

TWR3

THE DOOR OF STARS



**A MAZTICAN ADVENTURE FOR
FOUR CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 6-8**



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MAZTICA ALIVE!

“Maztica Alive!” is a group of enthusiasts whose love of the Mesoamerican setting in the Forgotten Realms known as Maztica continues today - almost thirty years after the setting’s introduction. All of Maztica Alive products are for use with the fifth edition of the Dungeons and Dragons game.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This product is the third in an adventure path for Maztica which will all receive the tag “TWR” (True World Resurrection). There is something major afoot that all TWR products will at least partially tie into. Keep an eye out for future installments!

In this book, you will find an adventure set in the hitherto unexplored lands of Huaclic. Beyond some description in the original Maztica boxed set and updates in Maztica Alive products, there has never really been any major happenings in the nation of Huaclic. Monsters in this book appear in the **Monster Manual** and the various Maztica Alive compendiums (TWC5-TWC7). Basic stat blocks for the monsters found in the compendiums will be provided in the appendix of the adventure.

This adventure is also a “sequel” of sorts to the adventure “Mechica” published in Dragon Magazine #70 in February, 1983 and written by Gali Sanchez.

It is important that the DM knows Huaclic’s history and the adventure background before starting the adventure itself. This way, it will be easier to fill in blanks for curious players and even to expand upon the adventure.

The Door of Stars itself is a wonderful way to introduce the players to countless other worlds, particularly those from other settings which have a Mesoamerican bent.



HUACLI REGIONAL HISTORY

The Nexalan Empire was vast and overpowering. It subjugated nations far and wide and it was once thought to cover the whole of the True World. Despite their distance from Nexal, the city states of Huacli were no stranger to the Empire's reach.

Yet somehow, despite multiple attempts, the city-state of Otomi has always managed to resist ultimate defeat. They won many battles and often set the Nexalans fleeing back to their valley with hardly a slave in tow.

Undaunted, the Nexalans brought about greater and greater forces to bring down the stubborn Otomi, and the inevitable conclusion would be victory. But when the victorious force finally marched into the city itself, they found naught but a ghost town. Abandoned homes, temples, even meals left uneaten were all that could be found. The treasures were few, and although copper could be found in relative abundance, the haul was hardly worth the campaign's expenditures. After many seasons and many attempts, the Nexalans finally gave up and left the Otomi.

The secret that has saved the Otomi was a relic of an ancient time and unknown origin. Before they inhabited the mountains and valleys of Huacli, there was a nation of folk known as the Zateca. The Zateca spoke a language called Teenek that still has some words in use in modern Huacli, but that is not the only remnant of their civilization.

THE DOOR OF STARS

The Door of Stars is an artifact that predates even the Zateca, and they are said to have found it hidden in the same mountain cave in which it still resides.

The Door is a gateway to other worlds, controlled by a series of crystals and unknown symbols – a “control center” of sorts. The Door is utterly unbreakable, as is its control panel. Sixteen crystals arranged in a sequence on a four by four panel open doors to different worlds and allows for nigh infinite permutations.

Experimentation is almost useless to find “random” worlds but it has been done before (most just keep the gate unopened). In the circumstances where one has been found, it has only caused disaster – once allowing an otherworldly retinue of vampires and their spawn to enter the True World and decimate the Zateca population. The Otomi know this, and experimentation is strictly forbidden.

The Otomi know of one specific sequence which leads them to a world where surviving Zateca relocated a thousand years past. In this world, their name has been bastardized over the centuries and they are now known as the Sapotec. It is this land – sometimes called Mechica, to which the Otomi flee when under duress.

Other sequences are said to exist hidden in ruins that are themselves hidden deep in the mountains.

**Note that given there are 16 crystals and 16 positions to fill there are over twenty trillion crystal permutations.*

THE ZATECA

The Zateca inhabited Huacli long before the current civilization and its city-states. They were a peaceful people, at home in the mountaintops, but very similar in temperament to the Payit far to the east.

They found the Door of Stars early in their prerecorded history and came across the crystal sequence that opens the door to Mechica. Whether the sequence was found in an old ruin or through experimentation is unknown, but when they entered, they came across a native population known as the Mechica. The Mechica were not outright hostile, but also did not entirely welcome the Zateca. An uneasy truce formed as the Zateca colonized the uninhabited mountains of the new world. The Mechica mispronounced the Zateca name and over time, the Zateca became known as the Sapotec.

On Toril, the remaining Zateca sought to find new worlds through the Door of Stars. Whether out of greed or simple curiosity, they experimented with abandon. After many years and tens of thousands of attempted sequences, the door finally opened to a world of darkness.

Within moments, a retinue of vampires and their spawn poured through the door and killed all the Zapotecs they could find. Within a decade the Zapotec civilization on Toril was no more and the vampires were prepared to move beyond Huacali's mountain borders.

THE DESMODU

Unbeknownst to both the Zateca and the invading vampires – another race took note of the horrors that came through the Door of Stars.

A shy civilization of batfolk known as the desmodu inhabited the mountains and remained virtually unknown to the Zateca. The vampires threatened their underground caverns in addition to the surface world and inevitably war began. The desmodu were fierce in defense of their home. In another decade of time, with heavy losses among the desmodu, the vampires were driven back in an event known as the Day of the Purge. The vampires were backed to the coast of Huacali and onto a tidal sand bar as the desmodu picked them off one by one astride their giant bats. The sand bar went for many miles ending at an unknown island. The undead were pushed to this island just as the tide came in and destroyed swaths of their vampire spawn. The cruel undead have languished on this island for many centuries now, ravenous and degenerate. They call their kingdom Nochte, and slaughter any who approach.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The adventure begins in the city-state of Otomi. The "nation" of Huacali is more unified in recent years than it has been in the past, but in reality, the whole region is more of a collection of independent governments and city-states. Otomi is considered by outsiders to be a capital for all of Huacali, but this is not technically true.

If the players are following the adventure path which began with *TWR1 The Sea Demon's Pearl* and *TWR2 The Maztican Ball Game*, they should be aware that something major is afoot in the True World. The Druids of Maztica, having seen their skill and unexpected performance in the Kultakan Grand Tournament, now believe that the characters will continue to

play a major role in what they are hoping will be the resurrection of their goddess. If the PCs had the vision of the goddess from *TWR1*, they will know that the druids are correct.

A prominent druidess, Malinalli of the Otomi, will have summoned them here to the mountain city in order to determine if the PCs desire to continue in their role. She will have already offered 100 gold quills (1,000 gp) through a messenger simply for them to make the trip.

The adventure can also be played if the characters are not yet involved in the adventure path. In this case, however, it is up to the DM to determine the reason why the characters are in Otomi. Huacali is known for its exports of copper and perhaps the players are hired to accompany a returning caravan. Either way, Malinalli will have had visions about their role in this all and will approach them within hours of entering the city.

The druids have existed for some time now, organizing when the gods stopped answering prayers and when the sky turned to steel over a hundred years ago. Now that the world is back to what it once was, the druids consider this the fulfillment of a prophecy that the goddess Maztica would return. In their visions, the druids have been told that they must first acquire an item known as the Risa Stone. The magic of the Risa Stone could distract Maztica's son Zalteco long enough to allow her tonalli (soul) to reunite with an immortal body. Otherwise, the vindictive god of war would personally strike down any who attempted such a deed.

Unfortunately, the Risa Stone is not of this world - and if heroes were to acquire it for her, they would have to pass through the Door of Stars.

The Door of Stars has existed since time immemorial and it is hidden in a nearly inaccessible cavern far in the mountain passes. The Door can connect to an infinite number of worlds, and the Risa Stone exists in one.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

After a few hours in the Huacli city Otomi, the player characters will be approached by the druidess who summoned them. She (Malinalli) will explain to them the adventure backstory and send them on their way.

For the first phase of the adventure, the PCs will have to infiltrate a City of the Dead known as Mictlaneca in order to obtain a code long kept secret by the Otomi.

In the next step of their journey, the players will have to brave an underground journey to the Door of Stars and open the portal. They will be set upon by an ancient vampire and his spawn who has survived an ancient purge, but the characters may find allies here in unexpected corners.

Through the Door of Stars, the PCs find themselves in a whole new world, one very different from their own where foreign, yet familiar gods and myths reside. In this land, they need to locate the fabled Risa Stone and take it by force from the nation of cruel men and women known as the Mechica.

Getting it back to the True World will require the PCs to find additional allies in this strange land among the gnomish tlaloques and the shy Sapotecs - a people who once inhabited the True World but migrated here long ago.

With the Risa Stone in hand - the Druids of Maztica reward the PCs handsomely before preparing the PCs for their next mission.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

As stated in the background, the PCs should already be in Otomi, where they are approached by the druidess Malinalli (**druid, MM** pg 346).

Greetings to you travelers and blessing in the name of the Mother of Us All.

My name is Malinalli and I serve the goddess Maztica herself – to whom you are already known. I have foreseen that your role in returning her to us is grand, but only if you choose it to be. Do you accept your fate?

The players might accept, remain unsure or outright refuse to help. If they accept or remain unsure (but continue to listen), then continue below. If they refuse, express Malinalli's sad, but not angry disposition. She was certain that it was the PCs that she saw in her visions, and this turn of events makes her question her own worth rather than express anger towards the characters. In this case, she will inform the PCs that she will remain in Otomi for a tenday, at which point she will seek out others of her kind to discuss what has gone wrong. Effectively, this ends the adventure as the PCs will never know of the Door of Stars or the Risa Stone.

Malinalli has nothing beyond the original gold quills she offered the players to travel here. She makes good on this promise. If they ask for more to continue she remarks "the gratitude of the Mother of Us All is not enough for you?" She will not give more and in fact does not have anything more to offer.

Assuming the PCs allow her to continue, read the following.

Understand that from this moment forward, you are privy to information that only the Otomi know. If you were to pass on this information to their enemies – there is little I could do to convince the whole of the city from hunting you down.

The Otomi have always been fierce warriors and were one of the few to withstand the empire of Nexal when it was at its height over a century ago. Even when they were outmatched, the Otomi were able to disappear where none could find them. They would use the Door of Stars to evade their tormenters.

At this point, Malinalli will relay to the PCs all of the information about the Door of Stars in the background. She will also relay the history of the Zateca, their decimation at the hands of vampires, and carefully explaining their transition in Mechica to the people known as the Sapotecs. Most importantly, she will explain to them that their quest is to find and obtain the Risa Stone – an artifact that will help them return Maztica to the True World!

Continue with the following once she has given the PCs their history lesson, or if forward

thinking players ask about the specific sequence for the control panel at the Door of Stars to enter Mechica.

Huasteco is the chieftain of the Otomi and he guards the crystal sequence with his life, knowing that the Door of Stars will always be a refuge for his people.

I know of only one way that you will be able to convince Huasteco to share the sequence with you and allow you to travel to the Door.

In the mountains, there is a city known as Mictlatepec. It is no ordinary city, and one that is only occupied by the dead. It has been a thorn in the side of Huasteco and the Otomi for centuries.

A creature, once a man, but now a terrible and damned being named Alban “rules” over his dead subjects. He does so with the power of a talisman of hishna. If you could either destroy Alban or take his talisman, Huasteco would be eternally grateful. With this deed accomplished, and my word of your bravery – he would not refuse you.

The PCs may have more questions. Malinalli also knows the history of Mictlatepec and will gladly explain all she knows, but she is eager to see the players on their way.

Before they go, Malinalli blesses each player individually. If one or more of the characters has roleplayed exceptionally well at this point (particularly in regards to their background) this blessing gives the character or characters inspiration.

THE CITY OF THE DEAD

Eagle knights patrol the hills and valleys in the immediate vicinity of Otomi and keep it relatively free of both predators and the occasional wandering undead. The trip, however, is two full days into the mountains and well out of range of these patrols.

If the PCs are itching for a fight, perhaps they could come upon a band three wandering **mictlaneca scouts** and one **mictlaneca priest** that have wandered from Mictlatepec.

Before long, and at twilight, the PCs will see the city atop a nearby mountain that has been

cleanly levelled. Intact temples and pyramids grace the manmade plateau, but there are no signs of anyone living while the sun begins to set.

MICTLATEPEC

When the Zateca were the primary peoples living in the mountains and valleys of Huacli, Mictlatepec went by the name Tehuatepec. It was primarily an administrative city, used to help govern and keep records for the surrounding region.

When the Zateca lost most of their civilization to emigration and the predations of vampires, its role slowly began to change. At first, it became a center for trade in fine pottery and the city became known (ironically) as a refuge from the undead vampires.

In order to avoid the potential despoilment of their remains, the Zateca began to bury their dead within the boundaries of the city itself. At this point, the remaining Zateca began to refer to the city as “Mictlatepec,” meaning “The City of the Dead,” and the name stuck.

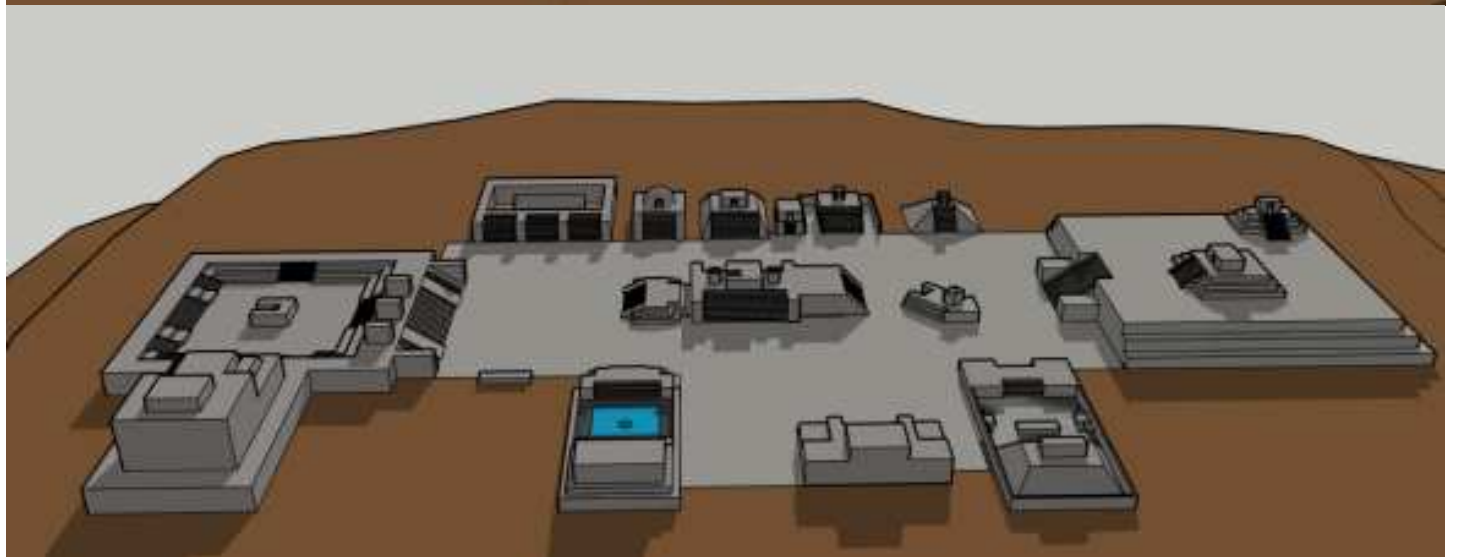
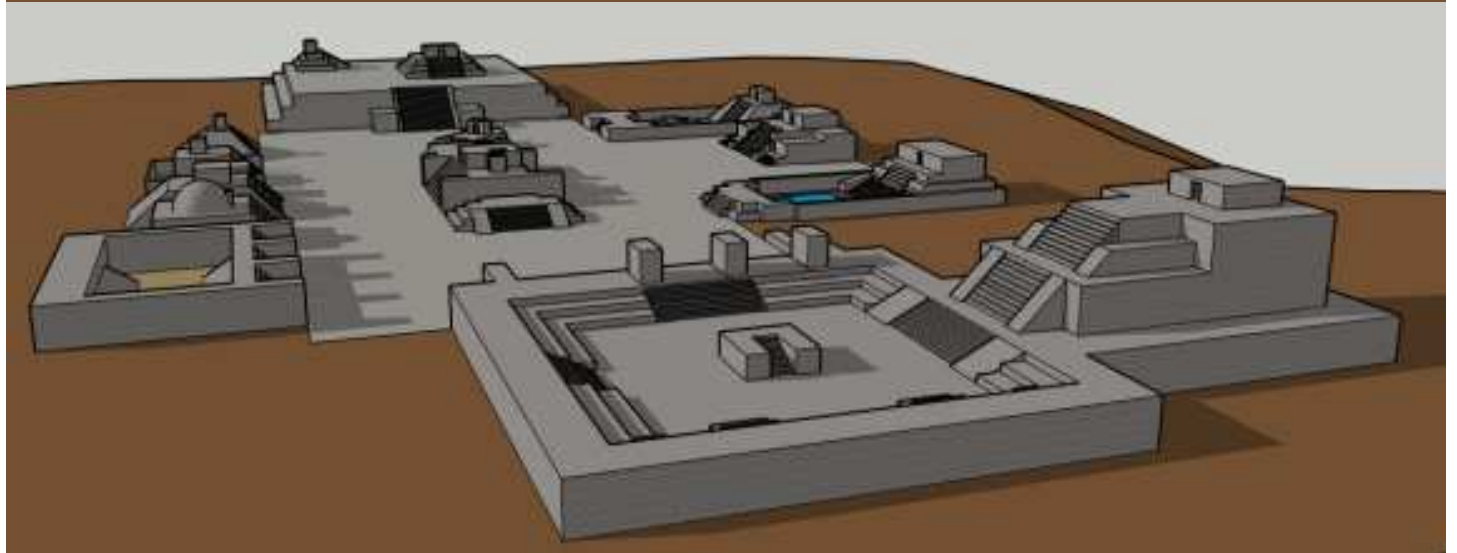
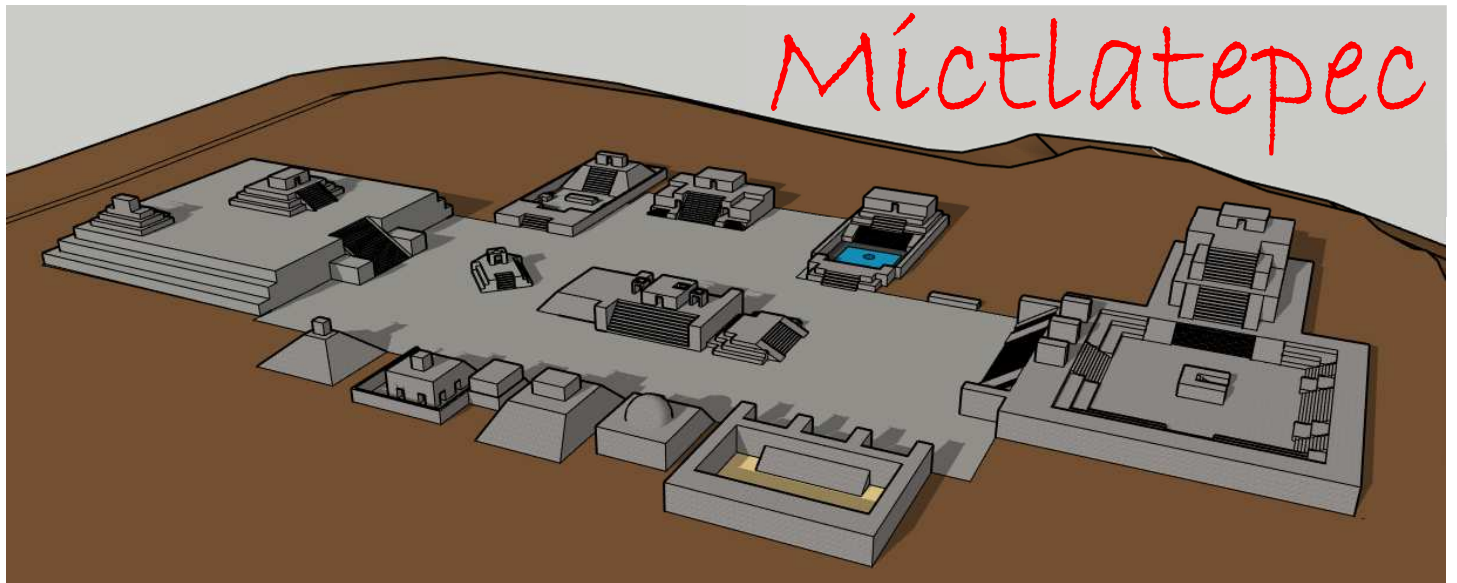
Over time, Mictlatepec’s relative safety became a valuable commodity and only the noble and powerful were allowed to remain within its confines. Within time, the dead outnumbered the living as the greedy took more and more for themselves.

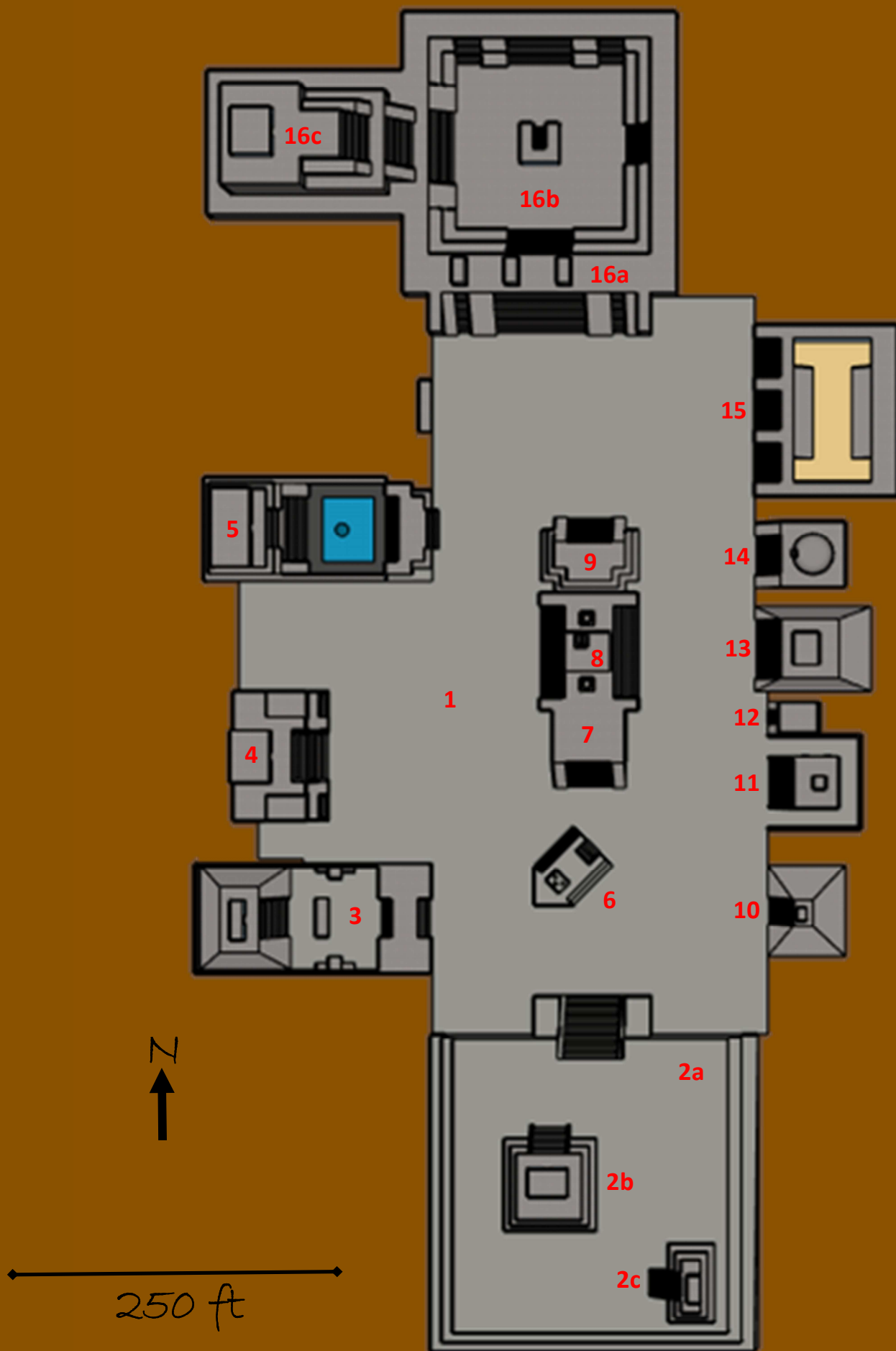
The last of its rulers was a spoiled noble named Alban. He held to very strict laws that allowed him to rule successfully for many years, but very few would say his rule was just.

He also desired to continue his rule of the City of the Dead perpetually. Alban reached out to his royal hishnashaper – a loyal Zateca named Moctexa. Moctexa created a powerful talisman which he called the *talisman of perpetual life* and gave it to the despotic ruler.

Alban wore the talisman until the end of his natural life and arose when the sun set as the first ever mictlaneca or “dead one.”

Moctexa was horrified at his own creation but continued to serve. In exchange for a promise from the dead king to respect his own eternal rest, Moctexa agreed to forge other items of hishna known as *knives of perpetual service*. With these obsidian daggers, Alban cut out the





hearts of hundreds of his subjects and they too arose as dead ones.

Today, Mictlatepec is silent during the day as the undead abhor the sunlight. But as the last rays of light drop behind the mountain, the undead leave their chambers and engage in what might seem to otherwise be a normal “life.”

Mictlatepec. Unless they intentionally wait, the PCs should arrive just before dusk. The city is utterly deserted during the day but the mictlaneca do not actually rest. Rather, they wait in tunnels under the city or in the darkness of the various buildings. If the players hope to wipe out the mictlaneca by waiting for day and clearing out each building one by one, Alban will quickly realize his city is under attack and will consolidate all his remaining forces in the palace and its under tunnels. Allow this tactic for perhaps a day or more, but warn them that the mictlaneca seem to be catching onto their plan and are prepared with greater numbers each day the attacks are attempted. A full on assault on the city is not advised as there are literally hundreds of undead.

When the city is in sight, but before the PCs have entered, read the following out loud:

Other than the whistling of the wind, the City of the Dead is bereft of sound and motion. As the last rays of the sun disappear behind the mountain you prepare yourself for what you know is soon to come.

Within moments you hear your first sound of the night as a small creature comes charging at you from one of the temples. It is fast and quadrupedal and you do not recognize it until it barks out a high pitched yelp and charges your ankles. Somehow, the creature does not appear to be a natural being.

The creature is a **skeletal chihuahua** created by Alban. It is not much of a threat to the PCs on its own, but the barking will draw the attention of four **mictlaneca guards** and their **mictlaneca knight** commander which guard the city’s main entrance and outskirts. This attack occurs prior to most of the mictlaneca emerging from their tunnels, so the battle will not yet alert the city.

Waking the Dead. From this point forward, it is imperative to the PCs’ survival that they maintain at least a semblance of secrecy in their actions. If the PCs are in the city the average “citizen” will ignore the players for a time as they go about their nightly business. Nighttime Mictlatepec is a horror to behold, with its shambling bodies and foul smelling residents, but it can be navigated temporarily by PCs who behave themselves.

There are hundreds of **mictlaneca commoners** wandering about the city performing normal activities as if the city itself still lived. Starting a fight with them is ill advised and for every turn the PCs battle in the open there is a chance (roll of 1 on a 1d6) that the entire city becomes alerted to their presence. At this point, the players only hope is to escape in order to come back long after the alert has died down (a tenday at least). When they return, the guards and knights that have been destroyed will be replaced. In total, there are 470 mictlaneca commoners armed with makeshift weapons, and 10 will arrive each turn to fight the PCs. After ten rounds of battle, the buildings will start to empty as the entire city mobilizes.

Entering and fighting inside or atop the various structures of Mictlatepec does not hold the danger of alerting the city.

1. **Inner Courtyard.**

There is no plant life in the inner courtyard and it is kept free of growth by commoners who shamle about performing their nightly duties. The ground is made of smoothed stone and it is difficult to see beyond the edge of the city and mountaintop into the surrounding valleys. The city might have one time been considered beautiful as you note the buildings standing out clearly against the starlit sky. Two **mictlaneca cult fanatics** lead separate cleanup crews throughout the city grounds and it is best that they are avoided altogether. PCs who encounter such beings need to succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check to avoid having the fanatics sound the alarm.

2. **Temple of Zaltec.**

A 30-foot high platform dominates the southern portion of the city and is dedicated wholly to the worship of Zaltec. Mictlaneca commoners are

allowed on the platform but not in the main (2b) or auxiliary temples (2c) themselves.

The main temple connects to underground tunnels where the priests and acolytes hide from the sun during the day, but the auxiliary temple does not have such a connection. Thus, it is possible for the PCs to rest in 2c without being attacked during the day.

Unfortunate victims are brought here after being captured elsewhere and are sacrificed in one of the two temples. Currently, there is a living **aarakocra** (*MM* page 12) being held behind a stone slab in 2c (requires a combined Strength of 45 to move). The aarakocra is in good shape and is actually willing to fight alongside the PCs if rescued. If the players believe it is a liability, they can set the aarakocra free as it can easily escape by flying out of the city. Either way, the aarakocra could be a source of future adventures and its rookery lies elsewhere in the peaks of Huacali.

Both living and undead beings are sacrificed here. The living are changed into mictlaneca using a *knife of perpetual service* wielded by one of the priests in 2a. Undead (which include mictlaneca who have lost in the ball game or have otherwise displeased Alban) are torn apart and thrown to the commoners who feed upon the grisly parts. All sacrifices occur promptly at midnight.

The main pyramid is an additional 15 feet above the platform and contains a 10 foot stone structure. Two **mictlaneca priests** and 3 **mictlaneca acolytes** occupy the structure performing rites of worship to Zalteco. The occupants will attack any creature that enters the temple and is not bound for sacrifice (other than other priests, acolytes or Alban himself).

The smaller auxiliary temple contains 4 **mictlaneca acolytes** who behave similarly.

The two priests wear golden necklaces worth 100 gp each and one carries the *knife of perpetual service*. There is no other treasure to be found.

3. *Market Complex and Treasury*

The courtyard of this complex is surrounded by a 10-foot platform at its eastern end, a 20-foot stone building to the west, and 10-foot walls to the north and south. A **mictlaneca noble** stands atop an auction block in the center of the

courtyard protected by two **mictlaneca guards**. Four **mictlaneca commoners** also stand ready to relay messages or items elsewhere in the city.

In the northeast corner of the courtyard, a mictlaneca commoner sells “food” in the form of **skeletal chihuahuas**. There are 18 in total which he will release should battle break out.

Sitting atop the pyramid shaped stone building is Mictlaneca’s “Minister of Trade,” a **mictlaneca veteran** who supervises all business in the city. He is attended by two **mictlaneca commoners** and is currently busy negotiating trade with three **mictlaneca acolytes** from the Temple of Zalteco.

Below the pyramid, accessible via a stairway from its main entrance, is the city’s treasury, which currently holds 17,500 gp worth of moldy mayz and cocoa beans, quills of gold dust, jade and turquoise. If the players attack this complex, the commoners will scatter and alert the city.

4. *Temple of the Dancers*

Alban and the mictlaneca love nothing more than to capture women of noble birth and bring them here for extended torture and eventual sacrifice. Alban refers to these unfortunate folk as his “dancers” and he employs a **mictlaneca bard** to carve their tortured likeness in stone tablets. There are currently 31 of these stone tablets in the south end of the building. There are currently no living dancers here, but there are three wooden barrels, two of which have normal skeletons dressed in fine garb. If the PCs make a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they can recognize the same fine clothing from depictions in two of the tablets. The third barrel contains 5 gold quills worth 25 gp.

Two **mictlaneca priests** and the bard wait atop the 20-foot platform at the end of the central staircase. One holds a *knife of perpetual service*.

5. *Palace of the Warriors*

This building is the military command center for the city and is best avoided by the players. A 10-foot-tall platform surrounds a courtyard and central fountain. The water is obviously fouled, but should the PCs be so foolish as to drink from it, they must make a DC 15 Constitution check or become poisoned. They may make another check at the beginning of each of their turns, but

until they succeed, they have the poisoned condition and suffer disadvantage on all attack and defense rolls.

At night, the inhabitants are all over the compound practicing drills, fixing weapons and in some cases relaxing. There are 26 **mictlaneca veterans** here, but their leader is the most fearsome of all – a **mictlaneca champion** who one day hopes to dispose of Alban and lead the city to war.

Under the main building, there are chambers with treasure that is used to pay the veterans and it includes 1,300 gp worth of cocoa beans, 224 gold quills (1,120 gp) and chunks of jade and turquoise worth 500 gp total.

6. *Observatory*

Notches in the wall of this arrow shaped structure allow for observation of a variety of celestial objects, but one notch has been filled in with thatch and mud. PCs who make a DC 12 Intelligence check realize the filled in notch was specific to the movements of the sun. Some mictlaneca have left their moccasins here and one is a pair of *moccasins of free movement* (TWC1 page 72) whose owner did not realize it was valuable.

7. *Temple of Azul*

The stairs and ramps on the south side of this structure lead to a 20-foot tall platform where priests of Azul hold their ceremonies. There are three **mictlaneca priests** and three attendant **mictlaneca acolytes** here who hold no treasure.

8. *Temple of Tezca*

The east and west stairways lead to this structure's 20-foot platform which has two open stone buildings that face to the east. Neither building has a roof so the mictlaneca will not be found here during the day. A third stone structure between the others also opens to the east and a wooden ladder leads to its rooftop. The four **mictlaneca priests** here have gone nearly insane due to the fact that they may never again lay their eyes on the sun and it have not been able to for centuries. If the players do not attack, they might be able to convince these priests to destroy themselves by making a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If such an event occurs, they will also tell the

PCs that Alban wears the *talisman of perpetual life* around his neck at all times, giving an accurate description of the object. They will also mention that shortly after the ball game, Alban will seek to worship Zalteco alone in the Royal Complex.

If the players attack, the priests will respond with violence, but don't seem to be into the fight, suffering disadvantage on attack rolls.

9. *Temple of Qotal*

This ancient temple has not been occupied in centuries, but the mictlaneca leave it alone in order to avoid angering the Plumed Dragon. It is a safe place to rest.

10. *Priest's Tomb*

The small stone structure upon this 20-foot platform guards the secret entrance to the tomb in the pyramid. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a small trapdoor under an altar. The ladder that leads into the tomb ends in a large chamber. This chamber contains the remains of Moctexa, whose final wish for eternal rest was actually upheld by Alban. The chamber has no light, but if the players bring their own, Moctexa's eyes sparkle with a green glow. Moctexa however, is truly dead and the green sparkle is the result of two valuable emeralds that have been placed in his eye sockets. The chamber holds several pieces of worked gold worth a total of 1,000 gp and the two emeralds worth 250 gp each.

The mictlaneca consider this structure sacred, or at least Alban does and they fear his wrath. Players who set foot upon it at night might alert the city to their presence and initiate an attack as described in *Waking the Dead*.

11. *Palace of the Merchants*

The central courtyard extends into this structure, and a staircase on the west side leads up to a 20-foot platform which supports a stone building. The 100 square foot central courtyard is open to the sky and attended by 21 female **mictlaneca commoners** who weave, make pottery, sit and talk or play games. There is also a finely dressed merchant (**mictlaneca noble**) attended by four **mictlaneca veteran** guards. The merchant incessantly counts the treasure in the room, which consists of 2,700 gp worth of

cocoa beans, coral buds, jade, turquoise and gold quills. If PCs try to take anything, the noble will call out and the entire complex will attack, including the commoners. Otherwise, they ignore the living – even if the players attempt to speak to them.

12. *Servants' Quarters*

This building is empty at night time, but it is where five of the mictlaneca commoners from building 11 spend their days.

13. *Merchant's Tomb*

An open stone building sits atop this pyramid and inside a stone block has been moved to uncover a tomb entrance. Unfortunately, the once rich tomb has long since been looted, and all that remains are pieces of worthless broken pottery. There are also no living or dead inhabitants.

14. *Warrior's Tomb*

The building atop this 20-foot platform is spherical in shape unlike any other structure in Mictlatepec. Inside, the walls are decorated with the exploits of what must have been a powerful warrior. There is a plainly visible trap door in the center of the floor which leads down into an empty tomb, but this is a central hub for the tunnels that permeate the undercity. During the day, nearly the entire population of Mictlatepec can be reached via the crawlspaces connected to the tomb. At night, the Mictlaneca exit to live their normal “lives.”

15. *Ball Court*

When the sun first sets over the city, many of the city's residents descend upon the ball court to watch their only form of entertainment that does not involve torture or killing. In this court, the mictlaneca play a version of pokolpok (described fully in *TWR2 The Maztican Ball Game*) where there are only three players per team.

There is a team of reigning champions consisting of **mictlaneca veterans** who routinely play against three **mictlaneca commoners**. The losers are then brought to the Temple of Zaltec for sacrifice at midnight, while the winners continue to practice.

If the players so choose, they may play the game against the mictlaneca veterans, but win or lose, the veterans and a dozen mictlaneca commoners attempt to capture the characters. The only difference is that if the PCs win, the sacrifice will be performed with a *knife of perpetual service*, so that they can continue their nightly victories for eternity.

16. *The Royal Complex*

The Royal Complex is the largest structure in Mictlatepec and it is the home of its ancient ruler, Alban. Commoners are not allowed anywhere on its grounds, even if it is under assault. The central courtyard (16b) is ten feet above the city floor, and staircases, ramps, and steps lead up to a surrounding platform (16a). In the center of the courtyard is a 10-foot pyramid which Alban climbs nightly to worship Zaltec alone. This is the best time to confront Alban, as he does not have his typical retinue of guards.

Steps also lead up to the Royal Palace (16c), where **Alban**, 12 **mictlaneca veterans** and 2 **mictlaneca priests** spend the majority of the evening. The Royal Palace also contains considerable treasure in the form of gold quills, turquoise, jade and an assortment of gemstones worth a total of 7,000 gp. There is also a *spiderwalker* hishna talisman, as well as a *talon of Zaltec* that Alban wields in battle. Both items can be found on page 72 of *TWC1 The Maztica Campaign Guide*.

If the players wait for Alban to perform his nightly rites to Zaltec (a DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) will allow them to suspect this pattern if the information wasn't gathered from the priests of Tezca), read them the following.

You see one of the dead that stands out from all the rest enter the central courtyard and start to climb to the top of the temple in its center. He is dressed in finery unlike any you have seen so far and wears a plumed headdress that most certainly indicates royalty. A necklace of jaguar claws and human teeth adorns his neck among other pieces of jewelry. The mictlaneca is most certainly the one you seek – the dreaded Alban, ruler of the City of the Dead.

Killing Alban and taking his necklace, which is obviously the talisman of perpetual life, will ensure the players receive the proper crystal sequence from Huasteco along with his blessing and a promise that they are forever welcome among the Otomi. The characters will not want for food or lodging ever again among the city-states of Huacli, and most will treat them as the heroes they are.

Once the PCs acquire the talisman, they may recover from any wounds in Otomi, speak to Malinalli and prepare for their journey to the Door of Stars. Malinalli explains that the way is not always safe, and they will have to be wary of the surrounding dark in the tunnels.



CAVERNS OF THE DOOR OF STARS

Huasteco provides directions to the caverns where the Door of Stars is located. The entrance lies only a few miles from Otomi, but it is deeper into the mountains towards the west coast of Maztica. Huasteco indicates the location of the secret door that leads to its chamber, but he is unaware of the new inhabitants of the caverns. In addition, the Huasteco gives the characters a second sequence – one that will return them to Huacli when they are ready to return.

1. *Bridge of Stars*

The characters will recognize the Bridge of Stars from a description provided by Huasteco. It is a landmark they were told to look for to identify the proper caverns. The bridge itself is remarkably sturdy, and it needs to be considering the entire population of the Otomi occasionally must flee across it.

2. *Battle Scene*

This chamber is strewn with the corpses of three humans wearing garb that is unknown elsewhere in the True World, or even Toril itself for that matter. There is also the corpse of a giant bat that has been ripped to shreds by either claws or fangs. If a character makes a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check, they will realize the clothing comes from an ancient kingdom of vampires known as Nochte that once plagued the Zateca of Huacli and led to their exodus to another world.

3. *Desmodu*

The fabled batfolk of Huacli are only spoken of in the most ancient legends, yet here one rests, having lost its mate and its mount to the vampires of Nochte. Read the following if the players enter the chamber.

A creature unlike any you have seen sits by a fire with another corpse of its race. It appears to be some form of anthropomorphic bat, but powerfully built with expressive, sad eyes.

The creature is obviously distraught and when it notices you it hisses and chirps with a high pitched sound that is only barely in your range of hearing.

It does not immediately attack, and it seems to allow you to make the first move.

The creature is a **Maztican Desmodu** – rare in the extreme, except in the mountains of Huacli and perhaps in parts of Kolan. The desmodu speak their own language, but this one has picked up enough of the Maztican common tongue to communicate haltingly with the PCs. Its voice is so high pitched that it is somewhat painful to listen to and the sound seems out of place coming from a creature that looks so brawny and powerful.

If the players do not attack, the desmodu asks who they might be. It knows of the Otomi and the desmodu hold no outright hostility towards humankind. No matter if the players lie or tell the truth, the desmodu knows that no man would be in these caverns were it not looking for the Door of Stars.

The desmodu introduces itself as Xio'trioc and the corpse is that of his mate, recently slain by an ancient enemy of the desmodu and of mankind as well.

Xio'trioc pleads with the characters to help gain some revenge on the vampire and its remaining spawn. He and his mate already destroyed three in the battle scene in cavern 2, but at least two remain. In return, the desmodu swears to guard their return to Huacli, because the trip is known to cause disorientation and the players will otherwise be vulnerable.

If the players refuse to help the vampires will kill the desmodu and wait at the Door of Stars for the players to return.

5. *Bat Cave*

Fifty normal **bats** rest in this cave and will not be disturbed by PCs who are accompanied by the desmodu. There is also one **giant bat**, though it is terribly injured and unfit to enter battle unless it receives healing from the PCs. If healed, the bat will accompany the desmodu, but the ceilings are too low in areas 6 and 7 for Xio'trioc to ride this mount.

6. *Vampire Spawn*

Two **vampire spawn** remain in this cavern, guarding the rest of their master in cavern 7. They attack immediately upon spotting the

desmodu. Player characters that are unaccompanied are given warning hisses and if they back out, the spawn do not follow. However, they will warn their master and if the PCs enter the Door of Stars, all three vampires will be waiting for them upon their return – a very deadly prospect for the players.

7. *Vampire of Nochte*

Most of the vampires of Nochte are forced to reside on their island kingdom to the west of Huacli, but some have either found a way back to the mainland or remained here from a time before the vampires were banished. This **vampire of Nochte** is the latter, having found its way through vast underground tunnels that pass deep under the ocean. Though tough, this vampire is a straight up battle and with their superior numbers and the desmodu's help, they should be able to overcome it.

ROBE OF NOCHTE

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This dark black robe is laced with strands of golden thread that stand out clearly against the pitch cloth. It has powers very similar to a *robe of stars* including an attuned wearer receiving a +1 bonus to saving throws while they wear it.

Instead of stars, the robe has six shards of jagged obsidian that do not blend in entirely with the robe. While wearing the robe, you can use an action to grab one of the shards and use it to cast obsidian shards (*TWC1* pg 68) as a 5th level spell. At dusk, 1d6 removed shards reappear on the robe.

While you wear the robe, you can use an action to enter the plane of Mictlan (*TWC1* pg 35) along with everything you are wearing or carrying. You remain there until you use an action to return to the plane you were on. You reappear in the last space you occupied, or if that space is occupied, the nearest unoccupied space.

The vampire wears a fine gold laced robe with attached shards of obsidian that is worth 500 gp for its beauty alone, but it also has abilities

similar to a *robe of stars* from pg 194 of the *DMG*. See the description for its powers.

The significance of the vampires finding a way back to Huacli is left for the DM to expand upon in future adventures.

8. *Secret Door*.

Huasteco was very clear in his description of what to look for to find the entrance to the chamber of the Door of Stars. The desmodu can also help the players locate the hidden groove that blends almost seamlessly with the wall. If the players are here for some reason without either clue, a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to find the secret door even if they know approximately where to look.

9. *The Door of Stars*

Read the following description as the players step inside the room.

In front of you lies what you assume is the fabled Door of Stars. The door itself is nothing more than a circular stone ring, obviously ancient and obviously crafted by living hands. Through the stone ring, you see nothing more than the cavern wall.

What really draws your eyes is what most certainly must be the control panel. Set in a carved stalagmite, sixteen beautiful spindle-like crystals are arrayed in the slots of the four by four panel. They each glow slightly with a different vibrant color. Together, the lights form a gorgeous array.

The crystals can be removed from their slots and easily moved into others that are unoccupied. Once all 16 are arrayed, they gently lock into place whether or not the sequence leads to another world. The players have been warned about experimenting with the crystals, but if they insist, it is up to the DM as to what occurs. Mathematically speaking, there is almost no chance the players will find a working combination, but if the DM is feeling particularly devious (or prefers to take them on a side trek of sorts), risk-taking PCs might just get lucky. Remember, the portal only opens to worlds and regions of those particular worlds

that have some connection to the real world's Mesoamerica. This could be in its gods, culture, language, etc.

The array given to the players by Huasteco from top left to bottom right is Crimson, Jade, Rose, Sapphire, Blue, Pink, Orange, Olivine, Emerald, Amethyst, Magenta, Yellow, Ruby, Black, Ivory, Ochre.

The return array is Yellow, Ivory, Crimson, Emerald, Ochre, Ruby, Rose, Blue, Sapphire, Magenta, Olivine, Pink, Amethyst, Orange, Black, Jade – symbols around the ring of the Door indicate the return sequence, but the PCs cannot comprehend the language it is written in without magic.

If one of the players grabs ahold of a crystal, it feels warm to the touch and slightly electric. They cannot be brought more than a foot from the control panel under any circumstances. There is no magic or force that can break this that isn't of a divine origin.

Once in their proper sequence, the Door begins to shimmer, eventually revealing a sunlit world unrecognizable to the players. The flora is certainly different, and even some creatures fly or run by that the players will not recognize (refer to the cover).

This gateway is two way and remains open as long as the crystals remain in place. Xio'trioc will diligently guard this end of the gate so that the PCs may safely return. Stepping through the Door causes mild disorientation (Disadvantage on attack and defense rolls for one minute) after walking through.

When the PCs step through the gate, proceed to area 1 of Mechica.

MECHICA

Mechica is the name of both a people and the land where the Zateca once emigrated long ago, and where the Otomi retreat to in dire circumstances. The Otomi have not been to Mechica since the Nexalan Empire last set upon their city, so they know only what it was once like in centuries past. This is unfortunate, because the circumstances in Mechica today are rather dire themselves. The Sapotec people (once the Zateca of Huacali) are under siege by the Mechica. The Mechica have become

werejaguars, and now only worship the cruel Tezcatlipoca where they once worshiped many deities. Sacrifice, as it has been for centuries, is always performed on the ancient artifact known as the Risa Stone. Where once its magic was used to polymorph men and women into jaguars and other animals it is now stained with the blood of thousands who have had their hearts ripped from their chests.

Mechica was first introduced in *Dragon Magazine Issue #70* from February 1983, written by author Gali Sanchez. Finding the magazine and reading the adventure is in no way necessary to play this portion of the *Door of Stars*, but it could certainly help flesh out some of the background. The world in which the Mechica are located will also always be here for the PCs to further explore.

The circumstances described in *Dragon* showed a much less violent Mechica than in this adventure. Tezcatlipoca, once just one god among many, has always schemed to become the sole deity worshiped by the Mechica, and he did so by slowly encouraging its people to take the powerful forms of werejaguars. Now, other gods are virtually unknown and their worship is outlawed.

There is a war between the Sapotec and the Mechica, and while the players are here they might be able to assist the Sapotec as they simultaneously steal the *Risa Stone*. Just taking the blood soaked artifact itself pleases the Sapotec, and aids them in their war.

1. *The Sapotec*

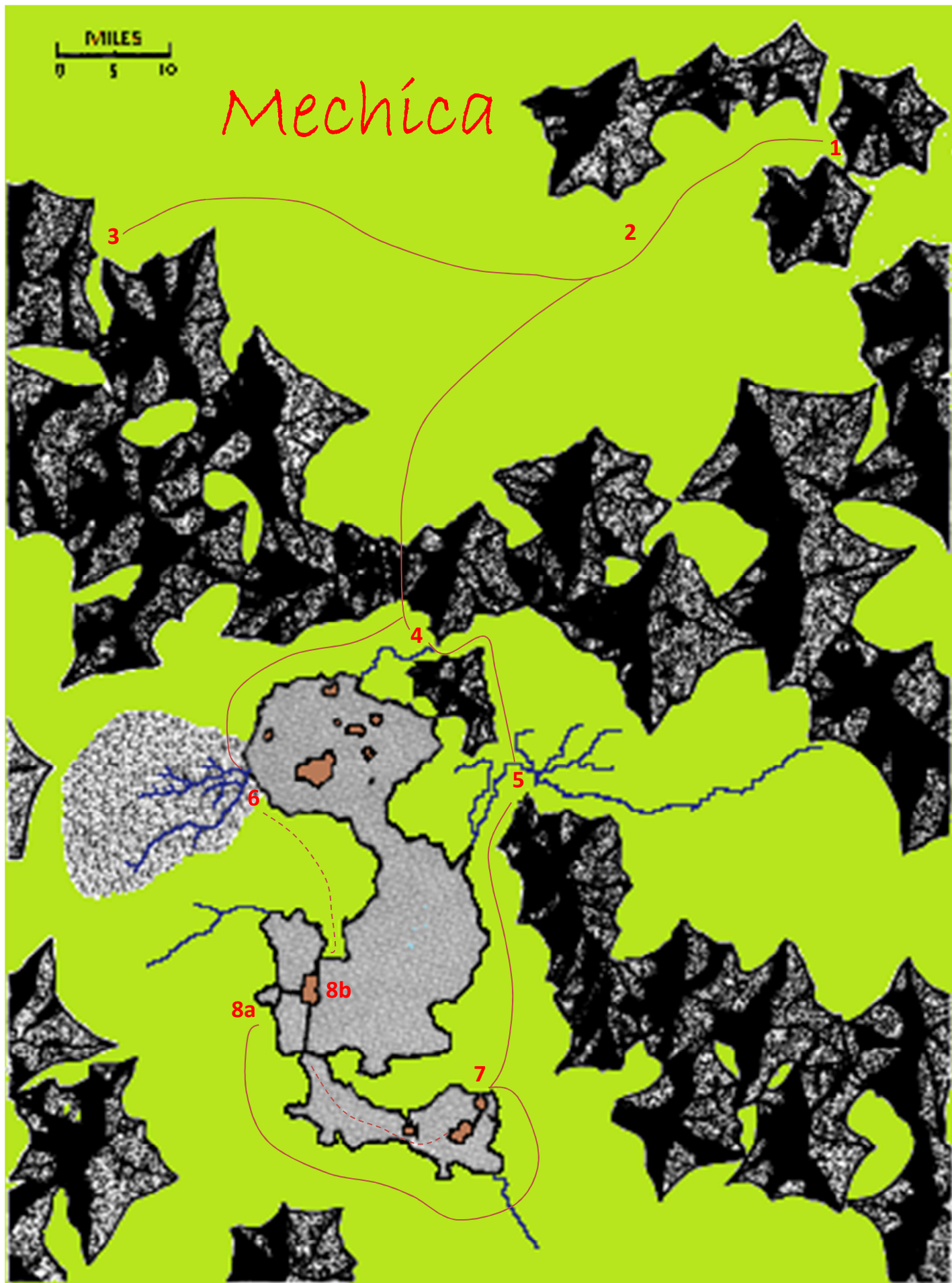
Read the following to the PCs as they step through the gateway.

As you step through the Door of Stars you feel an immediate sense of nausea and disorientation. The world you saw beyond the Door slowly comes into focus and you immediately sense the warmth of the sunshine. The world is much like your own, but you don't recognize all of the plants or small creatures that scurry by.

Some rustling in the bushes draws your attention to a brown skinned human who drops the basket of fruits he is carrying and points at your party. Shockingly, he smiles before running off into the woods. You hear him yelling in a

MILES
0 5 10

Mechica



The characters have just encountered a Sapotec adult male. Once, long ago, his people were known as the Zateca before they immigrated to this world through the Door of Stars. They are under siege - hunted by the dreaded werejaguars of the Mechica. Should the PCs attempt to follow it is only a short way to the Sapotec encampment.

When the PCs catch up to the human, read the following to them.

From Malinalli's description, you believe you recognize the identity of the man now. He is one of the long lost Zateca people – who on this world go by the name "Sapotec."

Other Sapotec begin to appear from your surroundings. They are obviously not hostile and many are laughing, smiling or falling to their knees in joy. They speak in a language which you cannot understand, but you do recognize one – the name "Quetzalcoatl."

A wizened elder Sapotec steps forward from the crowd and in halting common begins to speak to you.

From generation to generation, the Sapotec teach their most wise the "language of the ancients." Though there will be frequent grammatical errors, the players should understand the elder and he will understand them.

The elder, named Xiuhতোপেক, fills in the PCs in on any history they already don't know about Mechica. He then explains to them that their arrival was prophesized by their god Quetzalcoatl. The PCs should know Quetzalcoatl from their own world as either an old name or one closely related to the Plumed Dragon, Qotal (DC 13 Intelligence (History or Religion)).

He explains how the Sapotec are at war, and the Mechica wish for their utter annihilation. The Mechica are no longer human, and can change forms between that of a man and a powerful jaguar, or even a creature somewhere in between. A character who makes a simple DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check realizes this must be a lycanthrope.

At this point PCs can offer their help and allow them to do so without explaining to them that they will not be able to take the *Risa Stone*

without Sapotec help. It lies in the Mechican city of Tenocatlan where only a sufficiently distracted population will be safe enough for the PCs to enter. Assaulting the city alone is suicide.

Xiuhতোপেক explains to the players that three tasks would break the Mechica sufficiently for the war to favor the Sapotec.

First, there is a race of the "small men of the rains" who the players should establish an alliance with. These reclusive beings who call themselves the tlaloques, typically avoid the Sapotec – but the players will hopefully pique their curious natures. Xiuhতোপেক knows that the Mechica capture and sacrifice these gnome-like beings as well, so if the characters gain their trust, they might ally with the Sapotec.

Next, the players must assault a training camp (known as Ocelotlaca) where the werejaguars receive their training, and kill its battle captain. Without him, Mechican tactics in warfare will most certainly suffer.

Finally, acquiring the *Risa Stone* from Tenocatlan itself will crush the Mechica. Xiuhতোপেক has foreseen that they will immediately lose the favor of their god Tezcatlipoca (whom the PCs might know as the Zalteco of their own world – same check as for Quetzalcoatl). Without his favor, the Mechica will no longer be able to pass on their lycanthropy. Xiuhতোপেক tells them to return to the Sapotec before taking on such a venture after they have established communications with the tlaloque and their pledged support.

The players are welcome to stay as long as they wish in the Sapotec camp to recover from past battles and prepare for their adventure. They are handed crude, hand carved map of the region on a stone tablet with general locations for Ocelotlaca, the tlaloques, and Tenocatlan. They are given a similar one of the city of Tenocatlan for the future assault as well.

The PCs are then warned to beware patrols of the jaguar-men and to always be on their guard.

2. *Werejaguars.*

The PCs don't have to travel very far before having their first encounter with the Mechica. One **werejaguar**, a **werejaguar servitor** and two **jaguar** pets ambush the players as they step

out into a small clearing in the woods. The werejaguar wears a ring of protection.

If the DM desires to put random encounters in this portion of the adventure, most will consist of a similar make up for each encounter. The patrols are everywhere and have eliminated many of the normal creatures that prowl the environs.

3. *The Tlaloques.*

Normally a playful race with a fey-like temperament, the tlaloques have become guarded and xenophobic in recent years. Their clan lost dozens to Mechica raids and they no longer trust as easily as they once might have. Ten tlaloque guards patrol an entrance to the mountain pass that is the only way to get to their encampment without going around the mountain completely. A tlaloque elder commands the guards, and he sends forth an illusion of himself to speak with the PCs as the guards use their *call rains* ability to call in storm clouds without actually attacking the PCs. If the PCs attack the illusion, the tlaloque call a lightning bolt from the rains before giving them one last opportunity to stand down.

The tlaloque have their own language and the player characters will have to use magic to communicate. The tlaloque elder, through his image, says:

You are not of the Sapotec, and you are certainly not of the jaguar folk who hunt us like animals. Explain who you are and tell us why you are here!

At this point the PCs have no reason to lie and will likely give the tlaloque elder their entire story. They should inform the elder that the Sapotec wish to ally against the Mechica, ending their depredations once and for all. Once the PCs explain their quest, the illusion disappears, the gate opens and the real elder who calls himself Nopaltzin, steps forward to speak to the PCs.

So the big folk want an alliance now that they too have become prey? Where were they when it was only the tlaloque who were hunted? Why

should we trust those who only seek to help when it is they who need the help? Do you not see that we are protected here?

Allow the PCs to roleplay this interaction. Nopaltzin truly desires this alliance, but he does not want to be taken advantage of. Either good roleplaying or a successful Charisma (Persuasion) check with a DC of 15 should change the elder's mind to at least allow the PCs to prove their mettle. With a successful DC 25 check, the tlaloque will instantly agree to the alliance. In the case of the former, Nopaltzin continues.

The Mechica have taken from us a something of importance and desecrated the most holy of temples of the gods. We understand your quest and wish to assist you, but as you can see we cannot risk war if our allies are not ready. Show me that it is worth risking my people – recover our relic and eradicate the Mechica who defile our temple. If you are successful, the magic and spears of the tlaloque are yours to command. Without this small action, there can be no alliance.

Nopaltzin speaks of Teotihuacal, the fabled “City of the Gods.” In Teotihuacal, Nopaltzin explains, there are three temples which the Mechica will need to be cleared from. In the greatest of these – the temple of Tezcatlipoca, they will find something important to their god Tlaloc. If the PCs retrieve this “something” and eradicate the resident werejaguars, the tlaloque will find them worthy of alliance. Nopaltzin pinpoints the location of Teotihuacal on the Sapotec map. If asked exactly what they are looking for, Nopaltzin claims that they will know when they see it.

4. *Ocelotlacan.*

The werejaguar raiding parties rest, train, and resupply in these barracks. It is currently occupied by 9 **werejaguars** (including Matlipoca, the war captain) and 29 **werejaguar servitors** spread out among a dozen buildings. The Sapotec will have told the PCs to scout the southeast building where their spies have

indicated Matlipoca resides. Matlipoca is known to be a remarkable tactician in addition to being a battle master and if the characters manage to slay him the Mechica forces will not find leadership such as his for a long time.

The PCs should be able to enter the southeast barrack relatively easily as the werejaguar hardly expect this type of assault. However, Matlipoca will be found with his guards – one werejaguar and two servitors. This will be a difficult battle, but it will be an impossible one if the PCs have raised the alarm. Matlipoca's barrack is far enough from the others that a normal battle will not automatically give away the intrusion. If the PCs use flashy or exceptionally loud magic however, at the DMs discretion, the alarm might be raised and it would be best that the PCs make a hasty retreat.

Retreating would be a shame, however as Matlipoca is an avid art collector and his barracks contains three featherwoven portraits that could be sold for 500 gp each. Matlipoca also carries a cloth of woven black feathers which actually functions as a *portable hole*. Clever PCs (DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)) realize that the item would make the perfect container to transport the *Risa Stone* when they get their hands on it.

5. *Teotihuacal*.

Also known as the “City of the Gods,” Teotihuacal is actually no more than three temples formerly dedicated to the deities Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca, and Quetzalcoatl, though the Mechica long ago re-consecrated all three to Tezcatlipoca. The area is not nearly as occupied as it once was as most of the worship of Tezcatlipoca takes place in Tenocatlan itself these days, particularly in the presence of the *Risa Stone*.

If the PCs enter the northernmost structure, they enter what was once known as the Pyramid of the Moon. What was once a place of worship for the war god Huitzilopochtli has become a dumping ground for waste. Half a century ago, an earthquake cracked the pyramid and a significant portion of the pyramid fell into an underground chasm. Some horrors from beneath caused havoc among the Mechica but were soon put down by reinforcements from Ocelotlacan. Now, the pit is filled with refuse and a rather

content **otyugh** (pg 248 of *MM*) that attacks any creature who it finds in its trash.

Persistent PCs will find a chunk of jade worth 50 gp if they make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check after the otyugh has been slain.

The smallest temple is surrounded by pillars in the shape of serpents, though three have been toppled (yet are surprisingly intact). This is the former temple of Quetzalcoatl and it too has been left in disrepair. Currently, it is occupied by a large family of **giant jaguars** including two adults, three young adults (treat as regular **jaguars**) and three noncombatant kittens. The giant jaguars are quite loyal to the Mechica and attack on sight.

Clearly the most spectacular and grandest temple belongs to Tezcatlipoca and is known as the Pyramid of the Sun. Inside, the PCs will have to overcome three separate groups consisting of one **werejaguar** and two **werejaguar servitors**. After dispatching the third group, the PCs will come face to face with a feathered tarp that obviously covers some standing flat surface approximately four feet tall. This is the “Smoking Mirror” which effectively behaves as a *mirror of life trapping*. In the mirror's twelve cells, there are twelve tlaloque, each a warrior captured and waiting to be sacrificed at a future date upon the *Risa Stone*. The return of these warriors is what Nopaltzin requires to gain the tlaloque as allies.

If the PCs keep the Smoking Mirror covered, they might assume the mirror itself is what the tlaloque require. Without any malice, Nopaltzin would actually prefer to keep this misinformation alive and secretly free the trapped tlaloque away from the PC's eyes. He is embarrassed over their capture which explains why he never mentioned what they were meant to retrieve in the first place.

Of course, if a PC becomes trapped and incidentally frees a tlaloque warrior, the gig is up.

The tlaloque send a small delegation (including Nopaltzin) to the Sapotec and within hours a war council is formed. You may roleplay this event, allowing the PCs to input their ideas and tactics, but in the end Nopaltzin and Xiuhotepac agree to attack Tenocatlan simultaneously from the

northern and southern causeways simultaneously. Shortly afterwards, the PCs should infiltrate the city and steal the *Risa Stone* (though both leaders would've preferred its destruction). Now that Matlipoca is dead, the removal of the *Risa Stone* should end the Mechica threat permanently.

Xiuhbotepec owns a special set of *sending stones* except that the items are considered rare, come in a set of four, and each use of *sending* contacts the holders of each of the other stones. The stones will be given to the tlaloque, the PCs, Xiuhbotepec, with an extra carried by a Sapotec war captain.

The assault will only work if the Mechica are surprised, therefore the PCs need to clear out any werejaguars in the swamps of Tepozatlan and Xipe and Xico islands. In these two locations the tlaloque and Sapotec (respectively) plan to set up base camp and stage their attack.

6. *The Swamp of Tepozatlan.*

Tepozatlan is a bug infested, disease ridden swamp that both the Mechica and the Sapotec ignore and give a wide berth. The tlaloque consider it perfect to keep their forces and presence secret since they are not bothered by the conditions. However, in case there are Mechica scouts, they do ask the PCs to clear out any potential dangers that lie ahead for the tlaloque.

After a few hours of trailblazing, the PCs will indeed come across a werejaguar, but it will be most certainly dead and found half eaten. PCs who examine the corpse will be attacked by its killer, an **ahuizotl** that lairs in the swamp. The ahuizotl has accumulated 200 gold quills (worth 1000 gp total) that can be found easily in its nearby lair.

7. *Xipe and Xico Islands.*

The Mechica have been attacked before over a century ago by a group of adventurers that easily cleared out these two islands and the werejaguars have not forgotten the lesson. There are now seven **werejaguars**, a dozen **werejaguar servitors** and ten **jaguars** that protect these islands and the 37 canoes that are moored here. However, it is imperative that the islands are cleared as it is the only way the

Sapotec can attack Tenocatlan without being spotted prematurely.

Although the Sapotec originally thought it necessary for the PCs to clear out the islands alone, this is obviously an impossibility without some assistance from the Sapotec. Xiuhbotepec will suggest that the PCs cut off any werejaguars who attempt to flee to Tenocatlan to warn of the impending attack while the Sapotec battle the islands' inhabitants. This should be a *hard* encounter for the PCs, and it is suggested that the battle consists of 5 **werejaguar servitors** and two **werejaguars**.

Once the battle is over and assuming the PCs were successful, the Sapotec will also have killed or captured all the remaining Mechica on both islands. The stage for the assault on Tenocatlan is now set.

8. *Tenocatlan.*

Tenocatlan has been blessed by Tezcatlipoca with a mythal-like force which prevents any sort of teleportation into its location, though teleportation within its confines is still possible. The PCs could approach via the shallow waters that surround the city, but they have been stocked with thousands of piranha (use 20 **swarms of quippers** from pg 338 of the *MM*) which serve as both a food supply and protection for the city.

There are three causeways that lead to the city. Using the *Sapotec sending stones*, the tlaloque and Sapotec should coordinate their attacks simultaneously, with the PCs infiltrating from the western causeway only slightly afterward. Most of the city's forces will concentrate on the assault and the PCs will need to head directly to the Palace of Cuactehmoc. There are other locations in the city to explore if the PCs desire, but the chance to ruin the entire plan increases as they stray from the main target. If the PCs insist on exploring beyond the scope of the adventure, have them run into increasing numbers of werejaguars and their servitors or reference a copy of *Dragon Magazine Issue #70* on pages 44-46 to flesh out the city (considering changes that might have occurred in over a century).

8a. *The Western Causeway.*

Normally, each causeway is guarded by dozens of werejaguar servitors and at least five

werejaguar. However, most of the forces have been called to the northern or southern causeways to battle the tlaloque and Sapotec. On the bridge, however, a single **werejaguar** and his **kamatlan** pet remain.

8b. *The Palace of Cuactehmoc.*

Cuactehmoc, the king of Tenocatlan, has both been blessed and cursed by Tezcatlipoca. Long ago he fled a superior force of adventurers who invaded the city and nearly destroyed the *Risa Stone*. The stone was recovered, but Tezcatlipoca transformed his priest into a **jaguar lord** for his cowardice. The now immortal priest has lost his magic, but protects the *Risa Stone* with a powerful new body and his two **giant jaguar** allies.

CONCLUSION

The tlaloque and Sapotec forces will battle from night into day and back to night again, but will eventually fight to a standstill. Once the PCs report through the *sending stones* that they have acquired the *Risa Stone*, they will cease attacks and retreat back to the Sapotec encampment to the north. Even if the PCs fail, they do not prolong the battle.

If the PCs do lose, the Mechica will be momentarily stunned at the surprise attack, but will redouble their efforts in upcoming weeks. Eventually, they will wipe out and sacrifice both groups to their cruel god.

If the PCs manage to secure the *Risa Stone*, they will have broken the power of the Mechica and will be hailed as heroes among both the tlaloque and the Sapotec. Tezcatlipoca will withdraw his favor from the Mechica, and the werejaguar will lose their ability to pass on lycanthropy. The remaining werejaguar will be far less aggressive knowing that they no longer have the backing of their deity.

Perhaps, if the DM desires, a population of Sapotec and tlaloque wants to immigrate through the Door of Stars to Toril and the True World. This could be an excellent role playing opportunity for the PCs as they negotiate an alliance with Huasteco and the Otomi, perhaps even the desmodu. It would be very interesting

for the Sapotec to return as Zateca and retake their old ruins (perhaps even Mictlatepec!).

Malinalli will be ecstatic to see the PCs and the *Risa Stone* when they return to Otomi. Her smile fades as she ominously explains to the PCs the next step in their quest if they choose to continue.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

The Door of Stars is a gateway (pun intended) to an infinite number of adventures. Perhaps there are crystal sequences hidden elsewhere in more ancient parts of the True World. And who exactly created the Door of Stars? Was it the batrachi in a time before man and even the gods? Perhaps the writing around the Door offers a clue or perhaps the PCs find a *King's Tear* stone which gives them clues to the past?

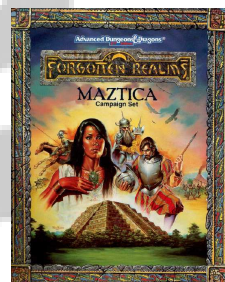
The vampires of Nochte are now aware of the PCs and have apparently found at least one way back to the True World. Do the PCs need to make an expedition to Nochte? Will the desmodu assist them in the vampires' final defeat?

How about the tlaloque and Sapotec who return to Maztica? Undoubtedly, the cleaning out of Mictlatepec and return to Tehuatepec can make quite an excellent campaign.

Of course, the quest to resurrect the goddess continues...

TO BE CONTINUED IN...

TWR4 ZATAL – THE MOUNTAIN OF FIRE



-“Mictlatepec and Mictlaneca” originally appears in the *Maztica* Boxed Set on Page 51 of the booklet, “A Journey to the True World”

-“Mechica” originally appears on page 35 of *Dragon Magazine* Issue #70

THE RISA STONE

Wondrous item, Legendary

The Risa Stone is an ancient item of great power that was created by the god Tezcatlipoca and is sacred to his clergy. It can store power derived from sacrifice and use it to permanently change the form of those who are sacrificed upon it or to fuel the magic of the spells of those who touch it.

The stone's appearance is of a reclining man holding his hands on his chest. A human body can be strewn across the man's lap in preparation for sacrifice. For every human being sacrificed, the Risa Stone stores a single "charge." The stone can hold a maximum of 10 charges.

A character in physical contact with the stone may then use these charges to power a spell of level 3 or lower (1 charge), 5 or lower (2 charges), 7 or lower (3 charges) or transform a man permanently into a jaguar (1 charge) or a werejaguar servitor (2 charges). Jaguars and werejaguar servitors obey the one who transformed them if it is a worshiper of Tezcatlipoca only.

The transformation may be reversed using powerful magic at the DMs discretion, but should require spells of higher than 7th level.

APPENDIX – MONSTER STATISTICS

Creatures found in each chapter have their basic statistics or complete creature entries written below.

MICTLATEPEC

The City of the Dead is occupied by the mictlaneca. Undead who go about living their "lives" as if they weren't rotting corpses fueled by powerful hishna magic.

The original entry for the mictlaneca template can be found on page 18 of **TWC7**.

The following stat blocks represent the use of the mictlaneca template on human NPCs from the Monster Manual and Volo's Guide to Monsters. Some of the base stat blocks have been changed to fit the flavor of each creature but most have been left alone. The DM is encouraged to make appropriate additional changes (such as spell selection, weapons, etc.) utilizing other Maztica Alive products.

The skeletal chihuahua is an original creature.

SKELETAL CHIHUAHUA

Tiny undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages -

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Hearing And Smell. The skeletal chihuahua has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., Hit: 1 piercing damage.

ALBAN

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (hishnahide plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +7

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Teenek, Maztican

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Alban takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces Alban to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Alban drops to 1 hit point instead.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of Alban must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to Alban's Stench for 24 hours.

Spellcasting. The alban is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The alban has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mending*, *sacred flame*, *spare the*

dying

1st level (4 slots): *divine favor*, *guiding bolt*, *healing word*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *magic weapon*, *prayer of healing*, *silence*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope*, *crusader's mantle*, *dispel magic*, *revivify*, *spirit guardians*, *water walk*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *freedom of movement*, *guardian of faith*, *stoneskin*

5th level (1 slot): *flame strike*, *hold monster*, *mass cure wounds*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) thunder damage.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an equal amount to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes on a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under Alban's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. Alban can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

REACTIONS

Guided Strike (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest).

Alban grants a +10 bonus to an attack roll made by himself or another creature within 30 feet. Alban can make this choice after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.

MICTLANECA ACOLYTE

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Religion +2

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Teenek

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca acolyte takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight.

While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca acolyte to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca acolyte drops to 1 hit point instead.

Spellcasting. The mictlaneca acolyte is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The mictlaneca acolyte has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (3 slots): *bless*, *inflict wounds*, *sanctuary*

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

MICTLANECA BARD

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (hishnahide chain shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Teenek, Maztican

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca bard takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca bard to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca bard drops to 1 hit point instead.

Song Of Rest. The mictlaneca bard can perform a song

while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The mictlaneca bard can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Taunt (2/Day). The mictlaneca bard can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the mictlaneca bard, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the mictlaneca bard's next turn.

Spellcasting. The mictlaneca bard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The mictlaneca bard has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockery*
 1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*
 2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) piercing damage.

Tecpatl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Tlahhuītōlli. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

MICTLANECA CHAMPION

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (hishnahide plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Teenek

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca champion takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca champion to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless

the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca champion drops to 1 hit point instead.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the mictlaneca champion must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the mictlaneca champion's Stench for 24 hours.

Second Wind (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the mictlaneca champion can regain 20 hit points.

Indomitable (2/Day). The mictlaneca champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mictlaneca knight makes 3 attacks with its macuahuitl.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) thunder damage.

Macuahuitl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10+5) slashing damage.

MICTLANECA COMMONER

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Teenek

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca commoner to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca commoner drops to 1 hit point instead.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca commoner takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

MICTLANECA CULT FANATIC

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (cotton armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Teenek

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca cult fanatic takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca cult fanatic to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a

success, the mictlaneca cult fanatic drops to 1 hit point instead.

Dark Devotion. The mictlaneca cult fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Spellcasting. The mictlaneca cult fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The mictlaneca cult fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mictlaneca cult fanatic makes 2 melee attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6+1) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

MICTLANECA GUARD

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (tunic, chimalli shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Teenek

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca guard to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca guard drops to 1 hit point instead.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca guard takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

MICTLANECA KNIGHT

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (hishnahide plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Teenek

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca knight takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca knight to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca knight drops to 1 hit point instead.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the mictlaneca knight must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the mictlaneca knight's Stench for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mictlaneca knight makes 2 melee attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) damage.

Macuahuitl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage.

Leadership (Recharge 5-6). For 1 minute, the mictlaneca knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

MICTLANECA NOBLE

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (hishnahide "breastplate")

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Teenek, Maztican

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca noble takes 10

radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca noble to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca noble drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

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

REACTIONS

Parry. The mictlaneca noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

MICTLANECA PRIEST

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (tunic)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Teenek, Maztican

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca priest takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the mictlaneca priest can expend a spell slot to cause its bite attack to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a

target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the mictlaneca priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca priest to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca priest drops to 1 hit point instead.

Spellcasting. The mictlaneca priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The mictlaneca priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
 1st level (4 slots): *guiding bolt*, *inflict wounds*, *sanctuary*
 2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
 3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardian*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

MICTLANECA SCOUT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (cotton armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +5, Nature +4, Stealth +5, Survival +5

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Teenek

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca scout takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca scout to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca scout drops to 1 hit point instead.

Keen Hearing And Sight. The mictlaneca scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mictlaneca scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Itztōpilli (axe-club). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) slashing damage or 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.

Tlahhuītōlli (bow). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

MICTLANECA VETERAN

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (hishnahide splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Teenek

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mictlaneca veteran takes 10 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mictlaneca veteran to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless

the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mictlaneca veteran drops to 1 hit point instead.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the mictlaneca veteran must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the mictlaneca veteran's Stench for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mictlaneca veteran makes 2 macuahuitl attacks or a macuahuitl attack and a bite attack. If it has its tecpatl drawn, it can also make a tecpatl attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) thunder damage.

Macuahuitl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage.

Tecpatl. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

CAVERNS OF THE DOOR OF STARS

Desmodu are rumored to exist elsewhere on Toril, but there are colonies found in the western mountains of Maztica that have been separated from others of their kind long enough to have evolved into a subrace of sorts. They are xenophobic, but compassionate, and long ago waged a war with the vampires of Nochte – rescuing the world from a plague that would have taken many lives.

The vampires of Nochte are themselves not what they once were. Centuries of starvation in their island kingdom first made them feral, but they have since grown used to less sustenance – though their forms have grown weaker for it. They have also lost their ability to charm, much of their magic, and their ability to call bats when using Children of the Night.

DESMODU, MAZTICAN

Medium humanoid (desmodu), neutral good

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +3, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (negated by silence) passive Perception 11

Languages -

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Subsonic Vibrations. As a bonus action, a Maztican desmodu can begin to emit subsonic vibrations that affect creatures that can hear. This hum can take the form of despair or hope. Hope offers a +1 bonus to all allies on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves and skill checks. Despair causes all creatures that are hostile to the desmodu to suffer a -1 penalty to attacks and skill checks. The effect has a radius of 30 feet centered on the desmodu. The effects from multiple desmodu do not stack. A creature may make a DC 16 Constitution save (and then again at the beginning of each of their

turns) to avoid the effects of despair. Once they make their save, they are immune to that desmodu's despair for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage and the target continues to an additional 1 point of damage per bite at the start of the desmodu's turn for a minute. Multiple bite wounds stack.

Multiattack. The Maztican Desmodu makes 2 melee attacks.

Notbora. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) bludgeoning damage or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage

Screech (1/Day). The Maztican desmodu can produce a screech as an action which has one of two effects on creatures that can hear the desmodu. The screech can stun creatures in a 30-foot radius centered on the desmodu (except other desmodu). Creatures who fail a DC 13 Constitution save are stunned for 1d4 turns. If the Maztican desmodu chooses, it may focus this screech into a ray which can cause 17 (5d6) thunder damage to a single target in a 30 foot range.

VAMPIRE OF NOCHTE

Medium undead (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +9

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Teenek, Maztican

Challenge 9 (5000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the vampire of Nochte fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When it drops to 0 hit points outside its resting place, the vampire of Nochte transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that it isn't in sunlight or running water. If it can't transform, it is destroyed. While it has 0 hit points in mist form, it can't revert to its vampire form, and it must reach its resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in its resting place, it reverts to its vampire form. It is then paralyzed until it regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in its resting place with 0 hit points, it regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. The vampire of Nochte regains 20 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire of Nochte takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

Shapechanger. If the creature isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its action to polymorph into a Medium cloud of mist, or back to its true form. While in mist form, the creature can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.

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

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire of Nochte has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vampire of Nochte can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. The vampire of Nochte takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into the vampire of Nochte's heart while the vampire of Nochte is incapacitated in its resting place, the vampire of Nochte is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The vampire of Nochte takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack

rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Bite (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire of Nochte, incapacitated or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire of Nochte regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire of Nochte spawn under the vampire of Nochte's control.

Charm. The vampire of Nochte targets one humanoid it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the vampire of Nochte, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the vampire of Nochte. The charmed target regards the vampire of Nochte as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the vampire of Nochte's control, it takes the vampire of Nochte's requests or actions in the most favourable way it can, and is a willing target for the vampire of Nochte's bite attack.

Each time the vampire of Nochte or the vampire of Nochte's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the vampire of Nochte is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children Of The Night (1/Day). The vampire of Nochte magically calls 2d4 swarms rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, the vampire of Nochte can call 3d6 wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire of Nochte and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the vampire of Nochte dies, or until the vampire of Nochte dismisses them as a bonus action.

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). The vampire of Nochte makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire of Nochte can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The vampire of Nochte can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The vampire of Nochte regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The vampire of Nochte moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. The vampire of Nochte makes one unarmed strike.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The vampire of Nochte makes one bite attack.

MECHICA

Mechica's flora and fauna is very different from that of Toril's but with the exception of the tlaloque, each potential combat encounter in this chapter has a Torillian counterpart. For convenience, the jaguar, jaguar lord, giant jaguar, werejaguar and jaguar servitor and kamatlan from *TWC5* are reproduced here as is the ahuitzotl from *TW6*.

The tlaloque is presented here as a subspecies of gnome, and can even be used as a playable race. A colony will choose to emigrate to Maztica at the conclusion of the adventure and a tlaloque character would make an excellent replacement for a dead PC.

TLALOQUE – GNOME SUBRACE

As a tlaloque, you feel most comfortable in the soaking conditions of a torrential downpour. You are a creation of Tlaloc, a god of the rains with whom the world cannot live without, yet there are other deities that also might have earned your worship.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Call Rains. You may subtly influence the weather when combining your powers with two or more additional tlaloque using an action. This may either clear the skies or cause the sky to rain.

AHUIZOTL

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d10 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +3

Skills Perception +3, Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Aquan

Challenge 6 (2300 XP)

Amphibious. The ahuitzotl can breathe air and water.

Mimicry. The ahuitzotl can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can

tell they are imitations with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Binding Strike. If the ahuitzotl scores a critical hit with its claws, tail hand, or bite, the victim becomes blinded permanently.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ahuitzotl can make three attacks, two with its claws and one with its tail hand or its bite.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8+5) piercing damage.

Tail Hand. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage. and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained.

JAGUAR LORD

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armour Class 15 (natural armour)

Hit Points 105 (14d10+28)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +5, Cha +6

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Payit

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Keen Smell. The jaguar lord has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the jaguar lord moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the jaguar lord can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. The jaguar lord is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The shaman has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mending*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *entangle*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness*, *pass without trace*, *spike growth*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*

Actions

Multiattack. The jaguar lord makes one attack with its bite and one with its claw.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 22 (4d8+4) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 18 (4d6+4) slashing damage.

Penumbra Door (Recharge 5-6). The jaguar lord teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet.

JAGUAR

Medium beast, unaligned

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 40 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Smell. The jaguar has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the jaguar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the jaguar can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

GIANT JAGUAR

Large beast, unaligned

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 51 (6d10+18)

Speed 40 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The jaguar has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the jaguar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the jaguar can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. The jaguar makes one attack with its bite and one with its claw.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage.

KAMAILAN

Medium humanoid (human, chaotic evil)

Armour Class 11 (natural armour)

Hit Points 45 (1d8+14)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+2)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The kamailan has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Snake Heads. The kamailan has an extra reaction, and it gets one more extra reaction per bite attack it forgoes per turn. These extra reactions can be used only for opportunity attacks.

Actions

Multiattack. The kamailan makes two bite attacks.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

WEREJAGUAR SERVITOR

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), lawful evil

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 44 (8d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't obsidian

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception

Languages understands Payit but can't speak

Challenge 1 (300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The werejaguar makes one bite attack and one claw attack.

Bite (Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage.

Claw (Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d+2) slashing damage.

WEREJAGUAR

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), lawful evil

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)

Speed 30 ft., 40 ft. in jaguar form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't obsidian

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Payit (can't speak in jaguar form)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The werejaguar can use its action to polymorph into a jaguar-humanoid hybrid or into a jaguar, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The werejaguar has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pounce (Jaguar or Hybrid Form Only). If the werejaguar moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the werejaguar can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. The werejaguar makes two melee weapon attacks, of which no more than one can be a bite attack.

Bite (Jaguar or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werejaguar lycanthropy.

Claw (Jaguar or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Spear (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.