

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®

SEASON OF GHOSTS

ADVENTURE PATH

The Summer That Never Was

By Sen H.H.S.





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Campaign Overview

Shenmen wasn't always a haunted land. Not so long ago, monsters and ghosts were bedtime stories; the citizens of the sparsely populated province had a proud oral history of their ancestors' resilience despite the terrors they faced. But their own day-to-day lives instead faced a less supernatural threat: oppression from the empire of Lung Wa.

Lung Wa didn't intentionally treat Shenmen poorly, but the empire's practice of using postings to Shenmen to punish politicians and soldiers with an "undesirable assignment in the backwoods" created a cycle of oppression. As long as silver and fine lumber continued to be exported to greater Lung Wa, Shenmen's appointed governors and guards were mostly left to their own devices.

Over the years, the local government grew more corrupt. Those whom Lung Wa had sent to the province to be taught a lesson in humility instead learned that, as long as they produced goods for their superiors, they could run their own fiefdoms in whatever way best served themselves.

This situation only grew worse after Lung Wa's collapse. With no one above them, the leaders of Shenmen showed their true colors and became despots and tyrants—but not for long. The ghosts and monsters of Shenmen's history had never truly left—they'd merely been waiting. When they swept down from the Gossamer Mountains and emerged from the deepest vales of Spectrewood, Shenmen's corrupt leaders were the first to fall.

This resurgence was no reprieve for the people of Shenmen. It was merely a changing of the guard, as many of the slaughtered leaders rose from death as ghosts or transformed into monsters themselves. Today, the people live lives of fear, with annual traditions (such as Willowshore's "season of ghosts") in place to ensure proper offerings are regularly given in return for one more year of fearful subsistence.

Welcome to Willowshore

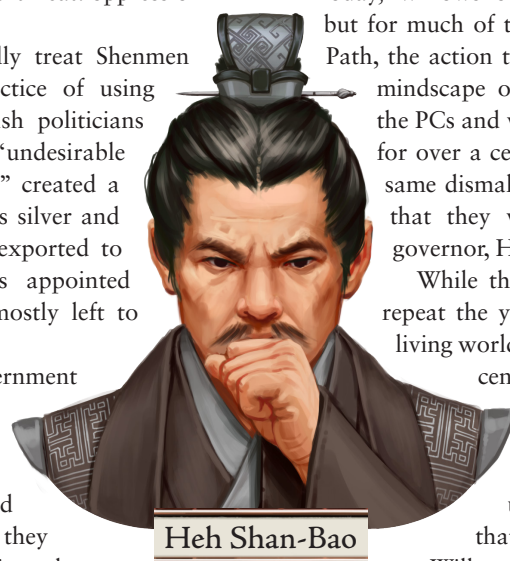
"The Summer That Never Was" begins in Willowshore, an isolated, self-sufficient settlement that scrapes by year after year with regular offerings and rituals designed to keep the ghosts and monsters at bay.

Today, Willowshore is abandoned and haunted, but for much of the Season of Ghosts Adventure Path, the action takes place in a phantasmagoric mindscape of the town where the souls of the PCs and villagers alike have been trapped for over a century, unwittingly repeating the same dismal year again and again, unaware that they were accidentally slain by their governor, Heh Shan-Bao.

While these trapped souls unknowingly repeat the year 7108 IC over and over, the living world moved on. Over the course of a century, Willowshore fell into ruin, despite a few half-hearted but doomed attempts to reclaim the settlement. It isn't until the current year, 7223 IC, that a significant effort to reclaim Willowshore finally begins.

At the command of Chou Mingxia, the ghostly ruler of the city of Sze, a lumber baron named Mago Kai turned his sights to Willowshore. Mago Kai is one of Sze's cruel success stories, but when several disasters caused closures at his other lumber camps, he was forced to look further afield from Sze to honor the commitments he'd made to Chou Mingxia. When Mago's scouts discovered the ruins of Willowshore, he set upon the settlement with swift urgency, establishing a base of operations at a nearby coastal fortress named Karahai after finding Willowshore to be in an unlivable state of disrepair. However, Mago Kai sees potential in the abandoned town—if he uses what resources he still has to rebuild Willowshore, he knows he can turn a profit in time for next spring's offering to Chou Mingxia.

There's only one problem: the ruins of Willowshore are haunted. The village's spectral inhabitants include its long-dead and long-trapped citizens... and the PCs.



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SHENMEN

While some nations in Tian Xia are inspired more closely by certain real-life cultures, Shenmen is instead primarily inspired by horror traditions taken from a wide range of real-world stories. It's a fictional nation and isn't meant to represent more than these traditions of supernatural horror. During this nation's history, it was conquered by Lung Wa, picked up immigrants from Hwanggot, and was taken over by jorogumo. It has a mix of cultures as a result, and its people have adopted words from multiple languages for their names and places. In Shenmen, ghosts and monsters are a very real part of life, and the practices employed by its people arise not from superstition but from necessity.

To those within Willowshore's mindscape, it's the first day of summer in the year 7108, just at the beginning of the so-called "season of shosts," when Spectrewood sees an increase in activity from hauntings, restless spirits, and undead. Every year, on the final day of spring in 7109, the mindscape and its trapped inhabitants reset back to that first day of summer in 7108. This cycle has repeated itself over and over as time in the living realm marched onward, until the arrival of Mago Kai in the year 7223, a full 115 years after Willowshore's doom.

It's that first day of summer in Willowshore—the 115th first day of that same summer, unknown to the mindscape's inhabitants—when this campaign begins.

PLAYING SEASON OF GHOSTS

The *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide* is a free PDF available at paizo.com. This adventure assumes the players use that document to help build their characters, but if you choose not to use the Player's Guide in your campaign, let your players know that this Adventure Path isn't set in a contemporary time—it instead takes place a few years after the onset of the Age of Lost Omens, in the year of 7108.

Campaign Timeline

Key events that led to the start of Season of Ghosts are presented below. Note that these dates use the Imperial Calendar, not Absalom Reckoning. To convert a date to Absalom Reckoning, subtract 2,500 from the year.

Date	Event
6223 IC	A heroic adventurer named Tan Sui-Jing defeats the powerful fiend Kugaptee but dies herself as the battle concludes. Her body

sprouts a sugi tree over Kugaptee's remains, trapping the fiend below the roots and preventing him from returning to life.

7020 The remote village of Willowshore is founded by a follower of Sangpotshi named Zhi Hui. She builds a Sangpotshi monastery in the mountain hinterlands, incorporating Tan Sui-Jing's sugi tree (and thus Kugaptee's grave) at the heart of the monastery's courtyard.

7054 Zhi Hui passes away of natural causes.

7060 Willowshore becomes a lumber town. Local Sangpotshi traditions dwindle. The monks of the Tan Sugi monastery, bereft of Zhi Hui's guidance, bicker and abandon the monastery.

7062 Chou Mingxia, the leader of the city of Sze, sends her son to Willowshore, where he attempts to harvest the glorious sugi tree. His attempt fails but does allow Kugaptee's influence to spread, resulting in a mysterious tragedy that would come to be known as the Night of Broken Blades.

7102 Governor Heh Shan-Bao is installed at Willowshore by Lung Wa.

7106 Age of Lost Omens begins. Lung Wa empire collapses. Government officials in Shenmen are cut off, and they succumb to greed, becoming cruel and abusive to the common folk. Governor Heh does his best to shelter Willowshore from these events.

7107 Shenmen falls under the control of the jorogumo Lang Loi. Elderly Chou Mingxia, still the ruler of Sze, is slain but returns as a ghost.

7108 The people of Willowshore perish in their sleep when Heh Shan-Bao attempts and fails to perform a ritual to heal the Tan Sugi and seal off Kugaptee in hopes of protecting the village from the fiend's growing influence and power. Two parallel mindscapes of Willowshore are created, one trapping the slain townsfolk in a realm between life and death. Heh Shan-Bao tries a last-ditch effort to save himself but instead becomes trapped alone in the second mindscape lodged between Willowshore and the living realm—a haunting within a haunting.

7223 Present day. Lumber baron Mago Kai begins his plans to turn Willowshore into a new lumber camp and starts orchestrating a mass exorcism and cleansing of Willowshore. These efforts causes enough of a disruption in the cycle of the Willowshore mindscape that, for the first time in 115 years, the PCs are potentially able to break free from the time loop they've endured.



Campaign Summary

In *Season of Ghosts*, the PCs become saviors of the town of Willowshore and lead their fellow townsfolk from being trapped between life and death to emerge once more into the modern era—provided they can survive the machinations of a greedy lumber baron and the influence of a not-quite-dead fiend.

This Adventure Path isn't built on a three-act story structure that follows a "beginning-middle-end" pattern, but instead on the classic four-act framework known as *kishotenketsu*, which is a traditional story structure of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese narratives. The four parts of this Adventure Path are organized accordingly. The first adventure introduces the story, setting, and characters while presenting the central issues and plot points. The second adventure is when the action of the plot takes center stage and the story escalates. The third introduces an unexpected twist or turning point in the storyline and serves as the plot's climax. Finally, the last adventure focuses on the results and ramifications of the story, concludes the events, and explores lessons learned.

THE SUMMER THAT NEVER WAS

By Sen H.H.S.

Pathfinder Adventure Path #196, Levels 1–3

The PCs find Willowshore infested with monsters. The PCs defeat them but are then presented with a mystery as to how the monsters infested the village in the first place. Soon thereafter, they discover that they can't travel far from the village—they, like the other citizens of Willowshore, are "cursed" and can't travel more than a few dozen miles from town. Eventually, the PCs confront the monsters that abducted them, discovering that a frightening Wall of Ghosts has manifested not far from their home and that the "curse" affecting them all might be even more insidious than they feared.

LET THE LEAVES FALL

By Joan Hong

Pathfinder Adventure Path #197, Levels 4–6

The PCs help the people of Willowshore rebuild and recover. At the same time, they must help the town prepare for winter, but as they do so, they experience more and more strange supernatural events that suggest actual ghosts are involved in the curse that afflicts Willowshore. To seek answers, the PCs must use magic to defeat the Wall of Ghosts west of town then travel to an abandoned monastery at the far side of the village hinterlands. There, they'll discover something shocking: not only have they been trapped in a mindscape, but they've been reliving the same year over and over.

PRESERVING SURPRISES

This Adventure Path has several surprises for the players to uncover as they play, most notably that they've been trapped in a time loop in between life and death, and that if they want to return to the real world, they'll have to reincarnate back into either their old bodies or entirely new ones. The Adventure Path still works fine if some or all of these surprises are spoiled for players, but you might want to let your players know when the campaign begins that *Season of Ghosts* includes some plot twists, and that if a player happens to know some or all of them, to please keep that knowledge to themselves to preserve the surprise for the others at the table.

If some or all of your players figure things out early or have had these plot twists spoiled, resist the urge to change the developments at the last minute to "preserve surprise" since it can be just as satisfying to experience a storyline that you've correctly anticipated. Instead, neither confirm nor deny correct guesses; simply remind the players, "We'll see how it all plays out by the end, won't we?"

NO BREATH TO CRY

By Dan Cascone and Eleanor Ferron

Pathfinder Adventure Path #198, Levels 7–9

The PCs search for ways they can escape their mindscape by entering another inhabited by Heh Shan-Bao, where they discover the truth—they're actually dead and have been repeating the same awful year for over a century. The PCs must then perfect a ritual to manifest in the living world so they can invade the coastal fortress of Karahai and defeat the exorcists who seek to banish them to the afterlife. Only then can they attempt a final return to the living world.

TO BLOOM BELOW THE WEB

By Liane Merciel

Pathfinder Adventure Path #199, Levels 10–12

The PCs and Willowshore reincarnate into the modern world and life, but once again they must defend their homes. They seek to secure the favor of the jorogumo in charge of Willowshore but must also find a way into yet another mindscape—one which the fiend Kugaptee hopes to use to return to life. By forging an alliance with the jorogumo and defeating Kugaptee's growing influence, the PCs can finally make Willowshore (relatively) safe once more.

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The PCs wake in the forest, but they soon discover their hometown has been engulfed in eerie supernatural weather and invaded by monsters. After making their way back into town and consulting with elders, the PCs pursue several missions to scout out the situation and take steps to relight the *Eternal Lantern* in the middle of Willowshore, which should drive back the supernatural weather and, hopefully, restore peace to the town!

Chapter 2: Reclaiming Willowshore..... 26

The PCs turn their attention to downtown Willowshore, where monsters have entrenched their position. Here, many townsfolk need rescue, and just as many strange and sinister creatures must be confronted before the town can be safely inhabited once again.

Chapter 3: The Willowshore Curse..... 36

The PCs discover that a cursed fog bank enshrouds the hinterlands, preventing all attempts to travel too far from town. Forced to rely upon what they have at hand, the PCs help the townsfolk of Willowshore recover from the monstrous invasion while investigating what could be the source of the strange curse that has trapped them in the region.

Chapter 4: The Wall of Ghosts 54

The PCs head west to confront the source of the curse. They then discover that the band of faceless monsters that now dwell in an abandoned lumber camp are merely worshippers of an older, more sinister force. This entity's influence might be the actual source of the Willowshore curse—yet that lies beyond an impenetrable Wall of Ghosts.

DEATH IN WILLOWSHORE

Though much of this Adventure Path takes place within a mindscape, slain PCs can be revived as usual through *raise dead* and similar spells. A slain PC can even become undead (see *Pathfinder Book of the Dead* for options), though the townsfolk are unlikely to welcome such a sinister development. Also, a player can always create a new character to take the place of a fallen character. This new PC might be from Willowshore, or could be an adventurer who stumbled into the region back in 7108 and who arrives in Willowshore with a strange gap in their memory between the first day of summer and the current date in your campaign—a gap whose meaning will eventually become clear once the PCs realize what has happened to them! Once you reach the final adventure in this campaign, the PCs will have “caught up” to the current date, and introducing replacement characters as needed becomes less complex.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“The Summer That Never Was” is designed for four characters.

- 1 The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.
The PCs should become 2nd level during their attempt to liberate downtown Willowshore—if you’re using milestones to level up, the PCs should reach 2nd level upon defeating the second of the three monstrous ringleaders that now control central Willowshore.
- 2
- 3 The PCs should be 3rd level before they begin Chapter 4.
The PCs should reach 4th level by the time they complete the adventure.



Chapter 1: To Light the Night

During the winter of early 7223 ic, a lumber baron named Mago Kai discovered something intriguing while looking back through his ancestor's journals—mentions of a grove of incredible sugi trees said to be hidden near a remote town called Willowshore.

During the first week of spring, Kai and a group of his agents traveled to Willowshore, ready to appraise and investigate a region that, according to the recovered journals, hadn't been harvested in well over a hundred years. The expedition arrived to find an overgrown and haunted ruin, but it was still full of potential. Could the place be reclaimed as a lumber camp? As they began planning, one of the ruin's remaining guardians—a stone spider guardian beast—attacked the group of prospective loggers.

Several people perished before Mago Kai defeated the stone spider, and he decided the group should retreat east to recuperate after their losses. He settled into the coastal fortress of Karahai and began to prepare for a more organized reconstruction effort, gathering the supplies, soldiers, and exorcists needed to cleanse Willowshore's ruins and reclaim it from its haunted past.

Unbeknownst to Mago Kai, the haunting effects he and his people experienced in the ruins of Willowshore were from more than merely unquiet spirits. These phenomena were the spiritual echoes and influences that reached out from within a mindscape version of Willowshore that came into existence 115 years before, when the city's governor



attempted (and failed) to perform a complex ritual meant to protect the town from the influence of an ancient fiend named Kugaptee. That failure resulted in the deaths of everyone in Willowshore, and left their souls trapped in a mindscape. The death of the town's guardian spirit, the stone spider once known to its locals by the name Ugly Cute, set into motion a series of events that may make Mago Kai's goal of reclaiming Willowshore for his own use impossible.

In previous years, the end of the mindscape's annual cycle reset everything back to the previous year's first day of summer, and all those trapped within the mindscape woke again in their beds with no memories of the previous year's events. But with Ugly Cute's death during the final days of spring, something strange happened. Without the spiritual protection afforded by the guardian beast, Kugaptee's influence grew even more quickly. It created a ghostly shell around the deeper regions of Willowshore's hinterlands, manifesting in the mindscape as a frightening "Wall of Ghosts." As Kugaptee slowly woke from his death slumber, the fiend's thoughts manifested in physical form, infesting the mindscape with all manner of monstrous creatures. Many of these monsters invaded Willowshore and overran the town in the final days of spring, disrupting the townsfolk's preparations for the upcoming season of ghosts and devastating many of the town's structures. Three of these creatures in particular—a gluttonous buso named Gurglegut, a vain ittan-momen named Gray Butcher, and a hedonistic rokurokubi named Mo Douqiu—became ringleaders for these manifested monstrosities, and their bullying leadership proved key to the town's fall.

When the mindscape reverted back to the first day of summer a few days after this disaster, things had changed forever, for these new manifestations born from Kugaptee's thoughts didn't reset with the rest of the mindscape. For the first time in 115 years, the people of Willowshore woke to a town infested with monsters and savaged by mayhem—but without any memories of how these events had come to pass.

Ugly Cute found itself alive once again when the cycle reset, but this time it was trapped in the mindscape itself. The stone spider quickly went into action, attacking and fighting back against the invading monsters. Fortunately for the PCs, among the creatures Ugly Cute encounters and drives off are the same noppera-bos who were in the process of dragging the unconscious PCs out of town and to the east to torment. With the rising of the sun, the PCs awaken in a familiar forest clearing along with memories of the previous night that are at odds with the reality

they now face. Where they go from here could lead to the destruction of the mindscape and the return of Willowshore's trapped souls to life—or to their true deaths after a long-delayed trip to the Boneyard.

Getting Started

When you're ready to start this campaign, inform the players that as they wake on the first day of summer, they do so in strange circumstances. Memories of the previous night return, and they can recall being dragged from town by townsfolk during the height of the Reenactment Festival, yet as they gather themselves, things seem off. The straw mats and red blindfolds they were ceremoniously trussed up in the night before seem to be cruder, filthier, and less comfortable today.

Even more curious is the fact that while each PC remembers settling down to sleep for the night to await their rescue in the morning, they were certain they'd been left behind in an entirely different part of the woods than where they woke. Allow the PCs to attempt DC 10 Survival or Willowshore Lore checks—anyone who succeeds realizes that they've instead awoken in a clearing east of Willowshore and that a nearby game trail leads west back toward town. If no PC attempts this check, the trail is easy to notice, and the fact that it leads downhill toward the sound of a river is enough to suggest that it likely leads back toward home.

The weather this morning is typical for Shenmen in the early summer—partially overcast with a crisp early morning chill to the air that, by noon, the PCs might expect to give way to a more pleasant but not overbearing heat. As the day draws on, the clouds only grow more ominous, and rain begins to fall.

Give the players a chance to introduce their characters if they haven't done so already. If the PCs chose backgrounds from the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, they'll have built-in reasons why they were among those selected for the role of abductee for the Reenactment Festival, as well as some potential links to the other PCs or Willowshore.

After the PCs talk for a bit, they notice something else is amiss. The main organizer of the ritual this year, the miller Choe Chung-hu, said he would arrive by sunrise with food to "ransom" the PCs and lead them back home. This step isn't essential; it's more of a breakfast delivery to thank those who helped with the reenactment. The PCs know that they can go back to Willowshore without this ransom being delivered, as if they safely "escaped from their kidnappers." However, Choe's absence is strange since the miller seldom goes back on his word.

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WHAT THE PCS KNOW

If you're using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, the players should already know the following three key points. If not, or if you wish to remind them of some key elements, make sure they know the following before starting this adventure.

What is the season of ghosts? The season of ghosts is a time during summer when Spectrewood sees an increase in hauntings, spirits, and undead. While the cause is uncertain, these ghosts often lure folks to their deaths.

What is the Reenactment Festival? In Willowshore, following a massive feast to celebrate the end of the season on the last day of spring, the town reenacts people being snatched away by "ghosts" (played by villagers in paper masks); the townsfolk then pretend to plunge into collective panic as designated wailers mourn loudly, while others play out a search and rescue effort. This farce is believed to trick real ghosts into thinking that someone has already haunted the settlement and thus convince them to seek a happier village to inflict misery upon. The PCs recall playing the role of the abductees, who must spend the night wrapped in straw mats until they're "ransomed" in the morning by the local in charge of that year's Reenactment Festival.

What items do the PCs have? Staying overnight in the woods is risky, and the PCs were given time to prepare in advance. They currently have whatever items most 1st-level adventurers start with, as determined during character creation.

If the PCs head back toward town, remember to ask each PC what Exploration Activity they use on the trip. If instead they decide to wait a while in the clearing, they can explore the location with activities such as Investigate or Detect Magic to check for anything out of place. Regardless of their choice, the "Strange Aggression" encounter that follows takes place at this time.

The First Day of Summer

The next four encounters assume the PCs travel west from the forest clearing, over the Duyue River bridge and up the road into Willowshore, passing by the stone spider and the eastern watchtower as they approach town. This journey is presented on the following pages as a series of encounters, but if your players choose

to diverge from this assumed path, use the gazetteer of Willowshore that starts on page 68 as needed. You should work in the information they would've gained from the first four encounters (the aggressive wildlife, the strange mist and crimson moon, the missing stone spider, and Ha Hai-er's tale) as soon as possible so that the PCs still have some context for events to follow.

STRANGE AGGRESSION

TRIVIAL 1

The woodlands surrounding Willowshore have their share of dangerous predators, but this close to town, those threats are usually minimal. As the PCs head back to town—or if instead they decide to wait for a time in the clearing—the sound of something rustling in the nearby undergrowth attracts their attention.

Creatures: Kugaptee's growing influence causes wildlife in the Willowshore hinterlands to grow unusually aggressive and supernaturally vocal, as the PCs now discover. A few moments after they hear the rustling, two giant centipedes scuttle out from the undergrowth. The bright orange creatures initially make unnerving hissing sounds upon spotting the PCs, but as they scurry forth to attack, these hisses begin forming words: "meat... flesh... bones... fingers... hair... skin... eyes..." As the fight progresses, the centipedes' whispering grows into short sentences, making it apparent that they're gasping out the parts of the PCs they hope to soon feed upon.

As the combat concludes, allow the PCs a chance to interpret the strange actions taken by the giant centipedes, as detailed in the "Sinister Animals" sidebar on page 11.

GIANT CENTIPEDES (2)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 61

Initiative Perception +6

MAZE OF MIST, RAIN OF BLOOD

As the PCs continue traveling west down the game trail, the weather grows stranger. Mist rolls in through the trees, growing into a full-fledged fog by the time the PCs step out of the forest and onto a familiar riverside road, a mere 10 minutes after they left the clearing they awoke in.

Up ahead, the sight of the Duyue River bridge through the unusual fog is a welcome sight, for this bridge confirms that the PCs have arrived at the easternmost edge of Willowshore. As they cross the bridge, though, the fog persists. Allow each PC to attempt a secret DC 13 Society or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge. On a critical failure, a PC misremembers an old legend that claims summer fog brings summer sickness. On a success, a PC recalls an

old nursery rhyme that suggests Willowshore's *Eternal Lantern* has been extinguished. See the lantern poem on page 12 for this rhyme.

As long as Willowshore's *Eternal Lantern* remains extinguished, day and night are more dangerous and unsettling. During the day, the town is constantly bathed in a thick fog known as mirage mist. The mist dissipates at night, but at the cost of crimson moonlight bathing the land.

Mirage Mist: The eerie fog is thick enough to obscure visibility beyond a range of 500 feet. Creatures viewed from more than 100 feet away are concealed. In addition, the mist distorts peripheral vision, causing one to periodically notice strange shapes moving and shifting about at the limits of their vision. All Perception checks attempted within mirage mist suffer a -1 status penalty as a result, and all DCs for Survival checks to Sense Direction are increased by 5.

Crimson Moon: At night, the mirage mist clears and the sky reverts to partially overcast. When the waxing moon is glimpsed through the clouds, it shines with an eerie crimson hue. This effect has the emotion, enchantment, fear, and mental traits. At the start of any hour a creature spends under this crimson moon, it must attempt a DC 15 Will save to avoid having the value of its frightened condition increase.

Critical Success The creature reduces its moon-induced frightened condition by 1.

Success The creature's moon-induced frightened condition doesn't increase.

Failure The creature's frightened condition value increases by 1, to a maximum value of 4. This frightened condition persists until dawn, or until enough critical success results reduce the value to 0.

Critical Failure As failure, but the condition's value increases by 2.

Blood Rain: Every sunset as the crimson moon rises, attempt a DC 14 flat check. On a success, the cloud cover increases fully (this doesn't negate the need to make hourly Will saves against the crimson moon while outdoors), and at some point during the night (as decided by the GM), what appears to be blood rains down on Willowshore. This "blood" seemingly coats everything with a layer of gore. Any PC who witnesses the blood rain must immediately attempt a save against the effects of the crimson moon, taking a -4 circumstance penalty to the save if they're out in the rain. A PC whose frightened condition increases as the result of this saving throw becomes fleeing for 1 minute and must attempt to escape to an indoor location. The blood rain ends after a few minutes, transitioning back to overcast skies for the remainder

SINISTER ANIMALS

The fact that these animals are unusually aggressive should already concern any PC who succeeds at a secret DC 15 Nature or Survival check (on a success, that PC realizes how unusual it is for creatures like giant centipedes to be so quickly aggressive and to avoid fleeing upon facing superior foes, especially during daylight hours), but the addition of their disturbing ability to speak reveals immediately that something supernatural is afoot. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Occultism or Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows these animals are being influenced in some way by an evil spirit. These animals—along with many other aggressive animals encountered in the mindscape during this chapter—are physical manifestations of Kugaptee's influence over the region. Their unusual intellect (they have Int +0 and can speak Common), chaotic evil alignment, and cruel personalities are a side effect of the fiend's increased presence in this cycle of the mindscape, but they otherwise have standard statistics for their kind.

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Crimson Moon





Lazy Adou took a break, and
did not light the lamp that day.
This proved to be a big mistake, for
then the ghosts came out to play!
Kazy mist and moon of blood,
all because he just gave up.

LANTERN POEM

of the night. Fallen rain reverts to normal water once the bloody rain ends.

Resolving the Manifestations: The PCs can stop these eerie manifestations of Kugaptee's influence by lighting the *Eternal Lantern* at Dawnstep Bridge (see "Light the Night" on page 25). If the PCs don't recall the old rhyme, you can have them learn of the rhyme by a rescued NPC of your choice.

THE SPIDERLESS GATE

After crossing the bridge over the Duyue River, the PCs arrive at the eastern entrance to Willowshore. Here, a stone statue of a guardian spider once stood in a shrine next to the road, but as the PCs approach, something looks off in the mist—the spider statue is missing, with only an empty shrine left behind. Willowshore's eastern entrance lantern, once held in the stone spider's fangs, now lies extinguished on its side in the grass below.

Allow the PCs a DC 15 Society or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge about the stone spider statue, as detailed in area **W30** on page 79. The same check also reminds them that the *Eternal Lantern*—Willowshore's original entrance lantern—is located near Dawnstep Bridge (area **W11**).

The Missing Spider: The stone spider somewhat affectionately known by the locals as "Ugly Cute" is the size of a horse and made of solid stone, which makes it unlikely that someone simply made off with it. No sign of chiseling or damage to the rock on which it once perched upon is evident, but large furrows scar the ground surrounding it. With a successful DC 15 Survival check to Track, a PC confirms these marks are consistent with tracks the statue would've left if it animated and headed east down the road. The tracks then enter the river and become impossible to follow. The PCs have no way of knowing it at the moment, but

later in the adventure, they'll discover what happened to Ugly Cute—see page 50 in Chapter 3.

The Unlit Lantern: The entrance lantern is empty of oil. While this lantern won't drive back the mist and moonlight if it's lit again, if the PCs refill it (they can find lantern oil in the next encounter if they don't have any at this time), they gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against the crimson moonlight, and the flat check for blood rain increases to DC 18.

Reward: Give the PCs 20 XP for lighting the lantern.

EASTERN WATCHTOWER

After traveling about a mile further west from the missing spider statue, the PCs reach Willowshore's eastern watchtower. The tang of blood fills the air, and four bodies lie sprawled on the ground. Two belong to town guards, their legs swollen and expressions of pain frozen on their faces. The other two bodies appear to be tiny blue-gray humanoids with sharp teeth and giant ears, seemingly slain by sword blows.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the two tiny humanoid bodies as jinkin gremlins. Any character who examines the two human guards and succeeds at a DC 13 Medicine check realizes they perished from poison delivered from snake bites to the legs. A PC who Searches the area reveals two dead vipers in the grass nearby.

Creatures: Up in the guard tower, a town guard named Hai-er Ha managed to escape death. When she sees the PCs, she demands they recite at least four of the eight practices of the season of ghosts to prove they aren't monsters in disguise. These eight practices are listed in the sidebar on page 13 and in the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*. If you're not using the guide, or if the players have trouble remembering the practices, a character can recall two randomly rolled practices with a successful DC 10 Religion, Society, or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge (or four on a critical success, one on a failure, and none on a critical failure). A PC can also get Hai-er to relax by Making an Impression with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to shift her attitude from unfriendly to at least indifferent.

Once she's convinced, her attitude shifts to indifferent if it wasn't there already, and she clammers down from the tower to greet the PCs with relief. While she doesn't know any of them personally, she certainly remembers yesterday evening when Uncle Choe and his crew in their ghostly paper masks carried the PCs out to the woods at the culmination of the Reenactment Festival. She also confirms they returned from the woods without the PCs a short time later, just at the beginning of her watch. It was well after

midnight that those “horrible little blue monsters” came out of the woods to the south with their trained serpents. The other two guards on duty managed to defeat the creatures but then perished to snake bites. Hai-er has remained in the watchtower, plagued by a mix of fear and guilt ever since, and the dense fog that has descended on Willowshore frightens her all the more. If no PC recalled the rhyme about Lazy Adou earlier, she could share it with them.

She warns the PCs that screams, roars, and other frightening sounds have been echoing through the air from town, but that since dawn, things have been silent. She’s incredulous if the PCs tell her Ugly Cute’s statue is missing. Hai-er prefers to stay here in the tower “until this weird fog lifts,” and she promises to ring the tower bell if she spots any danger. If more than 24 hours have passed, she is running low on food and will make her way into town—her fate is left to the GM to determine in this encounter.

Hai-er has some advice for the PCs before they leave the watchtower.

“Go home, check on friends and family, make sure everyone is all right. That’s what I would do if not for this fog. Pharasma bless us, I hope my daughter is okay. Even though I asked Granny Hu to babysit, I worry. And my husband... hopefully he’s safe at the Matsuki estate right now. That place is nearly a fortress!”

All PCs know that “Granny Hu” refers to Hu Ban-niang, and the Matsuki estate is Shou’s home—though he’s more commonly called “Old Matsuki.” These two individuals are the spiritual leaders of Willowshore’s Northridge and Southbank factions, respectively. The PCs can invite Hai-er to join them, though she initially resists due to a combination of her fear of what’s happening all around her and her dedication to her post. If she can be made at least friendly, she’ll agree to accompany the PCs. She encourages them to either visit Granny Hu (so she can check on her daughter) or the Matsuki estate (to track down her husband)—if the PCs neglect either of these options before nightfall, she’ll set off to reunite with her daughter on her own. As long as she’s accompanying the PCs, Hai-er provides support in combat with her crossbow, closing to melee only once she runs out of ammunition. If reduced to fewer than 6 Hit Points, she panics and



Hai-er Ha

THE EIGHT PRACTICES

The people of Willowshore follow these eight tenets during the season of ghosts. These beliefs are held as protections against the attentions of minor evil or mischievous spirits and, as such, can be used against the phantoms that plague Willowshore early on. However, they’re generally ineffective against more powerful undead or actual ghosts the party will face in later adventures, and any local or PC who knows these practices would know this as well.

1. Do not call a ghost a ghost; instead, address them with friendly greetings if you must.
2. Do not pat people on the head or shoulders.
3. Avoid entering bodies of water when a ghost is nearby.
4. Do not eat food that has two stick-like objects protruding from it.
5. Do not lean against walls during the day.
6. Do not whistle at night.
7. Do not leave laundry out at night.
8. If you hear someone call your name from behind you at night, do not turn around.

flees, hoping to find somewhere safe to hide before moving on to seek out her daughter. Once she’s reunited with either her daughter or husband, she no longer accompanies the PCs.

HAI-ER HA

CREATURE 1

LN female human guard (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 232)

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: Hai-er provides the party with two minor magical supplies from the watchtower that might be of use to them—a *ladder feather token* and a single *shining crossbow bolt*. A small cask of lantern oil is stored here as well, should the PCs wish to light the lantern to the east at Ugly Cute’s abandoned perch.

Reward: Grant the PCs XP as if they defeated Ha Hai-er in combat if they befriend her. If they help reunite her with her family, grant the party 1 Reputation Point with Northridge and Southbank.

Back to Willowshore

Once the PCs reach Willowshore, their main goal should be to explore the monster-infested town, build

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up their resources and reputation, and work toward lighting the *Eternal Lantern* so they can neutralize the effects of the mist and moonlight.

If the players need guidance, you can have Hai-er ask them to escort her to either the Matsuki estate (see Making Contact: Southbank on page 16) or to Granny Hu (see Making Contact: Northridge on page 17)—either will put the party in contact with one of Willowshore’s two elders. Any PC who has family, friends, or a home in Willowshore might wish to return there as well—see Returning Home on page 16 in this case.

The PCs can also begin exploring downtown Willowshore on their own, but this area is where the bulk of the invading monsters now lurk, and it’s best if the PCs first make contact with one of the elders. If the party persists in heading downtown, proceed to Chapter 2. While encounters in this chapter are more challenging, they’re still balanced for 1st-level PCs.

WILLOWSHORE FEATURES

Most doors in Willowshore are sliding doors, with the exception of those found on outhouses (which are hinged wooden doors). Exterior sliding doors are made of solid wood, grant standard cover, and can be Forced Open by a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Athletics check. Indoor sliding doors or room partitions provide no cover, do provide concealment, and can be Forced Open by a character who succeeds at a DC 5 Athletics check. You can poke a hole in the paper of many interior doors to peek inside as an Interact action, though you must pass a Stealth check to remain undetected by creatures on the other side. Weapons and ammunition can easily pierce through interior doors.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

When the PCs travel throughout Willowshore using exploration mode for more than a mile in one continuous stretch, attempt a DC 10 flat check. Each PC who’s Avoiding Notice or Scouting increases this DC by 1, but each PC who’s Hustling or Searching decreases the DC by 2.

On a success, the PCs come across a random encounter. If the result is a phantom but the PCs are outdoors during the day, treat it as no encounter. If the result is a haunt, choose the haunt that’s most appropriate for the location (see Haunts), or treat it as no encounter. When the PCs are traveling at night, add a +5 modifier when rolling on the Willowshore Random Encounters table.

These random encounters end once the *Eternal Lantern* has been lit.

WILLOWSHORE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20 Roll	Encounter	Threat Level
1-2	1 giant cockroach (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 2 53)	Trivial 1
3-4	Haunt (phantom footsteps or locking door)	Trivial 1
5-6	1 jinkin (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 193)	Trivial 1
7-8	1 spider swarm (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 306)	Trivial 1
9-10	Haunt (blood-soaked soil or disembodied voices)	Trivial 1
11-12	Haunt (bloodthirsty toy or toppling furniture)	Trivial 1
13-14	1 jinkin and 1 viper (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 193, 302)	Low 1
15-16	3 phantom ravens	Low 1
17-18	1 phantom boar	Low 1
19-20+	2 phantom wolves	Moderate 1

Aggressive Wildlife: Giant cockroaches or spider swarms are normally skittish, but these creatures have become more aggressive from Kugaptee’s growing influence, and these vermin fight to the death. As in *Strange Aggression* (page 10), a character who succeeds at a secret DC 15 Nature or Survival check notes how strange it is for these creatures to be so violent. And as with the centipedes in that encounter, these wild animals are chaotic evil and can speak—but do so mostly to issue threats or taunt their victims; they have no interest in actual conversations.

Haunts: For each haunt encounter, two options for haunts taken from *Pathfinder Book of the Dead* are given—choose the one that makes the most sense for the situation the PCs are in at the time. All six of the haunts mentioned on this table are detailed fully on pages 64–65 of *Book of the Dead*. You can use these six haunts as inspiration to craft more haunts to vex your players with if you wish.

Jinkin: Encounters with these gremlins are either with a lone jinkin or with a jinkin and their pet viper. A jinkin flees if reduced to fewer than 5 Hit Points, but a pet viper fights to the death. Many of these jinkins have stolen mundane objects from locals and either wear them in strange ways or are in the process of destroying the object. Note that all of the jinkins encountered in this adventure speak Common, rather than Undercommon.

Phantoms: These creatures are the closest thing to actual ghosts the PCs are likely to face this early in the Adventure Path. These phantom animals are manifestations of Kugaptee’s influence as much as they are of Willowshore’s collective fears and superstitions.

As such, these phantoms might call out a PC's name when they're looking away, or might appear as the result of a PC entering a body of water or daring to whistle at night. The most important thing for the PCs to note is that by using the first practice and addressing these phantoms with friendly greetings, the PCs can cause them to lose their power and even disincorporate. Allow the PCs to attempt a secret DC 15 Religion or Willowshore Lore check to realize this tactic if they don't come up with it themselves after encountering a phantom. These phantoms appear as ghostly, pale green versions of the real animal, but have eerie glowing eyes and can speak Common. Phantoms, when encountered, are more eager to frighten the PCs than to fight, and until they're attacked, they'll only use their innate occult spells or Intimidation checks to Demoralize. Once a phantom is attacked, it fights back with its melee strikes. These wandering phantoms can't pursue victims into buildings and vanish back into the Ethereal Plane at the end of any round in which they see no viable targets outside on the streets.

PHANTOM BOAR

CREATURE 2

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 202)

Perception +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidation +6

Str -5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Walk the Ethereal Line ♦♦ As phantom knight.

AC 18; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

HP 22; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 2 (except force or *ghost touch*; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Vulnerable to Kindness Any creature within 30 feet that the phantom can see and hear can issue a calm and friendly greeting to it as a two-action activity with the auditory, concentrate, linguistic, and mental traits. A creature greeting the phantom in this manner must attempt a DC 18 Diplomacy check.

Critical Success The phantom takes 4d8 mental damage and is stunned 1.

Success The phantom takes 2d8 mental damage.

Failure The phantom takes 1d8 mental damage.

Critical Failure The phantom is unaffected, and is not affected by this weakness for 1 round.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ tusk +7 (finesse, force, magical), **Damage** 1d8+3 force

Occult Innate Spells DC 15, attack +7; **1st** *fear*; **Cantrips (1st)** *daze*, *ghost sound*

Boar Charge ♦♦ The phantom boar Strides twice and then makes a tusk Strike. As long as it moved at least 20 feet, it gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its attack roll.

PHANTOM RAVEN

CREATURE -1

RARE NE TINY ETHEREAL INCORPOREAL PHANTOM SPIRIT

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 202)

Perception +5; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4

Str -5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Walk the Ethereal Line ♦♦ As phantom knight.

AC 15; **Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

HP 6; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 1 (except force or *ghost touch*; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Vulnerable to Kindness As phantom boar, but DC 15.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ beak +7 (finesse, force, magical), **Damage** 1d6 force

Occult Innate Spells DC 13, attack +5; **Cantrips (1st)** *daze*, *ghost sound*

PHANTOM WOLF

CREATURE 1

RARE NE MEDIUM ETHEREAL INCORPOREAL PHANTOM SPIRIT

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 202)

Perception +7; darkvision



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Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidation +5

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Walk the Ethereal Line ♦♦ As phantom knight.

AC 15; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

HP 14; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision;

Resistances all damage 2 (except force or ghost touch; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Vulnerable to Kindness As phantom boar, but DC 17.

Speed fly 35 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +7 (finesse, force, magical), **Damage** 1d6+2 force

Occult Innate Spells DC 14, attack +6; **1st** *fear*; **Cantrips** (1st) *daze*, *ghost sound*

Pack Attack The phantom wolf's Strikes deal an additional 1d4 damage to creatures within reach of at least one of its allies.

RETURNING HOME

One or all of the PCs might have homes or family in Willowshore, in which case they might be concerned and wish to return home to ensure everything is safe. If your players are using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, they might have already selected buildings for their homes.

Use buildings from any map of your choice to represent the PC's homestead. In each home, a minor peril awaits—roll 1d12 on the Willowshore Random Encounters table on page 14 to determine what the PCs face in their homes. If any friends or family are present, they should be safe (but perhaps rattled by the danger), provided the PCs can solve the situation found within.

Treasure: For each home the PCs visit, they can recover some supplies—either items left behind by the PC, or gifts from friends or family. If you're using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, the players themselves will have had the chance to pick one of the following sets of treasure during character creation when they selected their homes in town. Otherwise, choose a treasure from the following list for the PCs as a reward, but don't duplicate rewards unless there are more than 4 PCs in the party.

- Two *minor healing potions* and one piece of common adventuring gear worth 2 gp or less of the PC's choice.
- One *predictable silver piece* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 262) and a vial with one dose of *oil of potency*.
- Supplies for an alarm snare, 10 sp, and two lesser ghost charges (*Advanced Player's Guide* 253).
- One chunk of cold iron.

Reward: Grant the PCs 10 XP if they visit all of their homes.

Making Contact: Southbank

Many of the townsfolk in South Willowshore retreated to the Matsuki estate (area W6) or the Thrice-Blessed Inn (area W7) in the predawn hours due to the monstrous invasion, only braving their workshops and stores if they had no other choice. As a result, most NPCs who are usually found south of the river are generally sheltering at the estate or the inn until the *Eternal Lantern* is lit. If the players don't think of paying a visit to the Matsuki estate on their own, an allied NPC should suggest it before long—or you can simply have the PCs all attempt Society or Willowshore Lore checks and give this suggestion to whichever character rolls highest.

MEETING OLD MATSUKI

The Matsuki estate is a blur of activity. Many rooms have been cleared and converted into workshops, medical stations, or sleeping quarters. The only pocket of relative calm is in the banquet hall. Here, sitting with other major figures of south Willowshore, Old Matsuki listens patiently to all the reports coming in.

When he notices the PCs, Old Matsuki pauses his current meeting and beckons the PCs to join him, providing warm food and drinks for the party. While the PCs recuperate, Old Matsuki asks them what happened after they woke up in the forest. After the PCs recount their experience, he is sympathetic and encourages anyone with missing family members to stay optimistic. He offers lodgings if the PCs feel their homes aren't secure enough to stay in.

Once the PCs have had a chance to relax a bit, Old Matsuki asks for their help in retaking Willowshore. In particular, he mentions the following four topics as goals for the PCs to tackle. The order in which they attempt these quests is left to the PCs to decide.

Contacting Northridge: With the monsters encamped on Dawnstep Bridge, easy access to Northridge is denied. Old Matsuki admits he has his differences with Granny Hu, but making contact with her and providing available aid to Northridge is important. If the PCs feel up to the task, Old Matsuki suggests seeking Granny Hu out at the trade office (see Making Contact: Northridge on page 17).

Ugly Cute: Old Matsuki notes that several refugees have seen a horse-sized spider made of stone striding through the mist, and he believes Willowshore's stone guardian has awakened to defend the town; the PCs can confirm this theory by reporting the missing statue. He plans on recruiting the hunters from the Silvermist Lodges (area W5) to track down Ugly Cute to provide aid to the guardian beast, but currently, the hunters are busy saving townsfolk in the streets. If the PCs can

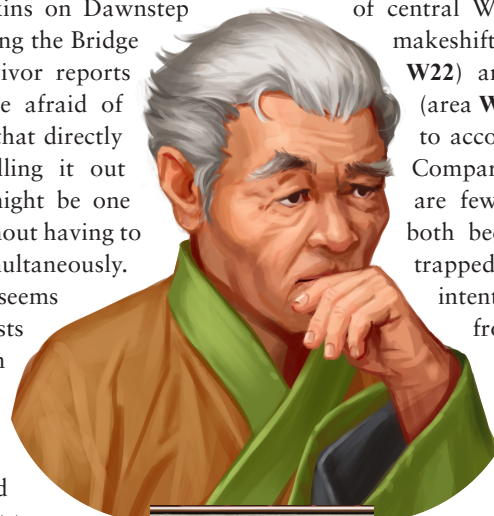
contact one of the hunters, Old Matsuki asks them to convey this information to them (see The Trapped Hunter on page 19).

The Invading Monsters: Old Matsuki warns the PCs about the buso and jinkins on Dawnstep Bridge (area W11; see Liberating the Bridge on page 23). He shares survivor reports that the jinkins appear to be afraid of fighting beside the buso, and that directly confronting the buso or calling it out specifically for a challenge might be one way to defeat the monster without having to contend with the gremlins simultaneously. He also notes that the buso seems taken with drink, and he suggests that if the PCs think they can trick the monster, they could approach it with an offering of drugged or poisoned wine to make it easier to defeat. Old Matsuki suggests paying a visit to the Hand of Spring (area W19) if the PCs are interested in pursuing this option (see Clash at the Clinic on page 20).

The Unlit Lantern: Old Matsuki suspects that the cause of the strange weather affecting Willowshore (and thus an important step in retaking the town) is tied to the fact that, for the first time since it was lit generations ago, the *Eternal Lantern* has gone dark. He knows the history of the *Eternal Lantern* and shares with the PCs the story of how Master Zhi Hui first lit the lantern using three blessed copper coins. To relight the lantern and, hopefully, bring an end to the strange mist and unsettling crimson moonlight, the PCs must obtain the blessing of three gods by visiting three different shrines and offering a copper coin to receive the blessing. It only takes 10 minutes for Old Matsuki to teach the PCs how to perform the prayer; he provides the PCs with three copper coins as tokens to offer (see Blessing the Coins on page 22). Once the PCs have three blessed coins, they should make haste to Dawnstep Bridge to relight the *Eternal Lantern* (see Light the Night on page 25).

Downtown Willowshore: In closing, Old Matsuki warns the PCs against entering downtown Willowshore at this time, for reports indicate that this part of town has become particularly infested with monsters. Once the four tasks above have been accomplished (in particular, the lighting of the *Eternal Lantern*), plans for dealing with downtown can proceed.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for meeting Old Matsuki for the first time in this adventure.



Old Matsuki

Making Contact: Northridge

Willowshore's new trade office (area W21) and its warehouses were completed weeks ago. This, plus the fact that they're located a fair distance to the east of central Willowshore, makes them perfect makeshift shelters. The fisheries (area W22) and even the Mushroom House (area W24) have also opened their doors to accommodate the influx of villagers. Compared to the Matsuki estate, there are fewer refugees at the trade office, both because the NPCs downtown are trapped and because several locals have intentionally distanced themselves from Granny Hu, but making contact with those holed up at the trade office is still an important step toward reclaiming Willowshore from the monsters.

CROSSING THE WATERS MODERATE 1

As long as monsters retain control of Dawnstep Bridge (area W11), traveling between Northridge and Southbank is tricky, as the waters of Woodcraft Lake and the Ceiba River present a significant barrier.

Ceiba River: The Ceiba River varies between 20 and 25 feet deep with very little shallows along either shore—a feature that traditionally made the river very well suited for the transport of lumber. A PC can Swim the river's waters with a successful DC 15 Athletics check or cross in a rowboat via Piloting checks (see page 175 in the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*, but note that a critical failure on a Piloting check results in a capsizing and the boat sinking). Make sure to remind the players of the third practice of the season of ghosts—that one should “avoid entering bodies of water when a ghost is nearby.” In this case, entering a body of water could mean physically entering it or even attempting to pilot a boat across water. While there are no game mechanics in play to back up this implied danger, you can make your players a bit uneasy and nervous about crossing the river simply by reminding them of this superstition.

Willowshore Dam: The dam (area W14) is currently open. A character can close it as a 10-minute activity to Interact with the dam's mechanisms on either shore by succeeding at a DC 15 Athletics or DC 13 Engineering Lore check. Each attempt to close (or open) the dam incurs a flat check for an encounter (page 14), and a critical failure indicates the mechanism has become stuck and can't be opened or closed again until it's repaired with several days of work.

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Once the dam is closed, the waters of the Ceiba River lower to a depth of 10 feet, and the DC to Swim or Pilot a boat is reduced by 5 for 2 hours, after which the water level of Woodcraft Lake rises enough to drain over the dam's spillways, reverting the waters to their former depth and speed. Opening the dam at this point increases the river depth back to normal and increases checks to cross it by 5 for 15 minutes.

A PC can treat the dam itself as an improvised bridge, but its slick surface and narrow spots mean that to do so requires that PC to succeed at five DC 17 Acrobatics checks to balance during an intense 5-minute crossing.

Woodcraft Lake: While the waters of Woodcraft Lake (area **W13**) are calmer (reduce checks to Swim and Pilot by 5), the bodies of dead townsfolk float in the waters, either tossed here unceremoniously by monsters or, more tragically, the results of failed attempts by frightened people trying to cross the waters. These deaths, combined with the influence of the eerie mists and crimson moonlight, have caused the lake to become haunted. Any attempt to cross the lake before the *Eternal Lantern* is lit runs afoul of the following hazard.

GRASPING CURRENTS

HAZARD 3

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +20 (trained) to notice a weird, faintly glowing ripple of the current beneath the water.

Description A swath of drowned spirits tries to pull someone down into the water to join them.

Disable DC 23 Religion to calm the unquiet spirits in the waters for an hour, or light the *Eternal Lantern* (automatically disables the haunt)

Ghostly Grasp  **Trigger** A creature attempts to cross the lake by swimming or piloting a boat; **Effect** Ghostly arms reach up to grab and clutch at the creature or the boat, causing a -2 penalty to the Athletics or Piloting check that triggered the haunt. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) On its initiative, the grasping currents attempt to Grapple a swimming creature or capsize a rowboat by attempting an Athletics check with a +12 modifier. A creature that's restrained by the grasping currents is pulled underwater and risks drowning. To capsize a rowboat, the haunt's Athletics check is rolled against the pilot's Athletics or Sailing Lore DC, whichever is higher.

Reset The grasping currents quickly build up power and can trigger again after 10 minutes have passed.

Reward: The first time the PCs make it to Northridge in this adventure, grant them 40 XP.

FINDING A BOAT

Until the buso at Dawnstep Bridge is defeated, rowboats are perhaps the safest way to cross the Ceiba River, but finding one on the southern shoreline isn't particularly easy since most of the urban infrastructure for boating exists along the river's northern banks. Worse, many of the rowboats in town have been damaged by destructive jinkins. A character who Searches for 10 minutes along the southern bank and succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check can find a broken rowboat, while with a critical success, they locate an undamaged rowboat.

Larger boats and barges are moored at various places along the northern shore, but these vehicles are likely beyond the capacity of a low-level party to pilot. Fortunately, characters can automatically find a functional rowboat on the river's northern bank after taking 10 minutes to Search.

See the *Gamemastery Guide* for vehicle rules (pages 174-177) and for rowboat statistics (page 179).

MEETING GRANNY HU

The new trade office (area **W21**) is indeed where Granny Hu and most of Northridge's refugees have fled to. Several of the nearby warehouses have been converted into temporary shelters for locals, but everyone the PCs speak to directs them to the trade office, called the Ceiba-Duyue Exchange.

At the trade office, Granny Hu scrutinizes a map of Willowshore, using game pieces from an Eight Paces set to mark where monsters have been sighted and where people might be trapped. The PCs' arrival comes as quite a shock to her and her current right-hand aide, the Kofusachi cleric Kim Gu-won. Granny Hu questions how the PCs managed to cross the river, fearing they might have been forced to strike a bargain with the monsters. Once the PCs explain, Granny Hu shakes her head and chuckles at the party's foolish bravery. She asks them to sit and update her on what they've been through, feigning concern for the folks in the south.

Granny Hu is forced to reluctantly agree with Old Matsuki about the three most important steps that must be taken next, but if the PCs come to her first, she eagerly suggests the following tasks on her own, providing somewhat different advice.

The Invading Monsters: Granny Hu has heard rumors that the "brain" of the monsters that invaded Willowshore is someone (or something) named Mo Douqiu. She believes he might either be a human with occult powers or some sort of human-like yokai. She sees Northridge as being more self-sufficient, and restoring access to Dawnstep Bridge is, to her,

less important than defeating the creatures that now control downtown Willowshore.

Ugly Cute: Granny Hu did hear from some survivors that the spider statue has gone missing, but she finds the idea of the stone statue “waking up on its own” to be ridiculous superstition. If anything, she suspects the statue might have been animated by magic, or perhaps it has become haunted. Since the source of its mobility is unknown, she warns against assumptions that Ugly Cute is friendly, though she doesn’t see it as a foremost threat that needs to be handled.

The Unlit Lantern: While Granny Hu only vaguely knows the legend of the *Eternal Lantern*, Kim can recount how Master Zhi Hui lit the lantern with coins blessed by Calistria, Kofusachi, and Shelyn and suggests that seeking their shrines for blessings might be the best tactic.



Granny Hu

Additional Requests

Granny Hu’s primary objective is to retake the barracks downtown for its armory, but she trusts her son-in-law and current guard captain, Zheng Peng, to be able to hold his own for a week. Therefore, she only mentions this quest to the PCs if they manage to reach and liberate the barracks before she does.

While she begrudgingly agrees that the missions given to the PCs by Old Matsuki are important, there are other tasks that she feels are more pressing. Granny Hu asks the PCs to help with the following first before they look to Matsuki’s tasks.

Checking the Doctor: Despite Granny Hu’s invitation to Dr. Damihansig Mababangloob (“Doctor Dami” for short) to join her at the trade office, the doctor refused to abandon his clinic, the Hand Of Spring. Being the only doctor in Willowshore, Granny Hu wants to ensure that when this is all over, the village still has a physician—and if she can personally claim some of the responsibility for the doctor’s safety, so much the better (see *Clash at the Clinic* on page 20).

Missing Grandchildren: On a more personal level, Granny Hu is worried about some of her missing grandchildren. They were last seen heading toward the northern drying yards near the Mushroom House (area W24) on the evening of the Reenactment Festival. Granny Hu speculates they hosted their own private party there and somehow ended up unable to return home (see *The Worst Puzzle* on page 21).

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for meeting Granny Hu for the first time in this adventure.

First Missions

Before the PCs get to the larger task of confronting the creatures in downtown Willowshore or seeking to relight the *Eternal Lantern*, the town’s elders have the following missions for them to attempt.

A1. THE TRAPPED HUNTER SEVERE 1

If the PCs agree to seek out a Silvermist lodge member to deliver Old Matsuki’s request for a hunter to track Ugly Cute when possible, the PCs will need to spend an hour Searching in Southbank, after which each PC who took part in the Search can attempt a DC 17 Perception or a DC 15 Survival check. On a success, they find their way to a small farm where a strange commotion is taking place.

Use map the map for Small Farm on page 20 for this encounter.

Creatures: A pair of jinkins by the names of Midori and Murasaki, plus two mean-spirited animals (a weasel named Noodles and a raven named Sparrow), have trapped one of the Silvermist hunters, a half-elf named Sumika. She was tricked into investigating this farm by the creatures’ voices, which she mistook for crying children. After being critically wounded by a spring-loaded spear trap the gremlins rigged in the farmhouse’s southwest communal room, Sumika managed to crawl into the southern bedroom and barricaded the door.

The four are now gathered near the entrance to the southwest building, calling out taunts to Sumika. “Blue like the dawn! Purple and miraculous! Swift like a fawn! Together, we are the Abacus Sisters!” cry out the two jinkins. As their nonsense rhyme concludes and they fall into a fit of cackling, Noodles elaborates, “That means we’re here to steal all your cattle!” Sparrow remains perched on the roof above the entrance, calling out to Sumika as if trying to lure out a trapped cat with a high-pitched, “Here, kitty, kitty! Come on out and get a treat!”

These four mischievous tormentors aren’t particularly interested in fighting the PCs. Rather, they seek to “befriend” animals by taking them by force and have mistaken Sumika for this farm’s rancher. If any PCs have a companion animal, familiar, mount, or eidolon, the group fixates on the most powerful-looking of them, using a combination of obviously untrustworthy promises of food and outright threats to try to get the animal to join them.

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While the PCs can certainly fight the Abacus Sisters, this is a dangerous encounter. If instead a PC calls out to the four before attacking, the strange group cackles in delight. Midori gives the party a mock salute, and Murasaki says, “Oh! So you’re a chatty bunch then? Think you’ve got the wits to win out against the Abacus Sisters?” Sparrow chirps out a snarky, “I doubt it! I do! I doubt it! Don’t you?” Once it becomes obvious there are visitors, Sumika leans up to peer out of a window in the room and mouths the words “Help me!” to the PCs after waving a hand to attract their attention.

To help Sumika make her escape, the PCs can engage with the Abacus Sisters in a “battle of wits.” Allow the players to engage in any sort of conversation they wish, then have each of them attempt a DC 13 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check, as they see fit. If more than half of the PCs are successful, they confuse and distract the Abacus Sisters. You should also allow each PC to attempt a secret DC 17 Society or a secret DC 15 Farming Lore check to realize a mistake the four made—if they point out that the word “abactor” is the one that means “one who steals cattle,” not “abacus,” the four immediately fall to bickering and arguing among themselves about the revelation, allowing the PCs to automatically win the battle of wits.

If the PCs manage to distract the Abacus Sisters, Sumika can clamber out through the window to limp away to safety. The PCs can then follow, leaving the bickering creatures behind before they can attack. Otherwise, the Abacus Sisters grow impatient and decide to attack the PCs. In combat, each member squeals in fear if reduced to fewer than 4 Hit Points and flees for their life.

MIDORI AND MURASAKI CREATURE 1

Female jinkin gremlins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 193)

Initiative Perception +7

NOODLES CREATURE -1

Weasel (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 291)

Initiative Perception +4

SPARROW CREATURE -1

Raven (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 221)

Initiative Perception +5

SUMIKA CREATURE 2

NG female variant poacher (*Gamemastery Guide* 218)

Initiative Perception +9

HP 30 (currently 2)

Rescuing the Hunter: Sumika joins the party once she escapes the Abacus Sisters (or once the creatures have been defeated) and thanks the PCs with enough supplies to craft two *spirit traps* (page 83) along with additional materials to craft two other common 1st-level snares of the PCs’ choice. If Sumika learns about the effort to reignite the *Eternal Lantern*, she suggests the PCs visit one of the Ketephys shrines at the Silvermist hunting lodges (area **W5**).

If the PCs convey Old Matsuki’s request that the hunters seek out Ugly Cute, Sumika nods in understanding and promises to deliver that information to her allies soon. If the PCs provide healing, Sumika is confident that she can make her way back to the Matsuki estate safely on her own but won’t turn down an offer by the PCs to escort her.

Reward: Reward the PCs full XP as if they defeated the Abacus Sisters in combat, no matter how they resolve this encounter.

A2. CLASH AT THE CLINIC LOW 1

Willowshore’s only clinic, the Hand of Spring (area **W19**), has become an impromptu haven for townsfolk who are unaffiliated with either faction. Some, such as Igawa Jubei (a wizard’s apprentice from Mother’s Coil, area **W20**) and Huo Tian-Zhe (a tinkerer from Second Best, area **W18**) are here due to injuries. Jubei badly

sprained her ankle escaping from a jinkin contraption, while Tian-Zhe sports a large burn wound from a backfired alchemical explosion.

When the PCs first arrive, the western half of the clinic appears to be boarded up and abandoned, but as they approach, the sounds of hissing, growling, and the thumping of a battle become apparent, seemingly coming from the eastern courtyard. They can plainly see several giant centipedes attacking a ghostly gecko the size of a human by peering through the wooden lattice separating the courtyard from the exterior path.

Use the map for Hand of Spring on page 22 to play out this encounter.

Creatures: Despite Doctor Dami's precautions, giant centipedes have been attracted to the area by the presence of those sheltering in the building. The ghostly gecko is the manifestation of a guardian spirit that has long protected the clinic but has never been forced into being. As the PCs approach, the gecko is doing its best against two centipedes, but three more clamber out through gaps in the lattice to attack the PCs before they can even reach the front door.

The centipedes fight to the death. While the phantom gecko itself isn't a manifestation of the evil infusing the mindscape, it still regards the PCs as potential intruders. If the PCs defeat the three centipedes that attack them, the gecko finishes off its last centipede and then threatens the PCs by attempting to Demoralize them on its turn. It doesn't initiate an attack, and one round after the last centipede is slain, Doctor Dami emerges from the western building and blurts out, "Don't kill it!" with the hope of preventing the PCs from attacking the phantom gecko. If a round passes without any hostile action from the PCs after all the centipedes have been slain, the phantom gecko fades back into the Ethereal Plane.

GIANT CENTIPEDES (3)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 61

Initiative Perception +6

PHANTOM GECKO

CREATURE 1

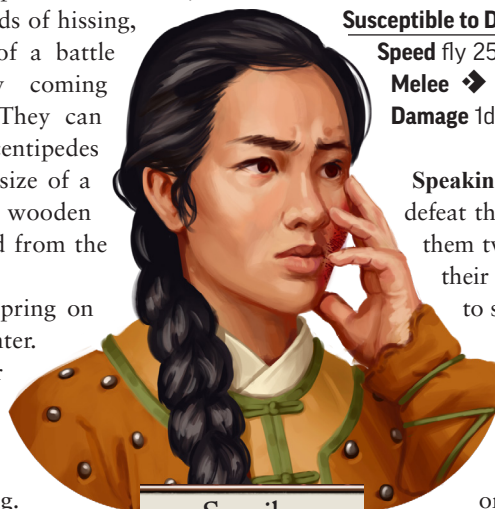
RARE **N** **MEDIUM** **ETHEREAL** **INCORPOREAL** **PHANTOM** **SPIRIT**

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 202)

Perception +5; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +6, Intimidation +6

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0



Sumika

Walk the Ethereal Line ♦♦ As phantom knight.

AC 15; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

HP 15; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision;

Resistances all damage 2 (except force or *ghost touch*; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +7 (finesse, force, magical),

Damage 1d6+2 force

Speaking to the Doctor: If the PCs help defeat the centipedes, Doctor Dami gives them two lesser antidotes in thanks for their timely services. If they managed to spare the gecko from being killed as well, he also gives them a lesser darkvision elixir. He has five more vials of lesser darkvision elixirs, should the PCs be interested in buying or bartering for more. He also offers to use Treat Wounds on the PCs

whenever they come to the clinic at no cost, so long as the monsters are still in town.

If the PCs mention their intention to relight the *Eternal Lantern*, Doctor Dami opens his shrine to Qi Zhong for them to seek the god's blessing. Also, Jubei informs the PCs about the Nalinivati shrine in Mother's Coil (area **W20**).

As for Granny Hu's concerns for his safety, Dami dismisses that concern with a wave of the hand, noting his disinterest in her posturing and politics. Despite the centipede attack, he still feels safe in his clinic and refuses to abandon it, noting that moving the wounded may do them more harm than good. If the PCs really want to help, they should work toward reclaiming Willowshore.

Finally, if the PCs mention a plan to poison or drug the buso at Dawnstep Bridge, Doctor Dami nods grimly and admits he can help, although he makes it clear that he doesn't normally condone poisoning. He supplies the PCs with a dose of dreamtime tea (*Gamemastery Guide* 121), warning them to be careful with it and to use it only against the monster (he keeps this small supply of the drug on hand for rare personal use and knows that it can be addictive).

Reward: If the PCs let the phantom gecko live, they receive full XP as if they defeated it.

THE WORST PUZZLE

TRIVIAL 1

As Granny Hu suspected, three of her grandchildren and one of their troublemaking friends (a

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woodcarver's apprentice) held their own private party on the night of the Reenactment Festival in a lumber drying yard not far from the Mushroom House (area W24). They passed out and spent the night in the yard, and that morning, a group of jinkins found them and decided to cruelly trap the youths before the gremlins moved on to other parts of town.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, they find the four endangered revelers trapped in a small area at the center of a lumber drying yard that the jinkins rigged into a dangerous trap. As the four hear the PCs approach, they call out for help but also warn the PCs to watch out—"There's all sorts of trip lines and triggers set!" The four locals huddle together in a 10-foot-square area in the middle of several stacks of lumber, and an unnerving amount of blocks of wood, heavy timbers, and sharpened stakes have been arranged all around them within a tangled web of trip lines and tension-bearing wood dowels.

ENDANGERED REVELERS (4)

Commoners (*Gamemastery Guide* 214)

Initiative Perception +3

Hazard: As long as the four villagers remain still, they'll be safe at the heart of this hazard. In order for them to escape, the PCs must disarm the trap the jinkins built.

CREATURE -1

HAPHAZARD WOOD PILE

HAZARD 1

UNCOMMON MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 17 (trained) to notice how the pile might fall on a person disabling it; DC 0 to see the pile.

Description Beams of heavy and sharp wood rest against one another to form a precariously balanced cage tied to several trip lines and tension-bearing dowels.

Disable DC 17 Thievery (trained), Crafting (trained), or Engineering Lore (trained) to figure out how to safely dismantle the pile without it collapsing on anyone.

Collapse Inward **Trigger** Any of the four revelers within the hazard perform any action with the Move trait; **Effect** The pile collapses onto the four revelers, dealing 1d6+5 bludgeoning damage (DC 17 basic Reflex save) to each of them. All four also take 1d6 persistent bludgeoning damage until they're pulled from the rubble with a DC 17 Athletics check or can Escape (DC 17).

Collapse Outward **Trigger** An attempt to disable the hazard from outside critically fails, or the hazard is intentionally triggered by someone from outside of the wood pile; **Effect** The pile collapses outward, inflicting 1d6+5 bludgeoning damage to the four revelers (DC 15 basic Reflex save), and 2d6+5 bludgeoning damage (DC 17 basic Reflex save) to all creatures in a 10-foot area surrounding the central 10-foot-square where the revelers were trapped.

Reward: The PCs gain XP for each surviving reveler as if they'd defeated that reveler in combat. The party also earns 1 Reputation Point with Northridge.

Blessing the Coins

In order to light the *Eternal Lantern*, the PCs must place three blessed copper coins into the lantern's fuel receptacle. To bless a copper coin, the PCs must seek out one of several shrines found in Willowshore's town limits and perform the following activity.

VOKE SHRINE BLESSING

CONCENTRATE EXPLORATION MANIPULATE

Requirements You are holding an unblest copper coin and are adjacent to one of Willowshore's shrines.

You offer prayers to a shrine and implore its associated deity to bless a copper coin. Place the copper coin before the shrine, then spend 10 minutes in prayer before the shrine. Attempt a DC 15 Religion or deity Lore check or a DC 17 skill check associated with the deity's teachings—two alternate skills are available for each shrine, as detailed in the Willowshore's Shrines table on page 23. If you worship the deity in question, increase the result of your check by one degree of success.

Critical Success The deity blesses the copper coin but also imbues you with additional divine energy and insight.

WILLOWSHORE'S SHRINES

Deity	Location	Discover	Alternate Blessing Skills
Abadar	Abadar Shrine (area W3)	Automatic	Society or Willowshore Lore
Daikitsu	Nine Ear Shrine (area W9)	Automatic	Farming Lore or Survival
Kofusachi	Trade Office (area W21)	Automatic	Mercantile Lore or Performance
Pharasma	Lady of Souls (area W10)	Automatic	Fortune-Telling Lore or Medicine
Shelyn	Downtown (area B17)	DC 12	Art Lore or Performance
Qi Zhong	The Hand of Spring (area W19)	DC 13	Herbalism Lore or Medicine
Ketephys	Silvermist Lodges (area W5)	DC 14	Hunting Lore or Survival
Nalinivati	Mother's Coil (area W20)	DC 15	Midwifery Lore or Nature
Shizuru	Mother's Coil (area W20)	DC 15	Diplomacy or Warfare Lore
Tsukiyo	Mother's Coil (area W20)	DC 15	Genealogy Lore or Occultism
Desna	Abandoned Estates (area W26)	DC 16	Scouting Lore or Survival
Lao Shu Po	Mushroom House (area W24)	DC 17	Thievery or Underworld Lore
Yaezhing	Bones of the Forgotten (area W28)	DC 18	Intimidation or Legal Lore
Calistria	Thrice-Blessed Inn (area W7)	DC 19	Deception or Guild Lore
Lady Nanbyo	Woodraft Lake* (area W13)	DC 20	Nature or River Lore

*This shrine is 25 feet underwater.

You heal 1d8+8 Hit Points and can cast *guidance* once in the next 24 hours as a divine spell. You treat all further critical successes at Invoking Shrine Blessing as regular successes instead.

Success The deity blesses the copper coin.

Failure You fail to achieve a blessing but suffer no ill effects. You can't attempt to invoke a blessing at this specific shrine again for 24 hours.

Critical Failure You anger the deity.

The copper coin vanishes, you can't attempt to invoke a blessing at this shrine again for 1 week, and you become stupefied 1 for 1 hour.



Dami

once and learn the locations of all shrines with a Discover DC equal to or less than the result of their check. The table entries are organized in ascending order of Discover DC value to make it easier to tell at a glance what shrines a character discovered.

Liberating the Bridge

Dawnstep Bridge (area **W11**) is an important link between the town's two shores, but if the PCs decide to investigate at this time, they'll find the bridge is heavily guarded by a buso and several jinkins. Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs come within 100 feet and the details become visible through the mist or under the eerie moonlight.

Blood smears the gray stone of Dawnstep Bridge, evidence of a recent fight. The flame of Willowshore's iconic stone lantern is—for the first time in memory—extinguished. A large humanoid figure sits on a throne made of stolen furniture heaped on the bridge. As he drinks from a brewing pot, several much smaller humanoids around him caper about, apparently mimicking and mocking death throes and reactions of recent victims.

The PCs can spend some time observing the monsters, who are cavorting loudly enough that the PCs can watch their antics from a distance without needing to roll Stealth checks. However, they do need to attempt a secret DC 15 Perception check to pick up on clues from 10 minutes of observation.

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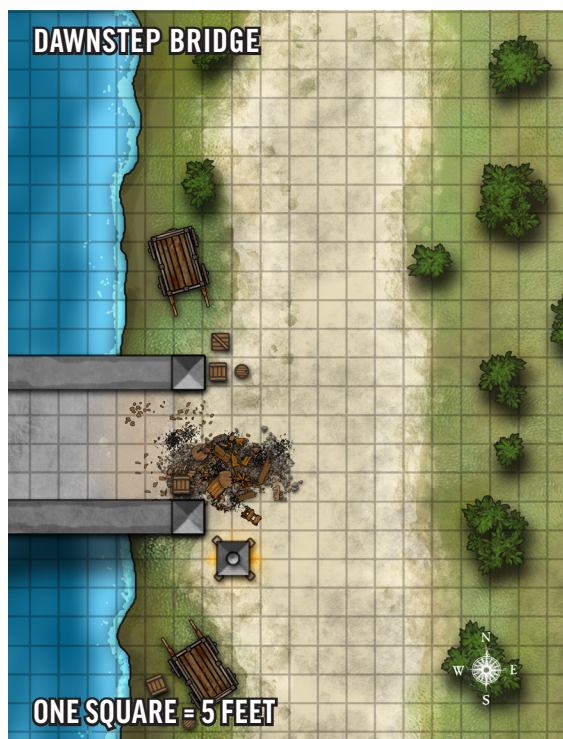
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SHRINE LOCATIONS

Although most of the town's residents are either followers of Sangpotshi or worship Abadar, Daikitsu, Lady Nanbyo, or Pharasma, a large number of additional shrines can be found in town. Some of these shrine locations are automatically known to the PCs, while others require the character to succeed at a Willowshore Lore check to locate.

A PC who worships the deity in question automatically knows the location of their deity's shrine. The PCs can also learn of some of these more obscure shrine locations by exploring the town or by speaking to various NPCs. At your discretion, if a PC worships a deity or follows a faith not listed on the following table, they might have a small personal shrine to their faith set up in their own home.

When a PC attempts a Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge about shrine locations, they roll



Critical Success The PC notes that the jinkins speak Common (the gremlins are mostly just play-acting roles of comically frightened townsfolk), but the larger figure doesn't seem to be paying attention. The few times the larger figure speaks, it's to drunkenly sing out (in Sylvan) a few rhymes of bad poetry about alcohol or boast of his violent triumphs against the locals. After listening for 10 minutes, the PC learns the names of what appear to be the three ringleaders of the invading force—Gurglegut, Gray Butcher, and Mo Douquiu—although there's no indication who's who or what these three creatures are.

Success The PC learns that the jinkins and larger figure don't seem to share a language, but don't learn the three names.

Failure The PC learns nothing of note from their observations.

Critical Failure The PCs mistakenly interpret the scene and comes to the erroneous conclusion that the large figure is drunk and on the verge of passing out.

The PCs can attempt additional DC 15 Perception checks beyond the first 10 minutes, but each additional 10 minutes they do so, the monsters get a chance to notice the PCs if they don't succeed at their Stealth checks to remain hidden. If the PCs are noticed, the jinkins shriek in excitement, and four of the gremlins give chase. A fight against four jinkins is an Extreme 1 encounter—one from which the PCs

would be wise to flee. The jinkins hoot and shriek and give up the chase after a few rounds, pleased to have scared the humans, but if they fight and defeat the PCs, the party might need to be rescued by locals before Gurglegut gets involved.

Reward: Grant the PCs 10 XP and 1 Reputation Point with both factions for successfully spying on the monsters.

RETAKING DAWNSTEP

MODERATE 1

Use map the map for Dawnstep Bridge for this encounter.

Creatures: The large figure seated on the improvised throne on Dawnstep Bridge is a lumbering buso named Gurglegut, while the smaller crowd are several jinkins who are doing their best to keep their violent leader entertained. Fortunately for the PCs, they don't need to fight all of these monsters at once—any approach to the bridge quickly attracts their attention, but only Gurglegut steps forward to confront the PCs. The jinkins hang back to jeer and taunt the PCs, but any actual attack directed toward them causes the gremlins to shriek and flee in panic.

If the PCs approach with a gift of wine, Gurglegut laughs in delight and quickly snatches up the gift and drinks it, waving the PCs away. If he falls unconscious from the drink the jinkins panic and flee, thinking he died, but if the PCs approach again (or refuse to leave in the first place) while he's still conscious, he attacks at once.

Gurglegut is drunk enough that he's effectively sickened 3 during this encounter. He opens the fight by spending his first action to attempt a DC 15 Fortitude save to reduce his sickened value, then uses his second action to try to Demoralize the toughest-looking PC. His third action is either to Stride up to that PC or to Strike an adjacent character with his kukri. He starts each following round with an action to try to reduce his sickened condition until he's fully recovered. In any event, he fights to the death.

GURGLEGUT

CREATURE 3

Male buso (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 339)

Initiative Perception +8

Treasure: Gurglegut has gathered a few treasures that he keeps near his impromptu throne—a silver scepter set with semi-precious stones worth 15 gp and a *full-pack cantrip deck* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 181). In addition, the buso carries three ancient copper coins in a pocket—a character who succeeds at a DC 15

Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge correctly identifies these three coins as those that, for so long, kept the *Eternal Lantern* lit. These three coins no longer bear blessings and are worth precisely that—3 cp.

Reward: If the PCs rid Willowshore of Gurglegut and thus reopen Dawnstep Bridge, they earn 1 Reputation Point with each faction.

Light the Night

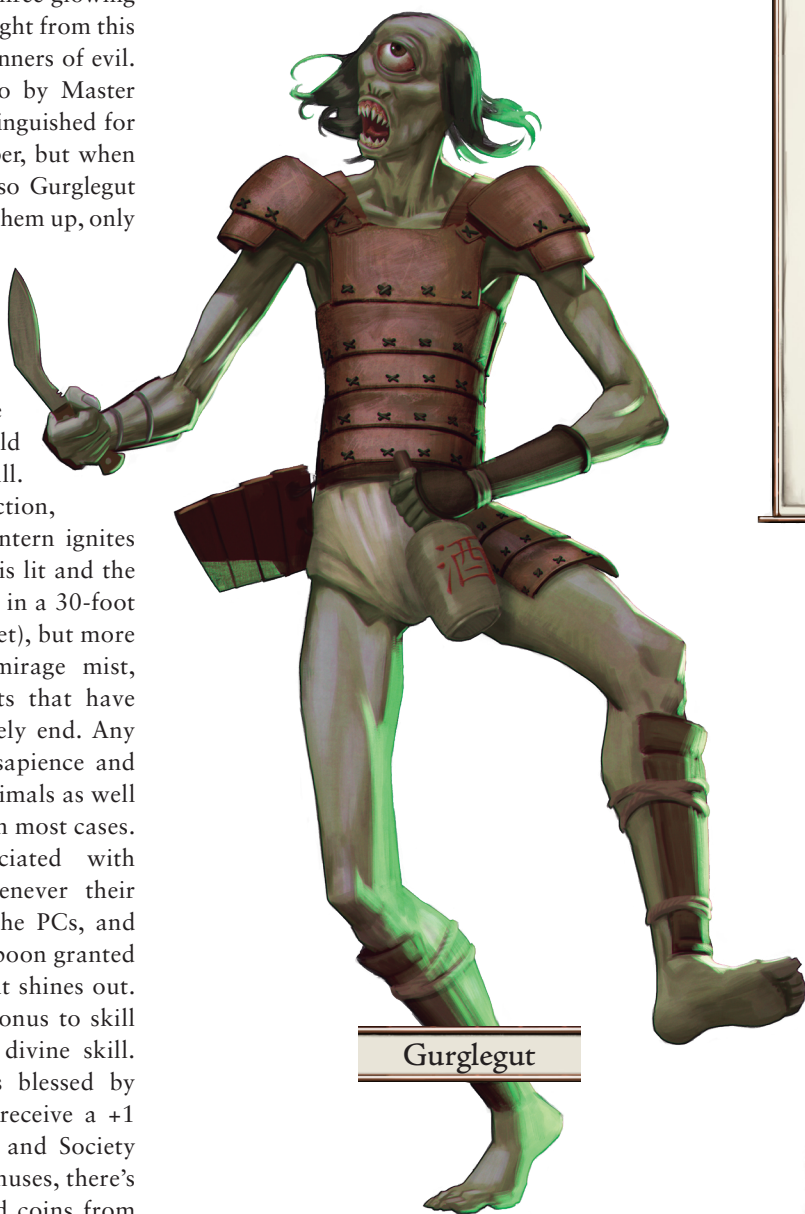
The *Eternal Lantern* is an immobile 15th-level magical item located on the southern side of Dawnstep Bridge. This stone lantern is a 5-foot-tall stone lamp carved from silver-laced granite from the Gossamer Mountains. Its interior contains a cold iron cage with a lotus-shaped pedestal on which three glowing copper coins once sat. It's said that the light from this lamp protects Willowshore from all manners of evil. Gifted to Willowshore many years ago by Master Zhi Hui, the lantern has never been extinguished for as long as anyone in town can remember, but when the monsters invaded the town, the buso Gurglegut spotted the glowing coins and snatched them up, only to be disappointed when the “magic” coins went dark after he took them from the bowl.

To relight the lantern, all the PCs need to do is open the grill on the *Eternal Lantern*'s southern face, place three blessed copper coins in the cold iron cage within, and then close the grill. Each of these is a single Interact action, and once the last is completed, the lantern ignites once more. While the *Eternal Lantern* is lit and the three coins remain inside, it sheds light in a 30-foot radius (and dim light for the next 30 feet), but more importantly, lighting it causes the mirage mist, crimson moon, and blood rain effects that have settled over Willowshore to immediately end. Any animals that had been granted cruel sapience and the ability to speak revert to normal animals as well and make their way back out of town in most cases.

The various divine forces associated with Willowshore's shrines take note whenever their blessings are used in the lantern by the PCs, and their interest and approval results in a boon granted to the PCs as soon as the lantern's light shines out. This boon grants the PCs a +1 item bonus to skill checks they attempt with the deity's divine skill. For example, if the PCs place coins blessed by Calistria, Desna, and Shizuru, they'll receive a +1 item bonus to Deception, Acrobatics, and Society respectively. Since these are all item bonuses, there's no advantage to using multiple blessed coins from

the same shrine or from deities who share the same divine skill. Likewise, the PCs might eventually find that magic items they gain during the rest of the campaign could provide greater item bonuses than those granted by these boons. Each PC gains the effects of these boons, regardless of who placed the coins, as the gods know the PCs are working together, and that it's their destiny that can save or damn Willowshore.

Reward: Grant the PCs 80 XP the first time they light the *Eternal Lantern*. This also increases the PCs' reputation in town. They gain 1 Reputation point with both of Willowshore's factions the first time they light the lantern.



Gurglegut

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Chapter 2: Reclaiming Willowshore

Once the *Eternal Lantern* is lit and the eerie supernatural mists and moonlight are banished, the monsters and perils in most of Willowshore abate as well. Citizens who have been hiding in their homes or gathering in safe zones emerge cautiously, yet the people of Willowshore remain frightened. Nothing like this has happened before, and the town's leaders have their hands full keeping the citizens comfortable, safe, and calm. One notable part of town is still in danger, though: downtown Willowshore remains controlled by monsters, and any citizens who were trapped there remain prisoners or worse. More disturbing, now that the mists are gone, the light of day reveals something truly unsettling. The governor's manor, once

situated at the northeastern corner of downtown Willowshore, has vanished!

At this point, the PCs should've met with Willowshore's most influential elders, "Granny Hu" (Hu Ban-niang, representing Northridge) and "Old Matsuki" (Matsuki Shou, representing Southbank). Both of these NPCs have full write-ups at the end of this adventure, including influence stat blocks the PCs can use to gain additional benefits. Both want the PCs to do what they can to liberate downtown while the elders focus on keeping their constituents safe during these troubled times. Which elder the PCs choose to work with is up to them, but their choice of which faction to support will help decide Willowshore's future throughout the remainder of this campaign.



Liberating Downtown

Whomever the PCs ally with, the request is the same—downtown Willowshore must be liberated. It's likely that the PCs have already defeated one of the three monster ringleaders (Gurglegut, the “muscle” of the group), but the other two (Gray Butcher and Mo Douqiu) are firmly ensconced in downtown and will be more difficult to defeat.

With Gurglegut defeated and the *Eternal Lantern* lit, Gray Butcher and Mo Douqiu realize that their grip on Willowshore has grown tenuous. Gray Butcher takes to patrolling downtown's streets, and the PCs could encounter them at any time. To confront Mo Douqiu (who serves as the mastermind of the monsters), the PCs must infiltrate the building he has chosen as his fortress—the ruined Cerulean Teahouse.

Regardless of whether the PCs ally with Granny Hu or Old Matsuki, their patron doesn't send them into downtown without support. While the PCs were handling the encounters in Chapter 1, their patron gathers up a supply of ten *minor healing potions* and eight *potency crystal talismans* and delivers the items to the PCs for them to use as they see fit.

DOWNTOWN LOCATIONS

General details on downtown Willowshore (area W15) are provided on page 75, but that information relates to the area during safer times. Currently, the streets of downtown are empty. Evidence of violence lies everywhere—splashes of blood on the streets and walls, broken weapons in gutters, and smashed doors and windows.

Many of the locations on the map of downtown (see inside front cover) lack numerical codes. These unlabeled buildings are either empty homes, abandoned shops, or partially completed structures. They can provide the PCs with hiding spots or shelter. If one of your players has selected a downtown building as their home, then use *Returning Home* (page 16) to resolve that encounter after working with that player to determine which building is theirs.

B1. EMPTY LOT

The opulent Governor's Manor, just yesterday the crowning jewel of downtown, has vanished without a trace. The only indication that there was once a building in this empty lot are the two guardian stone lions that once guarded the entrance of the manor. Both have been defaced and damaged.

Governor Heh became trapped in a parallel mindscape, along with his entire manor. Each time

Willowshore's mindscape resets, the townsfolk must contend all over again with the discovery of their missing leader and his vanished manor. See the start of Chapter 3 for a few additional repercussions to the town in the wake of this mystery.

B2. IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICE

The office looks like a hurricane has been through it, with documents strewn about the room. Very few furnishings remain in the room at all.

The furniture from this office was used to build Gurglegut's throne on Dawnstep Bridge, leaving only one flimsy bookshelf, a desk, and a couple of broken chairs behind among the criminal records now scattered all over the floor.

B3. GUARD HOUSE COURTYARD

This small sunken courtyard is hidden from above by a canopy of wisteria in full bloom.

This courtyard used to be a place for guards to relax, though many have pointed out how they would much rather have a practical use for the space.

B4. PRISON

The inside of this dingy room is where Willowshore's prison cells are located. The seven cells have iron bars and brick walls.

Creatures: When the monsters invaded, 10 guards were captured and thrown into the seven cells here, with captain of the guard, Zheng Peng, locked away in the northeastern-most cell on his own. While each of the cells has a lock of average quality (four DC 25 Thievery successes can Pick the Lock), Zheng Peng's contingency plan of hiding backup keys to the cells and armory finally pays off. When the PCs arrive, he calls over to them and informs them that a spare set of keys for the cells are hidden under a loose brick in the southwest corner of the room. He asks the PCs to retrieve the keys and release him and the other guards at once. Without his aid, a PC who Searches this room can discover the hidden keys with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

Zheng Peng describes how one human-looking figure—a bald man with sharp teeth who wore a hooded cloak and whose neck seemed capable of rotating more than it should—organized the attack on the barracks along with several jinkins. He's unaware of where the man and his gremlins headed next.

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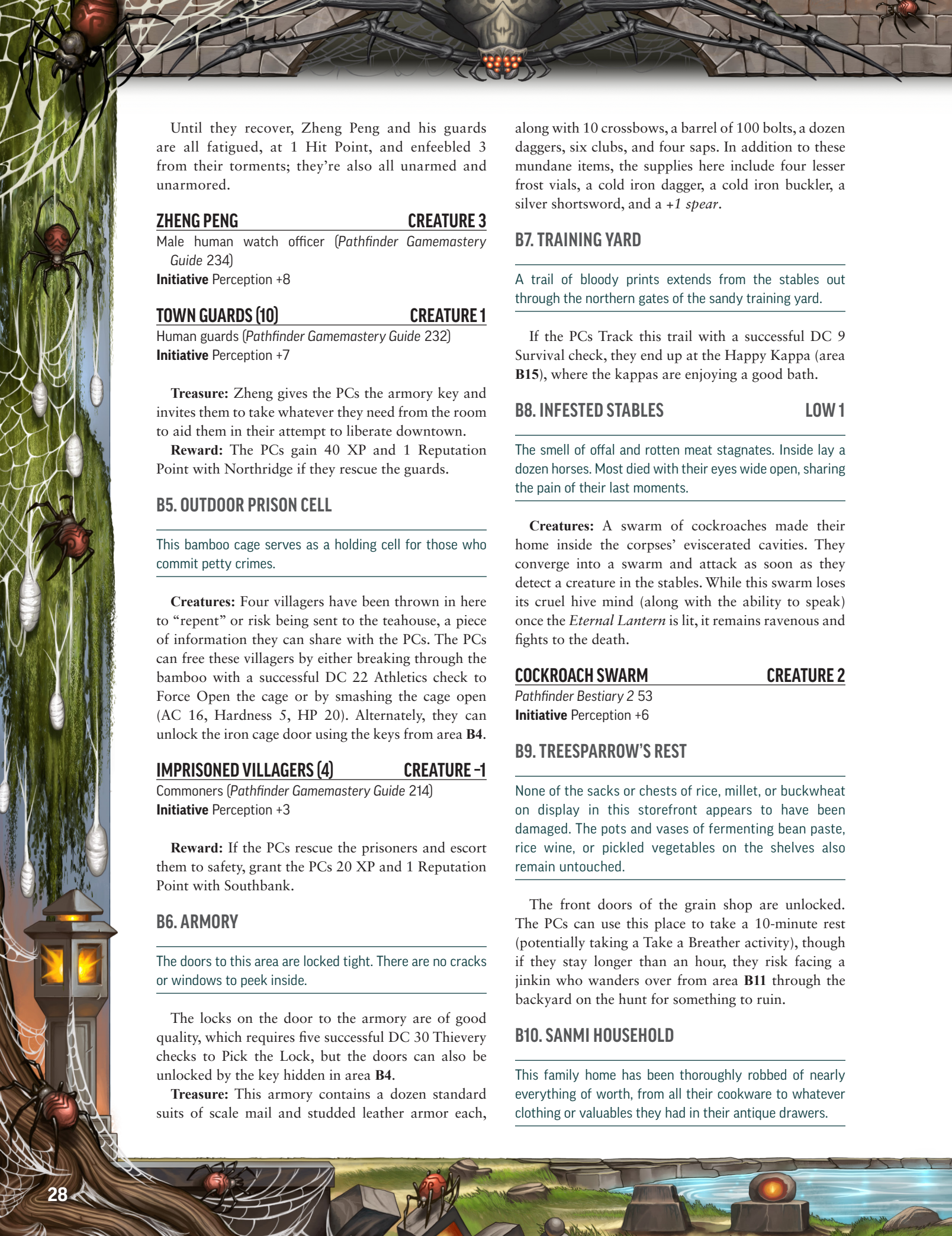
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Until they recover, Zheng Peng and his guards are all fatigued, at 1 Hit Point, and enfeebled 3 from their torments; they're also all unarmed and unarmored.

ZHENG PENG

CREATURE 3

Male human watch officer (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 234)

Initiative Perception +8

TOWN GUARDS (10)

CREATURE 1

Human guards (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 232)

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: Zheng gives the PCs the armory key and invites them to take whatever they need from the room to aid them in their attempt to liberate downtown.

Reward: The PCs gain 40 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Northridge if they rescue the guards.

B5. OUTDOOR PRISON CELL

This bamboo cage serves as a holding cell for those who commit petty crimes.

Creatures: Four villagers have been thrown in here to “repent” or risk being sent to the teahouse, a piece of information they can share with the PCs. The PCs can free these villagers by either breaking through the bamboo with a successful DC 22 Athletics check to Force Open the cage or by smashing the cage open (AC 16, Hardness 5, HP 20). Alternately, they can unlock the iron cage door using the keys from area B4.

IMPRISONED VILLAGERS (4)

CREATURE -1

Commoners (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 214)

Initiative Perception +3

Reward: If the PCs rescue the prisoners and escort them to safety, grant the PCs 20 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Southbank.

B6. ARMORY

The doors to this area are locked tight. There are no cracks or windows to peek inside.

The locks on the door to the armory are of good quality, which requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock, but the doors can also be unlocked by the key hidden in area B4.

Treasure: This armory contains a dozen standard suits of scale mail and studded leather armor each,

along with 10 crossbows, a barrel of 100 bolts, a dozen daggers, six clubs, and four saps. In addition to these mundane items, the supplies here include four lesser frost vials, a cold iron dagger, a cold iron buckler, a silver shortsword, and a +1 *spear*.

B7. TRAINING YARD

A trail of bloody prints extends from the stables out through the northern gates of the sandy training yard.

If the PCs Track this trail with a successful DC 9 Survival check, they end up at the Happy Kappa (area B15), where the kappas are enjoying a good bath.

B8. INFESTED STABLES

LOW 1

The smell of offal and rotten meat stagnates. Inside lay a dozen horses. Most died with their eyes wide open, sharing the pain of their last moments.

Creatures: A swarm of cockroaches made their home inside the corpses’ eviscerated cavities. They converge into a swarm and attack as soon as they detect a creature in the stables. While this swarm loses its cruel hive mind (along with the ability to speak) once the *Eternal Lantern* is lit, it remains ravenous and fights to the death.

COCKROACH SWARM

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 53

Initiative Perception +6

B9. TREESPARROW’S REST

None of the sacks or chests of rice, millet, or buckwheat on display in this storefront appears to have been damaged. The pots and vases of fermenting bean paste, rice wine, or pickled vegetables on the shelves also remain untouched.

The front doors of the grain shop are unlocked. The PCs can use this place to take a 10-minute rest (potentially taking a Take a Breather activity), though if they stay longer than an hour, they risk facing a jinkin who wanders over from area B11 through the backyard on the hunt for something to ruin.

B10. SANMI HOUSEHOLD

This family home has been thoroughly robbed of nearly everything of worth, from all their cookware to whatever clothing or valuables they had in their antique drawers.

If the PCs Search this room and succeed at a DC 20 Perception check, they discover a stack of letters hidden in a compartment beneath a dresser drawer. Reading the letters reveals a secret and blossoming relationship between the youngest generation of the Sanmi and Hu families, Yuli Sanmi and Hu Lelong.

Once the PCs discover these notes, allow them to attempt a DC 10 Willowshore Lore check or DC 15 Society check to Recall Knowledge that the highly traditional Sanmi family wouldn't approve of this relationship. These notes might prove useful in resolving the situation in area **B11**.

B11. MUDWALL HOUSE

MODERATE 1

This house has a double-layered mud wall that regulates heat, cold, and sound—though it isn't up to the task of dampening the rabble of high-pitched voices within.

Creatures: Once home to the widowed Nadoya Sanmi, this house is now infested with gremlins. A group of six jinkins forced Nadoya and most of the Sanmi family to live in the backyard storage room (area **B12**) while designating **Yuli Sanmi** (female NG human young villager) and **Hu Lelong** (male N human young villager) to be their personal attendants. The two secret lovers hatched a plan shortly before the PCs arrive to fight back against their captors, and now the jinkins here are quite drunk on the rice wine they've been plied with. Yuli and Lelong's hopes that the gremlins would pass out and allow them the chance to escape (or rather, elope) are diminishing, for the gremlins only grow rowdier as they get drunker. Two jinkins in particular are playing a game of catch with a collection of stolen jewelry (more accurately, a game of "toss, drop, and then scramble to pick back up").

As the PCs enter, they find the jinkins making a mess of the place while Yuli and Lelong cower in a corner. The drunken jinkins mistake the PCs for oni when they arrive and immediately begin to vie for the attention of the party, crying out, "Ooh! The oni are here!" and then doing their best to up their destructive antics, crying out "Look at me!" or "Watch this!"

The jinkins all have the weak creature adjustments as a result of their drunkenness. A character who succeeds at a DC 17 Intimidation check compels all six jinkins to flee the house. Otherwise, the only way to get the jinkins to stop wrecking the place is to either wait for them to pass out (which will take long enough for one of them to light the place on fire, thereby destroying the interior completely) or to attack them. Once a fight starts, the drunk jinkins howl in delight and, foolishly, fight to the death.

VERY DRUNKEN JINKINS (6)

CREATURE -1

UNCOMMON CE TINY FEY GREMLIN

Variant jinkins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 193)

Initiative Perception +0; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +2, Crafting +0 (+2 traps), Deception +2, Nature +2, Stealth +2, Thievery +2

Str -2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0

Items club (table leg or bottle)

Far Too Drunk The jinkins are inefficient with their actions and always spend one action each round to cackle, stumble in place, or otherwise perform ineffective antics.

AC 12; **Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

HP 9; **Weaknesses** cold iron 2

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ club +0, **Damage** 1d6-2 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ club +2 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6-2 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 13; **Cantrips (1st)** prestidigitation

Star-Crossed Lovers: If the drunken jinkins are defeated, Lelong asks if the PCs would let him take one of the necklaces the gremlins were playing with. If the PCs inquire why, he clumsily lies, claiming that he wants to let his uncle (guard captain Zheng Peng) or Granny Hu sort out who the rightful owner is. The PCs can press the truth of out him with a successful DC 13 Diplomacy or Intimidation check: he wants funds to support an elopement for himself and his lover. He refuses to reveal Yuli is the lover, though the PCs might already know from the letters in area **B10** (as will anyone who succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check to Sense Motive with either Lelong or Yuli).

This secret romance also explains why Lelong is downtown rather than at the Trading Post: he was secretly visiting when monsters attacked, trapping him here. Regardless of whether they receive the funds, Yuli and Lelong are steadfast about running away, hoping their families will think they died during the monster invasion. Whether the PCs stop or allow the young couple to elope is up to them, but if they're allowed to run away, the PCs can encounter them later at the Hunter's Hut in the hinterlands (area **D6**). Yuli remembers to retrieve the letters from area **B10** or asks the PCs to return the correspondences to them before they leave.

YULI AND LE LONG

CREATURE -1

Servants (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 222)

Initiative Perception +9

Treasure: Among the stolen jewelry, one of the PCs discovers a recognizable necklace that belongs to their family, and they can reclaim it. This necklace

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is worth 10 gp, but the jinkins cursed it before they got too drunk to remember how to Tinker. As long as the necklace is worn or carried, it makes a person stink of rotting garlic, imparting a –1 item penalty to Diplomacy and Stealth checks.

The rest of the stolen jewelry is worth a total of 75 gp, but these two dozen pieces belong to various citizens of Willowshore.

Reward: Grant the PCs XP for defeating the jinkins or chasing them off normally, to a maximum total of 80 XP to account for the lesser threat they posed. If the PCs take steps to return the stolen jewelry, they gain 1 Reputation Point with Northridge. If the PCs actively encouraged or even aided the young couple in their elopement, they lose 1 Reputation Point with Southbank, and Nadoya's attitude automatically becomes unfriendly at the start of Chapter 3 as she finds out about the relationship.

B12. BACKYARD STORAGE

Built almost like a bank vault with its cast-iron doors, this backyard storage has only a single round window that allows in air from the outside. The small vegetable garden in the backyard has an abundance of cucumbers.

Creatures: Nadoya and the rest of the Sanmi family have been ordered to stay here unless Gray Butcher or the jinkins call on them. When the PCs meet the family, Nadoya asks if the jinkins in area B11 are still there and whether Yuli and "the other young man" are safe. If the PCs haven't cleared the area, she asks them to do so and save the two.

Treasure: If the gremlins from area B10 have been evicted, Nadoya gives the PCs a *crying angel pendant talisman* in gratitude. Out in the backyard, there's also a row of fresh cucumbers—the PCs can take as many as they want with Nadoya's permission.

Reward: The PCs gain 20 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Southbank if they see the Sanmi family to safety past the Dawnstep Bridge.

B13. BATHHOUSE FOYER

The Happy Kappa's foyer is as homely as it's always been, though the floor is damp as if recently mopped. A distinct lye-like smell of some disinfectant hangs in the air.

When a group of five kappas, covered in horse-gore, casually strolled into this bathhouse to clean up, the bathhouse's hypochondriac owner, De-ge knew it was best to treat the monstrous visitors as respected guests. Once they were settled into the baths, though, he

immediately set about cleaning their bloody footprints and disinfecting the foyer before hiding in the locker room (area B14).

B14. BATHHOUSE LOCKERS

This locker room is orderly, with slippers and towels in each cubby. All the lockers are open, save for one.

Creatures: In his panic to hide, De-ge squeezed himself into a locker but ended up stuck. He's trying to remain calm, but his panic is growing—every round a PC starts their turn in this room, they can attempt a DC 10 Perception check to hear the sound of shuffling and soft whimpering within the closed locker. The locker door can either be Forced Open with a DC 17 Athletics check or Disabled with a DC 15 Thievery check without harm to De-ge, but any attempt to damage the locker (AC 13, Hardness 5, HP 24 [BT 12]) transfers half the damage inflicted to the locker to De-ge as well, who howls in pain and begs for his assailants to stop and go away.

If he's freed, De-ge is grateful, but he expresses he's had enough of downtown and wants to head to a more sanitized place, such as the Hand of Spring clinic (area W19). He begs the PCs to bring him there.

He also informs the PCs that his "guests" are still here—the five kappas went through the middle door toward the baths to the west and have yet to emerge. While he's certain that a few polite words would get them to leave, he's too afraid to face them and asks the PCs to do it instead.

DE-GE

CREATURE 1

Male halfling innkeeper (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 239)
Initiative Perception +7

Reward: Grant the PCs 20 XP if they escort De-ge to the clinic.

B15. MOSTLY HAPPY KAPPAS

EXTREME 1

A pair of stone-lined baths of steaming water sit within this open-air, hedge-walled yard.

Creatures: Not all the monsters drawn into Willowshore are inherently evil, but even the five kappas who are now relaxing in the pools can hardly be called kindhearted. While they weren't the ones who slaughtered the horses in the stables (area B8), they nonetheless delighted in the fresh meal. After making a mess of themselves there, they relocated here to wash up and relax.

A group of five kappas is beyond an extreme encounter for 1st level PCs, but this isn't intended to be a combat encounter. As they spot the PCs, the kappas invite the party to join them in the bath. Whether or not the PCs do, they concede that what has happened in Willowshore is "unfortunate" but maintain that they aren't the source of the problem. The kappas reveal that they were invited here by a rokurokubi named Mo Douqiu who asked for help taking over Willowshore. They confirm that they were the ones who ate the horses' innards, though it was the jinkins who killed the animals—admitting this bribe from Mo Douqiu was enough to get them to join with him. Since then, they've begun to regret things. Particularly, the kappas realize that such an invasion can only bring woe and harm to themselves once the town's defenders rally, giving the PCs polite nods at this time.

Initially indifferent, if the PCs can make the kappas friendly with a successful DC 17 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression, the kappas agree to leave town peacefully and return to Gourd Lake (area D2); otherwise, they'll remain until Mo Douqiu is defeated. If the PCs have any cucumbers on them (perhaps as a reward from area B12), allow each PC a chance to attempt a DC 16 Arcana or Nature check to Recall Knowledge that cucumbers are a kappa's favorite food. Offering cucumbers to the kappas during any attempt to Make an Impression improves the result of the roll by one degree of success. If they're made hostile, or if the PCs attack, the kappas curse and sputter in indignation and flee rather than fight back.

KAPPAS (5)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 147

Initiative Perception +9

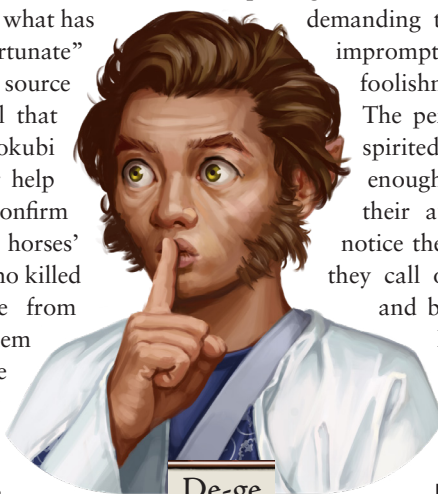
Treasure: If the PCs convince the kappas to leave on friendly terms, they give the PCs a pearl worth 50 gp as a tip (as if the PCs are bathhouse employees). In the unlikely event that the PCs confront and kill the five kappas, they can claim this pearl as treasure.

Reward: If the PCs convince the kappas to leave by making them friendly, grant them 60 XP.

B16. PUBLIC STAGE

SEVERE 1

The mural on the back wall of this open-air stage has been heavily chipped and defaced.



De-ge

Creatures: When PCs first approach this stage, three jinkins are roughhousing on the roof, wearing costumes and props they stole from backstage. Upon spotting the PCs, the two gremlins cheer and shout, demanding the PCs watch them perform an impromptu play about the cowardice and foolishness of Willowshore's citizens. The performance is insulting and mean-spirited, but the jinkins are invested enough that they'll keep at it as long as their audience keeps watching. If they notice the PCs are about to leave the area, they call out to the "ungrateful audience" and begin hurling loose shingles at the PCs. As soon as any of the jinkins actually take damage, though, all three scream in surprise and flee the town entirely.

JINKINS (3)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 193

Initiative Perception +7

Ranged ➤ shingle tile +7 (improvised, thrown 10 feet),
Damage 1d6–2 bludgeoning

B17. SHELYN SHRINE

Someone had the foresight to board up the shrine to the Eternal Rose. Through the cracks of the board, it's apparent that the ceramic statue of Shelyn inside is intact and well.

If the PCs seek Shelyn's blessing for their coins, they'll need to Force Open the boards first with five successful DC 15 Athletics checks. If they do so and don't restore the shrine's barricade, monsters notice the shrine 24 hours later and destroy it (causing any blessing the PCs got from the shrine on a copper coin to end). While the shrine can be rebuilt in time, this vandalism costs the PCs 2 Reputation points from each faction.

A PARADE OF COOKWARE

MODERATE 1

While Mo Douqiu and Gurglegut both claimed specific locations as their domains (the Cerulean Teahouse and Dawnstep Bridge, respectively), the third member of the monstrous ringleaders hasn't quite yet settled on a "home." Instead, the butcher-apron-resembling ittan-momen named Gray Butcher has been leading swarms of clattering cookware that have become animated by Kugaptee's influence through the streets of Willowshore.

Creatures: The timing of when Gray Butcher's parade of cookware encounters the PCs is left to you.

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When this encounter begins, the PCs hear the parade before they spot it, as the sound of hundreds of pieces of cookware clattering together, combined with Gray Butcher's off-key humming and singing, are impossible to miss. Gray Butcher is an ittan-momen tsukumogami born from a butcher's apron. They carry within themselves a malicious cruelty born from a century of exposure to blood and pain as they lead a swarm of animated cleavers, meat tenderizers, kettles, pans, chopsticks, and more on a clattering procession.

If Gray Butcher notices the PCs, the ittan-momen orders a stop to the parade and shouts a stern "Who goes there?" at the party, giving them a chance to explain themselves. The PCs can attempt to Lie or Make an Impression on Gray Butcher (who begins the encounter unfriendly) when they answer. If the PCs improve Gray Butcher's attitude to indifferent or better, the ittan-momen orders the PCs to join the parade for 15 minutes as their "duty" to celebrate Willowshore's new rulers. After this exhausting trip back and forth through the streets of Willowshore, each PC must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save to resist becoming fatigued. Regardless, Gray Butcher leaves them behind once their duty is fulfilled.

If the PCs refuse to join, their impertinence enrages Gray Butcher, who orders the animated cookware to attack. During this fight, Gray Butcher hangs back, but if the PCs defeat both swarms, the ittan-momen sighs in frustration before swooping in to finish the job.

If the PCs perform one parade with Gray Butcher, it should be no more than an hour before they encounter the group a second time. This time, Gray Butcher is frustrated and annoyed to see the PCs are still "lollygagging" on the street and attacks.

GRAY BUTCHER

CREATURE 2

NE agender ittan-momen (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 276)

Initiative Perception +7

ANIMATED COOKWARE SWARMS (2) CREATURE 1

Variant animated silverware swarm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 18)

Initiative Perception +5

Slice and Pound ♦ (magical) Each enemy in the animated cookware swarm's space takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning or slashing damage (DC 17 basic Reflex save). This action replaces the typical Slice and Dice action possessed by the typical animated silverware swarm.

Treasure: Gray Butcher has several treasures stashed away in the pockets of his apron body. This treasure consists of two vials of *oil of potency*, two *mesmerizing opal* talismans, a pair of *potency crystal* talismans, and

a +1 *silver dagger* in a silk-wrapped leather sheath (the sheath is worth 10 gp).

Reward: For defeating Gray Butcher, grant the PCs 1 Reputation Point with each faction.

Cerulean Teahouse

The Cerulean Teahouse (area **W25**) is located just north of downtown and can be approached by heading up the northwestern street from the downtown map for about 100 more feet. The PCs might learn that the abandoned teahouse is being used as Mo Douqiu's "headquarters" as early as when they free prisoners from areas **B4** or **B5**. However, if they don't discover this news through the course of liberating downtown, make sure they learn about it from someone since Willowshore won't be free of monstrous influence until Mo Douqiu is defeated.

C1. PUBLIC FLOOR

LOW 1

The once finely lacquered wooden walls of this room bear evidence of violence, covered now with gouges and scrapes. The front counter of the teahouse is a mess of broken pots, bottles, and cups. A table has been turned on its side, along with whatever dishes were on it at the time. Another table still stands in the southeast corner, this one strangely well placed and set, as if expecting guests. Stairs lead up to an upstairs balcony to the northeast. Steps lead up two feet to an upraised wooden platform running along the northern wall, where several sliding doors stand closed save for the northwest corner, in which two unlit stoves sit in an alcove near a smaller wooden door.

Abandoned for months, Mo Douqiu's arrival did no favors to the Cerulean Teahouse. His jinkin minions did most of the damage here, although they've moved on since then. While Mo Douqiu spends his time in the private banquet hall (area **C3**), he has entertained the notion of potentially meeting with some of the noppera-bos who now dwell in the lumber camp to the west (see Chapter 4). The set table to the southwest has been prepared for just such a meeting, but until he can be sure he has full control of Willowshore, the rokurokubi hasn't yet contacted the noppera-bos with his invitation.

Creatures: Mo Douqiu lets his pet giant toad, Warty, wander about this room freely. While the *Eternal Lantern* was unlit, Warty had a foul-mouthed personality and enjoyed using his tongue to mess with anything that caught his interest, but once the PCs light the lantern, Kugaptee's influence over the giant toad diminishes. Warty remains loyal to Mo Douqiu, but is more content to spend his time sleeping near the stairs leading up to the balcony. If he's awoken

by intruders, he begins to croak eagerly and lumbers forward to attack.

As long as Warty is the only one making noise out here, Mo Douqiu assumes the giant toad is just being frisky and yells out from area C3, “Settle down, Warty! I’ll get you some food in a bit!” Even the obvious sound of PCs fighting in this room fails to rouse the rokurokubi—he’ll only respond to them once they enter his chamber.

Unless commanded to heel, Warty, not knowing any better, fights to the death.

WARTY

CREATURE 2

Giant toad (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 261)

Initiative Perception +8

Treasure: If the PCs Search the front counter, they discover paperwork that lays bare the fact that the teahouse’s financial troubles began long before Lung Wa collapsed. The papers also include a document titled “The Last Will and Testament of Qing Mai-Lai”; the PCs know Mai-Lai was the last proprietor of the Cerulean Teahouse. This document is key to the PCs legitimizing their claim over the teahouse if they want to run it as a business. See The Teahouse Owner’s Will on page 43 for more information.

C2. PANTRY PRISON

Both doors to this room are locked with heavy-duty padlocks. Mo Douqiu carries the key to these locks; otherwise, a character can open them with three DC 20 Thievery checks each to Pick the Lock. Alternately, a character can Force Open these sturdy doors with a single DC 25 Athletics check each.

This pantry is poorly stocked, with any remaining supplies having spoiled long ago. The stink of ammonia lingers in the room.

The pungent smell of ammonia comes from a slow reaction of several spoiled ingredients in the pantry—a character who ends their turn in this room must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or become sickened 1.

Creatures: Mo Douqiu has little use for this room as a pantry and instead has turned it into an impromptu prison to hold the 12 villagers he and his monstrous agents have captured so far. All 12 of these men and women are terrified, bound hand and foot with coils of rope and fearful for their

lives. The prisoners look quietly but hopefully at any PCs, too afraid to cry out for help in fear of alerting Mo Douqiu. All 12 are currently fatigued.

IMPRISONED VILLAGERS (12)

CREATURE -1

Commoners (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 214)

Initiative Perception +3

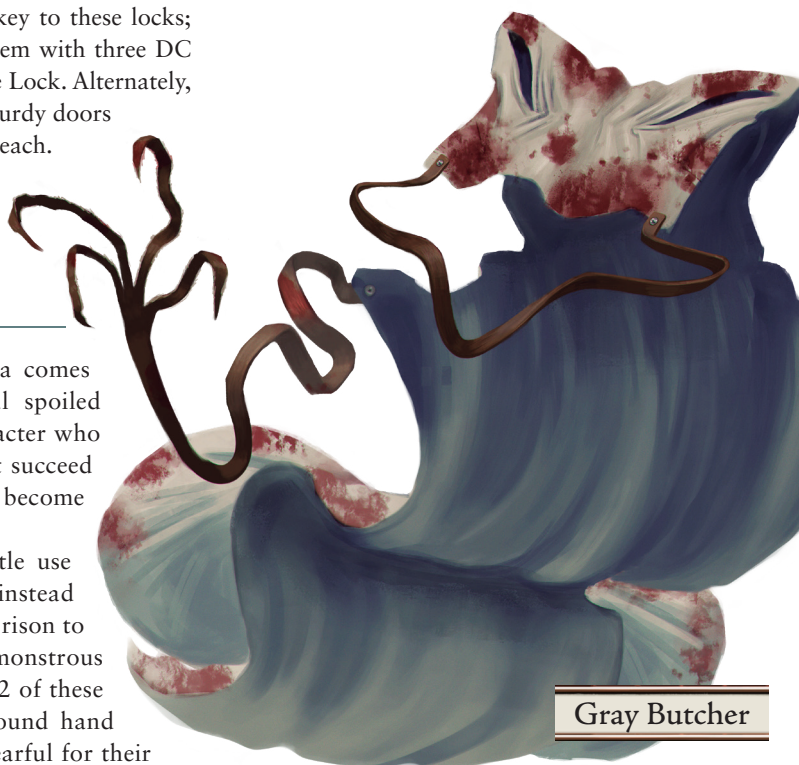
Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP and 1 Reputation Point with each faction if they free these captives.

C3. PRIVATE BANQUET HALL

MODERATE 1

This once-elaborate banquet room has become a den of filth, littered with unwashed dishes, food stains, and what looks to be the aftermath of many grisly slaughters. Bodies flayed or partially digested to the point of being unrecognizable lie heaped in corners or sway from ropes tied to wooden beams above. A pile of filthy, soiled cushions and blankets lie in a nest-like heap in the middle of the room.

Creatures: Mo Douqiu is a hedonist, and it’ll take more than the sounds of battle in area C1 or upstairs in area C4 to get him to respond to the PCs, but as soon as the sliding doors on the south wall are opened, the rokurokubi gives a heavy sigh, conceding that he’ll need to handle the intruders himself.



Gray Butcher

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CERULEAN TEAHOUSE: GROUND FLOOR
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

Once confronted by the PCs, Mo Douqiu shifts into a more upright position on the filthy cushions he's sprawled on in the middle of the room, then casually notes that while he didn't call for performers, he accepts the "new entertainment." He sits back to wait for the PCs to "start their performance" as he begins chugging yet another large jug of alcohol. If asked what he means by a performance, Mo Douqiu curtly states the following:

"Dance! Sing! Fight! Whatever is entertaining! It's what living is all about, so LIVE! Otherwise, make use of yourself and go feed Warty. As in, leave your treasure here and let that hungry critter just gobble you down. Most people are better as toad food anyway."

If the PCs ask why he invaded Willowshore, Mo Douqiu replies:

"Because this town is the most boring place ever! Everyone's working day-in, day-out, just to make ends meet. Every single year, doing the same thing over and over again. All that work just to survive. Wouldn't you want to liven this up too if you see everyone forever mired in the same dreadful routine?"



CERULEAN TEAHOUSE: SECOND FLOOR

If the PCs question his philosophy and point out the violence he's caused, the rokurokubi says:

"But it was a change, right? Nothing changes you more than being thrown into the middle of a horror story! People love those terrifying tales, you know, so why not live through one?" He breaks into a roaring laugh, then asks, "Admit it. Haven't you been having fun?!"

Any further conversation with Mo Douqiu's proceeds along the same line, with the rokurokubi showing a distinct delight for wanton destruction and instilling fear and distress in others. It's almost as if he wants to provoke the PCs into starting a fight. He won't make the first attack, but once combat begins, he commands his remaining pets to rise to his defense. This includes Warty (if the giant toad still lives) and Stingy (if the cave scorpion still lives), but if the PCs have already defeated these two animals, Mo Douqiu can still rely upon his pet weasel, Fluffy Whiskers, to clamber out of his sleeves, launch off his shoulders, and fight at his side. As a result of his philosophizing and hesitation to start the fight, the rokurokubi rolls for initiative with Society.

Mo Douqiu favors tactics focused on Demoralizing the PCs, particularly by using Threatening Lunge. In addition, if a PC occupies the same space as a hanging body (these squares are indicated on the map with an “X”), and if Mo Douqiu’s neck is extended and he’s adjacent to that PC, the rokurokubi can make a jaws Strike against the ropes holding the body aloft, automatically hitting and severing the rope. This causes the dead body to fall onto the character below, inflicting 1d6+3 bludgeoning damage (DC 15 basic Reflex save); a character who fails this saving throw is also knocked prone by the falling body.

Reveling in the violence, Mo Douqiu fights to the death. He even laughs as he dies, ending with an unhinged grin on his face in death.

MO DOUQIU THE HEDONIST CREATURE 2

CE male rokurokubi (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 216)

Initiative Society +6

FLUFFY WHISKERS CREATURE -1

Weasel (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 291)

Initiative Perception +4

Treasure: While Mo Douqiu has ruined most of the objects of value in the teahouse, one item—a *flask of fellowship* (*Secrets of Magic* 184)—has escaped his attention. Mo Douqiu also carries the keys to the locks on the doors to area C2.

Reward: For defeating Mo Douqiu, grant the PCs 1 Reputation Point with each faction. If they ensure all the bodies in this room are removed from the beams and respectfully covered or otherwise made presentable to the rest of the town so they can be prepared for proper funerals, grant the PCs 1 additional Reputation Point with each faction.

C4. SECOND FLOOR TRIVIAL 1

Once a relaxing area in which guests could enjoy tea and quiet conversation, the furniture and walls of this room have been vandalized and bear deep scratches. A hole has been smashed into the wall to the northeast.

The second floor of the Cerulean Teahouse is 10 feet aboveground, and the stairs leading up are noisy from lack of maintenance. Someone who climbs the stairs automatically causes them to creak and alerts the creature that dwells up here. Attempts to traverse the stairs via Stealth suffer a –4 item penalty.

Creatures: Mo Douqiu’s final pet, a cave scorpion named Stingy, dwells here. The cave scorpion is far more subtle than Warty. If alerted to intruders, Stingy doesn’t immediately clamber down the stairs to join the fight, but instead Hides in the rafters here, hoping to drop on the PCs and attack unexpectedly after allowing them a few rounds to explore the place.

STINGY CREATURE 1

Cave scorpion (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 234)

Initiative Stealth +7

Concluding the Chapter

This chapter ends once the three monstrous ringleaders are defeated and the *Eternal Lantern* is once again lit. The remaining monsters in Willowshore flee back into the surrounding wilderness, but if you want, some of them could end up hiding somewhere else in town, giving the PCs additional tasks to deal with as the adventure continues.



Mo Douqiu

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Chapter 3: The Willowshore Curse

Once the PCs have defeated the three monstrous ringleaders and lit the *Eternal Lantern*, life can return to normal for Willowshore. In the days that follow, townsfolk set about the grim task of arranging funerals for the dead, treating the wounded, and searching for the missing, as well as working to repair, rebuild, and restore the town from the damage caused by the monstrous invasion.

Two of Willowshore's most influential citizens, Granny Hu and Old Matsuki, fall into leadership roles. While each one has their own vision and plan for Willowshore's future, the PCs get to decide who they prefer to side with—or if they prefer to ally with both or neither. Both of them have additional information, including influence statistics, at the end of this volume.

The Mysterious Merchant

The day after the liberation of Willowshore (preferably before the PCs have met with one of the elders and begun to think about their role in the town's future), a stranger with a raven arrives in a horse-drawn cart and sets up a stall in downtown Willowshore. The merchant appears friendly, but the timing of his arrival makes the townsfolk wary.

Though this nondescript merchant looks like an average Tian man, he's secretly a powerful entity in the service of Pharasma—a shinigami (page 86) named Asahina Shinzo who's still undergoing penitence for an infraction against Pharasma made decades before the advent of the Age of Lost Omens. Explicitly barred from directly intervening in the fate of any mortal,

Shinzo hopes that by doing what he can to help those trapped in Willowshore's mindscape escape (be it back to life or on to death), he can repay his mysterious debt to the Lady of Graves. His raven accomplice is a nosoi psychopomp named Yix who remains in bird form at all times. Here to silently observe Shinzo, the nosoi gives no clue that he's anything other than a friendly (if periodically noisy) raven.

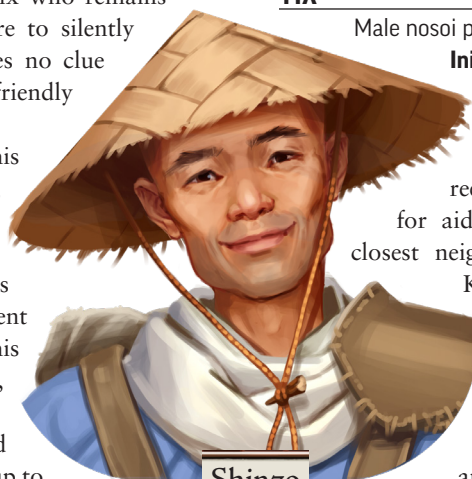
Likewise, Shinzo maintains his disguise as a human at all times, introducing himself to the PCs as a traveling salesperson who hopes to add Willowshore to his regular route. He offers his current wares to the PCs, opening his cart for them to shop through, but at this time, he has little to offer beyond minor items and supplies (any common item of up to 2nd level). Shinzo can also buy any items or equipment the PCs wish to sell, offering normal prices.

His greatest service to the PCs, though, as he eagerly explains, is his capacity to obtain items the PCs might desire and to return with them for sale on a following visit. Initially, this service might not seem like a particular advantage, as the PCs can purchase much of what they need at lower levels from shops in Willowshore. However, as the Adventure Path progresses, Shinzo's uncanny ability to come and go will become an increasingly important asset for the PCs, giving them access to shopping opportunities they otherwise wouldn't have.

Shinzo's Supplies: You can handle the supplies Shinzo offers in two ways. You can create a list of items for the PCs to shop through on each of his visits, filling his cart with a dozen various items of a level no higher than the party's level, or you can allow your players to "place orders" for things. In this second system, items the PCs request are available for purchase upon Shinzo's next visit to town, but again, the upper level limit of items he can offer for sale is set by the party's level.

Visit Timing: Shinzo visits Willowshore no more often than four times per month. He conveniently tends to show up right before or after the PCs level up, and before or after they set out on or return from a large expedition. His visits should generally be spaced out by at least 1 week. Try to time his arrival for when the PCs are close to leveling up, or when the PCs reach the halfway point of a level.

Length of Stay: Shinzo stays in Willowshore for 24 hours each time he visits.



SHINZO

Male shinigami (page 86)

Initiative Perception +31

CREATURE 17

YIX

Male nosoi psychopomp (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 270)

Initiative Perception +6

CREATURE 1

Into the Hinterlands

Recent events left Willowshore reeling, and news (as well as requests for aid) must be sent to Willowshore's closest neighbor, the fortified settlement of Karahai. Located several dozen miles to the east of town on the coast of the Sea of Ghosts, Karahai has long served as Willowshore's most important trade partner. Word of the attack and the loss of the governor and his estate must be reported.

This task falls to the PCs, who have impressed both the town and its temporary leaders. Whether it's Granny Hu or Old Matsuki who approaches the PCs with this task, the request is the same—make the journey southeast along the banks of the Duyue River to deliver news of recent events to Commander Wen of Karahai. The trip to Karahai is one many in Willowshore have made, and it's known to be a relatively safe route. The PCs' favored elder provides them all with horses to make the trip along the road even swifter, so that if they leave at dawn, they'll arrive on the coast at Karahai just before sunset.

THE MINDSCAPE BORDER

The PCs shouldn't expect to face much danger on the trip to Karahai, and to help the players feel this as well, you shouldn't present their journey downriver from Willowshore as an exploration with any potential for an encounter—there will be plenty of time for this sort of gameplay soon enough! Instead, once the PCs set out on their trip, simply summarize their journey, making sure to describe how the lack of rain (even as the skies above tend to stay overcast) for these few days might feel like a good sign for a dry and even pleasant summer.

A few hours before they expect to reach Karahai, not long after they leave Gourd Lake behind and are about to emerge into a wide valley that should give them their first glimpse of the Sea of Ghosts with the fortress of Karahai visible on its coastline bluffs, another strange fog descends on the party. Unlike the mirage mist, though, this fog quickly grows unexpectedly and

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WHERE DOES SHINZO GO?

Shinzo has a unique ability to come and go from Willowshore's mindscape as he wishes, but never does so when the PCs observe him. His level is sufficiently high enough that any attempt to follow him should be easily defeated by his Stealth. If asked about how he obtains his supplies, or whether he can travel beyond the boundaries of the hinterlands, Shinzo is initially evasive. If pressed, he "admits" he isn't sure where he goes to or comes from in between visits, hoping only that his time here in Willowshore proves helpful to the PCs. As *Season of Ghosts* continues, the PCs will learn more about Shinzo, but for this adventure at least, the merchant should remain friendly, helpful, polite... and enigmatic.

almost supernaturally thick, reducing visibility to a dozen feet or so. The horses grow nervous and skittish, and regardless of the direction the PCs travel (or even if they remain motionless), a few moments later, the fog lifts to reveal the PCs have returned to the spot they just left.

No matter how many times they attempt to push forward, the fog descends, and they find themselves back where they started just before the fog's descent. This takes place whenever the PCs attempt to cross the mindscape's boundary, as indicated on the Willowshore Hinterlands map (including if the low-level PCs somehow manage to fly up into the air), but the first time it happens, it should be unsettling, confusing, and even frightening.

The unraveling of this mystery takes up a fair amount of the *Season of Ghosts* Adventure Path, so you shouldn't reveal much to the PCs if they attempt skill checks to Recall Knowledge on this strange phenomenon. Let the PCs attempt whatever check they wish, but regardless of the result, let them know that whatever is causing it is beyond their current knowledge, other than to suggest the possibility that some strange curse has settled down on the land—no doubt something tied to the invasion of monsters and the vanishing of Governor Heh and his estate. As the PCs won't be able to reach Karahai, they should return to Willowshore to report their findings. Proceed with *Investigating the Curse* on page 43 once they do so.

In the meantime, night will soon fall, and with it comes a rainstorm. The PCs are faced with the choice of camping for the night near Gourd Lake or returning home in the dark and wet—at this point, proceed with exploration mode play.

USING THIS CHAPTER

Once the PCs discover the mindscape's edge, where they go next is up to them—but eventually, they'll return to Willowshore. Consultations with their allies there suggest three specific avenues of investigation to figure out what's going on in the region. These investigations are presented in the last section of this chapter, starting on page 43. The remainder of this chapter summarizes minor encounters, locations, and opportunities to build reputation, wealth, and experience for the PCs. In any event, the contents of this chapter should fill the bulk of the summer, as the assumption is that in the last weeks of the season, as fall looms on the horizon, the PCs will finally confront the monsters responsible for abducting them at the start of the adventure.

EXPLORING THE HINTERLANDS

A map of the Willowshore mindscape appears on the inside front cover of this volume. If you're using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, the players have a map of the region. If you aren't using this guide, consider providing a map of your own design for the group to use to help them orient themselves.

Forest hexes without roads are difficult terrain, as are rough and rocky fields in the southern hinterlands.

When the PCs travel, make sure you know what exploration activities they're taking (*Core Rulebook* 479–480). Once per day the PCs spend in the hinterlands, attempt a DC 17 flat check to see if an encounter occurs. On a success, roll 1d12 on the following table if the PCs are within 2 hexes of Willowshore. Otherwise, roll a 1d20 to determine what they meet in the wilderness. If an encounter occurs, you should decide if it takes place while they travel or while they camp.

HINTERLANDS RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll	Encounter	Threat
1–3	1 black bear (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 2 36)	Trivial 2
4–6	1 slime mold (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 2 193)	Trivial 2
7–9	2 thatchlings (page 88)	Trivial 2
10–11	2 hunting spiders (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 306)	Low 2
12–13	2 wolves (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 334)	Low 2
14–15	3 thatchlings (page 88)	Low 2
16–17	2 jinkins (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 193)	Low 2
18	1 giant stag beetle (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 41)	Moderate 2
19	4 noppera-bo grunts (page 84)	Moderate 2
20	2 boars (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 43)	Moderate 2



Animals: Wild animals the PCs encounter are wary of the party and only attack if they're attacked first. There's only one giant stag beetle living in the region.

Jinkins: These jinkins are survivors from the invasion of Willowshore. A jinkin shrieks in fear if it takes any damage and flees into the wild.

Noppera-bos: These noppera-bo grunts are outcasts who never quite managed to be accepted into the larger gathering found at the lumber camp (area **D11**). They fight to the death, hoping that if they can claim the PCs as trophies, they'll be able to buy their way into the larger group. At your option, if the PCs are about to reach 3rd level, you can have them learn about the noppera-bo presence in the lumber camp at this point—see Chapter 4 for more details.

Slime Molds: These patches of ravenous fungi emerged from the fungal infestation south of Willowshore at area **D7**, and slithered out into the surrounding hinterlands to wander and prey upon wildlife indiscriminately. There are only six slime molds in all in the hinterlands.

Thatchlings: These undead aren't part of the thatchlings found at Canary Inn (area **D4**).

D1. WILLOWSHORE

The town of Willowshore is located here, straddling the banks of the Ceiba River.

D2. GOURD LAKE

Marshy shores surround this relatively shallow lake, making it a poor site for building a village. The lake itself is excellent for fishing—as long as fishers take care to avoid the southern shores, which are claimed as the territory of several kappas.

D3. TREACHEROUS TRAIL

LOW 2

Once used more often as a shortcut to bypass the southern river bend, it's well known that this trail has become quite overgrown and infested with snapping flytraps. A sign posted at either end reads, "Warning: Dangerous plants!" Whether or not PCs who dare to take this trail encounter a snapping flytrap is up to you, though.

SNAPPING FLYTRAP

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 160

Initiative Stealth +13

D4. CANARY INN

Once a roadhouse used by travelers journeying between Karahai and other villages a few days' travel to the north, this inn burned to the ground a few years back in the aftermath of a tense standoff between

Willowshore's guards and a group of fugitives on the run from Lung Wa. See *The Missing Governor* on page 44 for more details.

D5. GREEN SILK PEAK

At nearly 2,000 feet in elevation, Green Silk Peak's slopes make for a tiring ascent (treat this area as greater difficult terrain), but the view from its summit is breathtaking, affording an expansive view of the Sea of Ghosts to the east. A PC who climbs to the peak can see the fortress of Karahai on clear days, with no evidence of the strange mist that encloses the region. Yet even attempts to fly directly to the fortress from the peak will encounter the mindscape's barrier. Attempts to attract attention from Karahai using long-distance signals, such as smoke signals or powerful lights at night, won't result in responses, for this view of Karahai and the Sea of Ghosts beyond is little more than a potent illusion of what once lay beyond the mindscape's borders.

D6. HUNTER'S HUT

Abandoned a year ago, this small hunter's hut is already looking overgrown but can still serve as a shelter for PCs caught out in the elements.

If the young couple Yuli and Lelong were allowed to elope in Chapter 2 (area **B11**), they end up taking shelter here after they discover they can't leave the region. They aren't sure what to make of the strange mist, but for the time being, they've decided to shelter here. They beg the PCs not to let anyone in Willowshore know they're staying here. However, the couple consents to return to town if the PCs impress upon them the strange times and dangers that they might face (along with a successful DC 13 Diplomacy or Intimidation check), and they sheepishly return home.

Reward: What fate the lovers might meet if they're left out here is up to you to decide, but if the PCs save them or support them, grant them 20 XP. If the couple is convinced to return to town (or if the PCs inform their families they're up here so they can be retrieved), also grant the PCs 1 Reputation Point with Southbank for the return of the missing youths.

D7. INFESTED GROVE

Once an idyllic grove of willow trees where young lovers would gather for picnics, this grove has become infested by a fungal monster (see *Into the Infestation* on page 49 for more details).

D8. OLD VILLAGE EXPANSION

The overgrown ruins of several buildings lie slumped in this large grassland, surrounded by weed-choked

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fields. This site could serve Willowshore as an excellent location to grow additional crops in the next adventure, provided the PCs help to get things moving (see Investigate the Old Expansion on page 42).

D9. EYES OF FUMEIYOSHI

LOW 2

These pools, located in bowl-shaped depressions, are known as the Eyes of Fumeiyoshi. Most of the hinterlands are filled with verdant vegetation, but nothing grows in the gritty gray soil that fills both of these basins. Local rumor holds that centuries ago, Fumeiyoshi, the god of graves and dishonor, looked out into the world through these two brackish pools before his attention was diverted elsewhere, and in the wake of his passing, no plant life can grow here. These two hollows are simply places with bad soil, yet the story about Fumeiyoshi is strong and the lore that his attention has “cursed” the land here persists.

The western pool (area **D9a**) is known as “The Left Eye of Fumeiyoshi,” while the eastern pool (area **D9b**) is known as “The Right Eye of Fumeiyoshi.” The Left Eye is 25 feet deep, while the Right Eye is quite shallow and never reaches a depth in excess of 10 feet. The steep sides of either depression can be navigated with a DC 16 Athletics check (a failure indicates a minor slip for 5 points of falling damage). While the Left Eye is otherwise safe, a pair of hunting spiders has claimed the shores of the Right Eye as their lair.

The PCs will need to explore these locations if they wish to become the new owners of the Cerulean Teahouse (see The Teahouse Owner’s Will on page 43).

HUNTING SPIDERS (2)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 306

Initiative Stealth +7

D10. GORGE OF FANGS AND TEETH

Located a few miles from the edge of the forest, this escarpment of stone was where most of the materials used to pave Willowshore’s roads and build its foundations and stone structures was quarried. The stone spider Ugly Cute retreated here (see Searching for Ugly Cute on page 50).

D11. LUMBER CAMP

This once-abandoned lumber camp is now the home of monsters—see Chapter 4 for more information.

D12. RITUAL SITE

A forest clearing is bisected here by the Wall of Ghosts—see page 63 for more details about this ritual site.

D13. THE ROAD TO ENLIGHTENMENT

This narrow roadway leads further up past the Wall of Ghosts into the mountains to the west. This road is the most likely route the PCs will take in the next adventure when they visit the abandoned monastery northwest of Willowshore.

P. PEACHWOOD GROVE

A grove of peachwood trees grows in each of these areas. These trees can be harvested for fulu creation supplies (see Collecting Peachwood on page 42).

WALL OF GHOSTS

The westernmost reaches of the mindscape lie beyond an impenetrable field of opaque white mist that cuts through the region, forming a vertical wall that appears to rise 50 feet into the air. Now and then, the distorted shapes of what look like silently screaming humanoid ghosts ripple through the mist, as if trapped within the fog. A PC who can fly and who attempts to soar above the wall finds that they can look further west upon the view of the forested mountains, but any attempt to approach within 10 feet of the wall’s position below causes more mist to flare up before them. This is the Wall of Ghosts—a defensive barrier that sprung directly from Kugaptee’s sinister power to protect the approach to his grave.

Removing the Wall of Ghosts is an important part of the next adventure. For now, any PC who attempts to enter the Wall of Ghosts finds they are not only turned around to reemerge where they entered (in the same manner as if they press beyond the mindscape’s border elsewhere), but are also exposed to an overwhelming sense of fear and horror as the ghosts in the wall flow through them, tainting their mind with terror and feelings of overwhelming, impending doom. Affected PCs must succeed at a DC 24 Will save. On a failure, they are frightened 1 upon emerging from the Wall of Ghosts back where they started, and on a critical failure, they’re frightened 3 and fleeing as long as they remain frightened.

See “Let the Leaves Fall,” the second Season of Ghosts adventure, for more details on the Wall of Ghosts and what lies beyond.

OPPORTUNITIES

As the PCs become better known, they’ll be presented with many opportunities. These tasks, bounties, and requests are summarized here, presented roughly in order of availability, but you should feel free to mix and match these requests as you see fit to match your game’s progression. Opportunities unpursued in this adventure can always be used in upcoming seasons!

Each of these opportunities is presented in abridged format. They're meant to be resolved in exploration mode, but if some of them inspire you, feel free to expand upon them so that they can be resolved in encounter mode. Several of these opportunities use Victory Points to resolve situations—see page 148 of the *Gamemastery Guide* for rules on how to accumulate Victory Points.

MISSING BOATS

Requester Rajul Samudra (Willowshore Dock, area W23)

Task Rajul breathlessly approaches the PCs with a report that kappas just stole two boats from Willowshore Dock and fled downriver with them. He asks the PCs to try to catch up with them and get the boats back.

Challenge The kappas bring the boats to the southern shores of Gourd Lake (area D2), so as soon as the PCs reach that area, they can confront the kappa thieves. The boats themselves float a dozen feet offshore while several kappas play on them. A kappa elder approaches the PCs to apologize for the youngsters' pranks, and asks the party to teach the younger kappas a lesson through "trial by sumo wrestling."

In order to teach the lesson, the PCs must win at least three out of five sumo wrestling matches. Each match is resolved by a PC attempting a DC 17 Athletics check to use brute force or a DC 17 Deception check to trick a kappa into bowing or otherwise causing it to spill the water in its head bowl. A critical failure on an Athletics check indicates that PC has strained a muscle and becomes enfeebled 1. A critical failure on a Deception check indicates that PC made a fool of themselves and takes a -2 circumstance penalty to all future Deception checks they attempt in this contest.

If violence breaks out, or if the PCs fail to win at least three matches, the kappas hiss and curse and flee into the water, abandoning the boats—but they'll likely just steal the boats again a few days later.

Some of these kappas might be those the PCs encountered in Chapter 2. If the PCs resolved that encounter on peaceful terms, then the PCs must only win at least one of the five sumo wrestling matches to teach the above lesson.

Reward If the PCs win enough matches, the kappas learn their lesson and will no longer steal boats. Grant the PCs 40 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Northridge.

FIXING THE RANCH

Requester Kum Soon-chong (Willowshore Stables, area W2)

Task Help the proprietor repair Willowshore Stables, which was heavily damaged during the monster invasion.

Challenge Once per day, each PC can either spend 8 hours chasing down and returning livestock that fled into

the nearby wilderness with DC 15 Survival checks, or helping to repair the ranch's fencing with DC 15 Crafting checks. These checks earn Victory Points.

Reward Once the PCs gain 10 Victory Points, services at Willowshore Stables become available again; the PCs earn 10 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Southbank.

MOVING DESNA'S SHRINE

Requester Choe Chung-hu (Milling Houses, area W8)

Task Chung-hu asks the PCs to help him find a new home for the Desna shrine currently languishing in the Abandoned Estates part of town (area W26).

Challenge A shikigami kami (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 142) named Kohoshi guards this shrine. The PCs must succeed at a DC 19 Diplomacy check to convince Kohoshi to let them move the shrine. The PCs must then either attempt DC 15 Athletics checks to physically move parts of it, or DC 16 Religion checks to ensure the shrine's components remain intact. These checks each take 4 hours and accumulate Victory Points. The PCs take a -2 circumstance penalty to these checks if they attempt to move the shrine without Kohoshi's permission. A worshipper of Desna gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all checks they attempt during this challenge.



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Reward Once the PCs gain 5 Victory Points, the shrine is relocated to the Milling Houses, where Chung-hu will attend to it; the PCs earn 20 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Southbank.

INVESTIGATE THE OLD EXPANSION

Requester Matsuki Shou (Matsuki Estate, area **W6**)

Task Old Matsuki has already started to worry that if the people of Willowshore are trapped by some sort of curse, they won't have enough food to last the winter. He asks the PCs to head north to an abandoned village and determine if it can still be reached—and if so, to explore it and gather enough information so that villagers can plant emergency crops there.

Challenge The PCs must travel to the old village expansion (area **D8**), potentially facing a random encounter along the way. The abandoned village lies just within the mindscape's fog border. Once the PCs arrive, they can accumulate Victory Points by spending 4 hours and then attempting DC 16 Nature or Farming Lore checks to investigate the surrounding fields and appraise their viability for use, or DC 18 Society checks to plan out the best methods for starting new crops in the ruins.

Reward Reaching 8 Victory Points is enough to secure the location as a supplemental agricultural site for Willowshore. This will have repercussions in the next adventure. Grant the PCs 20 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Southbank.

SMITH TROUBLES

Trigger The adventure has entered its second month.

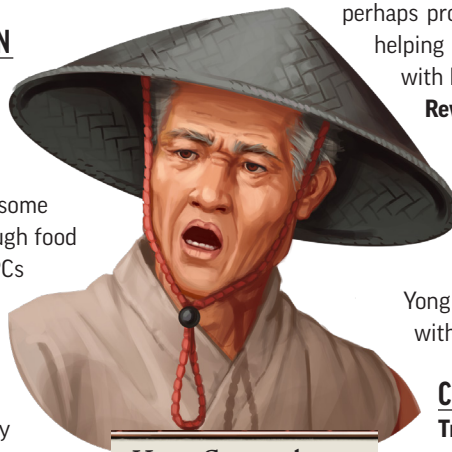
Requester Yong Wu-Xiu (Eternal Blaze Ironworks, area **W1**)

Task Imperial guards allied with Northridge have begun pressuring Eternal Blaze Ironworks to set aside other work to focus on crafting weapons and armor, free of charge, to help arm guards now that it looks like Willowshore might be cut off from the rest of the world. Wu-Xiu asks the PCs to speak to Zheng Peng at Willowshore Barracks (area **W15**). Alternatively, they could try to convince Wu-Xiu that supporting the town's guards is a good idea.

Challenge Whether the PCs decide to speak to Zheng Peng or Yong Wu-Xiu, it won't be a simple and quick discussion to sway one or the other. To convince one of the two to capitulate to the other's needs, the PCs must accumulate Victory Points by spending several 2-hour discussions with the NPC of their choice. They can either Intimidate

Yong Wu-Xiu with stories of the dangers facing Willowshore (or even threaten her into complying with Zheng Peng's requests) with DC 21 Intimidation checks or appeal to Zheng Peng's sense of community (and perhaps promise to serve a more active role in helping to defend Willowshore themselves) with DC 18 Diplomacy checks.

Reward Reaching 6 Victory Points is enough to convince the NPC to acquiesce to the solution favored by the PCs. This earns them 20 XP and 1 Reputation Point with either Southbank (if they sided with Yong Wu-Xiu) or Northridge (if they sided with Zheng Peng).



Kum Soon-chong

COLLECTING PEACHWOOD

Trigger The adventure has entered its second month.

Requester Yun Mong-un (Woodcarver's Guild, area **W17**)

Task Now that Willowshore needs to be more self-sufficient and to protect itself from "ghosts and monsters," Mong-un asks the PCs to gather supplies of peachwood from the wilds. With fresh peachwood, Mong-un can craft paper suitable for the creation of several rare fulus that will help protect both Willowshore and the PCs from supernatural influences.

Challenge Traditionally, supplies for making peachwood paper are imported since there's a strong local belief that the three regional groves help to protect Willowshore from the influence of evil spirits, but with supply lines cut off, the PCs must visit these three groves to secure supplies for Mong-un. She can indicate to the PCs where the three local groves are located (they're indicated with a "P" on the Willowshore Hinterlands map). Only the highest-quality, most flexible branches from a peachwood are suitable for crafting the paper required to create these fulus. To harvest supplies, a PC must attempt to Earn Income in the area to determine the value of raw materials gathered. A PC must attempt a DC 18 Nature or Survival check to Earn Income, and it can be up to a 4th-level task (with a DC set by level, according to table 10-5 on page 503 of the *Core Rulebook*). On a critical failure, no further attempts to harvest supplies from this grove can be attempted until next year (which, unknown to the PCs at this time, renders this grove useless for the remainder of the campaign).

Reward The PCs can continue to harvest peachwood as long as the groves hold out. The first time they manage to harvest and hand over a total of 10 gp in supplies, grant them 20 XP and 1 Reputation Point with Northridge. In thanks for this support, Yun Mong-un

offers to teach the PCs the formula for any of the rare fulus presented on page 83 and also gives each PC 8 gp worth of these fulus as thanks. Unfortunately, their harvesting of the peachwood trees bothers enough tradition-focused locals that the PCs also lose 1 Reputation Point with Southbank at this time.

THE TEAHOUSE OWNER'S WILL

Trigger The PCs discover "The Last Will and Testament of Qing Mai-Lai" in area **C1** of the Cerulean Teahouse, or the third month of summer begins.

Requester Luo Xi Yang (Luo & Laws, area **W16**)

Task If the PCs discover this document on their own, they can begin its challenge as soon as they read it and understand the requirement. Otherwise, on the first day of the third month of summer, Luo Xi Yang approaches the PCs after the document has come into her hands. She presents the document to the PCs, noting that "Willowshore's newest heroes" should have the first chance to fulfill the document's requirements to take ownership of the Cerulean Teahouse.

Challenge A reading of the document reveals that eccentric aristocrat Qing Mai-Lai wanted to ensure her heirs would have the gumption and devotion needed to continue running the teahouse once she passed away, and set a somewhat dangerous requirement for its inheritance. With no descendants surviving today, ownership of the teahouse will legally transfer to the first person or group that fulfills the document's requirement: to recover the "two pearls I've thrown into Fumeiyoshi's eyes."

A character who succeeds at a DC 14 Willowshore Lore check or DC 16 Social check to Recall Knowledge knows that two small ponds north of town are known locally as the "Eyes of Fumeiyoshi." Xi Yang (or another NPC of your choice) can point this out to the PCs if none of them make the connection. In order to comply with the will's unusual stipulation, the pearls must be retrieved from these pools.

To retrieve a pearl, a PC must succeed at a DC 16 Athletics check to reach the pond (as detailed in area **D9**) and must then spend time searching the waters for a single pearl. (Note that before a search of the Right Eye of Fumeiyoshi, area **D9b**, the two hunting spiders that dwell on its shores must be dealt with.) Each attempt to find a pearl takes 4 hours of Searching, a DC 10 Athletics check (to successfully Swim underwater during the search), and a DC 15 Perception check (which

can only be attempted if the Athletics check to Swim was at least a success) to discover the pearl. The DC of the Perception check to discover the pearl decreases by 2 each time the Perception check is repeated.

See area **D9** on page 40 for more information.

Reward Each of the pearls is worth 10 gp. If the PCs recover both of them, they become eligible to claim the Cerulean Teahouse as a business to run; rules for restoring the teahouse and running it will appear in the next Season of Ghosts adventure, "Let the Leaves Fall." Grant the PCs 40 XP for claiming ownership of the Cerulean Teahouse.



Luo Xi Yang

TEA FARM INFESTATION

Trigger A week has passed since the PCs completed The Teahouse Owner's Will.

Requester Mountain Summit Grass (The Leshy's Salon, area **W27**)

Task Once word spreads that the PCs have taken ownership of the Cerulean Teahouse, the leshy teamaker Mountain Summit Grass approaches them with a proposition. A frustrating blight has been spreading through the Leshy's Salon's plants, and the leshies could use help in stopping its progress.

Challenge Identifying the blight and treating the affliction requires careful examination, pruning, weeding, and rotation of tainted soil for fresh soil. Once the PCs get started, they can accumulate Victory Points by spending 8 hours and then attempting DC 18 Nature checks or DC 16 Farming Lore checks to make progress.

Reward Once the PCs achieve 10 Victory Points, they've scoured the blight from the Leshy's Salon. Grant them 20 XP. In addition, the gratitude earned at the Leshy's Salon will aid the party in supplying tea when running business at the Cerulean Teahouse, as detailed in the next adventure.

Investigating the Curse

While there are plenty of requests from locals to keep the PCs busy in Willowshore, the most important thing facing the town is the strange "curse" that descended on Willowshore at the onset of the season of ghosts. A few days after the PCs return from their failed attempt to reach Karahai, they're asked by both town elders—Granny Hu and Old Matsuki—to meet with them at the Lady of Souls, the local temple of Pharasma.

Here, the two elders set aside their personal grievances to thank the PCs for the services they've provided to Willowshore so far—and to then request that they continue their work to determine what

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has caused the town to become cursed. While the monstrous invasion of Willowshore was certainly an aspect of this curse, it seems to have been largely solved by lighting the *Eternal Lantern* and as a result of the PCs' actions. Yet, as the elders point out, there are three other mysteries facing the town: the vanishing of Governor Heh and his estate, the strange mists that surround the hinterlands and prevent travel, and the disappearance of the stone spider known as Ugly Cute.

The elders ask the PCs to investigate all three of these developments—the order in which they're tackled is irrelevant, although the disappearance of the governor seems to be the most pressing matter. If Governor Heh can be found, perhaps he'll know more about what's going on, after all! Each of these mysteries is presented on the following pages as its own set of encounters for the PCs to explore.

The Missing Governor

Unlike the mists or Ugly Cute, there are no obvious starting points to begin the search for the missing governor. Examinations of the plot on which his manor once stood lead nowhere—nothing even indicates that a building once stood there, lending weight to the prevailing theory that whatever snatched away the manor was a powerful supernatural force indeed.

With the lack of any obvious leads, both Granny Hu and Old Matsuki came to the conclusion that some supernatural force with a grudge against the governor must have had some role in the mysterious vanishing. Neither elder knows anyone in town who has the right combination of power and motivation to pull something like this off, but then they recall an event that happened near the end of the previous year, when Governor Heh had some fugitives arrested.

HOW IT FEELS TO LOSE IT ALL

This event took place three years ago, in the winter of 7105. Governor Heh received a missive from Sze to be on the lookout for "dangerous fugitives" said to have attempted to curse the imperial family. When one of these fugitives, a singer named Fan Hongrui, showed up in Willowshore claiming to be searching for aid in dealing with a friend's snakebite, the governor attempted to arrest her.

Fan Hongrui used magic to distract and injure his guards and then fled. As soon as the guards recovered, the governor led them in pursuit of the woman. They tracked her to Canary Inn, a roadside shelter to the northeast of Willowshore, but in the tense standoff that followed a fire erupted. Officially, the fire is believed to have been triggered by the

fugitive, but there are more than a few who claim the governor and his guards started the blaze in an attempt to force the fugitive and her allies out into the open.

What none contest is that the final words Hongrui sung out as the building burned seemed to unsettle Governor Heh, for she promised that "All those who serve Lung Wa will soon know how it feels to lose it all!"

At the time, it seemed little more than the dying oath of a criminal, but in hindsight, with Lung Wa collapsing within a year, the PCs' patron wonders if there was more magic to the oath than they suspected. In any case, the bodies of Fan Hongrui's two accomplices were recovered and buried near the ruined building, but her remains were never found.

While the elders admit the connection to Governor Heh's disappearance three years later seems tenuous, it's the closest thing they've come up with to explain what could have happened. They ask the PCs to travel to Canary Inn to investigate the site, if only to confirm this strange story is merely a coincidence to the governor's disappearance.

GHOSTS IN THE GRASS

LOW 2

The exact circumstances of Hongrui's death twisted her into an undead creature—a red-hooded thatchling (page 89). Since even before the formation of Willowshore's mindscape, she has been converting the souls of those unable to reincarnate into the thatchlings that increasingly haunt the forests of the Willowshore hinterlands. The PCs might even have encountered some of these spirits out in the forest before being contacted by the elders to investigate this situation.

Once the PCs are asked by the elders to travel to the ruins of Canary Inn (area D4), they'll need to make the journey northwest using trails or traveling through the forest, as the primary road that connects Canary Inn to Willowshore is interrupted just east of Gourd Lake by the edge of the mindscape. The elders suggest following the road up north along the east bank of the Duyue River, then taking one of the old hunter's trails further east to try to reach the inn. If it turns out that Canary Inn lies beyond the edge of the "curse," the elders note, then that suggests their theory of the link to Governor Heh's disappearance is false.

Creatures: Regardless of the route the PCs take, they encounter a group of thatchlings during their journey to the Canary Inn. This encounter takes place in an area where a wide spot in the road or a clearing in the forest allows for a large clearing of tall grass to grow. As the PCs pass through the area, the sound of strange



giggling, or perhaps even a single whispered cry of “help me” that sounds more like a threat than a call for aid, becomes apparent just over the sound of wind or soft rainfall. Whether or not the PCs investigate, the three thatchlings hiding in the grass scurry out to attack them, fighting until destroyed.

In the aftermath of the encounter, allow the PCs to attempt DC 14 Religion checks to Recall Knowledge about thatchlings. Remember that while these monsters are newly introduced in this adventure and that players are unfamiliar with them, in Shenmen, rumors and stories of thatchlings are a part of local folklore. With a critical success at this check, a character certainly knows that thatchlings, with their surrogate bodies made of grass, are vulnerable to fire and that the presence of thatchlings suggests a red-hooded thatchling—an undead capable of creating thatchling spawn—is present in the region as well.

THATCHLINGS (3)

CREATURE 0

Page 88

Initiative Stealth +7

SONGS AT CANARY INN

MODERATE 2

As the PCs approach the ruins of Canary Inn, they’ll hear a sweet voice singing a song about butterflies and dreams. The closer they get to the inn, the clearer the song gets. Once the PCs come in sight of the ruined inn, read them the following (note that the second paragraph includes descriptions of the creatures—make sure to adjust this text as necessary if the PCs’ actions would impact the creatures’ activities).

Use the Canary Inn map on page 46 for this encounter.

The forest road comes to a junction here, just north of which sit several partially burned single-bedroom structures. These half-dozen bungalows once comprised the Canary Inn, but today most of the buildings are burned to rubble, although the surrounding woodland has recovered from the fire. The northernmost structure seems mostly intact.

Three figures sit in the clearing just south of that structure. Two of the figures wear long gray hooded cloaks and sit facing away, their attention rapt on the third figure who stands before them—a young child wearing a red-hooded cloak whose song about butterflies and dreams floats along on a melody that feels much more maudlin and downbeat than its whimsical topic would suggest.

Creatures: The red-hooded child is Hongrui, who has disguised her thatchling reality using an *illusory disguise* spell. As the PCs approach, allow them DC 22 Perception checks to see through the magical disguise and to realize the child is, in fact, a blood-soaked,

mobile effigy made of dried grass held together by wisps of ghostly ectoplasm. The other two figures are regular thatchlings who, in life, were Hongrui’s traveling companions Chi Hongxin and Nanzhe Hongban. Viewed from behind, they appear as Small cloaked humanoids, but once they react to the PCs (or are viewed from the front), their true supernatural nature is impossible to miss.

While the thatchlings are filled with jealous anger toward the living, they don’t attack the PCs on sight. Instead, once Hongrui notices them, she stops her song and regards the party silently. The other two thatchlings scramble to their feet with the sound of rustling grass to stand at either side, ready to defend her.

Hongrui is curious to find out why the PCs are here. If any of the PCs carry a musical instrument or are otherwise obviously a performer, she points to that character and asks in a forlorn voice, “Are you here to entertain us? It’s been so long since we’ve had others to perform for us.” If a PC does perform for her, that PC must attempt a DC 17 Performance check.

Critical Success The performance soothes the thatchlings’ anger and reminds them of the beauty of life in a way that doesn’t evoke feelings of jealousy or loss. Hongrui’s illusion fades to reveal what she actually is, and she thanks the performer for the beautiful gift before asking why the PCs have come to visit her. She allows each PC to ask her one question that she’ll answer to the best of her ability.

Success Hongrui’s anger is soothed somewhat. She doesn’t lower her illusion but still asks the PCs why they’ve come to visit her. She allows the party to ask one question that she’ll answer to the best of her ability.

Failure The performance fails to impress, and Hongrui’s expression grows darker—she warns the party that they shouldn’t be here and should leave at once. If the PCs don’t comply immediately, the thatchlings attack.

Critical Failure The thatchlings begin giggling in mockery well before the performance ends and attack at once.

If Hongrui is soothed enough that she allows the PCs to ask questions, feel free to answer what the PCs ask as you see fit, to the best of her ability. She knows nothing about the mindscape surrounding Willowshore, but if asked about the governor, her expression darkens and she says he was a lapdog of Lung Wa and an enemy to the individual. She has no idea that Lung Wa has collapsed, or that Governor Heh has vanished, but if she learns that he has gone missing, she says, “Those in power will always abuse or abandon their responsibility, given time—be grateful your governor chose to leave you rather than inflict upon your town something worse.”

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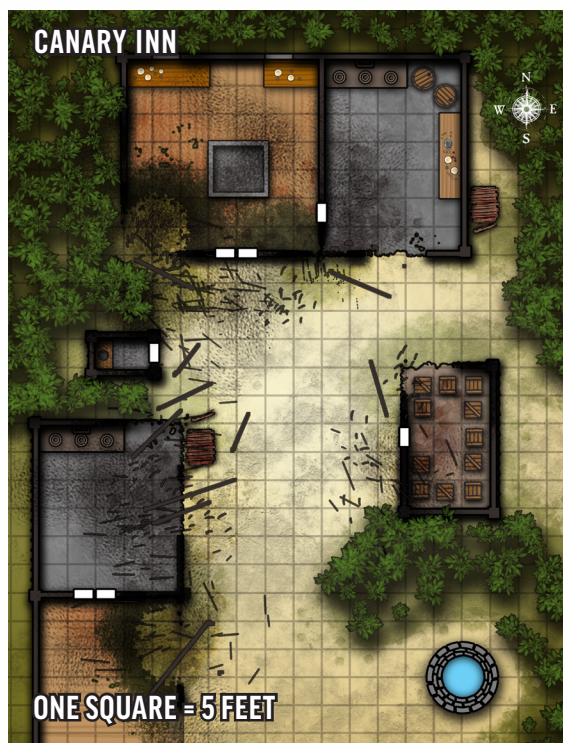
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Once she has answered their questions, if a PC achieved a critical success on the Performance check, she sighs in relief—she and the other thatchlings fade away, their reed bodies collapsing to the ground. If the Willowshore mindscape is allowed to eventually reset, the three will return next year, but until then, these three thatchlings won't rejuvenate. If instead the PCs only achieved a success, she asks the party to leave at once—those who remain are attacked.

If the thatchlings attack, all three roll Perception for initiative and begin to Giggle Distractingly as their turn begins. Hongrui remains at range, using *telekinetic projectile* against the PCs while the other two thatchlings move into melee. If either of those thatchlings are destroyed, or if a PC engages Hongrui in melee, she unleashes a *Howl of Vengeful Fury*. The thatchlings fight until they're destroyed but don't pursue fleeing PCs further than a half mile from the ruins.

FAN HONGRUI

CREATURE 2

Variant female red-hooded thatchling (page 89)

Initiative Perception +9

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +8, Performance +10, Stealth +7 (+9 in undergrowth)

THATCHLINGS

CREATURE 0

Thatchlings (page 88)

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: After the tragic fire destroyed Canary Inn, the bodies of two of the rebels were given unceremonious shallow graves in the middle of the courtyard, exactly where the three thatchlings were located when the PCs first visit (Hongrui's body was never recovered). A PC who Searches in this area and succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check notices irregularities in the charred soil that they recognize as shallow graves.

If the PCs exhume the bodies, they'll find two skeletons—all that remains of Hongxin and Hongban. If the PCs see that these two bodies are given proper burials, the three thatchlings don't rejuvenate again during this mindscape cycle.

Curiously, a red cloak that once belonged to Hongrui lies in the graves as well. If the PCs see to it that the bodies receive proper burials, one PC (the one who attempted the Performance check, preferably) feels a sudden sense of gratitude and understands that Hongrui wants them to take her cloak as thanks for the kindness. Likewise, if a PC critically succeeded at the Performance check, when the thatchlings fade, that PC feels the urge to exhume the grave and claim the cloak as a reward.

If Hongrui offers the cloak to the PCs as thanks, it functions as a unique magic item called *Hongrui's Gratitude* (page 82). If the PCs claim the cloak without her gratitude, it instead functions as a *stone of weight* (*Gamemastery Guide* 92), suddenly increasing to 5 Bulk if worn for longer than 1 minute. This curse can be lifted normally but also fades as soon as the two skeletons are given a proper, respectful burial, whereupon the cloak becomes *Hongrui's Gratitude*.

Reward: If the PCs bring rest to the three thatchlings, grant them 40 XP in addition to what they would've earned for defeating them in combat. Thatchlings are no longer encountered in the Willowshore mindscape, and any random encounter resulting in a thatchling is treated as no encounter. Additionally, the region feels slightly less haunted overall. This improves the townsfolk's morale and the PCs gain 1 Reputation Point with Northridge and Southbank.

While this line of investigation ends at a dead end for the PCs, the town elder encourages them to pursue the other two leads and hopes that they might ultimately help solve the mystery of the vanished governor.

The Mists

While the disappearance of the governor and his manor and staff are worrisome, the discovery that a strange mist is preventing anyone from traveling too far from Willowshore quickly becomes the major concern of its citizens. The town is relatively self-sufficient, but without trade, the coming winter will be difficult.

While the new reality of this mysterious mist settles in on the town, its people will need heroes to look up to—a role the PCs are primed to fill in the coming months. For now, the town elders have a very specific request for the PCs: they'd like to determine the extent of the effect that surrounds Willowshore. Do these strange mists merely prevent travel to the coast and to Karahai? Or do they completely encircle the region—and if so, to what extent?

While simply exploring the limits of the “curse” and following the mist in a circuit around the region is one way to determine its reach, this would be a long, potentially dangerous slog through trackless wilderness. Instead, the town elder favored by the PCs suggests they pay a visit to the Great Willow that stands on the hilltop just north of town. There dwells a local spirit whose connection to the hinterland wilderness should allow them to provide valuable insight into what's going on.

FOLLOWING THE BORDER

The mindscape's misty border doesn't manifest until one physically crosses it, at which point the traveler spends a few moments confused and disoriented, only to step back into the mindscape at the point they crossed the border in the first place. Since there's no visual cue to follow without repeating this process, mapping out the mindscape's borders by exploring is repetitive and complicated. Once a PC reaches a hex through which the border runs, they can map out the border's path through that hex by spending 4 hours Searching that hex through a process of exhaustive exploration and backtracking to interact with the border over and over. A PC can thus map out the border of two adjacent hexes in a day's work before becoming fatigued.

Note that the Wall of Ghosts, which serves as an additional border along the mindscape's western side, is very much a physical and visual barrier—see page 40 for more information about this feature and how the PCs can interact with it.

VISITING GREAT WILLOW

Willowshore's Great Willow (area **W29**) sits atop a hill overlooking town, a visible landmark and a source of pride among many locals. Said to be the first place Master Zhi Hui visited on her search for the Tan Sugi, the tree has endured through the years as one of the town's symbols, yet no road or trail has ever been laid to the hill's summit. Everyone knows that a spirit dwells within the tree, a kami who calls themselves Great Willow and who watches over the town, yet few feel it's wise to disturb or potentially

annoy the spirit. As such, visits to Great Willow tend to happen rarely, and only at times when Willowshore needs advice from the spirit world—times such as those now facing the settlement.

In addition to seeking wisdom from Great Willow, the elders suggest to the PCs that they organize an offering from the townsfolk to bring to the tree, in hopes of currying the spirit's favor in protecting Willowshore. At the very least, bringing an offering should help make conversing with the spirit easier. The elders suggest an offering of wine or sake, as can any PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Nature or DC 14 Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge. A PC who critically succeeds at this check realizes an even better offering would be a custom-made, hand-crafted twisted rope—a shimenawa—that the kodama could use to drape over the tree's branches or to use to aid in their own creation of spiritual ropes.

Wine or sake can be purchased anywhere in town, but if the PCs decide to offer a shimenawa, it's best for one of them to craft the braided rope themselves, as the kodama will likely be insulted if such a gift is delivered by hands that didn't craft it. The shimenawa need not be particularly long—a PC can craft an appropriate



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offering with an expenditure of 3 gp on materials and a successful DC 16 Crafting check as a 1-hour activity (a critical failure indicates the materials are ruined and can't be reused on another attempt).

It's about a 1-mile walk through relatively light forest to reach the Great Willow, but since the terrain involves navigating a steep slope at times, this trip is considered difficult terrain. A party that moves at a speed of 25 feet can make the trip from Willowshore to the Great Willow in about 20 minutes. As the PCs approach the hilltop, the forest thins into a clearing.

The forest thins around the hilltop, leaving an eighty-foot-diameter clearing at its summit. Atop the hill in the center of the clearing grows the Great Willow—the only willow tree present in much of the forest. Looming at a height of nearly ninety feet, the Great Willow is also quite large for its kind. Yet the reason the Great Willow has held such a place of reverence in Willowshore's history has more to do with the spirit said to dwell within it. At least a few years have passed since anyone has visited the Great Willow, but even from the clearing's edge, it's apparent that something seems amiss with the tree, for some sort of gray fungal growth has seemingly infested its lower roots.

Creatures: As the PCs enter the clearing, Great Willow emerges from the tree to adopt a defensive pose among its roots, little fists upraised. They call out a challenge to the PCs, demanding they explain why they dare approach. Note that PCs who come within 30 feet of the tree and its kodama will be in range of Great Willow's Distracting Gaze.

When the PCs explain themselves, allow them a chance to attempt a DC 24 check to Make an Impression on Great Willow, whose starting attitude is unfriendly. If the PCs reveal that they have an offering for Great Willow, the DC drops by 10 to DC 14. If the offering the PCs bring is a hand-made shimenawa, then they also increase result of their check by one degree of success.

If Great Willow remains unfriendly, they demand the PCs leave at once and "come back tomorrow"; if the PCs do so, they'll need to bring a brand new offering. Each time they return, the DC to Make an Impression is reduced by 2.

If Great Willow becomes hostile, they shriek in rage, accuse the PCs of being "the source of the curse," and attack. Great Willow doesn't aim to kill PCs as much as to frighten them away and breaks off from combat if the PCs call for a truce. They won't pursue the PCs beyond the edge of the clearing, and they retreat to the tree to merge with it if reduced

to fewer than 30 Hit Points. If the PCs flee and then return at a later date, the DC to Make an Impression on Great Willow increases by 2.

If Great Willow is made indifferent or friendly, they calm down and agree to speak to the PCs, as detailed below under Talking with Great Willow.

Great Willow can't be made friendly until the PCs solve the fungus infestation situation down south (see Into the Infestation on page 49).

GREAT WILLOW

CREATURE 5

Agender kodama (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 143)

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: If the PCs made Great Willow friendly, once they prepare to leave, the grateful kodama gives them a parting gift—a *lesser rope of climbing* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 262) made of supernaturally supple woven willow branches.

Talking with Great Willow

Once the PCs secure Great Willow's cooperation, the kodama relaxes somewhat and agrees to talk to the PCs. They speak in a tiny, almost childlike voice, but in a slow and very methodical manner, as if taking care with their word selection. Great Willow's mind has grown increasingly fractured with each repetition of the year (even though they don't understand or remember why), and the act of speaking with others requires deliberate concentration for the kodama these days.

If asked about the fungus growing on the tree roots, Great Willow bristles a bit, then calms and says, "An infection I brought back from a visit to check on a friend to the south. I am fighting it back, but I fear for my friend."

If the PCs ask about the strange misty border that they faced when they attempted to reach Karahai, Great Willow nods slowly in understanding, replying as follows.

"Yes. I sense it too. It is a curse. A powerful one. I can feel its edges all around. We are in a cage now. When it happened on the first day of summer, I was confused. I was alone. I could not hear my friends' voices. I jumped to visit my closest friend and they were not there, but a foul-tempered mushroom was, and I had to run away all the way back to here. Alone. I don't know what to do. I dare not leave this tree again when this curse is all around, but I can look for its edges from here. I will tell you more, but before I do, I need to know my friend is safe. You will go to save her from the angry mushroom, and then I will help."



Every first day of summer, when the mindscape's yearly cycle resets, Great Willow senses the change to the environment but is, each time, at a loss as to its cause. And every year, they use *tree stride* to travel from their willow tree ward to a willow grove nearly 5 miles to the south of Willowshore to check up on the kami of a grove of willow trees located there—a kami who, unlike Great Willow, wasn't pulled into the mindscape. This year, things have changed for the worse: Kugaptee's influence allowed an infestation of hostile fungi to bloom in this grove.

When Great Willow used *tree stride* to travel to the grove, they found the place overgrown with fungi, with no sign of the kodama who once dwelled there (these kodama avoided being drawn into the mindscape—see The Last Kodama sidebar on page 50). Faced with aggression from a hostile fungus and having used their only casting of *tree stride* for the day, Great Willow was forced to make the undignified trek back home to their ward atop this hill on foot—and in so doing, tracked invasive fungal spores with them.

Reward: If a PC succeeds at a DC 18 Nature check to Recall Knowledge, they can share some helpful techniques with Great Willow on how to fight back against the fungal infestation. Without this aid, Great Willow still removes the infestation by the time the PCs return, but they're grateful for the suggestion—grant the party 20 XP for the help.

INTO THE INFESTATION MODERATE 2

The infested willow grove is located on the western bank of Dragonfly Creek, south of Willowshore (area D7).

The creek-side road diminishes to a trail here as it approaches the once-idyllic grove of willow trees, but today, the foliage has become overgrown with sheets of gray and pale yellow fungi. More colorful spotted mushrooms or warty toadstools grow where underbrush once did.

While unpleasant looking, and certainly harmful to the willow trees and other foliage here, the fungus that has taken over this grove is largely harmless—with one significant exception. This encounter takes place in an open but fungus-infested clearing in a forest; use a map of your own design or a forest-themed Flip-Mat of your choice.

Creatures: When this cycle began in the Willowshore mindscape, a fungal invasion spread

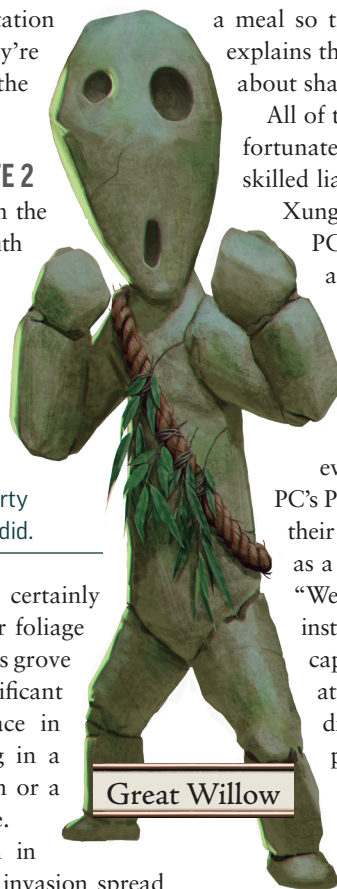
through this patch of willow trees. Once a place where locals came to enjoy nature and pursue romance, Kugaptee's influence clung to those positive emotions like a parasite, resulting in an influx of dangerous fungi. The fungi mostly manifested as slime molds that immediately slithered out into the surrounding hinterlands (and that can now be periodically encountered as wandering monsters), but one, a myceloid named Xungu, remains here.

Xungu is a direct physical result of Kugaptee's influence, and while they have memories of "ruling" this grove for decades, they didn't exist before this mindscape cycle began. The myceloid spends most of their time patrolling the perimeter of the infested patch, looking for meat to catch to prepare for meals. Faced with the PCs, Xungu is initially more duplicitous than violent. As a manifestation from Kugaptee's thoughts, Xungu speaks Common rather than Undercommon, but this doesn't stop them, upon spotting the PCs, from recounting a pitiful tale of how they were chased out from their underground colony. The myceloid explains how the kodama who dwelled here welcomed Xungu into their home, but then they all vanished, and now Xungu is all alone again. Xungu then asks one of the PCs to stay overnight and share a meal so that they won't feel lonely. The myceloid explains they have "secrets" to share but are bashful about sharing with too many people at once.

All of these claims are falsehoods, of course, and fortunately for the PCs, Xungu isn't a particularly skilled liar. If the party agrees to this request, once

Xungu and the PC are alone, they reveal to the PC that the secret is that they're really hungry and that the meal they'll "share" will be Xungu eating the PC—the myceloid attacks at once, hoping to overpower the lone PC.

When Xungu tells this story, they attempt a +0 Deception check to Lie, but even if this story is successful against every PC's Perception DC, the players should still make their own decisions as to what to do. Called out as a liar, Xungu huffs in frustration, then says, "Well, I suppose I'll have to settle for a banquet instead of a snack!" and attacks, intending to capture and eat the entire party. When Xungu attacks, they try to capture PCs, hoping to draw things out long enough for PCs to perish from purple pox, since poxy meat is tastier. This should give the party time to rescue a captured PC or (if the whole party gets caught) for NPCs to come rescue them instead. Xungu fights to the death,



Great Willow

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THE LAST KODAMA

What Great Willow doesn't yet realize, but will soon enough (as they've done so in every mindscape cycle before), is that they're the only kodama present in the region now. As a side effect of their proximity to Governor Heh's ritual, they perished along with the citizens of Willowshore and are now trapped here as well. Great Willow's other kodama friends throughout the region have gone on in the real world, leaving Great Willow alone (each of them mourning Great Willow's disappearance as well). If the PCs succeed at restoring the people of Willowshore to the modern age at the beginning of the final adventure in this campaign, Great Willow will be restored as well, but until then, the kodama grows more and more withdrawn and depressed as the campaign progresses.

in any event, and pursues fleeing PCs for only a few rounds before returning to the infested grove.

XUNGU

CREATURE 4

Agender myceloid (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 181)

Initiative Perception +10

Reward: With Xungu's death, the fungus infestation in the grove immediately begins to recede, with mushrooms and mold shrinking, melting, and evaporating. After just an hour, the grove is restored fully. At this point, a PC who's suffering from purple pox treats all saving throws against the affliction caused by Xungu as automatic successes (afflicted PCs should still roll the save to determine if they achieve a critical success, though).

RETURNING TO GREAT WILLLOW

Great Willow can sense when Xungu is defeated and is ready to receive the returning PCs in a much more pleasant manner upon the party's next visit to their hilltop. The kodama is now helpful, and if any of the PCs are suffering from poison pox caught from Xungu, Great Willow offers to help the character recover (they do so by attempting a Nature check to Treat Disease). The news that no kodama were present in the grove disappoints Great Willow, but they take the fact that there were no bodies or evidence that the kodama were harmed as a reason for hope.

In return for the aid the PCs provided, Great Willow confirms that the region surrounding Willowshore appears to be cursed. They can sense no other kodama

in the vicinity, and by the time the PCs return from defeating Xungu, Great Willow has already started to meditate upon the curse's boundaries. They can give the PCs a rough estimate of the size of the region they're trapped in, describing it as a region about 10 to 16 miles or so in every direction from Willowshore. More importantly, Great Willow mentions that something even more potent seems to lie to the west—the kodama is sensing the Wall of Ghosts, but isn't sure what it might be. While none of Great Willow's revelations will help the PCs defeat the "curse" that affects them, it should give them an idea of the scope of the region they're trapped in. One thing Great Willow can confirm, though—there seems to be no way to go beyond the mists, so for the time being, goals to become more self-sufficient as a settlement should be prioritized.

For the rest of Season of Ghosts, Great Willow remains helpful to the PCs on their visits to the hilltop; you can use the kodama to give the party advice on what to do next or to provide clues as needed to get things back on track as you see fit.

Searching for Ugly Cute

The vanishing of Willowshore's guardian spirit—the stone spider affectionately called "Ugly Cute" who has stood vigil for many years at the eastern edge of town—might not seem as urgent a mystery to follow up on as the missing governor or the strange mists, but tracking down Ugly Cute is the only mission of the three that will give the PCs a solid lead for reversing the "curse" that has settled over the land.

When the PCs first passed by Ugly Cute's abandoned post, tracks on the ground suggested that the spider got up and walked away toward the nearby river, after which that particular trail became impossible to follow. The town elder the PCs are working with informs them that trackers from the Silvermist Lodges have been looking for clues ever since the *Eternal Lantern* was lit, but so far, no trace of Ugly Cute has been found. Still, meeting with hunters from the Lodges is a logical first step if the PCs want to start tracking down the missing guardian themselves.

CONSULTING SILVERMIST

When the PCs visit the Silvermist Lodges (area **W5**), consider having Sumika be the hunter who meets with them if the PCs rescued her earlier in the adventure. Regardless of whom the PCs meet with, the answer is the same: attempts to track Ugly Cute have yielded no leads; the rainstorms and the amount of time that passed while the hunters were recovering from the monster invasion did them no favors. Sumika (or

whoever they contact) muses that even the old hunter's trick of "returning to the quarry's home" to try to pick up the trail anew hasn't worked. Despite several visits back to Spider Gate (area **W30**), no fresh clues have manifested.

Allow the PCs to attempt a DC 16 Hunting Lore or DC 18 Nature check to Recall Knowledge at this point. On a success, a PC notes that Spider Gate is less akin to Ugly Cute's home, but more like a posting, so following this logic, Ugly Cute wouldn't return there if they chose to flee to a lair. On a critical success, a PC has a flash of insight—Ugly Cute was "born" from locally quarried stone, so wouldn't the creature's "home" be akin to the source from which its components were originally harvested? If no PC comes up with this insight, feel free to have Sumika or another hunter realize this possibility and contact the PCs with a request to help after several days have passed if the party hasn't made progress on their own.

With a successful DC 16 Willowshore Lore or DC 18 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a PC also remembers that Ugly Cute's materials were originally quarried from the Gorge of Fangs and Teeth to the south (area **D10**).

SEARCHING THE HINTERLANDS

It's inefficient, but the PCs could simply explore the hinterlands and Search for signs of Ugly Cute's passage. Attempts to find evidence of Ugly Cute north or east of Willowshore automatically fail, but each time a PC spends 4 hours Searching a hex in the hinterlands southwest of Willowshore, attempt a DC 16 flat check (or, if the PC is Searching in the Gorge of Fangs and Teeth or any hex that borders this region, a DC 3 flat check). On a success, that PC can attempt a DC 15 Survival check to Track to discover signs of Ugly Cute's passage. Once these signs are found, anyone can Track Ugly Cute's trail with a successful DC 16 Survival check. With enough successes, the trail leads directly to area **D10**.

RESCUING UGLY CUTE

After Ugly Cute saved the PCs by attacking the noppera-bos who had abducted the party, they chased the fleeing monsters south for a time before catching up to and destroying the creatures. The stone spider was damaged in the fight, but was also increasingly distraught over the strange new reality they found themselves in. Rather than return to their post, Ugly Cute instinctively returned to the place where their stones were "born," the Gorge of Fangs and Teeth. Here, Ugly Cute was able to draw upon the stones of

their creation to slowly repair their body. Since then, the guardian beast has been particularly obsessed over the noppera-bos and the Wall of Ghosts, and has split their time between thinking things over in the Gorge and patrolling the region south and west of town, searching for the source of the noppera-bos, who Ugly Cute believes have something to do with the "curse" that has settled over the land.

Once the PCs approach within 1 hex of area **D10**, it becomes easier to Track Ugly Cute (dropping to a DC 10 Survival check), but regardless of their success, they'll run into some dangerous denizens of the region soon after entering the area.

This encounter takes place in an open area of rocky ground; use a map of your own design or a Flip Mat of your choice with relevant terrain.

Creatures: Just as Kugaptee's influence wreaked havoc on Willowshore and brought infestation to the southern willow grove, the ancient fiend's association



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with destruction and decay clashed against the long traditions held in this region as being a source for raw materials used to create sculptures and structures. The result was the manifestation of several swarms of animated stones and mobile grit that rasp and scour through the gorge.

The PCs encounter two of these slithering carpets of gravel soon after they enter the gorge. These two creatures function identically to cobbleswarms, but their individual components are made of loose rock and bits of gravel rather than from worked stone used to pave roads. The two cobbleswarms slither and grind over a large shape crumpled in a narrow cleft in the stone. As the PCs draw near, the cobbleswarms move to attack, revealing that the shape they'd been covering is, in fact, Ugly Cute!

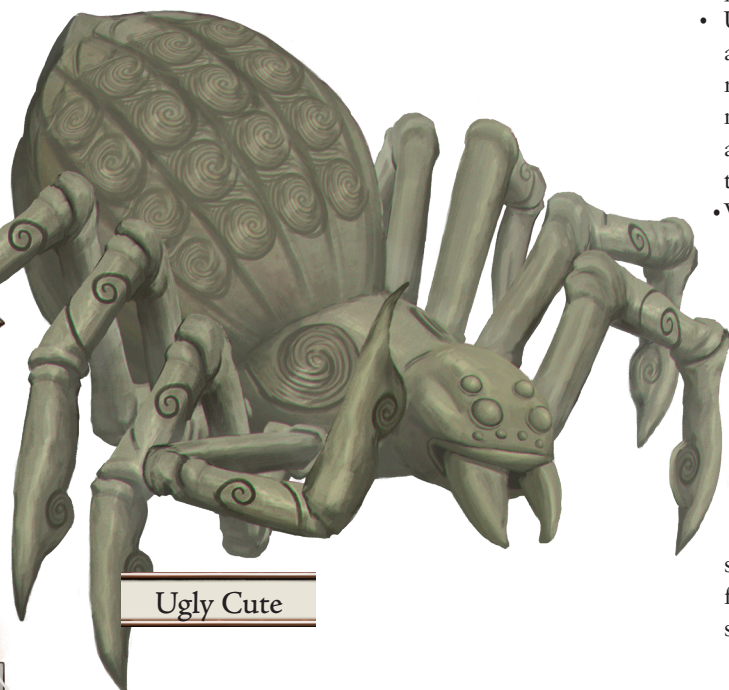
For the duration of this encounter, Ugly Cute remains battered and barely able to move, having been taken near to the point of destruction by the cobbleswarms. If the PCs have trouble defeating the two swarms, you can have Ugly Cute step in to save the day, but it's best if the PCs are the heroes here! The cobbleswarms fight until they're destroyed. If they manage to drive the PCs away, it's up to you whether or not they finish off Ugly Cute or if the stone spider survives to speak to the PCs upon the characters' eventual return.

COBBLESWARMS (2)

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 52

Initiative Perception +9

CREATURE 2



Ugly Cute

Speaking with Ugly Cute

Once the PCs defeat the cobbleswarms, Ugly Cute rises up on their eight legs, a bit wobbly and bearing plenty of chips and cracks to their body (with 5 Hit Points remaining), but still very much alive. The stone spider is thankful for the PCs' help and intends to remain here in the gorge until they recover (the stone spider's immunity to healing doesn't apply to healing gained from rest in this location), but they're eager to learn from the PCs how things are faring in Willowshore. Ugly Cute knows them all by name and is delighted to find out they've taken up the mantle of protectors of the town.

During conversation, Ugly Cute is a chipper guardian spirit who's starving for a proper chat. Like the PCs, Ugly Cute doesn't realize they died in the real world, and even though their death occurred (from the PCs' perspective) 115 years in the future, Ugly Cute believes that the past 115 years it spent were something more like a dream or a vision than an actual experience, and shouldn't give the PCs any clues or insights into this passage of time; this revelation will take place in a future adventure. As the PCs and Ugly Cute speak, make sure to convey the following points, either as comments by Ugly Cute or as specific answers to the PCs' questions.

- Ugly Cute reveals that they confronted a group of faceless monsters who were abducting the PCs. They attacked and pursued the creatures, but ended up lost and wounded and had to return here to recover. They apologize for leaving the PCs behind, and they express relief and delight that the PCs recovered and are now helping to protect Willowshore.
- Ugly Cute claims to have had visions of an abandoned Willowshore left to crumble into ruins reclaimed by the forest after some sort of monstrous invasion, and it was this vision that allowed it to awaken and come to the PCs' aid at the start of the adventure.
- While Ugly Cute doesn't think that the Reenactment Festival was the source of the curse, whatever caused the curse did take place during the height of the ceremony itself.
- The mists surrounding Willowshore are the beginning of the town's doom, a curse brought upon the region by an unknown force—and one that Ugly Cute senses is tied to the faceless monsters who abducted the PCs. These faceless monsters have claimed an old lumber camp to the west of town, near Ceiba River's source. Perhaps clues about the curse can be found there? Further west, Ugly Cute can sense a stronger source of evil, but they haven't been able



to observe this source themselves as it lies beyond the 10-mile range it can travel from Willowshore.

Once the conversation is over, Ugly Cute tells the PCs they intend to return to their post at Spider Gate on the eastern edge of Willowshore. There, the guardian spirit will settle in to watch and observe, leaving the active defense of the town to the PCs. If Ugly Cute has any revelations during their time of introspective guardianship, they'll waken again to alert the party.

UGLY CUTE

CREATURE 5

Agender stone spider (page 87)

Initiative Perception +14

Treasure: In thanks for the rescue, and as an apology for abandoning the PCs to chase down the faceless abductors, Ugly Cute gifts the PCs a piece of their stony carapace, which can help supply the PCs with tools to protect Willowshore. *Ugly Cute's Gift* is detailed on page 83.

Reward: For rescuing Ugly Cute, grant the PCs XP as if they'd defeated the stone spider in combat. In addition, they earn 2 Reputation Points with both factions once Ugly Cute resumes their post at Spider Gate.

Who Leads Willowshore?

Being stuck in Willowshore with a missing governor, under a fear that the monsters could return at any moment, and with only each other for company causes tension to escalate between the town's two factions of Northridge and Southbank. One evening during the third month of summer, this tension finally snaps as Old Matsuki very publicly challenges Granny Hu for Willowshore's leadership.

The elders resolve to settle the question of leadership via a duel between chosen champions, drawing upon a Willowshore tradition for solving public disputes. The two set the date for this duel as seven days hence and part ways, leaving the rest of those present to begin gossiping about who might be representing whom, who yet holds a grudge against another, and even wonder if a third party might step into the conflict between Northridge and Southbank. As word spreads through town, dread grows as folks realize that a duel will likely lead to a bloodbath. Soon enough, an NPC close to the PCs asks them to de-escalate the situation, to stoutly stand with one of the factions, or to put themselves forward as a collective third candidate. Which NPC approaches the party is left to you to decide, but it should be someone the players trust.

A TIMELY INTERVENTION

One way to automatically trigger the discovery of Ugly Cute's trail is if the PCs begin to draw close to the old lumber camp (area **D11**) or the Wall of Ghosts while they aren't yet 3rd level. If the PCs come within a hex of area **D11**, or are about to reach the Wall of Ghosts, they should automatically discover Ugly Cute's trail. They can Track this trail south to area **D10**, but if they ignore it and continue on toward the lumber camp, you should have Ugly Cute find them instead. In this case, the stone guardian begins the encounter by warning the PCs about the denizens of the camp rather than closing with it, but otherwise, you can play this meeting out the same way as Rescuing Ugly Cute does (although without the need to rescue the stone spider from ravenous cobbleswarms). In this way, you can use Ugly Cute as a way to delay the PCs' arrival at the lumber camp (itself detailed in Chapter 4) before they're likely ready to face the threats found therein.

With seven days before the duel, the PCs have time to make a decision as to where they stand. Both Old Matsuki and Granny Hu extend invitations to the PCs to speak to them by the end of the day, for the support of those who relit the *Eternal Lantern* would go a long way toward establishing that faction's legitimacy to claims of leadership, even if a PC doesn't wish to be directly involved in the duel itself. In order to convince one of the two elders to step aside and let the other assume the leadership role, the PCs must reach 7 Influence Points with that elder. It's possible that the PCs have already reached this level with one or both elders during play, in which case they can solve the issue by making the decision of who should be Willowshore's interim governor until Governor Heh's fate can finally be determined. Each elder's influence stat block appears in their NPC entry at the end of this book.

If the PCs fail to solve this problem, then you should select which elder wins the leadership, picking the one that the party is less in favor with. At your option, if the PCs are intrigued by a duel, you could even allow them to serve as one of the elders' champions, using the rules for dueling (*Gamemastery Guide* 166–167).

Reward: If the PCs convince one of the elders to cede to the other and achieve a peaceful resolution, grant the PCs 80 XP and 2 Reputation Points with the faction whose elder becomes the town's leader.

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Chapter 4: The Wall of Ghosts

Lumber is one of Willowshore's traditional exports, but with the fall of Lung Wa, the lumber became of secondary importance as Willowshore's citizens turned to other pursuits. One of the region's major lumber camps was located near the source of the Ceiba River, but production there was halted when its workers abandoned their posts and fled the region after Lung Wa's collapse. In the nearly 2 years that have passed, the lumber camp has remained abandoned, but when everything changed during the latest mindscape cycle, a gathering of monsters spawned from Kugaptee's influence took control of the camp.

Primary among the lumber camp's new inhabitants are faceless monsters known as noppera-bos. Once a united front, these monsters have fractured into two

groups, each influenced by beliefs imprinted on them by Kugaptee himself: the Prayers and the Rovers. The Prayers (led by a zealot named Zoudou) are those who worship Kugaptee religiously, while the Rovers (led by scoutmaster Muginrou) see Kugaptee as a call to conquest. The Prayers have been sacrificing captives in hopes of opening the Wall of Ghosts and revealing the "paradise" they believe waits for them beyond. The Rovers, meanwhile, want to cause pain and suffering in the region, believing that doing so will make the wall expand and bring paradise to them. Neither method will actually result in the goals the factions seek, but the lack of progress has pushed the Prayers to make more sacrifices, while the Rovers are growing impatient to make a glorious attack on Willowshore.





The Lumber Camp

When the PCs rescue Ugly Cute, the stone spider can inform them about the monsters now occupying the abandoned lumber camp, but the PCs might stumble across the location on their own as they explore the Willowshore hinterlands. Once Willowshore has a new leader, the noppera-bos escalate the situation by repeating the event that started this Adventure Path—they sneak into town to abduct a fresh batch of victims, as the need for more sacrifices to Kugaptee pushes the Prayers to attempt such a desperate move. News of the abduction should galvanize the PCs into action, with many locals in southwest Willowshore confirming that a “group of masked bandits just raided Willowshore Stables and marched everyone there off to the west!”

ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

While the lumber camp hasn’t been occupied for two years, its location and basic layout are still known to many locals. In order to learn about the camp, a PC can attempt to Recall Knowledge on the subject with a DC 15 Willowshore Lore check or a DC 18 Society check. Alternatively, a PC can ask around town and then attempt a DC 16 check after Gathering Information for 2 hours.

On a success, the PCs can secure enough of a description of the camp to create a map of the site. There are two entrances to the main camp, but entering through one of these routes might be too obvious.

On a critical success, the PCs learn about a secret door in the stockade wall (area E6) that woodworkers once used to sneak out and enjoy the nicer guard outhouse.

THE MERCHANT RETURNS

Before the PCs set out for the lumber camp the first time, the strange merchant Shinzo pays one more visit to Willowshore—perhaps even meeting the PCs on the road just as they leave town. Shinzo is delighted to have caught the PCs before they left and warns them of strange monsters who have been masquerading as “bandits” in the region to the west. Upon hearing about the abduction, Shinzo doesn’t seem surprised and tells the PCs to take care before asking a strange question meant to suggest a tactical option that might not occur to some parties.

“How do you intend to approach these enemies who invade your town and take your people? Do you intend to bring furious ruin to them in battle, or do you think you can fool them into believing that you are one of them to effect a rescue without resorting to violence?”

Treasure: Shinzo nods sagely at however the party answers. If the PCs’ answer leans toward revenge or enacting justice, he gifts them a *cape of justice* (page 81) and a warning not to stray from their path. If the PCs’ answer leans toward subtlety, Shinzo gifts them a *noppera-bo hood* (page 82) and compliments them for their bravery. Whichever item he doesn’t gift remains available for purchase, along with any other items he might have to offer.

LUMBER CAMP FEATURES

The lumber camp is located just over 8 miles west of Willowshore, at the end of a poorly maintained road that follows the northern bank of the Ceiba River.

The first time the PCs approach the camp, regardless of time of day, the sound of rowdy celebration comes from within, along with the smells of smoke and roasting meat. In addition, the sounds of cackling and taunting voices come from the island to the west (area E5), while periodic cheers and curses accompanied by the sound of a crossbow firing come from the dormitory to the east (area E4), potentially attracting the PCs’ attention as they draw near.

The heart of the lumber camp is surrounded by a 15-foot-tall log fence. Each of the logs has been sharpened to a stake, making it impossible to stand atop them. A PC must succeed at a DC 20 Athletics check to Climb these walls. Buildings within are 10 feet tall unless stated otherwise. Unlike Willowshore, the lumber camp exclusively uses wooden swivel doors instead of sliding doors.

Bickering and conflicts aren’t uncommon among noppera-bos, so if those in one encounter area see a fight break out in a nearby area, they’re likely to take note, watch, and even call out taunts, but generally won’t rush to join a battle in progress, instead choosing to remain at their posts for fear of greater punishments should they be caught abandoning their duties.

E1. ENTRANCE

TRIVIAL 3

These heavy double doors are shut tight. A single iron-framed wicket is set in the right door.

The noppera-bos keep these doors (as well as the northern doors opposite) barred with a large log on the inside. Removing the log from the inside takes three Interact actions—alternately, a character can Force Open the heavy doors with a successful DC 30 Athletics check.

Creatures: A pair of noppera-bo tricksters, each disguised as a human, stand here. Frustrated over not being allowed to join the party inside, the two have spent the past several hours in a heated debate about

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LUMBER CAMP
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



whether the outhouses inside are haunted, as a way to distract themselves from feeling too bitter about their assignment here. They're allied with the Prayers and want little to do with the "slackers" in area **E4**.

Along with the two noppera-bos is the lumber camp's guard dog, Jerky, who has been living a feral life in the area after being abandoned by the woodworkers 2 years ago. He has come to see the noppera-bos as his new masters, but he still prefers the company of humans. A PC can attempt to Command an Animal with a DC 14 Nature check to get Jerky to realize that his "masters" are monsters in disguise. On a success, Jerky becomes indifferent to the PC and stands aside, refusing to follow the orders of the noppera-bos. On a critical success, Jerky turns on the noppera-bos and attacks them. He then accompanies the PC for as long as the character will have the eager dog by their side and treat him well.

The noppera-bos call out to the PCs as soon as they approach, claiming to be men posted here by "the camp's owners" and that no visitors are allowed. Asked about the sound of revelry inside, the two appear sullen and cranky but only repeat their command to the PCs to "turn around and head back to town." They attack if the PCs persist, rolling for initiative with Deception and starting the fight by Removing their Faces. They fight until one is reduced to fewer than 5 Hit Points, at which point both noppera-bos throw down their weapons and flee into the woods. If the PCs haven't won Jerky over yet, the dog's instinct is to pursue, though the PCs can use Command an Animal to call him back.

When the noppera-bos need the gate to be opened, they telepathically contact the grunts in area **E10** to come open the gate. Note that any questions about the abduction are sure to alert these noppera-bos that the PCs aren't actually who the tricksters think they are and will quickly result in a fight.

NOPPERA-BO TRICKSTERS (2)

CREATURE 1

Page 84

Initiative Deception +8

JERKY

CREATURE -1

Guard dog (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 102)

Initiative Perception +6

E2. GUARD TOWER

This simple, wooden guard tower supports a single, open-air platform, fifteen feet off the ground. A ladder leaning against the west side provides access to the platform above.

The noppera-bos that are usually posted here are slacking off in the guard dormitory (area **E4**) the first time the PCs visit, leaving the tower conveniently unattended, but on subsequent visits, a pair of noppera-bo grunts are stationed here.

E3. OX STABLES

The stables are conspicuously empty. Old hay is scattered across the floor and crunches underfoot. A sweet smell drifts from the rotting feed in the hay boxes.

These stables stood empty after the camp was abandoned, although more recently, the noppera-bos used them to cage deer and wild oxen they caught earlier—which they are now in the process of eating in their celebration inside the camp.

Treasure: Searching the stables uncovers a bottle of lesser bravo's brew in one of the hay boxes.

E4. GUARD DORMITORY

LOW 3

Blood splatters and weapon marks cover this dormitory's walls. Pools of dried blood stain the floor and bedding of the bunk beds. On the southeastern wall, several humanoid silhouettes have been painted using blood.

Creatures: A total of four noppera-bo grunts are inside this dormitory, three of whom are engaging in a shooting contest with a hand crossbow they found. The last was sent here to clean up as punishment for a trivial matter. Deep in their game, the noppera-bos are initially indifferent to the PCs since they don't expect intruders and are quick to assume they're noppera-bo tricksters with newly stolen faces. As long as the PCs do nothing to suggest otherwise, the noppera-bos continue to ignore the party. These slacking noppera-bos are part of the Rovers, and as soon as they realize the PCs are intruders, they fight to the death, believing the PCs might pose a threat to Mugirou's safety if not dealt with.

NOPPERA-BO GRUNTS (4)

CREATURE 0

Page 84

Initiative Perception +4

Treasure: A vial of *oil of potency* sits on a shelf next to the eastern door.

E5. LOADING ISLAND

LOW 3

Across a sagging wooden bridge is a small island where logs are unloaded into the water for storage or transport.

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Creatures: A group of four noppera-bo grunts have captured a frightened and injured kappa and are passing the time bullying the poor creature as a way to take out their frustrations at being deemed “unfit” for the social gathering inside the camp’s walls. These noppera-bos play at the role of “heroic adventurers” taking out a “monstrous threat.”

As with the guards nearby, these four are likely to mistake the PCs for disguised noppera-bo tricksters, and the PCs can attempt to influence the grunts’ behavior by Requesting or Coercing them. If a PC’s check results in a failure on either attempt, the noppera-bos grow suspicious and ask the PCs if they stand with Zoudou or Mugirou. As these four noppera-bos are allied with the Prayers, if the PCs claim to be with Mugirou, the noppera-bos shriek in anger and attack, eager to “earn respect” by beating up the opposition. If they claim to be with Zoudou, the PCs must successfully Lie to the noppera-bos. If successful, the noppera-bos offer their captured kappa to be sacrificed to the Wall of Ghosts but also sheepishly ask to be allowed to come watch. If the PCs can keep the deception going, they can use it to be escorted into the camp proper.

During this time, the kappa, whose head bowl is empty and has been reduced to 5 Hit Points, begs for mercy. He might even recognize the PCs, for this kappa was one of those the PCs encountered earlier in the adventure, either at the baths downtown in Chapter 2 or at Gourd Lake in Chapter 3.

If the PCs rescue the kappa, and particularly if they treated the kappa well in their previous encounter, the creature remains nearby for a short time after being rescued. Having been around the area, the kappa is aware that there’s some friction between two individuals named Zoudou (whose followers are zealots) and Mugirou (whose followers are warmongers) but doesn’t know much else.

NOPPERA-BO GRUNTS (4)

CREATURE 0

Page 84

Initiative Perception +4

INJURED KAPPA

CREATURE 2

Variant kappa (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 147)

Initiative Perception +9

HP 35 (currently 5)

Treasure: A PC who Searches the muddy water near the southern end of the western floating logs and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers a treasure forgotten by a woodcutter—a +1 *battle axe*. If the PCs rescued the kappa, the creature points out the treasure’s location before they flee the area.

E6. SECRET DOOR

If a PC Searches this area and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check, they find the secret door built into the fence here. If they know about the secret door’s existence as a result of preliminary investigations (see Advance Knowledge on page 55), a character must succeed at a DC 8 Perception check to locate the door.

E7. COURTYARD

MODERATE 3

A roaring campfire built from furniture scraps and lengths of timber roars in the middle of this open courtyard. A dome-shaped cage made of branches and thin wooden slats stands just to the south of the fire.

Creatures: The sounds of revelry and the scent of cooking meat come from here, where a gathering of a half-dozen noppera-bo grunts loyal to the Rovers are cooking strips of beef over the fire while betting on the outcome of a fight they’ve just staged in the wooden cage between two giant rats.

The cage can be destroyed by a character who Forces it Open with a successful DC 18 Athletics check or simply by damage (AC 12, Hardness 3, HP 12 [BT 6]). If the cage is broken, one of the animals escapes at once and the other in 1d4 rounds. If the cage is destroyed, both animals escape. Escaped animals attack the noppera-bos before trying to flee the camp.

If the noppera-bos realize the PCs aren’t disguised tricksters (automatic if the PCs let the caged animals loose), they’ll fight until two of them are slain or defeated, at which point those remaining flee to area E16 to join their leader’s side for protection.

NOPPERA-BO GRUNTS (6)

CREATURE 0

Page 84

Initiative Perception +4

GIANT RATS (2)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 276

Initiative Perception +5

E8. KITCHEN

LOW 3

The hearth of this kitchen is dark from heavy use. The floor is lined with broken pots. A thin layer of cobwebs cover much of the surfaces, including a few bundles of what seem like bodies that lie in the middle of the room.

Creatures: In the first few days of summer when Kugaptee’s influence granted creatures a modicum of sapience, the noppera-bos lured a trio of hunting spiders here from the nearby woods with promises of free food.



When the PCs lit the *Eternal Lantern*, these spiders reverted to normal animals but continued to dwell here. They've since grown somewhat weary of their captivity and fight anyone who enters the room to the death.

HUNTING SPIDERS (3)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 306

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: One of the bodies on the floor belongs to a noppera-bo who died before they could use the moderate thunderstone still clutched in their hand.

E9. STOREROOM

This pantry has been cleaned out, leaving empty baskets and bags with scraps of vegetables and grains.

Having fully ransacked the area, no monster comes by this room. The PCs can safely rest in this location if they stay undetected or unnoticed. While they rest, they may hear the skittering of the spiders next door in area **E8**.

E10. MANAGER'S DORMITORY

LOW 3

This room is well furnished, complete with a desk, wardrobe, and a bed with privacy curtains.

Creatures: Once the personal quarters for the lumber camp's manager, the noppera-bos have taken to using this sturdy building as a prison to hold special sacrifices. Kum Soon-chong, the owner of Willowshore Stables, and his son, Meng-sung, wound up here. When his son was taken away after only a half hour, Soon-chong's despair only grew, and now, the elderly veterinarian is truly desperate.

Soon-chong is tightly bound with rope in the eastern bedroom while two noppera-bo occultists allied with the Prayers stand guard in the main room. Unlike many of the grunts and tricksters in the area, these two occultists aren't easily tricked; they're quick to assume that the PCs are heroes from Willowshore who have come to the camp to rescue prisoners, and as such, they attack on sight. If one of the occultists is slain, the other attempts to flee the camp to make his way northwest to the ritual site to warn the others there.

If the PCs rescue Soon-chong, he tearfully begs them to save his son, explaining that the monsters kept him here for only a short time before taking him away. He managed to learn that Meng-sung has been taken somewhere to the northwest at the

end of a trail and that his son has some sort of "old soul" the cultists were eager to use as an offering to something or someone they called "Great Kugaptee." The veterinarian can't provide much help; he lacks any gear and has been reduced to 2 Hit Points. He suggests that, for the time being, he can remain here while the PCs press on, but asks them not to leave him behind once they return to Willowshore.

NOPPERA-BO OCCULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 85

Initiative Perception +8

KUM SOON-CHONG

CREATURE 3

NG male human variant tracker (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 219)

Initiative Perception +13

HP 45 (currently 2)

Reward: If the PCs rescue Soon-chong, grant the PCs 40 XP, as well as 1 Reputation Point for both factions once he returns home. If they intentionally hurt him or are responsible for his death, they lose 5 Reputation Points with both factions.

E11. CAMP OFFICE

LOW 3

The contents of the camp office are mostly well-organized—almost immaculate—as if no one has been inside for a while. All furniture from chests to chairs is in place, with one exception: loose documents lie strewn all over the floor, as if a gust of wind tore through the room at some point. A very solid looking wooden door that has been reinforced with iron bands stands in the northern wall.

The iron door to area **E12** is locked, and the key is long gone. Opening this door requires a character to succeed at three DC 20 Thievery checks, or a single DC 23 Athletics check to Force it Open. Alternately, the door can be battered down—it's a typical reinforced wooden door (Hardness 15 HP 60 [BT 30]).

Hazard: The noppera-bos have avoided this chamber due to several summoning runes that were placed here by the camp's previous management for security. The first attempt the noppera-bos made to enter here triggered the runes and frightened them enough that they've avoided the chamber ever since. In all, there are three summoning runes in the area, and all of them trigger simultaneously once anyone steps fully into this room. While the elemental wisps the traps summon will pursue foes beyond this area, they still vanish after 2d6 rounds, as normal for a summoning rune trap.

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WHO IS KUGAPTEE?

The name “Kugaptee” was synonymous with death and fear many years ago when the fiend still lived, but after Tan Sui-Jing defeated him only to perish soon thereafter, those who survived took steps to ensure that while Sui-Jing was remembered for her bravery, that Kugaptee would be forgotten and that none would seek his grave. Nearly nine centuries have passed since the fiend’s defeat, and in that time, his name has largely been lost to time. The PCs are certain to hear his name several times during this chapter, but other than contextual clues that he’s some sort of entity the noppera-bos worship, they’ll have little to go on at first. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Religion, Society, or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the name as an ancient and long dead monster of some sort, but little more than that. Learning more about Kugaptee will become more important in the next adventure as the PCs take time to research and investigate the ancient threat further. For now, leave the name as a vague menace, and let the players draw their own conclusions.

SUMMONING RUNES (3)

Pathfinder Core Rulebook 526

Stealth +7 (trained)

HAZARD 1

ELITE AIR WISPS (3)

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 6, 90

Initiative Perception +8

CREATURE 1

Treasure: The documents strewn about the room indicate that while the lumber camp was still producing in its final months, upheaval from the collapse of Lung Wa was resulting in discord and desertion that ultimately led to the site being abandoned. A search of the office uncovers 15 gp and a bottle of *oil of mending*.

E12. TREASURY

Several empty freestanding shelves fill this large room, some of which still display open but empty chests. The place is obviously looted and likely has been for quite some time.

Treasure: When the lumber camp was abandoned, the disenfranchised workers looted the treasury. A 10-minute search of the room automatically turns up

24 cp and 3 sp behind shelves or empty chests that got missed, but PCs who Search and succeed at a DC 18 Perception check notice a hidden trapdoor between the two northwestern shelves.

Within the trap door is a stash of valuables that a corrupt official had been storing, only to never have the chance to make off with his embezzled funds. The stash consists of a leather pouch that contains an *invisibility potion* and a silver ingot worth 100 gp.

E13. GUEST HOUSE

TRIVIAL 3

This building appears to be of more recent construction than the other structures in the camp and is relatively unblemished by moss or rot. It stands out as the only building in the camp that resembles a normal house.

Creatures: If the Abacus Sisters didn’t survive their initial encounter with the PCs at the start of this adventure, then this building is empty. If they did survive, the jinkins Midori and Murasaki fled Willowshore soon after their encounter with the PCs. While their raven ally Sparrow abandoned them the first chance they got, the weasel Noodles remained loyally at their side even after he became a mundane animal once more.

Unfortunately, the Abacus Sisters’ fate didn’t improve after fleeing Willowshore, for as they stumbled into the camp’s vicinity, they were captured by the Prayers. Initially destined to be sacrifices, Zoudou realized that the two jinkins might make great underlings or even allies, after they’ve had some time to “acclimate” to their new roles. Zoudou’s method of “recruiting” allies is little better than imprisonment, though—after giving the jinkins a very intimidating “you can join us or you can die” speech, she left them to think things over here. Since then, other events have distracted the Prayers (not least of which being the growing schism with the Rovers), and the Abacus Sisters have largely been forgotten.

Meeting the PCs, the Abacus Sisters instantly surrender and beg the PCs to free them, despite the fact that there are no locks on their doors and they aren’t bound. So long as there are no enemies in areas E1 and E7, the Abacus Sisters can make their getaway with ease once the PCs point this out. In exchange for saving them, the Abacus Sisters provide important information—that the noppera-bos believe that some sort of paradise lies beyond the Wall of Ghosts. If the PCs haven’t seen the Wall of Ghosts yet, the Abacus Sisters can fearfully describe it as a “haunted wall to the northwest, beyond which the real monsters live,” but don’t know much more about it. Asked about “Kugaptee,” the jinkins just shudder and say, “That’s a bad name. We don’t talk



about it. We don't even *think* about it." Pushing them to talk more about Kugaptee (whom they know only as a frightening fiend) is one sure way to drive them to flee or, if they're cornered, to attack.

MIDORI AND MURASAKI

CREATURE 1

Female jinkin gremlins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 193)

Initiative Perception +7

NOODLES

CREATURE -1

Weasel (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 291)

Initiative Perception +4

Reward: If the PCs help the Abacus Sisters to escape, grant them XP as if they'd defeated them in combat.

E14. WORKER'S DORMITORY

LOW 3

An elevated floor takes up the majority of this room. Dozens of blood-red candles carved into the shapes of various ancestries are lit here, their wicks burning without smoke. In the center of the irregular configuration of lights hunkers a misshapen effigy crafted from a very deformed burl.

The candle flames here are an eerie magical effect sustained by Kugaptee's influence—the flames don't melt the candles or give off smoke. The effigy strangely seems to shimmer and ripple when studied, as if it were trying to hide its actual form from observation. One moment it appears as a hunched-over man with long broken arms and a head made of a bundle of twigs. In another, it shifts to a crouching frog choking on a man it swallowed whole. In the next, it appears to take on a form not wholly spider nor octopus nor plant, yet something combining all three. Then, as soon as one sees a shape, it shifts back to a tangled knot of roots, branches, and bark. This strange sight is a manifestation of Kugaptee himself, one that provides vague hints to his true nature without revealing any actual truth. If the candles are extinguished, the effigy loses these traits and appears simply as a human-sized burl of tangled wood.

Creatures: A pair of noppera-bo occultists sit before the effigy, faceless and repeatedly genuflecting as they worship the image, chanting telepathic prayers the PCs can hear in their minds as the name "Kugaptee" over and over. They pay no attention to the PCs and are indifferent even if the PCs verbally threaten them. They only attack if the PCs lay hands on one of them, damage or extinguish the candles, or attempt to touch or damage the effigy.

If questioned, the two noppera-bos patiently answer the PCs' queries. These noppera-bos belong

to the Prayers faction, though they don't identify themselves by that name. Rather, they call themselves the Teeth of Kugaptee, and explain that Kugaptee promises freedom from the cycle of suffering that is the River of Souls. The occultists praise their leader, Zoudou, as a visionary and meticulous servant who can narrow down the perfect second for a sacrifice. The two noppera-bos spit at the mention of Mugirou, calling him ungrateful and irresponsible for putting his own wants before Kugaptee's needs. Asked for more information about Kugaptee himself, the occultists speak in metaphors and even at times seem to contradict each other, with one comparing him to the "first breath you take when you are born" to the other describing him as "the first breath you'll never take after you die."

If the PCs declare they're here to rescue the kidnapped NPCs, these occultists find this goal quite understandable, noting that "if it is to be that they should not be sent to Kugaptee, who are we to deny their fate?" They propose a bargain: if the PCs can humiliate or defeat Mugirou in combat, these two are willing to escort the PCs to Zoudou and ask her to spare those who are to be sacrificed, for a price. What that price is, the noppera-bos can't say, as that's a decision only Zoudou can make.

If the PCs don't secure such an agreement before they attempt to leave, the two occultists inform them, almost regretfully, that they can't be allowed to leave and that their souls should remain here as two more lights for Kugaptee's domain. They attack, fighting to the death.

NOPPERA-BO OCCULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 85

Initiative Perception +8

Treasure: If the PCs complete the deal to defeat Mugirou, they're awarded a *pendant of the occult* by the noppera-bo occultists before they're escorted to the ritual site. If the PCs defeat the occultists instead, they can obtain the same item hanging off one of the "arms" of the Kugaptee effigy.

E15. OUTHOUSES

A horrible, gag-inducing stench wafts out of the open doors of this side building, revealing the poor condition of these outhouses without a shadow of a doubt.

The state of the outhouses is so bad that noppera-bos intentionally go faceless whenever they must work or pass within 10 feet of the structures, just to avoid the smell. As they never go inside, the outhouses are convenient hiding

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places, but a PC who enters this foul structure must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or become enfeebled 1 for 10 minutes from the overwhelming stink.

E16. MUGIROU'S THRONE

MODERATE 3

This warehouse-like building stands taller than the fences of the camp. Within, a makeshift wooden cage, apparently crafted from parts scavenged from large saws and other lumber work tools, sits before a haphazard throne made from a large root burl that's nearly five feet tall.



Mugirou

Creatures: Mugirou, the leader of the Rovers, slouches on his wooden throne brooding, while four noppera-bo grunts pester and mock prisoners held inside the cage. These four prisoners were abducted from Willowshore Stables, but when Zoudou determined that their souls weren't "old" enough to suffice for sacrifice, she turned the four over to the Rovers. The intent was that these four would be a sort of "peace offering," but Mugirou interpreted it as an insult, believing that the only reason Zoudou did this was to "pass off undesirable trash" to the Rovers.

When the PCs make their presence known, the four prisoners cry out for rescue. The four noppera-bo grunts silently scamper over to Mugirou's side, awaiting orders from their leader. Mugirou doesn't immediately attack, as he suspected that heroes would come soon to rescue the prisoners. Currently faceless, he telepathically greets the PCs and tells them that it wasn't he who orchestrated the abductions and that the true target of their vengeance should be Zoudou, leader of the Prayers.

If the PCs attack, Mugirou orders his grunts to fight to the death, which they do loyally. Mugirou has no such desire to die, though, and if reduced to fewer than 8 Hit Points, he either attempts to flee or begs for mercy, at which point any surviving grunts surrender or flee as well.

If the PCs speak to the leader of the Rovers, Mugirou states he doesn't even enjoy what his underlings are doing. He's simply bored and out of ideas. If it were up to him, he would rather just kill the prisoners and move on to explore the region beyond the camp and eventually attempt to take Willowshore for his own domain. Of course, he's sly and evasive about these desires, Lying as needed to keep the PCs from realizing his true motives.

Mugirou is willing to bargain. If the PCs can eliminate all noppera-bo occultists in the camp and at the Ritual Site, and thus end Zoudou's influence over the noppera-bos, Mugirou promises to free the prisoners in the cage and allow the PCs to leave the camp unharmed. If the PCs seek to secure a promise from him that he'll leave Willowshore alone, he grows frustrated—but if Coerced with a successful DC 17 Intimidation check, he'll agree to those terms. Whether or not he honors them is up to you.

If Mugirou surrenders to the PCs, though, he'll honestly agree to leave Willowshore alone in return for his life, and he makes good on his word. Mugirou and his fellow noppera-bos retreat into the wilderness of the region and do their best to avoid the citizens of Willowshore for the remainder of the campaign.

Note that the captured farmers all lack gear other than the leather armor they were wearing when captured.

MUGIROU THE REBEL **CREATURE 2**

Elite noppera-bo trickster (page 84, *Pathfinder Bestiary* 6)

Initiative Perception +7

NOPPERA-BO GRUNTS (4) **CREATURE 0**

Page 84

Initiative Perception +4

CAPTURED FARMERS **CREATURE 0**

Farmers (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 222)

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: If PCs agree on the deal, he gifts them a set of *keymaking tools* (*Secrets of Magic* 186) as a token of “friendship.” If the PCs fight and defeat him, they can instead loot these tools from his corpse.

If the PCs successfully rescue the four prisoners, the grateful farmers deliver to the party a *crafters’ eyepiece* a day after they safely return home.

Reward: If the PCs strike a deal with Mugirou, grant them experience as if they’d defeated him and his grunts in combat, but if word spreads through Willowshore that the PCs let these monsters live or didn’t chase them off, they’ll lose 1 Reputation Point from each faction.

E17. LOG PILES

Four fifteen-foot-high log piles remain stacked in a narrow clearing here, each secured with heavy rusty chains. At the far side of the clearing, a well-traveled trail winds further to the north.

The PCs can climb atop one of the log piles to attempt a Long Jump into the lumber camp. The trail once led further up into the mountains but is used today by the Prayers to come and go from the ritual site they’ve erected at the Wall of Ghosts. This trail soon turns west and, after a hilly hike of about 6 miles, reaches the Wall of Ghosts where the leader of the Prayers is performing a complex ritual to Kugaptee.

The Ritual Site

As long as the PCs travel to the ritual site within a few days of the abduction, they should be able to reach the location before Zoudou finishes her sacrificial rite—proceed with Zoudou’s Rite below. If the PCs arrive too late (at your discretion), instead proceed with *Horror From Beyond* on page 66.

ZOUDOU’S RITE

MODERATE 3

The forest trail suddenly reaches a clearing in the woods, where a few fallen trees and stumps testify to woodcutting pursuits abandoned years ago. Beyond a fallen tree, the clearing’s northwestern side is obscured by a seething wall of mist that reaches fifty feet into the sky. Now and then, what appear to be silently screaming ghosts thrash and writhe through this mist, as if tormented souls were trapped within the fog. A three-tiered stone stands near this wall, while a bit further to the east of this platform stands a dome-shaped cage built of bent branches and wooden slats.



Zoudou

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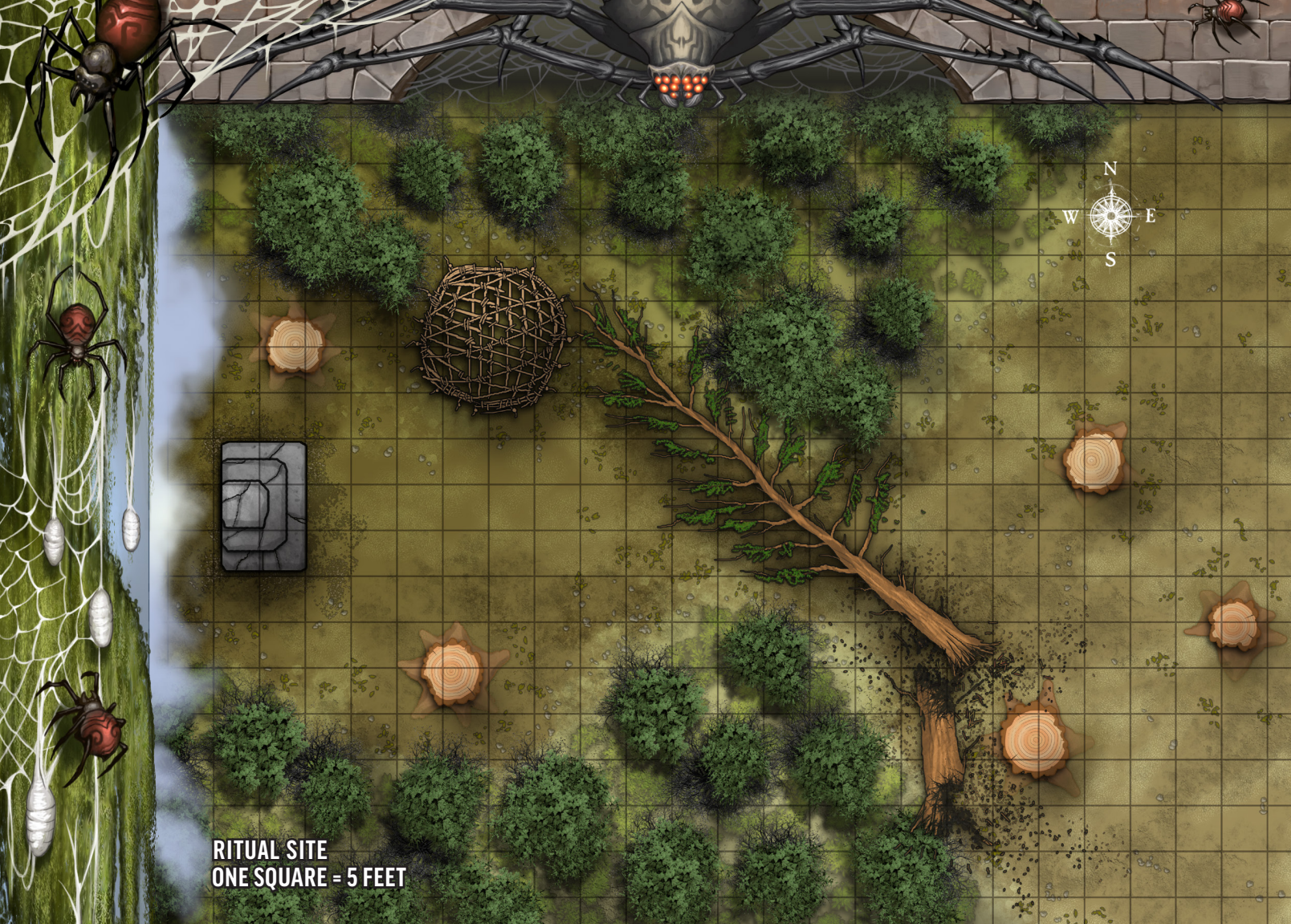
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RITUAL SITE
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

You can use this same description for the location if the PCs arrive too late and the noppera-bos have moved on. If the PCs arrive on time, though, describe to them the creatures that are performing a complex ritual here.

The old stone shrine was originally devoted to the kami of the region but has been corrupted by Kugaptee's faithful into a shrine devoted to the ancient fiend.

The wooden cage is empty—the sacrifice that was kept in it having just been moved to the shrine itself.

Creatures: The leader of the Prayers, Zoudou the Zealous, stands on the second step of the corrupted altar, with poor Meng-sung bound hand and foot and lying on his back before her on the tallest tier of the shrine. The young man squirms and thrashes and shrieks through the gag he wears, but to no avail. A pair of noppera-bo occultists stand on the ground to the east and south, about 5 feet from the shrine's lowest step, performing duties as secondary casters. Meanwhile, Zoudou leads the *consecrate* ritual she hopes will attract Kugaptee's attention, secure his

blessing over the area, and potentially even result in him sending agents from beyond to bolster the Prayers' strength.

Zoudou arrogantly doesn't expect interruptions to the *consecrate* ritual she's in the middle of performing, so she and the other occultists (who are serving as secondary casters for the ritual) take a -4 circumstance penalty to Perception checks until the PCs become impossible to ignore—this includes initiative checks. Meng-sung wears only a loincloth and is tightly bound (Escape DC 25); while he's otherwise unharmed, he won't try to get free as long as a creepy, faceless monster armed with a dagger looms over him.

As *consecrate* takes 3 days to cast, the PCs certainly have time to interrupt the ritual before it ends with Meng-sung's sacrifice. Merely approaching Zoudou and getting her attention isn't enough to disrupt the ritual, for as long as at least one of the secondary casters maintains focus on the ritual, it can continue even while the other and Zoudou fight the PCs.

If the PCs were led here by the noppera-bo occultists from area E14, Zoudou is annoyed at the interruption

but agrees to speak with the PCs to hear their plea. Unfortunately for the PCs, Zoudou isn't interested in halting her ritual, and if the PCs truly wish to save Meng-sung, Zoudou agrees only at a steep price: one of the PCs must offer themselves in Meng-sung's place. If the PCs agree, Zoudou replies as follows.

"It is quite simple, for Kugaptee is generous and accepting. Come before his Wall, Child of the Ensnared. I will show you how to free yourself from the bondage of the world. Repeat my words:

"I offer thee my name, Great Kugaptee! Unbind me from those whom I called friends.

"I offer thee my blood, Great Kugaptee! Unbind me from those whom I called family.

"I offer thee my flesh, Great Kugaptee! Unbind me from the body I called my own.

"Lastly, I offer thee my soul, Great Kugaptee! Unbind me from that which was my fate."

Most PCs will likely balk at this prayer, and rightfully so, for the next stage involves that PC taking Meng-sung's place on the altar. Rather than ending in the sacrifice of the PC's life, the *consecrate* ritual ends with Zoudou passing her dagger over the PC's body and "cutting" their soul's link to the cycle of life and death. Promising a soul in this way counts as an act of anathema for all religions other than the worship of Kugaptee and could have repercussions on champion or cleric characters, but it has no other immediate effect on the PC—until they die. At this point, the PC's soul is absorbed into Kugaptee's domain, preventing that PC from being resurrected or otherwise restored to life. At your discretion, the soul of such a slain PC could potentially be encountered or rescued in the final part of the last adventure of Season of Ghosts. A successful *atone* ritual can also break this link to Kugaptee and prevent this unpleasant fate.

If the PCs refuse the exchange, Zoudou sneers and observes that she isn't surprised at the PCs' lack of conviction and their spiritual cowardice. If the PCs don't attack, Zoudou returns to the *consecrate* ritual. If the PCs allow the ritual to play out to its end, Meng-sung is sacrificed. Proceed with Horror from Beyond (page 66).

It's more likely that the PCs will (rightfully) balk at this option—or even more likely, simply attack the noppera-bos when they see them in the act of preparing to sacrifice Meng-sung. In this case, Zoudou and one of the noppera-bo occultists break off from the ritual

to fight the PCs, doing their best to protect the other occultist from being disrupted. As long as one occultist continues to spend every round telepathically chanting prayers to Kugaptee (feel free to let the PCs "overhear" these prayers as ones similar to those in the read aloud text above, so as to convey to the players the eerie promises to the mysterious fiend), the *consecrate* ritual can proceed if Zoudou manages to defeat the party. Certainly, the PCs would be well advised to focus on fighting Zoudou and one occultist, as that isn't quite a Moderate 3 encounter—if both occultists join Zoudou in combat, the encounter is closer to a Severe 3 encounter.

Zoudou fights to the death, as do the occultists as long as Zoudou lives. Once Zoudou is slain, any remaining occultists panic and flee. At this point, proceed with Horror from Beyond (page 66).



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ZOUDOU THE ZEALOUS

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Female noppera-bo (page 84)

Perception +8; no face

Languages Common; telepathy 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +11, Diplomacy +9, Occultism +10, Religion +9, Society +8

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

Items *Fiend's Hunger* (page 81), tattered ledger, twisted knot of wood (religious symbol of Kugaptee)

No Face As noppera-bo grunt.

AC 19; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

HP 45; **Immunities** inhaled, olfactory, visual; **Weaknesses** sensitive hearing

Identity Crisis  (emotion, mental, occult, visual)

Frequency once per day; **Trigger** Zoudou successfully Steals the Face of an adjacent creature; **Effect** As Zoudou Steals the creature's Face, she telepathically draws at the creature's sense of identity and self. The creature must attempt a DC 20 Will save. On a failure, the creature questions their own identity and becomes slowed 1 for 1 round. On a critical failure, they're slowed 1 for 1 minute.

Oath of Anonymity When Zoudou has a face, she can't cast divine prepared spells.

Sensitive Hearing As noppera-bo grunt.

Speed 25 feet

Melee  *Fiend's Hunger* +9 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Divine Prepared Spells DC 20, attack +12; **2nd** *darkness*, *harm*; **1st** *bane*, *fear*, *heal*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *divine lance*, *read aura*, *shield*

Rituals *consecrate*

Impersonate Shape  (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) As noppera-bo trickster.

Regain Anonymity  (occult, polymorph, transmutation)

Requirement Zoudou has a face; **Effect** Zoudou melts the face she's wearing and gains 3d6 temporary Hit Points. She can't Regain Anonymity again for 1d4 rounds.

Silent Casting When Zoudou is faceless, she can substitute an additional somatic component for a verbal component.

Steal Face  (concentrate, curse, incapacitation, occult, polymorph, transmutation) As noppera-bo occultist, but DC 20.

NOPPERA-BO OCCULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 85

Initiative Perception +8

KUM MENG-SUNG

CREATURE 0

Male human farmer (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 222)

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: The tattered leather-bound ledger that Zoudou carries was once used by the lumber camp boss to track profits and expenditures, but only the first quarter of the pages contain these mundane annotations. The rest of the journal is filled with Zoudou's dense notes and theories about the nature of Kugaptee, the Wall of Ghosts, and the "paradise" she has come to believe lies beyond the wall. These notes are all written in a mix of Abyssal and Aklo, so a character must be able to read both languages to study the contents. A character who can read both Abyssal and Aklo can use the journal to learn the *consecrate* ritual, but an even greater use for the information is explored in the next adventure, where clues within Zoudou's notes can help the PCs open a doorway through the Wall of Ghosts.

Horror from Beyond

Zoudou hopes that by sacrificing a creature whose soul has reincarnated several times (a discovery she believes she made while examining Meng-sung with *read aura*) at the end of the *consecrate* ritual, she can earn Kugaptee's favor and draw additional minions from beyond the Wall of Ghosts to serve her agenda. However, Zoudou's theories about Meng-sung, as well as those about Kugaptee, are faulty—as a creation of Kugaptee's will, Zoudou knows little more than the fiend's name and a strange sensation of loyalty related to him. The majority of the faith she has built for the Prayers over the past few months of her existence are unintentional fabrications that delude even Zoudou with their veneer of veracity.

As a result, if Zoudou completes her ritual, the fate that awaits her might be worse than death at the PCs' hands, for her ritual does attract a glimmer of Kugaptee's influence—just not in the way she hopes.

The way in which the PCs encounter this horror from beyond the Wall of Ghosts depends on if they confront and defeat Zoudou before she sacrifices Meng-sung or if she's able to complete the ritual.

INTERRUPTING THE RITUAL

MODERATE 3

If the PCs arrive at the ritual site before Zoudou sacrifices Meng-sung, and the PCs end up fighting the noppera-bos, then as soon as the ritual is disrupted (likely as soon as Zoudou is slain and the remaining noppera-bo occultist maintaining concentration on the ritual gives up and flees, but earlier if the PCs attack or otherwise disrupt that occultist's focus on the ritual), a sudden rumble—as if an enormous tree suddenly toppled over—rolls out from beyond the Wall of Ghosts. Any surviving noppera-bos collapse to their knees in fear and begin to telepathically beg for mercy as a vast, vaguely humanoid shadow rears



up beyond the Wall of Ghosts. The shadow lunges at the wall from the far side, causing the misty barrier to suddenly flex and bulge as if it were a solid wall being pushed against from beyond. The shadow vanishes and leaves the Wall of Ghosts intact, but the bodies of the three noppera-bos, be they living or dead, suddenly burst apart as immense mockeries of their previous forms climb out of their bodies, shedding the smaller frames to emerge as misshapen undead versions of themselves. Their arms hang low, nearly to their ankles, and appear to be broken in several places; instead of heads, they have moldy wicker cages filled with blood-colored butterflies. These are Kugaptee's Blessings, and they attack the PCs at once.

While these awful undead creatures have particularly unsettling appearances that foreshadow the shapes of the nindoru fiends the PCs will increasingly face in the coming adventures, they function identically to zombie brutes. While they're Medium sized rather than Large, their long broken limbs retain the reach of a typical zombie brute. Mindless and violent, Kugaptee's Blessings shamle forth to attack the PCs but give up pursuit after 1 round once the PCs move beyond the ritual site map's border, returning to the altar to bow down before the Wall of Ghosts until they're attacked again. Each time one of Kugaptee's Blessings is damaged, a cloud of glistening blood-red butterflies bursts from the wound to spiral into the air before melting away into wisps of red smoke that fly up to rejoin the mists of the Wall of Ghosts.

If one of the PCs offered themselves as a replacement for Meng-sung, then the same scene plays out, only the three blessings that emerge from the noppera-bos don't attack the PC who offered himself to Kugaptee.

KUGAPTEE'S BLESSINGS (3)

CREATURE 2

RARE NE MEDIUM MINDLESS UNDEAD ZOMBIE

Variant zombie brutes (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 341)

Initiative Perception +8

Arriving too Late

Severe 3

If Zoudou finishes the ritual, her sacrifice of Meng-sung results in the same development, only Meng-sung's body also transforms into one of Kugaptee's Blessings. When the PCs eventually arrive at the ritual site, they find four lumbering undead in prostrate positions before the Wall of Ghosts, as if worshipping it. These four monsters rise up to attack the PCs as they approach, fighting as detailed above, but in this fight, the PCs face four of the variant zombie brutes rather than three, making this a Severe 3 encounter.

Concluding the Adventure

The noppera-bos who survive the PCs' visit to the lumber camp quickly disband in the following days, likely as a result of the defeat of their leaders and the realization that the PCs are too powerful to stand against. At your discretion, if the PCs didn't make a strong showing against the noppera-bos, the creatures might remain as a continuing threat to Willowshore until they're either defeated or bargained with. While the PCs will encounter another, more powerful group of noppera-bos as winter arrives in the Season of Ghosts, this particular band has no further scheduled role to play in the campaign.

If the PCs return to Willowshore with the abductees from the stables, the party is greeted as heroes and earn 3 Reputation Points with both factions. Reduce this Reputation Point award as you see fit if the PCs return with fewer surviving abductees, especially if the PCs seem cavalier or dismissive about any lives lost to the monsters.

Depending on how many days are left in summer before fall begins, you'll want to give the PCs some time to rest, recover, and pursue additional downtime activities. Unfinished opportunities from Chapter 3 can be pursued and completed at this time. Otherwise, you can simply jump forward in time to the first day of fall, describing the remaining days of summer as dreary, rain-filled weeks during which the townsfolk slowly adapt to their new reality of being trapped within a curse.

There's one bit of good news, though: the PCs' actions in helping to bolster and support Willowshore have helped the town grow more confident in itself. At this point, Willowshore's effective level increases to 5, with ramifications detailed in the Growing the Town sidebar on page 72.

As the final days of summer draw to a close, the PCs should be left with more questions than answers as to the nature of the "curse" that afflicts Willowshore, but they should consider the mystery of the Wall of Ghosts, what lies beyond it, and the mysterious name of "Kugaptee" as their primary clues going forward. With fall beginning, more pressing matters soon loom, for the question of whether or not Willowshore will have enough food for its citizens through the coming winter arises. In addition, strange new hauntings begin to manifest in the town—supernatural events unlike those the PCs have faced before. Something is wrong with Willowshore once again, and as the last day of the rainy summer that never was passes, the responsibility of solving the town's problems increasingly falls upon the shoulders of the region's newest heroes.

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Willowshore



Willowshore's founding is steeped in Sangpotshi asceticism. After Tan Sui-Jing's triumphant act of self-sacrifice defeated the fiend Kugaptee in 6223 IC, there rose a challenge among Sangpotshi practitioners to locate the sugi tree Sui-Jing transformed into. In 7020, a Sangpotshi master under the Fluvial name of Master Zhi Hui accomplished this feat. To ensure that others could safely visit the tree's grove themselves, Master Zhi Hui decided to enshrine the sugi within the Tan Sugi monastery, where Sangpotshi practitioners could come to reflect upon the philosophy.

The wooded and mountainous terrain made construction immensely difficult, even for the most seasoned of builders. Some refused to rest there, as the idea of sleeping near a place where another died (even for a noble cause) was taboo. Master Zhi Hui gladly accommodated these workers and sought funds to build them living quarters and other facilities at the foot of the mountain where supplies were dropped off at a convenient harbor along the riverside. The merchants ferrying in the supplies took to calling the remote settlement "the shore of willows," a local metaphor meaning "impossible to find." In time, the name became associated with the settlement, shortened to Willowshore.

After five years of hard work on the monastery, the workers turned their focus to expanding Willowshore, building inns, farmhouses, and other structures to support a growing stream of long-term visitors. At the height of the monastery's popularity, almost every shop or farm offered a meal and bed for pilgrims. This economic boom faded with Master Zhi Hui's death in 7054, and many Willowshore residents began to ply their skills and wares further afield to earn a living as the Tan Sugi monastery began its slow decline.

In 7060, Shenmen enlisted the village to become part of Lung Wa's lumber harvesting ambitions. Things started out well, with the construction of infrastructure including bridges and a dam. However, the lumber bosses who ran the harvesting operation soon became loathed for their exploitation of Willowshore's ascetic past. Worse, they began to

present the settlement (now properly called a town) as a "getaway" for Lung Wa aristocrats to hunt for sport and indulge in food and drinks forcefully seized in the empire's name.

The lumber bosses and government cared little for the long-abandoned monastery until their greedy expansion reached for the Tan Sugi grove in 7062 and an attempt to harvest the sacred trees ended in grisly slaughter. The sole survivor's testimony cemented an ill reputation within Willowshore of the abandoned monastery. As monster sightings grew in the weeks and months after, the appointed governor responded by enticing imperial forces to move into the town with the promise of land or property in compensation for the protection they could offer. Many of these soldiers would ultimately retire in the region, becoming a new wave of settlers in the town.

When Lung Wa collapsed in 7106, Willowshore's lumber lords took their wealth, abandoned their estates, and fled. Most soldiers returned to Shenmen's capital or deserted their posts, leaving behind those who had put down local roots. Though Willowshore's remoteness saved it from the rampant banditry and external political conflicts, the isolation also delayed major news. Willowshore didn't learn of the jorogumo takeover of all Shenmen until late spring of 7108, news that compelled the town's governor Heh Shan-Bao to attempt a dangerous ritual to restore the protective power of the Tan Sugi monastery. The ritual backfired and instead awakened the fiend Kugaptee's legacy, resulting in a devastating wave of power that tragically killed the entire town.

The sun rose the next day on a Willowshore devoid of life, and to the world at large, the town has remained an abandoned source of ghost stories for over a hundred years. However, those who perished in this event never realized their fate, for their slain souls became trapped in an alternate reality. Stuck in a strange limbo between life and death, they reside in a mindscape largely indistinguishable from reality to those who live within its realm.

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The Mindscape

For those trapped within the mindscape, it's indistinguishable from the living world. Magic functions as one expects, and creatures conjured from other planes assume they've been called into the mortal realm. Any discrepancy in information, such as what year it is and what events took place, can easily be dismissed due to Willowshore's remoteness. While the people of Willowshore were slain in the real world in 7108, they remain very much alive within Willowshore's mindscape. Inevitably, the supernatural borders that surround the region are discovered, forcing the citizens of Willowshore to come to terms with their new unnatural situation, but every year on the last day of spring, time resets and all memory and progress toward understanding the nature of the mindscape resets, starting the cycle over again. And so it has been for 115 years.

WILLOWSHORE HINTERLANDS

FINITE CYCLIC TIME

The Willowshore mindscape is an immersive mindscape, as detailed on page 199 of *Pathfinder Dark Archives*, but you won't need to reference that book to run Season of Ghosts. The mindscape's inhabitants, including the PCs, remain unaware of their reality until later in the Adventure Path.

Willowshore's mindscape has the cyclic time trait and is locked into a "time loop." The mindscape has a set point in time when it starts and when it ends after the passage of a year. When time reaches this yearly end point, everything within the mindscape (including all natives of the mindscape) revert in time. All developments, accomplishments, and memories of the previous year are lost, and everything resets to the state things were at the start. This restores all native creatures to their previous age, resets their health and location to where they were at the start, and even resurrects those who died during the past year. The soul of a cyclic mindscape native who dies doesn't enter the River of Souls but instead remains in stasis awaiting the end of the mindscape's current cycle. In some cases, eerie echoes of previous cycles can accumulate in strange and unique ways, resulting in haunt-like manifestations or undead creatures, such as thatchlings (page 88).

During each cycle, events proceed identically unless an outside influence (such as a visiting creature from another reality) disrupts these events, potentially setting up a significantly different scenario for the rest of that cycle's remaining time. When a cyclic mindscape resets, foreign objects or visitors remain, along with their memories of previous cycles, and they can use these memories to their advantage as they see fit. Such events have never happened in Willowshore's mindscape before, but this time, things will be different.

MINDSCAPE

MINDSCAPE INHABITANTS

Four types of inhabitants dwell in Willowshore.

Trapped Souls: The citizens of Willowshore (including the PCs), as well as most of the sapient creatures in the hinterlands perished in 7108 and then became trapped, alive and with no memories of their deaths, in the mindscape.

Non-Sapient Creatures: Creatures like animal companions or familiars are linked spiritually to PCs and are considered to be trapped souls, but the rest of the non-sapient wildlife and plant life that dwells in the mindscape function as normal animals of their kind but lack anything akin to a soul—when they're slain, they decay as normal but can't become undead, nor can they be restored to life.

Monstrous Manifestations: The influence of the fiend Kugaptee introduces physical and free-willed manifestations of monsters whose appearance at the end of the mindscape's previous cycle have persisted into this one. They have no true memories of their existence before the mindscape's formation, nor do they possess a soul, but they otherwise function as typical monsters of their kind. They can't be brought back to life or become undead, but their bodies remain after death and decay as normal.

Visitors: A very few inhabitants of the mindscape are visitors from beyond its border. The shinigami merchant named Shinzo is one example here, as are nindoru fiends the PCs will encounter starting in the second adventure.

People of Willowshore

For over a century, the souls of the slain townspeople repeated the same year in a mindscape that annually loops time back on itself. As far as these residents—including the PCs—are concerned, this adventure begins at the onset of summer in 7108, a mere two years after the fall of Lung Wa. Current trending topics are the recent exodus of the lumber lords, news of the jorogumo seizing control of the nation, and preparations for the upcoming season of ghosts.

Many Willowshores identify by when their family first settled in town, which often affects which bank of the Ceiba River they live on. The first wave of townspeople are either those who worked on the monastery or who were paid to settle in Willowshore by the monastery. These folks originally lived south of the river and are thus referred to as Southbankers. Those who arrived after Lung Wa took control, meanwhile, settled on the river's northern banks, called Northridge due to its prominent incline. These settlers included workers for the lumber bosses, businesses that wanted convenient access to the lumber, and imperial guards.



Though these two factions in Willowshore today use the names Southbank and Northridge, one's allegiance isn't solely determined by where they live or work. Southbank folks are traditionalists, keen on maintaining Willowshore's culture and living simply off the land. Northridge folks, meanwhile, focus on modern pragmatism and urban growth. Many Northridge folks are open to the idea of the jorogumos ruling Shenmen, while Southbankers on principle think the jorogumos are evil monsters and best avoided.

Despite disagreements, both sides have a consensus on putting Willowshore's survival and safety first. Plenty of residents have their own opinions that lean in neither direction and consider themselves unaffiliated with either faction. Overall, Willowshore values giving all one has to offer. In many ways, the village has no choice, especially as the events of this adventure evolve.

WILLOWSHORE

SETTLEMENT 4



Isolated town trapped in a cyclic mindscape

Government Appointed governor (Heh Shan-Bao, missing)

Population 225 (73% humans, 6% half-elves, 4% halflings, 4% kitsune, 3% elves, 3% tengu, 2% nagaji, 5% others)

Languages Common (Tien), Elven, Halfling, Minatan, Nagaji, Tengu, Tian-hwa, Tian-min

Religions Abadar, Daikitsu, Lady Nanbyo, Pharasma, Sangpotshi, others (represented by small shrines)

Threats malicious spirits, ravenous vermin, struggling self-sufficiency, supernatural influences, territorial beasts

Teeth-Clenching Teamwork Willowshore's residents help one another despite their differences. You can attempt to Request help from another Willowshore resident even if they're indifferent or unfriendly, but you do so with a -2 circumstance penalty.

"Granny" Hu Ban-niang (LN female Tian-shu guard) retired imperial guard captain

Heh Shan-Bao (LN male Tian-shu governor) appointed administrator of Willowshore; currently missing

"Old" Matsuki Shou (NG male Tian-shu family patriarch) retired carpenter and Willowshore's living history

Building Reputation

As the PCs aid the townspeople, their reputation grows. All NPCs have a default starting attitude based on the party's current reputation with their faction. (An NPC who's unaffiliated with a faction always has a default attitude of indifferent.)

At the start, the party has 0 Reputation Points with both factions. As they accomplish goals during this campaign, they'll gain points—or, more rarely, lose points. The table on page 73 summarizes the effects of reputation further, using the following qualities.

Default Attitude: This indicates the default attitude of an NPC associated with the faction when the PCs first encounter that NPC. Unaffiliated NPCs always have a default attitude of indifferent. Note that NPCs who become hostile to the PCs don't attack them on sight (unless provoked), but instead, they simply refuse to do business or associate with the PCs.

Social DC Mod: The modifier in this column is applied to the DC of any social encounter skill check with an NPC of that faction. The base DCs for social encounters are always included in the encounter text.

Earn Income: The circumstance bonuses and penalties granted by these tiers apply to all checks attempted to Earn Income associated with locations or NPCs of the faction. When the PCs are admired, they increase the maximum task level they can attempt to Earn Income at with that faction by 1, and when they're revered, they instead increase the maximum task level by 2.

Willowshore Locations

Significant buildings and important people found in Willowshore are detailed on the following pages, with numbers corresponding to the locations on the map on the inside front cover of this book. Unlabeled buildings are wooden structures that might be shops, homes, farmhouses, storerooms, or other miscellaneous usage depending on their location.

LOCATION SUPPORT

Some locations end with a short stat block that summarizes the location's name, general function, level (for the purpose of determining DCs or NPC level), wares and services, and information about significant NPCs who work or live there. These locations also have one of two traits—Southbank or Northridge.

The PCs can gain the support of these locations by making the site's NPC helpful. The first time a PC gains the support of a specific site with one of these traits, they earn 1 Reputation Point with the matching faction unless they're already admired or revered by that faction, in which case no additional Reputation Points are earned.

Services: Many NPCs or locations can craft specific items. Requesting an NPC to craft an item is equivalent to buying an item at full price with a four-day delay.

Attitudes: Unless otherwise specified, an NPC's initial attitude toward the PCs is indifferent. If a PC becomes liked by a faction, all indifferent associated NPCs shift their initial attitude to friendly. If a PC becomes revered by a faction, all indifferent or friendly associated NPCs shift their initial attitude to helpful and automatically grant the support of their site.

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GROWING THE TOWN

When Season of Ghosts begins, Willowshore is a 4th-level settlement that has just endured a brutal monster attack. Helping the townspeople recover and getting Willowshore back “on its feet” is a recurring theme throughout this campaign. As the PCs accomplish milestone events, as detailed in each adventure, they’ll effectively increase Willowshore’s level. While this doesn’t impact the town’s population total, it does increase the baseline for what items can be purchased in town and the baseline maximum for most task levels for Earning Income in town. Willowshore’s NPCs also grow in power as the PCs help build morale and reestablish themselves. Increase all NPC DCs and skill modifiers in the following locations by 1 each time Willowshore gains a level above 4.

Willowshore won’t gain levels as fast as the PCs. The town’s periodic level increases are less about the town itself growing in size and more about the PCs restoring morale and helping locals recover from recent events to bring Willowshore back to its previous height. Once the PCs find a way to restore the town to the living world, Willowshore’s further growth will require time, patience, and effort over the course of many decades.

Work: Some of these locations allow bonuses to Earn Income downtime activities. Unless otherwise indicated, any attempt to Earn Income in Willowshore must be of a task level equal to or less than Willowshore’s level (level 4 as this Adventure Path begins). Note that this maximum task level can be increased by becoming admired or revered with the associated faction.

W1. ETERNAL BLAZE IRONWORKS

In the days of the monastery’s construction, the Eternal Blaze Ironworks was responsible for creating metal items from cookware, woodworking tools, and small metal parts, such as hinges, locks, and keys for chests.

Yong Wu-Xiu inherited the business from her father about a decade ago. Known as the Iron Pot Blacksmith, Wu spent Willowshore’s unprosperous years traveling throughout Tian Xia, both to earn a living and to learn new techniques. Other than mastering how to make weapons and armor, she also picked up the skill of working unconventional metals such as cold iron and silver, though she rarely shares this fact with anyone.

ETERNAL BLAZE IRONWORKS

BLACKSMITH 3

SOUTHBANK

Wares metalworks, adventuring gear (especially cookware), metal armor, metal weapons, metal shields

Yong Wu-Xiu LG female kitsune blacksmith 3, Perception DC 21, Will DC 21, Crafting +13

Services In addition to regular metal items, Wu-Xiu can also craft objects out of cold iron or silver but generally does so only for those she’s at least friendly with—she has 250 gp of cold iron and 250 gp of silver on hand hidden in her forge that she can use to craft with.

W2. WILLOWSHORE STABLES

Willowshore Stables is the town’s veterinary facility for household animals, pets, and livestock. Incidentally, Willowshore Stables’ use of livestock as beasts of burden influenced the village’s food culture, causing many households to avoid the consumption of beef.

When monsters invaded Willowshore on the first day of summer, the Willowshore Stables and its tempting fields of cattle were an impossible target to ignore. By dawn, most of the ranch’s fences were destroyed and nearly all of the cattle and oxen had fled into the wilderness. The owner, Kum Soon-chong, and his teenage son, Meng-sung, have been scrambling to get things fixed. These are problems Soon-chong must solve first before he can provide healthcare for other animals. (The PCs can help fix the ranch during Chapter 3 of the adventure.)

WILLOWSHORE STABLES

STABLES 3

SOUTHBANK

Wares animal rentals, barding, saddle bags, land vehicles

Kum Soon-chong NG male human veterinarian 3, Perception DC 19, Will DC 16, Nature +10

Services Once the ranch is repaired, Soon-chong can treat creatures with the animal trait using Nature in place of Medicine to perform Medicine untrained or trained actions, such as Treat Wounds, on the target. He can treat up to six animals per day, and each treatment per day costs 1 sp.

W3. ABADAR SHRINE

This darkwood-trimmed shrine houses a 3-foot-tall limestone statue of Abadar that holds a shovel in one hand and a trowel in the other. The statue was reportedly taken to Goka first to ritualistically invite Abadar’s divine blessings at the Grand Bank before being ferried back to Willowshore.

W4. GRAVESIDE MANNERS

Willowshore’s residents practiced cremation in its early days to prevent undeath. The tombs in this old cemetery house the urns of many of those early settlers.

WILLOWSHORE REPUTATION

Reputation	Points	Default Attitude	Social DC Mod	Earn Income Bonus/Penalty
Revered	31 or more	Helpful	-10	+3 (treat as 2 levels higher)
Admired	15 to 30	Friendly	-5	+2 (treat as 1 level higher)
Liked	5 to 14	Friendly	-2	+1
Ignored	-4 to 4	Indifferent	0	—
Disliked	-5 to -14	Unfriendly	+2	-1
Hated	-15 to -29	Unfriendly	+5	-3
Hunted	-30 or less	Hostile	+10	Can't Earn Income

Today, only a few families use Graveside Manners as a burial ground. The headstones remain free of lichen and moss, thanks to the graveyard's keeper, So-Jin.

Once a pilgrim who frequented the Tan Sugi monastery, So-Jin settled in Willowshore after the monastery's collapse and maintains an herbalist shop.

GRAVESIDE MANNERS

SOUTHBANK

Wares alchemical elixirs and tools, alchemical reagents, fresh and dried herbs

You So-Jin NG female elf herbalist 4, Perception DC 21, Will DC 21, Crafting +14 (Master)

Services The PCs can rent usage of So-Jin's expanded alchemist's lab for 1 sp per day to craft their own alchemical items

HERBAL STORE 4

W5. SILVERMIST LODGES

The Silvermist Lodges are split between two small compounds in the woods south of town. At each location, the lodges' woodwork conforms to the grain of the wood, giving the buildings an organic look associated with elven architecture. In the days when Willowshore first tried to become self-sufficient, eight elven adventurers came and took up an offer to settle in the village, seeing the request as a short-term contract given their life spans. Though none of these original eight elves live in Willowshore anymore, they left many offspring and descendants behind.

SILVERMIST LODGES

SOUTHBANK

Wares animal parts, snare supplies

HUNTING LODGE 2

W6. MATSUKI ESTATE

The man that Willowshore calls "Old Matsuki" once apprenticed to the head carpenter of the Tan Sugi monastery. After taking leave from his master, he led his family to construct a large Tian-shu/Minkaian estate to house all two dozen of them. Reportedly, the superstitious patriarch then made sure that the outer walls were whitewashed with limestone containing blessed salts and holy water, which helped the estate

weather the monster invasion. Old Matsuki uses his home to coordinate what Southbank should do next to protect themselves.

MATSUKI ESTATE

LIVING QUARTERS 5

SOUTHBANK

Matsuki Shou NG male human carpenter 5, Perception DC 22 (20 if visual), Will DC 22, Crafting +13, Willowshore Lore +16

W7. THRICE-BLESSED INN

Willowshore's Thrice-Blessed Inn began as the Thrice-Blessed Brothel, for it was founded by three clerics of Kofusachi, Calistria, and Shelyn. The former brothel's heavy shutters for privacy—and the blessing of three different gods—turned out to be great defenses against the monsters and helped protect the building (and all those who sheltered within) during the attack.

Political complications forced the brothel's owner, Mother Otis, to shut down the establishment only a few years before Lung Wa's collapse. With the aid of Willowshore's local lawyer, Luo Xi Yang, she was able to rely upon an obscure law that prevented their eviction and allowed them to continue to operate the building as an inn. Well suited for housing and feeding large numbers of people all at once, the former brothel is perfect for those who lost their homes until repairs in the wake of the monster invasion are completed.

THRICE-BLESSED INN

LIVING QUARTERS 4

SOUTHBANK

Reverent Mother Otis CG genderfluid half-elf innkeeper 4, Perception DC 20, Will DC 20, Diplomacy +12, Calistria Lore +10, Willowshore Lore +10

Services A PC can hire one of the inn's employees to assist in a Gather Information check at a cost of 1 gp—doing so grants the PC a +1 status bonus to their check to Gather Information. Any PCs who lack lodging or food can receive subsistence levels of living here while Willowshore recovers from the monster invasion unless they've greatly offended Reverent Mother Otis personally.

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W8. MILLING HOUSES

Willowshore has numerous millhouses, including two powered by water, three by wind, and 10 powered by people or draft animals. The abundance ensures that losing one or two mills to routine maintenance or malfunction never jeopardizes the village's needs.

Working at the mills is intense, and the hours can be irregular due to the demand each day. The millers' leader, Chung-hu, keeps morale high with encouragement, pushing back against unreasonable demands, keeping wages stable, and midnight snacks.

MILLING HOUSES BUSINESS 4

SOUTHBANK

Wares De-husked grain, grain flour, stone objects

Choe Chung-hu NG male human miller 4, Perception DC 20, Will DC 20, Abadar Lore +10, Crafting +12

Work The mills are always looking for extra hands to help keep the stones turning. A PC can use Athletics to Earn Income here.



Yong Wu-Xiu

W9. NINE EAR SHRINE

This mud-wall hut looks like a grain storage hut on the outside. Its interior descends 10 feet underground into an enclosed space lined with stone, in the middle of which sits a 15-foot-tall marble statue of a nine-tailed fox. A large spiritual rope made of hay hangs off its neck. The walls of the basement are decorated with painted carvings that depict stories of Daikitsu.

Fifteen years ago, a desperate mother of the Ouh family hid her baby here as the family was rounded up for execution by a corrupt guard. By the time the guards knew about the missing offspring, a large skulk of foxes had surrounded the temple. Unwilling to tempt divine wrath, the guards retreated. Allies of the family soon arrived to rescue the baby, at which point the foxes vanished.

That baby, Ba-Ming Ouh, grew up under the care of distant relatives. While she shows signs of the Ouh family's inclinations toward the veneration of nature, Ba-Ming wishes to return her life debt by serving Daikitsu. While some question her intentions, most Willowshorers support her dedication.

NINE EAR SHRINE

TEMPLE 3

SOUTHBANK

Wares fulus, scrolls, talismans

Ba-Ming Ouh N female human priest 3, Perception DC 18, Will DC 20, Crafting +5 (Trained), Religion +8

Services Ba-ming only provides her services if her attitude is helpful. She can craft fulus up to 2nd level, 1st-level spell scrolls from the divine or primal spell list, and the *wolf fang*, *hunter's bane*, *monkey pin*, and *bronze bull pendant* talismans.

W10. LADY OF SOULS

One of Lung Wa's chief concerns when they first expanded into Willowshore was to reduce the likelihood of an undead uprising. They solved it by building a cathedral to Pharasma.

Elizeth Candora, a second-generation Taldan from Goka, is the current priestess here. Having once visited Willowshore and the Tan Sugi monastery as a child, Elizeth never imagined

that becoming a cleric of Pharasma would

lead to an opportunity for her to permanently return to the village she vividly recalls. She sees the coincidence as fate arranged by Pharasma's hands and therefore serves dutifully and diligently. She's fond of spending time alone in the graveyard with her flute, and often plays the instrument there to help soothe the spirits of those recently buried therein.

HER FLUVIAL LADY OF SOULS

TEMPLE 5

UNAFFILIATED

Wares consumable religious items, divine scrolls

Elizeth Candora NG female human cleric of Pharasma 5, Perception DC 25, Will DC 25, Crafting +13, Performance +13, Religion +13

Services As the cathedral was damaged during the monster attack, Elizeth can only provide divine scrolls up to 2nd-level during this adventure. Once summer ends, Elizeth can create or inscribe the *bane* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 180), *ghost touch*, *disrupting*, +1 *potency*, and *striking* weapon runes once every 4 days at normal cost. Before that, Elizeth can create the following items if the PCs Request her help: *crying angel pendants*, *ghost charges* (lesser and moderate; *Advanced Player's Guide* 253), and *healing potions* (minor and lesser).

W11. DAWNSTEP BRIDGE

After the Thrice-Blessed Brothel was established (but before it became an inn), Willowshore's population had grown enough in size to be considered a town by Shenmen standards, meaning that a lit lantern must be maintained at all times within the town near the entrance, at a major crossroads, or at a bridge. The lack of a lit lantern at one of these locations suggests that the town is abandoned, which is believed to

invite the likes of vermin, ghosts, beasts, and worse. In Willowshore, a minor artifact known as the *Eternal Lantern* serves this purpose—a treasured heirloom from Master Zhi Hui herself.

W12. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

Willowshore's Lung Wa lumber bosses had a host of other businesses related to materials taken from the woods. Many industrial workers came to Willowshore explicitly for this work, leaving family and friends behind.

After the lumber bosses left, Governor Heh seized control and ordered the workers to continue working. Upset that they had no choice in the matter, the workers have been gathering late at night under the guidance of Kawaka, a senior paper and bookmaker, to discuss how they should negotiate with the governor to release those who want to leave and fairly pay those who elect to stay.

With the collapse of Lung Wa, many of the businesses that once thrived here closed up shop. Those listed below are the only ones still functioning.

CLOUD PAPER HOUSE

SOUTHBANK

Wares paper and paper products such as spellbooks and formula books

Kawaka Myna LN male tengu guild leader 3, Perception DC 20, Will DC 20, Crafting +10

Work Willowshore is going to need a lot of paper to fix all those sliding doors. A PC who's at least liked by Southbank can help craft paper here and gains a +1 item bonus to Crafting checks to Earn Income.

JADEITE ESSENTIALS

NORTHRIDGE

Wares alcohol, essential oils and perfume, glassware and glass items

Work With the distilling equipment mostly destroyed by the monsters, all that's left of the plant is its inhouse glassblowing facilities. A PC who's at least liked by Northridge can help craft glassware here and gains a +1 item bonus to Crafting checks to Earn Income.

REBEL'S LEATHERWORKS

UNAFFILIATED

Wares hide and leather items

Work Demand for leather and hide armor is high throughout Willowshore, regardless of faction. A PC who's at least liked by Southbank and Northridge, can

help craft leather goods here and can attempt a task of a level equal to Willowshore's level +1 or less.

W13. WOODRAFT LAKE

The first governor appointed to Willowshore by Lung Wa made an effort to tame the notorious Ceiba River through various engineering feats. Part of that effort, plus the demand for wet storage for wood, led to the construction of the Willowshore Dam—and by extension, Woodraft Lake.

Many protested the construction at first, as the resulting lake would submerge some homes and farmlands—including the village's shrine to Lady Nanbyo. A few imprisonments later, all complaints ceased. The dam was completed in due time. While

the governor earned himself a promotion and left Willowshore soon after, they didn't get to enjoy it for long before a landslide buried them on a bright sunny day. While the story's veracity is somewhat dubious, subsequent governors have never stopped Willowshore's villagers from treating the lake as a shrine to the Widow of Suffering.

W14. WILLOWSHORE DAM

Willowshore's dam is a minor engineering marvel. Its main body is constructed out of immense, precisely fitted slabs of dark-gray marble, carved with a carefully calculated curvature. The dam has two giant wooden gates that can be closed or opened to lower the level of the lake. Turning the wheel that controls the gates automatically causes a bell to ring, signaling those downriver to move away to safety.

W15. DOWNTOWN WILLOWSHORE

Downtown Willowshore remains a major hub of activity in town. To the northeast once stood the governor's home and office, which also served as the village's bank and treasury—but today, this entire area is a mysterious empty lot. What happened to the governor and his estate is one of the great mysteries the PCs will eventually solve during this Adventure Path. South of this empty lot lie the imperial barracks. To the north of the crossroad, opposite an empty square, is the stage for the village's weekly Shu Opera performance. Nearby, on opposite sides of the road is one of Willowshore's busiest stores, the Treesparrow's Rest, and Willowshore's only public bathhouse, the Happy Kappa.



Otis

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See Chapter 2 in this volume's adventure for a more detailed exploration of downtown Willowshore, but the following four businesses comprise the most important locations in the area.

THE SEVEN-COLORED SONGBIRD

THEATER 5

NORTHBRIDGE

Kazuma Oono NG male kitsune director 5, Perception DC 22, Will DC 20, Diplomacy +13, Performance +13, Shelyn Lore +12

Work Once a month, a PC can audition for a role in one of Kazuma Oono's productions by attempting a DC 25 Performance check. On a success, the task level limit for Earn Income checks using Performance for that PC during that month is equal to Willowshore's level or the PC's level, whichever is higher.

TREESPARROW'S REST

BUSINESS 3

SOUTHBANK

Wares alcohol, grains, preserved foods, rations

Nadoya Sanmi NG female human family matriarch 3, Perception DC 18, Will DC 20, Crafting +10

Services Thanks to the Sanmi family's pre-planning, Willowshore has enough food stores to support the village on a subsistence level of living until winter. If the PCs are at least liked by Southbank, they can stay here free of charge to take advantage of this.

THE HAPPY KAPPA

BUSINESS 1

UNAFFILIATED

De-Ge Hua CG male halfling bathhouse owner 1, Perception DC 17, Will DC 17, Diplomacy +8

Services Once the bathhouse has been restored, the PCs can use the facilities free of charge. Once per day, a 1-hour soak in the warm waters helps to bolster the PC's immune system—attempts to Treat Disease on that PC during the next 24 hours gain a +1 item bonus.

The bathhouse's proprietor, De-Ge, knows just about every bit gossip in town, though he keeps his mouth shut about it. Providing the PCs are collecting information for a good cause and De-Ge is at least friendly, chatting with him allows the PCs to roll Gather Information checks twice and take the better result. This is a fortune effect and can be used once per week.

WILLOWSHORE BARRACKS

BARRACKS 3

NORTHBRIDGE

Wares armor, gear maintenance equipment, weapons

Zheng Peng LN male human watch officer 3, Perception DC 18, Will DC 18, Intimidation +9

Work As long as the party is at least liked by Northridge, a PC can help to keep guards in line here. Doing so allows one to Earn Income using Intimidation.

W16. LUO AND LAWS

Lung Wa's laws, after being revised time and time again by self-serving rulers, are a bag of contradictions allowing independent lawyers, such as Luo Xi Yang, to make a decent living attempting to make sense of them. Promised by the lumber lords who invited her here that rural life would be less stressful, Xi Yang arrived with only the essential 10-volume Imperial Compendium. Quickly, the lawyer discovered that Willowshore's legal issues were as complicated, if not more so, than what she'd previously encountered in the city of Sze, and thus her library grew to a size that doubled the one in her former home.

LUO & LAWS

LAW OFFICE 4

UNAFFILIATED

Luo Xi Yang N female human lawyer 4, Perception DC 23, Will DC 21, Diplomacy +12, Law Lore +14, Society +12

Services If Xi Yang is helpful, the PCs can make use of her eclectic collection of books, case studies, and records to gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Recall Knowledge checks associated with Willowshore while researching in the office.

Work Xi Yang is always in need of help with filing documents, scribing contracts, and adjudicating disagreements. A PC can Earn Income here with Diplomacy or Law Lore.

W17. MERCANTILE STREET

Willowshore's newer businesses, particularly those associated with woodcarving, are mostly found in one of the two-storied red-brick buildings along Mercantile Street. To ensure the lumber lords would never favor anyone, the woodcarvers came together to form a guild, through which young apprentices have the opportunity to intern at different shops during their apprenticeship. Mong-Un, the woodcarver's current elected guild leader, is a product of such training. Though heaped with praises for her work, Mong-Un would rather be a painter or jewelry maker.

WOODCARVER'S GUILD

GUILD 4

NORTHBRIDGE

Wares artwork, wood items, wooden religious symbols

Yun Mong-un LG female human guild leader 4, Perception DC 22, Will DC 20, Crafting +12

Services The woodcarver's guild can craft any non-magical non-weapon wood or hardwood items for the PCs upon request. Mong-Un can also craft painted artworks and jewelry if the PCs provide the raw materials necessary for the item. Once the guild has peachwood supplies (see Collecting Peachwood on page 42), the characters can craft peachwood paper, which allows Yun Mong-un to craft fulus (including the rare regional fulus on page 83).

W18. SECOND BEST

When Huo Tian-Zhe arrived in Willowshore with his blacksmith father from Karahai about five years ago to assist with the maintenance of Willowshore's dam, the urban-born son thought he was about to show the "second-rated smiths of the countryside" how to get things done. Quickly, Tian-Zhe realized his own skills were subpar to even the youngest apprentice of the Eternal Blaze and that his fancily-designed farm gadgets were more toys than machines of marvels out in the actual farm fields. Humbled, Tian-Zhe asked his father to stay in Willowshore so he could learn to be a "smith of use." Begrudgingly accepting the abrupt request, Tian-Zhe's father nevertheless gave his son a handful of gold to order a new shop sign. As a reminder to himself, Tian-Zhe boldly named his workshop "Second Best."

In the last five years, Tian-Zhe's products have garnered some loyal customers, and his knowledge of machinery won over Yong Wu-Xiu such that the old smith tasked him with the maintenance of the dam.

SECOND BEST

SMITH 4

UNAFFILIATED

Wares adventuring tools, alchemical ammunition, alchemical bombs, clockwork gadgets, and simple armor, metal weapons, and shields,

Huo Tian-Zhe CG male human inventor 4, Perception DC 18, Will DC 18, Crafting +12

Services Tian-Zhe can craft alchemical ammunition and bombs in addition to regular metal items.

W19. THE HAND OF SPRING

Willowshore relied heavily on home remedies, herbal droughts, and traveling priests for medical care until the arrival of Doctor Damihansig, whom everyone calls Dami for short. Dami uses a mix of acupuncture, purified chemicals, and surgery to provide care. Though his treatments aren't what Willowshore is used to, Dami has developed quite a reputation for being a charitable doctor who cares more about his patients than monetary gain.

THE HAND OF SPRING

CLINIC 4

UNAFFILIATED

Wares alchemical healing items, healer's kit supplies, non-magical healing items

Damihansig "Dami" Mababangloob LG male human doctor 4, Perception DC 22, Will DC 22, Crafting +12, Medicine +14

Services Other than selling or making healing items for the PCs, Dami can attempt untrained and trained Medicine checks to treat up to 8 different patients a day, charging 5 cp per person per treatment.

W20. MOTHER'S COIL

Magic was seen traditionally in Willowshore as either a manifestation of divine blessing, one's connection to the Spirit World, or just a trick of the hand and mind. Most folks didn't quite understand it as a topic studied and learned until the arrival of Anjal of Thulsadus, an old nagaji wizard. Arriving about fifteen years ago, Anjal found the weather of Willowshore to be gentle on their dryscale condition and thus bought a plot of land from a farmer looking to relocate to the city. Overnight, a Nagajor-styled tower of dark basalt appeared, much to the awe of the villagers.

Though curious about magic, most villagers find studying the topic to be formidable and unapproachable, not to mention impractical. Thus, Anjal had only one apprentice, Jubei, a child they raised after she was abandoned in Willowshore by a pair of irresponsible "parents" who posed as well-off merchants but then fled town without paying their bills. Infuriated that anyone dared endanger a child so, Anjal's Nalinivatian beliefs prompted the old wizard to take the terrified Jubei in as their own.

Jubei has since grown into a capable young adult. While Anjal's death last year was tragic, Jubei is determined to continue studying the arcane arts through the books her adopted parent left behind.

MOTHER'S COIL

WIZARD'S TOWER 3

UNAFFILIATED

Wares arcane and occult scrolls, formulas and recipes, wands

Igawa Jubei NG female human wizard 3, Perception DC 19, Will DC 19, Arcana +10, Crafting +10

Services Jubei begins the campaign knowing only how to craft 1st-level and 2nd-level spell scrolls and 1st-level wands. Each week, she adds one non-consumable magical item of the PCs' level to her known list of magical item recipes. The PCs can Request her to research a specific recipe.

W21. THE CEIBA-DUYUE EXCHANGE

When Governor Heh Shan-Bao took office in Willowshore, he ordered several new warehouses and a trade office to be built here, hoping to expand the town's industry and connection with the coastal fortress of Karahai. On Granny Hu's advice, Shan-Bao handpicked the local Kofusachi priest, Kim Gu-won, to take the post of Exchange Manager. Gu-won reluctantly accepted the job, knowing that with what Granny Hu has on him, he wouldn't be able to refuse if she asked him to shift a few numbers here and there or ignore a few packages going to or coming from the Mushroom House.

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THE CEIBA-DUYUE EXCHANGE

TRADE OFFICE 5

NORTHBRIDGE

Wares beverages, divine scrolls, foods and spices, fulus, raw mineral, textiles

Kim Gu-won CG male human cleric of Kofusachi 5, Perception DC 23, Will DC 23, Crafting +12

Services Gu-won is exceptional at calligraphy, a skill that gives him an advantage in crafting fulus and scrolls. He can craft fulus that last a month with 4 hours of work and fulus that last a year in 2 days. He can also craft scrolls in 2 days.

Work A PC can help organize logistics here and use Society checks to Earn Income.



Zheng Peng

W22. FISHERIES

Fish is an important food source for Willowshore. Locals traditionally capture entire schools of fish, preserve those above a certain size, and raise small ones in their backyard ponds. Today, this practice has been expanded, though the fishers have yet to reach a point where the fishery ponds here can be maintained indefinitely.

Zataku is Willowshore's foremost fish keeper; her ability to sense weather changes gives her the perfect edge in her occupation.

FISHER'S FARMS AND DOCKS

GUILD 3

NORTHBRIDGE

Wares Dried or smoked fish and shrimp, fertilizer, fishing gear, insect bait

Zataku CG female ratfolk fisher 3, Perception DC 19, Will DC 19, Nature +9

Services If the PCs are liked by Northridge, they can confer with Zataku's weather forecasts to gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks and saves against weather effects for 1 day. They can benefit from this effect once per week.

Work A PC can patrol the fisheries for predators or inspect the simple docks used by the pole fishers for damage, allowing them to Earn Income with Survival checks.

W23. DOCK

After the construction of the dam, Willowshore's old dock was blocked off, thus requiring the construction of a new dock at the mouth of the Ceiba River. The dock is operated and managed by Rajul, who was hired by the Ceiba-Duyue Exchange specifically for his boatbuilding skills.

WILLOWSHORE DOCK

DOCK 3

NORTHBRIDGE

Wares river boat rentals and sales

Rajul Samudra CG male nagaji shipwright 3, Perception DC 19, Will DC 19, Crafting +10

Services The party can rent a rowboat (*Gamemastery Guide* 179) for 5 cp a day or purchase one outright for 15 gp. Rajul also offers excellent handcrafted oars for his rowboats. These oars grant a +1 item bonus to Piloting checks with rowboats and cost 50 gp.

W24. THE MUSHROOM HOUSE

This remote brick farmhouse smells of decay and manure. Everyone knows that mushrooms aren't the only things growing in the farmhouse, though. For the right price, the Mushroom House can grow almost anything. Luda Bama, a spry, elderly halfling woman, is the head of this illicit market, which she runs with the explicit permission of Granny Hu.

THE MUSHROOM HOUSE

ILLICIT MARKET 3

NORTHBRIDGE

Wares adventuring gear, drugs, poisons, tattoos

Luda Bama LE female halfling smuggler 3, Perception DC 20, Will DC 18, Crafting +10

Services A PC can act as a "collector" for Luda, using Intimidation to Earn Income.

W25. THE CERULEAN TEAHOUSE

Willowshore's lumber bosses thought very highly of themselves, and the idea of mingling with the "common folk" rankled them. Aristocrat Qing Mai-Lai's solution was the establishment of this fine structure, close to the lumber lords' estates.

The Cerulean Teahouse took off quickly, thanks to its offerings of extravagant food, drinks, and performances. However, once the novelty wore off, business quickly died. Still, Mai-Lai persevered, first by changing the teahouse's focus to banquet catering, then by collaborating with The Leshy's Salon as a storefront, and finally as a flexible bed-and-breakfast. Just days after Mai-Lai finally paid off the loan on the property, news of Lung Wa's collapse reached Willowshore.

Mai-Lai called it quits at that point and announced her retirement, but her attempts to pass on control of the Teahouse to family met with complications when it became apparent none of her relations wanted to move to Willowshore. When Mai-Lai passed away early in the previous winter, ownership of the business was undetermined, for Mai-Lai never submitted a will. When the PCs explore the teahouse in this adventure, they'll find a curious remnant left behind by Mai-Lai that, in time, will result in them becoming the teahouse's new owners.

W26. ABANDONED ESTATES

The abandoned lumber lords' estates, after being thoroughly picked clean, were left to serve as the occasional rage room or dare challenge. An abandoned shrine to Desna sits in one of the houses, and many have questioned if someone should accept the goddess into their home instead of leaving her bereft in the estate ruins.

W27. THE LESHY'S SALON

The local leshies don't recall when they came to the region, just that it was long before Willowshore was founded. They didn't officially join Willowshore until the expansion of the settlement made it inevitable. With allied families keeping the greedy lumber lords away, the leshies built their own tea farm business, taking to the roads with brewed tea and teaware stashed in rectangular bamboo backpacks. Some would shout slogans, while others used a simple temple block to inform customers of their arrival. These traveling merchants soon became an attraction and staple of Willowshore life.

THE LESHY'S SALON

FARM 3

UNAFFILIATED

Wares clay pottery tea ware, tea leaves

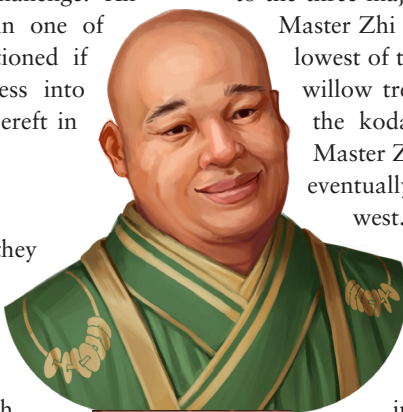
Mountain Summit Grass N agender leshy teamaker 3, Perception DC 19, Will DC 19, Crafting +9

W28. BONES OF THE FORGOTTEN

Willowshore, like many remote villages, has its own set of laws. Grievous crimes were punished via exile, or permanent imprisonment if the individual's skill or knowledge was needed. Executions were rare, as being exiled into the Specterwood was often a death sentence in itself.

Particularly vile criminals had a Mark of Crime tattooed onto their scalp, and after death, this tattoo was transferred to the bones through carving, meaning even in death and decomposition, the mark remained. Bodies with a Mark of Crime—be it from Willowshore, another village, or an imperial force such as Lung Wa—can only be buried in this overgrown and unkept area.

While graves were unmarked in the past, a few wooden posts have been erected recently and paper shuriken hung off them, seemingly in silent protest that the ones buried beneath might have died an unjust death. Or perhaps this is an attempt to stave off the rise of a bitter, vengeful ghost.



Kim Gu-won

W29. THE GREAT WILLOW

Willowshore rests at the foot of a mountainous region known geographically as the Trimountains, named due to the three major peaks in the area. In her memoir,

Master Zhi Hui noted how on the summit of the lowest of these mountains she found an ancient willow tree of unusual size. After befriend- ing the kodama kami who protected the tree, Master Zhi Hui learned vital information that eventually led her to the Tan Sugi grove to the west. For this knowledge, the kodama

of the so-called "Great Willow" received much reverence from both Willowshore and visiting pilgrims for many years, until the day Willowshore's governor failed in his fateful attempt to protect the town from Kugaptee's influence. When the region became a mindscape, the kodama was drawn in as well to be reborn along with the rest of the region's inhabitants. Each time the mindscape resets, Great Willow feels just a bit more "distant" from reality, growing more and more distracted and detached from the world.

THE GREAT WILLOW

WILDERNESS 6

UNAFFILIATED

Wares foraged foods and non-metallic raw materials

Great Willow N kodama, Perception DC 26, Will DC 24

W30. SPIDER GATE

After the slaughter caused by an attempt to harvest the Tan Sugi, Willowshore's governor caved to the demand for a new lantern for the entrance of the village. While the original plan was for the carpenters of Willowshore to build a tori gate or Tian-shu gateway on which lanterns could be hung, a Lung Wa aristocrat offered a free stone guardian spider from his garden instead, since it no longer fit in with the garden's decorations.

Most Willowshorers thought the giant statue was the ugliest thing they'd ever seen when it arrived. Nevertheless, they assumed the statue housed a guardian spirit and respected it accordingly. In time, villagers accepted their unique entrance guardian, even calling it their "ugly but cute" mascot. While the guardian spirit is reluctant to accept that title, the sudden death of the whole village left it forlorn for over a century, an experience it forgot when it died and reunited with the people it vowed to protect. The lantern Ugly Cute holds in its fangs is a regular lantern, unlike the *Eternal Lantern* found at Dawnstep Bridge, but the people of Willowshore value it just as much and strive to keep it lit at all times.

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The townspeople of Willowshore have developed several uncommon magical tools and items; however, there exist other mysterious treasures no one in town can recall the source of.

CAPE OF JUSTICE

ITEM 4

RARE EVOCATION INVESTED MAGICAL

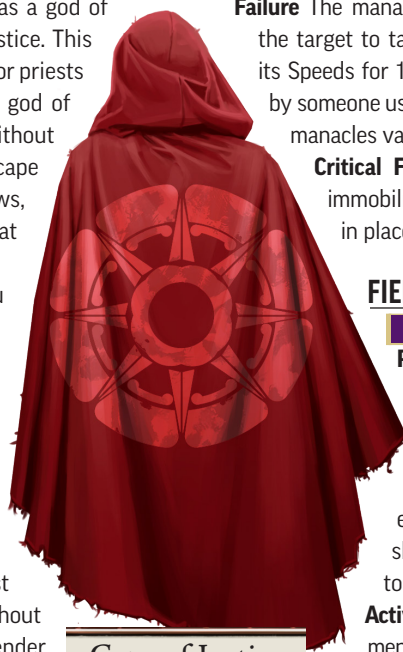
Price 100 gp

Usage worn cloak; **Bulk** L

While Yaezhing is feared and seldom worshipped in the open, some regions of Tian Xia see him as a god of necessary evil and their only hope for justice. This garment is often worn by bounty hunters or priests of Yaezhing, yet non-worshippers of the god of harsh justice sometimes wear this item without fear of religious persecution. The red cape appears almost black while in the shadows, with a lighter red mandala pattern on it that resembles a shuriken.

When you invest a *cape of justice*, you must designate a single creature as your offender. You must have met the creature before, or the creature should have a persona well known to the public (for instance, a bandit's epithet, if not their face as shown on a wanted poster). You gain a +1 item bonus to Demoralize this creature. If you don't designate a creature as your offender when you invest the *cape of justice*, or if 24 hours pass without you either slaying or capturing your offender, your thoughts become worried and distracted and you take a -1 item penalty to Perception checks for the next 24 hours.

Activate ♦ command, Interact (force); **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** By using a free hand to grab the edge of your cape and give it a quick flourish, you cause a red, shuriken-shaped bolt of force to fire at a target within 60 feet that you can see. The shuriken hits automatically and deals 1d4+1 force damage, or 2d4+2 force damage if the target is your designated offender. If the target is within 30 feet, you can attempt to Demoralize the target as a free action after the shuriken strikes them.



Cape of Justice

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact (incapacitation); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You produce manacles from the cape and then fling them at a Medium or Small bipedal target within 30 feet. The target must attempt a DC 18 Reflex save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected, and the manacles vanish.

Success The manacles strike the target's legs but fail to latch properly. The target is flat-footed until the start of your next turn, at which point the manacles vanish.

Failure The manacles lock on the target's legs, causing the target to take a -15-foot circumstance penalty to its Speeds for 1 minute, or until it Escapes or is freed by someone using Pick a Lock (DC 18), after which the manacles vanish.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target is immobilized for as long as the manacles remain in place.

FIEND'S HUNGER

ITEM 4

UNIQUE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Price 100 gp

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

The blade of this +1 *low-grade silver dagger* has a sickly red tinge.

Though once used to send souls to empower Kugaptee, the fury of those slain by the blade now allow its wielder to periodically strike back against fiends.

Activate ♦ command (divine, enchantment, mental); **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger**

You score a critical hit against a fiend; **Effect**

Vengeful echoes of the fallen lance out into the psyche of the fiend struck. After the normal effects of the critical hit, the target must roll a DC 18 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature becomes distracted by vengeful spirits and becomes flat-footed until the start of your next turn.

Failure As success, but the creature is also slowed 1 for 1 round.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature is slowed 1 for 1 minute.

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HONGRUI'S GRATITUDE

ITEM 3

UNIQUE INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 60 gp

Usage worn cloak; Bulk L

Given as thanks for honoring the memories of three unfortunate travelers who met a tragic end in the Willowshore Hinterlands, this red-hooded cloak is decorated with an image of an elaborately dressed performer whose two companions hold a lantern and umbrella for her.

Activate  command, envision, Interact (evocation, light); **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** You don't have the umbrella activation of this cloak active; **Effect** With a wave of the cloak to the left, you cause the image of the lantern-holding companion on the cloak to vanish. A floating red lantern appears at your side and follows you at an arm's length while casting bright light in a 20-foot radius (and dim light for the next 20 feet) like a torch. For 1 hour, while the light from this lantern is active, you gain a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy checks. You can Activate the cloak again to dismiss the torch.

Activate  command, envision, Interact (abjuration); **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** You don't have the lantern activation of this cloak active; **Effect** With a wave of the cloak to the right, you cause the image of the umbrella-holding companion on the cloak to vanish. An indestructible red wax paper umbrella appears above you and follows you, shielding you from weather effects, such as rain or bright sunlight. For 1 hour, while this umbrella is active, you gain a +1 item bonus to Survival checks. You can Activate the cloak again to dismiss the umbrella.



Ugly Cute's Gift

MATSUKI'S MEDICINAL WINE

ITEM 3

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE DRUG INGESTED POISON

Price 12 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate  Interact

Old Matsuki's private brew has quite the kick. In addition to making you tipsy, this medicinal wine works wonders in helping to recover from disease—including (ironically) drug addiction. Matsuki's medicinal wine functions as alcohol (*Gamemastery Guide* 120), except that its saving throw is a DC 18 Fortitude save. In addition, upon drinking a dose of Matsuki's medicinal wine, you gain a +2 item bonus to Fortitude saving throws against diseases and poisons for 24 hours. This applies to your daily save against a disease's progression; however, the bonus doesn't apply to any checks you attempt against Matsuki's medical wine itself.

NOPPERA-BO HOOD

ITEM 4

RARE ILLUSION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 85 gp

Usage worn helmet; Bulk L

This unpleasant-looking hood appears to be a completely smooth, round sack of skin that feels uncannily warm to the touch. When you wear this hood and invest it, it merges with your head and face, becoming imperceptible as a worn item except on close examination, which reveals a slight oily sheen to your facial features. You can cause minor shifts and changes to your features while wearing a *noppera-bo hood*; this counts as having a disguise kit to Impersonate any creature that is the same ancestry as you.

Activate  envision (transmutation); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You focus on the hood's magic, and then gain the effects of 1st-level *illusory disguise*, though it's a transmutation effect rather than an illusion.

SPIDER LILY TATTOO

ITEM 3

RARE INVESTED MAGICAL NECROMANCY TATTOO

Price 60 gp

Usage tattooed on the body; Bulk —

The *spider lily tattoo* marks you as a trusted member of Granny Hu's network. This crimson tattoo fades and becomes invisible within a day of being applied, reappearing only when you Activate it, when you gain the doomed condition, or when you die. The higher the doomed value, the more vivid the color.

If your tattoo is plainly visible, you gain a +1 item bonus to Intimidation checks against all creatures that can see the tattoo, but you take a -1 item penalty to Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression on those who understand the actual meaning of the *spider lily tattoo* (including all of Willowshore's citizens).

Activate  envision (concentrate); **Requirements** Your tattoo isn't currently visible; **Effect** You make the tattoo visible. You can use this activation again to make the tattoo not visible, unless you have the doomed condition.

Activate  envision (concentrate); **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** An undead creature detects you for the first time; **Effect** The *spider lily tattoo* manipulates your life force to make you appear to be undead for a short time. Attempt a Deception check against the triggering undead creature's Perception DC. On a success, the triggering undead believes you're undead as well—a mindless undead is likely to ignore you, while a sapient undead might react with curiosity or confusion. You can continue attempting Deception checks each round as a single action to Sustain the effect for up to 1 minute.

SPIRIT TRAP

ITEM 2

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 5 gp

A *spirit trap* consists of a net dipped in water that has been steeped with sacred herbs to better combat phantoms. This snare's components function as a net (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 249) when not set up. You set this snare up in a 10-foot-by-10-foot area. The first creature with the spirit trait that steps into the area must attempt a DC 16 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected

Success The creature is flat-footed for 1 round.

Failure The creature is immobilized for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is immobilized until it Escapes (DC 16).

UGLY CUTE'S GIFT

ITEM 4

UNIQUE MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 60 gp

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

This spiky, stony fragment shed from Ugly Cute's carapace fits quite comfortably over the hand. Though a little bulkier than the typical gauntlet, it still functions as a +1 *spiked gauntlet*.

Activate **◆◆** command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You draw upon Ugly Cute's latent spiritual energy to infuse the gauntlet with forceful power. For 1 minute, *Ugly Cute's gift* gains the advantages of a *ghost touch* property rune and deals an additional 2 force damage on a successful Strike.



Firecracker Fulu

WILLOWSHORE FULUS

Mixing Sangpotshi concepts with animism, Shenmen traditions, and local practices, Willowshore crafters have developed a number of fulus rarely found elsewhere. Before the town's disastrous transformation into a mindscape, Willowshore fulus were one of the town's most sought-after resources by adventurers. General rules for fulus appear on page 158 of *Pathfinder Secrets of Magic*.

ANIMAL-TURNING FULU

ITEM 1

RARE ABJURATION CONSUMABLE FULU MAGICAL TALISMAN

Price 4 gp

Usage affixed to armor; **Bulk** –

Activate **➤** envision; **Trigger** A creature with the animal trait successfully Strikes you.

Frightened animals depicted on this fulu flee in all directions from a central figure (traditionally represented by a human hunter, but sometimes depicted as a skeletal undead creature or even a fiend with long, broken arms). You activate this fulu, gaining a +2 item bonus to AC

against the triggering Strike. If this causes the Strike to miss, you become concealed from the triggering creature until the start of your next turn.

FIRECRACKER FULU

ITEM 1

RARE CONSUMABLE EVOCATION FULU MAGICAL TALISMAN

Price 4 gp

Usage affixed to a weapon; **Bulk** –

Activate **◆** envision; **Trigger** You critically succeed at an attack roll with the affixed weapon.

The fulu explodes and showers the area with bright sparks. The creature struck takes an additional 1d4 sonic damage and must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be dazzled for 1 round (or dazzled for 1 minute on a critical failure).

PRIVACY WARD FULU

ITEM 1+

RARE ABJURATION CONSUMABLE FULU MAGICAL

Usage affixed to wall; **Bulk** –

This fulu seeks to keep thieves, spies, and unwanted attention away from a room. A depiction of a lock appears in the center of this fulu, which is in turn surrounded by circles of broken keys. When applied to a wall inside a room, all creatures within the room gain an item bonus to Stealth checks against creatures outside the room.

Type *privacy ward* (hallway); **Level** 1; **Price** 4 gp

The *privacy ward fulu* can shield a room of up to 10 square feet, grants a +1 item bonus, and has a duration of 1 hour.

Type *privacy ward* (room); **Level** 5; **Price** 25 gp

The fulu can shield a room of up to 30 square feet, grants a +1 item bonus, and has a duration of 8 hours. If you become hidden within the room, you automatically become undetected to creatures of the fulu's level or lower.

Type *privacy ward* (chamber); **Level** 9; **Price** 120 gp

The fulu can shield a room of up to 90 square feet, grants a +2 item bonus, and has a duration of 24 hours. If you become hidden within the room, you automatically become undetected to creatures of the fulu's level or lower.

TRAVELER'S FULU

ITEM 2

RARE CONSUMABLE DIVINATION FULU MAGICAL TALISMAN

Price 7 gp

Usage affixed to armor; **Bulk** –

Activate **◆** envision; **Trigger** You critically fail an attempt to Sense Direction; **Requirements** You're trained in Survival.

This fulu shows a series of constellations and arrows depicting astronomical movements through the night sky. When you activate a *traveler's fulu*, the magic infuses your mind with sensations of *deja vu*, as if you'd been in this region before. You gain a success on the triggering check.

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CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONALS

While the typical noppera-bo is cruel and revels in the act of frightening or tormenting humanoid creatures, not all of them wallow in evil. Neutral noppera-bos tend to be pranksters who use their abilities to trick and tease, while the rare good noppera-bos instead use their abilities to honor and idolize those they admire while focusing their own time on developing their skills at art or crafting.

Noppera-bo

Noppera-bos appear to be regular humans from behind, and might even resemble someone you know, until they turn to reveal a featureless face.

NOPPERA-BO GRUNT

Noppera-bo grunts lack the social graces necessary to fully disguise themselves with another person's face.

NOPPERA-BO GRUNT

CREATURE 0

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +4; no face

Languages Common; telepathy 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +3, Athletics +5, Deception +4, Intimidation +4

Str +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

Items leather armor, spear

No Face Noppera-bos have no sense of vision, but their sense of hearing is precise. They don't breathe and are immune to effects that require breathing. They gain sustenance by absorbing fluids through their skin—traditionally by immersing their hands or faceless head into the fluid to “drink” through osmosis; they can also benefit from consumables, such as potions or elixirs, in this way.

AC 15; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

HP 18; **Immunities** inhaled, olfactory, visual; **Weaknesses** sensitive hearing

Sensitive Hearing As long as a noppera-bo is deafened, they are slowed 1.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ spear +7, **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing

Ranged ✦ spear +5 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing

Impersonate Shape ✨ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) The noppera-bo grunt changes into a faceless version of a Small or Medium humanoid they've touched during the last 24 hours. While transformed and their face is covered, the grunt gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Impersonate that creature. The noppera-bo grunt can change back by using this ability again.

NOPPERA-BO TRICKSTER

These noppera-bos have mastered the art of disguise.

NOPPERA-BO TRICKSTER

CREATURE 1

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +5; no face

Languages Common; telepathy 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +4, Deception +8, Stealth +6

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3

Items leather armor, shortbow (20 arrows), shortsword

No Face As noppera-bo grunt.

AC 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

HP 20; **Immunities** inhaled, olfactory, visual; **Weaknesses** sensitive hearing

Sensitive Hearing As noppera-bo grunt.

Noppera-bo Grunt

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ shortsword +8 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing

Ranged ♦ shortbow +8 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Impersonate Shape ♦♦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) As noppera-bo grunt, but the noppera-bo trickster gains the target creature's face and voice. As long as the noppera-bo trickster has a face, it loses its no face ability and its listed immunities.

Remove Face ♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult, visual)

Requirements The noppera-bo trickster is Impersonating a creature with a face; **Effect** The noppera-bo trickster's facial features melt into nothingness, and they menace a creature within 30 feet. The creature becomes frightened 1 on a failed DC 17 Will save (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

Sneak Attack The noppera-bo trickster deals an additional 1d4 precision damage to creatures that are flat-footed.

NOPPERA-BO OCCULTIST

Some noppera-bos harness their natural magic to further frighten victims.

NOPPERA-BO OCCULTIST

CREATURE 2

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +8; no face

Languages Common; telepathy 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5, Crafting +7, Deception +9, Occultism +7, Stealth +7

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3

Items staff

No Face As noppera-bo grunt.

AC 17; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

HP 30; **Immunities** inhaled, olfactory, visual; **Weaknesses** sensitive hearing

Sensitive Hearing As noppera-bo grunt.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ staff +7 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+3 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 18, attack +9; **1st** *fear, phantom pain, sleep*; **Cantrips** (1st) *daze, ghost sound, prestidigitation, read aura, shield*

Remove Face ♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult, visual) As noppera-bo trickster, but DC 18.

Impersonate Shape ♦♦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) As noppera-bo trickster.

Steal Face ♦♦ (concentrate, curse, incapacitation, occult, polymorph, transmutation) **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** The noppera-bo occultist is faceless; **Effect** The noppera-bo occultist targets one creature within 30 feet. The creature must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is dazzled until the start of its next turn.

Failure The noppera-bo gains the target's face. The target's face vanishes until the end of its next turn. Until then, it is blinded, can't speak or ingest, and can't smell. The target must also hold its breath or begin to suffocate.

Critical Failure As failure, but the effect doesn't end automatically. The target can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such attempt.



NOPPERA-BO ORIGINS

There are many theories on the origins of noppera-bos—from tanuki whose change shape ability went wrong, to humanoids who were warped by curses, to naturally spawning yokai. Some even theorize this condition is a transmissible curse like lycanthropy. Most noppera-bos don't recall their origins, and are often more interested in pretending to be someone else entirely.

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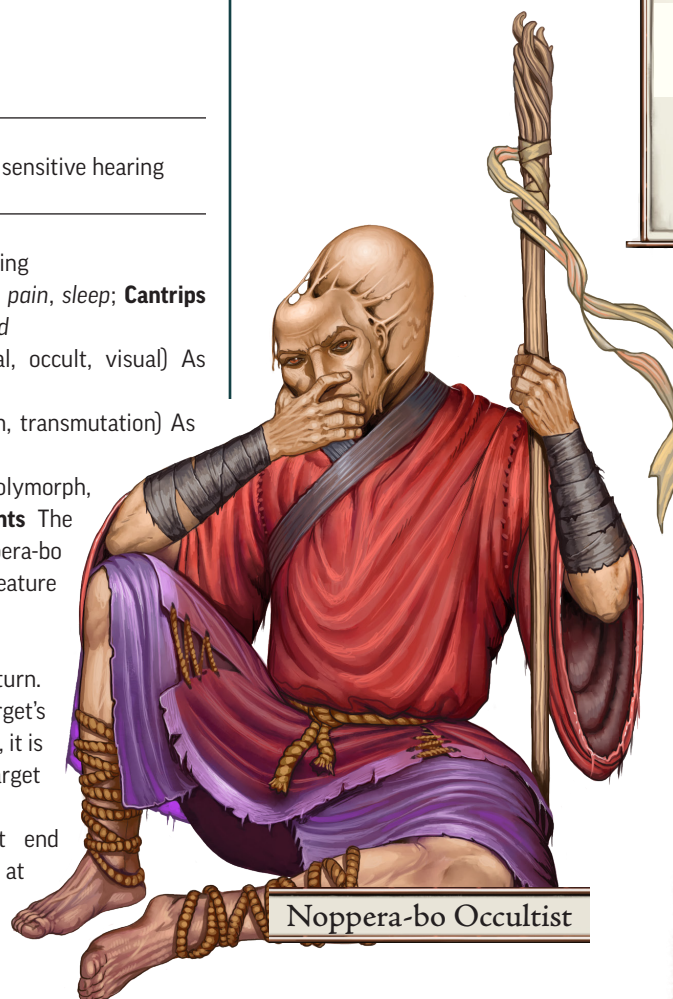
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Noppera-bo Occultist



GUARDIANS OF THE CYCLE

Shinigami are responsible for investigating and dealing with widespread phenomena that disrupt the natural flow of life. They might be tasked with solving the issue or be told to wait, observe, and provide minimal assistance. While most shinigami can retain their impartiality during such long vigils, some are far from emotionless and end up wavering toward mercy or cruelty.



Shinigami

Shinigami

Even immortals such as kami aren't immune to death. When a kami or equally powerful entity refuses the call of the Boneyard, a shinigami is summoned to bring these stubborn souls to heel. Exact and swift, shinigami are known to dispense the judgment of death efficiently and dispassionately.

SHINIGAMI

CREATURE 17

UNCOMMON LN LARGE MONITOR

Perception +31; darkvision, *detect alignment* (chaotic and lawful only), *true seeing*

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Necril, Requian, Utopian; *tongues*

Skills Acrobatics +31, Arcana +30, Boneyard Lore +32, Diplomacy +32, Intimidation +34, Occultism +30, Religion +33, Society +30, Stealth +31

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9

Items +2 *greater striking axiomatic naginata* (Treasure Vault 27), pouch of four gems

AC 40; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +29, **Will** +31; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 260, fast healing 40; **Immunities** death effects, disease, negative; **Weaknesses** silver 15; **Resistances** all physical 15 (except chaotic and silver), cold 15, poison 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 35.

Speed 25 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ *naginata* +33 (deadly d8, reach, versatile P),

Damage 3d8+16 slashing plus 1d6 lawful and spirit touch

Divine Innate Spells DC 38; **9th** *bind soul* (×3); **8th** *finger of death* (×3), *scrying*; **7th** *enervation* (Advanced Player's Guide 218; ×3), *plane shift*; **Constant (9th)** *detect alignment* (chaotic and lawful only), *tongues*, *true seeing*

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph, transmutation) The shinigami takes on the appearance of a specific Small or Medium humanoid creature. This doesn't change their statistics, other than to remove the reach trait from their Strikes. The shinigami's human shape is unique to the shinigami and can't be used to Impersonate a creature.

Pouch of Four Gems Each shinigami carries a pouch containing four black sapphires for use with *bind soul*. Each gem is capable of holding a soul of a maximum level equal to that of the shinigami. If the shinigami dies, the gems are destroyed as well, and any souls they contain are released harmlessly to travel to the Boneyard.

Release Soul ♦♦ (manipulate, necromancy) **Requirements** One of the gems in the shinigami's pouch contains a soul from *bind soul*; **Effect** The shinigami crushes the gem, sending the soul to the Boneyard while releasing a wave of necromantic energy. All creatures within a 30-foot emanation take 18d6 damage (DC 38 basic Fortitude save); the shinigami chooses whether this damage is positive damage or negative damage. A creature who takes damage from this effect and fails the saving throw is also sickened 2 and drained 1 (or sickened 4 and drained 2 on a critical failure).

Spirit Touch A shinigami's Strikes can affect incorporeal creatures with the effect of a *ghost touch* property rune.

Stone Spider

The tradition of venerating spiders as wards against vermin, pests, and evil in general far predates the modern jorogumo rule, with stone spiders filling a role similar to stone lions (*Bestiary* 3 125). Stone spider guardian beasts can be found perched on plinths near town and village entrances, standing motionless—for generations in some cases—so that many locals have forgotten their local guardian is anything more than a decoration.

STONE SPIDER

CREATURE 5

RARE NG LARGE CELESTIAL

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Celestial, Common; telepathy 60 feet

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +13, Intimidation +9, Religion +14, Settlement Lore +12 (regarding their home settlement), Society +10

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +0

Anchored Soul The stone spider is bonded to a specific settlement and must remain within 10 miles of the settlement's border.

AC 22; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

HP 62; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, petrified, poison

Bonded Vessel The condition of a stone spider's vessel dictates its maximum HP. Undamaged, the vessel is an object with 62 HP (BT 31). When the stone spider is in spirit form, damaging it doesn't hurt the vessel, but damaging the vessel deals an equal amount of damage to the stone spider. When the stone spider Inhabits its Vessel, they're a single target, and damage reduces the HP of both the stone spider and the vessel. If the vessel is broken, the stone spider can still fight while inhabiting it and suffers no ill effect, but if the vessel is ever destroyed, the stone spider is instantly slain and can't reconstitute.

Reconstitution (divine, necromancy) When the stone spider reaches 0 Hit Points, its spirit dissipates. If its bonded vessel is intact, the stone spider re-forms in this vessel after 2d4 days, fully healed. If the vessel is broken, it must first be Repaired, after which the stone spider re-forms in 3d4 days.

Speed fly 40 feet

Ranged ♦ spirit web +14 (range increment 30 feet), **Effect** spirit web trap

Divine Innate Spells DC 21; **3rd** *dream message*; **1st** *detect alignment* (at will; evil only)

Inhabit Vessel ♦♦ (manipulate) The spider touches and melds with its bonded vessel, bringing it to life. It can cease Inhabiting its Vessel by spending a single action, which has the concentrate trait. While Inhabiting the Vessel, it loses its fly Speed and gains **Immunities** healing, nonlethal; **Resistances** physical 6 (except bludgeoning); **Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet; and the following Strike.

• **Melee** ♦ stone fangs +14 (finesse), **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing

Spirit Body When not Inhabiting its Vessel, the stone spider is incorporeal and gains resistance 6 to all damage (except force damage and *ghost touch*; double resistance against non-magical).

Spirit Web Trap (force) A creature hit by the stone spider's web attack is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface until it Escapes (DC 22).



MINDSCAPE PERKS

When Ugly Cute, the stone spider who protects Willowshore, is slain in the modern era and their bonded vessel is destroyed, they don't dissipate. Instead, they awaken in Willowshore's mindscape, fully merged with their vessel. While in the mindscape, Ugly Cute can move their stone body as if it were a living body. They function at all times as if Inhabiting their Vessel and they are unable to cease Inhabiting their Vessel. If Ugly Cute is destroyed in the mindscape, they remain destroyed and can't reconstitute, although if the mindscape were to reset, Ugly Cute would return to life as well, once more fully Inhabiting their Vessel.

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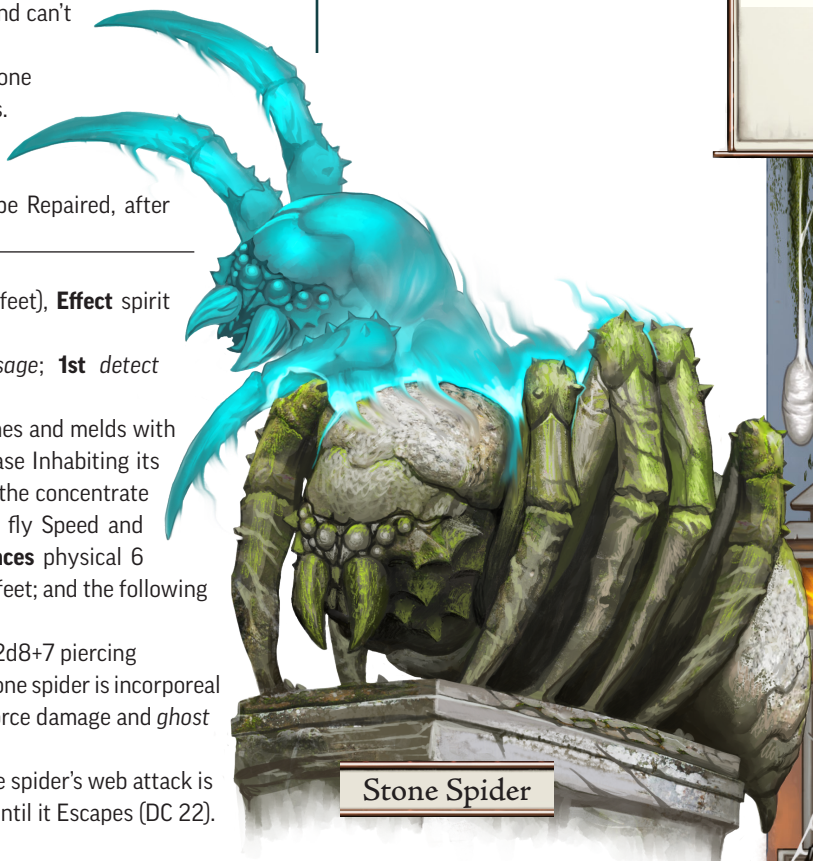
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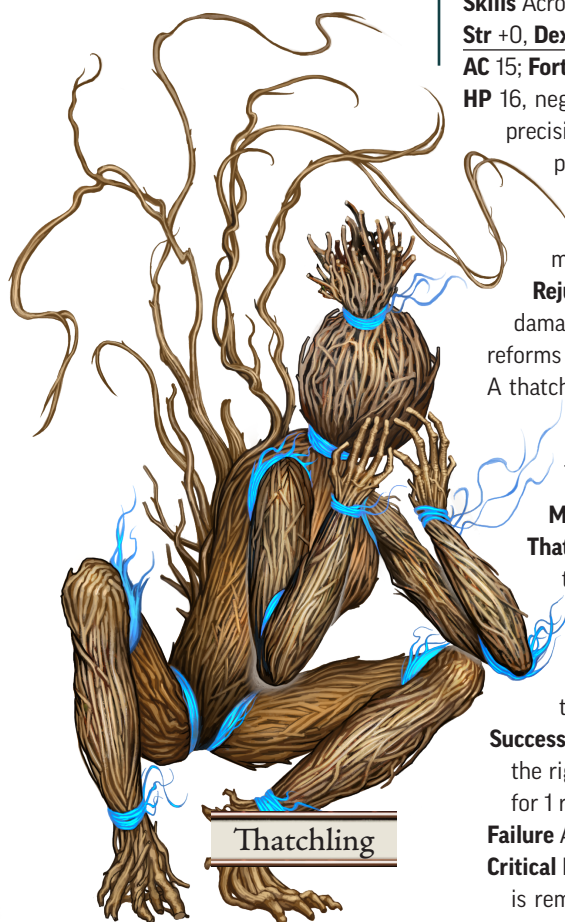


Stone Spider



OLD FRIENDS

The source of Willowshore's thatchlings is the simple fact that the souls who would normally have been reincarnated upon death can't do so, thus rising as thatchlings. Of course, since each year "resets" things, those who died during the year and became thatchlings are reborn alive once more on every first day of summer, with no memories of their previous doomed existence. While still driven by instinct to attack the living, Willowshore's thatchlings do feel a sense of remorse—if the GM judges it especially appropriate, they might take a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and saving throws against creatures they knew in life.



Thatchling

In rural Shenmen, some branches of Sangpotshi warn of what can happen if a soul bound for reincarnation is prevented from entering the River of Souls and rejoining the cycle. These souls become frustrated, confused, and then furious at what they feel is a denial of the body they deserve, and in turn, they force vegetation to serve as their new body. Others theorize that when a body is buried in a shallow grave, the roots of grass growing down into the remains can tangle the soul and capture it.

Thatchlings are intelligent and capable of speaking but rarely do so—they generally have little to say to those whose lives they covet. Rarely, one might attempt to lure someone into an area of tall grass or dense undergrowth by calling out to them for aid, but they have little skill at deception, so such tactics aren't particularly effective at making them seem like actual living creatures in need of help.

THATCHLING

The typical thatchling appears as a humanoid bundle of dry grass and twigs, held together by coils of what looks like glowing blue hair. These minor undead can't form bodies larger than those of a small human child.

THATCHLING

CREATURE 0

UNCOMMON CE SMALL UNDEAD

Perception +6; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +5, Stealth +5 (+7 in undergrowth)

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

AC 15; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

HP 16, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 5; **Resistances** bludgeoning 2, piercing 2

Distracting Giggle (auditory, aura, emotion, enchantment, mental, occult) 15 feet. The thatchling's giggle echoes in the back of the mind. Creatures within the aura take a -1 status penalty to Will saves.

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) When a thatchling is destroyed by damage other than fire, it attempts a DC 11 flat check. On a success, it reforms after 2d4 days within 120 feet of where it was destroyed, fully healed. A thatchling is always permanently destroyed if reduced to 0 Hit Points by fire damage or if the obstacle preventing the soul from reincarnating is removed.

Speed 30 feet; thicket walker

Melee ♦ frond +5 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6 slashing

Thatchling's Curse ♦♦ (curse, enchantment, mental, occult) The thatchling focuses its attention on a single target within 30 feet that it can see, and then begins muttering and whispering nonsense. The target must attempt a DC 16 Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and is temporarily immune to Thatchling's Curse for 24 hours.

Success The target is momentarily disoriented and has difficulty moving in the right direction. The target takes a -5-foot status penalty to its Speeds for 1 round.

Failure As success, but the penalty to its Speeds lasts for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As failure, but the penalty to its Speeds lasts until the curse is removed or until the thatchling that created the effect is permanently

destroyed, whichever comes first. In addition, when the cursed creature attempts a Survival check to Sense Direction or Track, they use the outcome for one degree of success worse than the result of their check, and they can't take the Scout exploration activity.

Thicket Walker Thatchlings ignore difficult terrain caused by brambles, tangled grass, and undergrowth, even those manipulated by magic.

RED-HOODED THATCHLING

When a soul doomed to become a thatchling dies in the throes of great anguish, they can return after death as a red-hooded thatchling. These vengeful thatchlings appear to wear red hoods when viewed at a distance, but up close, the grisly truth—that their heads are blood-soaked—is revealed. Unlike other thatchlings, red-hooded thatchlings are skilled at trickery, and their ability to appear as a living humanoid through illusion magic allows them to lure the unexpected into ambushes much more easily.

RED-HOODED THATCHLING

RARE CE SMALL UNDEAD

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +8, Stealth +7 (+9 in undergrowth)

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

AC 17; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

HP 32, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 5; **Resistances** bludgeoning 3, piercing 3

Distracting Giggle (auditory, aura, emotion, enchantment, mental, occult) 15 feet. As thatchling.

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) As thatchling.

Speed 30 feet; thicket walker

Melee ♦ frond +9 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+2 slashing plus 1d4 persistent bleed

Occult Innate Spells DC 18, attack +10; **1st** *illusory disguise*; **Cantrips (1st)** *ghost sound*, *telekinetic projectile*

Create Thatchling Spawn (necromancy, occult) A living humanoid who's slain by a red-hooded thatchling while under the effects of Thatchling's Curse rises as a thatchling after 1d4 rounds. This spawn is under the command of the red-hooded thatchling that killed it. If a red-hooded thatchling controls too many at once (as determined by the GM), some thatchlings can free themselves with a DC 18 Will saving throw at the start of their turn. If the red-hooded thatchling who created the spawn is destroyed, the spawn becomes an autonomous thatchling.

Howl of Vengeful Fury ♦♦ (necromancy, occult, sonic) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The red-hooded thatchling sobs pitifully before unleashing a terrifying scream. All non-thatchling creatures within a 30-foot emanation take 2d10 sonic damage (DC 18 basic Fortitude save) and become immune to all thatchlings' distracting giggle for 1 minute. Thatchlings in the area gain 5 temporary Hit Points and a +1 status bonus to their Strikes and saving throws for 1 minute.

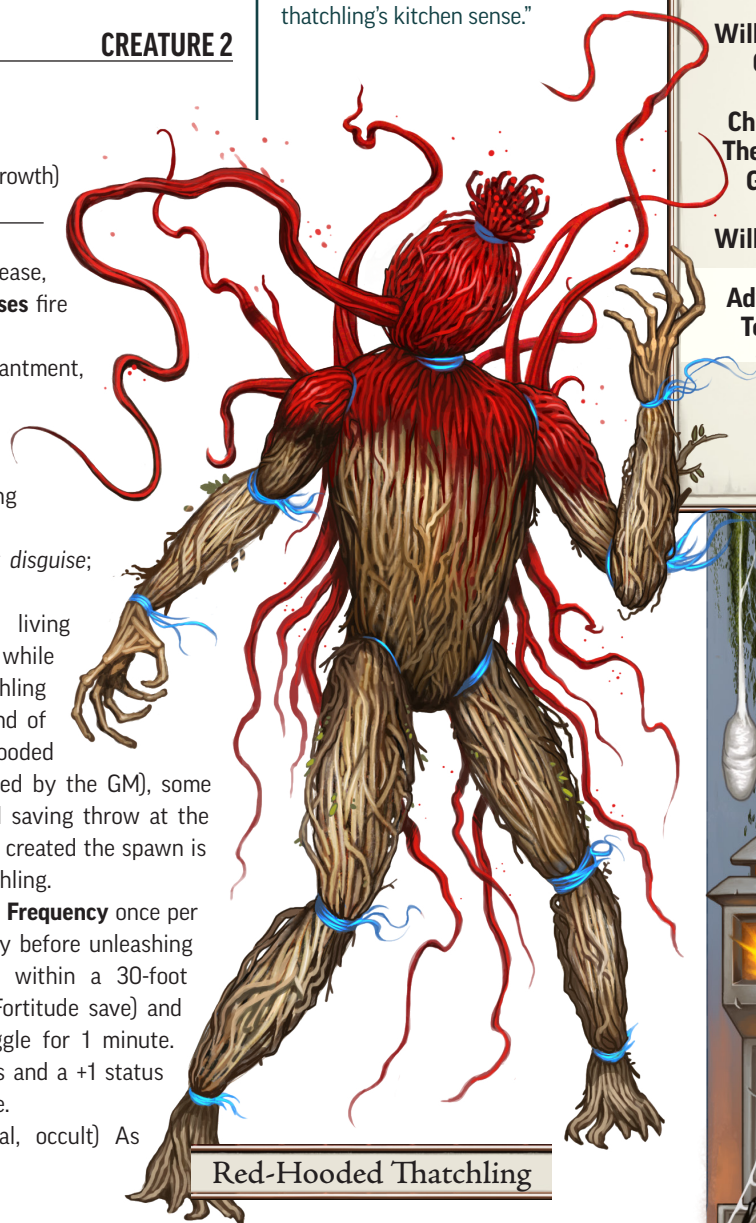
Thatchling's Curse ♦♦ (curse, enchantment, mental, occult) As thatchling, but DC 18.

Thicket Walker As thatchling.



FOREVER SENSELESS

The thatchling's curse robs the sense of direction from those it falls upon, leading to a whole category of insults in Shenmen that compare someone's ability to get something done to "a thatchling's sense." For example, someone who has a hard time making friends might be said to have "a thatchling's sense of friendship," while someone who constantly ruins meals might be said to have "a thatchling's kitchen sense."



Red-Hooded Thatchling

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Ban-niang “Granny” Hu

Retired Imperial Guard

Growing up a street urchin in Sze, Ban-niang came to view other urchins as her siblings. She pulled them and herself through to adulthood by working as a racketeer before securing a position as an imperial soldier guard. Her siblings remained in the criminal world but retained loyalty to their sister and acted as informants and financiers to help her climb the ranks of the city watch.

Planning ahead for the day when she grew old and frail and simply wanted to enjoy the wealth and power she’d amassed, Ban-niang volunteered to be an inaugural village guard captain in the “backwaters” that was Willowshore when Lung Wa started its lumber operations. Occupying the position for over two decades, Ban-niang retired in 7088 IC but, by that point, had grown fond of the town she’d once dismissed as a backwater and stayed on in her retirement. She has cultivated her image of “Granny Hu,” pretending to let age mellow her ambitions, but in fact, she knows many folks’ dark secrets and isn’t afraid to use this knowledge to manipulate others.

Campaign Use

If Granny Hu becomes Willowshore’s interim governor, she favors Northridge’s businesses and goals. This development makes it easier for the PCs to bolster the town’s defenses in the coming months, but at the cost of being able to efficiently prepare food stores for the coming winter.

Once the town of Willowshore is safe at the start of Chapter 3, the PCs can attempt to interact with Granny Hu using the Influence subsystem, described on pages 151–153 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. An influence encounter with Granny Hu is a 3rd-level challenge, and an influence round with Granny Hu takes 1 hour. If any attempt to Influence Granny Hu results in a critical failure and the PCs have fewer than 5 Influence Points with her, she uses her So Have You Heard? ability against that PC soon thereafter.

HU BAN-NIANG

LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Retired Lung Wa guard captain

Perception +11

Will +13

Discovery DC 14 Underworld Lore, DC 16 Society, DC 16 Willowshore Lore, DC 18 Perception

Influence Skills DC 14 Willowshore Lore (acknowledge the imperial guard’s claim to keep peace), DC 16 Crafting (to prepare and serve tea to impress), DC 16 Intimidation, DC 18 Diplomacy, DC 20 Deception

Influence 2 Granny Hu revises her initial opinion that the PCs are largely either useless to her or possibly plotting against her interests. The start of this better impression grants the PCs 1 Reputation Point with Northridge.

Influence 5 Granny Hu trusts that the PCs have Northridge’s best interests at heart. She invites the PCs to become a member of her network and offers to let Luda apply a *spider lily tattoo* (page 82) on any PC who’s interested.

Influence 7 Granny Hu trusts the PCs and values their input. If the PCs ask her to retract her bid for leadership, she does so without (much) complaint, trusting the PCs have Willowshore’s best interests in mind.

Resistances While Granny Hu has a checkered past when it comes to the law, she’s trying to turn over a new leaf and keep Willowshore’s safety in mind. Any Influence attempt that includes an attempt to bribe her or relies on her criminal past increases the DC of that roll by 2.

Weaknesses While Granny Hu is more focused on shoring up Willowshore’s defenses, she’s aware that the town will struggle to subsist. Any Influence attempt that uses Diplomacy, Deception, or Intimidation and that involves fears that Willowshore might face food shortages or the like reduces the DC of that roll by 2.

Background Granny Hu’s awful childhood hardened her into a scheming and power-hungry retiree who only feels secure if she has a hold on all Willowshore affairs.

Appearance Granny Hu’s gentle smile makes her feel approachable as if she’s ready to listen to your woes, but the hard glint in her eyes lets you know she’s no pushover.

Personality While mild-mannered and polite, Granny Hu’s schemes and rumor-mongering can be vicious.

Penalty Attempting to blackmail Granny Hu backfires. While it has no direct impact on the Influence challenge, she uses her Want to Try Me? reaction, which allows her to potentially later use her Are You Sure About That? reaction during the duel against a PC when they attempt a Strike against their dueling partner.

HU BAN-NIANG

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human guard captain

Perception +11

Languages Common, Halfling

Skills Athletics +11, Crafting +11, Deception +13, Diplomacy +11, Intimidation +13, Society +11, Willowshore Lore +11

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

Items +1 striking longsword, smoking pipe worth 20 gp, spider lily tattoo

So Have You Heard? (exploration); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Granny Hu can shift a PC's reputation in Willowshore over the course of 2 hours of work. She attempts a Deception check against the target's Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation DC, whichever is highest. If the target is admired or revered by at least one faction in Willowshore, Granny Hu takes a -1 status penalty to her check, or -2 if the target is admired or revered by both factions. The target is then temporarily immune to So Have You Heard? for 1 week.

Critical Success The target takes a -2 circumstance penalty to Charisma-based skill checks when interacting with Willowshore residents for a week.

Success As critical success, but only a -1 circumstance penalty and for only 1 day.

Failure The target is unaffected.

Critical Failure The plan backfires; not only is the target unaffected, but Granny Hu can't use So Have You Heard? for 1 month.

AC 20; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13; +1 status vs. fear, nerves of steel

HP 75

Nerves of Steel If Granny Hu succeeds at a save against a fear effect, she gets a critical success instead.

Are You Sure About That? ⤴ (emotion, mental, visual)

Trigger A creature within 30 feet who's visible to Granny Hu and who has been exposed to Want to Try Me? in the past week says or does something that would be against Granny Hu's interests; **Effect** Granny Hu makes a subtle gesture, reminding the triggering creature of their secret. The creature must succeed at a DC 22 Will Save or the triggering action is disrupted. Regardless of the outcome, the creature then becomes temporarily immune to this ability for 24 hours.

Want to Try Me? ⤴ (auditory, emotion, fear, mental)

Trigger A creature within 30 feet attempts to Coerce or Demoralize a creature; **Effect** Granny Hu threatens to expose a secret of the triggering creature. She attempts an Intimidation check against the triggering creature's Will DC. Her reputation means she can threaten a PC even if she doesn't actually know a secret, but if she

does know an especially dangerous or shameful one, she gains a +2 circumstance bonus to her Intimidation check.

Critical Success The creature is frightened 2, and the result of their Coerce or Demoralize attempt is reduced by one degree of success.

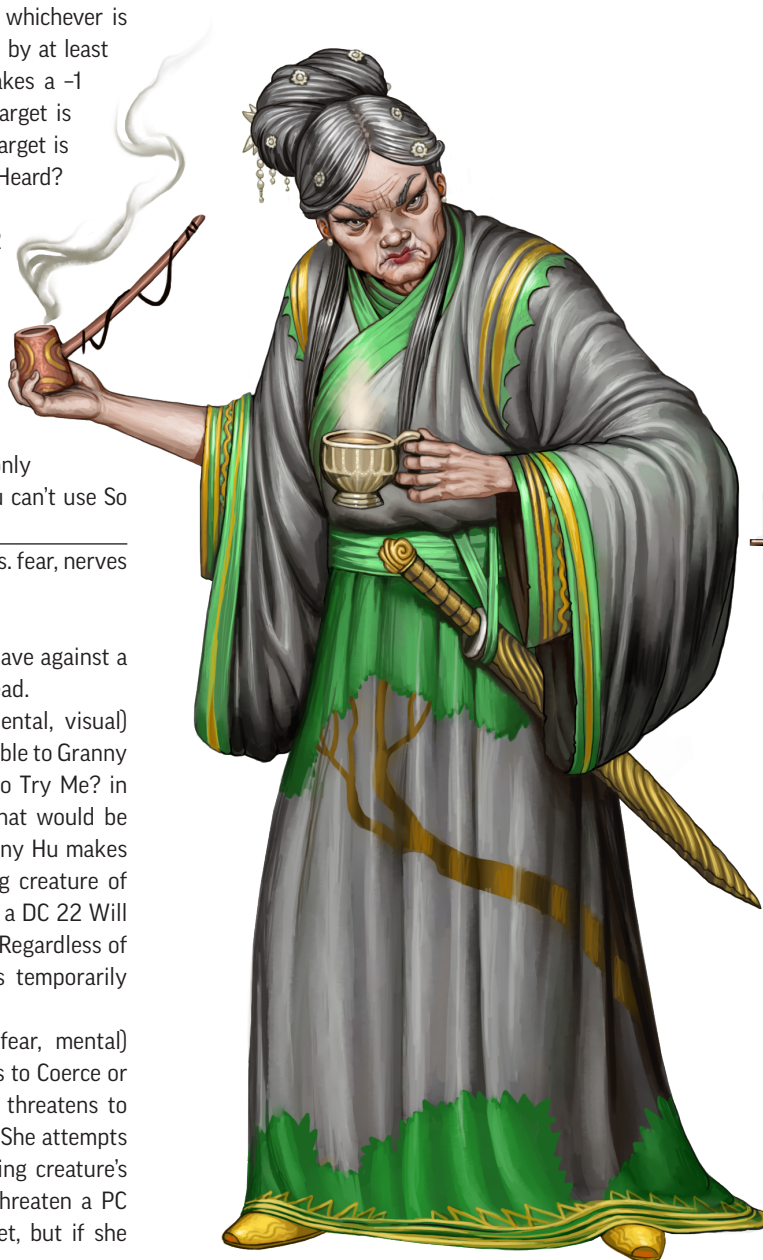
Success As success, but frightened 1.

Failure The creature is unaffected.

Critical Failure The creature is unaffected, gains a +1 circumstance bonus to their Coerce or Demoralize attempt, and is immune to Want to Try Me? for 24 hours.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⬠ longsword +13 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+3 slashing



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Shou “Old” Matsuki

Popular Local Old-Timer

At the tender age of 10, Shou Matsuki was already part of the family carpentry business and participating in the construction of the monastery. A few weeks short of being 99 years old this year, Shou is the only human left in Willowshore who has experienced the village’s entire history in person. He fondly remembers the vibrant days when pilgrims filled the streets, speaks highly of his fellow migrant workers in the decade when they sought work outside the village, and grumbles about Lung Wa’s takeover.

Outwardly, Old Matsuki is a belligerent elderly man who prefers alcohol over tea, thinks the Northridge faction is always up to no good, and laments at the brothel’s transformation into an inn. In private, everyone knows he has a soft spot for the future of Willowshore’s culture, traditions, and people. During the monster invasion, his mind remains sharp and focused as he organizes Southbank to fortify their position, buying precious time for the surviving villagers to figure out how they might take Willowshore back.

Campaign Use

If Shou Matsuki becomes Willowshore’s interim governor, he favors Southbank’s farmers and traditions. This development makes it easier for the PCs to prepare the town’s food stores for the coming winter, but at the cost of not having a head start at shoring up the town’s defenses in the coming months.

Once the town of Willowshore is safe at the start of Chapter 3, the PCs can attempt to interact with Old Matsuki using the Influence subsystem, described on pages 151–153 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. An influence encounter with Old Matsuki is a 3rd-level challenge, and an influence round with him takes 1 hour. If any attempt to Influence him results in a critical failure and the PCs have fewer than 5 Influence Points with him, he uses his Respect your Elders! ability against that PC soon thereafter.

SHOU MATSUKI

NG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Gruff patriarch of the Matsuki carpenters and spokesman for Southbank’s farmers

Perception +12 (+10 visual)

Fort +10, **Will** +12

Discovery DC 14 Farming Lore, DC 16 Society, DC 16 Willowshore Lore, DC 18 Perception (plus see Weakness, below)

Influence Skills DC 14 Willowshore Lore (to understand and share stories of the “good old days”), DC 16 Alcohol Lore (to share opinions about favorite drinks), DC 16 Diplomacy, DC 18 Deception, DC 20 Intimidation

Influence 2 Old Matsuki revises his initial assumption that the PCs have no respect for tradition and admits (if only to himself) they’re likable sorts. The start of this better impression grants the PCs 1 Reputation Point with Southbank.

Influence 5 Old Matsuki grows fond of the PCs and sees in them a bright promise for Willowshore’s future. To celebrate what he hopes will continue to develop into a lasting friendship, he both gifts each PC with a dose of his special medicinal wine and shares the formula for it with them. Matsuki’s medicinal wine is detailed on page 82.

Influence 7 Old Matsuki now fully trusts the PCs and values their input. If the PCs ask him to retract his bid for leadership of Willowshore, he does so with a nod of understanding, trusting the PCs have Willowshore’s best interests in mind.

Resistances Old Matsuki disdains appeals asking him to trust the younger generation. Utilizing such themes in conversation increases the DCs for all Influence attempts with him by 2.

Weaknesses A PC who critically succeeds at a Discovery roll against Old Matsuki notes his appreciation for fine food and drink. If the PCs ask to speak to Matsuki over a dinner they prepare (and succeed at a DC 16 Crafting check to impress him), all Influence attempts made against him for up to 3 hours after the meal concludes gain a +1 item bonus (or a +2 item bonus on a critical success to Craft a fine meal).

Background An experienced carpenter, Old Matsuki’s level-headed nature makes him a natural leader.

Appearance Old Matsuki is a slightly hunched elderly man in a simple work shirt and shorts, wearing wooden sandals.

Personality A calmer person once upon a time, Old Matsuki has become quite vocal in the last decade. He still deeply

loves Willowshore; he just no longer holds back and indulges in complaining as he believes he doesn't have many years left in him.

Penalty Old Matsuki drinks wine during all influence rounds. After every influence round, he must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save—the DC increases by 1 with each additional round. If he fails this save, he passes out, happily drunk, and the influence encounter ends for the day.

SHOU MATSUKI

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE NG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human carpenter

Perception +12; cataracts, wood-grain speaker

Languages Common, Hwan, Minkaian, Tengu

Skills Crafting +13, Diplomacy +12, Nature +12, Society +11, Willowshore Lore +13

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

Items calabash bottle worth 20 gp, +1 *striking staff*, sterling carpenter's artisan tools,

Cataracts Old Matsuki's deteriorating eyesight imposes a -2 circumstance penalty to vision-based Perception checks.

Wood-Grain Speaker Old Matsuki gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception when examining wood items, structures, and trees. He can use Crafting to Identify Magic for items primarily made of wood. This ability isn't affected by Old Matsuki's cataracts.

You Know, They Say... Old Matsuki can use Willowshore Lore in place of Arcana, Medicine, Occultism, or Religion to attempt Recall Knowledge checks with a -2 penalty. He has the effects of the Dubious Knowledge feat for Recall Knowledge checks attempted in this way.

AC 18; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

HP 70

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *staff* +11 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+4 bludgeoning

A Drink for Good Luck ♦♦♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, fortune, mental, occult) **Frequency** once per season; **Requirements** Old Matsuki has a drink in hand; **Effect** Old Matsuki toasts to good fortune, then selects up to six other creatures within 30 feet before he drinks his drink. He, and all creatures that drink before the end of their next turn, become infused with good luck. Once before the end of the current season, each target can reroll a failed saving throw as a free action, taking the second result.

Respect Your Elders! ♦♦♦♦ (auditory, emotion, enchantment, linguistic, mental, occult) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Old Matsuki publicly chastises a character he can see and who's within 30 feet for being disrespectful, not just against him or Willowshore's other elders, but against Willowshore's traditions. Whether or not his reprimands are justified, the target of this tirade must attempt a DC 22 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and immune to Respect Your Elders! for 1 week.

Success The creature feels a momentary bout of shame, becoming stupefied 1 for 1 round.

Failure Feelings of shame and doubt nag at the creature, distracting them enough that they become stupefied 1 for 1 hour.

Wait, Give Me a Moment... ➤ **Trigger** Old Matsuki fails a check to Recall Knowledge; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Old Matsuki realizes his error, then rerolls the triggering check with a +2 circumstance bonus.



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Next Month

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by Joan Hong

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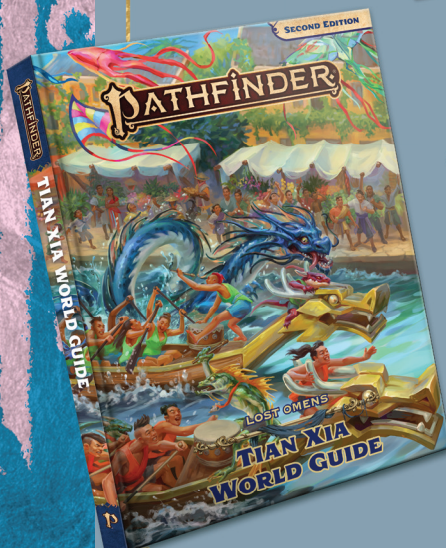
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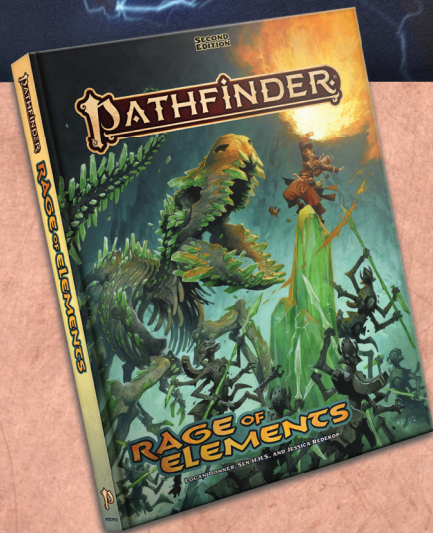


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