

Choe Pho



The Watchtower in the Wood

An introductory adventure for use with
Choe Pho: A New World of Fantasy

Written by:
Travis Legge
Art by:
Stinky Goblin



The Watchtower in the Wood

*An introductory adventure for use with
Choe Pho: A New World of Fantasy*

WRITTEN & DEVELOPED BY:

TRAVIS LEGGE

ARTWORK BY:

J.M. WOIAK & HEATHER SHINN

OF THE STINKYGOBLIN

Some art by Andrew Krahne, courtesy Sine Nomine Publishing

Some art by Ian MacLean, courtesy Sine Nomine Publishing

Some art by Miguel Santos, courtesy Sine Nomine Publishing

Some art by Mark Huffman, courtesy Auralius Art.

Some art courtesy www.videoblocks.com

**Special thanks to Nick Greenwood
for the 5e Compatible logo!**

The Watchtower in the Wood

An introductory adventure for use with
Choe Pho: A New World of Fantasy

In this adventure, the characters venture forth from the safety of the Isle of Hope, seeking to bring order to the Plains of Marrow. The adventure offers options for the characters to begin in various areas on the Isle of Hope, but regardless of the path taken, the party eventually makes their way to the haunted lands of the Plains of Marrow. After crossing the harrowing and chaotic lands (and fighting off some of the dark denizens) of the Plains of Marrow, the characters come across a small wooded area. A small stone fort with a lone watchtower stands in a clearing among the trees. Within this camp, the characters will find adventure, drama, and their first dharmachakra!

Part I: The Journey Begins

Choose a Starting Point

The Isle of Hope is a large and diverse region, covering hundreds of square miles and incorporating four distinct environments, each tied to a specific direction. Traveling to the border of the Plains of Marrow from the city of Sakya takes about five days (what is one week on Choe Pho) if the party moves at a standard pace. If the party moves at a slow pace, add two days to the journey, but if the party moves at a fast pace, subtract two days. Depending on the story you wish to tell, the characters may begin their journey at the city of Sakya, or at any village, settlement, or open region between the city and the Plains of Marrow. The most important details for the GM to determine at

the starting point are the story motivations and background for the characters, and the distance to the Plains of Marrow. This module assumes that the characters begin their adventure in the city of Sakya, with the intent of exploring and taming the Plains of Marrow in accordance with the wishes of the buddhas. The GM and players should feel free to work together to determine alternate starting details if so desired.

Select a Region of Travel

Though the characters are not bound to approach the Plains of Marrow by any specific direction, you will want to determine the region through which they will travel. Each region of the Isle of Hope presents a unique environment and set of circumstances for a traveling party to contend with.

The North

The north is a rocky, mountainous region. While the odd human settlement has cropped up in the valleys of the north, and some mountain peaks are home to hermits of all races seeking enlightenment and solitude, the north is largely the domain of the tsuchigumo. The tsuchigumo tend to make their homes in caves and caverns, venturing out into the mountains to hunt and trap prey animals. Some tribes of tsuchigumo engage in trade with the human settlements, which tend to be agrarian cultures. Settlements with established trade relationships tend to be friendly and loyal, working for mutual benefit and defense from outside threats. This is especially true in the areas of the north that border directly with the Plains of Marrow, where monsters and

the undead occasionally threaten the peaceful existence of the mortal inhabitants.

For travelers who wish to trade, seek out the wisdom of locals, and rest in established villages, the trek through the north is accommodating. A character succeeding at a Wisdom (Survival) check at DC 10 can plan a route to intersect with human settlements, providing relative safety and security.

Those traveling through the north who wish to avoid human settlements can do so relatively easily, however electing to do so causes the journey to take place over difficult terrain. Avoiding the tsuchigumo is much trickier, as they are far more abundant and spread out. Aside from potential encounters with the humanoids of the region, those traveling through the north must contend with the various flora and fauna of the area.

As the party travels through the mountains, the GM should check for random encounters by rolling 1d20. On a result of 17-20, the GM should roll once on Table: Random Encounters – North. If the party seeks out human settlements along their path, check once per day for a random encounter. If the party seeks to avoid human settlements, check twice per day for a random encounter.

Random Encounters – North Explained:

A result indicating 1d4+1 wolves, leads to a pack of aggressive, hungry wolves. This pack will be hunting and will be hungry enough to consider the party to be potential prey. Use the **wolf** stats listed in the SRD 5.1 to represent these wolves.

Table: Random Encounters – North

1d12 Result	Encounter
1	<i>Pack of 1d4+2 wolves</i>
2	<i>Pit trap (simple)</i>
3	<i>1 ogre</i>
4	<i>tsuchigumo hunting trap</i>
5	<i>1d4 pseudodragons</i>
6	<i>Wild herd of 2d10 goats</i>
7	<i>1d4 giant wolf spiders</i>
8	<i>1d4 human commoners</i>
9	<i>1d4 harpies</i>
10	<i>1d4 violet fungi</i>
11	<i>1 lion</i>
12	<i>1d4 tsuchigumo scouts</i>

A pit trap (simple) result indicates a simple pit trap. If created by humans, the trap is covered with cloth or twine. If created by tsuchigumo, the trap will be covered with webbing (Dexterity Save DC 15 to prevent becoming restrained by the webs). Any character who becomes restrained in the webbing of a tsuchigumo pit trap, falls into the pit, suffering the normal effects of falling into a 10-foot-deep **simple pit trap**, as described in the SRD 5.1.

An ogre encountered in the north is a lone, hungry wanderer, who seeks food. The ogre prefers to eat livestock, but will eat a humanoid if given the opportunity. The ogres of the north tend to remain relatively well fed, and are rarely outright hostile. Unless the party attacks first, is wounded, or otherwise presents themselves as easy prey, the ogre is likely to ignore their presence and not initiate a confrontation. Use the stats for an **ogre** provided in the SRD 5.1 for this encounter.

A tsuchigumo **hunting trap** operates as described in the SRD 5.1 with the exception that the trap is constructed of animal bone rather than steel, and attached to a nearby heavy object via webbing.

If the characters encounter pseudodragons, the tiny creatures will likely be found lounging and digesting a recent meal. The pseudodragons will be cordial if approached, communicating telepathically with any adventurers they encounter. If the adventurers attack or accost the pseudodragons, the creatures will brutally fight to the death. For stats regarding **pseudodragons** see the SRD 5.1.

Should the characters come upon a herd of goats, the herd will likely be more frightened of the adventurers than anything else, attempting to flee the area. However, if the adventurers attack (or sneak up on) the goats,

they will fight to defend themselves. Use the **goat** stats provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent members of the herd.

Giant wolf spiders are common in the north. While some are domesticated and treated as pets by the tsuchigumo, most are wild, territorial hunters and trappers. Assume any giant wolf spiders encountered to be of the wild variety. Use the **giant wolf spider** stats provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

Human commoners encountered in the north could represent a hunting party from a nearby village, a group of nomads, or a ragtag bunch of would-be bandits looking for easy prey. Whatever the case, use the **commoner** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these humans.

Should the adventurers come across harpies, the harpies will immediately attempt



to charm the characters so that they might subdue and rob them. The harpies will not attempt to kill except in self-defense, but they will take all equipment and possessions from the characters if they have the chance. Use the **harpy** stats from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

An encounter with violet fungi leads the adventurers to an area of mountainside covered with fungal growth. The violet fungi will be able to surprise the characters under most circumstances, attacking out of instinct. Use the **violet fungus** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

Should the characters encounter a lion, it will be a lone predator on the hunt. Use the **lion** stat block from the SRD 5.1.

A result of tsuchigumo scouts brings the adventurers into contact with a band of roving tsuchigumo. It is left to GM discretion if these scouts are friendly or hostile. The approach or reaction of the players may be the most appropriate way to determine the mood of these tsuchigumo, treating them as neutral until the characters act. To represent these tsuchigumo, use the **scout** stat block from the SRD 5.1, modified to reflect the racial traits of the tsuchigumo.

The South

The south is a region filled with warm, breezy grasslands and abundant wildlife. This region of the Isle of Hope is home to the nekomata. The spiritual and serene nekomata maintain several monasteries and temples throughout the south, and virtually every

permanent settlement is based around such a site. The land between these numerous settlements is wild and untamed with few roads or established paths. It is quite easy to travel from the city of Sakya to the Plains of Marrow without encountering a single sign of humanoid civilization.

Adventurers making their way through the south would do well to remember that the wild grasslands are not necessarily safe. The relative lack of landmarks and roads in the vast plains of the south makes it all too easy for travelers to become lost in their journeys. The wild growth makes an excellent place for the more savage predators of the area to hide and stalk their prey (which often includes various flavors of humanoids.) Add to this bands of humanoid poachers, as well as the occasional escapee from the chaos of the Plains of Marrow, and travel through the south can be quite dangerous.

A group traveling through the south may also run across nekomata hunting parties, nekomata on religious pilgrimages or monastic hermitages, or a band of simple humanoid nomads. Most of these types of encounters are peaceful and such people are generally willing to assist a party who is lost or injured, unless the party approaches them with hostility.

Those traveling through the south who wish to avoid nekomata settlements can generally do so with ease. The nekomata are fairly spread out, and the lack of established roads or paths in the south make such settlements hard to find without a local guide.

As the party travels through the grasslands, the GM should check for random encounters by rolling 1d20. On a result of 17-20, the GM should roll once on Table: Random Encounters – South. When the adventurers are traveling in the south, the GM should check once per day for a random encounter.

Table: Random Encounters – South

1d12 Result	Encounter
1	1d4+1 <i>nekomata</i> guards
2	1d4 cockatrices
3	1 leopard (panther)
4	2d6 zombies
5	2d6 human bandits
6	temple
7	1d4 giant boars
8	2d4 axe beaks
9	monastery
10	1d6 giant wasps
11	1d4+1 <i>nekomata</i> acolytes
12	1 pegasus

Random Encounters – South Explained:

An encounter with 1d4+1 *nekomata* guards represents a patrol of *nekomata* looking for poachers or bandits. The patrol will be suspicious and wary of the adventurers, but will not be outright aggressive unless they have reason to believe the party is poaching or otherwise a danger to the land. To represent this *nekomata* patrol, use the **guard** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1, modified to reflect the racial traits of the *nekomata*.

A result indicating 1d4 cockatrices means that the adventurers run across a group of hungry, aggressive cockatrices. The birds will

attack unprovoked, attempting to petrify the party to eat at a later time. Use the **cockatrice** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

If the encounter check results in a leopard, the party comes across a territorial giant cat. The leopard will fight aggressively, to the death, to drive any unwanted intruders from the area near his den. If the players give the leopard a wide berth or attempt to retreat once the leopard attacks, it simply chases them to about a quarter mile from the location of the initial encounter and lets them leave in peace. To represent this leopard, use the **panther** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1.

An encounter with 2d6 zombies means that the characters have come across rare refugees from the Plains of Marrow who have made their way inland to the Isle of Hope. These zombies are hungry, aggressive and mindless, fighting until destroyed. Upon their destruction, their Marrow visibly rises from their bodies, flying into the sky, then returning to the Plains of Marrow. Use the **zombie** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these poor unfortunate souls.

Human bandits encountered in the south could represent a poaching party, a group of nomads, or a collection of pilgrims seeking enlightenment at one of the temples or monasteries of the south. Whatever the case, use the **bandit** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these humans.

If a temple result is rolled on the random encounter check, the characters spot



a temple in the distance. If the characters do not approach the temple, it simply remains a landmark in their journey, but if the adventurers seek rest or supplies, a temple can provide a reprieve from the rigors of their journey as well as an excellent opportunity for roleplaying. At the GM's discretion, this temple could be dedicated to either the service of Sojobo, or the service of Tara in her orange aspect. The temple will be made up of 75% nekomata acolytes, 25% other races, and will be overseen by an 8th level nekomata cleric of the appropriate buddha. If game statistics are needed to represent the inhabitants of the temple, use the **acolyte** stat block from the SRD 5.1, modified by race as appropriate, to represent the parishioners. Once the temple result has been rolled on the random encounter chart, further rolls of the same result on the same journey may be treated as "no encounter."

A result of 1d4 giant boars brings the characters to a group of oversized, wild boars who are hungry and attack the party without provocation. These boars will attempt to flee after any one member of their group suffers 15 or more hit points of damage. Use the **giant boar** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

A result of 2d4 axe beaks leads the characters into the path of a flock of aggressive axe beaks. These flightless birds will attack any humanoids they see, fighting to the death. Use the **axe beak** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

If a monastery result is rolled on the random encounter check, the characters spot a monastery in the distance. If the characters do not approach the monastery, it simply remains a landmark in their journey, but if the adventurers seek rest or supplies, a monastery

can provide a reprieve from the rigors of their journey as well as an excellent opportunity for roleplaying. At the GM's discretion, this monastery could be dedicated to either the study of the Way of the Green Tara, or the Way of the White Tara. The temple will be made up of 75% nekomata monks, 25% other races, and will be overseen by an 8th level nekomata monk of the appropriate monastic tradition. If game statistics are needed to represent the inhabitants of the temple, use the **spy** stat block from the SRD 5.1, modified by race as appropriate, to represent the monks. Once the monastery result has been rolled on the random encounter chart, further rolls of the same result on the same journey may be treated as "no encounter."

A result indicating 1d6 giant wasps means that the characters must make a Wisdom (Perception) check at DC 14. If this check is failed, they stumble over a giant wasp burrow in the ground and are attacked when the aggravated giant wasps fly out from their subterranean hidey hole. A successful check means that the characters can spot evidence of the burrow before stepping in it, and bypass the encounter. Use the **giant wasp** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

An encounter with 1d4+1 nekomata acolytes represents a group of nekomata traveling to the city of Sakya on a spiritual pilgrimage. This group of acolytes will be welcoming, warm, and helpful and will invite the adventurers to share a meal and speak of the wisdom of the buddhas. To represent this group, use the **acolyte** stat block provided in

the SRD 5.1, modified to reflect the racial traits of the nekomata.

If the random encounter check leads to an encounter with a pegasus, the characters find the creature grazing in a spacious area. The pegasus does not inherently fear humanoids and will continue grazing if left alone. If the characters interact with the pegasus, the tone of their actions will determine the pegasus's behavior. If they are kind it will treat them well, possibly even following them to the border of the Plains of Marrow, offering guidance and protection. If they are cruel or evil (either to the pegasus or to another creature in view of the pegasus) the pegasus will leave them. If their cruelty is severe or life threatening (without provocation) the pegasus will attack the party. Use the **pegasus** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to reflect this creature.

The East

The east is a vast, forested wilderness, which is home to the playful kitsune. The eastern forests are dense, full of wildlife, and challenging to navigate. There are a few well-established paths and roads connecting the various human and kitsune settlements scattered throughout the east, but most of these settled areas are relatively inland. As one travels near the border of the Plains of Marrow to the east, settlements become rare, and the wilderness becomes even more difficult to navigate.

While the kitsune are the native humanoid species (and certainly the most populous) in the east, the settlements of the

forest region are the most cosmopolitan areas to be found outside of the city of Sakya. Many of the larger forest communities are home to members of all the native humanoid species of Choe Pho, as well as civilized settlers from the Plains of Marrow. This suits the social kitsune just fine, as more people in the area means more people to party with.

Of course, one traveling through the east would do well to remember that outside of the established settlements, the forests are savage and dangerous. Various beasts and monstrosities run rampant throughout the eastern forests, making their homes among the trees and brush, hunting for food, and fighting with other species over the shared and sometimes cramped environment.

Adventurers traveling through the east to reach the Plains of Marrow will find the inner portion of the east to be fairly safe, tame and predictable. While the characters are within three days' travel of Sakya in the east, the GM should check for random encounters

once per day by rolling 1d20. On a result of 16-20, the GM should roll once on Table: Random Encounters – East. When the adventurers are traveling deeper into the east than three days from Sakya, the GM should check twice per day for a random encounter.

Random Encounters – East Explained:

A result of owlbear on Table: Random Encounters – East places the characters in the path of a hungry owlbear. Use the **owlbear** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent this creature.

A result indicating bandits leads the characters into an ambush set up by 2d4 human bandits. Among these should be one bandit captain. These bandits want to rob the characters, not kill them. If the characters offer no resistance, the bandits will simply take any items they possess and leave. If the characters fight back, the bandits will fight until the first bandit suffers 6 or more hp of damage, at which point the bandits will attempt to retreat. If retreat looks impossible, the bandits will surrender rather than fight to the death. Use the **bandit** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these bandits, and the **bandit captain** stat block to represent their leader.

A result indicating 1d4+1 wolves, leads to a pack of aggressive, hungry wolves. This pack will be hunting and will be hungry enough to consider the party to be potential prey. Use the **wolf** stats listed in the SRD 5.1 to represent these wolves.

A result of 1d4 kitsune scouts leads the characters to a small camp where a group

Table: Random Encounters – East	
1d12 Result	Encounter
1	1 owlbear
2	2d4 bandits
3	1d4+1 wolves
4	1d4 kitsune scouts
5	1d4+1 giant badgers
6	1 swarm of poisonous snakes
7	2d6 giant wolf spiders
8	2d4 tribal warriors
9	1d4 elk
10	2d4 giant bats
11	1 tengu priest of Sojobo
12	1d4 harpies

of kitsune rests, nursing hangovers from an impressive woodland revel. These kitsune are friendly and helpful, though insistent that the characters keep their voices down, due to the alcohol-induced headaches suffered by the group. If necessary, use the **scout** stat block from the SRD 5.1, modified to include the kitsune racial traits, to represent these characters.

A result of giant badgers places the characters passing near a burrow, which is home to 1d4+1 giant badgers. These badgers are stand-offish and territorial, defending their home and the area in its immediate vicinity with brutal tenacity. Use the **giant badger** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

A result indicating poisonous snakes leads the characters across a swarm of snakes making their home in a bush or tree that the adventurers pass. If the characters do not antagonize the swarm, and give the snakes a wide berth, they will merely hiss and spit, but if the characters approach the swarm, the snakes will attack. Use the **swarm of poisonous snakes** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

If a result of giant wolf spiders is rolled, the characters make their way into a region of forest used as a spider den. The area is thick with old webbing and considered to be lightly obscured as well as difficult terrain, due to the webbing. Note that any tsuchigumo in the party ignore both conditions. Once the characters



disturb the webbing, they are set upon by the giant wolf spiders, who look to make a meal out of them. Use the **giant wolf spider** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

A result of tribal warriors means the characters encounter a nomadic raiding party of slytherine. These are brutal warriors who take what they need from whomever they encounter and are not interested in peaceful interaction. Use the **tribal warrior** stat block from the SRD 5.1, modified with the racial traits of the slytherine, to represent these warriors.

If the adventurers encounter elk, they see wild elk running through the forest. Should provisions be low and hunger be gnawing at the characters, these beasts could provide nourishment. The elk are frightened of humanoids and will flee as soon as they perceive the adventurers. Use the **elk** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these beasts.

Several of the trees of the eastern forest are home to giant bats. During the daytime, these creatures are generally asleep unless disturbed, but at night they are always on the lookout for potential prey. Use the **giant bat** stat block in the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

If an encounter with a tengu priest of Sojobo is rolled, the characters cross paths with a wizened tengu named Yasahiro, who is wandering the eastern forest on a quest of reflection. The

priest offers the party healing and comfort if they are injured, advice if they are inquisitive, and a simple greeting if they do not pursue an interaction. If necessary, use the **priest** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent this character, modified to include the racial traits of the tengu. Ignore this result on subsequent random encounter checks, treating it as “no encounter.”

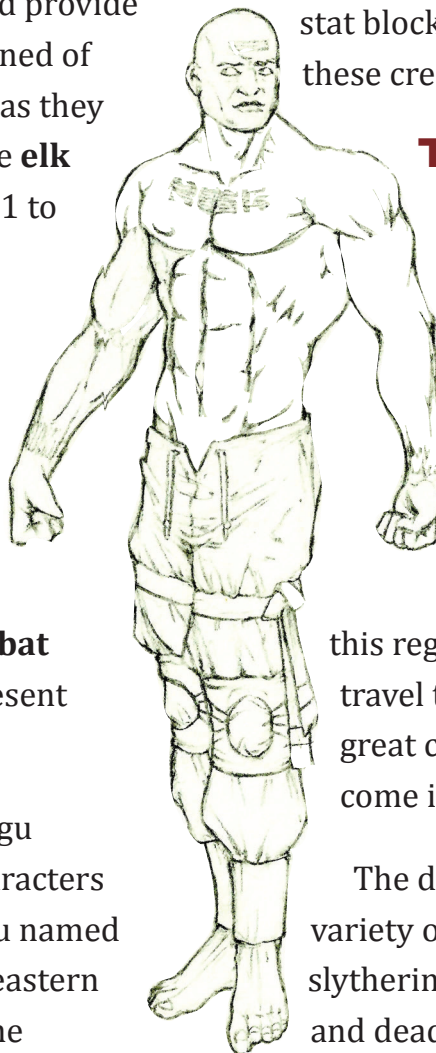
If the random encounter check results in harpies, the characters hear these women before they see them, immediately being subjected to the effects of the harpy’s luring song ability. The harpies will try to lure the adventurers into a vulnerable position then attack in force, fighting to kill. Use the **harpy** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

The West

The west is the barren desert home of the slytherine. With scorching, hot days and frosty, cold nights, the western desert is a difficult region to travel in, let alone to settle. The lands of the west are hard and unforgiving, much like the slytherine that call

this region home. Parties who choose to travel through the west should exercise great caution not to offend, upset, or come into conflict with the slytherine.

The desert of the west is home to a wide variety of threats and dangers beyond the slytherine berserker tribes. Poisonous and deadly animals are commonplace.



Humanoid bandits are a constant threat, as several tribes consider the desert their hunting ground. These bandits prefer to prey upon travelers who appear lost or ill-equipped for long-term desert travel. Most bandits who operate in the desert have extensive experience with survival tactics for the harsh climate. Few slytherine are found among the bandit parties in the desert, as slytherine culture tends to frown upon the combat tactics used by most bandits.

Slytherine tribes are territorial and mildly xenophobic. Travelers coming upon slytherine berserkers should not expect a warm friendly welcome. Though most slytherine will not indulge in unprovoked violence, it is not unheard of for a band of travelers in the desert to fall to the clubs of a tribe of slytherine who were annoyed or offended by the outsiders.

As the party travels through the desert, the GM should check for random encounters by rolling 1d20. On a result of 17-20, the GM should roll once on Table: Random Encounters – West. When the adventurers are traveling in the west, the GM should check three times per day for a random encounter.

Random Encounters – West Explained:

The deserts of the east are infested with dust mephitis, as many spirits who escape the Plains of Marrow take on this form to better hide in the west. Dust mephitis are enraged and irrational, incapable of reasoning or parley. They fight until destroyed whenever encountered. Use the **dust mephit** stat block

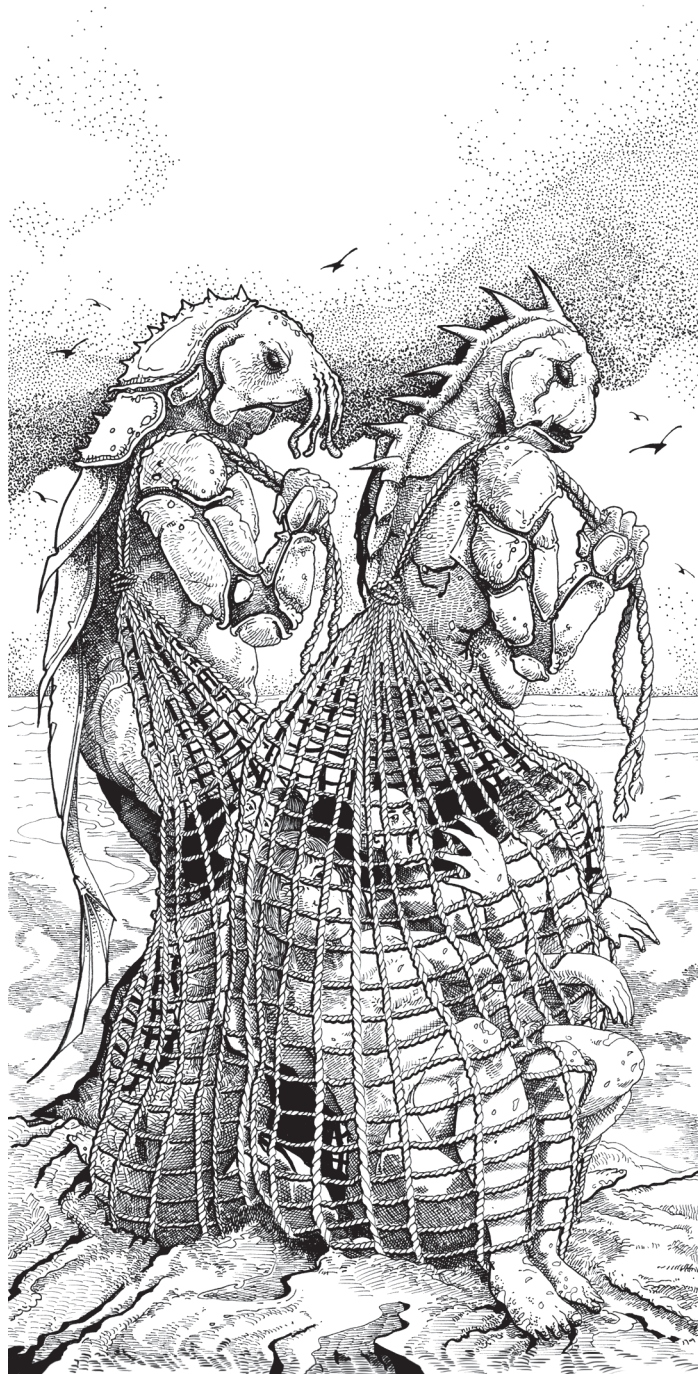
provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these monsters.

Scorpions are common in the deserts of the west. This encounter result brings a swarm of scorpions to attack the characters, emerging from the sand to overwhelm the unwary. Use the **swarm of insects** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

A result indicating bandits leads the characters into an ambush set up by 2d4 human bandits. Among these should be one bandit captain. These bandits want to rob the characters, not kill them. If the characters offer no resistance, the bandits will simply take any items they possess and leave. If the characters fight back, the bandits will fight until the first bandit suffers 6 or more hp of damage, at which point the bandits will attempt to retreat. If retreat looks impossible, the bandits will surrender rather than fight to the death. Use the **bandit** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these bandits, and the **bandit captain** stat block to represent their leader.

Table: Random Encounters – West

1d12 Result	Encounter
1	1d4 dust mephitis
2	1 swarm of scorpions
3	2d4 bandits
4	2d4 jackals
5	1d4 giant vultures
6	1d4 giant spiders
7	1 death dog
8	1 lion
9	1 swarm of beetles
10	1 giant scorpion
11	2d4 slytherine tribal warriors
12	1 swarm of poisonous snakes



A result indicating jackals leads the adventurers into the hunting grounds of a pack of wild jackals. These enormous cats will eat humanoid flesh, fighting until one of their pride is killed, at which point the survivors will attempt to retreat. Use the **jackal** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these beasts.

If vultures are rolled on the random encounter table, the adventurers come across giant vultures feeding on the rotten corpse of a purple worm. If the characters do not interrupt the feast, the giant vultures leave them be. Use the **giant vulture** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

The giant spiders of the west live in burrows in the ground, darting out from beneath the sand to attack any creature that passes by. Unwary adventurers are surprised by such a result on the random encounter table. Use the **giant spider** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent these critters.

Strange creatures wander the western desert, including the two-headed death dog, which seeks to kill everything it encounters. This result brings the adventurers into conflict with one such creature. The death dog will attack the characters savagely and fight until it is killed. Use the **death dog** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1 to represent this monster.

A result indicating an encounter with a lion brings the characters across a lion on the hunt for food. The lion will not normally hunt or attack humanoids, especially humanoids traveling in a group. However, if attacked the lion will fight back ferociously. Use the **lion** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent this beast.

Flesh eating beetles are common in the deserts of the west. This encounter result brings a swarm of such beetles to attack the characters, emerging from the sand to overwhelm the unwary. Use the **swarm of insects** stat block provided in the SRD 5.1,

including the modifications listed under the **variant: insect swarms** sidebar, to represent these beetles.

A result of tribal warriors means the characters encounter a local patrol of slytherine warriors. These slytherine are peaceful, but cautious of humanoids. They are likely to assume the adventurers are bandits until convinced otherwise. These slytherine will not provoke combat immediately, but they will demand the characters state their business and will respond harshly to any resistance. They also will not back down from a fight, regardless of the odds. Use the **tribal warrior** stat block from the SRD 5.1, modified with the racial traits of the slytherine, to represent these warriors.

A result indicating poisonous snakes leads the characters across a swarm of snakes making their home in a burrow under the ground the adventurers walk upon. These snakes are incredibly aggressive, attacking anything that moves within reach. Use the **swarm of poisonous snakes** stat block from the SRD 5.1 to represent these creatures.

Part II: Abandon All Hope

The Second Leg of the Journey

Once the characters reach the edge of the Isle of Hope, they begin to sense the very fabric of reality itself fraying. Regardless of the angle of approach, at the border between the

Isle of Hope and the Plains of Marrow stands a cliff's edge, which the characters must descend to reach the surface of the Plains of Marrow. Characters who wish to descend safely must make a Strength (Athletics) check at DC 10. Failure results in a 30 foot fall to the rocky surface of the Plains of Marrow.

The Plains of Marrow

The Plains of Marrow are a chaotic and nightmarish landscape, which host a wide variety of undead creatures and unnatural hazards. The landscape of the Plains of Marrow can shift dramatically at a moment's notice and there is no sustenance naturally occurring within the Plains of Marrow (save for that which is generated within a regional reality.) Adventurers who wish to have any hope of survival in the Plains of Marrow must bring sufficient provisions and protect those provisions from the harsh elements.

As the party travels through the Plains of Marrow, the GM should check for random encounters by rolling 1d20. On a result of 15-20, the GM should roll once on Table: Random Encounters – Plains of Marrow. When the adventurers are traveling in the Plains of Marrow, the GM should check three times per day for a random encounter.

For the purposes of the Watchtower in the Wood, if the characters do not receive the “regional reality” result by the second random encounter check of the third day of travel, simply have them come across the Watchtower's regional reality at that time.

Table: Random Encounters – Plains of Marrow

1d12 Result	Encounter
1	2d8 zombies
2	1d4 specters
3	chaotic vortex
4	1d4+1 shadows
5	1 ghost
6	regional reality
7	2d8 skeletons
8	1d4 +1 stirges
9	chaotic vortex
10	1 will-o-the-wisp
11	1d4+1 ghouls
12	1 wight

Random Encounters – Plains of Marrow Explained:

If a random encounter check results in the regional reality entry, the characters happen upon the watchtower, and should proceed to Part III of this adventure.

If a random encounter check results in a chaotic vortex, the local environment shifts to a weather extreme of the GM's choosing for the next 1d10 minutes. See **the environment** in the SRD 5.1 to determine the effects of these harsh environments.

All other results on Table: Random Encounters – Plains of Marrow lead the characters into a conflict with hungry, angry and confused

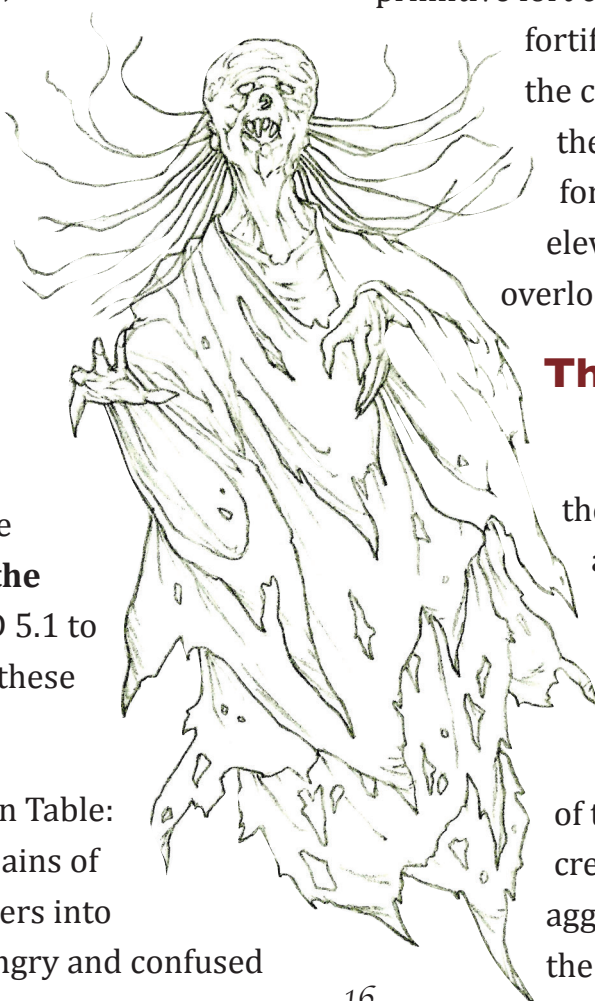
undead. The clear majority of the undead native to the Plains of Marrow are in a perpetual state of hungry suffering. For the purposes of this adventure, assume all undead encountered are nearly mindless with rage, hunger and pain. Use the appropriate stat blocks from the SRD 5.1 to represent these unfortunate souls.

Part III: The Watchtower A Regional Reality

As the characters approach the regional reality of the Watchtower in the Wood, the mists of the Plains of Marrow lift, revealing a wooded area, roughly an acre in size. In the center of the wooded area stands a small, primitive fort comprised mainly of stone fortifications placed in a clearing in the center of the regional reality. In the northwestern corner of the fort stands a stone watchtower, elevated to a height of 25 feet, overlooking the clearing.

The Maricoxi

As the characters enter the woods, any character with a Passive Perception score of 13 or higher will notice furry humanoids, armed with crossbows, stationed at the watchtower, each facing one of the cardinal directions. These creatures are maricoxi, a race of aggressive goblinoid warriors. If the characters attempt to make





a stealthy approach, have them make a Dexterity (Stealth) check at DC 20 (the Passive Perception score of the maricoxi sentries.) The maricoxi are on high alert, as their camp has been victimized by waves of undead since the regional reality coalesced two days prior to the party's arrival.

The maricoxi speak Goblin, and characters who do not have this language must use magic (such as a *Comprehend Languages* spell) to have any hope of a parley with the creatures. Even if a character speaks their language (unlikely, but not impossible) or

uses magic to communicate, the maricoxi are exceedingly wary of outsiders. Any Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Persuasion), or Charisma (Performance) roll made to try and open diplomatic relations with the maricoxi suffers disadvantage.

Characters who seek to incapacitate the Maricoxi, must render them unconscious in combat and restrain them. Any attempt to gain information from the maricoxi once subdued and restrained suffers the same conditions as above, with the characters suffering disadvantage on the aforementioned Charisma

checks. Furthermore, restrained maricoxi are considered outright hostile, and will remain so until released, at which point they will retaliate against their captors with violence.

If the characters simply elect to fight their way through the maricoxi in order to discover the region's dharmachackra, they can certainly do so. The dharmachackra of this region does not require the maricoxi to survive for activation to be successful. Ultimately, the adventurers may choose to deal with the maricoxi as they see fit.

There are four **maricoxi sentries** scattered in the trees around the fort. Four **maricoxi archers** are stationed in the watchtower, one facing each cardinal direction. The **maricoxi chieftain** is also positioned in the watchtower. Each of the other three stone structures in the area houses two **maricoxi thugs**, ready for combat.

The Dharmachackra

The dharmachackra of this regional reality has manifested as a trinket worn by the maricoxi chieftain. The chieftain's necklace and badge of office is a collection of bones and teeth, strung together with hemp twine. When the regional reality coalesced, this necklace was infused with a strange power. The necklace calls out to the restless dead in a one-mile radius, making them believe that it is a conduit to their missing and mangled memories of life. This, understandably, makes the undead crave the item, which is why the various undead creatures continually bombard the regional reality with attacks. Any undead who make

their way to the maricoxi chieftain will attempt to steal the item and take it into the Plains of Marrow. If they succeed, the regional reality fades back into chaos within 1d6 minutes unless the necklace is returned to the area. Every two minutes after the characters arrive at the regional reality, a new group of undead enters, their type determined by a roll on Table: Random Encounters - Plains of Marrow, treating a roll of 3, 6, or 9 as "no encounter."

The dharmachackra will be opened if the maricoxi chieftain is defeated in combat, whether killed or knocked unconscious. This will cause any native of Choe Pho to instinctively recognize the necklace's nature, allowing the dharmachackra to be activated as described under **Activating the Dharmachackra** in the *Choe Pho: A New World of Fantasy* corebook. The characters may also determine the nature of the necklace if they successfully parley with the maricoxi and discover that the undead seem to be chasing after this item. If this happens, the characters must either persuade the maricoxi chieftain to hand over the item willingly (Charisma (Persuasion) DC 15. This check suffers disadvantage, though good roleplaying by the players can negate this disadvantage, at GM discretion,) or take it from him by force.

In either case, as soon as the dharmachackra opens, the necklace stops acting as a lure for the undead, and instead becomes a fully charged **necklace of prayer beads** as described in the SRD 5.1. The necklace contains two beads of blessing, two beads of curing and one bead of favor. This necklace can be attuned by any cleric or monk.

Appendix: New

Creatures

The Maricoxi

The maricoxi are a race of small goblinoids, standing three and a half to four and a half feet tall. They are covered head to toe in thick, matted fur. These creatures speak the goblin language. The Maricoxi are well-trained warriors specializing in guerilla warfare, trap making, hit and run tactics, and ambushes. However, when pressed into a defensive position, such as they are in this adventure, the maricoxi are quite capable of coordinated defensive tactics.

Maricoxi Archer

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8(-1)	17(+3)	10(+0)	12(+1)	14(+2)	16(+3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14 (19 with Keen Hearing and Sight.)

Languages Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The maricoxi archer has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.



Nimble Escape. On each of its turns, the maricoxi archer can use a bonus action to take the Disengage or Hide action.

Actions

Multiattack. The maricoxi archer makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

or

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Maricoxi Sentry

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 14 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15 (20 with Keen Hearing and Sight.)

Languages Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The maricoxi sentry has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.



Nimble Escape. On each of its turns, the maricoxi sentry can use a bonus action to take the Disengage or Hide action.

Actions

Multiattack. The maricoxi sentry makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Maricoxi Thug

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)/ 16 (with shield)

Hit Points 27 (5d6 + 10)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10 (15 with Keen Hearing and Sight.)

Languages Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The maricoxi thug has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Nimble Escape. On each of its turns, the maricoxi thug can use a bonus action to take the Disengage or Hide action.

Pack Tactics. The maricoxi thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of

the maricoxi thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The maricoxi thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

Maricoxi Chieftain

Small humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 50 (9d6 + 18)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12 (17 with Keen Hearing and Sight.)

Languages Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the maricoxi chieftain hits with it (included in the attack).

Keen Hearing and Sight. The maricoxi chieftain has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the maricoxi chieftain can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the maricoxi chieftain. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the maricoxi chieftain is incapacitated.

Nimble Escape. On each of its turns, the maricoxi chieftain can use a bonus action to take the Disengage or Hide action.

Actions

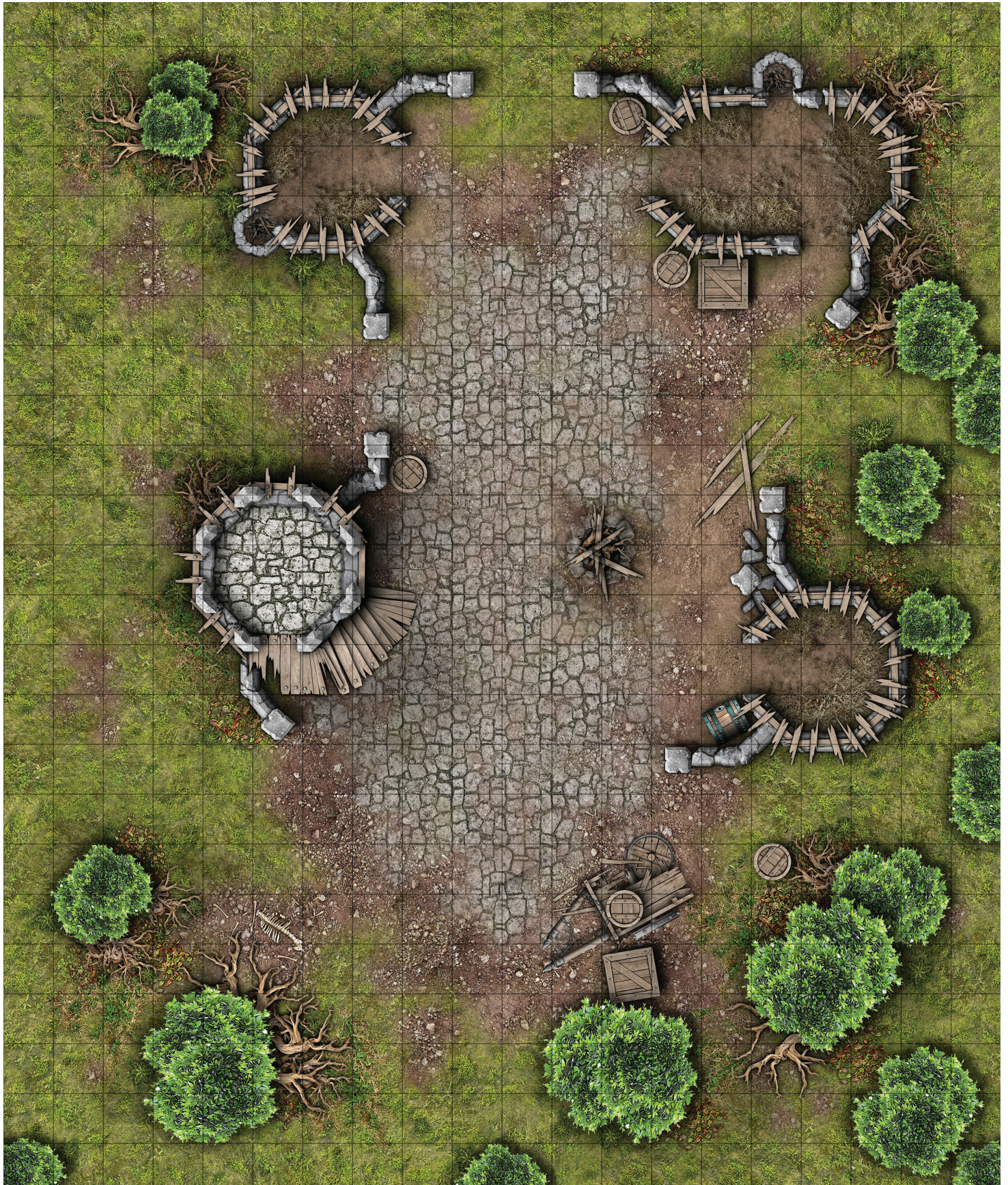
Multiattack. The maricoxi chieftain makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 12 (2d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

The Watchtower in the Wood



Scale: 1 sq. = 5 ft.

Contagion, the **Contagion** game setting, Contagion Points, all artwork and design elements, specific layout and trade dress, Choe Pho, Choe Pho: A New World of Fantasy, the Choe Pho game setting, specific race and class descriptions apart from game system & rules information, Marrow, and the Plains of Marrow are hereby declared PRODUCT IDENTITY as described in the OGL.

All systems and rules additions are hereby declared Open Game Content, pursuant to the license below.

The terms of the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a are as follows:

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content

may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty\free, non\ exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co\adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document 5.0 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Choe Pho: A New World of Fantasy PREVIEW Copyright 2016, Aegis Studios

The Watchtower in the Wood Copyright 2017, Aegis Studios

END OF LICENSE