

# Shadows Of Sin

Part One In The lacerial Trilogy  
A Low Level (1st-5th) Living Jungle Adventure

**By Stephen H. Jay IV**

“The Council Of Elders is in disarray, many of its members dead or wounded. Without the council to stop them, the Rudra now go to attack the lacerials. Are the Rudrans just holding on to old grudges? Or is there merit to their claims that the lacerials are not the friends they claim to be?”

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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 scenario 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 *italic Century Gothic font*. 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.

## **The Living Jungle Campaign**

Players bring their own characters to Living Jungle events, and are responsible for keeping records of the characters experience, wealth, and possessions. Look over the characters that are brought to your table, both to familiarize yourself with them and to check for unusual magic items or discrepancies. Magic in the Living Jungle is very rare, with permanent magic items being very, very rare. Most Living Jungle possessions will be ornamental, symbolic, or items carried for barter. If a player has an unusual item or items, question them where they got it. If you are not satisfied with their answer, you may disallow the item for the round.

During the course of the adventure, the PCs will earn experience points based upon their accomplishments. Some of these points are for overcoming obstacles, finding information, defeating monsters, and recovering treasure.

This is summarized at the end of the adventure. All characters that contributed 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 participating character receives 100 points. All points will be awarded at the end of the adventure. Do not award experience points after each encounter.

**DM's please note: The maximum experience points available for this tournament is 2,750.** This is attainable only if the heroes do everything correctly and make it through the entire scenario.

This scenario is designed for characters from 1st to 5th level. As such, the opponents encountered in the scenario, their number and capabilities, will stay the same regardless of the total number of levels.

## **At Death's Door**

Living adventures use a version of the Death's Door rule for the duration of the tournament. If a PC is reduced to zero or fewer hit points, he/she does not die immediately. Instead, the PC continues to lose one hit point at the end of each round until aided by another PC or NPC. heroes who go unaided die when they reach -10 hit points.

A PC who is saved "At Death's Door" will have one hit point and will be unable to perform any physical action greater than walking unless magical healed. Spellcasters who fall into the negative hit points lose their spells in memory.

## **DM's Background - The Trilogy**

"Shadows Of Sin" is part one of the "lacerial Trilogy". Statistics on lacerials are included at the end of the scenario. Please familiarize yourself with them before reading on.

As stated in the entry, the lacerials are a people whose lives are filled with tragedy. The extent of the tragedy, and their effects on the lacerials, are the primary subject of the trilogy. Through this plot device the lacerials will decide once and for all if they have a place in the Living Jungle. In other words, can the lacerials survive and prosper, or are they a dying people?

There is, however, another sub-plot that will be resolved by the trilogy. The first has to

do with the elemental forces found in Malatra. In a number of scenarios, the elemental nobles of air, fire, and water have been prominently featured. No 'normal' elementals have ever been witnessed, just the elemental nobility. What interest these nobles have in Malatra will become apparent through the trilogy. In practical terms, their machinations will change the very nature of the jungle itself and result in the conversion of the Living Jungle to AD&D 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

## **DM's Background - Shadow's Of Sin**

Malatra has suffered a tremendous tragedy. While in pursuit of the last surviving ancient, the Council Of Elders is brutally attacked by the ancient. (See the scenarios "Forgotten Father" and "Necromancer's Stone"). Many of the elders are killed, others are wounded. Bengoukee himself was attacked and badly wounded by the Katimayan traitor, Kural.

All of this comes at a time when Malatra is facing its greatest peril. The servants of Tiger are now in total control of the Jungle of Lost Tribes. Other old enemies, such as the tasloi and the Kukaputuri, a cannibal tribe, have been seen again in the Jungle. The Rudrans threaten to make war on the lacerials. The plantpeople and the Huroola have withdrawn themselves from all council matters.

In this scenario, Bengoukee sends the heroes to Rudra on the River of Laughing Idols. It is rumored that the Rudrans are preparing for war with the lacerials, and Bengoukee wants the heroes to stop it. Conflict between the Rudrans and the lacerials would almost certainly spread to a wider conflict at a time when unity against the Tamara is needed the most. The heroes leave and begin their journey downriver to Rudra. Encounter one begins with the heroes a few miles upstream from Rudra.

When the party arrives, the Rudrans will make all kinds of claims as to the evil of the lacerials. The heroes will have to agree to look into these claims to placate the Rudrans, and will find that some of them are true. The lacerials are "trespassing" on lands the Rudrans claim as holy, but out of need not disrespect. The lacerials are also holding commerce with the yuan-ti (who are officially

allies but whom few really trust) and hyena katanga, who are evil and usually chaotic.

During the adventure the heroes must travel to the Rayana Savanna, meet a lion katanga noble, survive a large ambush by the evils allied against them, and recover a spelljamming helm from the wreckage of the oscray's spelljammer. The lacerial mage, Trueblood, believes he can repair the helm and use it to return the lacerials to their true home in a distant sphere.

## **Players Introduction**

*Two days ago Bengoukee summoned you to his hut and said, "Much evil has befallen the good tribes of Malatra. The servants of Tiger prepare for his return. Old enemies once thought vanquished are reappearing while the good peoples of Malatra squabble together like spoiled children. Our needs are great and we have precious few heroes for all the tasks ahead of us.*

*" I have an important task for you. As you know, the Rudrans have never been happy with the lacerials coming to Malatra. Though the lacerial village of Lilac is almost 200 miles away, and the Tenanga people lie between them, the Rudrans are threatening to attack Lilac. If this happens, the rift caused in the council would be irreparable. The yuan-ti would certainly move to protect the lacerials and then it would be all-out war. The spirits save us if Tiger would attack then."*

*Bengoukee continues, "You must travel to the village of Rudra. Talk to the chieftain M't'lak and the shaman Com'lak. Negotiate a peace and reassert the authority of the Council of Elders. Bring peace to these peoples before Tiger attacks and destroys us all.*

*"You go with the full authority of the Council of Elders. You are its voice and its arm. Bring unity to the good peoples of Malatra, before it is too late."*

## **Encounter One - Drums Of War**

*You are on the River of Laughing Idols, a few miles from the village of Rudra. It is mid-morning. The jungle is filled with the sounds of drums. The*

drums are relaying messages from one Rudran village to the other.

A hero with “Drums-Signaling” proficiency can decipher the drums message. They are a call for all warriors, shamans, and witch-doctors of the Rudra to gather for war upon the lacerials. The drums say that the gathering has already begun, but the time of the first raid upon the lacerials will not be decided until tonight.

The Rudra drums are not coded and can be understood by anyone with the drums-signaling proficiency.

The heroes may decide to travel on down to Rudra on the river or walk overland. Either way, they will be met by a group of Rudran warriors. The heroes can also decide to sneak up on the village and spy on its activities. There is no need for this, as the Rudrans make no secret as to their intentions, but spying will make the xenophobic Rudrans even more suspicious of the heroes’ motives.

*The village of Rudra is a group of some 50 or 60 river huts on stilts nearly the height of a Nubari. Two great watchtowers oversee the village, while a pair of rope bridges span the river.*

**Rudran Warriors (20), F4:** AC 5; MV 12; hp 20; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (Spear); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 13.

The Rudran warriors will be suspicious of the heroes. If the heroes act aggressive they will be asked to leave. If they are courteous and say they have been sent by the council, a warrior will spit upon the ground and say, “The Council thinks they are rulers of all Malatra. Rudrans do not take orders from outsiders!” The warriors will try to bluff the heroes and tell them they should leave “for their own sake.” If the heroes stand firm, however, the warriors will take the heroes to see the village elders.

*You are taken to the center of the village where a dozen men sit gathered in a circle. Ten of the men are in white cotton togas, a symbol of elder rank among the Rudra. One man is a huge, well-muscled warrior wearing a large headdress. The second man is clearly a shaman.*

The ten men in togas are the actual ‘elders’, wise men who have survived into their 60's and

70's and act as living libraries and rememberers. They are classless NPCs. The man in the headdress is the chieftain M't'lak. The shaman is Com'lak.

**M't'lak, Chief Of The Rudra. Nubari male F9:** AL LN; AC 2 (Magical Headdress); MV 12; hp 91; THACO 9 (str bonus, weapon bonus); #AT 2; Dmg 1-10+3 (ceramic war club); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 19.

**Com'lak, Shaman Of The Rudra P8:** AL NG; AC 8. MV 12; hp 62; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or club (1d6); SA spells; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 17.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> - *command, detect evil, entangle.* 2<sup>nd</sup> - *augury, barkskin, hold person.* 3<sup>rd</sup> - *dispel magic, summon insects, tree.* 4<sup>th</sup> - *cure serious wounds x2.*

Chief M't'lak speaks. “If you have come as friends of the Rudra, you may join us in our attack of the vile Garuda-People!”

“Garuda-People” is the Rudran word for lacerial. It is pejorative term.

Chief M't'lak is a powerful Nubari, strong of will and body. The Rudrans admire strength above all else; that is how their chiefs are chosen. M't'lak listens to his elders and his shaman, but in the end it is he and he alone that makes the decisions for the tribe. M't'lak tolerates no dissent once a decision is made. M't'lak remembers when, three years ago, the garuda-people raided his village, killed many of his people, and kidnapped his daughter. The fact that this was done by a different group of lacerials under a misguided ruler means little to M't'lak. He's always wanted an excuse to strike back at the lacerials, but the Council has always convinced him to hold back for the good of Malatra. With the Council weakened, M't'lak believes he now has his chance. Some might call this revenge. M't'lak calls it justice.

*“We warned the garuda-people to leave the grove alone. They insulted us by trying to barter for the plants, as if holy things could be bought and sold and traded!”*

*“One night our scouts spied upon their village and saw proof, the absolute positive proof, that the garuda-people are evil creatures which traffic with the unclean. They*

have been dealing with hyena katanga, have had them in their very village and treated them as honored guests!"

*It is clear the garuda-people plot with their snakemen brothers to kill us and betray all of Malatra to Tiger."*

Hyena katanga live on the Rayana Savanna in large numbers; it would be unusual to find them in this jungle. They are opportunistic and voracious, and guard their lands jealously. It is said that they are in constant conflict with the lion katanga that also call the Rayana home. It is commonly believed that hyena katanga are evil, though in truth they can be chaotic neutral as well.

Shaman Com'lak has no love for the lacerials, but he doesn't particularly hate them either. Com'lak has supported Chief M'tlak because he has always resented the Council of Elders' attempts to tell him what to do. Com'lak is no fool, however. He knows that there is merit to the Council's claims that an attack on the lacerials could result in a larger war that would devastate Malatra.

Once introductions of some sort are made, run the encounter along the following lines:

*M'tlak says, "Ever since the garuda-people have come, evil has stalked Malatra. Things began to change. The earthquakes and storms came, and the omens of Tiger began to appear. All this started with the garuda-people and their evil ways."*

*Com'lak adds, "What concerns me most is their apparent kinship to the snakemen, the yuan-ti. The snakemen make no secret of their disdain for us 'warm bloods'. It is clear that they ally themselves with us because of their fear of Tiger, and because their evil god, the Snake-Earth mother, commands them to. Whose to say they won't change their mind and attack us tomorrow?"*

Finally, the conversation will get around to what has caused the Rudrans to act.

*"Several moons ago we discovered that the garuda-people had been raiding our sacred vanilla groves. It is true that these groves are not on Rudran lands, for the spirits tell us that no one, not even the Rudra, can claim these lands*

*as our own. So we share this holy place with the Tenanga. We were ready to share them with the garuda-people until they violated the sacred grove! They tore out many of the sacred plants and angered the spirits!"*

What really happened: The grove of vanilla plants lies some two days' travel down the river and then another two days' travel east through the jungle. This puts the grove in the middle of unclaimed territory, between Lilac in the south and the swamp of the snake-men in the north. The lacerials did take two-dozen of the plants for reasons that will be made apparent in a later encounter. They did not "tear them out" as the Rudrans claim, but carefully transplanted them. The vanilla plants are very important to the lacerials as well as the Rudrans.

The heroes were sent here to stop a war. The only way they will find out what is really happening is to travel to Lilac and see for themselves. If the heroes don't suggest this then the Rudrans will suggest it themselves. The two Rudran leaders are not fools and know that war with the garuda-people could be very costly. If they could convince the Council of Elders that the lacerials are a threat, then the Rudrans might get support in any conflict with them.

The Rudrans will insist on two things. First, that a number of Rudran warriors accompany them. This is both to make sure that the heroes don't take the lacerials side unfairly, and to make sure that these 'representatives of the Council' aren't hurt by the lacerials or the snake-men. Both M'tlak and Com'lak will come as well. This is a tricky situation, and both men know that quick decisions may need to be made, either for peace or for war.

Second, the heroes must go and see for themselves the damage done to the grove.

There is no negotiating these conditions. If the heroes refuse, M'tlak will simply declare war immediately and forcibly forbid the heroes from warning Lilac or the Council of their intentions.

## Encounter Two - Something Rotten In The Vanilla Groves

After much discussion you head for the sacred vanilla groves. M't'lak, Com'lak, and 20 Rudran warriors accompany you first in boats on the river, then in a column through the jungle. Near the end of the second day, you arrive at the groves.

The "grove," as the Rudrans called it, is actually a clearing in the jungle in a small valley. A huge mass of vanilla plants - climbing, orchid-like plants with small white flowers - covers an area the size of the Rudran village. The plants are full of the dangling vanilla pods, and everywhere is the perfumed smell of the flowers. Here and there you spy small outgrowths of other rare plants, but overall the vanilla plants dominate everything.

The Rudrans fall to one knee on the trail leading into the grove and say, "To our brothers and sisters of the jungle, mother of our life and father of our teacher, we give thanks." The Rudrans then rise and Com'lak says, "Come. I will show you the signs of their sacrilege."

Com'lak will take the heroes to where the vanilla plants have been removed. Any hero making a **Herbalism** check will notice that the vanilla plants here are very healthy and robust and that the plants were removed from the edges of the grove. If the **Herbalism** is made by 4 or more the hero can say with confidence that the grove is recovering nicely. A successful **Herbalism** check at half reveals that they were removed very carefully and with obvious concern for the health of the grove. Here and there the heroes will see what the lacerials have left behind - hide armor, jewelry, food, wine, and elaborately carved totem staves. Any lacerial hero can identify these items as definitely lacerial in manufacture and very valuable. No Rudran will touch these 'offerings.'

The grove is an herbalist's dream. The Rudrans have no objection to the removal or harvest of any other plant here. Their concern is only for the vanilla plants. If the heroes decide to harvest any rare plant, however, they will be ambushed by the tasloi.

While exploring or harvesting the grove, the heroes will be attacked by a large group of tasloi. Roll for surprise at a -4. Several dozen

will attack the Rudrans and their leaders, while 12 will attack the heroes.

**Tasloi (12 against heroes):** AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, cl 15; HD 1; hp 10; THACO 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg by javelin (1d6) or by net (entangle); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 10.

The Tasloi leaders are attacking the Rudrans.

Tasloi are long-legged, flat-headed humanoids. Though not very fearsome individually, they are dangerous in numbers. Tasloi are awkward on the ground but very nimble in the trees. Their favorite attack is to throw their nets from the trees (those surprised are automatically hit. If the target has less than 15 strength they are helplessly entangled. If greater than 15 they may make a successful open doors to rip open the nets and escape).

The tasloi once roamed the jungle in great numbers, but were beaten back many years ago by the Huroola, who went after them with a vengeance. Some Malatrans believed the tasloi extinct, though any PC who rolls under half their Intelligence will recall a rumor that the tasloi had returned and were supposedly helping the servants of Tiger. The rumor has not been taken seriously, however. In truth the Tasloi have, as of yet, had no contact with Tiger.

The DM should continue the fight until the tasloi fighting the heroes fail morale and flee. The Rudrans will easily defeat their opponents, but two Rudran warriors will have to return to Rudra.

The tasloi will avoid capture at all costs. Since they intend to eat the party (this attack was merely an attempt to feed their village), they believe that they will suffer the same fate if captured. Once they have made it into the trees, only a saru with tracking will be able to follow them. If a hero saru is foolish enough to follow the fleeing Tasloi very far, he will find himself the victim of another ambush.

Tasloi speak their own guttural tongue and do not understand Malatran Common. If a *tongues* spell is cast, they will refuse to cooperate. They will under no circumstances lead the heroes back to their village.

The only 'treasure' the tasloi have are shrunken heads they carry around as trophies.

Com'lak and M'tlak will see the Tasloi as further evidence of the 'evil of the garuda-people.'

IF THE HEROES TRY TO HARVEST THE GROVE, GO TO ENCOUNTER THREE. IF NOT, SKIP TO ENCOUNTER FOUR

### **Encounter Three - A Couple Of Guys**

Once the heroes begin to harvest the grove, the two lesser nature spirits that care for the grove will manifest.

**Pumba and Timon, lesser grove spirits:** AL NG; AC 4; MV 12; HD 8; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 3 (bite, claw, claw); Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA bite save vs paralysis or held for 2d4 rounds; SD hit by magic or magical weapons only, may change to their spirit form in one round and transfer back into the grove; SW if grove is destroyed, spirit dies, if spirit is slain, grove loses its robust vigor and health, necromancy spells do double damage; MR nil; SZ S; ML 18.

Pumba is in warthog form. Although not very smart he is big-hearted and prone to give away the bounty of the grove to anyone with a sad story. Pumba is also flatulent, and claims to be the primary source of grove fertilization. STR 16 DEX 16 CON 18 INT 9, WIS 9, CHA 16.

Timon is in mongoose form. While Timon is kind at heart he is also a smart alec and a bit impatient. It is Timon who is responsible for all the 'offerings' left by the lacerials and, in the past, the Rudrans. He tells anyone who comes to harvest the grove that they must leave offerings. While the spirits can't actually use the things left them, Timon insists that it is the thought that counts. STR 12, DEX 18, CON 12, INT 16, WIS 16, CHA 14.

A dialogue may go something like this:

Pumba: "Hey, Timon! Look what I found rooting around our grove!" (Referring to Heroes).

Timon: "Now wait a minute. Who do you think you are? We're the guardian spirits here. We're the ones who have worked our fingers to the bone getting things to grow. What d'ya think you're doing?"

Pumba: "Aw, c'mon Timon. Look, one of them hurt! We gotta' help them. Here, I have a great big basket of grubs for ya!"

The grubs, in fact, will heal the heroes of all wounds - if eaten alive. DM should feel free to narrate the largest, crunchiest bug he/she can imagine.

The purpose of this encounter is two-fold. First, comic relief. The DM is free to make the heroes jump through any whimsical hoops he'd like before offering help.

Second, Timon and Pumba can tell the heroes that the lacerials took great care in harvesting the vanilla plants and left behind everything that the spirits asked for them in return. Timon will add, "*What a sad bunch, though. Just kept giving us stuff and wouldn't sit down and laugh awhile. You know, what ever happened to the gentle art of conversation? Almost as bad as the Rudrans. Sure, bowing and scraping is fine if you're into that sort of thing, but they just won't TALK to us.*"

The spirits don't know why the lacerials needed the vanilla plants.

As for the tasloi, the spirits have ignored them. "They stay in there part of the jungle and we stay in ours."

If the heroes are well-behaved and offer either offerings or good conversation and a sense of humor, the spirits will give them a number of rare herbs and seeds. The DM should not give these items out unless the heroes get into the spirit of the encounter. If the players make an extra special effort at roleplaying, and the heroes, really entertain Timon and Pumba, then the two give them healing bugs as well. **See Treasure Summary at the end of the adventure for items given.**

If the heroes mention 'Tiger' or the 'Tamara', the spirits will immediately act frightened. "*Don't even talk about those guys! They give me the creeps. Not to mention those irritating Yaksha. Always floating in here trying to upset the plant life. Don't worry, there are none here now. They wanted to rumble and so we showed them the Jungle Rumble! Kicked their shadow patooties clean out of here.*"

Timon and Pumba will claim to have little knowledge of what happens outside their grove. If pressed they will say, "Look, we're not supposed to say anything, but I'll tell you this: Lion and Tiger are both very close. But the

sleeping powers are even closer. When the great Earth spirit finally wakes up and joins the rest, EVERYTHING will change. We can say no more."

The PCs have to sleep somewhere now. The following day they probably head for Lilac.

Near mid-afternoon the next day you crest a hill and catch a glimpse of Lilac through the trees. It is difficult to see anything in detail, but the village looks busy.

## Encounter Four - Lilac

The heroes must decide whether to approach Lilac openly or stealthily.

### STEALTHY APPROACH

You find a position overlooking Lilac and settle down to observe. You don't have to wait long before things get interesting.

First you notice the snake-men. There are perhaps two dozen of them intermingling with the lacerials. Some seem to be acting as sentries for the village. What the others are doing is unclear.

Very shortly you also see half a dozen oscaray emerge from a hut. One of the lacerials, a hornhead, hands several sacks to the oscaray. The oscaray opens one of the sacks and dumps its contents on the ground. From this distance you think they are coconuts. The oscaray gather up the objects, bow to the lacerial, and leave to the north.

A few hours later you get another shock. Six large dog-like creatures enter the village yapping, barking, and snarling. After being surrounded by yuan-ti and lacerial warriors, the dogs change into Nubari! They are hyena katanga! The hyena katanga enter a hut with several of the lacerials. They emerge several hours later and leave the village, heading north.

After all this has been witnessed, a troop of yuan-ti and lacerial warriors will discover the heroes and Rudrans and escort them to the village.

### OPEN APPROACH

You approach Lilac and are met by a large group of yuan-ti and lacerial warriors. A finhead and a yuan-ti step forward. The yuan-ti

immediately shouts, "What are you doing here! You have many warriors - are you a raiding party?" The yuan-ti then winces and turns to the finhead lacerial. He says, "My apologies, cousin."

The yuan-ti points to the Finhead. "This is Strongarm, Guardian of the Lacerials. I am Fisster, Third Servant of the Snake-Mother." With a look of disgust, Fisster continues. "We welcome you to the sanctuary that is Lilac. How may we help you?"

Lilac is normally closed to outsiders, though any pleas for aid from good creatures are always answered. Fisster is a typical snakeman in that he considers all mammals as lower life forms, mere animals meant for labor and consumption. Lacerials are held in high regard by snakemen, and Strongarm has proven his prowess in battle many a time. Since lacerials speak primarily through scents, Fisster will have to interpret for Strongarm until the mage Trueblood arrives (This, of course, need not be the case if a hero has a *tongues* or *comprehend languages* spell available). It is through Strongarm's influence that Fisster will be kept reluctantly polite to the heroes.

Once the heroes explain why they are here, Strongarm will agree to let them enter the village. Fisster will translate, "These are serious charges. The rest of our leaders are in council with others and I cannot speak with you by myself. Please, allow us to show you to comfortable guest lodgings until Trueblood, Starr, and Swiftwing can meet with you. You will be feed and cared for until they are ready to meet with you."

If the heroes balk, make it clear to them that this is the only way they will be allowed to enter Lilac.

The PCs will be shown to a very large hut and compound (see description of lacerial huts below). The entire group of heroes and 20 Rudran warriors will be able to fit within this compound. They will be allowed to keep all their weapons, but will be closely guarded at all times. Any hero that sneaks away to observe may see the comings and goings of the oscaray and hyena katanga, but only at a distance. Additionally, there is a 20% chance every hour that the hero will be discovered, caught, bound, and returned to the compound, all as politely as possible.

If no hero sneaks out of the compound, have a random hero find a hole in the foliage surrounding the compound. Through it the heroes will witness the oscaray, the hyena katanga, and the exchange of shrunken heads.

### VILLAGE DESCRIPTION

If the heroes show the inclination to observe or explore Lilac through this or the next encounter, the DM may relate or role-play the following:

**1) Moment Of Remembrance.** Each night all the lacerials in the village will drop to one knee, place their hands over their hearts, and look toward the southern sky. They will give off a heady mixture of scents. Roses for sadness, lilac for home, and ozone/burnt blood for despair.

**2)** If asked further about their situation or the lack of lacerial young (see next encounter), the lacerials will say simply, "We have no Soul-Singer. We have no Soul-Seeker. Without our teachers, we are lost. We cannot go home, we cannot live here. If this continues long enough, we will all die."

**3) Lacerial Huts** - Reflecting the four body-types of the lacerials, individual huts vary greatly. Flyers prefer open-sided roots elevated 6' to 25' above the ground. They are flimsy compared to the other three types, as flyers can't stand the idea of a lot of weight over them. As a result, flyer huts usually need repair after every storm.

Bladebacks and finheads have simple, sturdy structures that appear plain on the outside. Inside is just one big room, but the walls and floors are always decorated. Bladebacks have decorations in simple colors, textures, and shapes, though the different decorations in the hut usually relate to each other in some way. Finheads prefer more complex but unrelated art.

Hornheads have large huts to fit their large frames. They are open-sided on one side like flyers, and sometimes come with only half a roof. Ambitious hornheads will also build a half-wall around an adjoining compound, making a 'backyard' of sorts. Their huts and backyards are filled with foliage of all kinds, though mages do keep an covered, more

aesthetically sterile area for their arcane studies.

All lacerial huts are a mixture of mud and dried, thin reeds laid onto a bamboo or palm framework. Lacerials often use living plants as part of their structure.

## Encounter Five - Shadows Of Sin

*It is late into the night before you hear from your hosts. A flyer and several snakemen enter your hut, though this flyer is able to speak for himself. "Leaders come, warriors stay. Talk, talk, leaders talk. You come."*

*You enter a hut similar to the one you left. In it are Strongarm, Fisster, and three other lacerials - a hornhead, a bladeback, and a flyer. The hornhead gestures and you can suddenly understand them and be understood by them.*

*The hornhead speaks, "I am Trueblood. This is the flyer Quickwing and the bladeback Starr. Strongarm and Fisster you know. We welcome you and offer you water. How may we help you?"*

The heroes now have the opportunity to make their case. If they don't, Com'lak and M'tlak will. Use your judgment, but allow the heroes to ask their questions and draw out an explanation from the lacerials gradually and reluctantly. Below is an example of how the conversation might go.

PC: "The Rudra have made serious claims against you."

Trueblood: "The Rudra were wronged by us in the past and have long memories. We ask their forgiveness and offer to make amends."

PC: "These are very specific accusations."

Starr: "Such is the moral justification for their anger with us maintained."

PC: "They say you have raided their sacred vanilla grove."

Trueblood: "The grove is sacred to us as well. Like the Rudra, we do not claim ownership."

PC: "They say you stole some plants."

Strongarm: "How can we steal what no one owns?"

Fisster: "These are lesser creatures, cousin. Why do you stand their questioning?"

Starr: "We must show tolerance, snake cousin. It was through intolerance that we almost destroyed ourselves."

PC: "But you did take the plants."

Trueblood: "Yes."

PC: "Why?"

Starr: "Our reasons are a personal matter."

PC: "We saw you give shrunken heads to the oscray."

Starr: "They were oscray heads. We recovered them from the evil ones, tasloi, I think you call them, and gave them back to the oscray people in exchange for a favor."

PC: "What favor?"

Trueblood: "That is a personal matter."

PC: "What of the hyena katanga we saw here earlier?"

Trueblood: "That is a personal matter."

Eventually, the heroes will convince the lacerials to come clean. The DM should roleplay this out instead of reading the boxed text verbatim.

*Trueblood suddenly says, "Enough. You have convinced us that the only way to prevent conflict among us is to tell you our story." A great smell of roses fills the air, and the lacerials look downcast. "Ours is a story of sorrow that does not end.*

*"What we will tell you is a very private and personal matter. We will not tell you everything, but we will tell you enough to allay your fears. Perhaps you will even be kind enough to assist us.*

*"We do this because we are a dying people. You may have noticed that we have no young. My people have laid no eggs since coming to Malatra. Our gods have abandoned us in this place and now we face extinction. The vanilla was used for a fertility spell, but it failed. Now we search the oscray skyship for a device that the oscray believe is damaged beyond repair. It is called a spelljammer helm. I believe I can repair it where the oscray failed. With it, I can take my people back home.*

*"We wish to travel to the wreckage of the oscray's spelljammer, their 'skyship' as you call it. We took the remains of their dead from the tasloi and gave them to the oscray. In return they have given us permission to take from their spelljammer anything we find there. Also, we needed safe passage through hyena katanga lands in the Rayana Savannah in order to reach the skyship. The hyena katanga you saw was an emissary from the hyena clans. We gave them tribute for permission to enter their lands."*

The Rudrans will be suspicious of this claim, but also happy at the prospect of the lacerials leaving.

*"Gather your warriors, Trueblood," M't'lak will say. We will go with you to the hyena katanga lands. "If there is a chance of your people going home, I will help. Besides," he will say with a smile, "none of my tribe have ever gone to the hyena lands. I will be the first."*

The Rudrans send eight of their warriors and Com'lak back to Rudra. For now, the war has been called off. Yet you know that M't'lak will return to his path of conflict with the lacerials in a moment if he decides that they have lied to him. The other eight warriors will accompany him to the hyena lands.

The lacerials include six warriors and shaman, Trueblood, and Strongarm. The lacerial warriors wield oddly balanced weapons that they alone seem able to use.

Fisster and eight other snake-men finish out your expedition. The yuan-ti avoid anyone not of reptilian nature. You often catch them looking at you with repugnance and looking at the Rudrans with hostility.

It is another day and a half before everyone is ready to depart for the Rayana Savannah. The lacerials have proven to be gracious hosts.

Even M't'lak and Com'lak seem surprised at what they see.

## Encounter Six - He Who Greets With Fire

Three days of hard travel later, the heroes reach the southern tip of the savannah.

*The jungle falls away and before is the vast expanse of the savannah. The waist-high brown grasses sway back and forth softly with the breeze. In the distance you see great herds of antelope, gazelle, and zebra.*

*After a bit more travel you come across the beginnings of a great rift in the ground. Though Trueblood takes you along the west side of the rift, you can see clearly a herd of tontors (elephants) on the east side. Several large males eye you warily from their side of the rift, but make no move to cross it.*

Roll for surprise. Those who fail will be startled by the sudden appearance of a dozen female lions and one very large male. They stand up in the tall grass thirty feet away. Ask for hero reactions. Remember, since the heroes are on the savannah, there are no trees in which to hide. Only the tall grass and the great rift.

The tontors on the opposite side of the rift are Tontor Katanga. The lions are Lion Katanga. The two species are rarely seen Lawful Good creatures, allies and protectors of the savannah and the secrets it holds. They are bitter enemies of the hyena katanga. Throughout this encounter, the tontor katanga will not interfere unless a member of the party crosses the rift. If this happens, the tontor katanga will verbally warn the heroes away, attacking if the heroes ignore the warning. These tontor are guardians of the Tontor lands and will allow no trespassers.

Pause for player reaction.

*M't'lak grasps his great war club and shouts, "I've always wanted to fight a lion, and look at the size of that beast! I must have him!"*

If the heroes do nothing to stop him, M't'lak strides out to do battle with the big male. The lion katanga remains in his lion form and

rushes out to meet him. No Rudran warriors will interfere, nor will the female lion katangas.

**Lion Katanga Stats, Females (12), F6:** AC 5; MV 12/24; HD 6+2; hp 32; THACO 15, #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite), Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10; SA Rear Claws rake for 1d4 if both front claws hit; SD Surprised only on a 1; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

**In-Twy-Da-May-La, Lion Katanga Noble F10:** AC 5; MV 12/24; HD 10; hp 70; THACO 11; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite), Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10, SA Rear Claws rake for 1d4 if both front claws hit; SD Surprised only on a 1; MR nil; SZ M; ML 17.

**Tontor Katanga (in Tontor form) (12), F7:** Int Very; AL LG; AC 6; MV 15; HD 7; hp 49; THACO 14; # AT 5; Dmg 2-16/2-16/2-12/2-12/2-12; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ L (11'); ML 14.

The tontor katanga will remain in tontor form. They will not interact with the heroes and are here only for effect.

The DM may narrate the battle as follows, providing the heroes do nothing to interfere:

**Round one** - M't'lak stands his ground and waits for the rush of the lion. The lion leaps at M't'lak, who ducks, rolls under the lion, and strike the beast in the hindquarters.

**Round two** - Unfazed, the lion spins and swipes at M't'lak, catching the chief squarely in the chest. Deep gashes from the claws spurt blood as M't'lak is knocked back. M't'lak raises his club and brings it down on the side of the lion's head. Both combatants back off, staggering slightly.

**Round three** - M't'lak once again leaps forward, making a jab for the lion's eyes. He misses as the lion bats the club away and sinks its jaws into the throat of M't'lak.

**Round four** - The lion shakes M't'lak viciously back and forth. M't'lak pulls a dagger from his belt and plunges it twice into the lion's throat.

**Round five** - The lion shakes M't'lak again as blood pours down M't'lak's chest. With a mighty shove M't'lak pushes the lion away and staggers back.

**Round six** - M't'lak reaches down for his war club, but the lion gives him no time. It launches itself at M't'lak, knocking him to his back and landing on top of him.

**Round seven** - M't'lak stabs twice more with his dagger into the beast's flank. The lion slashes with claws and fangs in a frenzy of blood. In a moment, M't'lak lies still.

If M't'lak does indeed die, refer to DM's conclusion at the end.

The heroes may intervene at anytime, stopping the fight. While the heroes may believe that M't'lak is fighting an ordinary lion, any hero with jungle lore knows that the savannah is the home of lion katanga. If asked, Trueblood also knows.

If the heroes intervene to save M't'lak's life, the lion will back off and say (while still in lion form), "He has challenged me to combat. One of us must die or yield."

M't'lak will only yield in round five or after. Otherwise, a hero may physically stand between the combatants or otherwise risk personal injury to prevent the fight from continuing. The lion katanga will say, "Rarely have I seen such heroism. For your sake, I yield to this great warrior." If this happens, reward the hero with a Hero Point.

If the hero volunteers to shield M't'lak with his/her body and actually takes damage while trying to separate the combatants, the lion katanga will yield as listed above and the hero will receive a special cert at the end of the scenario for his "scars of honor".

Remember to note either ending in the DM's conclusion.

M't'lak, incidently, will be quite pleased with himself the rest of the scenario for "winning" the battle.

If the heroes try to attack the lion at any time, the Rudran warriors will intervene to restrain them. "You may ask M't'lak to stop fighting, but you must not help him. If he lives, he would kill you for the insult."

*After the battle, the wounded lion changes into a large Nubari warrior. "I am In-twy-da-may-la, 'He Who Greets With Fire' in the common tongue. I am lord of the Southern Clan. Your friend was a mighty warrior whom I have honored with combat. Now tell me, why are you here?"*

After listening to the heroes, In-twy-da-may-la, will respond:

*"Yes, I know of the great skyship. It is in hyena lands, a very evil place. Only the very foolish or the very brave venture there.*

*"You may cross our lands on your heroic quest, but be warned: do not stray from your path. The lion lands are sacred to us and hold many treasures important to Malatra. It is from our lands that the Vizerathu, the spirit of the lion, will appear to do battle with Tiger. Any intrusion would be met with violence. We would regret your deaths, but would not hesitate to kill you.*

*"Do not trust the Hyena clans. You say you have bargained for safe passage, but the Hyena sometimes break their word. Also, they do not speak with one voice: there are many clans."*

*Finally, "We have listened to the spirits of the sky and they tell us many strange things. The Lion clans believe that Tigers servants may be found in Hyena lands. Be wary."*

## **Encounter Seven - Ambush**

*For two more days you travel north in lion lands, always followed by a large pride of lion at a discreet distance. Game animals are bountiful here, and those use to the fruits of the forest find a surprising number of edible roots and berries. Still, those of you not familiar with the broad openness of the savannah find the open sky unsettling.*

*On the third day your lion escort falls away and you enter a somewhat more barren landscape. It is still the savannah with its grasses and grains, but food is by no means bountiful here. The fruits and roots are less common and the game herds much smaller, the individual gazelle and antelope smaller and less healthy. Somehow you know that you've entered hyena lands. You don't see any hyena, but you nevertheless feel their dour presence.*

*After another half-day's travel the heroes see the sky-ship. It is some 200' long. On one end is the carven image of a red snake or lizard (it's actually a dragon, but only those heroes who have played 'Necromancer's Stone' have ever*

seen a dragon). The hull is crumpled and broken in several places.

*Everything is quiet. Even the breeze has stilled. Trueblood says through a spell, "We must go aboard and find the spelljammer - Strongarm and I know what to look for. Then we shall see if I can repair it."*

Ask what the heroes intend to do. When the party approaches the spelljammer, have them roll for surprise. A large number of hyena katanga are hiding in the tall grasses and will attack.

For the sake of combat, you may ignore most of the hyena katanga, the Rudran warriors, the yuan-ti, Fisster, M'tlak, Trueblood, and Strongarm. They are the "NPC group" and their combat is scripted. You need only concern himself/herself with the heroes and the enemies listed below.

### **Rounds one and two.**

NPC group is attacked by three dozen hyena katanga.

The heroes are ambushed by five hyena katanga which will fight to the death. If the heroes are primarily 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level, let a few Rudrans or lacerials aid them in their combat

**Hyena Katanga (5 attacking heroes):** Int 13; AL NE; AC 5; MV 12/24; HD 5+1; hp 26; THACO 15; #AT 1, Dmg 2-12 (bite); SA Locking Bite (successful hit results in automatic damage following rounds until victim makes bend bars roll), SD Never Surprised; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12.

### **Round three.**

NPC group continues to fight the hyena katanga.

The heroes will see movement on the skyship and will realize that there are other creatures on the ship.

### **Round four.**

NPC group will fight hyena katanga for the remainder of the encounter.

Heroes will see a creature with the grotesque head of a giant spider stand on two legs like a Nubari. It has three pairs of arms at the shoulders, mid-torso, and the hips. Each of the two upper arms is human-like and ends in a hand with five clawed fingers. Each of the

four lower arms ends in a pair of pincer-like claws. This is a spinning spider katanga.

The Spider Katanga appears, gestures, and M'tlak is held. Trueblood and Strongarm are attacked by six kretch.

### **Round five:**

Combat continues one of two ways as outlined below. Either way, the spider katanga will cast *burning hands* on the spelljammer hull. The broken timbers of the hull will begin to slowly to burn. After 5 rounds, the fire will roar out of control and will destroy the spelljamming helm inside.

Handle the remainder of the combat in one of two ways.

- If the hero party is of high enough level, let them fight their way through the kretch, save M'tlak (if that is their plan) and attack the spider katanga, attempting to stop it from burning up the spelljammer.
- If the heroes are low level, then have several lacerial and Rudran warriors leap to their leaders rescue, leaving the heroes to struggle with the spider katanga.

Unless a hero (higher level party) attempts to intervene in some way, M'tlak is slain by a kretch. Allow the heroes a fair opportunity to prevent this from happening.

Continue the combat for Trueblood, Strongarm, the Kretch, and the Spider Katanga at your discretion.

**Spinning Spider Katanga, W6:** AL CE; AC 4; MV 12, wb 15; hp 31; THACO 19 or 18; #AT 7 or 1; Dmg 1/1/1/1/1/1/1-4 (6 arms, bite) or 1-4+2 (dagger); SA spells, poison (2-12 points of dmg, save for half); SD spells, *armor* precast (14 points), *shield* precast; MR nil; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 9; SZ M; ML 18.

Save vs. Paralyzation: 13, Save vs. Spells: 10

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level - *magic missile* x2, *burning hands*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level - *web*, *levitate*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level - *flame arrow*, *dispel magic*.

**Kretch (6):** AC 4; MV 12; HD 7; hp 35; THACO 13; #AT 2/1/1; Dmg 1d6+7 x2 (Claws), 1d4 (Bite), 1d8 (Horn Gore), or by weapon type; SA *polymorph object* three times daily; SD immune

to poison, 270 degree field of vision, only surprised on a 1; MR nil; Str 19; SZ L; ML 14.

Kretch are large, saru-like creatures capable of great cunning and ferocity. They are green-furred, have four eyes, a single horn, and huge, hinged jaws filled with serrated fangs. For more information, read the description at the end of the scenario.

At the end of combat, all enemy forces are either dead or have retreated. Four Rudra, four snake-men, and five lacerials survive. Fisster has also survived. Captured kretch will never cooperate with the heroes. Other enemy forces will reveal that the ambush was an attempt to eliminate the leaders of both the Rudra and the lacerials at the same time, then to spread rumors that would insure a war between the two peoples.

## **Encounter Eight - The Treasure**

Trueblood must now prepare himself to repair the spelljamming helm, providing the fire is not raging out of control. If Trueblood is killed, then Strongarm or one of the surviving lacerials will take the helm back to Lilac to Trueblood's apprentice.

Trueblood (or Strongarm) says, "I think this is proof that the Hyena Katanga are working with the servants of Tiger. We must waste no time. Enter the skyship while we stand guard. Find the spelljamming helm. It will look like a large chair with many attachments. Remove it from its moorings and bring back to us."

The inside of the skyship is a jumble or wrecked and crushed decks, but the helm is set suspiciously out in the open. It is at the bottom of the ship, and can be easily picked up by anyone of 16 Str or better and carried out.

The helm has been trapped with a trip-wire set-up. If the heroes try to remove the helm before disarming the trap, part of an upper deck will come crashing down upon, inflicting 4d6 points of damage (save vs paralyzation for half damage). Those failing their save must make Dexterity checks or be trapped under the wreckage (which may also be burning). The helm will be crushed.

If the trap is detected, the helm can be removed from the ship in two rounds.

## **Conclusion**

*You wrestle the strange device, this chair that Trueblood calls a 'helm', up and out of the ruins of the skyship. Trueblood has you set it down and eagerly begins opening several bundles that he has brought with him.*

*One of the bundles contains a finely carved stick with strange runes carved on it. It is about a foot long and tipped in silver. "One of our few remaining magic items from home," Trueblood explains. "Also one of the least useful. You never know what effect it will have when you use it. It is called a wand of wonder."*

*Trueblood begins his incantations. After a few minutes, the wand begins to glow. Then the glow moves from the wand to the helm. The helm lights up, brighter and brighter. Then, with a crackle and a fizz, it goes out.*

*Trueblood looks downcast. "I am sorry, my friends. We have risked our lives for nothing. I cannot repair this helm."*

*A scent of roses and lilacs fill the air. "Then we are doomed people," Strongarm says.*

*"No," Trueblood says. "Now we must take the most dangerous course and travel into the enemy's stronghold. We must find the helm of the ancients. We must travel to the Jungle of Lost Tribes."*

## **DM's Conclusion**

This scenario, while not a direct component of "The Ancient Enemy" story arc, has several components that will affect the Living Jungle as a whole. Therefore, you are asked to send a brief email to [Jungle\\_tales@hotmail.com](mailto:Jungle_tales@hotmail.com) with the following information:

- 1) Were any of the NPC leaders killed? Who was killed, and how?
- 2) Did a hero intervene and save M'tlak from In-twy-da-may-la?
- 3) Did the enemy manage to kill both lacerial leaders?

Thank you for your time!

## Experience Point Summary

### Encounter One

Hold council with Rudrans 50 xp

### Encounter Two

Investigate grove 100 xp  
Defeat Tasloi 200 xp  
Interrogate Tasloi 100 xp  
Collect shrunken heads for burial or return to own peoples 50 xp

### Encounter Three

Interact with Timon & Pumba 50 xp

### Encounter Four

Observe Lilac 100 xp  
Interact with lacerial council 50 xp

### Encounter Five

Investigate the village/interact with inhabitants 100 xp

### Encounter Six

Prevent M'tlak from being killed 100 xp  
Interact with In-twy-da-may-la 50 xp

### Encounter Seven

Defeat enemy forces without significant NPC help 750 xp  
OR  
Defeat enemy forces with significant NPC help 500 xp  
Prevent ship from burning 100 xp  
Prevent all allied NPC leaders from dying 300 xp

### Encounter Eight

Disarm trap 100 xp  
Recover helm 100 xp

Total for Objectives: 2,250 xp  
Discretionary Role-Playing 0 to 500 xp

**Maximum Experience Possible: 2,750 xp**

- 1) Tiki Root - Boil to make 2 does of *slow poison* brew
- 2) Magasorium Leaves - Crush to make 6 doses of insect repellent
- 3) Billitri Leaves - Crush to make a fragrant juice that can be used as perfume, valued in some rituals, or can mask the scent of 6 individuals from predators
- 4) Allium Plant - Eat entire plant (12" long) to reduce the effects and duration of diseases and poisons by allowing a new saving throw. 1 dose only
- 5) Aloe Vera Plant - May be used for immunity to skin irritations. Lizardmen and their like may use the plant in lieu of daily wetting their hide. 3 doses
- 6) Marsh Mallow plant - Boil root and leaf together to make a draught that provides an exceptionally restful sleep, healing 2 hp by morning. 6 doses.
- 7) Healing Bugs (one set per PC): This large and crunchy big heals 1-3 hit points when eaten. There are six bugs in a little leaf bag, and one must be consumed entirely to gain any benefit.

One hero per table can receive this:

Lion Scars of Bravery: The hero leapt in the way heroically to save M'tlak from the lion Katanga In-twy-da-may-la, and was marked by the scars. Any intelligent, good or neutrally aligned warrior reacts favorably to the hero (+1 reaction), recognizing his or her bravery. The Simbara believe that the hero was blessed by the spirit of the lion and treat the hero with great honor and respect (+4 reaction adjustment). The servants of Tamara will have a likewise negative reaction (-4).

## Treasure Summary

From Timon and Pumba (Encounter Three): You received this from Timon and Pumba, lesser nature spirits of the vanilla grove, while journeying to the lacerial village of Lilac.

## Lacerial

	Finhead	Bladebacks	Flyers	Hornheads
Climate/Terrain:	Jungle	Jungle	Jungle/Mountain	Jungle
Frequency:	Rare	Rare	Rare	Rare
Organization:	Tribal	Tribal	Tribal	Tribal
Activity Cycle:	Day	Day	Day	Day
Diet:	Omnivore	Herbivore	Carnivore	Herbivore
Intelligence:	Very to Exceptional	Average to Very	Average to Very	Very to Genius
Treasure:	Individual	Individual	Individual	Individual
Alignment:	Any (Lawful Good)	Any	Any (Chaotic Good)	Any
No. Appearing:	1-4	1-6	1-4	1-2
Armor Class:	5	4	6	4
Movement:	12	12	FL 24(C),10	9
Hit Dice:	2/Varies	2/Varies	2/Varies	4/Varies
Thac0:	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
No. Of Attacks:	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 3	1 or 3
Damage/Attacks:	By Weapon/ 1d3/1d3/1d2	By Weapon/ 1d4/1d4/1d6	By Weapon/ 1d2/1d2/1d2	By Weapon 1d4/2d4/2d6
Special Attacks:	See Below	See Below	See Below	See Below
Special Defenses:	See Below	See Below	See Below	See Below
Magic Resistance:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Size:	M(5' tall)	L(7' tall)	S (3' tall)	L (10' tall)
Morale:	Steady (12)	Steady (12)	Average (10)	Elite (14)
XP Value:	35	35	65	120

Lacerials are intelligent, bipedal lizards descended from creatures similar to dinosaurs. Lacerials are not native to Malatra, but claim to come from some other realm or world. Most Malatrans don't understand the concept of other worlds, and it is widely known that the lacerials fled some catastrophe in the Valley Of Spirits. They are now settled as one tribe along the River of Laughing Idols, 100 miles east of the tribe of Rudra.

The lacerials are a solitary people. While not hostile to outsiders, they avoid prolonged contact with non-lacerials. They seem to be suffering spiritually from what they call their 'abduction' from their home and 'abandonment' by their 'gods'. Many native Malatrans are quite willing to avoid them, particularly the Rudrans. The Rudrans were viciously attacked by a small group of misguided lacerials just before they moved to Malatra. The Rudrans have an insulting nick-name for their unwanted neighbors: Garuda-People.

There are four types of lacerials currently living in Malatra: Finheads, Bladebacks, Flyers, and Hornheads. These are Malatran names; the native language of the lacerials is a combination of smells and ultra-sonic whistles.

All four races have brightly-colored scales, sharp claws, and tails, but their bodies vary considerably. A finhead is nearly human in shape, though slightly smaller. A bladeback is taller and stockier with a series of large, sharp scales which extend from the top of its head, down its spine, to the tip of its tail. A flyer has a delicate frame with small legs, a short tail, and a flap of scale-covered flesh beneath each arm which serve as wings. A hornhead is a giant beast with a tail as long as its own body, sharp horns protruding from its head, and a great bony plate protecting its neck. All four races have scales of some shade of green. Their back scales vary in color and pattern with each individual, with colors ranging thru green, yellow, orange, and brown.

Tattoos are a common adornment among lacerials, especially mages. Approximately half of the lacerials that came from the Valley of Spirits wear tattoos in the shape of a white heart and the other half wear one in the shape of a black flame. The disaster that brought them to Malatra was centered on a conflict between these two groups. The nature of this conflict is known to only a few Malatrans, as the lacerials do not speak of it openly. It is a

source of great shame, for it was one of the few times in history that lacerials killed each other. Though the fighting is over each side continues to wear the tattoos in silent acknowledgment of their past shame.

All lacerials have *infravision*. They can detect heat wavelengths with their eyes, but cannot see a cold object in the dark. Although not cold-blooded, lacerials have difficulty keeping their body temperature warm in cold conditions.

For daily activities lacerials generally do not wear more than loincloths and simple, loose cloaks. Lacerials do not wear armor. They do, however, wear ornate robes or hides for ceremonial occasions. Decorating the robes or hides is a deeply personal and private matter, as the colors and patterns chosen always hold some kind of significance to the owner, frequently showing some important connection to the tribe or family (their homes may be similarly decorated). Once the robe or hide is complete, however, it is a source of great pride and will be eagerly worn at any important social occasion. On those rare occasions when a lacerial has been expelled from his community, his robes are ceremoniously stripped from his body and torn apart.

Lacerials rarely speak common - PC lacerials must spend three proficiency slots in order to speak a halting, clumsy form of the language. Indeed, to most Nubari, they do not seem to speak at all since their voices are pitched too high to hear without magic. The emotions accompanying their words are emitted as scents that Nubari can often detect. Lacerials can hear Nubari speech, but so far few have learned the language. Apparently they have had prior contact with other races as yet unknown to Malatra, for the lacerials have developed a sign language with which to communicate with other species. The lacerial form of writing is to carve lines on sticks, which is used as spell fetishes or to record important documents.

**Combat.** Lacerials fight with a variety of weapons, and are mainly determined by character class. For example, spellcasters use magic, fighters use blades and missile weapons, and clerics favor blunt weapons and magic. Lacerial-crafted weapons generally have shorter grips and favor barb-like edges. Nubari who try to use a lacerial weapon without being

trained in its use suffer a -1 to hit. Lacerials likewise suffer a -1 when trying to use a Nubari weapon that they are unfamiliar with.

Some lacerials have knowledge of weaponry different than Malatrans. Already they have introduced to the Living Jungle bladeback flails, which is one of their most used weapons. Lacerials often speak of creating other new weapons out of foreign materials, but so far have not done so.

If unarmed, lacerials resort to ancient modes of attack. Finheads claw with both hands (1d3) or use their tail as a whip (1d2). Bladebacks use both claws (1d4) or swing at their attacker with their razored tail (1d6). Flyers claw and bite (1d2/1d2/1d2). Hornheads either claw (1d4), swing their tail (2d4), or gore with their horns (2d6).

Lacerials' Armor Class is as listed for each race and is a result of their own thick hide. Lacerials do not wear armor, but will occasionally use a shield. Because of the nature of the lacerial senses, lacerials gain a +2 save bonus against sound-based attacks such as charm or shout. They are more susceptible to gas-based attacks, and have a -2 penalty on all such saving throws.

Finheads, Bladebacks, and Hornheads can be any character class except rogue. Flyers can be any character class. No lacerial can be a true paladin, though some still claim to be.

**Habitat and Society.** The adult lacerials of Malatra number 60 and consider themselves one tribe. Leading this tribe is the young hornhead Trueblood. Trueblood is an 8<sup>th</sup>-level wizard. Although it remains to be seen if Trueblood is up to the task, he was Whiteheart's only apprentice. (Whiteheart was the former lacerial leader who died in a battle with Blackflame just before the tribe came to Malatra.) Aiding Trueblood is the 6<sup>th</sup>-level bladeback shaman Starr, the 9<sup>th</sup>-level Flyer rogue Quickwing, and the 8<sup>th</sup>-level finhead fighter Strongarm. Most of the lacerials are not adventurers, but fate and circumstance has forced many to learn skills associated with character classes.

Lacerials communicate with other tribes in one of two ways. First, through sign language that the lacerials developed and taught to a select few in other tribes. Second, through a magical shell-like device that attaches to the ear. This device translates any form of language

into a form understandable by the wearer. It is believed that only Whiteheart was able to make these devices. Only two are known to exist, and they are kept in the lacerial tribe.

Lacerials are generally polite and tolerant of other species and points of view, but they recognize evil and do not hesitate to stamp it out. They can be very friendly and tremendously loyal to those who have proven themselves to be friends. Lacerials generally maintain the highest code of ethics, but are very resolute about their wish to be left alone. While they will engage in trade, aid their neighbors, and assist travelers, few outsiders are offered lodging for the night or are allowed to witness their ceremonies. Lacerials usually adventure only to gather information and maintain cursory ties with other tribes.

The lacerials are suffering spiritually from their current situation. They were kidnapped from their home and forced to work as slaves, dumped into the Valley of Spirits, succumbed to inter-tribal bloodshed, and forced to flee to Malatra. Their greatest leaders, Whiteheart and Blackflame, killed each other in battle. The lacerial gods, another concept foreign to Malatra, seems to have abandoned them. The result of all this is that lacerials have become culturally introverted and lacking in hope. Their priests no longer pray to their old gods, but have become shamans instead and follow the nature spirits. Paladins have lost their powers and act as fighters, though a few still hold to the old paladin code of honor. It remains to be seen if lacerials will begin to pick up the habits and beliefs of their Malatran neighbors, rediscover their gods, create totally new beliefs, or just slowly die out.

**Ecology.** Lacerials mate for life and can produce 1 to 4 eggs a year. Both male and female share the duties of raising the young equally. A lacerial appears full-grown at 5 years, but mental maturity takes about 16 years. Under favorable conditions, lacerials can live to be 200. It is rumored that with the lacerial emotional state in its current malaise, reproduction among lacerial adults has slowed considerably.

**Finheads** are generally alert, bright, active, curious, and emotional. They have good manual ability and are as dexterous and flexible as any Nubari. Exceptional finheads are

usually fighter types. They tend to believe in ultimate concepts of good and evil and see things in absolute terms of black and white. In players' terms, they are the most heroic, willing to take incredible risks for the common good. While finheads can be great thinkers, they are more likely to be impulsive in their actions.

**Bladebacks** are very social creatures. They enjoy the company of friends and fellow lacerials and always find time to socialize. Being straightforward and honest, non-lacerials sometimes think they are naive. In fact, bladebacks understand other races better than any other lacerials, and are capable of understanding the most deceitful of creatures. Bladebacks have phenomenal memories, often able to recall the most trivial of details. As a result, they are slow to forgive an insult. Luckily, they are slow to anger as well. Bladebacks often act as mediators, judges, and living record keepers.

**Flyers** are nervous, hyperactive lacerials, both irritable and irritating. They are noisy and talkative, listening to everyone and telling almost everything they know. Gossip seems to be a source of great pleasure to them, although only the most indiscreet of flyers will tell non-lacerials the shameful secrets of the lacerial tribe. They have the benefit of flight, so often flee instead of fight. They are not cowards, however, and will gladly tell the stories - over and over again - of heroic flyers who saved their larger brethren. Flyers are often messengers, and help maintain contact with the other tribes of Malatra. As such, they are the least happy about their tribe's insular attitude toward the rest of the Living Jungle.

**Hornheads** are large and powerful, and tend toward careful, rational planning and thought. They are slow of speech but not slow of mind. They can take a long time to come to an important decision because they tend to methodically consider all sides of an argument. Hornheads tend to be mages.

## **Kretch (Warriors Of The Tamara).**

Climate/Terrain:	Any
Frequency:	Common
Organization:	Military Hierarchy
Activity:	Any
Diet:	Carnivore
Intelligence:	Very to Highly
Treasure:	Varies, but limited.
Alignment:	Lawful Evil
Number Appearing:	2 to 20
Armor Class:	4
Movement:	12
Hit Dice:	3, 5 or 7
THACO:	17, 15, or 13
Number of Attacks:	2/1/1
Damage/Attack:	1d6+7 x2 (Claws), 1d4 (Bite), 1d8 (Horn Gore), or by weapon type
Special Attacks:	Polymorph object 3 times daily, mimic any animal sound they hear
Special Defenses:	Immune to poison, surprised only on a 1, never sleep
Other Abilities:	19 str; 270-degree field of vision
Size:	7' to 8'
Morale:	Fearless (20)

### **Combat**

Highly organized and disciplined, the Kretch are fearless and bold in battle. They do not fear death, but are smart enough not to die needlessly. Kretch are known to employ terror tactics before battle, such as surrounding a camp the night before an attack and screeching and howling throughout the night, making sleep impossible. Kretch often enter new territory pretending to be animals, for they look like green-furred gorillas. Then, once enough of their number is in place, they attack quickly in a coordinated and ruthless fashion.

### **Habitat/Sociology**

Very little is known. The kretch are the warriors of the Tamara and are utterly dedicated to serving them. Kretch seem to view all other forms of life with contempt. How they reproduce or determine who is the leader is unclear. The largest and most ferocious kretch is always in charge, though no battles for dominance has ever been witnessed. The kretch, though obviously intelligent, show no indications of cultural or familial ties. Their only purpose, it seems, is to serve and die in the name of the Tamara.

### **Ecology**

The kretch are clearly warm-blooded and give birth to live young, so that qualifies them as

mammals. They have no extra-planar characteristics so far observed. It is theorized that the kretch evolved on a parallel prime plane. The kretch make excellent guardians as they have no need of sleep and require only 2 hours of rest per day. The life span of the kretch is not known.