



BURYING THE PAST

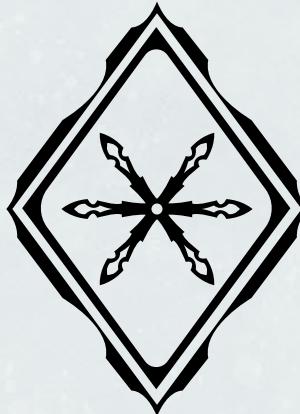
A *Plague of Ancients* Adventure

The bombs are constructed, the plans laid. The only thing remaining is the easy part; stealing into an ancient, alien city full of nightmarish creatures from beyond the limits of sanity, setting the bombs, and escaping the city without getting caught before they detonate. Simple!

Part Ten of the *Plague of Ancients* Series of Adventures.

A Four-Hour Adventure for 10th through 13th-Level Characters

Optimized for APL 11.



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

They curse the ice that swallows the day / While the madness beckons, that comes of the dark / In a world without sunrise.

— C.S. Friedman, *The Longest Night*

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 10th-through 13th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 11**, but provides adjustments for a group consisting of 10th-level characters. Characters outside this level range can't participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in the Spine of the World, the vast mountain range that runs south and east of Icewind Dale.

BACKGROUND

The fallen star witnessed by the **THUUNLAKALAGA GOLIATHS** isn't what it appeared to be: it's a **NAUTILOID** piloted by gnomish **CEREMORPHS** that was chased into one of Auril the Frostmaiden's great blizzards and now lies earthbound.

To make matters worse, the neogi masters of the **DEATHSPIDER** pursuing the nautiloid arrived. Slavers, the **NEOGI** capitalized on the havoc sown by the Everlasting Rime to capture and enslave whomever they could find. One such captive, a **GIFF** named **LIEUTENANT PROOK**, managed to escape and has allied with the Thuunlakalaga goliaths.

The goliath settlement at **WYRMDOOM CRAG** has lost many of their hunters—some to internal strife and others to the neogi. A rescue expedition discovered the bodies of some of the missing hunters within the ancient **ABERIAN** city of **XORVINTROTH**. However, the characters quickly learned the neogi were the least of their concerns—the city is festering with **ABERRATIONS** from the **FAR REALM**; long-dormant terrors that threaten the entirety of **ICEWIND DALE**. Lieutenant Prook now intends to bury the city and end the Far Realm threat with arcane bombs constructed especially for the task.

OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **four parts** and takes approximately **4 hours** to play:

Call to Action: The Far Realm Threat (10 mins). The characters, having assisted Lieutenant Prook in constructing the explosives to bury the city, head out to Xorvintroth to make good their deed.

Part 1: Into Madness (50 mins). The characters head into Xorvintroth, where they find signs of the missing Thuunlakalaga goliaths. Surveying the city, deciding where to plant the bombs, and finding a way to reach the northern and southern towers is **Story Objective A**.

Part 2: Path to the Towers (60 mins). The characters are beset by the haunted remains of the city's past as they make their way to the northern tower. Setting a bomb here is **Story Objective B**.

Part 3: The Southern Tower (60 mins). The party must overcome the ancient trap and construct that still guard the southern tower before they can plant the explosive device. Setting a bomb here is **Story Objective C**.

Part 4: Come with Me If You Want to Live! (60 mins).

After running into an old goliath friend, the party must evade pursuit and escape Xorvintroth before the bombs detonate. Escaping Xorvintroth with Nararhak Tree-Eye is **Story Objective D**.

STORY AWARDS



At certain points in the adventure, you'll see this glyph along with an entry describing how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore the entry if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters just earned, it provides information for you and the players.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure continues immediately after the events of DDAL10-09 *Recipe for Retribution*. If the characters didn't play the previous adventure, the following hooks provide ways to involve them in the scenario:

Far Realm Worries. Sages from the Harpers or the Lords' Alliance detected worrying signs of Far Realm activity in the Spine of the World. Added to rumors of a falling star in the same vicinity, the factions became desperate for information. Characters sent to investigate come upon Lieutenant Prook at Wyrmdoom Crag—with the bombs, but without the goliath allies he was counting on to protect him on the final excursion to the city.

Following the Star. The characters witnessed the falling star from Ten-Towns and sought it out on their own initiative. Characters with the acolyte background may see the star as a sign from their deity, sages may see it as an opportunity for research.

XORVINTROTH, THAT WHICH SURVIVES

Derived from Xorvintaal, the ancient "game" by which dragons wage war and determine power among themselves, this ancient Abeiran city was one of many ruled by dragonborn. It was once a place of learning and enlightenment, but a sect of dragonborn wizards dabbled with sources of magic best left undisturbed. Pulling back the veil of the stars and gazing into the madness of the Far Realm drove the wizards to open portals to the Far Realm. For thousands of years, the city—and the horrors it housed—lay dormant until the Spellplague in 1385 DR when they were expelled from Abeir like a festering infection and transposed into the depths beneath the Spine of the World.

CALL TO ACTION: THE FAR REALM THREAT

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

The action begins in the Thuunlakalaga settlement at Wyrm doom Crag in the Spine of the World.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each player a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and their reason for being at Wyrm doom Crag. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to the characters.

Award **inspiration** (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) once everyone's had a turn.

AREA FEATURES

Wyrm doom Crag has the following general features:

Dimensions and Terrain. Wyrm doom

Crag is the cave complex that houses the Thuunlakalaga goliath clan. A massive dragon skeleton dominates the entrance area, past which twin tunnels lead into the mountain where the goliaths live. East of the entrance, a raised area serves as a goat-ball court.

Lighting. The sun is high in the sky again, brightly lighting the area. If the characters are playing *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* and haven't completed it yet, the Everlasting Rime offers only a dim twilight.

Smells and Sounds. A haunch of meat roasting on a spit near the entrance to the caves. Sounds of activity as the goliaths go about their business, but no sounds of merriment or laughter. The gathering's overall mood is somber and worried.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Ogolai Orcsplitter ("Old Goat") watches with curiosity as **Lieutenant Prook** maintains his pistol before the impending mission. Nearby wait three fully harnessed sleds, each carrying a large, well-secured barrel.



LIEUTENANT PROOK (LEF-TEN-ANT PR-OOK)

Giff interstellar mercenary

Lieutenant Prook (he pronounces lieutenant as "leftenant" and prefers to be addressed as such) once commanded a brigade of his fellow hippopotamus-headed giff mercenaries, but his entire unit was captured by neogi slavers. Of them, he's the sole survivor. The neogi ship recently crashed in Icewind Dale while pursuing the *Id Ascendant*—an illithid nautiloid piloted by gnomish ceremorphs. In the chaos, Lieutenant Prook managed to escape, but underestimated the cold.

What They Want. While Lieutenant Prook's immediate goals are survival and recovery, once out of the woods, he plans to find a way to exact his revenge on the neogi who enslaved him and killed his unit.

Gruff and No-Nonsense. Lieutenant Prook doesn't waste time on pomp and circumstance; he focuses on his goals with laser precision and those who question his orders (yes, orders) or methods are quick to earn a scathing admonishment. To that end, however, he's loyal and honorable without apology. He would throw down his life to save those he considers allies.



OGOLAI (OH-GO-LIE) ORCSPLITTER “OLD GOAT” THUUNLAKALAGA

Goliath warrior

The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

What They Want. Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh. Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

BACK TO XORVINTROTH

Some characters may have the **Captured Goliaths** story award from DDAL10-06 *The Fallen Star*. They're aware the strongest Thuunlakalaga hunters are missing, they were either kidnapped by the neogi or they left with **Kaskur Spearsong**. See the “A Tribe on the Brink” sidebar if the characters need to be brought up to speed on the Thuunlakalaga clan's current state.

For characters who haven't participated in the previous adventures, Lieutenant Prook can inform them about **Xorvintroth** and the danger the Far Realm abominations within the city present. He explains that the barrels are explosives, with which he intends to bury the ancient city, ending the threat. Without the Thuunlakalaga hunters for an escort, however, he looks hopefully to the characters for additional muscle.

Old Goat is of two minds regarding the trip. On one hand, she understands that if whatever was in Xorvintroth could kill both the Thuunlakalaga hunters and the slavers that kidnapped them, then the threat it poses is too serious to ignore. On the other hand, she still hopes against hope that some of the tribe's hunters, including **Nararhak Tree-Eye**, can be rescued. She begs the characters to spare no effort to find and rescue Nararhak and any other surviving hunters. She can't offer anything more than the Thuunlakalaga clan's friendship, but does what she can to convince the characters the tribe's survival may well depend on it.

Lieutenant Prook accompanies the characters on their mission. One of the players (chosen at random if they can't agree) can control Lieutenant Prook as a sidekick during this adventure. **Give that player handout 1.**

A TRIBE ON THE BRINK

During the events of DDAL10-06 *The Fallen Star* and DDAL10-07 *Into Darkness*, most of the Thuunlakalaga hunters were lost. Several left with **Kaskur Spearsong**, the leader of the hunters, who became fed up with Old Goat's leadership. More were kidnapped by neogi slavers. Adventurers tracked both hunters and slavers to the city of Xorvintroth. They found the bodies of hunters and slavers alike there—killed by the Far Realm aberrations inhabiting the city. However, not all the goliaths were accounted for. Several are still missing, including **Nararhak Tree-Eye** (see part 4).

BE CAREFUL WITH THAT!

The bombs (AC 12, 25 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage) Lieutenant Prook crafted are large, powerful, and cumbersome. Each is housed in a three-foot-tall, one-and-a-half-foot-wide wooden barrel and weighs 30 pounds. To aid in their transport, the Thuunlakalaga clan has provided sleds. The creatures that inhabit Xorvintroth don't recognize the bombs for what they are and don't attack them; but allow paranoid or cautious characters to convince themselves the party needs to take extra care safeguarding the bombs. As every good player knows: “If it has hit points, it can be destroyed.”

INTO MADNESS

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

HORROR IN THE ICE

The ancient city of Xorvintroth is buried in the side of an enormous crater. The city extends deep within the ice, but part of the city is exposed, providing an entrance to the surface.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Determining where to plant the bombs, then finding a way to the northern and southern towers is **Story Objective A**.

TREKKING TO XORVINTROTH

Overland travel through the Spine of the World is always treacherous, given the bitter cold, strong winds, endless night, and the possibility of mountain predators, but this particular trip is uneventful.

As the characters crest the edge of the crater where Xorvintroth lies, the cloud cover is pierced by a fleeting beam of sunlight that strikes the crater wall, giving the group a brief vision of an ancient city of green stone buried deep within bluish ice. The moment passes and the sky is once again overcast. Trails from prior forays into Xorvintroth that were open to the sky have been snowed over and can't be followed. However, once the characters make their way to where the buildings intersect with the crater wall, they come upon dried bloodstains on the ground in areas sheltered from the elements.

AREA FEATURES

Xorvintroth has the following general features:

Dimensions and Terrain. The buildings of Xorvintroth are wrought from slightly translucent green stone that intertwines into the icy crater wall. Most are damaged in some fashion, which makes for difficult terrain about half the time.

Lighting. The sun is high in the sky, brightly lighting the area. If the characters are playing *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* and haven't completed it yet, the Everlasting Rime offers only a dim twilight. Within the city, it's unlit and dark. Occasionally, an eldritch glow suffuses certain areas with eerie radiance.

Sounds. The Far Realm's influence in Xorvintroth is increasing over time. Whereas the city was ominously silent during previous visits, now, a mysterious susurruus can be heard almost continuously. As the characters

make their way into the city, the ambient whispers grow louder and louder, eventually turning into wailing shrieks and cacophonous gibbering.

Themes. Alien horror versus the comforts of mortal society. Traveling through Xorvintroth affects the characters' minds and sanity—although currently home to Far Realm influence and alien horrors, the city was once the peaceful home of a proud dragonborn race. Once the party steps inside, the echoes of these opposing impressions vie against each other in the characters' minds.

Tracking. Trails from previous visits to Xorvintroth have been snowed over and can't be followed except in sheltered areas. However, once the characters reach the sections of the city sticking out from the crater wall, they spot obvious bloodstains in places that are sheltered from the elements. These trails lead in various directions, but one trail is more prominent than the rest. It eventually leads through twisting tunnels, opening up into a larger chamber (see "City Map," below).

SANITY WITHIN XORVINTROTH

As the characters travel through Xorvintroth, the Far Realm's influence might affect them in negative ways. The adventure calls for saving throws throughout to resist the escalating madness the party encounters. **Track the number of failed saving throws for each character separately.** If one of these saving throws fails by 5 or more, the character also develops a form of short-term madness (see the **Short-Term Madness table in appendix D**).

The city also contains fragmented memories of the noble dragonborn society that once lived here peacefully. As characters interact with these legacies of a normal (if unfamiliar) society, the Far Realm's influence has a chance of dwindling. As noted in part 2, each successful interaction **reduces** that character's failed saving throw tally by 2.

In **part 4**, the characters' overall ability to resist the Far Realm's influence will be tested. The total number of failed saving throws influences how likely each character is to succumb during that crucial combat.

A *lesser restoration* or *greater restoration* spell can remove the effects of short-term madness and also **reduces** the number of failed saving throws—one for *lesser restoration* or two for *greater restoration*. However, characters can only benefit from this reduction only **once**, using the highest reduction gained.

Even if none of the characters experience short-term madness, be sure to describe the ominous feelings the characters encounter as the number of failed saving throws increases. They can become jumpy, experience hallucinations, shout gibberish (which forms dire omens in Deep Speech), etc.



A. CITY MAP

The characters emerge from claustrophobic tunnels into a 50-foot-wide, vertical cylinder chamber. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 17 or higher see a series of grooves or carvings in the floor (see “**Floor Map**,” below). Characters actively examining the room notice these carvings with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Terrain. Most of the floor is covered in a thick sheet of ice, making the chamber difficult terrain. Worse, the ice is covered with blood and viscera from a number of corpses. When a creature moves onto the ice for the first time on a turn, it must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

Bodies. The corpses in the room have mostly been consumed, but characters can identify some with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check. There are bones belonging to at least one goliath, as well as animal bones, Medium humanoids that can’t be identified more specifically, and a yeti.

Creatures. Four **gibbering mouthers** with the adjustments listed in Creature Statistics are busy consuming what’s left of the corpses in the room. The noises they make are unearthly and horrifying.

Floor Map. Characters who investigate the carvings on the floor determine that they represent a stylized map of Xorvintroth with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The map isn’t perfectly accurate, but it gives a good overview of Xorvintroth’s layout. However, due to the blood and viscera on the floor, this check is made with **disadvantage**. If the characters clean up the mess to see better, the Intelligence (Investigation) check can be attempted a second time without disadvantage. However, characters who help clean up must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or have their overall sanity impacted (see the “**Sanity within Xorvintroth**” sidebar).

Planning the Explosion. It takes time, but once the group recognizes the map for what it is, the characters are able to piece together where they are on it, where they came in, and Xorvintroth’s general layout. With a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) **group check**, the party can use the map to determine the best locations to place the explosives—a pair of towers on opposite sides of the city. The map shows the towers are connected by a single long corridor with a building in the center. Placing one bomb high up in each tower and placing the third bomb in the center structure for good measure seems like the best approach. Characters with the Stonecunning feature or proficiency with mason’s tools have **advantage** on the check. Allow players to suggest alternative ability scores or proficiencies for their check (for instance, a dragonborn character might suggest History because they have knowledge of how dragonborn cities tend to be laid out).

On a failure, it takes the party longer to interpret the map and plan the best locations for the explosives. The extra time spent impacts the party’s sanity, and each character **adds 1 failed saving throw to their tally** for the purposes of the “**Sanity within Xorvintroth**” sidebar.

Playing the Pillars. Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. This fight may not require initiative if the characters attack with surprise and all the gibbering mouthers flee. It's intended to help set the tone rather than provide a challenge. However, if you have a fast group, or a group that emphasizes combat, feel free to have the gibbering mouthers flee—not because of the characters, but because three **star spawn manglers** (two for Tier 2, Weak, or Very Weak parties) have crept up behind the party. They attack using their Ambush and Flurry of Claws.

Exploration. Xorvintroth may seem like a treasure trove for characters bent on exploration, but the danger posed by aberrations and the urgency of the mission naturally prevents long detours from the party's goal. This room provides an opportunity to drop a hint or two about the nature of Xorvintroth's history from the "Xorvintroth, That Which Survives" sidebar to whet the appetite of lore-hungry characters before the library encounter (see part 2).

Social. There's no opportunity for social interaction with the aberrations, but Lieutenant Pook can be used to good effect here. If the characters haven't played the previous *Plague of Ancients* adventures, he can fill the characters in on the recent backstory as they discuss plans. In particular, the gruesome scene may cause him to recount the horrors of finding the neogi and goliath corpses during the events of DDAL10-07 *Into Darkness*.

After the gibbering mouthers are chased off or destroyed, the party will probably take time to plan their next steps. There are no clear paths from this chamber to continue tracking the goliath hunters. If the characters hesitate for too long, Lieutenant Pook suggests they get on with the business of planting the bombs, and hopefully they'll find the goliaths along the way.

B. VIADUCTS

After finding the map in the previous section, the characters can make their way to the central building on the map.

Terrain. The city's crumbling walls have littered the ground with patches of difficult terrain as the characters make their way through areas that were damaged or destroyed. The **central building** is largely intact, and its floor is smooth and unbroken.

Lighting. Darkness, with the occasional eerie glow from other parts of the city.

Sounds. The whispers and murmuring throughout the city can still be heard, but are muffled while in the viaduct. An occasional unearthly shriek rings out when passing over parts of the city where the Far Realm is reasserting its influence.

Central Building. This sprawling four-story structure is made of the same green stone as the rest of the city. The first floor doesn't have an entrance—only four grand pillars that support the upper stories and two winding stairs that lead up into the building proper. The first floor once served the ancient dragonborn society as an open-air market and town square. **Viaducts** connect the central building to the towers on the map, which can be reached from the fourth floor. The central structure's other stories are deserted; mainly ransacked offices where the city's mercantile leadership worked. Little remains of interest or value.



Viaducts. Spanning the city on a series of crumbling arches, these passageways give the characters a bird's-eye view of Xorvintroth. If they're hesitant to go into the building or travel through the viaducts, allow the characters to catch a glimpse of aberrations, some as big as city blocks, walking the streets in the direction they want to go. They can also see that a poisonous miasma fills many of the streets. It should be clear the sheltered corridor is the safest route. The walls of these enclosed corridors are enchanted such that viewers outside can't see into them, but they're almost transparent to those inside.

DEVELOPMENT

The characters can place one of the three bombs here in the central structure—either now or on their way out. The bomb must be placed as high as possible within the structure to direct the blast upward into the bulk of the crater wall. Lieutenant Pook can set the detonator for a specific interval of time. If a character wishes to set the bomb instead, roll an Intelligence (Arcana) check for them in secret. The bomb explodes as they're leaving the city regardless, but the mystery of whether they succeeded or not may incentivize them to depart as quickly as possible.

NORTHERN TOWER

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

ABANDONED LIBRARY

The characters can travel to the towers in either order. This part assumes the characters travel to the northern tower first, but if they go south instead, simply transpose parts 2 and 3. The city rises to meet the viaduct until the corridor connects to the first floor of the northern tower.

During the trek to the tower, the party passes over several sections of the city eerily glowing purple and blue. Strange aberrations flit through miasma clouds, and many buildings are being warped and twisted into logic-defying shapes. The characters must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or have their overall sanity impacted (see the “**Sanity within Xorvintroth**” sidebar). Characters **without** darkvision and characters who take steps to avoid the trip’s mind-bending vistas, such as staring straight ahead or specifying that they aren’t looking outside the corridor, have advantage on the saving throw.

STORY OBJECTIVE B

Planting the bomb in the northern tower is **Story Objective B**.

AREA FEATURES

The library has the following features:

Dimensions and Terrain. See **appendix A** for the map of this encounter. This tower was Xorvintroth’s public library and archive. The floor is smooth wood and **bookshelves** fill most of the room. One corner is an open **classroom**, with chairs and tables sized for young dragonborn. Everything is covered in a thick layer of dust. Ceilings are 15 feet high.

Lighting. Completely dark. Lanterns hang throughout, but have been empty of oil for centuries.

Sounds. The ambient sounds of the city can’t be heard here. The party’s footsteps and other sounds echo and seem amplified in the tower’s silence.

Bookshelves. The bookshelves contain a variety of books, ranging from fiction novels to detailed histories. However, they’re written in an archaic Abeiran dialect of Draconic. Characters fluent in Draconic (or who use a *comprehend languages* spell or similar) still have a difficult time reading the books—requiring a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check to understand fully.

The archives contain the history of Xorvintroth leading up to, but not including, the disaster mentioned in the “Xorvintroth, That Which Survives” sidebar, but if the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character can surmise the entirety of the sidebar’s information from the ominous hints and warnings left by the more foresighted dragonborn historians. A perusal of the archives also turns up a *spell scroll of legend lore* and a *spell scroll of contact other plane*.

Classroom. There are indications that Abeiran history was taught here to young dragonborn. The open classroom area has scattered toys and puzzles, including a cunningly carved puzzle whose pieces assemble to form a perfect 3-D model of the tower. Completing the puzzle requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Characters who successfully browse the archives or complete the puzzle feel their minds clear as they connect to a piece of reality uncorrupted by the Far Realm. **Ignore 2 failed saving throws** for such characters when tracking their sanity for the purpose of the “**Sanity within Xorvintroth**” sidebar. These characters also have an increased chance to pacify the dragonborn ghosts during the encounter.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Five dragonborn **ghosts** who inhabit the northern tower are in the Border Ethereal when the characters first arrive. Even in death, they play out the dangerous studies that spelled doom for their city.

If a character investigates a part of the library on their own or separates from the group, a ghost phases in from the Border Ethereal and attempts to possess that character. The remaining ghosts join the encounter the next round. If the party never separates, the ghosts eventually manifest together to start combat. The ghosts harbor feelings of vengeance against the reckless wizards who brought the horrors of the Far Realm to their city, so tend to concentrate hostilities on spellcasters first.

At first, the ghosts see the characters as intruders and enemies, not recognizing that the characters also oppose the horrors that have overtaken Xorvintroth. Possessed characters can make a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check on their turn to convince the possessing spirit they aren’t an enemy. On a success, the ghost ends its possession as a bonus action on its next turn, returns to the Border Ethereal as an action, and leaves combat. If the possessed character made a connection with Xorvintroth

in the library (either by successfully examining the archives or by completing the puzzle), they have **advantage** on the check. Characters who aren't possessed, but also wish to pacify a ghost can make a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check to invite possession deliberately (with advantage if they examined the archives or completed the puzzle). On a success, one ghost possesses the character (who should choose to fail their saving throw, or risk wasting the attempt), spends 1 round searching that character's thoughts, then end its possession, as above.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative.

Tier 2 Group: Remove two **ghosts**.

Very Weak: Remove one **ghost**.

Weak: No change.

Strong: Add one **ghost**.

Very Strong: Add one **ghost**. Increase the DCs of the ghosts' *Horrifying Visage* and *Possession* to DC 14.

Playing the Pillars. Here are some suggestions for this encounter:

Combat. The ghosts have no regard for their own survival during the fight. They're intelligent enough to know they likely can't defeat the entire party, so they concentrate on taking vengeance by ganging up on one or two individuals, even if it leaves them vulnerable to attack by the others. Parties that ignore the possibility of diplomacy do so at their own peril.

Exploration. The party should be given plenty of time to examine the library before the ghosts attack. Optionally, the ghosts could influence the search by creating physical disturbances, such as loudly dropping books or creating dust swirls.

Social. If the dragonborn ghosts are convinced that the characters are on their side, the ghosts prove to be especially important allies in part 4. Successfully browsing the archives or completing the puzzle provide the easiest methods to connect with the ghosts, but reward creative roleplaying with advantage on the Charisma (Persuasion) check to pacify the ghosts as well.

TREASURE

Perusing the archives turns up a *spell scroll of legend lore* and a *spell scroll of contact other plane*. The scrolls are beautiful examples of ancient Abeiran calligraphy and illumination.

DEVELOPMENT

The bomb must be placed as high as possible within the structure to direct the blast upward into the bulk of the crater wall. Lieutenant Prook can set the detonator for a specific interval of time. If a character wishes to set the bomb instead, roll an Intelligence (Arcana) check for them in secret. The bomb explodes as they're leaving the city regardless, but the mystery of whether they succeeded or not may incentivize them to depart as quickly as possible.



SOUTHERN TOWER

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

ARCANISTS' WORKSHOP

Traveling through the viaduct to the second tower is similar to travel in part 2. The characters must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw to avoid having their overall sanity impacted per the “**Sanity within Xorvintroth**” sidebar. The same modifiers apply—characters who can avoid seeing the mind-bending activity in the city below have advantage on the saving throw.

STORY OBJECTIVE C

Planting the bomb in the southern tower is **Story Objective C**.

The translucent green walls of the viaduct corridor end at a small ledge. A path runs from the ledge between two carved pillars and into a hexagonal tower. The left pillar is carved to represent a dragonborn smith at an anvil, while the right pillar shows a dragonborn in arcane robes holding a many-faceted stone.

Read or paraphrase the following once all the characters enter the tower:

As you explore, additional lamps recessed into the walls begin to light up, and the room gets brighter and brighter. You hear a creaking as the brass plates and mirrors begin moving—slowly at first, then faster and faster. Soon, the room is almost blindingly bright as the largest of the statues—a hulking crystalline creation—shrugs off its drop cloth and starts striding in your direction with fists raised.

AREA FEATURES

The workshop has the following features:

Dimensions and Terrain. See **appendix B** for the map of this encounter. The first floor of the hexagonal tower is clearly an abandoned workshop with a 30-foot-high ceiling. Various dusty tools and materials sit in organized rows on dusty tables. Half-rotted canvas drop cloths cover several statues in the southern end of the room. The walls are covered with huge brass plates. Twenty-four 1-foot-wide mirrors are mounted on the brass plates. Some mirrors are broken, leaving silvered glass scattered in places. Stairs in the northern part of the room lead to the upper floors.



Lighting. The door to the tower is wide open, and dim light spills out. When first entering, a few recesses in the walls contain glowing orbs that serve as lamps, providing the room with dim light. While the **mirror trap** is active, the room is brightly lit.

Sounds. The ambient sounds of the city can't be heard here. When active, the **mirror trap** produces a continual loud hum as the whirring and grinding of gears fills the chamber.

Tools. This room served as a workshop for artisans of all kinds, both mundane and magical. Most of the tools are brittle with age, but characters with relevant tool proficiencies can determine that glassblowers, jewelers, metalworkers, engravers, sculptors, and enchanters all plied their trades here.

Mirror Trap. The mirrors' mechanisms have seized up over time and some don't function, but one and a half mirrors per character (rounding down) still work. On initiative count 20 (losing ties), each mirror targets a random creature within the room, which must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) radiant damage and be blinded until the end of its next turn. The mirrors (AC 15, 35 hit points, and immunity to poison, psychic, and radiant damage) can be disabled with a successful DC 19 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. If a melee attack against the mirrors or a check to disable them fails by 5 or more, the creature is struck by the whirling plates and takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The statue is a **crystal golem** that animates and attacks the party. Once the golem is destroyed, the mirror trap's mechanisms grind to a halt, and most of the recessed lamps wink out one by one, leaving the room in dim light once again.

TREASURE

Characters who make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to search the workshop find a delicately crafted *clockwork amulet* in a glass-enclosed velvet display case. Near it is a complete (though useless due to the ravages of time) set of jeweler's tools. A small lockbox contains neatly stacked rows of ancient Abeiran gold and silver coins. The lockbox can be unlocked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

DEVELOPMENT

The bomb must be placed as high as possible within the structure to direct the blast upward into the bulk of the crater wall. Lieutenant Prook can set the detonator for a specific interval of time. If a character wishes to set the bomb instead, roll an Intelligence (Arcana) check for them in secret. The bomb explodes as they're leaving the city regardless, but the mystery of whether they succeeded or not may incentivize them to depart as quickly as possible.



COME WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE!

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

LEAVING THE CITY

With the bombs planted, the party will want to leave the city as quickly as possible. Allow the characters to make their way back to the central building. As the party leaves the viaducts, call for a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) **group check** with disadvantage (due to the characters' minds being clouded by the continual whispers). On a failure, the group ends up walking in circles and spends additional time exposed to the Far Realm's influence—each character **adds 1 failed saving throw to their tally** for the purposes of the “Sanity within Xorvintroth” sidebar.

STORY OBJECTIVE D

Escaping Xorvintroth with Nararhak Tree-Eye before the bombs detonate is **Story Objective D**.

AREA FEATURES

The area has the following features:

Dimensions and Terrain. See **appendix C** for the map of this encounter. This room is of the same green stone as the rest of Xorvintroth. The floor is smooth and unbroken. The party should realize they don't recognize the room from their initial trek into the city and have taken a wrong turn. There are two beautiful fountains of dragonborn make in the center of the room. The ceiling is 20 feet high.

Lighting. The deep-blue aura emanating from the two pools in the center of the chamber bathes the area in dim light.

Sounds. The whispers and murmurs of Xorvintroth grow louder again as the characters enter this room. Clanging and thudding sounds mix with the other ambient sounds. A high, keening wail is barely discernible, but seems to come from the two pools as well.

Starlit Pools. The two fountain-like structures contain an inky darkness filled with tiny pinpoints of brilliant starlight that wink in and out of existence. The pools are fascinating to look at, and characters who examine them find it hard to tear their gaze away. A creature that touches the darkness within one of these pools is teleported to a random point in the room and must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Aberrations aren't subject to the pool's effects.



STORY AWARD: I SAW FOREVER

Creatures that touch the darkness within the pool and subsequently fail the saving throw also receive the **I Saw Forever** story award.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Unbeknownst to the characters, Nararhak Tree-Eye is close on their heels, pursued by a **star spawn hulk** and a **star spawn seer**. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher (19 or higher for characters distracted by inspecting the pools) hear Nararhak's heavy goliath footfalls (and the hulk bounding after them) getting closer and louder. The party succeeds in getting out of Nararhak's way as they barrel through and run headfirst into Lieutenant Pook—who's thrown to the ground and knocked unconscious. Characters who don't hear Nararhak's approach are surprised as the missing goliath and the star spawn arrive.

Nararhak has no wish to waste time. Their eyes open wide as they recognize any party members they've met before.

NARARHAK (NA-RUHR-UCK)

TREE-EYE THUUNLAKALAGA

Goliath druid

Nararhak was orphaned at birth during a raid by another clan. Though they were spared, the violent circumstances of their birth damaged Nararhak's left leg, leaving them slow and clumsy when without a crutch. Rikuur Hideminder took the child in and raised them in the ways of storytelling and nature.

When not with the rest of Souljoined (Grakal Dawnbearer and Thugeo Goatchaser), Nararhak tends to be very apprehensive and cautious in their interactions, having suffered a great deal of bullying in the past. They're wary of outright strangers.

The name “Tree-Eye” comes from Nararhak's heterochromatic eyes, their right is a brown, barky color and the left is the color of deep-green leaves. Nararhak is always chewing on something. If they start speaking while overly excited, small bits of spittle tend to spray from their mouth.

What They Want. To know more. Nararhak is always ready to hear another tale or read another story or learn another language. When sharing the stories and history of the clan, few hold up to Nararhak's narrations.

Brains of the Operation. Few in the clan know more about the different flora, fauna, and sacred places than Nararhak does. Even Old Goat seeks advice from Nararhak from time to time.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The enormous goliath quickly gets back to their feet. "Prook!" they exclaim, looking first at the unconscious giff, then at the rest of the party. "How did you . . . never mind, there's no time—we must get out of here, now! They're behind me, always behind me, closing in, always chasing!" They glance back with a panicked look in their eyes, and following their gaze, you spot a towering, ogre-like being with glistening, translucent skin and pale, lidless eyes bearing down on you. A smaller, masked being carrying a glowing, green staff in a tendrillous hand follows close behind.

THE PURSUIT

Narrahak is pursued by a **star spawn seer** with the adjustments listed in Creature Statistics and a **star spawn hulk**, which begin combat 60 feet behind them.

Tactics. The star spawn hulk and star spawn seer can't be intimidated or reasoned with, and fight to the death. The seer uses its Collapse Distance at every opportunity, and chooses targets near the star spawn hulk to take advantage of the hulk's Psychic Mirror trait.

Help from the Dragonborn. Any character who pacified a dragonborn ghost in the library encounter can feel the spirit helping them. Once during this encounter, the character can prevent all psychic damage they would take from a single source. When psychic damage is prevented this way, the ghost briefly manifests to absorb the damage by sacrificing themselves. The ghost then dissolves into incorporeal wisps.

Madness. During this encounter, whenever a character takes psychic damage from an ability that doesn't already require a saving throw, they must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or gain a form of short-term madness (see the **Short-Term Madness table in appendix D**) until the end of their next turn. If the character has **one or fewer** failed saving throws tallied per the "**Sanity within Xorvintroth**" sidebar (remember to reduce their total by two if they had a successful interaction with the library in part 2), they have **advantage** on the saving throw. If the character has **four or more** failed saving throws tallied, they have **disadvantage** instead.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative.

Tier 2 Group: Replace one **star spawn seer** with one **star spawn mangler**.

Very Weak: Replace one **star spawn hulk** with two **star spawn manglers**.

Weak: Replace one **star spawn hulk** with three **star spawn manglers**.

Strong: The **star spawn hulk** has 175 hit points.

Very Strong: The **star spawn hulk** has 175 hit points. Add one **star spawn mangler**.

TREASURE

The players can recover the star spawn seer's *staff of striking*. Tier 2 characters participating in this encounter instead receive a *staff of defense*. The star spawn seer also carries otherworldly items of value to scholars of the Far Realm. These include a blinking eyeball suspended

within a chunk of polished ice that never melts and a writhing severed tentacle, capped in bronze and inscribed with incomprehensible glyphs.



WRAP-UP: WALKING AWAY FROM EXPLOSIONS

After the star spawn are defeated, Lieutenant Pook regains consciousness, and the party can make their way out of Xorvintroth. As they scale the crater wall, they hear a massive explosion behind them, forcing a desperate scramble up the crater wall and away from an avalanche. Lieutenant Pook lets out a string of giff curses and starts sprinting much faster than would be expected for someone of his bulk. Once clear, assuming the characters turn to look, they see the landscape is vastly changed, with the city cleanly buried under a mountain of snow, ice, and rock.

Afterword. The threat of Xorvintroth has been stopped—or at least postponed. It's doubtful the aberrant threat will emerge from its burial anytime soon. But the characters may have a brief premonition of the Far Realm's malignant influence still lurking undamaged beneath the ice, waiting for someone else to find and release it.

With the threat of Xorvintroth handled, Lieutenant Pook is ready to move on. He has no outstanding debts of vengeance—the neogi slavers on whom he swore vengeance were found destroyed during the events of DDAL10-07 *Into Darkness*, and now he wants only to return to life as an interstellar mercenary.

Old Goat is thankful to have Nararhak returned to the tribe and hosts a small feast in celebration of the characters. But the Thuunlakalaga clan has still been decimated, and it may take decades for them to fully recover. The importance of ceasing hostilities with the rival Akannathi clan becomes even more crucial. But with Nararhak able to pass their knowledge on to the next generation of the Thuunlakalaga clan, they may make the difference between extinction and survival.

TRANSITIONING TO DREAMS OF THE RED WIZARDS

The new *Dreams of the Red Wizards* campaign storyline, *Terminal Ambitions*, begins immediately following this seasonal storyline. The first adventures of this subsequent series are designed for tier 2 characters. Notify players with tier 2 characters of this; some may wish to play those adventures with the same character they used in this one. These players should decline the advancement granted by this adventure.

REWARDS

At the **end of the session**, everyone receives rewards based upon their accomplishments:

PLAYER REWARDS

The players earn the following rewards:

ADVANCEMENT

A character participating in this adventure gains one level.

OPTIONAL: DECLINING ADVANCEMENT

Each player can decline advancement if they wish; this has its benefits. It's possible for a character to advance beyond an adventure's level range, leaving them unable to play an adventure as planned. Similarly, a character advancing too quickly won't earn as much gold as their peers.

Conversely, remind players the gold their characters can earn per level is limited; characters who decline advancement might reach a point where they no longer earn gold.

GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

| Tier | Hourly GP Award | GP Limit per Level |
|------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 20 gp | 80 gp |
| 2 | 30 gp | 240 gp |
| 3 | 200 gp | 1,600 gp |
| 4 | 750 gp | 6,000 gp |

MAGIC ITEMS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items, described in **handout 2**:

- *Clockwork amulet*
- *Spell scroll of contact other plane*
- *Spell scroll of legend lore*
- *Staff of defense* (tier 2 characters only)
- *Staff of striking* (tier 3 characters only)

STORY AWARDS

The characters may earn the following story awards, described in **handout 2**:

I Saw Forever

DM REWARDS

For running this adventure, you earn a DM Reward. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.





DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

LIEUTENANT PROOK (LEF-TEN-ANT PR-OOK)

Giff interstellar mercenary

Lieutenant Prook (he pronounces lieutenant as “leftenant” and prefers to be addressed as such) once commanded a brigade of his fellow hippopotamus-headed giff mercenaries, but his entire unit was captured by neogi slavers. Of them, he’s the sole survivor. The neogi ship recently crashed in Icewind Dale while pursuing the *Id Ascendant*—an illithid nautiloid piloted by gnomish ceremorphs. In the chaos, Lieutenant Prook managed to escape, but underestimated the cold.

What They Want. While Lieutenant Prook’s immediate goals are survival and recovery, once out of the woods, he plans to find a way to exact his revenge on the neogi who enslaved him and killed his unit.

Gruff and No-Nonsense. Lieutenant Prook doesn’t waste time on pomp and circumstance; he focuses on his goals with laser precision and those who question his orders (yes, orders) or methods are quick to earn a scathing admonishment. To that end, however, he’s loyal and honorable without apology. He would throw down his life to save those he considers allies.

NARARHAK (NA-RUHR-UCK) TREE-EYE THUUNLAKALAGA

Goliath druid

Nararhak was orphaned at birth during a raid by another clan. Though they were spared, the violent circumstances of their birth damaged Nararhak’s left leg, leaving them slow and clumsy when without a crutch. Rikuur Hideminder took the child in and raised them in the ways of storytelling and nature.

When not with the rest of Souljoined (Grakal Dawnbearer and Thugeo Goatchaser), Nararhak tends to be very apprehensive and cautious in their interactions, having suffered a great deal of bullying in the past. They’re wary of outright strangers.

The name “Tree-Eye” comes from Nararhak’s heterochromatic eyes, their right is a brown, barky color and the left is the color of deep-green leaves. Nararhak is always chewing on something. If they start speaking while overly excited, small bits of spittle tend to spray from their mouth.

What They Want. To know more. Nararhak is always ready to hear another tale or read another story or learn another language. When sharing the stories and history of the clan, few hold up to Nararhak’s narrations.

Brains of the Operation. Few in the clan now know more about the different flora, fauna, and sacred places than Nararhak does. Even Old Goat seeks advice from Nararhak from time to time.

OGOLAI (OH-GOH-LIE) ORCSPLITTER “OLD GOAT” THUUNLAKALAGA

Goliath warrior

The chieftain of the Thuunlakala goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that’s created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

What They Want. Old Goat’s first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She’s quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh. Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she’s getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren’t for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would’ve offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure:

CRYSTAL 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 adamantine

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) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Illumination. The golem magically sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. This light goes out when the golem is destroyed.

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

Light Intensity. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the illuminated golem and can see the golem must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be blinded until the start of its next turn.

A creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the golem until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the golem in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

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.

GHOST

Medium Undead, Any Alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 7 (-2) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) |

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-Undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One Humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn Undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

GIBBERING MOUTHER

Medium Aberration, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 10 ft., swim 10 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 8 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 3 (-4) | 10 (+0) | 6 (-2) |

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP) Proficiency Bonus +2

Aberrant Ground. The ground in a 10-foot radius around the mouther is doughlike difficult terrain. Each creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Gibbering. The mouther babbles incoherently while it can see any creature and isn't incapacitated. Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the mouther and can hear the gibbering must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gibbering mouther makes one bites attack and, if it can, uses its Blinding Spittle.

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is killed by this damage, it is absorbed into the mouther.

Blinding Spittle (Recharge 5–6). The mouther spits a chemical glob at a point it can see within 15 feet of it. The glob explodes in a blinding flash of light on impact. Each creature within 5 feet of the flash must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of the mouther's next turn.

GIBBERING SCAVENGER

Apply the following adjustments to the **gibbering mouther** stat block:

Gibbering. Increase the saving throw DC to DC 14. Also, a failed saving throw should be tallied. See the "Sanity within Xorvintroth" sidebar for more details.

Skulker. If an attack deals 15 or more damage to the gibbering mouther, it attempts to flee combat at the next opportunity.

STAR SPAWN GRUE

Small Aberration, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 17 (5d6)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 6 (-2) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 9 (-1) | 11 (+0) | 6 (-2) |

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Deep Speech

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) Proficiency Bonus +2

Aura of Madness. Creatures within 20 feet of the grue that aren't Aberrations have disadvantage on saving throws, as well as on attack rolls against creatures other than a star spawn grue.

ACTIONS

Confounding Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of the grue's next turn.

STAR SPAWN HULK

Large Aberration, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (13d10 + 65)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 20 (+5) | 8 (-1) | 21 (+5) | 7 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 9 (-1) |

Saving Throws Dex +3, Wis +5

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Deep Speech

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP) Proficiency Bonus +4

Psychic Mirror. If the hulk takes psychic damage, each creature within 10 feet of the hulk takes that damage instead; the hulk takes none of the damage. In addition, the hulk's thoughts and location can't be discerned by magic.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hulk makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target also takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Reaping Arms (Recharge 5–6). The hulk makes a separate slam attack against each creature within 10 feet of it. Each creature that is hit must also succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

STAR SPAWN MANTLER

Medium Aberration, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 8 (-1) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 7 (-2) |

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +4

Skills Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Deep Speech

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Ambush. On the first round of each combat, the mangler has advantage on attack rolls against a creature that hasn't taken a turn yet.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the mangler can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mangler makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage. If the attack roll has advantage, the target also takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

Flurry of Claws (Recharge 4–6). The mangler makes six claw attacks against one target. Either before or after these attacks, it can move up to its speed as a bonus action without provoking opportunity attacks.

STAR SPAWN SEER

Medium Aberration, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 22 (+6) | 19 (+4) | 16 (+3) |

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +11, Wis +9, Cha +8

Skills Perception +9

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Undercommon

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Out-of-Phase Movement. The seer can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. Each creature it moves through takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage; no creature can take this damage more than once per turn. The seer takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The seer makes two comet staff attacks or uses Psychic Orb twice.

Comet Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Psychic Orb. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 feet, one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) psychic damage.

Collapse Distance (Recharge 6). The seer warps space around a creature it can see within 30 feet of it. That creature must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, is magically teleported up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space the seer can see, and all other creatures within 10 feet of the target's original space each take 39 (6d12) psychic damage. On a successful save, the target takes 19 (3d12) psychic damage.

REACTIONS

Bend Space. When the seer would be hit by an attack, it teleports, exchanging positions with another star spawn it can see within 60 feet of it. The other star spawn is hit by the attack instead.

SEEING STARS

Apply the following adjustments to the **star spawn seer** stat block if your party is **tier 3**:

Special Equipment. The seer wields a *staff of striking* with 10 charges. When the seer hits with its Comet Staff, it can expend up to 3 charges. For each charge it expends, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) force damage.

Comet Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage, or 13 (1d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

HANDOUT 1: SIDEKICK STATISTICS

LIEUTENANT PROOK (WARRIOR SIDEKICK)

Medium Humanoid (Giff), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, Improved Defense)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) |

Saving Throws Con +5

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Proficiency Bonus +4

Battle Readiness. Lieutenant Prook has advantage on initiative rolls.

Extra Attack. Lieutenant Prook can attack twice, instead of once, whenever he takes the Attack action on his turn.

Firearms Knowledge. Lieutenant Prook's mastery of firearms enables him to ignore the loading property of muskets and pistols.

Headfirst Charge. Lieutenant Prook can try to knock a creature over; if he moves at least 20 feet in a straight line that ends within 5 feet of a Large or smaller creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Improved Critical. Lieutenant Prook's attack rolls score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.

Improved Defense. Lieutenant Prook has a +1 bonus to his AC (already included).

Indomitable (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lieutenant Prook can reroll a failed saving throw.

Martial Role (Attacker). Lieutenant Prook gains a +2 bonus to all attack rolls (already included).

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Fragmentation Grenade (1/Day). Lieutenant Prook throws a grenade up to 60 feet. Each creature within 20 feet of the grenade's detonation must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

BONUS ACTIONS

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Lieutenant Prook regains 1d10 + 11 hit points.

HANDOUT 2: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters may earn the following rewards in this adventure:

MAGIC ITEMS

CLOCKWORK AMULET

Wondrous item, common

A miniature mechanical dragonborn wielding a two-handed sword encrusted with small garnets is nestled in the center of an intricate bronze sphere hanging from a translucent green chain. Pressing a button causes the mechanical warrior to go through an elaborate series of thrusts and parries within the confines of the sphere.

When you make an attack roll while wearing the amulet, you can forgo rolling the d20 to get a 10 on the die. Once used, this property can't be used again until the next dawn.

SPELL SCROLL OF CONTACT OTHER PLANE

Scroll, rare

A *spell scroll* bears the words of a single spell, written in a mystical cipher. If the spell is on your class's spell list, you can read the scroll and cast its spell without providing any material components. Otherwise, the scroll is unintelligible. Casting the spell by reading the scroll requires the spell's normal casting time. Once the spell is cast, the words on the scroll fade, and it crumbles to dust. If the casting is interrupted, the scroll is not lost.

If the spell is on your class's spell list but of a higher level than you can normally cast, you must make an ability check using your spellcasting ability to determine whether you cast it successfully. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a failed check, the spell disappears from the scroll with no other effect.

SPELL SCROLL OF LEGEND LORE

Scroll, rare

See above.

STAFF OF DEFENSE

Staff, rare (requires attunement)

This slender, hollow staff is made of a translucent green glass yet is as strong as oak. It weighs 3 pounds. You must be attuned to the staff to gain its benefits and cast its spells.

While holding the staff, you have a +1 bonus to your Armor Class.

The staff has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend one or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from the staff if the spell is on your class's spell list: *mage armor* (1 charge) or *shield* (2 charges).

The staff regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff shatters and is destroyed.

STAFF OF STRIKING

Staff, very rare (requires attunement)

This staff is made of a single piece of unmelting, dark-green ice. While its exact form can't be discerned, a dark shape running the length of the staff writhes within.

This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it.

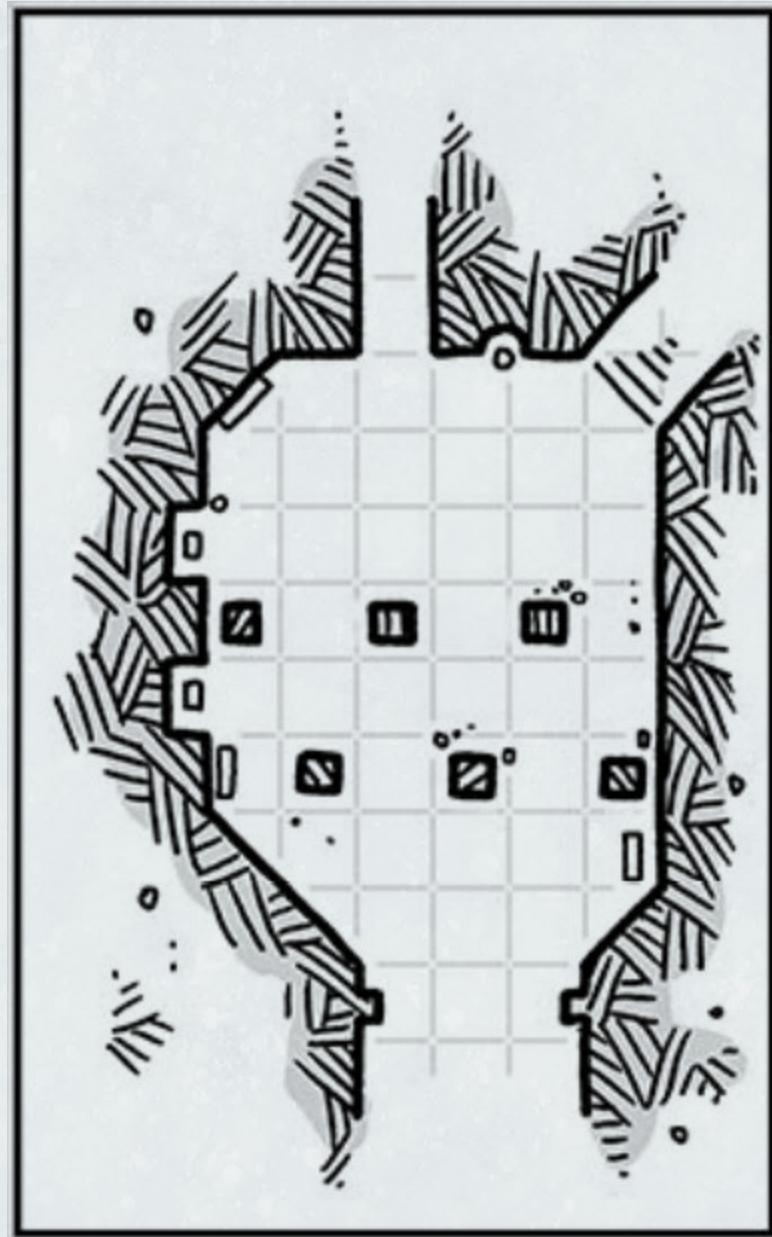
The staff has 10 charges. When you hit with a melee attack using it, you can expend up to 3 of its charges. For each charge you expend, the target takes an extra 1d6 force damage. The staff regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff becomes a nonmagical quarterstaff.

STORY AWARDS

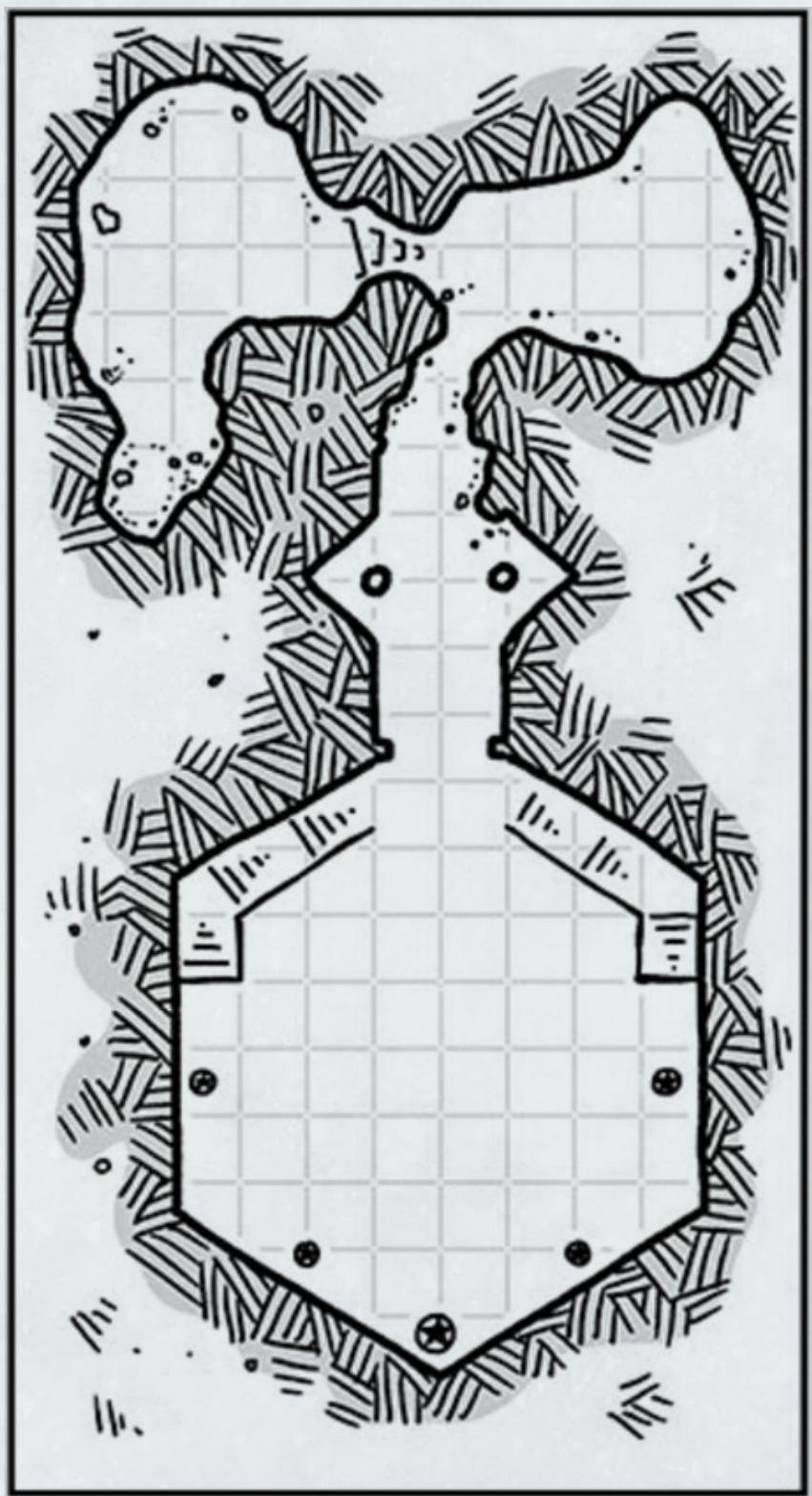
I SAW FOREVER

Creatures that touch the darkness within the pool and subsequently fail the saving throw receive the **I Saw Forever** story award.

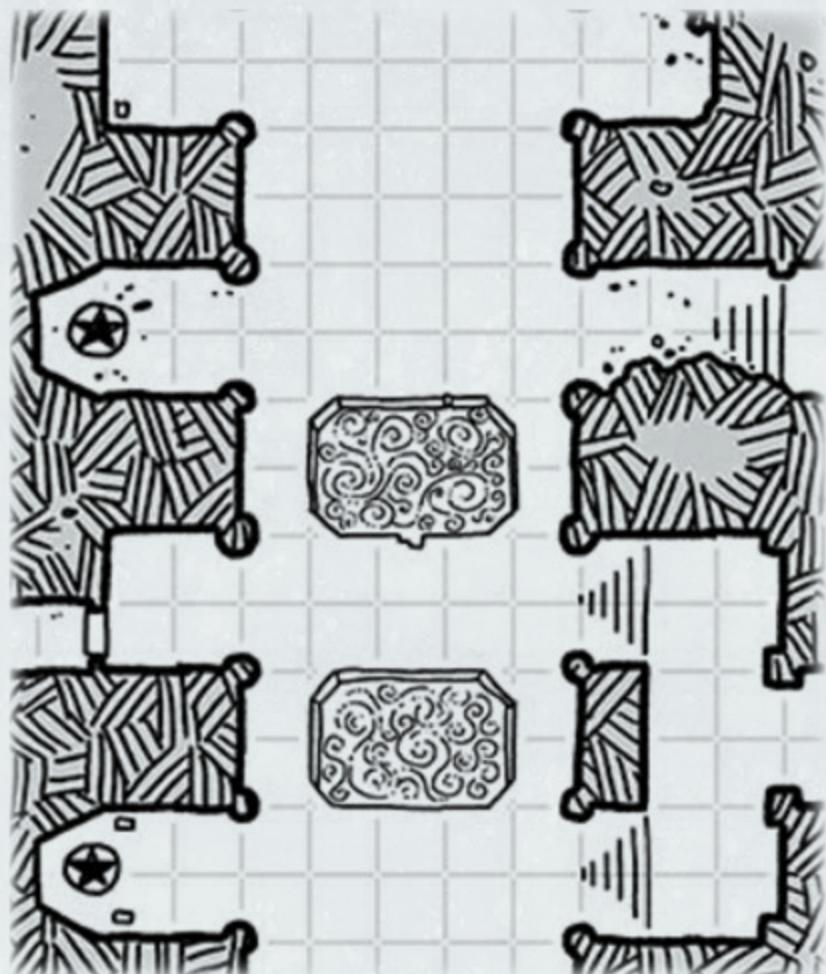
APPENDIX A: NORTHERN TOWER MAP (PART 2)



APPENDIX B: SOUTHERN TOWER MAP (PART 3)



APPENDIX C: EGRESS MAP (PART 4)



APPENDIX D: DUNGEON MASTER MISCELLANY

SHORT-TERM MADNESS TABLE (PARTS 1 THROUGH 4)

A calm emotions spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a lesser restoration or *greater restoration* spell can rid a character of short-term madness.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS

d100 Result (lasts 1d10 minutes)

| | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01–20 | The character retreats into their mind and becomes paralyzed. The effect ends if the character takes any damage. |
| 21–30 | The character becomes incapacitated and spends the duration screaming, laughing, or weeping. |
| 31–40 | The character becomes frightened and must use their action and movement each round to flee from the source of the fear. |
| 41–50 | The character begins babbling and is incapable of normal speech or spellcasting. |
| 51–60 | The character must use their action each round to attack the nearest creature. |
| 61–70 | The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks. |
| 71–75 | The character does whatever anyone tells them to do that isn't obviously self-destructive. |
| 76–80 | The character experiences an overpowering urge to eat something strange such as dirt, slime, or offal. |
| 81–90 | The character is stunned. |
| 91–00 | The character falls unconscious. |

APPENDIX E: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you must have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a hardcover adventure may continue to play too, but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they can't return to the first if they level beyond its level range.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of 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. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score, and anything the adventure specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, and flaws).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or DM, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold, and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

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 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 can't, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Players 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.

NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one it's possible you may have players new to D&D, or just new to fifth edition. It's up to you as the DM to ensure they a) have fun with the game and b) learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you'll notice they quickly follow suit.

If you're a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. This adventure includes sidebars like this one that explain of some rules used as the adventure progresses!

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the characters' levels and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

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 |

SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools ensure that players aren't pushed beyond their comfort levels. They let your players know you want them to have a positive experience.

A broad range of safety tools are available for you and your players online, but for more information reach out to your Event Organizer or to community@dndadventurersleague.org