

Ship from the Sky

**A One-Round Living Jungle Adventure for
High Level Heroes**

by Tom Prusa

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Welcome to the Living Jungle!

The Living Jungle is a tournament campaign exclusively for members of the RPGA Network. Be sure that you distribute scoring sheets at the *beginning* of the round, and make sure that each player at your table has a membership card (or at least remembers his or her membership number).

This tournament should include:

-  17 pages of text and maps
-  6 Hero Point Certificates
-  21 Treasure Certificates

This is a one round Living Jungle adventure for high level heroes. Lower level heroes may play in this adventure, but their survival will definitely be in question. Don't blatantly pick on them, but don't pull any punches either.

During the course of the adventure, the heroes will earn experience points based on their accomplishments. Some of these points are for overcoming obstacles, finding information, defeating monsters, and recovering treasure. After each encounter an experience point value is listed. This is summarized at the end of the adventure as well. *All characters contributing to the success of an encounter receive the listed experience points.*

For example, if an encounter lists an experience point value of 100, then each hero participating earns 100 points. All experience points are awarded at the end of the tournament. Do not award experience points after each encounter.

DMs please note that the maximum amount of Experience Points available for this tournament is 11,500. This award is attainable only if the heroes do everything right and make it through the entire scenario.

In some places the characters can gain treasure. For common items, like normal weapons and equipment, the players must simply record the new items on their character sheets. But for magical or other special items, you must hand the appropriate Treasure Certificate, included with this tournament.

The actual playing time of the event is about three hours. You must stop in time to let your players vote. Begin this process by letting each player explain a little bit about their character. You should be completing the judge voting form while they do this. Next, remind the players to complete their own scoring forms, then collect them all for your event coordinator.

DM Background

In this adventure the players will meet the Oscray, a new race allowed for player characters in Malatra. The Oscray have fled from a war in space, set in the Spelljammer setting. No knowledge of Spelljammer is necessary to play or run this module.

The adventure starts when the heroes are on a hunt for a large garuda, a gnasher (T. Rex). The heroes can track and defeat the longtooth with little problem, probably. After defeating it, they have time to render and collect souvenirs. This should take some time, and they have to camp somewhere near the carcass. During the night, an event occurs in the sky above them. Something blocks out the moon, for a brief moment. Any heroes on watch can clearly see what seems to be a large canoe in the sky, flying! It is followed by a loud crash a short time later. The heroes can and should investigate, although if they do not, the oscray find them.

If they proceed in the general direction of the crash, they encounter a party of oscray. The meeting that follows should be historic, but it is sure to be tense. The Oscray present are tough fighters, and they are certainly suspicious of the heroes. They do not speak the language of Malatra, and they may view some non-humanoid heroes (katanga in non-human form, saru, butu, aarakocra, lacerials) as monsters. If they can be reasoned with, they may tell a story of flight from a war and flight from their own kind, who still pursue.

While talking with the oscray, the heroes and the oscray are surrounded by members of the Katimaya tribe. The heroes get to be peacemakers between two tribes.

After this, the entire group is attacked from above by another ship from the sky, filled with many more oscray. These oscray are led by Backbiter, the sworn enemy of Bentfang, leader of the oscray with the heroes. The heroes can join in their first and only aerial combat by aiding Bentfang's tribe.

The heroes then have some time to perform healing, get to know the oscray, and make plans to deal with Backbiter. After a few days of this, they receive news that Backbiter has taken hostage the leaders of both the Koshiva and Rudra tribes. He wants the oscray to turn themselves over to him, and he also intends to rule the plateau.

In the climax of the adventure, the heroes help assemble a force from three villages, while they themselves must sneak onto the oscray ship and free the hostages.

Player Introduction

Another year has gone by, and once again you have attended the annual council of tribes at the village of Big Chief Bagoomba. This year you won many honors, as you should, since you are some of the most famous heroes of the whole jungle. This year also had something different. For a change, Bengoukee did not have a mission for you. Instead, you saw him harrasing a group of less experienced heroes, those more likely to view him with awe. Not that you don't respect Bengoukee, but now that you have some experience, you realize that much of what he does is for show. Of course, for him it works. Showmanship is always better when backed by lots of power.

You are heading towards your respective villages, and have agreed to travel together for a while. You are nearing the village of the Katimaya, certainly not a dangerous place. Then you hear the scream of terror coming from high in the trees ahead.

Encounter One: The Journey Begins

The heroes should proceed quickly to investigate. If they do not, the screams grow louder and more desperate. Tell them that it sounds like a child's cry, no, two children screaming. They also hear the crashing and roaring of a large creature, it could very well be a gnasher. When/if they proceed, continue with the following:

Entering a small clearing that is rapidly getting larger, you see two small korobokuru children high up in a tree. Their plight is obvious, a large gnasher stands below them, attempting to force the tree down to the ground. And it looks like he might succeed. The tree already sways and it is only a few minutes before he will succeed in reaching his prey.

The heroes may attack, they may try to distract the gnasher, they may try to rescue the children, or any combination of these.

Gnasher (Tyrannosaurus Rex): Int Low; AL N; AC 2; MV 18; HD 18; hp 108; THAC0 5; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/5-40; SA trample for 2-12 damage; SD nil; MR nil; SZ G (50' long); ML 17 (frenzied).

The gnasher does not notice the heroes for the first round unless they make loud noises, (*a lightning bolt or fireball* spell, or really loud screaming), or unless they hit it and cause damage. If they merely close, they

may attack with a +2 bonus to hit for surprise. The gnasher fights until it is at or below 20 hit points, then flees to seek easier prey.

The gnasher is not an intelligent fighter. It seeks to attack whomever hurt it the most on the previous round. So, don't make a point of trying to kill anyone, this is the first encounter after all. The adventure would be better served if the gnasher manages to wound severely heroes than if one is killed. Also, the gnasher really can only bite most heroes, its claw attacks are only effective if the opponent is large size or better. (It has to lean over to bite them, it's forelegs are just not long enough).

Distracting the gnasher

A hero may attempt to distract the gnasher and lead it away. This can probably work, a spell or some kind of damage can cause it to chase the hero through the jungle. Unless the hero is a saru, aarakocra, or monkey katanga, or possesses the brachiation proficiency, the gnasher is faster than the hero. A hero will have to use Intelligence to lose the gnasher in the jungle. If this is done, the gnasher attacks the village later in the day, still hungry.

Rescuing the children

The children are about 60' up the tree. There are several other trees of similar size that can be climbed nearby, close enough for brachiation or a heroic leap to get a hero to their aid. It takes two rounds for a non-climbing hero to make it, one round if the hero is a saru, monkey-katanga, or has some kind of climbing proficiency (brachiation, rogue climbing skill, etc.). Of course an aarakocra can also make it in one round. The clearing does provide plenty of space for an aarakocra to take off and land without danger. (Except possibly from the gnasher, of course).

The children weigh 50 and 60 lbs respectively, a certain amount of strength will be needed to get them to the safety of another tree. Of course if the gnasher is not involved in a battle, it will follow the hero(s) and the children to the next tree.

Kailen and T'risk, Korobokuru boy/girl F1: Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 4,6; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg NA; SA nil; SD nil; SZ S; ML 5 (they are terrified).

They both possess the climbing skill with a score of 12. Kailen is 12, T'risk is 10. They are brother and sister, children of the shaman of the Katimaya village.

If rescued, the children are thankful. If there are saru in the party, they do not talk to them (unless

everyone is a saru). They insist that the heroes accompany them back to the village where their father can heal any of the heroes wounds (so they say). It is a little over three miles to the Katimaya village. If any of the heroes are honorary (or real) members of the Katimaya, the children recognize them and stick close to these heroes.

At the village of the Katimaya.

The shaman of the Katimaya is Nibloc, an older korobokuru. He has neither the aura of power nor the real power of Bengoukee, however. He is very thankful that the heroes rescued his children, and offers to do what healing he can on any wounded heroes (Saru last).

Nibloc; Korobokuru male P6: AL CG; AC 7 (hide armor); MV 12; hp 33; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); SA spells; SD spells; ML 17; Wis 16; Dex 6; all other stats 12.

Spells Known: *cure light wounds x2, command, entangle, sanctuary, hold person x2, speak w/animals, silence 15' radius, slow poison, dispel magic, cure animal bite.*

Cure animal bite is a 3rd level priest spell unique to Malatra. It heals 2-12 points of damage caused by a claw or bite.

Chief Yrbom Korobokuru male F7/T7: AL N; AC 3; MV 6; hp 43; THACO 14; Dmg 1d4+3 knife, 1d6+3 spear; SA thief abilities; S 16, D 17, C 12, I 11, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14.

Equipment: hide armor, knife, spear

Thief skills: PP 51%, OL 40%, FT 56%, MS 87%, HS 72%, DN, 47%, CW 50%.

Yrbom is the consummate boaster. Everything is grand and glorious when he talks about it, even a Saru hero. He is fairly young for a chieftain, about 42 years old. He is short and strong, and can drink an incredible amount of mead or beer (Katimaya beer is red, flat, and potent).

The chief and the shaman take great pleasure in honoring the heroes. The heroes are not robbed during the night; the katimaya don't consider that a challenge.

Boasting Contest:

The heroes are allowed to enter the nightly boasting contest, if they wish. Don't make a big deal out of this, most heroes have been in, or seen, these before. You can make up a few boasts if you wish, but only one is included. You can call this the best boast of

the night, and rate the heroes, according to how they do against this boast. Any hero who uses a previous adventure (boasts of something that actually happened), and has physical proof, should get a bit of a bonus when considering this.

Talmut's boast: *I am Talmut, fierce warrior of the Katimaya. I have hunted many strong garuda, I have faced the fierce leopard katanga, nothing has given me fear. But perhaps the most dangerous quest I have undertaken is when I entered the dread and taboo Valley of Spirits, and emerged not only alive, but as a hero to a whole new people.*

I did not break a taboo, I was sent by the only one in the whole jungle who I would not care to face in battle, the dread Bengoukee, witch doctor of great power. He ordered me to go, and enchanted my person so that the taboo would not have an effect on me. I made my way past many fearsome monsters, strange creatures the likes of which you have never seen. There were gnashers, of course, but I slew or avoided them with ease. The true danger was the new race that I discovered, the lacerials. Many of them were good and kind people. But others, those with the Black Flame tattooed on their arms, were more fierce than any garduda. Nearly was I slain by them before I won out. It was their leader who struck fear into my heart for the first and only time. He was not a lacerial, rather he seemed a Nubari, but one who resisted even death itself. His chilling touch withered my arm, and I would surely have died. But at the last minute I heard the unmistakable crashing of a gnasher in the jungle. I raced to it and struck it a mighty blow. Not enough to kill it, just enough to enrage it. I then led the gnasher straight to the leader. I struck him a mighty blow, not truly hurting him, but spoiling the fell magic which would surely have cooked my bones. While the two of them then battled, I led the whitehearts, the good lacerials, to safety out of the Valley.

As proof of my tail, I can offer three things. The first is my hand, missing two fingers. I struck the fell leader of the Black Flame lacerials with that hand, the fingers stiffened and actually fell off. The second is the scale of the gnasher, which I picked up as I led the lacerials to safety. The third is the name I earned from the lacerials. For lacerials do not communicate as we do, rather they communicate with scent and a hissing that no Malatran can understand. If you should meet one, mention Talmut and you will hear a "SSSS", and smell cinammon. That is my name among the lacerials, and it means "Great Hero who Leads without Fear". For so I am known, not only by the lacerials, but by any tribe in the jungle.

Truth: Talmut picked up a scale from the gnasher the Heroes fought. His fingers were lost in a hunting accident, and the rest is pure fiction. He heard the story from the heroes who did go on the quest of "Valley of Mists", when lacerials were introduced to the jungle (adventure *Death from the Mists*).

Let the heroes enjoy an evening with the Katimaya. They are not robbed, or bothered in any way. Yrbom is delighted to feast them, and plenty of Katimaya beer is served. He does send out a party to rend the gnasher, offering the heroes teeth, scales, claws, whatever memento they want from the beast.

Encounter Two: Ship from the Sky

During the night the village has a strange occurrence. A ship passes over the village.

The feasting lasts long with the Katimaya, it is late before you get to sleep. You have defeated a fierce creature, and are among friends. The moon is full, by its light you can see nearly as well as in daylight. Towards morning, you are wakened by a scream from the camp. As you emerge from your huts, one of the katimaya points to the sky and shouts; "Look, a giant canoe." When you look up you are shocked to see that he is not lying. Indeed, against the moon you can see what looks to be a strange canoe of a size you have never seen. It has many sails, and is larger than the largest hut. Indeed, such a craft could not fit in any river easily, but it is not in the river, it sails through the sky. As katimaya around you panic, scream and run, you can see that the canoe is not really sailing, it is falling. Now you see why. Another canoe pursues it. As you watch, the second canoe fires a giant arrow at the first, piercing it with the arrow. The first canoe wobbles and falls even faster. In a matter of moments you hear the sound of a crash in the jungle. The second canoe flies overhead for a moment, and then sails off into the night. What could such a portent mean?

The heroes may go check out the ship now, or they may wait until dawn. It is entirely up to them. Point out that they have only an hour until dawn, they will do a much better job of tracking it down in daylight. Such time can be used to replenish spell lists, for some heroes may still be in need of healing. By the time spell lists are replenished, it is past dawn.

If there are no spellcasters, the heroes may indeed leave immediately. It makes no real difference, for they do not locate the ship until at least an hour has passed.

It should not be difficult for the heroes to locate the ship, it landed but two miles away. When they do, they have an historic meeting with the oscray, a new race fleeing from wars far away in space.

Have any hero with tracking or direction sense proficiencies make a check. If no one possesses these skills, Wisdom -6 is also allowed. *Speak with animals* can also get them a direction, but remember that the animals don't even know what a canoe is, much less a ship. Asking about the loud noise in the night should work though.

If checks are failed, another may be made each hour, with a +2 (cumulative) bonus to the chance for success. When they locate the ship, continue.

The giant canoe rests upon the ground, near a small pair of trees that have been broken off. The giant canoe looks damaged, too damaged to ever float in water again. Whether it can float in the sky is a mystery to you, you have no idea how it did that in the first place.

A number of creatures crawl around and about the canoe. They appear to be attempting repairs. They are a strange looking people. Most are large, perhaps six feet tall, some taller. They have an ugly snout, and coarse skin that is almost gray, too light for any type of Nubari. Most wear some sort of brown armor, and carry spears tipped with a strange brown substance that gleams in the sun.

If the heroes show themselves, continue. If they do not immediately show themselves, have them make stealth type rolls (hide in shadows, whatever.) As soon as the heroes are spotted, continue.

When they spot you they immediately go to battle readiness, drawing knives and waving spears about. Several of them bark at each other in a guttural language.

Find out if the heroes are hostile. They should not be, they have not been attacked. They are also badly outnumbered, as many as 50 or more of these creatures can be seen.

As long as the heroes are not immediately hostile, the oscray send out a party to talk with them. This is accomplished by having one of their shamans, Whistleweed, who is quite a linguist, attempt to speak with them. He is familiar with many languages of

space, one of them is close enough to the language of Malatra to allow communication. Make sure to mix up or mispronounce common words, to represent this gap. If one of the heroes has a *tongues* spell, and uses it, the oscray will be a bit more friendly. The oscray are suspicious at first, particularly if there are saru or katanga in non-human form in the party.

Oscray (50), Oscray male F5: AL N(G); AC 6 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-6 (short bow), or 1-6+1 (brass-tipped spear), or 1-4+1 (brass dagger); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; Str 17; Dex 12; Con 15; Int 11; Wis 9; Cha 9; SZ M (6'); ML 14.

Bentfang (leader), Oscray male F7: AL NG; AC 5 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 44; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-6+1; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; Str 17; Dex 15; Con 16; Int 13; Wis 10; Cha 14; SZ M (6'2"); ML 16.

Steelheart, Oscray male W5: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (brass dagger); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; Str 11; Dex 14; Con 11; Int 15; Wis 11; Cha 13; SZ M (5'8"); ML 14.

Spells memorized: None

Shamans (3), Oscray male P3: AL N; AC 6; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (spear); SA spells; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (5-6'); ML 15.

Spells memorized: *cure light woundsx2; command, detect evil, hold person.*

Notes on the Oscray. These are the remnants of a race from a world far, far away. They are fleeing a war in space, one in which they were forced to fight against the Elven Armada. They fled here, to the plateau of Malatra, purely by accident. They are not educated (none of them can read and write), even their spellcaster uses a fetish system similar to the one used on Malatra. Their one 'civilized' advantage over the natives here is the fact that they use brass. They also understand the ballista that is mounted on their ship.

The oscray are an orc-like people, perhaps even descendants of the orcs. Their resemblance is strong, physically, although they are larger than the average orc. Mentally, they have surpassed the orcs by quite a distance. They are not inherently evil, no more so than any other race on the plateau.

More on the Oscray is included in the handout at the end of the module. They brought their families with them, children can be seen hiding behind the ship.

Points for the Oscray to share.

- The oscray are not seeking war, they are fleeing it. They want only peace with the inhabitants of Malatra.
- Bentfang is their leader, he has led them in their long flight across the skies. They have been fleeing for years and years, across distances that can't accurately be expressed to any inhabitant of Malatra. The best they can do is 'across many skies'
- Another ship, filled with warriors from their own race, was pursuing them. It is led by Backbiter, brother of Bentfang. The two hate each other with a fire that burns in their hearts. Bentfang is sure that the ship could not have followed them to this world, small and insignificant as it is. Yet it is so, because no one else would have come this far and attacked them.
- Their ship flies through the use of the power of a shaman or mage, although the shaman or mage cannot cast spells for a full day afterward.
- They are hungry. They have had short rations for many moons, if the heroes know where to get food they will be grateful. (An opportunity for one or more heroes to go hunting with several of the oscray). The oscray have (compared to the heroes, at least), horrible hunting traits; they are loud, smelly, and clumsy. Actually, they are not bad, but compared to natives of the jungle, they do not match up well. If some heroes choose to go hunting with them, they can find a dozen antelope. The antelope spook at the sound of the oscray, but several of them bring down antelope with spears, at fairly long range. Don't spend much time on this, any hero with hunting or survival can arrange to spook the antelope right past the oscray and the other heroes, allowing them to bring down enough meat for the oscray tribe.

Assuming the heroes do not attack, and there is no reason why they should, they can eventually communicate with the oscray. The oscray do not really want to settle here in the jungle, they really just want to lay in supplies and continue to some place more comfortable-looking. Of course they aren't going to have a choice, but they don't know that right now.

Let the heroes talk to the oscray for a short while. Eventually (especially if the heroes share food), the children overcome their shyness and come out. They are fascinated by the heroes, particularly non-humans. They are suspicious of tam'hi, but any other really strange types quickly draw their attention. Saru, aarakocra, lizardmen, all draw their attention.

After they speak a while, one of the sentries goes on alert. As the oscray react, Chief Yrbom and his warriors appear, having come to check out the strange occurrence. Things should look tense for a while, as oscray face korobokuru in about equal numbers. Let the heroes be the peacemakers, although if they refuse, Yrbom and Bentfang eventually work it out themselves.

Encounter Three: Ship of Evil

As the korobokuru and the oscray are meeting for the first time, they are interrupted by the other oscray ship, the one led by Backbiter.

*As you stand in the midst of the oscray and the korobokuru, a cry draws your attention. One of the oscray is pointing to the sky, where another ship can be seen. "Backbiter" screams one, as the oscray rush towards their ship. Bentfang strides up to you, "We go to face my brother. You who are might warriors of the jungle, will you fight with us?" As he speaks there is a crash, and you see a boulder from the ship up in the sky drop and crush a pair of korobokuru. The members of the Katimaya tribe are fleeing in panic, while the oscray frantically board their ship. Another crash, and a boulder just misses **(pick a hero)** and bounds over to slam an oscray in the back, breaking her back with a sharp snap. All around boulders are dropping into the jungle, while the oscray in the sky laugh and taunt those of you on the ground. Chief Yrbom rushes up to Bentfang. "I will fight with you, I should be able to boast of this for the rest of my life, if I live that long." He is clearly scared, but a number of korobokuru are already dead from the dropping boulders, the fight has come to him.*

The heroes do not have to fight with the Oscray, although, since they are being attacked as well, they probably will. If so, Bentfang does not want them to do the spelljamming, nor does he want them to man the ballista. He hopes they can handle weapons and/or

spells, that could be invaluable to the oscray in this fight.

If the heroes are reluctant, have a boulder drop on a hero, for a glancing blow, doing 2d12 points of damage (pick a hero with some hit points to spare).

The Aerial Battle

As you climb into this strange canoe, it lifts straight into the sky. Bentfang is roaring orders to his troops, who are rushing about in frantic haste, but with purpose. Several of them struggle with the largest arrow you have ever seen, it is twice the height of a Nubari. Bentfang strides by, "Do any of you have experience with a ballista," he asks. Seeing the blanks looks on your faces, he points to an open box lying on the deck. "Bows and quivers are there, if you have spells be ready with them." Meanwhile the oscray have managed to mount the huge arrow onto a strange contraption, it must be the bow that fires it. The ship is rising rapidly, now it is above the tree line. Oscray are lining the rail, bows at the ready. Ahead and above the other ship is turning to face you. The other ship is almost twice the size of the one you are on, and it seems to have many more oscray on it than are on yours.

Let the heroes help where they will. There is plenty of space to get a short bow and line up along the rail. Particularly strong characters may offer to help with the ballista, just require a Strength roll at -4 to get the ballista bolt mounted in one round, otherwise it takes two. Or, they may end up helping to re-cock the ballista, requiring a Strength roll at a -6. If they succeed, they have cocked it by themselves in one round, a feat that usually takes three oscray two rounds. If they fail, it takes them two rounds. Only heroes with a Strength of 16 or above may attempt this by themselves, otherwise they need help.

Combat:

Round one:

The heroes' ship is still trying to get the ballista ready, while the rest of the oscray are rushing to get ready for battle. The enemy ship is primed and ready.

Let the heroes fire off their attacks, bows will be at long range, while spells with a range of less than 100 yards will be ineffective. Should someone have a *fireball*, they can set the rigging and the wood of the other ship on fire. This is countered in one round by a *create water* spell from several of the enemy shamans. The shamans are surrounded by fighters, only through the use of area spells can the shamans be targeted.

Use statistics above for Bentfang's oscaray, and stats from Encounter Six for Backbiter's oscaray.

The enemy fires off a volley, bringing down 10 friendly oscaray. Each hero who is on the rail firing back is targeted by two arrows. Each hero who is merely on deck is targeted by one.

Round Two:

The oscaray fire their ballista bolt, which hits. The enemy ship fires two ballista bolts, one of which **automatically** hits. (This is vital, or we may end up with spelljamming ships in Malatra, which is NOT intended). The other bolt snaps off the mainmast, killing three more oscaray. One random hero on deck must make a Dexterity check at -2, or be struck for 2d6 points of damage from the mast. Let the heroes get their attacks, and then continue below:

As you deliver your attacks on the enemy ship, one of the giant arrows slams into the hull, piercing it. Another strikes near the back of the ship, passing all the way through it. And a lightning bolt crackles through the mast, snapping it in two. There is a sudden lurch, and the ship turns its nose towards the ground. "All hands prepare for crash landing" screams Bentfang. "They took out the spelljammer". Above you can see that your attacks have hurt the enemy, it is not following you, instead the giant arrow that your ship fired seems to have fouled its sails and caused considerable damage. You might have won, but for this problem with a crash landing.

Each hero must find a place to hang on. Allow a Dexterity or Strength roll, hero's choice. Those who succeed take 1d6 points of damage from the crash, those who fail take twice that. The ship itself will never fly again.

Note on Aarakocra. If there are any flying heroes in the party, they are obviously not going to stick around and crash. They may never have been on the ship in the first place. If so, they cannot get too close to the enemy ship, a volley of arrows (the first one just short), keeps them away. If they persist, remind them that the first volley was at least 50 arrows, just how tough are they? They can follow for a while, long enough to see that the ship is heading towards Fire Mountain.

The enemy ship is indeed damaged, it handles poorly now. They are also out of boulders to drop, they are headed to the mountain to pick up more and make what repairs they can. Their speed is effectively 96, no

arakocra or other flying hero (with a *fly* spell) can possibly keep up for long.

The ship the heroes are on goes down with a crash. Part of the hull crumbles, and the cabin bursts open. Through the hole in the cabin the heroes can see one of the shamans sitting in a throne-like chair, clearly dead. A strange helmet rests on his head, it is cracked open, as is the shaman's skull. The spelljamming chair is clearly ruined.

After the crash, the heroes can help with the wounded, and there are many. Every *cure wounds* spell can save a life. There are a total of 20 oscaray that are in need of healing. Those with healing proficiency may try to help, making as many rolls as needed. Only one try per wounded oscaray is allowed, so divide up the wounded oscaray among those heroes with healing proficiency.

When the uproar dies down a bit, Bentfang limps over to the heroes.

"We have lost everything. Our ship will no longer fly, and we are trapped here in this jungle. But what is worse still is that my brother's ship survived. There is no telling what evil he will be up to, but one thing is sure. He will not rest until I and all my people are dead. I thank you for aiding us in battle, although I fear it was for naught."

If pressed for explanations, Bentfang reveals that he and his brother argued bitterly over the course of the war. If asked about the war, he refers to the Elven/Orc war, neither term should mean anything to the heroes. Bentfang claims that he wanted to leave the war, as it was not right to slay thousands of innocent civilians in the name of war. His brother agreed, but wanted them to set off on their own and find a city or country that they could conquer, and set themselves up as minor kings. Bentfang disagreed, and the two fought. After the fight, Bentfang determined to leave on his own, with his crew and their families. Backbiter took this as a sign of cowardice (which it is, a little), and pursued. Now, who knows what Backbiter will do?

Encounter Four: Hostages

Three days pass before the heroes get any news of Backbiter and his troop. Let the heroes heal up, aid the oscaray, and get to know them.

If the players wish to roleplay with the oscaray, let them for a short while.

Things of interest to the heroes - possibly

✍ **Brass.** The oscaray bear weapons of brass. Quite a few have armor of brass as well. As per the DMG, brass armor is one armor class worse than regular metal, thus brass chain mail is AC6, the same as hide armor. It is also uncomfortable to wear in the heat of the jungle. The oscaray are willing to trade a brass dagger for training in hunting or jungle survival. If asked, brass is made by melting copper and zinc together. Neither of these words mean anything to the heroes, there is no copper or zinc on the plateau. Thus, there will be no more brass.

✍ **Whistleweed, Twitch, and One-eye, the shamans of the oscaray.** These priests worshipped an actual deity, one that they cannot connect with on the plateau. They seek out any hero shamans and want to know how they receive spells. They cannot contact great Minardin, their deity. Minardin was a deity of peace and growth, a far cry from the deities worshipped by Backbiter's shamans. If told about the spirits of the jungle, they have trouble at first, but by the third day, Whistlewind has managed to memorize some first level spells, if he gets some advice on the use of fetishes. He will ask a hero shaman.

Whistlewind is intelligent and inquisitive. Twitch has a twitch, but she is otherwise a nice oscaray. One-eye is suspicious and very upset at the loss of his spells. He is possibly the ugliest of all the oscaray.

✍ **Steelheart, the mage.** Steelheart is a 5th level mage. He is interested in the heroes fetishes, his are different. For instance, for his *magic missile* spell, he carries a small brass arrow. For his *levitate*, he carries a portion of a feather from a roc, something completely unique on the plateau. Steelheart wants to make the best of the situation. He is always eager to learn.

✍ **Bentfang.** Bentfang wants to meet with Yrbom, and with any hero that he recognizes as a leader (anyone who has distinguished themselves in combat, which may actually be all of the heroes). Bentfang is worried about Backbiter. Backbiter has no ethics or morals (said with a great deal of bitterness). He may do anything here on the plateau. His force numbers around 150, battletrained and war-hardened. The heroes know that this is the equal of anything any single tribe can put together, or even several of them. Only the tribe of Bagoomba could even hope to hold off such a force.

If he can be hurt badly enough, he might be driven off. Also in Bentfang's mind is the fact that Backbiter has the only ship still capable of flight.

Bentfang urges sending scouts in the direction that Backbiter went, and Yrbom quickly agrees. Bentfang wants to know what kind of forces the jungle can muster against Backbiter. To the heroes' knowledge, they could call upon the Koshiva, the Rudra, and the tribe of Bagoomba, in the area. Yrbom sends runners to warn each of these villages, and ask for help.

Bentfang is also most interested in the new home of the oscaray. He wants to know who rules, he expects there is a king, and is quite surprised when the concept means nothing to the heroes. He likes the idea, however.

He is interested in livable land, his people are adept at making things, and his warriors have been through many a battle. He asks the heroes for help in finding a suitable spot for a village for his people, preferably in the plains. Not until something is done about Backbiter, of course.

✍ **If the heroes want to follow the ship immediately:**

Bentfang and Yrbom both urge against this. If the ship returns, the heroes are needed to help defend the village. Also, it flies so fast that it could return while the heroes are days away. Instead, they urge sending out scouts, several of the heroes may act as scouts if they desire.

✍ **If heroes go out scouting:**

They find no traces of Backbiter for the first two days. On the third day, they come across a runner from the village of the Rudra. He insists on making it to the village of Yrbom, looking for the rest of the heroes. He can tell the information included in the introduction to the next encounter.

Don't drag this out. Let the heroes realize that this tribe of oscaray, at least, is decent and hard-working. They will be a welcome addition to the jungle. The time should mostly be used to plan for when Backbiter returns.

Encounter Five: Villages in fear.

It takes a few days, but the oscaray have recovered somewhat from the attack. Your wounds are better, as well. It is late in the third day since the attack that

you spot a Rudran tribesman running towards the Katimaya village.

He stumbles to Chief Yrbom's hut, looking aghast at the presence of the Oscray. "They have kidnapped the chief and his family!" he stammers out, as he collapses in front of you. He points to Bentfang, "Those monsters have done it, kill him!"

When he catches his breath, the story comes out a bit clearer. Backbiter and his troops landed in the village of the Rudra, giving the appearance of a peaceful group. When the chief introduced his family, Backbiter's guards slew the chief's guards, they grabbed the chief and his family, and took them up in a giant canoe that flew! The runner, Tardic, is pretty sure that people won't believe him, and is quite surprised when they do.

The chieftain of the monsters forced the village to surrender, and sent a runner here. He wants Bentfang and all his people to turn themselves over to him within three days, or he will slaughter the entire village of the Rudra.

Within two hours of Tardic's arrival, another runner comes, this one is M'le from the village of the Koshiva. She has the same story about her village.

Yrbom calls a council meeting, inviting the heroes as well as Bentfang, M'le, and Tardic.

M'le tells the council that Backbiter and his force were occupying their village when she was sent, early this morning. The flying ship was resting in the river, tied up and heavily guarded by the monsters. The chief of the Koshiva and his family were taken to the boat, where they still were when M'li left.

Tardic knows only that the ship took the chief and left, after forcing the warriors of the Rudra to surrender. They also took a lot of food and wine. They sent the message that he was to pass, and said they would return in three days.

Both tell tales of the ship flying overhead after kidnapping the chieftains and their families and dropping boulders on huts, killing several tribesmen, including even a few children. Neither really wants the oscray to turn themselves over to Backbiter, but what choice do they have?

Bentfang then speaks. He says that this is a tactic that Backbiter has used before. And no, he will not release the chieftains if the villages submit to him. In fact, slaying the chieftain and their families is one of the ways he can insure that no one is left to rise up against him.

Backbiter's Tactics

Backbiter knows he has the strongest force in the jungle, but he is a wily commander. He also knows that

he cannot possibly defeat the whole jungle by himself. Therefore, he has taken to kidnapping as a method of breaking the spirit of the nearby villages. When they are thoroughly subdued, and Bentfang's force neutralized, he will be ready to move on. He intends to rule the entire plateau someday, and he believes it will be sooner rather than later.

The Plan

The heroes must help come up with a plan. Let them lead, but their options are limited.

Some of the things that should be covered:

- Unless the oscray are present, Backbiter will probably not risk the majority of his force on the ground. If they are present, he almost certainly will want the majority of his force at hand, to make sure there is no trouble from Bentfang's force.
- The hostages need to be freed. Backbiter will surely order them slain at the first sign of an attack.
- The heroes do not have enough of a force to challenge Backbiter, not with the 50 oscray and 25 or so korobokuru that Yrbom can provide. They need more help. If someone realizes this, or asks about it, Tardic says that he can get almost 50 Rudra warriors, many without their best weapons, but with some kind of a weapon. M'li volunteers that if a fight breaks out, the boat people will surely fight, they too have daggers and bows hidden in their huts. Thirty Koshiva could be counted on.

If a runner could reach Bagoomba's tribe, another 100 or so warriors could be counted in, with the possibility of Bengoukee coming as well. M'li volunteers for this duty, she is the fastest runner in her tribe, and should reach Bagoomba's village in two days. From there it is but a day's travel by canoe to the village of the Koshiva. The timing will be close, but it should be possible.

So the plan that Yrbom, Tardic, and Bengoukee agree on should be something like the following:

The oscray come marching in with their hands empty, preparing to surrender. They can be guarded by the warriors of the Rudra, as well as the warriors that Yrbom sends. When the main group of Backbiter's force gets off the ship, someone should sneak around and attempt to free the hostages. A good signal would be cutting the boat free, when it drifts away from shore Backbiter should panic, this will be an excellent time to turn the tables and attack. It also prevents the brave heroes who will free the hostages from facing

reinforcements. If Backbiter is killed, his troop will likely surrender, there is only one other strong leader in his troop, Grimace the mage, but he is feared more than respected.

Note: When ever they refer to the brave heroes who will attempt to free the hostages, everyone at the council meeting looks at the heroes. Remember, these are high-level heroes, with many a song being sung about their exploits.

Other Plans that may work:

The heroes and a picked group could assault the ship at night, to free the hostages. Problems: The village is still basically hostage to Backbiter, so an attack on the village would still have to be timed for no later than immediately after the hostages were freed.

Harrassing the oscray from the cover of the jungle, in true guerilla warfare style. While the junglecraft of the heroes would let this succeed, Bentfang cautions against it. He refers to the ten for one policy. Backbiter practices a ten for one policy with his hostages. If one oscray is killed that way, he will slay ten Koshiva villagers.

Sneaking in and slaying Backbiter. This might work, but Backbiter is no fool. He will have guards about. Unless it is done with a show of force, his troops still might retaliate against the Koshiva. And something should be done about Grimace, who is a powerful mage. If questioned about his power, he warns that Grimace has turned creatures into frogs, and frozen a dozen elves with a single blast of cold. (Grimace is 9th level).

Other plans have to be adjusted accordingly, keeping in mind that Backbiter is ruthless, and the heroes should do their best to avoid the loss of innocent life.

If heroes want to go for help: Some heroes (aarakocra come to mind), may be able to reach other tribes much faster. This is fine, if they go to Bagoomba, they can arrive in a day with a hundred warriors. Bengoukee is not available, he is on a retreat. No available spellcasters can be found in Bagoomba's village. The hero should be urged to return without waiting. The warriors of Bagoomba certainly know where the Koshiva village is, and a single person can move much faster than a group of 100. Also, if a hero is waiting to return with the warriors, he/she will miss the final encounter, which would hardly be very satisfying.

The other oscrays' attitude.

Some of the oscray rank and file are not too happy about the whole situation. They don't mind attacking Backbiter, he has been chasing them for a long time. They also don't know if they can trust these strange-looking people and animals that their chief is now associating with. Nothing radical, but some general grumbling in the ranks should be noted.

Map of the Oscray Ship

A crude map of the ship can be drawn by Steelwind, in the dirt (of course). Hand the heroes the ship map when/if they ask for specifics about ship and guards location.

Encounter Six: Showdown

This encounter assumes that the plan goes pretty much as described above. It is up to the DM to make changes to fit the situation, if it is different.

Facing the Heroes on shipboard.

Oscray (15), Oscray male F4: AL N(G); AC 6 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 16; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-6 (short bow), or 1-6+1 (brass-tipped spear), or 1-4+1 (brass dagger); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; Str 17; SZ M (5-6'); ML 14.

Backbiter (leader), Oscray male F8: AL NG; AC 5 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6+5 (brass short sword); SA specialized in short sword; SD nil; MR nil; Str 18 (10%); Dex 15; Con 16; Int 13; Wis 10; Cha 14; SZ M (6'); ML 19.

Grimace, Oscray male W9: AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (brass dagger); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; Str 11; Dex 14; Con 11; Int 17; Wis 13; Cha 13; SZ M (5' 7"); ML 14.

Spells memorized: *magic missile x2, comprehend languages, ventriloquism, detect good, detect invisible, Melf's acid arrow, flaming sphere, lightning bolt, Melf's minute meteors, tongues, polymorph other, polymorph self, cone of cold.*

Shamans (2), Oscray female P4: AL NE; AC 6 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 20, 19; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (spear); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (5-6'); ML 15;

Spells memorized: *cure light wounds; command, detect good, hold person x2, silence 15'radius.*

In the Village of the Koshiva:

Oscray (135), Oscray male F4: AL N; AC 6 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 16; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-6 (short bow), or 1-6 (brass-tipped spear), or 1-4 (brass dagger); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 14.

Lieutenants (6), Oscray male F6: AL N(E); AC 6 (brass chain mail); MV 12; hp 33; THAC0 14; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-6 (short bow), or 1-6+1 (brass-tipped spear), or 1-4+1 (brass dagger); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; Str 17; SZ M (5-6'); ML 15.

Shamans (5), Oscray female P3: AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 20, 19; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (spear); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (5-6'); ML 15;

Spells memorized: *cure light wounds; command, detect good, hold person, silence 15' radius.*

If the Heroes have a different plan:

If the heroes choose to sneak in at night, 30 more oscray are on the ship, as well as 3 lieutenants and 3 more shamans. All of the additional oscray are asleep when the heroes first attempt to climb on the ship.

Hostages: The hostages are held below, in the brig. (See map). There are a total of seven hostages, including:

- Chief Rakil, of the Koshiva, his wife and daughter.
- The chief of the Rudra, his wife, and two young sons. (age 10 & 13).

The hostages are guarded by five oscray and a shaman. The rest of the oscray troops are on deck, keeping watch. Backbiter, Grimace, and the other shaman are in Backbiter's cabin, although if news of the oscray coming in (supposedly to surrender, or whatever) comes, Backbiter and the shaman will leave the ship and enter the village.

Preventing the ship from flying off:

One shaman is always on duty in or near the spelljamming room. It takes two rounds after the shaman knows the ship is attacked for him to get into the spelljamming room, and in place in the spelljamming chair. In one more round, the ship will lift off of the water. It will be held down by the line tied to the dock at the edge of the village. An oscray will attempt to cut it free if the ship lifts.

The heroes can stop the ship from escaping by harming or slaying the shaman in the chair. The shaman cannot fight back in any way, although if

someone batters at the door, he will attempt to set the ship back down in the water.

Important Nhero actions during the combat.

Backbiter starts on the ship, but leaves it if Bentfang and his oscray show up. If he knows that the ship is being attacked, he leaves off any other action to return to the seat of his power.

Grimace remains on the ship at all times. He starts in his cabin, but comes up on deck as soon as the oscray appear, or if an alarm is raised.

The shamans are responsible for flying the ship, and for watching the hostages. As noted above, one is on duty near the spelljamming chair, the others are in their quarters. They proceed to help guard the hostages if an alarm is raised.

The ten oscray on guard on the deck of the ship. If combat breaks out in the village, five of them go to help in the village, the rest stay on board on guard. The five watching the hostages do not leave for any reason (unless the ship is on fire, or something like that).

Basically, it is intended that the heroes deal with the oscray on the ship, while the assembled jungle warriors and Bentfang's oscray deal with the oscray in the village. Adjust situations according to the heroes' actions.

If Grimace and Backbiter are slain:

If a hero slays Backbiter, and Grimace is also disposed of, the heroes can try to stop the combat. A loud speech or proclamation (something to get the combatants' attention) will be required. If this is done, the oscray will surrender.

It takes approximately ten rounds of combat for the combined jungle forces to gain the upper hand over the oscray. At this time small groups of them will break off and flee into the jungle, where they will remain as Nhero villains. They will not be wiped out to the last oscray.

Epilogue

It was a fierce battle, many good beings perished. But the threat to the jungle is ended, and new allies have been made.

In the days that follow, the wounded are healed, the villages are repaired. You go with a party of oscray and locate a place for them to settle, at the edge of the Rayanna Savnanah, north of the Wise Ones' territory.

Gifts are presented to you for your help in this crisis, and songs are sung of your exploits. The

jungle wil never be the same, for now you know that other exist, far away across many skies.

Here ends *Ships from the Sky*

Experience Point Summary:

Note: If you have a mostly mid-level group, and you have to tone down the oscray numbers a bit, then lower the XP awards for them by 25%-50% as appropriate.

Encounter One:

Defeat the gnasher 2,000 xp
Rescue the children 250 xp per child.

Encounter Two:

Negotiate peacefully with oscray 250 xp
Mediate between the oscray and the katimaya 500 xp

Encounter Three:

Fight in the ship battle from Bentfang's vessel 1,000 xp

Encounter Four:

Plan intelligently to deal with Backbiter 250 xp

Encounter Five:

Work with the other leaders to develop a decent plan for freeing the hostages and defeating Backbiter 500 xp

Encounter Six:

Free the hostages 750 xp
Hero defeats Backbiter 500 xp
Hero defeats Grimace 500 xp

Role-playing

Good character portrayal, staying in character 0-1,000 xp

Total possible experience 7,750 xp

Treasure Summary

It must be on this list or the heroes cannot keep it. Note that there is a lot of brass chain mail and many brass weapons. These are all taken by the oscray themselves which survive, and by tribal leaders for adornment and study. The heroes cannot end up with anything not listed below.

Encounter Two

- Brass dagger: This dagger was obtained by trading from the Oscray, a new race who came to Malatra from the skies. It does normal dagger damage, but is made of a shiny brown substance known as brass. It is sharp, and retains the sharpness much longer than a wooden or bone dagger.

Encounter Six

(each hero may receive one item)

- Brass headdress: This brass circlet fits snugly on your brow. It is the symbol of the defeat of Backbiter, an evil Oscray who came from across the skies to threaten the existence of three villages. For your help in this crisis, you were awarded this trophy as a symbol of your courage. It is readily recognized in the village of the Rudra, the Koshiva, and the Katimaya. (+1 reaction roll in any of these villages).
- Brass chainmail (one suit for a hero): This armor is made of tiny little rings of brass, a substance from across the skies. It provides AC 6 protection, and is very durable. It was obtained in battle with the forces of Backbiter, an evil Oscray who threatened the existence of three villages.
- Spell fetish for *dispel magic*, *polymorph other*, or *cone of cold*
- Farseer glass: This strange tube allows you to look through it and see as though you had an eagle's eye. You can see things as though they were 5 times as close as they really are. The tube is made of a brownish substance called brass, inside is a substance as transparent as water, in fact even more so. It is an artifact that came from across the skies, with the Oscray when they came to the jungle of Malatra. It was presented to you by their chieftain, Bentfang, in gratitude for your help.
- Powder of healing (2): This rare substance is of unknown origin, having come from far across the skies. It was obtained as a gift from the shaman of the Oscray, a new race who traveled here to the jungle 'across many skies.' When sprinkled on a wound, the wound heals at a miraculous rate (1 hit point per ten minutes). A total of 1d6 +4 points of damage are healed with every application. There is enough in the bag for five applications.
- Gem of fascination: This extremely rare gem was gifted to you by Bentfang, chieftain of the Oscray. He presented it to you for your help in freeing his people from the attentions of his brother, Backbiter. It is large and beautiful. It has no magic properties, but is quite fascinating to those who like gems and shiny objects. Saru and monkey katanga in particular prize this stone, and should

react in a more favorable manor to the wearer (+3 to Nhero saru and monkey katanga reactions, heroes' reactions are up to them.)

Cone of Cold Spell Fetish

This small cone is made of brass. It was obtained from the effects of Grimace, a powerful evil mage of the oscray race who brought it across many skies.

Polymorph Other Spell Fetish

This small bag contains scales from a lizard, fur from a bat and a leopard, a claw from a tiger katanga, a fish's scale, and a frog's leg. When you meditate upon these items, you are able to memorize the *polymorph other* spell, and turn other creatures into small inoffensive creatures.

Dispel Magic Spell Fetish

This small gem was recovered from the effects of Grimace, a powerful evil mage who came with the Oscray, a race from across the sky. When you meditate upon it you can memorize a *dispel magic* spell.

Oscray

Climate/Terrain: Any (prefer plains)
Frequency: Very Rare
Organization: Tribal
Activity Cycle: Day
Diet: Omnivore
Intelligence: Highly (13-14)
Treasure: D
Alignment: N
No. Appearing: 2-12
Armor Class: 6 (brass chain mail)
Movement: 9 (12)
Hit Dice: 3
THAC0 18
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/attack by weapon type
Special Attacks: Nil
Special Defenses: Nil
Magic Resistance: Nil
Size: M (5-8' tall)
Morale: Elite (15)
XP Value: 150

Player Character Oscray:

Player Characters who are oscray may be fighters, thieves, mages (maximum of 9th level), priests (maximum of 5th level), or multi-classed fighter/thieves or fighter/priests.

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength	6	19
Dexterity	3	18
Constitution	5	18
Intelligence	3	18
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	3	16

Any oscray character may chose to begin with either brass chain mail (AC 6), a brass dagger, or 20 brass-tipped arrows. These do count against their starting items.

The oscray are a race of demi-humans originally descended from orcs. They resemble orcs more than a little, but are larger and slightly grayer of skin than true orcs. They have the characteristic piglike snout of the orcs, but they stand proud and erect. Oscray have large canine teeth that they like to sharpen to a fine point.

The oscray came from across the skies, fleeing a far off war with a horrid race called The Elves. They came in ships that flew in the sky, although those ships no longer have that power. The oscray have found a home here on the plains of Malatra.

The oscray speak a variant of the orcish tongue, unknown on the plains of Malatra. They can also learn any Malatran language.

Combat: Oscray are highly disciplined fighters, using strategical and tactical cunning. They are as yet unfamiliar with the jungle, but that will soon be remedied as they accustom themselves to their new surroundings.

Oscray use a variety of weapons in combat: spears, daggers, short bows, hand axes, long spears and long knives. In an emergency an oscray can bite with its teeth for 1-3 points of damage.

Oscray make a point of insulting foes in combat, it is considered a fine talent to possess. Oscray combat abilities are not affected by daylight.

Habitat/Society: Oscray have but one village, located on the Ravanna Savanah, well to the north of the Wise Ones territory. They exist by hunting and some agriculture. Their chieftain is Bentfang, who led them here.

Ecology: The oscray have banded together in this new world. An oscray will look first to protecting his tribe, especially the young. An oscray can live to be 80 years old.

