

THE SEARCH FOR BLUE HERON

**A ONE-ROUND LIVING JUNGLE ADVENTURE
FOR MID-LEVEL HEROES**

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. 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, 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 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.

THE LIVING JUNGLE CAMPAIGN

Welcome to the Living Jungle! If this is the first time you've judged a Living Jungle adventure, review the use of optional rules (especially the "At Death's Door" rule) before beginning play. The Judge Guidelines for Living Jungle are attached to this tournament.

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 current Polyhedron label.

This is a mid-level Living Jungle adventure; only characters of fourth through 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 a player brings a lower-level hero (third or below), explain that the adventure may be quite dangerous for them. If they agree, they may play.

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. Experience points are summarized at the end of the adventure. *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.

DMs please note that the maximum amount of Experience Points available for this tournament is 3,300. This award is attainable only if the heroes do everything right and make it through the entire scenario.

In some places the characters can gain treasure. For items found on the list of available starting items in the Character Creation instructions, the players must simply record the new items on their character sheets. For magical or other special items, you must hand out the appropriate Treasure Certificate, included with this tournament.

HERO POINTS

Hero Points are a game device for rewarding good-aligned characters for particularly selfless or heroic actions. They affect the outcome of die rolls, but promote role-playing rather than just number crunching.

All good-aligned PCs can earn Hero Points, but only human characters may have more than one Hero Point "saved up" at a time.

Earning Hero Points

PCs earn Hero Points by acting bravely, selflessly, daringly, and dramatically. Normally, a tournament author will point out several instances in which the PCs can earn Hero Points during the adventure. But sometimes, PCs may act heroically in

unanticipated circumstances. In these cases, the judge determines whether a PC has earned a Hero Point; since defining these qualities is difficult, here are some general guidelines about what do not and what do constitute heroic actions:

- Heroic actions are not hesitant or calculated. A warrior whose companions must persuade him to fight a local champion to save an NPC from death is not heroic. A wizard who pauses to consider whether his spells will be more effective than weapons against the champion before agreeing to fight him is clever and perhaps even brave, but he is not heroic. Heroism is impulsive, not scheming.
- Heroic actions are not performed for personal gain. If two PCs "elbow each other out of the way" to be the one to earn a Hero Point, then neither receive one: "I will fight the champion." "No, the honor will be mine!" Further, when a PC performs an act which has an obvious reward (fighting the champion to gain his magical spear) no Hero Point is awarded. If the PC expects a reward for his action, then it is not heroic. Heroism is selfless, not selfish.
- Heroic actions are not safe and easy. A PC must face and realize she faces a serious threat for an action to be heroic. Thus, a warrior who leaps into a pit of vipers to save a fallen comrade is acting heroically—unless she thinks she is immune to the poison or that the vipers are no threat. A rogue who rushes across a vine bridge to save a young boy from an imminent landslide is heroic only if he has a real chance to fall or be caught in the landslide—and knows it. Heroic actions are dangerous and difficult.
- Heroic actions are not mechanical and bland. If a player simply declares, "Oh, I guess Kalida will face the champion," then the judge shouldn't award a Hero Point. On the other hand, a player who accepts a challenge with real panache is acting heroically: "I, Kalida, son of Harusa the Wise Woman, accept your boastful

challenge in defense of all the Nubari tribes!" Heroism is grand and dramatic.

When a judge deems a PC's action worthy of a Hero Point, he or she fills out one of the six Hero Point certificates provided with each tournament and hands it to the player. The PC can use the Hero Point immediately.

Except in special circumstances (noted in tournaments), a PC can earn a only one Hero Point per adventure, which is why only six Hero Point certificates are provided for each tournament. Once they are all awarded, no more are available during the session.

Human PCs can never have more Hero Points than levels of experience. For example, any heroic actions performed by a 3rd level character who already has three Hero Points are still heroic, but they do not earn Hero Points. Non-human PCs may never have more than one Hero Point at a time; thus, a Saru PC who has earned one Hero Point must spend that Hero Point before being eligible to acquire another. (Note: Some special items and situations may allow a PC to exceed these limits.)

Spending Hero Points

Hero Points affect rolls which determine the results of a PC's actions, including "passive" actions like resisting a spell effect. Hero Points do not affect an opponent's rolls. So a PC can spend a Hero Point to raise his own chance to hit an opponent, but the PC can't spend a point to lower the opponent's saving throw or Ability check. A player may use Hero Points in one of three ways: to modify a die before it is thrown, to modify a die after it is thrown, or to re-roll a failed die roll.

- Before a die is thrown, a PC may "spend" a Hero Point to gain a +2/d20 (or +10%/d100) bonus for combat rolls, saving throws, Ability checks, system shock, resurrection survival, or virtually any other d20 or d100 roll during the game. A Nubari PC may spend up to two Hero Points at a time in this manner,

gaining a maximum bonus of +4/d20 (+20%/d100) on a roll before the die is thrown.

- After a die is thrown, a PC may spend a Hero Point to gain a +1/d20 (or +5%/d100) bonus on those same sorts of rolls. Again, a PC may spend up to two Hero Points in this manner, gaining a maximum bonus of +2/d20 (+10%/d100) on a roll after the die is thrown.

- A PC may spend two Hero Points to re-roll any failed d20 or d100 die roll.

Whenever a PC spends a Hero Point, the judge must collect the player's Hero Point certificate and tear it in half.

PCs may use Hero Points to benefit the rolls of other good-aligned characters. Using a Hero Point in this manner is generous, but it is not in itself a heroic action (so the PC doesn't earn another Hero Point for using his own Hero Points to benefit another character).

Hero Points and Judge Rolls

Occasionally, judges may—and should—roll dice secretly to determine the result of an action. For instance, an NPC wizard casts a charm person spell upon a PC, but the DM makes the saving throw secretly so that the player's aren't sure of the spell's effects. Any time the judge makes a secret roll based on a PC's action, the PC may elect to spend a Hero Point to affect that roll, but the judge still rolls the dice secretly.

DM INTRODUCTION

This is a one round mid-level adventure for the Living Jungle. In this adventure, the heroes will meet several new races, which will be allowed as player character races. They must travel to the home of the aarakocra (bird men) and recover an artifact of the ancients for Bengoukee, the witch doctor of the tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION:

The annual meeting of the Council of Tribes in nearing a close. Many brave Nubari have come from across Malatra to trade, exchange stories, hunt together, and participate in contests of skill. As the last day of the council comes to a close, and the fires once again rise in celebration of the year, a boy of the tribe of Big Chief Bagoomba comes up to you "Please, brave heroes, the great Bengoukee would like to speak with you before you leave."

If the characters do not go to Bengoukee's hut now, the child begins to look nervous and eventually says that Bengoukee seemed rather urgent about his desire to speak with the characters.

How soon they go will dictate how gruff Bengoukee is with them; the longer they dally, the more upset Bengoukee gets.

When they go, continue:

The drums beat in the night, the flames swirl hauntingly as you wait. Not that you do not respect Bengoukee, he is the most powerful magic-crafter in the jungle. Refusing Bengoukee is not conducive to one's health. Finally he makes his usual dramatic appearance, one which still mystifies and amazes some of you, to see him appear out of the swirling smoke.

"I have need of great heroes, and you have served me well before. Will you do so again?" he asks.

Pause for the party to agree.

"Know that far to the west, through the jungles inhabited by the Huroola tribe, across the forbidden Ash plains, lie the Forbidden mountains. Not formidable mountains by the standards of our Fire Mountain, but mountains none the less. These lands have long been taboo, but on you, I will now do what I can to lift the taboo". As he says this he sprinkles purple powder over you all. It seems to swirl and draw itself onto your skin, before disappearing. For a moment you see the others; their skin glows and then returns to normal.

"I need you to seek an artifact of the ancients, said to rest in the wings of the bird people of the mountain. The artifact is fashioned in the likeness of a Blue Heron, an ancient symbol of power. I have spoken to the spirits of the jungle, they say that the artifact still exists. With it I may work a great magic. More than that you need not know. Supplies have been

prepared, and questions will now be answered. Rewards will be given for success."

Bengoukee answers what questions he can. The heroes are to travel south across the Ash Plains to the Mountain. There they are to locate the bird people and get the artifact. Bengoukee stresses that the Blue Heron must be recovered without harming the bird people. They have long held the artifact, and have as much claim on it as he does. In fact, he wants only the loan of the Blue Heron, which he will use and then return.

The heroes are to be back before six months have passed. They are traveling a long way into unknown territory, and Bengoukee knows only that it will take them much time.

Supplies awaiting: A month's rations and two waterskins for each hero, two coils of 50' of vine rope, and a full quiver of stone-tipped arrows (20) for anyone who can use them.

Further Questions:

Who are the bird people: Many years ago his grandfather told him of a people who could fly. At the time Bengoukee dismissed it as the ramblings of an old man. Now, however, his commune with the spirits of the jungle has confirmed that such people exist.

What is the great magic you would cast? None of their business. To mage or priest heroes, he says only that he seeks to awaken the crow, to the wonder of all Nubari. The heroes get no more out of him.

ENCOUNTER ONE: RESCUE THE RESCUER.

With little to guide you, you set out traveling west. The trip is uneventful for the first few weeks. You pass through the lands of the Huroola and enter unexplored jungle. Finally the country begins to change. It is swampy here, your progress is slow. As you attempt to fend

off the bugs who think that fresh hero is a wonderful dish, a crashing in the underbrush alerts you. No, it is not a huge monster. Instead, a small shu comes staggering through the brush towards you. "Help, we have to save him," the shu begs. The shu is covered with muck, it is impossible to tell what tribe she comes from. "He saved me from the quicksand, but he fell in himself. Can you help?"

Aluka, a shu warrior (F1), was trapped in a patch of quicksand. She was rescued by a lizardman, who subsequently fell in himself. The heroes have only a few rounds to rescue the lizardman.

Aluka begs the heroes to help. If they find out it is a lizardman, they may be reluctant. Aluka will not hear of it. If the heroes won't help, she asks for the loan of some vine rope, she'll try to do it herself. She does not have the strength or the knowledge (Str 10, no skill with ropes) to actually do so.

Assuming the heroes do follow Aluka, a few hundred yards away they come upon the quicksand.

As Aluka leads you to the small pool where she was trapped, you see you have little time. The pool is a murky dirty one, only a few inches deep over the quicksand. It stretches in an oval that is farther across at its narrowest as two tall Nubari males. As you approach you can see the arm and head of a lizardman. It is struggling, but fighting a losing battle. There are no trees nearby, only large bushes.

The lizardman was actually able to swim out and rescue Aluka. But when he heaved her out of the quicksand, he was trapped himself. The heroes have one round before he disappears under the surface, three rounds before he suffocates.

Possible solutions:

Obviously someone with a rope can simply cast it out. A hit on AC 8 gets the rope in SSilick's hands. However, he is exhausted from struggling. Have the heroes make a Strength check. Ssilick hangs on for one round, then loses his grip. If the heroes' Strength roll was successful (have the hero with the highest Strength who is actually pulling make the

roll, with a -1 bonus for ever extra hero pulling.) Ssilick is pulled partially out of the quicksand. This gains the heroes two extra rounds before he sinks. SSilick is exhausted, and in effect passes out. He is still conscious, but does not have the strength to help himself further.

A more heroic option is for a hero to tie a rope to himself, and leap out and grab Ssilick. This requires a jumping roll (Dex -4 if no one has this proficiency). Failure means that the hero has missed by three feet, a Strength or Dexterity check (whichever is higher) can be used to reach and grab SSilick. If this also fails, the hero must be pulled out and try again.

Once a hero has grabbed SSilick, he must make a Strength roll at -4 to hang on while the rest of the heroes pull them out. Of course the hero could just tie the rope to Ssilick, and wait to be rescued individually. A hero jumping into the quicksand sinks waist deep, and has six rounds before going under. River tam'hi and caimen katanga have an extra two rounds, they are more familiar with this environment.

Those on the shore must then pull Ssilick out. This requires a Strength roll by the strongest hero pulling, with a -1 bonus to the roll for every extra hero pulling. If a roll is failed, the heroes make no progress, but they also don't lose ground. If a natural 20 is rolled, the rope snaps, near the heroes pulling. They can grab a shorter rope the next round, and try again. (maximum of two heroes can grab the shorter rope). Note that the special rope obtained from the Living Jungle trading shop will not break, even on a 20.

It takes two successful Strength checks to get the lizardman out. If a hero is holding him, the Strength check has a +4 penalty. If the hero is pulled out individually, there are no penalties to the Strength check.

If no rope is possessed, the heroes may also form a living chain. It takes three large heroes (tam'hi or larger), or four smaller heroes to reach the lizardman. This is more dangerous, since each hero

must make a Strength check to hang on. The check has a +1 penalty for each hero they are pulling. Thus, if there are three heroes, the one holding the lizardman has a +1 penalty, next in line has +2, next +3, and the hero on the bank has a +4. Be sure to tell the Heros this, they will want their strongest member to remain on shore.

Other things may occur to the heroes, judge accordingly. For example, pulling up underbrush and throwing it out won't help the lizardman, but it would allow a hero who jumps out onto it an extra four rounds before sinking.

Flying heroes (aarakocra) do not possess the Strength to pull the lizardman out from the air. They could get the rope to him, but have the same problem as someone just throwing the rope, he is too weak to hang or, or to tie it around himself.

Sslick, lizardman male F1: Int Average; AL NG; AC 5; MV 6; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil (no weapons); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 11.

Hero Points: A hero who selflessly leaps into the quicksand without pausing to do anything but grab the end of a rope may deserve a hero point. Be strict on this, river tam'hi have an advantage here, and probably don't deserve a hero point.

ENCOUNTER TWO: A WHAT KANTANGA?

It is eight days since your rescue of the noble lizardman. You have left the swampy area, and are now nearing the plains. Food is beginning to become a consideration, you will have to stop soon and do some hunting. Then you leave the jungle and enter a wide plain. Food should be no problem, at least for those of you who are meat-eaters. Vast herds of zebra, gazelles, antelope, wildebeest, and even a few large duck-billed garuda feed here.

As you move out onto the plains a half mile or more, the scene captivates you. All these animals living and feeding in peace. A herd of antelope notices you and darts off, fleeing the strangeness of your presence. About a mile off

you spot a lone Nubari warrior hunting, he stands and casts his spear at a duck-billed garuda. The response is not to his liking, or yours. A garuda goes down, but the herd does not flee. Well, it does, but in your direction. The warrior is also fleeing in your direction, as fast as he can. You are directly in the path of a stampede!

The garuda cover a wide path, over a mile across. The heroes can flee back to the jungle, or they can try to get out of the path of the herd by fleeing at a cross angle to the stampede. Either way, they have to cover a half-mile in the next four rounds, or risk being trampled.

Normally running allows the heroes to cover 240 yards per round, or a half-mile in a little over seven rounds. Of course shu and korobokuru have 1/2 that speed, they need to hurry. If characters want to run faster, see the optional running rules in the PHB, page 157-8.

The following rolls should be made:

- Nubari, saru, tam'hi, lizardmen, plantmen, or katanga in human or biped forms must make an endurance check for the 2nd round of running. This gives them two rounds to find a large enough tree to hide behind for safety.
- For shu, butu, or korobokuru, they must make three endurance checks for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th round of running. If they possess the running proficiency, they receive a -2 bonus to this roll. They will not have time to climb a tree, they must just duck behind one, (probably the first one they see). This does grant them safety.
- A saru or other strong hero (Str 16 or higher), can grab up a shu or vegpygmy hero and carry them, this adds one round of running. They must make two endurance checks, with a +1 penalty to the roll for the last round of running.

If the endurance proficiency is not possessed, the roll is Constitution -4.

If a hero fails the check, they must make a Dexterity roll or fall. Heroes who fall can get back up and resume running, but they lose a whole round. If this happens to a small hero, they are almost certainly going to be trampled.

Trampled heroes take 3d6 points of damage, plus their AC (Dexterity bonuses do count). If this damage puts a hero below zero hit points, any damage below zero is considered stunning damage (only 1/4 is real). This should keep someone from being killed in the stampede.

Heroes about to be trampled may want to try something fancy, like leaping onto the back of a charging garuda. Let them, but it won't be easy. For one thing, the garuda isn't crazy about the idea, and it isn't going to be easy to hang on.

Someone who attempts this must make 1/2 of their Dexterity roll to grab on, then two Strength rolls to hang on while the garuda run. If the hero in question has the brachiation skill, grant them a -2 bonus to all rolls, they are used to this sort of thing. Another possibility is attempting to turn the herd. It will require extremely flashy magic (on the order of a *fireball*, or *lightning bolt*) to have any effect at all. And even then, it grants them at most one more round, there are just too many garuda in this herd to change its direction in time.

Heroes who make it easily may also want to try to bring down a lagging garuda for food. This is perfectly acceptable. A slain garuda will provide food for at least a week for the whole party.

Duck-Billed garuda (NA thousands); AC 7; HD 2; hp 9 (this is a weak straggler); THAC0 NA; Dmg NA; ML 0.

At some point during the flight, the heroes notice something strange. The Nubari warrior does not pass, or even keep up with them. Instead, an ostrich passes them like they were standing still. He flees into the jungle. If they wish to track it, a few hundreds yards into the jungle the footprints of the ostrich change into Nubari footprints. The trail is lost

when they reach a small creek about a mile farther back.

Potential rescue: If one of the small heroes falls immediately, the ostrich grabs them with his beak as he flees, dropping them a round later at the edge of the jungle. This option should not be used if the hero still has a chance to make it on their own, or if the hero is a korobokuru, who would be too heavy. But for a shu or butu, the ostrich will help.

The ostrich katanga does not remain to talk to the heroes, he is quite aware that many races and predators consider his flesh a delicacy, and doesn't want to be eaten. Not that the heroes actually would, but he doesn't know that.

Hero Points: A hero who charges back into the stampede to try to rescue a fallen comrade may deserve a hero point, particularly if this results in the hero getting trampled. Note that large heroes about to be trampled can protect the smaller heroes with their bodies. If they do so the large hero takes an extra dice of damage, while the smaller hero takes only 1/2 damage from trampling. If the hero thinks of this on their own, they should definitely get hero point consideration.

ENCOUNTER THREE: AN ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS.

A week has passed since the stampede, soon you will leave the plains and enter the jungle again. Now you see truly an inspiring sight. A trio of elephants move ponderously across the plains. Two of them are adults, while the third is old beyond belief. All three have decorations on their tusks, and the largest even carries a large open sack over his back, fastened around his neck with a section of vine.

As they spot you, the largest raises his trunk in greeting.

The heroes do not have to speak to the elephants, but they miss out on some valuable information if they don't.

The speaker is the oldest and wisest of the elephants, Tarmanganus the Wise. He

is hundreds of years old, and held in great respect by the other elephants. The other two are Saycho and her mate Cresapahn.

As the heroes approach, Tarmanganus speaks.

"What brings you this close to the Yaku plains, wanderers? It is many ages since any of your kind have ventured here. These old eyes could not believe it."

The heroes can reply as they will. Tarmanganus listens carefully, with one ear raised. (His hearing started going about 50 years ago).

As long as they tell him something close to the truth, Tarmanganus has a riddle and a warning for them.

"It is well that you speak the truth. Is it that you no longer fear the lingering death that breaking the taboo promises?"

The heroes are certainly going to want to know more about this. Tarmanganus tells them what he knows.

"It is said that in my father's time the Nubari, korobokuru and shu lived here in great throngs. They hunted and lived with the land in balance. But the Nubari became too strong, and slew many animals for sport. So the spirits of the mountain and the plains sent the coughing sickness on them. Many died, and the rest fled. The Yaku plains, once a lush green paradise, were filled with the ashes of the dead. It is many lifetimes of a Nubari since any have existed here. You are the first I have seen in many of the short lifetimes of a Nubari. Is the taboo then lifted?"

This is a rhetorical question, the heroes have no way of knowing. In point of fact, in ages past a volcano exploded, the ashes caused the deaths of many Nubari and demihumans. It also caused the death of many other species, but they had no taboo, and moved back within a few years. The Nubari never did.

Tarmanganus will not reveal all of this, he merely hints that perhaps it is time for the taboo to be lifted, only brave heroes can find out for sure.

When they have finished questioning him about this, he has a riddle for them.

"If you are truly the ones to lift the taboo, perhaps you can answer the riddle that goes with it. What is a man, but not a man, larger than a garuda but not a garuda, more cunning than a black leopard and more dangerous as well?"

The heroes are not expected to answer this. Give them a few minutes, but Tarmanganus does not know the answer either. When the heroes fail to come up with an answer, Tarmanganus continues.

"The answer lies across the Yaku plains, many days to the west. If you survive the plains, you will reach the mountains. There, on the tallest mountain as legend has it, men can fly, and smaller beings move with the speed of mountain goats. You must find the answer to the riddle if you are to survive to fulfill your quest."

Tarmanganus indicates a direction with his trunk, and then appears to fall asleep immediately. Saycho asks politely that the heroes do not disturb old Tarmanganus any further, he has certainly said all he will on the subject. The heroes have no choice but to continue on. If they are particularly worried about the taboo, Cresapahn says that he does not believe in a taboo. He himself has ventured out onto the Yaku plains many times, and has never gotten the coughing death. He has not crossed them, however.

When the heroes continue, read the following:

Within the day, the scenery changes. Gone is the lush jungle, the wildlife and constant sounds of life. Instead the ground you walk on is covered with what can only be ashes. Dread fills your heart as you contemplate a land covered with ash. Nothing grows here save a few scraggly weeds. No water is in sight, although far ahead you see the Forbidden Mountains looming ahead. With luck, a day or two and you will cross this horrid place.

The heroes now have a new challenge, water. Assume that each hero with a

waterskin listed on their sheet started with a least a full skin. They will find no water, and it is going to take them a week to cross the Yaku plain. (They should not know this until they have spent at least two days trying. Always the mountain looms higher. After the second day, a band of promising green can be seen at the foot, but it does not draw much closer until at least the fifth day.

Each hero needs at least 1/2 of a waterskin per day. Any priests in the party can memorize *create water*, but here on the Yaku plains water magic is suppressed, only 1/2 a waterskin is produced per level of the priest. Heroes who do not get enough water in a day must make a constitution check. Failure indicates a loss of 1 point of constitution, with attendant loss of hit points for those with bonuses. All of this is recovered after the hero gets enough water for a day.

River Tam'hi are especially in trouble here. They need twice the water of any other race (so do plantmen and lizardmen, should any be present).

- **The Coughing Death.** After the second full day on the Yaku plains, all heroes have to make an additional constitution check (Tam'hi make this check at a +2 penalty). Anyone who fails develops a hacking cough that doesn't seem to go away. This prevents restful sleep, as they are constantly disturbed. (no new spells memorized) And no, they do not have the coughing death. What they have is an allergic reaction to the ash. The cough clears up within a day after leaving the Yaku plains. It should scare the bejeebers out of the affected heroes. Have unaffected heroes keep making checks each day until they succumb, or cross the plains. This check is made after any constitution losses for the day due to lack of water.

Finally, they reach the welcome greenery at the base of the mountain. They should be coughing, weakened and desperate for water. It takes four hours of searching (two for a ranger) to locate a rivulet of water that they can drink from. While they are

doing so, they are surrounded by aarakocra.

ENCOUNTER FOUR: THE BIRD MEN OF THE MOUNTAIN.

Finally, you reach the belt of greenery that surrounds the mountains. After several hours of searching, you locate a clearing. A butte of rock rises out of the clearing, and trickling down the side of the rock is that most precious of substances, water!

As you slake your thirst, you gaze up at the mountain above you. It is sheer and steep, those of you who possess skill at climbing know that it will not be easy to scale this mountain. But it must be done if you are to fulfill your quest for the Blue Heron. High above, almost out of sight, you can see several of the largest nests you have ever seen. Bigger than any a flying garuda would need, it might almost be a nest large enough to hold a village.

Then you see your first bird-man. The legends are true. It is not a garuda, the red feathers sparkle clearly in the sun. Now you see more of them, three, five, a dozen or more. And they are not ordinary birds, ordinary birds do not carry javelins. With a bloodcurdling shriek, one of them dives out of the sky at you. He grasps a pair of javelins in his feet, and just before he pulls out, they strike the ground right next to (Pick out a hero by name here). The aarakocra rises into the air with a speed unknown to garuda or normal birds. Clearly you have been warned.

The dozen or so aarakocra who have spotted the heroes originally think that these are strange looking butu, the only other humanoid shape they know about. They are not immediately hostile, but this should be clear indication that the heroes will not be allowed to climb the mountain without being stopped.

A hero may panic and attack, in spite of Bengoukee's warning. The aarakocra do not get close enough for melee combat, they are out of range of even spears. Should someone throw a spear, the aarakocra in question has a chance (hit on AC 4), to grab the spear out of the air. He immediately drops it, it should come close to the attacking hero, but not hit him/her. The swooping aarakocra can be attacked by bows, at a -2 penalty for

medium range (the closest it gets). While none of this band are spellcasters, they are aware of such characters, and will react intelligently.

The aarakocra that delivers the warning is a leader, AC 7 with 30 hit points. For game purposes, do not let the heroes kill the leader. Thus, if hit with a *fireball* or multiple *magic missiles*, it makes its save, or even gains a few extra hit points if necessary to survive. The heroes should be reminded that they are here to negotiate, not to attack. Make it plain that the aarakocra missed intentionally. If they still persist, several aarakocra land on the top of the bluff overhead (150'), and push rocks down. THAC0 for these rocks is 15, damage is 2d6. The heroes should be forced to flee back into the trees before long.

Aarakocra (20): AC 7; AL NG; HD 1+2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-4 (javelins); SA Dive for +4 to hit and double damage with javelin; ML 11; SZ M (20' wing span).

Fleetwing, aarakocra leader: AC 7; AL NG; HD 5 (F5); hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8 (javelins); SA dive for +4 to hit and double damage with javelins; Int 15; ML 15.

Fleetwing speaks a bit of the common tongue of Malatra, it is maintained for dealing with the butu and with other intelligent creatures. Remember that the aarakocra trace their ancestry back to when they were earthbound.

He is a proud bird, actually a bit sympathetic for those poor creatures who must walk on the ground, and may never know the joy of flight. He speaks a bit arrogantly, but he is willing to listen to the heroes, if they react peacefully.

If on the other hand, the heroes respond by staying put, and not showing signs of attack, Fleetwing will eventually land to parley. If there are aarakocra in the PCs' group, he greets them as friends from far off, who live across the jungle (which is true).

The bird men circle above you, but eventually the one who cast the javelins at you

circles lower and lower. With a flutter of wings, he lands in front of you. You feel part of a momentous occasion, the first members of your race to meet one of the legendary bird men.

Now that you can see him up close, his eyes gaze at you with clear signs of intelligence. In a halting voice, he speaks: "You are not butu. Fleetwing apologizes for scaring poor ground beasts. Who are you and why do you come here, to our lands?"

(If they have attacked, he adds)

"Why do you attack people defending their lands? Are you here as allies of the butu. Why should we not kill you all?"

If the heroes have attacked, they have some explaining to do. If not, they can tell their story. As they do, several more bird men land, but the majority stay in the air, where they are safe. They do not trust the heroes until they have proven themselves.

Let the heroes tell their story. When they mention the Blue Heron, signs of awe and anger fill Fleetwing's face. He is clearly amazed that the heroes know of the Blue Heron, and he is angry about it as well. Try to convey that he does not seem to be angry at them, but at something involved with the Blue Heron.

When they have finished explaining that they need the Blue Heron, Fleetwing responds.

"The Blue Heron is not for such as you. Go, and do not return, or we will be forced to kill you. Fleetwing has spoken." He prepares to launch himself into the air. Then, suddenly, a roar cuts the stillness that followed Fleetwing's statement. A small pack of garuda explode from the jungle, leaping at Fleetwing, and at you.

The heroes and Fleetwing have been attacked by a pack of deinonychus. This is their chance to prove themselves to Fleetwing.

Deinonychus (raptors): (6); AC 4; Mv 21; HD 4+1; hp 21 each; THAC0 17; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8; SA jump for +2 to hit, rake with rear claws on jump for 2d6, Sz L; ML 11.

Three of the deinonychus attack the heroes, three attack the aarakocra. Of course the aarakocra can attack from the air, but not at those in melee. It is up to the heroes to carry the bulk of the fight here.

Fleetwing can probably handle his raptor, but the other two birdmen are in real trouble. Stress that Fleetwing seems to be handling himself well, but the other birdmen are almost certainly doomed. On the first round the deinonychus hit all three of the birdmen, they can not take flight. Assume that each birdman is hit by at least a claw, taking two points of damage in the process. Roll normally for attacks on the heroes. After that, it is up to the heroes to save the birdmen. Remember the death's door rule, it applies to the birdmen as well.

Run this combat quickly, it will be over for the birdmen soon. If a birdman is put below zero hit points, the deinonychus attempts to pick it up and drag it into the jungle. If attacked by any hero, it drops its prey and attacks the hero. The heroes have two rounds to attack before it reaches the jungle.

During this time the birdmen above can also attack with javelins, but don't do this unless it appears the heroes can't save it. If necessary, two bird men make swooping charges, receiving +4 to hit and double damage from their javelins. This is at each deinonychus that succeeds in dropping a bird man. If the heroes are clearly trying to help, they will make this same charge at any deinonychus that drops a hero below zero hit points as well.

Also note that flashy magic causes the deinonychus to make a morale check (for the individual targeted only), or flee into the jungle. Magic missiles, burning hands, or any fire spell qualify.

The birdmen fight by stabbing with their javelins, for 2d4. They are at a huge disadvantage on the ground, particularly against creatures as large and fierce as deinonychus. The heroes have a real chance to make some friends here.

When the battle is concluded, assuming the heroes helped the birdmen, Fleetwing is grateful. Both of the other birdmen are severely wounded, one has a

broken wing. If a priest is present, healing spells would be a good idea. Even a *cure light wounds* will repair the wing enough to allow the birdman to fly.

After healing is attended too, Fleetwing revises his opinion of the heroes.

"You fought well. I will tell Sharpclaws, our chieftain. I cannot speak further of Blue Heron, he must do so. But I will speak of how you fought, if not for you, Brownfeathers would fly no more. I will return before dawn. Await us up there," he says, pointing to the top of the bluff some 150' above. "Climb no higher, it is forbidden for groundwalkers to enter our village. But do not be foolish enough to try to wait down here, dead garuda will draw many predators." With that, several of the aarakocra land and pick up one of the dead garuda, flying up and up, to one of the far off nests.

The heroes can finish their interrupted drink and look into climbing the butte. They may also have to carry a wounded aarakocra with them.

- **The climb.**

The climb is not particularly difficult, there are several ledges on the way for the heroes to rest and anchor ropes. A saru or monkey katanga has a base 90% chance for the climb, as does any rogue hero. Others have a 60% chance, with an additional 15% chance if ropes are used. Saru, monkey katanga, or rogue heroes receive an extra +5% if they are climbing with the aid of a rope.

Three successful climbing rolls are needed. Because of the ledges, a hero can take no more than 3d6 from a fall, with a Dexterity check allowed to cut that damage in half. Truly wounded (or clumsy) heroes can even be pulled up by others.

In other words, they must make the climb, but they really shouldn't lose anyone doing so. Be a bit generous here, fudging the damage to avoid permanently killing a hero who just made a couple of bad rolls.

Once they reach the top of the butte, they find a wide ledge (20' by 50') with plenty of space to set up a camp. The small rivulet runs down from here, there

is water enough for the whole party. The air is clean and crisp, those heroes with coughing sickness already feel their lungs clearing up. By morning, any constitution losses from lack of water have also been recovered.

Let the heroes rest, recover spells, and prepare for their meeting with Chief Sharpclaws. When they are ready, continue with the next encounter.

Hero Points: There are several good opportunities for hero points here. Standing over a wounded birdman by oneself is certainly an opportunity for a hero point, but make them earn it. The deinonychus will attack fiercely, a hero could very well go down here. That's fine, fighting to the death (or almost) is certainly an opportunity for a hero point.

ENCOUNTER FIVE: CHIEF SHARPCLAWS AND THE BUTU.

As Fleetwing said, the night was more restful up here on the ledge than it would have been in the jungle. The howling and fighting from below indicated that you would have received little rest down there. Up here, you were not molested.

As you finish breaking your morning fast, a number of birdmen circle in for a landing. One of them stands out, he clearly is an old birdman. Fleetwing brings him forward. "These are the strange creatures I told you about. While they have no wings, they can fight like garuda, and Brownfeathers, Whistlewind, and I would fly no more if it was not for them. I will let them speak for themselves. I introduce Sharpclaws, he who leads us in flight."

Sharpclaws is intelligent and calculating. He has heard the legends of the Nubari and knows of the katanga and the tam'hi. He does assume that anyone who is not a saru is a Nubari.

He asks the heroes to repeat their story. He wants to know if they think that Bengoukee can be trusted with Blue Heron. If they mention Bengoukee by name, his eyes widen in recognition. Even

he has heard of the witch doctor.
(Probably from elephants).

After the story is told, he asks all the aarakocra to leave him alone with the heroes. They don't like it, but they comply. Have Fleetwing make an objection or two, but he is silenced with a stare from Sharpclaws. After they have gone, Sharpclaws continues.

"For your brave actions, I would probably trust you. Now I trust you with a secret that could plunge my people into a war. It is a war that they would win, but in doing so, my flock might die.

We no longer have Blue Heron. It was stolen some 20 years ago by the butu. The butu are much like yourselves, but they have the feet of mountain goats. If my people knew, it would mean war. While a single butu, or even three, is no match for one of our warriors, they are numerous. Their caves are small, and we would be hard pressed to recover the Blue Heron. If you agree to never speak a word of this to my people, and recover Blue Heron, you may borrow it for a year. I will have your word that it will be returned in that time, else my people must seek out this Bengoukee and recover it. If he is as powerful as you say, we may perish in the attempt, but we will try.

If the heroes agree (what do they have to lose?), he gives them directions to the butu village. It is on the next mountain, an easy climb. As soon as he has the heroes agreement he simply says; *"So be it. I have your word, I will see you in a year with the Blue Heron."*

Then he launches himself off of the ledge, soaring back to his village with his flock.

If any of the heroes are still badly wounded after yesterday's battle, he summons the tribal shaman. The shaman has four *cure light wounds* memorized, and 12 *goodberries*. He will use any or all of them, as the heroes decide.

The heroes can now climb down (simple Dexterity check to succeed). This assumes they use ropes along to do so. Failure indicates 1d3 points of damage from rope burns.

There are no encounters on the way to the mountain with the butu village.

• Encountering their first butu.

The butu are indeed small, with the feet of mountain goats. They are swift in the mountains, and climb extremely well. What they are not is particularly brave. And they don't have the Blue Heron, either. But they do know where it is.

You have traveled to the location of the butu village. Well, you are on the slopes below it, when you encounter your first butu. You round a boulder to come face to face with a shu-sized creature. It looks like a cross between a mountain goat, and something else. It has small horns, a very ugly face, and carries a spear.

The butu is cowardly, but not that cowardly. He knows that his tribe is above, watching. They have spotted the heroes from several miles away, and he was selected by lot (he lost), to confront the heroes. If they slay him, they will be attacked by the rest of the tribe, who will push boulders down on the heroes. Rangers or rogues in the party can make a surprise roll to notice that the heroes are being watched.

The butu (Booda is this one's name), is mainly concerned with keeping the fierce heroes away from his village. They also want something from the heroes, an end to the manscorpions that are plaguing them.

The heroes have to physically pick up Booda and reassure him that they are not here to slaughter him. He takes a bit of convincing, he is convinced that they came for a meal of cooked Butu. The larger the hero, the more scared he is of them. Naturally, saru terrify him. With a shu or korobokuru, he can get almost comfortable. In any event, he speaks mostly to the smallest member of the party.

Booda claims that his people are peace-loving, wanting only to be left alone to live on their mountain. He doesn't know why the heroes have come here to kill them all. If the heroes explain their real mission, he gets a crafty look on his face for a second, then remembers his fear.

"It is wrong, the butu do not steal the Blue Heron. It is the beasts that are larger than a

garuda, but are not garuda. They looks like you, but doesn't look like you. They have Blue Heron. Will the fierce warriors slay the manbeasts and take the Blue Heron. Get us many birdman feathers for our arrows as well?

This is an obvious reference to the riddle that Tarmanganus gave them earlier.

The comment about feathers is in reference to a belief that aarakocra feathers make the best fletching for arrows. No butu has ever slain an aarakocra for his feathers (or any other reason), but they have stolen more than a few.

Gradually his story comes out. The butu hunt and scavenge in the jungle and on the plains below their mountain. For the last 20 years or so, they have been preyed upon by the manbeasts. He even makes reference to a giant manbeast, one that dwarfs even the largest garuda. But they haven't seen that one in a while. If the heroes agree to help, the butu will help as well. They will send many fine warriors to assault the manbeasts with the heroes.

The heroes should realize that the butu might not be much help, but any help is better than none. They may disregard the tales about larger than a garuda, but here Booda is telling the truth.

If the heroes agree, Booda becomes almost at ease. He waves, and a dozen butu appear from behind rocks above and join the party. The heroes are escorted to their village, where they can spend the rest of the day feasting, drinking, and swapping tales with the butu. They find the butu rather friendly, once they get over their fear of the giants. (the heroes).

Any hero still wounded can recover three points of damage overnight (a day of complete rest), and there are several butu shaman who can help heal seriously wounded heroes. Basically, any hero who is more than 8 points below full hit points is healed to almost full health (roll a d6, that is the damage that remains). The heroes are also treated to many stories about the fierceness of the manbeasts, and a rough description.

The manbeasts are described as looking just like you (pointing at a

Nubari, shu, or tam'hi, in that order), with many clawed feet and a tail that can strike. A single tail strike kills anyone it hits, so they must avoid that. If asked about numbers, they are told that the cave where Blue Heron is secreted is home to three of the beasts. The giant manbeast has not been seen in several seasons, it must be away eating someone else.

The butu also want explanations of just what the heroes are, where they come from, and why. They ask if there are any good mountains in the lands where the heroes were born. If told about Fire Mountain, they are interested, but tales of the volcano scare them almost as much as the manbeasts.

Most of this information is true. Try to present it as wild tales, but smart heroes can use the information to prepare suitable spell lists. Obviously, *slow poison* would be a good spell to learn here.

The butu also have a plan. They intend to send six warriors with the heroes. The warriors are armed with short bows and clubs. None of the warriors intends to close, they come up to the heroes and boast that the heroes have nothing to fear. They will put many arrows into the manbeasts while the heroes are attacking them. Make it clear that the butu do not intend to melee with the manbeasts.

After the roleplaying winds down, the butu show the heroes to a cave where they can rest. At dawn, they awaken the heroes, ready to see the heroes defeat the manbeasts.

ENCOUNTER SIX: MANSCORPIONS, AND GIANT ONES AT THAT.

The manscorpions are somewhat different than the Monstrous Manual entry. There are only three of them present, and they have no spellcasters. They do not lose their organization without a leader type. The rest of the entry still applies.

The butu lead the heroes to a cave at the edge of the Yaku plains. There are

many bones littered about the entrance to the cave, some of them rather large.

After exploring for a bit, they discover that the manscorpions are not home. When they enter the cave, the heroes find several things of interest.

- A beautiful sculpture of an aarakocra, about six inches tall. It is carved of granite. (treasure certificate enclosed).
- A ceramic spear that looks extremely sharp. It does not have a normal spear head, resembling a javelin more than anything else. It is +1 to hit and damage, but is non-magical. (treasure certificate enclosed).
- A ceramic chisel, suitable for creating the sculpture listed above. It also serves as a serviceable long knife (dagger).
- Blue Heron, an exquisite ceramic sculpture of a crow. The ceramic has been colored a maroon red, by a process the heroes have no chance of understanding. If magic is detected for, Blue Heron radiates faint magic.

After the heroes have finished searching the cave, they hear a scream from outside. (none of the butu have entered the cave, nor will they unless dragged in.) When they exit the cave, read the following.

You emerge from the cave of the manbeasts to see a sight that is truly horrifying. One of the butu, little Galu, writhes on the tail of a huge beast. The beast has the head, body, and arms of a Nubari, but the tale and legs of a giant scorpion. Make that a monstrosity giant scorpion. Another of the things is reaching high above him to club at another butu warrior in a tree, he cannot quite reach him. Still a third is chasing little Booda towards you, he stops when he sees you. He calls out in a clicking language to the others, the turn and start towards you. Now you know what the elephant meant, these are truly worse than any garuda you have seen.

Huge Manscorpions (3): AC 5; MV 12; HD 12; hp 70, 60, 55; THAC0 9; #AT 3 (club, claw, and tail); Dmg 1-8 (spiked club), 2-5

(claw), and 1-4 +poison (tail): SA poison (save or die in 2d6 rounds); MR 20%; ML 15; SZ H.

The rest of the butu fight with the heroes, but not in melee.

Butu warriors (5 remaining): butu warriors, 3rd level; AC 6; Mv 15; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 2 (short bows); Dmg 1-6 x2; ML 10; Dex 16.

The butu stay back and fire arrows. The manscorpions are not concerned with the butu, unless the majority of the heroes go down. (Enough so that less heroes are left than manscorpions).

Two rounds after the combat starts, the heroes are aided by Fleetwing, who has been watching. Fleetwing feels he owes his life to the heroes, he does not like to be in debt. He does not close to melee at first, relying on swooping attacks with his javelins (he has seven). It takes one round to circle and prepare for another swoop, so Fleetwing can only attack every other round. If the battle still rages after three swooping attacks, he lands next to a hero and fights with him.

To keep this from becoming a lot of DM dice rolling, it is suggested that you allow each hero to also roll for a butu. When Fleetwing arrives, the remaining hero can roll for him.

Fleetwing, aarakocra leader: AC 7; AL NG; HD 5 (F5); hp 30; THAC0 16 (12 when swooping); #AT 2; Dmg 2-8 (javelins); SA dive for +4 to hit and double damage with javelins; Int 15; ML 15.

This could be a horrid battle. A single manscorpion could be a tough battle for the heroes, so don't forget their allies. Don't let the allies carry the battle (not much chance of that, considering the butu), but they can contribute a lot of damage. Also, for this combat, ignore the rule about firing missiles into melee. The manscorpions are large enough that it is easy to get a shot at them without endangering a hero.

If the battle begins to go badly, have one of the butu make a lucky shot. This hits a manscorpion in the eye, blinding and enraging it. The manscorpion ignores any other combat to try to catch the butu, who can outrun it. It doesn't leave the battle entirely, but it will allow the heroes to concentrate on two of the manscorpions and finish off the other one later. It could also allow Fleetwing to pass around another dozen *goodberries*, courtesy of the aarakocra shaman.

When the battle concludes, the heroes will probably have several people ready to collapse from poison. If they do not possess the means to take care of this, Fleetwing does. He has brought a special salve from the flock shaman, it *neutralizes poison*. The hero will be weak for at least three days afterward, but she will survive.

The heroes will truly be, and should feel like, heroes for surviving this battle. They can rest and recover at the butu village, in a week everyone should be healthy and ready to go. Now that they know about the Yaku plains, they can carry enough water to cross safely. Proceed to the epilogue.

Hero Points: There should be several opportunities for Hero Points in this encounter. Anyone who risks themselves to save a comrade or an NPC may be eligible for a hero point.

EPILOGUE:

Having defeated the worst monster you have ever run into, you feel as though Bengoukee got you into more than you bargained for. But you have made new friends, new races that you didn't even dream existed.

Fleetwing decides to accompany you, as do a half dozen of the butu. Together you have little trouble returning home. Fleetwing makes a wonderful scout, although he has a lot of trouble finding a place to land when you reach the jungle. Even the butu become your friends, you realize you would not have survived without their aid.

Back home, Bengoukee is a little surprised to see you. He is quite excited to receive Blue Heron, and promises to return it to Fleetwing

within six months. Fleetwing accepts this, and asks if he can accompany you on your adventures while he waits.

Bengoukee is also generous with his rewards, for Bengoukee, most generous. And with Fleetwing and the butu along, the disbelieving stares at your stories are quickly put to rest, they have to believe you. Truly now, you feel like heroes of Malatra. The legend of the Search for Blue Heron will be told at many a campfire, for many a year.

Rewards from Bengoukee:

- They are allowed to keep the javelin, the ceramic chisel, and the aarakocra carving they found in the manscorpion cave. Heroes who have not received one of those items may choose from the following: (Limit one treasure certificate per hero).
- A spell fetish from among *web*, *blur*, *spectral forces*, or *water breathing*. (treasure certificates enclosed)
- A new canoe, made of a single huge garude bone. It is weighted so that it is very hard to sink. (Certificate enclosed)
- A gift from the butu, a dozen arrows fletched with aarakocra feathers. These have an extended range of +10 yards in each category. (certificates enclosed.)
- A rare brew made personally by Bengoukee, acting as a *potion healing* (but it must all be drunk at once). (certificate enclosed).

Heroes may trade, for instance if no one wants to keep the aarakocra statuette, or no one can use the chisel, they may take one of Bengoukee's items. If by some chance one hero grabbed all three items in Encounter Six, Bengoukee insists on having the chisel back, claiming he needs it for his work on Blue Heron. (Bengoukee hates greedy heroes). Of course if the rest of the heroes freely gave all this stuff to one hero, this does not apply.

EXPERIENCE POINTS:

Encounter One:

Rescue the lizardman: 400 pts.

Encounter Two:

Avoid the stampede: 400 pts.

OR

Avoid the stampede with the help of the ostrich katanga: 300 pts.

Encounter Three:

Show respect and politeness to the elephants. 250 pts.

Survive the Yaku plains with a bit of initiative: 300 pts.

Encounter Four:

Defeat the deinonychus: 350 pts.

Save all the aarakocra, or heal them after they are down: 350 pts.

Safely climb to the ledge: 100 pts.

Encounter Five:

Agree to return Blue Heron: 100 pts.

Kill no butu: 100 pts.

Encounter Six:

Defeat the manscorpions: 600 pts.

Fleetwing and at least three butu survive as well: 350 pts.

Maximum Possible: 3,300 pts.

Epilogue:

Spell fetish of *web, blur, spectral forces*, or *water breathing*.

Special healing brew from Bengoukee (acts as potion of healing).

Garuda bone canoe, weighted to avoid overturning.

A dozen arrows fletched with aarakocra feathers, an additional 10 yards to range.

TREASURE LIST:

All items which are not on the list of starting equipment have certificates attached. Give the certificate to the player whose character takes the item in question.

Starting:

2 50' vine ropes.

2 waterskins (each)

quiver of 20 stone-tipped arrows for anyone with a bow.

Encounter Six (Cave):

Statuette of an aarakocra.

Ceramic chisel (attacks as a dagger)

Ceramic javelin

AARAKOCRA, MALATRAN

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/Mountains and plains
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	D
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good

NO. APPEARING:	1-10
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 36 (C)
HIT DICE:	1+2
THACO:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3/1-3 (beak) or 2-8 (weapon)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Dive +2
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (20' wing span)
MORALE:	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	65

The aarakocra are a race of intelligent bird-men. They stand about five feet tall and have a wing span of 20 feet. About halfway along the edge of each wing is a hand with three human-sized fingers and an opposable thumb. An elongated fourth finger extends the length of the wing and locks in place for flying. Though the wing-hands cannot grasp or cast spells during flight, they are nearly as useful as human hands when an aarakocra is on the ground with wings folded back. The wing muscles anchor in a bony chest plate that provides extra protection. Powerful legs end in four sharp talons that fold back to reveal another pair of functional hands, with three human-sized fingers and an opposable thumb. The hand bones, like the rest of an aarakocra's skeleton, are hollow and fragile.

Aarakocra faces resemble a cross between parrots and eagles. They have gray-black beaks, and front-set black eyes that provide keen binocular vision. Plumage color varies among tribes, but generally males are red, orange, and yellow, while females are brown and gray.

Aarakocra speak their own language, and on occasion, a common Nubari tongue (10% chance).

Combat: Aarakocra fight with either talons or a heavy fletched javelin clutched in their lower hands. An aarakocra typically carries a half dozen javelins strapped to his chest in individual sheaths. He throws or stabs with them for 2d4 points of damage. Owing to the aarakocra's skill at throwing javelins in the air, he incurs no attack penalties for aerial missile fire. Aarakocra always save their last javelin for melee. A favorite attack is to dive at a victim (from at least 200 feet) with a javelin in each hand, pull out of the dive just as he reaches his target, and strike with a blood-curdling shriek. This attack gains a +2 bonus to hit and causes double damage.

An aarakocra avoids grappling or ground combat, since its fragile bones are easily broken. They prefer speed and maneuverability over armor.

Flying in Malatra: Aarakocra have two means for becoming airborne. The preferred method is to launch from at least 20 feet off the ground. They may also take flight with a running start of at least 30 feet in open terrain.

Jungle take-offs, flight, and landing are difficult. Each



attempt requires a Dexterity check, including each round of flight in medium or dense jungle (-4 and -6 modifiers respectively). Failing a check while flying in the jungle indicates collision. A second Dexterity check avoids falling damage. Landing failure indicates a "controlled crash" of 1d2 points of damage.

Habitat/Society: Aarakocra live in high mountains in tribes of about 11-30 (1d20+10) members. Each tribe has a hunting territory of about 10,000 square miles with banners marking the boundaries. Due to overcrowding, Malatran aarakocra have begun to move into the savanna where they nest in singular large trees found scattered throughout the plains. Aarakocra are affected by the antipathy magic of the domes, so they cannot spread to the edge of the plateau.

Each tribe lives in a communal nest made of woven vines with a soft lining of dried grass. The eldest male serves as leader. In tribes of more than 20 members, the second oldest male serves as shaman. Males spend most of their time hunting for food and shiny treasure. Females spend eight months of the year incubating eggs, passing the time by making javelins and tools from wood and stone. Resting on their backs, aarakocra females can use all four hands to weave boundary pennants, javelins sheaths, and other objects from vines and feathers. Aarakocra breed slowly and therefore make great efforts to preserve and protect their race.

Aarakocra are claustrophobic and will not willingly enter a cave, building, or other enclosed area. Hero aarakocra suffer a -1 to all initiative, to hit, and damage rolls in such settings.

Ecology: Aarakocra have had little contact with other races, and most remain aloof. The mountain aarakocra are more solitary than plains dwellers. Aarakocra hero characters are generally concerned with protecting their tribe's hunting grounds, and seeking knowledge or honor among other tribes. They want others to realize that the aarakocra are people of honor and not "large bird things" to be shot for sport.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Hilly/Mountainous terrain
 FREQUENCY: Rare
 ORGANIZATION: Clan
 ACTIVITY CYCLE: Night
 DIET: Omnivore
 INTELLIGENCE: Low to Average (6-8)
 TREASURE: M, N, O, Q
 ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral

NO. APPEARING: 6-60 (6d10)
 ARMOR CLASS: 7
 MOVEMENT: 6 (jungles/plains), 15 (mountains)
 HIT DICE: 1-1
 THAC0: 20
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4 or 1-6 (by weapon)
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: head-butt
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: quivering huddle
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil
 SIZE: S (3' 6" tall)
 MORALE: Average (9-10)
 XP VALUE: 15
 Leaders/guards: 30



Legend has it that the Butu arrived in Malatra as the pets of the Ancients, though in fact they came from an original kobold-like servant race of the Ancients. These kobolds mated with the resident bakemono to produce the modern butu. Long thought to be extinct, butu have been recently spotted among several remote rocky crags.

Butu physically resemble a cross between the Kara-Turan bakemono and the Faerûnian kobold. Their lower body is like that of a bakemono, with hairy legs with hooved feet similar to that of mountain goats. Their upper body strongly resembles a kobold, though with two medium sized goat-like horns atop their heads. Their unique ability to run along the face of rocky cliffs like mountain sheep most likely accounts for their ability to survive the many Malatran predators.

Butu have their own language and communicate in shrill, yapping barks. Some can learn other languages, such as the common tongue of the Nubari (50% chance).

Combat: While they tend to avoid combat, if trapped Butu will fight to defend the clan and create a pathway to safety. The butu approach to combat centers around ambush, maneuver, sneakiness, and overwhelming numbers. In planning an attack they will use the terrain to the best advantage for ranged weapons and concealment. Like kobolds, they often hurl crude javelins and spears, not closing to melee until they see that their enemies have been weakened. Once melee starts, however, they can become impulsive (caught up in the heat of the moment); in this state they forgo any attempt at cunning or organized tactics.

When they do close for melee with their enemies, they rush to the attack with weapons swinging. A preferred means of attack is to charge in mass, head-butting their opponents and then engaging with hand-held weapons. A swarm of butu can often knock down even the largest opponents. Opponents on rocky slopes and cliff faces find it difficult to maintain balance after receiving a head-butt charge. A failed Dexterity check by such a recipient indicates a loss of balance, and possibly a fall down a rocky slope. Butu use horns, clubs, short bows, and stone knives. They greatly prize obsidian for this purpose.

Their AC stems from the hodgepodge collection of armor, skins, and rags randomly strapped to their bodies.

The butu have limited infravision capability of 30', but do not incur any attack penalties when fighting in bright light. A special defense of the butu is to huddle down into a small quivering form and hide. Enemies who fail an Intelligence check bypass that particular butu, thinking it harmless, and attack the nearest standing butu or other foe. Unfortunately, this special defense causes all "hungry" enemies to immediately attack the small, helpless-looking morsel.

Habitat/Society: The butu live a nomadic lifestyle among the rocky crags of Malatra. Their movements and habits remind one of mountain goat herds. They like the safety of rocky ledges and slopes that predators find hard to scale.

A typical clan consists of 4-24 (4d6) males, an equal number of females, and a number of young equal to the total number of adults. There is no size difference among adults. For every 10 adult males there will be a leader or guard of larger size (HD 2, AC 5/6, THAC0 19, Dmg 1-8). The leaders/guards generally have larger weapons and pieces of tougher armor.

Clan possessions are those things only able to be carried by the butu. A butu clan will rarely have non-butu companions, as they move around the rocky cliffs very quickly and most often non-butu eventually slip and fall to their deaths.

Butu live along the rocky cliffs of mountains, co-existing peacefully with bighorn sheep and mountain goats. The heightened sense of the sheep and goats provide the butu with early warning of approaching strangers. The butu constantly roam the mountainside looking for areas that provide both safety and plentiful small game.

Ecology: Butu eat nuts, roots, small game, and anything else they can acquire without getting killed in the process. They stay in rocky areas primarily for safety. Their slow speed on flatlands makes them easy prey for most predators.

KATANGA, OSTRICH

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Tropical/Plains
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Day
DIET: Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE: Low to Genius
TREASURE: Individual
ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

NO. APPEARING: 1-10
ARMOR CLASS: 9/7
MOVEMENT: 12/18
HIT DICE: Varies
THAC0: Varies
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (kick)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: none
SPECIAL DEFENSES: none
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil
SIZE: M
MORALE: Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE: 150/hit die

Katanga are a race of intelligent shape-changing animals. Their ability to shapeshift is natural—not a form of lycanthropy. Katanga appear as normal animals to spellcasters who detect for illusions or use *true seeing*.

Katanga can shapeshift between three different forms: animal, biped, and human. Each form has its own advantages and disadvantages.

In human form, the ostrich katanga retain a slightly elongated neck, beaky nose, and bald head. In all other respects they have the same abilities as a normal human and may employ weapons, nonweapon proficiencies, and class-based skills.

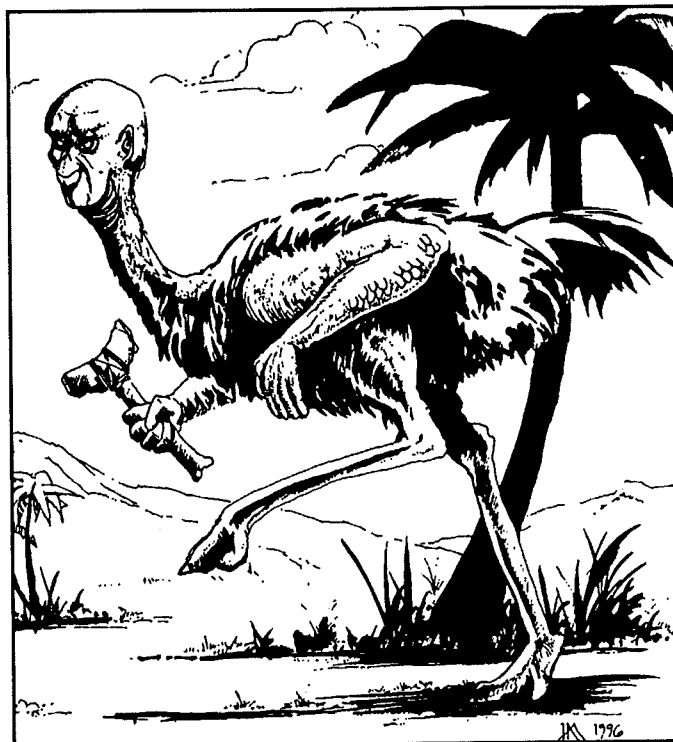
In biped form, ostrich katanga have an ostrich body and legs with a human head and prehensile hands (pictured above). They may still use a limited form of their natural attacks. In this form they can converse both with people and animals of their same type.

In animal form, ostrich katanga are indistinguishable from normal ostriches. They can use full natural attacks and employ their animal movement. They cannot cast spells, use weapons, wear armor, or use nonweapon proficiencies which require a human form. They can communicate only with other katanga or animals of their type, though they understand any language they know.

Each day a katanga can shapechange a number of times equal to its level (including changing back) measured by the rising of the sun. For instance, a 1st level katanga can change from human to biped. It must then remain in that form until after the following dawn. Changing form requires one complete round of concentration, during which the katanga can take no other action. Armor and other equipment does not change, but simply falls to the ground.

Only physical shape and capacity change when a katanga changes form. Total hit points and intelligence do not vary between forms. Regardless of form, ostrich katanga always cast a shadow in the shape of an ostrich.

Combat: All values divided by a slash indicate biped/animal forms. In human form, katanga have human Size, Armor Class, and Movement rates, and inflict damage by weapon type. Strength bonuses do not apply to natural attacks, only to



weapon attacks made in human or biped form.

In ostrich form, ostrich katanga can kick with their powerful legs for 1-8 points of damage. If a fight is going badly, they can also flee quickly.

In biped form, katanga gain 120-foot infravision.

Habitat/Society: Ostrich katanga generally live solitary lives, gathering in small flocks only to trade or mate; such gatherings take place at the beginning of spring and fall. They have little use for material possession, never accumulating more equipment than they can carry, trading precious items for practical ones like weapons, tools, or food.

They are generally on good terms with the Nubari and other savanna humanoids, with no . Ostrich katanga see themselves as the dominant birdlife on the savanna, and they protect their homelands fiercely. However, they feel uncomfortable in the jungle; the enclosed space makes them claustrophobic and hinders their running ability which they rely on heavily.

Ecology: A katanga's diet depends on its animal form. An ostrich katanga eats mostly plants, although they will also eat lizards and turtles if they can find them. In addition, they eat sand and gravel to aid digestion. Ostrich katanga can go for long periods without water as long as they eat plenty of leafy green plants.

Mating is polygamous, with a hen laying as many as 10 eggs approximately once a year. Males sit on the eggs at night, while both males and females take care of the eggs during the day.

Ostrich katanga can live up to 80 years, and their hide makes an excellent leather. Most ostrich katanga will attack anyone wearing ostrich hide on sight.

LIZARDMAN, MALATRAN

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Lizard Man Tropical/Swamp, forest	Lizard King Tropical/Swamp, forest
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	Special	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7) to Average (8-10)	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	D	E
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	8-15 (1d8+7)	1
ARMOR CLASS:	5	3
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 12	9, Sw 15
HIT DICE:	2+1	8
THACO:	19	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or 1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2/1-2/1-6 or by weapon	5-20 (3d6+2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M (7' tall)	L (8' tall)
MORALE:	14	16
XP VALUE:	65	975

Lizard men are semi-aquatic, reptilian humanoids that live through scavenging, raiding, fishing, and gathering.

Adult lizard men stand 6 to 7 feet tall, weighing 200 to 250 pounds. Skin tones range from dark green to gray to brown, and their scales give them a flecked appearance. Their tails average 3 to 4 feet long and are not prehensile. Males are nearly impossible to distinguish from females without close inspection. Lizard man garb is limited to strings of bones and other ornamentation, and occasionally loincloths among the more advanced lizard men. Lizard men speak their own language; lizard man heroes must use proficiency slots to learn the common tongue of the Nubari or other lanugaues.

Combat: In combat, normal lizard men fight as unorganized individuals. If they have equality or an advantage over their opponents, they tend toward frontal assaults and massed rushes. When outnumbered, overmatched, or on their home ground, however, they become wily and ferocious opponents. Snares, ambushes, and spoiling raids are favored tactics then. While individually savage in melee, these lizard men can be distracted by food or simple treasures. They occasionally take prisoners as slaves or to sacrifice in obscure tribal rites.

Advanced lizard men, those evolved to a higher state, hurl barbed darts (30 yard range, 1-4 points damage) or javelins (1-6 points damage) before closing with the enemy. These lizard men use clubs (treat as morning stars, 2-8 points damage), and the leaders may use captured swords or other weaponry.

For every 10 lizard men encountered, there will be one patrol leader with maximum hit points (17 hp) and a 50% chance for a shaman with 3 Hit Dice and the abilities of a 3rd-level priest. If one or more tribes are encountered, each tribe will also have a war leader of 6 Hit Dice, two subleaders with 4 Hit Dice, and a shaman of either 4 or 5 Hit Dice (50% chance of each). Any group of two or more tribes has a 50% chance for an additional shaman of 7 Hit Dice. Furthermore, each such group has a cumulative 10% chance per tribe to be led by a lizard king. A lizard king is a lizard man of above average



height and intelligence, leading one or more loosely organized tribes of lizard men. If a lizard king is present, a shaman of 7 Hit Dice will always be present, and all patrol leaders from each tribe (i.e., 10% of the male warriors) will be combined into a single fanatical bodyguard for the lizard king.

Habitat/Society: Lizard men are typically found in swamps, marshes, and similar places, sometimes dwelling totally underwater in air-filled caves. In Malatra, tribes can also be found in the jungle near swampy regions; these tend to be the more advanced lizard men. A tribe rarely numbers more than 150 individuals, including females and hatchlings. It is not uncommon for several tribes in an area to forge an informal alliance against outsiders, including other lizard man tribes.

About one tribe in 10 has evolved to a higher state. *All lizard man heroes are among these advanced lizard men.* They dwell in huts and have more advanced aspects to their culture; in many ways they imitate the Nubari tribes around them.

Lizard men are omnivorous, but prefer flesh to other foods.

Ecology: Lizard men have few natural enemies. They prey on human, demihuman, or humanoid settlements if these are nearby. Lizard man eggs are bitter and inedible, as is their flesh, but their skin is sometimes worked as scale armor (Armor Class 6). If a lizard man sees a human or humanoid wearing armor made of lizard man hide, he becomes enraged and seeks to slay the wearer at the first good opportunity.

As amphibians, lizard men cannot breathe underwater; they can however, hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to 2/3 of their Constitution score before making a check for drowning. Lizard men can suffer from dehydration when adventuring outside of very moist/swampy areas. They must wet themselves twice a day or lose two Constitution points per missed bath. Lost Constitution points are regained at the rate of two points per bath. A waterskin provides enough water for a single wetting.

PLANTMAN (MALATRAN MOLD MAN)

by Wellson Clark

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/Swamps, moist jungle
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	O, P
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	6-24 or 30-300
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	1 to 12
THACO:	By HD
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4 + 1/level or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	Medium/Large (4' - 9')
MORALE:	Average (8-10)
XP VALUE:	Variable

Malatran plantmen are medium to large sized, bipedal fungus creatures. They have sharp, thorn-like claws, and leaf-like tendrils form a fringe on their shoulders, abdomens, and limbs. A topknot of these tendrils sits at the apex of the plantman's head.

Malatran plantmen have brown skin and green tendrils. They are 4 feet tall, plus 1/2-foot per Hit Die. Although they do not have a spoken language, they communicate by sign language and vocalized cries, and can learn to understand Nubari and other languages (by lip reading) at the cost of a proficiency slot. Other hero characters can learn to understand (but not speak) the "Plantman language" at the cost of a proficiency slot.

Combat: Parties of plantmen hunt near their lairs. In the forest, plantmen blend in to their surroundings giving them the same ability to move silently and hide in shadows as rangers of their level. Plantmen will attack any form of animal life for food. Malatran plantmen will use their natural camouflage capabilities to ambush opponents.

Half of the plantmen in a group have 1 or 2 HD, while 25% have 3 or 4 HD. The rest are 5 or 6 HD (equal chances). For every 50 plantmen, there is a subchief with 7 or 8 HD and 1d4+1 bodyguards of 5 HD each. Each tribe of plantmen is led by a chief with 10 HD and 2d4 bodyguards with 6 HD each. Half of the plantmen encountered carry spears, while the others use clubs or go without weapons (equal chances).

Chiefs can also attack with spores; victims must make a saving throw vs. poison or be paralyzed, dying in 5d4 minutes unless treated by a cure disease spell. Victims who die in this manner are reborn 1d4+20 hours later as plantmen with 6 HD. These individuals become the chief's bodyguards.

Plantmen larger than 7' tall suffer damage as large creatures but also gain the benefit of wielding two-handed weapons with one hand. They are immune to charm and electrical attacks, except for charm plants, and take half damage from water-based attacks. Fire-based attacks cause double damage and require plantmen to make a saving throw vs. paralysis or flee for 1d6 rounds before another save can be attempted.

Player character plantmen can be fighters, rangers, wizards,



priests, fighter/priests, or fighter/wizards. All plantmen heroes can move silently and hide in shadows as rangers when in forest terrain. Preserving the forest and natural habitat of plantmen is the primary reason that some plantmen adventure and become Malatran heroes. Spell-casting plantmen are unable to use fire- or cold-based spells. Further, their healing spells are ineffective on animal-based life forms.

Habitat/Society: Plantmen form primitive, settled tribes. Their lairs are usually found in the underbrush of warm forests and jungles, though some tribes have lairs in underground places as well. Tribes are very territorial.

Plantmen co-exist well with plant and fungus life. They often use shriekers to guard their lairs, and plantmen native to the lair can pass by those shriekers unnoticed. Russet plant is usually found in the vicinity of a plantman lair as well.

New Malatran plantmen are created by russet mold, by their leaders' spore attacks, or by budding from their leaders. Leaders are 10+ HD (and therefore non-adventuring) plantmen and can only bud if food is plentiful. Plantmen heroes are too young to bud new plantmen.

Plantmen have been known to associate with myconids, which view them as rustic cousins.

Ecology: Plantmen live by scavenging and hunting. They will eat meat in any condition, from fresh to carrion. In times of great need, they have been known to eat other plantmen, though they seldom attack members of their own or an allied tribe.

Plantmen can suffer from dehydration when adventuring outside of very moist, swampy areas. They must wet themselves twice a day or lose two Constitution points per missed bath. Lost Constitution points are regained at the rate of two points per bath. A waterskin provides enough water for a single wetting.