

Enascencia



The Bridge of a Thousand Whispers

An Enascencia Savage Tale for 4-6 Novice adventurers by Umberto Pignatelli

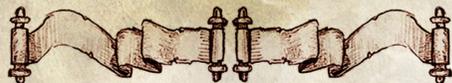
The Bridge Secret

Nobody truly knows when the Bridge of Aalimshaasa was built; a cyclopean structure with many levels, it crosses the Valley of Fogs, in the Rallenok Mountains, providing safe passage through that insalubrious land.

Some legends say it wasn't constructed by any Tribe, but that it appeared one night, the manifestation of Kami itself, others say it is the last remnant of a Lost Tribe. Whatever the truth, under its vaulted domes the travelers' steps echo in weird ways, twisted to resemble voices whispering in an unknown language, hence the name.

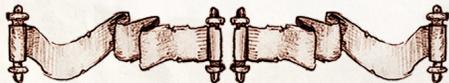
In recent months something dark has been happening in the Bridge: caravans passing through it never reach the other side, and terrible howls are heard during nighttime. The cause is a monster, the Matryx, which has made its lair in the lower bridge levels. The Matryx is an enormous mass of tendrils and energy, which lives only to feed and to spawn its sons, the Hunters, small chameleonic creatures born to find prey to sustain their mother.

Unless this threat is discovered and stopped soon, the Matryx will grow so big as to become a real danger in the area...



Newly Generated Basic Knowledge

The Bridge is more than a simple building: it is a titanic artifact built by a forgotten Lost Tribe of the Second Generation, the Luxuar. Imbued with magic and arcane technology lost today, its main purpose was to be a self-sustaining environment, where the Tribe could seal themselves inside and find shelter, in sight of a new Subversion of the Royal Tribes. Unluckily something went wrong with the plan and the Tribe was totally wiped out during the Second Subversion before they could reach their fortress and seal it...



Kidnapped!

The heroes joined the caravan of Davarko, a chatty Oscurian peddler, and are going to cross the Bridge. Whether the heroes are simple travelers or hired guards is left to the GM, but Davarko didn't tell them anything about the voices on the Bridge (he doesn't believe in them and doesn't want to pay guards extra money).

"Caravan" is an exaggeration in this case because the whole enterprise is composed of Davarko himself and his companion, a gorgeous Menoosh





woman called Wylya. Together the two of them drive a train of six Koopash packed with wares. Nobody knows what Wylya sees in the little Oscurian, but the two of them seem to get along pretty well.

The caravan reaches the Bridge in the afternoon and starts crossing it. It is at least thirty miles long and built on several, interconnected levels, so the crossing will take a whole day. Getting lost is easy, but Davarko knows the place pretty well, because he has used this path a dozen times. The Bridge's interior is feebly lit by glowing stones. Frequent, unsettling, whispers, are heard, but they are nothing out of the ordinary, Davarko says.

At dusk the caravan stops. Wylya takes a secondary passage, a few steps away from the main passage, to gather water from a fountain (there are a number of them in the bridge, along with small, perfectly tended, gardens).

She suddenly cries for help, but, when the party arrives on the scene, the woman is missing. On the ground are the tracks of small feet, mixed with blood (belonging to the Menoosh woman). The tracks are almost impossible to recognize; due to the rarity of the Matryx and her sons, no hero can know anything about them.

Davarko goes mad. He wants to follow the tracks and rescue his companion, but at that moment a weird howl comes from the depths of the bridge, driving the Koopash mad, so the Oscurian must run to calm them before they run away.

Despite the merchant's feelings for Wylya, his beasts and cargo are more important to him, so the task of finding the woman is in the party's hands.

In the Bridge's Depths

Following the tracks of the kidnappers is easy, and will lead to several encounters (the GM is free to add or remove some to make the adventure longer or shorter). Before each encounter, ask the party for a Tracking roll, which can be cooperative; in the case of failure the adventurers go off the trail (and must play the appropriate encounter, Ancient Gem). After playing that encounter no further Tracking roll is required as the party reach their destination.

Matryx Guardian. The party, while following the tracks, hears another weird howl, like those heard before, but this time coming from a corridor nearby. Investigating, they discover the source: on a wall there is a dog-sized, ball-shaped fungus, which periodically contracts and expands (it is breathing), and, at regular intervals of five minutes, howls from a small orifice on its top. It is a Matryx Guardian, a lesser type of drone, mentally connected to its mother, which extends her sensory range. If destroyed (Toughness: 5) the thing

explodes in a cloud of needle-like pieces, dealing 3d6 damage in a LBT (a successful Agility roll halves this).

Ambush! The Matryx Hunters are patrolling the area: if the party previously destroyed the Matryx Guardian, they are alert and set up an ambush in a large room with six different exits: three at ground level and three at 4" from the ground. The room also hosts several columns, which the little creatures use to their best advantage. Half of them hide among the column while the other half are in the upper entrances, ready to spray the pursuers with acid.

Remember the Hunters are drones, controlled by a hive mind, so they coordinate and fight to the death. If the party didn't destroy the Matryx Guardian, the beasts are simply wandering in the room and can be Surprised.

(M) Matryx Hunter (1 per hero +1)

Voice of the Bridge. The heroes arrive at a T junction. Both ways lead to dark corridors and the tracks are so confused that nobody knows what corridor the kidnappers took. While the party is discussing this, they hear a whispering voice from the right corridor, and they see a shrouded

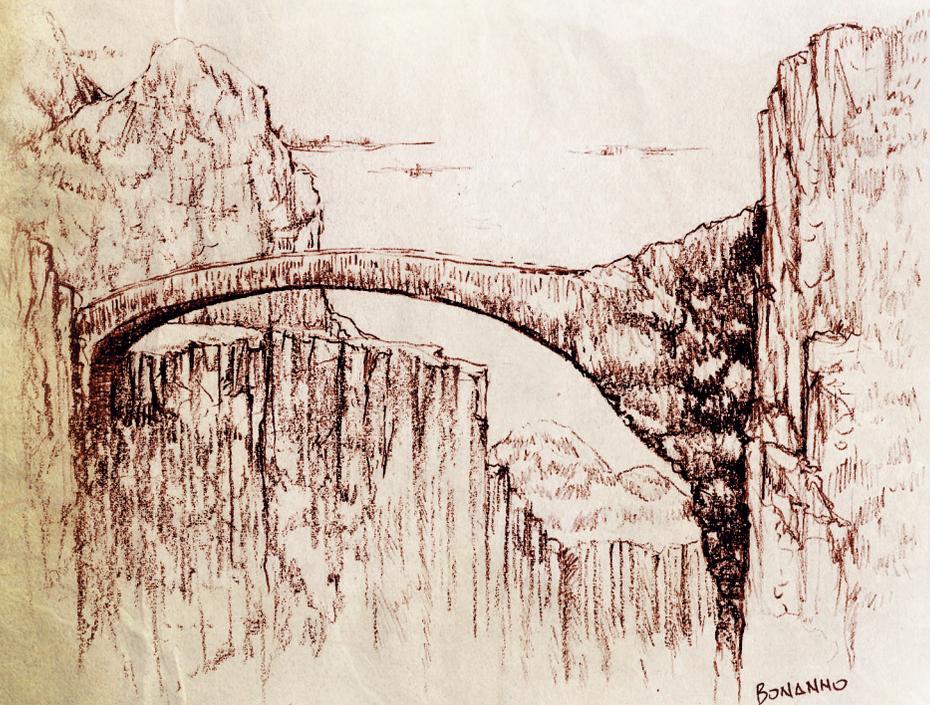




figure in the darkness, the only light coming from a couple of burning blue eyes under its hood. The apparition says, in a rasping voice:

“They took the other path, they are bringing her to it. You must hurry.”

If the heroes ask where the right corridor (where the mysterious apparition stands) leads, it answers:

“Only to death.”

If they ask where the left one leads it answers:

“To the Enemy of Many Sons.”

This creature is a manifestation of the conscience of the Bridge, a psychic echo of the builders. If a hero tries to unhood the Voice, the cloak falls to the ground, revealing only a couple of floating blue sparks, which fizzle and disappear. The Voice tells the truth, and is worried by the presence of the Matryx in its realm. If the party decides to follow the right corridor, play the following encounter, Room of Death.

Room of Death. While the party is advancing along the corridor they hear a very loud crashing coming from the passage in front of them. If this isn't enough to make them stop, they reach a large, empty room, with polished walls and no roof. Looking up they can see the sky, hundreds of feet above. The stone ground is peculiar too, being covered in little holes, the size of a Groomsh's finger. There is another exit from the room, on the opposite side from where the

party entered. While the adventurers are crossing the room, a door opens several yards from the ground, letting a mass of waste (mostly plants and dirt) fall into the room. At this point the real nature of this room is revealed: it is an enormous trash compactor – the two walls start moving, crushing everything in the room! The only chance the heroes have to save their skins is running like hell for an exit! This is a Dramatic Task, based on Agility. If the heroes score at least five successes (raises count as extra successes) in five rounds they are safe, if they score three or four they almost manage to exit, but a friend (only one) must grab them with a Strength (-2) roll, if he fails the poor sod is partially smashed suffering 2d8 damage, AP 4 to the legs, before managing to escape the deadly trap. With two or fewer successes the adventurers are reduced to bloody pulp. After some minutes the walls separate again, while the pulverized waste filters down through the holes on the ground, leaving the room clean as before.

Off-Trail Encounter – Ancient Gem. The adventurers have lost the tracks of Wylya's kidnappers. While they are looking for them, they see a blue light coming from an arch. If they investigate they discover a round-shaped room. In the middle is a pillar of light in which a white gem, large as a fist, floats in midair. But that isn't all: from the wall emerge five stone spikes, six feet long, pointed toward the center of the room, as if they

were a sort of colossal claw closed around the pillar of light. The gem is obviously a magical item but a well-protected one.

The pillar of light shields it from any magical effect (so telekinesis, gusts of winds or similar tricks don't move it), but the mere touch of a hand is enough to grab it (breaking the floating effect). The problem is that picking the gem triggers a trap: from the point of every spike, in sequence, erupts a lightning bolt, thrown with Shooting d8 and dealing 2d6 damage. The bolts randomly hit a person in the room (not necessarily the thief). The random attacks continue, each round, while there is at least one person in the room.

The gem is a powerful ancient artifact; it stores raw magical energy accessible to every hero. It has 20 Power Points, which don't recharge. When they are exhausted the gem turns gray. If the GM wants, it can have other, mysterious capabilities...

The Matryx Lair

Finally the adventurers reach the end of their hunt: a narrow passage leading to a room full of pipes and weird-shaped columns. There is something very strange in this place: the air crackles, full of energy, and blurs.

Hanging from the columns there is an enormous creature. It looks like a giant octopus, made of semi-transparent matter, covered in

irregular, bubbling, protuberances. To make it even more horrible, it has an enormous circular orifice in the middle of its body, a sort of monstrous mouth. A number of small Hunters are dragging Wylya toward it: their goal is clear - throwing the Menoosh inside it, nurturing the creature! The heroes must stop them before this happens.

But when the party approaches they have a very bad surprise: several protuberances explode, releasing freshly-born Hunters, ready to kill!

The party must fight!

Note that, given their proximity to the mother, the Veil Distortion Ability of the Hunters doesn't work.

Matryx Hunter (2per hero)

 **Matryx**

The End

If the adventurers save Wylya and kill the Matryx, the scenario is a total success: the Bridge is safe again, plus they gain the eternal friendship of the Menoosh woman and of the Oscurian merchant (even if "eternal" is a vague concept for an Oscurian...). If they kill the monster but Wylya dies Davarko mourns the loss of his mate, and in his grief he could even blame the party for what happened, becoming an enemy in the continuing campaign.



CREATURES AND NPCs

Matryx

Nobody knows from where Matryx came from or how they reproduce, but a common theory is they are the result of a Kronoss experiment gone wrong. When caught in the larval stage they aren't a great danger, but if left to grow they become a real threat. This specimen is of average size.

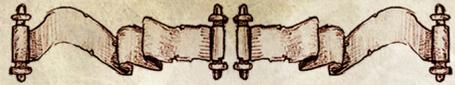
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d4, Shooting d8.

Pace: -; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

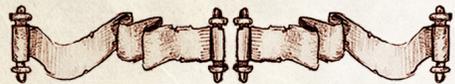
Special Abilities

- **Hive Mind:** A Matryx's mind is made to elaborate many thoughts at the same time. Each round roll a d8 four times and check the table (see box) to see what it is going to do. Each action is totally independent from the others and so doesn't suffer any multi-action penalty. Roll one die less per Wound taken by the creature (so if the Matryx suffers two Wounds it only rolls two dice).
- **Large:** Attack rolls against a Matryx receive +2 due the beast's size.



Matrix Actions Table

D8	EFFECT
1	Tentacle Lash! Str+d6, Reach 3.
2	Energy Blast! One of the protuberances of the creature shoots a ray of raw magical energy (Range: 6/12/24, Damage: 2d8).
3	Stun Wave! Place a LBT in contact with the Matrix. Any target caught under it suffers the effects of the stun Power cast with arcane skill d8. The Hunters are immune to this effect.
4	Displace Enemy! The Matrix uses its power to teleport an enemy 2d6" away from it. The target can make a Spirit (-2) roll to resist this effect.
5-6	Spawn Hunter! The Matryx spawns a new Matryx Hunter. It can act in this round, on the Matryx's Action Card.
7	Frenzy Order! The Matryx releases a powerful mental order to its minions! Till the end of the next round, the Hunters receive +1 to attack and damage rolls.
8	Regeneration! The Matrix regenerates a Wound, but only if it has two or less. Otherwise it does nothing.



- **Size +5:** A Matryx is large enough to cover a whole room.
- **Veil Disrupter:** A Matryx has a field of magical anomaly around it. Every Power cast within 12" of it costs one extra Power Point, unless cast with a raise.

Matryx Hunter

This creature, vaguely humanoid, is three feet tall, with a brownish, smooth skin, claws and a noticeable hump of translucent material, which contains a fragment of its mother, the Matryx, and makes it capable of briefly Distorting the Veil (see below). It is toothless, living by sucking fluids from nipples on the Matryx, but is capable of spitting a deadly acidic substance.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8.

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Acid Spitting:** A Matryx Hunter spits acid at Range 3/6/12. It deals 2d6 damage, AP 2.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Drone:** Matryx Hunters are controlled by the Matryx so they are immune to fear, tests of wills and other mental effects.
- **Size -1:** They are somewhat smaller than an Oscurian.
- **Veil Distortion:** A Matryx Hunter can, at will, become invisible. This works exactly like the invisibility Power. No roll is required but it can only be used once a day and lasts only the basic duration (three rounds).



