

LJGC1

PLAGUE

**A One-Round Living Jungle Adventure
For Low Level Heroes**

**by
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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. Begin by passing out the player characters; pass them out based on class only, not revealing gender or race. Instruct the players to leave the character sheets face down until you have read the introduction. Then, tell them to study their character sheets, select spells, and notify you when they are ready to begin the adventure.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character. The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsulize their characters for each other and vote.

The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Make sure you have finished voting before you collect the players' voting sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their votes and comments. The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Heroes of Malatra Living Jungle Character Creation Guidelines

The following are guidelines for creating Living Jungle heroes and for modifying heroes after playing in official Network tournaments.

You can use the Living Jungle Hero Sheet or make one of your own, as long as it is complete and easy for a judge to read. You are responsible for keeping a copy of your hero and a list of all the items, wealth, and experience points he or she earns during tournament play. You must be able to provide a Treasure Certificate to prove that your hero has earned any special items listed on your Hero Sheet, and you must have a Hero Point

Certificate to show that you've earned a Hero Point.

All Living Jungle heroes must fit the AD&D 2nd Edition Game rules. Follow these steps to create your own Living Jungle hero:

1) Select a Race & Class

Races Available: Katanga, korobokuru, Nubari (humans), saru, shu, and tam'hi. The katanga are shapechanging animals, korobokuru are dwarfish savages, Nubari are humans, saru are smart apes, shu are hairless halflings, and tam'hi are nature spirits. All of these races are explained in greater detail in the Tribes descriptions and MC sheets.

Classes Available: fighter, ranger, cleric, thief, and wizard. Bards, specialty priests, druids, paladins, and specialty wizards are not available at this time.

Multi-Class heroes are permitted (see below). Keep in mind that it takes longer for these demi-humans to advance, as they must divide experience they earn. Dual-Class heroes are not permitted in the Living Jungle at this time.

Warriors: Living Jungle warriors are virtually unchanged from the generic version, though the lack of powerful armor changes the nature of combat significantly. Living Jungle rangers are identical to the standard version, except for style and trappings.

Wizards: Wizards begin play with any five spells from the following list: *affect normal fires*, *armor*, *audible glamour*, *burning hands*, *chill touch*, *comprehend languages* (spoken only), *enlarge*, *feather fall*, *friends*, *jump*, *light*, *magic missile*, *mending*, *protection from evil*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *spider climb*, *spook*, *taunt*, *ventriloquism*, *wall of fog*. Spellbooks are unknown in the Living Jungle (see below). Hero wizards will gain spells at the end of most (but not all) adventures as part of the scenario's rewards. Living Jungle wizards do not use spell books or material components;

instead, they memorize their spells by meditating upon the various fetishes each wizard carries. Each fetish represents a single spell that the hero wizard can memorize. First level wizards begin the game with four fetishes.

Priests: The shamans and priests of the Living Jungle are all treated as clerics, except that they have major access to all priest spheres. Because the clerics of the Living Jungle do not worship gods, but the spirits of the jungle, their holy symbols are of all varieties, even within a tribe: rattles, small drums, preserved snakes, bones, and virtually any totem or fetish imaginable.

Rogues: Thieves are essentially the same as their basic versions, but they cannot use the read languages ability until after written or iconic languages are discovered during the course of the campaign.

2) Assign 75 Points

You have 75 points to divide among your hero's Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma scores. Scores of 19 can be reached only by spending 10 points beyond the initial 18. A Dexterity of 19, then, requires 28 points. The exception to this rule is in Strength scores. Raising Strength above 18 costs one point for each 10% up to 18/00. Strength scores of 19 cost 29 points. Except for katanga, all non-human heroes Ability Scores must range from 6 to 18, with the following exception:

Korobokuru:	C: 12/19	I: 3/17
Tam'hi:	C: 3/17	Ch: 12/19
Shu:	S: 3/17	D: 12/19
Saru:	S: 12/19	I: 3/17

Human heroes' scores must range from 3 to 18. Heroes begin at first level and must meet the minimum statistic scores for their classes. Living Jungle heroes have maximum hit points at first level.

3) Choose an Alignment

All Living Jungle heroes must be of neutral or good alignment, but only goodly-aligned heroes may earn or benefit from Hero Points.

4) Select Proficiencies

Most proficiencies in the Players Handbook are also available to Living Jungle heroes. Others could become available as the campaign progresses.

At present, no Living Jungle hero may begin play with the following proficiencies: ancient history, armorer, blacksmithing, charioteering, engineering, forgery, gem-cutting, heraldry, languages (ancient), mining, reading/writing, riding (airborne), riding (land-based), seamanship, stonemasonry.

5) Select Equipment

Living Jungle heroes begin with no money. The people of Malatra do not use money, but a bartering system. Magic items are acquired only during tournament play and at convention activities, such as the Great Convocation of Fire Mountain. Trading magic items among heroes is welcome, but players must exchange Treasure Certificates to prove the trade.

A player character begins play with one item for each point of Charisma he or she has. Money is not used in the Living Jungle setting, so starting equipment is represented by the gifts heroes have received in past. For example, a hero with a Charisma score of 10 can select 10 items total. Choose all of your items from the following lists of clothing, food, equipment, weapons and armor.

Clothing: robe, belt, loincloth, halter, vest, sandals, shoes (reed), snakeskin cap, toga, tunic, rain cape, woven hemp sash, straw hat, lizardskin leggings

Food: beer, bread, cheese, eggs, fruit, grain, berry juice, wine, meat, milk, nuts, water, coconut shell full of honey, roots (one week's supply of food and drink counts as two items)

Equipment: arrows (6), barbed darts (6), basket (large or small) berry dye (ink), bone tube, charcoal stick, clay pot, clay jug, cloth, fish net, bone fishhooks (6), pouch (large or small), sack (large or small), torch, water gourd, waterskin, wicker backpack, straw sleeping mat, wooden bracelet, bone earrings, walking stick, wooden bowl, reed flute, bone comb, small drum, leather cup, ornamental necklace, witch doctor foot salve, coconut filled with insect wax, 20 feet of hemp rope, 30 feet of vine rope, sharp cutting stone, fire-starting stick, bone needle with thin hemp thread

Weapons in the Living Jungle setting are usually made of stone, wood, or bone. Metal technology has simply not appeared on the Malatran plateau (yet), and metal weapons are rare. For the sake of simplicity, however, these inflict the same damage listed in the Player's Handbook for steel versions of the same weapons.

During campaign play, heroes could find more exotic weapons, but beginning heroes must choose from this list:

Weapons: Battle axe, blowgun (for barbed darts or thorns*), short bow, club, hand axe, javelin, knife, quarterstaff, sling (stone only), spear.

* Poison thorns are never available to heroes, though non-player character shu tribes are notorious for their use. Sleep poison could become available during an adventure, but only for the duration of that adventure.

Armor is rare in the Living Jungle, but these kinds are available: hide armor (AC 6, weight 30), bone armor [Wise Ones heroes can also wear thatch] (AC 8, weight 15, weight 5 for thatch), and reed armor (AC 9, weight 5) body shields, and medium

shields. Other weapons and equipment will be made available during the campaign. Heroes may not begin the campaign with items that are not on this list.

6) Describe Your Hero

Heroes should never be just collections of numbers and abilities; they should have personality, appearance, and history. So before your Living Jungle character is done, you should be sure to fill in the Physical Description, Personality Description, and Tribe Information on your Hero Sheet. If you want more room, simply attach another page to your sheet and write as long a description and background as you like! These can be as sparse or as elaborate as you like, and here are some suggestions:

 Characters who have both strengths and weaknesses are much more interesting than characters who have nothing but strong points. Consider giving your character some flaws, like a fear of spiders, an inability to see more than one side of an issue, or even a physical injury, like a missing finger or tooth.

 Heroes come from humble beginnings as often as from grand. Consider a character who isn't especially prominent in her tribe, or perhaps one who everyone thought wouldn't go far in life.

 Even when playing a non-human character, remember to include human-like personality traits, especially some that you do not possess. If you consider yourself quiet and reserved, you may like trying to play an active and out-spoken character.

7) Advancing a Level

Heroes should have interesting backgrounds, but be sure not to tell all of your hero's story before she begins adventuring. Let the tournaments be a large part of your hero's story, and update your Hero Sheet to include important or interesting events from those tournaments in your Hero's

background. Advancing in Level When your Living Jungle character earns sufficient experience to advance a level, be sure to modify your Hero Sheet to reflect the new level.

Add the appropriate number of additional Hit Points. Living Jungle heroes gain hit points based on their hit die type: Hit points for high Constitution scores are added to this. For example, a ranger hero (warrior class) with a 16 Constitution gains 10 hit points per level beyond first. Consult the following table for the additional hit points gained.

Note that a Nubari hero can earn and save more Hero Points at higher levels. For example, second level Nubari heroes can have up to two Hero Points at a time. Check the *Players Handbook* for additional or improved abilities, such as thief skills.

Important: Living Jungle heroes gain a new proficiency slot with every level they attain beyond the first. This advancement is a change from the core AD&D game rules and replaces the usual weapon and non-weapon proficiency advancement. Thus, a fighter hero in the Living Jungle can gain a proficiency (weapon or non-weapon) at second level, and another at third.

8) Multi-Class Options

Korobokuru: fighter/cleric, fighter/thieves

Katanga: fighter/wizard, fighter/thieves, fighter/cleric, wizard/thieves

Tam'hi: fighter/wizard, fighter/thieves, wizard/thieves

Shu: fighter/thieves

Saru: fighter/thieves

About The Living Jungle

The following text will help familiarize you with the jungle setting. This material appeared in Polyhedron Newszine #102.

Far beyond the Living City lies an undiscovered land of savage tribes, fabulous creatures, and the mysterious ruins of a forgotten race. Soaring above the jungles of southern Kara-Tur, the Malatran Plateau has been invisible to the natives of Abeir-Toril for thousands of years. Most sages consider the area nothing more than an uninteresting wilderness.

They couldn't be more wrong.

The Living Jungle is a tournament setting for members of the RPGA Network. Like its older sister, the Living City, this campaign is designed for players who create their own characters to play at conventions all over the world. These Heroes gain levels, treasure, and power with every adventure, just as in a campaign played at home.

The Living Jungle setting is very like the Living City, but it is at once simpler and more exotic. You won't need a suitcase full of books to play or judge in the Living Jungle; all you need are the core AD&D Game rules and this manuscript.

History

The current human inhabitants of the Malatran Plateau are descended of two separate human races: the indigenous humans of southern Kara-Tur, and an ancient spelljamming race from a distant crystal sphere.

Living in relative harmony with the modern Nubari are the diminutive shu, the wild korobokuru, the elusive tam'hi, and the shape-changing katanga. None of the modern people of the Living Jungle remember their ancient origins, and archeological clues are rare. Here, then, is a brief sketch of the history that contemporary characters do not know.

Thousands of years ago, the ancient Nubari were a very tall and lithe race of humans, dark brown of skin and golden yellow of eye. While still essentially human, the Ancients had slightly larger heads, tapering to an elongated crown, and but three fingers and a thumb on each hand (missing

the "normal" human pinky). They were a people of art and magic, science and philosophy.

Nubari technology was quite advanced in some ways, but mostly it was simply alien to, not superior to, the current technology of Toril's more advanced nations. For instance, though they used metal for ornamentation, the Nubari had developed a fantastically hard form of ceramic which they used for tools such as knives. Traditional weapons were unknown to them, as they lived a sort of Utopian existence, using their magical technology to live with, rather than against, nature.

The Ancients were a celestial race, traveling among several home worlds shared by other spelljamming peoples. Each of these worlds was a veritable paradise, so while the Nubari knew of Abeir-Toril for millennia, they deemed the planet unworthy of interest when so many more beautiful worlds were theirs for the visiting. In all crystal spheres, there are gods of strife and misfortune. Ultimately, then, the paradisiacal existence of the Nubari came to an end, as war came to the Nubari and their neighbors. As in every war, the worst aspects of the people came to the fore, and even the otherwise peaceful Nubari found themselves embroiled in conflict.

One faction of the Nubari, however, refused to give in to conflict. They chose to flee the war, making no claim to any of the worlds disputed by the others. Rather, they came to Abeir-Toril. Arriving in great spelljammers, the Ancients barely escaped the powerful invasion fleet which conquered the last world they had inhabited. Resolving not to duplicate the mistakes of their own ancestors, the Ancients swore to form a society without war. In this, they were largely successful. They chose the central jungle of Malatra as their home, reasoning that it would not seem a desirable location to the indigenous races of the planet. To dissuade visitors further, they devised a great magic to raise the land they had chosen far above the rest of the jungle floor, creating a vast, insurmountable plateau. It was an

ideal place for them to live, since—once carefully removed from the inhabited regions—the surrounding dinosaur population could not easily climb the high cliffs surrounding the plateau, and neither would the Ancients disrupt the natural course of indigenous life on the planet. This was their new paradise. They practiced their philosophy of non-violence very strictly, never killing the natural predators which remained in their lands, but learning to live in harmony with the animals and the land.

The Ancients began to create their vision of a Utopian world. Unknown to them, they were not as alone as they had hoped. River and bamboo spirits had lived in the area for centuries. At the arrival of the Ancients, they hid. Seeing that the newcomers seemed peaceful enough, the spirits did not trouble them, nor did they approach to greet them. Each lived in harmony with the other, the Ancients never knowing of their neighbors.

The newcomer culture thrived and grew, ever mindful of keeping itself secret. But Tymora and Beshaba forever quarrel over Utopias, and Lady Luck cannot forever hold out against Black Bess. So eventually, disaster struck. The nature of the disaster is a mystery. It may have been a natural disaster, an incredibly fast plague, or even a magical experiment gone awry. Whatever it was, it left the surviving Nubari without their former civilization, reducing them to a primitive existence. The disaster also destroyed most of the Nubari culture, buildings, and knowledge. For whatever reason, the surviving Nubari fled the fragments of their homes and took to life in the jungles and plains.

Years later, during a long but temporary decrease in the carnivore population surrounding the plateau, some of the natives of Toril--katanga, humans, and Korobokuru—explored far enough to reach and even ascend the plateau. How these peoples won past the cliffs and magical barriers is a mystery, though Korobokuru legend speaks of a great and long exodus from a distant homeland,

including a journey though sunless and moonless paths. These wanderers stayed with the Nubari of the plateau, either because they chose to remain or because they could not return. The ancient humans and Nubari gradually inter-bred, eventually becoming the new race of Nubari which inhabit the Living Jungle today. The Korobokuru thrive in this land, and the katanga took to the land as naturally as if they'd always been there.

How the shu came to the plateau is another mystery, and the saru seem to have evolved from the existing gorilla population—though their accelerated evolution remains undiscovered. For reasons unknown to the Nubari, the dinosaur population rose once more, effectively isolating the plateau from the surrounding world.

Geography

The Living Jungle is situated high upon a magically-created plateau near the center of the southern jungles of Malatra. None of the civilized cultures surrounding the plateau, however, are aware of its existence or of its inhabitants. There are three main barriers between the inhabitants of the Living Jungle and the rest of Malatra and the Forgotten Realms.

First, the Malatran jungle itself is a formidable barrier, especially considering the carnivorous dinosaurs which make their home around the plateau. The few bands of humans, korobokuru, or other oriental races which have delved deeply enough into the jungle to find the dinosaurs have not survived long enough to find the plateau. Second, the plateau rises thousands of feet above the floor of the Malatra jungle. Even should some explorers win past the dinosaurs, they would need extraordinary mountain climbing skills or potent magic to reach the plateau itself.

Both of the first two obstacles would certainly be overcome by now, if not for the third. In forming the plateau for their own needs, the Ancients built a long chain of magical domes

around the territory in which they settled. In addition to a vast and permanent hallucinatory terrain spell, the Ancients incorporated powerful and permanent antipathy spells into the battery of domes.

None can detect the Malatra jungle from above, and any who approach the surrounding cliffs from below must make a saving throw vs. spells with a -6 penalty or feel compelled to leave the place and not return.

Except from the hints of legend which suggest that their ancestors came from beyond the edge of the world, the inhabitants of the Living Jungle are unaware of their borders, since they too are subject to the effects of the antipathy spells. None of the Nubari or other intelligent races of the plateau have been to the giant cliffs and seen the limits of their own land. On the plateau itself, Fire Mountain is the most conspicuous feature. The southern-most peak in the small central range, Fire Mountain is an active volcano around which several of the tribes have developed part of their religions. From the central mountains spring three rivers: the Dreaming River to the southwest, the River of Laughing Idols to the southeast, and Hebika River to the north.

The Dreaming River is so called because of the perpetual mist which rises from Sleepy Lake and its southern branch. Even past the lake the fog grows more dense as the river opens into Kumo Swamp near the base of the Miranuma Mountains. This area is taboo to the Nubari and other intelligent peoples. The few who have disobeyed the taboo have never returned to explain what lies within the obscuring shrouds of those lands.

Little is known of the Hebika River, also known as the Serpent River, except that it feeds the Dokuba Swamp. There live savage lizard races, with whom the Nubari, korobokuru, and shu have an ancient enmity which has—for some inexplicable reason—not been tested in the last several decades. Elders speak of the lizard raids as if they were nearly constant in their youth, but none has seen one of the scaly raiders in years.

The most familiar of the plateau's rivers is the River of Laughing Idols, so named for the curious statues which lie along its length, planted at the edge of or even in the river itself. Those which still function "laugh" as the current flows into them, bubbling with humor and music as the water courses through their cunning chambers, only to rush out of mouths, nostrils, eyes, or ears.

No two of these idols are alike, and some are considered taboo while others have become centerpieces of the more distant river villages. The River of Laughing Idols ends, as far as the Nubari know, at the edge of the Valley of Spirits—undoubtedly the most dread of the taboo regions on the plateau. Where the river spills over the sheer cliff edge, colossal waterfalls explode into white mist which seems to expand to fill the entire area. The valley itself is a severe canyon hidden in mist, just like the region to the southwest.

Blood-chilling screams of alien throats rise from the obscured valley, and its edges are ringed with taboo totems warning away any so foolish as to approach the place for a view of its spectacular falls—though romantic legends of some Nubari tribes do impel young men and women to defy the taboo. Some of them even return to their people, but they never speak of what they saw, and they never go back to the falls.

DM **INTRODUCTION**

This adventure centers on a plague that will strip a good portion of the jungle bare and lay low many villages. It is a plague that the witch doctor Bengoukee wants to prevent, and he will enlist the Heroes to carry out the miracle.

The heroes must discover the nature of the plague—a swarm of insects—and find a way to stop them from eating up the jungle. The action begins in Big Chief Bagoomba's village and then leads to an ancient grove of trees, to the river, and

at last to a cave where the insects are breeding.

Before beginning the adventure, note the names of the heroes and any other pertinent information. The character names will be inserted into the Player's introduction in place of the blank lines.

PLAYER **INTRODUCTION**

The Great and Wise Bengoukee paces in front of the roaring fire. His head is cocked to the sparkling evening sky, as if he is listening for something.

You sit quietly several yards back, in the company of members of Big Chief Bagoomba's tribe. Everyone is watching the witch doctor's motions and is enjoying the cool summer breeze that washes through the village. Yet everyone seems uneasy, on edge.

Finally, the grizzled Bengoukee nods and raises his right hand. And in that instant the drums begin. They start low, with long pauses between their beats. Then the rhythm picks up, the sound grows, and the witch doctor lets out a hollow, mournful cry. He twirls about the fire, the grass from his skirt teasing the flames. Faster and faster he moves, and without warning he jumps high into the air.

He spins above the fire then comes to land near you. His feet strike the ground in time with the drum beats, and he slaps his chest and thighs. He throws his head back, his shoulders jerk spasmodically, then his mouth falls open.

"Enala! The sky!" he screeches. "Bootora! The wind! Ligela! The earth! Enala, Bootora, and Ligela—they all speak to me, warn me, plead with me to aid the jungle! Their voices are strong. Their voices demand champions! Their voices yield a vision!"

The witch doctor leaps back toward the

fire and flings his fist at the flames. Colorful sand flies into the lapping orange and red tendrils, and in an instant a great cloud of green-gray smoke fills the air.

You blink and see shapes form within that cloud. Tall trees, whose branches reach toward the stars. But the branches are bare, all the leaves are gone, and the bark is dark and withered. You see huts amid the trunks. Most are destroyed. And you see the bodies of slain Nubari all about, their flesh torn from their bones.

"Bootora whispers a plague is coming!" Bengoukee howls. "A plague the likes of which this jungle has not known for hundreds of years! Enala promises that the plague will carry death and destruction to our homes—and that no one will be safe from it! Ligela murmurs that it hides within the ground, growing, waiting, yearning to be released into the innocent embrace of the jungle!"

The witch doctor waves his fist and the drum beat slows. He sways back and forth on his bare feet, closes his eyes, then spreads his palms wide above his head.

"The wind and sky. The earth. They need champions to stop this plague, to route this destruction. They say champions are within our midst! _____ stand and step toward me. You are the first to be selected. Enala demands that _____ join in. And Bootora has chosen _____. A strong warrior, _____, must help. And one quick of wit, _____, will help lead this group of heroes to victory. Lastly, Ligela requests that _____ add his might.

"The earth. The wind. And the sky. They have spoken to you through me. They have selected their champions and have deemed them our only chance for survival. Bootora says you must travel north to the old grove of trees. Enala says you must wait for dawn at the edge of the pool, and when the water turns pink with

morning, you must find the earth woman. Ligela says you must embrace her, and when you are on the edge of death you will find the Speaker of Wisdom—the oldest tree in the circle. The Speaker will help you stop the plague. Go now!"

The witch doctor shakes his head violently, screams shrilly, and the drums increase their tempo. The rhythm is maddening and hypnotic, and it fills the air and your senses. The smoke cloud with its vision of ruined trees wraps its tendrils about you then dissipates, but the acrid scent it leaves behind is strong in your lungs.

Bengoukee points to the path leading north from the village. In the background you see Big Chief Bagoomba nod his approval. The pounding of the drums becomes louder still, and you make your way down the path until the jungle swallows you, and the village is lost from your sight.

ENCOUNTER ONE THE EARTH WOMAN

A plague! You shudder at the thought. How can only a handful of heroes stop something that could lay low the jungle? Thoughts of sickness, disease, and dying friends dance around in your heads. Might you succumb to this plague, too?

You pause briefly along the trail to turn your thoughts away from the horrid possibilities. This would be a good time to discover a little more about the others who accompany you. Just who are these people, and what skills do they possess? Will you be able to join forces and stop Bengoukee's predictions from coming true?

Allow the heroes several moments to role-play and to get to know each other. When the action winds down, ask for a marching order to the grove. Select a hero and tell him or her that he

knows about the ring of old trees the witch doctor was babbling about. There is a pond in the center of the ring, and he or she knows how to get there. When the heroes are on their way:

Starlight filters down through the treetops as you continue along the path toward the ring. The drums have long since stopped beating, and the sounds of birds and insects, of chattering apes fill the air. You suspect that Bengoukee's ruckus stirred them up.

Still, the noise doesn't seem to bother you, and it keeps you company until you finally reach the ring of old trees.

The ancient giants tower above you, looking eerie in the night. Their trunks are bigger around than an elephant's stomach, and some of them are half-dead, the years taking their toll.

In the middle of the ring is a near circular pond, its waters look black with specks of light dancing on the surface. The pond is a mirror, reflecting the stars back at the sky. Dawn is a few hours away. Time to sleep perhaps? Time to plan?

Investigating Before Dawn

No matter what the heroes decide to do, nothing happens until dawn. If the heroes post a watch, they see the dawn coming. If they do not post a watch, there is a 30% chance they will sleep past dawn, past the time the water turns pink.

If the heroes try to find the oldest tree they do not know for certain which tree it is. Animals in the area think all of the trees are very old, and they do not care which one is the oldest. The animals know nothing about an earth woman, which is actually a statue left by the Ancients. If the heroes are awake at dawn, read the following:

The sun has just started its journey into the sky, its light filtering through the dense jungle

foliage and painting the pond before you a rosy pink.

If the heroes approach the pond, tell them they see something at the bottom, perhaps a face.

Heroes with a swimming proficiency can make it to the bottom of the pool without difficulty. Heroes attempting to swim to the bottom must make a check versus ½ their Constitution to make the trip; otherwise they must surface and try again.

The water feels cool and welcoming against your skin. You can tell that this pond is deep, perhaps it is fed by a spring. You swim down and down, lured by the image of a face.

Read the following if the swimming heroes do not breathe water (make sure to read this with concern in your voice):

You begin to get light-headed, needing air to breathe. The bottom of the pool may be too far. Maybe you should surface for another breath.

Continue with the following:

As you mull over what to do, the face comes into focus. It is the image of a beautiful woman with a very large head. You blink and see that the woman is a statue, a hunk of stone that has fallen to the bottom of this pond. Her feet are imbedded into the ground. Her hands are stretched out to her sides, and weeds whip about her form like they are trying to clothe her.

Determine the hero's actions, and look at your watch. The heroes have 10 minutes of real time to embrace the earth woman—the stone statue—and follow her directions. After those 10 minutes, the rosy color is gone from the surface of the pond, and they have to wait for the next dawn.

It doesn't really matter whether a hero surfaces and then dives back down or whether he continues on to the statue. If he does it within 10 minutes, everything works. Read the following if the diver does not breathe water and goes to the statue:

The pond is so deep that by the time you reach the statue, all of the air in your lungs has vanished. You feel dizzy, and in your state you imagine that the arms are beckoning you closer.

If the Hero hugs the statue, read the following:

You imagine the statue is whispering into your ear, telling you to gather the water at the top of the pond kissed pink by the sun. Gather it quickly before the blush leaves and the water is again blue. You can then drink this water and find a new awareness. Drink deeply, she tells you. Deeply.

Determine what the heroes are doing. They will need flasks, skins, or coconut halves to gather the water. The heroes can take as much as they like, but the effects of the water only work once, and only for a few moments.

If a Hero states he or she is drinking the water, go to Encounter Two.

Investigating After Dawn

If the heroes slept past dawn, read the following:

You awake refreshed and ready to go. You slept several hours and are filled with energy. Hours? You slept past dawn. The sun is low in the sky, but it is definitely past dawn. Now will you have to wait another day, looking for another dawn?

If the heroes search about for the oldest tree, they are not be able to determine which one is the oldest. If they look into the pond, they think they

see a face at the bottom. If they dive into the pond, read the following:

The water feels cool and welcoming against your skin. You can tell that this pond is deep, perhaps it is fed by a spring. You swim down and down, lured by the image of a face.

Read the following if the swimming heroes do not breathe water (make sure to read this with concern in your voice):

You begin to get light-headed, needing air to breathe. The bottom of the pool may be too far. Maybe you should surface for another breath.

Continue with the following:

As you mull over what to do, the face comes into focus. It is the image of a beautiful woman, and the face is attached to a shapely body. You blink and see that the woman is a statue, a hunk of stone that has fallen to the bottom of this pond. Her feet are imbedded into the ground. Her hands are stretched out to her sides, and weeds whip about her form like they are trying to clothe her.

If the Hero states he is hugging the statue—or if he goes up for air and comes back to hug the statue—read the following:

Hugging the statue, you imagine that she is whispering into your ear, telling you to gather the water at the top of the pond that is kissed pink by the sun. That you must gather it only when the blush is on the water. Then you can drink this water and find a new awareness. Drink deeply, she tells you. Deeply.

Your head clears the surface of the pond, and you spit out the water that was filling your lungs. You are bobbing in the center of blue

water, your friends on the edge looking curiously at you. Looking toward the sky and the ever-climbing sun, you realize you must wait another day—wait for the next dawn to touch the pond.

The heroes indeed have to wait for the next dawn, as the pond water does nothing now but passably quench their thirst. Let the day pass quickly so the heroes can get the dawn water and proceed to Encounter Two.

Experience Award

🐉 Waking at dawn the first time: 50

🐉 Embracing the earth woman: 100

ENCOUNTER TWO TREE TALK

If the heroes drink the pond water, take those characters aside who imbibed and read them the following:

The water tastes brackish, but is drinkable. You swallow it down quickly, and you feel instantly flushed as if you had a fever. The sensation passes, your head clears, and you look about the circle of trees. They look different, almost. . . . The bark on the trunks have features—eyes, mouths. Can you be dreaming?

What the heroes drank was stagnant pond water. Whether it is producing a hallucinatory effect, or has a touch of magic to it is inconsequential. What is important is that the water is acting as *Speak with Plants* spell.

There are seven trees in the clearing that can be talked to. Each hero who drank the water can talk to one tree. Inform the hero that he realizes he can speak to only one. Describe the

trees and ask which one they try to speak with. It doesn't matter what language the Hero speaks, the tree can understand him—and he can understand the tree. Refer to the different trees listed below. Besides carrying on a pleasant conversation, each tree has a bit of information. Feel free to alter their responses based on the heroes' questions.

Ancient Shaggybark

"You look for the oldest tree here. It is not me, though I feel old. I was born hundreds of full moons ago. I lost count of how many years my roots have soaked up the jungle water. Still, I am older than the tall palm near me, and I am older than the thick palm that was struck two moons ago in a fierce storm, and I am not so old to remember any great or terrible occurrence in this wonderful jungle."

Tall Palm

"A plague. A plague is a disastrous evil affliction. A calamity! It is a destructively numerous influx of horridness. It is a disease, an epidemic illness causing a high rate of mortality. Pestilence. Virulent, contagious sickness. You say such a plague is coming to the jungle. Sickneses are usually limited to animals—except for willow trees—so I have little to fear. Still, if there is a chance this plague will affect me, damaging my beauteous leaves, then you must do whatever you can to stop it. Here, I offer you a token of appreciation for your efforts." The tall palm shakes itself and three coconuts fall to the ground. "Eat and drink well, and get to work right away stopping this plague."

Half-Dead Jungle Willow

"I am not the oldest tree here, but I am wise beyond my years, and I know that my years will not be much longer upon this fertile ground. I have a plague of my own, so to speak, a sickness

that has ate away most of my roots. Perhaps it is merely the sickness of age. Still, when I was born there were two other trees nearby, the proud nut tree and the shaggybark, which lies dead. Perhaps the nut tree can give you kernels of wisdom, can remember things of greatness and great sadness from the past. I wish I could help you. Let me think a moment. Hmmm. No. I cannot help you, but I can give you a gift. You are the first people in nearly a hundred moons who have talked to me.

I fear I will die before I have more two-legged visitors. So you shall receive my boon. High in my branches, nestled against my trunk, is a small birds nest. Inside it is something shiny, something my bird friend hid amid the twigs. My bird friend has not returned this season, so I suspect he grew tired of me, and found a new perch. Or perhaps he preceded me in death. Climb my withering body and take the bird's prize."

Heroes who try to climb the tree must make a successful climbing proficiency check at a -2 penalty because of the sickly, oozing bark. Thieves and saru suffer a -10% penalty.

Thick, Lightning-Struck Palm

"Cry for me. I hurt and suffer. The spirits of the sky were angry at me. I was vain, and I did not let my leaves grow large to offer shade to the creatures of the jungle. In anger they brought a storm and called forth a bolt of lightning that pierced my trunk. Oh, I have learned my lesson. I was young and foolish. Now I am young and sorry. As I regain my strength, I will let my leaves grow big. I will shade the creatures of the jungle, and I will give my coconuts to anyone hungry or thirsty." The injured tree shakes itself and two coconuts fall to the ground. "Eat my fruit and tell the spirits of the sky I am generous. I do not wish to share the fate of the oldest

tree—I do not wish to die."

Arooonda Nut

"How can you talk to me? You are a two-legger! Two-leggers haven't the brains of an ant! Why am I listening to you? You are a two-legger. I look down on two-leggers because two-leggers cannot fly. But they can dance. See! I will show you how to dance!" With that the tree violently shakes itself and nuts fall from its branches, pummeling you. You hop to get out of the way.

All heroes within 10 feet of the tree's trunk suffer two points of damage from the hail of nuts. Thereafter, the tree stops shaking, as it has loosed all of its nuts. The heroes can harvest the nuts if they have something to put them in. There are 110 nuts, each about the size of a walnut. The shell is thick, but the meat inside has a pleasing, sweet taste. If a Hero has herbalism, tell him these nuts are valued by several tribes because of their taste and rareness.

Dead Shaggybark

"There is no life in me, only spirit. My essence is tied to the land, for I think I am nearly as old as the jungle itself. I have seen much in my centuries upon the loam. I have witnessed life and death and struggle and greatness. I have seen warriors and peace-makers, the proud, and the generous. I sense strong purpose in your hearts. And I sense that I can help you. What do you wish to know?"

The dead shaggybark knows the following:

 "There are many plagues in the jungle, random illnesses that hit tribes."

🦖 "The last plague was about four years ago, striking the elephants gathered about a tribe of Wise Ones. Thirty elephants died."

🦖 "You speak of a plague that will lay low the jungle. I know of what you speak, but first you must tell me how you know."

🦖 "Such a plague is not illness or disease. Such a plague is worse. It happened four hundred years ago, and legend says every four hundred years it will happen again."

🦖 "I was a victim of the plague. My branches were stripped bare by a great black cloud that moved over the horizon and swallowed all life in its path. So dark was the cloud that I couldn't see inside it to see what evil was striking the jungle. I closed my senses and prayed I would survive."

🦖 "Myself and several trees lived—barely. The jungle had to grow up again. Perhaps the plague had a purpose. . . to wipe life clean and start over. The jungle does not need to start over this time."

🦖 "If I had not closed my senses I could have told you more about this darkness. Perhaps you need to talk to someone older than I. Go talk to the River of Laughing Idols. I'll help you. Dig into the earth and cut off a piece of my root—enough so that each of you can have a bite. When you reach the river, plant your feet in the soil, eat my root, and talk to what you find there."

🦖 "I can tell you no more. I am tired, and my spirit needs to rest."

Giant Frond

"I am not the oldest tree, but I am the tallest, the grandest, the wisest—the provider. I am the provider of shade to the animals. I am the provider of homes for the birds. In the spring I provide flowers for the village women. And all year round I provide company for these other giants. Talk not to the nut tree, you'll get no words of wisdom there. Talk not to the dead

tree. Only its spirit is left in the earth. Leave the willows alone. Converse with me, for I am a teller of fortunes and futures. For a gift of food for the animals, placed at the base of my trunk, I will provide you with words of advice. Come, come, there are a half dozen of you. For a half-dozen morsels you can have a half-dozen pieces of invaluable information."

The frond will offer words of advice to each hero who leaves a food gift.

🦖 "The tiniest things in the jungle often can be the most deadly—for trees and for animals."

🦖 "To save the land, you must go below it. But first you must seek the River of Laughing Idols and its ancient statues."

🦖 "From the water to the earth to the sky to death. Watch the skies for the cloud of death."

🦖 "As you stalk knowledge, something shall stalk you."

🦖 "To rescue something might mean to risk death."

🦖 "Judge not the anteater."

Experience Award

🦖 Talk to dead tree or giant frond: 100

🦖 Taking a piece of dead tree root: 100

ENCOUNTER THREE THE RIVER

If the heroes conversed with either the giant frond or the dead shaggybark, they know to go to the river of laughing idols. If they didn't, run this encounter and then skip to Epilog B. Along the way to the river a group of lizard men hunters spies them, and begins stalking their prey. The lizard men intend to kill the heroes, roast them for dinner, and take any valuables back to their lair.

You travel toward the river, hopeful the trees were right and you will find someone or something there to tell you more about this plague. The sun is directly overhead now, and its rays stream through the leaves to bake your skin. The birds glide from branch to branch, and little spider monkeys throw nuts at them.

You wonder what the jungle would be like without birds and monkeys, with trees stripped bare. You shudder and press onward. Then you pause, for the sounds of the birds and monkeys has stopped.

Ask the heroes what they are doing. They have one round of free actions before the lizard men strike. If the heroes do not take precautions, the lizard men gain surprise attacks.

Lizard Men (6): AC 5; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 2+1; hp 13 each; THACO 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6; SZ M (7' tall); ML 14; Int Low (5); AL N.

Notes: None of the lizard men carry weapons. However, one has a monkey skull on a leather thong about his neck, and another has a dozen giant lizard teeth strung on a thong about his waist.

The creatures only speak lizard man, so unless any of the heroes know that language or have the *tongues* spell, communication will be impossible.

After the battle, the heroes might try to

track the lizard men back to their home. If they successfully make two tracking rolls, they find an earthen cave. Inside are two more lizard men, of hit points appropriate to the heroes' level. Also in the cave are three clay jars, each about 18" high. The first is filled with coconut milk—slightly spoiled. Another jar is filled with coconut meat, and the third is filled with rotted animal parts.

The lizard men's treasure is at the bottom of this third jar. It consists of a gold human-sized head band with delicate filigree work showing twisting vines (chips of jade represent the leaves); a six-inch tall jade icon of a heron; and a jade hoop earring about three inches in diameter. Of course, to appreciate the pieces, the animal guts should be cleaned off.

Experience Award

-  Defeating the lizard men: 100
-  Tracking the lizard men to their lair: 50
-  Finding the treasure: 25

Treasure

-  Monkey skull on leather thong
-  Dozen lizard teeth on belt
-  Gold head band
-  Jade heron icon
-  Jade earring

ENCOUNTER FOUR ROCKS

By the time the heroes reach the river, it will be afternoon. Tell any shu, korobukuru, and saru heroes they are very hungry. If the heroes have the root of the dead shaggybark, they must eat it and try to talk to the water.

Read the following when the heroes approach the river:

The river cuts a wide swath through the lush jungle. You see crocodiles floating lazily a few feet out from the bank, and others lounging in the mud between thick tree roots that snake out deep into the water.

The crocodiles pay you no heed as you approach. You are too large and numerous to present a tempting target. Besides, the hot sun has made them sluggish. A black water serpent slides by and cuts through the current, making "S" shaped ripples in its wake.

Insects dance along the surface, and some are pulled under by the numerous fish that live in the river.

On your side of the bank is an old stone statue, its features nearly eroded. A colorful parrot sits on its head and regards you for a moment before flying away. Across the bank is a similar statue, water bubbling from its mouth as if it were a fountain.

If a hero eats a root, they will quickly discover it does not allow them to talk to the river. The effect of eating the root is roughly the same as casting a *stone tell* spell. It is not the water that talks to them, but the rocks at the river bottom and the statues along the banks. If the heroes do not have the bark, allow them to hear voices inside their heads. The statues will "talk" to them. However, the heroes will not be able to talk to the rocks in the water unless they remove them.

The statues and a big gray rock in the water speak slowly, as they are old and time has little meaning to stone. The pebbles talk rapidly, laugh often, and speak in many different voices. If the heroes want to talk to the statue/fountain on the other side of the river, they must swim across or build a makeshift raft. The crocodiles will not bother them, and any reasonable attempt to get across works.

Statue nearest them

"I am young, for stone is ancient and I am still intact. When I am ancient, I will be in many pieces, like the playful pebbles that line the riverbed. I am wise, for stone sees and hears much. I sense that you are searching. May I be of assistance?"

The statue knows the following, and reveals it based on the heroes' questions:

🐉 There is a plague coming that shall hurt everything but the stones.

🐉 The plague is not an illness. It comes every four centuries.

🐉 Ask my brother across the river, he knows the nature of this plague. I was buried beneath a fallen palm when the black cloud came by the river.

🐉 I do not think you can stop the plague once it has begun. It is like the river—unstoppable.

Statue/Fountain

"Take the water that spews from my mouth and rub some on the top of my head. It is warm today, and I wish to be cooled off. (Pause) That is much better. I heard from my brother's conversation with you that you ask of the plague. He speaks correctly. It shall come. Within the week I suspect. I have passed through two such plagues. I know much about them."

The statue knows the following, and reveals it based on the heroes' questions:

🐉 The plague is a cloud of insects, horrid winged things that make a great noise and fly in a giant black cloud.

🐉 They come every four hundred years.

🦎 I have lived through two of their passings. During the first plague I suspected the gathering of the insects was the spirit's way of cleansing the jungle. But during the second plague I realized this was not true. They are killers, destroyers of life, bringers of grief, and they should be stopped. The jungle cannot bear to be struck down again.

🦎 The insects are called luroki, and they are the size of a grown man's thumb. They are about in the jungle every day—in small numbers. But there is a great breeding spot now, as there was four hundred years ago. There is a way to stop them. A group of apes tried just before the last plague, but they went looking for the insects too late. The insects swarmed them, leaving only their bones behind.

🦎 The apes gathered sap from the iticala trees that line the banks several miles south of here. The iticala trees are tall with red-veined leaves. I do not know what the apes intended to do with the sap. It certainly isn't edible. But they seemed to think it was important.

🦎 The insects are breeding in a cave beyond the iticala trees. To find the cave, watch the river. The cave is hidden but the river knows how to get there.

Pebbles under the water

"We are young because we are small, but we are old, as we were once large but were broken apart by time and the river. Now we enjoy youth again, and again we will grow old and be worn to nothingness. Then we shall be with the river, for stone never dies.

"We are happy to talk with you, for the fish are dull-witted. Only the crocodiles have anything interesting to say. Tell us some news of life above the river. Yes, talk to us, and then we will talk more to you!"

The pebbles know the following:

🦎 There was a great plague many years ago, and it killed much of the jungle—except the fishes were safe, and the crocodiles who went below the water.

🦎 The plague is a cleansing, but a horrible cleansing. We would hate to see so many animals die again.

🦎 There are other creatures who navigate the river. In fact, some were here just shortly before you arrived. They did not talk to us. They were bird snakes hunting for fruit. They looked very hungry. We bet if you give them fruit, they will be happy.

🦎 Take some of us with you, for we would like to see a different part of the jungle. Just put us in your pockets and leave us some place interesting.

Big Gray Rock

"I have chosen the embrace of the water, rolling here with great effort after the last plague struck the great jungle. I could not bear to see my friends—the birds, the apes, the lizards—die again. I could not bear to see the trees swept clean of their leaves by maddened, hungry insects. I know about the plague you speak of. And I know that it can be stopped. But I also know that the task is not easy."

The big rock knows the following and reveals the points based on the heroes' questions:

🦎 The luroki are but common insects, not harmful of themselves. Once every few centuries the great volcano spews forth gasses and smoke that taints the air and drives the luroki wild.

🦎 They mate in great numbers, and the queen lays eggs in an underground cave. The humidity of the place nurtures the young, and when they are ready they fly forth in the thousands upon thousands and strip the jungle bare.

 The young must be killed. It is the only way to stop the plague, for they are the plague. Destroy them, and the jungle will be safe for another few centuries.

 Follow the river. Their lair is many miles south of here. I can feel their presence, though. I feel the vibrations from their many wings. You have only a few days at best to save yourselves and everything you know.

When the heroes are finished talking to the rocks, and provided they have gathered enough information, they likely will set off after the insects. If the heroes did not gather enough information, give them the next encounter, then proceed to Epilog B.

Experience Award

-  Learning about the iticala trees: 100
-  Learn about the underwater cave: 100

ENCOUNTER FIVE SNAKES

As the heroes continue on their quest, they are spotted by some winged snakes—hungry winged snakes. The snakes favor fruit, and their last attempt to gather some resulted in one of their number being killed by a saru. The snakes smell fruit on the Heroes—or maybe they just smell heroes—and they dive down for a bite to eat.

If the heroes learned about the fruit-eating flying snakes from the rocks in the previous encounter, they can avoid being attacked by offering the snakes fruit. Give them a few rounds to do this. Otherwise, the creatures attack.

You travel further along the river in your journey to stop the plague of insects. But you stop and stare when several yards ahead of you snakes

with colorful wings flit into view. The serpents' wings beat furiously to keep them aloft.

The snakes stare at you with their dark red beady eyes, then their forked tongues whip out and wipe their scaly lips. Their two front teeth are long and jagged, and sparkle pearly white in the afternoon sun. The snakes fly a little closer and you see what passes for their noses twitch.

Give the heroes two rounds to offer the snakes fruit. If no fruit is forthcoming, the snakes attack.

Winged Snakes (2): AC 5; MV 12, Fl 18(B); HD 4+4; hp 28 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Poison, 1d6; SD Immune to electricity; SZ L (8' long); ML 9; Int Semi (3); AL N.

Notes: The bite of a winged serpent inflicts 1d4 points of damage and injects the victim with a corrosive, acidic fluid. This poison has an onset time of 1 round and inflicts an additional 1d6 points of damage for the next two rounds—half damage if a save vs. poison is made..

The snakes have no treasure, but their skins would make nice belts and clothes. Heroes with a rending skill can retrieve these skins with a successful roll. If these skins are returned to the tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba, they are rewarded an item from the basic equipment list from the character generation list.

When the heroes are ready to continue, go on to Encounter Six. If the heroes did not learn about the iticala trees, bypass the next encounter. If they also didn't get hints about the underwater cave, go to Epilog B.

Experience Award

-  Give the winged serpents fruit: 200
- OR
-  Defeating the winged serpents: 50

ENCOUNTER SIX ITICALA TREES

Read the following as the heroes march along the river bank:

It is late afternoon and the sun is starting its rush toward the horizon. You will need to find a spot to camp soon, and some of you are thinking about dinner.

The heat is not so oppressive now, and since the air is a little cooler you see many curly-tailed lizards scampering about, and hairy apes leaping from branch to branch. There are several wide places along the river where you could set up camp. Though perhaps there are better spots farther down the river.

Determine what the heroes are doing. If they start searching for the iticala trees, have each searcher make an check versus $\frac{1}{2}$ their Intelligence. Heroes can make multiple checks, but each check represents one hour of time passing. Heroes with the herbalism or lore proficiencies can make proficiency checks rather than Intelligence checks. It is possible the heroes do not find the trees until morning. When the heroes are finally successful, read the following:

At last you have found the iticala trees. There is a small copse of them, about a dozen yards back from the river. They are tall, stretching high into the air, and their trunks are thick and prickly. Their branches start half way up, and stretch out even with the ground. Their red-vein leaves are large and numerous.

Squinting upward, you can see the sap on the trees, all around where the branches meet the trunks. The sap glistens.

Determine the heroes' actions. If they want any sap, they will have to climb. All climbing checks suffer a -4 or -20% penalty. This is because the bark is slippery and has jagged bits of sharp wood sticking out of it. A climbing check must be made for every 10 feet (total of 30 feet to the sap) a hero climbs. The penalty can be negated if the hero takes precautions such as make-shift gloves, climbing tools, clever use of ropes, etc.

Failure on the first attempt simply means a hero is having a hard time getting up the trunk.

Failure on the second attempt—When the hero has started climbing his second 10 feet—failure means the hero has slid down the tree 10 feet and is back at the base of the tree. Plus, the Hero suffers 2 points of damage, and the hero will have to start over.

Failure on the third attempt—When the hero has started climbing the third 10 feet—failure means the hero has slid down the tree 10 feet and is at the 10-foot mark, and the hero suffers 2 points of damage.

Once the heroes are up 30 feet where the branches are, they can collect the sap. However, there is one little problem—no matter which tree the hero climbs. A huge spider in the tree is hidden by the leaves and is feasting on some of the sap. Roll for surprise. The spider will attack the sap gatherer.

Leaf spider (1): AC 8; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 2+2; hp 10; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Poison, saps 3 points of Strength; SZ M (6'); ML 8; Int Animal (1); AL N.

Notes: Anyone bitten by a leaf spider must make a successful saving throw versus poison or lose 3 points of Strength. The Strength loss is cumulative if the victim is bitten multiple times.. Strength is recovered at a rate of 1 point for 1 hour of rest.

There is nothing especially valuable or unique about the spider, but its flesh is edible—and quite delicious! Any hero who eats the freshly killed spider meat heals 1d8 points of damage.

After the spider is dealt with, the hero can harvest the sap—provided he has something to put it in. Tell the hero the sap is oily, yet thick. It has a strong scent, and it makes his fingers slippery. The sap does not seem harmful, as the spider was eating it, and small flies flit down for a taste.

The heroes might experiment with the sap to determine its properties or why it might be valuable.

 It has no healing abilities.

 It is not poisonous.

 It does not clog pores or aid in suffocation.

 It does burn very easily, hotly, and quickly. This is similar to extra-good lantern oil. (Four hundred years ago a group of apes had tried to collect enough of the oil to spread on the insects in the cave and burn them.) It will not create any significant fire in the jungle, as everything is so moist. However, inside a dry cave it would make a nice blaze.

When the heroes are finished here they can camp somewhere for the night, and be ready to continue on their quest in the morning.

Experience Award

Harvesting iticala sap: 100

Defeating the leaf spider: 50

ENCOUNTER SEVEN UNDERWATER CAVE

Refer to the DM's map when the heroes enter the underwater cave complex. Determine the heroes' actions and marching order as they travel along the shore looking for the underwater cave. There are a few of methods of finding the hidden cave:

 The heroes could swim underwater until they find an opening.

 They could float things on the surface and watch the current (a small branch of the river flows toward the bank the cave is beneath).

 Someone might have the ability to speak with the fish and other animals to locate it.

DMs should use their judgment on how the heroes go about finding the cave. When they are successful, read the following:

The river branches here, part of it going under an overhang on the bank. Peering over the edge, you see the water continue on, forming an underground river.

The heroes must either be able to swim or hold onto someone who can swim. Saru heroes should be decidedly unhappy about the whole affair.

There is just enough air between the roof of the underwater cave and the surface of the river—about six inches—so the heroes do not have to hold their breaths.

After 200 yards, the river narrows and flows through a crack in the earth the heroes cannot fit through. However, to the right of the river is dry land—the underground cave. Read the following:

You have been traveling in near darkness for a few hundred yards. Ahead, it seems to be getting a little lighter, and as you peer through the considerable shadows, you see the river is narrowing—flowing into a crevice in a rock face. You haven't a prayer of fitting through that crack. However, luck seems to be with you. To your right there is a hollow space—above the water level. It is an underground cave. The back of the cave glows faintly from a large patch of luminous moss.

ENCOUNTER EIGHT TIGHT PASSAGE

The heroes are welcome to devise a way to slip through the foot-wide crack the river follows—which goes nowhere but away from the adventure. Or they can climb out and enter the cave.

The cave is only five feet high, though it is nearly 40 feet across. It is warm and dry, though the air is humid because of the river. If the heroes search this cave, they find no sign of any insects.

This is not the only chamber to the cave, however. The cave continues, but it does so behind the large patch of luminous moss. The moss has grown down the wall, by chance concealing a 2' high by 2' wide hole that opens into another chamber.

Simply scraping off some of the moss will not find the concealed passage. Here's some things that might work:

🦖 The heroes could check for secret doors or the equivalent thereof—success means someone accidentally brushed away some of the moss near the cave of the floor.

🦖 A hero could state he is examining the moss near the base of the cave floor.

🦖 Any hero listening carefully in the cave hears chirping noises behind the moss.

🦖 Other things could work based on the heroes' actions. However, if the heroes are unsuccessful in finding the chamber, and give up and leave the cave, go on to Epilog B.

The moss can be gathered and fashioned to make a light source. Such a light will last for one hour. If the heroes crawl through the passage, go to encounter eight.

Experience Award

Finding the concealed passage: 100

The passage is not difficult to navigate, at least not at first, but the heroes have to do it on their hands and knees. Consult the DM's map and determine the heroes' marching order. The passage is roughly 180 feet long. Halfway along the passage there has been a partial cave-in, practically cutting the opening in half. All heroes are able to fit through this opening, but it is a tight fit.

Let them think it is nip-and-tuck, a very uncomfortable fit that takes a little squirming to get through. If the heroes think about turning back, allow the lead character to hear buzzing beyond the tunnel to lure them on.

Just beyond the tight passage is a thin section of rock that is practically worn through. The first hero weighing more than 150 pounds who crawls over it, will crash through to an underground pool below.

If a Hero falls, ask for a Dexterity check. Success means he suffers no damage from the falling rocks or hitting the water. Failure means he suffers 1d6 points of damage.

The underground pool is 12 feet deep and is a 40 foot drop from the passageway above. Don't kill off heroes who can't swim. Allow them to dog-paddle to the chamber side where they can hang onto rocks until help comes.

Climbing the walls of the chamber below keeps any heroes out of the water, but it won't serve to help them get to the passage above. The heroes will need at least 50 feet worth of vines or ropes to lower to heroes below so they can be pulled out.

About 30 feet beyond the broken floor, the passage slopes downward dramatically. Read the following:

You grope your way deeper into the passageway, and you notice that the walls and floor are damp with moisture. The passageway starts to slope downward, rather steeply, and you find yourself scrambling to keep from sliding!

Within a day, perhaps within several hours, they will be adult insects, ready to leave this cave and strike off on their mission of destruction.

Roll for initiative and begin the action. Keep in mind the party might be split if some heroes slid into the insect lair and others are continuing to crawl.

Round One: Six of the luroki workers separate from the shadows and swarm the heroes. The queen has heard the commotion and has started moving toward the heroes. Because of all the shadows, they cannot see her.

Round Two: Another six luroki workers join in the fray. The queen, who moves slowly, continues to close.

Round Three: Add six more luroki workers. At this point the queen is close enough that the heroes can see her.

Round Four: Another six luroki workers come forward to bite. The queen closes and begins to battle. She selects female heroes first.

Round Five: The final six luroki workers throw their all into the fray. The queen continues to fight to the death.

Round Six: Describe to the heroes that the a large mass of luroki larvae have skittered off the wall and are moving their way. Make it clear that the heroes are in trouble.

Luroki larvae (thousands upon thousands): AC 8; MV 3, Sw 3; HD 1/4; hp 1 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SZ T (1" long); ML 9; Int Non-; AL N.

Note: Can attack one hero at a time.

Ask each hero for a Dexterity check at -2, starting with the one in front. Heroes who fail the check slide down the passage as if it were a sliding board. heroes who successfully make the check can continue to crawl. If a hero fails his check, any hero in front of him who made the check must make a second check—failure means he is barreled over and starts sliding, too!

Heroes who slide down the passage are deposited in the insects' lair, detailed in Encounter Nine. Sliding heroes get to bug central four rounds before crawling heroes. This gives these characters four rounds of actions before their companions join them.

ENCOUNTER NINE PLAGUE!

Heroes who slid down the passage find they're in the midst of an insect lair. These heroes have four rounds of actions before their companions are able to join them. Below the player description is a round-by-round account of what happens in the lair.

The passage opens into an immense cave dimly lit by patches of luminous moss. Most of the rock wall is black and shadowy, and after blinking a moment you realize the darkness is moving. It is insect larvae. The tiny creatures writhe and squirm, and you shudder when you see there are thousands upon thousands upon thousands of them. You seem to be in the midst of the plague Bengoukee spoke about. Watching the larvae, you see tiny wings on most of them.

Luroki workers (10): AC 6; MV 6, FL 15 (C); HD 1/4; hp 2 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Acid, for every point of damage inflicted, a point of acid damage occurs the following round; SZ T (4" long); ML 12; Int Non-; AL N.

Note: The workers are intent on protecting the larvae, and if the heroes make any move to harm the larvae, the workers fight to the death.

Luroki queen (1): AC 8; MV 6; HD 5; hp 35; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Acid, for every point of damage inflicted, a point of acid damage occurs the following round; SZ T (2' long); ML 20; Int Animal (1); AL N.

Note: The queen will fight to the death to prevent the larvae from being harmed.

Killing the Larvae:

🐉 If the heroes have fire and have the tree sap, they can dispose of the larvae without a lot of trouble. However, each hero attempting to dispose of the insects in this manner is subject to one larvae attack. It will take four rounds to spread the sap around and get the fire going well.

🐉 If the heroes have a source of fire, but no tree sap, they also can dispose of the larvae, but it will take longer. Each hero attempting to dispose of the insects in this manner is subject to 1d4 larvae attacks. It will take 10 rounds to spread the sap around and get the fire going well.

🐉 If the heroes simply try to step on or smash all the insects, this will work, too. However, some larvae will be falling off the walls and ceiling onto them, subjecting each hero to 2d4 larvae attacks each half hour. It takes hour to get rid of the insects in this manner.

The heroes can retreat into the passageway if they are becoming too damaged. The larvae do not follow them there. This gives them a chance to heal before returning to destroying the larvae.

However, if the heroes decide to leave and come back tomorrow, they will be in for a surprise. The insects will be ready to fly shortly after dawn, and the plague will have struck the jungle. If this happens go to Epilog B.

Searching the Insect Cave

If the heroes have dealt with the larvae and want to search the cave—or if they waited too late and came back after the insects left, they find nothing of any particular value—just a wall covered with insect goo or jelly.

The jelly is not have been destroyed in the fire. If a Hero with herbalism, lore, or healing examines the jelly, or if an injured Hero eats some of the jelly, it reveals that it has curative properties.

If the heroes have containers, they can gather the equivalent of 12 pints of the insect jelly. One pint of jelly heals 8 points of damage, with fractions of pints healing lesser damage. For example, eating a quarter-pint heals 2 points of damage, and eating a half-pint cures 4 points. There is no other treasure in the cave.

Experience Award

🐉 Stopping the plague: 300

Treasure

🐉 Up to 12 pints of curing jelly

EPILOG A

If the heroes were successful, they return victorious to Bengoukee. Read the following:

Tired from your ordeal with the insects, you follow the underground stream and emerge into the river. From there you pass the iticala trees and the stone statues you spoke to, and you cut through the dense undergrowth and the circle of

trees. Eventually you reach the tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba and are brought before the witch doctor Bengoukee. He squints, weaves a pattern in the air with his fingers, then smiles broadly.

"The spirits are happy with you," he says. "The plague was ended before it began, and the jungle is safe because of you. No finer heroes are there in the land."

Big Chief Bagoomba strides to the witch doctor's side. "As a tribute for your great risk and bravery, I give you each a huronda gourd filled with sunberry wine, and a net bag filled with spiced wala-wala dates. For the men of magic, Bengoukee has something else for your bravery. A feast has been prepared tonight in your honor, and the boys and girls have been practicing a special dance."

Bagoomba retreats to the feast table, and the drums start. The rhythm is lively and quick. The children rush to stand before the fire, and they begin a dance to pantomime your heroic actions. In the distance, the cry of a kinshe bird cuts through the air. You hear a few apes grunt, and the chitter of insects pleasantly mixes with the buzz of Nubari conversation. None of this would be going on, you think, if you hadn't prevented the plague.

A hush falls over the jungle. The birds glide to the trees. The monkeys stop their playful antics. All you hear is the rustle of the leaves, then a hum begins. Quiet at first, then raising in volume. Within a few heartbeats the noise becomes deafening. The sound heralds the arrival of a great dark cloud.

The cloud rises over the treetops, and then descends. And to your horror you see the cloud is a swarm of insects. They devour leaves, attack birds, send monkeys shrieking away in terror. You hide low to the ground and pray you will not fall victim. The buzzing grows louder still—until it is all you hear and all you think you will ever hear. It is louder than the greatest of lions ... and is far more terrible.

Then as soon as the insects came, they leave, moving to another patch of jungle. Spared, you climb to your shaky feet. Above you the trees are stripped bare, as if they'd been ravaged by a fire. You see the bodies of birds and lizards.

You hear the hum, growing softer as the plague spreads farther west, leaving a path of death and destruction behind it. Your home shall never be the same.

Treasure for each hero

 A huronda gourd of sunberry wine

 One net bag filled with 20 pounds of spiced wala-wala dates, or two spell fetishes.

EPILOG B

If the heroes were not able to stop the plague, disaster strikes the jungle. Whether they return to the village or simply wander the jungle, read the following and then end the tournament.

End of Plauge

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Encounter One

- 🐉 Waking at dawn the first time: 50
- 🐉 Embracing the earth woman: 100

Encounter Two

- 🐉 Talk to dead tree or giant frond: 100
- 🐉 Taking a piece of dead tree root: 100

Encounter Three

- 🐉 Defeating the lizard men: 100
- 🐉 Tracking the lizard men: 50
- 🐉 Finding the treasure: 25

Encounter Four

- 🐉 Learning about the iticala trees: 100
- 🐉 Learn about the underwater cave: 100

Encounter Five

- 🐉 Give the winged serpents fruit: 200
OR
- 🐉 Defeating the winged serpents: 50

Encounter Six

- 🐉 Harvesting iticala sap: 100
- 🐉 Defeating the leaf spider: 50

Encounter Seven

- 🐉 Finding the concealed passage: 100

Encounter Nine

- 🐉 Stopping the plague: 300

Maximum points possible: 1,475

TREASURE SUMMARY

Encounter Three

- 🐉 Monkey skull on leather thong
- 🐉 Dozen lizard teeth on belt
- 🐉 Gold head band
- 🐉 Jade heron icon
- 🐉 Jade earring

Encounter Nine

- 🐉 Up to 12 pints of curing jelly

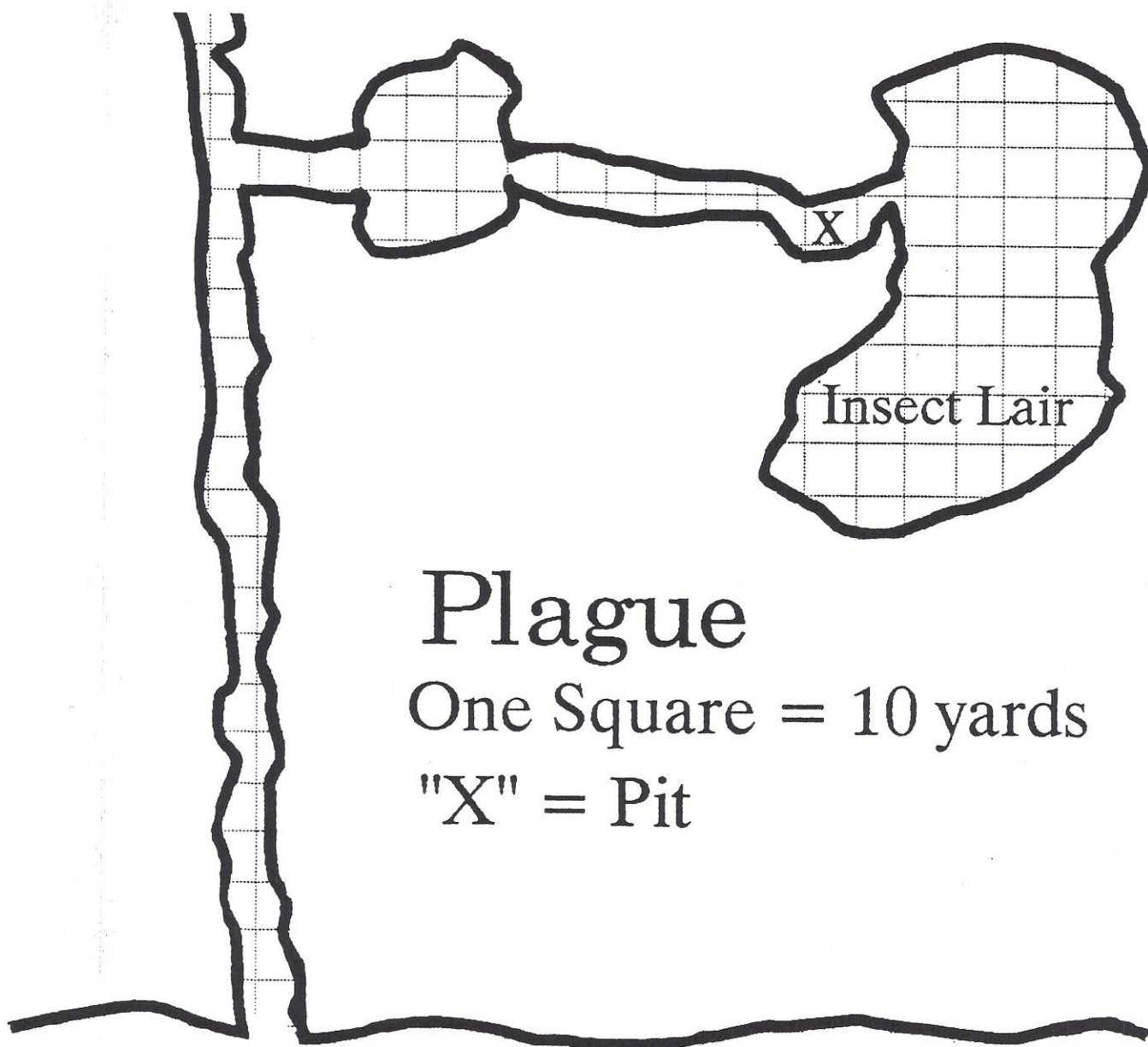
Epilog A (per hero)

- 🐉 A huronda gourd of sunberry wine and 20 pounds of spiced wala-wala dates.

OR

- 🐉 Two spell fetishes

Exit



Plague

One Square = 10 yards

"X" = Pit

River of Laughing Idols

HERO POINT CERTIFICATE

This document certifies that the character known as _____

acted with bravery, daring, and selflessness in the Living Jungle adventure *Plague*.

Player's Name: _____

DM's Name: _____ Initials: _____



This certificate may be exchanged for a +2 (+10%) bonus to a combat roll, saving throw, Ability check, system shock, resurrection survival, or other 1d20 or 1d100 roll during a Living Jungle tournament if exchanged before the roll of the die. Alternately, this certificate may be exchanged for a +1 (+5%) bonus to the die roll if exchanged after the roll is made. Two Hero Point certificates may be exchanged to re-roll any failed 1d20 or 1d100 die roll.

When this certificate has been exchanged, the DM should tear this certificate in half, or write "VOID" in ink across its face if the player would like to keep the certificate as a souvenir.

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ITICALA CURING JELLY (TWO PINTS)

A one-pint container of this curing jelly heals 8 points of damage. The jelly can be taken in smaller doses (one-quarter pints), curing 2 points of damage. Mark off the quarter pints as used. [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

This jelly was found deep in the heart of the plague.

CONVENTION: _____ DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____
DATE: _____

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This jelly was found deep in the heart of the plague.

CONVENTION: _____ DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____
DATE: _____

SUNBERRY WINE & DATES

One huronda gourd filled with delicious sunberry wine
A net bag filled with 20 pounds of spiced wala-wala dates.
(relative value 50 gp)

For your brave efforts to stop the plague, Big Chief Bagoomba of the Tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba has gifted you with this item.

CONVENTION:
DATE:

DM'S NAME & INITIALS:

ITICALA CURING JELLY (TWO PINTS)

A one-pint container of this curing jelly heals 8 points of damage. The jelly can be taken in smaller doses (one-quarter pints), curing 2 points of damage. Mark off the quarter pints as used. ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

This jelly was found deep in the heart of the plague.

CONVENTION:
DATE:

DM'S NAME & INITIALS:

SUNBERRY WINE & DATES

One huronda gourd filled with delicious sunberry wine
A net bag filled with 20 pounds of spiced wala-wala dates.
(relative value 50 gp)

For your brave efforts to stop the plague, Big Chief Bagoomba of the Tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba has gifted you with this item.

CONVENTION:
DATE:

DM'S NAME & INITIALS:

SUNBERRY WINE & DATES

One huronda gourd filled with delicious sunberry wine
A net bag filled with 20 pounds of spiced wala-wala dates.
(relative value 50 gp)

For your brave efforts to stop the plague, Big Chief Bagoomba of the Tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba has gifted you with this item.

CONVENTION:
DATE:

DM'S NAME & INITIALS:

JADE EARRING

This circular band of jade affixes to an earlobe or the nose.
(relative value 25 gp)

This item was plundered from a group of lizard men following their defeat at your hands.

CONVENTION: _____

DATE: _____

DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____

SUNBERRY WINE & DATES

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(relative value 50 gp)

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A net bag filled with 20 pounds of spiced wala-wala dates.
(relative value 50 gp)

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(relative value 50 gp)

For your brave efforts to stop the plague, Big Chief Bagoomba of the Tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba has gifted you with this item.

CONVENTION: _____

DATE: _____

DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____

CHARM PERSON SPELL FETISH

Skin of the rare aikyoo lizard. Meditating on this dried skin gives you the ability to learn this spell.

This fetish was given to you by the witch doctor Bengoukee for preventing a terrible plague from sweeping across the jungle.

CONVENTION: _____
DATE: _____

DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____

CORAL BRACELET

This fine bangle bracelet was carved of pale orange coral and shines pleasantly in the sun.
(relative value 50 gp)

This bracelet was given to you by the kindly half-dead jungle willow for your kindness while saving the jungle from a terrible disaster.

CONVENTION: _____
DATE: _____

DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____

HEADBAND OF GOLD

This gold headband is beautiful in its simplicity. It is roughly as thick as a human's thumb, and it gleams warmly. It is etched to resemble a vine, and pieces of jade are the leaves.
(relative value 100 gp)

This item was plundered from a group of lizard men following their defeat at your hands.

CONVENTION: _____
DATE: _____

DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____

JADE HERON ICON

This small statue carved of dark green jade is about as high as the measure of a saru's hand. The carving is exquisite and shows a heron resting on one long leg.
(relative value 100 gp)

This item was plundered from a group of lizard men following their defeat at your hands.

CONVENTION: _____
DATE: _____

DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____

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STINKING CLOUD SPELL FETISH

Rotten turtle egg shell. The moldy egg of a snapping turtle sealed within a small gourd with a small hole in the top. The wizard must sniff through the hole before meditating on this powerful spell.

This fetish was given to you by the witch doctor Bengoukee for preventing a terrible plague from sweeping across the jungle.

CONVENTION: _____ DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____
DATE: _____

MAGIC MISSILE SPELL FETISH

This fetish is a small arrow carved of jade. Meditating on the arrow allows you to memorize this powerful spell.

This fetish was given to you by the witch doctor Bengoukee for preventing a terrible plague from sweeping across the jungle.

CONVENTION: _____ DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____
DATE: _____

LIGHT SPELL FETISH

This piece of volcanic glass, when held up to the sunlight, allows you to memorize this spell.

This fetish was given to you by the witch doctor Bengoukee for preventing a terrible plague from sweeping across the jungle.

CONVENTION: _____ DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____
DATE: _____

SLEEP SPELL FETISH

This fetish is the dried essence of the nemuri plant kept in a small gourd. The wizard must meditate and inhale the powerful vapors of the plant to memorize this spell.

This fetish was given to you by the witch doctor Bengoukee for preventing a terrible plague from sweeping across the jungle.

CONVENTION: _____ DM'S NAME & INITIALS: _____
DATE: _____