

Once Broken

**A One-Round Living Jungle Adventure
For Heroes of Any Level**

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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.

Hero Points

Hero Points are a game device for rewarding good-aligned characters for particularly selfless or heroic actions. They affect the outcome of die rolls, but promote role-playing rather than just number crunching.

All good-aligned heroes can earn Hero Points, but only human characters may have more than one Hero Point "saved up" at a time. Heroes earn Hero Points by acting bravely, selflessly, daringly, and dramatically. Normally, a tournament author will point out several instances in which the heroes can earn Hero Points during the adventure.

But sometimes, heroes may act heroically in unanticipated circumstances. In these cases, the judge determines whether a PC has earned a Hero Point; since defining these qualities is difficult, here are some general guidelines about what do not and what do constitute heroic actions:

Heroic actions are not hesitant or calculated. A warrior whose companions must persuade him to fight a local champion to save an NPC from death is not heroic. A wizard who pauses to consider whether his spells will be more effective than weapons against the champion before agreeing to fight him is clever and perhaps even brave, but he is not heroic. Heroism is impulsive, not scheming.

Heroic actions are not performed for personal gain. If two heroes elbow each other out of the way to be the one to earn a Hero Point, then neither receives one: "*I will fight the champion.*" "*No, the honor will be mine!*" Further, when a PC performs an act which has an obvious reward (fighting the champion to gain his magical spear) no Hero Point is awarded. If the PC expects a reward for his action, then it is not heroic. Heroism is selfless, not selfish. Heroic actions are not safe and easy. A PC must face and realize she faces a serious threat for an action to be heroic. Thus, a warrior who leaps into a pit of vipers to save a

fallen comrade is acting heroically—unless she thinks she is immune to the poison or that the vipers are no threat.

A rogue who rushes across a vine bridge to save a young boy from an imminent landslide is heroic only if he has a real chance to fall or be caught in the landslide—and knows it. Heroic actions are dangerous and difficult.

Heroic actions are not bland. If a PC says, "*Oh, I guess Kalida will face the champion,*" then the judge shouldn't award a Hero Point. On the other hand, a PC who accepts a challenge with panache is acting heroically: "*I, Kalida, son of Harusa the Wise Woman, accept your boastful challenge in defense of all the Nubari tribes!*" Heroism is grand and dramatic.

When a judge deems a PC's action worthy of a Hero Point, he or she fills out one of the six Hero Point certificates provided with each tournament and hands it to the player. The PC can use the Hero Point immediately.

Except in special circumstances (noted in tournaments), a PC can earn only one Hero Point per adventure, which is why only six Hero Point certificates are provided for each tournament. Once they are all awarded, no more are available during the session.

Human heroes can never have more Hero Points than levels of experience. For example, any heroic actions performed by a 3rd level character who already has three Hero Points are still heroic, but they do not earn Hero Points. Nonhuman heroes may never have more than one Hero Point at a time; thus, a Saru PC who has earned one Hero Point must spend that Hero Point before being eligible to find another. (Note: Some special items and situations may allow a PC to exceed these limits.)

Spending Hero Points

Hero Points affect rolls which determine the results of a PC's actions, including passive actions like resisting a spell effect. Hero Points do not affect an opponent's rolls. So a PC can spend a Hero Point to raise his own chance to hit an opponent, but the PC can't spend a point to lower the opponent's saving throw or Ability check. A player may use Hero Points in one of three ways: to modify a die before it is thrown, to modify a die after it is thrown, or to re-roll a failed die roll.

Before a die is thrown, a PC may spend a Hero Point to gain a +2/d20 (or +10%/d100) bonus for combat rolls, saving throws, Ability checks, system shock, resurrection survival, or virtually any other d20 or d100 roll during the game. A Nubari PC may spend up to two Hero Points at a time in this manner, gaining a maximum bonus of +4/d20 (+20%/d100) on a roll before the die is thrown. After a die is thrown, a PC may spend a Hero Point to gain a +1/d20 (or +5%/d100) bonus on those same sorts of rolls. Again, a PC may spend up to two Hero Points in this manner, gaining a maximum bonus of +2/d20 (+10%/d100) on a roll after the die is thrown.

A PC may spend two Hero Points to re-roll any failed d20 or d100 die roll.

Whenever a PC spends a Hero Point, the judge must collect the player's Hero Point certificate and tear it in half.

heroes may use Hero Points to benefit the rolls of other good-aligned characters. Using a Hero Point in this manner is generous, but it is not in itself a heroic action (so the PC doesn't earn another Hero Point for using his own Hero Points to benefit another character).

Hero Points and Judge Rolls

Occasionally, judges may—and should—roll dice secretly to determine the result of an action. For instance, an NPC wizard casts a *charm person* spell upon a PC, but the DM makes the saving throw secretly so that the players aren't sure of the spell's effects. Any time the judge makes a secret roll based on a PC's action, the PC may elect to spend a Hero Point to affect that roll, but the judge still rolls the dice secretly.

DM Introduction

The saga takes place over a several-day period and will require the heroes to travel deep into the jungle to attempt to save a dying Saru village. The heroes are drawn into the adventure when Bengoukee tells them the story about the village and asks for their help.

The affliction facing the Saru is due to the inadvertent breaking of a local taboo. One of the young saru slipped from a tree while swinging--and accidentally landed on a patch of rare flowers in a sacred grove.

Ligela, the earth spirit, was angered by this disrespectful act and started reclaiming all the nourishment that she had given the Saru.

The tribe's only hope for survival is to build an idol to honor the earth spirit. Its construction, however, requires rare items from the jungle. If the idol can be completed, it should appease Ligela and ward off the effects of the broken taboo.

Before beginning the adventure, note the names of heroes and any other pertinent information you might want to reference.

The character names should be placed on name-tags in front of each player so participants can see who is who.

Allow the players to consult the *Player's Handbook* throughout the course of the adventure.

Player Introduction

The wilds of the Malatra plateau are home to many unique races and creatures. And from the numerous Nubari to the shy and reclusive tam'hi, all know that the

village of Big Chief Bagoomba is the place to gather to hear stories of heroic deeds and to find rumors that hint of grand adventures.

Bagoomba's village is often a peaceful place, though never quiet. And it is a common stop on many routes that lead across the plateau.

This evening finds many different groups of travelers in the village enjoying Chief Bagoomba's legendary hospitality. The moon is full, and it casts a soft gray light over the scene.

Occasionally, through gaps in the crowd in the center of the village, you see the grizzled form of old Bengoukee the witchdoctor, sprinkling sand among the many people visiting.

Allow the heroes time to interact with one another. If any of the heroes are acquainted, assume that they arrived together. If the heroes have not met, they will be able to introduce themselves while Bengoukee continues to make his way through the crowd.

The characters will catch glimpses of Bengoukee and make eye contact with the elusive witchdoctor from time to time. However, if they try to approach the witchdoctor, they will not be able to find him. Bengoukee managed to lose himself among the villagers and visitors.

Eventually, the heroes see the witchdoctor walk deeper into the jungle, beckoning them to follow. When the heroes join Bengoukee, proceed to the next encounter.

Encounter One: A Cry for Help

If the heroes do not immediately follow Bengoukee into the jungle, a messenger appears and directs them into a glade, where the witchdoctor is waiting. Read the following:

Following the grizzled form of Bengoukee deep into the jungle, you find yourselves on an ancient path that leads into the darkness. Through small gaps in the branches overhead, the moonlight sneaks down, helping you find your way. Occasionally, you catch a glimpse of the old man. A shadow dancing among shadows, he is well ahead of you.

After several minutes of travel, the thick canopy opens and reveals a small glade. In the center, the witchdoctor Bengoukee stands hunched over a small fire. He grins as you approach.

"May the moon shine upon you--Malatra's true heroes--for time is short, and the need is great. Far from here there is a noble tribe of tribe of jungle children. They hold to life barely, and they will soon disappear--unless you can find the means to prevent their destruction.

“Two days’ journey to the south and east, toward the Sleepy Lake, is a village of saru. Recently stricken by an unknown malady, they are wasting away. It is as if Ligela, the earth spirit, is reclaiming all the nourishment and energy she gifted them during the years.

“The saru sent their strongest warrior to ask for help. Our scouts found his weak form on the edge of Bagoomba’s village.

“The once mighty saru was only a shade of his former self and was barely able to speak. He would not take food or water.

“He merely kept saying that Ligela was angry and that her signs said to journey here and beg for help.

“Since the warrior’s passing, I spoke with the spirits of the earth. They told me Ligela is indeed angry. She will say nothing of how to save Malatra’s tree children, but she admitted that they can be spared.

“The sands have shown me you are the ones Ligela will allow to help the once mighty saru. You must discover how to cure their affliction. Their time is short.”

Bengoukee does not know much else that can help the heroes. However, he will answer their questions and provide food and water for the journey. He has a map drawn by the saru on garuda hide that he will give the heroes (**Player Handout #1**).

Bengoukee can answer the following:

- The village is small, fewer than forty saru. It is located in the trees about two days’ journey south and east.
- The saru messenger died a few hours after delivering his message.
- Ligela’s anger started a month ago, and the wasting is a slow and painful way to die.
- By communing with the sand, he believes the heroes are the only ones capable of saving the saru village.
- This wasting sickness is unfamiliar to Bengoukee.
- Ligela can be a vain spirit, easy to offend and difficult to appease.

Once Bengoukee has answered the heroes’ questions, they can examine the map, prepare for their journey, and get a good night’s rest. When they awake in the morning, proceed to encounter two.

Encounter Two: Trouble on the Trail

When the heroes are ready to leave Big Chief Bagoomba’s village, read the following:

The early morning sun filters through the thick jungle canopy, and the first sounds--jungle birds--can be heard

in the distance. The gods of Fire Mountain are quiet, but the wind spirit, Bootara, is stirring up gray clouds and dark skies, hinting at strong rains to come.

Three of Bagoomba’s warriors come toward you. They carry large traveling packs filled with the food and supplies Bengoukee mentioned last night. Dropping the packs at your feet, the warriors nod respectfully and leave.

Looking in the snakeskin packs, you see there are plenty of dates, coconuts, dried lizard meat, and skins full of water. There are also six carved wooden bowls, and three large berries.

The witchdoctor says each berry is very potent and can be used to heal serious injuries. They spoil easily, however, and they will last three days--at the most.

Each berry cures 2d6 points of damage. If the heroes do not use the berries before they reach the village, the berries are considered spoiled.

The map that Bengoukee provides was drawn by the saru and will be fairly confusing to all except saru heroes. However, with effort, the trail can be followed. The DM should tell any saru characters that they can read it easily and will have no trouble following it to the village.

On the first leg of the journey, the heroes will pass around the base of a mountain to reach the headwaters of the Sleepy Lake, where they will encounter well hidden and dangerous pits of quicksand. When the heroes strike off, continue with the following:

The trail leading toward Fire Mountain is well marked and easy to follow. Time begins to pass, and you are soon far from the home of Big Chief Bagoomba.

What could be the cause of the strange wasting disease of the saru village? you wonder. What can you do? And why would Bengoukee select you to save the ailing tree children?

As if to mock your unspoken questions, the clouds open and a strong rain begins falling.

The hours pass uneventfully, and soon the heroes are traveling around the base of Fire Mountain. The rain continues to fall, and the trail gets increasingly muddy. The rain does not hinder the heroes, but it will make travel slower and those who do not like water miserable.

On the far side of the mountain, the trail becomes less traveled, and the jungle gets thicker and thicker.

In the late afternoon hours, the heroes start making their way toward the Sleepy Lake. The trail is now almost impossible to follow, and in places it exists only as patches of worn high ground. The water lays heavy on the ground, in pools, and runs in rivulets by parts of the trail. As the heroes continue around the lake, the terrain becomes dangerous.

Unless the heroes are taking precautions (such as traveling through the trees like the saru do), they will wander across treacherous pits of quicksand.

If the heroes are taking precautions--such as using tracking or jungle survival skills, a successful proficiency check will reveal the presence of the pits. If the heroes do not have any of these skills, but are looking for trouble, they can notice the sign of quicksand on a roll of 1 on 1d6.

heroes who notice the pools can guide others around them. Otherwise, the first two heroes in the marching order will tumble into a pit.

Quicksand!

- A hero who falls into a pit will continue to sink for 1d4+1 rounds until they are completely submerged.
- For each round a hero struggles, he reduces the number of rounds he has until going under by 1 round. For example, Rathor the tiger katanga falls into the quicksand. The DM rolls 1d4 and gets a 3. Rathor has 4 rounds before he will be submerged. However, Rathor panics and tries to slog free. He does this for 2 rounds, effectively cutting the time he has before being swallowed to 2 rounds.
- Heroes who fall into a pit can escape in any number of ways. A hero has a 1-in-6 chance of being able to find a nearby vine they can use to climb out. Heroes may also be helped out by others who are not in quicksand or by using spells or unique items. Heroes can also attempt to lasso a tree or limb (by hitting AC 7), However, this action counts as struggling, described above.
- Heroes who are submerged drown 4 rounds later. They suffer ½ of their current hit point total in damage each round they stay submerged. They will not drop below 1 hit point until they are considered dead. Water breathing magic does not provide protection from the quicksand or stave off the drowning effect.
- If a PC dives into the quicksand after a submerged hero, they can, with a successful Strength check or an expenditure of a Hero Point, pull a previously submerged hero to the surface. This action will count as “struggling” described above for the rescuing PC, and the drowning PC will receive an another 2 rounds before sinking again.

Heroically saving a submerged character could gain the rescuer a Hero Point.

DMs should use the quicksand to challenge the heroes and provide heroes the opportunity to earn a Hero Point by risking their own lives in an attempt to save heroes who are going under. DMs can “spring” an additional two pools on the heroes to heighten the excitement, but should not use them to kill heroes.

This hazard is not marked on the saru map because the saru travel through and sleep in the trees.

Once they can make their way farther from the lake and find safe camping. The heroes will not have any encounters during the night, although allow them to worry and establish watches.

Encounter Three: Dangers of Malatra

When the heroes break camp in the morning, use the following description:

The morning sunlight eases through the thick clouds that brought yesterday's deluge. The ground is still wet and muddy, but at least the rain has stopped. Gathering your supplies, and enjoying some of the food Bengoukee provided, you make your way toward the saru village. If the map can be trusted, you should continue around the west side of Sleepy Lake and arrive at the village sometime late in the afternoon.

The morning hours will pass rapidly, as the heroes make up some lost time under the strong morning sun. During the morning hours, the heroes will hear and see the signs of a myriad of tiny animals, birds especially, but they will notice that there are no signs of larger animals. The reason for the lack of larger creatures is due to the presence of a trio of quick-thunderers--fast and aggressive hunters. These garuda become aware of the heroes about midmorning, and stalk them throughout the day. Part of it is a game, to these skillful predators, who like to study their intended meals. Part of their strategy is born of necessity--an effort to make sure what they're after won't turn around and eat them.

Worry the heroes with bushes rustling and birds suddenly crying and taking flight for no apparent reason. However, do not allow them to sight the clever hunters too easily or quickly.

Quick-thunderers are raptor-like garuda that are very difficult to track or see until they are ready to attack. These creatures are intelligent and hunt in a pack-like strategy and use the foliage to their best advantage.

They will quickly surround the heroes and look for an opportunity to pick-off a lone victim who might investigate a rustling branch. The hunters hope to lure the heroes away one by one. However, if the heroes wisely stay together, the garuda will eventually spring their attack anyway.

The quick-thunderers begin their assault on a group by having the lead hunter step out in front of the heroes and allow itself to be seen. The other two will attack from the flanks while the heroes' attention is focused on the forward creature. Consider the strengths and levels of the heroes when selecting a group of garuda.

Use the following description to spring the attack.

The morning hours passed quickly, and the afternoon sun is getting hotter. The trail marked on the map is starting to become a little more recognizable. Ahead, you see the snout of a small garuda poke through the thick brush. The creature's head is long, and its eyes are a deep jade green. It pulls its head back into the foliage, causing the branches to rustle. But you know the beast is still just off the trail.

The lead creature will attempt to keep the heroes' attention focused on it. When the moment for surprise is right, the other two spring out of their hiding places and attack using their leaping ability on heroes in the back ranks. DMs should check for surprise with a -2 penalty. Add additional thunderers, as indicated in the second bracket, if the heroes are high level.

Quick-Thunderers (3): Int Very; AL N; AC 4; MV 21; HD 5+1; hp 30 each; THAC0 16; #AT 3 (or 1 special); Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4; SA Leap attack (+2 to hit and inflicts 2d8 pts. of damage); SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 16

--OR--

Large Quick-Thunderers (3 to 5): Int Very; AL N; AC 4; MV 21; HD 7+1; hp 45 each; THAC0 14; #AT 3 (or 1 special); Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA Leap attack (+2 to hit and inflicts 3d8 pts. of damage); SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 16

If a quick-thunderer is able to knock a hero unconscious during the course of battle, it will attempt to drag its meal back into the jungle. The other two will continue to fight until they have something to eat, too. The movement rate of a dragging thunderer is reduced to 10, and it leaves a clear trail of blood and broken branches that can be easily followed.

A quick-thunderer will continue to battle if other heroes object to some of their comrades being dragged away for dinner.

Non-fighter heroes who leap bravely into battle attempting to prevent one of their friends from being dragged off may earn a Hero Point if they survive.

If a "tug-of-war" with a downed PC begins, use opposing Strength checks to determine which side wins. The side with the largest margin of success is the victor. Treat a deinonychus's Strength as 14. Heroes who are the subject of a tug-of-war lose an additional 2 points of damage per round due to additional bites and the strain of being pulled apart.

Once away from the battle, and at the conclusion of any fight, the hunters begin devouring their meal.

Encounter Four: The Saru Village

Following the encounter with the dinosaurs, the animal trails become easier to follow, and the signs of "civilized" life become more apparent. The directions from Bengoukee, and the map, eventually lead the heroes to the outskirts of the saru village. Read the following:

Bengoukee's directions prove to be accurate, and after two days in the jungle, you are starting to see evidence of saru. Many of the fruit-bearing trees have been heavily picked, and empty coconut shells litter the ground under the tallest trees.

A gentle breeze picks up, and the putrid smell of sickness, smoke, and death is carried toward you. Ahead, you see the first of the small straw tree huts that serve the saru as homes. There are no small animals about, and no saru swing in the trees.

The heroes may suspect, as Bengoukee does, that the saru have broken a taboo and are suffering from Ligela's anger. It is also very possible the heroes might suspect a plague is to blame or believe that some strange animal could be the cause of the problems. DMs should be careful not to reveal the true nature of the affliction too soon, and allow curiosity to heighten the tension.

If the heroes want to scout the village from a distance, they will encounter no traps or creatures. They will have to climb to learn more.

The village is fairly small, with fewer than a dozen huts arranged in the thickest, tallest trees.

A stream of runs along the south border of the village, and fishing nets hang in the branches along the water's edge. On the western side of the village is a large pit, freshly dug, from which acrid smoke slowly rises.

In the center of a clearing, below a great shaggybark tree, an idol of some type is under construction.

Crude tools and gourds, mud and other building supplies, lie strewn about it.

The idol stands roughly four feet tall and is intended to be some type of humanlike creature, but it is not far enough along to be distinguishable--at least at this distance.

Until the heroes travel from hut to hut, searching for clues, nothing will happen.

There are only nine surviving saru in the village, all too weak to answer the heroes' welcoming calls, and all in the largest hut--the one in a tree away from the pit and overhanging the stream.

The other locations of potential interest are:

◆ **The Stream**--Despite what the heroes might fear, the water in the stream is clear and fresh and only three feet deep. Small fish can be seen, and river tam'hi or other heroes with the ability to detect fresh water can rule out the stream as the source of the saru's problems. Most of the fishing nets hanging from branches are of poor quality, but are serviceable. There are three nets the heroes can take (although they would be stealing from the saru and depriving any potential survivors of a way to gather food).

◆ **The Pit**--The pit in the center of the village is the source for the foul stench that permeates the air. Acrid smoke still spirals slowly up from the bottom of the pit, and a few hot coals glow softly. Many of the saru who fell victim to the sickness have been burned in this pit. Barely visible from the top of this 15' deep pit are the charred bones of several saru skeletons. Heroes who spend more than two rounds in the immediate vicinity of the pit must make a Constitution ability check or become nauseated, incurring a -1 penalty to all proficiency scores and attack rolls for the following ½ hour of game time. Secretly record which heroes, if any, are affected and note the time they will recover.

◆ **The Idol**--If the heroes take a closer look at the statue, they can see that the portion that is completed is well made. Fine details that appear to be lines of imperfection at a distance are folds of skin when viewed from 10' or less. The idol is just over four feet tall and is female. Judging from the shape, it is likely a Nubari or a tam'hi child, but final determination of race is impossible.

The body is completed, but construction of the face has barely begun. The tools and building supplies appear crude, but careful inspection reveals they are newly made and well cared for--except for the recent neglect of being left out in the weather for a couple of weeks.

◆ **The Large Hut**--Only one of the huts is inhabited by surviving saru, and the others are in a sorry state of repair. The occupied hut is the largest. When the heroes enter this hut, skip to the next encounter.

◆ **The Other Huts**--Heroes who search through the unoccupied huts will find little of value. Items of daily living are strewn about, with no sense of organization. In one of the huts, however, heroes will find a very large, spiked war club that belonged to one of the village warriors. The club is thick and heavy and inflicts 1d8+1 points of damage versus small and man-sized creatures and 1d6+1 points of damage versus larger than man-sized creatures (a treasure certificate is found at the end of the adventure).

The warrior who fashioned this club died from the sickness, and there is no restriction against the heroes taking it.

If the heroes do not take this club on their own, Magilla, the surviving saru shaman, suggests they take it before they leave the village.

Encounter Five: The Shaman's Tale

Located in the largest hut in the village, near the stream, is the home of the village shaman, Magilla. In the shaman's care are seven ailing young adults and a child, Brunga, who inadvertently caused the village's troubles by breaking a local taboo.

Magilla, Brunga, and the others are too weak from the wasting sickness to answer the heroes' calls, and only Magilla is able to greet the heroes when they enter his hut.

The saru are in no condition to travel, and attempting to move them very far will result in their deaths.

Use the following description:

The smell of death and decay is very strong in this part of the village, but there are some signs of activity around the largest hut. A few discarded banana peels lay on the ground. There is still a hint of yellow to them.

The hut is nestled in the wide crook of a massive shaggybark tree, the limbs of which stretch over the stream.

It is a simple hut, like all the others, made of packed mud and grasses woven together forming an effective shelter from the elements.

The doorway is beginning to collapse from the heavy rains, and you can barely see the signs of movement inside. You hear a whisper, a low grunt. Then there is silence.

If only one or two of the characters enter the hut, take them aside and read the following. Reveal the information to the entire group only when all the heroes look inside.

Inside, you see the shriveled forms of nine saru, all but one of them are very young.

The exception is a gray-haired male who wears several necklaces of odd stones and a string of feathers from jungle birds.

The smallest saru, little more than a child, is at the old one's side. He wears a cord necklace with a serpent's tooth dangling from it.

When the heroes enter, Magilla looks at them and grunts an acknowledgment. He is one of the few saru who can fluently speak Nubari. If none of the heroes speak Nubari or saru, conversation with the exhausted Magilla will be impossible.

Heroes who examine the saru will not be able to determine the cause of their problems, nor will they be able

to reduce the creatures' suffering. Use of Divination spells such as *detect evil*, *detect poison*, *detect magic*, etc. will not reveal any information about the cause of the ailment.

The youngest saru, Brunga, is unconscious and near death, suffering from severe spasms.

The heroes will not be able to wake him, although using a curative magic or a healing item will slow the spasms and allow Brunga to rest peacefully.

If the heroes can converse with Magilla, he tries to answer their questions as best he can. His words sound like forced gasps and are punctuated by coughs. Due to his weakened condition, he can only answer three questions before his voice fails him. He motions with his hand to his mouth and throat to hint at his limited abilities.

If the heroes do not ask him about the idol in their first two questions, Magilla will ignore their third question and talk about the idol.

The heroes can learn the following, based on their questions:

- The strange wasting began one moon turn (about 30 days ago). Gatherers began to find less and less food, and the fish became scarce. Fruits started rotting right on the trees, and warriors began to grow weak. The first death occurred four days after the wasting was noticed.
- There was no cure once the wasting began. Saru could not eat or drink anything, and none of the shaman's powers were able to stop the wasting. Some limited healing was able to reduce the pain. But in the end, the wasting was far more powerful than Magilla's limited magic.
(Heroes who attempt to use healing spells or items on the weak saru will learn Magilla speaks the truth--healing does not end the affliction, it only temporarily lessens the pain.)
- The strongest saru dug the burial and burning pit about midway through the crisis, after the warriors were too weak to continue digging graves for all the members of the tribe. There were originally forty members of the tribe, all of whom, except the nine in the largest hut, have died from the wasting. This village is dead, and heroes who help save the lives of Magilla and Brunga may take anything they wish from the remains of the village (including the club from the hut).
- If the heroes stop the wasting, Magilla and the survivors will join another saru tribe.

- The mightiest warrior in the village was sent to Bengoukee to ask for help, but he has not been heard from.

When the heroes ask Magilla about the idol, the old shaman's eyes will clear, and his voice gets a little stronger.

As you mention the strange idol located in the center of the village, Magilla's gaze focuses intently on you, and for the first time the wisdom of this old saru is visible in his deep red eyes. Magilla leans heavily on a walking stick and asks that you help him climb down from the hut. With your aid, he staggers toward the child-idol.

As he gathers up some of the tools from around the idol, he grunts in pain and begins working on the image. His gnarled and weak hands make slow but skilled alterations.

"Many warriors have claimed to see the vision of the earth woman, but we did not believe them. It was not until Brunga and I shared the same vision that we finally believed her to be responsible for our troubles. Now, it may be too late to stop her anger.

"All of our visions showed this small child with an angry face, walking among the saru who did not notice her. Wherever she went, the saru fell ill and died. Her eyes burned blue like the river and the sky, and she smelled of honey and then death. Somehow, we must have angered the earth spirit, Ligela, and she is taking her anger out on us.

"To appease her, we must make her happy. I will finish this idol to ward off the bad spirits, but it cannot be complete without the final parts.

"You must find a piece of the river, green stones from the waterfall an hour's travel to the south. Perhaps that will give her eyes the sparkle of youth.

"You must also find and collect wax from the giant bees in the ancient grove directly to the east of the fall, a journey of half a day, perhaps more. When burned here, the scent of the wax should remove the fragrance of death and replace it with the smell of honey.

"Without these things, Brunga and me, and now perhaps even you, will die."

Magilla's skilled hands continue to work on the idol and the smiling face of a small Nubari child begins to take form.

"You must go now, I will try to complete this and prepare for your return."

The aged saru haltingly continues with his sculpting.

Magilla focuses his remaining efforts on completing the idol. His voice is too drained, and he cannot verbally answer any more of the heroes' questions.

Encounter Six: The Waterfall

Shortly after the characters leave the saru village, they hear the cacophony of rushing water from the nearby fall. By sound alone, they can find the falls.

Watchful heroes with the Alertness and Tracking proficiencies note a plethora of bird tracks in the mud along the trails that lead to the falls.

Read the following as the heroes approach the water:

The waterfall the shaman spoke of fills your vision. A rush of sunset-colored water plummets from a rocky rise about thirty feet high into a wide pool.

Hundreds of birds--parrots, herons, and more, crowd the banks. They splash in the water and nest in trees and along the shore. There are no predators to disturb them. Indeed, there seems to be no sign of anything other than birds.

Where to start looking for the stones?

Determine where the heroes start looking, then consult the following:

The trees: Let the heroes search as long as they want. They'll only find coconuts, bananas, and gingu fruit. There won't find any stones.

The Falls: directly behind the rushing water is a thin ledge. Those traversing it must make a successful Dexterity check at a -4 penalty or fall in the pool. There's no green stone to be found here.

The plants: There are a few rocks scattered amid the grass and bushes, but no green ones. If the heroes are able to cast *speak with plants*, the grass tells them to talk to the birds. The birds are always sitting on stones and hatching little birds from them.

The pool: There are lots of stones in the pool, which is fifteen feet deep and feeds into an underwater river. The stones are: white, black, gray, brown and mottled pink. But no green ones. Some have a slimy green moss on them, but when they're taken out of the pool, the moss drops off.

The shore: There are some stones along the shore, but these are brown and gray. There are also pieces of wood and lots of birds.

The birds: There are all sorts of birds here--stark black ones, blue and red ones, milky white ones with legs that are nearly two feet long. If a hero is able to converse with the birds, read the following:

Stones? Rocks? Green. We care not about such things. You cannot eat them. The largest of us, they use rocks for edging their nests. We use twigs. Much better.

If you want to look for rocks, go to the mountain. The mountain has plenty of rocks to share with you.

Heroes watching the birds can see that most of those on the shore are nesting. Frightening the birds, by either shouting or using force, scares some away from their nests--revealing a variety of colored eggs, though no green ones. A group of large birds--white plumed ones with green wing- and tailtips--refuse to budge from their nests, which are about ten feet apart.

These four birds are called reeos, and they are quite rare. If the heroes approach within two yards of their nests, read the following:

The large white birds with long beaks and green-tipped wings glare at you. As you near their nests, they rise on scrawny legs that are at least two feet long and screech at you. It is obvious they want you away from their nests and the green eggs that sit at the bottoms.

To get the birds away from their nests, the heroes will have to fight. It is not necessary to kill the reeos. Reducing them to ½ of their hit points--17 hit points or less--will cause them to fly away. Clever heroes might use magic or other tactics. Any struggle with the reeos will cause all the non-nesting birds to fly away. The resulting squawking and falling feathers will cause the heroes to suffer -1 penalties on their attack rolls for the first two turns of combat. Use 4 to 7 reeos, depending on the strength of the heroes.

Reeos (4-7): Int Low; AL N; AC 7; MV 12, fl 24; HD 7; hp 35 each; THAC0 14; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6 (beak)/1-2/1-2 (wing buffets); SA Cry; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 12

If the heroes are especially tough or experienced, allow one or more of the reeos to use their special attacks--in addition to their physical attacks.

Every other round, the reeos can emit a piercing shriek that causes physical damage.

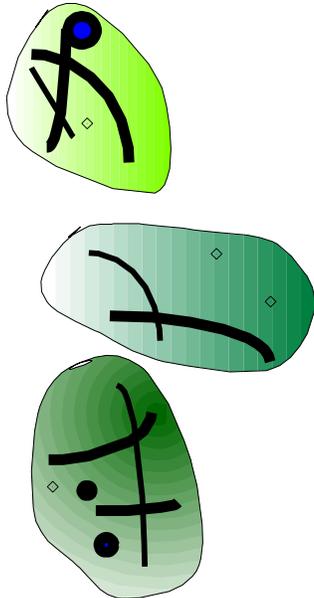
Those within five feet of a shrieking reeos automatically suffer 1d6 points of damage. This effect is cumulative if the victims are close enough to multiple screeching birds.

When the birds have been driven off or killed, the heroes can search through the nests. The reeos eggs each weigh about a pound and are the size of a grapefruit. The eggs are edible, quite delicious, and very valuable. However, they will rot within two days, as they no longer have the parent birds to keep them warm. Any attempts the heroes make to hatch the eggs will fail (the heroes are not mother reeos, after all).

heroes will heal one hit point of damage per green egg eaten. Eating one or more white eggs will add the Animal Lore nonweapon proficiency to their list of abilities. If the character already has this proficiency, the rating is increased by one point. There are certificates at the end of this scenario for the proficiency gain.

The Nests: The first nest has three green reeos eggs, and one white one.

The second has two green eggs, and one that just hatched. The tiny bird is bald, blind, and is crying softly. The hatchling will die unless a PC who has Animal Lore or Animal Training-birds feeds the baby and makes a proficiency check. Future feedings must happen once an hour for the first two days. Without the frequent feedings, the bird will die of starvation.



The third nest has six green reeos eggs and one white one.

The fourth nest contains two green eggs and three green egg-shaped stones with strange marks on them. These are the stones the saru shaman spoke of.

The reeos will not return to their nests once the heroes have disturbed them. A character who makes a successful Animal Lore or Animal Training-birds proficiency check will realize the reeos have abandoned these nests.

Shortly after the heroes finish gathering the stones, evening arrives. Determine whether they rest for the night or press on to find the giant honey bees. If they opt for the latter, all their attack rolls and proficiency checks suffer a -1 penalty because of fatigue.

Encounter Seven: A Sticky Situation

Heroes who have direction sense can easily find the ancient grove the old saru shaman mentioned in half a day's travel. Using *Speak with Animals* or *Speak with Plants* also can lead the heroes there.

Otherwise, the heroes can find the old grove, but it will take twice the time--one day--and they will come upon the place just as the sun is setting. Read the following when the heroes find the grove:

At last you spot a grove of ancient, gnarled trees. Most of them are dead, and all of them are huge. Some of them have trunks bigger around than Chief Bagoomba's hut. Two of the largest trees are hollow, and you see large bees--roughly the size of a shu--enter and leave.

A soft buzzing sound fills the grove, almost musical. The sound is soothing, relaxing, comforting.

Ask each PC to make a saving throw versus paralyzation. Those who fail are so mesmerized by the sound of the buzzing that they fall asleep, as if under the effects of a *sleep* spell (10 rounds). They can be woken. However, note which heroes were so affected, they suffer a -1 penalty on all attack rolls against the bees.

There are several ways to attain the honey. Consider some of the following methods:

- Simply taking it: Any heroes who stride up to a tree and try to take some of the honey, will be subject to attack by the giant honey bees.
- Using magic: Casting any of the following spells will essentially incapacitate enough bees so that the heroes can collect the honey without a fight: *sleep*, *friends*, *hypnotism*, or *stinking cloud*. Creative use of the following spells could limit the combat or allow the heroes to avoid a fight (use your judgment): *warp wood*, *entangle*, *plant growth*, *grease*, *gust of wind*, *phantasmal force*, *unseen servant*, or *scare*. There are other possibilities, of course. However, keep in mind if significant physical damage is done to the trees, such as through fire-based spells, the honey inside will be ruined.
- Trading: The insects have a limited intelligence and will not attack unless it appears the heroes are either hostile or want inside their hives. They are fond of shiny things--pretty rocks, jewelry, gemstones--and they are willing to let a character harvest a little bit of honey if he or she first leaves a shiny present.

If a fight with the honey bees ensues, use the following statistics. If the heroes are especially tough or have a few experience levels, increase by 50% (18) or double (24) the number of combative bees.

Honey Bees (12), (18), or (24): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, fl 24; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (sting); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ S; ML 9

After the bees have been dealt with, the heroes can collect as much wax and honey as they want. Ask them what they are putting the honey in. Cloth bags won't work--the honey will soak through. Jars, gourds, and coconut shells will work. It is possible the heroes will have to search around for a container. Make them sweat a little, but eventually they'll find a few coconuts they can hollow out to make work. They find nothing else of value in either of the hollow trees.

If the characters reached the ancient grove in one-half day's travel, they still have several hours of light left and can backtrack to the saru village. However, if it took them a day to reach the grove, it will be dark by the time they have gathered the honey. Ask them if they are resting for the evening before continuing on.

The following encounter will occur regardless of when the heroes leave the ancient grove.

Encounter Eight: Tiger, Tiger

If there is little tournament time remaining, this encounter can be skipped. (Of course, the heroes' opportunity for treasure would be skipped also.)

A trio of shan sao, tiny humanoids from the nearby lands of Kara-Tur, have been marooned in Malatra for the past many months. They have chaotic tendencies--and those tendencies have led them to this method for obtaining food and bits of treasure.

The shan sao are able to polymorph themselves into birds. By flying through the jungle, they find wandering Nubari--and other races--who are laden down with packs and bundles. These travelers become their targets. The shan sao select a spot along their targets' trail, summon one or more tigers, and begin their ploy.

The tigers are instructed to stalk the shan sao's intended victims, to frighten and worry them. At the same time, the shan sao position themselves along the trail and begin their assault. The tigers remain on the edge of the combat, drawing the targets' attention away from the shan sao. The tigers only fight if they are attacked or if the shan sao are in serious trouble.

One of the shan sao is a spellcaster. He cannot be discerned from his fellows. He employs his spells where he believes they will be the most effective, targeting other spellcasters first. The shan sao will not fight to the death. If

it appears the heroes are winning the confrontation, and the little men suffer two-thirds of their hit points in damage--20 points for the warriors, 18 for the shaman--they attempt to run away, polymorphing into birds and flying if necessary. The bird forms retain the shan sao's Armor Class.

Neither will the shan sao attempt to kill the heroes--unless it seems they have no other recourse. The shan sao simply want all the bundles, sacks, and food the heroes are carrying. If it appears they are triumphing over their victims, the shan sao call for the heroes' surrender and demand their belongings. These belongings, of course, include the green stones and the wax. The number of tigers should depend on the strength of the heroes. For example, if the party has several tough fighters, include up to four tigers. However, if the party consists of low-level heroes, use only one or two.

Read the following when the heroes fall into the shan sao's path, then begin the combat:

You should reach the saru village in an hour or two, and you hope the shaman was able to finish the idol.

Pausing, you notice the jungle has become strangely silent about you. The birds have stopped singing.

Nearby, you hear a growl, low and deep. A big cat is hunting.

Peering through the foliage, you catch a glimpse of orange and black fur. A tiger stalks you!

Unless the heroes look away from the tiger, or specifically state they are looking elsewhere, they will be surprised by the initial attack of the shan sao. Roll for initiative on subsequent rounds.

Tigers (1-4): Int Low; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-10; SA Rear claws (2d8); SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 15

Shan Sao Warriors (2): Int Very; AL N(NE); AC 4; MV 6, fl 15; HD 4; hp 30 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-3/1-3 (darts) or 1-6 (club); SA Cause disease; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ T; ML 15

Shan Sao Shaman (1): Int Very; AL NE; AC 4; MV 6, fl 15; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; D 1-3/1-3 (darts) or 1-6 (club); SA Spells, cause disease; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ T; ML 16

The shan sao shaman has the following spells in memory: *magic missile* x2 (each spell inflicts 2d4+2 points of damage) and *irritation*, itch (1-4 heroes can be effected by this spell, a saving throw negates. Those "irritated" must spend the following round scratching and itching. Otherwise, the next three rounds their Armor Class will be worsened by 4 and their attack rolls suffer a -2 penalty because they are squirming uncomfortably.

Shan sao stand about one foot tall and look like plump Nubari. Their skin is a deep orange, and they have unruly tangles of dark brown hair. They have slightly pointed ears, feline eyes, and they wear simple cotton smocks. They speak their own tongue and can communicate with tigers.

However, they have learned one Nubari phrase: “Surrender. Drop all your belongings.”

Each shan sao can assume the form of a bird three times a day and can *cause disease*, as the priest spell, once a day, simply by pointing at any target within ten feet. They are immune to all types of *fear* spells.

If the heroes best the shan sao, any remaining tigers will run away, no longer under the summon influence. Searching the area where the little men were hiding reveals their treasure. If the men polymorphed into birds and flew away, the treasure is still there. Only their smocks transformed with them. The treasure consists of: four pressed white flower petals, roughly eye-shaped; a gourd filled with a dark green oily substance; a leather pouch containing 12 feathered darts with sharp bone tips; and two large gourds filled with a fruit-flavored stew.

The flower petals are enchanted. Two must be used for the magic to take effect. Placing the petals over an individual’s eyes grants that person infravision for 24 hours. If the person already has infravision, it doubles the range of sight for 24 hours.

The dark green oily substance is a shan sao balm. There are four uses inside (unless the shan sao had an opportunity to use some of it). When applied to the skin, the balm cures 1d6 points of damage, heals poison, and cures disease.

The barbed darts are non-magical and inflict 1d3 points of damage—plus any appropriate Strength bonus. However, because they are so well balanced, they add a +1 attack bonus. There is a 1-in-10 chance each time a dart is used that it will break, becoming useless.

The two large gourds full of shan sao stew would be prized in Kara-Tur. Here, they are simply special food. Each gourd contains three meals, and each meal will be enough to keep even the hungriest individual full for 24 hours.

Encounter Nine: Return to Magilla

When the characters return to the saru village, regardless of the time of day, read the following:

The old saru shaman lies near the completed idol. His chest rises and falls slightly, irregularly.

The idol’s face carries a petulant expression, and it looks very much like a young Nubari female. The eyes are dark and intense, the lips drawn into a thin line.

The idol’s right hand is open, palm up. The left is slightly below it, cupped.

If the heroes lost the green stones and the wax to the shan sao, Magilla and the eight young saru will die. Consider the adventure concluded. However, if the heroes have the stones and the wax, determine what they are doing with them.

Magilla can’t be roused—not even with spells or the oily mixture they might have obtained from the shan sao. Searching the village will not net them any clues, though they will learn that the young saru are also very near death.

What will work: placing the stones in the cupped left palm of the idol and burning the wax in the right, open palm. The heroes can find cord, which will work as a wick for the wax. If the heroes are successful, read the following:

You place the stones in the child-idol’s left hand and burn the honeyed-wax in its right. A sweet smell wafts over the village, strong and cloying. Your eyes water from the powerful odor, and you blink to clear your vision.

Magilla wheezes and rises from the dirt. His rheumy eyes water, too.

“Brave friends,” he begins, “my heart beats with life and gladness that you were successful. Ligela allowed you to save us because you proved yourselves worthy. Once, we broke her faith. Now, perhaps, we can prove ourselves worthy again.”

He glances toward the largest hut and a grin spreads wide across his gray-haired face. The young saru are slowly climbing down and approaching. The tree-children move sluggishly, as if awaking from a long sleep. But their eyes are bright and shiny.

“We will find another tribe to join, and teach those saru of our foolishness. When our words spread across the jungle, no more will a saru anger Ligela and bring doom. We owe you much.”

Magilla reaches behind his neck and tugs free his necklace of feathers and his necklace of stones. “All I can give,” he says. “Wear them well and use them wisely. Now it is time for you to return home. Return with our gratitude.”

This Concludes Once Broken

Experience Point Summary

Encounter One: A Cry for Help
Asking Bengoukee questions

100 xp

Encounter Three: Dangers of Malatra

Defeating the garuda	400 xp
Encounter Six: The Waterfall	
Not killing the rare birds	100 xp
Obtaining the green stones	200 xp
Encounter Seven: A Sticky Situation	
Not killing the honey bees	100 xp
Obtaining the wax	200 xp
Encounter Eight: Tiger, Tiger	
Defeating the shan sao	300 xp
Encounter Nine: Return to Magilla	
Saving the saru village	500 xp
Total Points Available	1,900 xp

Treasure Summary

Saru Warrior Club: A heavy wooden club, carefully balanced, tipped with bits of rocks and volcanic glass. This weapon inflicts 1d8+1 points of damage versus small and man-sized creatures and 1d6+1 points of damage versus large creatures. This is in addition to any Strength bonus the wielder possesses.

You acquired this fine weapon in a saru village. The villagers, stricken by a strange ailment, sought your aid. This club previously belonged to one of the tribe's strongest and greatest warriors. He succumbed to the disease, and the village shaman wished the weapon to be passed into your capable hands.

2 pairs of **Two Veoriti Flower Petals:** These rare, mystical flower petals must be used in pairs. When placed over each eye, the petals disappear, and the individual is granted the infravision ability at 60' for the following 24 hours. If the individual already possesses infravision, these petals double the range he or she would normally see.

You acquired these two blooms after battling small, orange-skinned men who are called shan sao. The petals were tucked away in a pouch. The fight was a difficult ordeal, and the threat of tigers complicated matters. However, you managed to persevere.

Oil of the Eenoro Vine: This dark, oily green mixture is a curative balm. When spread over a wound, it heals 1d6 points of physical damage, neutralizes poisons and toxins, and cures disease. There are four doses in this specially-prepared gourd. Put a mark through the circles below when a dose is consumed.

0 0 0 0

You acquired this healing mixture after battling small, orange-skinned men who are called shan sao. The fight was a difficult ordeal, and the threat of tigers complicated matters. However, you managed to persevere.

Shan Sao Barbed Darts: Here are one dozen fine darts. They are feathered, and the tips are made of sharp bone. Because they are so well made and balanced, they confer a +1 attack bonus. Each dart inflicts 1d3 points of damage, plus any applicable Strength bonus. However, because bone is sometimes brittle, each time a dart is thrown, there is a one-in-ten chance it will break. When this happens, cross off one of the darts, which are indicated with circles below.

O O O O O O O O O O O O

You acquired this set of darts after battling small, orange-skinned men who are called shan sao. They were tucked away in a specially-designed pouch. The fight was a difficult ordeal, and the threat of tigers complicated matters. However, you managed to persevere.

2 gourds of **Shan Sao Fruit Stew:** You own a gourd filled with a fruity-smelling stew. There are vegetables, fruit pieces, and chunks of meat swirling inside. It smells delicious, and it tastes wonderful. There are three meals in this gourd, and each meal is so filling that you won't have to eat anything else for the next 24 hours. Put a mark through the circles below when you consume one of the meals.

O O O

You acquired the stew after battling small, orange-skinned men who are called shan sao. The stew is in a special gourd that will preserve it for a long time. The fight was a difficult ordeal, and the threat of tigers complicated matters. However, you managed to persevere.

Magilla's Feather Healing Necklace: This leather corded necklace is adorned with five blue feathers from a large parrot. Each feather was especially enchanted by the old saru shaman, Magilla. The power of the feathers can be called on by a priest character of any race. To use a feather, the character simply pulls it free and touches it to the individual needing to be healed. Each feature cures 1d8 hit points of damage. Draw a line through the circles below to indicate when a feather has been used.

O O O O O

You acquired the necklace from the old shaman after saving the saru village. The village was cursed by Ligela after a young saru broke a taboo.

Magilla's Stone Missile Necklace: This leather corded necklace is adorned with ten dark red stones. Each stone was especially enchanted by the old saru shaman, Magilla. The power of the stones can be called on by a wizard

Adventure Map -- Once Broken

