

SECOND EDITION

# PATHFINDER®



## Strength of Thousands

ADVENTURE PATH

### SPOKEN ON THE SONG WIND

By Quinn Murphy

# NANTAMBU

1500 FEET

TO FIRE-POT'S FORGE

TO THIEVES' SWAMP

• RETH'S SHACK

• KALEMBI'S MANOR

• AMAECHI'S POTTERY SHOP

• THE CARNIVOROUS GARDENS

• GOANA'S CARVINGS

THE MAGAAMBYA

• TOKKU'S HOME

• ASANDA'S MANOR

• OBA'S WONDROUS CREATURES

• TRADING BAZAAR

TO IBISU'S FIELDS

THE BLACK-CROWNED CRANE •

EVERYWHERE AND BEYOND •



# PATHFINDER

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# Strength of Thousands

ADVENTURE PATH

## Adventure Path 2 of 6

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# SPOKEN ON THE SONG WIND

## Chapter 1: The Learned One Returns.....4

The wise and influential teacher Janatimo returns to the Magaambya with questions about the heroes' recent experiences and successes. He suggests the heroes find out more about what recently brought a group of anadi seekers to the school and discover why a pair of griffons tried to make a meal of them.

## Chapter 2: Service to the City .....18

The heroes are elevated to the rank of conversants, which means they're not only responsible for representing the Magaambya in Nantambu, but also poised to handle its citizens' most unusual problems. Several service missions reveal that the city—and the Magaambya—have some powerful and sinister enemies.

## Chapter 3: The Flooded Mansion ..... 54

The heroes have ascertained that all is not right with Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, and they must enter his flooded manor to learn more. There, they find serpentfolk infiltrators who once sought to steal a Magaambyan secret, but now plot to take over Nantambu's government!

## SANDBOX IN A CITY

Now that the heroes have more responsibilities at the Magaambya, they've been trusted to venture further afield to serve the school's interests. The first two chapters of this adventure provide a number of tasks for the heroes to complete, and they can choose to address these undertakings in any order. More straightforward tasks are set forth in Chapter 1, and more difficult tasks are found in Chapter 2. Your responsibility as GM is to inform the players what the options are; the players should decide where to go and how to approach their duties. This type of "sandbox" structure gives a lot of narrative control to the players, and requires that you be ready to respond to the heroes' actions no matter where they decide to go.

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## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Spoken on the Song Wind" is designed for four characters.

- 4** The heroes begin this adventure at 4th level.
- 5** The heroes should reach 5th level after completing Janatimo's first two tasks in Chapter 1.
- 6** The heroes should reach 6th level while performing services to people of Nantambu in Chapter 2.
- 7** The heroes should reach 7th level before venturing into the flooded manor in Chapter 3.

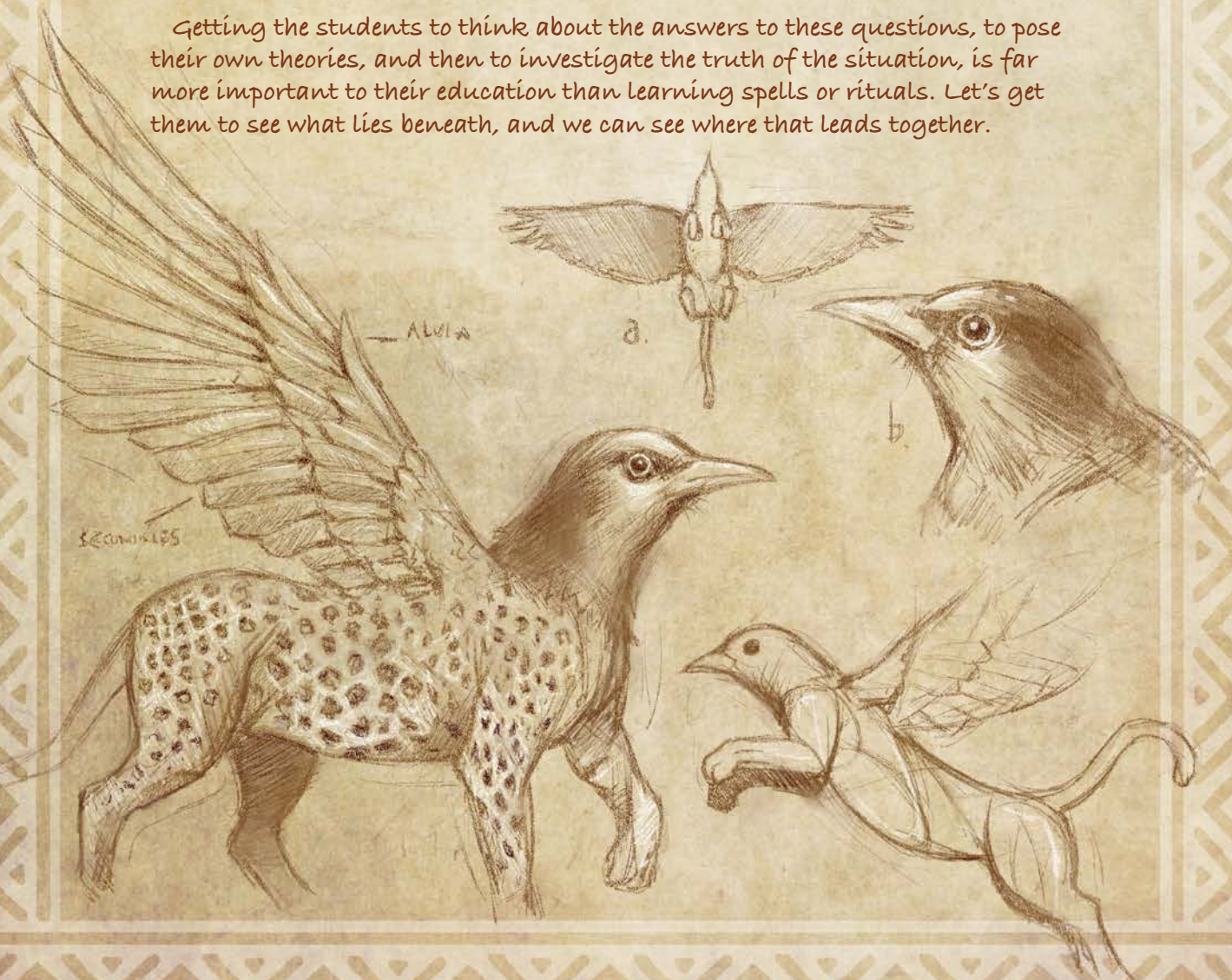
The heroes should reach 8th level by the time they complete the adventure.

Even before I set down my satchel after returning from my travels, Takulu Ot spoke breathlessly about a group of students who fought off insects, confronted an expelled pupil we all thought to be dead, and defeated griffons that had decided to feast upon mysterious anadi arrivals.

My role leading the uzunjati and my love for a good story demanded that I ask Takulu about these students. He supplied me more information over dinner, and my initial interest turned to fascination. I have decided that I shall speak to them and, if they are even partially as interesting as Takulu makes them out to be, offer my hand to help guide their efforts.

The stories I hear about them fascinate me, but what I want to them to know—and deeply understand—is that stories of the past build the events of today. What brought the griffons to the school? Where did they come from? Griffons don't normally prey on anadis; why did they attack those poor students? For that matter, what attracted the anadi students here in the first place? We've welcomed them to the school, but it seems wise to understand their motivations and their goals.

Getting the students to think about the answers to these questions, to pose their own theories, and then to investigate the truth of the situation, is far more important to their education than learning spells or rituals. Let's get them to see what lies beneath, and we can see where that leads together.



# CHAPTER 1: THE LEARNED ONE RETURNS

Two weeks after the final events of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic*, the heroes learn that the head of the Uzunjati branch, **Janatimo** (CG male half-elf storyteller 12), has returned to the Magaambya. Janatimo is one of the five learned ones, scholars who lead each of the Magaambya's branches separately. Heroes who have Uzunjati as their primary branch hear about his return first; if there aren't any, Noxolo and Okoro Obiyo eventually alert everyone in the Spire Dormitory. Janatimo is kind, insightful, and entertaining, three important qualities that make any teacher popular.

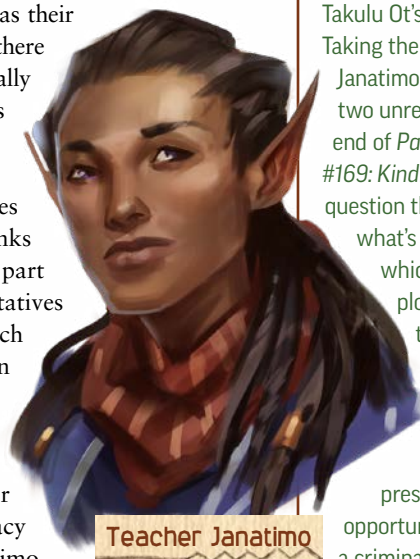
Janatimo has heard about the heroes' victories and wants to speak with them himself. He thinks that, with proper guidance, the heroes can be part of the next generation of teachers and representatives that the Magaambya needs. He sends each hero a note to meet him at his office in an unassuming building on the northeast edge of the canal-ringed campus. It's easy for the heroes to ask around to learn who Janatimo is, but a hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Society or Magaambya Lore check, or a DC 15 Diplomacy check to Gather Information, learns that Janatimo has an eye for talent, and those he takes under his wing tend to become prominent figures in their own right.

When the heroes arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

The furnishings in Teacher Janatimo's office are simple, but the desks and shelves contain many objects and curios, each of which seems as though it has an interesting story to tell. In the center of all these items, sits Janatimo himself, Learned One and head of the Uzunjati. He stands from his desk and extends his arms wide in greeting.

"Ah, thank you for taking the time to visit with me. Please, have a seat. I am sure there are some interesting tales we can share."

Janatimo wants to talk to the heroes about their exploits at the Magaambya thus far. He prompts them for specifics and interesting moments, then brings focus to the new anadis' arrival and the griffon attack. He asks them to explain what happened in detail. If the heroes mention Teacher Ot's aid, Janatimo nods with a smile and observes that the heroes remained in good hands with him.



Teacher Janatimo

## CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, Teacher Janatimo returns from abroad. He's interested in the heroes, based largely on Takulu Ot's reports of their successes. Taking the heroes under his wing, Janatimo asks them to investigate two unresolved mysteries from the end of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic*. First, they must question the anadi students about what's drawn them to the school, which uncovers a serpentfolk plot and reveals further clues the heroes can't yet answer. Second, they must investigate a rare-animal shop where the griffons were once caged. This site presents several dangers and opportunities to collect hints about a criminal organization that the heroes will face in Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows.

- *animal staff*
- *crown of the companion*
- *feather step stone*
- *hunting spider venom*
- *lesser elixir of life*
- *moderate cheetah's elixir*
- *rhino hide brooch*
- *ring of acid resistance*
- *sneaky key*
- *striking rune*
- *warcaller's chime of destruction*

SPOKEN  
ON THE  
SONG  
WIND

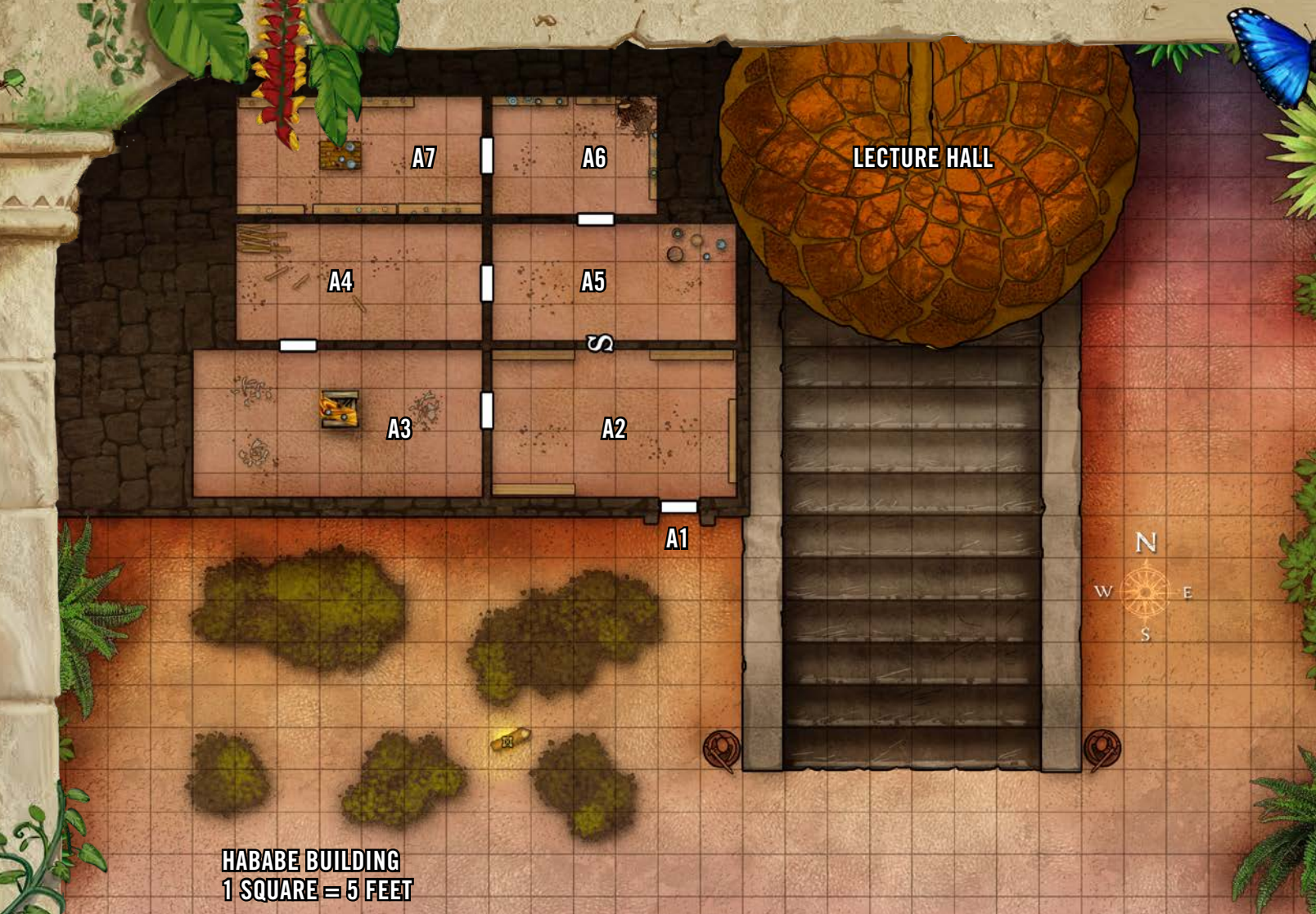
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**HABABE BUILDING**  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

After discussing both topics, Janatimo pauses and redirects the conversation. He asks the heroes to speculate on theories regarding what happened. He's not looking for answers—as he knows that neither he nor the students currently have any—nor does he want a rehashing of facts. He seeks plausible theories, and considers none too outlandish for this conversation.

Janatimo is most interested in the rigor of the heroes' thinking and their ability to invent plausible connections. He asks the following four questions. For each, he chooses one hero to provide a realistic answer and another hero to provide an intentionally outlandish answer. He makes sure to pose an inquiry to each hero so that they all answer at least one question, as he wants to make sure that every voice is heard.

Regardless of the specific theory a hero advances, they can attempt a skill check at the listed DC to impress Janatimo with their reasoning. Use the skill most applicable for the hero's answer; if the hero suggests an overtly magical effect, Arcana or Occultism might be the most applicable skill, but if a hero suggests a natural connection, Nature or Survival might be better. If the character attempts to Lie their

way out of a question, the Deception check uses the same DC but takes a –2 circumstance penalty, as Janatimo has a keen eye for when students haven't studied. The heroes collectively earn Impression Points for well-presented answers. A successful check grants 1 Impression Point, a critical success gives 2 Impression Points, and a critical failure removes an Impression Point (to a minimum of 0).

**“What drew the griffons to the Magaambya?”** Griffon behaviors tend to be straightforward, so realistic answers have a DC of 14 and outlandish answers have a DC of 24.

**“Why were the griffons so hostile?”** Realistic answers have a DC of 18 and outlandish answers have a DC of 20.

**“What brought the anadis here, to the heart of a city with which they appear wholly unfamiliar?”** Much remains mysterious regarding the arrival of the anadi students, so realistic answers have a DC of 20 and outlandish answers have a DC of 18.

**“What else might the anadis want, besides to study? That is, what might make them feel more like they belong here?”** Realistic answers have a DC of 18 and

outlandish answers have a DC of 20. Janatimo believes it to be friendship, acceptance, or something similar; a hero who responds along these lines earns a bonus Impression Point in addition to any the check result generates.

Janatimo nods with each answer, thanking the heroes for sharing their analysis once the conversation is over.

**Digging Deeper:** Whether or not the heroes impress Janatimo, he feels they should spend time looking into recent matters at the Magaambya to discover the truth. Janatimo's hunches tell him that these events are no mere coincidences, and he wants the heroes to confirm these hunches. In the process, he believes the heroes will further develop their knowledge and skills as students.

Janatimo asks the heroes to find out more about what brought the anadi students to the school, and where the griffons came from. He asks them to report to him on these matters over the school year; it doesn't matter which they tackle first. He emphasizes that coursework is a priority above all else. There's no rush, so the heroes are free to investigate around their classwork, as described in the Life in the Academy article starting on page 60 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic*.

**Treasure:** For taking the time to meet with him, Janatimo gives the heroes one of the curios in his office: a *crown of the companion* (page 75). He thinks it will assist the heroes with the investigations he's asked them to conduct. He's in no hurry to get it back, as he knows its story will grow the longer they keep it.

**XP Award:** If the heroes earn at least 3 Impression Points, award them 80 XP. If they earn at least 6 Impression Points, increase this award to 120 XP.

## Hababe Building

For the heroes to locate the anadi students, they should either ask their fellow student (and likely friend) Strands-of-Glowing-Dawn Tzeniwe or succeed at a DC 17 Diplomacy check to Gather Information about them. In either case, the heroes learn that the anadi students haven't made many friends, as they tend to unsettle other classmates with their preference for their natural humanoid spider forms. The heroes' anadi classmates often spend evenings in front of the Hababe Building (map on page 6), a little-used structure that contains storerooms, lecture halls, and spare offices. There, the students discuss arcane theories well past dark.

## A1. HABABE BUILDING EXTERIOR

The lecture hall is dark for the evening, but the front steps are illuminated by a lantern on a log between several soft clumps of brush. The stairs up to the lecture hall are flanked by two clay statues of stout masked figures holding swords. Although the lecture hall entrance atop the stairs is a grand double door, it's not the building's only visible entrance: a smaller door behind the stairs is just illuminated by the lantern's light.

The main and upper floors of the Hababe Building hold nothing of interest. The building sees some activity during the day, but there's no one in it now.

The statues are an old defense mechanism, rendered inert so long ago that no one on the campus remembers they were once animated. Salathiss found a way to reactivate the western statue to kill or drive off any anadis who spend too much time near the storeroom door.

The teak door is scratched and old. Its brass lock is corroded and obviously inoperable, but the door doesn't open easily; the serpentfolk boarded it closed from the inside. The door requires a successful DC 17 Athletics check to Force Open, or the heroes can pry open the wood piece by piece given about an hour of work. Before they can give much attention to the door, however, they have to deal with its guardian, as described in the Guardian Animates section on page 8.

## Questioning the Anadi Students

The anadi students are named Rainbows-Reflected-Upon-Gossamer-Strands (or simply "Goss"), Barest-Threads-Billowing Maztachia, and Droplets-Hanging-Gently Savanakin. Unlike Tzeniwe, these anadis are quite unfamiliar with non-anadi society and structures. They feel exceptionally out of place at the Magaambya but also feel an undeniable psychic pull to be at the school. Although it is uncomfortable, the Magaambya feels like the right place for them to be, so they are making the best of it. The fact that they've been admitted as students and are able to develop their inherent magical powers goes a long way to making them feel at home, and many teachers and students go out of their way to make the anadis feel welcome.

The anadis are currently deeply involved in an esoteric debate about the intricate webs of fate and



Goss

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causality. A hero can interrupt the anadi students to question them with a successful DC 19 Diplomacy or Intimidation check, or can join the debate and steer it to a conclusion with a successful DC 15 check using Arcana, Society, or another skill that seems appropriate. Waiting them out is a test of patience, as the anadi students can debate with one another for hours. Of course, they cease their debate immediately if the terra-cotta soldier (see below) animates.

When the debate is over or interrupted, the heroes can talk to the students. The following are questions the heroes might ask.

**Why did you come to the Magaambya?** “We... are not sure. We felt the call of magic, and knew this was the place that had the most to teach us about it.”

**Where did you come from?** “We live deep in the jungle. We wanted to see more of the world, and so came to Nantambu. We had only just arrived, and only just learned of the Magaambya, when we felt the call pulling us here. We hadn’t seen more than a handful of other humanoids until we came, and here there are so, so many!”

**How long do you intend to stay?** “We will stay as long as we are allowed to keep learning.”

**Why do you meet here so often?** “This storeroom calls to us at times. We spend a lot of time discussing what might be there, but we haven’t gone in. We sometimes hear noises inside, and that gives us caution.”

**Why did those griffons attack you?** “We couldn’t say. It was the most terrifying moment of our lives, and we are grateful you were there. We owe you a great debt. We have seen griffons before, but not those griffons—they are very distinctive in their look, so perhaps it’s not difficult to find out where they came from.”

If the heroes don’t bring it up, the anadis bring up the storeroom anyway. They tried to tell faculty members about the strange feelings and occasional noises, but no one has taken an interest until the heroes did just now. The anadi students are too cautious to look themselves.

### Investigating the Storeroom

Heroes who ask around campus about the storeroom learn that it used to hold talismans and alchemical reagents, but a newer storeroom was built in a more central location a few years ago, making this one obsolete. It’s part of the building’s foundation, though, and the classrooms and offices in the building are still used occasionally, so it’s just left empty and unused.

Heroes who observe the storeroom sometimes hear a noise from inside at different times of the afternoon and late at night, but see no one enter or exit. Salathiss and his minions use secret tunnels to enter and exit the storeroom to maintain the illusion of it being empty.

## THE GUARDIAN ANIMATES

## MODERATE 4

Whenever a creature approaches the storeroom door, the statue grinds to life, shaking off years of dust and raising its sword and shield.

**Creature:** Once activated, the statue attacks everyone in the area until it’s destroyed. If no enemies are within 60 feet, it returns to its spot next to the stairs, but reanimates when anyone else approaches the door.

## TERRA-COTTA SOLDIER

## CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 263

**Initiative** Perception +14

**Anadi Aid:** The anadi students flee from the statue as it animates, keeping well away but remaining in the area to provide the heroes encouragement and advice (if necessary, use the anadi seeker statistics on page 78 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #169). A hero who listens realizes the advice contains sound suggestions on how to disrupt the statue’s animating force; the heroes can use the following action in this encounter.

### HEED ANADI ADVICE

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC

You interpret the anadis’ suggestions on how to best assail the terra-cotta soldier’s animating magic. Attempt a DC 19 Arcana or Occultism check, or a DC 24 Perception check.

**Critical Success** As success, but the status bonus is +2.

**Success** You gain a +1 status bonus to your attack rolls against the terra-cotta soldier until the end of your turn.

**Critical Failure** You can’t understand the students’ advice, and the attention you’re paying them causes you to become flat-footed until the start of your next turn.

**Investigating the Statue:** The old statue’s sudden animation might puzzle the heroes; certainly, the anadis have seen it every night for the last several nights and it hasn’t animated before. Heroes who Investigate the statue and succeed at a DC 19 Arcana or Crafting check see that the statue was imbued with arcane energy within the past day. On a critical success, the heroes realize that the statue was once animated long ago, and the recent energy merely reactivated its former defense protocols.

**Aftermath:** The anadi students thank the heroes for their efforts after the battle. They appear dismayed that trouble seems to be following them: first the griffons, and now the statue. They appreciate that the heroes are, once again, on hand to save them.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for obtaining information from the anadi students and an additional 30 XP if any hero Heeds Anadi Advice successfully.

## A2. SUPPLY DELIVERY ROOM

Dust and cobwebs coat empty shelves and cabinets. The hard dirt floor is stained with paint and the powder of long-inert reagents.

The shelves and cabinets here were used simply to prepare goods for delivery elsewhere. The serpentfolk don't use this room either, as they use tunnels that lead directly into area **A3**. They barred the door leading outside, set a trap on the door to area **A3**, and have left this room unattended ever since.

The serpentfolk don't realize there's a secret door on the north wall leading to area **A5**. One of the cabinets pivots outward along with a section of the wall when a shelf within it is tilted up. A hero who Searches this room discovers it with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

**Trap:** The serpentfolk trap produces a loud hissing noise. If the heroes bypass this ward and open the door silently, the creatures in area **A3** are caught off guard.

### SERPENT WARD


### HAZARD 7

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRAP

**Stealth** DC 25 (expert)

**Description** Illusionary snakes erupt from the trapped door, inflicting a venomous curse on intruders.

**Disable** DC 26 Thievery (expert) or DC 24 Occultism (expert) to deactivate the magical trigger

**Curse the Intruders**  (curse, illusion, occult) **Trigger** The trapped door is opened other than by a serpentfolk;

**Effect** Hissing, illusionary snakes leap from the door. Each living creature within 30 feet is subjected to the curse of potent poison. If a living creature opened the door, that creature must roll its saving throw against the curse twice and take the worse result (this is a misfortune effect).

### CURSE OF POTENT POISON

### CURSE 5

UNCOMMON CURSE MAGICAL

This curse magically speeds poison through your body.

**Saving Throw** DC 20 Will; **Effect** You take a -1 status penalty to Fortitude saves and you gain weakness 3 to poison (if you already have weakness to poison, increase it by 3). The curse remains until removed by *remove curse* or similar magic.

## A3. TRASH ROOM

## MODERATE 4

The room is poorly illuminated by a flickering lantern. Multiple piles of trash dot the room. A makeshift table made of crates and covered by a large cloth bears a few scattered coins.

## FEWER ANADIS

The three anadis who came to the Magaambya at the end of the last adventure are Goss, Maztachia, and Savanakin. Because the griffons targeted them with their attacks, one or two of these anadis may not have survived. In addition to their strange sense of displacement and ignorance of the mysterious effect that drew them to the Magaambya, you should also emphasize the anadi students' grief if they've lost any such companions.



Despite the heaps of broken shelves, expired supplies, and other trash, this room is obviously occupied more regularly than area **A2**.

Two young "humans" dressed in dark blue robes gamble at the table when the heroes arrive. One of them is short with a slight sneer to his smile. He calls himself Oyo. His compatriot, who calls herself Mtembe, is thin and tall, with a fierce, scowling countenance. The gamblers are both serpentfolk Coil spies posing as students. Their job is to serve as lookouts and convince anyone who comes by that the storeroom is nothing but a hideout for bored students. If the heroes catch them off guard, the "students" are defensive and ill-prepared to maintain their ruse; they take a -2 circumstance penalty to Deception checks, and their Deception DCs are reduced by 2.

Underneath one of the trash piles is a locked trap door. The cramped passage beneath it leads to a dense knot of shrubbery elsewhere on campus. Salathiss has the only key, as he wants to control who comes and goes this way. Unlocking the trap door requires three successful DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or a successful DC 23 Athletics check to Force it Open.

**Talking to Oyo and Mtembe:** The pair try to turn the heroes away with subterfuge and careful lies. Salathiss places a huge importance on infiltration over violence, and he expects the spies to weave a convincing story. They know they will be punished harshly if they fail.

Oyo and Mtembe discuss the following topics to establish their cover, but their stories aren't airtight as they haven't spent much time catching up with current events. The heroes can notice subtle discrepancies in their stories by succeeding at the indicated skill checks.

**They Hate Attending Classes:** "The teachers are so boring. They always teach the same things, over and over!" A hero who succeeds at a DC 19 Society or Magaambya Lore (or similar Lore) check catches that the pair mention Teacher Orwallu and Teacher Haarou, two instructors who don't teach at the Magaambya anymore.

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*They Like to Experiment Here on Their Own:* “We come here to learn better stuff than what our teachers can show us.” A hero who succeeds at a DC 19 Arcana or Nature check reveals that nothing about the room indicates that any experiments take place here.

*The Other Storerooms are Unsafe and Contain Only Junk:* “We tried going in the other rooms, but there’s nothing but trash there, trust us.” A hero who succeeds at a DC 19 Crafting check evaluates the debris here and realizes that many such supplies would withstand the test of time; that is, goods deeper in the storeroom are likely to be useful and maybe even valuable.

*The Ward is One of Their Experiments:* “It’s a great example of what self-study can produce.” Oyo only brings this up if the heroes triggered the ward, or if they otherwise bring it up. A hero who succeeds at a DC 17 Occultism or Nature check realizes that such a complex ward is beyond what students at the Magaambya should be able to produce.

*They Have a Secret Way In:* “It wouldn’t be a good place to hide out and relax if everyone could get in here so easily, right?” Mtembe only brings this up if the heroes ask how they got into this room when there’s no evidence they passed through the adjacent supply delivery room. If the heroes press on this point, Mtembe moves aside the trash to show them the trap door. The Coil spies can’t open the door and pretend to have lost the key if the heroes want them to open it.

*They are Surly and Disagreeable:* “That doesn’t seem like anything we should care about, and you should go bother someone else with it.” If the heroes bring up other topics, the serpentfolk are generally dismissive and rude, as they feel interrupted students would be. A hero who succeeds at a Perception check to Sense Motive against the Coil spies’ Deception DC indicates that something is wrong.

If the heroes discover at least two discrepancies in the Coil spies’ stories,

the pair of serpentfolk drop their disguise and attack. If the heroes seem content with Oyo’s and Mtembe’s answers but intent on exploring anyway, the pair pretends to agree with them. Salathiss has told the spies he’ll know if the door to the talisman room (area A4) is opened; this is a complete lie, but the Coil spies believe they’ll be in trouble if that door is opened. They attack if anyone steps up to that door. Note that if the heroes open the door, they might end up fighting the wood golem and the Coil spies at the same time—a difficult fight!

**Creatures:** The Coil spies use Sneak Attack when possible, trying to poison each hero with their short swords or fangs. Fearful of Salathiss’s retribution, they fight until killed or incapacitated.

### COIL SPY (2)

### CREATURE 4

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 238

**Initiative** Perception +10

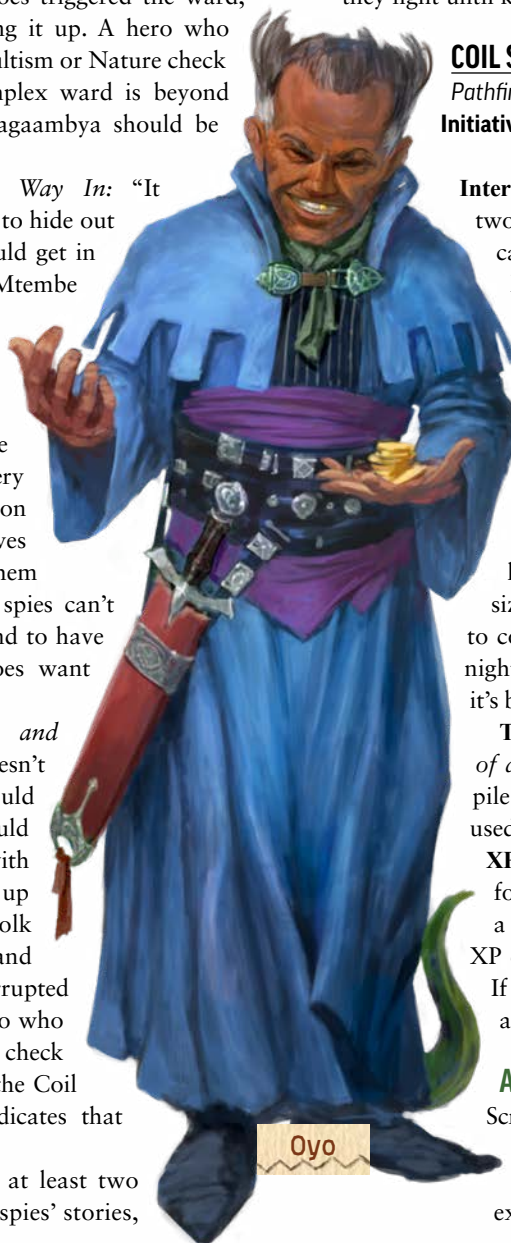
**Interrogating the Serpentfolk:** If the two serpentfolk are uncovered and captured, they claim to know very little, and they’re basically speaking the truth. Their leader (whom they name as Salathiss and describe by appearance only if a hero succeeds at a DC 21 Intimidation check) told them to pretend to be students and deter any trespassers. They know that Salathiss is hiding in Nantambu with other serpentfolk, but they don’t know where and they don’t know the size of Salathiss’s retinue. Salathiss used to come into the storage room every few nights on an errand he didn’t discuss, but it’s been a few days since they’ve seen him.

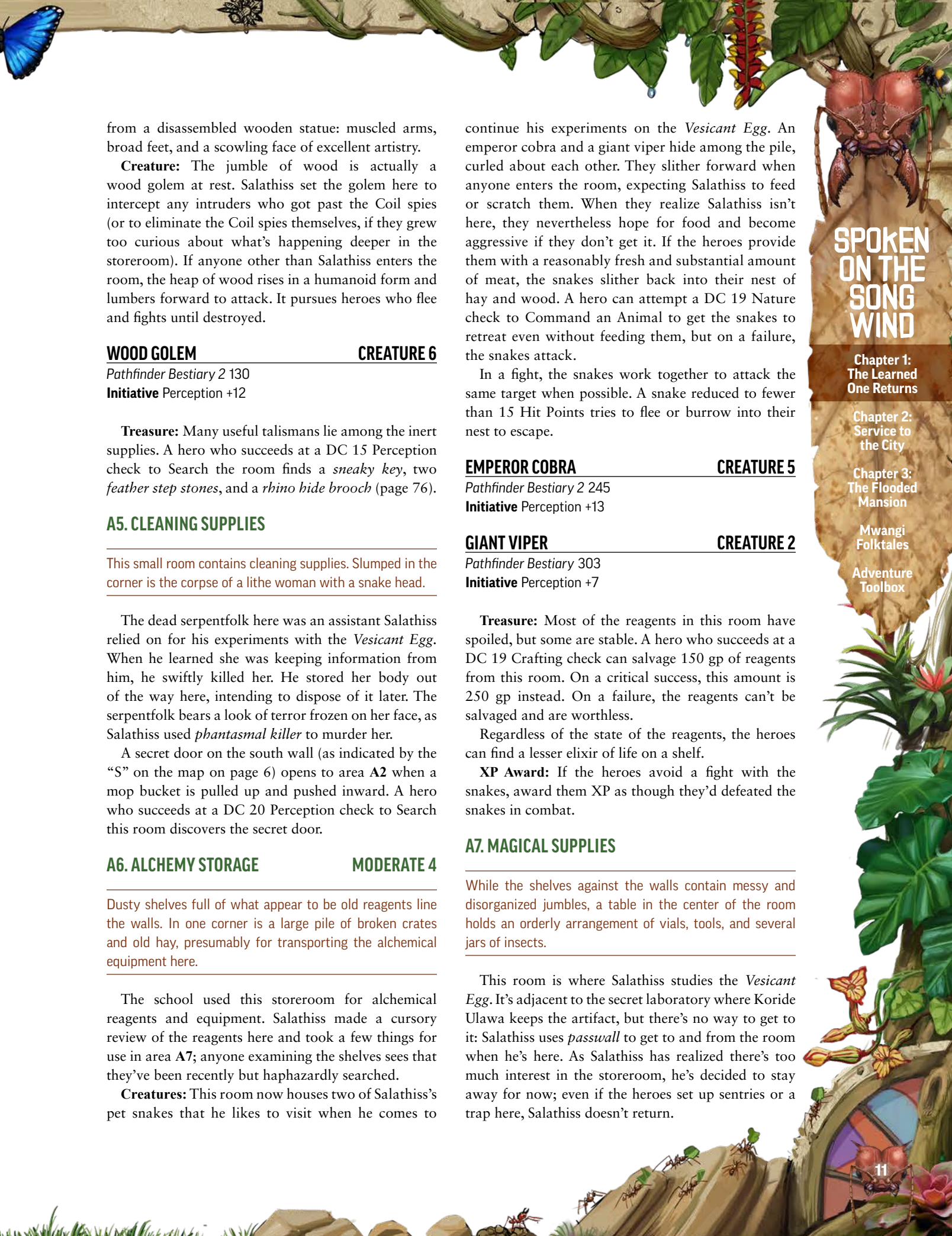
**Treasure:** A pilfered *warcaller’s chime of destruction* (page 77) sits in the trash pile above the trap door. The serpentfolk used it to force their way into this area.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for each discrepancy they uncover (to a maximum of 90 XP), in addition to XP earned from defeating the Coil spies. If they get Salathiss’s name, award them an additional 30 XP.

### A4. TALISMAN ROOM MODERATE 4

Scraps of wood, feathers, and bones litter the floor and the shelves of this room. Atop a heap of wood are a few exquisitely carved pieces, as though





from a disassembled wooden statue: muscled arms, broad feet, and a scowling face of excellent artistry.

**Creature:** The jumble of wood is actually a wood golem at rest. Salathiss set the golem here to intercept any intruders who got past the Coil spies (or to eliminate the Coil spies themselves, if they grew too curious about what's happening deeper in the storeroom). If anyone other than Salathiss enters the room, the heap of wood rises in a humanoid form and lumbers forward to attack. It pursues heroes who flee and fights until destroyed.

## WOOD GOLEM

## CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 130

**Initiative** Perception +12

**Treasure:** Many useful talismans lie among the inert supplies. A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check to Search the room finds a *sneaky key*, two *feather step stones*, and a *rhino hide brooch* (page 76).

## A5. CLEANING SUPPLIES

This small room contains cleaning supplies. Slumped in the corner is the corpse of a lithe woman with a snake head.

The dead serpentfolk here was an assistant Salathiss relied on for his experiments with the *Vesicant Egg*. When he learned she was keeping information from him, he swiftly killed her. He stored her body out of the way here, intending to dispose of it later. The serpentfolk bears a look of terror frozen on her face, as Salathiss used *phantasmal killer* to murder her.

A secret door on the south wall (as indicated by the "S" on the map on page 6) opens to area A2 when a mop bucket is pulled up and pushed inward. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check to Search this room discovers the secret door.

## A6. ALCHEMY STORAGE

## MODERATE 4

Dusty shelves full of what appear to be old reagents line the walls. In one corner is a large pile of broken crates and old hay, presumably for transporting the alchemical equipment here.

The school used this storeroom for alchemical reagents and equipment. Salathiss made a cursory review of the reagents here and took a few things for use in area A7; anyone examining the shelves sees that they've been recently but haphazardly searched.

**Creatures:** This room now houses two of Salathiss's pet snakes that he likes to visit when he comes to

continue his experiments on the *Vesicant Egg*. An emperor cobra and a giant viper hide among the pile, curled about each other. They slither forward when anyone enters the room, expecting Salathiss to feed or scratch them. When they realize Salathiss isn't here, they nevertheless hope for food and become aggressive if they don't get it. If the heroes provide them with a reasonably fresh and substantial amount of meat, the snakes slither back into their nest of hay and wood. A hero can attempt a DC 19 Nature check to Command an Animal to get the snakes to retreat even without feeding them, but on a failure, the snakes attack.

In a fight, the snakes work together to attack the same target when possible. A snake reduced to fewer than 15 Hit Points tries to flee or burrow into their nest to escape.

## EMPEROR COBRA

## CREATURE 5

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 245

**Initiative** Perception +13

## GIANT VIPER

## CREATURE 2

*Pathfinder Bestiary 303*

**Initiative** Perception +7

**Treasure:** Most of the reagents in this room have spoiled, but some are stable. A hero who succeeds at a DC 19 Crafting check can salvage 150 gp of reagents from this room. On a critical success, this amount is 250 gp instead. On a failure, the reagents can't be salvaged and are worthless.

Regardless of the state of the reagents, the heroes can find a lesser elixir of life on a shelf.

**XP Award:** If the heroes avoid a fight with the snakes, award them XP as though they'd defeated the snakes in combat.

## A7. MAGICAL SUPPLIES

While the shelves against the walls contain messy and disorganized jumbles, a table in the center of the room holds an orderly arrangement of vials, tools, and several jars of insects.

This room is where Salathiss studies the *Vesicant Egg*. It's adjacent to the secret laboratory where Koride Ulawa keeps the artifact, but there's no way to get to it: Salathiss uses *passwall* to get to and from the room when he's here. As Salathiss has realized there's too much interest in the storeroom, he's decided to stay away for now; even if the heroes set up sentries or a trap here, Salathiss doesn't return.

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Two vials contain a weak acid with a faint aura of transmutation magic. A hero who succeeds at a DC 21 Nature check identifies it as similar to formic acid, which is found naturally in ants and some bees. A clay jug holds the remains of some solvent at the bottom; a hero who succeeds at a DC 21 Crafting check identifies it as a powerful solvent used to neutralize acids, and that it's mostly been used to weaken the formic acid in the other vials. This is the solvent the Coil spies obtained from a local alchemist named Fire-Pot Ubanu.

The tools are all fine sculpting equipment and small drills. A hero who succeeds at a DC 17 Crafting check identifies them as tools used for prodding or scraping something extremely hard, like stone. There are two jars of flies and two jars of grasshoppers, with tools and forceps for examining each. All the insects are agitated and aggressive, but none pose the heroes any harm. The insects are obviously here for experimentation, but the heroes can't deduce what kind (Salathiss uses them to try to gauge the *Vesicant Egg's* ability to control insects).

Anyone examining the table realizes the experiments that take place here all focus on the study of a particular item or items that aren't here. Without knowing what was being studied, it's impossible to ascertain the specific nature of the research.

**Treasure:** A ring of acid resistance rests on the table, which Salathiss uses to handle the caustic secretions of the *Vesicant Egg*. In addition, a jumble of magical supplies on a shelf includes a striking rune on a runestone. Salathiss knows it's there but hasn't yet bothered to take it.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for identifying the formic acid, and 30 XP for identifying the purpose of the tools. The heroes can't yet piece together what these are for, but they're rewarded for finding more clues to the puzzle.

## FOLLOWING UP

When the heroes tell the anadi students that they've cleared out the storerooms, the anadis are elated and resolve to move into the storerooms as soon as they can get permission. They're fascinated with the experimentation table in area A7 and investigate its purpose in more detail on their own. If the heroes haven't figured out that someone was studying a

now-missing substance that produced strong formic acid in the area, the anadis report that idea to them after a few days of their own research.

## Investigating the Griffons

Heroes looking into the origins of the griffons that attacked the anadi students have to investigate Nantambu to acquire the necessary clues.

Any hero who's trained in Nature knows that griffons don't approach urban areas unless they've been acclimated to humanoids. Heroes trained in Society know that many people in Nantambu capture and domesticate animals for use as guards, mounts, or pets. Griffons are exceedingly difficult to capture and harder to domesticate.

This difficulty, combined with the distinct appearance of the griffons that attacked the anadis, means finding the right place is simply a matter of narrowing down the options.

The heroes can ask around the city and find the griffons' former owner, animal trader Oba Eze, in six days. A successful DC 19 Diplomacy check to Gather Information reduces that time to four days; on a critical success, it takes only two days. Other heroes can Aid this check to Gather Information with DC 15 Diplomacy, Nature, or Society checks. Feel free to reduce this time further if the heroes have inventive means of finding out where the griffons originated.


At the end of their search, the heroes locate Oba's Wondrous Creatures, a shop on the south edge of Nantambu that trades in hard-to-find animals.

## OBA'S WONDROUS CREATURES

**Oba Eze** (N female human animal vendor 6) has operated Oba's Wondrous Creatures for years. The proprietor has made good profits from trading (or capturing) and training animals that are rare in settlements. Oba takes immense pride in her collection and expects the highest price for her extraordinary creatures. Her biggest problem is that the prices she expects are too much for most interested buyers to pay, leaving her to feed and house her creatures for weeks or months at a time. On top of that stress, her prized griffons that she spent so much effort to acquire and train were recently slain by Magaambya students.

Oba has never liked the magic school; she's of the opinion that Magaambyans think of themselves as better than ordinary folk just because they can rely on





magic to do all their hard work. She's grown to really despise the school now that it's cost her two valuable animals. (Even if the heroes didn't kill the griffons in the last adventure, they've proven themselves a danger, and Oba hasn't gotten them back.)

When the heroes arrive at the store, Oba knows them from reputation as the Magaambya students who have damaged her business. When the students arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

---

Inside Oba's Wondrous Creatures, an elegantly styled woman sits behind a desk, swiftly counting coins and writing notes in a ledger. A few cages contain rare birds and lizards. The woman looks up, and her look of concentration turns into a scowl.

"You! Why would you harm such beautiful, expensive, majestic, and expensive creatures?"

---

Oba begins a litany of complaints about the heroes, the Magaambya, and her business. Although she knows only what an ordinary citizen of Nantambu might know about the heroes or the school, she's not adverse to inventing further faults. Oba blames the heroes for her current woes and insists they compensate her for the damage they've done. She's unwilling to talk to them until they address her concerns and accusations. A hero who succeeds at a DC 19 Diplomacy or Deception check calms Oba down, and offering a heartfelt apology reduces this DC to 15. On a failed check, or upon any attempt to use Intimidation against the hot-tempered woman, she ushers the heroes out and insists they'll have to come back some other day.

Even if the heroes can calm Oba down, she remains cold to them. She can confirm that both griffons got loose the morning of the attack. This is unusual because she housed the griffons in separate, albeit adjacent, cages. She has a good suspicion as to why the griffons attacked the anadi students; Oba fed them spiders by the sackful because they considered the arachnids a treat that kept them calm. Once the griffons escaped, they probably fixated on the anadis—who assumed their hybrid forms rather than adopting a humanoid guise—as the most spiderlike food available. Oba is reluctant to share this theory, as she thinks it puts some of the blame for the attack on her, but she shares it with heroes who critically succeed at the Diplomacy or Deception check to calm her down, as well as with heroes who prove themselves likeable during their subsequent conversation by succeeding at a DC 17 Diplomacy check.

Regardless of the result of their interaction with her, Oba offers to let the heroes investigate the griffon cages for clues. She's been so distraught by

the loss of her prized beasts that she hasn't been to their cages since they got free. In fact, she admits that she's hardly been able to rouse herself to tend to her animals at all.

What Oba doesn't tell the heroes—yet—is that she suspects the gripli crime boss nicknamed Froglegs let the griffons loose. Froglegs offered to buy the griffons at a third of Oba's asking price. Not knowing who the gripli criminal was, Oba laughed in her face. It wasn't until later that a friend told Oba who Froglegs was, just how dangerous an enemy she can be, and how swiftly those who inform on the crime boss end up dead or missing. She doesn't really expect the heroes to find anything on their own, but if letting them look around keeps them from digging further, she's willing to do it. Oba tells the heroes not to further damage her wonderful and expensive creatures and sends them to the lot behind her shop. She won't go with them, as she's got a lot of accounting to finish.

## THE ANIMAL LOT

Oba keeps her animals in large, hemispherical metal cages in an overgrown lot behind her shop. Outbuildings made of wood and canvas store supplies, harnesses, food, and other requirements. Several tall trees provide shade and fruit to feed animals that will eat it. A high metal fence surrounds the lot to keep intruders out, but the fence did nothing to impede Froglegs's bandits.

The bandits freed the griffons several days ago, but Froglegs decided that Oba hasn't been taught enough of a lesson. Froglegs recently sent a gang into the animal lot again, this time to let out as many of the dangerous animals as possible. The bandits hope the freed animals will injure or even kill her.

The map of Oba's lot is on page 14. The lot is larger than this area, but there isn't much of interest between the area depicted on the map and the fence.

## B1. ENTRANCE

---

A path leads about thirty feet past the shop, through a sturdy gate, and into an expansive, fenced area filled with trees, cages, and sheds. A few wide paths lead through the area, and the smell of animals is unmistakable. A large hemispherical cage to the north stands empty. Boards have been pulled away from a nearby shed. From the east come the sounds of several animals squawking.

---

The empty cage is for Oba's tigers (area B2). If the heroes return right away to explain that something seems wrong, Oba dismisses their concerns as ignorance of the animal trade.



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**THE ANIMAL LOT**  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

## B2. TIGER CAGE

## MODERATE 4

The large open cage bears a wooden sign reading, "Tigers: 3." A wooden shed to the southwest has several boards torn from it, and bits of chewed leather harnesses and collars are strewn about. A canvas tent to the northwest is torn open, with several large chunks of meat spilling from it. The meat reeks of rot.

Froglegs's bandits slashed the tent containing meat for the tigers, and then let the tigers out. Tired of eating the cheap meat that's already started to spoil, the tigers stalk the animal lot looking for fresher fare. One of the tigers got too close to the basilisk cage (area B5) and was petrified. The other two remain near their cage. One of them savaged the shed to gnaw upon the harnesses there and left its chew toys strewn about on the ground.

The lock on the tiger cage still hangs open. The bandits picked the lock and left it here. A hero who looks over the lock and succeeds at a DC 19 Thievery check realizes someone picked the lock; on a critical success, they learn it was within the past day.

A hero who looks over the tent and the spilled meat might find some additional clues. First, a successful DC 17 Nature or Survival check reveals that the meat was already starting to rot while in the tent thanks to its inferior quality. Being left in the sun has only hastened its spoilage. Second, a hero who succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check notes that the canvas wasn't torn by animal claws; someone cut it with several knife strokes. On a critical success, the hero realizes this was done within the past day.

**Creatures:** Before the heroes can get too far with their investigation, the tigers decide to make a meal of them. They lurk in the brush nearby and pounce, using their Stealth for initiative.

## TIGERS (2)

## CREATURE 4

*Pathfinder Bestiary 52*

**Initiative** Stealth +13

## Oba's Plea

If a fight breaks out with the tigers, Oba hears and runs to the gate. She realizes she needs some quick assistance to recover her creatures.



"More of my animals are free! Why must misfortune plague me? Please recover them alive, I beg of you. These animals are fierce, but they're also expensive. I'll reward you for subduing them and putting them back in their cages." She hurls a ring of keys through the gate and onto the path.

The keys can lock or unlock any of Oba's cages. She doesn't want to enter the area, as she's not sure she can help recover the tigers. Bringing her workers in to help will take many hours, and she worries that the tigers will harm each other or even escape the fencing if not returned to their cages quickly. You might want to remind the players that they can make nonlethal attacks even with weapons that don't have the nonlethal trait by taking a -2 circumstance penalty to the attack roll.

If the heroes recapture the tigers, Oba asks them to check on the other creatures, too. She knows the squawking is coming from her elephant birds and that something must be agitating them. She explains that she also has a rare beast called a mpeshi with an electrified aura and a basilisk that's best handled with the mirrored shield in the adjacent shed.

### B3. ELEPHANT BIRD-CAGES

This set of three cages has two elephant birds in each. They have shimmering golden plumage and are squawking noisily. A wooden sign reads, "Elephant Birds, Golden: 6."

The beautiful birds are well-fed and groomed, as Oba has a buyer lined up for them already. Froglegs's bandits didn't bother to unlock the elephant birds, so they remain in their cages. They're currently in a panic because of the freed tigers, who have already unsuccessfully tried to get at the birds a few times. The birds are so agitated that they're fluttering their wings against the bars and hurling their weight against them, which hurts the birds and, to Oba's dismay, damages their golden feathers.

Calming the elephant birds requires a successful DC 19 Nature check to Command an Animal. Offering the birds food, such as fruit or feed from a nearby seed bin, reduces this DC to 17. Opening the cages makes them more agitated, increasing the DC to 23 so long as any cage is open. Only one successful check is required, not one per elephant bird; as soon as one of the birds calms down, the others quickly settle down as well.

On each failed check, the elephant birds flap in agitation, breaking more feathers.

**Tiger Attack:** If the heroes haven't already taken care of the tigers from area B2, the pair sneaks up once the birds are quiet. As the tigers can't get at the caged birds, they attack the heroes instead, sending the birds into another panic. As a result, the elephant birds break more feathers and must be calmed again once the fight is over.

**Treasure:** One large, well-formed feather on the ground is worth 75 gp. If the heroes try to return it to Oba, she gives it back to them if they've been diligent about returning her animals to their cages unharmed.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP if they can calm the elephant birds before they break their feathers three times. If they calm the elephant birds so quickly that the birds don't break any feathers at all, increase this reward to 80 XP.



Elephant Bird

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## B4. GRIFFON CAGES

A sign on a stake between these two cages reads, "Griffons: 3." The doors to the cages are still wide open, and black feathers are still littered about in the trampled mud. A provisions shed just east of the cages is shut tight. It's clear that Oba hasn't touched this area since she lost her prized animals.

Oba hasn't attended to these cages since the griffons escaped because it brings her bad memories. The griffons were worth a lot, but they were also starting to grow on her.

The shed is full of grooming tools, spoiled meat, and a sealed box full of dead spiders. The griffons enjoyed these as treats, but the spiders have died since Oba was last here.

The most surly griffon had its own cage, but the other two were shoved into a cage together. When Froglegs's bandits picked the lock on these cages, one of them accidentally left evidence of their wrongdoing. An infiltrator's pick is stuck in the mud, plainly left here several days ago. The specially made pick is longer than most, with strange grips and pads that make it awkward to use. A gripli hero who is trained in Thievery (or any non-gripli character who succeeds at a DC 24 Thievery check) realizes the pick is well-suited for gripli use; for most characters, however, the pick's distinctive design must remain a mystery for now.

## B5. BASILISK CAGE

LOW 4

A statue of a rearing tiger stands before the open door of this cage, a wooden sign trampled beneath its back paws. Several low walls stand on three sides of the cage.

The sign beneath the stone tiger's paw reads, "Basilisk: 1." This cage contains Oba's most dangerous creature. She erected the walls to block the creature's vision, and, for additional safety, she fitted it with a leather hood.

The bandits opened this cage before yanking off the basilisk's hood from behind and backing quickly away. As with the tiger cage, the lock hangs open, and a hero who succeeds at a DC 19 Thievery check realizes someone picked the lock.

The bandits overestimated the basilisk's eagerness to leave its cage; the indolent creature is still here and doesn't have any inclination to leave even though its door is wide open. When one of the tigers got too close, the basilisk paralyzed it.

The provision shed by area **B6** holds grooming tools, food, magically preserved basilisk blood in case of accidental petrification (this is enough to coat two Medium creatures or one Large creature), and a special mirror shield. Oba uses this to handle the basilisk, as it doesn't like to gaze at its own reflection. A hero can use this item as a shield; the basilisk doesn't use its Petrifying Glance or Petrifying Gaze against anyone with the shield raised. The mirror shield gives no benefit to AC, as it's lightweight for maneuvering and not made for combat.

**Creature:** The basilisk doesn't want to leave but doesn't allow anything to corner it. If it sees a creature get within 30 feet, it darts from the cage to run around the animal lot. It uses its Petrifying Glance to slow pursuers, but generally uses its actions to keep away from heroes who get too close. If it's attacked with a melee weapon, it stays in place to fight, using its jaws and Petrifying Gaze to keep from being recaptured.

### BASILISK


### CREATURE 5

*Pathfinder Bestiary 38*

**Initiative** Perception +11

**Using the Blood:** If the basilisk petrifies any of the heroes while they return it to its cage, Oba encourages them to use the magically preserved basilisk blood to restore them. If none of the heroes need it, she plans to use the blood to restore





the petrified tiger instead. If the heroes instead kill the basilisk, she sourly tells them to use the blood of the basilisk they just killed. If Oba requires more basilisk blood to restore the heroes, she'll procure it for them, but it takes 3 days to get it.

## B6. MPESHI CAGE

## MODERATE 4

This cage is larger than the others. The door is ajar, and debris is scattered all around the outside and inside.

This area contains Oba's rarest creature, a mpeshi that fell from the sky near Nantambu. The creature's electrical aura charged the metal bars of the cage, and they emit a noticeable, but harmless, jolt of static electricity when touched. Like the tiger cage, the lock hangs freely from the open cage.

**Creatures:** The mpeshi left its cage, but it didn't go far; it's lurking in the trees just to the south. When it spots the heroes, it takes out its anger at its capture on them. The mpeshi begins with a Charging Leap, using its Thunderous Fall at the end of its jump. It fights until killed or incapacitated.

## MPESHI

## CREATURE 6

Page 85

**Initiative** Perception +14

## FOLLOWING UP WITH OBA

After the heroes have dealt with the animals, they can speak with Oba about what they found. If they killed all the animals, Oba remains in a very foul mood, telling them how the group somehow took her low expectations of the Magaambya and lowered them even further. She says that she hopes they got what they were looking for and asks them to leave immediately.

If the heroes save at least one of the four loose creatures (the two tigers, the basilisk, and the mpeshi), Oba is thankful that they at least tried. She complains only a little about the time and expense the heroes cost her and thanks them for their work.

If the heroes saved all four creatures, Oba is genuinely impressed, and exclaims "Have you thought about a new profession? I could use people like you for my business!" She must now admit that the Magaambya produces something that's definitely not useless.

If the heroes talk about the griffon's diet of spiders in connection with the anadi attack, Oba admits that she had been overdoing it with spider treats, though she insists she couldn't have seen that end result coming. She sends along her apologies to the anadi students and pledges to find new ways to treat the next griffons she raises.

The heroes have probably pieced together that freeing the animals was an intentional act of sabotage, and they might show Oba the distinctive lockpick they found. Oba insists that she doesn't know anyone who would do this to her, but a hero who succeeds at DC 21 Perception check to Sense Motive indicates that she's nervous or afraid, and withholding the truth. On a critical success, the hero realizes she actually suspects who's behind the incident. Nonetheless, she won't yet divulge anything about Froglegs: Oba hopes that Froglegs thinks she's been sufficiently punished and will leave her alone if she keeps quiet.

**Treasure:** If the heroes got at least one creature back into its cage, Oba gives them a moderate cheetah's elixir. If they got all four creatures back into their cages, she also calls in a favor from a friend and has an *animal staff* delivered to their dormitory on campus.

**XP Award:** Give the heroes 30 XP for each dangerous creature they kept alive (to a maximum of 120 XP), in addition to XP for defeating them in combat.

## Returning to Janatimo

When the heroes report to Janatimo about Oba's Wondrous Creatures, he observes that perhaps someone's trying to teach Oba a painful lesson, but he isn't sure who it would be. If they explain why the griffons attacked the anadis, he notes that it is both more mundane and more fantastical a coincidence than he would have imagined.

Once the heroes check in with him about what they discovered in the storeroom, he's concerned to hear about serpentfolk on campus. If the heroes discovered that Oyo and Mtembe were only pretending to be students, and not actively attending classes or anything of that sort, he's a bit more relieved. Clearly, the serpentfolk weren't infiltrating the student body, even though they're active on campus. Janatimo vows to heighten the Magaambya's security precautions as best he can without alarming the students and staff. He asks the heroes to keep these events to themselves while he pledges to look into matters to keep the student body safe. If the heroes managed to take any of the serpentfolk captive, Janatimo takes them into custody to find out what he can about their plans. He hopes the anadi students can find some answers about what drew them to the school, or at least some peace, by making the storerooms their new living space.

When the heroes have investigated both topics, Janatimo praises them for their bravery and diligence. He asks the heroes to invite a few of their friends to attend a small ceremony where the group will be elevated to the rank of conversants and given new titles and responsibilities.

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My dear pupil—

Once again, you've exceeded the Magaambya's high expectations of its students. You've shown that you are ready to expand the scope of your connections and your magical studies, learning how magic and the world both shape each other.

Because of this, I am pleased to advance you to the rank of conversant. You will represent the school to the outside world while you continue your studies. This representation is significant, and it reflects the trust the Magaambya is ready to place in you.

It's true that your advancement is unusually rapid, but your services and exploits have been unusually admirable. I, and many others, feel this advancement is long overdue.

Please give the following three invitations to any associates you wish to attend our small ceremony to commemorate your promotion. Join us at dusk a week from today. I'll ask you to speak briefly about how you see magic being most useful in the world, so please think about that in the meantime.

I know I'll be telling your tales one day.

—Teacher Janatimo





# CHAPTER 2: SERVICE TO THE CITY

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After proving themselves by investigating the matters Janatimo wanted them to look into and ably dealing with the complications that arose, the heroes have shown the lore speaker that they are ready to become conversants. Conversants supplement their learning with tasks that take them out of the school and into Nantambu and beyond. While many of these tasks serve the Magaambya or friends of the school, they also help the local community to further the Magaambya's mission of aid and protection. Serving as a conversant gives students practical applications for their studies and creates ties between them and others outside the school.

A few weeks after concluding the investigations in Chapter 1, each hero receives a handwritten letter from Janatimo, as seen on page 18. Rumors of the heroes' advancement spreads quickly. None of the other students in the Spire Dormitory, not even the exemplary Esi Djana, have become conversants. Make sure to have NPCs remark with admiration on how quickly the heroes are moving through the ranks. Becoming a conversant is no small thing and doing it at the heroes' pace is even more impressive. Other students congratulate them, and faculty members might take special note of how the characters behave to a degree that they haven't before. Even before the formal ceremony, the heroes should be able to see how their lives are beginning to change.

Once the heroes have invited their guests and prepare short speeches, it's time to go to the ceremony. It's assumed that the heroes invite at least some of the NPCs from Spire Dormitory to the ceremony; whether he was specifically invited or not, the catfolk Chizire also attends. Read or paraphrase the following.

The atmosphere in this lavishly decorated room in Whistle Tower is congenial and lively. People talk in several small groups about magic, politics, philosophy, education, and more. In the center, a large round table is laden with food.

"Smart, to put it in the middle of the room," opines Chizire casually as he picks up a mango tart, "in case any more giant bugs crash through the walls, that is."

Janatimo beckons for everyone to find seats.

"Friends, I am glad that you have all made it here to mark the growth of several of our students. They have proven that their studies don't register in their minds as mere theory or academic exercise, but as a force that they can use to influence the world at large and in turn be influenced by it. Magic is not a tool we use, but a living thing that we experience and embody. Becoming a conversant means that these students take this understanding and expertise out into the world.

"But before we welcome them officially, I'd love to have each of our advancing students tell you for themselves what is the best use of their magic out in the world."

### CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The heroes become conversants and are assigned a variety of missions throughout Nantambu that appear distinct, though many are connected behind the scenes. The heroes have some flexibility in their tasks' order, but easier ones are presented earlier in the chapter and harder ones can be found near the end. This chapter covers two levels of play.

### CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows.

- +1 dagger
- +1 hand crossbow
- +1 rapier
- +1 scimitar
- +1 striking composite shortbow
- bag of cats
- bismuth leopards wondrous figurine
- chime of opening
- fulminating spear
- giant centipede venom
- Habu's Cudgel
- invisibility potion
- lesser darkvision elixir
- lesser maestro's instrument
- low-grade cold iron dogslicer
- lesser elixir of life
- moderate antidote
- moderate antiplague
- moderate healing potion
- moderate juggernaut mutagen
- singing muse
- staff of abjuration
- stone fist elixir
- warcaller's chime of blasting

Janatimo asks each of the heroes to stand and speak. Unless a hero says something actively distressing or mean-spirited, they each receive enthusiastic applause.

After the heroes finish speaking, Janatimo closes the ceremony.

“Thank you again for showing us where your understanding begins. I look forward to seeing how your understanding deepens and evolves as a conversant.”

Everyone in the room stands and cheers in celebration.

People stay to chat and eat for another hour or two after the ceremony, wishing the heroes well and striking up conversation. At some point, Janatimo asks them for a few minutes to privately discuss their duties as conversants. He explains that conversants represent the Magaambya in and around Nantambu, advancing the school’s interests and helping the community. He already has a few tasks in mind for them, but he invites them to ask any questions they have about the process or their new role.

**How involved will these tasks be?** “Many things will remain the same: you’ll still live in the dormitory and receive your regular stipend, and this work doesn’t replace your usual studies! We expect a conversant to be grounded in their studies above all else, balancing it with the tasks that we assign.”

**Who assigns these tasks?** “Often, I will. But any faculty member who needs assistance in the community might reach out to you.”

**How long will we be conversants?** “We shall see. Graduation depends, in no small part, on how well you perform your tasks as conversants. It could be months, or years. Perhaps it would be better to ask yourselves how long it will take.”

**How often do we get tasks?** “This is a question best answered by your own performance, but expect us to err on the side of respect for your studies. We’ll try not to assign more than a few tasks each semester.”

**What sort of tasks will we do?** “There are a wide variety of tasks that we ask of conversants. The only commonalities are that they will test your skills and your spirit, and that they are intended to help you learn to serve others.”

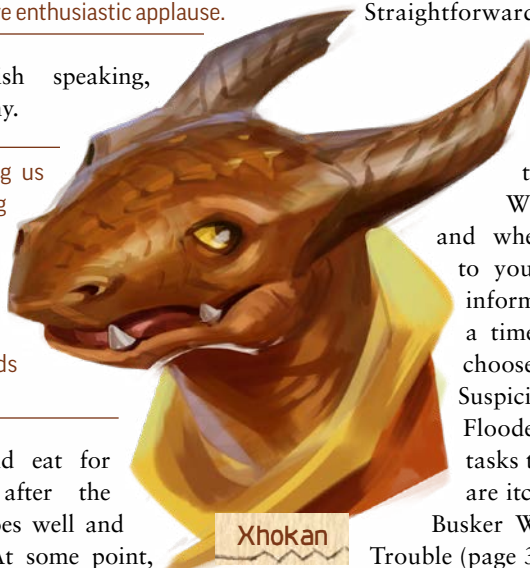
The remainder of this chapter provides several tasks for the heroes to perform. There’s no set

order for these, but they are ranked by general difficulty: straightforward, challenging, and taxing.

Straightforward tasks are appropriate for 5th-level parties, while challenging tasks are good for either 5th- or 6th-level parties. The heroes shouldn’t pursue taxing tasks until they are 6th level.

Which specific tasks they receive, and when they receive them, are up to you. It’s best to keep the heroes informed about a couple of tasks at a time, so the players can pick and choose what they want to do next. Suspicious Alchemy (below) and Flooded Workshop (page 24) are good tasks to present first, but if the players are itching for a fight, you might offer

Busker Woes (page 25) or Oozing into Trouble (page 35).



Xhokan

Conversant Tasks	Difficulty
Suspicious Alchemy	Straightforward
Flooded Workshop	Straightforward
Busker Woes	Straightforward
Tell a Tale	Straightforward
Ghost Stories	Straightforward
Oozing into Trouble	Straightforward
Fiery Debt	Challenging
Trouble from the Skies	Challenging
Finding Froglegs	Taxing
Carving Trouble	Taxing

The heroes should only have a couple tasks each semester; they’re intended to break up the flow of classes that frame the heroes’ academic careers. You can also introduce tasks of your own design, particularly if you want to deepen connections between the heroes and their favored teachers or peers.

Once the heroes have completed all the tasks, they’ll likely suspect something is amiss at Magistrate-Mayor Asanda’s manor house. That investigation is set forth in Chapter 3, and the encounters here are sufficient to get them to 7th level before they tackle it.


## Suspicious Alchemy

**Difficulty** straightforward

**Requested by** Xhokan

**Location** student supply store

The Magaambyan quartermaster **Xhokan** (LN male kobold inventory manager 8) asks the heroes to come by his supply store, colloquially known as the



Powderpile, about an unusual matter. The heroes already know Xhokan, as he's the one who gives them their monthly stipend and supplies. Xhokan welcomes the heroes with a broad grin. Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes are ready to address the matter at hand.

"As you already know, I keep the students stocked with the best alchemical and magical powders I can get. I'm always looking to do that in as thrifty a way as I can, too. I work with many different suppliers from around Nantambu. I mean, quality items are good, but quality items at a low price are even better!

"That said, I just got a shipment in from Bamidele, my old friend and longtime supplier... and the deal was really good! I actually think it was too good. It's cheaper than I've ever gotten alchemical powders from him before. On top of that, I don't think it's unrelated that I've been hearing of several classes in the last few weeks where major things went wrong with mixtures or experiments. Just to be sure, I've recalled all the powders from Bamidele until I can assess what's going on, but I'd love if you could go talk with him and ask where he got it. I can't put students' work—or maybe even their lives—at risk for a good deal. Even a very good deal."

Xhokan gives the heroes any answers he can. Likely questions include the following.

**Have there ever been shifts in the quality of Bamidele's alchemical powders before?** "No, there's never been a problem! He's always been reliable, though I suspect he's reselling other people's alchemical goods rather than producing his own."

**Where is Bamidele?** "He has a stall in the trading bazaar. He's... hard to miss. Just look for loud colors and listen for his even louder laugh."

**Can we see some of this dangerous powder?** Xhokan lets heroes examine some of the powder, though he does make sure that they sign it out ("even bad powder needs to be tracked"). It's a grainy reddish-orange powder that smells faintly of cinnamon. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Crafting check finds that the powder is highly potent as an additive, enhancing any chemicals it's combined with, but it's also highly unstable. It seems doubtful that anyone could get consistent reactions and effects with anything using these powders as reagents. A hero who thereafter succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana check or a DC 22 Crafting check realizes that this instability was infused into the powder using magic.

Xhokan suggests that the heroes do not make any alchemical mixtures using these reagents due to their potentially volatile nature. A hero who ignores this

warning can incorporate the powder when crafting an alchemical formula. The resulting effect is noticeably improved in color, flavor, or some other obvious but nonmechanical way, but the compound requires a DC 3 flat check when used. On a failure, the item is either wholly inert and has no effect or backfires in some chemically spectacular way.

## TALKING TO BAMIDELE

**Bamidele** (CG male human alchemical merchant 3) peddles wares at one of the busiest stalls in the market, but he's tall enough to be easily spotted. He dresses in bright colors, smiles broadly, and speaks loudly. His stall contrasts his large and bright demeanor, as it's fastidiously organized with understated presentation.

His new powders are proving popular. People have heard that Bamidele's alchemical powders are an excellent additive to nearly anything: alchemical mixtures, furniture polish, medicines, and even soups. Word about the occasional accident hasn't yet spread, so business at his stall is brisk. The heroes must wait for about ten minutes as he takes care of business with other customers.

Bamidele is plainly a little overwhelmed from all the business, but happy to speak with the heroes—especially when he learns Xhokan sent them. Some questions the heroes might ask include the following.

**Do you make your own supplies?** "Long ago, I did! These days I'm more of a merchant than an alchemist, but my eye for quality alchemical powders is still as sharp as ever!"

**What makes these powders so special?** "I wish I knew! I'm good at alchemy, but I can't determine how they have such a remarkable effect. They add extra flavor as a spice, extra power as a cleanser, and extra kick to any elixir! Now, I haven't had anyone give me specifics about exact effects—they seem to differ even when added to the same base—but that's part of the fun! I don't know how they make something so good so cheaply, but I pass the savings to my customers, and that's even better!"

**Where do you get these powders?** "I get them from Abeo. 'Abeo the Calm,' I call him, because he's just so serious all the time. He meets me here for supplies, but I haven't seen him in some time—which is a problem, because I've nearly sold out of my powders!"

**Are the powders dangerous?** Bamidele is genuinely confused by this. "I haven't really heard anyone complain, and you saw the line I had today! Besides, I would never send Xhokan and his students anything I thought was unsafe."

**You should stop selling these powders immediately.** "Are you certain? This is my livelihood!" Bamidele

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doesn't like losing business, but he likes the thought that he might be inadvertently hurting people even less. If the heroes are insistent, Bamidele puts his powders away and closes up his stall. He offers to help them however he can.

### What's Going On

Bamidele is unknowingly a middleman in a dangerous scheme. A few weeks ago, a fence named Abeo offered Bamidele some strange new powder at incredibly low prices. He didn't ask too many questions and started selling them. Bamidele doesn't know that Abeo is working as a fence for Froglegs, whose gripli jinxers have been magically boosting cheap alchemical reagents with chaotic magic. The reagents break down after just a few days, but Froglegs hopes to flood the market, drive up demand, then create scarcity to drive up prices. Abeo is selling solely to Bamidele to test the plan, and so far, everything is working well. He plans on making one last delivery to Bamidele before reporting his success to Froglegs.

### FINDING ABEO

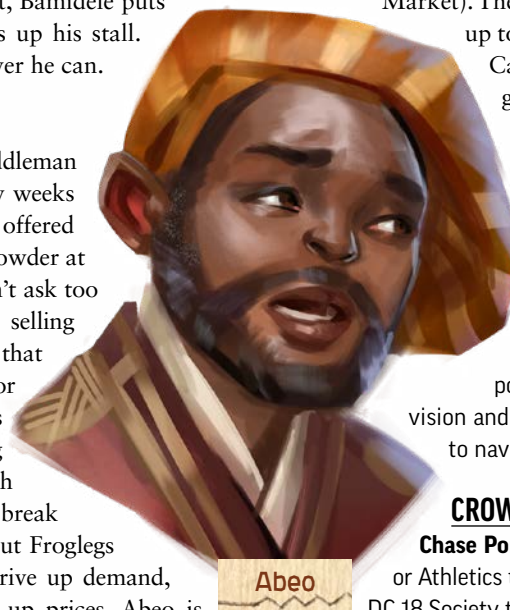
Bamidele has no contact information for Abeo ("He comes to see me with the powders, and I haven't ever needed to chase him down"). To get any additional details, the heroes must find Abeo, but he remains a private and suspicious man.

The best option to find Abeo is to stake out Bamidele's stall. He makes his last exclusive drop-off to Bamidele's stall in 3 days, or on the following day if word gets back to him that Bamidele isn't selling the powder any longer, since Abeo assumes it's because he sold out of the last batch.

If confronted at Bamidele's shop, **Abeo** (NE male human fence 5; *Gamemastery Guide* 210) is visibly nervous about talking to anyone he hadn't planned to talk to. At the first sign of even slightly serious questioning, Abeo runs off, and the heroes must chase him to get further information.

This chase uses the rules on page 156 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. Abeo and the heroes each attempt to clear the obstacles in the order presented below. Each round, Abeo goes first and automatically moves to the next obstacle. The heroes can act in whatever order they prefer, attempting any of the checks set forth in each obstacle (or a different skill you find reasonable, such as a relevant Lore check).

The heroes start at the first obstacle (Thrown Powder) and Abeo on the second obstacle (Crowded Market). The chase ends when the heroes catch up to Abeo, or when he overcomes the Carnivorous Gardens obstacle and gets away for good.



Abeo

### THROWN POWDER OBSTACLE 5

**Chase Points 4; Overcome** DC 20 Acrobatics or Athletics to avoid the powder, DC 18 Crafting to recognize the threat of the powder and shield the eyes early. Abeo throws a bunch of alchemical powders into the air, obscuring vision and making a huge mess that's difficult to navigate.

### CROWDED MARKET OBSTACLE 5

**Chase Points 4; Overcome** DC 20 Acrobatics or Athletics to weave or push through the crowd, DC 18 Society to follow the flow. It's difficult to maneuver through the bustling market.

### TWISTING ALLEYWAYS OBSTACLE 5

**Chase Points 4; Overcome** DC 22 Perception to navigate, DC 18 Society to know the neighborhood. These tight, dense alleyways are filled with objects that threaten to trip and confuse people rushing through.

### BUSY CANAL OBSTACLE 5


**Chase Points 4; Overcome** DC 20 Acrobatics to vault across using poles or hanging lines, DC 18 Athletics to leap from boat to boat. Clotheslines hang across this narrow section of the canal, which is filled with boats carrying bird cages, stacks of pottery, and other impediments.

### GUARDED GATE OBSTACLE 5

**Chase Points 4; Overcome** DC 25 Athletics to run past the guards and climb, DC 18 Deception or Diplomacy to convince the guards to open up the gates, DC 20 Stealth to slip past the guards. A metal gate and a few bored guards are meant to keep unwanted visitors out of this affluent neighborhood.

### CARNIVOROUS GARDENS OBSTACLE 5

**Chase Points 4; Overcome** DC 20 Acrobatics to weave past snapping plants, DC 18 Nature to trick the carnivorous plants, DC 22 Survival to plot a clear path. The chase leads through a lush garden full of large carnivorous plants, all of which take a keen interest in anyone who passes through.



Abeo gives up if caught, but he says as little as he can; see Interrogating Abeo below. If he gets away, the heroes can ultimately find him at his home as he's too exhausted from the prior chase to flee.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 80 XP if they catch Abeo during the chase.

### Abeo at Home

Heroes who wish to find Abeo's home must succeed at a DC 22 Diplomacy check to Gather Information to ascertain that he lives near the Carnivorous Gardens in the northeast part of the city. Abeo is both private and suspicious, so he keeps a careful eye on people approaching his house. He keeps his front door locked and talks through it to visitors. As soon as he realizes the heroes have come from Bamidele's stall or are asking about Froglegs's powders, he flees out a back window and darts through the garden. The heroes must give chase as described on page 22. However, the obstacles should be presented in reverse order: Abeo begins at the Guarded Gate and the heroes start at the Carnivorous Gardens. If Abeo gets to the market and obscures his location by hurling powders into the air, he gets away.

### Interrogating Abeo

Abeo is ostensibly a textiles merchant, but he has long fenced stolen goods. He got in trouble in one of Froglegs's gambling dens, and one of her gripli jinxers offered him a way to pay back his debts. Deliveries of alchemical reagents are made to his door at night, along with cryptic notes like "give Bamidele a lot for a little," or "move the merchandise faster." Abeo doesn't know where the powder comes from or who's dropping it off, but he assumes the gripli he met is involved somehow. His job is to act like a good supplier to Bamidele and start sparking demand as quickly as possible.

Abeo doesn't want to give any of this information to the heroes, but it's not out of obstinacy—it's out of fear. He knows people who cross Froglegs end up missing, dead, or worse. The heroes must succeed at a DC 25 Intimidation check (or other means, such as magical compulsions or mind reading) to get the information from Abeo. Even then, he never speaks Froglegs's name, insisting, "She'll kill me if I say more."

Abeo doesn't mind if the heroes threaten to report him to the authorities—he hasn't done anything overtly illegal, and he's more than happy to take his chances with Nantambu's Chime-Ringers and the Magaambya rather than be permanently silenced by Froglegs.

Heroes who succeed at a DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge remember rumors about a very secretive crime lord advancing in power in the

### NANTAMBU CHIME-RINGERS

Nantambu is generally a peaceful city and one which is well-defended by the Tempest-Sun Mages of the Magaambya. Law enforcement is generally handled by the community, but Nantambu maintains a dedicated group of community protectors known as Chime-Ringers. Formally under the command of the city's treasurer, as peace was deemed a city resource early in Nantambu's history, the Chime-Ringers are few in number. They use small chimes to call for support or grab attention, and the magical chimes, often crafted by the Chime-Ringers themselves, tend to have a unique song and purpose.

Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, who formerly served as the city's treasurer, ran the Chime-Ringers so efficiently that he's still considered their de facto leader. With Asanda's recent retreat to his manor, community protection in Nantambu has become erratic at best, which has emboldened Nantambu's criminals.

The Chime-Ringers seek more support continually; any hero who wishes to aid them or even join their ranks gains access to the Nantambu Chime-Ringer archetype on page 79.



Nantambu underworld. The crime lord deals harshly with those who threaten to reveal her identity or interests, which explains Abeo's reticence.

If the heroes get any information out of Abeo, he breaks down and begs them to sneak him out of Nantambu to start anew somewhere else. He's afraid that Froglegs will kill him if he doesn't have help leaving the city. Heroes who want to help Abeo escape should make a plan, and then attempt a secret DC 25 Deception, Society, or Stealth check to get him out of the city. If the heroes' plan is particularly clever, you might allow them to use a different skill or lower the DC (or both).

If the heroes succeed, they don't hear from Abeo again, other than to receive a message a few days later that reads, "She's called Froglegs. -A." If they fail, authorities discover Abeo's corpse days later in a canal.

**XP Award:** If the heroes get information out of Abeo, award them 80 XP. Increase this to 120 XP if they also get him out of the city safely.

### WRAPPING UP

Whether or not the heroes catch Abeo or get him to talk, Froglegs puts her tainted powder operation on hold indefinitely. She presses some informants on who was to blame, and she might start to realize the threat these conversants pose to her.

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It pains Bamidele to hear about his potential new business being wiped out before it had even started, but as reports of strange accidents, burns, or poisonings start to roll in, he realizes that he was unknowingly complicit in the affair. He throws himself on the mercy of the Chime-Ringers, who defer the man's punishments to what the heroes decide; they're representatives of the Magaambya, after all, and the most knowledgeable about the chastened merchant's activities.

Xhokan is happy enough to know that the new supplies were too good to be true, as he expected all along.

**Treasure:** Xhokan gives the heroes 200 gp in credit at the Powderpile, which they can redeem for alchemical items of 7th level or less.

## Flooded Workshop

**Difficulty** straightforward

**Requested by** Amaechi the potter

**Location** Amaechi's shop

This request comes from outside of the Magaambya, but no one else has the time or motivation to deal with it, so it eventually ends up with the heroes. The request is a pleading letter from a potter named Amaechi who lives and works on the southern side of Nantambu. The fact that Amaechi needs help is plain, but the letter doesn't explain the nature of his troubles.

**Amaechi** (NG male human potter 5) lives in his workshop. Amaechi is open and welcoming to his neighbors, particularly those who simply want to practice pottery for artistic or therapeutic reasons. His shop has therefore become something of a local community center. When the heroes arrive at Amaechi's shop, read or paraphrase the following:

Amaechi's shop is a modest, square-roofed clay building on a slight slant. All around the building is muddy ground. The canal's retaining wall behind the potter's shop is gone, and the canal is overflowing its banks. Two nearby houses have collapsed over their cracked foundations. It looks like Amaechi's shop isn't long from joining them.

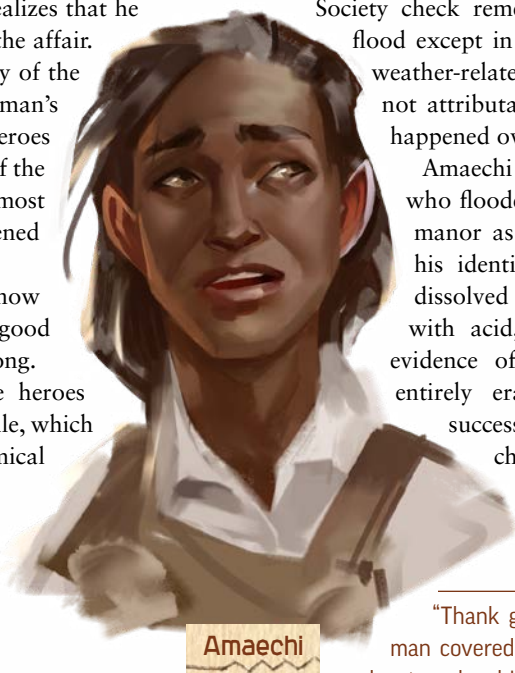
The heroes have a few moments to survey the area before Amaechi comes out to greet them. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature check notices that the canal's flooding is unseasonal and unusual; a critical success on the check means the hero is confident there's something unnatural about it. A hero who succeeds

at a DC 22 Survival check ascertains that Amaechi's shop has only 2 days left before its foundation buckles and it collapses. A hero who succeeds at a DC 22

Society check remembers that the canals rarely flood except in the rainiest weather—the last weather-related canal flood (that is, one not attributable to accident or negligence) happened over a decade ago.

Amaechi is a victim of the serpentfolk who flooded Magistrate-Mayor Asanda's manor as part of the ruse to take over his identity. Serpentfolk venom callers dissolved some of the canal's foundation with acid, resulting in the flood. The evidence of the acid damage is nearly entirely erased by the floodwaters; a successful DC 25 Arcana or Nature check is required to spot it when examining the nearby canal.

Amaechi soon approaches the heroes.



Amaechi

"Thank goodness you've come!" shouts a man covered in dried clay on his upper body and wet mud on his legs and feet. He gestures at the chaos around him. "I can't work like this!"

"You can probably tell we are artists in this area, not engineers. That means my neighbors and I weren't much help to counteract the effects of these floods. We tried to get help from Magistrate-Mayor Asanda—as infrastructure is his responsibility—but he's apparently too busy to worry about us. I hear he has plenty of help at his mansion, which also flooded, but we don't have the money to just hire a bunch of people. I'm just glad the school sent help... please tell me you have some solutions!"

The most that physical solutions can do at this point is slow the rate at which Amaechi's shop sinks; the ground is just too saturated. To do so, the heroes can use the Shore Up Structure exploration activity.


## SHORE UP STRUCTURE

**CONCENTRATE** **EXPLORATION** **MANIPULATE**

You work to shore up Amaechi's sinking shop by erecting supports, diverting floodwater, or reinforcing existing walls and flooring. This activity takes 2 hours, after which you attempt a DC 20 Crafting or Survival check, or a DC 15 check with a relevant Lore skill (such as Architecture Lore). The task can be attempted once per day.

**Critical Success** You add 1 day to the time before Amaechi's shop collapses.

**Success** You add half a day to the time before Amaechi's shop collapses.



**Critical Failure** You deduct a half a day from the time until Amaechi's shop collapses. If reduced to 0 hours, it collapses immediately and deals 8d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 20 basic Fortitude save) to everyone within or adjacent to it.

Casting a ritual to restore Amaechi's shop provides a more permanent solution; if the heroes don't think to find a magical solution, a hero who's trained in Arcana recognizes that a ritual might help. None of the most commonly-known rituals are applicable, but the Magaambya is full of secret lore.

Heroes who ask Magaambya faculty members about magic solutions to help Amaechi should attempt a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. As many of the most knowledgeable professors require appointments during office hours or around their other duties, this task takes a day to attempt. On a success, Teacher Ot provides them with the *community repair* ritual (page 75). On a critical success, Teacher Lesedi also offers them the *unseen underpinning* ritual. *Unseen underpinning* is a variant of *unseen custodians* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 245), but instead of conjuring pattering unseen servants, the ritual creates stronger, immobile unseen servants that support a building's foundations. A success on the *unseen underpinning* ritual is sufficient to rescue Amaechi's shop for the ritual's duration (a critical success can support an even bigger building's foundations).

Heroes who perform their own research in the Magaambya's libraries and archives should attempt a DC 20 Arcana or Occultism check. As Amaechi's needs are fairly specific, this research takes a day to attempt. On a success, the hero discovers the *unseen underpinning* ritual described above (as well as the *unseen custodians* ritual, should they care to learn it). On a critical success, the hero also finds the *community repair* ritual.

## SAVING AMAECHI'S SHOP

If the heroes cast either ritual in enough time to stop Amaechi's shop from collapsing, he's effusive with his thanks and gives the heroes a clue (though they might not recognize it as such now) about something being wrong with Asanda.

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"Thank you so much for all your hard work! It's true what they said about you students after all—the future is so bright with people like you learning and helping others." Amaechi chuckles to himself. "I mean, Asanda has a whole work crew at his manor, and they haven't done in weeks for him what you did for me in days. You've really helped me and everyone in this community."

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**Treasure:** Amaechi gives each of the heroes one of his best pots as thanks. Each pot is worth 5 gp.

**XP Award:** If the heroes save Amaechi's shop, award them 80 XP.

## RESTORING THE CANAL

The heroes might have realized that the canal's damage isn't natural and seek to repair that as well. Everyone in the area knows that Magistrate-Mayor Asanda is in charge of public works, and he's been notified about the necessary repairs but is taking too much time to address it. If the heroes could make the repairs, everyone in the neighborhood would be grateful.

Unlike Amaechi's shop, which was doomed to collapse after only a short time, there's no particular rush to get the canal wall fixed—the damage has already been done (or, in Amaechi's case, mitigated by the heroes). If the heroes are willing to dedicate a few weeks' labor to restore the retaining wall, the neighbors lend a hand as well. The heroes can perform this task much more quickly with the *community repair* ritual, if they know it (*unseen underpinning* lifts a foundation, and thus can't repair the canal wall). As the repairs near completion, neighbors bring a celebratory feast, with the heroes as guests of honor.

**XP Award:** If the heroes restore the canal's retaining wall, award them 80 XP.

## Busker Woes

**Difficulty** straightforward

**Requested by** Janatimo

**Location** Nantambu streets

Janatimo asks the heroes to meet him at the Speaker's Stage on the west edge of campus. When the heroes arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

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"Welcome again, conversants!" Janatimo says, his arms outstretched on the sunny stage. "I thought this site of Magaambyan performances might focus us on a matter of... well, performances. Someone is robbing street entertainers all over Nantambu. What makes this most interesting is that the folks committing the crimes are quite efficient and show experience on the part of the robbers, but... the stakes are laughably low. I'm not sure anyone becomes a busker to become rich. So why take the risk when you could do something more with your talents?"

"When a storyteller withholds parts of the tale, it intrigues the listener. I'm intrigued. I need you to fill out the rest of this story for me."

---

Janatimo answers what questions he can from the heroes, which are likely to include the following.

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**What do the robbers look like?** “There are iruxis—lizardfolk—among the predominantly human robbers, but they attack from the shadows and alleys, so no one’s yet gotten a clear look at them.”

**Why aren’t the authorities stopping them?** “For now, it’s typical politics: the attackers aren’t targeting anyone with clout and no one’s gotten killed, so the Chime-Ringers have higher priorities. They might have some reports to shed some light on this, even if they haven’t acted yet.”

**Why are you interested in this?** “Personally, I have many friends who have been attacked or are at risk of it. I’d like to see none of them get hurt any further. Also, I think there’s more to this than it appears.”

Janatimo encourages the heroes to explore the streets and question anyone involved. The sooner they can stop these bullies, the better.

## FINDING CLUES

This investigation is open-ended, so the heroes can follow up in several different ways. The types of contacts the heroes pursue are described below. The heroes can follow up with different contacts or investigate the same one multiple times (by asking several different street performers across the city,

for example). As they do so, the heroes collect the indicated clues. Once they’ve obtained four clues from any source, they know enough to track the robbers to their hideout.

Each check to find clues takes half a day. Keep track of how many days it takes the heroes to assault the robbers’ hideout, since an assassin makes an example of Reth, the ringleader, three days after the heroes’ investigation begins.

**Question Performers:** Nantambu has many street musicians and performers who set up in a courtyard or public square each day. Most play an instrument, but some are singers, dancers, or thespians who recite excerpts from popular plays. Nearly all of them know about the attacks and can point to a fellow artist who’s been robbed. Getting useful information from them requires a successful DC 20 Diplomacy, Performance, or Society check, or a DC 18 check using a relevant lore (such as Art Lore). A success yields one clue, and a critical success yields two clues. Clues the heroes might obtain include: the gang of robbers is four in number; the robbers’ leader was a lizardfolk marred with black slashes; the robbers steal musical instruments as well as money; and attacks come when the performers are packing up and are most flush with coin.

**Speak with the Chime-Ringers:** Nantambu’s overworked town watch are stretched thin with the rise in crime, but they’re eager to speak with conversants from the Magaambya who might solve this problem for them. Obtaining information requires a successful DC 18 Diplomacy or Society check, or a DC 16 check using a relevant lore (such as Legal Lore). A success yields one clue, and a critical success yields two clues. Clues the authorities provide include: the robbers likely target the buskers because it’s easy and the risk is low; the robbers have been very active and are thus likely getting wealthy just from the sheer volume of their strikes; and the attackers come and go from a run-down area of the city.

**Infiltrate Criminals:** To get more information about the robberies, the heroes might decide to question shady characters in the city. Getting useful information from them requires a successful DC 22 Deception, Intimidation, or Thievery check, or a DC 20 check using a relevant lore (such as Underworld Lore). A success yields two clues, and a critical success yields three clues. Clues that criminals can provide include: the robbers are holed up in a run-down area of the city; their leader is a lizardfolk named Reth; the gang consists of two lizardfolk, a human, and an elf;

the robbers are drawing unwelcome attention from higher-ups in the underworld who don't like attention; and the robbers are just looking for quick cash by stealing coin and small, valuable-looking instruments.

Once the heroes have gained any four clues, they can piece together the location of the robbers' hideout.

## RETH'S SHACK

Reth's gang used to come here only when arranging crimes under Froglegs's direction, but since they've started going out on their own, they're here most of the time. Reth believes that one day he'll have enough money to branch off from Froglegs and start a criminal enterprise of his own. He doesn't understand the danger he's in trying to establish his independence from Froglegs; depending on when the heroes arrive at the shack, Froglegs might have already eliminated him to send a message to Nantambu's underworld.

When the heroes arrive at Reth's shack (map on page 26), read or paraphrase the following.

The gang's hideout is the most intact building amid a cluster of abandoned wooden shacks. All the windows have been boarded up while the front door hangs open, barely on its hinges. Smoke drifts out of the back of the building, carrying with it the faint smell of charred food.

The front door is the best way into the building. The shack has windows in each room, but they're all boarded up. The only boards spaced widely enough to allow a look inside are those over a window to area C4. Forcing Open a window requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check.

The heroes have arrived shortly after Loakan has cooked a meal for the gang. Depending on the time of day, it's either an extra snack (the gang has been eating more often with the extra paydays) or a proper full meal. The crew typically eats Loakan's meals in their own rooms.

The three lower-ranked gang members (Mashkudu, Kiru, and Loakan) each come to the aid of the others if they hear trouble. Unless the heroes take these opponents out quietly, the others arrive ready to fight in 1d3 rounds. Together, they make a Severe encounter for 5th-level characters. Reth doesn't bother coming to his gang's aid, but instead prepares an ambush in his office (area C5), if he's still alive.

## C1. MASHKUDU AND KIRU'S ROOM

LOW 5

Two hastily built straw beds line the wall opposite the door. Bits of trash cover the hard dirt floor and an open chest sits against the wall.

**Creatures:** This room belongs to a burly bully from Bloodcove named Mashkudu and a lean Ekujae elf named Kiru. Both sit on their beds, eat from their bowls, and talk about their latest victims. The pair gleefully discusses the startled and horrified reactions of the street performers they've robbed.

When the heroes enter, the pair immediately draw their weapons to fight. In the second round of combat, unless they clearly have the upper hand, Kiru pretends to offer to negotiate. This is merely to give Loakan or Reth a chance to hear the commotion and join the fight; they renew their attacks as soon as backup arrives. A robber reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points makes a run for it and the heroes might encounter them later in Froglegs's hideout.

## MASHKUDU THE BULLY

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Agender human mugger

**Perception** +13

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +13, Deception +9, Intimidation +11, Stealth +11, Thievery +13

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

**Items** hand crossbow (10 bolts), leather armor, longsword, thieves' tools

**AC** 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

**HP** 75

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** longsword +15 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing

**Ranged** hand crossbow +15 (range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6 piercing

**Opportunistic Maneuver** **Trigger** Mashkudu Shoves, Trips, or Disarms a creature; **Effect** Mashkudu attempts a Thievery check to Steal an object the target carries.

**Sneak Attack** Mashkudu deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

**Surprise Attack** On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are flat-footed to Mashkudu.

## KIRU

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Male elf thief

**Perception** +9; low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Elven

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Intimidation +9, Stealth +9, Thievery +11, Underworld Lore +8

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

**Items** dagger (6), studded leather armor, thieves' tools

**AC** 20; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

**HP** 45

**Speed** 30 feet

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**Melee** ♦ dagger +12 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing plus knife jab

**Ranged** ♦ dagger +12 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing plus knife jab

**Knife Jab** Creatures hit by Kiru's dagger Strike must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or become clumsy 1 for 1 round (1 minute on a critical failure). If Kiru's Strike is a critical hit, the DC increases to 25.

**Sneak Attack** Kiru deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

**Surprise Attack** On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are flat-footed to Kiru.

**Treasure:** The chest contains various low-quality clothes, 61 sp, and a nice lute worth 10 gp stolen from a street performer.

## C2. RETH'S ROOM

This room is very orderly; clothes are neatly placed on a shelf in the corner, and a well-made bed sits toward the northern wall. A chest lies on the floor behind the bed.

This is Reth's sleeping room. He spends little time in this room, preferring to scheme and count coins in his office. Heroes who look over the clothes note they're plainly tailored for a lizardfolk.

**Treasure:** The chest is locked with a simple lock (three DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock, or DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open) and contains 51 gp, 80 sp, and 80 cp.

## C3. LOAKAN'S ROOM

LOW 5

The smell of many different spices fills this room. Several books are scattered in the corner. On the far side of the wall is a chair next to a straw bed.

**Creature:** This room belongs to a lanky lizardfolk bruiser named Loakan. She's currently sitting on her bed, perusing a new book of recipes she just bought. She's furious at being interrupted by intruders and attacks with a loud snarl. Unlike Mashkudu and Kiru, who flee with their lives if hard-pressed, the stubborn Loakan doesn't ever leave a fight. She pursues foes that flee but doesn't leave sight of the shack.

## LOAKAN

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID LIZARDFOLK

Female lizardfolk bruiser

**Perception** +13

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Iruxi

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Athletics +14, Cooking Lore +10, Thievery +12

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

**Items** +1 greatclub, recipe books

**AC** 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13

**HP** 100

**Speed** 25 feet, swim 15 feet

**Melee** ♦ greatclub +17 (backswing, magical, shove),

**Damage** 1d10+6 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ tail (agile) +16, **Damage** 1d8+6 bludgeoning



**Melee** ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing  
**Ranged** ♦ book +16 (range increment 10 feet), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning  
**Battering Tail** ♦♦ Loakan makes a *greatclub* Strike and two tail Strikes against the same creature. If the *greatclub* Strike hits, the target is flat-footed against both tail Strikes.  
**Deep Breath** Loakan can hold her breath for 200 rounds (20 minutes).

**Treasure:** Loakan spends most of her share of recent thefts on cooking equipment. Sturdy, high-quality cookware worth 15 gp sits on the chair.

## C4. MEETING ROOM

In the center of this area is a large fire pit with a pot over it. Several chairs surround the fire and a wooden chest sits next to a sturdy door.

This is where the gang has meetings and where they get food from Loakan. The pot contains the pepper stew she recently made. The chest is empty, but underneath it is a spare key to the door of Reth's office (area C5).

## C5. OFFICE MODERATE 5

The only door to this room is locked with a simple lock. The heroes can open it with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock, or with a successful DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open.

This small room is quite tidy despite the general dilapidation of the shack. On a large table are orderly stacks of paper and coins. A full bookshelf stands to the south.

This is Reth's office, where he likes to count his money and dream of his next caper. If the heroes investigated and arrived here before three days pass, Reth is alive. If it's been at least three days, only his corpse is here, as described in If the Heroes Are Too Late on page 30. The rest of the gang doesn't yet realize Reth is dead, as they're too intimidated by him to pester him when he's in his office.

**Creature:** If the heroes made a commotion elsewhere in the shack (such as to get the locked door to this room open), Reth is hiding in the corner of the room with his hand crossbow drawn and uses Stealth for initiative; otherwise, he's idly counting his loot. In any case, he assumes the heroes are here on Froglegs's order to eliminate him, so he doesn't surrender.

## RETH

## CREATURE 7

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID LIZARDFOLK

Male lizardfolk gang leader

**Perception** +13

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Iruxi

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Intimidation +15, Society +12, Stealth +15, Survival +13, Thievery +15

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

**Items** +1 hand crossbow (10 bolts), keyring, leather armor, thieves' tools

**AC** 25; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

**HP** 115



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Loakan

**Speed** 25 feet, swim 15 feet

**Melee** ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 1d6+5 piercing

**Melee** ♦ tail (agile) +16, **Damage** 1d4+5 bludgeoning

**Ranged** ♦ *hand crossbow* +16 (magical, range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing plus 3d8 precision

**Deadly Bolts** ♦ (stance) **Requirement** Reth is wielding a crossbow; **Effect** Reth gains a deadly focus with crossbows while in this stance. His crossbow Strikes deal an additional 3d8 precision damage. He doesn't provoke reactions for making ranged Strikes with crossbows.

**Deep Breath** Reth can hold his breath for 200 rounds (20 minutes).

**Running Reload** ♦ Reth Strides, Steps, or Sneaks, then Interacts to reload.

**Skirmishing Shot** ♦ (flourish) Reth Strides or Steps, then Strikes with his hand crossbow.

**Interrogating Reth:** Even though Reth doesn't surrender, the heroes might capture him and want to learn what he knows. Reth doesn't have a lot to offer other than he was tired of making money slowly and carefully, like his boss wanted. He maintains that robbing street performers was a perfect way for him and his crew to get all the extra things they wanted. He's aware his boss has a mean streak, but he figured once he showed off how much money he'd made, all would be forgiven—of course, that day kept getting further away in his mind as his gang made more and more money. If the heroes interrogating Reth succeed at a DC 21 Diplomacy or Intimidation check, he reveals the identity of his boss: a reclusive gripli named Froglegs.

**If the Heroes Are Too Late:** If it's been at least three days since the heroes began their investigation, Reth can be found dead at his desk. Froglegs decided to make an example of him. She quietly pried up one of the boarded up windows, murdered him, and left the way she came, stopping long enough only to take everything of value from this room. Apart from the lethal dagger wounds in Reth's back, she left one of her long-handled lockpicks near the chest, which is open and empty.

**Treasure:** Several neat stacks of coins sit on the table: 40 gp, 40 sp, and 80 cp. The chest is locked (it can be opened with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock, or a successful DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open) and contains 75 gp, three virtuoso handheld musical instruments (a hand drum, lyre, and shekere) and a reed flute *lesser maestro's instrument*.

## WRAPPING UP

Janatimo is pleased to hear that the gang responsible for the robberies has been dealt with. If presented with information about Froglegs, he can't provide any additional facts or details ("There seems to be a new criminal mastermind every week, these days"). He takes some comfort in the fact that this Froglegs character at least has enough morals to keep her people from performing such petty violent crimes ("If she has a code, then she's better than most, I think"). The authorities also don't bother following up any further, as their requests for direction and aid from Magistrate-Mayor Asanda go unanswered.

**XP Award:** Once the heroes stop the robberies of the street entertainers, award them 80 XP.



Reth

## Tell a Tale

**Difficulty** straightforward

**Requested by** Janatimo

**Location** Black-Crowned Crane restaurant

Janatimo asks the characters to meet him at the exclusive Black-Crowned Crane restaurant. The note politely suggests they dress up. When the heroes arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

Janatimo stands at the entrance of the Black-Crowned Crane restaurant, famous for its artistic and culinary delights. "This task is all about stories," he begins. "Every year, the Black-Crowned Crane has a 'Tall Tails' contest. It's wordplay: the contest is about tails, as in the appendage. People tell stories of encounters with strange or unique versions of ordinary animals.

"I've been trying to get participation to be something of a tradition among the Uzunjati, though I haven't had a lot of luck making that stick. This year, I entered each of you. Any of you are capable of winning, but I only ask that you try to show the rest of Nantambu how imaginative our students are. I think any of your past exploits with giant insects, ferocious tigers, venomous snakes, or other animals provide excellent storytelling material, but you can embellish or even invent other tales if you choose. If it seems like I'm springing this on you, that's the intent—impromptu stories are sometimes the best ones."

Janatimo holds open the door and gives a bow. "You're up in about an hour."

Janatimo briefly goes over the rules as the party settles in the restaurant and enjoys an exquisite meal at his expense. Each story must center on a person's interaction with an animal. The person might be the narrator themselves, but the narrator can also tell a tale about someone else. The animal must have some distinguishing supernatural or unusual ability. Is it a crocodile that can control minds? A lion that can step through shadows? The story must be no longer than five minutes but can be as short as a few sentences if the tale-teller likes.

When the time comes, the heroes are invited onto a small stage with the other performers. Several judges sit at the closest tables, and Janatimo greets each of them like old friends.

Each player should describe their character's story generally; if your players are willing, each of them can try to tell their story to the other players, but you can handle the storytelling mechanically if anyone is uncomfortable. Heroes accrue Story Points by building the best story that they can. The heroes perform the following activity to accrue story points.

Since the story can't be longer than five minutes, they can't perform this action more than five times.

## PRESENT A TALL TAIL

**AUDITORY** **CONCENTRATE** **EXPLORATION**

You present one aspect in your narrative about a meeting with a mystical animal. Each attempt takes 1 minute and requires you to attempt a DC 20 skill check. You can choose between describing the animal (Nature), inventing something supernatural about it (Arcana, Deception, or Occult), recalling past tales about the animal (Society), adding narrative drama (Deception or Performance), or connecting with the audience (Performance). You can't take any of these options more than twice in the same story.

**Critical Success** You gain 2 Story Points.

**Success** You gain 1 Story Point.

**Critical Failure** You lose 1 Story Point (to a minimum of 0) and can't retry the option you just attempted, even if you haven't yet used it twice.

## THE OTHER TALE-TELLERS

The heroes aren't alone in the competition—the following participants tell their stories and automatically earn the Story Points listed.

**Eriayomi** (NG female human storyteller 7; Performance DC 22) is a seasoned storyteller who has won the contest a few times. She's a bit overconfident. Her story is about a persuasive talking snake who talks itself out of being killed by a hunter. She earns 7 Story Points.

**Tokunbo** (N male human woodworker 4; Performance DC 20) is anxious because he's competed a few times but never won. His story is about a frog who can leap into the future and creates a series of pranks for a boy who threw stones at him. He earns 5 Story Points.

**Ifedayo** (LN female halfling scribe 3; Performance DC 18) is nervous for her first storytelling contest. She tells a very personal story about being lost in the swamp and meeting a heron that can turn itself and others invisible to hide from predators. She earns 4 Story Points.

**Tizawa** (CG male elf apothecary 3; Performance DC 14) tells a tired old story about Old-Mage Jatembe reconciling two estranged brothers, and he tells it clumsily. He earns only 2 Story Points.

The contestant with the greatest number of Story Points wins. In the event a hero ties with an NPC, the hero attempts a Performance check against the NPC's Performance DC to determine whether the hero was just ahead or just behind the NPC's story. If two heroes tie, the one with the higher Performance modifier wins.

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Ebele, proprietor of the Black-Crowned Crane, awards prizes to the victors. These are stylish black animal statuettes depicting the animal in the tale-teller's story—how Ebele managed to produce the correct animal statuettes so quickly is a mystery.

Janatimo congratulates the heroes on their performance after the contest, and he's particularly pleased if any of them received a prize. Prize-winning heroes might later overhear students on campus telling their own versions of their story, as Janatimo ensures the story spreads.

**Treasure:** The statuette she presents to the first place contestant is worth 50 gp, the second-place statuette is worth 25 gp, and the third-place statuette is worth 10 gp.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 80 XP for participating in the contest. Increase this award to 120 XP if any hero wins a prize.

## Ghost Stories

**Difficulty** straightforward

**Requested by** Lesedi

**Location** Tokku's home

The heroes receive an invitation to meet with Teacher **Lesedi** (CG female elf summoner 13), a Cascade Bearer and specialist on extraplanar portals and creatures. When they arrive at Lesedi's office, read or paraphrase the following.

Lesedi is a diminutive Alijae elf dressed in a pink caftan adorned with tiny bones. In a cheerful voice, she exclaims, "Thank you for taking this request, conversants! I have a friend with a new house and an awful problem: a poltergeist! Tokku hasn't been able to sleep a full night in his new house for weeks. It's proven difficult for me to find the time to get over there to help, but this is a great opportunity for students with real potential to learn more about the afterlife.

"So, are you ready for a... haunting experience?" She laughs loudly at her own joke.

Lesedi doesn't have a lot of information to give the heroes, deferring most questions to Tokku. She gives the heroes his address and promises that she'll keep them in mind for future projects if they can take care of her friend's problem now.

## TOKKU'S HOME

Tokku's house is a creaking wooden structure that's obviously quite old—although the house is new to him. **Tokku** (NG male elf jeweler 4) greets them amiably from the porch. Tokku is also an Alijae elf, a long-time friend of Lesedi's who left Nagisa with her to learn more about the world outside. He makes a good living as a jeweler and finally decided to make Nantambu his home permanently by purchasing a house. As happy as his house makes him, he hasn't an opportunity to sleep there because there's a poltergeist who angrily makes its presence felt at night or whenever guests enter. Tokku has spent several nights at Lesedi's place. While they are friends, part of why Lesedi needs this task undertaken is so she can have peace and quiet in her own home again.

After introductions, Tokku explains that he'd like to welcome the heroes inside, but visitors nearly always irritate the poltergeist. It shows its displeasure by telekinetically tossing around anything in the house that isn't affixed in place. He knows the poltergeist resembles a skeletal catfolk, but it rarely makes its form visible except to frighten people. Destroying the poltergeist is only a temporary solution, as it rejuvenates after a few days angrier than ever, so Tokku asks the heroes not to destroy the poltergeist unless they can ensure it can't return. He notes, "It'll try to frighten you, for sure, but don't fall for it."

A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check recalls that many spirits, including poltergeists, can only be put to rest when something that's wronged them is put right. Tokku doesn't have any idea what the poltergeist wants and suggests that the only way to find out is to enter his home and try to talk it out, no matter how aggressive or dangerous it is initially. Tokku intends to wait out on the porch while the heroes investigate his home.

**Haunting:** The heroes don't have to wait long for a supernatural manifestation. As soon as they enter, the doors and windows slam shut and household items launch throughout the house—unfortunately, Tokku has a large collection of interesting rocks. Creatures in the house take 6d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save) from the whirlwind of items. A creature that's obtained significant protection from



Teacher Lesedi

hurled items, such as by hunkering down behind a large shield, treats the result of the saving throw as one degree of success better than their roll.

**Creature:** The poltergeist manifests immediately after the haunting, using its Frighten ability. If the heroes attack, it fights back until destroyed or until the heroes all leave the house. If the heroes instead refuse to respond, the poltergeist is both confused and curious. They can talk to it, as described below.

## POLTERGEIST

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 264

**Initiative** Perception +11

## CREATURE 5

**Speaking with the Poltergeist:** If the heroes try to talk to the poltergeist, it is willing to remain in its ghostly, skeletal form and speak to them. This is the first time that anyone has tried to speak to it; Tokku only hides or runs away, and everyone else he has brought in to deal with the poltergeist has tried to fight it rather than ask why it's bound to the house. The heroes might ask the following questions when speaking to the poltergeist.

**What is your name?** "I was known once as Gerrus."

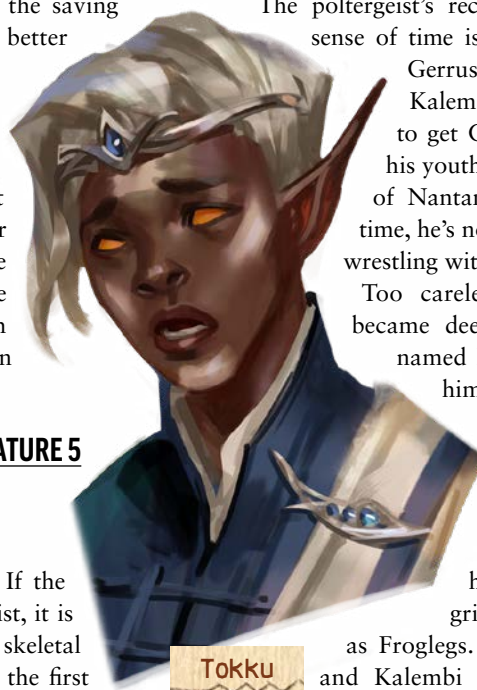
**Why do you still haunt this place?** "A few years ago, this was my home. I can't rest because a person I trusted took something valuable to me—a leopard figurine of the most beautiful rainbow hues. It had been in my family for generations. It belongs here in my house."

**Who took your figurine?** "The one who I thought was my best friend, Kalembe. He murdered me the night he stole it."

**Why would Kalembe steal your figurine?** "I have no reason to give for his theft. Kalembe is one of the wealthiest traders in the city; my figurine was valuable, but not to one as rich as him. Others had offered to buy it, but I refused, since it belongs here in my house. But if my friend had only asked, I would've given it to him freely."

**If we return the figurine, will you depart?** "Yes, as bringing it back into my house will put everything right again."

**In the meantime, will you not bother Tokku?** "Peace is not something I have, so it's not something I can give. But I will do my best to be patient and wait for you to do what is right."



## KALEMBI'S HISTORY

The poltergeist's recollections are all true, but his sense of time is skewed, as Kalembe murdered Gerrus almost 20 years ago. Gerrus was Kalembe's friend, and Kalembe worked to get Gerrus established as a trader in his youth. While Kalembe was indeed one of Nantambu's wealthiest traders at the time, he's now an old man of faded fortunes wrestling with a life of regret.

Too careless with his wealth, Kalembe became deeply indebted to a crime lord named Habu the Cudgel. Habu forced him to engage in crime to pay his debts. As Kalembe knew where Nantambu's richest people kept their choice valuables, Habu sent Kalembe to their houses at night with one of his most talented burglars: the gripli who would become known as Froglegs. Froglegs would pick the locks and Kalembe would just walk in, take the valuables, and walk back out. He knew that if he returned empty-handed, she would simply kill him on the spot.

Kalembe protested when Habu insisted on taking Gerrus's leopard figurine. He knew how much the figurine meant to his friend. But he felt he had no choice. When Gerrus interrupted the theft that night, Kalembe knew he must choose between his life and his friend's—and he picked his own. Kalembe killed him and gave the figurine to Habu; it's now in Froglegs's possession.

Kalembe's good fortune declined after Habu forced him into burglary, and his once-grand trading enterprises have now been reduced to a single export shop in a middle-class section of Nantambu. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Society or Nantambu Lore check knows about Kalembe and his long, slow descent from incredible wealth to mediocrity.

## MEETING KALEMBI

## LOW 5

The next step in the investigation is to talk to Kalembe. A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Society or Nantambu Lore check recalls the location of both his export business, "Everywhere and Beyond," and his home. Alternatively, a hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy check to Gather Information not only finds the location of his home and business, but also hears the rumors about Kalembe's decline in fortunes.

Kalembe is now an old man, plagued by guilt and fearful of retribution from past crimes. He maintains heightened

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security and tries to keep a low profile, running his business through proxies when he can. He's almost never at Everywhere and Beyond, so heroes who go there must speak with his trading manager **Nalefe** (N female human merchant -1; *Gamemastery Guide* 244). Nalefe has long harbored suspicions that her boss is involved with something shady, so she's quick to tell strange visitors seeking him out that he's at home.

**Creatures:** Kalemby's security is high at his small manor, and he only meets with people who have a special passphrase. Three armed bodyguards intercept visitors and deter anyone without the passphrase. They like to swagger and show their strength, so they're quick to pick a fight with anyone who doesn't take a hint to leave. If they face serious opposition (such as if the heroes defeat one guard or reduce all guards to fewer than 30 Hit Points), they give up and let the heroes enter.

### KALEMBI'S GUARDS (3) CREATURE 3

Watch officer (*Gamemastery Guide* 234)

**Initiative** Perception +8

**Talking to Kalemby:** As he's unwilling to fight anyone who's already gotten past his guards, **Kalemby** (LN male human merchant 6) speaks to the heroes only because he feels he has no other option. He initially insists he doesn't know anyone named Gerrus, but his deceitful facade quickly crumbles if the heroes are persistent. He always knew his past would come back to haunt him, and he realizes that this is the day.

Kalemby admits to his role as a thief many years ago, as described in Kalemby's History on page 33. He hated stealing from his friends, but his fear of Habu the Cudgel and his fierce gripli burglar was too overwhelming. He has since made recompense to most of them, which is part of the reason his fortunes have declined. Kalemby regrets nothing so much as his decision to murder his friend Gerrus—it's the one mistake he can never repay. Heroes who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check to Sense Motive can detect

that Kalemby feels genuine grief resulting from killing his friend, even after all these years.

Kalemby can offer a few more relevant points to assist the heroes' investigation. First, he recalls that the gripli burglar used special, extended lockpicks that suited her frog-like hands well.

If the heroes still have the strange picks from Oba's Wondrous Creatures (area **B4**), Kalemby confirms they are the same style. Second, he knows that someone murdered Habu the Cudgel, and the same gripli burglar who terrorized him those many years ago now runs a significant part of Nantambu's organized crime. She's taken the name Froglegs now—Kalemby never knew the former name she used. Kalemby doesn't know where to find her but assumes it's in a well-hidden safe house.

What the heroes do with Kalemby is up to them. They might insist he take his admission to the authorities or even make him come to Tokku's house to apologize to the poltergeist. Forcing the crestfallen merchant to take these actions requires a successful DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidation check; on a failure, he flatly refuses to leave his manor and keeps wallowing in his misery.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 60 XP for getting past the guards, even if they don't fight them. Award the heroes 30 XP for obtaining Kalemby's information about Froglegs.

### RETURNING THE FIGURINE

The heroes can't quell the poltergeist for good until they recover the *bismuth leopards wondrous figurine* from Froglegs's hideout (area **F5**) and bring it back, though their actions at least allow Tokku to sleep in his own house. When they finally show the figurine to Gerrus, the poltergeist thanks them and fades away.



The heroes are free to keep the figurine or leave it in Tokku's house, as they see fit—in any case, the poltergeist is gone for good.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 80 XP for putting the poltergeist to rest.

## Oozing into Trouble

**Difficulty** straightforward

**Requested by** Zuma

**Location** Carnivorous Gardens

This request summons the heroes to Teacher Zuma's office in the Magaambya's Elephant Museum. The heroes likely met this eccentric but gifted teacher in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic*. When the heroes arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

Stacks of dusty arcane tomes teeter precariously on the desk and floor of this office. A bespectacled half-orc peers from behind one of the stacks and asks, "Did the demons finally hatch their plot?"

Zuma rambles on for a bit about a conspiracy plot of demons trying to take over Nantambu by popularizing certain colors of paint ("It's all in the pigments, you see!"). Heroes can redirect his attention back to the request by either talking it through with him or coming up with an even more outlandish plot to get him to pursue. When Zuma has exhausted his conspiracy theories for the time being, read or paraphrase the following.

"So, I have called you here so that you can help preserve one of my favorite places: the Carnivorous Gardens. I love to go there and collect my thoughts. Also, it's hard for the celestials to hear your thoughts when you're around meat-eating plants.

"Anyway, they've had to close the garden because the fool caretaker decided to experiment with how they feed the flora. Her name is Natofo, and though I appreciate her willingness to experiment, I wish she'd done her experiments somewhere other than in one of my few peaceful places.

"I need you to go help her clean up so I can reclaim my place to escape. For the celestials hear all..."

Zuma gives the heroes directions to the Carnivorous Gardens and answers any other questions they have. Some of the players' most likely questions follow.



Natofo

for plants."

**Who's Natofo? / What is Natofo's role?** "She's a fool half-orc who doesn't know when to call it quits, how to set boundaries on important experiments, or use any common sense in general. She's also my sister. She's brilliant but she refuses to take time with her botanical experiments!"

**What did Natofo do?** "I'll let her tell you most of it, but the short answer is that she was trying to use oozes as a food source and it went horribly wrong—just like I said it would."

**What do you know about the Carnivorous Gardens?** "I already told you that they are the one spot in Nantambu where the celestials can't hear you, what more do you need? I mean, I guess I can tell you that they raise and tame carnivorous plants from all over Golarion for others to see and learn about. Sort of a... zoo

## VISITING THE CARNIVOROUS GARDENS

When the heroes go to visit Natofo (NG female half-orc botanist 5), they find her at the custodian's hall outside of the Carnivorous Gardens. When they enter the large room, read or paraphrase the following.

A rather bookish female half-orc interrupts her work on a gigantic succulent plant to shrug and say, "Aah, Zuma sent you. But... I suppose I need the help. Come over here and let me show you the problem."

Natofo shows the heroes a collection of small oozes in containers and explains that she was trying to find alternate and cheaper food sources to feed the plants. The keepers of the garden spend a lot of time and money getting plenty of meat for the plants, and she had been testing ways to make fake "meat" by combining alchemical reagents with samples of oozes of different types to create a variety of savory flavors and nutritional balances.

Initial tests were promising, but when Natofo went large scale with the plan, she started to run into problems. Despite Zuma's advice to conduct more tests, she started feeding her specialized ooze-based "meat" to the plants in large quantities. One ooze was too tasty to the plants; the plants attacked Natofo's assistants to get more, and they dropped the ooze before running away. Another ooze wasn't digested but instead grew inside the plants that ate them, mutating into another form.

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When Natofo told the owners about the problem, they immediately closed the garden down for the safety of the community. She asked a few people for advice, including her brother, and that's why the heroes are here now. The introduction of the oozes has disturbed the garden's careful ecosystem. Natofo needs the heroes to find the lost samples and remove them from the environment so the garden can recover.

Natofo admits she'd hoped Magistrate-Mayor Asanda would have been a little quicker to provide help, as he's normally a big supporter of public amenities like the Carnivorous Gardens. He's apparently too busy restoring his flooded manor.

If the heroes ask what kind of oozes Natofo used, she replies breezily, "Oh, some of this, and some of that... by this, I mean I used some brown ones and some green ones. I'm not an ooze expert, but I know enough to stay away from black puddings. I also used some cheap sewer ooze but that one leaked into a cesspool, so don't worry about it."

Natofo cautions the heroes to be vigilant, as the oozes and the plants have battled tirelessly, leaving the plants particularly agitated.

## CARNIVOROUS GARDENS

When heroes are ready to enter the Carnivorous Gardens, read or paraphrase the following.

The Carnivorous Gardens are less like their namesake and more like a small, lush jungle. Plants and vines of all sorts writhe noisily, looking for fresh meat. A stone path winds through the park.

Natofo opens the gate and says sheepishly, "Uh, it's not normally this loud."

Few of the Garden's carnivorous plants pose a direct threat to the heroes, but the oozes introduced into their artificial ecosystem have agitated the plants enough that they act in concert to keep out any new intruders that come too close.

**Hungry Plants:** The places indicated on the map contain the following hazard, which triggers when anyone enters the area.

### AGITATED CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

### HAZARD 5

UNCOMMON ENVIRONMENTAL

**Stealth** DC 20 (trained)

**Description** Many carnivorous plants that were once kept satiated now hunger for any meat they can get, even lashing out onto the path to get it.

**Disable** DC 25 Survival (trained) to distract or trick the plants or DC 22 Nature (expert) to calm the plants

**AC** 20; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +9

**HP** 60 (BT 30); **Immunities** mental; **Weaknesses** acid 10, fire 10, slashing 10

**Trapping Vines** **Trigger** A creature moves within reach of the carnivorous plants' vines; **Effect** The vines wrap around the triggering creature. The creature must succeed at a DC 22 Reflex save or be grabbed until it Escapes (DC 22). Whether or not the creature is grabbed, the plants make a gnawing plants Strike against the creature.

**Melee** **◆** gnawing plants +17, **Damage** 8d4+12 piecing

### D1. OOZE MULTIPLICATION

### MODERATE 5

When the heroes reach this area, read or paraphrase the following.

A statue commemorating one of the Garden's founders is flanked by two large flytraps. The flytraps remain shut and quiver violently.

These two snapping flytraps fought over a small piece of an ochre jelly, pulling the ooze apart. Both ochre jelly parts began dissolving the flytraps' interior, quickly growing into separate jellies. The jellies are nearly ready to burst out of the flytraps, which are struggling to stay shut with the thrashing oozes inside. A hero

who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature check realizes that something is inside each of the flytraps and struggling to get free, killing the flytrap in the process—on a critical success, the hero realizes that there is a large ooze inside each flytrap.

**Creatures:** The snapping flytraps are so severely damaged by the ochre jellies that they don't pose any threat to the heroes; the true threats here are the jellies themselves. They burst from the flytraps after two rounds, or sooner if the flytraps are damaged. The ochre jellies then attack the heroes, craving more sustenance. If an ochre jelly bursts from the flytrap on its own, it uses Athletics for initiative; if it leaks free from a flytrap being damaged, it rolls Perception for initiative as normal. The oozes fight until destroyed.

### OCHRE JELLY (2)

### CREATURE 5

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 255

**Initiative** Perception +7 or Athletics +13

### SNAPPING FLYTRAPS (2)

### CREATURE 3

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 160

**Initiative** Perception +7

**Injured** The snapping flytraps are drained 4 and have only 5 Hit Points each.

**Saving the Flytraps:** The two snapping flytraps barely survive their oozy meal, and each die within a few minutes unless a hero succeeds at a DC 22 Medicine or Nature check to heal the flytrap or uses any healing effect that heals at least 20 Hit Points.

**Treasure:** Natofo becomes particularly moved if the heroes take the time to save the flytraps. She gives them a moderate antidote for each flytrap they save.

## D2. DESTROYED GRATE

## LOW 5

A spray of rot that emanates a powerful stench covers this area. The plants here seem pacified by the repulsive coating of filth.

A destroyed sewer grate is plainly the source of the filth spread around this area.

**Creature:** The sewer ooze Natofo believed to be disposed of lurks under the grate. When the heroes come close, it lunges forth and fights until destroyed.

### MUTATED SEWER OOZE

### CREATURE 6

UNIQUE N LARGE MINDLESS MUTANT OOZE

Variant sewer ooze (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 254)

**Perception** +10; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

**Skills** Stealth +9 (+12 in sewers)

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

**Motion Sense** A sewer ooze can sense nearby motion through vibration and air movements.

**AC** 16; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

**HP** 45; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, mental, precision, unconscious, visual

**Noxious Scent** (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). A creature taking persistent acid damage from the ooze's pseudopod can't recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

**Speed** 10 feet

**Melee** ♦ pseudopod +17 (agile, deadly d10, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 2d8+5 bludgeoning plus 1d4 acid and 1d4 persistent acid

**Filth Wave** ♦ **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** The sewer ooze unleashes a wave of filth, covering all creatures within a 20-foot emanation. Each creature in the area must succeed at a DC 24 Reflex save or take 1d4 acid damage and a -10-foot penalty to its Speeds for 1 minute (on a critical failure, the creature also falls prone). A creature can spend an Interact action to clean someone off, decreasing the Speed penalty by 5 feet with each action.

## D3. OOZE GAZEBO

## LOW 5

This stone gazebo contains a decorative bench overgrown with moss and tiny pitcher plants. Ivy on the gazebo's sides is lush and green, trailing across its base and the surrounding path. This looks like weeks or even months of overgrowth, not simply a few days' worth.

The plants here are all invigorated and animated by a verdurous ooze lurking in the conical ceiling of the gazebo, making the area within and adjacent difficult terrain. Natofo fed pieces of a verdurous ooze to the plants around the gazebo as a combination of food and botanical enrichment. A spitting plant rejected the food, hurling a glob of ooze up into the rafters after Natofo had gone. That glob eventually grew into an entirely new verdurous ooze. As verdurous oozes can't climb, once it falls down from the rafters it can't climb back up again.

**Creature:** The verdurous ooze lurks above the gazebo entrance, out of sight from anyone that isn't in the gazebo. When living creatures enter, it drops to the ground and emits its sleep gas before attacking with its pseudopods until it can't sense any creatures to attack.

### VERDURIOUS OOZE

### CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 194

**Initiative** Perception +8

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## WRAPPING UP

When the heroes dispatch the four oozes in the Carnivorous Gardens, Natofo is incredibly grateful. She admits that she should have been more careful with introducing new lifeforms to the delicate ecosystem but insists that she's made many useful discoveries for future work. She asks the heroes to relay her thanks to her brother but requests that they perhaps downplay the chaos they encountered in the Gardens, or she'll never hear the end of it.

**Treasure:** Natofo awards the players 60 gp for their help. She also leverages her brother's connections at the Magaambya to have a *staff of abjuration* delivered to them a few days later (if any of the heroes are a wizard with an arcane school other than abjuration, she instead arranges for a 6th-level staff of that arcane school to be delivered).

## Fiery Debt

**Difficulty** challenging

**Requested by** Janatimo

**Location** Fire-Pot's Forge

Before the heroes receive this request, they hear rumors describing nighttime fires across campus. The fires take place at unoccupied parts of the campus and appear to be nothing more than strangely coincidental accidents. So far, the fires have been extinguished before there's been any real damage, but rumors swirl that perhaps an arsonist is to blame. Janatimo wants to look deeper into the matter and calls in the heroes to investigate.

When the heroes answer the request and arrive at Janatimo's office, read or paraphrase the following.

"Greetings conversants! I suspect you've heard about the fires around campus. I am glad no one has been hurt yet, but I feel that someone's lighting those fires to draw our attention to something. Whoever or whatever this fire-starter is, they don't understand that fire is like magic: you don't ever fully control it, and the more you think you have it wholly contained, the more likely it is to hurt you or someone else.

"I'd like to find whoever's responsible and stop them before they end up learning this lesson the hard way and causing real damage. I'll need your help to investigate and track them down."

Janatimo answers any questions he can. Here are some questions the heroes might have.

**What makes you think someone is sending a message?** "If the aim were to hurt someone specific or to destroy a particular building, they certainly could've done so by now. I've come to understand that the arsonist used a sophisticated blend of magic and alchemy to ignite the fires. It would've been trivial to compound the reagents or the magic to amplify the effect and create a conflagration. These blazes are meant to make a statement, in my opinion."

**Do you think a student is to blame?** "I sincerely hope not, but you may want to talk to Xhokan and see if anyone has checked out supplies that seem suspicious." Janatimo knows that Haibram Thodja is often a suspect when strange fires are to blame, but some discreet inquiries have already shown Janatimo that Haibram hasn't been on campus when most of the fires were set.

**Why hasn't anyone investigated this before now?** "I think everyone at the Magaambya learns to tolerate a certain level of the odd or inexplicable occurring around them. Since there's been no serious damage and no one's been hurt, everyone is content to keep their heads down to focus on their studies."


**What do you think the reason for lighting the fires is?** "That is the story I wish you to discover and tell."

Before sending the heroes to investigate, Janatimo gives them a piece of paper with the locations of the three fires: a lecture hall that isn't in use this semester, a dormitory that's currently empty while the students are off doing field research in the Bandu Hills, and an irregularly used alchemical laboratory.

## INVESTIGATING THE FIRES

A man named **Fire-Pot Ubanu** (page 88) set the fires over the past few nights. An accomplished alchemist and fire sorcerer, Ubanu knows just how to create fires that burn hotly but don't

Mutated Sewer Ooze



cause more than superficial damage. Burn marks on the exterior walls are all the damage left behind. These marks make jagged lines from the alchemical residue used to set them—they spell out words, but as the fires temporarily burned out of control, the words are hard to decipher. A hero looking over the burn marks at a location can attempt a DC 15 Society check to Decipher Writing and realize the message Ubanu left. The word at the lecture hall is “Pay,” the word at the dormitory is “Your,” and the word at the lab is “Debts.”

Because his anger got the better of his common sense, Ubanu has left several clues behind. Many of these point to his identity and current whereabouts.

**Scene of the Crimes:** The heroes can learn more by asking around the arson sites. A successful DC 22 Diplomacy check to Gather Information reveals that a middle-aged human man wearing patchy leathers and reeking of sulfur loitered around all three areas. The smell is distinctive enough that asking around on campus or in Nantambu earns the heroes more information. On campus, senior faculty members remember a man named Ubanu as a hot-tempered applicant who, despite several tries, never earned admission to the school. In Nantambu, they know Fire-Pot as a curmudgeonly alchemist and weaponsmith who runs Fire-Pot’s Forge outside of town.

**Alchemical Residue:** A hero closely examining the burn marks finds a strange alchemical residue, just as Janatimo indicated. A successful DC 20 Crafting check reveals that the material is a highly refined alchemical gel that reacts only at high temperatures. A critical success reveals that the alchemical agent is meant to work specifically with magical flames to indelibly mark a surface.

If heroes speak with Xhokan about the reagent, he tells them that he doesn’t stock that gel at the school because such compounds are too advanced for most students to use effectively. He does know where the heroes can find such a gel, however: Fire-Pot’s Forge just outside of town. Xhokan warns them that Fire-Pot is cranky and unwelcome to visitors on his best days, so he may be unwilling to answer questions.

**School Debts:** Heroes who investigate any outstanding “debts” the school might have can ask at the bursar’s office in Warden House. A clever and talkative halfling named **Oukosh** (NG female halfling bookkeeper 4) tells them that a few weeks ago a cranky old human came in, ranting about needing payment for some chemicals he sold to students of the Magaambya. She remembers that the man smelled strongly of sulfur. He didn’t give his name but provided the names of the students who cheated him—Oukosh quickly confirmed that they’re not and never have been students. The man

kept ranting about expensive and complex acids that he lost a lot of time and money on and blames the school because he took these “students” at their word that the Magaambya would pay. He never even provided the amount he believed to be due, but Oukosh got the impression it was a lot—perhaps several thousand gold pieces. The man eventually left, but he promised to make the school pay one way or another.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP for recognizing Fire-Pot’s Forge as the next step of their investigation.

## FIRE-POT’S FORGE

Fire-Pot Ubanu’s forge can be found in a cliffside cave on the outskirts of Nantambu. He crafts weapons and sells highly specialized alchemical reagents for breaking down and destroying hard materials like stone and metal. Fire-Pot feels more at home with fiery creatures than other people, so he takes great pains to reduce or minimize his contact with others. Most people buy his goods from the pugnacious minotaurs he hires as guards. The last time Ubanu spoke to customers he prepared some special acid for “Magaambya students,” and he’s still angry about the nonpayment. In truth, these weren’t students at all, but the serpentfolk Oyo and Mtembe in disguise, seeking a strong acid for Salathiss (page 92) that was ultimately insufficient to open the *Vesicant Egg*.

When the heroes approach Fire-Pot’s Forge, read or paraphrase the following.

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Fire-Pot’s Forge is at the bottom of a riverside cliff. The gravelly path winds down the cliff until it fans out into a large open shore, which is spotted with a campfire and a few shoddily built huts. A variety of weapons and alchemical goods sit on display in front of the huts, and beyond is a wide-mouthed cave.

---

The cave interior is brightly lit by lanterns and fires that heat Ubanu’s forge. The walls that separate the cave interior into several rooms are made of metal with metal doors; they’re locked where indicated in the descriptions of those areas.

## E1. MINOTAUR SHOPS

## MODERATE 6

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The campfire in the middle of the huts has been quenched recently, smoke rising lazily from the burnt logs. Shelves of full vials and racks of weapons stand near the huts.

---

This is where Ubanu’s four minotaurs gather to sell his goods and guard his forge. They’ve had their skin scorched and toughened with fire over time. At any point, two of them remain in this area to receive customers while the other two stay in their huts.

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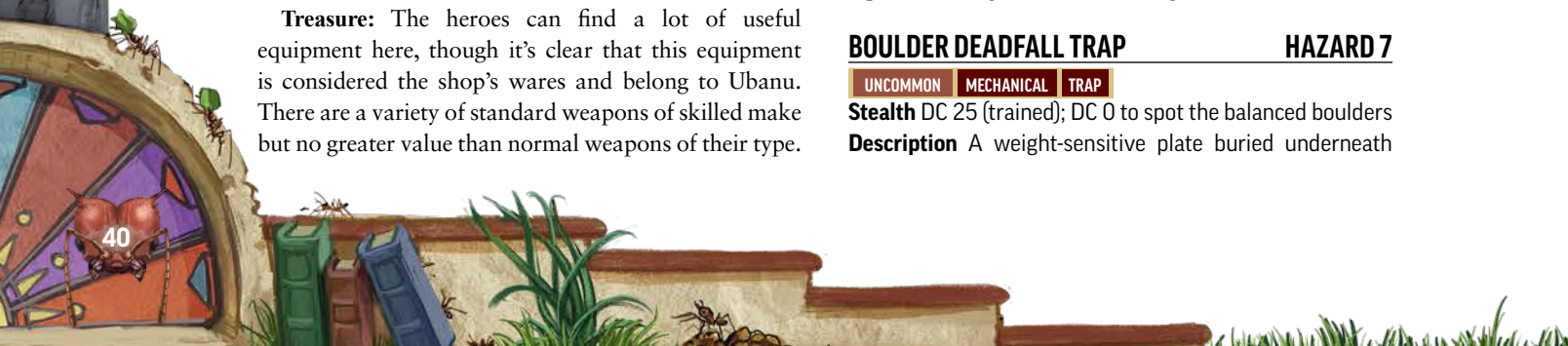
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## CREATURE 4

Minotaurs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 237)

**HP 70; Resistances** fire 5

## E2. BOULDER DEADFALL


**Trap:** The entrance to Ubanu's forge is secured with a boulder deadfall trap (triggering area indicated on the map above with a dotted line). He only arms the trap when he expects trouble—like now, as he expects the Magaambya to send people to silence him for insisting on his payment. After the rocks fall, the opening is small enough to admit Small or smaller creatures; Medium creatures must succeed at a DC 15 Acrobatics check to Squeeze through (DC 25 for Large creatures).

## HAZARD 7

**Stealth** DC 25 (trained); DC 0 to spot the balanced boulders  
**Description** A weight-sensitive plate buried underneath

sand pulls a boulder over a cliff ledge, causing it to fall on targets within the entrance.

**Disable** DC 27 Crafting (expert) or DC 25 Thievery (expert) to find and disconnect the plate from the tipping mechanism

**Deadfall**  **Trigger** A creature enters the area without taking care to avoid the hidden trigger plate; **Effect** Creatures within 10 feet of the cave entrance take 4d10+18 damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save).

**Reset** Resetting the boulders in the trap is a labor-intensive project that takes 2 hours.

**Locked Gates:** Both of the iron gates leading east (to areas **E3** and **E4**) are locked with simple locks (requiring three successful DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or a successful DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open).

**Noisy Alarm:** If the boulders fall, they make enough noise to alert Ubanu that intruders are near. He calls his hellcat ally Rajata from area **E4** to his side in area **E5**. If intruders haven't appeared in about half an hour, Rajata returns to her lair in area **E4**.

### E3. FIRE PIT

MODERATE 6

The room's intense heat emanates from a large pit with a metal pipe rising out of it and into the cave wall. Near the wall, the pipe is outfitted with a large valve.

Ubanu has bound two fire elementals to the pit in this room. They provide a smoky heat, which travels through the pipe in this room to Ubanu's forge.

**Creatures:** The two striding fires also serve as guardians. When anyone who isn't Ubanu spends more than a round in this room, they crawl up out of the pit to attack.

One of them takes a two-action Interact activity to turn the valve on the pipe. Smoke fills the room one round later. This smoke provides concealment, but the striding fires can see normally due to their Smoke Vision. Closing the valve stops the smoke, which clears out of the room after two rounds.

The striding fires don't pursue creatures out of this room, but otherwise fight until destroyed.

### STRIDING FIRES (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 111

**Initiative** Perception +14

### E4. UBANU'S PET

LOW 6

A pile of smoldering trash in a corner emits a stench that fills the room. An open metal cage stands opposite the trash pile.

The odor of the garbage is powerful. Creatures entering this room or starting their turn within it must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure) and can't recover from the sickened condition while in this room and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. Regardless of the result of this save, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

**Creature:** If Ubanu hasn't called his hellcat Rajata to fight with him, she's in the center of this room feeding on charred meat. Rajata doesn't mind the smell of the room as it reminds her of the worst parts of Hell.



Fireskin Minotaur

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Rajata is as lazy as she is sneaky. She begins combat by Fading into the Light and then uses her Menacing Growl, making its noise emanate from the pile of burning filth. She prefers to attack frightened creatures, and if there aren't any, she lurks around invisibly until she can use Menacing Growl again. Her bond with Ubanu is strong, but she's too self-interested to remain in a fight she's losing. If reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points, Rajata flees and doesn't return.

## RAJATA

## CREATURE 7

Female hellcat (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 141)

**Initiative** Perception +16

## E5. UBANU'S STUDY

## MODERATE 6

This room is a mixture of a laboratory, arcane study, and forge. A basin rising out the floor is filled with burning red coal and ringed with half-finished weapons. The other part of the room contains shelves and a stone workbench with singed papers strewn across its surface. The room bears a pungent smell of sulfur.

If Ubanu hears the boulder deadfall trap trigger in area E2, he calls his hellcat Rajata to his side for protection. Together, they make a Severe encounter, even considering Rajata's general laziness and tendency to leave when a fight gets tough.

When Ubanu sees the heroes, he understands that they've come from the Magaambya. Read or paraphrase the following.

"You've finally come for some vengeance, eh? Well, I'll have you know that it's my time for some well-deserved *payback*! Fire-Pot Ubanu will have what he is owed, even if the price is paid in blood!"

**Creature:** Fire-Pot Ubanu attacks right away, trying to ensure he gets the upper hand. If the heroes refrain from attacking him and one of them insists that they want to talk by succeeding at a DC 28 Diplomacy check, Ubanu stops long enough to cautiously hear them out. If the heroes offer clearly to pay him, reduce this DC to 23. Ubanu also surrenders if reduced to fewer than 50 HP.

## FIRE-POT UBANU

## CREATURE 8

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**Initiative** Perception +16

**Talking with Ubanu:** Ubanu makes his demands clear: he wants the 300 gp that students of the Magaambya promised to pay for his stonerot solvent.

If he doesn't get his money, he plans to keep terrorizing the school until it pays up. He answers only a few questions before his temper gets the better of him again. A few questions the heroes might ask Ubanu and his responses can be found below.

**Who were the students?** "You better believe I remember the names of those dishonest cheats! Oyo and Mtembe, two students in your so-called 'advanced studies' classes." The heroes know there aren't any courses as generic as "advanced studies." If they ask for a description, Ubanu describes Oyo and Mtembe, the pair lurking in the storeroom in area A3. Of course, Ubanu has no idea they are serpentfolk, and he treats this revelation with a combination of surprise and suspicion.

**What did the students want?** "They wanted a substance that could neutralize and break down powerful acids. They said they were studying some kind of magical acid. They couldn't even describe it all that well—it was plain they were just ordering it on someone else's behalf, and I guessed it was for a teacher." If the heroes happen to have the clay jug from area A7, Ubanu confirms that it's the remains of the solvent he gave the students.

**Why did you burn the school?** "Why didn't the school pay me? I tried talking to them, and that got me nothing. I sent my message in flame, and now you're here!"


**Would you take anything besides money?** "It's hard to think of something better than money, but... I've got magic in my blood. I always have. I've always wondered what it would be like if I could learn to use it—formal education, I mean..."

The easiest way to get Ubanu to back down is to pay him with the heroes' own funds. The Magaambya won't pay for something ordered through fraud—Oukosh is insistent on this matter. If the heroes want to find out whether Ubanu might be able to enroll at the Magaambya, their best course of action is to ask Janatimo.

**XP Award:** If the heroes talk Ubanu down rather than fight him, award them XP as though they'd defeated him in combat.

## WRAPPING UP

If the students need some help paying Ubanu, Janatimo offers to pay half the amount out of his personal funds. He has one condition: Ubanu must come to campus and publicly apologize for his attack on the school and promise to never do anything like that again. Ubanu's pride makes this difficult; unless one of the heroes succeeds at a DC 28 Diplomacy check (or, based on how they frame the request, a Deception check), he refuses.



Janatimo is initially hopeful that Ubanu could take classes at the Magaambya, but a quick search of school records reveals his troublesome application history and explosive temper. For the school to admit him, someone must accept close responsibility for his coursework and behavior, to help ensure that Ubanu keeps his temper under control. If the heroes agree to do so, Janatimo arranges to have him provisionally admitted.

You can decide how much work with Ubanu the heroes are required to do; at a minimum, the distractions of aiding him to excel should increase the DC of the heroes' skill checks to Study by 1 and their skill checks to Cram by 2 for the next two academic semesters. Ubanu might also be placed directly under their tutelage, as described in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #171: Hurricane's Howl*.

If the heroes dealt with the problem by killing Ubanu, Janatimo's disappointment is clear. He believes the man should have been granted solutions to his problem instead of death.

**Treasure:** If the heroes arrange for the Magaambya to admit Ubanu, he thanks them by giving them the best weapon he's ever made, his *fulminating spear* (page 76).

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 30 XP if they're able to get Ubanu admitted to the Magaambya.

## Trouble from the Skies

**Difficulty** challenging

**Requested by** Ahassunu

**Location** jungles south of Nantambu

The heroes receive this request from Teacher Ahassunu (N female lizardfolk diplomat 12), a professor of diplomatic history at the school. Heroes with Uzunjati as their primary or secondary branch likely already know Ahassunu, as she's something of a colorful character among Uzunjati faculty.

When the party arrives at Ahassunu's office on the top floor of the Elephant Museum, read or paraphrase the following.

"Welcome, conversants!" Ahassunu says happily, her scaled face breaking into a wide grin. "I've been watching your progress. Quite impressive, I say, quite impressive. It reminds me of a group of ancient Mwangi Expanse warriors who defied all expectations when they—oh, you didn't come here for me to ramble. You want to know what I need from you, yes?"

"Well," she says without pausing for answer, "I have a dear old friend who is a goat herder on the Nantambu outskirts. For an iruxi, she has quite the affinity for those hairy mammals. Do you know who else has an affinity for goats?"

"Jungle drakes," she says without pause. "My friend needs help to stop some of these creatures from grazing on her livestock. I'm happy to give you directions when you're ready to go."

Ahassunu doesn't have much additional information, but she's happy to engage in conversation of any type. A hero who wants to impress the professor can attempt a successful DC 24

Lore check of any type. The heroes might think to ask for the friend's name;

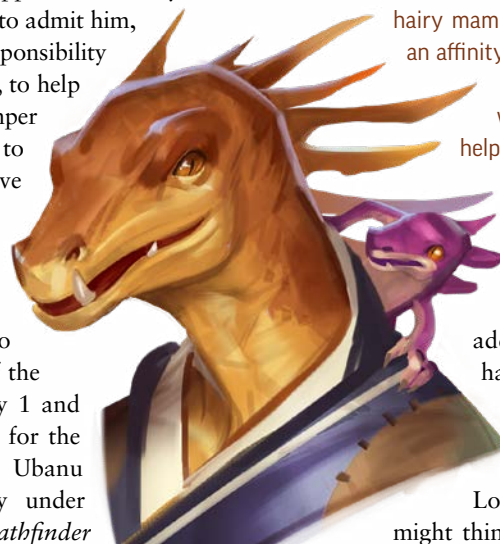
Ahassunu first looks puzzled, insisting she's already given it, but then explains (again, in her recollection) that her friend is Ibisu. In any case, she provides directions to Ibisu's fields, which are southwest of Nantambu.

When the heroes head to Ibisu's fields they spot an elderly iruxi with lime-green skin moving deliberately through a flock of several dozen goats. It's clear she's moving slowly not due to the aches or pains of old age, as she's quite agile, but out of concern for her goats—she nudges them gently out of her way with her staff as she walks. She's plainly pleased to see the heroes and impressed that the Magaambya would send so many students to help her.

After making introductions, Ibisu tells the heroes the following story.

"Nantambu is a living, changing city. Nothing ever remains the same for too long! But sometimes that change brings pain. Nearby there are a male and female jungle drake. I could watch them fly in the skies all day long, courting each other.

"And I would... except that they've developed a taste for my goats, as I'm sure Ahassunu told you. I need these goats for my livelihood. I tried to speak to a friend of a friend, Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, but he was not nearly as approachable as I was led to believe. Everyone else I try to talk to reminds me that jungle drakes are cruel and scheming monsters and wants to turn them into pelts or trophies. I don't want that—I just want them moved! They have eggs, and moving the eggs means the drakes will follow. No matter how mean they are, they want what's best for their children, just as we all do. I've already found



Teacher Ahassunu

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thirty feet high. The waterfall and river are surrounded on all sides by lush vegetation.

Although the water right at the base of the waterfall is about 5 feet deep, the river is otherwise only about 2 feet deep and is greater difficult terrain. The Athletics DC to Climb the stones by the waterfall is only 15.

If the heroes arrive during the day the drakes can be found flying above the canopy of the trees, looking for prey. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots them. During the evening, the drakes sleep in their nest, and the sound of the waterfall provides good cover to sneak up on the pair. A hero need only succeed at a DC 13 Stealth check to approach the nest while the drakes sleep.

The easiest way to lure the drakes close is to approach the nest containing their three eggs. Even if the drakes soar high above, they both dive to protect the eggs once they realize a creature has gotten close to them.

A hero can lure the drakes wherever they choose in the area by using the live goats as bait and succeeding at a DC 20 Nature or Survival check to ensure that the animals are placed so that the drakes smell them. Both drakes come down to eat the goats, putting them within the heroes' reach.

**Talking to the Drakes:** Jungle drakes are somewhat intelligent, but they only speak Draconic. A hero able to speak with them might simply explain that the drakes are causing trouble for Nantambu and must move further away. The jungle drakes don't really mind going somewhere that provides good hunting, as Ibisu's proposed location does, but they don't pass up an easy meal. If the heroes brought goats or some other food, the drakes accept it if a hero succeeds at a DC 21 Diplomacy check. If the hero fails this check, or has no food to offer, the drakes pretend to parley long enough to get close and attack. As their Deception DC is only 11, this ruse is appallingly easy to spot.

**Creatures:** The drakes prefer to attack with their fangs and stingers. If they're fighting near the top of the waterfall, they grab creatures and hurl them off into the foliage or the water below. Heroes can attack the drakes with nonlethal effects to subdue them but might have other approaches to ensure the drakes aren't killed. You should be flexible in allowing for creative solutions, as knocking the drakes out rather than simply slaughtering them outright is the key focus of this encounter.

Once the drakes are unconscious or otherwise incapacitated, keeping them unconscious long enough

a distant place where they could live comfortably, if I could get them there.

"That's where you come in."

Ibisu asks the heroes to help her catch the drakes. She has a wagon and some very sturdy collapsible cages from Oba Eze. Ibisu has already located the drakes' nest, which is near a pretty waterfall in the jungle. She also provides a map on goatskin parchment showing a new, distant location for the drakes' release, about a day's travel further from the city. Before sending the heroes out, Ibisu reminds them that the drakes aren't just animals and that killing them is unacceptable.

Ibisu doesn't suggest it, but the heroes might realize that one or two goats could be excellent bait (they also realize this with a successful DC 20 nature check). Ibisu is happy to give up two of her fattest goats for this plan.

## FORCED MIGRATION

## MODERATE 6

The drakes' nest perches near the top of a waterfall rising

to load them into the cages and release them into Ibisu's new location can be resolved easily.

## JUNGLE DRAKES (2)

## CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 132

**Initiative** Perception +13

**Returning to Ibisu:** If the heroes kill either drake, Ibisu becomes furious and refuses to speak to them other than to remind them that she specifically told them not to kill the drakes. Ahassunu also expresses some disappointment in the heroes, but she maintains a less rosy picture of the reality of the situation, and knows that self-defense sometimes requires lethal force.

**Treasure:** If the heroes get the drakes to the new location mostly unharmed, Ibisu is incredibly pleased and gives them a keepsake that she has had for some time, a *bag of cats*.

**XP Award:** If the heroes successfully relocate the drakes, award them 120 XP.

## Finding Froglegs

**Difficulty** taxing

**Requested by** Janatimo

**Location** Thieves' Swamp outside Nantambu

Some of the heroes' prior tasks indicated that there's a reclusive and brutal new crime boss in Nantambu named Froglegs. Although the heroes might have learned a little bit about her nature and background, they haven't been able to find out where she's hiding—until now. Janatimo has been following up on information the heroes previously acquired, and he finally has a lead. He's all but given up on the Chime-Ringers doing anything about this, so that leaves him with the heroes.

Janatimo's request to meet him in his office comes with a taxidermy poison dart frog from his collection of oddities. When the heroes arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

"Ah! You received my message, and perhaps interpreted the silly clue that accompanied it. We've been hearing a lot about a new crime boss named Froglegs. She's mostly kept to the shadows, making people afraid to even say her name for fear of being silenced.

"The more violent her crimes become, however, the more people are willing to set aside their anxiety and speak out about her. For the first time, we have a good lead on where Froglegs can be found. We know why she's been so hard to find in Nantambu: she's not in Nantambu. Instead, she's just outside the city, in a swampy, unpleasant area where the city sewers deposit waste. It's not a place people want

## INTERROGATING FROGLEGS'S MINIONS

Froglegs's reputation for revenge makes most people reluctant to say anything about her, and her closest minions have witnessed her thirst for vengeance firsthand. Skill checks to get information out of captured minions have their DCs increased by 5 (normally, to the thief's Will DC + 5). They only know what their rank suggests—low-ranking thieves know little about the high-ranking thieves, and high-ranking thieves know much about the lower ranks but not much about Froglegs beyond where her hut is. The exceptions are the grippli skirmishers in area **F3**, who can provide a lot of information about Froglegs's background if questioned, because they've known her for so long.

to go, which seems to have suited Froglegs well. If we wait much longer, she may relocate—even if she doesn't, other people will suffer from her reign of crime. We must act."

Janatimo gives a wide smile.

"I say we, but I really mean you, conversants. I think you are ready for this task. I need you to arrest Froglegs."

The heroes are likely to have some follow-up questions for Janatimo.

**Why us?** "Many reasons. Because you've run into Froglegs's schemes at least once, because you've proved you are flexible and tough, and because performing this task will teach you more about yourself."

**Why doesn't the faculty of the Magaambya take action?** "We are! We act in Nantambu through our trusted conversants, and you've certainly proven your trustworthiness to me."

**Why don't we just go to the authorities?** "The Chime-Ringers are too busy chasing petty criminals, like some of the ones you've encountered. They refuse to see the grander story unfolding behind their backs. Magistrate-Mayor Asanda remains too obsessed with repairing his flooded mansion to provide the necessary direction... although I'd have thought that work would have been finished by now."

**Is our arrest binding?** "Yes, but only provisionally. Once she's in custody—with the Chime-Ringers if they can spare a holding room, or with my Tempest-Sun Mage colleagues if they cannot—we can investigate the scope of her network and put an end to the recent criminal activity plaguing Nantambu. Of course, you should bring any evidence you uncover while working to capture her."

**Can we kill Froglegs?** "Murder would make you little more than vigilantes, and we can't risk such a

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**THIEVES' SWAMP**  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

stain on the Magaambya's reputation. We need to stop her, but we don't want to become like her. She's unlikely to come along willingly, but if you're resolute and forthright, you can capture rather than kill her."

Janatimo gives the heroes directions and encourages them to head after Froglegs without delay.

**Treasure:** Janatimo also gives the heroes some supplies that might come in useful: a set of average manacles, two moderate healing potions, and a moderate antiplague for each hero. He also gives each hero a simple necklace containing a lump of scented wax, which should help offset the smell of the unpleasant environment.

### THIEVES' SWAMP

Located in a noisome, swampy area that receives a lot of the output of Nantambu's sewer system, Froglegs's hideout is tucked away in a place where people generally don't want to spend much time—and this includes most of her crew. Very few members of Froglegs's organization ever meet her here. Those who do travel here either to receive a promotion, handle an important task, or unknowingly facilitate their own execution and subsequent disposal in the swamp.

Like everything Froglegs does, she chose her hideout's unpleasant location with intention. Gripplis don't mind the swamp smell, but other humanoids avoid staying long, lingering here only when they need to split up loot, take orders, or lie low. Her thieves stay in two ramshackle huts (one for lower-ranked members of her crew, and the other for higher-ranked members). Froglegs lives in a stone and wood building on a low hill in the least-odious part of the swamp.

Froglegs has more non-gripplis than gripplis in her organization, but as gripplis don't mind staying here as much, they're more commonly encountered here.

When the heroes arrive in the swamp, read or paraphrase the following.

---

This swampy area outside the city is near one of Nantambu's sewer outlets. On the rainiest days, water sluices through the area, but today the stench is barely tolerable, and the brown-green water looks dangerous to stand in.

---

Fortunately, the paths are well used and maintained, which makes navigating the fetid swamp easier. The

three buildings are usually lit from within by lanterns after dark, but natural light otherwise prevails.

**Swamp Guts:** The sewage-tainted swamp is dangerous to wade through, even though it's only 4 feet deep at most. Anyone who spends time in the water must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or contract a disease called swamp guts.

### SWAMP GUTS

### DISEASE 6

UNCOMMON DISEASE VIRULENT

Exposure to the swampy sewage produces extreme nausea and weakness for several days.

**Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 hour; **Stage 1** sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** enfeebled 1 and fatigued (1 day); **Stage 3** enfeebled 2 and fatigued (1 day); **Stage 4** enfeebled 4 and fatigued (1 day)

## F1. LOW-RANK SAFEHOUSE

## MODERATE 6

This ramshackle hovel built from scraps of metal and wood seems appropriate given the environment. Wooden bridges connect the island the structure is on to others in the swamp.

This hovel serves as the hideout for lower-ranking criminals in Froglegs's organization. It is unstable enough to fall apart if given a solid shove. Here, subordinates place Froglegs's cut of their earnings in a strongbox under the watchful eyes of a higher-ranking thief, who gets it to her. If her cut is even a copper short, she accosts the thief for the transgression (resentment toward such shakedowns inspired Reth to break out on his own and start robbing the city's entertainers).

**Creatures:** Right now, there are only two low-ranking criminals staying here. A gripli burglar named Yorulu stopped to turn over proceeds from recent burglaries, and a gnoll enforcer named Spotted Fist is laying low after being too aggressive while collecting protection payments. A gripli jinjer named Hrroupo collects Froglegs's cut from Yorulu while giving Spotted Fist a lecture on subtlety—a concept the gnoll seems unable to comprehend. Hrroupo likes bossing the other criminals around, dragging his words out as long as he can.

All three criminals react quickly to trouble. They want to prove themselves to Froglegs, and eliminating snoopers seems like a great way to do so. They don't surrender until there's only one of them left standing.

If Mashkudu or Kiru fled from the heroes in area C1, they're here as well, pleading with Hrroupo to ask Froglegs for a second chance to serve her.

### HRROUPO

### CREATURE 6

Male gripli jinjer (page 83)

**Initiative** Perception +16

### YORULU

### CREATURE 4

NE SMALL GRIPPLI HUMANOID

Female gripli burglar (*Gamemastery Guide* 210)

**Initiative** Perception +10 (+11 to find traps); low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Gripli

### SPOTTED FIST

### CREATURE 4

Female gnoll sergeant (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 179)

**Initiative** Perception +10

**Treasure:** The strongbox here is currently unlocked and contains 23 gp, 13 sp, 10 cp, and a *singing muse* (page 76).



Yorulu

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## F2. OLD THRASHER'S LAIR

MODERATE 6

Old Thrasher is a crocodile who has survived here in the sewer runoff for a long time and grown strong, fierce, and a little senile. It swims around this low island, eyeing anyone who crosses as a potential meal. Froglegs teaches the higher-ranked thieves a special whistle that keeps Old Thrasher calm, as the crocodile has learned to expect a special jerky treat when it hears the sound. Feeding Old Thrasher is a dangerous job, and one that Froglegs assigns to subordinates that she wouldn't mind losing to the beast (the gripli jinxer in area F1, Hrroupo, has had to take on this task more often than he'd like). If the heroes hide and observe the island, the notice people who cross safely use the whistle each time.

Old Thrasher lurks just under the water for hours at a time, so it's hard to spot; a hero looking over the area from a distance spots the crocodile with a successful DC 30 Perception check. If the heroes know Old Thrasher is there, it's easy enough to lure it away with food, particularly jerky. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature check to Command an Animal gets Old Thrasher to temporarily relocate; several hours usually expire before it comes back.

**Creature:** Old Thrasher is ready to attack anyone who crosses the island without giving the whistle. If the heroes haven't spotted it, it uses Stealth for initiative. The tenacious crocodile only retreats if reduced to

fewer than 20 Hit Points, but it doesn't chase after foes who flee.

## OLD THRASHER

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE N LARGE ANIMAL

Variant crocodile (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 67)

**Perception** +16; low-light vision

**Skills** Athletics +18, Stealth +16 (+20 in water)

**Str** +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -2

**AC** 26; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

**HP** 140

**Speed** 20 feet, swim 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ jaws +20, **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing plus Grab

**Melee** ♦ tail +20 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

**Death Roll** ♦ (attack) **Requirement** Old Thrasher must have a creature grabbed; **Effect** Old Thrasher tucks its legs and rolls rapidly, twisting its victim. It makes a jaws Strike with a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll against the grabbed creature. If it hits, it also knocks the creature prone. If it fails, it releases the creature.

**Deep Breath** Old Thrasher can hold its breath for about 4 hours.

**Into the Deep** ♦ **Requirement** Old Thrasher must have a creature grabbed; **Effect** Old Thrasher Swims, bringing its victim along with it.

**Thunderous Tail** ♦♦ Old Thrasher makes up to three tail Strikes against different targets. Any target hit must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save (DC 30 on a critical hit) or be knocked prone.

**XP Award:** If the heroes bypass Old Thrasher without a fight, award them XP as though they'd defeated the crocodile in combat.

## F3. HIGH-RANK SAFEHOUSE

SEVERE 6

This hut looks ready to fall into the swamp with a hard shove. A thick tarp hangs over the entrance, concealing the interior from view, and smoke billowing from a vent in the roof indicates a fire is burning inside.

The hut is far sturdier than it appears, as hard wood and sheets of metal reinforce its internal walls. Anyone attempting to knock over the hut only makes a lot of noise, alerting those inside.

The recent expansion of Froglegs's criminal activities has meant more work for her higher-ranking criminals; thus, this safehouse is more crowded than usual. The residents take turns keeping guard, so at least two of the creatures who dwell here



Old Thrasher

remain outside the hut at all times. These guardians don't expect any trouble, so they usually swap stories or nap just outside the tarp door.

**Creatures:** The Platanna Crew is comprised of four gripli skirmishers who came to Nantambu as performing acrobats but secretly work as pickpockets. They allied with Froglegs before she killed the former crime boss, Habu the Cudgel, and they've ascended through the ranks along with her. They know quite a bit about Froglegs, including her real name—Ktaal—and the impact of her strong relationship with her murdered mother. They remain among the few thieves who serve Froglegs out of respect rather than fear.

A scruffy dwarf from Kibwe named Kolbo currently bunks with the griplis. Froglegs gave Kolbo a high rank because he's provided useful information about his former employers, the Aspis Consortium. Froglegs has already started to realize that Kolbo is a con artist, and his claims are mostly lies. He knows his footing with Froglegs is shaky, and he's desperate to either stabilize it or part ways with her entirely.

The griplis are dedicated to Froglegs; they fight until only one gripli remains, and that survivor tries to flee to warn Froglegs that the intruders were more than they could handle. Unfortunately, the gripli doesn't realize that an i'iko dragon has taken up residence beneath the bridge to Froglegs's hut (area F4) and is swiftly killed by the creature.

Kolbo is not very loyal, but he is opportunistic; if any of the griplis seem close to being defeated, Kolbo tries to subtly finish the gripli off with a knowing wink to the heroes. He isn't on the heroes' side—he just hopes that if things go sour and he needs some leverage to get the heroes to accept his surrender (or even to let him go), that he can claim he was "helping them out all along." Even if the criminals prevail, that's one less gripli to vie with for Froglegs's favor. Kolbo surrenders if he's reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points, and he flees only if he thinks he can escape without too much trouble.

## GRIPPLI SKIRMISHERS (4)

## CREATURE 4

Page 82

**Initiative** Perception +12

## KOLBO

## CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Male dwarf con artist

**Perception** +12; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Jotun

**Skills** Athletics +14, Deception +15, Intimidation +13, Society +12, Thievery +14

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

**Items** heavy crossbow (10 bolts), lesser elixir of life, leather armor, longsword, strongbox key, thieves' tools

**A Quick Word** If Kolbo is aware of his opponents and isn't prevented from speaking, he rolls Deception for initiative.

**AC** 24; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13

**HP** 115

**Deny Advantage** Kolbo isn't flat-footed to creatures of 6th level or lower that are hidden, undetected, flanking, or using surprise attack.

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** ✦ longsword +17 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing

**Melee** ✦ heavy crossbow +15 (range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d10 piercing

**Low Blow** ➤ **Requirements** Kolbo successfully Feints an opponent; **Effect** The foe is knocked prone.

**Sneak Attack** Kolbo deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



Kolbo

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**Treasure:** A strongbox in the hut is locked with a good lock, and Kolbo has been entrusted with the key—for now. The strongbox contains an item the thieves use only as a last resort: a *chime of opening*.

#### F4. DRAGONFLY BRIDGE

LOW 6

This plank bridge remains in serious disrepair, with the rope railing on the east side dangling in the water. A heavy floral fragrance hangs in the air, and several dragonflies buzz about the bridge.

The bridge is as rickety as it looks. A creature that Strides more than half its Speed in a single action must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save, or a board pops free beneath the creature's feet and the creature is immobilized until it Escapes (DC 20).

Froglegs uses an alchemical agent that interacts with the water to attract and agitate dragonflies. She considers the mundane dragonflies good for snacks and the giant dragonflies to be useful guardians. The giant dragonflies attack anyone on the bridge, even Froglegs, so she keeps the alchemical substance in a metal ball attached to the dangling rope. The ball bobs just beneath the water's surface, and a hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check notices it there. When someone pulls up the rope on either side of the bridge, the alchemical attractant fades quickly. The rank smell of the swamp replaces the floral smell in the next minute, and the dragonflies disperse (only to return when the attractant drops back into the water).

**Creatures:** Only a single giant dragonfly remains to guard the bridge. An i'iko dragon moved into this area a day ago without Froglegs's knowledge. They delight in feasting on giant dragonflies here, and have already captured and eaten two of three native to the area. The remaining giant dragonfly has thus far proved too quick for the i'iko dragon to catch. The i'iko dragon now lurks beneath the bridge, snapping up the smaller dragonflies when they get peckish. They know the alchemical substance attached to the rope railing keeps the dragonflies here, so if the heroes lift it from the water, the dragon reaches up a claw to pull it back into the water again.

The giant dragonfly attacks anyone on the bridge but stays clear of the i'iko dragon. Maddened by the alchemical aroma, it fights to the death.

The i'iko dragon considers the bridge part of their territory and aggressively opposes anyone who attempts to cross it. The dragon uses Stealth for initiative if the heroes haven't noticed them hiding under the bridge. They first scramble onto the bridge to use their Draconic Grandeur, and then attack

anyone who doesn't flee from them. The i'iko dragon takes to the water to flee if reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, but there's another way the heroes might convince them to end combat: if a hero kills the giant dragonfly, the i'iko dragon immediately offers to retreat and allow the heroes passage over the bridge if the heroes give the dragon the dragonfly to eat. The dragon is a surprisingly courteous creature—that is, once the heroes get on their good side, and for so long as they remain appropriately flattering.

#### I'IKO DRAGON

CREATURE 6

Page 84

**Initiative** Perception +12 or Stealth +15

#### GIANT DRAGONFLY

CREATURE 4

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 98

**Initiative** Perception +11

#### F5. FROGLEGS'S HUT

SEVERE 6

This octagonal house stands about twenty feet high and is built from stone and fine wood. All windows are boarded up and its only door has been reinforced with metal plates.

Froglegs's hut is the most comfortable of the three huts in the swamp, featuring a cozy hammock, several crates of food and stolen goods, and a full-length mirror on one wall.

If the heroes made significant noise in any of the previous encounters, or if they launched an initial attack but had to retreat, Froglegs suspects they're coming. She directs her lieutenant, a grippli jinxer named Grubush, to pretend to be her and distract the intruders while she hides behind a stack of crates to ambush them. If they're caught unaware, Froglegs and Grubush speak about their plans for future crimes as they are interrupted by the heroes.

**Creatures:** Froglegs doesn't waste time trying to parley. She goes quickly on the offensive, and as soon as she attacks, Grubush joins in the fight. If the heroes retreat, Froglegs commands him to pursue them, but she doesn't leave her hut for fear of falling into a trap. Grubush is loyal but flees if plainly outmatched, much to Froglegs's frustration.

Froglegs isn't suicidal, and she's canny enough to know when she's been beaten. If she's reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points and doesn't seem likely to win the fight, she throws down her weapons and raises her hands to surrender, saying, "Okay, you've got me, you can arrest me. But you should know that the chief criminal in this city isn't me—he's at Magistrate-Mayor Asanda's house." She won't say

more until the heroes call off the fight as well and have her in custody; she trusts that the heroes won't kill her if she goes peacefully.

## FROGLEGS

## CREATURE 8

Page 90

**Initiative** Perception +16

## GRUBUSH

## CREATURE 6

Male griplli jinjer (page 83)

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Questioning Froglegs:** Froglegs thinks she can get a lighter sentence—and perhaps more easily escape jail altogether—if she turns against the other significant force lurking in Nantambu. If asked about Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, she tells the heroes the following information.

“So, my people have said the magistrate-mayor isn't... exactly who he appears to be. Quite different, in fact. It's been like that for some time, ever since the flood, I think. It's not just that he's hiding out, shirking his duties. He's been making secret trips across the city onto the Magaambya campus. At least, he did, but he hasn't recently. Some opportunity he was pursuing there just dried up, it seems, and I suppose you lot had something to do with that.

“People who visit Asanda's manor just disappear. Trust me to know what it looks like when you're disposing of people who threaten to expose you. I bet he's a lot more like me than you'd like to think.”

Otherwise, Froglegs is dismissive of the heroes, or rude if she's treated badly. She knows better than to talk about crimes she's been directly involved with, such as freeing Oba Eze's griffons, burgling houses with Kalembi, or assassinating Reth. She merely responds with, “I prefer to take that up with the ‘actual’ authorities, thank you.”

**Mercy for the Crime Boss:** Froglegs has spent so much of her life being betrayed or lied to that she finds trust difficult and anonymity comfortable. If the heroes are honest and fair in dealing with Froglegs, and particularly if they call her by her real name, Ktaal, her unkind demeanor cracks. The hero who shows her the most mercy and honesty can attempt a DC 24 Diplomacy check. On a success, Froglegs realizes that this arrest is a turning point, an opportunity to make amends for the things she's done and to surround herself with trustworthy people.

**Treasure:** The stolen goods here are of little monetary value, though their owners are glad to get

their possessions back if the heroes take the time to return them. A strongbox beneath the hammock has 400 gp in various gems, a *bismuth leopards wondrous figurine* (page 77; the poltergeist Gerrus longs to see it once again) and a *warcaller's chime of blasting* (page 77).

**XP Award:** If the heroes show mercy to Froglegs and teach her to value trust again, award them 30 XP in addition to the XP for defeating her in combat.

## WRAPPING UP

If the heroes kill Froglegs, Janatimo is deeply upset. He lectures them about their responsibilities and the goals of the school, but it shakes his confidence that the heroes can be trusted to make the right decision.

If the heroes arrest Froglegs, Janatimo is quite pleased. He's enough of a realist to know that Froglegs might have enough clout to bribe her way out of custody, but she now knows she has enemies who see her and have the power to stand up to her. If the heroes took the extra step of showing Froglegs mercy and putting her on the long road to redemption, he's doubly impressed and calls this out as a specific example of the good that is expected of Magaambyans in the world.

He's troubled but not completely surprised at Froglegs's implications about Magistrate-Mayor Asanda. Janatimo has known Asanda as far more responsible than he has shown himself to be lately, and Froglegs's outlandish-sounding implications might have some merit. It isn't a theory that the Magaambya can address directly now, but Janatimo promises to look into this further.

## Carving Trouble

**Difficulty** taxing

**Requested by** Janatimo

**Location** Goana's home

This task is particularly useful if the players aren't yet suspicious of Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, who has retreated into his flooded manor house. Following up on this task puts the heroes in a tough fight, but one that leads directly to the events of Chapter 3. When heroes respond to Janatimo's request, read or paraphrase the following.

“This task isn't the most exciting that I've given you, but that makes it no less important. Besides, I think you are owed a few quiet duties!

“I need you to go to the home of Goana the carver to pick up special commemorative carvings of the Ten Magic Warriors for an upcoming ceremony. Goana has worked

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with the Magaambya often in the past. Her craftsmanship is stunning, and we're excited to put these carvings on display. Please retrieve them and offer Goana the academy's deepest thanks."

Janatimo keeps to himself that the "upcoming ceremony" is the heroes' graduation. He suspects that won't be too far away, and he wants to be ready for it.

Complicating this simple task is the fact that **Goana** (LG female halfling woodcarver 3) is a loose end in Salathiss's plans. While he was masquerading as Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, the disguised serpentfolk commissioned Goana to construct the pieces for the wood golem in the talisman room (area **A4**). As a precaution, he asked for the components in separate pieces and assembled the golem himself, hoping the woodcarver wouldn't realize what she was making. Goana is no fool—not only did she realize that the magistrate-mayor had commissioned the pieces to construct a golem, but she also suspected that something was dreadfully off about her friend "Asanda." Unfortunately, Goana has thus far kept her suspicions to herself.

Since the heroes breached the talisman room, Salathiss has worked to eliminate several loose ends that might expose him, including Goana. Salathiss has hired an assassin to kill her, and this assassin arrives just as the heroes do.

## SAVING GOANA

## SEVERE 6

Goana has decorated her low home with ornate wood carvings. Using a wooden ramp and a long lever, the stout halfling hefts a large carving into the back of a wagon with three others. "Greetings to you," she waves, wiping her forehead. "I hope your school enjoys my latest work."

Goana is happy to make small talk, and happier still if the heroes offer to heft the remaining four statues into the back of the wagon.

The heroes can attempt DC 20 Perception checks to realize that the style of the wood carvings is remarkably similar to that of the wood golem they faced in the Magaambya storeroom, and that Goana must have made that, too. She remembers doing so, making pieces on commission for her friend Magistrate-Mayor Asanda. If they don't realize it, Goana brings it up, pointing out that she's working on expanding her style a bit, ever since the magistrate-mayor commissioned pieces for a wooden golem.

**Creatures:** Before conversation with Goana can get very far, the assassin Nairu attacks, swooping down into the yard on his trained giant eagle, Kreekoss. Nairu is a smug Ekujae elf who's engaged in assassinations-for-hire across the Mwangi Expanse. A few years ago, he met a giant eagle born and raised near the fiend-haunted city of Holy Xatramba, and the two became allies. Nairu likes how Kreekoss is often mistaken for a noble and honorable creature simply because he's a giant eagle, while Kreekoss's fiend-twisted heart is as wicked as his own.

Nairu is unhappy that there are so many witnesses, but he was paid to get the assassination over with as quickly as possible. Eliminating witnesses is something professionals must sometimes do, he tells himself, so he splits the assassination work: he commands Kreekoss to focus on Goana while he dispatches everyone else at the scene.

Nairu leaps from Kreekoss's back to land at the edge of the woodcarver's roof. He fires his shortbow at whoever is near Goana in an attempt to get them to scatter. He then leaps off the roof, draws his poisoned rapier, and tries to kill the heroes. Nairu flees when reduced to a quarter of his Hit Points or less, choosing

his life over the job. When fleeing, he curses “damn Asanda’s ‘simple’ assignments!”

Kreekoss plans to grab Goana in his talons, fly her 80 feet in the air, and drop her. However, Nairu didn’t fully brief Kreekoss as to what she looks like, and the eagle is just as likely to grab a Small hero instead of the woodworker. Kreekoss doesn’t flee as long as Nairu is still in the fight, but he flies off when Nairu runs away or when the heroes dispatch him.

If you need statistics for Goana, use those of a halfling smith (*Gamemastery Guide* 204, 245).

### NAIRU CREATURE 8

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Male elf assassin (*Gamemastery Guide* 204, 211)

**Initiative** Perception +16; low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Elven

**Speed** 30 feet

### KREEKOSS CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NE LARGE BEAST FIEND

Male variant giant eagle (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 141)

**Perception** +15; low-light vision

**Languages** Auran, Common, Sylvan (can’t speak any language)

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Athletics +12

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

**AC** 24; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +16, **Will** +14

**HP** 95; **Weaknesses** good 3; **Resistances** fire 6

**Evasion** When Kreekoss rolls a success on a Reflex save, he gets a critical success instead.

**Speed** 10 feet, fly 60 feet

**Melee** ♦ beak +17, **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing

**Melee** ♦ talon +17 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+8 slashing plus Grab

**Eagle Dive** ♦ Kreekoss Flies up to double his fly Speed in a straight line, descending at least 10 feet, and then makes a talon Strike.

**Snatch** Kreekoss can Fly at half Speed while he has a creature grabbed or restrained in his talons, carrying that creature along with it.

**Interrogating Nairu:** If captured, Nairu tells the heroes very little until they get him to open up by succeeding at a DC 24 Intimidation check. He then reveals that Magistrate-Mayor Asanda gave him a supposedly very easy job with great pay. There wasn’t supposed to be any resistance, especially not the type the heroes provided. Nairu has no idea why the magistrate-mayor wants the carver dead. Asanda told him Goana was a “loose end,” and the assassin didn’t pry.

**If Goana Is Killed:** The heroes might not have the ability to question Goana about her carving style and her prior commission for the magistrate-mayor if she’s assassinated. In this case, heroes who take a cursory look around her workshop find records of her past work for Asanda, including a note about how something seemed very unusual about his behavior the last time they met.

**XP Award:** If the heroes uncover the connection to Magistrate-Mayor Asanda, award them 30 XP.



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So often, I see people meeting their circumstances on the level they were confronted; violence meets violence, pettiness begets pettiness. It's so rare to find individuals who, when challenged, rise above and find the part of them that is better than circumstance dictates. It's not that they ignore the realities of what happens around them, but rather that those realities become starting points to investigate and explore—to go deeper. By going deeper, they address what lies in front of them, but also what could await them and others. To approach life in this way is to blaze a trail that others can and will follow.

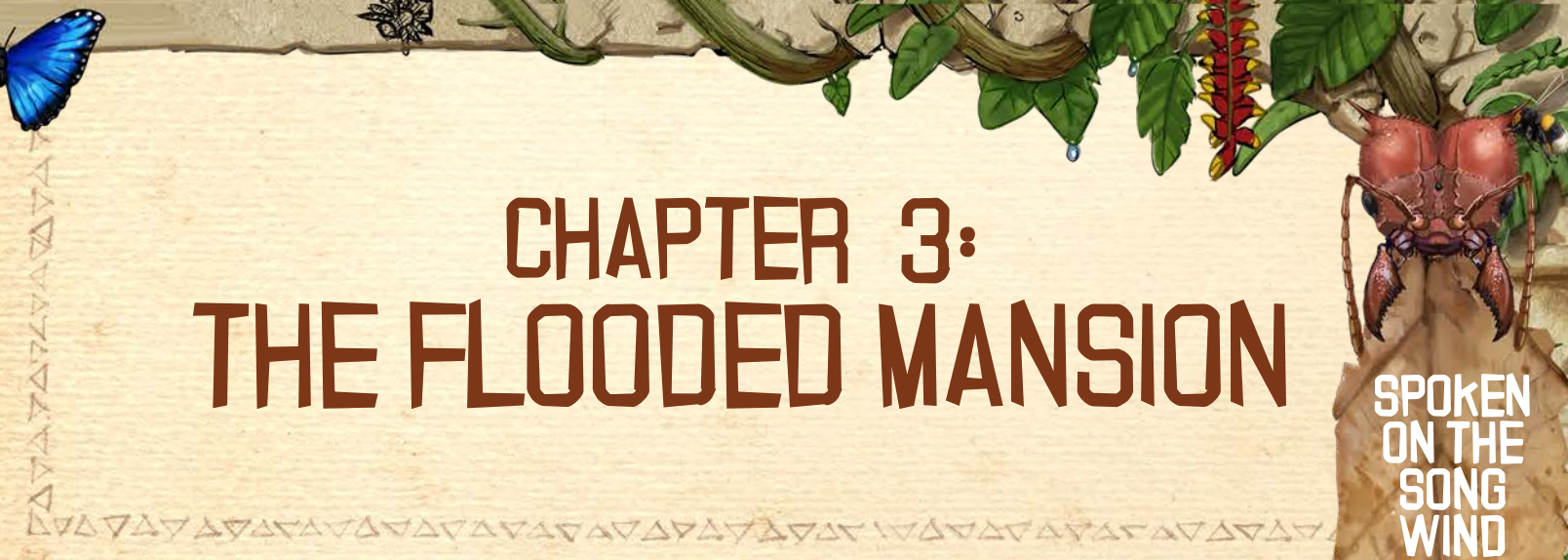
Take these conversants, for example. They have been given tasks in the world. They have completed these tasks admirably, but they have not confined their thinking to only the performance of those duties. They have drawn the connections between them, and they have discovered the patterns and underlying conditions that caused those tasks that needed to be done. Repeatedly, they show that they go further than is expected or is even known to be needed.

They've taken down (at least for a time) a crime boss who is the source of growing corruption in our city. The conversants have learned that our magistrate-mayor may have turned from negligent to corrupt, possibly because of some snakes among us.

These heroes have blazed a path that leads them into the heart of this corruption and beyond. I don't know where their full ambitions lie, but from where I stand, I can see that they will soon propel themselves past the realms where the Magaambya can teach them. I've never seen a rise so sudden in the school, but I suspect will have little time to contemplate my surprise before they display their heart and talent yet again.

My time is precious, at any rate; I have a graduation ceremony to prepare.





# CHAPTER 3: THE FLOODED MANSION

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Magistrate-Mayor Asanda has retreated to his manor for too long, and the work to repair the structure moves at a suspiciously slow pace. The void in Nantambu's leadership provides opportunities for crime, deteriorating city infrastructure, and decline in public trust. Rumors the heroes have collected indicate that it's past time for someone to inquire into what's happening with the magistrate-mayor.

What no one yet knows is that the magistrate-mayor is imprisoned in his manor by the serpentfolk wizard Salathiss, who has taken his place. Salathiss came to Nantambu to investigate rumors about the *Vesicant Egg*, which he initially suspected was a serpent egg that he could use to restore the headless serpentfolk god, Ydersius. He flooded Magistrate-Mayor Asanda's manor as a comfortable yet isolated base of operations and adopted the magistrate-mayor's role as a useful disguise.

When the heroes cleared out the storehouse in Chapter 1, they unknowingly frustrated Salathiss's plans to study the *Vesicant Egg*. His time with the egg was all but complete anyway, as he'd learned it's not a serpent egg but an insect egg. Further study might reveal the artifact's actual use, but he no longer has access or time to investigate it. Still, Salathiss's ongoing impersonation of Magistrate-Mayor Asanda is proceeding well. Too well, in fact; he's starting to lose his identity and spends entire days believing he actually is the magistrate-mayor, frustrating his minions.

## Janatimo's Final Task

"I told you I would follow up with you after I figured out what to do about the magistrate-mayor, and that time has arrived.

"After speaking with the faculty, we are in another position where taking direct action could be politically harmful. Nantambu has its own leadership, separate from the Magaambya, and we respect that independence. Conversants can more easily inquire and take any necessary action without the political risks. I know that you can handle yourself in challenging situations, so I feel confident sending you in our stead. We don't know what awaits at the magistrate-mayor's mansion, but something villainous is going on there. Do you feel prepared for this task?"

Janatimo is happy to talk further about the heroes' discoveries and their questions. He's plainly uneasy not knowing the danger's extent.

**Why is this so urgent?** "The magistrate-mayor has long jeopardized Nantambu with his inaction, but we see now he may be behind the deaths of Nantambu's citizens. We can't ignore this any longer."

## CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, the heroes follow up on the clues pointing to something unusual going on at Magistrate-Mayor Asanda's manor. They investigate, only to find the manor filled with monsters and serpentfolk, including the scheming serpentfolk Salathiss perfecting his disguise as the magistrate-mayor. Upon proving their value to the city by rescuing Asanda and completing their coursework, the heroes graduate to become teachers of the Magaambya.

## CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 3 are as follows.

- *boots of bounding*
- *bracers of armor type I*
- *choker of elocation*
- *greater hat of disguise*
- *leopard's armor*
- *nettleweed residue*
- *ring of sustenance*
- *scroll of water breathing (2)*
- *staff of illusion*
- *warcaller's chime of refuge*

**What should we do?** “Get as much information as you can, respond to any threats, and return safely.”

**What do you think is happening?** “As usual, I’m more interested in your theories about this, conversants.”

**Treasure:** Janatimo doesn’t want the heroes to leave unprepared. He provides them each with a scroll of a common 4th-level or lower spell that they would like. The heroes can pick the spells they want, but Janatimo recommends defensive choices, like *clairvoyance*, *freedom of movement*, or *restoration*.

## Asanda’s Manor

To flood the manor and take over, Salathiss and his minions posed as laborers fixing assorted items in the magistrate-mayor’s home. While they did the work expected of them, they secretly used alchemical agents to weaken the northern and southern walls that led into the ballroom and the dining hall. When they damaged part of a nearby canal, the weakened walls collapsed, causing deep flooding in those rooms and heavy spillage on the manor’s lower levels.

Salathiss and his followers then kidnapped Asanda. Salathiss keeps him confined in his room and regularly interviews him about his habits and associates, working to perfect his impersonation.

The road to Asanda’s manor passes through a dense orchard and is therefore somewhat isolated. When the heroes approach, read or paraphrase the following.

---

Asanda’s large manor seems quiet and lifeless. Both the north and south sides of the building have collapsed walls, with the remaining walls supported by makeshift scaffolding.

An air of neglect hangs about the manor like a fog. The orchards around the manor are waterlogged, with fruit rotting on branches. Weeds grow wild and grass grows tall, even on the main path leading to the wide front door.

---

The heroes can approach the manor from several directions, though the guards stationed at area **G1** move to intercept them unless the heroes move quietly through the overgrowth. As the rear of the manor abuts the thick canal wall, it’s not possible to circle entirely around the building.

The flood waters range from ankle-deep at the edges to 5 feet deep near the manor walls. The creatures in areas **G4** or **G6** likely come out to investigate anyone in the water outside the manor, alerting the heroes that all is not quiet within.

If the heroes want to investigate the manor before they’re ready to face its dangers, you can use exterior guardians to discourage them until they’re higher level or count on the entrance guardians’ ruse to dissuade them for the time being.

## FEATURES OF THE MANOR

Asanda’s manor is made of stone elegantly designed with gold-and-green geometric patterns. The building has a few narrow windows and high skylights to admit air and light. Lanterns hang inside, but the manor’s current denizens don’t use them. Ceilings are 15 feet high, giving the building a lofty, airy feel. The manor’s doors are made of sturdy wood and are unlocked, although some are barred or trapped where indicated.

The flooding has lent the entire manor an unpleasant smell of moisture and rot. Paint on the interior walls is beginning to swell and peel away, and mold is starting to grow in moist corners and crevices.

The map of the flooded mansion can be found on the inside back cover of this adventure.

### G1. MANOR ENTRANCE

### MODERATE 7

---

The mahogany double door to the mansion has complex patterns carved into it. The walls of the mansion are dirty, and the hedges are overgrown and wild. Water is pooled under the double door.

---

A discreet door to the north of the main steps leads to a small exterior closet crammed with gardening equipment that hasn’t been used in weeks.

**Creatures:** Three serpentfolk guards stand at the entrance. They wear heavy cloaks with deep hoods that obscure their features from anyone who isn’t within a few feet of them. These serpentfolk granitescales are instructed to accept any messages for the magistrate-mayor, but to turn away prospective visitors and use with violence if they think it won’t cause trouble with others in town. As they prefer the latter anyway, these instructions sit well with the serpentfolk. They particularly like feeding trespassers they’ve defeated to the gbahali in area **G6**.

To aid in this duplicity, Salathiss gave the trio a *greater hat of disguise*. The serpentfolk take turns being the one to wear it and assume the form of a bald, burly human guard, giving them a less suspicious countenance. The granitescales dislike the responsibility of talking to people they’d prefer to skewer on their spears and argue often over who has to be the one to wear the hat.

The serpentfolk don’t surrender and they pursue foes who flee, but they don’t leave the orchard, so anyone who gets more than about 150 feet away from the manor escapes their pursuit.

### SERPENTFOLK GRANITESCALES (3) CREATURE 6

Page 86

Initiative Perception +13

**Treasure:** The gardening closet contains a forgotten dose of nettleweed residue beneath some old gloves. Any hero searching the closet finds it.

## G2. GREETING ROOM

LOW 7

Water collects in pools on the marble floor of this wide foyer, particularly at the east end where curved steps descend to a door.

The north end of this room contains two tall tables wedged into an alcove, while the alcove to the south has several high-backed wooden chairs.

**Trap:** Salathiss put a trap on the door leading to area G3 (as indicated by the dotted line on the map). It triggers from both sides, but serpentfolk can use the door without triggering it.

## SERPENT WARD

HAZARD 7

Page 9

**Stealth** DC 25 (expert)

**Creatures:** A venom caller named Atathik has two subservient aapoph serpentfolk who have served her for years. Salathiss ordered Atathik to guard the manor, but she doesn't like going outside and is happy to leave protection of the grounds to the granitescales. She can usually be found lounging in the chairs to the south, ordering her minions around. If Atathik knows intruders are present—such as if the fight with the granitescales outside the manor is particularly loud or if the heroes trigger the trap on the door—Atathik casts *invisibility* on her minions and *false life* on herself. She then casts *illusory disguise* to appear as an old, human woman resting in one of the chairs.

Atathik doesn't have the patience for a lot of deception, which is part of the reason Salathiss put her on guard duty. She orders her serpentfolk minions to attack intruders right away and then uses her acid spells and venom pool against them. The aapoph serpentfolk fight to the death, but Atathik flees or surrenders if reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points. She's more than willing to bargain information in exchange for her life.

## ATATHIK

CREATURE 7

Female serpentfolk venom caller (page 87)

**Initiative** Perception +15

**Items** scroll of water breathing (2), shortbow (20 arrows), sickle, staff of illusion

## AAPOPH SERPENTFOLK (2)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 237

**Initiative** Perception +8

## WEARY LOYALTY

Salathiss's minions have spent too long undercover. Although impersonating humanoids is something serpentfolk do well, it's normally in smaller groups for more focused missions. Serpentfolk in the manor are starting to think that Salathiss doesn't really have a plan and is too deeply involved in his impersonation to keep the mission in Nantambu on track. Fear of Salathiss's power keeps them in line for now, but all the serpentfolk here—save for Salathiss—are increasingly eager to leave the city.

Heroes who interrogate captured serpentfolk can learn much about Salathiss's plans and other serpentfolk on his team, and that Asanda is still alive somewhere in the manor (although no one other than Salathiss knows for certain where he is). The heroes have a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks to Coerce captured serpentfolk if they agree to let the serpentfolk go free—even if the condition is that they leave Nantambu and never return.

## G3. MAIN HALL

LOW 7

A sodden, torn rug lies half-submerged in a two-foot deep pool of water that fills most of this hall. Double doors to the north and south are ajar, and those rooms also look flooded. To the east, semicircular stairs lead out of the water to a double door.

The serpentfolk have trapped this main corridor to deter intruders. The traps also keep the creatures in areas G4 and G6 from wandering further into the manor.

**Traps:** The door to the west bears a magical serpent ward trap, as described in area G2. The center of the room contains a more complicated trap that sends pulses of electricity through and atop the water (indicated by the dotted line on the map in the center of this area).

## ELECTRIFIED WATER WARD

HAZARD 8

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

**Stealth** +18 (expert)

**Description** Passing over an invisible rune on the floor between the north and south doors triggers a dancing burst of electricity.

**Disable** DC 26 Thievery (expert), DC 28 Arcana (expert), or DC 28 Occultism (expert) to harmlessly bleed away the electrical energy from the rune. Once the trap has been activated, the electrical energy is stronger, so three successful checks (of any combination of the relevant skills) are necessary to deactivate it, but these checks can be attempted from anywhere in the room.

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**Electrocution** ⤿ (arcane, electricity, evocation); **Trigger**

A creature passes over the invisible underwater rune between the north and south doors; **Effect** The trap deals 4d10 electricity damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save) to creatures touching the water, and then rolls initiative.

**Routine** (1 action) The trap deals 4d10 electricity damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save) to all creatures in the room. A creature that fails the save is slowed 1 (slowed 2 on a critical failure). A creature that isn't touching the water treats the result of its saving throw as one degree of success better.

**Reset** The pulses stop as soon as no creatures are in the hallway, and then reset after 1 hour.

## G4. DINING HALL

LOW 7

Rounded stairs lead down into this flooded room. Long tables and chairs, the remains of a once glorious dining hall, drift as flotsam in the water. The top of a mostly submerged doorway can be seen on the eastern wall and a massive hole gapes in the northern one.

Opulent meals were served in this dining room until as recently as a few months ago.

**Creatures:** Two giant water cobras lurk amid the floating debris in the room. The venom callers brought them here to serve as guards.

When a hero enters the water, the cobras sense food and attack. They're tenacious and pursue foes who flee. A water cobra reduced to fewer than 10 Hit Points flees through the gap in the northern wall.

### GIANT WATER COBRAS (2)

CREATURE 5

Variant emperor cobra (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 245)

**Initiative** Perception +13

## G5. KITCHEN

MODERATE 7

Cooking utensils and waterlogged food drift in the murky water of this flooded kitchen. Jagged scrap metal protrudes above the waterline in the northwest corner.

Asanda's kitchen once boasted two appliances featuring extraordinary culinary magic. The oven remained hot at all times, and the sink remained perpetually filled with fresh water. Food cooked in the oven and drinks imbued with the water always tasted fresh and flavorful, if a bit sweet. Asanda had both devices crafted with tiny connections to the First World of the fey: a scorching desert locale and a deep river, respectively. The guests drawn to Asanda's private dinners based on the odd deliciousness of the food made Asanda's investment in his magical kitchen pay off multiple times over.

When this room flooded, the oven's tiny portal was overwhelmed. It shredded the metal of the oven and tore the portal in the sink wider. Three grodairs slipped through the sink's portal—one enormous specimen and two smaller ones—before that portal collapsed as well. A hero who investigates the ruined, mostly submerged kitchen can deduce what happened with a successful DC 22 Arcana or Nature check.

**Creatures:** Three grodairs are now trapped here. They've mostly remained in



this room, feasting on the soggy cuisine and swapping tales (the great grodair having the most, and best, stories). They've ventured into the adjacent room but consider the water cobras to be dangerous. The grodairs constantly leak more water from their mouths, which only adds to the flooding in the manor.

When the heroes arrive, the great grodair is in the middle of a fanciful tale about a fisher who made a series of silly wishes. The story is, unfortunately, several hours long. The great grodair dislikes interruptions; a hero who wishes to politely interrupt can do so with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy or Performance check. On a failure, the hero's rudeness angers the great grodair, and he demands the offending hero leave the room until after his tale is done. Once the tale concludes, the grodairs are happy to speak with the heroes, as described below, but there's a one in four chance that any new subject the heroes bring up causes the great grodair to begin, "That reminds me of a tale in which..." followed by another hours-long story.

If the heroes attack the grodairs, they fight back. A grodair flees or surrenders when reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points.

## GREAT GRODAIR

## CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CN LARGE AMPHIBIOUS BEAST FEY WATER

Male variant grodair (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 140)

**Perception** +16; darkvision

**Languages** Aquan, Common, Sylvan

**Skills** Athletics +17, Intimidation +15, Nature +15, Performance +17, Survival +14

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

**AC** 23; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

**HP** 130

**Death Flood** (conjunction, primal, water) When the great grodair dies, his body explodes in a blast of pressurized water that deals 6d6 bludgeoning damage to creatures within a 15-foot emanation (DC 25 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails its save is pushed 5 feet (or 10 feet on a critical failure).

**Speed** 25 feet, swim 50 feet

**Melee** ♦ jaws +18, **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing

**Melee** ♦ tentacle +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d12+9 bludgeoning plus Knockdown

**Ranged** ♦ water jet +16 (range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 4d6 bludgeoning plus Push 10 feet

**Primal Spontaneous Spells** DC 25; **5th** *control water*

**Muddy Field** ♦ (primal, transmutation, water) The great grodair transforms all soil, sand, or similar sediment in a 10-foot emanation into mud for 1 round. This mud is difficult terrain for creatures other than grodairs.



Great Grodair

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**Organ of Endless Water** ♦ (conjunction, manipulate, primal, water) The great grodair causes water to pour from a magical sac on his spine, either a stream of water at a rate of 1 gallon per round, or a fountain in a 5-foot-long stream at a rate of 5 gallons per round. He can stop the flow of water as a single action.

## GRODAIRS (2)

## CREATURE 5

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 140

**Initiative** Perception +13

**Grodair Tales:** If the heroes make friends with the grodairs, they're eager conversationalists (although the smaller grodairs speak only Aquan and Sylvan). The grodairs aren't certain what brought them here; they were simply swimming in a river when they felt a rush of water and appeared here. They know there are dangerous cobras in the next room, and people who occasionally move about the building, but they don't know more than that.

The great grodair takes a liking to any hero who shows interest in his tales. He's willing to spend time outlining any number of strange, fanciful yarns built around simple lessons, granting access to the folklorist archetype (page 78).

**Treasure:** Trapped beneath the ruined stove is the corpse of Asanda's head chef. Anyone searching the wreckage finds it. The man still wears a *ring of sustenance* on one finger.

**XP Award:** If the heroes befriend the grodairs, award them 120 XP.

## G6. BALLROOM

## MODERATE 7

Round stairs descend into a flooded room. Once-fancy mildewed tapestries hang on the walls, filling the room with a rank scent. Several drums and koras float on the water's surface against the room's western wall. The top portion of a submerged doorway is just visible on the eastern wall, and a ragged hole ten feet wide is visible in the southern wall.

Once a small ballroom, this chamber was the site of many elegant private affairs during Asanda's political rise. The water here is 7 feet deep. A hero who succeeds at a DC 22 Nature or Survival check notes that the instruments should have floated through the hole over time, but something is keeping them from floating away.

**Creature:** A crocodilian beast called a gbahali came to Nantambu's canals to feed but had the bad luck to be caught in the flood when the canal's wall broke. The serpentfolk charmed the creature and encouraged it to nest in this room. The gbahali considers the floating instruments its toys and becomes enraged when anyone touches them, so the serpentfolk let the beast play with them as much as it likes.

When creatures who aren't serpentfolk enter this room, the gbahali tries to make a meal of them. Though aggressive, the gbahali is easily distracted by its toys. Any unattended floating musical instrument catches its attention, and it takes two Interact actions to nudge the instrument into its collection at the west end of the room. If a hero opens the door to area G7, the gbahali focuses all its efforts on collecting the trove of floating instruments there, and it thereafter ignores the heroes if they don't attack it and don't touch the instruments. The heroes might even lure the gbahali away if they can move its instruments out of the room without letting the creature know they're doing so.

The gbahali retreats out the opening in the south wall when reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points. It attempts to make its way through the orchard, doing its best to hide its bulk between the trees, and then slinks back into a canal.

## GBAHALI

## CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +17

## G7. MUSICIANS' CHAMBER

This room's only entrance is a wide double door leading west. Drums, wooden flutes, marimbas, and other musical instruments float in the murky water.

Magistrate-Mayor Asanda invited musicians and performers throughout the Mwangi Expanse to entertain his guests here. The performers could change and warm up with the double door closed, then perform when they're opened. Several waterlogged costumes, weighted with metal buckles and the like, sunk to the floor. The water in this room is 7 feet deep.

A secret door in the northeast corner (indicated with an "S" on the map) accesses a narrow stairwell that ascends to the hall outside Asanda's chamber (area G10). Musicians could surreptitiously come and go from this chamber without intruding upon the ballroom. Finding the concealed stairwell from either direction requires a successful DC 20 Perception check. The serpentfolk don't know it's there.

**Treasure:** Most items in this room are worthless, but any hero searching this room discovers a pair of *boots of bounding* stuck beneath an overturned music stand. A hero must dry them before they function.

## G8. MEETING ROOM

## LOW 7

A round teak table with chairs is in the center of this room. Abstract wood carvings of people line the walls. A painting of a hyena, once meant to be the room's focal point, has a large rip across the canvas. The painting hangs crookedly above a large bronze door on the eastern wall.

Magistrate-Mayor Asanda holds his most important meetings in this room. Heroes who take a close look at the carvings recognize Goana's craftsmanship. Goana is the real magistrate-mayor's favorite artisan, and Asanda has many of her pieces. The hyena painting was a gift from an artisan whom Asanda funded while city treasurer. Asanda's detractors considered the funding unprofessional, and he likes to show it off to see how people react to it.

The bronze door is barred from the other side, in area G11. The doors are too well-made, and the bar too thick, to open the doors from this side.

**Creatures:** A serpentfolk named Syrith sits at the table along with a dweomercat named Longshimmer he's raised from a cub. They are both wearing disguises; Longshimmer resembles an ordinary panther. Salathiss has Syrith adopt the appearances of dignitaries in Nantambu so he can practice interacting with them. Syrith is currently disguised as a councilor

and glassworker named Thuba. A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Society check identifies the man as Magistrate-Mayor Thuba, Asanda's peer; on a critical success, the hero remembers that Thuba is desperately allergic to cats and couldn't stand being near a panther.

Syrith has grown to hate Salathiss. He feels Salathiss wastes his talents by forcing him to appear as the same human over and over; Syrith enjoys disguising himself as different people in quick succession. When the heroes arrive, he pretends to be Magistrate-Mayor Thuba for a short period of time, blustering about what they're doing invading the home of a fellow member of the Governing Council. Syrith soon tires of the deception and gratefully drops his disguise in favor of his natural form. When he does, read or paraphrase the following.

The bearded man sighs as he strokes the purring black panther, "Ah, perhaps it's time to get out of this awful costume he has me in." His appearance changes into that of a serpentfolk as the panther grows blue spirals in its fur and a second pair of eyes.

Syrith is chatty in combat, taunting his foes and lamenting his current role. He spits out comments about how much he hates "warmbloods," a word he makes sound like a curse.

Longshimmer teleports around the battlefield to disorient her foes and dispel significant spells. Syrith casts *mirror image* and then makes sneak attacks against whomever Longshimmer is near.

When reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, Syrith boldly declares his intent to fight and die as a proper zyss, unlike his master Salathiss who "has gone so deep into his role he's forgotten how disgusting you all are. He thinks he's actually Asanda!" If killed, his final words are, "I hope you slay that obsessed traitor."

Longshimmer doesn't flee as long as Syrith is alive, but if Syrith is slain and Longshimmer is reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, she flees to a position where she can see outside the manor, and then uses *dimension door* to leave the area entirely.

## SYRITH

## CREATURE 5

Elite Coil spy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 238)

**Initiative** Perception +12

## LONGSHIMMER

## CREATURE 7

Female dweomercat (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 103)

**Initiative** Perception +15

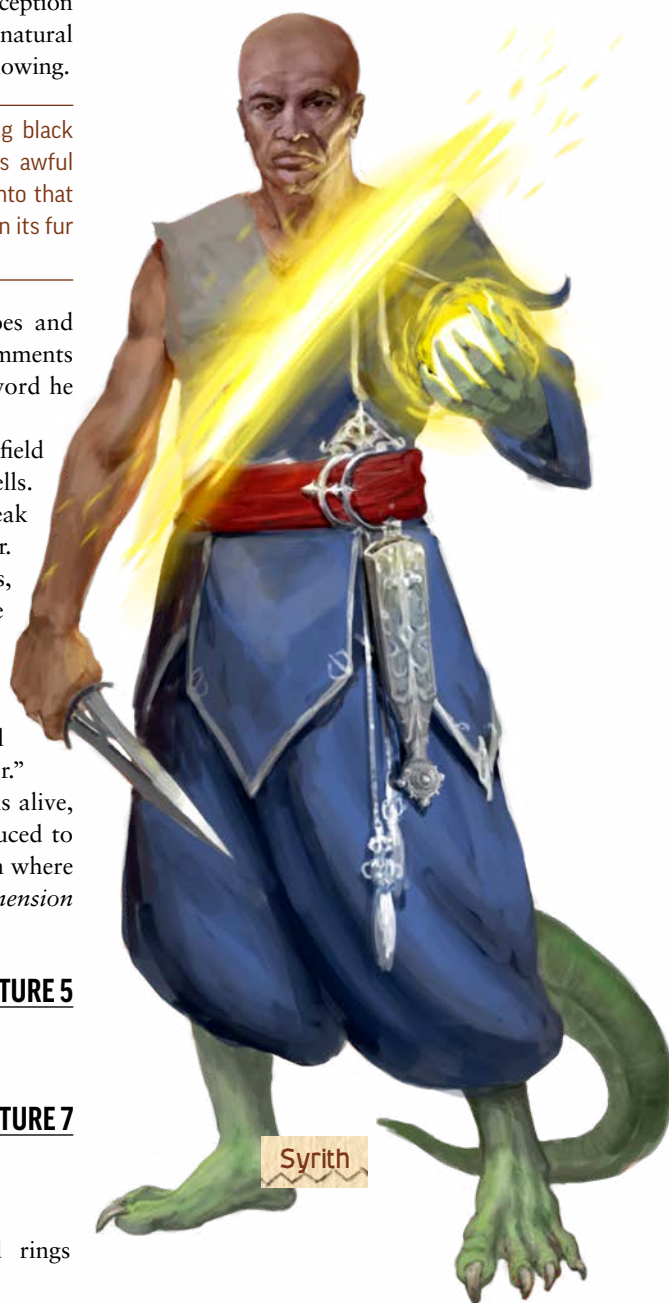
**Treasure:** Syrith wears several bejeweled rings worth a total of 300 gp.

## G9. GUEST ROOM

## MODERATE 7

Aromas of sandalwood and mildew mingle in this long room. A wide bed fills the eastern end of the room beneath a high window overlooking the canal. Scattered papers and notes cover a desk that stands against the west wall. A large journal with metal bindings and a metal lock sits atop the papers.

Two serpentfolk venom callers await Salathiss's orders in this room. They're bored and dissatisfied with pretending to be valets or laborers repairing



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the manor, so they mostly sit on the bed and gossip. Salathiss has already chastised them for being insufficiently precise with their enunciation, so they speak out loud rather than telepathically to practice. Their distraction gives them a -2 penalty to Perception checks and their Perception DCs.

The bed isn't within sight of the room's only door, so a hero who succeeds at a DC 23 Stealth check (or who otherwise listens at the door and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check) can overhear their conversation. The main points they discuss are as follows.

- The interminable practice at being warmbloods is wearing on them; if they could leave safely, they would.
- Their superior has been devoting a lot of effort to studying "the egg," which is someplace hard to access. These serpentfolk don't know what the egg does and make several fanciful guesses (that it's the egg of Ydersius, that it contains a dangerous monster, that it's made of solidified magic, and so on).
- Salathiss can't get at the egg any longer, and the serpentfolk guarding it have been eliminated, putting the whole reason they've come to Nantambu in jeopardy. They think all the serpentfolk should leave.
- Salathiss has instead focused on stealing the magistrate-mayor's identity. He's getting too deep into the role; one venom caller tells a story about how he tried to get orders from Salathiss and the serpentfolk didn't even seem to recognize his own name. He would only talk to his subordinate as Asanda! The serpentfolk now derisively refer to him as "Salathiss the Warm."

**Creatures:** Once the venom callers become aware of the heroes, they immediately attack. One uses Venom Pool while the other casts *slow* to prevent their foes from easily leaving the puddle of poison. Any venom caller reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points casts *invisibility* and flees the manor, but then waits just outside to ambush the heroes as they leave. During the ambush, the vengeful venom callers fight to the death.

## SERPENTFOLK VENOM CALLERS (2) CREATURE 7

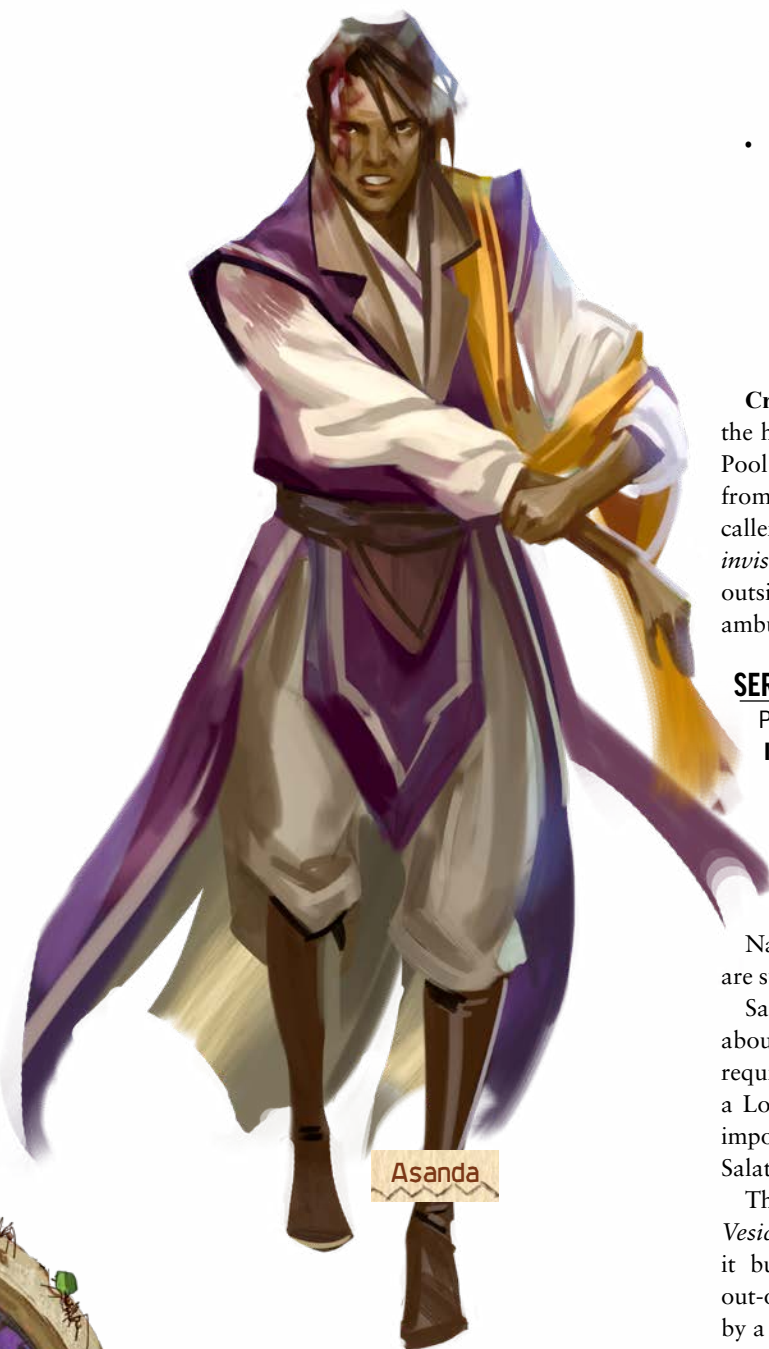
Page 81


**Initiative** Perception +15

**Investigating the Desk:** The scattered papers on the desk are Magistrate-Mayor Asanda's notes about the other members of Nantambu's Governing Council and general governance in Nantambu; these are resources the venom callers are supposed to be studying, but they don't care to do so.

Salathiss has been using the metal journal for notes about his plans. It's locked with a good lock and requires four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock to open. The metal bindings make the book impossible to rip or force open without destroying it. Salathiss has the only key to the journal.

The journal details Salathiss's plan regarding the *Vesicant Egg*. It doesn't detail how he heard about it but describes that the egg is being held in an out-of-the-way laboratory on the Magaambya campus by a professor named Koride Ulawa.





The journal contains several diagrams and notes about the *Vesicant Egg* from hands-on study. Salathiss first assumed it to be some unusual type of snake egg, hoping that it might somehow hold the key to resurrecting the serpentfolk's dead god Ydersius, but Salathiss soon realized that it's an insect egg. As the egg is entirely immune to damage, Salathiss assumes it's an artifact of some kind, and thus might be of use once he learns more about it.

The journal describes Salathiss's technique of infiltrating the school through the unused storage area, in which he'd placed a few guardians, and using *passwall* to enter the laboratory where the egg is stored late at night. Salathiss proudly notes that no one on campus, not even Koride, has figured out why he was there; he notes "The fool doesn't even realize the power she has access to, and she keeps it as a bauble." Nevertheless, some "meddling students" recently blundered into the storage rooms and dispatched his guardians, putting the *Vesicant Egg* out of Salathiss's reach for now.

In the second half of the journal, Salathiss writes on what he understands about Nantambu's governance from talking to Magistrate-Mayor Asanda and reading his papers. Salathiss's ambitions are plainly growing. He seems to be studying these to emerge as the ruler of Nantambu instead of hiding in the mansion. Salathiss calls this his "greatest role" and speaks of the power he will wield.

Heroes who have looked at Asanda's notes can attempt a DC 20 Society check to realize that, near the end of the journal, Salathiss's handwriting closely resembles Asanda's, hinting at how successfully he's adopting the magistrate-mayor's persona.

**XP Award:** If heroes review Salathiss's journal, award them 80 XP.

## G10. ASANDA'S PRIVATE CHAMBER MODERATE 7

A painting of Nantambu at sunset hangs on the south wall of this room, opposite a large bed with a blackwood frame. A pile of clothes sits at the foot of the bed, and other clothes are heaped on a desk that's otherwise bare.

Magistrate-Mayor **Asanda** (N male human administrator 6) has been held prisoner in his own chamber since the canal burst and his mansion flooded. Salathiss keeps him fed and alive, though guarded and bound, to interview him on detailed points and to practice his mannerisms, all to perfect his eventual role as magistrate-mayor of Nantambu.

**Creatures:** Several brutish serpentfolk guard Asanda. Two aapoph serpentfolk stand outside the

door to his room, while two granitescales remain in his room, watching him. In truth, their task is so dull that one granitescale is usually napping while the other is awake and alert. The granitescales emerge in 1d3 rounds when there's a commotion or fight outside the room. These serpentfolk relish the opportunity for violence, and all four fight to the death. They know better than to leave their prisoner unguarded, so they don't pursue foes who flee.

### SERPENTFOLK GRANITESCALES (2) CREATURE 6

Page 86

**Initiative** Perception +13

### AAPOPH SERPENTFOLK (2) CREATURE 3

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 237

**Initiative** Perception +8

**The Rescue:** After the heroes have dealt with the serpentfolk guards, they might be surprised to find Asanda suspicious rather than grateful. He shakes his head and says, "Is this another one of your sick games? I won't fall for it." Convincing Asanda that the heroes are who they claim to be requires interacting with him for 10 minutes and success at a DC 23 Diplomacy check. Alternatively, if the heroes performed for Asanda during *Kindled Magic*, they might recall that event for him. Asanda's face lights up with the memory, and he believes the heroes without any check required.

After the heroes gain Asanda's trust, he tells them all he knows.

"We must do something. That crafty serpent Salathiss has been studying my every move, asking me questions every day. Even when I refuse to answer, I see me—I mean, him—examining my mannerisms.

"I thought I was going to lose my mind, answering questions from myself about myself all day long! I can hear him outside my chambers, saying obscene things in my voice. I've heard him give the orders to assassinate citizens of Nantambu!

"He told me once he came here looking for something, but now that he sees the riches of our fine city, he intends to stay and corrupt the city from within its leadership. If we don't stop Salathiss now, he'll place all of Nantambu in the coiled grip of his malevolent organization!"

Some questions that the heroes might ask Asanda include the following.

**Where is Salathiss?** "He spends more and more time with his lackeys practicing how to interact with humans in my private entertainment room in the back of the mansion. He's preparing to mimic me in any

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social situation, even the busy and complex ones that my position demands. The serpentfolk who guard me complain about the practice sessions quite often.”

**Why is Salathiss impersonating you?** “I can’t step inside his mind, nor would I want to, but I think that he wanted an identity that would allow him unquestioned access to whatever he came to find. He might have had his ambitions set on ruling Nantambu from the start, though.”

**Do you have any information that could help us?** “I don’t have that much information right now, but I can definitely tell you that he is getting confused about where he ends and I begin. The other serpentfolk cast their false identities like a snake shedding skin, but Salathiss is different. He lingers in his fake identity for hours and hours. That is something I think you can use against him when you encounter him. Confuse him, and you might defeat him more easily.”

The magistrate-mayor thanks the heroes for rescuing him. What he does next is up to the heroes—if they want him to hide somewhere safe in the manor, he does so; if they want him to leave the manor entirely, he leaves its reclamation in their capable hands.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 80 XP for rescuing Magistrate-Mayor Asanda.

## G11. ENTERTAINMENT SUITE

## SEVERE 7

This room is home to a sedate party of around a dozen people. They stand dressed in fine clothing or sit on the benches lining the walls. Their low conversations make a soft susurrus throughout the room. In the middle of the floor is a cheetah hide rug, matted with a thick green liquid. In the middle of the western wall is a bronze double door with a wooden bar on this side preventing entry from the west.

The crowd here is an *illusory scene* Salathiss created to practice his deception. He stands amid the crowd, disguised as Magistrate-Mayor Asanda and practicing his ability to entertain party guests. Obviously out of place in the party is a granitescale who serves as Salathiss’s bodyguard. She lacks the wits and desire to be a good conversationalist, and hangs out in a corner, pretending to be attentive to what Salathiss says.

Salathiss plans to introduce himself to Nantambu as mayor-magistrate Asanda at the end of the week at a meeting of Nantambu’s governing council and chief business owners, so all his focus is on perfecting his public persona. He even ignores commotion from nearby rooms. When the heroes arrive, Salathiss responds in the guise of Asanda with, “I don’t know who you are, but if you don’t have an invitation, I’ll have to ask you to leave my manor right this moment.”

Lifting the bar on the door to area G8 is easy from this side.

The heroes can engage in a brief conversation with Salathiss, but he keeps confusing his own personality and desires with Asanda’s. Salathiss is imperious and demanding, while Asanda is erudite and attentive. You can contrast these two personalities not only with mannerisms and language, but in the answers Salathiss gives. For example, he might explain that his plan is to help people with his authority, then shake his head, stand up taller, and insist that his authority is only good for exerting domination over others. He’s momentarily forgotten his secret excursions to the Magaambya campus to investigate the *Vesicant Egg*, and questions about his actions there visibly confuse him—he might respond with a statement like, “That wasn’t me, that must have been Salathiss.”

**Creatures:** Eventually, Salathiss realizes that the heroes have come to oppose or expose him. Even if the heroes go along with his guise, the granitescale bodyguard eventually intervenes. The granitescale is loyal and fights until slain.

Once combat breaks out, Salathiss becomes more focused on the danger the heroes represent. He casts *cloak of colors* and then creates his morphic weapon to fight. He relies on his spells to disorient foes that pose him the most trouble. If things start to turn against him, he casts *invisibility* and *passwall* to escape.

The heroes can gain an edge in this fight by using the following activity to confuse Salathiss’s identity with his Asanda persona. Multiple successes (or a single critical success) cause Salathiss to become unresponsive, allowing the heroes to capture him.

## CONFUSE SALATHISS ➡➡

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE

You stoke the disconnect in Salathiss’s mind by offering statements that confuse Asanda and Salathiss with each other. Attempt a DC 25 Deception or Diplomacy check.

**Critical Success** Salathiss is stunned for 1 minute as he struggles to reclaim his identity, allowing the heroes to take him into custody.

**Success** Salathiss is stunned 1 as he tries to sort out the conflict in his mind. Each successive success increases this stunned value by 1 (for example, to stunned 2 the second time it’s successful). When a success would make him stunned 4, the hero gets a critical success instead.

**Critical Failure** Salathiss learns to ignore the hero’s efforts; that hero can’t attempt this activity again.

## SALATHISS

## CREATURE 9

Page 92

Initiative Perception +19

## LIBERATING ASANDA

Once the heroes clear Salathiss and his minions from the mansion, Asanda takes stock of the manor and prepares to return to his normal duties. He's particularly grateful to the heroes; read or paraphrase the following.

"It's not every day that one has to get help to kick themselves out of their house! It has been a harrowing time. Thanks to you, those times are over. Or, they may be just beginning, since I doubt my captor was very effective at actually connecting with and helping the people of Nantambu while impersonating me."

Asanda sighs. "But that was yesterday. Today, my first order of business is to restore people's faith in me. My second is to have actual laborers repair this place."

Asanda asks the heroes to keep the details of the serpentfolk infiltration a secret; there's no telling what sort of paranoia and suspicion the news might unleash. He's willing to shoulder the burden of people thinking he was unresponsive and lax in his duties but doesn't want to risk citywide panic by letting them know how close serpentfolk came to infiltrating Nantambu's government. Asanda encourages the heroes to share the truth with anyone they choose at the Magaambya—the faculty there, in particular, understand discretion. Whether the heroes agree to this request is up to them.

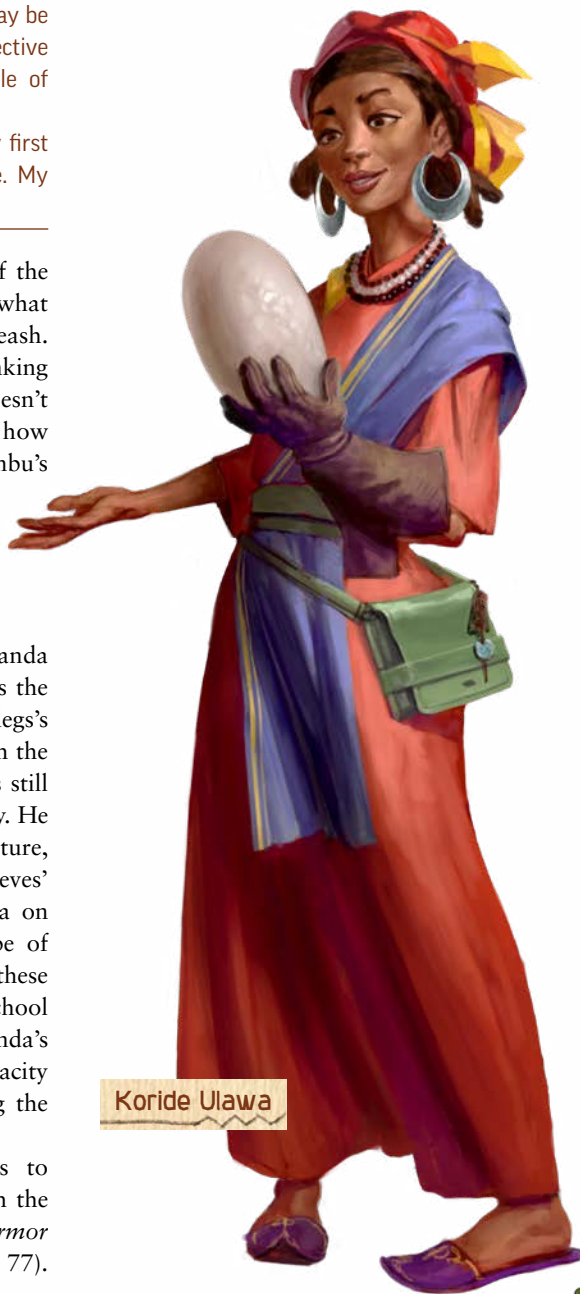
In the weeks that follow, Magistrate-Mayor Asanda works tirelessly to restore Nantambu. He directs the Chime-Ringers to focus on dismantling Froglegs's criminal network rather than simply dealing with the low-level perpetrators and victims. If Froglegs is still at large in Nantambu, she's forced to flee the city. He commissions city laborers to shore up infrastructure, including the failed canals and noxious Thieves' Swamp. Finally, he works with the Magaambya on the best magical deterrents to prevent this type of infiltration from happening again. As part of these conversations, he strongly encourages the school to reward the heroes with graduation—in Asanda's mind, they've more than demonstrated their tenacity and competence, and he's not shy about letting the Magaambya faculty know this.

**Treasure:** Asanda leverages his connections to reward the heroes with two items affiliated with the Magaambya and Nantambu: a suit of *leopard's armor* (page 76) and a *warcaller's chime of refuge* (page 77).

He has these items delivered to the Spire Dormitory within a few days after the heroes rescue him, along with several fine chocolates on an elegant silver tray worth 150 gp.

## Ordeal of the Egg

When the heroes return to the Magaambya and relay what happened to Janatimo, he's beyond impressed with what they did ("I set the bar high, and you soared over it!"). He also muses about what kind of a story this would be if they could tell it. He understands the magistrate-mayor's caution and supports his request to keep Salathiss's plot a secret.



Koride Ulawa

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If Salathiss escaped, Janatimo warns that beings like him rarely give up their villainy. Fortunately, the heroes are clearly up to the task of stopping him if he dares to threaten the Magaambya or Nantambu again.

Janatimo closely reviews Salathiss's journals and discusses theories about the *Vesicant Egg* with the heroes at length. Several points become clear.

- The egg is an artifact of unknown ability and power. Like most artifacts, it has proven impervious to damage.
- The egg plainly drew the insects, gremlins, and other pests plaguing the Magaambya in recent years. It was likely also responsible for drawing the anadis to the school, which Janatimo is quick to note as an unexpected benefit.
- Koride Ulawa kept a private laboratory in the Hababe Building, just on the other side of the solid wall of the storeroom. Janatimo believes Teacher Ulawa didn't understand the danger the artifact posed, and she certainly wasn't working with the serpentfolk—otherwise, Salathiss wouldn't have had to work to keep his studies of the egg a secret.

Janatimo invites the heroes with him when he speaks with Koride about dealing with the egg. If the heroes agree, read or paraphrase the following when they arrive at Koride's office in the Heron Archives.

---

Janatimo knocks once on Teacher Ulawa's office door and, after a moment, opens it.

"She gets absorbed in her work," he says with a shrug.

Teacher Ulawa's office is brimming with curios and oddities. She sits at her desk with the *Vesicant Egg* in front of her, staring in wonder at the trails of acid that drip down its sides and scar a metal plate beneath it.

Janatimo clears his throat and smiles. Teacher Ulawa looks up, sees her visitors, and smiles back.

"Greetings! What can I do for you, Learned One, and your... hmm... tagalongs?"

---

Janatimo hasn't yet told Koride anything about the *Vesicant Egg*. In his usual way of seeking conversation, he first asks her thoughts about it. She quickly explains its physical basics—that it seeps acid like that created by insects, it's invulnerable to damage, and insects act strangely in its presence—but it doesn't seem to "do" anything and thus, she thinks, it's something of a dud as far as artifacts go.

Janatimo encourages the heroes to give a full accounting of what they've learned. Much of this is a surprise to Koride, but she nods along and expresses that it puts a lot of her conjecture into place. She says things like, "That's... surprisingly insightful, actually,"

or "I'm not one to shy away from sensible analysis, and you're making sense." You should convey the sense that Koride might not like the heroes, but she's too dedicated an academic to ignore facts and reason.

After they've presented their facts, Koride acknowledges that there isn't anything to do but dispose of the *Vesicant Egg*. It can't be destroyed unless dedicated research into its destruction method is performed. Koride intends to work with her colleagues to do so—even if the *Vesicant Egg* doesn't need to be destroyed, understanding an artifact's method of destruction often gives insights into how its abilities might be neutralized. But this research takes time, and in the meantime, the *Vesicant Egg* should be taken someplace where it can't do any harm. Certainly, it can't stay on campus, in Nantambu, or in any other settlement. There are distant places in the Mwangi Expanse that might suffice, or even areas in other planes. Koride will research these with her colleagues and find a solution. She promises Janatimo that she'll do so by the end of the month and report back to him.

The heroes should have every reason to think Koride is going to be responsible in this, and that Janatimo will ensure her promises are kept. Indeed, at the time she discusses it with them, Koride has every intention of finding a safe place for the *Vesicant Egg* until its powers can be controlled or neutralized. For now, the *Vesicant Egg* doesn't cause any more trouble.

Yet Koride is nothing if not erratic, and it's not long before she changes her mind. The repercussions unfold later in the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path.


## Graduation

After handling the disposition of the *Vesicant Egg*, Janatimo asks the heroes to return to his office for a serious discussion. If they haven't yet reached 7th level in their branch, as described in the "Life in the Academy" article in *Kindled Magic*, you might allow them to attend the necessary classes to do so before Janatimo calls for them; they should be accomplished students before he presents the following advancement to them.

---

Janatimo gestures to comfortable seats in his curio-filled office. "You have done excellent work as conversants. You used your abilities and knowledge to create incredible bonds with the people around you. You came to the defense of those who needed it, and you lent your power where it would do the most good. You've shown cleverness, resourcefulness, and resilience in troubled times. You have been impeccable conversants. But here is where we have a problem."

Janatimo smiles. "As students, it appears we don't have much left to teach you. Your time as conversants and as



students of the Magaambya is over. You're to graduate and become lore-speakers."

Janatimo tells the heroes that he'd like to put a stipulation on their advancement: that they stay at the Magaambya for a time as teachers. As teachers, the heroes can impart their special skills and talents to others, but this also lets Janatimo and other senior faculty members help them develop a bit more. The heroes have advanced so quickly through their talent and hard work that it's difficult for some staff to believe that they could be ready at this point, and a probationary period will allow the heroes to prove that graduation is both deserved and appropriate.

Janatimo reinforces his pride in the heroes' efforts ("I told you I would be telling your stories, and I am certainly in the process of doing that!") and asks them to prepare for the lore-speaker ceremony in two weeks.

Unlike the conversant ceremony, there is no need to invite specific friends; the whole Magaambya will be there to witness the heroes graduate. Janatimo asks that they think about what they most need to learn about magic's connection to the world. Now that they have learned all that the school can teach its students, what is it that they seek to learn? He asks each hero to prepare a small speech on this subject at the ceremony.

News of the heroes' impending graduation spreads rapidly across campus. Friends are likely to throw parties for them, and teachers to whom the characters have grown close offer encouragement and advice. People from Nantambu who they helped, such as Tokku and Amaechi, hear of their graduation and send congratulations or small gifts.

The graduation ceremony takes place before the massive obelisk carved with the names of the thousands of lore-speakers throughout the Magaambya's history. The sun shines brightly on the large crowd of students, staff, and Nantambu citizens who have come to witness the ceremony. Musicians with drums and woodwinds play quick, joyful tunes to get the crowd singing and clapping. The music picks up in pace, with people singing and stomping. Janatimo steps in front of the monument and raises his hands for silence, and the music stops abruptly.

He holds a pause for a long moment. The only sounds come from a pair of thrushes perched on the monument high above. Their birdsong punctuates the silence. Finally, Janatimo speaks.

"Students, faculty, and friends of the Magaambya, it pleases me today to honor a group of students who exemplify the heart and soul of what we teach at the

Magaambya. It is easy for us to think of an institution as an entity in and of itself, something whose reputation is created by its existence. Even though we know that this is false, even though we know that an institution is only as good as the people who make it up, we often forget. Storytellers remind us of important truths, and I remind you of this.

"These students have served as constant and vigilant reminders to me that individual deeds and actions are the foundations we use to build the principles and reputation of the Magaambya.

"Those deeds and actions are not just made from what we have done; they are built from what we wish to do, who we seek to be." Janatimo turns away from the stage.

"Conversants, who is it that you seek to be? What do you seek to learn?"

Janatimo introduces each hero to the crowd and lets them speak. After the heroes give their speeches, Janatimo resumes the ceremony.

"Thank you for your words, which I know will one day be exceeded by your deeds. I want everyone to know you have agreed to stay for a time and teach our students what you have learned." Janatimo motions to the monument and holds out an ancient chisel.

"I have told you before, and I will tell the world: I look forward to telling your story as you go forth into the world. All that's left for you to do now is to carve your name on this monument along with all the lore-speakers who have come before."

The crowd's applause rises as music begins again. Once all heroes carve their names, they are officially lore-speakers, graduates from the Magaambya.

**XP Award:** Award the heroes 120 XP for participating in the graduation ceremony.

## Concluding the Adventure

Janatimo leaves shortly after graduation for another mission for the school. He admits that staying around as long as he did is uncharacteristic for him, but the party's exploits were just too fascinating for him to leave. The heroes have about 2 months of downtime as they prepare for their new roles as teachers. They must settle into their offices (most new teachers take offices in the Heron Archives, but each hero can claim an office in whichever of the ten oldest campus buildings they choose) and meet with senior faculty members to discuss curriculum and classes. By the time the next adventure begins, the heroes are presented with their students, and their next phase of learning and responsibility begins!

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# MWANGI FOLKTALES

Storytelling is perhaps one of Golarion's oldest forms of entertainment. Before the times of grand theaters, blossoming fireworks, and monthly periodicals, families would sit in a circle and spin tales, filling the hours with legends of clever heroes and the cruel villains they outsmarted. But the purpose of such stories is not only to entertain—they also explain natural phenomena, instill morals, or comfort those who fear death. Tales have the power to change or open the minds of others and to mold cultures.

In the Mwangi Expanse, renowned storytellers are not just entertainers, but archivists as well. A book is easily lost, taken, or destroyed, but a storyteller requires no tome to remember the lineage of a mythical kingdom or the formula for a healing poultice. Their stories, long committed to memory, hold the answers. As it's important for stories to connect with the listener, storytellers vary their tales by region. The story of a clever farmer, told in the highlands, might become a clever fisherwoman when told by the coast. These alterations can be more than cosmetic—folktales are meant to teach lessons, and lessons are set by culture. In one tale, a merchant may use his wits to deceive bandits on the road, but in another, he may learn how to defend himself.

The following folktales are just a sample of the countless tales passed on for generations across the Mwangi Expanse.

## The Four Hunters

Once, four great hunters roamed the highlands. Each was equally skilled in mind, body, and every hunting art, and the four were so alike that they came to be known just by the region they roamed: West, North, East, and South. They differed in only small ways, which we shall get to in a moment.

Each year, the four hunters would come together in a contest, to see who could first track down and capture a creature, and each year, the contest would end the same way: as all four were equally skilled,

they would always each track down the creature at the exact same time, and the contest would be a draw. So long did this go on that the hunters felt disheartened by the contest. After all, if it ended the same way each time, how would they ever grow?

This year, the hunters gathered and made camp as they often did, and while they were deciding what they'd hunt—Zebra, Antelope, or perhaps even Crocodile—a star fell in the distance. One hunter (it does not matter which) turned to the others and said, "My fellows, I have seen the perfect quarry: that star falling in the distance! The one to capture it first shall be the champion of our contest." The other hunters agreed, and the four raced for the horizon.

The hunters soon came to a raging river, as wide across as four villages and treacherous in its churning. All four would be able to cross, though it would tax their strength to the very limit. Halfway through the crossing, West was swept back to the river's bank, for she was overly competitive. She had pushed herself to beat the other hunters, charging ahead through the river, and she had run out of strength halfway. Only three hunters continued on.

They soon came to a cliff, one that stretched so high that its top melded into the clouds. North took one look at the cliff and gave up, for he was overly cautious. Tired from the long swim, he feared tackling such a challenging climb and the unknown dangers ahead with anything less than his full strength. He sat down by the foot of the cliff in defeat. Only two hunters continued.

East and South reached the top of the cliff to see a thick jungle in front of them, deafening in its screaming and howling, and beyond it, a shine of gold against the clouds. East charged ahead into the jungle, for East was overly optimistic. She knew her strength was waning from the swim and the climb, and yet she thought she could keep going just a little bit longer, pushing through this one last challenge. She was wrong. The beasts of the jungle tore at her flesh, and

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the trees screamed vicious words to wound her heart. Without the strength to defend herself, East fled the jungle, injured in both mind and body.

While East rushed ahead, South rested, for he was wise and knew his limits. Rather than press on or give up altogether, South gathered his strength, knowing that only when he restored himself could he take on another challenge. As East stumbled from the jungle, South charged in, his feet steady, his endurance restored. The beasts' claws and fangs could not break his shield, and the trees' insults and invectives could

not break his spirit. South fought on, until he crossed to the other side.

Passing a ring of stone statues, South found himself in a beautiful city, the streets paved with gold and its people welcoming. He walked through its golden streets until he found a crowd gathering around the fallen star. "We have no need for this strange stone," they said. "You are welcome to take it with you, but you must tell no one of what you have seen here." The townspeople pressed the star into South's hand and a sweet drink to his lips that would make him forget the way to their city, and South took his leave, the champion of the hunters' contest.

South left the golden city, and as he crossed its borders, its location faded from his mind, but South had pressed his memories of the city into the star, just as the townspeople had pressed the drink of forgetfulness to his lips. He collected East, North, and West as he made his way back to their camp, breaking off a piece of the star for each to wear as a medal. Even if South's memories of the city remained within the star's fragments, the lesson that had helped him get there—that as important as it is to fight, it's also important to know one's limits and take on challenges only when one can—remained in the hunters' hearts for all their days after.

## The Whispering Parrot

In the past—but not so far back that the sky was yet to fall upon Vidrian—high on a mountain near a waterfall, there lived a Weaver. Weaver's fingers were nimble as raindrops, her imagination as quick as lightning, and her smile as brilliant as the setting sun; she could weave the most beautiful patterns that put the skies to shame. Each afternoon, she would work her loom, and each morning, she would take her cloths down the mountain to the market. Between the beauty of her smile and her fabrics, every man who saw her in the market sought her hand.

But Weaver had no interest in marrying any man—or anyone else, for that matter—all she wanted was to be left alone, free to pursue her weaving for all her days. After much time, she grew tired of the suitors, and so she made it known. "None may marry me unless they can guess my greatest regret, my greatest weakness, and my greatest fear." Soon, Weaver was no longer bothered by suitors, until one day, in the market, when she caught the eye of a traveling Witch.

He had come from a distant land, as was clear from his fair skin and crimson hair, and though his voice was kind, his green eyes were empty as pits. The Witch called Weaver to him and asked for her hand in marriage, though he didn't love her and only sought to make her



South, the Hunter

his. Weaver told Witch, as she did everyone else, “I can’t marry you, kind Witch. You are new here, it seems, and so you may not know what is known: I can’t marry someone until they have guessed my greatest regret, my greatest weakness, and my greatest fear.”

“I apologize for troubling you, good Weaver,” said Witch, but he had a plan. He retrieved a beautiful red-and-black parrot from his wagon. “Please, take this parrot with you as a token of my remorse. I’ve trained her to help in my work, and she will prove most useful. Perhaps one day, I can guess the answers, but until that day, I shall wait.”

Weaver had never seen such a beautiful parrot, and in that moment, she hesitated in refusing Witch’s gift. “Very well, friendly Witch, I shall take this gift. But know that it doesn’t mean I can marry you, not until you have guessed correctly.” Witch bowed to Weaver, his plan already in motion.

That afternoon, Weaver returned to her mountain to work on her latest cloth, and just as Witch had said, the parrot was very helpful. She passed threads to Weaver when they were out of her reach, and beat her wings to fan Weaver’s brow when the air grew still. Eventually, Weaver had completed a brilliant blue cloth, and she went to sleep. But once she had fallen asleep, the parrot remembered Witch’s training, and hopped to Weaver’s side.

All night long, the parrot whispered. “Your greatest regret, your greatest regret. You can’t help but think about your greatest regret!” And Weaver dreamed a fitful dream. The next morning, as she was folding the blue cloth from her loom to take to market, she said to herself, “What a terrible dream! I spent the whole night thinking of how I never said goodbye to my younger sister before she left to cross the blue sea.” The parrot cocked her head in sympathy, or perhaps in cunning.

When Weaver went to market that day to sell her cloth, the parrot flew swiftly down the mountain ahead of her, to tell Witch what she had learned. When Weaver passed by, he

called out to her. “Weaver, I’ve thought long and hard. I can tell from your kindness you once took care of a sister, and I can’t help but notice that she’s not here. I think she left to cross the blue sea, and I think your greatest regret is that you never said goodbye to her.”

Weaver was shocked, but she kept her word. “Keen Witch, you guessed correctly. But there are still two more things you must guess before I may marry you.” Witch agreed and bade Weaver farewell, but as Weaver left, she noticed a stray feather behind Witch’s wagon.

That afternoon, she returned to the mountain to work on her latest cloth. Once again, the parrot passed her threads and fanned her brow, and when she finished, a deep purple cloth sat at her loom. Weaver went to sleep, and the parrot hopped to her side.

All night long, the parrot whispered. “Your greatest weakness, your greatest weakness. You can’t help but think about your greatest weakness!” And Weaver dreamt another fitful dream. The next morning, she sighed out loud, “Another awful dream!

I spent the whole night thinking of how close to death I become after just the tiniest bite of purple yam.”

In truth, Weaver became ill after a bite of yellow yam, but in her exhaustion after two nights without sleep, she misspoke as the purple cloth caught her eye.

The parrot cocked her head, waited for Weaver to leave, and flew down the mountain.

When Weaver arrived, Witch called her over. “I had another thought! I can tell by the way you linger at the farmer’s stand that you enjoy sweets, but I can’t help notice there’s one thing you never buy. Clearly, your greatest weakness is that you have the sickness, as some do, that brings you close to death upon eating purple yams.”

Weaver was shocked at how close Witch had guessed, and began to open her mouth to tell him that he was close, but incorrect. But Witch saw the look cross her face and cut her off before she could reject him. “Apologies, skilled



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Weaver, the beautiful purple cloth you carry drew my eye, and I misspoke. Clearly, you enjoy purple yam! You must fall ill after a bite of yellow yam instead.”

Weaver’s mind began to turn as she saw yet more feathers from behind Witch’s wagon and reflected on how he had guessed something she said out loud that very morning. “You’re indeed right again, good Witch. There’s only one thing left you have to guess—my greatest fear. If you present it to me tomorrow, then not only will I marry you, but I shall give up my weaving and follow you anywhere.”

Witch enjoyed the idea of cruelly denying the woman her passion but hid his desire behind a smile. “If that is what you wish.”

Weaver returned to the mountain, and this night, she wove no cloth, but went to bed early. She lay there with her eyes closed, waiting to see what would happen, and soon enough, the parrot hopped over and whispered. “Your greatest fear, your greatest fear. You can’t help but think about your greatest fear!” and at last Weaver understood Witch’s plot. When the sun rose, she feigned a yawn, spoke her fears aloud to the parrot, and left for market.

Witch was waiting for her at the gate, the parrot on his shoulder. “Weaver, I’ve guessed your greatest fear! And as you agreed, I’ll use my magic to make it real!” He summoned a terrible cloud of red magic that filled the sky. “When you arrive home, you’ll find your crops bountiful and the water from your falls pure.” With each proclamation, sparks shot from the cloud in the direction of Weaver’s mountain. “You’ll find your loom never breaks, and the air always flows cool through your home.” A storm of sparks filled the air.

Weaver smiled. “Clever Witch, you’ve guessed almost all of my fears. But there’s one bit you have not yet told me.” The parrot whispered in Witch’s ear, and he grinned. “I know that the fear you spoke aloud this morning was for your home to be comfortable, for you to want for nothing... and to do so alone, free to weave undisturbed for the rest of your days!” No sooner had he said the words than the last bit of magic in the sky shot down at him, and in a puff of smoke, Witch and his whispering parrot disappeared forevermore.

Weaver slept well that night, having outsmarted Witch. For the rest of her days, she was free to weave as she liked, and she was sure to warn others to be wary of gifts from strangers, and to protect your secrets, for you never know who a parrot may be whispering to.

## Ibex’s Harvest

In the time of regrowth after the skies turned dark, a warrior turned from fighting to tend the land. The warrior took one of their spears and used it to dig

holes in the earth, placing a plantain seed into each. With their other spear, the warrior carved a channel from a nearby river, allowing water to nourish the seeds. Long the warrior toiled until their field was complete. This warrior’s name was Ibex.

Ibex worked hard in the field, and when a season had passed, the field flourished with ripe plantains, each as gold as Ibex’s mask. The warrior cut down each bunch with their twin spears and parceled them out for each village under their protection. When they completed the task, two plantains were left, and Ibex went to the gate in front of their field. “I have food left over! If there are any bellies that need filling, come, and I shall divide what’s left.” Two creatures stepped forth: great Hippo lumbered from the river, and tiny Ant skittered from the forest.

“Kind Ibex, the rivers have been empty. I would ask for a plantain to survive,” Hippo asked politely.

“Strong Ibex, little has been left on the ground for me to scavenge. It would be just of you to give me a plantain to survive,” Ant demanded confidently.

Ibex thought long and hard. There were two creatures before them, and two plantains. There was only one fair solution. “You may each have one, then. Go and be well.” And Hippo returned to the river, cradling her single plantain in her large hands, while Ant returned to the forest, dragging his plantain behind him on a leaf with all his might.

Ibex returned to tend their field once more. This time, they placed rocks around the outside of the field to shore it up, and they worked manure and charcoal through the soil to enrich it. Another season passed, and the harvest was more bountiful than before—there was more than enough food to go around for all the villages, and a dozen plantains were left over. Ibex returned to the gate, and once more called out, “I have food left over! If there are any bellies that need filling, come, and I shall divide what’s left.” As before, Hippo and Ant came forth, but this time, Hippo was smaller, and Ant came not as one individual, but as a swarm of eleven.

“Kind Ibex, I thank you for your generosity. Though my stomach growled through the last season, I feel I need only a single plantain, as before.”

“Strong Ibex, I have grown more numerous. As I now have eleven bellies, it would be only fair for me to receive eleven plantains.”

Ibex had a slight doubt, but they thought hard. There were twelve creatures before them, and twelve plantains. There was only one fair solution. “Hippo, as there’s one of you, you will have one plantain. Ant, as there are eleven of you, you will have eleven. Go, and be well.” And Hippo returned to the river after

thanking Ibex, swooning a bit from hunger as she carried her plantain, while Ant formed a line, carrying each plantain back to the forest in a chain as drool dripped from his lips.

Ibex returned to their field. Surely, they thought, if they could simply grow more, there would be enough to give everyone an equal share. Ibex toiled harder than they ever had. They sang to the wind, and they sculpted a sphere of light above the field to shine on days the sun could not. Ibex toiled and toiled, and when the season had passed, their field shone gold as far as the eye could see. Ibex sighed in relief after they had passed out the harvest to their villages, as they saw that countless plantains remained. Surely, this time, it would be enough. They returned to the gate and called out, and they dismayed to see that Hippo came from the river, no bigger than a dog, and Ant came in a swarm of thousands, buzzing and biting with great hunger.

"Kind Ibex, I've grown leaner over these few seasons. I think a single plantain is all I might need."

"Strong Ibex, there are many thousands of me now, and my hunger is vast. As before, you should give one plantain to Hippo, and one for each of me."

Ibex looked at Hippo with her grumbling stomach and Ant with his many mouths, thinking something must be amiss. They turned to their field for advice. "What should I do? I've given all I can, and I've given it as fairly as I can." The field spoke to Ibex. "Ibex, you've tended to me well, but in trying to be fair, you've given Hippo less than she needs, and Ant has grown entitled and ravenous. With each season, these differences have only become more pronounced. You must think not about what seems fair, but what actually is." Ibex thanked the field for its wisdom and returned to the gate.

"Hippo, I apologize. I've given you less than you need for many seasons now. Ant, for many seasons now, you have had more than you need. Please allow Hippo to take what she requires of the harvest, and you're welcome to the rest."

Ant's greed turned to indignant rage. He gathered himself into a column towering over Ibex, Hippo, and the field. "If you will not give me what I need from your harvest, I shall eat you instead!" he roared, but in that moment, Ibex showed why they were first and foremost a warrior. They struck at the river with their spears, carving a second channel in the earth that washed Ant away until he was a single insect once more. Ant scuttled back into the forest, and Ibex threw a plantain after him, before allowing Hippo take as much as she needed.

In time, Hippo returned to her normal size and then lived healthily, starting a family of her own. Ibex kept an eye out for Ant, who continued to skitter around seeking more than he needed, his numbers swelling from time to time. But above all else, Ibex remembered to consider not just what seemed fair, but what was.



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# ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

The following new rules supplement the heroes' adventures in "Spoken on the Song Wind."

## Ritual

The following ritual is the most permanent way to repair Amaechi's pottery shop in Chapter 2.

### COMMUNITY REPAIR

### RITUAL 4

**RARE** **EMOTION** **TRANSMUTATION**

**Cast** 1 day; **Cost** rare powdered pigments in at least three different colors, worth a total of 50 gp; **Secondary Casters** 4 or more

**Primary Check** Performance (expert); **Secondary Checks** Crafting, Performance, Society

**Range** 10 feet; **Target** 1 damaged or broken public work no larger than 3,000 cubic feet (the size of a Huge creature)

You lead your community in repairing a public work, such as a bridge, well, or mural, through the power of memory and art. The primary caster serves as an emcee or leader, while each secondary caster provides a heartfelt anecdote that somehow involves the public work; for instance, recounting a story of playing at a fountain each summer. The anecdotes don't need to be firsthand accounts—a community member might sing of how their grandparents fell in love crossing a bridge every day—but they must be directly connected in some way. The GM can offer a +1 circumstance bonus to the secondary caster whose anecdote seems most moving.

If the public work was destroyed intentionally by one of the casters, the ritual automatically critically fails.

**Critical Success** The public work is restored to its prior construction, and it takes on further qualities, encouraged by the thoughts of the community. For the next week, while a caster is within 60 feet of the site of the ritual, they receive a +1 status bonus to Will saves against emotion effects and a +10-foot status bonus to their Speeds.

**Success** The public work is restored to its prior construction and function.

**Failure** The ritual has no effect.

**Critical Failure** The public work refuses to repair itself, and the memories of the community members are soured in response to the botched ritual. For the next week, while a caster is within 60 feet of the site of the ritual, they cannot receive any benefit from beneficial emotion effects, and they take a -10-foot status penalty to their Speeds as their movement slows to a morose crawl.

## Magic Items

The heroes can find some of the following new magic items in the adventure. The others don't specifically appear as treasure but are thematically linked to the Magaambya or Mwangi history and make good options for you to give the heroes as replacement or supplemental magic items.

### BAG OF CATS

### ITEM 8

**UNCOMMON** **CONJURATION** **MAGICAL** **TRANSMUTATION**

**Price** 500 gp

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

This beautiful leather bag is lined in soft fur and purrs quietly when pet.

**Activate** ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You shake the bag to produce a single cat. You cast a 3rd-level *summon animal* to produce a leopard (*Bestiary* 52).

**Activate** ♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You pull the bag over your head and it covers you completely. You then exit the bag in the form of a large cat. You gain the effects of 3rd-level *animal form* but must use the cat battle form.

### CROWN OF THE COMPANION

### ITEM 6

**UNCOMMON** **HEALING** **INVESTED** **MAGICAL** **NECROMANCY** **POSITIVE**

**Price** 250 gp

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

Stories tell of a forgotten king who once loved his subjects so much he was willing to give his own life energy for them. Whether true or not, this majestic

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wooden crown bears elaborate carvings depicting that tale. It's ringed with images of the same kingly figure giving more and more of himself to a throng of needy subjects. While wearing it, you gain a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy checks.

**Activate** envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You bow to an ally within 30 feet, creating a magical bond between the two of you. You cast *shield other* targeting the ally. The link remains even if you move more than 30 feet away from them. At the end of the spell's duration, your ally recovers 4d8 Hit Points and you recover half of what they recover.

## FULMINATING SPEAR

ITEM 7

UNCOMMON EVOCATION FIRE MAGICAL

**Price** 360 gp

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

This +1 *striking returning spear* is warm to the touch. The head of the spear is crafted from gold with ivory inlay and has a ruby set into the shaft. You can make the spear glow like a torch or suppress its light by using an action, which has the concentrate trait.

**Activate** envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You touch the ruby and hurl the spear at a square within 40 feet. When the spear lands, it detonates, dealing 6d6 fire damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save) to all creatures in a 10-foot emanation. It then flies back to your hand.

## HABU'S CUDGEL

ITEM 8

UNIQUE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

**Price** 415 gp

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

Long associated with a notorious crime boss in Nantambu, this stout +1 *striking fearsome*<sup>APG</sup> club is studded with vicious-looking knobs of obsidian and wrapped in cloth for a better grip. It emits a ghastly groan when swung.

**Activate** Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You gesture at a square within 40 feet with *Habu's Cudgel*. The club causes a frightful wail to unleash from that square and casts *fear* (DC 24 Will save) targeting the creature in that square and all adjacent creatures.

## LEOPARD'S ARMOR

ITEM 9

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

**Price** 700 gp

**Usage** worn armor; **Bulk** 2

Made of cobalt-colored steel rings that flow down the entire length of the garment, this +1 *resilient chain mail* includes an armored face covering. The armor is said to

be based on the same armor once worn by Azure Leopard, one of Old-Mage Jatembe's magic warriors.

**Activate** command, envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You call upon the ferocity and grace of the leopard. The armor's rings flatten out to become a solid piece of flexible armor. You gain a +2 item bonus to Stealth checks and Intimidation checks to Demoralize, but take a -2 penalty to Diplomacy and Society checks. This lasts for 1 hour, but you can Activate the armor again to revert it back to its original form.

## RHINO HIDE BROOCH

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON ABJURATION CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN

**Price** 28 gp

**Usage** affixed to armor; **Bulk** –

**Activate** envision; **Trigger** You would take physical damage.

This thick brooch is carved from a single piece of rhino hide. It's lacquered and covered in a thin layer of silver dust. When activated, the talisman grants you resistance 5 to physical damage until the end of the current creature's turn. This resistance applies to the triggering attack.

## SINGING MUSE

ITEM 6

UNCOMMON ABJURATION CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN

**Price** 250 gp

**Usage** affixed to armor; **Bulk** –

**Activate** envision; **Trigger** You attempt a Performance check.

This small figurine is carved from a single piece of silvery, spiky stone and resembles a beautiful dryad pouring water into a small pool. When you activate the muse, you are momentarily enlightened with inspiration that bolsters your performance. If you roll a success on your triggering check, you get a critical success instead.

## SPELLENDER

ITEM 9

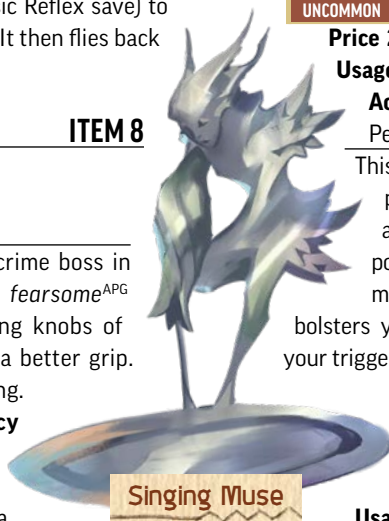
UNCOMMON ABJURATION MAGICAL

**Price** 600 gp

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

This knife is a +1 *striking returning dagger* with a wide blade and thick wooden handle. A prayer for protection from evil magic is carved into the handle in tiny script, running around the handle in a spiral. The grooves of the carved prayer provide a good grip on the knife and make it easy to catch when it returns to your hand.

**Activate** envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You critically hit with the weapon; **Effect** The dagger casts a 4th-level *dispel magic* targeting the most powerful spell effect affecting the creature you critically hit. The counteract check is +15.



Singing Muse

## WARCALLER'S CHIME

ITEM 4+

UNCOMMON EVOCATION MAGICAL

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

The Nantambu Chime-Ringers created these magical chimes to aid in their defense of their city. Each chime is made from elaborately carved wood depicting the nature of a given chime's power.

**Activate** ➡➡ envision, Interact; **Effect** You ring the chime, unleashing its magic. The specifics of each chime, as well as the activation's frequency (if any), appear in its entry below.

**Type** *warcaller's chime of blasting*; **Level** 6; **Price** 250 gp

This chime features carvings of destructive runes. When activated, it creates the effects of a 3rd-level *sound burst* centered on you (DC 20 Fortitude save). Instead of the spell's normal range, it has a 5-foot emanation. In addition, creatures that critically fail their save are knocked prone by the chime's effect. You can use this chime once per day.

**Type** *warcaller's chime of destruction*;

**Level** 4; **Price** 100 gp

A series of shattered mountains are carved into this chime. When activated, you touch the chime against an unattended object, casting *shatter* upon the object, ignoring the object's Hardness if it's 6 or lower. You can use this chime once per day.

**Type** *warcaller's chime of dread*; **Level** 10; **Price** 1,000 gp

This chime's carvings depict skulls and other grim icons. When activated, it creates an aura of *fear* in a 5-foot emanation for 1 round. Creatures in the aura must attempt a DC 27 Will save. On a failure, they become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). Affected creatures can't reduce their frightened condition below frightened 1 while the chime is ringing. You can Sustain the Activation to sustain the aura, up to a total of 5 rounds. This chime can be used only once per day, whether or not you Sustain the aura.

**Type** *warcaller's chime of refuge*; **Level** 8; **Price** 500 gp

This chime's carvings depict a series of warding runes that evoke feelings of serene protection. When activated, you touch the chime to yourself or a willing creature. The target gains the effects of *sanctuary* (DC 20 Will save). You can use this chime up to five times per day, but each use must target a different creature.

**Type** *warcaller's chime of resistance*; **Level** 5; **Price** 160 gp

This chime features several elemental runes in its carvings. When activated, it creates a defensive aura in a 5-foot emanation. As you activate the chime, choose acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. You and creatures

in the aura gain resistance 5 against the damage type you chose. This aura remains active for 10 minutes. This chime can be used once per week.

**Type** *warcaller's chime of restoration*; **Level** 12; **Price** 2,000 gp

This chime's carvings depict blooming flowers. When activated, it creates a small aura of healing in a 5-foot emanation. Creatures in the aura gain fast healing 15. This aura remains active for 3 rounds. This chime can be used once per week.

## WONDROUS FIGURINES

ITEM 8+

UNCOMMON CONJURATION MAGICAL

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

The magical statuettes known as *wondrous figurines* are described on page 576 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.

The following additional figurines are uncommon versions sometimes found among the magical creations of the Magaambya or for sale in the streets of Nantambu.

**Type** bismuth leopards; **Level** 8; **Price** 495 gp

This exquisitely crafted statuette is carved into the form of twin panthers climbing a tree. When activated, it transforms into a pair of beautiful leopards (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 52) that are carved out of bismuth and flash hypnotically as they move. Creatures that come within 5 feet of a bismuth leopard or that end their turn within 5 feet of a bismuth leopard become dazzled for 1 round unless they succeed at a DC 24 Will save. A creature that comes within 5 feet of both leopards or ends its turn within 5 feet of both leopards need only attempt one saving throw each time. The leopards can be called on only once per day, and they remain in their leopard form for up to 10 minutes. If either of the leopards is slain, that leopard can't be summoned again until 1 week has passed, but this doesn't prevent you from summoning the other leopard.

**Type** ruby hippopotamus; **Level** 9; **Price** 700 gp

This roughly hewn ruby figurine shimmers with a deep red hue and is carved into the likeness of an ornery hippopotamus. When activated, it transforms into an enraged hippopotamus (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 144) that sees everything within 30 feet of its activation area as its territory. It will relentlessly and ferociously attack anyone within this area except you, but it ignores your commands in favor of defending its area. The hippopotamus is active for 1 minute before reverting to its statue shape, satisfied that it has punished all possible interlopers into its territory. The figurine can be used only once per day.



Ruby Hippopotamus

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## Folklorist Archetype

Folklorists are welcome across the Mwangi Expanse for the entertaining stories they tell and the counsel they impart. However, those who take the art of storytelling to the next level can produce magical effects based on their understanding of stories and their firm belief that life conforms to the contours of these tales. While many such folklorists are benevolent, terms like hero and villain are notoriously relative, changing to fit the perspective of the storyteller.


### FOLKLORIST DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

**Prerequisites** trained in Performance

You are a master archivist and entertainer, capable of pulling wisdom from the tales you tell and weaving your allies and enemies into a powerful narrative. You gain the Spin Tale action.

**Spin Tale**  (auditory, linguistic) **Frequency** once every 10 minutes; **Effect** You tell a story, designating one of your allies (but not yourself) as the hero of the story, and one enemy as the villain; both must be within 60 feet. The hero gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and saving throws against the villain until the start of your next turn. If you Spin a Tale on your next turn, the story continues for another round, for a maximum of 10 rounds. While the tale continues, minor, crude illusions spring into being in your space; these are arcane illusion effects that have no mechanical impact other than illustrating your tale.

**Special** You can't select another dedication feat until you've gained two other feats from the folklorist archetype.

### FOLKTALES LORE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

**Prerequisites** Folklorist Dedication

You can pull bits of wisdom from any tale. You become trained in Folktales Lore, a special Lore skill that can be used only to Recall Knowledge, but on any topic. If you fail a check to Recall Knowledge with Folktales Lore, you get the effects of the Dubious Knowledge skill feat.

If you are legendary in the Performance skill, you gain expert proficiency in Folktales Lore, but you

can't increase your proficiency rank in Folktales Lore by any other means.

### NARRATIVE CONDUIT

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY LINGUISTIC MAGICAL

**Prerequisites** Folklorist Dedication

You act as a conduit for your companions just as your stories are a conduit between teller and listener. When you Spin a Tale and the hero of your tale Casts a Spell against the villain, you warp the world, allowing the hero to calculate range and cover to the villain from your space instead of their own if they prefer. The hero must choose to calculate both range and cover from the same space; they can't use one space for range and the other for cover.

### RULE OF THREE

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY LINGUISTIC MAGICAL

**Prerequisites** Folklorist Dedication

**Requirements** You have Spun a Tale.

**Trigger** The villain of the tale you've spun makes an attack roll with a given weapon or unarmed attack, uses a particular special ability (such as a Breath Weapon), or Casts a Spell against the hero, and they used that same attack, special ability, or spell against the hero on the previous turn.

Heroes learn from their previous failures, often succeeding on the third attempt. You narrate a tale of the hero's success, granting them a +2 circumstance bonus to their AC or saving throw against the triggering effect. If the villain has used the same effect against the hero on both of their last two turns, and you used Rule of Three on that effect last turn as well, the bonus increases to +4.

### COMMUNAL TALE

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

**Prerequisites** Folklorist Dedication

Stories are an experience meant to be shared as a group. When you Spin a Tale, you can designate up to six non-minion allies as the heroes of your story. Each hero, once during the tale, can continue the story in your stead by spending an action to Spin the Tale; if they do, the story continues for another round, as if you had Spun the Tale at the start of your turn. This could allow the story to continue for up to 6 additional rounds, if all possible allies Spin the Tale, though you can continue to Spin the Tale on your own as normal.



## Nantambu Chime-Ringer Archetype

The Chime-Ringers serve as Nantambu's elite town guard, keeping the peace while carrying on ancient traditions of crafting chimes in metal, bamboo, or glass.

### NANTAMBU CHIME-RINGER DEDICATION FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

**Prerequisites** trained in Performance and Society

You've studied the basics of harmony and resonance in magic, exemplified by the ringing of chimes. You gain a single arcane or occult cantrip of your choice, heightened to a spell level equal to half your level, rounded up. If you weren't already, you become trained in that tradition's spell DCs and spell attack rolls, with Intelligence as your spellcasting ability if you choose arcane or Charisma as your spellcasting ability if you choose occult. Regardless of your choice, you also either become trained in Arcana or Occultism, or an expert in one of these skills if you are already trained in both.

**Special** You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Nantambu Chime-Ringer archetype.

### FLEET TEMPO FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY TRANSMUTATION

**Prerequisites** Nantambu Chime-Ringer Dedication

**Frequency** once per hour

To rush after a criminal or reach someone in need, you ring a sprightly tone. You and all allies within 30 feet gain a +10-foot status bonus to all Speeds for 1 minute.

### DENY THE SONGS OF WAR FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

**Prerequisites** Nantambu Chime-Ringer Dedication

To keep the peace, you disrupt those who seek to break it. You can cast *deafness* and 4th-level *silence* once per day each as innate spells. The tradition of these spells is the one you chose for the Nantambu Chime-Ringer Dedication feat.

### SING TO THE STEEL FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY EVOCATION

**Prerequisites** Nantambu Chime-Ringer Dedication

**Frequency** once per hour

You strike magical tones that can turn the tide of combat. You and your allies within 30 feet gain the effects of one of the following runes until the end of your next turn: *corrosive*, *disrupting*, *flaming*, *frost*, *ghost touch*, *shock*, or *thundering*. The effects apply to a single weapon the creature is holding or one of the creature's unarmed attacks. You choose the rune and the effect applies to all creatures. You can use an action, which has the concentrate trait, to extend the duration of the rune for 1 additional round up to a maximum of 1 minute. If this would give a weapon

or unarmed attack more property runes than its normal maximum, an existing property rune (as the creature chooses) is suppressed until the spell ends.

### SONG OF GRACE AND SPEED FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY TRANSMUTATION

**Prerequisites** Nantambu Chime-Ringer Dedication

**Frequency** once per day

You instill great swiftness into your allies. You and all allies within 30 feet become quickened for 1 minute and can use the additional action to Strike, Stride, or Step.



Nantambu Chime-Ringer

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## WILD DAMIBWAS

Although feral damibwas are rare, they aren't unheard of. Feral damibwas live in packs of up to a dozen. They fish in close proximity, so the attack of one damibwa drives fleeing fish toward their waiting packmates. Never truly wild in temperament, feral damibwas have a friendly disposition and bond easily with humanoids and other canines.

# Damibwa

Damibwas are domesticated hounds capable of detecting prey or predators via echolocation thanks to their exceptionally large ears and keen hearing. Adept swimmers, damibwas have sleek bodies, short limbs, webbed feet, and long muscular tails that enable them to maneuver underwater with grace and speed.

Trained as specialized hunting hounds, damibwas primarily catch fish, although they're also adept at diving for lobsters, crabs, and clams. While hunting, damibwas wait near the water's edge, typically on a boat or along the shore, listening for choice prey. When they detect prey in range, they dive down below the water, catch the animal in their jaws, and drag it back up to the surface. When large or dangerous aquatic predators approach, damibwas retreat to land and howl a warning, making them desirable guard dogs in coastal or riverside communities. Damibwas rarely attack terrestrial creatures unless they're threatened and unable to make an escape.

Damibwas are popular pets along rivers, lakes, and swamps throughout Golarion, particularly in the River Kingdoms, Wanshou, and the canals of Nantambu in the Mwangi Expanse. Some Erutaki in Avistan's far north hunt seals alongside a particular hardy breed covered in thick fur and a layer of blubber. They are only universally called damibwas in the Mwangi Expanse, and are often called "diving dogs" in other regions.

## DAMIBWA

## CREATURE 4

N MEDIUM ANIMAL

**Perception** +12; echolocation 60 feet, low-light vision

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Athletics +12, Stealth +10, Survival +10

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

**Deep Breath** A damibwa can hold its breath for 5 minutes.

**Echolocation** A damibwa's hearing is a precise sense at the listed range.

**AC** 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

**HP** 62

**Speed** 30 feet, swim 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ jaws +14, **Damage** 2d8+4 piercing plus Grab

**Fetch** ♦ (attack, move) **Requirements** The damibwa has a Small or smaller creature grabbed in water; **Effect** The damibwa attempts an Athletics check against the creature's Fortitude DC.

**Critical Success** The damibwa moves up to its swim Speed, dragging the grabbed creature along with it.

**Success** The damibwa moves up to half its swim Speed, dragging the grabbed creature along with it.

**Failure** The damibwa doesn't move and the creature isn't dragged.

**Critical Failure** The damibwa no longer has the creature grabbed.

**Predatory Dive** ♦♦ (move) **Requirements** The damibwa is in or adjacent to water; **Effect** The damibwa moves up to double its swim Speed, descending at least 10 feet, and then makes a jaws Strike. If it was undetected at the start of predatory dive, it remains

undetected until after the attack.



Damibwa

# Gbahali

Resembling an enormous, long-legged alligator, the gbahali is larger, stronger, faster, and more cunning than all but the largest of its crocodilian kin. Gbahalis will range far from the banks of the rivers they inhabit to seek prey. With a powerful, squat snout, a gbahali viciously bites their quarry, while their powerful hind legs allow them to leap upon fleeing creatures or stride away to safety when threatened.

Gbahalis are solitary creatures, splitting their time between the rivers that offer easy meals of fish and aquatic snakes and stalking the edges of the hunting territories of larger, meatier prey. Given the option, gbahalis much prefer warm-blooded food, but a hungry or injured gbahali remains near a river where it can more easily consume large fish, snakes, or even crocodiles until it's ready to hunt its preferred quarry once again. An adult gbahali can quickly take down and consume livestock, leaving no sign of its meals but enormous scuffed tracks in the ground, as its jaws are large enough to swallow many creatures whole.

Gbahalis have a basic understanding of humanoid behavior. A gbahali learns quickly to evade trackers and traps, and can skillfully hunt along the fringes of a settlement for months before its presence becomes known. They usually avoid humanoid prey, even when hungry; they know that humanoid communities may hunt them in dogged retaliation for feasting upon a humanoid. Gbahalis therefore prefer to hunt far-ranging livestock like ranch or grazing animals. If another predator threatens a gbahali's territory, it might attack a humanoid, leave messy remains strewn about, and then retreat from the area for several weeks. In this time, it hopes the angry humanoids will hunt and kill its rival, leaving the gbahali an uncontested hunting ground when it returns.

## GBAHALI

## CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON N HUGE BEAST

**Perception** +17; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Skills** Athletics +20, Stealth +17 (+21 in water), Survival +17

**Deep Breath** A gbahali can hold its breath for 2 hours.

**Str** +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** -3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -2

**AC** 28; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17

**HP** 170

**Attack of Opportunity** ↻

**Speed** 40 feet, swim 30 feet; powerful jumper

**Melee** ♦ jaws +21 (deadly d12, reach 10 feet),

**Damage** 2d10+13 piercing plus Grab

**Melee** ♦ claw +21 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+13 slashing

**Melee** ♦ tail +21 (backswing, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d10+13 bludgeoning

**Aquatic Ambush** ♦ 40 feet

**Powerful Jumper** A gbahali jumps 10 feet up on a successful High Jump or 20 feet up on a critical success.

**Swallow Whole** ♦ (attack) Medium, 2d8+7 bludgeoning, Rupture 20



## GBAHALI NESTS

Long-lived, solitary, and rare, gbahalis have survived numerous attempts to hunt them into extinction by simply remaining far from each other's hunting grounds. A gbahali can survive for two centuries or more and can spend weeks away from its preferred rivers; naturalists assume the creatures come together to mate and perhaps raise young, but no gbahali mating grounds or nests have yet been found. Given the speed with which gbahali can bring down and consume prey, few ecologists relish the prospect of finding a nest of the creatures.

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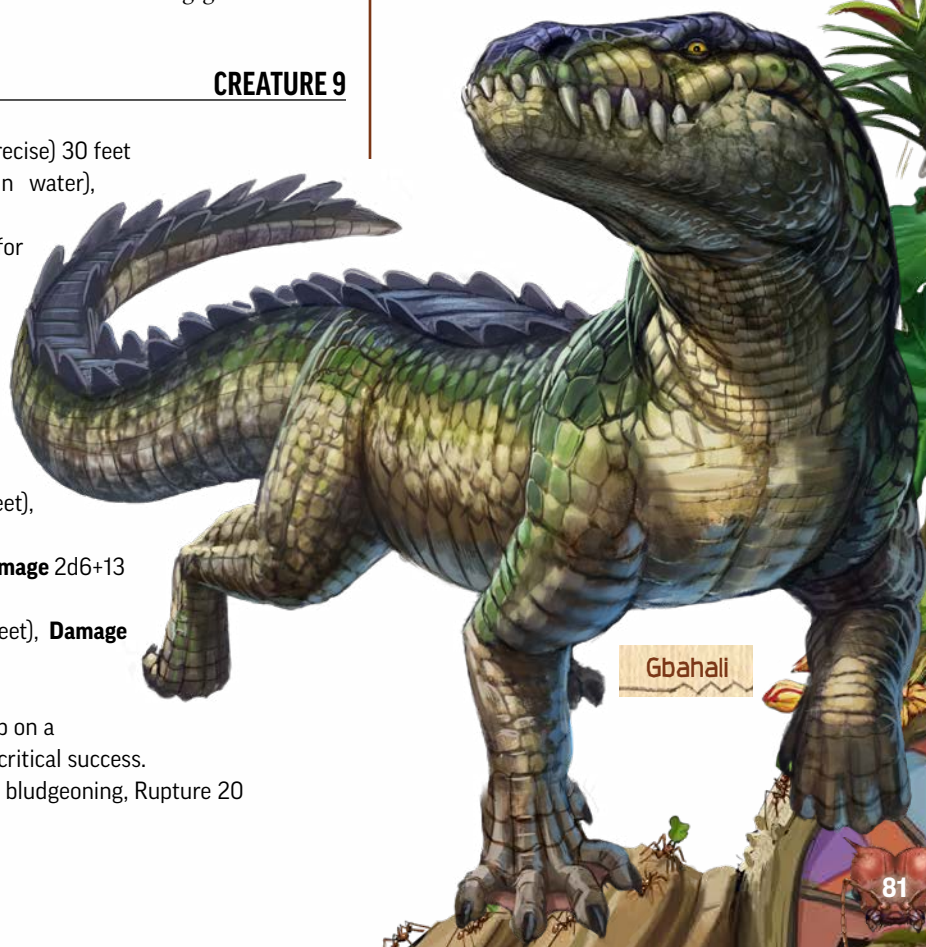
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## RANCOROUS ENCLAVES

Exiled baneback sometimes band together to form their own villages, usually under the leadership of a jinjer. Given that some banebacks are violent malcontents, these villages don't last long unless the leader keeps order, usually by violence or fear. These villages often keep monstrous vermin, such as giant cockroaches, giant tsetse flies (*Pathfinder* #169 *Kindled Magic* 81), or giant ticks as guards or mascots.

## Grippli

Gripplis are small, frog-like humanoids native to tropical rainforests. Most gripplis live in tight-knit treetop villages and survive primarily as hunters and gatherers. While most communities are peaceful and harmonious, a lingering superstition has led to a unique group of these people being cut off from their communal bonds and forced to make their own way in the world.

Among the many gripplis who possess poison glands, a rare subset secrete mind-altering chemicals. These gripplis aren't immune to this toxin, and over many years it may render them erratic at best and selfishly misanthropic at worst. Other gripplis view these "banebacks" as cursed and react to their presence with fear and mistrust, which usually leads to their censure and exile. They soon find that their natural skills as hunters, combined with an unlimited supply of their potent toxin, make them ideally suited to taking on work as mercenaries, bandits, or assassins.

### GRIPPLI SKIRMISHER

Skirmishers are jittery baneback hunters or ambushers. Although they often fight in groups, they aren't loyal to each other and sometimes leave one member of the group behind to face punishment while the others flee.

### GRIPPLI SKIRMISHER

### CREATURE 4

NE SMALL GRIPPLI HUMANOID

**Perception** +12; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Grippli

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Athletics +10, Stealth +12, Survival +11, Thievery +10

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

**Items** composite shortbow (30 arrows), kukri, leather armor, thieves' tools

**Springing Step** When the skirmisher uses the Step action they ignore difficult terrain and may move up to 10 feet instead of 5 feet.

**AC** 22; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

**HP** 60

**Hopping Dodge** **Trigger** A creature misses the skirmisher with a melee Strike; **Effect** The skirmisher quickly takes advantage of the attacker's error and Steps.

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 20 feet; jungle stride

**Melee** **◆** kukri +14 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing plus baneback poison

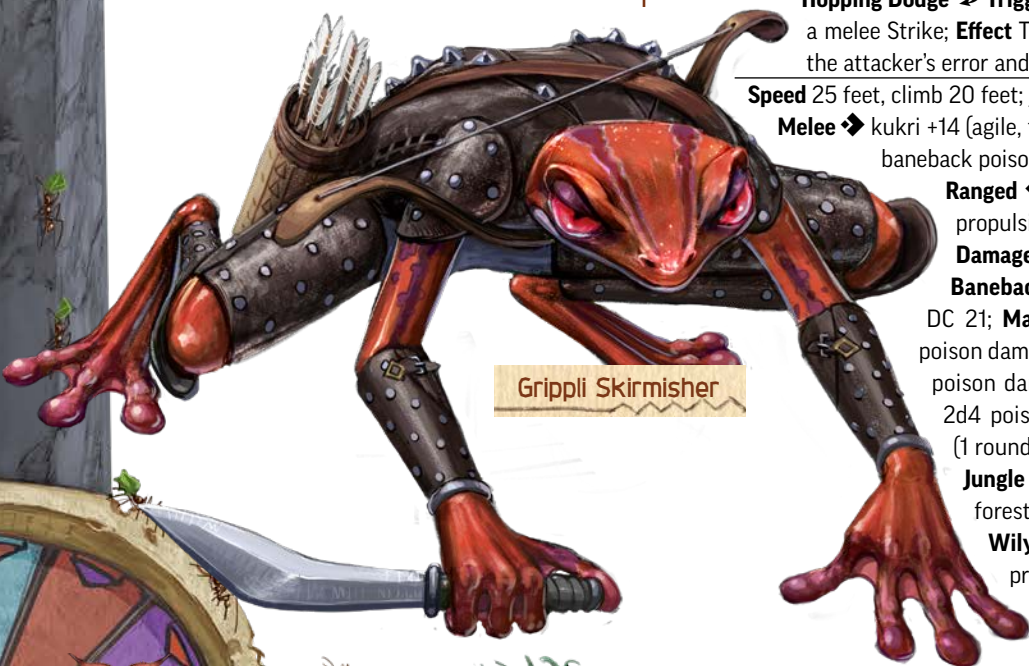
**Ranged** **◆** composite shortbow +14 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0),

**Damage** 1d6+3 piercing plus baneback poison

**Baneback Poison** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 21; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d4 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d4 poison damage and stupefied 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 2d4 poison damage, stupefied 3, and flat-footed (1 round)

**Jungle Stride** Gripplis ignore difficult terrain in forests and jungles.

**Wily Attack** The skirmisher deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures and creatures afflicted by a poison.



Grippli Skirmisher

## GRIPPLI JINXER

Baneback gripplis with innate magical ability may find themselves drawn to vile magic dealing with poison, vermin, and ill luck. Those who revel in the dreadful legends surrounding their kind often worship evil gods or demons associated with poison, tattooing themselves with mystic symbols to gain powerful control over toxins.

### GRIPPLI JINXER

### CREATURE 6

NE SMALL GRIPPLI HUMANOID

**Perception** +16; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Grippli


**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Athletics +12, Intimidation +12, Nature +14, Occultism +10, Stealth +14

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

**Items** dart (8), staff

**AC** 23; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

**HP** 95

**Hypnotic Tattoos**  **Trigger** A hostile creature targets the jinxer with a melee Strike; **Effect** Tattoos on the jinxer's body swirl and shift in mesmerizing patterns. The creature must attempt a DC 22 Will save.


**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected and is temporarily immune for 1 hour.


**Success** The creature is unaffected and is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

**Failure** The creature treats the jinxer as concealed until the end of its turn.

**Critical Failure** The creature treats the jinxer as hidden until the end of its turn.


**Speed** 25 feet, climb 20 feet; jungle stride

**Melee**  staff +14 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning plus baneback poison

**Ranged**  dart +16 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing plus baneback poison

**Occult Spontaneous Spells** DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** (3 slots) *blindness, fear, paralyze*; **2nd** (3 slots) *dispel magic, summon animal* (giant cockroach, giant fly, or giant tick only), *vomit swarm* (Advanced Player's Guide 227); **1st** (3 slots) *bane, ray of enfeeblement, spider sting*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *chill touch, forbidding ward, know direction, shield, telekinetic projectile*

**Baneback Poison** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 24; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d4 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d4 poison damage and stupefied 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 4d4 poison damage, stupefied 3, and flat-footed (1 round)

**Curse of Baneful Venom**  (necromancy, occult) The jinxer magically intensifies toxins in their foes. Creatures within 30 feet of the jinxer that are currently afflicted by a poison immediately attempt their next saving throw against the poison with a -2 status penalty, then are temporarily immune to Curse of Baneful Venom for 1 hour.

**Jungle Stride** Gripplis ignore difficult terrain in forests and jungles.



## BANEBACK ORIGINS

Legends tell of a grippli warlord who bargained with the demon lord Jubilex to gain a foul power over poison and become the first baneback. He and his children—all of whom bore a malignant toxin—terrorized surrounding communities before being defeated and drawn into the Abyss. This legend explains gripplis' disdain for banebacks, though it's unclear if the trait is the lingering effect of a demonic bargain or simply a rare mutation.

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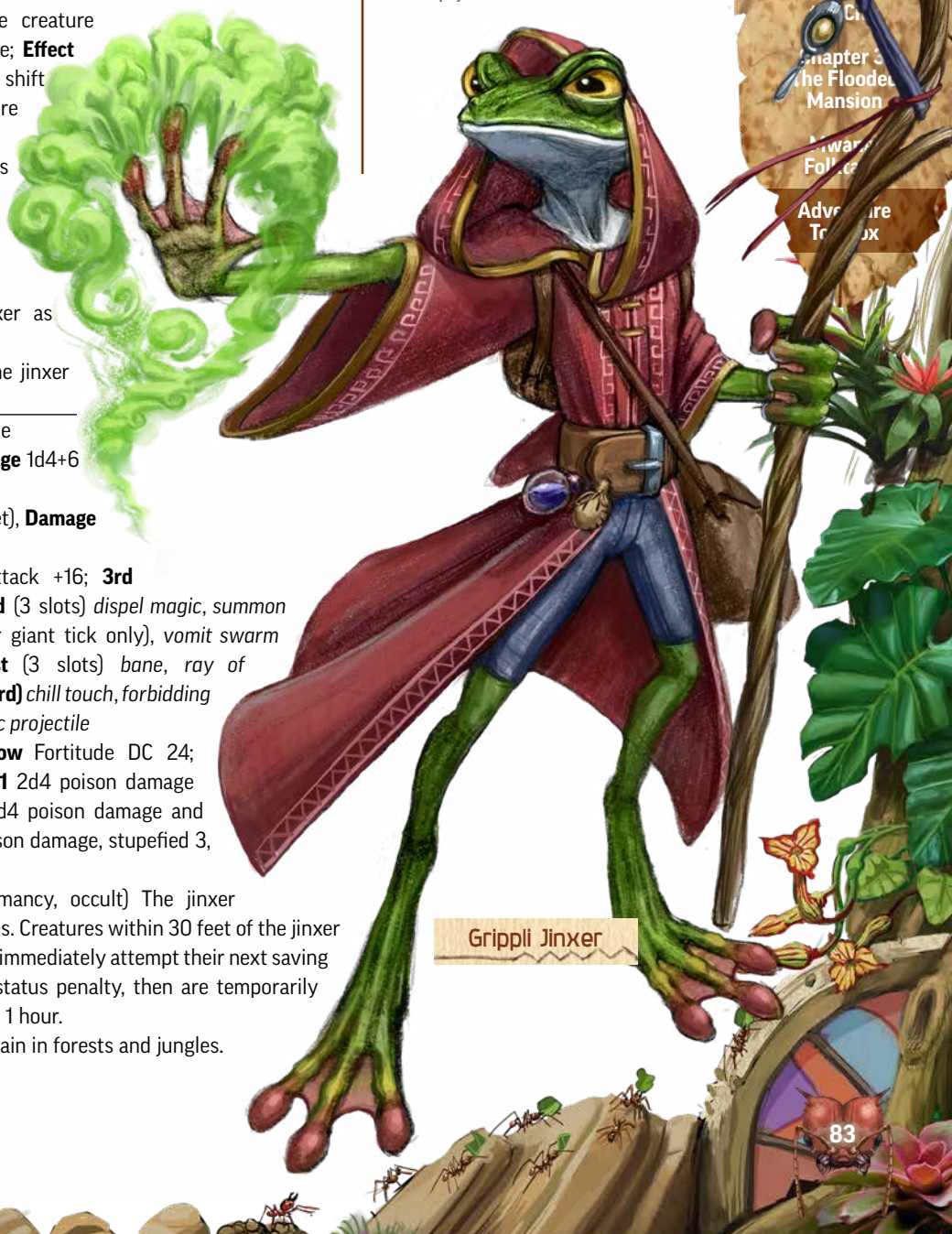
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Grippli Jinxer



## I'IKO DRAGON HOARDS

I'iko dragons hoard small, easily transportable baubles in their nests, particularly magical trinkets and any objects incorporating glass, crystals, and gemstones—though these objects rarely remain whole long, as the dragons devour the most colorful components, leaving gemless rings and glassless mirrors.

# I'iko Dragon

I'iko dragons are greedy bullies with long muscular bodies, stubby legs, small wings, and shimmering glass-like scales. From their treetop nests overhanging well-traveled rivers, i'iko dragons land on passing watercrafts and extort the passengers, threatening to capsize boats if not paid with bright treasure. When faced with a well-armed group guarding their desired trinkets, they instead resort to stealth, stealing them under cover of darkness, using their claws to pick locks and disable traps as needed.

I'iko dragons reside in the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse, particularly in Nantambu where they live under the tall arching bridges that cross the city's many canals, building roosts in the bridge supports. I'iko dragons eat fish and birds, and have a taste for glass, crystals, and gemstones, which they consume to harden and color their scales. Incredibly vain, i'iko dragons collect the most colorful glass they can find to transform their scales into a resplendent rainbow.

## I'IKO DRAGON

## CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON CN SMALL AMPHIBIOUS DRAGON

**Perception** +12; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Athletics +14, Intimidation +14, Stealth +15, Thievery +13

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

**AC** 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

**HP** 110; **Immunities** paralyzed, sleep

**Speed** 30 feet, climb 30 feet, fly 60 feet, swim 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 2d10+6 piercing

**Melee** ♦ claw +17 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing

**Breath Weapon** ♦ (arcane, evocation) The i'iko dragon breathes a spray of jagged glass shards that deals 7d6 piercing damage in a 15-foot cone (DC 23 basic Reflex save). They can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

**Cunning Capsize** ♦ (attack) The i'iko dragon attempts to capsize an aquatic vessel of Medium size or smaller that they're on or adjacent to. They must succeed at an Athletics check with a DC of 25 or the pilot's Sailing Lore DC, whichever is higher.

**Draconic Grandeur** ♦ (emotion, fear, mental)

The i'iko dragon spreads their wings, bares their teeth, and threatens their opponent in a terrifying display of draconic majesty. All creatures within 30 feet must attempt a DC 24 Will save. Regardless of the result of the saving throw, the creatures are temporarily immune to Draconic Grandeur for 1 minute.

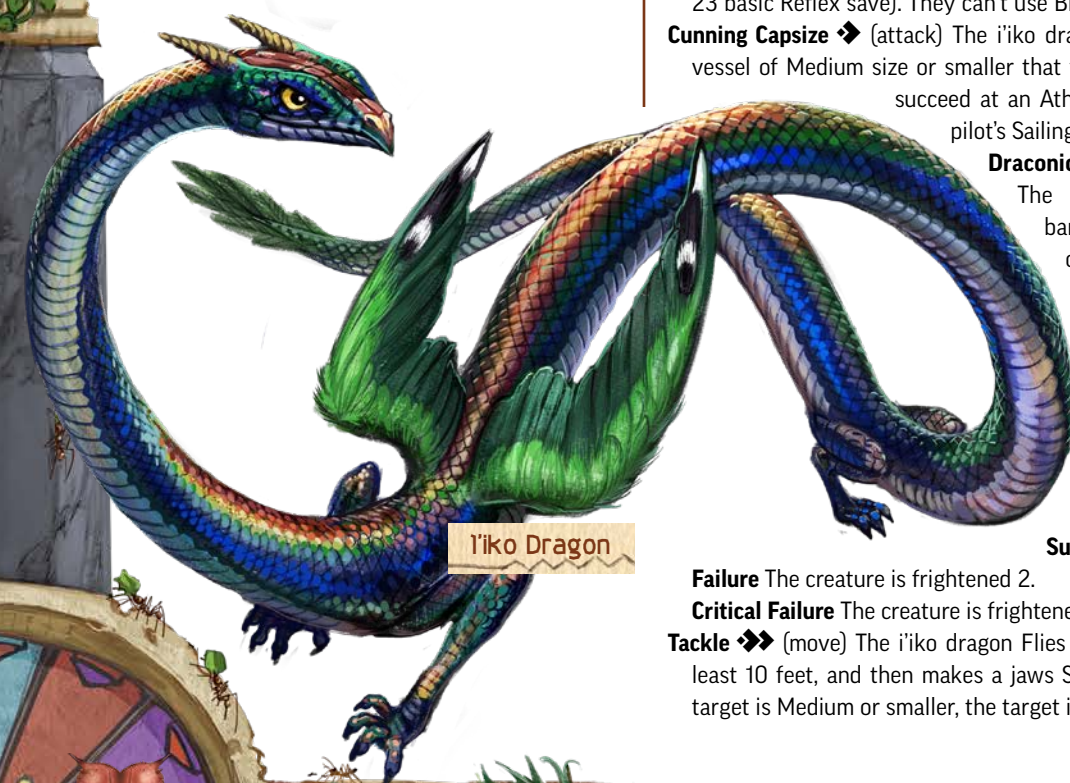
**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is frightened 1.

**Failure** The creature is frightened 2.

**Critical Failure** The creature is frightened 4.

**Tackle** ♦♦ (move) The i'iko dragon Flies up to their fly Speed, descending at least 10 feet, and then makes a jaws Strike. If the jaws Strike hits and the target is Medium or smaller, the target is knocked prone.



I'iko Dragon

# Mpeshi

In the heights of the world, where the hills and mountains reach up to touch the clouds, mpeshis fall to the earth in flashes of lightning and thunder. Most return to the heavens on the gossamer strands of web on which they descend, but those few that remain cry out, lamenting their inability to return to their homes in the sky.

A mpeshi appears to be a monstrous goat with the foreclaws, hindquarters, and tail of a crocodile. Electricity arcs around its sharp horns, which it can use to both batter and gore with equal facility. Although mpeshis are always seeking methods to return to their homes in the clouds, they aggressively defend their earthbound lairs from outsiders.

Mpeshis are generally solitary, though some congregate as pairs or small groups that watch cloud movements together. They can sometimes be seen trying to join reach the storm clouds, leaping from high places such as hills, mountains, or cliffs. Though these attempts are rarely successful, the mpeshis always resolve to try again—and some do manage succeed at returning to their mysterious homes amongst the clouds.

Mpeshis are utterly unafraid of rocs, dragons, or other monstrous flying creatures, usually seeing them as competition. Mpeshis are crafty, though, and sometimes try to negotiate transportation back to the clouds from flying creatures larger than they are.

## MPESHI

## CREATURE 6

RARE N LARGE BEAST ELECTRICITY

**Perception** +14; darkvision

**Skills** Athletics +16, Nature +14, Stealth +12

**Str** +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

**AC** 24; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

**HP** 110; **Immunities** electricity; **Resistances** sonic 10

**Lightning Aura** (aura, electricity) 5 feet. A buzzing static electricity surrounds the mpeshi. When a creature within the aura takes electricity damage, the damage arcs to a random adjacent creature, dealing 1d6 electricity damage. A creature can only receive arcing damage once from each attack or effect.

**Thunderous Fall** **Trigger** The mpeshi falls at least 10 feet; **Effect** The mpeshi reorients itself to slam headfirst into the ground with a thundering crash. Creatures within 10 feet of the mpeshi take sonic damage equal to the bludgeoning damage the mpeshi took from the fall (DC 23 basic Fortitude save). Creatures that fail this save are stunned 1 (stunned 2 on a critical failure).

**Speed** 30 feet; cloud walk

**Melee** **◆** horn +17 (electricity, reach 10 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning plus 1d6 electricity

**Melee** **◆** tail +17 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

**Charging Leap** **◆◆** The mpeshi leaps up to 40 feet in any direction, including straight up. The mpeshi makes a horn Strike at any point during this leap.

**Cloud Walk** The mpeshi can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground.



## LIGHTNING LEGENDS

The mpeshi is based on the akampeshimpeshi, described by the real-world Lamba people of Zambia as a beast accompanying the lightning before becoming trapped on the land. The webs that the akampeshimpeshis ride down to earth are broken by their impact. Akampeshimpeshis are dangerous creatures; when sighted, they are hunted and burned by warriors with protective magics laid on them for this purpose.

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Mpeshi



## EVOLVING TIMES

Granitescales are only one type of aapoph variant to arise in surface colonies, but all display intelligence somewhat greater than ordinary aapophs. Zyss serpentfolk are secretly concerned that their grip on their dull-witted aapoph brethren might slip.

A cultural shift has begun to emerge in some colonies where the ruling zyss now assure aapophs they're valuable workers with a purpose to fill, rather than subservient chattel.

# Serpentfolk

Ancient and cunning, the once mighty serpentfolk have suffered numerous setbacks and indignities since the decapitation of their god, Ydersius, millennia ago. Scattered in isolated pockets, the reptilian humanoids constantly scheme their return to glory. Though many serpentfolk labor to restore Ydersius and reclaim power through him, others pursue different avenues to greatness, such as by mastering uncanny magic or practicing spycraft to take down enemy organizations from the inside.

## SERPENTFOLK GRANITESCALE

Many burly aapoph serpentfolk bear minor mutations. Granitescales have bulky frames covered in hard, speckled gray plates. These scales offer additional protection but shed when struck with too much force. As granitescales regrow lost scales quickly, they make effective long-term sentinels and vanguards for guerilla tactics. Granitescales like to carve their shed scales into small chips and attach them as rattles to the ends of their spears. Many an unsuspecting victim has heard the shaking hiss of a granitescale's rattle too late.

### SERPENTFOLK GRANITESCALE CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMANOID MUTANT SERPENTFOLK

**Perception** +13; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Athletics +15, Intimidation +13

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

**Items** javelin (5), longspear

**AC** 24 (22 with shed scales); **Fort** +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12 (+2 status vs. mental)

**HP** 120; **Resistances** poison 8

**Attack of Opportunity** ↻

**Chipping Scales** ↻ **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** The granitescale takes piercing or slashing damage; **Effect** The granitescale twists to take the blow on their hardest scales, which they shed to reduce the incoming force. The granitescale reduces the damage by 10, but their AC is reduced by 2 for 1 day, when the shed scales regrow.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ longspear +17 (reach), **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing

**Melee** ♦ fangs +17, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing plus serpentfolk venom

**Ranged** ♦ javelin +16 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing

**Rattling Spear** ♦ (auditory, emotion, mental) **Requirement** The granitescale's last action was a successful spear Strike; **Effect** The granitescale rattles the base of their spear, attempting an Intimidation check to Demoralize all enemies within 30 feet (compare the granitescale's Intimidation check result to the targets' Will DCs individually).

**Serpentfolk Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d4 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d4 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round)

Serpentfolk Granitescale

## VENOM CALLER

Venom callers are zyss serpentfolk spellcasters that specialize in the use of acid and poison magic, viewing them as natural extensions of their inherent venom. They have a reputation for bold action, something that puts them at odds with other zyss who prefer stealth and subterfuge. When a venom caller can't eliminate their rivals to seize control of their colony, they often leave in a dramatic demonstration of arrogance, insisting that slithering in shadows does the serpentfolk cause no favors.

Though venom callers aren't considered subtle by their kin, their schemes—which often revolve around acquiring rare magical lore—can nevertheless take humanoid communities by surprise. Venom callers often lure away unsuspecting victims, murder them, and disfigure their venom-wracked bodies with acid; the venom caller then assumes the victim's form. Authorities, believing all members of the community are accounted for, assume the unrecognizable corpse must have been a traveler. Most venom callers have broken with other serpentfolk communities and have no qualms about murdering their kin or infiltrating other serpentfolk cells if it serves their purposes.

### SERPENTFOLK VENOM CALLER

### CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMANOID SERPENTFOLK

**Perception** +15; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Draconic, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

**Skills** Arcana +17, Deception +15, Nature +15, Occultism +17, Society +15, Survival +15

**Str** +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Items** shortbow (20 arrows), sickle

**AC** 24; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17 (+4 status vs. mental); +1 status to all saves vs. magic

**HP** 105; **Resistances** poison 10

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ fangs +16 (finesse), **Damage** 2d8+4 piercing plus serpentfolk venom

**Melee** ♦ sickle +16 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing plus serpentfolk venom

**Ranged** ♦ shortbow +16 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing plus serpentfolk venom

**Arcane Spontaneous Spells** DC 25, attack +17; **4th** (2 slots) *acid arrow*, *noxious vapors* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 222); **3rd** (3 slots) *mind reading*, *slow*, *stinking cloud*; **2nd** (3 slots) *acid arrow*, *false life*, *invisibility*; **1st** (3 slots) *feather fall*, *item facade*, *magic missile*; **Cantrips** (**4th**) *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read aura*, *shield*

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 25; **4th** *suggestion*; **3rd** *illusory disguise* (at will); **2nd** *mirror image* (at will); **1st** *ventriloquism* (at will)

**Serpentfolk Venom** (poison) As granitescale, but DC 23.

**Venom Pool** ♦♦ (arcane, conjuration, poison) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The venom caller conjures a 10-foot burst of liquid poison within 60 feet. Each creature that begins its turn in the area takes 4d6 poison damage (DC 25 basic Fortitude save). On a critical failure, creatures also take 1d6 persistent poison damage. Once per turn, starting the turn after the venom caller uses Venom Pool, the venom caller can use a single action, which has the concentrate trait, to increase the radius of the burst by 5 feet. The pool of venom lasts for 1 minute, at which time it evaporates without a trace.



## MAGAAMBYAN VICTIMS

Zyss serpentfolk of the Mwangi Expanse have recently taken a keen interest in the activities of the Magaambya and its members throughout the region. Some Magaambyans far from the school have gone missing, often after uncharacteristically absconding with magical lore. While they may have been impersonated by serpentfolk, even more worrying is the possibility that the serpentfolk have discovered an arcane means of regaining their former dominance.

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Serpentfolk Venom Caller



# FIRE-POT UBANU

## *Fire Lover with a Grudge*



Ubanu never felt like he belonged. From an early age, he felt more comfortable playing with fire than with other children. When they went out to play games, Ubanu stayed home watch the fire dance in the hearth. He remained painfully shy during his youth, aware that the other children found him strange. Even he wondered why he was so different. Ubanu's parents tried to encourage him to be social, but when the boy tried to befriend the other children, they mocked his fascination with flames, calling him "Fire-Face Ubanu."

When the taunting became too much, Ubanu would strike back, lashing out against his tormentors. Once when he was overwhelmed with rage, a fiery lash manifested around his hand and struck another child. He didn't burn the child too badly, but the other kids all became afraid of him—and Ubanu became afraid of himself. Since that time Ubanu has been surrounded by a strong sulfurous smell, which grows more intense when he's angry.

As soon as his parents smelled their son, they realized what had happened and revealed that some of their ancestors had been fire sorcerers. Neither of his parents possessed the powers of this bloodline, and they'd not told Ubanu in the hopes that there would be no need. He'd discovered the reason for his fascination with fire, but it made him no less awkward around people. Even when he could keep his temper in check, the faint sulfurous smell made others keep their distance. He assumed that if he went somewhere around more people with magical gifts—someplace like the Magaambya—he would finally find acceptance and perhaps friendship.

Ubanu said goodbye to his parents and moved to Nantambu. His plan was as simple as it was naive: he would get into the Magaambya, learn to control his powers, find friends, and graduate to become a rich and powerful sorcerer.

His initial request for admission was denied. Perhaps it was because he grew impatient and yelled at his proctor for making him wait, or perhaps they saw his stubborn petulance and inability to work with others. For five years, Ubanu tried to

get accepted into the Magaambya—each time, his temper flared, and his hopes were dashed. If he hadn't found work as an apprentice to an alchemist, Ubanu would have had to return to his parents a broken and penniless young man. Instead, Ubanu found ways to express his fascination with fire through chemistry. Eventually, the alchemist discharged him for being too argumentative, and Ubanu once again had to look for new options.

Ubanu drifted into an apprenticeship with an elderly weaponsmith named Nua Obi. He used his sorcerous powers to help maintain the forge's heat while learning all Nua Obi could teach him. Ubanu and the old woman fought furiously over the smallest details, but they had tremendous respect and affection for each other. For the first time in his life, Ubanu had found a place where he belonged.

It was Nua who gave Ubanu the nickname Fire-Pot, both for his tendency to play with firebombs and erupt into fiery rages. For many years Ubanu worked crankily and happily at Nua's side.

When Nua passed she left Ubanu her forge and enough money to expand it however he wished. Ubanu found that he couldn't run the shop like she could, however. He fought with the customers and had an awful habit of blowing things up for fun instead of working. He also kept a pet hellcat that he couldn't keep from causing fires in the city.

Ubanu decided he needed a change of scenery, so he sold the shop and moved to the edge of town. There, he made a deal with a mercenary group of minotaurs looking for a place to settle down far from the troubles they'd left behind in other lands. If they would protect Ubanu's privacy and take care of his sales, he'd give them a cut of the merchandise they sold. Ubanu got to experiment on alchemy and weaponsmithing however he chose, and soon increased his talent in both. He's become known across Nantambu as one of its most skilled yet most irritable alchemists.

He feels betrayed by the Magaambya. When serpentfolk came to Ubanu in the guise of Magaambyan students named Oyo and Mtembe, he

almost turned them away. Yet their subtle persuasion and promises of significant reimbursement from the school convinced him to take their order for some unusual acid. Ubanu crafted the acid and turned it over to the “students,” but his promised payment never materialized. He tried to follow up at the school and was rebuffed. His anger overwhelmed him, and he hatched a plan to send a strong message to the school about paying their debts. If the Magaambya responds with the money he’s due, he’ll let the matter drop—but he suspects they won’t, and he looks forward to taking out his anger on whomever the school sends his way.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Fire-Pot Ubanu isn’t actively malicious, but he has an explosive temper and no real ability or desire to keep it in check. One moment, Ubanu might be pleasant and friendly, and the next moment, he’s hurling a firebomb at your house for some perceived insult. The heroes might quell his grudge, making him a good contact for training in incendiary alchemy, weaponsmithing, and fire spells. The heroes might even advocate for him to attend the Magaambya, once they learn about his past. If Ubanu joins the Magaambya, he becomes a rowdy and colorful character who can solve nearly as many problems as he causes.

## FIRE-POT UBANU

## CREATURE 8

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human pyrochemist

**Perception** +16

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Ignan, Jotun

**Skills** Arcana +16, Crafting +20, Intimidation +16, Nature +15, Weapons Lore +16

**Str** +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +4

**Items** smock (as padded armor), *fulminating spear* (page 76)

**Infused Items** Ubanu carries these infused items: 8 moderate alchemist’s fires, 2 lesser elixirs of life, and 2 moderate tanglefoot bags. These items last for 24 hours, or until the next time Ubanu makes his daily preparations.

**AC** 26; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +19, **Will** +13

**HP** 140; **Resistances** fire 10

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ *spear* +17 (magical), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing

**Ranged** ♦ alchemist’s fire +19 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d8+2 fire plus 4 persistent fire plus 6 fire splash

**Ranged** ♦ *spear* +19 (magical, range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing

**Primal Spontaneous Spells** DC 26, attack +18; **4th** (2 slots)

*burning hands*, *fire shield*; **3rd** (3 slots) *blindness*, *fireball*, *haste*; **2nd** (3 slots) *flaming sphere*, *obscuring mist*, *resist energy*; **1st** (3 slots) *gust of wind*, *jump*, *mending*; **Cantrips** (4th) *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *prestidigitation*, *produce flame*

**Distracting Spells** Creatures who fail a saving throw against one of Ubanu’s spells are flat-footed to his attacks until the end of his turn or until the end of his next turn on a critical failure.

**Quick Bomber** ♦ Ubanu Interacts to draw a bomb, then Strikes with it.



Fire-Pot Ubanu

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# FROGLEGS

## *Brutal Gripli Crime Boss*



The gripli known and feared today as Froglegs spent her early years wandering the streets of Nantambu as Ktaal, daughter of Tokywe. Tokywe was a lovable rogue who taught her daughter the skills to become a master thief. Tokywe and Ktaal were rootless—they happily spent their nights roaming Nantambu’s rooftops under the stars or squatting in abandoned buildings, sharing dreams of what their next adventures would be. Mother and daughter spent many years getting into and out of trouble, and Ktaal always took comfort in her mother’s cheerful demeanor and positive outlook no matter how desperate or bleak the situation appeared.

Nantambu’s thieves loved Tokywe for her personality, but what they respected most were her skills with a lockpick. She could pick any lock imaginable with her unusual tools—specially crafted for her gripli hands—and her keen sense of touch. Tokywe taught Ktaal her lockpicking skills from a young age, even showing her how to craft the special lockpicks that fit her hands so well. Mother and daughter were both in high demand once it became obvious that Ktaal was almost as good with locks as her mother.

After some time, Tokywe began to tire of wandering. She wanted somewhere stable for her and her daughter to live and begin a new chapter. To transition into this life, Ktaal’s mother planned to go by herself on one last heist with Habu the Cudgel’s crew, a notorious group of thieves and ruffians. The heist went smoothly, but Habu’s greed overtook him and he killed Tokywe for her share. Habu told Ktaal that the Nantambu authorities killed her mother, and that Tokywe’s dying wish was for Ktaal to join Habu’s crew so he could take care of her.

Grief-stricken and in need of family, Ktaal believed Habu’s lies and joined his crew. Keeping her mother’s tradition of light-hearted professionalism, Ktaal soon became a trusted and valued member of the gang. She was an excellent planner and improvised well when those plans went awry. She rose through the ranks, and Habu’s cutthroats began to whisper that she might be running the crew one day, especially if one of Habu’s many enemies decided to eliminate him.

Habu heard those whispers and he didn’t like them. He had brought Ktaal to bolster his own successes, just as he had done with her mother, not to groom a successor. Habu’s jealousy at the thought of this young gripli winning over his crew filled him with a quiet, seething rage.

Habu learned of a large jewelry shipment traveling through Nantambu. He let Ktaal plan the heist and run the crew during the theft, but he directed the thieves most loyal to him to eliminate Ktaal and her supporters immediately after. This would leave bigger share for the survivors, he assured them.

The heist went off without a hitch, but when Habu’s handpicked thieves moved to betray Ktaal, they found her to be a smarter combatant and a more inspiring leader than Habu predicted. Ktaal struck down her would-be assassins and rallied those loyal to her to eliminate their killers as well. When she realized the extent of Habu’s treachery, she finally guessed what actually happened to her beloved mother.

Anguished at the realization she’d been deceived all these years, Ktaal’s happy-go-lucky demeanor instantly transformed into hate. She gathered together the thieves loyal to her—predominantly disaffected gripli who had joined Habu’s crew to work alongside Ktaal—and struck back against Habu and his remaining followers. It took the better part of a week, but she killed or drove out everyone loyal to Habu and learned where the gang boss was hiding out. Ktaal cornered Habu in his hideout, made him confess his betrayal, and then slowly bled him to death with her daggers. She still carries Habu’s club as a trophy of vengeance, though she still prefers to use knives in combat.

After taking over Habu’s crew, Ktaal thought about his betrayal—how trust and connection killed Tokywe and almost killed Ktaal as well. She remembered something her mother had told her as a child when Ktaal asked about people eating frog legs at a fine restaurant.

“Child, we aren’t those frogs, but any time a gripli gets too comfortable, too trusting, too reckless... we can end up on someone else’s plate.”

Ktaal gave up her name. She began to call herself Froglegs as a reminder to stay alert and avoid becoming anyone's food. As she and her crew began to expand into extortion, robbery, and protection rackets all across Nantambu, she developed a new goal: she aims to rule the underworld of Nantambu from the shadows. Froglegs is through with others making her suffer and will never again allow anyone to take advantage of her.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

The heroes face off against Froglegs when they realize her gang is behind many of the troubles in Nantambu. If they capture Froglegs rather than kill her, she doesn't remain in custody for long. She has an extensive network of bribed or terrorized authorities, so she soon arranges for her release and goes to ground to recover, rebuild, and plan new criminal enterprises where the meddling heroes hopefully won't bother her again.

Froglegs has one chance to leave her life of crime and vengeance behind her: if the heroes are forthright and honest with her (even though they're arresting her for what she's done), she realizes that not everyone in the world is out to make her suffer. She's not likely to be the heroes' ally, but she might be set upon a road to redemption knowing there are honest, good people in Nantambu.

## FROGLEGS

## CREATURE 8

UNIQUE NE SMALL GRIPPLI HUMANOID

Female gripli crime boss (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 139)

**Perception** +16; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Elven, Gripli, Iruxi

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Athletics +15, Deception +16, Intimidation +16, Stealth +16, Thievery +18 (+20 to Pick a Lock), Underworld Lore +15

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

**Items** +1 daggers (4), Habu's Cudgel (page 76), leather armor, infiltrator thieves' tools

**AC** 27; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

**HP** 135

**Deny Advantage** Froglegs isn't flat-footed to creatures of 8th level or lower that are hidden, undetected, flanking, or using surprise attack.

**Speed** 30 feet, climb 20 feet

**Melee** ♦ dagger +20 (agile, deadly d10, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing plus knife fighter

**Melee** ♦ Habu's Cudgel +19 (magical), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning

**Ranged** ♦ dagger +20 (agile, deadly d10, magical,

thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing plus knife fighter

**Knife Fighter** Froglegs deals an additional 2d6 precision damage with weapons from the knife group, and knives gain the deadly d10 weapon property while she wields them.

**Roll and Snatch** ♦ **Trigger** Froglegs successfully Tumbles Through an enemy's space; **Effect** Froglegs attempts to Disarm or Trip the enemy. She can use her tongue for this attempt and does not need to have a free hand.

**Twin Slash** ♦ (flourish) Froglegs makes two dagger Strikes.

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# SALATHISS

## *Serpentfolk Infiltrator Obsessed with His Role*

The subjugated lower caste of serpentfolk society, aapoph serpentfolk, are prone to strange mutations. Serpentfolk culture considers these mutations a sign of the aapoph's lesser status and think nothing of it—in fact, for the higher-ranking zyss serpentfolk these physical variations reinforce their twisted self-image of purity and superiority. While zyss serpentfolk can disguise themselves as other humanoids to achieve their goals, it's often seen as a duty and not a pleasure—zyss prefer the purity of the zyss form to all else.

It is rare, but a zyss can also be born with mutations. This is a closely guarded secret, only mentioned in shameful whispers. Any zyss born with a mutation is immediately killed, as their very existence flies in the face of zyss's so-called superiority.

Salathiss would have been destroyed, except his strange mutation took many years to materialize. As he matured, he sometimes lost control of his form: the skin and bone on a part of his body would slacken and soften into a thick ooze for a few moments before snapping back suddenly and painfully into its original shape. The first few times this occurred caused a panic in Salathiss's colony; he was only spared death because his mentor, Thissal, was a serpentfolk of great power and influence. To punish Salathiss would invite Thissal's wrath, and no one wished to anger him. None even dared to tell him of his pupil's mutation, though the powerful zyss eventually learned of it on his own.

Salathiss knew his mutation set him apart from other zyss. He prayed day and night for Ydersius to take it away, to cut it from his body just as the Headless King had his own body severed. Salathiss's prayers were never answered, but the daily ritual of constant prayer gave him what he needed most: focus. Salathiss learned that by focusing his mind when his body lost control, he could shape that body part into something else. He could mold his shape, such as turning his arm into a tool or a weapon.

Prayer turned into practice. Salathiss realized that his mutation was an advantage if he kept it hidden and under control. He absorbed lessons in spycraft while he studied magic, convinced that he could succeed at one of the infiltration missions important to

serpentfolk society. Though he was too young for such an important task, Thissal saw a dangerous mission as a good way to dispose of Salathiss without personal disgrace and gave his consent.

Salathiss spoiled Thissal's hopes by exceeding all expectations placed on him. He infiltrated a human village and became well respected in the community. When he stole an ancestral relic from the village shrine, no one thought to suspect him. When he vouched for other serpentfolk infiltrators, the people welcomed them completely. Over a year of long-term infiltration, Salathiss corrupted the human village from within and left it a place of confusion and paranoia. Even Thissal had to agree that his protégé had performed exceptionally and after silencing a few doubters with well-timed assassinations, Thissal declared Salathiss ready for more espionage work.

Salathiss developed a knack for studying “warmbloods,” understanding their nature, and displaying empathy for those he would eventually betray. Though other zyss consider Salathiss's interest in warmbloods to be unseemly, his string of successes elevated his status and gave him the autonomy to determine his own assignments. He learned of the *Vesicant Egg*—an artifact he incorrectly believed to be a magical snake egg—and resolved to unlock its secrets to benefit all serpentfolk, and his own stature in particular. Salathiss wished to supplant Thissal, and a successful assignment of his own design could do just that.

### CAMPAIGN ROLE

The heroes inadvertently deal Salathiss's mission a serious blow early in this adventure when they expose his secret operations in the Hababe Building on campus. Salathiss is nothing if not flexible, though, and he realizes he might have more to gain from impersonating one of Nantambu's nine influential magistrate-mayors. At first, Salathiss only sought this duplicity to regain access to the *Vesicant Egg*; eventually, he realized the true scope of authority that his impersonation could give him. Yet he's gotten far too deep into his role, and the serpentfolk under

his command whisper that he's practically become a warmblood himself.

Salathiss is the heroes' final foe in this adventure. Defeating him is the only way to keep Magistrate-Mayor Asanda safe and the *Vesicant Egg* secure. If Salathiss survives but can't continue his plans to recover the artifact or impersonate Asanda, he impersonates someone close to the heroes and plans a murderous betrayal. He keeps this long goal in mind, and it might be months before he strikes.

## SALATHISS

## CREATURE 9

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID MUTANT SERPENTFOLK

Male serpentfolk illusionist (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 236)

**Perception** +19; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Draconic, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

**Skills** Arcana +18, Deception +21, Diplomacy +19, Intimidation +19, Occultism +18, Society +18, Stealth +18

**Str** +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

**Items** *bracers of armor type I, choker of elocution* (imparts Xanmba, a regional language spoken by many in Nantambu)

**AC** 27; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +20 (+4 status vs. mental); +1 status to all saves vs. magic

**HP** 150; **Resistances** poison 10

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ fangs +19, **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing plus serpentfolk venom

**Melee** ♦ morphic weapon +20 (magical, reach 10 feet, sweep, versatile P), **Damage** 3d10+8 slashing

**Arcane Prepared Spells** DC 28, attack +20; **5th** *cloak of colors, passwall*; **4th** *glibness, phantasmal killer, veil*; **3rd** *hypnotic pattern, magic missile, mind reading*; **2nd** *darkness, hideous laughter, invisibility*; **1st** *fleet step, item facade, true strike*; **Cantrips (5th)** *dancing lights, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, telekinetic projectile*

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 28; **5th** *command, illusory scene*; **4th** *suggestion*; **3rd** *illusory disguise* (at will); **2nd** *mirror image* (at will); **1st** *ventriloquism* (at will)

**Morphic Weapon** ♦ (morph, occult, transmutation) Salathiss transforms one of his hands into a tentacle with a blade at the end, allowing him to make morphic weapon Strikes. If he's disguised, whether by magical or mundane means, his disguise immediately ends. He can return his hand to normal with another use of this ability, but doing so doesn't restore his disguise.

**Peerless Duplicate** (divination, exploration, fortune, occult) If Salathiss interacts with a creature for 10 minutes, he can choose to expertly duplicate that person. He can roll

any Deception check to Impersonate that person twice and take the higher result. This benefit lasts for 24 hours or until he uses this ability on a different creature.

**Serpentfolk Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 26 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d4 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d4 poison damage and enfeebled 2 (1 round)



## SPOKEN ON THE SONG WIND

Chapter 1:  
The Learned  
One Returns

Chapter 2:  
Service to  
the City

Chapter 3:  
The Flooded  
Mansion

Mwangi  
Folktales

Adventure  
Toolbox

Salathiss

# NEXT MONTH

## HURRICANE'S HOWL

by Michelle Jones

The heroes have become lore-speakers—teachers at the Magaambya school of magic. Sent with their students to the edge of the Mwangi Expanse, these new teachers must unearth ancient ruins while keeping themselves and their students out of danger. When a student vanishes, the heroes uncover a nefarious plot to subjugate the rain-lashed Sudden Lands. They must liberate a town, stop an evil cult, and show their students how heroes stand as wardens of the world.

## JULA GAZETTEER

by Andrew Mullen

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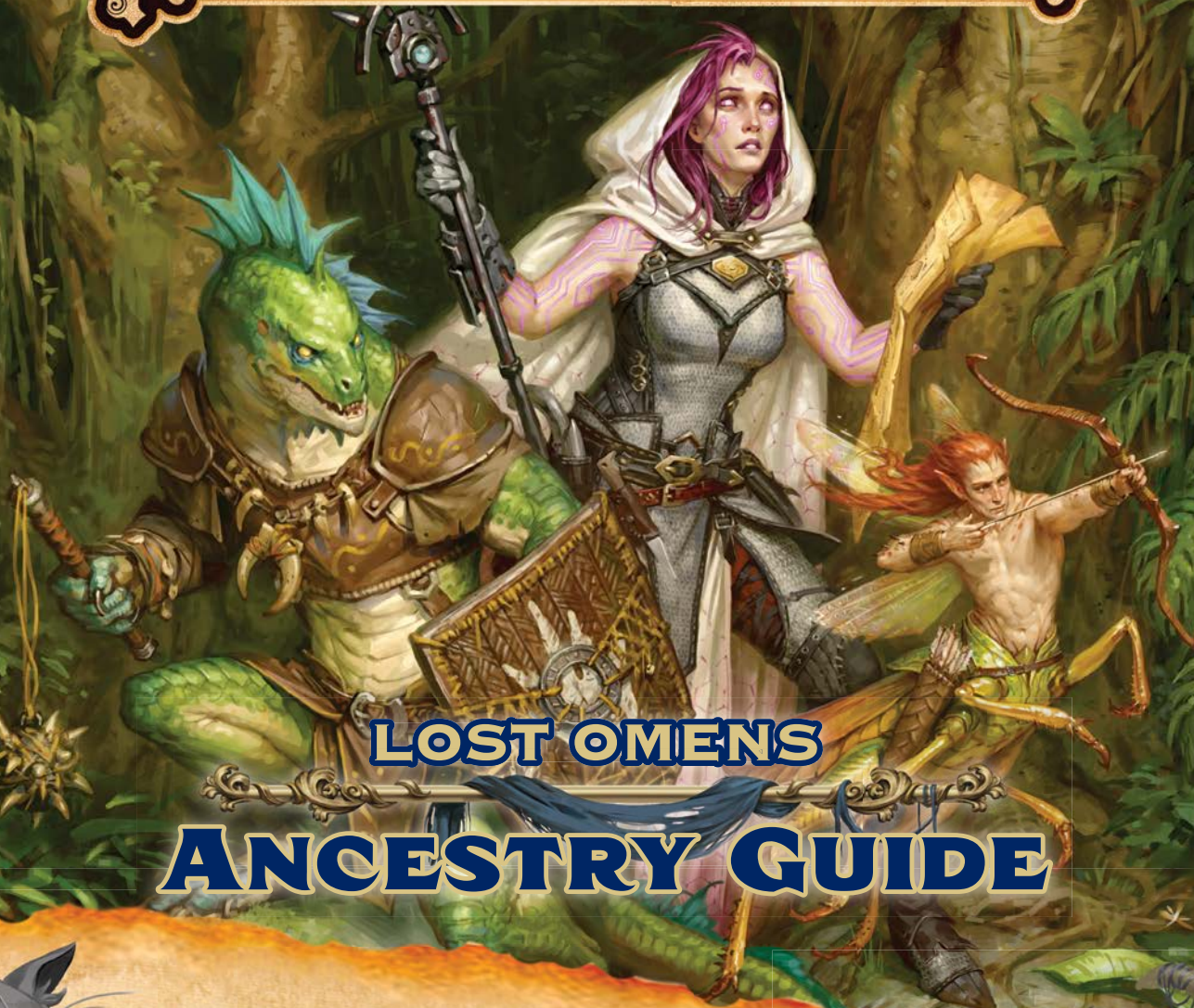
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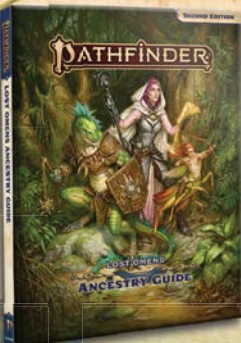
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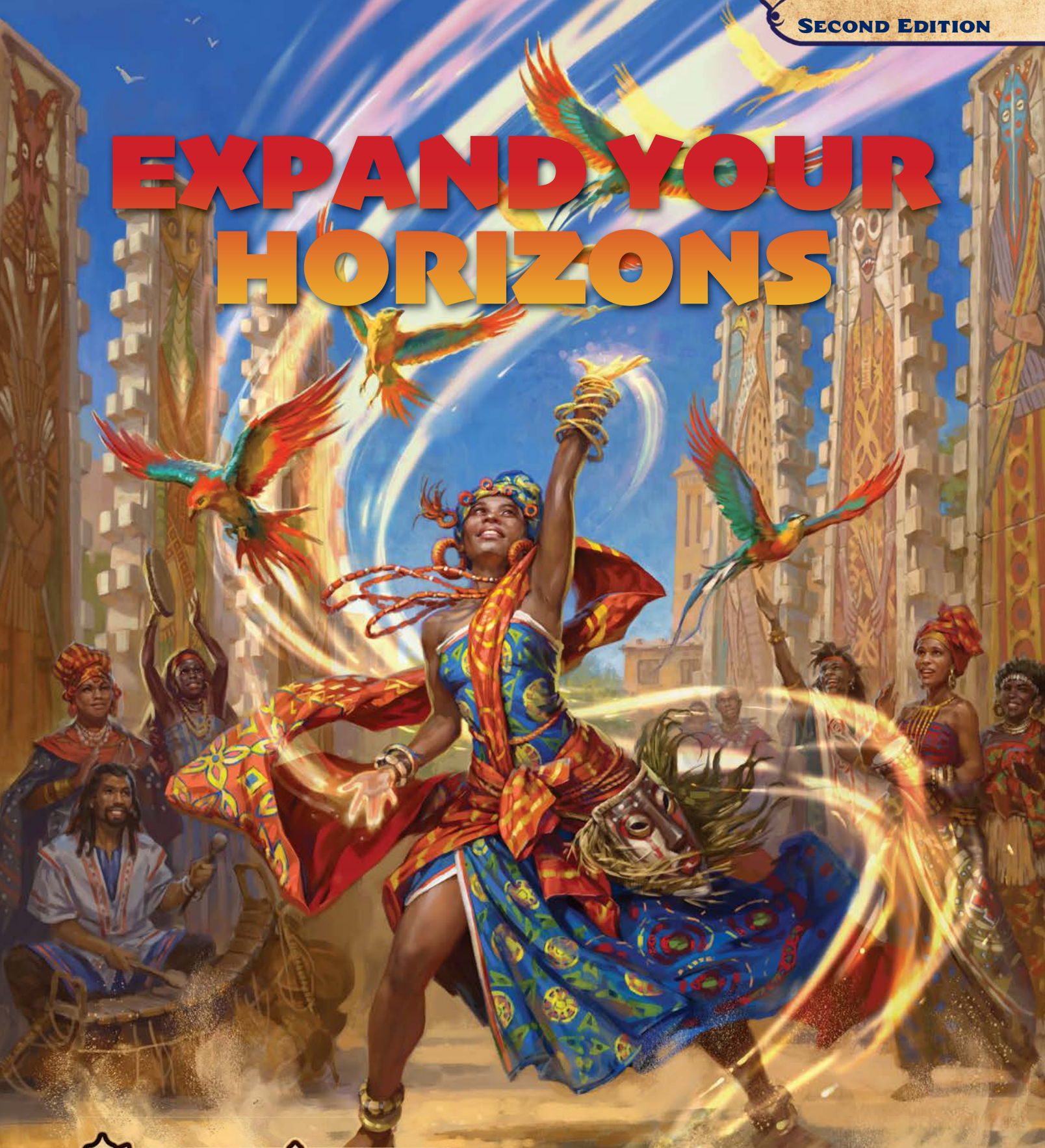


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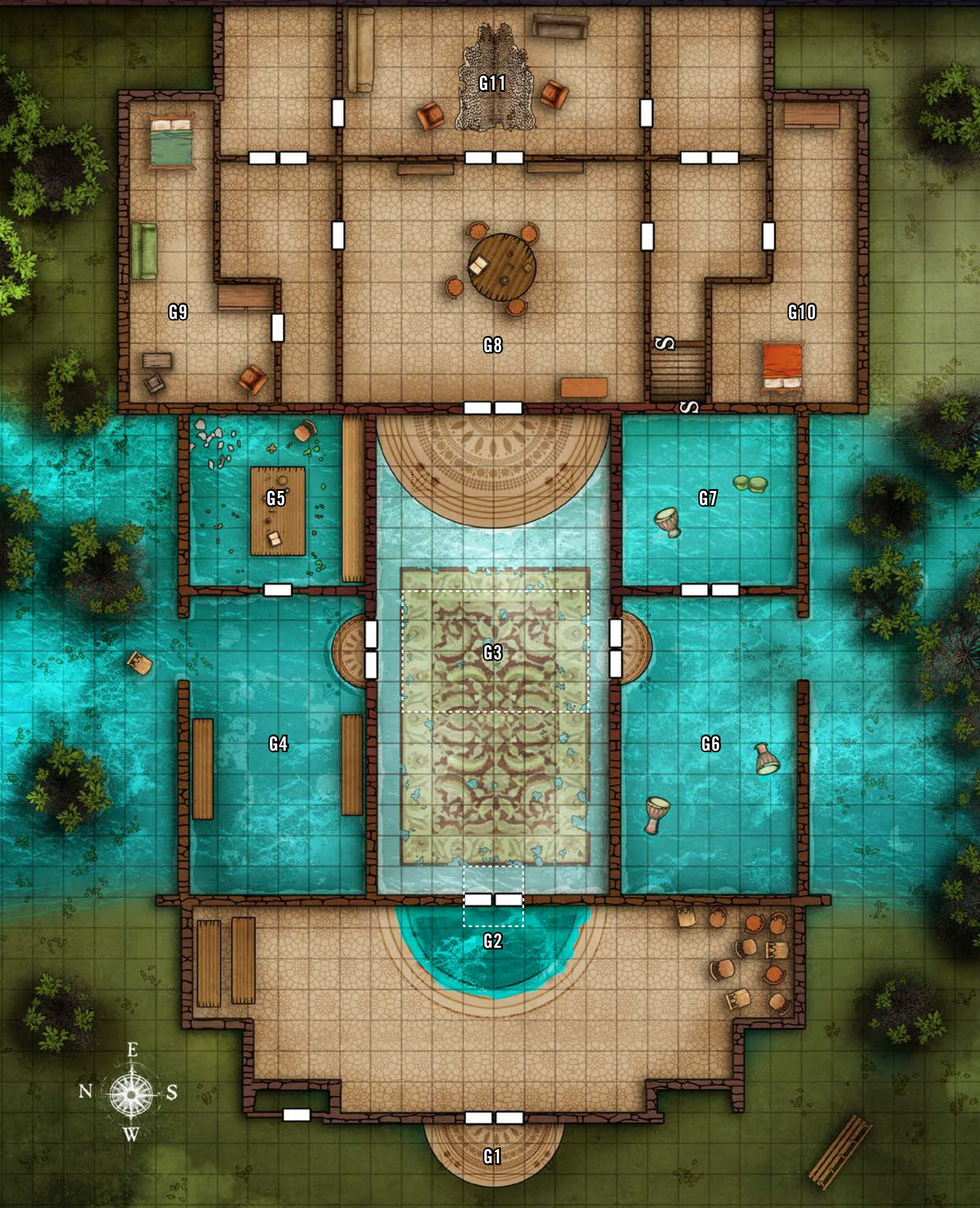
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