

MZA1

CREATURE FEATURES IN THE JUNGLE

A Trilogy of Cinema Based Maztican Side Treks



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ADVENTURES INSPIRED BY HOLLYWOOD

In the depths of the deepest jungles, there are secrets and horrors that thankfully remain hidden to those who do not seek them out. But once in a while, brave individuals will travel under those darkened canopies and put their lives in terrible danger. Will the intrepid explorers live to tell their tales?

CINEMATIC ADVENTURES

Once in a while, either Hollywood or an independent studio will produce a film that is just begging to be converted into a Dungeons and Dragons adventure. I've thought this with such greats as the Predator, Aliens, Lord of the Rings, the Last Unicorn, the Dark Crystal, and countless others too numerous to name. This adventure book is an attempt to take three personal favorites that have at least partially a Mesoamerican flavor and use them for the Maztica Campaign setting.

These adventures do not have world shaking consequences to them, but since they are based on movies with horror themes they are meant to scare the life out of your players.

New monsters are at the center of each adventure and perhaps halfway through them, your players will recognize what a horrifying (but fun!) time they are in for.

THE RUINS

The Ruins is based on the 2008 movie also known as *The Ruins*. It is a supernatural horror film directed by Carter Smith and it stars Jonathan Tucker, Shawn Ashmore, Jena Malone, Laura Ramsey, and Bella Sana. The movie itself is based on the novel of the same name by Scott Smith, who also wrote the screenplay.

The adventure tries to recreate many of the events that occurred in the movie, though the setup is different, and the ordeal that the players will have to go through is only designed to last for one day of adventuring.

The adventure is balanced for four players who should be at 5th level. The main encounter itself can easily be adjusted to accommodate higher level parties, though lower level parties will require some reworking of the main monster.

As it always is with magic, there are a number of ways that a party that is rich in magic could end up avoiding the encounter altogether. Flying magic in particular could end the adventure before it begins. Considering the party's level, and the fact that the hook assumes that the party is traveling on foot through the jungle, this should not be a problem.

THE RELIC

The Relic is a short, site based adventure that gained its inspiration from the 1997 movie also known as *The Relic*. It is a supernatural horror film directed by Peter Hyams and it stars Penelope Ann Miller, Tom Sizemore and Linda Hunt. The movie itself is based on the novel of the same name by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child.

The adventure utilizes the creature featured in the movie (known there as a kothoga but here altered to kothoggo) and tries to recreate events and the sense of horror that occurred in the movie. The setup is different however, and the ordeal that the players will have to go through is only designed to last for one session of adventuring.

The adventure is ideally designed for four players who should be around 5th level. The main battle is a CR7 encounter.

AvY

AvY stands for "Anadjin versus Yagrel" which is a not so subtle allusion to the *Alien vs. Predator* film. AvP (as it was stylized) is a 2004 science fiction action film which starred Sanaa Lathan, Raoul Bova, Lance Henriksen and Ewen Bremner and was written and directed by Paul W. S. Anderson.

In this adventure, the "predators" are creatures from the far off world of Anadia known as anadjin, and the "aliens" are a degenerate breed of illithid known as "yagrel." While the setting is certainly different than in the movie, there are some easily recognizable plot elements that should be fun to play with.

This adventure is slightly more difficult than the other two and it is recommended that the PCs reach at least 6th level before tackling the terrors they will encounter here.

A TRILOGY OF ADVENTURES

These adventures could be run separately or as sequels. They are independent stories, but all three are set in the southern jungles of the Green Folk and the Green Folk feature in each adventure.

If a foray is ever planned to the southerly land of Lopango, the adventures here make a perfect transition geographically. Each adventure is set in the Chapullelel Jungle which is either the southernmost tip of Maztica or northern point of Lopango, depending on who is asked.



THE RUINS



THE RUINS

A cruel and sadistic plant, gargantuan in size and desperate to spread its evil to the jungles of the True World has long been trapped by the simplest of means. To the Green Folk, keeping the evil contained is far more important than the lives of a few strangers.

BACKGROUND

In the Chapullelel Jungles south of the House of Tezca and city of Tukan, there are ruins of a civilization that are a complete mystery to the tribal Green Folk who reside nearby. Though they have a similar structure to the grand pyramids of the northern nations, they tend to be smaller and have dissimilar markings. The ruins are ancient, and the Green Folk tend to keep their distance for fear of the evil that may lie within.

In one small ruin, a squat and square pyramid 80 feet on a side and 30 feet high, the evil that the Green Folk fear literally covers the ruins.

An intelligent, carnivorous plant that appears to be nothing more than a common jungle creeper (with vibrant red flowers) covers practically the entire ruin. This creature is known in the tongue of the Green Folk as the *ezcochitli*, which means "bloodflower," and they believe it is their sacred duty to keep it contained.

THE PLANT

The *ezcochitli* is a gargantuan and sadistic plant of unknown origin, but it is possible that it is a result of evil magic remnants from the ancient civilization which once occupied the Chapullelel Jungle.

The plant has a massive surface area, but it remains relatively flat on whatever surface it occupies or it climbs up structures like a hanging ivy or jungle creeper. When attacking, its thorny vines snap outward from many different directions, slashing at anyone who stands within its confines.

Though the *ezcochitli* can move at a very slow pace, it is effectively trapped atop the ruins. The simple Green Folk, who are usually awed by the supernatural and strange, discovered an effective means of keeping the creature contained and not by the power of some awesome magic.

Long ago, at the cost of many lives, the Green Folk discovered that the *ezcochitli* could not cross earth that had been salted. Though it is not hurt by the substance, it still cannot pass such a barrier.

The *ezcochitli* has desires that are easy to understand. Other than the occasional animal that wanders or alights upon the pyramid steps, it has not fed well in many decades. The Green Folk repeat the salting of the earth every so often, but they never approach close enough to the creature for it to feed.

It also seeks to spread by infecting humans with its spawn. Only living humanoids are capable of carrying its live young within their bodies. These wriggling larva-like vines that cannot be removed without magic.

Eventually, the vines burst forth from the body, killing their host and seeking a place among the jungle creepers where they can grow unmolested. An "infection" of such terrible creatures could decimate the entire jungle.

THE GREEN FOLK

The Green Folk are an isolated people who know close to nothing of the arrival of the Amnians, the wars to the north, or even the Night of Wailing. When the skies changed from blue to steel gray, they feared that the gods had become angry with them, and this drove them into even greater isolation and xenophobia.

The skies are blue once again which is something not even their greatest elders are old enough to remember. To the Green Folk, this means that the message is clear that the gods are pleased with their work.

The tribes of the Green Folk are not unified. Leaders are selected through common consensus and based on merit. Usually the wisest is chosen rather than the fiercest and one tribe which is led by a portly but brave middle aged man considers preventing the spread of the *ezcochitli* his sacred duty.

It is utterly forbidden to set foot near the ruins, and only those who periodically salt the ground ever enter the clearing where it lies. Like all Green Folk, this tribe is distrustful of strangers. As long as they are left alone, the tribe is not immediately hostile. They are however, serious about their sacred duty, and killing trespassers who do not abide by their rules is considered a holy act, rather than an evil one.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

While traveling through the Chapullelel Jungle which separates Maztica from Lopango, the players come upon a young green folk boy playing by a stream.

The boy stares at the players but does not respond to any of their questions. If the characters approach the boy, they are attacked by an ambush predator that resides within the stream.

By the time the players defeat the creature the boy has disappeared into the jungle, but they hear his screams coming from further into the wood. If the players follow the screams they come upon a clearing which contains a square ruin in the shape of a pyramid.

When the players set foot on the ruin, the boy emerges from the forest, followed by dozens of Green Folk who make it clear that the players are not allowed to leave and can only continue into the ruin.

After hourly events that should serve to rattle the players, the main villain, which is a malicious plant creature that covers a major portion of the ruin, finally attacks. The party either fights back or flees from the plant, and during the battle some may have been infected by its spawn.

Considering the implied hostility of the Green Folk, the players must flee through the only egress available which is a shaft that passes deep through the pyramid and into a hidden tunnel which has guardians of its own.

The players may escape; exiting distantly into the jungle should they overcome all attackers.

CHARACTER HOOK

The adventure location is simple to apply almost anywhere and can be found while the characters are wandering through a jungle setting. This can occur anywhere, even outside of Maztica if the DM desires.

JUNGLE FEATURES

It is early in the morning when the characters first see the Green Folk boy and encounter the cipactli.

Light. Though it is early in the morning when the players begin this adventure encounter, the sun is already high enough in the sky to offer bright illumination. There will be a full 12 hours of light before nighttime and darkness.

The Jungle. The jungle is very densely packed in this area and anywhere that jungle is indicated counts as difficult terrain. There are numerous well-traveled paths used both by jungle animals and the Green Folk, however, and the clearing can be navigated easily.

The River. There is a seasonal fresh water stream where the characters have their first encounter. It does not get terribly deep, though there are frequent low waterfalls. Moving through the river is considered difficult terrain.

THE GREEN FOLK BOY

The characters' first encounter occurs as they come upon a small river and waterfall. The dense jungle clears out a bit here and near the waterfall, a young boy stands by the river with a pointed wooden stick; apparently using it to spear fish. When the players notice the boy, read the following.



The boy was staring intently into the water with a sharpened stick in hand. When he noticed your presence, he simply stopped and stared, with the stick being held in a non-aggressive manner.

The boy was obviously shocked by your sudden appearance, but his stare has remained perfectly still, almost eerie in a way.

He does not attempt to begin any sort of conversation, nor does he move to flee.

No matter how much they try to communicate, the boy will not respond to the characters. He is a Green Folk boy and speaks their unique language, but even if the language barrier is broken, the boy will not respond.

It is only when the party approaches the boy that something occurs.

As you approach the boy, you sense a stirring in the river near you. What you initially think is a large crocodile explodes from the water and tries to bite.

As if the attack was not terrifying enough, you notice that the “crocodile” is attempting to bite from mouths that appear at every joint – elbows, knees and even its shoulders. This is no ordinary crocodile!

The characters have been attacked by a **cipactli**, an incredibly stealthy predator that may get the jump on the characters. The encounter, however, should still remain relatively easy.

When the battle is over, the characters will notice that the boy has disappeared, but over the noise of the waterfall, they hear what sounds exactly like a young boy screaming off in the woods. If the characters search (no check necessary), they will find a poorly hidden path that leads in the general direction of the scream, which happens once again, but this time sounding even more desperate.

CIPACTLI AND KULTAKANS

Kultakans consider the cipactli a sacred creature, and if the party consists of any native characters from Kultaka, that character will undoubtedly recognize the creature for what it is and would most likely insist that the party avoid harming it.

The cipactli is an aggressive predator which attacks from multiple mouths that can be found at each joint of their body. While not evil, they enjoy the taste of human flesh and make excellent ambush predators as the Green Folk boy almost discovered.

CIPACTLI

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d10 + 22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 30 ft, passive Perception 13

Languages -

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Ambush Predator. Cipactli have scales the color of swampy water and are extremely stealthy predators. As a result, they gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide when in this type of environment.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cipactli make three bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6+3) piercing damage.

THE CLEARING

Read the following to the players if they follow the sounds of the screaming boy.

The jungle path suddenly opens up into a huge clearing with very little vegetation of its own. In the center of the clearing you see a squat, square ruin in the shape of a pyramid which is perhaps sixty to a hundred feet on a side.

It is covered in jungle creepers which hide strange markings that you cannot make out from this distance. There are sets of stairs on all four sides of the ruin.

At this point, the PCs should notice nothing unusual about the **ezcochitli** which virtually covers the ruins. It appears to be nothing more than ivy with occasional bright red flowers and it is in fact intermixed with other, normal jungle vegetation.

Though the ezcochitli typically covers 2 feet for every hit point, this one has grown to perfectly encompass the surface of the pyramid.

Continue reading after the players have gotten a good look at the area and describe whatever they wish to investigate, but nothing will seem amiss until they turn to the pyramid.

Though you cannot see the top of the pyramid from your angle, you do hear the scuffling sounds of movement and you hear one final, gurgling cry.

When the last character has set foot upon the ruin, read the following.

As the last of you sets foot on the pyramid, you hear a whistle from the nearby wood. From the darkness steps the Green Folk boy who you thought you were attempting to rescue.

A moment later, you realize that he is not alone. A portly middle-aged man steps out from behind him. Within moments, dozens of Green Folk emerge from both the path and the jungle itself. Most of the men who appear are armed with bows, and though they keep the bows low, they remain drawn.

The portly man begins to yell at you in the language of the Green Folk.

The Green Folk will absolutely not allow the characters to step off of the pyramid at this point. If the characters approach the edge, they have only the clearly drawn bows of thirty three Green Folk **scouts** and one **veteran** (armed with a bow instead of a crossbow) to warn them of their certain death should they continue. Stepping back up the pyramid allows the scouts to lower their weapons, and even without communication, the intent is obvious.

The portly man continues to yell in the Green Folk tongue. If they can understand him, he only repeats warnings to step back. He refuses to answer any questions, including inquiries into the Green Folk's intentions. The characters truly have no choice but to go to the top of the pyramid or remain where they stand.

At no point during the events of this adventure will the Green Folk leave, and they will stand guard through all hours. Women and children arrive soon after, bringing enough supplies to demonstrate to the players that the Green Folk are here to stay. They set up camp in a corner of the clearing.

RUIN EXTERIOR FEATURES

The players have nothing to do but to explore the exterior of the pyramid at this point.

Vegetation. If the players focus on the vegetation, and use a Search action, they can make a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check to determine that there are a dozen different species of plant on the pyramid, all of which are some form of ivy or jungle creeper.

Six species, one of which is the ezcochitli, have small thorns and cause 2 (1d4) piercing damage if they are handled. Roll 1d6 if the characters take damage to determine if the character inadvertently got injured by the ezcochitli, at which point you can refer to its infection ability. This occurs on a roll of 6 only. Certain precautions can be made to avoid the damage at the DM's discretion, but the ezcochitli can subtly make small movements that might foil them.

Markings. Underneath the brush, the pyramid is covered in ancient markings that have mostly faded over time. Some can be seen without removing the brush, but most of them are covered and attempts to expose them subject a character to the vegetation.

The following carvings are examples of what might be discovered, with 1-3 being plainly visible anyway. Each could be used as future plot hooks or insight into the history of the civilization which created these pyramids (or possibly even the ezcochitli).

RANDOM MARKINGS

Roll 1d8 when brush is removed and consult the following table.

1d8 Markings

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | An erect, feathered crocodile swallowing a heart. DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals this is a Maztican Ahuizotl. |
| 2 | A parrot like creature trailing motes and stars behind it. DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals this is a corollax. |
| 3 | A cipactli, as encountered by the characters earlier. |
| 4 | An elaborate carving of a warrior being sacrificed. The removed heart is on fire. |
| 5 | Two intertwined serpents that span an entire side of the pyramid. One is smooth to the touch and the other grainy and segmented. |
| 6 | A gaping mouth of fanged teeth. Behind these, what initially appeared to be a second row of teeth is in fact a collection of buildings which forms a miniaturized town. |
| 7 | Jaguar headed humanoids with furry wings and clawed feet like those of an eagle. |
| 8 | Humans with elongated skulls and gossamer robes either joining or separating with the jaguar headed humanoids. |

TRAPDOOR

A trapdoor leading into the tunnel area is in the center of the pyramid top. As long as the ezcochitli is alive, the trapdoor is extremely difficult to find despite its rather obvious location, and it requires a DC18 Wisdom (Perception) check to find. In addition, the character must be searching by removing the creepers, most of which will be the ezcochitli. If a character gets hurt by the thorns here, roll 1d6 as usual, but on a 4-6 it is caused by the ezcochitli.

EVENTS

The ezcochitli does not immediately attack the characters, perhaps because it likes to see its victims suffer before a kill. It is intelligent enough to know that unless they find the trapdoor, there is no way for the characters to escape.

If the characters have some form of travel magic that could quickly end this encounter, the DM has a number of options.

Remember, the Green Folk fear the characters escaping because they do not want there to be even a small chance that the ezcochitli might spread. If they recognize a caster's intentions, or see flying magic in action, they will all train their bows on the offending caster. If a few warning shots don't deter the players, a volley of arrows might be unleashed.

The ezcochitli should not attack yet, unless the encounter is otherwise certain to end. It will not let its prey go easily.

Reveal the following events to the players at a rate of about one per hour. The events should give the players clues as to the nature of their foe, until it is finally revealed in the sixth event. At this point it is time for the main battle, which could be deadly for the characters.

EVENT 1

A flock of birds fly into the clearing but make a sharp turn into the trees just before they come close to the ruin. Their avoidance of the area was obvious.

EVENT 2

Five Green Folk men and women with woven sacks full of something white and grainy approach closer to the pyramid than any others have come before.

They pour the contents of the sacks in a circle which completely surrounds the pyramid. A Wisdom (Perception) check with a DC of 12 allows a player to recognize that the substance is salt.

EVENT 3

The sound of a baby crying comes from the other side of the pyramid. If the characters investigate, they find nothing.

EVENT 4

One of the characters catches movement at the corner of their eye. When the character looks it is just a rabbit rustling in the brush. A few moments later, the character hears a pitiful squeal and intense shaking in nearby bushes. If he or she investigates, the rabbit has disappeared.

EZCOCHITLI

Gargantuan plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 202 (15d20 + 45)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Skills Perception +4

Condition Immunities charmed, blinded, deafened

Senses blindsight 30 ft, passive Perception 14

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2300 XP)

Amorphous. The ezcochitli can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

False Appearance. While the ezcochitli remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from normal jungle foliage.

Spider Climb. The ezcochitli can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Thorns. All along the length of its vines, the ezcochitli has long, pronged thorns. Anyone who attempts to grab the vines with uncovered flesh takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage automatically.

Regeneration. If the sun shines on at least part of a ezcochitli, it regenerates 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the ezcochitli takes fire damage, the trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The ezcochitli dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Massive Area. The ezcochitli occupies up to a 5 foot

square for every hit point it has remaining, though it can choose to occupy up to one-half its maximum area. Much like a swarm, creatures may occupy this space as well. All creatures within the space are subject to two vines attacks. Creatures within 5 ft. of its area are also subject to a single attack.

Infection. If a humanoid suffers damage from an ezcochitli, they must make a DC 15 Constitution save or become infected with the ezcochitli's spores. In two days, the victim will start to notice vines wriggling underneath their skin. After three days, they will become incapacitated. After five days, they will be paralyzed, and after seven days they will die at which time a young single hit die ezcochitli will burst forth from its body and slowly seek out the nearest jungle. The disease is cured with lesser restoration or stronger magic such as heal, but attempting to remove the crawling vines physically only causes 1d6 slashing damage to the victim without removing the infection.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ezcochitli can attack any creature that occupies its space twice, no matter how many creatures are in its space.

Vines. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4+5) slashing damage.

Horrorifying Mimicry. The ezcochitli can mimic babies crying, screaming, or other horrifying sounds. This forces all creatures occupying its space or within 30 ft. to run as fast as they can from the ezcochitli and behave as if frightened if they fail a DC 15 Wisdom save.

REACTIONS

Attack. For every 10 ft. a creature moves within an ezcochitli's space, it is subject to a single vines attack.

EVENT 5

This event will lead to revelation of the main antagonist of the adventure. Read the following out loud to the players.

A small boy, younger even than the one at the river, somehow manages to slip past a few scouts who are apparently less focused on what is going on behind them than who is attempting to leave the pyramid.

The boy manages to grab a red flower from the very edge of the pyramid before the portly man notices him. The man starts yelling at the child, who can't possibly be more than 7 years of age. You recognize the tone.

It is obvious that the boy is doomed as you are, though he does not have the sense to come to the top of the pyramid. What can only be his mother appears from the nearby camp and cries the boy's name aloud. The portly man holds her back and the boy cries out "mama" as he steps forward and presents his red flower.

It is unclear which of the six arrows took the boy's life.

At this point the characters should be sufficiently horrified at what the Green Folk have done. Unfortunately, this is only the beginning of the horror. As the boy's body falls backward into the vegetation, vines rise up and start to entwine his corpse.

The vines, obviously alive, begin to feed. All around them, the entire pyramid erupts in movement. The mother of the child screams and all around the players, the red flowers repeat the scream over a thousandfold.

The battle with the *ezcochitli* has commenced. Make sure you are familiar with all of its powers. This is not a standard creature, and its abilities are quite unique. Despite the sounds of the screaming mother, the *ezcochitli* is not using the magic behind its horrifying mimicry. It does not want its prey to run off to be killed where it cannot reach their corpses and feed.

UNDERGROUND PASSAGE

Once the *ezcochitli* is defeated, the vines quickly wither and die as do the red flowers. The remaining vegetation is no longer enough to cover the surface of the pyramid and each carving from page 7 can now be clearly seen.

The Green Folk do not relent in their quarantine of the characters unfortunately, because they do not know if there is spawn living in the bodies of one of the characters or not. The portly man however, does give the characters somewhat of a respectful nod, and once the Green Folk realize the threat is forever dead, a bit of a cautious celebration occurs.

While the characters may not escape the way they came, another exit readily makes itself visible outside the watchful eyes of the Green Folk, who still won't cross the salt barrier. The trapdoor, long held in place by the *ezcochitli*'s vines, has swung open. Handholds along the side of a stone wall lead into darkness that has not seen the light of day in ages. The climb descends 60 feet; well below the base of the pyramid and the characters will realize they are underground if a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check is made. The climb leads into a moderately sized chamber that smells of musty earth.

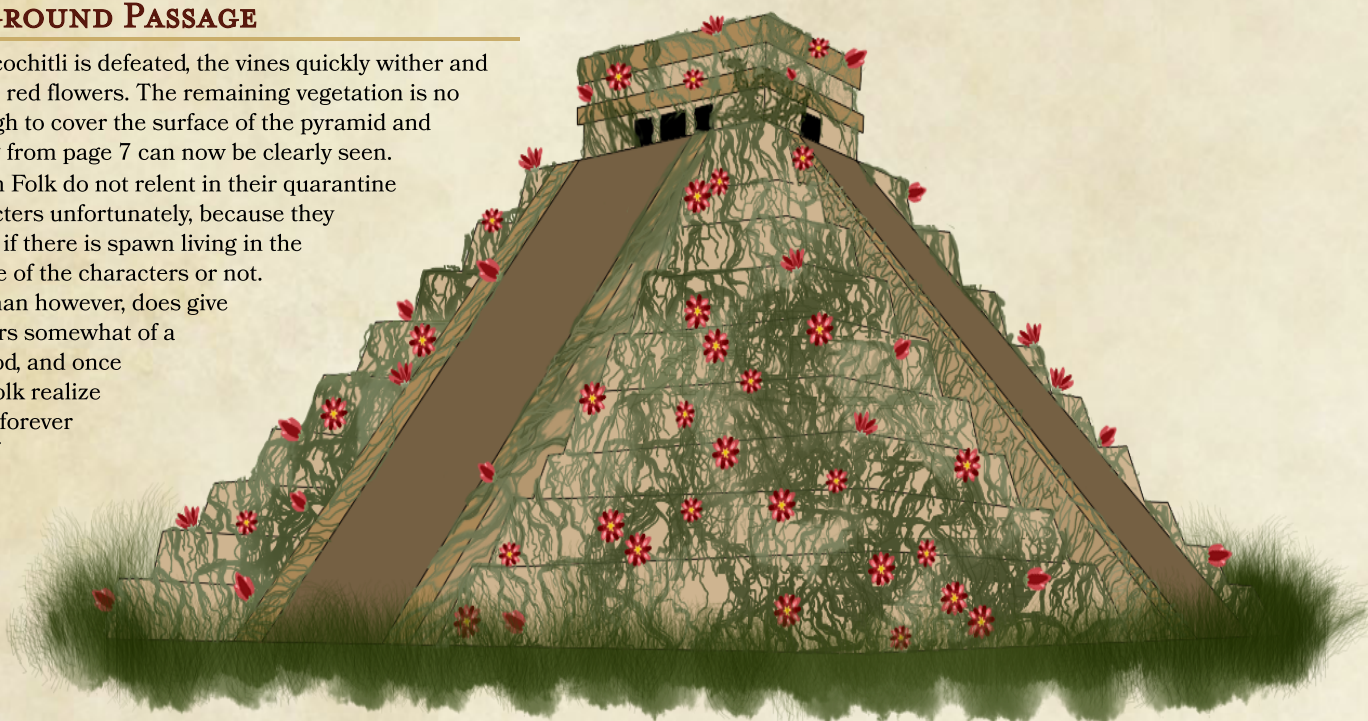
The chamber is completely dark with the exception of the shaft of light from the surface that is disappearing slowly as the day turns to night. If the characters have a light source read them the following.

Your light illuminates an earthy chamber which can't be more than 30 feet on a side. To your right, you see what appears to be an irregular tunnel, three and a half feet high at the most. To your left there is a stone pedestal, upon which sits a copper statuette of some horse-like creature with wings. Sprinkled around the statuette on the pedestal are what can only be tiny blue gemstones.

From the earthen tunnel comes the growing sound of chittering, almost as if thousands of insects are headed this way.

The tunnel is not a natural part of the pyramid, but was actually dug by terrible chitin covered reptiles known as *kruthik*. Deep below ground, there is a magma flow which has attracted these creatures and a small hive has recently hatched over a dozen of the tiny *kruthik* spawn which the PCs have unfortunately broken right into.

While the hatchlings are harmless, there are also four **young kruthik** and two **adult kruthik** with which the PCs will have to contend. See **Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes** for the *kruthik*'s statistics.





The reward for characters is in the gems and the statuette. There are 18 tiny, but perfectly cut sapphires worth 100 gp each. The statuette detects as magical. With a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check, they can identify the winged creature as a hakuna, which is a Maztican beast similar to the dragonne of Faerûn. The statuette is a relic from the ancient builders of the ruin who could tame these beasts, and in essence the copper hakuna is a *figurine of wondrous power*.

The characters may use the tunnel to crawl well beyond the confines of the clearing and escape the Green Folk. The kruthik actually arrived in the chamber over a year ago from the Underdark and branching tunnels lead upwards to the surface and down into the Underdark for further adventures. There is most certainly a kruthik hive lord lairing somewhere nearby.

COPPER HAKUNA

Wondrous item, rare

If you use an action to speak the command word and throw the copper hakuna on the ground within 60 feet of you, it becomes a living hakuna. If the space where the hakuna would appear is occupied by other creatures or objects, or if there isn't enough space for the hakuna, the figurine doesn't become a hakuna.

The hakuna is friendly to you and your companions. It understands your languages and obeys your spoken commands, but it fights only to defend itself. If you issue no commands, the hakuna takes no other actions.

The hakuna can remain alive for up to 24 hour. Once it has been used, it can't be used again until 5 days have passed. It reverts to a statuette early if it drops to 0 hit points or if you use an action to speak the command word again while touching it.

HAKUNA

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +4

Skills Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic, Sphinx

Challenge 7 (2900 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hakuna makes one attack with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10+4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8+4) slashing damage.

Weakening Breath (Recharge 5-6). The hakuna exhales gas in a 30 foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or have disadvantage on Strength-based attack rolls, Strength checks, and Strength saving throws for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

THE RELIC

CUNYER



THE RELIC



f all the nations and peoples of the True World, the Green Folk still remain the most distrustful and outwardly hostile towards outsiders. Most are content to remain hidden in the southern jungles as long as they are left alone, but others would actively seek to bring harm to the outside world.

BACKGROUND

A century ago, one of the tribes ignored cultural taboos and entered ruins once forbidden. In those ruins they found a way to defeat the light-skinned invaders and return to their lives.

This new weapon was a ritual of unknown origin, coupled with a mushroom-like spore that grows only within the forbidden ruins. With the ritual and mushrooms, they have learned to transform a man or woman into the dreaded kothoggo.

The kothoggo is a creature whose lifespan is remarkably short, but in that short time it can decimate entire villages. When a human consumes the spores from the ruins and the ritual is performed he or she slowly begins to change, becoming more and more monstrous until five days have passed and they transform completely. The creature loses almost all semblance of its humanity but does not need to kill as long as it is fed with the rare mushroom that spawned it.

When the tribe stopped feeding the creature it sought out the closest source of the compounds found in the mushroom, which can only be found elsewhere in part of the human brain.

Knowing this, the Green Folk have found themselves a terrible weapon which they use as a doomsday weapon of sorts. The tribe eradicated a settlement of Cordell's men who set themselves up to plunder the region of its resources. Now, over a century later, the settlement has remained as a ruin, but the Green Folk have recently returned to occupy the neighboring region.

Unfortunately, an evil shaman who is generally shunned because of his experimentation with dark forces has performed the ritual on an unwitting simpleton, and the kothoggo has come again.

This is the scenario that the PCs stumble upon when they find the Green Folk village, its multitude of headless corpses, and notice an entrance in the nearby rock face.

THE VILLAGE AND RUINS

The village itself is small and poor. It perhaps could have been occupied by a half dozen families of hunters and gatherers.

The most notable feature is the sheer rock wall behind the village. A door leading into the wall lies to the side, crushed by some tremendous pressure.

Room 1

Fifteen headless bodies are strewn about the main entrance. Despite the heat outside the room feels uncomfortably cold.

This is because one of the dead has become an undead **wraith** and inhabits the room, desperate to snuff out whatever life it can find.

In life, he was a cruel torturer who made pacts with dark forces that have no place in the True World, and his current condition is the end result of those pacts. He was the one who brought about the decimation of his village by performing the kothoggo ritual, though he did not truly understand the creature he had created.

The wraith rises from among the bodies, dark and wispy. Similar to the corpses, the wraith is missing its head.

Room 2

The door to this room is locked but easily forced open with a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check as the lock is badly rusted. Inside the PCs will find what was once a small barracks for guards that would have defended the complex for Cordell's missionaries from rebelling natives.

A few rusted weapons can be found that have not held up well in the humid jungle climate. One longsword gleams brightly amidst the rot, however because it is a *+1 longsword*.

Room 3

This door is unlocked but warded with a magical trap that blasts cold in a 10 foot cone and does 11 (2d10) cold damage to any that open the door. Along with the blast of cold, an audible "whoosh" can be heard as the room's vacuum seal is broken. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the trap and a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can remove it (a failure sets it off and opens the door).

Inside, there appears to be a small library. Its old books and scrolls have held up remarkably well due to the room's vacuum seal. The books tell the history of Amn, up to and including Cordell's subjugation of Nexal and the True World. In addition, there is a *manual of stone golems*. The resident wizard was going to use it to construct a powerful guardian before the Amnians were all slain by the first kothoggo.

Room 4

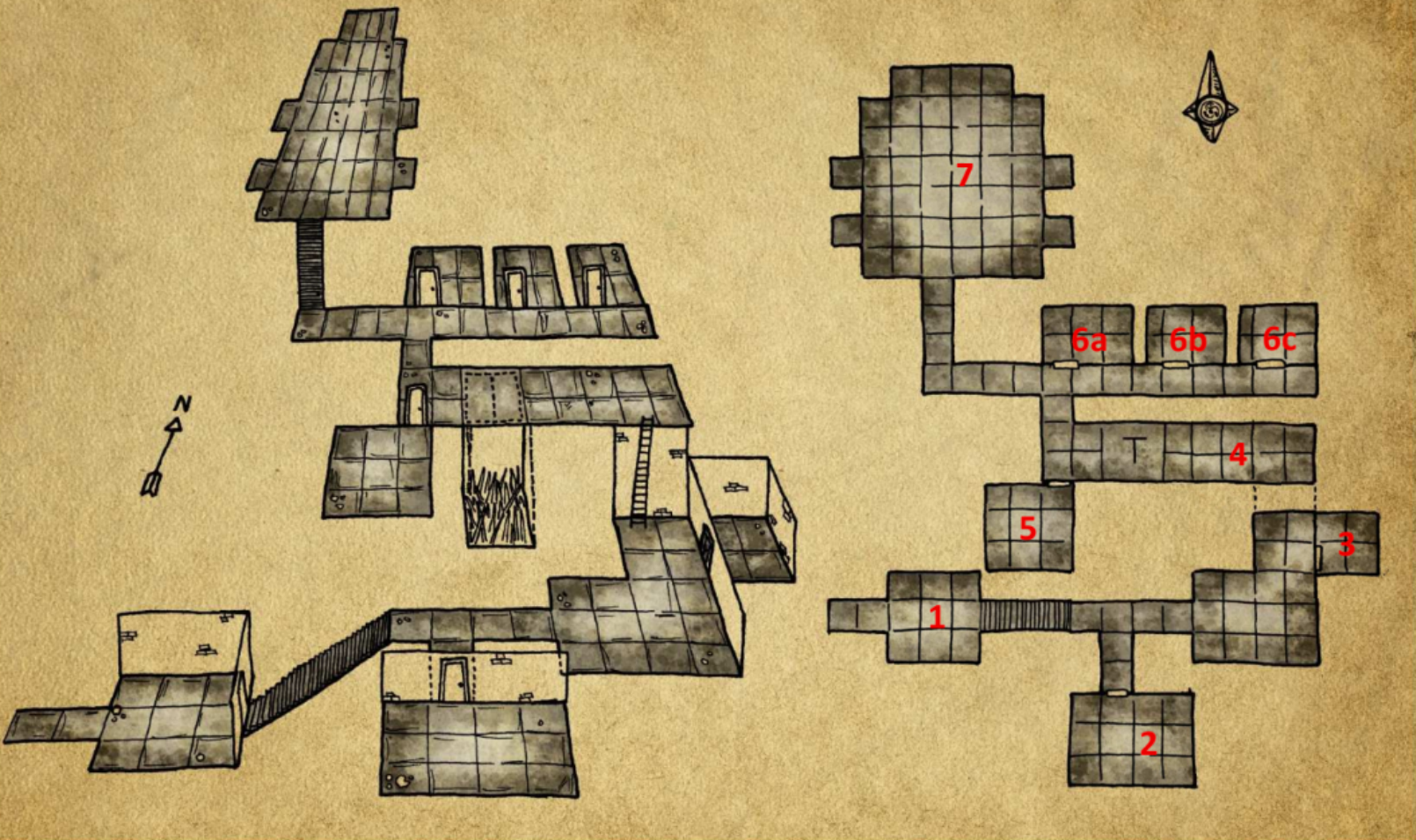
A 15 ft. ladder leads to a hallway whose walls are gouged by the kothoggo's claws. The marks are on both the walls and the ceiling. It doesn't seem that the creature stayed on the ground at any point.

About 30 feet into the hallway, there is a large spiked pit trap. If a PC walks across it and fails a Dexterity saving throw (DC 15), the floor drops out beneath them resulting in 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage from the fall in addition to 13 (3d8) piercing damage from the spiked floor. The spikes used to be poisoned as well, but the poison has since worn off.

Room 5

The door to this room is locked and rusted, but it is not as fragile as the one found leading into Room 2.

A Strength (Athletics) check of 20 can break it, but it is more easily picked with a DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.



This room was once the abode of a high priest of Helm. Candles and holy symbols of Helm still remain in the room from over a century ago.

There is also a loose stone which requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. The prior resident hid 25 gold quills (125 gp) he stole from the natives here.

Room 6

These are the bedrooms of other former residents of the structure. Not much remains as they fled or were killed when the first kothoggo attacked a century ago.

The walls are covered in once beautiful tapestries that are now moldy and worm eaten. Some sort of leak in the ceiling has put 6a in the worst condition, and 5 **violet fungus** have sprung up from the rot.

Room 7

This is where the **kothoggo** has chosen to lair. A statue of helm stands at the northern end of the hallway and has had its head removed by the bite of the kothoggo. If the kothoggo is caught unaware, the PCs see it with its long prehensile tongue deep in the eye socket of a villager's severed head.

There is a gold offering plate (75 gp) in front of the headless statue that has a variety of small gemstones (one small ruby, two topazes, an emerald and three sapphires each worth 50 gp).

If the PCs replace the head on the statue, it magically fuses to its original position and the PCs each gain Inspiration. If they simply take the loot and don't replace the statue head, Helm curses them to suffer disadvantage on their next saving throw or skill check.

KOTHOGGO

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 161 (19d10 + 57)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages -

Challenge 7 (2900 XP)

Behead. If a kothoggo reduces a creature to 0 hit points in an attack where the bite caused damage, the creature is beheaded, killing it if it needs its head to live.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Kothoggo makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6+6) slashing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the Kothoggo can attack only the grappled creature and will attempt to behead the creature on its next attack.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+6) slashing damage.

AvY



AvY



ometimes conflicts that have gone on for ages have nothing to do with the heroes that stumble upon them. Unfortunately, even though the violence is really not directed at them, there is no way to avoid becoming a participant. In AvY, the heroes become involved in such a war between two very strange species.

BACKGROUND

The story of "AvY" is the story of a conflict that has lasted for many centuries between two races of creatures.

One of these races is a degenerate form of illithid known as the yagrel. While these creatures no longer have the powerful mental capabilities of their illithid forbears, they have developed a powerful musculature to compensate for what they have lost and a savagery to match.

The other race is the noble, but unforgiving Lopangan anadjiin. Powerful predators originally from the world Anadia, they were stranded on Toril hundreds of years in the past and have since adapted to the very different world which they have come to occupy.

The two races have had their histories intertwined for nearly five-hundred years now and the anadjiin have always maintained the upper hand. However, because of some bizarre and twisted desire to maintain balance, the anadjiin have never finished off their opponents when the opportunity has arisen. Instead, when yagrel populations grow too large, they begin an event known as *the Culling*.

During this purge, which has no set cycle other than that due to the anadjiins' keen sense of population imbalance, the anadjiin capture as many yagrel as they are able. These yagrel are then placed in strange puzzle-like fortresses created by the anadjiin and hunted by young, untested anadjiin.

Many yagrel escape the Culling, but typically their numbers are brought low enough so that it takes almost a century for their savage elder brains to replenish them. The Culling is occurring just as the players stumble upon one of the anadjiin puzzle-fortresses. This one a rotating deathtrap for all creatures inside.

THE ROTATING FORTRESS

The rotating fortress of the anadjiin is a monstrous marvel wrought purely of iron and outfitted with magical and mechanical gears that cause it to rotate once every hour or when a new being enters it.

The fortress is in fact one titanic iron cylinder surrounded by two hollow cylinders of increasing size, and an outer wall. The spaces in between are so small that the seams are practically imperceptible and they remain so until the cylinders begin their motion.

A movement of the fortress is heralded with a loud metallic clang and is followed by a terrible grating which lasts for a full minute as the outer two cylinders rotate.

During this minute, it is difficult to balance and a creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity check at the start of their first turn in order to avoid falling prone unless they remain still. Communication during rotation is difficult as well because the grinding metal and gears drown out all sounds except for yelling. The seams are small enough and the motion starts off slow enough that creatures do not need to be concerned with getting crushed between walls in rooms 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, or 19.

There is no pattern to the rotation and the connections are made randomly. The hour timer between rotations begins immediately after the characters enter and the first movement occurs.

FEATURES INSIDE THE FORTRESS

The following features are common throughout the entire rotating fortress.

Light. The anadjiin have intentionally captured and dispersed glowworms throughout the entire fortress. The glowworms instinctively remain close to the ceiling and they give the whole complex the dim light condition.

Ceilings. The fortress is nearly perfect in its geometry and each level has 15 foot ceilings with an addition 10 feet of pure iron in between. thus, staircases to upper levels are 25 feet and the overall fortress is 85 feet tall.

Doors. The outer doors are forged of adamantite, and all others are made of thick brass. The outer doors have AC 23 and 54 hitpoints, and the brass ones are AC 18 with 40 hit points.

Configuration. Where the connections are formed between cylinders is up to the DM to decide or can they can be assigned randomly. The outermost layer has four possible connectors to the exit and three connections to the middle cylinder. The middle cylinder has two connections to the central, stationary cylinder.

On the second level, there are only two possible connections which do not necessarily alternate (they might end up in the same position after a rotation) but using the staircases as a reference will make it easier to determine the most current layout.

Of course, since the central cylinder is stationary, its orientation always remains the same.

When the you are ready to begin the adventure, read the following to the player characters while they are still in the jungle.

As the jungle canopy clears in front of you, you see a sight which you truly did not expect.

A black fortress of stacked cylinders rises above the trees seemingly having come out of nowhere.

KEYED AREAS

The following descriptions are for each numbered area on the map. If changes occur because of the PCs actions at area 16, they will be indicated at the end of a description.

It is important to keep track of the fortress' current configuration at all times during the adventure, noting that it changes at random ever hour, on the hour with a full minute allotted for rotation.

AREA 1. ENTRANCE

The only visible entrance to the fortress is a large set of heavy adamantine doors which, despite their great weight, are easy to open from the outside.

AREA 2. ENTRY CHAMBER

Once the PCs enter the fortress, the adamantine doors gently close because they are set on springs.

If the fortress has rotated, the entry chamber might now face another direction depending on the configuration. If it faces west, the room simple ends at a wall, northward allows partial entry to Area 3 (see the description) and southward has a secret exit which the adandjiin can recognize, but the yagrel have no idea exists.

PCs may find this door by searching the area and making an Intelligence (Investigation) check with a DC of 15 or a Wisdom (Perception) check with a DC of 18. From the outside, the secret door is nearly impossible to find by those who are unaware of its existence and the DCs increase to 20 and 25 respectively.

AREA 3. ARCHERE

If facing west, north or south these rooms simply face walls and serve no purpose. To the east however, the area combines with another open space.

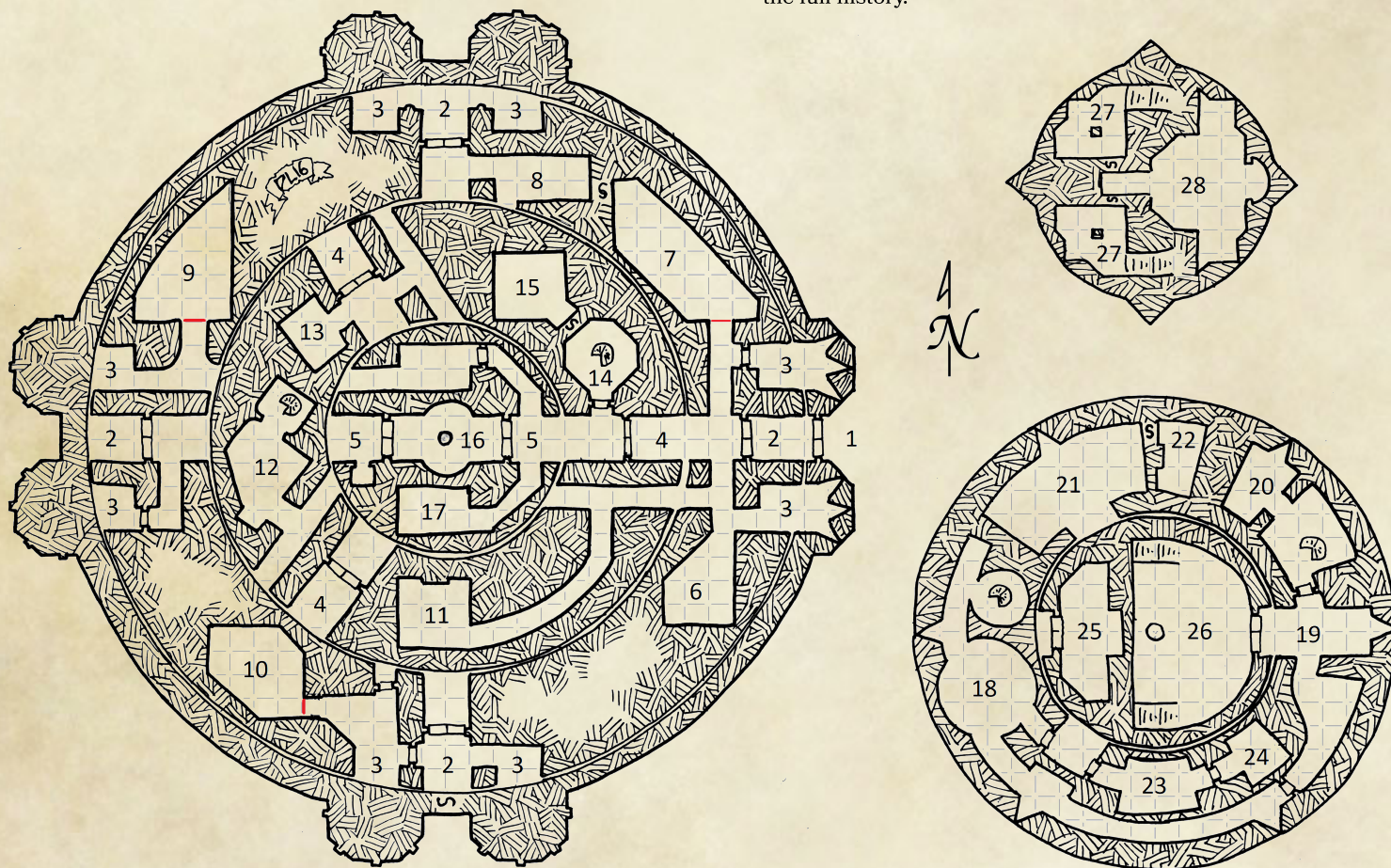
While the fortress mostly serves as a training ground for anadjiin young and as an effective location to enact the Culling, the murder holes indicate its secondary use as a full blown fortress. Twice in the past, the yagrel have grown to such numbers that the anadjiin have been forced to retreat to complexes such as these and go on the defensive. In their understanding, this cycle is all a part of the balance they revere.

AREA 4. CENTRAL CYLINDER ENTRY

Another set of brass doorways lead inwards toward the central cylinder. Depending on the fortress configuration, there may be side passages leading deeper into the middle cylinder or it may only head directly inwards to the inner cylinder.

AREA 5. INNER CYLINDER ENTRY

These short halls lead to the innermost cylinder which does not rotate. One of these entries has a tiny empty side chamber which contains inscriptions written in a pictographic language. There are no recognizable images but if the players read it with magic, they can learn the ancient history of the anadjiin and their conflict with the illithids who eventually became the yagrel. The writing reads in strips from top to bottom and some glowworms need to be cleared from the pictographs at the top of the ceiling if the players want to get the full history.



ANADIAN EXODUS

Long did the ancestors of the beings we now call yagrel prey upon us as we cowered in the dunes and badlands of Anadia. The name itself means "Wet-One" for their skin was moist like it had been soaked in the deep World-Below lakes of Anadia. While we were not a soft species, the tentacle-faces used mind magic from which we had no defense and they rained death upon our fiercest warriors from the skies where we could not rake our claws against their soft bodies. Would only such cowards have come to ground, the early days of our war would not have gone how they had.

Our people and the balance was in peril! Only those who hid away under the sands or in the deepest ravines managed to avoid the strange spiraled structures from which the tentacle-faces came. Year after year, there were less and less of us and those who set forth to find sustenance for their brood often never returned. To emerge from cover was to die.

When all was thought lost, the sounds of battle rang across the skies where the tentacle-faces lingered. Such foul and imbalanced beings surely had terrible enemies of their own and it was apparent that they had come to collect what was due.

Unlike the tentacle-faces, these creatures oft came to ground in structures which they styled after the 8-legged vermin from the World-Below where we now cowered. Thinking them allies, our people approached the vermin-structures and soon learned that the newcomers were no friends either. Creatures part serpent and part vermin burst forth from the structures led by monstrous hulks who could burrow underneath our warriors or send them into a panicked confusion if we met their strange mosaic of eyes.

Yet this was the type of battle our people understood. One clan gathered together some of their finest warriors and ambushed over a dozen of the vermin-structures, taking them for their own. Though it took some time, our Balance-Seekers discovered a means to control the structures which they called "ships" and more specifically "mindspiders."

This clan of the fiercest warriors, known as the Yatilli, are our descendants. You, as the young and untested must earn your way by Culling our former oppressors. Yes, we came to this blue-green orb to escape the death upon our world. Yes, we abandoned many. But to maintain the Yatilli needed to survive. The foolish tentacle-faces followed us to this world and could not find us among the strange green living behemoths the natives people call "trees." So the fools came to ground where we could finally enact our revenge.

Yet still, the Balance above all is what must be protected. Our people are stronger now than ever before because of our tribulations and in a way we owe it to the Wet-Ones.

This is why we suffer them to live. Today, you prove yourself worthy of the name "Yatilli" should you find your way from our most blessed fortress. Find your weapons by the iron spear and kill what you can, or be killed in the process. If it is your deaths which result, that is the will of the Balance. Good luck to you all and remember if you emerge victorious, you emerge as Yatilli - the greatest warrior clan among anadjin for all time.

Another set of doors leads to Area 16, but the doors are warded with a *glyph of warding*. Anadjin Balance-Seekers have placed these glyphs to prevent the yagrel from entering and they are keyed to strike aberrations only for 5d8 acid damage.

AREA 6. CONFUSED YAGREL

Three **yagrel** that have been released from Area 7 have just wandered into this dead end were confused by their imprisonment and the hourly motion of the citadel. They have no idea where they are going but are certainly not willing to talk or negotiate with PCs.

YAGREL

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Survival +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Deep Speech

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yagrel makes 2 attacks, one with its mācuahuitl and one with its tentacles.

Mācuahuitl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage. If the target is medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 14).

Extract Brain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the yagrel. *Hit:* 22 (4d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the yagrel kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

AREA 7. YAGREL PRISON #1

This room smells of filth and PCs who approach hear a high pitched bark or growl that has an otherworldly quality to it. Another **yagrel** remains here in what was once its holding prison and stands besides five tentacle-faced dog creatures with bird-like beaks and a nasty disposition. These creatures are **kigrids** and they attack any who approach their yagrel master.

When the illithid who would one day devolve to the degenerate yagrel came to Toril, there were a number of servant creatures on their ship with them which escaped with the illithids into the wilds of northern Lopango.

Over the centuries, these strange beasts have remained with their masters and when the yagrel were captured by the anadjiin and brought to the fortress, their pets were imprisoned alongside them.

KIGRID

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses passive Perception 15, blindsight 60 ft.

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kigrid makes 2 attacks, one with its claws and one with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4+2) slashing damage and if the target is a creature, the kigrid's does an additional 7 (2d6) poison damage and the target is poisoned if it fails a DC 13 Constitution save for 1 minute.

Once the PCs have cleared the area they might notice (Wisdom (Perception) DC 16) a small depression at the entrance.

If a hand is placed against the depression (or claw for the anadjiin) an opaque, red wall of force will instantly cover the entrance. Touching it again lowers the force field.

There is one of these in every prison chamber (Areas 9 and 10) as well.

AREA 8. INJURED ANADJIIN YOUTH

One of the **anadjiin youths** was separated from its kin earlier when the yagrels were released from their prisons. It ran afoul of the kigrid and yagrel in Area 7 and was certain to die, but when the PCs triggered another movement it managed to escape and was sealed off into these rooms. It is gravely injured (6 hit points remaining) and won't know what to make of the PCs though it does not attack unless the PCs have taken the weapons from Area 11.

If the PCs don't have the anadjiin weapons and assist it with healing magic, the creature will quietly accompany them until they encounter the other anadjiin youths. In such a scenario, the anadjiin will automatically act indifferently towards the PCs instead of hostile and allow them to go about their business.

ANADJIIN YOUTH, LOPANGAN

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +6, Perception +6, Perception +6, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Anadjiin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Lopangan anadjiin makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage if the target is a creature that can bleed.

AREA 9. YAGREL PRISON #2

There are signs of a recent battle here as the injured anadjiin youth from Area 8 encountered the five yagrels that had been released from this prison. Luckily, he killed one and its bloody mess of a body lies on the floor with a slashed throat.

The other four **yagrel** have not moved on, however, having been trapped once again when the PCs caused the fortress to rotate.

One of the yagrel's is wielding a *flame tongue mācuahuitl*, but does not even realize it has this property. The maca has the word "Xiuhcoatl" engraved on its surface in Maztican which is its command word.

AREA 10. YAGREL PRISON #3

The yagrel that were released from this prison moved quickly from their confines once they were released and have made it to the second floor through Area 14 before the anadjiin even made it down to the first floor. All that remains in this chamber is their filth from being locked inside for a tenday.

AREA 11. TEMPTATION CHAMBER

While it is rare, the occasional anadjiin has had its mind polluted by temptations that would not be beneficial to Clan Yatilli. This room was designed by the elder anadjiin to weed out such abominations.

From the hallway a continual flame spell illuminates a pile of gold and gemstones as if it is attempting to highlight the objects. While seasoned PCs might suspect a trap, anadjiin youth are not privy to such tricks and should they become distracted by the wealth, they might briefly abandon the Culling for a moment for easy pickings.

However, the northern square in this room is occupied by a **roper** which has been chained to the ground. Three **piercers** also occupy the ceiling which the anadjiin might not notice (DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)) if they are attacked by the roper.

The roper waits until the treasure is approached to truly reveal itself and its tentacles can easily reach whatever occupies the chamber despite its own immobility. The piercers are just in front of the roper and drop upon any creatures that attack the roper.

The treasure is real, and consists of 300 gold pieces minted in Lopango (among a folk known as the Natican) and a sprinkling of similarly sized tiny emeralds (4), rubies (4) and sapphires (6) worth 50 gp each.

AREA 12. STAIRCASE

spiral staircases lead upwards and rotate along with the middle cylinder. The staircase in this area leads to the chamber in Area 18 above. A wall before the staircase has an engraving depicting both yagrel and anadjiin. the anadjiin are seen wielding halberds that crackle with energy.

These weapons are of course the anadjiin weapons that the PCs might eventually find in Area 15.

AREA 13. ANADJIIN YOUTH SEEKERS

Three **anadjiin youth** have just entered this chamber searching for the *anadjiin weapons*. They will be surprised to see the PCs but will likely not mistake them for yagrels nor will they attack immediately, unless the PCs carry the halberds.

Even with a language barrier, the PCs can make a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check in order for the anadjiin to allow them to move on. If the injured anadjiin from Area 8 is accompanying them, this check succeeds automatically.

If hostilities ensue, the anadjiin are not cowards and will fight to the death.



AREA 14. STAIRCASE AND SECRET DOOR

Another spiral staircase leads up to the second level here like the one in area 12, but there is also a secret door leading into weapons cache in Area 15. This door is seamlessly cut into the surrounding iron and is remarkably difficult to find. It would require a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice or if the PCs are specifically looking for a secret door a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check would suffice.

Opening the door is a challenge as well because there is no lock to pick and no obvious handle or mechanism visible from the outside to enter and it is thick iron like the surrounding wall. The iron door simply slides aside once the control rune is touched in Area 16.

AREA 15. WEAPONS CACHE

There are ten weapons in a long stone coffer in this chamber. Each of these are *anadjiin weapons* which are described below. There are ten halberds, six spears and four war picks.

If any of these weapons are taken, the anadjiin will actively pursue the characters and will be automatically hostile. Returning the weapons can end these hostilities, but the anadjiin often won't give thieves an opportunity to do so.

ANADJIIN WEAPONS

Weapon, rare

The anadjiin of Lopango have moved somewhat from the savagery of their ancestors on the planet Anadia. They prefer to use weapons instead of their claws in battle, but their ability to cause an excess loss of blood is lost when they do so.

The anadjiin discovered a silver-like metal, however, that allows them to transfer the extra necrotic damage they cause through their weapon. This means that in the hands of an anadjiin, anadjiin weapons do an extra 1d8 necrotic damage when in the hands of anadjiin youth or 2d4 in the hands of an adult. This damage transfers to ammunition as well.

Other than serving as normal weaponry, anadjiin weapons are useless to any other creature.

AREA 16. CONTROL PILLAR

All configurations lead to this central chamber which controls a number of effects in the complex. An iron pillar with numerous anadjiin pictographs can be used to remove the prison walls of force, open secret doors in Areas 2 and 14 and start the random rotations of the fortress.

The pictographs include instructions for the controls and the proper series of runes must be touched in the proper order for them to function. It requires a DC 12 Intelligence check to understand the prison controls, DC 15 Intelligence for the secret doors and DC 20 Intelligence to stop or start the fortress rotation.

AREA 17. ANADJIIN VS YAGREL BATTLE

Three **anadjiin youths** and four **yagrel** with two **kigrid** battle in the cramped confines of this room. The PCs should hear the sounds of battle from Area 5 but sounds will be muffled through the doors to Areas 4, or 16.

The PCs can get involved on one side or another, but neither group will have an improved disposition towards the PCs in the aftermath. However, the anadjiin adults in Area 28 are observing this battle using a *crystal ball* and their actions will be watched from this point forward (DC 17 Wisdom save).

Due to the fact that they do not yet have their weapons, the outnumbered anadjiin youth will fall to the yagrel if left alone, but only two yagrel and one badly injured kigrid (half hit points) will survive.

AREA 18. FORTRESS LOOKOUT

If the fortress is ever under attack, from the outside, the murder holes that ring the second floor of the fortress will be manned by anadjiin who wield bows that have the *anadjiin weapon* quality. These bows are in the armory of Area 22 at the moment.

AREA 19. DOORWAY TO THE CENTER

The door to Area 26 is made from adamantine like the entrance and only opens from the inside unless a secret command word known only to the anadjiin adults is spoken. Once the anadjiin youths travel beyond this point, they are on their own within the lower chambers of the fortress.

AREA 20. DEAD YAGREL

A yagrel that made its way upstairs to this level ran into the full contingent of anadjiin and was quickly torn apart. Its remains have been left here and the glowworms that illuminate the complex have crawled from the ceiling to slowly consume the remains.

If they are wiped off, the PCs can find a golden armband on the yagrel which is worth 250 gp.

AREA 21. SECRET DOOR

Area 21 is still a part of the fortress lookout, but there is a secret door which leads to another weapon cache. This cache and secret door is not controlled by the control pillar and must be found separately.

The door is extremely well hidden and requires a DC 22 check to find (either with Perception or Investigation). Opening it requires another DC 20 check using Dexterity (Sleight of Hand). The anadjiin adults in Area 28 have a key. The door is made of iron and appears to be part of the wall.

AREA 22. ARMORY

The anadjiin adults store many of their own weapons here, including 14 longbows and 8 halberds, all with the *anadjiin weapon* quality.

Taking these weapons has the same affect on anadjiin disposition as the weapons in Area 15 do.

AREA 23. GUARD CHAMBER

Normally, when the fortress is not being used for the Culling, anadjiin adults remain stationed in this room and in Area 24. At the moment, it is empty.

AREA 24. GUARD QUARTERS

This room usually houses the anadjiin adults who guard the fortress, but it has been cleared of all its contents in preparation for the ritualistic Culling.

AREA 25. SHRINE

This large chamber serves as a shrine of sorts to the Lopangan anadjiin. They maintain belief in a foreign deity otherwise unknown on Toril.

The room is lit with six *everburning torches* and the shrine has a golden idol of a statuesque anadjiin. It's appearance is much more savage than the anadjiin the PCs have likely encountered so far and is in fact a deity from their home world.

There are various instruments placed throughout the room, but the golden statue itself is worth 15,000 gp. Taking the statue will certainly earn anadjiin ire and the PCs will not be allowed to leave with it.

AREA 26. GRAND ENTRYWAY

The walls in the grand entryway are carved with dozens of depictions of anadjiin in a variety of heroic roles. When the anadjiin youth are released and the Culling begins, this room serves to build their pride and sense of superiority as they prepare to battle the yagrel.

Passing through this room gives all anadjiin inspiration if it is the first time they have done so.

The top portion of the control pillar passes through this room as well, but it does not have any of the controls found in Area 16.

AREA 27. STAIRWAY TO LEVEL 2

A murder hole is the only feature of these rooms except for the staircase down towards the second level. However, there is a secret door similar in design to the armory secret door in Area 21. This leads to the Culling Chamber where the adult anadjiin can be found.

The doors will open when the PCs walk to the top of the stairs.

AREA 28. CHAMBER OF THE CULLING

Read the following to the PCs as they enter this chamber.

Standing before you there are six beings with appearances much like the other clawed creatures you have encountered in this strange complex. These creatures seem more sure of themselves, however, and despite being armed with bows and halberds they stand as if they do not fear you in the slightest. Something makes you think that they really do not have reason to.

This chamber is the true heart of the fortress where anadjiin adults prepare their youths for the oncoming battles and give them instructions on their task.

The anadjiin have been observing the PCs actions for some time now and have contacted the youths to garner more information.

How they react now is based on a Charisma (Persuasion) check made by the PCs with the following modifiers to the roll on a DC 15 check.

- -10 The PCs took anadjiin weapons and have not returned them.
- -5 The PCs killed one or more anadjiin youth during the adventure
- +5 The PCs joined the battle against the yagrel in Area 17
- +5 The PCs helped/healed the injured youth in Area 8

If the PCs make the Charisma Check one of the anadjiin speaks to them in halting Common or Maztican.

You fight like the Yatilli and represent your race well. We have not thought of you as true warriors in the past but perhaps we must rethink. Take this as a token of our respect and then begone from these lands. Powerful you may be, but let us not believe that you might upset the balance. No few such as yourselves could withstand the might of the Yatilli clan.

With that, the anadjiin throws a longsword that it holds to the most martial looking PC. This is a *longsword of wounding* which it took from one of Cordell's men over a century ago when they attempted to pass through the southern Chapullel Jungle.

After the sword is passed on, the PCs can teleport to just outside the fortress using a permanent *teleportation circle* that the anadjiin guide them to in the eastern portion of the room. This circle teleports them to Area 1.

If the PCs fail the Charisma check, the anadjiin say nothing, give them nothing, but still lead them to the teleportation circle. Should the PCs fail the check by 10 or more, the anadjiin attack which will likely lead to a total party kill, unless the PCs flee immediately.

ANADJIIN, LOPANGAN

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Nature +6, Perception +6, Perception +6, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Anadjiin

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Lopangan anadjiin makes two anadjiin halberd attacks.

Anadjiin Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage plus 5 (2d4) necrotic damage if the target is a creature that can bleed.

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The movies which have been referenced are **The Ruins** from 2008, the **Relic** from 1997, and **AvP: Alien Versus Predator** from 2004. Watch your players' faces when they finally realize what they have been thrust into!

Cover Art: *"The Jungle"*

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