

Tales From Malatra:

Stories From The Jungles Of Southern Kara-tur.

December 2020 Volume 1, Issue 5

Tags: Malatra Living Jungle Kara-tur Forgotten Realms

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Welcome to Tales From Malatra!

Welcome to the 5th issue of Tales from Malatra, and the 4th I have been solely responsible for.
Some announcements:

Item- Currently, I have no fewer than 5 people working on writing some form of Malatra adventure. Many of these may require a great deal of editing. One person is currently planning on doing a 3x version as well as a 5e version which is planned to go on DM's Guild. Others are either planning 5e or 3x only. Hopefully, I will get to host all of those on the FB group when completed... but I am always looking for people wanting to make more. Even if the 'Organized Play' part of the setting is long dead, cons always need ready-made adventures (with or without pregens) to keep players busy.

Item- In October, I finished a quick writing challenge: #Creatober2020. In it, I had to take a random adjective from a list and apply it to a set list of words. There was a definite 'halloween' theme to the lists, which doesn't always fit Malatra, so it was fun doing some workarounds. Check it out on the FB group, or I will post the entire list here in some future issue.

Item- This will be the last issue of the newsletter for a time. Fear not though, I will be back to making more content in about a year (currently planning for January 2022). I am still hoping for some submissions for those future issues (hint). In the meantime, I intend to publish some cleaned up versions of the original "Jungle Tales" newsletter. A few of the versions that I have are decayed due to format changes. I also hope to use this time to work more on the various adventures I have half-written (some from Steve Jay or from other people which I have inherited over the years, and quite a few of my own). Look for them on the FB group when they are released, in fact two previous 3x adventures are already

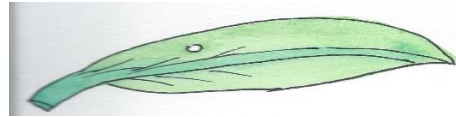
there: “Promises: Jus Post Bellum”, and “Clutch”. In addition, you can find the complete revision of Steve’s “Day of the Saru, pt 1”, and some 5e adventures set a great deal into the future of the setting.

Game Well!

-Ryan Conrad, aka ‘Apotheot’



Leaves On The River



Shinola’s Quest

By Aaron Brewer

(Editor’s Note: This is the Character History of one of my players who will not be able to play with us due to circumstances beyond anyone’s control. I thought it might make a good short. It has been mildly edited for grammar, spelling, and some content.)

I am Shinola, I was once living a happy life surrounded by family and friends. I had a loving husband named Kenta, and two beautiful baby girls named Dana and Fumia. All was good until one day while out hunting for food, Kenta bust through the door to our hut, he was all bloodied, as if he were attacked by a vicious animal. With panic in his voice and face, he told us "We have to leave here, it’s not safe now that his...." Just as he was about to finish, he stopped. Blood started to spew from his mouth. Unable to speak he fell to his knees.

I then saw the spear sticking from his back. I was instantly scared that he would die but what frightened me the more was the shadowy man who stood behind him holding the other end of the spear. The man put his foot on my husband’s back and violently kicked him from it. My husband landed on top of me. Now pinned down with my Kenta on top of me I was helpless in stopping the man who I can still not see. The man walked over to my daughters, who were cowering in the corner of the hut. I watch in horror as he grabbed both of them by their hair and started to drag them towards the door as they kicked and screamed. Dana managed to turn around and bite the man’s hand. This act must have annoyed him as he responded by tossing some dust in each of their faces, which caused them to fall to the floor in a deep slumber.

Once both of my girls were restrained, the man grabbed his spear and walked towards me. He bent down to my face, and with the little light that was shining in the hut I could see him clearly for the first time. In horror, I realized I recognized him. It was Largon, Kenta's older brother. “It’s been many seasons, has it not little Shinola? When was the last time we saw each other? Oh yes that’s right, when you and my dumb brother left me in that horrible cave after the collapse. Well as you can see, I am free

now thanks to my new friends, and my poor brother is near death. And these two little ones, oh they look so much like you! It's a shame my friends need volunteers for their future ritual!"

With those words Largon picked up the twins and began to walk out of the hut. I was powerless to stop him. But then Kenta started to move and cough, quickly I snapped back to reality. Kenta tried to stand but can only manage to roll over. I begin to nurse him and try to keep him alive, but my skills were too weak. With tears in my eyes, I ran outside to get the village healer to take care of Kenta. I was shocked to see that all the villages huts were all on fire smoke filling the air around me. I saw the village healer as he rushed to me. I told him my husband needed help urgently, he and I dragged my husband to a group of villagers just outside of our village. Once he was being looked after, I grabbed his hunting gear and prepared to give chase. I kissed my husband one last time before I took off following the wake of destruction that Largon has left in his wake. The only thing on my mind was getting my children back no matter what!

TALES OF MALATRA



Tabaxi

These leopard men have seemingly tried to avoid the free tribes as much as they can. We are not sure if they are unfriendly, malicious, or xenophobic. That said, the few times we have had contact with them have universally been hostile. The black leopard katanga claim to have had more amicable dealings with them, but this is unconfirmed. In fact, it is somewhat interesting that these two leopard cultures seem to share a less-than-open outlook toward the other races of Malatra. One thing of interest is the story from a member of the Zantira tribe, backed up by some comments from the plant men, indicate that the race is not originally native to the region. Where they might have come from or why they came is anyone's guess, but it is an intriguing possibility.

Tam'hi

The spirit born tam'hi are arguably the most connected to nature, yet simultaneously very apart from it. Both the Jungle and River Tam'hi are very in tune with their element of course, but they are less so with the fauna that inhabits their region. Upon first meeting the tam'hi, the oscray mistook them for their hated enemy the elves...something that likewise happened when some heroes swapped bodies with heroes in a distant land. Despite the similarities, the oscray have confirmed that the direct connection with nature is not something most elves they have encountered possess. The connection with a type of nature is somewhat confusing though. One would assume with already having Jungle and River versions of the tam'hi that we might see a type for Savannah or Mountain. But if these exist, they have yet to make themselves known to us. Sub-races of tam'hi are known to be able to interbreed, but it is rare, and the offspring is always the same type as the mother. No tam'hi has ever been known to willingly become dangerous or a threat to the civilized races, though they may act against them if they feel threatened or that something is threatening their guarded lands. Like katanga, the tam'hi can interbreed with nubari, but the offspring is always a tam'hi.

-Tam'hi, Jungle

The most plentiful, yet most reclusive of the tam'hi are the jungle sub-race. These are most at home in the dense jungles but can endure areas such as Fire Mountain or the Yaku Plains far better. They have made for excellent scouts, guides, hunters and warriors in the past. But their aversion to fire is even greater than the their River cousins, which causes them to stay apart from any group hoping to utilize a campfire for the night, and they will steadfastly refuse to allow a member of their group to carry a lit torch with them into an enclosed area.

-Tam'hi, River

The River Tam'hi are less reclusive, but harder to find due to far fewer rivers than open stretches of jungle. Most tend to hang out near the River of Laughing Idols, as their only major known settlement of Wounded Rock lies there. They have always been great witch doctors and shaman, but their need for water is much greater than their cousin's causing trips to the top of Fire Mountain or across the Yaku Plains to be more of a chore.

Tasloi

Long thought extinct, the flat-headed tasloi revealed their continued existence just before the war began. Many of the creatures fought on the side of Tiger and were eventually killed in the final battle. But it is unlikely that they were all wiped out. Although they are primitive compared to us, and obviously reclusive, their vicious and wicked nature will make them a threat so long as they continue to survive. Prior to encountering them in the war, the two areas where we have encountered them before are somewhere between the Rudra and the lacerial village of Lilac, and near the territory of the Dohi'ri. These would be the most likely areas that they might have tribes or villages. I would suggest we investigate them as thoroughly as we can immediately.

Thri-kreen

The mantis-men, or kreen as they call themselves, were not originally native to Malatra, and only arrived after following a group of heroes back from a journey to a distant dying world. Although that initial expedition found them to be hostile, they have since proven that they are actually a rather honorable and friendly race. One of their number, a hero named Tr'cla proved himself a great warrior during the war. This fact does not mitigate the other issues we have had with the race. Apparently, they do not have the need to sleep, and spend all their time hunting to the point of extinction any animal within their territory. They have currently taken up residence in the southern Rayana Savannah near the Simbuki, and the group cannot number more than thirty, though there are likely at least ten. The Simbuki have reported that game is scarce now in their region, and so the territory the kreen control has slowly grown. It is likely this could become a problem in future months. The kreen also seem to have an interest in seeing if the tam'hi taste like the elves of their world and have an innate hatred of lizardfolk and shu. Communication can also be an issue, as although they do understand malatran common, they are not great at speaking it and seem to have a completely nonverbal form of communication which we have yet to decipher. Whatever the council decides about our new kreen friends, they will likely need to bring some sort of translator, though it best not be one of the races I mentioned above unless we are wanting them to be eaten.

Treants

The trees themselves sometimes move and talk, at least that is what we have learned from our plantmen allies. Old Root, the shaman of the plantmen has said that there are several hundred of the tree folk he calls treants within Malatra. But they are even more reclusive than the plantmen. The plantmen insist, these are not like the comparatively dumb Dark Trees, but that they are more intelligent and wiser than even plantmen. It is possible that the trees that helped us during the Iuroki plague, or the singing trees once discovered near the waterfall into the Valley of Spirits could have been Treants, however since we have never spoken to them directly, we do not know. Only time will tell if they deign to make themselves known.

Troglodytes

Called the Demons of the Deep, (the name 'troglodyte' was provided by the Oskray) these awful smelling monsters were first encountered in the underground ruins of an Ancient base. Since then, we have had rumors of them from the Forbidden Mountains to the caves which lead into the Valley of the Spirits. A few of their kind fought with Tiger during the war, but their number has been observed to be far greater than that which appeared during the final battle. They are less intelligent than Nubari, but also more cunning. Vicious and bloodthirsty, they seem to follow tribal structures like ours. This could mean that one or more tribe could easily become much more powerful a threat than the others like the way the Huroola has in the past, and arguably the way the Saiyama, Koshiva, or Simbara are now. It is worrisome what might happen if a tribe becomes too big--will they attempt to attack us directly? One thing in our favor, is that the race seems to have a problem dealing with light. So, it is likely, if the troglodytes ever do attack, they will likely come at night.

Umber Hulks

From descriptions of beasts fought within the Earth Temple, the Oskray have named a creature Umber Hulks. They tell us that this race can burrow through earth faster than most of us can walk across it, their massive form and sharp claws are dangerous to even the most experienced heroes. Their mandibles can hold a full sized Shu in them when needed, and their eyes are such that those looking into them lose track of themselves for a brief time. Although these creatures are a threat, there is some good news in that they are not organized into any sort of stable group and spend as much time fighting each other as they would anyone else. They do not make long term plans, so although there may be hundreds living beneath our feet in depths of the earth, they are not likely to be a significant threat unless disturbed. One final note is that the Oskray have also suggested that there may be an aquatic breed of the race, though none of them have ever seen one.

Wemics

Lion at the legs, but Nubari above the torso except for the cat-like face and mane, the Wemics are a powerful and warlike race, but not necessarily wicked. They seem to have some sort of code of honor that only they understand. Their ways are very alien to us though, and for one to seek out their tribe they are more likely to be killed than be freed to leave. Although they did not take part in the war, they seemed to understand that the civilized tribes were too busy to deal with them and became strangely less provocative. They allow all they capture to keep all their possessions, as taking such things from prisoners is not what they consider honorable. They do not seek out any sort of trade, but if a captured

nubari possesses any Koshivan Date Wine, they will leverage the captive's freedom for it almost universally. One thing of note, the wemics apparently have a massive hatred toward lions. They will kill any lion katanga immediately if they change from nubari form and will likely whip or kill anyone who refers to them as 'lion people'. The reason for this is unknown.

Yaun-ti

There are at least three forms of Yaun-ti, or 'snake people' though we are still uncertain if these are separate races like the lacerials or simply separate sub-types like the saru. The first of these racial types, they call the Purebloods. These seem to be the lowest caste in the yuan-ti's political structure.... likely as they barely resemble snakes at all and look much more like nubari with a few snake-like traits. If one didn't notice the distinctive shadow a snake katanga always casts, it is conceivable this group could easily be mistaken for members of that race. It is therefore thought that they are sometimes used as spies or infiltrators. This may also have contributed to the negative stereotype snake katanga have. The second known type is called the Half-Bloods. These also appear mostly like nubari but tend to have at least one major trait of a snake. This could be in the form of scaly skin, lower bodies like snakes, or even snakes instead of arms. These seem to be the warrior or shock troops of the race. Lastly, there is the Warbloods, (sometimes called Abominations by our Oscrays friends), these all look similar: almost completely snakelike, with only a few nubari features, such as arms or head. These appear to be the leaders of the race, as it appears they value 'snakeness' as a desired quality. Oddly, the oscray inform me that other Yuan-ti they have dealt with in other places have their hierarchies reversed, with the Abominations at the bottom of the hierarchy and the Purebloods as the rulers. It just shows you how backward the uncivilized worlds beyond Malatra can be. Unsurprisingly, The Snake Mother had a snake-like body as well as a head and powerful reptilian claw but otherwise a torso similar to nubari. Her direct children were called the Firstblood, and these could be of any of the three types described. They inevitably become the leaders of groups and tribes and greatest heroes. Our ally from the war Runs With Animals is known to have had the Firstblood title. All firstblood yaun-ti are known to come originally from eggs laid by a being they called 'the Snake Mother', but it is unclear where the Snake Mother comes from. Some have suggested that the colony of snakemen works in a similar way to a hive of bees, where one snake mother is hatched causing the colony to split off or undergo a civil war. But for as long as any can tell, this has never happened before. Since the firstblood yaun-ti also have defined gender, it is possible that one of these will get elevated to be the new Snake Mother, but no one knows, as our yaun-ti allies all retreated into the Swamp of the Snake Men, after losing the Snake Mother in the Final Battle. More recent rumors are that a new powerful ruler has taken over the snake men, and it is very likely that they will soon decide to enforce the terms of the treaty we made with them ceding control of most of Malatra north of the Kuamu and west of Fire Mountain...in itself an odd place the Snake Mother asked for, but also containing several smaller tribes like the Manbuja, the Tendri, and a few larger ones such as the Huroola, Jengi and parts of the Lizardfolk controlled Dokuba Swamp. As it is, I am sure the repercussions from the yaun-ti's involvement in the war are far from over. One final note about the origins of the snakemen. The discovery of the Temple of Snakes prior to the war suggests that nubari used to venerate the race to the point of trying to transform themselves into snakemen. If this actually occurred is unknown, but it is possible that the yaun-ti we know may once have common ancestors with the nubari of today. Hrm, this makes me even more curious why the Snake Mother wanted such a particular stretch of Malatra. I would suggest we explore that area immediately!

Mirmirani closed the book and remained silent for a long time. Unable to contain his interest for long, Flood fidgeted nearby.

"Well?" Flood finally asked.

"Insufficient." the chieftain replied.

Flood looked crestfallen; he had put a great deal of time into his work. "What? What is wrong with it." he asked sheepishly.

"Oh the work is impressive for what it is, but is also insufficient. At several points you engage in speculation, remark on rumors, give reports you claim are unconfirmed, or allow your personal bias to show without the benefit of further investigation. This makes the work feel unfinished." She replied

"What more could I do?" Flood finally asked.

"I asked you to do an assessment of all the races of the jungle and what potential threat they might have toward the known tribes. What you have here is the bare-bones of that assignment. What I don't see are fighting numbers, strategic locations, lists of allies, magical or technological capabilities, cultural taboos we need to avoid when encountering them, and so on. Plus, there are no previously unknown races listed here, but there is ample evidence that some of them exist."

"Well, I could hardly be expected to..." Flood began

"There are also no hard numbers." Mirmirani continued. "Many times, you make a comment that indicates you are surprised at just how many tribes were able to survive the war with Tiger. You don't investigate that at all. How many and how fast would we be able to mobilize if we needed to."

Flood stared at her for a second. "Are you...expecting another war?"

Mirmirani hid a half smile, "Perhaps only just being overly cautious. The fact remains; your work is full of many holes and invites many questions. My intent was that this be a guidebook for future encounters with potentially hostile races. For that this is woefully insufficient."

"I see your point," Flood sighed. "I take it I have a bit of travel ahead of me?" Flood was more than a little disappointed; recently he had grown quite close to a river tam'hi named Oola, whom he greatly desired to spend some time with.

"For a while." Mirmirani said.

"You know that as a member of the Council of Elders, I could just overrule you and send someone else." Flood said smirking.

"Who else would you find capable and trust for this mission?" Mirmirani replied.

"I see your point." said Flood as he prepared to exit. "I best get packed then."

"One last thing," the chieftain called from over her shoulder as she turned away from him. "Take Ffft with you."

Flood stopped in his tracks. "Why?! Am I being punished?" he said staring back at her. The anointed "Great Sage of Malatra" and fellow council member was more than a little hard to deal with.

"Not at all, I just think his skill set might compliment your own." she said.

"He is going to antagonize everyone we meet!" Flood complained

"That is where you come in; you can help restrain him a bit. Plus, some antagonizing might help your research with some of the more obscure races."

"It would be better if we brought Grey Shadow to muzzle him." Flood muttered.

"You might consider bringing him too, for added protection from those 'less-friendly' races. Regardless, while you can assess the strategic and technological issues of a people, Ffft can likely do the same for their cultural taboos and magical capabilities. Plus, we will be able to test just how frustrated some races can get." she said this last with a smile.

"You do remember what happened the last time Ffft and I worked together on a project, right?" Flood asked

"I do, but I believe because of that incident that you might be the only one who can keep his, shall we say enthusiasm, in check." She countered.

"You have obviously given this some thought." He replied.

"A necessity of leadership, I assure you. Go now, please, and hurry back. You have much still to do." Mirmirani said ominously.

Flood nodded noncommittally as he backed out of the hut. It was going to be a long dry season. Mirmirani sat in thought for a few moments longer. The threat assessment, helping educate the tribes on the black art of reading and writing, the history of the war, the census of jungle, the reworking of the jungle calendar and dating system--she knew she had more than enough work to keep Flood busy for some time. Inwardly, she smiled. That was a good thing, Mirmirani thought. A resource like Flood's mind should not be wasted and working for the betterment of the entire jungle was a far safer alternative than letting him do whatever he felt like.

JUNGLE MOODS



Trent Brewer has graciously agreed to do an even better map than the one previously provided! It has been formatted to fit on a single page.

LEGEND CREATED BY FLOOD IN THE YEAR OF THE CLUTCH

1 - Hungry Spirit of Fire Mountain

2 - Butu Tribe of Courage

3 - Cantambi Tribe (Lost Tribe of Fire Min)

4 - Sunken Tower of the Order

5 - Temple of Snakes

6 - Dome of the Snake Mother

7 - Wounded Rock

8 - Lilac Village (Lacertals)

9 - Kimbo Tribe

10 - Temple of Laughing Idols

11 - Ruins of Ancients

12 - Broken Domes

13 - Kalira Village (Destroyed and Abandoned)

14 - The Mountain That Cannot Be Seen

15 - Mesorae Colony (Old Roof's Village)

16 - Mokka Village

17 - Hafoka

18 - Temple of Saru

19 - Z'itit'

A - Black Leopard Katanga Area

B - Butu Tribe

C - Arakocra

D - Sauhaugin

E - Lizardmen

F - Hyena Lands

G - Tortor Lands

H - Great White Saru Area

I - Long Tooth Saru Area

- 20 - Sotokoun
- 21 - Kolaki Village
- 22 - Ancient City of Duren
- 23 - Green-Green-All-Flowers (Plantman Village)
- 24 - Bright Orchid
- 25 - Coridos Village
- 26 - Manbuja
- 27 - Final Tamara Battle
- 28 - Ancient City (Monkey City)
- 29 - Morta Village (Abandoned)
- 30 - Dreamer Tribe
- 31 - Vrgana Tribe
- 32 - Spirit of Silence
- 33 - Yilgoma
- 34 - The Black Tree
- 35 - Elephants Graveyard
- 36 - Kangera Village
- 37 - Hidden Village of Boo
- 38 - Lokotatani Tribe (Abandoned)

Tribe moved north of river during the war



WARRIOR, TAKE INSTRUCTION

Suggested Additional Feats from Official Sources for Homeplay

By Jonathan Mathisen

(Editor's Note: these are from 3.5 sources, so some minor tweaks with rules might be needed for those using the final printing of The Jungle Book, which was still in 3.0. Feats are arranged by Sourcebook, for ease of reference.)

Masters of the Wild

Animal Defiance

Pre - Ability to cast Detect Animals or Plants

Can turn (but not destroy) animals as a cleric can turn undead. Can be used 3+Cha modifier times per day

Animal Control

Pre- Animal Defiance, Ability to cast speak with animals and animal friendship

You can command or rebuke animals as a cleric rebukes undead. Can be used 3+Cha modifier times per day. These creatures count toward your animal friendship HD limit.

Brachiation

Pre - Climb (6), Jump (6), Str 13+

You can move through trees at your normal land speed. You must have at least two hands free and be wearing Medium or lighter armor

Plant Defiance

Pre - Ability to cast Detect Animals or Plants

Can turn (but not destroy) Plants as a cleric can turn undead. Can be used 3+Cha modifier times per day

Plant Control

Pre- Plant Defiance, Ability to cast speak with plants

You can command or rebuke animals as a cleric rebukes undead. Can be used 3+Cha modifier times per day.

Savage Species

Grass Trekker

Background - Plains

+2 to Jump, Fort saves on forced marches after 12 hours

Peak Hopper

Background - Mountains

+2 to Balance and Climb

Swamp Stalker

Background - Swamps

+2 to Swim and Str to break nets, webs, entangle etc. This does not apply to grapple

Treefriend

Background - Forest

+2 to climb and survival (for direction only)

Races of the Wild**Aerial Superiority**

While flying gain +1 dodge bonus to AC against opponents that are not fly or have lower maneuverability

Agile Athlete

Pre Climb 1, Jump 1

Can use Dex instead of Str for Climb and Jump

Defensive Archery

Pre - Point Blank Shot

+4 ac against attacks of opportunity when shooting

Magic of the Land

Pre - 1st lvl spells, Concentration (5), Knowledge Nature (5), Spellcraft (5)

When you cast a spell you can attempt a free Knowledge Nature check (DC 15+lvl) when casting a spell.

If successful, the target is healed 2 hit points per spell level. This spell cannot have an alignment.

Undead are harmed by this healing.

