check.
3	Cinderlings talk in squeeks. This attracts an owl , or if it is getting late in the day a bat . Both can be distracted by the adventurers making sounds themselves, or even lured away. If the adventurers can make the cinderlings go completely quiet for several minutes the predator loses interest. Getting the cinderlings to go quiet is a good roleplay opportunity. But if the players are stumped how to do this, it can easily be substituted with a Persuasion (Charisma) check.
4	The pitter-patter of cinderling feet causes small vibrations. This attracts a giant spider or for an easier challenge, a constrictor snake . Both can be distracted by the adventurers stomping on the ground to send confusing signals. If the adventurers can make the cinderlings stop moving for several minutes, the predator loses interest. Making the cinderlings stand still is a good roleplay opportunity. But if the players are stumped how to do this, it can easily be substituted with a Persuasion (Charisma) check.

TACTICS

Fighting the animals or scaring them away is always an option. Animals will defend themselves when attacked but won't attack an adventurer unless driven into a corner with no escape. The animals will flee when wounded, or reduced to ¼ of their hit points when applicable.

DEVELOPMENT

After an encounter the cinderlings are relieved, but if an animal had to die for their safety, they are also very sad. They crowd around the dead animal, showing remorse and paying respect to the dead.

RUINED VILLAGE

There are signs that people once lived in this forest. Overgrown heaps of stone vaguely resemble the structures they once were. When the group moves through the area, part of the ground suddenly gives way. Several cinderlings dance around the hole, making a great commotion. Four cinderlings have fallen into an old cellar.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The hole: The ruins of the building above are very unstable and an adventurer squeezing through the hole might cause a collapse. Any medium adventurer who tries to do so immediately notices debris starts to fall and that the building groans under strain.

The cellar: The cellar is 20 feet wide and 20 feet broad and 15 feet deep. Water drips down the walls of the cellar, making the cinderlings too scared to climb out themselves.

The ruins: the forest encroaches on the ruins of several houses and a well. Small trees grow out of the rubble itself.

DEVELOPMENT

When the adventurers rescue the four cinderlings, there is much rejoicing. The cinderlings hug among themselves and hug the adventurers.

RAIN SHOWERS

As the journey progresses, the weather turns from sunny to overcast. Soon, heavy rain clouds gather on the horizon. The cinderlings huddle together as the first drops begin to fall. The trees will provide shelter for a short while, but before long thick drops begin falling through the leaves. The cinderlings will be safe for a little while, but it looks like it will be raining for quite some time, so the adventurers will have to act to keep the cinderlings safe. Water will hurt cinderlings, dissolving a bit of their ashy-essence. A few drops will only hurt, but getting stuck in the downpour will cause damage and might kill a cinderling.

There are numerous ways the adventurers can handle this. If they want or need to make a check, a DC of 12 is a good average to aim for.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The forest: all kinds of plants grow abundant in the area. Trees, shrubs and leafy vines. With a DC 12 Nature (Intelligence) check an adventurer can recall that a plant species with exceptionally large leaves grows in the vicinity, which can be used as umbrellas.

The terrain: the terrain in this area is hilly.

DEVELOPMENT

The longer the cinderlings remain unprotected in the rain, the more damage they take, and the more agitated they become. Their squeeks will become more desperate as time goes on. When provided with enough shelter, the cinderlings will still be scared and huddle together until the rain stops. If any cinderling is lost to the rain, the others will stand around the wet sooty puddle and say their farewells, before dejectedly continuing.

MAGICAL ENCOUNTERS

These encounters give the journey more flavor. They are not meant to present an obstacle to overcome. They merely illustrate that there is more going on in the world. The cinderlings will treat these encounters as perfectly normal. Feel free to add as many as you want, depending on what kind of story you want to tell.

- A large buck can be seen in the distance watching the party. It has many sets of antlers on its head.
- Small white forest spirits can be seen in the trees and resting in roots. They happily make ticking noises at the adventurers. The cinderlings seem especially fond of the little forest spirits.
- A large shadow passes over the party. When they look up, they catch a glimpse of something grey and furry passing overhead.
- When passing a stream a few fish jump up. The fish have surprisingly human looking faces and the fins almost look like clothes.
- A black cat crosses the path out of nowhere, followed by a raccoon (or tanuki), followed by a pig.
- A scarecrow with a turnip for a head follows the party for a little bit. It quickly hops away on its stick when the adventurers try to confront it.

CHAPTER 3: HOME IS WHERE THE HEARTH IS

At the end of their journey, the adventurers and cinderlings enter the abandoned mansion. The mansion consists of multiple rooms which contain some lost treasures. The fireplace that would become the cinderlings' new home is, however, occupied by fire spirits. When the fire spirits are defeated, the cinderlings can inhabit their new home.

THE ABANDONED MANSION

Ahead through the trees the ruins of a once magnificent mansion can be seen (appendix C). When built, it had two floors, but most of the roof has since collapsed. However, most of the building has remained standing, and will probably be able to resist the weather and ravages of time for years to come. An ideal home for the cinderlings.

Walking around the mansion to scout it from the outside is easy. There used to be gardens all around the building, and while they are now overgrown, trees have had a hard time growing close to the house due to stone paths covering the ground.

The mansion has 9 outside doors. All provide fairly easy access to the inside. The wood has swollen and is partially rotten, requiring just a little bit of force for the doors to break free of their hinges. The adventurers can move throughout the house unhindered. The cinderlings will cautiously follow them at a distance.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ceiling: Each room has a 10 foot ceiling.

Light: Each room has dim light.

AREAS OF THE MANSION

The following rooms are keyed to the map found on the next page.

AREA 1: LIVING ROOM

Read aloud:

This room used to be a large, opulent living room. The floor is parquet and has warped with dampness. Vines have grown inside through the broken windows. The smell of damp is pervasive and comes from moldy heaps of collapsed furniture. There are two doors in the north wall and one in the west wall. A door in the south wall leads outside.

End of read aloud text.

Footing in this room is uneven, but poses no real hindrance. The smell is unpleasant but bearable. It is clear that the room was once richly appointed. Scraps of velvet cling to the furniture, paintings have fallen down from the walls to rot away. Very little of value remains.

REWARDS

Adventurers who search the room and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check find a stone statue that has remained unscathed. It is made from red jasper and depicts a rearing horse. It is worth 50 gp.

AREA 2: LIBRARY

Read aloud:

This room was once a library. Now, however, not much is left. Cabinets that reached to the ceiling have partially collapsed, leaning against each other. Leather sofas have a pile of mushrooms growing out of them. Of most books nothing is left but scraps and dust. There are doors in the east, north and west wall. A door in the south wall leads outside.

End of read aloud text.

REWARDS

Adventurers searching through the remains of the library can find 2d10 books worth salvaging. There is also a silver candelabra under a collapsed table. To retrieve it without damaging it further, the debris can be lifted off it with a DC 12 Strength check. With a bit of a polish it is worth 70 gp.

AREA 3: SOLARIUM

Read aloud:

Plants have taken over most of this room. Roots have burrowed into the floor, and leafy stems hold up whatever is left of the roof. Shards of glass poke out of the green in places. There is a door in the east wall. An overgrown door in the south wall leads outside.

End of read aloud text.

This solarium was once used to grow plants. Without anyone tending them, the plants have taken over. Any adventurer who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check knows that there are several rare plants growing here. These plants can be harvested to replenish 5 charges of a healer's kit.

AREA 4: STORE ROOM

Read aloud:

This store room has remained mostly intact. Racks once contained dry goods, most of which have now gone to dust. There are two doors in the east wall. A door in the south wall leads outside.

End of read aloud text.

Some mundane items remain in this room, although a bit mustier than the adventurers are used to. There are candles in a rusted iron box and a few blocks of incense with little bite marks in them. Clearly it was not a flavor the mice liked. A few lanterns stand on a top shelf, while in the corner an hourglass lies discarded.

AREA 5: DINING HALL

Read aloud:

This room was a large dining hall which is in remarkably good shape. The air is dry and smells faintly of smoke. Two long tables have collapsed in the centre, and upholstered chairs have been reduced to kindling. Both tables and chairs show scorch marks. A large fireplace stands against the north wall. There are two doors in the south wall, three doors in the west wall, two interior and one exterior door. There is one door in the south wall. The east wall holds one door and a hallway leading to a door going outside.

End of read aloud text.

When the cinderlings enter the room, they start enthusiastically squeaking and pointing at the fireplace. If not stopped by the adventurers, they rush forward. When the cinderlings come within 10 feet of the fireplace, a flame suddenly roars to life in its center. The flame quickly splits into multiple smaller flames.

CREATURES

Three fire spirits (Uses **smoke mephits** stats), react to the presence of the cinderlings. The owner of the house practiced fire magic long ago. These magics lingered and became fire spirits over time. The fire spirits have been living in the fireplace, marked 5a. Without any magic happening, they only venture out when something enters the house. This has kept animals from entering this room and causing damage. The presence of the spirits has also kept this room dry and well preserved. Not knowing actual hunger, the spirits occasionally 'nibble' on the furniture.

DIFFICULTY ADJUSTMENTS

When using the statistics for smoke mephits for the fire spirits, there are the following adjustments for larger or higher level parties. For a party of four level 1 adventurers, there are three fire spirits. For a party of six level 1, or a party of four level 2 adventurers, there are five fire spirits instead.

TACTICS

The spirits are not intelligent and operate on instinct, rushing out of the fireplace, seeking to consume the cinderlings. If a fire spirit uses its action to grapple a cinderling and succeeds, the cinderling is instantly consumed. This allows them to absorb the magic that gives the cinderlings life, enabling the fire spirits to grow stronger. If a fire spirit consumes a cinderling, then it heals all damage taken. If the fire spirit is at maximum hit points, its maximum hit points increase by 2. The cinderlings scatter at the sight of the fire spirits, who relentlessly pursue. Only when attacked will the fire spirits focus their attention on the adventurers.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the last fire spirit has been defeated, the cinderlings emerge from the nooks and crannies that they managed to squeeze themselves into to hide. They squeak and dance around the adventurers, overjoyed. After celebrating, the cinderlings move into the fireplace, examining every square inch of it. The cinderlings find the fireplace to be an ideal new home, and Bop comes over to shake the adventurers' hands again. They certainly held up their end of the bargain.

REWARDS

Bop and the cinderlings huddle together, producing a cloth bag which they ceremoniously hand over to the adventurers. Inside the bag are little star shaped candies (Appendix B). Bop makes clear the candies are magical, and that the cinderlings hope the candy will help the adventurers.

AREA 6: KITCHEN

Read aloud:

Being made of mostly stone and metal, this kitchen has weathered pretty well. The metal has rusted, but countertops are intact. The south wall is mostly taken up by a large oven. There are two doors in the south wall. A door in the north wall leads outside.

End of read aloud text.

Any food has long ago wasted away. But pots, pans and utensils are mostly intact. Most mundane kitchen items can be found and restored to usefulness with a little bit of work.

REWARDS

If an adventurer searches through the room and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check they find a collapsed drawer beneath one of the counters. A successful DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check must be made to open the drawer without the heavy countertop collapsing on top of it. Those that fail take 1d4 bludgeoning damage from the weight. The drawer contains silver cutlery. While not in the best state, the cutlery can be melted down, resulting in a silver ingot worth 200 gp.

AREA 7: STAIRS

The house has two staircases. Both are choked with rubble. Adventurers wishing to check out the upper level can clear the stairs with an hour of work. The stairs are stone and safe to use. The upper level however is choked with rubble containing nothing of value.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the fire spirits defeated, the cinderlings quickly settle in their new home. They are comfortable with the adventurers around, and the adventurers can stay as long as they want. The cinderlings consecrate their new home by dancing, singing and gladly invite the adventurers to participate in their celebrations.

APPENDIX A: MONSTER STATBLOCKS

YOUNG TROLL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 19 (+4) **DEX** 8 (-1) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 5 (-3) **WIS** 7 (-2) **CHA** 7 (-2)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The troll regains 2 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

CINDERLING

Tiny elemental, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 11 (+0) **INT** 10 (+0) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Damage vulnerabilities cold

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft.

Languages soot speak

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Pack Tactics. The cinderling has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the cinderlings allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fire spirit makes two touch attacks.

Punch. Melee Weapon Attack: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

APPENDIX B: MAGICAL CANDY

The magical candy is star shaped and tastes like sugar and aniseeds. There are fifty pieces of candy in the bag. When ingested, roll on the table below to determine what happens to the adventurer who eats it, then cross that effect off the list.

It is possible to eat more than one candy at the same time, but the more the effects could blend together into unintended consequences, up for the DM to determine.

Some of the effects might be more powerful or debilitating then stated, depending on when the candy is ingested. As the DM, feel free to adjust how long the effects last and if they are permanent or not.

d50	Effect
1	Resize - Roll a d10. Your height changes by a number of inches equal to your roll. If the roll is odd, you shrink. If roll is even, you grow.
2	Bubbles - You can't speak for the next minute. Whenever you try, bubbles float out of your mouth.
3	Natural Armor - Your skin takes on a metallic sheen. You gain a +2 bonus to AC for 24 hours.
4	High volume - You now shout whenever you speak for 1 hour.
5	Invisible - You are now invisible for 1 hour.

6	Illuminate - You shine with a bright light in a 30ft radius for the next 2 hours.
7	Polymorph (Toad) - you Polymorph into a giant toad matching your height for 30 minutes.
8	Polymorph (Sheep) - you Polymorph into a sheep 10 minutes.
9	Polymorph (Dragon) - you Polymorph into a dragon wyrmling of the color or metal of your choice for 24 hours.
10	Water breathing - You can now breath underwater for 1 hour
11	NOT invisible - for 1 hour you believe yourself to be invisible. You are not actually invisible.
12	Stinky butt - You have uncontrollable flatulence for 1d10 minutes.
13	Pigeon speak - You can only speak in cooing noises for 24 hours. Everyone can still understand & converse with you as normal, but they only hear coos.
14	Fabulous - 1d100 sparkling motes dance about your head until dawn.
15	Like a fish - Your skin turns to fish scales for 4 hours.
16	Like a bird - Your grow feathers which fall out after 4 hours.
17	Like a bear - You grow thick shaggy fur which falls out after 4 hours.
18	True North - All compasses in the vicinity point towards you, as if you were true north for a week.
19	Lend and ear - You can change the size of your ears at will for 24 hours.

20	Like a carrot - Your hair turns bright green, and your skin bright orange for 24 hours.
21	Like an eggplant - Your hair turns bright green, and your skin dark purple for 24 hours.
22	Like a wizard - You grow a long grey beard that reaches to your knees.
23	Flower power - Flowers permanently grow from your head, making it look like you wear a flower crown.
24	Like a stag - You permanently grow a set of antlers.
25	Like a rabbit - Your ears turn into rabbit ears for 24 hours.
26	Animal friend - You change into the shape of your favourite animal for 24 hours.
27	Rainbow - When you move your arms, rainbows trail behind them for 24 hours.
28	Color coded - Every time you sneeze, your clothes change color.
29	Where is everyone? - All other adventurers in the party appear invisible to you.
30	Spooky - You appear as a skeleton for 1 hour.
31	Southpaw - If you were right handed, you become left handed, and the other way around.
32	Talk to plants - You can talk to plants for 24 hours.
33	Talk to animals - You can talk to animals for 24 hours.
34	Ghost Watcher - You can see into the ethereal realm up to 30 ft. for the next 24

	hours.
35	Contagious happiness - When you smile at someone, they must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or be forced to smile for 1 minute.
36	Such a charming monster - when you touch a creature, it turns pastel shades of itself for 1 hour. You can use this ability one time per day.
37	How did that go again? - You forget how to tie your shoes and have to relearn how to do it.
38	Like a ram - You permanently grow a curved pair of ram horns.
39	The Golden Goose - For the next hour, you feel compelled to eat a hefty meal. At the end of the hour, if you have eaten, you lay an ornate golden egg (don't need to know how, please don't ask) worth 100 gp.
40	Bushy tailed - You permanently grow a fluffy animal tail.
41	Half gone - You lose all hair on the right side of your body. It grows back after 24 hours.
42	Sparkly - Your skin permanently sparkles faintly.
43	Hop hop - For 1 hour you can only move by doing a kangaroo hop.
44	Like a lion - your hair grows long and around your face like a lion's mane.
45	See through - You, your clothes, armor and gear, all become see-through for 4 hours.
46	Wrong way round - Your body swivels 180° at the waist for 4 hours.

47	Like a shark - Your teeth become shark teeth. If you lose a tooth, they grow back within a day. (bite attack at DMs discretion)
48	What was it doing up there? - A handful of small glass marbles tumble from your nose.
49	Little star - When you laugh, little glowing stars float from your lips up into the air.
50	Like a cat - Your eyes change into cat eyes, you permanently gain darkvision.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tineke is a freelance RPG writer from the Netherlands, with a dayjob in ICT. She is passionate about animals and loves games in general and Tabletop RPGs in particular. You can find her at direottergames.com

CINDERLING CAKE POPS

A speciality of Kirsa, who co-owns the Kat and Cake Bakery, these cake pops are a favorite and always sell out quickly when they are displayed at the bakery. Rumor has it they are inspired by the Cinderlings, a type of sprite that inhabits abandoned dwellings—especially sooty fireplaces.

YIELD: APPROXIMATELY 24 CAKE POPS

- 1 box of chocolate or vanilla cake mix of choice
- 1 can of vanilla or chocolate frosting
- 10 ounces (280 grams) milk chocolate baking wafers
- 1 package of Oreos, crushed (or black sprinkles)
- 1 package cake pop/lollipop sticks
- Assorted rainbow colored sprinkles and candy eyes (optional)

Make cake mix per box instructions. (Alternatively, you can make your favorite chocolate or vanilla cake from scratch.) Allow the cake to cool completely.

Crumble the cooled cake and combine with 3/4th of the can of frosting to form thick dough. You may have to use more or less frosting depending on the dryness of the cake. Take 1-2 tablespoons of the cake mixture (depending on how big you want) and roll into a ball. Continue until all the mixture has been formed into balls.

Meanwhile heat 1/3 cup (40 grams) of milk chocolate baking wafers per package instructions. Take the lollipop sticks and dip the end, approximately 1 inch, into the melted wafers and stick them into the cake pop balls. This will act like glue to keep the sticks attached. Once all cake pop balls have sticks, place in the freezer for 30 minutes or until ready to decorate.

While the cake pop balls are in the freezer, place the Oreos in a plastic bag and crush them until you have chunks no bigger than 1/4 inch. Place the crushed Oreos into a shallow bowl. You can also use black sprinkles instead.

Heat the remaining milk chocolate wafers per package instructions. Take the cake pop balls out of the freezer and let thaw slightly. Set up a work station with the balls, melted chocolate and crushed Oreos/sprinkles.

Working one at a time, submerge the cake pop balls in the melted chocolate, then roll in crushed Oreos/sprinkles. Place them on a baking tray with wax paper. Once all cake pop balls have been coated, place them back in the freezer to harden up, approximately 30 minutes.

Once the cake pop balls have hardened, take them out and decorate further if desired. You can reheat the remaining melting chocolate to add eyes and multicolored sprinkles.

Serve right away or place them in a sealed container for up to 2 weeks.

An Unfamiliar Court

By Bridie Dutton

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Deep in the Feywild a new civilisation has taken root. Spirits who had once served as familiars for mages in the Material Plane have decided to stay in their animal form. Whether because of affection held for their last masters, a way to avoid serving again, or other more inscrutable reasons, one thing is true: they all want to be free. This movement grew from a small group of spirits to a whole town. Eventually, as is custom in the Feywild, a court was formed. The Cat King, a well-liked and trustworthy spirit, was chosen to lead. From the very beginning, he has shaped the town, keeping the best interests of its inhabitants at heart. What the spirits didn't know is that their borders encroached on the territory of Atakon, a mischievous faerie dragon. Atakon saw an opportunity to grow his hoard of shiny baubles and discover if the spirits will make good neighbours by pulling what he perceives as a playful prank. He came to Eleutheria in the form of an eladrin envoy from the Summer Court and met with the Cat King. Atakon tricked the Cat King into believing that by providing him with gifts to give to Titania, Eleutheria will be recognised as an equal court of the realm, thereby securing the continued happiness and freedom of its subjects.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for four level 2 characters. The adventurers witness a weasel stealing an amulet from a young apprentice wizard who begs for help retrieving it. They follow the weasel to Eleutheria, a town in the Feywild inhabited by spirits in the form of familiars and ruled by the Cat King. The town is setting up for a celebration; an envoy from the Summer Court will arrive tomorrow and Eleutheria will be established as a full court of the realm. In reality, this envoy is Atakon, a faerie dragon whose territory borders the town. He has magically disguised himself as a fey envoy to deceive the town and trick them into growing his collection of shiny baubles. Can the adventurers retrieve the amulet, and will they help the Cat King and Eleutheria see Atakon for who he really is?

INVOLVING THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The adventure can begin in any town. As the adventurers wander through the marketplace the first scene takes place.

PART 1: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

The adventurers witness the theft of a magical amulet from a wizard apprentice, Airen Evenstar. Distraught, she begs them to help her retrieve it. Following the thief leads the adventurers to Eleutheria, a magical town in the Feywild inhabited by spirits in the form of familiars.

YOU WON'T WEASEL YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS!

The adventurers wander through the marketplace.

Read aloud:

The marketplace bustles with happy shoppers browsing colourful market stalls. As you take everything in, quick movement catches your attention. You turn to see a young red haired woman leaning over a box of apples and clutching at her neck. “My amulet!” she screams. “It took my amulet!”. She is pointing at a weasel running along the cart stalls, a large golden amulet clenched in its jaws.

End of read aloud text.

The woman begins to run after the weasel, but isn't going nearly fast enough.

A CHASE

If the adventurers chase the weasel, use the guidelines and Urban Chase Complications table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to run the encounter. The **weasel** begins 80 feet in front of the lead adventurer and has advantage on saving throws against obstacles due to its tiny size.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Light: The encounter takes place at midday. There is bright sunlight.

Crowded: Attacks against the weasel have disadvantage as the marketplace is very busy, and firing into crowds may have negative consequences.

DEVELOPMENT

The weasel travels for 150 feet before running through a 3 foot tall door into an unassuming house. The door closes behind the weasel.

If the adventurers chose to talk to the apprentice instead of chasing or lose the weasel during the chase, they can follow its tracks with a successful DC 8 Wisdom (Survival) check, or ask around to see where it went.

As the adventurers reach the door, the apprentice catches up to them huffing and puffing from the run. She is distraught and begs the adventurers to help her retrieve her amulet, as she honestly doesn't know how she'll cope without it. If the adventurers agree to help her she introduces herself as Airen Evenstar (LN human **apprentice wizard** (VGtM), she/her). The necklace is an *amulet of charm protection* (see appendix B) but is worth more to Airen for its sentimental value. It was a gift from her mentor, Hiran Brightflame, who recently passed. Airen explains that while Hiran was a powerful illusionist and a brilliant teacher, she's been struggling with her studies since he passed. As the necklace is the only thing she has to remember him by, she pleads for the adventurers' aid. She would go herself, but she knows she isn't strong enough to protect herself should things go wrong.

AN UNUSUAL ROOM

Once the adventurers enter the room, the door closes behind them. The room contains all the normal furniture you would expect to find in a study: a desk, a bookshelf, a chair, and a lamp. What is extraordinary is that the furniture is greatly oversized, making the adventurers feel like children. The weasel is no longer in the room, and if the adventurers look around they find books on the benefits of catnip and flyers comparing scratching posts. The only door in the room is the one they came through, which is now normal sized. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals the footprints of the weasel appear to grow in size and lead back out the same door. *Detect magic* reveals transmutation magic in the room, and conjuration magic on the door.

When the adventurers leave, they find that the door doesn't take them back to the town they came from, but instead to the magical town of Eleutheria.

INTO ELEUTHERIA

Read aloud:

Stepping through the door, you discover you're no longer in the sunny marketplace you expected. Before you stands a wild reflection of the town you just left, except vertical. Three circular platforms supporting buildings wind above and below you, circling a gigantic tree. Suddenly, you realise there are no humanoids in this town; it is completely inhabited by animals the same size as you and they seem to be decorating the town for a celebration.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Cat Architecture: The town is structured like a giant cat tree, geometric in the use of shapes and yet also oddly natural. Three distinct platforms form the town. Shops and houses make up the first two floors and the Cat King's residence is on the highest, smallest platform.

Crystal Lights: The whole town is lit by the glow of beautiful green crystals.

The following encounters can be played in any order as the adventurers explore the town. They aim to endear the adventurers and townsfolk to each other and hint at the existence of Atakon. Feel free to add your own encounters to suit your players! The townsfolk will be excited to see the adventurers as they haven't had visitors from the Material Plane before. However, they will attempt to steer any conversation away from the stolen amulet. They might not all agree with stealing as a means to gain their freedom, but they trust the Cat King. Asking after a weasel isn't likely to help them either, as there are many in the town. If asked about the celebration, the townsfolk happily tell the adventurers of the Summer Court envoy, Atakon, and their upcoming independence.

FIRE BREATHERS

Two **rats** hold flaming torches and wow a crowd by creating large plumes of fire. As the adventurers pass, one rat accidentally sets the eaves of a nearby home alight. If the adventurers stop to help, the rats are extremely thankful, though a little confused by the appearance of people! Quenching the fire can be accomplished by dowsing it with water, smothering it with a blanket before the fire spreads too far, or a spell such as *prestidigitation*.

JELLY TART STALL

Bunting lines a small stall selling delicious looking jelly tarts. There are only four tarts left and the stall appears to be unmanned. If the adventurers approach they hear a sad bubbling coming from a nearby barrel of water. A dejected looking **octopus** appears from the barrel and explains that he only has the four tarts left. He could have sworn he baked two more trays, but when he came to open they were gone! The adventurers can buy a jelly tart for 3 cp.

FAERIE DRAGONS SIDEBAR

Faerie Dragons come in a range of colours depending on their age. They have an impish sense of humour and love good company, sweets, and shiny trinkets. There are several points in the adventure where an adventurer might attempt to figure out what creature is causing mischief around town. This can be achieved with a successful Intelligence (Nature) check. The DC for the check starts at 18 and decreases by 1 for each additional piece of evidence collected. You might also want to decrease the DC if a player has existing knowledge of the Feywild.

ILLUSIONS

The adventurers turn a corner to see a dark tunnel in the middle of the street, with young animals “ooing” and “ahhing” inside it. Drawing closer, there is a click, followed by a loud rumbling as a large boulder appears from the darkness. It looks to be heading right for the children who squeal and run as the boulder engulfs them. When it reaches the adventurers the boulder dissipates as the illusion is suddenly dropped. Where the tunnel once was, only the squealing children, some laughing parents, and a startled looking **raven** remain. She points at the adventurers and says, “Ah! Welcome to Eleutheria, erm, feel free to look around. I’ll be right back!” before flying off higher into the town.

TUMBLERS

Two **weasels** and a **poisonous snake** practice contorting their bodies to form the shapes of monsters such as umber hulks and displacer beasts. The shock of seeing the adventurers causes one of them to lose their footing and all 3 look set to fall. The adventurers can catch the acrobats with a successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check, otherwise they fall to the ground in a heap.

THE SILK SPIRIT

The shop is run by an elderly orb-weaver **spider** named Mrs Spinney. Many fine clothes hang all around. One fabric in particular stands out, a beautiful shimmering

pattern of indigo dragon scales. The spider explains that she was inspired to create it by a scale she found on the ground in Eleutheri's town square. [To help nudge the players towards making a fake dragon for the "Play a Trick of Your Own" conclusion, Mrs Spinney is only too happy to make a fine "faux dragonscale" suit for them, either now or during "Getting Ready" later on.]

TOY STALL

Behind this stall a **bat** hangs upside down. He is selling small toys of a chubby tabby cat with a crown, and explains they are toys of the Cat King and they're lucky. The adventurers can buy one for 5 sp.

AN INVITATION

As the adventurers explore Eleutheria they are approached by the raven they saw performing illusions earlier, looking more composed. She is accompanied by 2 guards, a **lizard** and a floating **seahorse**. She apologises profusely for her earlier rudeness and introduces herself as Merlina, the advisor to the Cat King of Eleutheria. The Cat King is proud to welcome visitors to the town, and will throw a feast in honour of the adventurers, if they would kindly follow her to the castle. If the adventurers refuse, Merlina pleads with them. As a last resort, she discreetly lets them know she can help them retrieve the amulet if they can be patient.

Merlina leads the adventurers up through Eleutheria to the highest and grandest building on the tree.

PART 2: DINE AND DASH

The adventurers attend a feast and must perform for the Cat King! They are approached by Merlina, who asks for their help. They must lose their escort out of Eleutheria to find her in her home.

A FEAST FIT FOR A KING

The castle sits inside a giant bark cylinder and is magnificent. Stepping inside, the adventurers see lavish plush walls and cat themed opulence. Animals flit around the place carrying trays of food, instruments, and chairs through the main entrance hall to an impressive looking room to the east. A staircase winds to the upper floors.

GETTING READY

Merlina leads the adventurers to a room upstairs where they can get ready for the feast. She leaves them in the capable hands of a **hawk** maid named Hawksly (they/them), who can help them with anything they need. If the adventurers require clothes, a selection of suits and dresses is brought to them; however, they are all sized to fit animals with room for wings, tails, and extra legs. Alternatively, Mrs Spinney from the Silk Spirit could make outfits especially for the adventurers (10 gp per outfit), letting them choose how they'd like to look!

THE FEAST

When they're ready, the adventurers are led back down the spiral staircase into the banquet hall. Although the feast has been hastily put together, it looks extremely impressive. Tables are arranged in a horseshoe shape to face the entertainment and each one hosts a colourful platter of food. The adventurers are introduced as they enter the room and presented to the Cat King.

The Cat King is a chubby tabby cat, with a wise but fun look. He greets the adventurers, expresses his deep joy at hosting visitors to his town, and bids them sit at the table next to his, where Merlina also sits. At the other tables sit fancily dressed familiars.

Fey food has strange effects on creatures from other planes. Roll on the Fey Food Effects table (see appendix A) to determine what happens to adventurers who eat it. During the feast each guest performs for the Cat King - an owl reads poetry, a rat performs acrobatics, and there's an acapella band of frogs. At some point during the feast, Merlina surreptitiously grabs the attention of the adventurers. She tells them after the feast they will be escorted back to the Material Plane, but asks them to lose their guard and come to her home. She tells the adventurers she can help them find the amulet they seek, and explains where they need to go.

THE ADVENTURERS PERFORM

At the end of Merlina's plea, the music stops and everyone turns to face the adventurers. Merlina jumps and says, "Oh! Yes! It is customary in Eleutheria for everyone to perform for the king!" With some embarrassed glances, she snaps at the band to "fill time" as she explains.

The adventurers can choose how they want to perform - as a group or separately. The performances could be dazzling magic, impressive swordsmanship, music, or acrobatics. Choose an appropriate skill that represents the performance, and the

adventurers must succeed on a DC 12 skill check to impress the Cat King. If successful, the Cat King laughs and cheers at their performance. Otherwise, he holds a confused and unamused look. Keep note of which adventurer scored highest on this check, as they will receive a special reward at the end of the adventure (see “Epilogue”).

YOU CAN’T STAY ELEUT-HERE-IA

Once the feast concludes, the Cat King heartily thanks the adventurers for their performances and visit. He tells them that unfortunately, they must now be escorted back to their plane as tomorrow is essential for Eleutheria’s future, though they are very welcome to visit another time.

The floating seahorse and lizard guards stand ready to lead the adventurers to the door through which they entered the Feywild.

ESCAPING THE GUARDS

Use the chase rules (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, Chapter 8) to run this encounter. If the adventurers impressed the Cat King, the guards are paying less attention to them. Instead, they revel in the happy atmosphere and discuss the nature of serving mages on the Material Plane, giving the adventurers advantage on skill checks to sneak away. Otherwise, the guards pay close attention to the adventurers and will chase them should they run.

Once the adventurers have successfully lost the guards, they can make their way to Merlina’s house.

MERLINA’S HOUSE

Merlina’s home is on the lowest level of Eleutheria. It is made from wound branches and leaves, giving it the appearance of an upside down nest. It is warm, welcoming, and smells of earth. Merlina hurries the adventurers inside, prepared to fool any pursuing guards with illusions as she closes the door.

She explains that a few weeks ago Eleutheria was visited by an eladrin man, Atakon, claiming to be an envoy of Titania. He told the Cat King that Titania requested gifts from the town in exchange for recognising its independence. Freedom for the spirits that live here is exactly why Eleutheria was founded, and so, since the visit, the familiars have been gathering items their old masters treasured to give as gifts. Merlina doesn’t like stealing, but the freedom of the people of Eleutheria could be worth it. However, she has reason to believe the envoy is not all he seems.

Merlina's last master, Hiran, was a master of illusions and she learnt many things from him. When Atakon visited, he never seemed to physically interact with anything, which raised her suspicions. The Feywild is a place full of tricks after all.

Merlina tells the adventurers that Atakon will be visiting again tomorrow and asks them to help her prove to everyone that he isn't real. She would do this herself, but, as the King's advisor, she will need to be by his side at all times. Besides, Hiran always said "People only believe what you show them." The adventurers might be able to convince some townsfolk to help them. They're not good at fighting, but they might be able to help scare whoever's causing the illusion away or at least into revealing it. She describes many of the townsfolk the adventurers met during their exploration and the skills they possess (fire breathing, forming the shape of other creatures, etc). Merlina details the envoy's route through town and suggests the gift giving ceremony outside the castle as a good time to scare him. She says this with impish glee before correcting herself, embarrassed.

The amulet is meant to be a gift for Atakon, so if the adventurers can prove he isn't real, they'll be able to take it back with them. If asked about Airen, Merlina tells the adventurers that Hiran was very fond of his student, but often talked about how she needed to believe in herself more. She is saddened to think of how the theft of the amulet might have affected Airen. If the adventurers intend to return the amulet, Merlina asks to accompany them.

PART 3: THE CAT'S OUT OF THE BAG

The adventurers must disguise themselves as familiars to look for clues to prove Atakon's illusion without being detected. When they have found enough evidence they can choose how to deal with the mischievous faerie dragon.

GETTING AROUND TOWN

To make their way around town without being immediately detected, the adventurers must disguise themselves or hide their appearance. This can be achieved with disguise kits, spells such as *disguise self*, or Merlina can collect items from around town to fashion disguises. If your players are really stuck for ideas, Merlina has a scroll of *seeming* (that she would prefer not to use) to make them appear as the familiar of their choice.

GATHERING EVIDENCE

Eleutheria is in full party mode. The town is covered in bunting and the streets are filled with familiars being wowed by entertainers. In the distance, a procession seems to be slowly climbing the tower. If the players approach, they see a ring of guards keeping townsfolk back from a tall, handsome eladrin man. Pixies fly to and fro, protecting the envoy, whilst being distracted by the celebrations.

There are multiple pieces of evidence the adventurers might collect:

- A *detect magic* spell shows a strong glow of illusion magic around the eladrin.
- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that although the envoy is talkative, he doesn't interact with anything physically.
- Adventurers who succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a flash of a blue tail pierce the illusion momentarily. It swipes a number of jelly tarts into the illusion while no one watches.
- The adventurers find 2 pixies arguing in an alleyway. They must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check to not be noticed. One pixie berates the other, saying that the trick they played on the townsfolk almost ruined Atakon's plan; the other thinks their prank was harmless.

Adventurers who have gathered this evidence and succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check know about faerie dragons (see "Faerie Dragons" sidebar).

CONFRONTING ATAKON

When the adventurers are convinced that Atakon the envoy is an illusion they must choose how to proceed. Atakon is led through the crowds of celebrating familiars to the town square where the Cat King waits, ready to hand over a small pile of trinkets and magical items.

A FIGHT

CREATURES

If the adventurers want to face Atakon in combat, the battle involves the indigo **faerie dragon** and 4 **pixies**.

TACTICS

Atakon and the pixies aren't looking for a fight, but don't stand for being attacked. Atakon uses his *Superior Invisibility* trait and *Euphoria Breath* action to confuse the adventurers and tilt the situation in his favour.

DEVELOPMENT

If his hit points are reduced to half, Atakon attempts to flee. As he does, Eleutherian guards surround both him and the adventurers. Atakon moans that he was only having harmless fun, and that nobody in this town is good company. He admits defeat and, injured and dejected, agrees to leave the town.

CONVINCE THE CAT KING

The adventurers could wait until everyone's attention is firmly on Atakon in the town square and reveal the illusion.

Adventurers who present their evidence to the Cat King must succeed on a Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the crowd. If the adventurers have collected no evidence the DC is 18 and it lowers by 1 for every piece of evidence collected. If the adventurers succeed, the crowd turns and starts shouting at Atakon to lower the illusion, and he does so begrudgingly. If they fail, guards begin to approach their position.

A successful DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check allows the adventurers to throw an item at the illusion whilst sidestepping the pixies' attempt to protect it. The thrown item flies directly through the envoy's head, which shimmers and falls to reveal the faerie dragon hiding inside. If the check is failed, a pixie catches the item in mid-air and guards start to descend on the adventurers' position.

DEVELOPMENT

See "Play a Trick of Your Own" for Atakon's reaction.

PLAY A TRICK OF YOUR OWN

Adventurers might decide to play a trick of their own on Atakon. Townsfolk can be persuaded to help them with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check; this DC is lowered to 12 if the adventurers helped the townsfolk during their previous exploration.

Using the skills of the townsfolk, magic, and some dragon scale fabric from The Silk Spirit, the adventurers could fashion a "dragon" of their own to trick Atakon. This is just a suggestion; reward creative and fun ideas, as Atakon loves a good prank! The adventurers must succeed on a group DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check to trick Atakon.

DEVELOPMENT

If successful, the illusion of Atakon the envoy shimmers and disappears in front of the crowd, revealing a beautiful but scared looking faerie dragon. He pleads, “It was only a little prank, you don’t want to hurt poor Atakon, do you?” until the adventurers’ trick is revealed. If the adventurers fail the Performance check, Atakon sees through the trick, but is still greatly impressed with the humour and ingenuity of it! There is a stunned silence before his lips curl into an impish grin and he begins to laugh.

Atakon laughs heartily at the stunned faces of the crowd and the Cat King, declaring, “My, my, who would have thought a town full of little spirits would be so much fun, or make such delicious food! I am sorry for fooling you little friends, but you have nothing to fear. You can keep your baubles and I think we’re going to be great neighbours!”

CONCLUSION

Whether Atakon is a new ally of Eleutheria or left with his tail between his legs, the Cat King thanks the adventurers for revealing the truth to him. He promises not to be so naive next time! The stolen items will be returned to their owners, though there are a few items whose owners had passed or that were simply lost. He allows the adventurers to choose one as a reward, roll on the Magic Items table or choose an item from it (see appendix A). Finally, he turns to the adventurer who impressed him most at the feast, and says “You’re all welcome in this town at any time, however, you are especially welcome at our grand feasts!” He hands the adventurer a *figurine of the cat king* (see appendix B).

EPILOGUE

Merlina accompanies the players back to the Material Plane to return the amulet to Airen. On returning, Airen is overjoyed to see the amulet and Merlina, who was a dear companion of Hiran’s. She offers to make food for the group as a thank you, and leads everyone back to an old wizard’s tower. Whilst Airen is cooking, Merlina looks through the tower she knows well to find Hiran’s hidden journal, and gives it to the young apprentice. The journal notes that Airen is bright and skilled in her studies, but often suffers from doubt in her own abilities and puts too much emphasis on Hiran’s praise. Airen is stunned, and thanks the raven and adventurers profusely. After eating, she gives the amulet to the adventurers as a reward, not wanting to rely on it anymore. The adventurers leave Merlina and Airen together to forge a new friendship.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

1. Although this situation turned out well, it's still possible that an Archfey would not recognise the legitimacy of Eleutheria. The players could become envoys for the town and venture through the Feywild to seek Titania's approval.
2. Hiran's journal points towards his death not being natural. Help Airen find out what happened to her teacher.

APPENDIX A: TABLES

FEY FOOD EFFECTS

d10	Effect
1	You have advantage on Charisma checks for the next 24 hours.
2	For the next 7 days any bird you encounter wants to nest in your hair.
3	Cat ears sprout on your head for the next hour.
4	You are immune to being poisoned for 7 days.
5	For the next hour, whenever you finish speaking a round of applause can be heard.
6	You have disadvantage on Strength checks for the next 24 hours.
7	Flowers sprout wherever you step.
8	You are poisoned for the next 10 minutes.
9	For the next minute, noxious gas leaves your mouth whenever you speak.

10	For the next 10 minutes, whenever you try to walk somewhere you move by cartwheeling.
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MAGIC ITEMS

d8	Item
1	Bag of Tricks
2	Medallion of Thoughts
3	Potion of Greater Healing
4	Pearl of Power
5	Brooch of Shielding
6	Ring of Jumping
7	Necklace of Adaptation
8	Dust of Disappearance

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

AMULET OF CHARM PROTECTION

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this amulet, you are protected from enchantment magic. You have advantage on saving throws against being magically charmed.

FIGURINE OF THE CAT KING

Wondrous item, very rare

This porcelain figurine has been crafted as a perfect replica of the Cat King to commemorate the independence of Eleutheria. Holding the figurine and speaking the command phrase transforms the holder into an identical representation of the Cat King: a 4ft tall, chubby tabby cat complete with crown and cape.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bridie is a chaotic whirlwind of ideas based in the UK. She is one half of The Secret Cat Shop (@secrecatshop on Twitter) and spends the majority of her time thinking about tabletop games, cats and chocolate. You can find her on Twitter @Bridieiswriting

ELEUTHERIAN JELLY TARTS

These tarts are made specifically for celebrations in Eleutheria. Each one has a pastry depiction of the Cat King, who works hard to make sure the town's residents have a lot to celebrate.

YIELD: 12 TARTS

- 3/4 cup (80 grams) unsalted shelled pistachios
- 1 3/4 cups (250 grams) plain flour
- 3/4 cup (180 grams) room-temperature, unsalted butter
- 3/8 cup (50 grams) confectioners' (icing) sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup (100 grams) jam of choice (raspberry and rose are customary in Eleutheria)
- Fresh raspberries, for garnish

Blend the pistachios in a food processor until they resemble fine crumbs.

Alternatively, finely chop the pistachios and pass them through a sieve. In a bowl, rub together the flour and butter until the mixture looks and feels like breadcrumbs. Add the pistachios and icing sugar and mix thoroughly to ensure an even distribution. Add the egg and mix in using a cutlery knife.

Gently knead the mixture until it forms a ball of dough. Wrap the dough with cling film and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.

While the dough is chilling, preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C/180°C fan oven/gas mark 6) and butter a 12-hole tart tin. Once the pastry has chilled, unwrap it onto a pre-floured work surface and roll it out to about 1/10-inch thickness (about the thickness of a £1 coin). Use a round cutter to cut out 12 circles of pastry and place them into the holes of the baking tin.

Place 1–2 teaspoons of jam into each. Use any leftover pastry to cut out the Cat King pastry (an oval face with triangular ears) and put these on top of the jam. Bake the tarts for 15–18 minutes or until the pastry is golden and the jam is starting to bubble. Remove the tarts from the oven, let cool until they can be removed from the baking tray, and transfer them to a wire rack so they can cool fully. Finally, garnish each Cat King with a raspberry crown and serve.

Delivery Witches Apply Within

By Brittney Hay

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Kat and Cake Bakery is run by two middle-aged women named Kirsa and Minami. It started as a small operation out of Kirsa's home kitchen, but soon grew into a prosperous business. When Minami and Kirsa married, they expanded the bakery into a parcel delivery service, delivering packages to the nearby towns that ring the coastal region.

In recent years, a competitor, The Purple Stove Outfitters, has run a smear campaign against Kat and Cake, the local favorite mom-and-pop store. While The Purple Stove focuses more on profits, Minami and Kirsa are more concerned with getting to know their customers personally.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for one to two 3rd-level characters.

Part 1: Prospective Delivery Witches Apply Within: The player characters apply to become delivery witches with The Kat and Cake Bakery.

Part 2: Deliveries and Delays: The characters set out making deliveries and dealing with any delays or obstacles that come their way.

Part 3: A Job Well Done: The characters return to the bakery to see if they can get hired as permanent delivery witches.

HOOKS

This adventure can function as a self-contained one-shot. It can also be inserted into a campaign by placing The Kat and Cake Bakery and The Purple Stove Outfitters locations in a sufficiently large coastal town like Neverwinter, Baldur's Gate, or Waterdeep.

RIVALRY

The characters come across a group of three bakery workers (**commoners**) tearing down notices on a bulletin board and replacing the notices with their own advertisements. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 12 or higher notice similar torn-down advertisements in one of the workers' hands. If the worker sees the characters staring, the worker hastily shoves the pieces of parchment in a bag at their side, feigning innocence.

If the characters approach the bakers, they present their flyers to the characters, while attempting to prevent the party from reaching the notice board. The bakers will flee if force is used against them.

The flyer that the bakers give the characters reads:

“WANT TO WORK FOR A REAL DELIVERY COMPANY? COME JOIN THE OLDEST DELIVERY SERVICE IN THE REGION. APPLY WITH THE PURPLE STOVE OUTFITTERS TODAY!”

If the characters pick up one of the torn-down advertisements, it reads:

“LOOKING FOR PARTIES INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH DELIVERIES. DECENT PAY. IF INTERESTED PLEASE INQUIRE WITH THE KAT AND CAKE BAKERY”

The bottom of the parchment is stamped with the image of a cat carrying a cake aloft on a broomstick.

THE PURRFECT MESSENGER

The characters come across a small black cat wandering the city streets with a scroll case in its mouth. If the characters approach the cat, it drops the case at their feet, meowing emphatically. Inside is a rolled up piece of parchment with the words:

“LOOKING FOR PARTIES INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH DELIVERIES. DECENT PAY. IF INTERESTED PLEASE INQUIRE WITH THE KAT AND CAKE BAKERY”

The bottom of the parchment is stamped with the image of a cat carrying a cake aloft on a broomstick.

If the party accepts the cat’s job proposal, it meows and beckons for them to follow, leading them to The Kat and Cake Bakery.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS & PLACES

THE KAT AND CAKE BAKERY

The Kat and Cake Bakery is a baked goods and delivery service owned by Kirsa and Minami, two middle-aged women. The bakery is known as one of the best shops in the coastal region. Delivery requests come in the form of *paper bird* (appendix B) messengers, and are fulfilled by workers colorfully nicknamed “delivery witches”.

THE PURPLE STOVE OUTFITTERS

The Purple Stove Outfitters is a competitor of The Kat and Cake Bakery. Though Kat and Cake is the older of the two stores, over the past few years, the Purple Stove has steadily lost business for various reasons, like missed deliveries and damaged packages due to careless workers boycotting low wages. Now that their competitor is expanding and hiring more employees, The Purple Stove’s owners have been forced to take notice.

KIRSA

She/her, fire genasi **druid**, lawful good

Kirsa co-owns The Kat and Cake Bakery with her wife, Minami. Of the two, Kirsa is the baker, and she can often be seen behind the counter happily engaging with customers. Characters should not let her pleasant demeanor fool them. Kirsa is a fierce negotiator, and anyone who attempts to cause trouble can expect to receive a sharp thwack from her oversized wooden spoon.

Personality Trait: I'm full of witty aphorisms and have a proverb for every occasion.

Ideal: I like seeing the smiles on people's faces when they enjoy my work. That's all that matters.

Bond: I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Flaw: I have trouble keeping my true feelings hidden. My sharp tongue lands me in trouble.

MINAMI

She/they, eldarin **priest**, lawful good

Minami co-owns The Kat and Cake Bakery with her wife, Kirsa. Minami handles the bakery's finances and deliveries. She sorts out orders and deliveries, and makes sure that things are sent out in a timely manner. Minami can seem distant and socially awkward at times, but she cares deeply about her wife and her business.

Personality Trait: Nobody stays angry around me for long, since I can defuse any amount of tension.

Ideal: Life is like the seasons: in constant change, and we must change with it.

Bond: Life is messy. Throwing yourself into the worst of it is necessary to get the job done.

Flaw: My pride will probably lead to my destruction.

PART 1: PROSPECTIVE DELIVERY WITCHES

APPLY WITHIN

The characters apply to become delivery witches with The Kat and Cake Bakery. They meet the owners, Kirsa and Minami, and receive their delivery assignments.

THE KAT AND CAKE BAKERY

Read or paraphrase the following when the adventurers arrive:

A large display window dominates the front of this cheery shop, filled with cakes, breads, and baked goods made fresh this morning. The sign swinging in the breeze over the door frame depicts a cat carrying a cake aloft on a broomstick. The smell of fresh baked goods wafts out the door as a customer exits the shop, a large paper bag in their arms. As they leave, a small object seemingly made of paper flutters through the gap, moments before it closes.

End of read aloud text.

The majority of the building's first floor is a large shop, with a kitchen and storage room in the rear. Kirsa is at the counter taking care of customers while Minami is in the back looking over the deliveries for the day, when the characters enter.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A DELIVERY WITCH?

When the player characters approach Kirsa, she thinks that they are customers. If they inquire about or present the advertisement, Kirsa's face lights up, and she shows excitement at the prospect of more help. If you used the hook "The Purrfect Messenger", the black cat follows them into the shop, jumps up on the counter, and promptly falls asleep. Otherwise, he is already sleeping on the counter when the characters arrive.

Kirsa takes them to the back room where Minami is seated behind her desk, going over the delivery list for the day. Every so often, a *paper bird* (appendix B) flutters through the door and unfolds itself into a bin of identical-looking notes. Minami takes charge of the player characters, while Kirsa leaves to attend to the customers waiting out front.

Minami explains to the characters that she has many necessary deliveries of varying urgency and difficulty (Part 2: Deliveries & Delays). She also states that if the characters prove themselves capable, they can be hired on as full-time workers.

Minami allows the characters to keep any tips that they may acquire while working, and Kirsa and Minami promise a handsome reward if the characters successfully fulfill their orders. Minami hands them a small stack of delivery orders before getting back to her work, telling them she is available to answer any questions the characters may have about said deliveries.

PART 2: DELIVERIES & DELAYS

The characters set out making delivery runs and dealing with any delays or obstacles. This part is split into two sections: Deliveries that the characters must fulfill for The Kat and Cake Bakery, and Delays that challenge the characters while they fulfill deliveries. Some of the deliveries have recommended delays that synergize with the delivery's objectives. The DM is free to mix and match Deliveries and Delays as well as include their own.

PLAYING WITH LARGER GROUPS

If this adventure is played with more than 2 characters, it is recommended to pair the party up into teams of two to complete the deliveries.

DELIVERIES

A DELICATE DELIVERY

The characters are asked to deliver a beautifully decorated cake to a noble's mansion for a gathering taking place that evening. Kirsa directs the characters to a carefully packed crate that is hovering on what appears to be a small puff of air. She explains that this is a *ring of Tenser's floating disk* (appendix B), which the bakery uses for fragile deliveries.

DEVELOPMENT

While the ring helps stabilize the cake, the characters must still move slowly to ensure it reaches the mansion in one piece. While delivering the cake, the character wearing the ring moves at half speed. If they wish to move faster, they must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, or risk making the cake unstable. If they fail 3 of these checks during delivery, the cake topples over. A *mending* spell or DC 23 Cook's Utensils check can repair any damage. The characters must complete three delay challenges to deliver the cake successfully.

RECOMMENDED DELAY CHALLENGES

Runaway Cart, Rivalry, Poachers

A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

The characters are asked to deliver a shipping crate to a local bath house. The crate contains a number of bath tokens, which possess various restorative properties.

DEVELOPMENT

When the characters arrive, the bath house manager (grung **commoner**), asks them to help with a polluted water spirit (**water weird**) wreaking havoc in one of the bath rooms. The spirit has been polluted with water trash and must be cleansed, but no one has been able to approach it. The source of the problem is a bicycle caught in the spirit's side. The party must succeed on three DC 12 Strength (Athletics) skill checks to pull out the bicycle, which releases all the garbage at an alarming rate. As the garbage bursts forth in a torrent of muddy water, each character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d10 bludgeoning damage (half on a save). If the characters can convince an NPC to help, they gain advantage on the saving throws to pull the bike free. Once fully cleansed, the spirit gifts the party a dumpling that acts as a *greater restoration* spell.

AIRSHIP ANTICS

The characters are asked to deliver a toy airship kit to a little boy who dreams of flying. Upon delivery, the boy realizes that the kit must be powered with magic. The characters can help him assemble the kit by succeeding on a DC 12 Dexterity or Intelligence check and power it either by passing a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or by expending a spell slot of 1st level or higher.

DOLL HOUSE

The characters are asked to deliver toy-sized furniture to a little girl who is making a dollhouse for the "little fae people who live inside the walls". Delighted with finally completing her project, the little girl gives the characters a handful of sugar cubes (appendix B) that her fairy friends gifted her. Characters who succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check or have a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 8 or higher notice a flutter of movement out of the corner of their eye. If they focus on the area, they see a small group of sprites poking their heads out of various nooks and crannies, watching the proceedings with intense curiosity.

DRAGON TREATS

A small cart of sweets and baked goods waits in the alleyway behind the shop. The cart can be pulled by a single person or animal. The characters are asked to deliver the cart to a small cavern outside the city for a high-profile client. When they get to the cave, they find a **young silver dragon** who is a stalwart fan of the bakery. The dragon is delighted by the delivery, and gifts each character one item from its small hoard of treasures (roll twice on Magic Item table A and once on Magic Item table B in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

TEA LEAVES

The characters must deliver a crate of ingredients to a tea shop named The Purrfect Cup. The crate is small enough so that a single character may carry it. The Purrfect Cup is owned by a dapper tabaxi holding a cane and dressed in a top hat, frock coat, and bow tie. The tabaxi identifies himself as The Duke (he/him, **druid**).

DEVELOPMENT

The Duke is excited to receive the latest shipment of tea leaves and happily invites the characters into his cozy tea shop, decorated with colorful knick-knacks and tchotchkes. He pays the delivery fee and invites the characters to sample his latest brew of tea and tea cakes. If the characters accept, The Duke pours them each a cup, chattering the entire time. The tea tastes different to each person who drinks it, harkening back to their favorite childhood beverage, and it grants each character 1d4+2 temporary hit points until the end of their next long rest.

TWO'S COMPANY

The characters are asked to pick up a delivery from a kind old lady who presents them with a miniature statuette of a female lion. They are to deliver it to an antique shop owner who has been looking for this statuette, as he possesses its male counterpart and seeks to reunite the two. When reunited, the statuettes form a pair of *Figurines of Wondrous Power (Lion)*. The shop owner is overjoyed and gifts the party a quirky trinket among his various wares (appendix B).

DELAYS

Delays are meant to challenge the characters as they complete delivery requests for the bakery. There should be at least one delay per delivery, but the DM may add more for a greater challenge.

CABBAGES!

The characters come across a merchant (**commoner**) who is being harassed by 3 ruffians (**bandits**). They have overturned the merchant's cart full of cabbages, and a wheel has been broken in the process. The desperate merchant spots the characters and pleads with them for their assistance. If engaged in combat, the ruffians flee if they are reduced to half health. The busted wheel can be repaired with a DC 12 skill check of the player's choice within reason (e.g. carpenter's tools, Strength (Athletics)).

GUARD HARASSMENT

The characters are cornered by 1d4+1 **guards** eager to throw their weight around. They demand to see what the characters are delivering, believing it to be stolen goods. If the characters succeed in a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the guards tell them they were tipped off by employees of The Purple Stove Outfitters. If threatened, the guards call out for help and might attract the attention of another patrol of guards.

LOST DOG

The characters are approached by a small gnome child, asking them for help finding the child's lost dog. If they agree, they must succeed on three DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) checks in order to locate the animal, which has fallen down a locked sewer grate. The grate can be opened with a successful DC 15 Thieves' Tools check or DC 13 Strength check.

MISTS

As the characters are traveling through the city, an unusually thick mist begins to blanket them. Characters see unusual shapes drifting through it as well as sights of a whimsical city, set in a luscious forest. They must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or feel compelled to walk towards the mysterious landscape. Characters can gain advantage on this check if they think to close their eyes or don't stare directly at the mysterious shapes.

DEVELOPMENT

Just as the unusual city starts to come into focus, the mist vanishes and the characters find themselves in a completely different part of the city than where they started. If they question passersby about the mysterious city they saw, the local says they don't know of a location like that near here, and that they just saw the characters emerge from the nearest alleyway as if in a trance.

MONEY POUCH

The characters spot a discarded money pouch lying on the side of the street. If they choose to investigate, roll a d3 to find out what's inside. This delay is repeatable, using a different encounter each time.

d3	Money Pouch Contents
1	The money pouch is actually a baby mimic (appendix A) that will use its <i>Toothless Maw</i> ability, out of fear, to latch onto the character that attempts to pick it up. Characters can befriend the mimic (<i>see Delay: Swap</i>) if they don't immediately attack the creature.
2	It contains a dung beetle bomb, and upon opening it the characters must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, or be covered in a noxious stink that gives them disadvantage on all Charisma based skill checks for the next hour. Customers will comment on the stink, and characters must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince them to accept the order.
3	The characters find a note that says " <i>For my friend from the sea –S</i> " and a jeweled goldfish pendant that slowly transforms into a little girl and back again. If worn as a necklace, once each day, it grants the wearer water breathing for the next hour.

POACHERS

When the characters arrive at the delivery location, they are met with workers from The Purple Stove Outfitters attempting to poach customers. They will try a variety of tactics, from offering discounts, to promising a more speedy delivery, to disparaging the business. Characters must succeed on 3 contested Charisma (Persuasion) checks before the NPCs succeed on 3 of their own contested checks in order to persuade the customers to choose them over the competition.

RIVALRY

Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher or a character that succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a pair of commoners who have attracted a decent sized crowd and are talking about The Kat and Cake Bakery, attempting to smear the business' good name. They are also handing out flyers for The Purple Stove Outfitters to passersby. Characters can attempt to turn the crowd with three successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks before two failures.

RUNAWAY CART

A runaway cart comes barrelling down the road towards the characters. Sitting in the driver's seat is a terrified half-orc **commoner**, clinging for dear life. Each character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being run over, or take 2d10 bludgeoning damage. If the characters choose to help stop the cart, the driver is grateful and gives them a purse of 50 silver pieces as a reward.

STRAY CAT

Characters notice a large, fat stray cat that has been following them for some time. It meows at them until they follow it to a shop which is locked and repeatedly scratches at the door. If the characters pick the lock (DC 15 Thieves' Tools check) or attempt to rouse the owner, he calls for the guards, thinking that the characters are thieves. Unless the characters succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the owner calls over a pair of **guards**. If questioned about the cat, he says he doesn't know what the characters are talking about and doesn't own a cat.

DEVELOPMENT

The cat is actually a wild shaped **druid** in disguise, who has been hired by The Purple Stove Outfitters to waylay the characters for their delivery.

SWAP

The characters get approached by a charismatic **commoner** who seems to mistake them for someone the commoner knows. While the characters are distracted, the package they have been attempting to deliver is swapped for a **baby mimic** (appendix A) by another pickpocket (**bandit**). Characters can spot this change with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the mimic is caught, it cowers fearfully, not wanting to fight unless absolutely forced to. The pickpocket tries to flee if the ruse is discovered. If the pickpocket is captured or knocked unconscious, searching them uncovers 10 gold pieces and a payment note from The Purple Stove Outfitters.

DEVELOPMENT

The mimic is quite sweet and harmless. It will take a liking to any character that shows it kindness. If the characters choose to keep it, the mimic functions as a non-combat pet unless a character with the *find familiar* spell chooses to target the mimic with the spell.

WAYWARD SOUL

The characters come across a small child who has wandered away from home. The child clutches a worn owlbear stuffie and approaches the characters, asking for help. Characters can help the child reach their home by asking them questions and succeeding on three DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) checks. They can gain advantage on these checks if they ask a local for help. Alternatively, they can look for a **guard** to take the child home.

DEVELOPMENT

The child is actually the ghost of a lost child who went missing and was never found. When they reach the child's home, the parents are very confused but cautiously hopeful. They tell the characters their child went missing and was presumed dead over a year ago, blaming the spirits for taking them. When the characters turn to reunite the child with their parents, all they find is the stuffie, which did belong to their lost child. They take it, thanking the characters sincerely.

If the characters choose to turn the child over to the **guards**, they are confused as the child is nowhere to be found. The only thing left is the stuffie they were clutching in their arms.

PART 3: A JOB WELL DONE

The characters finish their deliveries and report back to The Kat and Cake Bakery to see how successful their day was.

Read aloud:

As the sun sets, the smell of fresh baked goods is a welcome change from the bustle of the busy day. Kirsa is helping wait on the last few customers of the evening, while Minami is busying herself straightening up around the front room and absentmindedly sweeping. As the tinkling of the bell sounds, they turn towards the door expectantly.

End of read aloud text.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE

If the characters have managed to complete three deliveries successfully, Kirsa and Minami will reward them with the position of Delivery Witch, and a permanent place

on the staff, if they want it. The characters are also each given a *broom of lesser flying* (appendix B) as a mark of a job well done.

If the characters fail, Kirsa and Minami are rightfully disappointed but not disheartened. They express their frustration, especially if the Purple Stove is mentioned, and invite them to try again tomorrow if they still wish to lend a helping hand. If not, the couple understands and wish the characters well on future adventures, saying that they'd love for them to stop by from time to time to tell them of their travels.

PLAYING WITH LARGER GROUPS

If you have a party of more than 2 characters, they must complete five deliveries in order for the adventure to be considered a success. Add a delivery for each additional character past 5 party members.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

1. Characters can come back to The Kat and Cake Bakery during downtime between adventures and make more deliveries for the bakery, completing any unfulfilled deliveries from Part 2.
2. Characters can explore the rivalry between Kat and Cake and The Purple Stove, and perhaps even confront the owners of The Purple Stove about the sabotage attempts.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

BABY MIMIC

Tiny monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 12 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 3 (1d4+1)

Speed 10 ft.

STR 2 (-4) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 12 (+1) **INT** 4 (-3) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 2 (-4)

Skills +3 Stealth

Damage Immunities Acid

Condition Immunities Prone

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common but cannot speak it

Adhesive (Object Form Only). The mimic adheres to any creature that it touches. A creature adhered to by the mimic is also grappled by it (escape DC 6); though if the creature is Small or larger, this grapple does not reduce its movement speed and when the creature moves, the mimic moves with it. Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

Damage Transfer (Object Form Only). While it is grappling a creature, the mimic takes only half the damage dealt to it, and the creature grappled by the mimic takes the other half.

False Appearance (Object Form Only). While the mimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object. A creature within 10 feet of it can discern its true nature with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Interdimensional Space. The mimic can hold as much as a regular backpack regardless of the shape it takes, though it must transform into a backpack in order to retrieve items.

Shapechanger. The mimic can use its action to polymorph into an inanimate object (like a small crate, pouch, coin etc.) or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

REACTIONS

Toothless Maw. When a creature touches the mimic without patting it first, the baby mimic bites the creature (1 piercing damage). For 1d4 rounds the baby mimic stays attached to the creature and imposes disadvantage on all attack rolls. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the mimic.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

TRINKET TABLE

Roll 1d20, or choose, a trinket from the table below for the “Two’s Company” Delivery Mission:

1d20	Trinket
1	A small blank book. As an action, the holder can copy another book or other document into this book. The text remains until the holder copies another document, which replaces the previously stored one.
2	A diagram of a forest on an island that doesn’t appear on any map.
3	A small oakwood box containing vials of vibrantly-colored powders.
4	An umbrella-sized green leaf. When in use, deflects rain in a 5 ft. radius around the user.
5	A whistle that only the blower’s allies can hear.
6	A single newt's eye in a glass jar.
7	A bundle of fragrant herbs that releases a relaxing aroma. When burning the bundle, you gain the effect of a <i>calm emotions</i> spell (DC13).
8	A sewing needle that will finish sewing any seam the user started on their own.
9	A small doll that mimics the holder’s movements.
10	A necklace of animal teeth. When worn, the holder can communicate with small beasts through simple words and gestures.

11	A small magical snake that can take the form of a tattoo on one of the holder's arms. Once per day while the snake is a tattoo, the holder may add 1d4 to a Medicine check.
12	A necklace or circlet woven of meadow flowers that never wilt.
13	An ash divining rod that twitches when water is close.
14	A collar that lets a dog or cat speak Common. It doesn't change the animal's Intelligence.
15	A pink scabbard that feels lighter than it actually is.
16	A lute made out of dry grass.
17	A gem that adheres to the holder's forehead like a third eye. Once per day, the holder can gain advantage on their next Wisdom (Perception) check.
18	A pocket sundial that only works in the moonlight.
19	A lantern that glows black, making previously lit places dark.
20	A small violin that is missing all but one of its strings. Remarkably, when played, it sounds as though the other strings are present.

SUGAR CUBES

Wondrous Item, consumable

These sugar cubes come in a pouch containing 1d20 cubes. When consumed, the user gains the effect of the *reduce/enlarge* spell for 1 hour (no concentration required) or until the user ends the effect as a bonus action.

RING OF TENSER'S FLOATING DISK

Ring, uncommon

This silver band is engraved with swirling cloud patterns. The ring has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. The wearer can expend a charge to cast *Tenser's floating disk*. When cast this way, the disk will start to follow the caster after they move 5 ft. away.

BROOM OF LESSER FLYING

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This wooden broom, which weighs 3 pounds, functions like a mundane broom until the user stands astride it and speaks its command word (e.g. *tobu*). It then hovers beneath the user and can be ridden in the air. The user can fly on the broom for up to 1 hour, all at once or in several shorter flights, each spending a minimum of 1 minute from the total duration. If the user is flying when the duration expires, they descend at a rate of 30 feet per round until landing.

PAPER BIRDS

Wondrous Item, uncommon

After the user writes a message of fifty words or fewer on this magic sheet of parchment and speaks a creature's name, the parchment magically folds into a paper bird and flies to the recipient whose name was uttered. The recipient must be on the same plane of existence as the user, or else the bird turns into ash as it takes flight.

PAPER BIRD

The bird is a Tiny object with 1 hit point, an Armor Class of 13, a flying speed of 60 feet, a Dexterity of 16 (+3), and a score of 1 (–5) in all other abilities. It is immune to poison and psychic damage. It travels to within 5 feet of its intended recipient by the most direct route, whereupon it turns into a non-magical and inanimate sheet of parchment that can be unfolded only by the intended recipient. If the bird's speed or hit points are reduced to 0, or if it is otherwise immobilized, it turns into ash.

Paper birds usually come in small, flat boxes containing 1d6 + 3 sheets of the parchment.

(Item first appeared in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brittney Hay (they/she) is a stay at home mom, writer and graphic designer who has written for projects like Eat the Rich Anthology Volume 1, Unbridled, Animal Sidekicks, and Wisdom Under Fire. You can find them on Twitter @FNDungeonMom but be warned here there be adorable pictures of dogs, kitties and a small fierce child adventurer that keeps them on their toes.

KIRSA'S FISH CHOWDER POT PIE

While Kirsa excels at the sweet side of cooking and baking, her savory talents cannot be denied. If you find yourself at the Kat and Cake Bakery, request this off-menu item. It will certainly be a hit at your dinner table.

YIELD: 4-6 INDIVIDUAL POT PIES

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 cups (256 grams) red potatoes, skin-on, diced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup (240 milliliters) vegetable broth, plus more to taste
- 3/4 cup (180 milliliters) heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 cup (128 grams) frozen corn kernels, thawed (or 1 15-ounce can corn kernels)
- 1 pound (453 grams) skinless cod filets, cut into 1/2-inch chunks (or flounder, halibut, or tilapia)
- 1/3 cup (45 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 package frozen pie crust, thawed (or see below for pie crust recipes)
- 1 large egg, beaten

Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C) and lightly oil 4-6 10-ounce ramekins or coat with nonstick spray.

To make the filling, melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and onions and cook until the garlic is fragrant and the onions become translucent, stirring occasionally, approximately 2 minutes. Add potatoes and cook until slightly brown and cooked through, seasoning with salt and pepper.

Whisk in flour until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in chicken broth, heavy cream, and Italian seasoning, about 1-2 minutes. Stir in corn kernels and fish, then season with salt and pepper to taste. If the broth is too thick, add more vegetable broth to desired thickness. The fish does not need to cook at this stage; it will cook thoroughly in the oven when baked.

Divide the filling evenly into the ramekins. Top with a small slab of the remaining butter, then cover with pie crust, cutting small slits in the dough for ventilation. Brush each crust with the beaten egg.

Bake for about 20 minutes or until the crust is golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

HOMEMADE PIE CRUST RECIPES

- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cold butter (approximately 2 sticks), cut into 1/2-inch cubes*
- 1 cup water (or 1 cup sourdough starter discard)
- 1 tablespoon honey (sourdough starter recipe only)

*if you use salted butter, adjust the amount of salt accordingly

BASIC PIE CRUST

Combine the flour and salt together in a large mixing bowl. Pulse or cut in butter until pea-size pieces are incorporated into the flour and salt. Add water 1–2 tablespoons at a time and continue to mix until it comes together and forms a shaggy dough. You may not need to use all the water to reach the right consistency.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead just a few times until the flour is incorporated. Do not over-knead—you should still see bits of butter in the dough. Shape into a disc and wrap with plastic wrap. Chill in the fridge for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days before use, or freeze for up to 2 weeks.

SOURDOUGH STARTER PIE CRUST

Combine your flour and salt together in a large mixing bowl. Pulse or cut in butter until pea-size pieces are incorporated into the flour and salt.

Add the starter and honey to the flour and salt. Continue to mix until it comes together and forms a shaggy dough. If your dough is too wet, add more flour a tablespoon at a time; if it is too dry, add more starter until it reaches the right consistency.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead just a few times until the flour is incorporated. Do not over-knead—you should still see bits of butter in the dough. Shape into a disc and wrap with plastic wrap. Chill in the fridge for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days before use, or freeze for up to 2 weeks.

TIER 2

The Satyr's Dream

By C. Michael Chase

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Hyrsam, an archfey known as the Prince of Fools, is an anarchist that seeks to rid the Feywild of the influence of the fomorians and other beings that didn't originate in the Feywild, in addition to general chaos in the political machinations of the fey nations. His followers have discovered a location of particular potency in the Feywild, and they have found a way to harness that power to make themselves stronger. They plan to use that power to expel all of those not native to the Feywild from it, unconcerned with the chaos this would cause in both the Feywild nations and the Prime Material Plane.

The other nations of the Feywild are unaware of this looming threat, but some have begun to detect that something is amiss in the Feywild. Unsure of the threat, or what it could mean to the ever-shifting balance of power in the Feywild, they all seek to discover what is happening and turn it to their own gain.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for five 5th-level characters.

Part 1. The party stumbles upon a portal into the Feywild hidden in an unusual natural formation and are found by a powerful fey and her retinue on the other side.

Part 2. The party investigates ancient elven ruins in the Feywild at the request of Vinethra, Shiere Knight of Autumn Winds, trying to discover the source of the unrest in the area. They encounter an outpost of empowered fey and learn of the Dreamwell and Hyrsam's plans.

Part 3. After choosing a side, the party must either help Vinethra stop Hyrsam or prevent her from interfering in Hyrsam's plans.

HOOKS

Archfey Patron. If one of the characters is a warlock with an Archfey patron, they could be contacted or pressured by their patron to enter the Feywild and investigate the unrest. The patron tells them of a gate to the Feywild nearby called The Forest Gate.

Calling in a Favor. A fey that helped the party in the past reaches out to the characters, calling in the favor owed for past aid. They are asked to meet the fey at a place called The Forest Gate.

Down the Rabbit Hole. The characters happen upon a portal into the Feywild, and Vinethra's scouts stumble upon them.

Lost Child. The characters learn of a lost child by the name of Orin that was last seen traveling along the road near the Forest Gate.

PART 1: THE FOREST GATE

Part 1 handles how the party enters the Feywild and their initial encounter with Vinethra's troop. Depending on the adventure hook you used to start the adventure, you may need to adjust certain components to fit your narrative.

THE FOREST GATE

This unusual natural feature is known as the Forest Gate because of the tall arching trees that form a path through the forest. As the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following. Replace the large stag with their fey contact if you're using that adventure hook.

Read aloud:

On one side of the road, trees loom over a small footpath, their branches entwining to form an archway. A large stag stands in the middle of the path about fifty feet into the forest, looking back toward you with its large antlers spreading almost the entire width of the path. After a moment, the stag turns and begins walking down the path away from you.

End of read aloud text.

The dire stag is attempting to lead the characters through the Forest Gate into the Feywild.

FEY CONTACT ADVENTURE HOOK

If using the “Calling in a Favor” adventure hook, the fey that reached out to them is waiting here instead of the dire stag. They tell the characters that something is causing unrest in the Feywild and that the party’s debt will be cleared if they can help discover what it is. They also explain that the footpath is actually a portal into the Feywild and task the party with finding Vinethra’s troop on the other side and offer their aid to her.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Nature. Characters proficient in the Nature skill may attempt a DC 11 Intelligence (Nature) check to know that the stag is unusually large and is likely a **dire stag** (appendix A).

Arcana. Characters proficient in the Arcana skill may attempt a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to discover that the trees and other parts of the path are arranged in a way that is similar to a teleportation portal. If a character casts *detect magic* or a similar detection spell, they can make this check at advantage and can detect extremely faint traces of transmutation and illusion magic.

Footpath. The footpath is 10 feet wide. Everything else except for the road is considered difficult terrain, owing to the dense vegetation.

LOCAL MYTHS

On a successful DC 14 Intelligence (History) check, a character can recall 1d4 of the following local legends:

d4	Myth
1	Fey creatures kidnap children who travel alone on the roads.
2	A man once entered the forest and returned a tenday later having aged 30 years.
3	An evil wizard in the forest lures children to his invisible tower where he turns them into flesh golems.
4	There is a town in the forest that only appears every 10 years for a single day. Each day in the town lasts ten years, and there is no evidence of where the town goes in the intervening time.

DEVELOPMENT

If the party follows the footpath into the forest, they find themselves in the Feywild once the road is out of sight. Traveling back along the path, they can discover that the road is no longer there, and they no longer recognize the terrain. After they enter the Feywild, Vinethra's troop comes across the party.

VINETHRA'S TROOP

Vinethra, Shiere Knight of the Autumn Wind, leads a troop of elves, eladrin, and other fey warriors in protecting the Feywild from threats. They are currently traveling to the ruins of an ancient elven city that scouts have not returned from. They are wary but not immediately hostile.

After the party has entered the Feywild, read or paraphrase the following:

As you travel deeper into the forest, you slowly sense a change in the light and sounds around you. The darkness to either side of the path suddenly seems to glow with an ethereal light that is barely perceptible, and the sounds of the forest seem louder and yet more indistinct. There is a dreamlike quality to the air as you breathe it in, and you feel as if you're being pulled into a deep sleep.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Footpath: The footpath is 10 ft. wide, and the forest off the path is considered difficult terrain.

Surrounded: The forest is filled with members of Vinethra's troop. The characters cannot escape Vinethra's troop without magical aid, such as a *dimension door* or *teleport* spell. If they attempt to escape, immediately move to the next encounter with Vinethra interceding.

CREATURES

The forest is filled with elves, eladrin, and other fey loyal to Vinethra. An elven **veteran** steps onto the path in front of the party and demands to know their business in the Feywild. If the party is hostile, a second **veteran** and an eladrin **spy** materialize out of the shadows to join the fight.

TACTICS

The two veterans engage the party directly. The scout stays at range, using its cunning action ability to stay out of melee range and utilizing its Sneak Attack ability as much as possible. The attackers are not trying to kill the characters—only to wound and take them captive.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters answer the elf's questions, he immediately sends a runner to bring Vinethra. If the characters tried to escape or fight, Vinethra appears after their attackers have fallen, using her *Fey Presence* ability to subdue the conflict.

VINETHRA, SHIERE KNIGHT OF AUTUMN WINDS

Depending on how the characters reacted to the previous encounter, they have either just defeated some of the elves and eladrin or they are waiting for Vinethra to arrive.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The large stag you saw before, or one very much like it, leaps onto the footpath in front of you, this time with a tall, elegant woman in elaborate breastplate armor sitting astride it, a drawn rapier in one hand. The woman slides to the ground in a smooth motion and strides toward you.

End of read aloud text.

If the party fought or attempted to escape in the previous encounter, each character must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw as **Vinethra** (CN eladrin, she/her; appendix A) uses her *Fey Presence* ability to charm the characters. Once she does this, she demands that they lay down their arms or be executed. Those that fail their save immediately comply.

Upon learning that the characters are not invaders, she orders her soldiers to stand down and introduces herself. If you're using the "Lost Child" adventure hook, Vinethra doesn't know anything about a human child in the area, but she does explain that she and her troop are investigating some unrest in the area.

No matter what the characters say, she requests their aid in her investigation and offers to send the characters back to Material Plane if they help her.

VINETHRA SIDEBAR

Vinethra (appendix A) is a noble eladrin sworn to defend the Feywild from harm. She is a powerful warrior and spellcaster, blending the magic of the Archfey into her martial prowess. Like all eladrin, she has a chaotic personality, and like her fey kin, she cloaks her words in riddles and confusing logic. In talking with the party, she tries to reveal as little about herself and her motives as she can while trying to learn as much about the party as possible. Though she is not easily shaken, when something does manage to shift her mood, it swings wildly as if she becomes a new person.

Personality. I only say as much as I need to say.

Ideal. Brevity and discipline are the marks of an ordered mind.

Bond. The Feywild is my home and I will do anything to protect it.

Flaw. I use others for my own benefit.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters accept Vinethra's offer, she asks them to travel to some elven ruins to the northwest and find any evidence of the scouts that she sent there. She gives them a glass vial and tells them to summon her by breaking the vial and speaking her name after they have found something of interest.

If the characters refuse, she recommends that they seek shelter in the elven ruins to the northwest (failing to mention that her scouts haven't returned from that direction) until her troop has finished investigating the unrest. Her advice is less to aid them and more to cause a distraction for her forces to investigate the ruins.

PART 2: UEWER'S OUTPOST

The scouts that Vinethra sent out found an outpost of Hyrsam's forces in the ruins of an elven temple. Until recently, a tribe of fomorians lived in the temple remains, unable to return to the Shadowfell and hiding from the fey natives. When Hyrsam's retinue found the Dreamwell, they also found the tribe of fomorians and drove them out, killing most of them. Hyrsam left a few of his retainers behind to kill any fomorians that attempted to return, and to scout the area for other dangers.

THE MAIN CAMP

The retainers left behind to wait for returning fomorians or detect approaching threats are camped in the remnants of the elven temple. Plants and moss cover most of the stones, and vines hang from dark, empty windows.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ancient Ruins. This area is filled with crumbling walls, fallen pillars, trees, large stones, and hanging vines that make hiding and moving stealthily easier. Dexterity (Stealth) checks are made with advantage in this area as long as they remain more than 50 feet from the outpost.

Crumbling Walls. The walls of the ruins can be climbed with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. Doing so for a better vantage point yields the general layout of the outpost, as well as general information about their numbers.

CREATURES

The outpost is manned by one **githyanki warrior**, one **redcap**, one **empowered satyr** (appendix A), two **empowered sprites** (appendix A), and three elves (one uses the **druid** stat block and two use the **spy** stat block).

TACTICS

The githyanki warrior and redcap engage in melee combat while the other creatures stay at range, harassing as many enemies as they can with spells and ranged attacks.

SPYING ON THE OUTPOST

Characters may attempt to spy on the outpost before approaching it. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check yields the following information:

- The githyanki or the druid appear to be in charge.
- The druid has a journal that she can be seen writing in every once in a while.
- There is a ravine that can allow the party to easily get close to the camp without being seen.

If they attempt this check after climbing to a higher vantage point, they may do so with advantage.

INTERROGATION

The characters may take one of the fey captive to question them about Hyrsam's plans. If they succeed on a DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, they can learn the following information:

- They are all part of Hyrsam's retinue, and are helping him tap into something called the Dreamwell to destroy all of the fomorians, goblinoids, and other non-fey invaders in the Feywild.
- The location of the Dreamwell.
- They were about to break camp and rejoin Hyrsam's retinue, which is preparing to harness the Dreamwell in a few hours.

THE DRUID'S JOURNAL

The eladrin druid carries a journal that can be stolen with a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. It reveals the same information as would be gained from interrogating one of the fey.

DEVELOPMENTS

Once the party learns of Hyrsam's plans to harness the Dreamwell, **Uewer** (appendix A) arrives at the outpost with two githyanki warriors.

THE COUNTER BARGAIN

Uewer returns to the outpost and finds the adventurers after they have learned of Hyrsam's plans. This encounter should be modified depending on how they handled the previous encounter.

If the characters fought the guards at the outpost directly, Uewer and his men show up shortly after the end of the battle, giving the characters enough time to find the druid's journal and learn the information contained there, or for them to interrogate one of the guards.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"Well, well, well," a smooth, deep voice says as three githyanki enter the camp. One of them steps forward, a large silver greatsword slung across his back. "I applaud your battle prowess. Perhaps we can come to a mutually beneficial arrangement?"

End of read aloud text.

If the characters favor a less hostile approach and steal the journal from the druid or kidnap one of the guards to interrogate them, Uewer's arrival in the camp leads to the missing journal or guard being discovered. The guards and Uewer's men start a search for the adventurers.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A smooth, deep voice suddenly calls out from the direction of the camp. "I am impressed by your resourcefulness. Come out now, and perhaps we can come to an arrangement. Or run and hide, and we will hunt you down like animals. The choice is yours."

End of read aloud text.

No matter how the characters react, Uewer and his men try to avoid combat until after Uewer makes his offer.

UEWER SIDEBAR

When githyanki reach adulthood, they must kill a mind flayer in a sacred githyanki ritual before they can join the rest of their people on the Astral Plane. Uewer completed his initiation, but when it came time for him to travel to the Astral Plane, his creche was attacked by their ancient illithid enemies, the mind flayers. During the attack and subsequent attempt to escape, Uewer was stranded in the Feywild, where he met Hyrsam and joined his band of revelers.

Since then, Uewer has shed much of the rigid militarism that he grew up in, though his prowess as a fighter is undiminished. He is quick to laugh or sing and will rise to any challenge, more for the sport of it than out of any sense of pride. He is completely loyal to Hyrsam, who he sees as something of a father figure, and who has granted him some minor boons in exchange for his service.

Personality. I am quick to make a joke or laugh at one, even under duress.

Ideal. Everyone should do what pleases them.

Bond. Hyrsam found me when I was young and scared. I will do anything to serve and protect him.

Flaw. I will accept almost any challenge, no matter how foolish or dangerous.

UEWER'S OFFER

If given the opportunity, Uewer explains to the adventurers that they are too late to stop Hyrsam. Hyrsam's forces are already gathered, and they will begin the ritual to harness the Dreamwell soon. Uewer attempts to convince the characters to assist Hyrsam instead of standing against him. Uewer offers the characters Hyrsam's Favor (appendix B), who can also send them back to the Material Plane. If the characters refuse this initial offer, Uewer asks if they will accept the same for simply staying out of the conflict.

CREATURES

Uewer brings two githyanki warriors with him unless the guards at the outpost are still alive. If they are, he only brings one githyanki warrior.

TACTICS

If the characters don't agree to Uewer's bargain, then the githyanki warriors and any remaining guards engage the characters while Uewer escapes. One of the githyanki

warriors engages in melee while the other one uses its *Misty Step* ability to go after spellcasters and ranged attackers.

DEVELOPMENTS

The characters can either accept Uewer's bargain, which prompts Uewer to lead the characters to the Dreamwell to meet Hyrsam and prepare for the ritual, or they can refuse his offer, which leads to a fight with Uewer's men while he escapes.

PART 3: THE BATTLE FOR THE DREAMWELL

Hyrsam's retinue prepares to harness the Dreamwell to expel all of the fomorians, goblinoids, and other non-fey from the Feywild. Meanwhile, Vinethra's company readies themselves for battle against Hyrsam's forces, aiming to prevent the use of the Dreamwell. The characters, depending on which side they are on, prepare for the coming conflict.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The Dreamwell. The Dreamwell is a large fountain shaped like an elven woman cradling a sleeping elven man in her arms in the courtyard of a ruined palace. Despite its age and the crumbling buildings around it, the fountain is in remarkable condition, and water continues to stream from the woman's eyes and hair over the sleeping man. A creature that drinks from the fountain immediately falls into a deep sleep that can only be broken by an Archfey. While in this sleep, the creature wanders the Astral plane, and if they die there, their body fades into nothingness.

PREPARING WITH VINETHRA

If the party returns to Vinethra and informs her of Hyrsam's plans, she requests their aid in stopping Hyrsam, offering a minor boon (see Vinethra's Favor, appendix B) in exchange for their help.

If the characters need convincing, Vinethra explains that expelling all of the non-fey in the Feywild would create significant chaos among the fey courts as well as on the Material Plane. Many notable members of the fey courts are not native to the Feywild. Goblinoids, fomorians, hags, and other creatures would be expelled, leaving them to wreak havoc on the Material Plane. Vinethra states that many fey would be grateful to the characters if they were able to put a stop to Hyrsam's plans.

While Vinethra marshals her forces, the party may take a short rest, after which Vinethra bestows a blessing of *wound closure* (detailed in appendix C) on each character. In addition, each character may choose one additional blessing to be granted before the battle from the following list (detailed in appendix C):

- Health
- Protection
- Magic resistance
- Understanding
- Weapon enhancement

These blessings last until the end of the battle for the Dreamwell.

Vinethra tells the characters that she will engage directly with Hyrsam to disrupt the ritual. He will likely be guarded by his best warriors, and the characters are to keep them from interfering with her struggle against Hyrsam.

PREPARING WITH HYRSAM

If the party joins Uewer and returns to the Dreamwell to assist Hyrsam, they are introduced to **Hyrsam** (CN Archfey, he/him; appendix A), who welcomes them to his retinue. He explains that he fights against the stratification and rigid order of the Feywild that was brought about by the influence of mortal creatures. Furthermore, he aims to protect the Feywild from the corruption of the fomorians, goblinoids, and other evil creatures that hide in the Feywild. He offers the characters a minor boon (see Hyrsam's Favor in Appendix B) if they help him complete the ritual. In addition, he will send them back to the Material Plane.

While Hyrsam prepares for the ritual, the party may gain the benefits of a short rest, after which they are given orders to protect Hyrsam and the Dreamwell with Uewer's help.

THE BATTLE FOR THE DREAMWELL

If the characters are helping Vinethra, they must face Uewer .

If the characters are helping Hyrsam, they must face Vinethra, with Uewer's aid.

As the battle begins, Hyrsam begins to play his fiddle and sing in a rich baritone that can be heard over the din of battle. The water in the Dreamwell begins to glow and swirl, and motes of silver light begin to dance around the fountain. Describe what the characters see from their perspectives as the two armies clash together.

UEWER'S TACTICS

Uewer (appendix A) uses *misty step* to bypass melee attackers, focusing on spellcasters and ranged attackers. If he can't reach a spellcaster or ranged attacker, he splits his attacks to target an *eldritch blast* at a ranged target while engaging in melee.

VINETHRA'S TACTICS

Vinethra (appendix A) begins the battle with *armor of agathys* already cast on herself as a 2nd level spell. On her first turn she casts *confusion*, aiming to hit as many characters as possible. Then she moves into melee, using *misty step* and *invisibility* to keep from being engaged by too many characters at once, and blending spells and melee attacks to take advantage of her *Arcane Surge* and *Improved War Magic* abilities. She also uses *hellish rebuke*, *Misty Escape*, and *Parry* whenever possible.

THE CHAOS OF BATTLE

Battles are chaotic; large battles, even more so. As the two sides come together in battle, feel free to add descriptions of what is going on near the characters as the combat progresses, for example: blue dragon illusions flying overhead, *fireball* spells going off nearby, a githyanki warrior falling to a swarm of pixies. In addition, have each character roll 2d6 at the end of their turn; the result determines a battle effect from the table below.

2d6	Effect
2	A centaur or mounted soldier charges across the character's space. They must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 bludgeoning damage.
3	The character is inside the radius of a <i>faerie fire</i> spell. They must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, or attacks against that character will be at advantage for 1d4 rounds.
4	An enemy soldier enters the combat, making one <i>melee weapon attack</i> with a +5 to hit. If the attack hits, the character takes 1d8 + 3 damage of a random type. The enemy disappears after the attack is made.
5	An arrow flies across the battlefield at the character. Make one <i>ranged weapon attack</i> with a +4 to hit. If the attack hits, the character takes 1d6 + 2 piercing damage.
6-8	Nothing happens.
9	An arrow flies across the battlefield at an enemy of the character's choice. They may make one <i>ranged weapon attack</i> with a +4 to hit. If the attack hits, the enemy takes 1d6 + 2 piercing damage.
10	An ally casts <i>cure wounds</i> on the character. They gain 1d8 +4 hit points.
11	An ally casts <i>cure wounds</i> on a character of the player's choice. That character gains 1d8 + 4 hit points.
12	An ally casts <i>bless</i> on the character. They may add 1d4 to each attack roll and saving throw for the duration of the battle. This effect may only be applied once per character. If a character is already under the effects of a <i>bless</i> spell, they may choose an ally to apply this benefit to instead.

DEVELOPMENTS

Once the adventurers have defeated Vinethra or Uewer, the battle draws to a close in a few minutes.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure can end in one of three ways depending on which side the party took in the battle for the Dreamwell. Regardless of which conclusion they reach, each character must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or forget everything that has happened since they entered the Feywild. A success means they remember the events as if remembering a dream.

VINETHRA SUCCEEDS

Once Uewer falls in battle, read or paraphrase the following:

As the githyanki warrior falls to the ground, you hear an ethereal shout of rage and pain. A pulse of energy washes across the battlefield, and as you turn toward the Dreamwell, you see Vinethra standing over Hyrsam, his fiddle shattered on the stones. “You protect these abominations?” he snarls. “Fine.” The satyr begins to fade into silvery motes of light, and the musical tinkling of bells fades into nothingness as the ethereal voice says, “Pray we never meet again.”

End of read aloud text.

If the characters ask Vinethra how she was able to defeat Hyrsam, she sighs and says that she didn’t; she only managed to stop the ritual, and barely. Once that was done, Hyrsam likely didn’t care for a direct confrontation. “He’s always preferred manipulation and sabotage to combat.” She worries that she and the characters have made a powerful enemy, and she warns them to be on their guard in the future.

With the battle concluded, and Hyrsam’s plans stopped, Vinethra honors her bargains with the characters. She offers each of the characters a minor boon in the form of one of the charms detailed in appendix B.

If you are using the “Lost Child” adventure hook, Orin can be found hiding in the ruined palace after the battle. With a successful DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check, he can be convinced that the adventurers will bring him home. If they fail, he wants to stay with Vinethra’s troop in the Feywild.

She opens a portal to the Material Plane for the characters and tells them they are always welcome with her company should they find themselves in the Feywild again.

HYRSAM TRIUMPHS

Once Vinethra falls in battle, read or paraphrase the following:

The eladrin woman falls to her knees, her swords falling from her hands. “You do not... know the chaos you have brought... to your world...,” she says as she slumps to the ground, releasing her last breath in a misty cloud that envelopes her body. In moments, she is gone, leaving behind the faint scent of pine and autumn leaves.

End of read aloud text.

Hyrsam completes the ritual while Vinethra’s company is routed. In the aftermath, Hyrsam is tired and drained from harnessing the Dreamwell, but he still attempts to convince the characters to stay in the Feywild and join his band of revelers. If they refuse, he may offer promising candidates the honor of his patronage or try to entice the characters into a bargain for a minor boon (see appendix B). If you are using the “Lost Child” adventure hook, the child can be found among Hyrsam’s revelers, and Hyrsam tries to bargain with the characters for the child’s release.

In the end, though, Hyrsam honors the deal Uewer made with the adventurers, with a minor twist. When they are returned to the Material Plane, they find that a month has passed, and they all have disadvantage on the saving throw to remember their time in the Feywild.

NEUTRALITY

If the characters accepted Uewer’s compromise to have the adventurers stay out of the battle for the Dreamwell,

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you make your way through the forest, you hear the sounds of battle in the distance. A few minutes later, your hackles raise as a wave of powerful magic washes through the trees. Your eyelids and limbs grow heavy, and darkness creeps over your vision.

End of read aloud text.

When the characters awaken, they are camped next to the road in front of the Forest Gate with no memory of their time in the Feywild. If you are using the “Lost Child”

adventure hook, Orin stumbles into their camp, bleary-eyed and with no memory of his time in the Feywild.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

If the characters aided Vinethra, Hyrsam may seek revenge upon the characters for foiling his plans.

If the characters aided Hyrsam, he may have tasks that he would like the party to accomplish in exchange for further favors or boons.

If the characters aided Hyrsam or remained neutral, Hyrsam's success expelled all of the hags, goblinoids, fomorians, and other non-fey from the Feywild. The surrounding countryside is overrun by these creatures, and the towns and cities in the area come under siege.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

EMPOWERED SATYR

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 12 (+1) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 14 (+2)

Skills Perception +2, Performance +6, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Magic Resistance. The satyr has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

EMPOWERED SPRITE

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class 15 (leather armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d4 + 10)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR 8 (-1) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 14 (+2) **WIS** 13 (+1) **CHA** 11 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +8

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. If its saving throw result is 7 or lower, the poisoned target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature uses an action to shake it awake.

Heart Sight. The sprite touches a creature and magically knows the creature's current emotional state. If the target fails a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, the sprite also knows the creature's alignment. Celestials, fiends, and undead automatically fail the saving throw.

Invisibility. The sprite magically turns invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the sprite wears or carries is invisible with it.

HYRSAM, THE PRINCE OF FOOLS

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 22 (leather armor)

Hit Points 225 (30d8 + 90)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 12 (+1) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +10, Wis +9, Cha +14

Skills Arcana +8, Deception +14, History +8, Insight +9, Nature +8, Perception +9, Performance +21, Persuasion +21, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances radiant, necrotic

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons; poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages can speak and understand all languages
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

Bewitching Whispers. Hyrsam can cast *compulsion* once per long rest without using one of his spell slots.

Fey Sight. Hyrsam can see the true form of any shapechanger or creature concealed by illusion or transmutation magic while the creature is within 30 feet of him and within line of sight.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Hyrsam fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Hyrsam has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Musical Defense. Hyrsam adds his Charisma modifier to his AC (already included in stat block).

The Dance of Battle. Hyrsam can make one *eldritch blast* attack after casting a spell of 5th level or lower.

The Soul of Music. Hyrsam cannot be killed unless he has the deafened condition when his hit points fall to 0. Otherwise, his body disappears in a puff of smoke, leaving behind the faint tinkling of bells. All of his equipment disappears with him, and he reappears in a different area of the Feywild at the next dusk.

Spellcasting. Hyrsam is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells, and needs no material components:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, eldritch blast, mage hand, minor illusion, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, charm person, cure wounds, disguise self, dissonant whispers, faerie fire, feather fall, hellish rebuke, heroism, silent image, sleep, Tasha's hideous laughter*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, calm emotions, crown of madness, enhance ability, enthrall, hold person, invisibility, lesser restoration, phantasmal force, shatter, silence, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, fear, hypnotic pattern, major image, plant growth, stinking cloud*

4th level (3 slots): *compulsion, confusion, greater invisibility, hallucinatory terrain, polymorph*

5th level (3 slots): *animate objects, awaken, dominate person, dream, geas, legend lore, mass cure wounds, mislead, modify memory, seeming*

6th level (2 slots): *mass suggestion, Otto's irresistible dance, programmed illusion, true seeing*

7th level (2 slots): *etherealness, mirage arcane, project image, regenerate*

8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster, mind blank*

9th level (1 slot): *foresight, true polymorph, wish*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hyrsam makes six attacks; five eldritch blasts and one ram attack.

Eldritch Blast. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 123 (1d10 + 7) force damage.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be thrown 10 ft. back, landing prone. If the target's movement is obstructed, they take an additional 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage.

Hyrsam's Fiddle. Hyrsam plays his fiddle and chooses one of the following magical effects: a charming melody, a frightening strain, or a gentle lullaby. Any creature within 300 feet of Hyrsam that can hear his fiddle must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as described below. Satyrs and creatures that can't be charmed are unaffected.

Charming Melody. The creature is charmed by Hyrsam for 1 minute. If Hyrsam or any of its companions harm the creature, the effect on it ends immediately.

Frightening Strain. The creature is frightened for 1 minute.

Gentle Lullaby. The creature falls asleep and is unconscious for 1 minute. The effect ends if the creature takes damage or if someone takes an action to shake the creature awake.

An affected creature can repeat their saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Hyrsam's fiddle for the next 24 hours.

UEWER

Medium humanoid (gith), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 14 (+2) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +5, Wis +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Gith, Sylvan

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Uewer's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *eldritch blast*, *mage hand* (the hand is invisible)

3/day each: *jump*, *misty step*, *nondetection* (self only), *tongues*

1/day each: *plane shift*, *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Uewer makes two silver greatsword attacks and one eldritch blast attack, or three eldritch blast attacks.

Silver Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) psychic damage. This is a magic weapon attack. On a critical hit against a target in an astral body (as with the *astral projection* spell), Uewer can cut the silvery cord that tethers the target to its material body, instead of dealing damage.

Eldritch Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) force damage.

VINETHRA, SHIERE KNIGHT OF AUTUMN WINDS

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (+1 breastplate)

Hit Points 170 (20d10 + 60)

Speed 35 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 22 (+6) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 13 (+1) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +6, Cha +9

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +9, History +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +9

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silver

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 16

Languages Common, Sylvan, Elven

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Arcane Surge. Twice per short rest, Vinethra can take an additional action on her turn. When she does, she may instantly teleport 30 ft. to an unoccupied space she can see. She can do this before or after taking her action. In addition, she must use her additional action to cast a spell.

Beast Speech. Vinethra can cast *speak with animals* at will without expending a spell slot.

Dreadful Word. Vinethra can cast *confusion* once per long rest without using one of her spell slots.

Fey Native. Vinethra has advantage on all saving throws against magic.

Fey Sight. Vinethra can see the true form of any shapechanger or creature concealed by illusion or transmutation magic while the creature is within 30 feet of her and within line of sight.

Improved War Magic. When Vinethra uses her action to cast a spell, she may use her bonus action to make one melee attack with her rapier or shortsword.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Vinethra fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Mask of Many Faces. Vinethra can cast *disguise self* at will without expending a spell slot.

Otherworldly Leap. Vinethra can cast *jump* on herself at will without expending a spell slot or material components.

Shifting Seasons. At the end of each short or long rest, Vinethra aligns herself with the magic of one of the four seasons. Doing so allows her to cast a certain cantrip, as shown in the Shifting Seasons Cantrips table. When she aligns herself with a season's magic, she loses the cantrip associated with the previous season and gains the cantrip associated with the new season. Her spellcasting ability for these cantrips is Charisma.

Shifting Seasons Cantrips

Season Cantrip

Autumn	<i>Friends</i>
--------	----------------

Winter	<i>Chill touch</i>
Spring	<i>Minor illusion</i>
Summer	<i>Fire bolt</i>

Spellcasting. Vinethra is a 20th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *armor of agathys*, *charm person*, *faerie fire*, *hellish rebuke*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions*, *enthrall*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *misty step*, *phantasmal force*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *major image*

4th level (1 slot): *hallucinatory terrain*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Vinethra makes three attacks when she takes the Attack action; two with her rapier, and one with her shortsword.

+1 Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 7) piercing damage plus 5 necrotic damage.

+1 Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d6 + 7) piercing damage plus 5 necrotic damage.

Eldritch Blast. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 60 ft., up to four targets, four beams (separate attack rolls for each). *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) force damage.

Fey Presence. Each creature in a 30 ft. cube originating from Vinethra must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed or frightened by her (her choice) until the end of her next turn. Once she uses this ability, Vinethra must complete a short rest before she can use it again.

Dark Delirium. One target within 60 ft. of Vinethra that she can see must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target is charmed or frightened (Vinethra's choice) for 1 minute or until her concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell). The effect ends early if the target takes any damage.

While under this effect, the target thinks it is lost in a misty realm, the appearance of which Vinethra determines. The target can only see and hear itself, Vinethra, and the illusion. After using this ability, Vinethra must complete a short rest before she can use it again.

BONUS ACTIONS

Fey Step. As a bonus action, Vinethra can magically teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space she can see. Once she uses this trait, she can't do so again until she finishes a short or long rest.

Second Wind. Once per short rest, Vinethra can use her bonus action to regain 25 (1d10 + 20) hit points.

REACTIONS

Beguiling Defenses. When Vinethra is targeted by a spell or ability that would charm her, she can use her reaction to attempt to turn the charm back on the caster. The caster must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. Since Vinethra is immune to the charmed condition, nothing happens on a success. On a failure, the caster is charmed by Vinethra for 1 minute or until the caster takes damage.

Misty Escape. When Vinethra takes damage, she can use her reaction to turn invisible and teleport up to 60 ft. to an unoccupied space she can see. She remains invisible until the start of her next turn or until she attacks or casts a spell. After using this ability, Vinethra must complete a short rest before she can use it again.

Parry. Vinethra adds 4 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

APPENDIX B: ARCHFEY BOONS

VINETHRA'S FAVOR

If the characters aided Vinethra in defeating Hyrsam, she offers each character one of the following charms (their choice):

- **Charm of Animal Conjuring.** This charm allows you to cast the *conjure animals* spell (3rd-level version) as an action. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.
- **Charm of the Archfey.** This charm has 3 charges. As an action, you may expend a charge to reroll a spell saving throw. This can be done after the first roll is made, but must be done before hearing the results.
- **Charm of Heroism.** This charm allows you to give yourself the benefit of a *potion of heroism* as an action. Once you do so, the charm vanishes from you.
- **Charm of Restoration.** This charm has 6 charges. You can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells: *greater restoration* (4 charges) or *lesser restoration* (2 charges). Once all its charges have been expended, the charm vanishes from you.
- **Charm of Vitality.** This charm allows you to give yourself the benefit of a *potion of vitality* as an action. Once you do so, the charm vanishes from you.

HYRSAM'S FAVOR

If the characters aided Hyrsam in harnessing the Dreamwell, he offers each character one of the following charms (their choice):

- **Charm of Wolfsbane.** This medallion in the shape of a wolf's head contains 3 charges. A character can expend one charge using an action to give one weapon the silvered property for 10 minutes.
- **The World's Tiniest Violin.** This small velvet lined box contains a tiny violin on a stand. When the box is opened, it emanates a musical effect, and each creature within 30 ft. of the box must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw

against one of the effects below, chosen by the creature that opened the box. The effect lasts for one minute, after which the box snaps shut, and the music stops. Any creature that moves within 30 ft. of the box while it is open must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or fall under its effect. Once this item is used, it cannot be used until after the next dawn.

- *Distracting Melody.* All creatures that fail their saving throw are stunned for 1 minute. The effect ends if the creature takes damage.
- *Frightening Strain.* All creatures that fail their saving throw are frightened for 1 minute. The effect ends if the creature takes damage.
- *Gentle Lullaby.* The creature falls asleep and is unconscious for 1 minute. The effect ends if the creature takes damage or if someone takes an action to shake the creature awake.
- ***Cleansing Rites.*** An enchanted flail with a head in the shape of a knotted piece of wood. Attacks with this weapon count as magical for the purposes of overcoming damage immunities and resistances, and if the target is a goblinoid, it deals an extra 1d8 radiant damage. If the target is a fomorian or hag, it deals an extra 2d8 radiant damage.
- ***Warlock Patronage.*** A character that accepts this boon from Hyrsam gains the ability to advance in warlock class levels. If they already have levels in warlock, Hyrsam instead grants the character a *rod of the pact keeper +1* as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX C: VINETHRA'S BLESSING

If the party is aligned with Vinethra in the battle for the Dreamwell, the players receive a blessing of *wound closure* and may choose one of the following blessings to be placed upon them before the battle.

- **Wound Closure.** When you are dying, you stabilize at the start of your turn. In addition, whenever you roll a Hit Die to regain hit points, double the number of hit points it restores.
- **Health.** Your Constitution score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.
- **Protection.** You gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws.
- **Magic Resistance.** You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- **Understanding.** Your Wisdom score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.
- **Weapon Enhancement.** One nonmagical weapon in your possession becomes a +1 *weapon* whenever you wield it.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This adventure draws inspiration from Studio Ghibli's *Ponyo on the Cliffs*, and deals with the topics of freedom, agency, and environmentalism. Through the course of this adventure, the players have the ability to choose between two sides that each have valid reasons for their actions. Though Hyrsam is the "villain" in this story, there is little malice in his actions, and he believes he is working for the protection and growth of the Feywild and its peoples. I encourage Dungeon Masters to challenge their players with this perspective, and not present Uewer's offer as a simple choice between good and evil. After all, it's all a matter of perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

C. Michael Chase is an IT Professional, Dungeon Master, and Adventure Writer in Portland, OR. He has been involved in tabletop roleplaying games for almost fifteen years, and regularly volunteers as a DM at Kumoricon in Portland, OR. His first adventure, *Bhaal's Vendetta*, was published in December 2019 and can be found on DM's Guild.

The Only Docent Thing to Do

By Anthony Alipio

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Near the end of The Last War a conscientious artificer, pressed into service making warmachines that would contribute to the senseless death toll, decided to sabotage the colossus manufacturing plant she worked at.

Stealing a half-finished colossus warframe (torso and hips) and its intended docent network, the artificer, along with several of her constructs, made her way across Cyre. They hoped to escape into the desert...unfortunately they didn't make it out before the Day of Mourning.

Although the artificer perished, the primary docent node gained sentience. Imbued with the artificer's personality, the docent somehow also has intermittent access to her memories.

The docent found itself attached to the homunculus and still networked to the other docent nodes in the modified warframe.

The warframe now serves as a mobile home, inhabited by the iron defender, the homunculus, the docent, and a living glitterfire spell which powers the moving structure.

Led by the docent, this crew has been on the run since the Day of Mourning. They fled into the Blade Desert to escape the war which they believe to be ongoing, as they are unaware of the Treaty of Thronehold.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for four 6th-level characters.

While making a difficult desert crossing, the adventurers stumble across a large metal structure which can only be the husk of a Warforged Colossus -- or at least part of one. Though the exterior is sandworn and some parts appear to be mismatched, the warframe has not fallen into complete disrepair. How it ended up so far outside of the Mournland is a mystery until its current inhabitants make themselves known.

Two constructs (a large clockwork ant and a praying mantis homunculus) and a sentient spheroid docent (a magical repository of knowledge capable of embedding itself into a warforged's body) describe their sudden self-awakening and frantic flight from Cyre into the Blade Desert.

Never staying too long in the same place, the crew recently got caught in and buried by a large sandstorm, only just now resurfacing. But their warframe's power source, a living glitterfire spell, has been gone now for five days, and the mobile home is going nowhere without it...

NOT ADVENTURING IN EBERRON?

Although this adventure was designed for use within the Eberron setting and has ties and references to sourcebook material in *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*, here are a few suggestions to help make the adventure more setting neutral.

Instead of the mobile warframe being based on a Warforged Colossus from Cyre, it could be ancient technology from a long lost civilization. Rather than the sentient docent and constructs resulting from the arcane chaos of the Day of Mourning, they could be remnants of magic from that lost civilization. Instead of a living spell, a fire elemental could be what powers the structure.

HOOKS

Salvage Mission. A wealthy patron sends the party into the Blade Desert to look for wartime salvage.

Desert Crossing. Cutting across the Blade Desert seemed like a good idea at the time. Now, with water and supplies running low, not so much. Hopefully this giant beetle is just another mirage...

In Search of Answers. A warforged hermit with knowledge of what really caused the Day of Mourning is rumored to live in a hidden oasis somewhere deep in the Blade Desert.

FRIEND OR FOE

How will the adventurers be perceived by the warframe crew? If there is an artificer among them, will the constructs be drawn to or repelled by the idea of renewing a partnership with a master? Likewise, if there is a warforged in the adventuring party, would the docent be open or opposed to transferring from the homunculus? You may find it useful to track this “friend or foe” sentiment as a game mechanic, a party attribute that begins at -1 and can be increased or decreased to a max of +/- 5 based on decisions and actions of individual party members.

+5 Loyal Friend

+4 Staunch Ally

+3 Trusted Advisor

+2 Friendly Face

+1 New Acquaintance

0 Harmless Passerby

-1 Unknown Stranger

-2 Rude Antagonist

-3 Untrustworthy Villain

-4 Fearsome Enemy

-5 Despised Foe

PART 1: HEAT, METAL

The desert is an unforgiving biome. Extreme temperatures, no water, no food, no shelter, ever-shifting sands underfoot, wild beasts and even wilder monsters. The unrelenting sun of day and the freezing temperatures at night drive an alternate activity cycle which favors nocturnal travel and midday rest.

In addition to the suggested rules regarding Extreme Heat (*Dungeon Master's Guide* Chapter 5), you may wish to impose one or more of the following effects on adventuring parties that are unused to desert travel. Creatures who are native to the desert or who succeed on a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw do not suffer these effects.

- **Sweltering Heat.** A creature suffers one level of exhaustion after any combat that takes place during daytime hours.
- **Blurred Vision.** The distance a creature can see during daytime hours is reduced by 50%.
- **Fitful Rest.** A creature is unable to gain the benefits of a long rest.
- **Water Waste.** A creature must consume 3 gallons of water over the course of a day to restore exhaustion due to heat.
- **Desert Mirage.** A creature perceives a hallucination that seems completely real, including sounds, smells, and temperature appropriate to the thing imagined. Physical interaction with the image reveals it to be an illusion. It is revealed to be a hallucination with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.
- **Sunburn.** For the next 48 hours, a creature's maximum hit points are reduced by 1d6 and it has a -1 penalty on all attack rolls.
- **Drought.** A creature is unable to magically conjure food or water.
- **Shifting Sands.** All terrain is difficult terrain.

OPTIONAL PRELUDE

To help set the stage of travel in the burning desert, leverage the following random encounter/event table. This table may also be used in Part 3.

d10	Encounter
0	Small oasis/watering hole (real)
1	Small oasis/watering hole (mirage)
2	5 dust mephits who spin up to protect their territory
3	A family pod of 6 bulettes who dive playfully in and out of the sand in the distance
4	A hunting pod of 4 bulettes who attack the youngest, oldest, or most sickly looking party member
5	3 giant lizards sunning on some rocks
6	A minor dust storm (limited visibility/direction sense)
7	An empty efreeti bottle
8	A sealed bottle containing an enraged efreeti who will attack if released. Note: this is a CR 11 creature, so use with caution for a Level 6 party. It will only attack for 1 round as freedom, not death, is its goal. On its turn on the second round of combat, it will cast <i>plane shift</i> on itself in an attempt to escape into the Elemental Plane of Fire. If defeated, it has no wishes to grant but will beg not to be put back into the bottle.
9	A purple worm surfaces 120 feet away, consuming a small grove of cacti. This CR 15 creature should be a clear signal for the party to flee and can be useful to drive exhaustion and increase tension, but it shouldn't be a TPK encounter unless the party is very foolhardy.

UNNATURAL WAYPOST

In the dim light of early morning, any party member on the lookout (DC 11 passive Perception) will notice an odd wooden post sticking out of the sand. In fact, this is **Manta** (CG **homunculus servant** (*Eberron: Rising from the Last War*), fly speed 35 feet, she/her) who is stuck head down in the sand. If no one in the party has a passive Perception score of 11 or higher, the party member with the lowest Perception score simply trips over the protruding bit of wood (Manta's lower abdomen).

Read aloud:

An oblong object made of polished wood juts out of the sand. It has a shimmering green varnish and is covered in markings that might be runes or possibly text in an unfamiliar language. The markings continue down the post, extending below where it is buried in the sand.

End of read aloud text.

A *detect magic* spell identifies the object as magical (transmutation school). An *identify* spell will identify it as a magical construct.

Excavating Manta from the sand is difficult, but not impossible. Five minutes of clearing sand by hand, a *mold earth* cantrip, or other similar effort will free the homunculus. Manta is a 6-foot-tall wooden homunculus, modeled after a praying mantis with wings and pincer forelimbs. She has no hind legs and is missing one eye. None of these parts are lost in the sand; she was designed to flit and hover, not walk, and the empty eye socket is now home to a docent named Dot (see Part 2). Head down, the tail end of her long abdomen was the only visible part above ground.

The mantis is covered in strange markings, and seen in context they can be identified with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check as a magical method for transforming a mundane object into a homunculus.

When she is finally upright, Manta shakes the sand from her wings and bounces about excitedly. She cannot speak but attempts to express her gratitude with body language. When the adventurers speak with Dot, they will learn the homunculus is named Manta.

If they treat Manta well, the party gains +1 to their Friend or Foe attribute (see "Friend or Foe" sidebar), and Manta leads the party to the warframe. If not, she attempts to wander off and will eventually head back to the warframe.

GUARDED ANTHILL

Unless the party decides to leave the desert back the way they came, their desert exploration (or Manta) leads them to the warframe. From a distance it might be mistaken for a large dune, but for the occasional glint of metal. Up close, its shape is much better defined.

Read aloud:

The large structure seems to have six makeshift mechanical legs and its roof is roughly domed. It appears reminiscent of an enormous metal-plated beetle.

End of read aloud text.

As the party begins to investigate, the clockwork ant **Clacky** (see “Creatures” below) senses their presence and sounds an alarm (the grating sound of metal wrenching against metal) in an attempt to scare off any intruders and warn Dot (see Part 2) that someone has arrived. How the ant behaves depends on whether or not Manta has led the party to the warframe or if the party arrived alone.

- If Manta is not with the party, the ant attacks the intruders.
- If Manta accompanies the party, the ant does not attack, but rather playfully approaches the mantis who pets the ant in a friendly and familiar way. (Note: it may still be seen as an aggressive action by the party who may decide to attack.)

CREATURES

Clacky (LG iron defender (*Eberron: Rising from the Last War*) with a burrow speed of 30 feet, she/her)

Read aloud:

What seemed at first a random scrap of metal jutting out from a low sanddrift suddenly shakes free, revealing itself to be the antenna of a clockwork ant the size of a large dog.

COMBAT HAZARDS

If combat ensues, feel free to leverage the effects from the optional desert travel effects, e.g. Shifting sands and Sweltering heat.

TACTICS

After raising the alarm, Clacky charges menacingly towards the nearest intruder. If the characters do not immediately flee (as most native beasts would), she will leverage a rush and burrow technique, disappearing under the sand except when popping up to strike. If her target is small sized, she will attempt to grapple and drag the creature down with her. Burrowing provides Clacky with full cover, but unless Clacky takes the disengage action, opponents within reach when she begins to burrow still gain an attack of opportunity.

DEVELOPMENT

If the iron defender drops, or is in danger of dropping, below half its hit points, or if the party surrenders, she disengages and retreats (as instructed telepathically by the docent), burrowing deep into the sand if a quick exit is needed.

A STILL, SOFT VOICE.

Once Clacky retreats or has determined the party is not a threat, the docent reaches out telepathically to the nearest party member of good alignment (or the adventurer with the highest Wisdom if no adventurer is good-aligned), requesting a cease to the violence and assistance in reuniting with its friends.

Read aloud:

The voice in your head is calm and unhurried, speaking with the confidence and patience of a scholar or professor.

“Please accept my apologies. Clacky is designed to guard and protect. But I sense perhaps you are more interested in exploration than confrontation, as am I. We might even be able to help one another.”

DEVELOPMENT

If the party investigates the warframe and/or responds to the docent’s message, proceed to Part 2.

PART 2: MAGIC, MOUTH

The telepathic voice directs the party to the entrance to the warframe. Once past the hatch, which is jammed with sand, the party meets Dorothea (or “Dot” for short) who tells the tale of the repurposed colossus and their flight from Cyre.

THE HATCH

Read aloud:

The metal hatch on the side of the warframe has a handle with a latch, but there is no visible locking mechanism.

DEVELOPMENT

Attempts to open the hatch are met with resistance. Although it isn’t locked, sand has jammed it shut. A *knock* spell, *prestidigitation* spell (cleaning effect), several minutes of old-fashioned elbow grease, or other creative solution (tinker tools, grease/lamp oil, etc.) can dislodge enough sand to allow the hatch to open.

THE HELM

Read aloud:

The interior is unlit, and what little light the open hatch lets in isn’t enough to see more than 5 feet in.

“I hope you won’t be too alarmed once you see me,” the voice announces in your mind.

End of read aloud text.

Once the adventurers are able to see the area and look around, they find it is fairly clean and well kept. This level is where the warforged colossus would have been piloted. The primary docent node (now sentient and known as Dot), was located in the center of the chassis at the helm, from which the pilot could navigate and command the colossus via the docent network.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Pilot’s seat. In the center of this room a comfortable looking chair faces a console that has several levers and switches. Adventurers who succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence (History) or DC 14 Wisdom (Land Vehicles) check identify the chair as a pilot’s seat and the console as a steering mechanism.

Dorothea “Dot” (NG sentient **docent**, appendix A, it/it).

Dot is currently situated on a small pedestal built into the steering mechanism. It is a multi-faceted metallic spheroid. Its facets are slightly concave and its surface is perforated with tiny holes through which a low, violet light can be seen pulsating. Dot can adjust the brightness of this light or choose to turn it off altogether, but finds it helpful to pulse in tandem with its words.

Teleportation Circle: There is a permanent *teleportation circle* located behind the pilot’s chair. This circle is not visible unless a passphrase (which Dot knows) is spoken. Once visible, its unique sigil sequence may be memorized by studying it for 1 minute.

TACTICS

If the party behaved more aggressively than defensively during the encounter with Clacky, Dot will be more guarded with its information. The docent may even cease communicating altogether if the party begins rummaging around the warframe searching for valuables.

DEVELOPMENT

If the party approaches Dot with sincerity and openness, Dot will have a friendly conversation and disclose much of the information found in the Adventure Background.

Dot has several quests it believes the party can complete and can offer the party a range of rewards in return. The rewards are commensurate with the assistance given and goodwill earned by the party (see rewards table at the conclusion of the adventure).

QUEST 1: A GOOD HOST (A.K.A. CONNECT THE DOT).

The goal of this quest is to reunite Dot with Manta. Dot and Manta have a symbiotic relationship. Manta helps Dot get around, and Dot gives Manta a way to voice her opinions. Together they keep the warframe up and running.

DEVELOPMENT

If Manta led the party to the Warframe, this quest can be completed immediately. Otherwise the party may need to search for Manta (who would already be heading back to the warframe). The search takes 1d100 minutes. The longer the search, the more likely a random encounter is to occur.

Once Manta is found, the party must then convince her they are there to help. Although she is mute, she understands Common (and many other languages thanks to Dot's tutelage) and can be convinced with words and actions without requiring an ability check as long as the party does not try to deceive her.

REWARDS

Completing this quest increases the party's Friend or Foe attribute by +1 (see "Friend or Foe" sidebar). In addition, Manta gives the party a rare magical item (either a *cloak of desert shade* or a *sash of whirling*), and Dot entrusts the party with Quest 2.

When attached to Manta, Dot can speak out loud. Interestingly, Manta remains mute, but does occasionally ask Dot to speak for her (e.g. "Manta has asked me to thank you for freeing her from the sand. She is most grateful.")

QUEST 2: FRIENDLY FIRE

In describing how they escaped the Mournland, Dot will explain the vital role Glim played. Although the Dot controls the movement of their mobile home via the docent network, it is Glim, a living spell, that provides the magical energy necessary to power the entire structure.

The goal of this quest is to find Glim and ensure her safety. Dot will only grant this quest to the party if they have succeeded in completing Quest 1.

In this last sandstorm (they have weathered several during their years in the desert), Dot hunkered the warframe down as usual, but Glim was feeling restless and wandered out into the desert just before the storm hit. Manta impulsively chased after her.

Dot enlists the party's aid in finding Glim to see if she is ok and find out what might be causing her restlessness.

THE BARRACKS

A ladder leads to a second level of the warframe where several beds and footlockers are bolted into the floor. There are also shelves, counter space, and cabinets built into the walls.

The cabinets contain an assortment of alchemy and artificing books and paraphernalia as well as a small but quite interesting bug collection.

Several unlocked footlockers contain the personal effects of the deceased artificer -- clothing, a small bag of coins worth 15 gp total, cosmetic jewelry (mostly glass beads

worth 10 gp total), a scholar's pack, and a small mechanical beetle with a wind up key in its back.

A few (2d4) footlockers are locked, requiring a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to unlock or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to bash open. Collectively, the footlockers contain a *scroll of glitterdust* plus 1d4 artificed items (choose from Common Magic Items table (*Xanathar's Guide to Everything*), or Magic Item table B (*Dungeon Master's Guide*)).

One footlocker is magically warded. If opened without the passphrase, it is empty. When the passphrase (which Dot knows) is used, it contains: the artificer's personal diary, keys to all the other footlockers, and schematics for a complete set of insectoid warforged colossi. These Colossi are designed not for waging war but for farming and reconstruction. They are clearly tools for healing a post-war nation. The schematics require several skilled artificers, a forge full of blacksmiths, and years of study and labor to complete, not to mention the lost art of infusing a warforged colossus with sentient life. Despite this, the rulers of any kingdom would immediately see value in these schematics and pay handsomely for them.

TACTICS

Dot is prepared to reward the party from this stash of items and expects them to leave all the items alone. If the party begins ransacking the room, Dot asks them to stop and reminds them that these items belong to the crew and are not just up for grabs. There isn't too much Dot, Clacky, and Manta can do to stop the party from just taking what they want (except for the magically sealed footlocker), and Dot views this as another opportunity to observe the party's trustworthiness. The party's actions/response will affect their Friend or Foe attribute accordingly. If it appears the party needs a bit of incentive restraining themselves, Dot may hint that the warframe holds more secrets than can be obtained by brute force.

DEVELOPMENT

If the party receives and accepts Quest 2, once they are prepared to head out, proceed to Part 3.

PART 3: FREEDOM, MOVEMENT

With Dot, Manta, and Clacky's help, the party can quickly and efficiently track Glim down. What they discover surprises even Dot: Glim has a gained small following of devoted dust mephit elementals.

READY! GLITTER! FIRE!

Manta, Dot, and Clacky accompany the party on this quest, but suggest the party form a search strategy before proceeding. Dot mentions that Glim has wandered off before, but never stayed away for so long and will offer suggestions if the players ask (e.g. a widening spiral search pattern). However, Dot is also watching how the party members operate to assess how trustworthy they are. Manta is less judgmental and, as long as the party's Friend or Foe attribute isn't negative, will give the adventurers the benefit of the doubt.

This is an opportunity for the party to increase their Friend or Foe attribute. Clever solutions, teamwork, concern for each other and the warframe crew are examples of behaviors that earn trust, and to which the crew reacts positively. Use the time to continue the party's conversation with Dot and Manta, draw from the desert encounters table, and after three encounters/events, proceed to finding Glim's trail:

Read aloud:

Clacky's antennae perk up suddenly, and Manta flits over to the ant.

"Manta thinks Clacky's caught the trail!"

End of read aloud text.

The sand where Clacky is investigating has bits of sand-fused glass scattered about in it, and Manta says she can smell the residual scent of magical glitterdust.

Party members can assist in following the trail by searching for other similar patches, succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Survival), or Wisdom (Nature) check. After 3 failed checks, the party has a random desert encounter. After 3 successful discoveries, the group catches up to **Glim** (N *glitterfire* (living spell), appendix A, she/her) and her 3 **dust mephit** admirers.

DEVELOPMENT

After cresting a large dune, the party sees Glim blasting about wildly from spot to spot (see Glim's Spell Mimicry action), with the three mephits racing to keep up. Two of the three mephits seem to shimmer as they swirl about, and as the party watches, the third scoops up a patch of glitter from the sand and spins, mixing dust and glitter, joining the others in a sparkly dance.

Interrupting this interaction can be perilous. The mephits may see it as an attack on their beloved Glim. Glim could perceive it as an unwanted intrusion of her privacy.

There are three aspects for the party to consider here:

The warframe crew. Dot, Manta, and Clacky all consider Glim family. They would never turn their back on her, and so they might not understand why she would turn her back on them. Dot in particular struggles to find value in expressions or outbursts of emotion. The logical conclusion in its mind is that the crew's best chance for survival is to remain together.

The dust mephits. The dust mephits are all in awe of Glim and treat her accordingly. As evidenced by their frolicking dance, they practically worship the ground she glitters on. Note that they speak both Auran and Terran and Dot can serve as a translator if needed.

Glim herself. Glim has no language to speak of, but in her own way can express happiness, displeasure and other emotions. She is also very empathetic and is sensitive to the emotions of those around her. She does feel a strong connection to the rest of the warframe crew, but struggles to find her own place in the world beyond simply being a power source, and feels her independence is validated by her new dust mephit followers.

In one possible outcome, the dust mephits join the warframe crew, and Glim chooses to embrace both her new friends and her essential role as part of a family, realizing she is (and always was) free to walk away from her task of powering the mobile structure whenever she wants, for however long she wants.

However, be careful not to predetermine this result. Read your players at the table carefully and weigh their characters' choices and actions. For example, if the party has already built a trusting rapport with Dot, Manta, and Clacky, Glim will sense this and lean more towards a peaceful resolution. If, on the other hand, she senses the party is only there for personal gain, she may resist or flee.

Some alternate possibilities:

- After discussing, Glim ultimately decides to head off with the mephits, and the warframe crew is happy for her, though Dot will take some convincing that this is for the best.
- After discussing, Glim decides to leave the mephits to rejoin the crew. The mephits leave dejected and a little hurt, but accept Glim's choice. They are not bitter and look back fondly on their brief happiness together, but may blame the party for their interference.
- If the situation becomes a combat encounter and any of the mephits are harmed by the adventurers, Glim retaliates and may need to be subdued.
- If the situation becomes a combat encounter and any of the crew are harmed by the mephits, Glim lashes out wildly, then regrets it.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

As long as the party's Friend or Foe attribute does not end up in the negative, an alliance with the warframe crew is a possibility. How much of an alliance depends on their Friend or Foe attribute (see the rewards table below).

WHOSE WILL BE DONE?

Whether Glim stays or not, the adventuring party has made an incredible discovery: an operational warframe with a fully functional docent network. Even if the party is not tempted to claim it for themselves, it should be clear to them that others will be, should the discovery be made public. The warframe itself, not to mention the potential knowledge housed in the docent, and the lockbox of other schematics, is a veritable treasure trove. Power, fame, and fortune could all be had by those who choose to profit from it.

Yet neither the warframe, nor the valuables contained within, are simply there for the taking. To the crew that inhabits it, the warframe is the only home they have ever known, and not one they are looking to simply abandon.

The party must decide how they want to treat their discovery. This is most likely played out as a conversation with the warframe crew, depending on how things ended with Glim. A few considerations are listed below, but feel free to improvise as needed.

- If there is an artificer among the party members, will the constructs be drawn to or repelled by the idea of renewing a partnership with a master?
- Likewise, if there is a warforged in the adventuring party, would the docent be open or opposed to transferring from the homunculus?
- Note: if the docent remains detached from the homunculus for an extended amount of time (10 consecutive days), the homunculus will cease to exist, leaving behind only a small carved statue of a praying mantis.

REWARDS

Friend or Foe Rating	Rewards and Warframe Crew Response
+5 Loyal Friend	The crew is open to joining the party and offers to share the warframe as a mobile base of operations.
+4 Staunch Ally	The crew offers increased rewards, including access to the teleportation circle, and can be called upon to assist the party if they are in need.
+3 Trusted Advisor	The crew openly exchanges information and shares the warframe schematics as part of the reward for helping them.
+2 Friendly Face	The crew pursues friendship, places more trust in the adventurers, and provides one or more common magical items as rewards.
+1 New Acquaintance	The crew is open to future interactions and offers simple mundane (non-magical) rewards, such as temporary shelter to rest from the desert heat, any clothing or jewelry, etc.
0 Harmless Passerby	The crew remains neutral, observing the party to determine how much to trust them.
-1 Unknown	The crew is open but guarded; they answer questions honestly and

Stranger	deal politely with the party, but will not offer information that the party might use against them.
-2 Rude Antagonist	The crew provides information only on a need-to-know basis.
-3 Untrustworthy Villain	The crew ceases all telepathy/communication.
-4 Fearsome Enemy	The crew members actively flee whenever possible.
-5 Despised Foe	The crew directly opposes the party with guile, force, etc.

In addition to any items, Dot has (and is) a wealth of knowledge:

- It can provide detailed navigational information of pre-Mournland Cyre and surrounding areas as well as up to date geographical intel about the Blade Desert. A creature proficient with Cartographer's Tools can create detailed maps that lead to buried treasures, points of interest, etc. with this information.
- It can train people in a new skill or toolset: e.g. cartographer's tools, history, arcana (see training in lieu of a financial reward in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Regardless of how events played out, Dot, Manta, Clacky and Glim are fun resources for you to leverage in future adventures.

- Sentience and Free Will are growing social issues and major themes in the Eberron campaign setting, especially considering the warforged people. How might the discovery of the warframe crew of self-aware constructs and the sentient docent impact the adventurers' perspectives on this?
- If Glim decided to part ways with her former crew, the warframe is now a stationary structure. With its teleportation circle, it could still serve as a remote

base or safe house. But perhaps there is some other way to power it back up. Searching for an alternative power source can be a quest of its own.

- If leveraging the “**In search of answers**” adventure hook, perhaps Dot knows what caused the Day of Mourning, but only has intermittent access to the artificer's memories. Is there a way to help Dot access all the memories?
- Perhaps Dot is actually the artificer Dorothea, merged with the lead docent of the colossus' docent network, revealed in a memory that suddenly surfaces. Can the artificer ever be extracted and restored to their original form? Do they want to? What would happen to Dot in the process?
- Dot might serve as a mentor/trainer, possibly as a way for a warforged to multiclass into artificer. While its own spellcasting ability is limited, its knowledge of methods, rituals, and magical theorems is quite extensive.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

CLACKY

Uses the statistics of an **iron defender** (*Eberron: Rising from the Last War*) with a burrow speed of 35.

MANTA

Uses the statistics of a medium sized **homunculus servant** (*Eberron: Rising from the Last War*) with a fly speed of 30 (hover)

DOROTHEA “DOT”

docent (*Eberron: Rising from the Last War*)

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a warforged)

A docent is a small metal sphere, about 2 inches across, studded with dragonshards. To attune to a docent, you must embed the item somewhere on your body, such as your chest or your eye socket.

Sentience. A docent is a sentient item of any alignment with an Intelligence of 16, a Wisdom of 14, and a Charisma of 14. It perceives the world through your senses. It communicates telepathically with you and can speak, read, and understand any language it knows (see "Random Properties" below).

Life Support. Whenever you end your turn with 0 hit points, the docent can make a Wisdom (Medicine) check with a +6 bonus. If this check succeeds, the docent stabilizes you.

Random Properties. A docent has the following properties:

- **Languages.** The docent knows Common, Giant, and 1d4 additional languages chosen by the DM. If a docent knows fewer than six languages, it can learn a new language after it hears or reads the language through your senses.
- **Skills.** The docent has a +7 bonus to one of the following skills (roll a d4): (1) Arcana, (2) History, (3) Investigation, or (4) Nature.

- **Spells.** The docent knows one of the following spells and can cast it at-will, requiring no components (roll a d6): (1–2) *detect evil and good* or (3–6) *detect magic*. The docent decides when to cast the spell.

Personality. A docent is designed to advise and assist the warforged it's attached to. One of the simple functions of a docent is to serve as a translator. The docent's properties are under its control, and if you have a bad relationship with your docent, it might refuse to assist you.

Source: *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*. Also found in *Wayfinder's Guide to Eberron*.

“GLIM” CREATURE: GLITTERFIRE (LIVING SPELL)

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 60 (8d6 + 32)

Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft. (hover)

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 15 (+2) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 3 (–4) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 6 (–2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amorphous. The living spell can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The living spell makes two Magical Strike attacks.

Magical Strike. Melee Spell Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (5d6 + 4) fire damage.

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5–6). The living spell chooses an unoccupied space within 150 feet and instantaneously transports there, arriving with an explosive burst of fire and glittering dust. Each creature within 10 feet of the explosion must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

In addition, a cloud of golden particles covers everyone and everything within the blast radius. This dust renders the invisible visible, and dust-covered creatures have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. Creatures who failed their saving throw are blinded by the dust. These effects last for 1 minute or until the living spell's concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

CLOAK OF DESERT SHADE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This magical cloak provides +1 to AC and relief from the desert sun. While wearing this cloak, you have resistance to fire damage. In addition, you and everything you wear and carry are unharmed by temperatures as high as 150 degrees Fahrenheit.

SASH OF WHIRLING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This magical sash seems to flow and swirl of its own accord. While wearing this sash, you gain +1 to Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks. In addition the sash has 5 charges. You can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the freedom of movement spell.

The sash regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the sash's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the sash disintegrates into a warm breeze and is destroyed.

SCROLL OF GLITTERDUST

Scroll, uncommon

SPELL: GLITTERDUST

2nd-level conjuration (Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 ft.

Components: V, S, M (ground mica)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose a point within range. A cloud of golden dust particles covers everyone and everything in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on the point. This dust renders the invisible visible, and dust-covered creatures have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. Creatures must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded by the dust. These effects last for the duration of the spell.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Typically when the adventurers make an important discovery or find a significant magical item, the first question they ask is “how much is it worth?” or “what can it do?” In other words, “how can it benefit us the most?” This is easier when the discovery is a long abandoned remnant or relic from an ancient civilization.

But when sentient beings, people, are involved, the conversation shifts. Who are these people? Do they own the discovery and/or magic item? How would the people be impacted if the discovery were more widely known? How important is the magical item to these people? How important are the needs and wishes of the people? Whose needs and desires are more important? Whose lives are more important? How is the importance of a person's life even measured or compared?

And who gets to decide all that?

At its heart, this adventure is a D&D take on Studio Ghibli's *Howl's Moving Castle* which itself was an anime take on Diana Wynne Jones' novel of the same name. And while *The Only Decent Thing to Do* can be run as a lighthearted sidequest to help a family in need get their home up and running again, there are deeper questions to probe as well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Alipio is doing his best to live his life with eyes unclouded by hate. He has been part of several groundbreaking collaborations including the Uncaged Anthology, Unbreakable, Vast Kaviya and the Vengeance of the Shunned adventure path. You can discover more of his work at https://linktr.ee/dm_fromscratch, support his caffeine and creativity habits via <https://ko-fi.com/insomna>, and follow him on Twitter ([@dm_fromscratch](https://twitter.com/dm_fromscratch)).

GLITTERFIRE GRILLED CHEESE

When you're craving comfort food but wish there was a way to make it feel magical and new, try this combo of two comfort classics: the grilled cheese sandwich and egg-in-a-hole toast.

This makes a great meal for a quick Sunday brunch — especially quick if there's already cooked bacon from Saturday morning!

YIELD: 1 SANDWICH

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pinch garlic powder (or 1/2 minced garlic clove)
- 1/2 ounce (15 grams) fresh leafy greens (e.g. baby spinach, baby red and green chards, baby kale)
- 1 slice of bacon
- 2 slices of bread
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 egg
- 1/2 ounce (15 grams) shaved or shredded Parmesan cheese

Heat oil and garlic in a medium skillet over medium-low heat.

Lightly sauté greens for about 30 seconds. Adding a small splash of water can help steam the greens and provide even heat. Remove from skillet and save for later.

Cook bacon to desired crispness (1–2 minutes per side); remove and save for later. Drain excess bacon grease from skillet.

Butter one side of each slice of bread. Make a hole in one of the slices, large enough to crack an egg into, and place the bread in the pan buttered side down.

Crack the egg into the hole in the bread and cook for 1 minute or until the egg begins to set on the bottom. Flip the bread and egg to cook the other side.

Layer cheese, greens, and bacon, then top with the second slice of bread (battered side up); be sure there is enough cheese to hold the sandwich together when the cheese melts.

Cook the egg for an additional minute or until it is cooked to over easy, then flip the entire sandwich. This is the trickiest bit of the whole process, as the stack can fall apart if you're not careful.

Remove from heat when the second slice is toasted (about 40 seconds) and serve while hot.

Pairs well with juice, coffee, or a refreshing mimosa.

In the Heart of the Thicket

By Amber Litke

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The village of Wealdstone was founded on the border of the Undying Thicket, an ancient, magical forest. Peace flourished when the town's harvest maiden Alfiann Yve and the deer god Eirnos fell in love. However, this attracted the interest of the local nation's military, who considered the forest a tactically strategic region.

As soldiers invaded the forest, the wolf goddess Fyrir's hatred of mortals grew. Blaming Alfiann for both their audacity and Eirnos' distraction, Fyrir murdered Alfiann. In grief, Eirnos abandoned his heart and fell into a dreamless slumber while his heart became a magical relic known as the *Seed of Life*.

Without Eirnos' balancing presence, Fyrir's hatred festered into a curse that blighted the Undying Thicket. Alfiann's death incited further military aggression that was opposed by monstrous beasts—starting a cycle that fed itself over the next century, strengthening Fyrir's curse.

Rumors of the *Seed of Life* reached the ears of General Garin Ronith, who fortified Wealdstone into a military outpost. Seeing an opportunity to end this war, he marshals his forces to march on the Undying Thicket.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for 4 8th-level characters.

- The party is enlisted to aid the town of Wealdstone in seizing a magical relic from within the Undying Thicket, a primordial forest that has assailed them for a century.
- A young druid gives another perspective: the forest is cursed by hate, and war only feeds it.
- Delving into the thicket, the adventurers overcome the consequences of the curse and in the grove of a slumbering god, ancient spirits present a clouded history.
- The adventurers uncover the truth: the curse originated when a goddess killed her brother's mortal lover.
- As Wealdstone marches, the adventurers must face the goddess and end the war before hate consumes them all.

IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS

Eirnos. The deer god of the Undying Thicket. A century past he fell in love with a human woman, and her death at the fangs of his sister broke his spirit. He tore out his heart to slumber eternally, though his nurturing spirit persists in the *Seed of Life*.

Fyrir. The wolf goddess of the Undying Thicket. Her ferocity balanced her brother's tranquility, but her hatred of mortals led her to murder Alfiann. That atrocity quickened her hate into a blight that infects the forest she once defended.

Alfiann Yve. The harvest maiden of Wealdstone. Her boundless passion and sensitivity drew her to Eirnos and they fell in love. She cared for her people and the forest equally, but Fyrir killed her, convinced she enabled the desecration of the Undying Thicket.

Garin Ronith. The steely half-elf general of the military-occupied Wealdstone, who defends the town against the Undying Thicket. Weary of war, he seeks the *Seed of Life* as a means to end it.

Pim Yve. A descendent of Alfiann, Pim is a young human druid sensitive to the voice of animals. Her empathy for the hate-cursed beasts and her outcries against further conflict make her unpopular in Wealdstone.

HOOKS

Mobilizing. Rumors say the military outpost at Wealdstone is marshalling to seize a magical weapon. The party is asked to aid or investigate.

Encounter. Near the border of the Undying Thicket, the party finds a caravan that was ravaged by hate-cursed beasts. The convoy's tracks lead to Wealdstone.

Invitation. A military courier carries a letter from Garin Ronith inviting adventurers to aid his cause for a reward.

PART 1: IN THE SHADOW CAST BY STONE

Upon arriving in wartorn Wealdstone, the adventurers seek out General Garin Ronith, who wants their aid. The town is assaulted by a monstrous beast and, after defeating it, the party meets Pim Yve, a druid who believes a curse drives the cyclical conflict between the town and forest.

WEALDSTONE

The unpaved road to Wealdstone is well-trod. The party can cross paths with travelers approaching or leaving the town, but they know only rumors surrounding the present circumstances and the distant, looming treeline.

Wealdstone is surrounded by a thick wooden palisade. Organized around the stakewall is a military camp, at its thickest between the town and the forest. Despite the soldiers milling and patrolling about the tents, the party is unhindered as they approach.

Depending on the hook used, the party may need or want to explore the encampment and town before meeting the general. The information the soldiers and townspeople know about the situation is not accurate, as time, misinformation, and bias has muddled the truth.

If part of a larger campaign, the military presence can be of a nation important to your world. In a standalone adventure, it is of the kingdom of Gydenald, acting under the banner of a golden griffon on a dark blue field. The soldiers are restless and scorn the

Undying Thicket—but vary opinions if the party speaks to more than one. They know the following information:

Demon Beasts. They defend Wealdstone against monstrous beasts from the forest. One soldier claims to have seen an immense demon wolf tear apart their allies. Supposedly, the general has a means to deal with it.

Centurial War. Wealdstone has endured these attacks for nearly a century. The army has lent aid before, but this is the first time it has come in full force.

The General. The soldiers speak highly of Garin Ronith for ensuring their wellbeing. If the party intends to help, the soldiers point them toward his quarters in Wealdstone.

Wealdstone. The army respects Wealdstone's hospitality and persistence. However, a quarrelsome druid girl protests the army's presence.

Past the palisade, Wealdstone is a small human town. Aside from homes, there is a general store, a blacksmith, a tannery, a two-story inn, and a small market plaza. The townsfolk are wary, but not unkind, and answer questions if asked. They know the following information:

Worsening Attacks. The forest's attacks on Wealdstone have worsened over the decades. They are grateful the army is keeping them safe.

Old Folklore. To explain the attacks, the townsfolk reference folklore. Some lament the disappearance of the forest god that watched over them, while others mention a woman of Wealdstone who conspired with the forest to repay a slight.

The General. The citizens praise Garin Ronith and his dedication to the town's safety. They point the party to where he is staying at the mayor's home.

Pim. The townsfolk advise the party to avoid Pim, who squabbles with the army and cares too much for the forest.

GARIN RONITH

The party finds **Garin Ronith** (appendix A, he/him) at the home of Wealdstone's mayor. He wastes no time before discussing business. Between studying the town's history and his soldiers' reports, the general has learned of a powerful relic, the *Seed of Life*, in the forest. If he can seize it, he believes he can not only stop the attacks on

Wealdstone but have the means to end future conflicts before they become full-scale wars.

Garin wants the expertise of renowned adventurers to aid his best scout in finding a path to the heart of the forest. He can pay handsomely—7,500 gp for their group. Of course, he does not expect blind acceptance, and willingly answers any questions. In discussions, the following information may come up:

The Dangers. The Undying Thicket is an ancient forest of dark spirits and monstrous beasts. Even a cursory delve reveals it is labyrinthine and deeply magical. Garin advises caution, for the denizens are powerful, especially in their own territory.

Wealdstone's History. The town has stood for over a century, but the constant attacks have prevented it from expanding. Rumors state that an ancestor betrayed Wealdstone and started the attacks.

The Demon. There is a demon wolf lurking in the Undying Thicket that Garin believes is a powerful spirit. He warns the party to avoid it, but he has the means to eventually handle it. A successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Garin to reveal he has a poison for weakening powerful magical beings.

His Motivations. Garin is tired of war; seeing how the forest has throttled Wealdstone has only embittered him further. The *Seed of Life* is his opportunity to protect Wealdstone, curb further conflicts before they escalate, and usher in peace for his spouse and child back home.

The Druid. He knows Pim Yve—who he calls a madwoman—and has clashed with her before. Garin advises the party not to heed her.

If the party is not convinced, a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check can raise the reward to 10,000 gp. Once the party finishes questioning him, Garin invites his scout into the room for introductions. A tiefling with umber skin and a bandage around his left eye introduces himself as Therus (LN **veteran**, he/him). He acts easy-going, but moves vigilantly.

The general holds Therus' abilities in high-esteem and is certain the scout and the adventurers will compliment each other. When the conversation dwindles, whether the party has accepted Garin's offer or not, the door to the mayor's home slams open.

HATRED'S JAWS

A breathless soldier reports that beasts have attacked the camp—and one has breached the wall, even with a dozen arrows in its hide. Garin abandons the discussion; he enlists the party to stop the beast while he and Therus get the townspeople out of harm's way.

CREATURES

Outside the house, a **hate-cursed bear** (appendix A) snarls from a hole in the palisade. Its eyes are baleful and its festering hide oozes pitch-black; multiple arrows in its back do not slow it. A young human—**Pim Yve** (appendix A, she/her)—stands before the beast. As she tries to calm it, it *roars*—and Pim staggers, stunned, as the beast turns its attention to the party.

ENVIRONMENT

Residential Road. There is a 30 foot long and 10 foot wide dirt road between the mayor's house and the bear. Three other houses, a wagon, and several barrels of provisions line the road.

Fleeing Townsfolk. Five Wealdstone citizens (**commoner**) are in the vicinity. Garin and Therus take two rounds to clear them from the area.

TACTICS

Gravitating Hate. The hate-cursed are drawn to hatred. Any adventurers that hold loathing in their hearts attract the beast's focus.

Defending Wealdstone. While Garin and Therus get the civilians to safety, the party earns the favor of both the general and Wealdstone by mitigating further damage (see "Epilogue").

DEVELOPMENT

When the beast falls, it is still alive. Before an adventurer or soldier finishes it off, Pim pushes between everyone and the beast—insisting they leave it be. She kneels beside the bear and soothes it until it stills. With a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check an adventurer overhears her murmurs: *"I'm so sorry. This isn't your fault. Go peacefully."*

Garin rejoins the party, using the slain beast to justify his cause. If the party did not accept his job, he asks again. Once the deal is struck, Garin tells the adventurers to

meet Therus on the outskirts of the encampment. He needs to assemble his people after this chaos.

After he leaves, Pim—having overheard—approaches the party. If they are aiding Garin, she needs them to understand why the forest is hostile, because no one else will listen. The thicket is afflicted by a hateborn curse, and the constant fighting only makes it worse. She insists that if it is cleansed both Wealdstone *and* the Undying Thicket can be saved. If the party converses with her, she knows the following information:

The Source. Pim does not know where the hate-curse originates from, but suspects it is deep within the forest. She is certain cleansing the curse will end the attacks on Wealdstone.

The Curse. As far as she knows, the curse cannot be cleansed by normal means. However, creatures that are not fully afflicted can be cured (appendix B).

The General. She does not like Garin Ronith. Pim acknowledges his decency, but is afraid of his single-minded focus and unwavering certainty.

The Traitor. She has heard the story of Wealdstone's traitor. The woman was her great great aunt, Alfiann. Pim does not believe she betrayed the town, no matter what anyone says.

Empathy. Pim can understand the hate-cursed beasts. They are in constant pain and near mindlessly enraged.

Regardless whether the party believes in the hate-curse or wants to help her cleanse it, Pim invites herself onto the scouting mission. She has experience in the forest and claims to be a vital asset, but sprints off before she can be argued with.

PART 2: IN THE FALL WROUGHT FROM HATE

Accompanied by Pim and the scout, the adventurers navigate the labyrinthine forest. Deep within the Undying Thicket, they witness the curse monstrously transform a mortal soldier and must deal with the disturbing threat.

THE UNDYING THICKET

No matter how quickly the party leaves Wealdstone and crosses the recovering encampment, Pim is waiting with Therus at the perimeter. The two barely tolerate each other. Pim puts on her best face. Therus does not try.

The party can smooth things over—or not. Either way, they are led to the treeline towering less than a mile away.

From the moment the party enters the forest, they feel it is a deeply magical place. Ancient trees tower overhead. By day, light pierces the boughs and dapples the forest floor. By night, cold yellow lights stave off utter darkness. The air is uncomfortably stifling, thick, and itches the skin.

The Undying Thicket is a labyrinth. If the party wishes to explore, they must convince Therus with a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check, otherwise he loses respect for the adventurers and continues on his own. The party encounters him again during “Hatred’s Price.” Pim follows the party no matter what.

To traverse the forest, a path is created from the encounters listed in the roll table below. The party comes upon 1d4 + 1 encounters—or a number you feel is appropriate for your table. Add 1 additional encounter if the party is purposefully exploring, and subtract 1 encounter after a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to navigate the forest, rolled with advantage if Therus is present.

TACTICS

Therus takes a hostile approach to all encounters, and requires a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check to stand down. Pim advocates for a peaceable solution, and requires a successful DC 19 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to be placated after unnecessary hostility. She may abandon the party if not satisfied.

d8	Forest Encounters
1	The party passes a craggy cliffside and must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they notice two hate-cursed gorillas (appendix A) ready to attack. On a failure, they are surprised.
2	At the foot of a waterfall, a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check discovers a rare restorative herb. As part of a short rest, Pim, or an adventurer with proficiency in alchemist's supplies, can distill the herbs into two <i>potions of greater healing</i> .
3	The party discovers a large boar, on the verge of being consumed by the hate-curse, trapped in a wicked snare. Through Pim, it condemns mortals for poisoning the thicket with steel. The party can either finish it off or heal and free it (appendix B). Should they do the latter, the party earns the favor of the forest (see "Truth Behind Despair").
4	In a small grove, the party finds berry bushes. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies they are similar to berries produced by the spell <i>goodberry</i> , but a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check is needed to know all but one bush is tainted. 2d4 + 2 berries can be harvested from the untainted bush; each restores 1d6 hit points when consumed. Consuming a tainted berry deals 1d6 poison damage.
5	Shrieks echo as the party reaches where the forest canopy is lower. A trio of hate-cursed falcons (appendix A) descends on the party.
6	In the underbrush of a dark copse, the party must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to see the mangled bodies of two soldiers. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) to search them finds reports on the surrounding forest and a <i>stone of good luck</i> . If the party studies the reports, they skip the next encounter.
7	Within a glade, the party finds a pair of young trees inhabited by two dryads. One

	panics at the sickly umbrage of the other, whose tree is tainted near its roots. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces them the party means no harm, or else they attack. If the party can cleanse the curse from the tree (appendix B), they earn the favor of the forest (see “Truth Behind Despair”). The lucid dryad tells Pim she reminds her of Eirnos’ maiden.
8	The party comes upon an obstructing wall of thick thorns, flowers that burn what they touch, and a tree oozing a sap that a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check discerns is medicinal. Burning or cutting the thorns only strengthens them. The party must pour a <i>potion of healing</i> , use a healing spell, or spread the sap on the thorns so they retreat.

HATRED’S PRICE

Once the party makes it through the encounters, a last event occurs. There is a crashing stampede and an enraged scream. If Therus is not accompanying the adventurers, a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies his voice in the clamor. Following the sounds, the party reaches an area of thick thorns and overgrown roots.

CREATURES

They come upon the scene of two **hate-cursed boars** (appendix A) goring a soldier—who staggers backward, the curse spreading through her, and mutates into a monstrous humanoid. If Therus was not with the party, they arrive as he stumbles away from the boars and the **mutated soldier** (appendix A).

ENVIRONMENT

Overgrown Terrain. The 50 foot-by-50 foot area is considered difficult terrain for the party and their allies, but not the hate-cursed enemies.

TACTICS

Gravitating Hate. The hate-cursed focus on targets filled with ire. They avoid Pim unless there is no other target. The mutated soldier attacks Therus at least once.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the cursed creatures are defeated, Therus—horrified—explains that the soldier was part of a group that went missing in the forest days ago. He excuses himself to report this to the general *immediately*.

PART 3: IN THE TRUTH LOST THROUGH TIME

After the scout leaves to raise the alarm, the adventurers are led by spirits of the forest to its heart—the grave of the deer god Eirnos. They are pushed into a world of memory and must discern the truth behind the war’s muddled origins.

EIRNOS’ GRAVE

If the party tries to follow Therus, their path is blocked by forest spirits—wisps of spectral smoke. If struck, they dissipate. They direct the party elsewhere; Pim encourages the party to follow the spirits, believing the forest is trying to communicate. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check gleans that the spirits do not mean any harm.

The adventurers are led through the Undying Thicket to where the oldest trees grow. Magic shimmers in and warps the air. The spirits lead the adventurers to a grove at the heart of the forest surrounded by enormous trees, immense roots, and crystalline pools fed by waterfalls.

At the grove’s center is the overgrown body of an enormous deer. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies him as Eirnos, god of the forest. Before the fallen god hovers a barklike mass, cracks in which pour forth green light. The *Seed of Life* (appendix B).

The spirits draw the party’s attention to the pools and, if they near the water, push them in with gusts of wind. Should anyone approach the *Seed of Life*, they are knocked back into the pools by the artifact. If they tarry too long or leave the grove, there is a furious howl, and the spirits push them into the pools before they get far.

HATRED’S LEGACY

When the party resurfaces, the grove is a washed-out realm of memory. In this section, the party witnesses events of the past distorted by misinformation. They must interact with and investigate the memories to discern the falsehoods—whether by a correct conclusion or uncovering all the clues. Once they do, the true memory is revealed.

TRUTH BEHIND TREASON

The party witnesses Eirnos and a woman he names Alfiann meeting within the grove. They can hear the woman discussing an assault on Wealdstone, for she despises the people. The party can engage with the memory in the following ways:

Investigate. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discerns a distortion around Alfiann and Eirnos—concentrated at his head, her hands, and the space between them.

Converse. Any conversation with Alfiann and Eirnos is cyclical. She never explains why she hates Wealdstone and Eirnos gives no details of the planned attack.

Interact. The party cannot walk between Alfiann and Eirnos, as though there is something between them.

When the adventurers point out these discrepancies, the spirits surround the scene, dispelling the haze of misinformation. It is revealed that Alfiann is cradling Eirnos' head and pressing a kiss to the god's brow. Instead of hate, she hopes that their love will bring Wealdstone and the forest closer together.

TRUTH BEHIND SAVAGERY

The landscape of memory shifts. The party beholds monstrous beasts attacking commoners just outside the Undying Thicket. This memory can be engaged with in the following ways:

Investigate. The beasts are chimeric amalgamations rather than hate-cursed. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the scenery blurs oddly.

Converse. The commoner's screams are distorted. If rescued and spoken to, they babble endlessly about the forest's savagery, but cannot explain what they were doing or what happened.

Interact. If the party attacks the beasts, they die in one hit. The commoners have more weight than expected for people in simple clothing.

When the truth is revealed, the scenery shifts: this attack happened within the forest. The beasts are not monstrous and are being attacked by soldiers. An enormous white wolf—a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies her as the forest goddess Fyrir—intervenes. She snaps that mortals have no right to defile the forest.

TRUTH BEHIND HATE

When the scene shifts again, the party witnesses a tragedy: a group of soldiers confront Alfiann within the Undying Thicket, then kill her with a sword through the chest. The memory can be engaged with in the following ways:

Investigate. Alfiann is looking upward rather than at the mob. There is more blood than a single blade would cause. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a thick distortion in the air above the soldiers.

Converse. The soldiers are incoherent save a single word: traitor. Alfiann is unresponsive if spoken to.

Interact. Physical contact passes harmlessly through the soldiers. The distortion in the air is solid.

When the haze is lifted, it is revealed Alfiann was killed not by the army—but by Fyrir. The goddess' white hide is blotched with black; every exhale spews noxious smoke. She believes Alfiann is at fault for the mortal incursions, and will do what Eirnos is too weak to. Fyrir kills Alfiann. Black stains the rest of Fyrir's hide. Thick dark smoke seeps into the ground and the surrounding forest.

TRUTH BEHIND DESPAIR

There is no distortion in the last memory. In Eirnos' grove, the party witnesses the deer god, overcome by grief, tear out his heart—the *Seed of Life*. He collapses where the party found him in the present. As the wash of history returns to the clarity of present day, they watch the overgrowth layer atop the body that has not moved in a century.

The spirits whirl around the party. In gratitude, they confer the benefits of a short rest—and if the party earned the favor of the forest during “The Undying Thicket,” each adventurer gains 10 temporary hit points.

PART 4: IN THE BREATH JUST BEFORE WAR

Knowing the truth behind Alfiann's death, the adventurers come face to face with her murderer: the goddess Fyrir. Garin Ronith, ready for war, weakens the forest deity and the party must choose to kill or cleanse the curse's progenitor.

HATRED'S THRALL

If it was night when the party entered the forest, it is now sunrise. If it was daytime, it is now sunset. Colored light pours into the ancient grove—and a furious howl quakes the earth.

A shadow falls over the grove. The wolf goddess descends from overhead, landing between the party and the *Seed of Life*. Fyrir is immense, her black hide writhing and oozing. With every bellowing accusation against the party comes heavy breaths of vile smoke. Her fury settles on Pim, who she believes is Alfiann. Around the perimeter of the grove, an army of hate-cursed beasts emerge.

Fyrir staggers with a strangled roar. The oppressive godlike aura lessens; Fyrir moves to reveal a silver-tipped arrow buried in her hide, the wound billowing arcane smoke. On the far side of the grove is Garin Ronith, at the head of a regiment. He thanks the adventurers for leaving a trail—it is time to finish this and claim the *Seed of Life*.

The forest goddess howls, her call no less mighty in her weakness, and the hate-cursed beasts descend. War answers.

CREATURES

Fyrir (appendix A) intends to finish what she began long ago. The weakened goddess summons three **shadows of hate** (appendix A).

ENVIRONMENT

Hazards. While in a greater conflict, the party can be caught in the skirmishes around them. Use the table below to add hazards at the start of each round, or forgo them for an easier fight.

d4	Environmental Hazards
1	Each adventurer must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 2d6 piercing damage from a beast purposefully, or a soldier accidentally, striking them.
2	Choose one adventurer to make a DC 16 Strength saving throw. On a failure, they take 1d10 bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone as a hate-cursed beast charges them.
3	Half the party must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 3d4 fire damage as a burning arrow lights the forest beside them.
4	Choose one adventurer to make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, their foot is caught on a corpse and they are considered restrained until the start of the next round.

TACTICS

Greater Conflict. The soldiers and the hate-cursed beasts are occupied with each other and do not actively intrude on the encounter.

Gravitating Hate. As with other hate-cursed beasts, Fyrir focuses on mortals with hatred in their hearts. She saves one attack for Pim if she can reach the druid.

Cleansing. This fight can be won by killing or cleansing Fyrir. Defeating the three shadows of hate weakens Fyrir and leaves her susceptible to cleansing while in the presence of the *Seed of Life*. Using *remove curse* or a similar effect, or restoring 25 hit points to her, frees her from the curse.

Allies. Pim focuses on support over dealing damage and can guide the party on cleansing Fyrir. The party can call on Garin's aid; if they do not, it is at your discretion whether he participates in the combat.

EPILOGUE

The war in the grove ends when Fyrir is either killed or cleansed; the hate-cursed beasts fall back at her defeat. What happens next heavily depends on Fyrir's fate.

A GODDESS SLAIN

Hate begets hate, and thus the curse cannot be cleansed.

Pim is distraught. Garin congratulates the party for slaying the demon wolf. He makes for the *Seed of Life*, and the party can choose whether to stop him.

A successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces him not to take the *Seed of Life*. The DC is reduced to 16 if the party earned Wealdstone's favor during "Hatred's Jaws." Otherwise, he proceeds as planned; his soldiers surround and restrain the party if they interfere.

If Garin stands down, the *Seed of Life* can be restored to Eirnos, reviving him. When the god wakes, his grief deepens at the state of the forest and the death of his sister. He pressures the army and Pim, who reminds him of his lost love, to leave the forest and not return so he can salve the worst of the curse.

A GODDESS CLEANSED

The cycle ends; the grip of hate loosens.

If Fyrir is cleansed, she is overwhelmed by the knowledge of what her hatred wrought upon her home—but she refuses to let the army take her brother's heart.

Garin must be convinced with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, reduced to DC 13 if the party earned Wealdstone's favor during "Hatred's Jaws," to not take the *Seed of Life*. Otherwise he still tries, unyielding in his belief, and if the party does not stop him—Fyrir will.

The goddess pushes the party to restore the *Seed of Life* to Eirnos. When her brother revives, Fyrir lowers herself before him for judgment. She knows what she did to his lover and their home. It is with mercy and love that the god chooses forgiveness; hate and despair have done enough damage to the Undying Thicket, and he would rather rebuild together than alone.

With the cycle ended and the source cleansed, Eirnos fully purges the hate-curse from the forest, including from any afflicted humanoids. If Garin was persuaded to stand

down, the general and the gods can be encouraged to make a truce and prevent the history of their people from repeating anew.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Consequences. Consider what might happen as a result of Fyrir's death. If Garin has the *Seed of Life*, will the party help him stop wars across the realm, or will they challenge his newfound power and authority? Will they follow Pim to find a cure for the hate-curse, especially if one of their own is still afflicted?

Hope. If the cycle of hatred is broken, what opportunities present themselves to the party? Can they help Wealdstone and the Undying Thicket rebuild? If Garin is alive, does he know of other conflicts in the realm the adventurers could help end? Do Eirnos and Fyrir know of other ancient regions with secrets for the party to explore?

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

HATE-CURSED BEAST

Large beast, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d10 + 22)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 13 (+1) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 11 (+0) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +4

Damage Resistances poison, necrotic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages can understand Common, Sylvan, and Druidic but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the hate-cursed beast can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Consuming Curse. If targeted by a spell such as *remove curse*, the hate-cursed beast takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage and has disadvantage on its next attack roll.

Hate Burn. Whenever a creature is hit by the hate-cursed beast's first attack each turn, the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is infected by the hate-curse (see appendix B).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hate-cursed beast makes two attacks.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Variant: Animals

Depending on the creature listed in the adventure text, refer to the following list for additional features.

The hate-cursed **bear** uses these additions:

Armor Class. 17

Multiattack. The hate-cursed bear makes three attacks.

The hate-cursed **boar** uses these additions:

Charge. If the hate-cursed boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

The hate-cursed **falcon** uses these additions:

Flight. 60 ft. flying speed.

Flyby. The hate-cursed falcon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

The hate-cursed **gorilla** uses these additions:

Bludgeoning. Gore deals bludgeoning damage instead of slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

MODIFICATIONS FOR GARIN RONITH

Garin Ronith uses the **hobgoblin warlord** stat block with these additions and modifications:

Creature Type. Medium humanoid (half-elf), lawful neutral.

Languages. Common, Elvish

Fey Ancestry. Garin Ronith has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

MODIFICATIONS FOR MUTATED SOLDIER

The mutated soldier uses the **veteran** stat block with these additions:

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the mutated soldier hits with it.

Consuming Curse. If targeted by a spell such as *remove curse*, the mutated soldier takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage and has disadvantage on its next attack roll.

Hate Burn. Whenever a creature is hit by the mutated soldier's first attack each turn, the creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is infected by the hate curse (see appendix B).

FYRIR

Gargantuan beast, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 188 (13d20 + 52)

Speed 50 ft.

STR 20 (+5) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 11 (+0) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +7, Wis +5

Skills Perception +8

Damage Resistances poison, necrotic

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Sylvan, Druidic

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Consuming Curse. If targeted by a spell such as *remove curse*, Fyrir takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage and has disadvantage on her next attack roll.

Hate Burn. Whenever a creature is hit by Fyrir's first attack each turn, the creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is infected by the hate curse (see appendix B).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Fyrir makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Heart of Ire (Recharge 6). Fyrir erupts with her concentrated hatred. Each creature within 30 feet of Fyrir must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 21 (3d10 + 5) necrotic damage on a failure, and half that on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Fyrir can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Fyrir regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn. If a shadow of hate dies, Fyrir loses 1 legendary action.

Bite. Fyrir makes one bite attack.

Heart of Ire (Costs 3 Actions). Fyrir recharges her Heart of Ire and can use it.

Vile Howl (Costs 1-3 Actions). Fyrir chooses up to three shadows of hate, which costs 1 legendary action per shadow of hate, to immediately use its reaction to make one weapon attack, with advantage on the attack roll.

PIM YVE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 12 (+1) **WIS** 18 (+4) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +7

Skills Animal Handling +7, Medicine +7, Nature +4

Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Druidic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Nature's Boon. Whenever Pim casts a beneficial spell on an ally, she also grants them 4 (1d8) temporary hit points.

Speak with Beasts. Pim can communicate with beasts as if they shared a language.

Spellcasting. Pim is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, resistance, shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, fog cloud, healing word*

2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin, beast sense, enhance ability, hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *plant growth, speak with plants*

4th level (1 slot): *grasping vine*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (+7 to hit with shillelagh), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh.

SHADOW OF HATE

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d10 + 22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 6 (-2) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 8 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison, necrotic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Sylvan, Druidic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Hate Burn. Whenever a creature is hit by the shadow of hate, the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is infected by the hate curse (see appendix B).

Pure Hate. If targeted by a spell such as *remove curse*, the shadow of hate takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage and has disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Ravage. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Baleful Discharge (Recharge 5-6). The shadow of hate unleashes a wash of pure hate in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

APPENDIX B: THE CURSE & THE SEED

HATE CURSE

From the day Fyrir's hatred cursed the Undying Thicket, the curse has spread from beast to beast; at first, only when anger burned in their hearts, but soon it spread like a contagion and twisted the afflicted with festering rage. Humanoids are not immune to the hate curse, and may find themselves victim to it.

Humanoids afflicted by the hate curse deal an additional 1d10 of damage with any attack. However, hatred comes easily, and they may be unable to control themselves. If a cursed humanoid is in the presence of extreme anger, they are compelled to attack the source of hatred.

To resist the compulsion, a cursed humanoid must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, or they must succeed on a Strength saving throw, with a DC equal to 12 + their own Strength modifier, in order to restrain themselves. If a cursed humanoid fails to resist the compulsion 3 times in a row, they succumb to hatred and mutate into a dark, hate-driven creature.

A creature fully afflicted by the curse cannot be cleansed by *remove curse* or similar means. If such an effect is used on a hate-cursed beast, refer to either the Consuming Curse or Pure Hate feature on the appropriate stat block (appendix A). If used on an afflicted, but unmutated, humanoid, they have advantage on saving throws against the curse's effects for 1 hour.

For non-humanoid creatures not fully afflicted by the curse, it can be cleansed by using *removing curse* or a similar effect, or by restoring 10 hit points to the creature. Other methods may be used at your discretion.

SEED OF LIFE

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This heart-shaped object is made of a barklike substance. A soft green light pours from cracks in the surface.

Speak with Beasts and Plants. While attuned to the seed, you can communicate with beasts and plants as if you shared a language.

Spells. The seed has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 16): animal shapes (8 charges), conjure animals (5th-level version, 5 charges), cure wounds (5th-level version, 5 charges), druid grove^{XGE} (6 charges), entangle (1 charge), guardian of nature^{XGE} (4 charges), moonbeam (2 charges), plant growth (3 charges), wall of thorns (6 charges), wrath of nature* (5 charges).

^{XGE} - Xanathar's Guide to Everything

The seed regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn.

Revivification. While holding the seed, you can use an action and expend 10 charges to cast true resurrection. Once the seed has resurrected someone, it can't do so again for 1 year.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Inspired by *Princess Mononoke*, *In the Heart of the Thicket* is an adventure that focuses on the toxic nature of hatred and how conflicts are often perpetuated by burying the truth behind them. With choice being so important to the narrative of D&D, there are ways the adventurers can continue this cycle—but also ways that they can overcome it with mercy, love, and second chances. I strongly believe in that hope and a chance of an ideal ending.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amber L. is a game designer, writer, and artist who discovered that creating for TTRPGs was a way to combine all three and further her passion for inspirational storytelling. She delights in making memories and trying new things with her closest friends—and refusing to heal them when playing support roles. Her two best-selling adventures, *The Fog of Solhaven* and *The Deathless Skies of Cyre*, can be found on DMsGuild and you can find her on Twitter @quantum_synergy, where she posts free for use stat blocks every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

WEALDWOOD VEGETARIAN RICE BOWL

This recipe originates from the historical peace between Wealdstone and the Undying Thicket. In the past, the forest creatures would help villagers forage for fungi and other wild vegetables, providing an earthy palette of flavors perfectly complemented by crisp, Wealdstone-grown crops. While the collaborative origins of this dish are long forgotten, it remains a favored meal among Wealdstone's people—though the best ingredients have been too dangerous to harvest.

YIELD: 4 RICE BOWLS

- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cucumber
- 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
- 1 tablespoon oil
- Salt, to taste
- 1 cup (75 grams) sliced portobello mushrooms
- 1/2 cup (38 grams) sliced shiitake mushrooms
- 1 cup (150 grams) snow peas
- 1 cup (175 grams) broccoli
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 cups (750 grams) cooked long grain rice
- 2 green onions, sliced
- Sesame seeds, for sprinkling

In a medium bowl, stir together the rice vinegar, salt, and sugar for the cucumber marinade. Slice the cucumbers and add them to the bowl, tossing to coat. Stir occasionally while preparing the rest of the dish.

In a large pan over medium-high heat, sauté garlic in oil and a dash of salt until fragrant. Add the mushrooms, snow peas, and broccoli, cooking until the vegetables start to soften. Add soy sauce and continue to cook for 5 minutes or until tender, stirring often to prevent burning.

Remove the vegetables from heat and build the bowls by adding 3/4 cup of rice to each, portioning the sautéed vegetables and cucumbers, and sprinkling sliced green onions and sesame seeds on top. Serve immediately.

The City of Lost Time

By Kat Kruger

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Aomori was once a humble fishing village that lived in harmony with the neighbouring Blue Forest. It was illegal to hunt in the woods and resources were taken with care. With increasing prosperity from trade, the village grew and began to encroach upon the woodlands. Its residents took more and more resources without bothering to replenish for the future. What the inhabitants did not know was that the forest did not age, thanks to a magical well that was built over when the city expanded. Cut off from the well, the forest and its inhabitants began to see corruption spread, threatening to destroy whatever it touched.

Aomori continued to flourish over the years, slowly engulfing the forest. With deforestation came a displacement of forest creatures. Wild animals wandered into wards where they no longer belonged, and hunters were called in to cull the beasts. Among the creatures was a giant boar, who was shot with an arrow but ran off before the hunter could capture it.

Almost 100 years have passed since the forest creatures lost access to the well. Strange occurrences have transpired around the city leading up to its 100th anniversary. In three days, the corruption will overtake the well and give rise to a monstrosity that could destroy the entire city.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for five 8th-level characters.

The adventurers have just arrived in the bustling city of Aomori when wild wolves and boars tear through the streets of the busiest ward, too many to wrangle in a day. In

another ward vegetation grows at an alarming pace, threatening the last of the kodama (tree spirits) in the city's park. At dusk, a forest wayfarer awakens from a mountain. Disoriented by the city lights and unable to see the stars to navigate, it levels part of the city including the tunnel out.

To make matters worse, the day resets at dawn. As the days repeat, the dangers increase. The key to solving this mystery lies in the city's history: a former bandit leader, now an old woman, shot an inoshishi (giant boar) but never recovered its body. The beast survived but became corrupted. At the same time, a magical well was built over it by the expanding city.

To save Aomori and restore time, the adventurers must defeat or heal the boar, which has transformed into an inosasao (corrupted giant boar), and reopen the well to revitalize the last of the forest and its enchanted residents.

HOOKS

Use one of the following hooks to draw the characters into the adventure or devise your own.

Ashes to Ashes. Mariko Hoshino, former resident of Aomori, passed away peacefully in her old age. In her last will and testament, she wished for her remains to be scattered at the harbor of her place of birth. The adventurers are tasked with delivering an urn to her relatives, with whom she lost contact many years ago.

Bounty Hunters. The adventurers discover a wanted poster for a band of illegal poachers and their ring-leader, with a generous bounty being offered by the governor of Aomori. They should speak to the governor to get started.

RUNNING THE GAME

The magic of the corrupted well forces a day to play out on repeat. At sunrise, the world resets to seven o'clock in the morning and the citizens of Aomori forget what happened. They also do not age. However, the adventurers are not bound by the magic of the Blue Forest upon which the city was built. Their hit points, experience points, spell slots and equipment are all restored when the day resets, but unlike the residents they are able to recall the events of the previous day or days.

Although the events of the citizens repeat daily, the characters can effect change. As Dungeon Master, you may introduce any number of NPCs throughout the prefectures

as they go about their routines (see appendix A). Those who learn of the time loop may be frightened or skeptical, while others may attempt to help. Unfortunately, they all forget everything at dawn. The adventurers have three days to restore the magical well before it is irreparably corrupted and an inosasao is unleashed upon the city along with hundreds of wild creatures turned evil. DMs are encouraged to play out the first day in full, and then use a “montage” storytelling style to present the following days.

PART 1: HOME AWAY FROM HOME

The adventurers arrive at Aomori, a bustling city situated in an enclosed bay with a picturesque peninsula and excellent views of the sea. The city is divided into four distinct wards: Thousand Leaves, Deer Child Point, Mount Divergence, and Good Luck Well. Entering the city by land requires passing through a mountainous tunnel; by sea, vessels enter via the harbour.

THOUSAND LEAVES

Read aloud:

With buildings as colorful as the characters that fill them, there’s a child-like essence that radiates from every corner of this ward. Blossoming flower pots hang from lamp posts and hand-painted signs decorate the bustling street level businesses bustling with activity.

End of read aloud text.

Whether by land or sea, travelers generally first arrive in Thousand Leaves ward. It is the most metropolitan area in Aomori, with structures that are all three-storeys or taller. Each building is painted brightly. Legend has it the houses are painted in this way so that when sailors came back from the fishing grounds, all they had to do was look up to find their home shining in the harbor like a beacon.

LOCATIONS

City Hall. The three-story white plaster building with lifting pagoda roofs sits in the heart of the ward. Its main gate features a strong wooden door with iron plating and cross-beams, and leads into a central courtyard. From here, characters can access the main tower where an administrator directs visitors. This area is connected via passageways to several subsidiary towers, one of which is the city archives.

Marina. Situated across from The Narrows (a sea inlet between Deer Child Point and Divergence Hill), the marina occupies a significant portion of the waterfront in this ward. Among the many ships docked here are sightseeing vessels for tourists.

Teahouses. These establishments are peppered around the ward. They are places of social gathering, gossip, and business meetings. The teas on offer are harvested from private gardens attached to each building and each house guards their secret blends carefully.

Shipyard. Fishing and seafaring are important industries to Aomori. As such, a large shipyard takes up the remaining portion of harbour in this part of the ward and abuts Deer Child Point.

THOUSAND LEAVES: GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The streets in this area are cobblestone and 20 feet wide to allow for wagon traffic in both directions.

Lighting. Between dusk and dawn, lampposts shed light in a 30 foot radius, providing ample illumination for the area.

Buildings. The exterior of buildings are constructed of brightly painted wood with tile roofs. Inside, the floors are covered in tatami mats and rooms are divided by sliding paper doors.

ENCOUNTER

Wild Stampede. At midday, 15 **wolves** and 15 **boars** rampage through the streets of Thousand Leaves and wreak havoc throughout the ward. This number doubles each time the day resets. The wolves roam in packs of at least five and go after weaker targets such as civilians (**commoners**), while the boars charge and knock down whatever they can. The wild beasts are numerous and can take the better part of a day for the adventurers to contain or defeat.

DEVELOPMENTS

It should quickly become clear to the adventurers that the wild animals are a problem they can't manage on their own. In fact, they are a distraction from the source of the problem located in Deer Child Point.

If you are using the "Bounty Hunters" adventure hook, characters can find Governor Chihiro Abe (NG gnome **noble**, he/him) at City Hall, located in this ward. The gnome is preoccupied with reports of wild animals and fast-growing vegetation originating

from the city park on Deer Child Point. Upon seeing the bounty poster, he informs the characters that it is almost a decade old, and points the characters to the archive where they may find more information about the history of Aomori and one of its prominent residents. The city was built over Good Luck Well in the Blue Forest, a place where a hero by the name of Hibiki Hoshino led hunters in a battle with feral animals in order to bring peace and civilization to the area. What remains of the forest can be found in Deer Child Park.

If you are using the “Ashes to Ashes” adventure hook, citizens eagerly share stories about the heroic Hibiki Hoshino. She can be found in a house built into an ancient tree overlooking the nearby marina and city park in the distance.

Either way, the characters discover that Hibiki is still a young woman in her thirties. Over the years since the city was founded, she believes the tales around her involvement have been greatly exaggerated. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check notices her voice is tinged with regret. With a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, any character gleans more information from her. Hibiki was a poacher about a decade ago when her husband fled the city with their little girl, Mariko, to start a new life. Shortly after, she answered the call to help Aomori deal with wild animals wandering the streets. She struck an inoshishi (a white-moustached wild boar) with an arrow but it fled before she could put it out of its misery. Her two regrets in life are losing her family because of her criminal activity and causing an animal to suffer what she assumes was a painful death.

DEER CHILD POINT

Read aloud:

A wide paved road leads to a wooded area surrounded by a low stone wall. At an open wrought-iron gate, a deer roots around a paper food container. A few feet on the other side of the entrance is a small stone lodge.

End of read aloud text.

From the south end of Aomori, a peninsula called Deer Child Point juts out toward the sea. It holds a 100-acre wooded park crisscrossed with winding trails and wide paths. A single road leads from Thousand Leaves ward past a marina and shipyard to the gated western entrance of the park. The wolves and boars have fled from this area.

DEER CHILD POINT: GENERAL FEATURES

Lighting. The park is open between dawn and dusk. It is unlit except by natural lighting.

Terrain. Although the park features many well-maintained trails, it becomes overrun by vines as the day progresses, making the park difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTERS

Sika Deer. Hundreds of sika **deer** freely roam the woods and wander out of the park onto city streets. The deer at the gate is eating Deer Child Sweets (roasted sweet potato chips topped with sweet syrup and toasted sesame seeds). Because the deer are considered to be messengers of the gods, a small shrine has been erected at the gate where locals put food out for them. It is illegal to hunt or harm the deer.

The deer are bold, curious creatures that will root through bags in search of food and can be seen wandering into more residential areas near the park. The park's warden, Tsubame (CG halfling **druid**, she/they), attempts to contain them but has concerns that a poacher is in the park. She informs all visitors she sees that they must maintain a distance between the deer in order to encourage the creatures back to their natural habitat. Visitors are also requested not to tease, touch or feed the deer and to ensure that they do not drop any litter on the peninsula.

Vines and Spirits. Vines can be seen creeping across Deer Child Point, overtaking the shipping yard and causing damage. An **assassin vine** lurks in the park, consuming deer and kodama in the area. It attacks adventurers who wander too close. Kodama (use the **chwinga** stat block, appendix D, *Tomb of Annihilation*) are tiny ghostly white humanoid figures with hollow eyes in large heads. These spirits live in trees and represent the health of the forest, seeding new life. Once they numbered many but now only a dozen survive.

Each day that resets, the number of kodama is halved. On the second day, add 8 **vine blights** to the shipyard followed by an additional 8 vine blights to the marina on the third day. They act similarly to the assassin vine.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the assassin vine and vine blights are removed, more kodama return from hiding. One bestows a magical gift and a character receives a *charm of animal friendship* (see appendix B). The kodama attempt to cast *druidcraft* in order to reforest the area but

their magic fails. Any attempt to grow new plant life fails on account of the lack of magical spring water from Good Luck Well.

PART 2: SEEING STARS

At dusk on the first day, the adventurers feel the earth rumble beneath their feet as the mountain tunnel leading in and out of Aomori collapses. The tremors continue at a regular pace and are the result of a forest wayfarer wandering across Mount Divergence. Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, notices a huge human-shaped celestial creature on the mountain. Otherwise, any number of NPCs can inform them of a monster wreaking havoc in that area.

MOUNT DIVERGENCE

The tunnel into Aomori goes through a mountain that can be seen across the harbor from Deer Child Point.

Read aloud:

The snow-capped beauty of Mount Divergence is a wonder to behold from any angle. In the ruddy glow of twilight, however, a troubling scene unfolds as dozens of humanoid figures flee from the site of a collapsed mountain tunnel. High on the peak, stars form a strange shape and the earth trembles.

End of read aloud text.

A mountain footpass allows the adventurers to ascend to the peak of Mount Divergence with access to five stations located on redoubts along the way, each 1 hour away from the last. The pass is rugged but its paths are easily navigable, requiring no ability checks to climb. Ascending to the peak of the mountain at an average pace normally takes 6 hours.

The collapsed tunnel is located at the third station, halfway up the mountain. There they meet Kenzo (LG human **veteran**, he/him), captain of the guard, who is leading a dozen **guards** in an effort to save trapped civilians from the tunnel collapse. Kenzo asks the adventurers to help. As they do so, more rumblings shake the earth.

MOUNT DIVERGENCE: GENERAL FEATURES

Interior Terrain. Rubble is piled up throughout the tunnel, making it difficult terrain.

Lighting. Both the tunnel and mountain are unlit except by natural lighting.

ENCOUNTER

The Wayfarer. A **forest wayfarer** (see appendix A) wanders the mountain summit. It has two forms. From dusk till dawn it takes the form of daidarabocchi, a gargantuan human-like creature with tentacle-like spikes on its back and a body that looks as if it's made of stars. From dawn till dusk it takes the form of shishigami, a large stag with many antlers, bird-like feet, and the face of a baboon. The forest wayfarer has just awoken and is disoriented because the city's light pollution prevents it from seeing the stars for direction. The adventurers must redirect it to its lair in the mountain summit, where it reveals an underground passage that leads to Good Luck Well. Near the lair is a spring that feeds into the mountain. Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices a fallen meteor at the edge of the spring.

Good Luck Wellspring. Any character succeeding on a DC 10 (Arcana or Nature) check verifies the spring contains enchanted water. They also gain the following information:

- If quaffed directly from cupped hands as an action, water from the spring restores 1d8 hit points.
- If the character drinking from the spring has threatened the balance of nature since the last full moon, the water instead deals 4 (1d8) poison damage.
- Either effect occurs once only per long rest per character.
- Water from the spring placed in a container or taken more than 30 feet away from the source no longer has any of the above properties and simply becomes potable water.

Upon the arrival of the adventurers, roll a d6 to determine how many hours the forest wayfarer wanders the area before it begins its descent into the city. In subsequent replays of the day, this amount of time remains the same. The adventurers must redirect the forest wayfarer back to the mountain before it levels the city. If the adventurers return during the day after a reset, they find the forest wayfarer in its shishigami form.

DEVELOPMENT

While the adventurers are on the mountain, roll a d6 and consult the Random Mountain Encounters table below to see if the adventurers come across any creatures.

d6	Encounter
1	1d8 + 1 giant goats
2	1d8 fissures that each vent a 20-foot cylinder of steam and partially obscures the area above the fissures
3	1d4 air elementals
4	1d10 giant eagles
5	A ravine blocked by a 100-foot-high wall, which has an opening in the center where a gate used to be
6	1 cloud giant

If the characters lead the forest wayfarer back to the forest, it shows them an underground passageway leading toward Good Luck Well. Characters also notice the passage to Good Luck Well when investigating the collapsed tunnel. The destruction caused by the daidarabocchi opens a fissure inside the mountain. The rubble on the east side of the tunnel conceals a hidden passageway. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notices the hidden passage. Anyone actively searching the rubble finds it with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. The passage wends down a stone path where an underground stream once flowed, ending at a well beneath Thousand Leaves ward.

REWARDS

If the adventurers successfully aid the forest wayfarer, it gifts them a *ring of shooting stars*.

PART 3: WELL WISHES

Following a passage leading beneath Aomori's Thousand Leaves ward from Mount Divergence, the adventurers reach an underground well. It is discovered after the encounter with the forest wayfarer.

GOOD LUCK WELL

Once a part of the Blue Forest, the Good Luck Well was a source of magical enchantment. The wellspring kept the forest vibrant and eternally young. With the continued spread of civilization, the forest shrank and eventually the well was built over. When the source of the woodland's magic was cut off, an evil was allowed to creep in and take over. The magic of the well slows time but when the flow of spring water was cut off from it, time was altered. As a result, time slowed for several years and eventually began to loop.

Read aloud:

At the end of the passage is a large cavern. A natural basin curves down the center of the room, depleted of well water. It is surrounded by short pillars of petrified wood.

End of read aloud text.

Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines the pillars are humanoid in shape and are, in fact, adventurers.

GOOD LUCK WELL: GENERAL FEATURES

Ceilings. Most of the caves and passages have steeply sloping ceilings that create stalactite-covered vaults rising 20 to 30 feet above the floor.

Lighting. The underground area is dark unless stated otherwise.

Pillars. These upthrust spires of petrified wood can provide cover.

ENCOUNTER

An **inosasao** (see appendix A) rests behind the cover of pillars. The inosasao is a corrupted giant boar with quills upon its back, and it engages the adventurers in direct combat as soon as they enter the area. It chooses its target at random, then continues attacking until the target is subdued. If a character under attack takes cover, the brutish inosasao destroys the cover in order to reach its target.

DEVELOPMENT

Any character that gets within 5 feet of the inosasao sees an arrow lodged among the many quills. The arrow has corrupted the creature. In the center of the cavern lies a wellspring that once provided enchanted water to the forest, but has now run dry. If the adventurers are able to redirect a natural spring from the mountain into the well, they may still be able to save the creature. They may wish to subdue the creature first. If the inosasao is not dealt with, it flees into the city and destroys everything in sight.

When time runs out and the final day resets, the inosasao cannot be saved, nor can the wellspring be salvaged in time to restore the remaining forest at Deer Child Point.

REWARDS

If the party is able to save the forest by restoring Good Luck Well, the governor rewards them with a *mask of the beast* (see appendix C, *Tomb of Annihilation*) and a *jade boar figurine* (see appendix B).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the time loop is broken, the city is finally able to live out new days. Everything that happened during the last day is remembered by citizens and recorded by city historians. The adventurers are celebrated as heroes.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Aomori still has a great deal of work to do in order to restore balance between the city and the forest. Warden Tsubame or the kodama can provide quests to assist in Deer Child Point. Due to the light pollution, the forest wayfarer may require another mountain to inhabit. The sailor in the marina might report on mysterious creatures at sea, threatening to enter the harbor or causing supplies to be lost.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

Here is a quick summary of the most important NPCs in Aomori, and their relevance to the adventure.

Chihiro Abe (chee-HEE-ro AH-bay, NG gnome **noble** he/him). Governor of Aomori, initial point of contact if you are using the “Bounty Hunters” adventure hook.

Hibiki Hoshino (hee-bee-kee ho-SHE-no, CN human **bandit captain** she/her): Retired hero of Aomori, initial point of contact if you are using the “Ashes to Ashes” adventure hook.

Kenzo (LG human **veteran** he/him): Captain of the guard.

Tsubame (tsu-BAH-may, CG halfling **druid** she/they): Warden of the park at Deer Child Point.

In addition, here are stat blocks for the unique monsters presented in this adventure.

CHWINGA

Tiny elemental, neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR 1 (-5) **DEX** 20 (+5) **CON** 10 (+0) **INT** 14 (+2) **WIS** 16 (+3) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 17

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Evasion. When the chwinga is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Innate Spellcasting. The chwinga’s innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or verbal components:

At will: *druidcraft, guidance, pass without trace, resistance*

ACTIONS

Magical Gift (1/Day). The chwinga targets a humanoid it can see within 5 feet of it. The target gains a supernatural charm of the DM's choice. See chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on supernatural charms.

Natural Shelter. The chwinga magically takes shelter inside a rock, a living plant, or a natural source of fresh water in its space. The chwinga can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect while inside this shelter, and the shelter doesn't impair the chwinga's blindsight. The chwinga can use its action to emerge from a shelter. If its shelter is destroyed, the chwinga is forced out and appears in the shelter's space, but is otherwise unharmed.

FOREST WAYFARER

Large celestial, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 50 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 11 (+0) **WIS** 17 (+3) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Slashing

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Celestial, Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The forest wayfarer's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The forest wayfarer can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *druidcraft*, *sanctuary*, *spare the dying*

1/day each: plant growth, remove curse, greater restoration

Magic Resistance. The forest wayfarer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The forest wayfarer's weapon attacks are magical.

Shapechanger. The forest wayfarer has two forms. Between dusk and dawn it takes the form of a daidarabocchi, a Gargantuan human-shaped creature with tentacle-like spikes on its back and a body that looks as if it's made of stars. Between dawn and dark it takes the form of a shishigami, a Large stag with many antlers, bird-like feet, and the face of a baboon. Other than its size, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The forest wayfarer makes two attacks: one with its antlers and one with its hooves.

Antlers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Draining Breath (1/Day). The forest wayfarer breathes on a creature within a 15-foot cone. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Healing Touch (3/Day). The forest wayfarer touches another creature. The target magically regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points. In addition, the touch removes all diseases and neutralizes all poisons afflicting the target.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The forest wayfarer can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The forest wayfarer regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The forest wayfarer makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Constellation Crown (Costs 2 Actions). Seven star-like motes of light appear and orbit the forest wayfarer's head. It can use 1 legendary action to send one of the motes streaking toward one creature or object within 120 feet of it by making a ranged spell attack (+7 to hit). On a hit the target takes 26 (4d12) radiant damage. Whether it hits or misses, the mote is expended. If there are four or more motes remaining, they shed bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. If there are one to three motes remaining, they shed dim light in a 30-foot radius.

Heal Self (Costs 3 Actions). The forest wayfarer magically regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points.

LAIR AND LAIR ACTIONS

A FOREST WAYFARER'S LAIR

A forest wayfarer's lair might be a grove of ancient trees, a remote mountainside, or some other tranquil woodland locale. It seeks out places where a star has fallen.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

Transformed by the creature's celestial presence, the domain of a forest wayfarer might include any of the following magical effects:

- When the forest wayfarer walks, flowers bloom in its tracks but wither and die after 1 minute.

- Creatures native to the forest wayfarer's domain have an easier time hiding, gaining advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to Hide.
- Once per day, the forest wayfarer can alter the weather in a 6-mile radius centered on its lair as per the *control weather* spell. The forest wayfarer doesn't need to be outdoors.

If the forest wayfarer dies, these effects end immediately.

INOSASAO

Huge elemental, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 168 (16d12 + 64)

Speed 60 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) **DEX** 12 (+1) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 7 (-2) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 7 (-2)

Saving Throws CON +8, WIS +4

Skills Perception +4

Damage Vulnerabilities Thunder

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Terran

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Charge. If the inosasao moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Thunderous Return. When the inosasao takes thunder damage, its Petrifying Quill action automatically recharges.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The inosasao makes five attacks: four with its tusks and one with its bite.

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage and 5 (1d10) cold damage.

Petrifying Quill (Recharge 6). The inosasao fires bamboo quills from its back in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

CHARM OF ANIMAL FRIENDSHIP

Supernatural gift

This charm allows you to cast the animal friendship spell (3rd-level) as an action. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

FIGURINE OF WONDROUS POWER (JADE BOAR)

Wondrous Item, rare

This jade statuette of a charging boar is small enough to fit in a pocket. If you use an action to speak the command word and throw the figurine to a point on the ground within 60 feet of you, the figurine becomes a living **boar** for 6 hours. If the space where the boar would appear is occupied by other creatures or objects, or if there isn't enough space for the boar, the figurine doesn't become a boar.

The boar is friendly to you and your companions. It understands your languages and obeys your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, the boar defends itself but takes no other actions.

At the end of the duration, the boar reverts to its figurine form. It reverts to a figurine early if it drops to 0 hit points or if you use an action to speak the command word again while touching it. When the boar becomes a figurine again, its property can't be used again until 5 days have passed.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This adventure was inspired by Princess Mononoke.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kat Kruger is Dungeon Master on the actual play podcast d20 Dames, Chief Wordsmith at Steampunk Unicorn Studio, and Story Architect for Multiverse. Many of her best-selling adventures can be found on DM's Guild and DriveThruRPG. Visit www.steampunkunicornstudio.com for more information.

DEER CHILD SWEETS

*When visiting Deer Child Point, visitors are encouraged to keep a safe distance from our local fauna. In particular, our curious sika deer are quite fond of sugared sweet potatoes, a local street food that has earned the nickname “Deer Child Sweets.” —
Aomori Visitor’s Guide*

YIELD: 4

- 2 Japanese sweet potatoes (with skin on)
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 5 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 1/4 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 yuzu, zested, plus the juice of 1/2 yuzu
- 1 teaspoon black sesame seeds

Wash the sweet potato thoroughly and cut diagonally while rotating the sweet potato a quarter between cuts. This Japanese cutting technique is called “rangiri.”

Soak the wedges in cold water for 15 minutes to remove the excess starch, then dry completely with kitchen paper or a clean tea towel.

Place the oil in a deep frying pan over a low heat and stir. Add the potatoes to the pan and increase the heat to medium. Place a lid on the pan and leave to heat until you hear it sizzling. Turn the heat down to medium-low and cook for another 2 minutes, then remove the lid and cook for another 8–10 minutes or so, turning the potatoes frequently to ensure they brown lightly on all sides. When the potatoes are tender and nicely browned, turn off the heat.

Make candy syrup by combining sugar, water, and mirin in a large frying pan and bringing it to boil on medium heat. Once the mixture is bubbling, add soy sauce, yuzu zest, and juice.

Reduce the mixture, stirring constantly, until it has thickened enough that you can draw a line through the syrup. Add the sweet potatoes and turn off the heat, stirring to coat the sweet potatoes with syrup. Sprinkle black sesame seeds while still hot and serve.

Tier 3

A Wealth of Flames

By Sadie Lowry

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Empyrean Spires have housed the Verendus Court for centuries. This assembly of archmages does far more than study—they direct realm-wide research, advise world leaders, and oversee powerful resources. The court does not intervene in politics; they see themselves above borders and nations, a supreme authority unto themselves.

Months ago, the wizard Ophiane studied a plane called the Starscape, where celestial arcane wonders reign. She learned of beings called aurorians who use the Sidereal, a crystal of concentrated starlight, as a magical source. Ophiane sent her apprentice, Evius, to retrieve the Sidereal for her study—but Evius, knowing of Ophiane's darkening heart, betrayed her, keeping it for himself. To keep the Sidereal safe, he set it in a ring that he gave to Ismene without telling her what it held.

They did not know that the aurorians used the Sidereal as a lifesource. The dying aurorians drew upon the magic of the Starscape to survive, but their rage and suffering twisted them into vengeful creatures: the avaricians. They wreaked havoc throughout the Starscape, threatening a civilization of fire demons called flamewreaths.

To save themselves, the fire demons made a deal with the Verendus Court—the wizards gave the flamewreaths their hearts, significantly increasing the power of both parties. This has come at a great cost: the hearts are slowly consumed by the flamewreaths, forcing them to seek more hearts to avoid extinction, and as the wizards' hearts are burned away, their greed grows. As both parties strive to consume and acquire more and more, they unknowingly empower the avaricians.

These vengeful manifestations of greed now prepare to breach the Material Plane and bring war to the Verendus Court, which has long lost sight of what consequences their hunger has wrought. The court has called a meeting to discuss what to do about the threat.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for four 10th-level characters.

- The party is invited to the Empyrean Spires to investigate a mystery in the wizards' court.
- They find that some of the wizards have traded away their hearts in deals made with flamewreaths, a race of fire demons.
- The pernicious greed amongst the wizards allows dark, insatiable creatures to manifest and slaughter many of the court.
- The party ventures into the Starscape—and after learning of the demiplane's history, they face the Jaws of Avarice, in combat or in peace, to save the wizards' hearts.

CAST

THE COURT

Ismene. (NG **Verendus wizard** (appendix A), she/her) A new member of the court and a close friend—or perhaps more—to Evius. Ismene stubbornly searches for unique solutions, which often makes her unpopular with the court. What's happening to the wizards scares her.

Evius. (TN **heartless wizard** (appendix A), he/him) Wielding wry eyes and a charming smile, Evius only reluctantly attends court, though is devoted to studying magic. What he doesn't do for communal gain, he will do for personal gain—but Ismene is his weakness, and one of few who helps him see sense when seeking freedom leads him to dangerous waters.

Ophiane. (NE **heartless wizard** (appendix A), she/her) Ophiane already traded away her heart, and this powerful wizard plans to stop the coming onslaught. She is the court's most cunning, tactical mind, though not always for the right reasons.

Aviquin. (NG **Verendus wizard** (appendix A), they/them) Aviquin is the head of the court and deeply uncomfortable with the deals. However, having sacrificed much to get here, they are pragmatic—as the threat creeps closer, they grow more open to trading their heart away.

Anais. (LN **Verendus wizard** (appendix A), she/her) Among the oldest wizards at court, Anais has a sensible mind and steady heart, though her strict adherence to

tradition has often stifled the court. She refuses to trade her heart away and openly disapproves of those who do, though she offers no alternative solution to the impending war.

THE PLANE

Igneous. [he/him, TN] The primordial spark of the flamewreaths, this ancient demon carries the weight of their existence. At first, he took wizard hearts for greater power to repel the avaricians, willing to bear the risks. Now he struggles with their humanity, his desperation, and explosive power—and is dangerously close to losing himself in the fight.

HOOKS

No one is brought to the Empyrean Spires without invitation, thus the hook must be an official summons. However, *who* invites the party can create a variety of introductions to the situation.

Generally, the letter invites the party as a whole. However, consider sending individual characters letters from different members for a challenge—giving the party different perspectives can lead to interesting character conflict during the first section.

Ismene's Letter. Ismene writes a letter begging the party for help, as the wizards are acting strangely and she does not know why. She knows the party's deeds and feels they can use the meeting to investigate.

Ophiane's Summons. Ophiane sends an official summons and does not explain her request until they arrive. With tensions brewing, she has brought them to act as bodyguards should fights break out within the court.

Aviquin's Messenger. Aviquin sends word via a discreet messenger to meet outside the Spires where they invite the party to the meeting concerning the demiplane threat. They do not tell the party of the deal with the flamewreaths, but insinuate that the party could save some of the court's most powerful members.

PART 1: CURIOUS DEALINGS

The Empyrean Spires is a grand hall on a floating island. Many say that the islands were carved from a mountain range and set upon the winds by the first great wizard Evakora. Whatever the origin, the court has drifted above the world below ever since.

This first section is exploratory. The party's initial perception of the court is colored by who invited them, but otherwise the party is free to explore, investigate, and mingle while searching for the truth. When you feel the party has gained enough information to meet the prerequisites, move to "A Price Brought to Bear."

NAVIGATING THE COURT

Before the events of "A Price Brought to Bear" occur, the party should meet the following prerequisites:

Dangerous Deals. They must learn that many of the wizards made deals with flamewreaths, trading their heart away for more power.

Locations: the Gilded Hall, the indoor garden, and the library

Growing Dissent. They should learn of the two opposing sides of the court: Ophiane, who leads the heartless wizards, and Anais, who strictly upholds tradition. Aviquin is not sure where their opinion lies.

Locations: the Gilded Hall, the indoor garden, and the personal studies

A Bitter Past. They should, in heavily guarded rooms, learn that Ophiane and Evius caused this by stealing the Sidereal. They can learn this information later if they do not learn it now.

Locations: the council chamber and the personal studies

The party can freely roam for a couple of hours to investigate before the meeting. The tone for this can range from inquisitive (if invited by Ismene) to mysterious (if invited by the clearly lying Aviquin) to dangerous (if invited by Ophiane). Ophiane is particularly manipulative, introducing them to the threat at hand and mocking the wizards who choose inaction to turn the party to her side.

This first section is politics, manipulations, and secrecy—you should be prepared to think on your feet. The party has a good chance of interacting with certain characters frequently enough to sway their opinion to either side of the argument. Aviquin and

Evius are easier to sway and susceptible to appeals. Anais and Ophiane are harder to convince, but not impossible. If you wish to continue the story as initially intended, start “A Price Brought to Bear” before the party can sway Ophiane. Otherwise, improvise who starts that section—any of Ophiane’s followers can instigate it.

The following sections detail the places the party can investigate and what information they can learn in each. However, fill in each area as needed to suit your party’s exploration as their investigations continue, especially as their relationships with each NPC develop.

If the party is repeatedly or conspicuously caught in any of the heavily guarded rooms, Aviquin will magically shackle them and take them to a chamber to deal with after the meeting. The high-security rooms have descriptions of the risks. If the party is imprisoned early, they can attempt to sneak out. If they cannot break out or if this happens close to the meeting, see the end of “A Price Brought to Bear” for the consequences.

GILDED HALL

Read aloud:

The Gilded Hall, the main foyer in which events take place, is a spacious hall of splendor. Marbled flooring and carved pillars in deep shades of blue and black offset the gold ornamentations and astronomical engravings. Food, wine, art, and music are on full display.

End of read aloud text.

This is the main venue for the evening; it’s breathtaking, entrancing, and *crowded*. It’s impossible to have a private conversation, though eavesdropping is easy. A feast is laid out: sizzling fish and pork loins, arrays of fruits and cheeses, and small plates of desserts that glint with minor enchantments to draw the eye.

While there are a few secret treasures tucked away to uncover in this bustling room, the Gilded Hall is where the party can overhear hushed conversations, engage NPCs for quick chatter, and get a feel for the brewing tension. Use checks as appropriate for them to achieve these tasks, adjusting the DC as necessary.

The following encounters can happen in the Gilded Hall:

Gossip. The music comes from bards known as the **Aeris Pipers** (3 **bards**, *Volo’s Guide to Monsters*): the sly half-elf bassist and leader Jinelle (she/her), the shy, doe-

eyed drow flutist Istdan (he/him), and the fierce tiefling violinist Cadenza (she/her). All three are *eager* to gossip about the wizards, who they feel look down on them; if they think the party sides with them, they'll talk.

Fledglings. The feast is provided by the **Verendus apprentices** (see appendix A). The three of note are Arjurn (they/them), Ophiane's cunning, loyal dragonborn enchanter; Taza (she/her), Aviquin's young, nervous gnome conjurer who sides with Anais; and Khira (she/her), Anais's experienced elven illusionist who would betray Anais for Ophiane. Sabra (she/her), a new drow diviner, trails distantly after Isemene, hopeful she will take an apprentice soon—though Ismene hasn't noticed, too distracted and worried.

Tension. An arguing couple's escalating voices disrupt the beautiful music. One hisses that Ophiane is at least *doing* something about the war, while the other fretfully responds that Anais has never led them wrong.

LIBRARY

Read aloud:

The library is overwhelming; bookshelves stretch from floor to impossibly tall ceiling. The shelves, tables, and desks are made of rich wood draped in dark blue fabrics flecked with silver or gold. Globes, maps, parchment, quills, orbs, and curiosities cover every surface.

End of read aloud text.

The library holds innumerable tomes, though with a startling lack of organization. The library contains information on nearly any arcane topic; however, if an adventurer searches for a book regarding a specific subject, a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check is needed to even *find* a tome on the matter—these wizards have no regard for common filing systems. A character must then succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check to learn from the thick, overwrought texts.

The following encounters can happen in the library:

Conflicted. Aviquin paces, troubled, seeking an answer to what is right and unable to find one.

Research. Ismene pores over books to find clues to what is happening with Evius.

Demonology. An open tome that discusses the nature of the deals with fire demons, learning more about the benefits—and the *costs*. See the “Flamewreath Pacts” sidebar in appendix A for more information.

COUNCIL CHAMBER

Two **guards** stop anyone who tries to enter the council chamber before the meeting, as it's off-limits. The chamber holds a lacquered table and nearly fifty seats, a shelf with records of their previous meetings, a vault, and two bust statues facing each other on the other side of the room in front of the vault.

Sneaking into the council chamber requires distracting, charming, or otherwise deceiving the guards. Regardless of the method, a successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check is required to draw the guards from their station, adjusted according to context and your discretion. Doing so in a way that draws attention earns Aviquin or Ophiane's condemnation and can have dire punishments if attempted repeatedly.

If the council chamber is entered before the meeting, the party has a chance to access the vault. The vault is guarded by two traps to keep unruly wizards from prying.

Statues. Two bust statues face each other from opposing walls in front of the vault—and are magically trapped, noticeable via *detect magic* or a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. If anyone passes between the statues without using *dispel magic* on them first (DC 16), they must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they feel cold magic wash over them. For the next hour, they have disadvantage on spell attack rolls and saving throws against spells.

Arcane Locks. The vault contains a layered trap that is noticeable with a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check. Picking the vault's lock requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools, but triggers the first arcane blast, and the adventurer who picked the lock must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they lose the ability to speak for the next hour, but the vault clicks open. Reaching for the contents triggers a second wave and necessitates a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the adventurer cannot use their hands for the next hour. Both traps render the infiltrator incapable of somatic and verbal components of spells.

Unbeknownst to the adventurers, failing any of the three Wisdom saving throws alerts Aviquin that someone was in the vault. Use that as you will to make them squirm in later scenes.

If they successfully break in, they find a *Sidereal shard* (appendix B), a *wand of the war mage* (very rare), and a *ring of spell storing*, which currently holds one stored *Melf's minute meteors* or a spell of your choice.

INDOOR GARDEN

Read aloud:

Water lilies, lotuses, and chrysanthemums line trickling waterways around casual benches with lush pillows. Ornate tables house vases filled with vibrant orchids. One streaming waterfall from the ceiling hushes the conversation from elsewhere.

End of read aloud text.

The indoor garden is an intersection of private and public. It's impossible to have a conversation unseen, but the myriad streams of water make it possible to conceal words under the facade of casual enjoyment. The indoor garden is open enough that Stealth checks cannot be used to eavesdrop without *invisibility*, *polymorph*, or other tricks.

The following encounters can happen in the indoor garden:

Demands. Ophiane quietly pressures Aviquin to fold. Interruptions make Ophiane very terse and displeased.

Pleas. Ismene beseeches Evius to talk to her, increasingly angry with his secrets. The party can urge Evius to talk to Ismene and subsequently discover that Evius has stolen something very important—something Ophiane intends to threaten him over.

ARCANE LABORATORY

The laboratory is rarely empty; even during a grand event, some wizards prefer to work. More common are apprentices—with most wizards distracted, some apprentices find gleeful freedom in touching stuff they're not normally allowed to touch. Scandalous.

Alchemical components such as herbs, monster parts, and ores litter the shelves and counters. The party can take some with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)

check, though failing the check infuriates present wizards and apprentices, who will not *hesitate* to call the guards if they aren't soothed or bribed.

The following encounters can happen in the laboratory:

Dust. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals strange crystal dust the party does not recognize. The dust is Sidereal dust, left when Evius created Ismene's ring (see “Adventure Background”), and nearby tools suggest that it was part of a larger crystal that was being fitted for something, such as a piece of jewelry.

Apprentices. The **apprentices** (appendix A) can all be found here. Arjurn gossips to the party that he is Ophiane's new apprentice—and a *far* better one than Evius ever was; he clamps up afterward. Khira reveals that she disagrees with Anais and prefers Ophiane. Taza looks uncomfortable with the gossip and may report to Aviquin if the party mentions anything strange. Sabra, hoping to earn Ismene's attention, offers to assist the party, either in getting information from someone who may trust an apprentice or by distracting the guards long enough for the party to sneak into one area.

OBSERVATORY

Read aloud:

The observatory is a looming dome of immense grandeur. Starry patterns freckle the rich marble flooring and splay up the wall in shimmering beauty. The gleaming surfaces of telescopes, orreries, star maps, and mathematical instruments catch and exchange light in gentle colors, like auroras dancing over the beautiful coppers and blues.

End of read aloud text.

The observatory is the oldest unchanged room in the court, clearly prized. The room lies up a winding staircase—with its distance from the Gilded Hall, this is the best room for privacy.

The following encounters can happen in the observatory:

Aurorians. The party can find research about the aurorians and the Sidereal hidden in the shelves with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The research reveals that they are a race in the Starscape demiplane, and the Sidereal is a source of their power.

Threats. Ophiane threatens Evius in a tense, terse murmur, though both of them refuse to say why and Ophiane leaves immediately.

PERSONAL STUDIES

Several personal studies, reserved for the wizards who've earned them, are found down a side hall watched by another two **guards**. The plaques indicate that Aviquin, Ophiane, Anais, and Evius possess rooms. Getting past the guards requires a successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to avoid consequences unless other methods are used.

Each door is magically trapped. Noticing this requires *detect magic* or a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, and it can be dispelled with *dispel magic* (DC 17). If the trap is not dispelled, anyone who enters the study takes 6d6 psychic damage and the owner of the study is alerted to the break-in.

The following information can be found in the personal studies:

Evius. A letter from Ophiane demands he return the Sidereal or she will reveal him to the entire court. He has crossed out her letter and written "Returning is an interesting idea" in lazy cursive.

Aviquin. Aviquin's journal reveals an ultimatum from Ophiane: they will support the flamewreath pacts or Ophiane will move to de-seat them during the meeting.

Anais. A missive from the heartless wizards demands Anais present another solution if she doesn't want them doing this. It's unsigned and set aside.

Ophiane. Ophiane's research notes seem to be searching for a way to replicate the Sidereal—the ancient aurorians were musicians and artisans that fed off of starlight, and Ophiane surmises that there could be artifacts left of their artistry in the Starscape that could act as a replacement for the Sidereal.

A PRICE BROUGHT TO BEAR

When the party has enough information and tensions are about to break, it's time to make the stakes clear.

As the meeting is about to begin, the party hears shouting coming from the council chamber. The following scene should establish the price of the heartless wizards' greed, and the threat of the Jaws of Avarice and the avaricians.

Read or paraphrase the following scene:

You hear Ophiane's furious bellow drown out the hall, and the distant bell chimes to begin the meeting. "Anais has you acting like a *coward!* Forfeit the seat!" A strange infernal screeching undercuts her words through the hall—a black rift is opening along the ceiling. "They're here! *Forfeit!*" When Aviquin hesitates, Ophiane pulls out a knife.

End of read aloud text.

The party has the chance to interject—to try to argue down Ophiane or stop her. This can play out in a few ways:

Unbreakable Resolve. If the party has not interacted with Ophiane frequently during the exploratory sections, she is unlikely to heed them. She will attack anyone who attempts to stop her.

Subdued. The party can subdue Ophiane in a way that renders her unable to attack.

Compassion. If Ophiane's resolve is wavering, the party can potentially talk her down. This can succeed or fail depending on Ophiane's relationship with them.

If the party does not successfully stop Ophiane (**heartless wizard**, appendix A), she tries to kill them. If Ophiane is soothed or subdued, choose one of her followers, such as Khira, Arjurn, or another heartless wizard. They bellow, "No! We've come this far and we won't stop now!" and lunge to attack the party in Ophiane's place.

Read or paraphrase the following scene, replacing Ophiane's name if someone else instigates the scene:

Another screech, this one much louder, over the violence. The rift slashes open across the ceiling, stretching down into the Gilded Hall. A looming dark creature, vaguely humanoid with void-like eyes, hovers above the Empyrean Spires. Inky black drips off of its night-sky skin onto the marble floor, each drip forming into smaller humanoid beings that screech with terrible hunger.

Chaos. The court descends into screaming. The inky black lunges for Ophiane with impossible speed, covering her, overtaking her—consuming her. Ophiane—or the creature she has become—howls with insatiable hunger and attacks.

End of read aloud text.

Ophiane's greed opens the way for the avaricians to manifest in the Empyrean Spires. The party faces three **avaricians** (appendix A) while others ravage the court.

Describe the chaos as the battle goes on.

Verendus Court. Ismene assists the party. Aviquin and Anais fight two avaricians on their own. All three of them use the **Verendus wizard** block in appendix A. Ophiane, if she did not transform, fights alongside Aviquin and Anais.

High Threat. In order for Aviquin, Anais, and Ophiane (if she survived) to survive this assault, the party must directly intervene with their combat.

The Price of Greed. If Aviquin was persuaded to pursue power for the wrong reasons, they might transform as Ophiane did.

A Disappearance. Evius is nowhere to be found.

If the party easily dispatches the avaricians, consider threatening the apprentices with more. You can describe Ophiane's followers becoming avaricians that maul the court. It should feel as if the spires are being overrun—directly correlating to the wizards' brewing greed.

If the party was caught and imprisoned by Aviquin, they can hear Ophiane's bellowing from their chamber and the sounds of chaos. An avarician breaks the door or a wizard frees them. Either way, it's too late—by the time the party returns, Ophiane has turned and Aviquin, Anais, and countless others are dead.

A PLEA FOR HELP

All falls quiet when the avaricians are defeated. The remaining wizards weep over the dead and, fearing another attack, try to restore order and defenses. The surviving heartless wizards worry for the flamewreath they struck deals with. Any of the survivors can answer questions the party may have:

Abdication. Ophiane, believing Aviquin was not strong enough to lead, was demanding Aviquin resign when the void creatures attacked.

Extremism. Despite her intentions, Ophiane transformed because she was willing to kill Aviquin to take the seat.

Siege. The large void creature has been trying to assault the spires for weeks now—this is the first time it has broken through.

The party is begged to go into the Starscape. Ismene approaches them, panicked. “Evius went after the large creature alone! I need your help, please! We have to save him!” If Aviquin is alive, they offer the party a substantial reward to stop it. If Aviquin gave in to their greed or died, Anais or Taza takes their place. If Arjurn survived, he mumbles, “I can’t feel my flamewreath anymore . . . I can’t feel him. What’s happening? Did I lose him, too?”

At your discretion, 1–2 additional allies can go with the party into the rift if the party has bonded with them. See notes on the “The Jaws of Avarice” for adjusting.

The party ascends into the Starscape through the rift trembling above.

PART 2: INTO THE STARScape

HEART’S DESIRES

If the Starscape was once beautiful, it isn’t any longer.

Greed and vengeance have overrun the grasses, seeping everything from them. Brittle brown flora clings to life aside dried-out pools that once reflected the sky. The stars flicker out. The whole demiplane is being consumed to nothing.

The party sees Evius dragged away by the darkness. Ismene screams his name, but the great void creature bellows above her call.

Read aloud:

“He stole from us! He stole our life, and for that, there’s a price! See what it is to hunger for life itself!”

End of read aloud text.

Darkness surrounds the party, drawing up from the ground and dragging them into a void of black. Ismene pulls out a ring, a crystal glinting on top, explaining that Evius gave it to her. It’s supposed to lead her to what she wants the most. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the crystal is not native to the Material Plane.

A red beam spills out of the ring and into the darkness. Visions of what the party wants most flicker in their side vision, though a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal them as mere illusions. Roleplay these

temptations of greed freely as they traverse the darkness, following Ismene's red beam until it leads them toward the light.

A DYING PEOPLE

Freed from the darkness, the party emerges back into the dry lands to find that they are surrounded by flames. Dim flames that barely hold light and warmth. The largest introduces himself as Igneous, leader of the **flamewreaths** (appendix A). His people have been devastated in the attacks, driven out of their home, and snuffed out.

"The wizards nearly consumed us to escape the attack," he says. "And in the same assault, we nearly consumed the wizards. We needed, and so we took." A moment to grieve. "Wizards are dead. Flamewreaths are dead. This is our price."

In talking to Igneous, the party can learn about the following:

The Aurorians. The avaricians were once the aurorians, a celestial race of fractals of light. They were artisans in art and music, bending light and sound to make the Starscape beautiful. They used the Sidereal as not just power, but a life force—and they nearly died when it was stolen. The avaricians are a result of the immense power of the Starscape mixed with the pain and anger at the wizards for their greed.

The Sidereal. Igneous does not know if returning the Sidereal will restore the aurorians. He hopes, but it is only hope. Igneous implies that the Sidereal could be replaced—either by more captured starlight or by another source of enormous power.

The Flamewreaths. If the party hasn't learned of the nature of the deals before this, Igneous can explain. The wizards and flamewreaths both can expend their energy and power to bolster each other—like a familiar, but with greater reward and greater cost. Igneous strains to keep burning to avoid harming the many, many wizards he was bound to.

The Jaws of Avarice. They call the great creature the Jaws of Avarice—an all-consuming darkness. It sits in the center of the valley at the lowest point, slowly consuming all around it. Igneous points the way.

If the party talks to the rest of the flamewreaths, they worry that Igneous is burning himself out. A spellcaster can make a similar deal with the flamewreaths if desired, though it takes a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check to soothe their fears. See the "Flamewreath Pacts" sidebar in appendix A for more information.

When the party is ready to move on, Igneous bids them farewell, mumbling, “It was about safety to start. When did we fall so far . . .”

FACING YOUR DARKNESS

Before the party faces the Jaws of Avarice, they can explore other ways to save the aurorians. Below are options, but this is their chance to be inventive, and creativity should be rewarded.

Starlight. The party can track falling stars with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check and stop stray avaricians from consuming the fragments.

Artisans. The party can follow distant music notes, finish a dying melody (the last lullaby of the aurorians), and return with the song.

Beauty. The aurorians were artists; the party can find remnants of beautiful earth and bring it back with them.

If the party needs more challenges before facing the Jaws of Avarice, intersperse their travel with more avaricians, holes of darkness that they must navigate across, or ever-growing exhaustion as the Jaws of Avarice’s hunger consumes their life from a distance. A successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw staves off a level of exhaustion as they near the center.

PART 3: TEMPERING THE FLAMES

THE JAWS OF AVARICE

Descending into the darkest part of the Starscape, the party finds the looming void, its eyes like chasms amidst the night sky. While its shape is somewhat humanoid, it's more than a creature—it's vengeance against greed, *retribution* for what the aurorians suffered.

“Mortals,” it murmurs, though its voice echoes loud even in its quiet. “This cycle—violence. Power. *Transgression* in the name of gain. The blood that stains your palms. It ends here. I am that end. And when I have consumed, there will be nothing.”

The Jaws of Avarice reveal Evius, unconscious and suspended in darkness. Ismene begs the creature to return him, but without the Sidereal, it does not heed her. If the party has no solutions ready, the **Jaws of Avarice** (appendix A) attacks.

There are three primary ways this encounter can play out.

ISMENE'S RING

If the party took the Sidereal shard from the vault, they may realize that Ismene's ring has the same crystal inside it—Evius gave it to her long ago, knowing he could entrust it to her and her good heart. She does not know this. The Jaws of Avarice can hint to it, saying, "The Sidereal is not yet wholly corrupted," and demanding the party return it. It's up to the party to realize that Ismene has it and to return it to save the aurorians.

ALTERNATE LIFE

If the party has found an alternate life source, they can present it to the Jaws of Avarice and make an appeal. At your discretion, you could begin combat but show that the Jaws of Avarice are listening to the pleas and becoming smaller and brighter with each passing round. Playing music, appealing to who the aurorians once were, or apologizing for the wizards' greed are all ways that the party can bring back the aurorians from their vengeance and help them use the power to heal.

A BITTER END

The party can choose to defeat the Jaws of Avarice. This is not considered the ideal end, as it will obliterate the existence of the aurorians. Should the party choose combat, keep the following information in mind while running the encounter:

Vengeful Fury. The Jaws of Avarice will focus on party members with the most power, especially if they seem to use it unjustly.

Ismene. Ismene (**Verendus wizard**, appendix A) is a competent wizard who fights strategically. She stays back and assists the characters who need help.

Adjusting Difficulty. If the party brought one additional wizard, add two **avaricians** for a wizard or one for an apprentice. If they brought two additional wizards, add three avaricians or two for apprentices.

ALLIES

The Verendus Court is full of powerful wizards meant to be threats. However, allowing the party to bring along 2–3 of them can easily devastate encounters. Thus, it is recommended to not use any spells above 5th level—it is easy to say they expended their higher-level spells during the first avarician attack.

EPILOGUE

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the Jaws of Avarice defeated or saved, Ismene rushes to catch Evius in his fall as the darkness drains away and the weak aurorians return. If saved, the Jaws of Avarice split into hundreds—thousands—of small, faint flickering celestial beings barely holding their forms of light together. It will take time for them to return to what they were, but they are awed, a people full of wonder that they were brought back from that anger and revenge.

If defeated, the Starscape falls into a dismal silence, like the ashes of a beautiful fire gone out. The land mourns the lost star creatures, but the war is over.

Evius grips Ismene in a tight embrace, apologizing hoarsely. “I knew the Sidereal was safest with you—you and your heart. . . . I should have told you.” Ismene clutches him in return, near weeping.

The party is free to return to the Verendus Court to tie up any loose ends and to check on those who were wounded.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Continuing the adventure can easily consist of cleaning up some of the devastation left behind.

The Ring. Evius could use help finding a way to apologize to Ismene—if Ismene returned the Sidereal, can the party help him replace a one-of-a-kind ring as a gift?

Flamewreaths. The flamewreaths are devastated as much as the Verendus Court. Is there a way to rekindle their spark? And is it possible to maintain a deal with spellcasters that helps them both, rather than hurts them?

Verendus Court. Who is going to lead the court now? The party certainly has a say in choosing after all they have done for the wizards.

Restoring the Starscape. The demiplane is drained and lifeless. The party can work with the aurorians to restore it to its former beauty and life.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

FLAMEWREATH PACTS

Making a pact with a flamewreath is an equal share of power. In its best form, it's a symbiotic give-and-take. However, if prolonged and if either side is taking too much, the pact can quickly start to drain both sides. If you are willing to let a character make a pact with a flamewreath, you may add the following features to your spellcaster and to its flamewreath familiar, though you have the freedom to explore the long-term consequences as you will.

The spellcaster gains the following features:

Fuel the Fire. When you cast a spell or cantrip, you can choose to siphon excess energy to the flamewreath by expending an additional spell slot of 1st level or higher. If you do, reduce the flamewreath's exhaustion level by 1. When you expend a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the flamewreath gains 1d8 temporary hit points for each slot level above the 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.

Supernova. As a reaction when the flamewreath makes an attack, you can expend one spell slot to deal additional fire damage to the target. The extra fire damage is 2d8 for a 1st level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.

Draining Burst. When you cast a spell or a cantrip, you can choose to take energy from the flamewreath. If you do, you deal an additional 2d8 fire damage to the target, in addition to the attack's damage, and the flamewreath gains 1 level of exhaustion.

The flamewreath gains the following features:

Fires of Passion. As a reaction when your companion makes a Charisma check, you can lend your power. Your companion gains advantage on the ability check, and you gain one level of exhaustion.

Let it Burn. As a reaction when your companion makes a spell attack, you add 7 (2d6) fire damage to one damage roll of that spell against one of its targets and you gain one level of exhaustion.

Vitality Strike. When you make an attack, you can choose to empower it with your companion's arcane prowess. You can take a spell slot from your companion of 2nd

level or higher, adding 1d6 fire damage for each slot level above the 1st, to a maximum of 7d6.

MODIFICATIONS FOR THE VERENDUS WIZARD

The verendus wizard uses the **diviner** stat block with these modifications:

Spellcasting. The verendus wizard is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The verendus wizard has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, fire bolt, light, mage hand, message*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, locate object, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye, ice storm, stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *arcane hand, creation*

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning, true seeing*

7th level (1 slot): *crown of stars, teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *demiplane*

Portent. The verendus wizard does not have the Portent feature.

MODIFICATIONS FOR THE HEARTLESS WIZARD

The heartless wizard uses the **diviner** stat block with these additions and modifications:

Draining Burst. When the heartless wizard casts a spell or a cantrip, it can choose to take energy from the flamewreath. If it does, the attack deals an additional 2d8 fire damage to the target, in addition to the attack's damage, and the flamewreath gains 1 level of exhaustion.

Fuel the Fire. When the heartless wizard casts a spell or cantrip, it can choose to siphon excess energy to the flamewreath by expending an additional spell slot of 1st level or higher. If it does, reduce the flamewreath's exhaustion level by 1. When it

expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the flamewreath gains 1d8 temporary hit points for each slot level above the 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.

Spellcasting. The heartless wizard is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The verendus wizard has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, fire bolt, light, mage hand, message*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, pyrotechnics, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *fire shield, stoneskin, wall of fire*

5th level (2 slots): *arcane hand, cloudkill*

6th level (1 slot): *investiture of flame, true seeing*

7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball, teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *incendiary cloud*

Portent. The heartless wizard does not have the Portent feature.

Supernova. As a reaction when the flamewreath makes an attack, the heartless wizard can expend one spell slot to deal additional fire damage to the target. The extra fire damage is 2d8 for a 1st level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.

MODIFICATIONS FOR THE VERENDUS APPRENTICE

The verendus apprentice uses the **mage** stat block with these modifications:

Spellcasting. The verendus apprentice is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The verendus apprentice has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *fire shield*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *arcane hand*

AVARICIAN

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 18 (+4) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 11 (+0)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities radiant

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Celestial, Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Greedsbane. When the avarician makes a claw attack on a hostile creature using or attuned to two or more magic items, it deals an extra 6 (2d6) psychic damage.

Magic Resistance. The avarician has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The avarician makes two attacks with its claws of hunger.

Claws of Hunger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit., reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

Seeping Dark (Recharge 5-6). The avarician consumes the magic of a nearby spellcaster. One creature with unspent spell slots within 30 feet of the avarician must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 31 (6d8 + 4) radiant damage and one of its lowest level unspent spell slots is expended. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and no spell slots are expended.

FLAMEWREATH

Small elemental, neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 33 (6d6 + 12)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR 7 (-2) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 15 (+2) **INT** 12 (+1) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 17 (+3)

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fire Form. The flamewreath can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the flamewreath or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage. In addition, the flamewreath can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Fires of Passion. As a reaction when the flamewreath's companion makes a Charisma check, the flamewreath can lend its power. The flamewreath's companion gains advantage on the ability check, and the flamewreath gains one level of exhaustion.

Illumination. The flamewreath sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light in an additional 30 ft..

Let it Burn. As a reaction when the flamewreath's companion makes a spell attack, the flamewreath adds 7 (2d6) fire damage to one damage roll of that spell against one of its targets and it gains one level of exhaustion.

Vitality Strike. When the flamewreath makes an attack, it can choose to empower the attack with its companion's arcane prowess. The flamewreath expends a spell slot of its companion's of 2nd level or higher, adding 1d6 fire damage for each slot level above the 1st, to a maximum of 7d6.

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet the flamewreath moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 cold damage.

ACTIONS

Burning Crown. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit., range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 +3) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

JAWS OF AVARICE

Gargantuan monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 174 (12d20 + 48)

Speed 15 ft.

STR 22 (+6) **DEX** 17 (+3) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 23 (+6) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +9, Int +11, Wis +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities radiant

Condition Immunities grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception

Languages Celestial, Common

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Greedsblight. When the Jaws of Avarice makes a claw attack on a creature carrying at least 500 gp or 2 magical items, the attack deals an extra 14 (4d6) psychic damage.

Magic Resistance. The Jaws of Avarice has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Jaws of Avarice makes two attacks: one with its claws of hunger and one with its condemning blast.

Claws of Hunger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit., reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) radiant damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target loses 2d100 gold pieces, which the Jaws of Avarice consumes.

Condemning Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* +11 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) radiant damage and the target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the effects of the target's magical items are suppressed until the start of its next turn.

Gnawing Dark (Recharge 6). The Jaws of Avarice consumes the magic of nearby spellcasters. Three creatures with unspent spell slots within 30 feet of the avarician must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creatures take 33 (6d8 + 6) radiant damage and one of its lowest level spell slots is expended. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and no spell slots are expended.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Jaws of Avarice can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Jaws of Avarice regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Condemning Blast. The Jaws of Avarice makes one Condemning Blast attack.

Draining Retreat (Costs 2 Actions). The Jaws of Avarice becomes amorphous, moving up to its movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks, then reforms at the end of its movement.

Gnawing Dark (Costs 3 Actions). The Jaws of Avarice recharges its Gnawing Dark and can use it.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

SIDEREAL SHARD

Wonderous item, very rare

The sidereal shard has 12 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it using your spell save DC: conjure celestial (7 charges), crown of stars* (7 charges), cure wounds (3rd-level version, 3 charges), dawn (5 charges), daylight (3 charges), Melf's minute meteors (3 charges), meteor swarm (9 charges), moonbeam (2 charges), sunburst (8 charges) and wall of light (5 charges).

The shard regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn.

*Xanathar's Guide to Everything

RING OF DESIRES

Item (ring), legendary

While wearing this ring, you can use an action to expend 1 of its 3 charges to create a beam that points toward your greatest desire. The DM makes the final determination of what the greatest desire is. The ring regains one charge at dawn, and it becomes nonmagical when you use the last charge.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

A Wealth of Flames harkens to the themes of power and greed in *Howl's Moving Castle*, proving—as we prove over and over again—that togetherness, understanding, and unity will achieve far more than a scramble for selfish intent ever will. Choices, relationships, and discovery are the backbone of this adventure, as they are the backbone of everything: we choose how we will affect the world around us. Choose goodness, every time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sadie Lowry is a writer, editor, and artist. When she isn't working full time at a book publisher, she is usually playing D&D, trying new recipes, or traveling with her husband and best friends. She is a firm believer in bringing heart to D&D through stories of heroics, healing, community, and family. Her best-known work includes *The Adventurer's Domestic Handbook* and two best-selling Eberron adventures, *A Darkness from the Stars* and *The Deathless Skies of Cyre*. You can find her on Twitter @incandescaent and more of her work at <https://sadielowry.carrrd.co/>.

EMPYREAN SPICED ALMOND ÉCLAIRS

Often served as a delicacy at the Verendus Court, these éclairs were the result of two wizards trying to out-bake each other—resulting one year in a chocolate so spiced that it was nearly inedible. This particular version has won out as the clear favorite of the court, though that does not stop newcomers from trying to unseat this delectable victor. The almond is just strong enough to delight the senses, while the warm taste of spice dances like magic on the tongue, creating an intriguing delicacy that has enchanted the hearts of many.

YIELD: 12–14 ÉCLAIRS

PASTRY CREAM

- 2 cups (470 milliliters) milk
- 1/4 cup (50 grams) plus 1/3 cup (66 grams) white sugar, divided
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup (32 grams) cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) butter
- 1 teaspoon almond extract

PÂTE À CHOUX

- 1 cup (240 milliliters) water
- 8 tablespoons (115 grams) unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs

SPICED CHOCOLATE ICING

- 1 cup (180 grams) milk chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup (120 milliliters) heavy or whipping cream
- 1/4 teaspoon chile powder
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

FOR THE PASTRY CREAM

In a medium saucepan, stir together the milk and 1/4 cup of sugar. Bring to a boil over medium heat.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and egg. Stir together the remaining sugar and cornstarch, then whisk them into the egg until smooth. When the milk comes to a boil, drizzle it into the bowl slowly and while mixing to avoid cooking the eggs.

Return the mixture to the saucepan and slowly bring to a boil, stirring constantly so the eggs don't curdle or scorch on the bottom.

When the mixture comes to a boil and thickens, remove from the heat. Stir in the butter and vanilla, mixing until the butter is completely blended in. Pour into a heat-proof container and place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until chilled before using.

FOR THE PÂTE À CHOUX

While the pastry cream cools, make the *pâte à choux*. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C) and lightly grease (or line with parchment) two baking sheets.

Combine the water, butter, and salt in a medium saucepan, heat until the butter has melted, and bring to a rolling boil. Remove the pan from the heat and add the flour all at once, stirring vigorously. Return the pan to the burner and cook over medium heat, stirring all the while, until the mixture smooths out and follows the spoon around the pan; this should take less than a minute.

Remove the pan from the heat and let the mixture cool for 7–10 minutes. It'll be warm, but you should be able to comfortably handle it. If you have an instant-read thermometer, the temperature should be below 125°F (around 52°C).

Transfer the mixture to a mixer and beat in the eggs one at a time at a medium speed. The batter will look curdled at first, but it will become smooth when you add the last egg. Beat for at least 2 minutes after adding the last egg.

Transfer the batter into a pastry bag or a ziplock with the corner snipped off. Pipe the batter into 5-inch logs that are about 1/2–3/4-inch in diameter. Bake the pastries for 15 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (177°C) and bake for an additional 25 minutes until pastries are a medium golden brown. Don't open the oven door while the pastries are baking.

Remove the pastries from the oven. Make a small slit in the top of each to allow the steam to escape, and return them to the oven for 5 minutes. Place them on a rack to cool. When they're cool enough to handle, split each in half to make top and bottom pieces; splitting and exposing the centers to air will help keep them from becoming soggy.

FOR THE SPICED CHOCOLATE ICING

Place the chocolate chips and cream in a small saucepan. Heat over low heat (or in the microwave) until the cream is very hot and they have begun to melt together.

Remove from the heat and stir until the chocolate melts and the icing is smooth. Stir in the chile powder and cinnamon, adding more to taste if desired.

Assemble the éclairs by spooning the pastry cream plentifully into the éclair shells and then drizzling the spiced chocolate icing over the top shell, spreading to the edges. For a thicker icing, let cool or chill briefly before spreading. Chill the éclairs or serve immediately.

For an extra magical touch, sprinkle gold edible glitter onto the chocolate before serving.

The Coral Princess

By Toto Joseph Sullivan

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Thousands of years ago the mighty Kratobia, a gigantic ancient dragon turtle, sacrificed herself. She used her breath to make a huge storm to surround her body forever atop a deep cavern in the sea floor. This created a safe haven for dragon turtles to procreate away from predators. Dragon turtles from around the world travel to the site to give birth and leave their young to mature. Every hundred years the Deyas-Pyran occurs - a giant tidal wave that spreads the mature dragon turtle young across the globe. This event temporarily weakens the protective storm surrounding the nursery. A tribe of sahuagin known for convincing dragon turtles to help them raid sea vessels found a way inside the storm and carved a castle out of Kratobia's coral encrusted bones. The dragon turtles' draconic lust for gold was inflamed to a pathology, and thus it was for many hundreds of years.

Over 100 years ago, a malenti (a sahuagin born in the guise of a sea elf) of the coral castle was sent to infiltrate a sea elf community. Instead of spying, he fell in love. Fleeing retribution the couple escaped together. They had a child blessed with elven and sahuagin magic, who they named Frontida. Growing up with stories of sahuagin exploitation, Frontida made it her life's mission to give the dragon turtles back the freedom of choice that was taken from them so long ago. After her parents' death in a dragon turtle raid, Frontida drove the sahuagin out of the dragon turtle breeding grounds. For the last 100 years, the mighty dragon turtles have been able to leave their young to mature in peace. Eventually, wishing for a child, Frontida created a being of coral and magic, her coral princess, 'Pop'.

As the Deyas-Pyran approached and the storm weakened, Frontida prepared to protect the castle from sahuagin invaders. Unfortunately 'Pop' also saw this as the perfect time to flee the castle and explore the world. The tidal wave should have happened 3 days ago, but it has not. Hiding in the town of Kaze Ga Ke, 'Pop' believes her mother is delaying the tidal wave, waiting for her to return.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for a party of four level 10 or 11 adventurers.

The adventurers find themselves in Kaze Ga Ke, a town that has mastered air travel and is frightened of a storm far out on the sea. Tofu Clifface, a young pilot, has reason to investigate this storm, and needs the adventurers' help, though she isn't telling the whole truth. The characters discover a castle in the midst of a siege by sahuagin raiders and kuo-toa treasure seekers, and are forced to make an abrupt landing. Exploring the castle, the party encounters many obstacles, including other interested parties racing to the bottom. They meet the Coral Princess, discover her story, and unlock the secrets of the witch who controls it all. The story, as always, is never as clear as it seems.

HOOKS

- Many objects lost at sea find their way to the Coral Castle's storerooms. Characters looking for a specific item have heard rumours of a place where many ocean currents converge, leading them to Kaze Ga Ke.
- The Storm wavering is a mystical 100 year cycle, and an old elven lord is hiring adventurers to make sure villages along the cliffs are prepared.
- Sahuagin High Priestess Dwynwyn Yarrow (see *Dramatis Personae*) hires them through a third party to reclaim the castle "from an evil witch"

USING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure contains the groundbreaking invention of flight. The technology is rudimentary and is the result of the unusually strong, consistent winds from the storm, meaning that you could easily restrict flight outside this region with little change if your world does not already contain flight. You should decide if you want this level of technology in your world at all before starting. If you decide against it, feel free to come up with another way to access the Coral Castle, for example, a traditional ship.

This adventure also has many elements that are more free form than a typical dungeon crawl. The more free form sections require you to note down what you want your dungeon to look like before play begins. In addition, the flight and windsurfing sections could be too vague for some DM's taste. This has been done intentionally to allow easy difficulty adjustment on your part, as anything that feels like a positive

achievement, even something wildly out of the box, has a codified effect on the adventurers success (see “The Battle for Stormy Skies” below).

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE CORAL PRINCESS, ‘POP’ (POPPING BUBBLE SOUND)

Pop’ was made of coral and magic by her mother Frontida Selkia. With only her mother and Magareath for company, ‘Pop’ has nevertheless had a decent education from her mother’s extensive library. Even occupied by caring for the dragon turtle brood, the idea that she should spend another 100 years in this castle has caused her relationship with her mother to become quite strained. Fed on tales of the outside world by Magareath, ‘Pop’ constantly fights with her mother, wanting to go see the world. Seeing an opportunity in the buildup of the tsunami, she escaped and has had a wonderful few days of excitement with Tofu. Ultimately, ‘Pop’ now fears her mother will be killed by invaders whilst stubbornly preventing the Deyas-Pyran. ‘Pop’ hopes she has not risked everything for her freedom.

TOFU CLIFFACE (CLIFF-AH-CHE)

Pilot, mechanic, badass. The definition of upbeat, Tofu is a know-it-all prodigy of the highest calibre, obsessed with anything aviation related. She’s been with the ‘Pop’ for a week and is completely devoted to her. Tofu’s plan is to deliver them both to the Coral Castle, braving the storm and the sahuagin to help ‘Pop’ reunite with her mother. Tofu hopes that the “sea witch” will let the princess go for good so they can explore the world together.

FRONTIDA SELKIA (FRONTY-DAH SELKY-YAH)

Frontida grew up in exile with her malenti father and sea elf mother. Shunned by both communities, they lived with the shadow of her parents’ choice hanging over them. Her parents never stopped trying to be good, eventually being killed whilst intervening in a sahuagin/dragon turtle raid on a merchant ship. Enraged, Frontida decided to take up her parent’s mantle. Frontida cast the sahuagin from their home in the Coral Castle, and installed herself as the neutral caretaker of the young turtles, hoping to teach them compassion instead of a lust for gold. It has been a long, lonely life for Frontida, and now, on the eve of another Deyas-Pyran, her daughter has run away. She cannot face another 100 years alone, and so is holding off the storm, and the invading sahuagin, hopelessly waiting for her daughter to return.

“THE GREAT STURGE(ON) OF THE SEA OF STARS” (“STURGE” TO HIS FRIENDS)

Kuo-toa pirate captain, unusually savvy for a race known to “*live in madness*”. Rumours of the Coral Castle’s treasures have spurred the captain to invade the castle in search of glory. Very much the agent of chaos in the story, he and his crew are only interested in getting away with as much treasure as possible. Hapless but well-meaning overall, the aging pirate and his crew may be enticed to help a sorry cause, such as the princess, her mother, or the adventurers, *especially* with suitable monetary incentive.

HIGH PRIESTESS DWYNWYN YARROW

Frontida’s aunt, high priestess of the sahuagin. After her brother betrayed the sahuagin and ran away with Frontida’s mother, she was distraught and enraged. When her half-breed niece captured the Coral Castle, she took it as a personal failing on her part. Never learning to let go, she sees it as her personal crusade to take back the Coral Castle. She communicates with her scouting forces through several *tears of the sea* (see appendix B), small glass globes that allow communication over vast distances. Should the adventurers find one, she is overjoyed at the prospect of more powerful allies. She will tell the adventurers that the castle belongs to the sahuagin, they are beset by invaders, or any combination of truth and lies to get them to aid her in taking back the castle.

MAGAREATH

An ancient dragon turtle, she comes to complete the Deyas-Pyran every 100 years, travelling through the secret trench beneath the castle to add her breath to the storm. Unusually amiable for a dragon turtle, she has become friends with Frontida during her selfless protection of the mighty beasts’ mating grounds, and has taken a special shine to ‘Pop’. She is loath to see Frontida so upset, and has used her clout to prevent the other dragon turtles who have gathered in the depths from completing the ritual, *so far*. Dragon turtles are concerned with self sufficiency by nature, and so her opinion is that Frontida has done more than enough for dragon turtle independence and should leave with her daughter and live her life. Even if that means some sahuagin will try to tempt dragon turtle children into becoming their tools, she believes that Frontida has made enough of an impact that some more community focused dragon turtles (herself included) may be convinced to steer the young ones towards a less destructive life.

PART 1. KAZE GA KE

The adventurers arrive in Kaze Ga Ke (literally “Wind Cliff”) and are told the continuous storm that rages far off the coast is abating and legends tell of treasure there. They are introduced to Tofu Clifface, who is very insistent that she deliver them to the castle herself. They fly into the storm and battle against the sahuagin and kuo-toa, crashing into the coral citadel and ruining the glider.

THE TOWN

Kaze Ga Ke is a beautiful fishing town on a high cliff whose industrious citizens have developed flight. The town benefits from a constant warm, mystical updraft and current from the black brooding storm many miles out to sea. This has allowed the townsfolk to take inspiration from the many native seabirds and utilise gliders. These gliders can fly great distances with only a little pedaling, and can stay aloft even whilst skimming the rich, warm waters for fish.

As the adventurers approach the town, read or paraphrase the following:

The waves and wind roar loudly along the tall coastal cliffs. The wind feels delightfully warm as you spy a large collection of buildings haphazardly jumbled atop the highest cliff. Below the town rails of metal seem to jut out of the cliff and a lift is raising odd vehicles from a dock at the base. Out at sea, in the far distance, a mighty and terrible typhoon rages.

THE TOWN SQUARE

A loud argument that could be called a town meeting is taking place. The central debaters are a chubby woman in polka dot clothing wielding a giant spoon (Clementine Clifface, LG human **commoner**, she/her) and a gang of gangly, oil stained younger folk wielding spanners and wearing thin leather jumpsuits and large glass goggles.

By listening, the players can learn the following things, only some of which are useful:

- The storm is abating. No one remembers this happening before.
- Clementine vehemently denies anyone access to the launch bay, no one should go out there.
- The storm houses a castle.
- The castle is full of treasure.
- The castle is home to a “murderous sea witch”.

- The sahuagin are filling the waters in what is clearly a sign of the end times.
- The storm decreasing heralds a deadly wall of water.
- The flyers want to plunder all the glorious treasure in the castle.
- The flyers “aren't babies and can go where they want”, despite none looking older than 18.

As the argument becomes progressively more slapstick, the adventurers hear a “psst” sound, and see a young red-haired teen in a jumpsuit and pilot's goggles, with a red polka dot neckerchief. She introduces herself as “Tofu Clifff-a-che, pilot extraordinaire”(CG human, she/her). Tofu has the statistics of a **commoner** with an Intelligence score of 20, and 23 hit points. She is bubbly, very smart, and a lot to handle. At first she ingratiates herself, saying she can take the adventurers to the castle for a price. If that doesn't work, she says she wanted to go anyway, plus, there's treasure. If this still doesn't work she pitifully offers 10 gp each for them to escort her on a fly-by of the castle.

Eventually Tofu's mother Clementine is pulled down by a mob of terrified pilots in a large chaotic scuffle. Tofu exclaims “Quick! They won't hold her for long!” and leads the adventurers through a door down into the cliff to the launch bay underneath the town.

THE LAUNCH BAY

The launch bay is guarded by 5 oil-stained pilots (CN **commoners**) who will block any outsiders, but will let the adventurers pass if Tofu is present.

When they reach the hanger, read or paraphrase the following:

The oblong room bustles with the sounds and smells of woodwork. Several large wooden cylinders sit in berths, with odd angular struts of wood and canvas jutting from their roofs. In the centre, rails pass along the ground and out of a large window open to the sea.

End of read aloud text.

Tofu leads the adventurers to a berth and stands grinning at a glossy, wooden cylinder. She runs towards the fish-like tail and turns to the adventurers. Tofu is immensely proud of her glider and introduces it as “Gust-Stomper” (appendix D). She confidently asserts the glider can carry everyone and asks for the adventurers' help in getting it on the gantry quickly. The first player that crouches in the glider notices a large thin box covered with a tarpaulin. Meant to contain the catch of the day, it currently houses ‘Pop’ (CG sea elf **sahuagin priestess**, she/her). As Tofu begins the

safety rundown, Clementine's voice bellows through the hanger, and the adventurers only have a few seconds before Tofu frantically pulls a lever.

When she does, read or paraphrase the following:

The glider is shunted onto the incline of the rail, shooting them down a long coaster that veers up at the end. Tofu and her mother are still shouting as the rails screech and the plane jettisons out into the blue sky. Tofu shouts "Brace!" and the many segmented wings of the glider spread open like massive gull wings. She engages a pedal-like mechanism and the wings begin to flap.

End of read aloud text.

If the players discover 'Pop', Tofu tells them to be quiet until they are in the air, and the princess stays put. Once out to sea, 'Pop' makes herself known with a bang, tumbling out of her hiding place and generally floundering about. Tofu explains that she found 'Pop' a few days ago, and thinks she came from the storm. She's been having trouble communicating with 'Pop' who speaks a very disjointed form of common and has only made it clear that the bubble popping noise is her name. Given half a chance, Tofu waxes lyrical about how amazing she thinks 'Pop' is, but is interrupted by the storm growing more intense, as shapes mobilise in the waters beneath.

If at any point the adventurers choose to not follow Tofu, she goes without them. After getting very angry, Clementine pleads with the adventurers to save her daughter using another glider (use the Gust-Stomper statistics in appendix D). She cites the rumours of sea witches, castles, and limitless treasure as payment (or 200 gp, all of her savings, if an upfront payment is demanded) for her daughter's safe return.

MIYAZAKI'S WINGS

It should surprise no one that the co-founder of *Studio Ghibli* adored planes. To keep flight localised to whatever region you set this story in, Tofu's glider is intended to be more physics based, relying on the unique geography and echoing the more grounded flying machines of *Porco Rosso* and the *Wind Rises*. That being said, there are a great many weird and wonderful creations in the source material to choose from.

Descriptions are kept to a minimum so that if you wish to echo the sleek and futuristic "meheve" glider from *Naussica*, or the dragonfly-esque bionic "flaptors" from *Laputa*, you can. For this reason a full description isn't given for *where* the adventurers are sitting or what *exactly* breaks and how to fix it when it is required.

THE BATTLE FOR STORMY SKIES

As the adventurers approach closer to the storm, the winds become more intense and their vehicle is buffeted about.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Tofu shouts that everything is “completely under control” as a small miscellaneous piece of the glider strips off and flies into the waters below. The glider veers wildly to the left before being pulled immediately back on course.

End of read aloud text.

The character with the highest passive perception spots more than ten dark shapes following the glider in the water, as Sahuagin surrounding the castle prepare to ambush the flying vehicle clearly heading towards the storm. As Tofu begins to explain that she’ll “need to go fix that”, two **sahuagin** (each wielding two tridents) riding a flying great white (a **hunter shark** with large flipper-like wings granting it a 50ft fly speed) fly up to attack the glider, trying to bring it down, and the battle begins (see “Sahuagin Tactics” below). The adventurers must make it through the strong winds, through the storm wall itself, all the while being attacked by sahuagin and maintaining the glider’s speed enough to land safely.

LANDING TRACKER

This encounter uses a “landing tracker” to determine success or failure. The players start at number 5 on a scale of 1 to 10, with 9-10 being a perfect landing near “The Maw” (see below) and 1-3 being a crash landing deeper in the castle. For every action the adventurers take to boost the plane or prepare for “The Stormwall” (see below), move the adventurers one step closer to a perfect landing (9-10), for every successful attack on the plane or other hindrance, move it one step closer to a crash landing (1). Tofu should be used to convey these mechanics through her actions and dialogue. For example, her agitation is obvious for any score below 5 and at 2 she becomes extremely worried. Determine the outcome of the landing using the score they have when they reach the stormwall at the end of the fifth round.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

VICIOUS STORM.

The extreme nature of the storm causes complications to occur. At initiative 0 each round, roll on the following table to determine what happens.

d6	Complication
1	Lightning Strike. Adventurers must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 40 (8d10) lightning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. The engine stalls and must be repaired with Tofu's help, otherwise mark -2 on the landing tracker for every round it is disabled.
2	Forceful Gusts. Any adventurers not in the cabin (on the wings, under the glider etc.) must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check or be thrown from the vehicle.
3	Evade Flying Shark. The pilot must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity check to evade an incoming shark and its rider. Failure means that the shark crashes into the glider, disabling one weapon of your choice.
4	Forced Spin. A powerful squall causes a malfunction, and the glider begins to spin uncontrollably. Characters lose their regular movement until the end of the next round, though they may still take the Dash action to move.
5	Vision Compromised. Debris from an attack sends a plume of black smoke streaking from the engine. Adventurers have disadvantage on any ability checks that rely on sight until the engine is repaired.
6	Fire! Something breaks and fire begins to spill into the cabin. At the end of every turn that this is left unchecked, anyone in the cabin takes 10 (3d6) fire damage and the landing tracker is reduced by 1 point.

SAHUAGIN TACTICS.

Each flying great white carries two sahuagin. The front (pilot) sahuagin fly the great whites close to the glider and attempt to hit the passengers with one thrown trident, while the rider throws both their tridents. At the start of each round the sahuagin and sharks glide back down to the water having taken their shot, and fresh sahuagin appear. Every round when new sahuagin appear, an additional shark with pilot and rider enters combat (two groups at the end of round 2, three groups at the end round 3 etc).

GLIDER ACTIONS.

Appendix D details the actions adventurers can take to aid the glider. The Gust-Stomper begins the fight with its Flair action disabled until someone helps Tofu repair the initial damage. If no adventurer spends their turn in the pilot's seat using the Move action, reduce the landing tracker score by 1. Reward creative ideas to speed up the glider (such as the *gust of wind* spell). Tofu attaches herself to a harness (10ft rope with a clip fixed to the end) and recommends anyone leaving the cabin do the same. Anyone flung from the vehicle whilst attached is buffeted about and must use their

action to make a DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to regain their footing (this DC is reduced to 10 with another character's help). If the adventurer is not tethered and their death would be too traumatic, you can give them an extra chance by having 'Pop' jump from the glider, tethered, to attempt to grab hold of them.

DEVELOPMENTS

THE FLIP-FLOP EMERGES.

At the start of round 4, when things *should* be seeming bleak, the Flip-Flop emerges from the waters below and surges upwards. The gargantuan pirate ship appears more like a submersible wooden fish than a surface vehicle, but is apparently also capable of flight as it joins the fray. It is being harried by 10 sets of shark-riding sahuagin. The Flip-Flop uses its cannons to attack the sahuagin interceptors that are attacking the adventurers, in addition to those it is trying to fight off itself.

If questioned later about why they aided the adventurers, the Great Sturge of the Sea of Stars assumed quite incorrectly that “anyone heading so foolishly into the storm clearly had a plan, and being an enemy of the sahuagin just sweetened the deal”.

THE STORMWALL.

The storm surrounding the coral castle is a thick black cylinder of swirling cloud and lightning. The adventurers reach the storm wall at the end of round 5 of combat. Check their score on the landing scale. For a score of 1-3, the glider crashes in the storm. The adventurers take 40 (3d6 + 30) bludgeoning damage as they and the glider are lost, and appear in any room connection or waterway encounter of your choice (see “Waterway Encounters” below). For a score of 4-8, the adventurers take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage as the glider crashes into the frothing water surrounding “The Maw” and begins to sink (see “The Exterior” below). For a score of 9-10, the glider lands safely, skimming across the frothing water and pulling up to The Maw with all occupants unharmed.

PART 2. THE CORAL CASTLE

The adventurers make their way through the Coral Castle. They get to know the four forces working to fulfil their own ends within the castle walls: the coral princess, the sahuagin, the kuo-toa and the mysterious Frotida.

THE EXTERIOR

The stormwall abruptly stops, opening out onto a wide circle of white, frothing seawater. In the centre lies an island about a third of the size of the foaming water. Two overhangs of rock and coral stretch skyward, jutting out from either side of an elliptical surface of rock. Its mouth and throat slopes down in a crater, and at the center is the opening into the “The Maw”.

If the adventurers crashed into the sea or the storm, they each must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check to reach the island. On a failure, they are pulled under the churning water. They appear in a place of your choice from “Waterway Encounters”. Consider using this as an opportunity to split them onto two sides of a puzzle or put some adventurers or all of them into immediate peril.

THE CORAL CASTLE

The Coral Castle is building up to unleash the Deyas-Pyrun, and its chaotic geography reflects this.

The castle is a gigantic dragon turtle skeleton staring open-mouthed into the sky, surrounded by a storm. The skeleton is unrecognisable as untold years of coral growth encompass the structure. It lies above a deep well in the sea floor almost as wide as the gigantic turtle, and all of this is surrounded by the storm. It is normally beautiful inside, but preparation for the tsunami has the rooms of the castle swirling and shifting in a slow, chaotic shuffle. The top half is filled with fast waterways, and tight, shifting corridors of coral, rock and bone. Lower down are the bubbledomes, huge pockets of air and water, and coral platforms.

The following sections contain encounters for The Waterways and The Bubbledomes that can be played in any order. When planning this dungeon for your players be sure to take full advantage of opportunities to control the pacing. For example, the adventurers might be walking through a beautiful coral tunnel one moment, only to be met by an abrupt wall of water. As the adventures explore, they may catch glimpses of the adjoining rooms within, such as a stone platform in a bubble full of air, large clear rooms, sparkling cave networks or rushing water. It should feel extremely hard to navigate as the rooms are in a state of flux, retreading their footsteps will not necessarily lead the adventurers back the way they came., A looming sense of pressure should always be building in the background.

THE MAW

The Maw is the central island in the foaming waters. It is a coral-rock structure that is Kratobia's immense head unrecognisable in its current form, and is the only place of relative peace in the castle. Where the mouth and tongue would be, a sloping rock crater leads down towards a hole in the throat. This 5 foot wide opening in the center of the crater is covered with a bubble like film, through which churning water, open space and coral rock slide past. The adventurers feel a warm, pleasant breeze pulling them down into the hole.

Choose a connection from "Connections Between Rooms" below to lead the adventurers to their first encounter. It is encouraged to use the first connection to separate 'Pop' and Tofu from the adventurers to avoid premature confrontation.

THE WATERWAYS

The top half of the Coral Castle is primarily rock and water. The smaller rooms and pieces of architecture have been forced to the top by the swirling currents within Kratobia's body. This area is claustrophobic, and what isn't rock or coral is fast moving water channels that can save the adventurers or propel them towards disaster.

THE WATERWAYS FEATURES

Lighting. At your discretion, due to the constant movement of rooms in the castle some rooms closer to the surface are lit with bright sunlight. All rooms have luminescent coral that sheds dim light in a 30 foot radius.

Air Pockets. Most rooms are completely filled with water, but some have air pockets in them. Which rooms are full of water and which have air pockets is up to you, a party without the ability to breathe underwater may find constantly worrying about drowning more tedious than exciting, while a character who knows the *water breathing* spell (as 'Pop' does) could trivialise it.

A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath or is choking, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round) before falling unconscious.

Coral Architecture. The passageways resemble the stone halls of a regular castle with coral growths that create tight spaces. The small passages and claustrophobic jets of water weave together chaotically and are prone to moving.

HIGH PRIESTESS YARROW

Outside the storm, safely lounging on her pet hydra is the Sahuagin High Priestess Dwynwyn Yarrow. She has waited 100 years to take back the castle from her daughter, and now at the moment of truth a number of her sahuagin have broken through the storm. Only two of her teams have made it inside the castle, and she communicates with them using her *wail of the ocean* to appear on their *tears of the sea* (see appendix B for both).

As the adventurers could come by these communication devices in a number of ways, it is worth noting that Yarrow will try her hardest to entice them into securing the castle for her sahuagin barons. This includes spying on their progress through the tears and actively sewing dissent between ‘Pop’ and her mother. Though safe outside the storm, the High Priestess will do her best to manipulate the adventurers. Don’t be afraid to play on the characters’ bonds, flaws and ideals to swing their opinion against the current occupants of the castle.

THE WATERWAYS ENCOUNTERS

ENCOUNTER A. THE LUST OF PIRATES

The adventurers stumble into a large room with a sandy floor. In the centre of this arena is a magic lamp sitting on an altar.

CREATURES

This obvious trap is surrounded by 20 **kuo-toa** dressed as pirates. Standing behind the altar is “The Great Sturge of the Sea of Stars”(CN **kuo-toa archpriest**, ‘e / ‘im). He greets the adventurers as fellow treasure seekers and is doing his best Indiana Jones impression as he eyes the lamp, weighing various objects that his crew mates hand him: clams, bags of sand etc.

DEVELOPMENT

Without vehement intervention from the adventurers, he deftly swaps the lamp for a bag of sand, triggering a **marid** guarding the room to rise from the sand and attack everyone. The Sturge apologises as he and the kuo-toa flee hysterically.

ENCOUNTER B. THE GLORY OF MALENTI

This room is the remnant of a sahuagin temple, and contains twelve statues: five sahuagin raising their weapons and seven equally combative sea elves standing haphazardly around the room. Most of the floor is a flat and smooth rectangle, allowing the statues to be rotated and slid anywhere.

CREATURES

When the adventurers arrive, two **sahuagin barons** are frustratedly ordering four **sahuagin** to move the statues around. The sahuagin are shocked to see interlopers but are not immediately hostile. They ask the adventurers for help, or show them to the *tear of the sea* (appendix B) so that High Priestess Yarrow can talk to them.

PUZZLE

The sahuagin recognise this room as one used for malenti birth rituals: lining up the statues to fight, with each sahuagin facing one sea elf, causes the remaining two sea elves (one representing a malenti) at the end nearest the door to open the door into the next room. What they don't know is that Frontida has changed the puzzle to confound invading sahuagin and remember her parents' unlikely love: the door won't open until the sea elf pair near it have had their weapons removed. Ways to hint at this answer include:

- Two elf statues in particular seem to be given more care and affection than the others. Several sea-flowers and other offerings strewn about the floor have been disturbed by the sahuagin. They point out the statues that had offerings if asked.
- The weapons can be removed. An adventurer that examines the weapons notices this.
- The sahuagin claim the statues are broken, and can show the adventurers the way it should be set up. They pick the most aggressive sea elves for the front, and slam them together roughly, saying “that should be enough.”

ENCOUNTER C. THE SUSPICIOUS COUPLE

The adventurers enter a room that appears to be a slowly rotating cylinder with many holes in its surface.

FEATURES

Jets of boiling hot water shoot up out of each hole, seemingly at random. To cross to the other side, each adventurer must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to dodge straight through the jets or a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to hang onto the rough coral surface as the room rotates. An adventurer that fails one of those checks is launched across the room and slammed into the wall for 7d6 bludgeoning damage.

Roll a d4 to determine if the adventurer falls into one of the holes and what happens.

d4	Outcome
1	The adventurer is sucked from the room and can be found in the following connection.
2	The hole is about to vent. The adventurer must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb out, and are propelled across the room again on a failure.
3	The hole is filled with water, and can be easily climbed out of.
4	The adventurer lands safely on coral floor near the entrance to the room

DEVELOPMENT

After one of the adventurers has attempted to cross, Tofu and 'Pop' fall into the room through one of the holes (it is assumed they are absent from the group by this point. If they are not they can easily be separated before this moment by a room connection mishap). They land in the middle and, in between screams as water fires up around her, Tofu tries to explain about 'Pop' and her quest to help her reach her mother. She is interrupted when 'Pop' tries to grab her and lead her in a traditional sea-elf waltz. The waltz is actually timed perfectly to the jets, and 'Pop' leads Tofu through a few steps before pulling her down one of the holes. A jet of water blasts up after they exit. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check allows a character to remember the steps of the waltz, and performing the dance allows them to cross the room safely. Characters with proficiency in a musical instrument make the check with advantage.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ROOMS

- A coral bridge with a bright aquarium surrounding it. Tofu can be seen clinging to 'Pop's back, speeding away from a giant shark and breaking the surface, disappearing from sight.
- A wall of fast moving water hits and carries the adventurers to another room.
- A T-junction in a coral corridor. Kuo-toa run across in one direction and Sturge shouts, "YARR this way lads!" As the adventurers near the junction, a huge wall of water sweeps back the other way with the kuo-toa in it, screaming. The adventurers are swept away in a different direction or continue on at your discretion.

- A bubble conveyance system that requires the adventurers to ride in bubbles to reach the next room. At your discretion, the lift maximum occupancy is 1/3rd of your group size, creating a good opportunity to pop one of the bubbles, to split the adventurers up or lose a trailing NPC.
- A twisting and turning water slide.
- A dark water-filled room with what is clearly a large tentacle serving as a bridge.
- A beautiful but razor sharp and difficult to navigate coral passageway requiring breaking the coral or taking 1d4 slashing damage. If 'Pop' is with the group, she laments the devastation of such beauty.
- A central vertebrae of the castle, allowing the adventurers a panorama of the movements of the castle rooms all around them.
- Moving luminous polyps guide the adventurers through a pitch black hallway.
- 4 **giant octopuses** with riding harnesses wait patiently at the entrance of a cramped water filled corridor. They peacefully convey anyone who mounts them to the other end.

THE BUBBLEDOMES

The lower half of the castle is given over to larger spaces of air bubbles and water platforms. The rooms here are spacious and have few walls, instead they are encompassed by resilient bubbles. Surrounding each room is a protective aquarium-like layer that allows the vast array of marine life swimming about to be viewed. In addition to the room connections the adventurers can be forced to swim through water containing this marine life at each entrance and exit to a room. Passage between is less about not knowing where the objective is, but rather how to navigate the long drops, fast moving rocks, and jets of boiling water. At any point here, the next room might be viewable from the current, showing the previously hidden size and scale of the Coral Castle.

THE BUBBLEDOMES ENCOUNTERS

ENCOUNTER D. THE GREAT STOREROOM

FEATURES

One of the largest bubbledomes contains a lattice of rigid coral struts, giving the impression of broken up rooms separated by bubble walls and floors. Each small room has a large and varied collection of one type of mundane object. Empty chests, candelabras, ships sails, all lie about in various states of disrepair. There are no weapons or gold, and nothing looks particularly expensive.

DEVELOPMENT

Walking through, the adventurers hear many loud noises coming from further in. As they round a corner they hear a scream as a jewelled dagger flies at them (whether this hits or not is at your discretion). The kuo-toa pirates are gathered around a dead end with torches on either side, where a large web-fingered coral hand protrudes from the wall beside a door, palm up. An inscription in Aquan on the wall above reads: “There are many treasures in the sea, which one is the most valuable to thee?”. Captain Sturge welcomes the characters warmly and asks for his dagger back.

PUZZLE

The hand is part of a hidden magical door made by Frontida, and requires some show that a person values kindness. Any coins, weapons, or other objects placed on the hand are thrown back at whoever made the offering, making a single improvised weapon attack (+10 to hit, improvised weapon damage of the type most relevant). If neutral or peaceful objects are offered, the hand places them on the floor.

Any character that examines the hand notices it can be rotated at the wall without activating, allowing someone to shake it in greeting, kiss it on the top, or place their head in it as if it was stroking their cheek. If a friendly or affectionate action is taken, the hand morphs into a door with a coral figure of a sea elf woman in the process of whatever action was correctly used, and the door opens.

ENCOUNTER E. THE LIBRARY

FEATURES

A circular room with six alcoves blocked by heavy stone doors. A pair of sahuagin statues flank each alcove. The alcoves contain many stone tablets, water resistant scrolls, and historical objects, and were built to survive the powerful blast of water of the Deyas-Pyrun. The relics contain histories of sahuagin customs and the diary of a sahuagin who lived here before his grandsire who was cast out.

Opening Alcoves. Moving any of the stone slabs requires a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the doors are operated using water pressure and will lock when the room is ankle deep with water.

CREATURES

A **sahuagin baron** is entranced with a record of his family history, over 200 years old, as two **sahuagin** pry another door open.

DEVELOPMENT

There is an obvious exit to the room, and the sahuagin are amiable enough to share their people's knowledge unless the adventurers give them reason not to. This is a good opportunity for the adventurers to learn about the castle's history. The Baron has another *tear of the sea*, allowing the adventurers to speak to High Priestess Yarrow if they haven't yet.

ENCOUNTER F. THE PRINCESS'S ROOM

The room is a large strikingly beautiful fish bowl filled with water and all manner of eclectic sea debris.

CREATURES

If Tofu and 'Pop' have yet to return to the adventurers, they can be found here. Tofu is calmly breathing underwater, trying to convince a scared 'Pop,' with gestures, to confront her mother. 'Pop' is flitting about in the water nervously, clearly wishing to stay in this safe place and having doubts about the wide open world. The adventurers can leave them, or intervene and attempt to give 'Pop' the confidence to press forward.

PART 3. THE WOMB OF THE DRAGON TURTLES

The adventurers make it to the inner sanctum of the Coral Castle. They confront the 'witch' Frontida, taking in the perspectives of those they have met to decide the ultimate fate of the castle, princess, and witch. Whatever they decide, the tsunami is inevitable and the adventurers must escape. Riding the front of the tidal wave, the adventurers make it back to Kaze Ga Ke - heroes, thieves or something in between.

THE WOMB OF THE DRAGON TURTLES

The adventurers follow stairs downward until Kratobia's skeleton ends, and the passage opens out into a massive cylindrical chasm called The Womb, almost as wide as the storm above.

FEATURES

An air bubble extends downwards 300 feet, as do a set of bright white pearl stairs, seemingly supported by nothing. A 100 foot diameter circular platform lies at the bottom of the bubble. Outside the confines of the bubble, thousands of berths in the walls are filled with huge egg shells. The water surrounding the bubble is filled with

young **dragon turtles** of varying sizes, the eldest being Large sized. The water extends down into inky blackness with a hint of glowing orange far below.

CREATURES

Magareath (CN **dragon turtle**, she/her) and other gigantic shapes can be glimpsed deep in the darkness. Magareath is agitated, waiting and respecting her friend Frontida's request for space whilst also postponing the inevitable "Deyas-Pyran".

On the platform at the bottom of the bubble are several tables with papers, glass tubes, and laboratory equipment. A beautiful sea elf can be seen feeding a concoction to a sick dragon turtle currently half in and half out of the bubble where it meets the edge of the platform.

TACTICS

Frontida is hostile towards the adventurers, and upon seeing them she assumes they are treasure hunters or pirates and summons two **water elementals** made out of bubbles to attack them.

This encounter can conclude in a variety of ways, with the three main perspectives at play clashing. The sahuagin are the rightful owners, but they are exploiting the dragon turtles. Frontida is treating the creatures with respect, but used violence to kick the sahuagin out of their home. She is also neglecting her child for the dragon turtles' sake when the dragon turtles can grow and learn on their own. There is no easy answer, and the players should feel comfortable weighing in and not just watching the drama unfold. One thing is clear, the tsunami is imminent.

This list features the most probable outcomes and allows you to pick and choose which characters wade into the debate.

- If 'Pop' is present, Frontida is overjoyed to see her safe. Without intervention, they will argue about her not being prepared to leave. Depending upon whether 'Pop' has learned to stand up for herself, she will demonstrate examples or ask for proof of her readiness from Tofu or the group. Successfully proving to Frontida her daughter's ability to fend for herself causes her to sob uncontrollably and accept 'Pop's independence.
- The sahuagin want their castle back, and High Priestess Yarrow may be able to convince the adventurers of this, as Frontida stole the sahuagin home. They may even agree to let Frontida go peacefully, dissolving their enmity towards her and her family. Frontida doesn't believe the sahuagin will change their exploitative ways, even if they promise it. Magareath can weigh in to give her

opinion that she and the other dragon turtles see the value in protecting their young from harmful philosophies. If Frontida is convinced to leave, Magareath tries to reassure her that even if the sahuagin restore their power in the castle, it doesn't mean things will go back to the way they were.

- It may all turn hostile. Frontida is very capable of using force to defend herself. Magareath moans sadly, and prepares to flood the castle in 1d6 rounds, unable to keep the building tension in the depths of the earth at bay any longer. After this time has elapsed, the adventurers have 60 seconds (10 rounds) to make it to the glider, the kuo-toa ship, or something similar to escape, or risk certain death in the wall of water. In desperation, the adventurers may have to leap into the water and ride the young dragon turtles to safety.

THE RIDE HOME

Whatever happens, the beginning of the tsunami in the womb drains and quiets the castle above. The rooms align into a much more navigable space, and the central staircase leads all the way up to The Maw, allowing the adventurers to pass by familiar rooms on their way back to the surface. If alive, the kuo-toa return to their battered submersible that crashed into the side of the Coral Castle. If there is limited time, Tofu asks for help converting the glider into something more like a windsurfer as she is no longer confident of its capacity for flight. Fortunately, she admits that due to frequent crashes, she's very practiced at this.

The Deyas-Pyran surges up through the castle and then outwards from it. The adventurers must be on the glider or a suitable substitute or risk certain death drowning in the maelstrom. The journey back is a repeat of "The Battle For Stormy Skies" from Chapter 1. The adventurers have one round to describe how they help their windsurfer stay stable, after which any foes will attack and complications will play out.

BALANCE SCALE.

This encounter uses a "balance scale". Foaming water and debris all around makes it very difficult to steer and remain upright. Starting at 5 on a 10 point scale, the adventurers have five rounds to become stable enough to crest the top of the wave and avoid crashing into the cliffside beneath Kaze Ga Ke. Make it clear what options are available to the players but allow creativity to take the lead.

FEATURES

Complications. Most of this debris is from the Great storeroom in the coral castle, spewed forth by the Deyas-Pyran.

d6	Complication
1	A tangled mess of treasure chests hits the vehicle, breaking something important that requires Tofu and two adventurers to fix. In addition one chest is still holding onto the vehicle with tentacled arms. It is actually a mimic . It doesn't attack, but comically clings on for dear life. If allowed to hold on, it coughs up a sack of 1000 gp that must be retrieved by the end of the round or is lost.
2	A young dragon turtle gets in the way and must be avoided. The pilot must succeed a DC 14 Piloting check or lose 2 from the balance scale.
3	An amorphous collection of candlesticks strikes the front of the vehicle. Everyone onboard must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked off balance into the water and cling to the side of the vehicle. The adventurer must use an action to pull themselves back to safety.
4	Assorted debris causes all ability checks, saving throws and attack rolls to be made with disadvantage for the turn.
5	The vehicle hits a bump and jumps. Upon landing, the adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity Saving throw or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Anyone knocked prone in this way cannot fix or fight anything out of arm's reach next turn. The DC can be lowered or mitigated if, for example, the adventurers had the foresight to tie themselves down.
6	As the water recedes for the wave a large rock looms out of the water ahead. The adventurers can attempt to go around it, sacrificing 2 on the balance scale, or attempt to jump it, requiring a successful DC 15 Piloting check

TACTICS

Piloting. The windsurfer is different from the glider in the following ways:

- It has no capability for flight and its speed is reduced to 40ft.
- Piloting is done by a series of ropes and pulleys and is open to interpretation. One adventurer can move the massive wings to steer with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics). Other adventurers can give advantage to this check by using their action to assist. At least one adventurer must be trying to keep the vehicle upright or the balance scale moves down one point (this is true even if

the adventurers are aboard the Flip-Flop or riding dragon turtles). This will be referred to as a Piloting check in the rest of this section for simplicity.

- The windsurfer has its “flair” ability, though using this requires a successful DC 15 Piloting check. Failure causes the balance scale to move down one point
- Creative ideas for restoring balance result in the balance scale moving up one point.

DEVELOPMENTS

THE LAST FLIP-FLOP

The kuo-toa, if alive, are having trouble maintaining stability after unsuccessfully trying to submerge into the wave. They attempt to follow the adventurers, but it's clear they aren't doing well.

At the end of turn one, read or paraphrase the following:

Tumbling upwards, the Flip-flop crashes through the waves below you, sending debris showering all around. The ship flounders about wildly, and it is clear they aren't going to make it on their own.

End of read aloud text.

An adventurer can aid the kuo-toa by sacrificing their balance and speed (giving a -1 on the balance scale each turn) to help them survive.

“SOME PEOPLE NEVER LEARN.”

If High Priestess Yarrow (NE **sahuagin priestess** with 100 hit points) is angry at the adventurers' intervention, she arrives riding a **hydra**. To increase the difficulty of this encounter, add in sahuagin at your discretion. Both Yarrow and the sahuagin flee after the 4th round, not wanting to be smashed against the cliffs below Kaze Ga Ke.

KAZE GA KE.

If the adventurers finish five rounds with a score of 3 or lower, they smash into the wall of the cliff beneath Kaze Ga Ke, dealing 65 (10d12) bludgeoning damage and plunging everyone into the water beneath Kaze Ga Ke. With a score of 4-5, the adventures pull up just enough to slide into the launch bay, destroying the glider but leaving everyone otherwise uninjured. With a score of 6-10 the adventurers skid gracefully and unharmed onto the main street, potentially with the kuo-toa pirates in tow.

CONCLUSION

Clementine offers the adventurers 200 gp for rescuing Tofu, and The Sturge offers them a 200gp share of their treasure for saving their lives, claiming he “may ‘ave learn’d summin’”. Depending on who left the castle, ‘Pop’ and her mother may join Tofu to explore the world, or the adventurers may return to tell of a dreadful battle in the Coral Castle and the price of war and greed.

APPENDIX A: ITEMS

WAIL OF THE OCEAN

Wondrous item, very rare

An orb of deep blue, smokey glass. When looking into a glass, the bearer of a *wail of the ocean* can allow their face to be seen and voice to be heard in any connected *tear of the sea*, as long as both objects are on the same plane of existence.

TEAR OF THE SEA

Wondrous item, rare

A tear of the sea is a small, slightly misshapen clear glass ball the size of a palm. It is used by sahuagin high priestesses to command their followers. If the bearer of a *wail of the ocean* wills it, the two objects can be used to hold a normal conversation. A *tear of the sea* can only be used to respond to messages sent by a *wail of the ocean*, and cannot be forced to cause the tear-users face and voice to appear in a wail if the bearer of the wail does not wish it.

APPENDIX B: VEHICLES

TOFU’S GLIDER, GUST-STOMPER

Tofu Clifface spends all of her time working on this beast of a glider. The gliders of Kaze Ga Ke tend to be small, single rider affairs. They are wooden and metal structures, not particularly durable, but mechanically novel nonetheless, with gears and mechanics that allow complex movement. Tofu has tried to upgrade hers to allow

for as long a flight as possible, and to make it back with as much fish as it can carry. The glider can be stowed for launch, tucking its wings along itself, only unfurling them as it is flung into the air. This particular glider is blood red and has painted jaws with white teeth on the nose cone.

GUST-STOMPER

*Large Vehicle (15ft. X 5 ft. excluding wingspan),
(15ftx20ft when airborne)*

Creature Capacity: 6 Medium creatures

Travel Pace: 20 miles per hour (480 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	0	0	14 (+2)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

Fire Harpoon Gun or Net Launcher.

A player manning a weapon can use their action to make one weapon attack using that weapon.

Flair. The pilot can move the glider up to half its movement speed and pull some fancy maneuvers,

CONTROL: PILOT'S SEAT

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 15

Move up to the speed of the glider, with one 90-degree turn. If the pilot's seat is destroyed, the glider can't turn.

MOVEMENT: WINGS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 40; -5 ft. speed per 10 damage taken

If its wings are destroyed, the glider cannot move and has a speed of 0.

Speed (air) 120 ft.

WEAPON: HARPOON GUN (2)

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 15 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) piercing damage, and the

<p>granting disadvantage to attacks made both <i>against</i> the glider and <i>by</i> the glider's weapons until the start of the pilots next turn.</p> <p>Move. The glider can use the pilot's seat to move using the controls. If the Gust-Stomper enters a Medium or smaller creature's space, that creature is automatically pushed to the edge of the Gust-Stomper's space. The creature must also succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage.</p> <p>Reel In. The weapon placements can pull each target grappled by it up to 30 feet toward the glider.</p> <p>HULL</p> <hr/> <p>Armor Class 15</p> <p>Hit Points 60 (damage threshold 5)</p>	<p>target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, the target's speed is halved, and it can't move farther away from the glider. Each of the harpoon guns can grapple one target. As long as the creature is Large or smaller, Gust-Stomper's speed is not halved whilst grappling in this way</p> <p>WEAPON: NET LAUNCHER(1)</p> <hr/> <p>Armor Class 15</p> <p>Hit Points 20</p> <p><i>Ranged Weapon Attack</i>: +8 to hit, range 120/300 ft., one target or two adjacent targets. One Large creature or up to two smaller creatures hit by this net are restrained. A net has no effect on creatures that are formless or creatures that are Huge or larger. A creature can use its action to make a DC 15 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 10 slashing damage to the net (AC 12) also frees the</p>
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	creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net.
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THE FLIP-FLOP, KUO-TOA PIRATE SUBMERSIBLE

Captained by “The Great Sturgeon Of The Sea Of Stars” (who insists on his full title whenever addressed), this pirate ship is a fearsome opponent to all who would stand in the way of booty. Resembling a gargantuan bug-eyed fish (and more than a little like the captain ‘imself) it uses its large mechanical flippers to haul itself through the waters. Despite all logic concerning its size, it can propel itself upwards through the water's surface and deploy winged fins to soar through the air.

THE FLIP-FLOP

Gargantuan Vehicle (80ft. X 20 ft),

Creature Capacity 30 crew, 20 Passengers

Cargo Capacity 100 Tons

Travel Pace 5 miles per hour (120 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20(+5)	7 (-2)	17 (+3)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the Flip-Flop can move using its helm. It can also fire its ballistas and mangonel. If it has half its crew or fewer, it moves at half speed

CONTROL: HELM

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 50

Move up to the speed of one of its movement components, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the Flip-Flop can't turn.

MOVEMENT: WINGS

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 100 ; -10 ft. speed per 20 damage taken. If its wings are destroyed, the Flip-Flop's fly speed becomes 0 and it immediately falls.

Speed (air) 100 ft.

MOVEMENT: FLIPPERS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100 ; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken.

Speed (water) 100 ft.

WEAPON: BALLISTA (2)

and can fire only half of its weapons.	
HULL	
Armor Class 15	Armor Class 15
Hit Points 300 (damage threshold 15)	Hit Points 50 each
	<i>Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d10) piercing damage</i>
	Weapon: Cannon(1)
	Armor Class 15
	Hit Points 100
	<i>Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 200/800 ft., one target. Hit: 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.</i>

AUTHORS NOTES

This story could very easily tilt over into a regular dungeon crawl, with the bad sahuagin getting slaughtered along the way and I think that would be to its detriment. This story was inspired by two movies in which the antagonists aren't *really* the bad guys.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Toto Joseph Sullivan is a part time writer, full time pedant and probably staring into space this very moment. He is one half of The Secret Cat Shop, a nerdy tabletop emporium for all manner of cute accessories (which you should go to now and buy

something). He has written another Ghibli adventure, The Mystery of Yokai Vale, which can be found on DriveThruRPG. He also wrote Is Dryad Property Theft for Eat The Rich Vol.1, which can be found on the DMsGuild. He can be found @JoeSullivanDM on twitter, where you can deliver him unreservedly hyperbolic praise or soul-crushingly unfiltered critique... it seems rather unclear which one he enjoys more.

Legacy in the Clouds

By Jacky Leung

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Legends speak of an ancient fortress that belonged to the giants of Xen'drik - Himingard, the Garden in the Clouds. It is believed that Himingard served as a military fortress for the giants nearly forty thousand years ago. It was also rumored to have been one of the last surviving fortresses before the fall of Giant civilization. There are stories of a large Siberys dragonshard deep within the bowels of the fortress that not only grants its flight ability but acts as the source of a deadly power. Most records of the ancient ruin are lost, though some scriptures and ruins depict the floating castle miles above the ground. Various factions have expressed interest in locating this lost sky fortress, with many fruitless expeditions, until a recent endeavor uncovered new information about Himingard.

A scholar from House Cannith believes they have a lead to finding the elusive stronghold. Captain Syd Wynora has been hired to crew the airship that will take the expedition team deep into the wilds of the continent. Such a discovery could tip the balance of power for the Five Nations, and as tensions run high, various explorers and expeditions have been sent to find the legendary floating fortress. It's a race to find Himingard, and the Treaty of Thronehold seems even more fragile than ever.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for four to five 12th-level characters.

Pathis d'Cannith, a scholar and artificer of House Cannith, unearthed startling information about the fabled sky fortress of Himingard and its possible whereabouts during an expedition into the continent. Pathis believes that the secret to unearthing Himingard's true location rests in an ancient temple located near the wastelands of

Menechtarun. An airship called The Scarlet has been contracted by the party's sponsor, one of the Five Nations interested in securing Himingard. The Scarlet's captain, Syd Wynora, will ensure safe passage to the legendary fortress.

Pathis wants to find the legendary fortress and observe its splendor and learn more about the ancient secrets of the Giant's artifice. Each of the Five Nations desire to gain this technological and strategic advantage, with Pathis being a central link to the sky fortress. When the party meets Pathis, several attempts are made to kidnap or assassinate him, or to destroy his research. From Stormreach, the party will venture through the Phoenix Basin to reach the Wasting Plain to set up a base camp. Enemy factions will seek to kidnap Pathis or follow the Scarlet to the ruins in the hopes of reaching Himingard.

According to Pathis, the ruins of Mel-Aqat may provide additional information to locate Himingard and he wants to investigate the site. The ruins are filled with ancient magical traps, wards, and constructs made from the giants. In their search, the party will find that the site is guarded by a dying giant named Aurvandil. The giant foretells doom and warns about the allure of Himingard, leaving it up to the party to determine its fate. The party will acquire a special Siberys dragonshard from the giant that is magically linked to the main shard located on Himingard.

Using the dragonshard as a wayfinder, the party will have to traverse through the dangerous wastelands of Menechtarun by airship to find the sky fortress which is hidden inside of a large storm cloud. An enemy nation will have followed the Scarlet to reach the fortress, and a final confrontation will ensue. Once they arrive, the party will have a chance to explore some of the ruins before confronting the stronghold's guardians. The characters will need to make the desperate choice of trying to fight off the invaders and steer Himingard back to Khorvaire or destroy the city and prevent others from misusing their powers.

HOOKS

The adventurers gather at the port of Stormreach to meet up with Pathis d'Cannith whether by the word of an intermediary from House Cannith, as hired mercenaries by a military leader from one of the Five Nations, or adventurers contracted by a member of Sharn's Adventurer's Guilds.

Further Research Required. A member from House Cannith has tasked the party to meet up with Pathis d'Cannith to authenticate the claims regarding Himingard. If true, secure the fortress and any secrets regarding artifice.

For the Homeland. A prominent military leader has contacted the party, informed of their past deeds and heroics. The group has been tasked to verify the claims, and secure the fortress if true for the prosperity of their nation. This one is for the homeland.

Adventurer's Guild Contract. Whether from the Clifftop Adventurer's Guild, the Deathsgate Guild, or the Circle of Song, the adventurers accepted a work contract to protect Pathis d'Cannith and ensure he reaches his destination to Himingard. The promise of treasure and wealth as compensation will please you and your guild leader.

Airship Crew. The party has recently joined as new crew members onboard the Scarlet under her captain, Syd Wynora. The ship received a new commission and Syd has tasked the group to escort and protect Pathis d'Cannith for the length of the expedition until they find the lost fortress. The captain has promised each crew member a share of any treasure they find.

Song of the Dragonshard. An adventurer in possession of a dragonshard fragment has visions or dreams about Himingard floating at the center of a large storm cloud. Deep within the fortress lies a large amber crystal that emits a series of sounds in a haunting melody that calls to the adventurer that possesses the dragonshard.

PART 1: INTO THE STORMREACH

Stormreach rests on the northeastern coast of the Skyfall Peninsula of Xen'drik and serves as the most northern extension into the Thunder Sea. The city is built on the ruins of an ancient giant city and was once a haven for pirates, criminals, and smugglers. Now, it serves as a major port for all further passage into the continent. Each of the dragonmarked houses has an outpost in the city, which is ruled by a council of Storm Lords.

SPIRITED ARTIFICER

The adventurers arrive at Stormreach's harbors and are instructed to meet with Pathis d'Cannith (LN human **archmage** he/him) to learn more about the expedition. Pathis informs the party of several attempts to kidnap or kill him in recent weeks. The party will need to escort Pathis safely through the harbor and onto the docked airship, The Scarlet, captained by Syd Wynora. Captain Syd is prepared to depart once the party arrives onboard.

Read aloud:

Your meeting with Pathis d'Cannith was successful, but the middle-aged artificer warns of insidious outsiders that are after him and his findings. You disembark from the Citadel of the Twelve and make your way to the harbor to reach your chartered airship, the Scarlet. The streets and alleyways of Stormreach are built from the hollowed remnants of the Giants' civilization, providing ample opportunities for skullduggery.

End of read aloud text.

Walking from the Citadel of the Twelve to the Harbor takes over an hour. Navigating through the ruins, alleyways, and crowds requires a total of three successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (History) group checks. On a failed group check, the party becomes delayed by half an hour, and a part of Pathis' research is stolen. If the party fails all three group checks, Pathis is kidnapped and results in either a chase (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, Chapter 8) or a combat encounter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Crowded: The harbor is bustling with activity from dock workers, shipwrights, and the exchange of cargo and passengers. Creatures have disadvantage to Wisdom (Perception) checks and advantage to Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide among the crowds.

Lighting: Even in broad daylight, the city streets and alleyway provide cover that results in many areas being dimly-lit and lightly obscured.

City of Dungeons: The city sits on the ruins of Giant civilization with many unexplored passageways. Creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track others if they are not locals.

CREATURES

A group of three **assassins** stalks the party, keeping their distance until an opportunity presents itself to kidnap Pathis or steal his research. Characters with a passive Perception of 15 or higher will notice they are being followed or that the assassins are close by.

TACTICS

If the assassins kidnap Pathis, they will knock the artificer unconscious and one of them will escape with him, leaving the other two to confront the party in a darkened alley. The remaining assassins will work to delay the party, fleeing once they are

reduced to less than 20 hit points. The assassin with Pathis wants to reach the lower ruins underneath the city and fights to hold onto an unconscious Pathis.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the party arrives at the Harbor with Pathis, they will see one airship, The Scarlet, docked to the port. **Captain Syd Wynora** (appendix A) and her crew (**pirate bosuns**, (GoS)) have been chartered by the party's benefactor and await their arrival. Pathis asks that the airship head toward the ruins of Mel-Aqat.

Read aloud:

The crew of the Scarlet comes alive as the airship departs the Stormreach harbor and ascends into the clouds over the ruined city heading southwest. Captain Syd Wynora commands her decks with gusto and a flourish of her crimson red hat, which the crew returns with the same enthusiasm.

PART 2: SETTING SUN IN XEN'DRIK

The Scarlet (appendix D) traverses through the skies over Xen'drik from the Skyfall Peninsula through the Phoenix Basin and the Wasting Plain. Another airship is spotted on a fast approach toward The Scarlet, eager to capture Pathis or prevent the group from reaching their destination. Once the crew of The Scarlet fends off their pursuers, the party will make camp near the ruins of Mel-Aqat and search for clues to locate Himingard's final location. Beyond the traps, a dying **sun giant** named Aurvandil will warn of the fortress's power and gives the party a dragonshard attuned to Himingard.

UNFRIENDLY SKIES

The Scarlet must travel nearly 1400 miles through the Phoenix Basin, the Wasting Plain, and the Sun Pillars mountain range to reach the ruins of Mel-Aqat. It takes roughly 3 days in good weather for the airship to reach its destination.

Read aloud:

With his research notes, Pathis provides details to locate the ruins of Mel-Aqat within the desolate wastelands of the Menechtarun. Captain Syd takes the wheel of The Scarlet and commands her loyal crew with precision while navigating the turbulent skies over Xen'drik, a feat just as dangerous as traversing the lands below.

End of read aloud text.

The characters may help the crew of The Scarlet navigate through the uncertain skies and keep a lookout for hazards and dangers with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Wisdom (air vehicle) group check at the end of an 8-hour period. If Pathis has his research notes with him, the party has advantage on the group check. On a failed check, The Scarlet takes 1d6 hours to readjust its heading and get back on course.

If the airship takes 4 or more hours to get back on course, the **Destroyer Airship - Leviathan** (appendix D) will catch up to The Scarlet and the adventurers can choose any of the following:

- Initiate combat with the Leviathan. Roll initiative for each airship using its Dexterity modifier plus their crew's quality score (typically starting at +4). On an airship's turn, the captain determines which of the ship's actions to use. The DM coordinates with players what roles and positions they may take onboard the airship.
- Dodge and evade the Leviathan. Roll initiative for each airship using its Dexterity modifier plus their crew's quality score (typically starting at +4). Aided by the tables and mechanics for a chase encounter (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, Chapter 8), use the Aerial Chase Complications table below.

AERIAL CHASE COMPLICATIONS

d20	Complication
1	A roc chases after your airship and attacks it.
2	The airship pierces through a cloud and gets pummeled by hail. Each creature on the upper decks of the airship must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (3d8) cold damage.
3	Your path takes the airship close to a tornado. The airship makes a DC 16 Strength check. On a failed check, the airship is caught in the funnel and is restrained until the end of its next turn.
4	A giant storm cloud is ahead. Make a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) group check to evade it. On a failed check, the airship passes through the cloud and takes 27 (6d8) lightning damage.
5	An elemental rift erupts near the airship, sending a wave of energy that disorients the elemental bound to the airship. Suddenly, the elemental moves in a random direction determined by the DM at its full speed.
6	A meteor storm catches the crew of the airship by surprise. Each creature on the upper decks of the airship must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and 9 (2d8) fire damage.
7	A water spout blocks your path. The airship makes a DC 15 Dexterity check. On a failed check, the airship reduces its speed by half until the end of its next turn.
8	The airship passes through a colony of thirty dust mephits. Each creature on the upper decks of the airship makes a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target is blinded until the end of the turn. While half of the crew is blinded in this way, the airship's speed is halved.
9	Your path takes the airship through a volcanic cloud. Each creature on the airship makes a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target

	takes 14 (4d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute.
10	Your path takes the airship through turbulent winds. Each creature on the upper decks of the airship makes a DC 14 Strength saving throw to brace for harsh winds. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone and is pulled 10 feet toward the edge of the airship.
11 - 20	No complication

TACTICS

The crew of the Leviathan will attempt to cripple and seize control of The Scarlet when they first encounter the party. During a chase encounter, the Leviathan will continue to pursue The Scarlet until they escape. If some of Pathis' research notes were stolen in Chapter 1, the crew of the Leviathan is aware that a clue to Himingard lies in Mel-Aqat and would rather destroy The Scarlet at any opportunity. If the Leviathan's hull has lost half of its hit points, the airship will retreat and avoid further confrontations to initiate repairs.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Stormy Skies: The skies over Xen'drik are generally cloudy with sharp gusts that have a chance to erupt into a sudden storm. When passing through a cloud, the area is considered difficult terrain.

Lighting: The area is considered lightly obscured due to the cloudy skies.

TEMPLE RUINS OF MEL-AQAT

The ruins of Mel-Aqat sit on the eastern corner of the Menechtarun desert where the Sun Pillars and Fangs of Argarak converge, an ancient city full of abandoned halls, temples, and buildings with plenty of secrets hidden. According to Pathis' research, the secret to finding Himingard rests within the dead city's Temple of the Tiger God.

Read aloud:

The Scarlet hovers over the crumbled ruins of the city of Mel-Aqat, and the crew's encampment rests on the broken roof of an old building. As night falls, Captain Syd and her crew prepare an exceptional meal with a rich and hearty stew.

“In the morning, we must venture toward the temple and search for any information about Himingard. I am certain that the ancient Giants held records of it,” Pathis professes enthusiastically.

“So long as we find a bounty of treasure, as well. My crew and I have done our share to get you all here, now it’s time to fulfill your end,” Captain Syd replies.

End of read aloud text.

The temple is a labyrinth of debris, rubble, and collapsed corridors. Pictographs and text written in Giant adorn the walls and depict the Giant sky fortress in various displays of grandeur and destructive power. Either with Pathis’ help or knowledge of Giant speech and text, a character can attempt to read or decipher the text. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals that a dragonshard called the Tiger’s Eye was placed deep within the inner sanctum with markers to point the way. On a failed check, the party will need to locate the inner sanctum by searching the temple through a skill challenge (see below).

SKILL CHALLENGE: REACH THE INNER SANCTUM

Use these guidelines for running your Skill Challenge.

Difficulty Class. The base DC for skill checks is 15.

Objective. Find and reach the temple’s inner sanctum.

Making Ability Checks. On their turn, a character can make one ability check using an ability score and skill proficiency they like, as long as they can explain how this check should reasonably help them find and reach the inner sanctum. Each failed check results in a random encounter or trap (see the Creatures section)

Outcomes. If the party accumulates a total of three failures, they will encounter Mersket, the Shadow (LE **rakshasa** he/him), who is also searching for the dragonshard near the entrance of the inner sanctum in his personal quest to locate Himingard.

If the party earns a number of successes each to the number of players, they successfully navigate the temple and find the inner sanctum without encountering Mersket.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Dark Whispers: A powerful demon named Dhavibastha is imprisoned underneath the Temple of the Tiger God, bound with its couatl guardian. At the end of each hour while in the temple, a creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for 1 hour. While charmed, the creature grows paranoid and believes their allies will betray them. A *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell can remove these effects.

Lighting: The area is considered lightly obscured due to cracks in the temple roof providing streaks of sunlight.

Ruined Temple: The area is considered difficult terrain from the debris and rubble.

Traveler's Curse: The Traveler cursed the land of Xen'drik so that no path can be followed twice. Creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks when retracing their steps or attempting to find pathways.

CREATURES

The temple is infested with **shadow demons** that stay in the darker areas underneath the ruins. For each failed check, the party encounters 5 (2d4) shadow demons while searching for the inner sanctum. Dormant **stone golems** also rest underneath the buried rubble of the temple and will attack the characters if they approach. Finally, a **steel predator** (MTF), tasked by its long gone Giant creators to attack and kill any intruders, stalks the abandoned temple halls.

TRAPS

The temple has several mechanical and magical traps along corridors, rooms, and hallways which include **fire-breathing statues** and **poison darts**. Additionally, there is a **medusa gemstone** trap as detailed below:

MEDUSA GEMSTONE

Complex trap

The trap is a room, 40 feet square, with 5-foot-wide stone doors in the middle of each wall. An array of green gemstones form a 10-foot radius mural on the floor depicting serpents. In each corner of the room stands a 10-foot-tall statue of a serpent, coiled and ready to strike. The eyes in each of the statues are emeralds worth 500 gp apiece.

Trigger. This trap activates when a creature first passes through the gemstone mural. The gemstone eyes of the serpents flash a bright green flame.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative count 20 and 10.

Active Elements. The eyes release rays of petrifying energy at a creature and the gemstones in the mural release fibers into the air making it difficult to breathe.

Locked Doors (Initiative 20). The four doors in this room slam shut and are locked in place by magic. This effect activates only once, the first time the trap is triggered.

Emerald Gaze (Initiative 20). Green rays shoot from the statues' eyes and cause creatures to become petrified. A targeted creature must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Gem Fibers (Initiative 10). The gems on the floor mural release toxic fibers into the air. All creatures in the room must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) poison damage and becoming poisoned on a failed save, or half as much damage and not be poisoned on a successful one.

TREASURE

A successful DC 14 Dexterity (Jeweler's Tools) check can extract 2000 gp worth of gemstones off the temple walls. In addition, the party finds a pair of **gauntlets of ogre power** near a destroyed stone golem.

TIGER'S EYE SANCTUM

Regardless of how the party reaches the inner sanctum, they will find a dying Aurvandil (LG sun giant he/him) with 20 hit points remaining that stands as a vigil over a large dragonshard affixed to a mural.

Read aloud:

Glass beads, gemstones, and colored rocks decorate a wall that resembles a large tiger dozens of feet tall. An amber crystal with golden swirls is affixed on the tiger's eye. As you approach, a lumbering giant with golden hair, bronze skin with cracks of ember, and wielding a volcanic warhammer wearily greets you.

"At last, my vigil is near its end. Our disgrace will soon perish."

End of read aloud text.

Depending on the amount of roleplaying, the party learns from Aurvandil that he is the last guardian of the dragonshard. If the characters mention Himingard, the sun giant will confess that the fortress was supposed to be a safe haven against the dragons of Argonnessen, but it housed a terrible and dangerous power. If asked, Aurvandil does not know the nature of the power within Himingard. The sun giant pleads that the characters destroy Himingard and not repeat their mistakes.

If the party agrees to destroy Himingard and prevent others from using it, the giant will retrieve the Himingard Dragonshard (Appendix B) and teach them the command word to activate it to locate the castle in the sky.

The party may also choose to attack and slay Aurvandil, after which they can retrieve the dragonshard with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.

DEVELOPMENT

Aurvandil dies as the last guardian of the Temple of the Tiger God. Once the party has retrieved the Himingard Dragonshard, they can depart on The Scarlet with Captain Syd and her crew with the new course and their final destination: Himingard. The dragonshard will point the direction through a soft red light aimed towards the center of the massive desert.

PART 3: GARDEN OF GIANTS

The dragonshard points to Himingard and the crew of The Scarlet set their course to the heart of the Menechtarun Desert. A deadly sandstorm awaits the airship and the Giant's sky fortress lies beyond the whirlwind of sand and lightning. Various golems and other engines of war awake to protect the vacant stronghold. Near the core of the structure, the party finds an enormous Siberys dragonshard that grants the fortress the ability to remain afloat but also powers a weapon of mass destruction.

EYE OF THE STORM

The dragonshard indicates that Himingard is within an enormous sandstorm. It takes a day of travel from Mel-Aqat to the center of the Menechtarun Desert.

Read aloud:

The sound of howling winds is deafening as the airship skims along the edges of a swirling storm in the middle of the desert. The dragonshard's glow points beyond the storm's wall of sand, dust, and cracks of lightning.

End of read aloud text.

The characters may assist the crew of The Scarlet as they prepare to venture into the sandstorm. Depending on the amount of roleplaying, the party may find the crew a bit unsettled about the obstacle ahead and may find themselves doubtful that Himingard is beyond the storm clouds. Regardless, Pathis and Captain Syd are eager to reach their destination. If the characters inform the two of Aurvandil's warning about the fortress, there will be a difference of opinion between Pathis and Captain Syd. Pathis will argue to keep Himingard unharmed, in order to reclaim all the arcane and technological secrets from the ancient Giants. Syd believes that the fortress is dangerous and would rather see it destroyed, though not before plundering it of its treasures.

While using the Himingard Dragonshard, the party can direct and navigate The Scarlet through the sandstorm with three successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) group checks. For each failed check, The Scarlet takes 32 (8d8) bludgeoning damage spread across the different sections at the DM's discretion.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Tornado Winds: The area is considered difficult terrain due to the high winds and dense clouds of sand.

Sandstorm Lightning: Streaks of lightning dance through the sandstorm. After each navigation group check, The Scarlet must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the airship and creatures on the upper decks take 52 (8d12) lightning damage, or half as much on a successful one (damage is spread through sections of the airship at the DM's discretion).

SKY FORTRESS HIMINGARD

Once past the storm's outer wall, The Scarlet and its crew find a calm eye in the center and the sky fortress of Himingard sits suspended in the air.

Read aloud:

As the sand clouds part, the air grows calm and tranquil to reveal a massive fortress carved from a mountaintop with an equally large tree protruding from its center. Tree roots and vines have ensnared the pale stone walls like hanging gardens. A large metallic orb rests on the lower half of the enclave, pristine and untouched by the wild nature of centuries past.

End of read aloud text.

Captain Syd and her crew will begin to search for treasure within the vaults inside the Ruins of the fortress. Pathis requests that the party accompany him to explore the rest of the fortress.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Himingard Zones: Himingard is divided into three main areas: the perilous Ruins that encircle the main mountain, the Central Tree where a large and old tree grows through stone and rock, and the Metallic Core which consists of the throne room and the Siberys Dragonshard Core.

Ruins: Various portions of Himingard consist of loose stones, roots, and branches. After each hour while exploring the Ruins, a creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature falls from the floating fortress as the floor breaks. Creatures may use their reactions to grab onto a ledge or root and make a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb back up.

Central Tree: The tree provides shade and the area inside the main chamber is lightly obscured. The dense foliage and roots also makes it difficult terrain.

Siberys Dragonshard Core: A 15-foot tall Siberys dragonshard floats in the center of a large circular metallic room. The chamber is brightly lit due to the crystal.

RUINS

When exploring the ruins, a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) group check reveals up to 4 (2d4) secret vaults that contain coins, gems, and pieces of art.

CENTRAL TREE

An **iron golem** can be found tending the flora and fauna encapsulated within the fortress walls and the large tree at the center of the complex. It will greet and welcome the adventurers with a bouquet of flowers and then resume its routine. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) or Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal an obsidian mural that depicts the final days of the Giant's empire as they collapsed. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (History) check or proficiency in Giant can translate the text to reveal that the city was abandoned and consequently claimed by the curses on the continent.

SIBERY'S DRAGONSHARD CORE

A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the secret entrance to the inner chamber. If a character is attuned to the Himingard Dragonshard, they have advantage on this check.

A creature attuned to the Himingard Dragonshard can issue commands to the Siberys Dragonshard to direct Himingard (see appendix D) and can cast *clairvoyance* at will choosing any location within the fortress with no components. In addition, the controller can also issue commands telepathically to all ancient constructs and warforged titans in the fortress to attack creatures of the wearer's choice.

DESTROYER AIRSHIP – LEVIATHAN

If the Leviathan was not destroyed in Part 2, the spellcasters within the crew would have attempted to scry and follow the party to Himingard. The airship arrives at the floating sky fortress 2 (1d4) hours after The Scarlet. The crew consists of **veterans** and **knights** that will search for treasure within the fortress and seek an entrance to the Siberys Dragonshard Core.

MERSKET THE SHADOW

If Mersket the Shadow was not slain in Part 2, he will either join The Scarlet crew or stowaway onboard in the hopes of acquiring the Himingard Dragonshard for himself. Mersket is pragmatic and retreats if overwhelmed or reduced to less than half of his total hit points. He can also impersonate a high-ranking officer on the Leviathan and use their military resources to capture the party or storm the Siberys Dragonshard Core.

BETRAYAL

Pathis has longed to find Himingard and uncover its secrets. If the party decides to destroy Himingard, he will attempt to steal the Himingard Dragonshard from them and fight for it if necessary.

CREATURES

Himingard has an army of **ancient constructs** (PoA) and **warforged titans** (ERLW) that will awaken and attack any non-Giant creature that approaches them. A creature attuned to the Himingard Dragonshard is not attacked by these creatures.

A **treasure ooze** (appendix A) is hidden among the piles of treasures in one of the vaults in the Ruins and will attack any creature when they approach it.

TREASURE

Each vault within the Ruins contains roughly 50,000 gp worth of gems and artwork.

A character can extract enough of the flora in the Central Tree with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Nature) or Wisdom (Herbalism Kit) check to produce two *potions of greater healing*.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the party makes their way into the Siberys Dragonshard Core, they will need to decide to destroy or protect Himingard.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Depending on the party's decision regarding Himingard:

DESTROY HIMINGARD.

Aurvandil's dying wish was to destroy the sky fortress and prevent its destructive power from being misused by others. Captain Syd professed that she also believed that the fortress was a danger to the world. A character attuned to the Himingard Dragonshard (see appendix B) can issue the Final Order.

Read aloud:

As you utter the final order, radiant amber light bursts from the dragonshard amulet, shattering into hundreds of ethereally unobtainable pieces. The large amber crystal at the heart of the chamber releases an ominous chime and ascends forth from the structure to some unknown place above. The fortress trembles as rooms and corridors begin to break apart while rising higher into the sky.

PROTECT HIMINGARD.

Pathis wishes to preserve Himingard to ascertain and collect the lost wisdom of the Giants' arcane knowledge. A nation in control of this facility has a clear military advantage and could deter future wars.

Read aloud:

You use the power of the dragonshard to activate all of the constructs in the fortress to repel the invaders. The Giants' legacy upholds its legendary might, vanquishing any opposing force. Once they have been driven out, Himingard is yours now. You command the large dragonshard to fly back towards your home nation with the promise of peace in Khorvarire's future.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

You may continue this adventure with these story threads:

Siberys Race. If the party chose to destroy Himingard, its remnants now drift within the Ring of Siberys. But the Five Nations still yearn to reclaim the lost knowledge of the Giants and a new race begins to reach the rings and claim the secrets of Himingard once more.

Dark Plots. If the party protected Himingard and returned it back to Khorvaire, the other Four Nations scheme and plot to gain control or destroy the fortress.

Sky Pirate's Life. The party may choose to leave and join Captain Syd's crew onboard The Scarlet. A freelance Lyrander airship has its advantages and brings a plethora of clients and job offers to keep the coffers full.

Bleak Future. If Mersket manages to escape or survive by the end of the adventure, he will return to the Lords of Dust and inform the Bleak Council of his findings which prompts further schemes to retrieve Himingard wherever it ends up.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS & NPCs

CAPTAIN SYD WYNORA (LYRANDER)

Syd Wynora is the captain of The Scarlet airship, and is an exiled member of House Lysander who took a life of privateering and flying in the free skies.

What They Want. Captain Syd wants to fulfill her contract to escort Pathis d'Cannith to Himingard safely and secure whatever treasure she and her crew find. She is very protective of The Scarlet and her crew's overall safety.

Exiled Lyrander. Captain Syd keeps her Mark of the Storm dragonmarked hidden and tries to play off the fact that she learned to bond with The Scarlet's fire element, Brigit, through a magical secret from Zilargo gnomes. That is partially true, but she is the sole architect of the airship and bound the elemental to her years ago.

CAPTAIN SYD WYNORA

Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +6

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +7, Insight +6, Intimidation +7, Nature +6, Perception +6, Survival +6

Damage Resistances Lightning

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish, Auran

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Airship Balance. Captain Syd has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Fey Ancestry. Captain Syd has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Flourish. Captain Syd adds her Charisma modifier to the damage roll of her rapier attacks (included in the attack).

Innate Spellcasting. Captain Syd's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *gust*

1/day each: *feather fall* (self only), *gust of wind*, *thunder step*

Sneak Attack: Once per turn, Captain Syd deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Windwright's Intuition. Captain Syd rolls a d4 and adds the number rolled when she makes a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or an ability check involving navigator's tools.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Captain Syd makes three attacks with her rapier or pistol interchangeably.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) piercing damage.

MERSKET THE SHADOW

Mersket the Shadow is a rakshasa sent to Xen'drik by the Lords of Dust to find any noteworthy clues about the Overlords.

What They Want. Mersket is in search of any means to gain power for himself and hopes to barter for it when he frees Overlord Dhavibashta.

Claw of Khyber. Mersket is a cunning negotiator and is not above working with others to unlock the secrets of Mel-Aqat if it means he can free Dhavibashta. Given

that Himingard was a Giant's fortress, there is a chance that they may have held technology or magic powerful enough to break the couatl sealed with the Overlord.

PATHIS D'CANNITH

Pathis d'Cannith is a middle-aged human artificer (using the archmage stat block) and researcher who has spent decades researching the lost sky fortress of Himingard.

What They Want. Pathis seeks to learn and acquire the secrets of the giant's magic and artifice. Himingard is a treasure trove of ancient knowledge and possibly lost technologies.

Scholar First. Pathis is a scholar first and will actively pursue any course that yields new knowledge or information that edges on being an obsession. He has spent a few decades of his life gaining knowledge and researching the location of Himingard - it's his life's work.

SUN GIANT

Huge giant, lawful good

Armor Class 16 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 200 (16d12 +96)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +8, Cha +8

Skills Athletics +14, Arcana +8, Insight +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +8, Survival +8

Damage Resistances Lightning

Damage Immunities Fire

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Giant, Ignan

Challenge 16 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The giant's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At-will: *control flames, create bonfire, light*

3/day each: *bless, daylight, heroism, protection from evil and good*

1/day each: *dawn, sunburst*

Solar Aura. The giant sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light in an additional 30 feet. This light cannot be hindered by magical darkness. Creatures that enter or start their turn in the bright light must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. A blinded creature can repeat the saving throw on each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two warhammer attacks.

Hurl Meteor. *Melee Ranged Attack:* +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d10) fire damage.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Halo of Fire (Recharge 6). A fiery halo emerges above the giant's head, sending flares in all directions. All other creatures within 15 feet of the giant must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 26 (4d12) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 6 (1d12) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Treasure Ooze

Huge ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 165 (16d10 +80)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +9

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Acid

Damage Immunities Slashing, Piercing, Poison, Psychic

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned, Prone

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius)

Languages --

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Amorphous Form. The treasure ooze can occupy another creature's space and vice versa.

Coin Pile. The ooze takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does is subjected to the ooze's Engulf and has disadvantage on the saving throw.

Creatures inside the ooze are obscured by the coins and gemstones and have total cover.

A creature within 5 feet of the ooze can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the ooze. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 Strength check.

The ooze can hold only one Huge creature, two Large creatures, or up to eight Medium or smaller creatures inside of it at a time.

False Appearance. While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a pile of coins and gemstones.

Magic Resistance. The ooze has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Illumination. The ooze sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. This light goes out when the ooze is destroyed.

Immutable Form. The ooze is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ooze makes three coin slam attacks.

Coin Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Engulf. The ooze moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Huge or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the ooze enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the ooze. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw. On a failed save, the ooze enters the creature's space and the creature takes 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 44 (8d10) at the start of each of the ooze's turns. When the ooze moves, the engulfed creature moves with it. An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 15 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the ooze.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

HIMINGARD DRAGONSHARD

Wondrous Item, legendary (requires attunement)

This Siberys dragonshard is encased in gold and silver to resemble a large tiger's eye that can be worn around a character's neck. While wearing the amulet, the wearer can read and speak Giant. The amulet has 10 charges for the following properties. It regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn.

Spells. While wearing the amulet, you can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it: feather fall (1 charge), levitate (2 charges), or find the path (specifically to find Himingard even if its moving) (5 charges).

Final Order. You can use an action to utter a command word and enact the last safeguard while this amulet is within 500 feet of Himingard's Siberys Dragonshard Core (see Chapter 3). The amulet is destroyed and the magical bindings on the core of Himingard are lifted which causes effects similar to the earthquake spell to affect the fortress.

APPENDIX C: VEHICLES

Airships are a superior method of travel and prove to be a substantial workaround against the curses laid by the Gods on the continent, save for the uncertain storms that continue to plague Xen'drik. Both The Scarlet and the Destroyer Airship - Leviathan are featured in the course of this adventure and highlight the rare but deadly battles that will wage across the skies should Himingard be used by the wrong hands.

THE SCARLET

The Scarlet is a modified House Lyrander elemental airship that Captain Syd Wynora (formerly Lyrander) commissioned from the dragonmarked house before her eventual exile. Designed with a sleeker silhouette than other airships, where The Scarlet lacks in storage, she makes up for in armaments. Captain Syd crafted and engineered the airship's thundercannons by harnessing her connection with the Mark of the Storm. The fire elemental, Brigit, is bound into the elemental ring and has been a long-time friend and partner of Captain Syd, as both of them fled House Lyrander together and took to a life of freedom and the endless skies.

THE SCARLET

Gargantuan Vehicle (80 ft. x 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 15 crew, 10 passengers

Cargo Capacity 20 ton

Travel Pace 20 miles per hour (480 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn the Scarlet can take 3 actions if it has 15 or more crew, or 1 action if it has fewer than ten crew, choosing from the options below. It cannot take any actions if it has no remaining crew.

Fire Ballista. The Scarlet can fire its harpoon guns.

Fire Thundercannon. The Scarlet can fire its thundercannon.

Move. The Scarlet can use its wheelhouse to move using the elemental ring on the airship. If The Scarlet enters a Large or smaller creature's space, that creature is automatically pushed to the edge of The Scarlet's space. The creature must also succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage.

Harpoon Haul. The Scarlet can pull each target grappled by it up to 30 feet toward the airship.

HULL

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 200 (damage threshold 15)

CONTROL: WHEELHOUSE

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 50

Move up to the speed of the airship, with one 90-degree turn. If the wheelhouse is destroyed, the airship can't turn.

MOVEMENT: ELEMENTAL RING (BRIGIT)

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -20 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

If its elemental ring is destroyed, the airship cannot move and has a speed of 0. Equipped with a *wheel of wind and water* that allows a creature with the Mark of the Storm to telepathically communicate with the fire elemental Brigit.

Speed (air) 180 ft.; 220 ft. while a creature with the Mark of the Storm is in control of the wheelhouse.

WEAPON: HARPOON GUN (3)

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 50 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, the target's speed is halved, and it can't move farther away from The Scarlet. Each of The Scarlet's harpoon guns can grapple one target. While it has one or more targets grappled with its harpoon gun attack, The

	<p>Scarlet's speed is not halved.</p> <p>WEAPON: THUNDERCANNON (2)</p> <hr/> <p>Armor Class 15 Hit Points 75 each</p> <p><i>Ranged Weapon Attack:</i> +8 to hit, range 200/800 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 36 (8d8) thunder damage. Hit or miss, the DM determines where the sonic energy hits. Each creature within 10 feet of that spot must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) thunder damage on a failed save.</p>
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DESTROYER AIRSHIP – LEVIATHAN

The Leviathan is the militarized elemental-bound airship in Eberron. Economic trade wars and piracy continue to escalate in the era after the Last War and the need for nations to protect their interests has prompted the first attempt toward a new norm. While soarwood is a precious commodity, its elevation into a military resource has shifted production priorities and leads to uncertain relations with the elves of Aerenal as the Five Nations seek alternative sources of the buoyant timber. House Lyranter is placed in a difficult political position and warmongering crafters from House Cannith and Zilargo are more than willing to profit from a soon-to-be growing list of military contracts and clients.

DESTROYER AIRSHIP - LEVIATHAN <i>Gargantuan Vehicle (100 ft. x 30 ft.)</i>						Movement: Elemental Ring
Creature Capacity 50 crew, 20 passengers						Armor Class 14 Hit Points 125; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken
Cargo Capacity 50 ton Travel Pace 18 miles per hour (432 miles per day)						<p>If its elemental ring is destroyed, the airship cannot move and has a speed of 0. Equipped with a <i>wheel of wind and water</i> that allows a creature with the Mark of the Storm to telepathically communicate with the bound air elemental.</p>
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)	0	0	0	

Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

Actions

On its turn the Destroyer Airship - Levithan can take 3 actions, choosing from the options below. It can only take 2 actions if it has fewer than 20 crew and only 1 action if it has fewer than 10 crew. It cannot take any actions if it has fewer than three crew.

Fire Arcane Turrets. The destroyer airship can fire its arcane turrets.

Fire Aerial Mortars. The destroyer airship can fire its aerial mortars.

Move. The destroyer airship can use its wheelhouse to move with its elemental ring. As part of this move, it can use its airship ram.

Hull

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 500 (damage threshold 20)

Control: Wheelhouse

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 100

Move up to the speed of the airship, with one 90-degree turn. If the wheelhouse is destroyed, the airship can't turn.

Speed (air) 160 ft.; 200 ft. while a creature with the Mark of the Storm is in control of the wheelhouse.

Weapon: Arcane Turret (5)

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 75 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d12) force damage.

Weapon: Aerial Mortars (2)

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 100 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 ft. of it), one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d10) piercing damage and 22 (4d10) fire damage. If the attack misses, the DM determines where the mortars hit. Each creature within 10 feet of that spot must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the mortar on impact, taking 5 (1d10) piercing and 5 (1d10) fire damage on a failed save.

Weapon: Airship Ram

Armor Class 20
Hit Points 100 (damage threshold 10)

The destroyer airship has advantage on all saving throws relating to crashing when it crashes into a creature or an object. Any damage it takes from the crash is applied to the airship ram rather than to the ship. These benefits don't apply if another vessel crashes into the airship.

HIMINGARD SKY FORTRESS

Himingard is a mobile sky fortress created by the Giants with their heightened knowledge of wizardry and artifice. After the titan Cul'sir was defeated and the rest of the Giant's empire came crumbling down, the remaining Giants departed and left the city to be claimed by Xen'drik and the Gods' curses. For most Giants, Himingard is an idealistic mecca of their achievements but also a reminder of their hubris that is best left to stories and myth. The fortress is powered by a large Siberys dragonshard that also fuels the various constructs that act as guardians and a weapon of mass destruction.

HIMINGARD <i>Gargantuan Sky Fortress (5 mi in diameter)</i>						Movement: Siberys Dragonshard
Creature Capacity 1 crew, 200 passengers						Armor Class 20 Hit Points 2000; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken
Cargo Capacity 100,000 tons Travel Pace 5 miles per hour (100 miles per day)						Speed (air) 45 ft.; 100 ft. while a creature with the Himingard Dragonshard is in control of the Siberys Dragonshard Core.
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Weapon: Arcane Turret (200)
30 (+10)	6 (-2)	30 (+10)	0	0	0	Armor Class 18 Hit Points 75 each
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, electricity, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't Adamantine Damage Immunities poison, psychic Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious						Ranged Weapon Attack: +16 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 39 (6d12) force damage.
Actions On its turn Himingard can take 3 actions, choosing from the options below. It can only take actions from a creature attuned to the Himingard Dragonshard. It cannot take any actions if it has no remaining crew.						Weapon: Aerial Mortars (100)
Command Constructs. The fortress can command its complement of 2000 constructs, which consists of 1000 ancient constructs, 500 iron golems, 300 warforged titans, and 200 warforged colossuses.						Armor Class 18 Hit Points 100 each
Fire Arcane Turrets. The fortress can fire its arcane turrets.						Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 ft. of it), one target. <i>Hit:</i> 27 (5d10) piercing damage and 27 (5d10) fire damage. If the attack misses, the DM determines where the mortars hit. Each creature within 10 feet of that spot must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the mortar on impact, taking 11 (2d10)

<p>Fire Aerial Mortars. The fortress can fire its aerial mortars.</p> <p>Move. The fortress can move through the use of the Siberys Dragonshard Core.</p> <p>Wrath of Cul'sir (Recharge 6, 3 Actions). The fortress can fire its energy bolt.</p> <p>Castle Walls</p> <hr/> <p>Armor Class 20 Hit Points 10,000 (damage threshold 25)</p> <p>Control: Siberys Dragonshard Core</p> <hr/> <p>Armor Class 20 Hit Points 500</p> <p>Move up to the speed of the fortress, with one 90-degree turn.</p>	<p>piercing and 11 (2d10) fire damage on a failed save.</p> <p>Weapon: Energy Bolt</p> <hr/> <p>Armor Class 20 Hit Points 1000 (damage threshold 50)</p> <p>Each creature within a 1-mile radius sphere centered on a point chosen within 2 miles must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. On a failed save, a creature takes 70 (20d6) fire damage, 70 (20d6) force damage, 70 (20d6) radiant damage, and is blinded for 1 hour. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage and isn't blinded. A creature blinded by this spell makes another Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If it fails its saves three times, it is permanently blinded. On a successful save, it is no longer blinded.</p>
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AUTHOR'S NOTES

This adventure was largely inspired by Hayao Miyazaki's *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*, which was my first Studio Ghibli movie and watched on a laser-disc (yes, I'm that old). The story captivates me and my imagination to this very day, drawing from the themes presented in the film at large. As a homage to the original film and its themes, I tried to present opportunities for moral implications of wielding such dangerous power, the notions of war and peace, and how power can corrupt even the best of us. This adventure centers around developing relationships and understanding the different NPCs like Pathis and Captain Syd in the beginning and later introducing a truly evil and scheming character like Mersket as a threat to everyone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacky Leung is an Asian American RPG designer and writer with credits in different projects, publications, and anthologies such as *Uncaged*. He is a bestselling creator on DMsGuild and DriveThruRPG. He is also a project organizer for *Unbreakable*, an Asian-inspired anthology featuring Asian creators. It is rumored that he has found the secrets to lichdom.

SYD'S STEW

This beef stew recipe has seen transformative changes over the years, with subtle additions and substitutions as my palate developed. It's become a family favorite and has been requested on more than several occasions. I'm happy to be sharing this recipe with you and I think this stew is a great complement for cold nights. If you're looking to modify this recipe, I suggest adding a couple tablespoons of dijon mustard near the end or substituting the wine with an amber or dark beer.

Captain Syd learned to make this hearty stew from one of her adventures before stealing the Scarlet and riding the skies. Over the years, the recipe has changed and altered to suit whatever ingredients were onboard and the captain's personal tastes, but for her, this recipe is her definitive claim to fame besides the Scarlet. She only makes this dish for those who she deems worthy of it.

YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

- 16 ounces (450 grams) beef chuck, cubed
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) flour
- 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon tomato paste
- 1/4 cup (60 milliliters) red wine (pinot noir or merlot)
- 3 cups (720 milliliters) beef stock
- 5 large golden potatoes, cubed
- 5 to 6 sprigs parsley, leaves separated and stems finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons rosemary
- 1/4 cup (60 milliliters) heavy cream
- Salt and pepper, to taste

First, cut the beef stew meat into 1-inch cubes, pat dry, and dredge in flour. In a large stock pot, apply your grapeseed oil (or another neutral oil with a high smoke point, such as sunflower oil or olive oil) and sear the stew meat over medium heat. Do not crowd the pot; give the beef pieces enough space to prevent steaming. Flip the beef meat to the other side until each piece has been seared on all sides, remove and place on a plate or in a bowl.

After removing all the beef meat from the pot, add the onions, carrots, and celery to the pot. Once the onions begin to sweat, add paprika and garlic and stir to incorporate. Add tomato paste and cook; once the paste has turned a darker color, pour in the red wine. As soon as the smell of alcohol is gone, add the beef stock, potatoes, parsley stems, and rosemary. Keep chopped parsley leaves separate. Increase the heat to medium high until the stew comes to a boil, then lower the heat to simmer for 40–45 minutes or until the potatoes are fork tender.

Finish by adding cream and some of your reserved parsley. Serve immediately in bowls and garnish with additional parsley.

A City in the Mountains

By Collette Quach

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Hidden high in the mountains and cloud cover lies a city, Jing Shen Jia, built in a natural valley. For generations, the people of Jing Shen Jia have lived peaceful and quiet lives, detached from the outside world. The city is a self-sufficient human society.

Jing Shen Jia has a unique culture due to their isolation. Most of their clothing is made from cloth and linens, rather than leathers or furs, dyed in bright colors. The architecture also reflects their color. Buildings are painted with bright colors and murals of various flora and fauna. They have prominent hip-and-gable rooftops, and every home no matter the size contains a small garden with various herbs and mountain flowers.

The valley has an unusual connection to the other planes. Spirits frequently manifest in the area. Most of the spirits are connected to a person. Every person, even those who arrive from outside the valley, can call upon a spirit for help. There is an opportunity for the party to gain one in this adventure. Before the start of the adventure, discuss with the players about their character's backstories and goals. See the section "Calling A Spirit" for more information.

Beneath the city, a system of caves contain the ruins of an ancient temple, accessed through the cave of the Sleeping Serpent. The deepest room of the temple, where the barrier separating the planes is weakest, used to be dedicated to the housing and peaceful dispersing of negative spirits. Over time, the meaning of this area was lost, and the buildup of negative spirits began to draw monsters to the temple's forgotten halls.

Generations ago, Jing Shen Jia was open to the rest of the world. People came and went freely. However, with the ritual forgotten, the buildup of evil spirits formed a monster, the Sleeping Giant. The people of the city were able to seal the Sleeping Giant in the lowest room of the temple. This event forced the city to go into isolation and hiding. The Sleeping Giant event was kept secret from future generations.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure is optimized for four 14th-level characters.

When adventurers get caught in bad weather they seek refuge in a mountain valley. In that valley lies Jing Shen Jia, a city of magic and awe. They are greeted by Keiran, a young and ambitious individual with a desire to see their home opened to the world. Keiran asks the adventurers to help find their friend, Ky, who snuck into a restricted cave system to investigate earthquakes that have been shaking the city for a month.

After a brief rest, the adventurers meet the Council. They meet General Gris, another outsider who pleads for assistance in saving his city. The adventurer's try to convince the Council to allow them to investigate the seismic activity down in the local cave. The adventurers then call upon and meet their spirit companions.

Delving into the cave of the Sleeping Serpent and eventually finding an old ruin, the adventurers uncover secrets of the city above: the Sleeping Giant, a cumulation of negative spirits made into physical form and sealed deep underground.

Breaking free, the Sleeping Giant wreaks havoc on the city, sending out corrupted spirits. Banding together with the townsfolk, the adventurers help defeat the Sleeping Giant. The adventure concludes with the adventurers having the option to weigh in on whether the city should continue its tradition of isolation or not.

The adventurers arrive at a time of great dissent. The younger generation has become restless of being confined to their city. Kieran, a particularly ambitious individual, has become the spokesperson for the group. After continued rejections from the Council, the group has lost faith in their leadership. Many of the younger people distrust the Council, believing that they are hiding something from them.

To make matters worse, the Giant is waking up. A mining venture from a nearby city has accidentally woken the giant, and the writhing of it's waking is causing earthquakes to shake the entire mountain.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Keiran (NG **commoner**, they/them). Kieran is a dark skinned individual. They wear mostly deep reds and have stark blue tattoos. They are outspoken and question the traditions and secrecy of the elders. They have become the de facto spokesperson for those that believe in opening the city up to the world.

Acteon (LN **noble**, he/him,). The spiritual leader of Jing Shen Jia. He is part of the “old guard”, the older generation of the city, and believes in keeping the mountain a secret due to the consequences of the past.

General Gris (LN **warlord** (*Volo’s Guide to Monsters*), he/him,). A general and diplomat of a nearby region, Vertlyn Hold. The region struggled financially until they found veins of precious metals within the mountain. Mining operations have begun, but the general, out of courtesy, is seeking permission from the city of Jing Shen Jia.

Ky (CG **scout**, he/him). Keiran’s friend, sent into the caves to investigate the earthquakes. Died tragically before getting to the Sleeping Giant.

HOOKS

Jing Shen Jia is an unknown location that the party discovers while travelling through the mountains, or you can use one of the following adventure hooks:

- Someone in Vertlyn Hold asks the party to look for General Gris, who went into the mountains looking for wealth but hasn’t reported back.
- Legends have told of a land of magic and treasure within the mountains.

PART 1: THE CITY IN THE MOUNTAIN

In this part the adventurers discover Jing Shen Jia while taking refuge from a violent storm and earthquakes that shake the mountains. They are shown around the city by Keiran (see “Dramatis Personae”). Keiran asks the adventurers to help find their friend Ky, who traveled into the cave system beneath the city to investigate the earthquakes. The adventurers petition the Council for permission to enter the cave of the Sleeping Serpent and receive their companion spirits.

While traveling through the mountains, periodic earthquakes shake the ground beneath the adventurer’s feet. The earthquakes become more frequent the deeper the adventurers go into the mountain range. The wind howls and blusters, tearing at the adventurer’s clothing. Near the adventurers the trail leads into a tunnel. The further the party goes down the tunnel, the more the howling of the wind lessens. They arrive at a cliffside overlooking a large sprawling valley. The valley has avoided the harsh wind and dreadful cold of the mountain range. There is a 15 foot wide path along the cliff side that leads down into the valley itself.

Read aloud:

The valley is a bright patch of green in the dull grey and white rocks. The sound of the howling winds fade, giving way to an air of peace and calmness. As you take in the scenery, a shimmering light darts through the air. It comes closer to you and reveals itself to be a translucent, iridescent blue and purple sparrow. The sparrow flies past the cliffside and back down into the valley, leaving a faint trail.

AREA 1: MOUNTAIN VALLEY

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Hidden Valley. The valley is a natural hideaway within the mountain range. The only entrance and exit to the valley is the rock tunnel.

DEVELOPMENT

Upon reaching the base of the valley, the adventurers see the sparrow once again. It flies down to a pair of plainly clothed individuals. The sparrow lands on Keiran’s (NG **commoner**, they/them) shoulder before dissipating into the air. Keiran is excited to see the adventurers, having seldom seen outsiders in the valley. They introduce themselves and tell the adventurers that they came through the mountain at a bad time. The high winds will last at least the rest of the day making travel dangerous, but the valley offers shelter.

AREA 2: CITY IN THE MOUNTAINS

Keiran leads the adventurers to Jing Shen Jia, answering questions on the way. They know about the city and spirits, but know nothing of the Sleeping Giant or why Jing Shen Jia is cut off from the rest of the world. Keiran also excitedly asks about the outside world and the adventurers' exploits, wishing they were allowed to travel.

Keiran shows the party around the city, pointing out the landmarks and the culture. They mention that they believe the wonders and knowledge of their home should be shared.

CITY LAYOUT

Jing Shen Jia is self-sufficient; all of the needs of the city's inhabitants, such as food and tools, can be found in the city and the surrounding fields are filled with various fruits, vegetables, and other produce. Livestock roam the pastures. The city's unique points of interest are listed below.

Spirit Well. The Spirit Well is the spiritual center of the city. It's not an actual well, but a decorated longhouse adorned with intricate wood carvings along its walls. Spirits fly in and out of the open doors and windows. It is connected to the Tower of the Four Spirits on the first and second floors.

Tower of the Four Spirits. This four-story pagoda style tower is the political center of the city. Each floor is decorated based on the four spirit categories. The first floor is decorated with motifs of canines and earth toned colors. The second floor is decorated with feline and fire motifs, the third with serpentine and water, and the top floor with avian and air. The Council chamber is on the fourth floor.

Dancing Spirits. Darting through the air are spirits of different forms and colors. They're chasing each other throughout the sky. Occasionally they fly down and attempt to play with the adventurers.

DEVELOPMENT

Keiran brings the party to a longhouse. Inside ten young people sit around a cooking fire having a meal. They are having a lively conversation and laughing before they notice Keiran and the party enter. They welcome the adventurers with open arms, possessing a similar enthusiasm and curiosity for the outside world as Keiran.

Keiran explains that the young people of the city have lost faith in their leadership who refuse to acknowledge their concerns. They want to travel to other places and let the world know that Jing Shen Jia exists. Currently, the city gets very few visitors, just

people who stumble on the city like the adventurers did. The group believes the city is stagnant and that opening up to the world would benefit everyone.

While in the longhouse, a small earthquake shakes the building. Once the tremors stop, the group notes that these small quakes have been happening for the past month. They started becoming worried after the quakes continued past the second week. They've asked the Council what's going on, but their questions go largely unanswered, the simple statement of "we're investigating it" an unsatisfactory reply. The group decided to take matters into their own hands. Ky, a hunter and a friend of Keiran, snuck into the cave of the Sleeping Serpent to investigate the restricted areas and hasn't returned in 3 days. Keiran has been squirreling away supplies and building up the courage to go after Ky, but admits to being extremely underqualified. With the adventurer's arrival, they hope the party will be able to use their expertise to go in their place. Keiran also hopes the adventurers can figure out what's causing the earthquakes.

Keiran begs the adventurers to talk to the Council in the hopes that they can go down in the caves to investigate. Keiran assumes this type of work is nothing out of the ordinary for the adventurers.

AREA 3: THE COUNCIL

Whether the next day or immediately after the earthquake, the adventurers can make their way to the Council hall to speak with the leaders of the town.

The Council hall is a four story pagoda style building in the middle of the city. The front doors are large and the ground is painted with elaborate scenes of nature. On entering the tower the party is stopped by 2 **guards**, who demand to know the reason for the intrusion. A DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check allows the party to pass. On failure, Keiran steps in to convince the guards to let them through.

Keiran insists that the adventurers are exactly what the Council needs. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Keiran has come here multiple times to the point where the guards are clearly annoyed.

The Council consists of five elderly people, not one of them free of wrinkles or grey hair.

- Enyo (he/him, **noble**). The youngest member of the Council, though not by much. He wears a sword at his hip. He is neutral on the topic of reopening Jing

Shen Jia. His only concern are the issues on the city's security and safety if that were to happen.

- Pheng (they/them, **noble**). They are a regal looking individual. They wear bright reds and purples. Despite their aloof appearance, they are a welcoming individual, more accepting and willing to listen to new ideas.
- Nubia (she/her, **noble**). She has a small spirit bird sitting on her shoulder and wears a lot of green. She is very stoic and often agrees with Acteon's traditional views.
- Solah (she/her, **noble**). She is writing notes as the others speak. She is prim and proper, focusing more on transcribing rather than saying anything.
- Acteon (he/him, **noble**). He is the eldest of the Council members. There is an aura of superiority. He wears completely white clothing and sits at the head of their table.

A REQUEST FOR HELP

In the Council room, the Council is talking to a man, General Gris (LN human **warlord** (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*), he/him). He is begging for permission to mine in the mountains. His home is on the verge of bankruptcy and could be saved by the profits from mining. The Council refuses his request, saying that it's too dangerous and will disrupt the infrastructure of the city.

As the general leaves the adventurers are called in, but Keiran is asked to wait outside. When asked about the earthquakes the Council acknowledges them, but claims they're natural.

While they deny anything out of the ordinary, the party can make a DC 30 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the Council to give them permission to investigate the caves. The DC can be lowered by appealing to the specific concerns of individual Council members.

Below are examples on how to sway the Council members. Adventurers can roll an DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to see if the members are swayed. Each Council member swayed drops the DC by two:

- Enyo: The earthquakes put the people of Jing Shen Jia at risk.
- Pheng: Pheng is open to new ideas as long as it's delivered in a pragmatic and respectful manner.
- Nubia: Nubia is the hardest to convince. She will agree with anything Acteon says or agrees with. Convincing Acteon also convinces her.

- Solah: She is mostly quiet through the meeting. Arguments that lean more towards emotional ones, especially if it's about how the people of the city will be affected will sway her.
- Acteon: Acteon is nearly impossible to convince, as he is strongly opposed to risking the giant becoming common knowledge, especially to outsiders.

No matter the outcome of the conversation with the Council, Acteon allows access to spirit guides for the party and will lead them to the Spirit Well (see “Calling A Spirit” below). If the party were successful in gaining permission to enter the cave, Acteon tells them they will need a spirit guide for their task. If they weren't, Acteon offers them to the party as a welcoming gift while they're in Jing Shen Jia, but cautions the party not to use their spirit to cause mischief.

General Gris can be found outside the council chamber, looking forlorn. If the adventurers speak with him, he will tell them of the precious metals that can be found within the mountain, but that his people stopped mining when they realised they were encroaching on the land of Jing Shen Jia. Without the money from mining, he's not sure how Vertlyn Hold will survive.

CALLING A SPIRIT

Acteon brings the adventurers to the Spirit Well. The inside is filled with various spirits dancing around. Their radiance lights the room with a blue glow. There are other people in the longhouse, meditating and communing with the spirits.

Acteon takes the party to a back room. Pillows are arranged on the floor in a circle and jasmine flowers are placed in the corners of the room. The smell is fragrant but not overwhelming. At the center of the pillows is a small font of glowing water. Acteon invites the party to sit on the pillows and meditate.

There are four categories of spirits: Avian, Canine, Feline, and Serpentine. Both as Acteon and directly questioning your players, consider the following:

- What are the adventurer's values?
- What is their past? How does it play with them in the present?
- What do they want to achieve in the future?

This can be discussed in the moment or be established prior to the start of this adventure. The categories can be up to the DM's interpretation. Here are examples of each category's values.

- **Avian.** Free spirit, bravery

- **Canine.** Loyalty, community
- **Feline.** Cunning, independence
- **Serpentine.** Fluidity, duality

Once the category is decided the spirit can manifest in various forms. For example an avian spirit could be a sparrow or an eagle, the form is purely cosmetic.

MECHANICS

Each spirit's category dictates their mechanics.

- **Avian.** Rulers of the sky, not bound by earth. Adventurers who manifest the spirit of the air ignore difficult terrain. The adventurer can use their action to gain a flying speed of 60 feet for 1 minute. They can use this action three times per long rest.
- **Canine.** As strong as the pack they stand with. Adventurers that harness the spirit of earth can make sure no one falls behind. As an action, they can give up to two people they can see advantage on any roll. This action can be used five times per long rest.
- **Feline.** Cunning and quick, adventurers that harness the spirit of fire gain an additional Use An Object action every turn. In addition, they have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in lightly obscured foliage, such as tall grass or heavy thickets.
- **Serpentine.** The symbol of duality. Some believe serpents are signs of evil, others believe they are healers. Once per turn, adventurers that harness the spirit of water can use their bonus action to either restore 1d6 hit points or deal 1d6 poison damage to one creature they can see.

DEVELOPMENT

When the party leaves the Spirit Well and heads for the caves, Keiran tracks them down to ask how their meeting went. If the party gained permission to enter the cave of the Sleeping Serpent, they are excited to find their friend and finally get some answers. If the Council refuses the adventurer's request, Keiran begs the party to enter the caves anyway. No one is looking for Ky and they are sure that something is seriously wrong down there.

PART 2: UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

In this part the adventurers enter and explore the cave of the Sleeping Serpent, fighting creatures that have been infested with evil spirits along the way. They discover the chamber where the Sleeping Giant once resided, now littered with the bodies of General Gris' mining expedition. The lone survivor tells the party that they accidentally freed the Sleeping Giant, and it is now barreling towards the surface.

At the end of the valley, on the outskirts of the farming fields, is the cave of the Sleeping Serpent. As the party approaches the mouth of the cave, they see a swath of guards. If they gained permission to enter from the Council, the guards have been informed of this and let the party enter.

If the party does not have permission, there are five **guards** patrolling the area. A successful DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) is needed to sneak past the guards without alerting them. A successful DC 18 Charisma (Deception) check convinces the guards to let the party into the cave.

AREA 1: CAVE OF THE SLEEPING SERPENT

The entrance tunnel is lit by dim candlelight. Following the tunnel into the cave, the path eventually splits in two. One path leads to a small nook covered by a see-through cloth material, and the other path leads down deeper into the cave.

The natural nook houses a small meditation area for one person. There is a carpet on which to sit or kneel and various trinkets. Floating glowing orbs provide bright light. The walls are the most intact evidence of the temple's original purpose, displaying glyphs and frescos of humanoid figures and animals sat in contemplation, with darker reflections of themselves mirrored above them.

The path to the right continues deeper into the cave. It is a long corridor filled with stone statues carved directly into small nooks in the cave walls. These statues are of heroes, spiritual people, and other prominent figures of Jing Shen Jia. The details of the statues are exquisite, with some of the statues having carved folds in their clothing.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Dim Light. The cave is lit by candlelight that gives 10 feet of dim light.

ENCOUNTER: WIND TUNNEL

The party reaches a corridor with a strong, howling wind blowing through it. The corridor is 80 feet long and 20 feet wide.

Each adventurer that starts their turn in the corridor must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be pushed 15 feet back. When moving against the wind, every 1 foot of movement costs 2 feet. There are two large boulders that can block the wind at 30 feet and 60 feet.

ENCOUNTER: NAGA

The tunnel curves around a set of stone steps leading to a flattened plateau, 20 feet in diameter, in the middle of which three curled, serpent creatures lay. Two appear to be skeletal serpents, and all are much larger than ordinary snakes.

CREATURES

One **spirit naga** and two **bone nagas** stir to life as the adventures approach. The spirit naga has a similar glow to that of the spirits seen before. However, instead of the smooth glowing trail other spirits emit, the spirit naga puffs and billows glowing smoke.

The skeletal serpents begin to rattle with life before forming into bone nagas.

TACTICS

The bone nagas focus on melee attacks to keep the party occupied while the spirit naga attacks from distance with spells.

DEVELOPMENT

When the nagas are killed they disintegrate into light.

The adventurers can move further down the cave system. While walking they pass a pile of rocks blocking another path. A successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check alerts them to a faint chirping, perhaps that of a beast. A DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals it is slightly distorted, but not by the rocks.

ENCOUNTER. FAERIE DRAGONS

Turning a corner, the party hears the sound of chirping get louder and louder. From the right, a group of faerie dragons fly past the party like bats.

CREATURES

There are eight **faerie dragons** total: two blue, two green, two indigo, and two violet. Similar to the spirit naga, they emit a smoky light, depending on their variant color. The usual playfulness of these creatures is replaced with stoicism or anger.

TACTICS

The faerie dragons fight in pairs, typically with the same color variant. Each pair targets one of the adventurers throughout the encounter.

DEVELOPMENT

Once defeated, the faerie dragons slowly fade, their usual colorful features growing pale. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the dragons seem to have been infested by dark and negative spirits.

If the adventurers investigate the area, a pile of scraps strewn about the floor turns out to be a broken bow and a torn cloak. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, an adventurer notices some of the dirt and rocks have been disturbed, leading farther down the path.

ENCOUNTER. COLLAPSED PATHWAY

The adventurers enter a corridor, 50 foot from one end to the other, where several holes and large gaps litter the floor. The pathway before them has collapsed. Each hole is a 15 foot drop into the pit beneath the walkway. Along the collapsed pathway are intact landings, 5 feet in diameter. These landings are rocks that can hold one person at a time. There is a 7 foot gap between each landing. If an adventurer can only jump 6 feet they can make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) to successfully grab the ledge of the landing. Markings on the walls of the pit can be seen from the platforms above.

Adventurers that fall into the pit take 3d6 bludgeoning damage as rocks fall on top of them. The walls are adorned with ancient stone reliefs of humanoid figures on some sort of journey, each with some sort of animal companion. These glyphs hint at the temple's original use. As with the prayer room above, darker versions of the figures and their animals are mirrored above them. Any spell that allows an adventurer to read the glyphs (like *comprehend languages*) lets them know the images are of a pilgrimage to cleanse themselves of evil. On a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check, an adventurer in the pit notices a dagger on the ground. The blade has no rust and has been maintained recently.

Adventurers can climb back up to where they came from with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. The other side of the pit is completely flat.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the party has crossed the collapsed pathway they can continue on. The cave system ends at a small drop into a stream. The water flows toward and down a small waterfall.

AREA 2: WHERE THE PLANES MEET

Following the stream leads to a short 10 foot drop into a shallow pool of water. Wading across the pool, the adventurers see ruins of an ancient pagoda-like structure. Part of the structure's floor is submerged, allowing the adventurers to climb up into the building. As the adventurers reach the structure, the ground shakes violently. Small rocks fall from the ceiling and dust fills the air.

With a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check, the adventurers discern that the epicenter of the seismic activity is just ahead of them.

ENCOUNTER: THE PAGODA GATEWAY PUZZLE

Climbing into the structure, the adventurers arrive in a room with two doors, one ahead of them and the other to the left. Each of the doors has a stone carving, depicting a scene. The door on the left shows a motif of a bird flying in the air, a cat prowling in tall grass, a dog running through open plains, and a snake moving underground. The door on the right contains two snakes, a cat, and a dog. The cat is chasing one of the snakes while the dog is running away from the other.

Between the doors are four rotating pillars in a line. The pillars have four sides, each side corresponding to one of the spirit categories. The pillars can be easily turned to change where each image faces. Below is the solution to open the door from left to right. The scenes on the door can be used as hints for the party.

Left door. Avian, Feline, Canine, Serpent.

Both doors. Feline, Serpent, Serpent, Canine.

When the pillars are turned to the correct position they glow before the corresponding door opens.

The door directly ahead of the party opens up to a straight path that leads to "Encounter: Crumbling Hall".

The door to the party's left opens up to a corridor with a large alcove in the wall to the left. The alcove contains an old shrine covered in cobwebs. It is similar to the one at the entrance of the cave, but far older. The same stone reliefs can be seen here, as well

as a new section that shows the figures facing their darkened selves, whilst their animals circle above, representing the next room. Continuing on to the right leads the party to “Encounter: Chimera and Revenants”.

ENCOUNTER: CHIMERA AND REVENANTS

As the adventurers descend the corridor, they may attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone who succeeds hears faint banging and scratching coming from a room at the end of the hall. Reaching the room, a chimera and two revenants are standing guard near a door.

The room used to be a place for pilgrims to confront their problems in spirit form. To mirror it's more peaceful ancient use, you should use the creatures below to confront your adventurers on their deepest fears and secrets. The enemies shout and scream using the voices of the adventurers or those of close allies. They also have intimate knowledge of the adventurer's worst aspects and flaws.

The chimera has one eagle head and one lion head, the body of a wolf, and a tail ending with a snake's head. It shimmers a dull blue color.

The two revenants stand tall with their weapons drawn. They are clad in armor from head to toe with no defining features. Under their helmets are a pair of ghastly blue glowing eyes.

CREATURES

1 **chimera** and 2 **revenants** guard this chamber, attacking anyone who approaches.

DEVELOPMENT

When the revenants are defeated their armor clatters to the ground in pieces and shatters like glass. Inside the armor are the bodies of Jing Shen Jia citizens, recognisable through their distinct bright clothes. Despite the clear wear and tear, the color is still striking.

The door the creatures were guarding is unlocked, and through it is a long hallway with a fairly fresh body under a pile of fallen rocks, a quiver of arrows strewn beside them. The body has an empty dagger sheath that matches the dagger found in the “Collapsed Pathway” encounter. This is the body of Ky, the hunter Keiran mentioned.

ENCOUNTER. CRUMBLING HALL

As the adventurers enter a long hallway, 40 feet in length and 25 feet in width, there is a violent earthquake. Rocks and dust fall down from above. When the quake stops, the corridor is filled with rubble, but with care the adventurers are able to cross.

With a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, adventurers notice that the ceiling has significant cracks that are barely holding together.

For every 15 feet of movement the party travels, roll a d10. If the result is 6 or higher, a ceiling section drops on a 15 foot Cube area. Adventurers in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage as they fail to get out of the way in time.

AREA 3. THE PRISON

The adventurers arrive at an antechamber that appears to be a long abandoned guard room. Rusted weapons and rotted wooden tables lay strewn across the area. The main point of interest is a huge set of double doors that glow faintly and hum with a silvery white light. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that there are markings of a spell on the doors to seal them and that they are considerably more modern than the temple itself, only hundreds of years old. Any attempt to detect magic or identify the spell reveals that it has been severely damaged and has almost faded completely.

After a brief moment, a massive earthquake almost knocks the adventurers off their feet. Loose dirt and rock crumble from the ceiling. A large boulder breaks through the double door, creating an opening. The perfectly circular chamber inside is 70 foot tall and wide, meant to hold something large. The adventurer's spirit companions are noticeably shaken by the chamber. They fly around in a panic or stick close behind their adventurer. There are recent signs of destruction. Pillars have been damaged and piles of rocks have created indentations on the ground. Scattered across the floor are the bodies of a dozen people. There are pickaxes, shovels, and other mining equipment lying on the ground. On the other side of the room a giant hole in the wall leads up and out of the mountain.

Circled around the room are several smooth dents in the floor. Heavily obscured by the rubble, but decipherable to anyone deliberately looking. The dents have the familiar images of the pilgrims and animals from the stone reliefs etched into the floor around them, whilst the dark mirror images stretch and fade into the middle of the

room. The original purpose of this room was to kneel in the dents and pray in a circle around the entrance to the other planes, divesting yourself of your negative energy.

DEVELOPMENT

There is one survivor of the destruction. He is gravely wounded and needs medical attention to survive. He explains that he was part of the mining crew from Vertlyn. They were waiting for General Gris to return with permission to mine the metals they found in the mountain. However, as time went on with no word from the general, the crew were desperate so mining continued.

They broke through the wall of this chamber where they encountered The Sleeping Giant, a large being that was chained down in this room. Their disturbance woke the giant and it escaped by smashing through their tunnel.

Any character praying in this room with a spirit may move their alignment one step towards good.

PART 3: THE SLEEPING GIANT AWOKEN

In this part the adventurers face the Sleeping Giant that is leaving destruction in its wake.

The adventurers may return the way they came, exploring other parts of the caves and shrine if they wish, or they can follow the tunnel carved by the mining crew. If the party decides to return the way they come from, add frequent earthquakes and rockfalls to provide a sense of urgency.

THE SLEEPING GIANT

Read aloud:

Returning to the surface, the destruction has already begun. A bald, genderless giant with light grey skin stomps through the fields. Pale blue lines glow over its entire body like veins. The fertile land turns grey under its feet. Guards rush to the giant, weapons drawn. Around the giant swirl corrupted spirits, striking at nearby terrified spirits and mortals alike.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Collapsed Buildings. There are collapsed buildings throughout the area. They act as half cover.

Upheaved Rocks. As the Sleeping Giant moves, it breaks the very ground it walks on and leaves disaster in its wake. The path it walks is considered difficult terrain

CREATURE

The Sleeping Giant (see appendix A) is rampaging through the valley.

TACTICS

The Sleeping Giant attacks anything it sees, destroying buildings and fields. It's only goal is to destroy life in the valley.

DEVELOPMENT

When defeated, the giant falls and dissipates into specks of white and grey light. Before it hits the ground, the giant is gone. While the destruction has ended, the damage remains.

PART 4. THE FATE OF JING SHIN JIA

In this part the party explains to the Council and Keiran what they found in the caves. They can then help mold the future of Jing Shen Jia by using what they've learnt to sway opinion on whether the city should be opened to the outside once more.

THE DUST SETTLES

Once the party has recovered from their battle with The Sleeping Giant, the Council, Kieran, and General Gris gather at the foot of the Tower of the Four Spirits. Kieran is furious at the Council, specifically Acteon, and interrogates him about the giant and the fate of the hunter. When they notice the party, Kieran asks the adventurers to confirm what they saw down in the caves and asks if they found Ky. The party can give the hunter's dagger to Kieran as proof if they collected it.

With the death of Ky and the destruction caused by the Sleeping Giant, the mistrust of the leadership by the younger generation has come to a tipping point. Kieran is appalled by the fact the giant would have destroyed their home if it wasn't for the adventurer's intervention. Acteon berates that Kieran is simply using this tragedy for their own gain.

Acteon eventually admits that the Sleeping Giant was a secret the Council kept hidden to keep the city and the rest of the world safe. They continue to argue about whether Jing Shen Jia should be opened up to the rest of the world. The adventurers can step in at any time, using what they've learnt during the adventure to sway either Keiran's

or Acteon's opinion. As the party slayed an age old evil, Acteon appears to be slightly more open to listening to the adventurers.

OPEN THE CITY

If the players vouch for reopening Jing Shin Jia, they need to convince the Council by passing a DC 32 Charisma (Persuasion) check. A failure results in the outcome of the "Doing Nothing" conclusion as the Council still believes that the city will be in danger if it opens.

If the party argues the points below, reduce the DC by 1 for each point made. Other points can be made that are not listed below that are in favor of opening the city. If the adventurers can figure out the meaning of the pilgrimage, then the city can be reopened safely, and the DC to convince the council drops by 5.

- The world has changed and the generation has changed. The young people of the town want to see the world.
- There are neighbors, such as Gris' home, that need help. The city is hiding its wealth from others who need it.

KEEP THE CITY HIDDEN.

If the players believe the city should stay hidden, they need to convince Kieran by passing a DC 32 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Failing results in the outcome of the "Doing Nothing" conclusion as Kieran still believes in having the city open to the world.

If the party argues the points below, reduce the DC by 1 for each point made. Other points can be made that are not listed below that are in favor of keeping the city hidden.

- The Sleeping Giant was created from the negative spirits and evil intentions of outsiders.
- People will try to exploit the city for its resources.

DOING NOTHING

The party can simply do nothing and leave the city to their own devices. Jing Shen Jia remains closed off from the rest of the world.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The fate of Jing Shen Jia has been resolved. While the city needs time to rebuild, their plans for the future depend on the actions and decisions the Council has made. General Gris offers to rebuild the city as repayment for what he and his people have done.

Regardless of the fate of the city, the Council thanks the adventurers for defending the town from the Sleeping Giant. They give each adventurer an *amulet of spirits* (see appendix B).

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Jing Shen Jia may be a place the party comes back to. Depending on how the adventure is resolved, people in the city have changed.

If the Council decided to open the city to the world, many citizens would come and go. Most people who stop by the city are travelers, but as word spreads more and more people come to visit this city. There is still an underlying fear of another Sleeping Giant forming. Keiran takes on the responsibility of watching out for signs of this. If the ritual is re-discovered, they become the head of the pilgrimage, and Jing Shen Jia becomes known as a place to seek spiritual harmony and peace from one's demons. While Keiran often goes out of the city, their home is still Jing Shen Jia. Vertlyn Hold and Jing Shen Jia form a partnership. Gris' mining operation continues at a sustainable pace. In return, he and his company also keep watch for signs of corrupted spirits.

If the Council decided to keep the city hidden from the world. General Gris finishes rebuilding Jing Shen Jia then he and his company return to their village. They have some wealth given to them by the city, but Gris is not sure how long it will last before he will need to find a way to further fund his city. Kieran becomes an apprentice in the Spirit Well, having given up on their desire to see the world. They have found peace with where they are.

If the party didn't weigh in on the Council's decision, General Gris finishes rebuilding Jing Shen Jia then he and his company return to their village. As with above, Gris is not sure how long it will last. Kieran continues to advocate for reopening the city. Eventually, they and others with the same mindset leave the city.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS

THE SLEEPING GIANT

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 281 (24d12 + 125)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 29 (+9) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 21 (+5) **INT** 20 (+5) **WIS** 23 (+6) **CHA** 19 (+4)

Saving Throws Strength +15, Constitution +11

Condition Immunities Restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Celestial, Giant, Sylvan

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the Sleeping Giant fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (6d6 + 9) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Call Spirits. The Sleeping Giant calls upon the spirits it has corrupted. It can choose one of the options below:

- **Malice.** The spirit takes the form of a black snake with piercing red eyes. The Sleeping Giant makes a melee spell attack (+10) against a creature within 10 feet. On a hit, the target takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage, and the Sleeping Giant regains hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt (rounded down).
- **Grief.** The spirit takes the form of a coyote. The Sleeping Giant summons two direwolves that attack the closest enemy to them. They go on the giant's initiative and last until destroyed
- **Spite.** The spirit takes the form of a mountain lion. The mountain lion runs outward from the Sleeping Giant in a direction of the giant's choice, creating a line of fire 15 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature

in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 18 (4d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

- **Betrayal.** The spirit takes the form of a vulture. The vulture creates a 15-foot cube of swirling wind centered on a point the giant can see within 60 feet of you. Each creature in that area must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a Large or smaller creature fails the save, that creature is also pushed up to 10 feet away from the center of the cube.

Spirit Fire. The Sleeping Giant exhales blue fire in a 30-foot cone that tears through the very soul of a person. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 56 (16d6) radiant damage and cannot use their spirit ability until the start of their next turn. On a successful save they take half damage and their spirit ability is unaffected.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Sleeping Giant can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only 1 legendary action can be used at any time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Sleeping Giant regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Rock. The Sleeping Giant makes a rock attack.

Stomp (2 actions). The Sleeping Giant stomps the ground. Creatures in a 15 ft. radius around the giant must succeed on a DC 17 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (their choice) or take 19 (3d12) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Call Spirits (2 actions). The Sleeping Giant uses the Call Spirits ability.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS

AMULET OF SPIRITS

Legendary item, rare (requires attunement)

This amulet swirls with energy from Jing Shen Jia, the city in the mountains. Inside the translucent stone at its center resides the adventurer's spirit. This amulet grants you the ability to take their spirit with them when they leave the Jing Shen Jia.

The amulet has 3 charges. You can expend 1 charge as an action to summon your spirit for 1 hour. When the amulet is used in this way, some abilities are altered:

- The avian's fly ability can be used to make a creature fly for the full hour whenever it is summoned, rather than three times per long rest.
- The canine's ability to give advantage to two creatures may be used five times per hour it is summoned, instead of five times per long rest.

The amulet regains 1 expended charge daily at dawn.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Collette is a writer and narrative designer, focusing on analog games and tabletop RPGs. She has a passion for creating fantasy worlds based on non-European cultures and using games as a way to tell stories from marginalized communities. Her work can be found in *Uncaged*, *Book of Seasons: Solstices*, and the *Unbreakable Anthology*. Follow her on twitter @collettequach.

Creator Profiles

ARTISTS

AURI CAVENDISH

Auri is a full time freelance artist, find her @the_lady_auri on Twitter and Instagram for commissions. She is currently a cast member for @goil5r legend of the five rings podcast and cast on soulbearrrpg.

As well as the Eyes Unclouded cover, Auri did original art for *Legacy of the Clouds*, food illustrations of *Eleutherian Jelly Tarts*, *Glitterfire Grilled Cheese* and *Syd's Stew Recipe*. As well as all cartography for the anthology.

CAMMIELLE GWISDALLA

Cammielle is an illustrator and story artist who recently worked on the Princess Project Anthology.

Cammielle completed all original art for *Delivery Witches Apply Within* and the cover art for *The Coral Princess* and the food illustration for *Cinderling Cake Pops*.

H. "INK" KUGLER

Ink is a non-binary and Korean artist and resident geek who has been rolling dice since 2014. Their work and play is mainly geared toward inclusivity and fantasy for all with a focus on queer and diverse content. They have contributed to the bestselling "Wisdom Under Fire" charity anthology for Australian wildlife relief, Threeflings actual play stream, Curse of Lords podcast, and other projects. You can find them on Twitter at @TheseDeadPens, Twitch at the same username, and anywhere there is bigotry to be destroyed.

Original art in *The Satyr's Dream* is by Ink.

XAN LARSON

Xan is an illustrator and cartoonist with a focus on mythological creatures. Known for the teacup wolpertinger. Art credits include *Uncaged*, *Unbridled*, *Book of Seasons*, and the *Big Book of Cats*.

Xan contributed original art for *An Unfamiliar Court*.

AMBER LITKE

See *In The Heart Of The Thicket* for Amber's full profile, which she wrote and completed original art for.

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MORGAN MADELINE

Morgan is mixed black and queer, and loves fantasy and world building that celebrates inclusion and diversity.

Morgan completed two pieces of original spot art for *The City Of Lost Time* and all original art for *A City In The Mountains*.

MEGAN MCCURDY

Megan McCurdy is lead artist at Multiverse, a tabletop RPG platform built to make creating, sharing, and playing RPGs as easy as possible. She has worked as a game artist doing freelance 3D and 2D art for multiple different games projects. She is from the US but relocated to Sweden and is staying at the Spelkollektivet, a Swedish game developer co-living space. When she isn't making games she is working on developing a D&D podcast and admiring hedgehogs.

Megan was the art director for *Eyes Unclouded* and completed the interior cover and sprite illustrations for the tier pages.

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Lessie is a Puerto Rican illustrator and Painter who works digitally and traditionally in fantasy world building concepts. Recent projects include *Into the Feywild Vol 1* and *Vol 2*, *Tartarus*, *Wisdom Under Fire*.

Lessie completed original art for *Cinderling Herding*, the cover and kodama illustrations for *The City Of Lost Time* and food illustrations of *Kirsa's Fish Chowder Pot Pie* and *Deer Child Sweets*.

MARS SKIFF

Mars is an artist based in Washington state, known for their work in Wisdom Under Fire on DMs Guild and other indie projects. They can be found on twitter @illumars.

Mars completed all original art for *The Only Decent Thing To Do* and interior art for *The Coral Princess*.

EDITORS

REMY CORTEZ

Remy Cortez solves computer problems by day and solves manuscript problems by night. He is currently completing the UC Berkeley Extension's Professional Sequence in Editing. Remy aims to help writers bring their best work to the table, reach their largest audiences, and ensure those audiences have the most immersive experience possible. Remy was the primary editor for *The Satyr's Dream* in Eyes Unclouded. This is Remy's first work to reach the publication stage, and he hopes for many more to follow.

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Echo (she/her) is a writer, editor, and tabletop game designer from Indiana. She is trans and proud to be so. Her editing talents are on display in Uncaged Anthology Vols. I-IV, Unbreakable, and numerous other works. You can find her on Twitter at @echoroanoke. <3

LAYOUT

LYDIA VAN HOY

Lydia Van Hoy is a full-time TTRPG creative, with a focus primarily on DM's Guild supplements. With several best-sellers under their belt, they hope to continue creating content that encourages meaningful roleplay and creative gameplay experiences.

Outside of their work as a creator, they are a stay-at-home parent who works to encourage a love of magic and adventure. You can find them on twitter

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