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VILLAGE BACKDROP: APIA



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VILLAGE BACKDROP: APIA

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GM's RESOURCE supplement by Ben Kent

Along the shores of the Illgen river hard against the ruins of a once-mighty castle lies the village of Apia. Apia marks a convenient spot to cross the river, but more than that offers a pleasant place to slake a thirst or enjoy a sumptuous meal. The canny know to order Sanna's golden mead during their stay at the Bee's Knees Inn while others might notice a certain sweetness to the local food, or a strange hum in the air, but only a few note the higher than average number of bees buzzing about the village. Few bother to investigate the old and dilapidated castle anymore, after being cautioned by the locals that the structure is both already well-explored and dangerously unsafe – which is true, but avoids mentioning that the old ruins are not entirely abandoned...

Village Backdrops are short, richly detailed supplements that each present a single village ready to insert into almost any home campaign. Perfect for use as a waystop on the road to adventure, as an adventure site themselves or as PC's home, Village Backdrops present the details so the busy GM can focus on crafting exciting, compelling adventures.



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Thank you for purchasing *Village Backdrops: Apia*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products.

CONTACT US

Email us at gatekeeper@ragingswan.com.

ERRATA

We like to think *Village Backdrops: Apia* is completely error free, but we are realists. So in that spirit, we shall post errata three months after release on ragingswan.com. We aren't going to be correcting typos and spelling errors, but we will correct any game mechanic or balance issues that come to light.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Ben has memories of seeing "bigger kids" playing RPGs in the hallways of his Elementary school. After overhearing the destruction of skeletons beyond number at the hands of a skilled cleric, he immediately settled upon such games as the sort of thing he'd enjoy.

Living with his wondrous and encouraging life-partner Tiffinie and their two beautiful young daughters in Ontario, Canada, Ben continues to find role-playing games the sort of thing he enjoys. He is eagerly looking forward to the day his daughters are both grown up enough to roll the dice instead of eat them, so they can join their parents at the table (and thus ease the difficulty in finding babysitters on gaming days).

Ben's eventual objective is complete dominion over the earth, but there's a lot of competition in that field. He's presently working as a customer service agent by day and superhero/game designer/bug squasher/father figure by night. Now that he's been published, he's honestly not sure his life could get much cooler.

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Published by Raging Swan Press
1st printing, November 2012

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FOREWORD

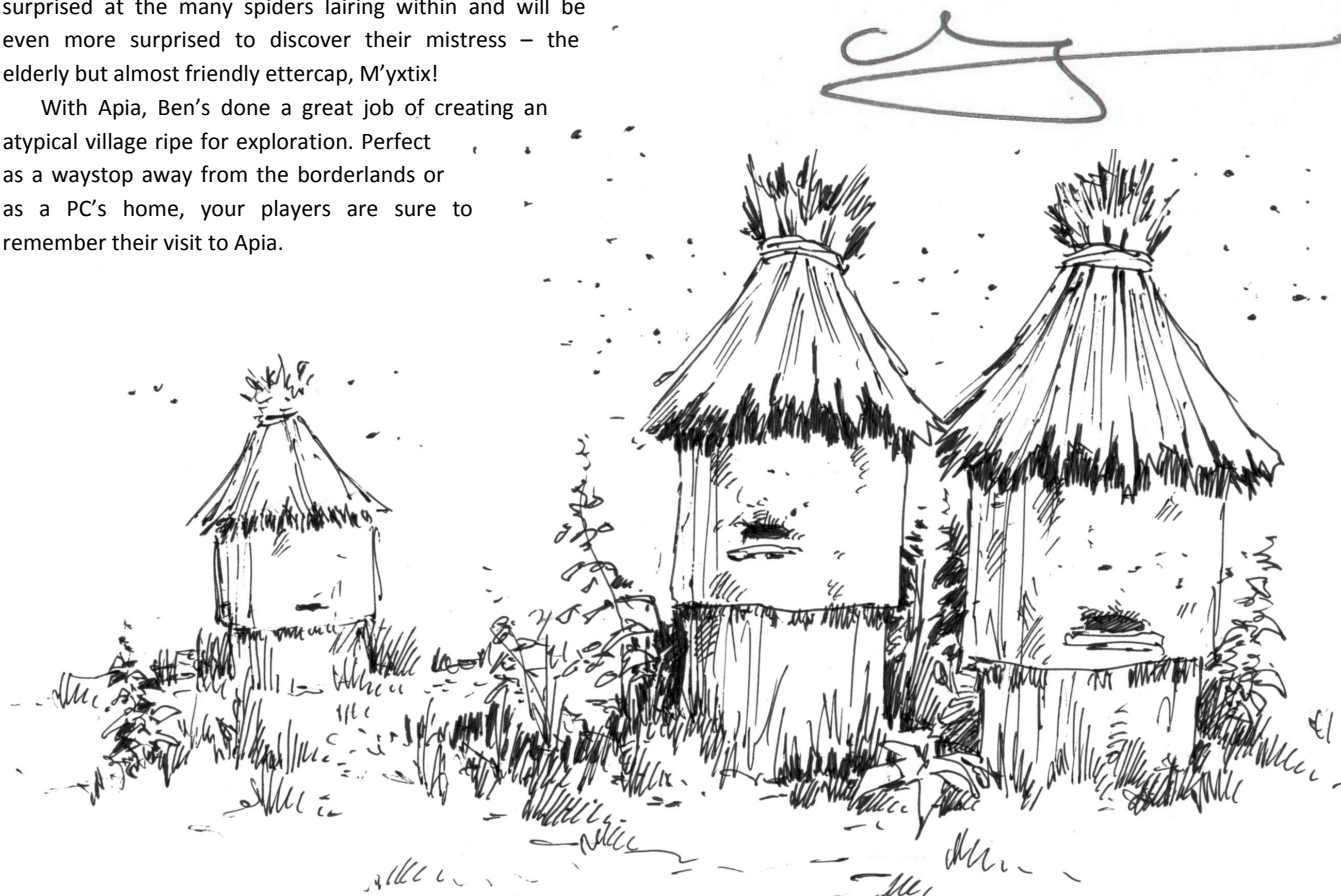
Ben's second Village Backdrop is the rather sedate and almost tranquil, Apia. The village is the kind of place exhausted adventurers could while away several days in between adventures. That's not to say Apia is boring, though! PCs exploring the ruined castle overlooking the village are sure to be surprised at the many spiders lairing within and will be even more surprised to discover their mistress – the elderly but almost friendly ettercap, M'yxtix!

With Apia, Ben's done a great job of creating an atypical village ripe for exploration. Perfect as a waystop away from the borderlands or as a PC's home, your players are sure to remember their visit to Apia.

STAT BLOCKS BY CR

CR		PAGE
2	Honeybee Swarm N fine vermin (swarm)	8
5	M'yxtix N(E) female old advanced ettercap expert 2	9

I hope you find *Village Backdrop: Apia* useful and that your players enjoy visiting the village and tasting the local honey. It would be great to hear about how you used Apia in your game – drop me a line at creighton@ragingswan.com.



APIA AT A GLANCE

Apia is built on the ruins of a town from an earlier era; a town successful and important enough to have warranted the construction of both a stone castle and bridge.

The town of Actia lay along a major trade route, with shipments of lumber, ore and food traversing its length. Unfortunately, this also made the town valuable. As is often the case, battles were fought over which petty tyrant could rule the area; the town fell in the third such battle, when hill giants powerful enough to break through Castle Actia's walls and cripple the bridge, razed most of the town. Worse, the course of the war shifted the trade routes and, coupled with the loss of the bridge, Actia's position as a trading centre was gone forever.

Trade is one thing, but people are creatures of habit, and the ruins of Actia still lay on a convenient and well-travelled route, even if it was no longer as economically vital. Travellers still used Actia's ruins as a way station and adventurers often stayed a night or two in the rubble of the town while exploring the castle. Eventually, the makeshift camps became a semi-permanent settlement, which grew into an inn and a shop clustered around a small apple orchard that had escaped the devastation; from there, the small village of Arca grew from Actia's ashes.

Nearly three decades ago, Arca's fortunes changed again. One night, seven-year-old Marsa Daigle went missing from her family home. A search was organised and as the villagers hunted through the woods looking for the young girl, Marsa's father Loiker happened upon a bloated, violet humanoid clutching his child. Loiker prepared himself to face this terrible monster only to have the menacing creature set the child down and release her, hissing in guttural Common, "Needs honey."

The creature's strange response was enough to give Loiker a moment's pause; studying the creature, he slowly and carefully reached out and began examining his child, as the large purplish creature watched. A cursory examination revealed burn wounds, covering both of his daughter's lower arms. Looking at the creature for an explanation, it merely repeated, "Needs honey."

Over the next few weeks, the ettercap, M'yxtix, helped Loiker treat his daughter's burn wounds, and was a guest in the burgeoning community. The villagers quickly became used to their strange guest and she adapted rapidly to "village life." Loiker Daigle and other townspeople asked M'yxtix countless questions about insects, drawing on the forest-dweller's exceptional store of information about insects and arthropods. It was over repeated conversations that Loiker came to understand how exceptional honey is, and how easy it would be to gather with the ettercap's help.

Over the next few years, the village of Arca added an apiary and began raising bees and selling the honey, rapidly finding a wide untapped market for the sweet substance. Recognizing the economic momentum behind their beekeeping, and in

recognition of M'yxtix's assistance, Arca renamed itself Apia, after "apiary", the formal term for beekeeping.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Marsa Daigle (NG female human expert 3)

Government Autocracy

Population 177 (138 humans, 34 halflings, 3 elves, 2 half-elves)

Alignments NG

Languages Common, Halfling

Corruption 0; **Crime** -3; **Economy** +1; **Law** +0; **Lore** -1; **Society** +0

Qualities insular

Danger -15; **Disadvantages** none

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Casia Lornton (location 1; NG female human expert 2) Apia's lead beekeeper.

Marsa Daigle (location 2; NG female human expert 2) Tavern owner and informal mayor of Apia.

M'yxtix (location 4; NE female advanced old ettercap expert 2) A forest creature that dwells in Castle Actia and aids the village.

Toldreth Morl (location 5; NG male human expert [apothecary] 1/wizard [transmuter] 2) The owner of Apia's only shop.

Loiker Daigle (location 6; NG male human expert 3) Retired beekeeper and lifelong friend of M'yxtix

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. There are, however, a few locations of note:

1. **Beekeeper's Home & Studio:** Here, Casia tends Apia's bees, and harvests their honey.
2. **Bee's Knees Tavern:** The local inn and tavern.
3. **Bridge & Docks:** Here, children dive and swim in the river.
4. **Castle Actia:** An old ruined castle; M'yxtix's home.
5. **General Store:** The only shop in the village; here travellers can buy a wide range of honey-based products including Apia's famous alchemical honey.
6. **Loiker's House:** Home of the village's former beekeeper.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry light farming, light forestry

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

When the PCs arrive in Apia, the following items are for sale:

Potions & Oils *obscuring mist*, *neutralize poison*

Scrolls (Arcane) *fog cloud*

Scroll (Divine) *lesser restoration*

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about Apia. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Apia is moderately well known as a significant producer of honey.

DC 15: Apia was the site of an ancient battle that saw the ruination of the town of Actia, its castle and stone bridge.

DC 20: Apia was, until about 25 years ago, known as Arca.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: The people of Apia have, on the whole, notably smooth and clear skin and bright eyes, but are perhaps a few pounds heavier than in neighbouring villages.

Dress: Nearly everyone in Apia dresses in light colours; both men and women tend to wear long-sleeved shirts and pants made from light clothes, particularly in the late summer.

Nomenclature: *male:* Augar, Baldak, Emark, Halok, Neror, Rennar; *female:* Carrina, Dandria, Gallae, Isila, Rennae; *family:* Amberale, Bottlecast, Gallinson, Multengrue, Portercast



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

1: BEEKEEPER'S HOME & STUDIO

These two buildings are painted a light blue, as if to match the sky. They have open windows and their doors stand ajar. The scent of the place is almost unpleasantly sweet.

The two buildings that sit alongside the beekeeping fields are kept by Casia Lornton (NG female human expert 2), the current beekeeper of Apia. Casia studied under Loiker Daigle (Area 6), before he retired, and M'yxtix the ettercap. She uses one of the buildings as her home, and the other for the processing of honey. In the early morning, Casia can always be found hard at work, gathering honeycomb, collecting and bottling honey and replacing any damaged panels or portions of the apiaries.

Characters with questions about beekeeping are directed to Casia, who answers questions patiently and pleasantly. She is also happy to show interested parties the apiaries (provided they don't seem untrustworthy and are genuinely interested).

Casia is a dark-haired, bright-eyed woman who looks to be in her early 30s. She always wears light-coloured, long, snug clothing, and nearly always wears a beekeeper's hat and carries a smoker – a modified lantern that generates smoke to soothe bees. Casia moves and speaks slowly and with great deliberation, even when dealing with people. Occasionally, she talks to her bees as a parent talks to their children.

Loiker (Area 6) can still be found here, helping out a few times a week. While he's here, he often sneaks off a quantity of honey for himself to aid in perfecting the method of creating a Mellified Man (see "Mellified Man" for more information).

2: THE BEE'S KNEES

The sign above the door features a cartoonish bee with a bright red and swollen stinger, clutching a tankard and smiling widely. Within, you hear music and laughter and smell wonderful scents.

Marsa Daigle (NG female human expert 2), a plump and smiling woman, serves the drinks and food at the Bee's Knees with a laugh and wink. The large ground floor of the tavern is heated and lit by a large hearth and surrounded by cosy booths of dark wood and soft, red leather.

Much of the food and drink at The Bee's Knees includes honey, which also provides travellers with otherwise uncommon delicacies such as honey-glazed hams, honey-roasted peanuts, honey oat bread, and honey mead.

The Bee's Knees has a simple fireside stage, suitable for a bard or minstrel to perform. Most evenings some local volunteers do their best on a lute or harp, and at least a few nights a week Marsa gives an admirable performance with her singing (generally, the bawdiest tavern-song that comes to her mind at the time).

TARIFF

PRICE

Meal	5 sp
Wine, common (pitcher)	2 sp
Mead (pint)	5 cp
Stay (night)	5 sp

3: THE BRIDGE & DOCKS

The bridge that spanned the Illgen river fell long ago, broken to gain a temporary respite in an ancient battle. The children of Apia now use the broken bridge as a diving platform, and sunken stones from the bridge are visible in the river. Those sailing on the river stay to the deepest part of the channel when passing the bridge's ruin.

Curious characters looking into the construction of the bridge can make a DC 10 Craft (stonemason) check or a DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check to determine that what's left of the bridge (on either side) is stable and solidly constructed. Beating either DC by 5 or more reveals the bridge is almost 500 years old and that it was obviously collapsed deliberately.

Crossing the river now requires a boat (or DC 10 Swim checks, for characters who don't mind getting wet). The villagers own a half-dozen or so boats and will carry travellers across the river for a few coppers. Transporting animals or heavy goods is somewhat trickier and more time-consuming; the water is deep enough to make leading a horse across both difficult and dangerous. Marsa, at the Bee's Knees, owns a moderately large boat that can carry one horse or a small cart, although she'll expect some compensation in return.

ALCHEMICAL HONEY

Conventional bee honey has many noteworthy properties, in addition to making even bland meals more palatable. It can be used to treat gastric disturbances, ulcers, sore throats, coughs, wounds and burns, being both an antiseptic and antibiotic. Using honey in this way is part of a normal Heal check, although an ample supply of honey provides a +2 competence bonus on such checks. A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check or a DC 10 Heal check confirms these delightful properties, which are fairly common knowledge to woodsmen, herbalists and alchemists.

With alchemical treatment, though, honey can significantly magnify its healing properties. If this alchemical honey is ingested by a character afflicted by poison or disease, or spread on a poisoned wound or a diseased area, the alchemical honey bestows a +5 alchemical bonus to the next saving throw made within 1 hour to resist the poison's or disease's effects. A dose of alchemical honey costs 100 gp, and weighs half a pound.

4: CASTLE ACTIA

The outer walls of this sprawling ancient castle have half-collapsed. Lichens and mosses are well established on the ruins and a strange, foreboding silence hangs over the place.

The ruin of Castle Actia sits atop a small hill. There is a simple road up to the castle's (now fallen) gate, although it's become somewhat overgrown from disuse. A DC 20 Perception check, or a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check, notes a higher than typical number of spiders dwelling in the castle's immediate surrounds.

The history of Castle Actia is now largely unknown to Apia's inhabitants, although its fall is noted in histories of the area. Most villagers don't visit the castle anymore, which they describe to travellers as a dull, boring place that decades of looting have stripped of anything interesting or valuable. This is partly true although the ruins – with stones slick from moisture and heavy walls that eliminate outside noise but produce eerie echoes – are ominous. Although bereft of valuables, however, the castle is far from abandoned.

M'yxtix (N[E] female advanced old ettercap expert 2 [page 9]), a particularly strong, clever and resourceful ettercap, took up residence in the ruins some 23 years ago with the villagers' approval and blessing. M'yxtix helped the villagers learn how to keep bees and harvest the honey and is a valued, if reclusive, member of the community.

A few adults – often including Casia and Loiker – visit M'yxtix every week or so, to speak with her about bees and the surrounding woods. Outsiders are not welcome at these meetings, unless Casia or Loiker vouches for them.

MELLIFIED MAN

Stories tell that, a humanoid near the end of its life, can mummify itself with honey. Supposedly, the stories say, the subject must stop eating other food or drink, consuming only honey, even going so far as to bathe in the amber liquid. After a short while on this treatment, the subject's waste, tears and eventually even blood run golden and viscous. When this diet eventually proves fatal, if the body is sealed in a stone sarcophagus filled with honey, after ten years, the body's transformation into a mellified man is complete.

According to legend, a piece of a mellified man ingested by a character afflicted by poison or disease cures the ailment, as though from a successful *neutralize poison* or *remove disease* spell (as appropriate).

Creating a mellified man requires a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) checks, a total of 250 lbs (150 gp worth) of honey, and a stone sarcophagus worth 500 gp. A complete mellified man would contain enough material for 25 uses each worth 1,125 gp (or 28,125 gp for a whole body).

5: GENERAL STORE

A pleasant sweet and syrupy aroma wafts from this small shop.

Toldreth Morl (NG male human expert [apothecary] 1/wizard [transmuter] 2), the owner of Apia's only shop, runs an organized and well-stocked establishment. While there's only a limited selection of adventuring gear, there's everything anyone could need for village living.

The shop also has a selection of honeyed products available, including honey candies, honey on the comb and jars of honey. Toldreth is pleased by any opportunity to talk up the curative properties of the golden liquid, peddling it as something of a miracle cure for everything from minor skin irritations to life-threatening injury, as well as its amazing preservative properties.

Toldreth is also something of a retired wizard; he makes much more of his very brief adventuring career than it really deserves. He has parlayed his minor talent for spellcraft into the manufacture of some alchemical items for sale in his shop, including alchemical honey (see "Alchemical Honey").

ITEM	WEIGHT	PRICE
Alchemical honey	1/2 lb.	100 gp
Honey candy	—	1 cp
Honey (jar)	1/2 lb.	3 sp
Honey on the comb	—	2 cp

6: LOIKER'S HOUSE

This tiny house is little more than a cottage.

Loiker Daigle, father to Marsa and original beekeeper of Apia, lives in this simple cottage, close to his lifelong friend, M'yxtix. When his duties as beekeeper became too much for him, Loiker handed his duties over to Casia and steadied himself to face the long night of death. Long, late night conversations with M'yxtix have, however, recently given him pause to reconsider his options. In conversations with M'yxtix about death, the ettercap revealed that there is an alternative to passing uselessly into death, in which honey plays a vital role: she spoke of transformation into a mellified man. Loiker sees this as an opportunity to continue and extend his useful and productive "life" in the community. Knowing that many of his peers would be shocked at his plans, he has quietly begun working toward his goal and has begun stealing the requisite honey from Casia.

LIFE IN APIA

Life in Apia is much like life in any other small village, with the addition of several thousand honeybees.

The presence of the bees has a distinct effect on the residents' clothing; villagers dress in light clothing that covers much of body, leaving minimal exposed skin, and tend to move about slowly, giving the bees time to get used to their movements. Even young children are cautious about running or roughhousing around the fields of flowers and the apiaries.

Further, along with the bees has come an abundance of honey. Honey is an excellent source of a number of things people need, as well as providing a more readily available treatment for illness and some types of injury. People in Apia tend to have better complexions, less scarring and be healthier than those from other similarly sized communities, although they are perhaps somewhat rounder in the midsection.

While harming the bees of Apia isn't against any laws, it's certainly frowned upon; the bees are allowed to fly anywhere in the village. Visitors using spells or abilities likely to harm a large number of bees find the residents of Apia become more cautious, reserved and hesitant due to their concern for the bees' welfare.

Honeybee Swarm: Honeybees are essentially docile creatures; getting them to swarm is actually somewhat difficult; spraying the hives with water or grease, setting fire to several apiaries, kicking the apiaries over and so on creates a swarm.

EVENTS

While the PCs are in Apia, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D4	EVENT
1	Dance: For dances in Apia, the ladies invite the gentlemen. Characters are welcome to attend, even without escorts. Attractive male characters are likely to be invited, and it would be rude to decline!
2	Weddings: Weddings in Apia are nearly always held out of doors, often with clouds of smoked (and thus docile) bees around as a living decoration or accompaniment. It's considered exceptionally good fortune in the town if a bee should "feed" from the bridal bouquet.
3	Bee Cleaning: Every ten days or so, Casia pulls the apiaries apart for examination. Obviously, this irritates the bees to no end, so there's often a large amount of smoke rising from her fields, and most villagers avoid the fields and try to stay indoors as much as possible; they suggest as much to visitors, if asked.
4	Crabapple Harvest: The local crabapple trees are well tended by Apia's bees. Several times a year, the villagers head into the woods to gather crabapples. A weeks-long flurry of pie eating and apple-cider making follows.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 | Baking Contest: Baking contests are one of the highlights of life in Apia. Any outsiders are likely to be asked to serve as "neutral" judges, particularly those with an air of sophistication or fairness. The food is delicious, and virtually all includes honey in some capacity. |
| 6 | Wild Beasts: Every so often, an animal gets the scent of the apiaries and decide it's worth coming close enough to investigate. Depending on the size and strength of the animal, their escapades in Apia range from amusing to terrifying. The villagers band together to hunt such animals, and might offer some (small) bounty on their capture to tempt outsiders to help. |

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Apia and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D4 RUMOUR

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | "Casia has a real way with the bees! There are some folks that think she's able to talk to them. I dunno where they'd get that crazy idea." |
| 2 | "Did you know that there are only a few males in a bee colony? Females do all the work. I think there's a lesson in that somewhere." |
| 3 | "Maybe it's just me, but I think there's less honey coming out of the bees these days. Not a lot less, sure, but less; ever since Casia took over." |
| 4* | "Castle Actia? Teenagers sneak off there, from time to time, for a little privacy. Nothing much else there, nowadays." |

*False rumour

HONEYBEE SWARM

CR 2 (XP 600)

A cloud of black-and-yellow fat, buzzing insects descends upon you.

N Fine vermin (swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); **ACP** 0; Fly +13

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; **CMD** —
(+3 Dex, +4 size)

Immune critical hits, flanking, mind-affecting effects, spells targeting a specific target, weapon damage; **Weakness** vulnerable to spells or effects with an area (+50% damage)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

hp 31 (7 HD); immune to weapon damage

Space 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** -

Melee swarm (2d4 plus distraction [nauseated 1 rd. {DC 11 Fort negates}]) and poison [DC 11 Fort {1 save}; *freq.* 1 rd./4 rd.; *effect* 1 Dex damage])

Abilities Str 1, Dex 17, Con 6, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 9

M'YXTIX

A remarkably social creature for one of her kind, albeit one with a monstrous mien. M'yxtix is well-loved in Apia.

M'yxtix has dwelled in Apia for over two decades, in the ruins of Castle Actia.

Background: M'yxtix is a gifted member of her species, having killed her fellow broodmates (and her mother who tried to chase her from the nest). M'yxtix dwelled in the woods in comparative peace for years, before the fateful night when young Marsia Daigle ran into the night to play with fire. When M'yxtix came upon the injured child, she recognized that Marsia was immature, and that, if she were harmed, the other humans would hunt down her killer. Instead, M'yxtix made what seemed the obvious decision; to save the child. The decision that Loiker and the townspeople came to see as an inspired act of a kind soul was, in actuality, an act of self-interest. Since then, M'yxtix has learned much about humans and has come to value her friendships with the villagers.

Personality: M'yxtix is similar to most ettercaps; an introvert, generally preferring solitude to the company of others. However, for an ettercap, M'yxtix is positively gregarious; other ettercaps would find her almost obnoxiously extroverted in tolerating interaction and conversation with others as often as every week.

M'yxtix may be a social creature, but she's still savage and nearly as instinctual as she is intelligent. When frustrated or upset, M'yxtix struggles to control her primal, feral nature. Politeness and civility are crucial to M'yxtix; she requires a certain amount of routine when guests visit; first tea, small talk, whatever business there is to be done (over food), and then some brief parting pleasantries. She enjoys learning about human culture and habits, often asking highly specific and detailed questions about seemingly mundane details.

Mannerisms: M'yxtix is reaching the end of her life. Like an elderly human, she often moves slowly and reacts to things with caution instead of spontaneity. While talking, she makes quiet, clicking noises that sound not unlike a pair of knitting needles.

M'yxtix is constantly attended by several pet spiders the size of dinner plates. She speaks to her pets (in Common, in front of guests) and compliments them on their behaviour, tolerating and reprimanding their actions (including climbing on guests) just as though they were more "common" pets.

Distinguishing Features: M'yxtix's hue has dimmed considerably with age; her body is now lilac in colour. Her rounded, black eyes and mandibles effect a sinister appearance.

Hooks: Characters encountering M'yxtix might attack the strange creature. Such characters will no doubt be surprised to see villagers running to her aid!

M'YXTIX

CR 5 (XP 1,600)

This bloated, lilac-coloured creature has elongated limbs ending in wicked curved claws. It moves slowly and deliberately.

Female old advanced ettercap expert 2

N(E) Medium aberration

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12, Sense Motive +10

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Climb +10, Stealth +13

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; **CMD** 20
(+5 Dex, +2 natural)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

hp 53 (6 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6

Melee bite +6 (1d6+2 plus poison [DC 17 Fort {2 cures}; *freq.* 1 rd./10 rds.; *effect* 1d2 Dex]) and
2 claws +6 (1d4+2)

Special Actions traps, web

Web (Ex [Standard, 8/day]) M'yxtix can use webs to support herself and up to one additional Medium creature. In addition, she can throw a webs at targets up to Large size up to 50 ft. (+8 ranged, range increment 10 ft.) in a similar fashion to a net. An entangled creature can escape with a DC 18 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a DC 18 Strength check. Attempts to burst a web by those caught in it take a –4 penalty. M'yxtix can create sheets of sticky webbing up to three times her size. She usually positions these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must make a DC 20 Perception check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot-square section of web has 4 hp and DR —/5. M'yxtix can easily move across her own web and can pinpoint any creature touching its web.

Abilities Str 15, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 21, Cha 14

SQ spider empathy (+9), traps

Spider Empathy (Ex) This ability functions as the druid's wild empathy, but only works on spiders. M'yxtix gains a +4 racial bonus on this check. Spiders are mindless, but this empathic communication imparts on them a modicum of implanted intelligence, allowing M'yxtix to train giant spiders and use them as guardians.

Traps (Ex) M'yxtix is skilled at crafting cunning traps with her webs, and doesn't require gold to build the traps, merely time. She does not use lethal traps, in her lair.

- **Ettercap Noose:** CR 1; *Type* mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20; *Trigger* location; *Reset* repair; *Effect* +15 CMB check (grapple).

Feats Ability Focus (web), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative

Skills as above plus Craft (traps) +9, Knowledge (nature) +7, Profession (beekeeper) +14, Survival +11

Languages Common, Halfling, Sylvan

READING STAT BLOCKS

Village Backdrop: *Apia* includes all necessary stat blocks; these notes explain how to read them. Unless otherwise noted, all listed scores include all the creature's normal modifiers. Stat block appear in four sections: basic, defensive, offensive and supplemental.

BASIC

Name, CR and XP: The monster's name appears first followed by its CR and how many experience points it is worth. If more than one creature is encountered, a bracketed number lists how many appear.

Appearance: The GM can read aloud or paraphrase this section. If a picture depicts the creature, this section may be omitted.

Sex, Race, Class and Level: If the monster has class levels these appear here along with its race and sex. The first noted class is the creature's favoured class.

Alignment and Type: The creature's abbreviated alignment and its type (including applicable subtypes).

Init and Senses: This creature's initiative modifier appears before any special senses (such as scent or darkvision) and the creature's Perception and Sense Motive scores. If the creature has special Perception-based abilities, such as trapfinding or stonecunning, these appear here.

Speed: The creature's modified land speed appears first along with any other relevant speeds (such as climb or fly). If the creature's base land speed is different to its modified speed this is also listed.

ACP and Movement Skills: ACP presents the creature's normal armour check penalty modifier. If the creature's Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Stealth or Swim modifier differs from the relevant ability modifier minus its armour check penalty, these skills appear here.

DEFENSIVE

AC: The creature's normal, touch and flat-footed AC along with its CMD; additionally this section lists any defensive powers or abilities that affects the creature's AC.

Immune, Resist and Weaknesses: If the creature has immunity, resistance or a vulnerability to an effect or condition it appears here.

Fort, Ref and Will: The creature's saving throw modifiers along with any conditional modifiers and defensive powers (such as evasion) and spell resistance appear here.

HP: The creature's full, normal hit points along with the number

of hit dice it possesses. A bracketed hit point total indicates that the creature is injured. If the creature has damage reduction or hardness it appears here.

OFFENSIVE

Space, Base Atk and CMB: The creature's space, base attack bonus and CMB.

Melee: This section lists a creature's melee attacks. If the attack has a reach that is not 5 ft. it is listed here. This line also lists any specific feats a creature can use with the attack (for example Power Attack), but the effects of these feats are not included in the attack's statistics. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.

Ranged: This section lists the creature's ranged attacks. It always includes the attack's range. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. This line also lists any specific feats a creature can use with the attack (for example Point Blank Shot), but the effects of these feats are not included in the attack's statistics. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.

Atk Options: This section lists any abilities or feats that can affect more than one of the creature's attacks, unless it has already been presented with the creature's specific attacks. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in depth.

Special Actions: This section lists any useful abilities that a creature could use in battle. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in more depth.

Spells and Spell-Like Abilities: The creature's caster level, along with its concentration modifier and domains appears in brackets before the main spell listing. If one or more of the creature's spells require a touch attack, the relevant attack bonus is included. Spells available appear in reverse order from highest to lowest level. Spells denoted ^D are domain spells. If applicable, a spell's DC is also provided.

Combat Gear: This section lists any combat-related equipment the creature possesses.

SUPPLEMENTAL

Abilities and Special Qualities: These sections list the creature's ability scores and any special qualities that do not appear anywhere else in its stat block.

Feats: An alphabetical listing of all the creature's feats.

Skills and Languages: These sections list any skills the creature possesses that have not already appeared in the stat block and all languages spoken or understood. Any language-based special abilities also appear here.

Gear: This section lists any gear not already listed in the creature's stat block. This section hardly ever contains weapons or armour as they usually appear in the relevant sections above.

Spellbook: The contents of the creature's spellbook and its opposition schools.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities appear in the section to which they are best suited. Thus, offensive abilities appear with a creature's attacks while defensive ones appear with its other defences. Full write-ups of irrelevant powers (such as those that could not affect combat) are omitted. The effects of abilities that factor into a creature's normal attacks or defences have already been included in the relevant calculations.

DENTON'S END

As twilight bleeds red in the sky, gaily dressed villagers lay out the yellowed bones of their departed loved ones. Teeth clacking, mouldering skulls crowned in garlands of fresh flowers greet the rising moon with cold, hollow voices. Creaking skeletons lurch forward with shuffling steps, arms reaching out eagerly towards the awaiting villagers. With warm smiles, the villagers fall into their embrace, holding them close as the creatures caress them with bony fingers. Then, the dancing begins. Welcome to Denton's End, a village where the dead never truly die.

Village Backdrops are short, richly detailed supplements that each present a single village ready to insert into almost any home campaign. Perfect for use as a waystop on the road to adventure, as an adventure site themselves or as PC's home, Village Backdrop present the details so the busy GM can focus on crafting exciting, compelling adventures.

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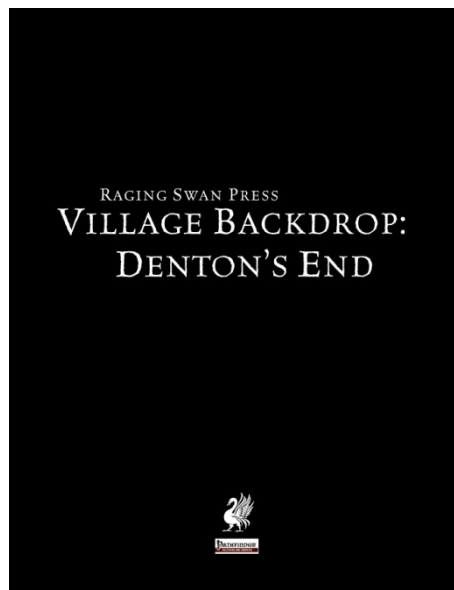
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Along the shores of the Illgen river hard against the ruins of a once-mighty castle lies the village of Apia. Apia marks a convenient spot to cross the river, but more than that offers a pleasant place to slake a thirst or enjoy a sumptuous meal. The canny know to order Sanna's golden mead during their stay at the Bee's Knees Inn while others might notice a certain sweetness to the local food, or a strange hum in the air, but only a few note the higher than average number of bees buzzing about the village. Few bother to investigate the old and dilapidated castle anymore, after being cautioned by the locals that the structure is both already well-explored and dangerously unsafe – which is true, but avoids mentioning that the old ruins are not entirely abandoned...

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