

Death From Above

A One Round Living Jungle Adventure
For Mid Level Characters

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsulize their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in oblique lettering. **It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text**, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The characters are in the Rayana Savanna, in the village of the Wise Ones. They are there to celebrate the upcoming birth of a baby tontor, the wisest of the jungle animals.

While awaiting the birth, they are called into a meeting with the chief of the Wise Ones, Arkari. She tells them of her dreams, and asks them for help.

The characters then head towards the Dokuba Swamp to investigate. On their way there, they are attacked by snakemen, and must fight for their lives.

Shortly after their fight with the snakemen, they encounter an elder giant cobra who is willing to trade information, and shed some light on what is happening.

They continue on and have to cross the Hebika River to avoid the lizardmen of the

Dokuba Swamp, and then prepare to enter the swamp itself.

Before they can enter the swamp, they are attacked by a group of Pteramen. They can follow the attacking force away from the swamp.

The characters then search out the Pteraman village, and discover the root of their problems. Here they find Somari, an exiled witch doctor of the Wise Ones. They have a most deadly fight against Somari and his forces, including a marrashi.

After defeating Somari and his minions, the heroes return to the village of the Wise Ones, and witness the birth of the baby tontor, and join in the celebration and are welcomed as friends of the Wise Ones and the tontor.

DM INFORMATION

Eight years ago Somari was exiled from the Wise Ones' village, and the Rayana Savanna for being evil. He had attempted to arrange for an accident to happen to Arkari, hoping to kill her, and try to take control of the Wise Ones himself.

Upon his exile, he headed north towards the Dokuba Swamp, and encountered a tribe of lizardmen. He quickly made enemies of them and fled west just past the Dokuba Swamp. There he discovered a small group of Pteramen, used his powers to take control of them, and made them his children. He took them from an unorganized group and turned them into an elite attack unit. He then planned his revenge on Arkari, and the rest of the Wise Ones.

He learned of the birth of the baby tontor; one of whom will once lead all of the tontor of the Rayana Savanna. He thought if he could capture the baby tontor, and sacrifice it, then he could control all of the tontor. With the tontor under his control, he could defeat the council of Wise Ones, and assume leadership of the tribe.

Little does Somari realize, the marrashi in his group hates him, and seeks to end his existence by turning him into a marrashi and becoming his underling. When the opportunity first presents itself, the marrashi will shoot Somari with its taklif arrow, then will aid Somari and the Pteramen to defeat the characters. He will then await until Somari turns into a marrashi.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

It is a warm Spring evening and you find yourselves in the Rayana Savanna, in the village of the Nubari tribe called The Wise Ones. You have come because you have heard of the upcoming birth of a new baby tontor, the sacred animal of the Wise Ones tribe.

You are amazed by the incredible workmanship of this tribe of Nubari with their finely woven thatch huts. The Wise Ones are indeed the masters of weaving, and it shows in the craftsmanship of their huts, baskets, and even the occasional raft they make to trade to other villages of Nubari.

You feel honored by being allowed to partake in the birth of a baby tontor, a sight in which you never imagined you would witness. You arrived a little early, seeing how the baby is not due for another two to three weeks. You are wondering just what you can do to help out the village in return for their incredible hospitality when you are asked to appear in front of Arkari, the chief of the Wise Ones.

You enter her huge hut woven of thatch, and see a rather disturbed-looking Nubari of some 70 plus years. She is sitting in front of you with a look of distress upon her face, when she begins to speak. "Welcome guests, and friends, I have asked you here, because I need your help. I have had disturbing dreams, that tell me great danger faces us in the very near future.

"My visions have told me the birth of the baby tontor will be the beginning of the end of both the Wise Ones tribe, and the great tontor themselves. That is why I need your help.

"There is a great evil living near the Dokuba Swamp on the other side of the Hebika River. I sense there you will find the object of my troubles, and I ask that you put an end to it. The sake of the Great Tontor and our entire village is in your hands, will you help us?"

Arkari will await for an answer, and upon receiving a "yes" answer will continue.

"Splendid, then I can offer to you resources that you may need to make your journey. I will equip you with food and water for your journey, as with other items you may need. Please make haste and return, I do not want you to miss in the birth of the baby Tontor."

If asked Arkari will give the following information.

- Her dreams tell her of an enemy that seeks to destroy her and the tribe
- She is not sure who this is, but fears it is Somari, a witch doctor she had exiled from the tribe eight years ago
- Somari was exiled because he had tried to kill her and take control of the tribe
- If asked she will give each character a jar of biseechee juice, and tell them it will only last three days before spoiling. It will heal 10 points of damage if consumed in its entirety, no effect for partial consumption.
- If they search before leaving the Rayana Savanna, the heroes will find some biseechee bushes to the north of here, but the berries only last a day (and heal 1 point each to a maximum of 4 points a day)
- She will give them a raft woven of thatch to take with them to cross the Hebika River

ONWARD AND AROUND

The first day, the heroes will encounter a group of snakemen called Ophidians. Roll for characters with Danger Sense or Observation or Alertness proficiencies to see if they can sense the ambush attack before it happens.

You set out on your journey towards the Dokuba Swamp with vigor, to put the evil to rest and to return to see the amazing birth of the baby tontor.

You wonder if you can stop this evil, but you remember some of your earlier exploits, and those of your friends. The times when

you traveled into the Valley of Spirits, or to the Forbidden Mountains. You even remember the first time you saw the great tontor when searching for The Golden Child. Then you recall your battles with the garuda, and know you can defeat this evil in front of you.

Your travel through the Rayana Savanna thus far has been pleasant. Then suddenly, who should be surrounding on both sides but six snake like men, carrying weapons and looking like you will be their meal for today.

Ophidians (5): Int Ave; AL CN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-6; SA Poison; SD Camouflage; SZ M (6'); ML 7

Ophidian Leader (1): Int Very; AL CN; AC 4; MV 9; HD 6; hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-6+1; SA Poison; SD Camouflage; SZ M (6'); ML 7

Characters bit by an ophidian who fail a saving throw vs. poison begin to turn into an ophidian. The process begins in four days and takes 16 days to complete, so the hero will slowly change over the course of the module (it's nine more days to the villain's camp, and then 10 days back to the Wise Ones). This means that the hero arrives back at the Wise Ones village just in time to be saved before irrevocably becoming an ophidian. Keep track of any time the heroes waste from this point forward, because if they spend an extra half-day doing something they lose any heroes who cannot be cured before returning to the Wise Ones village.

Cure disease and *remove curse* spells are both required to cure the affliction. The Wise Ones have shamans capable of casting these spells

Due to the ophidians' camouflage ability, the characters will suffer a -2 penalty to their surprise.

Treasure to be found:

- 5 clubs
- 1 obsidian club +1 damage
- 1 coral bracelet
- 1 ivory necklace
- 1 small diamond

SLITHERING ON

After your battle with the snakemen, you continue on your journey. The night is fast approaching and you set up camp for the night. During the night you each have dreams of flying garuda attacking each of you. You see yourselves being torn limb from limb, and awaken in a sweat from your dream of the death from above. You manage to sleep for the rest of the night.

You travel until the afternoon, when you sense you are being watched. From the bushes in front of you, slithers a huge Giant Cobra. It is longer than four tall Nubari lying in a line head to feet. It seems to be swaying in a hypnotizing way as it speaks to you in a lisping voice in the Nubari tongue: "Who are you, and what are you doing in my domain?"

This is an elder giant cobra and he is not here to attack the party, but he will fight if attacked. He also has at his disposal 12 snake katanga which will assist him during the second round of combat if need be. Otherwise they do not make an appearance.

Elder Giant Cobra: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Poison, Charm; SD nil; MR nil; SZ H (24' long); ML 16

Snake Katanga (12): Int Ave; AL N; AC 8; MV 9; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M (6'); ML 10

The Elder Giant Cobra will introduce himself, if not attacked, as Sslith. He is only interested in acquiring the glittering objects the party has attained.

This gives the party the chance to role play their way through this encounter, and trade away the coral bracelet, ivory necklace, and diamond they found on the ophidians. Sslith knows of these treasures because he was after the ophidians because they raided his lair when he was not there and he was tracking them when the party fought them yesterday. Thus the three items are his, stolen by the ophidians.

Sslith thought it best not to approach the heroes yesterday due to their fight with the ophidians.

Sslith will trade information for his treasures. For each treasure returned to him, he will tell them one piece of information. If they give him all three pieces of treasure, then he will tell them all he knows. Alternately, he will take any **four** other shiny glittery items from the PCs and let them keep the three items they found on the ophidians.

- There is a big tribe of lizardmen in the Dokuba Swamp
- You need a raft to cross the Hebika River due to its current
- His people have seen flying garuda men just west of the Dokuba Swamp
- He knows where some Biseechee Bushes are located.

If the party gives him all of his treasure and a piece of theirs, then he will lead them to the Biseechee Bush without them even asking about it if someone looks hurt. If they give five other items besides his treasure, he will do the same.

THE HEBIKA RIVER

It has been three days since you dealt with Sslith the giant cobra. You come to the Hebika River and see it is a bit calmer at the base of Fire Mountain, and indeed it may be easier to cross here. You think to yourselves, it may be quicker if you were to take your raft most of the way down the river, and cut a day off your travel.

If the heroes got a raft from Arkira then they should have a relatively easy time across and down the river. If not then they must try to swim across the river. Have them make **three** successful Swimming checks at -2, or start to be pulled by the current down the river, and suffer 3d8 points of damage for inhaling water, and hitting into rocks throughout the river. They will float about three miles down the river toward the swamp before they can make their way to the shore.

Another clever approach would be to try and make a Vine-swinging proficiency check at -4 to swing over the river without falling in.

To set a little fear into the party, if they are riding the raft down the river, then make them each roll a Dexterity check to avoid falling off the raft. Any who fail can make a Strength check to hold onto the side of the raft as they splash into the river.

This encounter is designed to challenge those characters who did not get the raft from Arkari from the start.

If any character has the boating skill then with a single successful check, no one will have to roll their Dexterity checks to fall off the raft.

OUT OF THE BLUE

You have been gone from the Wise Ones' village for almost a week now, when you see the Dokuba Swamp not far in the distance. As you make your way through the jungle, you begin to wonder just what evil awaits you, and just how much longer it will be before you encounter it. You hope you can get things done in a hurry, so you can get back and witness the birth of the tontor.

After a while you see a clearing up ahead in the jungle.

When they enter the clearing, continue. If they do not, just keep throwing clearings at them until they enter one.

As you start to walk through the clearing, from above in the sky you see five garuda men diving at you and your friends. You remember your dreams about the death from above.

Make the characters roll surprise at -4 to see if they can react to the Pteramen attacking them in the first round. Aarokocra will be attacked in the air, and have no penalty to surprise.

The five Pteramen will all use their swoop attack in the first round, doing damage and making the victim make a successful Dexterity check or fall to the ground.

The Pteramen will try to kill the party outright, but at the first death amongst them one of their number will fly towards the village where Somari is dwelling.

They attack with great barbed spears and fight with vigor to kill the characters.

Pteramen (8): Int Ave; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12, FL 12(C); HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-4(x2)/1-6+1 or 2-8; SA Swoop; SD nil; SZ L (10'); ML 18

Treasure:

- 8 barbed spears

INTO THE FRAY

The heroes should at this point follow the fleeing pteramen, as he is their most likely clue. If they do, read the following. If not, them improvise to get them going in the right direction.

You managed to defeat the flying garuda men, and sent one fleeing the combat. You know to succeed in your mission that you need to make sure all of the evil has been defeated, so you follow the fleeing one.

There is no doubt that they planned on killing the baby tontor, and eating its remains. You press forward into a small encampment, with several huts finely woven out of thatch.

You see the flying garuda man that fled your battle, and he seems no worse for wear. Also with him are three more of the garuda men, and they all are giving you looks of death. Standing behind them is a Nubari man, and he has symbols of the Wise Ones on.

When the PCs decide what to do, continue. They will probably charge into combat, but one can never tell. After intentions for the first round are gathered, continue with the following and then let the heroes act.

As you begin to (insert action here), an arrow from 100 yards above thumps the Nubari in the chest as he begins to cast a spell and makes him stagger backwards. You look into the air and see a creature that could only come from nightmares. It is as tall as a Nubari, with the body of a Nubari, the wings of a dark vulture, the claws of a big bird, and the head of a jackal.

The creature is wielding a bow and directs its second arrow at you. This is truly Death From Above, as it shoots its bow by holding it with its claws and pulling it back with its arms.

Now resolve the heroes' intentions.

Marrashi: Int Avg; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, FL 27(B); HD 7; hp 45; THAC0 13 (12 with bow); #AT 3 or 2; Dmg 1-2(x2)/1-6 or 1-8+2; SA bow, disease; SD immune to missile attacks; SZ M 5', ML

Pteramen (4): Int Ave; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12, FL 12(C); HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-4(x2)/1-6+1 or 2-8; SA Swoop; SZ L 10'; ML 18

Sombari, Nubari male P9: AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 56; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Spells; SD Spells; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 8; SZ M 6'; ML 20

Spells: 1st level— *curse, cure light wounds x3 (2), command, entangle*; 2nd level— *charm person, hold person, aid, silence 15' radius, messenger, snake charm*; 3rd level— *animate dead, hold animal, plant growth, remove paralysis*; 4th level— *free action (precast), spell immunity (magic missile, precast), cure serious wounds*; 5th level— *flame strike (lost)*.

During the first round of combat the Marrashi fires his only remaining disease arrow at the strongest-looking character, doing 1-6+2 points of damage if he hits. Sombari was casting a *flame strike* when he was hit, so he can cast no spells this round. Sombari does fight the heroes, but plans to deal with the upstart marrashi after the heroes are dead.

If a hero is hit with the marrashi's arrow, he or she contracts a terrible disease. A saving throw vs poison is appropriate to avoid infection, but the disease can only be stopped by the casting of a *cure disease* spell from a 7th level or higher priest. The disease kills the character in 20 days (it is 10 days back to the Wise Ones village). The character does not feel ill until the 15th day of infection, when he or she suddenly becomes unable to do more than lie and groan in pain.

If the Marrashi is not forced to land on the ground, then after Sombari and the Pteramen are defeated, he flies away.

Once the heroes defeat the foes, they can search the village and do whatever else. They have found the source of evil, so the quest is over. The items listed below are things that Sombari has collected during his days of exile.

Treasure:

- 4 barbed spears
- 1 club
- 1 suit of thatch armor, Nubari- sized (AC 8)
- 1 ancient saru necklace– stone necklace with a 3” pendant in the shape of a saru head
- 1 pottery painting of a map into the Howling Mountains

A TONTOR IS BORN

Your battle with Sombari and his minions were successful, and you know make haste back to the village of the Wise Ones. When you arrive Arkari invites you into her hut to find out what happens. She tells you her dreams the past few nights have been very pleasant and she is sure the evil has been defeated.

She invites you out to the tontor fields, and you are just in time to watch the baby tontor born. You are overwhelmed by the feelings of joy watching the baby born, and you look forward to the night's celebration.

The celebration is everything you expected and more. Several other tontors come near the village, and there is much feasting and drinking. Only the annual Council of Tribes meeting has a better celebration than this. Before the night is over, you are proclaiming friends of the Wise Ones.

The heroes may also want to have priests cast *cure disease* and *remove curse* spells to cure the ophidian poison and the marrashi disease, if applicable.

To each wizard in the party, the village of the Wise Ones are willing to give one of the following fetishes (there is one of each only): *enlarge, message, gaze reflection, ray of enfeeblement, hypnotic pattern, or dispel magic.*

Each character receives a special bracelet signifying that he or she is a friend of the Wise Ones.

THE END

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY:

Introduction:	
Getting all information:	100 xp
Onward and Abound:	
Defeating Ophidians	700 xp
Slithering On:	
Trading with Sslith	100 xp
The Hebika River:	
Crossing with no one falling into river	100 xp
Out of the Blue:	
Defeating Pteramen	350 xp
Into the Fray:	
Defeating Somari and his minions	525 xp
Defeating the Marrashi	225 xp
Discretionary Role-playing	0-1,000 xp
Award this based on consistent character portrayal throughout the adventure. You should average the players' performances in this matter and award the same to all heroes. Do not just give out the maximum if the heroes did not earn it.	
Total Possible Experience	3,000 xp

Treasure Summary

Onward and Abound:

- 5 clubs
- 1 obsidian club, +1 damage
- 1 coral bracelet
- 1 ivory necklace
- 1 small diamond

Out of the Blue:

- ? 8 barbed spears

Into the Fray:

- 4 barbed spears
- 1 club
- 1 suit of thatch armor, Nubari- sized (AC 8)
- 1 ancient saru necklace– stone necklace with a 3” pendant in the shape of a saru head
- 1 pottery painting of a map into the Howling Mountains

A Tontor is Born

- One fetish from this list for each wizard hero (there is one of each only): *enlarge*, *message*, *gaze reflection*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *hypnotic pattern*, or *dispel magic*.
- Each character receives a special bracelet signifying that he or she is a friend of the Wise Ones.