

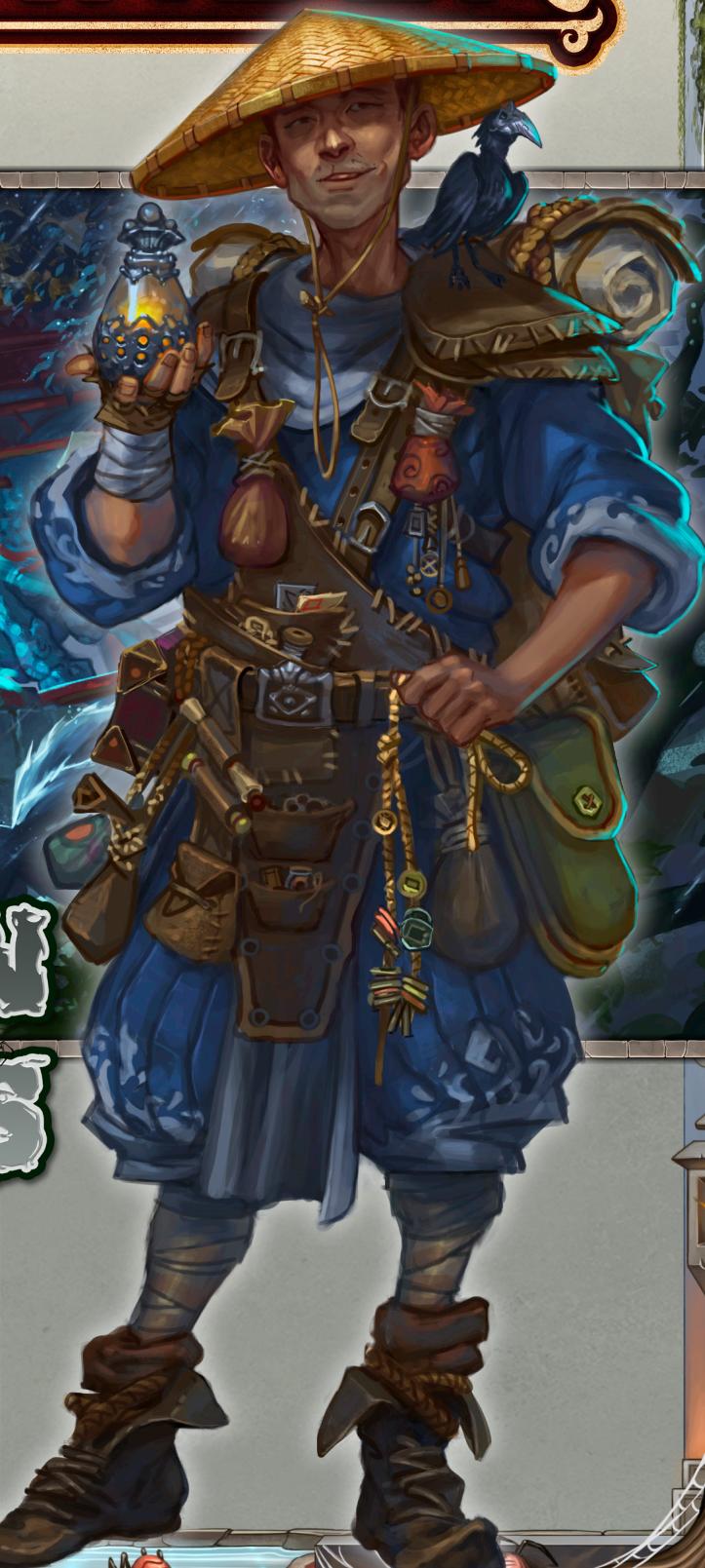
PATHFINDER®

SEASON OF GHOSTS

ADVENTURE PATH

The Summer That Never Was

By Sen H.H.S.







AUTHOR
Sen H.H.S.

ADDITIONAL WRITING
James Jacobs

DEVELOPER
James Jacobs

EDITING LEAD
Ianara Natividad

EDITORS
Felix Dritz, Patrick Hurley, Avi Kool,
Priscilla Lagares, Ianara Natividad,
Simone D. Sallé, and Tan Shao Han

COVER ARTIST
Rodrigo Gonzalez Toledo

INTERIOR ARTISTS
Shafi Adams, Mylene Bertrand,
Wilmar Ballespí Escarp, Robert Lazzaretti,
Justine Nortjé, and Firat Solhan

ART DIRECTION
Sonja Morris

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Adriana Gasperi

PUBLISHER
Erik Mona



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Paizo Inc.
7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

paizo.com



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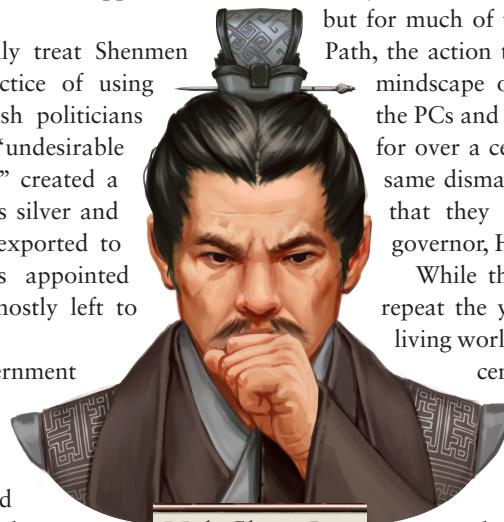
Shenmen wasn't always a haunted land. Not so long ago, monsters and ghosts were bedtime stories; the citizens of the sparsely populated province had a proud oral history of their ancestors' resilience despite the terrors they faced. But their own day-to-day lives instead faced a less supernatural threat: oppression from the empire of Lung Wa.

Lung Wa didn't intentionally treat Shenmen poorly, but the empire's practice of using postings to Shenmen to punish politicians and soldiers with an "undesirable assignment in the backwoods" created a cycle of oppression. As long as silver and fine lumber continued to be exported to greater Lung Wa, Shenmen's appointed governors and guards were mostly left to their own devices.

Over the years, the local government grew more corrupt. Those whom Lung Wa had sent to the province to be taught a lesson in humility instead learned that, as long as they produced goods for their superiors, they could run their own fiefdoms in whatever way best served themselves.

This situation only grew worse after Lung Wa's collapse. With no one above them, the leaders of Shenmen showed their true colors and became despots and tyrants—but not for long. The ghosts and monsters of Shenmen's history had never truly left—they'd merely been waiting. When they swept down from the Gossamer Mountains and emerged from the deepest vales of Spectrewood, Shenmen's corrupt leaders were the first to fall.

This resurgence was no reprieve for the people of Shenmen. It was merely a changing of the guard, as many of the slaughtered leaders rose from death as ghosts or transformed into monsters themselves. Today, the people live lives of fear, with annual traditions (such as Willowshore's "season of ghosts") in place to ensure proper offerings are regularly given in return for one more year of fearful subsistence.



Heh Shan-Bao

Welcome to Willowshore

"The Summer That Never Was" begins in Willowshore, an isolated, self-sufficient settlement that scrapes by year after year with regular offerings and rituals designed to keep the ghosts and monsters at bay.

Today, Willowshore is abandoned and haunted, but for much of the Season of Ghosts Adventure Path, the action takes place in a phantasmagoric mindscape of the town where the souls of the PCs and villagers alike have been trapped for over a century, unwittingly repeating the same dismal year again and again, unaware that they were accidentally slain by their governor, Heh Shan-Bao.

While these trapped souls unknowingly repeat the year 7108 ic over and over, the living world moved on. Over the course of a

century, Willowshore fell into ruin, despite a few half-hearted but doomed attempts to reclaim the settlement. It isn't until the current year, 7223 ic, that a significant effort to reclaim Willowshore finally begins.

At the command of Chou Mingxia, the ghostly ruler of the city of Sze, a lumber baron named Mago Kai turned his sights to Willowshore. Mago Kai is one of Sze's cruel success stories, but when several disasters caused closures at his other lumber camps, he was forced to look further afield from Sze to honor the commitments he'd made to Chou Mingxia. When Mago's scouts discovered the ruins of Willowshore, he set upon the settlement with swift urgency, establishing a base of operations at a nearby coastal fortress named Karahai after finding Willowshore to be in an unlivable state of disrepair. However, Mago Kai sees potential in the abandoned town—if he uses what resources he still has to rebuild Willowshore, he knows he can turn a profit in time for next spring's offering to Chou Mingxia.

There's only one problem: the ruins of Willowshore are haunted. The village's spectral inhabitants include its long-dead and long-trapped citizens... and the PCs.

SHENMEN

While some nations in Tian Xia are inspired more closely by certain real-life cultures, Shenmen is instead primarily inspired by horror traditions taken from a wide range of real-world stories. It's a fictional nation and isn't meant to represent more than these traditions of supernatural horror. During this nation's history, it was conquered by Lung Wa, picked up immigrants from Hwanggot, and was taken over by jorogumo. It has a mix of cultures as a result, and its people have adopted words from multiple languages for their names and places. In Shenmen, ghosts and monsters are a very real part of life, and the practices employed by its people arise not from superstition but from necessity.

To those within Willowshore's mindscape, it's the first day of summer in the year 7108, just at the beginning of the so-called "season of shosts," when Spectrewood sees an increase in activity from hauntings, restless spirits, and undead. Every year, on the final day of spring in 7109, the mindscape and its trapped inhabitants reset back to that first day of summer in 7108. This cycle has repeated itself over and over as time in the living realm marched onward, until the arrival of Mago Kai in the year 7223, a full 115 years after Willowshore's doom.

It's that first day of summer in Willowshore—the 115th first day of that same summer, unknown to the mindscape's inhabitants—when this campaign begins.

PLAYING SEASON OF GHOSTS

The *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide* is a free PDF available at paizo.com. This adventure assumes the players use that document to help build their characters, but if you choose not to use the Player's Guide in your campaign, let your players know that this Adventure Path isn't set in a contemporary time—it instead takes place a few years after the onset of the Age of Lost Omens, in the year of 7108.

Campaign Timeline

Key events that led to the start of Season of Ghosts are presented below. Note that these dates use the Imperial Calendar, not Absalom Reckoning. To convert a date to Absalom Reckoning, subtract 2,500 from the year.

Date	Event
6223 IC	A heroic adventurer named Tan Sui-Jing defeats the powerful fiend Kugaptee but dies herself as the battle concludes. Her body

sprouts a sugi tree over Kugaptee's remains, trapping the fiend below the roots and preventing him from returning to life.
7020 The remote village of Willowshore is founded by a follower of Sangpotshi named Zhi Hui. She builds a Sangpotshi monastery in the mountain hinterlands, incorporating Tan Sui-Jing's sugi tree (and thus Kugaptee's grave) at the heart of the monastery's courtyard.
7054 Zhi Hui passes away of natural causes.
7060 Willowshore becomes a lumber town. Local Sangpotshi traditions dwindle. The monks of the Tan Sugi monastery, bereft of Zhi Hui's guidance, bicker and abandon the monastery.
7062 Chou Mingxia, the leader of the city of Sze, sends her son to Willowshore, where he attempts to harvest the glorious sugi tree. His attempt fails but does allow Kugaptee's influence to spread, resulting in a mysterious tragedy that would come to be known as the Night of Broken Blades.
7102 Governor Heh Shan-Bao is installed at Willowshore by Lung Wa.
7106 Age of Lost Omens begins. Lung Wa empire collapses. Government officials in Shenmen are cut off, and they succumb to greed, becoming cruel and abusive to the common folk. Governor Heh does his best to shelter Willowshore from these events.
7107 Shenmen falls under the control of the jorogumo Lang Loi. Elderly Chou Mingxia, still the ruler of Sze, is slain but returns as a ghost.
7108 The people of Willowshore perish in their sleep when Heh Shan-Bao attempts and fails to perform a ritual to heal the Tan Sugi and seal off Kugaptee in hopes of protecting the village from the fiend's growing influence and power. Two parallel mindscapes of Willowshore are created, one trapping the slain townsfolk in a realm between life and death. Heh Shan-Bao tries a last-ditch effort to save himself but instead becomes trapped alone in the second mindscape lodged between Willowshore and the living realm—a haunting within a haunting.
7223 Present day. Lumber baron Mago Kai begins his plans to turn Willowshore into a new lumber camp and starts orchestrating a mass exorcism and cleansing of Willowshore. These efforts causes enough of a disruption in the cycle of the Willowshore mindscape that, for the first time in 115 years, the PCs are potentially able to break free from the time loop they've endured.

Campaign Summary

In Season of Ghosts, the PCs become saviors of the town of Willowshore and lead their fellow townsfolk from being trapped between life and death to emerge once more into the modern era—provided they can survive the machinations of a greedy lumber baron and the influence of a not-quite-dead fiend.

This Adventure Path isn't built on a three-act story structure that follows a "beginning–middle–end" pattern, but instead on the classic four-act framework known as kishotenketsu, which is a traditional story structure of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese narratives. The four parts of this Adventure Path are organized accordingly. The first adventure introduces the story, setting, and characters while presenting the central issues and plot points. The second adventure is when the action of the plot takes center stage and the story escalates. The third introduces an unexpected twist or turning point in the storyline and serves as the plot's climax. Finally, the last adventure focuses on the results and ramifications of the story, concludes the events, and explores lessons learned.

THE SUMMER THAT NEVER WAS

By Sen H.H.S.

Pathfinder Adventure Path #196, Levels 1–3

The PCs find Willowshore infested with monsters. The PCs defeat them but are then presented with a mystery as to how the monsters infested the village in the first place. Soon thereafter, they discover that they can't travel far from the village—they, like the other citizens of Willowshore, are "cursed" and can't travel more than a few dozen miles from town. Eventually, the PCs confront the monsters that abducted them, discovering that a frightening Wall of Ghosts has manifested not far from their home and that the "curse" affecting them all might be even more insidious than they feared.

LET THE LEAVES FALL

By Joan Hong

Pathfinder Adventure Path #197, Levels 4–6

The PCs help the people of Willowshore rebuild and recover. At the same time, they must help the town prepare for winter, but as they do so, they experience more and more strange supernatural events that suggest actual ghosts are involved in the curse that afflicts Willowshore. To seek answers, the PCs must use magic to defeat the Wall of Ghosts west of town then travel to an abandoned monastery at the far side of the village hinterlands. There, they'll discover something shocking: not only have they been trapped in a mindscape, but they've been reliving the same year over and over.

PRESERVING SURPRISES

This Adventure Path has several surprises for the players to uncover as they play, most notably that they've been trapped in a time loop in between life and death, and that if they want to return to the real world, they'll have to reincarnate back into either their old bodies or entirely new ones. The Adventure Path still works fine if some or all of these surprises are spoiled for players, but you might want to let your players know when the campaign begins that Season of Ghosts includes some plot twists, and that if a player happens to know some or all of them, to please keep that knowledge to themselves to preserve the surprise for the others at the table.

If some or all of your players figure things out early or have had these plot twists spoiled, resist the urge to change the developments at the last minute to "preserve surprise" since it can be just as satisfying to experience a storyline that you've correctly anticipated. Instead, neither confirm nor deny correct guesses; simply remind the players, "We'll see how it all plays out by the end, won't we?"

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NO BREATH TO CRY

By Dan Cascone and Eleanor Ferron

Pathfinder Adventure Path #198, Levels 7–9

The PCs search for ways they can escape their mindscape by entering another inhabited by Heh Shan-Bao, where they discover the truth—they're actually dead and have been repeating the same awful year for over a century. The PCs must then perfect a ritual to manifest in the living world so they can invade the coastal fortress of Karahai and defeat the exorcists who seek to banish them to the afterlife. Only then can they attempt a final return to the living world.

TO BLOOM BELOW THE WEB

By Liane Merciel

Pathfinder Adventure Path #199, Levels 10–12

The PCs and Willowshore reincarnate into the modern world and life, but once again they must defend their homes. They seek to secure the favor of the jorogumo in charge of Willowshore but must also find a way into yet another mindscape—one which the fiend Kugaptee hopes to use to return to life. By forging an alliance with the jorogumo and defeating Kugaptee's growing influence, the PCs can finally make Willowshore (relatively) safe once more.



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DEATH IN WILLOWSHORE

Though much of this Adventure Path takes place within a mindscape, slain PCs can be revived as usual through *raise dead* and similar spells. A slain PC can even become undead (see *Pathfinder Book of the Dead* for options), though the townsfolk are unlikely to welcome such a sinister development. Also, a player can always create a new character to take the place of a fallen character. This new PC might be from Willowshore, or could be an adventurer who stumbled into the region back in 7108 and who arrives in Willowshore with a strange gap in their memory between the first day of summer and the current date in your campaign—a gap whose meaning will eventually become clear once the PCs realize what has happened to them! Once you reach the final adventure in this campaign, the PCs will have “caught up” to the current date, and introducing replacement characters as needed becomes less complex.

Chapter 1: To Light the Night.....8

The PCs wake in the forest, but they soon discover their hometown has been engulfed in eerie supernatural weather and invaded by monsters. After making their way back into town and consulting with elders, the PCs pursue several missions to scout out the situation and take steps to relight the *Eternal Lantern* in the middle of Willowshore, which should drive back the supernatural weather and, hopefully, restore peace to the town!

Chapter 2: Reclaiming Willowshore.....26

The PCs turn their attention to downtown Willowshore, where monsters have entrenched their position. Here, many townsfolk need rescue, and just as many strange and sinister creatures must be confronted before the town can be safely inhabited once again.

Chapter 3: The Willowshore Curse.....36

The PCs discover that a cursed fog bank enshrouds the hinterlands, preventing all attempts to travel too far from town. Forced to rely upon what they have at hand, the PCs help the townsfolk of Willowshore recover from the monstrous invasion while investigating what could be the source of the strange curse that has trapped them in the region.

Chapter 4: The Wall of Ghosts54

The PCs head west to confront the source of the curse. They then discover that the band of faceless monsters that now dwell in an abandoned lumber camp are merely worshippers of an older, more sinister force. This entity’s influence might be the actual source of the Willowshore curse—yet that lies beyond an impenetrable Wall of Ghosts.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“The Summer That Never Was” is designed for four characters.

1 The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.

The PCs should become 2nd level during their attempt to liberate downtown Willowshore—if you’re using milestones to level up, the PCs should reach 2nd level upon defeating the second of the three monstrous ringleaders that now control central Willowshore.

3 The PCs should be 3rd level before they begin Chapter 4.

The PCs should reach 4th level by the time they complete the adventure.



Chapter 1: To Light the Night

During the winter of early 7223 IC, a lumber baron named Mago Kai discovered something intriguing while looking back through his ancestor's journals—mentions of a grove of incredible sugi trees said to be hidden near a remote town called Willowshore.

During the first week of spring, Kai and a group of his agents traveled to Willowshore, ready to appraise and investigate a region that, according to the recovered journals, hadn't been harvested in well over a hundred years. The expedition arrived to find an overgrown and haunted ruin, but it was still full of potential. Could the place be reclaimed as a lumber camp? As they began planning, one of the ruin's remaining guardians—a stone spider guardian beast—attacked the group of prospective loggers.

Several people perished before Mago Kai defeated the stone spider, and he decided the group should retreat east to recuperate after their losses. He settled into the coastal fortress of Karahai and began to prepare for a more organized reconstruction effort, gathering the supplies, soldiers, and exorcists needed to cleanse Willowshore's ruins and reclaim it from its haunted past.

Unbeknownst to Mago Kai, the haunting effects he and his people experienced in the ruins of Willowshore were from more than merely unquiet spirits. These phenomena were the spiritual echoes and influences that reached out from within a mindscape version of Willowshore that came into existence 115 years before, when the city's governor



attempted (and failed) to perform a complex ritual meant to protect the town from the influence of an ancient fiend named Kugaptee. That failure resulted in the deaths of everyone in Willowshore, and left their souls trapped in a mindscape. The death of the town's guardian spirit, the stone spider once known to its locals by the name Ugly Cute, set into motion a series of events that may make Mago Kai's goal of reclaiming Willowshore for his own use impossible.

In previous years, the end of the mindscape's annual cycle reset everything back to the previous year's first day of summer, and all those trapped within the mindscape woke again in their beds with no memories of the previous year's events. But with Ugly Cute's death during the final days of spring, something strange happened. Without the spiritual protection afforded by the guardian beast, Kugaptee's influence grew even more quickly. It created a ghostly shell around the deeper regions of Willowshore's hinterlands, manifesting in the mindscape as a frightening "Wall of Ghosts." As Kugaptee slowly woke from his death slumber, the fiend's thoughts manifested in physical form, infesting the mindscape with all manner of monstrous creatures. Many of these monsters invaded Willowshore and overran the town in the final days of spring, disrupting the townsfolk's preparations for the upcoming season of ghosts and devastating many of the town's structures. Three of these creatures in particular—a gluttonous buso named Gurglegut, a vain ittan-momen named Gray Butcher, and a hedonistic rokurokubi named Mo Douqiu—became ringleaders for these manifested monstrosities, and their bullying leadership proved key to the town's fall.

When the mindscape reverted back to the first day of summer a few days after this disaster, things had changed forever, for these new manifestations born from Kugaptee's thoughts didn't reset with the rest of the mindscape. For the first time in 115 years, the people of Willowshore woke to a town infested with monsters and savaged by mayhem—but without any memories of how these events had come to pass.

Ugly Cute found itself alive once again when the cycle reset, but this time it was trapped in the mindscape itself. The stone spider quickly went into action, attacking and fighting back against the invading monsters. Fortunately for the PCs, among the creatures Ugly Cute encounters and drives off are the same noppera-bos who were in the process of dragging the unconscious PCs out of town and to the east to torment. With the rising of the sun, the PCs awaken in a familiar forest clearing along with memories of the previous night that are at odds with the reality

they now face. Where they go from here could lead to the destruction of the mindscape and the return of Willowshore's trapped souls to life—or to their true deaths after a long-delayed trip to the Boneyard.

Getting Started

When you're ready to start this campaign, inform the players that as they wake on the first day of summer, they do so in strange circumstances. Memories of the previous night return, and they can recall being dragged from town by townsfolk during the height of the Reenactment Festival, yet as they gather themselves, things seem off. The straw mats and red blindfolds they were ceremoniously trussed up in the night before seem to be cruder, filthier, and less comfortable today.

Even more curious is the fact that while each PC remembers settling down to sleep for the night to await their rescue in the morning, they were certain they'd been left behind in an entirely different part of the woods than where they woke. Allow the PCs to attempt DC 10 Survival or Willowshore Lore checks—anyone who succeeds realizes that they've instead awoken in a clearing east of Willowshore and that a nearby game trail leads west back toward town. If no PC attempts this check, the trail is easy to notice, and the fact that it leads downhill toward the sound of a river is enough to suggest that it likely leads back toward home.

The weather this morning is typical for Shenmen in the early summer—partially overcast with a crisp early morning chill to the air that, by noon, the PCs might expect to give way to a more pleasant but not overbearing heat. As the day draws on, the clouds only grow more ominous, and rain begins to fall.

Give the players a chance to introduce their characters if they haven't done so already. If the PCs chose backgrounds from the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, they'll have built-in reasons why they were among those selected for the role of abductee for the Reenactment Festival, as well as some potential links to the other PCs or Willowshore.

After the PCs talk for a bit, they notice something else is amiss. The main organizer of the ritual this year, the miller Choe Chung-hu, said he would arrive by sunrise with food to "ransom" the PCs and lead them back home. This step isn't essential; it's more of a breakfast delivery to thank those who helped with the reenactment. The PCs know that they can go back to Willowshore without this ransom being delivered, as if they safely "escaped from their kidnappers." However, Choe's absence is strange since the miller seldom goes back on his word.

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WHAT THE PCS KNOW

If you're using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, the players should already know the following three key points. If not, or if you wish to remind them of some key elements, make sure they know the following before starting this adventure.

What is the season of ghosts? The season of ghosts is a time during summer when Spectrewood sees an increase in hauntings, spirits, and undead. While the cause is uncertain, these ghosts often lure folks to their deaths.

What is the Reenactment Festival? In Willowshore, following a massive feast to celebrate the end of the season on the last day of spring, the town reenacts people being snatched away by "ghosts" (played by villagers in paper masks); the townsfolk then pretend to plunge into collective panic as designated wailers mourn loudly, while others play out a search and rescue effort. This farce is believed to trick real ghosts into thinking that someone has already haunted the settlement and thus convince them to seek a happier village to inflict misery upon. The PCs recall playing the role of the abductees, who must spend the night wrapped in straw mats until they're "ransomed" in the morning by the local in charge of that year's Reenactment Festival.

What items do the PCs have? Staying overnight in the woods is risky, and the PCs were given time to prepare in advance. They currently have whatever items most 1st-level adventurers start with, as determined during character creation.

If the PCs head back toward town, remember to ask each PC what Exploration Activity they use on the trip. If instead they decide to wait a while in the clearing, they can explore the location with activities such as Investigate or Detect Magic to check for anything out of place. Regardless of their choice, the "Strange Aggression" encounter that follows takes place at this time.

The First Day of Summer

The next four encounters assume the PCs travel west from the forest clearing, over the Duyue River bridge and up the road into Willowshore, passing by the stone spider and the eastern watchtower as they approach town. This journey is presented on the following pages as a series of encounters, but if your players choose

to diverge from this assumed path, use the gazetteer of Willowshore that starts on page 68 as needed. You should work in the information they would've gained from the first four encounters (the aggressive wildlife, the strange mist and crimson moon, the missing stone spider, and Ha Hai-er's tale) as soon as possible so that the PCs still have some context for events to follow.

STRANGE AGGRESSION

TRIVIAL 1

The woodlands surrounding Willowshore have their share of dangerous predators, but this close to town, those threats are usually minimal. As the PCs head back to town—or if instead they decide to wait for a time in the clearing—the sound of something rustling in the nearby undergrowth attracts their attention.

Creatures: Kugaptee's growing influence causes wildlife in the Willowshore hinterlands to grow unusually aggressive and supernaturally vocal, as the PCs now discover. A few moments after they hear the rustling, two giant centipedes scuttle out from the undergrowth. The bright orange creatures initially make unnerving hissing sounds upon spotting the PCs, but as they scurry forth to attack, these hisses begin forming words: "meat... flesh... bones... fingers... hair... skin... eyes..." As the fight progresses, the centipedes' whispering grows into short sentences, making it apparent that they're gasping out the parts of the PCs they hope to soon feed upon.

As the combat concludes, allow the PCs a chance to interpret the strange actions taken by the giant centipedes, as detailed in the "Sinister Animals" sidebar on page 11.

Giant Centipedes (2)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 61

Initiative Perception +6

MAZE OF MIST, RAIN OF BLOOD

As the PCs continue traveling west down the game trail, the weather grows stranger. Mist rolls in through the trees, growing into a full-fledged fog by the time the PCs step out of the forest and onto a familiar riverside road, a mere 10 minutes after they left the clearing they awoke in.

Up ahead, the sight of the Duyue River bridge through the unusual fog is a welcome sight, for this bridge confirms that the PCs have arrived at the easternmost edge of Willowshore. As they cross the bridge, though, the fog persists. Allow each PC to attempt a secret DC 13 Society or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge. On a critical failure, a PC misremembers an old legend that claims summer fog brings summer sickness. On a success, a PC recalls an

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SINISTER ANIMALS

The fact that these animals are unusually aggressive should already concern any PC who succeeds at a secret DC 15 Nature or Survival check (on a success, that PC realizes how unusual it is for creatures like giant centipedes to be so quickly aggressive and to avoid fleeing upon facing superior foes, especially during daylight hours), but the addition of their disturbing ability to speak reveals immediately that something supernatural is afoot. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Occultism or Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows these animals are being influenced in some way by an evil spirit. These animals—along with many other aggressive animals encountered in the mindscape during this chapter—are physical manifestations of Kugaptee's influence over the region. Their unusual intellect (they have Int +0 and can speak Common), chaotic evil alignment, and cruel personalities are a side effect of the fiend's increased presence in this cycle of the mindscape, but they otherwise have standard statistics for their kind.

old nursery rhyme that suggests Willowshore's *Eternal Lantern* has been extinguished. See the lantern poem on page 12 for this rhyme.

As long as Willowshore's *Eternal Lantern* remains extinguished, day and night are more dangerous and unsettling. During the day, the town is constantly bathed in a thick fog known as mirage mist. The mist dissipates at night, but at the cost of crimson moonlight bathing the land.

Mirage Mist: The eerie fog is thick enough to obscure visibility beyond a range of 500 feet. Creatures viewed from more than 100 feet away are concealed. In addition, the mist distorts peripheral vision, causing one to periodically notice strange shapes moving and shifting about at the limits of their vision. All Perception checks attempted within mirage mist suffer a -1 status penalty as a result, and all DCs for Survival checks to Sense Direction are increased by 5.

Crimson Moon: At night, the mirage mist clears and the sky reverts to partially overcast. When the waxing moon is glimpsed through the clouds, it shines with an eerie crimson hue. This effect has the emotion, enchantment, fear, and mental traits. At the start of any hour a creature spends under this crimson moon, it must attempt a DC 15 Will save to avoid having the value of its frightened condition increase.

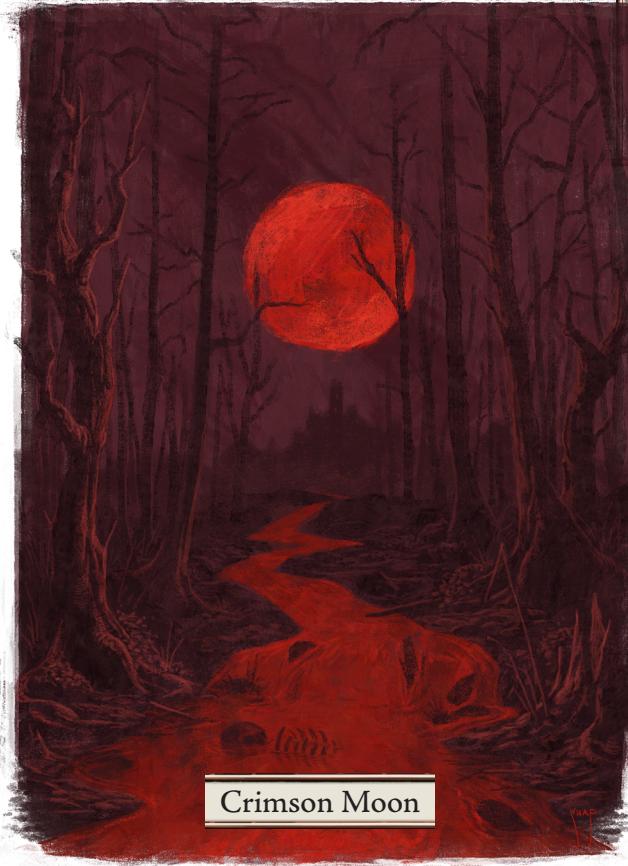
Critical Success The creature reduces its moon-induced frightened condition by 1.

Success The creature's moon-induced frightened condition doesn't increase.

Failure The creature's frightened condition value increases by 1, to a maximum value of 4. This frightened condition persists until dawn, or until enough critical success results reduce the value to 0.

Critical Failure As failure, but the condition's value increases by 2.

Blood Rain: Every sunset as the crimson moon rises, attempt a DC 14 flat check. On a success, the cloud cover increases fully (this doesn't negate the need to make hourly Will saves against the crimson moon while outdoors), and at some point during the night (as decided by the GM), what appears to be blood rains down on Willowshore. This "blood" seemingly coats everything with a layer of gore. Any PC who witnesses the blood rain must immediately attempt a save against the effects of the crimson moon, taking a -4 circumstance penalty to the save if they're out in the rain. A PC whose frightened condition increases as the result of this saving throw becomes fleeing for 1 minute and must attempt to escape to an indoor location. The blood rain ends after a few minutes, transitioning back to overcast skies for the remainder



Crimson Moon



Lazy Adou took a break, and
did not light the lamp that day.
This proved to be a big mistake, for
then the ghosts came out to play!
Hazy mist and moon of blood,
all because he just gave up.

LANTERN POEM

of the night. Fallen rain reverts to normal water once the bloody rain ends.

Resolving the Manifestations: The PCs can stop these eerie manifestations of Kugaptee's influence by lighting the *Eternal Lantern* at Dawnstep Bridge (see "Light the Night" on page 25). If the PCs don't recall the old rhyme, you can have them learn of the rhyme by a rescued NPC of your choice.

THE SPIDERLESS GATE

After crossing the bridge over the Duyue River, the PCs arrive at the eastern entrance to Willowshore. Here, a stone statue of a guardian spider once stood in a shrine next to the road, but as the PCs approach, something looks off in the mist—the spider statue is missing, with only an empty shrine left behind. Willowshore's eastern entrance lantern, once held in the stone spider's fangs, now lies extinguished on its side in the grass below.

Allow the PCs a DC 15 Society or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge about the stone spider statue, as detailed in area **W30** on page 79. The same check also reminds them that the *Eternal Lantern*—Willowshore's original entrance lantern—is located near Dawnstep Bridge (area **W11**).

The Missing Spider: The stone spider somewhat affectionately known by the locals as "Ugly Cute" is the size of a horse and made of solid stone, which makes it unlikely that someone simply made off with it. No sign of chiseling or damage to the rock on which it once perched upon is evident, but large furrows scar the ground surrounding it. With a successful DC 15 Survival check to Track, a PC confirms these marks are consistent with tracks the statue would've left if it animated and headed east down the road. The tracks then enter the river and become impossible to follow. The PCs have no way of knowing it at the moment, but

later in the adventure, they'll discover what happened to Ugly Cute—see page 50 in Chapter 3.

The Unlit Lantern: The entrance lantern is empty of oil. While this lantern won't drive back the mist and moonlight if it's lit again, if the PCs refill it (they can find lantern oil in the next encounter if they don't have any at this time), they gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against the crimson moonlight, and the flat check for blood rain increases to DC 18.

Reward: Give the PCs 20 XP for lighting the lantern.

EASTERN WATCHTOWER

After traveling about a mile further west from the missing spider statue, the PCs reach Willowshore's eastern watchtower. The tang of blood fills the air, and four bodies lie sprawled on the ground. Two belong to town guards, their legs swollen and expressions of pain frozen on their faces. The other two bodies appear to be tiny blue-gray humanoids with sharp teeth and giant ears, seemingly slain by sword blows.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the two tiny humanoid bodies as jinkin gremlins. Any character who examines the two human guards and succeeds at a DC 13 Medicine check realizes they perished from poison delivered from snake bites to the legs. A PC who Searches the area reveals two dead vipers in the grass nearby.

Creatures: Up in the guard tower, a town guard named Hai-er Ha managed to escape death. When she sees the PCs, she demands they recite at least four of the eight practices of the season of ghosts to prove they aren't monsters in disguise. These eight practices are listed in the sidebar on page 13 and in the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*. If you're not using the guide, or if the players have trouble remembering the practices, a character can recall two randomly rolled practices with a successful DC 10 Religion, Society, or Willowshore Lore check to Recall Knowledge (or four on a critical success, one on a failure, and none on a critical failure). A PC can also get Hai-er to relax by Making an Impression with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to shift her attitude from unfriendly to at least indifferent.

Once she's convinced, her attitude shifts to indifferent if it wasn't there already, and she clammers down from the tower to greet the PCs with relief. While she doesn't know any of them personally, she certainly remembers yesterday evening when Uncle Choe and his crew in their ghostly paper masks carried the PCs out to the woods at the culmination of the Reenactment Festival. She also confirms they returned from the woods without the PCs a short time later, just at the beginning of her watch. It was well after

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midnight that those “horrible little blue monsters” came out of the woods to the south with their trained serpents. The other two guards on duty managed to defeat the creatures but then perished to snake bites. Hai-er has remained in the watchtower, plagued by a mix of fear and guilt ever since, and the dense fog that has descended on Willowshore frightens her all the more. If no PC recalled the rhyme about Lazy Adou earlier, she could share it with them.

She warns the PCs that screams, roars, and other frightening sounds have been echoing through the air from town, but that since dawn, things have been silent. She’s incredulous if the PCs tell her Ugly Cute’s statue is missing. Hai-er prefers to stay here in the tower “until this weird fog lifts,” and she promises to ring the tower bell if she spots any danger. If more than 24 hours have passed, she is running low on food and will make her way into town—her fate is left to the GM to determine in this encounter.

Hai-er has some advice for the PCs before they leave the watchtower.

“Go home, check on friends and family, make sure everyone is all right. That’s what I would do if not for this fog. Pharamsa bless us, I hope my daughter is okay. Even though I asked Granny Hu to babysit, I worry. And my husband... hopefully he’s safe at the Matsuki estate right now. That place is nearly a fortress!”

All PCs know that “Granny Hu” refers to Hu Ban-niang, and the Matsuki estate is Shou’s home—though he’s more commonly called “Old Matsuki.” These two individuals are the spiritual leaders of Willowshore’s Northridge and Southbank factions, respectively. The PCs can invite Hai-er to join them, though she initially resists due to a combination of her fear of what’s happening all around her and her dedication to her post. If she can be made at least friendly, she’ll agree to accompany the PCs. She encourages them to either visit Granny Hu (so she can check on her daughter) or the Matsuki estate (to track down her husband)—if the PCs neglect either of these options before nightfall, she’ll set off to reunite with her daughter on her own. As long as she’s accompanying the PCs, Hai-er provides support in combat with her crossbow, closing to melee only once she runs out of ammunition. If reduced to fewer than 6 Hit Points, she panics and



Hai-er Ha

THE EIGHT PRACTICES

The people of Willowshore follow these eight tenets during the season of ghosts. These beliefs are held as protections against the attentions of minor evil or mischievous spirits and, as such, can be used against the phantoms that plague Willowshore early on. However, they’re generally ineffective against more powerful undead or actual ghosts the party will face in later adventures, and any local or PC who knows these practices would know this as well.

1. Do not call a ghost a ghost; instead, address them with friendly greetings if you must.
2. Do not pat people on the head or shoulders.
3. Avoid entering bodies of water when a ghost is nearby.
4. Do not eat food that has two stick-like objects protruding from it.
5. Do not lean against walls during the day.
6. Do not whistle at night.
7. Do not leave laundry out at night.
8. If you hear someone call your name from behind you at night, do not turn around.

flees, hoping to find somewhere safe to hide before moving on to seek out her daughter. Once she’s reunited with either her daughter or husband, she no longer accompanies the PCs.

HAI-ER HA

CREATURE 1

LN female human guard (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 232)

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: Hai-er provides the party with two minor magical supplies from the watchtower that might be of use to them—a *ladder feather token* and a single *shining crossbow bolt*. A small cask of lantern oil is stored here as well, should the PCs wish to light the lantern to the east at Ugly Cute’s abandoned perch.

Reward: Grant the PCs XP as if they defeated Ha Hai-er in combat if they befriend her. If they help reunite her with her family, grant the party 1 Reputation Point with Northridge and Southbank.

Back to Willowshore

Once the PCs reach Willowshore, their main goal should be to explore the monster-infested town, build

up their resources and reputation, and work toward lighting the *Eternal Lantern* so they can neutralize the effects of the mist and moonlight.

If the players need guidance, you can have Hai-er ask them to escort her to either the Matsuki estate (see Making Contact: Southbank on page 16) or to Granny Hu (see Making Contact: Northridge on page 17)—either will put the party in contact with one of Willowshore’s two elders. Any PC who has family, friends, or a home in Willowshore might wish to return there as well—see Returning Home on page 16 in this case.

The PCs can also begin exploring downtown Willowshore on their own, but this area is where the bulk of the invading monsters now lurk, and it’s best if the PCs first make contact with one of the elders. If the party persists in heading downtown, proceed to Chapter 2. While encounters in this chapter are more challenging, they’re still balanced for 1st-level PCs.

WILLOWSHORE FEATURES

Most doors in Willowshore are sliding doors, with the exception of those found on outhouses (which are hinged wooden doors). Exterior sliding doors are made of solid wood, grant standard cover, and can be Forced Open by a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Athletics check. Indoor sliding doors or room partitions provide no cover, do provide concealment, and can be Forced Open by a character who succeeds at a DC 5 Athletics check. You can poke a hole in the paper of many interior doors to peek inside as an Interact action, though you must pass a Stealth check to remain undetected by creatures on the other side. Weapons and ammunition can easily pierce through interior doors.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

When the PCs travel throughout Willowshore using exploration mode for more than a mile in one continuous stretch, attempt a DC 10 flat check. Each PC who’s Avoiding Notice or Scouting increases this DC by 1, but each PC who’s Hustling or Searching decreases the DC by 2.

On a success, the PCs come across a random encounter. If the result is a phantom but the PCs are outdoors during the day, treat it as no encounter. If the result is a haunt, choose the haunt that’s most appropriate for the location (see Haunts), or treat it as no encounter. When the PCs are traveling at night, add a +5 modifier when rolling on the Willowshore Random Encounters table.

These random encounters end once the *Eternal Lantern* has been lit.

WILLOWSHORE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20 Roll	Encounter	Threat Level
1–2	1 giant cockroach (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary 2</i> 53)	Trivial 1
3–4	Haunt (phantom footsteps or locking door)	Trivial 1
5–6	1 jinkin (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary 193</i>)	Trivial 1
7–8	1 spider swarm (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary 306</i>)	Trivial 1
9–10	Haunt (blood-soaked soil or disembodied voices)	Trivial 1
11–12	Haunt (bloodthirsty toy or toppling furniture)	Trivial 1
13–14	1 jinkin and 1 viper (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary 193, 302</i>)	Low 1
15–16	3 phantom ravens	Low 1
17–18	1 phantom boar	Low 1
19–20+	2 phantom wolves	Moderate 1

Aggressive Wildlife: Giant cockroaches or spider swarms are normally skittish, but these creatures have become more aggressive from Kugaptee’s growing influence, and these vermin fight to the death. As in Strange Aggression (page 10), a character who succeeds at a secret DC 15 Nature or Survival check notes how strange it is for these creatures to be so violent. And as with the centipedes in that encounter, these wild animals are chaotic evil and can speak—but do so mostly to issue threats or taunt their victims; they have no interest in actual conversations.

Haunts: For each haunt encounter, two options for haunts taken from *Pathfinder Book of the Dead* are given—choose the one that makes the most sense for the situation the PCs are in at the time. All six of the haunts mentioned on this table are detailed fully on pages 64–65 of *Book of the Dead*. You can use these six haunts as inspiration to craft more haunts to vex your players with if you wish.

Jinkin: Encounters with these gremlins are either with a lone jinkin or with a jinkin and their pet viper. A jinkin flees if reduced to fewer than 5 Hit Points, but a pet viper fights to the death. Many of these jinkins have stolen mundane objects from locals and either wear them in strange ways or are in the process of destroying the object. Note that all of the jinkins encountered in this adventure speak Common, rather than Undercommon.

Phantoms: These creatures are the closest thing to actual ghosts the PCs are likely to face this early in the Adventure Path. These phantom animals are manifestations of Kugaptee’s influence as much as they are of Willowshore’s collective fears and superstitions.

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As such, these phantoms might call out a PC's name when they're looking away, or might appear as the result of a PC entering a body of water or daring to whistle at night. The most important thing for the PCs to note is that by using the first practice and addressing these phantoms with friendly greetings, the PCs can cause them to lose their power and even disorporate. Allow the PCs to attempt a secret DC 15 Religion or Willowshore Lore check to realize this tactic if they don't come up with it themselves after encountering a phantom. These phantoms appear as ghostly, pale green versions of the real animal, but have eerie glowing eyes and can speak Common. Phantoms, when encountered, are more eager to frighten the PCs than to fight, and until they're attacked, they'll only use their innate occult spells or Intimidation checks to Demoralize. Once a phantom is attacked, it fights back with its melee strikes. These wandering phantoms can't pursue victims into buildings and vanish back into the Ethereal Plane at the end of any round in which they see no viable targets outside on the streets.

PHANTOM BOAR

CREATURE 2

RARE **NE** **MEDIUM** **ETHEREAL** **INCORPOREAL** **PHANTOM** **SPIRIT**

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 202)

Perception +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidation +6

Str -5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Walk the Ethereal Line ➔ As phantom knight.

AC 18; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

HP 22; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 2 (except force or ghost touch; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Vulnerable to Kindness Any creature within 30 feet that the phantom can see and hear can issue a calm and friendly greeting to it as a two-action activity with the auditory, concentrate, linguistic, and mental traits. A creature greeting the phantom in this manner must attempt a DC 18 Diplomacy check.

Critical Success The phantom takes 4d8 mental damage and is stunned 1.

Success The phantom takes 2d8 mental damage.

Failure The phantom takes 1d8 mental damage.

Critical Failure The phantom is unaffected, and is not affected by this weakness for 1 round.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ➔ tusk +7 (finesse, force, magical), **Damage** 1d8+3 force

Occult Innate Spells DC 15, attack +7; **1st** fear;

Cantrips (1st) daze, ghost sound

Boar Charge ➔ The phantom boar Strides twice and then makes a tusk Strike. As long as it moved at least 20 feet, it gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its attack roll.

PHANTOM RAVEN

CREATURE -1

RARE **NE** **TINY** **ETHEREAL** **INCORPOREAL** **PHANTOM** **SPIRIT**

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 202)

Perception +5; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4

Str -5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Walk the Ethereal Line ➔ As phantom knight.

AC 15; **Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

HP 6; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision;

Resistances all damage 1 (except force or ghost touch; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Vulnerable to Kindness As phantom boar, but DC 15.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ➔ beak +7 (finesse, force, magical), **Damage** 1d6 force

Occult Innate Spells DC 13, attack +5; **Cantrips (1st)** daze, ghost sound

PHANTOM WOLF

CREATURE 1

RARE **NE** **MEDIUM** **ETHEREAL** **INCORPOREAL** **PHANTOM** **SPIRIT**

Variant phantom (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 202)

Perception +7; darkvision





Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidation +5

Str -5, Dex +4, Con +1, Int -3, Wis +2, Cha +0

Walk the Ethereal Line ♦♦ As phantom knight.

AC 15; Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +5

HP 14; Immunities disease, paralyzed, poison, precision;

Resistances all damage 2 (except force or ghost touch; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Susceptible to Death As phantom knight.

Vulnerable to Kindness As phantom boar, but DC 17.

Speed fly 35 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +7 (finesse, force, magical), **Damage** 1d6+2 force

Occult Innate Spells DC 14, attack +6; **1st** fear; **Cantrips** (1st) daze, ghost sound

Pack Attack The phantom wolf's Strikes deal an additional 1d4 damage to creatures within reach of at least one of its allies.

RETURNING HOME

One or all of the PCs might have homes or family in Willowshore, in which case they might be concerned and wish to return home to ensure everything is safe. If your players are using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, they might have already selected buildings for their homes.

Use buildings from any map of your choice to represent the PC's homestead. In each home, a minor peril awaits—roll 1d12 on the Willowshore Random Encounters table on page 14 to determine what the PCs face in their homes. If any friends or family are present, they should be safe (but perhaps rattled by the danger), provided the PCs can solve the situation found within.

Treasure: For each home the PCs visit, they can recover some supplies—either items left behind by the PC, or gifts from friends or family. If you're using the *Season of Ghosts Player's Guide*, the players themselves will have had the chance to pick one of the following sets of treasure during character creation when they selected their homes in town. Otherwise, choose a treasure from the following list for the PCs as a reward, but don't duplicate rewards unless there are more than 4 PCs in the party.

- Two *minor healing potions* and one piece of common adventuring gear worth 2 gp or less of the PC's choice.
- One *predictable silver piece* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 262) and a vial with one dose of *oil of potency*.
- Supplies for an alarm snare, 10 sp, and two lesser ghost charges (*Advanced Player's Guide* 253).
- One chunk of cold iron.

Reward: Grant the PCs 10 XP if they visit all of their homes.

Making Contact: Southbank

Many of the townsfolk in South Willowshore retreated to the Matsuki estate (area W6) or the Thrice-Blessed Inn (area W7) in the predawn hours due to the monstrous invasion, only braving their workshops and stores if they had no other choice. As a result, most NPCs who are usually found south of the river are generally sheltering at the estate or the inn until the *Eternal Lantern* is lit. If the players don't think of paying a visit to the Matsuki estate on their own, an allied NPC should suggest it before long—or you can simply have the PCs all attempt Society or Willowshore Lore checks and give this suggestion to whichever character rolls highest.

MEETING OLD MATSUKI

The Matsuki estate is a blur of activity. Many rooms have been cleared and converted into workshops, medical stations, or sleeping quarters. The only pocket of relative calm is in the banquet hall. Here, sitting with other major figures of south Willowshore, Old Matsuki listens patiently to all the reports coming in.

When he notices the PCs, Old Matsuki pauses his current meeting and beckons the PCs to join him, providing warm food and drinks for the party. While the PCs recuperate, Old Matsuki asks them what happened after they woke up in the forest. After the PCs recount their experience, he is sympathetic and encourages anyone with missing family members to stay optimistic. He offers lodgings if the PCs feel their homes aren't secure enough to stay in.

Once the PCs have had a chance to relax a bit, Old Matsuki asks for their help in retaking Willowshore. In particular, he mentions the following four topics as goals for the PCs to tackle. The order in which they attempt these quests is left to the PCs to decide.

Contacting Northridge: With the monsters encamped on Dawnstep Bridge, easy access to Northridge is denied. Old Matsuki admits he has his differences with Granny Hu, but making contact with her and providing available aid to Northridge is important. If the PCs feel up to the task, Old Matsuki suggests seeking Granny Hu out at the trade office (see *Making Contact: Northridge* on page 17).

Ugly Cute: Old Matsuki notes that several refugees have seen a horse-sized spider made of stone striding through the mist, and he believes Willowshore's stone guardian has awakened to defend the town; the PCs can confirm this theory by reporting the missing statue. He plans on recruiting the hunters from the Silvermist Lodges (area W5) to track down Ugly Cute to provide aid to the guardian beast, but currently, the hunters are busy saving townsfolk in the streets. If the PCs can

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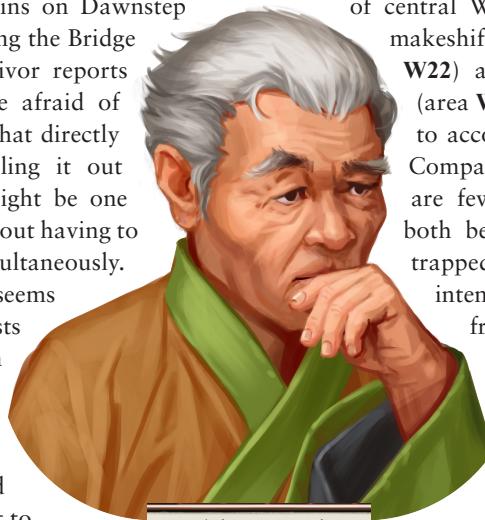
contact one of the hunters, Old Matsuki asks them to convey this information to them (see The Trapped Hunter on page 19).

The Invading Monsters: Old Matsuki warns the PCs about the buso and jinkins on Dawnstep Bridge (area W11; see Liberating the Bridge on page 23). He shares survivor reports that the jinkins appear to be afraid of fighting beside the buso, and that directly confronting the buso or calling it out specifically for a challenge might be one way to defeat the monster without having to contend with the gremlins simultaneously. He also notes that the buso seems taken with drink, and he suggests that if the PCs think they can trick the monster, they could approach it with an offering of drugged or poisoned wine to make it easier to defeat. Old Matsuki suggests paying a visit to the Hand of Spring (area W19) if the PCs are interested in pursuing this option (see Clash at the Clinic on page 20).

The Unlit Lantern: Old Matsuki suspects that the cause of the strange weather affecting Willowshore (and thus an important step in retaking the town) is tied to the fact that, for the first time since it was lit generations ago, the *Eternal Lantern* has gone dark. He knows the history of the *Eternal Lantern* and shares with the PCs the story of how Master Zhi Hui first lit the lantern using three blessed copper coins. To relight the lantern and, hopefully, bring an end to the strange mist and unsettling crimson moonlight, the PCs must obtain the blessing of three gods by visiting three different shrines and offering a copper coin to receive the blessing. It only takes 10 minutes for Old Matsuki to teach the PCs how to perform the prayer; he provides the PCs with three copper coins as tokens to offer (see Blessing the Coins on page 22). Once the PCs have three blessed coins, they should make haste to Dawnstep Bridge to relight the *Eternal Lantern* (see Light the Night on page 25).

Downtown Willowshore: In closing, Old Matsuki warns the PCs against entering downtown Willowshore at this time, for reports indicate that this part of town has become particularly infested with monsters. Once the four tasks above have been accomplished (in particular, the lighting of the *Eternal Lantern*), plans for dealing with downtown can proceed.

Reward: Grant the PCs 40 XP for meeting Old Matsuki for the first time in this adventure.



Old Matsuki

Making Contact: Northridge

Willowshore's new trade office (area W21) and its warehouses were completed weeks ago. This, plus the fact that they're located a fair distance to the east of central Willowshore, makes them perfect makeshift shelters. The fisheries (area W22) and even the Mushroom House (area W24) have also opened their doors to accommodate the influx of villagers. Compared to the Matsuki estate, there are fewer refugees at the trade office, both because the NPCs downtown are trapped and because several locals have intentionally distanced themselves from Granny Hu, but making contact with those holed up at the trade office is still an important step toward reclaiming Willowshore from the monsters.

CROSSING THE WATERS MODERATE 1

As long as monsters retain control of Dawnstep Bridge (area W11), traveling between Northridge and Southbank is tricky, as the waters of Woodraft Lake and the Ceiba River present a significant barrier.

Ceiba River: The Ceiba River varies between 20 and 25 feet deep with very little shallows along either shore—a feature that traditionally made the river very well suited for the transport of lumber. A PC can Swim the river's waters with a successful DC 15 Athletics check or cross in a rowboat via Piloting checks (see page 175 in the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*, but note that a critical failure on a Piloting check results in a capsizement and the boat sinking). Make sure to remind the players of the third practice of the season of ghosts—that one should “avoid entering bodies of water when a ghost is nearby.” In this case, entering a body of water could mean physically entering it or even attempting to pilot a boat across water. While there are no game mechanics in play to back up this implied danger, you can make your players a bit uneasy and nervous about crossing the river simply by reminding them of this superstition.

Willowshore Dam: The dam (area W14) is currently open. A character can close it as a 10-minute activity to Interact with the dam's mechanisms on either shore by succeeding at a DC 15 Athletics or DC 13 Engineering Lore check. Each attempt to close (or open) the dam incurs a flat check for an encounter (page 14), and a critical failure indicates the mechanism has become stuck and can't be opened or closed again until it's repaired with several days of work.



FINDING A BOAT

Until the buso at Dawnstep Bridge is defeated, rowboats are perhaps the safest way to cross the Ceiba River, but finding one on the southern shoreline isn't particularly easy since most of the urban infrastructure for boating exists along the river's northern banks. Worse, many of the rowboats in town have been damaged by destructive jinkins. A character who Searches for 10 minutes along the southern bank and succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check can find a broken rowboat, while with a critical success, they locate an undamaged rowboat.

Larger boats and barges are moored at various places along the northern shore, but these vehicles are likely beyond the capacity of a low-level party to pilot. Fortunately, characters can automatically find a functional rowboat on the river's northern bank after taking 10 minutes to Search.

See the *Gamemastery Guide* for vehicle rules (pages 174–177) and for rowboat statistics (page 179).

MEETING GRANNY HU

The new trade office (area W21) is indeed where Granny Hu and most of Northridge's refugees have fled to. Several of the nearby warehouses have been converted into temporary shelters for locals, but everyone the PCs speak to directs them to the trade office, called the Ceiba-Duyue Exchange.

At the trade office, Granny Hu scrutinizes a map of Willowshore, using game pieces from an Eight Paces set to mark where monsters have been sighted and where people might be trapped. The PCs' arrival comes as quite a shock to her and her current right-hand aide, the Kofusachi cleric Kim Gu-won. Granny Hu questions how the PCs managed to cross the river, fearing they might have been forced to strike a bargain with the monsters. Once the PCs explain, Granny Hu shakes her head and chuckles at the party's foolish bravery. She asks them to sit and update her on what they've been through, feigning concern for the folks in the south.

Granny Hu is forced to reluctantly agree with Old Matsuki about the three most important steps that must be taken next, but if the PCs come to her first, she eagerly suggests the following tasks on her own, providing somewhat different advice.

The Invading Monsters: Granny Hu has heard rumors that the “brain” of the monsters that invaded Willowshore is someone (or something) named Mo Douqiu. She believes he might either be a human with occult powers or some sort of human-like yokai. She sees Northridge as being more self-sufficient, and restoring access to Dawnstep Bridge is, to her,

Once the dam is closed, the waters of the Ceiba River lower to a depth of 10 feet, and the DC to Swim or Pilot a boat is reduced by 5 for 2 hours, after which the water level of Woodraft Lake rises enough to drain over the dam's spillways, reverting the waters to their former depth and speed. Opening the dam at this point increases the river depth back to normal and increases checks to cross it by 5 for 15 minutes.

A PC can treat the dam itself as an improvised bridge, but its slick surface and narrow spots mean that to do so requires that PC to succeed at five DC 17 Acrobatics checks to balance during an intense 5-minute crossing.

Woodraft Lake: While the waters of Woodraft Lake (area W13) are calmer (reduce checks to Swim and Pilot by 5), the bodies of dead townsfolk float in the waters, either tossed here unceremoniously by monsters or, more tragically, the results of failed attempts by frightened people trying to cross the waters. These deaths, combined with the influence of the eerie mists and crimson moonlight, have caused the lake to become haunted. Any attempt to cross the lake before the *Eternal Lantern* is lit runs afoul of the following hazard.

GRASPING CURRENTS

HAZARD 3

UNIQUE | COMPLEX | HAUNT

Stealth +20 (trained) to notice a weird, faintly glowing ripple of the current beneath the water.

Description A swath of drowned spirits tries to pull someone down into the water to join them.

Disable DC 23 Religion to calm the unquiet spirits in the waters for an hour, or light the *Eternal Lantern* (automatically disables the haunt)

Ghostly Grasp **Trigger** A creature attempts to cross the lake by swimming or piloting a boat; **Effect** Ghostly arms reach up to grab and clutch at the creature or the boat, causing a -2 penalty to the Athletics or Piloting check that triggered the haunt. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) On its initiative, the grasping currents attempt to Grapple a swimming creature or capsize a rowboat by attempting an Athletics check with a +12 modifier. A creature that's restrained by the grasping currents is pulled underwater and risks drowning. To capsize a rowboat, the haunt's Athletics check is rolled against the pilot's Athletics or Sailing Lore DC, whichever is higher.

Reset The grasping currents quickly build up power and can trigger again after 10 minutes have passed.

Reward: The first time the PCs make it to Northridge in this adventure, grant them 40 XP.