

TlokPik Area

This small map, around 9 by 8 miles in area (15 by 13 kilometres), is that in the vicinity of a ruined village, known locally as TlokPik or Yhangha. It is located towards the northeastern tip of Mate Ora, southernmost island in the Nga-Whenuatoto archipelago, in Nibirum's southern tropics, around 36 degrees South latitude. The area's name is that used by the native ape-folk in the vicinity, whose spoken language consists of tongue-clicks and throaty sounds, rather than specific word-vocalisations. "TlokPik" approximately translates as "Jungle hill(s)/burial mounds where the (living) dead walk," and in general, the natives use it as a catch-all term for a place to be avoided. The nearest ape-folk village lies about three miles (5 km) off the northeastern map edge. They find few reasons to visit this district south of Lost Souls Inlet overall.

Climatically hot and wet, there are many small streams, marshy areas and pools alongside the mapped river lines, with the vegetation primarily rainforest jungle. This jungle is denser towards the southern and western parts of the map (indicated by the darker green background colouring). However, one such darker-green patch, east of the settlement ruins and labelled "Goldenwood", is unusual in having a preponderance of more temperate deciduous trees, not the evergreen tropical varieties elsewhere. One tree symbol with yellow foliage marks an especially fine specimen, right in the dense heart of Goldenwood, which is perpetually bathed in magical, sparkling light, sunlight by day, paler moon- or starlight by night. The light's source, while loosely from "above", has no definable origin, nor does it provide any external indication as to this tree's whereabouts from further away in the forest.

While the main river and one of its major tributaries south of Lost Souls Inlet are designated "TlokPik River" and "Stream", the name tends to be applied in a scattergun fashion to any watercourses, ponds, and other obvious terrain features by the local ape-folk. The ruined settlement's earlier name was "Yhangha" (of unknown meaning), although only its sole humanoid inhabitant now knows this. The settlement is detailed separately in the Atlas. The Inlet's name derives from the Mountains of Lost Souls, into whose southeastern extent the Inlet cuts, beyond the northwestern corner of this map.

Aside from the usual living and undead creatures found across Mate Ora, that are as likely to be encountered here as anywhere on the island, the labelled map features concentrate on geographical and vegetal curiosities, such as Goldenwood. On and a little beyond the western map edge, for instance, is Hotmarsh, an extensive swampland marked by dead trees, where little of the usual vegetation, or anything else much, grows, and hot-water mineral springs dominate. These produce strong, unpleasant, sulphurous scents over the entire Hotmarsh area, and beyond. The stream running east from the Marsh past Memory Vines into the TlokPik River, is similarly polluted along its upper course (the stretch that has dead tree symbols alongside it), although it is less unhealthy further downstream, as additional minor channels enter and help dilute it. Sulphur land around, and especially southeast of, Hotmarsh, is equally filled with dead trees, little other living vegetation, and a generally poisoned landscape look, together with the omnipresent stink of sulphur.

Although the tip of the triangular peninsula west of the mouth of the TlokPik River may seem filled with similarly dead-looking trees, this region has been affected by the undeath so prevalent across Mate Ora instead, as this is an area of Living Dead Trees. Some are able to uproot themselves and walk of their own volition, if in a ponderous, zombie-like manner, attracted by living blood. Luckily, their ability to do this is restricted to just this small region (albeit there are ape-folk tales suggesting it is larger now than once it was). At the water's, or jungle's, edge, such mobile undead trees collapse as ordinary dead wood.

In a bend of the stream east of Hotmarsh, on its south bank where a tributary joins on its northern side, is an especially tricky, small zone, the red-tree-marked Memory Vines. Here, flowering vines on the jungle trees hang down to tangle on the ground in great profusion, the flowers distinctly different to those seen elsewhere in the jungle, for the knowledgeable or keen-eyed, at least. The pollen they release, sometimes in misty clouds, when inhaled by living creatures, causes those affected to forget the names of things and individuals, including even their own names. These memories must be recreated and relearned after leaving this vicinity, as such will not return otherwise.

Southwest of the Yhangha ruins is the first area of denser jungle in that direction, concentrated mostly along the north bank of the labelled TlokPik

Stream, near its confluence with the TokPik River. In its midst is a region where the canopy is lower, part of which is further characterised by some notably vibrantly-coloured orchid-like parasitic flowers. These grow seemingly quite randomly on all kinds of plants in the red-marked Parasitic flowers space. Anyone spending too long here will find these flowers start growing on them as well. Their effects are not too debilitating, although the plants do need to extract liquid from their host - such as sap, sweat or blood. They are not very fussy as to which.

A couple of miles (3 km or so) southeast of the Parasitic flowers is an unexpected, huge, piece of sculpture - or possibly the exposed part of a petrified, buried creature. It stands in the northern edge of the denser jungle, so is likely to be found more by chance than design. It is an enormous, stone, humanoid hand, wrist and short piece of forearm, which extends straight out of the soil, hand uppermost. Its palm is cupped, and faces the sky, roughly halfway towards the canopy from the ground. Smaller plants grow over it in places, without obscuring what it is from nearby. In the palm-cup is a shallow pool of magical, clear, freshwater, which is perfectly safe to drink, and cannot be polluted by any means. Its origins are wholly unknown, along with its significance, although a few among the local ape-folk may know of its existence.

South of the angle formed by the TokPik Stream-River confluence lie the two remaining notable items here. The red-marked tree, labelled "Portal Vines" indicates a strange, small area, where the omnipresent hanging jungle lianas weave themselves together like spiderweb curtains, often in mid-air, suspended from branches of the canopy trees. Occasionally within these web-curtains, a circular gap will appear, some simply empty, others containing a genuine magical portal to other places, times, or wherever else the GM may require.

Finally, near and extending off the map's southern edge, is an extensive region of fungal jungle, where a proliferation of obvious and less-obvious fungi are apparent, the fruiting bodies of which display a great range of appearances, colorations and degrees of bioluminescence (none to lots). A significant proportion produce hallucinogenic spores that will affect breathing creatures to a greater or lesser extent, and whose resultant visions can be equally variable.