

Return to Northmoor Session 3 - Descendence - Scene 1 - Investigation in the Lost Village

Purpose: To allow the PCs to try and get to the bottom of some of the strangeness surrounding the strange attack on the village, it's seeming emptiness, and the Raftman's hanging.

Tone: Investigative, but urgent. The Mentor is out there some where with the Sahuagin, and the next attempt to get the coins from the PCs might not be a simple Homonculus.

Setup: The town is not heavily detailed, and it's small, so geography isn't terribly important at this time. There is not a lot to the Lost Village, except for shacks built on old ruins, and a small town square with a few vendors.

NPCs: The Ranger, the PCs' contacts, Sgt. Rose

Things to Discover

- A large barrel is found on the northern edge of the Lost Village, it seemed to once contain the Needlefang Drake Swarm, and it appears to have been intentionally loosed upon the village.
 - There are Sahuagin tracks around the barrel
- The Raftman paid less scrupulous people in town to spread false rumors about treasure in the bog the night before he made it into town. No one knows how he got the communication to the Village.
 - Ideally, **one of the PC's contacts** is this less than scrupulous person

What to do next?

- **The Ranger will want to tell them what he knows**, either during the cleanup of the Hole on the Water Inn, or after the Raftman's body is dealt with (see Scene 2 - "The Past Revealed").
- The next step after talking to the Ranger for the PCs is to **seek out the Bogman**.
- They may wish to go to the outpost to find out what happened there. If so, they can talk to **Sgt. Rose** at the Inn, who can give them his account (**see right**).
- If they choose to do anything but seek out the Bogman, he will find them and talk to them (**see Scene 4 - "Meet the Bogman"**).

Sergeant Rose's Tale

- **Sergeant Rose**, one of the people stationed at the Outpost when it was attacked is **hiding out in the Inn**.
- When the PCs find him (either by staying at the Inn, or on the Ranger's recommendation), he is **writing a letter** to one of the PCs, explaining what happened at the outpost, and telling them that the Mentor's instruction should anything ever happen to him was to **seek out the Bogman**.
- He and a 2 young fighters had left early the night of the attack to go and turn the flag on the middle outpost upside-down as a practical joke.
- When they returned in the wee hours of the morning, the outpost was **almost completely destroyed** - of the garrison of 55, only 15 remained alive, and 15 were missing, presumably kidnapped by the Sahuagin.
- There was a huge, **six-armed Sahuagin dead** in the middle of the outpost courtyard.
- Many men from the other outposts have been sent to cover the main outpost, but now they are all understaffed. A **request has been sent to the Big City for more men**.
- Sgt. Rose may also deliver **more personal messages** from the Mentor to individual PCs.
- **Nolar**, the former sword-teacher of the King, is now in charge of the outpost, **and he has no love for the Mentor or his friends**.

Return to Northmoor Session 3 - Descendence - Scene 2 - The Past Revealed

The Ranger's Tale of the Star Temples

- He and a group of others (see right) were **sent by the King to locate the Star Wand**, an artifact supposedly allowing the wielder to harness the power of the stars.
- The Star Wand was supposed to be in one of **five ancient Star Temples** that were only hinted at in **ancient texts**. One of the temples was rumored to be in the mountains far to the east of the Big City.
- The group eventually **found that Star Temple to the east**, and after much danger and **losing their torchbearer** to a trap, found their way inside.
- Inside, they **found the Star Wand**. When the Wizardess took it from a dais, a portal opened, and **tall purple creatures** stepped out and **easily captured the group**.
- The creatures took them to a **hidden chamber** of the Star Temple, and **did horrible things to them**, ending with **implanting a copper rod in each of them** in different locations of their body (see right).
- The rods **prevent** them from **fully using their Powers**. They can still use them, and they can use magic items. They are still as tough as they used to be, but not as powerful, and they seem unable to gain power. (In game terms they **function as about 2nd level**, rather than their former 6th-8th. They **still have the ability bumps and hit points** of their former selves, but use powers as 2nd level characters, and **cannot gain new powers** in their former classes).
- The group found themselves **outside the temple**, without the Star Wand, and found they **could not reenter**. They returned home in shame, and the group split up.
- The Wizardess **removed the rod from the Rogue**, but the process **killed him and destroyed his soul**. Prayers to restore him went unanswered.
- About a year ago, each of the former adventurers **received an Item** in a box. It appeared on their doorsteps one morning. They were told that it was poisoned and should not be touched, and it someday could be used to free them from the rods, and that it should not be lost or stolen if they wanted to be normal again.

Where are the Old Adventurers Now?

- **The Ranger** runs the Hole on the Water Inn. His Rod is in his **leg**. He still has his Item, although he will gladly give it to the PCs).
- **The Bogman** (a Druid) lives in the Bog (and is the crazy man from the rumors in Session 1), and is seeking out the Star Temple (he has his Item still, and his Rod is in his **arm**). He hoping to find the temple and in it, a way to remove the rod.
- **The Mentor** (a former Sorcerer, now most likely a Fighter, depending on what your group came up with) was stationed at the Outpost, but is now MIA, presumably kidnapped by Sahuagin. (His Rod is in his **eye**, and his Item is in the possession of the PCs now). He was a very talented Sorcerer, but had the youth and strength of character to learn a completely new profession after the Star Temple incident).
- **The Wizardess** is rumored to still be in the Big City, working on and off for the King (rod location **unknown**). She was an aspiring court wizardess, and was spiritually destroyed by the incident, and publicly blamed the rest of the group for ruining her life.
- **The Rogue** is dead, he passed on when the Wizardess tried to remove his rod (which was in his **hand**). By the time he returned to the Big City from the Star Temple, he was insane, and the group agreed to let the Wizardess try and remove the rod from him to save him...it didn't work.
- **The Torchbearer** is **dead**, killed in the Temple by traps before the group was attacked (no rod). He was an aspiring Warlord.

Return to Northmoor Session 3 - Descendence - Scene 3 - Bogman Down! - Setup

Purpose: To rescue the bogman from a pack of stirges.

Tone: Shocking, tense, urgent.

Setup: Either on their way into the bog to find the Bogman, or, after meeting him, travelling to his hut in the bog to meet the "special friends" he talked to them about, the PCs find the Bogman unconscious, and being attacked by Stirges.

NPCs: The Bogman, Stirges

Finding the Bogman

- While searching for the bogman, the PCs find him unconscious in the bog, beset by monsters.
- The bogman's leg is in a noose - it appears that he stepped in some sort of trap.
 - The rope from the trap is newish (although soaked and icky), and of very fine quality.
 - The Bogman's leg got caught, and he fell and hit his head.
 - The PCs **arrive just as the Stirges find** the Bogman.
- The **Bogman should survive this encounter**, but just. He should owe the PCs his life.

The Map

- The Bogman's hut is on the upper-left-hand island, among the stones. Those stones become important in the future, as they are used by the Lost People to test the PCs (in the next session).
- The Bogman can be found unconscious anywhere else on the map, and you can decide how the PCs got there, by boat, or by island hopping.
- The **water** is about **3 feet deep** at the deepest, and as **shallow** as **3 inches** in some places.



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This map uses: Hazards - Terror Stones, Swamps

Return to Northmoor Session 3 - Descendence - Scene 3 - Bogman Down! - Combat Reference

6 -8 Stirges (4 PCs - 6 Stirges: 600xp total; 5 PCs - 8; 800xp total)

Lost Bog Stirge

Level 1 Lurker

Small natural beast

XP 100

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision

HP 22; **Bloodied** 11

AC 15; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 10

Speed 2, fly 6 (hover)

☛ **Bite** (Standard, at-will)

+6 vs Armor Class; 1d4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape) and takes ongoing 5 damage until it escapes. An attached stirge doesn't make attack rolls while grabbing a target and gains a +5 bonus to its AC and Reflex defenses.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** ---

Skills Stealth +8

Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 10 (0)

Con 10 (0) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 4 (-3)

Description: Darting and hovering on four wings, this cat-sized creature looks like a weird combination of bat and mosquito. It has a long, sharp proboscis and eight dangling legs tipped with small hooked claws. It's skin is a mottled blue-green that makes it very hard to see in the bog.

First published in Monster Manual.

Lost Bog Stirge Tactics

- The stirges will try and gang up on the weaker members of the party. Having 2-3 stirges attached to one character makes things exciting very quickly.
- If a Lost Bog Stirge **becomes bloodied, it will fly away (and not return)**. As a result, this encounter is stacked a little higher than normal in terms of XP.
- Stirges are best in large numbers, and are best played up with thoughts of **Alfred Hitchcock movies** in mind.
- Although there are no rules for PCs attacking an attached Stirge to accidentally hit the victim PC, your narration should make it clear that it's always a close call (thus the **increased AC of the Stirges when attached**)

Return to Northmoor Session 3 - Descendence - Scene 4 - Meet the Bogman

Purpose: To introduce the PCs to **the Bogman**.

Tone: Quirky, amusing

Setup: Either the Bogman has sought out the PCs, or they have sought him out in his hut in the bog, and they've sat down to chat.

NPCs: The Bogman

The Bogman

- A human druid. Old Man's Beard grows from his tattered robes, his beard is wild and unkempt, and his left arm is swathed in mummy-like bandages. He appears to be very old, even though he's actually about 40.
- He speaks many languages, including Abyssal.
- He is very odd, and on the brink of madness, while at the same time being a very calming presence.
- Although he used to be a powerful druid, now he is but a shadow of his former self. He's as tough as he used to be, but his connection with nature has been severed by the rod embedded in his left arm.
- One of the metal rods, originally seen in the first Homonculus encounter in session one, is **embedded through his left arm**.
- Other than the (now dead) Rogue from the original adventurers, the Bogman has taken the loss of his powers the most. His muted connection with nature is a constant **source of sadness...and madness**.

What's the Bogman want?

- He wants the PCs to **take his Item from him**, he is afraid someone will hunt him down for it. He thinks the PCs will better be able to guard it.
- He wants them to **meet his friends**, who he says know where the Mentor has been taken.

What Happened to the Mentor?

- The Bogman trapped a Sahuagin a few days ago, and was able to...convince it to tell him a little of their plans.
 - One of the Sahuagin Barons was leading the investigation of some of the sea caves that lead from the sea beneath the bog.
 - They were digging out a new section, that was to be the Baron's new palace, when they broke through into something ancient.
 - The Baron was first into the ancient ruins to investigate, when the roof suddenly caved in, trapping him inside.
 - The Sahuagin have been unable to dig through the massive cave-in to get him.
 - The Sahuagin priests believe that he is still alive, but trapped in the ruins.
 - The Sahuagin priests found out where the entrance from the surface was, but they also discovered that the only way in required someone from the bloodline of the Old Ones.
- The Bogman believes they kidnapped the people from the Outpost, hoping to get lucky and find one that had Bel Alaquan blood.

The Bogman's Friends

- The Bogman has made friends with a number of ghosts in the area. They are the ghosts of people from the lost city of Bel-Alaqua, which now lies buried beneath the bog.
- The ghosts have sensed the presence of the PCs in the area, and have asked the Bogman to set up a meeting between them.
- The Bogman is reluctant to tell the PCs that his friends are ghosts, and will try and get the PCs to meet with them so they can 'see for themselves who they are'.
- The Bogman will tell the PCs that his friends know where the Mentor is being held (which is true).

Return to Northmoor Session 3 - Descendence - Scene 5 - Descendence

Purpose: To introduce the PCs to the ghosts of ancient Bel-Alaqua, and hint at their heritage as descendants of the nobles of the Old People.

Tone: Somber, shocking cliffhanger - a heavy-duty role-playing encounter.

Setup: The Bogman sits the PCs down in his hut, and then invites his "special friends" - two ghosts, to meet the PCs. He will do his best to let them know that they mean know harm, and to prevent combat.

NPCs: The Bogman, Ghosts

The Ghosts Arrive

- The ghosts are misty and insubstantial to humans, but to non-humans, they appear as if they are standing there fully solid. They are **dressed in flowing robes of bright colors, and decorated with beautiful feathers**, gold, and beads of exotic rock. (Think combination between Ancient Greeks and ancient Mayans - very Empire of the Petal Throne/Conan/Elric-ish).
- When they speak, their words make no sense at first, but then they slowly start to unravel - as if the PCs very suddenly learned their language.

Who are the Ghosts?

- The Ghosts will tell the PCs that they are the **keepers of the Temple of Art**, in the great city of Bel-Alaqua, which now lies sunken beneath this bog.
- The Temple has been **sealed for hundreds of years**, up until about a month ago.
- The **ghost's bodies lie in the temple**, prevented, up until now, from ever decaying, and thus **trapping their souls on this plane**.
- They are **members of the Bel-Alaquan nobility**.
- Only those of **noble Bel-Alaquan blood can enter the temple safely**.
- The ghosts believe **that the Mentor is being taken to the Temple of Art** by the Sahuagin. They have seen them carrying prisoners toward it.

The Big Reveal

- They believe that each of the PCs is a descendant of the few families that escaped the city during its destruction by a chaos cult.
- The stones outside the Bogman's hut will glow when touched by a Bel-Alaquan noble.
- The ghosts need the PCs help to burn their bodies, so they can have peace.
- The ghosts believe that the Mentor is being taken to the Temple of Art.

The Test

- The Ghosts would like each of the PCs to touch one of the stones outside the Bogman's hut to see if it glows, proving them to be of noble Bel-Alaquan blood (however dilute).
- You can have it glow the same for all of the PCs, or more for some, it's up to how you think they will react.

Treasure

- The Bogman will give each of the PCs something in return for saving his life. You should give out the **rest of the level 1 treasure parcels** as items that the PCs need. A Wand for the spellcaster, a Holy Symbol for the cleric, etc. Don't just give out cash - use any monetary treasure parcels to instead give out potions or cool mundane items.
- The items are all things that the Bogman **has found in the bog**.

Experience and Level Up

- The PCs will get a **story award of 200xp each** (so for 4 PCs: 800xp total) for completing the first story arc of the adventure. If you are using the recommended double-XP progression, this will allow them to level up to 2nd level.

