A GB ROAD GAME



# THE Sundered Oasis

A one-shot adventure compatible with Dungeons & Dragons.

# INTRODUCTION

This book is written for the Game Master (GM). It contains a compatible adventure designed for use with *Dungeons & Dragons* fifth edition (5e), released in 2014 or the 2024 updated version, and assumes familiarity with the basic rules. It introduces an accessible, linear story set at a corrupted oasis in the Dorfert desert, on the continent of Motopia.

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# RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

*The Sundered Oasis* is a one-shot fantasy adventure for four players, using characters at 20th level. It is designed for roughly three to four hours of play. The characters arrive rested, with their normal equipment and three magic items each (see Unique Modifier below).

This one-shot is deliberately direct. Rather than branching corridors, its choices are tactical: where to stand, whom to protect, whether to destroy or disable the nests, and when to challenge the queen. Every decision feeds into one climactic battle.

This module is divided into the following sections:

- **The Plot** section informs you, the GM, of the overarching story that will be told.
- **The Beginning** section jumps right into the game and contains the numbered scenarios, including the battle.
- **The Endings** section contains the final confrontation's outcomes.
- **The Farewell** section provides the wrap-up for the possible choices made throughout the game.
- **The Maps** section contains visual aids and layouts for use on tabletops or virtual systems.
- **The Crew** section includes all NPC descriptions, stat blocks, the Crystal Nests, and the oasis lair actions.
- **The Huh?** section contains references to this book's functionality and other pertinent information.

As the GM, your role is to run the game. You will be narrating, refereeing, roleplaying the story's characters, and adjudicating or improvising when needed. Above all else, you are responsible for driving the story forward with your players. This is a collaborative process, after all.

**"The intended DC"** — In this adventure, the DCs printed in each encounter are deliberate and tuned for 20th-level characters. Do not replace them with a general level-based DC. Apply cover, resistance, conditions, and character abilities normally.

Before you begin your role as GM, it is important to read through this book. Chance plays a part in the storytelling, and having a clear idea of the narrative's progression will help you keep everything on track for your players.

Reviewing the accompanying maps and non-player character (NPC) stat blocks will likely be your most helpful tool in understanding the layout of the area and the characters in this game.

And if you dive right in before reading everything, don't worry: each numbered scenario follows a natural progression based on player choice, so this module will guide you along the way as the choices stack up.

### BEFORE YOU PLAY

***You will need:*** *a gridded battle map of the oasis (see The Maps); a Gargantuan token for Vespa (4 by 4 squares); four Large tokens for the Hiveguards (2 by 2 squares); three 15-foot nest markers with their aura bands; and a copy of the GM Quick Reference.*

***Ask your players for:*** *finished 20th-level characters, built before the session, with their spells, features, and chosen magic items ready to hand.*

***Pacing:*** *spend the first scenes setting the mood and letting the players plan, then give the battle the bulk of your session.*

### UNIQUE MODIFIER

***Legendary heroes.*** *Every character begins with three magic items of their player's choice:* ***one legendary, one very rare, and one rare.*** *Agree each item before the session; normal attunement rules apply. The battle is balanced around this, so do not skip it.*

# THE PLOT

Below is a general summary of the plot, which, along with the rest of this book, will help you understand the flow of the game. Do not share this information with your players; the text below helps you, the GM, understand the story (and game) structure.

*An unnatural hive has taken root in an oasis deep in the Dorfert desert. Three Feywild Crystal Nests feed the queen, Vespa, and restore her Vespid Hiveguards.*

*A caravan that sheltered at the oasis was destroyed. Lio Sandglass, a bard, was its sole survivor. He has sought out heroes whose names he once sang, and now guides them to the southern approach, where they can see the queen and her feeding grounds.*

*The heroes win by killing Vespa. Destroying or safely disabling the nests removes her source of healing and the guards' support, but the nests are not required for victory. Vespa has no hidden second health bar and no automatic reinforcements.*

*The adventure ends with the fate of the oasis and the memory of the caravan. Will the heroes prove the songs were true?*

### TUNING THE FIGHT

*For a less optimized party, use three Hiveguards, three Legendary Action uses, and reduce every save DC Vespa forces, including her lair actions and Buzzkill, by 2 (27 to 25, 25 to 23); Power Word: Buzzkill then unlocks once all three guards are dead. For an exceptionally optimized group, begin with the default; if their damage is known to be extreme, consider giving Vespa 700 HP before initiative.*

*Make this choice before the fight. Never introduce new healing midway through combat.*

# THE BEGINNING

The adventure begins in the Dorfert desert, where the bard Lio Sandglass has found the heroes. Read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *Word has travelled across Motopia: a bard named Lio Sandglass is searching for heroes whose names he once sang. You have answered his call.*
>
> *Now the Dorfert desert stretches out before you, white-hot and silent. Somewhere beyond these dunes lies an oasis where a caravan stopped to rest, and never left.*

Before play, prepare a battle map with:

- A southern shore and shallow oasis water.
- Three clearly marked 15-by-15-foot nests, each with its 10-foot-wide aura.
- Ten-foot-high dunes and palms for cover.

Place Vespa 30 feet above the water, with four Hiveguards deployed as described in 3. The Feeding Ground. Lio stays out of initiative. **See map: The Oasis — GM Map.**

This is a great moment to have your players introduce their characters and describe their appearance, class, and species, or if they have any personality traits or background notes they wish to share. Do their characters have history with the other player characters? These heroes are legends: ask each player which deed made their character's name famous enough for a bard to sing of it.

## 1. THE SURVIVING BARD

Lio Sandglass approaches the heroes with a scrap of silk in his hands. Read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *"I have sung your names in halls where kings stood to listen," the bard says. "Today I need to know whether the songs were true."*
>
> *He unfolds a scrap of silk marked with a turquoise pool and three amber shapes. "The oasis still looks beautiful. That is how it catches you. My companions drank there. Then the wings began."*

Lio is the sole survivor of a caravan. His lute has two strings left, and amber dust stains his cloak. He is a witness and narrative guide, not a combatant. He can tell the party that:

- The queen has two heads.
- Her violet stinger tears the air.
- The amber nests sustain the hive.
- The guards heal near the nests, and Vespa drinks their nectar.

*Lio does not know the precise nest mechanics or Vespa's resistances. Give his information freely.*

When the heroes set off with Lio, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *Beyond the dunes, a line of green palms shimmers in the heat haze. Lio walks ahead with a broken lute cradled against his chest. Once, he tries to hum a marching tune.*
>
> *He stops when another sound answers from the distance: a deep, uneven buzzing, like two monstrous hearts beating out of time.*

***Convey Choice—Did the heroes question Lio, scout ahead, or plan an approach?***

*Lio shelters beyond the battlefield and is never targeted.*

## 2. THE OASIS APPROACH

As the heroes crest the last dune, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator (if they are scouting or sneaking, read the last two paragraphs only when Vespa notices them or combat begins):

> *Turquoise water gleams beneath palms and enormous flowers.*
>
> *Three amber towers rise from the water. Their faceted shells are riddled with honeycomb chambers, and golden liquid pours from them in narrow, luminous streams. Thousands of small shapes stir beneath the crystal.*
>
> *A winged guardian lifts its cleaver. Above the pool, two draconic heads turn together. A vast striped abdomen curls forward, bringing a violet stinger into view.*
>
> *The buzzing stops. In the sudden silence, the queen speaks: "You have crossed my feeding ground."*

The heroes approach from the southern shore. Vespa is territorial but may speak briefly: "The desert offers nothing. I have taught it to feed."

Scouting can matter. Vespa's Passive Perception is 34, which already accounts for the Advantage from her Two Heads trait. Within 120 feet, her Blindsight finds anyone not behind Total Cover. Heroes who successfully stay hidden can surprise her: under the 2024 rules she rolls Initiative with Disadvantage; under the 2014 rules she loses her first turn.

**See map markers: 1. West Nest, 2. East Nest, 3. South Nest.**

***Convey Choice—Where do the heroes begin? Do they identify the nests as dangerous, seek cover, or try to surprise the queen?***

## 3. THE FEEDING GROUND

Set out the battlefield as follows:

| Feature | Placement |
|---|---|
| **1. West Nest** | North-west, in the water |
| **2. East Nest** | North-east, in the water |
| **3. South Nest** | South, in the water |
| **V. Vespa** | Between the nests, hovering 30 feet above the water |
| **G. Hiveguards** | One within 10 feet of each nest |
| **M. Mobile Hiveguard** | Between the queen and the southern approach |
| **Heroes** | Southern shore, with room to spread out before initiative |

## WATER AND DUNES

The water is 2–3 feet deep and counts as Difficult Terrain; the dunes sit in the four corners of the map. The 10-foot-high dunes provide directional Half Cover (+2 to AC and Dexterity saving throws) when they partially block an effect, or Total Cover when they block it fully. Crossing a dune uses normal movement, including vertical distance; no check is required.

## THE NESTS

Each nest occupies a 15-by-15-foot footprint, rises 20–30 feet, and has a clearly visible violet core. A 10-foot-wide Nectar Aura extends outward from each edge. A creature that enters an Active aura for the first time on a turn, or starts its turn there, takes 21 (6d6)

Fire damage plus 14 (4d6) Psychic damage. Teleporting into the aura counts as entering it. Vespa and her Hiveguards are immune.

*The nests are dangerous and conspicuous, not hidden traps. Their full rules appear in The Crew: Feywild Crystal Nest.*

***Convey Choice—Do the heroes cross the water, take cover behind dunes or palms, use flight, attack the guards, or disable a nest?***

## 4. THE BATTLE

Roll initiative. Vespa has Advantage on her roll (Queen of the Hive).

## INITIATIVE COUNT 20

On Initiative Count 20 (losing ties), first resolve Nectar Pulse for eligible guards. Then, if Vespa is alive and not Incapacitated, she may choose one lair action. A lair action cannot repeat on consecutive rounds. Once all the Hiveguards are dead, Power Word: Buzzkill becomes an additional once-per-encounter choice, replacing that round's usual lair action.

## ROUND 1 THE THREAT

The guards defend their nests. Vespa uses Fey Venom Torrent if she can catch multiple heroes; otherwise, Multiattack. Consider Darting Wasp for mobility, and Mirage of the Fey as an opening lair effect.

## ROUND 2 FEEDING CYCLE

Nectar Pulse visibly repairs nearby guards. If Vespa is wounded and can reach an Active nest, Consume Fey Nectar heals her 90 Hit Points, recharges Venom Torrent for a later turn, and makes the nest Dormant. Consume is an Action; she cannot also use Venom Torrent on that turn.

## ROUNDS 3–4 CONTEST NESTS

Tear the Veil can move up to two creatures into supported spaces, including an Active aura. Desert Bloom and Furious Wingbeat can push creatures, subject to their saves. Grasping Oasis can restrain pursuers. Reinforce threatened nests with the mobile guard.

## ROUND 5 ONWARD THE LAST STAND

As nests fall, Vespa loses her feeding opportunities and the guards lose their nearby benefits. When the last guard dies, Buzzkill becomes available as an optional last-stand lair action. It is not an automatic trigger or a second phase.

*Reaction reminder: a Hiveguard that spends its Reaction on Not the Queen! cannot use it again for Queen's Command or Rally the Hive until it refreshes. Protective Swarm requires Vespa actually to be hit. Cracking Carapace reduces Vespa's AC by 1 for every Legendary Resistance she spends; describe her armor visibly fracturing.*

***Convey Choice—What threats have the heroes prioritized? Which nests remain Active, Dormant, disabled, or destroyed? Has Vespa spent her healing or her Legendary Resistances?***

## 5. THE LAST FEEDING GROUND

The endgame is decided by the players' actions, not a hidden phase. When the last guard falls, Vespa may choose Power Word: Buzzkill on a later eligible Initiative Count 20, or on that count if the condition is already met. If she does, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *Both heads rear back at once. The buzzing that has filled the oasis gathers into a single, shattering word, and it is inside your skull before you hear it.*

Buzzkill affects enemies of Vespa's choice within 120 feet who can hear her: a DC 25 Intelligence saving throw, taking 120 Psychic damage on a failure or 60 on a success. It consumes the lair action for that round, can be used only once, and does not bypass Resistance.

If the nests are destroyed or safely disabled, their auras stop and they can no longer support Vespa or the guards. If Vespa dies, the remaining nests immediately cease pulsing, their auras fade, and any surviving guards become Frenzied. Move on to The Endings.

### BATTLE TRIGGERS

***A guard falls within 20 feet of an Active nest:*** *For the Hive bursts (DC 16 Dexterity, 10 Force damage), and the nearest Active nest regains 10 HP.*

***A nest reaches 0 HP:*** *Shatter the Hive (DC 20 Dexterity, 28 Force damage). The nest is Destroyed.*

***A core takes two Arcana successes:*** *The nest is safely disabled. No explosion; it still gives cover.*

***Vespa uses Legendary Resistance:*** *Her AC drops by 1 (Cracking Carapace).*

***The last guard falls:*** *Power Word: Buzzkill unlocks for an eligible Initiative Count 20.*

***Vespa dies:*** *Nests stop pulsing, auras fade, and surviving guards become Frenzied.*

***Vespa is removed:*** *If Vespa is banished for good, imprisoned, sent to another plane or permanently transformed, treat it exactly as her death: the nests stop pulsing, surviving guards become Frenzied, and use Victory and "If Vespa was slain" in The Farewell.*

The first time a nest is destroyed, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *The amber crystal splits with a sound like a bell struck too hard. Shards and golden nectar burst across the water, and for one heartbeat the whole hive falls silent. Then both of Vespa's heads swing toward you, and the buzzing comes back louder.*

The first time Vespa uses Consume Fey Nectar, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *Vespa folds over a glowing nest and drinks. Gold runs down both throats; her torn wings knit, her stinger brightens to a violet glare, and the crystal beneath her dims to the colour of old honey. She rises, whole again, and turns back to you.*

The first time Vespa spends a Legendary Resistance, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *Vespa shrugs the magic off — but not cleanly. A crack races across her armoured thorax with a sound like ice on a frozen pond, and a thin seam of violet light bleeds through.*

*GM note: Each later Legendary Resistance can widen the crack in a word or two ("another seam opens").*

# THE ENDINGS

The ending is triggered when Vespa falls, or when the heroes can no longer fight on. Removing Vespa for good (banished, imprisoned, sent to another plane or permanently transformed) counts as her death.

## VICTORY

Vespa reaches 0 HP and dies. Her surviving guards become Frenzied; resolve any meaningful remaining combat, or narrate its conclusion once the outcome is certain. The nest hazards fade. There is no surprise brood and no reinforcement. When the queen falls, read the following text out loud to your players as narrator:

> *The queen falls, and the water rises around her in a single turquoise wave. Violet light flickers along the stinger, then goes dark.*
>
> *Beneath the honeycomb, the golden streams thin to ordinary water. For the first time since your arrival, you hear the palms moving in the wind.*
>
> *Lio comes down from the dune. He looks at the towers, then at you. "I will need more strings," he says.*

## DEFEAT

If the party is overwhelmed, the oasis remains a feeding ground. There is no scripted defeat: adjudicate it from what actually happened at the table, rather than inventing an automatic resurrection or a mandatory sequel.

> *The buzzing returns, steady and patient. From the dunes, Lio watches the golden streams begin to flow again. The oasis still looks beautiful.*

*However the final moments play out, your players can resolve any final interactions before you move on to The Farewell.*

# THE FAREWELL

While there are no right or wrong endings to this story, the following will help guide you toward which set of circumstances you end up with at the end of the game to wrap up the adventure.

*You may piece together fragments of several outcomes if your players made different choices.*

**If Vespa was slain:**

*Lio records your names, and those of the caravan defenders who fell before you arrived.*

*The oasis communities offer you their hospitality and raise a monument by the water. The songs were true.*

**If any nest was safely disabled:**

*Where a core went dark under your hands, the honeycomb cools into a single piece of inert amber.*

*Each disabled nest leaves one keepsake behind (a fist-sized piece of inert amber, a trophy with no magical properties): proof of what you faced here.*

**If every nest was shattered:**

*Nothing remains of the towers but glittering dust on the water. The oasis is free, though nothing of the hive survives to show for it.*

**If any nest was left standing (never destroyed or disabled) when Vespa fell:**

*Within the standing honeycomb, one violet core still glows. Etched into its facets is a sigil: the mark of whoever first brought Vespa across the planes.*

*The oasis is free, but someone, somewhere, opened that door.*

**If the party was overwhelmed:**

*The oasis remains a feeding ground. Lio slips away into the desert to find new names to sing, and new heroes to bring back.*

*The sigil is a hook for a future adventure, not an unresolved victory condition.*

Once you've resolved all outcomes, provide your players with congratulations, commiserations, or maybe something in between. Thank you for playing!

# THE MAPS

## THE OASIS — GM MAP

*Stage the three nests, the guards and the heroes' approach*




### MAP KEY

- 1 — West Nest
- 2 — East Nest
- 3 — South Nest
- G — Hiveguard (one per nest)
- M — Mobile Hiveguard
- V — Vespa, hovering 30 feet above the water
- **Amber band** — Nectar Aura, 10 feet out from each footprint
- **Dashed area** — Heroes start on the southern shore
- **Corner dunes** — 10 ft high

### SCALE

*One square equals 5 feet. The 15-by-15-foot nest footprint is the dark inner square; the visible aura band is measured outward from it.*

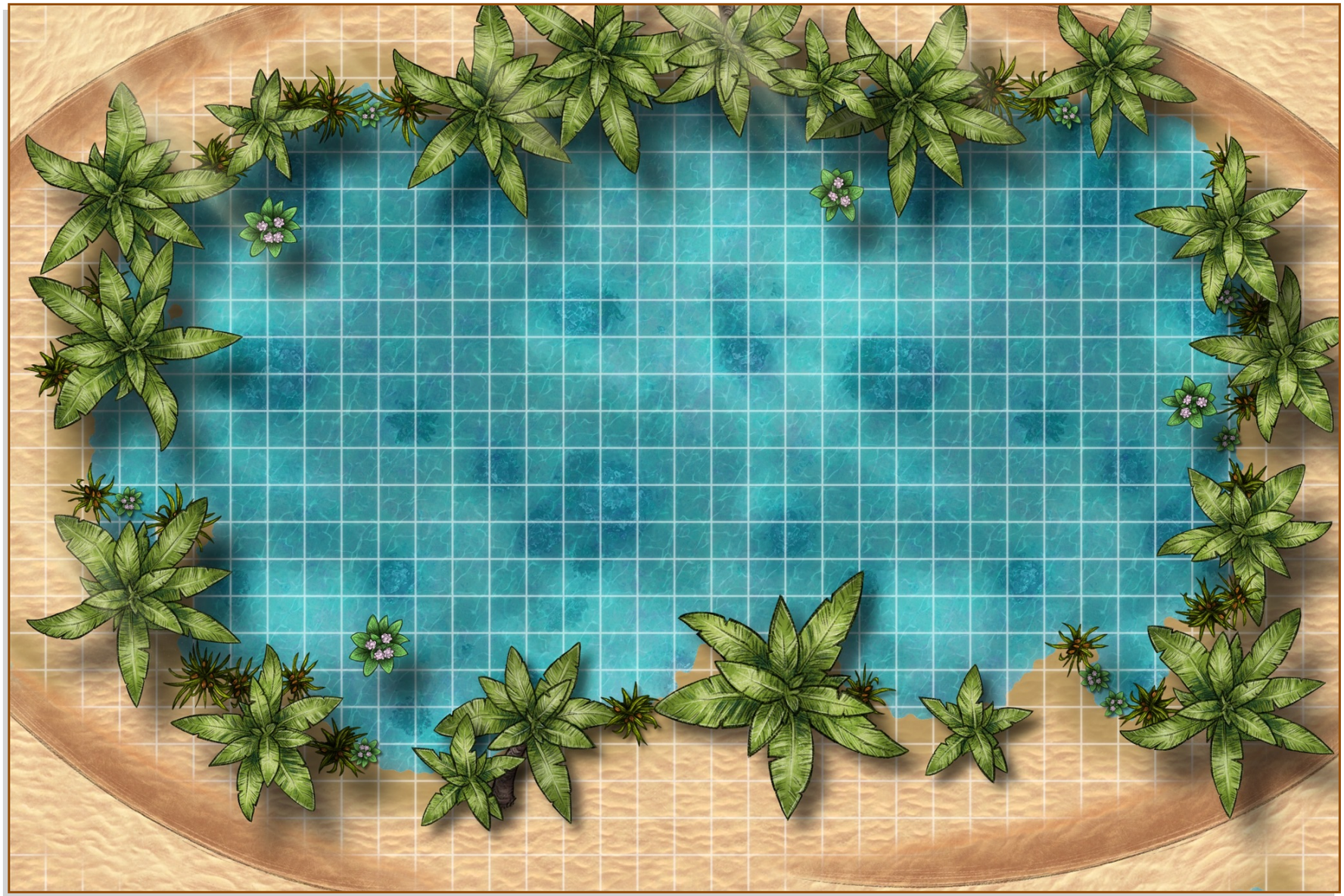
### USING THE MAP

The oasis map is a reference for staging the three nests, the guards, the southern approach, the dunes, and the water. Adapt the placement to your own grid, keeping the nests separated as distinct objectives.

# THE MAPS

## THE OASIS — PLAYER MAP (36 × 24)

*Downloadable maps available at www.gbroadgames.com/tso*



# THE CREW

NPC




## VESPA

**Two heads, one hunger. Vespa has turned the oasis into her feeding ground, and everything that drinks there becomes nectar for her hive. She does not flee and she does not bargain; she lets her guards die so that she can keep feeding.**

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| +10 | +4 | +10 | +4 | +6 | +8 |
| *30* | *18* | *30* | *18* | *22* | *26* |
| *Saving Throw modifiers* | | | | | |
| +19 | +13 | +19 | +13 | +15 | +17 |

*This battle takes place in the Oasis, so Vespa always uses her lair values: Legendary Resistance 5/Day and 4 Legendary Action uses.*

## VESPA

*Gargantuan Dragon (Dragon-Wasp Hybrid), Chaotic Evil*

**Skills** Perception +24

**Resistances** Cold, Lightning, Psychic

**Immunities** Fire, Poison; Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned

**Senses** Blindsight 120 ft., Darkvision 240 ft.; Passive Perception 34

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Sylvan; telepathy 120 ft.

**CR** 30 (XP 155,000; PB +9)

### TRAITS

***Cracking Carapace.*** Whenever Vespa uses Legendary Resistance, her AC decreases by 1 for the rest of the encounter.

***Fey Nectar Metabolism.*** Vespa is immune to the Fire and Psychic damage caused by the Crystal Nests' Nectar Auras.

***Flyby.*** Vespa doesn't provoke Opportunity Attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

***Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in the Oasis).*** If Vespa fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

***Queen of the Hive.*** Vespa has Advantage on Initiative rolls. Allied Hiveguards within 60 feet of her have Advantage on saving throws while they can see or hear her.

***Two Heads.*** Vespa has Advantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Blinded, Deafened, Stunned, or Unconscious condition. She also has Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks. This trait doesn't prevent Vespa from becoming Unconscious at 0 Hit Points.

### ACTIONS

***Multiattack.*** Vespa makes three attacks: two Mandibles or Talon attacks in any combination and one Queen's Stinger attack.

***Mandibles.*** *Melee Attack Roll:* +19, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 26 (3d10 + 10) Piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) Poison damage.

***Talon.*** *Melee Attack Roll:* +19, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) Slashing damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 27 Strength saving throw or have the Prone condition.

***Queen's Stinger.*** *Melee Attack Roll:* +19, reach 25 ft. *Hit:* 32 (4d10 + 10) Piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) Poison damage. If the target already has the Poisoned condition, it takes an extra 18 (4d8) Poison damage. Otherwise, it must succeed on a DC 27 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.

***Fey Venom Torrent (Recharge 5–6).*** *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 27, each creature in either a 90-foot Cone or a 120-foot-long, 15-foot-wide Line (Vespa's choice). *Failure:* 44 (8d10) Acid damage plus 33 (6d10) Psychic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

***Fey Stinger: Tear the Veil (Recharge 5–6).*** Vespa creates a momentary portal at a point she can see within 60 feet. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 25, up to two other creatures within 15 feet of the portal. *Failure:* Vespa teleports the target to an unoccupied space she can see within 60 feet of the portal. The destination must accommodate the target and provide a supporting surface; the Nectar Aura around an Active nest is a valid destination. The portal then immediately closes.

***Consume Fey Nectar (3/Day).*** *Requirement:* Vespa is within 15 feet of an Active Crystal Nest. Vespa regains 90 Hit Points, immediately recharges Fey Venom Torrent, and ends the Blinded or Deafened condition on herself. The Crystal Nest becomes Dormant until the end of Vespa's next turn.

## BONUS ACTIONS

***Fey Stinger: Personal Rift.*** Vespa teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.

***Queen's Command.*** One allied Hiveguard within 120 feet that can hear Vespa can use its Reaction to move up to half its Speed and make one attack. This movement provokes Opportunity Attacks.

***Wasp's Skitter.*** Vespa moves up to 30 feet using one of her Speeds without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

## REACTIONS

***Protective Swarm.*** *Trigger:* Vespa is hit by an attack while a living Hiveguard is within 10 feet of her. *Response:* Vespa redirects the attack to that Hiveguard, which takes the attack's damage and any applicable on-hit effects instead.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

*Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in the Oasis).* Immediately after another creature's turn, Vespa can expend one use to take one of the following actions. She regains all expended uses at the start of her turn.

***Darting Wasp.*** Vespa flies up to 60 feet without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

***Drone Strike.*** Vespa makes one Mandibles or Talon attack.

***Rally the Hive.*** One Hiveguard Vespa can see within 120 feet can use its Reaction to move up to its Speed. If it ends this movement within 5 feet of an Active Crystal Nest, it gains 20 Temporary Hit Points, which don't stack. This movement provokes Opportunity Attacks.

**HP** 615 (30d20 + 300) **Speed** 50 ft., Fly 120 ft. **Initiative** +13 (23) **AC** 25

◆ NPC ◆




# VESPID HIVEGUARD

**Winged guardians bred to defend the nests. They heal in the nectar's glow, throw themselves between their queen and her attackers, and burst with fey energy when they fall.**

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| +6 | +3 | +5 | −1 | +2 | +0 |
| *22* | *16* | *20* | *8* | *14* | *10* |
| *Saving Throw modifiers* | | | | | |
| +9 | +3 | +8 | −1 | +5 | +0 |

## VESPID HIVEGUARD

*Large Monstrosity, Typically Lawful Evil*

**Skills** Athletics +9, Perception +5

**Resistances** Fire, Psychic

**Immunities** Poison; Poisoned

**Senses** Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 15

**Languages** Understands Common and Sylvan; communicates with clicks and pheromones

**CR** 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

### TRAITS

***Hive Mind.*** While within 120 feet of Vespa, the Hiveguard knows her location and is immune to the Frightened condition. If Vespa dies, the Hiveguard becomes Frenzied for the remainder of the encounter.

***Frenzied.*** While Frenzied, the Hiveguard has Advantage on its melee attack rolls, and attack rolls against it also have Advantage.

***Guard the Nectar.*** While within 20 feet of an Active Crystal Nest, the Hiveguard has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects, and on Opportunity Attacks.

***Fey Nectar Metabolism.*** The Hiveguard is immune to damage caused by the Crystal Nests' Nectar Auras.

***For the Hive.*** When the Hiveguard is reduced to 0 HP while within 20 feet of an Active Crystal Nest, its body violently bursts with unstable fey energy. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, each other creature within 10 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Force damage. *Success:* No damage. The nearest Active Crystal Nest then regains 10 HP, to a maximum of 100 HP. A Destroyed nest can never regain HP; resolve a nest's destruction before this effect.

## ACTIONS

***Multiattack.*** The Hiveguard makes three attacks: two with its Hive Cleaver and one with its Fey Stinger.

***Hive Cleaver.*** *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Slashing damage. If the attack roll had Advantage, the attack deals an extra 4 (1d8) Slashing damage.

***Fey Stinger.*** *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) Piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) Poison damage. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 16. *Failure:* The target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.

***Furious Wingbeat (Recharge 5–6).*** The Hiveguard violently beats its wings. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 17, each other creature within 15 feet. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) Bludgeoning damage, and the target is pushed up to 15 feet directly away and has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only. The Hiveguard can then fly up to 30 feet without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

## BONUS ACTIONS

***Buzzing Rage (1/Day).*** For 1 minute, the Hiveguard has Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage; has Advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws; and its Hive Cleaver deals an extra 4 (1d8) Slashing damage on a hit, which stacks with the Hive Cleaver's Advantage bonus. The rage ends early if the Hiveguard has the Incapacitated condition.

***Defend the Hive.*** The Hiveguard flies up to 30 feet toward Vespa or an Active Crystal Nest without provoking Opportunity Attacks. It must finish closer to that destination.

## REACTIONS

***Not the Queen!*** *Trigger:* A creature within 10 feet of the Hiveguard makes an attack roll against Vespa or an Active Crystal Nest. *Response:* Before the roll, if the Hiveguard can see the attacker, it imposes Disadvantage on the attack. The attacker can instead redirect the attack to the Hiveguard, removing the Disadvantage. No movement is required.

**HP** 136 (13d10 + 65) **Speed** 40 ft., Fly 60 ft. **Initiative** +3 (13) **AC** 18

◆ NPC ◆

**ART**
**COMING SOON**
*Original illustration by a human artist*

## LIO SANDGLASS

**The sole survivor of a destroyed caravan. His lute has two strings left, and amber dust stains his cloak.**

Lio is a witness and narrative guide, not a combatant, and has no stat block. He stays out of initiative, shelters beyond the battlefield, and is never targeted by Vespa. Use him to deliver what he knows in **1. The Surviving Bard**, and to carry the heroes' story home in **The Farewell**.

*Lio knows the queen has two heads, that her violet stinger tears the air, that the amber nests sustain the hive, and that the guards heal near the nests while Vespa drinks their nectar. He does not know the precise nest mechanics or Vespa's resistances.*

### HIVEGUARD NOTE

*Nectar Pulse (see Feywild Crystal Nest) is the Hiveguard's only recurring healing. Four guards are deployed by default; track their HP as A, B, C, and D on the GM Quick Reference.*

# FEYWILD CRYSTAL NEST

*Huge Object (magical)*

**AC** 20 **HP** 100 **Speed** 0 ft.

**Resistances** Fire

**Immunities** Poison, Psychic; all conditions for this encounter

## FEY NECTAR

The nest forms around superheated liquid Fey essence. Each nest occupies a 15-by-15-foot footprint and contains a clearly visible violet Fey core. Each nest is Active, Dormant, or Destroyed.

***Active.*** The nest supplies Vespa's feeding, Nectar Pulse, Guard the Nectar, and its Nectar Aura.

***Dormant.*** The nest keeps its defenses and physical cover, but supplies no feeding, Nectar Pulse, Guard the Nectar benefits, or damaging aura. A nest made Dormant by Consume Fey Nectar remains Dormant until the end of Vespa's next turn.

***Destroyed.*** The nest no longer functions and can never regain HP; its Nectar Aura ends immediately.

## NECTAR AURA

The area within 10 feet of an Active nest's footprint is hazardous terrain. A creature that enters the aura for the first time on a turn, or starts its turn there, takes 21 (6d6) Fire damage plus 14 (4d6) Psychic damage. Vespa and Hiveguards are immune. Teleporting into the aura counts as entering it.

## INITIATIVE COUNT 20

***Nectar Pulse.*** Each living Hiveguard within 20 feet of at least one Active Crystal Nest regains 15 HP. A Hiveguard benefits only once per round, even if it is near multiple nests. Vespa never benefits.

## DESTRUCTION

***Shatter the Hive.*** At 0 HP, the nest is Destroyed and explodes once. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 20, each creature within 20 feet. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Force damage. *Success:* Half damage. Vespa and Hiveguards automatically fail this save. Vespa can't use Legendary Resistance against this.

## TARGETING & DISABLING

***Object Targeting.*** Attacks that can target objects can damage it; spells affect it only if they affect objects.

***Saving Throws.*** The stationary nest automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws when a valid effect requires them; for any other required save, use +0.

***Disable the Core.*** A hero adjacent to the violet core can take an action (the Magic action under the 2024 rules) to attempt a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Two successes, accumulated across heroes and turns, permanently disable the nest without an explosion. After the first success, part of the core goes dark and the aura visibly flickers, but it remains dangerous until the second success. A failure has no additional effect. A safely disabled nest counts as Destroyed for feeding, guard features and its Nectar Aura, can't regain HP, and no longer explodes if reduced to 0 HP; it still provides physical cover.

***Dispel Magic (Optional).*** If you announce this rule before combat, casting Dispel Magic on the visible core counts as one Arcana success. This is a specific interaction for this encounter, not a general change to the spell.

| Nest | HP | State | Arcana successes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **West** | 100 | Active | 0 of 2 |
| **East** | 100 | Active | 0 of 2 |
| **South** | 100 | Active | 0 of 2 |

*Starting values. Use the GM Quick Reference to track each nest during play.*

# THE SUNDERED OASIS

*Vespa's Lair Actions — Initiative Count 20 (losing ties), Save DC 25*

On Initiative Count 20, losing ties, resolve Nectar Pulse first. Then, if Vespa is alive and not Incapacitated, choose one oasis effect below. Do not use the same effect in consecutive rounds.

These lair effects are separate from Vespa's Legendary Actions. Nest pulses continue if Vespa is Incapacitated, but stop when she dies.

## LAIR ACTIONS

***Grasping Oasis.*** Choose three nonoverlapping 15-foot squares of ground or shallow water Vespa can see within 120 feet. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 25, each enemy in a chosen square. *Failure:* The target has the Restrained condition until the next Initiative Count 20. A Restrained creature, or an ally adjacent to it, can take an action to attempt a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check, ending the restraint on a success. Only creatures standing on the ground or in the water are affected.

***Mirage of the Fey.*** Until the next Initiative Count 20, Vespa and her Hiveguards are Lightly Obscured to enemies more than 30 feet away, and Opportunity Attacks against them have Disadvantage. Lightly Obscured does not itself impose Disadvantage on attack rolls; it affects sight-based Perception checks. Vespa's Flyby still applies.

***Desert Bloom.*** Choose a point on ground or shallow water Vespa can see within 120 feet. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 25, each enemy within 20 feet. *Failure:* The target is pushed up to 20 feet in a direction Vespa chooses and has the Prone condition. *Success:* No effect. Only creatures standing on the ground or in the water are affected. Entering nectar may trigger its hazard; announce the threatening bloom before resolving saves.

***Power Word: Buzzkill (Once per Encounter).*** *Prerequisite:* All Hiveguards in the encounter are dead (four by default; three if you used Tuning the Fight). Vespa releases a devastating psychic shriek. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 25, each enemy of Vespa's choice within 120 feet that can hear her. *Failure:* 120 Psychic damage. *Success:* 60 Psychic damage. Buzzkill replaces, rather than accompanies, that round's lair action.

## RUNNING THE COUNT

**1. Nectar Pulse.** Each living Hiveguard within 20 feet of an Active Crystal Nest regains 15 HP (once per round).

**2. Check Vespa.** If Vespa is dead or Incapacitated, no lair action occurs.

**3. Choose an effect.** Grasping Oasis, Mirage of the Fey, or Desert Bloom, but not the effect used on the previous round. Once the prerequisite is met, Buzzkill may be chosen instead, once per encounter.

## LAIR QUICK REFERENCE

| Effect | Save | Result |
|---|---|---|
| **Grasping Oasis** | STR DC 25 | Restrained (three 15-ft. squares within 120 ft.) |
| **Mirage of the Fey** | — | Lightly Obscured beyond 30 ft.; Opportunity Attacks have Disadvantage |
| **Desert Bloom** | DEX DC 25 | Pushed 20 ft. and Prone (20-ft. radius within 120 ft.) |
| **Power Word: Buzzkill** | INT DC 25 | 120 Psychic, or 60 on a success; once per encounter |

## TABLE NOTES

- Resolve Nectar Pulse before the lair action every round, so the state of each nest on Initiative Count 20 always matters.
- Buzzkill does not stack with another lair action, and the rule against repeating a lair action on consecutive rounds still applies.
- All of Buzzkill's damage is Psychic, so normal Psychic Resistance and other defenses apply. A feature that turns a failed Intelligence save into a success works normally, though a successful save still takes half damage.
- **Design note:** Buzzkill is a last-stand pressure valve for the shift in action economy once all the guards are defeated. It is not a new phase or an automatic trigger; you choose whether to use it on an eligible Initiative Count 20.

# THE HUH?

### Why make this module?

The objective of this game was to make something players can engage with quickly and Game Masters (GMs) can run with little prep. The aim was neither a massive campaign that takes weeks to prepare nor a bare-bones one-shot that requires too much homebrew or improvisation to work.

This was to be a single adventure with every step of the story planned out from the start. Players have a confirmed hook, and the location is somewhat confined while providing enough choice to keep players engaged without them running loose.

It functions as procedurally as possible; there are multiple player interactions that affect how the game plays and ends, but each choice leads to the next.

Here, that means putting experienced characters into a contained, high-stakes encounter with meaningful tactical choices, while giving the GM complete references for the creatures, the terrain, and the consequences of destroying the nests.

### Ideal for four players?

That's right. While this game can be run for more players, the idea is to keep the party small so there is less back-and-forth and less waiting between turns. The encounter is balanced around four 20th-level heroes; see Tuning the Fight in The Plot to adjust it for your table.

### One-shot?

A game made to be run in a single session, taking roughly three to four hours to complete. Once started, each scenario builds naturally on the others.

### NPC?

A non-player character controlled by the GM.

### Player character?

A character in the game who is controlled and acted by a real person.

### Branching paths?

Yes, though here they are tactical rather than physical. Which nest to attack first, whether to shatter or disable a core, who protects whom, and when to go for the queen: every choice changes how the battle plays out.

### But it's still linear?

Absolutely! The story runs from the desert road, to the oasis approach, to a single climactic battle, with a clear beginning and ending. The freedom lives inside the fight: there is no single right way to win it.

### Railroading?

Players will always find something to do that you could never have imagined. Come up with something fun and unique that everyone can enjoy (even you, GM) and run with it.

That said, making sure your players know which choices and story beats they are interacting with will help keep everything on track. This game does have a linear design, after all.

### Convey Choice?

Each numbered scenario has a Convey Choice line that recaps exactly what your players' focus should have been at that moment. This gives you, the GM, an opportunity to understand what your players could be responding to.

### Party splitting?

In a battle like this, splitting up is a tactical choice. Heroes may divide to take on separate nests while others hold Vespa's attention.

Spreading out limits the reach of Fey Venom Torrent and Desert Bloom, but isolated heroes are easier for the Hiveguards to overwhelm, and Tear the Veil can drop them straight into an aura.

### Scenarios?

Yes. The opening scenarios are bite-sized, setting the mood and letting the players plan, so most of the session is spent in the battle itself.

### Session 0?

Before you invite players to join you, it may be best to describe the type of game you intend to run using this module. You could also review any characters your players make.

### Variety?

This adventure leans into combat, with roleplay in Lio's opening scenes and tactical choices throughout. We believe that mix still makes for a great session of tabletop roleplaying games (TTRPGs).

### Intended DC?

This is a battle encounter, so every DC in this book is part of its balance: the saving throws Vespa, her guards, and the nests force, and the checks to disable a core. They are set for 20th-level heroes, so use them as printed rather than replacing them with a general DC. If your table needs an easier or harder fight, use Tuning the Fight in The Plot instead.

### Multiple endings?

Indeed. Victory or defeat, and whether each nest was shattered, disabled, or left standing, all change how the story closes. See The Farewell.

### Go wild?

As with so many roleplaying games, chances are you'll go off script. That's never a bad option. If players come up with something fun and different, there will always be room for improvisation in this story. The story is designed with enough choice that you won't veer too far from the ultimate goal, but if a new path develops in the wild, follow it through to its end. Vespa's objectives stay the same, so think

about how she and her hive would react.

### Digital map?
You will find digital versions of the map here:
**www.gbroadgames.com/tso**

### Magic items?
Yes, and they matter. Each character starts with one legendary, one very rare, and one rare magic item of their player's choice (see Unique Modifier in Running the Adventure). The battle is balanced around heroes equipped this way.

### Can Vespa Consume Fey Nectar and use Venom Torrent in the same turn?
No. Both require her Action. Consume recharges Venom Torrent for a later turn.

### Does the water slow characters?
Yes. The shallow water is Difficult Terrain.

### Do nests explode if disabled by Arcana?
No. Two DC 22 Arcana successes safely disable a core. Reducing a nest to 0 HP causes Shatter the Hive.

### Does Buzzkill happen automatically when the last guard dies?
No. It is an optional, once-per-encounter lair action, chosen on Initiative Count 20 when all the Hiveguards are dead.

### Can Vespa teleport a hero into empty air?
No. Tear the Veil requires an unoccupied destination with a supporting surface. An Active Nectar Aura is valid if the space meets that requirement.

### Is there a second phase?
No. Vespa's HP, her Legendary Resistances, and the nest economy determine the fight.

### What does Cracking Carapace do?
Every Legendary Resistance Vespa spends reduces her AC by 1 for the rest of the encounter: from 25 to a practical minimum of 20 with five uses.

### Do characters get a surprise round?
Only if they genuinely surprise Vespa. Under the 2024 rules, a surprised creature has Disadvantage on its Initiative roll. Under the 2014 rules, a surprised creature can't move or act on its first turn.

### Does Lightly Obscured mean attack rolls have Disadvantage?
No. Mirage of the Fey separately imposes Disadvantage on Opportunity Attacks, not on all attack rolls.

### What if Vespa is banished?
A temporary Banishment returns her when the spell ends; she has made the oasis her home.

# GM QUICK REFERENCE

*Print or copy this page and keep it beside your screen during the battle.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **VESPA** | HP _____ / 615 AC _____ (starts 25) Nectar drinks _____ / 3 |
| **DEFENSES** | Legendary Resistances _____ / 5 Legendary Actions _____ / 4 |
| **RECHARGE** | Fey Venom Torrent _____ Tear the Veil _____ |
| **NESTS** | West _____ / 100 East _____ / 100 South _____ / 100 |
| **NEST STATES** | West _____ Arcana ☐ ☐ East _____ Arcana ☐ ☐ South _____ Arcana ☐ ☐<br>Active / Dormant / Destroyed / Disabled |
| **HIVEGUARDS** | A _____ / 136 Wingbeat ☐ Rage ☐ B _____ / 136 Wingbeat ☐ Rage ☐<br>C _____ / 136 Wingbeat ☐ Rage ☐ D _____ / 136 Wingbeat ☐ Rage ☐ |
| **LAST LAIR ACTION** | _____ (no repeats on consecutive rounds) |
| **BUZZKILL** | ☐ Unused ☐ Used |

## INITIATIVE COUNT 20 - EVERY ROUND

- Nectar Pulse: +15 HP to each living Hiveguard within 20 feet of an Active nest (once per round).
- If Vespa is alive and not Incapacitated, choose one lair action (or Buzzkill, once, after all guards are dead).
- Dormant nests from Consume Fey Nectar wake at the end of Vespa's next turn.

## KEY NUMBERS

- Hiveguards: AC 18; Furious Wingbeat Recharge 5–6; Buzzing Rage 1/Day.
- Nectar Aura: 21 Fire + 14 Psychic. For the Hive: DC 16 Dexterity, 10 Force.
- Shatter the Hive: DC 20 Dexterity, 28 Force. Disable the Core: DC 22 Arcana, two successes.
- Lair actions and Buzzkill: DC 25 (Buzzkill 120 Psychic, or 60 on a success).




## MORE LORE

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