

The Necromancer's Stone

**A One-Round AD&D[®] Game Living Jungle Adventure for
Low/Mid Level Heroes**

by Tom Prusa

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in bold italics. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Welcome to the Living Jungle!

This is a low/mid-level Living Jungle adventure; only characters of sixth level or below may participate in it. If a player brings a higher-level character to your table, explain that he or she must use a lower-level hero (or start a new hero) to play in this event. If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see your event coordinator for character creation instructions, if you don't have them).

During the course of the adventure, the heroes will earn experience points based on their accomplishments. Some of these points are for overcoming obstacles, finding information, defeating monsters, and recovering treasure. After each encounter an experience point value is listed. This is summarized at the end of the adventure as well. *All characters contributing to the success of an encounter receive the listed experience points.*

For example, if an encounter lists an experience point value of 100, then each hero participating earns 100

points. All experience points are awarded at the end of the tournament. Do not award experience points after each encounter.

In some places the characters can gain treasure. For common items, like normal weapons and equipment, the players must simply record the new items on their character sheets. But for magical or other special items, you must hand the appropriate Treasure Certificate, included with this tournament.

DM Background

This is a one round Living Jungle adventure for low/mid level heroes. In this adventure the heroes must attempt to recover the fabled Necromancer's Stone, and use it to stop the earthquakes and storms that have been ravaging Malatra.

The heroes are summoned to the village of the Rudra, along the Laughing Idols River. They are met by a council of some of the most powerful heroes of the jungle, including Bengoukee, S's'ilik, a yuan-ti, Ffft the tiger katanga, and Mali the great hunter. They are told that the source of the earthshakes is not the coming of tiger at all, but another source. Ngemba, the spirit of storms and tempests, is awakening. He has been sleeping for many years, but something has disturbed him. An artifact was used in the distant past to cause Ngemba to sleep. It was called the Necromancer's Stone. The Ancients, perhaps, cast a great magic, with the Stone as the key. Now, an Ancient has awoken and has the Stone. The heroes must help track down this Ancient, and recover the Stone.

The heroes are told that their job is merely to search. If they find the Ancient, Mali himself will lead a party to face this powerful creature out of legend. The Stone itself must not be touched. It would surely doom any hero who comes in contact with it.

When they set out, they have a few small encounters, but nothing too serious. There is a small earthquake, an attack by a hungry garuda, and a chance to rescue a Nubari who has fallen into the river.

Then they find the remnants of the "high level" party that was going to handle the Ancient. This group did meet the Ancient, and lost badly. Most of them are dead, and the three remaining are severely wounded. But they have recovered the Necromancer's Stone. The

heroes are charged with returning the Stone to its place in the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen.

Along the way, they have no more encounters, but do witness the Ancient doing battle with a large gnasher, giving them an idea of the Ancient Ones power.

Once they enter the Cave of Three Fingers in the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen they must solve several puzzles and bypass a few traps to cast the Stone into the River of Fire. Of course they must face the Ancient to do it. If they succeed, the earthquakes and storms are ended, and the jungle is safer than it was when they started.

Players Introduction

There's a lot of introduction. Please paraphrase; if you read it all, you'll lose your players about half way. The legend should probably be told pretty straight, but tell the rest, don't read it.

You have all heard the tales. Tiger is returning. Everyone says so, and if that is not enough, the earthquakes continue, as do the storms. The monsoon season should have ended weeks ago, but the storms continue. The jungle is in grave danger, which is why you have been brought together.

You are in the village of the Rudra. And you are not alone. Many of the most famous heroes of the jungle are here as well. Mali, the tam'hi who has earned the title of the Great Hunter, Ffft, the sage of Malatra, Ubarr, the guardian of the jungle of Lost Tribes, Taronee, witch doctor of the Koshiva, are just a few of the heroes you have seen.

Other heroes are gathered as well. You see Lana, Flood, Booda, Goff, Boo Dos, Mantikqua, Nine Fingers, Kamak Thuldar, (here insert several heroes who are at the con but not at the table, if you can), as well as a large group of equally worthy heroes.

Something big is happening, and you are both nervous and excited to be part of it. None of the other heroes seem to know why you are here, as you wait for the Council of Elders to finish their meeting.

Finally, after hours of meeting, accompanied by strange smokes and flashes of light from inside the hut, the council emerges. You and the other heroes gather round to hear what the council has decided, and why they have summoned you.

Bengoukee speaks; "As you all have certainly heard, tiger is returning. Here now the prophecy of the doom of the jungle."

Ffft steps forward, joined by Lana and Flood. These three are deemed amongst the wisest in the jungle, Ffft is even known as the Sage of Malatra, wisest in lore.

"In the days of the Ancients, a great battle took place. The Ancients fought the tiger, known then as Tamara. The tamara had many servants, evil and powerful. They proved to be the stronger, but they could not bring an end to our ancestors. In the end, the Ancients escaped the tamara and fled here. The tamara tried to open a great gate, but the Ancients closed it, until legends should walk again. But before they could, the tamara awakened Ngemba, the spirit of the storm. Ngemba did much damage, until a great Ancient found a way to cage him. This Ancient is known in legends as the Forgotten Father, for he has guarded Malatra all these years, but no one remembers him.

"Great as the Father was, he could not contain Ngemba alone, for Ngemba is a powerful spirit of the air. He had the help of a most magical, and most evil stone. In the days of the Ancients, it was known as the Necromancer's Stone.

"This Stone allowed the Father to cage Ngemba deep in the Jungle of Lost Tribes. There they both have slept for moons uncounted. The legends said that they would sleep until tiger returns. But when the Father awoke, he did not do so to fight tiger, for the evil of the Stone had worked on him all those centuries. He emerged thinking only of destruction. So he seeks to slay all that is not of the Ancients, including us.

"Even worse, with the Stone removed, Ngemba sleeps lightly. Just his stirrings are causing the earthquakes and the storms that have been plaguing Malatra for these seven seasons.

"Thus, we have summoned you, the greatest heroes of Malatra, in our time of need.

"We must find the Forgotten Father, and wrest the Necromancer's Stone from him. It must be taken to the heart of the Jungle of Lost Tribes, and cast into the lava at the core of the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen.

“Your missions are to search the jungle for signs of the Forgotten Father. You will know his work by the ruin the Stone leaves behind. It is much the same as the Yaku plains, for the magic that caused the plains of ash is of the same flavor as that of the Stone. When you find the Ancient, do NOT confront him. You will be provided with a messenger, who will summon us,” says Ffft. I, Mali, Taronee, Ubarr, Boo Dos, and S'S'ilik of the Snake People will face him. Bengoukee has read the omens; facing him is our destiny. If you see him, you must signal us, and flee.

“This is no disrespect to the many brave heroes gathered here, but common sense. We need you in the coming months, for even if the earthquakes are ended, tiger is still coming. Be safe, be careful, and be swift. If you see him, follow him. If he sees you, flee for your lives.”

The heroes are then broken up into ten groups, with the PC party obviously as one of them. The heroes are assigned to search down the Dreaming River to the lake, then back to the jungle of Lost Tribes, then north to the village of the Rudra again.

Supplies are provided if needed: 2 canoes, food and waterskins, 2 coils of vine rope (30' long), 2 quivers of stone tipped arrows, and any other reasonable request. The only stipulation is that the heroes are to leave in the morning, so anything that takes longer than overnight to fashion is out of the question.

Mali then brings each party a small bird, a swift. It is trained to find him wherever he is, and do it within a day. The elder party has means of moving very swiftly, and should join the party in a day and a half. The elder party will be searching inside the jungle of Lost Tribes, as it is thought that the Father may return there from time to time.

Finally, Bengoukee hands to the party one *brew of extra healing* (good for this adventure only), to aid them in their mission.

Ffft will answer questions:

- Why can't Bengoukee or one of the mages locate him magically?
It was tried. It nearly killed Bengoukee and Taronee, working together. They have magically restored themselves, but they will not attempt it again.

- What should we do if we find him?

If he does not know you are there, follow him. If he does, flee, towards the Jungle of Lost Tribes. If the elder party can ambush him, they have a good chance of recovering the Stone.

- What powers does the Forgotten Father have?

At the very least, he is certain to have as much power as Bengoukee and Taronee, the two strongest witch doctors in the jungle, combined.

- What if we get the Stone?

Do not allow it to touch your flesh. It could entrap your mind, and send you down an evil path with its promises of power. For it does deliver great power. But in so doing, it robs the very land around it of life.

- Where is the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen?

Legend says that the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen lies deep within the Jungle of Lost Tribes. It is thought to be the place where the Ancients first landed. It is a place of great magical power.

- How will you find us?

The swift can speak to Mali, we will find you.

- Can we stay and help against the Father?

It is very dangerous, but great heart cannot be denied. If you are the ones to find him, you may stand with us.

Give the party a little respect for asking this, have Mali and Taronee look at each other and nod approvingly.

When the heroes have supplies and questions answered, they are expected to leave. It is mid-afternoon, there are several hours of travel time left.

Encounter One: Search

Your assigned territory is the stretch along the Dreaming River, down to the Dreaming Lake. Once you reach that point, you are to proceed east to the Jungle of Lost Tribes, and then north back to the village of the Rudra. This should take about three weeks. If you find signs of the Ancient, you are to release the bird, which will find Mali much faster than you could. Other teams are being sent to various points in the jungle, with the Elder team searching the Jungle of Lost Tribes, the most likely location of the Ancient. It is imperative that the Necromancer's Stone be found and returned to its hidden spot in the Jungle of Lost Tribes before Ngemba awakens fully.

As you stow your belongings aboard the canoes, the sky rumbles. In just a moment, the torrential downpour hits again.

The heroes can prepare as they see fit. If they ask, they can obtain supplies, including a pair of canoes, food, waterskins, cloaks of lizardskin to protect them from the ever-present rains, and plenty of arrows. Normal weapons are also available, if any of the heroes need them. Someone will have to agree to watch over the swift, whose name is Klik. Klik is not in a cage, but flies freely and accompanies his chosen one until told to go find Mali.

When the heroes are ready, they can set out on the canoes, down the Dreaming River. It is four days along the river to reach the falls above the Dreaming Lake. Along the way, they have three hazards to deal with.

Anyone who does not wish to enter a canoe will be quickly left behind. Aarakocra can fly, until it starts to rain, but then will have to get into a canoe or tire out and lag behind. Vine swinging will not allow the hero to keep up. It's the canoes or nothing.

Waterfall.

After a few hours in the canoes, the heroes come to the first waterfall that lies in their way.

The river flow has increased substantially. The landmarks are not as you recognize, for the river is much higher than you remember. In fact, you now are passing an outcropping that normally stands entirely out of the water, but only half of it does now. The problem with this is that this landmark was the last point to beach your canoes to avoid the waterfall that is now less than a mile downriver, with no place to beach a canoe. The heavy rains mask your vision, you still cannot see the falls, but you can certainly hear them.

The current is too swift to turn around, the heroes have a couple of options.

Ride the waterfall. This requires boating checks by at least two people in each canoe. When the canoes go over the falls, they fall 20', hitting the water hard. Each person in the boat must make a Dexterity check. Failure means they have been swept out of the boat and take 2d6 points of damage. Success means they hung on, taking only 1d6 points of damage. Anyone who is swept out must make swimming rolls at -4 to safely reach either land or a canoe. Failure means that they

take an additional 2d6 points of bruising and drowning damage before being flung onto the bank about a mile downstream.

If only one person makes the boating roll, the canoe capsizes and everyone is thrown overboard, requiring swimming checks as above.

If no one makes a boating roll, the canoe capsizes and is lost. Pieces of it can be found downstream, having smashed into rocks and trees. Again, swimming checks are required before the heroes can get to safety.

Abandon the canoes. One successful boating roll from each canoe can get the canoes close enough to shore for the heroes to leap for the banks. A successful Dexterity check is required to reach the bank. If the Dexterity check is failed, the hero must make a swimming roll at -4 or be swept over the falls, taking damage as listed above for capsizing.

There are no easy places to land. The heroes will be jumping onto boulders, into broken trees, that kind of thing. Upon landing, each hero must make a Dexterity check or suffer 1d6 points of damage. If a 6 is rolled on the damage roll, the hero has severely sprained or even cracked an ankle, and will be slowed to ½ movement until all of the damage is healed.

The heroes can later find the canoes near the bank about a mile and a half downstream. They are waterlogged and worse for the wear, but still float. All supplies that the heroes stowed in the canoe are lost or ruined.

Once past the falls, the heroes should take the rest of the day to regroup and recover. If they have lost one or more canoes, materials for rafts are available. To go back and get new canoes would take at least three days of land travel. The river is moving fast! Note: the swift doesn't fly well in all this rain, but well enough to avoid any damage during this particular encounter.

Continuing down the river, the heroes come to Tokamoc, a village of the Huroola. There they can camp, and if no healing is available within the party, they can obtain it here. They are invited to spend the night, but urged to get back on the river as soon as possible the next day. If they are using rafts, they are given new canoes. Remember to warn the PCs about the Huroola policy of slaying out of hand any males carrying weapons in their territory.

Drowning Child.

A few hours after they set off, the heroes spot a young Huroola lass being swept downstream. To save her, the heroes have several options.

As you continue down the river, the rains have stopped, for now. Ahead you see a young lass spear-fishing, from a branch overhanging the river. As you draw closer, the branch snaps and she drops silently into the river.

To deal with the drowning child, the heroes have several options.

Jump over and swim for her. Requires two swimming rolls, the first is normal (to reach the child), the second is at -4 (to get back to the bank).

Go after her in the canoe. This requires a boating roll (to get near her), and a Strength and Dexterity check (to grab her and lift her into the boat.) If the Dexterity check is failed, the hero is pulled into the river by the panicking lacerial. If the Strength check is failed, the hero loses her grip on the young lass.

Other options as dictated by the party. An aarakocra or a flying mage can swoop down and pick her up, using a Dexterity check and a Strength check. A river tam'hi or caiman katanga can make the swimming rolls at +4 to their skill.

When rescued, the young girl identifies herself as K'michi, a fledgling hunter of the Huroola. She is grateful, but embarrassed. If she is rescued by a male, she is really embarrassed (That sort of thing is woman's work). She offers to share her catch (a dozen healthy fish, mostly perch and catfish) with the party. After sharing a meal, she takes her leave. If any of the party wish to accompany her for safety's sake, she makes it quite clear that the PCs – especially the males and more exotic non-Nubari (lizardman, butu, aarakocra, etc.) are not welcome in Huroola territory.

Encounter Two: Obligatory Garuda Encounter.

You are on your last day of travel on the river. The rains have started again, but as you near the end of the river, it has widened and slowed. It is still very fast, but the river is deeper here and consequently smoother. It is a far cry from the excitement of the past few days. In fact, you are nearing the headwaters

of the Sleepy Lake, swollen far out of its banks by the rains. Then you see the swirl in the water, moving against the current. And from the size of the swirl, whatever it is is big. A gigantic head breaks the water, all slashing teeth and terror. It is a scooper, otherwise known as a water gnasher, the biggest predator in the lake. It strikes at the first canoe.

Suchiminius Terminus, Water gnasher (1): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, sw 18, HD 12; hp 80; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/5-40; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ H (40' long); ML 15.

The water gnasher is hungry -- fishing has been poor since the rains and earthquakes have started. Its first attack is on the lead canoe. If it is successful in hitting a canoe (which can be considered AC6), it splinters it and throws everyone on board into the lake. If it misses, it still swamps the canoe, although the canoe is not damaged. Swimming heroes can be attacked with a +4 bonus, and receive no Dexterity bonuses to AC.

The water gnasher attacks until it takes ½ damage. It is merely hungry. Flashy magic (*minute meteors, magic missiles, etc.*) that also cause damage force a morale check or it flees. It is smart enough to attack the second canoe if the occupants of that canoe are doing damage with spells and/or missile weapons.

When the garuda is driven off, allow the heroes to travel quietly until after they reach the lake. They may set out through the jungle, heading due east.

Encounter Three: The Elder party, not so elder now.

The jungle drips and steams around you. The rain has slowed, more of a drizzle right now. You continue towards the jungle of lost tribes, realizing that your chances of locating the Forgotten Father are slim indeed, with hundreds of miles of jungle to search.

Two days have passed since you left the river, with no sign of anyone but the pack of long-leggers that fled from you yesterday. It is as if the jungle has fled from this spot. This morning an earthquake rumbled through, but you were able to avoid injury with a bit of luck.

As the rain finally stops, the clouds clear for a moment, and in the clear sky you can see a pillar of smoke. Anything that could have burned through the rain must be a strong fire indeed.

The fire is off to the northeast, not exactly on their line of march, but close enough. They are about five miles from the site of the smoke.

When the heroes have traveled about three miles, someone spots a footprint headed south. A ranger or jungle tam'hi is most likely to spot it; next would be a rogue or a saru.

Anyone with tracking, may make a roll. Their success determines the information obtained.

Tracking roll (Wisdom -6 allowed only if no one has tracking).

- **Fail the roll:** A shu passed here within hours. He had some other people with him, three or four.
- **Succeed:** There were three other people, two Nubari and a tam'hi. Or maybe three katanga in Nubari form. Or maybe three tam'hi. Anyway, there were three, and at least two of them were wounded. The tracks are less than an hour old.
- **Succeed by half or less:** The Nubari or tam'hi were helping each other along, and were moving pretty slowly. The shu seemed to be the only one moving normally. They were running, where they could. They passed this way about 30 minutes ago.
- **Roll a natural one:** One of the tracks is positively identified as that of Mali, the Great Hunter. (a tam'hi fighter of 7th level).

The heroes will probably choose to follow the tracks. If someone with tracking skill fails, you may allow them to cast about and search for another ten minutes, and get another roll. Remember to adjust the time since the party passed.

If the heroes choose to head for the smoke instead, have someone find a few bloodstains near the tracks, relatively fresh.

If they still persist, use the 'Sight of the Ancient' section of encounter now.

It takes the party less than an hour to catch the elder party.

The Elder Party, or what's left of them.

As you continue through the dense jungle, you finally come upon the source of the tracks. It is indeed the elder party, or part of it anyway. You recognize Ffft, sage of the jungle, stumbling forward with a weary gait. He is supporting a Nubari, none other than the

Great Hunter of Malatra, Mali. His eyes are dulled with defeat, and his body seems to have been badly burned all over. Leading them is Booda, the shu who just recently became chief of the Simbuki. But it is the figure that Booda is supporting that draws your eyes. Boo Dos is well known as a powerful mage, but he is known even more as an abject coward. Now, his eyes are beyond cowardice, well into shock. And his hand! It is a shriveled claw, clutched around a stone that seems to radiate evil.

Allow the heroes to approach the elder party. Only Booda notices them at first. He is the only one who was not in on the last battle, not being a part of the elder group himself.

Booda is happy to see the heroes, and will welcome any help they can give. All three of the elders need healing, but Boo Dos is beyond any healing that the heroes can give. Mali currently has three of a total 78 hit points, and Ffft has two of a total of 29.

Boo Dos has only taken a few points of damage, but his mind is gone, and his hand a shriveled useless lump (*withering* effect).

Booda tells the heroes the following facts, not in any specific order. He is quite shaken with the whole experience, and is hoping to turn these wounded heroes over to the party.

- He got separated from the team he was leading. (translation - he got lost).
- He saw a great battle from afar, and thought he might be of aid. (translation - he blundered into a battle).
- Ubarr was charging a strange looking Nubari, when the Nubari spoke a terrible word. When it was over, only a few specks of dust remained of Ubarr.
- Taronee was hit by a lot of balls of fire that burned him to a crisp. Part of it got Mali too.
- Mali actually hit the Nubari, but the Nubari shot fire out of his eyes and Mali fell.
- Boo Dos ran out and grabbed the Stone out of the Nubari's hand.
- The Nubari was going to destroy Boo Dos, but Ffft hit him with a whole bunch of *magic missiles*, and Boo Dos got away.
- The Nubari then turned and must have done something to Ffft, because he started to look stupid and slack jawed. He doesn't even seem to know his own name, now.

- A snake guy tried to grab the Nubari, and actually succeeded. I got Ffft and Mali got Boo Dos, and we ran away. There was a big burst of flame behind us, and I don't think it came from the snake guy.
- We've been running ever since. How long, about an hour or two.
- I've done all the healing I can for the day, Mali isn't going to die, anymore. And Ffft's mind is beyond my healing, not to mention Boo Dos' hand.

Spellcraft rolls can be made to recognize the spells used on Mali (*spectral forces*), and Ffft (*feblemind*). If the roll is at 1/2 of the skill or less, they can also recognize the fabled *power word: kill*, and *meteor swarm*.

Make the heroes work for this information. Booda is a chief, but he's also an unassuming little shaman of fifth level, just exposed to magic unseen in Malatra for millennia. He did what he could to help, but he is very shaken by it all. These were supposed to be some of the strongest heroes of Malatra.

Mali can chime in with some information too, although he is in terrible pain from the burns. Magical healing will aid this somewhat, but it will take more than the heroes can come up with to make him whole again.

Mali's information

- The elders were able to ambush the Ancient One.
- Taronee insisted on talking to him first. He was killed for his pains.
- I got a shot at the Ancient, but my weapon shattered. Either he can't be hit with normal weapons, or he knows that spell that Ffft says only he knows. The one that makes your skin like a rock (*stoneskin*).
- Ubarr saved my life, I would be dust know if he hadn't leaped on the Ancient.
- I never thought Boo Dos had it in him, that little coward. He was supposed to hide behind a tree and cast spells when no one was looking. He didn't cast any spells that I saw, but he did grab the Stone when the Ancient was busy blasting Ubarr.
- We've got to get out of here, he's coming!

When they have finished talking to the two coherent heroes, Booda makes his pitch.

"You can see that I'm not qualified to take care of these heroes. Don't you think you should take them

back to the village of the Rudra? Bengoukee will know what to do."

Let the players decide. When they do, Ffft has a moment of lucidity, though his voice is very weak.

"No, no time. You must take the Stone, take it to the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen. Find the cave, the Three Fingers cave, and the River of Fire. The Stone must be thrown into the River of Fire, or Ngemba will walk." He grabs (fill in name of PC here), lokks intently into his/her eyes, and says: "Remember." He then falls silent, and the stupefied look returns to his face.

Tell the player grabbed that he has an image of a cave, and a sense of direction. He knows how to find the Three-Fingered cave, and the direction to get there.

Choose a hero that has been talking to Booda, or whoever makes the most sense. A ranger, a jungle tam'hi, or a tiger katanga, would all be appropriate.

Booda reluctantly agrees to try to get the wounded elders to safety, although he does need directions (north by northeast). Any suggestion to split the party to provide a guide for Booda are rejected by Mali, who claims to be feeling much better and can get them back. Note that unless the party has helped with *healing*, Mali does NOT look better than when they found them. It might be a good time for a hint or two.

The party can take the Stone, but are cautioned not to touch it. Boo Dos makes no reaction, his mind has broken under the fear, and in so doing, he was protected from the controlling forces of the Stone. Point out that the vegetation near Boo Dos has started to wilt, just in the few minutes they have been there.

The Necromancer's Stone.

This ancient and evil artifact has several powers. First and foremost, the great elemental noble Ngemba is bound to Malatra through the Stone. It also allows *animate dead* at a large scale. If touched by a non-evil person, it causes 1d6 points of damage per round, with a saving throw vs. *withering* (as the staff). The artifact is intelligent, and can try to control those it comes in contact with.

If accidentally touched, say for a few moments, it causes 1d6 points and a -1 to Dexterity until a *remove curse* is cast.

After seeing Boo Dos's hand, there should be no question that the heroes will not touch the Stone with bare flesh, but have Mali warn them again.

Encounter Four: Taboo.

The heroes should have the Necromancer's Stone and be on their way into the Jungle of Lost Tribes.

Although it is all jungle, now that you are to cross the stream that marks the boundary of the Jungle of Lost Tribes, you can tell there is a difference. The jungle there is denser, but that is not the main difference. It just feels . . . lost. An agelessness is about it, that is at once serene and eerie.

But your mission is clear, and (name of PC who knows directions) is firm about the direction, straight into the center. Somehow (s)he has the feeling that your travel has at least three more days before you reach the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen.

This is a problem, because it is a taboo area. They have not had any spell cast upon them to lift the taboo, nor have they received the blessing of the guardian, Ubarr, who is dead now. Lead them into it slowly, but the following things happen after the party enters the jungle.

First Day

Increased insect attacks. Most heroes are used to and ignore insect attacks, but these are both persistent and large. On the first two nights, no spellcasters get more than four hours rest. In other words, they can only memorize first and second level spells. Only plantmen, lizardmen, and saurials are immune to this curse. Whoever bears the Stone is also immune to the insects, but (s)he can memorize no spells, having had rather bad nightmares all night.

Second Day

Their food begins to spoil. When they check the second morning, they can salvage only one day's food. Certe items are not affected (shameo, etc.) This is a good opportunity to get them to use up some of the wine and dates or gourds of shameo so many LJ characters are carrying.

If they have no certs, they can try hunting, but they only find a tree with almost-ripe bananas along the route. The wildlife seems to be leaving them alone.

An small earthquake rumbles through. Have all the PCs roll Dexterity checks; only on a natural one do they avoid taking 1d6 points of damage. Those who would have made them seemed to keep their feet, but then slipped and injured themselves. For the rest of the adventure all ability checks and saving throws have a -1 penalty.

Third Day

The insects leave them alone, and spellcasters can memorize spells (except the Stone bearer). The party sees no sign of animal or insect life all day. It is a very strange feeling. The jungle is almost silent.

Any korobokuru, ranger, or jungle tam'hi can sense that the party is climbing, but very gradually. Others have no chance of sensing this.

At the close of the third day, the party witnesses two strange sights.

You are nearing your destination, or so senses (fill in the PC that Ffft selected). And you are climbing as well. A roar shatters the eerie silence of the jungle. It is a gnasher, and it is behind you somewhere. It is not in sight, but it is not far.

The heroes cannot see the gnasher from here, unless they have someone up in a tree. There are several trees that are easily climbable. Once there, the following sight greets them.

Sight of the Ancient

Below you a mile or so you can see the gnasher towering above the trees. It charges across a clearing towards a small grey figure. Then the figure gestures and a garuda out of nightmares appears before him. It is twice as long as the gnasher, with a long sinewy tail. It has great teeth to rival the gnashers, but this garuda is red, and has wings! It is unquestionably a garuda, the scales tell you that, but what kind of garuda has red scales? Now it rears back and fire comes from its mouth and sears the gnasher. The gnasher is furious, and closes with the fire breathing garuda. It is a fierce struggle, but the strange garuda finally finishes off the gnasher. Then the Ancient One gestures again and the garuda is gone. He turns in your direction and walks on into the jungle, out of sight.

In game parlance, the Ancient One just met a gnasher, and defeated it with a *demi-shadow monster* spell. The gnasher was too stupid to fully believe the illusion, but

even the 40% real part of it was enough to beat the gnasher.

The second sight that greets them is in the other direction.

You realize you are very near the top of the hill you have been climbing, A vast valley stretches before you some twenty miles. It should be where you are headed, but you see no mountain, merely a broken jungle valley. From the devastation unleashed upon the plant life here, it is clear that this is where the earthquakes originate.

The hero with the directions knows that what they seek lies at the center of the valley. They also know that the Ancient is not far behind them. It is a few hours before dusk, but they really shouldn't stop tonight.

Once back on the move, they soon crest the hill and all can see the valley below them.

The Mountain that Cannot Be Seen.

It takes well into the night to reach the mountain. (six to seven hours) As the party proceeds, have them make Wisdom or navigation rolls (at a -1 penalty because of the taboo), to notice that the stars seem to be slowly disappearing. They can try each hour until someone notices, then it is automatic. If they look at the center of the valley, they see only more broken jungle. If they look at the sky, they see a small mountain sized hole in the stars. The mountain is protected by magic similar to that of the domes on the edge of the plateau. There is *antipathy* magic (which is cancelled by the Stone), and *illusion* to make the mountain look like nothing more than valley.

The Cave of Three Fingers

As long as the party continues to hurry, they can stay ahead of the Ancient. Their junglecraft far outweighs his. They know exactly where to go to reach the cave, which is found in a cleft in the mountain, already deep within its embrace. Like any good entrance, this one has some guards.

After climbing over the broken jungle for hours, you have finally reached the cave that (fill in name) says is your destination. But it is not unoccupied. As you approach, several lizardmen move out of the cave to confront you. Behind them is a larger form -- No, it's an actual lizard king! He brandishes a huge ceramic trident, and hisses in his own language at you.

Anyone who can speak lizardman understands "You have come to the cave of Three Fingers, but here you will find only your death."

Lizard Men (8); Int Low; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, sw 12, HD 2+1; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 14.

These lizardmen serve a lizard king. If the party is all 2nd level and below, there will only be four lizardmen.

Lizard King (1); Int Avg; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9, HD 8; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6+2; SA skewer (double dmg if attack roll succeeds by 5 or more); SD nil; MR nil; SZ L; ML 16; Sw 15.

The lizard king uses a great trident. If the hit roll succeeds by five or more, the weapon does double damage, with a minimum of 15 points.

The lizardmen are here to guard the caves. It is not a very good place for them to live, but they and their ancestors have always guarded this cave. They have a colony nearby (five miles away, near a swampy area of the valley), and take turns guarding the caves.

If the party contains any lizardmen or saurials, they can try to negotiate with the lizard king. He never intends to let them leave -- they have found the cave, they must die. But he will try to find out what they know: is anyone else coming; how far away are they; how many; etc. Meanwhile his lizardmen are spreading out, the better to rush the heroes. Any hero not actually speaking to the king can make a normal surprise roll to notice this.

If they reveal they have the Stone, the lizard king orders the attack immediately. He thinks they have come to free Ngemba. And since they have, in effect, come to do just that, they can't talk their way out of it.

When the battle is over, someone can pick up the ceramic trident. It is large and unwieldy, so only those with a 16 Strength or better can even wield it. Only those of large size (saru, plantmen of 6th level or higher, oscaray) can wield it without a -1. Don't forget the non-proficiency penalty as well.

After the battle, the heroes find three long caves leading out of the first cave.

Encounter Five: The Cave of Three Fingers.

It is dark in the cave, but materials for torches are available if needed. The caves are no real mystery. A bit of exploration reveals one cave was the lizard king's lair, another was where the lizardmen stayed, and the third was for storage. There are some rather gruesome things stored here for food, as well. But at the end of the storage cave (the one on the left), is a narrow tunnel, blocked off by a large boulder. It requires a successful open doors roll to move the boulder, and only three heroes can try at once.

Once the boulder is moved, the heroes see the narrow tunnel. It is only 3' wide by 6' tall, so some heroes may have trouble. It leads down and into the center of the mountain.

The barrier

You have found the tunnel that should lead to the River of Fire. But only a few hundred feet in, you have come upon a barrier. Not a physical barrier, but rather a magical one. It feels like you are pushing on solid rock, but there is nothing there. There are strange markings on the wall, ancient and unintelligible. But under the markings is a crude picture, showing a being glowing, maybe with fire, passing through the barrier.

The Stone is the easy key to get through, the bearer of the Stone can walk right through. Passing the Stone back to others is an acceptable solution.

Other methods include: being under the influence of a spell, any kind. Fire in the painting merely represented magic, as it was the only way the lizardmen's ancestors (who drew the picture) could depict it.

The final method is to possess the trident of the lizard king, which is magical, only in that it has been enchanted to serve as a key through the barrier.

The Room of Testing

You have entered a large cave. It is lit by luminous fungi, and stretches up out of sight. There are no other exits from the cave, but near the back you can make out a trio of statues.

As you approach this trio, you see that the workmanship is both ancient and exquisite. The trio are depictions of ancients, a male bearing a trident, a female bearing a staff, and a female bearing a crown.

As you approach they all begin to glow with a strange blue light, and their eyes open and seem to fasten on you.

As if from inside your head, you now hear a phrase: "Only for the best will we stand aside. Others may not pass. So tell us now, in turn, what makes you a hero?"

This is not a boasting contest, this is a chance for the heroes to tell exactly why they feel they should be considered heroes. The statues look at each of the heroes in turn. Start with the highest level heroes, and work down.

Go around the table and get a heroic story from each of the PCs. Success is measured in one of two ways.

A heroic story, followed by a successful Charisma roll.

The same heroic story, followed by the use of a hero point. (Removes any need for a Charisma roll.)

The simple statement "I bear the Necromancer's Stone", is enough of a heroic story to succeed for that person with no roll or hero point required. It will not work for more than one hero.

The heroes do not have to make a Charisma roll, nor do they have to spend a hero point. Just make sure to point out that they only get one shot at this. A majority of the heroes must succeed or the mission ends in failure. Do not allow the rolls until all have contributed a story. First level characters may have some trouble here, so be a bit lenient on their stories. They may have only this adventure to draw on. If the party is low on hero points, especially if two have already failed a roll, you might consider awarding a bonus to Charisma (+1 to +4) for any story that involves the hero seriously risking their life for the jungle.

When the stories are completed, the statue of the queen moves aside, revealing an opening in the wall. This tunnel leads to the Cave of Fire.

If the heroes have failed in their stories, they have one last chance. Again, it is the Stone. The voice appears in their heads again; "*You have failed. Why? You carry the key, but you do not use it. If you will not, you must be gone from the place.*"

Anyone brandishing the Stone can get the statue to move, by touching the statue with the Stone.

Encounter Six: The Cave of Fire

Having passed the testing room, you now stand at the entrance to the cave of fire. It is a huge cave, over 100' high and more than twice that across. All about are crevices and gaping pits. From them fires shoot up, almost to the ceiling. In the middle of the cave is what can only be the River of Fire. A small roiling stream of molten lava, bubbling and splattering as it rolls along.

To reach the River, you will have to pass several fire pits and cross a narrow strand of rock that juts out over the River. It won't be easy, but the end of your quest is finally in sight.

As you look about, searching for the best route, there is a almost silent pop, and a flash. Midway between you and the River, the Ancient One has appeared!

"That will be enough of this;" he cries. "I have had it with you fools. Give me back my Stone now, or perish in agony."

The Ancient does not necessarily have to be defeated to get rid of the Stone, it is enough if someone just gets there and drops the Stone in.

The Forgotten Father: hm, W20; AL ?; AC 0 (*bracers*, *Dexterity*, *stoneskin* x11 uses); MV 15; hp 60; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+1 (staff); SA spells; SD immune to *illusions* of 1st and 2nd level; Str 16; Dex 21; Con 16; Int 20; Wis 15; Cha 11; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 20;.

Magic Items: *bracers of defense* AC 4, *staff* +1

Spells available: 1st level - *magic missile*; 3rd level - *Melf's minute meteors*, *spectral force*; 4th level - *wall of fire*; 5th level - *hold monster*; 6th level - *flesh to stone*; 7th level - *power word stun*; 8th level - *power word blind*.

Although he is an archmage, the Forgotten Father has no spell books, so he has not been able to recover any spells since he awoke. Thus, the heroes have a chance. He still has some potent spells left, but it is a mere fraction of his original power.

Fighting the Ancient

The Forgotten Father depends on spells entirely. He appears about 60' in front of the PCs, courtesy of his

last *dimension door*. He will do whatever it takes to wrest the Stone from them.

Combat actions for the Forgotten Father.

- Round one: Cast *wall of fire* in front of the River of Fire. The wall extends 400', in other words from one end of the cavern to the other.
- Round two: *power word blind* on anyone who has managed to get close.
- Round three: *hold monster* on all the non-humanoid PCs in the party. If less than four, he spreads the rest of the *hold* around.
- Round four: *minute meteors* at anyone closing with him. Four meteors this round and five next.
- Round six and beyond: he saves the *power word stun* for anyone who actually hurts him in melee. His last two spells are used if needed. *Stone to flesh* is saved for someone who closes with him, *spectral forces* can be used to reproduce the *wall of fire*, *magic missiles*, or *minute meteors*. *Magic missiles* are used on the bearer of the Stone, if that hero gets close to the River of Fire.

Destroying the Stone.

Of course the heroes do not have to defeat the Ancient, they really only have to destroy the Stone. Someone must make their way to the River of Fire, and put the Stone in.

It takes three rounds of dodging and jumping to reach the River of Fire. It is not that far, but the hero must leap over flaming pits and crevices to make their way there.

Each round the hero must make a Dexterity check. Failure indicates a loss of 1/2 of their total hit points in fire damage. A saving throw vs. breath is allowed for 1/4.

Someone may get the bright idea to just throw the Stone, or have an aarakocra fly over. The Stone cannot be thrown, no matter who throws it, or what the roll is made. The Stone is not going into the lava that way. It actually resists the throw, landing on the bank of the river of lava. If someone makes a real good roll, tell them that the Stone is flying straight and true to the River, but it drops suddenly just short.

An aarakocra flying over is targeted by the Ancient One with his *power word blind* immediately. The flames also shoot high enough that the aarakocra must make the Dexterity checks or take the same damage. (1/2 of total, 1/4 if save vs. breath is made). Flying

heroes must still swoop down. Dropping the Stone in the River does not work, it lands on the bank. Anyone flying over the river of lava is subject to the poisonous gases emitting from it. They must save vs. poison or they will pass out in one round, for 1d4 rounds.

In the end, unless they can fly, someone must pass through the wall of fire. This will cause 2d6 +20 points of damage, with no save allowed. If this will clearly kill the character, give them a choice. They have a feeling that the Stone can protect them from the fire, but they know what happened to the hand of someone who dared touch the Stone. And they would have to touch the Stone to gain the protection of it. Leave it up to them, but make it clear that the fire may well kill them (if that is likely).

If they choose to hold the Stone, they receive 1d6 points of damage each round, and must save each round vs. withering or lose the use of that hand.

When the Stone is destroyed, continue with the next encounter:

Encounter Seven: Ngemba – free!

As the Stone hits the lava, there is a violent eruption. Hot droplets of lava spatter all over the cave, and the Mountain begins to rumble. Just as you are sure that your doom is sealed, a whirlwind forms, driving away the spattering lava, and dampening all the flames in the cave.

The whirlwind solidifies into a figure of power and majesty. Twenty feet tall, with arms like tree trunks and a tail that looks like a small whirlwind, Ngemba is indeed an imposing figure. “I am free” he screams, and the shout causes the very air to quiver.

Ngemba then turns to the Ancient One and says “Silence old one, your struggle is over.” *The Forgotten Father prepares to launch another spell at Ngemba, but the spirit of the air gestures and the Ancient One is frozen in place. He turns to you and speaks, mind to mind. “You have freed me, for this I am thankful. At long last I can return to my home, free of the bounds of this earth. Before I go, I must repay you.” A small whirlwind forms and in turn, touches each of you. “I grant you a small boon, a bit of luck for the future. For my sight tells me you are fated to face many more dangers before the end. I*

feel I owe you more. Is there anything else I could do for you?”

While the heroes are pondering this, point out that the cave around them is in ruins, and the tunnel they entered through is collapsed. If they don’t notice this, Ngemba will.

Other options they could ask for include:

- *Healing or raising any dead heroes (he’ll claim they weren’t actually dead, just mostly dead).*
- *Fixing the hand of someone who had it withered by holding the Stone.*
- *Help against the tamara – he responds with some information: “In the days to come, you will need to seek out the smallest of the lions, for he can stop the return of tiger, but he is weak. He will need your guidance and protection to survive. Only he, and your courage and heroism, give the jungle a hope for survival.*

Any other boon is not in his power to grant, enchanting magic items, raising abilities, that sort of thing.

Finally, he asks the heroes’ advice.

“Now I crave a boon from you. This one has imprisoned me for long, long centuries. What do I do with him. My personal feelings are to destroy him, lest he return as danger to you and me both. Or, I could take him and attempt to heal him, for I know him as no other could. I ask for your judgement: mercy, or prudence. Life or death? What is it to be?”

Let the heroes discuss this, answering any questions they may have.

For mercy: The heroes do know that the Ancient One did not start out as evil, he started out to save the jungle. And he did succeed, suppressing the spirit of the storm throughout the first invasion of tiger, and the many long years between.

For prudence: The heroes also know that the Stone was very evil. The Ancient was turned by it, and destroyed at least three of the most famous and powerful heroes in the jungle.

If someone asks, the accepted penalty for murder in the jungle is usually banishment, not death. There is no place on the plateau that he could be banished that

would be safe. The elemental plane of air is another story, of course.

When the heroes have made their choice, Ngemba transports them to the village of the Rudra. Not as a *teleport*, more like a whirling nauseating flight that shakes them considerably. Then he departs, leaving behind the healing staff of the Ancients, which the Forgotten Father has no use for any longer.

Epilogue.

With the Necromancer's Stone destroyed, the Forgotten Father banished (or dead), you notice an immediate change in the weather. The clouds are breaking up, the sun is shining, and the ground is doing what it's supposed to, lying there quietly.

You have not struck a blow against tiger, but you have struck a blow for Malatra. With the shaking of the earth stilled, the villages of Malatra can rebuild and truly prepare for the coming of tiger.

Ffft and Bengoukee greet you warmly. "You have done well, succeeding where the greatest heroes of Malatra failed;" says Bengoukee. "But hear now another prophecy. So said the great mage Aarakocra, before he died; 'When the Stone is found, and the earth is stilled, then will you know that the time for tiger to come is at hand.' You have saved Malatra from the earthquakes and the monsoons, now we have another task. And this one will be truly dangerous. "

As far as rewards, Ffft offers to teach mages several new spells (*strength*, *slow*, or *seeming*). Other heroes are offered teachers for an additional proficiency (no cert provided). Their choice of: sign language, boating, or herbalism. If the hero already possesses all three, they may add +1 to two of them.

Experience Points

Encounter One:

Try to insist on facing the Forgotten Father with the elder party	100 xp
Bypassing the Waterfall	100 xp
Saving the drowning child	100 xp

Encounter Two:

Defeating the garuda	500 xp
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Encounter Three:

Getting the information from the elder party	100 xp
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Encounter Four:

Defeating lizardmen	100 xp
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Encounter Five:

Gaining entrance to the cave	100 xp
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Encounter Six:

Destroying the Stone	300 xp
Defeating the Forgotten Father without help	400 xp

Discretionary roleplaying experience	0-800 xp
Award for consistent character portrayal	

Maximum Possible Experience:	2,600 xp
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Treasure:

Slow spell fetish: This item is a carved turtle shell. When you meditate upon it, you are able to memorize the *slow* spell. This was given you as a reward by Ffft, the sage of Malatra, as a reward for helping to recover and destroy the Necromancer's Stone, an evil artifact that bound Ngemba, spirit of storms to Malatra.

Trident of the Ancient: This large trident is made of the ceramic of the Ancients. It is nearly unbreakable, receiving a +4 on all item saving throws. It causes 2d4/3d4 +2 points of damage. It is large and unwieldy. Only someone with a 16 Strength can wield it at all, with a -1 to hit. Large heroes, including saru, plantmen of 5th level and above, and oscaray, or anyone over 6' 6" tall can wield it with no minus. You took this weapon from the Lizard King who was guarding the Cave of Three Fingers in the Mountain that Cannot Be Seen.

Strength spell fetish: This item is a small carving of a saru. When you meditate upon it, you are able to grant someone the strength of a saru, by casting the 2nd level spell *strength*. Note that someone with a 19 Strength receives no benefit from this spell. This was given you as a reward by Ffft, the sage of Malatra, as a reward for helping to recover and destroy the Necromancer's Stone, an evil artifact that bound Ngemba, spirit of storms to Malatra.

Seeming spell fetish: This item is a ceramic egg. It is hollow, and inside is a small figure of a pangolin katanga, in biped form. When you meditate upon it you are able to memorize the 4th level spell *seeming*. This was given you as a reward by Ffft, the sage of Malatra,

as a reward for helping to recover and destroy the Necromancer's Stone, an evil artifact that bound Ngemba, spirit of storms to Malatra.

Healing Staff of the Ancients: This ceramic staff contains many intricate carvings and designs. It is usable in combat, as a normal staff. It is a bit fragile, on an attack roll of a natural one, the staff shatters.

It is particularly effective in the hands of a priest. A priest using this staff to focus her healing spells allows her to add +1 to each healing roll. This does not allow the priest to exceed the maximum healing for a spell. Thus, using this staff while casting a *cure light wounds* heals from 2-9 points of damage. You recovered this staff from the Forgotten Father, an Ancient who threatened to release Ngemba, spirit of storms upon Malatra.

Boon of Ngemba x6: You helped free Ngemba, spirit of storms and a powerful noble of the air, from his millennia long imprisonment. In gratitude, he has granted you one boon. This boon takes the form of an extra bit of luck. It may be used in one of two ways.

You may re-roll any ONE saving throw that has been failed.

You may use it to make ONE automatically successful ability check. This use must be declared before the roll is made, it cannot be used to recover from a failed ability check.