

The Sound of Silence

A One-Round Living Jungle Adventure for Low/Mid Level Heroes

by Tom Prusa

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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 nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender 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 capsule 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.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Introduction

The Living Jungle is a tournament campaign exclusively for members of the RPGA Network. Be sure that you distribute scoring sheets at the beginning of the round, and make sure that each player at your table has a membership card (or at least remembers his or her membership number).

This is a low/mid-level Living Jungle adventure; only characters of sixth level or below may participate in it. If a player brings a higher-level character to your table, explain that he or she must use a lower-level hero (or start a new hero) to play in this event. If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see

your event coordinator for character creation instructions, if you don't have them).

During the course of the adventure, the heroes will earn experience points based on their accomplishments. Some of these points are for overcoming obstacles, finding information, defeating monsters, and recovering treasure. After each encounter an experience point value is listed. This is summarized at the end of the adventure as well. *All characters contributing to the success of an encounter receive the listed experience points.*

For example, if an encounter lists an experience point value of 100, then each hero participating earns 100 points. All experience points are awarded at the end of the tournament. Do not award experience points after each encounter.

In some places the characters can gain treasure. For common items, like normal weapons and equipment, the players must simply record the new items on their character sheets. But for magical or other special items, you must hand the appropriate Treasure Certificate, included with this tournament.

DM Background

This is a one round Living Jungle adventure for low/mid level heroes. In this adventure the heroes must aid a lacerial priest in her quest to locate an artifact in the far off Forbidden Mountains.

The PCs are summoned to the village of the lacerials, located along the River of Laughing Idols. There they meet the lacerial shaman, Starr. He claims he has had a vision, and he must travel to the Forbidden Mountains and recover the Sound of Silence, which will end the earthquakes that have been plaguing Malatra. His vision has said that he must travel with six strangers to this mountain, there to recover this elusive and unnamed sound.

The lacerials promise good rewards, and even take time to teach the heroes sign language before they leave. The vision said that they would leave on the next full moon, and that is not for a week.

Once en route, the heroes must travel through hundreds of miles of jungle, then across the Yaku plains - the plains of Ash - until they reach the Forbidden Mountains. Along the way they experience several earthquakes, as well as the occasional garuda.

They encounter another group of 'heroes', on a different mission.

Once they cross the plains, they must make it up the Silent Mountain, where they find a small protected crater, long ago volcanic, now verdant and green. They face an ambush by the other 'heroes', who have come on a quest to destroy the Sound of Silence. If they can either drive off the other party, or convince them to turn aside from their quest, Starr is able to learn things from the sound, as can any other priest in the party.

If successful, they do not end the earthquakes, but they do enable the shaman to learn to do so for his village, and the priests in the party get a special reward.

Players Introduction

The rainy season has ended, and once again the land is green and the sun is bright. The earthquakes still threaten Malatra, but somehow in the bright spring air you cannot but feel that this problem can be solved.

You are about your own affairs in the jungle when a messenger reaches you. Not a running nubari, a small bird. The bird chirps, in a language understood by you, the following message; "We must end the earthquakes if we are to resist the coming of tiger. I seek your help in this matter. Come with all haste to the village of the lacerials, east of the Rudran village along the River of Laughing Idols. Please hurry, if the visions do not lie, your fate and ours are intertwined, and together lies our path."

Of course any heroes who do not go will not have much of an adventure. Otherwise, move to encounter one.

Encounter One: A strange summons

Heroes who know each other can travel together, meeting the other heroes on the trail, or on the river. Work on this, get them together at least one night before they reach the lacerial village.

The heroes need not be immediate friends, the similarity of the method of their being summoned offers enough to talk about. When they are together,

they receive a visit. Determine who is on watch and read or paraphrase the following:

The sounds of the jungle night are all around you, and the camp is peaceful and quiet. You drowse a bit, and then stand up and stretch. You are on watch, and the jungle is no place to sleep unwary. Your watchfulness is rewarded a few minutes later by the realization that the sounds of the jungle come from only the south and the west, with the sounds of the river to the north. Something is out there, something that doesn't belong there.

Let the heroes react as they see fit, they have several rounds before the Rudrans approach the camp.

Anyone who investigates, say through the trees, can spot at least three nubari figures on the ground about 150 yards from the camp. After a few minutes they move towards the camp. If the hero moving through the jungle can make move silently and hide in shadows rolls (+20% for darkness), they also spot a shu and a monkey katanga in monkey form conferring with the nubari. Otherwise the shu and the monkey have spotted them, and remain out of sight, in case of an attack.

Rudran Warriors:

Nubari (3) - Ungar, Ter'se, Andorab, hm F3 (5): AC 4 (hide armor + Dex); MV 12; HD 3 (5); hp 24 (32); THAC0 17 (15); #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (spear + Str); Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12; ML 13 (steady);.

Shu (Ormic) hgm T4 (6): AC 6 (dex); MV 6; hp 15 (20); THAC0 18 (17); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); Str 13, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14; Relevant thief abilities: Move Silently 80%, Hide in Shadows 65%, Hear noises 35%, backstab for 2x damage (3x damage); ML 14 (steady).

Monkey Katanga (Cheep); km T3 (5): AC 7 (dex); MV 12; hp 14 (19); THAC0 19 (18); #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (coconut) or 1-3 (knife); Str 13, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14; Relevant thief abilities: Move Silently 60%, Hide in Shadows 68%, Hear noises 15%, backstab for 2x damage (3x damage); ML 14 (steady).

The numbers in parentheses are intended for use if the party possesses a lot of 5th or 6th level fighters, or is all 4th level and above. And it only become necessary if the party attacks, which really shouldn't happen.

If the party does not attack as the Rudrans come forward, they stop when they get within 20 yards of the camp and call out.

"Hello the camp. May we come in?"

It is up to the party how they respond.

The Rudrans are here to warn the party. They won't be friendly, in fact they are little short of hostile, given the probable diverse makeup of the party. If the party is made up of entirely nubari, tam'hi, and katanga in human form, their tone is scolding rather than threatening. They are not here for a fight, some of these heroes may have reputations. Assume that at least one of the Rudrans has heard of any hero who is fifth level and above. Of course if combat should develop, these heroes will be targeted first, especially wizards.

When the Rudrans have been allowed to come into camp, Ungar, the leader, has a small speech.

"We have been sent by Toq'masei, shaman of the Rudran village of Luarna. He has a warning. You are called to go on a quest, is it not so?"

Pause for party reactions. Whatever they reply, he continues, for he knows the truth.

"You will be told that this quest is to benefit all of Malatra. That is not so. The visions did not say that the Garuda people would lie, although who can tell with them? The words of the shaman were so. The silence they seek can help only their village, and how can one village be helped if not that the others suffer in its stead? I see the success of their quest, and in within the moon, much of our village is destroyed in an earthquake, while theirs sits safe." Ungar pauses and then adds: "You must not go to the village of the Garuda people. We are not here to fight you, but only to urge you strongly not to go."

A jungle lore roll or membership or familiarity with the Rudrans will reveal that the tribe is not the most enlightened when it comes to strangers. With the village of the lacerials only a hundred miles downstream, there are a lot of strangers living entirely too close for the Rudrans' satisfaction.

The shaman has heard talk of the vision that was had by Starr, the lacerial shaman. He sought a divinatory

vision of his own, and foresaw damage to the village of Luarna.

Let the heroes negotiate as they see fit. The Rudrans have nothing to offer but the words of the wise man, but they are powerful words. They are a bit edgy, this close to Garuda-people country. They repeat the story of the death of many Rudrans at the hands of the Black Flame lacerials (*Death from the Mists* adventure) and how the stories of the lacerials shame are not even real.

Again, jungle lore or local history, or having played the adventure - *Death from the Mists* reveals that the lacerials who attacked were under the influence of Blackflame, an evil lacerial wizard. He defeated, and was defeated by, Whiteheart, but the lacerials had to flee their home in the Valley of Spirits. In all other dealings with Malatrans the lacerials have been courteous and eager to learn. Their inability to speak by any other means than sign language hamper communication, of course.

Possible results to the encounter:

Party agrees to turn back and actually does turn back.

They receive another messenger bird the next day, pleading with them to come, for the life of a race. Keep it up until they do turn back. The Rudrans are watching them, and will be waiting for them when they leave the village.

Party agrees to turn back but goes on anyway. Rudrans watching, waiting when they leave.

Party insists on going on, and is rude and insulting. Play this by ear, but particularly insulting PCs could be challenged to a wrestling match or fight. The Rudrans do not want a battle to break out, but they won't back down from one.

Party politely insists on going on, possibly agreeing to meet with the Rudrans after they've been to the village. This is probably the best solution the Rudrans can hope for. They are almost friendly, and agree to wait for the heroes to return.

Fight breaks out. The Rudrans fight until two go down, then flee or surrender. Use the death's door rules for the Rudrans as well as the heroes. The heroes must decide if they want to kill someone who is acting in the interests of the village, as far as he knows.

A hero point may be awarded here if a fight is about to break out and a hero takes the first blow and still calls for peace. If done in a heroic manner, it works, and avoids a battle.

A hero point should not in any way be awarded for someone risking themselves in an unnecessary battle. Any type of fight here would not be heroic, so the only heroic action involved can be risking one's self to stop it.

Encounter Two: A village called Lilac

As you enter the village of the lacerials, you are surprised at the rather ordinary appearance of the village. For all the talk of the Rudrans, you expected something barbaric and terrible. Instead, you see a bladeback caring for her young, a finhead mending a fishing net, a hornhead deep in conversation with a flyer. Most bear tattoos on their arm, either a black flame or a white heart.

As they see you arrive, young lacerials come running up to you. They make no sound, well, no sound you can hear. A definite smell of cinnamon is in the air, it gets stronger as the children approach. They grasp your hands and lead you towards a hut at the center of the village.

There, awaiting you, stand a young looking hornhead, with a sturdy finhead and a bladeback bearing many fetishes at his sides. The hornhead's hands flash in the gestures of the language of those without speech, and they all look at you expectantly, to see if you understand.

The lacerials will wait to see if anyone understands sign language. If not, Trueblood (the hornhead), offers one of the PCs a small earring, while putting one on himself. This allows them to converse.

Anyone who has played "Death from the Mists" will be recognized by at least these three, and some others as well. They are made welcome, brought some of the dark Katimayan beer, and some food appropriate for their race. (meat and/or vegetables, as needed).

"Welcome to our home", signs Trueblood. "We are glad you have come so swiftly. Starr has had a vision, and in it he says that our fates are (again) bound with

yours. I will let him speak for himself, for this is his quest."

The bladeback steps forward and begins to sign (or takes the earring and speaks).

"I am humbled at your willingness to help strangers to the jungle. Together we must seek a mountain far away. For in my vision I have seen the end of our village, unless we can penetrate and learn what sound silence makes. The answer, so the vision said, is at the peak of the southernmost mountain in the range called the Forbidden Mountains. I have been told that these lands are taboo, and that none should enter. But if the spirits speak true, we must enter, or our village, and eventually the whole jungle, will fall to the coming of a great evil. I do not know the way to these mountains, so I must beg of you, will you guide me?"

The PCs should agree, although they may have questions. Some probable questions and answers provided:

Will we be protected from the taboo? Starr does not know how to do that, he only knows that he must go, and his vision says that he cannot go alone, these people that stand before him must go as well.

Where does the vision come from? He believes it comes from the very spirits of the jungles themselves.

How can we speak to you? The heroes are offered the chance to learn sign language, they need not set out for a week. Any hero with a proficiency slot open is allowed to learn sign language now.

What of rewards? Starr looks disappointed, but promises that the quest should be its own reward. If not, the village will do what it can to reward the heroes.

What of supplies? The village is poor, but what little they have is available. This consists of waterskins, one coil of vine rope (50'), and some trailbread (1 week for each hero). Their skill at survival in the jungle is certainly one of the reasons they were called here. They do have a week, they may use their skills to gather food, make rope or arrows or other weapons, whatever they can think of.

The heroes have a week to kill in the village before Starr will be ready to leave. They can spend it helping with daily duties (hunting, weaving, fishing), learning

sign language, or, for the mages, learning a spell that may help in their quest.

Trueblood will take time to teach any mages one of the following three spells: *fly*, *detect evil*, or *improved phantasmal forces*. (Certificates provided, circle the chosen spell). If there are less than three mages, the other certs will not be handed out. Any mage who makes his learn spells roll by more than 20% can learn two of the spells.

Note: no one has time to learn both sign language and a new spell, it must be one or the other.

Starr (bladeback shaman), bbm P5: AL LG; MV 12; AC 6 (hide); HD 5; hp 33; #AT 1; THAC0 18; dmg 1-3 (bite); SA spells; SD +2 save vs. sound based attacks, -2 save vs. gas attacks; ML 18 (heroic); Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 18;

Spells typically memorized: *cure light wounds* x2, *messenger*, *detect evil*, *sanctuary*, *aid* x2, *hold person*, *summon swarm*, *cure disease*, *cure animal bites* (heals 2d6+1 of bite or claw damage only)

Starr has taken an oath to take no life in the jungle. He is a strict vegetarian, although he could eat meat if necessary. He takes no active role in combat other than the spells he has at hand. He prefers to use spells like *aid*, *cure light wounds*, and *cure animal bites* rather than actively participate in battles. Only if the entire party is about to be defeated will he attack, and then he avoids killing if he possibly can.

Trueblood (hornhead mage), hhm W8: AL NG; MV 12; AC 8 (hide - dex); HD 8; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; dmg 2d6 (horns); Str 16, Dex 4, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Spells as needed.

Trueblood is concerned only with his people, he realizes that there are barely enough of them to survive as a race, and he wants every assurance that they will bring back Starr safely. He is otherwise a wise and caring leader.

Strongarm (finhead fighter), fhm F8: AL LG; MV 12; AC 4 (hide + dex); HD 8; hp 65; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2, dmg 1-8 +3 (long knife); Str 18 (30%), Dex 16, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Carries the longest knife they have seen to date. (acts as a long sword). Strongarm thinks he should be going on the quest. Only some tall talk about his duty to the

village has kept him here. He is a formidable fighter, and a stout heart. He is interested in whatever weapons the fighters in the party may use that he is not familiar with. In return, he shows them the use of his long knife, and of the signature weapon of the lacerials, the bladeback flail.

Any fighter type who has a weapon proficiency slot open may choose to learn to use the bladeback flail. If so, they will be given one to take with them (no cert provided). Remember that non-lacerials receive a -1 to hit with a lacerial weapon.

During the week the heroes meet most of the village. They cannot speak to many of them, for most do not know sign language either. But basic signs and good will should allow them to communicate, after a fashion. The heroes should find them friendly and eager to learn any skill the heroes want to show them. Try to make it a point to have at least one normal lacerial befriend each hero. A short list of lacerials is provided below, add to it if necessary.

Normal Lacerials:

Netweaver: old bladeback. Gruff, but friendly in a rude (and quiet) sort of way. Making nets is a new skill for the lacerials, he can use a few pointers from someone who has weaving or fishing proficiency.

Garantu: young finhead fighter. Trying to learn how to use a spear. Very respectful of an experienced fighter.

Newcomer: young hornhead. apprentice to Trueblood. Very curious about other races. Tries to meet a wizard of another race, the more exotic the better. He does know sign language.

Fruitpicker: young, rather tubby female bladeback. She is eager to learn more of the bounty the jungle provides. Anyone with herbalism proficiency finds her eager to learn. She slowly speaks a little sign language.

Questor: a very young finhead. She is determined to go on many a brave quest, as soon as she is ready. Like any young one, she is certain that will be in a matter of moons. In reality it will be at least a few years. Does speak sign language, although not very well. Wants to learn about all of party's new weapons.

Moongazer: a young hornhead female, she is determined to become a mage, although she has no talent for it. Tries to get a hero mage to teach her a

spell, but only succeeds in blackening her own fingers. Shows a lot of hero worship of any hero mage who will teach her.

Learning of the Lacerials

During the course of the week, the heroes will start to understand some of the smells associated with the lacerials, and what they mean.

- cinnamon - curiosity.
- baked bread - anger or fear.
- lilac - longing (for home)
- rose - friendliness, affection
- cherry - hunger, desire
- fresh apple pie - satisfaction
- sandalwood - protective (like a mother for a child).

Leaving the village

After roleplaying a while, and proficiencies and spells are learned, the party should ready to leave. With many wishes for luck and success, the party takes their leave.

Encounter Three: Rudrans revisited

One day out from the village, the party re-encounters the Rudrans. They are waiting on the trail about midday.

When the party approaches, Ungar again challenges them, asking them to turn back. If the party refuses, as they should, the Rudrans faces turn stony.

"So be it," says Ungar. "I will report to the chief, and the shaman. Know that from this day you are no longer welcome in the villages of the Rudrans. We realize you do what you must, but many may pay for this decision you have made today. I hope you can live with yourselves when our village is destroyed."

Without another word, the Rudrans turn and vanish into the forest, heading west towards home.

Any members of the Rudrans tribe, whether by birth or by honor, should be told to put a question mark behind this particular feature on their character sheet. Whether they lose this tribal membership will be determined at the end of the adventure.

Encounter Four: Earthshake

A few days after encountering the Rudrans for the second time, the heroes are caught by an earthquake. Use the following table to determine effects.

D6 for effects:

1. Small tremor. Dexterity checks required or each person who falls suffers 1 pt of bruising damage.
2. Small tremor. Dexterity check or suffer 1d4 points of bruising damage.
3. Medium tremor. Dexterity check or suffer 1d4 points of damage. One hero (at random) must make an additional check to get out of the way of a falling tree. Failure indicates an additional 2d4 points of damage.
4. Medium tremor. Dexterity check or suffer 1d4 points of damage. One hero is pinned by a tree for 2d4 points of damage, successful dexterity check reduces it by 1/2.
5. Medium tremor. Dexterity check or suffer 1d6 points of damage. Hero who makes the worst dexterity roll sprains an ankle - 1 pt of damage. Sprained ankle can be healed with a healing proficiency or spell. Otherwise hero is at 1/2 movement rate for three days.
6. Serious tremor. Dexterity check or suffer 1d6 points of damage. One hero must make an additional dexterity check or suffer a broken leg or arm. Slows the hero by 1/2 for 2 weeks. Three *cure light wounds* heal broken limb.

Within a few hours after the earthquake, the heroes come upon a large garuda that was seriously injured in the earthquake. The garuda, an adult bladeback, would not normally be hostile, but it is in intense pain, and acts like it. It has a broken leg that will surely doom it when the first carnivores find it.

Bladeback garuda (stegosaurus): AL N; AC 5; MV 6 (3); HD 18; hp 95 (34); THAC0 5 (9); Dmg 5-20 (- 4); SZ H 25'; ML 19 (fanatic). Listed stats in parentheses are current, due to its injuries.

The heroes have three options:

- Kill the bladeback. Putting it out of its misery is not a bad idea. It cannot flee or defend itself very well from predators, they are doing it no favors by leaving it alive. It also provides as much meat as they can carry.
- Avoid it. It does not pursue.
- Subdue and then heal it. They may use nets to try to subdue it. Stunning damage may be used, 1/4 of damage is real. Once unconscious, it can be healed

with a pair of *cure light wounds* or other magical healing.

When the bladeback has been dealt with, the party can move on. They have no other encounters for the next two weeks, but you should throw at least another two earthquakes at them.

At the end of the two weeks, they have reached the Yaku plains, where things change. Move to the next encounter.

Encounter Five - Yaku Plains

After weeks of travel, you have finally reached the Yaku plains, also known as the Ash plains. Indeed, nothing grows there but a few stunted weeds, and the ground does appear to be covered with ashes. Legends say it is all that is left of the destruction of the ancients. Other legends talk of the coughing sickness that the plains inflict. It will take some preparation to cross these plains safely. As the sun sets and you prepare to make camp you realize that tomorrow the tough part of the journey really begins.

Heroes who have played the module *Search for the Blue Heron* know that the coughing sickness does not kill, it merely makes one sick for a while, until they leave the plains behind. They also know that it takes about a week to cross, with no water to be found anywhere. The heroes do encounter a stream a few miles before reaching the Ash plains, they can stock up on water.

When you awaken in the morning, you find that something, or someone, has been in your camp. All but two of your waterskins are now torn and useless. From the shreds left, it seems as though something with claws tore them apart. You cannot make it across the plains without more water than you can currently carry.

During the night, the heroes camp was invaded by a hedgehog katanga, using *invisibility* and *silence 15'radius*. The heroes have no chance to detect him, although anyone who has the Curse of the Snake Mother has a very disturbing dream about dying of thirst on the plains.

The heroes can probably fashion new waterskins, but it will set them back a full day. A hunting roll is required to get a garuda whose skin can be used. They may also think of other substances that could fashion a

waterskin. A successful rendering roll will be necessary to get the skin off properly, as well as jungle survival or weaving or wisdom - 4 for each waterskin fashioned. Each hero will need at least 1/2 waterskin per day, plantmen and lizardmen need 1 1/2 waterskins per day or they begin to suffer constitution loss. Starr can and will memorize up to two *create water* spells, although that spell works at 1/2 effectiveness on the Yaku plains. Any other priests may also change their spell lists, the party may not need many waterskins, since they may be able to replenish them during the trip.

When they have dealt with the loss of the waterskins, they can set out across the plains. Have each hero make a constitution check each day, with a cumulative -2 on the roll. Failure means they develop the coughing sickness, and begin to get weaker.

The coughing sickness is really just an allergic reaction to the dust. It clears up within two days of leaving the plains. But play it up as though the hero was going to die.

On the third day of crossing the plains, those with tracking may make a roll. If successful, they notice tracks in the dust. The wind has almost covered them over. All that can be determined is that someone is almost a day ahead of them, and that there were at least four distinct beings in the group.

After crossing the Yaku plains, it takes the heroes another two days to get to the Silent Mountain. During this time, anyone with the coughing sickness recovers completely.

At the end of the second day, the heroes spot vultures circling a spot about a mile off their trail. If they investigate, they come upon a dying shu.

As you come upon the spot where the vultures circle, you spot a body lying in the underbrush. No, not a body, but a person, a shu from the size of him. He is still moving, but feebly.

When the heroes proceed to the shu, it is obvious that he won't live long. He has a broken leg, due to an earthquake, and he was poisoned by a manscorpion, and is clinging to life by a thread. He has a last message to give, of course.

"Help them. My friends, they have gone on.. the prophet of the Huroola said... must destroy the sound

of silence or tiger will return.. help them..." and he breathes his last.

Anyone with jungle lore or local history knows that the Huroola prophet was revealed to be a servant of Tiger, not a true prophet. Also, anyone who has played "Huroola Prophet" will know this. If no one has this knowledge, Starr does. Of course whether they believe him or not is up to them.

Encounter Six - The Silent Mountain

You have reached the Silent Mountain, or so it is called by Starr. A more forbidding climb than even Fire Mountain, it towers thousands of feet above you. And according to Starr, you must go up to the top to find the sound of silence. And according to the dying shu, you are not alone on this quest. If you needed further proof, it lies right before you. Fresh scratch marks in the stone show where someone has climbed here, recently. And up above, on a particularly steep stretch, a rope dangles down for almost a hundred feet, a clear marker of a trail that someone has already covered.

The fact that the other party is ahead of them will actually aid them here. They do not have to seek out the best method of a climb; the other party has done that. The ropes they have left along the way to aid their trip down will aid the heroes' trip up.

The mountain is steep and treacherous. It will require five climbing rolls by the lead member of the party to make it safely up the mountain. The rest of the party can follow by making five strength or dexterity checks, whichever they prefer.

Failure on any of the rolls indicates a slide down a rope to a ledge, causing 1d2 points of damage to their hands, and reducing dexterity by 1 (for climbing purposes only), until healed.

Flying up: Aarakocra or mages using a fly spell can speed the trip up considerably, although they cannot fly all the way. They can get to within 100' of the peak, and then must land or be blown into the side of the mountain by the strong and gusty winds. Give them one round to turn back, if they continue, they smash into the mountain, taking 2d6 points of damage. They must climb the last 100' like everyone else. (using a strength or dexterity roll).

Flyers do get a look at the other party, about 20 minutes ahead of them.

Once they crest the mountain, move to encounter seven.

Encounter Seven: The Hidden Glade

Finally, you crest the mountain. To your surprise you see not a landscape of jagged rock, but a hidden glade, green and lush. The temperature is quite cool up here, and the vegetation even looks different than what you expect in Malatra. Many of the trees are tall and stately, with oddly shaped leaves. Starr signs to you that these are ash trees, although they look green and strong, not burned. Fresh nubari tracks lead down into the glade.

It takes the heroes only a few minutes to follow the tracks to the center of the glade. Anyone making a tracking roll can determine that there are five people ahead of them, three nubari, a saru, and lizardman. If the tracking roll succeeds by 1/2, they also spot the tracks of a forest tam'hi.

After they start out, read or paraphrase the following:

As you move into the glade, it seems very peaceful. The trees have a pleasant smell, and the temperature is cool, almost cold. Starr seems in a bit of distress, lacerials aren't built for cold weather. But he urges you on, slowing you down only a little.

As you reach the center of the glade, you see a small pond with boulders as stepping stones to the center. In the center of the pond, resting in midair with no apparent support, is a large (18") jagged white crystal. Standing next to it is a saru with a huge obsidian club. He takes the club and smashes it into the crystal, producing a most unexpected result. The crystal cracks but does not shatter, while the club explodes into countless pieces. The crystal does produce a shattering tone, producing pain deep inside your head, it feels as though your ears have exploded. When the pain passes a moment later, you realize something else. No sound of the wind, the crystal, no sound of any kind can you hear. You are all completely deaf.

In front of the pond are the other five members of the saru's party, now turning to you and drawing weapons. Two are nubari, one is a lizardman, one an oscray, and the last is transforming into a tiger. Behind them the saru floats face down in the pond, blood staining the water by his ears. The lizardman points at you and back the way you came, indicating that you should leave.

This is obviously not an evil party, not with a tiger katanga in their midst. It is not even a party controlled by evil. Instead, it is a party sent on a mission by a false prophet. They are heroes, or trying to be. As such, they do not try to kill the party, merely to defeat them.

The heroes may pick up on the good alignment of their foes and attempt to negotiate. Do not allow this to be successful without some combat. The opposing party has been told that their mission is vital to the survival of Malatra, and they believe it. Also, any stopping to talk allows one of the nubari to move out into the pool and prepare to finish off the crystal. This should not happen without the party being allowed to intervene.

The Opposing 'heroes':

Rafala, hm F5(3): AL NG; AC 2 (hide + dex); MV 12; HD 5(3); hp 52 (32); THAC0 13 (15); #AT 3/2; dmg 1-6+3; Str 18(34%), Dex 18, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8. Specialized with a spear, which he actually uses as a club in this battle.

Sedgewick, hm M5(3): AL CG; AC 7 (dex); MV 12; HD 5 (3); hp 16(10); THAC0 19 (20); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); Str 11, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Spells memorized: *magic missile*, *detect magic**, *spider climb* (already used), *color spray*, *blindness*, *flaming sphere**, *hold person**

* spells to eliminate if low level option is used.

Hirssa, lmf F5(3): AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5(3); hp 42 (26); THAC0 15 (17); #AT 1 (club) or 2 (claws); Dmg 1-6+1 (club) or 1d4x2 (claws); Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 9.

If taken below half his hit points, Hirssa turns to lethal damage.

Any lizardman in the party recognizes Hirssa as a loner who left the tribe several years ago to seek his own way.

Ragged Ear, om (oscray male), F/P 3/4 (2/3): AL NG; AC 6 (brass chain mail); MV 9; HD 5 (4); hp 32

(21); THAC0 15 (16); #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+7 (spear); Str 19; Dex 8; Con 16; Int 8; Wis 15; Cha 4.

Spells memorized: *cure light wounds* x2, *create water*, *detect snares & pits**, *entangle*, *aid**, *hold person*, *silence* 15'R

* spells to eliminate if low level option is used.

Any oscray in the party recognize Ragged Ear, a young oscray who always wanted to be a priest but had little success at it. He left to try training with a nubari shaman of mixed reputation. He seemed like a nice enough lad, but not too bright.

Snarl, tkm F5 (3): AL LG; AC 6; MV 15; HD 5 (3); hp 57 (37); THAC0 16 (18); #AT 3 (claws & bite); Dmg 1-4+1/1-4+1/1-10; Str 18 (00), Dex 14, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Snarl is the one who believes he is on a holy mission, and anyone who opposes them must be evil.

Woya; saru female. She took lots of damage, and won't be a factor in this combat. She will drown in four rounds if not pulled to safety. One of the opposing party will try to do it, but not at the risk of failing in their mission.

* If the party is mostly low level, use the levels, THAC0s, and hit points listed in the parenthesis.

The majority of the opposing heroes fight to subdue, using spears as clubs, casting *hold person*, *color spray*, *silence*, and *entangle*.

Deafness. Because of the deafness effect, all spellcasters, on both sides, have a 20% chance to miscast any spell with verbal components. The deafness lasts for 30 minutes +1d20 minutes.

Starr. The sound carried into the ultrasonic, where Starr's hearing is sharp. He is unconscious for at least a turn, and has no part in this battle. Any other lacerial must save vs. death magic at +2 or be at -4 to hit, AC, and damage from the effects of the sound for a full turn.

Combat. The opposing heroes attack at first, but doing subdual damage (1/4 is real). The heroes notice this, of course. One important fact to note is that if a hero mage or priest is affected by a *silence* spell, he/she won't know it until spells start to fail. They can't hear that it's quiet.

Negotiation. If the heroes also attack to subdue, the other side is surprised. One of the heroes can attempt to sign for peace. Hirssa and Sedgewick both can sign, the PCs must attempt to communicate with them, or in their sight, for it to be effective.

Position is important here, even if Sedgewick is convinced, Snarl will keep attacking until Sedgewick gets in his sight and urges him to stop. Even then it will take a round or two for him to stop.

One thing that could cause an immediate stop for negotiations is the unconscious saru. If one of the heroes tries to save her, or indicates that the other party should, all but Snarl cease fighting for a round or two, this could allow negotiations to begin.

If two of the opposing heroes go down, the remainder of them move back into the pond, and attempt to destroy the crystal. One good blow causes the cracked part to fall off, leaving only a small (4") segment hanging in the air. The other party cannot completely destroy the crystal without more time, they must defeat the heroes to do it.

If they attempt to negotiate, the opposing heroes won't be easy to convince. They are here on a mission, and won't be easily turned back. Some things that might work:

- An impassioned (silent) speech. If one of the heroes truly comes up with a good story, telling the tale of the Huroola prophet and the reason for their mission, the opposing heroes agree to wait until they can hear each other to continue the debate.
- *Charm person* makes one of the opposing heroes more agreeable. Sedgewick and Ragged Ear may notice this, that will firm their resolve so that they will be almost impossible to convince. Of course if it's one of them, the opposing party is almost won over.
- A recounting of the Huroola prophet tale, particularly if someone can point to scars received opposing it. An oath that this tale is true by a tiger katanga or a shaman would help a bit here, particularly a nice dramatic one.
- Saving the saru in the pond. He is floating face down and will drown in four rounds. If the heroes

move to save him, they get within about 10' of the crystal. Since they should initially outnumber the opposing party, at least one hero can get there and pull him to safety before meeting an enemy. This at least convinces the other party that the heroes are not evil.

- Urging that the opposing party wait until Starr carries out his ceremony, whatever that is. If it fails, the other party could still destroy the crystal. This appeals to them, although they insist on having hostages in case it causes something evil to occur. Hostage(s) are tied up tightly, with weapons taken from them (and turned back over to the heroes).

The heroes may very well fail. Negotiation then becomes a break while their priests can heal party members. Of course Ragged Ear casts his two *cure light wounds* spells on his own wounded party members.

If negotiation lasts very long, Starr will wake up. He'll have a 50% chance of his spells failing, but he does have a *hold person* spell he'll use to try to stop anyone from breaking the crystal.

Smashing the Crystal. If the battle takes a bad turn for the opposing heroes, or the negotiations break down, at least two of the other party moves back to the crystal and attempts to smash it. One will move to block attempts to reach the crystal, while the other hauls off and smacks it. The pond is 3' deep at the center, the crystal is 3' above the surface of the pond.

Getting the other party to agree. Good roleplaying should allow the battle to wait to continue until hearing returns. Then, the heroes can all chip in with explanations of their mission and the vision received by Starr. The opposing heroes counter with their mission from the Huroola prophet. It is a stalemate unless the heroes can raise the stakes, somehow.

It is up to you as the DM to decide if they have put up a good enough argument to be believed. Or more appropriately, is it a good enough argument to convince the heroes to give up, assuming they were on a similar mission. If so, the opposing heroes withdraw to watch the ceremony to come. Starr does invite Ragged Ear to participate, but being new to the jungle, he declines.

Encounter 8: The Sound of Silence

When the other party is either defeated or convinced to back off, Starr has a ceremony to perform. It will work even if the other party manages to break off most of the crystal. If they did not, the ceremony causes this to happen.

Starr asks some of the party to assist him. He chooses party members based on the following criteria:

1. Shamans
2. Mages
3. Rangers
4. Lawful Good fighters
5. Other good fighters
6. Rogues

He takes everyone of the highest category, that is, if there are no priests but two mages in the party, both are asked to participate.

Those participating are asked to move out into the pool and stand by the crystal. He takes out a small rod made of ivory and strokes the crystal, producing a low mellow sound that lasts for quite a while. He instructs the participants to seek for the moment when the sound stops and the silence begins. It is in this moment that one can find the sound of silence. He warns them that if they are successful, they may enter the dreamlands, and experience a vision of their own.

Success in this is determined by a wisdom roll. One additional try may be made at -4 if the first one is failed. Those who succeed experience the following.

As the sound dies away you feel yourself drawn into the crystal, at least your consciousness is. You are floating in a cloudy place, where dreams may be real. You float past scenes of events in your past life, but you cannot interact with them. Finally you come to an old Nubari shaman, who smiles at you and beckons you forward. As you come forward, he reaches out and touches your forehead. A cold feeling creeps over you, and you feel yourself drifting off to sleep. In your mind you see yourself with a shard of the crystal, standing at the center of your village. You reach out and pull in a piece of the sky, rubbing it into the crystal. A section of the earth and a portion of the river follow, and then you bury the

crystal at the center of the village. The vision fades, and you know nothing more.

To the others in the party, it appears that those who succeed are in a trance. When they drift off to sleep, the trance state ends and they fall face down into the pool. They must be pulled out or they could drown. They awaken in about a turn, unable to remember details of the trip. They have, however, learned something.

Starr splits up the broken portion of the crystal into two sections. He gives one to the heroes, and keeps one for himself. He signs; "With this crystal, and an offering of sky, earth, and river, you can protect your village from the earthquakes for a full year. It will also help protect the village from the ravages of tiger, should that day come soon."

Any hero who went into the dreamland can perform the ceremony to protect a village. If the heroes who participated were also priests, they receive a certificate that grants them an additional power.

It is up to the heroes which village they protect. If they remember the Rudran shaman's vision, they should want to protect that village, but they may choose to protect their own, if they have one.

The trip back is uneventful, with the other party along to assist. If time permits, make the heroes come up with the items used for a piece of the sky (wood struck by lightning, a feather from an eagle or an aarakocra, etc.) a piece of the earth (dirt from the center of the village will work, or the hide or claws of a burrowing animal), and a portion of the river (water from the river, fish scales, or similar things). If not, just assume that they can protect one village.

Epilogue

With your mission accomplished, the saurial village is protected, as is one other. You have learned something of the mysteries of Malatra, and fulfilled a quest that should aid you in the times to come. And the success of your mission is soon apparent, as a nasty earthquake tumbles trees around the villages, but does almost no damage to the villages themselves. The villages are grateful, and offer rewards. Flushed with success, you know that at last you have struck a blow against the coming of tiger, there is hope for the coming times of danger.

Rewards:

- The Rudran village, if saved, offers full tribal membership to anyone who is not a lacerial.
- The Lacerial village offers the same, although they leave out anyone who is already a member of the Rudran village.
- Each member of the group receives an emerald necklace which grants sanctuary in any Rudran village. (If the party does not choose to save the Rudran village, they receive sanctuary in the village they do save.
- Any hero who was a member of the Rudran tribe and did not choose to save the Rudran village is expelled from the tribe. If they do save the village, they are greeted as heroes of the tribe.
- Each shaman who succeeded in reaching the dreamland receives a certificate entitling them to commune with the jungle spirits, in effect giving them automatic success on the jungle lore proficiency once per adventure.

Here ends *The Sound of Silence*

Experience Points

Encounter One:

Do not turn back and do not attack the Rudrans

Encounter Two:

Roleplay with the lacerials, make an effort to learn about a new tribe 200 pts.

Encounter Three:

Again, refuse to turn back, and stand up against the Rudrans 50 pts.

Encounter Four:

Put the bladeback out of its misery, one way or another 200 pts.
OR

Avoid the bladeback 100 pts.

Encounter Five:

Deal with water loss in creative ways 200 pts.

Encounter Six:

Climb the mountain with little or no damage 150 pts.

Encounter Seven:

Defeat or negotiate with the opposing party with no deaths on either side 1000 pts.
OR

Defeat the opposing party with one or more deaths 500 pts.
* (reduce either by 1/2 if the lower level option is used)

Encounter Eight:

Save the Rudran village from earthquakes 500 pts.

Discretionary Role-playing Experience 0-500 pts.
Award for consistent character portrayal.
You can award any amount in the range, and different amounts to different heroes.

Max Total: 2,900 pts.
(2,500 if low level).

Treasure

From encounter two:

Spell fetish for one or two spells: This small fetish is the brightly colored scale of a lacerial. It was gifted to you by Trueblood, wizard of the lacerials. With it you can meditate and memorize the spell(s) circles below.

DM initial # of spells one _____ two _____

DM Circle spells learned:

Detect Evil Improved Phantasmal Forces
Fly 100 pts.

From encounter eight:

Gift of the dreamlands (for priests only): While on a quest to discover how to save two villages from the ravages of the earthquakes, you entered the dreamlands. Now, once per adventure, you may 'commune' with the spirits of the jungle. This entitles you to one automatically successful roll of the jungle lore proficiency. It requires a full hour to do so, since you must enter a trance and truly cross the dreamlands for an answer. Available only to priests of Malatra.

From epilogue:

Emerald of the Rudrans: This fine stone was gifted to you by Toq'masei, shaman of the Rudran village. It entitles you to sanctuary and rest in any village of the Rudrans whenever asked for. It also carries the status of full membership in the tribe of the Rudrans.