

DARK HOUSES

Location
Sourcebooks and Adventures
For Monte Cook's
Arcana Evolved



The Guild Hive

Written By Bill Collins

BLUE DEVIL GAMES

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THE GUILD HIVE

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THE GUILD HIVE

Deep in a canyon hidden by forest boughs, giant vermin live and die among their faen caretakers while snakes and toads slither and crawl amidst the web-strewn canyon. The Venomer's Guild Hive. Their mark is found on many a mysterious bottle, but even the knowing dare not speak of it. Among the piled-high husks of wasp bodies and shredded wings of giant moths, these unusual sprytes and faen make their home. Something attracts a few rare, twisted members of this race to dissect giant insects for their deadly poisons. Woe betide the lone traveler who forces through the thick brush and thorns ringing the canyon looking for a cheap source of spider venom. They may never return home. The breeding swarms of normal-sized insects buzzing in the air nearby is but a hint of what flies within.

This location fits well in any wilderness setting, as a sidelight to an urban adventure--especially where there are thick woods or jungles nearby--or when a surprise at the end of the trail is in order. The Guild Hive could be a source of rare or signature poisons in the Lands of the Diamond Throne. Assassin's guilds, harrids, the Jarren, machiavellian politicians, Nightwalkers, and all manner of unsavory organizations and individuals may either be affiliated with or rivals to the Venomers. The Hive's suggested location is near Thayn in the Elder Mountains. In the past, the Guild has killed off those who have revealed their secrets and often even those who merely learned them, so few in other organizations speak of them to any but their most trusted confidantes. PCs who wish to use the Wasp Totem Warrior class described later might train at the Hive.

About AEvolutions

From their very first product, *Poisoncraft: The Dark Art*, Blue Devil Games has been among the most prolific supporters of Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*. The AEvolutions line includes acclaimed products from the enclave of AE scholars known as the Keepers of the Oath (*Akashic Nodes: The Home of Memory, Tell It To My Axe!*), a unique rpg/board game hybrid product (*Witch Stones*), NPCs of depth and distinction (*Faces of Serran*), and the forthcoming *Dragon Hunters*.

About Dark Houses

Dark Houses is a series of pdfs detailing locations of no small dread. Each release includes a chilling illustration by Bradley K. McDevitt, a complete description of the location and how to use it in your campaign, new rules relating to the location such as new spells, poisons, items, and more. Each release also ties in with a set of e-Adventure Tiles by Ed Bourelle of SkeletonKey Games with instructions for using the tiles and a bonus tile available exclusively with this product.

About Blue Devil Games

"Fiendishly Clever." Blue Devil Games is one of the highest-quality small-press publishers on the market today. Other product lines include the ENnie-nominated *Dawning Star* science-fiction campaign setting and *Passages*, the game of literary dimension-hopping during the Victorian Era.

About Bill Collins

You can never spend too much time playing RPGs. Bill Collins is a living example of that -- and a father, author, message board moderator, and itinerant game master. His motto, "Have dice, will travel", comes out of the many convention games he puts on annually.



FINDING THE GUILD HIVE

Few travel directly to the deep score in the forest floor, preferring to wait until Guild Hive traders skulk into town in the dark of night. But many less-than-savory individuals desire the pure poisons available and make the trip. At least half of them return. The Venomer's Guild is comprised of faen that nurture and shepherd giant insects to maturity to slay them or milk them for their venom. They carefully guard their proprietary processes and other secrets, protecting their home with the surrounding insects and a variety of traps. The Guild trains and maintains an environment enjoyed by many poisonous snakes, whose fangs often give up drops of deadly fluid for the Venomer's alchemists. Elite fighters serving the guild become Wasp Totem Warriors (though the sages argue as to whether there really is an insect Totem).

The routes into the canyon are not marked and it is extremely well hidden. Many of the guild are sprytes, transporting the tiny bottles of precious fluid by air. The Venomers themselves are loresong faen, curious about the magical properties of the poison, while guards and workers tend to be quickklings. Any insects that are appropriate to the local climate may be found within.

Javerdas, a sibeccai (Unfettered 5/Nightwalker 1), is the local agent for the Venomer's Guild. The DM can place him anywhere convenient to the campaign. He takes would-be visitors near the canyon, signals the Waspriders with a small bone whistle, and then departs. Javerdas never guarantees anything to visitors in case the Waspriders decide they need a few bodies to serve as hosts for giant wasp eggs. He plays a dangerous game, keeping the Hive's location secret from his Nightwalker masters but placating them with his ready supply of toxins for those certain moments. (Any powerful criminal organization can be substituted for the Nightwalkers as necessary.)

KNOWLEDGE OF THE GUILD HIVE

The following Difficulty Classes reflect the relative obscurity of the Guild.

Delve Into Collective Memory: DC 25. An akashic might see an argument between a loresong and a quickling faen over a half-dissected giant insect, a litorian tied spread-eagle between two posts while enormous insects sting him to death, or perhaps a very small dining hall where a man dressed in Sormeran garb dies slowly, his skin turning deep purple as it swells. The akashic gains a general impression of the Guild Hive's whereabouts.

Knowledge (faen): DC 25 as this is quite an obscure faen habitation.

Knowledge (history or nature): DC 30 to recall stories about a valley where giant insects are trapped for their venom and mysterious warriors train them for battle.

Knowledge (local): DC 20 for anyone who lives within ten miles. The DC rises by +5 for each additional 5 mile radius. Beyond 35

Maker's Marks

Each and every bottle of venom produced by the Guild--even the signature ebon-colored single-dose containers--has a maker's mark stamped into the clay. No more than a quarter inch in diameter, the small circle contains a long stinger piercing a grotesquely swollen hand. The vial's stopper is always sealed with trademark dark blue wax. The mark of the Venomers' Guild is only known to a few outside assassins' circles. Knowledge (local-Thayn), DC 25; Knowledge (nobility & courtesy), DC 25; and Delve Into Collective Memory, DC 30; +2 synergy bonus for 5 or more ranks of Craft (poisonmaking).



miles the check does not apply.

Knowledge (poisons): You get a +2 circumstance bonus to other Knowledge checks about the Guild Hive if you have 5 or more ranks in this skill.

See also the Maker's Mark sidebar on the preceding page.

THE CANYON RIM

Unless a guide from the Guild helps to navigate the one secret trail through the woods, approaching the canyon is difficult. The entire rim is choked with hedgerows and thorn bushes. Additionally, there are several other hazards. There is no "path" to speak of, as the guildmembers are careful to conceal any clues to the Guild's location. Thus, using the Search skill is fruitless. Two successful Survival checks (base DC 21) by one possessed of the Track feat reveal the way.

Dense thorns and brush cover the entire jagged edge of this canyon, which is over 600 feet wide and 300 feet deep at its lowest point. Treat these plants as *light undergrowth* (see DMG, Chapter 3, *Forest Terrain*), with a few areas of *heavy undergrowth*. Additionally, due to the brambles, anyone moving through this undergrowth at faster than walking speed takes 1d6 piercing damage for every minute (10 rounds) of movement. Wearing medium or heavier armor negates the damage.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS ON THE RIM

The following encounters can occur anywhere along the rim.

1. Fire Ant Nests: Large dome-shaped mounds of earth, some stretching up to six feet high, block the path at irregular intervals along the rim. These are fire ant nests, even though there are no visible openings. Anyone standing on them will quickly find the tiny red creatures swarming onto their flesh. The tiny ants move onto anyone standing within 15 feet of the nest. Treat the ants as a spider swarm (see MM, *Swarms*), except that failing a saving throw against the poison causes the victim to become *sickened* for 1d6 hours.

2. Bodies & Bombardier Beetles: Ahead lies the body of an animal (raccoon, deer with the meat cut off, or bear) writhing with maggots. As the players draw closer, they also see large black beetles scuttling along the limbs and torso. (Anyone with the Scent ability may smell rot and decay within 60 feet of the carcass.) Suddenly the beetles whirl into flight, right toward them! These bugs feed on carrion but feel threatened by anyone getting too close to their eggs. The Guild dumps dead bodies (including those of customers who don't pay) on the rim to entice the bombardier beetles to lay eggs in them. The Guild extracts the acid from the beetles directly. The beetles also serve as an early warning system to scouts who may hear the sounds of battle.

3. Elite Wasprider Patrol: Two Waspriders and two elite wasps. (See *Inhabitants of the Hive* later in the text.)

4. Black Diamondback Nest: This section of the rim is favored by certain local serpents. Over the years, natural selection removed the less aggressive and stealthy diamondbacks. Selective breeding by the Guild created the highly aggressive and deadly sable vipers that remain. All

d6	ENCOUNTER
1	Fire Ant Nests
2	Bodies & Bombardier Beetles
3	Elite Wasprider Patrol
4	Black Diamondback Nest
5	The Garden
6	Lost Shipment



snakes found in or around the canyon are equivalent to medium or large vipers and may have warrior levels. (See *New Rules* later in the text.)

5. The Garden: Well hidden by thick brush and trees, along this section of the rim the Guild maintains a large garden. During warm weather, the faen grow vegetables to vary the diet. (Grains are imported from elsewhere.) It is visible from the air, so they've taken some pains to make it look like it's not in use. Carefully planted trees and brush seemingly growing wild in the middle of the rows make it look as if it lies fallow. Tools hide in a hollow tree. Nets thrown over the sensitive plants make that part look like a nasty, weed-choked area but still allow plenty of light. The faen who tend it (all commoners) do their work after sunrise and before sunset. During harvesting, Waspriders patrol the area.

6. Lost Shipment: A small wooden crate lies broken in some thick brush, having gotten lost during transport. The crate bears the Guild's mark and contains two dozen single-dose containers of poison. How many remain intact and what poison they contain can be altered to suit the DM's particular needs.

THE CANYON FLOOR

Gazing down from the rim at first light, spider webs glitter with spangled dew all across a large brown scar in the ground. Beneath the webs, the ground appears choked with mounds the size of houses, holding round brown shells and collapsing vermin carcasses. Imagine a spider's web in a ditch with the debris from thousands of insect husks below. Now picture it large enough that pine trees growing at the base won't reach the rim. That's the canyon. The mounds are the collected carapaces of dead giant vermin that the Guild or its spiders have allowed to fall here over the three generations that they've been operating. The air in the canyon is thick with a peculiar odor rising from the dead insects broiling in the sun.

Buzzing swarms of gnats and mosquitoes cloud close enough to obscure the far rim. There are so many insects in air of the canyon that targets more than 10 feet away enjoy concealment (20% miss chance). In the center, barely visible through the spinning, dancing swarms, is a large, earthen pile of what appears to be mud. It is the size of a castle. Flitting here and there, sprytes guide giant bees, wasps and flying ants into the hive, while quickling faen heave desiccated bodies out of the top of the mysterious structure. By any measure, the Guild Hive is a sight to behold.

Anyone on foot must wade through the house-high piles of vermin exoskeletons to get to the main entrance of the Guild Hive. These unstable mounds shift frequently, cascading dust, sticky remains of webs, and sharp bits of legs or chitin down on anyone in the area. Movement through is treated as hampered by both the equivalent of thick undergrowth (x 1/2) and a bad surface (x 1/2). Anyone on foot moves at one-quarter their normal speed unless they find a path, which allows for movement one-half speed.

The faen make paths by clearing areas, gluing together random insect bodies into sculptures, and piling up rubble to create narrow, twisting walkways that occasionally become tunnels through the debris. Anyone larger than Small size must stoop when passing through a tunnel area, reducing their movement in half again. If the Venomer's Guild knows that there are hostile intruders in their canyon, they set traps with small, envenomed darts or pitfalls into gaping holes with giant wasp and bee stingers set at the bottom like punji sticks. Giant centipedes also tend to favor the dark areas underneath the husks,



making their presence known when they scuttle out across someone's foot and bite.

At night, the canyon dims and the buzz and whine of insects change to a deep drone. Anyone walking the paths runs the risk of brushing against an insect body or shell, and starting a small cascade of fragments that will alert the Hive. For every five minutes on a path, the characters must roll a Reflex save (DC 15). Anyone who fails triggers a noisy clatter as something tumbles out of the webs and shards around. Any guards on duty get a new Listen check to note the disturbance. Due to conditions, there is a -2 circumstance penalty to detect and disable any traps at night.

Specific encounters in the canyon are left to the DM's discretion. Some ideas include: sprytes with the undead template and poisoned claws, swarms of dragonflies that breathe fire, and dying visitors driven mad by poison who seek a more peaceful end at the blade of an adventurer's sword.

THE GUILD HIVE

Five stories of dark-red, rock-hard mud tower above the center of the canyon, poised on a mesa of hard black stone around which a mighty river once flowed. As wide as it is tall, the Guild Hive is home to three dozen faen and sprytes, and half that number of elite insects. Members of the Guild have lived, worked, and died here for three or more generations, breeding new varieties of giant insects and constantly improving their skill at extracting venom from the surrounding vermin. These faen resemble the typical laughing, prankish kind that one might see reciting dirty limericks in a crowded tavern--except for their hard, twisted edges.

Interior heights (except for the Grand Hall) are all comfortably sized for faen. Any Medium or Large creature must stoop or crawl to move through the Hive. Those of size Huge and up cannot fit inside the cramped quarters. Medium creatures move at half speed, and Large creatures move at one-quarter speed. The walls are as hard as stone and, for purposes of hardness and damage, are treated as such. They have a hardness of 8 and 180 hit points per cubic foot. The walls range in thickness from one foot to three feet at the base of the structure.

The following entries describe specific locations in the Guild Hive. Each entry includes a number corresponding to the e-Adventure Tile maps located on pages 27 and 29.

1. Grand Hall: This 40-foot-wide entryway has a six-foot ceiling, high enough for humans, verrik, litorians and sibeccai to stand up comfortably. A giant might find their head brushing the ceiling and invariably have to bow or stoop to enter. On the far side is a faen-sized door, glowing with a permanent *rune of warding* created by a 10th-level runethane (Will DC 19), who once was Guildmaster. The Warder, Elai Witherhand, bears a magic ring that allows her to suppress the rune to allow visitors to enter. Hoeth Silkwalker, the transformed ettercap, lurks on the ceiling when visitors are expected; otherwise, he can be found in his room (see the entry later in the text).

2. Dining Hall: A human or verrik, perhaps even a small giant, can stand up in this area with its six-foot vaulted ceiling. With high, long windows at the end of many tiny niches, and a table for the Masters of the Guild in the center, this is a grand sight even by faen standards. Meals are held at dusk every night, with faen servants bustling up and down the tables offering all manner of vermin and reptile delicacies. Roast rattler, caramelized bee



legs, and fried centipede are favorites. Imported goods are welcomed by the Guild, although they often don't make it to the evening meal as hungry guild members find ways to pilfer a taste here and a nip there

Maith Loamstrider can always be found at a feast. Many of the other "normal" Guild masters will attend in order to greet visitors--or size them up if they distrust them.

3. Kitchen: Spicy smells waft down the corridor from this location. This cozy room contains a fireplace at the end of one of the cells, fed with wood by busy faen. Cooks and assistants scurry about. A huge kettle bubbles and steams on the fire, giving off scents of rosemary and pepper. On a bench near the door, a blonde-haired faen woman dices up vegetables with remarkable speed and precision. Hanging in another cell are a variety of snake carcasses being smoked above applewood chips. At any given time there are $1d4+4$ servants here. They alert the others at the first sign of trouble by ringing a special bell.

The chief cook is Raula Queenshand (Commoner 1, hp 5, Craft (cooking) +9). She greets peaceful visitors politely, while barring their way into her territory. She is slightly vain; anyone who butters her up gets a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks. Her basic attitude is Friendly, unless someone takes food without asking, upon which she becomes Hostile.

4. Privies: Several of the cells at the end of this hall contain public facilities for the Hive. The typical faen sense of humor is present: Over the door a sign reads "Duck!" There is no special accommodation for any of the large folks that occasionally visit. Anyone Medium-sized or larger must squeeze into the tiny stalls, or use a faen-sized thunder mug or chamber pot in their chambers or outside. There is a secret passage to the Meeting Room (see below) in one wall that opens when a specific song is played in the room. Locating and opening the portal without using the song requires a Search check (DC 20) and a Disable Device check (DC 25).

5. Meeting Room: This room has three means of entry: the corridors, a secret passage from the privy, and a spryte-sized vertical tunnel running from Gloemi's quarters above.

6. Chrysalis Chamber & Ceremony Room: Though few choose to undergo the transformation to spryte, the Guild has a room for that most important of ceremonies. They also hold other, lesser rituals here when needed. The entry has a thick wooden door painted green and carved with intricate scenes of faen life and sprytely changes (hardness 5, hp 20, Strength DC 23 to break). Gloemi and Maith are the only two with keys to the room. Otherwise, there is an expensive lock on the door that is hard to pick (Open Lock DC 30). Inside hang numerous *objets d'arts* crafted over the years by the celebrants.

7. Apothecary: Dominating the western half of the Guild Hive, Nemmoth Leafcaller's poison brewing room is guarded by many wards both magical and mundane. Other than the main corridor, there are no stairs, hatches, ladders or other means of entry except for a window housed in one of the cells, a dizzying 150 feet from the canyon floor. Strange fumes and acrid odors often waft out of here, which is why it is placed so remotely within the structure. The room itself has a four-foot-high ceiling. There is a jumble of low benches piled with a complete alchemist's lab (value 500 gp).

Amidst the braziers, mixing vessels, and mortars and pestles, Nemmoth and her assistant take venom sacs and raw poisons and refine them into pure products for sale. The yield is approximately fifty percent of the raw materials by volume. For example, every ten ounces of raw venom will provide five ounces of refined poison. Her assistant Tuill (when



he's there) swiftly transfers these into waiting glass or ceramic vials and seals them with the Guild's signature dark-blue wax. Tuill, in turn, takes the fruits of their labors to the venom stores, where Gloemi bundles them up to send out with the next courier or to wait in storage for a rare, determined visitor. During the summer months, venom gathering becomes backlogged because the giant insects are slaughtered faster than the poison crafters can turn it into the finished product. By the middle of the winter, the supply often runs slim, so Tuill and Nemmoth turn to making acids, other alchemicals, or occasionally very rare poisons that require extensive time and more obscure reagents.

8. Venom Stores: This long hallway contains numerous storage cells, each kept sealed with a *door warning* spell and a *heightened eldritch web* trap on the handle. (CR3, Caster Level 5, 20-foot radius, Reflex DC 14 to avoid the webs, Str DC 20 to break out of the webs, 1d4 electricity damage per round stuck in the web; Search DC 20, Disable Device DC 20) Unless someone says "avert" in faen before touching the handle, the trap triggers, filling the nearby corridor with crackling electrified webs. Some protect empty, "dummy" cells. Only two are actually used to store the Guild's products. The back wall of these cells has neatly labeled shelves (again in faen) indicating what is on each shelf. There are extra supplies of venom--both for the guards' own weapons and for future sale. At any given time, there are 3d8 vials of venom and 2d6 vials of antitoxin in each cell, divided up between the different types available with wasp- and spider-based poisons being the most plentiful. (See the DMG or *Poisoncraft: The Dark Art* also from Blue Devil Games for sample poisons, and see the New Poisons section below.)

9. Cutting Room: The walls of this room are marked with line-drawings in black ink of all major vermin found in the canyon along with dissection notes. (Anyone who tries to cut open a vermin using one of these diagrams gains a +2 competence bonus to the Heal check.) Dead or captured spiders and other non-flying vermin are brought here for slaughter and venom sac removal. Two expert vermin surgeons, surgically trained faen, dissect the giant centipedes, spiders, and other vermin of the canyon. Within a matter of minutes of an arrival, a bug is stretched out and lashed down by workers. The surgeons use long, sharp scalpels and crystal chisels to open carapaces and extract the sacs with their precious poisons. The remains are carted off and thrown out a window to the valley floor.

10. Milking Station: This tall, narrow room wends its way vertically up through the Guild Hive. It holds several cloth targets with buckets beneath the cloth. Here the Guild milks the wasps and bees of their venom. (Unlike their pedestrian counterparts, giant bees don't die when they sting. The Venomers prefer the hornet and wasp venom to the bees' though.) One of the Guild's spellcasters, usually Maith, casts illusions over the targets. Beaters drive the insects from their hive to lead them to several access ports into the milking station. They hide in alcoves running the length of the room while the enraged insect stings the illusionary victim repeatedly, causing its venom to drip into the bucket. Eventually, the exhausted insect is chased back out and the poison sent to the apothecary.

11. Viper Breeding Pits: In addition to the wild serpents found throughout the canyon, the Guild keeps four pits full of vipers for breeding and poison milking located in the cells found in this room. The keeper is Elai Witherhand, who trains all the other viper wranglers at their tasks. These pits have up to 3d6 fine vipers, or 1d6+3 tiny vipers, in them at any one time. Large iron-mesh grates cover them up safely. The walls are festooned with specialized equipment for snake handling: thick leather gauntlets, snake snares (long poles with a small



noose around the end for looping around the serpent to pluck it from the pit), and small ceramic containers with tiny holes in the lid for transporting snakes.

12. The Proving Chamber: Screams occasionally echo from deep in the bowels of the hive. The room descends several feet leveling off at the lowest level. It contains three small cells along with masterwork torture instruments (500 gp new, market value 250 gp--if you can find a buyer) and manacles. Captured intruders or guests that are not well received may be brought down here to test out new venoms and poisons. When customers bring rare substances for Nemmoth Leafcaller, the brewmistress, to fashion into poison, she first tries out her concoctions. The unlucky test subjects are kept here until needed. Food is shoved in through tiny openings in the cells. There is no light and the air is foul. On the walls (if anyone has a light source) are various markings: scratches where several prisoners have kept a calendar of days, a poem in an ancient language, and even graffiti depicting the Hive dwellers in various funny yet unflattering ways. The chamber can also be accessed by a secret passage from the wasp platform that only Soern and his trusted aides knows about.

13. Wasp Platform: Halfway up the Hive's northern face is a flat, wide opening. Here the elite Waspriders take off and land in the course of their business. The cells house the wasps and attendant gear such as harnesses and barding. The platform is large enough that up to five of the enormous insects may launch from it simultaneously. A narrower passage leading from the southwest to the exterior of the Hive affords an alternate means of egress.

14. Living Quarters: These winding passages house numerous cells that serve as rooms for the waspriders, apartments for guests of the Guild, and quarters for the servants and lackeys. At any given time, about a quarter of the total population is asleep here, particularly guards and waspriders. If the alarm is sounded, they can muster in 1d6+1 rounds and respond to the threat. All rooms in this area have simple, unlocked doors. The inhabitants may bar them while sleeping if they wish. Maith Loamstrider, Nemmoth Leafcaller and Tuill Webskipper have all purchased locks for their doors (Open Lock DC 25). In addition, Maith places a *door warning* on his room's entry most every night.

15. Hoerth's Room: An aberrant faen names this circular space as his home. No one is certain what disease Hoerth Silkwalker caught, but ever since he returned grotesquely altered from a spider hunt, he was quarantined just the same. Now he remains silent and brooding in his room, waiting for his cousins and former friends to come back so that he can

d8	EMPTY CELL ENCOUNTERS
1	Garth Blackwing, Wasprider trainee
2	A victim, chained to the wall, near death
3	Escaped giant wolf spider (MM, <i>medium monstrous spider</i>)
4	Thenna Ringsinger, Nightwalker spy
5	Mother scorpion and her brood (MM, <i>medium monstrous scorpion</i> and <i>scorpion swarm</i>)
6	Two young faen caught in an embarrassing rendezvous
7	A still presently brewing moonshine from insect hemolymph and wild blossoms
8	Nemmoth Leafcaller and Tuill Webskipper in a heated argument



try to break free. Food is brought daily, but pushed under a slot in the door of the prison from a distance. Once a year, Hoerth is removed to obtain his venom. He invariably tries to escape, and his captors always subdue him with nets and clubs, take him upstairs, drain his unique poison and return him to his cell. This has made him somewhat deranged. The creature is likely to attack anyone who enters, unless they are extremely cautious.

16. Gloemi's Room: This opulent space is home to the current leader of the Guild. It contains numerous trophies and trinkets Golemi has gathered in her adventures, including her prized collection of decorative poison bottles. A secret passage on the floor of the room opens to a vertical tube leading to the meeting room (Search DC 25).

INHABITANTS OF THE HIVE

This section details some of the NPCs and other creatures found in the Guild Hive. Full statistics are provided for major NPCs. Items marked with an asterisk (*) indicate a new rule found in this supplement.

BLACK DIAMONDBACKS

These snakes are especially bred by the faen for their aggressiveness, venom potency, and ability to survive among the powerful auras of the Hive's hidden valley. The ceremonies of their faen caretakers enable them to grow both in size and lethality. Small black diamondbacks use the statistics for medium vipers (see MM, *Animals*). For larger or advanced diamondbacks, add warrior levels as needed. For example, a CR 3 diamondback encounter could be either a medium viper with three warrior levels or a large viper with two warrior levels.

BOEN GNATS

These tiny, electric-blue insects fly about light and heat sources and are attracted to scents given off by mammals, whose blood they feed upon. The gnats travel in swarms composed of thousands of flying vermin that sting any living creature in its path. Using a gram of boen gnat stingers to make poison reduces the time to make one dose by one day (to a minimum of one day).

Boen Gnat Swarm: Diminutive Vermin (Swarm); CR 2; HD: 6d8-6; hp 21; Dying/Dead: -1/-8; Init: +4; Spd: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 30 ft. (poor); AC: 18 (+4 size, +4 Dex), touch 18, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple: +4/-; Atk: Swarm (2d6); Full Attack: Swarm (2d6); Space/Reach: 10 ft./0 ft.; SA: Distraction; SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., immune to weapon damage, swarm traits, vermin traits; SV: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Abilities: Str 1, Dex 19, Con 8, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2; Skills: Listen +4, Spot +4; Feats: —

Combat: A boen gnat swarm deals 2d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a boen gnat swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: A boen gnat swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.



ELAI WITHERHAND

Tall for her kind, Elai stands three feet and eleven inches high with dark brown hair and soft brown eyes. She commonly wears a simple, green dress. Elai wears her hair in a tight bun, held in place with dried, lacquered wasp stingers. She fashions fake fingernails from the iridescent wings of vermin to cover her fingers, and wears a necklace of fire beetle glands.

The others whisper that this loresong faen once poisoned a powerful magister, who used his last spell to destroy her left hand. The poisoning may well be true, but it is not the explanation for her disfigurement. When Elai was young, a snake bit her on the hand. The limb withered, but did not completely die. She is right-handed, so it has no significant impact on her daily chores. However, if forced to use her left hand for any task requiring manual dexterity, Elai suffers a -2 circumstance penalty. Elai serves the Green, but has a truly odd outlook on what that entails.

Elai Witherhand: female loresong faen Greenbond 6; CR 6; Small humanoid [faen]; HD 6d6+6; hp 30; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+5 armor, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 16; BAB +3; Grp -3; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1/x3, masterwork halfspear); Full Atk: +3 melee (1d6-1/x3, masterwork halfspear) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ spell-like abilities, low-light vision, nature sense, infuse with life (3/day, 2d8+6), nature's gift (+3 divine bonus to any d20 roll Elai makes in the next round), trackless step, bond with the Green, percipience; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 6, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Craft (poisonmaking) +11, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +11, Knowledge (Nature) +11; Craft Single-Use Item, Elemental Mage (fire), Fey Mage, Way with Animals

Possessions: +1 leather coat, masterwork halfspear, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of scent tracker*, *potion of precise vision*, *potion of predict weather*, *potion of charm*, 2 oils of magic weapon, wand of transfer lesser wounds, +1 cloak of resistance, ring to bypass rune of warding in grand hall, 2 doses of black adder venom, 4 doses of silver dust (for faen template), 6 red gems (for fire template)

Languages: Common, faen, goblin, troll

Spells Per Day: 5/4/4/3

Spells Readied (simple, Plant and Positive Energy only): 9/6/5/4; 0 – canny effort, detect poison, enchanting flavor, hygiene, read magic, saving grace, scent bane, seeker, touch of weakness; 1 – charm, distraction, fireburst, glamour, obscuring mist, transfer lesser wounds; 2 – drain away speed, energy blade (fire), greenspy, protective charm; 3 – attack from within (fire), conjure repast, invisibility, summon minor elemental

ELDRITCH SPIDERS

These unique spiders were bred to absorb electricity from thunderstorms and discharge it later as a defense mechanism. Their webs function like a heightened *eldritch web* spell, dealing 1d4 electrical damage to anyone caught in it (see Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*, *Spell Descriptions*). Additionally, their bite discharges electricity in lieu of venom, dealing an additional 1d6 points of electricity damage. They have a base CR 2. Otherwise, they use the statistics for medium monstrous spiders (see MM, *vermin*).



ELITE WASPS

Bred and trained from birth to be more intelligent, these giant wasps are the mounts of the dozen faen waspriders employed by the guild for defense. They have an average Intelligence of 14, have light armor proficiency, and may advance in Unfettered, Warmain or Warrior levels. If their rider is killed, they act intelligently.

GLOEMI WASPWRANGLER

Standing a full eight inches high, this golden-haired, blue-eyed spryfe favors dark purple clothes. Her large antennae and shiny, hard-looking skin cause startled looks from many, however. She is the oldest fourth-generation dweller of the Hive and is the current leader of the Guild. Gloemi rose to power after the death of the last guild master, who, despite being resistant to every known poison, succumbed to a spider bite.

Gloemi Waspwrangler female spryfe wasp totem warrior* 9/akashic 3; CR 12; Tiny Fey; HD 9d8 + 3d6 +12; hp 67; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., flight 30 ft (average); AC 25 (+6 armor, +1 ring, +5 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size), touch 18, flat-footed 20; BAB +11; Grp +7; Atk +21 melee (1d4+5/19-20, +2 dagger); Full Atk: +21/+16/+11 melee (1d4+5/19-20, +2 dagger) and +21 melee (1d4+4/19-20, +2 Devanian dagger) or +19 ranged (1d8+1/19-20, +1 light crossbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA Sting of the Wasp (+1d6 sneak attack); SQ +4 to saves vs. poison, +10 feet to movement when making charge attack, skill memory (+2), delve into collective memory (d20+5); SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 20 (18), Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poisonmaking) +17, Handle Animal +15, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Dangerous Beasts) +16, Knowledge (Nature) +19, Listen +14, Spot +14; Ambidexterity, Rapid Strike, Resistance to Poison, Two-Weapon Fighting, Venomdrinker*, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization

Possessions: +2 dagger, +2 Devanian dagger, +2 Devanian chain shirt, +1 light crossbow, 20 bolts, +2 gloves of dexterity, +1 ring of protection, oil of advance poison, 2 potions of lesser battle healing (caster level 3), 1 dose of deathblade poison.

Languages: Common, faen, draconic

Giant Wasp (animal companion): Size/Type: Large Vermin; Hit Dice: 9d8+22 (94 hp); Initiative: +1; Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (good); Armor Class: 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+14; Attack: Sting +9 melee (1d8+4 plus poison); Full Attack: Sting +9 melee (1d8+4 plus poison); Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.; Special Attacks: Poison; Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 9; Skills: Spot +11, Survival +1*; Feats: Sturdy (6th), Improved Natural Attack (9th). Poison Ex): Fort DC 16, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con. Skills: Giant bees have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. (*Giant wasps have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks to orient themselves.)

Skills & Feats: Search +8, Sneak +6, Spot +9, Survival +1*, Tumble +9; Improved Critical (sting), Weapon Focus (sting)

Possessions: Large wasp chain barding (light armor, 400 gp, 50 pounds)

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Giant wasps have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks. *They also have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks to orient themselves.



Vermin traits: Immune to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

HOERTH SILKWALKER

Hoerth was caught in a magical explosion in a spider web, which changed him into a unique creature. He is an ettercap (see MM), but he retained his prior skills, class abilities, and mental abilities.

Hoerth Silkwalker, Ettercap/Snake Totem Warrior 2/Warrior 2; Medium-Size Aberration; CR 7; HD: 5d8 + 2d10 + 2d12 + 22; hp 72; Dying/Dead: -3/-15; Init: +3 (Dex); Spd: 40 ft (8 squares)., climb 30 ft. (6 squares); AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +4 armor), touch 13, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple: +7/+9; Atk: Bite +10 melee (1d8+2 plus poison); Full Attack: Bite +10 melee Bite +10 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) and 2 short swords +10 melee (1d6+2/19-20); S/R: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA: Web, poison; SQ: Low-light vision

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Climb +10, Craft (poisonmaking) +4, Hide +9*, Listen +4, Spot +8*; Ambidexterity, Fleet of Foot, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Sturdy, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Possessions: 2 +1 *Devanian short swords*, especially modified for use on Hoerth's claws, masterwork *Devanian chain shirt* (custom-made for his new form), *detonation of eldritch web*.

Languages: Common, faen

Web (Ex): An ettercap can cast a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets of up to Medium-size (see page 102 in the Player's Handbook for details on net attacks). The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20) or burst the web with a successful Strength check (DC 26). The web has 6 hit points and takes double damage from fire. Ettercaps can also create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square. They usually position these to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web or stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing receive a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot-square section has 6 hit points and takes double damage from fire. An ettercap can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web.

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fortitude save (DC 15); initial damage 1d6 temporary Dexterity, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Dexterity.

Skills: *Ettercaps in shadow receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Spot checks.

MAITH LOAMSTRIDER

Holding a staff that appears to be a gigantic blue-green insect stinger dripping with venom, this red-haired loresong faen magister stands approximately four feet high-tall for his kind. He wears a dark-red leather vest, a white shirt, and black leather pants. Maith has quite the sense of humor. He serves as majordomo of the Guild because he lost a bet. Maith personally greets all travelers that make it through the vermin swarms. He invites everyone



to dine with him, regardless of the hour of day. However, anyone that he takes a dislike to (a reaction of Neutral or worse) he treats to a “special feast.” He casts *conjure repast* and uses the earth template (see *Monte Cook’s Arcana Evolved, Spell Templates*) to make the food harden. Grapes become as sling stones. Bread may only be broken with a chisel. Maith enjoys watching overly hungry guests dig into a “hearty” meal and chip a tooth. He enjoys using his spells to annoy people. In a fight, he favors toxic-templated *sorcerous blasts* (see *New Rules* later in the text). Unlike most of his peers, Maith knows nothing about making poison. His power makes him valuable.

Maith Loamstrider: male loresong faen Magister8; CR 8; Small humanoid [faen]; HD 8d6+12; hp 46; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 16; BAB +4; Grp -3; Atk +3 melee (1d6-2/x2, staff) or +6 ranged (spell); Full Atk: +3 melee (1d6-2/x2, staff) or +6 ranged (spell); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ spell-like abilities, low-light vision, the magister’s staff, familiarity with magic; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Magic) +15, Knowledge (Nature) +15, Knowledge (Runes) +15, Spellcraft +17; Baneful Mage*, Eldritch Training, Elemental Mage (earth), Exotic Spell (*forcebeam*), Spell Affinity (*drain away speed* (lesser))

Possessions: Ring of magical might (1st), ring of protection +1, bracers of armor +2, potion of predict weather, scroll of veil of darkness, charm of lesser battle healing, scroll of heightened flight, scroll of heightened invisibility, scroll of sorcerous blast (water), 3 doses of andrecite, 5 pinches of powdered steel (for earth template), 4 doses of Lazyfeet I (small centipede poison)

Languages: Common, draconic, faen, giant, goblin, troll, uncommon

Spells Per Day: 5/6/4/4/3

Spells Readied (Complex and all Earth spells. DC 15 + level; DC 16 + level): 10/7/6/5/4; 0 – appropriate size, canny effort, detect poison, disorient, door warning, enchanting flavor, hygiene, read magic, telekinesis (lesser), touch of nausea; 1 – charm, cold blast, conjure weapon, distraction, obscuring mist, stone blast, transfer lesser wounds; 2 – beastskin (lesser), drain away speed (lesser), earth burst, energy blade (fire), muddy ground, protective charm, silent sheath; 3 – attack from within, conjure repast, dispel magic, forcebeam, summon minor elemental; 4 – chains of vengeance, dimensional door, stone arm, stone leg

NEMMOTH LEAFCALLER

This female spryte stands a sparse foot-and-a-half high. She possesses iridescent green wings akin to a dragonfly’s but is otherwise unremarkable in appearance. Her hands and clothes are invariably stained with the remnants of her latest concoction.

Those Damnable Faen!

Faen are, by nature, highly independent minded. They resent taking orders, they often ignore or “forget” their assigned duties. At any given time, a gardener can be found wandering the paths of the canyons, looking for a tasty beetle snack. Gloemi might decide to go taunt spiders by pulling other insects from their webs and setting them free. Tuill has been known to disappear during crucial moments of poison-brewing, leaving Nemmoth to fend for herself. This compels Nemmoth to abandon her work to hunt him down, losing all progress for a day. Similarly, a member of the Guild may simply be in a puckish mood. Guests might find bugs of all size and description in their beds. A disliked guest might find a mildly poisonous vermin in the privy! The faen love to tell tall tales about “Old Hundred Eyes”, a spider the size of a dragon that lurks underneath one of the piles of insect husks. Sometimes they present “parting gifts” of insect repellent, which of course has the exact opposite effect, attracting every hungry bug nearby.



Nemmoth Leafcaller: female sprytc Wind Witch7; CR 7; Tiny Faen; HD 7d6+7; hp 34; Init +6; Spd 10 ft., flight 30 ft. (average); AC 22 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +2 size, +1 natural armor, +2 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 20; BAB +5; Grp +1; Atk +7 melee (1d6/19-20, *wind blade*) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork crossbow); Full Atk: +7 melee (1d6/19-20, *wind blade*) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork crossbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA Spells, *wind blade*, *gusting wind*; SQ spell-like abilities, low-light vision, air resistance 20, familiarity with magic; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +13, Concentration +13, Craft (poisonmaking) +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +11; Energy Mage (acid), Improved Initiative, Skill Application (Alchemy & Craft (Poison))

Possessions: +1 *leather coat*, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, *detonation of drain away speed (lesser)*, *oil of magic weapon*, *detonation of summon minor air elemental (lesser)*, *potion of acrobatics*, 3 *potions of transfer wounds (lesser)*, *potion of dexterity boost*, *oil of (cloak of) darkness*, *scroll of battle healing (lesser)*, *scroll of attack from within (acid)*, *amulet of natural armor* +1

Languages: Common, faen, draconic

Wind blade (Su): Wield blade the size of a short sword in two hands. Blade grants a +2 deflection bonus to AC when drawn.

Gust (Sp): *Gusting wind* 7/day.

Spells Per Day: 4/4/3/1

Spells Readied (Simple and complex Acid spells. DC 13 + level): 5/5/4/1; 0 – *bash*, *canny effort*, *detect poison*, *saving grace*, *seeker*; 1 – *compelling command*, *conjure energy creature (acid)*, *mind stab*, *resistance*, *transfer wounds (lesser)*; 2 – *ability boost (lesser)*, *destructive grip*, *energy blade (acid)*, *sealed door (lesser)*; 3 – *hand of battle*

SOERN EBONSPIKE

Soern is a beast of a faen. He stands a shade under three feet tall and weighs on the order of 35 pounds but manages to strike an imposing image nonetheless. Notably, the entire left side of his face is pocked with scars from the sting of a wasp swarm many years prior. He always carries his spikestick, which is fashioned from wasp stingers and easily has double the normal number of a standard weapon of its kind.

Soern Ebonspike, Wasprider Leader: male quickling Totem Warrior (wasp) 7; CR 7; Small humanoid (faen); HD 7d10+14; hp 56; Init +4 (+3 Dex, +1 race); Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 17; BAB +7; Grp +5; Atk +11 melee (1d8+6 plus poison/x3, venomstick, used two-handed); Full Atk: +11/+6 melee (1d8+6 plus poison/x3, venomstick, used two-handed); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA: Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ run, low-light vision, totem animal bond; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poisonmaking) +10, Ride +13, Sneak +12, Tumble +12, Spot +11; Bond with Item (spikestick), Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Resistance to Poison, Ride-by Attack, Weapon Focus (spikestick), Weapon Specialization (spikestick)

Possessions: +1 *venomstick* (spikestick with 3 doses of giant wasp venom) (2510), +1 *chain shirt* (1250), *detonation of drain away speed (lesser)* (300), 2 *potions of transfer wounds (lesser)* (100), *token of safe fall*, +1 *ring of protection*, *oil of (cloak of) darkness* (600), *detonation of eldritch web*



Giant Wasp (animal companion): Size/Type: Large Vermin; Hit Dice: 7d8+18 (74 hp); Initiative: +1; Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (good); Armor Class: 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+13; Attack: Sting +8 melee (1d6+4 plus poison); Full Attack: Sting +8 melee (1d6+4 plus poison); Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.; Special Attacks: Poison; Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 9; Skills: Spot +9, Survival +1*; Feats: Sturdy (6th). Poison Ex): Fort DC 15, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con. Skills: Giant bees have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. *They also have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks to orient themselves.

TUILL WEBSKIPPER

Nemmoth's occasionally loyal servant, Tuill is never far from her side--unless he's out having fun. He was on his way to becoming a fine marksman but was intrigued by the art of poisoncraft and spends all his time and energy learning and improving his skills, occasionally at the foot of his master and occasionally by his own trial and error.

Tuill Webskipper: male loresong Expert3; CR 2; Small humanoid (faen); HD 3d6-3; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 size), touch 12, flat-footed 14; BAB +2; Grp -3; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk: Atk +3 melee (1d6-1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SQ spell-like abilities, low-light vision; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +14, Appraise +8, Balance +8, Climb +4, Craft (poisonmaking) +13, Escape Artist +6, Knowledge (Dangerous Beasts) +8, Knowledge (Nature) +8, Listen +6, Sneak +12, Spot +6, Tumble +10; Affinity with Skill (alchemy), Skill Application (Alchemy & Craft (Poison)), Skill Focus (Craft (poison))

Possessions: Masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow, studded leather jack, 10 bolts, 3 flasks of acid,

Languages: Common, faen, draconic

VERMIN CHIURGEONS

The guildmembers are charged with harvesting raw materials from insects for use by the poisoncrafters. Though they possess a measure of competence in creating poison themselves, their duties focus on the initial part of the process.

Vermin Chiurgeons: loresong expert 2; CR 1; Small humanoid (faen); HD 2d6+2; hp 12; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size), touch 15, flat-footed 15; BAB +1; Grp -5; Atk -1 melee (1d6-2/x2, sickle); Full Atk: Sickle -1 melee (1d6-2/x2) or light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SQ low-light vision, spell-like abilities; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 6, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +8, Climb +0, Craft (poisonmaking) +8, Handle Animal +3, Heal +5, Knowledge (Dangerous Beasts) +6, Knowledge (Nature) +6, Listen +5, Ride +8, Sneak +12, Spot +5, Tumble +10; Resistance to Poison, Skill Application (Craft (Poison) & Alchemy)

Possessions: leather coat, sickle, masterwork poison harvesting tools, light crossbow, 10 bolts, 2 tokens/detonations with a second level spell



WASPRIDERS

Defenders of the Guild, the waspriders often get into mischief but muster and organize in an instant if an alarm is sounded. They are particularly skilled at attacking in concert and used advanced tactics, taking full advantage of their speed and maneuverability.

Waspriders: quickling Totem Warrior (wasp) 4; CR 4; Small humanoid (faen); HD 4d10+8; hp 35; Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 race); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 17; BAB +4; Grp +2; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3 plus poison/x3, venomstick, used two-handed); Full Atk: +8 melee (1d8+3 plus poison/x3, venomstick, used two-handed); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA: Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ run, low-light vision; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poison) +7, Ride +9, Sneak +8, Tumble +9, Spot +8; Bond with Item (spikestick), Mounted Combat, Resistance to Poison, Ride-by Attack, Weapon Focus (spikestick)

Possessions: Venomstick (masterwork spikestick with 3 doses of giant wasp venom) (510), +1 chain shirt (1250), detonation of drain away speed (lesser) (300), 2 potions of transfer wounds (lesser) (100), token of safe fall

Wasp companion: Medium Vermin; Hit Dice: 4d8; hp 17 hp; Initiative: +2; Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (good); Armor Class: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3; Attack: Sting +3 melee (1d4 plus poison); Full Attack: Sting +3 melee (1d4 plus poison); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; Special Attacks: Poison; Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 9; Skills: Spot +5, Survival +2*; Feats: —; **Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based. **Skills:** Giant bees have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. *They also have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks to orient themselves.

WORKERS

The Hive needs manual labor. They employ primarily quicklings whose parents were servants of the Guild. Many of them are third-generation servants, who are hardy and resistant to poison.

Workers: quickling commoner 1; CR 1/2; Small humanoid (faen); HD 1d6+3; hp 6; Init +2 (+1 Dex, +1 race); Spd 20 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size), touch 12, flat-footed 12; BAB +0; Grp -5; Atk club +0 melee (1d6-1/x2, club - used two-handed); Full Atk: club +0 melee (1d6-1/x2, club - used two-handed); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SQ low-light vision, run; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poisonmaking plus one of the DM's choice) +5, Handle Animal +3; Chitinous Hide (as Iron Flesh), Resistance to Poison

THE FINEST POISON IN ALL THE LAND

The Guild can make any poison created from a venomous insect or animal, plus several exotic toxins described below. They tend to have wasp- and spider-based poisons due to the abundance of those creatures. Generally speaking they have up to 5,000 gp worth of their specialty poisons on hand, in addition to the numbers noted above in the Apothecary entry



earlier in the text. Given sufficient notice and the right raw ingredients, the guild masters can attempt to manufacture any specific poison a customer desires. They do not search for rare materials themselves, so customers must arrange delivery for unusual components (typically for poisons not detailed here or in the DMG).

NEW POISONS

Toiling away in the secret laboratories of the Hive, each generation of faen has concocted a new poison specialty. Although uniformly expensive, those who favor poison often use these rare brews to harry their enemies.

DM's Note: These entries were created using the expanded poison-creation rules in *Poisoncraft: The Dark Art* also by Blue Devil Games. You do not need that book to use these poisons in your game. Just ignore the additional information contained in these descriptions (such as the poison family and Exposure DC). These poisons deal alternate forms of damage to characters rather than the typical ability score damage.

Boen Prowess Venom: Distilled boen gnat venom; blue, slightly sour-smelling liquid; hymenoptera family; injury DC 18; 1d8 Base Attack Bonus/1d8 BAB; Craft DC 26; price 900 gp; Exposure DC 18. The oldest venom discovered by the guild, the crafty and underhanded prize this toxin when facing a stronger and more capable enemy, especially for use against a rival before a contest or duel. BAB cannot be reduced below +0. Spells that normally heal ability damage restore a like amount of BAB damage. BAB damage normally heals at a rate of +1 per day.

Dun Recluse Tincture: Refined spider poison elixir; odorless milky-white viscous fluid; araneida family; ingestion DC 20; 1d6 base Will Save bonus/1d6 Will; Craft DC 22; price 550 gp; Exposure DC 4. First crafted over 50 years ago, the twisted faen of the Hive enjoy this poison for the havoc it wreaks upon a potential victim, making them progressively more susceptible to charms, enchantments, and compulsions. Many a shady diplomat would enjoy access to such a venom before a crucial negotiation.

Queen's Shadow: Solubilized starbee thorax; black inky liquid with yellow flecks and the scent of wildblossoms; hymenoptera family; injury DC 20; blinded 1d3 rds/blinded 1d6 hrs; Craft DC 29; price 1,105 gp; exposure DC 21; this poison only affects male victims. This concoction was secretly created by Nemmoth unbeknownst to anyone else in the Guild, including Tuill. She's presently deciding whether to offer it for sale or keep it for her own purposes.

Slowwort Mist: Purified wort extract; clear liquid that turns to an odorless gas when exposed to air; vine family; inhalation DC 17; damage 1d6 (x 5 ft.) base movement rate/1d6 (x 5 ft.) movement; Craft DC 30; price 1,500 gp; exposure DC 15. A cunning creation of Nemmoth Leafcaller's predecessor, sap from the slowwort plant (which grows on the rim of the canyon) is alchemically treated to turn gaseous and drains speed from anyone who inhales this poison. So far, the Hive has kept this concoction a secret, but if the right customer came along, they would sell it. Base movement rate cannot be reduced below 0 ft. Any character reduced to a base movement of 0 ft. cannot take any move actions or otherwise change their position, even to take a 5-foot adjustment. Immobile characters can still make gross gestures with their arms and are not considered *held* or *helpless*.



NEW RULES

This section presents new rules of particular use with the Guild Hive.

WASP TOTEM WARRIOR

The wasp totem warrior strikes like its namesake: hard, quick, and painfully. They are temperamental, persistent, and wily. As the wasp totem warrior gains levels, she begins to look more insect-like. Antennae sprout in place of ears, hair falls out, skin takes on a chitinous appearance, and eventually their eyes assume a compound quality. The strongest even have stingers. Until annoyed or attacked, the wasp totem warrior may leave potential threats alone, but once angered they rarely stop until victorious or dead.

Hit Die: d8

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The wasp totem warrior is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as agile exotic weapons, Medium and Light armors, and shields.

Additional Class Skills: Intimidate (Cha) and Tumble (Dex)

Special: All wasp totem warriors gain a +1 natural armor bonus. This stacks with any existing natural armor bonus. They also gain a rapport with all flying insects.

Vermin Companion: Large Wasp. At level 3, the wasp totem warrior gains the service of a large wasp. This creature is medium sized, with the statistics of a giant bee, save that it only has a fly speed of 40 (good). At 6 HD, the creature becomes size Large.

Totem Powers: A wasp totem warrior earns these powers as she gains levels:

1st level - Tenacity of the Wasp - The character gains Resistance to Poison, as per the Talent. (This is an exception to the rule that Talents cannot be gained after first level. If the wasp totem warrior already has Resistance to Poison, she gains Great Fortitude instead.)

4th level - Sting of the Wasp - The wasp totem warrior gains +1d6 sneak attack as per the unfettered ability.

8th level - Buzz of the Wasp - The wasp totem warrior may move an additional 15 feet as part of a charge attack.

12th level - Shape of the Wasp - The wasp totem warrior can take on the form (and gain the statistics) of a wasp totem animal companion appropriate to her level: she gains a giant wasp's stats with +1 HD for every level she has above 3. She can take this form once per day, for up to ten minutes per class level.

16th level - Sting of Paralysis - While in wasp form, the totem warrior's poisonous sting also causes paralysis for 1 round per 4 class levels in addition to its normal damage (DC 10 + totem warrior level). Additionally, the poison's secondary damage occurs one round later, instead of one minute later. In normal form, the wasp totem warrior may expectorate venom onto a weapon once per day per point of Constitution bonus. This injury poison lasts for 1 round per totem warrior level and has the same paralysis effect.

20th level - Eyes of the Wasp - The wasp totem warrior gains the tremorsense ability with a 30-foot range.

24th level - Double Stinger - Once per day per point of Dexterity bonus, the wasp totem warrior may make an additional full attack after their regular attack. A wasp totem warrior with no Dexterity bonus may use this ability once per week.



NEW FEATS

Among the husks of the insects, the faen who live in the Guild Hive have acquired a few new capabilities due to their constant exposure to toxic creatures and poison. The DM may make these available to player characters as part of an adventure (this can be an excellent opportunity to send someone to visit the Hive).

Baneful Mage (Ceremonial)

After a ritual involving imbibing a dose of magical poison over the course of a full day, you gain mastery over poison magic.

Prerequisite: truename.

Benefit: A character with this feat may apply the toxic template to his spells. Further, all magical poisons created by him gain a +2 competence bonus to their Fortitude save DCs.

Note: This feat first appeared in *Poisoncraft: The Dark Art* also from Blue Devil Games.

Sensitive Taste (General)

You develop an excellent sense of taste, allowing you to note the presence of poison and other foreign substances in food or drink.

Prerequisite: Wis 11+

Benefit: Any time you begin eating, drinking, or otherwise observe poisoned food or drink (and other substances at the DM's discretion), you gain a second roll to notice the poison if you fail to detect it. If you notice the poison, you gain a +2 bonus to your Fortitude save to resist its effects. Your excellent taste gives you a +2 competence bonus to skill checks that involve imbibing or ingesting or otherwise tasting substances (such as identifying a potion by taste).

Venomdrinker (Ceremonial)

You and at least two others drink, inhale, or expose yourselves to three different poisons in an hour-long ceremony. If you survive, you become hardier, reducing the ability damage you take from poison.

Prerequisites: base Fortitude save bonus +6, Resistance to Poison (Talent), truename

Benefit: Any time you suffer ability damage due to poison, you take 2 less points of damage than normal (but not less than 0).

Special: The ceremony cost (100 gp per level) includes the purchase price of the poison. The DM may choose any available poison, but the total cost must be equal to or less than the ceremonial cost.

NEW ITEMS

While the Guild is particular skilled at brewing poison, over the years they've demonstrated their ability to employ a few unique items to augment this knowledge.

Battlewelt Hives: These hives full of tiny, dormant boen gnats are carried by the bold (or depraved) faen of the Guild--for use on themselves. When opened and shaken, a swarm of insects pours forth to sting the person holding the hive repeatedly, leaving them covered in welts. A character so affected loses 1d4 hit points and suffers a -2 Charisma penalty until the welts heal (1 day per hit point of damage). However, the victim suffers temporary nerve damage that confers immunity to non-magical pain-related effects and a +4 circumstance bonus against magical pain effects. The welted individual also gains DR 3/- against swarm damage. These effects last for 24 hours. Most guild members use these hives to protect



themselves when invading insect nests. Use of more than one hive at a time causes additional damage and Charisma penalties but confers no additional bonus. Cost: n/a.

Venomstick: These modified spikesticks are always masterwork items. They contain a hollow channel and a stinging mechanism in the tip. They hold up to three doses of poison in tiny internal compartments. Loading each compartment requires a full minute, and the person doing it risks exposure (see DMG). A Small venomstick holds two doses; a Tiny venomstick holds one dose. Functional venomsticks cannot be crafted in Fine or smaller sizes. Once loaded, each time the weapon deals damage it also injects a dose of the poison into the target. Most venomsticks are loaded with injury poison, but contact poison works equally well. For each size category above Medium, the venomstick can hold an additional two doses. Cost: +250 gp per dose compartment.

NEW SPELLS & MAGIC RULES

The presence of so much poison in the vicinity has prompted spellcasters of the Guild Hive to study magical means of restoring those damaged by it. Prior generations developed the following spells to aid those so afflicted. (DM's Note: If you do not wish players or the Guild members to have easy access to these spells, you may make them Exotic or even Unique to the NPCs described herein.)

Restore Constitution

Transmutation [Positive Energy, Truename]

Level: 2 (Complex)

Casting Time: Standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The target is healed 1 point of temporary Constitution damage, plus one point for every 5 caster levels. You may not heal Constitution damage to any creature whose Constitution score is 0.

Diminished Effects: The spell lasts for one hour/level.

Heightened Effects: You heal 2 temporary Con damage +1 point of temporary Con damage for every 3 caster levels (maximum 8). Additionally, if the target is sickened or nauseated, the spell removes that condition.

Restore Dexterity

Transmutation [Positive Energy, Truename]

Level: 2 (Complex)

Casting Time: Standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)



The target is healed 1 point of temporary Dexterity damage, plus one point for every 5 caster levels. You may not heal Dexterity damage to any creature whose Dexterity score is 0.

Diminished Effects: The spell lasts for one hour/level.

Heightened Effects: You heal 2 temporary Dex +1 point of temporary Dex damage for every 3 caster levels. Additionally, if the target is paralyzed, the spell removes that condition.

Restore Strength

Transmutation [Positive Energy, Truename]

Level: 2 (Complex)

Casting Time: Standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The target is healed 1 point of temporary Strength damage, plus one point for every 5 caster levels. You may not heal Strength damage to any creature whose Strength score is 0.

Diminished Effects: The spell lasts for one hour/level.

Heightened Effects: You heal 2 temporary Str +1 point of temporary Str damage for every 3 caster levels. Additionally, if the target is fatigued or exhausted, the spell removes that condition.

Shield vs. Elements

Abjuration [see text]

Level: 2 (Exotic)

Casting Time: Standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Personal

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This protective spell grants the caster invulnerability to a specific type of elemental damage. Select an elemental type when cast (air, earth, fire or water). For the duration of the spell, you ignore up to 1 point/2 caster levels (max 10) of damage of that type. As a move-equivalent action, you may change the type of element the spell resists. The spell protects your equipment as well as yourself.

Shield vs. elements only protects against hit point damage. The target can suffer other side effects, and is not immune to templates or other effects of spells that cause elemental damage. The spell takes on a descriptor of the chosen element. *Protection from elements* overlaps, and does not stack with, *shield vs. elements*.

Diminished Effects: You may not change the element type once chosen. The maximum protection is up to 5 hp per round.

Heightened Effects: The target becomes “creature touched,” and the range becomes Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 caster levels).



Shield vs. Energy

Abjuration [see text]

Level: 3 (Exotic)

Casting Time: Standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Personal

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This protective spell grants the caster invulnerability to a specific type of energy damage. Select an energy type when cast (acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic). For the duration of the spell, you ignore up to 1 point/2 caster levels (max 10) of damage of that type. As a move-equivalent action, you may change the type of energy the spell resists. The spell protects your equipment as well as yourself.

Shield vs. energy only protects against hit point damage. The target can suffer other side effects, and is not immune to templates or other effects of spells that cause element damage. The spell takes on a descriptor of the chosen energy type. *Protection from energy* overlaps, and does not stack with, *shield vs. energy*.

Diminished Effects: You may not change the energy type once chosen. The maximum protection is up to 5 hp per round.)

Heightened Effects: The target becomes “creature touched,” and the range becomes Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 caster levels).

Toxic Template

Baneful casters are secretive and mysterious. Their skin gains a violet hue when casting spells with this template. Characters can add this template to any spell that directly deals physical damage.

A toxic spell deals half as much physical damage as normal but deals poison damage as well. The magically created injury poison deals initial and secondary damage equal to 1 point of Constitution for every three caster levels. The Fortitude DC of the poison is equal to 10 + the level of the spell + the caster’s relevant ability score modifier.

For example, a toxic *sorcerous blast* cast by a 10th-level magister with an 18 Intelligence would deal 5d6 points of elemental damage and expose anyone damaged by the spell to poison dealing 3 points of Constitution damage with a Fortitude DC of 17. If the physical damage of the spell is avoided entirely (such as through evasion, immunity, etc.), the target is not exposed to the poison. If the physical damage from the spell is reduced (such as through a successful save, resistance, etc.), the poison’s initial and secondary damage are reduced by half.

Cost: Material component (25 gp worth of poison).

Gained: From the Baneful Mage feat.

Note: This template first appeared in *Poisoncraft: The Dark Art* also from Blue Devil Games.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are many ways to employ the Guild Hive in your campaign:

Anyone attacked by an assassin with an envenomed blade may be an indirect victim of the Venomer's Guild. Too many poisonings could lead to an investigation and a request from authorities to locate the source of the poison itself and "shut it down." Such an adventure would require significant investigation skills.

Someone well known to the adventurers may be dying of a particularly rare and horrible venom. The closest source for an antidote is the Venomers Guild. Not only must they find the Hive, but they need to get the antidote by negotiation or stealth--and quickly. Naturally, the Guild has no vested interest seeing their handiwork foiled.

An adventure may simply involve purchasing venom from the Guild. If your players are of less than savory intent, they might need a rare poison to complete a mission of their own such as an assassination. The Guild might require them to obtain obscure raw materials to complete the order.

A player character may want to learn the various uses of poison, become a Wasp Totem Warrior, or otherwise gain some bit of lore possessed only by the Guild. She and her companions must brave the dangers to reach the Guild Hive and convince the faen to tutor her.

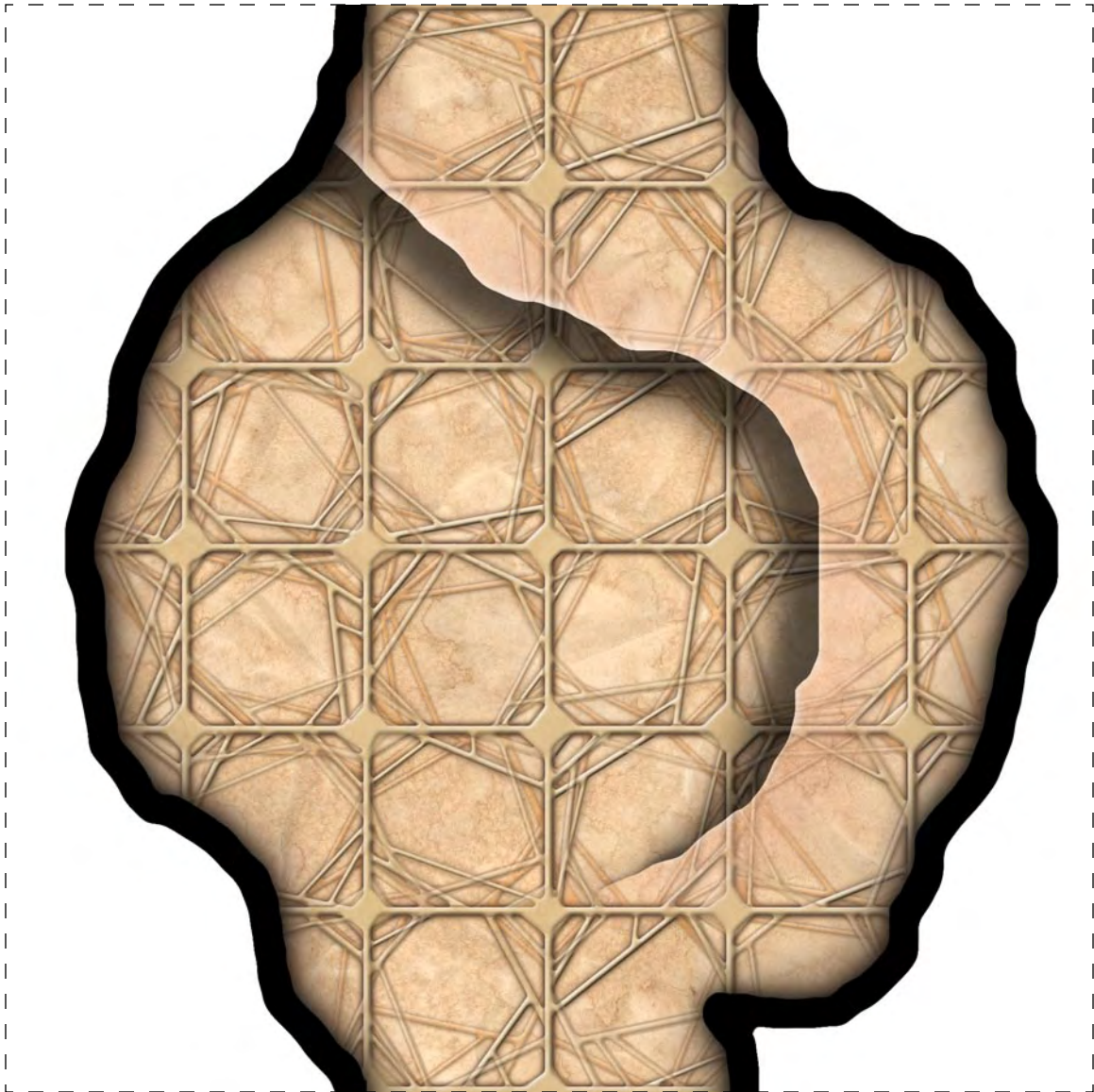
A wayward party might stumble upon the Guild Hive by sheer happenstance. They might find themselves remembering fondly the harsh environs they escaped after getting a taste of the Guild's "hospitality." Indeed, they might find themselves invited to a grand feast--with them as the main course at the dripping mandibles of some monstrous insect.

In a bit of a twist, the Guild might require the services of the PCs. Perhaps they need an ingredient not easily obtained or simply some muscle to protect an expensive shipment. The PCs may not even be aware of their employer's identity, and finding out may leave them with a difficult decision to make.

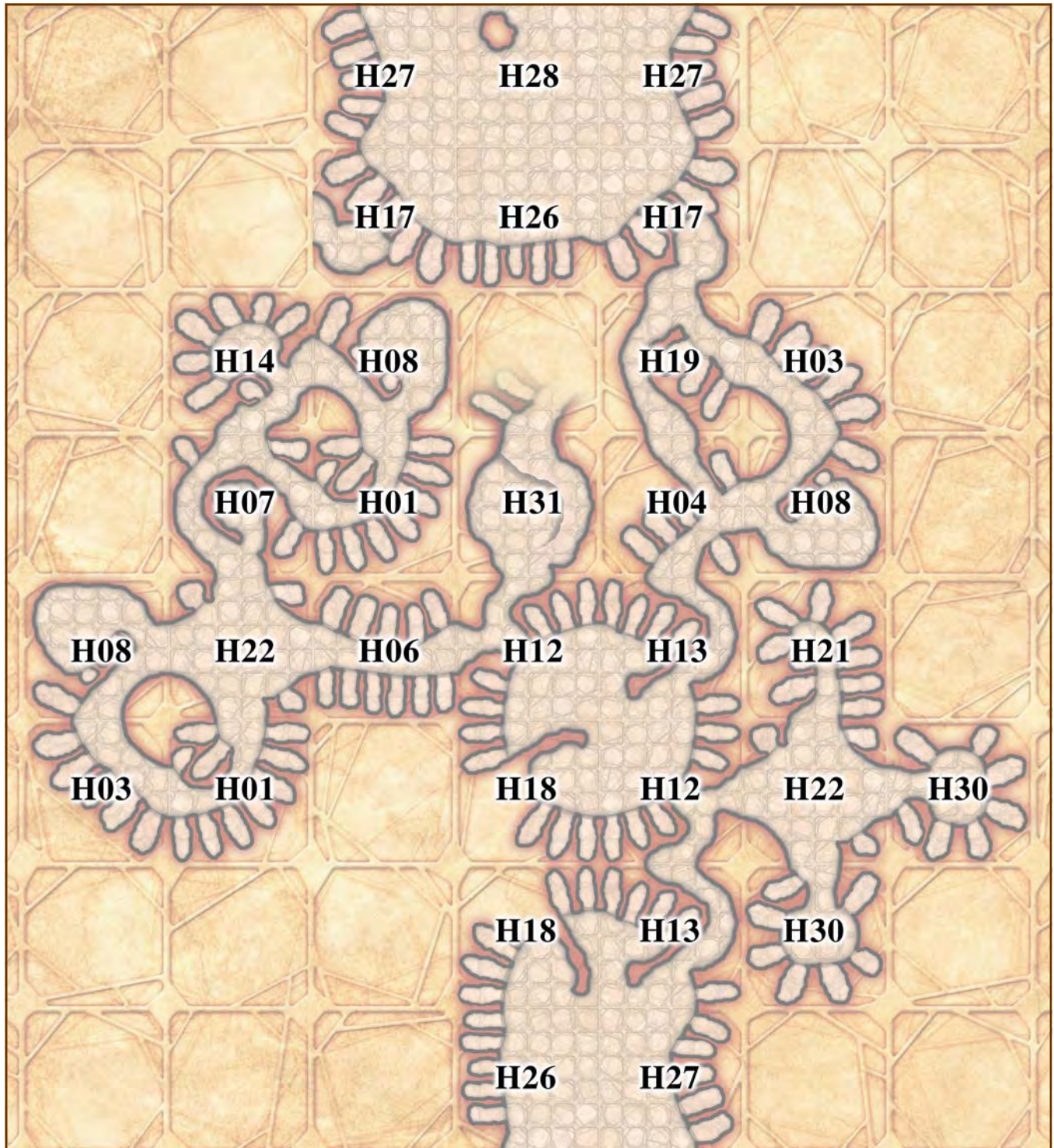
Due to a catastrophic accident, a massive swarm of some venomous creatures is unleashed by the Guild. The swarm sweeps over the land, killing herds of cattle and any innocent people caught in its path. The PCs may be hired to disperse the menace or may need to do so for their own wellbeing.

The Guild finally crosses the wrong person's path. One of their poisons is used to kill a beloved and powerful figure. A relative of the victim wants revenge--nothing less than the end of the Guild's venomous ways and the utter destruction of its members. The Guild is to be wiped from the face of Serran for good. Undertaking such a task will surely stir the Guild to a frenzy in defense of itself.

e-Adventure Tiles: Hive



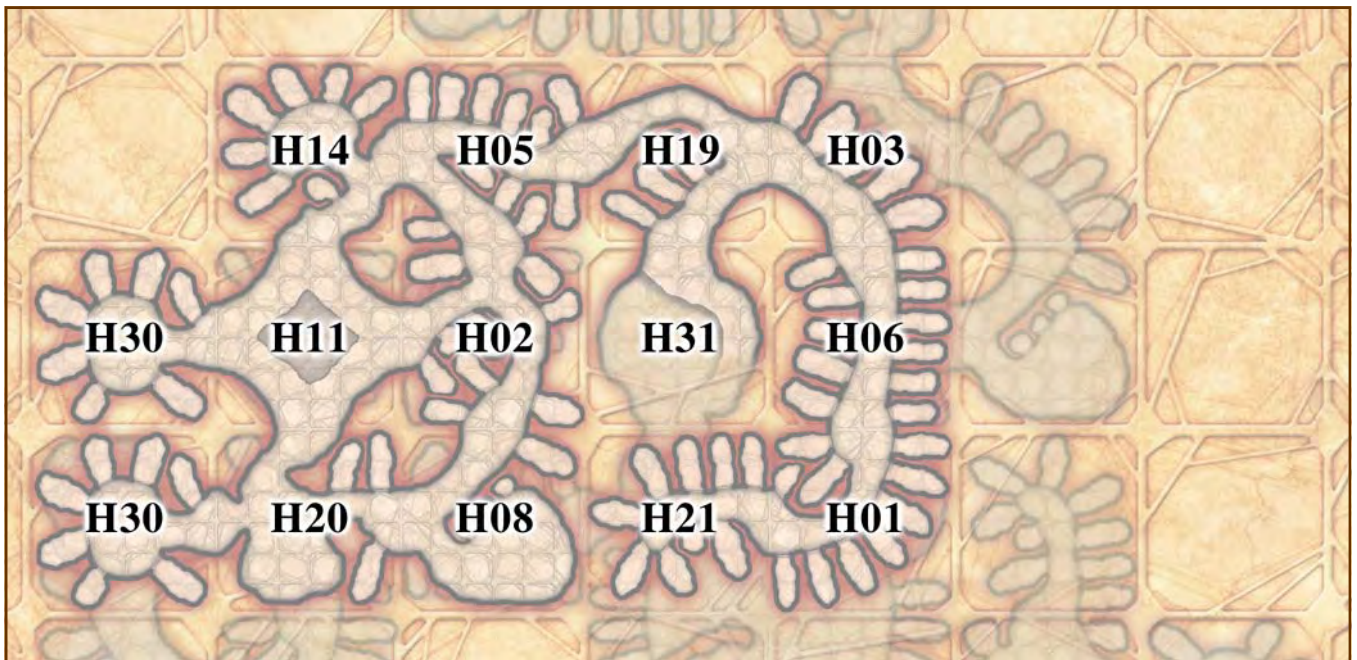
H31



This guide shows how to build the Guild Hive floorplan using the corresponding tile codes in “e-Adventure Tiles: Hive” from SkeletonKey Games. Some tiles may need to be rotated to correspond to the floorplan.



~ THE GUILD HIVE - UPPER LEVEL ~



This guide shows how to build the Guild Hive floorplan using the corresponding tile codes in “e-Adventure Tiles: Hive” from SkeletonKey Games. Some tiles may need to be rotated to correspond to the floorplan.

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