



# ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

## IT'S ALL IN THE BLOOD

Rumors of faceless demonic creatures have been steadily rising in the Hillsfar region, and it is said that far below the surface of Faerun, nestled in the bowels of the underdark, ancient terrors are stirring. The imperiled drow of Szith Morcaine have extended an intriguing offer, but can the drow be trusted, and for how long? An eight-hour adventure for 11th-16th level characters.

**Adventure Code: DDEX3-4**

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# EXPEDITIONS™

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Occupation of Szith Morcane*, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the Rage of Demons™ storyline season.

This adventure consists of five mini-adventures, and is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 12th-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure begins near the city of Hillsfar but quickly moves to the Underdark. The adventure is broken up into two, four-hour rounds.

## THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a [DCI number](#). This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the [D&D Adventurers League home](#).

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the [D&D basic rules](#) or the *Player's Handbook™*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

## BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an [official adventure logsheet](#) for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

## ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 12th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

## DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

**Average party strength** indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

## DUNGEON MASTERING THE ADVENTURE

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

**Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.**

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

## DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the [D&D basic rules](#) or the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of

expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

## SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services. Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

### SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

### ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Faiths that can call upon spellcasting services in and around Hillsfar include the following: Chauntea, Lliira, Mielikki, and Tempus.

## CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

## DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

## DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

**Create a New 1st-Level Character.** If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

**Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead.** If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

**Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead.** As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

**Faction Charity.** If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is not available.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The drow of Szith Morcane have been driven from their home by invading forces. Fiendish fire giants led a host of slaves from their home city of Maerimydra and overran the drow outpost. Those drow that stood up to the invaders were cut down, while the smart ones fled into the darkness.

The fire giants and their forces had been harrying Szith Morcane for several months before their invasion was put into action, and in that time the drow desperately sought a solution to their plight. The demonic blood coursing through the fire giants's veins spurred them on to greater acts of atrocity and malice, something that the drow of Szith Morcane knew they would not be unable to fend off for long.

Solom Ned'razak, the archwizard ruler of Szith Morcane, poured all of his available resources, along with those of his students at the Inverted Tower, into finding a solution. Their research arrived at a single conclusion, if they were able to somehow purge the demon blood from the fire giants they would at least buy themselves an advantage.

Solom worked closely with the city's greatest alchemist, Xaven Tanor'this, to develop the ritual necessary for such an act. As they drew closer to completion, however, the final force from Maerimydra marched on Szith Morcane and sacked it in one fell swoop (DDEX3-3 *The Occupation of Szith Morcane*).

With the assistance of adventures from the area surrounding Hillsfar, miles above and far to the north, Solom managed to flee to Sporedome, a great fungal forest in the Underdark, to regroup and plan his next move. Xaven, however, was captured. Via spies, traders, and other sources in and around Maerimydra, word quickly reached Solom that Xaven was not brought to the city as was expected, but was instead sold to a yugoloth named Maram il Vass and taken to deep into the Lowerdark. Known to those that live near the fiend, his refuge—the Den of the Whispered Word—is avoided at all costs.

Solom knows they need Xaven Tanor'this in order to complete the ritual, which has become even more important now that the demon-blooded fire giants and their minions hold Szith Morcane. Solom, still in the Sporedome, reached out to the drow mage Murssvayas Dhuurniv in Hillsfar to find a group of capable adventurers to recover Xaven and help finish the ritual.



## OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken into two rounds, each of which should take up 4 hours of playtime. Round 1 consists of Parts 1 through 4, and round 2 consists of Parts 5 through 7.

### ROUND 1

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**Part 1.** The characters are invited to a midnight meeting outside Elventree by their faction contacts. In a shadowed cave the characters meet Murssvayas Dhuurniv—a drow wizard—who asks for their assistance on behalf the displaced drow of Szith Morcane. In order to take back their home and defeat the fire giants, they need to recover the drow alchemist Xaven Tanor'this who was captured and sold to a creature called Maram il Vass.

**Part 2.** Here, the characters descend into the Underdark and into the Howling Pits. In this area, powerful winds drive travelers insane from exhaustion while strange creatures lurk in the darkness. The characters must navigate the tunnels, facing off against mad fire giants, hidden cloaklers, natural and unnatural obstacles, and demons in their search for Maram il Vass's domain.

**Part 3.** The characters locate Maram il Vass's refuge and are faced with a choice to find Xaven Tanor'this—either by treating diplomatically with the fiend or using force in hopes of finding the drow on their own. Either option presents problems to the characters that must be overcome.

**Part 4.** The adventurers discover Xaven and other prisoners being held in a great cavern below the Den of the Whispered Word, being held by a coven of hags. Even if the characters treated diplomatically with the ultroloth, they are going to have to fight if they want to rescue Xaven Tanor'this.

### ROUND 2

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**Part 5.** In order to complete the ritual that can expel demon blood from targets, a living fire giant must be captured and experimented upon. Not just any giant would do however—the target must have the blood of demons flowing through its veins. During the attack on Szith Morcane at least one such opponent was engaged in the battle. Xaven knows of a secret path into Maerimydra to stealthily enter the city.

**Part 6.** The characters travel further into the Underdark to find Xaven's secret tunnel into Maerimydra.

Unfortunately, in the intervening years, the fire giants have fortified the area against intruders; constructing an outpost called Black Ember. The characters must defeat the fire giants, hell hounds, and other guardians, or find a way to get past them, in order to gain access to the secret tunnel into Maerimydra.

**Part 7.** Using the secret tunnel, the characters arrive in Maerimydra via the ruins of the Shattered Tower in the city's abandoned northern section. As they gaze upon the fire giant city of chaos and madness, the characters find the imp, Pipypap, scavenging amongst the ruins. In exchange for not killing him, the small devil offers his assistance. Though only an imp, Pipypap knows quite a bit about Maerimydra, including the location of two fiend-blooded fire giants ("You can almost smell 'em."). One serves in the Coliseum while the other watches over the Six-Fingered Temple. Reaching either location without raising alarms requires skill and timing, and then capturing one of the fire giants alive and returning it to Sporedome should test the resources of the characters.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters have made a name for themselves across their careers and people are starting to notice. Their appearance in Hillsfar region has brought them to the attention of Murssvayas Dhuurniv, a drow wizard connected to Solom Ned'razak and the refugees of Szith Morcane.

The easiest way to involve the characters is through their representative in the Hillsfar region using the Faction Invites, below. If a character does not belong to a faction, you can use the "Message by Squirrel" hook.

### FACTION INVITES

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Characters who are members of a faction receive a message from their contact in Hillsfar. The message asks the character to stand for the faction at a midnight meeting with a drow seeking a capable group to handle a unique problem. The meeting is to take place within the borders of Elventree at a site called Silver Shadow Cave.

**Zhentarim, Lord's Alliance.** These factions have been seeking ways to treat with the drow of the Underdark for many years but so far few avenues have proven worthwhile.

***Harpers, Order of the Gauntlet, Emerald Enclave.***

These factions's contacts relate that there have been rumors of recent activities in the Underdark of a dire nature. Demons and other fiendish creatures have begun to take an active interest in the affairs of the world and the fear is that those interests may affect Hillsfar and the Moonsea region in the near future. The midnight meeting with the drow is a way to get a group of experienced agents into the situation and to help stop any problems before they occur.

## MESSAGE BY SQUIRREL

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If a character does not belong to any faction, their presence in Hillsfar region is enough to draw the attention of Murssvayas directly. However, he knows what an invite from a drow might look like so he works with the keeper of the Silver Shadow Cave in Elventree, the aged elf druid Nymarrath, to request the presence of the characters. Murssvayas and Nymarrath know and respect each other.

Nymarrath sends a squirrel to greet the characters wherever they are staying. The squirrel, magically enchanted, speaks to the characters, inviting them on behalf of the elf druid Nymarrath to follow him to a meeting in Elventree that concerns the safety of the whole region. The squirrel is excitable and doesn't stand still for long, eager as she is to return to her home at Silver Shadow Cave.

## PART 1: DESPERATE TIMES

Elventree is a small village a short distance away from Hillsfar. The 300 elves, half-elves, and humans that live in the small community dwell in homes built into the living surroundings - some are high in the trees, some in hollowed out stumps, while others in natural shallow caves. Elventree is a haven for non-humans, a refuge against the rampant prejudices that dominate the politics and life of nearby Hillsfar.

Silver Shadow Cave is located just within the northern border of Elventree. The characters are not accosted by anyone in the area as they make their way through the forest to the meeting site, and if they did not already know about Elventree they would likely not even know a village existed here!

Soft moonlight bathes the small clearing in pale radiance, highlighting the motes of pollen that float gently in the air. The light of the moon shines upon a wide cave entrance in the center of the clearing surrounded by short grass and patches of wild flowers. You can see that the shallow cave descends a short distance and then into a broader opening - some natural phenomenon causes the moonlight to filter down below ground as well!

This is Silver Shadow Cave, a sacred site for communing with the power of the moon goddess Selune. Characters that enter feel a sense of calm and peace wash over them. The cave is well lit by the moonlight and holds a round, natural chamber, in the center of which sits the stump of a tree roughly 10 feet wide. The stump has been smoothed over and polished to create a table, upon which sits a handful of glasses and a pitcher of odd, silvery water. It's regular water, but somehow manages to capture the moonlight.

### MIDNIGHT MEETING

After the characters have had a few minutes to acquaint themselves with one another, their host appears out of the shadowy corner of the chamber. **Murssvayas Dhuurniv**, a drow with long silver hair, thick sideburns, emerald green eyes, and skin so dark it's nearly purple, steps forward. He is dressed in a black silk shirt and pants with a sword buckled at his side.

Murssvayas greets each of the characters by name and sets immediately to his request in righting a shift in the balance of power in the Underdark below Hillsfar.

### STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Murssvayas gets right down to the heart of the matter. He relays the following information as organically as possible to the characters.

- In the recent past, the drow outpost of Szith Morcane was sacked by an army host of slaves led by fiendish fire giants and demons striking out from the city of Maerimydra. The outpost's leader Solom Ned'razak, fled to the fungal forest known as Sporedome. Shortly thereafter, a number of other survivors began arriving, having received word of Solom's own arrival.
- Solom could not be here himself so Murssvayas was chosen to be the representative of Solom's interests.
- For many weeks the drow have been harried by these forces so they had been taking precautions but those plans were violently cut short when the giants launched their attack. Those plans centered on a ritual meant to cull the fiendish blood from targets—a key advantage the giants have over the drow.
- Xaven Tanor'this—the main alchemist working on the ritual—was captured in the raid. In order to complete the ritual and strike back against the giants squatting on Szith Morcane, Solom needs Xaven.
- Through a spy network that has since collapsed, Solom learned that Xaven was sold to a creature called Maram il Vass who resides in the Den of the Whispered Word, sort of extraplanar brokerage of goods and services. Maram's refuge is located in a twisting realm of the Underdark known as the Howling Pits.
- Solom and the displaced drow need Xaven recovered from Maram's clutches and returned to Sporedome so that the ritual can be complete.

In exchange for returning Xaven and assisting with the completion of the ritual, Solom Ned'razak provides the characters and their allies a copy of the documents that detail its workings, along with any notes that Solom might make upon conducting it. The abyssal forces controlling both Maerimydra and Szith Morcane are not going to be content with their conquests to date—soon they will spill over into the surface lands.

Also, once Szith Morcane is retaken, avenues can be opened up for friendly dealings with certain surface factions, specifically those factions that help the drow now in their time of need.



Once they agree, the drow mage gives the characters a map of the Underdark showing the location of the Howling Pits, but he warns them that the area is filled with dangerous winds that drive travelers insane. No one has successfully mapped the area before so they are on their own with finding the Den of the Whispered Word.

#### ROLEPLAYING MURSSVAYAS DHUURNIV

The drow mage was introduced in DDEX2-16 *Boltsmelter's Book*, where he could have been a help or a hinder to the party at that time depending on what they did with the *elemental codex*. If they let him use the *codex*, Murssvayas deals with the characters with a smile as he knows they did the "right" thing. If not, however, the drow is cold in negotiations and blames the characters, partially at least, for what happened to Szith Morcane.

If the characters had no previous dealings with Murssvayas, he is polite but aloof in his negotiations.

**Quote:** "I assume I am dealing with people of business in this room. If not, please be quiet or remove yourselves."

#### PREPARATIONS

Though time is of the essence, allow the characters a chance to prepare for the journey as best as they are able to before they set out, including purchasing rations and other mundane gear. Murssvayas is quick to point out that the Underdark is a dangerous place and that they are going to need food and water for a long journey if they hope to survive.

### THE WAYDOWN RIVER

The route into the Underdark is via a sinkhole a half day's journey from Hillsfar called the Waydown.

You crest a small hill and come upon a great sinkhole in the ground. A partially built wall surrounds the hole and two soldiers are nervously walking around the perimeter. The soldiers wear splint armor, shields and longswords, with shortbows slung over their shoulders. There is a tent large enough for four nearby with a small fire pit in front of it.

Someone in Hillsfar thought the drow attacks could be contained by building a wall around the sinkhole. However, even though there was a contingent of Red Plumes here guarding the builders multiple small attacks occurred closer to the city. Outside from an odd group of adventurers nothing has come near. The Red Plumes were called back to the city but left a guard of four. The builders went to gather more stone. The wall varies somewhat in height, but is on average currently about 3 feet tall. A disassembled winch that the Red Plumes used to lower soldiers into the hole (to make sure nothing

nasty in the immediate area felt like climbing up) is stacked to one side.

The guards know they are not a large enough unit to do more than blast a warning using their horns if something comes out of the sinkhole. The soldiers can tell them:

- The sinkhole is 100 feet straight down at which point it opens into a cavern that has a river flowing through it. The current is pretty fast and the water deep enough only for a raft.
- Guard Commandant Vuhm Yestral is their group commander. He has gone back to the city with the larger contingent of Red Plumes
- A patrol used to go down once a day to clear the area underneath the hole of any creatures that seem a threat.
- They personally have never been down there.
- The commandant actually helped a group of adventurers a while back go down there, so they have no problem letting these adventurers go on down.

Mud clings to the sides which extend down about 100 feet, the bottom of which holds a swift flowing river judging by the sound.

Descending the sinkhole shouldn't require any checks as the characters are under no time constraint, though if they did not bring rope there is still time to go back and get some. At the bottom of the sinkhole is a swift-flowing tributary of the River Tesh, which Murssvayas' map says to follow for 10 miles before turning west along a branching tunnel.

## WELCOME TO THE UNDERDARK

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Once the characters split off from the river they are well and truly in the realm known as the Underdark. Most of the tunnels are natural formations though this close to the surface the paths have been smoothed by foot traffic over the years. Patches of fungus in ever-increasing quantities are a common sight.

As the characters traverse the tunnels and caves the way becomes rougher and less worn. It's a two day journey to the Howling Pits from the Waydown River, and in that time the characters are enveloped in the ever-present darkness that seems to choke out all light. See Indefinite Madness f Graz'zt sidebar on the next page.

Drow characters, rangers with the Underdark favored terrain, or any other character who grew up in this sunless realm knows that the Underdark has a strange effect on teleportation magic as a result of *faerzress*.

### **FAERZRESS**

An unusual magical energy the drow call *faerzress* pervades much of the Underdark. The origin of this mysterious arcane power is unknown. Legend claims it is an ancient elven magic dating back to the time when the dark elves were first exiled from the world above. The drow and other Underdark creatures use the properties of areas suffused with *faerzress* to protect their settlements.

Areas suffused with *faerzress* can range in size from a few dozen feet across to several miles in diameter, and feature the following effects:

- Areas suffused with *faerzress* are always filled with dim light.
- A creature in an area suffused with *faerzress* has advantage on saving throws against any divination spells. If a divination spell doesn't allow a saving throw, the caster must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to cast the spell. Failing this save means the spell is wasted and has no effect.
- Any creature attempting to teleport into, within, or out of a *faerzress*-suffused area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 5 (1d10) force damage and the teleportation attempt fails. Even if the save succeeds, the teleportation attempt can suffer a mishap as if the destination was known only by description, regardless of how familiar the destination actually is. See the table in the teleport spell for more information.
- Areas suffused with *faerzress* have become tainted by the chaos of the demon lords. When a spell is cast in a *faerzress*-suffused area, the caster rolls a d20. On a roll of 1, the spell has an additional effect, determined by rolling on the Wild Magic Surge table in chapter 3, "Classes," of the *Player's Handbook*.
- Though *faerzress* can't be dispelled, its effects are temporarily suppressed in the area of an antimagic field.

## PART 2: THE HOWLING PITS

The journey through the Underdark to the Howling Pits takes approximately two days. Murssvayas' directions and map are good and lead the characters directly to the site without any problems.

### THE HOWLING PITS

However, it is possible for the characters to gain Madness points on the second day of travel.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

**Ceilings.** The tunnels of the Howling Pits vary between ten to 30 feet wide and just as tall unless otherwise noted.

**Width.** Like the ceiling, the width of the tunnels varies from section to section, but it is usually at least twenty feet wide.

**Light.** There is no light in this section of the Underdark, so the characters must provide their own means of illumination.

**Sound.** The howling, maddening wind is ever present in these tunnels, masking sounds more than 75 feet away. The howling winds are not a magical effect and can be heard through effects that provide shelter such as *Leomund's tiny hut*. Extradimensional effects such as *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*, however is effective at removing the threat.

Read:

For the past several hours you've detected a faint piping sound echoing through the caves of the Underdark, though the exact location was difficult to determine. The twisting tunnel you've been following begins to descend sharply and the piping noise grows louder as you feel a strange sensation - a breeze on your skin, originating from somewhere in front of you. A sudden gust rises up from the darkness bringing with it a howling sound that resembles an unearthly moan. The tunnel ahead splits off into branching passages in a multitude of directions.

This is the entrance to the Howling Pits, an area shunned by most rational residents of the Underdark. Dangers lurk in its windy tunnels.

#### THE HOWLING WINDS

Every time the characters finish a long, the maddening howl of the winds drives them further into the arms of madness. After the rest, each character must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or succub to madness.

#### MADNESS

At the best of times, the Underdark is a bizarre, alien, and inhospitable world, but the influence of the demon lords has transformed it into a domain of madness and chaos. *Faerzress* acts as a catalyst, spreading the demon lords' madness throughout the Underdark.

A creature's madness level starts at 0. When the creature fails a madness saving throw, its madness level increases by 1, and the creature immediately suffers the level's effect (as determined by rolling on the Short-Term Madness, Long-Term Madness, or Indefinite Madness table in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, as appropriate). When the effect ends, the creature's madness level doesn't change. Any time the creature's madness level increases, it suffers the effect of the new level.

If a creature with level 3 madness fails a madness saving throw, its madness level becomes 1. In this way, characters can potentially accumulate multiple forms of madness. If a character accumulates a form madness that they are already suffering from, reroll until a new result is reached.

Bouts of short- and long-term madness can be cured as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Given the demonic source of the madness, *remove curse* and *dispel evil* are also effective as cures. A *greater restoration* spell or more powerful magic is needed to cure indefinite madness and also resets a creature's madness level to 0.

In adventures set during *Rage of Demons*, madness is measured in three levels:

#### MADNESS LEVEL

Level	Effect
1	Short-term madness (lasts 1d10 minutes)
2	Long-term madness (lasts 1d10 x 10 minutes)
3	Indefinite madness (lasts until cured)

#### INDEFINITE MADNESSES OF GRAZ'ZT

Graz'zt influence on the region has manifested itself in the different forms of madness that characters may develop. Upon reaching madness level 3, instead of rolling on the Indefinite Madness table on page 260 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, roll on the following table and the character gains the madness listed below. Have the player note it on his or her character sheet.

If the roll results in a madness already possessed by the character, reroll until a new result is reached.

01-20	<b>Narcissism:</b> "There is nothing in existence that is more important than me."
21-40	<b>Megalomania:</b> "Anyone who doesn't do exactly what I say does not deserve to live."
41-60	<b>Infatuation:</b> "I will not rest until I have made someone else mine, and doing so is more important to me than my own life or the lives of others."
61-80	<b>Hedonism:</b> "My own pleasure is of paramount importance. Everything else, including social graces, is a triviality."
81-100	<b>Abomination:</b> "The mores of society are a lie, meant to shackle free thinking people. I will revel in that which others find shocking or disgusting to demonstrate my rebellion."

## NAVIGATING THE TUNNELS

The path through the Howling Pits is a total of 24 miles through difficult terrain. Each encounter in the Howling Pits occurs after the characters have traveled for 3 miles in the driving winds. Ask the characters the pace they are setting for their journey (fast, normal, or slow) and consult the Travel Pace rules in the *Player's Handbook* (page 181) to determine how long the journey takes. Traveling beyond 8 hours is considered a Forced March.

### TRAVEL PACE

Distance Traveled per...				
Pace	Minute	Hour	Day	Effect
Fast	400 feet	4 miles	30 miles	-5 penalty to passive Wisdom (Perception) scores
Normal	300 feet	3 miles	24 miles	
Slow	200 feet	2 miles	18 miles	Able to use stealth

## HOWLING PIT ENCOUNTERS

Presented below are eight encounter areas within the Howling Pits. The characters should participate in a total of four encounters during their travels; two encounters of your own choice, followed by Encounters 7 and 8.

The opening encounters should be determined in one of two ways, as described below.

### SELECTING ENCOUNTERS

The other two encounters should be determined in one of two ways, as described here:

**Method 1.** Choose a combat encounter and an environmental encounter.

**Method 2.** Treat them as random encounters and using the table below and a d10. Do not use the same result twice. Once the characters have encountered an encounter of a particular type (i.e., combat vs. environmental), choose or roll an encounter of the other type.

Roll	Encounter	Type
1	Giants Gone Wild	combat
2-3	This is the Pits	environmental
4	Hungry Ropers	combat
5-6	You Smell That?	environmental
7	Demon Ambush	combat
8	Cloaker Hunting Ground	combat
9-10	Underwater Tributary	environmental

Once the characters have experienced **2 locations** for the first time continue with Encounters 7 and 8.

## I. GIANTS GONE WILD

The howling wind slacks for a bit as the tunnel widens and opens up into a large cave. Several tall stalagmites squat around the uneven floor, though none reach the impressive twenty foot high ceiling. A deep bellow echoes from the opposite side of the cave, full of hatred and horror, rising above the gusting of the wind.

This cave contains two **fire giants** who were sent on a scouting mission to this area after Szith Morcane was sacked. They quickly fell victim to the maddening winds and have lost all sense of perspective and purpose. Now, having been completely consumed to mindless insanity, they seek only to destroy.

The fire giants leap out of the darkness two rounds after the characters enter, staggering from around the stalagmites. Unless the characters have taken precautions they are spotted by the giants, who let loose a bellow of fury and charge forward, hatred and madness in their blood-crazed eyes. These fire giants are beyond reason and do not engage in conversation - only a crazed foam flies from their black and broken lips.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace both fire giants with fire giant whelps
- **Weak party:** Replace one fire giant with a fire giant whelp
- **Strong party:** Replace fire giants with fire giant whelps, add a fire giant whelp
- **Very strong party:** Remove a fire giant, add two fire giant whelps

### TREASURE

These fire giants have only a handful of treasure they managed to plunder from Szith Morcane. Between the two of them they have ten onyx gemstones worth a total of 5,000 gp and a gold ring bearing a jeweled spider worth 250 gp.

## 2. THIS IS THE PITS

---

The characters have run into a section littered with dangerously deep pits, from which the winds howl out of relentlessly. Each character must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to navigate the pits successfully, which involves some tight squeezing in certain areas. Anyone that fails and isn't supported somehow falls into one of the pits, suffering 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage from the 80-foot plunge.

In addition, anyone in a pit (either at the bottom or dangling somewhere in between) is subject to stronger than normal winds and must immediately succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain a Madness Point. This is described earlier under "The Howling Winds."

### XP AWARD

If none of the characters fall into a pit, award each character 1,000 XP.

## 3. YOU SMELL THAT?

---

There are patches of yellow mold peppered throughout the lowest tunnels of the Howling Pits, and occasionally the wind picks up strong enough to trigger the spores and send them further away. The characters have reached just such a location. The tunnel they are following continues on in the same maddening way, but the wind picks up stronger suddenly. Characters can make DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) checks to pick up the scent of yellow mold on the air a round before the spores arrive, giving them a chance to act.

Once the spores arrive the characters must make DC 15 Constitution saving throws or suffer 22 (4d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. Poisoned characters suffer 11 (2d10) poison damage at the start of each of their turns. At the end of their turn, a character may attempt another DC 15 Constitution saving throw with success ending the effect early. A character that successfully saves against the spores is immune to them for 24 hours.

The wind carries the spores along the tunnel after a single round.

### XP AWARD

If none of the characters suffer damage from the spores, award each character 1,000 XP.

## 4. DEMONIC AMBUSH

---

Demons enter the Howling Pits from one of the many portals further down into its depths, and the characters have been noticed by some of them. A pair of **glabrezu** have been following the characters, keeping far enough away to not get noticed (trying to keep more than 60 feet away to stay out of the range of typical darkvision).

The demons stalk the characters, waiting for an opportune time to ambush them. Ideally they wait until the party comes upon some other encounter and are distracted. Alternately they strike during a short or long rest.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace glabrezus with barlguras, add one barlgura.
- **Weak party:** Replace glabrezus with hezrous.
- **Strong party:** Replace glabrezus with chasmes, add two chasmes.
- **Very strong party:** Replace glabrezus with hezrous, add one chasme

## 5. CLOAKER HUNTING GROUND

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Ahead of you the tunnel narrows to only five feet wide, and even narrower at some points based on how far down you can see. The ceiling rises to a height of thirty feet and widens to about ten feet at the top.

This section of the Howling Pits has become the hunting grounds for two **cloakers** who use the narrow tunnel to isolate prey. They wait on the ceiling for the characters to pass beneath them, and then one of them swoops down to try and grab on to whomever is in the rear. Once the first one has descended and attacked, the next round the other one flies silently down to try and attack the person in the lead.

### TREASURE

The cloakers have suspended a small sack in the ceiling filled with trinkets gathered from previous travelers. The sack is cleverly concealed and invisible to anyone on the ground but becomes obvious to anyone within five feet of it. The sack contains three amethyst gemstones (100 gp each), one topaz gemstone (500 gp), and a brooch laid with gold and ivory (250 gp).

## 6. UNDERGROUND TRIBUTARY

---

The tunnel ahead opens up into a wide cave. An underground river, fifteen feet wide, cuts the area in half, and on the other side you see branching tunnels leading further into the Howling Pits. Strange gray-and-white fungus grows in large patches on the banks of the dark and swiftly flowing river.

This is a tributary of a larger river system that flows out of the Lake of Shadows, a region of the Underdark between Szith Morcane and Maerimydra. The waters are dark, cold, and surprisingly deep, sloping down sharply to a ten foot depth in the center.

The gray-and-white fungus growing on the banks of the river is **cave creeper**, a mind-affecting fungus. From the cave entrance characters can make DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) checks to identify the fungus and recall that its spores cause madness. Anyone who enters the cave must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. While poisoned a character suffers from the effects of the *confusion* spell and can attempt another DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of each round to negate the effect. Characters succeeding on the saving throw are immune to the cave creeper's spores for 24 hours.

The river is 15 feet wide and there is 20 feet of cave floor on either side of it. Characters can try to swim across the swift-moving river with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Anyone that fails or falls into the river must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pulled under by the current and dragged thirty feet down. They can make another DC 15 Strength saving throw to cling to the side of the river, but if that fails they are swept away into darkness. They wash ashore at a bend in the river approximately 200 feet downstream.

Anyone caught in the river beyond the cave must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffers 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage each round from rocks. On a failure they are reduced to 0 hit points and are dying. The current takes the victim 60 feet each round until the bend, described above.

### XP AWARD

If the characters make it safely across the river without getting swept away, award each character 1,000 XP.

## 7. WINDS OF MADNESS

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The areas surrounding Maram il Vass's Den of the Whispered Word are closer to portals leading to the Abyss than much of the rest of the Howling Pits. At this encounter the characters face a particularly powerful gust of the maddening winds that scream and howl like a madman in the Underdark tunnels.

All characters must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or succumb to madness (see the "Madness" sidebar on page 11).

## 8. ESCAPED SLAVES

---

Over the mournful howl of the persistent wind in these tunnels you hear a ragged scream that is suddenly choked off. It must have been close ahead to have been heard.

The tunnel turns and opens into a small cave about 50 feet ahead of the characters. At the opposite end of the cave huddles a male human, clutching his knees with his hands and rocking back and forth. Dried blood runs from his ears and is pooled near a short length of sharpened wood at his side. A female human stands nearby trying to comfort him, her hand on his shoulder. They are both filthy, with mud-caked hair, torn rags for clothing, and visible lash marks all over their bodies.

These two unfortunates are two **human slaves** named Drystan and Tegan (both currently at half hit points), siblings and now escaped slaves from Maram's Den of the Whispered Word.

If any character enters the cave or if they call out, Tegan moves in a protective stance over Drystan who does not acknowledge anyone else's presence. Tegan swiftly picks up the pointed stick and holds it unsteadily in both hands, ready to defend herself and her brother.

Tegan shows more courage than her nearly starved appearance would suggest, demanding to know who the characters are and what they're doing here. She can be calmed with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, but the characters must prove somehow that they are not working with Maram as part of some elaborate plot to torture her and her brother. Healing her brother's wounds would go a long way to proving the characters are not with the mysterious broker. Any character that restore Dystan's hit points or, better yet, his hearing, make the Charisma check with advantage.

Once she trusts them, Tegan breaks down and tells them what she knows. Tegan can divulge the following:

IT'S ALL IN THE BLOOD



- She and her brother have been slaves controlled by Maram il Vass in the Den of the Whispered Word. They are farmers from the Dalelands until they were captured by an orc raiding party five years ago. The orcs brought them into the Underdark and sold them to Maram, who seems to be a half-elf, but Tegan suspects that there is more to him than meets the eye.
- Tegan has seen lots of demons that dwell in the palace as well. Tegan and Drystan served Maram's guests and tended to the broker's personal needs.
- Tegan and Drystan escaped "some time ago" (they don't have means of telling time outside the palace but it was only a day ago) when they were led outside to feed on the mushrooms that grow in the cave. Tegan grabbed Drystan and fled into the caves. She knew the dangers of the wind but preferred that to the torment that would no doubt continue if they stayed behind.
- Tegan recalls seeing a drow being brought to Maram il Vass recently. She doesn't know what happened to him but he wasn't kept in the main part of the palace.
- The palace is guarded by a pretty mean gnome with grey skin that answers only to Maram il Vass, is deceptively polite to guests. Lots of people come and go there, and he doesn't like it when people are mean back to him.
- Drystan broke down the day before they escaped. It seemed as though his mind just shut down from all of the tortures he was subjected to. He completely succumbed to the maddening winds yesterday and shoved the only weapon they had—a pointed stick—into both of his ears.

#### ROLEPLAYING TEGAN

Tegan is desperate for help from anyone that isn't a fiend but she and her brother have been playthings in the Den of the Whispered Word for too long for her to trust anyone right away. She is scared and feels that she and Drystan were incredibly lucky to have escaped as they did, even though a part of her suspects it was all a trick. Tegan is proud and stubborn, but if the characters are honest and can prove that they're not working with Maram il Vass she eventually opens up to them.

**Quote:** "We're not going back! You'll have to kill us first!"

#### DEVELOPMENTS

Tegan refuses to go back to the Den of the Whispered Word under any circumstances, promising that she and her brother can navigate the Howling Pits just fine (which isn't true). She can be convinced to stay in this cave waiting for the characters with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check but she does not respond to intimidation well—she has endured horrors the likes of which pale in comparison to anything the characters might do. The DC to browbeat her into staying is the same, but the check is made with disadvantage.

Anyone examining her brother can make a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check to determine that Drystan is suffering from some kind of mental breakdown. Curing him would require time and a safe environment; magic alone does not work. More apparent, however, is the damage he inflicted upon his ears. He is completely deaf; something that some might consider a blessing here.

Tegan has no idea but she and her brother have only gone roughly three miles from the Den of the Whispered Word in their flight. She has no real idea of where she is or where the palace is located at this point but vaguely points to the end of the tunnel opposite where the characters entered.

#### TREASURE

Between the encounters, the characters find a handful of treasure; a long-lost lockbox with total of 5,000 gp in various coins and a gold ring bearing a jeweled spider (250 gp).

Additionally, they find a sack contains three amethyst gemstones (300 gp), one topaz gemstone (500 gp), and a brooch laid with gold and ivory (250 gp).

#### XP AWARD

When the characters successfully navigate the Howling Pits, award each character 1,000 XP and proceed to Part 3.

## PART 3: DEN OF THE WHISPERED WORD

Maram il Vass was approached directly by agents of Graz'zt shortly after the demon lord was exiled to the Underdark. The ulroloth was long ago in the employ the Dark Prince in the Outer Planes, distinguishing himself as someone suitable cunning and reliable enough to be trusted...as much as a yugoloth can be. Eventually the two parted amicably and Maram il Vass used his newfound fortune to create the Den of the Whispered Word. With Graz'zt fortuitous arrival, Maram has found himself reaping the rewards of his previous service; having been gifted with the service of a number of demons while he serves Graz'zt once more.

With the fire giants in Maerimydra whipped into a blood frenzy and the sacking of the drow outpost of Szith Morcane recently, Maram il Vass saw an opportunity to add to his collection. Working through contacts she purchased from the fire giants the choicest of drow prisoners from Szith Morcane—the alchemist Xaven Tanor'this; a drow whose reputation preceded him. A skilled alchemist would be invaluable.

The drow currently resides in the gardens below the Den of the Whispered Word where he toils endlessly; brewing and transmuting for Maram.

### AT THE DEN'S DOOR

The characters arrive at the Den of the Whispered Word about a day's travel from their encounter with Tegan and Drystan.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

**Ceilings.** The cave the Den has been built in is 150 feet tall. The center building of the palace has 12-foot high ceilings on all the floors. The domes are 50 feet tall.

**Faerzress.** Faerzress does not interfere with teleportation magic within the Den of the Whispered Word.

**Light.** The illumination from the two domes is enough to shed the entire cave in dim light. Inside the den, cleverly placed lines of glowing marble provide bright light.

**Sound.** The howling, maddening wind in the cave masks sounds more than 75 feet away. Inside the palace the wind cannot be heard.

**Windows.** There are no windows in the Den of the

Whispered Word, but if Maram il Vass allows it the glass of the domes can become clear to allow outside viewing.

**Glass Domes.** The two domes are made of unbreakable glass. They are as strong as steel and are magically infused to change opacity based on Maram's whim.

#### MARAM IL VASS'S SERVANT

Maram il Vass's servant (**commoner**) is possessive of no name and appears to be incapable of speech. Any attempt to glean any information from him are met with impassive stares. If asked, Maram brushes any inquiries off with something to the effect of "*He enjoys working for me. He'd have it no other way.*"

In truth, the servant was a human captive of Maram il Vass for many years who has become completely conditioned into unquestioningly serving the yugoloth. He is wholly devoted to serving Maram and resists any attempt to betray his master—with violence if need be.

### D1. PALACE GROUNDS

The tunnel opens up into an expansive cavern, the ceiling and sides of which extend well beyond your vision. Slender stalactites cling to the ceiling and tall stalagmites rise from the floor, but the most dominating feature in the impressive structure in the center. A black-and-red marble central building stands approximately 50 feet high flanked by two, smaller buildings, each about 30 feet high. These domes's supports are lined with licking flames of blue, green, purple—*faerie fire* by the look of it.

There is 100 feet of open ground between the edge of the cavern where the characters enter and the doors to the Den of the Whispered Word. The ground is rocky and uneven (considered difficult terrain) with only a handful of stalagmites for cover.

### D2. BRASS DOORS

A pair of ornate doors of beaten brass, look to be the only entrance at the front of the marbled building. A smaller building is affixed to the wall beside the door. A construct stands sentry at the door and the flickering light of an oil lamp can be seen inside the smaller building.

The brass doors are the only entrance into the palace. The doors are carved with self-adulating images of what appears to be a half-elf in various stages of becoming very rich and very powerful.

This is the entrance to the Den of the Whispered Word. It is guarded by **Grabber Forth** and a **shield guardian**.

If the characters approach Forth and demand an audience with Maram il Vass, the *svirfneblin* is taken aback by their brazen attitude. However, he has orders to admit anyone into the Den of the Whispered Word that asks to see Maram il Vass by name. Otherwise, the shield guardian stands in front of the door while Forth stands behind one of the construct's legs and orders the characters to leave.

If attacked, Forth loses his seemingly clumsy and ineffective air and begins cackling in glee. He is absolutely vicious and his magical prowess is stupefying. On his first round, he casts *time stop* and casts the following spells in order (depending on how many actions he is able to take via the *time stop* spell). However, he uses his final action granted by *time stop* to cast *circle of death* using a 7th level spell slot (10d6 necrotic damage) on as many people as he can. Grabber Forth is a big fan of using *counterspell* to annoy enemy spellcasters.

- *Stoneskin*
- *Greater invisibility*
- *See invisibility*
- *Mirror image*

The shield guardian attacks whomever Forth instructs him to. If no instructions are forthcoming, he simply attacks the closest target.

#### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the shield guardian with a clay golem; replace Grabber Forth with a mage.
- **Weak party:** Replace the shield guardian with a stone golem; replace Grabber Forth with a mage.
- **Strong party:** Replace the shield guardian with an clay golem
- **Very strong party:** Replace the shield guardian with a stone golem

#### DEVELOPMENT

As the characters touch the door to enter, the carvings morph and the half-elf changes to resemble the character touching the door. The alluring image is fleeting and after blinking or looking away for a moment, they find that it resembles the half-elf once more.

This half-elf is Maram il Vass in his preferred guise.

#### TREASURE

Grabber Forth carries diamond dust worth 200 gp (*stoneskin* material component) and ruby dust worth 1,200 gp (*forcecage* material component).

#### XP AWARD

If the characters gain entrance to the Den without a fight, award each character 1,000 XP.

### D3. ENTRANCE FOYER

Inside the Den of the Whispered Word, once the doors close the howling winds of the tunnels are completely shut out. The air is filled with the scent of what is no doubt very expensive incense and perfume.

The entrance foyer has two large tapestries, one on the east wall and one on the west wall. The tapestries are similar in theme to the decoration of the front door; they continue the story of a self-made half-elf of extraordinary influence.

The hallway is lined with tall vases filled with fresh flowers and glass containers filled with all manner of small, unusual creatures, such as fish, birds, reptiles, and other curiosities.

#### TREASURE

The two tapestries are each worth 500 gp and weigh 150 pounds each.

### D4. AUDIENCE CHAMBER

You step into a wide, long hallway that ends in an archway before a grand chamber. The floor is polished white marble streaked with veins of red and black. Archways are set into the east and west walls leading into long hallways in either direction. A large desk of an unusual, purple wood sits in the middle of the room. Two brass doors lead out in the southeast and southwest corners.

A rakishly handsome half-elf sits at the desk.

**Maram il Vass** is here. While Maram is an *ultraloath*, he takes the guise of a rakishly handsome half-elf using *alter self*. If viewed by a character with *detect magic*, he radiates strong transmutation magic. If the characters determine his true nature, he dismisses his disguise with a wry smile.

Upon the characters entering the room, Maram il Vass rises from his desk and, with a lazy wave of his hand, bids them to be seated. A number of purple-wood chairs equal to the number of characters that weren't there before are inexplicably present.

### ROLEPLAYING MARAM IL VASS

Maram il Vass is a yugoloth who found a better alternative to warmongering long ago. He built the Den of the Whispered Word as a refuge on the Material Plane to ply his wares and secrets. He is meticulous and conniving and very, very charming--and he knows it.

**Quote:** "Won't haggle?!"

A **secret door** leading to D7 can be spotted with successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

A pair of **nycaloth** are in D5 dutifully standing guard. If combat breaks out, they enter initiative as normal. Thanks to the small peepholes in the door, they can see everything that transpires in the room and are able to *teleport* inside and attack on their turn using *multiattack*. Because of this, their initial attacks are made with advantage. They attack the same target, preferring to attack obvious spellcasters (i.e., less armored, etc.). If combat breaks out, Maram il Vass *dimension doors* away at his first opportunity, teleporting to D11.

If the mezoloths are used, they cast *darkness* upon themselves in the first round, and then *teleports* into the room on their turn in the following round, preferably adjacent to ranged attackers.

In the event that an arcanaloth is present, it casts *greater invisibility* upon itself, then opens the door, and then steps to the side and out of line of sight. In the following round, it casts *chain lightning*.

Detecting the peepholes requires a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character actively investigating the door notices them on a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace one nycaloth with two mezoloths.
- **Strong party:** Replace one nycaloth with an arcanaloth

### FIENDISH BARGAINING

Maram il Vass, despite being a yugoloth, is polite and hospitable and offers the characters food and drink. At the characters's request, a human in fine clothing enters the room impossibly quickly carrying a tray with whatever food and drink the characters requested, along with a hot, damp towel. He stands at the ready to address whatever needs Maram's guests might have.

If asked, he initially refuses to speak business until the characters have had a chance to refresh themselves, but if a character succeeds at a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, he relents with a disappointing sigh and dismisses the human servant. Characters with the Guild Artisan or Noble background make this check with advantage.

Maram il Vass then admits that he does, in fact, have a drow—a prize which he bought from some "rather obtuse" fire giants who had no idea of what they were selling. He was unconscious and in pretty bad shape, but Maram assures the characters that he has been extended the epitome of hospitality since his arrival. He initially refuses to offer up Xaven, but if he feels the characters are willing to buy him, he begins what he has been waiting all this time—haggling. There are two primary ways to "buy" the drow from Maram il Vass:

**Prize for Prize.** Maram initially offers a simple exchange—one of the characters' for the drow. His preference, in order of priority is:

- Arcane spellcasters
- Divine spellcasters
- Non-humans
- Humans

If, for some reason, the characters agree, Maram il Vass jumps from his seat and claps his hands excitedly. Once he is convinced the character intends to honor his arrangement, he rings a small bell on his desk, and the nycaloth (or mezoloths) in D5 emerge and attempt to escort the character to D6. If the character refuses, Maram—sighing in contempt at the double-dealing—is obviously upset. Future Charisma checks to negotiate Xaven's release are made with disadvantage.

**Gold Talks.** In order to satisfy Maram's greed, the characters may pay him 10,000 gp. Alternatively, they may offer him two, *rare* consumable magic items. They may attempt to negotiate this price, however—but is tricky.

Haggling with Maram is an exhausting affair that lasts for over an over an hour. It is apparent to any character with a passive Insight score of 10 or higher that Maram is enjoying it immensely. At the end of the session, the characters may attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) **group** check. If successful, the price for Xaven's release is reduced by half (5,000 gp or one rare, consumable magic item). For 5 points that the check succeeds by, the price is reduced by an additional 1,000 gp (to a minimum of 2,000 gp). He does not accept anything less than one rare, consumable magic item, however.

## DEVELOPMENT

What happens next depends on whether or not the characters and Maram come to an accord:

**Xaven's Release is Secured.** He informs them that Xaven is being held below and provides them the key to the Hanging Gardens, below, via D8. He does not accompany them.

**Xaven's Release is Not Secured.** If no deal can be reached, Maram il Vass shrugs and after informing the characters that they have no further business to discuss, asks the characters to leave. If they refuse or offer any trouble, he sighs and rings his bell, summoning the nycaloths hiding in D5 to escort the characters out.

The door to D11 is *arcane locked* and opening it requires a set of thieves' tools and a DC 30 Dexterity check.

Additionally, it is **trapped** with a *glyph of warding* (DC 15; triggered when someone reads the runes that are inscribed on a small, brass placard. Tiny words encircle the explosive rune (thunder) that reads (in Undercommon): "*This is what an explosive rune looks like.*"

## TREASURE

Maram carries a small silver key that unlocks the doors to D6, D8, and D11. There is nothing else of value in this room.

## XP AWARD

If the characters treat peacefully with Maram il Vass and negotiate Xaven's release without a fight, award each character 3,000 XP.

## D5. SIDE OFFICE

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The nycaloths use this room to avoid upsetting less cosmopolitan visitors who might otherwise be put off by their appearance. It is empty. The door has a three cleverly disguised peepholes involving a series of fine, crystal lenses. It can only be noticed by characters that specifically state they are investigating the door and even then only if successful on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

## TREASURE

If the characters find the peephole, the lenses are worth a total of 50 gp.

## D6. THE "WAITING" AREA

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This area is under the effect of a guards and wards spell. Maram il Vass, the nycaloth and Maram's human servant are all immune to its effects. As a result, the door is *arcane locked* and anyone entering the room is subjected to a suggestion spell. ("*Please be seated. Someone will be with you shortly.*") A character succeeding on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw may ignore the suggestion freely, but the door remains disappointingly locked.

The door may be unlocked with thieves' tools and a successful DC 25 Dexterity or bashed in with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. Otherwise, Maram carries a small silver key—the sole key to the door.

## D7. CLOSET

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This small room has a number of items waiting for Maram's decision as to their disposition. Most of them are trivial knick-knacks, but two things stand out: two bolts of amazingly exquisite cloth that seems to change color, pattern, and texture depending on the angle it's being viewed from; and a small box.

The box labeled "*Markoth*" is plain and nondescript; about six inches on a side, and contains six tiny vials filled with a clear, bubbling fluid and stoppered with a cork which has been sealed with wax. The potion doesn't radiate magic and seems to be little more than a vial of sparkling water. No attempt to discern its purpose reveals any information. Drinking the contents of a vial provides no effect, at least none that is apparent.

## TREASURE

The bolts of cloth are extraplanar; imported from some far off realm. The bolts of cloth are worth a total of 400 gp. The vial cannot be sold, but may be kept by one of the characters if they so choose.

## D8. PANTRY

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The door to this room is *arcane locked*. Opening the door requires a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 25 Dexterity check or a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. It can otherwise only be opened by the silver key that Maram and his human servant possesses. If the characters negotiated Xaven's release, he opens the door for the characters.

Inside this room is a series of shelves with what appears to be empty bottles, vials, and casks; as well as boxes, crates and barrels—all of which are similarly empty.

The stairs lead down to the Hanging Gardens (Part 4).

## D9. ARBORETUM

Inside the great dome a veritable paradise opens up. Several lush trees stand in well-tended plots around a sparkling pool, nearly twenty feet wide, filled with calm clear waters. At the apex of the dome, far above, a large white sphere bathes the entire area in light nearly identical to sunlight. A small pond full of unusual fish lies next to a table with a single chair--shaded from the light by the trees above.

Maram uses this as a place to treat with surface dwellers. Aside from the brilliantly-colorful insects and birds that flutter and dart about, the room is otherwise empty.

## D10. A GLIMPSE INTO KHALAS

The door to this area is hot, but not unbearably so. Opening it reveals a blasted, landscape of dust, smoke, and flame. Beyond the door, the room seems to extend for eternity, but in the distance four mountains can be seen, each one taller than the one before it.

This is Khalas, the first and most hospitable layer of Gehenna; Maram's home plane. Upon entering the room, the pull of gravity shifts at an approximate 45-degree angle, so it feels as if the characters are walking up (or down) the side of a vast mountain. Immense waterfalls can be seen in the distance, but no matter how long the characters walk, they never seem to get any closer.

### GEHENNA

The four layers of Gehenna take the form of four, steep mountains: Khalas, Chamada, Mungoth, and Krangath. Those unfortunate enough to fall often tumble and roll for miles. It is also the home of the yugoloths, though demons and devils can be found here as well.

Unbeknownst to the characters, the interior of the room is simply an illusion. They can walk for hours upon hours and encounter nothing.

### XP AWARD

If the characters enter this room and spend a half hour or more exploring Gehenna (at least Maram's illusory rendition of it), award each character 1,000 XP.

## D11. MARAM'S QUARTERS

The door behind Maram's desk in D4 leads to this room. Read:

The door opens into a finely appointed stateroom replete with two large cabinets, a comfortable-looking bed, a couple bureaux, and other furniture.

If the characters attacked Maram, he is here (unless he was slain in D4). By the time the characters arrive, he has summoned a **nycaloth** to assist him. The nycaloth is in the corner; having already cast *invisibility* on himself, and refreshes it as long as necessary. Maram has since cast *alter self* to make himself look like the human servant that had waited on the characters earlier, in D4. Maram (in his human guise) is standing beside a pantry holding a tray when the characters enter the room.

Maram attacks only if the characters attack him first. Otherwise, he lets the characters pilfer the room without protest; he'd much rather the characters make off with his treasures here than be sent back to Gehenna.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace Maram il Vass with an arcanaloth and replace the nycaloth with two mezoloths which enter the room
- **Weak party:** Replace Maram il Vass with a arcanaloth.
- **Strong party:** Add an arcanaloth. The arcanaloth has no 8th or 7th level spell slots available.
- **Very strong party:** Add an ultroloth.



## TREASURE

Maram il Vass keeps a small fortune's worth of treasure in this chamber hidden in a secret false bottom of one of the cabinets. Any character inspecting the interior of the cabinets detects the secret compartment on a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation).

Inside he keeps a golden necklace set with rubies and sapphires, a carved ivory statuette of a drow woman, a platinum chalice set with small emeralds, a silver bracelet inlaid with pearls, and a solid gold casting of a bird—each worth 250 gp for a total value of 1250 gp.

In addition to the valuable jewelry, Maram il Vass has stashed away a small cache of potions and scrolls. In a finely crafted wooden box in the same couch are resting six bottles - four *potions of superior healing*, a *potion of invulnerability*, and a *potion of heroism*. A leather-bound scroll case contains the following spell scrolls: *stoneskin*, *cone of cold*, *globe of invulnerability*, and *true seeing*.

A small (unlocked) lockbox by the second bed holds Gabber Forth's spellbook. It consists of sheets of engraved stone and is bound in thick, grey leather. It contains the following spells:

1st level: *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*  
2nd level: *mirror image*, *Maximillian's earthen grasp\**, *see invisibility*  
3rd level: *counterspell*, *slow*, *fireball*  
4th level: *greater invisibility*, *polymorph*, *stoneskin*  
5th level: *cone of cold*, *fire shield*, *immolation\**,  
6th level: *circle of death*, *globe of invulnerability*  
7th level: *forcecage*  
8th level: *incendiary cloud*  
9th level: *time stop*

Maram himself carries a small silver key that unlocks the doors to D6, D8, and D11.

## PART 4: HANGING GARDENS

There are secrets hidden beneath the halls of the Den of the Whispered Word in a cavern known as the Hanging Gardens. Maram il Vass sends new "acquisitions" here to the care of a trio of hags and chasme demons before deciding their ultimate disposition. Xaven Tanor'this is in this cave along with a handful of others.

### HIDDEN HORRORS

The only way into the Hanging Gardens is down the staircase in D8, above.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

**Ceilings** The Hanging Gardens have a ceiling height of 100 feet.

**Floor.** The cave floor of the area is uneven and is considered difficult terrain.

**Light.** Large patches of luminous fungus shed dim light in the entire cave.

**Sound.** The droning of the chasme demons in the ceiling and walls creates a disturbing, insect-like buzz.

**Chains.** The chains strung from floor to ceiling are heavy iron. Each link has AC 18, 30 hp, resistance to non-magical weapons, and vulnerability to acid. Climbing a chain requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, and each chain is about 15 feet from the next one. Each of the chains that holds a victim has a corresponding pull chain on the ground with enough slack to lower a victim to the ground. Doing so requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, with the victim dropping 1d6x10 feet on a failure.

### HI. ADMITTANCE

Read:

The staircase descends below the floor of the palace, turning rocky and uneven the further down you go. The rock walls give way to a huge cavern lit by patches of luminescent fungus clinging to the ceiling, bathing the cave in eerie pale illumination that resembles moonlight. From floor to ceiling the area is about one hundred feet tall and you see large heavy chains running that length. Cages hang from the chains, most occupied by a single occupant. An unusual buzzing sound echoes throughout the area.

These are the Hanging Gardens, the place no slave in the Den of the Whispered Word wants to find themselves in.

On the ground, hidden amongst stalagmites, the keepers of the Hanging Gardens keep watch over the area. They are Elsa, Ilsa, and Ulsa, a coven of three **night hags**. They consider themselves the mistresses of the Hanging Gardens and do not bargain with anyone but Maram il Vass.

#### HAG COVENS

When hags must work together, they form covens, in spite of their selfish natures. A coven is made up of hags of any type, all of whom are equals within the group. However, each of the hags continues to desire more personal power. A coven consists of three hags so that any arguments between two hags can be settled by the third. If more than three hags ever come together, as might happen if two covens come into conflict, the result is usually chaos.

**Shared Spellcasting.** While all three members of a hag coven are within 30 feet of one another, they can each cast the following spells from the wizard's spell list but must share the spell slots among themselves:

1st level (4 slots): *identify, ray of sickness*  
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, locate object*  
3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, counterspell, lightning bolt*  
4th level (3 slots): *phantasmal killer, polymorph*  
5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane, scrying*  
6th level (1 slot): *eye bite*

For casting these spells, each hag is a 12th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability. The spell save DC is 12 + the hag's Intelligence modifier, and the spell attack bonus is 4 + the hag's Intelligence modifier.

The droning in the air is a result of the three **chasme** demons that cling like huge flies to the ceiling. They owe loyalty only to Maram il Vass and are allowed to feed on the people hanging from the chains. They attack anyone entering unless they are accompanied by Maram il Vass.

#### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two of the chasme demons.
- **Weak party:** Remove one of the chasme demons.
- **Strong party:** Add two chasme demons.
- **Very strong party:** Add two chasme demons and one fire giant.

## THE HANGING VICTIMS

The chains in the Hanging Gardens currently hold seven victims. One of them, in the middle of the cave, is **Xaven Tanor'this**, the drow alchemist who was sold to Maram il Vass. The other victims are two dwarves and four humans. All of the prisoners are simply **commoners**.

Xaven is in a cage hanging 40 feet from the ground. The other cages hang anywhere from 10 feet to 60 feet from the ground (roll 1d6x10 to determine the height of any other cage the characters encounter).

## DEVELOPMENT

Once the coven sees the characters enter the Hanging Gardens they wait until the characters have fully entered H1 and then flee into H2; calling out for the chasme demons to deal with the intruders.

The chasmes fly to attack the characters where ever they are, hoping to catch some of them with their droning effect.

If the night hags detect what the characters are after (one of the hanging victims), they direct one of the chasmes to drop all the victims to the ground, figuring that Maram il Vass can get new ones if she needs them. The prisoners within the cages take falling damage, as is normal.

## H2. THE COVEN

This room is where the coven resides. If the characters entered without Maram accompanying them, the hags are here, lying in wait for the characters.

Each has readied an action to cast *ray of enfeeblement* at the first of the characters that enters.

The coven does what it is able to do in order to remain within 30 feet of one another. Each hag carries a *heartstone*.

## TREASURE

The night hags keep a small, moss-covered chest of treasure in the corner of the Hanging Gardens. A character searching the area that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the chest. The chest is locked (Ulsa carries the key currently) but can be picked with a DC 15 Dexterity check and a set of thieves' tools. Inside the chest are the following items: four *potions of greater healing*, one *potion of resistance*, and an ivory tube containing spell scrolls of *fire shield*, *hold monster*, and *prismatic spray*.

## WHAT IF XAVEN DIES?

There are several options available to the characters if Xaven Tanor'this doesn't make it through the Hanging Gardens alive. The characters should have access to the *raise dead* spell if the body of the drow alchemist isn't too maimed in the fighting. If all other options are exhausted, however, you can add Xaven's satchel of notes to the night hag's treasure pile. The notes contain all of the alchemist's research into removing demon taint from blood, though deciphering the coded material should require a trip back to the drow in Sporedome regardless. Solom is not be pleased that the alchemist is dead, but his notes are a suitable enough consolation for the excursion to not be a total loss.

## XAVEN'S RESCUE

Once the characters recover Xaven (alive hopefully, or dead with enough intact for a reasonable *raise dead* spell) they can escape from the Hanging Gardens. There are no other exits in the cave except for the stairs back up to the Den of the Whispered Word, which may or may not be a safe path depending on how the characters dealt with Maram il Vass.

The characters must now get Xaven back to the Solom Ned'razak and the other Szith Morcane refugees currently residing in Sporedome. If healing magic is used on Xaven to get him conscious he is confused at first but insists on getting back to Solom Ned'razak and whomever else escaped Szith Morcane.

He tells them that there is still some work to be done on the formula to purge demon taint from the blood of targets but he his research has indicated that they'll need the blood of an existing demonic creature to hone the process. Exactly what demonic creature is yet to be determined.

## EXIT THROUGH THE HOWLING PITS

If you are running this scenario as part of a timed slot the characters should begin Part 5 at about the 3 1/2 or 4 hour mark. If they are early you can have them run one or more of the Howling Pits encounters that had been skipped initially in Part 2.

The hard reality of this situation is that the dwarven and human prisoners, if freed, may perish during the excursion through the Underdark; or at least be driven mad through their trip through the Howling Pits. The characters should be made aware of this and be allowed to decide their fate accordingly.

## SPOREDOME

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Once he awakens, Xaven is quiet the entire trip to Sporedome. He eats very little and seems preoccupied with his thoughts, which focus mainly on the alchemical procedures he was working on before the giants sacked Szith Morcane. He can direct the party to Sporedome once they escape the Howling Pits.

Read or paraphrase the following once the characters arrive in Sporedome.

The tunnel opens up into a vast cavern, the ends of which are lost to shadow beyond your sight. A great fungal forest spreads out on the ground as far as you can see, with some stalks reaching heights of 20 feet and beyond. Luminous fungus provides soft light and you can see the dim waters of a large lake surrounded by the fungus. Several hundred feet to the east, tents have been erected in a hastily built camp, around which mill several dozen drow elves.

This is Sporedome, the current home of the refugee elves from Szith Morcane. The fungal forest is also resident to a large colony of myconids, though the shy creatures keep their distance from intruders. The drow and the myconid have not yet engaged in any talks and the myconid seem content to live and let live for the moment.

Xaven Tanor'this hurries the characters to the encampment where he is welcomed by several of the drow. Solom Ned'razak (DDEX3-3 *The Occupation of Szith Morcane*) steps forward, his face gaunt and his eyes harried, wearing a fresh set of finely crafted black robes trimmed with silver. He greets the alchemist with a nod and then turns his attention to the characters.

"I am Solom Ned'razak, archwizard and ruler of Szith Morcane. Thank you for recovering Xaven Tanor'this from the palace of Maram il Vass, but there is still much work to be done. Please stay and rest while I consider my options. I don't think this is over just yet."

Solom is a private drow and does not allow anyone else to assist, though he is too preoccupied with the situation to take any extreme measures to stop nosy characters. He leads Xaven to the largest tent of the encampment and they begin to talk about the alchemist's needs and next steps for developing the ritual Solom hopes will allow him to retake Szith Morcane.

## PART 4: BLOOD NEEDS

The characters have two days to spend in Sporedome before Solom Ned'razak and Xaven Tanor'this are ready for their assistance. The two drow work around the clock, sleeping in shifts, trying to finalize the ritual. They know that they need something—precisely what takes them the two days to discern.

After the two days of study, Solom and Xaven exit the tent and find the characters. Despite that they may seem to be in a safe place, the characters must still make madness checks as detailed above.

Solom Ned'razak, leader of the drow, has a determined look in his eyes as he approaches you. Behind him trails Xaven, nervous judging by the number of times he wrings his hands. "We know what must be done," Solom begins, "and we're going to need your help once again. We need the blood of a living fire giant in order to complete the ritual."

Solom has the following information to relate to the characters.

- The ritual to remove demon taint from the blood of the fire giants, or really anyone, requires the blood of a living fire giant—specifically one with the blood of a fiend coursing through its veins. Any character who participated in the events of DDEX3-3 *The Occupation of Szith Morcane* immediately recalls seeing one such fire giant. Solom has no doubt that they can be found within Maerimydra.
- If the characters did none of these things, Solom Ned'razak mentions that at least one such fire giant was involved in the sacking of his home. His spies in the city of Maerimydra have been rooted out since the fall of Szith Morcane but it's likely that any fire giants involved in the attack has since returned to Maerimydra.
- Solom provides the characters a map of Maerimydra—albeit slightly outdated.
- A frontal assault on Maerimydra would be paramount to suicide—their leader, a powerful fiendish giantess named Hledh, keeps the gates heavily guarded and locked at all times.
- In the years when Maerimydra was a drow city, Xaven worked with the archmage in the city's Shattered Tower, its center of arcane study. The archmage built a secret tunnel out of the tower to come and go beyond the sight of the Lolth-

worshipping matron mothers. Xaven (or his journal) is the only survivor of Maerimydra that knows of the secret entrance, as Kurgoth Hellspawn and the fire giants demolished the Shattered Tower when they took the city over a century ago.

- The tunnel exited into the Underdark four miles from Maerimydra, and by unlucky circumstances the fire giants built an outpost at the exit without realizing the significance of their construction. Black Ember Outpost is one of several outlying strongholds the fire giants use to maintain control over the region.
- The tunnel is found in the southern-most portion of a large pool beneath the outpost. Solom hopes that it is has not been blocked by time or the giants.

### THE PLAN

Solom Ned'razak asks the characters to undertake the journey into Maerimydra via the secret tunnel at Black Ember Outpost to find and capture a demon-blooded fire giant alive. The giant must then be brought back to Sporedome so that Xaven can complete the ritual, which they promise to share with the characters once it is complete. The strength and ferocity of the demon-blooded fire giants is great enough to threaten the entire region, including Hillsfar and the rest of the Moonsea. Solom is a master manipulator and tries to apply the right leverage to get the characters to cooperate.

Once they agree, Xaven explains that the secret tunnel into Maerimydra is located in a cave below a small underground lake, which is why the fire giants built Black Ember Outpost there.

#### ROLEPLAYING SOLOM NED'RAZAK

Solom is a powerful drow wizard who rules Szith Morcane. He uses the present tense when speaking of his home - he firmly believes the invaders will be pushed back and he hopes that the ritual is going to be the key that they need to accomplish that goal. He is ruthless and efficient in his dealings and detests dealing with non-drow, but understands circumstances have left him no choice.

**Quote:** "We are not wiped out, not yet. And if I have my way every demon-blooded pest is going to pay for what they did."

## ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

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The journey through the Underdark to Black Ember Outpost is over 100 miles. Solom knows these tunnels very well, however, and provides directions for the characters that avoid the dangerous elements of the region, including fire giant patrols. The way is not considered difficult terrain and Solom assures them that they should be able to keep a quick pace (how much they trust the drow is up to them).



# PART 5: BLACK EMBER OUTPOST

The path through the Underdark provided by Solom takes the characters right into the cavern that holds Black Ember Outpost. The tunnel is 15 feet wide and empties into a large, naturally-occurring pool beneath the outpost.

## GENERAL FEATURES

**Ceilings.** The ceiling in Black Ember Outpost is 40 feet high.

**Doors.** *The doors within the outpost are made of obsidian and incredibly heavy. Opening them requires a DC 15 Strength check.*

**Walls.** The walls of the outpost are five feet thick of heavy stone masonry.

**Light.** In the cavern outside the fungal illumination is bright enough to provide dim light. Inside the outpost torches burn in sconces to shed bright light.

**Sound.** The loud laughter and shouting of the fire giants coupled with the barking of the charnel hounds fills the air of the cave and the outpost.

**Windows.** The triangles marked on the map on the walls facing the cave are large arrowslits—5 feet wide and 10 feet tall. The giants inside can throw boulders through these windows at intruders that they see in area 1. Any creature hiding behind the arrow slit has three-quarters cover.

**Warmth.** The construction of Black Ember Outpost was completely in such a way to harness natural heat vents in the rocks. The entire structure is unusually warm.

The endless Underdark tunnel finally opens up into a huge cavern. The floor is much smoother in this cave than what you're used to, free of stalagmites and other natural formations, though a few stalactites cling stubbornly to the ceiling several hundred feet above you. In the southeastern corner a great, black fortress has been built into the wall of the cave. Natural fungal illumination shines on the polished, worked stone of the structure owing to the excellent craftsmanship. Through wide arrow slits you see firelight dancing and the sound of raucous laughter and shouting echo in the cave. A set of obsidian double doors appear to be the only true entrance into Black Ember Outpost.

The characters can see into Area 1 because of the fungal illumination.

## ALERT?

If the characters are detected by the patrol outside Black Ember Outpost, one of the fire giants lets out a great bellowing cry that echoes through the cave. The giants inside the outpost react by gathering around the windows, preparing for an assault by readying boulders to be hurled at incoming invaders.

If the characters are inside the outpost and are noticed, a demon-blooded fire giant's cry is enough to get everyone's attention. The resting occupants in Area 3 do not take the time to don their armor, instead taking up weapons and rushing to the source of the commotion.

The fire giant in the kennel (Area 5) takes two rounds to release two of the charnel hounds, leading them out afterwards towards the source of the commotion.

## 01. TRAINING FIELD

The great cavern that opens in front of Black Ember Outpost is used occasionally by the fire giants as a training field. However, the demon blood coursing through their blood keeps them from focusing on any one task for too long so training is irregular at best.

The field is patrolled by a **fire giant**, two **ogres** and two **hell hounds**.

The patrol walks all the way around the massive cavern every two hours. At the furthest point from the doors to the outpost they are still visible to the giants inside, but the patrol can be lured into one of the larger tunnels by strange sounds (the fire giants crave battle and bloodshed).

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak and weak party:** Remove two hell hounds.
- **Very strong party:** Add two ogres.

## O2. GREAT HALL

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Inside the outpost is a titanic chamber nearly one hundred feet wide and long. In the center sits a great roasting pit filled with smoldering coals. An uncomfortable warmth suffuses the inside of Black Ember Outpost.

At any given time this area is occupied by two **ogres** cooking meat in the fire pit for two **fire giants** who are passing a large barrel between themselves. Three empty barrels lay next to the giants. The fire giants are obviously intoxicated and any attack rolls made by the fire giants are made with disadvantage. Likewise, any attack made against the fire giants are made with advantage

## O3. SLEEPING QUARTERS

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This large chamber is where the denizens of Black Ember sleep. They do so in shifts, so at any given moment there a **fire giant** and two **ogres** resting here. Unless the alarm has been raised, the fire giants here are not wearing armor and have an AC of 9.

The ogres sleep in a bunk bed in the southeast corner while the giant sleeps in the bay immediately to the left of the door on a single bed.

## O4. ARMORY

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This chamber contains the spare weapons and armor for the outpost in great racks on the east and north walls. Titanic suits of black plate mail for both giant and ogre stand alongside spare greatswords, shields, and javelins. Two **fire giants** keep watch along the windows, arguing amongst themselves most of the time.

The fire giants in the armory have access to a number of preloaded heavy crossbows, and fire them on visible enemies in O1 if an alarm is raised. Add the following to their stat block in the Appendix:

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d10 - 1) piercing damage.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace a fire giant with an ogre.
- **Weak party:** Replace a fire giant with three ogres.
- **Strong party:** Add one ogre.
- **Very strong party:** Add three ogres.

## O5. KENNELS

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The smell of burning hair fills this room, which has large cages set against the south and east walls. The cages hold five **hellhounds** being watched over by a **fire giant**. The cages are all closed and kept shut by a heavy iron chain that runs between all of them. An individual cage can be opened as an action or the chain can be pulled to release all of the cages which uses only two actions.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak and weak party:** Remove two hell hounds.
- **Very strong party:** Add one fire giant.

## O6. STORAGE

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Large crates and barrels line the floor and walls of this room, filled with dry foodstuffs, sluggish black ale, and other perishable food items for the outpost. A lever in the center of the room can be pulled to open the five-foot-wide **trap door** in the floor. This room hangs over the pool of shadowy water 30 below. Ogres in the outpost are given the task of fetching water throughout the day by filling buckets (a stack of empty buckets sits next to the lever).

Black Ember Outpost was built to control access to the naturally fed pool but the fire giants never thought to have a need to monitor it directly. The trap door in the floor of this room is the only access in the outpost to the water.

### TREASURE

One of the ogres is keeping a small chest of coins and potions in the corner of the storage room, which so far has gone unnoticed by the giants. Anyone looking around can make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to catch a glimpse of the chest hidden beneath a ragged blanket. The chest is unlocked and contains a *potion of flying*, a *potion of fire giant strength*, and coral gemstones worth a total of 400 gp.

## O7. SHADOWED POOL

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Dark, murky water fills the back end of the cave fed by an underwater stream connecting to the larger Lake of Shadows. Black Ember Outpost was built to deliberately control the water supply in this region, though the fire giants had no idea a secret tunnel existed linking the outpost to Maerimydra (see Area 8).

There is no light in this cave but the occasional blind albino cave fish disturbs the surface, enough to cause regular ripples in the surface. The water is warm and only about 5 feet deep. The characters need to provide their own light in the cave and below the surface of the pool, which is just mundane water—darker than normal, perhaps, but possessing no unusual qualities.

## O8. SECRET TUNNEL ENTRANCE

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In the southern area of the pool, discoverable with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check and a light source, a five-foot-wide tunnel opens at the bottom of the pool at a depth of 5 feet. The tunnel is filled with water for about forty feet before it ascends and opens up into a small cave, the waters of the pool lapping gently at the rocks.

The dry tunnel only goes one way - southeast towards Maerimydra. This is the Path of Shadows built by the archmage of the drow city long ago.

## PART 6: MAERIMYDRA

The tunnel from Black Ember Outpost to the ruins of the Shattered Tower in Maerimydra is four miles long and considered difficult terrain.

### THE CITY ON FIRE

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Once the characters reach the city, however, they still have the daunting task of finding and capturing a demon-blooded fire giant alive in order to fulfill the requirements of the drow ritual.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

Maerimydra and the chamber that contains it have the following general features:

**Ceiling.** The cavern that holds Maerimydra is 600 feet tall at its highest point (between the Six-Fingered Courtyard and Castle Maerimydra).

**Smoke.** Anything above 250 feet over the city is enveloped in the ever-present layer of smoke. Creatures in the smoke layer are lightly obscured but must succeed on DC 16 Constitution saving throws every minute or inhale smoke and become incapacitated for 1 round from coughing. The coughing also draws the attention of the vrocks that fly through the air (see area 0 for details).

**Smells.** The heavy scent of charcoal hangs in the air.

**Light.** Due to the numerous burning braziers Maerimydra is lit at all hours in dim light.

**Plateaus.** The plateaus that separate Maerimydra into sections are 100 feet high. The grand stairs marked on the map between each plateau are 100 feet wide and offer no places to hide. Climbing the sides of a plateau requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Residents of Maerimydra see a climber unless the climber can beat the passive Perception score with a Dexterity (Stealth) check. The passive Perception score is listed in the area description.

#### A DANGEROUS PLACE

Maerimydra is a city fully controlled by demonic, evil forces bent on bloodshed and conquest. Players should understand that their goal is not to wipe out the entire city, as such an attempt at this point would be foolhardy at best. A lot of the encounters in Maerimydra are against tough combatants, but quick thinking and silver tongues should go a long way towards avoiding having to fight every evil creature the characters come across. Throw in a few scenes of random carnage if you must to remind the characters that they are in an epicenter of evil in the Underdark if they don't seem to be getting the hint.

For the past half mile or so the tunnel has been growing warmer as if you were drawing nearer to a smoldering fire. The end is partially blocked by rubble but seeping through the cracks are flickering orange lights and the sounds of shouting, talking, and the ringing of steel.

Removing the rubble only takes a few minutes, revealing the former drow metropolis of Maerimydra. As predicted the tunnel opens on the north side amidst rocks and ruins which shelter you from view. Beyond that sprawls a city of fire and ash nestled in a titanic cavern. Huge buildings dominate the center floor, creating alleys large enough for the black-skinned fire giants to walk about comfortably. The western section of the city holds a raised plateau upon which squats a courtyard surrounded by black spires bearing a prominent symbol above an ebon archway - a six-fingered hand. On the eastern side looms a castle on another plateau whose two towers stretch from floor to ceiling far above. The southern end of the residential district in the center is dominated by a massive coliseum from which huge crimson banners hang on the outside. The southeastern section of the city drops into a lower section beyond your sight. All over Maerimydra huge blazing fires burn in wide iron braziers creating a thick area of smoke over the entire city, and everywhere you look you see fierce-eyed fire giants, armored ogres, slaving hell hounds, drow elves in chains, and demons of all ilk.

Somewhere in this city on fire the characters must find a fire giant with demon's blood and return to Sporedome with the target alive. The task is not an easy one.

### IMPIN' AIN'T EASY

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After the characters have a moment to take in the sights of Maerimydra they hear a commotion nearby.

You hear it before you see it. Rounding the corner, you come across an unusual sight. Four large bipedal creatures, are standing over a smaller one. Occasionally, one of the larger creatures--ogres by the look of them--throws a kick or a punch at the smaller.

One of the ogres manages to get a hold on the little guy and tosses it into the air, gripping it by a barbed tail and begins swinging it around its head like a lasso.

The creature cries out in pain and scrabbles to keep hold of the satchel that, until now, was slung over its shoulder. The satchel is blood-stained and the flap secured shut by an over-sized button.

Pipyap (DDEX1-8 *Tales Trees Tell*) is being harassed by four **ogres** over something the imp the found in the rubble. The ogres are too busy pushing around Pipyap to notice the characters (their passive Perception is 10 for this encounter).

Assuming the characters assist Pipyap and rescue him from the ogres, Pipyap falls over himself in gratitude at the feet of the characters. He presents them with the thing that he found in the rubble—a slightly-grubby *ioun stone of regeneration*. He then begs to accompany the party, at least out of Maerimydra but he wants to go as far as Sporedome. He would forever owe a debt of gratitude to the characters if they were to keep him safe during the perilous journey through the Underdark.

If any of the characters encountered him in DDEX1-8, he remembers them and waves happily. "*What in the Nine Hells are you doing here?*"

#### ROLEPLAYING PIPYAP

Pipyap is a friendly, albeit ill-willed imp. He is talkative but has a plainly visible mean-streak. While he is not above violence and general meanness, he is honest and forthright in his dealings. Pipyap absolutely loves being on the Material Plane and has no desire to return to the Nine Hells. Because of this, he is very, very careful to avoid getting himself killed.

**Quote:** "Oi. ::chewing noise:: You gonna eat that?"

If asked about the city, Pipyap is happy to chat and provide information if it means the characters won't kill him. He knows the following bits of information.

- Demonic fire giants rule the city.
- The ruler of Maerimydra is Hledh, a huge fire giant queen. She lives in the big castle on the eastern side of the city. "*If you're smart, like me, you'll stay away from there.*"
- Non-fiends and non-giants are considered slaves and have no rights in the city. He is convinced that the pecking order in Maerimydra, from top to bottom, is demons, giants, ogres, rothé, devils, slaves, and then Pipyap. "*Dumb leading the dumb, is what I say.*"
- Pipyap knows of two fire giants with fiendish blood in the city. One of them is in charge of security at the Coliseum and the other manages the Six-Fingered Courtyard. "*They're both jerks.*"
- Great gladiatorial fights happen in the Coliseum all the time. "*Oh, boy. What a hoot that was.*"
- The Six-Fingered Courtyard is where a lot of demons and giants go to worship some demon lord. "*Meh. They all look the same to me.*"

#### DEVELOPMENTS

Pipyap doesn't accompany the characters as he would no doubt be subject to a life of slavery, but he is willing to wait in the rubble of the Shattered Tower and promises to let the characters know if he has been caught ("*I'm helpful like that!*"). He tells them that the giants and demons leave this area alone which is why Pipyap decided to live here (he points proudly to a small nearby cave). If the characters save Pipyap and treat him with a modicum of respect, they receive the story reward "**A Deal with a Devil**".

If asked, Pipyap abjectly refuses to serve as a familiar. He is still pretty broken up about the death of Halvin, his last master. He does, however, allow any characters that are also warlocks swear fealty to him in exchange for "*slightly impressive power.*" A fiend-pact warlock who received the story reward, above, may choose Pipyap as their patron. This has no effect on the character's abilities.

#### TREASURE

Pipyap has a *ioun stone of regeneration* and gives it to the characters if they treat him well enough. Alternatively, if they slay the imp, the *ioun stone* is found gripped in his tiny, clawed hand. Inside the satchel are a handful of crude drawings of a human man in black and purple robes, a tin cup, a tiny folding-knife, and a kaleidoscope of various kinds of raw meat wrapped in oilcloth. The drawings in the pictures are labeled "Halvin" in untidy, childish scrawl, and are blurred by what appears to be drops of water.

#### MOVING AROUND MAERIMYDRA

The fire giants and demons run the city and take what they want from anyone lesser than themselves. A group of non-fiends walking around Maerimydra attracts the wrong kind of attention unless the characters have disguised themselves or are sneaking around.

Each section of the city has two attributes:

**Passive Perception.** If the characters try to stealthily move about Maerimydra, you can have them make Dexterity (Stealth) group checks for each section of the city they cross, failure indicates that they have been detected.

**Wandering Encounter.** Each section has a list of monsters that the characters encounter if they are detected. You can also determine the structure for the encounter by choosing or rolling on the table for Random Activities below.

## RANDOM TABLES

Maerimydra is a city with many residents that they characters may encounter. You can use the first table to randomly determine what activity the residents were engaged in before running into the characters.

You can use the second table to randomly generate a fire giant name. You can roll a first syllable and second syllable or any combination to generate a first name and then combine rolls from the name part 1 and name part 2 columns to generate a family name. These tables are there for you to quickly flesh out an encounter based on the actions of the characters. Some of these are rather graphic, so consider the players before using them.

### RANDOM MAERIMYDRA ACTIVITY

#### 1d8 Random Maerimydra Activity

- | 1d8 | Random Maerimydra Activity                                                                                                                        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Gambling in a game of skullies, where polished skulls are tossed onto a flat surface with bets on which direction the eyes are facing.            |
| 2   | Torturing a group of drow slaves by seeing how long they can keep their hands in the fire before the flesh melts (a game called "showing bones"). |
| 3   | Roasting the flesh of some creature over one of the many braziers that burn in the city.                                                          |
| 4   | Arguing over won and lost bets to the point of bloodshed over a recent match in the Bloody Coliseum.                                              |
| 5   | Drinking thick black sludge from the hollowed out skulls of drow, toasting to victory in Szith Morcane.                                           |
| 6   | Heating up a large iron brand to use on a recently acquired batch of drow slaves.                                                                 |
| 7   | Entertaining a <b>hell hound</b> by tossing a huge giant bone and having the hound fetch it.                                                      |
| 8   | Leading a pack of <b>rothe</b> (Underdark cattle) to the grazing fields (area H).                                                                 |

### RANDOM FIRE GIANT NAME

1d8	First Syllable	Second Syllable	Name Part 1	Name Part 2
1	Bal	ak	Black	Axe
2	Crub	bos	Blood	Beard
3	Den	der	Coal	Blade
4	Dim	gor	Fire	Eater
5	Gak	log	Iron	Hammer
6	Maw	rag	Magma	Heart
7	Ska	rus	Red	Skin
8	Tra	tor	Smoke	Stone

### ENCOUNTERS IN MAERIMYDRA

The residents of Maerimydra hold the city under absolute control and know it. If any group of them comes upon the party they engage in combat if anything seems suspicious in the slightest - they are arrogant, brash, and eager for bloodshed. Death is not an uncommon occurrence in the city and open fighting in the streets is commonplace enough to not warrant much investigation by those nearby.

Unless otherwise noted, the chaotic frenzy that imbues the giants and demons in Maerimydra drives them to fight until dead. Hledh and Graz'zt behead cowards.

#### CAUGHT!

Characters who are not cautious can quickly find themselves overwhelmed by the forces in Maerimydra and killed or captured. If it looks like the party is going to be wiped out completely, you can have the attackers take the characters prisoner instead. Such prisoners make good fodder for the Bloody Coliseum, where the party can find themselves facing off against some force of creatures soon. While winning their freedom is beyond the scope of the adventure, they might be able to buy themselves enough time to escape.

### MA-MH. AIRBORNE

Passive Perception 13

Wandering Encounter: Four vrock

The smoke-filled air above Maerimydra can be used by characters to move about without having to worry about the giants and demons in the streets. However, the smoke makes breathing difficult and also hides the flocks of flying demons that keep to the air at all times.



## MA. NORTHERN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Passive Perception 16

Wandering Encounter: Two fire giants

The northern district of Maerimydra is filled with houses and buildings built for the fire giants. Doorways and windows are all of appropriate sizes for their residents, making you feel like a tiny stranger in a dark land. Black stone and obsidian seem to be the building materials of choice. Giants, demons, ogres, and slaves live and walk around every corner, coming and going in their own way.

Each of the houses in this residential district are sized for giants, with 40 foot high ceilings and two levels. The buildings range in size from 100 feet wide and long to twice that and more, while inside dwell numerous demon-blooded fire giants. Moving between the alleys and shadows of the houses is the safest route.

The gate leading out of Maerimydra on the northern end of the cave is guarded by eight **fire giants** at all times.

## MB. PLATEAU OF THE DARK PRINCE

Passive Perception 16

Wandering Encounter: One glabrezu and a fire giant whelp

Atop the plateau on the western end of the cavern sit a small number of broad estates for what seem like important giants of Maerimydra. Slaves are well-dressed and the general fiery chaos of the rest of the city is somewhat muted here. On the southern end of the plateau stands a courtyard with a polished obsidian floor surrounded by ebony pillars. A six-fingered hand is emblazed in crimson on each of the pillars.

When the city was under drow control over 150 years ago this plateau served as the home to the most prominent and powerful houses. The temple of Lolth was torn down and most of the great houses torched when Kurgoth Hellspawn took the city, and since then it has become home to powerful fire giants who have pleased Hledh and her master, Graz'zt the Dark Prince.

Characters can make DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) checks to identify the six-fingered hand symbol as belonging to Graz'zt.

## THE SIX-FINGERED COURTYARD

This wide open area is where the devout of Maerimydra come to pay their respects to Graz'zt. The obsidian floor is polished smooth as glass, and at every six hours the most faithful enter the courtyard to light the six ebony pillars in exultation to the Dark Prince.

This group consists of four **cambions** and Brandyr—a particularly powerful **fiendborne fire giant**—who leads the way dressed in black robes over her armor. Brandyr—surrounded by her attending cambions—raises her hands in exultation as the cambions use their Fire Rays to light the tops of the ebony pillars one by one, which flare to life with black and green flames. The ceremony lasts for 30 minutes.

### FIENDBORNE FIRE GIANTS

These fire giants are fiendborne, infused with the blood of Hledh. Aside from making them look rather scary, their heritage renders them immune to poison and the poisoned condition. In addition to this, they gain the ability to cast *darkness* innately 1/day. They gain blindsight 60 ft. Finally, the fiendborne trait also grants them the proficiency in Abyssal and some minor cosmetic features, examples of which include:

- Leathery wings (too small to fly with)
- Horns
- Extra eyes
- Extra fingers
- A long tail

When they are not attending to the lighting of the pillars, the group spends their time in the long building south of the courtyard.

### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the cambions with a glabrezu
- **Weak party:** Replace the four cambions with two chasmes
- **Strong party:** Replace the four cambions with four chasmes
- **Very strong party:** Replace cambions with two glabrezus

### TACTICS

If combat is initiated in or around the courtyard Brandyr orders the cambions to engage the characters. The cambions use their fiendish charm ability on any spellcasters first.

The fire giant begins combat by hurling a rock at the characters before charging into melee supported by the fire rays of the cambions and spells of Brandyr. Spurred on by demonic blood and the invasion of Graz'zt sacred site they all fight until dead.

## DEVELOPMENTS

Combat in the courtyard is isolated from the rest of Maerimydra so the characters can ambush the group containing Brandyr without having to worry about a city full of reinforcements. However, the **wandering encounter** in the area does notice and comes to investigate after any combat occurs, forcing the characters into another situation.

### HOW BIG IS A FIRE GIANT?

This is an important question for a group of characters trying to carry one out of Maerimydra. Fire giants are huge creatures, but what does that really mean? For the purposes of this adventure, the demon-blooded fire giants stand 18 feet tall and weigh about 2,000 pounds. A group would need a combined Strength of 65 to drag an unconscious fire giant or a Strength of 130 to carry one.

## TREASURE

Brandyr has a small bag at her side that contains a handful of peridot gemstones worth 5,000 gp.

## MC. CASTLE MAERIMYDRA

Passive Perception 16

Wandering Encounter: Two nalfeshnee and two fire giant whelps

The most impressive structure in all of Maerimydra is the castle that broods dark and mysterious atop a tall plateau on the cave's eastern edge. Two massive towers rise to connect the castle's grounds with the ceiling with several broad bridges connecting the two. The staircase leading into the massive structure is flanked by ten-foot-tall iron braziers made in the form of leering demonic faces.

Hledh, descended from Graz'zt himself, rules Maerimydra from this imposing castle. The site is heavily guarded and protected by magical wards. Nalfeshnee patrols make sure no one who doesn't belong enters the castle.

Castle Maerimydra is not detailed in this adventure.

## MD. SOUTHERN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Passive Perception 16

Wandering Encounter: A fire giant and four hell hounds

The southern residential district of Maerimydra sprawls around a wide stone column that reaches up to the ceiling. Packs of charnel hounds and their lesser kin run in the alleys between the titanic black stone houses. The cheering and shouts from the nearby Coliseum seem to fuel the residents of this district with a reckless rage based on the bodies in the streets and blood on the walls.

The houses here are much the same as the ones in the northern district (area A), but the frenzy of the Coliseum does infuse many of the residents with an unquenched blood rage. Any Charisma checks are made with disadvantage in this district, turning most encounters violent quickly.

The gate on the western side of the cave is guarded by eight **fire giants** at all times.

## ME. BLOODY COLISEUM

Passive Perception 15

Wandering Encounter: Four ogres and two barlgura

The sounds of violent combat echo from within this enormous oval building and the metallic smell of blood hangs heavy in the air. Clangs of steel on steel, bone-crunching bones, and shouts of the dying and victorious rise only to be drowned out by the stomping and crying of the enormous crowd inside. The walls of the coliseum are 60 feet tall, dotted with numerous windows.

The drow that built Maerimydra were proud of their coliseum, but since Hledh and the fire giants took over it has become a site of bloody nightmares and grotesque violence. Matches occur every hour of the day to satiate the bloodlust of the city's residents.

You can use the table below to randomly determine a matchup occurring at the Bloody Coliseum. Simply roll once for the first opponent and once for the second opponent. The matches are almost never fair and usually involve one side dominating the other, but occasionally an even match occurs.

## RANDOM BLOODY COLISEUM MATCHUP

1d8	Opponent 1	Opponent 2
1	One fire giant	Four manticores
2	One drow	Two nightmares
3	Four drow	Four fire giants
4	One barlgura	Four gladiators
5	One glabrezu	Three fire elementals
6	One ogre	Six ogres
7	One gladiator	Four hell hounds
8	Four gladiators	One nalfeshnee

### INSIDE THE BLOODY COLISEUM

The chief of security in the Bloody Coliseum is Veperyd, a male **fiendborne fire giant** who is surrounded at all times by his retinue of personal bodyguards (four **barlgura**). A proud and haughty giant, Veperyd enjoys a position of power in the city and makes sure that no unauthorized fighting occurs inside the coliseum. He spends most of his time in the stands patrolling with his bodyguards.

#### FIENDBORNE FIRE GIANTS

These fire giants are fiendborne, infused with the blood of Hledh. Aside from making them look rather scary, this power renders them immune to poison and the poisoned condition. In addition to this, they gain the ability to cast *darkness* innately 1/day. Finally, the fiendborne trait also grants them the proficiency in Abyssal and some minor cosmetic features, examples of which include:

- Leathery wings (too small to fly with)
- Horns
- Extra eyes
- Extra fingers
- A long tail

Inside the Bloody Coliseum opens into a large public gallery beneath the stands with three grand staircases leading up to the seating area. A 20-foot-tall iron statue of Kurgoth Hellspawn stands in the middle of the area, positioned so that it is gazing down with angry eyes upon anyone entering. Giants, demons, and ogres argue over bets won and lost on recent matches and a large board is set against the wall that contains a listing of the recently completed matches and upcoming ones. Numerous barlgura demons maintain the board, climbing up and down it to change lineups and to mark results.

The stands are open to the smoky air and give a great view of the arena, which is filled with blood-soaked sand from all of the matches that have occurred. The Bloody Coliseum is the most popular venue in Maerimydra and every match is attended by over one hundred giants and demons.

#### ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the barlguras with a fire giant
- **Weak party:** Replace barlguras with two chasmes
- **Strong party:** Replace barlguras with chasmes
- **Very strong party:** Replace barlguras with two fire giants

#### TACTICS

Veperyd and his bodyguards can be lured into one of the antechambers of the Bloody Coliseum with a convincing enough story (DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check).

#### DEVELOPMENTS

Initiating combat with Veperyd in the stands draws the attention of a nearby group of watchers consisting of four **cambions**. While not loyal at all to Veperyd, this group is simply caught up in the bloodlust of the match and rush headlong into combat. Within a minute the stands are filled with bloodshed as giants and demons fight one another in a massive carnage.

Getting the Veperyd out of the coliseum without being noticed is going to be much more difficult.

#### TREASURE

Veperyd keeps a small bag of gemstones at his side to help cover bets and settle issues if things get out of hand in the Bloody Coliseum. He currently has 10 aquamarine gemstones worth a total of 5,000 gp.

## MF. SLAVE DISTRICT

Passive Perception 16

Wandering Encounter: Three fire giant whelps

Below the main level of Maerimydra squats what must be the slave district. Tents and squalid houses lean together in a sprawling clump north and east of a wide natural rock pillar. Well-armored ogres keep watch on the various slaves, most of which are drow.

Turning the corner in a dark alley, a human in ragged clothes slams into you. Skidding to a halt behind her are three young fire giants.

"Well, well", one of them says, "What have we here?"

This area is where the slaves of Maerimydra live out their lives when they are not being actively owned. Ownership of a slave in the city is done by branding, and all slaves know that the punishment for hiding from one's master is flaying so most slaves come when sought after.

The slave residents of the district are apathetic to the characters, believing them to be just more property to be owned by the giants and demons of Maerimydra. The scope of saving these slaves is beyond the length of this adventure.

## MG. LAKE OF BLOOD

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Passive Perception 12

Wandering Encounter: Six ogres

Occupying nearly half of the lowest portion of Maerimydra is a great natural lake filled with blood-red waters. Herds of Underdark cattle graze on massive fields of mushrooms surrounding the lake.

The waters have been blood red since drow occupied Maerimydra. No one knows why the waters are tinged as they are but it is otherwise normal water. Deep rothé graze in great herds around the lake, providing nourishment for the city's residents when they grow tired of eating slaves.

The gate in the southeastern corner of the grazing field is guarded at all times by eight **fire giants**.

## MH. SECONDARY GRAZING FIELD

---

Passive Perception 12

Wandering Encounter: Three ogres

This area contains a shallow pool of reddish water (similar to the Lake of Blood but less pronounced) around which a herd of rothé (Underdark livestock) graze. They are watched over by three bored **ogres**. The ogres watch over the flock in 10 hour shifts, between which no one comes to visit. At shift change the ogres lead half of the herd to the southern residential district (area D) to sell off the rothé while the next two ogres come in with additional cattle to make up the loss from other areas of the city.

## GETTING OUT

Once the characters have their prize, they must get out of Maerimydra. The quietest way is back the way they came into the city, through the Path of Shadows in the ruins of the Shattered Tower.

## JOURNEY TO SPOREDOME

---

The journey back to Sporedome with the live fire giant can be as involved as you want it to be. If the characters have had luck and success in the adventure up to this point or if there is extra time in the slot, you can have them encounter something along the journey back. Perhaps Black Ember Outpost received some reinforcements since they left, or they run into a group of cloaklers in a tunnel. If time is in abundance and the characters have had an easy time thus far, you can use one or more of the encounters from **Part 2: The Howling Pits** if the characters skipped over them as well, adapting them to fit in this section of the Underdark. Perhaps the tunnel that the characters took to reach Black Ember Outpost becomes blocked by a natural collapse, forcing them to find their way via the well-trafficked main routes in this section of the Underdark.

The fire giant (Brandyr or Veperyd, whichever they captured) does its best to escape during the journey. Transporting the target may be the most difficult part of the journey, as the giant is huge, heavy, and resistant to magic. The general rule here is to allow the characters to devise a means by which to transport the giant; they must rely on their own ingenuity.

Alternately, if the characters had a particularly difficult time in escaping from Maerimydra, a band of pursuers can be sent to re-capture the fire giant. Both Brandyr and Veperyd are deeply involved in the inner workings of the city (Brandyr in the efforts to maintain Graz'zt as the true power and Veperyd in maintaining security at the Bloody Coliseum). A strike team of fire giants, barlgura, and a glabrezu could be sent out following the characters to retrieve the fiendborne fire giant or to at least see that it is killed rather than captured alive.

## CONCLUSION

Once the characters return to Sporedome with the living fiendborne fire giant, Xaven and Solom rush out to greet them. Xaven and a group of drow assistants take possession of the subject, careful to make sure it doesn't escape, and moves the giant into a nearby tent to begin experimentation.

Solom thanks the characters with little joy in his voice. Murssvayas reveals himself as well to offer a little bit more gratitude for the work the party completed—it was no easy task to capture a fiendborne fire giant alive in a city full of demons and danger.

The work to complete the ritual takes Xaven and his team a tenday to complete, during which the characters are asked to leave the drow encampment in Sporedome and return to Hillsfar. Solom assures the characters that he shall remain in touch via Murssvayas regarding their progress, and he does deliver the ritual to the characters once it is complete.

If any characters insist on remaining in Sporedome to assist or otherwise oversee Solom's work, they may spend 10 downtime days, at the end of which, they witness Solom's success firsthand.

## REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

## EXPERIENCE

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Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

### COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Bargura	1,800
Roper	1,800
Chasme	2,600
Cloaker	3,900
Fire giant	5,000
Glabrezu	5,000
Hezrou	3,900
Mage	2,300
Shield guardian	2,900
Clay golem	5,000
Stone golem	5,900
Gabber Forth	8,400
Mezolith	1,800
Nycaloth	5,000
Arcanaloth	8,400
Maram il Vass, ultraloth	10,000
Night hag (coven)	2,900
Ogre	450
Hell hound	700
Cambion	1,800
Vrock	2,300
Fiendborne fire giant	5,000
Nalfeshnee	10,000

### NONCOMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per character
Avoiding the pits	1,000
Resisting the spores	1,000
Crossing the river unharmed	1,000
Staving off madness	1,000
Navigating the Howling Pits	1,000
Peacefully enter the den	1,000
Negotiate Xaven's release	3,000
Behold Gehenna's beauty	1,000

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **17,250 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **23,000 experience points**.

## TREASURE

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This section summarizes the treasure awarded during the adventure. Each award should be divided up equally among the party members. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

**Consumable magic items** should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

**Permanent magic items** are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

### TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Howling Pits treasure	1800
Gabber Forth's components	1400
Crystal peephole lenses	50
2 tapestries	1000
Bolts of exotic cloth	400
Maram's hidden treasure	1250
10 coral gemstones	400
10 peridot gemstones	5000
10 aquamarine gemstones	5000

### IOUN STONE OF REGENERATION

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

This *ioun stone* is a pearly white spindle that orbits around your head when activated. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## GABBER FORTH'S SPELLBOOK

This spellbook consists of sheets of engraved stone and is bound in thick, grey leather. It contains the following spells:

- 1st level: *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*  
2nd level: *mirror image, Maximillian's earthen grasp\**, *see invisibility*  
3rd level: *counterspell, slow, fireball*  
4th level: *greater invisibility, polymorph, stoneskin*  
5th level: *cone of cold, fire shield, immolation\**,  
6th level: *circle of death, globe of invulnerability*  
7th level: *forcecage*  
8th level: *incendiary cloud*  
9th level: *time stop*

## POTION OF FIRE GIANT STRENGTH

*Potion, rare*

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master Basic Rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## POTION OF FLYING

*Potion, very rare*

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master Basic Rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## POTION OF GREATER HEALING

*Potion, uncommon*

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master Basic Rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## POTION OF SUPERIOR HEALING

*Potion, rare*

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master Basic Rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## SPELL SCROLLS

*Scroll, varies*

The spell scrolls available in this adventure are listed below along with their rarity. Each spell scroll contains a single spell. A description of spell scrolls can be found in the Dungeon Master Basic Rules or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Spell Scroll	Rarity
<i>Cone of cold</i>	Rare
<i>Fire shield</i>	Rare
<i>Globe of invulnerability</i>	Very rare
<i>Hold monster</i>	Rare
<i>Prismatic spray</i>	Very rare
<i>Stoneskin</i>	Rare
<i>True seeing</i>	Very rare

## PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

## FAVORS AND ENMITY

The following favor is available during the course of this adventure.

**A Deal with a Devil.** You have rescued the imp Pipypap in the giant-controlled city of Maerimydra. Somehow the pudgy fiend finds a way of knowing things that are happening in places he shouldn't be near. Maybe it's his unusual affection for the Material Plane? In exchange for your bravery, he made an offer that you just might be able to refuse.

## RENOWN

**All faction members** earn **one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

## DOWNTIME

Each character receives **10 downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

## DM REWARDS

You receive **600 XP**, **300 gp**, and **10 downtime days** for running this session.

# APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

## COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

---

## ACTIONS

**Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

## BARLGURA

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 68 (8d10 + 24)  
**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Con +6  
**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +5  
**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning  
**Damage Immunities** poison  
**Condition Immunities** poisoned  
**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15  
**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.  
**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The barlgura's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). The barlgura can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day each: *entangle*, *phantasmal force*  
2/day each: *disguise self*, *invisibility* (self only)

**Reckless.** At the start of its turn, the barlgura can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

**Running Leap.** The barlgura's long jump is up to 40 feet and its high jump is up to 20 feet when it has a running start.

---

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The barlgura makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its fists.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

## ROPER

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 93 (11d10 + 33)  
**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +5  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the roper remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal cave formation, such as a stalagmite.

**Grasping Tendrils.** The roper can have up to six tendrils at a time. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 20; 10 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the roper, which can extrude a replacement tendril on its next turn. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check against it.

**Spider Climb.** The roper can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

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## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The roper makes four attacks with its tendrils, uses Reel, and makes one attack with its bite.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Tendril.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and the roper can't use the same tendril on another target.

**Reel.** The roper pulls each creature grappled by it up to 25 feet straight toward it.

## CHASME

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 84 (13d10 + 13)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Wis +5

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Drone.** The chasme produces a horrid droning sound to which demons are immune. Any other creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the chasme must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 10 minutes. A creature that can't hear the drone automatically succeeds on the save. The effect on the creature ends if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to splash it with holy water. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, it is immune to the drone for the next 24 hours.

**Magic Resistance.** The chasme has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Spider Climb.** The chasme can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

---

### ACTIONS

**Proboscis.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 24 (7d6) necrotic damage, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. If this effect reduces a creature's hit point maximum to 0, the creature dies. This reduction to a creature's hit point maximum lasts until the creature finishes a long rest or until it is affected by a spell like *greater restoration*.

## CLOAKER

Large aberration, chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d10 + 12)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Deep Speech, Undercommon

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Damage Transfer.** While attached to a creature, the cloaker takes only half the damage dealt to it (rounded down), and that creature takes the other half.

**False Appearance.** While the cloaker remains motionless without its underside exposed, it is indistinguishable from a dark leather cloak.

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, the cloaker has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

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### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** The cloaker makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, the cloaker attaches to it. If the cloaker has advantage against the target, the cloaker attaches to the target's head, and the target is blinded and unable to breathe while the cloaker is attached. While attached, the cloaker can make this attack only against the target and has advantage on the attack roll. The cloaker can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. A creature, including the target, can take its action to detach the cloaker by succeeding on a DC 16 Strength check.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

**Moan.** Each creature within 60 feet of the cloaker that can hear its moan and that isn't an aberration must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until the end of the cloaker's next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the cloaker's moan for the next 24 hours.

**Phantasms (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The cloaker magically creates three illusory duplicates of itself if it isn't in bright light. The duplicates move with it and mimic its actions, shifting position so as to make it impossible to track which cloaker is the real one. If the cloaker is ever in an area of bright light, the duplicates disappear.

Whenever any creature targets the cloaker with an attack or a harmful spell while a duplicate remains, that creature rolls randomly to determine whether it targets the cloaker or one of the duplicates. A creature is unaffected by this magical effect if it can't see or if it relies on senses other than sight.

A duplicate has the cloaker's AC and uses its saving throws. If an attack hits a duplicate, or if a duplicate fails a saving throw against an effect that deals damage, the duplicate disappears.

## FIRE GIANT

*Huge giant, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)  
**Hit Points** 162 (13d12 + 78)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5  
**Skills** Athletics +11, Perception +6  
**Damage Immunities** fire  
**Senses** passive Perception 16  
**Languages** Giant  
**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (6d6 + 7) slashing damage.

**Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

### FIENDBORNE FIRE GIANTS

Some fire giants in this adventure are fiendborne, infused with the blood of Hledh. Aside from making them look rather scary, their heritage renders them immune to poison and the poisoned condition. In addition to this, they gain the ability to cast *darkness* innately 1/day. They gain blindsight 60 ft. Finally, the fiendborne trait also grants them the proficiency in Abyssal and some minor cosmetic features, examples of which include:

- Leathery wings (too small to fly with)
- Horns
- Extra eyes
- Extra fingers
- A long tail

## FIRE GIANT WHELP

*Huge giant, neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)  
**Hit Points** 126 (11d12 + 55)  
**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Con +8, Wis +4  
**Skills** Athletics +12, Perception +4  
**Damage Immunities** fire  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14  
**Languages** Giant, Undercommon  
**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The giant makes two longsword attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) slashing damage, or 22 (3d10 + 6) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## GLABREZU

*Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 157 (15d10 + 75)  
**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Con +9, Wis +7, Cha +7  
**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons  
**Damage Immunities** poison  
**Condition Immunities** poisoned  
**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13  
**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.  
**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The glabrezu's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16). The glabrezu can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*  
1/day each: *confusion*, *fly*, *power word stun*

**Magic Resistance.** The glabrezu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The glabrezu makes four attacks: two with its pincers and two with its fists. Alternatively, it makes two attacks with its pincers and casts one spell.

**Pincer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). The glabrezu has two pincers, each of which can grapple only one target.

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

## HEZROU

*Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (13d10 + 65)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +8, Wis +4

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The hezrou has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Stench.** Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the hezrou must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the hezrou's stench for 24 hours.

---

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hezrou makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

## MAGE

*Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** any four languages

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *Maximillian's earthen grasp*\*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

---

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

\*Found in the *Elemental Evil Adventurer's Companion*.

## CLAY GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 133 (14d10 + 56)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Acid Absorption.** Whenever the golem is subjected to acid damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the acid damage dealt.

**Berserk.** Whenever the golem starts its turn with 60 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

**Immutable Form.** The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

---

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The golem makes two slam attacks.

**Slam. Melee Weapon Attack:** +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this attack reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The reduction lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

**Haste (Recharge 5–6).** Until the end of its next turn, the golem magically gains a +2 bonus to its AC, has advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and can use its slam attack as a bonus action.

## STONE GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 178 (17d10 + 85)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Immutable Form.** The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

---

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The golem makes two slam attacks.

**Slam. Melee Weapon Attack:** +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Slow (Recharge 5–6).** The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, a target can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its turn. In addition, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. These effects last for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



## SHIELD GUARDIAN

Large construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 142 (15d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Languages** understands commands given in any language but can't speak

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Bound.** The shield guardian is magically bound to an amulet. As long as the guardian and its amulet are on the same plane of existence, the amulet's wearer can telepathically call the guardian to travel to it, and the guardian knows the distance and direction to the amulet. If the guardian is within 60 feet of the amulet's wearer, half of any damage the wearer takes (rounded up) is transferred to the guardian.

**Regeneration.** The shield guardian regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

**Spell Storing.** A spellcaster who wears the shield guardian's amulet can cause the guardian to store one spell of 4th level or lower. To do so, the wearer must cast the spell on the guardian. The spell has no effect but is stored within the guardian. When commanded to do so by the wearer or when a situation arises that was predefined by the spellcaster, the guardian casts the stored spell with any parameters set by the original caster, requiring no components. When the spell is cast or a new spell is stored, any previously stored spell is lost.

---

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The guardian makes two fist attacks.

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

---

### REACTIONS

**Shield.** When a creature makes an attack against the wearer of the guardian's amulet, the guardian grants a +2 bonus to the wearer's AC if the guardian is within 5 feet of the wearer.

## GRABBER FORTH

Medium humanoid (gnome), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 99 (18d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +6

**Skills** Arcana +13, History +13

**Damage Resistance** damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Gnomish, Infernal, Undercommon

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Gnome Cunning.** Forth has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Magic Resistance.** The archmage has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Spellcasting.** The archmage is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The archmage can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*\*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *Maximillian's earthen grasp*\*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *slow*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *polymorph*, *stoneskin*\*

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *fire shield*, *immolation*\*\*

6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slot): *forcecage*

8th level (1 slot): *incendiary cloud*

9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

\*Grabber Forth casts these spells before combat.

**Stone Camouflage.** Forth has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in rocky terrain.

---

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

\*\* Found in the *Elemental Evil Adventurer's Companion*.

## MEZZOLOTH

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The mezzoloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). The mezzoloth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

2/day each: *darkness*, *dispel magic*  
1/day: *cloudkill*

**Magic Resistance.** The mezzoloth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The mezzoloth's weapon attacks are magical.

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### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mezzoloth makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its trident.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Trident.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage when held with two claws and used to make a melee attack.

**Teleport.** The mezzoloth magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

## NYCALOTH

Large fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 123 (13d10 + 52)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The nycaloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. The nycaloth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility* (self only), *mirror image*

**Magic Resistance.** The nycaloth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The nycaloth's weapon attacks are magical.

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### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The nycaloth makes two melee attacks, or it makes one melee attack and teleports before or after the attack.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) slashing damage at the start of each of its turns due to a fiendish wound. Each time the nycaloth hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 5 (2d4). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage.

**Teleport.** The nycaloth magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

## ARCANALOTH

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 104 (16d8 + 32)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Int +9, Wis +7, Cha +7

**Skills** Arcana +13, Deception +9, Insight +9, Perception +7

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** all, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The arcanaloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The arcanaloth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self*, *darkness*, *heat metal*, *invisibility* (self only), *magic missile*

**Magic Resistance.** The arcanaloth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The arcanaloth's weapon attacks are magical.

**Spellcasting.** The arcanaloth is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The arcanaloth has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *shield*, *Tenser's floating disk*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *phantasmal force*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fear*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *dimension door*

5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane*, *hold monster*

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*

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## ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Teleport.** The arcanaloth magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

## MARA MIL VASS, ULTROLOTH

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 153 (18d8 + 72)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

**Skills** Intimidation +9, Perception +7, Stealth +8

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The ultraloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). The ultraloth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self*, *clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility* (self only), *suggestion*  
3/day each: *dimension door*, *fear*, *wall of fire*  
1/day each: *fire storm*, *mass suggestion*

**Magic Resistance.** The ultraloth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The ultraloth's weapon attacks are magical.

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## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The ultraloth can use its Hypnotic Gaze and makes three melee attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Hypnotic Gaze.** The ultraloth's eyes sparkle with opalescent light as it targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the ultraloth, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed until the end of the ultraloth's next turn. The charmed target is stunned. If the target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the ultraloth's gaze for the next 24 hours.

**Teleport.** The ultraloth magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

## NIGHT HAG (COVEN)

*Medium fiend, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

**Condition Immunities** charmed

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Primordial

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *magic missile*

2/day each: *plane shift* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement*, *sleep*

**Magic Resistance.** The hag has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Claws (Hag Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Change Shape.** The hag magically polymorphs into a Small or Medium female humanoid, or back into her true form. Her statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

**Etherealness.** The hag magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. To do so, the hag must have a *heartstone* in her possession.

**Nightmare Haunting (1/Day).** While on the Ethereal Plane, the hag magically touches a sleeping humanoid on the Material Plane. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the target prevents this contact, as does a *magic circle*. As long as the contact persists, the target has dreadful visions. If these visions last for at least 1 hour, the target gains no benefit from its rest, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 5 (1d10). If this effect reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and if the target was evil, its soul is trapped in the hag's *soul bag*. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

### HAG COVENS

When hags must work together, they form covens, in spite of their selfish natures. A coven is made up of hags of any type, all of whom are equals within the group. However, each of the hags continues to desire more personal power.

A coven consists of three hags so that any arguments between two hags can be settled by the third. If more than three hags ever come together, as might happen if two covens come into conflict, the result is usually chaos.

**Shared Spellcasting.** While all three members of a hag coven are within 30 feet of one another, they can each cast the following spells from the wizard's spell list but must share the spell slots among themselves:

1st level (4 slots): *identify*, *ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *locate object*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *counterspell*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *phantasmal killer*, *polymorph*

5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane*, *screaming*

6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*

For casting these spells, each hag is a 12th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability. The spell save DC is 12 + the hag's Intelligence modifier, and the spell attack bonus is 4 + the hag's Intelligence modifier.

**Hag Eye.** A hag coven can craft a magic item called a *hag eye*, which is made from a real eye coated in varnish and often fitted to a pendant or other wearable item. The *hag eye* is usually entrusted to a minion for safekeeping and transport. A hag in the coven can take an action to see what the *hag eye* sees if the *hag eye* is on the same plane of existence. A *hag eye* has AC 10, 1 hit point, and darkvision with a radius of 60 feet. If it is destroyed, each coven member takes 3d10 psychic damage and is blinded for 24 hours.

A hag coven can have only one *hag eye* at a time, and creating a new one requires all three members of the coven to perform a ritual. The ritual takes 1 hour, and the hags can't perform it while blinded. During the ritual, if the hags take any action other than performing the ritual, they must start over.

## OGRE

Large giant, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 11 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** Common, Giant

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

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### ACTIONS

**Greatclub.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

## HELL HOUND

Medium fiend, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (7d8 + 14)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Infernal but can't speak it

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The hound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

---

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The hound exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## CAMBION

Medium fiend, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 19 (scale mail)

**Hit Points** 82 (11d8 + 33)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +6, Int +5, Cha +6

**Skills** Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +7

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Fiendish Blessing.** The AC of the cambion includes its Charisma bonus.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The cambion's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The cambion can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *alter self*, *command*, *detect magic*

1/day: *plane shift* (self only)

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### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The cambion makes two melee attacks or uses its Fire Ray twice.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

**Fire Ray.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

**Fiendish Charm.** One humanoid the cambion can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the cambion's spoken commands. If the target suffers any harm from the cambion or another creature or receives a suicidal command from the cambion, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cambion's Fiendish Charm for the next 24 hours.

## VROCK

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 104 (11d10 + 44)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Wis +4, Cha +2

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The vrock has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

---

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The vrock makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage.

**Spores (Recharge 6).** A 15-foot-radius cloud of toxic spores extends out from the vrock. The spores spread around corners. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, a target takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Emptying a vial of holy water on the target also ends the effect on it.

**Stunning Screech (1/Day).** The vrock emits a horrific screech. Each creature within 20 feet of it that can hear it and that isn't a demon must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the vrock's next turn.

## NALFESHNEE

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 184 (16d10 + 96)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +11, Int +9, Wis +6, Cha +7

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The nalfeshnee has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

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### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The nalfeshnee uses Horror Nimbus if it can. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (5d10 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

**Horror Nimbus (Recharge 5–6).** The nalfeshnee magically emits scintillating, multicolored light. Each creature within 15 feet of the nalfeshnee that can see the light must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the nalfeshnee's Horror Nimbus for the next 24 hours.

**Teleport.** The nalfeshnee magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.



# DM APPENDIX: NPC

## SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

***Solom Ned'razak (SOLE-um NED-rizz-ack).*** Male drow archwizard and the deposed ruler of Szith Morcane.

***Xaven Tanor'this (ZAY-vin tuh-NORE-this).*** Male drow alchemist. Captured resident of Szith Morcane and possessive of knowledge that would purge the demonic taint from the fire giants of Maerimydra.

***Murssvayas Dhuurniv (mer-SVEY-yas DURR-need).*** Male drow wizard. Very practical and cautious about surface dwellers.

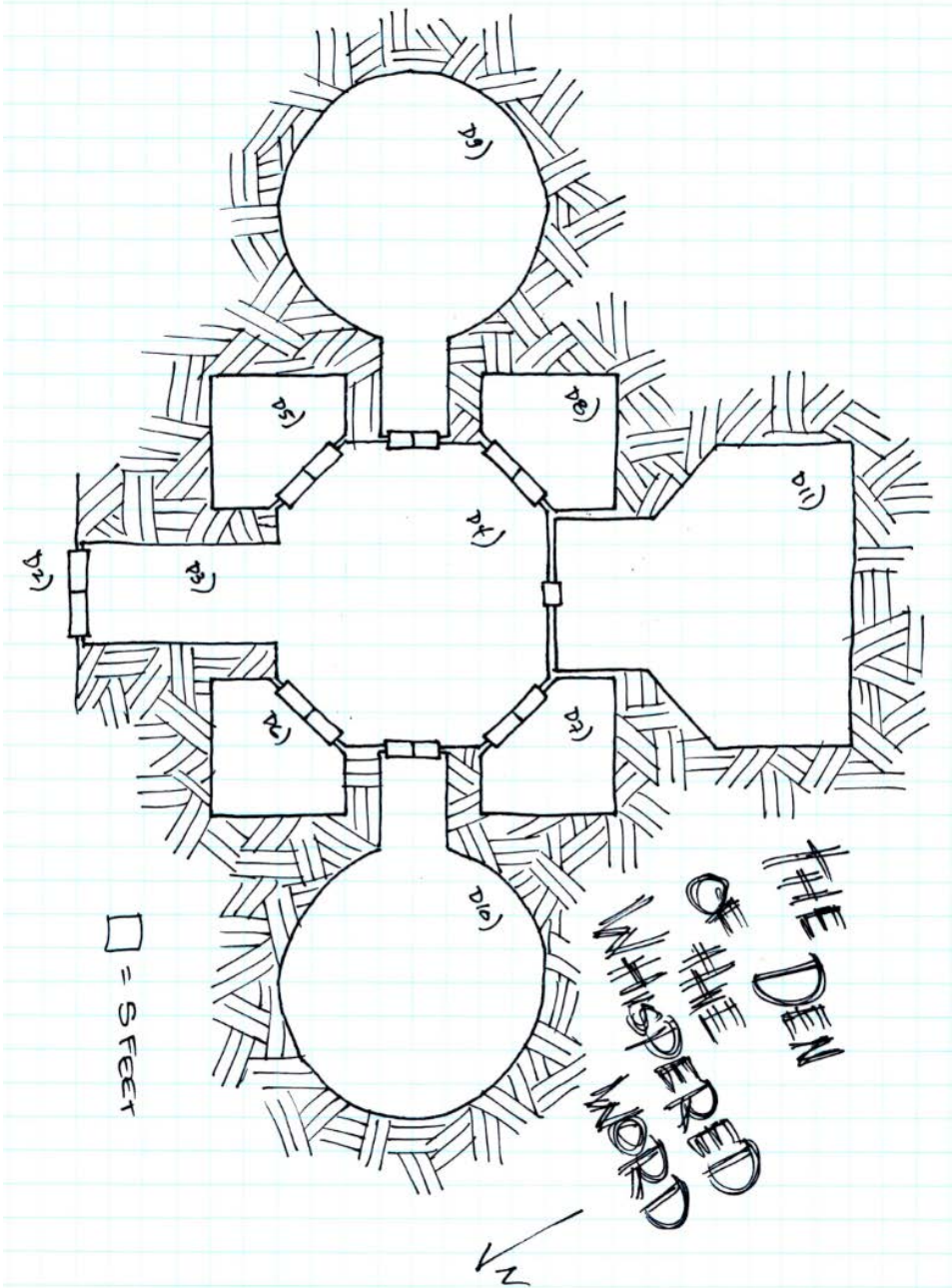
***Nymarrath (nye-MARR-ath).*** Male elf druid. Keeper of the Silver Cove Cave. Companion to a particularly annoying squirrel.

***Maram il Vass (MAY-rim ill VAHS).*** Powerful Yugoloth from Gehenna. Collector and purveyor of secrets, curiosities, and other exotic things. Resides in Den of the Whispered Word.

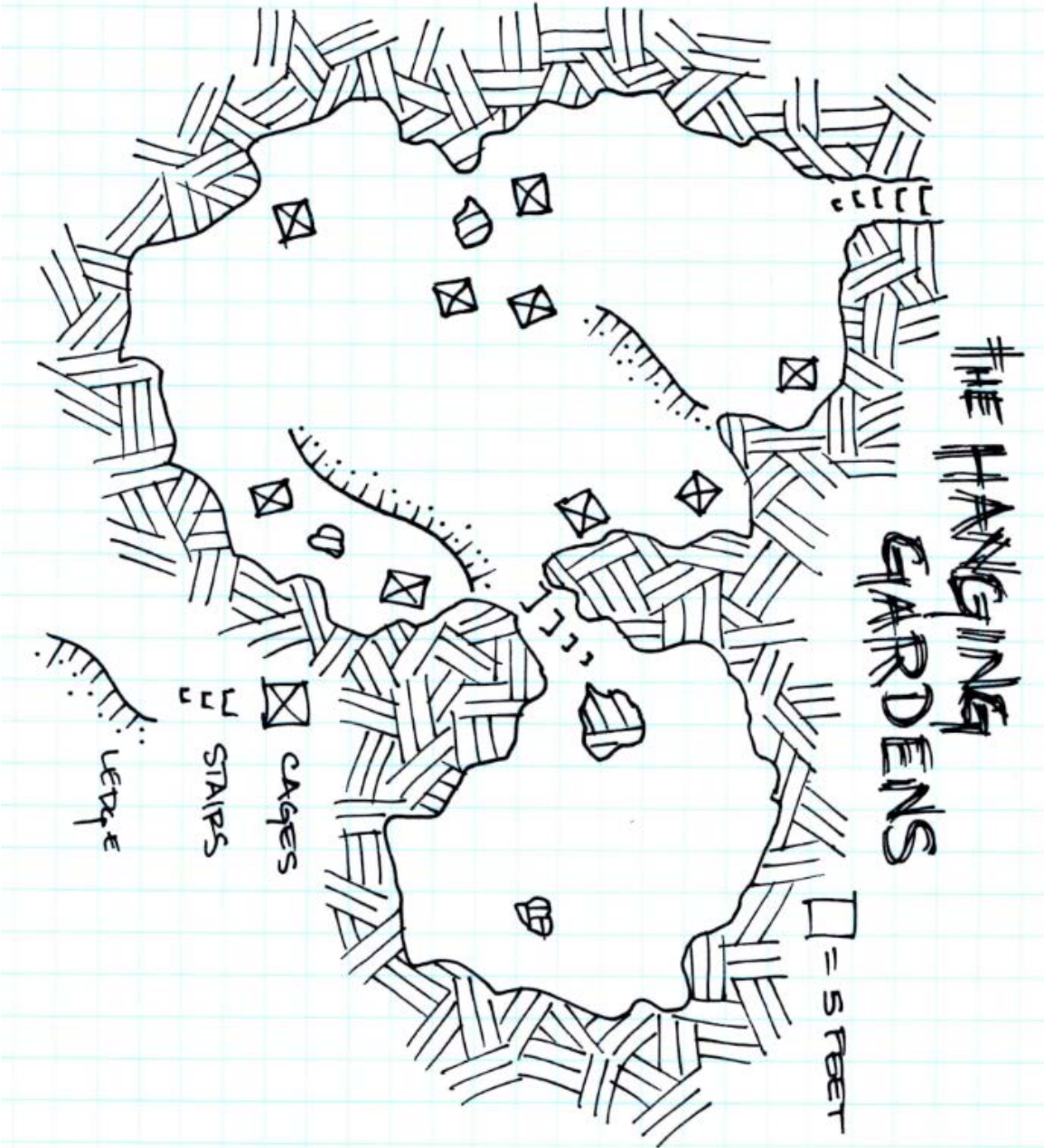
***Pipyap (PIP-YAP).*** Imp. Devil. Former familiar to a Red Wizard. Whatever you want to call him, he's now a Faerûn-trotting explorer with a penchant for overeating. Despite being someone friendly if it gets him what he wants, he is thoroughly evil and manipulative.

***Brandyr and Veperyd (BRAN-deer and veh-PUR-reed).*** Two fiendborne fire giants who hold positions of power within Maerimydra.

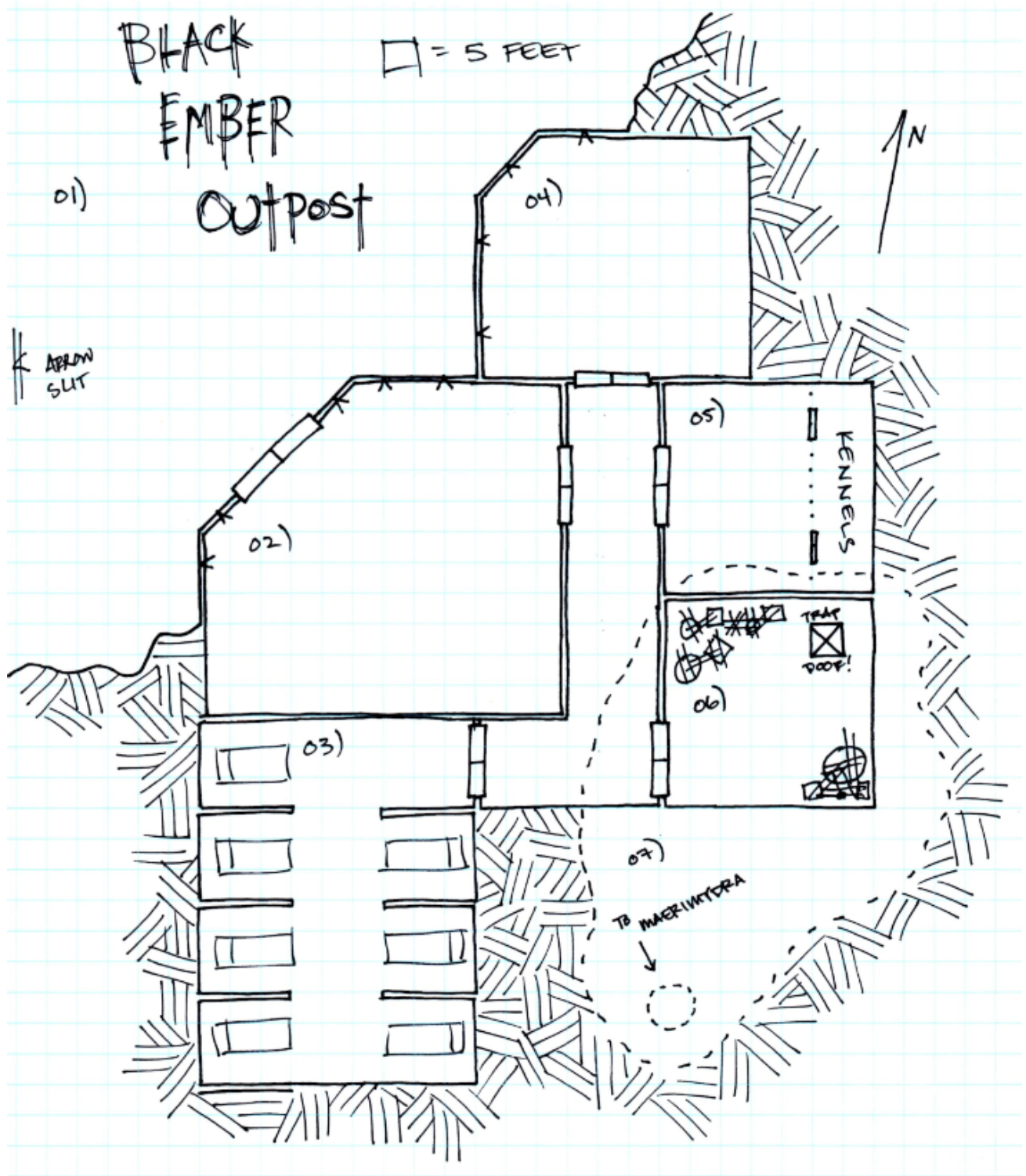
# MAP: THE DEN OF THE WHISPERED WORD



# MAP: THE HANGING GARDENS

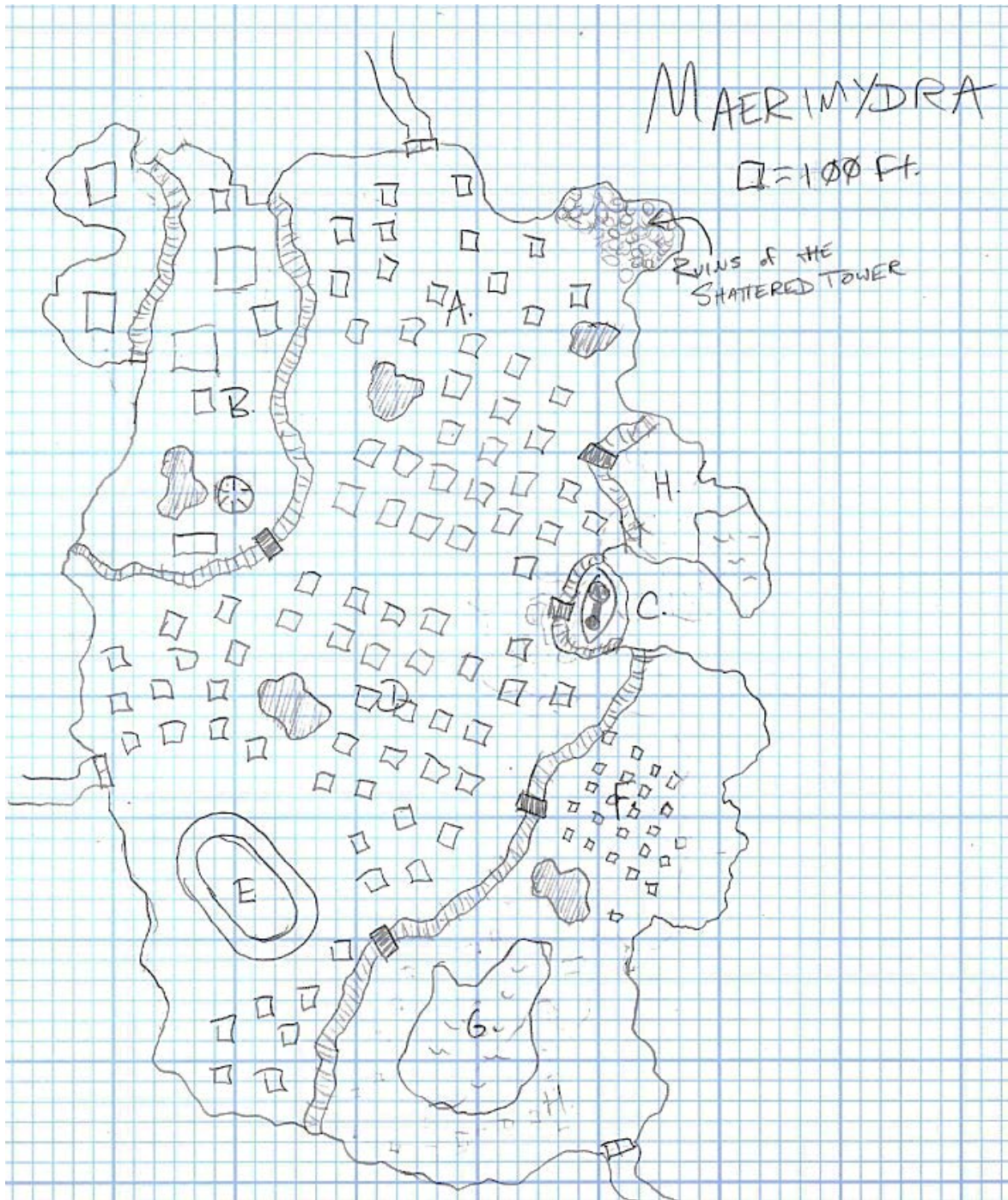


# MAP: THE BLACK EMBER OUTPOST





# MAP: MAERIMYDRA



## RESULTS CODE: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2015

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of August or September 2015, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to [dndadventurersleague.org/results](http://dndadventurersleague.org/results) to enter their results.

