

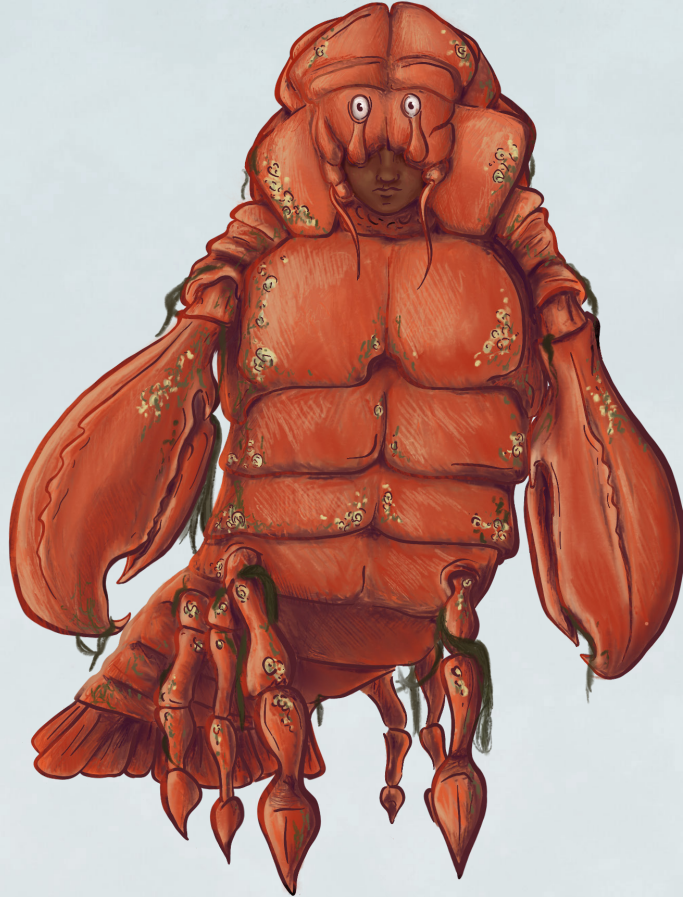
**TOMB OF ANNIHILATION**

# **CURSE OF THE ALDANI**



Expanded content for the Aldani Basin in Tomb of Annihilation  
Chapter 2: The Land of Chult

# CURSE OF THE ALDANI



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## INTRODUCTION

Far from the safety of Port Nyanzaru is the homeland of the cursed aldani people.

Known only from legends, the lobsterfolk are descendants of the aldani tribe who invoked the wrath of Ubtao. Now these people hide in the lakes and rivers of the Aldani Basin from civilization. One aldani has discovered means to lift the curse and restore her people's humanity, but threats within their tribe stand to doom the aldani to be cursed forever and the mindless undead creep ever closer.

This supplement to *Tomb of Annihilation* expands on the location the Aldani Basin from Chapter 2: The Land of Chult. It is meant to make this location more exciting and manageable for both the DM and the players. The document includes:

**Battlemaps**, providing a tactical encounter experience within the Aldani Basin.

**A New Location**, Nephropia, providing characters a fun way to interact with some aldani.

**New Flora**, see how your characters make tactical use of ling nuts, the natural water caltrops.

**Adventure Hooks**, tailored to give a natural start to the adventure in your *Tomb of Annihilation* game.

**Expanded History & Lore**, which elaborates on the history and culture of the aldani people who live in the Aldani Basin.

## USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

This supplement provides several new ideas on how to run the Aldani Basin from *Tomb of Annihilation*. It is useful to first read the section about this location in the official campaign book before reading this supplement as well as reviewing the information about the Heart of Ubtao.

As always, it is up to you how much of the content you want to use. It's perfectly fine to use some parts of this supplement while discarding others, or simply let the ideas presented here inspire new ideas of your own.

This supplement assumes a party of 4–6 characters of 3–4th level. More powerful parties will have an easier time with the challenges within.

## QUICK OVERVIEW

The characters will encounter the aldani tribe while exploring the Aldani Basin. A young shaman named Koura will enlist the party to help break the curse placed upon her people, which changed them into lobsterfolk. She asks the party to help her recover two lobsters (animal lobsters) from an underground pool somewhere near the floating earthmote, the Heart of Ubtao. The party will travel from Koura's village to the Heart of Ubtao and will face monsters both living and undead along the way.

Once they reach the Heart of Ubtao, they will find a cave entrance near where the red water is trickling down from above. Within the cave, the characters find a pool with two living lobsters in it. At the pool, the characters find out that they were followed by a group of aldani that want to maintain the status quo and their power within the tribe. The party must protect the lobsters from the brutes who want to stop Koura from breaking the curse. After recovering the lobsters, the party will face a final threat before Koura can return to the Aldani Basin with the lobsters to break the curse.

### Monster References

The following monsters are used in this supplement:

- **aldani** (TOA, 210) – Members of the aldani tribe from Chult whose ancestors were cursed by the god Ubtao a long time ago to cause them to resemble humanoid lobsters.
- **aldani shaman** – An aldani with druidic powers.
- **aldani brute** – A particularly strong and aggressive aldani.
- **deinonychus zombie** – An undead dinosaur that is a larger cousin of the velociraptor with deadly claws and teeth.
- **ghast** (Basic Rules, 311) – A more powerful ghoul with a long tongue and horrible stench.
- **ghoul** (Basic Rules, 130) – An undead humanoid that roams in packs, driven by an insatiable hunger for humanoid flesh.
- **hadrosaurus** (TOA, 224) – A semi-quadrupedal herbivore dinosaur recognizable by its bony head crest.
- **iron lobster** – A lobster whose shell has been enhanced by absorbing metals from spending centuries in a pool beneath the Heart of Ubtao.
- **skeleton** (Basic Rules, 152) – A mindless undead creature made only of bones.
- **spinosaurus** – A large carnivorous dinosaur that dwells in marshy areas. It has a long snout, powerful claws and a large sail on its back.
- **spinosaurus zombie** – An undead zombie spinosaurus.
- **zombie** (Basic Rules, 161) – A mindless undead creature.

### Dramatis Personae

The following characters from *Tomb of Annihilation* and new in this supplement are referenced in this document:

- **Commander Niles Breakbone** (TOA, 47) – Human commander of the Order of the Gauntlet at Camp Vengeance.
- **Koura** – The aldani shaman of Nephropia who wants to break the curse upon her people.
- **Kutu** – An aldani brute who enjoys his position of power amongst the aldani due to his strength..
- **Nanny Pu'pu** (TOA, 72) – The green hag living in Mbala.
- **Ubtao** (TOA, 210) – The god of Chult who cursed the aldani people a long time ago.
- **Valindra Shadowmantle** (TOA, 58) – An elven lich who works for the Red Wizards tasked with finding the Soulmonger.

### Official Material References

The supplement references *Tomb of Annihilation* (TOA) followed by a page number as a recommendation for further reading.

## ALDANI BASIN

This adventure takes place in the Aldani Basin on the Chultan peninsula. The Soshenstar and Tath rivers flow out of this marshy upland basin, which is a popular feeding ground for dinosaurs and swarms of biting insects. Tall plateaus and walls of dense foliage enclose the marsh.

The basin is named after the aldani, a race of lobsterfolk. Many Chultans recall childhood fables about the eerie lobsterfolk that lived in the rivers and lakes of their homeland. No reliable witnesses have reported an encounter with aldani in decades, so most Chultans believe the aldani perished. In fact, the lobsterfolk retreated to the secluded lakes of this basin, where they've kept hidden for a century.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

This section expands on a few adventure hooks from *Tomb of Annihilation* and provides a few new ones to encourage characters to visit Aldani Basin and start the adventure.

### ESCORT A PRIEST TO CAMP VENGEANCE

In Chapter 1: Port Nyanzaru, the characters may be asked to help Undril Silvertusk reach Camp Vengeance. If the party is following the quest Escort a Priest to Camp Vengeance (TOA, 17) from Port Nyanzaru, you can have Commander Niles Breakbone offer either of the following quests to the party.

- Commander Niles Breakbone has heard rumors of powerful lobsterfolk living in the Aldani Basin. He wants the characters to act as an emissary so that the lobsterfolk and the Order of the Gauntlet can join forces against the undead. If the characters successfully broker a peace with the aldani, Commander Breakbone will offer them a +1 shield or +1 weapon from one of his fallen captains at your discretion.
- Commander Niles Breakbone has heard rumors of powerful lobsterfolk living in the Aldani Basin and sent soldiers to broker an alliance with them. The soldiers never returned. If the characters are able to rescue the soldiers, Commander Breakbone will offer them a +1 shield or +1 weapon from one of his fallen captains at your discretion.

### EXPLORE THE ALDANI BASIN

In Chapter 1: Port Nyanzaru, the characters may be asked to explore the Aldani Basin with Inete, an acolyte of Savras for 100 gp. If the party is following the quest Explore Aldani Basin (TOA, 17) you can have the party run into a group of aldani a few days after they reach the Aldani Basin.

### REAGENTS FOR NANNY PU'PU

If the party is on peaceful terms with Nanny Pu'pu in Mbala (TOA, 72), you can have her ask the party to recover reagents from the Aldani Basin (or perhaps the aldani people). The particular reagent could be an aldani lobster claw, a pearl, or 2d4 cups of *Tath skullcap*, a plant that only grows in the Aldani Basin (see page 11 of this adventure).

### ALDANI RANDOM ENCOUNTER

If you are running random encounters, at any point if you roll an aldani encounter (04–07 in a river or 01–10 in a swamp on the Wilderness Encounters table on page 194, Appendix B of *Tomb of Annihilation*), you can alternatively start this adventure from Part 1 – Aldani Encounter on page 5 of this adventure.

#### Brief History of the Aldani Tribe

The following is an unofficial historical account of the Aldani Tribe based on written material in *Tomb of Annihilation*.

The aldani people were once human members of a now-extinct tribe. They were cursed by Ubtao millennia ago, as they had angered Ubtao due to their wanton overfishing of Chult's lobsters. Ubtao's punishment was for them to take the form of those they had eradicated. This event is referred to by aldani as "The Chitining".

Generations of aldani have lived as lobsterfolk, and most of them are resigned to their fate in this form, thinking that nothing can be done to lift the curse. Some of the aldani, however, have embraced their cursed form and taken on a brutish demeanor, exerting power through physical force upon adventuring parties and smaller and weaker aldani. A small number of aldani believe that they can break the curse and live a better life.

An aldani shaman, named Koura, is part of a line that has passed down the story of The Chitining and knows that restoring the lobsters to the waterways of Chult will lift the curse. They have spent generations preparing the habitat of the Aldani Basin for this restoration to ensure that such a miracle would be possible. Now their primary obstacle is that no one has seen a lobster in hundreds of years. Recently, Koura has had a vision of a red pool beneath the Heart of Ubtao that has two lobsters in it. However, the way to the pool is blocked by the hordes of undead, and there are those in power who fear this radical change in the status quo, and would seek to block Koura from success at any cost.



# THE ADVENTURE

The following sections describe the adventure, which is broken into four parts. The first part is an encounter with some of the aldani people, the second is exposition within the aldani village of Nephropia, the third is travel and gaining access to a special cave where two lobsters reside, and the fourth contains encounters within and outside the cave.

## PART 1 - ALDANI ENCOUNTER

During the journey in the Aldani Basin, at a time of your choosing, the party gets ambushed by 2 **aldani** and an **aldani brute** named **Kutu**. Usually aldani stay clear of travelers and try to peacefully push them out of the Aldani Basin, but Kutu is a bully and likes to incite violence to show off his strength. Make Dexterity (Stealth) checks for each of the aldani contested by each of the characters' passive Perception to determine surprise. Any characters who are specifically keeping an eye out for threats may make Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice the approaching aldani. When the characters notice the aldani, you can read the following text:

Suddenly you hear the sound of scuttling across the wet ground as three upright-walking human-sized lobster creatures charge towards you. Their faces appear to be mostly encased in their red shell-like armor, looking almost humanoid except for their long eyestalks.



**Marshland Battlemap.** For this combat encounter, you can have characters position themselves in their marching order somewhere near the middle of the map. The aldani approach from the direction of Nephropia. The top of the map is north. The areas of the map with water are marshy difficult terrain and the grassy rocks be elevated five feet above the marsh. You can have climbing up the rocks require a DC 10 Strength (Athletics check).

**Aldani tactics.** The aldani each go for different targets, feeling confident in their strength. Each aldani will retreat when reduced below half of their maximum hit points. If pursued, a fleeing aldani will offer a trinket worth 5 gp in exchange for being left alone.

Kutu is a NE male aldani brute that likes to assert his dominance in the tribe with strength and intimidation and, as such, he is unlikely to show cowardice and back down from a fight. When Kutu is reduced to below half of his maximum hit points, a LN female **aldani shaman** named **Koura** arrives to break up the fight. Kutu demands that the wretched characters leave the Aldani Basin, but Koura insists that they may be useful in helping to defeat the spinosaurus that has been prowling around and asks them to come back to their village, Nephropia.

If the characters are hesitant to accept Koura's invitation, she says that her people often find treasures in the marshland and would be happy to share them with the characters in exchange for their help. If the characters are more interested in information than treasures, Koura will suggest the characters return to her hut where she can share what information she knows about the surrounding lands.

If the characters killed one of the aldani, Koura will suggest they bring the body back to Nephropia and scolds Kutu saying something to the effect of "this is why we scare first, bribe second, and fight third." She knows that Kutu is aggressive and likely started the fight with the adventurers.

### Roleplaying the Aldani

The aldani are reclusive xenophobes. When disturbed, they try to frighten intruders away without killing them, or even offer bribes in exchange for being left alone. Some aldani have grown distant from their humanity over time. These brutes come from bloodlines of stronger, more aggressive aldani who assert their dominance in the simple society. They are less peaceful towards trespassers than other aldani, and all aldani know better than to challenge their authority. You can roleplay aldani brutes as tough bullies of average intelligence who are very concerned about maintaining the appearance of strength.

In stark contrast to these ruffians are aldani shamans. Magic is uncommon and mistrusted by the aldani, due to their curse. However, the few shamans among their people demonstrate its usefulness. Simple spells such as *mold earth*, *druidcraft*, and *shape water* are used to manage their aquaculture complexes and villages by performing more dexterous tasks than claws would otherwise allow. You can roleplay Koura, the shaman, as a wise and caring individual, who acts for the good of the community and is able to see outsiders as more than simple threats.



**KOURA, SHAMAN OF THE ALDANI TRIBE**

## PART 2 - NEPHROPIA

The aldani live in many small villages throughout the Aldani Basin, with varying levels of inundation. Nephropia is a muddy collection of centralized huts surrounded by a complex system of pools and channels devoted to food production. As the characters get close to the outskirts of Nephropia, you can read the following text:

The muddy pathway emerges into a small rise. A half-mile wide complex of labyrinthine channels and pools, with the huts of the village visible on the other side can be seen ahead. These waterways are teeming with small aquatic creatures and plants. A few thousand feet to the west a herd of huge, long-necked reptiles lazily grazes on marsh grasses. The constant buzzing of insects has become almost deafening in this area. Some lobsterfolk harvest the various plants and fish in these paddies, pausing to stare at you. Lobsterfolk children shout and throw darts at the small flying dinosaurs that prove too stubborn to flee, and suddenly dive into the water when they notice you.

Characters proficient in the Nature skill, may notice that channels near to the village have earthworks devoted to regulating water levels. The pools contain a variety of edible creatures including catfish, snails, eels, carp, and baitfish. In other pools, the aldani grow rice, lotus, ling nuts, and a variety of greens and berries.

When the party arrives at the central portion of Nephropia, you can read the following text:

The channel cuts right through the middle of the village. Lining the canal are thatch and mud huts set right into the mud. The huts lack doors and feature wide thresholds. A few stilted silos rise above the mud here and there. The channel terminates in a circle around a mound at the center of the village, where a raised bed of dried mud emerges from the waterline. Benches of dried mud and thatch form concentric rings around the apex of this small hill.

Most of the houses are in similar condition, of thatch and mud, with large doorways to accommodate the aldani's bulk and have no doors, which aldani claws would be unable to operate. The center of the village is on a raised bed of dried mud, with benches shaped from mud and thatch allowing for centralized meetings to take place.

When the characters enter Nephropia, aldani emerge from their huts carrying small shiny worthless trinkets hoping to bribe the characters into leaving. Koura explains to the village folk that she brought the characters to the village to help deal with the spinosaurus that has been raiding ponds and attacking foragers in the area. This is only a partial lie as several aldani have recently been eaten by a ferocious spinosaurus wandering the basin's outskirts. She would love for the characters to help with that issue as well, but she has a bigger mission in mind for them.



## KOURA'S VISION

Koura will lead the characters to her hut. Koura has recently taken up the mantle of the tribe's shaman. Through her training, Koura learned the tale of how the Chitining was the result of her people's overfishing of lobster and has carried on the tradition of trying to teach her people sustainability. She believes wholeheartedly that the solution to the curse is to repopulate the lobsters of the Aldani Basin, but nobody has seen a lobster in centuries.

Once the characters are in the privacy of her hovel, Koura shares with the party that she has been seeing visions of a subterranean red pool with two healthy lobsters living within it. She knows that the only red water in the region is what drips down from the Heart of Ubtao, but the area is full of undead. She begs the characters for their help and offers them her most valued treasure, a necklace with five pearls passed down from her elders. Four of the pearls on the necklace are worth 100 gp each and the fifth is a pearl of power.

If questioned about why she wishes to have the curse lifted, Koura will explain the obvious limitations of having claws rather than hands. Her people can barely build structures and lack the anatomy to use tools or weapons to help them adapt and survive.

Koura offers to lead the party to the Heart of Ubtao and asks that they not share the true goal of their mission with the other aldani. She informs them that many of the aldani are resigned to their fate as lobsterfolk, and those that follow Kutu would be certain to interfere with any efforts to upset the status quo, where the strongest aldani hold the power.

### Aldani Knowledge

While the characters are in Nephropia, they have an opportunity to help Aldani people with various tasks such as crafting nets, hunting, and building. Be sure to highlight the challenges the Aldani experience by not having fingers or hands. If the characters make a good impression, you can have the Aldani warm up to the outsiders and share local knowledge about the jungle, locations around Aldani Basin, and knowledge of the jungle flora including *citronella*, *ling nuts* and *Tath skullcap* (see page 11).

## TRADE IN NEPHROPIA

The aldani have no need for or interest in gold, but potentially have a number of things for trade. After characters leave Port Nyanzaru, there are almost no opportunities for characters to offload loot and for casters to pick up spell components. At your discretion, the aldani can have the following items for trade:

- A limited supply of nonperishable adventuring gear from Chapter 5 Player's Handbook that explorers may have lost or died with in the jungle.
- Spell components including: charcoal, incense and herb mixture (*find familiar*), diamonds (*chromatic orb*, *nondetection*, etc.), marked bones (*augury*), and pearls (*identify*). At your discretion more items may be available.
- Jungle flora from Appendix C of *Tomb of Annihilation* plus species native to the Aldani Basin from this supplement including *citronella*, *ling nuts*, and *Tath skullcap*.
- Trained **hadrosauruses** for use as pack animals.

Aldani will generally value things with practical use such as nets, animal hides, and jungle plants. In addition, characters with hands and fingers may be able to help the aldani with various tasks for a day's worth of work to earn credit for trading.

## PART 3 - TRAVEL TO THE POOL

The Heart of Ubtao is 50 miles southeast of Nephropia. If the party is traveling with Koura or if it is a clear day when the Heart of Ubtao is visible in the sky, you can have the party forgo Wisdom (Survival) checks as the chances of getting lost are minimal.



Additionally, if you are using random encounters, you can have Koura steer the party clear of creature encounters or use her *Speak with Animals* spell to convince wandering beasts that they mean no harm for the first 30 miles. Once the characters have reached the 30 mile mark, Koura informs them that they are moving into undead territory and should be on their guard. At this point, you can use either of the following encounters during the last 20 miles of travel to set the mood or tax the party's resources before running the Quicksand or Tall Grass encounters later in the day:

**Ghouls.** Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher hears and smells a ghoulish pack approaching, consisting of 3 **ghouls** led by a **ghast** (4 ghouls if the party is level 4). The ghast has a blue triangle tattooed on its forehead — an indicator that it once served Ras Nsi.

**Zombies.** Characters catch the scent of death on the air and hear the undead lumbering through the jungle. A horde of 5 **zombies** and 5 **skeletons** approaches (or 6 of each if the party is level 4).

### QUICKSAND ENCOUNTER

On the day when the party is traveling between the 30 and 40 mile mark, you can run the following encounter during daytime travel. The party suddenly realizes that they have wandered into an area of quicksand. Anyone specifically keeping watch must succeed a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to avoid stepping in it. Anyone not keeping watch with a passive Perception below 15 finds themselves in one of the corners of a 10 by 10-foot pit of quicksand. Have everyone, including Koura, roll initiative. At the start of each creature's turn, it sinks 1d4 + 1 feet into the quicksand and becomes restrained. At the start of each of the creature's turns thereafter, it sinks another 1d4 feet. As long as the creature is not completely submerged

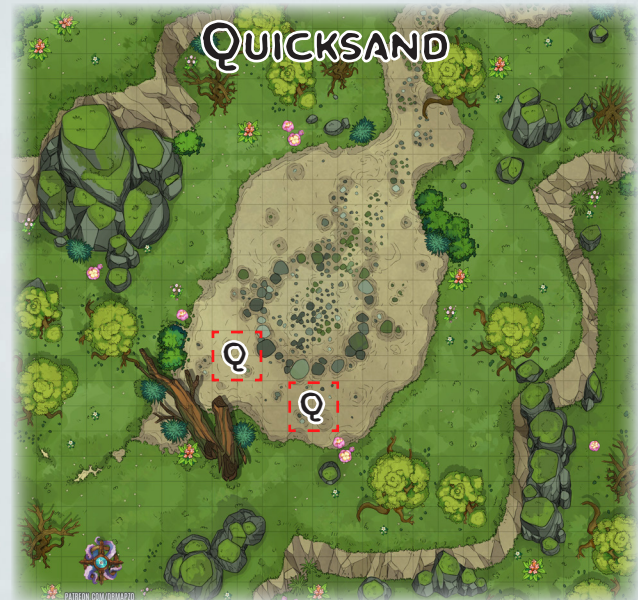
in quicksand, it can escape by using its action and succeeding on a Strength check. The DC is 10 plus the number of feet the creature has sunk into the quicksand. A creature that is completely submerged in quicksand cannot breathe.

### Suffocation Rules

A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath or is choking, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again.

A creature can pull another creature within its reach out of a quicksand pit by using its action and succeeding on a Strength check. The DC is 5 plus the number of feet the target creature has sunk into the quicksand. The *Mold Earth* spell can cause a creature stuck in quicksand to rise up to 5 feet, and removes the restrained condition for one round.

A lone **spinosaurus** is prowling nearby and hears the commotion. It arrives during the first round of initiative while the party is scrambling to escape the quicksand and attacks on the second round.



**Quicksand Battlemap.** You can assume characters approach from the bottom-left. When the characters wander into the quicksand, you can have them position themselves in the central muddy area on the map. You can draw 10x10-foot boxes around each of the characters that failed to notice the quicksand to represent areas of quicksand (examples shown with a 'Q' on the map). You can rule that other areas are more stable ground or place additional quicksand areas as you wish. The **spinosaurus** approaches from the top-right.

### TALL GRASS ENCOUNTER

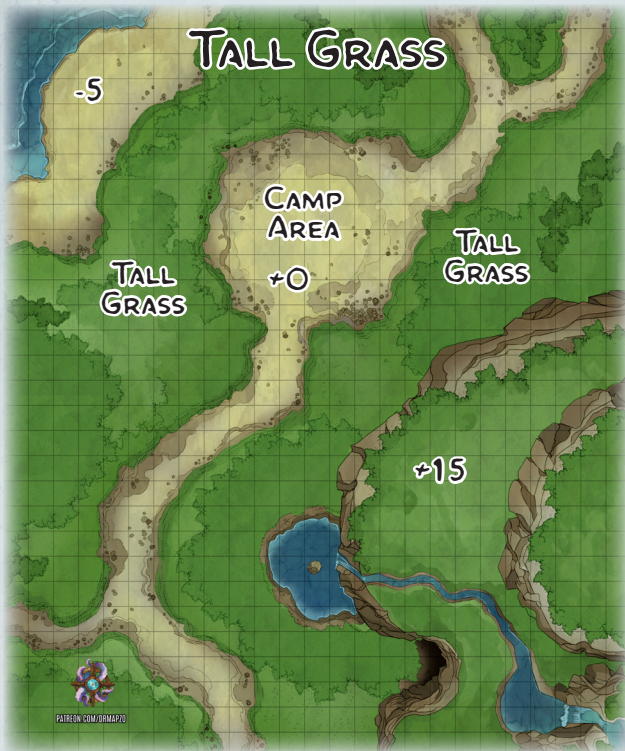
On the last day before the party reaches the Heart of Ubtao, you can run the following encounter when the party makes camp.

After another long day of travel, the marsh of the Aldani Basin gives way to tall grassland and small shrubs. The sturdy soil provides respite from the mushy ground of the marshes. The Heart of Ubtao hangs in the sky a few miles to the southeast and a few hundred feet in the air as the sunlight fades.

During the night, a pack of 4 **deinonychus zombies** sneak up and attack from the tall grass (five if the party is level 4).

During the first round of combat, each deinonychus will attempt to knock characters prone using their pounce feature and then grapple their victim. Creatures standing in the grass are lightly obscured from creatures more than 10 feet away.

During the second round of combat, any deinonychus that have a creature grappled will drag it into the tall grass before making attacks. Creatures that are prone or being dragged through the tall grass are heavily obscured from creatures more than 10 feet away.



**Tall Grass Battlemap.** You can assume the party made camp in the area labeled 'Camp Area' and that the surrounding green areas on the map are tall grass. For added terrain elements, you can have the raised area on the bottom right side of the map be 15 feet high and require a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. The area to the top left of the map descends towards the water and is 5 feet lower than the camp area.



## PART 4 - THE EVERRUST POOL

After 50 miles travel the characters near the Heart of Ubtao and the cave. Centuries ago the cave was referred to as Everrust Cave due to the rusty colored water, but the name has since been lost to time. Once the characters near the Heart of Ubtao, you can read the description presented on page 58 of *Tomb of Annihilation*:

A massive chunk of earth and rock torn from the earth drifts over the swampy forest, about two hundred feet above the ground. A petrified tree towers above the stone, with its stone roots protruding from the bottom. Between the shape of the rock and the branching of the tree's limbs, it creates the impression of a gigantic stone heart hanging in the sky. The impression is only made more gruesome by the red liquid dripping from the roots.

You see a cave mouth in the side of the slowly rotating "heart," and a staircase winding from the cave up to the flattened top where the petrified tree stands. The staircase definitely isn't natural; it was carved with tools into the rock.

### OUTSIDE OF EVERRUST CAVE

Koura knows from her vision that the pool they are looking for has red water and proposes searching beneath the heart. When the characters are roughly below the heart, you can read the following description of the cave entrance.

A small, shallow pool of red water sits beneath the heart. Vegetation grows more sparsely in this area. A rocky cave entrance lies just a few paces north of the pool.

You can have players position themselves on the Cave Entrance Battlemap from page 10 of this adventure as they are investigating the scene, but there is no combat encounter here yet (see Leaving the Cave).

The pool contains water rich in iron, which gives it the red color. There are no living creatures visible in the pool, though a close examination by a character proficient in Nature will reveal inedible but harmless brine shrimp and algae. The water is safe to drink, but has a fairly metallic taste. In the past, visitors to the Heart of Ubtao would toss coins into this pool from above. Siltation has buried most of these coins over time, but they can be uncovered with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check by anyone searching the bottom of the pool.

**Treasure.** The pool contains 80 gold pieces, 5 turquoise gems worth 10 gp each, and a ring of swimming.

### WATCHED FROM ABOVE

While the characters are considering the outside of the cave, Valindra Shadowmantle observes them from atop the heart under the effect of greater invisibility. In fact, Valindra has been keeping an eye on the party since they crossed into undead territory. After finding the corpse of the spinosaurus defeated by the party in Part 3, Valindra decided to reanimate the beast as a zombie for later use. She may be curious to test the strength of the adventurers and observe their combat prowess firsthand before forming an alliance with them to find the Soulmonger.



## PUZZLE DOOR

10 feet inside the cave, the party comes to a stone wall with a hidden door.

Just within the mouth of the cave lies a stone wall with an inscription etched above a circular maze.

The inscription is written in Common and reads:

Thicker than water,  
Trickles of red,  
Trace with a finger,  
To prove you're not dead.

A character who pricks their finger to draw blood and traces the maze causes the outline of a door to appear on the stone wall for an hour. The stone door is unlocked and can be opened by pushing on it. From inside the cave, the door is always visible and can be opened by pulling on the natural rocks. The riddle not only kept out undead for centuries, but also kept out *aldani* because they lack fingers to trace with.

## INSIDE EVERRUST CAVE

When the party enters the cave, you can reveal Battlemap 4. Have the players position themselves as they investigate the cave. Additionally, you can read the following description:

A dark tunnel meanders underground, a dim glow from deep within is just visible as the corridor turns. Water droplets stick to the stone as the warm air from above gives way to the cool, damp air of the cave. Pale moss and fungi form patches along the sides of the path, which opens into a vaulted, wide cavern. From the ceiling hang bead-like threads of dimly glowing blue-green luminescence. In the center of this cavern is a small pool of red water, fed by five small, slow streams flowing from small openings in the chamber's walls.

Resting in the pool are 2 **iron lobsters**. The lobsters haven't successfully bred because the iron in the water kills the eggs. However, the lobsters also never get sick because of the chemical and magical properties of the water so they have managed to live for hundreds of years without reproducing.

Upon close inspection, unhatched eggs can be seen floating in the water, which make food for the other denizens of the cave. The flora and fauna of the cave can provide several material spell components including: bat guano (for *fireball*) and fur (for *darkness*), phosphorescent moss (for *light*), cave crickets (for *sleep* and *jump*), and glowworms (for *dancing lights*).

Once the party is situated in the cave, Koura uses *Speak with Animals* to communicate with the lobsters that the party means them no harm.

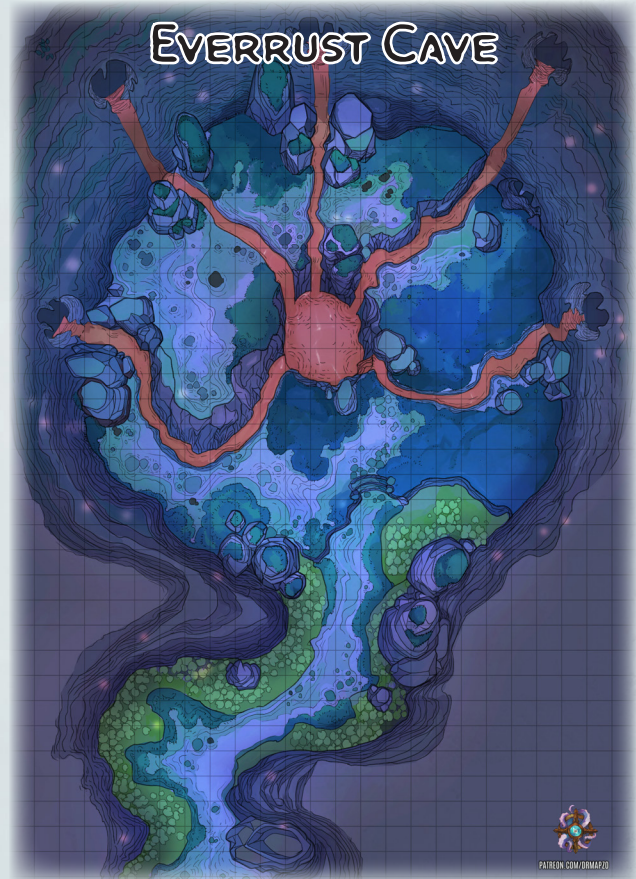
**Drinking from the pool.** Any creature who drinks the red water from the pool is cured of any disease they currently suffer from, but must succeed a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for an hour. If the check fails by more than 5, the creature is incapacitated for a minute as it experiences a fit of vomiting.

## CLAWS OUT

Once Koura collects the lobsters, the party notices a group of *aldani* enter the cave behind them.

Kutu, flanked by several smaller *aldani* stand at the entrance of the cavern. "Koura, you scrawny little rabble rouser. Whatever you're doing with those lobsters, I know it can't be any good - you lied to the village! You follow the guidance of a useless teacher so old and weak his shell rotted and cracked! You bring in these dangerous outsiders against all our traditions! This cannot be allowed, whatever it is! Your job is supposed to be making sure the crops grow, and that's it! We're going to make sure that's all you do. Crush the lobsters and let's be done with these squishies."

**Kutu** is accompanied by 3 **aldani** followers. Their main objective is to kill the lobsters. Koura will attempt to put herself between the assailants and the lobsters, guarding the lobsters and supporting the party. During the combat, the *aldani* aggressors will attempt to reduce Koura to zero hit points, knocking her out. Once Koura is knocked out for the first time, they then attack the lobsters directly.



**Everrust Cave Battlemap.** The cave is dimly lit. The pool is shallow, but is 5 feet below the rest of the cave floor. The ceiling within the cave is 8 feet high in the tunnel and 15 feet high in the main chamber. The walls have plenty of handholds and can be climbed with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. If player characters were not already on the map, you can have them place themselves near the pool. Kutu and the other *aldani* begin combat at the bottom of the map in the tunnel.

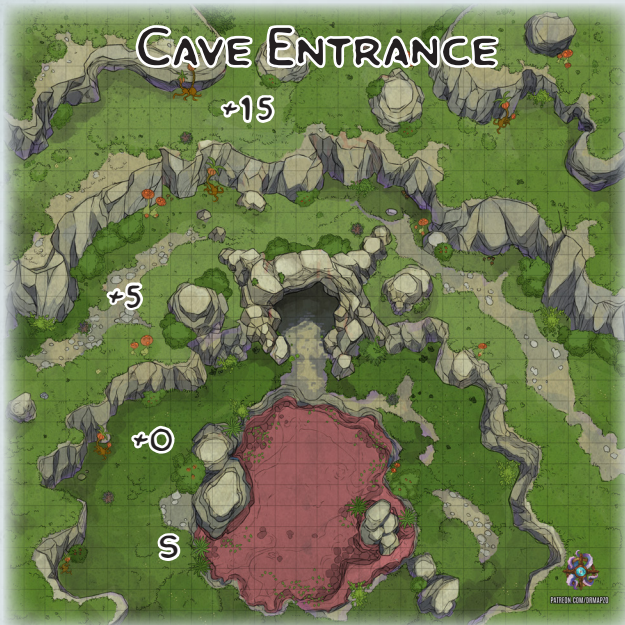
**A battle of wits.** Characters may try to reason with Kutu, but he is only concerned with strength and power. There is one course of action that may appeal to his interests. Characters may be able to convince Kutu to drink from the fountain under the guise that it will

turn his shell to metal as it has done for the lobsters with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check. If convinced to drink from the pool, you can have Kutu fail the Constitution saving throw for the water and experience intense vomiting for a minute while the characters either flee or deal with his minions.

After dealing with Kutu and his followers, Koura will ask the characters to accompany her back to the headwaters of the River Tath, roughly 30 miles to the west, where she plans to release the lobsters into the wild so that they can repopulate in order to break the curse. If the lobsters perish during the encounter, hope is not all lost. Koura still asks the accompany her with the dead lobsters so that she can invoke an ancient ritual and possibly bring them back to life.

### LEAVING THE CAVE

As mentioned in 'Watched from Above', Valindra Shadowmantle is waiting to see who exits from the activities in the cave below. When the characters emerge from the cave, Valindra sends the **spinosaurus zombie** to greet them so that she can observe their combat prowess for herself. If the party did not kill Kutu, they may be able to form an alliance with him to deal with this threat.



**Cave Entrance Battlemap.** The pool outside of the cave is 2 feet deep and is difficult terrain for creatures medium sized or smaller. The first terrace above the cave entrance is 5 feet higher than the base elevation. The second terrace is 15 feet higher than the base elevation. The walls between terraces can be easily climbed without making a check. The characters begin combat by positioning themselves at the mouth of the cave. The spinosaurus zombie begins the encounter on the other side of the pool at the location marked 'S', which is partially hidden by a large boulder from the vantage point of the cave entrance. The spinosaurus can easily jump up the terraces without needing to climb.

After defeating the spinosaurus zombie, Koura and the characters can head out to the headwaters of the River Tath immediately. Alternatively, you can first have Valindra Shadowmantle introduce herself to the party at the Heart of Ubtao. This introduction may steer the party back towards the main quest of finding answers about Omu and the Soulmonger at the conclusion of this adventure.

## CONCLUSION

At the headwaters of the River Tath, 30 miles to the west of the Heart of Ubtao, Koura gently places the lobsters into the river.

If the lobsters are dead, she will invoke an ancient ritual where her life force is transferred into the lobsters, bring them back to life (the death curse only affects humanoids so lobsters are unaffected by it). The ritual takes place over the course of an hour during which Koura suffers from a point of exhaustion every 10 minutes until she dies.

When Koura places the live lobsters in the water or just before she completes the ritual, you can read:

You watch as Koura's carapace turns dark. Her limbs and eyestalks lose their rigidity. Her claws slide off her arms like a pair of elbow-length gloves, revealing a Chultan complexion and smooth human skin. Her eyestalks retreat into her face, and the rest of the now-limp carapace detaches in flakes. A few patches of darkened chitin remain on her neck and scattered about her body, but she is now obviously a human of sorts. Koura looks at herself in the water's reflection. She traces her fingers across a smooth cheek and flexes her hands, fanning her fingers open and closed.

If Koura performed the life-giving ritual, you can add:

Koura haltingly struggles to take breath, and says "Now my people will be free. Thank you." Then she collapses.

Either way, the curse is broken and the aldani become humans once more, while retaining some of their lobster-like features. See the **aldani human** stat block at the end of this supplement, if needed.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The adventure is fairly linear, but there are a few ways the party could potentially get stuck. Potential solutions are presented below.

The adventure starts with fighting an aldani brute (Kutu) and a few regular aldani. If the party happens to kill Kutu before Koura can intervene, you can have the aldani brute be one of Kutu's followers rather than Kutu himself. Koura can inform the players that the group of aldani they fought all follow a particularly aggressive and mean aldani named Kutu.

The adventure hinges on Koura being alive so that she can break the curse. She is meant to fight alongside and support the party, but you can have monsters avoid targeting her – preferring meat without troublesome shells. In general, you can have her lend aid with *cure wounds* rather than using her more offensive spells, which would attract enemy attention.

The puzzle door riddle meant to be fairly simple, but there is a chance that some parties may not figure it out. If the party does not figure out what to do with the door riddle, you can have Koura tell them that legends of Ubtao say that his priests used to trace mazes with a finger as a sign of good luck. Additionally, you can have Koura infer that blood is both thicker than water and certainly red, but give the players ample time to reason it out themselves before offering hints.

## MAGIC ITEMS

### PEARL OF POWER

*Wonderous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a Spellcaster)*

While this pearl is on your person, you can use an action to speak its command word and regain one expended spell slot. If the expended slot was of 4th level or higher, the new slot is 3rd level. Once you use the pearl, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

### RING OF SWIMMING

*Ring, uncommon*

You have a swimming speed of 40 feet while wearing this ring.

## MUNDANE ITEMS

### CITRONELLA

An adaptable type of grass, with varieties growing in most Chultan environs. Can be burnt as a block of Insect Repellent-Incense. When lit, it burns for 8 hours and repels normal insects within a 20-foot-radius.

### LING NUTS

Ling Nuts, also known as “water caltrops”, are nuts with four half-inch long barbed spines that aldani use for protection on the outskirts of their villages. As an action, you can spread a bag of Ling Nuts to cover a square area that is 5 feet on a side. Any creature that enters the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or stop moving this turn and take 1 piercing damage. Taking this damage reduces the creature's walking speed by 10 feet until the creature regains at least 1 hit point. A creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save. Once spread on the ground, the Ling Nuts cannot be used again in this fashion, but each nut provides a half a pound of food.

### TATH SKULLCAP

These rare but noticeable reddish purple flowers are small herbs that grow in the boggy soils of the Aldani Basin. Named after the River Tath, these flowers have many uses in aldani medicine, but consuming a pint of the unprocessed flowers is said to calm muscles and the mind. As an action, you can consume or feed another creature a pint of the flowers, ending any effect causing the paralyzed or frightened condition.

## REFERENCES FOR THE ADVENTURE:

This section explains a few of the references for this adventure.

- **Kutu.** Swahili word for rust, named for Rusty Crayfish, which are invasive in many areas where they push other crayfish out of their native habitat.
- **Koura.** Maori (indigenous New Zealander) word for crayfish.
- **Nephropia.** Named for the Latin name for the lobster family, Nephropidae.
- **Chultan lobster characteristics.** The real-world analog of Chultan river lobsters is unclear in the lore. Many lobster-like groups exist, and their distinctions are not usually made apparent to anyone but those interested very specifically in their biology. Tropical marine lobsters are different from freshwater crayfish which are different from temperate marine lobsters, in terms of family and habitat. In order to get as accurate within the Decapoda as possible, we used the freshwater crayfish genus *Procambarus* as a baseline. Many species in this genus live both in caves and aboveground in tropical and subtropical environments. We also included some traits from the other families, such as the slow aging process of the temperate lobsters due to telomerase. The lobsters in this module have developed hardened shells that resist damage, and diseases cannot affect them in their pool, allowing lobsters in the pool to live for long periods of time.
- **Aldani aquaculture.** The pools and paddies of the aldani are based on various forms of sustainable and efficient aquaculture, in which plants are grown in water and receive nutrients from fish waste. Fishes help control insect populations that would otherwise feed upon these crops, and also eat the larva of pests such as mosquitoes.
- **Aldani children.** Many pre-industrial agricultural societies relied on the unskilled labor of children to protect crops from birds and help fend off or summon help for repelling larger threats to livestock.
- **Spinosaurus.** A piscivorous and carnivorous Cretaceous dinosaur known from North Africa noted for its large thermoregulatory sail, like that of *Dimetrodon*, and its crocodile-like swimming ability.
- **Tall grass.** Yes, that is very much inspired by the second Jurassic Park movie, “The Lost World: Jurassic Park”, 1997.
- **Cave life.** The subterranean glowworms, fungi, etc. are primarily based upon the glowworm caves of New Zealand, which feature crickets, arachnids, flies, fungi, eels, bats, and more. Animals can fall and become stuck or injured, and carcasses tend to flow down into caves and provide a glut of nutrients for cave life.

# MONSTERS

## ALDANI BRUTE

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27)

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Intimidation +2, Perception +3, Survival +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Amphibious.** The aldani can breathe air and water.

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the aldani can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The aldani makes two attacks with its claws.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). The aldani has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

## ALDANI HUMAN

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Survival +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Amphibious.** The aldani can breathe air and water.

### ACTIONS

**Yklwa.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

### Aldani Variant Humans

At your discretion, a player can plan a variant human - aldani, using the traits described below as their initial feat if they need a replacement character later in the adventure.

- Parts of your skin are covered by a thin sheen of lobster-like scales. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier.
- You have a swimming speed of 30 ft.
- You are amphibious and can breathe both water and air. You gain proficiency in the Survival skill.

## ALDANI SHAMAN

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Nature +2, Perception +5, Survival +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Amphibious.** The aldani can breathe air and water.

**Spellcasting.** The aldani is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following druid spells:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *mold earth*, *shape water*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *moonbeam*, *pass without trace*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The aldani makes two attacks with its claws.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 10). The aldani has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

## DEINONYCHUS ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)

**Speed** 40 ft.

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

**Skills** Perception +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

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

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Pounce.** If the deinonychus moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the deinonychus can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

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

### ACTIONS

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

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

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

## IRON LOBSTER

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 7 (2d4 + 2)

**Speed** 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Amphibious.** The lobster can breathe air and water.

**Iron shell.** The lobster has integrated heavy metals into its carapace and does not take additional damage from critical hits.

**Iron claw.** When the lobster attacks a creature that has at least one finger or toe with this attack and rolls a 20 on the attack roll, it cuts off one of the creature's fingers or toes. A creature is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage or has no fingers or toes, or the GM decides that the creature is too big for its fingers or toes to be cut off with this attack.

### ACTIONS

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

## SPINOSAURUS

*Huge beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 76 (8d12 + 24)

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The spinosaurus can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The spinosaurus makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

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

*Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, the spinosaurus can't bite another target.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

## SPINOSAURUS ZOMBIE

*Huge undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 76 (8d12 + 24)

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

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

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 4 (200 XP)

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

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The spinosaurus makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

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

*Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, the spinosaurus can't bite another target.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.



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We hope you've enjoyed the content in this compendium. If you find any errors, have a good idea, or just want to get in touch, you can reach out to Dan Kahn at [leprekahn7@gmail.com](mailto:leprekahn7@gmail.com).

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