

TOMB OF ANNIHILATION

WHISPERS IN THE NSI WASTES



Expanded content for the Nsi Wastes in Tomb of Annihilation
Chapter 2: The Land of Chult

WHISPERS IN THE NSI WASTES



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INTRODUCTION

Deep in the jungles of Chult lies a blighted swamp land called the Nsi Wastes. The sickness of the land spreads with the passing of every year and has begun to threaten the aarakocra of Kir Sabal. An evil lives in the ruins of Ras Nsi's fortress, which once stood on the backs of a dozen giant undead turtles and has spent the better part of a century sinking into the muck.

This supplement to *Tomb of Annihilation* expands on the location the Nsi Wastes. It is meant to make this location more exciting and manageable for both the DM and the players. The document includes:

A New Dungeon – Nsi Fortress with a Map, with new monsters and puzzles to defeat.

A New Location – Detrita, providing characters a fun way to interact with some vegepygmies.

Additional Adventure Hooks, providing the characters with a reason to travel to the Nsi Wastes.

Random Encounters & Discoveries for the Nsi Wastes, a tailored selection of random encounters to help make the Nsi Wastes stand out from the rest of Chult.

Expanded History & Lore, which elaborates on the Nsi Wastes and Ras Nsi's history, and foreshadows Ras Nsi in Omu.

USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

This supplement provides several new ideas on how to run the Nsi Wastes 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 Ras Nsi.

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 4–5th level. More powerful parties will have an easier time with the challenges within.

Monster References

The following monsters are used in this supplement:

- **allosaurus** – A fast predatory dinosaur similar to a large velociraptor.
- **ankylosaurus** – An armor plated herbivore dinosaur with a clubbed tail.
- **assassin vine** (TOA, 213) – A vine that can move and collect its own fertilizer by grabbing and crushing victims.
- **brontosaurus** (TOA, 215) – A massive four-legged herbivore dinosaur with a long neck.
- **corpse creeper** – A more powerful yellow musk creeper that feeds of dead creatures.
- **dimetrodon** (TOA, 217) – A sail-backed dinosaur that hunts in shallow water similar to a crocodile.
- **hadrosaurus** (TOA, 224) – A semi-quadrupedal herbivore dinosaur with a bony head crest.
- **shambling mound** – A large plant creature that consumes any organic matter in its path.
- **shrieker** – A human-sized fungus that emits a high pitched wail when it detects intruders.
- **vegepygmy** (TOA, 234) – A fungus creature that generally lives in simple tribal units, hunting for sustenance and spreading spores from which they reproduce.
- **vegepygmy chief** (TOA, 235) – An older, tougher vegepygmy deferred to by other vegepygmies.
- **vegepygmy shaman** – A vegepygmy with druidic abilities.
- **velociraptor zombie** – An small, swift, ferocious undead dinosaur that hunts in packs.
- **thorny** (TOA, 233) – Bestial fungal creatures with thorn covered bodies.
- **yellow musk creeper** (TOA, 237) – An unholy vine whose flowers resemble an orchid. Yellow musk creepers implant bulbs in those they kill, turning them into zombies.
- **yellow musk zombie** (TOA, 237) – A creature killed by a yellow musk creeper reanimated under the vine's control.

Dramatis Personae

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

- **Fenthaza** [fen-THAH-zah] (TOA, 111) – Yuan-ti malison looking to overthrow Ras Nsi.
- **Hssta** [HISS-tah] – A vegepygmy shaman and leader of the hunters of Detrita.
- **Ras Nsi** [RAZ nuh-SEE] (TOA, 111, 121) – Ras Nsi was once a Chultan paladin, a Chosen of Ubtao and sworn protector of Mezro who betrayed his oaths and was banished from the city.
- **Reistal** [RYE-stahl] – A druid living in the Nsi Wastes responsible for creating yellow musk creepers.
- **Salida** [sah-LEE-dah] (TOA, 35) – Yuan-ti pureblood guide in Port Nyanzaru with an agenda to help either Ras Nsi or gain from helping Fenthaza.
- **Hset** [Huh-set] – The vegepygmy chief of Detrita, interested in stopping the spread of the yellow musk creepers.
- **Teacher** (TOA, 69) – The leader of the aarakocras in Kir Sabal interested in rooting out the evil in the Nsi Wastes.

Official Material References

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

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following subsections include adventure hooks for the characters to adventure to the Nsi Wastes.

A LOOMING THREAT

As part of their quest to find Omu, the characters may head to the aarakocra village of Kir Sabal. When they arrive, you can have Teacher be preoccupied with the expanding blight just to the east of Kir Sabal, known as the Nsi Wastes. Teacher knows this region holds the ruins of an ancient fortress that belonged to the warlord Ras Nsi of Mezro. The region has become blighted, which expands every year, killing the creatures of the jungle and poisoning the plants. Before the aarakocra will aid the characters in their quest for Omu, Teacher requests that the characters root out the source of the blight. Similar to Nangalore, Teacher has forbidden aarakocra from traveling to the Nsi Wastes because of the evil presumed to lie there. You may want to have Teacher or the aarakocra monks trace the maze in their monastery with their wings to foreshadow the maze of Ubtao in Area N9.

VEGE TALES

As the characters explore Chult, they may randomly encounter vegepygmies in the jungle or explore the Wreck of the Narwhal, which is home to a small tribe of vegepygmies. All of the vegepygmies of Chult are keenly aware of the evil growing in the Nsi Wastes, as it threatens their way of life. Unfortunately, due to their limited communication abilities and low intelligence, they have had a hard time spreading the word and acquiring more capable allies. If the characters encounter any vegepygmies, the small plant-people will do whatever they can to communicate that they need help in the Nsi Wastes. Potentially imitating zombies to convince more noble groups, or drawing treasure chests or pointing to gold coins to motivate greedier groups. Characters may latch on to ideas that are similar to things they may be looking for related to Omu or the Death Curse, creating an enticing red herring for the party to follow.

MISGUIDED

If the characters are traveling with the yuan-ti spy Salida as their guide, you can have her be an agent of Fenthaza rather than Ras Nsi. In that case, Fenthaza would be eager to discover more of Ras Nsi's history or weaknesses. Salida may guide the party to the Nsi Wastes under the guise of helping them search for treasure in the ancient ruins. In reality, Salida will take the opportunity to examine the fortress up close and try to learn more about the history of Ras Nsi, the yuan-ti's fading leader. While the characters are in Port Nyanzaru you may want to have them overhear the rumor (*TOA*, 36), "The great god Ubtao loved mazes. If you happen upon a maze of any kind, trace a path through it. You will earn Ubtao's favor by doing so."

QAWASHA AND KUPALUÉ

If the characters are traveling with the guides Qawasha and Kupalué, the two of them may know of the vegepygmy village of Detrita, where you can have Kupalué be from. In addition to his quest to root out the undead from the jungle, you may have Qawasha want to destroy the rumored evil living in the Nsi Wastes. In *Tomb of Annihilation*, the pair can be found at Fort Beluarian.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

While the characters are traveling in the Nsi Wastes, you can roll random encounters on the Nsi Wastes Discoveries-table below, or choose your favorites. You can do so as often as you like, or you can determine if an encounter happens at random by rolling a d20 three times per day the characters spend exploring, checking for encounters each morning, afternoon, and evening or night. An encounter occurs on a roll of 16 or higher.

Nsi Wastes Discoveries

d10	Discovery
1	Assassin Vines
2	Dead Explorer
3	Dinosaurs
4	Preserved Artifact
5	Shambling Mound
6–7	Swamp Terrain
8–9	Vegepygmies
10	Yellow Musk Creeper

ASSASSIN VINES

The characters unwittingly enter the hunting grounds of 1d3 **assassin vines**. The vines are indistinguishable from normal plants and can't be spotted with Wisdom (Perception) checks. However, they draw carrion to their roots, so characters might smell a dead body nearby. Because assassin vines can move, an encounter in the evening or at night might involve the vines creeping into the characters' camp and strangling them as they sleep.

DEAD EXPLORER

Chult is strewn with the corpses and bones of those who have fallen victim to its terrors. When the characters discover one such victim, roll a d6 and consult the Dead Explorers table below. Then you may roll once on the Treasure Drops table (Appendix B of *Tomb of Annihilation*) to see what, if anything, can be found on or near the remains.

Dead Explorer

d10	Discovery
1	The mutilated corpse of a humanoid with rust-looking mold covering its bones. (This human was killed by vegepygmies and infected with russet mold.)
2	A half-orc under a toppled tree with his ribcage shattered by a spiked club of an ankylosaurus.
3	A dwarf crushed flat in the middle of a massive brontosaurus footprint.
4	The bloated corpse of a dead halfling tangled in a mess of vines.
5	The swollen, purple corpse of an elf, dead only a few days ago from the bite of a poisonous snake.
6	The gnawed and charred bones of a humanoid. (This unfortunate person was murdered and cannibalized by his starving, fever-crazed companions.)

DINOSAURS

The characters see one or more dinosaurs wandering through the swamp. The dinosaurs appear emaciated and got lost in the swamp searching for food. Roll 1d6 to determine which dinosaurs are found.

Dinosaur Encounter

- | d6 | Dinosaur |
|-----|---|
| 1 | The party's scent attracts 1d3 starving allosauruses , which appear 100 yards away when the characters first notice them. |
| 2 | An ornery ankylosaurus is searching for suitable plants to eat and it attacks any characters who disturb it. |
| 3 | A lone brontosaurus lumbers toward the characters, oblivious to their presence. Though it might step on characters who don't get out of its way, it fights only in self-defense. |
| 4 | A pack of 2d6 dimetrodons are spotted moving through the swamp. Roll any die. On an odd result, the dimetrodons take no notice of the characters; on an even result, they're hungry and attack at the slightest provocation (or if the characters approach within 100 feet of them). |
| 5-6 | A herd of 3d6 hadrosauruses travel by, with 1d6 noncombatant young among them. The adults don't attack unless they're attacked or antagonized. |

PRESERVED ARTIFACTS

The characters spot an item nestled into the swamp. If they take the time to clear it off, the item appears to be valuable and is worth 1d10 x 10 gp. Roll 1d6 to determine the artifact found.

Nsi Wastes Artifact

- | d6 | Artifact |
|----|--|
| 1 | A golden seal of the city of Mezro |
| 2 | A knife made from a Tyrannosaurus Rex's claw |
| 3 | An ornamental yklwa inlaid with emeralds |
| 4 | A batiri goblin chieftain mask |
| 5 | A silver spyglass with a cracked viewport |
| 6 | A metal shield with a triangle carved into the front |



SHAMBLING MOUND

Roll any die when a **shambling mound** encounter occurs. On an even result, the characters hear the creature trudging through the muck before it attacks them. On an odd result, the shambling mound lurks within a mass of vegetation, where it can be noticed by any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher.

SWAMP TERRAIN

The characters enter a dangerous hazard in the swamp. Roll 1d4 to determine the type of terrain. You can increase the tension of the terrain encounter by immediately rolling for an additional encounter (and rerolling if you roll another 'Swamp Terrain'-encounter) or choosing whichever creature encounter you prefer.

Terrain Encounter

- | d4 | Encounter |
|-----|--|
| 1 | The characters wander into quicksand and begin to sink. Characters must succeed a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid being stuck. A character who is stuck in the quicksand is grappled (escape DC 14) and restrained until the grapple ends. At the beginning of each of their turns, they sink 2 feet deeper into the quicksand. Characters whose heads are below the quicksand begin to suffocate. |
| 2 | The characters wander into an area with particularly thick swamp gas. Each character must succeed a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 poison damage (half on a save) and become poisoned for the next hour. |
| 3-4 | The characters wander into a patch of russet mold (see description on page 7 of this supplement or page 196 of <i>Volo's Guide to Monsters</i>). |

VEGEPYGMIES

The characters cross paths with **vegepygmies**, each one mounted on a **thorny**. Roll 1d4 to determine the disposition of the vegepygmies.

Vegepygmy Encounter

- | d4 | Encounter |
|-----|--|
| 1 | 2d4 swamp blights shamble towards the party and attack. |
| 2 | 2d4 vegepygmies , each mounted on a thorny , see the party and try to bring them back to Detrita. |
| 3-4 | 1d4 vegepygmies , each mounted on a thorny , are fighting 2d4 yellow musk zombies . If the characters help, the vegepygmies will be friendly towards the characters and lead them to Detrita. |

YELLOW MUSK CREEPER

The characters encounter a hoard of 3d6 **yellow musk zombies**. The zombies attempt to knock characters unconscious and drag their bodies back to the Nsi Fortress. The druid, Reistal, keeps captured characters with hands bound and body restrained to the throne (area N5) with vines. He stores any gear they were carrying in the master's quarters (area N6) A character can make a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to escape the restraints once per 8 hours. The character is questioned by Reistal and fed to the **corpse creeper** after 24 hours.

NSI WASTES LOCATIONS

Tomb of Annihilation pg. 80 describes the Nsi Wastes as a vast tract of jungle that was ravaged by blight and never recovered. This supplement adds two new locations to the Nsi Wastes.

- Detrita is a vegpeygmmy settlement added by this supplement, where the characters can interact with vegpeygmies, gaining information about the Nsi Wastes and new plot hooks to follow.
- Nsi Fortress is a new location hinted at in the campaign book as a crumbled stone fortress that once stood on the backs of a dozen giant undead turtles.

When the characters arrive in the Nsi Wastes you can read the following:

The land ahead is a thick bog. The jungle flora gives way to hunched, vine covered, rotten trees and the smell of swamp. The cacophonous sounds of animals seems to die off with every passing step into this land.

QUICK OVERVIEW

The following list capture a summary of the events in the intended sequence, but you may modify them as needed:

- Characters trek through the Nsi Wastes until they encounter vegpeygmies, who can guide the characters to Detrita.
- At Detrita, players may go on a side quest to hunt down a dinosaur for the vegpeygmies. Either way, the vegpeygmies will allow players to rest in the safety of the village.
- During the night, some of the vegpeygmies become blighted and attack the healthy vegpeygmies.
- In the aftermath of the attack, the chief of the tribe suggests that the blight may originate from a man that lives in the old fortress and can lead the players there.
- The players explore the fortress, fight the evil plants and find their way to the shrine where the druid attacks.
- The players defeat the druid, solve the maze in the shrine, and lift the curse from the land.

The History of the Nsi Wastes

Before he underwent transformation into a yuan-ti malison, Ras Nsi was a protector of the city of Mezro, granted supernatural powers by Ubtao. Ras Nsi was exiled from Mezro for war crimes against the Eshowe tribe by the other protectors of the city. Rather than seek redemption, Ras Nsi used his undead army for vengeance against Mezro. His palace, carried on the backs of a dozen giant undead turtles, was able to travel through the jungle along with his undead army. Because of his quest for vengeance, Ras Nsi was stripped of his powers and lost control of his armies. In one final denouncement of the god that abandoned him, Ras Nsi cursed the land upon which his fortress fell and abandoned it in a region now known as the Nsi Wastes. As the animals fled the spreading blight, the undead traveled further west in the continent.

Adventurers have tried to seek out this ancient fortress and until about 10 years ago, none had succeeded. One day a group of adventurers came to the Nsi Wastes to try to find riches from the fabled palace of the bara of Mezro Ras Nsi. They managed to get into the palace and get in but they set off an imprisonment trap of chaining. The party's healer was a nature domain cleric named Reistal.

A yellow musk creeper came upon the helpless party and slowly turned them into yellow musk zombies, implanting bulbs their brains. As the creeper prepared to do the same to Reistal, he was able to charm it with his 'Channel Divinity'-feature. The plant used Reistal's zombified friends to bring him nourishment over several tendays, but the poisoned land that nourished him (along with the ordeal of being fed by his zombified friends) drove him mad. As his connection to the land grew and his prayers to his god ceased, he began to lose his clerical powers and developed druidic ones instead.

Eventually his druidic powers allowed him to wild shape into a small creature, freeing him of his bindings. He took residence in the Nsi Fortress and began to study his new friend as well as various types of fungi. Recently he has begun experimenting with yellow musk creepers to make them more powerful, starting with the one that saved him. His work has allowed the yellow musk creepers to exploit the land further and cause the blight to accelerate outwards into the surrounding jungle.



MAP OF DETRITA



DETRITA

Detrita is a new Chult location added by this supplement. It is home to 24 **vegepygmies**, 10 **thornies**, 1 **vegepygmy shaman** (Hssta) and 1 **vegepygmy chief** (Hset).

Vegepygmies communicate with hisses and forcing air through their mouths, but lack the facilities to speak any formal language. You can role play vegepygmies as somewhat shy around humanoids and often making gestures and rhythmic tapping when they communicate. The vegepygmies have no concept of gender as they reproduce through spores.

You can have vegepygmies randomly encounter the players, or plan an encounter after the 3rd day of travel through the Nsi Wastes where 1d4 **vegepygmies**, each mounted on a **thorny**, are fighting 2d4 **yellow musk zombies**. If the characters help, the vegepygmies will be friendly towards the characters and lead them to Detrita.

When the characters arrive you can read the following:

A high pitched wail from several large mushrooms announces your presence. A dozen small fungal people emerge from hovels crudely built out of thatch and reeds in the marshland.

FEATURES IN DETRITA

The following locations and features can be easily identified in Detrita:

- **Hunter's Moot.** A small hill elevated above the swamp with a ring of stones placed around it. This is where **Hssta**, the **vegepygmy shaman** is located.
- **Chief's Den.** A thatch hut that stands taller than the rest with a dinosaur-hide tented pavillion set up in front of it. This is the dwelling for the **vegepygmy chief** named **Hset**.
- **Thorny Pen.** A dilapidated ring of natural fences serves as a pen for the tribe's thornies. 1d10 **thornies** are here at any time.
- **Huts.** A dozen huts made of reeds and mud serve as the dwellings for the vegepygmies. 1d4 **vegepygmies** live in each hovel and tend to live with those who were born from the same russet mold-infected humanoid. Friendly vegepygmies will emphatically steer characters away from this area due to the danger it poses.
- **Russet Mold Tent.** A large area shaded by dinosaur hide where the village keeps the swamp surface covered in russet mold.

SHMAN HSSTA

The leader of the vegepygmy hunters is a vegepygmy shaman named Hssta [HISS-tuh]. When the characters first arrive in Detrita, they are brought before Hssta. Hssta can use its *speak with plants* spell in a way to allow vegepygmies to communicate with the characters.

Side Quest. Until recently, the vegepygmies could absorb nutrients from the soil, but the land has become so poisoned that they have to depend on meat to fill their little bellies. In addition to the sustenance, vegepygmies convert the remains of dead beasts into thornies using russet mold. With the yellow musk zombies threatening their survival, the vegepygmies are in desperate need of a giant lizard. If the characters are willing to help the tribe infect a huge or large dinosaur with russet mold and then kill it, Hssta will provide them with some of the trinkets Hssta has found in the swamp: a *potion of healing*, 26 gold pieces, and a *driftglobe*. If the characters are actively hunting for dinosaurs, you may have the random encounters yield a dinosaur result on a 1 or 2 in addition to a 3 when rolling for random encounters.

CHIEF HSET

The vegepygmy chief's who lives here is named Hset [huh-SET]. Hset knows that the survival of its tribe is in danger. Hset has seen the a haggard man in the swamp, always followed by undead. Hset knows how to get in to the Nsi Fortress and knows that the man lives there. Hset thinks the man created the zombies that plague the swamp and is responsible for the blight.

Russet Mold

The fungus known as russet mold is reddish-brown in color and found only in places that are dark, warm, and wet. Russet mold that spreads out across a metal object can be mistaken for natural rust, and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check is required to identify it accurately by sight in such a case.

Any creature that comes within 5 feet of russet mold must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw as the mold emits a puff of spores. On a failed save, the creature becomes poisoned. While poisoned in this way, the creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns, sprouting mold as it takes damage. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Any magic that neutralizes poison or cures disease kills the infestation. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by the mold's poison damage dies. If the dead creature is a beast, a giant, or a humanoid, one or more newborn vegepygmies emerge from its body 24 hours later: one newborn from a Small corpse, two from a Medium corpse, four from a Large corpse, eight from a Huge corpse, or sixteen from a Gargantuan corpse.

Russet mold can be hard to kill, since weapons and most types of damage do it no harm. Effects that deal acid, necrotic, or radiant damage kill 1 square foot of russet mold per 1 damage dealt. A pound of salt, a gallon of alcohol, or a magical effect that cures disease kills russet mold in a square area that is 10 feet on a side. Sunlight kills any russet mold in the light's area. (*Volo's Guide to Monsters* pg. 196).

If characters are killed – by russet mold or otherwise – you can allow their players to control Hset, Hssta, or the one or two vegepygmies created by their death, until the party can return to a place where an encounter with a replacement character would make sense.

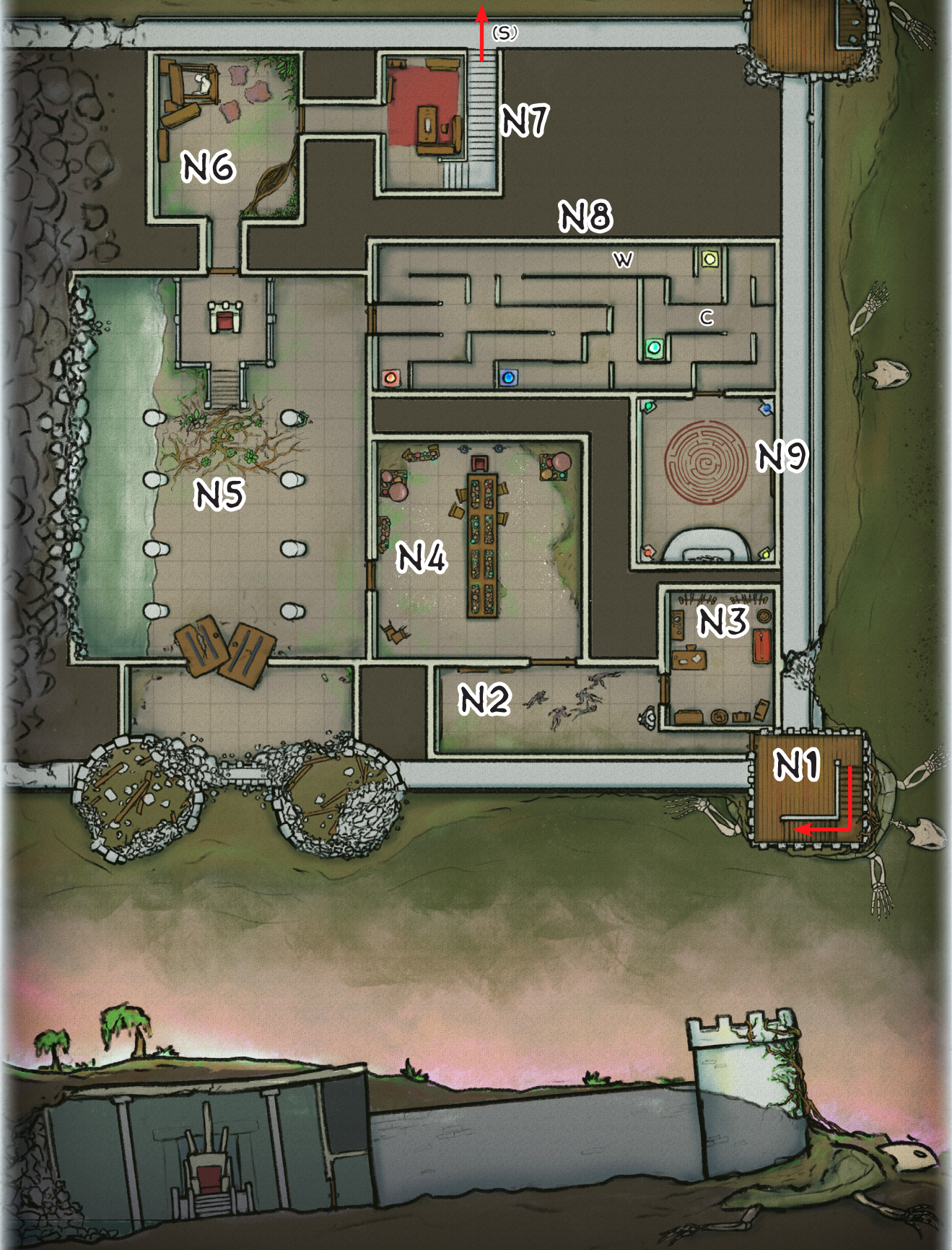
TROUBLE AT NIGHT

The vegepygmies are likely to allow the characters to sleep at Detrita, which is protected by **shriekers**, to warn the village of incoming danger. Due to the scarcity of food, not all vegepygmies can rely on meat for sustenance and as such, a few of them will absorb nutrients from the blighted land during the night.

If the characters choose to rest at Detrita for the night, you can have 2d8 **vegepygmies** turn into **swamp blights** and attack the village without alerting the shriekers. The characters will be able to engage the blights before the rest of the tribe is able to muster a defense. Unless targeted by the players, the blights target healthy vegepygmies. You can keep track of vegepygmy hit points or decide how often they fall. The purpose is to make the characters feel mournful for the little moldies.

In the aftermath, Hset or Hssta will relay the importance of rooting out the evil that is creating the yellow musk zombies, as it is likely also contributing to the corrupted vegepygmies.

MAP OF NSI FORTRESS



NSI FORTRESS

The western end of the Nsi Fortress has sunken into the swamp. The only visible point of access is the southeastern tower. If the players were led here by vegepygmies, you can have some, including Hssta or Hset, wait outside to cover the characters backs. These vegepygmies can serve as temporary replacement characters if a character death occurs inside. When the players approach you can read the following:

A collapsing tower stands before you with vines growing up its side. A massive skeleton of a turtle sits beneath the tower, jutting up out of the swamp. As you look past the tower to the west, the fortress appears to have sunken into the swamp.

N1. SOUTHEAST TOWER

The top of the tower is exposed above the surface of the swamp. It can be easily climbed as there are many vines and roots for handholds.

Stairs descend the interior of this stone tower into the darkness below. The muck from the surrounding swamp appears to be held back by the stone walls.

This is the only tower that still provides access to the interior of the fortress below the swamp. The stairs descend 30 feet to the ground floor where a door in the northwest corner leads deeper into the fortress. The tops of the fortress's exterior walls reside just below the muck and are inaccessible.

N2. GUARD ROOM

The hallway opens into a long room. A rusted suit of armor stands on the eastern wall next to a closed stone door. Bloated corpses sit against the walls, their flesh reflecting dampness of the room. Reliefs in the western wall depict a scene of regal Chultan warriors overpowering a group of tribal looking warriors. Mold covered text is carved beneath the reliefs. A large stone door exits this room to the north.

This room contains 5 **yellow musk zombies**. Any characters proficient in medicine can determine that these corpses have been dead for many years, but the moisture and darkness has preserved their flesh. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine that the creatures died as a result of some growth that punctured the skull. The zombies are on guard and stand up to attack when characters either try to open the northern door or damage one of the corpses.

The reliefs on the wall are carvings of Ras Nsi's warriors cutting down the Eshowe Tribe. If characters take the time to clear the harmless mold off the writing they can read that it says, "The great purge of the Eshowe Tribe, for the glory of Mezro" in Common.

N3. ARMORY

Old armaments are neatly stored along the walls of the room on decaying wooden racks. Among them are many short, broad-bladed, spear-like weapons. Several decorated shields are hung on the walls but appear to be in various states of disrepair. A stone and glass display case along the eastern wall holds a similar style weapon to those along the wall, but it appears to have been crafted with decorations and more precision.

This room contained the weapons and armor for Ras Nsi's guards. Housed in the room are 20 yklwas and 20 hlang shields. The yklwas are in good condition, but the shields, which are made out of toughened dinosaur hides, are damaged beyond repair. The display case holds a *+1 yklwa* meant for Ras Nsi's elite guard. Reistal had no need for weapons and paid it no mind. The display case has an AC of 15 and 10 hit points. Breaking the glass triggers a *glyph of warding* to anyone who opens it without speaking the passphrase "For the glory of Mezro." Anyone within 20 feet of the case at the time the trap is triggered must succeed a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5d8 acid damage, or half as much damage on a success. The case reveals abjuration magic upon inspection with *detect magic*.

N4. FUNGAL GARDEN

A long wooden table stretches the length of this room. Atop it are specimens of various types of fungi and vine-like plants that coil around wooden stakes in the soil. The walls are covered with moldy tapestries of men eating meat off of large bones and large dead reptiles in the background. The room is lit by the glow of phosphorescent fungi.

This room used to be the banquet hall but is now a fungal garden for Reistal. Here, he grows sapling yellow musk creepers, trying different soils and phosphorescent lights to help them grow. The yellow musk creeper saplings are harmless for now, but two have grown large enough to be a threat. The two yellow musk creepers attack when characters get in range of their yellow musk. Other specimens, whose properties can be identified by a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check or Wisdom (Survival) check include the following:

- 1d4 Barrelstalk
- 2d6 Nightlights
- 1d4 Nihogg's Nose
- 1d4 Wildroot
- 1d4 Zabou

N5. THRONE ROOM

This large room contains two rows of four columns covered in vines. Behind a pool of water on the western portion of the room is a mass of rubble. Grand doors lie broken to the south, where the walls have also caved in over time. The eastern wall has been carved to display the likeness of a formidable looking man with a fiery sword with legions of warriors in the background. Doors lead out of the room to the northeast and southeast.

The northern portion of the room is dominated by an elevated platform with a black throne upon it. In the backrest of the throne, blue stones have been inlaid to form a large triangle. Another stone door appears to be set into the wall behind it. A mass of plant growth lies at the bottom of the stairs leading up to the throne. Tendrils extend from it down into the water, which is a putrid green. The smell of decay fills the room.

At the bottom of the stairs is a **corpse creeper**, Reistal's nearly perfected creation. Using a combination of druidic and necromantic energy, Reistal has found a way to allow the plant to use corpses as sustenance rather than sunlight. When characters enter within 60 feet of the corpse creeper, it moves to attack.

N6. MASTER'S QUARTERS

What must have once been a regal living space is now a decrepit room covered in mold. Furnishings appear to have gone years without use. A mass of roots seems shaped to fit a human-sized form like a hammock.

Reistal lives here in Ras Nsi's private quarters. Nothing remains of value in this room, though he keeps a journal in the hammock (see journal entry handouts). If Reistal became aware of combat in the throne room, he cracks the door open and watches his creation at work under the effect of *pass without trace*. Characters will only notice him with a Wisdom (Perception) check of 21. If the characters defeat the corpse creeper, he uses *meld into stone* and listens for them to leave. If the characters enter the maze, he will curiously follow them as spider or rat. Reistal will only confront them once they have reached the shrine, an area of the fortress that he has never managed to reach. Reistal begins any confrontations with *barkskin* and *longstrider* already cast upon himself.

Treasure. Reistal carries a *staff of withering*, which serves as his druidic focus. His only other material possession is a rain catcher.

N7. MASTER'S PRIVATE TOWER

This used to be Ras Nsi's private tower for viewing the horizon as his fortress was carried through the jungles. Now Reistal uses it as a private entrance to and from the fortress. It provides safe exit to the surface, but is concealed by swamp debris from the surface. The secret entrance can be detected with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check from the outside.

N8. THE MAZE

As a devout follower of Ubtao, Ras Nsi believed that mazes served as a reminder that the path of life is complicated and it is up to each individual to find their way through. He had a trapped maze constructed to isolate his shrine from the rest of his fortress so that only those worthy of Ubtao could disturb him during his prayer. When the characters enter the maze, you can read the following:

The 5-foot wide, 10-foot tall hallway ahead seems to split in a number of directions.

There are four magic orbs in this maze, which look like 6-inch diameter spheres. The stone door to Area N9 has an inscription above it that reads: *One worthy of Ubtao may enter*. The red, yellow, and green orbs must each be activated by passing a test in order to open the door. The blue orb is a trick and cannot be activated. Once activated, the orbs shed a bright light to 20 feet and dim light to 20 feet beyond that. The orbs deactivate after 1 hour and are fixed in place by *sovereign glue*. Above each orb, an inscription has a hint of the trial to come written in Common.

Test of Strength. The text above the red orb reads: *One worthy of Ubtao should have the strength of his children*. When a character touches the orb, a **velociraptor zombie** appears in an unoccupied space near each of the four orbs within the maze. The raptors proceed to hunt down the characters until defeated, but will not leave the maze. Once the raptors are defeated, the orb activates. The raptor bodies disappear after 1 hour, when the orb resets.

Test of Will. The text above the yellow orb reads: *One worthy of Ubtao should have the courage to face one's fears*. When touched, the orb casts a *wall of fire* spell on the location marked with a 'W' on the map. The fire gives



off heat as though it were real but will not burn anyone that simply runs or walks through it. Any attempt to use magic to test the fire or put it out will cause it to flare up and force the character who interferes with it to make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 fire damage (half on a successful save). The fire wall is dispelled and the orb activates once all characters trapped between the orb and the fire wall walk or run through it.

Test of Cunning. The text above the green orb reads: *One worthy of Ubtao should be a convincing leader.* When touched, the orb conjures a male Chultan guard with the statistics of a **gladiator** at the location shown by a 'C' on the map. The guard speaks all languages and will not let anyone pass through unless convinced to do so. In order to activate the orb, any character must succeed a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion, Deception, or Intimidation) check with the goal of getting the guard to stand down and allow them to pass, to dispel the guard. If the characters fail two checks to convince the guard to let them pass, or if they fight the guard, he will fight to the death and a new guard will be conjured blocking characters path again.

Test of Survival. The text above the blue orb reads: *One worthy of Ubtao should be hard to deceive.* This orb is a trick and cannot be activated like the others. It is covered with an illusion that can be detected with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) to hide the runic trap etched into it. Touching it triggers the minimus containment effect of the *imprisonment* spell and causes the character to become trapped within the orb. A trapped character can be seen inside the orb from the outside. The imprisonment is dispelled when the other three orbs are activated and the door to the shrine is opened.

N9. SHRINE TO UBTAO

A spiraling maze is painted in red in the center of this pristine room. An altar stands against the southern wall with a small chest surrounded by gold pieces. A painting on the eastern wall shows a painting of a fortress on the back of giant turtles.

This shrine is where Ras Nsi used to pray to the god Ubtao. The shrine has not been accessed since Ras Nsi denounced his former god. The maze on the floor is the key to breaking the curse upon the land. If a character traces a solution to the maze with a finger, the latent magic of Ubtao begins the slow process of healing the land.

The Maze of Ubtao. The maze can be solved in about 1 minute of concentration or more hastily by one or more party members succeeding on a total of three DC 15 Intelligence checks. If the characters manage to solve the maze before combat with Reistal finishes (or if he was pacified rather than killed), you may have the healing magic cure his madness and stop him from fighting. If the characters solve the maze, you can read the following:

The solution to the maze begins to light up on the ground. The light grows brighter and brighter and culminates with a flash of warm green light.

As the characters enter this room, Reistal is shadowing them to see what happens. If they begin to work the maze or if the trap from the chest is activated, he will strike while they are distracted. He will try to strike a distracted individual with his *staff of withering* while getting as many as he can grouped together within the effect of his spreading spores. During the encounter, Reistal may say some of the following things out loud, giggling madly, to nobody in particular:

- "You may have killed my creation, but you will serve as fertilizer for the next."
- "After all this time, I just needed more fodder to get through the maze."
- "Your rotten bodies will be mine."

The Trapped Chest. The chest is locked by an *arcane lock*. The lock can be picked or the chest broken with a DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check or a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, but either of these methods activate a trap. If the trap is sprung, the room fills up with a poisonous gas. Characters within the room must succeed a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The gas disperses after a few seconds.

Treasure. The altar is covered in 300 gold pieces. The chest contains a diamond worth 500 gp and spell scrolls of *heroism*, *crusader's mantle*, and *raise dead*. There appear to be indentations for two other diamonds of similar size. A note inside the case reads, "*When your bara falls in combat, you should revive him with more expediency. Death is an inconvenience that I have little time for. Do not make me wait again.* - Ras Nsi, Bara of Mezro."

The characters likely do not know who Ras Nsi is at this point, but if they are traveling with Salida, she understands that the note signifies that Ras Nsi has died and been revived at least once in the past and must have the death curse. She will likely keep this information to herself until she can report her findings to Fenthaza. Players may be able to use this information in Chapter 4: Fane of the Night Serpent to negotiate with Ras Nsi.



CONCLUSION

If the characters are victorious in the Nsi Fortress and solve Ubtao's maze, the curse begins to lift from the land. The DM can describe visual improvements to the land as the characters exit from the fortress, such as wildflowers sprouting, the water becoming clearer, birds chirping, etc. Hssta, the vegepygmy shaman, can also confirm that the land is healing. The vegepygmy tribe celebrates the characters and offer to guide them back out of the Nsi Wastes. The vegepygmies are perceptive and stealthy and can help characters avoid random encounters while they travel. The vegepygmies will not leave the swampland of the Nsi Wastes.

If the characters traveled to the Nsi Wastes on behalf of the aarakocra, Teacher is pleased to hear of their success and can either give them the quest to get the black orchid from Nangalore or prepare the Dance of the Seven Winds if the orchid has already been acquired (*TOA*, 69).

If the characters traveled to the Nsi Wastes with Salida, she continues to bide her time, knowing that she has leverage over Ras Nsi, who she now knows must be afflicted with the death curse.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Here are a few suggestions if the characters get stuck during the adventure.

- In the event characters die in this dungeon, you can have Hset or Hssta come looking for the characters to make sure they are okay. Hset and Hssta should both be fairly comparable in strength to a 4th level character.
- In the event that the characters exit the dungeon through room N7, you can have them emerge into a particularly nasty area of the blighted swamp, subtly hinting that the cause of the blight has not yet been undone.
- In the event that the characters do not think to trace the maze with their fingers, you may have them make an Intelligence (Religion) check of DC 12 to recall that Ubtao was a god who loved mazes and that solving his mazes was a way for his followers to earn his favor.



MAGIC ITEMS

DRIFTGLOBE

Wonderous item, uncommon

This small sphere of thick glass weighs 1 pound. If you are within 60 feet of it, you can speak its command word and cause it to emanate the *light* or *daylight* spell. Once used, the daylight effect can't be used again until the next dawn.

You can speak another command word as an action to make the illuminated globe rise into the air and float no more than 5 feet off the ground. The globe hovers in this way until you or another creature grasps it. If you move more than 60 feet from the hovering globe, it follows you until it is within 60 feet of you. It takes the shortest route to do so. If prevented from moving, the globe sinks gently to the ground and becomes inactive, and its light winks out.

STAFF OF WITHERING

Staff, rare (requires attunement by a cleric, druid, or warlock)

This staff has 3 charges and regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

The staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff. On a hit, it deals damage as a normal quarterstaff, and you can expend 1 charge to deal an extra 2d10 necrotic damage to the target. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage for 1 hour on any ability check or saving throw that uses Strength or Constitution.

MUNDANE ITEMS

BARRELSTALK

A barrelstalk is a large, cask-shaped fungus that can be tapped and drained of the fresh water stored within it. A single barrelstalk contains 1d4 + 4 gallons of water and yields 1d6 + 4 pounds of food.

NIGHTLIGHTS

A nightlight is a tall and tube-shaped bioluminescent mushroom that grows to a height of 1d6 + 4 feet and emits bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. A nightlight that is uprooted or destroyed goes dark after 1 round. If a living nightlight is touched, either by a creature or an object, its light goes out until it is touched again.

NILHOGG'S NOSE

A Nilhogg's nose is a small mushroom that grants any creature that eats it advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks based on smell for 1d4 hours. However, the creature suffers disadvantage on saving throws against effects based on smell for the same amount of time (such as the corpse creeper's yellow musk).

WILDROOT

Introducing the juice of a wildroot into a poisoned creature's bloodstream (for example, by rubbing it on an open wound) rids the creature of the poisoned condition. Once used in this way, a wildroot loses this property.

ZABOU

Zabou mushrooms feed on offal and the rotting wood of dead trees. If handled carefully, a zabou can be picked or uprooted without causing it to release its spores. If crushed or struck, a zabou releases its spores in a 10-foot-radius sphere. A zabou can also be hurled up to 30 feet away or dropped like a grenade, releasing its cloud of spores on impact. Any creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned creature's skin itches for the duration. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

CREATURES

CORPSE CREEPER

Large plant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Corpses. When first encountered, a corpse creeper contains the corpses of 1d6 + 3 humanoids. A corpse creeper can hold the remains of up to nine dead humanoids. These remains have total cover against attacks and other effects outside the corpse creeper. If the corpse creeper dies, the corpses within it can be pulled free.

While it has at least one humanoid corpse in its body, the corpse creeper can use a bonus action to do one of the following:

- The corpse creeper digests one humanoid corpse in its body and instantly regains 11 (2d10) hit points. Nothing of the digested body remains. Any equipment on the corpse is expelled from the corpse creeper in its space.
- The corpse creeper animates one dead humanoid in its body, turning it into a yellow musk zombie. The zombie appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the corpse creeper and acts immediately after it in the initiative order.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The corpse creeper makes two tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) psychic damage. If the target is a humanoid that drops to 0 hit points as a result of this damage, it dies and is implanted with a yellow musk creeper bulb. Unless the bulb is destroyed, the corpse animates as a yellow musk zombie after being dead for 24 hours. The bulb is destroyed if the creature is raised from the dead before it can transform into a yellow musk zombie, or if the corpse is targeted by a remove curse spell or similar magic before it animates.

Yellow Musk (3/day). Each creature that starts its turn within 60 feet of the corpse flower or one of its zombies must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw, unless the creature is a construct or undead. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the creeper for 1 minute. A creature charmed in this way does nothing on its turn except move as close as it can to the creeper. A creature charmed by the creeper can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

REISTAL

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (16 with barkskin)

Hit Points 69 (6d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. with longstrider)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Symbiotic Entity. Reistal has awakened spores that give him +24 HP (included in the total) and cause his melee attacks to deal an additional 1d6 poison damage (included in the attack).

Spellcasting. Reistal is an 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following druid spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, druidcraft, infestation, shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle, longstrider, speak with animals*

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

3rd level (3 slots): *plant growth, speak with plants, meld into stone*

ACTIONS

Shillelagh (staff of withering). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage plus (3) 1d6 poison damage plus (11) 2d10 necrotic damage. The target must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage for 1 hour on any ability checks or saving throw that uses Strength or Constitution.

LAIR ACTION

Spreading Spores. Reistal hurls spores up to 30 feet away, where they swirl in a 10-foot cube. The spores disappear when he uses this feature again. Whenever a creature moves into the cube, or starts its turn there, that creature must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 necrotic damage. A creature can take this damage no more than once per turn.

SWAMP BLIGHT

Small plant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills perception +2, stealth +4

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened

Damage Resistances lightning, piercing

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages understands Vegepygmy but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Plant Camouflage. The vegepygmy has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks it makes in any terrain with ample obscuring plant life.

Regeneration. The vegepygmy regains 3 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes cold, fire, or necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vegepygmy's next turn. The vegepygmy dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

VEGEPYGMY SHAMAN

Small plant, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills perception +4, stealth +4

Damage Resistances lightning, piercing

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Vegepygmy

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Plant Camouflage. The vegepygmy has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks it makes in any terrain with ample obscuring plant life.

Regeneration. The vegepygmy regains 3 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes cold, fire, or necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vegepygmy's next turn. The vegepygmy dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Spellcasting. The vegepygmy is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following druid spells:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *thorn whip*, *produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *entangle*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spike growth*

3rd level (2 slots): *plant growth*, *speak with plants*

ACTIONS

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

VELOCIRAPTOR ZOMBIE

Tiny undead, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)

Speed e0 ft.

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

Skills perception +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Pack Tactics. The velociraptor has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the velociraptor's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the velociraptor 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 velociraptor drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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COLLABORATION

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