

PATHFINDER SOCIETY®

SEASON OF THE TEN



BONES OF BITING ANTS

By Sean McGowan



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GM RESOURCES

Bones of Biting Ants makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* (ACG), *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* (APG), *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6*, and *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*, *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* (OA), and *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue*. This scenario assumes the GM has access to these sourcebooks. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Reference Document at pfrd.info, and the relevant rules from the Bestiary volumes, *GameMastery Guide*, and *Ultimate Intrigue* are reprinted at the back of the adventure for the GM's convenience.

HOW TO PLAY

Pathfinder Society Scenario #10-02: Bones of Biting Ants is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 3rd- through 7th-level characters (Tier 3-7; Subtiers 3-4 and 6-7). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Roleplaying Guild campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Roleplaying Guild, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at PathfindersSociety.club.



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BONES OF BITING ANTS

By Sean McGowan



A decade ago in the Mwangi Expanse, a Pathfinder expedition went horribly wrong. Initially things proceeded well as the team travelled deep into the jungle to explore the Doorway to the Red Star. This odd locale was once the stronghold of the King of Biting Ants, a legendary scourge of the Mwangi people in the Age of Anguish who was ultimately defeated by the even more legendary hero Old-Mage Jatembe. In spite of the passage of thousands of years, the Doorway's ruins remain largely unexplored, due to both its remote location and its somewhat taboo reputation among locals. The Pathfinder expedition was among the first serious surveys of the site undertaken in recent history, having successfully documented the more easily accessible ruins and found significant artifacts of the past. As they progressed, they began to encounter otherworldly creatures and hazards that exceeded their abilities, and they wisely cut the mission short to return home with their findings and treasures. A secondary goal of the expedition was to map the nearby region and update the Society's knowledge of the Expanse. In doing so, the team unwittingly crossed into Mzali territory. Unfortunately, they never made it back.

The Mzali are an isolated nation of humans living in an eponymous temple-city ruled by the mummified child-god, Walkena. The xenophobic stance taken by the Mzali is fearsome indeed. A particularly vicious patrol found the weary Pathfinders and proceeded to hunt them across the savanna. As the terrified explorers fled, they were abducted, tortured, and killed, one by one. The screams of those taken echoed across the wilderness as their surviving comrades huddled in camp at night. In the end, the last survivor was the Ulfen frontiersman Stuinvolk Hundrakson. He kept his wits about him and hid the treasures his friends had died to acquire from the Doorway, hoping he might be able to travel faster unburdened and return for them at a later time. The Mzali patrol barely caught him and staked him out among a region of anthills, joking with each other about whether the sun or hungry vermin would finish him first. Neither happened—after a day of suffering, he encountered another inhabitant of the anthill region, a nuno gremlin named Bujune. Stuinvolk's

Where on Golarion?

The adventure begins in Eleder, capital of Sargava, quickly moving inland to the savannas skirting the city-nation of Mzali. Though the adventure never approaches the city itself, more on Mzali, its inhabitants, and their undead god can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Heart of the Jungle*.



life was spared, but not with kindness—Bujune, aggrieved that Stuinvolk had “despoiled” some of his favorite anthills, released him, but also laid a disfiguring curse upon him. The gremlin then located Stuinvolk's treasure cache and claimed it as his own before chasing off the Ulfen man. Eventually, after a painful, arduous trek, Stuinvolk made it home to safety.

His survival was impressive, but it was also the last feat of daring adventuring Stuinvolk would attempt for years. Harmed by his experience in ways beyond mere physical wounds, he lost his taste for exploration and suffers survivor's guilt to this day. Instead, he retired from duty and eked out a living doing what local work he could. The Pathfinder Society increasingly looks after its own, however; while the nuno's curse is too strong to break, efforts to help Stuinvolk's trauma have been ongoing. In the past year, he has achieved breakthroughs in therapy with a specialized mesmerist, and daily life is becoming easier to handle—the sound of wind whistling through trees no longer causes him to imagine Mzali arrows and panic, for instance.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

Stuinvolk's therapy specialist feels that he is ready to seek some closure with his past, and that being an active part of recovering the lost artifacts would benefit him. Conveniently, one aspect of the nuno's curse is that Stuinvolk can act as a living, supernatural compass to lead them to the gremlin again, and incidentally the treasure cache. Stuinvolk has agreed to take part in a second expedition, though he is quietly concerned that in doing so he leads another group of Pathfinders to their deaths in the Mwangi Expanse.

SUMMARY

Upon meeting with Venture-Captain Finze Bellaugh in Eleder, the PCs are tasked with escorting Stuinvolk to the nuno, lifting the gremlin's curse, and recovering the lost treasures. They then meet with Stuinvolk and begin getting to know the complex Ulfen. They arrange passage upriver, and the adventure begins with them disembarking as close to Mzali territory as their riverboat captain is willing to go.

In spite of their precautions, the PCs attract the attention of a Mzali border patrol. Depending on the PCs' disposition, they might negotiate permission to cross the outskirts of Mzali territory, or they may be in for a fight. After this, the group travels across the savanna for days, a difficult journey complicated further by Stuinvolk's mood swings, occasional triggered flare-ups, and the party being hunted by a supernatural creature of the Mwangi Expanse (that is linked to Stuinvolk's trauma).

After dealing with their supernatural pursuer, and possibly fighting off a pack of mundane wildlife, the PCs find the gremlin Bujune's anthill domain. The PCs can either negotiate or fight their way to lifting Stuinvolk's curse—as it turns out, Bujune is having “buyer's remorse” about stealing the artifacts, as they have induced distinctly odd changes in his favorite ant colony. Once Bujune is dealt with, they enter the mound, battling an undead ant colony and its now-sentient queen, She-Who-Devours. In doing so, the PCs both recover the artifacts and stop some small aspect of the King of Biting Ants from potentially reentering the world.

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins in Sargava during its dry season, which brings a respite from humid rains, but the heat still hangs oppressively across the region. The Eleder Lodge is built for the environment, with wide windows funneling breezes through its halls, but even so, it's stuffy in this closed-door meeting with Finze Bellaugh, Venture-Captain of Sargava. He paces around his desk, filling glasses with cool iced tea before sitting down, filling his own glass, and pushing aside a velvet cloth filled with pieces of a *wayfinder* under construction. The sunlight slanting through blinds casts his features in shadow as he takes a swallow of tea.

Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure underway.

“Thank you. Those of you who are new to Eleder, I hope you are enjoying my city. Hopefully you'll enjoy it more upon your return, as your talents are needed inland.

“Ten years ago, an expedition into the Mwangi interior discovered some interesting items from the Age of Anguish: items believed to belong to the King of Biting Ants, abandoned in his defeat by Old-Mage Jatembe. Clearly, these are worthy of study—so much of that period is still half-myth! But we never had the chance. The expedition's return journey crossed through Mzali territory, and, as I am sure you know, the Mzali despise trespassers. Only one agent made it out alive, and he bears... many scars. Some of a nature it has been impossible to heal.”

“Stuinvolk was an excellent field agent before this. But the trauma of seeing his friends die, from being hunted, tortured, and then barely escaping... upon his return, we tried to find a place for him, but the limited fieldwork we provided showed he hadn't recovered enough for that type of stress. His moods changed without warning. Anger mingled with icy reserve, throwing himself into needless risk to protect others, or shutting down in a panic mid-fight. We tried to find him other work, but in all cases he had become unsuitable. Even when simply taking reports from other agents, he would break out in a sweat when hearing about experiences even slightly similar to his own.

“We have been trying to find ways to help those who suffer mental distress like this on the Society's behalf—Stuinvolk is not the first, of course. And, in the past year, he has made some success. He is working with a specialist who has soothed many of the rough patches in his mind. He now understands the deaths of his friends are not his fault. There is one element to his therapy that remains to be seen, though: revisiting what he feels is his greatest failure. At the end of the Mzali hunt, Stuinvolk was alone and unsure if he would survive. He hid the artifacts where the Mzali wouldn't find them. But they caught him, tortured him, and left him for dead.

He would have died if not for a twist of fate. Have any of you heard of a creature called a nuno? Odd, solitary gremlins, mushroom-headed and possessed of an affinity for ants. Stuinvolk was left staked out among this particular nuno's anthills. While it eventually set him free, it was so outraged by the intrusion that it laid a curse upon Stuinvolk—a curse we have not been able to remove. Stuinvolk managed to return to civilization, but he has lived with the nuno's mark upon him all this time. And that is how he can undo his greatest regret—those who are cursed by a nuno also have the ability to unerringly locate that nuno again.”

Bellaugh leans forward on the desk, and his voice lowers to a whisper. “To be clear, this is no mere treasure hunt. As important as the artifacts are, they are trinkets. You are escorting and protecting Stuinvolk because his counselor believes he needs to reach some kind of closure. He is willing to revisit the place of his greatest nightmares and retrieve that which he feels he lost. I would like those artifacts, yes, but my main concern is helping my agent. I have seen too many lost to horror. I am sending you all along to bring him home again. Find the treasures, compel the nuno to lift its curse, but most of all, help Stuinvolk find peace.”

BONES OF BITING ANTS

The PCs likely have follow-up questions to ask Bellaugh. Following are some sample questions and Bellaugh's answers; feel free to extrapolate from these and the adventure background as needed.

Where are we headed? Bellaugh points a finger at map to a region a few hundred miles inland, south of the Screaming Jungle. "Here, roughly. It's a savanna, so don't worry about jungle travel. I've arranged for a riverboat to take you as far as the Lake of Vanished Armies; from there, you'll travel inland, guided by Stuinvolk."

How long a trip is this? "The river journey is a few days. It's a familiar route, so don't worry about that leg. Overland... Stuinvolk estimates it might be a week or so to travel to the nuno's territory. We'll arrange for the boat's return to retrieve you, a few weeks later."

Does Stuinvolk remember the way after 10 years? "The nuno's curse is double edged. The mark it leaves on Stuinvolk is... unpleasant—try not to stare when you meet him—but it also links him to the creature. He pours melted wax into water and it forms a compass, of sorts, always drifting in the nuno's direction. Use that to locate it."

Are you sure the nuno is still alive? "If it had died, the curse on Stuinvolk would have lifted. It's still there. Killing the nuno is another way you can lift the curse, by the way."

Isn't this close to Mzali territory? Isn't that how the first expedition failed? "Before, the team was doing some general surveying on their way back; crossing through Mzali territory was unexpected. Avoiding it entirely is difficult, but hopefully you can skirt the edges. Also, by the time they met the Mzali, the team's resources were depleted and they couldn't fight the patrol. If you encounter a patrol and they aren't willing to negotiate, I trust you have the skills and resources to ensure your—and Stuinvolk's—survival."

What can we expect from Stuinvolk? "You'll meet with him soon. He can be distant, often. His therapist theorizes he keeps himself apart from emotional connections so that he doesn't suffer if people die. He can help in a fight. He shouldn't involve himself in hand-to-hand combat, but he's a good archer; staying at a distance should keep him from overextending himself. He still has mood swings, though they're less extreme than before. Depending on the day, he might be enthusiastic, or he might be irritable and easily distracted. Please just be patient and remember what this man has given—and is still willing to give—for the Society."

I may be able to remove the curse, should I try? "Simply removing the nuno's curse—and it has proven no simple task so far—would have been helpful a decade ago, but now the curse is also a blessing in disguise. Successfully completing the expedition will do more for Stuinvolk than simply ending the curse could at this point, and ironically enough, removing the curse would also remove the only reliable method we have for locating the nuno and helping Stuinvolk achieve true closure."

After the PCs have finished the meeting, Finze dismisses them, setting up a meeting with Stuinvolk for the next afternoon (see The Cursed Ulfen sidebar) and a departure time for the morning after. PCs who need to purchase supplies can do so over the next day; Eleder is not the largest or wealthiest city in Sargava, but it can provide anything they should need.

KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY)

Based on the results of a Knowledge (history) check, PCs might know about the King of Biting Ants and Old-Mage Jatembe. They learn all of the information with a DC equal to or less than the result of their check.

10+: Old-Mage Jatembe is a near-mythic figure who is responsible for returning knowledge and control of magic to a devastated world a thousand years after Earthfall.

15+: The King of Biting Ants was a menacing sorcerer from the Age of Anguish, who was defeated by Jatembe and his band of Ten Magic Warriors.

20+: The King of Biting Ants is said to have had a body composed solely of venomous insects.

25+: The King of Biting Ants dwelt in the Doorway to the Red Star, deep in the Mwangi Expanse. It is unknown if he was truly killed, or if he was banished through the doorway by Jatembe and his allies.

KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)

Mzali has a fearsome reputation in Sargava. PCs may be familiar with the place based on the results of a Knowledge (local) check. They learn all of the information with a DC equal to or less than the result of their check.

10+: Mzali is a xenophobic city-state on the Pasuango River in the Mwangi Expanse. Its people hold a strong ethos of "Mwangi is for the Mwangi only," rejecting colonialism or trade with outsiders, especially Avistani. They are hostile toward Sargava, and have attacked the city of Kalabuto multiple times. Outsiders are generally not allowed within their borders.

15+: The Mzali people's distrust of outsiders stems from its ruler, the mummy-god Walkena. In distant generations, corrupt rulership led to a decline in the city's fortunes, but in the past century, Walkena's return has reversed that, making it one of the greatest strongholds of Mwangi culture on the continent, in spite of the child-god's isolationism.

THE CURSED ULFEN

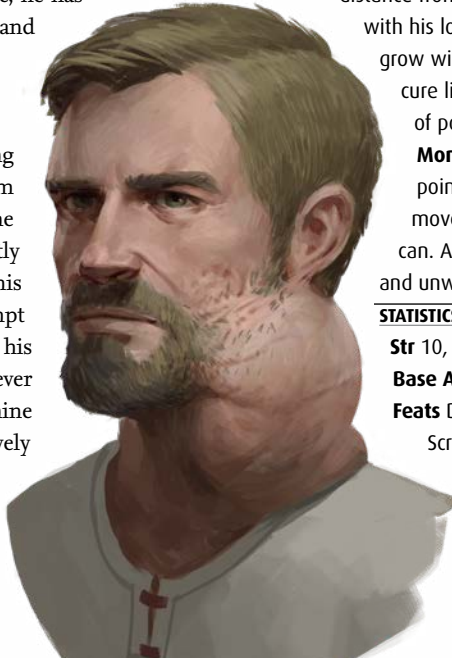
The next day, the PCs meet with Stuinvolk at a quiet tavern. He describes his plan of traveling around Mzali lands and into the savanna and passes along relevant information the PCs might request regarding his first expedition. He maintains some emotional distance from the PCs, becoming notably disinterested or uncomfortable if they share personal information or expect any from him.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

Over the course of the adventure, present Stuinvolk as wounded but not broken. He likely eventually warms to the PCs, but right now he is quietly dreading revisiting the Expanse, which, simultaneously, is something he actively wants to do to exorcise some of the phantoms of his past. A lot of his internal conflict follows similar paths; as a result, the overall impression the PCs might get is that he's gruff and distant. Try not to let that be his defining characteristic; he has worked hard in therapy over the past year, and while the PCs don't have the perspective to see it, he has come a long way.

Even at the best of times, Stuinvolk experiences regular mood swings, alternating between 'good' days where his old enthusiasm for exploration is dominant, to days when he seems embittered and withdrawn, silently staring off into the distance. In practice, this translates to the PCs needing to attempt a daily Diplomacy check to determine his attitude. While poor results on this check never result in him attacking PCs, these determine how communicative he is or how effectively he does something requested of him. (See The Moods of Stuinvolk sidebar for more information.)

In the event that combat breaks out, Stuinvolk assists, though (in consultation with the specialist treating him) he maintains his distance from the enemy. Generally, he either makes ranged attacks with his arrows or aids the PCs with his spells and raging song.



**Stuinvolk
Hundrakson**

STUINVOLK HUNDRAKSON

CR 4

Human ranger 2/skald 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 49)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 armor, +1 dodge)

hp 46 (5 HD; 3d8+2d10+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee cold iron mwk longsword +5 (1d8/19–20)

Ranged mwk longbow +7 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (fey +2), rage power (swift foot +5 ft.), raging song 3 rounds/day (inspired rage, song of marching)

Skald Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st (4/day)—*blurred movement*^{ACG}, *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *heightened awareness*^{ACG}

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *message*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Stuinvolk casts *expeditious retreat* and *blurred movement* on himself, if possible.

During Combat Stuinvolk uses raging song in the first round if any PCs can benefit from it. He stays mobile to keep his distance from enemies while making single shots with his longbow. If a PC is badly injured, his eyes grow wild and he maneuvers himself to cast cure light wounds on that person, regardless of possibly incurring attacks of opportunity. **Morale** When reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, Stuinvolk's nerve breaks and he moves away from combat as rapidly as he can. After the battle he returns, shamefaced and unwilling to speak of it.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Precise Shot, Recovered Rage^{ACG}, Scribe Scroll, Skald's Vigor^{ACG}, Toughness

Skills Heal +6, Intimidate +7, Perception +9, Perform (oratory) +10, Survival +9, Swim +5

Languages Common, Skald

SQ bardic knowledge +1, track +1, versatile performance (oratory), wild empathy +4

Gear +1 *hide armor*, cold iron mwk longsword, mwk longbow with 40 arrows, *torc of the primal song*^{ACG}, wax

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Nuno's Curse Stuinvolk suffers from the curse of a nuno gremlin, experiencing horrific swelling and hair growth on his chest and neck. Besides the cosmetic effects, the curse causes him to suffer a –2 penalty to his Dexterity (already factored into his statistics). The curse can be removed by the nuno Bujune, upon Bujune's death, or a *remove curse* check against a DC of 29 (31 in Subtier 6–7).

Rage Scarred Stuinvolk's trauma causes him to have difficulty reconciling his former joy in battle with the horrors he has experienced. Initially he can use Raging Song only 3 rounds per day. For each Empathy Point the PCs earn, Stuinvolk gains an additional 2 rounds per day of Raging Song, to his maximum of 9 rounds per day.

Wax Locator Stuinvolk can spend 1 minute pouring melted wax into a container of water, causing the wax to run in the direction of the nuno Bujune, no matter how distant the gremlin is. Stuinvolk loses this ability when the curse is lifted, including if the nuno is slain.

Additionally, most encounters in area **A** affect Stuinvolk's psyche—this is indicated in the individual encounter's Influence section. The PCs can mitigate this by talking to him and helping him find perspective. This is done via the influence rules from pages *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue*, modified here for use on Stuinvolk (see also the appendix on pages 30–31). Each encounter affecting Stuinvolk counts as a social encounter phase, during which PCs can take actions to influence him.

Rather than accumulating influence points, PCs instead acquire Empathy Points with successful influence checks, representing the understanding they are helping Stuinvolk to achieve. Keep track of these, as they affect the scenario's success conditions. During the adventure, each point earned grants a +1 bonus on Diplomacy checks made to establish Stuinvolk's attitude and increases his raging song by 2 rounds daily.

When a phase begins, all PCs can attempt either an influence or discovery check, as normal. Several phases take place during or immediately before combat; in this case, influence or discovery checks are free actions occurring before combat breaks out. Any number of PCs can attempt discovery checks, gleaning information to use later, but only one PC can attempt an influence check (with any number of PCs using Aid Another) per phase. Some encounters provide atypical means of influencing Stuinvolk that aren't presented in his social stat block; these are options for that phase only. Likewise, in some phases, occult skill unlocks from *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* provide advantages. PCs using appropriate divination magic (such as *detect thoughts*, and other non-invasive spells that access Stuinvolk's mind), gain a +4 bonus on discovery checks made in that phase. Enchantment magic is hazardous; due to the delicate progress Stuinvolk has made in therapy, subverting his free will sets him back. A PC who successfully casts a mind-affecting spell on Stuinvolk during a social phase automatically influences him but earns no Empathy Points. If Stuinvolk realizes he has been magically influenced, the PCs lose 1 Empathy Point. Illusion magic provides no real benefit.

Stuinvolk's social stat block appears below; all DCs listed are for Subtier 3–4. For Subtier 6–7, increase these DCs by 4.

STUINVOLK HUNDRAKSON

N male human skald 3/ranger 2

Background: The former Pathfinder isn't who he used to be, but sometimes he shows glimpses of the avid explorer he once was. In spite of his trauma, he hasn't completely lost his knowledge or skill, though these days his focus can wander.

DESCRIPTION

Appearance: Stuinvolk is tall, lean, and handsome. Unfortunately, the nuno's curse has burdened him with gruesome, hair-covered pustules on his neck and chest. He is resigned to his disfigurement, and in the heat of the Mwangi Expanse, rarely bothers buttoning his shirt to hide it.

The Moods of Stuinvolk

Each day that an encounter happens, or during which the PCs otherwise interact with Stuinvolk, the PCs attempt a Diplomacy check to influence Stuinvolk. He has a starting attitude of unfriendly. This doesn't really reflect his current feelings toward the PCs, but more toward himself. Some days, he's filled with survivor's guilt for outliving his expedition. Others, he's thrilled to have a chance to redeem himself, at least in his own eyes. As they get to know him further (by earning Empathy Points) the PCs can more easily coax him toward an optimistic mind-set. Certain results have certain effects that apply to Stuinvolk for the entire day, as detailed below.

Hostile: Stuinvolk is withdrawn, his haunted gaze often lingering on the horizon. Apply the Shaken condition to him. Additionally, he is unable to use his raging song ability, regardless of how many rounds he has regained; his voice breaks when he tries. The DCs for skill checks the PCs attempt to gain Empathy Points increase by 2.

Unfriendly: Stuinvolk is mostly quiet, clearly thinking things over but not unfocused from the world. Any Wisdom- or Knowledge-based checks he attempts take a –1 penalty. The DCs for skill checks the PCs attempt to gain Empathy Points increase by 1.

Indifferent: It's an average day for Stuinvolk. No unusual effects apply.

Friendly: In spite of some misgivings, Stuinvolk finds himself enjoying the expedition. PCs might notice him even occasionally humming to himself. He gains a +2 morale bonus that he can apply once during that day to any roll of his choice. The DCs for skill checks the PCs attempt to gain Empathy Points decrease by 1.

Helpful: His journey with the PCs is reminding Stuinvolk of all the best parts of his past, with the shadows at least temporarily banished. He gains a +2 morale bonus an additional two times that day, and the DCs for skill checks the PCs attempt to gain Empathy Points decrease by 2.

Personality: Stuinvolk is gruff and terse with the PCs at first. As he becomes more comfortable with them, he begins revealing a dry wit and darkly humorous side of his personality that has lain dormant for some time but that his therapy has begun to uncover. When his attitude is indifferent, he politely ignores any mistakes the PCs might make, but when he is outgoing, he makes occasional deadpan jokes at the PCs' mistakes. He doesn't spare himself from the dry commentary either; his own faults, including his disfigurement, are things worth joking over when he's in a good mood. He never jokes about the deaths of his friends.

Scaling Influence Checks against Stuinvolk

In groups with four players, in both subtiers reduce the DCs of any checks made to influence Stuinvolk by 2. (Including all encounter-specific checks listed in Influence sections.)

The Savanna and the Sun

The unforgiving sun makes traveling the savanna a hot, dusty experience. Unlike jungle travel, insects and disease are negligible issues during the dry season, but heat might negatively affect PCs. Rather than making use of typical heat rules that require hourly saving throws, use the following simplified rules.

Every day, each PC must attempt a single DC 15 Fortitude save. PCs wearing heavy clothing or armor of any kind take a –4 penalty on this save. Failing the save means that PC takes 2d4 points of nonlethal damage for the day. Suffering nonlethal damage from heat exposure also means that the PC is fatigued until the nonlethal damage heals. Any other effects that apply to typical heat-induced Fortitude saves (such as use of the Survival skill) apply here as well. A PC under the effects of *endure elements* or similar protective effects for at least six hours during the day is immune to these heat effects.

DISCOVERY

Analyze: (Sense Motive DC 16) Stuinvolk gains perspective on his trauma by reflecting on his travel experiences before the disaster in the Mwangi Expanse, and a conversation involving Knowledge (geography) helps. Lingering trauma is something that trained healers study, and a Heal check can influence him. He appreciates a good (albeit dry) joke, and as an Ulfen he respects epic poetry; Perform (comedy or oratory) checks help transform his experiences into dark humor or potential material for a saga. Simply talking him through his trigger events, whether sincerely (via Diplomacy) or pretending to care (via Bluff) can influence him.

Strengths: (Sense Motive DC 16) Stuinvolk learned early in therapy that his trauma doesn't make him weak, and that he shouldn't be ashamed when issues arise. PCs attempting to use guilt, shame, or similar tactics when influencing him incur a –4 penalty.

Weaknesses: (Linguistics DC 16; Profession [herbalist] DC 16) While Stuinvolk has mostly come to terms with his disfigurement, deep down it embarrasses him, and he hasn't visited his family or homeland in years. A conversation in Skald abates his homesickness a touch. The constant suppurating pus from his curse scar disgusts him, but the flow can be slowed

and dried with certain herbal poultices. Assisting him in finding these herbs earns his gratitude.

INFLUENCE

Influence Checks: Knowledge (geography) DC 15; Heal DC 16; Perform (comedy), Perform (oratory), or Survival DC 18; Bluff or Diplomacy DC 20

A. BORDERLANDS OF THE DEATHLESS CHILD

After a few days' travel upriver, the boat transporting the PCs arrives at a makeshift dock on the east bank of the Lake of Vanished Armies. The captain points out a route marker about half a mile in the distance—a post mounted with a beaten brass sun. “That marks the edge of Mzali territory,” she says, and states that this is as far as her boat goes. She (and Stuinvolk) say that the PCs should make their way north overland to skirt the Mzali borders as fast as possible. After the PCs finish unloading their gear and arrange a time to meet here for a return trip, the boat weighs anchor and departs.

Stuinvolk's suggested course of action is to follow the lake and river northeast for 50 miles or so, headed away from Mzali itself. He recalls a ford of the Upper Korir river that should move them further away from Mzali territory—possibly still within the Mzali's claimed territory, but he would feel more comfortable with another river between the party and Mzali. Once on the other side, they should be safe to start using his “curse compass” more regularly to locate the nuno's lands. Even still he recommends doing this in a meandering fashion, if necessary, to continue skirting Mzali lands.

A1. SCARS OF THE PAST

Soon after setting out, Stuinvolk grows more distant than normal (automatically treat his attitude as hostile for the day). While he steeled himself for painful memories surfacing from returning here, it is harder than he'd thought. As the sun sets and the party makes camp, he paces the camp's perimeter, glancing at the campfire with mixed emotions. This is the party's first opportunity to attempt influence and discovery checks. PCs with the Read Aura occult skill unlock can also attempt a DC 25 Perception check to sense his emotional state; succeeding counts as successfully making two discovery checks, in addition to the normal Read Aura benefits.

Influence: Stuinvolk is suppressing a lot of anxiety—not just for himself, but for the PCs whom he worries he's leading to their deaths, like his old party. The trigger for his mood is the campfire. While he knows it's a necessity, he worries that it makes them a target for the Mzali.

In addition to the normal influence checks available for this encounter, PCs can influence him by agreeing to travel across the savanna more stealthily. Crossing stealthily requires that a PC to succeed at a DC 15 Stealth check. If at least half of the PCs succeed, they not only influence Stuinvolk and gains an Empathy Point, but they also provide a chance to avoid being ambushed in area A3.

A2. A PREDATOR WAKES

Night on the Mwangi savanna is oddly peaceful. The temperature drops to more comfortable levels, and the night sky spreads out above like a rich tapestry of wonder. Even the humming sounds of insects are oddly comforting.

This event occurs the second night the PCs camp on the savanna. The false sense of comfort ends with a wild, ululating animal scream emanating from somewhere out in the darkness. The cry is repeated, now having moved a quarter way around the camp's perimeter faster than it seems possible—either there are numerous such creatures in the night, or one that is moving very quickly. The cry repeats a third time, now opposite where it was originally heard, and then a long, tense silence ensues. Against expectations, though, the creature does not circumnavigate the camp. After a few moments, the sound of insects resumes, though not anywhere near as comforting as before.

Compounding Stuinvolk's problems, the pain and guilt of returning here causes him to spawn a mngwa, a supernatural beast that resembles a black lion. Normally these magical beasts are a manifestation of the hatred from spirits offended by trespassers desecrating sacred sites, but Stuinvolk's anxieties have created one under idiosyncratic circumstances. The mngwa stalks the PCs nightly, looking to slowly instill dread, but it does not attack or approach the camp at this time.

If the PCs look for tracks, they find them easily, as the mngwa is toying with them and doesn't bother using *pass without trace*. It leaves tracks that are visible with a successful DC 15 Survival check. The tracks circle around camp before veering off and eventually vanishing into thin air (as the mngwa vanished once the sun rose). PCs can try using Knowledge (arcana) to identify this threat, but since they haven't laid eyes on the creature, the DCs of Knowledge checks are 10 higher than normal (DC 25 in Subtier 3–4, DC 28 in Subtier 6–7). Stuinvolk is unaware of his connection to the mngwa and isn't able to assist in identifying it. He does look particularly haunted after the creature passes. If his attitude is indifferent or higher, he gruffly mentions that the screams didn't sound like those of an animal; if anything, they sounded like the cries his friends as they were being tortured 10 years ago.

The mngwa returns nightly to torment the party in this way, until it finally confronts the PCs in area A5. This night's encounter merely foreshadows this confrontation, and players should be discouraged from spending too much time investigating, though if they want to alter their nightly plans for keeping watch, they can. Doing so allows them to attempt a DC 30 Perception check to catch a glimpse of a dark feline with green, gleaming eyes circling the camp at a distance of a few hundred feet. Succeeding at this check by 5 or more allows the observer to realize the creature's eyes are the same color as Stuinvolk's.

Scaling Encounter A3

To accommodate a group of four PCs, reduce the number of Mzali warriors by one and reduce the DC of all skill checks by to influence them by 2.

Influence: The PCs can influence Stuinvolk after this encounter, but it does not include any special skill checks for doing so.

A3. SERVANTS OF THE SUN (CR 6 OR CR 9)

After days of traveling the savanna, the miles of sere grassland seem to blend together. In the dry midday heat, the yellow and brown of the horizon form an interminable backdrop. Occasional patches of trees do little to break the monotony, their branches and sparse leaves barely moving in the still air. Even the nearby stretch of the Korir River melds into the dry, brown palette with its crumbling, muddy banks.

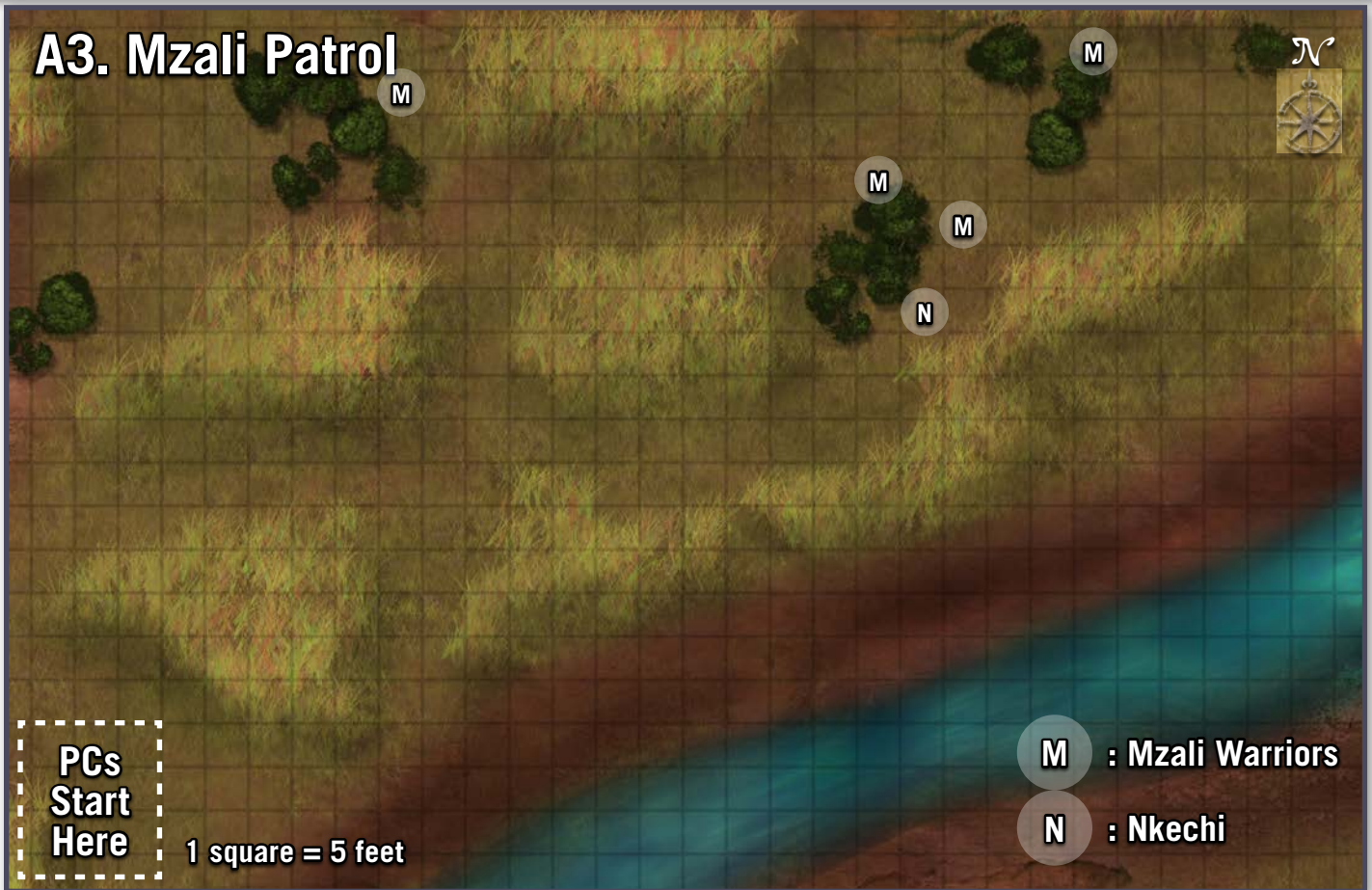
The lack of humidity at least reduces the number of stinging and biting insects encountered. In places, the noises of grassland life seem muted, with not even the chirp of a grasshopper to be heard, resulting in an eerie silence.

On their third day, the PCs' encounter a Mzali border patrol. Unless the PCs have made efforts to travel stealthily, the Mzali hide in the withered grass, in the positions marked on the map. If the party has been traveling quietly so far, Nkechi attempts an opposed Perception check (with a –5 penalty for distance, using her spyglass) against the PCs' Stealth check results from encounter A1. If she succeeds, the patrol waits as described above; if she fails, the patrol is unaware of the PCs until the two parties come into view of one another.

Creatures: The patrol consists of four warriors and their leader, Nkechi. Nkechi is a devout servant of Walkena and believes wholeheartedly in his goal of Mzali being a Mwangi homeland. But unlike the Mzali Stuinvolk encountered before, she doesn't believe all outsiders need to be killed, and is open to negotiation with outsiders who aren't trespassing with malice and can be frightened into leaving.

If the Mzali set an ambush, Nkechi reveals herself while the others hide, or else she steps forward to initiate dialogue. While she knows Common, she communicates in Polyglot—she believes travelers in the Expanse should speak the language out of respect, and seeks to trick potential opponents into thinking she can't understand them. If no PCs can speak Polyglot or communicate with magic, Nkechi is perfectly happy (amused even) to use pantomime and gestures. Understanding this improvised language requires the PCs to succeed at a DC 15 Sense Motive check, similar to intercepting a secret message. Alternatively, PCs may attempt a DC 16 (DC 20 in Subtier 6–7) Linguistics or Perform (acting) check to work out a simple kind of sign

A3. Mzali Patrol



language. If the PCs shift Nkechi's attitude to friendly, she drops all pretense and speaks to them in Common.

While the hiding patrol doesn't immediately attack, the PCs have an uphill battle to broker peace. Nkechi frames her dialogue jovially, interspersing innocent questions about their intent and destination with pleasant-toned comments about it being a beautiful day to be staked out and die under the sun. Nevertheless, she keeps an open mind. Getting past the patrol requires three separate Diplomacy checks, which may include modifiers based on the PCs' actions and appearances (see page 11).

The first check the PCs must attempt is to adjust Nkechi's starting attitude of hostile (DC 28 to make her unfriendly, DC 33 to make her indifferent). If she becomes indifferent, she is willing to forgo hostilities at this time. The PCs can also use Intimidate to adjust her attitude, as normal, but doing so has consequences on subsequent checks.

Once immediate battle is off the table, the PCs must negotiate the opportunity to continue their route. Since this is (quite literally) a borderline case for the Mzali, the patrol can be convinced to let the PCs continue with a successful DC 23 (27 in Subtier 6–7) Diplomacy check. Since the PCs can't be sure that Bujune's lair isn't technically part of Mzali territory, they also must attempt a DC 12 (14 in Subtier 6–7) Bluff check to convince Nkechi that their goal is outside

her jurisdiction. Failing this check makes her suspect they have other goals in mind and imposes a penalty on this and subsequent Diplomacy checks. Failing this Diplomacy check means Nkechi expects the PCs to turn around and head back, with combat breaking out if they fail to do so.

Finally, Nkechi proposes that her patrol follow the PCs route while they remain in Mzali territory, with the promise of death if they are found drifting back into the wrong side of the border. The PCs can convince her not to do so with a DC 25 Diplomacy check (29 in Subtier 6–7). Failure (or not attempting the check at all) means the PCs might encounter the patrol again (see Development on page 13).

If the PCs try to bribe Nkechi, they automatically fail. Nkechi responds with her trademark sarcasm: "Oh, You would offer us valuables? Perhaps you have some glass beads to buy our goodwill? Or colorful cloth and blankets?" Nkechi, while more open-minded than many Mzali, is wary of anything that smacks of colonialist tactics. Regardless of what the PCs offer, she is beholden to the sacred duty of her god, and she isn't swayed by anything as crass as material greed. She noticeably thinks less of the party for even making the attempt.

As the PCs work their way through these negotiations, they can acquire several bonuses and penalties on their Diplomacy checks. Any modifiers acquired during one round of negotiations carry over to subsequent rounds as well.

BONES OF BITING ANTS

- If the PCs can't calm Stuinvolk (see Influence on page 7), all Diplomacy checks incur a –4 penalty. This exchange is also further detailed on page 12.
- Not speaking Polyglot at all (and thus, communicating via gestures) imposes a –2 penalty.
- Using Intimidate to adjust the Mzali's attitudes imparts a –4 penalty to all Diplomacy checks.
- Offering a bribe at any point imposes a –5 penalty on subsequent Diplomacy checks.
- Speaking Polyglot naturally (not just via magic) impresses Nkechi and grants a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.
- If any PC is of Mwangi ethnicity, Nkechi is slightly less mocking, giving the PCs a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.
- Displaying some knowledge of the Mwangi Expanse (through a DC 20 Knowledge [local], Knowledge [nature], or DC 15 Knowledge [geography] check) earns the party a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks per successful check.
- Likewise, PCs who show deference to Walkena (through a DC 20 Knowledge [religion], Knowledge [history] or DC 15 Knowledge [nobility] check) impress Nkechi and earn a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks per successful check.
- Succeeding at the Bluff check to convince Nkechi that their destination lies outside Mzali lands by 5 or more earns the PCs a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks. Failing imposes a –2 penalty on subsequent Diplomacy checks.

SUBTIER 3–4 (CR 6)

MZALI WARRIORS (4)

CR 1

Caravan guards (*GameMastery Guide* 282; see page 28)

hp 16 each

TACTICS

Before Combat Nkechi casts *endure elements* on her patrol regularly, allowing them to wear armor in the hot weather.

During Combat The warriors try and prevent the PCs from engaging Nkechi in melee, favoring flanking tactics.

Morale The warriors follow Nkechi's lead and fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Gear banded mail, buckler, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, kukri, longsword, 3 gp

NKECHI

CR 3

Female human bard 4

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 29 (4d8+8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sickle +6 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks bardic performance 13 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 15], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +1)

Bard Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd (2/day)—*rage*, *sonic scream*^{ACG} (DC 15)

1st (4/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *sleep* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *know direction*, *lullaby* (DC 13), *read magic*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nkechi casts *endure elements* from her wand on her patrol regularly, allowing them to wear armor without heat and fatigue issues.

During Combat Nkechi uses inspire courage as soon as combat begins. She hangs back from melee, using her offensive spells to assist the warriors, possibly using *rage* on one as well. If accosted in melee, she draws her sickle and fights.

Morale As a devotee of Walkena, Nkechi sees her defensive duties as sacred and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Slashing Grace^{ACG}, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (sickle)

Skills Acrobatics +6 (+2 to jump), Intimidate +10, Linguistics +9, Perception +7, Perform (oratory) +10, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +6, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Common, Elven, Kelish, , Osiriani, Polyglot, Sylvan, Tien, Vudrani

SQ bardic knowledge +2, versatile performance (oratory)

Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*, *wand of endure elements* (20 charges); **Other Gear** studded leather, darkwood shield, sickle, spell component pouch, spyglass

SUBTIER 6–7 (CR 9)

MZALI WARRIORS (4)

CR 3

Slavers (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 266; see page 29)

hp 30 each

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 3–4.

NKECHI

CR 6

Female human bard 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 56 (7d8+21)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 sickle +9 (1d6+3)

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

Special Attacks bardic performance 19 rounds/day (move action; countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 16], inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion [DC 16])

Bard Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (2/day)—*good hope*, *slow* (DC 16)

2nd (4/day)—*babble*^{OA} (DC 15), *mirror image*, *rage*, *sonic scream*^{ACG} (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *know direction*, *lullaby* (DC 13), *read magic*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nkechi casts *endure elements* from her wand on her patrol.

During Combat Nkechi uses inspire courage and casts *good hope* as soon as combat begins. She hangs back from melee, using her offensive spells to assist the warriors, possibly using *rage* on one as well. If accosted in melee, she casts *mirror image*, draws her sickle, and fights.

Morale As a devotee of Walkena, Nkechi sees her duties as sacred and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Intimidating Performance^{ACG}, Slashing Grace^{ACG}, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (sickle)

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+9 to jump), Intimidate +13, Linguistics +12, Perception +10, Perform (dance) +13, Perform (oratory) +13, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +9, Survival +7, Use Magic Device +13

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnoll, Hallit, Kelish, Osiriani, Polyglot, Sylvan, Tien, Vudrani

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performances (dance, oratory)

Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*, *wand of endure elements* (20 charges); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 darkwood heavy wooden shield, +1 sickle, spell components pouch

Hazard: The taller grass patches indicated on the map count as difficult terrain and provide concealment to anyone in or attacking through their space.

Influence: This encounter counts as a social phase. Encountering the Mzali is Stuinvolk's worst nightmare. Regardless of the PCs reactions, he immediately advises killing these warriors, first quietly as an aside, but his volume and agitation quickly increase if the PCs parley with Nkechi, making negotiating difficult. PCs can quickly try and head off Stuinvolk's panic with a successful influence check. Success pacifies him, mostly, and allows the negotiations to continue without penalty.

Development: If Nkechi lets the PCs continue onward but follows them, they are expected to travel exclusively outside of Mzali territory. Nkechi draws them a general map, but it is still easy to wander off course. The PCs need to attempt a daily

DC 18 Survival check (DC 22 in Subtier 6–7) in order to avoid wandering back into forbidden territory. If they do trespass again, the Mzali attack at some point during the day. (Use the same map from this encounter.) In this case, negotiation is no longer possible.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to either negotiate passage with Nkechi or defeat her patrol, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 144 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 577 gp.

Subtier 6–7: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 1,011 gp.

A4. DILIGENCE TO THE DEAD

Swallowed by the tall grass is an old, weathered rock pile—a cairn somewhat taller and wider than a human adult. In spite of clearly having been here for years, it seems remarkably well built—no predators have broken through the rock cover, though a few stones have been pried loose.

This event takes place two days after meeting with the Mzali. Stuinvolk stops walking and stares intently at the cairn for a few minutes, lost in thought. If his mood is at least friendly, he is willing to tell the story: the cairn belongs to Jenisera, one of his old companions. She was the first to be abducted, and her body was left in their path after several days. The group decided to give her proper burial, though now he wonders if that was a mistake—if honoring a dead friend cost his group time they might have been able to use to escape.

Influence: PCs can likewise get this story from Stuinvolk with a successful discovery check, or characters with the psychometry occult skill unlock get a hazy knowledge of the cairn's history with a successful Appraise check (which also counts as a successful discovery check). In addition to the normal influence methods, the somber moment allows other influence options. Having a discussion with him about the importance of honoring the dead, even in times of crisis, allows PCs to attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check to influence him. Alternately, helping him repair the timeworn cairn gives him a sense of internal peace for a time, allowing PCs to attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check or relevant Craft or Profession check to influence him.

A5. TERROR IN THE NIGHT

On the sixth night, the mngwa decides it has spent enough time unnerving the party, and makes an opening sortie to test its prey. During the night, it makes its standard circling growls, but instead of screaming a third time and then leaving, it plunges into camp and attacks. The rocks here are difficult terrain.

Creature: For this encounter, Stuinvolk gains the cowering condition as long as the mngwa is within 60 feet. (*Remove fear* and similar effects alleviate this as normal.)

SUBTIER 3–4 (CR 5)

STUINVOLK'S MNGWA

CR 5

Unique mngwa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 173)

CE Large magical beast

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +5 natural, –1 size)

hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

DR 10/magic; **Immune** disease, poison

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness (affected by *daylight*)

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d10+6 plus grab), 2 claws +12 (1d6+6 plus 1d4 bleed and grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks bleed, murderous claws, pounce, rake (2 claws +12, 1d6+6 plus 1d4 bleed)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +7)

Constant—*feather step*^{APG}

At will—*chameleon stride*^{APG}, *pass without trace*

TACTICS

During Combat The mngwa focuses on Stuinvolk, if possible, but it fights PCs if they're in its way.

Morale The mngwa is testing the PCs capabilities and retreats after two rounds, or if it takes more than 40 points of damage. It's willing to take more damage if needed, since it benefits from *heal* nightly, but it prefers conceal its indestructible nature unless it's worth it—if it has a clear shot at killing Stuinvolk, for instance.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 3, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Acrobatics +12 (+16 to jump), Climb +10, Perception +9, Stealth +13 (+25 in forest terrain), Swim +10

Languages Aklo (can't speak)

SQ creature of the night, focus of hate, jungle stealth

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Creature of the Night (Su) A mngwa exists only at night, appearing at sunset and fading away at sunrise. It receives the benefit of a *heal* spell (CL 15th) each night when it reappears. A mngwa's connection to darkness is so strong that it has sunlight powerlessness even within the effects of a *daylight* spell. However, a *daylight* spell that affects a mngwa loses 10 minutes of duration for each round it affects a mngwa in this way.

Focus of Hate (Su) Stuinvolk's mngwa comes into being to punish him, and it survives only as long as Stuinvolk exists. The mngwa fades away permanently if Stuinvolk dies. The mngwa knows

Scaling Encounter A5

If you are playing with a group that only has four PCs, make the following adjustments to area **A5**.

Subtier 3–4: The mngwa retreats if reduced to 41 or fewer hit points.

Subtier 6–7: The mngwa retreats if reduced to 58 or fewer hit points.

the direction and general distance to Stuinvolk. This sense can be blocked by any effect that blocks scrying. While Stuinvolk exists, the mngwa fades away and reappears fully restored in 1d4+1 days if destroyed by violence. The only way to permanently destroy it is for Stuinvolk to die or overcome the fear and guilt the mngwa represents by killing it himself.

Jungle Stealth (Ex) A mngwa in forest terrain can move at full speed using the Stealth skill without penalty.

Murderous Claws (Ex) Stuinvolk's mngwa deals an additional 1d4 points of bleed damage with its claw and rake attacks, and each subsequent successful claw and rake attack increases the amount of bleed damage by 1 (up to a maximum of 1d4+7 points of bleed damage). A successful DC 20 Heal check or the application of any magical healing stops the bleeding.

SUBTIER 6–7 (CR 8)

ADVANCED STUINVOLK'S MNGWA

CR 8

Unique advanced mngwa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 288, 173)

CE Large magical beast

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

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +9 natural, –1 size)

hp 103 (9d10+54)

Fort +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

DR 10/magic; **Immune** disease, poison

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness (affected by *daylight*)

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d6+9 plus grab), 2 claws +18 (1d8+9 plus grab and bleed)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks murderous claws, pounce, rake (2 claws +18, 1d8+9 plus grab and bleed)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +11)

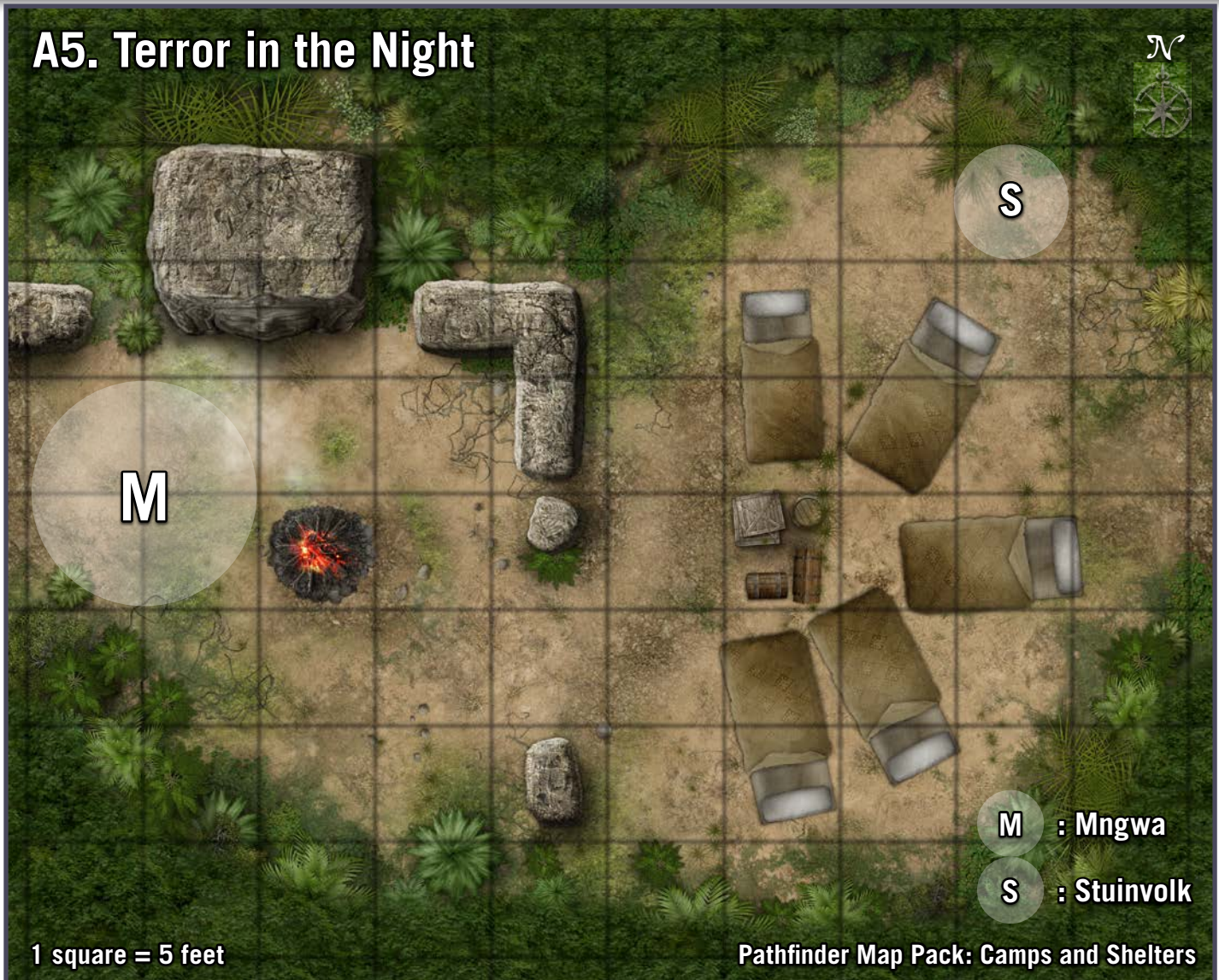
Constant—*feather step*^{APG} (DC 13)

At will—*chameleon stride*^{APG}, *pass without trace*

TACTICS

Before Combat The mngwa uses all its spell-like abilities before entering the camp, giving it *chameleon stride*^{APG}, *feather step*, and *pass without trace*. This raises its Stealth bonus by 5.

A5. Terror in the Night



During Combat The mngwa charges Stuinvolk. If the PCs have used some means to protect Stuinvolk (for instance, disguising one of themselves as him), the mngwa doesn't have an opportunity to discover this until after combat has begun.

Morale The mngwa is testing the PCs capabilities and retreats after two rounds, or if it takes more than 70 points of damage.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 22, **Con** 22, **Int** 7, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +19 (+23 grapple); **CMD** 35 (39 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+20 to jump), Climb +13, Perception +12, Stealth +17 (+25 in forest terrain), Swim +13; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Stealth, +8 Stealth in forest terrain

Languages Aklo (can't speak)

SQ creature of the night, focus of hate, jungle stealth

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Creature of the Night (Su) A mngwa exists only at night,

appearing at sunset and fading away at sunrise. It receives the benefit of a *heal* spell (CL 15th) each night when it reappears. A mngwa's connection to darkness is so strong that it has sunlight powerlessness even within the effects of a *daylight* spell. However, a *daylight* spell that affects a mngwa loses 10 minutes of duration for each round it affects a mngwa in this way.

Focus of Hate (Su) Stuinvolk's mngwa comes into being to punish him, and it lives only as long as Stuinvolk exists. The mngwa dies permanently if Stuinvolk dies. The mngwa knows the direction and distance to Stuinvolk. This sense can be blocked by any effect that blocks scrying. While Stuinvolk exists, the mngwa fades away and reappears fully restored in 1d4+1 days if destroyed. The only way to permanently destroy it is for Stuinvolk to die or overcome the fear and guilt the mngwa represents by killing it himself.

Jungle Stealth (Ex) A mngwa in forest terrain can move at full speed using the Stealth skill without penalty.

Murderous Claws (Ex) Stuinvolk's mngwa deals an additional 1d4 points of bleed damage with its claw and rake attacks, and each subsequent successful claw and rake attack increases the amount of bleed damage by 1 (up to a maximum of 1d4+7 points of bleed damage). A successful DC 20 Heal check or the application of any magical healing stops the bleeding.

Influence: This encounter does not provide a chance to influence Stuinvolk.

Development: After the mngwa retreats, Stuinvolk recovers and insists that every sound the creature made was identical to his friend's dying screams. PCs who failed to identify the mngwa before can now make another attempt, this time with a standard DC 13 Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 18 in Subtier 6–7). The PCs might have gleaned clues about this particular mngwa's unusual nature—PCs making Knowledge checks to identify it gain a +2 bonus for each of the following facts that anyone in the party mentions: Stuinvolk's hearing the screams of his friends, his fearful reaction to the monster, that it is focused on killing him, and the fact that they share the same eye color. Succeeding at the Knowledge (arcana) check by 5 or more imparts the insight that this mngwa is unique in that it's not just a curse from spirits of the Mwangi Expanse, but it is also an externalized projection of Stuinvolk's survivor's guilt.

A6. REVELATIONS AND PLANS

If the mngwa died during the fight, its body evaporates with the sunrise. But even if PCs don't know about its rejuvenation, Stuinvolk is instinctively convinced it isn't dead. The next day, whether or not the PCs have uncovered the mngwa's connection to Stuinvolk, they have the opportunity to work with him to find a means of permanently destroying the beast. If the PCs know what a mngwa is but haven't realized the reason it pursues Stuinvolk, they might assume it is hunting him because of the treasures his group found, and choose not to investigate the connection any further. If this happens, the next time the PCs fight the mngwa, Stuinvolk still has a chance to recognize his connection to the creature on his own.

Influence: If the PCs know what the mngwa is and understand its connection to Stuinvolk, they can try determining a way to destroy it. This involves dredging up some of Stuinvolk's worst memories—something he is reluctant but willing to do, if necessary. Doing so involves attempting another influence check (as normal—no special skills apply to this check). After this, a second social phase begins, allowing another round of discovery and influence checks as they probe Stuinvolk's memory for clues. This is an exception to the standard rule of one social phase per encounter. The PCs can also earn an Empathy Point in each phase. This second social phase includes other influence opportunities, learned with a standard discovery check. A DC

Scaling Encounter A7

To accommodate groups of four PCs, Stuinvolk instead frees himself from fear with a successful DC 12 Will Save (instead of DC 14). For the purposes of abilities Stuinvolk gains against the mngwa, treat the PCs Empathy Point score as one higher than it actually is.

Optional Encounter

The encounter with the starving hyenas in area **B1** is optional. If fewer than 2 hours remain to complete the scenario, skip this encounter and proceed directly to area **B2** instead.

20 Knowledge (local) check examines what Stuinvolk might know about variant behavior in local mngwas. A PC with the hypnotism occult skill unlock can guide Stuinvolk through his subconscious with a successful DC 16 Diplomacy check. Anything that allows a character to read Stuinvolk's mind (*detect thoughts*, or any similar spell or ability that reasonably emulates it) automatically succeeds at influencing him. In addition to earning the PCs an Empathy Point, this influence also reveals how the mngwa can be killed: When confronting the creature, Stuinvolk must come to terms with the events of the past, set his fear and guilt aside, and—most importantly—deliver the killing blow to the mngwa.

A7. RAGE REDISCOVERED (CR 5 OR CR 8)

The following night (or three nights later, if it was defeated during its first attack and has to re-form) the mngwa attacks again, this time making every effort to kill Stuinvolk. Once again, it attacks in the middle of the night, though presumably the PCs and Stuinvolk are ready for it this time.

Creature: The mngwa observes the PCs' tactics during the first fight and attempts to work around them, this time using its own abilities to full effect.

Initially, Stuinvolk is once again overcome by supernatural fear, but this time he has a chance to break free. At the beginning of each round, he attempts a DC 14 Will save, overcoming the paralysis of his memories if successful. He gains a +1 bonus on this save for each Empathy Point that the PCs have earned. Additionally, once clearheaded, he gains several abilities against the mngwa based upon the PCs Empathy Point total; the more they have helped with his trauma, the more capable he is of destroying that trauma's physical embodiment. For every accumulated Empathy Point, he gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against it. If the PCs have 2 Empathy Points, his raging song affects the mngwa as though it were a dirge of doom bardic performance, in addition to any normal

A7. Rage Rediscovered



effects. If the PCs have acquired 3 Empathy Points, Stuinvolk's weapons gain the bane property against the mngwa. If they have earned 4 or more Empathy Points, Stuinvolk's brow begins to glow as he fights and chants; this has the effect of a *daylight* spell. Even if the mngwa suffers a killing blow from a PC, it lies on the ground, panting heavily, for 1d4+1 rounds before expiring, allowing Stuinvolk the chance to kill it via a coup de grace.

If the PCs and Stuinvolk didn't uncover the mngwa's connection to him, or his role in destroying it, in area A6, he still has a chance to reach an epiphany here. He must still attempt Will saves every round to break free from fear, but he doesn't gain a bonus from earned Empathy Points. Once free, he takes part in combat, but again without any Empathy Point benefits. As the combat goes on, his expression becomes one of tranquil fury, but also of gradual understanding, as he realizes what the mngwa truly is. Once it is defeated, as described above, he requests the opportunity to be the one

to kill it, explaining as best he can that he feels that in some way, the mngwa is a piece of his own internal anguish given fearsome life by the magic of the Mwangi savanna.

SUBTIER 3-4 (CR 5)

STUINVOLK'S MNGWA

CR 5

Unique mngwa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 173)

hp 66 (see page 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat The mngwa uses all its spell-like abilities before entering the camp, giving it chameleon stride^{ACG}, feather step, and pass without trace. This raises its Stealth score by 5.

During Combat The mngwa charges Stuinvolk. If the PCs have used some means to protect Stuinvolk (for instance, disguising one of themselves as him), the mngwa doesn't have an opportunity to discover this until after combat has begun.

Morale The mngwa fights to the death, final or otherwise.

SUBTIER 6-7 (CR 8)

ADVANCED STUINVOLK'S MNGWA

CR 8

Unique advanced mngwa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 288, 173)

hp 103 (see page 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat The mngwa uses all its spell-like abilities before entering the camp, giving it *chameleon stride*^{ACG}, *feather step*, and *pass without trace*. This raises its Stealth bonus by 5.

During Combat The mngwa charges Stuinvolk. If the PCs have used some means to protect Stuinvolk (such as disguising one of themselves as him), the mngwa doesn't have an opportunity to discover this until after combat has begun.

Morale The mngwa fights to the death, final or otherwise.

Development: Once the mngwa is destroyed, Stuinvolk becomes more accepting of his past. While he is not "cured," his mood swings diminish and he becomes easier to work with. After this point, his attitude becomes helpful permanently, and no more influence checks are required.

Additionally, if Stuinvolk kills the mngwa, the PCs automatically gain 1 Empathy Point.

Rewards: If the mngwa isn't slain by Stuinvolk, reduce each PCs gold earned by 668 gp.

B. MASTER OF THE ANTHILLS

After killing the mngwa, the PCs have a few days of easy travel. At this point, the wax compass leads them entirely out of Mzali territory, so they are free to move in a straight line without having to triangulate. If they are being followed by Nkechi's patrol from area A3, they can stop attempting Survival checks—there is no chance of another encounter with the Mzali.

As they travel northeast, the savanna slowly develops gentle hills. Stuinvolk confirms that Bujune's lair is somewhere in these hills. While he is clearly discomfited to be back here, he manages to suppress his fears for the remainder of the trip.

B1. SAVANNA SCAVENGERS (CR 5 OR CR 8)

As the terrain gently slopes into hills, the temperature drops to a more bearable range. Traveling through the clefts between the hillsides provides welcome shade, and the contoured land shapes the air into gentle breezes. Less inviting

Scaling Encounter B1

To accommodate groups of four PCs, the hyena pack recently fragmented to better find food. Remove one hyena from the encounter.

are the cave mouths around the gorge—and the gnawed bones near them.

The PCs have come across the lair of a small pack of hyenas. Normally, they make a fair living scavenging larger predators' kills and wisely avoid large groups of armed humanoids, but late in the dry season the pickings are slim and they are desperately hungry.

Creatures: The hyenas are resting in several of the caves, conserving their energy. A single "sentry" sits astride a rocky outcropping which grants it an excellent view of the surrounding area, granting it a +5 circumstance bonus on Perception checks to notice the PCs' approach. If the sentry hyena notices the PCs, its yipping howl alerts the other beasts.

SUBTIER 3-4 (CR 5)

MWANGI HYENAS (4)

CR 1

Hyenas (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 179; see page 28)

hp 13 each

TACTICS

During Combat The hyenas adhere to simple pack behavior, ganging up on the smallest or weakest-looking PC to bring that individual down. They dance away from especially aggressive or intimidating foes.

Morale The hyenas break off and flee when two or more of them have been killed.

SUBTIER 6-7 (CR 8)

MWANGI HYENAS (5)

CR 3

Dire hyenas (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 179; see page 28)

hp 26 each

TACTICS

During Combat The hyenas adhere to simple pack behavior, ganging up on the smallest or weakest-looking PC to bring that individual down. They dance away from especially aggressive or intimidating foes.

Morale The hyenas break off and flee when two or more of them have been killed.



B1. Savanna Scavengers



B2. THE GREMLIN'S HOSPITALITY (CR 6 OR CR 9)

After days of travel, Stuinvolk's wax compass seems to have found its destination: a gentle gully with a stream rolling through it that could be an idyllic locale, were it not for a few less than idyll-inspiring details. An anthill that could better be described as a mountain dominates the landscape. Rising at least thirty feet high, this abode for titans has a clear path winding around its perimeter. Here and there along its length, lesser mounds rise, presumably built by ants not quite as prodigious in size. Inhabitants of these smaller hills march in lines through the nearby landscape. Nothing that would be at home in the giant, central hill seems to be present at the moment.

Stuinvolk confirms that this is where he suffered years ago, but he notes that there wasn't a giant anthill back then. Wise PCs might realize that Stuinvolk's compass points toward the gremlin, not just his lair, and begin looking around for the nuno. Even if they don't, he makes himself known shortly.

Creature: Bujune hides among the gravel and scrub halfway up the anthill; PCs searching for him gain a +5 bonus on Perception checks to locate him, since Stuinvolk's compass points directly toward him. If they don't spot him, Bujune reveals himself after a minute of assessing his visitors (and casting protective spells). While generally very antisocial, he faces a dilemma of his own and debates allying with these strangers to his domain.

The *amberhollow*, one of Stuinvolk's artifacts that Bujune buried, has slowly affected the ant colony in sinister ways. Bujune doesn't know any specifics; all he knows is that his favorite anthill has become "strange and dead." The ants no longer welcome him, and his ant affinity ability no longer protects him from the ants in the mound. He wants the issue resolved but is frightened to investigate it himself. Therefore, the PCs have a negotiating point, if they can suffer Bujune's arrogance long enough to let him make the offer.

Initially the nuno acts like a noble finding a group of peasants in his audience hall. Bujune recognizes his mark upon Stuinvolk ("You have brought that desecrator of my hills back to the site of his crime? My curse upon you all for your temerity!") and, should the PCs say they want the curse removed, expresses genuine outrage. Ultimately, Bujune is too stiff-necked to be a good negotiator, leaving most of the work to the PCs. His starting attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly, and he doesn't offer to trade the service of removing the curse until he becomes at least indifferent (in most cases a DC 25 Diplomacy check). PCs succeeding at a DC 20 Sense Motive check realize that underneath his arrogance, he is trying to court their assistance; this realization grants a +2 bonus on any Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made to influence him.

For all his base rudeness, Bujune is also fairly inquisitive. Bujune bonds to the Archmage spirit daily, taking the taboo 'cannot pass up the opportunity to learn new information.'

Scaling Encounter B2

If you are playing with a group that only has four PCs, make the following adjustments to area A5.

Subtier 3–4: Give Bujune a negative level and reduce the army ant swarm's hp by 15.

Subtier 6–7: Remove one of the army ant swarms from the encounter.

PCs with medium^{OA} class levels automatically realize this, otherwise any character capable of casting psychic spells, or any character with the Psychic Sensitivity feat, recognizes this fact with a DC 15 Perception check. Once this weakness is discovered, PCs can dangle new information in front of him to compel Bujune into offering his deal by succeeding at any two DC 18 Knowledge checks.

If the PCs can't bring his attitude around to at least indifferent, Bujune grows more and more angry, threatening them if they don't turn around and leave. If they don't immediately do so, he gestures at the ground around him. It boils up with thousands of normal-sized, living ants, which assist him in attacking.

SUBTIER 3–4 (CR 6)

ARMY ANT SWARM

CR 5

hp 49 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 16; see page 28)

TACTICS

During Combat: The swarm, while not directly controlled by Bujune, recognizes him as a benefactor, and rolls downhill to block PCs from approaching.

Morale: The ant swarm fights to the death.

BUJUNE

CR 4

Nuno ascetic medium 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 132, *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 30)

NE Tiny fey

Init +3; **Senses** tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

hp 35 (5 HD; 1d6+4d8+14)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities ant affinity; **DR** 2/cold iron

Weaknesses taboo (lust for knowledge)

OFFENSE

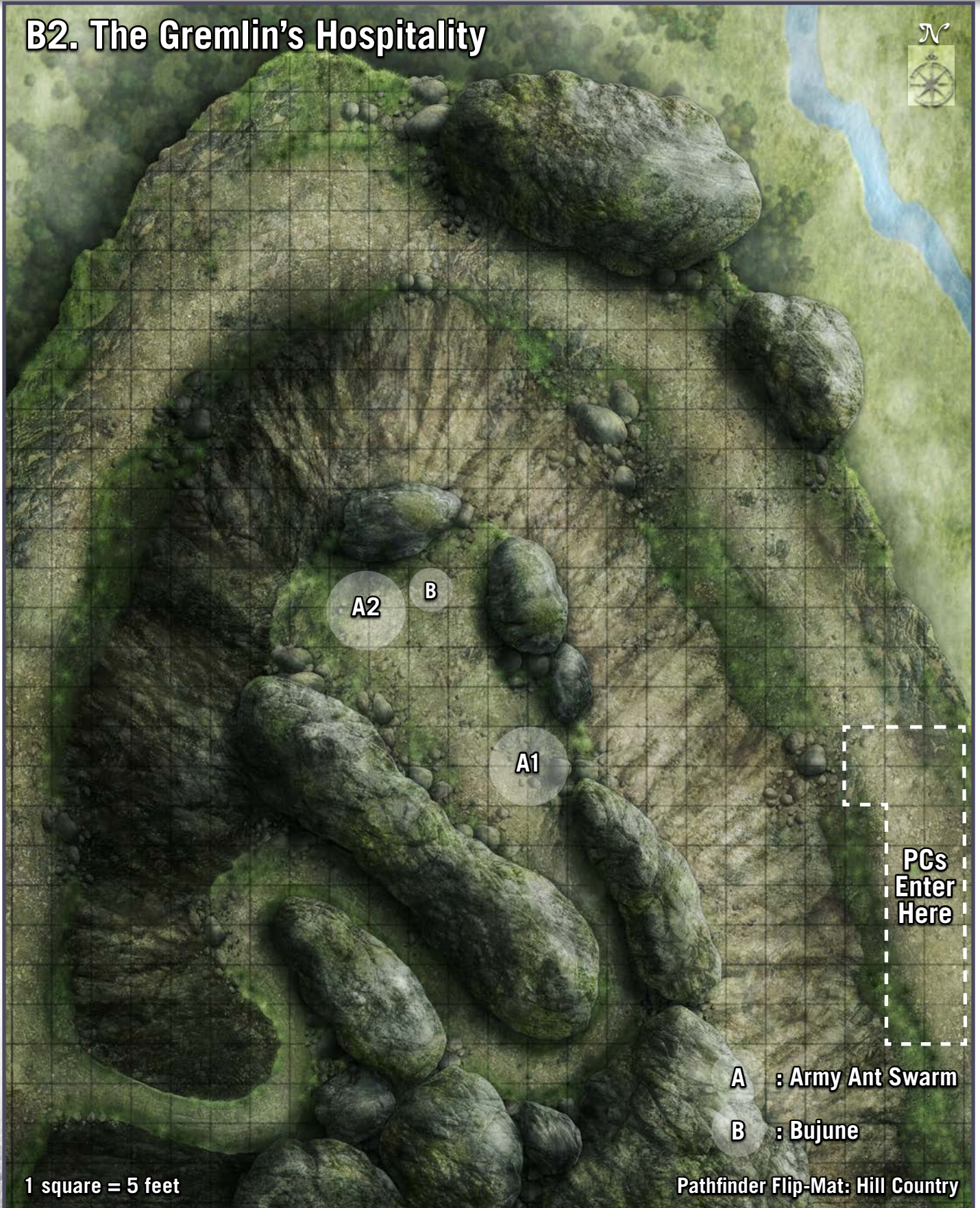
Speed 50 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee slam +3 (1d2–2)

Space 2½ ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks archmage arcana, haunt channeler (2d6), nuno's curse, seance boon (archmage), shared seance, spirit (Archmage, 1 influence)

B2. The Gremlin's Hospitality



PCs
Enter
Here

A : Army Ant Swarm

B : Bujune

1 square = 5 feet

Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Hill Country

BONES OF BITING ANTS

Medium Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +12)

2nd (2/day)—*scorching ray*

1st (5/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *oneiric horror*^{OA} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed* (DC 15), *daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Bujune casts *expeditious retreat* on himself.

During Combat Bujune hurls his most damaging *necklace of fireball* beads until doing so would harm the ant swarm. He then casts spells to render the PCs immobile inside the swarm's area, such as *oneiric horror* or *daze*. He knows he is physically weak and keeps his distance, weakening any pursuers with damaging spells. He is willing to use spirit surge twice, but no more; Bujune is too arrogant to chance losing control.

Morale If the swarm is killed and he is reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, or if he is reduced to 7 or fewer hit points at any time, Bujune surrenders. If the PCs accept, proceed as though they had successfully negotiated with him.

Base Statistics Without *expeditious retreat*, Bujune's speed is reduced to 20 feet.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 12

Feats Ability Focus (nuno's curse), Spirit Focus (archmage)^{OA}, Toughness

Skills Bluff +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +9, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +19, **Racial Modifiers** +4 Knowledge (dungeoneering)

Languages Aklo, Common, Polyglot, Sylvan, Terran

SQ ant affinity, spirit bonus (+2 on concentration checks, Intelligence checks, and Intelligence-based skill checks), spirit surge 1d6, wax locator

Combat Gear *necklace of fireballs type I*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ant Affinity (Su) Ants will never attack a nuno. A nuno can control ants and ant swarms as a druid's wild empathy, with a +4 racial bonus on their checks. The nuno imparts to them a modicum of implanted intelligence, allowing nunos to train ants to perform tasks as necessary to suit the nunos' fancies.

Nuno's Curse (Su) A nuno can curse any creature it touches unless the creature succeeds at a DC 17 Will save. A creature that harms the nuno, damages the nuno's home, or steals the nuno's belongings must also save against the curse with a –2 penalty. A creature that succeeds at its save is immune to that nuno's curse for 24 hours. A creature under the effects of the nuno's curse experiences horrific swelling and hair growth in a location the nuno touched or that was associated with harming the nuno. This swelling imparts a –2 penalty to Dexterity and causes the affected area to occasionally ooze or expel black pus. The DC to

remove a nuno's curse with spells and abilities like *remove curse* is 10 higher than normal (24 for a typical nuno). A nuno can remove its curse as a standard action, and when a nuno dies, all its active curses end immediately. The effects of multiple nuno's curses don't stack. The save DC is Charisma-based.

SUBTIER 6–7 (CR 9)

ADVANCED ARMY ANT SWARMS (2)

CR 6

Advanced army ant swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288, 16)

N Fine vermin (swarm)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 22, flat-footed 20 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +8 size)

hp 71 each (11d8+22)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee swarm (3d6 plus distraction)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks cling, consume, distraction (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat: See Subtier 3–4.

Morale: See Subtier 3–4.

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Climb +12, Perception +6; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cling (Ex) If a creature leaves an army ant swarm's space, the swarm suffers 1d6 points of damage to reflect the loss of its numbers as several of the crawling pests cling tenaciously to the victim. A creature with army ants clinging to him takes 3d6 points of damage at the end of his turn each round. As a full-round action, he can remove the ants with a DC 19 Reflex save. High wind or any amount of damage from an area effect destroys all clinging ants. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Consume (Ex) An army ant swarm can rapidly consume any creature it swarms over. Against helpless or nauseated targets, an army ant swarm attack deals 6d6 points of damage.

BUJUNE

CR 5

Nuno ascetic medium 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 132, *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 30)

NE Tiny fey

Init +3; **Senses** tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

hp 57 (8 HD; 1d6+7d8+23)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities ant affinity; **DR** 2/cold iron

Weaknesses taboo (lust for knowledge)

Scaling Encounter C1

If you are playing with a group that only has four PCs reduce the DCs of all skill checks needed to bypass an obstacle by 2.

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee slam +5 (1d2–2)

Space 2½ ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks arcane surge, archmage arcana, haunt channeler (3d6), nuno's curse, seance boon (archmage), shared seance, spirit (Archmage, 1 influence)

Medium Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +15)

3rd (2/day)—*babble*^{OA} (DC 19)

2nd (4/day)—*hold person* (DC 18), *inflict pain*^{OA} (DC 18), *scorching ray*

1st (6/day)—*lesser confusion* (DC 17), *expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *oneiric horror*^{OA} (DC 16), *paranoia*^{OA} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed* (DC 15), *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 15), *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Bujune casts *expeditious retreat* on himself.

During Combat Bujune hurls his most damaging *necklace of fireball* beads, before the ant swarm reaches the PCs. Once the swarm is attacking, he casts spells to render PCs helpless inside it, like *babble*, *hold person*, and other debilitating spells. He knows he is weak in melee, and keeps his distance, softening pursuers with damaging spells. He is willing to use spirit surge twice, but no more; Bujune is too arrogant to chance losing control.

Morale If the swarm is killed and Bujune is reduced to 25 or fewer hit points, or if he is reduced to 15 or fewer hit points at any time, the nuno surrenders. If the PCs accept, proceed as though they had successfully negotiated with him.

Base Statistics Without *expeditious retreat*, Bujune's speed is 20 feet.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 14

Feats Ability Focus (nuno's curse), Spell Focus (enchantment), Spirit Focus (archmage)^{OA}, Toughness

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (geography) +16, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perception +12, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +22, Survival +2; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Knowledge (dungeoneering)

Languages Aklo, Common, Polyglot, Sylvan, Terran

SQ connection channel, location channel (7 rounds), spirit bonus (+2 on concentration checks, Intelligence checks, and Intelligence-based skill checks), spirit surge 1d6, wax locator

Combat Gear *dust of appearance*, *necklace of fireballs type III*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Development: If Bujune reaches an accord with the PCs, he agrees to remove the curse from Stuinvolk and permits them to carry away the buried treasures—but only once they rid it of its curse. He also describes the layout of the anthill's interior for the PCs, though he acknowledges that it has changed recently. These pointers give PCs +1 on all skill checks made to navigate the hill in area C1.

The conditions he sets for considering the anthill cleansed are: the removal of the “poison” artifacts, the death of She-Who-Devours, and lastly, he asks that the PCs retrieve any ant larvae that live; he has sensed some cocooned deep within the nest, possibly not recognized as alive by She-Who-Devours because they are still developing. While he accepts this generation of ants is lost, he hopes to rear a new one by hand.

Lastly, he has some advice and gifts for the PCs: he suggests they might have an easier time if they can understand the ants' speech. He wanders off into the hills for a few minutes, and returns clutching something quite disgusting in his hands: a number of dead, preserved termites, one for each PC. He cackles as he explains that he enjoys taking the corpses of those who would go to war with his ants, and turning them into something useful. By eating one of the termites, a PC is affected by a variant *speak with vermin* allowing them to understand the chattering speech of ants for the next six hours.

Rewards: If the PCs don't successfully negotiate with or kill Bujune, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 162 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 349 gp.

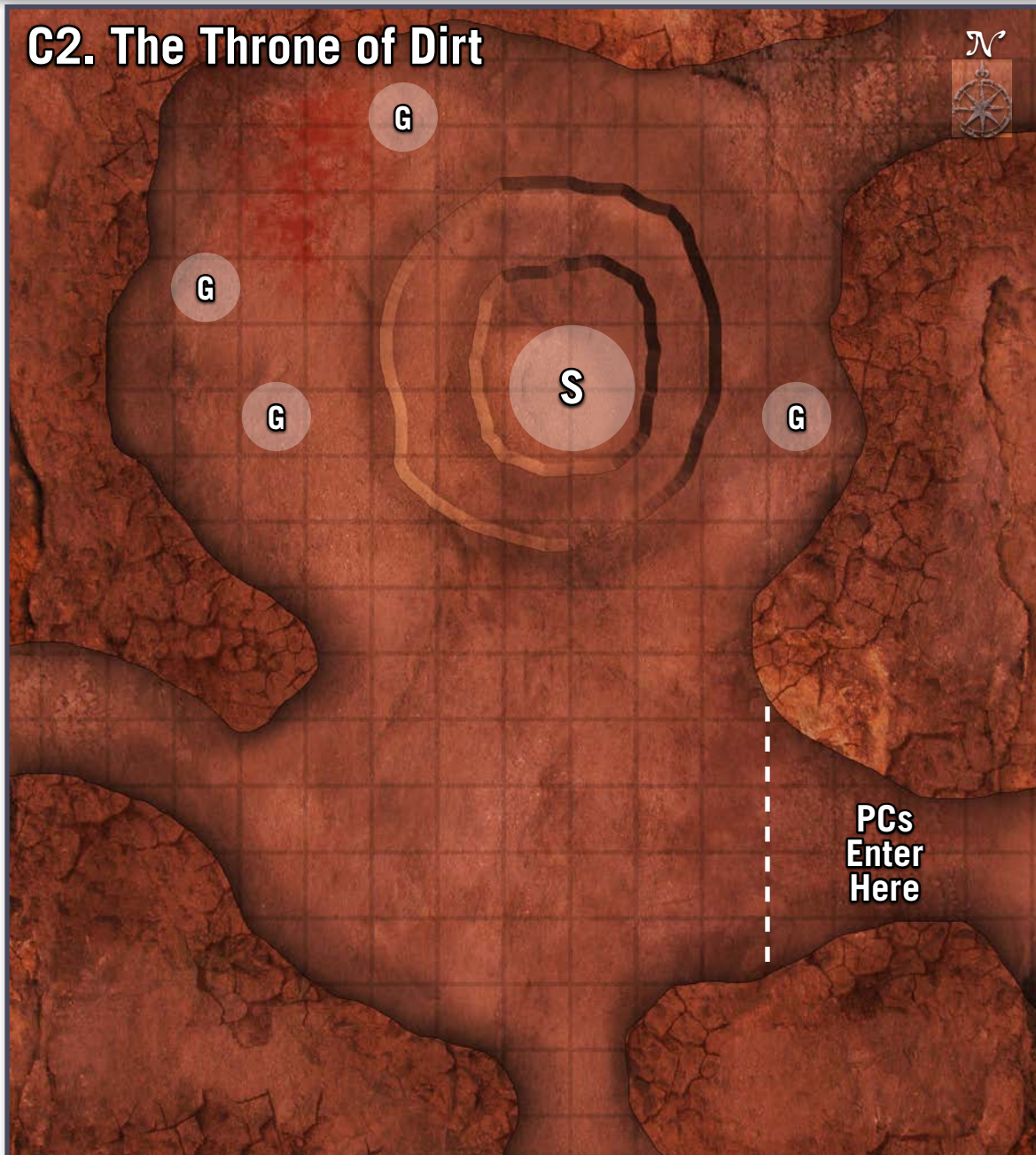
Subtier 6–7: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 537 gp.

C. THE QUEEN WHO WOULD BE KING

After dealing with Bujune, the PCs can investigate the undead anthill. Amongst the treasures found by Stuinvolk's group is the *amberhollow*, which possesses a connection to the King of Biting Ants' undying essence. While the King is presumably destroyed, the *amberhollow* seeks to form a new body for him, much like a lich's phylactery. For the last decade it has slowly altered the environment—first it enhanced the ants, causing them to grow to monstrous size. In the past year, it began siphoning the colony's life force, transforming the ants into undead husks and funneling their essence into the queen. The queen herself has been transformed into an undead creature with newfound intelligence. This budding intellect isn't her own, but part of the lost mind of the King of Biting Ants. His mind only manifests in bits and flashes, but it is enough that it has fueled the queen's ambitions. For reasons she doesn't comprehend, she wants to incorporate more anthills into her domain, siphon more life force, and become more powerful. She has even taken a name for herself: She-Who-Devours.

If the PCs need to rest, they can do so safely outside the hill (if Bujune is alive, he grumbles about the laziness of mortals, but tolerates his guests). Once the PCs are ready, they

C2. The Throne of Dirt



C1.

1 square = 5 feet

G : Giant Ant Exoskeleton

S : She-Who-Devours

can proceed to area **C1**. Stuinvolk chooses not to travel into the mound; while challenging his boundaries on this trip has done him good, he balks at revisiting the place he was buried alive. He offers to stand guard outside instead, against potential treachery on Bujune's part.

All areas inside the anthill are dark.

C1. DESCENT INTO UNDEATH

The interior of the hill is larger than can be practically explored in this adventure, involving winding tunnels and chambers that twist and turn their way, possibly for miles, underground. While Bujune's directions give a general idea of where the queen is, the journey below is approximated through a series of skill checks and challenges, in some ways similar to a chase sequence in reverse.

Creatures: The PCs don't encounter any opposition as they enter the nest; the *amberhollow's* curse killed many ants permanently. In most cases, their queen ate their life force. However, some reanimated as exoskeletal ants after dying. These are what remain to challenge the PCs as they make their way downward.

SUBTIER 3-4 (CR 1)

GIANT ANT EXOSKELETONS (4)

CR 1/2

Giant soldier ant exoskeleton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 16;

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6 124)

NE Medium undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0



DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d6+3), sting +5 (1d4+3)

TACTICS

During Combat The exoskeletons overwhelm isolated PCs.

Morale The exoskeletons fight until destroyed. They are unaware of their burst ability and don't maneuver to exploit it.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15 (23 vs. trip)

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +11

SQ burst (DC 11)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burst (Ex) When an exoskeleton is destroyed, its desiccated husk bursts, releasing the dusty remains of the ant's insides into the surrounding air. Any creature adjacent to an exoskeleton when it bursts must succeed at a DC 11 Fortitude save or become staggered for 1 round as it coughs and sneezes. Creatures that don't need to breathe are immune to this effect.

SUBTIER 6-7 (CR 3)

ADVANCED GIANT ANT EXOSKELETONS (2)

CR 1

Advanced giant soldier ant exoskeleton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*

294, 16; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 124)

NE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 29 (3d8+12)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d6+5), sting +7 (1d4+5)

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 3-4.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19 (27 vs. trip)

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +13

SQ burst (DC 13)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burst (Ex) When an exoskeleton is destroyed, it bursts, releasing dusty remains into the air. Any creature adjacent to an exoskeleton when it bursts must succeed

at a DC 13 Fortitude save or become staggered for 1 round as it coughs and sneezes. Creatures that don't need to breathe are immune to this effect.

Hazards: The PCs face three sequential obstacles as they travel into the hill. Each obstacle has multiple possible resolutions. At least one PC must attempt a skill check to overcome an obstacle, with the highest check result counting for the whole party. (PCs who roll lower may instead use their checks as if performing the aid another action.) A successful check means they move forward and closer to She-Who-Devours. If they fail, they still make progress, but with consequences: immediately after failing, the PCs face two exoskeleton giant ant soldiers. (Use the Generic Anthill Tunnel inset map on map C.) Killing them likely takes no more than a few rounds—individually they're no match for the PCs, and the players might enjoy the feeling of (figuratively) stomping them under their boots. But doing so alerts the hive, causing area C2 to be more difficult. In Subtier 6–7, increase the DC of all skill checks needed to overcome obstacles by 4.

1st Obstacle: (Climb DC 22, Escape Artist DC 18) The PCs must first descend the vertical tunnel leading into the anthill's belly. The sides are loose and sandy, making it difficult going. PCs can overcome this by taking time and effort to help everyone gently descend, or rigging an elaborate rope harness.

2nd Obstacle: (Knowledge [engineering or nature] DC 20, Profession [architect or engineer] DC 16) The anthill's tunnels are unintuitive, almost alien. To avoid wandering for hours, PCs need to stretch their understanding of what is structurally probable.

3rd Obstacle: (Handle Animal DC 20, Sleight of Hand DC 22) The PCs come across the larvae chamber Bujune spoke of. Surprisingly, there are some living pupae left. The cocoons are still tended instinctively by worker exoskeletons, although these offspring's futures are bleak if they emerge while She-Who-Devours lives. The PCs can filch a few cocoons and subtly cause a distraction, leaving the way clear, or they can evade the ants' attention entirely by using their knowledge of vermin.

Rewards: If the PCs don't overcome any obstacles, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 100 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 250 gp.

Subtier 6–7: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 400 gp.

C2. THE THRONE OF DIRT (CR 6 OR CR 9)

This chamber is clearly the heart of the anthill. The walls have a wavy, sculpted quality to them in contrast to the sandier, rougher tunnels, and several different entrances lead into the room. A high mound of earth rises in the room's center; interestingly, it seems to be decorated with bits of stick, rock, and even some bones, as though it were a dais or throne.

Scaling Encounter C2

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce the base number of exoskeletons by one. Instead of adding two exoskeletons per failed check during the descent phase in area C1, add one.

Subtier 6–7: Reduce the base number of exoskeletons by two. Instead of adding two exoskeletons per failed check during the descent phase in area C1, add one.

After passing the third obstacle in area C1, the PCs enter the chamber of She-Who-Devours. Unless the PCs have avoided ants on the way down, the queen likely already knows of their presence.

Creatures: She-Who-Devours lies here atop a 5-foot-high mound of dirt. Bujune buried Stuinvolk's cache here, and over time the *amberhollow* has given her limited intellect; she experiences memories of once commanding a swarm of vermin unlike any other, and of power being denied to her by humanoids. She rants about these memories in a combination of ant-chittering, Aklo, and Necril, hissing at the invaders about her goals to absorb more anthills, grow her swarm further, and that puny beings like the PCs cannot possibly stop her. "This time is not the time before, and you are not Jatembel!" PCs who have eaten one of Bujune's termites understand everything she says; otherwise, PCs who speak either Aklo or Necril comprehend her speech with a successful DC 16 Linguistics check (DC 12 if a PC speaks both languages).

She is backed by a number of exoskeletons. The base number of exoskeletons is listed below; for each obstacle in area C1 the party failed to overcome, increase this number by 2.

SUBTIER 3–4 (CR 6)

GIANT ANT EXOSKELETONS (4)	CR 1 1/2
hp 20 each (see page 24)	
TACTICS	

During Combat The exoskeletons do their best to delay the PCs, not caring about their own safety, in an attempt to keep their enemies from assaulting the queen in force.

Morale The exoskeletons fight until destroyed. If the queen dies, they crumble to dust.

SHE-WHO-DEVOURS	CR 5
Female variant deathweb (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 3 65)	
NE Large undead	
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +17	
Aura infestation (5 ft., DC 16)	
DEFENSE	

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, –1 size)
hp 58 (9d8+18)
Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.
Melee bite +12 (2d6+7 plus grab), sting +12 (2d4+7 plus poison)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +11)
 1/3 rounds—*acid arrow*

TACTICS

During Combat In spite of her unique abilities, the queen is still a relatively simple creature, using brute force to crush her opponents. She is not particularly mobile, so she tries grabbing PCs to hold them within her infestation aura. If PCs keep their distance, she uses her *acid arrow* spell-like ability to launch darts in the shape of flying, stinging ants at them.

Morale The combination of hubris flowing into her and her own brutal-minded nature means that She-Who-Devours never considers failure a possibility; she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +14 (+16 bull rush); **CMD** 26 (28 vs. bull rush, 34 vs. trip)
Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack
Skills Acrobatics +2, Perception +17, Stealth +14, Survival +14
Languages Aklo, Necril
SQ compression

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Infestation (Ex) An infestation of ants nesting within She-Who-Devours's exoskeleton surrounds her out to radius of 5 feet. Any creature takes 1d6 points of damage at the end of each round it remains in the area. A creature that takes this damage must attempt a DC 16 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. In addition, those damaged by this infestation are poisoned as well. Any area effect attack that deals 10 or more points of damage to She-Who-Devours destroys her infesting ants, removing her aura for 3 rounds, after which a new batch of ants swarms out of her body to replenish the infestation.

Poison (Ex) Infestation, sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save

SUBTIER 6–7 (CR 9)

ADVANCED GIANT ANT EXOSKELETONS (6) CR 1

Advanced giant soldier ant exoskeleton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 16; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 124)
hp 29 each (see page 24)

TACTICS

During Combat: The exoskeletons do their best to delay the PCs, not caring about their own safety, in an attempt to keep their enemies from assaulting the queen in force.

Morale: The exoskeletons fight to the death. If the queen dies, they crumble to dust.

SHE-WHO-DEVOURS

CR 8

Female variant deathweb
 NE Huge undead
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +22
Aura infestation (5 ft., DC 20)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +11 natural, –2 size)
hp 105 (14d8+42)
Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.
Melee bite +18 (2d8+9 plus grab), sting +18 (1d12+9 plus poison)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +17)
 At will—*acid arrow*

TACTICS

During Combat In spite of her unique abilities, the queen is still a relatively simple creature, using brute force to crush her opponents. She is not particularly mobile, so she tries grabbing PCs to hold them within her infestation aura. If PCs keep their distance, she uses her *acid arrow* spell-like ability to launch darts in the shape of flying, stinging ants at them.

Morale The hubris flowing into her means that She-Who-Devours never considers failure a possibility; she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16
Base Atk +10; **CMB** +21 (+23 bull rush); **CMD** 32 (34 vs. bull rush, 40 vs. trip)
Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (sting)
Skills Acrobatics +1, Perception +22, Stealth +14, Survival +19
Languages Aklo, Necril
SQ compression

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Infestation (Ex) An infestation of ants nesting within She-Who-Devours's exoskeleton constantly surrounds her out to a radius of 5 feet. Any creature within the infestation takes 2d6 points of damage at the end of each round it remains in the area. A creature that takes this damage must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. In addition, those damaged by this aura are poisoned as well. Any area effect attack that deals 10 or more points of damage to She-Who-Devours destroys her infesting ants, removing her aura for 3 rounds, after which a new batch of ants swarms out of her body to replenish the infestation.

Poison (Ex) Infestation, sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save

Treasure: Stuinvolk's lost treasure cache is buried in the throne-like mound, which the PCs can easily excavated once the queen is dead. Among them are numerous scholarly finds from the Doorway to the Red Star: a watertight satchel filled with charcoal rubbings, sketches, and notes; stone and flora samples; and small, nonmagical findings. Also among the pile are an *animal divining pot*^{OA} and a small *ivory ant construct* (functioning as a *brass spider*^{ACG}). In Subtier 6–7, the cache also contains an *aspect mask* (ant)^{ACG}, and a *runestone of power* (1st)^{ACG}. At the trove's heart is the *amberhollow*: a rough, fist-sized lump of amber with an empty space inside in the shape of an ant—almost as though a preserved insect had escaped. It has a strong aura of necromancy. While the artifact is responsible for what happened here, the events were merely the result of coincidence and long exposure, so it is safe to transport back to the Pathfinder Society for study.

Development: When She-Who-Devours is killed and the *amberhollow* is retrieved, the PC picking it up momentarily feels a sort of buzzing rage filling their head, and a crawling feeling upon their skin. This quickly fades into a lingering sense of desperation from whatever is trying to cling on to this world, and then the feelings disappear altogether. Any remaining exoskeletons crumble into dust, as does the corpse of She-Who-Devours.

The PCs can make their way out of the anthill without incident (and can retrieve some of the pupae from the larva room, if they have accepted the deal from Bujune and failed to retrieve any earlier).

Rewards: If the PCs don't defeat She-Who-Devours and reclaim the treasures, reduce each PCs gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 3–4: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 225 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 429 gp.

Subtier 6–7: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 633 gp.

CONCLUSION

Once they've concluded their business in the mound, the PCs can return to Eleder. Bujune, if they negotiated a deal with him rather than just killing him, honors his end of the bargain and lifts the curse on Stuinvolk. PCs who successfully bargain with Bujune without killing the nuno gain the Gremlin's Token boon. PCs who slew Bujune instead gain the Mushroom Masher boon. The return trip is uneventful, especially since it is easier during this leg of the trip to plot a course that keeps the PCs well away from the dangerous Mzali borders.

Stuinvolk is notably less tense, and with his curse removed, sometimes even segues into something that approaches happy. He still has traumas to work through, of course, as he isn't "cured" of his past, but this expedition helps to put a lot of his ghosts to rest. He mentions that while he doesn't see himself doing fieldwork again, he might consider working in a supporting capacity at the lodge level.

REPORTING NOTES

If Bujune was still alive at the end of this adventure, check box A. If the PCs final Empathy Point total with Stuinvolk was 4 or greater, check box B. If the PCs avoided fighting Nkechi and the Mzali warriors, check box C.

PRIMARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

Lifting Stuinvolk's curse (either by slaying the nuno Bujune or convincing him to lift the curse from Stuinvolk) and retrieving the King of Biting Ants' treasures earns the PCs 1 Prestige point and the Whispers of the *Amberhollow* boon on their Chronicle sheet.

SECONDARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

PCs whose final Empathy Point total with Stuinvolk was 4 or greater earn an additional 1 Prestige point and the Ulfen Ally boon on their Chronicle sheet.

APPENDIX: STAT BLOCKS

The following creatures appear in this scenario.

ARMY ANT SWARM

A writhing carpet of ants seethes over the ground, consuming everything in its path.

ARMY ANT SWARM CR 5

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 16

N Fine vermin (swarm)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 18; (+8 size, +2 Dex)

hp 49 (11d8)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee swarm (3d6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks cling, consume, distraction (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +8; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Climb +10, Perception +4; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cling (Ex) If a creature leaves an army ant swarm's square, the swarm suffers 1d6 points of damage to reflect the loss of its numbers as several of the crawling pests continue to cling tenaciously to the victim. A creature with army ants clinging to him takes 3d6 points of damage at the end of his turn each round. As a full-round action, he can remove the ants with a DC 17 Reflex save. High wind or any amount of damage from an area effect destroys all clinging ants. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Consume (Ex) An army ant swarm can rapidly consume any creature it swarms over. Against helpless or nauseated targets, an army ant swarm attack deals 6d6 points of damage.

CARAVAN GUARD

These sturdy warriors wield armor and weapons that show signs of frequent use.

CARAVAN GUARD CR 1

Pathfinder RPG Gamemastery Guide 282

Human fighter 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 16 (2d10+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee lance +5 (1d8+3/×3) or

longsword +5 (1d8+3/19–20) or

kukri +5 (1d4+3/18–20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +3 (1d10/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness, Animal Affinity, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload

Skills Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +3, Perception +4, Profession (drover) +5, Ride +1, Sense Motive +3, Survival +5

Languages Common

Gear banded mail, buckler, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, kukri, lance, longsword, light horse (combat trained) with saddle, 1 gp

HYENA

This hyena has shaggy, tan-colored fur with black and brown stripes.

HYENA CR 1

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 179

N Medium animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 13 (2d8+4)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d6+3 plus trip)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15 (19 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +6 (+10 in tall grass); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in tall grass

HYENA, DIRE

This large hyena has a thick head, rheumy red eyes, and a mouth filled with sharp, powerful teeth.

DIRE HYENA (HYAENODON) CR 3

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 179

N Large animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, –1 size)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +6 (2d6+6 plus trip)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20 (24 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +7 (+11 in tall grass or heavy undergrowth); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in tall grass

SLAVER

Armed to capture as readily as to kill, this stern warrior exudes an air of menace.

SLAVER

CR 3

Pathfinder RPG Gamemastery Guide 266

Human fighter 2/ranger 2

NE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 30 (4d10+8)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk guisarme +9 (2d4+4/×3) or

mwk sap +8 (1d6+3 nonlethal) or

spiked gauntlet +7 (1d4+3)

Ranged bolas +7 (1d4+3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with guisarme)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feat Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bolas), Precise Shot, Step Up, Weapon Focus (bolas), Weapon Focus (guisarme)

Skills Climb +12, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (geography) +4, Perception +8, Ride +7, Stealth +9, Survival+8 (+9 to follow tracks), Swim +8

Languages Common

SQ track +1, wild empathy +1

Combat Gear *feather token* (whip), tanglefoot bags

(2); **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, bolas (3), mwk

guisarme, mwk sap, spiked gauntlet, climber's kit, drow

poison (2 doses), manacles

APPENDIX 2: INFLUENCE SYSTEM

The following text is pulled from the Influence Section of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* (page 102). It does not include several parts of the subsystem that are not relevant to GMs running this adventure.

INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE

The most common model for social encounters involves a single exchange involving a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check. The following influence system serves as a more robust replacement for that basic system. It also encourages the entire party to participate in a social encounter, and can be used in encounters with multiple NPCs. In the individual influence system, participants try to change the targets' opinions or court favor by succeeding at a variety of checks unique to each individual target. Known as influence checks, these are usually skill checks, though other types of checks may suffice, as an NPC may be especially impressed by other qualities, such as drinking ability or martial prowess.

In this system, a social encounter is divided into one or more phases. The length of a phase is flexible, and typically lasts 15 minutes to 1 hour—long enough for each PC to perform several minutes' worth of actions per phase that are unrelated to influence checks (such as investigating a murder scene or surreptitiously defeating an assassin) without forgoing their chances to participate in the social encounter.

At the beginning of a phase, each PC selects an NPC (for the purposes of this scenario, that NPC is always Stuinvolk). During each phase, a PC can either try to directly influence the NPC via an influence check, or attempt to learn more about that NPC with a discovery check—a check to learn about an NPC that can help with future influence checks during the same social encounter. The kinds of checks required for an influence check or a discovery check, known as influence skills, are unique to each individual. The PCs can learn an NPC's influence skills through successful discovery checks (see Discovery Checks below); otherwise, they must guess.

DISCOVERY CHECKS

Each PC who attempts a discovery check rolls separately, even if multiple PCs attempt to discover information about the same NPC during the same phase. This represents the PCs forming their own separate opinions and analyses.

At the beginning of the social encounter, each PC can attempt a relevant Knowledge check to recognize particularly prominent NPCs. This skill is listed in the Recognize section of the NPC's social stat block. If any PC succeeds at this check for an NPC, then all PCs gain a +4 bonus on their discovery checks involving that NPC. Before attempting a discovery check, a PC chooses whether to try to learn the NPC's strengths, the NPC's weaknesses, or the skills that can be used to influence him. Each type of discovery check has its own requisite skill and DC. When a PC chooses to attempt a

discovery check, the GM should tell the player the possible types of skill checks for each kind of discovery check (though not the DCs), and let her pick which to attempt. If a discovery check relies on a Knowledge skill, it requires observation in the current moment, not static knowledge.

A PC who succeeds at a discovery check learns one of the skills that can influence the NPC (starting with the skill with the lowest DC), one of his strengths, or one of his weaknesses. For every 5 points by which the PC exceeds the DC, she learns an additional influence skill, strength, or weakness. Thus, a withdrawn but observant character can provide allies with a significant bonus (or help them avoid significant penalties) on future influence checks, making her as important to the group's success as PCs who prefer the spotlight.

INFLUENCE CHECKS

Without a successful discovery check, a PC attempting an influence check must guess what an NPC's influence skills are. A PC generally gains no benefit or hindrance when using a skill that cannot influence the NPC, though the GM may rule that multiple fumbblings annoy the target and impose penalties on future rolls.

The PCs usually must succeed at more than one influence check to sway an NPC. No matter how many PCs speak to the same NPC, only one check to influence that NPC can be attempted during that phase. Additional checks serve as aid another attempts tied to the principal check. Succeeding at an influence check by a substantial margin provides additional benefits. Succeeding at an influence check by 5 or more counts as succeeding at an influence check and a discovery check (the PC chooses whether to learn one of the skills that influences the NPC, one of the NPC's strengths, or one of the NPC's weaknesses after the check is rolled instead of before the check, but the check otherwise functions as a successful discovery check). Succeeding at an influence check by 10 or more allows the PC to choose between gaining the benefit of succeeding at two influence checks or the benefits of an influence check and a discovery check (as if she had succeeded by only 5 or more).

Each PC who successfully succeeds at a check to influence Stuinvolk Hundrakson during a social encounter improves his mood by one step (hostile to unfriendly, unfriendly to indifferent, indifferent to friendly, and friendly to helpful) while each failed attempt worsens his mood by one step. At the end of any social encounter during which Stuinvolk's attitude is at least friendly, the party gains 1 Empathy Point, which grants the PCs a +1 bonus on Diplomacy checks per point gained and increases his available rounds of raging song by 2 (up to his normal maximum of 9 rounds.)

Failing an influence check by a substantial margin makes it harder to influence the target in the future. If a PC fails an influence check by 5 or more, she cannot attempt to influence that NPC using the same skill for the remainder

of that social encounter. A PC who fails an influence check by 10 or more cannot influence that NPC for the rest of the social encounter at all. For example, if the NPC's influence skills are Diplomacy and Knowledge (arcana), a PC who fails a Diplomacy check against that NPC by 5 or more can still attempt to influence the NPC with Knowledge (arcana). These restrictions also apply to aiding another—a PC who fails by 10 or more irritates the NPC to the point that the party can no longer take advantage of her assistance.

A PC doesn't necessarily realize whether or not she has succeeded at an influence check unless she succeeds by at least 5, but a character always knows when she has achieved the maximum possible influence over an NPC. Some NPCs might act as if they were being influenced even if they have no intention of listening to the PCs.

Once the PCs succeed at a certain number of influence checks, they gain sway over that NPC, changing his opinion on an issue, earning a favor, or otherwise gaining some benefit or removing an obstacle.

BEFORE A SOCIAL EVENT

If the PCs know which NPCs they need to influence in advance, they can seek out information to assist them in doing so ahead of time, potentially gaining information from the social stat block before the encounter. To represent the results of such preparations, each PC can attempt one Knowledge-based discovery check in advance with a –5 penalty. The GM can allow other discovery skills to work, but Sense Motive should never work in advance unless the PC is actively stalking the NPC, which might require additional Disguise or Stealth checks and could lead to negative consequences. If the PCs attempt a discovery check against a particularly prominent NPC in advance, the PCs can attempt the Knowledge check to receive a +4 on the discovery check in advance, as well.

SOCIAL STAT BLOCK

For social encounters, GMs should build social stat blocks for important NPCs (a social stat block for Stuinvolk is already included on page 7 of this adventure). Social stat blocks are very flexible, and can include any information relevant to the encounter, though most include the information below.

Name: The NPCs' name, alignment, and class.

Affiliation: This notes the NPC's loyalties.

Secret Identity: Some NPCs have secret identities. There may not be any skill checks that would allow the PCs to detect such a secret identity (in which case no checks are listed), but if the NPC is disguised or the PCs have met this NPC before under another name, the skill check necessary to uncover the truth is listed here.

Background: This is a brief description of this NPC's history and how she is relevant to the PCs.

Recognize: This is the check required to recognize the NPC by reputation or fame.

Appearance: This is a description of the NPC, including any characteristic features.

Introduction: This section describes how the NPC introduces herself to the PCs (or perhaps, how a herald or mutual acquaintance introduces them).

Personality: This is a short description of the NPC's personality and demeanor or a list of adjectives that describe the NPC's behavior. The more NPCs are present in a social encounter, the more important it is to make them distinctive so that the players can keep them straight.

Goals: This is a list of the NPC's public goals.

Biases: Some NPCs have biases—subtle attitudes that influence an encounter. For example, an NPC may think favorably of half-orcs and be suspicious of elves. If the NPC's biases affect a PC, apply a +2 or –2 circumstance modifier on that PC's influence checks, depending on whether the bias is in the PC's favor or not. If an NPC is strongly biased for or against a PC, the modifier may be even greater, but such strong biases are readily apparent. PCs can detect a bias with a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check.

Skills: Only a few of the NPC's skills are likely to be relevant in a social encounter. Include this abridged list of skills in the NPC's social stat block.

Analyze: A PC who succeeds at the listed check learns details about what skills or checks can influence the NPC. Each sentence should contain the information a single successful discovery check reveals.

Strengths: An NPC may be particularly resistant to certain tactics; such tactics are referred to as that NPC's strengths. For example, a person with little patience for flattery may think less favorably of someone who showers her with compliments. The skills and DCs required to discover these strengths are listed here. A PC who incorporates an NPC's strength into an influence check takes a –4 penalty on the check.

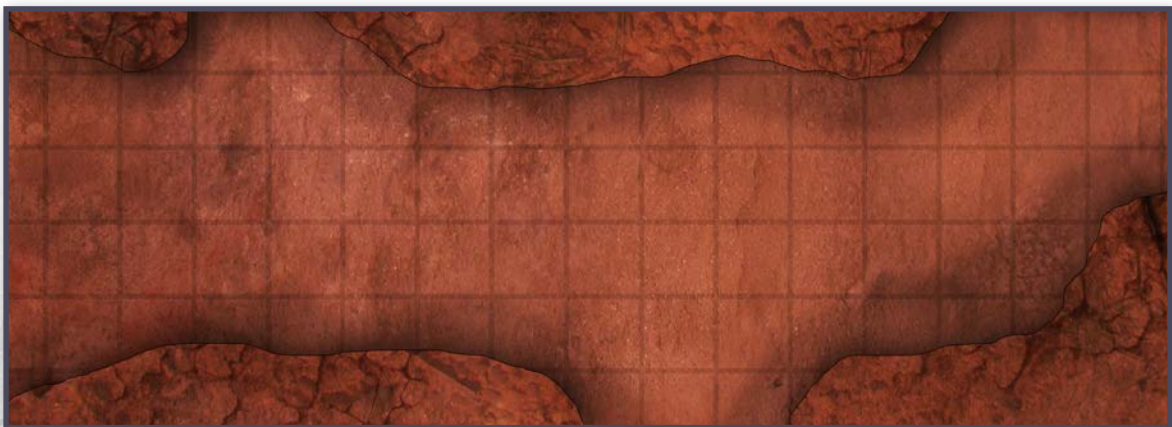
Weaknesses: Most NPCs have at least one weakness. A weakness could be a deep-seated secret or insecurity, or a hobby that the NPC can talk about for days on end. The skills and DCs needed to discover these weaknesses are listed here. For each weakness a PC incorporates into her influence check, she gains a cumulative +2 bonus.

Influence Checks: The skills and DCs for each influence check are listed here. If a skill isn't listed, it normally doesn't work at all, but if a player presents a strong narrative reason why a skill should work, his GM can add it to the list. Diplomacy and Bluff are usually on the list of possible skills. If Diplomacy isn't on the list of skills, there should be a reason in the NPC's personality. For example, an NPC who intensely dislikes small talk and only wishes to converse only about arcane theory may not respond to Diplomacy. However, Diplomacy is rarely the best skill with which to influence someone; the DC of Diplomacy checks to influence an NPC is typically higher than the DC when using skills tailored to the NPC's personality or interests. GMs should keep the PCs'

skills in mind when designing a social encounter so each PC has a way to contribute. Not every NPC can necessarily be influenced, in which case discovery checks reveal that the NPC is a lost cause.

Successes Needed: This lists the number of successful skill checks the PCs need to sway an NPC's opinion (or improve the NPC's mood in the case of the interactions presented in this scenario.)





Pathfinder Society Scenario #10-02: Bones of Biting Ants

Event _____

Date _____

GM # _____

GM Character # _____

GM Name _____

GM Prestige Earned _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Concordance
☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court ☐ Concordance

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Prestige Points

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Prestige Points

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #10-02: Bones of Biting Ants

Character Chronicle #

☐ Core Campaign

A.K.A.

Player Name

Character Name

Organized Play #

Character #

Faction

This Chronicle sheet grants access to the following:

☐ ☐ ☐ **Gremlin's Token:** While Bujune may have inflicted years of torment on poor Stuinvolk, you were able to see the inner nobility of the fungal gremlin. The tiny fey has given you a small charm to commemorate your friendship; you may activate this charm by checking a box next to this boon as an immediate action, granting you a +2 bonus on saving throws against curse effects for 1 hour.

☐ ☐ ☐ **Mushroom Masher:** You repaid Bujune for the years of torment he inflicted on poor Stuinvolk, learning a thing or two about squishing fey and ants in the process. You may check a box next to this boon as a swift action to gain a +2 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls against creatures of the fey or vermin types for 1 minute.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ **Ulfen Ally:** Your journey with the Ulfen skald Stuinvolk Hundrakson has earned you a lifelong friend in the Pathfinder Society. At the start of any adventure, you may gain a single scroll of any 3rd-level or lower bard spell without paying its purchase price, though you must check a number of the boxes that precede this boon equal to the spell's level. These scrolls are custom-made for you and cannot be sold for profit, but you (and only you) gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Use Magic Device checks to activate a scroll acquired from this boon.

☐ ☐ **Whispers of the Amberhollow:** Your exposure to the mysterious *amberhollow* has imparted a tiny fragment of the King of Biting Ants's power. You may check a box next to this boon as a standard action to gain the benefits of a *sanctuary* spell (DC 15) against all creatures with the vermin type with a duration of 1 hour.

SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
3-4	650	1,299

SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
Out of Subtier	1,137	2,274

SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
6-7	1,625	3,249

SUBTIER	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal
—	—	—

MAX GOLD	
	Starting XP
	XP Gained (GM ONLY)
	Final XP Total

FAME		
	Initial Prestige	Initial Fame
		GM's Initials
	Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)	
	Prestige Spent	
	Current Prestige	Final Fame

FAME	
	Starting GP
	GP Gained (GM ONLY)
	Day Job (GM ONLY)

Gold Spent
Total

Subtier 3-4

Subtier 6-7

ivory ant construct (acts as a *brass spider* in the form of an ivory ant; 2,500 gp; *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 228)

necklace of fireballs type I (1,650 gp)

torc of the primal song (6,000 gp; *Advanced Class Guide* 237)

wand of endure elements (20 charges; 300 gp, limit 1)

aspect mask (6,500 gp; *Advanced Class Guide* 225)

ivory ant construct (acts as a *brass spider* in the form of an ivory ant; 2,500 gp; *Advanced Class Guide* 228)

necklace of fireballs type III (4,350 gp)

runestone of power (1st level; 2,000 gp; *Advanced Class Guide* 234)

torc of the primal song (6,000 gp; *Advanced Class Guide* 237)

wand of endure elements (20 charges; 300 gp, limit 1)

For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #