

DESCENT INTO MIREFEN

A 5E ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 5-7 CHARACTERS

CREATED BY
WILLIAM MURAKAMI-BRUNDAGE





WITHIN MIREFEN'S BOG IS A RUINED TEMPLE.
THIS EDIFICE IS NOW HOME TO A TRIBE OF TOAD FOLK,
WHO HAVE DEFILED THE HOLY SITE WITH
STRANGE EFFIGIES TO THEIR SQUAT, BESTIAL GODS.
CAN THE ADVENTURERS WREST MAGIC
AND TREASURE FROM THE SWAMP?

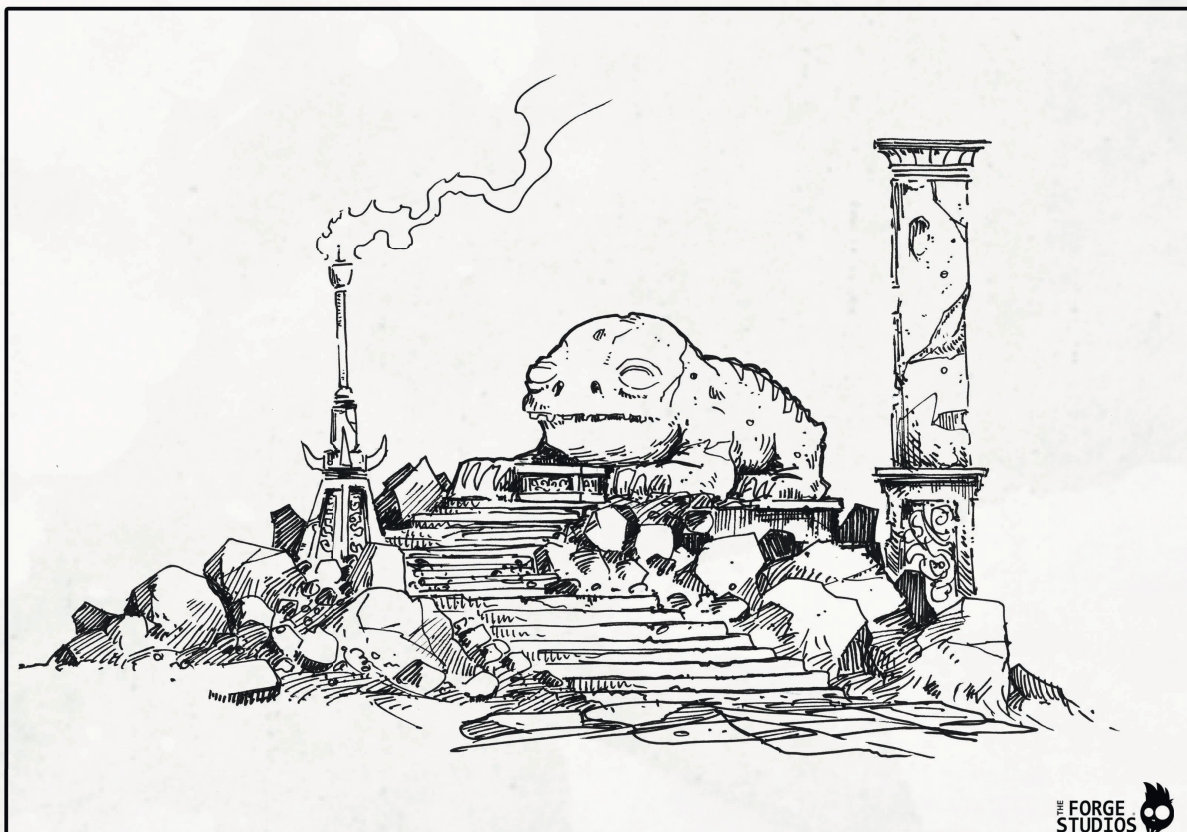
Descent into Mirefen

Within Mirefen's bog is a ruined temple. This edifice is now home to a tribe of toad folk, who have defiled the holy site with strange effigies to their squat, bestial gods. Can the adventurers wrest magic and treasure from the swamp?

A 5e Adventure for 5th-7th Level Characters

WILLIAM MURAKAMI-BRUNDAGE

Author



Credits

Author

William Murakami-Brundage

Art & Cartography

Andrea Alemanno, Pawel Dobosz, The Forge Studios, Gustavo Melo, Dean Spencer, Xanditz, Maciej Zagorski

Development & Editing

Iam Pace, William Beers, & William Murakami-Brundage

Layout & Design

William Murakami-Brundage

Playtesters

Christeen Allestad, Lee Ann, Jephrey Arp, Joseph Digman-McNassar, Kurshun Finch, Elijah Siron



On the front: Andrea Alemanno's art showing an (un)lucky adventurer.
On the back: Andrea Alemanno depicts a group of adventurers exploring Mirefen.

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, place names, etc.), new rules, races, classes, creatures, vehicles, items, backgrounds, storylines, story elements, locations, characters, sidebars, illustrations, art, graphics, and trade dress.

Open Game Content: The Open content in this book includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 provided by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. No other portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission.

Descent into Mirefen, all other Menagerie Press product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Menagerie Press. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Menagerie Press. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Menagerie Press.

©2019 by Menagerie Press. The mention, use of, or reference to any company, trademark, or product in this book is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright in question.

Table of Contents

ADVENTURE PRIMER	2
ADVENTURE BACKGROUND	2
PART 1. SECRETS LEARNED	5
PART 2. MIREFEN.....	7
PART 3. THE UPPER TEMPLE.....	15
PART 4. LOWER TEMPLE.....	21
PART 5. ALTAR OF BESHARAS.....	26
PART 6. SHA KALTHES	28
APPENDIX A. NEW CREATURES.....	30
APPENDIX C. DHRNU (TOAD FOLK).....	38
APPENDIX D. NEW FEATS.....	40
APPENDIX E. NEW BACKGROUNDS	41

Introduction

Welcome to *Descent into Mirefen*, a Menagerie Press 5e RPG adventure. The adventurers journey into Mirefen and retrieve the Bloodstone of Besharas from a sunken temple. Unfortunately, Mirefen's toad folk revere this glowing gem for its life-enhancing properties. The shrine is protected by both this amphibian tribe and mutant beasts created by the stone's magical aura.

This adventure is designed for **three to six 5th-7th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level of 6**.

Adventure Primer

Five hundred years ago, the land that would become Mirefen was filled with verdant forests, bountiful fields, and thriving cities. This country worshipped Besharas, a goddess who helped guide the harvest of sea and earth. Instead of bog water and moss-covered trees, lush grass covered the land.

Besharas wasn't alone. She was a key figure in a small local pantheon. Her demigod son, Targun was both a trickster and a good-natured figure. Targun was regarded as a hero amongst the people, always willing to take on a challenge. Unfortunately, Targun made powerful rivals and enemies, and eventually a divine war broke out. Besharas was slain defending her son from the Eldest God Cyugatha, and her defeat led to the disruption and dissolution of the entire pantheon.

As a final act of retribution against Besharas and Targun, Cyugatha cursed the land. It took only a decade for the swamp known as Mirefen to replace the fields and trees. During this time, many of Besharas's followers refused to recant faith in their slain goddess. These devout believers were magically transmogrified into dhrnu (toad-people), *saliek* (lizard folk), and other swamp-dwelling beings. They descended into bloodshed and chaos, and Besharas's faith fell into obscurity, existing only as a footnote in scholar's works and elven ballads.

Mirefen occasionally yields pieces of the past. Two months ago, a gaseous belch caused one of Besharas's ancient temples to emerge from the muck. A dhrnu tribe, named the Shigguk, was the first to discover and explore the still-sealed edifice. The temple contained undead defenders and remnants of Besharas's glory. Eventually, the toad folk defeated most of the undead, defiled Besharas's altar, and took control of the shrine.

While exploring the deeper levels of the shrine, the dhrnu found an ancient glowing stone, the Bloodstone

of Besharas. Negux, the Shigguk warlock, took possession of the magical gemstone.

Negux, guided by their patron Cyugatha, etched a new facet into the stone, destabilizing its magic. Using the corrupted stone, Negux set about mutating common swamp beasts into hideous monstrosities.

The first of these creatures was a toad. This became a fierce toad beast, which the Shigguk revere as a holy avatar and demonstration of their new-found might. Negux's second act was to mutate a simple earthworm, which became an undulating, blind linnorm. Next, the warlock created two-headed snakes and lizards. Negux was determined to create an army of terrible creatures, but the stone's magic began to wane.

The dhrnu sought to subjugate the swamp beings near their new abode. Using their newly-mutated servants, the Shigguk easily defeated their closest neighbors, the Ss'alk lizard folk tribe. The dhrnu also staged numerous raids, hitting other dhrnu tribes, ogre dens, and even a hag's lair.

An old druid named Rathlan Korr noticed the shift in Mirefen's dynamics. Rathlan dwells near the southern edge of Mirefen and was alarmed by the dhrnu's magical allies and new-found strength. Rather than confront the Shigguk directly, Rathlan used *animal messenger* to alert his allies. In turn, his allies successfully planted rumors of a swamp temple that holds great adventure and a magic gemstone.

Shortly after these rumors began to spread, Sha Kalthes, a priestess of Daant, organized an expedition to Mirefen. One of Sha Kalthes's emissaries connected with the Shigguk and arranged a diplomatic visit.

Currently, Brand Krاندell, Sha Kalthes's scout, waits in Karah am-Saar, a river town south of Mirefen. Once Sha Kalthes arrives, he is to guide her diplomatic retinue to the temple. Brand is hunkered down in a riverside inn called the White Stallion, where he bides his time drinking. The adventurers encounter him and learn more about Mirefen, the toad folk, and the temple.

Adventure Background

Even gods die. Centuries past, the fertility goddess Besharas was crucial to the harvests of both ocean and field. Her demigod son, Targun, was a roguish fellow who embodied heroism and cunning.

Eventually, new pantheons arose and Besharas was slain in a divine battle with the Eldest Gods, including Cyugatha, who had been wounded by one of Targun's pranks.

When Cyugatha slew Besharas, its final curse against the fertility goddess caused large tracts of her beloved grasslands and forests to turn into swampy,

thorny wetlands. One particularly large bog is now known as Mirefen.

Recently, a ruined temple to Besharas emerged from the bog. This once-grand edifice is now home to the Shigguk dhrnu tribe.

A Shigguk warlock and follower of Cyugatha, named Negux, discovered a large glowing bloodstone deep within the ruins, resting atop the temple's altar. This enchanted gem was the Bloodstone of Besharas, a holy relic of the now-forgotten goddess.

With Cyugatha's aid, over the next month Negux carved an extra facet into the stone, fundamentally changing its purpose. After Negux's magic, the bloodstone exhibited chaotic energy, transmuting mundane beasts into ravenous, bestial things.

Guided by their patron, Negux altered snakes, toads, and other swamp beasts into fierce monsters. The reclusive dhrnu used these creatures to successfully raid the Mirefen's lizard folk and prey on humanoids foolish enough to enter the bog.

This tumult drew the attention of Sha Kalthes, a priestess of Daant, the goddess of war. Sha Kalthes saw an opportunity to discover more about the temple ruins, the Shigguk, and the Bloodstone, and is en route to meet with the dhrnu.

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Mirefen. This is a temperate bog inhabited by toad folk, lizard folk, frogs, snakes, black dragons, and other swamp-dwelling creatures. It is also home to a sunken temple that houses the Bloodstone of Besharas.

Bloodstone of Besharas. A large, magical bloodstone that transmutes mundane beasts into aberrations. An archaic gem from a bygone era, corrupted by Negux's magic.

Shigguk. The Shigguk dhrnu dwell in the ruined temple of Besharas. They revere the Bloodstone as a holy icon. Using the stone's magic, the Shigguk mutate beasts into swamp-monsters.

Negux. The Shigguk warlock responsible for corrupting the Bloodstone. Negux's patron is the Eldest One Cyugatha, who appears as a sentient, roiling mass of brambles and plants.

Sha Kalthes. A priestess of Daant who is en route to parley with the Shigguk and either make an alliance or steal the Bloodstone for her own use.

Besharas and Targun. Besharas was an ancient fertility goddess who oversaw the harvest of land and sea. Targun was her demigod son, a monster-slayer and jovial rogue. Both of these deities belong to a long-extinct pantheon.

Daant. The goddess of strength and war. Her symbol is a crown wrought of cold iron.

Cyugatha. An Eldest One, a being that exists beyond the veil of space and time. Cyugatha appears to its patrons as an endless field of thorny brambles, from which rumbles Cyugatha's thunderous voice.

Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into four parts:

Part 1. The adventurers discover the location of the Bloodstone of Besharas, and travel to Mirefen.

Part 2. The adventurers visit the sunken temple. This ruin is home to the Shigguk tribe and their allies.

Part 3. There is a cave system underneath the main shrine. The upper cave is home to the Shigguk tribe, as well as several dangerous aberrations.

Part 4. Oltex, the dhrnu chief, and her warlock, Negux, dwell on the lower cave level, as well as Negux's second-most powerful creation.

Part 5. The Bloodstone rests on a desecrated altar within the caves. The Shigguk use the stone to mutate swamp beasts into terrible abominations. The stone is protected by its first creation, a monstrous toad-thing that the dhrnu worship as an avatar of their god.

Part 6. Sha Kalthes, priestess of Daant, and her envoy are detailed here, as well as possible events and narrative elements for if the adventurers work alongside the diplomatic mission.

Adventure Hooks

Potential adventure hooks to engage the players include:

Do the Right Thing. Taking the moral high ground, the adventurers may seek to recover or uncorrupt the Bloodstone for glory and honor.

Helping Hands. The adventurers may seek to recover the Bloodstone and prevent the Shigguk from creating more toad-beasts and bizarre swamp monsters.

Rathlann Korr. The adventurers may be asked to help restore Mirefen's natural balance by Rathlann Korr or some other guardian of nature.

Rivalry. The adventurers learn about Sha Kalthes diplomatic mission and seek to obtain or destroy the Bloodstone to thwart the envoy and earn some coin.

What's it Worth. Selling the stone to the highest bidder is always an option. Many wizards would trade gold or magic for the gem.

Translating Characters and Locations

All locations, characters, deities, historical footnotes, and other aspects of the adventure are adaptable to your specific campaign needs.

For example, the war goddess Daant can be replaced with Asmodeus, Ymir, or another domineering, evil figure. The forgotten goddess Besharas could be Persephone or Frigg, and Targun could be Perseus or Loki.

Cyugatha, Negux's patron, can be modified to use either a plant-focused deity or a different warlock patron.

Even the Shigguk tribe could be replaced by lizard folk or another amphibian or reptilian tribal race. In this case, simply

remove the toad folk's Great Leap ability and equip them with great clubs instead of daggers.

Giving Experience for this Adventure

As an alternative to calculating experience points by defeated creatures, grant a specific amount of experience points for completing the adventure and important milestones.

- **Completing the Adventure:** 1750 xp per character
- **Retrieving the Bloodstone:** 500 xp per character
- **Completing the Adventure Hook:** 250 xp per character



Part 1. Secrets Learned

Brand Krandell, otherwise known as Brand the Brash, serves as one of Sha Kalthes's scouts and guides. Brand has been waiting for the diplomatic retinue to guide them into Mirefen, and he's also been tasked with getting the lay of the land.

For the past two days, Brand has waiting in Karah am-Saar, a river town that straddles the River Saar. He is currently in the common room of the White Stallion tavern, getting drunk. If the adventurers are savvy, they can buy Brand a few drinks and learn about the ruined temple of Besharas, the dhrnu, and Sha Kalthes's diplomatic mission to obtain a 'magic gem.'

General Features

The White Stallion is a local caravan stop located near the horse market. The inn is frequented by merchants and locals, especially laborers and adventurers looking for hire. The stew is cheap, the ale is watered down, and the inn's raucous din is audible from a street away.

Terrain. The outside has a wooden shingle with a crude painting of a rearing white stallion. The interior of the White Stallion is a medium-sized city tavern. The tables have been carved with oft-illegible marks.

Weather. It is raining lightly, and the air is chilly.

Light. The tavern is lit by a handful of oil lamps. At night, the tavern sign is illuminated by a torch.

Smells and Sounds. The rank scent of sweat mingles with herbal smoke and old ale. The loudest thing in the room is a yelling human dressed in an envoy's garb.

Karah am-Saar

Karah am-Saar is a small river town. It straddles the River Saar, a moderately large river that flows south to the sea. To the east and west of Karah am-Saar are low hills and steppes. To the north is a fertile stretch of grasslands, which eventually turns into Mirefen, a large swamp.

The town has few permanent residents, and even the long-term residents usually have plans to relocate to a better, more luxurious place.

Much of the town's economy is based on capturing, domesticating, and training the wild white horses that roam the nearby steppes. These horses are supposedly descended from magical horses that were released by their fey masters. These horses are entirely white, have a reputation as being difficult to master, and sell for a premium.

There are quite a few outposts and small border forts in this area. The Saar Region is attractive to rugged, independent settlers, as well as bandits, outlaws, and other folk who often find themselves on the wrong side of the law.

The White Stallion

The local caravan stop and inn, the White Stallion, is a primary stop for merchants and locals, and a prime place to learn the local gossip. Anyone asking for directions gets pointed to the White Stallion.

Potential comments that people may make include:

- You can get a quick job but watch your pay (true).
- The previous tavern owner was eaten by a giant two-headed lizard (false, but entertaining).
- The innkeeper Caramos is a petty thug (mostly false).

Brand the Brash

Brand (human lawful evil **veteran**), one of Sha Kalthes's retinue, is loudly complaining about Mirefen. Read or paraphrase the following:

A finely-dressed human soldier sits at the center table. He has several empty tankards in front of him and is loudly complaining: "I don't get any respect. If Sha Kalthes doesn't show up soon, I ain't getting paid. I hope this magic gem is worth it, because nobody messes around in Mirefen."

This should be sufficient to get the adventurers' attention. Otherwise, Brand will order another tankard of mead. While doing so, he'll pull out a cloth coin pouch and drop several gold pieces on the table.

On a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurers notice that the pouch is embroidered with Daant's symbol, an iron crown.

Questioning Brand

If the adventurers are friendly towards Brand, he drunkenly tells them the following:

- He's part of a diplomatic mission to a Mirefen tribe and works for a woman named Sha Kalthes.
- He's waiting to guide Sha Kalthes to the Shigguk village and hasn't gone into Mirefen yet.

On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check, they learn the following details:

- Sha Kalthes is hoping to obtain the dhrnu allegiance and some kind of magic gem.
- The townsfolk have reported two-headed giant snakes, bizarre lizards, and other monsters lately.

On a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check, they learn the following details:

- Sha Kalthes is a day away from town.

- The entire diplomatic party serves Daant.
- If the dhrnu don't turn over the treasure, Sha Kalthes will order the destruction of the tribe.

Playing Brand the Brash

Brand is loud and boisterous. From his slurred speech, wobbly gait, and unsteady movements, it's obvious that he is drunk and near passing out. Brand has few scruples and believes in Daant's guiding principle: 'might makes right'.

Sleight of Hand

An adventurer may attempt to steal Brand's pouch. This requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, made with advantage because Brand is drunk.

Inside the pouch are 40 gp, a copper button embossed with Daant's holy symbol, and a folded-up map with directions to the Mirefen ruins. The copper button can serve as a focal point for *augury*, *locate object*, or other divination spells.

If the Sleight of Hand check fails by 5 or more, Brand notices the attempted theft and attacks the adventurers, screaming in rage. In this scenario, the adventurers probably must make a hasty escape, as the city watch will eventually appear.

Brand the Brash (Medium human, CR 3)

AC 17 HP 58 Spd 30'

Str +3 Dex +1 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha +0
Perception +2

Multiattack: 2 longsword + 1 shortsword or 1 h. crossbow

Longsword: Melee +5, 1d10+3 slash

Shortsword: Melee +5, 1d6+3 pierce

H. Crossbow: Range +3, 100'/400', 1d10+1 pierce

Searching Brand's Room

Brand is staying in a room upstairs. If left undisturbed, he passes out at his table in the common room an hour after the adventurers arrive. Caramos, the inn-keep, will have two of the regular patrons take Brand to his room upstairs.

Picking the crude lock on Brand's quarters requires a successful DC 11 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Breaking down the door requires a successful DC 11 Strength check. The brute force method attracts attention and an audience, but the local clientele is merely amused. The inn-keep demands 50 gp to cover damages. If payment isn't prompt, or the adventurers attempt to intimidate or threaten Caramos, he calls the city guard.

In either case, Brand is too drunk to awaken and defend himself or his belongings. Searching his room finds his coin pouch with 40 gp, a copper button embossed with Daant's holy symbol, a folded-up map with directions to the Mirefen ruins, a silver ring

worth 50 gp, a letter from Sha Kalthes, and a set of fine clothes. The ring is a diplomatic signet, and the letter contains the same information as per **Questioning Brand**, above.

Working with Brand

If the adventurers offer to work alongside Sha Kalthes, he'll drunkenly and loudly accept. He offers to deputize the adventurers in the name of Sha Kalthes. He then staggers upstairs to his room and passes out in a stupor.

If the adventurers wait until morning and insist on working alongside Sha Kalthes's diplomatic envoy, Brand accompanies them. He doggedly tries to convert the adventurers to Daant's service and extols Daant's tenets. For more details about working with Brand, see **Part 6: Sha Kalthes**.



Part 2. Mirefen

The ruins sit a few day's travel into Mirefen. Once the adventurers approach the temple, they can see decaying buildings and the remains of a perimeter wall located in the middle of a relatively shallow bog.

General Features

The temple ruins have the following general features.

Terrain. The ground is covered by substantial vegetation and some small- and moderate-sized trees. Decaying buildings and a perimeter wall occupy the driest parts of this area. Signs of the Shigguk's presence are evident from a distance. Much of the ground is difficult or watery terrain.

Weather. Even during the day, Mirefen is dim because of drizzling rainclouds. At night, the weather changes to heavy rain and occasional thunderstorms.

Light. Mirefen is dimly lit during the day, and dark at night.

Smells and Sounds. The overwhelming scent of the bog is everywhere. The air is filled with whiffs of swamp gas, stagnant water, and rotting vegetation.

The sounds of birds and vermin echo through the swamp day and night. If the adventurers haven't alerted the Shigguk, they also hear the sounds of the toad folk's daily labor. The toad folk croak and grunt in Draconic as they prepare animal pelts, food, and herbs.

Encounters En Rout

Depending on play time, roll twice per day of travel (daylight and nighttime) on the random encounter table below for travel through Mirefen.

Daylight in Mirefen: Random Encounters

d20	Daylight Mirefen Random Encounter
1-13	No encounter
14-15	A marauding pack of 10 goblins , a goblin cult fanatic , and their pet troll intercept the adventurers. If the cult fanatic or troll are defeated, the whole hunting pack flees.
16-17	2 shambling mounds ambush the adventurers.
18-19	2 trolls are following the adventurers and decide that it's time to attack. If damaged with fire or acid, the trolls insult the adventurers in Giant and flee.
20	Ghaufax, an adult black dragon is spotted flying overhead. Unless attacked or provoked, he has more important business elsewhere, and ignores the adventurers.

Nighttime in Mirefen: Random Encounters

d20	Nighttime Mirefen Random Encounter
1-10	No encounter

11-13	4 manticores have caught wind of the adventurers and launch a ranged assault. If they meet resistance, the manticores flee.
14-15	A riled-up basilisk attacks the adventurers, defending its territory.
16-18	5 ghouls and 2 ghasts launch an attack. The undead are ravenous for fresh meat but wait until a lull in the evening watch if possible.
19-20	A black pudding is nearby. While dangerous, the ooze is slow-moving, and can be outrun.

Random Encounters: Mirefen

Toad folk constantly come and go from the ruins. Every hour of in-game time roll for an encounter using the appropriate table. Each random encounter can only occur once. Consider pre-rolling these encounters.

Daylight Hours: Shigguk Village Random Encounters

d20	Daylight Shigguk Village Random Encounter
1-14	No encounter
15	Four toad folk carrying a dead giant lizard return from the west. One of the toad folk is loudly proclaiming her hunting skill in Draconic.
16	A giant two-headed snake and its rider, a toad folk croaker , return from the west. The croaker is grunting a kobold drinking song in Draconic and chortling to himself loudly.
17	A group of eight young toad folk begin playing football using a severed elf head.
18	A wyvern passes overhead, looking for easy prey. If any of the adventurers are Small sized and relatively unprotected, the dragon-kin may sweep in for an easy kill.
20	Esk, the toad folk shaman , is alerted by her <i>augury</i> , and begins looking for intruders.

Nighttime Hours: Shigguk Village Random Encounters

D20	Nighttime Shigguk Village Random Encounter
1-13	No encounter
14	Three toad folk return from the west, moving towards the hidden entrance of the cave system. They grunt and croak in Draconic, talking excitedly about their 'new god'.
15	Three will-o-wisps approach the eastern edge of the ruins. If any creatures have died within the ruins recently, five will-o-wisps appear. These wisps only attack badly wounded creatures.
16	Esk, the toad folk shaman , is amusing herself by casting <i>produce flame</i> and hurling the flames into swamp water.
17	A toad folk hexer is heard telling the fortune of a toad folk croaker in Draconic. On a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Insight) check, the adventurers can tell the hexer is spinning tall tales, not actively using magic.

18	A patrol of four toad folk , accompanied by two giant lizards , moves throughout the ruins.
19	A three-way brawl breaks out between three drunk toad folk . One of the toad folk holds a still-sealed bottle of fine mead worth 10 gp.
20	A giant two-headed lizard prowls through the southern ruins, dragging a broken length of hemp rope behind it. After a few minutes, two toad folk start searching the area, calling the lizard's name loudly in Draconic. The adult toad folk are accompanied by several crying toad folk children.

Traveling into Mirefen by Air

If the adventurers have access to aerial travel via hippogriffs, a *carpet of flying*, *fly*, or other magic, they can arrive well ahead of Sha Kalthes. The sky is filled with rainclouds and drizzling mist, forcing flying creatures to move at half speed, and causing Wisdom (Perception) checks to be made with disadvantage.

Depending on how the adventurer choose to approach, the toad folk may spot the intruders. If the

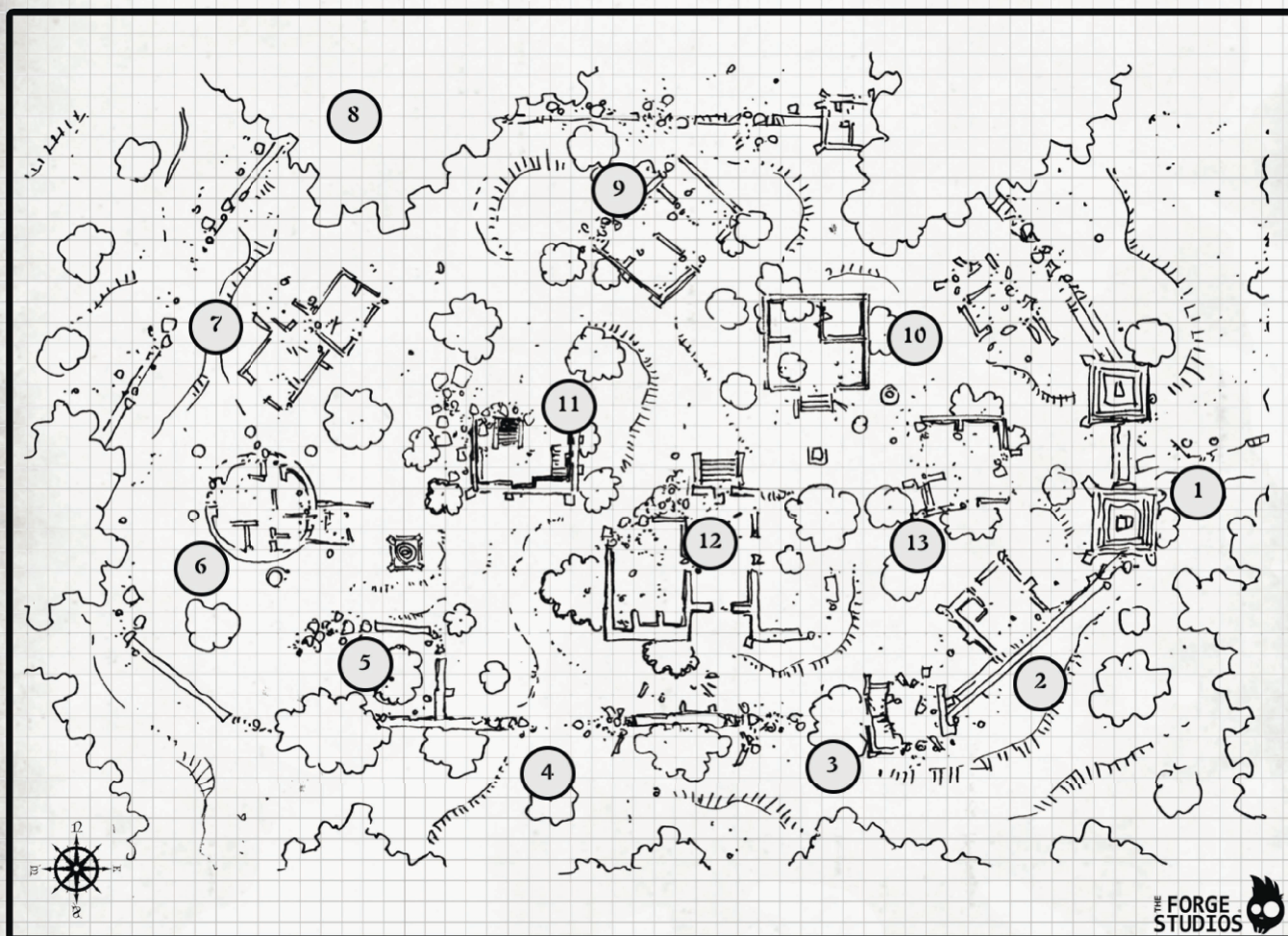
adventurers decide to fly directly into the temple grounds and engage in direct confrontation, the tribe's spellcasters launch a counterattack using *eldritch blast* and other magic. Otherwise, a more stealthy approach doesn't alert the Shigguk, and buys valuable time. This can include landing nearby, using *invisibility*, or scouting ahead before entering.

While airborne, one or two **wyverns** may attack aerial travelers, viewing them as intruders and/or food. This is especially likely if the adventurers have hippogriff mounts, as horse flesh is delicious to dragon-kin. For an extra challenge, the wyverns may grapple a flying adventurer and attempt to carry them off.

Other potential aerial creatures that may attack the adventurers include griffons, insect swarms, or giant vultures.

Wyvern (Large dragon, CR 6)

AC 13 HP 110 SPD 20' Fly 80'
 Str +4 Dex +0 Con +3 Int -3 Wis +1 Cha -2
 Perception +4, darkvision 60'
Multiattack: 1 claw or bite + 1 stinger



Bite: Melee +7, Rng 10', 2d6+4 pierce
Claw: Melee +7, 2d8+4 slash
Stinger: Melee +7, Rng 10', 2d6+4 pierce + 7d6 poison (DC 15 Con save for half dmg.)

Approaching by Land

Read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the southern edge of the ruins is a large expanse of stagnant water. The eastern and western edges have muddy paths, churned deep by dhrnu coming and going. The north edge of the ruins is a forested bog.

The thick northern forest hides an alternate entrance into the temple.

Tribe Details and Routine

Dhrnu are most active from dusk to dawn, but a few of the Shigguk tribe are active during daylight hours, hunting and taking care of urgent tasks.

The tribe is eighty members. Roughly half the tribe are noncombatant youths. Young toad folk have 1 hp and are non-combatants. Among the adults are six spellcasters, as well as the dhrnu chief and her warriors. See the table below for more details:

Dhrnu Tribe Details

Dhrnu Details	Number
Oltex, chieftain (barbarian)	1
Negux, corrupter (warlock)	1
Esk, shaman (druid)	1
Croakers (mutants)	2
Hexers (sorcerers)	2
Hunters (rangers)	10
Tribal adults	25
Noncombatant youth	38

The dhrnu also have a variety of mutated swamp creatures, such as giant two-headed lizards, giant two-headed serpents, and other monstrosities.

Esk, the tribal shaman, has spent months training these mutants with a special herbal concoction to follow basic commands. These monstrous creatures only truly obey the shaman, and often ignore commands given by other dhrnu.

If the Alarm is Raised

If the Shigguk raise an alarm, the following events occur:

Dhrnu Alarm Action Details

Area	Alarm Actions
1	The adults take the young to safety in the swamp.

5	Esk the shaman will go to Area 6 and get her giant lizard, then cast <i>pass without trace</i> on all nearby toad folk.
6	See Area 5 .
7	The toad folk will attempt to hide and ambush any intruders they find.
8	The hunters will assess the danger. If necessary, they will run into the cave and warn the rest of the tribe.
9	The hunters will take up arms and hide. If possible, they will travel to Area 6 and join forces with Esk.
11	The adults take the young to safety in the swamp.
12	The hexers will attempt to free the giant lizards in Area 14 , and then mount a frontal attack.
13	See Area 12 .

Pretending to be Sha Kalthes

The Shigguk villagers don't expect hostile forces. The tribe's leaders are aware that Sha Kalthes is coming, but they don't keep a calendar, instead relying on moon cycles and seasonal weather patterns.

This lack of timekeeping means that the Shigguk may mistake the adventurers for the envoys, especially if the adventurers are dressed in fine clothes, mention Sha Kalthes, display the symbol of Daant, or talk about making an alliance.

In this scenario, the dhrnu only make contested Wisdom (Insight) checks against the adventurers' Charisma (Deception or Performance) checks if the adventurers act out of line. The dhrnu expect Sha Kalthes to be diplomatic, and any direct aggression starts a melee.

Fooling the Dhrnu Leaders

The dhrnu leaders are more perceptive and will attempt contested Wisdom (Insight) versus Charisma (Deception or Performance) checks to attempt to understand the adventurer's motives. If the dhrnu catch on to the ruse, they'll lead the adventurers into the temple and then ambush them.

Alternately, they may direct the adventurers into **Area 17** and then bar the entrance, assuming the undead scourges will finish them.

Diplomacy and the Bloodstone

The dhrnu won't willingly give up the Bloodstone of Besharas, and if anyone demands the magical stone, the villagers instead ambush the adventurers.

Otherwise, the dhrnu will be crude but non-hostile, bantering and joking about the adventurers in Draconic. They poke and prod these 'dry-skins' (the toad folk term for non-toad folk) and intrude on personal space.

1. Eastern Perimeter Ruins

Two partially collapsed towers stand on the eastern edge of the temple ruins. Originally, these towers flanked the main entrance.

At night, four adult **toad folk** and a large number of young toad folk sit amongst the tower ruins, crafting household items out of hemp rope, twine, turtle shells, and other local pieces of flora and fauna. The toad folk banter in Draconic.

If one of the toad folk spot the adventurers, one adult runs to alert Esk and the village. The other three toad folk begin throwing javelins from behind partial cover, ordering the children to safety.

During the day, three adult **toad folk** stand guard.

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'

Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1

Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

2. Abattoir

Read or paraphrase the following:

This ruin smells like blood and death. Inside are several dozen hanging, skinless carcasses. Most of these are large lizards, snakes, and other swamp creatures, but the abattoir includes flayed, disemboweled lizard folk and other humanoids.

Searching the offal requires a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or the searcher becomes nauseated (poisoned) for 10 minutes. There is nothing of value in the abattoir.

3. Spoils of War

Read or paraphrase the following:

A broad-branched black willow tree grows amidst a pile of rubble. Several small lean-tos made from brightly patterned reptile hides are erected here. Inside the shelters are an array of boxes.

A small shipping crate in the back of one shelter has a dead lizard pinned to it with a javelin. Scrawled on the top is a single word, written in Draconic.

The dhrnu use this area to store the loot from their raids. The crates contain 120 gp worth of various trade goods.

The word 'No' is written in Draconic on one crate which holds five sealed bottles of mead worth 10 gp each.

4. Southern Perimeter Wall

Read or paraphrase the following:

This is a ruined temple wall. Beyond the wall to the south is a large expanse of water, stretching out into the distant trees.

It appears that the swamp water goes as far to the south as the eye can see. You see wood and other debris floating in the water but cannot tell how deep it is.

Close to the ruins, Mirefen is only a foot deep, but it gradually deepens into a 5-foot-deep, stagnant bog that reaches the forest line far in the distance. This deep bog stretches for a mile before dry land begins to appear again.

5. Herb Drying Racks

Read or paraphrase the following:

Gray stone walls jut out of the bog. A fire burns in the center of the ruined vestibule. Smoke drifts over wooden racks covered with bundles of drying herbs.

It is the DM's discretion that Esk the **toad folk shaman** is here, tending to her medicinal herbs. If encountered here, the shaman will attempt to flee and raise the alarm. Otherwise, Esk is found in **Area 6**.

Esk, Toad Folk Shaman (Medium humanoid, CR 2)

AC 14 HP 29 SPD 25' Swim 30'

Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +2 Cha +1

Nature +2, Religion +2, Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Scimitar: Melee +4, 1d6+2 pierce

Druid Spells (druid 4, Spell +4, DC 12)

Cantrips: *druidcraft*, *produce flame*

1st (4): *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *fog cloud*

2nd (2): *heat metal*, *pass without trace*

6. Shaman's Tower

Read or paraphrase the following:

This crumbling tower squats amidst patches of wild grass. It has gaping holes instead of windows, and one side is exposed to the swamp.

It is the DM's discretion that Esk the toad folk shaman is here, training a **giant two-headed lizard**. Unless Esk orders the lizard to stop, it will defend the shaman and her home by attacking the adventurers.

Otherwise, Esk is found in **Area 5**, and the giant lizard is perched on the inside ceiling of the tower here, dozing. In this case, it will attack any non-dhrnu entering the tower.

Tower Contents

Strewn around the shaman's bedding is a **herbalist's kit** and two jars filled with **antitoxin**.

Giant Two-Headed Lizard (Large monstrosity, CR 4)

AC 13 HP 52 SPD 35' Swim 35'

Str +4 Dex +1 Con +23 Int -4 Wis +0 Cha -2

Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in wilderness

Climb: Can climb walls and ceilings

Two Heads: Advantage on Perception and saves vs. blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Multiattack: 2 bites + 1 tail

Bite: Melee +6, Rng 10', 2d6+4 pierce

Tail: Melee +6, Rng 10', 2d6+4 bludgeon

7. Dwellings

Read or paraphrase the following:

The ground around these two partially collapsed buildings has been churned into foul-smelling mud. It looks like many sets of tracks come in and go from the western path.

Low croaks and chirps in what sounds like Draconic can be heard from inside the buildings. A guttural bellow, followed by a sharp smack, is briefly audible.

These two buildings serve as quarters for four **toad folk**, a **toad folk croaker**, and the croaker's **giant two-headed snake**. DMs discretion, the croaker and her snake are hunting, and not currently here.

The dhrnu are divvying up meat skewers, and the croaker is trying to claim a double portion of the food. This is starting a vicious argument amongst the dhrnu. With a little outside encouragement or prodding, a lethal brawl may break out.

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'

Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1

Stealth +4, darkvision 60'



Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

Toad Folk Croaker (Medium humanoid, CR 3)

AC 14 HP 38 SPD 25' Swim 30'

Str +0 Dex +2 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha +1

Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Great Croak (Rechrg 6): 30' cone, 3d8 thunder (DC 12 Con save for half dmg.)

Shortsword: Melee +4, 1d6+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

Giant Two-Headed Snake (Large monstrosity, CR 4)

AC 16 HP 52 SPD 35' Swim 35'

Str +2 Dex +4 Con +3 Int -4 Wis +0 Cha -3

Stealth +4, Perception +2, darkvision 60', blindsight 10'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in wilderness

Two Heads: Advantage on Perception and saves vs. blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Multiattack: 2 bites

Bite: Melee +4, 2d6+2 pierce + 4d6 poison (DC 13 Con save for half dmg.)

Tracks

The path leads to the main hunting grounds of the toad folk. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check spots giant snake and giant lizard tracks, as well as large toad prints. These toad prints are from a Huge sized creature.

8. Hidden Cave Entrance

Read or paraphrase the following:

Partially hidden in the tree line is an entrance to a cave. Above the archway is a carving of a bearded man. Next to the entrance is a pillar, atop is which a stone bust of a woman.

Beneath the man are carved the words "Targun, The People's Hero." The woman's bust is covered in ivy and moss, but the word "Besharas" is legible.

Hidden in the forest north of the ruins is an alternate entrance into the caves below the ruins. This archway leads to **Area 21**.



Guard Duty

Two **toad folk hunters** stand guard duty here at all times. They're generally playing with a set of bone

dice or sipping *bufo*, a poisonous herbal tea made from swamp herbs and snake venom.

Non-dhrnu who quaff this charcoal-colored tea must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or else take 7 (2d6) poison damage and be poisoned for an hour.

Toad Folk Hunter (Medium humanoid, CR 1)

AC 15 HP 26 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +3 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha -1
Survival +3, Stealth +5, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +5, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6+3 pierce

Herbal Tea

The tea is a combination of certain swamp herbs and snake venom. It's merely stimulating to dhrnu, but other creatures that imbibe the tea must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and be poisoned for an hour.

The Stone Carvings

On a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check, the adventurers identify Besharas and Targun, and recall their relevant history (see **Adventure Primer**, above).

9. Armory and Northern Wall

Read or paraphrase the following:

In the distant past, this broken-down tower had a second floor, but the passage of time has reduced it to stone debris.

Leaning against the outside wall are a number of javelins and crude wooden shields.

This armory holds the toad folks' hunting gear. Inside, two **toad folk hunters** are repairing broken equipment.

Toad Folk Hunter (Medium humanoid, CR 1)

AC 15 HP 26 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +3 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha -1
Survival +3, Stealth +5, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +5, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6+3 pierce

The Armory

In the armory are two dozen each of the following items: daggers, great clubs, javelins, and wooden shields. These weapons are from a variety of different manufacturers. For example, a bronze-tipped hobgoblin javelin may stand next to a lizard folk turtle-shell shield. The dhrnu trade with or take spoils from other Mirefen-dwelling tribes, and it's evident in this collection.

On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the adventurers notice that a quiver holding 10 mithral-tipped *skyfall* arrows. The dhrnu don't use bows, so the arrows have gone unused.



10. Envoy Quarters

Read or paraphrase the following:

This stone building is mostly intact, but has no door, only a gaping hole where the door would stand.

Inside, fresh-cut grass covers the ground and bedding has been prepared. In one corner is a woven basket holding pungent dried fish and several waterskins.

One wall is covered with a stylized mural of an iron crown.

The Shigguk have prepared this building for Sha Kalthes. The waterskins holds clean water, and the basket contains 3 days of dried fish rations. The room is currently unoccupied.

11. Main Cave Entrance

Read or paraphrase the following:

The remains of a great hall stands here, filled with muck and rubble. Bushes and grass sprout in the ruins, and the roof collapsed inwards some time ago.

Large, broken pillars jut from the earth. Within the courtyard is a stairwell.

This is the main entrance to the underground shrine of Besharas. Three **toad folk** and a handful of young toad folk are here, skinning a dead giant snake. The toad folk are cooking skewers of meat over a fire.

The stairs here lead to **Area 14**.

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1
Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

12. Hexer Quarters

Read or paraphrase the following:

When the temple was still standing, this building was several stories tall, but it is now mostly rubble. Sounds of croaking in Draconic come from within.

These are the quarters of two **toad folk hexers**. Unless encountered elsewhere, they are both here.

Toad Folk Hexer (Medium humanoid, CR 1)

AC 15 HP 23 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha +2
Intimidation +4, Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Quickened Spell (2). The toad folk changes the casting time of one spell to 1 bonus action for that casting.

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Sorcerer Spells (sorcerer 2, Spell +3, DC 11)

Cantrips: *acid splash*, *fire bolt*, *light*, *poison spray*

1st (4): *burning hands*, *magic missile*, *shield*

13. Lizard Quarters

Read or paraphrase the following:

This stone building has partially collapsed but is mostly covered by a thatch roof made of fresh reeds.

The Shigguk keep two **giant two-headed snakes** in this makeshift animal stable, tied with hemp rope. The toad folk use the snakes for hunting and only feed them at early dusk. The two-headed monsters are voracious at any other time.

Breaking Free

If attacked from a distance, the snakes will use an action to break free, succeeding on a DC 12 Strength check. The snakes flee into the bog if reduced to half their hit points or fewer.

Giant Two-Headed Snake (Large monstrosity, CR 4)

AC 16 HP 52 SPD 35' Swim 35'

Str +2 Dex +4 Con +3 Int -4 Wis +0 Cha -3

Stealth +4, Perception +2, darkvision 60', blindsight 10'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in wilderness

Two Heads: Advantage on Perception and saves vs. blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Multiattack: 2 bites

Bite: Melee +4, 2d6+2 pierce + 4d6 poison (DC 13 Con save for half dmg.)

Part 3. The Upper Temple

At one time, Besharas's divine rituals blessed the land and harkened the season's changes. Her temple played a central role in the life of her followers.

Now, the Shigguk live in the remains of her holiest shrine. Much of the western temple has collapsed into rubble.

Several of the Besharas's priests remain in the southern quarter as undead scourges. These vengeful spirits arose when the Shigguk began desecrating the holy shrine but cannot leave the hall.

General Features

The top level of the temple has the following features.

Terrain. Much of the temple displays remnants of Besharas's grandeur. Frescos, carvings, and tilework decorate the interior.

Weather. It is wet and cold inside.

Light. Most of the temple is dark, but the Shigguk keep small fires burning for cooking and warmth.

Smells and Sounds. Unless alerted, the croaks and grunts of the toad folk can be heard throughout the temple. It's impossible to make out specific conversations.

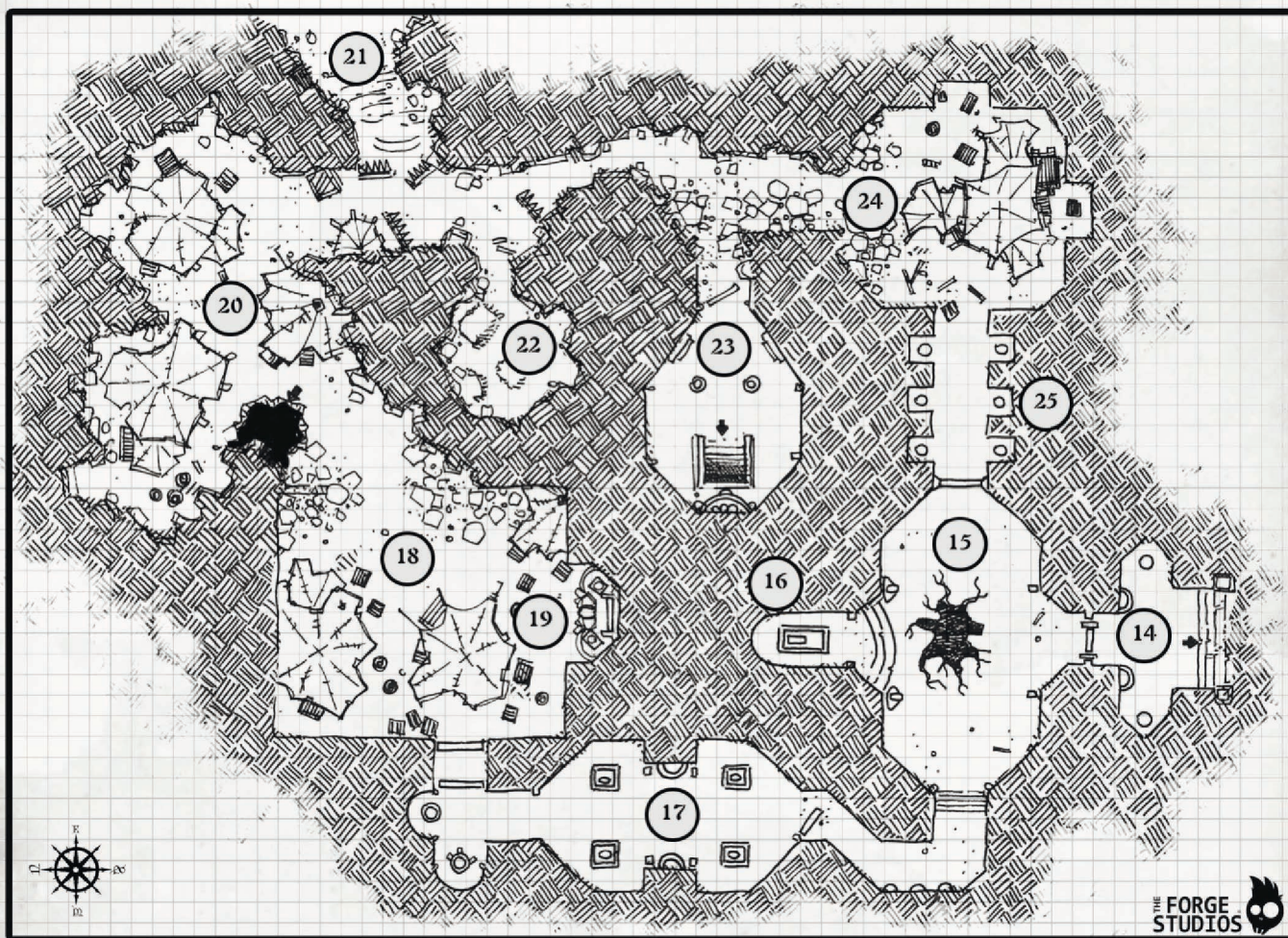
14. Main Temple Entrance

Read or paraphrase the following:

The stairway leads south to the surface. Dim light from outside shines down onto the cracked and pitted stones. To the north, a wide door was once inlaid with tiles, but little remains of the decoration. Carved stone pillars stand in alcoves to the west and east of the doorway.

On a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check, the carvings and tilework can be identified as belonging to the faith of Besharas, and reveal the temple's historical information (see **Adventure Primer**, above).

The door is latched but unlocked.





15. Besharas's Idol

Read or paraphrase the following:

A large, fractured sculpture of a tree dominates the center of this chamber. To the north is a short dais, upon which is an altar. There are large doors to the east and south, and a short flight of stairs down to the west.

A single Draconic word is painted on the western wall.

The stone tree sculpture is 30 feet wide and 40 feet tall. It was once a place to leave candles and prayers to Besharas and Targun. Bits of wax and soot can still be found on some of the branches.

Draconic Sigil and Western Stairs

The word 'Danger' in Draconic is painted on the wall near the western stairs.

On a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, a low, pained moan can be heard from the west.

16. Defiled Altar

Read or paraphrase the following:

A carved altar stands here. It is splattered with bloodstains, and it appears that something was butchered recently.

The Shigguk don't care about Besharas's temple, and regularly use this altar's flat top for preparing food caught by hunters.

Examining the Altar

Any adventurers that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Survival) check identifies the blood and gore as fish guts.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the altar was once dedicated to Besharas (see **Adventure Primer**) but has now been defiled.

17. Scourge Hall

This area is unlit and dark. Read or paraphrase the following if the adventurers can see:

In the center of this chamber are four large urns, each holding a withered tree. On the east and west walls are empty basins. To the north are two statues set into alcoves, and a door stands ajar to the south.

Four **scourges** are moaning in pain. These undead were once priests of Besharas. They cannot leave **Area 17**, and the Shigguk have learned to avoid this part of the temple, as the scourges reappear an hour after being destroyed.

One of the scourges wears the *ring of Besharas*.

Urns and Withered Trees

Each urn has a withered tree rooted within it. A jar containing cremated remains is buried within each urn. If these jars are shattered, emptied, removed from **Area 17**, or given last rites via *bleed*, holy water, or similar methods, the scourges don't reappear.

The two basins have 89 cp, 120 sp, and 19 gp in coinage. It looks like the basins were once filled with water. A tile above each basin has a short prayer to Besharas. If any adventurer recites the prayer or donates a coin, every adventurer in the hall receives an *aid* spell. Removing any of the coins stops this effect, and this magic only occurs one time.

Scourge (Medium undead, CR 5)

AC 14 HP 52 SPD 30'
Str +2 Dex +2 Con +3 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha +0
Perception +5, Stealth +5, darkvision 60'

Dmg Resist: necrotic; non-silver non-magic weapons

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Light Sensitivity: In bright light, disadvantage on attack rolls and Perception checks

Multiattack: 2 dark spheres

Dark Sphere: Melee/Ranged: +4, 30'/120', 3d6 necrotic + DC 13 Con save throw or hp maximum is reduced until a long rest. Target dies if hp maximum reaches 0.

18. Shigguk Village: West

Read or paraphrase the following:

Two shelters made out of giant sheets of snakeskin protect sections of this rubble-filled chamber from the dripping cave ceiling. In front of the largest shelter, skewers of meat sizzle over a bed of coals.

To the northeast are more shelters, as well as a gaping pit. A ladder leans up against one side of the pit. To the west is a door marked with a Draconic sigil. South is a large painting of a strange beast.

There are five **toad folk** adults and a dozen young toad folk here.

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1

Stealth +4, darkvision 60'
Dmg Imm: poison
Cond Imm: poisoned
Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp
Leap: Standing jump is 25'
Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce
Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

The ladder is 20 feet tall and goes down to **Area 26**. If the Shigguk spot intruders or are attacked, they'll raise the alarm and send several dhrnu down to alert Negux and Oltex. Removing the ladder will briefly delay the toad folk on the lower level from climbing up, but the dhrnu can leap from the upper temple to the lower temple, or the reverse.

Sigil and Fresco

The Draconic sigil on the western door says "Danger" and is painted in a reddish paint.

The strange beast looks vaguely like a toad, but the proportions are off, making it appear much more muscular.

19. Toad Beast Painting

Read or paraphrase the following:

A painting on the wall shows a huge toad creature rising from a magical glowing stone. The stone is shown atop an altar.

Placed before the painting are fresh flowers and bundles of fragrant herbs.

The fresco shows the toad beast in **Area 33** arising from the Bloodstone. The toad folk leave the fresco offerings, as the toad beast is too dangerous for most of the toad folk to approach directly.

20. Shigguk Village: East

Read or paraphrase the following:

More animal hides are set up here. A ladder disappears into the depths of a large hole near one of the shelters.

There are three adult **toad folk** and a dozen young toad folk here. If intruders are spotted, the adults order the youth to flee via **Area 21**.

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'
 Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1
 Stealth +4, darkvision 60'
Dmg Imm: poison
Cond Imm: poisoned
Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'
Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce
Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

21. Hidden Forest Entrance

Read or paraphrase the following:

A sloped path to the east leads upwards. The scent of stagnant water, trees, and moss is strong here.

The sloped path leads to **Area 8**, above ground.

Spiked wooden barricades are set up here. If the alarm is raised, the toad folk will push the barricades in front of the entrance, gaining three-quarters cover. The barricades require a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to push, lift, or move.

22. Guard Post

Read or paraphrase the following:

Makeshift tables and benches are haphazardly arranged here. In one corner are several crates, marked with the crest of an unknown merchant house.

Two **toad folk hunters** and two **toad folk** stand guard duty here. The guards are drinking a dark-hued herbal tea, called *bufo*, and telling long-winded myths and tall tales in Draconic.

Herbal Tea

See **Area 8** for details about the herbal tea.

Merchant Crate Contents

In the corner are three crates, each bearing the crest of a merchant house. One crate is empty, one contains 30 clay jars of preserved mushrooms, and one is packed with a half-dozen bottles of elven wine looted from an unfortunate caravan. The bottles of wine are worth 25 gp each. The mushrooms are a delicacy, and each jar is worth 3 gp.

Toad Folk Hunter (Medium humanoid, CR 1)

AC 15 HP 26 SPD 25' Swim 30'
 Str +0 Dex +3 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha -1
 Survival +3, Stealth +5, darkvision 60'
Dmg Imm: poison
Cond Imm: poisoned
Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp
Leap: Standing jump is 25'
Dagger: Melee +5, 1d4+2 pierce
Trident: Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6+3 pierce

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'
 Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1
 Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

23. Bloodstone Altar Entrance

Read or paraphrase the following:

A wide set of stone stairs descends here. The air feels thick with some kind of strange energy, and images of harvests, life, and death are carved into the walls.

The stairs here descend 100 feet to **Area 33**.

24. Shigguk Village: South

Read or paraphrase the following:

The Shigguk have erected a large shelter here made of bright, leathery skins and animal hides. The sound of croaking in Draconic emanates from within.

Inside the tent, two **toad folk** are arguing over food. Perched on the ceiling is a **giant two-headed lizard**. Unless the adventurers succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) group check, the lizard drops down and attacks with surprise.

Toad Folk (Medium humanoid, CR 1/4)

AC 14 HP 11 SPD 25' Swim 30'
 Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha -1
 Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

Giant Two-Headed Lizard (Large monstrosity, CR 4)

AC 13 HP 52 SPD 35' Swim 35'
 Str +4 Dex +1 Con +23 Int -4 Wis +0 Cha -2
 Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in wilderness

Climb: Can climb walls and ceilings

Two Heads: Advantage on Perception and saves vs. blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Multiattack: 2 bites + 1 tail

Bite: Melee +6, Rng 10', 2d6+4 pierce

Tail: Melee +6, Rng 10', 2d6+4 bludgeon

25. Hall of History

Read or paraphrase the following:

This hallway stretches to the east, opening into a large, partially collapsed chamber. A half dozen alcoves line the hall, and within each alcove is a carved stone pillar.

The pillars are painted with Draconic symbols, but older engravings are partially visible underneath the graffiti.

The stone carvings show the annual cycle of life for Besharas's clergy.

If the adventurers search/investigate this area for 10 minutes and succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check, they learn the relative historical information from the **Adventure Primer**.



Part 4. Lower Temple

The lower level of the temple glimmers with hazy motes of light. The Bloodstone's presence has warped the beasts and toad folk that dwell near it and manifests these glowing specks that float in the air throughout this level of the temple.

Occasionally, random *dancing lights* drift through the ruins, shifting color and shape.

General Features

The lower temple is hewn from the bedrock of the temple and prevented from collapsing by fragments of Besharas's presence.

Terrain. The lower temple is cave-like, cramped and dim. The floors are uneven and slick with moss and algae. Rubble covers much of the ground.

Weather. There's no outside weather, but dampness and cold pervade this level of the temple.

Light. Because of the Bloodstone of Besharas's presence, the lower temple is dimly illuminated by flickering motes of light. Additionally, the Bloodstone's magic creates random *dancing lights* that drift throughout the temple ruins, changing color and shape.

Smells and Sounds. Beyond the croaking of the toad folk, it is silent. The temple smells of mold and swamp water. The air is thick with an almost tangible electrical charge.

Dancing Lights

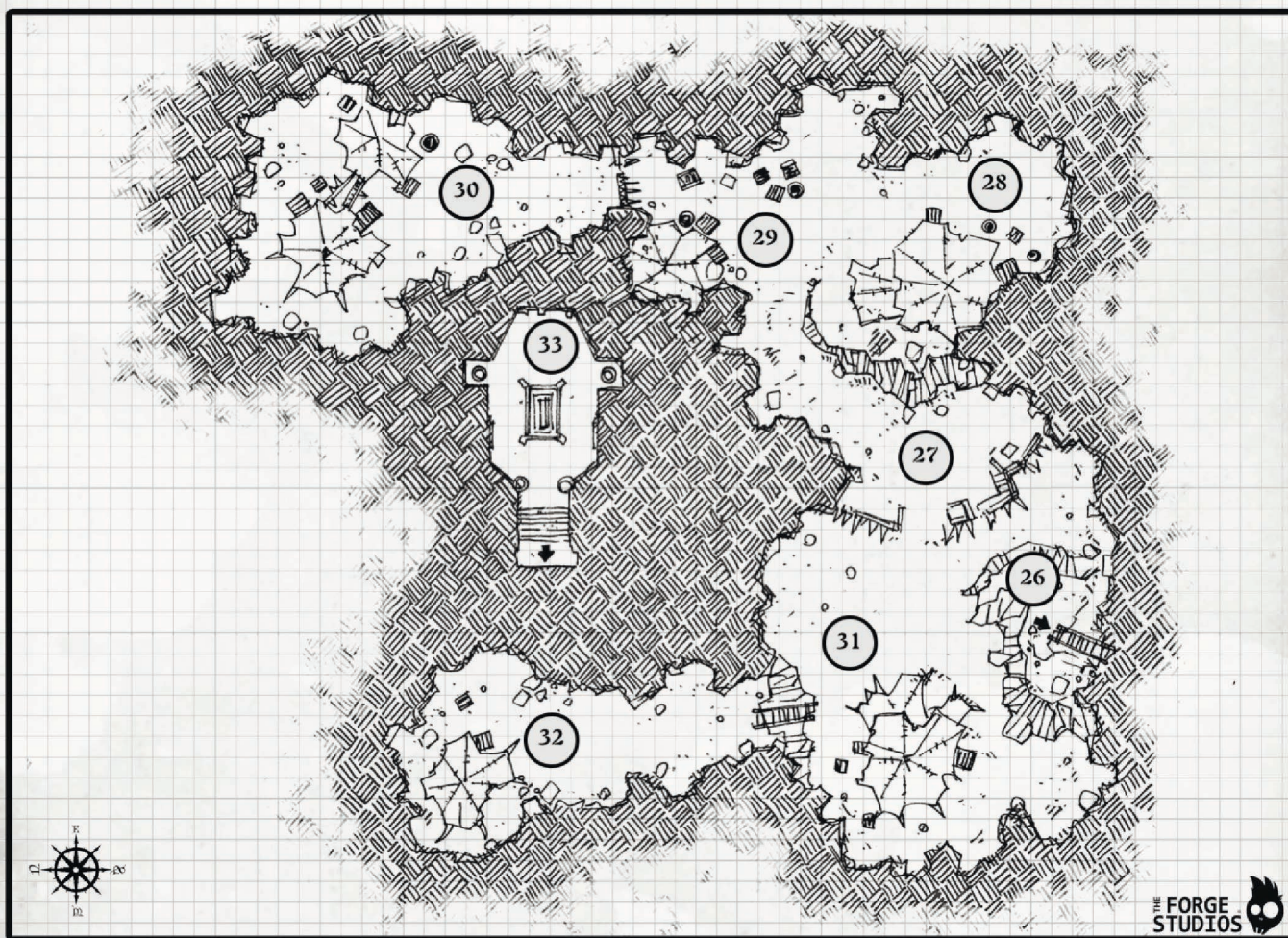
The *dancing lights* produced by the Bloodstone can manifest in several different ways. On a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check, the adventurers identify the cause of the light motes:

Using your arcane knowledge, you think a nearby magical conduit is cracked or broken, and excess energy is dripping out, saturating the temple.

Whenever the adventurers enter a new area in the Lower Temple, roll randomly or choose from the following table:

Lower Temple *Dancing Lights* Effect

D20	Dancing Lights Effect
1-7	No <i>dancing lights</i> occur.



8-10	Several reddish <i>dancing lights</i> motes slowly turn around the largest object in the immediate area. They vanish after 1 minute.
11-13	Four red, candle-like <i>dancing lights</i> motes drift together and merge into a torch-sized light, then disappear 1 minute later.
14-16	Ten small <i>dancing lights</i> motes rapidly flicker, creating a strobe effect for 1 minute. They then disappear.
17-20	A dimly glowing, scarlet-hued <i>dancing lights</i> outline of a human appears for 1 minute. The outline appears to be performing rituals or prayers.

26. Entrance to Upper Village

Read or paraphrase the following:

A tall ladder leans against the cave wall, giving access to the upper level of this cave temple through a gaping hole in the ceiling.

The ladder itself sits atop a rock shelf. To the east are wooden barricades covered with projecting spears. Beyond these barricades is a slope downwards.

To the northeast is another large animal-hide shelter, as well as a ladder leading up to a cave entrance.

The ladder goes to **Area 18** in the Upper Temple. Unless moving with stealth, *invisibility*, or similar methods, creatures moving up and down the ladder can be easily spotted by nearby dhrnu.

If the ladder is knocked down or removed, the dhrnu can leap from the lower temple to the upper temple, or the reverse.

27. Barricades

Read or paraphrase the following:

Several wooden barricades have spears jutting out of them. Beyond these barricades is a slope downwards. At the base of the slope are two more animal-hide huts, as well as a variety of crates, barrels, and boxes strewn about.

The barricades provide three-quarters cover to creatures hiding behind them. The barricades require a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to push, lift, or move.

28. Armory and Guardpost

Read or paraphrase the following:

A hut sits against the cave wall. It is made of snake and reptile skins.

Four **toad folk hunters** are within the hut, where they're manufacturing and repairing their weapons.

Toad Folk Hunter (Medium humanoid, CR 1)

AC 15 HP 26 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +3 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +1 Cha -1
Survival +3, Stealth +5, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +5, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Melee/Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6+3 pierce

The Armory

Inside the armory are a dozen each of the following: tridents, daggers, and spears. These weapons are from a plethora of cultures: for example, an iron dagger stands next to a bone-tipped spear.

29. Chief's Parley Hut

Read or paraphrase the following:

A hut made snake and reptile skins sits against the cave wall. Near the hut is a banner with several words in Draconic painted on it in a dark red pigment.

The banner is a greeting for Sha Kalthes and her retinue and is written in Draconic. If the adventurers can read Draconic, read the following:

The banner proclaims the great glory and strength of the dhrnu, who call themselves the Shigguk tribe. It also extols the virtues of Daant and Sha Kalthes and mentions an alliance between the two factions. There's no mention of a gemstone.

Inside the Parley Hut

The interior of the hut has a low table, several benches, an oil lamp, and several empty pitchers. Tucked into a wicker basket in the corner are four bottles of fine mead, worth 10 gp each.

30. The Chief's Abode

Read or paraphrase the following:

A pair of large huts sit in this cave. Both huts are made of brilliantly colored reptile skin.

Scattered all around the cavern are chests, crates, and numerous other cargo containers.

This hut belongs to Oltex, the **toad folk chief**. She is cunning, and offers a truce if intruders make it this far into the temple.

Only under the direst conditions will Oltex yield the Bloodstone of Besharas, as the gem is critical to her tribe's success. If Negux is slain or flees, Oltex will surrender the Bloodstone, as the warlock is the only toad folk capable of using its magic.

If the adventurers accept her parley, Oltex willingly gives up any other trade goods or items the Shigguk possess in return for her tribe's safety.

Oltex is a fierce opponent if attacked and will use the power of her *dragonbite amulet* against the first opponent who strikes her.

The Cargo Containers

The chests and boxes contain 400 gp worth of trade goods. Additionally, one small box holds a dozen platinum trade bars worth 50 gp each. Almost all of these cargo boxes have the mark of the Truvan merchant house.

Oltex, Toad Folk Chief (Medium humanoid, CR 5)

AC 16 HP 76 SPD 25' Swim 30'

Str +2 Dex +2 Con +4 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha +1

Intimidation +4, Perception +3, Stealth +4, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dragonbite Amulet: see desc. In **Appendix B**.

Reckless: Gain advantage on all melee attacks but attack rolls against have advantage

Multiattack: 2 mauls or 1 trident

Maul: Melee +5, 2d6+2 bludgeon

Trident: Ranged +5, Rng 20'/60', 1d6+2 pierce

31. Central Meeting Hut

Read or paraphrase the following:

A huge drum sits next to a hut made from brightly-hued giant reptile skins. Hanging on a strap next to the drum is a percussion mallet the size of a mace.

To the southwest is a ten foot tall ladder. At the top of the ladder is a ledge, and beyond it stretches another cave section.

This is the Shigguk's meeting hall, where they gather, talk, and feast. Inside the hut are several long, low benches and a collection of wooden and wicker basins and baskets.

Striking the Drum

If the drum is struck, a loud bass note reverberates throughout the temple grounds. Available dhrnu will gather at the meeting hut, arriving within 10 minutes.



32. Negux's Abode

Read or paraphrase the following:

This cave ends up ahead, where a large tent is constructed of vivid reptile skins. Bundles of sweet grass and other herbs are scattered on the ground.

A guttural chanting emits from inside the tent, and plumes of pungent smoke stream from the interior.

This large shelter belongs to Negux, the **toad folk warlock**. Negux is responsible for corrupting the Bloodstone by magically adding an additional facet to the gem, which destabilized the stone's magic.

Additionally, Negux is protected by a **linnorm** named Ghidor. The linnorm is currently burrowed into the ground directly below Negux and will attack if Negux is attacked.



Negux the Warlock

Negux is savvy but certain that any invaders who get this far down either intend to destroy the tribe or attempt to claim the Bloodstone. Either way, Negux will usually be hostile.

At the first opportunity, Ghidor the cave wyrm will burst from the ground and attack with its acid breath.

Maniacal Gloating

Given the opportunity (even during combat), Negux will gloat and announce in Common how they've altered the Bloodstone in service to Cyugatha, the Eldest God. They may also give a speech once slain or defeated. Use the following comments as examples:

- "I am Negux, warlock of the Shigguk. Cyugatha, eldest of the gods, is pleased with my transformation of the stone. "
- "The magic stone, I changed it, carved into it. Now its magic lets me create life and take control of our land."
- "Have you come to stop me? You're too late."

Ghidor the Linnorm

Ghidor is a mutated earthworm and is the second creation of the Bloodstone's warped magic. If the linnorm is slain, Negux loses morale and attempts to flee, abandoning the tribe.

Negux, Toad Folk Warlock (Medium humanoid, CR 4)

AC 13 HP 38 SPD 25' Swim 30'
Str +0 Dex +2 Con +1 Int +0 Wis +2 Cha +3

Arcana +5, Insight +3, Stealth +5, darkvision 60'

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp

Devil's Sight: Can see in magic darkness

Leap: Standing jump is 25'

Dagger: Melee +4, 1d4+2 pierce

Trident: Ranged +2, Rng 20'/60', 1d6 pierce

Warlock Spells (warlock 5, Spell +4, DC 12)

Cantrips: *eldritch blast, message, minor illusion, poison spray*
3rd (2): *bestow curse, charm person, counterspell, expeditious retreat, fear, misty step*

Ghidor, Cave Wurm (Large monstrosity, CR 5)

AC 14 HP 105 SPD 20' Burrow 30'

Str +5 Dex +0 Con +5 Int -3 Wis +1 Cha -2

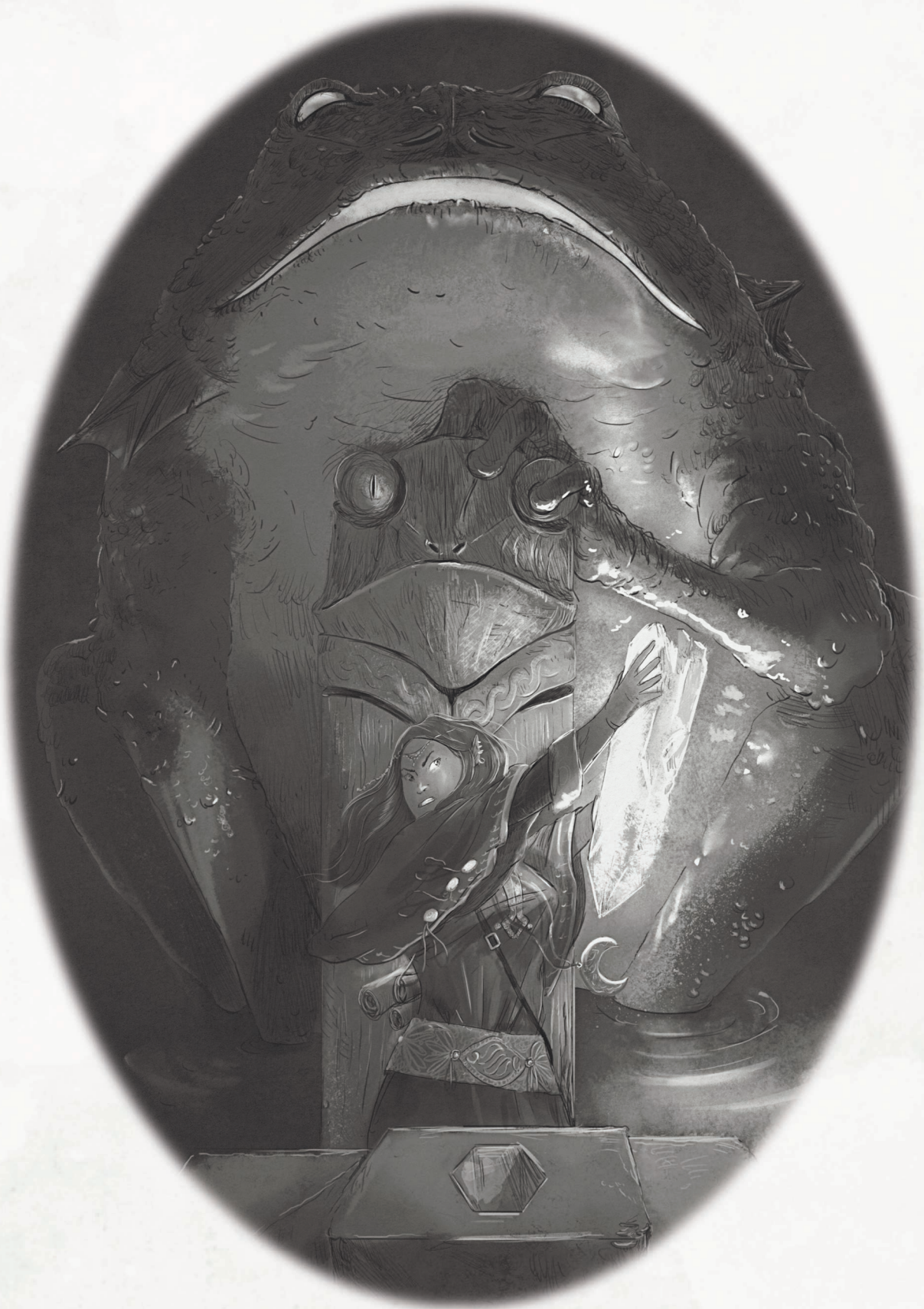
Perception +3, Stealth +3, tremorsense 20', darkvision 60'
Earth Burrow: Can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth. Unable to burrow through solid stone.

Bite: Melee +7, Rng 10', 2d6+4 pierce

Acid Breath (Rchg 5-6): 30' line, 5d8 acid (DC 13 Dex save for half dmg.)

33. Altar of Besharas

See **Part 5** for more details about the Altar of Besharas, the Bloodstone, and the Bloodstone's toad beast guardian.



Part 5. Altar of Besharas

This altar chamber was once the sacred heart of Besharas's rituals. It holds the Bloodstone of Besharas and Negux the warlock's first creation, a malignant toad beast. The Shigguk worship this mutant toad as an avatar of Negux's patron and believe that the toad monster bestows strength to their tribe.

General Features

The altar chamber has the following general features.

Terrain. The altar chamber is partially covered with debris.

Weather. Strangely warm. A sickly breeze blows softly on this level.

Light. The Bloodstone fills the altar chamber with bright light. If the Bloodstone is destroyed or removed from the altar, it ceases to shine and the room becomes dark.

Smells and Sounds. An electrical, ozone-like smell fills the chamber. Shallow water covers the floor.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Hundreds of stairs descend into an altar chamber. In the center of the room is a dais. Upon the dais squats a sculpture of a massive toad beast.

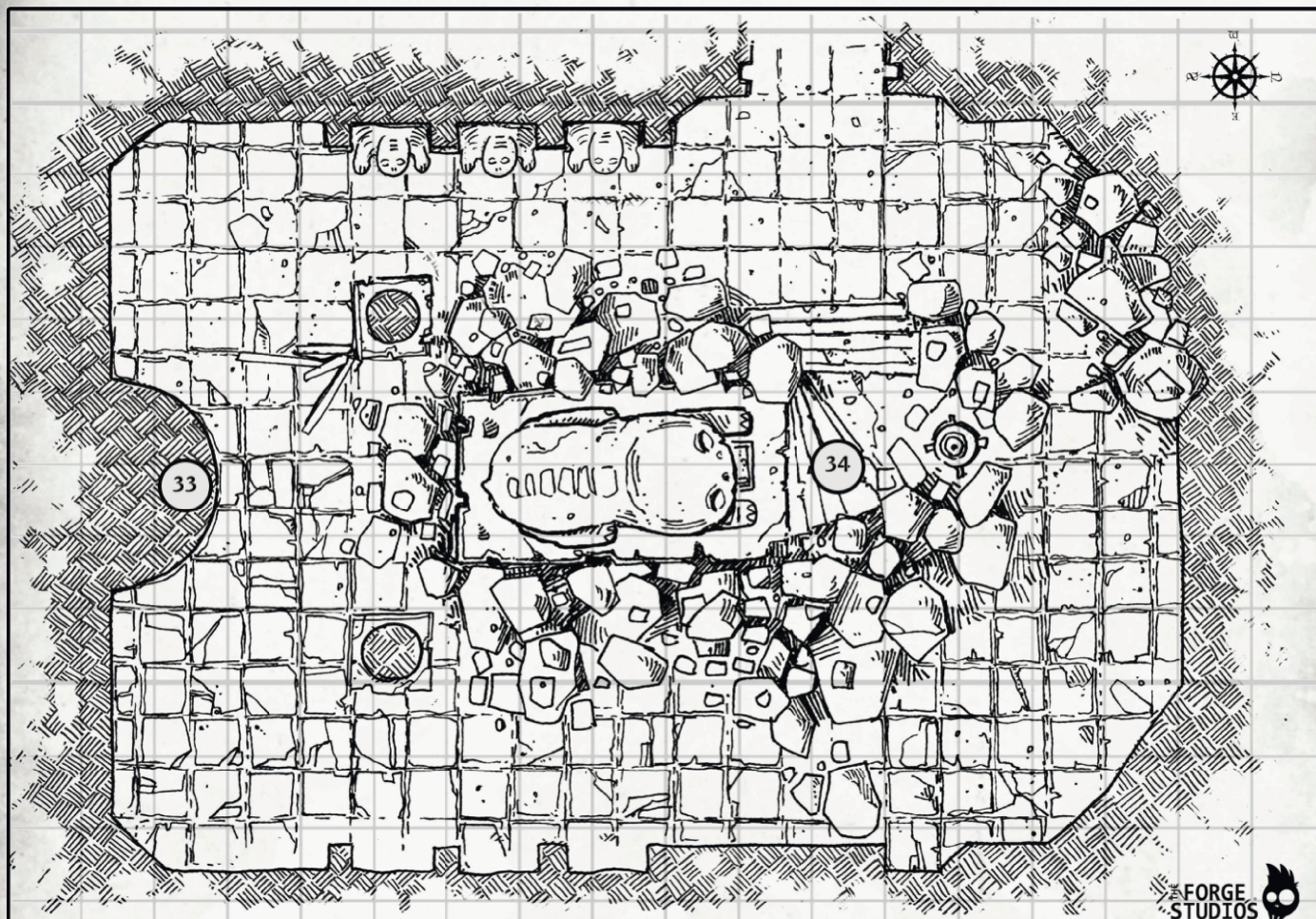
Inset into the altar is a glowing gemstone. The carved gem is three feet high, a foot wide, and fills the chamber with a dim scarlet light. The air is filled with dozens of dancing, sparkling lights.

34. The Altar

The Bloodstone is protected by its first and most powerful creation, the **toad beast**. Currently, the beast is resting atop the altar, and appears to be a sculpture. When the opportunity presents itself, the beast attacks the nearest unarmored or lightly armored target with its tongue.

Whenever the toad beast attacks or is attacked, the Bloodstone pulses a sickening reddish light.

33. Entrance to the Chamber



The Bloodstone of Besharas

The Bloodstone has AC 7, 40 hp, has resistance to acid, lightning, and fire damage, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. If reduced to 0 hp, the gem shatters into shards (treat as a *shatter* spell centered on the gem).

If the gem is shattered or destroyed, the toad beast recoils and uses its reaction to make a melee attack of opportunity against a target within range, after which it attacks non-Shigguk recklessly until dead or all its enemies are defeated.

The Beast and the Bloodstone

When combat starts, read the following:

The bulbous eyes of the sculpture pop open, glowing with a faint orange hue. Enlarging its throat sac, the stone-colored beast lets out a deep 'wallop' sound, and stares directly at you.

As its mouth opens, you can see down the beast's seemingly endless gullet.

If the Bloodstone is removed from the altar, the toad beast will recklessly attack whoever holds the Bloodstone over any other target.

The Toad Beast and the Stairs

The toad beast is a Huge creature, and the stairs are only 10 feet wide. Thus, the toad beast must squeeze up the stairs in order to pursue intruders.

When the dhrnu are preparing for a raid, they have Negux coax the toad beast up the stairs. The warlock is the only tribe member who can control the beast.

Recovering the Stone

The Bloodstone is worth 7,500 gp intact. If shattered, the larger fragments can be gathered, and are worth 1,500 gp. The Bloodstone is a magic item and can be attuned to if intact. See **Appendix A. Magic Items** for more details.

Toad Beast (Huge monstrosity, CR 7)

AC 16 HP 115 SPD 40' Climb 20'

Str +4 Dex +0 Con +5 Int -2 Wis -1 Cha -2

Perception +3, Stealth +4, blindsight 30', darkvision 60'

Dmg Resist: acid

Dmg Imm: poison

Cond Imm: exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Camouflage: Advantage on Stealth in swamp or cave

Reckless: Until next turn, advantage on attacks; advantage on attacks made against creature.

Legendary Resistance (3): Succeed on a failed save.

Multiattack: 1 bite + 1 tongue. On hit with tongue, Swallow.

Bite: Melee +7, Rng 10', 3d6+4 pierce

Tongue: Melee +7, Rng 30', 3d6+4 bludgeon

Swallow: Target takes 6d6 acid at start of beast's turns.

Poison Spray (Rchg 6): 15' cone, 3d12 poison (DC 14 Dex save for half dmg.)

Part 6. Sha Kalthes

Sha Kalthes is an imposing **high paladin**. She is scheduled to arrive at the White Stallion the day after the adventurers initially meet Brand and learn about the envoy mission. The adventurers may meet Sha Kalthes by working alongside Brand, setting an ambush for the priestess, or dallying too long in the temple ruins. However the adventurers meet Sha Kalthes and her retinue, it should be a terrifying encounter, and possibly devastating.

Sha Kalthes is charismatic, wise, and aware that Daant has many enemies. She's also a powerful zealot of a war goddess leading a battle-ready group of faithful warriors. If the adventurers fail to properly negotiate with her, or seek conflict, she'll destroy them without hesitation.



Daant's High Paladin, Sha Kalthes

Sha Kalthes (Medium human, CR 7)

AC 21 HP 77 SPD 30'

Str +3 Dex +0 Con +3 Int +1 Wis +2 Cha +4

Saving Throws: Wis +10, Cha +12

Insight +6, Intimidation +8, Perception +6, Religion +4
Darkvision 60'

Cond Imm: diseased

Divine Smite: spell slot for +3d8 radiant or more

Divine Aura: Self and all allies within 10 ft. gain +4 to all saves

Multiattack: 3 morningstar or 2 javelin

Morningstar of Terror: Melee +7, 1d8+3 piercing

Paladin Spells (paladin 10, Spell +8, DC 16)

1st (4): *bane, command, cure wounds*

2nd (3): *hold person, misty step, zone of truth*

3rd (2): *dispel magic, haste*



Priest-Advisors, Tislo and Ruskan

Sha Kalthes is served by two human advisors (**priests of Daant**), Tislo Mann and Ruskan Hoopbender. One of these two is never far from their lady. From dawn to dusk, they serve as council and arbiters for major decisions.

Advisors Tislo and Ruskan (Medium human, CR 6)

AC 20 HP 70 SPD 30'

Str +1 Dex +0 Con +3 Int +1 Wis +4 Cha +2

Saving Throws: Wis +8, Cha +6

History +5, Insight +8, Persuasion +6, Religion +5

Divine Eminence: spell slot for +3d6 radiant or more

Multiattack: 2 warhammer

Warhammer: Melee +5, 1d8+1 bludgeon

Javelin: Ranged +2, Rng 30'/120', 1d6 pierce

Cleric Spells (cleric 9, Spell +8, DC 16)

Cantrips: *resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st (4): *bless, command, cure wounds, guiding bolt*

2nd (3): *silence, spiritual weapon, zone of truth*

3rd (3): *create food and water, revivify*

4th (3): *death ward, locate creature*

5th (1): *dispel evil and good, flame strike, raise dead*

Veteran Soldiers

Amongst the diplomatic retinue are twenty **veterans**. These veterans are comprised of humans and dwarves and serve Sha Kalthes and Daant with resolute conviction.

Veteran (Medium human, CR 3)

AC 17 HP 58 Spd 30'
Str +3 Dex +1 Con +2 Int +0 Wis +0 Cha +0
Perception +2

Multiattack: 2 longsword + 1 shortsword or 1 h. crossbow

Longsword: Melee +5, 1d8+3 slash

Shortsword: Melee +5, 1d6+3 pierce

H. Crossbow: Range +3, 100'/400', 1d10+1 pierce

interrogating dead toad folk via *Speak with dead*, and ransacking the temple.

Again, if the adventurers assist Sha Kalthes, she pays them 200 gp each and makes a note of their service. She or another servant of Daant may require the adventurer's services another day.

Servants and Support Staff

Also in the diplomatic retinue are two dozen non-combatant servants (**commoners**). These include scribes, porters, guides, and other experts.

These servants are often less vested in the tenets of Daant, and more focused on a steady income. In general, the servants are both bribable and more neutral towards non-believers.

Unlikely Allies

There are a few courses of action that could occur during Sha Kalthes's negotiations with the dhrnu. Two of these are briefly outlined below: the double-cross and the alliance.

The Alliance

There's a strong possibility that Sha Kalthes and the Shigguk form a tenuous alliance. Unless disrupted, this scenario leads to Mirefen coming under control of Daant's priesthood over the next decade.

The key story element in this situation is Negux attempting to battle the high paladin of Daant. The toad folk warlock and the toad beast are destroyed, and Sha Kalthes seizes control of the Bloodstone, taking it to the high temple for study.

If the adventurers are assisting Sha Kalthes, she pays them 200 gp each and makes a note of their service. Daant's faithful may seek out the adventurers later.

The Double-Cross

In this outcome, Sha Kalthes is initially welcomed by the Shigguk leaders. The paladin learns of the location of the Bloodstone and demands it from Negux the warlock but is rebuffed.

After Sha Kalthes is refused, she decimates the dhrnu village. She loses most of her veteran soldiers during the battle, and spends the next week having Tislo and Ruskan cast *raise dead* on her troops,

Appendix A. New Creatures

Cave Wyrms (Ghidor)

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 60)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 20 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Earth Burrow. The cave wyrm can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth. While doing so, the cave wyrm doesn't disturb the material it moves through. The cave wyrm is unable to burrow through solid stone.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The cave wyrm exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Giant Two-Headed Lizard

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 35 ft., climb 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Natural Climber. The giant lizard can climb difficult surfaces without needing to make an ability check.

Camouflage. The giant lizard has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Two Heads: The giant lizard has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant lizard makes three attacks: two with its bites, and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Giant Two-Headed Snake

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 35 ft., swim 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Camouflage. The giant snake has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Two Heads: The giant snake has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant snake makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

High Paladin (Sha Kalthes)

Medium humanoid (half-elf), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 77 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +10, Cha +13

Skills Insight +6, Intimidation +8, Perception +6, Religion +4

Condition Immunities diseased

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Celestial, Abyssal
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Sha Kalthes has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Morningstar of Terror (3 Charges). Sha Kalthes can use an action and expend 1 charge to release a wave of terror. Each creature of her choice in a 30-foot radius extending from her must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of her for 1 minute.

Divine Smite. As a bonus action, Sha Kalthes can expend a spell slot to cause her melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 13 (3d8) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If she expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d8 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Sha Kalthes is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st (4 slots): *bane, command, cure wounds*

1st (3 slots): *hold person, misty step, zone of truth*

1st (2 slots): *dispel magic, haste, revivify*

Actions

Multiattack. Sha Kalthes makes three morningstar attacks.

Morningstar of Terror. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Priest of Daant (Tislo and Ruskan)

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (splint, shield)

Hit Points 70 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +8, Cha +6

Skills Insight +8, Persuasion +6, Religion +5

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Divine Smite. As a bonus action, the priest of Daant can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If it expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d8 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest of Daant is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips: *resistance, spare the dying, thaumaturgy*

1st (4 slots): *bles, guiding bolt, healing word, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, silence, zone of truth, lesser restoration*

3rd (3 slots): *mass healing word, spirit guardians*

4th (2 slots): *banishment, locate creature, greater restoration*

5th (1 slot): *mass cure wounds, raise dead*

Actions

Multiattack. The priest of Daant makes two warhammer attacks.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Scourge

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Light Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the scourge has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The scourge makes two dark orb attacks.

Dark Orb. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Toad Beast

Huge monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 115 (10d12 + 50)

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands Draconic but doesn't speak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Camouflage. The toad beast has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the toad beast can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the toad beast fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant snake makes two attacks, one with its bite and one with its tongue.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must also make on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target is swallowed. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad beast, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad beast's turns. A toad beast can have only one creature swallowed at a time.

Poison Spray (Recharge 6). The toad beast exhales poison mist in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (3d12) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Toad Folk

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6) piercing damage.

Toad Folk Chieftain (Oltex)

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d12 + 32)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +4, Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the toad folk can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The toad folk makes two maul attacks.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Toad Folk Corrupter (Negux)

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +5, Insight +3, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the toad folk's darkvision.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Spellcasting. The toad folk is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following warlock spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*

1st-3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse*, *cause fear*, *charm person*, *counterspell*, *expeditious retreat*, *fear*, *misty step*, *scorching ray*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Toad Folk Croaker

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (shield)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Insight +3, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6) piercing damage.

Thundering Croak (Recharge 6). The toad folk exhales a thunderous croak in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The croak can be heard from up to 300 feet away.

Toad Folk Hexer

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Intimidation +4, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Spellcasting. The toad folk is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, fire bolt, light, poison spray*

1st level (3 slots): *burning hands, magic missile, shield*

Quickened Spell (2/Day). When it casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, the toad folk changes the casting time to 1 bonus action for that casting.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6) piercing damage.

Toad Folk Hunter

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (shield)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Survival +3, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Actions

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Toad Folk Shaman (Esk)

Medium humanoid (toad folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (shield)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Skills Nature +2, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Camouflage. The toad folk has advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Great Leap. The toad folk triples its jump distance.

Spellcasting. The toad folk is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *fog cloud*

2nd level (3 slots): *heat metal*, *pass without trace*, *spike growth*

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Appendix B. Magic Items

The temple of Besharas held ancient treasure. In addition to gold and silver, the Shigguk toad folk possess several intriguing magical objects.

Dragonbite Amulet

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The Shigguk seized this magical amulet from the Ss'alk lizard folk tribe's defeated chief. This enchanted black dragon's fang hangs from a simple leather cord. The tooth belongs to Ghaufax, a black dragon that is still alive and dwells in the deep swamp.

While attuned to and wearing this amulet, you can use your reaction in response to being damaged by a creature within 60 feet of you that you can see.

The creature that damaged you is momentarily surrounded by a magical corrosive haze. The creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. It takes 3d10 acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The amulet can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Skyfall Arrows

Ammunition (arrow), uncommon

These magical mithral-tipped arrows harbor a fragment of Besharas's blessing and releases a burst of holy energy when fired.

Immediately after the arrow is fired and hits a creature, the target and all other creatures within 10 feet of it take 2d6 radiant damage each.

After being fired, the arrow becomes non-magical.

Ring of Besharas

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This silver ring is inset with a fire opal. This ring still bears magic from an ancient era.

While attuned to and wearing this magical ring, you can use an action to cast the *bless* spell with it. The ring can't be used this way again until the next dawn. Also, the wearer becomes fluent in and can read Celestial.

Bloodstone of Besharas

Wondrous item, unique (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This dimly glowing, bullet-shaped bloodstone is 3 feet long and 1 foot wide at its widest end. The bloodstone tapers down to a narrow point and weighs 450 pounds.

While attuned to and touching the Bloodstone of Besharas, a creature can use *alter self* on themselves or another willing creature touching the stone. This effect always results in reptilian- or amphibian-themed temporary mutations.

If attuned to the Bloodstone of Besharas for longer than two weeks, a creature begins to permanently develop toad-like cosmetic attributes. If attuned for longer than 3 months, a creature permanently transforms into a dhrnu, replacing their race with that of a dhrnu. Both of these effects are reversible only by *wish* or similar magic.

Appendix C. Dhrnu (Toad Folk)

Add in the snake venom

Just after the swamp grass simmers

Wait twenty breaths and add blackwort

Makes the deepest black toad-tea

- Dhrnu tea (*bufo*) recipe

Dhrnu Lifecycle

The dhrnu life cycle is complex. As amphibians, dhrnu are spawned from a large, gelatinous egg. These eggs are usually held in a hidden egg pool but could be deposited almost anywhere with enough standing water.

After hatching from the egg, dhrnu have a brief tadpole stage that lasts for a year. During this stage, the immature dhrnu have gills and a tail, and subsist on vegetation. During the final few months of the tadpole stage, the gills are replaced with lungs, the tail is absorbed into the body, and the dhrnu's diet becomes more omnivorous.

Dhrnu continue to grow in height as they age. Also, dhrnu's growth accelerates when they have power and authority (usually political, but also magical). Elder dhrnu sorcerers can be two feet taller than an average, mid-aged dhrnu.

Dhrnu Village Life

Life in dhrnu villages, from egg to old age, is defined by competition. Dhrnu live in swamps and bogs. Even elder dhrnu find swamp life dangerous and difficult. Resources are scarce, and the typical dhrnu routine consists of crafting hunting tools, hunting and preparing food, and squabbling with other swamp dwellers over power and territory.

Politics in dhrnu society are very authoritarian, where those with power use it freely on those with lower status. The lifestyle of powerful dhrnu is typified by greed and gluttony, while the lowest dhrnu dwell on the fringes of society, constantly at risk of being consumed by swamp beasts.

Herb Gathering and Foraging

Dhrnu foragers and shamans gather roots, mosses, lichens, and other herbal reagents. Often, dhrnu tribes start complex herbal gardens to grow more difficult medicinal herbs. These herbs serve multiple purposes, including spell components, healer's kits, and foodstuffs.

One of the most popular dhrnu herbal concoctions is *bufo*, a type of bitter, poisonous tea made of toxic

herbs. Dhrnu are immune to almost all poisons, and merely find this tea invigorating, much as humans may drink tea or coffee. Non-dhrnu's reactions to *bufo* differ, but include vomiting, paralysis, or death.

Beast Trainers

Dhrnu have an aptitude for training swamp beasts. When possible, dhrnu prefer to capture eggs and/or young beasts and raise them within the village as both livestock and guardians.

Beasts may include lizards and snakes (both normal and giant), as well as other, more exotic swamp creatures. Rarely, dhrnu may capture or trade for wyvern eggs.

Dhrnu worship dragon-kin, and revere even wyverns. A wyvern raised by dhrnu is likely to be pampered and treated as a status symbol.

Servants of the Swamp

For swamp-dwelling green or black dragons, dhrnu are expendable servants. For the dhrnu, serving dragon-kin is an aspiration. Dhrnu seek to partner with stronger wetland-dwelling creatures, including dragon-kin, aboleth, and evil fey.

In these situations, dhrnu are aware they are the weakest link in the partnership and won't risk their lives defending an unworthy ally. Likewise, their allies are usually wise enough to avoid putting faith in dhrnu as a front-line defense.

Herbal Tea

Bufo tea is a combination of certain swamp herbs and snake venom. It's merely stimulating to dhrnu, but other creatures that imbibe the tea must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and be poisoned for an hour.

Dhrnu Names

Dhrnu aren't given names until they reach adulthood. Dhrnu names tend to be simple, mirroring swamp beast sounds.

Dhrnu Names: Brak, Esk, Diirup, Grok, Negux, Roop, Wallup

Dhrnu Traits

Ability Score Increase. An adventurer dhrnu's Dexterity increases by 2, and their Constitution by 1.

Age. Dhrnu can live to be 35 years old and reach adult maturity at 5 years of age. Dhrnu life is harsh and violent, and few dhrnu reach old age.

Alignment. Dhrnu tend towards neutral evil or chaotic evil. Adventuring dhrnu can be of any alignment and probably have turned away from the evil ways of most dhrnu.

Size. Dhrnu are Medium creatures, standing a little over 5 feet tall and weighing between 90 and 100 pounds. As dhrnu grow in power and age, they also grow taller. Exceptional dhrnu can reach 6½ feet tall and weigh 180 pounds.

Speed. A dhrnu's movement is 25 feet.

Amphibian Swimming. Dhrnu's swim speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Dhrnu have darkvision and can see 60 feet in the dark. They can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Toad Leap. Dhrnu triple their jump distance.

Camouflage. Dhrnu have advantage on Stealth checks in wilderness environments.

Poison Immunity. Dhrnu are immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition.

Ways of Nature. Dhrnu have proficiency with either Animal Handling or Medicine.

Tool Proficiency. Dhrnu have proficiency with one of the following tools: weaver's tools, leatherworker's tools, vehicles (water), woodcarver's tools, or dice sets.

Weapon Proficiency. Dhrnu have proficiency with shortswords, tridents, nets, and whips.

Languages. Dhrnu read, write, and speak Common and one additional language, often Abyssal, Draconic, or Goblin.



Appendix D. New Feats

The following feats include both normal feats and racial feats. The racial feats are typically only possessed by paragons of a specific race. These feats exemplify a specific race's core beliefs and abilities. Otherwise, these feats are open to any character that meets the prerequisites, if any.

Beckoned: Forest

Some beings are summoned to serve by the eldest gods, the elusive beings that exist beyond the void. These beings are given great power, but always at a perilous cost.

You have sought magic from the fey or other dwellers of the deepest forest glades. Perhaps you undertook a quest or challenge, or made an oath, in exchange for your new-found powers. You learn one druid cantrip of your choice. You also learn the *speak with animals* and *misty step* spells, each of which you can cast once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast these two spells in this way when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for all three spells.

Beckoned: Swamp

Some beings are summoned to serve by the eldest gods, the elusive beings that exist beyond the void. These beings are given great power, but always at a perilous cost.

You learn the magic of the deep swamp, taught by hags or other strange beings that dwell within the darkest bogs. You learn one warlock cantrip of your choice. You also learn the *fog cloud* and *spike growth* spells, each of which you can cast once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast these two spells in this way when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for all three spells.

Great Leaper (Prerequisite: Dhrnu)

Dhrnu with this feat have mastered their toad-like leaping ability, and can swiftly leap, as well as use their leap in combat.

- You can use a bonus action to Dash, but only when combined with your Toad Leap ability and a standing or running jump.
- When you move more than 10 feet using your Toad Leap ability, you can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack or shove a creature. The creature takes an extra 1d8 damage from this melee weapon attack.

Sticky Skin (Prerequisite: Dhrnu)

Dhrnu with this feat are covered with a viscous, sticky slime. This protective gel-like ooze allows the dhrnu to climb vertical surfaces, as well as evade being grappled.

- You are covered with a protective, sticky gel. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 11 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.
- Creatures attempting to grapple you have disadvantage on attack rolls.
- By using your hands and feet, you can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings. You have a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. You can't move this way on a slippery surface, such as one covered by ice or oil.

Toad Tongue (Prerequisite: Dhrnu)

Dhrnu with this feat have an exceptionally long, sticky tongue that can be used to drag targets closer. The tongue also has limited ability to move or operate objects and other targets.

- You can use a bonus action to make a ranged melee attack and have your long, sticky tongue lash out and pull a creature closer. The target must be within 15 feet of you. If the attack hits and if the creature is Large or smaller, you pull the creature up to 10 feet closer to you.
- Your tongue has a reach of 15 feet, and it can lift or move a number of pounds equal to five times your Strength score. You can use it to pull an object or a creature or close a door or a container. Your GM might allow other simple tasks to be added to that list of options. Your tongue is not a prehensile appendage, and can't use weapons, tools, items, or perform somatic movements.

Appendix E. New Backgrounds

The following backgrounds are intended to be general enough that you can use them in almost any setting.

Swamp Explorer

Whether for gold or survival, there's a certain type of person who deals with bogs, fens, and mires. You may be looking for a specific herb, or hunting basilisk hides for a magician. Whatever the reason, you're adept at navigating and surviving in swamps.

Skill Proficiency. Nature, Survival, or Animal Handling.

Tool Proficiency. Vehicles (water) or cartographer's tools.

Language. One of your choice, probably Aquan, Draconic, or Goblin.

Feature: Swamp Kenning. You are adept at finding important things in swampy environments. You're able to find rare herbs, monstrosity dens, strange ruins, and other similar places and things while avoiding danger.

Work with your GM to determine how to apply this during your campaign.

Lessons from the Fen. How did you learn to navigate the depths of inhabitable swamps and fens? You can work with your GM to create the exact nature of your background or roll on the following table.

Swamp Explorer: Lessons from the Fen

d6	Lessons from the Fen
1	You indebted yourself to a swamp hag, and you've recently escaped her servitude.
2	You were raised by a tribe of swamp goblins.
3	Seven years ago, you were abducted by will-o'-wisps. You were presumed dead but have recently returned to your village with new-found knowledge.
4	When you were young, you remember the black willow trees whispering swamp secrets back and forth late at night. You couldn't help but listen.
5	You were raised by a group of rebellious bandits. This rag-tag group had a swamp hideout and taught you the secrets.
6	While a child, you played in the swamp. One of your best friends was bitten by a venomous snake, and you managed to make an antidote using swamp herbs. The herb knowledge just came to you that day.

Ex-Bandit

As an earlier career, you were a highway robber, bandit, or thug. Eventually you decided that adventuring was more rewarding and less likely to have you hanged at the gallows. You have friends in low places and can sometimes call in a favor.

Skill Proficiency. Intimidation, Stealth, or Sleight of Hand.

Tool Proficiency. Vehicles (land) or thieves' tools.

Language. One of your choice, probably Draconic, Goblin, or Orc.

Feature: Friends and Favors. From your previous career as a bandit, you have a connection to a bandit group. These bandits may have disbanded or may still be active. Given the opportunity, you can call in a favor. Keep in mind that there's almost always a price for calling in a favor, and it may not be monetary.

Work with your GM to determine how to apply this during your campaign.

Banditry. What happened to make you leave banditry? You can work with your GM to create the exact nature of your background or roll on the following table.

Bandit: Banditry

d6	Banditry
1	Your bandit captain was captured and hanged, and the rest of the group fled for safety.
2	You had an omen or sudden calling that forced you to stop being a highway robber.
3	The bandit group you were part of became mercenaries and signed on for a job you couldn't force yourself to finish, so you left.
4	After ransacking a noble's carriage, your bandit group had enough wealth to settle down and never rob again. Unfortunately, you never received your share.
5	While you were threatening a sorceress, she defended herself with magic. You'd never seen that kind of raw power and wanted to learn.
6	You've decided to move on from banditry and explore more thrilling work. This includes tomb robbing and hunting orcs for gold.

