

HEROIC

1-10

# THE OASIS OF THE GOLDEN PEACOCK

*An adventure for 7th-level characters*

*“I have never known birds of different species to flock together. The very concept is unimaginable. Why, if that happened, we wouldn’t stand a chance! How could we possibly hope to fight them?”*

*–Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds**

*by Tim Eagon*

*illustrations by Thomas Denmark  
cartography by Kyle Hunter*



“The Oasis of the Golden Peacock” is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure for five 7th-level characters. PCs who complete this adventure should gain enough experience to advance to 8th level by its conclusion. DMs can place the isolated oasis that is the main locale of this adventure in any desert in their campaign world.

## BACKGROUND

Roving bands of veiled eladrin have recently begun raiding desert settlements, ransacking libraries, and kidnapping prominent sages. Adventurers returning from the arid wilderness report that these same eladrin have plundered many of the prehistoric ruins that lie half-buried under the shifting sands.

These eladrin are ruthless mercenaries secretly acting at the behest of a mysterious female half-elf named Emrett Mazrid. With their aid, she has amassed an impressive collection of scholarly works. She is using these ill-gotten resources to translate the teachings of the Order of the Golden Peacock, an extinct circle of ancient druids fabled to have unlocked the secrets of immortality.

Long before the rise of Arkhosia or Bael Turath, the druids of the Order discovered an ancient oasis suffused with primal energy and teeming with all manner of avian life attracted to its power. What the druids didn’t immediately realize is that the strange oasis is a primeval fey crossing. Soon after the Order arrived, inhabitants of the Feywild made their presence known. With their assistance, the Order channeled the oasis’s ambient energy into a quartz obelisk that they erected upon an island at the center of the oasis, allowing them to harness its power to protect both the fey crossing and the surrounding

wilderness. As the millennia passed, the Order’s membership dwindled and their convictions faded. Eventually, they tired of their isolated existence and abandoned the oasis. The few living sages with any knowledge of that time seek to preserve the Order’s lost legacy through a loose organization they call the Brotherhood of the Peacock.

By tracing a tenuous ancestry, Emrett Mazrid believes the oasis’s legendary power is her birthright. She seeks to corrupt the power of the oasis and seize it for herself. To do so, she must decipher the Order’s secrets before finally drenching the obelisk in the sacrificial blood of one of their descendants.

However, when Emrett and her mercenaries arrive at the oasis, they find it under the rule of its former guardian, an evil, ibis-headed sphinx named Hazar. Hazar is the Order’s final, flawed creation, and her ability to command the oasis’s avian inhabitants forces Emrett to forge a tenuous alliance with the sphinx. They grow to detest each other and both plan to betray the other, but for now, they have settled into an icy détente as they pursue their shared agenda.

Using the oasis as their base, Emrett’s eladrin hirelings begin their raids, and she soon possesses what she needs to translate the Order’s hieroglyphics. For her sacrificial victim, she selects a historian named Voor, one of the Brotherhood’s most distinguished scholars. Voor long ago sank Emrett’s academic ambitions by writing a scathing critique of her unorthodox and controversial dissertation, and as revenge she plans to torture, interrogate, and murder him in her vile ritual. With Hazar’s assistance, she is only weeks away from realizing her dark ambitions.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins when members of the Brotherhood recruit the PCs to rescue Voor. No one knows exactly where the eladrin took him, but following their trail points the PCs in the direction of the oasis, which lies roughly a hundred miles southeast of the nearest permanent settlement. To reach it, the PCs must endure a long journey through the inhospitable desert, during which they face a band of Emrett’s eladrin raiders.

Stealthily approaching the oasis, the PCs encounter a few eladrin mercenaries encamped at its northern edge. The PCs must avoid their vigilant gaze if they wish to stay unnoticed.

Once within the oasis, they find clues that allow them to piece together Emrett’s plan. They can capture and interrogate Emrett’s capricious dryad handmaiden, search Emrett’s private tent and rummage through her personal papers, and—once rescued—Voor reveals all he knows of her plans. Eventually, the PCs learn of the obelisk and its significance to Emrett’s schemes.

Emrett and Hazar are both vain, arrogant divas who can barely stand the other. Astute PCs who learn of this friction can exploit their mutual contempt and gain a temporary advantage. Any alliance with Hazar proves fleeting, for as soon as Emrett is dead and her remaining followers massacred, the sphinx betrays the PCs. Whatever happens, the PCs must defeat both of them to end their threat to the surrounding desert communities.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

News of the eladrins' raids has quickly spread along the caravan routes that connect the desert's scattered settlements. Even if they are new arrivals to the region, the PCs should already be familiar with recent events, perhaps witnessing their aftermath. In particular, grim accounts of Voor's kidnapping swirl throughout the region, and most believe that the scholar is surely dead.

Those opinions have not dissuaded a pair of the Brotherhood's junior members from seeking out adventurers to rescue their mentor. Akilah is the more gregarious of the two, with a diminutive frame topped by a tangled mop of black hair. Her portly counterpart, Farooq, is a young male with an odd, froglike countenance; when flustered, he makes croaking noises. The bookish duo privately approaches the PCs and humbly beseeches them for aid. Initially, they appeal to their sense of charity, but they can scrounge up to 500 gp worth of jewelry from their fellow students in a day's time (with promises of more to follow) if the PCs require additional incentive.

Unfortunately, neither Akilah nor Farooq can provide much information regarding Voor's whereabouts. Though Farooq witnessed the kidnapping, he did not see or hear much from his hiding place. He did glimpse the beautiful, veiled female eladrin who led the raid, and he believes that she knew Voor because of the familiar way she talked to him. She also took some of Voor's books, but Farooq does not know which ones because he had to flee when they burned Voor's villa.

To better motivate the PCs, it is best if they have an existing relationship with Voor. Given his well-known expertise in ancient history, Voor makes an excellent heroic-tier NPC contact that could be relevant in a



previous adventure, and he can easily serve in the role of patron, hired sage, or mentor.

**Major Quest:** Rescuing Voor from Emrett's clutches gains the PCs 1,500 XP as well as any reward promised by Akilah and Farooq.

## A DESERT EXPEDITION

Once the PCs agree to rescue Voor, their first priority should be equipping themselves for the treacherous journey ahead. Most goods are available for purchase at their standard prices in any of the settlements clinging to the edge of the desert. In particular, the

PCs might want to purchase horses or camels for the journey. See *Adventurer's Vault* for more details on these mounts.

To reach the oasis, the PCs must traverse nearly 100 miles of desolate wilderness. Human adventurers walking at an average pace can make the trek in roughly a week, and mounted travel can shorten the journey to just over four days.

Reliable information on the eladrin is hard to come by. Their frequent raids have created a climate of fear and panic among the locals, and false rumors abound.

When the heroes are ready, Akilah and Farooq guide them to the site of one of the eladrins' recent raids. They strike every two to three days, so this trail is only a day old when the PCs begin their pursuit.

Sprinkle the journey with descriptions of crumbling ruins buried in sand, soaring vultures, sweltering days and frigid nights, sudden dust storms, and frequent bird sightings. The only significant event is an ambush by the retreating eladrin on the third day of their journey.

Unless the PCs took extraordinary measures to avoid discovery, the eladrin spot them and send a small group to circle back and ambush them, attacking as they pass through a desolate erg (sandy desert).

**Tactical Encounter:** D1. First Blood (page 45).

## THE OASIS OF THE GOLDEN PEACOCK

The oasis is a mysterious, primal locale that has existed perhaps since the dawn of creation. After its discovery, the Order's hierophants speculated that the oasis was spontaneously created by a previously unknown fey crossing, a hidden portal to the Feywild. The torrent of primal energy released by this supposed portal had another, unexplained effect; it attracted all sorts of feathered creatures to it, and birds became the oasis's prevailing form of wildlife, a dominance that continues to this day.

Today, the teardrop-shaped oasis is a pristine island of lush vegetation surrounded by a sea of arid scrubland. At its extremes, the oasis is nearly a mile long and half a mile wide; a shallow lake surrounded by a narrow strip of soggy marshland lies at its center. As one moves farther from the lake, the ground becomes firmer, reeds give way to tall grass and

flowering shrubs, and small copses of date palms and acacia trees shade the landscape.

The prominent feature of the oasis is a sandstone ridge that rises precipitously from the desert floor. Towering nearly 300 feet above the oasis, it wraps around its eastern edge, shielding it from the harshest desert winds. PCs can ascend the lower slopes with relative ease. Once they progress more than 30 feet up the cliff face, however, crumbling rocks and thorny vines make climbing treacherous; further progress requires a DC 15 Athletics check each turn. (Unhurried PCs can take 10 on this check, but this is impossible in combat.) The windswept summit is a relatively flat plateau worn smooth by erosion. It offers a commanding view of the surrounding landscape but little else.

Immediately upon their arrival, the PCs find that avian life pervades the oasis's every nook and cranny. Ibises, flamingos, and storks stalk the marshlands as ducks, geese, swans, gulls, and other waterfowl swim lazily across the lake's surface. Magnificent peacocks and simple partridges strut through the tall grass while multitudes of gaily-colored songbirds nest in the trees above. Hawks, ravens, eagles, owls, and other raptors perch high atop the cliffs, which are also home to the blood hawks and comet tail eagles that serve as the oasis's first line of defense (see "The Sentinels" for more information). The constant chirping, squawking, and cawing makes hearing difficult. Unless noted otherwise, all listening-based Perception checks made within the oasis suffer a -2 penalty.

The mystical effect that attracts the birds extends for hundreds of miles in all directions, strengthening as one draws closer to its source. It affects any living creature with feathers, and even some that merely maintain a birdlike form. Such creatures experience

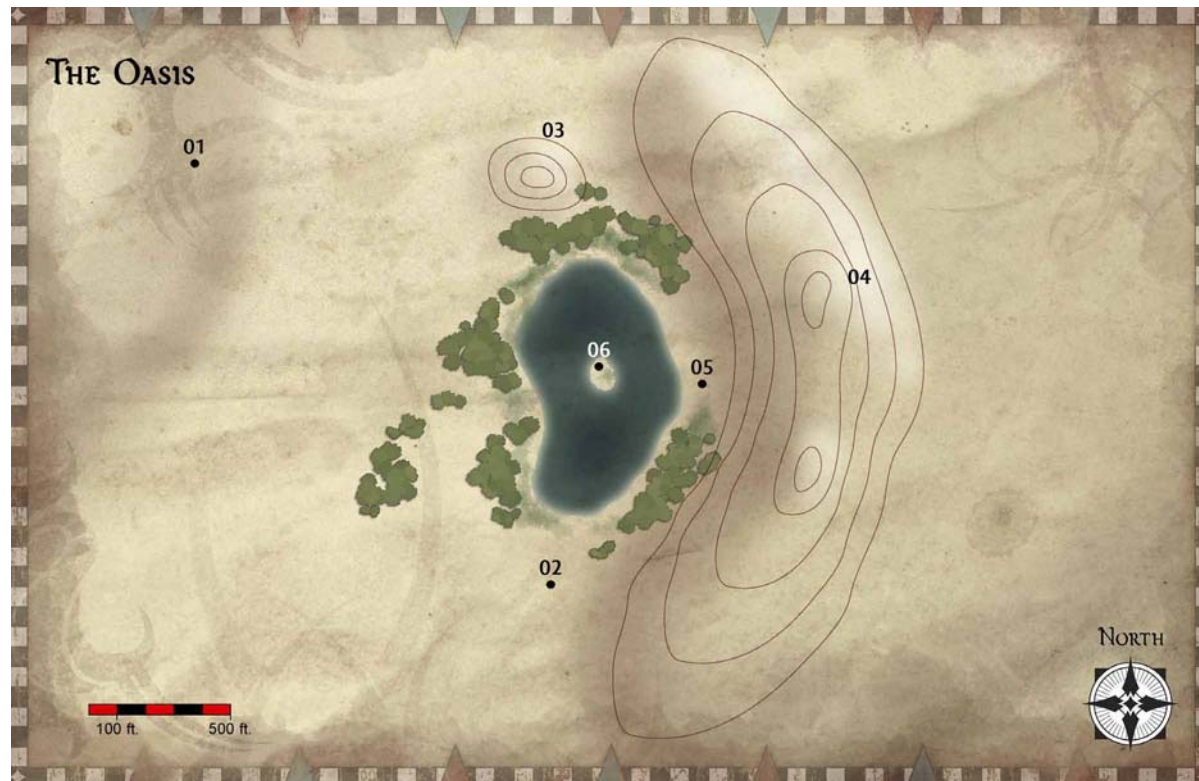
## THE OASIS AND MAGIC

The arcane and primal energy saturating the oasis generates odd effects, the most noticeable being the oasis's overwhelming allure to feathered creatures. A brief summary of its effects is provided below, and more detail on fey crossings and ley lines is available in *Manual of the Planes*™.

**Fey Crossing:** The entire oasis is a fey crossing, a region where the boundaries between the mortal world and the Feywild grow thin. Now and again, inhabitants of the Feywild inadvertently enter the mortal world through the fey crossing, but the reverse entails deliberate action. Normally, those wishing to transport themselves to the Feywild must either descend through the portal that lies at the bottom of the lake (see Area O7) or cast a fey passage ritual within the confines of the oasis.

**Ley Lines:** Several extremely powerful ley lines intersect near the oasis's underwater portal to the Feywild. As a result, a PC performing a ritual with the key skill of Arcana or Nature within the oasis gains a +2 bonus to any skill check called for in the ritual. The ritual's component cost is also reduced to 75% of the normal cost. At the DMs discretion, the quartz obelisk can increase these bonuses or eliminate the component cost altogether; in that case, there should be other costs or risks associated with casting rituals in this manner.

an instinctual urge to migrate to the oasis and possess a dim awareness of its general location, but they are not compelled to act.



the oasis from wandering predators, most of its inhabitants, including the other sentinel patrols, ignore the sounds of battle unless something unusual occurs.

The one notable exception is if the PCs scale the ridge. Once the PCs reach the mid-point of their climb, they automatically attract the attention of the sentinel patrol that nests among the rocks. The sentinels strike without mercy, fighting to the death to protect their aerie. If the PCs continue to climb or reach the top of the ridge, the sentinels try to overwhelm them at a rate of one patrol per minute until the intruding PCs are killed or driven off, or all the sentinels are defeated.

If the PCs vanquish four or more sentinel patrols under any circumstances, Hazar takes notice and joins her minions to confront the PCs. See Area O4 for more information on the sphinx and her reactions to this event.

**Encounter Level 6 (XP 1,250)**

- ◆ 5 blood hawk sentinels

**THE SENTINELS**

The birds that flock to the oasis are merely standoffish, but the blood hawks and comet tail eagles that soar aloft are openly hostile. For centuries, these vicious raptors have served Hazar as sentries, keeping their sharp gaze trained downward and constantly scouring the region for intruders. As PCs near the oasis, these sentinels are an ever-present threat looming overhead.

A total of 30 blood hawks and 12 comet tail eagles circle above the oasis and its environs, patrolling in groups of five and four respectively. During daylight hours, the PCs automatically notice these birds

soaring above the oasis from a mile or more away. If the PCs draw attention to themselves (such as by flying toward or near the oasis, or by using fire or creating light at night), a patrol automatically detects them and investigates. If they approach at night or use magic to avoid detection, make hourly Stealth checks for them opposed by the passive Perception of the blood hawks and the comet tail eagles. The sentinels normally patrol at an altitude of 500 feet, so the PCs gain a +2 bonus to their checks. Once characters enter the oasis, its tall grass and plentiful trees provide enough concealment to make hiding feasible.

Unless noted otherwise, if the sentinels discover the PCs, they attack. Because they frequently defend

Blood Hawk Sentinel	Level 6 Skirmisher	
Small natural beast	XP 250 each	
<b>Initiative</b> +8	<b>Senses Perception</b> +4	
<b>HP</b> 67; <b>Bloodied</b> 33		
<b>AC</b> 19; <b>Fortitude</b> 17; <b>Reflex</b> 19; <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Speed</b> 2 (clumsy), fly 6		
⊕ <b>Claw Rake</b> (standard; at-will)		
+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage, or ongoing 5 damage if the blood hawk sentinel is bloodied (save ends).		
‡ <b>Flyby Attack</b>		
The blood hawk sentinel flies 6 squares and makes a <i>claw rake</i> attack at any point during that movement. The blood hawk sentinel does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Str</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 13 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 11 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 2 (-1)	<b>Cha</b> 7 (+1)



**Encounter Level 5 (XP 1,200)**

◆ 4 comet tail eagles

<b>Comet Tail Eagle</b>		<b>Level 7 Brute</b>
Medium elemental beast (fire)		XP 300
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +10; low-light vision	
<b>Dissipating Heat (Fire)</b> aura 1; after a comet tail eagle charges, any creature that enters or begins its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage. The aura lasts until the beginning of the comet tail eagle's next turn.		
<b>HP</b> 94; <b>Bloodied</b> 47		
<b>AC</b> 19; <b>Fortitude</b> 20; <b>Reflex</b> 19; <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 20 fire		
<b>Speed</b> 2 (clumsy), fly 10 (hover); see also <i>comet fall</i>		
Ⓣ <b>Talon</b> (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage.		
<b>Comet Fall</b>		
A comet tail eagle does not provoke opportunity attacks while charging, and after it charges, it can shift 3 squares as a free action.		
<b>Fiery Impact</b> ◆ Fire		
For every square a comet tail eagle moves while charging, it deals 2 extra fire damage on a hit.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Str</b> 19 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 2 (-1)	<b>Cha</b> 6 (+1)

**O1. ELADRIN ENCAMPMENT**

*This makeshift encampment consists of four blue triangular tents arranged in a semicircle around a smoldering fire pit. A nearby grove of palm trees shields the campsite from the oppressive heat and serves as home to a small colony of chattering, parrotlike birds sporting vivid red, orange, and yellow plumage. Ten camels graze nearby.*

The majority of Emrett's eladrin mercenaries are away carrying out their various assignments, so only a small contingent remains at the oasis at any one time. The eladrin have pitched their tents under the shade provided by a grove of date palms. They like to relax around the fire pit while smoking their hookahs,

## WHO HATES WHOM?

The oasis seethes with conflict because most of its inhabitants hate each other. Although many of these conflicts are explored throughout the adventure, some DMs might wish to expand upon them. Here is a general summary of the various factions and their attitudes toward each other.

**The Eladrin:** The eladrin inhabiting Area O1 have no great love for their overbearing employer, Emrett, and they so detest her untrustworthy quickling and spriggan stooges that it is relatively easy to provoke a conflict. They are initially neutral toward Hazar, but if convinced of what the sphinx plans to do to them once Emrett is dead, they swear a vendetta against her.

**Hazar:** Hazar hates all the oasis's recent visitors but bides her time, looking for allies strong enough to destroy Emrett and her minions (including the mercenary eladrin), but too weak to oppose her. Except for Emrett's pet comet tail, Rami, all the birds in the oasis follow Hazar's lead. Hazar might ally with the PCs to destroy Emrett, but she ultimately turns on them.

**Emrett's Henchmen:** A healthy fear of Emrett's wrath keeps her henchmen's destructive impulses in check, but that harmony disintegrates if she dies. If given the opportunity (and if they feel that they can get away with it), they happily kill any eladrin that fall into their clutches. They share their mistress's attitude toward Hazar, but they are too terrified of the sphinx to express that fear, let alone act on it.

**Emrett:** Emrett views all her minions as expendable, and she hates Hazar as much as the sphinx hates her. She is too fanatical to ever agree to ally with an outside party; besides, she spends the majority of her time in Area O6, far away from the oasis's other inhabitants.

eating dates, and sipping cups of gahwa or tea. Seven eladrin and one of their tribe's leaders, a swordmage named Thurraya, rest here.

**Tactical Encounter:** O1. Eladrin Encampment (page 48).

## O2. THE LOVE NEST

Upon his arrival, a fierce eladrin warrior named Saqr became smitten with Emrett's handmaiden, a capricious dryad named Taalah, and the two became lovers. Although Saqr has genuinely fallen in love, Taalah continues the relationship mainly to satisfy her lusts and to offset her growing boredom, since Emrett rarely has any work for her.

Saqr and Taalah spend their time cavorting in a small clearing south of the lake. To keep out the prying eyes of his fellow tribesmen, Saqr unfurled bolts of stolen saffron-colored silk and strung it between the trunks of the surrounding trees, creating a makeshift circular barrier.

**If the PCs cross the barrier, read:**

*On the other side of the saffron barrier is a small clearing. A trio of snow-white peacocks roams through the knee-high grass and glance curiously at you. At the center of the clearing is a rumpled bedroll; discarded clothes are strewn all over the place.*

**Tactical Encounter:** O2. The Love Nest (page 51).

## O3. EMRETT'S ABODE

Emrett situated her campsite atop a small, wooded knoll northeast of the lake. She occupies the only tent, and her henchmen sleep on the ground or on hammocks woven from vines. Emrett devotes the majority

of her time to studying the obelisk, retiring to her tent for only a few hours of rest each night. During the day, a pair of spriggan giants guard the campsite while a satyr piper and a quickling runner idly entertain themselves with a game of dice.

**Tactical Encounter:** O3. Emrett's Abode (page 54).

**When the PCs investigate the tent, read the following:**

*A cot cocooned in mosquito netting squats in one corner, and tucked underneath it is a small wooden chest. Next to the cot is a desk and chair, both covered in stacks of books. A large armoire stands across from it. In the far corner of the tent, someone has constructed what appears to be an altar to some dark power.*

**Chest:** The chest is unlocked. It contains expensive cosmetics and vials of perfume collectively worth 200 gp.

**Armoire:** The oaken armoire is unlocked. Attached to the inside of the cabinet door is a full-length glass mirror. Hanging within it are eight fashionable outfits (worth 75 gp each), mainly silk abayas, dresses, and saris. At the bottom of the armoire are four pairs of equally stylish shoes worth 50 gp per pair.

**Desk:** The books stacked on the desk deal with the subjects of history and magic, and one volume in particular should interest the PCs. It is Emrett's handwritten diary. Unfortunately, she trapped the tome.

**Curse of the Devouring Darkness Level 7 Warder Trap** XP 300

As you flip through the black, leather-bound manuscript, the neatly penned text rapidly begins to dissolve, writhing and coagulating into a mass of ugly, black splotches that begin to bulge outward. With a loud tearing sound, the book ruptures and a droning swarm of black beetles explodes from the ripped pages.

**Trap:** Emrett safeguards her personal diary with a powerful magical curse. When a creature other than Emrett opens the diary, the curse activates.

**Perception**

◆ DC 23: The character feels an uncomfortable buzzing sensation when they handle the diary.

**Additional Skill:** Arcana

◆ DC 19: The character senses the curse's dark aura, providing a +2 bonus to Arcana checks made to disable it.

**Additional Skill:** Thievery

◆ DC 19: The character detects a faint hint of dried poison, providing a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable the curse.

**Trigger**

When a creature other than Emrett tries to open her diary, the curse activates.

**Attack**

**Opportunity Action** Close burst 1

**Targets:** All creatures in burst

**Attack:** +10 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 4d6 + 4 acid and poison damage and the target is blinded (save ends)

**Miss:** Half damage and the target is blinded (save ends)

**Effect:** The diary reappears where it was left, closed and intact.

**Countermeasures**

◆ A character holding the diary can dispel the curse with a DC 23 Thievery check or a DC 20 Arcana check.

**Special:** No one other than Emrett can read the diary until the curse is dispelled.

The diary, though written in Elven and full of intellectual self-aggrandizement, contains all the information provided in the "Adventure Background" except for the identity of Emrett's patron, who she obliquely refers to as "My Master" or "His Highness." It also reveals her plans to betray Hazar (who she describes in particularly unflattering language); if the PCs

present this evidence to the sphinx, she might turn against her erstwhile ally.

**Altar:** Emrett built this stone altar with magic and dedicated it to a fey aspect of Tiamat, the goddess of wealth, envy, and greed; a DC 20 Religion check identifies the exotic iconography. A triptych painting depicting sinister looking nymphs and satyrs cavorting under a swollen full moon (worth 250 gp) serves as a backdrop. Arrayed before it are three ceremonial objects: a cold iron dagger; a silver chalice studded with moonstones (worth 250 gp); and an egg-shaped, multi-faceted black gem held up by a delicate silver frame (worth 350 gp).

## O4. HAZAR'S LAIR

As the self-proclaimed ruler of the oasis, Hazar has selected an appropriately regal perch for herself, building her nest on a sheltered ledge overlooking a 200-foot vertical plunge. To reach her nest, the PCs need to fly or scale the cliff; in either case, they risk the wrath of the sentinels.

### Once the PCs reach the ledge, read or paraphrase the following:

*A crevice digs into the sheer face of the cliff, forming a recessed rock shelf nearly 20 feet deep that overlooks the oasis and blocks the worst of the desert sun. Some sort of monstrous bird has woven a large nest out of brush and tall grasses, tucking it against the rear wall; discarded fish bones litter the ground.*

Hazar recently retreated to her aerie to sulk after a translation dispute led to a violent quarrel with Emrett. She now divides her time between analyzing a set of papyrus scrolls she took in a huff from Emrett's

collection and preening her feathers while contemplating her partner's violent death. Occasionally, she leaves her nest to fly briefly among her subjects, allowing the PCs to catch an early glimpse of her gliding overhead surrounded by a flock of attentive birds.

Long ago, Hazar was an accomplished sage who was exiled after murdering a rival in a fit of rage. She discovered the oasis just as the last druids of the Order of the Golden Peacock were preparing to leave, and they requested that she serve as its guardian in their absence (in exchange for a promise of sanctuary).

As their final collective act, the Order gathered at the sacred obelisk and cast a powerful ritual that transformed Hazar into her current, ibis-headed form and invested her with command over the oasis's avian inhabitants. However, as the Order did not fully trust the exiled sphinx, their ritual also hid the quartz obelisk from her senses and memory.

Emrett's recent intrusion presented Hazar with a dilemma: She loathed sharing her realm with another, but Emrett's revelation of the obelisk's existence and her proposed alliance was too intellectually tantalizing for Hazar to refuse. She plans to betray Emrett and keep the obelisk for herself, gaining revenge on the druids that blinded her to it. However, their egos clash constantly, and clever PCs might be able to turn Hazar into an ally (albeit an untrustworthy one).

**Skill Challenge:** O4. Smoothing Ruffled Feathers (page 56).

**Tactical Encounter:** O4. Hazar's Lair (page 58).

If the PCs manage to destroy four or more sentinel patrols, a livid but secretly intrigued Hazar quits her brooding and searches the oasis for them with the aid



of a surviving sentinel patrol. If she locates the PCs, she lands close by and demands an immediate apology, but she attacks only if the PCs act in an insulting manner. Assuming they do not immediately attack the sphinx, the PCs have a chance to participate in the above skill challenge.

## 05. VOOR'S PRISON

*Someone has burned away the heavy undergrowth, producing a barren patch of scorched earth surrounded by a lush expanse of towering elephant grass and scattered trees. Near its center is a cramped cage, its bars formed from twisted tree roots that have seemingly erupted from the soil below. Inside the strange enclosure, a single human-sized figure wearing rags slumps dejectedly against the bars.*

Voor, the kidnapped member of the Brotherhood of the Peacock, is imprisoned within the cage. By the time the PCs reach the oasis, he is in terrible physical shape and suffers from fatigue brought on by heat exhaustion and sleep deprivation. Luckily, his formidable mental resolve has kept him from breaking under Emrett's torturous interrogations, much to her displeasure.

Since he is crucial to her plans, Emrett has Voor constantly monitored to insure both his continued survival and captivity. Four of Emrett's trusted spriggan henchmen watch over the stubborn academic. Finally, a powerful iron cobra has wrapped itself around the cage and maintains a constant vigil.

Emrett keeps the strange cage housing Voor locked at all times (Thievery DC 19) and carries the only key. It is one of Hazar's creations; the magically enhanced tree roots that form its frame have the resiliency of steel and mend themselves once damaged. Moreover, anyone within 10 feet of the cage and outside its



confines, who audibly utters the correct command word (“seal” in Elven), causes the roots to swell and fuse together, creating a nearly solid enclosure. The cage shrinks back to its standard form if a second command word is similarly spoken (“release” in Elven).

Unlucky prisoners trapped inside the solid enclosure during daylight hours immediately begin to suffer as the temperature spikes to 110° F. They must succeed on a DC 21 Endurance check once every minute or lose one healing surge; creatures that have no healing surges remaining lose hit points equal to their level. The sweltering heat, and its attendant dangers, dissipates once the cage reverts to its normal form or someone releases its prisoner.

**Tactical Encounter:** O5. Voor’s Prison (page 60).

## MEETING VOOR

If rescued, Voor hastily thanks his saviors and readily accepts any assistance they provide, but his thoughts rapidly turn to preventing the perversion of his ancestors’ legacy. Half-crazed with desperation, Voor pleads with the PCs to stop Emrett, launching breathlessly into a meticulous recounting of his entire harrowing ordeal. It takes several minutes for Voor to regain his composure, and once he finally does, he seems more cogent and apologizes for his outburst.

Voor is grimly determined to stop Emrett, whatever the cost, and readily assumes the PCs will help. If they hesitate, he appeals to whatever works best, and if the situation appears especially dire, is not above using his *charm person* ability to gain an ally. Even though he is next to useless in combat, Voor stubbornly insists on accompanying the PCs and fully participating in the remainder of the adventure. Assuming the PCs consent to help, he can provide the following information:

- ◆ If the PCs are not yet fully aware of Emrett’s plans, Voor can provide a broad overview.
- ◆ Voor can guide the PCs to Area O6; however, he fails to mention the illusion concealing the obelisk, which might cause them to doubt his sanity.
- ◆ If asked why Emrett selected him to be her sacrifice, he tells of how he publicly rebuked her earlier writings, calling them “morally repugnant,” and dooming any chance at her having a respectable academic career.
- ◆ He witnessed Emrett and Hazar’s latest spat and noted their overall frosty relations. He counsels the PCs that they might turn the sphinx against her ally if they can provide her with incentive.
- ◆ Finally, Voor theorizes about the likely devastating consequences of Emrett’s ritual on the oasis, describing how it will generate a tainted feedback

loop that will forever corrupt its natural energy, not only destroying its vibrant ecosystem, but also turning it into a fetid pool of evil that will menace the surrounding desert and its peoples.

Though Voor is a bookish middle-aged male human, his face is strangely youthful, graced by delicate, elfin features now marred by numerous bloody gashes and swollen, purple bruises. His normally wispy white beard and thick head of equally white hair are soiled and matted, and he is still wearing his damaged bifocals. Normally, Voor is kindhearted, intelligent, and witty, but he is sullen and withdrawn for days after this nightmarish experience.

## O6. LAKESIDE

The oasis’s magical emanations flow outward from the lake, which is why the original Order built the obelisk on the small, tree-covered islet at its heart. They didn’t understand that the lake is a portal pool (*Manual of the Planes* page 16) connected to the Feywild; anyone swimming down to its lowest depths, 40 feet below the surface, is transported to a similar lake in that plane. What lies beyond the portal is beyond the scope of this adventure.

On the main map of the oasis, areas adjacent to the lake contain sodden, mosquito-infested fens covered by thick layers of muck and choked by a tangle of reeds and gnarled trees. The waters of the lake are relatively calm, and the sandy bottom is visible in all but its deepest spots. Within 25 feet of shore, the lake is shallow; Medium sized creatures can wade through it, treating it as difficult terrain, though Small (and smaller) creatures must swim. Beyond that distance, the water is 20 to 40 feet deep, requiring DC 10 Athletics checks to swim.

<b>Voor</b>		
Medium natural humanoid, human		<b>Level 7 Minion Controller</b> XP -
<b>Initiative</b> +4	<b>Senses</b> Perception +6	
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 17; <b>Reflex</b> 19; <b>Will</b> 21		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
⊕ <b>Arcane Strike</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Force</b> +11 vs. Reflex; 4 force damage.		
↗ <b>Charm Person</b> (standard; encounter) ◆ <b>Charm</b> Ranged 5; +11 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends). Voor cannot make a dominated target attack another creature.		
<b>Feyblooded Prescience</b> (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter) ◆ <b>Teleportation</b> Voor can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack. If he succeeds, he can teleport 2 squares.		
<b>Alignment</b> Good	<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +12, Diplomacy +10, History +12, Insight +10, Nature +11		
<b>Str</b> 8 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 17 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 10 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 19 (+7)	<b>Cha</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Equipment</b> tattered robes		

## O6. THE ISLE OF THE OBELISK

To safeguard their work, the Order siphoned a fraction of the obelisk's power to generate a potent illusion that veils the entire island, masking any trace of the obelisk (as well as any other structures), supplanting it instead with an unremarkable view of a landscape consisting of a few date palms surrounded by curtain of tall reeds. To notice that the landscape is not quite right (it sometimes shimmers like a mirage), the PCs' passive Insight check must beat DC 19. Actively disbelieving the illusion requires a minor action to make an active Insight check against DC 21; if either Hazar or Voor have revealed the existence of the obelisk, the PCs gain a +2 bonus to their Insight check.

**When the PCs pierce the illusion, read or paraphrase the following:**

*A large copse of palm trees fades away, replaced by a towering obelisk apparently sculpted from a massive block of rose quartz. Even from this distance, you can make out the softly shimmering hieroglyphs scrawled on its surface. Someone has pitched a spacious tent a few feet away from it.*

The obelisk is at the center of Emrett's operations in the oasis, and it is where she spends the greater part of her day diligently studying and transcribing its magic hieroglyphs. She keeps the impressive library amassed by her eladrin mercenaries in the nearby tent.

To safeguard the site, a fang golem prowls the island, assisted by a pair of spriggan thorns. Each morning, Emrett joins them and resumes her arduous task, usually finishing several hours after sunset. Her

pet, a comet tail eagle named Rami, accompanies her and circles overhead while she works.

**Tactical Encounter:** O6. The Isle of the Obelisk (page 63).

## THE OBELISK

The Order of the Golden Peacock sculpted the 80-foot tall obelisk from an immense pillar of rose quartz that they conjured from deep beneath the earth, and then channeled the oasis's primal energy into it, creating a vast repository of power that they could draw upon. To commemorate their achievement, they recorded their collective knowledge for future generations, preserving it within the obelisk's polished surfaces.

Hieroglyphs cover the entire length of each of the obelisk's four facets. The Order chronicled their lore in a mixture of tongues, favoring now archaic dialects of Draconic, Elven, Supernal, and Primordial, with each 2' × 2' section encompassing hieroglyphs corresponding to a particular language (roll a d4 to determine the language randomly). A modern speaker can translate the related hieroglyphs with two hours of study; otherwise, a DC 25 Intelligence check can interpret a similar fragment in 8 hours. For nonspeakers, Emrett's library provides additional resources to assist in translations (see below).

Painstakingly translating the hieroglyphs can be a daunting task, but because of the Order's magic wards, it is a more reliable method than divination. Anyone casting a divination ritual in an effort to translate the hieroglyphics or learn more about the obelisk suffers a -10 penalty to any associated skill checks.

Once someone has fully translated the hieroglyphs, they can learn to utilize the obelisk's power under the proper conditions; however, Emrett is following an alternate path of her own wicked design.

## THE TENT

The large tent is another of Hazar's magic creations, built specifically to warehouse countless ancient tomes. Underneath its canopy, the temperature stays a comfortable 65°F and the humidity is practically nonexistent; four brass oil lamps dangling from the canopy provide the necessary illumination. All creatures and objects within the tent gain resist 10 fire.

A pair of long wooden tables, running parallel to each other, dominates the length of the tent. All sorts of manuscripts cover the tables, including leather-bound tomes, clay cuneiform tablets, delicate papyrus scrolls, and charcoal rubbings taken from walls of various ruins, all meticulously sorted by subject. Anyone consulting the library while making an Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Nature, or Religion check can add a +4 bonus to their roll; additionally, Emrett's comprehensive catalog of ancient linguistics tracts grants a +6 bonus to Intelligence checks made to decipher the obelisk's hieroglyphics. Together, the collection is worth over 10,000 gp to a wealthy collector or university, but it would be difficult to transport across the desert.

A squat writing desk buried under an avalanche of papers, writing utensils, and still more books sits at the north end of the tent, directly in front of a slate chalkboard crammed with diagrams and notations. If the PCs sift through the papers and examine the chalkboard, they find that Emrett is half finished translating the obelisk. Annotations made in the margins provide complete details of her plans to corrupt the oasis, revealed by a DC 20 Arcana check.

Lastly, some magic items probably interest the PCs. Lying under a stack of books is a locked footlocker (DC 20 Thievery); it contains a level 9 and a level 10 magic item (a tome implement would be a perfect fit for at least one of these items).

## EMRETT MAZRID

Emrett, the PCs chief antagonist, is a poseur of the highest order, a volatile mixture of narcissism, delusion, and rampant insecurity. Her arrogance (or as she puts it, “noble bearing”), affectations (“suitable behavior befitting high society”) and demands (“the benefits of my station”) would be comical if she was not also a highly intelligent and ambitious sociopath.

Although she was a gifted student and had won scholarships to prestigious universities, Emrett’s academic work failed to gain the recognition that she thought it properly deserved. Nonetheless, someone did note her deepening fascination with the darker aspects of the natural world, and enigmatic vassals of a being known as the “Emerald Suzerain” began to visit her dreams, whispering terrible and best-forgotten secrets into her entranced mind. With their blessing, she recorded their startling revelations, incorporating them into her doctorate. After publishing excerpts, she finally achieved some level of notoriety among the more outré intellectual circles, but any possibility of a respectable career shattered when Voor penned his critique, forever branding Emrett “irresponsible” and “dangerous.”

Her career prospects in tatters, Emrett’s nightly guests once again called upon her, rescuing her from intellectual oblivion by escorting her before the court of their sovereign, a powerful archfey. An enthralled Emrett instantly pledged her fealty and for once in her life, she humbly served another, rising through the ranks to become one of her master’s favorite mortal servants.

Once she was ready, her master summoned Emrett before him, and commanded that she journey to the oasis to seize its power for herself. In his twisted worldview, the good-hearted fey that had collaborated with the Order of the Golden Peacock were traitors

who foolishly betrayed the secrets of their own kind to the pathetic humans. He had patiently waited for thousands of years, and the time was finally right to take his revenge.

For her part, Emrett zealously leapt at the opportunity to once again prove herself worthy of her master’s favor. In her warped mind, she has come to fervently believe that he chose her for this task because she is the rightful heir to the Order’s legacy. That it allowed her to take revenge on her leading detractor is further confirmation of her grand destiny.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Since she is fanatically devoted to her cause, slaying Emrett is the only way to end the threat she poses to the oasis; if she somehow survives, she bides her time and gathers additional resources, beginning anew at her earliest opportunity. If they do dispose of Emrett, the PCs have to contend with Hazar because the unpredictable sphinx is far too territorial to allow them to remain alive.

If Voor survives, he eventually recuperates from his ordeal and dedicates the remainder of his life to studying the oasis. Assuming it survives, he tries to appropriate Emrett’s library and put it to good use, but he graciously permits the PCs to take whatever they desire. Lastly, in addition to whatever Akilah and Farooq promised, an indebted Brotherhood reward the PCs an additional 1,000 gp for Voor’s safe return, and they make their libraries available to the PCs any time they need use of their vast archives.

Finally, what if the PCs fail and Emrett completes her ritual? In that event, the quartz obelisk darkens, becoming black like onyx, and its life-giving properties that permeate the oasis begin to twist, rapidly transforming the verdant paradise into a warped,

## CAPTURED

The fate of captured PCs largely depends on which faction takes them prisoner. The eladrin view captives as potential slaves and try to keep any hidden from Emrett. They securely bind, gag, and blindfold any captured PCs, and then throw them into one of the tents in Area O1 (their weapons and equipment are kept in another tent). In a few days, a larger band of eladrin warriors visits the oasis and secretly whisks any prisoners away; in the meantime, give the PCs every opportunity to escape.

Although being the eladrins’ prisoner is obviously unpleasant, Emrett’s henchmen are far harsher in their treatment. The spriggans savagely beat any captured PCs and then force them to share a cramped cage with Voor (Area O5); to make matters worse, Emrett has their equipment divided between Areas O3 and O7. For the next several days, Emrett directs the spriggans to cruelly torture and interrogate the PCs before finally executing them. Encourage the PCs to attempt an escape before that can happen, possibly by requiring a skill challenge to free themselves from their confinement and evade their pursuers. This would be an ideal time to introduce Hazar; perhaps the intrigued sphinx could provide furtive assistance to the fugitives in return for certain favors...

nightmarish landscape that becomes a haven for evil fey. Perversely, the oasis remains inviting to birds, but only to those of the nastiest and most evil disposition. Rectifying the situation and finding a way to halt, or even reverse, this new menace would be an adventure in itself.

## ENCOUNTER D1: FIRST BLOOD

Encounter Level 8 (XP 1,800)

### SETUP

- Najid (N)
- War camel (C)
- 2 eladrin mamluks (M)
- Eladrin dune sniper (D)

When the eladrin notice the PCs several miles behind, following their trail through the desert, the raiding party scatters in various directions, but not before an elite squad of warriors circles back to prepare an ambush.

A veteran warrior named Najid, mounted on a war camel, leads the attack, and he keeps a large dune between himself and the approaching PCs while the other three eladrin lurk behind its crest, weapons drawn. The eladrin hope to gain surprise, and they patiently wait for the PCs to either scale the dune's windward slope (to an elevation of 30 feet) or circle around to its leeward side before springing their trap.

### When the PCs reach the base of the dune, read:

*As you near the foot of a massive dune, you notice that the tracks that you have been following diverge in several different directions. Some round the wide base of the dune, but others continue straight up its steep, windward slope.*

### Perception

**DC 23:** From behind the crest of the dune, you momentarily spy a strip of dark cloth fluttering in the breeze.

PCs that notice the concealed eladrin can act during the surprise round; do not place the eladrin on the map until they reveal themselves or the PCs detect them.

### When the eladrin mamluks attack, read:

*With a piercing cry, two slim eladrin leap out from behind the dune and rush toward you wielding massive scimitars. They wear flowing tan robes over their gleaming chainmail and headwraps that obscure their faces.*

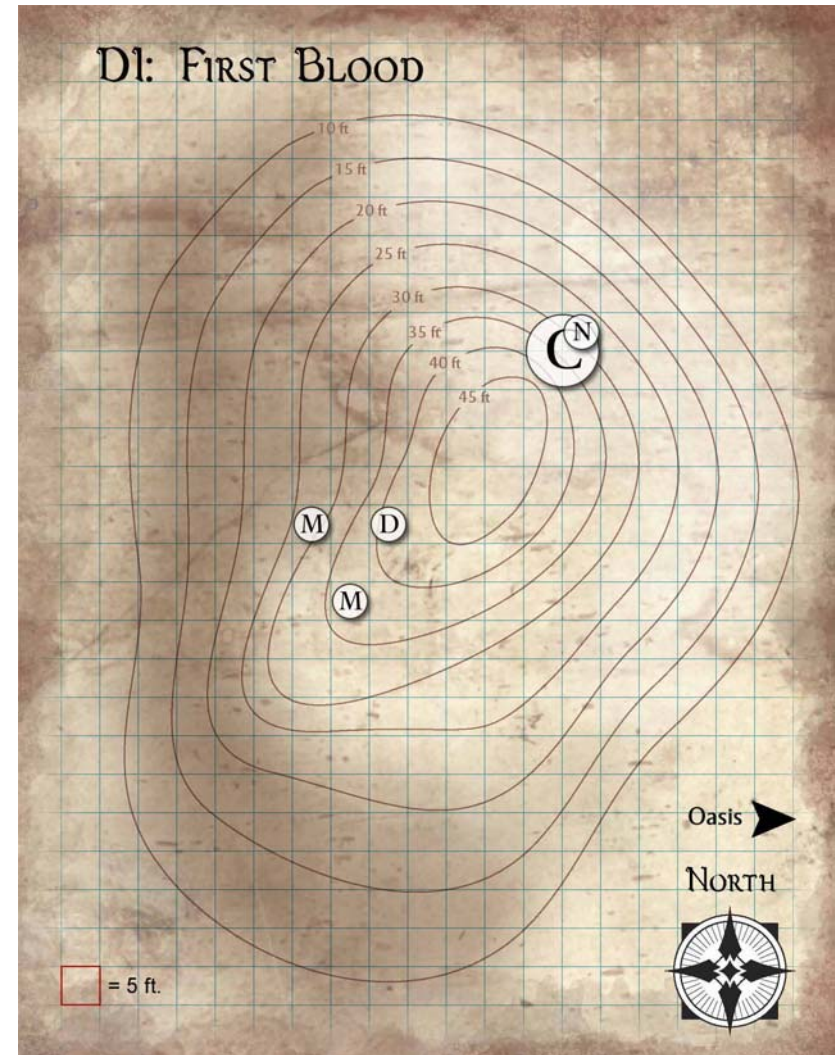
*A second later, a similarly attired eladrin gallops into view astride a powerfully built camel, the keen tip of his lance pointed directly toward you.*

### TACTICS

During the surprise round, Najid and the eladrin mamluks spend a move action to close with the PCs, and the dune sniper pops out of hiding to make a *rapid shot* attack with her longbow. Once they are within a few squares of the frontline PCs, the mamluks *fey step* into their midst and use *dance of the desert blades* to wreak havoc on lightly armored foes. If flanked, the mamluks use *tower of sand* to push the PCs out of position; otherwise, they use

it after becoming bloodied. The mamluks' code of honor requires them to either vanquish their foes in battle or die trying.

The dune sniper remains hidden behind the crest of the dune, appearing at various spots to pepper the PCs with *rapid shot*. The dune acts as blocking terrain



<b>Najid (N)</b>		<b>Level 8 Elite Solider</b>	
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin		XP 700	
<b>Initiative</b> +9	<b>Senses</b> Perception +8; low-light vision		
<b>HP</b> 180; <b>Bloodied</b> 90			
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 22; <b>Reflex</b> 19; <b>Will</b> 19			
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2; +7 against charm effects			
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>fey step</i>			
<b>Action Points</b> 1			
⊕ <b>Lance</b> (standard; usable only while mounted; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.			
⊕ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 2d8 + 15).			
⊕ <b>Dismounted Wrath</b> (standard; usable only while dismounted; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Najid makes two scimitar attacks, which score critical hits on a natural roll of 19-20.			
⊕ <b>Relentless Charge</b> (standard; requires a lance, usable only while mounted and charging; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.			
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>			
Najid can teleport 5 squares. If mounted, Najid can also teleport his mount.			
<b>Mounted Combat</b>			
While Najid rides a creature, he gains access to any special mount abilities it confers to its rider, plus the creature can also make Athletics, Acrobatics, Endurance, and Stealth checks using Najid's base skill check bonus rather its own if Najid's is higher.			
<b>Tower of Sand</b> (standard; unusable while mounted; encounter) ♦ <b>Polymorph</b>			
Najid absorbs the sand underfoot to fuel a magical growth spurt; Najid becomes Large, occupying 4 squares instead of 1. Creatures and objects in the squares that Najid comes to occupy are pushed 1 square. Najid's reach becomes 2 and he gains a +5 bonus to damage rolls. Najid can revert to its normal form as a free action.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +15, Endurance +13, Nature +13			
<b>Str</b> 22 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 18 (+8)	
<b>Con</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+6)	<b>Cha</b> 14 (+6)	
<b>Equipment</b> chainmail, lance, scimitar			

when she hides behind it, and it provides her with cover when she emerges to snipe at the PCs. The dune sniper enters melee only if forced to, preferring instead to *fey step* out of danger and resume her ranged attacks. If the battle clearly turns against the eladrin or she finds herself in great personal danger, the dune sniper assumes *dust form* and flees.

Najid prefers to remain mounted during the battle, using *relentless charge* against any strong melee characters. If a PC slays his war camel, Najid becomes enraged and spends his action point to use *tower of sand* before going on the offensive, concentrating his *dismounted wrath* upon the PC that struck the killing blow. Like his mamluk subordinates, Najid fights to the death.

If the PCs flee, the surviving eladrin stalk and harass them until they reach the safety of civilization.

<b>Najid's War Camel (C)</b>		<b>Level 5 Brute</b>	
Large natural beast (mount)		XP 200	
<b>Initiative</b> +4	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision		
<b>HP</b> 78; <b>Bloodied</b> 39			
<b>AC</b> 17; <b>Fortitude</b> 18; <b>Reflex</b> 17; <b>Will</b> 16			
<b>Speed</b> 8 (earth walk)			
⊕ <b>Kick</b> (standard; at-will)			
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage.			
⊕ <b>Trample</b> (standard; at-will)			
The war camel can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the war camel must end its movement in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the war camel makes a trample attack: +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.			
<b>Charger</b> (while mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ♦ <b>Mount</b>			
The war camel grants its rider a +5 bonus to damage rolls on charge attacks.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Skills</b> Endurance +11			
<b>Str</b> 21 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+4)	
<b>Con</b> 18 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 2 (-2)	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+2)	

<b>Eladrin Dune Sniper (D)</b>		<b>Level 7 Lurker</b>	
Medium fey humanoid		XP 300	
<b>Initiative</b> +13	<b>Senses</b> Perception +11; low-light vision		
<b>HP</b> 61; <b>Bloodied</b> 30			
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 19; <b>Reflex</b> 22; <b>Will</b> 19			
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5 against charm effects			
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>dust form</i> and <i>fey step</i>			
⊕ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14).			
⊕ <b>Longbow</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Ranged 20/40; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.			
⊕ <b>Rapid Shot</b> (standard; at-will)			
The eladrin dune sniper makes two longbow attacks.			
<b>Sniper</b>			
When an eladrin dune sniper makes a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.			
<b>Dust Form</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Polymorph</b>			
The eladrin dune sniper becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 8 (hover). It can enter and move through a porous obstacle that would otherwise prevent movement (such as a door or cracked window). <i>Sustain Standard</i> : The effect persists.			
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>			
The eladrin dune sniper can teleport 5 squares.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +14, Stealth +14			
<b>Str</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Dex</b> 22 (+9)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+6)	
<b>Con</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+4)	
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, longbow, scimitar, quiver of 30 arrows			

<b>2 Eladrin Mamluks (M)</b>	<b>Level 7 Soldier</b>
Medium fey humanoid	XP 300 each
<b>Initiative</b> +11	<b>Senses</b> Perception +4; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 77; <b>Bloodied</b> 38	
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 19; <b>Reflex</b> 20; <b>Will</b> 18	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5 against charm effects	
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>dance of the desert blades</i> and <i>fey step</i>	
⊕ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b>	
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14), and the target is marked until the end of the eladrin mamluk's next turn.	
⊕ <b>Dance of the Desert Blades</b> (standard; recharges when first bloodied)	
Targets one or two creatures; the eladrin mamluk makes a scimitar attack and can then shift 1 square.	
◆ <b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ◆ <b>Teleportation</b>	
The eladrin mamluk can teleport 5 squares.	
◆ <b>Tower of Sand</b> (standard; encounter) ◆ <b>Polymorph</b>	
The eladrin mamluk absorbs the sand underfoot to fuel a magical growth spurt; the eladrin mamluk becomes Large, occupying 4 squares instead of 1. Creatures and objects in the squares that the eladrin mamluk comes to occupy are pushed 1 square. The eladrin mamluk's reach becomes 2 and it gains a +5 bonus to damage rolls. The eladrin mamluk can revert to its normal form as a free action.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +12, Endurance +9	
<b>Str</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 22 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 16 (+6)
<b>Equipment</b> chainmail, scimitar	

## DEVELOPMENT

**Interrogating Prisoners:** If the PCs question a captured eladrin or if they cast *speak with dead* upon one of their corpses, they find that they have their work cut out for them. Dead or alive, any eladrin remain defiantly silent until the PCs succeed on a 7th-level skill challenge with a complexity of 1, requiring four successes before three failures (primary skills are Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate).

If convinced to talk, the eladrin reluctantly provide directions to their encampment, which is located in “an oasis, some days ride away.” Unfortunately, since their few layovers have been brief, they are familiar only with the region immediately surrounding their camp (Area O1) and can only guess at the number of eladrin present. They reveal that a beautiful female half-elf, who leads a small army of fey, employs their tribe and provides them with their specific targets, mainly ancient books and artifacts. However, the eladrin remain ignorant of Emrett’s larger plans.

**Tethered Camels:** The eladrin’s mounts, three dromedary camels, lounge in the shade of a small rock outcropping a hundred yards away from the ambush site. If the PCs rifle through their saddlebags, they find a single level 8 magic item among other mundane personal items.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Windward Slope:** Though steep, the windward slope of the dune does not hinder movement.

**Leeward Slope:** The leeward slope of the dune acts as difficult terrain. Unless a creature has earth walk, a DC 15 Athletics or Acrobatics check is required to avoid tumbling down its sandy expanse. Creatures that succeed on their skill check move normally, but those that fail by 5 or more fall 10 to 30 feet. The sand acts as a cushion and halves any falling damage. In addition to the above skill checks, creatures forced to move by an attack can also make a saving throw to avoid falling; if they succeed on their saving throw, they instead fall prone.

**Sandstorm:** Four rounds into the battle, the howling winds pick up, driving the sand inexorably forward and lightly obscuring anything 5 or more squares from a viewer. In addition, saving throws to end the blinded condition suffer a –2 penalty. The sandstorm persists until the end of the encounter.

## ENCOUNTER 01: ELADRIN ENCAMPMENT

Encounter Level 8 (XP 1,900)

### SETUP

Thurraya (T)

3 eladrin mamluks (M)

4 eladrin desert blades (D)

Normally, the three eladrin mamluks recline on reed mats arranged around the fire pit, while the eladrin desert blades meditate in their tents. Their leader, Thurraya, relaxes in her private tent reading a treatise on magical theory. In any case, none of them are particularly attentive and they suffer a -2 penalty to their Perception checks (in addition to the penalty caused by the avian cacophony); thus, it should be relatively easy for the PCs to sneak past the encampment or achieve surprise. If the eladrin are aware of the PCs, they lurk in their tents and hide behind the palm trees, waiting to spring an ambush.

### If the PCs surprise the eladrin, read:

*Three slim eladrin wearing flowing tan robes and indigo headwraps lounge around the smoldering fire pit. They appear startled by your sudden appearance, but they scramble to their feet, shouting for aid as they grab for their scimitars. In response, you hear a commotion from inside the tents.*

**If the eladrin are waiting to ambush the PCs:**

### Perception

DC 20: *You hear a faint rustling noise from inside one of the tents.*

**If the eladrin surprise the PCs, read:**

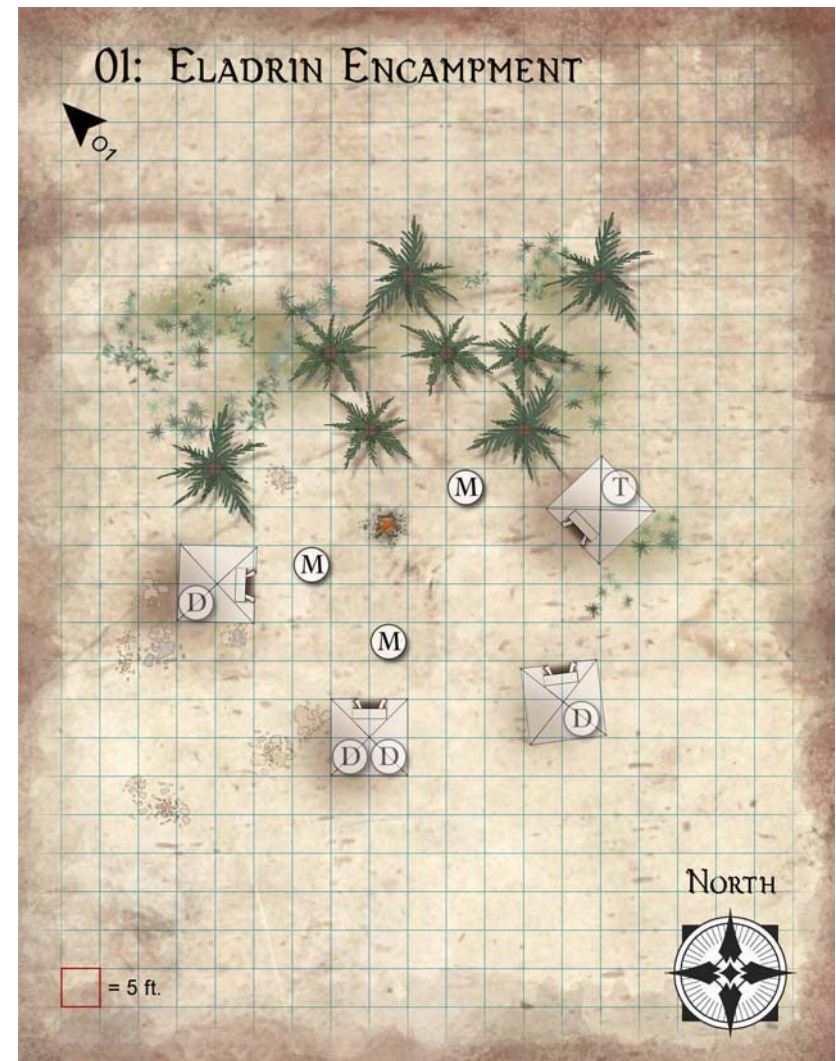
*Three eladrin wearing flowing tan robes leap out from within the copse of palm trees, scimitars at the ready. Five similarly clad eladrin pour out of the tents; one, obviously female, hangs back. The air roils around her like a heat mirage.*

### TACTICS

If the PCs surprise the eladrin, the three mamluks begin the encounter lying on the ground, prone. After they stand up, two engage the PCs while the third retreats toward Thurraya's tent. The mamluks hope to overwhelm the PCs and hamper their tactical movement, so they employ *tower of sand* as early as possible. The three mamluks are willing to give their life to protect Thurraya, retreating only if she orders it.

Thurraya and the desert blades emerge from their tents and enter the initiative count at the conclusion of the surprise round. The desert blades use *fey step* to surround a single, weak-looking foe to take advantage

of their *heat stroke* power, and Thurraya enters the conflict with her favored tactic, a *ricocheting assault*. She uses her *scorching scimitar* power if she can catch at least two PCs in the burst, grudgingly sacrificing allies if hard pressed.





<b>Thurraya (T)</b> Medium fey humanoid, eladrin	<b>Level 8 Elite Artillery</b> XP 700
<b>Initiative</b> +8 <b>Senses</b> Perception +12; low-light vision <b>HP</b> 134; <b>Bloodied</b> 67 <b>AC</b> 20; <b>Fortitude</b> 18; <b>Reflex</b> 21; <b>Will</b> 21; see also <i>mirage</i> <b>Resist</b> 10 fire <b>Saving Throws</b> +2; +7 against charm effects <b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>fey step</i> <b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 1d8 + 15).	
⊗ <b>Force Bolt</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Force</b> Ranged 20; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 7 force damage.	
↪ <b>Whirling Blade</b> (standard; requires a scimitar; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 2d8 + 15). <i>Aftereffect:</i> Thurraya's scimitar immediately returns to her hand.	
↪ <b>Ricocheting Assault</b> (standard; at-will) Thurraya makes a <i>whirling blade</i> attack. <i>Effect:</i> If Thurraya hits with her first attack, she immediately makes a second <i>whirling blade</i> attack against the nearest enemy within range other than the first target.	
✱ <b>Scorching Scimitar</b> (standard; requires a scimitar; recharge 2, 2, 1) ♦ <b>Fire, Weapon</b> Area burst 1 within 10; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 7 fire damage. <i>Aftereffect:</i> Thurraya's scimitar immediately reforms in her hand.	
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b> Thurraya can teleport 5 squares.	
<b>Mirage</b> (not usable while bloodied) ♦ <b>Illusion</b> Thurraya has concealment against all melee and ranged attacks.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned <b>Languages</b> Common, Elven <b>Skills</b> Arcana +12, Endurance +11 <b>Str</b> 14 (+6) <b>Dex</b> 18 (+8) <b>Wis</b> 16 (+7) <b>Con</b> 14 (+6) <b>Int</b> 12 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 20 (+9)	
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, scimitar	

If the eladrin are waiting to ambush the PCs and achieve surprise, during the surprise round, Thurraya attacks with her *scorching scimitar*, while two of the eladrin mamluks delay if necessary and then charge following her attack, with the third moving back to protect Thurraya. Otherwise, the ensuing fight unfolds as described above.

If the PCs kill two or more of the mamluks, the remaining eladrin flee to the nearby group of camels, abandoning Emrett and the oasis for the relative safety of the desert. If Thurraya lives, she first takes a minor action to disturb the corollaxes to facilitate their escape (see Features of the Area).

If the PCs flee, the surviving eladrin organize a posse and set out after them. However, they do not venture past the northern edge of the lake and decline to warn Emrett, Hazar, or their minions, since they prefer to hunt undisturbed.

<b>4 Eladrin Desert Blades (D)</b> Medium fey humanoid	<b>Level 7 Minion</b> XP 75 each
<b>Initiative</b> +6 <b>Senses</b> Perception +4; low-light vision <b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion <b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 19; <b>Reflex</b> 19; <b>Will</b> 18 <b>Resist</b> 5 fire <b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>fey step</i> ⊕ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +12 vs. AC; 6 damage (8 damage on a critical hit).	
<b>Heat Stroke</b> ♦ <b>Fire</b> A desert blade's basic attack deals 1 extra point of fire damage for each desert blade adjacent to the target.	
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b> The desert blade can teleport 5 squares.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned <b>Languages</b> Common, Elven <b>Str</b> 16 (+6) <b>Dex</b> 16 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+4) <b>Con</b> 14 (+5) <b>Int</b> 10 (+3) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+5)	
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, scimitar	

<b>3 Eladrin Mamluks (M)</b> Medium fey humanoid	<b>Level 7 Soldier</b> XP 300 each
<b>Initiative</b> +11 <b>Senses</b> Perception +4; low-light vision <b>HP</b> 77; <b>Bloodied</b> 38 <b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 19; <b>Reflex</b> 20; <b>Will</b> 18 <b>Saving Throws</b> +5 against charm effects <b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>dance of the desert blades</i> and <i>fey step</i> ⊕ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14), and the target is marked until the end of the eladrin mamluk's next turn.	
⊕ <b>Dance of the Desert Blades</b> (standard; recharges when first bloodied) Targets one or two creatures; the eladrin mamluk makes a scimitar attack and can then shift 1 square.	
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b> The eladrin mamluk can teleport 5 squares.	
<b>Tower of Sand</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Polymorph</b> The eladrin mamluk absorbs the sand underfoot to fuel a magical growth spurt; the eladrin mamluk becomes Large, occupying 4 squares instead of 1. Creatures and objects in the squares that the eladrin mamluk comes to occupy are pushed 1 square. The eladrin mamluk's reach becomes 2 and it gains a +5 bonus to damage rolls. The eladrin mamluk can revert to its normal form as a free action.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned <b>Languages</b> Common, Elven <b>Skills</b> Athletics +12, Endurance +9 <b>Str</b> 18 (+7) <b>Dex</b> 22 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+4) <b>Con</b> 13 (+4) <b>Int</b> 14 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 16 (+6)	
<b>Equipment</b> chainmail, scimitar	

## DEVELOPMENT

**Sentinels:** If the corollaxes (see Features of the Area) employ their *color spray* ability, it automatically attracts the attention of a single Sentinel patrol. If necessary, allow the PCs to take a short rest before they attack, but not if Thurraya intentionally created the disturbance to cover an escape attempt.

**Treasure:** Searching through the tents yields an assortment of blankets, trail rations, camel saddles, and personal trinkets. However, PCs can uncover a leather pouch containing three amethysts (worth 100 gp each) with only a few minutes of searching. In addition, they can find (Perception DC 15) a scroll inscribed with the *fey passage* ritual (*Manual of the Planes*, page 150; worth 360 gp) tucked under a pillow in Thurraya's tent.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Corollaxes:** The nearby palm trees are host to a flock of corollaxes (magical, parrotlike birds native to the Feywild). If any palm trees are caught in the area of a blast or burst power, or if someone takes a minor action to disturb the corollaxes (such as by making loud noises, violently shaking a tree, or throwing rocks), they unleash a vibrant clash of colored light in a random direction. The defensive *color spray* is a close blast 5 attack, +8 vs. Will, and deals 1d6 + 4 radiant damage; creatures hit by the attack are also dazed until the end of their next turn.

PCs can identify the corollaxes and the threat they pose with a DC 14 Arcana check.

**Eladrin Tents:** A creature inside a tent has total concealment against those outside and vice versa. Creatures cannot end their movement in a square occupied by a tent unless they enter it, and they can do so only through an opening; dealing 5 damage to the tent tears a gap large enough for a Medium-sized creature to pass through. Cutting three of the four support ropes (all defenses 10, 5 hit points) collapses a tent, restraining and blinding anyone inside until the end of their next turn as they fumble to escape.

**Fire Pit:** Creatures beginning their turn within the space of the smoldering fire pit take 5 fire damage.

**Palm Tree:** The palm trees stand 40 to 60 feet high; anyone sharing a square with a tree gains cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 12 Athletics check; however, this agitates its skittish inhabitants, immediately prompting them to unleash a *color spray* at the offending creature. Creatures without a climb speed hit by their *color spray* must make another DC 12 Athletics check to avoid falling and taking the appropriate amount of damage.

## ENCOUNTER 02: THE LOVE NEST

Encounter Level 7 (XP 1,700)

### SETUP

**Saqr, eladrin warrior (S)**

**Taalah, dryad handmaiden (T)  
quickling runner (Q)**

The encounter begins when the PCs cross the silk barrier. The lovers are too engrossed with one another to take notice of their surroundings and suffer an additional -2 penalty to their Perception checks, but if the PCs slash their way through the barrier, both automatically notice the intrusion. In either case, Saqr and Taalah begin the encounter together at the center of the clearing. (Taalah keeps herself continually cloaked in a *deceptive veil*, appearing as an exotic-looking female elf). If they detect the PCs' approach, Saqr prepares by using *tower of sand* while his lover takes cover behind him.

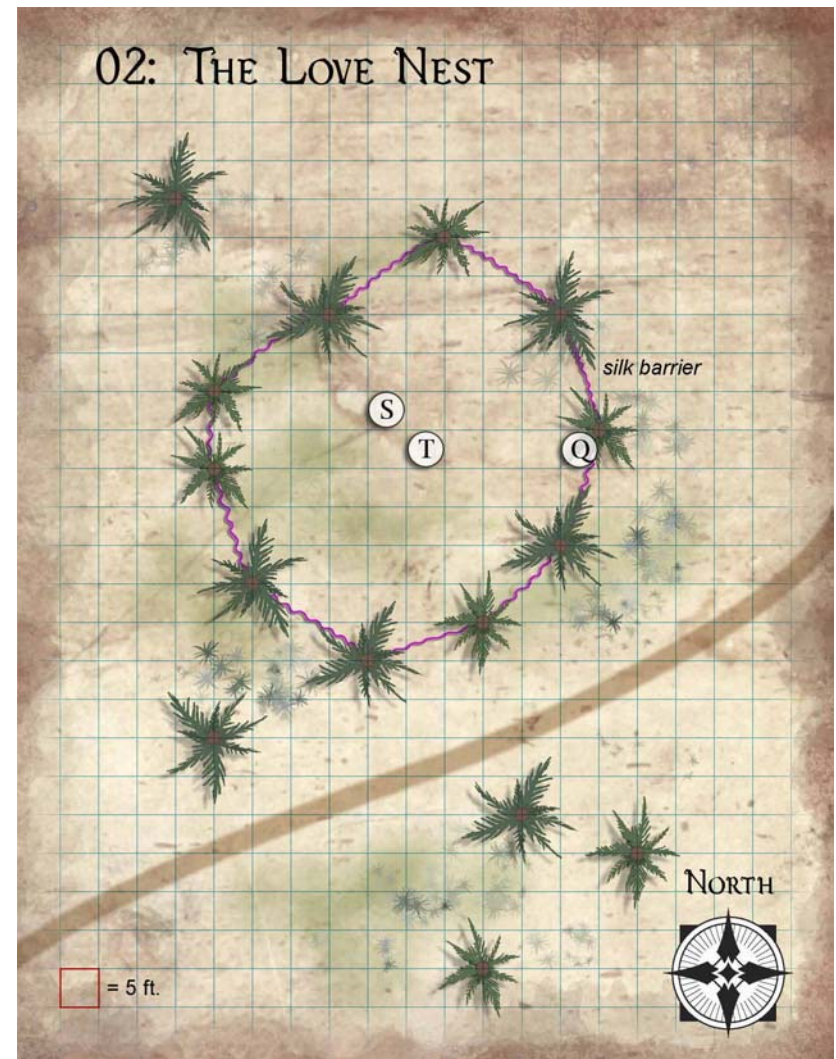
The quickling is one of a pair of runners employed by Emrett; lately, the creature has grown smitten with Taalah and has taken to sneaking under the silk barrier to watch the couple. For hours on end, he hides among the bushes, and though his presence delights Taalah, Saqr remains ignorant. It is unlikely that the PCs spot the quickling prior to the start of the battle, and it waits until the PCs seriously threaten Taalah before leaping to her defense.

When the PCs see Saqr and Taalah, read:

*A muscular, proud-looking eladrin with long chestnut brown hair stands naked before you; scars and other mementos of battle crisscross his bronzed skin. He nimbly hefts a serrated falchion into his long-fingered hands, shouting in Common, "I shall pluck out your eyes for daring to even look upon my love," obviously referring to the willowy female crouching behind him.*

*The elf woman's skin is the color of finely polished teak and her green hair seems woven from the delicate fronds of the surrounding palm trees. Though nude and in danger, she still smiles at you with a seductive gleam in her wide, almond-shaped eyes.*

If the PCs' Insight checks beat Taalah's Bluff check, they pierce her disguise and see her true form. (Saqr is not aware of what his love truly looks like, nor would he care, but he takes great offense to any suggestion that she is more than she appears.)



## TACTICS

Once the battle begins, Saqr keeps himself between the PCs and Taalah, who in turn flees toward the relative safety of the nearest grove of trees. If he has not done so already, Saqr uses *tower of sand* at his earliest opportunity, using his threatening reach to better control the flow of battle. His only aim is to keep the PCs away from Taalah; if they attack her, they quickly suffer the consequences of *a lover's retribution*.

Taalah tries to stay out of combat and uses *treestride* to keep her distance from the PCs. If Saqr is handling them easily, she teleports behind one of them to flank with her paramour, gleefully attacking with her claws. Otherwise, she continues to hide, attacking only in self-defense.

The quickling remains motionless unless Taalah is threatened. It then rushes to her side, continually circling her while using *quick cuts* as often as it can. The quickling would love nothing more than to see Saqr fall under a PC's blade, enabling him to take Taalah for himself, and does nothing to assist his nominal ally. (Saqr, offended by the quickling's obvious intrusion, reciprocates this attitude.)

Both Saqr and the quickling fight to the bitter end to protect Taalah (or avenge her death), but she is not so sentimental. If the PCs kill Saqr, she tries to flee by means of *treestride*.

Saqr (S)	Level 9 Elite Brute
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin	XP 800
<b>Initiative</b> +7	<b>Senses Perception</b> +9; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 236; <b>Bloodied</b> 118	
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 23; <b>Reflex</b> 21; <b>Will</b> 19; see also <i>bereaved frenzy</i>	
<b>Immune</b> fear	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2; +7 against charm effects	
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>fey step</i>	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Falchion</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b> +12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 9 damage (crit 4d4 + 17 damage).	
⚔ <b>A Lover's Retribution</b> (immediate reaction, triggers when Taalah is targeted by an attack; at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b> Saqr charges the enemy that targeted Taalah and makes a falchion attack. On a hit, the target takes an additional 1d10 damage and is marked by Saqr until the end of his next turn.	
<b>Bereaved Frenzy</b> (usable when Taalah drops to 0 or fewer hit points) Saqr gains a +2 bonus to his attack rolls and deals an extra 5 damage on a hit. However, he also takes a -2 penalty to all his defenses and gains vulnerable 5 to all attacks.	
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ◆ <b>Teleportation</b> Saqr can teleport 5 squares.	
<b>Tower of Sand</b> (standard; encounter) ◆ <b>Polymorph</b> Saqr absorbs the sand underfoot to fuel a magical growth spurt; Saqr becomes Large, occupying 4 squares instead of 1. Creatures and objects in the squares that Saqr comes to occupy are pushed 1 square. Saqr's reach becomes 2 and he gains a +5 bonus to damage rolls. Saqr can revert to his normal form as a free action.	
<b>Threatening Reach</b> (usable when Large-sized) Saqr can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within his reach (2 squares).	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +14, Endurance +13, Intimidate +11	
<b>Str</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+7) <b>Wis</b> 10 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 14 (+6)
<b>Equipment</b> falchion	

Taalah (T)	Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid (plant), dryad	XP 400
<b>Initiative</b> +9	<b>Senses Perception</b> +12
<b>HP</b> 92; <b>Bloodied</b> 46	
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 22, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 21	
<b>Speed</b> 8 (forest walk)	
⊕ <b>Claws</b> (standard, at-will) +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, or 1d8 + 9 damage if the target is the only enemy adjacent to the dryad.	
<b>Deceptive Veil</b> (minor, at-will) ◆ <b>Illusion</b> The dryad can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid, usually a beautiful elf or eladrin. An Insight check (opposed by the dryad's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.	
<b>Treestride</b> (move, at-will) ◆ <b>Teleportation</b> The dryad can teleport 8 squares if it begins and ends adjacent to a tree, treant, or a plant of Large size or bigger.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +10, Insight +12, Stealth +12	
<b>Str</b> 19 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+7) <b>Wis</b> 17 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 12 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 13 (+5)

Quickling Runner (Q)	Level 9 Skirmisher
Small fey humanoid	XP 400
<b>Initiative</b> +13	<b>Senses Perception</b> +7; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 96; <b>Bloodied</b> 48	
<b>AC</b> 24 (28 against opportunity attacks); <b>Fortitude</b> 20, <b>Reflex</b> 24, <b>Will</b> 20	
<b>Speed</b> 12, climb 6	
⊕ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard, at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b> +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.	
⚔ <b>Quick Cuts</b> (standard, at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b> The quickling moves its speed. At any two points during its move, the quickling makes a melee basic attack at a -2 penalty. The quickling cannot use this power while immobilized or slowed.	
<b>Fey Shift</b> (standard, encounter) The quickling runner shifts 10 squares.	
<b>Maintain Mobility</b> (minor, recharge Ⓛ Ⓛ Ⓛ Ⓛ Ⓛ) An immobilized quickling runner is no longer immobilized.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +21, Bluff +9, Stealth +16	
<b>Str</b> 9 (+3)	<b>Dex</b> 24 (+11) <b>Wis</b> 17 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 10 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> short sword	

## DEVELOPMENT

**The Likely Survivor:** If the PCs manage to capture Taalah, the anxious dryad feigns innocence and attempts to gain her freedom by charming the least charismatic PC (male or female) in the party. If that seductive gambit fails, she tries to ingratiate herself by readily divulging all that she knows, including the general layout of the oasis (even the hidden obelisk) and the disposition of Emrett's fey henchmen. In addition, though she is not privy to Emrett's plans, she informs them that her mistress keeps a personal diary in her tent in which she records all her secrets (though she neglects to mention the magic trap warding the book). Finally, Taalah offers to accompany them on their journey, staying uncomfortably close to her favored PC; however, the duplicitous fey eventually betrays them with a laugh and a smile.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Palm Tree:** The palm trees stand between 40 to 60 feet high; anyone sharing a square with a tree gains cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 12 Athletics check.

**Silk Barrier:** Creatures standing on one side of the barrier have total concealment against those on the other side. Dealing 2 damage to the saffron cloth opens a gap big enough for a Medium-sized creature to pass through, but it would be easier to lift the unanchored silk, which flaps freely in the breeze. Small (or smaller) creatures that crawl can easily pass underneath the barrier without disturbing it further.

**Treasure:** Taalah has hidden Saqr's gifts within a tree hollow that the PCs can find with a DC 20 Perception check (if captured, Taalah uses this treasure as a bargaining chip). They include a platinum hairpin (worth 100 gp), a collection of silver bangles (worth 75 gp), an ivory brooch shaped like an elephant (worth 75 gp), and a diamond necklace (worth 450 gp). Finally, the saffron silk barrier is worth a total of 1,000 gp if cleaned, but is extremely bulky and collectively weighs over 200 lb.

## ENCOUNTER 03: EMRETT'S ABODE

Encounter Level 6 (XP 1,450)

### SETUP

Quickling runner (Q)

Satyr piper (S)

2 spriggan giantsouls (G)

The spriggan giantsouls guarding the campsite normally stand near the entrance to Emrett's tent while the satyr piper and quickling runner noisily entertain themselves. After several weeks without serious incident, none of the fey expects intruders and they are genuinely shocked to see the PCs. The spriggans, who are fanatically loyal to Emrett, attack on sight; the other two take their cues from them.

### When the PCs spot the fey, read:

*A pair of ugly, gnomelike fey stand guard in front of the large tent; they appear unarmed but wear soiled hide armor, iron-shod boots, and grubby pointed caps stained red with blood. Off to the side, a satyr and a quickling laugh rather loudly as they shoot dice and take puffs from a battered hookah.*

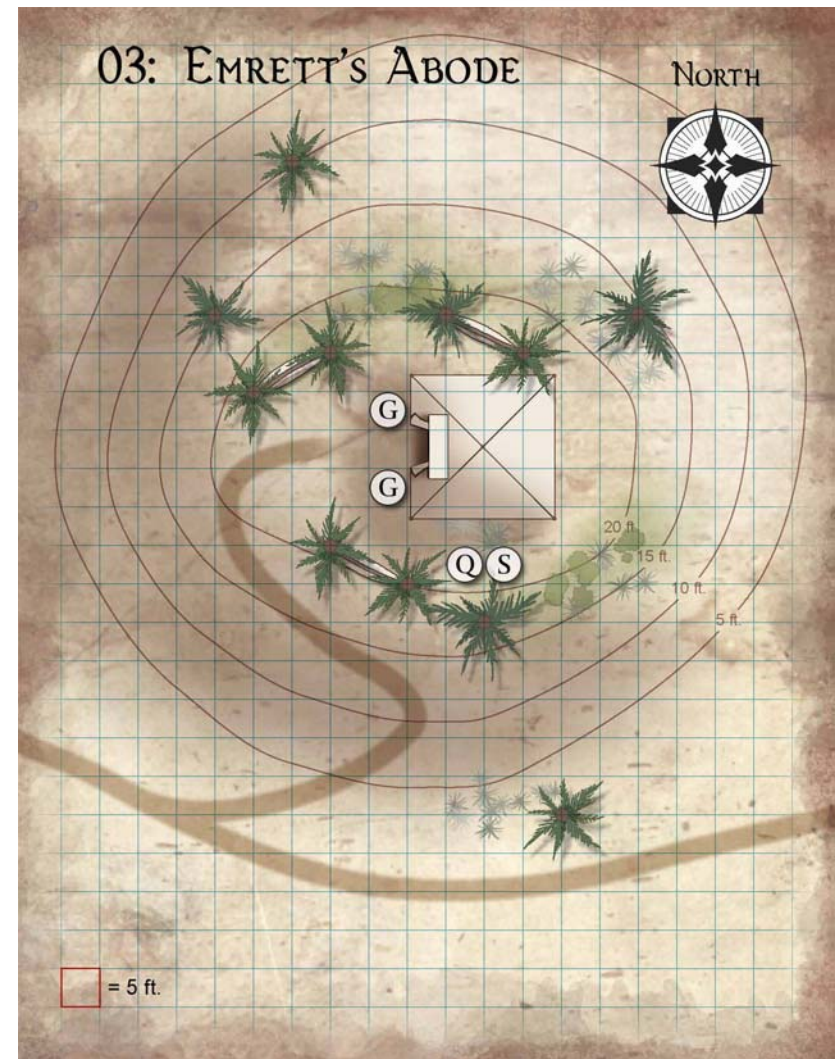
### TACTICS

The giantsouls gleefully attempt to beat the PCs to death, employing *giantsoul slam* whenever it recharges, while the satyr piper contributes by prancing around while playing his *wooden pipes*. He prefers to play a *feral overture* to bolster his allies, but he shifts to a *leaping stag dance* or *song of freedom* if it becomes

necessary, reserving his *dazing melody* for if the PCs move too close or if he needs to beat a hasty getaway.

Although the satyr piper defends himself with a well-placed gore or even his longbow, he entrusts his safety to his gambling buddy, the quickling runner. He weaves in and out of battle, joyfully employing *quick cuts*, but he keeps one eye trained on his friend (and the gambling pot) just in case. It particularly likes to goad a PC into giving chase, so it can clothesline them by leading them through a space containing a hammock.

The zealous giantsouls fight to the death to protect their campsite, but the satyr piper and quickling runner retreat if the PCs manage to kill both spriggans. They care little for Emrett's plans (not that they know any details) and retreat to a less hazardous region of the oasis to resume their frivolity.



<b>2 Spriggan Giantsouls (G)</b> Small fey humanoid	<b>Level 8 Brute</b> XP 350 each
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +7; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 106; <b>Bloodied</b> 53	
<b>AC</b> 20; <b>Fortitude</b> 21, <b>Reflex</b> 19, <b>Will</b> 20	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard, at-will) +11 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 9 damage while the spriggan giantsoul is bloodied.	
↓ <b>Giantsoul Slam</b> (standard, recharge ☼ ☼ ☼ ☼) Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone. While the spriggan giantsoul is bloodied, the damage increases to 2d6 + 9.	
↓ <b>Surprise Slam</b> (immediate interrupt, when an enemy within 2 squares of the spriggan giantsoul attacks an ally, encounter) Giantsoul slam recharges, and the giantsoul uses it against the triggering enemy.	
<b>Redcap Zeal</b> (when the spriggan giantsoul bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, encounter) The giantsoul gains 1d10 + 3 temporary hit points.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +14, Intimidate +10, Stealth +12	
<b>Str</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 17 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 12 (+5)
<b>Equipment</b> iron-shod boots, hide armor	

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Hammocks:** Spotting the camouflaged vine hammocks requires a DC 12 Perception check (DC 17 if the PC is moving). Medium-sized and larger creatures moving through a square containing a hammock must spend 2 squares of movement or become prone (smaller creatures can pass underneath the suspended hammocks without incident). Creatures can move through a square containing a hammock at their normal speed by making a DC 14 Athletics check to leap over it; failure causes the PC to fall prone and become immobilized until the beginning of its next turn. Cutting one of the support vines (5 hit points; all defenses 10) causes the hammock to fall to the ground, allowing unhampered movement through its squares.

<b>Quickling Runner (Q)</b> Small fey humanoid	<b>Level 9 Skirmisher</b> XP 400
<b>Initiative</b> +13	<b>Senses</b> Perception +7; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 96; <b>Bloodied</b> 48	
<b>AC</b> 24 (28 against opportunity attacks); <b>Fortitude</b> 20, <b>Reflex</b> 24, <b>Will</b> 20	
<b>Speed</b> 12, climb 6	
⊕ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard, at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.	
↓ <b>Quick Cuts</b> (standard, at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> The quickling moves its speed. At any two points during its move, the quickling makes a melee basic attack at a -2 penalty. The quickling cannot use this power while immobilized or slowed.	
<b>Fey Shift</b> (standard, encounter) The quickling runner shifts 10 squares.	
<b>Maintain Mobility</b> (minor, recharge ☼ ☼ ☼ ☼) An immobilized quickling runner is no longer immobilized.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +21, Bluff +9, Stealth +16	
<b>Str</b> 9 (+3)	<b>Dex</b> 24 (+11) <b>Wis</b> 17 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 10 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> short sword	

**Palm Trees:** The palm trees stand between 40 to 60 feet high; anyone sharing a square with a tree gains cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 12 Athletics check.

**Tent:** A creature inside Emrett's tent has total concealment against those outside and vice versa. Creatures cannot end their movement in a square occupied by the tent unless they enter it, and they can do so only through an opening; dealing 5 damage to the tent tears a gap large enough for a Medium-sized creature to pass through. Cutting three of the four support ropes (all defenses 10, 5 hit points) collapses a tent, restraining and blinding anyone inside it until the end of their next turn as they fumble to escape.

**Treasure:** The satyr and quickling's gambling pot lies scattered on a bare patch of ground adjacent to

<b>Satyr Piper (S)</b> Medium fey humanoid	<b>Level 8 Controller (Leader)</b> XP 350
<b>Initiative</b> +8	<b>Senses</b> Perception +10; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 86; <b>Bloodied</b> 43	
<b>AC</b> 22; <b>Fortitude</b> 18, <b>Reflex</b> 20, <b>Will</b> 21	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
⊕ <b>Gore</b> (standard, at-will) +11 vs. AC; 1d8 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⊕ <b>Longbow</b> (standard, at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> Ranged 20/40; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.	
↖ <b>Wooden Pipes</b> (standard; sustain standard, at-will) Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; the satyr piper plays one of the following tunes on its pipes and can repeat the effect on its turn as a standard action. <b>Dazing Melody (Charm):</b> Targets enemies; +11 vs. Will; deafened creatures are immune; the target is dazed until the end of the satyr piper's next turn. <b>Feral Overture:</b> Allies in the burst gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the satyr piper's next turn. <b>Leaping Stag Dance:</b> Allies in the burst can shift 2 squares immediately. <b>Song of Freedom:</b> Allies in the burst can make a free saving throw against an effect that a save can end.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Elven
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +14, Nature +10, Stealth +13	
<b>Str</b> 10 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+8) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 13 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 20 (+9)
<b>Equipment</b> wooden pipes, arrows (30), longbow.	

the Emrett's tent. It consists of a 34 sp and a couple of worthless IOUs scrawled in Elven on a piece of tattered sheet music.

## DEVELOPMENT

Every night, several hours after sundown, Emrett and her comet tail eagle companion return to camp, remaining there until dawn. If she is present during the encounter, the resulting combat is a Level 10 challenge.

## SKILL CHALLENGE 04: SMOOTHING RUFFLED FEATHERS

Encounter Level 7 (XP 1,500)

### SETUP

Run this skill challenge if the PCs opt to negotiate with the untrustworthy sphinx. If the conversation degenerates into combat, proceed with Tactical Encounter 04 (page 58). This skill challenge assumes that it takes place within Hazar's lair; adjust the challenge accordingly if it occurs elsewhere.

#### Smoothing Ruffled Feathers Level 7 XP 900

*The ibis-headed sphinx rises from her nest and eyes you warily before addressing you in a haughty, feminine voice. "I am Hazar, the sacred, eternal guardian of this oasis. How dare you mortals invade my aerie! Explain yourselves immediately or suffer my just punishment!" She paws menacingly at the ground with her razor-sharp, leonine claws and clearly appears irritated by your presence.*

Because the PCs must succeed on two separate tasks, this skill challenge is divided into a pair of mini-challenges.

First, they must appease Hazar and soothe her ego for their intrusion. Once mollified, she proposes an alliance with the PCs, but only if they can ease her boredom with "a spirited intellectual debate." Unfortunately, Hazar is toying with them; she mainly hopes to gain the benefits of her *sphinx's challenge* when she inevitably strikes.

The PCs need to gain four successes during the first part of the challenge before proceeding on to the second. If the PCs suffer 3 failures at any point during the skill challenge, it ends in failure. The consequences for failure depend on when it happens.

#### Complexity

3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures)

#### Primary Skills (Part 1)

Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate

#### Secondary Skills (Part 1)

Insight

#### Primary Skills (Part 2)

Arcana, History, Nature, Religion

#### Secondary Skills (Part 2)

Arcana, Diplomacy, Insight

#### Success

Their performance surprises Hazar; deprived of the benefits of her *sphinx's challenge*, she chooses to honor her alliance. See below for details of the assistance that she provides the PCs.

#### Failure (Part 1)

Hazar concludes that the PCs are bumbling fools and confidently attacks. She refuses to ally with them under any circumstances, but she does nothing to stop them if they somehow escape and then later interfere with Emrett's plans.

#### Failure (Part 2)

The PCs give Hazar pause, so she is happy to have the benefits of her *sphinx's challenge* when she pounces. Until the end of the encounter, Hazar gains the following benefits: +1 action point, an extra use of *second wind*, a +2 bonus to attack rolls, and a +2 bonus to all defenses. Fortunately, Hazar does not want to kill them at this time. Instead, she looks at them disdainfully and coolly demands that they leave her abode. If they do not immediately comply, she attacks, but she intends only to drive them off. The PCs have piqued her interest, and she views them as potential tools that she can use to weaken Emrett. Secretly, she instructs the sentinel patrols not to accost them any longer; if they discover the PCs, they circle overhead and take no hostile action unless attacked or Hazar commands otherwise.

### Part 1 - Flattering a Diva

*The sphinx glares at you impatiently. "Come now, out with it! Time is precious even for an immortal!"*

In Part 1 of the skill challenge, the PCs must pacify the irritable sphinx. She expects the PCs to be properly deferential and remains aloof while the challenge unfolds, leaving most of the talking to them.

#### Special

If the PCs possess Emrett's diary and reveal its contents to Hazar, they automatically gain one success in this part of the skill challenge. Hazar becomes enraged at her erstwhile partner's treachery and spends the next several minutes colorfully cursing her existence.

For every 500 gp worth of treasure or magic items that the PCs give Hazar, they gain a cumulative +2 bonus to any skill checks made during this part of the skill challenge.

Hazar merrily coos at everything given to her, paying extra attention to anything particularly shiny.

#### Primary Skills

Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate

*Bluff (DC 24):* Having grown weary of Emrett's constant lies, Hazar is automatically suspicious. She can be bluffed, but she squawks and glares threateningly at any PC who fails a Bluff check against her.

*Diplomacy (DC 14):* Hazar is utterly self-absorbed and adores praise; furthermore, she is immensely catty and enjoys mocking her rivals. If a PC succeeds at a Diplomacy check, they deliver either an exceptionally flattering compliment or a snide remark at Emrett's expense, both to Hazar's delight. Conversely, if a PC fails this check, she rolls her eyes in obvious disgust.

*Intimidate (DC 19; maximum one success):* Hazar is looking for dupes to help her murder Emrett, so any suitable display of power makes her sit up and take notice. If a PC succeeds at this Intimidate check, the bemused sphinx chuckles and pays the PC a compliment, though her tone is that of a mother indulging a child. If a PC tries to use Intimidate again or if this check fails, Hazar yawns loudly and does her best to ignore the offending PC for the remainder of the skill challenge.

#### Secondary Skill

Insight

*Insight (DC 14):* Astute PCs can exploit Hazar's vanity and learn her amenability to "gifts." Using this skill does not count as a success or failure for the challenge, but a success provides a +2 bonus to the PCs next skill check. A failure results in Hazar spending several minutes castigating them for wasting her time.



**Part 2 - A Sphinx's Salon**

*Looking rather pleased with herself, Hazar settles into her nest. "Now that we are all friends, won't you indulge me for a little while? Out here, thought-provoking dialog is so hard to come by." Before continuing, Hazar motions with her paw to the rocky ground at her feet. "Come now," she commands, "sit and let us discuss the latest schools of magical thought."*

Driven by boredom, Hazar becomes a vigorous participant in the second part of this challenge. She is an unbearable know-it-all, and loves nothing more than demonstrating her superior intellect and breadth of knowledge to a captive audience. As a result, during the ensuing debate, Hazar questions their ideas, dismisses their arguments, and ridicules any missteps, making for a most unpleasant experience.

**Special**

Hazar is a dogged adversary who continually looks to undermine her opponents' positions. When a hero makes an Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion check, they need to roll a 19 or higher to score a success. A roll of 14-18 means that the character presented an argument at least good enough to hold Hazar's interest but not persuasive enough to impress her; it keeps the skill challenge going but does not count as either a success or a failure. Only a result of 13 or lower counts as a failure.

**Primary Skills**

Arcana, History, Nature, Religion

*Any primary skill (DC 14/19):* These skills represent Hazar's favorite subjects, and she tries to steer the debate toward them. If a character gains a success (DC 19), Hazar acknowledges their skillful debate with a nod of her head. If they roll 14-18, Hazar rudely cuts them off so she can offer her counterpoint. If they fail, Hazar spends several minutes smugly lecturing them, talking over any interruption.

**Secondary Skills**

Arcana, Diplomacy, Insight

*Diplomacy (DC 14):* The PC makes an excellent rhetorical point and gains a +2 bonus to any character's next Arcana, History, or Nature check. Using this skill does not count as a success or failure for the challenge, though a failure does elicit a sarcastic retort from Hazar.

*Insight (DC 14):* An observant PC notices that Hazar is guiding the conversation in a peculiar fashion. Using this skill does not count as a success or failure for the challenge; instead, it unlocks the Arcana check below.

*Arcana (DC 20):* Characters cannot achieve this success without first succeeding at the above Insight check. If a PC makes the check, they realize that Hazar has entrapped them in her *sphinx's challenge*. They immediately grasp the severity of their situation and the consequences of failure or ending the challenge prematurely. Adding insult to injury, Hazar winks knowingly at the perceptive PC. Using this skill doesn't count as a success or failure for the challenge.

If the PCs succeed on the skill challenge, the sphinx decides that it is finally time to eliminate Emrett. Feigning contriteness and taking great pains to minimize her own involvement in recent events, Hazar proposes an alliance. In return for her assistance in their battle against Emrett, Hazar demands that the PCs leave the oasis and never return; her terms are nonnegotiable and if they refuse, she attacks.

Upon their acceptance, Hazar provides the following aid:

- ◆ If the PCs have not discovered the obelisk, Hazar reveals its existence and hidden location (Area O6), as well as its history.
- ◆ If the PCs have not rescued Voor, she discloses the location of his prison (Area O5) and the command words required to control his magic cage. PCs can thus bypass the skill challenge normally needed to save him.
- ◆ Hazar has been studying Emrett's fang golem looking for any glaring weaknesses. She informs the PCs that it is particularly vulnerable to thunder damage and cautions them to avoid its attacks, since they strengthen Emrett's magic. After their discussion with Hazar, the PCs gain a +5 bonus to any Arcana checks made to learn more about the golem.

- ◆ Hazar orders the sentinels not to accost the PCs as long as Emrett and her minions still live. However, the sentinels still attack the PCs in self-defense or if they invade their aerie.
- ◆ Emrett kept Hazar in the dark regarding the implications of her archaeological work, but she has since realized the obelisk's potential. However, Hazar conceals this from the PCs, truthfully claiming that the intellectual challenge was her sole reason for agreeing to participate in Emrett's schemes.
- ◆ Hazar promises to keep the PCs secretly apprised of any new information that arises through *animal messenger* rituals. Though she has no further information to share, Hazar sends a seemingly endless supply of annoying sparrows their way to prod them forward or urge them to act more quickly.
- ◆ Finally, Hazar promises to participate in the final battle against Emrett, but she is lying. In truth, she plans on hanging back and reserving her powers for when she double-crosses the spent PCs. They can detect her subterfuge by succeeding on an Insight check opposed by her Bluff check (+4 modifier). Hazar maintains her innocence no matter what the results of the check might be, and quickly resorts to threats if the PCs turn insolent.

## ENCOUNTER O4: HAZAR'S LAIR

Encounter Level 10 (XP 2,500)

### SETUP

**Hazar (H)**

4 summoned songbird swarms

If Hazar is unaware of the PCs ascent, she begins the encounter in her nest. Otherwise, she takes wing to attack them as they climb the cliff face. Do not place the songbird swarms until Hazar summons them. If the PCs decide to talk with Hazar instead of fighting her, proceed instead with Skill Challenge O4: Smoothing Ruffled Feathers.

**When the PCs first see Hazar, read:**

*This horse-sized creature combines the tawny body of a lioness and the balding gray head, elongated neck, and curved bill of a sacred ibis. Powerful wings covered in snowy white feathers sprout from her wide shoulders.*

### TACTICS

If the PCs surprise Hazar in her nest, her first instinct is to take flight. Since the rear of the ledge is too cramped for flying, she uses *desert storm burst* to slide the PCs out of her path (and perhaps over the precipice) before taking off. Once airborne, she spends her first action point to summon a pair of songbird swarms and instructs them to attack the PCs while she wheels about. If enough PCs still congregate on the ledge, she conjures a *flensing haboob* and sustains it for as long as possible, using a move action to move it only if she has landed (she might

<b>Hazar (H)</b> Large fey magical beast, sphinx	<b>Level 10 Solo Controller</b> XP 2,500
<b>Initiative</b> +7	<b>Senses</b> Perception +14; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 424; <b>Bloodied</b> 212; see also <i>second wind</i>	
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 21; <b>Reflex</b> 23; <b>Will</b> 22	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5	
<b>Speed</b> 6, fly 8, overland flight 10	
<b>Action Points</b> 2	
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.	
↓ <b>Pounce</b> (standard; at-will)	
Hazar can make two claw attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, it is knocked prone. <i>Special:</i> When charging, Hazar can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.	
↓ <b>Buffeting Wings</b> (immediate interrupt, triggers when two or more enemies flank Hazar; at-will)	
+15 vs. AC; targets enemies flanking Hazar; 1d6 + 4 damage and the target is pushed 2 squares.	
✱ <b>Desert Storm Burst</b> (standard; at-will) ⚡ <b>Lightning, Thunder</b>	
Area burst 1 within 12; +12 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 lightning and thunder damage, and Hazar can slide each target 1 square.	
✱ <b>Flensing Haboob</b> (standard; encounter)	
Hazar creates a violent, magical sandstorm. Area burst 2 within 12; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 damage and the target is knocked prone and blinded (save ends). Creatures within the haboob gain concealment, but it also limits their line of sight to adjacent squares. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage. <i>Sustain:</i> Hazar sustains the haboob and can move it up to six squares by spending a move action; any creature that enters the haboob's space or starts its turn within it is subject to another attack.	

sacrifice an action point to do so if necessary). She is otherwise content to continue hurling *desert storm bursts* at them, preferring to target vulnerable PCs still climbing the cliff.

If Hazar is aware of the PCs' ascent (most likely due to a fight with a Sentinel patrol), she summons the songbird swarms before taking off and attacks largely as described above. If the PCs confront the sphinx in the air, consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 47 for information on running aerial combat. If faced with a flying foe, Hazar tries to use her *flensing haboob* to knock them prone so that they crash.

**Second Wind** (standard; encounter) ⚡ **Healing**

Hazar spends a healing surge and regains 106 hit points. She also gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of her next turn.

**Summon Songbird Swarm** (standard; recharges when the first two songbird swarms are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points)

Hazar summons a pair of songbird swarms. The summoned swarms appear within 3 squares of Hazar and act immediately after her in the initiative order. They remain until they are killed, dismissed by Hazar (as a free action), or the encounter ends. Hazar can end her movement in a square occupied by a songbird swarm; she gains concealment when occupying a square containing a bird swarm.

**Alignment** Evil     **Languages** Common, Elven, Draconic, Supernal; Hazar can also communicate with any bird or birdlike creature.

**Skills** Arcana +15, Diplomacy +14, Nature +15

**Str** 20 (+10)     **Dex** 15 (+7)     **Wis** 18 (+9)

**Con** 18 (+9)     **Int** 21 (+10)     **Cha** 19 (+9)

**Rituals** Hazar knows the following rituals: *Animal Messenger* (birds only), *Brew Potion*, *Disenchant Magic Item*, and *Enchant Magic Item*.

Hazar has an aversion to melee, but if she must, she surrounds herself with her songbird swarms and charges, using *pounce* against her targets, while shielding herself with her *buffeting wings*.

If bloodied, Hazar immediately flees to nurse her wounds. If the PCs follow her, she tries to duck out of sight and use *second wind* before resuming the battle, but if unable, she turns and fights to the death. Her songbird swarms willingly sacrifice themselves at her command.

4 Songbird Swarms		Level 6 Skirmisher	
Medium natural beast (swarm)		XP 250 each	
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision		
Swarm Attack aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 damage.			
HP 68; Bloodied 34			
AC 20; Fortitude 17; Reflex 19; Will 18			
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;			
Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks			
Speed 2; fly 8 (hover)			
⊕ Blinding Swarm (standard; at-will)			
+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends)			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –	
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 14 (+5)	
Con 12 (+4)	Int 2 (-1)	Cha 6 (+1)	

## DEVELOPMENT

A fight with Hazar automatically draws the interest of a sentinel patrol, in addition to any patrols already attacking the PCs for trespassing in their rookery.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

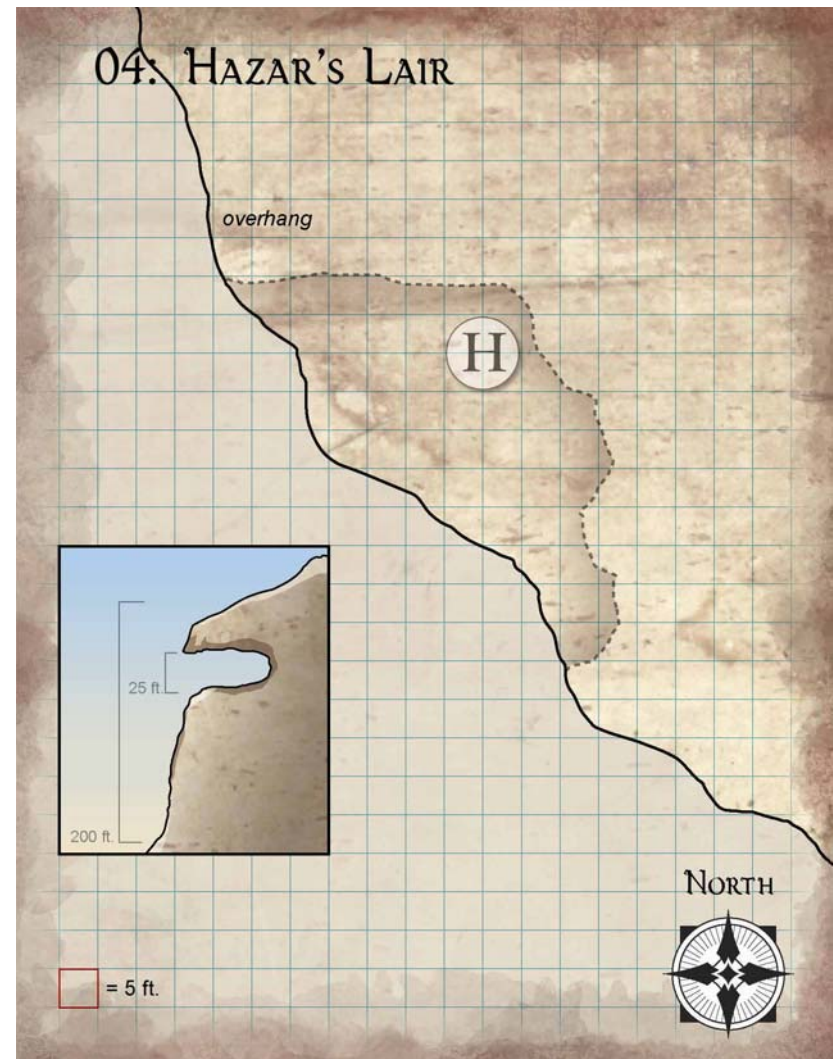
**Ceiling:** At its highest point, the rock outcropping above the ledge is only 5 squares above the floor.

**Illumination:** The ample shade normally shrouds the entire ledge in dim light, even at high noon.

**Nest:** Hazar built her nest to accommodate a creature of her size. Medium and smaller creatures must succeed on a DC 5 Athletics check to enter it. Such creatures enjoy cover relative to those outside the nest, but it acts as difficult terrain.

**Rock Ledge:** Hazar's nest perches 200 feet above the oasis. A fall from this height would be lethal (dealing 20d10 damage). Fortunately, a PC who falls from the nest lands on a ledge 30 feet below.

**Treasure:** Among the fish bones and molted feathers, the PCs can find fifty glittering garnets (each worth 10 gp) woven directly into her nest and a level 11 magic item. The ancient papyrus scrolls taken from Emrett's library rest atop a crude lectern in Hazar's nest. They illustrate principles of fey magic and are worth 500 gp to the right collector. Finally, discarded next to the lectern is an ivory scroll tube (worth 200 gp).



## ENCOUNTER 05: VOOR'S PRISON

Encounter Level 7 (1,550 XP)

### SETUP

**Advanced iron cobra (I)**

**Voor (V)**

**Spriggan powrie (P)**

**Spriggan witherer (W)**

**2 spriggan thorns (T)**

A gang of Emrett's minions watches over Voor. The thorns pace attentively in front of his cage, while the powrie and witherer crouch in a nearby stand of acacia trees. In addition, a powerful iron cobra has wrapped its articulated metal coils around Voor's cage.

### When the PCs approach, read:

*The cage is guarded by two gnomelike fey wearing rusty chainmail, ironshod boots, and pointed red caps. They wield odd swords studded with prickly green thorns and lug around blood-spattered shields. A metallic cobra is wrapped around the perimeter of the cage.*

The powrie and witherer remain hidden by the lofty elephant grass; do not place them on the map until they join the battle.

### TACTICS

When the battle starts, as a free action, one of the spriggan thorns shouts out the command word that seals Voor's cage, and then both use their *mark of thorns* against the PCs, targeting leaders first and

Advanced Iron Cobra (I)	Level 9 Skirmisher	
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 350	
<b>Initiative</b> +8	<b>Senses</b> Perception +10; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 99; <b>Bloodied</b> 49		
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 23, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 20		
Immune disease, poison		
<b>Speed</b> 7		
<b>⊕ Bite</b> (standard, at-will) <b>♦ Poison</b>		
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
<b>✈ Poison the Mind</b> (standard, recharge ☼☼☼☼☼) <b>♦ Psychic</b>		
Ranged 10; only affects creatures taking ongoing poison damage; +11 vs. Will; the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both).		
<b>Guard Area</b>		
An iron cobra can use its <i>poison the mind</i> power against any creature in its guarded area, even if the power hasn't recharged and even if the target isn't taking ongoing poison damage.		
<b>Slithering Shift</b> (move, at-will)		
The iron cobra shifts 3 squares as a move action.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +11		
<b>Str</b> 17 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 13 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 19 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 5 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 12 (+5)

melee characters second. They attack with their short swords and try to keep themselves between the PCs and Voor's cage. The thorns use *drowsing puncture* when the spriggan powrie enters the fight and after first becoming bloodied.

The spriggan powrie attacks as soon as it hears its ally cry out. It prefers to weave in and out of the elephant grass to gain combat advantage. It *hamstrings* any PC who appears especially mobile, and delights in using *punt the fallen* against a prone enemy, kicking them away from Voor's cage if possible.

The spriggan witherer skirts the battle and positions itself to put the iron cobra and thorns between it and the PCs. It favors *sun scorch*, and until it becomes bloodied it casts it as often as possible, after which it switches to *blood for the earth*. If the PCs move too

Spriggan Powrie (P)	Level 7 Skirmisher	
Small fey humanoid	XP 300	
<b>Initiative</b> +9	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 79; <b>Bloodied</b> 39		
<b>AC</b> 21 (23 against opportunity attacks); <b>Fortitude</b> 19, <b>Reflex</b> 20, <b>Will</b> 18		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
<b>⊕ Sickle</b> (standard, at-will) <b>♦ Weapon</b>		
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
<b>⊕ Hamstring</b> (standard, recharges when first bloodied) <b>♦ Weapon</b>		
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is knocked prone, is slowed until the end of the spriggan powrie's next turn, and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
<b>⊕ Punt the Fallen</b> (minor 1/round, at-will)		
Targets a prone creature; +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the spriggan powrie pushes the target 3 squares.		
<b>Blood Slide</b>		
A spriggan powrie does not provoke opportunity attacks for moving out of a space adjacent to a bloodied creature or a creature that is taking ongoing damage.		
<b>Combat Advantage</b>		
When a spriggan powrie hits a creature that is taking ongoing damage and is granting combat advantage to the powrie, the powrie's attack increases the ongoing damage by 5.		
<b>Redcap Zeal</b> (when the spriggan powrie bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, encounter)		
The powrie gains 1d8 + 2 temporary hit points.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +11, Stealth +14, Thievery +12		
<b>Str</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 15 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+3)	<b>Cha</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Equipment</b> iron-shod boots, leather armor, 2 sickles.		

close to it or Voor's cage, it uses *flattening wind* to push them away.

The iron cobra does not stray far from the cage, using *poison the mind* as often as possible and concentrating its attacks against those trying to free Voor. It indiscriminately targets any creature near the cage,

so the spriggans try to stay out of the shaded squares immediately adjacent to the cage unless the cobra has been destroyed.

The iron cobra fights until destroyed but does not move farther than 10 squares from its guarded area. The spriggans are too afraid of Emrett to let the PCs rescue Voor, so they fight to the death. However, they do pursue the PCs if they flee.

**Spriggan Witherer (W) Level 8 Artillery (Leader)**  
Small fey humanoid XP 350

**Initiative** +8      **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision  
**HP** 70; **Bloodied** 35  
**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 20  
**Speed** 6

⊕ **Withering Touch** (standard, at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**  
+11 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage.

☞ **Sun Scorch** (standard, at-will) ♦ **Fire, Radiant**  
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 fire and radiant damage.

☞ **Flattening Wind** (standard, recharges when first bloodied)  
Area burst 3 within 10 or close blast 3; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

☞ **Blood for the Earth** (standard; usable only while bloodied, at-will)  
Area burst 2 within 10; targets enemies; +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). *Effect:* Each ally within the burst gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Redcap Zeal** (when the spriggan witherer bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, encounter)  
The witherer gains 1d6 + 3 temporary hit points.

**Alignment** Evil      **Languages** Elven  
**Skills** Arcana +8, Athletics +11, Stealth +12  
**Str** 12 (+5)      **Dex** 15 (+6)      **Wis** 12 (+5)  
**Con** 16 (+7)      **Int** 10 (+4)      **Cha** 18 (+8)  
**Equipment** iron-shod boots, leather armor

**2 Spriggan Thorns (T) Level 6 Soldier**  
Small fey humanoid XP 250 each

**Initiative** +7      **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision  
**HP** 71; **Bloodied** 35  
**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19  
**Speed** 5

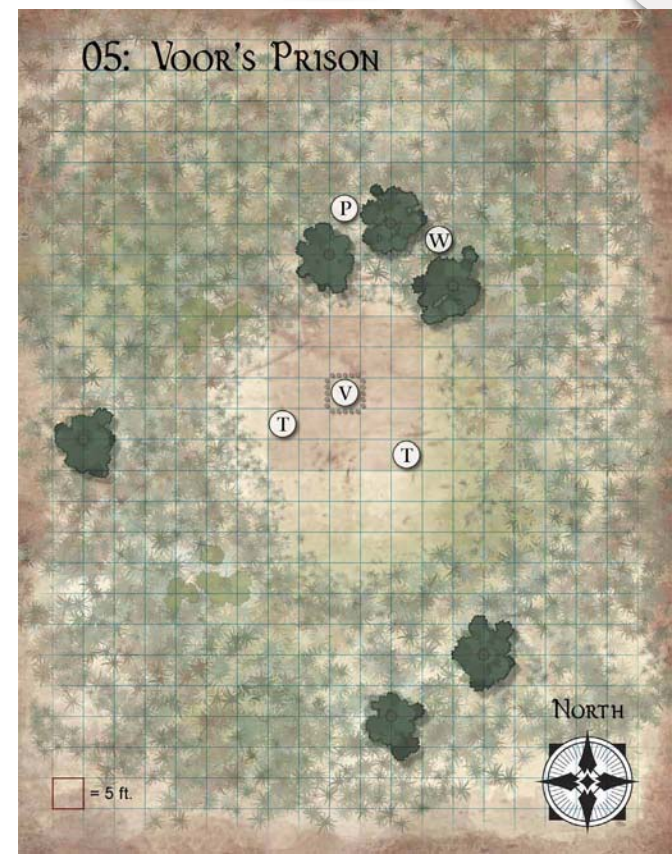
⊕ **Short Sword** (standard, at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

☜ **Mark of Thorns** (standard, encounter)  
Close burst 5; targets one enemy; the target is affected by the *mark of thorns* until the end of the encounter. While affected by the *mark of thorns*, the target cannot make opportunity attacks against the spriggan thorn, and the target takes 4 damage at the end of any turn in which it did not attack the thorn. In addition, at the start of the target's turn, each of the target's allies adjacent to the target takes 4 damage.

**Drowsing Puncture** (minor, when first bloodied)  
If the spriggan thorn hits with its next short sword attack, the target of the attack is dazed until the end of the thorn's next turn and is knocked prone.

**Redcap Zeal** (when the spriggan thorn bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points, encounter)  
The thorn gains 1d8 + 2 temporary hit points.

**Alignment** Evil      **Languages** Elven  
**Skills** Athletics +13, Stealth +11  
**Str** 17 (+6)      **Dex** 15 (+5)      **Wis** 12 (+4)  
**Con** 15 (+5)      **Int** 10 (+3)      **Cha** 18 (+7)  
**Equipment** iron-shod boots, chainmail, light shield, short sword



**Releasing Voor**  
Skill ChallengeLevel 7  
XP 600

In this skill challenge, one or more of the adventurers attempt to unseal the magical cage that is slowly killing Voor. It should take place while the remaining PCs battle the cage's guardians. To assist him, the PCs must use their skills to unravel the magic sealing him away; if they learned the command words from Hazar, they can unseal his cage immediately, but they do not gain any additional experience for completing this skill challenge.

PCs can make the skill checks described below only if they are adjacent to the cage, and each skill check requires a standard action unless noted otherwise. The PCs have 10 rounds to free Voor before the unbearable heat does serious harm.

**Complexity**

2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

**Primary Skills**

Arcana, Perception, Thievery

**Arcana (DC 19):** Once per round, on the character's turn, he or she can use their magical knowledge to detect the weak points in Hazar's enchantments or divine how the contraption functions. This skill can be used to gain up to four successes in the challenge.

**Perception (DC 19):** Once per round, on the character's turn, he or she can hear Voor's muffled cries. He is screaming out the cage's command word ("Release" in Elven). This skill can be used to gain a single success in the challenge.

**Thievery (DC 19):** Once per round, on the character's turn, he or she can use their impressive mechanical skills to bypass and trick Hazar's wards. This skill can be used to gain up to four successes in the challenge.

**Secondary Skills**

Nature, Perception

**Nature (DC 14, minor action):** PCs can use this skill to identify natural weaknesses in the roots Hazar used to form the cage. A success does not count toward victory, but it does grant the PCs a +2 bonus to their next skill check made as part of this challenge.

**Perception (DC 14, minor action):** PCs can probe the cage for minute flaws in Hazar's design, which they can then exploit. A success does not count toward victory in the challenge, but it does grant the PCs a +2 bonus to their next skill check made as part of this challenge.

**Victory**

If the PCs have 6 successes before 3 failures, the cage reverts back to its normal form and the deadly heat quickly dissipates. Voor is dehydrated and covered in sweat but relatively safe, and the surviving spriggans cannot reseal the cage for the remainder of the encounter. However, the PCs must free Voor by either picking the lock or bending one of the bars (see Features of the Area for more information). PCs that successfully participated in this skill challenge gain 600 XP.

**Failure**

If the PCs have 3 failures before 6 successes, they eventually unseal the cage after the 10 rounds has elapsed. The heat has taken its toll on Voor, and he is unconscious and dying at 0 hit points. Each round, make a death saving throw for Voor; if he fails three saving throws, he dies; PCs adjacent to the cage can stabilize Voor with a DC 15 Heal check. Voor does not regain consciousness until after an extended rest or until the PCs apply a power with the Healing keyword; unfortunately, he has no healing surges remaining. As above, the PCs must free Voor by either picking the lock or bending one of the bars. PCs gain no experience points for failing the skill challenge.

PCs could also opt to take a more direct route and use force to open the cage, but this is a risky option because any attacks could harm Voor. See Features of the Area below for the cage's statistics.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Acacia Trees:** Acacia trees stand between 20 and 40 feet high. Anyone sharing a square with an acacia tree gains cover, and climbing it requires a DC 12 Athletics check. In addition, the thorny acacia trees somehow make the spriggan thorn's *mark of thorns* power more potent. If that power deals damage, it deals an extra 4 damage if the target shares a square with an acacia tree. This extra damage effect also applies to the target's allies.

**Voor's Cage:** The cramped tree root cage occupies a single 5-foot square and is 8 feet tall. In its normal form, the cage provides cover (including to its occupants) and the roots that form its bars are spaced far enough apart to allow a Medium-sized creature to reach its arms through. (Small creatures can squeeze through the bars with difficulty, but Tiny creatures can move in and out at will.) When the cage seals shut, it provides total cover and blocks both line of sight and line of effect to its occupants. At all times, creatures within the sealed cage have line of sight and effect only to other occupants, and no power with the Teleportation keyword functions within its space. In either form, anyone can clamber atop the cage with a DC 10 Athletics check.

The PCs could conceivably destroy the cage to free Voor, but this is risky because any close or area attack deals half damage to the cage and half to its occupants. The cage has 120 hit points, AC and Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, resist 10 all, and regeneration 5.

**Elephant Grass:** Squares containing elephant grass count as heavily obscured. The elephant grass also acts as grab grass. Anyone knocked prone in a square containing elephant grass must make a DC 14 Strength check before standing up.

**Guarded Area:** The shaded squares surrounding Voor's cage (including the square occupied by the cage) count as the iron cobra's guarded area.

**Illumination:** Bright light during the day, dim light at night.

**Canoes:** Three canoes are drawn up on the shore of the lake near this location. See page 66 for details.

**Treasure:** The spriggans keep two *potions of healing* handy in case of emergencies, storing them in a wooden box next to Voor's provisions (a clay water jug and some moldy rations that are unappealing to the rapacious shadow hounds).

## ENCOUNTER O6: THE ISLE OF THE OBELISK

Encounter Level 10 (XP 2,600)

### SETUP

**Emrett Mazrid (E)**  
**Rami, comet tail eagle (R)**  
**fang golem (F)**  
**2 spriggn thorns (T)**

The fang golem normally prowls the open spaces south of the obelisk, but Rami (the only bird in the oasis not loyal to Hazar) soars overhead. If either detects the PCs' approach (automatic if they use a canoe to paddle across the lake during the day), they quickly alert their mistress and prepare to repel the intruders. Otherwise, Emrett remains absorbed by her work, and stealthy PCs find her intently studying a particular section of hieroglyphs, while her jaded spriggn bodyguards look on.

If the island's inhabitants discover the PCs' approach, read:

*A hideous, lion-shaped construct that appears to be a mélange of yellowed ivory tusks and broken teeth ambles into view, while overhead, one of those strange fiery eagles shrieks in fury and alarm.*

When the PCs first see Emrett, read:

*A diaphanous sari woven from the finest blue silk is wrapped around the lithe body of the striking female half-elf standing before you. Intricate arcane runes are painted in henna up and down her bare arms.*

### TACTICS

The fang golem opens fire as soon as the PCs come within range of its *barrage of spikes*; it then follows up with a fusillade of *spike volleys*, switching back to *barrage of spikes* when that power recharges. Though its *spike volley* should not pose a significant risk to the PCs' canoes, its *barrage of spikes* does, and you should keep track of any damage dealt to them in case they sink.

Once the PCs come ashore, the fang golem tries to pin them against the water's edge or on the beach, allowing enough time for Emrett and the spriggn to move up and engage. The fang golem is reluctant to enter melee, but if severely damaged, it wades into the center of the fight and intentionally provokes opportunity attacks to catch as many PCs as possible in its *death burst*.

Rami does not wait for the PCs to come ashore either; instead, he repeatedly charges from the highest altitude possible, using *comet fall* and *fiery impact* to its maximum effect and fighting as long as his mistress lives. If Rami scores a critical hit against a PC riding in a canoe, the impact causes the canoe to capsize, forcing its passengers into the lake. Flipping a capsized canoe is a minor action that requires a DC 12 Athletics check, while climbing back into it requires another DC 12 Athletics check and a move action. At the start of each round, a capsized canoe slides 3 squares counter-clockwise.

Each spriggn thorn enters combat by first using their *mark of thorns* power, preferably against a leader or defender. They try to stay mobile and concentrate their attacks against any PCs damaged by the fang golem, to take advantage of its *verdant surge*. If any PC deals a large amount of damage or seriously threatens Emrett, the thorns attempt to slow them down with a *drowsing puncture*. Both thorns zealously fight to the

<b>Emrett Mazrid (E)</b>	<b>Level 10 Elite Skirmisher</b>	
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf	XP 1,000	
<b>Initiative</b> +8	<b>Senses</b> Perception +5; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 204; <b>Bloodied</b> 102		
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 20; <b>Reflex</b> 22; <b>Will</b> 24		
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2		
<b>Speed</b> 6, teleport 3; see also <i>scorpion strike</i> and <i>unseele stride</i>		
<b>Action Points</b> 1		
⊕ <b>Venomous Jambiya</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison, Weapon</b>		
+15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).		
☉ <b>Eldritch Blast</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Implement</b>		
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 7 damage.		
⚡ <b>Scorpion Strike</b> (standard; at-will)		
Emrett can make two <i>venomous jambiya</i> attacks, or one <i>venomous jambiya</i> attack and one <i>eldritch blast</i> attack. Emrett can shift one square after each attack.		
☘ <b>Malignant Whispers</b> (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐) ♦ <b>Charm, Illusion, Psychic</b>		
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Will; targets enemies, deafened creatures are immune; the target takes 3d6 + 4 psychic damage and makes a basic attack against its nearest ally as a free action.		
↩ <b>Cruel Splendor</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Charm, Necrotic, Teleportation</b>		
Close burst 3; +11 vs. Will; Emrett pulls the target 2 squares, and the target is dazed and cannot attack Emrett (save ends both); Emrett then teleports 3 squares. <i>Afterscript: 3d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of its next turn. Miss: The target is dazed (save ends).</i>		
<b>Master's Favor</b> (free action; encounter)		
Emrett can reroll an attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw, using the higher of the two results.		
<b>Unseele Stride</b> (immediate reaction, triggers when Emrett is hit by a melee or close attack; recharges when Emrett is first bloodied or when an enemy drops to 0 hit points) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>		
Emrett teleports 5 squares and gains concealment until the end of her next turn.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Abyssal, Common, Elven, Giant, Primal	
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +14, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +11, History +14, Insight +7, Religion +10		
<b>Str</b> 10 (+5)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 11 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 18 (+9)	<b>Cha</b> 18 (+9)
<b>Equipment</b> jambiya (dagger)		

2 Spriggan Thorns (T)		Level 6 Soldier	
Small fey humanoid		XP 250 each	
<b>Initiative</b> +7		<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 71; <b>Bloodied</b> 35			
<b>AC</b> 22; <b>Fortitude</b> 18, <b>Reflex</b> 17, <b>Will</b> 19			
<b>Speed</b> 5			
⊕ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard, at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).			
↖ <b>Mark of Thorns</b> (standard, encounter) Close burst 5; targets one enemy; the target is affected by the <i>mark of thorns</i> until the end of the encounter. While affected by the <i>mark of thorns</i> , the target cannot make opportunity attacks against the spriggan thorn, and the target takes 4 damage at the end of any turn in which it did not attack the thorn. In addition, at the start of the target's turn, each of the target's allies adjacent to the target takes 4 damage.			
<b>Drowsing Puncture</b> (minor, when first bloodied) If the spriggan thorn hits with its next short sword attack, the target of the attack is dazed until the end of the thorn's next turn and is knocked prone.			
<b>Redcap Zeal</b> (when the spriggan thorn bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, encounter) The thorn gains 1d8 + 2 temporary hit points.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven		
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +13, Stealth +11			
<b>Str</b> 17 (+6)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+5)	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+4)	
<b>Con</b> 15 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+3)	<b>Cha</b> 18 (+7)	
<b>Equipment</b> iron-shod boots, chainmail, light shield, short sword			

death as long as Emrett lives, but if the PCs kill her, they break off the attack and try to flee in the nearest canoe.

Emrett strides confidently into battle and immediately uses *cruel splendor*. She then employs *malignant whispers* to turn the PCs against each other, resorting to repeated *scorpion strikes* as she waits for it to recharge. Emrett's pact with her master (see "Emrett Mazrid," page 63) allows her to benefit from the fang golem's *verdant surge* power, so she also concentrates her attacks against foes damaged by it.

Fang Golem (F)		Level 9 Elite Artillery	
Large fey animate (construct)		XP 800	
<b>Initiative</b> +9		<b>Senses</b> Perception +3; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 156; <b>Bloodied</b> 78; see also <i>death burst</i>			
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 21; <b>Reflex</b> 23; <b>Will</b> 19			
<b>Immune</b> disease, fear, sleep; <b>Vulnerable</b> 5 thunder			
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2			
<b>Speed</b> 6 (forest walk)			
<b>Action Points</b> 1			
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.			
⊖ <b>Spike</b> (standard; at-will) Ranged 10/20; +16 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).			
☞ <b>Spike Volley</b> (standard; at-will) The fang golem makes two spike attacks. If both spikes hit the same target, that target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends) and is also restrained until the end of its next turn.			
↖ <b>Death Burst</b> (when the fang golem drops to 0 hit points) The fang golem explodes in a burst of jagged shards. Close burst 1; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 damage			
✦ <b>Barrage of Spikes</b> (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞) Area burst 1 within 12; +12 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 4 damage. <b>Miss:</b> Half damage.			
<b>Verdant Surge</b> Until the end of the encounter, any enemy damaged by a fang golem suffers a -2 penalty to saving throws made to end ongoing damage or effects caused by the powers of a creature with the fey origin.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Str</b> 16 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Wis</b> 8 (+3)	
<b>Con</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 3 (+0)	<b>Cha</b> 3 (+0)	

When bloodied, Emrett tries to make her way back to the obelisk, intending to use a standard action to recharge *cruel splendor*, spending her action point to use it if more than one PC followed her into range. The thought of abandoning the oasis does not cross Emrett's mind, and she fights to the death to protect her "birthright." However, if she nears her end and Voor is present, she does her best to take her revenge by killing her former academic nemesis.

Rami, Comet Tail Eagle (R)		Level 7 Brute	
Medium elemental beast (fire)		XP 300	
<b>Initiative</b> +6		<b>Senses</b> Perception +10; low-light vision	
<b>Dissipating Heat (Fire)</b> aura 1; after a comet tail eagle charges, any creature that enters or begins its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage. The aura lasts until the beginning of the comet tail eagle's next turn.			
<b>HP</b> 94; <b>Bloodied</b> 47			
<b>AC</b> 19; <b>Fortitude</b> 20; <b>Reflex</b> 19; <b>Will</b> 17			
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; Resist 20 fire			
<b>Speed</b> 2 (clumsy), fly 10 (hover); see also <i>comet fall</i>			
⊕ <b>Talon</b> (standard; at-will) +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage.			
<b>Comet Fall</b> A comet tail eagle does not provoke opportunity attacks while charging, and following the charge, it can shift 3 squares as a free action.			
<b>Fiery Impact</b> ♦ <b>Fire</b> For every square a comet tail eagle moves while charging, it deals 2 extra fire damage on a hit.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Str</b> 19 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 15 (+5)	
<b>Con</b> 14 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 2 (-1)	<b>Cha</b> 6 (+1)	

Immediately following Emrett's demise, a sentinel patrol descends upon any of her surviving minions and tears them apart; Hazar arrives, accompanied by another sentinel patrol, several minutes later (see "Development" for details).



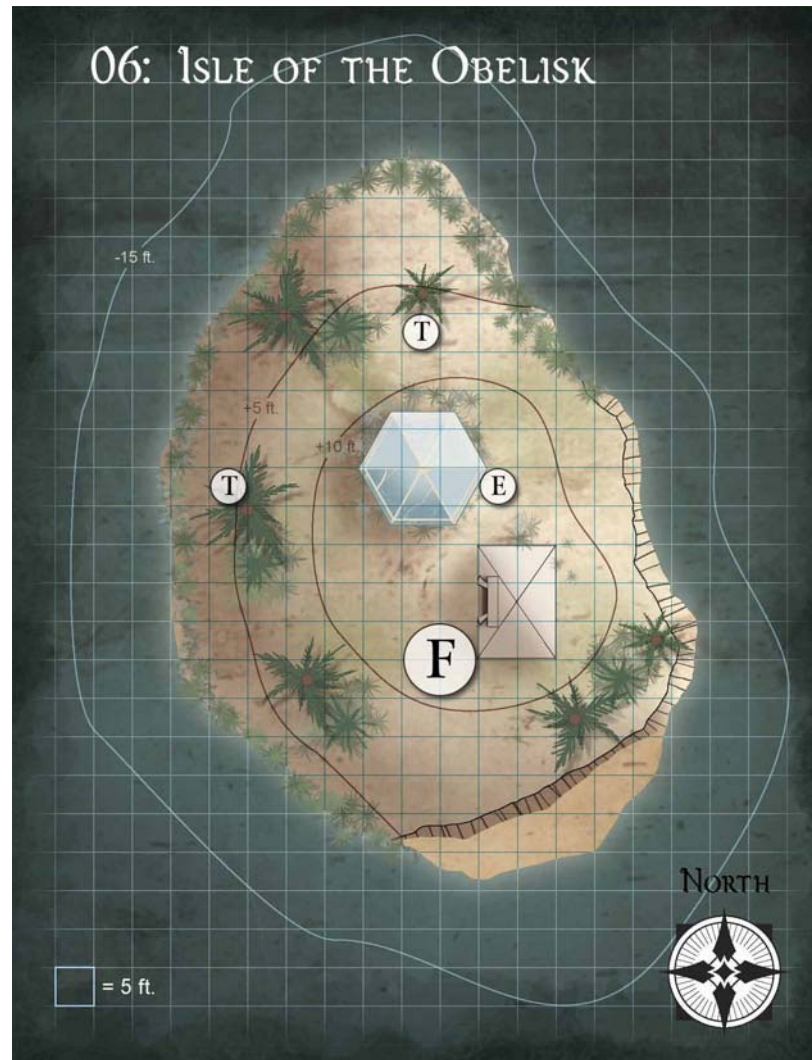
## PLAYING EMRETT

Emrett is extremely spiteful and possessed of unbridled arrogance. During battle, she constantly brags about her superior beauty, intellect, arcane talent, fighting prowess, and fashion sense. She interrupts her self-indulgent monologue only to sling condescending, even petty, insults at the PCs while heaping abuse upon her loyal minions. She is self-deluded until the end, and when the PCs finally strike the killing blow, she looks up at them in disbelief, murmuring, “You’ve killed ... not ... possible,” from her bloodstained lips before expiring.

## DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs flee the island and Emrett survives, she gathers all her surviving followers and hunts them down, hoping to slay them before they can inform anyone of her schemes. Hazar regards them as pathetic failures and abrogates her agreement with the PCs. To allay Emrett’s suspicions, she has the sentinels actively join the hunt, but their relationship remains extremely tense.

If the PCs kill Emrett, then Hazar (accompanied by two sentinel patrols) flies to the island both to congratulate them and remind them that as part of their agreement, they must now assist in the destruction of Emrett’s remaining minions. After personally desecrating Emrett’s corpse, the sphinx and her retinue accompanies the PCs to areas O5, O3, and O1, expecting them to do most of the fighting. (To keep up appearances, though, she provides token assistance.) After the ensuing massacre, Hazar immediately turns on the hopefully weakened PCs, showing no mercy.



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Canoe:** A wooden canoe lies on the beach, and a pair of oars and a hooded oil lamp rests at the bottom. Each morning and again after dusk, the two spriggan thorns ferry their mistress across the lake.

**Clump of Reeds:** Squares containing reeds are lightly obscured. The reeds also count as grab grass; any creatures knocked prone in a square containing a clump of reeds must make a DC 14 Strength check to stand up.

**Deep Water:** The depth of the lake dramatically increases a few yards offshore, and the power of the nearby portal creates a powerful current. A DC 15 Athletics check is required to swim through these squares. The current slides any creatures caught in it 3 squares counter-clockwise each round.

**Palm Trees:** The palm trees stand between 40 to 60 feet high; anyone sharing a square with a tree gains cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 12 Athletics check.

### Wooden Canoe

Large vehicle

HP 60    Space 2 squares by 2 squares    Cost 20 gp

AC 4, Fortitude 10, Reflex 3

Speed swim 5

#### Pilot

The pilot must steer and paddle with an oar, requiring both hands.

#### Crew

A wooden canoe does not require any additional crew. However, a canoe paddled by two creatures gains an additional 2 squares of movement.

#### Load

Three Medium creatures; 100 pounds of gear.

#### Out of Control

An out-of-control wooden canoe comes to a stop at the beginning of its turn. At the DM's discretion, it might continue in the direction of a strong current at half speed.

#### Cover

A wooden canoe provides cover to its passengers and pilot.

**Quartz Obelisk:** The obelisk is strangely translucent and does not block line of sight or effect. Once per encounter, a creature with the fey origin (including fey pact warlocks and Emrett) or a member of a primal class can touch the obelisk and spend a minor action to regain a spent encounter power, or a standard action to regain a spent daily power. Creatures that do not otherwise meet these criteria can also take advantage of this boon by making a DC 20 Nature check.

**Rise:** It requires a DC 10 Athletics check to climb these small escarpments. Creatures that fall or are pushed over the edge take no damage but are knocked prone.

**Sandy Beach:** The loose sand on the beach counts as difficult terrain.

**Shallow Water:** Medium-sized and larger creatures without the aquatic keyword can walk normally through water squares adjacent to the island, though they count as difficult terrain. Small and smaller creatures must swim, requiring a DC 12 Athletics check.

**Tent:** A creature inside the tent has total concealment against those outside and vice versa. Creatures cannot end their movement in a square occupied by the tent unless they enter it, and they can do so only through an opening; dealing 5 damage to the tent tears a gap large enough for a Medium-sized creature to pass through. Cutting four of the six support ropes (each has 5 hit points) collapses a tent, restraining and blinding anyone inside it until the end of their next turn as they fumble to escape. In addition, creatures and objects within the tent gain 10 fire resistance.

**Treasure:** The ivory collected from the vanquished fang golem is worth 400 gp. 🌀

### About the Author

"Oasis of the Golden Peacock" is Tim Eagon's first published RPG work. He would like to thank his fiancée Jeanneen for twice putting up with all the long hours spent writing it.