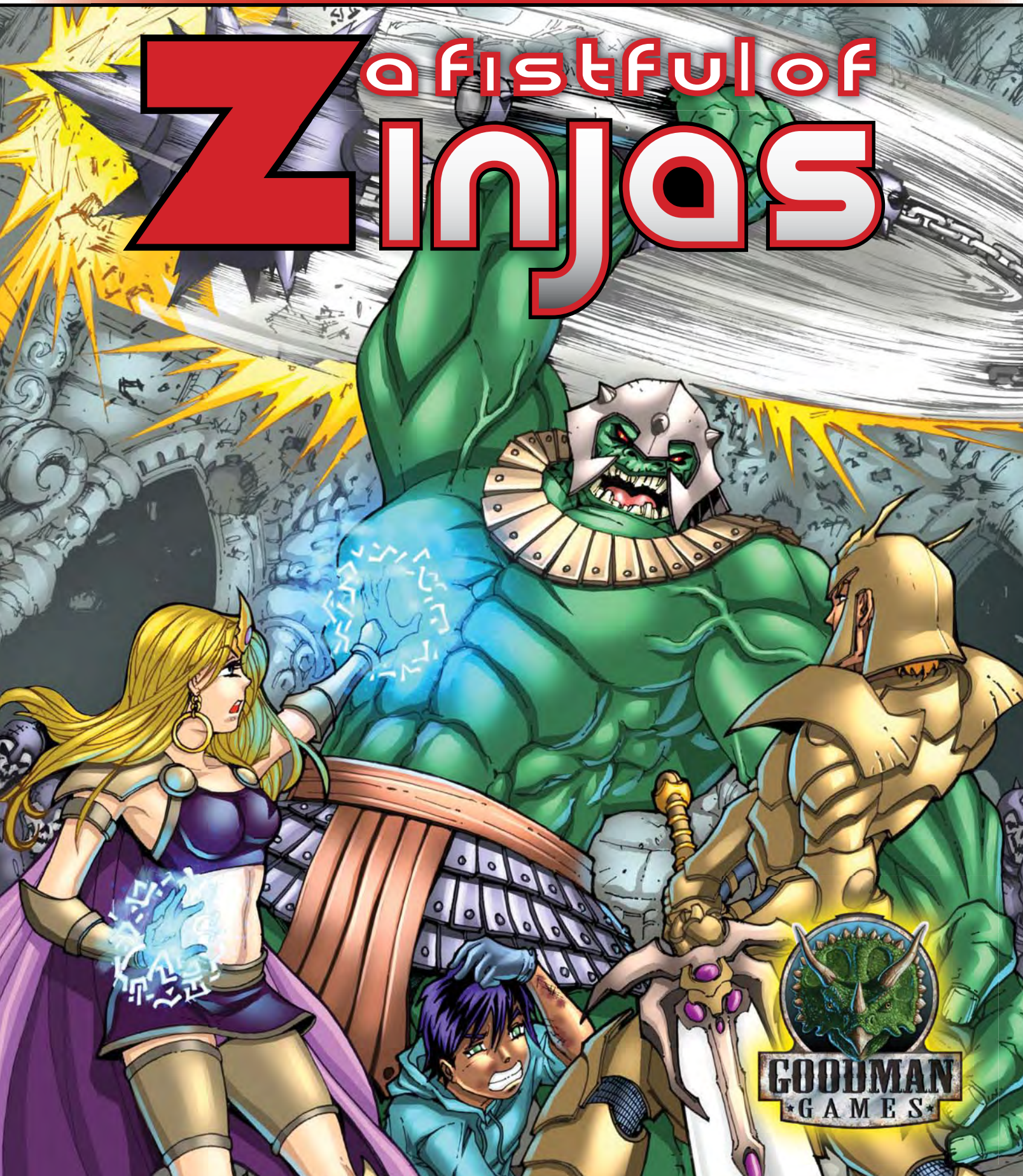


THIS ADVENTURE MODULE IS 4E COMPATIBLE

WICKED FANTASY FACTORY

Z a fistful of INJOS



A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

WICKED FANTASY FACTORY

A fistful of ZinjOs

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Your adventures are already exciting. Characters explore dungeons, crush monsters, and score loot. But maybe you want your adventures to be more. Maybe you want adventures that are over-the-top, in-your-face, BADASS THRILL RIDES! Maybe you want adventures that are things of LEGEND! Maybe you want adventures that are WICKED SICK! That's what Wicked Fantasy Factory gives you: axes hacking, spells exploding, and blood spewing. Don't just crawl through dungeons — make them sorry they ever met you!

A Fistful of Zinjas is a 4th-edition Wicked Fantasy Factory adventure for five heroes of 4th level. (In fact, it is the first Wicked Fantasy Factory adventure that uses the 4th-edition rules.) Slightly smaller or larger groups, or groups of a slightly higher or lower level, will also experience a good challenge. All characters will have a good time in this adventure; the party should include a good mix of character roles, with the controller being especially important. Parties with five characters would do best to double-up on the defender or leader role, but a party of any composition works fine. Characters trained in Acrobatics and/or Athletics will find their skills valuable, as will characters trained in social skills like Diplomacy and Bluff.

Though this adventure is designed for characters of around 4th level, you can easily adjust it to challenge heroes of higher or lower level. See the “Adjusting the Challenges” sidebar for ideas.

Adventure Summary: A castle composed of darkness and shadow stuff has materialized at the edge of the duchy of Arnatha. Humanoid forms, cloaked in gray and darkness and wielding slender swords, emerge from the castle to conquer the surrounding farmsteads. The PCs strike out toward the shadow castle and fight their way through it, along the way crossing blades with skilled varnai warriors, contending with mystic traps, and flinging scores of zinjas out of their path. At the end, the PCs confront the castle's ruler and match their spells and wits against those of a scheming oni; the outcome determines whether the castle's shadowy inhabitants will be friends or foes in the time to come.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Somewhere in some plane of shadows, or perhaps in the shadows between planes, dwell the Rathayans: dark humanoids with a complex society and empire on their minds. They maintain small fortresses throughout their domain, and especially on the frontier — and for the Rathayans, the frontier is where their world meets the real world. Sometimes these fortresses cross over into this world, and it is such an occurrence that sparks *A Fistful of Zinjas*.

The duchy of Arnatha is not as large or powerful as the empires of old, but it provides a degree of stability and protection to an area including several towns, many small village and farmsteads, and the central city of Arnatha. The Runjump River marks the realm's western boundary. Two weeks ago, on the banks of the river, at the edge of Arnatha's territory, a dark castle materialized.

The small castle is under the rule of Hoi-ya, a Rathayan with the ruling title of shogoon. Hoi-ya seeks conquest, but not foolishly, and not unconditionally. The Rathayans are not evil, yet they *are* power-hungry. Arriving in this new land, Hoi-ya seeks to test the native inhabitants. If they prove weak and easily cowed, he plans to conquer this realm (summoning reinforcements if necessary) and establish a Rathayan foothold in this world. If the locals seem too powerful, Hoi-ya will take his fight elsewhere — but he is also open to the idea of alliance or trade with otherworldly cultures. If the Rathayans plan to establish a territory in the PCs' world, they'll need help and supplies.

However, a dark taint mars Hoi-ya's honorable (if overly aggressive) intentions. An oni called Roniko has inveigled himself into Hoi-ya's confidence. Angered at the duchy of Arnatha for an old slight, the creature intends to incite the shogoon to battle, no matter what Hoi-ya would otherwise decide.

The PCs attack Hoi-ya's castle, fighting their way through droves of zinja warriors, skilled varnai swordsmen, vicious drakes, and other creatures. They display their physical prowess by overcoming challenges and

opponents and exhibit their mental acuity by solving puzzles and bypassing traps. Finally, they reach the shogun. Hoi-ya is impressed with the PCs, seeing in them evidence of the local populace's strength. However, Ron-

iko, who has become Hoi-ya's trusted advisor, attempts to convince the shogun to kill the PCs personally. In a tense skill challenge, the PCs must unmask the oni or face both him and Hoi-ya in combat.



JUICE UP YOUR GAME!

Wicked Fantasy Factory adventures are like other adventures, but with *XTREME!!* added in big, red, underlined letters. Send your game blasting to the next level with the following (optional) components!

Finish Him!

You chop the monster. It dies. Cool, but how much cooler would it be if you planted a foot on its chest, ripped out its arms, and golf-clubbed it out of the dungeon?

In WFF adventures, each hero has at least one *finishing move*, which is an encounter power he can use in addition to his other powers. Each hero gets to make up his finishing moves.

Inventing Your Finishing Move

It's a good idea to begin a WFF adventure with one particular finishing move in mind; that way you know how to describe it when the time comes. You can invent additional finishing moves as you play, but you probably want a solid, standby finishing move you can use against just about anything.

When inventing your finishing move, keep these points in mind:

- ◇ The most important thing about finishing moves is that they are flashy and over the top. Think about video games in which you dismember, decapitate, and explode your opponent — and seven rib cages clatter from the sky. You want your finishing moves to strike terror into your enemies: to make even the staunchest dragon piddle its scales when it sees you tear out its ally's intestines, or incinerate his head with a blast of fire, or plug arrows into — BAM! BAM! BAM! — both eyes and his crotch.
- ◇ A finishing move is independent of your weaponry and other powers. You can create a finishing move that uses your weapons or powers if you like, of course, but you can also create finishing moves in which you do interesting things without them. (See below for some examples.) Note that even if you incorporate your weapon or powers into your finish-

ing move, you do not gain bonuses based on proficiencies, implements, magic items, or anything else. Your attack roll when using a finishing move is always $d20 + 1/2$ your level + your relevant ability — and that's it. (Exception: An effect that simply provides a bonus to your next attack roll, such as the warlord power furious smash, does apply to your finishing move attempt.)

- ◇ When deciding what your finishing move looks like, remember: flashy, gruesome, and over the top! You might have to use it on creatures with various anatomies, so make sure it's versatile, or invent a different one for different creature types. Also remember that your finishing moves don't have to involve the weapon you normally wield or the powers you normally use — or, in fact, any weapon or power at all.

Performing Your Finishing Move

Finishing move is an encounter power. Every PC in a WFF adventure possesses this power, in addition to all his other powers.

FINISH MOVE	ATTACK 1
<i>You destroy your enemy in an impressive and triumphant manner. Holy crap, look at the blood!</i>	
Encounter	
Standard Action	Melee or Ranged 10
Target: One bloodied creature	
Attack: Appropriate ability score vs. appropriate defense	
Hit: The creature dies in some especially gruesome, spectacular, and/or awe-inspiring fashion. Describe it in gory detail!	
In addition, the party gains bonus experience points for this glorious maneuver. Increase the monster's XP value by 10%. (Note that the entire party shares in this bonus XP — doing so prevents cries of "Kill stealer!" and makes all the players root for all the characters to use their finishing moves.)	
Miss: Something goes wrong. The bad guy dodges out of the way, or pulls out of your grip, or you slip on a kidney and make a fool of yourself. Nothing horrible happens, but you pretty much wasted your standard action this round.	

Special: You can choose any ability score to use for this power, and you can choose any defense to roll against, as long as your choices make sense (and the GM agrees). For example, most melee finishing moves are Strength or Dexterity vs. AC. Most finishing moves using ranged weapons are Dexterity vs. AC. Finishing moves using spells or prayers span the range (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma are common abilities; any defense makes sense for these attacks, depending on how you describe it).

Note that the description of your finishing move determines what ability score you use for the power, as well as what defense you roll against. You can suggest to your GM what you think would be appropriate, but he (as always) has the final say.

Other Finishing Moves

Bad guys in some WFF adventures have unique finishing moves of their own. Also, you're welcome to add more than one finishing move to your repertoire or invent them on the fly as you lock your enemies in your sights or your rolls succeed. Be aware, though, that finishing moves are often signatures of a mighty hero, and the masses learn to identify him based on his moves!

Finishing Move Examples

The following are some examples of finishing moves. You are welcome to use these directly or let them inspire you when creating your own.

- ◇ Strength vs. Fortitude, melee: Rondo, the axe-wielding dwarf fighter, kicks his opponent in the privates so hard that important parts of its anatomy explode from its head!
- ◇ Dexterity vs. AC, range 10: Laeriel, the elf ranger, pins her opponent's feet to the ground with two well-placed arrow shots, and a third mighty shot tears the helpless foe's head from his shoulders!
- ◇ Charisma vs. Will, range 10: Mathees, the human warlock, causes his foe's head to crack open — the creature's brain then floats out and bludgeons its body to pulp!
- ◇ Dexterity vs. AC, melee: Xanna, the halfling rogue, backflips onto her opponent's shoulders, plunges

her daggers into its eyes, then uses them as handles to swing back to the ground!

No Cheating!


Do not abuse the finishing move rules! Examples of abuse include:

- ◇ Using finishing moves on creatures that are unconscious or dying.
- ◇ Hitting a creature as lightly as possible (“Hey, wizard, want to come over here and hit this guy with a staff for a few rounds?”) until he's bloodied.
- ◇ Using your finishing move on helpless creatures outside of combat. (“Let's tie this guy to a chair, heal him a little bit, then finish him!”)
- ◇ Anything else that diminishes the cool, dramatic aspects of finishing moves.

The GM has the right to tell you that finishing moves don't work under these and any other circumstances. If you stop thinking “Finishing moves are cool!” and start thinking “Finishing moves are dumb,” it's time to look at what the players are doing with them.

Mooks

Stupid, dirty little kobolds. Don't you want to just hack your way through hordes of the little buggers? Well, in WFF adventures, you can!

Certain monsters are mooks. These little weenies are just begging to be killed. This mook symbol —  — designates mooks.

Mooks are always minions, so they always go down with a single hit. In addition, when fighting mooks, characters enjoy the following benefits:

- ◇ When you kill a mook with a power, you also kill another mook adjacent to him. You can describe this secondary slaying however you like; perhaps your arrow blasts through two kobolds standing one behind the other, or maybe you gut the goblin with such vigor that his nearby friend drops dead of fright!
- ◇ Alternatively, when you kill a mook with a power that targets only one creature, rather than killing another mook, you can instead use the same power against another creature within range. This is a bonus use of the power, and it applies even to encounter and daily


powers. For example, if you use brute strike to dispatch the lowly cultist to your left, you can use brute strike again on the high priest to your right.

◇ Mooks are just begging to be cut to pieces; thus, they always count as being bloodied. For example, tieflings always get a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls against mooks, and you can use your finishing moves on them even when they're fresh off the presses! (Of course, if you kill a mook with a finishing move, you may kill another mook adjacent to him — but only the first is worth bonus XP.)

Note that mooks are worth the same amount of XP as minions; however, they are even easier to kill than minions. About six mooks are equivalent to a non-mook (non-minion) of their level.

Mooks aren't worth less XP, but the big badass (described below) isn't worth any more XP, so it all balances out.

The Big Badass

Each WFF adventure has at least one bad guy who's head and shoulders above everyone else. He's the big badass, and it's going to take a lot to bring him down. This symbol designates the big badass: 

The big badass gets a free resurrection. When you take him to 0 hit points (even with a finishing move), he picks himself off the floor, roars his defiance, and jumps back to full hit points. He comes back from anything — even effects like petrification and disease — and every detrimental ongoing effect on him ends. (He usually returns in some spectacular way; see his character description in each individual adventure for details.) Yikes!

Once you take him out a second time, though, he's gone for real. If you take him out with a finishing move the first time, you force him to use his resurrection, but you don't get any bonus XP. If you FINISH HIM the second time, though, he's worth bonus XP as normal.

Phat Lewt!

All WFF adventures have awesome loot scattered throughout, but only one piece of *phat lewt*, somewhere in the adventure — maybe in the boss' stash, maybe in some secret room. This piece of phat lewt is — wait for it — worth about as much as the rest of the adventure's treasure combined! Yes, that's right: WFF adventures

provide *double* the normal amount of treasure compared to your standard adventure, and half that loot is wrapped up in a single item. That means there's at least one crazy-cool piece of loot in each adventure, and it also means that GMs can easily remove the phat lewt if they prefer adventures of a poorer nature. The phat lewt is usually a magic item of the party's level +5.

Movie Rights

Wicked Fantasy Factory adventures are big and awesome and worthy of becoming summer blockbuster movies. Let's pretend that happened with the adventure that your group plays. Before you start the adventure, think about this: Who would play the main bad guys and NPCs in the movie? Ask your players the same question: Who would play their characters in the movie?

The "actors" upon which you decide don't have to be alive; in fact, they don't have to be actors, or even real people! If a player thinks Genghis Khan would do great in a particular role, or the Wicked Witch of the West is the perfect fit for a wizard character, or Mr. T of 20 years ago is a ringer for someone's fighter, that's great!

GM'S SECTION

GMs are overworked and underpaid. To help you out as much as possible, check out this cool chart of all the encounters in the adventure!

Area: The encounter area.

Pg.: The page on which the encounter begins.

Type: If the encounter likely involves primarily combat (C), a trap/hazard (T), a puzzle (P), or roleplaying (R). A superscript S (^S) indicates that a skill challenge is part of the encounter.

Encounter: A brief description of the encounter.

EL: The Encounter Level.

XP: The total XP for the encounter.

Treasure: The total value (in gold pieces) of the treasure the PCs can find in the encounter/area, as well as the magic items (including their level). This entry is in the table so that you can easily adjust the rewards if you desire. The exclamation point denotes the adventure's piece of PHAT LEWT!

Area	Pg.	Type	Encounter	EL	XP	Treasure
1	10	C	1 varnai warrior, 1 rage drake, 7 zinja lamers, 1 spitting drake	5	1,008 xp	—
2	15	C	2 zinja shinobis, 12 zinja lamers	4	878 xp	—
4	17	—	Barracks	—	—	250gp
5	17	R	Shaleeth and Atharo	—	—	—
6	20	T ^S	Obstacle course	4	875 xp	amulet of protection +1 (level 1)
7	21	C	Kazin, varnai battle commander; 2 needlefang drake swarms; 1 guard drake	5	975 xp	+1 lightning greatsword (level 5)
8	23	P	Rathayan puzzle room	—	500 xp	—
9	25	—	Room with treasure!	—	—	circlet of authority (level 7)
10	25	C/P	Maretta, human mage; 1 varnai warrior; 4 zinja lamers; 1 cave bear; 2 giant rats; 1 pit trap	3 or 6	1,251 xp	—

Area	Pg.	Type	Encounter	EL	XP	Treasure
11	28	C	1 vine horror, 5 elf archers, 1 shadowspore	5	1,000 xp	staff of winter +2! (level 9)
12	30	C	Orozu, young black dragon	4	875 xp	366 gp, 2 potions of healing, shadowfell gloves (level 6)
13	32	C/T	1 blazing skeleton, 2 shadowhunter bats, 1 spear trap, 1 magic crossbow turret trap	5	1,000 xp	—
14	34	C/T/R ^S	Hoi-ya, shogoon daimyo; Roniko, oni night haunter	6 or 8	1,750 xp	amulet of health +2 (level 8), 800 gp
TOTAL:	—	—	—	—	10,112 xp	1,471 gp, two potions of healing, amulet of protection +1 (level 1), +1 lightning greatsword (level 5), shadowfell gloves (level 6), circlet of authority (level 7), amulet of health +2 (level 8), staff of winter +2! (level 9)

ADJUSTING THE CHALLENGES

Though *A Fistful of Zinjas* is designed for around four heroes of around 4th level, you can run the adventure for larger or smaller groups of higher or lower level. To avoid slaughtering them utterly or turning the adventure into a cakewalk, you might want to adjust the adventure a bit. The following table provides suggestions for each encounter area. Remember to adjust the loot as well.

Area	For Weaker Parties	For Stronger Parties
1	Remove the spitting drake. Reduce the number of zinja lamers to three.	Add an additional varnai warrior mounted on a rage drake.
2	Halve the number of zinja lamers and shinobis.	Double the number of zinja lamers and shinobis.
6	Reduce the skill challenge DCs by 2.	Increase the skill challenge DCs by 2.
7	Remove one needlefang drake swarm. Consider making Kazin a varnai warrior rather than a battle commander.	Add another needlefang drake swarm and add a varnai warrior (Kazin's second-in-command).
10	Replace the cave bear with a kruthik adult. Consider replacing the varnai warrior with a zinja shinobi.	Replace the cave bear with an owlbear. Add two zinja shinobis.
11	Replace the elf archers with three goblin sharpshooters. (Atharo in area 5 was fighting the goblins at the time he was captured.) Replace the vine horror with a goblin hexer. Replace the shadowspore with a doomspore.	Replace the elf archers with hobgoblin archers. Replace the vine horror with a greenscale marsh mystic (lizardfolk). Replace the shadowspore with an elite doomspore.
12	Make Orozu a young white dragon.	Make Orozu a young blue dragon.
13	Remove the crossbow trap. Consider removing a shadowhunter bat.	Add another blazing skeleton and another shadowhunter bat. Add an additional crossbow to the crossbow trap and upgrade the spear trap to elite.
14	Make Hoi-ya a varnai warrior. Remove the two skeletons. Reduce all of Roniko's defenses by 2, his attack bonuses by 3, and his hit points by 60. Reduce the dream tendrils' attack bonus to +6 and their damage to 1d6+2.	Add the fighter template to both Hoi-ya and Roniko. Replace the four decrepit skeletons with skeletons. Consider replacing the two skeletons with boneshard skeletons. Increase the dream tendrils' attack bonus to +10 and their damage to 2d6+6.

A HEROIC START

Getting the heroes involved in this adventure can be as simple as showing them a mysterious, extraplanar castle and letting them know that there are things to kill in it. It might help if they know that the castle's denizens have been terrorizing (or at least threatening) nearby farms and intend to challenge the duchy. Both the players and the PCs might be more interested in the adventure if they realize that the creatures appearing from the castle (the Rathayans) aren't necessarily evil, but they do intend to test the mettle of people such as the PCs. Of course, the heroes don't need to know all of this right away.

The specific possibilities for involving the heroes are myriad; you might use one of the following, or make up one that's way better for your campaign.

◇ **A Message.** The PCs receive a message: Shogoon Hoi-ya has arrived, and he believes the people of Arnatha are weaklings. He plans to conquer the duchy and make its people his serfs unless some strong army, individual, or local adventuring party proves him wrong, which would involve fighting its way through his castle and talking to him personally. This message might also provide the first hint of the diabolical oni Roniko's involvement; something like "If your people are not able to defeat us in combat, then Shogoon Hoi-ya, and his esteemed advisor Roniko, will order his armies to conquer your lands and make you his vassals." This message could come via a variety of means. Perhaps a note wrapped around an arrow thuds into a tree inches from a PC's head. Perhaps a zinja flips from the shadows and thrusts out a hand with the message. Maybe the PCs find a terrified farmer who relays the information. Alternatively, the message may go straight to Duke Orvelon or some other authority figure, who then summons the heroes and beseeches them to take care of the problem. This hook works well as a traditional means of supplying the information, then sending the PCs to fight the bad guys. There is no ambiguity (or, at least, there is only as much ambiguity as you'd like to include): The heroes know who they're after, they know the stakes, and they know what they have to do.

◇ **Rathayan Raid!** The PCs encounter a Rathayan raiding party: the bad guys in area 1. The Rathayans may have just terrorized a farm as described in area 1 (having slain the inhabitants, burned the fields, and/or simply run around scaring people, depending on how brutal you want to make them), allowing the PCs to see the threat they pose. This encounter might also involve a message, as above, perhaps delivered by the varnai warrior before or during the encounter. Alternatively, the PCs might find a piece of incriminating evidence (perhaps raiding orders from Hoi-ya or Roniko) left in the battle's debris. This hook works well because it starts with action, and it still puts information into the PCs' hands.

◇ **Walking the Walk before Talking the Talk.** This hook alters the adventure's background slightly. The Rathayan castle has appeared recently, but rather than attacking the surrounding farmsteads, the Rathayans seem relatively peaceful; they start farms of their own and prospect for ore in the nearby hills. Duke Orvelon wants to open diplomatic relations with them. His wizardly advisers have told him that the Rathayans respect strength and honor, so the best way to talk to the shogoon is to fight one's way to him. (Alternatively, a PC trained in Arcana could provide the duke with this information.) The duke, impressed by the heroes' previous exploits, asks them to undertake the task. This hook might appeal to more politically- and/or roleplaying-oriented groups, since they know they'll experience a tricky negotiation at the end of the adventure. It might also tie the encounter into your campaign world more strongly; perhaps Duke Orvelon is particularly interested in an alliance with the Rathayans because of some danger to the duchy.

◇ **An Old-Fashioned Rescue.** The Rathayans have captured a couple of locals; they are imprisoned in area 5. Perhaps the PCs seek one of these people because a friend or family member has asked or hired them to do so; even better, maybe a friend or family member of one of the PCs is locked away. The PCs might not even know who they're trying to rescue, but they know they need to rescue this person (for information, for a piece of treasure, or anything else) due to circumstances that lead to the next adventure you have planned. A more interest-

ing option is for the PCs to be trying to "rescue" someone who has joined forces with the Rathayans, such as the elves in area 11 or Maretta in area 10. This hook works well because it ties the adventure into your campaign more strongly. While the PCs are busy rescuing someone, they can also learn of the danger the Rathayans pose.

CROSSING BLADES!

The adventure begins as the PCs encounter a Rathayan raiding party at a local farmstead. Depending on the method you use to involve the PCs in the adventure, this encounter could begin the adventure or simply provide the PCs with their first taste of Rathayan combat.

Boxed text is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased to the players.

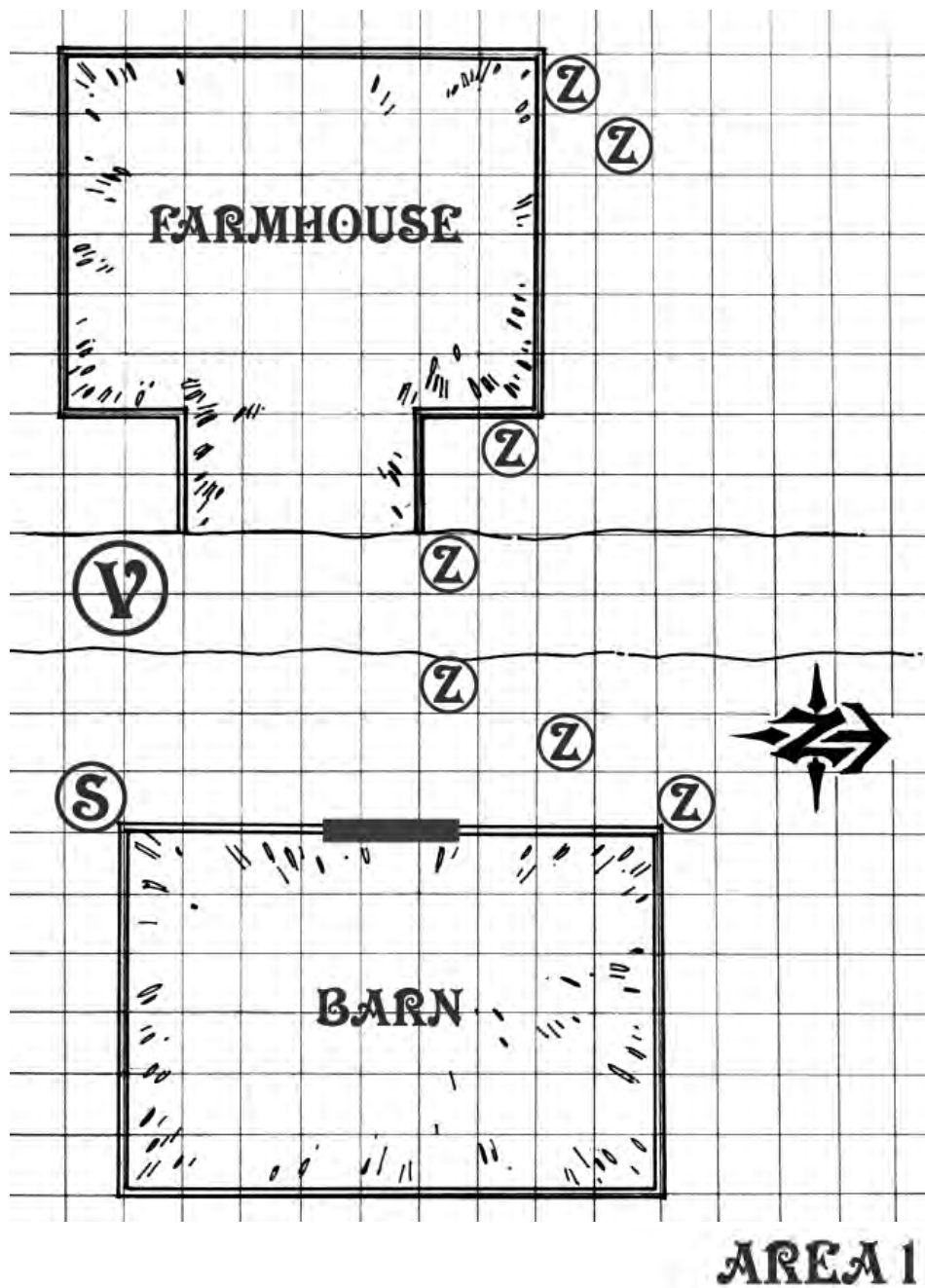
AREA 1: RATHAYAN RAID (EL 5, 1,008 XP)

Ahead and to the right of your path is a local farmstead — or, at least, what remains of one. Smoke curls from the fields' ashes. Several peasants flee toward you, their eyes wide with fear. The source of the destruction soon becomes clear as bits of shadow pull away from the darkness: humanoid shapes seemingly cloaked in the stuff that makes up the shadows in which they were hiding. Each holds a slender, gleaming sword. Dark scarves cover their heads and faces except for their eyes, and they display remarkable athleticism: They flip, cartwheel, or roll into ready positions, raising their swords above their heads and pointing them at you.

From around the farmhouse comes another figure, this one riding a fearsome, dragonlike creature with long whiskers. The shape atop this beast is also humanoid and is made of grays and shadow, but it wears elaborate armor and a distinctive helmet. It points its heavy sword at you.

"At last!" comes an echoing voice from behind the thing's mask. "Perhaps these adversaries are worthy of our challenge. Come, then, and let us see what the people of this land have to offer."

The raiding party was busy terrorizing the farmstead; they haven't killed any people or livestock, preferring instead to burn fields and challenge the locals to test the



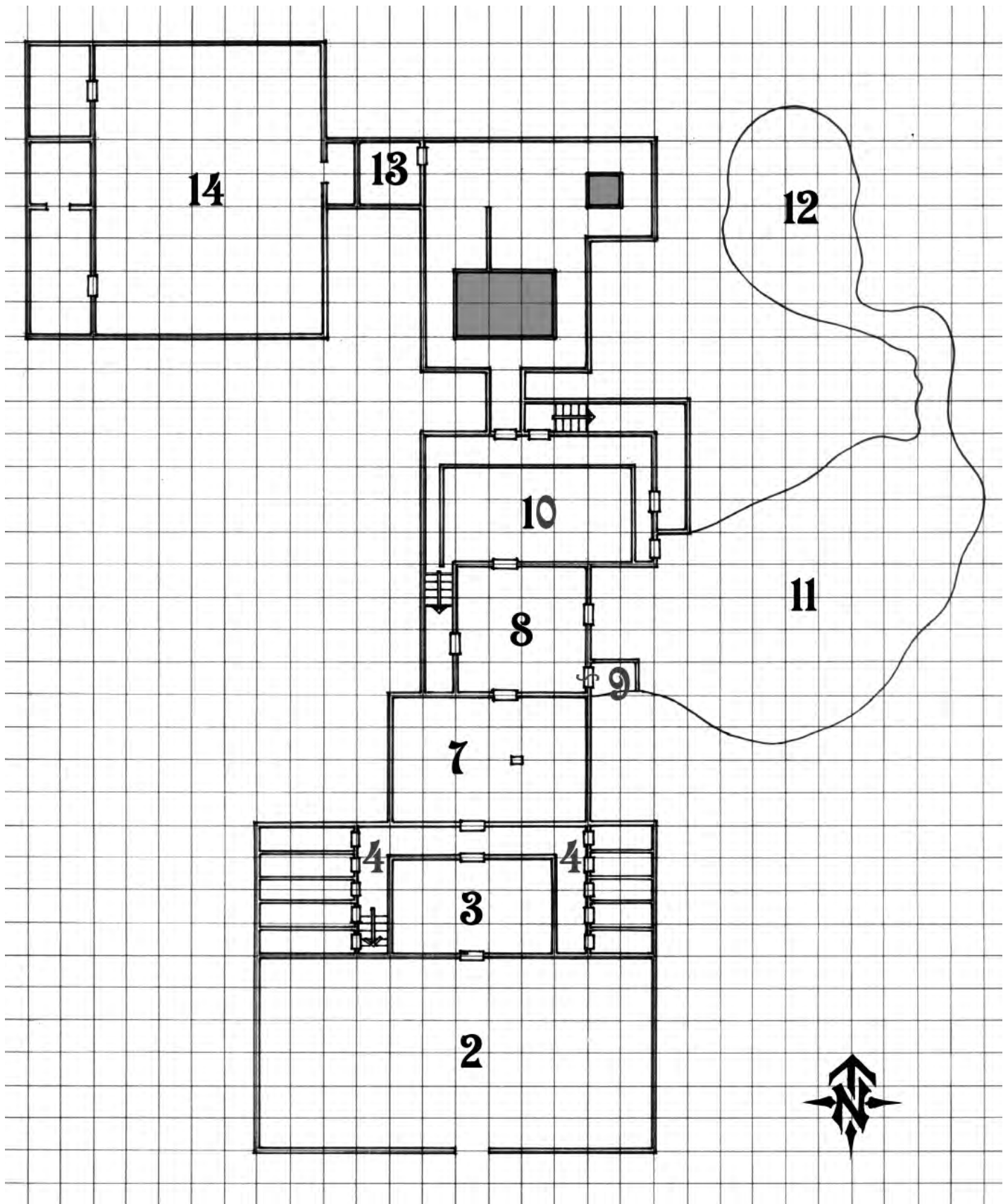
strength of the duchy’s people. The Rathayans are eager to cross blades with opponents worthy of the challenge.

Note that, if the PCs are unaware of the story behind the adventure (if, for example, you are using the “Rathayan Raid!” adventure hook), you might want the varnai to provide the PCs with some information during this encounter.

Bad Guys: The raiding group includes a number of zinjas led by a mounted varnai warrior. A spitting drake swoops in from above to provide ranged support.

This encounter includes the following:

- ◇ 1 varnai warrior mounted on a rage drake (V).
- ◇ 7 zinja lamers (Z).
- ◇ 1 spitting drake (S).



one square = 5 feet

1 VARNAI WARRIOR Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 4 ELITE SOLDIER XP 350
HP 108; Bloodied 54	
See Appendix 1 for complete statistics.	

7 ZINJA LAMERS Medium shadow animate	LEVEL 4 MINION XP 44
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. See Appendix 1 for complete statistics.	

RAGE DRAKE Large natural beast (mount, reptile)	LEVEL 5 BRUTE XP 200
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +3	
HP 78; Bloodied 39; see also bloodied rage	
AC 17; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 15	
Immune fear (when bloodied only)	
Speed 8	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage; see also <i>bloodied rage</i> .	
↓ Claw (standard; at will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage; see also <i>bloodied rage</i> .	
↓ Raking Charge (standard; at will)	
When the rage drake charges, it makes two claw attacks against a single target.	
Bloodied Rage (while bloodied)	
The rage drake gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 5 damage per attack.	
Raging Mount (while bloodied and mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ◇ Mount	
The rage drake grants its rider a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with melee attacks.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 3 (-2) Cha 3 (-2)



SPITTING DRAKE Medium natural beast (reptile)	LEVEL 3 ARTILLERY XP 150
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +3	
HP 39; Bloodied 19	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14	
Resist 10 acid	
Speed 7	
Ⓢ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage.	
⚔ Caustic Spit (standard; at will) ♦ Acid	
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10+4 acid damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages —	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 3 (-3) Cha 12 (+2)

Tactics: The zinja lamers spread out, worried about area attacks (and about being nearby when one of them dies). They then dash into melee from all sides, attempting to flank their opponents. Those who can't make it into melee hurl their buzzing shuriken.

The varnai warrior charges into melee, the drake using its raking charge power and the varnai hacking at the same target with his greatsword. The spitting drake remains in the back, trying to find the best angle and generally spewing its acid at the closest enemy.

The spitting drake flees into the wilderness when reduced to 9 hit points; the other bad guys fight to the death.

Loot: The bad guys carry their weapons, but that's it.

Development: If the PCs don't already know the score, this encounter should provide them with some basic background about the adventure. The farmers undoubtedly thank the PCs profusely after they defeat the Rathayans; they can point the way to Hoi-ya's castle. They can also tell the PCs stories of the Rathayans riding around the countryside, acting like they own the place. The peasants are scared, and Duke Orvelon, if he doesn't already know about it, is sure to be pissed.

This is probably the PCs' first encounter with Rathayans. They can make Arcana checks to determine something about them and their culture, as described in the monster entries in Appendix 1.

THE CASTLE OF HOI-YA

When the PCs come within sight of the castle, read or paraphrase the following.

The sun seems to dim; you walk into an early, supernatural twilight. The songs of crickets and night birds sound in the air. Ahead, on the near bank of the river, looms a dark castle. Its bricks are gray and black, and its outline is indistinct. It is almost as if the entire building is made of shadow. Nevertheless, there is a distinct solidity to it as well.

A set of large doors stands in the outer wall. The doors are unguarded.

One encounter takes place in the courtyard; the rest of the adventure occurs within the castle. Unless otherwise indicated in an area's description, the castle has the following characteristics:

- ◇ Ceiling height is 15 feet.
- ◇ Wall sconces throughout the castle are filled with oil and provide adequate illumination. Shadows are everywhere, and the stones seem to drink in the light from the flames, but these factors don't affect vision.
- ◇ The walls can be climbed (DC 20 Athletics check) or smashed (DC 35 Strength check). Objects like pillars and statues are similar, except statues require only DC 10 Athletics checks to climb.
- ◇ Interior doors are simply constructed and made of wood; PCs can smash them with DC 16 Strength checks. Many doors are painted with fanciful, shadowy scenes. Some have ornate calligraphy (in Common) with simple words like "Harmony" or "Perseverance." They're a bit like motivational posters.

AREA 2: COURTYARD (EL 4, 875 XP)

The doors on the outside wall are both unguarded and unlocked; Hoi-ya wants the local inhabitants to challenge his warriors.

Beyond the doors is a flagstone courtyard. Many pillars, their dark shapes reminiscent of flames, stand about; some have thin platforms halfway up their lengths. Several statues and more esoteric sculptures also decorate the area, and the shadows lie thick in the corners. Straight ahead, a drape-shrouded archway leads into the castle.

This area serves as a meditative sculpture garden. It also serves as the first gauntlet to challenge intruders.

Behind the dark curtain is a door to the castle. It is locked with a pair of locks; the zinja shinobis here carry the keys. The PCs can also smash the door (DC 20 Strength check).

Bad Guys: Zinjas lurk in the shadows, ready to leap out at anyone who advance into the courtyard. They are silent as they battle the PCs, communicating with each other via abrupt hand signals.

This encounter includes the following:

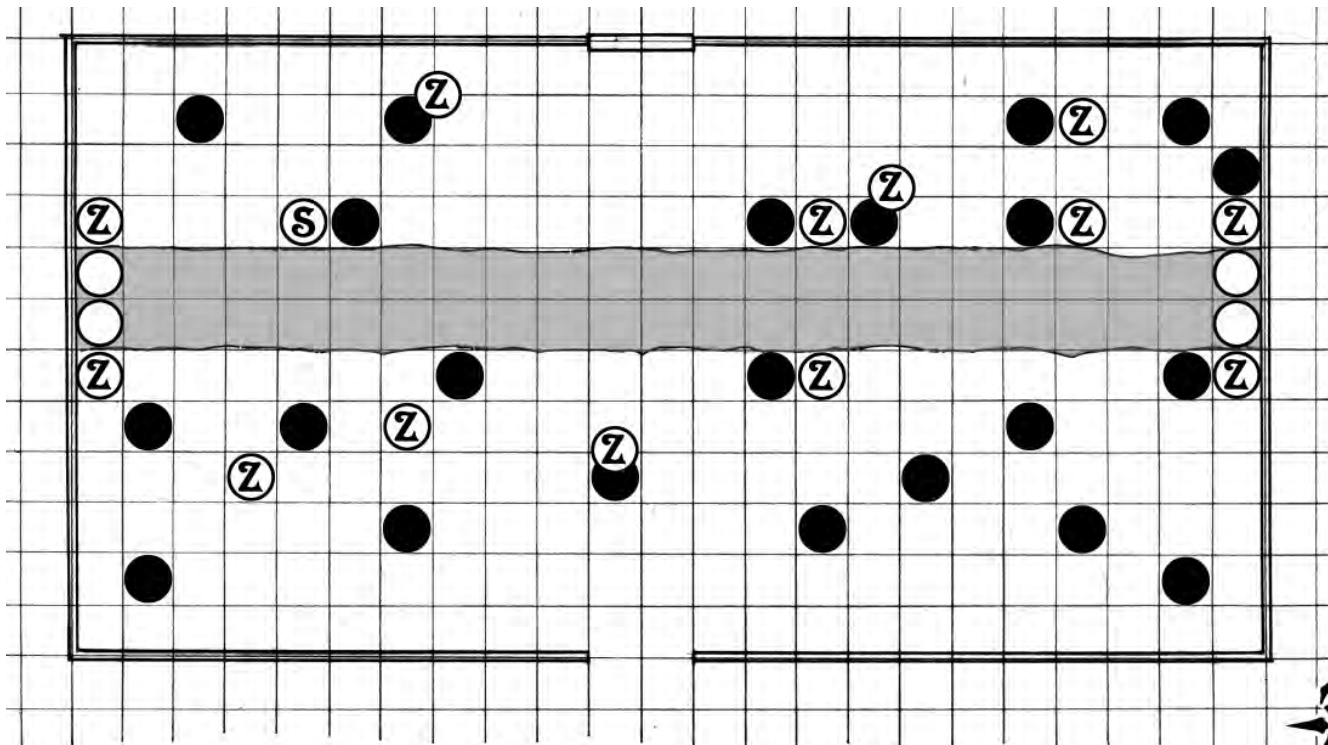
◇ 2 zinja shinobis (S).

◇ 12 zinja lamers (Z). Some of these are atop statues or pillars.

2 ZINJA SHINOBIS Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 4 SKIRMISHER XP 175
HP 53; Bloodied 26, See Appendix 1 for complete statistics.	

12 ZINJA LAMERS Medium shadow animate	LEVEL 4 MINION XP 44
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. See Appendix 1 for complete statistics.	

Tactics: The zinjas hide in the deep shadows that pervade the courtyard. The PCs might notice them with passive Perception checks (opposed by a single Stealth check for all the zinjas — Stealth +13) or by attempting Perception checks if the players say they're looking around. Otherwise, the zinjas surprise them.



AREA 2



If the zinjās get the drop on the PCs, they wait until the PCs approach the door, thus trapping them against the wall. The lamers watch the shinobis, who give the signal to attack. The zinjās then melt out of their hiding places; this should feel sufficiently threatening. Consider reading or paraphrasing the following as the zinjās appear:

The air suddenly vibrates with an ear-grating buzz; a black blade whizzes past you and thunks into the wooden door. You spin around to confront your attacker, but see nothing... no, there! A shape emerges from shadows. There's another not far away. And another. And another. Glancing around, you realize you're surrounded by dark humanoid forms. They spin their swords in martial readiness.

Four zinjās (two on either end of the courtyard) use their first action to kick over the rain barrels next to them; the barrels were filled with hundreds of 2-inch-diameter steel spheres. The spheres make an oddly melodious sound as they strike the flagstones and go rolling along the slight trough in the courtyard, covering the shaded area marked on the map. This area is now difficult terrain, though characters can treat it as normal terrain by making DC 15 Acrobatics checks. (Failure by less than 5 means the character must treat the terrain as difficult this turn; failure by 5 or more means he also falls prone in his space.)

The other zinja lamers on the ground dart into melee, skirting defenders to strike at controllers and strikers. They do their best to flank opponents. They remain as far apart from each other as they can while remaining effective; they are wary of area attacks and have seen scores of their kin consumed in the phoenix descends.

Some zinja lamers are hidden on platforms or atop statues. They are about 10 feet off the ground, and they spend their actions flinging shuriken at vulnerable opponents. If they run out of good targets, they leap to the ground and rush into melee.

The zinja shinobis try to lose themselves in the mass of lamers, moving carefully into position, throwing shuriken, and looking for the right time to strike. They use their lamer brethren to flank their foes, and use their swift as the shadow power to both strike vulnerable characters and move into better combat position.

The zinjās follow similar tactics if the PCs notice them before they attack.

Loot: Other than the zinjās' weapons, there isn't much of value here. The steel spheres are interesting, but useful primarily for their metal; a smith might pay 1 sp each for them. (If the PCs want to gather up as many as they can, have one of them make a Perception check — the others can help — and multiply the result by 10. That's how many they find.)

Each shinobi carries a small brass key. Each key opens one of the locks on the door leading into the castle.

AREA 3: MEDITATION CHAPEL

The hall is quiet. The dark stones that make up the walls, floor, and ceiling seem to soak up the little sunlight leaking in from outside. Doors stand to the right and left. Straight ahead is a series of shallow, semicircular steps leading up to a painting on the wall. The canvas is large, perhaps ten feet wide and six feet tall. Sconces set into the wall on either side of the painting are alight with flames, which throw dancing shadows across the scene.

A padded kneeling bench stands at the foot of the steps.

From a distance, the heroes can see that the painting depicts humanoid creatures, but it's tough to see what they're doing. If the PCs take a closer look at the painting, read or paraphrase the following.

The painting depicts a landscape. On the left side is the dark castle in which you now stand, and on the right is a structure that is unmistakably Arnatha Keep, the center of the duchy and where Duke Orvelon resides. Between the structures, figures clash in battle: Shrouded forms like those you've fought combat the knights of Arnatha. The dark creatures clearly have the upper hand; many knights lie dead, and more shadow warriors seem to come from everywhere — even the picture's decorative border.

Near Arnatha Keep, a figure in the colors of Orvelon tears at his hair, his mouth open in a wail. Near the dark castle, two figures stand proudly, surveying their victory: One is an armored warrior with a long-bladed spear, the other a short, bald man with a long beard.

The paint is a bit shiny. It's probably fresh.

Rathayans, especially varnai, come to this chapel to meditate. The painting is intended to provide inspiration or promote introspection. Kazin, the varnai commander (in area 7), is responsible for changing the paintings on a semi-regular basis; he has several through which he rotates.

This particular painting is a new addition. Roniko, the evil oni who has won Shogoon Hoi-ya's confidence, commissioned the painting and "suggested" that Kazin hang it on the wall. The picture depicts Roniko's vision for the future; the bald, bearded man in the painting is Roniko's current disguise. The spear-carrying warrior is Hoi-ya.

Loot: A DC 10 Perception check locates a not-too-secret hatch on the side of the little staircase. It opens into a storage area where the Rathayans keep the extra paintings. Five of them are stacked here, each wrapped in padding and as large as the one on the wall. In order from top to bottom, they depict:

- 1) A landscape much like that of the displayed painting (both Hoi-ya's castle and Arnatha Keep are featured), but Duke Orvelon and Hoi-ya stand side-by-side in the foreground. The shadowy warriors and the Arnatha knights are arrayed behind them, clearly part of the same army.
- 2) Hoi-ya's castle occupies half the canvas. Unsettled, green lands surround it, with rivers, hills, and trees in abundance. Standing atop the castle's tower is Hoi-ya, one hand holding his spear, the other shielding his eyes from the sun.
- 3) Rhythmic ocean waves.
- 4) A single varnai swordsman occupies this canvas. He is twisting to one side, his sword held behind him. An enormous full moon silhouettes him.
- 5) This painting shows a shadowy garden, not unlike area 11. Trees both short and tall stand about, and a stream runs through the center. A gray fox chases a strikingly white hare.

The paintings are of fine workmanship; however, if removed from the castle, after an hour they vanish back to the Rathayans' home plane.

Development: Characters observing the picture of Hoi-ya can make DC 20 Arcana checks to identify the figure as a Rathayan shogoon. They can then make additional Arcana checks to learn more about such creatures; the appropriate information appears in Appendix 1.

AREA 4: BARRACKS

The rooms coming off this hall are barracks. Each contains four bunks and four unlocked chests storing personal items. A DC 20 Perception check in each room uncovers coins and small items of value worth a total of 250 gp.

AREA 5: JAIL

The door opens onto a floor of black tiles. Potted plants with dark leaves stand in the corners. To the left, the wall is composed of vertical bars. On the other side of the bars are two identical cells, each appointed more like a lavish guestroom than a prison. A narrow but comfortable bed stands against a wall, while a washstand, complete with washbasin and mirror, stands against the other wall. Deep carpets cover the floors inside the cells.

In the closest cell, a human woman, sitting on the bed, rises as you enter. She is blond and looks well cared-for. Her short kimono does little to conceal her feminine form. In the other cell, an eladrin man sits cross-legged against the far wall, his eyes closed.

The woman approaches the bars. "Who are you?" she says.

The Rathayans have captured only a couple prisoners — which is good, because they don't have room for many more.

Opening the cells is difficult. A DC 30 Strength check breaks the bars, while a DC 25 Thievery check picks a lock. The oni Roniko carries the keys.

NPCs: The human woman is Shaleeth. The eladrin is Atharo.

Shaleeth: Assuming the PCs seem trustworthy (and like potential rescuers), Shaleeth eagerly tells them her story:

SKILL CHALLENGE



You guess the only way through is to play the game. It's an easy jump to the first platform. After that, things look a little more complicated.

Setup: The PCs must traverse the obstacle course by jumping upon platforms and swinging pendulums, balancing on narrow beams, climbing walls, swinging on ropes, diving through rotating openings, and performing other feats of acrobatic and athletic daring. A missed jump or a slipped grip might mean the character gets clocked by a pendulum, or it might involve a plunge into a pool of piranhas.

The heroes must each complete this skill challenge individually, though they can aid each other with certain skills as indicated below.

Level: 4 (base DCs 17).

Complexity: 4 (requires 4 successes before 2 failures). Note that, ordinarily, a skill challenge with a complexity of 4 requires 10 successes before 5 failures. Since the heroes must complete the challenge individually, that would equate to a total of 50 successes before 25 failures, which is far too much rolling for most players' taste.

Primary Skills: *Acrobatics, Athletics, Thievery.*

Acrobatics (DC 17): The hero swings, tumbles, or squeezes his way to victory. Characters can aid another with this skill.

Athletics (DC 17): The hero climbs, jumps, or forces his way to victory. Characters can aid another with this skill.

Thievery (DC 17): Rather than tackle the obstacles directly, the hero uses cunning and mechanical knowledge to his advantage: a well-thrown stone disables a swinging pendulum, a kick in the right place causes the ladder to descend, or throwing a hidden switch causes a plank to drop across the chasm. Unfortunately, the success is short lived, and the other heroes must find their own way across.

Perception (DC 15): A hero who succeeds on a Perception check stops to take stock of what's happening: He times the pendulum's swings, appraises the narrow beam, or looks for hidden handholds in the wall. He gains a +4 bonus to his next Acrobatics, Athletics, or Thievery check. Each PC can attempt such a Perception check only once. A hero who beats the DC by 5 or more (as long as he had gained at least one success during this skill challenge) notices a secret trapdoor in the ceiling; see area 6 for more details.

Arcana (DC 20): The hero recalls an important part of Rathayan culture: The creatures hide handholds on the underside of planks, perhaps, or their ropes are dangerously slick. Every hero receives a +2 bonus to all Acrobatics, Athletics, and Thievery checks during this skill challenge. Each hero can attempt such an Arcana check only once, and the bonus does not stack with itself.

Teleportation: Heroes who teleport (with fey step, for instance) gain a +4 bonus on a single skill check each time they use the power.

Success: The hero successfully crosses the obstacle course, winding up on the ledge on the room's far east side.

Failure: The hero gets clocked by pendulums, slips from a wall, drops from a rope, or otherwise ends up in the piranha-filled drink. He rips the vicious creatures from his flesh as he wades to shore. He loses one healing surge (or hit points equal to his healing surge value) and must start the skill challenge from the beginning if he wants to face the obstacle course again.

“Oh, thank the gods. Can you get me out of here?”

“My name is Shaleeth. My friend Maretta — she’s a wizard — and I were wandering around not far from this castle. Maretta thought she could defeat these... shadow men, and I was along because...” She sighs. “Because I thought it would be fun. Didn’t know what the hell I was doing.

“Anyway, as you can see, those things captured us. They’ve treated me pretty well, I guess, but the gods know what the sick bastards have done to Maretta. After they put us in here, she kept demanding to talk to their king, or whatever. Finally they took her out, and I haven’t seen her since.” She swallows. “Poor Maretta.”

The heroes should probably say something at this point, if not before. Eventually, Shaleeth continues:

“Please, rescue Maretta? If she’s... if she’s still alive. Gods. Poor thing. Please find her. She has a tattoo of a blue lightning bolt over her eye, and she has big...” her hand waves in front of her and her cheeks color slightly. “She has a big chest. Last I saw her, she was wearing a dress a lot like mine.” Shaleeth looks down at herself. “I think it looked better on her than it does on me.” And it looks pretty good on her.

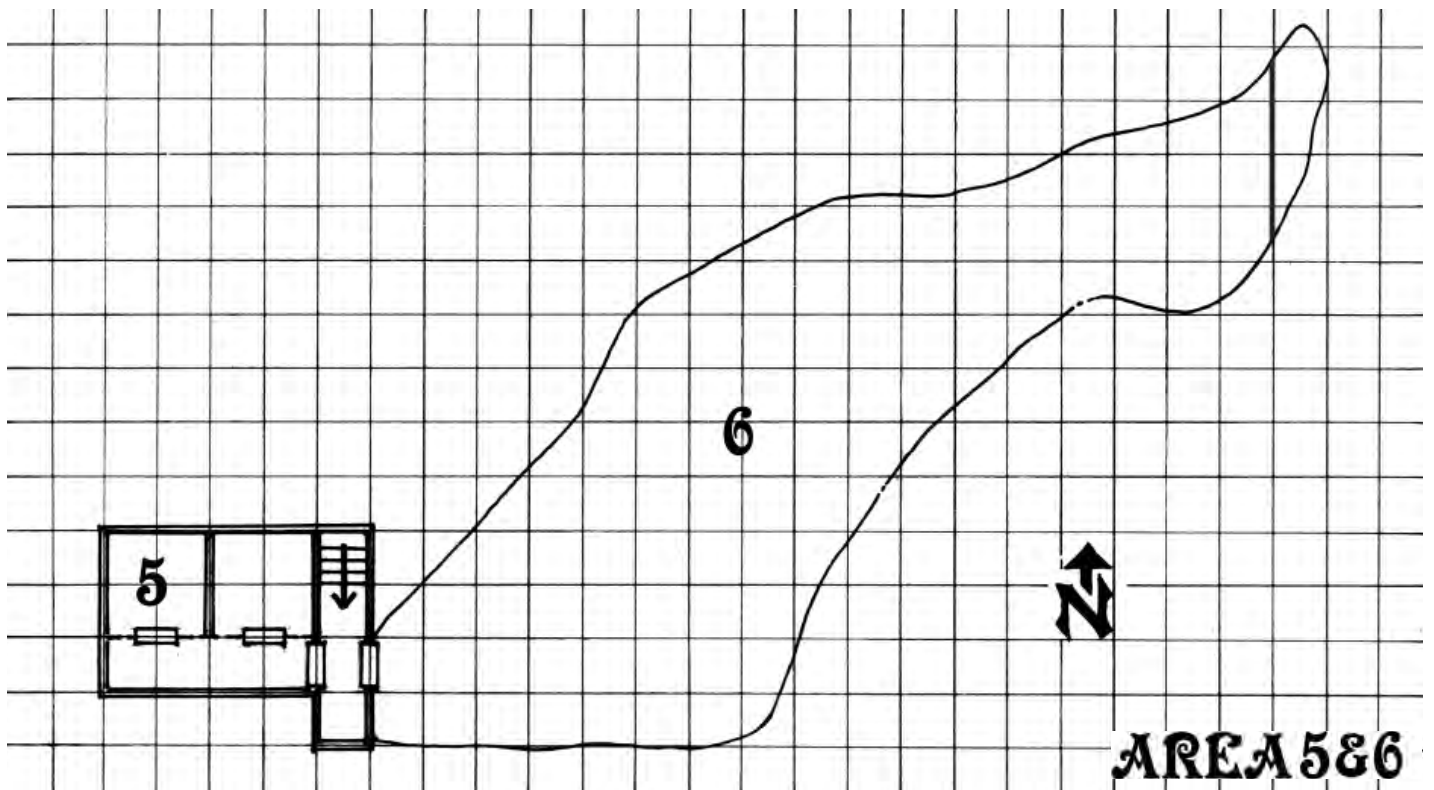
Shaleeth can’t tell the heroes much else. She herself is virtually worthless in combat, and flees the castle as quickly as possible if the heroes free her. She repeats her plea for the heroes to save Maretta and bring her home (to the city of Arnatha); she might even promise a reward if the heroes find her alive and return her.

Shaleeth is wearing the kimono (silk!) because that’s all the Rathayans gave her. She doesn’t know anything about the “shadow men” or their culture, but she’s heard them mention the name “Roniko” several times. She assumes that Roniko is their leader.

Shaleeth doesn’t know that Maretta joined forces with the Rathayans. The other woman can be found in area 10.

Atharo: Atharo is in a trance. The heroes can wake him, in which case his eyes blink, but he doesn’t otherwise respond. Atharo is sedate and monklike, speaking in knowing, single sentences when he deigns to do so. He spends a lot of time looking at the PCs and not speaking.

Though not very talkative, Atharo is potentially a valuable source of information. Depending on what the heroes tell/ask him, he might respond with the following:





◇ “I do not need your help to escape.” (Atharo can use fey step to bypass the bars. So far he has not done so because he wants to learn more about the Rathayans.)

◇ “These creatures are Rathayans. They come from a world of shadows.”

◇ “I am here because my companions — elves — wanted to join forces with the Rathayans. I did not agree.”

◇ “My companions were angry at humans. Bitter.”

◇ “The Rathayan leader is Hoi-ya, called a shogoon by his people. He has a new adviser: a man called Roniko. Roniko fills Hoi-ya’s ear with poison. Do not trust the adviser; he is not what he seems.”

Atharo might offer other bits of information as well, depending on your desires. If the PCs return to the cells after facing Hoi-ya and Roniko (or Atharo’s former companions in area 11), they likely find the eladrin gone.

Development: If the heroes reveal Maretta’s treachery to Shaleeth, the woman is distraught. She can’t believe her friend would turn against her, let alone Arnatha. She wants to talk to Maretta about it; what happens from there is for you to decide. Maretta might be simply a despicable turncoat; alternatively, she might have more complex reasons for joining the Rathayans. (For example, she might believe that Duke Orvelon is corrupt and the Rathayans are the only force strong enough to defeat him.) Shaleeth and Maretta are good potential hooks for a future adventure.

AREA 6: OBSTACLE COURSE (EL 4, 875 XP)

The stairs open into a large room — a large, noisy, chaotic room.

The ceiling is lost in shadow. Ahead of you, the floor gives way to a turbulent pool in which things move. As if sensing your presence, a sharp-toothed fish leaps from the water, snaps its jaws, then splashes back into the pool.

Pillars rise out of the pool, each supporting a platform. Further on, in shadow, pendulums — dozens of feet from the ground — mark the next portion of this apparent obstacle course.

AREA 7: THE COMMANDER'S GROUND (EL 5, 975 XP)

This place is indeed an obstacle course. It is a training area for zinjas and varnai. It is also an excellent way for Hoi-ya to gauge the PCs' athletic and acrobatic prowess, which are traits that the varnai value.

The obstacle course serves as a skill challenge. See the "Skill Challenge" sidebar for details.

As the heroes traverse the obstacle course, they might notice a trapdoor hidden in the ceiling; a DC 20 Perception check (after the PC has achieved at least 1 success in the skill challenge) locates the door. The placement of the door is such that it is more difficult to notice from the ledge on the east end of the room; PCs here require DC 25 Perception checks to see it.

Getting to the trapdoor, from either the platform or the midst of the obstacle course, is a skill challenge in itself. This challenge is identical to the obstacle course challenge (since getting there involves traversing part of the obstacle course), save that a hero must achieve only 2 successes before 2 failures. Heroes attempting to reach the platform from the trapdoor must complete the same skill challenge.

Opening the trapdoor causes water to spill down; the door leads to area 7.

On the ceiling above the east ledge is a ladder leading up to a trapdoor, which leads in turn to area 11.

Loot: On the east ledge is a hidden panel (DC 25 Perception check to locate). The panel conceals a cabinet, inside which are a dozen identical copper amulets, each shaped like a shuriken. One of them is an amulet of protection +1; the others are nonmagical and worth 5 gp each (55 gp total).

Stairs ring this room, descending to a rectangular pool of shallow, clear water. A snarl comes from the chamber's opposite end; a 5-foot-tall drake stands in the midst of much smaller drakes. A shadowy, armored humanoid kneels on the floor, surrounded by the tiny drakes. One snatches a scrap of meat from his hand and then he stands, turning to face you.

"Well met!" comes a voice from the thing's helmet. "I was wondering if the natives of this strange land would ever come for us. Yet if you want to speak to Hoi-ya," he says, drawing his sword, which flickers with lightning, "you will have to defeat me." The tiny drakes hiss and fix their beady eyes on you.

This room serves as a training area and an example of Rathayan architecture. The pool is only a few inches deep and is purely decorative. If characters fight in it, the water splashes and churns but presents no difficulty.

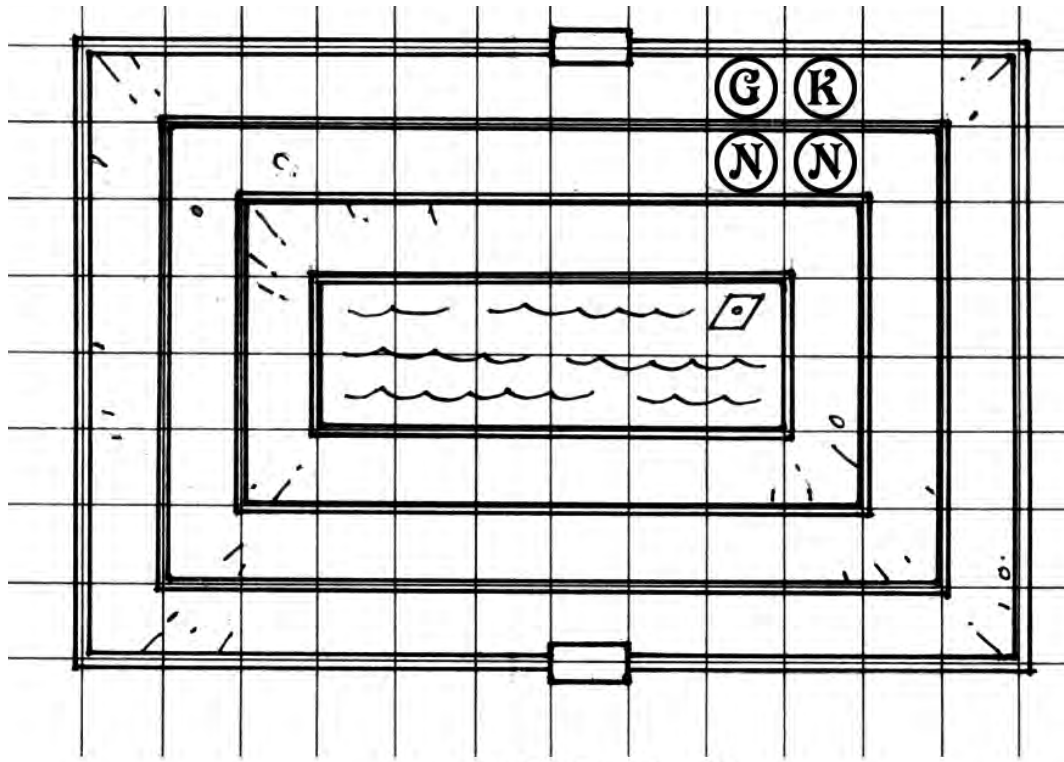
A hidden trapdoor at the pool's bottom leads to the obstacle course in area 6. Finding it requires a DC 30 Perception check.

Bad Guys: The varnai commander here is Kazin, Hoi-ya's primary lieutenant. Before Roniko appeared, Kazin was also Hoi-ya's most trusted adviser; now, the shogon gives little heed to his lieutenant's opinions.

Kazin is willing to talk to the characters, if they like. He is honorable and, as he sees it, exists only to challenge the native land's warriors to determine whether or not they are worthy of Hoi-ya's presence.

This encounter includes the following:

- ◇ Kazin, the varnai battle commander (K).
- ◇ 2 needlefang drake swarms (N).
- ◇ 1 guard drake (G).



AREA 7

KAZIN, VARNAI BATTLE COMMANDER

Medium shadow humanoid

LEVEL 7 ELITE SOLDIER (LEADER)

XP 600

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 160; **Bloodied** 80
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22
Speed 6

⊕ **+1 Lightning Greatsword** (standard; at-will)

◆ **Lightning, Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage, +1d6 lightning damage on a critical hit.

‡ **The Brutal Shadow** (immediate interrupt, whenever an enemy shifts or moves away from an adjacent space; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage (+1d6 damage on a critical hit) and Kazin can shift into the space the enemy occupied.

Lightning Weapon (free action when Kazin hits with his greatsword; daily) ◆ **Lightning, Weapon**

The target and each enemy within 2 squares of the target take 1d6 lightning damage.

Wasps Attack the Bear (standard; recharge 5, 6)

Kazin and all allies within 2 squares can make a melee or ranged basic attack.

The Hive Responds (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)

Kazin's wasps attack the bear power recharges, and he uses it immediately.

Mounted Combat

When Kazin rides a creature, he gains access to any special mount abilities it confers to its rider. In addition, the creature can make any Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, or Stealth checks with Kazin's base skill check bonus rather than its own.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +10

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+6)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Equipment helmet, +1 *lightning greatsword*

2 NEEDLEFANG DRAKE SWARMS Medium natural beast (reptile, swarm)	LEVEL 2 SOLDIER XP 125
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +7	
Swarm Attack aura 1; the needlefang drake swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.	
HP 39; Bloodied 19	
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 14	
Immune fear; Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks.	
Speed 7	
⊕ Swarm of Teeth (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, or 2d10+4 damage against a prone target.	
↓ Pull Down (minor; at-will)	
+7 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages —	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 2 (-3) Cha 10 (+1)

GUARD DRAKE Small natural beast (reptile)	LEVEL 2 BRUTE XP 125
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +7	
HP 49; Bloodied 24	
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12	
Immune fear (while within 2 squares of an ally)	
Speed 6	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, or 1d10+9 damage while within 2 squares of an ally.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages —	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3) Cha 12 (+2)

Tactics: Kazin's tactics are straightforward. He and the drakes charge into melee, focusing on one target in the hopes of brining him down quickly before moving on to another. Kazin uses wasps attack the bear as often as possible. He uses his lightning weapon's ability when he can catch at least two opponents in the blast.

Development: The heroes might defeat Kazin without killing him (by disarming and grabbing him, for example), in which case he concedes defeat. If the PCs let him go, he simply waits in this room for whatever challenge comes next.

AREA 8: RATHAYAN PUZZLE ROOM (500 XP)

The door opens onto a ledge 5 feet above the floor. The floor is a series of black tiles outlined in white. Six of the tiles are missing; in each of their places is a thin piece of rice paper stretched over a pit. Each of these squares of paper bears intricate calligraphy: a number and an arrow.

Give the players Player Handout 1. It depicts the room's layout.

The north door is locked; a DC 30 Thievery check opens it.

Next to each door is a plaque. They read as follows:

South: "The rash one rarely lives to regret his actions."

West: "The wise one thinks and considers before moving forward."

North: "The prudent one avoids obstacles rather than confronting them."

East: "The enlightened one knows that all paths eventually lead back to where he began."

This room is a puzzle. (In fact, it is a puzzle from Japanese culture called a *yajilin*, which translates roughly as "arrow ring." You can buy them from the Nikoli Company.) Each tile in this room can be removed, revealing a 20-foot-deep pit beneath the floor. In addition, some tiles are false, and fall away when stepped upon. The numbers on the rice paper tell the characters how many of these traps exist in the direction the arrow indicates. To solve the puzzle, a PC must begin in the southeast corner and walk a safe path indicated on the diagram (or something close to it). Doing so causes a secret door to open in the southeast wall leading to area 9. (A DC 35 Perception check locates the secret door otherwise.)

Traps: PCs who don't solve the puzzle before walking around in the room risk falling into the pits, each of which is marked with a T.

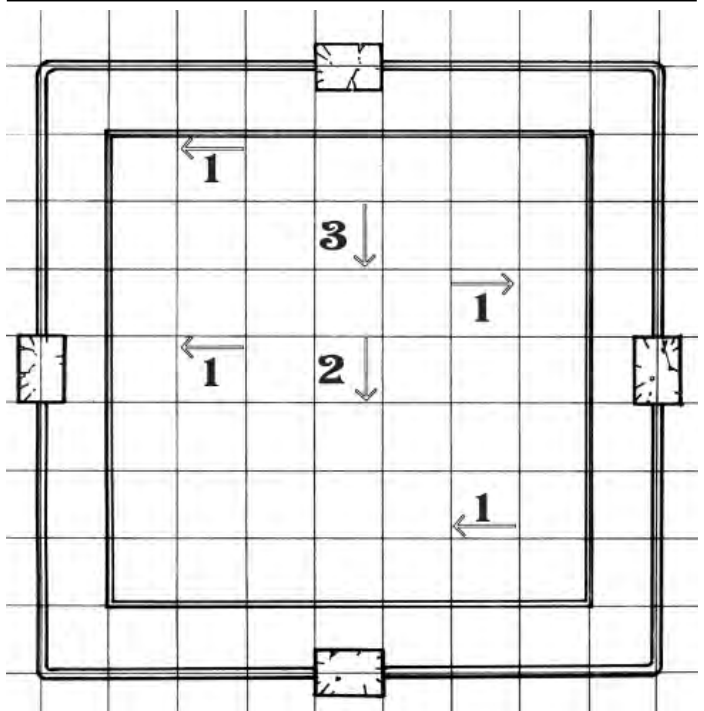
PIT TRAP	LEVEL 2 WARDER
Trap	XP 125
Trap: A 1-by-1 section of the floor (the squares marked with a T) conceals a 20-foot-deep pit.	
Perception	
☒ DC 30: The character notices the false stonework.	
Trigger	
The trap attacks when a creature enters its square.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction Melee	
Target: The creature that triggered the trap.	
Attack: +6 vs. Reflex.	
Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 2d10 damage, and falls prone.	
Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.	
Effect: The tile falls into the pit and it is no longer hidden.	
Countermeasures	
☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check (standard action).	
☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action). The floor becomes safe.	
☒ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.	

Leaving the pit is a bit difficult. The floor in this room is really a framework of thin metal girders suspended above the “real” floor, which is the 20-foot-deep pit. Thus, the pit occupies the entire room. A character climbing the wall can push away a tile with a DC 20 Strength check or remove it with a DC 15 Thievery check.

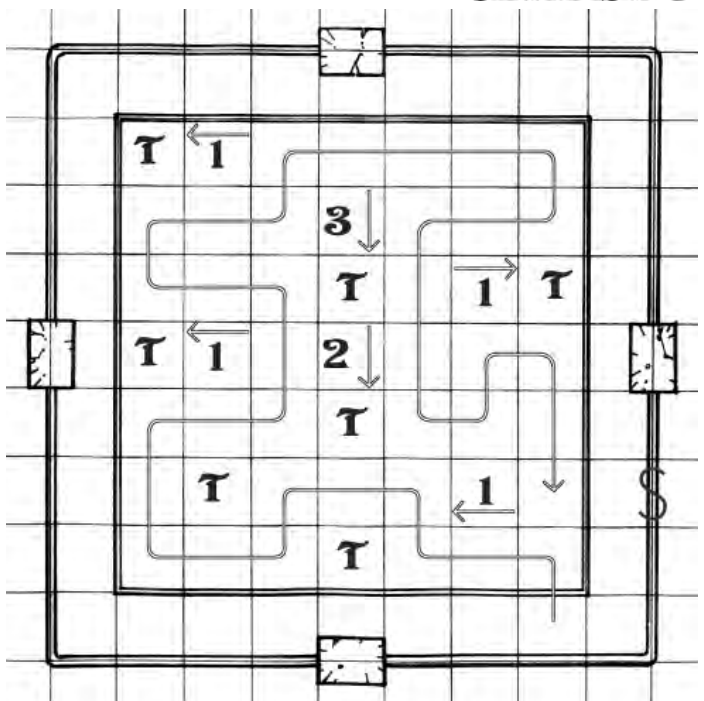
Loot: A hidden panel on the ledge’s southwest corner (DC 20 Perception check to locate) reveals a closet containing the materials for creating these puzzles: several stacks of tiles, sheaves of rice paper, ink, and quills. It is Kazin’s responsibility (see area 7) to update the puzzle periodically.

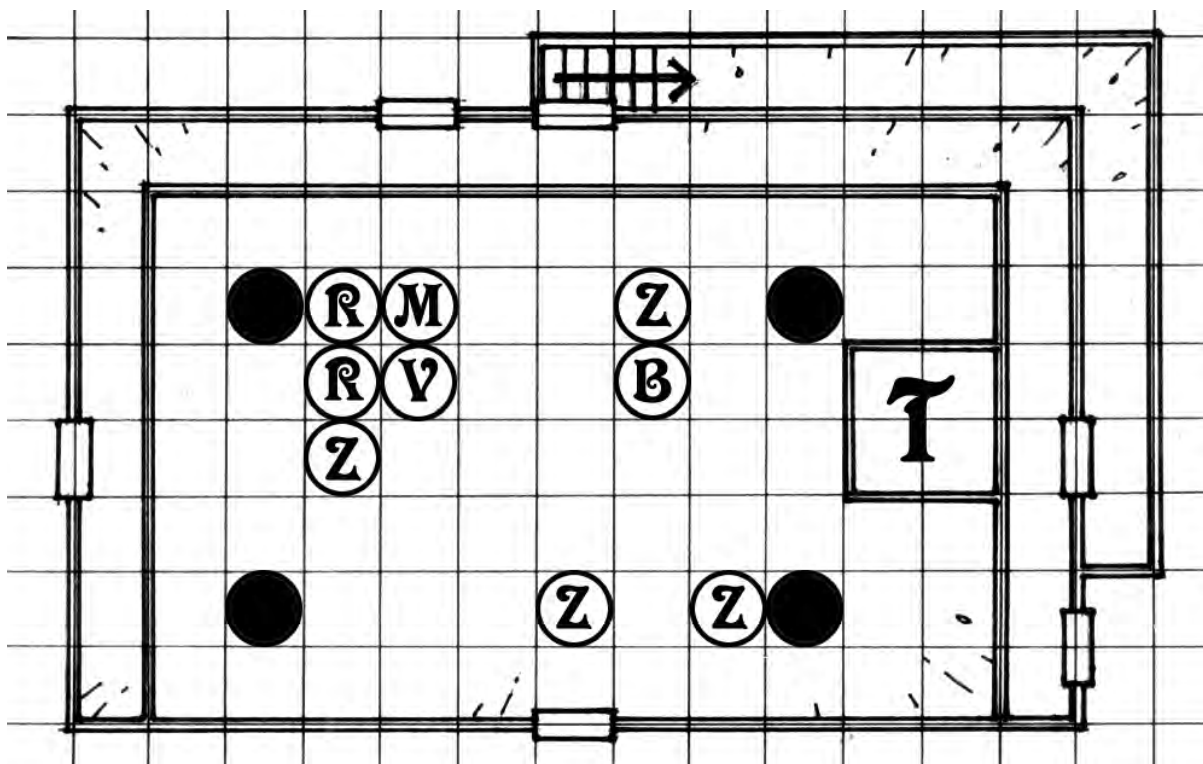
XP Award: If the PCs open the secret door (whether or not they solved the puzzle without falling into the traps), they gain 500 XP.

PLAYER HANDOUT #1



AREAS





AREA 10

AREA 9: REWARD

This small room has a pedestal at the far end. Atop the pedestal is a golden circlet with a red gem in the center. A small piece of parchment rests next to the circlet.

The parchment reads:

“Just as the spreading willow conceals true treasure within its trunk, so does your body conceal true ability within your mind. This band will help it come forth.”

Loot: The circlet is a circlet of authority (level 7).

Development: The parchment contains a clue to the treasure hidden in the willow in area 11.

AREA 10: BEAR TRAINING GROUND (EL 3, 1,251 XP)

The below text assumes that the PCs enter from the west. If that is not the case, amend it as appropriate.

You emerge onto a balcony that rings a floor 20 feet below. Several figures move about down there: a handful of shadowy humanoids and a large, snarling bear. One shadowy creature dangles a two-foot-long, squealing rat in front of the bear, but the bear holds back and the figure flings the rat away; the bear charges forward and snatches the rat out of the air. The creature’s squeaks are abruptly cut off in a barrage of wet, snapping sounds.

To the side, an armored, dark humanoid watches the drama. Next to him is a bamboo cage of large rats and a beautiful, red-haired human woman with a staff. The woman wears a short kimono which strains against her large chest.

The bad guys are engrossed in their activity and probably don’t notice the PCs (–10 to Perception checks due to preoccupation, distance, and the bear’s noise). If the PCs stay and watch a bit more, the Rathayans open



the cage to get another rat. The rodent briefly escapes, but the bear is upon it quickly, surprising its trainers in its enthusiasm. In addition:

The woman turns toward the shadowy warrior and says something, a questioning look on her face. He moves toward a door on the east wall and beckons her over. He talks for a moment, then prods the ground in front of him with his sword. Two hidden panels fall open, revealing a pit. After a few seconds, the panels crank closed, and the trap is again hidden. The woman nods, then turns back to watching the bear.

The smart move for the PCs is to sneak along the balcony, move through the encircling corridor, and open the door in the east wall. See “Tactics,” below, for more details.

The south door is locked (a DC 30 Thievery check opens it). The varnai has the key.

Bad Guys: Four zinjas train the bear while a varnai warrior looks on with the human mage Maretta. The PCs may have heard about Maretta in area 5, and she matches Shaleeth’s description.

This encounter includes the following:

- ◇ Maretta, a human mage (M).
- ◇ 1 varnai warrior (V).
- ◇ 4 zinja lamers (Z).
- ◇ 1 cave bear (B).
- ◇ 2 giant rats in a bamboo cage (R).
- ◇ 1 pit trap (T).

VARNAI WARRIOR Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 4 ELITE SOLDIER XP 350
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HP 108; Bloodied 54
Equipment helmet, key to the south door. See Appendix 1 for complete statistics.

4 ZINJA LAMERS Medium shadow animate	LEVEL 4 MINION XP 44
--	--------------------------------

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. See Appendix 1 for complete statistics.

MARETTA, HUMAN MAGE	LEVEL 4 ARTILLERY
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +5	
HP 42; Bloodied 21	
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 17, Will 16	
Speed 6	
⊕ Quarterstaff (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
⊕ Magic Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force	
Ranged 20; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d4+4 force damage.	
⤵ Dancing Lightning (standard; encounter)	
♦ Lightning	
The mage makes a separate attack against 3 different targets: ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6+4 lightning damage.	
⊕ Thunder Burst (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder	
Area burst 1 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Arcana +11	
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 14 (+4) Wis 17 (+5)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 18 (+6) Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment robes, quarterstaff	

CAVE BEAR	LEVEL 6 ELITE BRUTE
Medium natural beast	XP 500
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +5; darvision	
HP 171; Bloodied 85	
AC 20; Fortitude 21, Reflex 17, Will 18	
Speed 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.	
⊕ Cave Bear Frenzy (standard; recharges 5, 6)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 13 (+4) Wis 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 2 (-1) Cha 12 (+4)



2 GIANT RATS	LEVEL 1 MINION
Small natural beast	XP 25
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Speed 6, climb 3	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 3 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 12 (+1)	Dex 17 (+3) Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 2 (-4) Cha 7 (-2)

PIT TRAP Trap	LEVEL 2 WARDER XP 125
Trap: A 2-by-2 section of the floor (the squares marked with a T) conceals a 20-foot-deep pit.	
Perception	
☒ DC 20: The character notices the false stonework.	
Trigger	
The trap attacks when a creature enters one of its four squares.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction Melee	
Target: The creature that triggered the trap.	
Attack: +6 vs. Reflex.	
Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 2d10 damage, and falls prone.	
Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.	
Effect: The pit is open and no longer hidden. After 1 round, the pit doors close and it is again hidden. A DC 20 Strength check forces the doors open.	
Countermeasures	
☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check (standard action).	
☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action). The floor becomes safe.	
☒ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.	
☒ A character can climb out with a DC 15 Athletics check.	

Tactics: How the bad guys react depends on where and how the PCs attack them.

If the PCs attack from the balcony with ranged weapons and spells, Maretta takes cover behind a pillar and responds in kind. The varnai leads the zinjans out the north door and up the stairs onto the balcony; one of the zinjans grabs a rat and baits the bear into following. The zinja throws the rat into the PCs' midst once they reach the top. (The other rat flees into a corner, hoping everyone forgets about it.)

The PCs are better off attacking from the east. When they open the door, the bear charges. Due to its jubilation at finally having something real to eat, its Reflex

defense against the pit trap drops to 12. Thus, the PCs can use the pit to dispatch it.

The zinjans and varnai move to combat the PCs in melee, while Maretta hides behind a pillar and blasts the PCs with her spells. One of the zinjans hurls the rat cage; it travels up to 5 squares and breaks on impact. The rats attack anything within 2 squares; if they are out of legitimate targets, they flee.

Development: See area 5 for details about what might happen if the PCs capture Maretta.

AREA 11: SHADOW GARDEN (EL 5; 1,000 XP)

The door opens into the outside — but not the outside you know. This is a dark garden of twilight and shadow, of dark greens and rustling whispers. The place smells faintly of fresh water and night-blooming flowers. From somewhere nearby comes the sound of a trickling brook.

This is the Rathayans' meditation garden: their primary choice for walking and thinking. It's like a piece of their home plane come back with them.

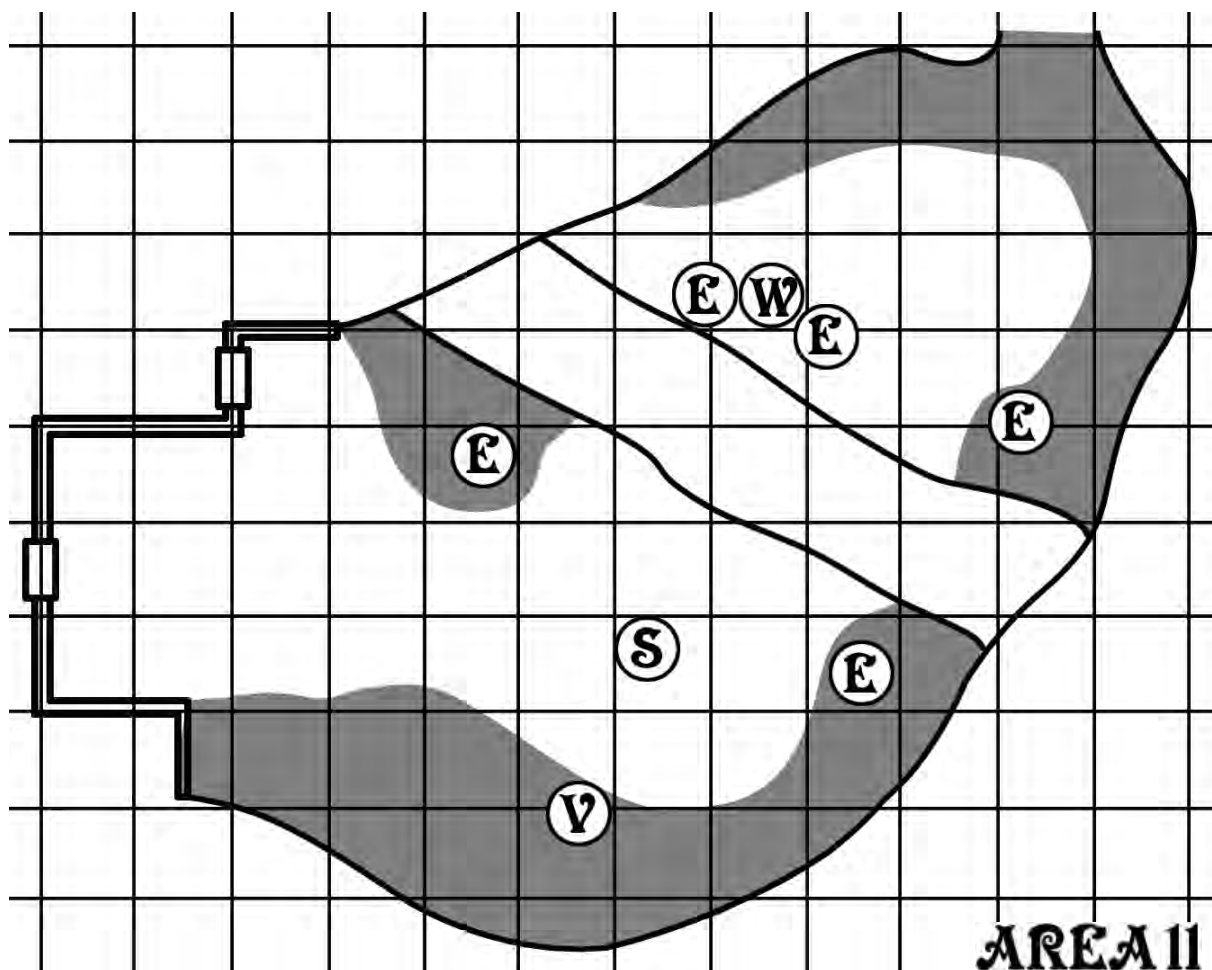
Squares marked with slashes contain a great deal of underbrush. This is difficult terrain and provides concealment to creatures within it. The brook is shallow (two feet deep) and not particularly fast-moving, though it still counts as difficult terrain. A large willow tree overhangs it.

The trapdoor in the southeast corner is well-hidden (DC 30 Perception check to notice). It leads down to the east ledge of area 6.

Bad Guys: Of course, the garden is not unprotected. Years ago the Rathayans tasked a vine creeper with guardianship of this place. Shortly after arriving in Arnatha, the Rathayans made an alliance with a group of disgruntled elves. The elves now live in the garden as well.

This encounter includes the following:

- ◇ 1 vine horror (V).
- ◇ 5 elf archers (E).
- ◇ 1 shadowspore (S).
- ◇ The W indicates a large willow tree. Characters adjacent to the willow are beneath its branches and have



total concealment against other creatures. They can see through the willow's branches, but other creatures have concealment against them.

SHADOWSPORE Hazard	LEVEL 2 OBSTACLE XP 175
See Appendix 2 for complete statistics.	

VINE HORROR Medium natural humanoid (plant)	LEVEL 5 CONTROLLER XP 200
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +9; blindsight 10 HP 68; Bloodied 34 AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 15 Speed 6 (forest walk, swamp walk), swim 6	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) +8 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage.	

⊕ **Vicious Vines** (standard; encounters)

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +10 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both) as magical vines spring out of the ground and crush it.

Malleability

The vine horror can compress its body enough to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and other openings that are more than 1 inch wide do not slow the vine horror at all.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Stealth +12

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 21 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+2)

5 ELF ARCHERS Medium fey humanoid	LEVEL 2 ARTILLERY XP 125
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +11; low-light vision	
Group Awareness aura 5; non-elf allies in the aura gain a +1 racial bonus to Perception checks.	
HP 33; Bloodied 16	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 12	
Speed 7; see also wild step	
⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.	
⊕ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +7 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage; see also archer's mobility.	
Archer's Mobility	
If the elf archer moves at least 4 squares from its original position, it gains a +2 bonus to ranged attack rolls until the start of its next turn.	
Elven Accuracy (free; encounter)	
The elf can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.	
Not So Close (immediate reaction, when an enemy makes a melee attack against the elf archer; encounter)	
The elf archer shifts 1 square and makes a ranged attack against the enemy.	
Wild Step: The elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.	
Alignment Any	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Nature +11, Stealth +10	
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 16 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 12 (+2) Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows	

Tactics: The elves and vine horror remain hidden in the foliage. The elves' ideal strategy is to wait until the PCs come close to the shadowspore in the garden's center; the elves then fire upon the shadowspore, causing it to release its cloud. The rest of the elves fire into the characters, hoping to bloody one or more of them and make the cloud more effective. The vine horror rushes to within range and uses vicious vines, planning to hold the PCs in place so the poison cloud can attack them repeatedly and they'll be easier targets for the elves.

The vine horror fights until slain. The elves surrender if the PCs destroy the vine horror and two or fewer of them remain.

Phat Lewt!: The willow (marked W on the map) hides a valuable item within its trunk: a +2 staff of winter (level 9). The PCs must crack the trunk to get at it, which they can do with a DC 25 Strength check, by chopping through it (AC 4, hp 40), or via some other method that you deem appropriate. The staff is hidden completely inside the tree and the heroes cannot make Perception checks to notice it; thus, they are likely to crack the trunk only if they realize the importance of the clue in area 9.

Development: Captured elves don't have much new information for the PCs. They know of Hoi-ya and Roniko, and their interests match well with those of the advisors. The elves know of the dragon Orozu in area 12, but give up this information only grudgingly.

AREA 12: DRAGON'S LAIR (EL 4; 875 XP)

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs move through the tunnel connecting this area with area 11:

The air becomes warmer and more humid as you move down the tunnel at a shallow grade. The fresh smells of the garden above gradually disappear, replaced by a scent of rot and dank water.

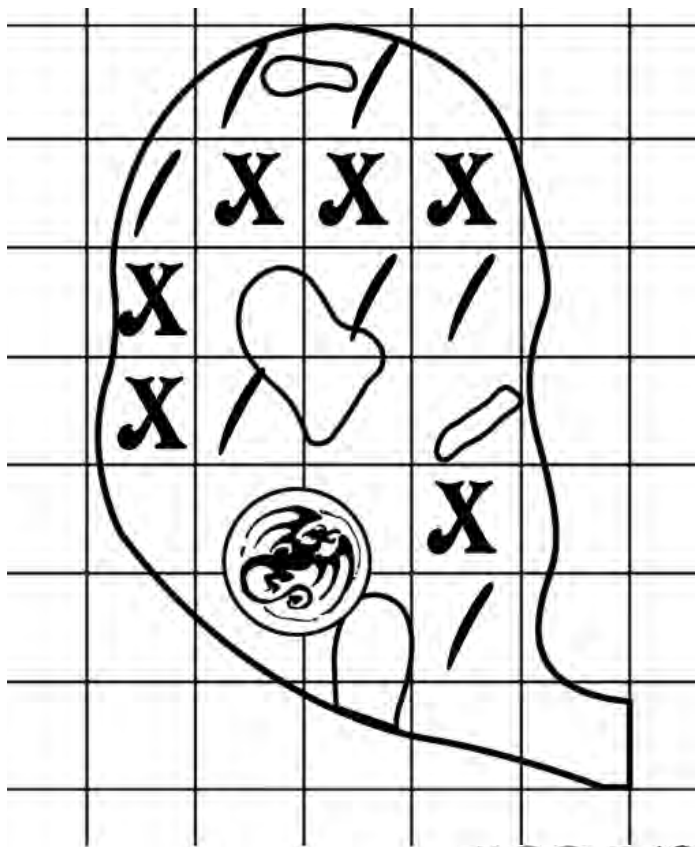
When the PCs arrive at the cave, continue with the following:

The tunnel opens into a large, earthen cave. The floor is covered with stagnant water; the ground bulges out of the water in many places, making small islands in the swamp. Toadstools poke out of the water as well, and roots descend from the ceiling and walls to disappear into the still liquid.

The water ranges in depth from 10 feet to a few inches. Squares marked with an X are 10 feet deep; those marked with a slash are deep enough to be difficult terrain. Heroes getting in over their heads must swim (DC 10 Athletics check) or sink. The water is murky enough that the heroes have a hard time judging the depth.

Bad Guy: The black dragon Orozu lives in the swamp here. If she heard the heroes coming, she is hiding beneath the water in the location shown on the map; if not, she is resting on the island in the swamp's center.

Though she probably begins by spewing acid on the heroes (see "Tactics," below), she is not averse to talk-



AREA 12

ing to them. After her initial attack, she throws her head back and laughs. “Ahhh, I love doing that!” she says, and flips her tail playfully. If the PCs attack immediately, she responds in kind, chuckling and playful until she is bloodied. At that point, things get serious.

If the PCs don't immediately attack her, she happily talks with them for a time. She is from the same plane as the Rathayans and has allied with them in hopes of finding treasure and a good spot for a lair in this new world. She knows Roniko has a large influence on Hoi-ya, but she doesn't care, because there's no way Roniko (whatever he really is) will want to tangle with the dragon. Orozu knows about the elves in area 11 and their eladrin friend in area 5; she chats with the elves regularly. The rest of her knowledge is up to you.

Of course, Orozu doesn't allow the PCs to leave. After a pleasant conversation to liven up her existence, she gets hungry. Besides, she needs the exercise.

This encounter includes the following:

◇ Orozu, young black dragon (O).



OROZU, YOUNG BLACK DRAGON	LEVEL 4 SOLO LURKER XP 875
Large natural magical beast (aquatic, dragon)	
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 225; Bloodied 112, see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
AC 22; Fortitude 18, Reflex 20, Will 17	
Resist 15 acid	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7; fly 7 (clumsy), overland flight 10, swim 7	
Action Points 2	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid	
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +8 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
↓ Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes two claw attacks.	
↓ Tail Slash (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the dragon; at-will)	
The dragon uses its tail to attack the enemy that missed it: reach 2; +8 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
⊕ Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ Acid	
Close blast 5; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d12+3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and takes a -4 penalty to AC (save ends both).	
⊖ Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Acid	
The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.	
⊖ Cloud of Darkness (standard; sustain minor; recharge 4, 5, 6) ♦ Zone	
Close burst 2; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon. Any creature entirely within the area (except the dragon) is blinded.	
⊖ Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +5 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	

Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Nature +9, Stealth +17		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 15 (+4)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 12 (+3)	Cha 10 (+2)

Tactics: Orozu begins by bursting out of the water (if that's where she was) and using her breath weapon on the puny humanoids. On her first serious attack (i.e., after her conversation ends), she uses *frightful presence* then uses an action point to make a bite attack. She uses cloud of darkness if the heroes are hitting her at range, then uses her other action point to attack as well. She tries to focus on soft targets first. If terribly hurt (hp 30 or below), she uses *cloud of darkness* and attempts to escape into area 11, whereupon she flies away from the castle, vowing to earn more XP before she fights adventurers again.

Loot: Orozu keeps her current "hoard" in a waterproof chest in the swamp, buried in mud. A DC 20 Perception check locates it. In the chest are 290 sp, 337 gp, two potions of healing, and a pair of shadowfell gloves (heroic tier) (level 6).

AREA 13: WALL OF PAIN (EL 5; 1,000 XP)

This room is 20 feet long, and on the opposite side, stretching up into darkness, is a wall: a wall with handholds decorating its surface sporadically, and ledges and ropes in places. High above, perhaps 60 feet, you can make out a faint blaze of a fire at the wall's summit.

Several dark, wet piles are scatted across the floor.

At the top of the wall is a ledge with a door leading to area 14. A DC 15 Nature check identifies the dark piles as bat guano; success by 5 or more reveals it to be shadowhunter bat guano.

Climbing the Wall: A few handholds are cut into the wall, and in most cases the wall's climb DC is 10. Ropes hang down in a few spots, allowing an easier time (DC 5), and a ledge offers a place to rest. See the diagram for a view of the wall straight-on, with the ledge, ropes, and the like marked. The ledge is 5 feet deep.

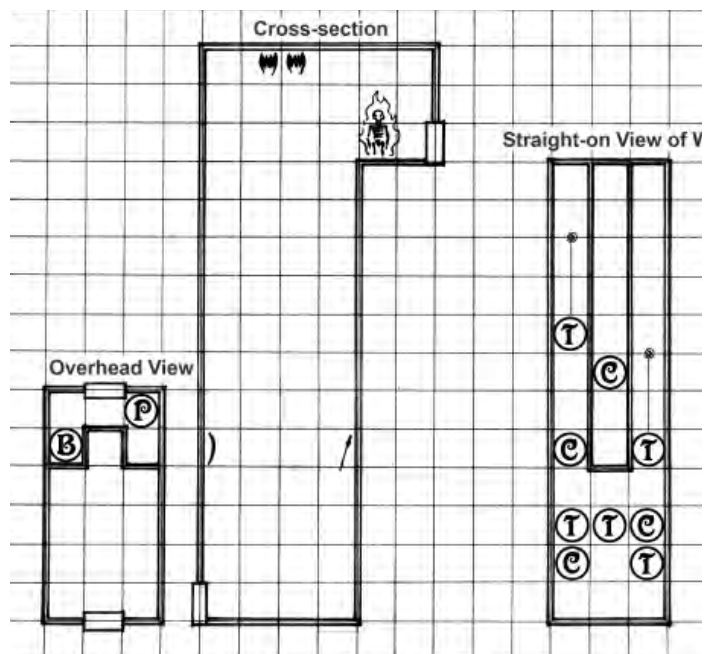
Bad Guys: Traps and monsters make the wall a challenge. Roniko has arranged for a blazing skeleton to defend his sanctum, and the shadowhunter bats traveled with the Rathayans from their home plane.

This encounter includes the following:

- ◇ 1 blazing skeleton (B). The skeleton is on the ledge 60 feet above the floor where the PCs enter.
- ◇ 2 shadowhunter bats. The bats roost on the ceiling, 75 feet above the floor where the PCs enter.
- ◇ 1 spear trap (T).
- ◇ 1 magic crossbow turret trap (C).
- ◇ The control panel (P) for both traps, near the skeleton's position on the ledge.

BLAZING SKELETON Medium natural animate (undead)	LEVEL 5 ARTILLERY XP 200
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +4; darkvision Fiery Aura (Fire) aura 1; any creature that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage. HP 52; Bloodied 26 AC 19; Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16 Immune disease, poison Resist 10 fire, 10 necrotic Vulnerable 5 radiant Speed 6	
⊕ Blazing Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire +8 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
⊕ Flame Orb (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d4+4 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned Languages — Str 13 (+3) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4) Con 17 (+5) Int 4 (-1) Cha 6 (+0)	

2 SHADOWHUNTER BATS Medium shadow beast	LEVEL 3 LURKER XP 150
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +7; darkvision HP 39; Bloodied 19 AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 12 Speed 2, fly 8 (clumsy); see also <i>flyback attack</i>	
⊕ Tail Slash (standard; at-will) +10 vs. AC; 1d6+10 damage. In dim light or darkness, a shadowhunter bat gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 6 damage; these bonuses have already been factored into these statistics, since this area is dimly lit.	
⊕ Flyback Attack (standard; at-will) The shadowhunter bat flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during its movement. The bat doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the attack's target. (Remember that the bat, as a clumsy flier, takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls and defenses in the air. These penalties have not been incorporated into its statistics.)	
Alignment Unaligned Languages — Skills Stealth +10 Str 13 (+2) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 13 (+2) Con 14 (+3) Int 2 (-3) Cha 11 (+1)	



AREA 13

SPEAR TRAP	LEVEL 2 OBSTACLE TRAP
Trap	XP 125
Trap: The squares marked with a T contain hidden spears that thrust forward when triggered.	
Perception	
☒ DC 20: The character notices the trigger handholds.	
☒ DC 25: The character notices the hidden control panel.	
Trigger	
The trap (the five squares marked with a T) attacks when a creature enters one of the trigger squares or starts its turn on a trigger square. When the trap is triggered, all five spears thrust forward at the same time, attacking anyone on a trigger square.	
Attack	
Opportunity Action Melee	
Target: All creatures on trigger squares when the trap activates.	
Attack: +7 vs. AC.	
Hit: 1d8+3 damage.	
Effect: Remember that characters who take damage while climbing risk falling; see the Athletics skill description for more details.	
Countermeasures	
☒ A climbing character who chooses to increase the DC of the Athletics climbing check by 5 can bypass the trapped square without grabbing the trapped handhold.	
☒ An adjacent character can disable a trigger handhold with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action).	
☒ A creature adjacent to the hidden control panel (marked P on the map) can disable the entire trap with a DC 20 Thievery check (standard action).	
☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check (free action) grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.	
☒ A character can ready an action to attack the spears (AC 13, other defenses 10; hp 10). When the spear in one square is destroyed, that trigger handhold becomes useless.	
☒ A character can ready an action to attack the spears (AC 13, other defenses 10; hp 10). When the spear in one square is destroyed, that trigger handhold becomes useless.	

MAGIC CROSSBOW TURRET	LEVEL 4 BLASTER TRAP
Trap	XP 175
Trap: Three crossbows attack each round on their initiative after they are triggered.	
Perception	
☒ DC 20: The character notices the trigger handholds.	
☒ DC 25: The character notices the location of the hidden turret emplacement.	
☒ DC 25: The character notices the location of the hidden control panel.	
Initiative +3	
Trigger	
The trap activates and rolls initiative when a character enters one of the four trigger squares (marked C on the map). At this point, the turret extends from the south wall, 20 feet above the door.	
Attack	
Standard Action Ranged 10	
Target: The three crossbows each attack one intruder. They magically distinguish intruders from bad guys.	
Attack: +8 vs. AC.	
Hit: 1d10+3 damage.	
Effect: Remember that characters who take damage while climbing risk falling; see the Athletics skill description for more details.	
Countermeasures	
☒ A climbing character who chooses to increase the DC of the Athletics climbing check by 5 can bypass the trapped square without grabbing the trapped handhold.	
☒ An adjacent character can disable a trigger handhold with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action).	
☒ An adjacent character can disable a trigger handhold with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action).	
☒ A character can attack the turret (AC 16, other defenses 13; hp 38). Destroying the turret stops all crossbow attacks.	
☒ A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the control panel. DC 20 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 2 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes the control panel to explode (close blast 3, 2d6+3 damage to all creatures in the blast) and the trap remains active.	

Tactics: The monsters wait until the PCs begin climbing the wall—preferably until after they trigger the first trap, shake it off, and start back up the wall. Then the blazing skeleton approaches the edge at the wall’s top and hurls flame orbs at lead characters. The shadowhunter bats swoop down and use flyby attack against climbing characters.

XP Award: Because climbing the wall makes this encounter much more difficult, award the PCs an extra 200 XP for overcoming this encounter. (Consider the wall a level 5 hazard.)

AREA 14: THRONE ROOM (EL 6; 1,750 XP)

The door opens into an impressive throne room. The floor is black marble flecked with gray and silver. Rice paper screens, each intricately painted and colorful in stark contrast to the rest of the room, stand in front of the walls. The ceiling disappears into murky shadow some twenty feet overhead, and narrow windows on all four walls allow twilight to enter.

At the room’s center is a dark throne, with several more mundane chairs close by. A short, fat man with a long white beard and green robes stands near the throne, mouth drawn in a frown. Another figure rises from the throne as you enter: A humanoid form in elaborate armor and helmet. His face is indistinct, but you can make out long white moustaches dangling over his breastplate. He holds a long-bladed spear in one hand and wears a golden amulet around his neck.

The dark figure takes several steps toward you and bows slightly. “Greetings to you, warriors. I bid you welcome to my throne room. I am Hoi-ya, Shogoon of this castle.” He holds out a hand. “This is my honorable adviser, Roniko.” The bearded man nods, but still looks unhappy.

Hoi-ya is impressed with these local warriors who have battled their way to his throne room. He happily speaks with them, and willingly discusses everything from Rathayan culture to the resources of Arnatha to the specifics of the heroes’ exploits. (“And what sword stroke did you use to finally defeat Kazin? Ha! I warned him that would be the end of him someday.”)

Roniko, however, has little tolerance for the heroes’ or Hoi-ya’s prattle. If the PCs don’t soon steer the conversation into “what happens now?”, Roniko clears his throat.

SKILL

CHALLENGE

“Yes, tell me,” says Hoi-ya. “In what ways would an alliance benefit me? Why should I not face you in combat, as my adviser suggests?”

Setup: The PCs must convince Hoi-ya that an alliance is in his best interest, or at least deserves more extensive negotiations with Duke Orvelon. Alternatively, the PCs must convince the shogoon that they (and the other local inhabitants) are strong enough that the Rathayans should withdraw from Arnatha. As a third option, the PCs are simply convincing Hoi-ya not to listen to Roniko.

Level: 3 (base DCs 15). If one of the heroes wears the *circlet of authority* from area 9, Hoi-ya is impressed by their mastery of the puzzle room and the DCs are instead 13. Similarly, a hero wearing one of the amulets from area 6 (even a nonmagical one) gains a +1 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks during this skill challenge.

Complexity: 3 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate.

Bluff (DC 15 or 13): The heroes attempt to convince Hoi-ya under false pretenses. Characters can cooperate to aid a lead character using this skill. The DC is 13 if one of the heroes wears the *circlet of authority* from area 9.

Diplomacy (DC 15): The heroes attempt to convince Hoi-ya using reason and rhetoric. The first successful use of this skill opens up the use of the Arcana skill (Hoi-ya mentions some aspect of Rathayan culture or his home plane that the PCs can use). The DC is 13 if one of the heroes wears the *circlet of authority* from area 9.

Insight (DC 15 or 13): The heroes attempt to read Hoi-ya’s intentions and determine what approach would be most likely to sway him. Succeeding on this check grants a +2 bonus on the next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check. PCs attempting to discredit Roniko might also use Insight; in this case, a success provides a +2 bonus to a future Diplomacy check that also attempts to discredit or reveal the oni. The first successful use of this skill on Roniko reveals that he is not what he seems and opens up use of the Nature skill. The DC is 13 if one of the heroes wears the *circlet of authority* from area 9.

Intimidate (DC 15 or 18): The heroes attempt to threaten Hoi-ya into submission, or reveal, through an

impressive martial display (spinning a weapon around to reveal one's skill with it, shooting an arrow through an apple, or the like), that they are more than worthy adversaries. In the first case, the DC is 18; in the second, it is 15. If one of the heroes wears the *circlet of authority* from area 9, reduce the DC by 2.

Arcana (DC 13): A hero makes an insightful remark about Rathayan culture or the Rathayan home plane. This skill is available only after one character has gained a success using the Diplomacy skill, and it can be used only once in this way during the challenge.

Nature (DC 15): A hero watches Roniko carefully, noting how the creature acts and responds. The PC comes to the conclusion that this is some beast in disguise; if he beats the DC by 5 or more, he believes Roniko is an oni night haunter and knows several things about such creatures (type, keywords, and powers).

Success: A success on a skill check indicates that Hoi-ya is becoming convinced.

Failure: A failure indicates that the heroes' arguments do not impress Hoi-ya, or (more likely) that Roniko's poisoned words are affecting Hoi-ya's judgment.

CONCLUSION

Success

Hoi-ya bows. "Your words are wise, and I am convinced. Allow me to—" He stops as Roniko throws a hand toward him.

The adviser hisses. "You people... you will not rob me of my revenge!" The adviser's form melts into the ground, then a new creature rises near the throne. It is huge, almost eight feet tall, with greasy white hair, green skin, and jutting fangs. It carries a huge morningstar — which it smashes against the throne, causing the chair to topple with a clang.

"You will not rob me of my revenge," the creature says, and its voice is deep. "Duke Orvelon and the people of Arnatha have wronged me, and they shall pay. As shall you!" Its eyes flare, and the world goes insane. You blink, trying to process the changes: The room is still there, but now strange, multicolored lights stream from the walls, ebbing and flowing. Within their midst is a chaotic jumble of images: landscapes, treasures, people, and, most prominently, monstrous things reaching for you. Blackened skeletons stalk from these dreamlike tendrils, the bones creaking as they lift their weapons.

If the PCs' succeed, Hoi-ya is paralyzed throughout the ensuing battle. He is freed when Roniko falls. If the heroes have the means to free him — allowing him a (successful) save is enough — he fights at their side against his treacherous adviser. Allow the hero who freed him to control his actions; give the player Player Handout 2.

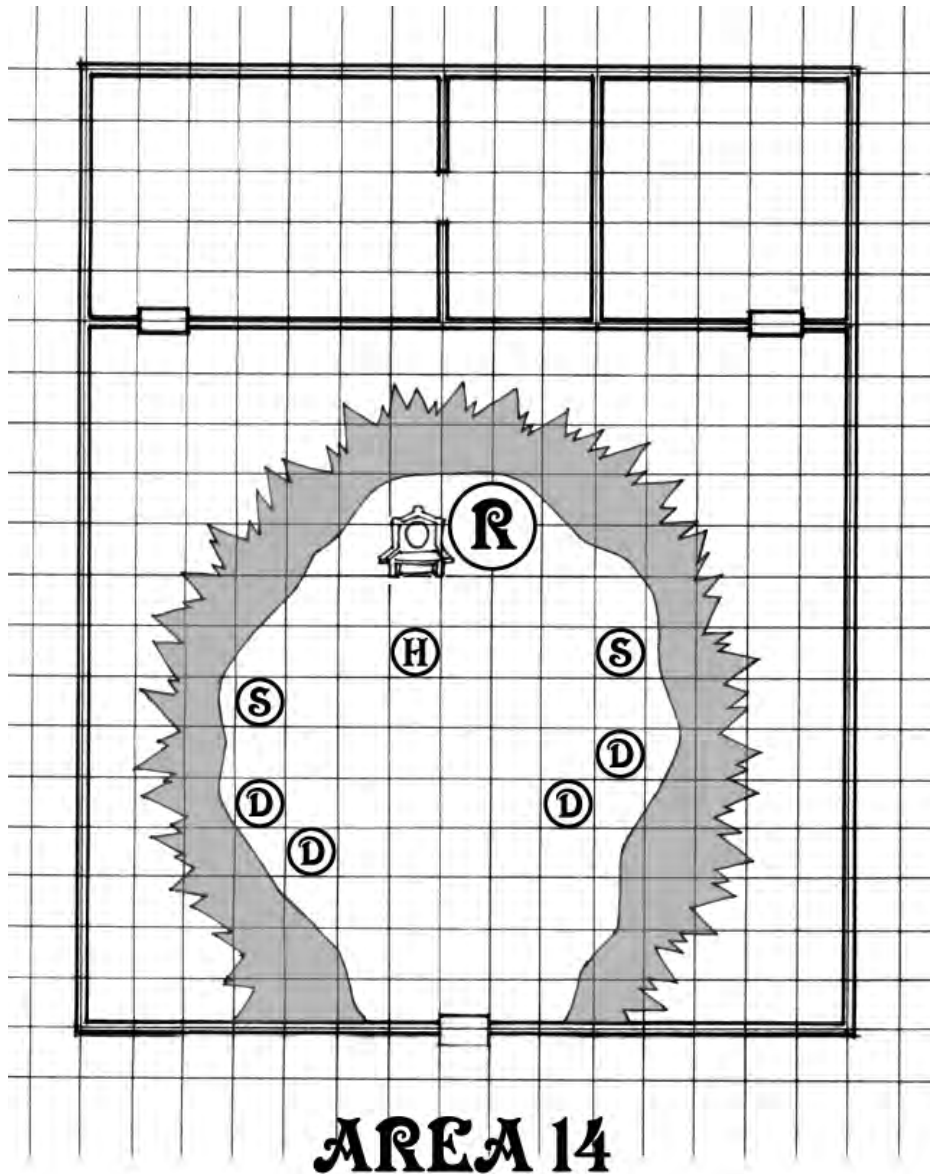
Failure

Hoi-ya chops the air with his hand. "I've heard enough. Roniko is right; you and the pathetic rabble that call this 'duchy' home are conniving weaklings. I must assume that your previous triumphs were based on luck. I assure you, your luck has run out." He steps back, and his spear spins into a ready position.

Roniko grins, and his teeth grow long and pointed. "For this, my liege, I will show you my true glory." The man's form melts into the ground, then a new creature rises near the throne. It is huge, almost eight feet tall, with greasy white hair, green skin, and jutting fangs. A huge morningstar dangles from its fist. Its eyes flare, and the world goes insane. You blink, trying to process the changes: The room is still there, but now strange, multicolored lights stream from the walls, ebbing and flowing. Within their midst is a chaotic jumble of images: landscapes, treasures, people, and, most prominently, monstrous things reaching for you. Blackened skeletons stalk from these dreamlike tendrils, the bones creaking as they lift their weapons.

Hoi-ya looks momentarily taken aback, then his eyes narrow and focus again on you.

If the PCs fail the skill challenge, they face Hoi-ya in addition to the other bad guys.



AREA 14

“My esteemed liege,” the adviser says, bowing low. “These... people have slain your warriors and ransacked your castle. Surely this shows that the inhabitants of this world are barbarians; these creatures are worthy of your blade, sir, not your words.”

Hoi-ya strokes his moustaches in thought, his eyes sparkling.

Assuming the heroes object to Roniko’s statement, a skill challenge develops. The same challenge occurs if the PCs bring up topics such as alliance, surrender, the withdrawal of the Rathayan forces, or if they try to expose Roniko.


Skill Challenge: This challenge is a tough negotiation. The heroes’ likely goal is alliance with Hoi-ya (and, in truth, the shogun would like to be convinced that such an agreement would be beneficial for the Rathayans) or the removal of his castle and forces from Arnatha. At the very least, the PCs are trying to convince Hoi-ya not to kill them, as Roniko has suggested.

See the “Skill Challenge” sidebar for details on running the skill challenge.

Bad Guys: In addition to Roniko and possibly Hoi-ya, the PCs must contend with the oni’s skeletal minions and his mystical dream tendrils.

This encounter includes the following:

- Roniko, night haunter oni (R).
- Hoi-ya, shogoon daimyo (H).
- 2 skeletons (S).
- 4 decrepit skeletons (D).
- The dream tendril hazard (described below).

 RONIKO, ONI NIGHT HAUNTER Large natural humanoid	LEVEL 8 ELITE CONTROLLER XP 700
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +5; darkvision HP 181; Bloodied 90; see also <i>big badass</i> AC 24; Fortitude 23, Reflex 21, Will 22 Saving throws +2 Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy) Action Points 1	
⊕ Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 1d12+5 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is pushed 1 square.	
☹ Hypnotic Breath (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Charm, Sleep Close blast 5; +11 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). First Failed Save: The target falls unconscious (no save).	
† Devour Soul (standard; at-will) ♦ Healing, Psychic Affects an unconscious target only; +13 vs. AC; 2d10+4 psychic damage, and Roniko regains 10 hit points. This attack does not wake the unconscious target.	
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ Illusion Roniko can disguise himself to appear as an elderly Medium or Large humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by his Bluff check) pierces the disguise.	
Gaseous Form (standard; sustain standard; encounter) ♦ Polymorph Roniko becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 8 (hover). He can enter and move through a porous obstacle that would otherwise prevent movement (such as a door or a cracked window). He remains in this form as long as he sustains the power.	

Big Badass

When Roniko dies, he really does die, falling to the ground in whatever horrible way the PCs destroyed him. However, on his next turn, a new Roniko steps from the dream tendrils. He appears in whatever space in the colored area he wants, and he's pissed. (Note that his hypnotic breath only recharges when he is *first* bloodied, so if he is bloodied after his resurrection, he can't use the power again.)

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Bluff +13, Insight +10, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+8)
Equipment morningstar, keys to the cells in area 5

HOI-YA, SHOGOON DAIMYO Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 6 ELITE SOLDIER (LEADER) XP 500
HP 144; Bloodied 72 See Appendix 1 for complete statistics. However, Hoi-ya has a +2 bonus to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will due to his <i>amulet of health</i> +2. (The modified statistics appear on Player Handout 2.)	

2 SKELETON Medium natural animate (undead)	LEVEL 3 SOLDIER XP 150
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +3; darkvision HP 44; Bloodied 22 AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15 Immune disease, poison Resist 10 necrotic Vulnerable 5 radiant Speed 5	
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +10 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn; see also speed of the dead.	
Speed of the Dead When making an opportunity attack, the skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages — Str 15 (+3) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3) Con 13 (+2) Int 3 (-3) Cha 3 (-3) Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword	

↖ 4 DECREPIT SKELETONS	LEVEL 1 MINION
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 25
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +2; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 6	
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
⊕ Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 3 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 15 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3) Wis 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 3 (-4) Cha 3 (-4)
Equipment heavy shield, longsword, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows	

DREAM TENDRILS	LEVEL 3 OBSTACLE
	HAZARD XP 150
<i>Multicolored lights stream forth in tendrils that seem almost alive. Within their depths, otherworldly forms shift. They stare at you. They reach for you.</i>	
Initiative: +1	
Trap: The colored areas on the map are always within range of the trap. In addition, the tendrils ebb and flow; roll 1d20 on the trap's turn. If the result is 11 or higher, the trap makes attacks against targets in the shaded area of the map in addition to the colored area (i.e., it attacks an additional 2 squares into the room). On a 20, the trap makes attacks against all creatures in the room.	
In addition, every three rounds (starting the third round after combat begins), four more decrepit skeletons stalk from the dream tendrils. Place them somewhere in the dream tendrils and roll initiative for them.	
Arcana	
☒ DC 20: The character has an idea of the danger.	
☒ DC 25: The character knows the exact nature of the danger.	

Attack
Target: Characters within the colored area (always), in the shaded area, or throughout the room (see "Trap," above).
Attack: +8 vs. Will.
Hit: The character is bombarded with frightening dream images and psychic trauma. He takes 1d10+3 psychic damage and is dazed (save ends).
Effect: The dream tendrils provide concealment in the same area in which they can make attacks. (Targeting a concealed creature with a melee or ranged attack imposes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.)

Tactics: Roniko uses his *hypnotic breath* on his opponents, catching as many as he can while still remaining safely removed from melee. (He isn't particularly concerned about catching Hoi-ya or the skeletons in the area, though he'd rather not.) The skeletons charge into close combat, and once they're there, Roniko moves forward to flank. He attempts to use his morningstar to knock enemies into the dream tendrils.

The skeletons mark fighter types to make it more difficult for them to attack Roniko. The decrepit skeletons focus on helping their more powerful allies flank. In addition, they grab unconscious targets and drag them into the dream tendrils.

Hoi-ya willingly goes toe-to-toe with the heroes' most powerful melee character. Indeed, the shogoon moves into the PCs' midst, fighting in the thick of things, where his *cherry blossoms in the wind* and *combat directives* powers are most effective.

If the heroes reduce Roniko to 50 hit points after his *big badass* resurrection, he uses *gaseous form* to escape out the window, vowing revenge. If he flees or if the PCs slay him, the dream tendrils vanish from the room and, if the PCs succeeded on the skill challenge, Hoi-ya snaps out of his trance.

Loot: Hoi-ya wears a +2 *amulet of health* (level 8) over his breastplate. A small chest of lacquered wood is hidden behind one of the rice paper screens (a DC 10 Perception check locates it); inside is a pile of gold coins and jewelry items worth a total of 700 gp. The chest itself is worth 100 gp.

HOI-YA, SHOGOON DAIMYO	LEVEL 6 ELITE SOLDIER (LEADER)
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 500
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +6; low-light vision	
HP 144; Bloodied 72	
AC 22; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 21	
Speed 6	
⊕ Longspear (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon	
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC, 1d10+4 damage and make another longspear attack against the same target.	
‡ Stingray Pierces the Hunter (standard; recharge 5,6) ◆ Weapon	
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 3d10+4 damage and the target is slowed and cannot shift until the end of Hoi-ya's next turn.	
⊕ Cherry Blossoms in the Wind (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ◆ Weapon	
Close burst 2; Hoi-ya makes a longspear attack against each enemy in the burst.	
Combat Directives	
Allies within 5 squares can shift as a minor action. They deal an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target they have combat advantage against.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Athletics +12, Diplomacy +11, Insight +11, Stealth +11	
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 16 (+6) Wis 16 (+6)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 15 (+5) Cha 16 (+6)
Equipment helmet, longspear, amulet	

XP Award: If the PCs succeed in the skill challenge, award them XP as if they had defeated Hoi-ya in combat (500 XP). If they fail, they really do have to defeat him in combat to earn the reward.

Victory!

After the heroes slay or route Roniko, the adventure is over. If they killed Hoi-ya, the shogoon's body dissolves into shadow, leaving behind only his helmet and the *amulet of health* +2, and the castle becomes gradually more unreal; the heroes have 10 minutes to leave the place or be transported, along with the castle, to the Rathayans' home plane.

If the heroes defeated Hoi-ya in combat but left him alive, the diplomatic situation is tricky. Hoi-ya respects their strength, but (assuming the heroes failed the skill challenge) he still doesn't trust them. Roniko's influence over the shogoon was too strong. For the PCs to convince him to reconsider an alliance requires some skillful verbal maneuvering — perhaps another skill challenge (this one only of complexity level 3).

If the heroes succeeded on the skill challenge, then Hoi-ya is impressed by their strength and their offer. He is grateful to them for defeating the treacherous Roniko. He gives them his +2 *amulet of health*, the chest of riches, and — perhaps most valuable of all — his friendship.

The heroes probably return to the city of Arnatha in triumph: They defeated the extraplanar invaders! Their rewards can be lavish or spare, but they should feel like *heroes*. Their fame spreads.

Further Adventures

The events in *A Fistful of Zinjas* can lead to future adventures, such as the following:

- ◇ If Roniko escapes, he harbors an even bigger grudge than he had before. He bends his efforts toward making the duchy of Arnatha and especially the heroes pay for their crimes against him.
- ◇ The Rathayans present numerous opportunities for adventure. If the heroes successfully broker an alliance between these creatures and Arnatha, perhaps they must help the Rathayans with a problem in their home plane. The heroes might need to clean out a den of monsters close to where the Rathayans would like to place their castle. Alternatively, if the adventure ended with sour feelings between the Rathayans and the PCs, the Rathayans could send a larger, more dangerous force to attack Arnatha.
- ◇ The prisoners in area 5, the elves in area 11, Maretta in area 10, and Roniko are good spots to plant hints for the next adventure you have planned. A treasure map or piece of incriminating evidence could be found in these areas or on these NPCs. Perhaps the presence of these characters is more than happenstance; perhaps they knew the heroes would show up and were waiting for them.

APPENDIX 1

NEW MONSTERS

Zinja

Zinjas are agile warriors composed of shadow stuff. Most of them are weak and come at the enemy in droves; they are the lowest caste and frontline soldiers of the shadowy Rathayan humanoids that, some say, dwell in the shadows between worlds. Some zinjas rise above their fellows and achieve positions of authority and respect.

Zinjas resemble humans wrapped in dark clothes of grays and black, the edges of their bodies sometimes losing distinction and progressing to wispy shadow. Zinjas wield slender, shining swords and throw flashing shuriken. Their shuriken make frightful buzzing sounds as they slice the air.

ZINJA LAMER	LEVEL 4 MINION
Medium shadow animate	XP 44

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15

Speed 8 (earth walk)

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 5 damage.

⊕ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 6/12; +9 vs. AC; 3 damage.

The Phoenix Descends (when reduced to 0 hit points)

The creature that reduced the zinja to 0 hit points slides the zinja up to 3 spaces. Then make a secondary attack. Secondary Attack: Close blast 1; +5 vs. Reflex; 1 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common

Skills Acrobatics +6, Stealth +6

Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+4)

Con 13 (+3) **Int** 6 (+0) **Cha** 6 (+0)

Equipment longsword, 5 shuriken



Zinja Lamer Tactics

Zinjas in general are not particularly intelligent, and lamers are the dimmest of the bunch. They eagerly follow the orders of other Rathayans, assuming (correctly) that they know better. Bereft of such leadership, zinjas come at their enemies en masse, leaping and flipping through the air, bouncing off walls, brandishing their swords, and flinging their shuriken. They spread out as best they can, wary of area attacks that can wipe them out. This problem is compounded by the fact that zinjas explode in multicolored bursts when they die; zinja lamers are resigned to the fact that, when one of them goes down, several others will probably be joining him.

ZINJA SHINOBI	LEVEL 4 SKIRMISHER
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 175
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +4; low-light vision	
HP 53; Bloodied 26	
AC 19; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Speed 8 (earth walk)	
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage.	
⊕ Shuriken (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +9 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage.	
⊕ Swift as the Shadow (standard; at-will)	
♦ Teleportation, Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the zinja shinobi teleports up to 2 squares and makes a secondary attack with its longsword.	
Combat Advantage	
The zinja shinobi deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Acrobatics +13, Stealth +13	
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment longsword, 5 shuriken	

Zinja Shinobi Tactics

Zinja shinobis, more intelligent and skilled than their lamer brethren, use their Stealth training, earth walk, and swift as the shadow power to gain combat advantage, often by flanking their opponents. One of their favorite tactics is for two of them to flank an enemy and use swift as the shadow to attack, then teleport into each other's previous flanking positions and attack again.

Zinja Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Zinjas are members of a shadowy group of humanoids called Rathayans. Zinjas are of the lowest caste; their job is to distract and harry their enemies while the more powerful Rathayans prepare advanced tactics. Zinjas are highly acrobatic, and this trait allows them to ignore most difficult terrain.

DC 20: You don't want to be near a zinja when it dies: Some of them blow up.

DC 25: Sometimes, a zinja rises above its fellows and breaks the caste barrier. These individuals must be exceptional to reach such heights, and they are fearsome opponents; they use their agility and stealth to excellent advantage and are able to walk between shadows.

Encounter Group

Level 4 Encounter:

- 8 zinja lamers (level 4 minion).
- 3 zinja shinobis (level 4 skirmisher).

Shogoon

Shogoons are the Rathayan equivalent of feudal lords: dukes, earls, counts, or the like. They are also trained as warriors and commanders. Many lead troops into battle — although experienced varnai commanders sometimes eclipse them in martial skill. Most shogoons have small fortresses and either control or scout the surrounding countryside.

The bodies of shogoons are composed of shaped darkness; they appear to be wearing armor similar to that of varnai (below). Their helmets are more elaborate, and most wield long-bladed spears. They sometimes wear banners similar to those of varnai; many shogoons were varnai before they ascended.

Also like the varnai, shogoons tend to be honorable. However, they aren't as uncompromising as the varnai; as leaders, they cannot afford to be. They have more concerns and responsibilities than other Rathayans. Most of them are skilled diplomats.

SHOGOON DAIMYO Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 6 ELITE SOLDIER (LEADER) XP 500
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +6; low-light vision HP 144; Bloodied 72 AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 19 Speed 6	
⊕ Longspear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage and make a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +13 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.	
‡ Stingray Pierces the Hunter (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 3d10+4 damage and the target is slowed and cannot shift until the end of the shogoon daimyo's next turn.	
⊗ Cherry Blossoms in the Wind (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Weapon Close burst 2; the shogoon daimyo makes a longspear attack against each enemy in the burst.	
Combat Directives Allies within 5 squares can shift as a minor action. They deal an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target they have combat advantage against.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common Skills Athletics +12, Diplomacy +11, Insight +11, Stealth +11 Str 19 (+7) Dex 16 (+6) Wis 16 (+6) Con 16 (+6) Int 15 (+5) Cha 16 (+6) Equipment helmet, longspear	

Shogoon Tactics

Shogoons enter combat surrounded by their soldiers, allowing their combat directives to be most effective. They use stingray pierces the hunter to stop athletic characters from maneuvering or to keep an enemy in an advantageous position. A shogoon usually rushes into the midst of his enemies to use cherry blossoms in the wind, then backs off and tries to fight one-on-one.

Shogoon Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Shogoons are members of a shadowy group of humanoids called Rathayans. Shogoons are members of one of the highest castes; they rule over other Rathayans and guide them in battle. They are feudal lords.

DC 20: Shogoons are skilled combatants and able commanders. A strike from their longspear can pin an enemy in place. At their most dangerous, their spears are flashing whirlwinds, stabbing at all nearby enemies.

DC 25: Shogoons rule other Rathayans. Most have small fortresses or castles. They have some independence from the Rathayan government and often negotiate with other groups.

Encounter Group

Level 5 Encounter:

- 1 shogoon daimyo (level 6 elite soldier).
- 6 zinja lamers (level 4 minion).
- 2 zinja shinobis (level 4 skirmisher).

Varnai

Varnai are the fighting elite of Rathay society. They are trained in battle and command from their genesis, and they carry out their duties well. They lead from the front lines, directing their troops to best effect. All who have faced them, however, know that the varnai's biggest threat is their own blades, not the zinjans they command.

Like other Rathayans, the bodies of varnai seem to be composed of shadow and gray, otherworldly material. For the varnai, these trappings take the form of elaborate, almost ceremonial armor, including a distinctive helmet. Most varnai helmets include masks depicting fearsome visages. These are intended to inspire fear and prevent their enemies from seeing the varnai's expressions. When entering large combats, varnai

often wear small banners strapped to the backs so that their troops can identify them on the battlefield.

Enemies might take some comfort in knowing that, unlike the zinja caste, varnai are possessed of impeccable honor. They follow a strict code of mental and physical purity, and believe that all creatures are worthy of respect — right before they chop their heads off.

When varnai die, their forms dissipate into shadowy mist, leaving only their helmets, bereft of mask, rolling on the ground.

VARNAI WARRIOR Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 4 ELITE SOLDIER XP 350
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +4; low-light vision HP 108; Bloodied 54 AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 18 Speed 6	
⊕ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +12 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.	
‡ Sunlight from the Mirror (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent foe attacks the varnai warrior; at-will) ♦ Weapon +12 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage and target suffers -4 to the triggering attack.	
Mounted Combat When the varnai rides a creature, it gains access to any special mount abilities it confers to its rider. In addition, the creature can make any Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, or Stealth checks with the varnai's base skill check bonus rather than its own.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common Str 18 (+6) Dex 15 (+4) Wis 15 (+4) Con 14 (+4) Int 11 (+2) Cha 12 (+3) Equipment helmet, greatsword	

Varnai Warrior Tactics

In combat, a varnai warrior chooses an opponent and remains on him. They target melee opponents to take advantage of sunlight from the mirror and rely on their allies to handle enemies with ranged attacks.

VARNAI BATTLE COMMANDER Medium shadow humanoid	LEVEL 7 ELITE SOLDIER (LEADER) XP 600
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +6; low-light vision HP 160; Bloodied 80 AC 23; Fortitude 23, Reflex 21, Will 22 Speed 6	
⊕ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +15 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage.	
‡ The Brutal Shadow (immediate interrupt, whenever an enemy shifts or moves away from an adjacent space; at-will) ♦ Weapon +15 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage and the varnai battle commander can shift into the space the enemy occupied.	
Wasps Attack the Bear (standard; recharge 5, 6) The varnai battle commander and all allies within 2 squares can make a melee or ranged basic attack.	
The Hive Responds (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter) The varnai battle commander's wasps attack the bear power recharges, and the varnai uses it immediately.	
Mounted Combat When the varnai rides a creature, it gains access to any special mount abilities it confers to its rider. In addition, the creature can make any Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, or Stealth checks with the varnai's base skill check bonus rather than its own.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +7 Str 19 (+7) Dex 14 (+5) Wis 16 (+6) Con 16 (+6) Int 12 (+4) Cha 14 (+5) Equipment helmet, greatsword	

Varnai Battle Commander Tactics

Varnai battle commanders stride into melee combat, preferably surrounded by a small army of lesser warriors. They use wasps attack the bear to bring down single tough targets. If paired with a more powerful melee combatant, the varnai battle commander uses wasps attack the bear to grant that creature extra attacks.

Varnai Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Varnai are members of a shadowy group of humanoids called Rathayans. Varnai are members of the middle caste; they are expert warriors and commanders. They are often found commanding the lower caste (zinjas) in combat, and they are powerful melee combatants. Some ride rage drakes into battle.

Encounter Groups

Level 7 Encounter:

- 1 varnai battle commander (level 7 elite soldier).
- 4 rage drakes (level 5 brute).

Level 10 Encounter:

- 4 varnai warriors (level 4 elite soldier)
- 1 varnai battle commander (level 7 elite soldier)
- 7 zinja lamers (level 4 minion)
- 1 zinja shinobi (level 4 skirmisher)



APPENDIX 2

NEW HAZARD

SHADOWSPORE

Hazard

LEVEL 2 OBSTACLE

XP 175

Related to the doomspore, shadowspores resemble blasted trunks of dark trees, broken off three to four feet from the ground. Moss grows on its side, and a few spindly branches reach up from the hollow trunk.

Hazard

A shadowspore fills a square (the square is difficult terrain). When triggered, it releases a cloud of spores.

Perception

No check is necessary to notice the wasted tree trunk.

Additional Skill: Nature

DC 20: The character identifies the tree trunk as a shadowspore.

Trigger

When a character enters a square of a shadowspore, or kicks it or pokes at it from an adjacent square, or attacks it in any way, it releases a cloud of spores. A character in the initial burst or that begins its turn in a shadowspore cloud is attacked by the poison.

Attack

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Creature in burst.

Attack: +6 vs. Fortitude.

Hit: 1d10 poison damage. A bloodied character instead takes 1d10 poison damage and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Effect: The cloud provides concealment for creatures inside it. It persists until the end of the encounter or for 5 minutes. Once a shadowspore creates a cloud, it can't create another one for 24 hours.

Countermeasure

A character can move into a shadowspore's square without triggering the cloud by making a DC 25 Nature check. The character's move must end in the shadowspore's square.

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