

# Untamed Lands



**Into the wild!**  
Use your heightened abilities  
to secure an encampment where  
ancient secrets and civilizations await

WRITTEN BY NEIL PASCALE



5e

A unique module  
for Dungeons &  
Dragons' 5<sup>th</sup> edition

**SPECIAL NOTE TO READERS – PLEASE READ!**

“Untamed Lands” is written for the clients of Heroes B&B to enjoy as part of their ultimate gaming experience with us. Heroes B&B is a Twin Cities-based company that caters to gaming groups in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa who wish to heighten their Dungeons and Dragons’ 5<sup>th</sup> Edition gaming experience. If you’re planning on spending a weekend or an upcoming day-long game with us then **STOP right here!** We don’t want to spoil your fun by giving away all the plot twists in “Untamed Lands.”

If that’s not the case, then enjoy this adventure module that provides hearty doses of RP and combat, not to mention unique gaming moments and player character choices.

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For monsters, we’ve either created them from common creature templates or made recommendations on which ones to use from our favorite 5e publisher, Kobold Press.

All images/visuals were used from Creative Commons sites; we would like to thank these generous and talented artists for their work!

Last, a heartfelt thank you to the many supporters of Heroes B&B who encourage us to turn our weekday nights into D&D scheming time. Our efforts are always centered on making our supporters’ future adventures with friends and family all that more thrilling. Many, many thanks to these adventurers!



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### **ABOUT THE ADVENTURE**

The PCs are members of a specially trained unit from a prosperous kingdom. This unit specializes in the subduing of frontiers, untamed lands that someday will be farmlands and communities to their growing kingdom.

An opportunity has arisen for this unit: A valuable area not far from a dwarven

settlement – one rich in resources - has been discovered. If the PCs can secure this distant location before a competing empire can, they'll earn fame and fortune.

Securing it, however, will mean a foray into untamed territory, one with more than a few ancient secrets and civilizations.

### **ADVENTURE OVERVIEW:**

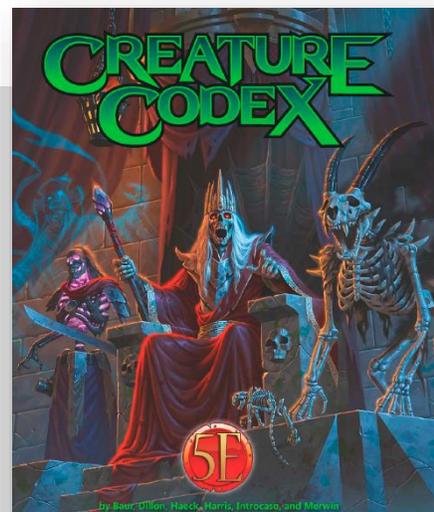
Here are special notes on this Heroes B&B module:

- It is intended to take at least 15-18 hours to complete;
- It has been written to accommodate all player levels in 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Dungeons and Dragons; GMs will need

### ***A great source for creatures!***

*Heroes B&B would like to credit Kobold Press for its terrific and creative creatures that play a significant role in this adventure. Check out all the great 5th edition creatures in Kobold Press' Creature Codex here:*

<https://koboldpress.com/kpstore/product/creature-codex-for-5th-edition-dnd/>



- to change creatures and conditions depending on player levels;
- We have provided monster recommendations as well as where to find these monsters' stat blocks in different 5<sup>th</sup> edition (5e) publications;
  - Locations are loosely described in most parts of this module as Heroes B&B gamers play their 5e adventures in a unique gameplay environment that features highly detailed digital maps, multiple monitors and a sound system.
  - GM note: Take PC's Passive Perception scores before the game begins and then consider adding a combat-impact (minus-5) to those stats for later use in the adventure.

### **ADVENTURE BACKGROUND & HISTORY**

Two kingdoms, the **Horizon Empire** and the **Realm of Galad** (Galad means "light" in an Elvish tongue), have stretched far to their north and south. Now the two powers, located far to the east and west of each other, are swallowing up the frontier between them, causing more than a few conflicts. Still the kingdoms' separate pushes into these unclaimed lands has hardly been quick or easy. Ancient powers and vast tribes of long-forgotten races have emerged with each stride the empires have taken into these vast frontier lands of swamps, towering mountain ranges and dense forests.

The adventurers' recent foray into the wilds has uncovered a remarkable find – an unclaimed gold mine. Their trek into this mine concludes with not only a battle against what had settled here but the opposing kingdom, whose force lies in wait until the PCs are at their weakest.

Once this situation is resolved – whether the PCs flee or triumph – they receive an urgent message to meet their unit's highest ranking officer at a not-to-distant location. Here they discover they are needed to venture beyond the kingdom's eastern border to secure a valuable piece of land. This land is in an unclaimed and uncivilized territory that lies near a dwarven settlement, one rich in minerals and metals. Securing this land would allow the empire to build a trading village that would flourish with the dwarves' goods.

But this can only happen if the adventurers can secure the newly discovered spot, an encampment atop a hill near a fast-flowing river. The hilltop looks over the surrounding countryside and thus represents a strong defensible location.

What - or who - lies near this possible new trading hub is an unknown. The adventurers are tasked to secure the area and fend off whatever threat awaits until a full regiment from their kingdom can reach this remote location.

Luckily, the adventurers won't be the first kingdom unit sent there. Another group – some 10 strong – has already left for this eastern encampment and will have a couple of days to secure the area before the adventurers arrive. The adventurers will then command the defenses of the site, ensuring the opposing empire or any other unknown force does not capture it.

This assignment is a rare opportunity for the Frontier unit. They know establishing a new trade village is uncommon now as the unclaimed lands have diminished considerably. Establishing such a trade hub could be incredibly rewarding to the PCs, not just in fame but for the considerable riches it would bring them as founders of such a village.

## **ADVENTURE OUTLINE:**

**Gold!:** The adventure opens with an encounter at a recently discovered gold mine, first with creatures that had claimed the mine and then with the other kingdom's forces.

Activity:

RP/Combat

**Orders:** The PCs will meet with their Frontier Division's senior officer and receive orders to venture to the frontier lands to the east. Once there, they are to secure a hilltop encampment until a full regiment from their kingdom can arrive. This location, if secured, could be turned into a valuable trade village not far from a rich dwarven settlement.

Activity: RP

**Too late!:** The PCs arrive at the hilltop location and discover the first unit sent here was slaughtered. The PCs can use a Speak with the Dead scroll to understand from the dead unit's commander what happened and how an even larger army of hostiles is expected soon. This will launch the PCs on an ambitious journey to the dwarven settlement, seeking their aid in securing the hilltop encampment and defeating this new threat.

Activity: RP/combat

**Journey:** The PCs have a rough idea of where the dwarven settlement is – north of the hilltop encampment – but the land between the hilltop and the settlement is unknown. They must choose which way to venture: along the nearby



In "Untamed Lands," the PCs must decide which route to take in a land unknown to them. Do they travel by river? Across a dense forest? Or toward a lake?

river, more directly northwards along a lake or through a dense and ancient forest.

**\*\* Note to GMs:** This part of the module will take up most of the adventure, with different encounters built into the module based on the route the PCs take. Among these encounters are a couple that should be used regardless of which direction the PCs take: 1) The Serpent Queen, 2) the Carbunkle and 3) Slaves & Sacrifices.

Activity: Combat/RP

**The conclusion:** Upon their return, the PCs discover the hilltop encampment is not a former village but a sacred burial site of the hostiles in the region. The hostile army's commander, an ogre shaman, will awaken his ancestors – buried underneath the encampment - in an effort to thwart the PC's efforts to claim the site. Finally, the PCs must confront the impact of their travels – a powerful ancient enemy or a Fey enemy who seeks the encampment for its own purposes.

Activity: Combat/RP



## **The PCs: Frontier Fighters**

The Player Characters have two decisions to make from the outset of the adventure: which kingdom to play as - there are two options –

and which Frontier specialist sub-class to use. These sub-classes provide benefits, traits and goals for the PCs.

## **PICK YOUR KINGDOM**

The PCs can select one of the two kingdoms to represent. Each kingdom has benefits and challenges. Whichever kingdom is not selected will become the PCs' enemy.



## **The Horizon Empire**

This well-known kingdom is the closest powerful nation to where the “Untamed Lands” adventure takes place. The kingdom has an abundance of resources, wealth and manpower and uses those without a second thought to expand its empire and spread its influence of freedom and free will.

Not all, however, look kindly upon this growing empire. While some believe it has brought peace and prosperity to previously poor villages, others view this kingdom of human leaders as power-hungry and

destroyers of valued, older civilizations.

### **Your empire's advantage:**

A famed Frontier leader once discovered a set of detailed plans that allowed the empire to construct golems. Thus, once every second day, your group can build and use a golem. (Type of golem will depend on tier)

### **Additional empire details:**

If the PCs align themselves with the Horizon, they will see the following benefits and challenges:

\* Greater chance of intimidation (+1 per tier) – the power of your armies and the might of your

arms and armor bear fruit;

- \* Reduced chance of diplomacy (minus-1 per tier) – your successful efforts to subdue other cultures and communities come at a cost in your future negotiations;
- \* Greater chance of finding natural or building aids (+1 per tier) – your knowledge of the land’s creatures and plants will surely aid you;
- \* Reduced chance of finding magic items and/or

riches (minus-1 per tier to Investigation checks related to treasure) – your push into frontier lands over a number of generations is not lost upon your enemies. Their spies watch your every move and gladly share word of your approaching movement. Thus magic items and riches are often secreted away before your arrival.



### **Realm of Galad**

This realm is on a different continent than where the adventure takes place. The agents of this realm travel here in secret, or at least try to. Only the leaders of the Horizon Empire know of their true power and their realm’s far-reaching and expansive ways. Most common folk or those in the Frontier have not heard of this realm, although they certainly will have opinions of the realm’s leaders (high elves). Close to home, this realm has as many detractors as supporters. Some view of it as a peaceful power that caters to artists and philosophers. Others, however, tell a far different story of a realm that silently funds excursions into other lands with the goal of pillaging priceless magical

heirlooms and artifacts.

#### **Your empire’s advantage:**

Long ago, your realm captured an artifact that gave you power over the magical drakes of your homeland. Thus, once every second day, your group can summon a drake. (Type of drake will depend on tier)

#### **Additional empire details:**

If the PCs align themselves with the Realm of Galad, they will see the following benefits and challenges:

- \* Greater chance of diplomacy (+1 per tier): Few know of your kingdom and kindly hope you are a better and more responsible power to deal with than the Horizon Empire;

- \* Reduced chance of intimidation (minus-1 per tier): The limited knowledge of your vast realm hinders you here, as there is little, if any, respect for your martial or magical prowess;
- \* Greater chance of finding magic items and/or riches (+1 per tier for Investigation checks relating to treasure): Because most are not aware of your realm, they do not watch for your arrival so their magical items and/or riches are not secreted away;
- \* Reduced chance of finding natural or building aids (minus-1 per tier): Your limited knowledge of this land and its wildlife makes recovering helpful plants, creatures and building materials challenging.

## PICK YOUR SPECIALITY

Every member of your kingdom's frontier division is a specialist in a particular way. Each PC should pick one of the below specialist roles, which provide benefits and traits as well as specific goals to achieve during the adventure. If PCs complete their specialist goal, they get an additional trait use per day.

### Commander

Leaders of their Frontier division. This distinction is not limited to certain classes.

- \* **Benefit** – Intimidation increase of +1 per tier and Persuasion increase of +1 per tier
- \* **Trait** – Leaders can provide an extra action for

one of your allies. This is a reaction. You can use this as many times per day as your Charisma or Wisdom modifier. Replenishes after long rest.

- \* **Goal** – Expand the empire's land or allies by either pact or conquest.

### Tracker

These skilled Frontier PCs can save valuable travel time by discovering previously unknown routes. This is not limited to certain classes.

- \* **Benefit** – Survival increase of +1 per tier.
- \* **Trait** – For one hour per day, can increase group's speed by +10 or provide +1 per tier to

Stealth for themselves and their party members.

- \* **Goal** – Find an unknown trail used by a different civilization in a wildlands area. This would take a successful Survival check to find the trail.

### Builder

These PCs are loaded with both tools and knowledge to craft an assortment of valuable items that could speed the party's way or provide valuable cover in times of peril.

- \* **Benefit** – An increase of +1 per tier on Dexterity checks when crafting/building and an increase +1 per tier on Nature checks.
- \* **Trait** – Build a transportation craft (boat, wagon, etc.) or structure with the help of one other party member with unusual speed. Also can find rare building materials. (See below).



Boat-building could prove to be key as the "Untamed Lands" has its share of waterfalls.

- \* **Goal** – Find a rare building material and craft it to aid the party. This would take a successful Investigation check to find a material and a successful Dexterity check to craft it.

### Merchant

These clever PCs identify ways for their empire to benefit from new relationships.

- \* **Benefit** – An increase of +1 per tier on

Persuasion and once-a-day use of the spell Tongues (this spell lasts for 2 hours).

- \* **Trait** – Expertise (double proficiency level) on

Investigation or Perception checks in order to find raw goods or resources that your empire doesn't have. This can be done at humanoid and/or creature settlements/areas.

\* **Goal** – Find a useful resource that is crafted or made by another civilization and trade for it. This will take successful Perception and

Persuasion checks to find the new resource and then secure a trade bargain. A new pact can be sent by message bird to the Empire to seal the agreement. The next dawn the message bird will arrive with a small, random magical item. (DMs will identify what the new magic item is.)

## **Theologian**

This PC has a fascination with little-known gods and/or religions. This is not limited to certain classes but should fit a PC's background.

\* **Benefit**: An increase of +1 per tier to Religion checks. Once every second day, they can read a Legend Lore scroll as an action.

\* **Trait**: Has advantage on Religious checks for identifying runes or other symbols from ancient civilizations.

\* **Goal**: Find a holy relic that can be used to aid your party or commune with an unknown civilization's god.



Naturalists will be looking for rare animals, including this one.

## **Naturalist (beast master)**

This PC has an unlimited knowledge and uncanny handling of creatures. This is not limited to certain classes.

\* **Benefit** – An increase of +1 per tier to Nature and Handle Animal checks.

\* **Trait** – Expertise in Handle Animal checks and can, at-will, speak to beasts and plants, issuing simple commands to them. There is a 50 percent chance the animal or plant will not respond and thus will not carry out the command. Also, the Naturalist can look for rare animals. (see list below).

\* **Goal** – Find a rare creature and use it to aid the group's quest.

## **Herbalist (medicines/poisons)**

Herbalists have studied flora, both for beneficial effects and those that can be used against foes.

\* **Benefit** – An increase of +1 per tier to Nature and +1 per tier to Perception checks when attempting to find rare plants.

\* **Trait** – Can explore for rare plant resources (described below) up to twice per day.

\* **Goal** – Find a rare plant and use its properties to provide your group an advantage.



## PART ONE

### **Gold!**

The PCs' foray into the Frontier has led to a major discovery – a gold mine that was buried beneath decades of jungle growth. The PCs have spent the majority of their day descending into the mine, fighting off creatures that have claimed this site as their own, not to mention encountering more than a few traps. As the adventure opens, the PCs have reached what they believe to be the final level of the mine.

### **STARTING OUT**

Due to that day's previous battles and traps encountered, the PCs are injured, at half health, and have used at least half of their spells and/or abilities, unless the following conditions override that:

**Have a PC roll a d20 to identify further effects** that they have suffered during the day (these stages should be communicated to the PCs but not actually played out):

- \* a roll of 1-4 means the first two battles have been exceedingly difficult for the PC, meaning they are down to one-third of their maximum hit points and have just one-third of their spell slots and/or abilities left;
- \* a roll of 5-7 means less severe consequences from the day's battles, allowing the PCs to

select if they want to be at one-third of their maximum hit points and/or one-third of their spell slots and/or abilities. Whichever they select, the other area would be at half – so half health points and/or half spell slots and/or abilities.

\* a roll of 8-13 has no additional consequences on the PCs;

\* a roll of 14-18 means the PCs have performed well thus far, meaning they are either at half health hit points or half of their spells and/or abilities, but not both. Whatever area is not at half is at two-thirds;

\* a roll of 19 or 20 and the PCs have been incredibly skilled and have only lost a third of their health or a third of their spell slots and/or abilities.

In this final level of the mine, the PCs will encounter cave creatures coupled with a demon or devil (based on PC tier), which had taken over the gold mine, drawn here by its riches.

Near the end of this battle, the real threat to the PCs will emerge – representatives of the other kingdom, which had found another entrance into the mine. This competing kingdom is led by a powerful and well known

necromancer, who has foiled the PCs' efforts to capture rich territory like the mine before.

The necromancer, Malrin as a human or Bellas as an elf, is not shy about threatening the PCs with their lives, even going so far as to mock them about how he'll use them as his undead army if they don't promptly vacate the mine. The PCs know if they leave the mine, their kingdom will not have a chance to claim it as their territory.



## PART TWO

### Orders

The PCs return to the Empire's Frontier Division, a sprawling facility set upon several acres where training of all kind happens year-around. Here the PCs are ushered into the office of the division's senior officer, a female halfling named Saffron Hedgehopper.

Hedgehopper is a renowned figure, her list of achievements has grown longer than her tiny but sturdy frame.

As the PCs walk in, they see two highly ranked members of the kingdom pinning a new decoration on Hedgehopper's uniform. The decoration – a silver mithril pin surrounded by deep purple fur – is reserved for the highest

The PCs have battled and lost to Malrin/Bellas and his followers from the opposite kingdom before. They also will face him and his party at a disadvantage as the opposing kingdom's force – unlike the PCs – are not injured.

If Malrin/Bellas and his party do not fare well against the PCs, he will teleport to safely, leaving behind the others from his kingdom to their own fates.

kingdom honor. Even Hedgehopper, usually curt and emotionless, looks upon the pin in a momentarily gleeful manner before recovering her usual stoic appearance.

The pin is distinctive not for the mithril but for the fur surrounding it – the fur is from the rarest and most sought-after creatures, the Carbunkle (see below encounter for creature details.)

Hedgehopper will nod toward the two highly ranked members of the kingdom before eyeing the PCs. If they have any words of appreciation for the pin, she will downplay the award and

even accuse them of laziness – don't they have something they should be doing?

Rattled by the award and the attention, Hedgehopper had briefly forgot the order she had given for the PCs to be brought to her immediately. If the PCs mention the latter or give her any grievance, she will respond quickly in anger and threaten to put them on goblin watch duty. Then she'll – as usual – come right to the point with their newest orders:

\* They are to travel immediately, first by horseback and then by boat. They will travel for approximately two weeks to the Frontier lands of the east where they will come upon an encampment on a hill. The encampment is marked on a map they will be provided that only has two items on it: 1) the location of the hilltop encampment (which does not have a name), located just off a river, and 2) a place to the north of the encampment named "Kjol Laz," a dwarven settlement whose name means "Mine of Riches." The map does not show any geographic markings or indicate how far the dwarven settlement is from the encampment as this is unknown and unclaimed territory.

\* Hedgehopper and the kingdom believe this site on the hilltop could be made into a trading village, which would benefit from the dwarven settlement's resources.

\* It is not known how far the dwarven settlement is from this hilltop encampment but it is believed to be only a couple of days away by foot or boat. The dwarves there have had past successful dealings with the kingdom and a trading pact is being arranged.

\* The PCs are to secure the hilltop encampment and ensure it does not fall into enemy hands. The latter could be the opposing empire or

unknown forces. (reference the necromancer again!)

\* There is very little known about the encampment, other than that it appears someone else had attempted to civilize it before. But who, or what, did that is not known.

\* An initial Frontier division has already been sent to this hilltop encampment a few days ago. The PCs are to aid this unit in securing this location and perhaps explore the surrounding area.

\* As veteran members of the Frontier division, the PCs will know that they can benefit tremendously from the successful start of a trading village. Frontier teams that aid in the successful start of a trading village are deemed as "founders" and can reap a percentage of all trade from such a village. The latter usually means a tremendous amount of annual gold, enough that in many cases Frontier adventurers can retire from these earnings.

\* Hedgehopper will end with the idea of how important it is the group secure this location before the other kingdom can.

After completing the succinct description of their orders, Hedgehopper will look to the PCs and add curtly: Hop to it!

As usual, the PCs can secure all necessary items to make this journey at the Frontier division compound.

**What items the PCs can receive at the Frontier unit compound:**

- \* d4+1 in healing potions;
- \* d4+1 in greater healing potions;
- \* as many rations as they wish;
- \* d4+1 in flasks of either acid, alchemist's fire, holy water or a combination of the three;
- \* one equipment pack of their choice;



## PART THREE

### **Too late!**

Approximately two weeks after leaving their kingdom borders, the PCs arrive to the frontier location by boat, having left their horses behind. The fast-flowing river that carried them here includes a fair amount of spring rain, which has fallen intermittently over the past several days.

Storm clouds follow the PCs here. As they beach their boat onto the shoreline, they'll notice an obscuring, thick fog lingering here as well.

The location of the newly found encampment is atop a steep hill. The encampment can be reached by a winding trail, which starts at the river and ascends a sharp grade. Atop this hill is what appears to be a small tribal settlement. It includes segments of a wood wall and guard posts atop tall rock outcroppings. Inside this encampment is a small, shallow creek and several small tents and two larger ones, all of which are made of old, decaying hide (The



This is the view the players have as they arrive at the hilltop encampment. The encampment can be reached from a winding trail.

constant swirling breezes atop this hill pass through these decaying hides easily.)

Surrounding the north, south and eastern sides of this settlement are rock outcroppings and mountains, making this area, on first appearance, a highly defensible location.

In actuality, as the first Frontier division discovered, there are plenty of flaws to this hilltop's security. The wooden "wall" is mostly made up of stakes, many of which are decayed and easy to tear down or break. The guard posts, while useable, are not complete and don't offer the guards protection from ranged weapons. And the rock outcroppings and mountain sides surrounding the settlement are

easy to climb and easy to stand atop, meaning an enemy can hurl down rocks and worse upon the encampment.

Upon arrival, the PCs can easily make out dozens of tracks of bare-footed humanoids, clearly not left from the kingdom's first unit. But booted prints – these are likely made from the kingdom's first unit - are evident as well. But no person – or anything else for that matter – greets the PCs upon their arrival.

Once inside the encampment, the PCs will find the remains – only about a half day old – of the kingdom's first Frontier unit scattered around the camp. They'll also find a small pool of fresh blood – seemingly from the kingdom soldiers – in the southeastern corner of the encampment, near a mountainside.

The PCs, like all Frontier divisions, carry a "Speak to the Dead" scroll and can use it to speak to the dead commander of this first kingdom frontier division. The spell allows up to five questions.

**Here's what the PCs will discover from the dead commander:**

\* The Frontier unit leader, a human or woodlands elf depending on the kingdom the PCs select, has deep, vicious wounds up and down his torso. Medicine checks will reveal the wounds were received at different times before his death;

\* The commander's name is either Xander, as a human, or Melian as an elf. He and his unit arrived here three days ago;

\* During their three days here, the unit worked primarily on strengthening the encampment's wooden wall and finding food. They did not find anything of interest here – arms or armor or really any signs of civilization - even in the caves on the western side of the encampment. About the only he remembers seeing here is various-

sized bones, scattered throughout the encampment.

\* Last night, a large force of lizardfolk were spotted arriving from the forest to the east. Their numbers were hard to comprehend, for they stalked almost silently within the protection of the tall, dense trees. But the lizardfolk had to be at least three to four dozen strong. "They were all armed and a few of them carried long painted shields, I guess."

(\*DM note: What the leader and his unit thought were shields, which were seen from afar, were actually wooden racks that held the remains of dead ogres and lizardfolk. These remains were to be brought to the encampment, an ancient burial site for their kind. When the PCs – the "invaders" – were noticed, some of the lizardfolk returned in a hurried fashion to their camps with their racks and their dead ones' remains. Because these lizardfolk hurried off, PCs that look around the forest to the east of the encampment could find a couple of skulls that rolled off the wooden racks – an ogre skull and a couple of lizardfolk skulls.

\* The commander's memories of last night continue: "We prepared our attack if they drew close to the encampment walls. But they surprised us, climbing the mountain and then shooting down arrows from the mountainside and then swarming us from atop the rocks not far from the wall."

\* "Some of us were kept alive for a few hours after the initial attack. Some were dragged to the rocks in the southeastern part of the camp and killed there. Blooded, really. Others, including myself, were tortured, asked repeatedly about why we would come here. We were told in their guttural tongue that their chieftain, Akkar the Ageless ..." At this point, the leader stops momentarily before adding in a quieter way, "They demanded to know if more of us were coming. I was so mad ... they treated

us like filth! Cutting us with their swords repeatedly! Calling us weak! I told them we would come in such numbers that they and every one of their kind within miles of this cursed place would be slain! .... I ... I ... shouldn't have said that. Their leader, a foul Ogre, said he, Akkar, will bring back an army five times larger than what we saw ... I'm sorry .. I shouldn't have .... Akkar will be here in a matter of days. You're .... You're doomed... I'm sorry ...”

\* The leader would say that he doesn't believe any of the kingdom troops who were here at the encampment lived through the short and bloody battle.



**Once the PCs hear of the late commander's words**, they should be reminded of the following:

They know a regiment – a full squad of their kingdom's army - isn't expected for weeks. They also know the dwarven settlement is days away. Perhaps they can travel to that settlement and seek the dwarves' aid to fight off the ogre chieftain and his forces. Otherwise, this encampment will be lost, along with their chance at fame and fortune, to the native army and perhaps then to the opposing kingdom.

## PART FOUR

### Journey to the Dwarven Settlement

Although the PCs won't know it, there are three routes that lead from the hilltop encampment northward to the dwarven settlement:

- 1) On the river going east and then north;
- 2) On the river going east, then to the lake and eventually, through the heart of the swamps;
- 3) On the river westward and then through the ancient forest.

Which route the PCs take will dictate what encounters they experience. There are exceptions to this: the Serpeant Queen, Carbunkle and Slaves & Sacrifices encounters are all required no matter where the PCs travel. The following outline travel considerations and different encounters, the latter of which are broken up by location.

## TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

- \* Current weather conditions make long-distance Perception checks difficult, it not impossible, at times, with heavy fog in the morning and evening AND short-term rainstorms that sweep through the area.
- \* It is known the opposing kingdom uses “spies in the sky” - large swarms of crows that track the movement of the other empire. The PCs understand that flight is likely to be riskier in terms of being spotted by the opposing kingdom;
- \* The PCs should be given time to try to do their specific sub-class jobs/opportunities whenever they travel.

## REQUIRED ENCOUNTER

### The Queen of the Serpents

The amount of frontier land being consumed by humanoid kingdoms has not been lost upon the ancient powers, including the Queen of Serpents. This ancient Fey, however, has tried to temper her impatience with the approaching kingdom by delving underground, finding new homes for her slithering companions. The largest of these discovered caverns is under a mountain range



The adventurers have three different routes to take on their northward journey – all of which will wind up in an extended swamp.

within the area the PCs have traveled to. The queen’s discovered cavern has all the attributes for a successful snake environment with the exception of one returning denizen – an Ankou who once lived here as a dragon.

Upon hearing of the PC’s arrival, the queen decides it is just fate that the PCs take care of the very problem they have caused – causing

snakes to go underground to escape their constant killing by humanoids. If the snakes will survive in any kind of numbers, they must be able to peacefully live underground, without the irritating and dangerous presence of the Ankou.

The queen will approach the PCs in snake form – asking them – if not demanding them - to kill the Ankou. The queen will tell the PCs she has the capability to ease their traveling, especially in the area they are headed to (the swamp) and that the Ankou has (magical) items that could be of value to them. While the queen will not tell them what they'll find in the swamps (the Yuan-ti), she will reveal they are likely to be hard-pressed to get around the swamps without her considerable aid.

**If the PCs agree to help....**

\* they will be directed to the closest mountain range and be given directions on how to enter the cavern where the Ankou can be found. They

are warned not to harm a snake – any snake! - while they are in the cave or their safety will be seriously jeopardized.

\* If they kill the Ankou, the PCs will encounter a more powerful Ankou (perhaps a Ankou Soul Herald) in the adventure's final encounter.

**If the PCs do NOT agree to help....**

\* There is a 50 percent chance they will face exhaustion on their next long rest (and every remaining rest attempt) while in the frontier as snakes will attempt to find them and constantly agitate them during their sleep.

\* The queen will contact the Yuan-ti in the swamp to set up an ambush and possible imprisonment there. (See Slaves & Sacrifices encounter below)

\* The queen will appear in the final encounter as she will try to take the hillside encampment away from the PCs as a new site for her snakes.

**REQUIRED ENCOUNTER**

**Carbunkle**

This mysterious creature is legendary - the target of every true frontiersmen. The rarely seen, small-sized creature is said to possess a gem that is incredibly sought after by magic users as the gem is believed to amplify magic. Such a gem could fetch thousands in gold. There is little known about the Carbunkle besides the following, which is dependent on the PCs succeeding on a Nature or Arcana check:

\* In appearance, it has the body type of a cat and the size of a bobcat, except it's a dark purple and has feathers on parts of its body and tail;

\* The creature is not from this plane and is incredibly clever;

\* It can speak Common;

\* The sought-after gem is believed to be on the creature's forehead.

The Carbunkle will only approach single PCs on guard watch, luring them into the forest to judge their intentions. If a PC gives chase – depending on location - the creature will lure it to a tree where a wasp nest will be dropped onto the PC, or run them toward a giant predator protecting its young, or if in the swamp, to quicksand.

If the creature finds a PC of noble actions and deeds, it will reward the PC with its gem.

**Monster recommendations:**

Carbunkle, Creature Codex, pg. 57;

## RIVER ROUTE

### **Rockpiles**

Huge nests on top of massive rockpiles overlook the area before the waterfalls, serving as a home for Kongamato (dinosaur birds).

Despite the persistent clouds and fog, it is likely at least one of these birds are visible flying around.

These large beasts are boat-breakers, possibly misidentifying the boats as potential meals, like hippos. The birds will likely target the PC's boat first, putting the PCs at risk of being swept into the river and down into the quickly approaching waterfall. (The waterfall drops off 100 feet, where the PCs would encounter the frogs below. Because of the massive spray of the waterfall, the PCs will not see what waits below.)

These birds will likely attempt to carry off a PC if they are small, into their nests.



The dinosaur birds nest on the nearby rockpiles and the nests are easily visible from the river. The nests hold lizardfolk bones, a considerable number of half-eaten frog bodies and a few notable magic items.

#### Monster recommendations:

Kongamato, Tome of Beasts, pg. 265

## RIVER ROUTE

### **Pick your froggy side!**

At the bottom of a massive waterfall on the river leading east from the hilltop encampment is a frog fight that's about to erupt. The PCs will have to find a way down this massive waterfall, which descends at least 100 feet into a large pond below. The spray coming from the water pouring over the side of the cliff is so dense that

it obscures vision from above, making it impossible to see what lies in the pond below.

The PCs' fall or climb down the waterfall, in the frogs' minds, is an obvious sign that they descend from the heavens and thus are messengers of the gods. The frogs – bullywogs on one side of the pond and Grung on the other

– have for weeks quarrelled about what species is the “true divine frog,” the one favored by the gods.

The PCs’ timing indicates that they are the messengers of the gods and have been sent to identify which frog species is divinely favored and then eliminate the other frog species.

As the PCs finish their descent from above, the frogs – bullywogs on one side and Grung on the other - will emerge with spears, nets and other

primitive weapons and try to convince the PCs to join their side as the gods’ “true” frog species.

There are dozens of both frog species lining the pond’s edge, ready to jump into battle. The PCs must pick a side quickly or the separate frog species will convince themselves the PCs aren’t messengers from the gods but a divine test! Meaning, both frog packs must battle the PCs and the one that kills the most god messengers will prove the most divine!

## LAKE ROUTE

### **Trolls!**

The lake not far from the hilltop encampment is primarily a shallow one, with some stretches of deeper water. But much of the shoreline has a gradual decline in elevation so it’s not uncommon for a normal-sized humanoid to only be waist-deep in water when they’re 15-20 feet out from the lake’s edges. Reeds and other plant life stick out of the water in large, sprawling stretches. An easy Nature check will reveal some of the plants to include healing properties.

The denizens of the lake, trolls, lie in waiting in the deeper pockets of the lake.

It is not uncommon for violent splashes of surface water to be seen in different spots of the lake as the trolls attempt to seize ducks and other wildlife that enter the lake. Give the PCs a 50 percent chance of hearing or seeing such a splash before they enter or near the water.

The shallow water in the lake is fairly clear; not so much though in the pockets of deeper, algae-stained water.

#### Monster recommendations:

Lake Trolls, Tome of Beasts, pg. 389;

## LAKE ROUTE

### **Hideout**

News of the extent of the dwarven settlement’s riches has traveled far and fast, which is why the opposing kingdom found this stretch of frontier land before the PCs’ empire did.

As a result, there is an opposing kingdom squad located in a mountain hideout near the lake. The squad has a number of their assassins scout out the lake area each day to ensure their

hideout remains a secret. These assassins will shoot upon any opposing kingdom force they see and then – if outnumbered – run back to the hard-to-find mountain hideout.

The hideout includes multiple rooms, a couple of which are only accessible by diving into pools and emerging in rooms that are not visible from the entrance of the hideout.

The opposing empire's movements and knowledge of the area has been thwarted by the Queen of Serpents and her desire to rid the area of an Ankou.

If the PCs are able to find this hideout and defeat the opposing empire forces within, they will find a notebook with various writings describing the local area, including:

\* The group's necromancer found his skeletons began to burn from an unknown radiant energy source south of the lake; (GM note: This is the regional effect of having an Ankou near. This is knowledge the PCs likely won't know unless they can roll a high Religion Check.)

\* Notes on an excursion south of the lake where several members reported seeing shadows and having a disturbing but very real belief that they were being watched. One scribbled note says, "Is the other kingdom here and simply hiding from us?" (GM note: This is the regional effect of having an Ankou near.)

\* A strange humanoid creature of the darkness approached the group not a day or two after

they arrived, telling them "we must either kill his master or feed it, relentlessly. His words – as strange as they were – seemed true and thus, curious, we aided this newcomer and began to feed its creature. Immense this creature is, filling up an entire cave ...." The rest of the descriptions details the strange humanoid creature who spoke to them – perhaps a priest of some sort?

\* "Snakes, snakes and more snakes! We've had half of our party bitten by snakes, sometimes in their sleep. We lost at least two and a third seems likely to succumb ..."

\* "We've discovered a small humanoid race here, a bizarre mix of insect and humanoid. They are a greenish hue with antennae and their skin appears shiny and oily. They carry wicked daggers and some use poison on their weapons. They do not appear to know magic. Trickery and deceit yes, but not magic."

#### Monster recommendations:

Lake Trolls, Creature Codex, pg. 35; Ankou Soul Seeker, Creature Codex, pg. 38

## FOREST ROUTE

### Night visit

A Celestial, a Buraq, visits with a PC (likely a Cleric, Paladin or one close to nature) at night when they are on watch, alone.

It will be curious about the PC and the group's intentions. If they sound believable and honest, the Buraq will offer to give them help, but in return for a favor.

The Celestial will ask them to kill a monstrous creature, a Cave Dragon. The dragon is relatively new to the forest and is causing considerable unrest and trouble.

In exchange, the Buraq promises to provide them much needed magic that would

considerably quicken their arrival back to the encampment - a "wind walk" spell that can get them quickly from the dwarven settlement back to the hilltop.

If the PCs do not agree to this request, the Buraq may increase the potential rewards for killing the dragon – a promise to reveal the location of another new group (the other kingdom's hideout, near the lake) that he does not trust.

To aid the Buraq, the PCs must find an Ent, named Tenderfir, in the ancient forest. The Ent, on the following night, is set to deliver a promised load of berries and other forest fruit

and plants to the dragon, which prefers to eat organic material over meat of any kind. The Ent may not know it but the cave dragon would likely eat it as well when it delivers the food.

If the PCs can work with the Ent, this will give them a chance to surprise the dragon and save the Ent, not to mention countless other forest creatures. (See Cave Dragon encounter below)

## FOREST ROUTE

### **King of the Forest**

To find the Ent – and eventually reach the Cave Dragon’s lair - the PCs must stealth through a forest occupied by the king of the forest – the territorial and aggressive giant apes.

This stealth test should include considerable use of the environment, including challenging checks made on thick but narrow tree branches, fallen logs covered by massive ant colonies or even swarms of insects that threaten to fill the PCs’ mouths causing coughs or even sneezes to awaken the resting apes.

Restless young giant apes also could heighten the situation as they enthusiastically search the



The forest environment – including active ant colonies – could prove to be challenging for PCs in hopes of avoiding the forest’s largest creatures.

dense forest and potentially come upon the PCs.

#### Monster recommendations:

Giant ape, Monster Manual, pg. 323

## FOREST ROUTE

### **Cave Dragon’s cavern**

The forest’s cave dragon – the size and age of it will depend on the PCs’ level - prefers to stay underground so it has a servant do its bidding.

This servant tasks other intelligent creatures it can find to provide constant food – mostly

organic food - to the dragon.

The cavern hosting the cave dragon could include multiple rooms, including those hosting:

- \* colonies of bats and large insects feasting off decaying carcasses;
- \* vast collections of bones, sorted or arranged

in careful order (also consider a guardian of these bones);

\* a derro or drow(s) would be the servant to the cave dragon, somewhat of an ally as this humanoid knows it must keep the dragon well fed or it will become its next meal in due time. The derro or drow, however, will have no issue with the group seeking to kill the cave as it become the creature's unwelcomed slave. "The

pay is seriously lacking and let me tell you - the pressure of finding enough food to keep that thing fed is having serious, frightening issues on my complexion!"

#### Monster recommendations:

Cave Dragon, Tome of Beasts, pg. 125; Derro, Creature Codex, pg. 96

## SWAMP ROUTE

### Memorable mud baths

A pair of small humanoids, Roachlings, sated from a recent meal, are caught napping on a sunlit rock in the midst of the swamp. After awakening, they brandish comically small swords at the PCs and try to seek an escape route.

If the PCs mention their ignorance of the area, the Roachlings, natural tricksters, will smile at each other and give the PCs directions to a "short cut" through the swamp. The "short cut" is actually the typical mud bathing area for a cranky creature known as the Bagiennik.

GMs should roll a percentage dice to identify the crankiness of the Bagiennik. If the roll is under 50 percent, the creatures have been bathing for only a few hours and will be incredibly angry when the PCs splash through their mud puddle.

If the roll is 50 percent or higher, the creatures will only be slightly cranky – and potentially helpful with healing – toward the PCs.

The Bagiennik also can speak of their knowledge of the nearby "snake people" and how they are a cruel race who enslave other humanoid creatures. The Bagiennik can identify the location of the snake people's lair.

They, however, do not know of the dwarves or their settlement as they do not venture outside the swamp.

#### Monster recommendations:

Roachlings, Tome of Beasts, pg. 329; Bagiennik, Tome of Beasts, pg. 31

## SWAMP

### Temple ruins

Within the swamp, not a day's away from the dwarven settlement, is a series of ancient ruins. There is only one building that has enough of its walls and roof intact to be identified – this is a former temple. What remains of the temple has largely been claimed by the swamp's intrusion and the destructive forces of the nearby inhabitants, the Yuan-ti and the Lizardfolk. Both humanoid species have pillaged the place, most

importantly damaging the temple's primary statue.

Near the entrance of the temple are stacks of skeletal heads placed in a series of triangular piles. Plus there is wording in common warning others away – "Leave this evil place!" ... "Don't whisper a word – flee. Evil resides here!" (These warnings have been left by the lizardfolk who

fear what the statue will do to them if it reawakens.)

In the center of the ruined temple is the statue, mostly covered in lichen. The life-sized statue (about 6 feet tall) is missing its head and parts of arms and torso. These pieces have been removed viciously from the statue – probably with weapons - and placed under heavy rocks so they can not return to the statue. If the rocks are removed from the statue pieces, the pieces will animate and return to the statue. At this point, the god of Knowledge, Oghma, will briefly

inhabit the statue and the lichen will fall from its body, the walls of the temple will shake viciously and then begin, piece by piece, to restore itself to its once grandeur-like state. If the PCs stay or return, the god will grant them a boon for allowing him to restore his temple: A blank scroll.

The PCs can use this blank scroll in 1 of 2 ways: If the PCs have a theologian with them, they will twice be able to use it as a scroll of Legend Lore. If there is not a theologian in the party, the PCs can the scroll as a Legend Lore spell just once.

## SWAMP ROUTE (REQUIRED)

### Slaves & Sacrifices

**\* GM note:** This encounter will depend on how the PCs handle the request from the Queen of Serpents. If the PCs deny the queen’s request to kill the Ankou, the queen will work with the Yuan-ti to try to imprison the PCs within the Yuan-ti ruins. If the PCs agree to help or have already killed the Ankou, then the queen will intercede on their behalf.

Once within the swamps, the PCs will hear the clanking of iron chains from afar. They won’t be see what is causing the sound as an obscuring fog clings to the swamp. But it is easy to follow the sound of the clanking chains – and even identify the sound as chains a prisoner might wear – from hundreds of feet away as more than a dozen lizardfolk have been captured by Yuan-ti slavers. The lizardfolk are bound by leg and arm irons and are slowly being led to the Yuan-ti’s home, an underground area. The slaves will be used as sacrifices by the Yuan-ti to continue their transformation. As the PCs appear in the swamps, the Yuan-ti will be leading the captured lizardfolk into their underground home. When the PCs arrive on the scene, they’ll see the final few lizardfolk being

led in, surrounded by a number of Yuan-ti guards. What happens from here depends on the PC’s previous encounter with the Serpent Queen. **\*GM note:** The Yuan-ti’s use of slaves – including their sacrificing of them – is well known by the PCs, who have come upon their kind in their previous Frontier travels.

#### **If the PCs have refused to help the queen ....**

The Yuan-ti have been commanded by the queen to look for the PCs and to lure them into the ruins through whatever means necessary. Once inside the ruins, the Yuan-ti are to place all of the slaves into one of the three underground rooms and then flee from the PCs once one of their kind are killed in battle. Once the PCs go to help the slaves – imprisoned in the single room – the Yuan-ti will regroup into bigger numbers and attempt to force the PCs into the same room as the slaves and then lock them into the room.

If the Yuan-ti can accomplish this, the Serpent Queen will appear and promise to release the PCs but only if they follow through with her request. To ensure their compliance, the queen will demand that one of the PCs ingest a slow-

releasing venom. They will then have three hours to complete the killing of the ankou before the venom is released into the PC's system. The queen will provide an antidote to the venom once the Ankou is killed.

**If the PCs have helped the queen but haven't killed the Ankou yet ....** The same as above will occur.

## SWAMP/MOUNTAIN ROUTE

### The Ankou's cavern

This is a cavern filled with snakes. If the PCs are here because of their promise to the Queen of Serpents, then they know they must not harm a snake, or else face the queen's wrath.

If the PCs have not met the queen and stumble upon the cavern, they will encounter the snake-filled cave and then the queen, shapechanged into a full-grown Zanskaran viper (30 feet long!).

The cavern has thousands of snakes within. As the PCs progress into it, they will be confronted with snake-obstacles, including:

\* The floors are crawling with different species of snakes, mostly harmless vipers. But there are poisonous asps within the vast numbers of sithering snakes. Roll a d20 for every 10 feet a PC walks – a roll of 5 and below and the PC will accidentally walk on an asp, causing it to attack in reaction. Roll a Dexterity save to avoid the asp's bite.

\* Sections of the cave's walls and ceiling consist of limestone rock, a porous material that has countless holes in it. From these areas, snakes hang from the holes, awaiting to attack bats that fly by. The snakes (non-venomous) are

**If the PCs have already killed the Ankou ....** The queen will appear at some point in the battle with the Yuan-ti and demand the snake people release the slaves and heal the PCs, as well as potentially even help them reach the dwarven settlement.

#### Monster recommendations:

Yuan-ti, various, Volo's Guide to Monsters, pg. 202

aggressive and strike out at anything that comes near them. Roll attacks whenever PCs get into these areas;

\* Decaying logs and other earthen material is spread across multiple areas around the cavern floor. These logs are home to a multitude of snakes, including the venomous swamp adders. PCs who try to traverse these areas have a 50 percent chance at encountering the swamp adders.

The Ankou rests on a pile of bones, attempting to sleep when the PCs arrive. The creature is a shape-changer so it could look like its past form – a dragon – as it sleeps in its old lair. Inside the cavern are momentos from its past life, including grisly remains of past foes and even rusty swords and other evidence of past conquests.

#### Monster recommendations:

Swarm of Poisonous Snakes, Monster Manual, pg. 338; Poisonous Snake, Monster Manual, pg. 334; Giant poisonous snake, Monster Manual, pg. 327; Zanskaran viper, Tome of Beasts, pg. 354; Swamp Adder, Tome of Beasts, pg. 354; Ankou Soul Seeker, Creature Codex, pg. 38



## PART FIVE

### The Conclusion

The finale plays out on the hilltop encampment after the PCs return from their journey to the dwarven settlement. There are two surprises waiting for them here:

- 1) A dwarven military unit had already been sent and will be arriving within several hours. This unit will significantly diminish the danger of the approaching hostile army. (Unbeknownst and unsaid to the PCs: The Frontier commander slain by the lizardfolk did send one of his division to the dwarf settlement upon arriving. The commander did not divulge this to the PCs as it is forgotten with the plight of his unit on the hilltop);
- 2) Once the hostile army arrives, the PCs will discover the hilltop encampment is not a former village but the enemy's sacred burial site.

The finale begins with the night-time assault of the native enemy force, an army of lizardfolk and ogres, led by an ogre chieftain – a shaman. As this force arrives, so too does the dwarven military unit. These forces clash outside of the hilltop encampment, but close enough to where the PCs can see and hear the activity.

Just after the start of this violent clash, the native army's commander, the ogre chieftain

shaman, will awaken his ancestors - which are buried underneath the encampment - in an effort to thwart the PC's efforts to claim the site.

Quickly the PCs will be tasked with fending off undead ogre and lizardfolk. This wave of undead will not lessen or cease until the PCs can eliminate the magical presence emanating from the burial site of a powerful ogre chieftain, whose body lies in a huge coffin that is buried 5 feet underground in the southeastern part of the hilltop encampment, where many of the first Frontier Division's unit were blooded and sacrificed.

The PCs can learn the location of the ogre chieftain's coffin as each undead ogre dies in combat. As this happens, each undead ogre's magical gold necklace explodes in a wave of thunder, causing the encampment's back wall to partially disintegrate. As this happens, runes written in old Giant on these walls become visible. It takes the slaying of three undead ogre to show enough of the runes so the PCs can understand their meaning. The runes, in old Giant symbols, express the following: "Our chieftain sleeps where the blood runs deep."

\* GM Note: If the PCs dealt successfully with the swamp temple and the god there, his blank scroll will provide the exact location of the chieftain's coffin.

The PCs can then dig up the coffin and perform some type of ritual or spell to consecrate the coffin and its immediate area. (This also can be done with holy water, which the PCs probably brought with them). Once this act is done, the undead will fall and the native enemy will flee, no matter how they've fared against the dwarves.

At this time, the PCs can only breathe for a moment as one of two events occur:

- 1) If the PCs attacked or killed an ankou earlier in the adventure, another ankou, possibly a Herald, arrives and takes vengeance upon the PCs for their killing of its kind.
- 2) If the PCs did not attack or kill an ankou earlier in the adventure, the Queen of Serpents arrives, possibly in huge snake form. She tells the PCs that since they will not help her, she will take it upon herself to find an area for her snakes. And the PCs' newly claimed hilltop encampment – now cleansed of the ogre's undead – will work perfectly. She'll then battle to the death – with some of her snakes – in an effort to claim this hilltop territory.

#### **LAIR ACTIONS DURING THE ARMY BATTLE**

While the main combat is occurring, there is also a "lair" action. In this case, the lair is not the environmental effects but the presence of

the native enemy army. Most of the enemy army's concentration is on the dwarven party, both of which are located outside the encampment. However, if the dwarven party begins to wane, the native enemy army – and their ogre shaman – will focus some firepower on the PCs. This then becomes the lair action.

To decide if the native enemy army is focusing on the dwarven party, have each PC roll a d20. (A straight roll, with no pluses or minuses.) Count how many PCs roll a "11" or higher. If the majority roll 11 or higher, the lair action does not occur. If the majority roll "10" or lower, then a lair action does occur.

To decide on the lair action, roll a d4:

On a roll of 1 – The shaman briefly appears, flying, and casts Bane upon all the PCs. The effects last one round.;

On a roll of 2 - The shaman briefly appears, flying, and casts animate dead. The dead can be lizardfolk and/or ogre.

On a roll of 3 – A group of lizardfolk launch a volley of arrows at all PCs that can be seen from either beyond the encampment wall or on the mountain rocks surrounding the encampment. Each PC would potentially be targeted with 2 arrows.

On a roll of 4 – A couple of ogres launch rocks at half of the PCs that can be seen (as described above).

## ABOUT THE FRONTIER

### Rare Building Materials

Builders must make Nature checks to find these materials. **They can then roll a d4 to determine which type of building material they've found.**

1 – **Fire Clay** - This clay is the result of lightning hitting the ground or a rock. It can withstand tremendous heat (resistance to fire). With one-hour of crafting time, this clay can be made into a single, consumable item, coating a shield or armor. This coating will resist fire for one use and then crack and not be useable again. It is found in limited quantities (1d4).

2 – **White Clay** – This fine, almost powder-like clay can be made into paints or ointments. This clay is often used in conjunction with rare plants to allow a user to increase the spread of the rare plant over a PC or several PCs in a safe and effective manner.

3 – **Hardened Tree** – This is a lightweight wood

### Rare Plants

Herbalists must make Nature checks to find these plants. **They can then roll a d6 to determine which plant they find.**

1 – **Goblin Balm** – A low-growing but fast-spreading plant that can be used to instantly cure the nauseated or poisoned condition. It is found in large concentrations (1d8+3 plants per pick). It is a fragile plant, however, and needs a Medicine Check of DC13 to make into a successful, single ointment. One potential ointment brew takes 3 plants. If the ointment is not successful, the plants wither and are not re-useable.

that is surprisingly hard. It can be easily crafted and can travel twice the distance of a normal item. Range on arrows, bolts or spears are doubled. Found in limited quantities. (1d4)

4 – **Cereal grass** – The stalks of these common grasses can be dried over an hour and then used in conjunction with an “Animate Straw Object” scroll - one is always carried by Builders in case these grasses can be found. The dried grass, which is straw, can be made into a small object or creature by the Builder. The creature can, when the builder chooses, be animated for one hour and carries the following stats: HP: 25, AC: 16, Attack: +6 to hit, 1d8 + 2 damage, Str: 6, Dex: 14, speed: 30 feet (walking, swimming or flying). Once used, the animated creature is no longer useable. Builders can find enough material for one such creature every time they find this grass.

2 – **Fire Sage** – A rare plant found on climbing vines. Its deep-stained red leaves cause an immediate eruption in one's mouth, producing a fiery explosion 10 feet long and 5 feet wide. (1d6 fire damage at tier 1, 2d6 at tier 2, etc.). The Fire Sage leaves must be boiled down to a liquid before using. One brew from a handful of leaves provides 1d4 uses. A Fire Sage breath attack is a bonus for Herbalists; an action for all other PCs.

3 – **Sticky Willies** – These big, sticky plants are often found on top of other plants, slowly

draining their life substance away. Naturalists can pick the square-shaped leaves off these larger plants – up to 4 feet long! – and use them to temporarily blind a foe, placing the Sticky Willie on their foe’s eyes. Naturalists are Proficient with Sticky Willies and can use a melee attack using their Dexterity modifier and Proficiency. (All other Party members do not have Proficiency with these attacks) Foes must use an action to remove these sticky plants and succeed with an Athletics check of DC10 if they are using two hands to remove the Sticky Willie or DC15 check if they are only using one hand. Sticky Willies must be handled carefully as they tend to stick to anything they come in contact with. PCs other than Naturalists must make a Dexterity check to ensure they don’t blind themselves while using a Sticky Willie.

4 – **The Red Dead Nettle** – This climbing plant is often found in the sprawling branches of trees. The Nettle’s leaves are tinged with red and black hues. When brewed – it takes one hour to prepare – it can be placed on the tip of a weapon. The Naturalist can place this poison on a weapon with a Bonus action; other PCs require an action to use it. A creature or foe who is hit with this poison must succeed on a DC13 Constitution check or be poisoned and

## **Rare Creatures**

Naturalists must make Perception checks to find these animals and then Nature checks to successfully identify them. **They roll a d6 to determine which animal they find.**

1 – **Spectacled Owl** - This owl, large for its type, has eye markings that appear to be spectacles. It has special capabilities at night, with darkvision to 120 feet, 40 ft. flying speed and a +4 Stealth. Its warning call can be heard from a hundred feet away, if there are no loud environmental noises around it (like rushing

take 1d6 poison damage each round. A single brew can deliver 1d4 uses. It is not uncommon to find enough Nettle to produce two brews.

5 – **Blindweed** – This is a tall, naturally growing grass that produces a plethora of small, yellow flowers. These flowers can be mashed into a yellow powder (this takes one hour). Once spread on the skin, this powder acts as a concealment, providing near invisibility (+10 Stealth) to the wearer. Lots of blindweed must be secured in order to make one batch for an individual. However, the powder can be used in higher doses if mixed into a white clay (1d4+1 batches).

6 – **Frog-Breath Bulbs** – These naturally grown bulbs are often found by a water’s edge. The bulbs must be dug out from the ground and are the size of one’s palm. Usually 1d8+1 bulbs are found in one spot. They are often used by natives to provide oxygen when diving underwater as the bulbs hold up to 1 minute of air for one PC. The bulbs do, however, have a slight toxicity to them and there is a 10% chance that users suffer mental issues after sucking in their air for two rounds. (This is the Confusion spell for the PC using the bulb)

water). These owls can be found by naturalists to aid the party.

2 - **Bumblewasp hive** – These wasps are not friendly but can be agitated to use on foes (use swarm of wasps stat block). To secure a hive, a PC will need a bag – carried routinely by Naturalists - and a successful Dexterity check. A failed Dexterity check immediately agitates a swarm. PCs who bag a hive must be careful in transporting it as the swarm can agitate due to loud noises.

3 – **Red Deer** - A large deer, weighing upwards of 500 pounds and standing up to 4 feet tall. These deer – with consecutive, successful Handle Animal checks made over a 2-hour period – can be made into friendly mounts. They have unusual courage for their kind and won't readily run from battle. They are typically found in small numbers: 1d4+1.

4 - **Silky pocket mouse** – A small mouse only active at night. (Disadvantage to sneaking during the day) It is highly valued for it can burrow as well as jump high, with unusual Dexterity. (+4 Dex, +5 Stealth) It is intelligent and can converse in short phrases with those who can speak in animal tongues. "Its dark ... smells bad ... seriously hungry – have cheese?" It does tend to get distracted when hungry, which is nearly all the time. Will stay in an adventurer's pocket if it's provided food and a dark, secure spot.

5 – **The Echo Cricket** – An unusually large cricket – up to 2 inches long – that will echo the last sound it heard using the tops of its wings. The echoed sound can only be heard 5 feet in any direction as it's not loud. It is anything but stealthy (minus-1 Stealth) as its large wings tend to rub together as it walks, creating an irritating, scraping noise. A Naturalist with an ability to speak to animals can provide the cricket with basic commands – "walk 10 feet forward and make this whistling sound ..." Echo crickets are not easy to catch however. They

require a Dex 15 check to grab. However, they are found in groups so it's not uncommon to catch more than one at a time. (Roll 1d4+1 when catching crickets)



Red Deer, if found, can be made into friendly mounts.

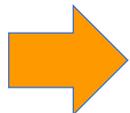
6 – **Spring-Box Tortoise** – This is a highly sought-after tortoise that is about 2 feet wide and weighs about 30 pounds. The tortoise has a spring mechanism in the bottom of its shell that allows it to vault away from danger, springing up to 20 feet in any direction. Spring-Box Tortoises, with a

successful Handle Animal check, are often lashed to the back of a Naturalist until the PC needs to use the creature's vaulting mechanism. At that time, the PC stands atop the tortoise, then jumps or moves 20 feet away in any direction (without using the PC's movement). At this point, the tortoise walks away. While latched to the PC's back, the Naturalist must be humming or singing to the tortoise. If the humming or singing is stopped for a significant period, the Tortoise will try to escape, probably springing away. The spring mechanism can only be used once per hour by a PC but at will by the creature.

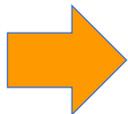


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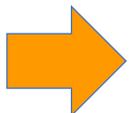
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