

Playground Adventures!

A Friend in Need



by Jenny Jarzabski

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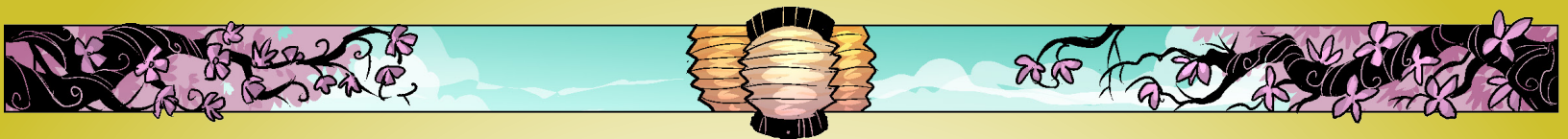
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Adventure Background

The Kneeling Wind monastery lies hidden in a thick bamboo forest, nestled high in the foothills of the Jade Mountains. The Monks of Kneeling Wind designed their grounds as a tranquil tribute to the elements, complete with moon-viewing tower, koi pond, and rock garden. They used this visible part of the monastery as a place to study, meditate, and practice their healing arts on local villagers.

The clever monks crafted a secret underground level of orderly tunnels and rooms to house their order. These subterranean halls provided living quarters, training areas, and served as a refuge in times of war. Unfortunately, the defenses proved insufficient when evil soldiers invaded their sanctuary. The pacifists within the monastery bought time for innocents to escape, but refused to take the invader's lives. The lingering spirits of the last Kneeling Wind Monks still haunt this home, unable to rest while their ways remain forgotten.

Abandoned for more than a century, the monastery's secluded location kept it empty for decades. However, twenty years ago the ruins caught the eye of the crystal dragon Azhuryx. The expecting mother settled in the underground part of the monastery to care for her offspring, and in those hidden halls she laid a single egg.

When her egg hatched, Azhuryx crafted sentinels to protect her precious wyrmling while she flew far afield to find food and new items for her hoard. For two decades Azhuryx and her son Kurisutaru lived together in the monastery, but two years ago, Azhuryx left for a routine outing and never returned.

Warned by his mother not to leave the lair's safety, Kurisutaru waited obediently, exiting only to hunt local livestock. However, Kurisutaru grew bored with the soulbound doll, animated objects, and haunts within the lair, which made poor playmates for a young dragon.

One day as Kurisutaru flew over the bamboo forest he saw a child folding colored paper into fantastic shapes—birds, frogs, flowers, and even dragons! He watched as the child spoke a word and launched her paper creations into the air to flutter and dive in the breeze.

At last, lonely Kurisutaru had found a friend! Overjoyed, he swooped down and gently scooped up the girl. She screamed despite his attempts to console her, and he believed her fear similar to the alarm he recalled from his first flight.

The child, an 11-year-old magical prodigy named

Azumi, panicked when the dragon caught her. She didn't understand the dragon's good intentions and sent an animated origami crane to bring help! Three days later the crane finds the PCs as they travel through the bamboo forest

Adventure Summary

The PCs receive Azumi's message and follow her origami crane back to the monastery. There, they confront guardians left behind by the dragon Azhuryx to protect and entertain her son. PCs also contend with the haunts lingering in the monastery, intent on testing Kneeling Wind apprentices and ensuring a legacy. They must solve puzzles and find clues to reach the dragon's horde. The wyrmling and girl may surprise the PCs, who find the pair have already settled their differences. However, they must still negotiate a solution pleasing to both parties to truly solve the matter. By rescuing Azumi and befriendng Kurisutaru, the PCs gain powerful lifelong allies.

Introduction

Sunbeams dance through the maze of towering bamboo stalks in this dense green forest. Birds chirp and swoop through the leafy canopy high above and small animals scurry around the edges of the path. A bright yellow creature darts through the bamboo, but as it dives low over the path, it seems too big to be a bird or butterfly. The brilliant yellow flier flits closer and lands gracefully on a leaf. A paper crane, folded expertly out of yellow rice paper, pauses as if to watch and think.

Scribbled letters peek out from one wing. The crane must be some sort of note!

The PCs are in the middle of a bamboo forest at the edge of the Jade Mountains. The animated origami crane waits for someone to approach it. If no PCs try to touch or call to the crane, it flutters over to land on a shoulder, nudging gently with its marked wing. The note reads as follows:

Dear Friends,


My name is Azumi. I've been kidnapped in the forest by a DRAGON and I need help! I'm trapped in an old monastery in the Jade Mountains. Follow my crane. I'll tell you more when you get closer. Please hurry!

Intelligence (History or Nature)

With a DC 10 check, the PCs realize that the nearest village is over a mile away.

As soon as the PCs read the note, the crane zooms down the path, stopping for a moment to allow the party to





catch up. The crane first leads the group two miles down an easy forest path. At this point, the path narrows and begins climbing a rocky hill into the Jade Mountains.

The abandoned Kneeling Wind Monastery rests high in the foothills of the Jade Mountains. Creatures without wings must climb the sloping hills, out of the bamboo forest, and ascend a quarter mile through meandering mountain paths to reach the monastery.

Hazard

PCs who travel up the steep slopes must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw every hour or gain one level of exhaustion. The PCs can't gain more than one level of exhaustion in this way. Completing a short or long rest acclimates the PCs to the altitude and removes the exhaustion. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check alerts PCs to this danger as they begin their climb.

Development

In two hours (three if they stop to rest) PCs reach the monastery.

A. Kneeling Wind Monastery

The mountain path leading up to the Kneeling Wind Monastery widens into a large clearing. An intricate, spiral-patterned rock garden (area A1) remains in nearly pristine condition even a century after the monastery's last habitation. Bamboo and bonsai trees, now unkempt and shaggy, grow among the rocks. Wide stone steps lead up to four stone archways. One of four heavy wooden doors stands ajar, providing entry past the 15-foot high stone walls that surround the monastery.

Inside the courtyard (area A2), a huge stone statue of a fu dog, a mythical guardian beast that appears to be a dog with leonine traits (see area A4) crouching on a swirling cloud greets any who enter. Hard-packed dirt covers the ground here. A large koi pond dominates the courtyard, and stone stairs lead up to a 40-foot tall red-roofed tower (area A3).

A stone bridge crosses the pond to connect the two parts of the courtyard. On the far side of the pond, two more stone arches sport closed wooden doors leading to a 20-foot tall stone building (area A4).

A secret trapdoor (area A4) opens to reveal a staircase leading down to the basement (area B) and more stone steps lead directly from the front doors to a terrace overlooking the north side of the mountains (area A5).

Animate Origami

2nd level transmutation

Casting Time 1 action

Components V, S, M (a sheet of origami paper)

Duration 1 hour

You fold a Tiny origami creation, imbuing it with mobility and a semblance of life. The animated object gains a fly speed of 30 feet. You assign the creation one simple task, which can take no more than 25 words to describe. The origami creation is incapable of combat, but can perform entertaining tricks, seek out a specific location, or even lead other creatures along a predetermined path. You can send the origami creation to a specific location, but you must envision the location and have seen it yourself. If you speak a message of no more than 25 words as you fold the paper, the spell inscribes that message on the paper in the language you speak when you cast the spell. You may enclose an item small enough to fit within the paper as you fold it. The origami creation is mindless and performs errands exactly as ordered. When the task is complete or if it is unable to accomplish the request by the end of the spell's duration, the animated origami reverts back to an inanimate object.

At higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd or 4th level, the duration increases to 8 hours. When you use a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the duration becomes 24 hours.

Stone blocks form the main monastery building and surrounding walls (AC 17, 30 hit points, damage threshold 10, break DC 30) with heavy wooden doors set into arches (AC 15, 20 hp, break DC 20). The red-tiled roof features elegantly sloping eaves.

Intelligence (History or Religion)

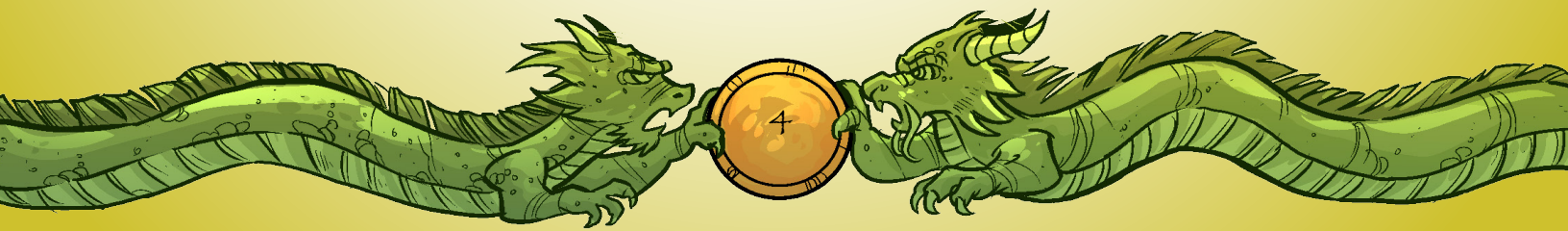
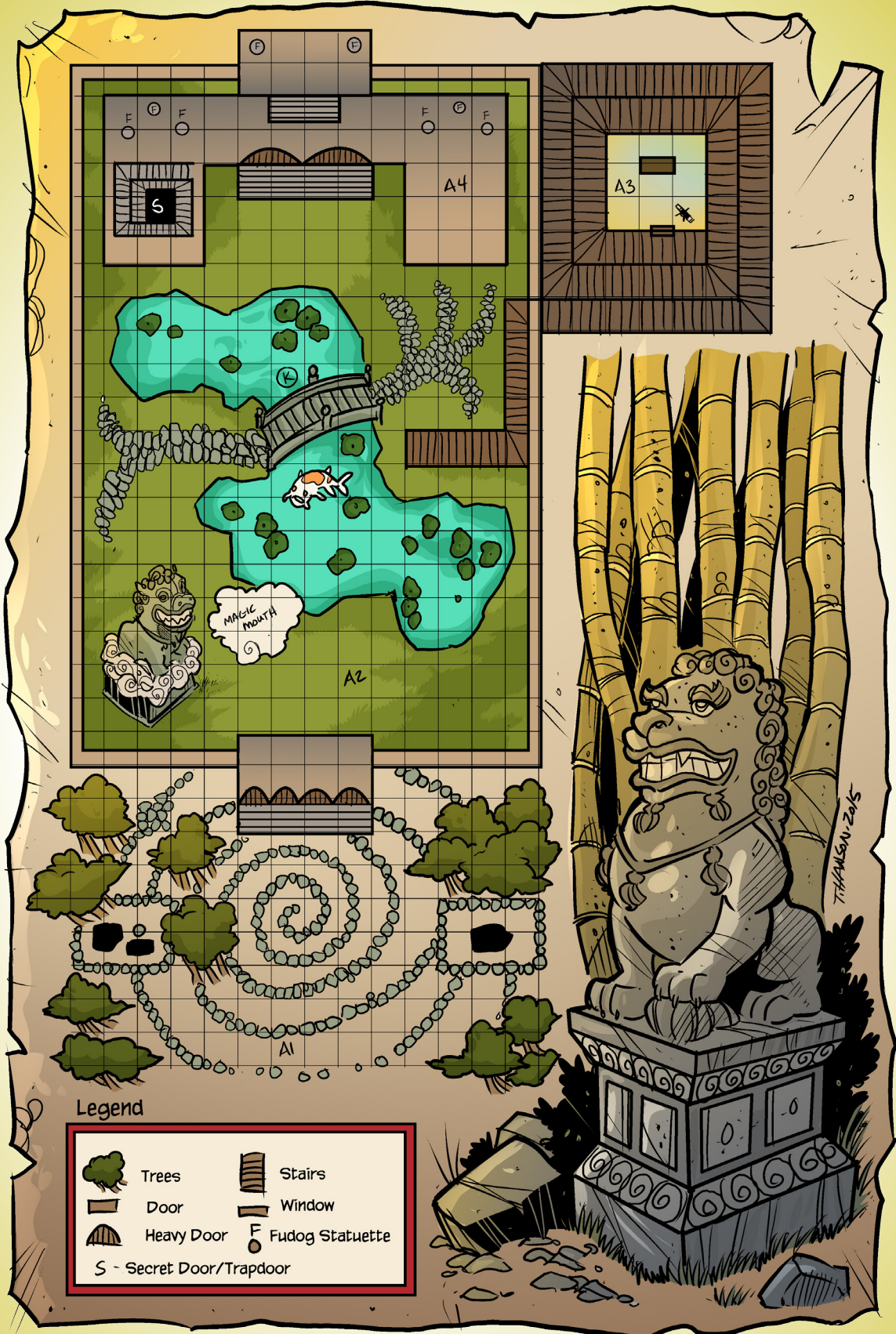
With a DC 10 check, a PC recalls the Kneeling Wind Monastery was originally built over 500 years ago by a pacifist order of monks who dedicated their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and tranquility. Though the monks shunned fighting, in times of war they allowed local villagers to retreat into the safety of the monastery, and kept a small supply of bows and staves to defend these innocents if necessary. Over the centuries the local farmers migrated to larger cities, and fewer apprentices wished to learn the ways of the Kneeling Wind. One hundred years ago, the handful of remaining monks left the monastery to serve as healers in a nearby village.





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A1. Rock Garden

Smooth, multi-colored rocks swirl in an intricate spiral pattern and overgrown bonsai trees sprout from the spaces between them in this large clearing. Directly to the north, broad stone steps lead to four archways set in a 20-foot high stone wall. Four heavy wooden doors stand before the massive stone building with a red-tiled roof peeking out over the walls. One of the doors is ajar, leaving just enough space for someone to squeeze past.

Years ago, Azhuryx recruited several earth elementals to stand as sentinels for her home while she was away. In the two years since her disappearance, most of the elementals burrowed away, no longer bound by the powerful dragon. One small earth elemental still lingers in the rock garden and attacks PCs as they approach.

Small Earth Elemental

Small elemental, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d6 + 15)

Speed 25 ft., burrow 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities thunder

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Earthglide. The elemental can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Siege Monster. The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

A2. Monastery Courtyard

A large courtyard of hard-packed dirt lies beyond the wall. A huge stone statue of a fu dog crouching on a swirling cloud stands facing the doors, looking fierce except for the tongue lolling out of its smiling mouth. A lone wisteria tree leans over a massive koi pond, trailing its purple and white flowers across the water's surface. Lily pads grow thick in the blue waters and dragonflies hum lazily in the air. A stone bridge provides a path across the pool. On the east side of the pond, a stairway leads to a tall tower and a stone building with two wooden doors waits to the north.

The monastery's courtyard is currently deserted, as Kurisutaru makes his home in the lower levels. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check identifies a single set of child-sized humanoid footprints leading from the monastery's front doors to the stone bridge, and picking up again from the stone bridge to the wisteria tree, where they abruptly stop.



Encounters With Children

Before you begin your first battle encounters you need to settle on a way to manage the death of enemies. Will it be an actual death or something on the lighter side? If your gamers are capable of dealing with slaying the bad guys, that's perfectly fine. However, if they are more sensitive in nature it doesn't hurt to avoid terms like killed or death and replace them with more friendly words such as defeated or unconscious. Instead of having bodies littering the battle field, you could say "The bodies disappear and the creatures return home, leaving only a pile of their belongings on the ground before you". Alternatively, you could offer extra XP for peacefully solved conflicts or rendering the enemy unconscious and delivering them to the proper authorities.

When Kurisutaru and Azumi arrived at the monastery three days ago, the young dragon landed in the courtyard and called for an awakened koi who lives in the pond to deliver the key. He learned about the koi from his mother, and always leaves the key with him for safe keeping when he flies out to hunt. While Kurisutaru spoke to the koi, Azumi, still fearing the dragon's intentions, hurriedly cast *magic mouth* on the wisteria tree and whispered her message. Read or paraphrase the following if the PCs move within 10 feet of the wisteria tree.

The bark of the tree trunk ripples and twists into the shape of human lips. The wooden mouth opens and a young girl's voice whispers, "It's me, Azumi! He's taking me to the basement. He locked the doors. The key is in the pond, just jump in! Trust me!"

The shallows near the banks of the koi pond are four feet deep, but gradually slope to a depth of 15 feet at the middle of the pond. Read or paraphrase the following if the PCs investigate the pond.

A smooth, pebbled bottom appears to be about four feet deep in the clear water at the edge of the pond, but fades to a darker blue in the middle and disappears. The golden, black, and white scales of dozens of koi fish teeming just below the surface glitter in the sunlight.

PCs of Medium-size or larger can easily stand in the shallows, but must swim to move through the water after wading out a few feet. The dozens of koi fish that swim here are friendly, and move out of the way if a PC jumps or wades in, but lurk nearby to nibble on any offered food. Searching the bottom of the pond reveals nothing but smooth, colorful rocks, and waterlily roots.

Three rounds after a PC enters the pond, an enormous spotted koi swims over and blows a large bubble at them. Read or paraphrase the following when a PC first encounters the enchanted koi.

The koi's lips part and a large bubble pops out, the bubble doesn't burst but forms a pocket of air around your head. Suddenly, you realize you can breathe underwater. The koi's long whiskers trail behind him as he slowly swims over. "Greetings, land-walker," the fish speaks! "I am Shu Lai. A long time ago a most generous monk gave me the gift of intelligence. That made me curious, and I am most curious about you. Who are you? What brings you to my pond?"

If some of the PCs are not yet in the pond, he urges the PC he's speaking to, to tell them the water is fine, assuring that he can blow enough bubbles for everyone. He is polite and genuinely interested in the party, encouraging them to speak of their journey to the monastery and any past adventures they may have had. He's lived in a small pond for over a century, and it's been a long time since he spoke to a human. If the PCs ask where the key is, Shu Lai reveals that he knows its location and can help them find it, if they first answer a riddle:

Round and round the world | race,
When | am young | hide my face.
A shining sickle in the clouds
As | emerge from birthing shrouds.
As days go by my belly swells,
And to the shore | carry shells.
Soon | wither, but never die
Born every thirty days am |.

Creatures

A koi awakened 150 years ago by one of the monastery's inhabitants guards the key within the pond.

Enchanted Koi

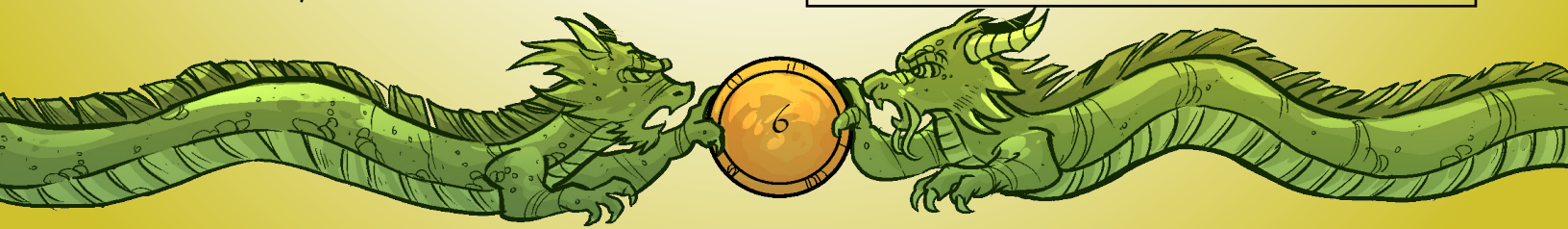
Small fey, neutral good

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)



Skills Athletics +1, History + 5, Persuasion +3

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The enchanted koi's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence. The koi can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *water breathing*

Water Breathing. The koi can breathe only underwater

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the koi can't bite another target.

Swallow. The koi makes one bite attack against a Tiny target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the koi, and it takes 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of the koi's turns. The koi can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the koi dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Development

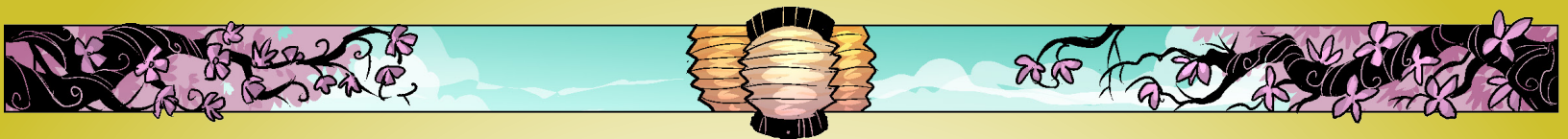
When the PCs solve the riddle, Shu Lai gives them the key without further negotiations, and thanks them for their company. Before they leave the pond, Shu Lai asks the PCs for a simple favor. He was not born in the monastery pond. Monks caught him in the wild when he was just a fry. He wants to return to the large lake he spawned in many years ago, where he can explore the wider world and have the chance to meet other types of aquatic creatures. He asks the PCs to return one day soon and transport him to that lake,



Riddles with Littles

For young children, change the first line to “Across the starry sky I race,” to give them an additional clue. The answer to the riddle is “the moon.” At the GM’s discretion, Shu Lai provides extra clues to PCs who are having a difficult time solving the riddle, for instance: “some have seen a man in me” and “I am the brightest light at night.” There is no losing here, as many hints as are necessary may be given until the riddle is solved.





which is miles away on the other side of the Jade Mountains. He thinks he knows how to find the lake, since he used to spend hours in conversation with the monk who awakened him, and learned a bit about dry land geography from him. If PCs agree, he thanks them again, and says he waits patiently for their return.

Treasure

When the PCs successfully answer the riddle, Shu Lai spits out the key that unlocks both the monastery's front doors and the door to the moon-viewing tower.

Story Award

The PCs gain Inspiration for solving Shu Lai's riddle.

Exploring with Small Children

Little gamers don't always know which direction to travel and need a bit more guidance than your average adult player. If you find they are struggling to follow the adventure, or are needing to be redirected from attempting to climb the walls, try offering more precise options. Instead of "You see all of this what do you do?" try encouraging them with assumptive questions such as "Do you approach the doors or would you rather try the stairs first?". You could also offer them guidance in the form of an NPC party member that wanders off in the required direction. Especially their first adventure, it's good for them to have an example to follow. You may feel a bit like you're running a game for yourself but children usually catch on quick and need less aid in no time!

A3. Moon-Viewing Tower

This square turret hugs the stone wall surrounding the monastery and is accessible by a staircase of the same material. A locked wooden door bars entry to the chamber within. Beyond the door, large windows on every wall provide a beautiful view of the bamboo forest below and the rising mountains to the north. A telescope on a wooden stand points toward the south window, where the sky can be clearly seen. A polished wooden desk stands against the north wall. A few woven bamboo mats on the floor provide a place to comfortably sit and enjoy the view.

The heavy wooden door to the moon-viewing tower is locked (DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools). PCs can use the master key found in area A2 to unlock this door.

The chamber at the top of the tower has an eight-foot high ceiling. Large windows set with clear glass begin two feet from the floor and stretch up to the ceiling. The door is the only break in the vista granted by the windows.

The monks of Kneeling Wind Monastery once used this room to enjoy the view of the surrounding lands as well as record star charts and track the movements of the moon and planets. A monk inspired Shu Lai's riddle by describing the moon's beauty from this room. The wooden desk is well-stocked with ink wells, scroll paper, and calligraphy pens. Several scrolls piled neatly on the desk reveal complicated star charts and sketches of various constellations.

The bronze telescope rests on a heavy wooden tripod and requires a DC 15 Strength check to move. The telescope does not fit through the door unless disassembled, requiring a successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' or tinker's tools, or an Intelligence (Arcana) check. PCs may look through the telescope and operate it to zoom in on objects in the surrounding area with a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Within the desk's drawers are several useful items that the PCs might discover with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Treasure

Hidden within the desk's compartments are the following items: compass, *potion of healing* (3), and a *driftglobe*. In addition, a basic map of the monastery located here reveals the location of the secret doors in areas A4, B2, and B3.

A4. Monastery

A narrow room branches into two separate wings, each guarded by three tiny fu dog statuettes, smaller versions of the grand statue found in the courtyard.

The heavy wooden doors are locked (DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools). PCs can use the master key found in area A2 to unlock this door.

The large chamber branches to the left and right of the doors. The ceiling is 20-feet high and the simple decor consists of a trio of fu dog statuettes on either side of the doors. Stone stairs facing the doors ascend 20 feet up to the unlocked trapdoor leading to area A5. A secret trapdoor in the floor of the room's west wing provides access to the basement (area B).

The monks once used this room as a communal work



Don't Forget!

When you're playing with new gamers you may have to explain things you wouldn't normally need to. A great many 6 year olds will easily make the connection that a *potion of healing* will mend their injuries. But if you don't think it's clear enough, it doesn't hurt to explain it's a bottle of liquid and add an Alice tag that says drink me for healing. Likewise, the *driftglobe* could have an engraving of its command word.

area. They allowed local villagers here when they arrived in need of healing, blessings, and quiet moments of meditation. The monks used the hidden trapdoor in the west wing to move between the public part of their monastery and the private living and storage areas located below.

The map from area **A3** shows the secret trapdoor's location and the PCs can easily locate the door with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check when using it as a reference. Without the map, PCs need to make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to find the secret door.

When Azhuryx made the abandoned monastery her home, she animated several of the fu dog statuettes as an additional layer of protection for her family and hoard. The fu dogs do not react to the PCs' presence until they try to open the trapdoor leading to the basement.

Creatures

Three animated object fu-dog statuettes leap to life as PCs discover the hidden trapdoor.

Animated Statues (3)

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 17 (5d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	5 (-3)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Dex +3

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 7

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The statue is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the statue must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the statue remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal statue.

ACTIONS

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

Fun Fact!

Candies and small fruits, such as gummy bears and grapes, make great placeholders for monsters! They are the perfect size to occupy squares on a battle map and the victors love to eat them as reward for winning the conflict! We recommend you wait till the battle is over entirely and split the candy equally amongst the party.

A5. Wall-Top Terrace


This bare, windy terrace overlooks the green, rocky slopes of the mountains.

Two fu dog statuettes stand in the corners of this uncovered rooftop terrace. The terrace faces north into the mountains. Despite the otherwise tranquil nature of the monastery, a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals arrow slits in the lower part of the four-foot wall surrounding the terrace.

Creatures

Traces of the Kneeling Wind monks who lived and died here linger throughout the monastery. While pacifists, the monks realized one could not embrace a life of perfect non-violence in a world with wicked people willing to do harm. They learned to fight, but only to protect others. A haunt, the spiritual residue of a monk who once trained apprentices in the use of the quarterstaff, materializes to test the PC's combat skills. The ghostly monk tosses a translucent blue staff to one of the PC's and bows respectfully before attacking. The haunt fights until its opponent surrenders or is reduced to 0 hit points (the haunt always knocks its foes unconscious, never kills them). The haunt continues to





battle all present “students” until it is reduced to 0 hit points, at which point it bows again, and vanishes.

The quarterstaff it gives the PCs is a magical weapon, which also vanishes when the haunt does.

Weapon Master Haunt

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 15 (unarmored defense)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lighting, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The haunt can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage if wielded in two hands.

Brain Break!

Here or immediately after the Sudoku puzzle may be a good place to take a break, stretch your legs, and get a small snack. While children are likely to play for hours if you allow them, they don't always realize that they sometimes need a “brain break”.

B. Monastery Basement

A stone stairway descends 30 feet down to the subterranean part of the monastery. The walls and floors are superior stone masonry (AC 17, 30 hit points, damage threshold 10) unless otherwise noted and the doors are constructed of heavy wood (AC 15, 27 hit points, break DC 20). The ceilings here are 10 feet high.

Though wall sconces provide a place for torches every 10 feet on either side of the walls, any torches left here by the last monks have long since decayed. It is completely dark in the basement.

A wide hallway leads from area **B1** to **B2**. Some of the tiles in area **B2** have numbers etched into them. A piece of chalk left on the floor invites the PCs to solve a Sudoku puzzle. A secret door on the eastern side of **B2** leads to **B3**, a room containing a deep pool (uniformly 20 feet in depth) spanned by a woven rope bridge. The bridge leads to a rectangular area blocked by 12 large stones, each with a number clearly etched on one side. These stones are easily rolled into adjacent squares and rearranged. If PCs place the stones in the correct order, a secret door in the eastern wall opens to reveal a tiny meditation chamber (**B4**) built of natural rock. A small shrine carved into the eastern wall of area **B4** provides a boon to any who spend time meditating here.

A hall on the western side of **B2** leads to what was once the monk's sleeping chambers, areas **B5–B7**.

Wooden double doors lead from the southern wall of **B2** to a short, wide hallway ending in another set of double doors. Area **B10**, once the monastery's communal dining area, is now occupied by the dragon Kurisutaru's hoard. Smaller wooden doors in the eastern and western corners of **B10** lead to the pantry (**B9**) and well, respectively. The well in **B8** is still functional and descends 80 feet to access an underground spring.

B1. Foot of the Stairs

Wooden double doors in the southern wall are the only exit from this bare stone chamber. To the north, the stone steps lead back to the ground floor of the monastery.

A DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a few fading lines written on the wall in chalk:

A disciple of the Kneeling Wind must be a master of logic, peace, and perception. If you enter, we shall test all of these skills.

—Master Hachiro.



Master Hachiro wrote this message to would-be members of his monk order several centuries ago at the monastery's founding. The current Master traced these ancient words to renew them every year, insuring they never faded, but no one has taken time to trace the words in a century. Monks who joined the order bypassed the constantly-changing magical puzzles each day when they rose for work and returned to sup and sleep. PCs succeeding on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check can recall learning this information about the monastery.

Creatures

A shade of Master Hachiro lingers here as a haunt. The haunt manifests after PCs read the writing on the wall, or when they try to leave the room. The haunt is technically an undead creature, but it doesn't attack.

The incorporeal form of a wizened man dressed in simple blue robes, his long white hair and beard hanging in braids that reach his waist, manifests in front of the room's

only door. He holds two identical objects in his hands, both scrolls tied with a bit of twine. "Greetings, apprentices," he addresses the PCs and bows. "You are here because you passed the test of the body, but now your mind must triumph. Tell me, which is real, and which is an illusion?" The illusory scroll in the haunt's right hand, and can be identified as such if a PC interacts with it and succeeds a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw. A PC who casts detect magic notes that both scrolls are magical, but a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the school of the scroll in the haunt's right hand as illusion.

When a PC successfully identifies which scroll is illusory, the haunt smiles and drops the scroll in his left hand. "remember, apprentice, that looks can be deceiving," he says as he dissipates.

Treasure

The scroll dropped by the haunt is a *spell scroll of aid*.



B2. Trial of Logic

Numbers appear etched into some of the stone tiles of this large room. Other squares remain blank. A piece of chalk lies just inside the doorway, ready for use. A stone hallway leads out of the room to the west, and the southern wall features sturdy double doors.

The puzzle here once tested those wishing to join the order of the Kneeling Wind and sharpened the minds of the monks who permanently dwelt here.

To complete the puzzle, the PCs must write the correct numbers on the empty squares. If they write a wrong answer on a square, the tile flashes red before vanishing, leaving a square chamber 10 feet deep. Any PC standing on the square must succeed a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the pit. PCs can hop over a single vanished squares by jumping, possibly requiring Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks if the distance becomes great enough.

Once the PCs solve the puzzle, any missing squares rise up to rejoin the floor, and the PCs may move freely across the room. The puzzle resets in 24 hours.

The PCs can find a secret door in the eastern wall of this room with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check if PCs have the map from area A3, or with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check without the map's aid. The answers to the original puzzle are in red and should not be written on the map.

Leveling the Puzzle

This simple Sudoku puzzle should be suitable for older children to solve. Make sure to explain the rules of the puzzle: each number 1-6 may be used only once in a row, column, and 6x6 grouping. Allow the players some scratch paper to work out the puzzle before writing the answers on the map. If players are struggling to solve the puzzle, even with hints, read the following out loud:

The squares glow with a dim white light and the numbers seem to squiggle and squirm on the tiles. When the light fades, more numbers have appeared magically on some of the blank squares.

After you read this text, fill in some of the answers to help players along. Alternatively, for young players a simple skip-counting pattern (such as counting by 2s or 4s) could be used instead of Sudoku. The solution to the puzzle is provided below.

Sudoku Squares:

6, 5, 3, 1, 2, 4

1, 4, 2, 6, 3, 5

3, 1, 4, 2, 5, 6

5, 2, 6, 3, 4, 1

2, 6, 3, 4, 1, 3

4, 3, 1, 5, 6, 2

Story Award

The PCs gain Inspiration when they solve the puzzle, regardless of whether or not they require aid or modifications to solve it.

Junior Trials

For younger players who don't yet know how to count by threes, reduce the numbers to a manageable amount (such as 1 through 10) and ask them to place the stones in numerical order.

B3. Trial of Peace

A narrow hallway connects to a larger stone chamber. The square stones set into the floor here form a checkered pattern of dark and light stone. A woven rope bridge hangs precariously over a rectangular pool and a silver bell is tied to the far end of the bridge. Beyond the crossing a formation of large, smooth stones each marked with a different number block the eastern wall.

Crossing the rope bridge and solving the puzzle here tested the tranquility of apprentice monks. The pool is 20-feet deep. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check allows crossing the bridge without falling into the water below. A PC who falls into the water may easily pull herself up onto the pool's ledge, but finds that the water is uncomfortably cold and deep.

PCs crossing the rope bridge may try their hand at solving the rock puzzle. These rocks easily roll into adjacent squares and reposition. Prompt the players to "look for the pattern" in the numbers, or, for players who need a bit of help, to "count by threes." When the PCs arrange the stones in order from 0 to 33, the secret door in the room's eastern wall opens. Read or paraphrase the following once PCs solve the puzzle.



The walls and floor shake for a moment with a sound like far-off thunder. A section of the eastern wall creaks open, revealing the doorway to a tiny room.

Creatures

The remnants of a monk who drilled apprentices to master balance and dexterity inhabits this area as a haunt. When PCs approach within 5 feet of the rope bridge, the haunt manifests.

The incorporeal form of a woman clad in blue robes appears on the ledge of the pool next to the bridge.

She bows to the PCs and speaks: "One who follows the way of the Kneeling Wind must always find balance. Ring the bell to past my test, apprentice." The rope bridge begins to shake violently and the checks made to cross the bridge suffer disadvantage. If necessary, remind the players that they can spend Inspiration to cancel the disadvantage.

B4. Kneeling Wind Shrine

Though cut stone blocks form the rest of the monastery, this tiny room seems carved from the earth itself. A light breeze blows, even though it is deep underground, and a shrine carved directly into the eastern wall faces the door.

Intelligence (History or Religion)

With a successful DC 15 check, the PCs identify the cloud-riding fu dog carved into the shrine as the aspect of the Kneeling Wind; a representation of the order's philosophy.

Development

If a PC spends 5 minutes resting calmly in this room, she receives the effects of the spell *bless* for 10 minutes (no concentration required).

B5. Monks' Chambers

Simple wooden cots are the only furniture in this unadorned room. The monks of the Kneeling Wind gave up all earthly possessions when they joined the order, so only items needed for daily life, study, and defense remain. The monks slept here for a sparse few hours each night before rising early to tend to chores, healing duties, and study. Though Kurisutaru rarely enters this part of the monastery, some of the animated objects created by Azhuryx to protect him currently patrol this area and notice the PCs' arrival.

Azhuryx created a soulbound doll to protect and see to her son's needs while she was away with the help of a willing human. Eva was a great-grandmother, and sacrificed

herself to ensure that the dragon would protect and guide her descendants. The soulbound doll demands to know if PCs plan to hurt Kurisutaru. If the PCs ask who Kurisutaru is, the doll simply replies, "my friend." A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the doll that the party is friendly. If the initial attempt fails the doll grows suspicious. The PCs can try once more (but with disadvantage). If that fails, the doll attacks.

Creatures

The soulbound doll once sang a young Kurisutaru to sleep while his mother was away at night, and tries to use its magically calming voice on the PCs before attacking alongside an animated incense burner.

Soulbound Doll

Tiny construct, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (10d4)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The soulbound doll's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can cast the following innate spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

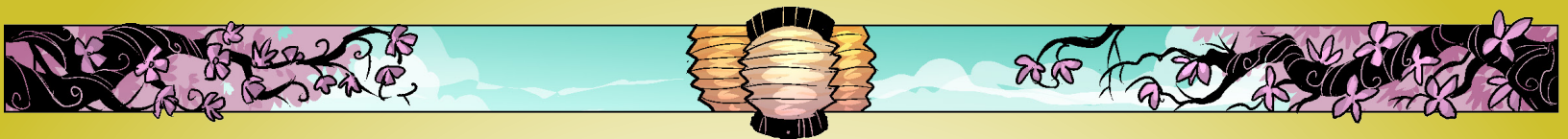
1/day each: *sleep*, *levitate*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The soulbound doll makes two dagger attacks.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.





Animated Incense Burner

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 20 (8d4)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	5 (-3)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 7

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The incense burner is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the incense burner must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the incense burner remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal incense burner.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) fire damage.

B6-7. Monks' Chambers

These rooms have the same appearance and function as area B5, occupied only by simple wooden cots. A wooden door in the eastern wall of B6 separates the bed chambers. Area B7 is the only room in which the monastery's superior masonry has an apparent flaw. PCs notice a narrow crack in the western wall with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Creatures

Two giant centipedes hiding in the wall of B7 attack PCs as they enter.

Giant Centipede

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 4 (1d6 + 1)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

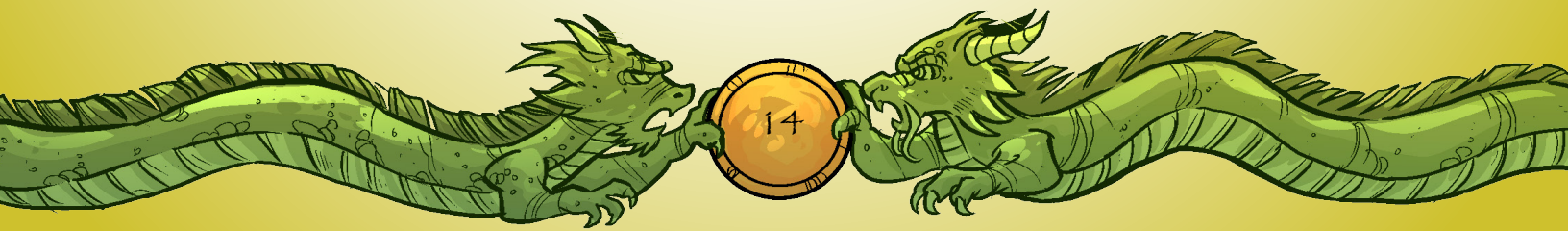
B8. Ancient Well


A large well takes up most of the floor of this room. A rope and pulley system rigged to the well allows anyone to lower wooden buckets, fill them up with water, and bring them back up. The well shaft descends 80 feet into the earth, where it meets an icy natural spring running beneath the monastery basement. The pulley system is still functional and PCs can draw clean water from the well. The well's water is pure and refreshing.

Creatures

The last remnant of the Kneeling Wind monks waits in this room. When PCs approach the well, Master Hachiro appears a final time as a haunt.

Master Hachiro (from area B1) appears and tells the PCs that a part of the techniques and knowledge of the Kneeling Wind can live on if they spread word of the monastery. He expresses his wish for a new order of monks to inhabit the monastery and revive its status as a place of healing and wisdom. As a final request, he asks that PCs put his memory to rest, which can only be accomplished once all the tests are completed. If the PCs have trouble passing any of the tests, Master Hachiro provides guidance and advice on how to overcome the challenge. If the PCs have already passed all





the tests, Master Hachiro thanks them with a respectful bow before fading away forever.

B9. Pantry

Bundles of dried herbs hang from the ceiling of this small pantry. Shelves carved into stone walls hold containers of dried meats and fruits, pickles, and canned vegetables. A few metal pots and pans hang from hooks, and an iron cauldron rests on what was once a fire pit.

This room served as a pantry and kitchen area for the monks. Some dried meats, fruits, and pickled foods in jars still line the dusty shelves of the pantry. The magically preserved foods here provide the equivalent of 10 days of trail rations.

Creatures

When the PCs first enter area **B10**, Azumi is in the pantry, attempting to squeeze herself under the shelves while playing hide and seek with Kurisutaru. As soon as she hears the PCs talking, she runs back to area **B10**.

Treasure

Four finely made kitchen knives (actually silvered daggers) protrude from a chopping block on one of the shelves should anyone think to take them.

B10. Kurisutaru's Hoard

A faded but beautiful mural of fu dogs, snake-like dragons, and birds with fiery orange feathers frolicking through fluffy clouds covers all four walls of this grand hall. Hundreds of items crowd the polished stone floor of this room. Coins, scrolls, goblets, weapons, and other knickknacks form tidy piles in every corner. A magnificent creature with bright blue and purple scales shining like glass sits in the center. The creature's front claws cover its eyes as it rests on its hind legs with glittering wings folded against its back. Its claws still clasped over its eyes, the creature whispers, "One...two...three...four..."

Show players the picture of Kurisutaru after reading the room's description. The ceiling in this grand room is 20-feet high. The monks used this chamber as a dining and living area, and the beautiful paintings that grace the walls were the only excess in their simple, structured lives.

The dragon Azhuryx used this room as her lair. A massive, orderly hoard takes up much of the room now. A DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check reveals that

this hoard is much too large for a dragon of Kurisutaru's age. Kurisutaru maintains his mothers' hoard but has only added a few items to it himself, including several origami creations crafted by Azumi in the last three days. Upon noticing the PCs, Kurisutaru snatches one of them up and demands to know why they are there. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs start explaining their plight to Kurisutaru, or if they call out to Azumi.

"Kuri-chan!" Calls a familiar voice. A human girl skips into the room with a huge grin on her face that quickly turns into a frown. She folds her arms over her chest and sticks out her lower lip. "Kurisutaru!" She scolds. "I told you that people don't like being snatched up by your claws!"

PCs must convince Kurisutaru of their noble intentions. The dragon's initial attitude is Hostile, but his attitude can be improved through the use of Charisma (Persuasion) checks. A successful DC 15 check improves the dragon's attitude to Indifferent, and a second improves it to Friendly. Finally, a third check against DC 10 can convince him to let Azumi go. The PCs can gain advantage on these checks in several ways suggested below. If they begin to run out of ideas or have difficulty passing the checks, Azumi can make suggestions on how to best convince her new friend. The PCs can retry failed checks, but only when they try a new approach, or fulfil one of the conditions to gain advantage.

- PCs who put the haunts to rest.
- PCs who befriend Shu Lai (awakened koi) or Eva (soulbound doll).
- PCs may can tell Kurisutaru a story (DC 13 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) or Intelligence (History)) or entertaining him (DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Charisma (Performance), or a Charisma check with a musical instrument).
- Playing a game of hide and seek with Kurisutaru provides a +2 bonus to these checks. Kurisutaru begins as the seeker, and the PCs must find a hiding place while he counts for 3 rounds. PCs then attempt a Dexterity (Stealth) check against Kurisutaru's passive Perception score. When it is the PCs' turn to be it, Kurisutaru has 3 rounds to attempt a rather clumsy Hide attempt against the PCs' passive Perception score.
- Reward creative attempts to amuse the dragon, such as with Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) to perform magic tricks.

Creatures

Kurisutaru, a young primal crystal dragon, is "it" and



is counting to ten while Azumi searches for a hiding place in an adjacent room. Azumi returns when she hears the PCs' voices.

Player vs. Character

Out of character most players should immediately recognize that this creature is a dragon. This is a great teachable moment for young players. Explain that just because they know it is a dragon does not mean their characters know. Their characters may have only heard stories of dragons and do not really know what they look like. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or History) Check identifies this creature as a wyrmling dragon. Scoring a 15 or higher on this check identifies the dragon as a young primal crystal dragon, a type of dragon that is usually good-natured.

Azumi

Small humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (*cloak of protection*, 16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 18 (4d6 +4)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +0

Skills Arcana +5 Deception +3, History +5, Persuasion +3

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. Azumi is a 3rd level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She was the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips: *light*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots) *feather fall*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (2 slot) *invisibility*, *misty step*, *spider climb*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Development

During Combat If threatened, Azumi casts *invisibility* on herself and flees.

Azumi isn't afraid of Kurisutaru anymore, and the two have become fast friends in the last several days. The excitement of meeting a real live dragon is starting to wear off, though, and Azumi wants to go home. She misses her family and knows they must worry about her. While she wants to

continue her friendship with Kurisutaru, and plans to visit, Azumi doesn't want to live in the monastery.

Azumi is a curious and intelligent child. She loves to explore and learn new things but is a bit shy. Though she is profoundly gifted she isn't at all bossy or vain, and is sensitive to others' feelings. Still, she's not above using her magic to cheat in a game between friends.

Azumi is willing to trade spells with arcane casters in the party. Azumi has the following spells in her spellbook: 1st — *alarm*, *burning hands*, *charm person*, *feather fall*, *jump*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *thunderwave*, *unseen servant*; 2nd — *animate origami*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *magic mouth*, *scorching ray*, see *invisibility*, *spider climb*.

In addition to her spellbook she carries an *origami riding crane* and she wears a *cloak of protection*.

Kurisutaru, Wyrmling Primal Crystal Dragon

Medium dragon, chaotic good

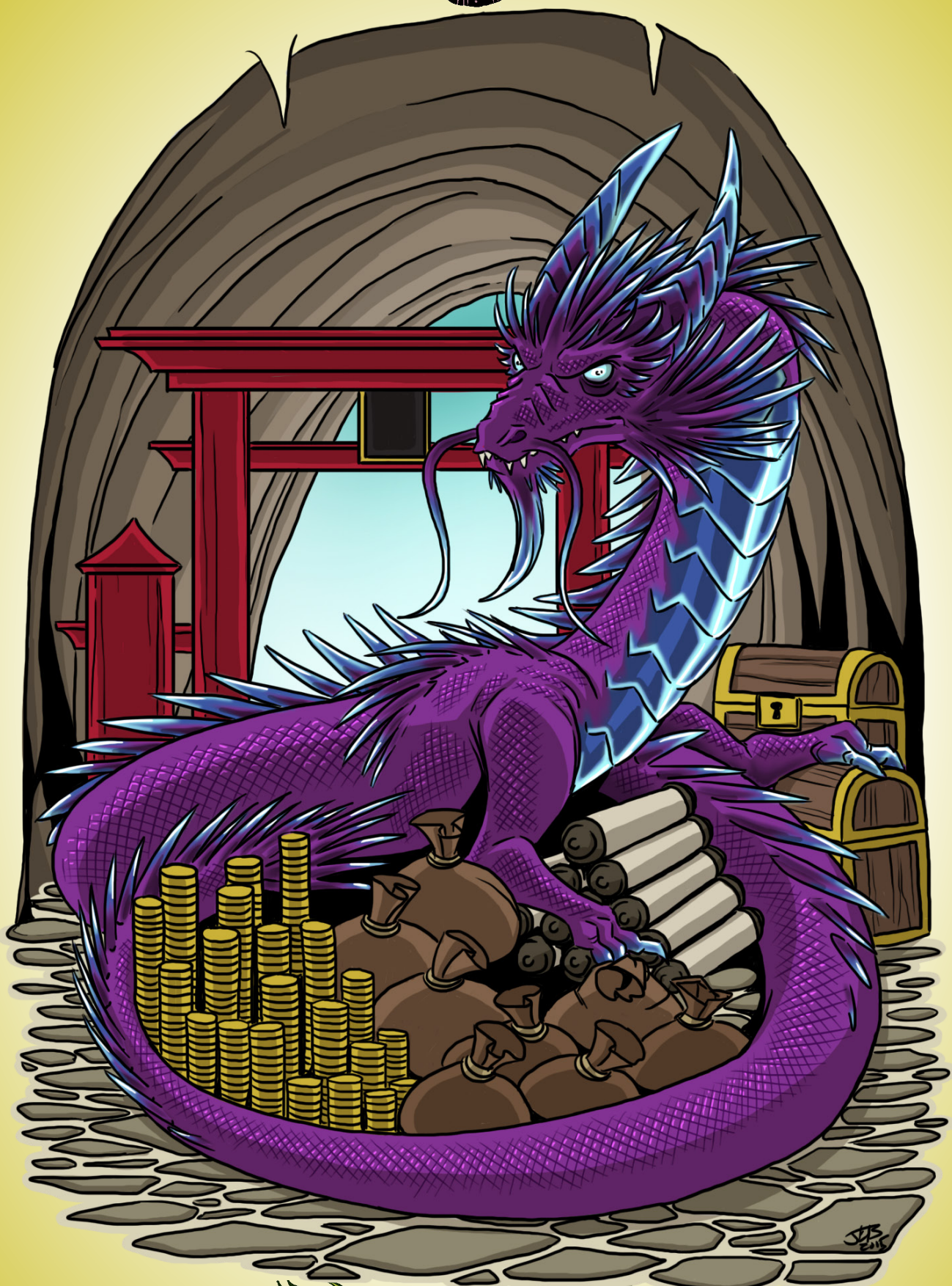
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)





Saving Throws Dex +2, Con +5, Wis +2, Cha +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +2
Damage Immunities thunder
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)
Razor Sharp. The crystal dragon's natural attacks all deal slashing damage.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage.

Thunderous Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon unleashes a thunderous roar in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Draconic Friendship Bracelet

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)



The crystal dragon Azhuryx crafted this bracelet to communicate with her child. A clear chunk of quartz carved into the delicate likeness of a dragon dangles from a silver chain. The miniature dragon sparkles and

casts tiny prismatic beams even in dim light. While wearing the bracelet you can cast *sending* to a dragon by speaking the dragon's true name. Once *sending* is cast from the bracelet, it can't be used again until 7 days have passed. While wearing the bracelet, you are considered to be proficient in the Deception and Persuasion skills when making Charisma checks against dragons, and you can add double your normal proficiency bonus on such checks. Additionally, you can always attempt to improve the starting attitude of a dragon by at least one step.

Treasure

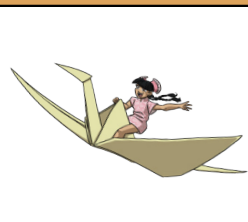
Kurisutaru gives the party his *draconic friendship bracelet*, advising them to use it to call him if they ever need help or just want to play.

Story Award

Instead of earning combat XP, the PCs gain 600 XP if they help work out a solution for Azumi and Kurisutaru (fighting the dragon won't end well anyway).

Origami Riding Crane

Wondrous item, uncommon



What appears to be a tiny origami crane transforms into a paper creature of the same shape capable of flying at a speed of 60 ft. with good maneuverability. It can comfortably carry two Medium

characters and their gear. The *origami riding crane* lasts for 1 day and is usable once.

Conclusion

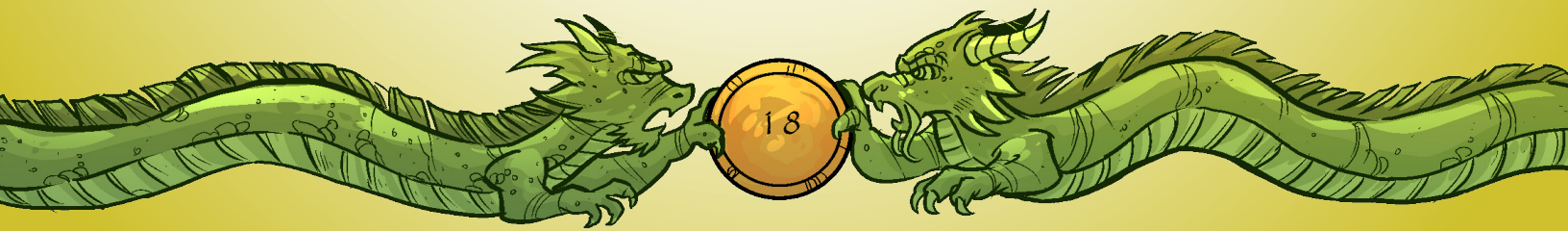
PCs can help Kurisutaru and Azumi reach an agreement about what to do next. Kurisutaru agrees to immediately fly Azumi back to her village so she can let her family know she's safe. He doesn't have enough room on his back or in his claws for everyone, but Azumi has another idea.

Azumi excitedly beckons the PCs to follow her. When they reach the courtyard, she retrieves a tiny origami crane from her pack and places it on the ground in front of the PCs. The young wizard speaks a command and the tiny crane transforms into a much larger version of itself that can comfortably seat two Medium characters. She has enough *origami riding cranes* to transport all of the PCs down the mountain. Azumi's wizard tutor **recently** helped her create these magical flying cranes, each useable only once. She explains that the cranes can navigate themselves in the mountain winds, and teaches PCs the commands needed to take off, turn, speed up, slow down, and land. The *origami riding cranes* are her gift to the PCs for "rescuing" her.

As the PCs prepare to fly down the mountainside on their cranes, Azumi clammers onto Kurisutaru's back and shouts, "last one there's a rotten egg!" PCs are welcome to join Azumi's family for a tasty dinner of dumplings and cookies once they land.

Continuing the Adventure

The adventure does not have to end with returning Azumi to her family, and could be the beginning of an entire campaign! There is still the mystery of Azhuryx disappearance to investigate, now with the aid of Azumi and Kurisutaru. Or the PCs might wish to return the awakened koi Shu Lai to the pool he spawned from. Additionally, the party could continue the legacy of the Kneeling Wind by seeking out other monk orders or even founding their own.





The End

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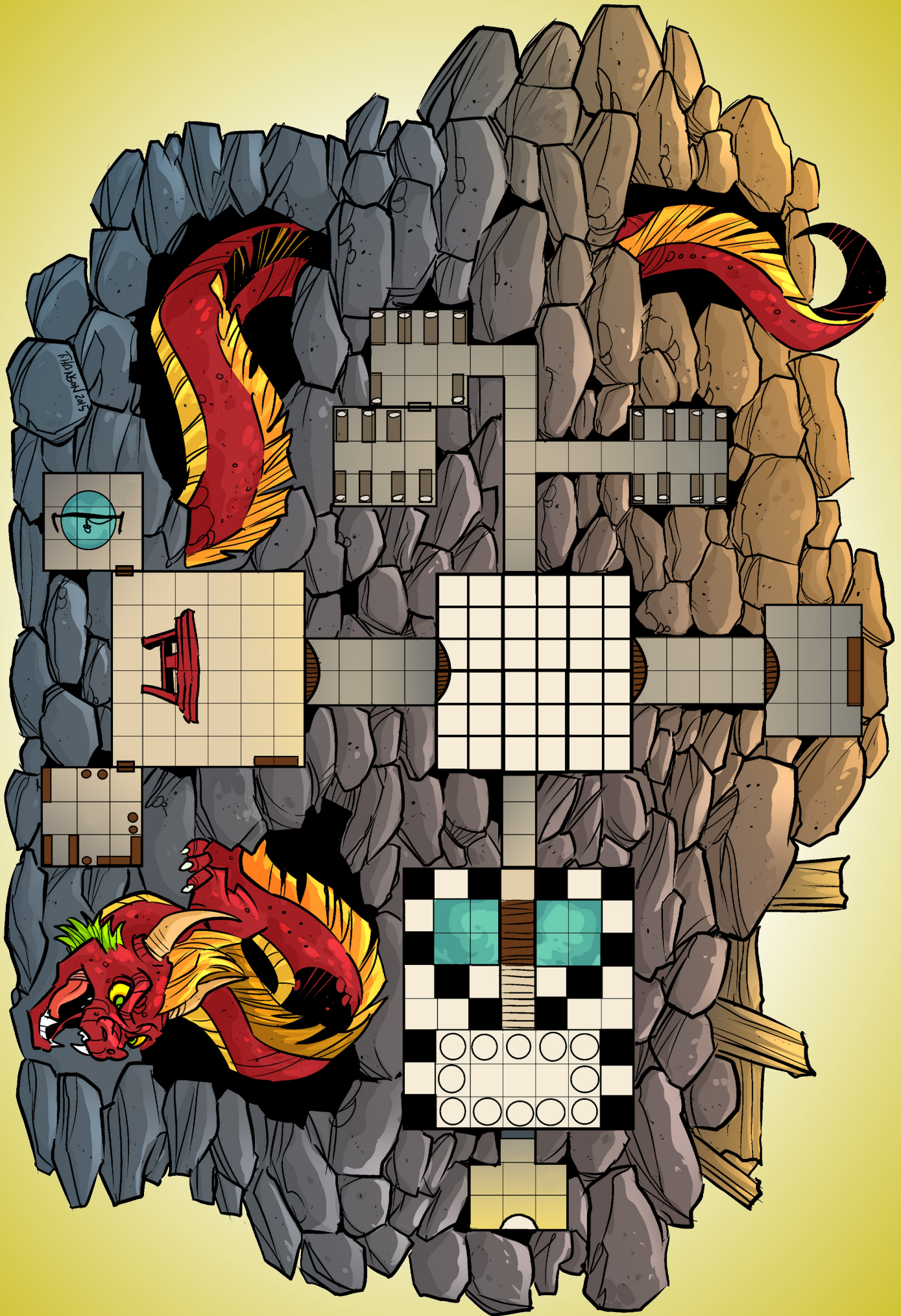




Legend

	Trees		Stairs
	Door		Window
	Heavy Door		Statuette

T.H. MAN 2015



Origami anyone?

Kurisutaru is an orphaned crystal dragon! When his mother disappears, he finds himself all alone in an abandoned monastery. After years spent with only constructs for company, he leaves to find a true forever friend and playmate. When he stumbles upon Azumi, he naively kidnaps the young magical prodigy with a gift for origami. The dragon scares the girl half to death, but she does her best to reach out to would-be rescuers! Can the PCs follow a trail of clues to save both Azumi and Kurisutaru from the dragon's loneliness?

A ***Friend in Need*** is a stand-alone mini-adventure for **5th edition *Dungeons and Dragons*** and 1st level characters. Recommended for ages six and up this module includes adventure content as well as advice for gaming with children. Players can expect to be close to 2nd level by the adventure's conclusion.

