

THE MISTS OF AKUMA



REVENGE OF THE PALE MASTER



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A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 PCS OF 8TH-10TH LEVEL.

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RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Revenge of the Pale Master is set in *Mists of Akuma* but can easily be placed into any eastern fantasy setting, although GMs will need to make several adjustments if they transport it outside of Soburin. If you are running this in *Mists of Akuma*, you have a unique opportunity to showcase a number of key themes pivotal to the setting. These themes include: depravity and pragmatism (see the Dignity and Haitoku attributes), the dangers of the ancient past, the corruption woven throughout Soburin, and a diverse array of races aligned with or arrayed against one another.

This adventure does an excellent job of bringing many of these themes into the fore and while it is certainly enough to be a worthwhile addition to an individual campaign, it truly shines when worked into the larger tapestry of *Mists of Akuma*. In addition to a preview available on distributor sites where the campaign setting book is sold, there are five free PDFs you can find via our website (www.mistsofakuma.com) for more information.

Before starting this adventure, GMs should note that *Revenge of the Pale Master* is not intended to be module where the adventurers achieve complete success. In the *Mists of Akuma* victories are pyrrhic and are only won after truly hard fought conflicts. The world around Soburin is decaying and doomed to fall, its peoples are paranoid and ruthless, and for all the talk of nobility there is sadly very little to be found. Though they do not play a crucial role in the module itself, the intrigues between the various clans are many, varied, and endless, and PCs from different prefectures should act accordingly (though to survive they will be forced to work together).





INTRODUCTION

Revenge of the Pale Master plunges the adventurers into the rusted heart of the industrial city of Kizaki on the eve of a great evil's reawakening. At its heart lies a mystery, and GMs running this module are encouraged to build tension and an aura of danger as the PCs uncover the secret history that casts a long shadow upon the future of this settlement in Gekido Prefecture. Part of the adventure's tension is based upon the ticking clock—the party arrives as night falls on the eve before the Festival of Falling Hawks, giving them less than 24 hours to uncover the truth and take action against those they believe to be the villains of the story.

OVERVIEW

Revenge of the Pale Master takes place in the city of Kizaki just before the Festival of Falling Hawks, a celebration commemorating the victory by militia under the command of Hiroshi Nara, a heroic administrator given command by his Gekido masters as they retreated before a Hakaisuru attack. The Gekido and the Hakaisuru clans, both powerful and warlike, have fought constantly for over a century—numerous cities have been ground under the heels of their great armies and Kizaki had been abandoned to the same fate. To the astonishment of everyone Hiroshi Nara managed a historic defeat of a force that was larger, better trained, and equipped. What few know is that the victory of Hawksfall was made possible by the assistance of a malevolent specter known in legend as the Pale Master, a foul undead mage who seeks to restore itself to a blasphemous facsimile of life.

Ichizo Ando—vicious and cruel, both feared and hated by samurai and commoner alike—ruled Kizaki and the surrounding lands for decades before being slain. He murdered his family in order to obtain power, was known to eat the flesh of captured enemies, and flayed any servants or subordinates that displeased him. These stories and others (detailing all manner of macabre practices) were whispered among his subjects and beyond but despite the horrible nature of the tales they paled in comparison to the truth. Trained by a demonologist that spread his practices under the guise of an itinerant teacher, Ichizo developed an insatiable lust for power that sped him along the descent into darkness. As he aged and his mastery grew he began to lust after immortality, delving into necromancy, and from the Crimson Keep he sought out forbidden secrets and cast fel rituals that demanded blood sacrifice on an appalling scale. Ichizo's evil and gradual necromantic transformation eventually garnered him the

moniker "the Pale Master" by his remaining subordinates, a name spoken with utter dread.

Eventually knowledge of Ichizo's blasphemous quest for immortality made its way to the ears of those capable of challenging him and a trio of famous adventurers were sought out in secret by a young nobleman named Shinzo Kitamura to free his land from the Pale Master's monstrous rule. These three—a potent yamabushi named Maru Okita, the famous samurai duelist Ukiyo Machi, and a mage of great skill named Takanibu Imai—made their way to the Crimson Keep with Shinzo and attacked Ichizo while he was performing a great magical rite. They killed him but not before he transformed into a disembodied specter, twisted by the disrupted energies, and in an attempt to constrain his evil Maru invoked a great sutra that required the blood of all three heroes, anchoring the Pale Master's soul to the seat of his rule before it could drift free and leaving him nearly powerless.

Afterwards the three adventurers chose to remain near the Crimson Keep in order to keep a watch on the specter that remained within, starting families and businesses, and their stories faded with history as much was forgotten to the passage of time. Only the young Shinzo kept the memory of what had happened alive, eventually passing on the knowledge of what lay within the forbidden tower to a small few who in turn did the same from generation to generation, calling their small order the Crimson Vigil.

Impotent and insubstantial the Pale Master was trapped within the walls of the Crimson Keep for nearly four centuries until the Mists of Akuma began to flow over the lands of the prefectures. The evil of the forbidden tower and its master attracted the corrupting fog, the malefic energies of the supernatural haze weakening binding spells and eventually allowing the Pale Master to influence the living world once more. He gathered knowledge and used his growing power to acquire

minions (finding adeddo-oni to be particularly easy to control), ever-seeking a way to free himself and restore his corporeal form. Eventually he discovered that he could accomplish both using the blood of those that had disrupted his ritual and bound him centuries before. When he discovered that the descendants of his captors lived in Kizaki he planted a minion within the city to take action at the first opportunity—the Battle of Hawksfall. In exchange for one child from each of the families ten years after the victory he promised, the Pale Master offered to defend Kizaki with his supernatural magics when the Hakaisuru launched their impending attack.

Thinking that the cost of three lives would be a small price to pay for the salvation of the city Hiroshi Nara accepted the offer and when the Hakaisuru attacked the Pale Master worked his foul magics. The minds of their enemies were clouded, their breath stolen from their lungs, and his minions assaulted them from the shadows and made commanders disappear in the night. Hiroshi became a hero and (always a pragmatic man) he sought to complete his end of the bargain a decade later when a servant of the necromancer came calling—neither he nor the Pale Master could have imagined that a young doctor and wizard named Seiya Fujioka would intervene, foiling their plans.

Seiya was a refugee who had come to Kizaki along with his sister Kumiko after their village was destroyed in the very beginnings of Hitoshi's Rebellion, a stark reminder by the Kengen Occupation that dissidents would not be tolerated. The pair were taken in by a kindly physician and Seiya followed in his footsteps, learning the craft and becoming the newest (and last) member of the Crimson Vigil. As part of his duties he kept track of the adventurers' descendants under the guise of their doctor and as he carefully watched the Crimson Keep for any signs of the ancient evil within, gained some mastery of wizardry. When he discovered the Pale Master's plans for the children he sought to foil them, taking the youths away and hiding them in his home before the servants of the necromancer were able to find them. Unfortunately Seiya underestimated his enemies and they were quickly discovered; in the ensuing struggle his home caught fire. Despite being mortally wounded he managed to escape with the single surviving child, Kaneda Moto, who suffers still from the terrible burns acquired during their escape.

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The two escaped to the dwelling of Fujioka's sister Kumiko, an engineer

who had married into a street gang after failing to adjust to polite society. She hid them and brought the doctor's apprentice, Fumio Oda, who saved the boy (though his body was ruined by the flames) and did what he could to ease Seiya's passing. After her brother died Kumiko turned his corpse over to the city watch, claiming that she found him on her doorstep alone according to the plan that she crafted with him before he expired, hoping to deflect suspicion. Knowing that the minions of the Pale Master would continue to hunt for the boy and already ostracized by her departed brother's new reputation as a murderer of children (the gossip of which also destroyed her marriage) she traveled with Kaneda to the remote ruins of the settlement they'd fled from a decade before: Owa Village.

Kumiko crafted augmetic limbs for Kaneda and in the years that followed he grew from a wounded child into a young man consumed with a desire to revenge himself against the creature that destroyed his life. Though she was something of an older sister and caregiver at first—given that they were only separated by eight years—the feelings they shared for one another became more complex as Kaneda grew older. The nature of their relationship strayed into murky territory and they both loved each other fiercely, having no one else to depend upon, and Kumiko hoped that it might be enough to steer him onto a different path. When the realization finally took hold that she could not quell the fires of his rage she taught him everything that she'd learned about fighting and technology in the hopes of making him strong enough to survive the coming conflict.

Now, a decade later, the two have put their plan to thwart the Pale Master's return into motion. Like his savior, Kaneda abducted three of the six children that the ancient necromancer has chosen for the ritual and returned them to Kumiko in the hopes of keeping them safe. Desperate to find a way to defeat Muraoka (the Pale Master's servant within the city), Kaneda foolishly tried to make his way into the secret room below the doctor's home only to be attacked by adeddo-oni that damaged his clockwork guardians and nearly killed him, forcing him to take shelter with the doctor that once saved his life, Fumio Oda. As he lays fighting a supernatural disease, those that will decide Kizaki's future make their way to meet with the monster that has insinuated himself among the city's leaders in the service of the Pale Master...

CAST

1. **Ichizo Ando, the Pale Master**
2. **Founders of The Crimson Vigil:** Maru Okita, Ukiyo Machi, and Takanibu Imai, a priestess, samurai, and mage that imprisoned the Pale Master.
3. **Hiroshi Nara:** Commander that made a fel deal with the Pale Master (deceased).
4. **Administrator Sanjuro Nara:** Son of Hiroshi and current ruler of Kizaki.
5. **Kiyoshi Muraoka:** The Pale Master's agent inside of the city and the true master of Kizaki.
6. **Seiji Kagawa, Keiko Moto, and Tadao Otoro:** Children that have gone missing, feared to be abducted by the Pale Master.
7. **Etsuko Gensai, Takuma Mazawa, Yuzuki Tabuchi:** Children protected by Kiyoshi Muraoka (who suspects they might be abducted next).
8. **Doctor Seiya Fujioka:** A doctor thought to be the Pale Master of legend because of his abduction and murder of six children a decade ago (deceased).
9. **Kumiko Fujioka:** The sister of Doctor Seiya Fujioka that nursed Kaneda Moto (the survivor of the tragic events a decade ago) back to health.
10. **Kaneda Moto:** A badly burned victim of the Pale Master's vile attempt to abduct children a decade ago.
11. **Doctor Fumio Oda:** The former apprentice of the late Doctor Seiya Fujioka, insulated from the Pale Master's treachery by his wealthy family.
12. **Guard Captain Arata Asai:** The no-nonsense head of the city watch in Kizaki.
13. **Shiro the Gate Guard:** A soldier in Kizaki's city watch.
14. **Koru Kagawa:** A stonemason who blames Doctor Seiya Fujioka for the death of his brother ten years ago, he is the father of Seiji Kagawa and greatly concerned that his son is missing.
15. **Reiko Otoro:** Widower who lost an older sister to the Pale Master ten years ago, her husband to tragedy in the past year, and most recently Tadao Otoro (her abducted son).
16. **Miki Moto:** A painter whose daughter Keiko is missing, she believes her brother Kaneda Moto was killed by the Pale Master a decade ago dead.
17. **Eight Arms Kazuya:** Master of the Iron Spiders gang and former husband of Kumiko Fujioka.
18. **Yumi Muramoto:** Priestess and minder of the Graveyard of the Damned in Kizaki..
19. **Juro and Sango Muramoto:** Son and Daughter of Yumi Muramoto.
20. **Shinzo the Eater:** The ghost of a cannibalistic murderer descendant of Shinzo Kitamura that lurks in the Kizaki Graveyard, brought to madness and despair before rising once more.



During *Revenge of the Pale Master* the adventurers are going to encounter many NPCs before the mystery plaguing Kizaki unravels. Throughout the module you'll notice that all major characters have portraits—use them! When introducing the various NPCs, show their illustrations to the party and encourage them to keep notes on who is who and what they're doing. With such a wide and diverse cast even the sleuthiest groups will be hard-pressed to remain on top of the adventure without visual references and those they make for themselves.

GEKIDO PREFECTURE

After initial skirmishes the ceramians found the diehard bravery of the Gekido Clan's warriors to be daunting in the best of conditions and terrifying in closed ranks. With a nearly mad-dened zeal their soldiers charged enemy lines and fortifications without fear of death, rapidly gaining back ground wherever the foreigners made incursions into their borders. The invaders response was nearly as brutal and swift as Gekido blades; entire battalions of technology-laden infantry marched over the plains, blotting out the fields of crops as far as the eye could see. There was no defense against such an overwhelming force and the soburi were forced into surrender—though some say they never truly accepted the defeat.

As the first of the clans from the Battle of Broken Spears to fall to the gaijin, Gekido suffered immediate ridicule and spite; already bristling with rage for their nemeses, the clan's lords devised a means to strike revenge both on their rivals and the invading foreigners. Throughout the Kengen Occupation they sent their warriors on suicidal missions against ceramian institutions and encampments along the borders of their prefecture, always disguised as ancestral adversaries—so much chaos was sewn throughout Gekido that martial law reigned, making conscription of forces or subjugation of an inhuman race an impossibility and enabling a strong network of insurrectionists to gather for Hitoshi's Rebellion.

Gekido's answer to the Mists of Akuma is just as lacking in respect for life. Clan lords make large traditional fans widely available to all their subjects at no cost, but citizens are made to surround nobles when the corrupting fog appears to push it away with wind. The most corrupted individuals are forced to the outside of these groups and slaughtered as soon as any signs of transformation are seen. Despite the bloodshed that follows them, merchants in need of merciless bodyguards travel to Reikokuna or Mujibina to hire foolhardy fortune seekers willing to cut down commoners for good coin before setting north on the Path of the Siblings.

The Mantis Reavers are perhaps the only defenders of the prefecture genuinely concerned with the welfare of the people. Truly lethal combatants



BATTLE OF BROKEN SPEARS

A centuries-old rivalry has persisted within the four territories sitting directly north of the Imperial Prefecture, shaping their culture and politics for generations. After the Ichizoku Wars they continued to fight over borders before the violence culminated in a fierce battle that ended in a stalemate between the four forces and a warning from the continent's capital that if war was to be made, a grand host would march to join them. The generals of each side agreed to an honor combat and—all masters of the spear and evenly matched—their melee lasted for hours until nearly as one they fell to the ground dead of exhaustion. None of the newly empowered commanders would admit to defeat and all four prefectures' forces nearly slaughtered one another before battalions from Sanbaoshi arrived to enforce order. Since then Gekido, Hakaisuru, Kirai, and Namida have all adopted new weapons and still disagree over who lost, making squabbles between their people a common occurrence.

bestowed by Lady Qinguang with the right to don armor and wield weapons of advanced science, a place in this order of warriors is earned by besting a renowned fighter from each of the rival clans (Hakaisuru, Kirai, and Namida). Even proximity to a Mantis Reaver cannot guarantee safety from slaughter however as the samurai among them grow more and more ruthless—some, rumors claim, even throwing off their oaths. These disgruntled soldiers have lost confidence in the clan's leadership and are plotting a massive assault on the chief Gekido estate in Chishi in coop with Lord Monami (a more direct descendant of the beloved hero General Komuku Gekido). As **Kizaki** grows more industrial (exploiting its place on the Path of the Siblings and cornering inland trade of technology) the dissent between the Mantis Reavers grows ever greater.

When journeying it is wise to be wary of a traveler from Gekido; the clan's suicidal and heartless tactics have rubbed off on their subjects, making them dangerously single-minded and devoted to achieving their goals no matter the cost. Though utterly ruthless there is a tendency of humility among soburi from the prefecture, likely bred from a willingness to sacrifice themselves and a tendency toward strong discipline.



FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms, uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electroheart augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, shindan yokutan, venom spitter

MANTIS REAVER

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (haramaki)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +7, Con +5, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +3, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Soburi

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hirikiri Strike. As a bonus action, the Mantis Reaver may make a melee weapon attack against an adjacent creature and deal an additional 22 (5d8) piercing damage, but takes an amount of damage equal to half the damage it deals with that attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Mantis Reaver makes two Gekido-katana attacks.

Gekido-Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) magical slashing damage. When the Mantis Reaver scores a critical hit that incapacitates an opponent, it may make another attack against an adjacent target.

REACTIONS

Expert Parry. The Mantis Reaver adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Mantis Reaver must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Defeating rivals from the other three prefectures of the Battle of Broken Spears requires a warrior to be courageous, strong, cunning, and ruthless—all traits emblematic of the Mantis Reavers. Equipped with swords forged by smiths from across the Great Divide, these fierce samurai wander Gekido and beyond at Lady Qinguang's behest.



GEKIDO BENGOSHI: MANTIS RAPTOR

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (haramaki, Swordmaster)

Hit Points 130 (20d8+40)

Speed 50 ft. (triple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +6

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Soburi

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Evasion. If the Mantis Raptor is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the Mantis Raptor instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Implacable Resolve. The Mantis Raptor gains advantage on all saving throws.

Mantis Strike (1/Turn). The Mantis Raptor may choose a melee weapon attack to become a mantis strike. On a successful hit, the Mantis Raptor's weapon deals an additional 21 (6d6) damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Mantis Raptor makes four Gekido-katana attacks.

Gekido-Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) magical slashing damage. When the Mantis Raptor scores a critical hit that incapacitates an opponent, it may make another attack against an adjacent target.

REACTIONS

Expert Parry. The Mantis Raptor adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Mantis Raptor must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Parry Arrow. The Mantis Raptor strikes a ranged weapon attack that would hit them or an adjacent creature from the air, reducing its damage by 15 (2d8+6).

The very best of the Mantis Reavers become bengoshi and are gifted with augmetics that make them even faster and deadlier.



THE CITY OF KIZAKI

Kizaki is something of a rarity on the mainland of Soburin—willingly embracing heretical technology, a dark parallel of the cities in Fuson to the south. Despite this it shares many of the same attributes as other settlements in Gekido Prefecture and beyond.

The guards focus their attentions almost exclusively on the Canal District, Luxury District, and Market District, but between Administrator Sanjuro's high-strung demeanor as of late, rumors of the Pale Master's return, and the anniversary of a victory over Haikasuru, the walls of Kizaki are well-manned and anyone attempting to flee from the city is likely to be stopped by blade and bow.

Canal District. The upper-middle class live here in large manors alongside the most affluent businesses and shops on the wide roadways that this district boasts. Famous actors, geisha, physicians, taikomochi, and other lesser celebrities make their home in the Canal District, traveling around Kizaki by waterway on masterfully crafted vessels.

Factory District. The massive influx of citizens after the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma has sustained the industrial groundwork laid during the Kengen Occupation and despite a general disdain for technology in mainland Soburin, there is no shortage of heretical science within the walls of these production facilities. Many of the augmetics found in Gekido are crafted here and thus are an extremely common sight in Kizaki.

Industrial District. Meeting the needs of industry during the times of foreign oppression necessitated the development of refinement facilities in Kizaki and the smelters haven't stopped burning since, belching smoke into the air above the city. Although it is known across the Gekido Prefecture as a reliable place for ceramian and ropaeo to find employment, the hardest laborers and most recalcitrant soburi work here as well.

Luxury District. The truly rich live in sizable mansions arrayed around the Ōroshi Aquifer, rarely ever setting foot on city streets and almost exclusively partaking in the settlement's finer offerings by means of opulent rafts along the canals of Kizaki.

Market District. With its central location on the Path of the Siblings commerce has always been a major part of Kizaki, though today the buying and selling dominating the Market District is largely confined to the products made here instead of elsewhere. Anything legal to trade in the Gekido Prefecture can be found in this area of the city and for the canny or loose of coin, contraband is everywhere.

Shūkan District. Clerks, managers, smiths, and other occupations that can earn a respectable living have modest homes in this middle-class area of the settlement. Affordable merchants and restaurants dot the area and offer their wares at reasonable prices, though patrons are expected to keep good manners and several of Kizaki's business owners employ gangs to offer protection when the city's guards are lacking (a frequent problem).

The Soots. Despite being the largest part of Kizaki's population the city's poor almost exclusively live in the slums of the Soots, a lawless sprawl of tenement housing and cramped apartments for workers to slink back to between shifts. Cheap restaurants and tea houses dot the area along with mundane shops but very few offer anything of value or even a fair deal.

Thousand Lanterns District. One never has far to look when searching for crime in Kizaki but the worst illicit businesses and toughest gangs can be found in the Thousand Lanterns. Easily the seediest area of the settlement, it seems as though the cycle of openly traded illegal technology, amoral pawnbrokers, and augmented thugs begat by the foreign oppressors will never end. The Iron Spider gang controls this part of the city and they show no signs of giving ground regardless of missing children, the Festival of Falling Hawks, or practically anything other than the command of their leader Kazuya.

KIZAKI



ACT 1: A GRIM OFFER

As the adventure begins the PCs have rushed to Kizaki from the inn of a nearby city to answer a desperate summons by Administrator Sanjuro Nara, who is offering a hefty sum for the timely recovery of children that have gone missing in the early hours of the morning. After a hard day's ride the party arrives just as dusk begins to fall.

CRIMSON BLOSSOM COURT

Read the following to begin the adventure:

As you round the bend Kizaki opens up before you—large walls scored from past cannon fire encircle an industrial city whose cramped streets and filthy canals are choked with towering tenements and a large factory district that belches noxious smoke into the darkening sky to shroud the settlement in perpetual smog. Upon presenting your contract at the gate, a nervous young guard who introduces himself as Shiro ushers you quickly toward the city center where a modicum of luxury creeps through the oppressive industrial gloom and squalor. Shiro refuses to answer any questions, but you can sense an aura of fear that many of the city's inhabitants that you pass seem to share, a stark contrast to the celebratory banners draped across streets and hanging from buildings to announce the Festival of Falling Hawks.

You eventually find yourselves at a gate leading into the walled home of one of the city's wealthy elite. Hard-eyed guards grant you entry into a wilting garden, no

AN UNUSUAL BENGOSHI

If the PCs are reticent to grab onto the leading thread of this mystery, the GM may decide that Kiyoshi Muraoka has managed to achieve the position of bengoshi and used his seal in the message that reaches the party—making refusing his summons a dire mistake, both to their social standing and their health.

different than the rest of the settlement's plantlife, with the exception of a single cherry tree in full bloom—though its blossoms are a startling crimson rather than pink. As you enter the lavish home you hear an argument from one of the rooms that you pass as the guard takes you onto the back patio where you find three men waiting. The first is well dressed and handsome, though he looks tired and his eyes seem haunted by worry.

"Welcome to Kizaki," he says, bowing slightly. "I am Sanjuro Nara. I have the honor of governing the city on behalf of the noble Lady Qinguang Gekido." He gestures to the slightly older and lithe man to his right, who smiles and bows. "This is Kiyoshi Muraoka. He owns the home that you now stand in; he is my advisor and a great friend to Kizaki." The administrator next gestures to a heavy-set fellow well into his later years, dressed in armor and bearing a sword on his hip. As the larger man grunts and bows perfunctorily, he is introduced as Arata Asai, the captain of Kizaki's guard.

Administrator Sanjuro quickly drains a full cup of sake, his hands shaking slightly. Kiyoshi Muraoka slides forward, offering an apologetic smile. "My guests" he says in a voice both deep and rich, "I'm afraid that we have little time for pleasantries. Shall we begin?"

The young administrator has only recently been made aware of the terrible pact to which he has been made a party. Sanjuro grew up worshipping his father and has not taken the news of the appalling dealings with the Pale Master well, though he has chosen to honor the bargain as he fears the possibility of losing his reputation (and position), has a true desire to save his city, and is utterly terrified of Muraoka. He does what he can to conceal his state, allowing Muraoka to do most of the talking during their conversation.

His fear is well placed—Muraoka isn't human and hasn't been for a long time. He is actually a vampire, and a servant of the true Pale Master. He wants to acquire the sacrifices for his master's ritual of re-embodiment, which can only occur on the anniversary of his own death (an event that coincides with the Festival of Falling Hawks by his own design). He has only agreed to hire adventurers to search for the missing children because he values the appearance of action

in the eyes of the public and his own minions haven't proved particularly adept.

During the course of the discussion, Muraoka relates the following:

- The supposed perpetrator is believed to be Seiya Fujioka. Fujioka and his sister Kumiko arrived in Kizaki as orphaned refugees. He became a local doctor while she became involved with a local gang.
- Exactly a decade ago on the eve of the Festival of Falling Hawks, Seiya attempted to abduct six children from three families that he had cared for. When the guard found him he burned down the building and attempted to escape to his sister, a local criminal—all of the children perished in the fire.
- When the guards sorted through the wreckage they found all manner of occult paraphernalia and a mostly destroyed journal. Alongside incomplete passages ranting about sacrifices and immortality, Seiya had proclaimed himself the Pale Master.
- His sister Kumiko turned his body over to the authorities, attended his funeral, and—disgraced and publicly vilified because of the revelations about Seiya—disappeared shortly thereafter.
- The victims this time are the children of the siblings of his previous victims, all taken from their homes within hours of one another. Their names are Seiji Kagawa, Tadao Otori, and Keiko Moto. One parent caught a glimpse of their assailant and said that he was strangely familiar to her.
- Other children that may be targeted (Etsuko Gensai, Takuma Mazawa, Yuzuki Tabuchi), all relatives of the original victims, have been moved to a secure location and placed under guard by Muraoka to ensure that they cannot come to harm.
- Fujioka's journal suggested that the eve of Hawksfall was significant and that they suspect that whatever Fujioka plans will occur then. Additionally, Administrator Sanjuro would like to announce the safe return of the children during his speech at the celebration.
- Muraoka will be traveling to his villa with the children under his protection and their parents shortly after this interview. Administrator Sanjuro and Guard Captain Arata Asai are naturally in charge here.
- Muraoka has generously offered to pay 8,000 Imperial Pieces for the safe return of the children.

In relation to leads, Muraoka suggests the following.

- Fujioka's sister Kumiko was a member of the Iron Spiders (a local gang from the Thousand Lanterns District) and before disappearing was married to the man that is now their leader.
- The ruin of Fujioka's home is located in the Shūkan District and reports of strange visitors at night have reached the ears of the watch in the past couple of days.
- Seiya's remains are kept at the Graveyard of the Damned, a remote cemetery where the cremated corpses of murderers, madmen, and others believed to be at higher risk of rising as undead are kept—if Fujioka has returned from the dead, the priest would almost certainly know.

PLAYING THE CITY FATHERS

Administrator Sanjuro Nara is normally confident, genial, and well-spoken though now he is a man at the brink, pushed to the edge of his composure and sanity by recent revelations. Sanjuro has turned to drink and even casual scrutiny reveals a man that is constantly near the point of a breakdown. If anyone asks about his troubled demeanor he blames the rigors of office for his worries, though the truth is much different.



Guard Captain Arata Asai is sullen, taciturn, and brutish, with just enough cunning and instinct to be dangerous. He uses the law as a pretense but until recently he kept his corruption and excess within the bounds of what Sanjuro's father considered acceptable. Now he is thoroughly Muraoka's creature, holding the new administrator in barely concealed contempt as Sanjuro has crumbled in front of him.

inhuman predator. He despises the living and considers them to be cattle at best and toys at worst, though he has practiced concealing this for more than a century and has become highly skilled at deception.

It is important that when portraying the above characters that the GM remembers that, at its heart, *Revenge of the Pale Master* is a mystery. Giving too much of Muraoka's nature away in his depiction may ruin the adventure—a few subtle hints provide suspense and doubt but too many will erase uncertainty and quickly reveal him as the villain. Should the party realized too early that Kuyoshi Muraoka is the true threat in Kizaki, remember that he has a myriad of powers at his disposal, an effectively limitless stockpile of gold, and that the PCs are on his home turf. Red herrings should not be in short supply and the GM has great mobility in terms of what can be brought to bear against the adventurers to muddy their search for the missing children, the kidnapper, or if they are truly ambitious, the real Pale Master.

- Fujioka once had an apprentice though that fact is not well known; the apprentice's family was reasonably affluent and spent a great deal of money to distance their son from the scandal but he may well still reside within the city.

If the party asks for a guide Muraoka suggests to Administrator Sanjuro that Shiro (the guard the party met at the gate) serve in that capacity (treat him as a Guard). Shiro is not terribly bright or well informed but he does know the city well and can guide the players if need be. If they ask him for advice or any insight he declines to answer, fearing that he could be blamed if the PCs fail to rescue the children.



FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS

Muraoka has invited the families of the missing victims to his home to wait for news of their missing children. While he has already interviewed them, the party may decide that they would like to inquire themselves.



Koru Kagawa is a large and bullish man in his late twenties that works as a mason. His younger brother was abducted during the incident a decade ago and he has nursed a hatred for Seiya Fujioka ever since—he is absolutely convinced that the Pale Master has returned as a specter, but neither he nor his wife saw anything early this morning when his child disappeared.

Reiko Otoro is a petite and pretty woman in her early twenties that lost an older sister a decade ago. She married a wealthy merchant who died last year, and the horror of losing her son has driven her over the edge. Reiko can barely speak and simply shakes her head while crying silently when asked if she saw anything.



Miki Moto is a lithe and short haired woman in her mid-twenties that is a talented and successful painter. She doesn't know it but her older brother Kaneda was the only child of the six to escape ten years ago and she has long since written him off as dead. She is strong willed and outspoken, and has responded to the situation with anger. The fact that Miki has a child without ever taking a husband has given her something of a reputation though she isn't bothered by the opinions of others, and her great skill has given her and her daughter a comfortable life. Unlike Koru, she never believed that "the Doctor," (as she refers to Seiya) had anything to do with what happened—she and him had been close when she was a child, and she was never convinced that he meant her (or anyone else) any harm.

When Kaneda arrived to take his niece she was up painting and somehow sensed that something was awry. Kaneda had only ever seen his niece from a distance and was momentarily overcome by the rush of affection and loss that he felt for her upon slipping in through her window. When Miki entered her daughter's room she found her brother looming over her daughter's bed and the two locked eyes for a moment in the dim light. Though she did not recognize him—a decade and his burns offering a compelling disguise—she was struck by a profound familiarity that overcame her in turn. Kaneda didn't speak but the love and regret on his face was plain even as he vanished out the window with her daughter. Miki told Muraoka what she saw but he publicly dismissed her account as a grief-fueled distortion while developing his own suspicions.

The parents have been placed in a small dining room where food and strong drink have been provided. When the party enters Koru and Miki lapse into a sullen silence—Koru snapped at her when she again suggested that the doctor might not be the culprit and the two have been arguing ever since. When the party begins to question the group Koru immediately attempts to dominate the conversation, loudly and repeatedly stating that the Pale Master (Doctor Seiya Fujioka) has returned as a foul spirit to continue his evil work and that even as a boy, Koru sensed the evil within Seiya. Miki is tired of being dismissed and seethes in silence unless asked directly but even then, the party must succeed at a **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to get her to open up. Apply disadvantage if the PCs are dismissive, rude, or sexist, though they can gain advantage if she is approached by a female party member or someone that has quieted Koru's ranting.

ACT 2: STREETS OF ASH

AN ENCOUNTER AT THE OYAMI TEA HOUSE

Having been pointed in the direction of a lead the party makes their way to the Oyami Tea House, the stomping grounds of the Iron Spiders (the gang that the supposed Pale Master's sister, Kumiko, was once a member of). The Oyami Tea House sits in the Thousand Lanterns district between a brothel and a black smoke parlor near the border of the Soots—a miserable place filled with the destitute and the desperate. The term 'tea house' is hardly accurate; as the party approaches, read the following:

You find the Oyami Tea House at the end of a small cul de sac nestled between a brothel and a black smoke den in the seedy strip of the Thousand Lanterns district that borders the Soots. The streets are thick with ragged drug addicts, wary gamblers, and other poor souls along with heavily-augmented thugs that eschew shirts in order to show off tattoos of mechanical spiders, brass webs, and other similar adornments that mark the store fronts and door ways leading to the various businesses that they are ever near.

When you make your way up the steps and into the Oyami Tea House you are assaulted by the foul stench of unwashed humanity as well as cries of victory and defeat intermixing into an unintelligible roar. Laborers, peddlers, and professional gamblers alike sit around nearly a dozen tables rolling dice and playing Oichokabu, with hanafuda shuffled by steady eyed dealers, throwing down mōjan tiles, or facing off in games of rōmaji. Geisha and taikomochi move through the crowd in worn satin kimonos that both reveal and conceal in a tantalizing blend while trying to entreat players next door.

On the far side of the room, past tables filled by oni-touched gamblers and other dicers of all races, your eyes fall upon an older man sitting on a balcony guarded by two thugs that tower over most of the other patrons of the Oyami Tea House. He has a salt and pepper top knot and a short beard, and like the rest of his gang is sporting the dull glint of a metal limb and elaborate tattoos depicting iron spiders on webs of brass and bronze that cover a torso heavy with muscle. He's easily two decades older than the rest of his crew, but if anything it only adds to the menace radiating from the man—there's no doubt in your mind that you've found Eight Arms Kazuya."

The Oyami Tea House is a gambling establishment run by the Iron Spiders Gang under the merciless and tyrannical leadership of Eight Arms Kazuya. When the party enters, Kazuya is being entertained by at least five full-fledged gang members and a number of lesser prospects. Like so many other gangsters, Kazuya is largely a product of his environment; a war refugee ultimately forced to run with a vicious pack of half-feral child criminals in order to have a chance of surviving in the poorest and most dangerous parts of Kizaki. He proved strong and cunning but the streets shaved away all but a glimmer of Kazuya's humanity before he was fifteen.

As the party was led to believe, Kazuya and Kumiko Fujioka were married—though that ended long ago—and he knows a great deal about her origins and those of her brother. In fact Kazuya grew up in and escaped Owa Village with both Seiya and Kumiko, though their fates took them in different directions after their refugee group arrived in Kizaki. By the time they'd reunited Kazuya had already been hardened by the streets. Perhaps she managed to see the man he might have been under the man that he was, or perhaps he fooled her into thinking that she had; one way or another, they were together for a time. When Kumiko disappeared around the time of the fire that supposedly consumed her brother a decade ago, Kazuya claimed that Seiya (who he also believes is the Pale Master) had dragged her away and murdered her, though more astute PCs might notice that the timeline of his account doesn't quite match up with actual events.

Despite what he told everyone however, Kumiko wasn't taken. After her brother was accused of the kidnappings she suffered a brief nervous breakdown, losing the child she carried. Kazuya—ever a violent man—flew into a fit and attacked her, beating her badly before she was able to wound him with his own knife and flee. Given that she and Kazuya had always discussed heading back home and rebuilding Owa to escape the city, he is nearly certain that she made her way there afterward. Though he cannot admit it even to himself, not following her is the great regret of his life.

PLAYING KAZUYA

Kazuya survived Kizaki's teeming warrens by constantly proving himself to be the most ruthless and fearsome among his competitors. Now that he's climbed into a position of authority he is careful to maintain a constant facade of absolute strength in front of his subordinates and other onlookers, particularly as he has crept into his fifth decade. He is fully aware that to show weakness opens him to attacks by those below him and Kazuya meets these threats head-on.



GETTING THE INFORMATION

Initially Eight Arms Kazuya likely won't be inclined to speak to the party at all unless one or more of the characters has a tie to the underworld that he feels may be profitable. He treats any pleas to aid the authorities with incredible contempt (indeed, he still wears the shackles he shattered after escaping his most recent stint of imprisonment, a way to show defiance and disrespect to Administrator Sanjuro) and snubs the party for it, if only to assert his dominance in the situation. Bribery, the promise of profit, the persuasion of one of his guards or subordinates, or a particularly good gambling run may secure the PCs an audience.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the group needs to present a compelling argument after they manage to speak to Kazuya to convince him to voice his suspicions regarding Kumiko's location. He may seem suspicious and dismissive but perceptive characters that make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check** notice a hint of surprise and the pain of an old wound when the topic of Kumiko Fujioka is broached, though he utterly dismisses any assertions to that fact as ridiculous (particularly if any of his subordinates are within earshot).

Bribery. Kazuya is a criminal at heart and his primary interest is money. If the party can make him a significant offer, he is willing to trade information so long as he believes that they pose no threat to Kumiko. The closer the party is to the truth already (and the more they reveal to him), the less he will insist they pay.

Gambling. Kazuya is a man of his word (publically, at least). If a particularly crafty character is able to appeal to his competitive edge via a game of chance, they may be able to place wagers against the knowledge he holds.

Persuasion. If a character is intuitive enough to divine that he has some feeling for his long lost wife, they may be able to convince Kazuya that she needs their help.

Intimidation. Threatening Kazuya almost certainly leads to bloodshed—he is not a man easily given to fear and when surrounded by loyal soldiers in the center of his power he is even less likely to back down. Any Charisma (Intimidation) checks made against Kazuya have a minimum DC of 20 and are made at disadvantage due to the presence of Kazuya's many supporters and lackies. A failed check provokes a fight, though if the party appears particularly formidable he demands they leave on pain of death first. Regardless of failure or success, PCs that attempt to intimidate Kazuya make an enemy for life.

Violence. When violence erupts most of the patrons, prostitutes, and employees scatter, darting towards exits and doorways to other rooms. Kazuya and his gang ruthlessly fight almost to the last man and show no mercy. Nearly all of them understand that to lose is to expose themselves to attacks by rival gangs, an event that is practically a death sentence.

Kazuya uses the statistics for a Veteran with a Strength of 16, an AC of 15, and thanks to his augmetics, martial training, and quick reflexes he is able to fight with any weapons or inflict 1d6+3 with unarmed attacks.

The rest of his gang is comprised of 6 Thugs and 5 junior initiates (use statistics for Bandits), as well as the Iron Spiders' ace-in-the-hole: Kuno-Meinu, a damaged mekkusenshi bought from disreputable merchants in Sanbaoshi (and brainwashed to believe that Kazuya is Emperor Hitooshi himself) that hides in the Oyami Tea House's basement.

After four rounds of combat, more Iron Spiders enter the Oyami Tea House at a rate of one Thug and two Bandits every 1d4 rounds until the party or Kazuya is

defeated or the doors are somehow blocked. If the party manages to take Kazuya alive he still isn't likely to reveal what he knows—though he might be more open to persuasion than he was previously.

VARIANT: A TOUGHER ENCOUNTER

For higher-level PCs, double Kazuya's hit points and use the regular statistics for Mekkusenshi (page 39) for Kuno-Meinu.

GRAVEYARD OF THE DAMNED

As the PCs approach, read the following:

As the road turns the buildings fall away to reveal a small forest nestled against the walls of the city, a surprising sight considering Kizaki's industrial character. The grove is shrouded in an unsettling silence and along the road you pass small shrines containing monstrous figures with small offerings scattered about—as you pass, their eyes seem to follow you hungrily. After a few minutes you see a stout wall encircling what must be the Graveyard of the Damned, a cemetery that terminates in a sacred arch covered with wards. A small house rests along the road just outside the gate.

Suddenly a victorious shriek thick with hunger and malice splits the silence. A boy runs out of the house towards you, nearly falling as he reaches your party. "Help! Please! A hungry ghost has taken my sister and mother!" he begs, his face lined with tears. "My mother is the priestess here, you must help her!"

The Graveyard of the Damned is an old cemetery located in a small and mostly dead forest tucked between the modest homes of the Shūkan District and the Market District along Kizaki's northwestern wall. While it was once a revered place when the city was first founded it is no longer—now the grounds are home to the interred ashes of those who were evil and mad in life in the hope of making it more difficult for them to return to the mortal world to plague the living. The graveyard is funded by the city and cared for by a priest that maintains the wards and sees to the rituals and prayers that deter the vicious dead from returning. For centuries they have been successful but as the Mists of Akuma spread

KUNO-MEINU, DAMAGED MEKKUSENSHI

Medium humanoid, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 60 (8d8+24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +5, Int +1, Cha +1

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4

Damage Vulnerabilities acid, lightning

Damage Resistances cold, fire, poison

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Soburi

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Augmented Leap. Mekkusenshi can vertically jump 15 feet or horizontally jump 30 feet without the need for an ability check.

ACTIONS

Sword Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage.

across the land their power has waned. The current caretaker is a priestess in her thirties named Yumi Muramoto. She inherited the position from her father and has lived in the small cottage with only her daughter Sango and her son Juro since her husband was killed in a robbery while returning from his job as a factory clerk.

Unfortunately one of the cemetery's most vicious inhabitants, a serial killer named Shinzo the Eater that was recently interred after being killed by the watch, has burst forth from the grave. A tragic victim of a conflict of which he was an unwilling participant and fated by his name to a dreadful end, as a child Shinzo found himself the only survivor of a Hakaisuru raid on the small town where his family ran a traveller's inn. When the attack occurred they took shelter in the cellar where a stray cannonball collapsed the building atop them, killing everyone except for Shinzo and trapping him in the rubble with only the corpse of his sister Haruka for company. Days passed and his mind broke—drawing the attentions of the Pale Master. Having been named after his ancestor (Shinzo

Kitamura, founder of the Crimson Vigil), the necromancer saw an opportunity to forever dishonor the name and touched the already shattered youth's psyche. Driven by hunger and corrupted by the ancient evil, Shinzo resorted to eating her corpse, trapped in the dark and sobbing even as he forced her flesh down his throat.

Days later he was rescued and eventually placed in an orphanage but he never truly escaped those terrible days in the dark; constantly tormented by dreams of fire, darkness, and the terrible taste of flesh. When he finally came of age and was released he found work in another inn before eventually succumbing to the terrible hunger that had been born within him. By the time he was caught Shinzo had murdered and devoured nine young women, each of them resembling his sister. His torments in the hells below have distilled his madness and hunger—separating it from the broken child that first spawned it and giving it a life of its own—and the preparations for the Pale Master's ritual have provided that fragment with the means to drag itself back into the world of the living.

Upon rising he was drawn to the priestess' daughter Sango, her innocence, youth, and resemblance to his sister guiding him like a moth to a flame, compelling him to drag her back to a mausoleum and slowly devour her. The Priestess Yumi immediately gathered her divine accoutrements and made her way to the spirit's grave to subdue it, but fueled by the Mists of Akuma it was more powerful than she was capable of dealing with.

The cemetery is not very large—the only enclosed building within its boundaries is a large temple that is currently glowing with spectral light from the partially open door. When the party enters, read the following:

A scream of terror slowly transforms into a wail of pain as it echoes from inside the simple brick temple in the center of the cemetery. Within you find an altar on an upraised dias surrounded by images of penitents being castigated in different hells. A priestess lay on the ground, dark blood pooling from her head, while on the altar itself is a trembling young girl that bears a resemblance to the unconscious woman. Tears stream from the corner of her eyes, though she seems incapable of moving otherwise. There is a ragged red wound on her bicep where the flesh has been torn away.



Floating above her is the spectral form of an older man, though death has twisted him into a creature out of nightmare. He is translucent and the spectral light that fills the chamber pours out of him. He finishes chewing and swallows before his gaunt features twist into a mad rictus of hunger, ghostly lips drawn back from sharpened teeth. He looks at you and screams, "More morsels? Good! I am so, so HUNGRY!"

Treat Shinzo as a Ghost though there is a significant difference; reducing Shinzo the Eater to 0 hit points only disperses him. He reforms at the beginning of any round where he is at 0 hit points. If he successfully manages to possess a target, Shinzo attempts to use that target to bite and devour the other adventurers. The possessed character foregoes weapon attacks, instead gaining the following action:

- **Ravenous Assault.** Make a **Strength (Athletics) check** against another living creature using either your proficiency bonus or 3, whichever is higher. If you are successful, you make a bite attack against the target with advantage, dealing 1d6 piercing damage plus your Strength modifier. If you begin a turn grappling a target, you must use your action to perform the Attack action to make as many bite attacks as you are capable against the target.

VARIANT: A TOUGHER ENCOUNTER

For higher-level PCs, include a number of Specters equal to the number of adventurers in the party, echoes of Shinzo equally eager to devour the PCs.

The only way to banish Shinzo the Eater back to the aether from which he dragged himself is to complete the ritual prayer that the priestess was planning to conduct herself. A PC attempting the task must first pass a **DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check** to identify this fact, though the GM may rule that an appropriate background or prior experience allows them to automatically succeed on the check, as does searching Yumi for two or more rounds. One way or the other, the adventurer must gather the priestess' satchel and begin the invocation with the components inside. The process takes three rounds, during which time the PC undertaking the

ritual must pass a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** to maintain his or her concentration while chanting, employing the appropriate gestures and syllables. Unless Shinzo is actively possessing a character he does everything that he can to disrupt the prayer ritual. Any damage that he does to the character conducting the prayer forces a **Constitution saving throw (DC 10 or half the damage taken, whichever is higher)**.

Alternatively, the party may choose to allow the priestess to conduct the ritual instead. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals that Yumi is breathing shallowly, although she is unconscious and slowly bleeding to death (make death saves for her at the end of every round, as per the normal rules.) Healing magic functions normally and only a moment after being restored to consciousness she casts protection from evil and good upon herself and begins the ritual. Given Yumi's familiarity with the prayer she need only make checks to maintain her concentration if she takes damage, and she gains advantage when doing so.

Assuming that Yumi survives the encounter she moves to her daughter and heals her while doing her best to console the girl, though the horror of the event is likely to leave deep marks. She then escorts the party back to her small home with a protective arm around her daughter and after seeing to the child's immediate needs, the priestess asks the party what brought them to the Graveyard of the Damned.

Over the course of their conversation she reveals the following:

- Yumi was a young acolyte when Seiya Fujioka was killed. While she does not know whether or not he was guilty of the horrible crimes he was accused of, she does know that her old mentor (a somewhat famous adventuring priest in his prime known as Iron Soul Rokurou) thought highly of the doctor and the two often spent many hours talking at least a few evenings out of every month. During these conversations they would discuss some sort of old local legend, though she was not privy to the actual content.
- Yumi is certain that Doctor Seiya Fujioka was dead—she helped to prepare and then cremate the body. She hasn't sensed anything that would lead her to believe

that the Pale Master has returned from the afterlife and is skeptical of the rumors regarding him.

- Last night (when the children disappeared) she noticed a strange male figure in the cemetery near Seiya Fujioka's grave. Though it was dark and there was something unsettling about him, she did not sense anything unnatural; when the figure heard her he turned and ran, leaping easily over the wall. Given that the fence is nearly eight feet high, that is a superhuman feat.
- When she checked Fujioka's grave the next morning she found freshly cut flowers placed upon it, but it was otherwise undisturbed.
- Seiya Fujioka's grave has only ever had two others visitors. The first was his sister Kumiko, though she stopped coming
- months after his death. The other is Doctor Fumio Oda from the Canal District. He has treated her children in the past as a sort of personal tithe for taking care of Seiya's grave, though he's never revealed as much to anyone. She can provide the PCs with his address and offers to do so as long as the party remain respectful in her home (page 33).

Though disjointed and corrupted, Shinzo the Eater may be able to provide help to adventurers that are struggling to grasp the plot threads in *Revenge of the Pale Master*, crying out for aid from the Crimson Vigil, blasting otherworldly energies marking the direction of Owa Village, or by revealing another clue leading to what truly plagues Kizaki.

Yumi is also willing and able to provide curative magics of 3rd-level or below in light of the fact that the PCs saved the lives of her and her daughter. Regardless of what happens over the course of the rest of their investigation, the party will have earned a staunch ally in the priestess.

All of the above assume that both Yumi and her daughter survive their horrible ordeal. If the party spends too long discussing what to do or exploring around the cemetery before entering the temple in the center, they may well find Sango dead, her throat torn out by her spectral attacker. While this is largely up to the GM, more than two or three minutes of in game time should likely be enough to ensure her demise. If Sango dies her mother Yumi is inconsolable, wracked with grief and guilt, utterly incapable of providing any meaningful assistance to the adventurers.



THE DOCTOR IS IN

Doctor Fumio Oda was never a brave boy but he was kind and brilliant in a quiet sort of way that endeared him to Doctor Fujioka, who hoped that he may one day help the lad find his courage and induct him into the Crimson Vigil. Whether that may have been possible or not became an impossible question after the abductions and the fire. Kumiko brought Kaneda and Seiya to Fumio, and though he was incapable of keeping his teacher from death he saved the child (albeit with deep scars and not completely curing him, the shock of his burns too great to heal). As a young man, Fumio couldn't believe that the doctor would be capable of evil but his cowardice stopped him from speaking out on Seiya's behalf, allowing his family to use both their wealth and their influence to insulate him and their name from the horrific events. He completed his training under another doctor and in time quietly opened a practice that he still maintains—the only link to his old life are his memories and his occasional visits to the Graveyard of the Damned.

When the party makes their way to Doctor Fumio's residence, read the following:

The canal district is a startling contrast to the Soots and Kizaki's many working class neighborhoods. Here, large homes sit upon broad lanes running along the canals while well dressed men and women leisurely stroll with their retinues into and out of fine restaurants, shops, and tea houses all festooned with banners celebrating the Festival of Falling Hawks. Doctor Fumio's residence sits on Green Lotus Lane between a fine tailor and maker of gramophones and other musical mechanical devices. Music and laughter can be heard within; though dark downstairs, you can see the flicker of lightning lanterns above, casting a silhouette against the closed paper blinds as a man moves about the room.

Doctor Fumio Oda is tall and slim with light hair and kind eyes. Despite his size however, he seems

somehow smaller than he should, a manifestation of his meek nature. He dresses well but not ostentatiously, and he walks with a cane: a byproduct of a riding accident as a child. He is quiet and attentive in conversation, as well as a gracious host.



After suffering serious injury by Muraoka's adeddo-oni while trying to enter the concealed chamber below the ruins of Seiya Fujioka's abandoned home, Kaneda made his way to Doctor Fumio's with the help of his remaining clockwork guardians, Kumiko having kept track of her brother's apprentice over the intervening years. When Kaneda appeared battered and bleeding in his apartment along with two heavily damaged automatons, he knew immediately who the stranger was and set himself to the task of saving the young man's life just as he had done a decade ago.

Though Fumio has stabilized him and helped him to regain consciousness, the doctor can't fix Kaneda's augmetics, which were also heavily damaged. While Kaneda is still capable of moving, he desperately needs them repaired if he is to survive another combat.

If the party simply pounds on the door, Fumio helps Kaneda hide in a small concealed room that he discovered after purchasing the building, then attempts to quickly clean up the mess before making his way downstairs. He strives to convince the party to move along but though he is an excellent doctor, he lacks the composure for intrigue. A **passive Wisdom (Insight) of 12 or higher** is enough to see that Fumio is terrified. A **passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 14** notices spots of blood on his collar, sleeves, and hands.

He first tries to politely convince the adventurers to leave and then lamely leans upon his social status, making threats about “knowing people in positions of authority,” though these claims quickly fall flat if the party discloses that they’re working directly for Administrator Sanjuro. Ultimately a **DC 12 Charisma (Intimidate) check** is all that is required to get Fumio to lead the party above, though his fear and desire to save Kaneda’s life forces PCs to make this check at disadvantage.

Unless any of the party have a superlative **passive Perception of 20**, Kaneda’s +10 Dexterity (Stealth) check coupled with the advantage his augmetics provide to his ability check allow him to easily stay hidden when the PCs arrive. After the party enters the apartment above, read the following:

Oda leads you up the stairs and into the apartment above his physician’s practice. The rooms within are simple but well-appointed, though something has clearly just happened—bloodied rags dangle out of a refuse bin and there’s a large dark stain on the divan with what looks to be a medical bag stuffed clumsily below it. The doctor’s eyes follow yours and he breaks into a cold sweat, terror apparent on his face. There is a moment of silence that is suddenly broken by the sound of hammer cocking.

When you glance towards the bedroom a lean young man in a pair of peasant’s

breeches and light tabi leans heavily against the doorframe with one hand while aiming a hand hwacha at you with the other. His hair is a ragged mess and both his arms and legs are augmetic, though heavily damaged. He has several freshly bandaged wounds, though they pale in comparison to the hideous burn scars that cover his torso and the left side of his thin face now twisted with pain, hostility, and grim resolve. “So Muraoka needs mercenaries to kill children now?” he growls, “Not if I have anything to say about it.”

Despite his burns Kaneda bears a striking resemblance to his sister Miki, who the party may have met at Muraoka’s manor in the center of Kizaki (page 11). Observant PCs with a **passive Perception of 16** or higher that spoke to Miki for any length of time immediately notice the resemblance. Kaneda is coiled more tightly than a watch spring and takes his readied action to fire at the first sign of violence before retreating back into the bedroom. His clockwork guardians (page 27) are inside the bedroom with him and ready to throw themselves in the way of anyone that attacks their creator, offering up their lives to defend him.

If combat does not immediately break out Kaneda is willing to talk—though far from afraid of the party, he is aware of his own limitations and particularly his wounds. He also doesn’t wish to see Doctor Oda harmed, a man to whom he feels he owes a great debt.

PLAYING KANEDA

Kaneda is intelligent, intuitive, and clever, but also deeply scarred—both physically and psychologically—and recent events have left him unstable. He is distrustful of anyone that he doesn’t know very well and almost entirely consumed with a desire for vengeance against Muraoka. Kumiko’s presence and the recent experience of seeing his niece are the only things that have prevented Kaneda from losing himself.

If asked to explain what he meant, Kaneda reveals the following:

- Muraoka is not human—he is actually an immortal blood drinking monster that serves an even greater power known as the Pale Master.
- The Pale Master is not Seiya Fujioka. Doctor Fujioka was in fact the last of a secret order known as the Crimson Vigil, a group sworn to prevent the real Pale Master from rising again.
- Fujioka did abduct the children a decade ago but that was only after he discovered that Muraoka was working with the Administrator Hiroshi (Sanjuro’s father) to deliver them to the true Pale Master.
- Fujioka and the other five children died that night; Kaneda only survived because of Seiya and Kumiko’s bravery and the skill of Doctor Oda.
- The three children the PCs are looking for are hidden somewhere safe but the rest are in grave danger as Muraoka’s protection is a lie and he certainly planning to sacrifice the remaining youths for his dark master.

Kaneda doesn't know where Muraoka's ancestral villa is though he suspects that Doctor Fujioka had figured it out (which was why he was attempting to gain entry to the doctor's secret room when he was attacked). He can tell them how to get into the secret chamber but warns the party that there are still adeddo-
oni waiting in the ruined house to ambush anyone who comes looking. He also suspects that Administrator Sanjuro may know where Muraoka's home might be.

If the party is able to convince Kaneda of their good intentions with a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check** he collapses back onto the divan that the doctor was treating him on. Otherwise he vanishes out a window and into the shadows when the opportunity presents itself.

One way or the other, while Kaneda is still determined to rescue the remaining children his wounds and the damage to his augmetics will force him to disappear and repair before returning to Owa Village.

If violence does erupt, the doctor cowers while Kaneda escapes. If interrogated afterwards, Fumio reveals the following:

- Kaneda was one of the children that had been taken a decade ago by Seiya Fujioka and he has been staying with the dead doctor's sister, Kumiko.
- Kaneda wants Muraoka and his inner circle dead and seems a bit unstable.
- Kaneda was injured looking for a secret chamber in the wreckage of Seiya Fujioka's home, claiming he was looking for a red stone.
- Fumio suspects that Kaneda and Kumiko are residing in the doctor's old home but cannot confirm the suspicion.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kaneda makes five scorching telescopic arm attacks.

Scorching Telescopic Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Hand Hwacha. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range (30/120) or all targets in a 30-foot line. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage at a single target or 17 (4d6+3) piercing damage to all targets in the area. Kaneda makes a separate attack roll for each object and creature in the area. After being fired at an area, reloading the hand hwacha requires 1 minute.

REACTIONS

Reflexive Dodge. When Kaneda is aware of an attacker, he may choose to reduce the damage of an attack or spell by half.

KANEDA MOTO

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor, Wisdom)

Hit Points 104 (16d8+32)

Speed 50 ft. (+20 ft. horizontal jump, +10 ft. vertical jump)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +7

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities lightning

Damage Resistances poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Soburi

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Dampening Enhancers. Kaneda possesses cutting-edge prototype augmetics that grant him advantage on Athletics and Stealth checks.

Evasion. If Kaneda is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Modified Dainamo Omiryō. When Kaneda is the target of a spell, roll 1d20; on a result of 10 or less, he draws the magic into his modified dainamo omiryō. The device can hold up to 4 levels of spells (cantrips count as 1st-level spells). By spending a reaction immediately after a spell is cast at him or an action after he has absorbed one or more spells, Kaneda can fire blasts of raw energy that deal 3d6+2 force damage per stored spell level to all creatures in a 50-foot line. A DC 15 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage. Alternately, he can fire it as a ranged attack at a single target within 150 feet (with a +7 bonus to hit).

A BROKEN MAN

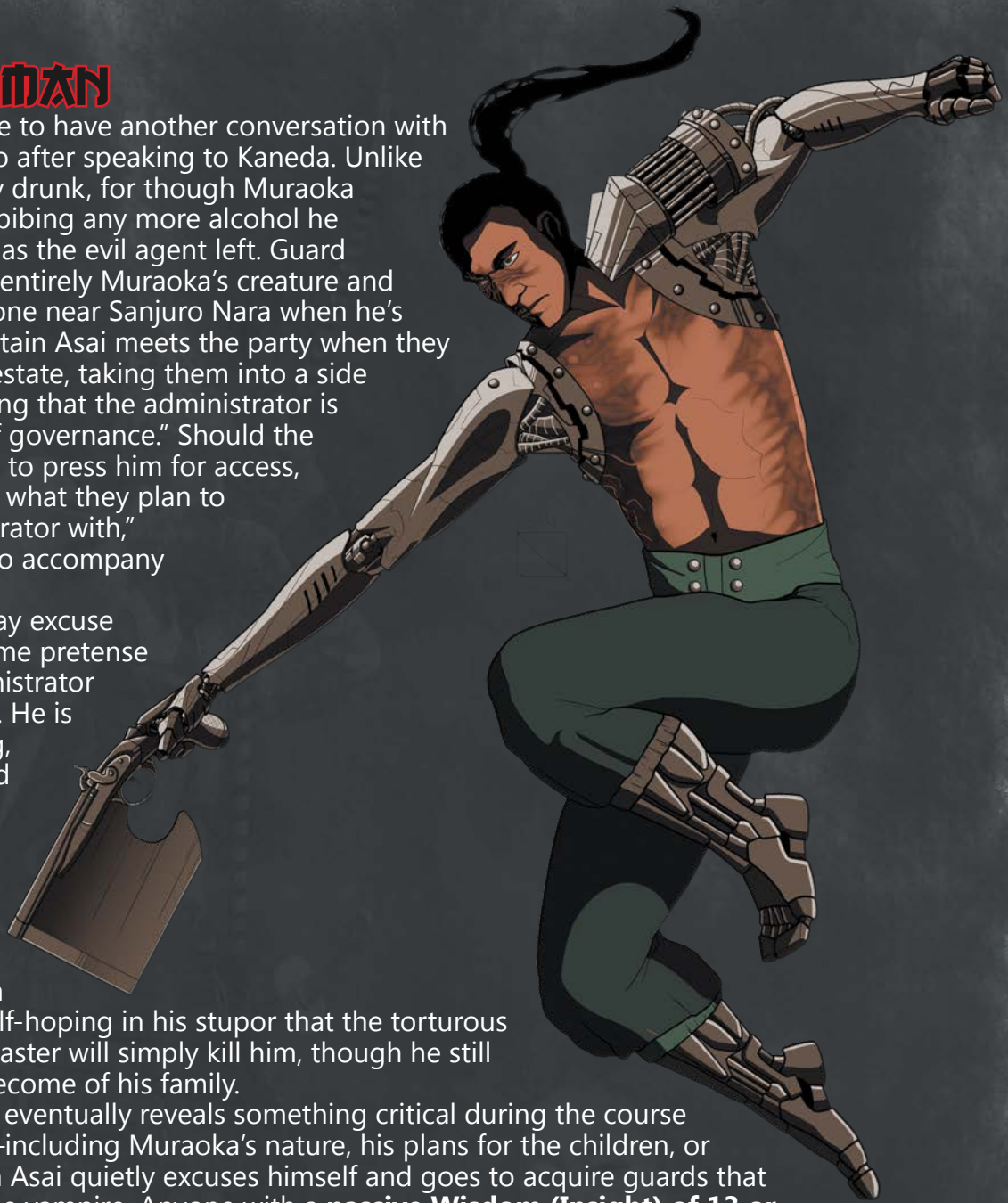
The party may choose to have another conversation with Administrator Sanjuro after speaking to Kaneda. Unlike before he is now very drunk, for though Muraoka forbade him from imbibing any more alcohol he began again as soon as the evil agent left. Guard Captain Arata Asai is entirely Muraoka's creature and knows not to let anyone near Sanjuro Nara when he's in this condition. Captain Asai meets the party when they return to Muraoka's estate, taking them into a side room and firmly stating that the administrator is busy "with matters of governance." Should the adventurers continue to press him for access, he demands to know what they plan to "trouble the administrator with," eventually agreeing to accompany them to see Sanjuro.

A canny PC may excuse themselves under some pretense and try to find Administrator Sanjuro on their own. He is in the library drinking, staring at the fire, and wallowing in misery. Sake has given him courage and he's been throwing empty bottles and glasses at a portrait of Muraoka above the mantle, half-hoping in his stupor that the torturous servant of the Pale Master will simply kill him, though he still fears for what may become of his family.

When Sanjuro eventually reveals something critical during the course of the conversation—including Muraoka's nature, his plans for the children, or his location—Captain Asai quietly excuses himself and goes to acquire guards that share his loyalty to the vampire. Anyone with a **passive Wisdom (Insight) of 13 or higher** realizes that he is planning something. When Asai returns he and his lackeys (use the statistics for a Gladiator and Guards) attack the party without pretense, using the opportunity to attempt to kill Administrator Sanjuro and blame it on the adventurers. While Muraoka would be furious by the whole affair and likely dismember him, Captain Asai mistakenly thinks that he'll be rewarded for helping to keep the evil secrets of the true Pale Master's servant.

Given the state that Sanjuro finds himself in the PCs shouldn't find it too difficult to get him to confess, particularly given his nearly overpowering guilt and obvious intoxication.

- Muraoka's ancestral home is located several hours away in the mountains of the city. He has sent messengers there before and provides the party with directions to reach the villa.
- Muraoka is an inhuman monster that seems to be immortal and averse to the light of day.
- Muraoka works for an even greater power, the Pale Master, and it was on its behalf that he took the children.
- Doctor Seiya Fujioka was innocent of any wrongdoing but Muraoka has been encouraging Sanjuro to pin the past events on him.
- If the Pale Master does not get its sacrifices it will stop providing any protection to the city. Sanjuro believes that this would almost certainly mean Kizaki's destruction.



PLAYING ASAI

Guard Captain Arata Asai is a violent, greedy, small-minded, and thuggish bully with just enough instinct and cunning to be dangerous. He barely hides the contempt he holds for the new administrator, a fact that anyone with a **passive Wisdom (Insight) score of 12 or higher** easily notices.

If Captain Asai or one of his guards have been made extremely suspicious one of them is already drinking in the library with Sanjuro, excusing themselves when the PCs step within to go and acquire reinforcements before attacking.

DOCTOR FUJIOKA'S RUINS

After speaking with Doctor Fumio Oda, the PCs may choose to investigate the ruined home of Seiya Fujioka. It is located in the Canal District on a relatively large walled plot of land that once contained a noble house and a spacious garden with trees and other greenery. Now the place of healing and safety is a mostly collapsed ruin, the once beautiful garden a tangled and overgrown snarl of dying trees. Both gates through the stone wall have been locked and can be opened with a **DC 12 Thieves' Tools check** or forced with a **DC 16 Strength check** (though the latter makes enough noise that the undead waiting within are able to hear it).

The ruin of the home itself has lost its upper floor but the the skeleton of the building remains intact, including a maze-like collection of old stone walls where the adeddo-oni that Kaneda didn't kill before still lurk. An adeddo-oni samurai (page 38) and two adeddo-oni ninja (page 37) watch the entrance to the basement and attack anyone who approaches it that isn't Muraoka.

As the party may have learned, Doctor Fujioka did in fact maintain a secret bolthole below his home that withstood the fire above—because of its warding magics against the unnatural, Muraoka and his minions had been unable to find it

despite being perilously close on multiple occasions. The entrance is located against the northern wall of the ruined basement of the estate and requires a **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to locate. Furthermore, anyone with a Haitoku score of 15 or higher requires a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw** to discern it, even if shown where it is. Due to the spells protecting the area, undead, monstrosities, and oni have disadvantage on both checks.

Inside the characters encounter a treasure trove of lore—Seiya Fujioka and those that came before him had devoted their lives to opposing the Pale Master and they learned much doing so. There are several journals and accounts of Ichizo Ando's evil in life (including some items that Ando himself wrote) and on the walls are a detailed map of the Crimson Keep, a very old photograph of a young Muraoka, and genealogies of the family trees of the adventurers' descendants. The doctor's own journal details his plan to take the children and keep them safe from harm—at this point, the GM may choose to simply synopsise the background of the adventure in full. The PCs also discover a map that shows the location of Muraoka's villa east of Kizaki.

ACT 3: FESTIVAL OF FIRE

By the end of the second act of *Revenge of the Pale Master* the party has likely discovered the location of Owa Village from either Eight Arms Kazuya, Kaneda Moto, the ghost of Shinzo the Eater, or another means. The PCs have also likely been told of Muraoka's monstrous nature and of his plans to sacrifice the children that he has offered to "protect" in his villa outside of the city, forcing the adventurers to make a choice. One way or the other, their decision will have dire repercussions for the future of Kizaki.

As the city prepares for the Festival of Falling Hawks—including preparations for a massive fireworks display, games, music, and food that typically spills from the main square throughout the city—the PCs leave Kizaki behind.

If the PCs choose not to believe Kaneda, they likely head to Owa Village and attempt to rescue the children being held by him and Kumiko.

If the PCs believe Kaneda, they likely discovered the location of Muraoka's Villa either by uncovering the secret room in the ruins of Fujioka's home or by interrogating Administrator Sanjuro.

TRAVELING FROM KIZAKI

Much of the travel time outside of Kizaki is not due to distance, but rather the roughness of the terrain. The region was remote prior to the bloodshed of Hitoshi's Rebellion and now it is almost entirely uninhabited, meaning that the roads are overgrown, bridges are either sagging or missing, and paths disappeared. Having a ranger among the party reduces the travel time by half thanks to the Natural Explorer class feature (so long as forests are among the PC's favored terrains). Though the adventure assumes that the adventurers have no problems following the directions they have, the GM could ask for a **Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Navigator's Tools) check** and have failure affect travel time, though this could affect the overall timeline.

While this adventure does not assume any random encounters, should the PCs be well ahead of schedule, the GM is free to include an encounter to tempt them off track.

d20	Random Encounter	CR
1	Jinmenju (page 44)	10
2–3	Ancestral Kami (page 47)	8
4–5	Yaoguai (page 49)	7
6–9	Gaki (page 41)	6
10–11	Harianago (page 42)	6
12–14	Chōchin-Obake Swarm (page 45)	5
15–16	Kuchisake-Onna (page 48)	4
17–18	Onryō (page 46)	3
19–20	Gang of a dozen Bandits	3

OWA VILLAGE

Located three hours west of Kizaki, Owa Village was a remote community of nearly two hundred men, women, and children before war found it nearly twenty years ago at the very inception of Hitoshi's Rebellion. Now it has a population of two—plus three children that Kumiko and Kaneda have hidden there. Read the following as the players approach:

Following the directions that you were given you head southeast, slowing your pace as the road turns into a broken path that meanders through a dying forest. You pass the occasional remains of villagers that likely perished in the fighting more than twenty years ago, still lying where they breathed their last and picked clean by scavengers.

Eventually, you come to an old stone gate revealing the ruins of Owa Village beyond the wreck of the wall that once surrounded it. Two dozen burned out huts stand in small clusters around an old well, and the husk of what may have once been a meeting hall or temple. Throughout the whole of the settlement trees thrust up through the ruins, and unlike the road leading here, no remains can be seen.



Owa Village is protected by three clockwork guardians that Kumiko created. Two hide motionlessly in ruined huts located near the old gate while the third lies similarly hidden behind the hovel that Kumiko and Kaneda share. The constructs remain undetected unless someone in the party has a **passive Perception score of 16** or a PC actively looks for signs of an ambush and passes a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Parties that approach openly or use a visible light source are attacked by the clockwork guardians without warning, sounding an alarm that alerts Kumiko. If the adventurers send a scout or approach stealthily they need to succeed on **Dexterity (Stealth) DC 13 checks** in order to avoid alerting the constructs. PCs that are able to make it into the village and investigate before discovering Kumiko and the children, find a small garden, a goat pen, and the graves of the neighbors that Kumiko and Kaneda could find enough of to bury after they returned home.

If Kumiko is alerted she quickly ushers the children into the concealed cellar that she's converted into a surprisingly extensive workshop below and throws a rug over the trap door before arming herself and stepping out into the village. Though it has been many years since she was an assassin for the Iron Spiders she is still a dangerous combatant—skilled, augmented, and capable of making the best possible use of her superior knowledge of the settlement to inflict as much harm as possible. Kumiko is armed with a lovingly modified rifle and several explosive grenades, and if all else fails she resorts to hand to hand combat. She fights to the death if necessary to protect the children, though she is not suicidal and does her utmost to survive while accomplishing her goal.

KUMIKO FUJIOKA

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 17 (Wisdom)

Hit Points 83 (17d8+7)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +7, Wis +7

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +5, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Ceram, Ropa, Soburi, telepathy 30 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Evasion. If Kumiko is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Qi (8 points/Day). Kumiko harnesses the mystic energy of qi and can spend it to power her abilities.

- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point when taking the Attack action to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action.
- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action, doubling her jump distance for the turn.
- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point to attempt to stun a creature she hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of her next turn.

Stance of the Serpent. Kumiko gains advantage on Acrobatics checks as well as checks and saving throws to avoid the prone condition. Creatures are at disadvantage to resist Kumiko's attempts to grant them the prone condition.

Stillness of Mind. As an action, Kumiko can end one effect on herself that is causing her to be charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kumiko makes three unarmed strike attacks or one matchlock rifle attack and one fragmentation grenade attack.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) magical bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) psychic damage.

Fragmentation Grenade. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range (120/240), all targets in a 20-ft radius. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) piercing damage, DC 15 Dexterity save for half.

Matchlock Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range (100/400), one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

REACTION

Deflect Missile. Kumiko can spend her reaction to strike a missile when she is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When she does so, the damage she takes from the attack is reduced by 16 (1d10+2d6+4).



CLOCKWORK GUARDIAN

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6, Int +1

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +4

Damage Vulnerabilities lightning

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, radiant, thunder

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Soburi (cannot speak)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Overclock (Recharge 6). As an action, the Clockwork Guardian overclocks itself for 3 rounds. While overclocked, it increases all of its attributes by 4 and spends its bonus action each round making an additional attack or using the Dodge action. While overclocked the Clockwork Guardian gains advantage on attack rolls, a +3 bonus to damage, and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.

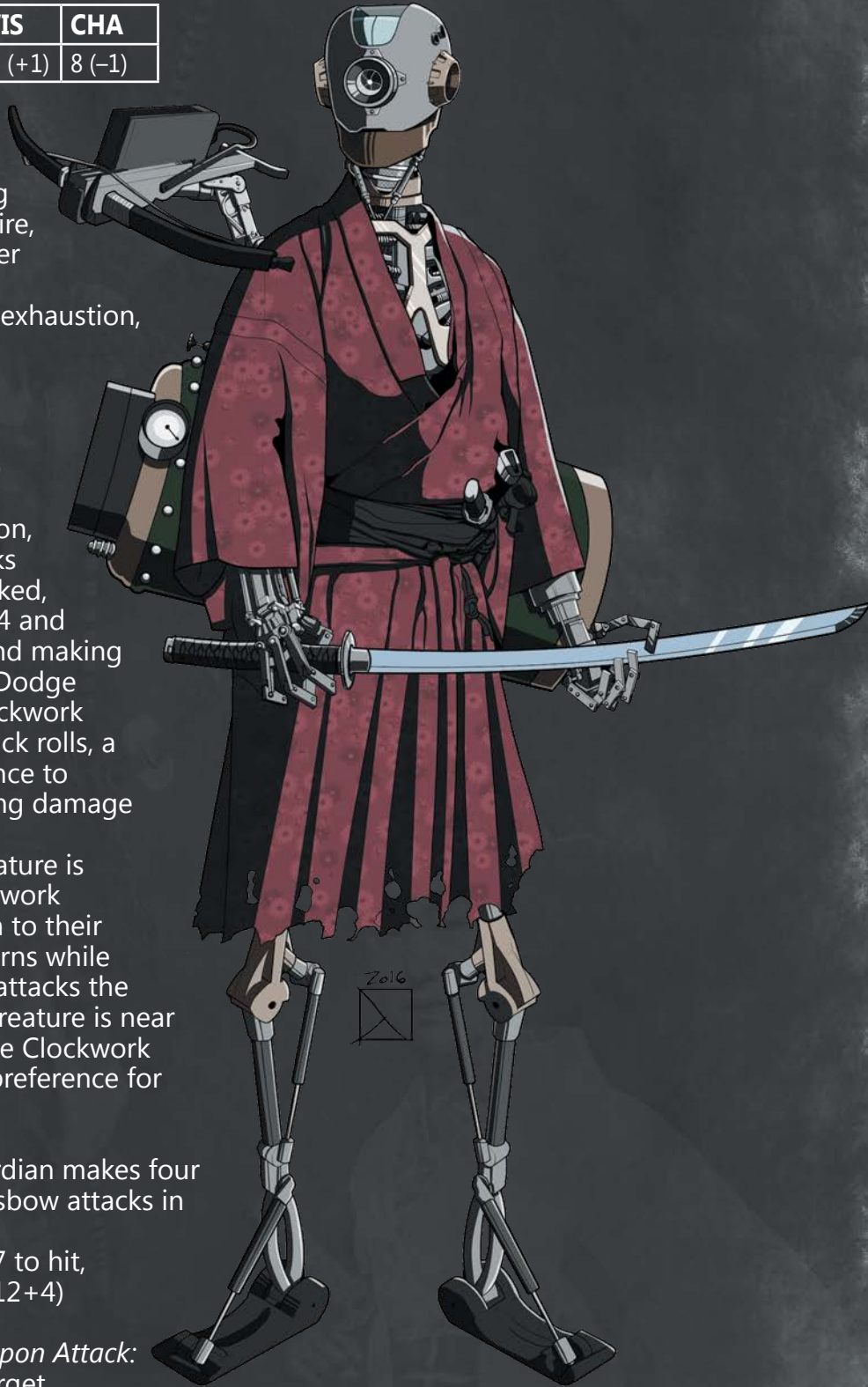
Roll 1d20 whenever this feature is activated. On a roll of 1, the Clockwork Guardian goes berserk in addition to their normal bonuses. On each of its turns while berserk, the Clockwork Guardian attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the Clockwork Guardian attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Clockwork Guardian makes four katana attacks and mounted crossbow attacks in any combination.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Mounted Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range (100/400), one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) piercing damage.



If the party manages to sneak past or quietly disable the clockwork guardians, a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals a sliver of light and the hint of a song echoing from a mostly intact cabin near the center of the town. Kumiko is inside trying to entertain the children with a play using clockwork toys that she made for Kaneda many years ago while they sit on the floor eating a simple but hearty bowl of stew. A **DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that she means the children no harm whatsoever.

Should the party make themselves known at this point, Kumiko interposes herself between the PCs and the children, attempting to stall until her guardians can engage and doing what she can to get the youths to safety. It takes the clockwork guardians a few rounds to travel to the hut from their hiding places but the adventurers can convince her of their good intentions in the interim by passing a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check**, depending upon their motives; if they have met Kaneda and mention his name, the PCs gain advantage on the check. On a success she refrains from signaling her clockwork guardians to attack, though she still needs far more convincing to trust the party completely.

If the party wounds or kills Kumiko the children she was protecting react with horror and confusion—if the PCs try to explain to them that she meant them harm, they deny that possibility outright. Should the adventurers race back to

Kizaki they may yet make it in time for the Festival of Falling Hawks; a gate guard quickly escorts them to Muraoka's villa, where Asai and his guards take the youths from them and furnish the party with payment. Asai tells the PCs and any of the parents that may respond to the adventurers' return that a priestess will check them for corruption before returning them to their families, but they are instead taken to a glade just outside of the city where Muraoka has a baku (page 40) waiting to deliver the children to his villa (a journey made much faster via flight than on foot). The party is then invited to partake in the celebrations, honored as heroes of Kizaki in an irony the vampire finds deeply satisfying.

If Sanjuro is still present and the hour of his opening speech at the celebration hasn't arrived, he drunkenly asks the PCs to accompany him after the children have been transported away. News of their success spreads quickly and the adventurers are introduced as heroes, though the citizens and officials to which he makes them known are quite put off by the administrator's obvious intoxication. When he finally gives his speech, Sanjuro talks about the great cost of their prosperity, a cost that was paid in blood by the innocent—tears form in his eyes and he finishes by thanking the heroes of the night and his father, who made the city's salvation possible.

MURAOKA'S VILLA

Muraoka Villa is four hours east of Kizaki in one of the few true forests remaining in the Gekido Prefecture. None of the foreigner's scientists ever figured out why so many soldiers died there and it remained relatively untouched throughout the Kengen Occupation thanks to the influence of the Pale Master. When the players depart Kizaki for Muraoka's Villa, read the following:

Leaving the city via the eastern gate and traveling for nearly an hour through the dwindling woods that surround Kizaki, you eventually find yourselves on an overgrown path that winds into the nearby mountains. It looks unused, except for a set of recent wagon tracks and the footprints of four heavily-burdened men. The only signs of habitation along the road are the husks of long abandoned homes or villages every few miles.

Eventually you come to a stone wall and through the trees beyond you see a cluster of dilapidated buildings. A three story manor house rises above both the trees and the other buildings around it. An eldritch light emanates from a window on its highest floor, sending a subconscious shiver of fear down your spine, and an ominous presence radiates from out of the shadowed woods on the other side of the gate leading inside.



While it was his home when he was a mortal aristocrat, Muraoka's Villa has gone uncared for decades and is little more than a dilapidated ruin. The wooded area between the outer wall and the actual villa itself is patrolled by adeddo-oni that he has bound to his will over time; the largest group is composed of 11 adeddo-hunchlings (page 37) and one adeddo-oni mage (page 38), who are currently waiting in the trees just inside of the gate. Short of invisibility, it is impossible for the party to sneak through the gate without attracting their attention and being attacked. The adventurers will fare better if they instead attempt to locate a damaged section of the wall, or simply scale it. Skirting the wall and making a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** identifies a part of the bulwark they can easily scale or pull down to get inside.

The buildings and the first floor of the manor are inhabited by the remnants of Muraoka's household, though like their master they are no longer human. Instead his sisters, wife, and trusted servants have spent the last century as Vampire Spawn; a total of six of the creatures haunt the ruins of their former home while stalking traders and nearby villages for sustenance. Thankfully the vampire spawn's greed for blood prevents them from alerting their brood mates when sighting the party, hoping to claim the feast for themselves. Consequently unless the PCs are particularly loud or draw the fight from its current location, the vampire spawn can be dispatched in small groups.

GROUND

In addition to the adeddo-oni guarding the gate, two vampire spawn (once Muraoka's servants) stalk the grounds, seeking anyone or anything who manages to slip by the guards.

STABLE

An adeddo-oni mage (page 38) waits here with two vampire spawn (one of Muraoka's sisters and his mother), casting sleep on the children that Muraoka is "protecting" and feasting on the flesh of their parents (brought along as the vampire promised). They have orders to keep the children alive if possible but these monsters are bloodthirsty—as soon as one of them is slain, the others turn to murder a captive in response.

MANOR HOUSE

The building that was once the summer home of Kiyoshi Muraoka is in disrepair, neglected for decades (possibly even centuries) and nearly as much a ruin as Doctor Fujioka's destroyed home. A pair of vampire spawn—which are recognized as Muraoka's siblings with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**—are picking apart the corpse of an unfortunate peasant in the foyer and slink away at the first signs of intrusion into the Manor House, knowing from experience that remaining hidden is the best way to lure prey into being vulnerably isolated before striking.

SERVANTS QUARTERS

Most of the Manor House has been stripped of valuables by daring thieves (many of which became food for the vampire spawn) but persistent adventurers that make a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check find some little wealth still secreted away on the second floor. These range from coins to jewelry and are worth 500 gold all told, though if anyone dons the items (including a ruby ring, a jade necklace, and an azure bracelet) Muraoka recognizes the bauble as something stolen from his mother and—affronted by the thievery—focuses his attacks on the wearer.

MURAOKA'S WORKSHOP

Upon the party ascending to the top floor of the Manor House, read the following:

The third floor was once a grand workshop, though it has fallen to the same disrepair as the floors below and is at least as gruesome. Tables strewn with outdated technology and grisly experiments lay beside the rotting remains of several corpses in different states of decay, almost all of them with faces twisted into rictuses of terrible pain.

Suddenly the nobleman from Kizaki, Kiyoshi Muraoka, appears from a stairway leading to the roof, almost as if he was there since the moment you arrived. He smiles, though now there is no warmth or pretense of humanity in it, his fangs visible and bloody. He descends slowly, each step deliberate and inhumanly graceful, as if he was floating—without saying a word or making a movement, a katana flowing with crimson red energy appears in one of his hands the instant before he dashes forward with a speed that defies sight!

CONFRONTING MURAOKA

Even without his minions Muraoka is a dangerous adversary—the Vampire was a highly skilled swordsman in life and has had more than a century to master his unnatural gifts. He wields a katana named Siphon that grants him a +1 bonus to attack and damage and allows him to apply the blood drain component of his bite attack to one melee attack per round. He can also use two legendary actions to attack with his blade rather than his bite.

Siphon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12+5) magical slashing damage if wielded two-handed.

Hazy shrouds summoned by the Pale Master hang above Muraoka's home, giving him little to fear from the sun even at the height of noon, and he fights with deadly cunning. The vampire focuses on lightly-armored spellcasters first, making full use of his abilities to turn or disable other threats. While he desires victory for his master, Muraoka values his own continued existence more and flees at the first credible sign that he is in true danger. When reduced to 0 hit points Muraoka retreats to his resting place, which is located behind a false wall in a partially collapsed corner of the basement that is nearly impossible to discover or access without magic.

VARIANT: A TOUGHER ENCOUNTER

Higher level parties will be on a more even ground when fighting Muraoka and to make for even footing, the top floors of the manor are more and more decayed.

Hidden Corpses. Muraoka sometimes puts the bodies of his victims in the rafters of his workshop, leaving their dessicated remains in precarious positions that are not at all sturdy.

Each turn when a PC takes the Attack or Dash action in a square no one has passed through, roll 1d6 and on a 1 a corpse falls, forcing the PC to make a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or gain the frightened condition for 1d4 rounds.

Rotted Floorboards. The manor's top floor is not in good repair and many of the wooden planks have decayed considerably, breaking apart under the weight of armored boots and the footwork of combat.

Whenever a PC enters a square no one has passed through, roll 1d6 and on a 2 or 3 the floorboard breaks apart, forcing the PC to make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or gain the restrained condition until they take a bonus action to remove their foot with a **DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**.

Unhallowed Ground. Muraoka has invested much of his dark power into his lair, infusing the top floor with unholy energy.

The entire area is within range of a permanent *hallow* spell (excluding undead) with either the darkness, energy vulnerability, extradimensional interference, fear, or silence extra effect.



AFTERMATH

One way or the other, the party's actions are sure to have affected Kizaki's future.

- If the children were recovered in time to be returned to Kizaki before the festival begins and are flown to Murakoa's villa, their souls are offered up to the true Pale Master, greatly increasing his ability to affect and influence the world around him, bringing him ever closer to his goal of regaining his corporeal form in order to reclaim his domain. He continues to honor his agreement and keeps Kizaki safe but only does so because it serves his ends.
- If the chosen children (Seiji Kagawa, Keiko Moto, and Tadao Otoro, hidden in Owa Village) are not rescued before Muraoka departs to conduct the ritual he instead uses those under his protection in their stead (Etsuko Gensai, Takuma Mazawa, Yuzuki Tabuchi). While the sacrifice still serves to feed the Pale Master an incomplete offering is not enough to dramatically increase his power, though it helps to ensure his eventual return. Kumiko's death goes largely unnoticed if she is slain and Kaneda swears vengeance upon those responsible, pursuing it with a fervor that made his single-minded devotion to the Crimson Vigil's mandate seem diffident by comparison (creating an enemy that could bedevil the party throughout the campaign). His augmentations make him a dangerous physical combatant and he took naturally to Kumiko's lessons—and obviously he can exhibit great patience, perhaps his deadliest skill. Muraoka offers the adventurers half the promised amount, citing that their lateness could well have cost the city dearly; a **DC 20 Insight (Wisdom) check** reveals that in truth he is completely unconcerned, though whatever suspicions are raised among the PCs come too late to be meaningfully acted upon.
- If the party uncovers the truth and acts against Muraoka they may have saved the lives of the children and staved off the Pale Master's return—though not without cost. Ichizo Ando was vengeful and monstrous in life and his undeath has only heightened these qualities; he uses his influence to once again bring war to Kizaki, hoping to force the city's rulers to capitulate to his will and help him in his quest for immortality. Administrator Sanjuro offers half the gold promised by Muraoka, promising that the rest will go to the defense of Kizaki (something he fears will be all too necessary without the protection offered by the city's despicable ally).

PLANS OF THE PALE MASTER

GMs are encouraged to sprout their own foul workings for the Pale Master to pursue after the events of this adventure but here are a few suggestions for what the ancient necromancer might do next.

If the chosen children were sacrificed according to the Pale Master's ritual:

Kizaki is protected but none of the lands or settlements nearby are so lucky. Adeddo-oni and far worse (any oni from Chapter 9) assail the countryside, sowing chaos and horror all over the Gekido and Hakaisuru prefectures to keep attentions focused away from the Crimson Keep.

If the chosen children were saved and the other trio were sacrificed to the Pale Master:

The Pale Master grows slightly in power and takes out his ire on the party, sending kuchisake-onna (page 45) and rokurokubi (*Mists of Akuma* core book) assassins to capture them, working out a means to rip the PCs' souls from the aether.

If none of the children are saved and they are all sacrificed to the Pale Master:

With his plans working perfectly Kizaki is saved, but now that the Pale Master is restored to his full power he acts quietly and with great subtlety, hatching horrors in the Crimson Keep that will soon enough threaten all of Soburin. The regions around the Crimson Keep experience a long period of peace as the Mists of Akuma seem to recede, but this is only a facade and the horrors that the ancient necromancer finally unleashes consolidate the area as the first part of the dark, warped kingdom that emerges.

If all of the children were saved from the dark ritual of the Pale Master:

No words can describe the incredible rage of the Pale Master and he makes killing the PCs the chief concern of Muraoka. The vampire and his spawn stalk the party wherever they go, striking when they are most vulnerable and dragging them—one by one, alive—back to the Crimson Keep.

THE MISTS OF AKUMA

While each prefecture of the realm is unique from each other some dangers plague all of Soburin. Chaotic oni, Imperial Dragons, and rogue Kengen generals each pose a great threat to the clans but nothing menaces the continent like the Mists of Akuma. The corrupting fog is remembered through whispered myths from the ancient past (before even the Ichizoku Wars) and it has returned once more to terrify the populace, sowing chaos across the land. Since their reappearance demons and oni have been growing more common, but worse than that is what happens to men or beasts who find themselves exposed to the cursed haze for too long—changing into horrific monsters intent only on bloodlust and violence.

Exposure to the Mists of Akuma twists all it touches even before wholesale transformation, leading to a special condition called misted. A creature inside a square occupied by the Mists of Akuma makes a Dignity saving throw (DC 8 + 1 per previous save in the last minute) at the end of each minute or accrues 1 point of Haitoku. This does not reduce a character's Dignity score and can increase a creature's Haitoku above 20.

NEW CONDITION: HATED

You are at disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but you cannot suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

NEW CONDITION: MISTED

Misted is measured in eight levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of misted, as specified in the effect's description. Creatures always have a minimum number of levels of misted condition equal to their Haitoku modifier. Kami, oni, and tsukumogami are immune to the misted condition.

Table: Misted Effects

Level	Effect
1	Mild auditory effect
2	Mild visual effect
3	Speed +10 feet during combat; Disadvantage on Dignity ability checks
4	Severe auditory effect
5	Severe visual effect
6	Visible physical mutation, providing +1 to two attributes, -1 to one attribute; Disadvantage on Dignity saving throws and you gain the hated condition
7	Ignore the first 3 points of damage from each attack or spell
8	Death and transformation into adeddo-oni (page 37)

Auditory and visual effects are not perpetual but they are frequent and obvious when they occur. Some example effects are:

Mild Auditory Effect. A disembodied voice repeats everything you say in a barely audible whisper.

Mild Visual Effect. Your hands and feet smolder with red energy during your katas, in battle or out.

Severe Auditory Effect. Whenever you draw your weapon a clap of thunder echoes around you.

Severe Visual Effect. Whenever your ire is raised (even slightly), your image stretches and distorts to make you appear look much larger and more demonic than you are.



CULTURE

Despite the decay of the world around them—or perhaps because of it—the citizens of Soburin strongly adhere to ancient traditions of etiquette and respect. An inappropriately timed offer, insulting gift, or brazen word can be as dangerous to one's well being as any crime, making those capable of navigating the intrigue of a noble's court as in demand as talented swordsmen (if not more).

General Etiquette. Punctuality is of the utmost importance. When presenting or receiving items, one does so with both hands (provided that they have two hands). Open displays of affection between amours are regarded very poorly.

Greetings. It is extremely impolite not to greet someone before beginning conversation, formally bowing and wishing the person to have a good day. When greeting a group only one bow is necessary but one should always address the oldest or most important person first.

NEW SKILL: CULTURE

The Culture skill is typically used with Dignity ability checks for knowledge of how to act during many social situations. Any character can take proficiency in the Culture skill instead of any one skill they would have gained through a background or class.

Being a Guest. When entering a dwelling one ties off their weapon inside its sheath and removes their shoes, armor, or winter clothing before passing through the doorway inside. When leaving a domicile, a guest dons their armor or winter clothing outside of the building. When hosting someone (regardless of who or why) it is rude not to offer drink, food, or similar, and when imbibing alcohol or using black smoke inside someone's residence, doing so without sharing or explicit permission is the height of rudeness. It is phenomenally impolite to invite oneself into someone else's home or outing.

NEW ATTRIBUTES: DIGNITY AND HAITOKU

In the lands of Soburin few people are truly honorable—most of those who claim to be hide their duplicitous ways behind hearsay, rumor, and the appearance of nobility. When playing in a game set in Mists of Akuma, two new ability scores come into play that are emblematic of the struggle against the overwhelming nature of the world that grinds down all the living souls within it: Dignity and Haitoku. These abilities function just like any other ability score, with the exceptions detailed below.

Characters begin with a Dignity score of 10 and Haitoku score of 10. Some backgrounds may decrease or increase a character's Dignity and Haitoku, and at the GM's discretion a PC may choose to have a starting Haitoku score of up to 15. Unlike normal, these attributes are not limited to a score between 1 and 20, and are directly related to one another. After character creation most increases to Dignity reduce a character's Haitoku by the same amount, and most increases to Haitoku reduce a character's Dignity by the same amount (though the GM is not bound to this rule and may increase either attribute as they see fit). A character with a feat that has Dignity or Haitoku as a prerequisite does not lose the feat even if their attribute drops below the prerequisite.

When a Dignity or Haitoku check or saving throw is needed for a monster that does not have these attributes, substitute Charisma for Dignity and Wisdom for Haitoku.

DIGNITY

Dignity isn't an actual measure of a character's devotion to a set of principles or how virtuous they might be—it is an indicator of how well they carry their dutiful nature (if they have one) and how honorable others perceive them to be. The reputation of a character with a high Dignity carries weight and garners them recognition, both generally and with bengoshi or among other characters with high Dignity.

Dignity can be raised through normal ability score increases without lowering a character's Haitoku (and when increased this way, gains double the normal bonus). Otherwise, the GM can choose to increase Dignity (lowering Haitoku) based on how a character acts (although they are not required to do so every time Dignity increases). At the end of a gaming session if a character was seen defending the law, protecting against wanton malice, or has otherwise distinguished themselves (such as finishing a mission for a bengoshi), the GM can increase the character's Dignity (assuming of course that at least one witness survived to spread the word).

Dignity Checks. Dignity checks can be used much like Charisma, when how honorable a character is plays an impact on a social situation.

The GM might also call for a Dignity check in the following instances:

- A character is unsure on how to act honorably and must respond quickly.
- A character is surrendering but attempting to retain the respect of their allies and enemies.
- A character wants to know another character's Dignity score (DC 10 – character's Dignity modifier).
- A character wishes to utilize the appropriate etiquette in a social situation that is complex or tense.
- A character wants to influence another character through their social standing.
- A character wants to acquire travel papers from a torii gate when they would not normally be able to.

Dignity Saving Throws. Dignity saving throws are used against Haitoku-driven abilities and when a character is attempting not to dishonor themselves. The GM might also call for a Dignity saving throw in the following instances:

- A character is about to breach etiquette.
- A character replies to an enemy's insults or provocations in turn, dishonoring themselves.
- A character is about to be fooled by an enemy's ploy to breach their honor.

HAITOKU

Haitoku means “fall from virtue” and represents a character’s gradual embrace of the dark methods, immoral ethics, and fel powers that have encroached upon and consumed Soburin (and everyone within). Characters with a high Haitoku score do whatever is necessary to achieve their goals—endangering children and the infirm, sacrificing the lives of others, committing a settlement to bloody reprisal from a rival town, or even dooming a region by disrupting a powerful relic for their own gain—and it taints their soul. This severe disposition can be recognized by others who share a willingness to be cutthroat, and some truly embody their depravity to unlock powerful abilities beyond the ken of mortal men.

Haitoku can be raised through normal ability score increases without lowering a character’s Dignity (and when increased this way, gains double the normal bonus). Otherwise the GM can choose to increase Haitoku (lowering Dignity) based on how a character acts (although they are not required to do so every time Haitoku increases). At the end of a gaming session if a character was seen breaking the law, engaging in wanton violence, or has otherwise committed an immoral act, the GM can increase the character’s Haitoku.

Finally, a character always has a number of levels of the misted condition (page 32) equal to their Haitoku modifier.

Haitoku Checks. Haitoku checks can be used much like Wisdom, when how despicable a character is plays an impact on a social situation. Generally if the Intimidate skill is applicable, Haitoku may be used with it.

The GM might also call for a Haitoku check in the following instances:

- A character is unsure of whether they are going to endanger others with their direct actions.
- A character wants to know another character’s Haitoku score (DC 20 – character’s Haitoku modifier).
- A character wishes to unlock the secrets of a powerful item, activating it with the implacable and unending perseverance of their spirit.
- A character wants to influence another character by revealing how depraved they are willing to be and that no consequence or measure can stop them.

Haitoku Saving Throws. Haitoku saving throws are used against Dignity-driven abilities or when a character pushes their body and mind beyond their limitations.

The GM might also call for a Haitoku saving throw in the following instances:



- A character can resist death by dipping into their deepest reserves of unyielding resolve. As a reaction, a character can attempt a Haitoku saving throw (DC equal to the damage from the last attack). On a successful save, the character regains 1 hit point and a level of the exhausted condition. They may activate this ability even while unconscious (and before they make a Death Save). A character may resist death a number of times equal to their Haitoku modifier (minimum 1). Uses of this ability recharge after a long rest and when they do the character gains a point of Haitoku.
- A character encounters a truly unnatural horror that would shatter the mind of a less resolute being. When an effect would cause insanity (such as the symbol spell or to resist madness) a character may make a Haitoku saving throw in place of a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw. They may make this Haitoku saving throw with advantage by gaining a level of the exhausted condition.
- A character breathes the Mists of Akuma.



ONI & OTHER NPCs

Kami are mystical spirits. Their forms, motivations, and purposes are wide and varied, but many are empowered by shared belief and ancient magic. Some are tied to sites of power or embody objects to manifest themselves, but there is no rule or reason binding them all save for a deep reverence for tradition.

Oni are demon-like monsters begat from a vast variety of evil means and they have become frighteningly frequent after the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma. While they are all magical in a sense, some have obvious powers while others are little more than physically superior killing machines.

Tsukumogami are items that have awakened, becoming living creatures fueled by magic. They have powers that defy explanation, drawn from the nature of their construction and how they were treated for their century of existence before manifesting sentience.

ADEDDO-ONI

The Mists of Akuma change people (page 32), transforming them into abominations with malevolent dead hearts that beat with a thirst for blood. Some scholars believe that the jabbering of adeddo-oni is more than the nonsensical chatter it sounds like and that despite their apparent mindlessness, the undead possess some level of intelligence. Military commanders agree with this assessment, convinced that the preternatural battlefield acumen shown by hordes of the creatures is a sign of a commanding presence among the adeddo-oni (and ancient legends tell of truly brilliant specimens though these have not been seen for centuries).

ADEDDO-ONI TEMPLATE

Giants, monstrosities, and any creature type other than beast or undead can become adeddo-oni. An adeddo-oni keeps its statistics, except as follows.

Alignment. Adeddo-oni are chaotic evil.

Type. The adeddo-oni's type changes to undead (oni).

Armor Class. Adeddo-oni gain a natural armor of 2.

Speed. Adeddo-oni increase all of their movement speeds by 30 feet and quadruple all jump distances.

Intelligence. Almost all adeddo-oni lose most of their memories and sense of self. An adeddo-oni's Intelligence score changes to 4 and it gains proficiency in Intelligence saving throws.

Resistances. Adeddo-oni gain resistance to cold damage.

Damage Immunities. Adeddo-oni gain immunity to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage.

Condition Immunities. Adeddo-oni gain immunity to the charmed, exhaustion, frightened, and poisoned conditions.

Vulnerabilities. Adeddo-oni are vulnerable to radiant damage and while in sunlight they are at disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.

Senses. Adeddo-oni gain darkvision 120 ft. and can see through mists and fog without difficulty.

Languages. Adeddo-oni speak and understand Adeddo (a simple and instinctual language).

Magical Attacks. Adeddo-oni weapon attacks are magical and they gain a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls and melee damage rolls made with natural weapons and unarmed strikes.

Regeneration. Adeddo-oni regain a number of hit points at the start of their turn equal to their CR if they have at least 1 hit point and are not in sunlight.

Challenge Rating. Adeddo-oni increase their CR by 2 (if necessary, recalculate proficiency bonus).

ADEDDO-ONI HUNCHLING

Small undead (oni), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Int -1

Skills Stealth +6

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9 (sees through fog or mist)

Languages Adeddo

Challenge 2 (450+50 XP)

Nimble Escape. The adeddo-oni hunchling can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Regeneration. The adeddo-oni hunchling regains 2 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

ACTIONS

Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 3 (1d6) magical bludgeoning damage.



ADEDDO-ONI NINJA

Medium undead (oni), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (leather, natural)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 60 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int -1

Skills Deception +5, Perception +6, Stealth +4

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16 (sees through fog or mist)

Languages Adeddo

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the adeddo-oni ninja can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide actions as a bonus action.

Regeneration. The adeddo-oni ninja regains 3 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The adeddo-oni ninja deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the adeddo-oni ninja that isn't incapacitated and the adeddo-oni ninja doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Ninja-To. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6+3) magical slashing damage.

ADEDDO-ONI SAMURAI

Medium undead (oni), chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor, o-yoroi)

Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)

Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +0

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10 (sees through fog or mist)

Languages Adeddo

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. The adeddo-oni samurai regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The adeddo-oni samurai makes two melee attacks.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) magical slashing damage if wielded in two hands, 7 (1d8+3) magical slashing damage if wielded in one hand.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range (100/400), one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) magical piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The adeddo-oni samurai adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the adeddo-oni samurai must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

ADEDDO-ONI MAGE

Medium undead (oni), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 60 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +0, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +0, History +0

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11 (sees through fog or mist)

Languages Adeddo

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Regeneration. The adeddo-oni mage regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

Spellcasting. The adeddo-oni mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The adeddo-oni mage has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips: *fire bolt, frostbite, mage hand, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*

5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*

ACTIONS

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

Adeddo-oni samurai and adeddo-oni mages are the lackeys of potent and powerful necromancers or other workers of dark magic. When placed under the control of one of these masterful spellcasters, the creatures can develop a simple intellect that make them far better servants. They have been known to set up ambushes, trap unsuspecting adventurers, kidnap specific individuals, and even help prepare fel rituals that are far more complicated than they should be able to comprehend.



MEKKUSENSHI

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Int +3

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +5

Damage Vulnerabilities acid, lightning

Damage Resistances cold, fire, poison

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Soburi

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Augmented Leap. The Mekkusenshi can vertically jump 20 feet or horizontally jump 45 feet without the need for an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mekkusenshi make a sword arm attack and gun arm attack.

Sword Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:*

+8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 14 (2d8+5) slashing damage.

Gun Arm. *Ranged Weapon Attack:*

+5 to hit, range (50/200), one target.

Hit: 11 (2d8+2) piercing damage.

These mechanical warriors were aspirants to the Imperial Guard that foolishly thought themselves above their peers and dared to ascend Surēta Tower rather than show humility.



BAKU

Large giant (oni), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10+27)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +8, Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Giant, Soburi

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Dreamtalker. The baku gains double its proficiency bonus to Deception.

Innate Spellcasting. The baku's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). The baku oni can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *darkness*, *hellish rebuke* (as a 2nd-level spell)

1/day each: *detect thoughts*, *fear*, *hold person*

Magic Weapons. The baku's weapon attacks are magical.

Nightmare Strike. Baku can pull a bit of a victim's nightmare from their subconscious mind and attack them with it. As a bonus action the baku can target a single enemy within 60 ft. that they can see. If the target fails a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, the baku summons a figment of their nightmares that lasts for a minute. As a bonus action, the baku can then direct the nightmare to assault the victim, dealing 7 (1d8+3) points of psychic damage.

Regeneration. The baku regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The baku makes two bite or claw attacks in any combination.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) magical slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) magical piercing damage.

Like many of the oni that roam the burned-out ruins, desolate mountain peaks, and other sinister summits of Soburin, the baku are fearsome foes who easily dominate many of the lesser creatures they encounter (forcing some to servitude while aligning with entities too powerful to control). Wicked to the core the oni are infamous things of terror that most mortals dread, but they are more than just that—they are creatures that quite literally create nightmares.

Eater of Nightmares

While all oni are terrible to some degree baku are worse than most. Cannibals that prize sentient flesh of all kinds, baku crave the meat of those who died drenched in their own fear. This trait puzzles many of Soburin's great sages but some have suggested that they share a special connection with the Mists of Akuma that pains them, a hunger that only supping on the terror-fueled nightmares of their meals ever truly eases.

Nightmare Caller

While baku share many traits with other oni they display a special connection to the psychic realm of dreams—a place they feed upon and, when feeling exceptionally predatory, open up to mortals they are actively hunting. While the monsters operate on the prime Material Plane most of the time, feeding on dreams and nightmares of the sleeping, they can snatch nightmares from the realms hidden within. With these in hand baku can shape fragments of a creature's subconscious into weapons of devastating power, turning them against those who dare to oppose the oni.



GAKI

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4, Wis +5

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

Damage Vulnerabilities cold, fire

Damage Resistances psychic

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Soburi

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aversion to Sun and Moon. A gaki takes 1d4 fire damage every round it is exposed to the light of a full moon. It takes 1d4 cold damage every round it is exposed to direct sunlight.

Compulsive Hunger. Though it does not need to eat, a gaki is consumed with an endless hunger and believes that it might return to its mortal form or achieve peace should it consume the right combination of drink, food, and flesh. A gaki that finds a corpse or is offered flowers, food, holy water, or wine must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or spend the next turn trying to consume it. The gaki's narrow neck prevents it from swallowing more than a tiny amount and it gives up after 1 round of attempting to do so. A gaki that consumes holy water in this way is not harmed by it.

Spellcasting. Gaki are 6th-level spellcasters that use Charisma as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). Gaki have the following spells prepared from the wizard's spell list and are able to cast them without the need for any components:

Cantrip: *minor illusion*

1st level (5 slots): *disguise self*

2nd level (5 slots): *invisibility*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gaki uses its frightful presence then makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage. A living creature that takes 10 or more damage takes an additional 3 points of damage at the end of each of its turns. This bleeding damage continues until the living creature receives a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check as an action or otherwise recovers hit points.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the gaki's choice that is within 60 ft. and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the gaki's frightful presence for the next 24 hours.

Greedy and avaricious souls that fail to find peace in the afterlife never truly leave Soburin, their spirits instead transforming into insatiable oni. Unsurprisingly gaki are one of the most common types of monsters to prey on the prefectures, wandering throughout ruins and the wilderness in a constant search to sate their unending appetite. Though they can be cunning predators gaki are not able to think much further than their next meal, eating as much as possible (engorging their elongated necks) before relenting. These oni are often found in the company of gashadokuro finding comfort in the collective hunger embodying the massive skeletons, and when gathered in concert gaki can be surprisingly clever about organizing a meal that will assuage the appetite of themselves and their larger ally.



HARIONAGO

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 94 (13d8+36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +6

Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances necrotic, piercing

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Soburi

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Graceful Attack. A harionago uses Dexterity for attack and damage rolls with its barbed hair and vicious claw attacks.

Renewed Vengeance. If the harionago is destroyed, roll a d20. On a 19 or 20 the harionago regains all of its hit points a week later and resumes hunting those who wronged it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The harionago makes three barbed hair or vicious claw attacks in any combination.

Barbed Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Vicious Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7, one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Mocking Laughter. A harionago can laugh scornfully in a 30-foot cone. Creatures within the cone must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or break into laughter as well. Creatures who fail the save are at disadvantage against all of the harionago's attacks as it becomes infuriated and mercilessly assaults them. A creature that makes the save cannot be affected by the same harionago's mocking laughter for 24 hours.

When an innocent young lover is tragically murdered—especially by their beloved—the harionago is the horrific result. Twisted by the injustice of their death these oni wander the countryside looking for revenge, driven by a rage so strong that even if destroyed they can rise again, never to rest until their murderer is dead. A harionago's taste for violence is not limited, however; when they encounter any who they feel resembles their former lover (and the likeness need not be strong) they attack with extreme prejudice, cackling eerily all the while.



HEBIKONTORŌRA

Medium monstrosity (oni), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d8+32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +5

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

Damage Vulnerabilities cold

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Aklo, Soburi

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Armed Serpent. As a bonus action, the hebikontorōra can transform its arms into serpents or back.

Change Shape. As an action, the hebikontorōra polymorphs into a humanoid that has a challenge rating no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the hebikontorōra's choice). In a new form, the hebikontorōra retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Enchanting Gaze. As a bonus action, the hebikontorōra can gaze at a creature it can see within 100 feet. The target makes a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or gains the charmed condition for 3 rounds. At the end of each of its turns, the charmed creature can make a saving throw to remove the condition. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by the hebikontorōra for 24 hours.

Poison Sense. The hebikontorōra is always under the effects of a detect poison and disease spell, save that it only detects poison and only in objects or creatures the hebikontorōra can see.

Snakespeaker (1/Day). Hebikontorōra are always accompanied by serpents. By spending a bonus action calling them with its mind, the hebikontorōra may summon 2d6 Poisonous Snakes or 1d4 Giant Poisonous Snakes that appear within 50 feet at the end of the round.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hebikontorōra makes two unarmed strike and snake arm attacks in any combination.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Snake Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8+2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage. Creatures that take this poison damage make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain the poisoned condition until the poison damage is healed.

Hebikontorōra were once only a threat in the jungles and forests of the southern prefectures but after the Kengen Occupation the cold-blooded predators have been seen as far north as Kirai. Able to seamlessly blend in with society, these oni use their natural beauty, cunning, and mystical powers to work themselves into positions of power (even swaying the minds of clan lords). None are certain how these horrors originate but there are countless legends—some say that the corpses of forlorn lovers that take their own lives shed their skin to become hebikontorōra, or that they are what becomes of reptiles that die in the Mists of Akuma. Where they come from is usually of little consequence however as they slaughter whomever suspects them of duplicity before their true nature can be revealed, fleeing to a new settlement to wreak havoc once more.



JINMENJU

Huge plant (oni), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 184 (16d12+80)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	8 (1)	20 (+5)	7 (2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +9, Dex +3, Int +2

Skills Perception +10

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Soburi

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Enticing Head-Fruits. Any creature that begins its turn within 5 feet of a jinmenju must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to immediately grab a head-fruit and eat it as an action. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that jinmenju's enticing head-fruits for 24 hours. Any creature that takes a bite out of a head-fruit suffers from both the poisoned condition and the effects of the confusion spell for four rounds.

Intoxicating Stench (1/Day). As a bonus action, a jinmenju can cause its fruits to emit an unnaturally sweet aroma in a 60-foot radius that lasts for 4 rounds. All creatures within the affected area must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw each round or be captivated. A captivated creature takes no actions except to approach the jinmenju via the most direct route possible. At the end of the creature's turn, if this path leads it into a dangerous area or if the jinmenju attacks it, the captivated creature may immediately make a new saving throw.

Unsettling Drone. A jinmenju emits a low, persistent hum that unnerves living creatures that hear it. Those within 30 feet must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until they leave the affected area and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that jinmenju's unsettling drone for 24 hours.

Spellcasting. Jinmenju are 10th-level spellcasters that use Charisma as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Jinmenju have the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list and are able to cast them without the need for any components:

Cantrips: *minor illusion* (sound only)

2nd level (5 slots): *shatter*

5th level (5 slots): *modify memory*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jinmenju makes one bite and two slam attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10+7) bludgeoning damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8+7) bludgeoning damage.

These strange plants grow in the wildernesses of Soburin, preying on unwary travelers far from civilization. Jinmenju are not often identified from a safe distance and are smart enough to hide themselves in places where victims are certain to get within range of their abilities, making them one of the continent's greatest dangers.



While they are occasionally mistaken for ghosts or oni, kami are instead the spirits of the world itself. Once rare and quiet beings, the disruptions in Soburin have made more of them active. This has had varying effects on the people of the prefectures as most kami are neither good nor evil, they simply protect nature and adapt to its changes. Kami are not always without an obvious source—the spirits of great heroes and leaders who were venerated after death can also become kami (page 47). Unlike their nature-based kin, they are more likely to take an interest in current events and the fate of their descendants. Though an exceptionally rare occurrence kami have bonded with mortals or occasionally a member of their bloodline, lending powers in exchange for advancing their goals.

Types of Kami. Kami vary greatly in terms of size and appearance though the more powerful are notably less mobile. The spirit of a pond or a single tree is likely to be small and of modest power, while the kami of an ancient grove or a revered mountain can be a creature of titanic stature and strength. The Mists of Akuma have had unpredictable effects however and kami of all sizes and strengths are being corrupted or driven mad by the supernatural fog's foul influence.

KUCHISAKE-ONNA

Medium monstrosity (oni), neutral evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 70 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +3, Cha +4

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +5, Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances cold, lightning

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Aklo, Soburi, Undercommon

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Disfiguring. A creature that takes 20 damage or more from a kuchisake-onna's scissors becomes disfigured, its mouth ripping open at the sides. A disfigured creature gains the hated condition until it receives a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check or magical healing. Any additional Medicine checks after the first are made at disadvantage. If the creature does not receive healing within 2 hours of being disfigured, the damage becomes permanent. A creature that dies while disfigured rises as a kuchisake-onna.

Eviscerate (1/Combat). The kuchisake-onna spends its bonus action asking a creature "Am I pretty?" or "Am I handsome?" A creature that responds with any variation of "no" takes 5d6 extra damage from the kuchisake-onna's scissors for two rounds. A creature that responds, "Do you think I am pretty?" or "Do you think I am handsome?" grants the kuchisake-onna the stunned condition for 2 rounds.

Unerring Tracker. After wounding a creature, the kuchisake-onna is unerringly able to track it so long as it remains on the same plane of existence.

ACTIONS

Scissors. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage or 12 (3d6+2) slashing damage.

Kuchisake-onna are emblematic of the violence that dominates Soburin, ruthlessly attacking those which displease them and creating more of themselves with every surviving victim. Notorious saboteurs that frequently join the service of oni warlords, they sneak through city streets sowing terror among the populace, inspiring paranoia in entire settlements or even prefectures. Creatures permanently disfigured by one of these feared oni gradually grow to be more ruthless, savage, and bloodthirsty, taking great offense at the smallest slights and aggressively responding to anyone that brings to light their gruesome mutilation.



ONRYŌ

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +2, Wis +4

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Soburi

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

VARIANT: GREATER ONRYŌ (CR +1)

Onryō with the capacity for causing natural disasters are much like their less powerful counterparts but are able to wield the elements through great concentration, effort, and spite. By undertaking an hour long ritual (requiring blood sacrifices in specific patterns around their target, usually a week long process), a greater onryō can unleash the effects of one of the following spells on one location it can see as it conducts the ritual: control weather, earthquake, meteor swarm, storm of vengeance. The duration of these spells does not change.

In addition, the greater onryō's AC increases by 1, it has twice as many hit points, and it gains a +1 magical bonus to attack and damage with its quasi-ethereal touch.

Incorporeal Movement. The onryō can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Persistent Hunter. The onryō has advantage and a +10 bonus to Wisdom (Survival) checks to track creatures they believed wronged them in life. If one of these creatures is dead, the onryō instead transfers its attentions to that creature's descendants.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The onryō makes two quasi-ethereal touch attacks.

Quasi-Ethereal Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

When a person dies feeling wronged—such as from a spouse's infidelity or the disinheritance of a relative—their bodies may rise up to correct the injustice done to them. This vengeance rarely limits itself to the actual perpetrator and the onryō often continues lashing out at any unlucky enough to be in its path. Usually these assaults are as simple as a physical attack but since the Mists of Akuma reappeared there have been rumors of stronger onryō, beings capable of great disasters such as famine, plague, and earthquakes.



PAPER KAMI

Large monstrosity (kami), neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 90 (12d10+24)

Speed 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (float)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	22 (+6)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +4, Cha +3

Skills Arcane +4, Insight +6,

Nature +4, Perception +6

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances cold, force, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities

exhaustion, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Draconic, Soburi

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Folding Form. The paper kami is able to assume the physical shape of any creature by spending a bonus action (though its coloration and accoutrements do not change). Each time it changes form the paper kami chooses a type of weapon damage (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing). The type of damage its weapon attacks deal changes to the chosen type and the paper kami gains resistance to that type of weapon damage. The paper kami may also become two dimensional, able to push itself under doorways and through keyholes.

Magic Weapons. The paper kami's weapon attacks are magical.

Regeneration. The paper kami regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The paper kami makes three paper strike attacks.

Paper Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) force damage.

Paper kami are spirits summoned to protect knowledge, souls of long dead scholars conjured by powerful mages to guard repositories of scrolls or legendary books filled with forbidden secrets. They are ageless creatures and wisened by time, and though they are swift and pliable their magic

VARIANT: ANCESTRAL KAMI (CR +1)

Though not as frequent as nature kami or bound spirits, the souls of the dead in Soburin can sometimes manifest as powerful otherworldly beings that are as strong as or stronger than their common counterparts.

Ancestral Kami lose the folding form ability and paper strike attacks, and they are Medium size (this does not change their hit points), but they gain the following abilities:

Ancient Knowledge (1/Day). An Ancestral Kami can attempt a DC 10 Intelligence check as an action to know an obscure piece of myth or lore, or spend one minute concentrating to attempt a DC 15 Intelligence check to learn a secret piece of information.

Etherealness. As a bonus action the Ancestral Kami enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Incorporeal Movement. The Ancestral Kami can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Multiattack. The Ancestral Kami makes three withering touch attacks.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 27 (7d6+3) psychic damage.

gives them immense strength. While many think them evil they are not actually malevolent, only haughty, prideful (often choosing to appear as lions or even dragons), and overly protective of their treasures—once provoked, a paper kami will go to the edge of the world to take vengeance.



CHŌCHIN-OBAKE SWARM

Large swarm of Small monstrosities (tsukumogami), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10+20)

Speed fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +3

Skills Perception +6

Damage Vulnerabilities acid, thunder

Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Soburi

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Conflagration. Creatures or objects occupying the same space as the chōchin-obake swarm take 11 (2d6+4) fire damage at the end of the chōchin-obake swarm's turn.

Float on the Wind.

Melee attacks against the chōchin-obake swarm are at disadvantage and the chōchin-obake does not suffer disadvantage when making ranged attacks while within an opponent's reach.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Small creature. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chōchin-obake swarm makes five fiery spitting attacks.

Fiery Spitting. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range (30/100), one target.

Hit: 7 (1d6+4) fire damage.

Historically the most common type of tsukumogami created by Soburin's peoples are chōchin-obake, paper lanterns cast away from settlements in Loi Krathong rituals. These elaborate festivals culminate with the release of many lanterns into the air and out to sea in an attempt to appease the entire spirit world with a legion of united gestures. While most meet their end in the ocean's waters some awaken and return, haunting souls for reasons known only to the mysterious tsukumogami.



YAGUAI

Large monstrosity (oni), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10+60)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +8

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +6

Damage Resistances poison

Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The yaoguai has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. The yaoguai has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mystical Hide. The yaoguai's thick hide allows it to ignore the first 5 points of damage from an attack, environmental effect, or spell. In addition, there is a 50% chance that a critical hit against a yaoguai becomes a regular hit.

Regeneration. The yaoguai regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the yaoguai is the target of a spell with a polymorph effect or takes fire, necrotic, or psychic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the yaoguai's next turn. The yaoguai dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Totsuzenheni. It is said that no two yaoguai are the same and that each carries a special talent all its own. The yaoguai gains one of the following traits:

- **Charge.** If the yaoguai moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- **Flight.** The yaoguai gains a fly speed of 20 feet and its Dexterity score increases by 2.
- **Horned.** The yaoguai receives an additional melee weapon attack each turn for its horns.
- **Horns.** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., 11 (2d4+6) bludgeoning damage and DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- **Poison.** The yaoguai's melee attacks deal an extra 7 (2d6) poison damage. On a critical hit, creatures make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain the poisoned condition for 3 rounds.
- **Rake.** The yaoguai deals an extra 11 (2d10) slashing damage against a creature it hits with more than one melee attack in a single turn.
- **Unnatural Senses.** The yaoguai gains blindsight 20 feet.

ACTIONS

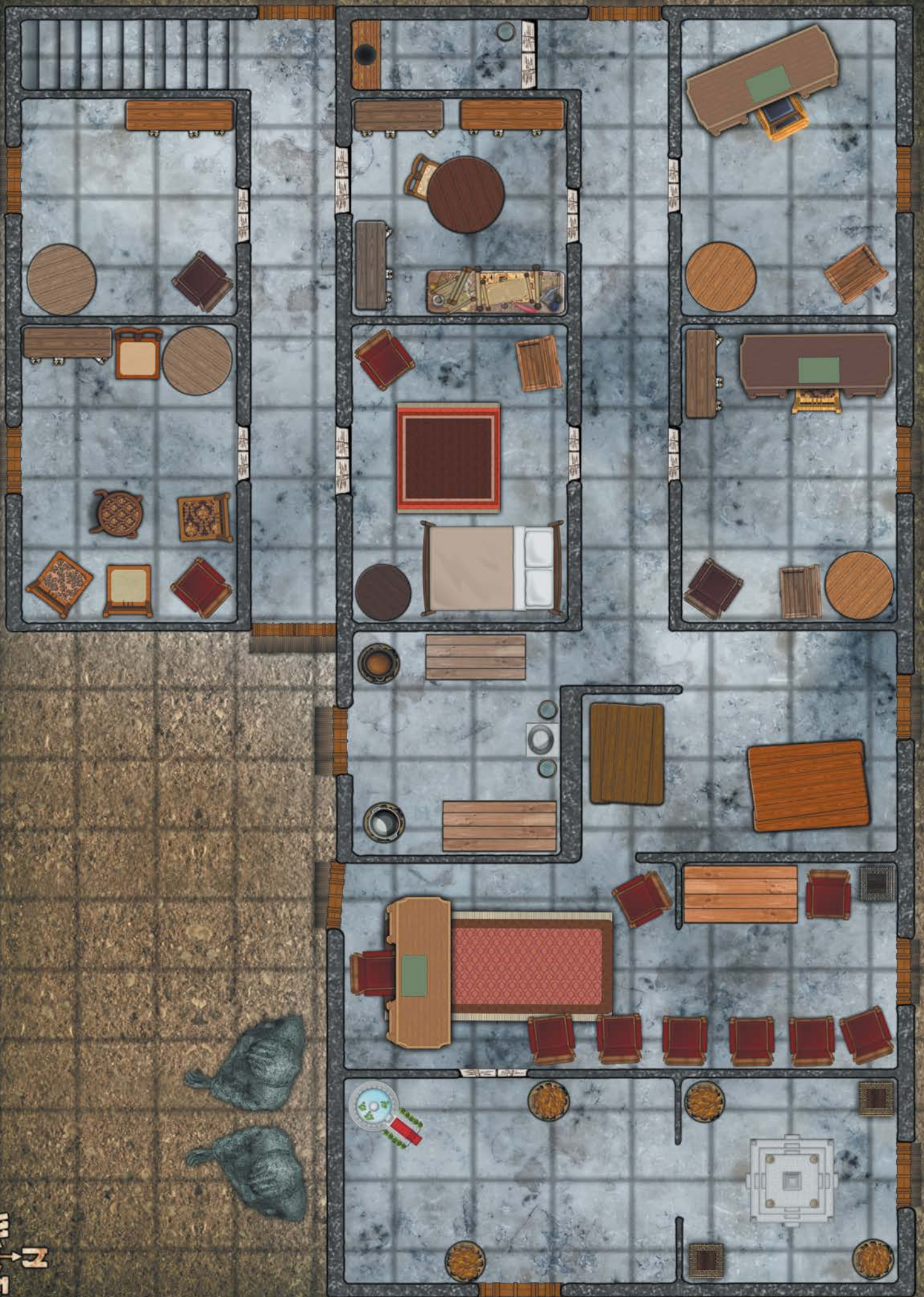
Multiattack. The yaoguai makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

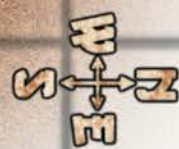
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) piercing damage.

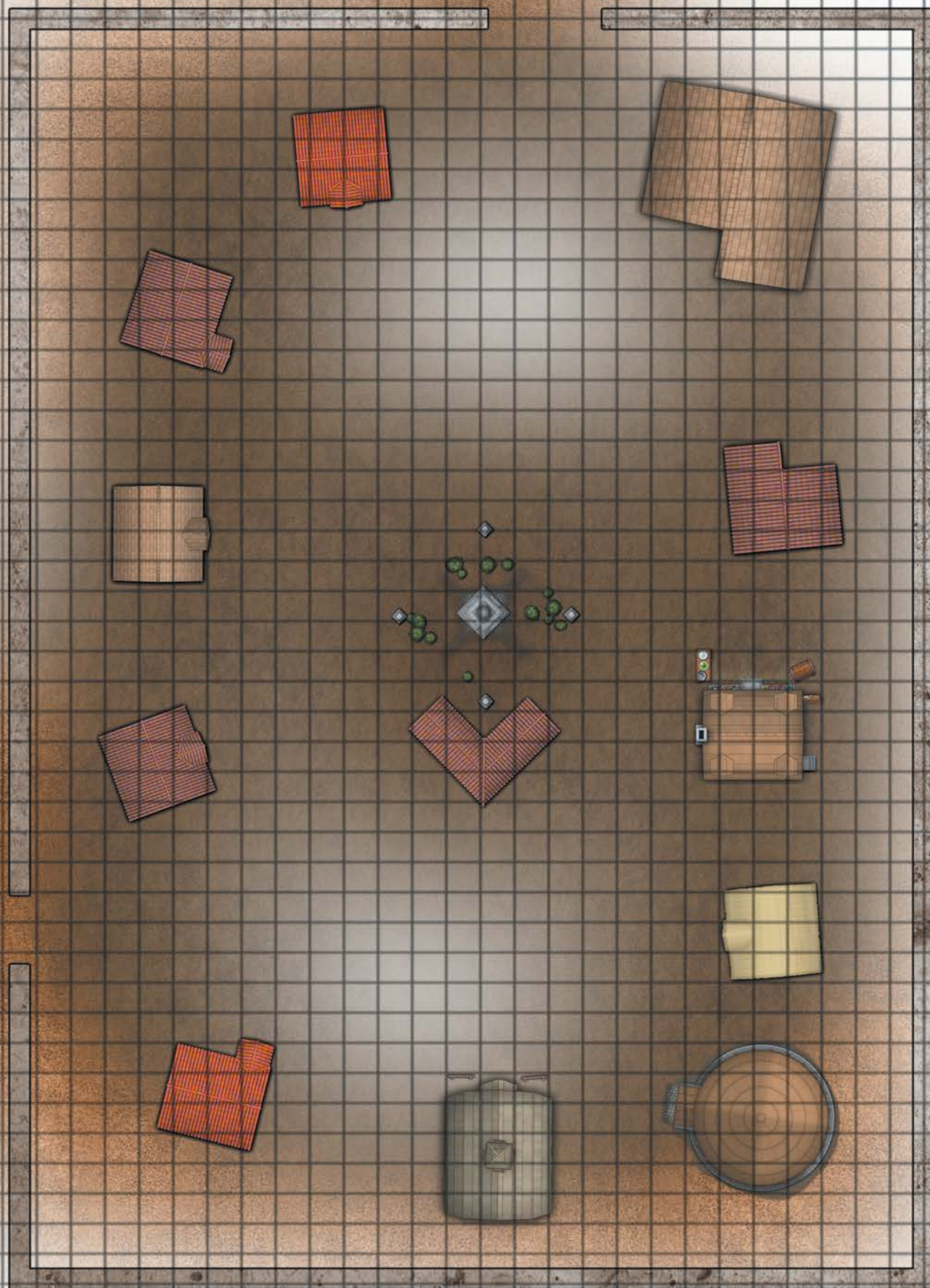
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+6) slashing damage.

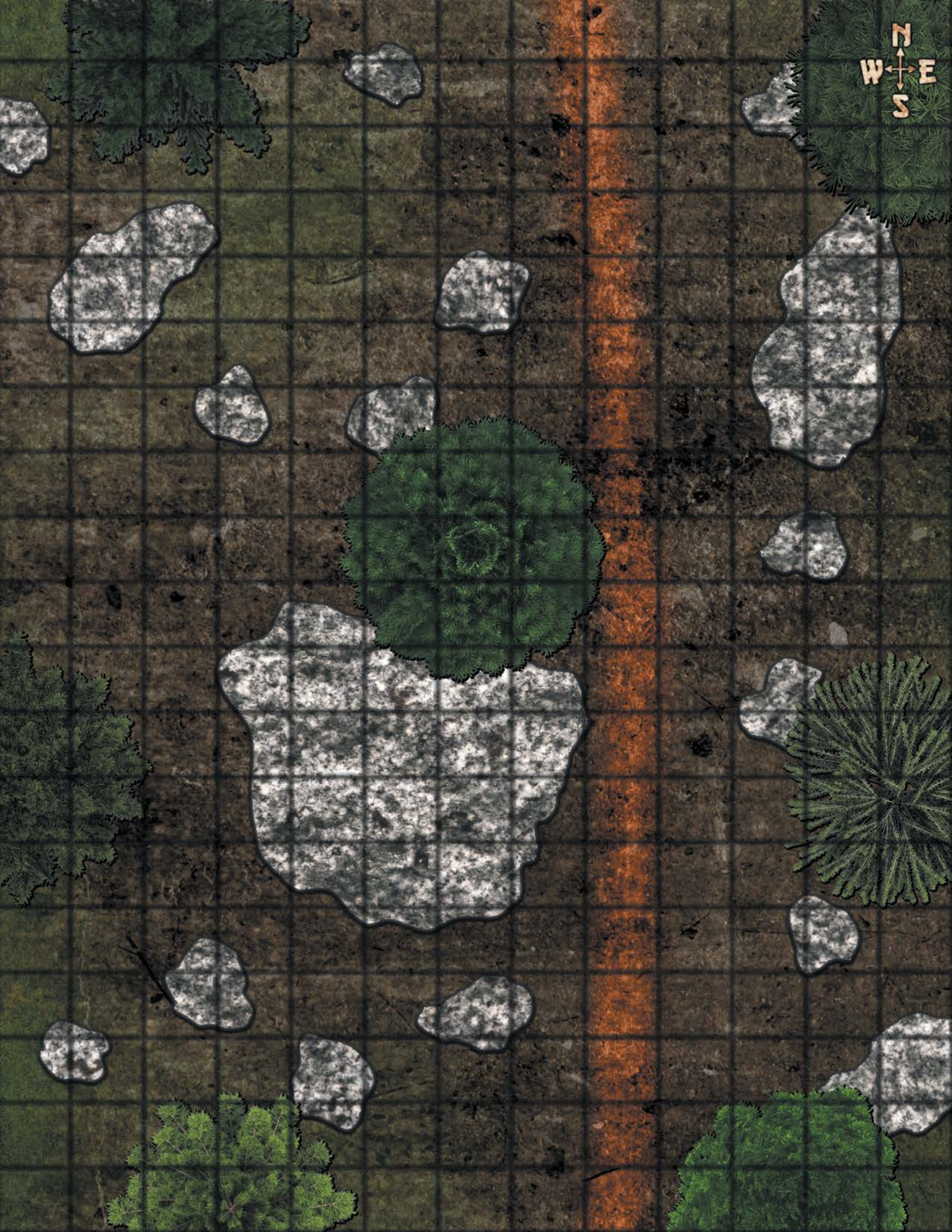
Once the rarest of creatures these unnatural amalgamations of beasts have become a much more common threat after the end of the War of Kaiyo. Mages and scientists are blamed in equal parts for the sudden prominence of yaoguai and the lethal oni are so resilient they can be found all over Soburin (frequently taking large territories in the most inhospitable regions and devouring anything that wanders nearby). Yaoguai hide is highly valued by artificers and magical craftsmen alike, and the mangled remains of ambitious hunters have become the telltale sign that one of these chimeric oni lair nearby.

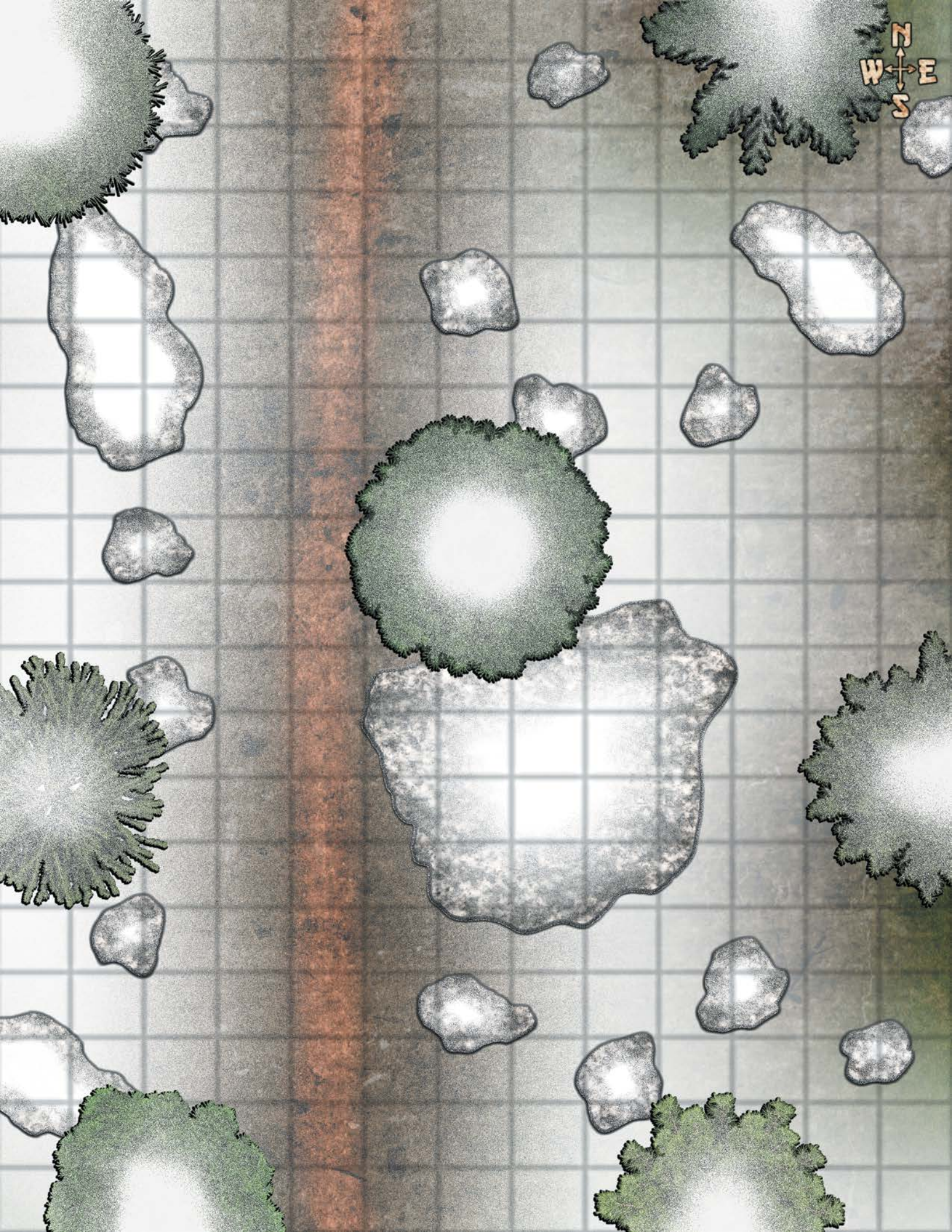


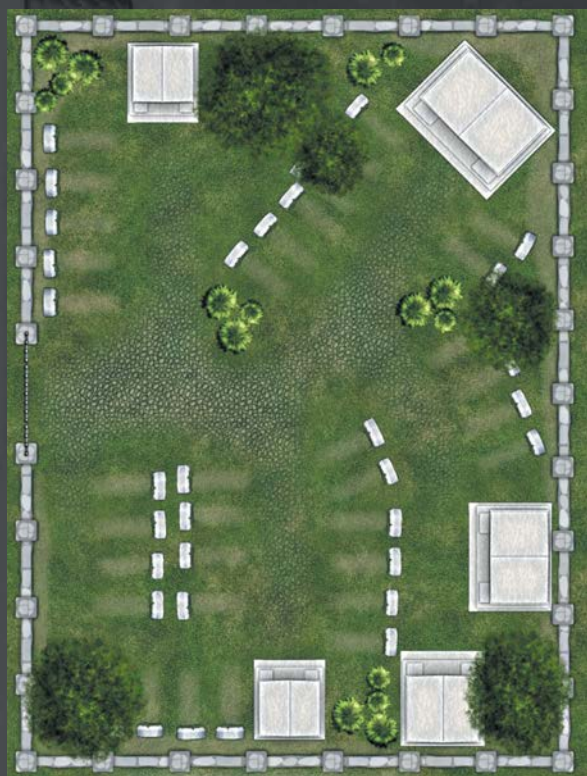
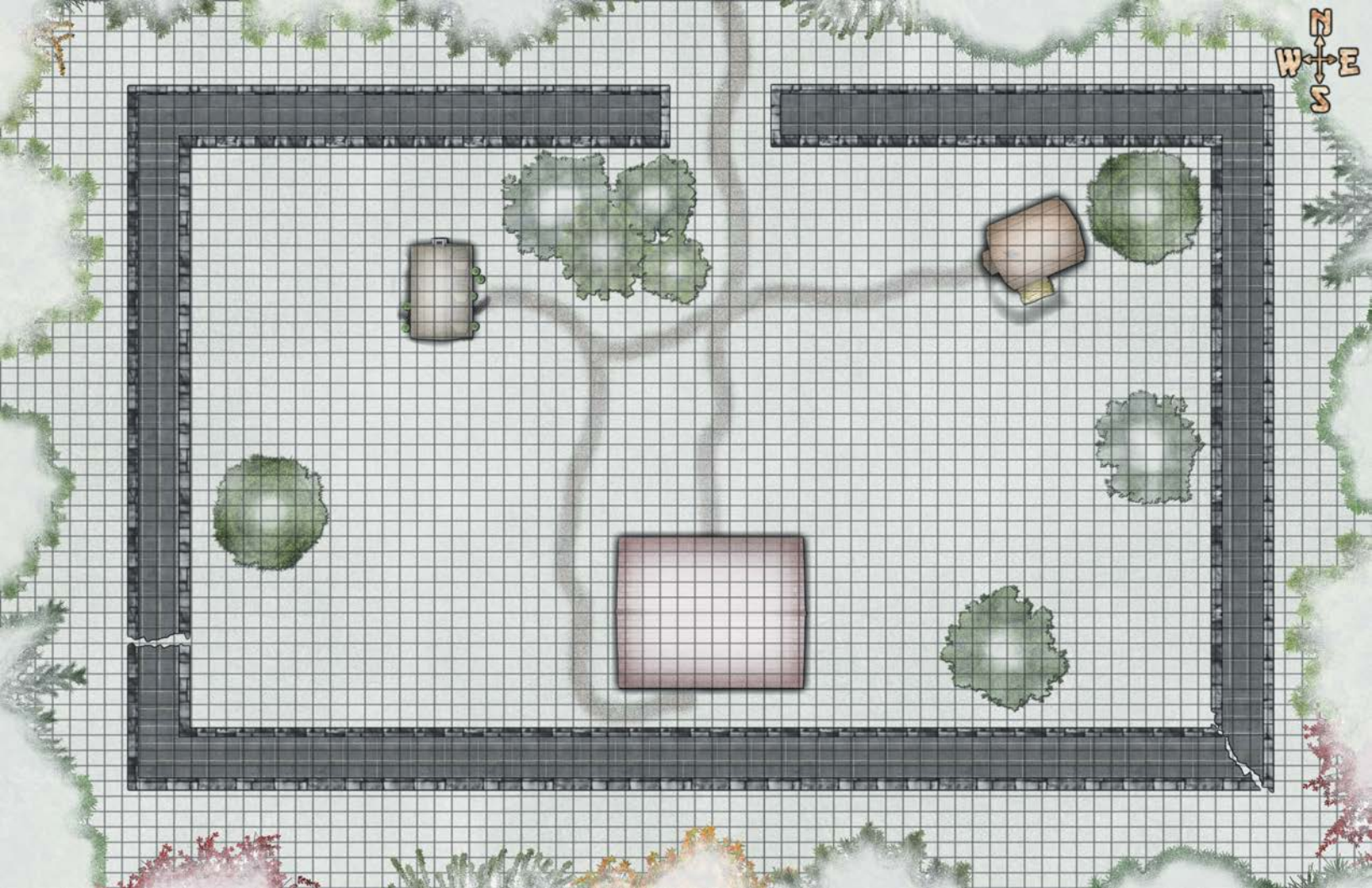


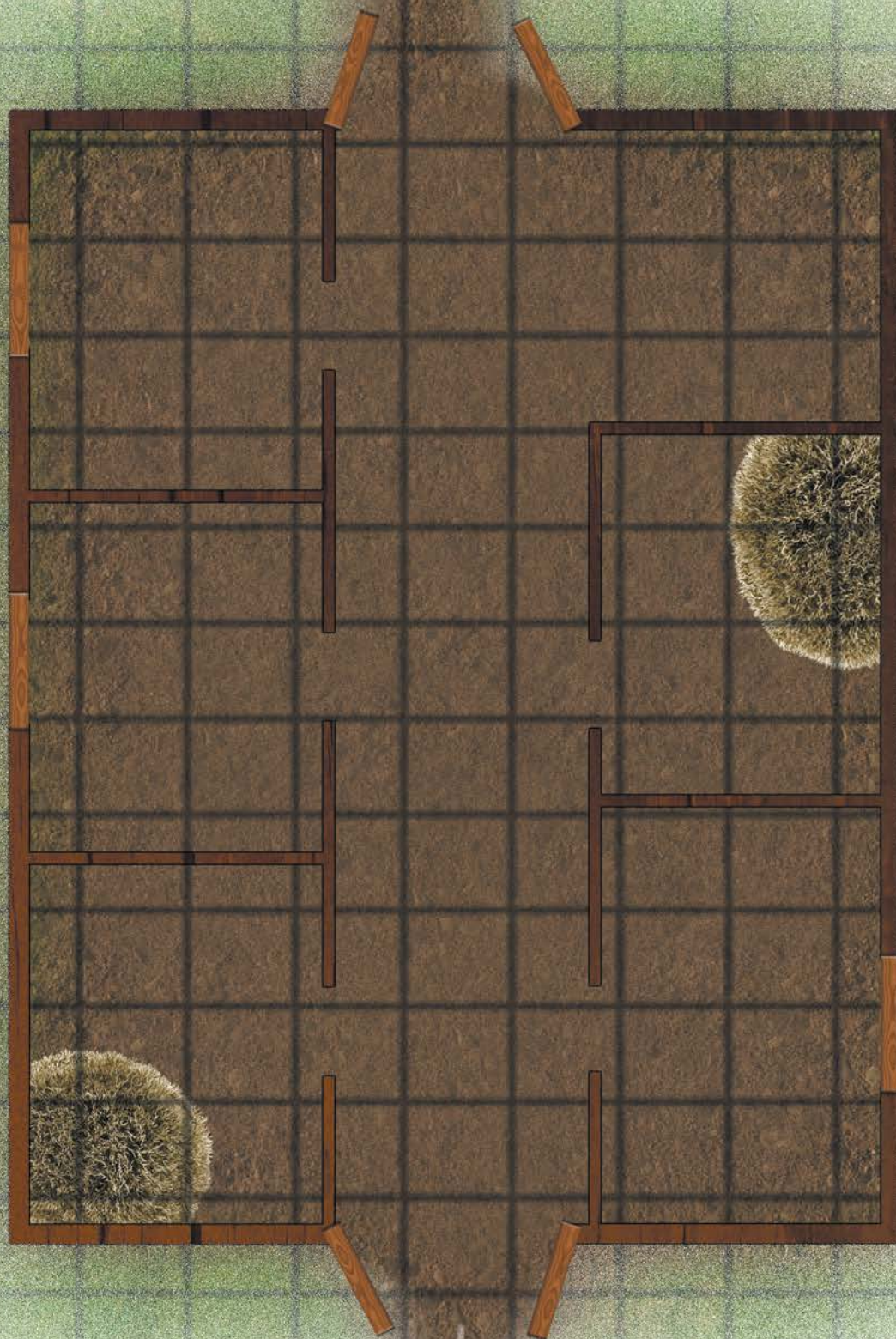
















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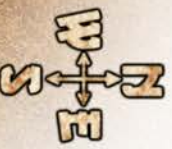
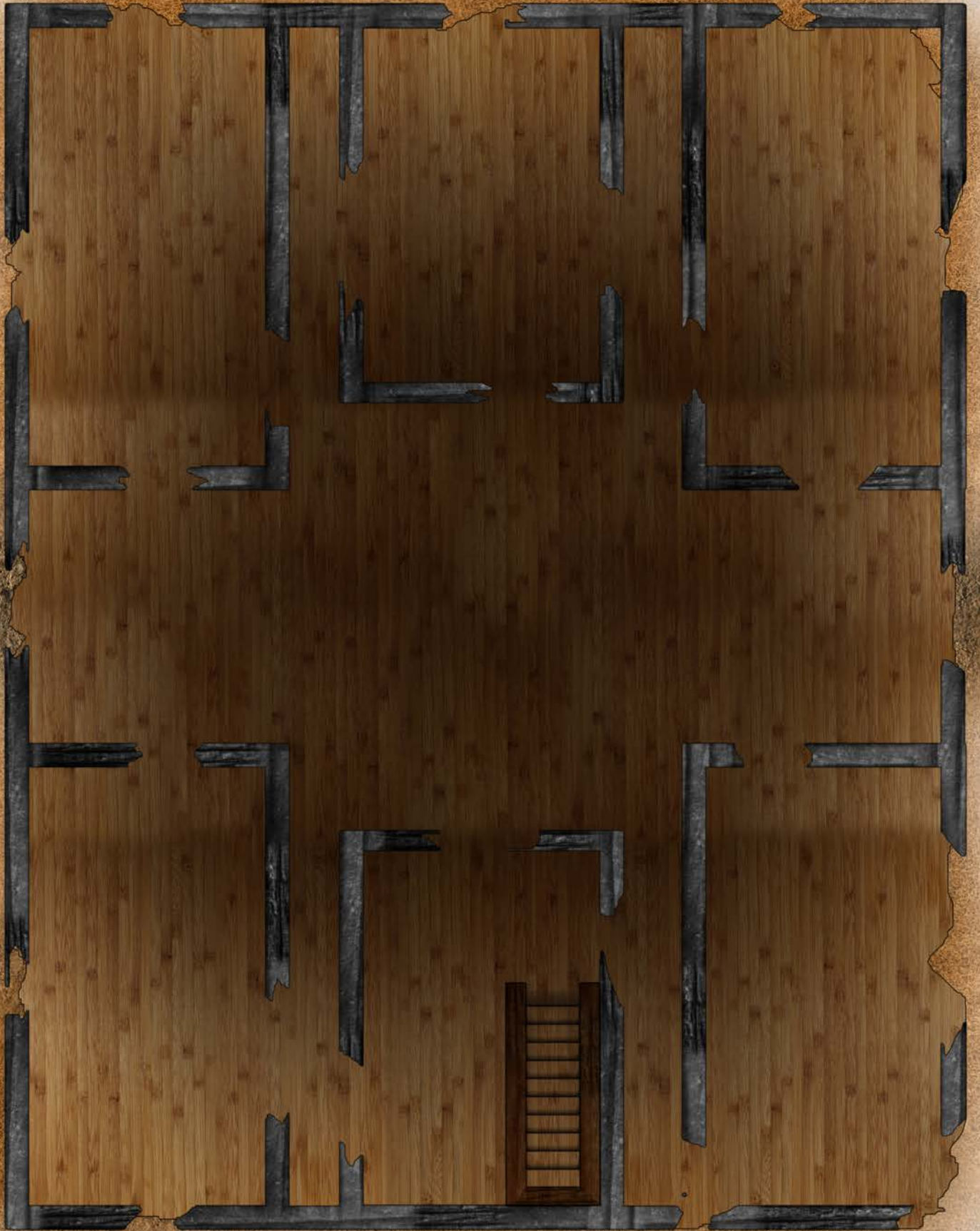
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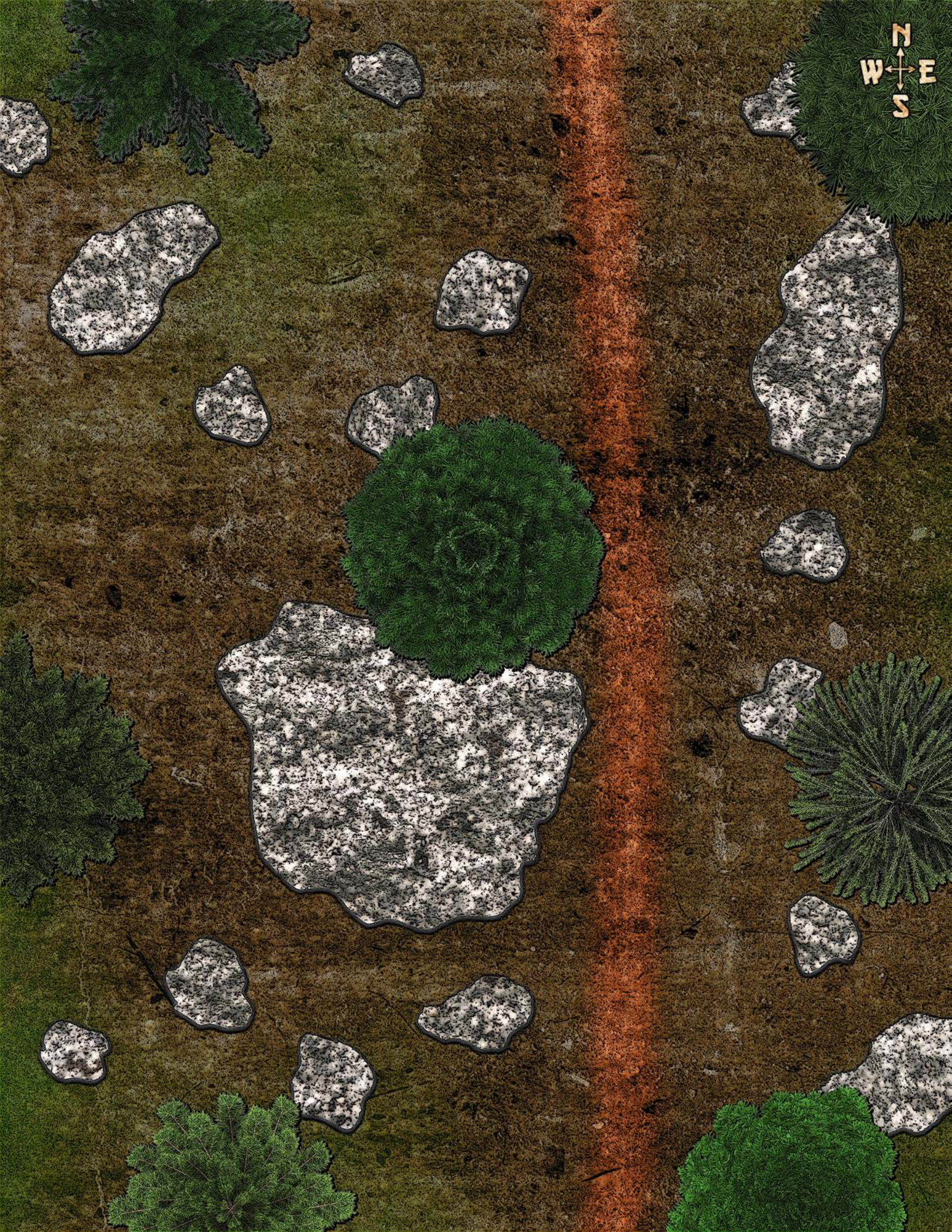
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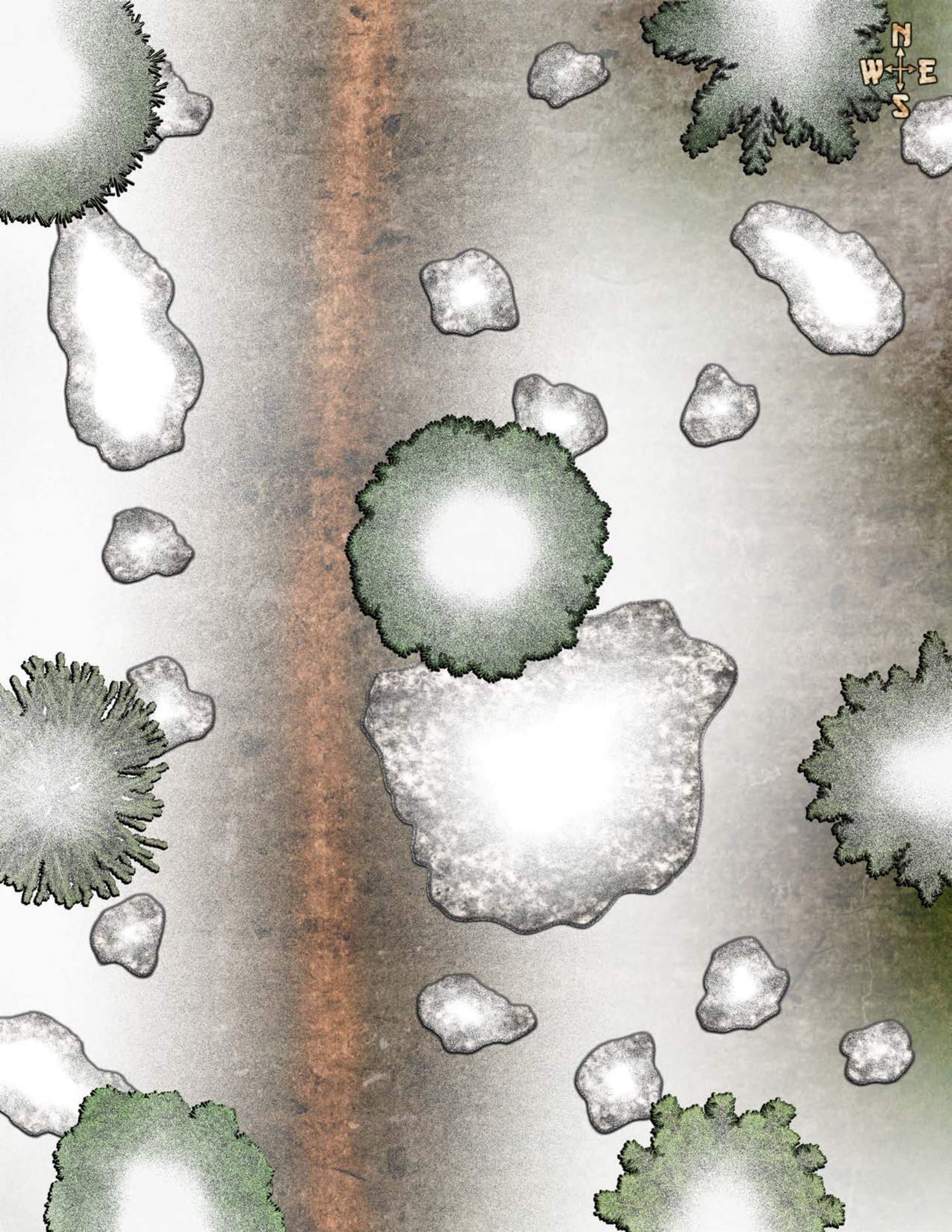
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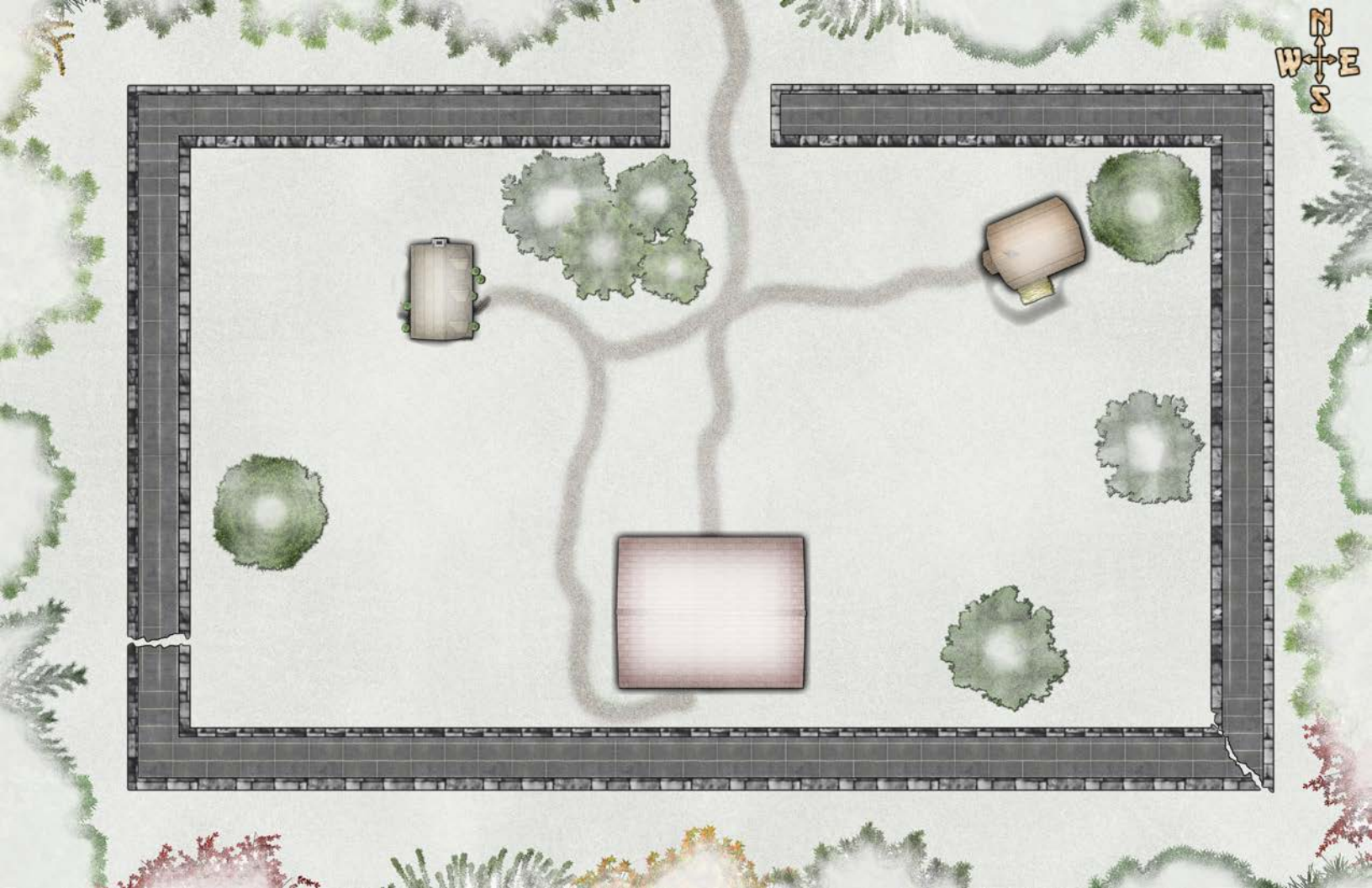


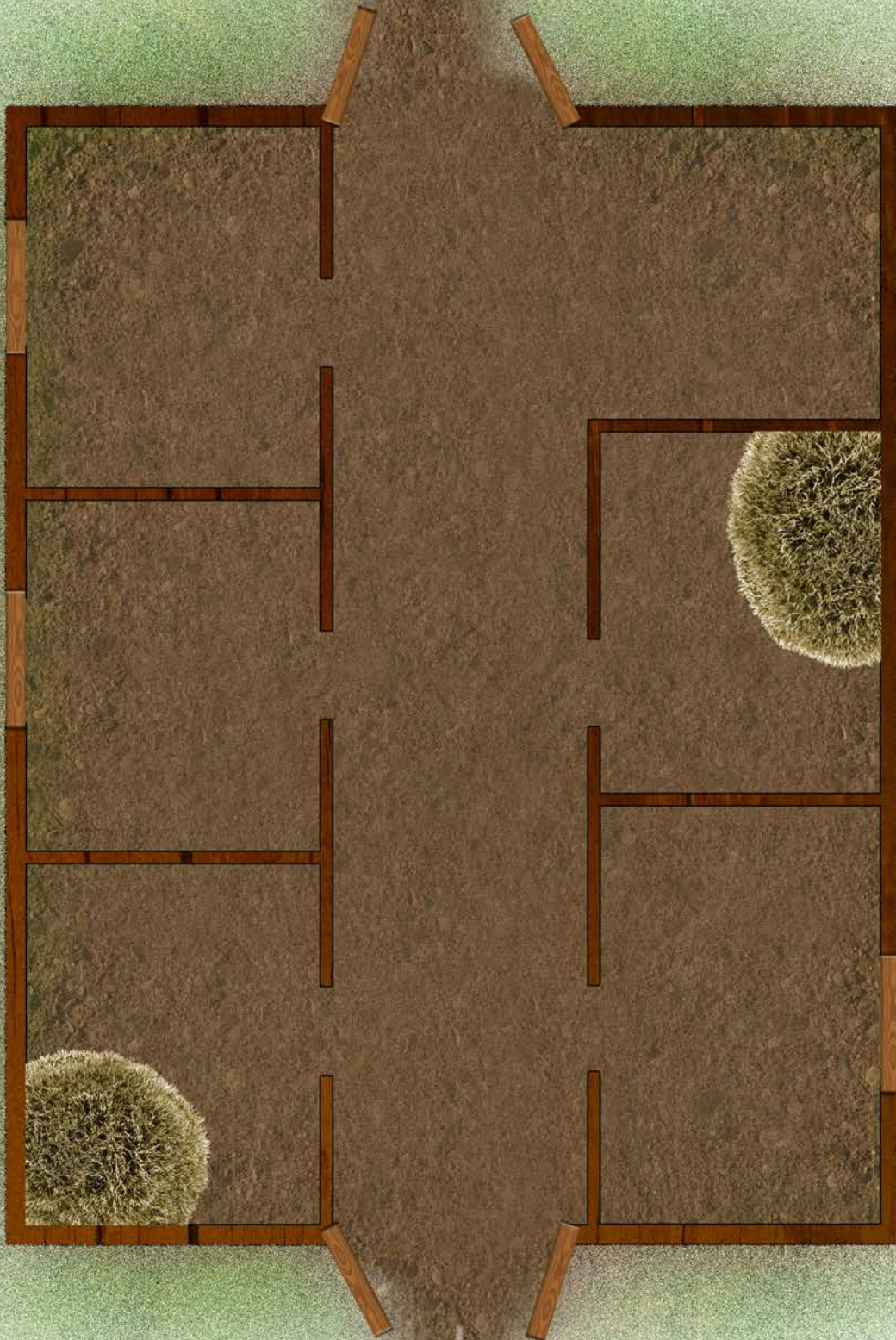


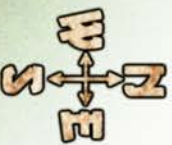


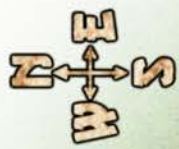












WHO IN KIZAKI HAS NOT HEARD OF THE DESPICABLE PALE MASTER BY ONE MONICKER OR ANOTHER? THE MAN-FLAYER MAGE? SORCERER OF THE DEAD AND ANCIENT MASTER OF THESE LANDS? MY ANCESTOR TARIKO WITNESSED THE FOUL ONE'S DARK POWERS AT WORK FIRSTHAND, AND HER STORIES HAVE BEEN TOLD AT OUR TABLES SINCE LONG BEFORE MY CHILDHOOD. A COURAGEOUS AND FIERCE WOMAN IN HER OWN RIGHT, SHE FOLLOWED THE FATED TRIO OF WARRIORS THAT ASSAULTED HIS CRIMSON KEEP, AN ABATTOIR OF BLOOD AND SLAUGHTER THAT ONCE STOOD NORTHWEST OF WHERE KIZAKI STANDS TODAY. THE SIGHTS SHE WITNESSED WITHIN THAT AWFUL PLACE WERE TOO GRUESOME TO RECOUNT TO OTHERS BUT I AM FILLED WITH HER DREAD, SO INTENSE I CAN STILL FEEL IT IN MY VERY BONES.

SO IT IS WITH THE PALE MASTER. NONE ARE CERTAIN OF EXACTLY WHERE HE CAME FROM OR WHO HE WAS, SAVE THAT HE WAS ONCE A MAN OF SOBURN THAT FELL FAR FROM HONOR. THAT IS KNOWN BUT NOT MUCH MORE. THERE IS TALK TOO THAT HE WAS NOT TRULY VANQUISHED, THOUGH WHO CAN BE SURE? THE POETS CLAIM THAT WHEN COMMANDER HIROSHI NARA WON THE BATTLE OF HAWKSFALL, IT WAS BY TURNING THE CROSSBOWS TAKEN FROM FALLEN HAKAISURU SOLDIERS BACK ON THEIR WIELDERS—BUT NOT ALL TALES OF THE ASSAULT AGREE. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THE BATTLE WENT VERY DIFFERENTLY, THAT THE SIGNS OF THE PALE MASTER WERE PRESENT. SOME SAY THAT THE INVADERS WANDERED IN A MALEVOLENT HAZE OR SUCKED AT THE AIR AS THOUGH THEY WERE DROWNING, MAKING EVERY ONE OF THE GEKIDO'S BOLTS A LETHAL STRIKE.

TALK OF THE PALE MASTER HAS BECOME MORE THAN LEGEND HOWEVER; NOW THEY SAY HE WALKS THE STREETS OF KIZAKI AT NIGHT, SLINKING IN THE SHADOWS TO STRIKE TERROR ONCE AGAIN. RUMOR HAS IT THAT HE IS ABDUCTING CHILDREN IN THE NIGHT AND TEARING OUT THEIR SKELETONS, ANIMATING THE BONES TO CARRY AWAY OTHER YOUTHS AND EATING THEIR FLESH TO REGAIN HIS YOUTH. STILL MORE ARGUE THAT HE IS DRAINING THE LIFEFORCE FROM THE CITY AND BLIGHTING THE LANDS AROUND IT, OR THAT HIS WHOLE PURPOSE IS TO DROWN KIZAKI IN VIOLENT BLOODSHED THAT HE CAN EXPLOIT TO GRANT UNTOLD POWER—NO ONE CAN KNOW.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN: WHENEVER IT COMES, THE REVENGE OF THE PALE MASTER WILL BE TERRIBLE INDEED.

