

SONG^{OF THE} SEKUTA

THE
COLONY

TABLETOP GAME

HEXAHEDRON STUDIOS

ADVENTURE DEMO
BOOKLET V2

THE LURKER
IN AKAIAGA

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-FOREWORD-

This one-shot campaign book is intended to act as an introduction to both Game Monarchs and Champions for Adventure Format. As it is designed around educating and familiarizing players with the game's mechanics, it reads akin to a “choose-your-own-adventure” book in which, depending on unanimous choices made by the party, you will be led to different sections of the book to continue the story. These demo materials are made to give you a small slice into the full experience of Song of the Sekuta, and this one-shot’s on-rails approach is not meant to represent or capture the enormous potential of the final game. As an aid for Game Monarchs, we have also included a number of prompts for you to extrapolate into your own adventures. We encourage you to share the adventures your groups have using this demo, and to homebrew your own tales as well.

For this One-Shot guide, there are a number of ways we will convey what kinds of information the GM is reading throughout the Adventure:

Any paragraph text written in this standard fashion should be read aloud as narration to the players. This is the primary way you will push the story forward and simultaneously move the players from one mechanical teaching scenario to another.

~INSTRUCTIONAL BLOCK~

Any centered, italicized text, and especially that with the above headers, will instruct you in how to interact with your players to move to the next part of the story. These often provide opportunities for your players to interact with the mechanics of the game, and the consequences of their actions are informed through those actions and choices.

INFO TABLE	
This box will most often provide information about Non-Player Characters, but can also provide information about a location. The tables below can provide the following types of information:	
NPC Dialog:	A selection of potentially essential conversational dialogs that can be triggered by the party conversing with the NPC.
Shop Menu:	A selection of items or services an NPC could potentially offer you.
Choice of Action:	A selection of actions that the party can take that invoke some effect on the party.

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Regarding “Apoi player | Tija”

There is an essential role to be filled by either the GM playing an Apoi NPC named Tija, or a player assuming this role as an Apoi Champion. Like with the majority of the Champions, your Apoi player may create a backstory for this character; the only requisite element that has pushed her into the one-shot scenario is that she has been assigned to act as a guard for a shipment of honey and mead that is being transported from the imperial capital, Arika Melvara, to the Fora Lin capital, Tamalin Mons – and that journey is nearly over.

# 3

## -PROLOGUE-

Your shadows stretch long, cast against the crimson forest floor by the raging inferno erupting from the mouth of the cavern before you. Your eyes reach deep into the flames, their light illuminating memories of what few and simple events have led you hence. They remind you how something as simple as a round of drinks might mark the beginning of becoming more. For thus, it was not a week's time this evening, that **[list all players EXCEPT the Apoi player | Tija]** found themselves in the Merry Mosek, sat upon stools with droplets in hand, quenching the day's thirsts and making merry as the Idom bard strummed his lyre and sang his memories, until the hours were spent, a lullaby was lulled, and you and patrons all went sojourning into the Dream Lands. Little could you know that the very next morning would bring with it the winds of change.

## -CHAPTER 1- THE MERRY MOSEK

You each awaken in some corner of the tavern to the sun peeking through small window slits, and the sound of heavy footbeats accompanied by the squeaking of wagon wheels outside. You hear a brief buzzing of wings, and then a moment of silence before three Valkir warriors of the Apoi Melif stride into the room. **[Apoi player | Tija]** is among them, and their captain is inquiring for the innkeep.

A stout Tera strides in from the larder, a small breakfast of fatwood and a droplet of dew in hand. "What can I do ye for," she says with a thick accent, stretching her antennae back in a tired yawn.

The captain boredly drops two amber shards on the counter. "However much this will pay for in provisions," the Apoi said without a drop of emotion behind her voice. "And as quickly as you're able. We must be off without delay."

Suddenly, from outside, a commotion starts, and the sound of snapping wood and loud chittering loudly reverberates throughout the Tavern. If the floor-dwelling patrons were still rubbing the sleep from their eyes before, they were all acutely awake now, staring out the slitted windows and bobbing their heads to and fro trying to get a glimpse of what could be out there.

~TELL YOUR PARTY TO ROLL AN EASY AWARENESS CHECK (GG page 5)~

*Those who succeed will see a Kolo Ulu broken away from the caravan wagon and galloping off into the nearby underbrush, a harness still attached and dragging broken staves behind it, drawing behind a trailing trench in its wake.*

When you turn back to look at the troop of Apoi, they are already gone, the sound of buzzing drifting off outside. The Apoi followed the drawn trail to the edge of the underbrush before stopping and taking a moment to converse with each other. The captain hovers her way back to the tavern entrance and steps into the doorway facing the silent crowd. "We cannot leave our envoy unattended, and we cannot continue without that Kolo. Are there any volunteers who would assist us in retrieving the steed?"

## -RUNAWAY KOLO- SIDE QUEST OPPORTUNITY

~THE PARTY DECLINES~

*If the party declines to assist, they will continue their journey on page 4*

~THE PARTY ACCEPTS~

*If the party agrees to this venture, they will continue their journey on page 6*

-RUNAWAY KOLO-  
THE PARTY DECLINES

The room is quiet for a moment before a few stray hands raise into the air. The Apoi captain nods and gestures for them to follow her outside. From the window, you see them meet the others of the Apoi troop at the edge of the underbrush. The leader of the troop beckons the volunteers to follow after her, and one by one, they all disappear into the green shade beyond the tree roots, led by the line scratched into the dirt before them.

After a few minutes of staring out the window, the tavern crowd begin breaking off and the daily hum and chatter begins to buzz the room. [List all party member EXCEPT the Apoi player | Tija] find themselves at a table together sipping on morning dew drops.

~OFFER YOUR PARTY AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHAT WITH TAVERN FOLK~

| KEO THE BARD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>This Idom bard has a cheery disposition, sings with a lovely voice, and plays an Idomic lyre, which is both strummed, plucked, and bowed at the same time. He is fond of conversation and considers himself a rather well-traveled individual, happy to provide news and rumors he is able to glean from all the chatty tavern patrons.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| If inquired about local rumors:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | “The Mir trading outpost south of here, Ekoia, have lost some members of their caravan as of late, but none know where they’ve gone. Some say they’ve wandered off into the night, never to return, but I have my doubts about that.”                                                                                                              |
| If inquired about the Apoi:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | “Rarely had a good experience with their folk. Prideful, they are, and cutthroat to boot. But I certainly don’t want to besmirch the whole of their people; certainly the Asetari must have had some reasoning for planting one of their kin upon the Amber Throne. This lot here seem to be running a honey shipment. To where, I could not say.” |
| If inquired about the tavern:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | “I consider the Merry Mosek as a home! I’ve sung memory here for many seasons now, almost too many to count. Buli has been a loyal friend and business companion and has housed me since my first night. It was on this very stage that I first met my lovely mate, Uku. Although... That may be a story best kept for another time.”              |

| BULI THE TAVERNKEEP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>This Tera tavern host has a gruff but hospitable demeanor about her, a long scar crossing her forehead and drawn down over her right eye, shattered and blinded. She speaks with a chipper politeness in a thick Terani accent and is a gracious and grateful host. But if she senses disrespect or sees a brawl coming, she has not reservations towards swiftly ending any behavior that could damage her tavern or its reputation.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| If inquired about local rumors:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | “Oh, I hear bits of rumors here and there, but I’m far too busy keeping this place going to pay much mind to any of it. Keo would be a better mouth to tell you such things.”                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| If inquired about the Apoi:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | “It’s hard to trust many of them, save for the Empress Zel, long may she reign. But her soldiers have been coming through here since long before I took over this establishment, and I expect that won’t stop anytime soon. They often expect far more than what they really pay for, and they won’t take no for an answer, even if we’re only scraping by. Be careful around their lot.” |
| If inquired about the tavern:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | “I’ve kept this place for nigh 20 seasons now. Keo’s been sculking about with his lyre for about 9, though the way he embellishes things, you’d think he’d been here since the age of the Asetari! But he keeps the patrons content and usually calms rough-rousers down before I have to step in... And he’s a good friend. Hard to come by loyalty the likes of his.”                   |

[The Apoi player | Tija] has grown tired of waiting outside, and decides to make herself useful by repairing the broken guide staves on the wagon, and so decides to recruit some of the tavern patrons to assist in this ordeal.

~ALLOW THE APOI PLAYER TO ROLEPLAY THIS~  
~INTERACTION ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE PARTY~

**5** Once you are recruited, you all step outside. The first step to repairing the guide staves is to first remove the broken ones from the wagon.

**~TELL YOUR PARTY TO ROLL AN EASY ARTIFICE CHECK (GG page 5)~**  
*If any party member succeeds the check, they will successfully remove the broken staves without damaging the rest of the wagon.*

The next step will be to find appropriate sticks to fashion into new staves.

**~TELL YOUR PARTY TO ROLL A FORAGE CHECK FOR ROOT (GG page 17, 18)~**  
*If any party member succeeds the check, they will find sticks that have a good flex and bend to them, ensuring they won't snap as easily as the old staves.*

The next step will be to shape these sticks into new staves.

**~TELL YOUR PARTY TO ROLL AN EASY ARTIFICE CHECK (GG page 5)~**  
*If any party member succeeds the check, they will successfully shape the sticks into guide staves. If they fail, they will break the stick and need to Forage for another to replace it. Once two staves have been successfully fashioned, the other Apoi warrior will excuse the party, thank them for their service, and mount the new staves to the wagon herself.*

You all, [Apoi player | Tija] included, funnel yourselves back into the tavern, knackered and thirsty after your work. Buli approaches your table and asks what you'll all have to drink (GG pg 26).

After taking your orders, Buli takes your payment and scuttles behind the bar, drawing droplets out of tall, conical casks built of waxleaf and silkwrap. After placing them onto a serving platter, she hefts it overhead, perfectly balancing the dish to not spill even a single droplet as she weaves around table and chair back to your group. With a nimble dropping motion, she brings the whole affair down and the droplets roll off the tilted platter, perfectly rolling to a halt in front of each of you.

"Enjoy," she says cheerily. "Let me know if you need anything more." And with that, she walks off to serve another table just seating themselves.

Just as she leaves, the other Apoi soldier steps into the room. Spotting her compatriot across the room, she strides over gracefully. She nods to [Apoi player] before turning and addressing the rest of the party. "You all proved yourself quite handy. Where are you headed?"

### IJARI THE DRIVER

*This Apoi Valkir is traveling companion to [Apoi player | Tija], and is the acting driver and navigator for their shipment caravan. She speaks with a slight stilt, but is professional in her manner. However, her apparent politeness should not be interpreted as tolerance. As with most Melif, she harbors deep bigotries, but she also believes that there one must be discerning in where to exhibit them, and finds it easier to be pragmatic when trying to get what she really wants.*

Ijari inquires: "We are headed toward Ekoia. I would feel more comfortable traveling with a team that can quickly get us back in operation in case something else goes wrong. Would you join us?"

If inquired about payment: "What do you feel is the right price?" | You and the party should haggle (Opposing Coercion Checks), but Ijari will give no more than 1 Amber or 1 Silk per party member.

"You have a deal," Ijari says, and with a quick heel turn, she strode back through the now-crowding tavern and out the door.

An hour or so later, a fellow patron keeping watch out the window cries out "They're back!" Sure enough, the volunteers reemerge from the green wilderness, the Apoi following close behind them, and the golden Kolo in tow with a berry between its mandibles. The tavern crowd shuffles out cheering for the safe return of the Kolo, clapping the volunteers on the back for their heroism. The Kolo is quickly reharnessed and tied to the new staves, and within a matter of minutes, the caravan is packed with provisions, ready to continue its journey down the road, this time, with you all aboard.

**~THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 8~**

-RUNAWAY KOLO-  
THE PARTY ACCEPTS

The room is quiet for a moment before your hands raise into the air. The Apoi captain nods and gestures for you to follow her outside. Staying close behind her, she leads you to the edge of the underbrush where her companions are standing waiting for you.

“My name is Meliz,” the captain says in her monotone voice. “These are my companions, Ijari and [Apoi player | Tija]. [Apoi player | Tija] will accompany you into the underbrush to find the Kolo. Just follow that trail it left behind.” Meliz plunges her hand into a satchel hanging about her waist, and soon removes it, holding a small berry segment in her grasp. “Try to lure her back with this. If she resists, well...” She turns and makes a look at [Apoi player | Tija] before dropping the fruit into her hands. “Try not to hurt it.”

With that you all set off into the lush wilderness of the underbrush.

| APOI CHAMPION   TIJA THE GUARD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>This Apoi Valkir is polite and responsive to questions, even if a little standoffish, as most Melif are. While potentially being assumed by a player, this character has vital information pertinent to the story, and must give the following information in their interaction with the rest of the party, whether this is done by the GM or the player.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| If inquired as to the caravan’s destination:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | “We’re headed for Tamalin Mons for our honey shipment, but our next stop is a trading post south of here. Ekoia, I believe it’s called? Where are you all headed?”                                                         |
| Upon learning they are headed for Ekoia also:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | “Well, if we get this Kolo back safely, I’m sure I could negotiate with Meliz to offer you passage with us. I’m sure we’d all feel more comfortable moving down the road in numbers, given the rumors we’ve heard lately.” |
| When inquired about rumors:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | “Haven’t you heard? There’s been disappearances down this road as of late. Nobody is quite sure if it’s bandits or something...more nefarious... But nobody should be walking these roads alone right now.”                |

When the discussion dies down, the entrenched trail you were following was abruptly cut short, the soft dirt underfoot transitioning to a patch of pebbles.

~TELL YOUR PARTY TO ROLL AN AVERAGE AWARENESS OR SURVIVAL CHECK (GG page 5)~  
*If any party member succeeds the check, they will pick up the trail and the search continues.*

You pick up the pace as the fresh scent of a wild beast on the brush catches your senses. Within a few short minutes, you find yourself stepping into a beautiful sight as the underbrush thins out into a few patches of flowers, the grass giving way to a soft sand bank dipping down into a swift and babbling stream that cuts through a small clearing. On the opposite bank, the sand slopes up and transitions back into grass, then patches of flowers, until being overgrown by the underbrush once more. And standing between these two hill crests, drinking from the crystal-clear stream, was the Kolo Ulu, its golden carapace glistening under the warm morning light of Es.

As you approach it, it turns its head toward you and chitters, its jaws clacking together loudly in an intimidation display.

| KOLO ULU (GG PG 35)                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The following are actions the players can take to easily sway the Kolo into following them back. If two attempts are made and fail, the Kolo will unfurl its elytra and fly away, never to return.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Offer Berry:                                                                                                                                                                                              | You may offer it the berry Meliz gave to you. The player who offers it will roll an opposing Coercion Check against the Kolo’s Grit Check. If the player succeeds, they will sway the Kolo. If they fail, the Kolo will steal the berry and retreat.   |
| Fora Lin Beast Mastery:                                                                                                                                                                                   | If your party has a Fora Lin player, you may ask them to draw up to their Hand Score. If they cycle cards until they find the Trait “Call to the Wild,” they may use the Trait effect to sway the Kolo. If they fail the Check, the Kolo will retreat. |

# 7

## ~IF THE KOLO ESCAPES~

The amberclad Kolo finds your attempts at flattery unimpressive, and decides that you are not worth its indulgences any longer. It turns, opens its elytra, and flies off over the stream, above the flowers on the opposite shore, and finally disappears over the tall grass and shrubbery beyond.

Upon returning empty-handed, Meliz looks at you all with grim disappointment, and after an accounting of your fumbles, she says sternly, “We have to make it to Ekoia by nightfall, with or without that Kolo, and your actions leave me little choice but to consign you all under Imperial Authority to pull in place of a draft beast. Like it or not, you’re coming to Ekoia with us; go pack your things.”

## ~THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 8~

## ~IF YOU SWAY THE KOLO~

The amberclad Kolo chitters in thought for a few moments, eyeing every one of you up and down suspiciously, before finally approaching with some caution, and eventually rubbing its head affectionately into your hands. It gives off a waft of Memoku that smells something like trust, and then with a small chirp, it begins walking back past the flowers to the edge of the undergrowth.

You all follow close behind as she follows her own scent back through every twist and turn until you spill back out into the clearing under the shade of the Merry Mosek. You hear some chatter from within the tavern, and out come the lot of them, cheering and celebrating the Kolo’s safe return.

Meliz approaches you all. “Thank you for your assistance today,” she says in that ever-emotionless droning voice. “If you are also journeying to Ekoia, you are welcome to join our crew as payment for your talents. And besides,” she *almost* chuckles. “We may have need of you yet.”

## ~THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 8~

# -CHAPTER 2-

## THE ROAD SOUTH

8

The caravan sets out, your wagon leading three others behind it as you embark on the pebblestone highway before you. You look ahead down the way into the deep forest and realize how much of a journey lay before you this day. Looking behind you down the caravan, you can see that each wagon is connected in sequence via fiber cords lashed to the back corners of the wagon ahead to the front corners of the wagon behind, giving passengers and crew alike the ability to traverse between the wagons as needed or instructed.

### ~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY | IF THE PARTY IS DRAWING THE WAGON~

*Encourage your players to converse with each other, regaling each other with personal anecdotes their characters might have. Give them the feeling of passing the time during a job, perhaps ten to twenty minutes of roleplay.*

### ~THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 9~

### ~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY | IF THE PARTY IS RIDING THE WAGON~

*Indicate to your players to speak that they have the opportunity to speak with the other crew and passengers of the caravan. The party sits in the lead wagon with Meliz, Ijari, and (Apoi player | Tija). The following is a list of characters they may encounter in the smaller wagons behind the lead, which they may traverse to and from via the fibers cords and passing an Easy Athletics Check between each wagon.*

#### **CART 2 | KARE THE DRIVER**

*This Apoi's face lights up a little at the sight of newcomers, tired of having to listen to Ji prattle on about her position in the imperial court. Kare is bored and rather put off by her assignment to this caravan, and wishes she were back at the Citadel. Though she may hold some bigotry toward your non-Apoi players, she would rather speak to you than to listen to Ji for a moment longer than she has to.*

#### **CART 2 | IKO THE GUARD**

*This Apoi stands alert, and will refuse to speak to the party in sentences containing more than two or three words. She takes her watch seriously, determined to be the first to spot danger should it appear.*

#### **CART 2 | JI THE TRADE REPRESENTATIVE**

*This Apoi is a proud member of the imperial aristocracy, and a lower member of the Empress' court under the Master of Trade. She will boast about the numerous trade deals she's made, though she will absolutely embellish these claims to inflate her status and importance.*

#### **CART 3 | ZIPA THE DRIVER**

*This Apoi holds deeply-seated bigotry toward every other race other than her own, and will refuse to speak to the party.*

#### **CART 3 | HIJA THE GUARD**

*This Apoi, like Iko, is keeping watch, though she seems much more bored than she is attentive, and uses her assignment as an excuse to not interact with the party*

#### **CART 3 | XUN THE BREWER**

*This Apoi is the artisan whose work is being shipped by this caravan. In contrast to other Apoi, she is friendly to other races, and is happy to interact with the party. She has a bubbly personality and may even be intoxicated, though that is not unusual for someone in her profession. If the party keeps her well-enough company, she may reward them by filling their Honey and Pollen Forages.*

#### **CART 4 | KIJi THE DRIVER**

*This Apoi is a quiet and softspoken individual. While wary of strangers, she can be warmed up to over time, although her main focus for the time being is driving the wagon.*

#### **CART 4 | ARA THE GUARD**

*This Apoi looks off past the rear wagon, keeping an astute and vigilant eye over the back of the caravan. She will not respond to the party at all if she is approached for conversation.*

### ~THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 9~

# 9

The conversation eventually dies down and the ride becomes a quiet reflection of the forest around you. Avasong bounces around the tree trunks from some far-off canopy, the chirping and buzzing of Exuta cuts in from the underbrush, the wagon wheels rhythmically clack and clatter on the pebblestone, and the road goes ever on and on.

**~BEGIN ROLLING TRAVEL TURNS (GG pg 13)~**

*Use TAMAN\_TRAVEL\_MAP from the provided materials to track the progress between The Merry Mosek (orange) and Ekoia (purple), using the following Travel Event tables.*

| DAYTIME ROADSIDE ENCOUNTERS |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1                           | Friendly Traveler (pg 10)       |
| 2                           | Environmental Hazard (GG pg 18) |
| 3                           | Nothing Happens                 |
| 4                           | Combat Encounter                |
| 5                           | Site of Interest (pg 11)        |
| 6                           | Injury that forces a Rest       |

| NIGHTTIME ROADSIDE ENCOUNTERS |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1                             | Dubious Traveler (pg 10)        |
| 2                             | Environmental Hazard (GG pg 18) |
| 3                             | Nothing Happens                 |
| 4                             | Combat Encounter                |
| 5                             | Combat Encounter                |
| 6                             | Injury that forces a Rest       |

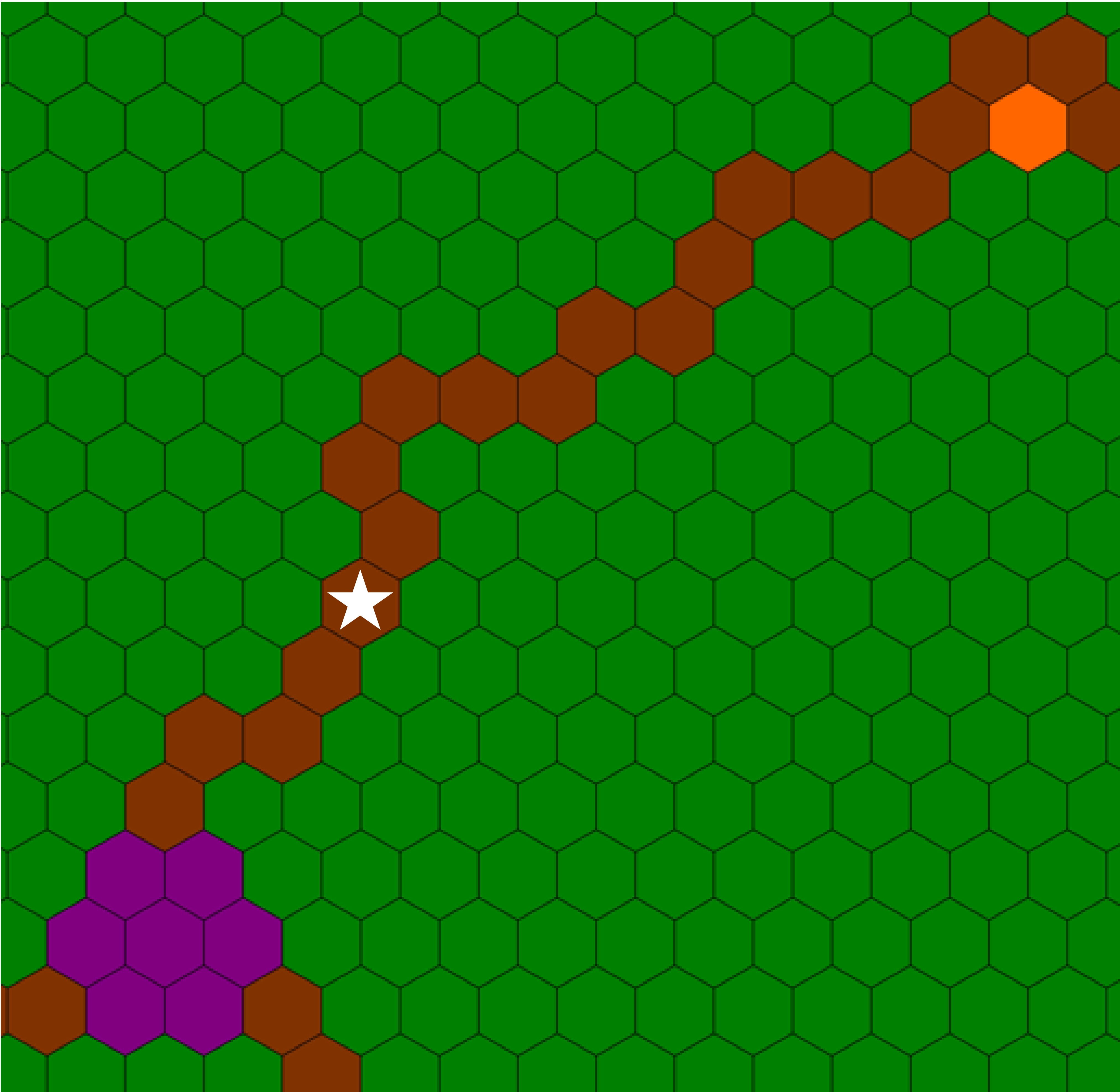
**~IF YOU ROLL A COMBAT ENCOUNTER~**

*Run the Combat Encounter found on page 12*

*After Combat concludes, all further rolls that land on a Combat Encounter do not trigger another Combat Encounter. Instead, nothing happens, and you may roll for the next Travel Turn.*

**~IF YOU DO NOT ROLL A COMBAT ENCOUNTER~**

*If the party enters the following space (marked with a white star) without entering a rolled Combat Encounter, they will automatically enter into the Combat Encounter found on page 12 and will not find another before reaching Ekoia.*



| FRIENDLY TRAVELER   RUKI THE BARD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>This friendly Idom bard is traveling away from Ekoia toward the Merry Mosek and carries a simple lute and an acorn drum. He is quick and happy to strike up conversation with the party. He offers to play the party a song of your choosing.</i>                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Song                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Effect                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Second Wind:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | This plucky tune fills the listener with confidence. Until the end of the party's next Combat, any time the players and their Allies are Bolstered, that Bolster's duration is extended by 2 Rounds. |
| Accelerated Rhythm:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | As the tempo builds, so too does your pace. Until the end of the party's next Combat, all players and their Allies have 3 additional Mobility.                                                       |
| A Hymn to Lir:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | This praise to the Asetari of ambition showers your endeavors with luck. Until the end of the party's next Combat, all players and their Allies may add 2 or subtract 2 from all their roll results. |
| <i>The bard strums his lute and beats his drums, singing a tune that enchants you in memories long past. When he concludes, you feel the power of the Dream Lands rush through you all, emboldening your Marrow. You all break into a round of applause, enchanted by the Idom's talents. He gives a small bow, a farewell, and a wave goodbye before once again hopping off up the road.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

| DUBIOUS TRAVELER   KELOI THE ALCHEMIST                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <i>This shady Het has wandered from the underbrush onto the road in front of the caravan, pausing in its path. When inquired as to his purpose, he begs for a lift from Meliz, offering a hefty sum of amber shards as payment. Meliz begrudgingly agrees, not wanting to stop for too long. After Keloï has boarded, he introduces himself to the party, inquiring after their business and revealing himself to be a tea dealer, and offers his wares, open for haggle.</i>                                      |                                                                                                                                                |        |
| Tea                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Effect                                                                                                                                         | Haggle |
| Soothing Infusion:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | An antidote to even the most vile of venoms and poisons. Bolster yourself or an Ally for 6 Rounds. While Bolstered, gain 1 Vitality per Round. |        |
| Rousing Brew:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | A strong and stiff solution that invigorates the drinker. You or an Ally may add +6 to the Score of your next Skill Check.                     |        |
| Energizing Libation:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | A nectar-sweetened swig that grants heightened stamina to the drinker. You or an Ally gain 5 Mobility until the end of Combat.                 |        |
| <i>When your dealing is concluded, the sly Het gives you a nod, thanking you for the business before opening his enormous wings and sweeping away into the darkness on a sharp burst of wind that passes over the caravan, laughing as he disappears into the shadows. Those who treated him poorly or disrespectfully will look down at their potions to discover they have vanished. Those who treated him kindly will keep their potions. Meliz looks into her pouch to discover the amber shards are gone.</i> |                                                                                                                                                |        |

| SITE OF INTEREST   AN ANCIENT SHRINE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>As your turn around a bend in the road, a pile of stones and pebbles can barely be seen from the edge of the path. After stopping and approaching it, you can see that it bares upon its larger faces the ancient hand paintings depicting the Asetari. The memoku within each cartouche are faded and dim, but enough still lingers to recall the prayers of this shrine’s last pilgrims; a Manta monk sojourning from Arika Melvara petitioning Lir for the endurance to complete his journey; an Idom and her hatchlings asking Dar for a joyous day of travel; a Fora Lin begging Xao for rain in the drought; an Apoi seeking guidance from Su and Ur whether to wait out a storm or to ride through it; and a dozen more asking Es for good weather and thanking Him for His creation. You all contemplate a prayer to leave here for yourself.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Prayer</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Effect</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| A Prayer to Es                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | You raise your hands into the sky, embracing the warmth of Es’s light. Until the end of your next Combat, environmental events and disasters cannot occur.                                                                              |
| A Prayer to Su                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | You make an appeal to Su, asking her to grant understanding that surpasses all barriers. Play your next Memoku Trait for free.                                                                                                          |
| A Prayer to Xao                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Imploring Xao for assistance, you muster your focus and shut out all distractions. Gain 1 Chitin and instantly negate the next Trait you are Burdened with.                                                                             |
| A Prayer to Lir                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | You seek from Lir a way to go beyond your limitations and achieve lofty goals. +5 to the Score of your next Skill Check.                                                                                                                |
| A Prayer to Ur                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | You beseech Ur for insight and knowledge of the future. At the start of your next combat, you may draw three additional cards into your hand, then return any three cards from your hand to the top of your Deck in any order you wish. |
| A Prayer to Dar                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | You sing unto Dar, praising his name and seeking inspiration. At the start of your next Combat, draw one additional card into your hand. You may play the first card of your first turn for free.                                       |
| A Prayer to Lu                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | You bow in earnest to Lu, imploring for her to uphold defenders of the meek. The first time you are attacked in your next Combat, that attack automatically misses.                                                                     |
| A Prayer to Okt                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | You petition Okt for aid, that you may stand resolute against the trials to come. The first time you are attacked in your next combat, that attack deals half damage to you and half damage to the attacker.                            |

The moment is quiet, without Avasong nor chittering to be heard, only the light rapping of wheel against stone breaking the eerie silence. A soft breeze bends the branches of a small bush, a light rustle accompanying their sway. Suddenly and without warning, shadows rush out from beneath the bush, revealing their true nature as they step out into the sunlight: armed brigands. You and the caravan guards draw your weapons and prepare for battle.

**~RUN COMBAT ENCOUNTER~**

*Use the following Creature Sheets to control your party's Allies and Foes. Feel free to adjust the number of Creatures involved to better suit the number of players in your party or how long you wish the Combat Encounter to play out.*

*If the party does not defeat every Foe Creature fielded within six Turns, one Creature who is not engaged will turn face and run. If all the Creatures are engaged, the Creature with the highest Vitality will disengage, and, supposing they survive the opportune attack from their opponent, will run at full speed off the board and out of combat.*

| ALLY CREATURES                | FOE CREATURES            |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ally                          | Foe                      |
| Meliz (GG pg 36)              | For a Igi (GG pg 44)     |
| Apoi player   Tija (GG pg 36) | For a Igi (GG pg 44)     |
| Iko (GG pg 36)                | For a Igi (GG pg 44)     |
| Hija (GG pg 36)               | For a Igi (GG pg 44)     |
| Ara (GG pg 36)                | Het Nivilo (GG pg 40)    |
|                               | Manta Asevilo (GG pg 38) |

**~IF THE PARTY FALLS~**

You have fallen. The brigands make swift work of the rest of the caravan, and they quickly take control of the wagons, leading them off into the forest. The last memories you take with you, drifting into the Dream Lands, are the tracks of Kolo and wheels pressed into the grass, leading off into the dark depths of the forest beyond the trail.

**~THIS JOURNEY ENDS HERE~**

**~IF THE PARTY IS VICTORIOUS~**

*If the party chooses to search the corpses, they fill their Forage Pouch entirely.*

As the last of the brigands lets out a dying wail, you all gather back at the caravan, dragging your wounded on board. It is best to leave before more bandits or other opportunists show up. The drivers waste no time, and within moments, the caravan is at a maximum pace, careening down the road as fast as the Kolo can gallop. If you are injured, your wounds are stabilized for now, but you must seek further medical attention when you get to Ekoia.

*Continue rolling for Travel Turns until the caravan reaches Ekoia.*

Hours later, the caravan follows a sharp turn south in the road, and at the limits of their vision, they can see the tip of a brightly-colored tent canopy, hear the sounds of voices and music faintly whispering from afar, and smell the scent of food wafting on the air. Ekoia at last.

**~THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 13~**

## -CHAPTER 3- EKOIA

As the caravan creeps nearer and nearer to the grand tent and its joyous, raucous sounds, the surrounding outer fence comes into view, Ampí torchlights adorning the upper points of its twig construction and faintly illuminating the surrounding perimeter in a greenish-yellow glow. As you draw nigh unto the gate, it swings open, and a small procession steps out onto the road in front of you. Leading this three-person posse is a large and portly Mir garbed in a bright blue and yellow shawl, trailing his long hindbody behind him, and on either side of him is a Fora Igi guard, each with a long spear in hand and a wary expression on their face. As the wagons pull up into view and the torch light illuminates the Apoi crew, the Mir throws out his arms as though welcoming you into his embrace.

“At last!” he shouts warmly in his booming baritone timbre. “We’ve had word your caravan would pass through our gates soon, and here you are! My name is Karima, I am the trade representative assigned to welcome your arrival. I pray your journey was safe?”

Meliz flutters down from the wagon and approaches Karima with a grim expression. “Were it only so,” she says with a deep, exhausted sigh. “We were accosted by bandits not far up the road from here.” Then, with a shifty look at the guards accompanying Karima, she adds, “Some of their kind, as well as a monk.”

Karima staggers back a moment in shock. “A Manta? Among bandits?” His incredulity is open and apparent. Given the Manta peoples’ history in doing away with raiders in the past, it is rare to hear of Manta turning to lives of crime. “How desperate they must be.”

“Well, we removed him of any desperation he might have been under.” Meliz says it so stone-like and in matter-of-fact that it took a moment for Karima to register what she was implying.

“I see,” he says. “May their souls find solace in their next hatch.” As you all climb down from the lead wagon and approach the welcoming party, Karima turns to you and dawns a curious expression. “And who might you all be?”

Before you can answer, Meliz cuts in. “Unexpected passengers,” she says, a hint of urgency in her voice. From this, it became evident to Karima that Meliz wanted more than anything to be shown to a sleeping quarter after the day’s many delays and dangers. But after a moment, she relaxes her shoulders a smidge, and in a somewhat gentler tone, she says, “But useful, nonetheless. Treat them this night as though they are of our company.”

Karima’s cheery grin lightly pulls across his face again. “Then you are most welcome, friends.” With a nimble and hypnotic movement, he claps his many sets of hands in a short series before gesturing toward the gate. “Welcome to Ekoia, travelers. Let us escort you to your nests for this evening.”

With a wave of her hand, Meliz motions for the caravan to move into the gates. You all walk closely behind Karima as he leads you past the twig fence and perimeter stations filled with curious guards peeking out windows at you, until all the wagons are within the fence and the gates are closed. The caravan crew dismounts and takes a moment to stretch before they all congregate behind their host, following him through a shallow maze of guard tents made from petals and leaves before emptying out into a void between the guard quarters and the outermost trade wagons. Breaching this inner perimeter, you wind your way down alleys and makeshift streets, the sounds of music and merrymaking emanating from the occasional shop. As you creep closer and closer toward the center of this massive cluster of wagons, the most prominent of these partying sounds grows louder and louder until the whole company pours out into the central plaza, and the source becomes apparent.

Across the plaza from you sits an amalgamation of many wagons, fashioned into a large, multi-tiered structure, and above its entrance is mounted a large and beautiful lotus flower. “Welcome, friends,” Karima says in a singsong voice. “To the Blessed Blossom. This establishment boasts our softest nests and our finest libations. Anything you desire to drink and eat tonight and tomorrow morning are our compliments.”

As you all enter into the bustling tavern, the sight of a dozen Apoi Valkir draws all the patrons’ attention, and the room goes suddenly still and quiet with unease. Karima takes the opportunity to address the room, projecting his voice and saying, “We are proud to host a caravan from Arika Melvara, and we ask that you make them feel welcome as they rest with us this evening!” Gesturing to you, he adds, “And these are their esteemed guests! We have been instructed to honor them all the same! Now, they have come a long ways and encountered many dangers in their travels. I would hate to bring down the merriment this evening, but they must rest now, and we will need the tavern to be quiet for the remainder of the evening. I would direct you all to some of our other establishments, if you please, and we’ll welcome you all back here come morrow!”

With a small groan of disappointment, the crowd draws in the last of their droplets, and the tavern’s patrons begin to slowly shuffle their way out the entryway. Meliz turns to Karima, her face as stonelike as ever, though with an air of exhaustion tinting her eyes. “Thank you for your hospitality. Would you ask the barkeep to send mead to my quarters?”

Karima nods, unsurprised by her request. “Certainly.” Turning to you and the crew, he adds, “And I can arrange the same for any and all of you, should you wish.”

You all make your way up to the elevated nesting quarters, taking a chamber to yourselves, and with only the smallest interruption by the bar keep depositing a mead droplet by the leaf flap of each of your doors, you all drift into the Dream Lands as the night passes.

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You all awake the next morning to the glow of colorful light seeping in as the sun beats through the great tent situated above you, and the sound of chittering and conversation begins to fill the crisp morning air. One by one you congregate in the tavern to find the Apoi crew already seated at a number of tables clustered together in the far corner of the room.

Meliz is seated on a stool at the furthest corner of this cluster, and upon seeing you all begin trickling downstairs, she gestures to an adjacent table. “Sit and eat with us,” she says, a hint of grogginess in her cold voice. “We have something to discuss with you all.”

MELIZ THE CAPTAIN	
<i>This Apoi Melif is the captain of the Valkir troop that crews the honey caravan. She is a straightforward, no-nonsense leader, and while she exhibits the same prejudices that most Melif share, she is extremely pragmatic, and will not hesitate to use good will to her advantage to achieve what she believes to be best for her, her crew, and for the people she perceives and being under her stewardship. The following is essential information for the party to receive to move the plot forward.</i>	
Upon the party’s yesterday, we don’t believe that lot had the look or behavior of abductors. We are going to sitting down: leave [Apoi player Tija] behind, and you will all assist her in her investigations into these disappearances. Ask around, see what you can find out. There’s bound to be someone who knows something.”	“We have talked at some length about the goings on with the disappearances around Ekoia and the surrounding areas. While some might chalk this up to the bandits we encountered
If inquired about compensation:	“I would have imagined that doing a public service should be its own reward. But... if you insist upon payment, what do you feel is the right price for this task?” You and the party should haggle (Opposing Coercion Checks), but Meliz will give no more than 1 Amber or 1 Silk per party member.

Upon striking the deal, Meliz stands, and her crew follows suit. “Thank you for your service,” she says. Then, turning to [Apoi player | Tija], she adds, “We will return here in a week’s time after dropping our shipment off at Tamalin Mons. If your mission proves successful, we will meet you here and pick you up on our way back to the citadel with the return shipment. I will make an offering for your success, sister.”

With that, she turns to leave, and the rest of the crew follows suit. As the last of the Apoi march out the exit, they leave behind only you, a few patrons, the bar keep, and an eerie and dreadful silence behind them.

15

THE BLESSED BLOSSOM

This lovely tavern is one of the highlights of the Ekoia markets, and a common watering hole for the many visitors and residents of the trading post.

~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY~
The party may interact with the following NPCs as part of their investigation or as customers of their wares.

JUFU THE TAVERN KEEP		
<i>This Mir tavern keep has her many arms filled with droplets and food, trailing around the Blessed Blossom in a frantic, nonstop run between the tables. She is friendly and happy to serve her guests, always seeming grateful for every new face that steps through the door. Being that she is busy, however, she will often speak with few words and does not stick around for chit chat, and if inquired about the disappearances, she will give you a sad look and tell you to refer to Uku. She offers the following items:</i>		
Drink/Food	Effect	Haggle
Apoi Mead	GG Page 33	3 Root
Sap Mead	GG Page 33	2 Sap
Fi Wine	GG Page 33	3 Root
Dew Drop	GG Page 33	1 Root
Dandelion Nectar	GG Page 33	1 Pollen
Kolo Flesh	GG Page 33	1 Amber
Fatwood	GG Page 33	2 Root

REKI THE PATRON	
<i>This Tera Neva is a prime example of your average Tera; friendly, boisterous, and almost always inebriated. One of his antennae skews a little off-kilter, and his speech is somewhat slurred, but he is open and accommodating, always happy to help a fellow in need. He sits with his friend Pina at the bar, happily sipping on his sap mead droplet.</i>	
If inquired about disappearances:	“Ah, yes, I heard your striped friend laying that task upon you all. Quite a demand. I could not tell you much about the disappearances, only that I’ve heard of them occurring. But last night, before you all arrived, that Ro over there was in here asking after anyone who would help her find her friend. Perhaps she knows something more.”

PINA THE PATRON	
<i>This Fora Lin wears a somewhat bored face, though with a light air of constant satisfaction. She is evidently not as drunk as her drinking companion, lightly sampling from her wine droplet. She speaks few words, and nods along to whatever Reki is saying, only interjecting or contributing with short, pertinent sentences.</i>	
Speaking after Reki is finished:	“Indeed, she may. Most certainly worth the ask.”

SURI THE PATRON	
<i>This Ro Jelevan is evidently distraught, sober, and anxious. She is sipping from a droplet of fresh morning dew, and the fingers of one of her middle hands is nervously and rhythmically tapping on the table in front of her. She sits alone at a table near the door, and she looks anxious to speak with you.</i>	
When you approach her:	“I heard your captain and you all speaking about the abductions. My friend, Liu, has been missing for four days. Will you help me find her?”
If inquired about missing friend:	“We were traveling the West road on our way here four days ago. Night was swiftly falling and it looked like it may rain. We decided to spend the night beneath some underbrush some ways off the side of the road. When I woke up the next morning, Liu was nowhere to be found. I spent so much of that morning looking for her, but there was no sign of her to be found except...” She pulls from her pouch a long strand of silk, unkempt and unbraided. “I feared the worst for her, and knew that I was also in danger if I stayed any longer. I rushed here as fast as I could, but there’s been nobody who would offer their help. Please, if you can... Please find Liu. Please find my friend.”

UKU THE DANCER	
<i>This Idom is a beautiful specimen of her kind, wielding slender but strong legs, and adorning herself in bright paints and ribbons. She is a dancing performer during the tavern’s nightlife, accompanied by the band that comes to play every evening. Many patrons come to watch her stunning performances, and she is regarded as one of the most treasured individuals of Ekoia. She is mindful of her tongue, never wanting to badmouth anybody who doesn’t truly deserve it, and a bit of a tease when she’s caught in the right mood.</i>	
If inquired about Keo the Bard:	“Keo and I were once mates. He plays and sings beautifully, and his memoku song is so vibrant and vivid. Though, between you and I, some of his best memories come from our time together. We had three children together, they’re out causing mischief right now, I’m sure. I love him dearly, but... he couldn’t break himself away from the Merry Mosek. There are memories too dear to him there, and when the opportunity to move down here came... he couldn’t bring himself to join us... I would see him break whatever chains that hold him there. I would have him here with me and our young ones. But that is his journey to make, and we cannot make it for him.”
If inquired about disappearances:	“Oh, we have been hearing of people disappearing since the middle of last season. At least once a week, we’ll have a newcomer in here delivering the news of a traveler having a departure log even just a settlement over, but never arriving at our gates. It’s caused many of our normal through-travelers to not want to leave until whatever it is has been taken care of. I don’t think there’s much more I know of the situation, but if you find out anymore, please come and tell me. Many of our patrons come to me for news of these local goings on.”

With this, you depart from the tavern and out into the plaza. Around this central area can be found a number of bustling businesses, each run out of one or more wagons, some lined up end to end, some parked around each other to create smaller courtyards to accommodate more space for the shop’s wares. Where would you like to go first?

~INVESTIGATION~

The party are free to go to the following shops and locations to interview and investigate the disappearances. It is also highly recommended to give patronage to these shops, as you may find need of their wares, products, or services.

~THE FORAGE EXCHANGE (PG 17)~

~THE STURDY BRANCH | SMITH SHOP (PG 18)~

~OLIE’S ODDITY EMPORIUM | CURIOS SHOP (PG 19)~

~THE RADIANCE RETREAT | SMOKE SAUNA (PG 20)~

When all locations have been visited, they will conclude with the chapter outro on pg 21.

17

THE FORAGE EXCHANGE

As you approach the Forage Exchange, you can hear dozens of voices chattering at high volume, some bartering, some screaming, all of them trying to get a good value for the Forage they’ve brought to trade. As you enter into the courtyard, a dozen storage wagons surround you, and you find Mir representatives haggling with traders of all races, some looking smug, others annoyed, and more still furious at some insultingly low rate they’ve been offered. A Mir approaches your group, courteous but curt.

“Welcome to our Forage Exchange, strangers! My name is Hu. As you can tell, we are extremely busy, and we’re running thin on representatives, so I will be the representative for all of your needs this day. I warn you that we will only be allowing three trades per individual here today, so be mindful of what you really need, as you won’t be able to trade again until tomorrow.”

~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY~
The party may interact with the following NPCs as part of their investigation or as customers of their wares.

HU THE EXCHANGE ACCOUNTANT	
<i>This Mir trader specializes in exchange rates for Forage at the daily value rate. While friendly enough, he is shrewd and focused entirely on business, only speaking enough to convey accurate trade information to the customer. If inquired about the disappearances, he will tell them that is none of his business and to inquire elsewhere. You and the party may haggle (Opposing Coercion Checks), but Hu will give no more than 1 Forage lower than the going rate, and will ask for a balance against it in the next trade.</i>	
<i>Forage Offered</i>	<i>Exchange Rate</i>
9 Mineral	2 Root
2 Herb	3 Fungus
2 Fungus	7 Mineral
2 Pollen	Blood
3 Root	1 Honey
1 Amber	4 Herb
2 Sap	1 Amber
2 Blood	5 Sap
1 Honey	5 Silk
3 Silk	4 Pollen

When your business is concluded, Hu gives you all a deep bow. “Thank you for your patronage. We hope you enjoy this beautiful day here in Ekoia!” The party returns to the plaza (pg 16).

You catch sight of a mildly emptier shop, a number of spears and polearms planted in front of it in the fashion of a fence with a gap in the middle, allowing visitors to pass in and out of these wagons’ courtyards. As you approach, you can see that this vendor is a weapons dealer, with all manner of swords, daggers, bows, and other martial tools hung on the outer walls of each wagon. As you pass through the perimeter of spears, a large Mir approaches you, a steep hunch in her back, and her gaze swaying from side to side as she eyes you all with a curious expression.

“Hello, friends,” she says in a low, gruff voice. “Welcome to the Sturdy Branch. I can provide you with the finest arms that Ekoia has to offer. How may I serve you young folk this day?”

~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY~
The party may interact with the following NPCs as part of their investigation or as customers of their wares.

KIRU THE SMITH	
This Mir has a rough but caring way about her, kindly in speech and manner, and always happy to supply her customers with the best protection she can offer. However, if one were to push her too hard in a haggle, she will begin making exorbitant pricing demands in the following trades.	
If inquired about disappearances:	“I’ve heard tell of those disappearances over these past few months, yes. I’ve also heard rumors from others that they’ve glimpsed the glint of a web in the trees not far off the path. I shudder to think that those poor souls are being taken by an Arak, but... If you head down the Western road out of Ekoia, I implore you to take heed. I would lament to hear of your disappearance as well.”
Weapon Offered	Haggle
Ordinary Amber Dagger (GG pg 31)	4 Amber
Masterwork Flint Sword (GG pg 31)	1 Amber
Refined Scale Axe (GG pg 31)	3 Amber
Ordinary Mosek Short Bow (GG pg 31)	2 Amber
Masterwork Crystal Atlatl (GG pg 31)	3 Amber
Mosek Needle Bolt (5) (GG pg 31)	3 Root
Scale Bolt (5) (GG pg 31)	5 Root
Ordinary Thorn Staff (GG pg 32)	1 Amber
Rustic Flint Spear (GG pg 32)	1 Amber
Refined Stinger Polearm (GG pg 32)	4 Amber
Masterwork Thorn Baton (GG pg 32)	2 Amber
Refined Marl Gauntlets (GG pg 32)	2 Amber
Ordinary Bark Shield (GG pg 32)	1 Amber
Rustic Heli Shield (GG pg 32)	2 Amber
Refined Marl Shield (GG pg 32)	2 Amber

When your business is concluded, Kiru claps her hands together in that same hypnotic pattern performed by Karima the evening prior. “Blessings upon you, friends, and may the light of Es shine upon thee in all thy travels.” The party returns to the plaza (pg 16).

19

OLIE’S ODDITY EMPORIUM

You spot a small shop across the plaza, only one wagon wide, and unique in that is devoid of customers except for a tall Het peeking over the counter and speaking enthusiastically with the shop keeper. As you draw closer, you can detect some strange odors coming from within the wagon, and inside, across the counter, you can faintly make out a Mir standing there, happily chatting with the Het customer. At your approach, the Mir breaks away from their conversation and turns their attention to you.

“Welcome, strangers,” she says, a light wispieness in her voice. “My name is Olie, and these are my oddities. I’m running low on stock these days, but you are free to peruse.”

~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY~
The party may interact with the following NPCs as part of their investigation or as customers of their wares.

OLIE THE CURIOUS	
This Mir is wistful and absentminded, and no doubt a sweet and kind soul. She can often be found staring off with a distant gaze, only snapping out of it when a customer announces their presence.	
If inquired about disappearances:	“Oh goodness, it’s terrible what’s been happening. I have only heard rumors of monsters on the West road. You’re not going out that way, are you?”
When the party affirms their investigation:	“Oh, blessings upon you, brave souls! I cannot see you leave here without aiding you how I can.” She hands over the Memoku Wayfinder. “Free of charge. This will guide you to wherever you imagine. Just promise me you will bring it back upon your return! As for the rest of my wares, I would be willing to part with them for half my normal asking price.”
Curio Offered	Haggle
Amber Talisman (GG pg 33)	1 Amber
Sapphire Talisman (GG pg 33)	1 Amber
Memoku Wayfinder (GG pg 33)	4 Amber
Caravan Token (GG pg 33)	1 Amber

FEN THE THRALL	
This Het, while socially awkward, is unusually sincere and open for one of his kind.	
If inquired about disappearances:	“I have been investigating them myself, though I’ve found little to point me to who the culprit is. What have you found?”
If the party reveals the Arak rumor:	“Those accursed web weavers. What I wouldn’t do to ensure even one of their ends.”
If the party does not have a Het player:	“I know I am a stranger to you, but if you would have me, I would be your ally in this coming venture. These acts of terror have gone unpunished for far too long, and I would see them stopped.”
If the party accepts:	“My name is Fen. Consider me at your service.”

As you step away from the shop, your business now concluded, Olie claps her hands in the Mir way. “Safe travels, strangers! May the light of the Asetari shine upon you all!” The party returns to the plaza (pg 16).

Staring off across the plaza, you see a conclave of large, brown tents grouped around each other, smoke billowing out of the openings of their pointed tops. The whole plaza is scented by these odorous smokes, and outside the flap of the main tent is a Mir barker.

“Smokes and herbal remedies!” she cries. “Relaxation and rejuvenation, here at the Radiance Retreat!” As you approach, she turns her attention to you. “Weary travelers! We have cures for all your needs! Step right in!”

Stepping into the tent flap, you are greeted by another Mir, crusted in soot and resin. “Welcome, friends,” he says in a slow, gravely voice. “Welcome to the Radiance Retreat. We have three public saunas available right now, all of them for the low price of only two Herbs per person. How can we mend you this find day?”

~ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY~
The party may interact with the following NPCs as part of their investigation or as customers of their wares.

RIET THE SAUNA KEEP	
<i>This Mir is relaxed and friendly, speaking slow and thoughtfully. He is the proprietor of this smoking establishment, and will provide any service (within reason) to ensure your stay with them is relaxing and comfortable. Whichever sauna tent the majority of the party enter will be the tent where the following story takes place.</i>	
If inquired about disappearances:	“I’m afraid I know very little about them. However...while I cannot recommend you disturb your fellow patrons, it’s possible you may overhear something in their conversations that may be useful to you...”
If asked for the Niko Sauna:	“You may find our Niko sauna through the tent flap on your right, I hope you enjoy!”
If asked for the Koka Sauna:	“You may find our Koka sauna through the tent flap on your left. Have a wonderful time!”
If asked for the Kino Sauna:	“You may find our Kino sauna through the tent flap just behind me, may your smoke be restful!”

As you all shuffle into the sauna tent, a wave of dry heat washes over you instantly like a wave crashing on the shore. The smell of herbal smoke permeates the air, billowing and filling the room from a small stone firepit in the center of the room. Above the fire sits a pulley mechanism suspending a large bouquet of the herb above the smoldering flame, singeing the tips of the flowers and leaves as they droop low to the hot coals. A Mir stands by the pit, stoking the fire, tending its fuel, and adjusting the height of the dangling bouquet so as to keep it from being fully engulfed in flames.

The pit is situated at the center of a gentle, radial slope, surrounded by dozens of mats for patrons to lay on and immerse themselves in the smoke. In this particular tent, only a group of three Fora Lin are found, seated at the far side of the sauna. As you circle around the pit, the Smoke Master gives you all a smile and a short bow before returning to his duties. You all seat yourselves near enough to the other group, though not so near as to draw their notice.

~TELL YOUR PARTY TO ROLL AN EASY AWARENESS CHECK (GG page 5)~
Those who succeed will be able to eavesdrop on the following conversation.

“...well I don’t like our predicament any better than you do, Oen,” the middle Fora whispers to the one on her right. “But we can’t risk traveling through the West pass, especially with talk of all those abductions.”

“But we have to make Donada before the next festival begins,” Oen replies, squirming around on her mat, looking for a comfortable position. “Otherwise the brewing guild will have our hides for not striking our trade quota - ugh, how can you two stand the heat in here? ...Anyway, it’s bad enough we’ve been grounded here for three weeks already, Iun. I’m going stir-crazy.”

“Better stir-crazy and safe than dead on the roads, sister,” the third For a says, a slight wavering to her gruff voice. “Besides, I’m not going out West. All the brood-nurses in Tamalin Mons growing up drilled into us about Akaiaga, don’t you remember?”

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“You... You don’t really think that monster is still alive after all these years, do you, Erur?” says Iun with a sheepish quiver. “Surely Serak couldn’t still lurk in that abyssal hole.”

“It’s an Arak, Iun,” Erur reminds her. “And an Arana at that. They say the beasts can subsist for more than four of our lifetimes. Yes, I think that if Akaiaga is still haunted by that monster, that is the most likely explanation for all these disappearances.”

“Then all those people... All those abductees...” Oen gasps.

“Yes...” Erur says, sorrow washing over her voice. “Even if someone were to go out to Akaiaga and rid us of Serak... we likely won’t see them again.”

A long pause hangs in the air as this final, devastating piece to the puzzle sets in – that even if you succeed in your mission, you will likely not rescue any of the missing Sekuta. But as you sit there, the smoke washing over you, one thing becomes clear: you cannot allow any more abductions, and you cannot let this monster continue in this horrendous reign of terror.

After having your fill of smoke, you all wander back outside to the plaza (pg 16).

~CHAPTER OUTRO~

Quietly make your way back to the Blessed Blossom, the day now spent. The evening’s festivities in the tavern give little comfort, and after one drink, you all head upstairs to sleep.

~ THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ON PAGE 22~

-CHAPTER 4-

THE WEST PASS

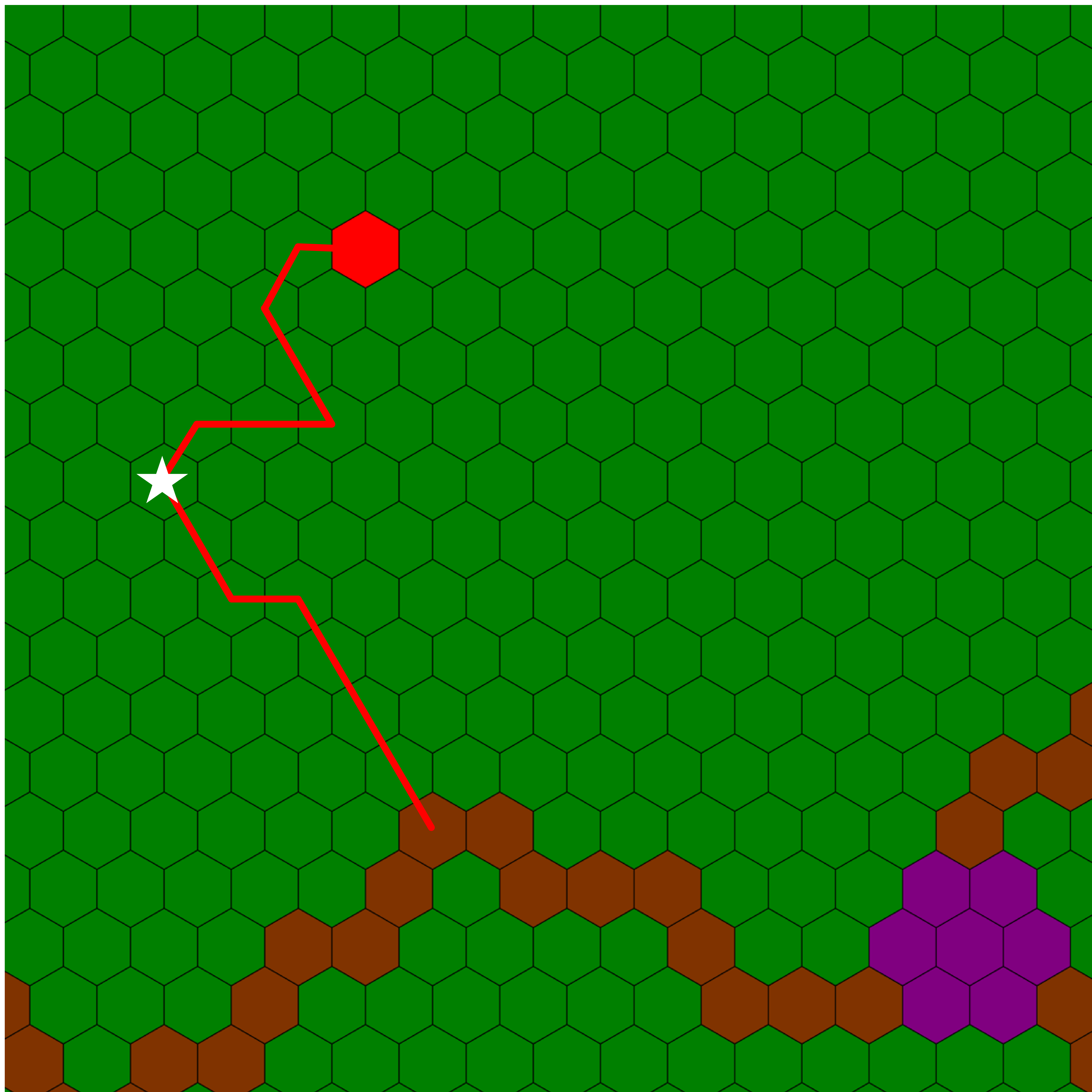
The following morning, you all wake up and solemnly prepare for the coming journey. Your new gear in hand, and your wits about you, you all wind your way through the wagons, past the guard tents, and stand before the opening to the West Pass.

~BEGIN ROLLING TRAVEL TURNS (GG pg 13)~

Use TAMAN_TRAVEL_MAP from the provided materials to track the progress between Ekoia (purple) and Akaiaga (red), using the following Travel Event tables. If the party has acquired the Memoku Wayfinder, they may use it once they are off the road to safely journey through the wilderness (marked by a red line), and will not experience a Combat Encounter during their travels. If they roll a 5 while traveling through the wilderness, they will discover the marked Site of Interest early, but otherwise will automatically discover it when they land on the marked Cell.

DAYTIME ROADSIDE ENCOUNTERS	
1	Friendly Traveler
2	Weather Event (GG pg 18)
3	Nothing Happens
4	Nothing Happens
5	Site of Interest (pg 23)
6	Injury that forces a Rest

DAYTIME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS	
1	Nothing Happens
2	Weather Event (GG pg 18)
3	Nothing Happens
4	Combat Encounter (pg 25)
5	Site of Interest (pg 23)
6	Injury that forces a Rest



ROADSIDE SITE OF INTEREST ROADSIDE SHRINE	
<i>As you turn around a bend in the road, a pile of stones and pebbles can barely be seen from the edge of the path. After stopping and approaching it, you can see that it bears upon its larger faces the ancient hand paintings depicting the Asetari, with faded memoku glyphs adorning the cartouches of each. You all contemplate a prayer to leave here for yourself.</i>	
<i>Prayer</i>	<i>Effect</i>
A Prayer to Es	You raise your hands into the sky, embracing the warmth of Es’s light. Until the end of your next Combat, environmental events and disasters cannot occur.
A Prayer to Su	You make an appeal to Su, asking her to grant understanding that surpasses all barriers. Play your next Memoku Trait for free.
A Prayer to Xao	Imploring Xao for assistance, you muster your focus and shut out all distractions. Gain 1 Chitin and instantly negate the next Trait you are Burdened with.
A Prayer to Lir	You seek from Lir a way to go beyond your limitations and achieve lofty goals. +5 to the Score of your next Skill Check.
A Prayer to Ur	You beseech Ur for insight and knowledge of the future. At the start of your next combat, you may draw three additional cards into your hand, then return any three cards from your hand to the top of your Deck in any order you wish.
A Prayer to Dar	You sing unto Dar, praising his name and seeking inspiration. At the start of your next Combat, draw one additional card into your hand. You may play the first card of your first turn for free.
A Prayer to Lu	You bow in earnest to Lu, imploring for her to uphold defenders of the meek. The first time you are attacked in your next Combat, that attack automatically misses.
A Prayer to Okt	You petition Okt for aid, that you may stand resolute against the trials to come. The first time you are attacked in your next combat, that attack deals half damage to you and half damage to the attacker.

WILDERNESS SITE OF INTEREST SPRING WATER POOL
<i>As you turn a corner, a wondrous sight graces your eyes. A beautiful spring bubbles up a pool of cool, clear water, and light dances upon its glittering surface. Praise be unto Xao for this blessing. All who drink from this spring will restore all Chitin Tokens and Vitality.</i>

The moment is quiet, without Avasong nor chittering to be heard. A small rustle in a nearby cluster of grass and leaves that sets all of you on edge. Out of the underbrush come running out an onslaught of Dipita, buzzing out a war cry and brandishing weapons overhead.

~RUN COMBAT ENCOUNTER~

Use the following Creature Sheets to control your party’s Allies and Foes. Feel free to adjust the number of Creatures involved to better suit the number of players in your party or how long you wish the Combat Encounter to play out.

ALLY CREATURES
Ally
Fen (GG pg 40)
Apoi player Tija (GG pg 36)

FOE CREATURES
Foe
Kolo Matu (GG pg 52)
Kolo Matu (GG pg 52)
Dipita Maragi (GG pg 54)
Dipita Maragi (GG pg 54)
Dipita Maragi (GG pg 54)
Dipita Maragi (GG pg 54)

~IF THE PARTY FALLS~

You have fallen. The Dipita begin stripping your bodies of your belongings, and the last vision you see before the darkness swallows you is the sight of your companions being bound in filthy cloth, and some vile, necrotic poultice being smeared across the wrappings. Who now will stop the Lurker in Akaiaga?

~THIS JOURNEY ENDS HERE~

~IF THE PARTY IS VICTORIOUS~

If the party chooses to search the corpses, they fill they may fill their Silk and Sap Forage.

As the last of the assailants lets out a dying wail, you all gather together and continue on your way toward your dreaded and dangerous errand.

*Continue rolling for Travel Turns until the party reaches Akaiaga.
The party will find no further Combat Encounters for the rest of this Travel session.*

-CHAPTER 5-

AKAIAGA

As you grow closer and closer to your destination, it seems to you all that the light of Es does not quite reach this part of the forest, obscured by a hazy mist that eerily sits halfway up the tree trunks. Finally, the trees begin to thin until you come to a clearing. The grass lays dead and flat, tinted the same dark grey as the skies above. As you keep journeying deeper into this dead meadow, the grass gives way to sooty dirt, then dark, exposed stone, until finally, you arrive at your destination.

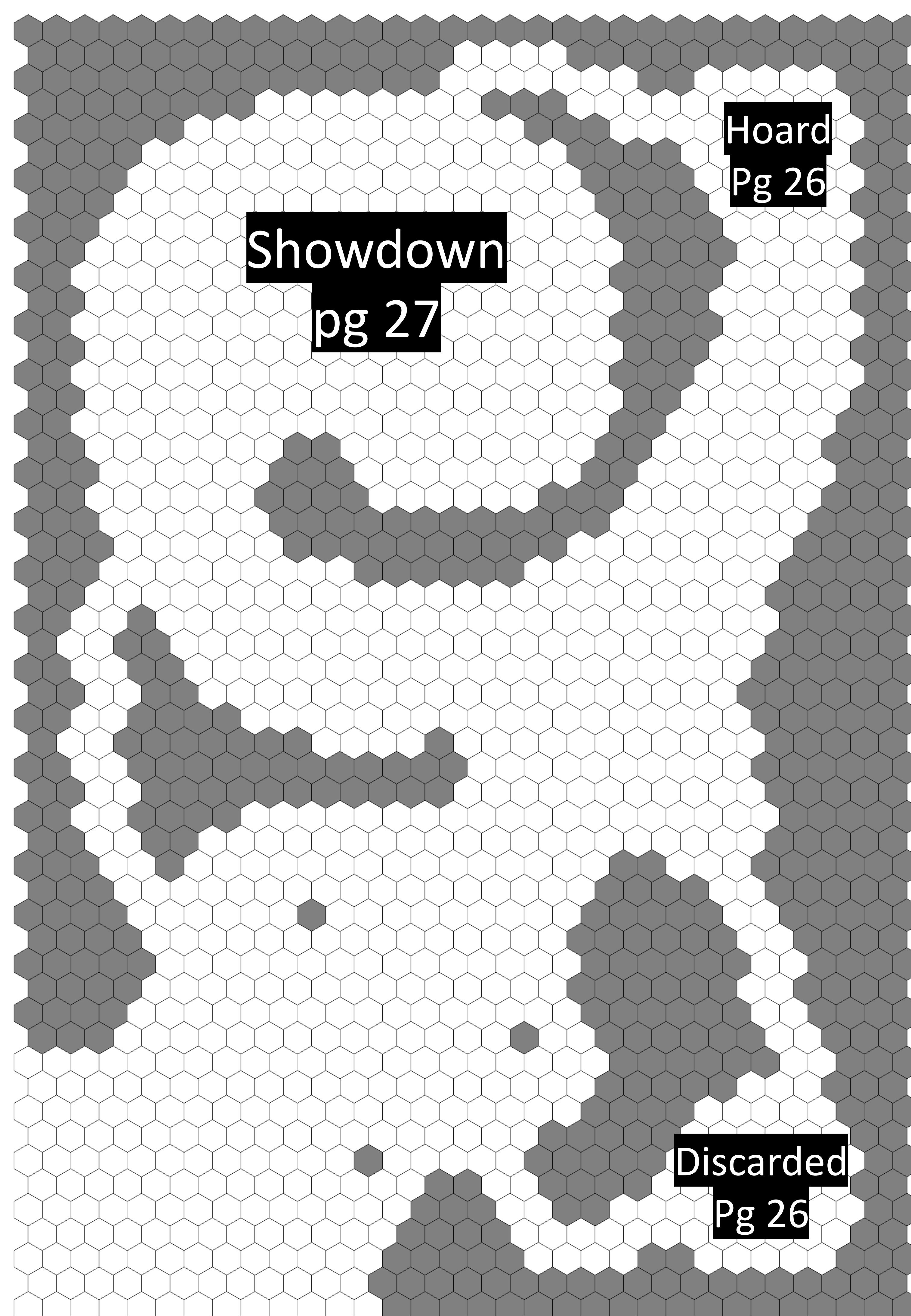
A hole opens up in the ground, almost perfectly circular, lined with thousands of silken strands, like a radius of teeth stretching down into the pitch-black nothingness beneath. With a final glance around at each other, you all draw your weapons, and descend into the maw of Akaiaga.

~ARAK LAIR CRAWL~

Use the Crawl mechanics found on page 15, and the Arak Lair mechanics found on page 27 of the Game Guide to run your party through Akaiaga (ARAK_LAIR_MAP). The floor of the Lair is covered in a web matrix – if your Het player or Fen uses either Crimson Flame or Concussive Flash at any point in the Crawl or the Combat Encounter with Serak, the web matrix will catch fire. This flame cannot be extinguished and will spread in a radius originating from the original Cell the spell was cast in, spreading by 1 Cell per Crawl/Combat Turn. All Creatures caught in the fire remove 1 Chitin Token at the start of every Turn they are in the fire, and 2 Vitality once their Chitin is depleted.

If you are playing with Fen, ensure this occurs early in the Combat Encounter on pg 27.

The following locations on the map have unique encounters.



DISCARDED

As you enter into this chamber, the unmistakable smell of death memoku wafts over you. As your eyes adjust, you begin to see empty, scattered husks of Sekuta, their marrow extracted from their bodies. Their final memories wash over you, and your mind begins to see.

A mother Mir and her brood entangled in a net of web, screaming for help or mercy. Neither would come before a set of venomous fangs silenced them forever.

Two Fora traveling companions setting off on their first expedition out of the Mountain, their journey cut short when they became entranced by some distant, shining thing off trail. Then, a stabbing pain in the side of their heads before darkness took them, and that false light shone no longer.

A Ro, fast asleep under a thicket of leaves, awakened by a distant whisper, following it to the edge of the underbrush, only to be engulfed in a cocoon of silk, unable to beat her wings. Unable to scream. Her last moments are of a pointed, burning bite, and the sensation of her marrow reducing to liquid.

You jolt back into yourself, breathing heavily, holding back the urge to scream. These corpses and memories are all that remains of the victims of Serak. Your resolve only strengthens further to end this nightmare, and ensure this fate can befall no other.

HOARD

As you reach the end of this long passage, you can spot a shimmering glint in the corner, barely visible in the low light of the cavern. As you investigate closer, you find yourself staring down into a hoard of treasures.

~ROLL ARAK LAIR HOARD TABLE~

Whatever the party discovers as part of the hoard, they may divide between themselves.

ARAK LAIR HOARD TABLE	
Roll	Suggested Loot
1	Party fills up on Silk forage.
2	Party fills up on Silk Forage. 1 Discover Ordinary Weapon.
3	Party fills up on Silk Forage. 2 Discover Ordinary Weapon, 1 Woven Silk Cloth.
4	Party fills up on Silk Forage. Discover 1 Refined Weapon, 1 Woven Silk Cloth.
5	Party fills up on Silk and Amber Forage. 2 Discover Refined Weapon, 2 Woven Silk Cloth.
6	Party fills up on Silk and Amber Forage. Discover 1 Masterwork Weapon, 2 Refined Weapon, 3 Woven Silk Cloth.

SHOWDOWN

As you turn the corner into this chamber, a dark and mesmerizing sight befalls you. At the top of this domed chamber, suspended by hundreds of strands of webbing, sits a sphere of twigs lashed together with silk. An opening into this sphere points directly downward toward the ground, a sickly green liquid dripping forth and splashing into a growing pool below.

Out of the hole, and echoing through the chamber, a rasping, hissing voice emanates.

“What fortune hath Zek wrought upon me this day,” it says, spitting venom with every word. “For he delivers unto me a feast of fearful flesh.”

Four legs protrude from the hole, gingerly finding hold on webs and twigs alike, until they take root and begin to bend. A head begins to lower down out of the opening, the dim light revealing eight crimson eyes and powerful fangs that flex and drip with vile toxin. The body follows suit, fat, bulbous, and covered in brown and amber-hued bristly fur. The last four legs emerge, and with a grotesque gracefulness, it lowers itself to the floor of the cavern.

“And what a feast you’ll make.” It rears itself up on its hindlegs, raising its forelegs up in an intimidating display, and lets out a hissing, bellowing roar that shakes the cavern and strikes fear into your hearts.

~RUN COMBAT ENCOUNTER~

Use the Arak Creature Sheet (GG pg 48) against the party in this final boss Combat Encounter, using the entirety of the Lair as a combat arena. Use the fire to help push the fight toward the entrance to the Lair. The fire will also help ensure that the Arak’s Chitin can be lowered enough for the party to begin dealing real damage on their own. It is recommended that, for the ending to hit harder, and if the party is struggling to kill the Arak, that it becomes trapped in the flames, giving the party a chance to escape, if only by the chitin of their mandibles.

~IF YOU ALLOW THE PARTY TO FALL~

It is over. Serak has won. All those who perished at his hands will have no vengeance made for them, and all his future victims will fall because of your failure. Who now will end the Lurker in Akaiaga?

~THIS JOURNEY ENDS HERE~

~IF THE PARTY IS VICTORIOUS~

Turn to the Epilogue on pg 28.

Your shadows stretch long, cast against the crimson forest floor by the raging inferno erupting from the mouth of the cavern before you. Your eyes reach deep into the flames, their light illuminating memories of what few and simple events have led you hence. Serak's hissing turns to screams in wretched agony as his infernal body burns away in the flames. Finally, the awful sound subsides, and you are all left in a maddening silence, your sanity only held together by the occasional pop and hiss of the fire.

After what seems like an eternity spent staring into this hellpit, you all eventually find each others' gaze, shaking yourselves free of this night's horrors. You turn and begin to walk away, back into the forest, quaking with every step, and never straying too far from each other. For who can say what else may lurk in the shadows?

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Thank you for playing this adventure booklet! We hope you enjoyed your time playing our game! If you would like to share any feedback, please let us know using the form found at the QR code below.



## **STORY PROMPTS**

Here we have provided prompts for Game Monarchs to extrapolate upon and craft their own narratives, quests, characters, and twists around.

~ A nearby tribe of Apoi has put out a request for Champion intervention. Something is killing the ensilers in one of their fields - or indeed, anyone who stays out too late at night - and the harvest is in danger as the cold season encroaches. Put a stop to the deaths, or the colony may not have enough food to survive through the winter...

~ There is a rumor that a treasure of great value lies lost in the depths of an abandoned colony home. The Sekuta who lived there either perished or fled many seasons ago, and left behind one of their artifacts in their mad scramble to escape. Only a party of Champions would be so bold as to descend into these haunted halls...

~ Two tribes have held a deep grudge against each other for as long as their people can remember, and recent events have threatened to escalate their mutual animosity into outright war. As a last-ditch effort to prevent more bloodshed, a group of Champions is assembled to act as a neutral party in the hopes of avoiding the conflict. But beware: there are many who do not desire peace, and unseen motives swirl beneath the surface. Watch your backs, Champions...