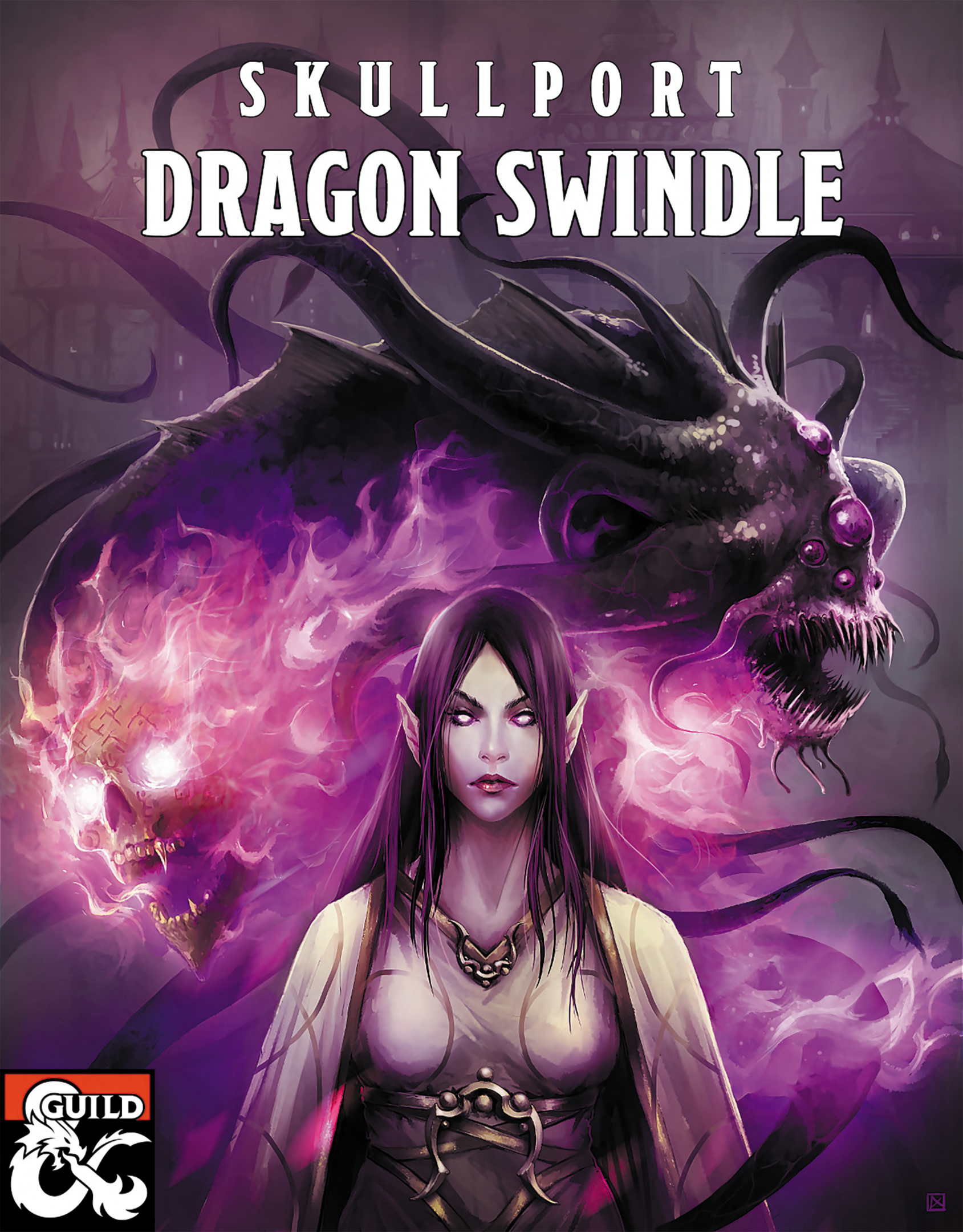


SKULLPORT DRAGON SWINDLE



SKULLPORT

DRAGON SWINDLE

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INTRODUCTION

Skullport: Dragon Swindle is a reimagining of the structure and events of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. Instead of heroes called to action in the beautiful City of Splendors, the characters are likely swindlers and scum in the grim city of Skullport, which lies beneath Mount Waterdeep and is technically a part of Undermountain.

DO I NEED WATERDEEP: DRAGON HEIST?

Yes. This module is a ‘hack’ of sorts that still draws on the structures, information, and NPCs present in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. The sequence of locations, the option to use different antagonists, and the general spirit of *Dragon Heist*’s structure are present here.

DO I NEED WATERDEEP: DUNGEON OF THE MAD MAGE?

Not really. This module will make use of the most current description and layout for Skullport as it is presented in *Dungeon of the Mad Mage*. As the description of Skullport in *DotMM* is minimal, this supplement includes an expanded overview of the city based on the old *Skullport* book from 2e. Locations have been updated or altered with respect to the current year in the Forgotten Realms and with the changes that Skullport has seen over the years.

Where *Dungeon of the Mad Mage* presents a new location or updated information to an old location, the newer edition takes precedence. A brief description might be included, but you will have to refer to *Dungeon of the Mad Mage* for a full description of that particular locale.

ROLEPLAYING DYNAMICS IN SKULLPORT: DRAGON SWINDLE

A campaign about generally bad people living in one of the worst cities and serving their own self-interests while circumstantially protecting said terrible city from arguably deserved destruction can be difficult to wrestle with from a roleplaying perspective. In most cases, the party in *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* will be playing a group of characters ranging from morally gray at best to openly evil at worst. The following pointers can help players ground their characters in Skullport and reconcile personal evil with a greater good.

Our terrible, wonderful town. Skullport is a terrible place, but it’s home. It’s not just a haven for sinister villains and evil factions; it’s a haven for outcasts and loners and the end-of-the-rope for the grim and desperate.

A greater good? Evil factions have always controlled Skullport, but the threats presented in *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* want to more or less destroy it. The characters’ ambitions and way of life are under threat from forces that want to upend, tyrannize, or destroy them.

Your worst best friend. Whether it’s an adventuring party, a gang, or an entire faction, residents of Skullport create associations and form groups to protect themselves and create a sense of belonging. Even the worst lowlife needs comrades in a town like Skullport. The characters’ call to adventure ties them together, and their association with factions in Skullport will help tie them to the city itself.

Good to see you again. Consider working with players during character creation to improve their knowledge of Skullport and its residents. Refer to Chapter 8 for locations in the city where a character might have spent time, worked, or made other connections.

In many ways, a mystery campaign in Skullport will contain common tropes present in noir fiction; a dangerous town, anti-hero protagonists, complex plots involving factions and double-crossers, and a bleak tone.

STORY OVERVIEW

The modified story of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* can be summarized as follows:

- Half a million gold coins are hidden somewhere in Skullport. Many individuals know about the cache and are looking for it. The adventurers can look for the cache for themselves or work to prevent it from falling into another faction’s hands.
- The cache is being actively sought by a variety of factions, ranging from so-called ‘do-gooders’ from Waterdeep to individuals in Skullport seeking to gain control of the city.

CACHE OF DRAGONS

Instead of being the embezzled funds of the former Open Lord of Waterdeep Dagult Neverember, the half-million gold coins are actually a hoard hidden beneath Skullport by the Mad Mage of Undermountain, Halaster Blackcloak. Skullport is technically a part of Undermountain, or is at least connected to it, and

Halaster has made a number of appearances both publicly and in secret within the city over its history.

In this version of the adventure, the *Stone of Golorr* is an aboleth from Undermountain who drew Halaster's ire when it attempted to kill the Mad Mage permanently and take control of the massive dungeon complex. Halaster transformed Golorr into the magic stone and seized the aboleth's amassed treasure, creating a new magical vault hidden below the city of Skullport to house the would-be rival's vast wealth.

Halaster, his motivations unclear, wants the *Stone of Golorr* and the treasure hoard to one day be found. He sees the hunt for the treasure as a curiosity and wants the *Stone of Golorr* to reveal its location to a 'worthy' finder. Byronae Trilluach, a mercenary lord of Skullport, found and possessed the stone for many years before it fell into the hands of the Xanathar Guild.

Like the vault of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the vault under Skullport is warded by Halaster against both magical and mundane methods of detection and entry. Only a creature using the *Stone of Golorr* can find the entrance to the vault and hope to claim its riches. Because the *Stone of Golorr* will only reveal the location of the vault to the 'worthy,' many of these factions are happy to let the characters find the stone and vault, hoping to get their cut when the treasure is found.

XANATHAR AND THE ZHENTARIM

As in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the Xanathar Guild and the Black Network are somewhere between tenuous alliance and all-out war. As in *Dragon Heist*, Xanathar is in possession of the *Stone of Golorr*; he is aware of the supposed treasure hoard, but has never sought the treasure himself. For one, the beholder has plenty of wealth and power without it spread throughout its various fronts, networks, and agents. On the other hand, the ever-paranoid crime lord fears that half a million in coin would tempt its advisors and other underlings to openly rebel and attempt to take its place.

When *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* kicks off and the *Stone of Golorr* is taken, Xanathar and the Zhentarim will form a tenuous agreement not to go to war over the riches of the vault; instead, they might offer support to the characters as they let events play out, focusing their efforts on preventing a mutual enemy from getting their hands on the vault's contents and spelling trouble for both criminal organizations.

A FRIEND IN NEED

Rather than meeting Volothamp Geddarm in the Yawning Portal, the characters meet the remarkable writer in the Black Tankard in Skullport. Volo thinks there's demand for a biography of Xanathar, and the preening beholder's pride can't resist giving the author permission to conduct research and interviews—for now. Against Volo's better judgement, he's allowed the dimwitted Floon Blagmaar to accompany him. Floon's kidnappers aren't representatives of the Xanathar Guild; they're actually representatives of the campaign's antagonist who has darker long-term plans for the weak-minded young man. Ranaer Neverember doesn't appear in *Dragon Swindle*; he is replaced by Auden Trilluach, son of Skullport's mercenary lord Byronae Trilluach, the original owner of the *Stone of Golorr*. More on this is discussed in the next chapter.

FIREBALL

The characters are allowed to settle into their new property in Skullport and establish a presence in the city. Meanwhile, Volothamp Geddarm and Floon are allowed to attend what Xanathar believes will be an important chapter of the biography; the meeting between the Xanathar Guild and the Zhentarim to negotiate a deal between the two factions.

Floon steals the *Stone of Golorr* from Xanathar's private treasures. The bearer of the *Stone of Golorr* can't leave Skullport and the object can never be truly lost, as it's bound to the magical mantle that keeps the subterranean city intact. Floon attempts to flee to Mindflay Manor but is intercepted and killed.

CHOOSE YOUR ANTAGONIST

When you run this adventure, you choose the main villain at the outset. This determines who was behind Floon's kidnapping, who is trying to acquire the *Stone of Golorr*, and what they intend with the vault's grand riches.

Some of these antagonists are traditionally 'good,' and some are traditionally 'evil.' In either case, the villains aren't meant to be killed and have no particular interest in killing the player characters. Because of this, this supplement often refers to the main opponent against the characters as the 'antagonist' rather than the 'villain.'

Each antagonist is summarized below.

REBALLIA HAVENTREE

A principal leader of the Harpers in the city of Waterdeep above, Remallia 'Remi' Haventree has learned about the *Stone of Golorr* and the legend of the vault. Citing the Harper adage that 'too much power leads to corruption,' Remi wants to bring down the Xanathar Guild and Zhentarim in Waterdeep by uprooting them in Skullport. With half a million gold coins, Remi could buy out the criminal underworld and leave both organizations in shambles, resetting the clock on criminal factions beneath the City of Splendors.

Remallia works well as an antagonist for a group of characters who buy into the moral corruption of Skullport and who lean towards evil alignment.

If you choose Remallia as the antagonist, the adventure takes place in Skullport's Growing Season.

THE SKUM LORD

This ancient aboleth lairs in the cavernous complex of sewers below Skullport. The Skum Lord once owned a near-majority of the businesses in the city in secret, but over the past century its influence has been muscled out by the efforts of the Xanathar Guild, who are now masters of the city. The Skum Lord has been enslaving new subjects as it plans to acquire the contents of the vault and use the funds to overthrow Xanathar in all-out war.

If you choose the Skum Lord as the antagonist, the adventure takes place during Skullport's Flooding Season.

THE RAG MAGE

The magical mantle that protects the structure of Skullport's cavern was created by an enclave of Netherese mages. The survivors of the enclave's destruction became thirteen extra-powerful **flameskulls** known as the Skulls of Skullport. Over a century ago, the Skulls captured a drow archmage and turned him into an entity known as the Rag Mage. Over time, the Skull's power transformed the Rag Mage into another Skull, an creature of urban legend called the Fourteenth Skull. The Rag Mage has lost its identity from its former life but retained its independence from the other Skulls, and has grown to resent their actions. It believes its unique nature makes it destined to supplant the other Skulls and reign as open master of Skullport..

If you choose the Rag Mage as the antagonist, the adventure takes place during Skullport's Dying Season.

SEASONS

The adventure occurs in a particular season depending on the antagonist you chose. As a subterranean city, Skullport doesn't experience the kind of seasons that aboveground cities do. Instead, the city goes through vague, regular cycles of events that act similar to traditional seasons and which have various effects on the city at large.

Unlike the weather effects as they're detailed in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the effects of these 'seasons' will have impact on encounters in their respective chains in different ways.

GROWING SEASON

Also called 'glowing season,' the conditions are just right for bioluminescent mosses and other fungus to begin rapidly growing on the moist walls and buildings of Skullport. The normally dim or dark city suddenly contains patches of bright light, driving some dark-loving creatures into other parts of the city and making it more difficult to move around unseen.

FLOODING SEASON

The runoff from rainfall on the surface world makes its way down into the caverns of the Underdark and Undermountain. The waters of the River Sargauth flood the lower level, leaving it awash with thick mud. The moisture on the upper level sometimes turns to a humid fog, obscuring vision.

DYING SEASON

The moisture of flooding season or the fungus of growing season sometimes give rise to outbreaks of mundane diseases. Though rarely actually deadly, these illnesses can impair the life and livelihood of many in Skullport. Many businesses and individuals are affected, and already-sluggish industries can grind to a halt.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

DIFFERENCES IN ENCOUNTER AREAS

The maps of encounter areas in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* will be referred to as-is in this supplement, but some of the areas are changed to match the culture and environment of Skullport:

Encounter 2: Mistshore. Referred to as 'Murkshore' in this supplement. All of the ships seen on the map

for this encounter zone are also established buildings and aren't free-floating vessels.

Encounter 4: Mausoleum. This location has been replaced entirely. Encounter 4 is now **Encounter 4: Wreck.** A replacement map with area descriptions is provided.

Encounter 8: Courthouse. This location has been replaced entirely. Encounter 8 is now **Encounter 8: Tavern.** A replacement map with area descriptions is provided.

Encounter 10: Converted Windmill. These structures are referred to as converted watermills for the purposes of this supplement. In some areas, flows of water from the cavern ceiling above have been harnessed by these freestanding watermills to provide low-grade power to their internal mechanisms.

LIFE IN SKULLPORT

Skullport is in many ways a dark reflection of Waterdeep above, full of as much desperation and crime as Waterdeep is bursting with life and culture. This doesn't mean life in Skullport is any less interesting, and the following pointers can help characters feel at home in the Port of Shadows:

- Just like in Waterdeep, just about anything can be bought or sold in Skullport. Goods are constantly being smuggled in from the South Sea Cave route, stolen from Watereep above, or plundered from Undermountain.
- Give characters opportunities to establish back-grounds in Skullport or to join various factions.
- Skulkers don't particularly respect adventurers, but Skullport lives and dies by the power of its various open and secret criminal factions. Having one or more characters involved in a faction gives many of Skullport's residents a good reason not to be too unhelpful—or too hostile.

BREAKING THE LAW

As odd as it sounds, there are harsh punishments for severe lawbreakers in Skullport. Make no mistake, Skullport is a dangerous place, but the city has its own mixture of hard lines and unwritten rules that can land a character in trouble for doing the wrong thing or hurting the wrong person.

Local justice. Petty crimes, fights, and thefts are woven into the grimy tapestry of daily life in Skullport. Few locals pay much attention to news of such offenses or hold long-term grudges over them—but will do what they must to prevent becoming victims of such crimes in the first place.

Some old formal and informal institutions of Skullport have widespread respect, such as the

scribes at Herald's Meet, the Skull Island Registry, and the speakers at the Hall of the Voice. They provide valuable services to the community as a whole and are protected as a result.

If an offense is deemed severe enough to warrant formal proceedings and isn't dealt with by the Xanathar Guild or the Skulls, the offender is generally taken to Skull Square for an impromptu court of public opinion.

Xanathar Guild. The Xanathar Guild is the closest thing Skullport has to a ruling authority other than the Skulls (see below). As such it tends to deal with offenses against the guild personally. Punishment can involve fines, forced service for the guild, and in extreme cases slavery (slaves are given to the Reforged Ring to double as good relations with this faction). Of course, many basic crimes against guild members are dealt with on the spot in the simplest of ways: a good beating and a 'seizure of goods.'

The Skulls. The Skulls of Skullport are arguably the ones really in charge, though they don't display any interest in actually ruling the city. The Skulls are ancient, immortal, insane, and dedicated to the protection of the city. A suitably obtrusive ruckus or one that threatens to cause significant devastation to the city will quickly bring one or more Skulls to the scene, where they will subdue or kill offenders without mercy. The Skulls will sometimes mete out bizarre punishments for offenses, such as demanding the criminal give their shoes to the third person they meet. There's only one rule: no matter how strange the request, if a Skull tells you to do something, you do it.

The thirteen Skulls are much more powerful than standard flameskulls, and even if destroyed they won't stay down for long. Something binds the Skulls to the existence of the city itself, and Skulls revive by bursting straight out of a random resident's head within minutes of being destroyed.

FACTIONS IN SKULLPORT

Various factions have interest in Skullport, some of them less savory than others. The description for each faction is listed below. Guidelines for utilizing factions within the structure of the adventure can be found in the matching section of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

THE CHOSEN OF EILISTRAEE

Usually only non-evil creatures, especially drow, are allowed into this faction.

Eilistraee, the Dark Maiden, is a rare good-aligned drow goddess. Her followers established a

temple near Skullport called the Promenade of the Dark Maiden in the mid-1300's DR. The so-called Chosen of Eilistraee live in an uneasy truce with the criminal elements of Skullport; their main focus lies in combatting the influences of evil, often drow-worshipped entities like Lolth and Ghaunadaur in the areas of Skullport, Undermountain, and nearby areas of the Underdark.

The temple's high priestess is a drow named Narceza Ulin, who oversees the faction's activities from the Promenade. The Chosen's agents are led by Iljrene Ahbruy, who has served Eilistraee since before the Promenade's construction.

The Chosen of Eilistraee don't openly defy the Xanathar Guild or other criminal factions in Skullport, but they conduct operations to provide aid and sanctuary to escaped slaves or enemies of the criminal underworld on occasion. An upheaval in the status quo in Skullport interests the Chosen greatly, and they might oppose the rise of a new group with whom they do not have an agreement.

Chosen of Eilistraee support comes in these ways:

- Spies working for the Chosen of Eilistraee can give the characters short-term access to people and locations owned by factions they aren't a part of.
- Iljrene Ahbruy (see Appendix A) might appear and help characters out of a difficult situation.
- The Chosen have safehouses all over Skullport where characters can receive treatment for wounds, diseases, and other maladies.

THE KEEPERS

Any character can join the Keepers, though they pay special attention to those with magical power or well-educated individuals, such as those with a high Intelligence score or the Sage background.

The Keepers are a group of magic-users who control the magical water locks on the path to the south sea caves. As such, they have considerable control over the imports and exports of Skullport. The controlling members of the Keepers are all **mag**es, **archmag**es, and **transmut**ers (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*), though they recruit members of all types to help protect their interests in Skullport.

Keeper support comes in these ways:

- Fellow Keepers can provide assistance in any Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (History) check when the character is performing research into a relevant topic. The assisting Keeper takes 2d4 hours to finish researching the question and makes the check with a +6 bonus to the roll.
- The Lochmasters give one character their transmuter's stone to carry for a 24-hour period. See the **transmuter** entry in *Volo's Guide to Monsters* for a

list of the stone's possible powers. The Lochmaster chooses the power when they give the stone and its effect cannot change during the 24-hour period.

- The Keepers provide a minor magical item, such as a *driftglobe*, for the character's use.

THE KRAKEN SOCIETY

Any character might have an opportunity to join the Kraken Society, though the organization focuses especially on evil characters.

This secret society obeys the commands of the ancient kraken Slarkrethel, who lairs far from Waterdeep in sunken ruins in the Trackless Sea. The kraken has secret followers in many cities along the Sword Coast, including Neverwinter, Waterdeep, and of course Skullport. The kraken's followers walk all manner of dark paths from cultists, to assassins, to thieves.

Slarkrethel's interests in Skullport are served by Navroth Keltesh, a dragonborn **kraken priest** who can literally act as the kraken's mouth, eyes, and ears in Skullport. The kraken's chief representative in Skullport was once the Skum Lord, an aboleth who might act as the adventure's chief antagonist. Over time, the Skum Lord's influence in Skullport led it to reject the kraken's patronage and seek power for itself.

The kraken's motives and long-term plans are known only to it, but Slarkrethel might offer aid in the search for the vault in exchange for a share of the treasure or other considerations.

Kraken Society support comes in these ways:

- Slarkrethel might share important information or suggest a key lead in a telepathic vision while a character is taking a long rest. The character wakes up with the long rest completed but takes a level of exhaustion for the day.
- Navroth Keltesh can cast *water breathing* on the party if they can articulate why they have use for the spell's effect.
- When the character is in dire straits, 1d4+1 **kuo toa** appear to assist them. The kuo-toa are chaotic and undisciplined fighters and scatter once the immediate threat has passed.

THE REFORGED RING

A character, usually evil, who can tolerate the Reforged Ring's activities can be brought into the faction's fold.

This criminal group partakes in slaving, perhaps the foulest trade in the entire city. A group known as the Iron Ring was once the most powerful faction of slavers in Skullport. Led by a magically disguised **yuan-ti abomination** named Zstulkk Ssarmn, the Iron Ring fell from power decades ago. Members of the

Reforged Ring seek to invoke the old organization's name, even in the face of some criminal elements in the city who oppose the slave trade.

In secret, Zstulkk still leads this slaver faction under its new name. Using an enchanted iron neckband, the yuan-ti has altered his old humanoid appearance and poses as a newcomer to Skullport. The only one who suspects Zstulkk's true identity is Ahmaergo, Xanathar's majordomo. Ahmaergo was once one of the Iron Ring's commanders, before he had a falling-out with Zstulkk and pledged his full loyalty to Xanathar.

Zstulkk is intelligent enough to know that the Iron Ring's days of glory, when they controlled most of Skullport, are behind it. In exchange for his faction's aid, the calculating yuan-ti wants just enough money and influence to have a seat at the table when the Xanathar Guild and Zhentarim form a criminal alliance, ensuring that the slave trade will continue to have its place in Skullport.

Reforged Ring support comes in these ways:

- The Reforged Ring can imprison and interrogate NPCs securely if the characters provide them. Important information is extracted quickly and efficiently.
- The faction provides a **spy** at a discounted rate of 2gp per day. The spy will not aid the characters in combat but will pursue investigative leads or perform similar tasks as instructed.
- As Mertensian Bluud, Zstulkk can set up meetings with business owners or almost any important faction member in Skullport.

XANATHAR GUILD

Anyone can join the Xanathar Guild, as long as they're willing to commit serious crimes in the name of the beholder crime boss. While knowledge of Xanathar's identity as a beholder is much more common in Skullport, it's still not an openly discussed fact in most circles.

The Xanathar Guild are the de facto rulers of Skullport, just as numerous other factions or individuals have controlled Skullport since its inception. Eyestalker-rank Guild members and new initiates often mistake their faction membership for protection; Skullport is still a dangerous place, and even the highest-ranking members don't cross the Skulls of Skullport.

Xanathar Guild support comes in these ways:

- Guild membership tends to grant access and enable cooperation from businesses in Skullport.
- A member on assignment might receive a monstrous bodyguard or assistant as described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

- Xanathar might send a **gazer** as described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

ZHENTARIM

The Zhentarim are open to all and recruit aggressively, which is perhaps one of the reasons they have so many problems with clashing cells and double-crossing. Still, they're a powerful group with a wide array of members, and in the events of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* are on the verge of securing a deal with Xanathar before things begin to go downhill.

The Doom Raiders as described in appendix B of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* can be active Zhentarim contacts in *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*. Any one of them can be the chief point-of-contact for a new Zhentarim character, based on the character's personality or the nature of a given mission.

Zhentarim support comes in these ways:

- Any of the benefits listed in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. In *Dragon Swindle*, Skeemo's shop is located in the Upper Trade Lanes.

THE HARPERS

Player characters are unable to join the Harpers, as this faction is antithetical to the lifestyle and core factions of Skullport. A character might be allowed to make tentative alliances with Harpers if Remallia Haventree is not the chosen main antagonist of the adventure.

Those Who Harp are a clandestine organization that usually prefers covert operations over open action. The Harpers have been interfering in Skullport's business for hundreds of years, seeking to reduce the tyranny of its ever-changing rulers and undermine the evils that take root there. Even Laeral Silverhand (see Appendix B of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*) served as an undercover agent for the Harpers in Skullport for a time.

Lately Remallia "Remi" Haventree, the elven leader of the Harpers in Waterdeep, has tired of Xanathar's constant destructive schemes. She has slipped into Skullport undetected and established a headquarters at Dalagor's Fortress, the former home of a long-dead mercenary lord of Skullport. She has plans to turn the mercenary and cutthroat nature of Skullport's resident factions against itself to collapse the current regime, and has heard rumors; rumors of a massive hoard of Halaster's gold beneath the city. With that gold, she believes she could undercut any faction in Skullport and bring the city down once and for all.

CHAPTER 1: A FRIEND IN NEED

Because there is no Yawning Portal tavern in Skullport, this introductory adventure needs to be adjusted for *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*. This chapter will provide notes on converting the contents of this same chapter in *Dragon Heist* to fit *Dragon Swindle*'s content. The broad changes to the events of the chapter are:

- The quest starts at the Black Tankard tavern in Skullport.
- The encounter with the troll has been altered.
- There is no Renaer Neverember in Skullport; his character is replaced with an equivalent character Auden Trilluach, son of late mercenary lord Byronae Trilluach.
- Those who participate in Floon and Auden's kidnapping still work for Urstul Floxin, but the group that mistakenly takes Floon works directly for the adventure's main antagonist and not the Xanathar Guild.

WHERE TO START

The adventure starts in the Black Tankard tavern in the Lower Port. The Black Tankard is an unsavory place with black stone walls and a stone well in the middle of the common room. This feature, strongly reminiscent of the Yawning Portal tavern in Waterdeep, leads to Skullport's monster-infested sewer system—nobody pays the business owner for the privilege of climbing down there.

BRAWLS AND MONSTERS

The events of the tavern brawl and the monster attack are virtually the same as they are presented in *Dragon Heist*, though the creature has been changed to account for the change of venue:

- The Xanathar Guild members are replaced by general ruffians. Krentz (CE human **bandit**) is still present.
- The troll that climbs out of the central well is replaced with an **ogre**, which currently has 46 hit points remaining. The ogre and three unfed **stirges** attack the Black Tankard while the patrons generally

attempt to flee to safety.

MEETING VOLO

As in *Dragon Heist*, Volo witnesses the characters' defeat of the monster attacking the tavern and approaches them about the kidnapping of Floon Blagmaar. Volothamp Geddarm is in Skullport writing an authorized biography of the mad beholder Xanathar. He's brought with him Floon Blagmaar, a rather dim Waterdhavian. Floon went missing two nights ago from right around the Black Tankard, where he and Volo had been drinking.

WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT?

As in *Dragon Heist*, Volo left Floon behind at the tavern (in this case, the Burning Troll) after drinking away a night of writer's block. After Volo's departure Floon met Auden Trilluach, son of Skullport's late mercenary lord Byronae Trilluach. Zhentarim thugs working for Urstul Floxin captured them both and brought them to a warehouse in the Lower Port docks to question Auden about the *Stone of Golorr*, which Byronae Trilluach originally owned.

Before they could interrogate Auden, the Zhentarim were ambushed by the antagonist's servants. Auden hid during the scuffle and Floon was mistakenly taken in his stead.

FINDING FLOON

Volo last saw Floon in the area around the Burning Troll, located nearby in the Lower Port. The following encounters kick off the characters' investigation.

Around the outside of the tavern, "Skull Justice" gives the characters a chance to interact with the Skulls of Skullport. If the characters

want to search the area, "Searching the Port" helps set the mood for Skullport's dangerous atmosphere, and they might find a lead in a nearby shop, "Madam Ivydanya's." When the characters reach the place where Floon was last seen, "The Burning Troll" is a chance for them to interview the tavern's patrons. This should lead them to "Old Warehouse," where the search continues.



SKULL JUSTICE

As the characters traverse the Lower Port, they run into one of the Skulls of Skullport doling out its own brand of inane, inconsistent justice:

A quivering goblin is looking up at an erratically bobbing flameskull, one of the Skulls of Skullport. The Skull is rattling off a list of offenses, ending with “Littering, littering!” Before the goblin can stammer out an apology, the Skull screeches. “GOAT! The punishment for littering is goat!” In a flash of light, the goblin is replaced by a small goat, which bleats in terror and dashes away. The Skull floats upward and away.

The Skulls of Skullport are thirteen particularly powerful **flameskulls** tied to the city’s own continued existence. If they were ever fully coherent they would be the undisputed, indestructible rulers of Skullport; instead, they float around the city and dole out bizarre punishments for supposed offenses. Should a threat to Skullport appear or a battle become too widespread, the Skulls have a nasty habit of swooping in and inflicting considerable harm on the perceived aggressor.

SEARCHING THE PORT

The Lower Port is unsafe. Actually, all of Skullport is unsafe. You can set the mood by reading the following to the players:

The narrow streets and alleys of the Lower Port crowd in around you, the stacked levels of the city seeming to lean in oppressively over the streets. Figures constantly slip in and out of pools dim lantern light and the shadow of crooked alleyways.

Near the Burning Troll, a peculiar shop might catch the characters’ attention:

A sign made of a dull brass ring hangs outside a small shop, a perpetual cloud of smoke lingering inside of it. Letters on the ring spell the words “Ivydanya’s” around the top half of the circle and “Fortunes Revealed” on the bottom.

If the characters enter the shop, continue with “Madam Ivydanya’s.” If not, they can enter the tavern next door; continue with “The Burning Troll,” below.

MADAM IVYDANYA’S

When the characters enter, they are struck by the establishment’s mystic atmosphere:

The shop is hazy with incense and the smoke of low-burning candles. Dull patterned curtains hung on the walls and across the ceiling only accentuate the place’s intense closeness. Withered heads and occult trinkets line glass-enclosed cabinets. A withered old woman sits on the far side of a small round table, peering at you over a smoke-filled crystal ball.

This is ostensibly Madam Ivydanya, who has served as the local fortune teller for an impossible length of time—over a century! In truth, the real Ivydanya passed away of old age decades ago; the shop’s current owner is a **green hag** named Auntie Gutcrunch. Gutcrunch uses her magic to accentuate her readings and seances and greatly enjoys playing her role.

Floon’s Fate. Ivydanya keeps a close eye on the goings-on outside her shop. She remembers Floon and someone else with a strong resemblance to him walking near her shop when they were attacked by five men in black leather armor. She remembers seeing a winged snake tattoo on one of their necks.

THE BURNING TROLL

This three-floor inn backs up the Furlough Street on the Lower Port, just next to Madam Ivydanya’s fortune shop. When the characters reach it, read:

The Burning Troll is a big, three-level building that rises higher than most others in the Lower Port. A large sign over the door depicts a group of adventurers posing on top of a still-smoldering, face-down troll corpse.

Floon has not been in the Burning Troll since the night he vanished, and the ill-tempered common room patrons aren’t ones to freely give up information. A successful DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check convinces them to share what they know, as can a bribe of 5 gp.

Floon’s Fate. Some of the customers remember Floon from several nights ago. After Volo left, Floon met with Auden Trilluach, son of the late mercenary lord Byronae Trilluach. Some sneeringly refer to Auden as a “prettyboy” or deride his late father.

The two drank for a while before leaving around midnight, followed closely by five men. The five men haven’t been back to the tavern either, but at least one of the patrons remembers seeing them before at a warehouse in the Central Trade Lanes. “Look for a snake symbol on the door,” they advise.

CENTRAL TRADE LANES

The Zhentarim warehouse is located on the Trade Lands on the Central Level. Characters on the lookout for the snake symbol easily notice it after spending some time searching this area.

ZHENTARIM HIDEOUT

As in *Dragon Heist*, the Zhentarim have hideouts and warehouses all over the city. Urstul Floxin and his fellow double agents utilize this particular location. Unlike the area described in *Dragon Heist*, there is no yard and fence.

Local Skulkers were hired by the antagonist to raid the Zhentarim warehouse and take possession of Auden Trilluach, seizing Floon by accident. The kenku searching the warehouse are there to loot and loiter, not really expecting any additional forces to appear.

Z1. MAIN ROOM

There are no major differences in this encounter zone, except for **What the Kenku Know**.

The new phrases the Kenku might repeat are:

- In a deep, gruff voice: “You’re going to tell us about that stone your daddy found.”
- In a thin, nasally voice: “Follow the yellow signs in the sewers.” (As in *Dragon Heist*).
- In a scratchy voice: “Get him into the sewers. Follow the signs.”

Z2. STORAGE CLOSET

In *Dragon Swindle* this area contains Auden Trilluach, hiding after slipping free of his bonds.

Roleplaying Auden

Auden Trilluach is the closest thing to nobility that a place like Skullport can have; the son of mercenary lord Byronae Trilluach is wealthy and well-educated, and trusts the characters only after personally certain they are not aligned with his kidnapers.

Auden isn’t quite kind, but on the night of his abduction he wanted to make sure the intoxicated Floon got back to his inn room safely. The two quickly found themselves accosted by five criminals ostensibly working for the Zhentarim, though the conversations he overheard led him to believe they weren’t really acting on behalf of their faction.

Auden doesn’t know who the second group of kidnapers was working for, but believes (correctly) that they’ve mistaken Floon for him. He’s happy to join

the search for Floon upon request, as he’s interested to find out who wants to abduct him.

If asked why he thinks he was kidnapped, he replies:

“My father Byronae was a powerful mercenary lord in Skullport. He found something, an artifact called the *Stone of Golorr*. It’s said that if the Stone deemed you worthy it would lead you to a vast hoard of Halaster’s gold hidden somewhere in Skullport. The Stone is with the Xanathar Guild now, but I think someone greedy for that gold is out to find the hoard. They foolishly thought I’d know something special about the Stone.”

OTHER AREAS OF THE WAREHOUSE

The remaining areas of the warehouse can be run as they are described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

THE XANATHAR GUILD ARRIVES

This section is run similarly to its entry in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, with a few small notes and differences:

Perpetrators. The Xanathar Guild forces determine the bodies in the warehouse belong to members of the Zhentarim and an unknown third-party group.

Staget. Hyustus Staget is now Lawful Evil. He is a strict Guild enforcer who most often oversees the incoming and outgoing goods in the docks at the Lower Port and on Skull Island. His personality is similar to how he is described in *Dragon Heist*.

Staget has suspected there are Zhentarim working for someone other than their own faction for some time, but hasn’t been able to prove it. He tends to keep this investigation private.

Auden and Staget recognize one another; Staget is generally respectful to the young Lord Trilluach, as the Trilluach estate and Xanathar are on good terms.

The Xanathar Guild are not constabulary, and with the kidnapping Zhents apparently slain and Auden Trilluach safe, Staget and his men consider the matter closed. They have no interest in Floon’s recovery; people go missing in Skullport all the time.

TRACKING FLOON

This section can mostly be run as it is presented in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. The differences are:

- The **gazer** in the sewers works for Grum’shar, but Grum’shar is now a criminal-for-hire and isn’t associated with the Xanathar Guild.
- The ladder leads up to the Lower Level near Gyudd’s Distillery.

THE HIDEOUT

Unlike in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, Floon was not taken by members of the Xanathar Guild. Instead, the antagonist (who may be undecided at this time) hired a half-orc named Grum'shar and his criminal underlings to capture and interrogate Floon—who he thinks is Auden Trilluach. Any creatures in the hideout described in *Dragon Heist* as working for the Xanathar Guild instead have no faction affiliation.

Nihiloor. There is no **mind flayer** present in *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*. Instead, area Q7 contains an invisible sensor similar to the *arcane eye* spell, which the antagonist or one of their agents uses to observe Floon's interrogation (and potentially the characters' interference).

Secret Route. There is no secret magical entrance to Xanathar's lair from area Q11. The room is bare.

Halfling Cellar. The private cellar (area Q9) is owned by a family of halflings who use their basement to brew moonshine. The Peabodys agree to seal up the tunnel or allow the characters to continue to use it in exchange for silence regarding their brewing operation.

Hostel Cellar. The Shard Shunners are a small-time gang in Skullport. They're aware of the tunnel and Grum'shar's hideout and have a tenuous alliance as long as they can use the tunnel for their own purposes.

COMPLETING VOLO'S QUEST

Returning to the Black Tankard with Floon Blagmaar marks the end of this quest.

A GOOD DEED

Part of Xanathar's 'payment' to Volo for the author's beholder biography is the deed to a manor-house along Illithid Way in the Lower Heart. Though this is a generous gift in real-estate-competitive Skullport, Volo has no particular interest in settling down. He gives the characters the deed to the home and sets up the appropriate meeting with the Skull Island Registry.

NOT QUITE FRIENDS

Volo and Floon are particularly grateful for the characters' service and consider them friends. Auden Trilluach is more reserved, though he views the characters as particularly useful allies and a potential force to be reckoned with in Skullport. If the characters need an audience with influential people in Skullport or information about the city and its history, Auden is always available to them.



CHAPTER 2: ILLITHID

WAY

Rather than being set in Waterdeep's North Ward, Trollskull Alley has been replaced in *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* with Skullport's existing Illithid Way. This dark lane is nestled in Skullport's Lower Heart, and historically known for its appeal to—what else—mind flayers. Whether they're ambassadors from an elder brain's colony or desperate renegades, these illithids need brains to sustain themselves. A mind flayer that kills and consumes the brains of locals will quickly find itself hunted down by gangs and other criminal organizations; Illithid Way is the place where mind flayers can buy pickled brains and other unsavory items 'legally.'

There are businesses canonically located along Illithid Way, the details of which can be found in Chapter 8. The residents of Trollskull Alley as presented in Chapter 2 of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* are modified to fit the tone of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*.

1. MINDFLAY MANOR

The layout and description of Mindflay Manor match the description of Trollskull Manor as described in Chapter 2 and Appendix C of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

Lif the Poltergeist. The building's resident **specter**, Lif, is present in Mindflay Manor. If Lif is appeased by the characters, Lif can act as a bartender and waiter as described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. The spirit can also be used as a bouncer in the (likely) event that trouble breaks out within Mindflay Manor's walls.

2. THE BENT NAIL

Talisolvanar "Tally" Fellbranch is still the proprietor of this woodcarving and carpentry business. The entry for this shop and storeowner are the same as the text in *Dragon Heist*, with the following changes:

- Talisolvanar Fellbranch is **neutral evil**.
- Talisolvanar keeps busy repairing the wooden walkways that crisscross the central and upper levels of Skullport. Some of this work is for specific businesses and some is for the Xanathar Guild.

3. STEAM AND STEEL

The following modifications are made to the Steam and Steel:

- Avi and Embric do not belong to any guild.
- The other details of Avi and Embric's characters are unchanged, though Avi does not make it known that he worships Eldath; knowledge that he believes in a goddess of peace would make the business a target for robbery and intimidation.

4. ZUGGTMOY'S CAP (FORMERLY CORELLON'S CROWN)

The business known as 'Corellon's Crown' is renamed 'Zuggtmoy's Cap.' It has the following additional changes:

- Fala Lefaliir is chaotic neutral.

5. TIGER'S EYE

This business is essentially unchanged. The **rakshasa** that owns this private detective agency has lived in Skullport for close to a century and can provide useful information about the rise and fall of various factions.

6. BOOK WYRM'S TREASURE

This business and its services are unchanged other than the fact that Rishaal is not a member of the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors. He has ties to the Keepers but isn't a member of that faction.

JOINING FACTIONS

Word travels quickly about a group of adventurers who rescued Auden Trilluach from a band of kidnappers. Whether or not they have respect for the Trilluach name, the factions of Skullport are constantly in competition with one another and respect strength and initiative. Soon after the characters settle into Mindflay Manor, various factions in the city may attempt to recruit members to their respective causes. Characters aren't required to join a faction, nor are they all expected to join the same one; factions might appeal to or target specific characters based on their background or actions in Skullport.

TRACKING RENOWN

If you are using the optional renown rules for factions in chapter 1 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to track a character's rank in a given faction, the ranks for the Zhentarim can be found in that chapter; the ranks for the Xanathar Guild can be found in the 'Faction Membership' section of the Introduction in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

Chosen of Eilistraee: Chosen (1), Swordsinger (3), Darksong Knight (10), Hand of the Protectors (25), Protectors of the Song (50)

The Keepers: Initiate (1), Keeper (3), Hoistkeeper (10), Sargauthian (25), Locklord (50)

Kraken Society: Thrall (1), Dredger (3), Deep One (10), Scion (25), Voice of the Kraken (50)

Reforged Ring: Branded (1), Jailer (3), Shackler (10), Iron Warden (25), Lord of Iron (50)

CHOSEN OF EILISTRAEE

The Chosen of Eilistraee are a drow-led faction, though they recruit other races into their ranks. They are generally only interested in approaching potential members who are good—or at the very least, who are not allies of evil factions the Chosen of Eilistraee oppose. Characters supportive of the Reforged Ring or the Xanathar Guild especially will not be approached by the Chosen of Eilistraee.

The Chosen might target a potential recruit with a test of personality, wherein an individual enters Mindflay Manor seeking shelter. The individual is dressed in clothes that strongly suggest they are a prisoner or slave of some kind; ragged clothing, an iron collar, and the like. After the individual is either willingly hidden by the potential recruit or attempts to hide themselves, two more disguised representatives from the Chosen of Eilistraee enter and ask about an



Chosen of Eilistraee Missions

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	“We have a package to be delivered to one of our agents at Herald’s Meet in two days’ time. Make sure you give it to the right person! They’ll tell you ‘the Dark Maiden dances.’”	The characters are given a note with coded Undercommon written on it; should they take the time to decipher it with a DC 17 Intelligence check, they determine that it is a request for more frequent reports on the Xanathar Guild. There are many people at Herald’s Meet; a trio of female drow initially approaches the characters and tells them “The Dark Lady sings.” They’re agents of Lolth who may turn violent if the note is not handed over. A tiefling later finds the characters and gives the correct phrase. <i>Reward:</i> Each Chosen of Eilistraee character gains 1 renown.
3rd	“One of our small patrols was killed while in a tunnel close to the Promenade. Investigate the area and deal with whatever killed them.”	The tunnel is newly home to a hook horror , which attempts to ambush the characters. The hook horror may attempt to flee if brought below 15 hit points, and will not return to the area if it manages to escape. <i>Reward:</i> Each Chosen of Eilistraee character gains 1 renown if the hook horror is defeated.
4th	“Some escaped slaves need shelter for a few days while they lay low. Keep them safe.”	Two commoners named Willek (male half-orc) and Yashi (female halfling) are brought to Mindflay Manor to hide out. On the second day, three thugs hunting the escaped slaves ask around about the slaves; they can be deceived with a DC 13 Charisma (Deception) check, fought off, or scared off with a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check. <i>Reward:</i> Each Chosen of Eilistraee character gains 2 renown. Each participating party member is given 50 gp.
5th	“We believe the Promenade has been infiltrated by an agent of Lolth. We must root out this spy before they acquire too much information or hurt a ranking member.”	Bemdan Icharn is a drow elite warrior who has infiltrated the Chosen but is a devout follower of Lolth. Characters can discover a hidden makeshift shrine to Lolth in the temple with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Bemdan will eventually return to the area to conduct prayer to Lolth; he will not surrender willingly and hopes to be killed rather than captured. <i>Reward:</i> Each Chosen of Eilistraee character gains 2 renown. Each party member who participated in the mission is given a <i>potion of waterbreathing</i> .

escaped slave, promising a reward for their return. If the 'slave' is protected, the Chosen later contact the potential recruit for an audience with Narceza Ulin.

ILJRENE AHBRUYN

Iljrene (see Appendix A) is the primary contact for characters in Skullport and for all faction recruits. She is small, almost appearing frail, and uses this to her advantage when she makes inquiries in Skullport. Iljrene usually has recruits meet her in an inn or tavern where they won't be overheard, but actively avoids The Black Tankard, where Xanathar Guild majordomo Ahmaergo likes to spend his time, and the Broken Pike Tavern, a meeting place for a shapeshifter organization known as the Unseen.

If the Chosen have decided to recruit a character into their ranks, Iljrene conducts an interview with them in Skullport and extends an offer to join the Chosen and will escort the recruit(s) to the Promenade of the Dark Maiden.

The Promenade lies down one of the winding cavern-paths of the River Sargauth. It is a temple complex and base of operations for the Chosen of Eilistraee. Narceza Ulin, the head priestess, is warm, charming, and wild in appearance, making her disarming to those who are used to traditional drow sensibilities.

THE KEEPERS

Characters with magical talent or a knowledge of the arcane are the most likely to be recruited this faction. Recruits are approached by Yarvi Yandle (see Appendix A).



The Keepers control the sea locks that lead from the Port of Shadows to the South Sea Caves on Waterdeep's shores. As such, they have final say on what vessels go into or out of Skullport from the sea, putting them in a precarious but powerful position. The Keepers don't have the strength or numbers to rule Skullport or to consistently defy a powerful faction like the Xanathar Guild, but their closely guarded knowledge of the sea locks makes them indispensable.

YARVI YANDLE

Yarvi is a female halfling **mage** and the primary point of contact for members of the Keepers in Skullport. She is soft-spoken and reserved in stark contradiction to her shockingly pink hair. She prefers to meet in a neutral location, like the Gentleman's Groggery.

KEEPER ENCLAVE

South of Skull Isle are a handful of sea caves called Keeper Enclave, acting as the faction's seat of power.

KRAKEN SOCIETY



Any nongood character might be targeted for recruitment into the ranks of the Kraken Society; how the kraken Slarkrethel chooses these recruits is unknown. The Kraken Society pursues unusual missions towards often-inscrutable goals, each of them a moving piece in a grand scheme of their master's design. Inducted members can receive quests from other members of the Kraken Society or in a telepathic vision directly from the kraken itself.

Keepers Missions

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	"A ship captain lied to us and underpaid for his passage through the sea locks. Track him down and collect his dues, but don't make a scene."	Cutter Blighe (N male human bandit captain) can be found at the Shattershields tavern and fight pit. Cutter can be bullied into paying his remaining dues with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check. Alternatively, characters can convince him to pay with a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This check is made with advantage if they share a few drinks with Cutter first. <i>Reward:</i> Each Keepers character gains 1 renown.
3rd	"We want to repair the big sea hoist one day, but to do it we'll need the original blueprints. Acquire them from the Skull Island Registry however you can."	The scribes at the Registry aren't interested in digging through decades of records to find the original blueprints, and a formal request requires seven days and 100 gold pieces. A single employee can be bribed to acquire the blueprints with a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check and a bribe of 20 gold pieces. <i>Reward:</i> Each Keepers character gains 1 renown. The party is given a jar of <i>Keoghtom's ointment</i> with 2 charges.
4th	"We're having trouble with one of the arcane sea locks. We'll need you to check out the problem and report back."	Five sahuagin have smeared profane symbols all over the sea lock. They can be fought off or frightened off with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check. Identifying the issue with the arcane lock requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Alternatively, a character can make a DC 14 Dexterity check to accurately record the symbols for the Keepers. <i>Reward:</i> Each Keepers character gains 2 renown.
5th	"An elemental has made its way to one of the sea-channels in the tunnels and has attacked a few smaller vessels. Take care of it."	Finding the elemental requires three successful DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) checks before three failures, each check representing an hour of searching for signs of its passage. The creature in question is a water elemental that appeared by means of a portal mishap. The elemental can be convinced to go elsewhere or stop attacking travelers with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check. <i>Reward:</i> Each Keepers character gains 2 renown. The party is given a <i>wand of magic detection</i> as a reward.

Kraken Society Missions

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	"A valuable trophy is arriving at the dock. Make sure no-one interferes with its delivery and keep its contents secret from those outside the Society."	A large crate containing a storm giant's belt buckle, a trophy from a Kraken Society scheme, is being unloaded onto the dock. Characters can discourage the dock foreman from inspecting the cargo with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check or a 5 gold piece bribe. The cost of the bribe doubles if the inspector sees what's inside the crate. <i>Reward:</i> Each Kraken Society member gains 1 renown.
3rd	"It would benefit us to expand our network of informants in Skullport. Convince at least two store owners to report to us when we request it."	Characters must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check on a shop owner to convince them to join the Kraken Society's network of informants. <i>Reward:</i> Each Kraken Society member gains 1 renown.
4th	"A shipment of vapors for the Frontal Lobe have gone missing. Get down to the Flatbacks and retrieve that product!"	Any character that spends at least 1 day searching the Lower Port can attempt a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, the information gathered leads them to an unused warehouse nearby, where a pack of goblins and kobolds from the Flatbacks took the vapor canisters. The group had been using the vapors as an illicit drug, but it isn't meant for humanoid; all of them are dead. <i>Reward:</i> Each Kraken Society member gains 1 renown.
5th	"We sought to explore an old business in the Lower Port for valuable magic, but instead it unleashed a monster that lairs there! Go in and kill the beast in its home before it hunts again."	The building in the Lower Port used to be a business that made monsters for the highest bidder. One of their creatures in stasis, a chimera , is now awake and must be destroyed. <i>Reward:</i> Each Kraken Society creature gains 2 renown. Navroth gives the participating characters a <i>potion of frost giant strength</i> in addition.

Reforged Ring Missions

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	“We have a shipment coming in from the docks. Bring it to Mertensian’s home.”	A heavy crate at the lower port docks requires creatures with a combined Strength score of 25 to lift and move. Characters needing assistance can recruit helpers from Herald’s Meet. The crate contains heavy iron manacles, leg shackles, and chained collars. <i>Reward:</i> Each Reforged Ring character who participates receives 1 renown. Each character who assisted is given a pouch containing 10 gp.
3rd	“There’s an old fishmonger named Tressym who’s really a yuan-ti spy. Wait until they’re alone and then take care of them.”	Tressym Bulinor is a yuan-ti pureblood who serves the fane of Dendar in Chult and has begun to suspect that Mertensian is a yuan-ti himself. Characters must observe him for 1d4 hours without being noticed with a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check, at which point Tressym heads into an alley. If Tressym has detected the characters during this time, this is an ambush. <i>Reward:</i> Each Reforged Ring character gains 1 renown. The party is given two vials of basic poison.
4th	“One of our members, a gnome named Bluenose Soothand, has gone missing after going to a meeting with some outside slaving interests in the Lower Heart. Find out what happened to him and bring him back if possible.”	Any character who spends at least two days asking around the Lower Heart can make a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check. On a success, they learn that Bluenose has been spotted near an old abandoned hovel. Investigating the hovel finds Bluenose and his contact, a neogi master who mistakenly thought the gnome was a gifted slave from the Reforged Ring and subsequently enslaved his mind. When the situation is explained, the neogi is willing to return the gnome. <i>Reward:</i> Each Reforged Ring character gains 2 renown.
5th	“One of our slaves has escaped from Mertensian’s home! Bring her back; alive is preferable. We’re fairly certain she’s trying to connect with the damned drow of Eilistraee.”	Gaulia is a female human spy who was caught trying to poison shopkeepers in an assassination plot. Any character who spends at least one day asking around the Lower Trade Lanes and makes a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check learns Gaulia’s whereabouts: a safehouse of the Chosen of Eilistraee nearby. Gaulia is in the safehouse with three drow and a human berserker from the faction, who are unaware of her background as a spy. To avoid violence, any character can attempt a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This check is made with advantage if the characters reveal Gaulia’s background. <i>Reward:</i> Each Reforged Ring character gains 2 renown. If Gaulia is returned to Mertensian alive, each character who participated receives 50 gp.

Zhentarim Missions

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	“An outside contractor is making a drop for us. Go to Herald’s Meet and wear a yellow cloak. Deliver the package back to the Keel Hall.”	Farcor Fastfinger (see Appendix A) and his giant weasel Slandersnout stole a 6,000 gp diamond from a vault in Undermountain at the behest of Bosskyn Gorb. The pair are watching Herald’s Meet in order to make the drop; if Farcor sees a character with the requisite yellow cloak, he sends Slandersnout with a small bound package in its mouth. <i>Reward:</i> Each Zhentarim character gains 1 renown upon successful delivery. Bosskyn Gorb also gives each participating character a pouch containing 10 gp as a tip.
3rd	“A weaponsmith in the Lower Heart won’t do business with us. Bring this canister to the smithy and empty its contents. Don’t get any on you, and try not to get caught.”	A duergar veteran named Zilbruk owns the smithy. The characters are given a ceramic canister containing a gray ooze , which they can unleash by opening or breaking open the canister. The ooze will attack the characters if they remain near it; otherwise, it begins ‘eating’ the metal in the smithy. <i>Reward:</i> Each Zhentarim character gains 1 renown.

Zhentarim Missions (Continued)

4th	“We had an agent named Urftol; they were torn apart in the streets of the Central Heart two nights ago. Track down their killer.”	Any character that spends at least a day piecing together witness testimony can make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, they learn that a huge wolf was seen killing Urftol; afterward, the wolf was seen fleeing into a nearby building. Urftol was slain by a human werewolf named Keng Sable, who resides in the Lodge of the Beastlord; Keng is an adolescent who has just begun to manifest the lycanthropy she inherited from her parents. Characters can satisfy the Zhentarim by killing her, taking her back as a prisoner, or securing compensation for the murder from the Malarites of the lodge. <i>Reward:</i> Each Zhentarim character gains 2 renown.
5th	“An upstart bugbear tried to slip Bosskyn Gorrb a dose of poison. We’d like you to slip the poison right back, but it’s important that you not get caught. He’s a creature of considerable appetite.”	Yrigml is a bugbear who makes the rounds to every tavern and restaurant in Skullport. The characters are given a vial of deadly poison; a character must use a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check contested by the Wisdom (Perception) checks of all potential witnesses to slip the poison into Yrigml’s food or drink unnoticed. Death comes swiftly; in almost any establishment there is uproar and a search for the culprit. If Yrigml is killed in the Worm’s Gullet, it’s assumed he died from Gharz Stonedark’s cooking. <i>Reward:</i> Each Zhentarim character gains 2 renown. In addition, each participating character is given a ruby worth 100 gp.

Xanathar Guild Missions

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	“Garryth at the Overflowing Urn has been supplying lantern oil to the city for years, but we received a tip that he might be up to something shady. Well, shady in a way we don’t like. Check him out and let us know if there’s a reason to be concerned.”	Garryth has been dead for years and was replaced by a doppelganger using his identity. Garryth uses his ability to read surface thoughts to his advantage in order to discourage suspicion. If he is revealed as a doppelganger, he offers a bribe of up to 20 gp to keep his secret. <i>Reward:</i> Each Xanathar Guild character gains 1 renown.
3rd	“Some kobolds at the Flatbacks are demanding more money to unpack our shipments! Go knock a few heads together, but try not to kill anyone; after all, dead kobolds don’t carry crates.”	The Flatbacks is a goblin-and-kobold-staffed business in the Lower Port docks. Six kobolds are leading a demand for higher wages from the Xanathar Guild with crude signs with slogans such as “No pay, no pack” and “High rate or no crate.” Characters can avoid conflict with a DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation) check. The kobolds fight unarmed (+4 to hit, 1 bludgeoning damage on-hit). <i>Reward:</i> Each Xanathar Guild character gains 1 renown. Each character who participates is given a pouch with 10 gp if none of the kobolds were killed.
4th	“People have gone missing in Taglath’s Gap. We can’t afford for one of the passages to become unusable. Find out what’s going on and deal with the problem.”	A band of ten grimlocks have taken up residence in the tunnel, killing and eating travelers and littering the floor with gnawed bones. They attempt to ambush anyone in the tunnel. <i>Reward:</i> Each Xanathar Guild character gains 2 renown. The characters are also given a scroll of <i>continual flame</i> and a pouch containing 75 gold pieces.
5th	“We’ve received word that there will be an assassination attempt on ‘The Spare.’ ‘The Spare’ must be protected at all costs. We currently have ‘The Spare’ in a warehouse in the Lower Port; stop the assassin and protect ‘The Spare.’ Don’t tell anyone else about this.”	‘The Spare’ is a goldfish identical to Xanathar’s pet Sylgar and is housed in a small magical glass bowl, which is immune to all damage. In the middle of the night a Harper assassin will attempt to sneak in and dump out the bowl. If ‘The Spare’ is removed from water, it dies if it is not returned to a container of water within 1 minute. <i>Reward:</i> Each Xanathar Guild character gains 2 renown, or 1 renown if The Spare dies but the assassin is killed or captured. The characters are also given three vials of basic poison.

NAVROTH KELTESH

The leader of the Kraken Society in Skullport is Navroth Keltesh (Appendix A), a female dragonborn **kraken priest**. Navroth is a devout follower of Slarkrethel and spends much of her time in telepathic contact with the kraken at her private offices in The Frontal Lobe, a strange lounge in the Upper Heart. Potential recruits to the Kraken Society are brought before Navroth, who surrenders her body to Slarkrethel so that the kraken can interview applicants directly.

THE REFORGED RING



This faction of slavers generally only seeks out unquestionably evil recruits, as even basic criminals in Skullport aren't friendly to the slave trade. Skullport's bustling slave trade over a century ago was a direct result of the Iron Ring's heyday as a ruling faction of Skullport—once the Iron Ring fell, Skullport's residents made their general distaste for the practice well-known. The Reforged Ring's current business in slaves is far from the scale it enjoyed before: it seeks to spread into smuggling and other illicit trades.

Inductees into the Reforged Ring have one of their ring fingers branded as a clear sign of their faction membership.

MERTENSIAN BLOOD (ZSTULKK SSARMN)

This **yuan-ti abomination** led the original Iron Ring along with other leaders, and has returned to lead the Reforged Ring. Only trusted inductees to the Reforged Ring are aware of Zstulkk's true identity. As the meaning behind the yuan-ti's new moniker suggests, Zstulkk is taking a cautious approach to reclaiming the glory of the old days.

The disguised yuan-ti takes particular interest in any yuan-ti pureblood characters or anyone familiar with yuan-ti deities. Such instances being specific and rare, Zstulkk usually just seeks to recruit new members for their utility and lack of moral scruples.

XANATHAR GUILD

The beholder crime lord has become the acting ruler of Skullport in recent years, and his Xanathar Guild are its ruling administration, spies, and enforcers in the Port of Shadows. Points of contact for burgeoning Xanathar Guild members include Ahmaergo and other Xanathar Guild members as described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

ZHENTARIM

The Black Network have begun negotiations with the Xanathar Guild to become a more prominent faction in Skullport, an effort led by the Doom Raiders (see *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*). The Doom Raiders act as the primary point of contact for characters who join the Zhentarim, taking a keen interest in recruiting characters who have undertaken public acts indicating particular bravery or ambition.

BOSSKYN GORRB

A blind tiefling **spy** named Bosskyn Gorrbb leads the Zhentarim in Skullport, operating out of the Keel Hall in the Central Port area.

CHAPTER 3: FIREBALL

Illithid Way is rocked by an explosion of fire just outside Mindflay Manor. Fighting and arguments aren't unheard of in Skullport, but residents rarely partake in loud and noticeable forms of violence for fear of attracting the notice of the Skulls of Skullport. This incident puts the main plot into motion and triggers the sequence of events that should result in the characters discovering the hidden Vault of Golorr.

The fireball goes off early in the morning, when the characters are present in Mindflay Manor. You can use the suggested read-aloud text from the start of **Chapter 3: Fireball** in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, making proper modifications for the location.

GIVE ME THE SUMMARY

Floon. Floon was enchanted by the antagonist during his capture and instructed to steal the *Stone of Golorr* at Xanathar's lair. He flees and shakes off the enchantment, hoping to take refuge with the characters in Illithid Way. He's intercepted and killed by Lady Gralhund's nimblewright in a fiery explosion.

Zhent Pursuit. Urstul Floxin and other Zhentarim pursue Floon, supposedly to recover the stolen item for Xanathar. In truth, Urstul works for Lady Gralhund on the side and is furious when her nimblewright interferes.

Gralhunds. In the events of this adventure, the Gralhunds are an old Skullport family that have fallen from grace. Hungry for a return to their former wealth, Lady Gralhund has aligned herself with the antagonist. Lady Gralhund sent the nimblewright to secure the *Stone of Golorr*.

Nimblewright. The (new) inventor of the nimblewright is Nim Wrackmutter, who works in Clockwork Wonders in the Lower Trade Lanes. He sold a nimblewright to an unknown buyer but has the *nimblewright detector* to track it.

Other Small Changes. There are small adjustments to the scene of the crime, eyewitnesses, and Gralhund Manor to account for the differences between the traditional *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* adventure and *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Floon Blagmaar, after his rescue, surprised Volo by insisting on remaining with him in Skullport. In secret, Floon was magically compelled by the adventure's antagonist during his capture.

Volo and Floon were invited to attend a meeting in Xanathar's lair so Volo could record negotiations between the Xanathar Guild and Zhentarim for the beholder's future biography. In the midst of the meeting, Floon snuck away and stole the *Stone of Golorr* before fleeing the lair entirely into the streets of Skullport.

Shaking off the magical compulsion, the disoriented Floon is on his way to the only other people he knows in Skullport—the ones who saved him from his kidnapping. Unbeknownst to Floon, an agent of the antagonist was tasked with intercepting the young Waterdhavian and securing the *Stone of Golorr*. The agent caught up with Floon just before he reached Mindflay Manor, taking the *Stone of Golorr* and creating an explosion to kill Floon before fleeing with the stone.

THE GRALHUNDS IN SKULLPORT

In *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the Gralhunds are an ambitious noble family who have been frustrated in their attempts to secure a place among the Masked Lords of Waterdeep. In *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*, the Gralhunds' backstory has changed.

Yalah and Orund Gralhund come from the closest thing Skullport has to nobility. In years past, Skullport was more strictly separated by class; generally, the more powerful individuals were housed higher up and further back from the foul-smeling slums by the River Sargauth. The Gralhunds enjoyed considerable power in this area of the city, and had financial ties to many criminal organizations. When the Xanathar Guild took complete control of Skullport and toppled the current power structure, the Gralhunds lost almost all influence.



The scheming Lady Gralhund has learned of the *Stone of Golorr* and has allied herself with the adventure's antagonist with the promise that her family will be returned to glory:

- If the Skum Lord is the antagonist, the Gralhunds were on good terms with the aboleth when it controlled a large portion of the city on behalf of the Kraken Society. The Skum Lord knows the Gralhunds are hungry for a return to power and has manipulated the Gralhunds into aiding its schemes.
- If the Rag Mage is the antagonist, the Gralhunds aren't members of the Fray but are aware of the Fourteenth Skull's existence. They believe that helping the Fourteenth Skull ascend to power will result in their own rise as well.
- If Remallia Haventree is the antagonist, the Gralhunds are helping the Harpers with the assumption that the combination of the payment for their services and the resulting power vacuum of the Xanathar and Zhentarim organizations' collapse will allow them to ascend once more.

Regardless of antagonist, Lady Gralhund has grown worried that her family won't be remembered when the plan comes to fruition. She's sent her **nimblewright** servant to intercept the wayward Floon, destroy the evidence, and bring her the *Stone of Golorr*. She plans on delivering the Stone to the antagonist's forces and making sure they know she 'salvaged' the plan after Floon shook off his enchantment.

Zhentarim in pursuit of Floon were caught in the explosion, and saw the fleeing nimblewright. Their leader, Urstul Floxin, secretly works for Lady Gralhund and believes he is supposed to secure the *Stone of Golorr*. He is enraged upon seeing the nimblewright and goes to confront the Gralhunds while the characters are putting the pieces together at the crime scene. As in *Dragon Heist*, Lady Gralhund takes the injured Urstul Floxin prisoner. Urstul breaks free and alerts other Zhents around the time of the characters' arrival to Gralhund Villa.

UNRAVELING THE PLOT

As in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the characters should be able to learn the origin of the explosion, the existence of the nimblewright, its goal, and where it went. Skullport is full of miscreants who have sharp eyes and tight lips; there is plenty of opportunity for NPCs to interact with the characters in order to be persuaded, bribed, or threatened into divulging important information.

THE CRIME SCENE

This section of **Chapter 3: Fireball** is modified in the following ways.

- The two female humans, half-elf male, two female halflings, and two male halflings are all changed to general squatters and loiterers in Illithid Way.
- Dalakhar is replaced with the slain Floon Blagmaar, who is wearing a burned, flashy doublet.

Investigating the scene is altered in the following ways:

- The Xanathar Guild is the closest thing to a City Guard in Skullport. They are the ones who arrive a few minutes after the explosion.
- Floon still has the pouch of five gemstones worth 100 gp; if the characters do not secure the scene quickly, curious residents of Skullport will quickly search the bodies and take the pouch for themselves before the Xanathar Guild arrives.
- If the characters are seen taking the pouch of gemstones, nobody cares to report it to the City Guard but this might result in the characters being targets of future crime.

THE GUILD ARRIVES

The Xanathar Guild's representatives can closely match the City Watch and City Guard members as presented in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. Saeth Cromley and Barnibus Blastwind (see **Appendix B** of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*) can be adjusted to be members of the Xanathar Guild tracking the perpetrator of the attack at the beholder's lair.

- The Guild members might know of or make the connection between Floon and the characters, as they previously rescued the Waterdhavian noble. They believe (or can see through most deception) that the characters were unaware Floon was on his way to see them.
- The Guild members know there were three Zhentarim in pursuit of Floon from Xanathar's lair. Two of the three are dead in the street; the third is missing.

EYEWITNESSES

As in *Dragon Heist*, eyewitnesses to the event are eager to talk. Anyone speaking with them for at least 1 minute learns what that person saw or heard.

Fala Lefaliir

Fala, the owner of Zuggtmoy's Cap, relates the following information:

"I was cultivating some fungal pods on the second floor of my shop when the blast blew out some of the windows. Lucky I wasn't injured! Through the smoke, I saw a figure take something from the body of a young man on the ground and then run away. He looked strange, like he was made of metal! One

of the survivors of the blast, a big middle-aged man, stumbled away after it.”

Jezryne Hornraven

A wealthy skulker, Jezryne was leaving the Tiger’s Eye, having just hired Vincent Trench to spy on her philandering husband. Her testimony matches her original quote in *Dragon Heist* exactly.

Martem Trec

This 12-year-old boy lost halfling friends in the explosion. His testimony matches that of *Dragon Heist* exactly.

Martem produces the *necklace of fireballs* as in *Dragon Heist*. Characters who withhold the necklace or knowledge of it from the Xanathar Guild representatives are punished in the same manner as described in *Dragon Heist*.

SPEAKING WITH THE VICTIMS

The bodies of the victims are brought to a house of Myrkul in the lower level. There’s little time for grief or mourning in Skullport, but the Myrkulytes are almost universally treated with respect for the service they provide in disposing of the dead. Most bodies are cremated; a rare few with estates or friends who can afford it are interred in lonely mausoleums (without worldly possessions, for fear of being plundered).

The Myrkulytes don’t owe allegiance to any faction in Skullport and can be bribed for access to the bodies for further investigation. They can also perform a *Speak with Dead* spell on Floon’s corpse, for a fee of 25 gp. Floon can reveal the following information.

- Floon is honest, but the magical compulsions placed on him cloud his memory even in death. Floon describes his memories like a ‘hazy dream.’
- Floon knows he was tasked with stealing a strange object called the *Stone of Golorr* from Xanathar’s lair during the meeting. He can describe the appearance of the *Stone* perfectly.
- He knows (from Volo) that there’s rumor of a legendary treasure of half a million gold coins hidden beneath Skullport, and that the *Stone of Golorr* is supposed to be the key to finding it.
- Floon shook off his magical compulsion after escaping the lair and hoped to find the characters for help. He remembers a strange ‘metal man’ accosting him and taking the *Stone* from him before the explosion occurred.

Casting *Speak with Dead* on one or both of the dead Zhentarim sellswords reveals the following.

- Their names were Bashekk Ortallis and Wen Malkrave. They worked for Urstul Floxin and resided at Gralhund Villa.
- They and Urstul were following Floon to take some-

thing important from him, something he’d apparently stolen from Xanathar’s lair. Urstul told them he intended to take it back to Gralhund Villa.

NIM’S SECRET

This section is extensively modified for the purposes of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*. The creator of the nimblewright is now Nim Wrackmutter, a male rock gnome **commoner** with proficiency in Tinker’s Tools and a creator of clockwork creatures. He works in Clockwork Wonders, a business in the lower trade lanes, under the owners Tykkyl and Tohkkal Burrwarden.

If the characters get the description of the ‘metal man’ from Floon’s corpse, Fala Lefaliir, or Jezryne Hornraven, people around Skullport can point them in the direction of Clockwork Wonders, where they’ve seen a metal humanoid like that working for Nim Wrackmutter.

Nim creates a number of small clockwork contraptions that he attempts to sell to criminals of all kinds. Most of his creations are ‘alarm birds’ and kits for simple mechanical-based traps. However, Nim’s pride and joy is the **nimblewright**, a humanoid construct with good fighting skill and an ability of faithfully carry out a variety of instructions. A nimblewright that Nim refers to as **Primo the Magnificent** works in Nim’s shop alongside the gnome and acts as both assistant and advertisement.

Like most residents of Skullport, Nim is just a dishonest businessman trying to make a dishonest living. He doesn’t believe in giving out information for free. Attempts to intimidate him will likely result in Primo the Magnificent coming to his aid, increasing the likelihood the scene turns into a brawl. Nim will open up and tell the characters what they want to know if he learns that one of his nimblewrights is somehow involved in the events at Xanathar’s lair; the gnome has no interest in being on the wrong side of the Xanathar Guild or the Zhentarim.

- Nim has only created a handful of nimblewrights because of their complexity and cost, and doesn’t even know if any of the ones he’s sold are still in Skullport.
- He doesn’t keep records of his sales, because most of his customers are probably using fake names and middlemen anyway.
- Nim has a secret means of tracking his nimblewrights; any nimblewright he’s made (excluding Primo the Magnificent) can be tracked using his *nimblewright detector*.

Whether by bribery, threats, or force, Nim agrees to lend the *nimblewright detector* to the adventurers. In exchange for providing proof of the nimblewright’s



destruction and keeping their mouths shut about the involvement of Nim's clockwork invention, Nim offers them the coin reward and items listed for doing so in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

If the conversation goes south and Nim winds up dead or incapacitated, or if the characters decide to use subterfuge to search Nim's shop without his knowledge, they can find the *nimblewright detector* easily on a workbench with the gnome's personal design notes next to it.

WHAT AUDEN KNOWS

The players might contact Auden Trilluach for help, or Auden could contact them at Mindflay Manor. With news that something was stolen from Xanathar's lair, Auden informs the characters of the following.

"My father wanted to find a hidden treasure hoard left by Halaster somewhere in Skullport, but the *Stone of Golorr* wouldn't work for him. When my father died and the Xanathar Guild took the *Stone of Golorr*, I thought this was done for good. Instead, I think the attack on Floon and I, the fact that Floon was captured and later stole the stone, and now he's been eliminated as a witness, is connected to Halaster's gold. Someone wants the Stone and they think they can use it to secure that treasure!"

OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

In Skullport, word always gets around if someone's willing to pay for it. There are any number of information brokers, criminals, or tavern owners keeping their ears to the ground for information about one of the biggest events in recent memory. If the characters are stumped for leads, they can always approach or be approached by one of these elements who can point them in the right direction in exchange for coin or a future favor.

Other Gralhund Leads. If the characters are following an unconventional path or haven't acquired the *nimblewright detector*, informants from one of the characters' factions (or another faction) might approach them with information about the Zhent (Urstul Floxin) who left the scene of the explosion. These informants can share knowledge of witnesses who saw Urstul Floxin enter Gralhund Villa soon after the explosion at Illithid Way and that he hasn't been seen since.

GRALHUND VILLA

After causing the explosion and fleeing Illithid Way, the nimblewright returns to Gralhund Villa with the *Stone of Golorr* so Lady Gralhund can bask in her success and form new instructions for the nimblewright. She plans to have the nimblewright bring the Stone to a rendezvous with the antagonist's forces.

As in *Dragon Heist*, the details of Lady Gralhund's deal with the antagonist are known only to her and her trusted bodyguard, Hrabbaz.

The Zhentarim working for the Gralhunds, led by Urstul Floxin, tried to catch up with Floon as he fled into Skullport. They were too late to catch up to Floon before the fireball occurred in Illithid Way, but they saw the nimblewright fleeing the scene and tracked it to Gralhund Villa. Realizing Lady Gralhund is working her own scheme, Urstul goes to confront her at Gralhund Manor and ends up imprisoned, as described in *Dragon Heist*.

By the time the characters arrive at Gralhund Villa, Lady Gralhund has given the nimblewright instruction to flee the villa and bring the *Stone of Golorr* to a location where the antagonist's forces can safely recover it. Meanwhile, Urstul Floxin has escaped his imprisonment and begun killing Gralhund forces.

SHOULD THEY OR SHOULDN'T THEY?

The characters must proceed cautiously, since the Gralhunds are powerful enough that being aggressive could have negative repercussions for the characters if they're wrong. The two choices are generally to inform the Xanathar Guild about the incident or to enter Gralhund Villa themselves.

LET THE GUILD HANDLE IT

The characters can approach any member of the Xanathar Guild and inform them that they have information about the explosion in Illithid Way. Soon afterward they are visited by Saeth Cromley and Barnibus Blastwind (or an equivalent member of the Guild), whose own information corroborates the characters'. Sometime afterward, the Xanathar Guild raids the Gralhund home. Secretly acting on Xanathar's orders, a member of the Guild provides the characters with information in the aftermath. The information provided matches the falsified story the Gralhunds give to the Watch in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

INVESTIGATE THE VILLA

The characters can enter Gralhund Villa themselves, following the suggested rules for sneaking in and out as presented in *Dragon Heist*. You can also utilize the text found here if the characters assist Lady Gralhund.

CHANGES TO THE VILLA

The layout of the Gralhund home can be assumed to be identical to how it is presented in **Chapter 3: Fireball** of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. However, there will be some clarifications or adjustments to some of the rooms, NPCs, and information presented.

Zhentarim Forces. The Zhentarim in the Gralhund Villa, including **Urstul Floxin**, are expecting only enemy forces. They are hostile to the characters or any unrecognized NPC.

Orond Gralhund. The general information Orond will share with the characters is changed to the following.

- “The *Stone of Golorr* was some kind of ancient creature transformed into a stone by Halaster. It knows the location of a vault hidden below Skullport containing half a million gold coins.”
- “My wife is supporting someone's bid to acquire the treasure; they staged the kidnapping of a young Waterdhavian man so that he could be controlled by magic and used as a plant in Xanathar's lair.”
- “My wife has a clockwork servant who brought the *Stone of Golorr* to us not long ago. I don't know where the servant or the *Stone* are now.”

Lady Gralhund and Hrabbaz. These two are still the only ones in the household who know the details of their patron and their plan.

No cult robes. Because this adjusted adventure contains no overt ties to Asmodeus and no mention of the Cassalanthers, it's suggested that the cult robes and cult ties suggested in area **G16** be omitted.

Locked tome. The locked book in area **G12** can be left as-is or modified to tie more closely to Skullport, as you desire.

CHAPTER 4: SWINDLE SEASON

SETTING THE STAGE

In chapter 3, Lady Gralhund's nimblewright fled with the *Stone of Golorr*. The nimblewright takes the stone to a location and leaves it there for servants of the main antagonist to retrieve.

- If Remallia Haventree is the antagonist, the stone is brought to a Harper agent working in a theater in the Lower Port.
- If the Skum Lord is the antagonist, the stone is taken to a cellar connected to the Skullport sewers. Members of the Kraken Society attack the hideout, forcing the Skum Lord's servants to flee before the characters arrive.
- If the Rag Mage is the antagonist, the stone is taken to hired hands working for Lady Gralhund near the Skullport docks.

FINDING THE NIMBLEWRIGHT

If the characters can't find the nimblewright's trail after dealing with Gralhund's villa, they can turn to their factions or request general aid from the Xanathar Guild, either of which comes within 1d4 days. If the characters ask around about a clockwork humanoid and haven't visited Nim Wrackmutter at Clockwork Wonders, an NPC might suggest the characters visit that shop for leads. The characters can acquire the *nimblewright detector* to track Lady Gralhund's nimblewright servant.

CAUGHT AT LAST!

As in *Dragon Heist*, the nimblewright fights until destroyed. No third parties respond to the scene of the fight, as such events are not uncommon in Skullport.

LADY GRALHUND'S INSTRUCTIONS

Lady Gralhund gave her nimblewright instructions on where to take the *Stone of Golorr*, but forgot to tell it to destroy these instructions once the stone was delivered. Characters who find the nimblewright's remains find her instructions, which vary depending on which antagonist you have chosen for the adventure.

- If Remallia Haventree is the antagonist, the nimblewright is carrying a note with the words "The Guffaw"

written on it. (This refers to the Troll's Guffaw, a theater in the Lower Port.)

- If the Skum Lord is the antagonist, the nimblewright is carrying a map of the Lower Trade Lanes with an X marking one of the buildings there. The words "Rusted Hook" are written next to it. (This marks the building whose cellar is occupied by the Skum Lord's servants.)
- If the Rag Mage is the antagonist, the nimblewright is carrying a note reading "Kraken's Folly." (The Kraken's Folly is a well-known ship-building full of brigands and squatters near the Lower Port docks.)

ENCOUNTER CHAINS

As in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the hunt for the *Stone of Golorr* consists of a series of eight encounters. These encounter chains occur in a manner and order determined by the choice of antagonist and season.

The encounter chains are generally presented as a closely linked series of events following one after another; the encounters are written as back-to-back events to create a narrative flow. Guidelines for linking encounters when characters take a 'break' between main events of the encounter chain are provided on occasion throughout the chapter.

See *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* for general advice on how to get wayward characters back on the proper encounter chain path.

Skullport: Dragon Swindle follows the same guidelines as *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* for determining the course of events if an antagonist successfully gains possession of the *Stone of Golorr*.

GROWING SEASON ENCOUNTER CHAIN

All manner of luminescent fungus grow rampant across the walls and buildings of Skullport, transforming the city into a glowing garden of lichen and mushrooms. Against this luminous backdrop, the Harpers under command of Remallia Haventree seek to seize Halaster's hoard and overthrow the criminal elements of Skullport for good.

SUMMARY

This encounter chain starts right in the area where the characters find the Lady Gralhund's nimblewright. Undercover Harper agents looking to tie up loose ends have tracked the nimblewright and attack the characters (encounter 1: "Alley"). A piece of pamphlet and other clues lead the characters to a theater in the Lower Port, where they must discover the identity of a

hidden Harper agent to progress further (encounter 6: “Theater”).

Their search leads them to a derelict building occupied by members of the Reforged Ring, where the holder of the stone is posing as a member of the faction (encounter 10: “Converted Windmill”). Confronted by the characters, the Harper agent flees (encounter 5: “Rooftop Chase”). The agent runs to a tavern, where they attempt to blend in (encounter 8: “Tavern”). Attempting to avoid the characters, the Harper flees the tavern (encounter 3: “Street Chase”).

The stone’s carrier ducks into a tower but is killed by a creature lairing within. Searching the building finds the stone (encounter 7: “Old Tower”). A character that attunes to the stone learns that the entrance to the vault is hidden inside an old shipwreck in the heart of Skullport (encounter 4: “Wreck”).

NATURAL PAUSES

Characters might seek a break between encounter chain events to heal or conduct other business. The natural progression of the encounter chain provides a few clear opportunities.

- After encounter 1: “Alley,” when the characters might want to recover from their fight with the Harpers and pursue leads about the theater.
- After encounter 6: “Theater,” characters can put the encounter chain on hold before going to the Reforged Ring outpost.
- After encounter 7: “Old Tower,” after the characters acquire the *Stone of Golorr*.

SEASONAL EFFECTS

Until the encounter chain is complete, the following seasonal effect is in play.

Phosphorescent Fungus. Creatures in outdoor areas of Skullport have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide from another creature’s sight. In addition, creatures in outdoor areas of Skullport have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to see through physical or magical disguises.

FLOODING SEASON ENCOUNTER CHAIN

Rain that falls on the world above trickles downward, swelling the waters of the Sargauth and flooding the lower level of the city. More than water is rising from the sewers, however: an aboleth known as the Skum Lord seeks the *Stone of Golorr*, planning to claim Halaster’s gold and become the master of Skullport once more.



SUMMARY

The nimblewright brought the stone to a cellar complex connected to Skullport’s sewers, which is controlled by the Skum Lord’s followers. Members of Kraken Society raided the cellar before the characters’ arrival, forcing the Skum Lord’s servants to flee (encounter 9: “Cellar Complex”). The characters track the stone to the Lower Port dock area and the home of Grinda Garloth. Grinda has been enslaved by the Skum Lord and is hiding the servant with the *Stone of Golorr*, who flees before they can be discovered (encounter 2: “Murkshore”). A chase ensues through the flooded, muddy streets of the Lower Port (encounter 3: “Street Chase”). The stone’s bearer

leads the characters into an ambush by the Skum Lord's servants (encounter 1: "Alley").

The characters learn that the ambushers were missing persons connected to a now-abandoned gang hideout. They go to the repurposed ship-turned-building, only for the Kraken Society to raid the site as they attempt to explore it (encounter 4: "Wreck"). The Skum Lord's surviving followers attempt to flee over the rooftops of Skullport with the stone but is ultimately unsuccessful in escaping (encounter 5: "Rooftop Chase"). With the *Stone of Golorr* in hand, the characters learn that the entrance to the vault lies in the basement of a ruined tower (encounter 7: "Old Tower").

NATURAL PAUSES

Characters might seek a break between encounter chain events to heal or conduct other business. The natural progression of the encounter chain provides a few clear opportunities.

- After encounter 9: "Cellar Complex," characters can take a break or might need to follow leads to the next encounter.
- After encounter 1: "Alley" characters will have done three chained encounters in quick succession and will likely need time to recuperate and follow leads to the next area.

SEASONAL EFFECTS

Until the encounter chain is complete, the following seasonal effect is in play.

Flooded Skullport. Creatures moving on the Lower level of Skullport treat outdoor areas as difficult terrain. A thin, humid fog pervades all levels of the city; anything beyond a radius of 30 feet is considered lightly obscured.

DYING SEASON ENCOUNTER CHAIN

In the dark and damp of Skullport's slums, diseases can quickly fester and sweep through the city like wildfire. Something else thrives in the filth piling up in Skullport's streets; the mysterious Rag Mage, transformed into the Fourteenth Skull of Skullport, plots its revenge against the city that twisted it into its current form.

SUMMARY

The stone is brought to the *Kraken's Folly* in Murkshore and given to Lady Gralhound's hired thugs. Lady Gralhound plans to demand assurances from the Rag Mage before handing over the stone. Instead, the Rag Mage's forces arrive and seize the stone

(encounter 2, "Murkshore"). An animated whirlwind of rubbish takes the stone and flies up over the rooftops of the Lower Port (encounter 5: "Rooftop Chase").

The whirlwind of garbage takes the *Stone of Golorr* to a derelict building made from an old ship, where it is held by diseased squatters in service of the Rag Mage. After a scuffle with the Rag Mage's forces, the characters discover that the stone has been taken by the Reforged Ring (encounter 4, "Wreck"). The Reforged Ring arranges negotiations at a local bar, where the characters can negotiate for the return of the stone (encounter 8, "Tavern"). There's a commotion outside in the alleyway as the Reforged Ring member who had been holding the stone is beset by the Rag Mage's forces, who once again attempt to escape with the stone (encounter 3, "Street Chase"). They bring the stone to an old watermill tower, which is being occupied by one of the Fray mages (see Appendix A) (encounter 10, "Converted Windmill"). After besting the Fray mage, the characters acquire the stone.

The Rag Mage sends its deadliest servants to prevent the characters from escaping with the stone, but the characters are aided by the Skulls of Skullport (encounter 1, "Alley"). Any character who becomes attuned to the stone learns that the entrance to the vault lies in a cellar in the Lower Heart (encounter 9, "Cellar Complex").

NATURAL PAUSES

Your characters might seek a break between encounter chain events to heal or conduct other business. The natural progression of the encounter chain provides a few clear opportunities.

- After encounter 5, "Rooftop Chase," the characters might pause to plan an attack on the ship-turned-building and conduct surveillance.
- When the Reforged Ring acquires the *Stone of Golorr* after encounter 4, "Wreck," the characters can arrange a meeting time within the next tenday if they so desire.
- Once the characters acquire the stone and attune to it, they can take time to find the vault keys before progressing to encounter 9, "Cellar Complex."

SEASONAL EFFECTS

Until the encounter chain is complete, the following seasonal effect is in play.

Skulker Fever. Characters that take bludgeoning or piercing damage from a melee weapon attack from a beast or humanoid in Skullport must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw at the end of combat or contract Skulker Fever. Creatures with this

disease start exhibiting symptoms within 1d4 hours of contracting the disease, gaining 1 level of Exhaustion.

A creature with Skulker Fever can repeat the saving throw when it finishes a long rest, removing one level of Exhaustion on a success or adding one level of Exhaustion if it fails (to a maximum of two levels of Exhaustion).

A creature that reduces its level of Exhaustion below 1 or that cures its disease by other means is unable to contract a strain of Skull Fever for 2d6 days or until the next encounter in the encounter chain, whichever comes first.

ENCOUNTER 1: ALLEY

Changes for Skullport

There are no major changes to this encounter chain location.

ALLEY: GROWING SEASON

As this encounter begins the characters have found and defeated the nimblewright in an alley in Skullport. After its defeat, three humans enter the alleyway and greet the characters.

HARPER AGENTS

The three newcomers are Harper agents impersonating members of the Xanathar Guild, sent by Remallia Haventree to tie up loose ends by destroying the nimblewright and destroying the evidence. Two of the agents are **scouts** led by a **spy** named Ruhla, who initially attempts to glean what the characters know about the nimblewright and its mission.

Ruhla is wearing an enchanted bronze medallion that can display various symbols. At the moment Ruhla is using it to display the Xanathar Guild symbol. However, the glowing fungus is causing the illusion to fade in and out; a character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices this oddity.

The Harpers will attack if their ruse is discovered; otherwise, in questioning the characters Ruhla decides they know too much about the nimblewright, the *Stone of Golorr*, or Lady Gralhund. She and her companions will attempt to surprise the characters with a sudden but inevitable betrayal.

DEFEATING THE IMPOSTORS

With the agents defeated, the characters find a number of clues for their next encounter.



Nimblewright. The nimblewright is carrying a note with “The Guffaw” written on it. The Troll’s Guffaw is the name of a theater in the Lower Port area of the city.

Ruhla. The Harper agent came from the Troll’s Guffaw, where she worked the ticket booth. She’s carrying some cheap paper ticket stubs. Some of the locals in Skullport might recognize Ruhla’s body, or a description of her, as a woman who works at the ticket booth in the theater.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters pursue their leads to the Troll’s Guffaw, proceed with encounter 6, “Theater.”

ALLEY: FLOODING SEASON

The characters have just pursued the Skum Lord cultist Trigas into an alleyway. Trigas continues running to the alleyway's other entrance and out; the characters find their way blocked by a collection of humanoid figures: two **sea spawn** wearing pale gray robes to hide their piscine features, and three **commoners** wearing matching common clothes with an unusual patch (see below). These commoners are under the Skum Lord's control and have a clammy, pale appearance like the slain cultists from encounter 9, "Cellar Complex." The group treats the muddy street as difficult terrain while Trigas continues to flee with the benefit of his *water walk* spell.

PURSUING THE STONE

The commoners are wearing matching uniforms with a small patch depicting a bucket and the words "Dreadful Dredgers." Locals recognize the uniform and name as belonging to a startup business that pulled scrap and treasure from the Sargauth. Locals can point the characters in the direction of their address in the Upper Heart.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

When the characters are ready to proceed, continue with encounter 4, "Wreck."

ALLEY: DYING SEASON

In the last encounter the characters finally obtained the *Stone of Golorr* by defeating one of the Fourteenth Skull's Fray mages in a derelict mill. As they attempt to leave the area, the Rag Mage's forces make a final attempt to prevent the characters from keeping the stone.

SWARM OF HORRORS

As the characters go through the alley, swarms of rats and insects appear at each alley entrance and the back alley, along with a pair of **raggamoffyns**. As the creatures begin to move forward, a *fireball* detonates at one of the alley entrances as a **Skull of Skullport** swoops in, screaming "Pest control! Pest control!"

The characters can choose to stay or flee as the Skull attacks the creatures around it. In either case, the characters are engaged by two **raggamoffyns**, three **swarms of rats**, and a **swarm of centipedes**.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If a character becomes attuned to the *Stone of Golorr*, it reveals the location of the vault entrance is in a cellar in the Lower Heart, and the three keys needed to enter it. When the characters are ready to visit the location, proceed with encounter 9, "Cellar Complex."

ENCOUNTER 2: MURKSHORE

Changes for Skullport

As noted in the Introduction, the area of 'Mistshore' in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* is referred to as 'Murkshore' in *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* to better match its atmosphere. Murkshore is a run-down slum in the Lower Port.

Grinda Garloth's Sea Chest. Grinda Garloth's locked chest no longer contains a key to her family mausoleum, as this location doesn't exist in Skullport. Instead, the key is to Grinda's *apparatus of Kwalish*.

MURKSHORE: FLOODING SEASON

In the last encounter the characters received a lead to Grinda Garloth, a mage living in Murkshore. Grinda is an inventor who has used her *apparatus of Kwalish* (housed in area D3) to search the bottom of the Sargauth for treasure. During one of these dives Grinda accidentally stumbled across the Skum Lord and was charmed by its Enslave ability. Grinda still obeys the Skum Lord's direct commands but has slowly begun reclaiming control over her own actions.

The survivor of the Kraken Society's raid on the cellar is a **cult fanatic** named Trigas (NE male human). Trigas is hiding in area D3 with the *apparatus of Kwalish* after Grinda helped treat his wounds.

Grinda's home shows evidence of Trigas's presence; there's a smear of blood on the outside door handle and bloody bandages visible on the table in Grinda's home, both visible with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. If confronted about the blood or pressured with questions about the cellar or *Stone of Golorr*, the enchanted Grinda shouts "Trigas, run!"

In area D3, Trigas dives out of a window in area D3 and attempts to flee into the Lower Port streets. Grinda breaks free from the Skum Lord's control if she takes any damage or is subjected to a spell or ability that ends the charmed effect on her. In either case, she collapses unconscious to the ground.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters choose to pursue Trigas, proceed to encounter 3, “Street Chase.”

MURKSHORE: DYING SEASON

Lady Gralhund’s nimblewright carried a note with the words “Kraken’s Folly” written on it. The Kraken’s Folly is a well-known derelict ship in Murkshore in the Lower Port where numerous **bandits**-for-hire reside. Lady Gralhund has hired the bandits to protect the *Stone of Golorr* somewhere away from her manor so that she can avoid attention and demand assurances from the Rag Mage; instead, the Rag Mage has sent servants to take the Stone by force.

GARBAGE ATTACKS!

When the characters arrive, the Rag Mage has extended its influence to the Kraken’s Folly in the form of a large maelstrom of garbage flying above the Lower Port. **Tatterdemanimals** and **raggamoffyns** (see Appendix A), are flying down from this maelstrom to attack the people of Murkshore.

There are six **bandits** in total between the street around the entrance to the Kraken’s Folly and on the first floor of the ship itself, each being attacked by a tatterdemanimal. Characters can choose to aid the bandits or not; the bandits are not particularly loyal to Lady Gralhund and don’t know the importance of the *Stone of Golorr*. Six tatterdemanimals and two raggamoffyns fly down from the top maelstrom and engage the characters.

THE STONE DEPARTS

There’s a commotion atop the Kraken’s Folly as someone screams “It’s got that stone! They’re after that damn stone!” A bandit is thrown from the top deck and is held in the air momentarily by a **raggamoffyn** as the *Stone of Golorr* is wrenched from their grasp. The raggamoffyn with the stone flies away over the pathways and rooftops of the Lower Port.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters give chase, proceed with encounter 5, “Rooftop Chase.”

ENCOUNTER 3: STREET CHASE

Changes for Skullport

There are no major changes to this encounter chain location.

STREET CHASE: GROWING SEASON

The characters are in close pursuit of Saxon Barkridge, a Harper agent carrying the *Stone of Golorr*. The illusionist starts 60 feet ahead of the lead pursuer. If at any point Saxon is incapacitated or the characters overtake them, a Harper agent (any humanoid **commoner**) runs out to take the stone and continue fleeing, acting next on the initiative count.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

When the characters are close to catching Saxon or when you want the encounter to end, the creature currently holding the stone attempts to hide in a tower, with disastrous results. Proceed with encounter 7, “Old Tower.”

STREET CHASE: FLOODING SEASON

The characters are pursuing a **cult fanatic** of the Skum Lord named Trigas, who has just fled into the Lower Port streets with the *Stone of Golorr*. The characters start 60 feet away from Trigas, who spends his first action using a *scroll of water walk* to move unimpeded over the mud-thick streets of the Lower Port. Because of his injuries Trigas has one level of Exhaustion, giving him disadvantage on ability checks during the chase (including avoiding chase complications). He is also unable to take the Dash action on his turn.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

When 5 rounds have passed or when the characters are close to overtaking Trigas, he ducks between two buildings and into an alleyway. If the characters pursue, proceed with encounter 1, “Alley.”

STREET CHASE: DYING SEASON

In the last encounter, the characters were negotiating with the Reforged Ring for the stone inside a tavern when the Rag Mage’s forces attacked outside and took the stone from its carrier. A **Fray mage** starts the chase 90 feet in front of the characters and is accompanied by **tatterdemanimals**. If a character gets within 60 feet of the Fray mage, one of the tatterdemanimals attacks and attempts to slow their movement.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

After five rounds, or when you feel the chase should end, the Fray mage reaches an old mill building and

runs inside. Proceed with encounter 10, “Converted Windmill.”

ENCOUNTER 4: WRECK

It’s notoriously difficult to bring building supplies into Skullport, and residents make do with whatever they can. During the city’s construction, some found it far easier to convert ships into permanent pre-built structures. This wrecked ship-turned-building has the following features.

- Interior rooms of the ship have 8-foot-high ceilings with 7-foot-high doorways between rooms.
- All areas of the ship are unlit unless otherwise noted in their individual encounter chain entry.

AREAS OF THE WRECK

The following locations are keyed to replacement map 4.3.

M1. MAIN DECK

Scattered barrels and crates litter the main deck of the ship. The ship’s mast is broken off approximately nine feet above the deck. Two large grates that used to allow goods to be moved into the cargo hold can be moved by creatures whose Strength score totals 30 or higher. A doorway leads to area M2; twin staircases lead to area M4 below.

M2. CAPTAIN’S CABIN

This spacious cabin used to be the captain’s quarters and a command room. It is furnished with a bed and a large wooden table surrounded by six stools. Bay windows in the aft of the ship are dirty or painted over, allowing almost no light to pass through them.

M3. LOWER DECK AREA

The spacious area immediately down the stairs from area M1 is the lower deck of the ship. Just beyond the stairs is a seam-split section of floor that was removed to allow full access to the cargo hold from the grates in area M1 immediately above. Towards the fore of the ship are two staircases leading down to area M5.

M4. ADDITIONAL ROOMS

Areas M4 are separate, interconnected portions of the lower deck utilized for storage or as makeshift bedrooms for the building’s occupants.

M5. CARGO HOLD

The entire lowest deck of the ship was once the ship’s cargo hold, and continues to be used for storage. A large portion of the starboard side of this hold is rotted; a creature can create a hole large enough to crawl through with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

WRECK: GROWING SEASON

This ship-turned-building is nestled against the cavern wall in the Lower Heart. A hint of light emanates from the interior of the ship (barely visible from the bay windows of area M2), but as far as anyone knows the building is currently unoccupied.

The main deck, area M1, is brightly lit by growths of phosphorescent fungus, as is area M2. The fungus in area M1 has overgrown the cargo hold grate and rendered it unusable. More bright light, strong and unwavering, emits from belowdecks via the staircases.

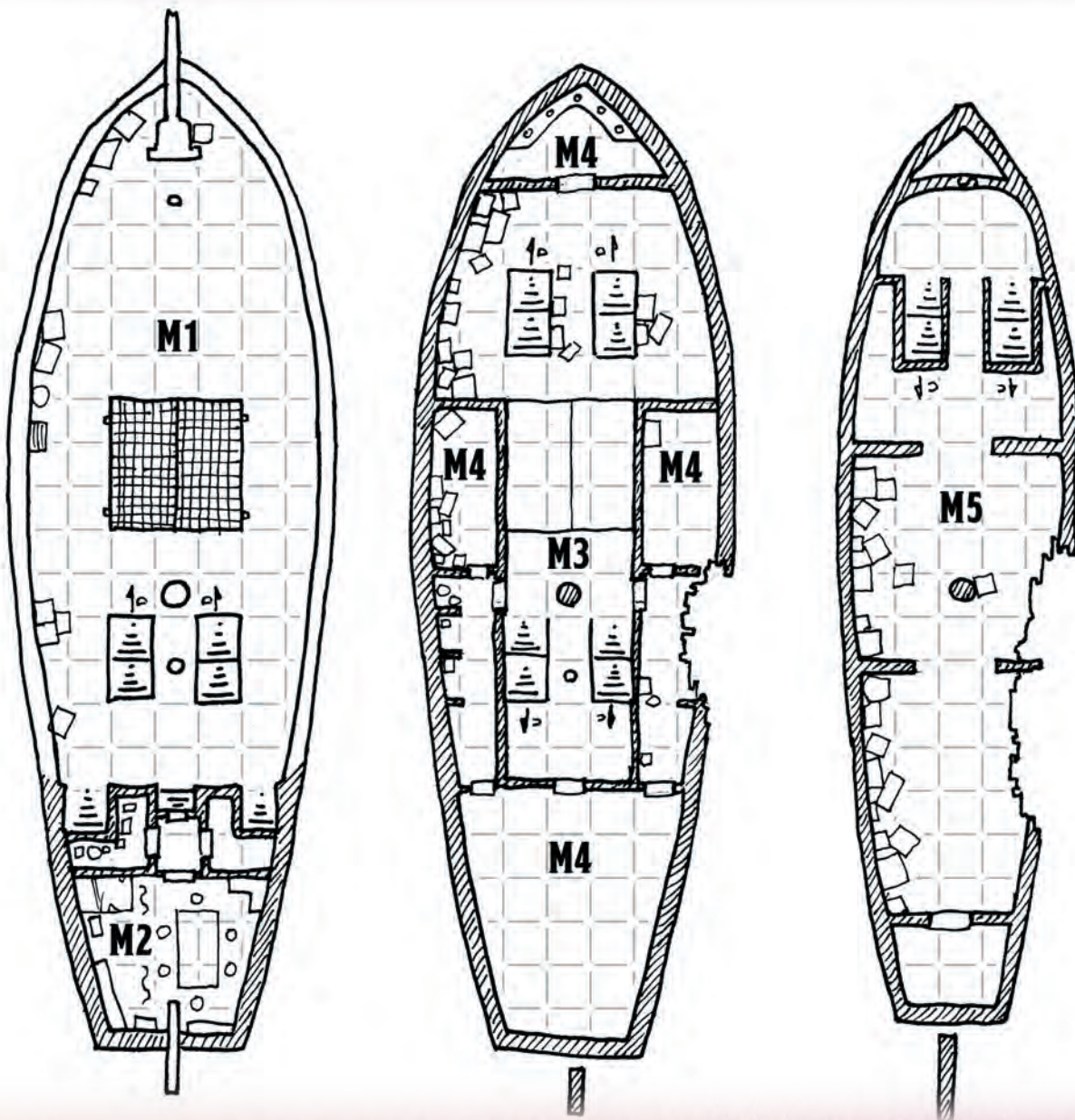
FUNGAL RESIDENTS

The lower deck and cargo hold (areas M3, M4, and M5) are completely overgrown with glowing fungus across the walls and ceilings. Hidden in the sub-decks of the ship is a colony of **myconids**, who are covered in the glowing fungus. While they remain immobile against a wall, these myconids are indistinguishable from the growth around them.

There are 2d4 **myconid sprouts** and three **myconid adults** scattered between the lower deck and cargo hold of the ship; the colony is led by a **myconid sovereign** in the cargo hold that oversees three **commoner spore servants**. The spore servants are **commoners** with the following adjustments.

- Its type is plant and it is unaligned.
- Its walking speed is 20 feet.
- Its ability scores are changed as follows: Int 2 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 1 (-5).
- It is immune to the blinded, charmed, frightened, and paralyzed conditions.
- It loses all known languages; it obeys commands given to it by a myconid’s Rapport Spores.
- Its club attack is renamed as an unarmed strike.

The myconids are not initially aggressive and seek to remain hidden for as long as possible. They intervene if the characters begin destroying fungal growths on the lower decks of the ship, using direct violence as a last resort.



PATH TO THE VAULT

The entrance to the vault is hidden behind a secret door concealed in the wall of the cargo hold. Beyond the secret door is a tunnel carved straight into the cavern wall that spirals down 60 feet before opening up into a 20-foot-wide corridor that extends 100 feet to the vault doors.

Characters in the cargo hold of the ship can perceive seams in the fungal growth with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or by a meticulous search requiring a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The fungus over the door must be removed with weapons that deal slashing damage, requiring ten minutes of work (halved for each participating character). If the myconids have not been interacted with prior to these attempts, they attempt to interfere in fear that the characters plan to break down the entire colony growth.

WRECK: FLOODING SEASON

In the last encounter, a cultist fled with the *Stone of Golorr* while its allies fought the characters. These foes bore a distinct uniform for the business 'Dreadful Dredgers,' which is headquartered in a converted ship located in the Upper Heart.

Dreadful Dredgers was founded almost a year ago, but the business has been shuttered for the past few months. The employees were enthralled by the Skum Lord during one of their Sargauth dives and have served the aboleth ever since.

KRAKEN RAID

The characters aren't the only ones who know about Dreadful Dredgers; a team sent by the Kraken Society is aware of the location's connection to the Skum Lord, and as part of their escalating aggression towards the aboleth's followers they conduct a raid on the Dreadful Dredgers building.

The Kraken Society raiders consist of a **berserker** and two **apprentice wizards**, who access area M1 by means of a wooden staircase. The Kraken Society warriors immediately head to area M2, which served as the businesses' main office when it was open. The Kraken Society members are suspicious of the characters' presence but can easily see that they aren't enthralled by the Skum Lord. Characters who are members of the Kraken Society are commanded to "head belowdecks and purge the rest." Characters who are not members of the Kraken Society are told to either help by going belowdecks or to stay out of the way.

SKUM LORD SERVANTS

The former business employees are pale-skinned humanoids wearing the Dreadful Dredgers uniform. There are 2d4 **commoners** and 1d4 **scouts** scattered evenly across the rooms of the ship. The **cultist** Trigas, all but overwhelmed by his wounds, is in area M3 with two levels of exhaustion. He is accompanied by Loravor Quick (NE male half-elf **master thief**) a rogue that unknowingly serves the Skum Lord's interests. Quick has taken possession of the *Stone of Golorr* from Trigas.

Loravor Quick and Trigas flee to the cargo hold in area M5. While the other Skum Lord followers attempt to drive the characters back, the pair break through the rotted wall of the cargo hold; the characters arrive in area M5 in time to see Loravor leap onto the nearest rooftop and Trigas fail the same jump, falling to his death. If the characters did not go belowdecks at the start of the raid, they can see Loravor and Trigas break through the hull of the ship and attempt the jump.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters pursue Loravor Quick and the stone, proceed with encounter 5, "Rooftop Chase."

WRECK: DYING SEASON

A whirlwind of garbage has carried the *Stone of Golorr* across the rooftops and walkways of the Lower Port, coming to rest over a shipwreck-building. The raggamoffyn bearing the *Stone of Golorr* has fled into the building via a large hole in the side. A series of wooden ramps leads up to area M1.

RAGGED RESIDENTS

The building is home to numerous squatters who have been inducted into the cult of the Rag Mage by a **Fray mage** in area M2. Upon sensing intruders the

Fray mage attacks, crying "Aha! Aha! You can't stop the Fourteenth Skull!"

2d6 **commoners** are spread throughout areas M3 and M4. Five followers of the Rag Mage are armed with crude spears and have the statistics of **tribal warriors**. They rush to the aid of the Fray mage if it is engaged in combat and vice-versa, arriving within 1 round. The warriors, commoners, and Fray mage are all carriers of Skulker Fever (see 'Seasonal Effects' for Dying Season).

FARCOR FASTFINGER

When the Rag Mage's forces are dealt with, the characters can search the rest of the building. If they reach the cargo hold, they see a gnome in gray leather armor and a shaved head casually awaiting their arrival atop a large crate; otherwise, the gnome seeks out the characters before they leave the area. If the characters discover Farcor in the cargo hold, they also find the bodies of two dispatched **cultists**.

The gnome is **Farcor Fastfinger** (NE male deep gnome **master thief**), who infiltrated the vessel and stole the *Stone of Golorr* while the fighting occurred abovedeck. Farcor was hired by the Reforged Ring in a pinch to track the strange garbage storm and, if needed, steal anything worth taking. Farcor has already given the stone to his companion, a **giant weasel** named Slandersnout. Slandersnout reappears during the characters' interaction with Farcor, indicating to the characters the stone has been delivered to the Reforged Ring. Farcor tells the characters that the Reforged Ring is willing to negotiate for possession of the stone as long as their interests are met and have a meeting place prepared.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters agree to meet the Reforged Ring, Farcor tells them to meet the Reforged Ring in the Gentleman's Groggery tavern in the Central Port, a common neutral meeting ground. If the characters attack Farcor, he focuses only on escape; if he is killed, a note on his person directs the characters to the Gentleman's Groggery. If Farcor is attacked and escapes, a representative of the Reforged Ring delivers the location of the tavern at a later time.

When the characters are ready, proceed with encounter 8, "Tavern."

ENCOUNTER 5: ROOFTOP CHASE

Changes for Skullport

There are no major changes to this encounter chain location. You can use the Rooftop Chase Complications table from *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

ROOFTOP CHASE: GROWING SEASON

In the last encounter, the characters sought out Saxton Barkridge (CG nonbinary human **illusionist**), a Harper in possession of the *Stone of Golorr* and posing as a member of the Reforged Ring. Saxon fled out of a second-floor window onto the rooftops of Skullport with the characters in hot pursuit.

Saxon starts the chase 60 feet ahead of the characters. The rooftops are brightly lit as all manner of glowing fungus have started to cover the buildings. The concentration glowing fungus has an effect on Saxon's magic as well: their illusion spells flicker strangely in the light, giving the characters advantage on their saving throws against these spells or their ability checks to recognize them as illusions.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

The chase lasts no longer than 3 to 4 rounds, at which point Saxon drops down to the Central Level and ducks into a busy tavern. Continue with encounter 8, "Tavern."

ROOFTOP CHASE: FLOODING SEASON

Loravor Quick is a half-elf **master thief** working unwittingly for the Skum Lord. He's fled from a hideout onto the rooftops of the Upper Heart. The humid fog from flooding season has pervaded the Upper Heart, lightly obscuring creatures who get too far from the seeker.

Loravor starts the chase 60 feet ahead of the characters. He is surefooted and quick, but is uncertain of his destination. As the characters pursue Loravor, the Skum Lord projects illusory images of itself in the fog, though these images are always fleeting and vanish if anyone pauses to inspect them. Seeing these apparitions, Loravor stops the chase after 4 rounds if he isn't caught beforehand; he attempts to negotiate with the characters for the *Stone of Golorr* but will fight if he must.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If a character becomes attuned to the *Stone of Golorr* it reveals the location of the Vault entrance,

in the fireplace of an old tower, and the three keys needed to enter it. When the characters are ready proceed with encounter 7, "Old Tower."

ROOFTOP CHASE: DYING SEASON

In the last encounter, one of the Rag Mage's raggamoffyns took the *Stone of Golorr* and fled over the rooftops of the Lower Port. The raggamoffyn starts 90 feet away from the characters at the start of the chase. The garbage maelstrom (see encounter 2, "Murkshore") follows the characters and raggamoffyn through the Lower Port but rapidly diminishes until it is all but gone by the end of the chase. If the raggamoffyn is killed or incapacitated, another raggamoffyn from the maelstrom immediately swoops in to pick up the stone and continue fleeing.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

The Rag Mage's animated servants flee until they reach a hideout for its zealous followers, a large shipwreck-turned-building. If the characters lose the raggamoffyns or don't pursue them all the way to their destination, residents can easily pinpoint where the garbage-storm finally dissipated.

When the characters are ready to proceed, continue with encounter 4, "Wreck."

ENCOUNTER 6: THEATER

Changes for Skullport

There are only some suggested cosmetic changes to this encounter zone. The theater is dilapidated, and the mannequins in the lobby are dressed in shoddy costumes; a few of them have an arm or leg missing. The theater curtain is a moldering, worn thing that has been patched in many places with fabric that doesn't match its color. Embellish other details about the theater as you see fit.

THEATER: GROWING SEASON

In the last encounter, the characters found clues from the nimblewright and the Harper spies that directed them to the Troll's Guffaw, a theater located in the Lower Port area of the city.

THE SILVER RAVEN

As the characters reach the Troll's Guffaw, a **raven** with silver-gray feathers flies low overhead to the back of the theater building. This is Remallia Haventree's *figurine of wondrous power (silver raven)*, which

she uses to send the bird with an *animal messenger* spell. The raven lands on the sill of a window leading into the theater's green room (P7) and begins loudly tapping its beak on the window. The window is twelve feet from the ground.

Within one minute of the raven's arrival, someone inside opens the window and lets the bird in. The silver raven delivers its message to whoever is inside: a character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check hears the following:

A commanding female voice carries through the open window. 'Orith. Agent unable to move the stone for now without breaking cover. Prepare your secondary identity to support. One can never have too much information.'

The voice is Remallia Haventree's. After delivering the message, the raven flies out through the window, which is left open. Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the last phrase as a core tenet of the Harpers.

TEN EYES FOR NINE FOOLS

The theater is in the middle of a performance of 'Ten Eyes for Nine Fools,' a play written by Xanathar about its defeat of a band of would-be heroes. The main characters—a goblin, a half orc, two tieflings, and three humans—attempt to challenge the beholder crime lord and die horribly while the audience shouts and jeers. The characters are colorful and amusing but the plot is difficult to follow; despite the title suggesting there are nine heroes to challenge Xanathar there are only seven main characters, though one of the tieflings dies early on and reappears later in a pink wig.

With such a haphazard production underway, the exterior door to the backstage hallway and the exterior door to the stage manager's office (P6) is open. The stage manager, a badly overworked half-elf **commoner** named Maugmer, believes the characters must be part of the play and irritably tells them to get to the dressing rooms.

The green room (P7) is usually empty at any given moment as the theater actors run back and forth from the stage in area P4 to the dressing rooms (P8). Many of these actors and actresses are dressed in full-body beholder eyestalk costumes.

DISCOVERING THE AGENT

Remallia's agent in the theater is Orith the Lucky (NG female tiefling **commoner**), who is currently

participating in the performance. The characters can pursue several avenues to get the necessary clues to their next destination:

Asking about Ruhla. The agent from the previous encounter worked in the ticket booth of the theater; the staff are happy to gossip about all the time Ruhla spent with Orith, one of the performers.

Asking about Orith. Theater staff indicate she's one of the performers dressed in the giant eyestalk costumes. The performers run pell-mell around the stage and the 'eyestalks' run offstage every so often so that the main characters of the play can give a soliloquy about their tortured pasts and why challenging Xanathar was a bad idea. By observing from the wings, the characters can identify which of the eyestalk characters is Orith.

Interrogating Orith. The characters can wait for the performance to end or they can grab Orith when she runs offstage with the other eyestalk-costumed actors and actresses; the tiefling is unable to offer any resistance while dressed in the unwieldy costume and in the tumult the other performers have disadvantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks and are unlikely to notice Orith being taken.

Orith isn't a hardened spy and is easy to intimidate. She admits she's a low-ranking Harper agent working for Remallia Haventree. The *Stone of Golorr* passed through her hands before going to another agent. This other Harper agent is named Saxon Barkridge, a human deep undercover with the Reforged Ring slavers. She describes the Reforged Ring building as an old mill building in the Upper Trade Lanes.

Snooping. Characters who spend at least ten minutes searching the dressing rooms and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check find a small bundle that doesn't appear to be a theater costume; its contents are a set of manacles, some common clothes, some ruddy reddish makeup that Orith uses to fake a burn around her ring finger (a mark of Reforged Ring membership) and a small note with the description of the Reforged Ring building's location.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

When the characters learn the Reforged Ring outpost's location, proceed with encounter 10, "Converted Windmill."

ENCOUNTER 7: OLD TOWER

Changes for Skullport

There only major change to this encounter location is that there are no *continual flame* sconces; instead, the interior is dimly lit by oil lamps.

OLD TOWER: GROWING SEASON

Saxon Barkridge, pursued by the characters, has ducked into a run-down tower with the *Stone of Golorr*.

YOU GO FIRST

The characters arrive just in time to see the creature with the stone in the entrance to area O2 dangling above the doorway, only their waist and legs visible as a gurgling scream is suddenly silenced. The severed bottom half of the creature falls to the floor at the doorway between areas O1 and O2.

HIDDEN PREDATOR

The ruined tower is the lair of a **grick**, which has eaten the top half of the *Stone of Golorr*'s carrier and the stone with it. Because the tower counts as indoors, the grick retains the benefit of its Stone Camouflage ability and the small amount of phosphorescent fungus inside the tower doesn't help the characters notice it. When the characters enter the tower, the grick attempts to avoid detection for as long as possible but will not leave its lair. If it is discovered it attacks. It also might ambush an isolated or injured character.

When the grick is defeated, its dying body expels pieces of the stone's carrier and the *Stone of Golorr* itself.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If a character becomes attuned to the *Stone of Golorr*, it reveals the location of the Vault entrance, inside a ship-turned-building in the Lower Heart, and the three keys needed to enter it. When the characters are ready to visit the location, proceed with encounter 4, "Wreck."

OLD TOWER: FLOODING SEASON

In the last encounter, the characters acquired the *Stone of Golorr* and learned the location of the vault entrance, inside a fireplace in an old tower, and the three keys needed to enter it.



ILLITHID RESIDENT

The tower is occupied by a **mind flayer arcanist** (*MM* variant) named Quilmnu, who lives here in secret to avoid persecution by "traditional" psionic illithids. Quilmnu primarily lairs in area O3 and knows nothing of the vault entrance. It casts *invisibility* on itself when it detects the presence of intruders below and communicate with them telepathically, keeping its location hidden; otherwise, it might use its *disguise*



self spell to change its appearance and determine the characters' intentions.

If Quilmnu learns about the vault, it demands 10,000 gp for access to the entrance and its silence. If the characters refuse, Quilmnu is likely to prioritize escape over combat and is one way that word gets around Skullport about Halaster's treasure.

PATH TO THE VAULT

A character who is attuned to the *Stone of Golorr* who presents it to the fireplace in area O3 prompts a transformation in the tower; the central pillar of the tower hollows into a narrow spiral staircase that plunges down through the basement in area O4 and beyond; 60 feet below the bottom of the tower the staircase opens up into a twenty-foot-wide hallway that continues for 80 feet before reaching the vault door.

ENCOUNTER 8: TAVERN

Skullport is a city of taverns and dive bars, each with its own unique atmosphere, history, and dangers. Each tavern has the following features:

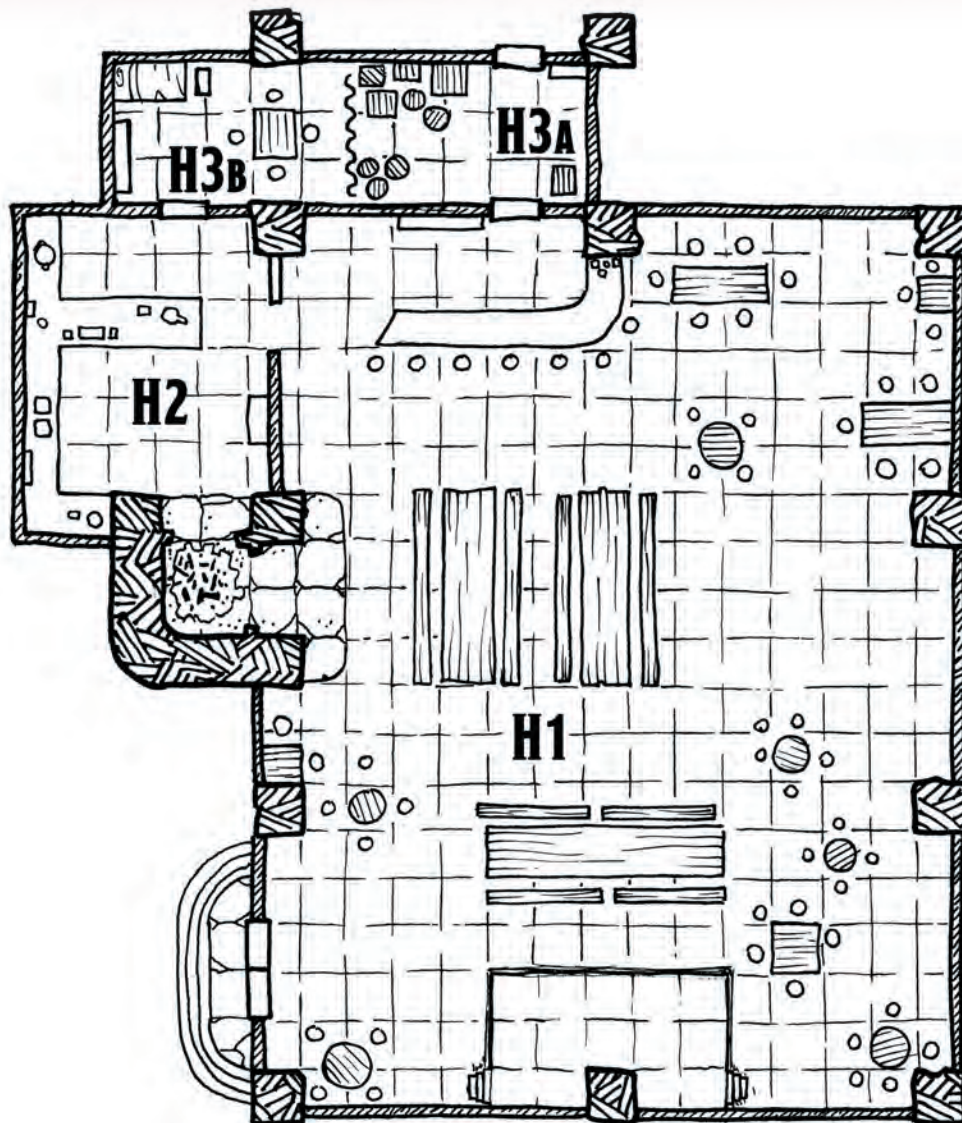
- A **thug** is posted by the front door and acts as a bouncer.
- Rooms have 12-foot-high ceilings with 7-foot-high doorways between areas.
- All areas are brightly lit by guttering oil lamps.

AREAS OF THE TAVERN

The following locations are keyed to the replacement map 4.6, below.

H1. COMMON ROOM

The main room of the tavern is where most of the patrons drink, eat, gamble, and brawl. Many of the



tables and chairs appear as though they've been broken in fights and shoddily repaired.

Stage. A low stage rises a few feet from the ground on one end of the common room. The stage is reserved for the tavern's rare performers. There are numerous gouge marks and a few small daggers still embedded in the wall behind the stage, which is also marked with a few suspicious dark reddish stains.

H2. PRIVATE TABLES

This area has a long standing bar and extension along the far wall and is often reserved for factions or similar groups.

H3. BACK ROOM

Area H3a is a storeroom containing crates and kegs. A sturdy wooden door leads out of the back of the tavern; it's kept barred from the inside and unbarred only for deliveries. Area H3b is separated from the storage area by a heavy curtain and serves as the tavern owner's private quarters. A small table with four stools in this area is used as a private table for drinking and gambling to only the proprietor or the most important patrons, should they request it.

TAVERN: GROWING SEASON

The **illusionist** Saxon Barkridge has just fled over the rooftops of Skullport and has ducked into a tavern on the Central Level. The tavern is the Keel Hall, the central hub for the Zhentarim in Skullport. Saxon uses a bit of illusion magic to fake a Zhentarim faction symbol for the bouncer and slip inside.

The characters can enter the tavern freely if at least one of them is a member of the Zhentarim; otherwise, they must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma check using either Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion. As a last resort, the bouncer will take a bribe of 15 gold pieces to let the characters inside.

INSIDE THE KEEL HALL

The tavern is full of Zhentarim and their friends. There are more than thirty patrons in the common room, including ten **bandits**, two **bandit captains**, and four **thugs**. The characters, especially non-Zhents, are the target of insults and intimidation by the other customers, making it difficult to search the area unnoticed.

SAXON...FOUND?

Searching the common room, the characters discover Saxon sitting alone at one of the tables.

When Saxon sees they've been discovered, they shout "The Zhentarim are a bunch of brainless snake lovers!" The characters are caught up in a stampede as every Zhent in the bar attempts to dogpile the illusionist.

In reality, Saxon used their *disguise self* spell to change their appearance and is actually near the end of the bar near area H2. They used a *major image* spell to create their illusory self at the table and made a break for the back door in the commotion caused by their comment.

Saxon knocks the barkeep to the side as they throw open the door to area H3a. If the characters don't notice this with a passive Perception of 14 or higher, the barkeep and some of the customers catch their attention as the pile of angry Zhentarim quickly realize the insulting mage is an illusion.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters pursue Saxon outside, continue with encounter 3, "Street Chase."

TAVERN: DYING SEASON

In the last encounter the characters sought the *Stone of Golorr* in a hideout used by the Rag Mage's vagabonds, only to discover that a thief had delivered it to the Reforged Ring, a faction of slavers and criminals beyond its glory days. The Reforged Ring have asked to meet the characters at the Gentleman's Groggery, a tavern in the Central Port that's frequently used as a neutral meeting ground.

FEATURES OF THE GROGGERY

The Gentleman's Groggery is used as a meeting place for one key reason: there is an *antimagic field* over the whole interior of the tavern. Though this is common knowledge, signs in Common, Dwarvish, and Undercommon warn would-be patrons before they enter the premises, lest they rely on magic for a day-to-day disguise or some other purpose.

The other main features of the bar include:

- The barkeep and owner is a half-orc named Wurgit
- Distinctly frazzled-looking staff are constantly fighting a losing battle to shoo bats away from the rafters using brooms and sticks.
- The tavern is only at around half-capacity, as Skulker Fever has kept many residents from congregating in close quarters.

REFORGED REPRESENTATIVE

The Reforged Ring's point of contact in the Gentleman's Groggery is Renault Dulsi (LE nonbinary

yuan-ti pureblood), whose hairless head and upper shoulders are covered by gleaming pinkish-brown scales. Renault is a loyal servant of Mertensian Bluud, the leader of the Reforged Ring. Mertensian has instructed Renault to receive guarantees on at least two of the following:

- The Reforged Ring will be given ten percent (50,000 gp) of the treasure hoard if the characters find it.
- None of the hoard will be given to the Chosen of Eilistraee or the Kraken Society.
- The Xanathar Guild receives no more than a quarter (or 100,000 gp) of the total hoard. How the characters ensure that happens is up to them.

These negotiations can go on for as long as you deem fit, as they end up becoming irrelevant once a commotion occurs outside.

RAGGAMOFFYNS ATTACK!

The door to the tavern slams open as an animate whirlwind of garbage flies in and immediately collapses, spreading rubbish all over the floor. Shouts and screams continue from outside as multiple residents flock inside to get away from the raggamoffyn assault.

Renault curses, shouting “the stone!” and runs outside; the *Stone of Golorr* was being held by an anonymous hobgoblin Reforged Ring member outside of the tavern, who now lies dead in the alleyway beside the tavern. Renault goes to check the hobgoblin’s body while a **Fray mage** further down the alley flees, accompanied by a number of **tatterdemanimals**.

In case the connection of events isn’t clear to the characters, Renault can tell them that the stone is theirs for the taking, since the retreating Fray mage has apparently taken it.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters pursue the fleeing Fray mage, continue with encounter 3, “Street Chase.”

ENCOUNTER 9: CELLAR COMPLEX

Changes for Skullport

There are few changes to this encounter location for Skullport. The keys to area B1 are carried by a few Xanathar Guild members and members of the Keepers. Second, area B9 is not underneath either a hostel nor an orphanage.

Also keep in mind that all cellar complex locations will be in Skullport’s Lower Level. The Skullport

sewers are filthy, monster-infested things that connect to Skullport dungeon below Skull Square.

CELLAR COMPLEX: FLOODING SEASON

The first lead to the *Stone of Golorr*’s location is the ‘Rusted Hook,’ an abandoned building in the Lower Trade Lanes. Upon arriving in the area marked on the nimblewright’s map, the characters discover a derelict building; a rotted wooden sign with the faded image of a red hook painted on it hangs above a doorway. The door is unlocked; characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher notice a dent in the wood near the handle and a broken, splintered doorjamb, suggesting the door was forced open.

The door opens to a staircase descending to area B9. Characters entering the cellar complex detect a faintly fishy, briny odor. Area B9 and B8 contain the bodies of four dead **cultists**. The characters can observe the following about them:

- The cultists are two humans and a half-orc, all wearing simple gray or off-white robes. They carry no notable insignia.
- All four cultists have unusually pale skin with dark, pronounced veins.
- All of them were killed with slashing and piercing weapons.
- At least one of the cultists is carrying a note with instructions: “Clockwork agent to deliver prize. Await collection by the Lord’s servant. Retreat to Grinda’s if necessary.”
- Dried blood is splattered on the walls and floor. A smeared trail of blood leads from area B8 through areas B7 and B5, to the iron door (B4).

Area B7 contains the corpse of a strange, Medium-sized creature; it has a slimy milk-white body with rubbery semi-translucent skin and tentacle-like appendages instead of limbs. The creature is suspended by a chain and hook hanging from the ceiling. On the wall behind the creature, someone has smeared the words “Ever always the Kraken” in Common using the creature’s white, viscous blood.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The stone was brought here to await pickup from the Skum Lord’s servants. Just as a **skum**, the pale aberration, arrived to collect the stone, the cellar was raided by members of the Kraken Society. The Kraken Society killed most of the humanoid cultists and the skum, leaving its body and the message as a warning for the rest of the Skum Lord’s followers. The Kraken Society are enemies of the Skum Lord; they knew nothing about the *Stone of Golorr*.

One of the cultists survived the attack and crawled away with the *Stone of Golorr* to the sewer and through the secret door to area B10. The Kraken Society members, unaware of the secret door, assume the cultist escaped or drowned.

SEA SPAWN

Two **sea spawn**, sent by the Skum Lord to investigate what happened in the cellar, are lurking in the sewer intersection at B2. If characters approach this intersection, the sea spawn immediately dive into the sewage and swim away.

TRACKING THE STONE

Characters who follow the trail of blood out into the sewers to area B3 can spot more blood on the wall if they have a passive Perception score of 13 or higher. This blood is next to the secret door to area B10, which contains blood-soaked rags and a small hastily-written note:

“Attack by Krakens. Taking the prize to G near docks.”

NEXT ENCOUNTER

Both ‘G’ and ‘Grinda’ refer to Grinda Garloth, a human inventor living in Murkshore. Asking around Skullport, especially the docks, leads the characters to her residence. If the characters are having trouble, word can reach them about someone wearing off-white robes limping into a building near the Lower Port docks. When the characters are ready, proceed with encounter 2, “Murkshore.”

CELLAR COMPLEX: DYING SEASON

Since the last encounter, one of the characters attuned to the *Stone of Golorr* and learned the three keys needed to enter the vault. They also learned that the vault entrance is in the Lower Heart, hidden in a cellar.

FINDING THE VAULT

The path to the vault begins behind a magically sealed rune wall in area B10. The character attuned to the stone has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and Intelligence (Investigation) checks to detect the secret doors leading from area B7 and B10.

GREEN GUARDIAN

Guarding the path to the vault is a **green slaad** calling itself Emrull’k. Halaster secretly possesses



the slaad’s control gem and has given it precise instructions to allow the ‘worthy’ to access the vault entrance; Emrull’k knows how to open the rune wall blocking the way to the vault but demands to be shown the *Stone of Golorr* first. If a character shows them the stone, Emrull’k asks the following riddle:

Many kill for me, to give to others. I make beggars into noblemen and kings into madmen. What am I?

The riddle is not strictly part of Emrull’k’s instructions, but is part of its twisted rebellious interpretation of Halaster’s orders. The correct answer is ‘gold’ or ‘coin;’ if answered correctly, Emrull’k opens the rune door. Emrull’k stubbornly refuses to let anyone in without answering its riddle and grows violent if they try to force the issue. If the characters can’t solve the riddle and can find some way of incapacitating the slaad, the rune wall can be bypassed with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

PATH TO THE VAULT

Beyond the rune wall is a sharply descending 10-foot-wide tunnel. The tunnel continues downward for 120 feet before evening out into a corridor 20 feet wide, which continues for 60 feet before ending at the vault doors.

ENCOUNTER 10: CONVERTED

WINDMILL

Changes for Skullport

The ‘windmill’ was operated by manual labor, rather than by wind. Other than that, there are no major changes to this encounter location.

CONVERTED WINDMILL: GROWING SEASON

In the last encounter the characters learned that the *Stone of Golorr* was given to a Harper named Saxon Barkridge, who is deep undercover with the Reforged Ring. Saxon has taken the stone to a Reforged Ring outpost in the Upper Trade Lanes, but the Ring suddenly acquired a large batch of fresh slaves from the Xanathar Guild. As such, they’ve locked down the building and Saxon can’t leave without breaking their cover.

REFORGED RING SLAVES

The Reforged Ring have 3d6 prisoners (humanoid noncombatants with AC 10 and 3 hit points) from the Xanathar Guild. The slaves are kept locked in areas W2 and replace any squatters normally present in this encounter location. The doors to their rooms are locked; Tion has the key to these doors.

TION THE BINDER

The old mill building is protected by Tion the Binder (NE male human **wererat**), who leads three Reforged Ring **bandits**. Tion is in area W1 while the bandits keep guard outside; undercover Harper agent Saxon Barkridge (CG nonbinary human **illusionist**) is on the second floor in area W5.

Tion is initially wary of the characters’ approach; he has been instructed by Reforged Ring leader Mertensian Bluud to keep a close eye on the large batch of slaves. He can be convinced to let the characters inside to confront Saxon with a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check. A character who is a member of the Reforged Ring or who has any useful evidence to back their claim has advantage on the check; a member of the Reforged Ring of rank Jailer or higher can order Tion to stand down with no check required.

THE MAGE FLEES

When the characters reach the second floor they hear a clamor of flapping wings from area W6. Looking inside, they see Saxon jumping out through the window of area W6 as the scrawny pigeons who roost here flock around the rafters in agitation.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

If the characters pursue Saxon, proceed with encounter 5, “Rooftop Chase.”

CONVERTED WINDMILL: DYING SEASON

The characters have pursued a **Fray mage** in possession of the *Stone of Golorr* through the streets to a derelict mill. The Fray mage runs into the building, causing a commotion among the squatters (N **commoners** of various races and genders) present in areas W2. The Fray mage takes advantage of the confusion to hide among the squatters for as long as possible.

The informal leader of the squatters is a one-handed drow named Quincy the Lip, who has no interest in the stone and will accept payment of 5 gold pieces to help oust the Fray mage from their midst. When the Fray mage is discovered or it has a chance to surprise one of the characters, it summons a **swarm of rats** from the walls of the mill to assist it before combat begins.

NEXT ENCOUNTER

When the Fray mage is defeated, the characters can find the *Stone of Golorr* on their person. When the characters leave the mill, proceed with encounter 1, “Alley.”

VAULT KEYS

At the end of an encounter chain, a character attuned to the *Stone of Golorr* learns the location of Halastar’s Vault, the keys needed to open it, and the presence of its gold dragon guardian, just like *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

As also described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, characters can spend 1 day and 5 gp in research to attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check in an attempt to determine the location of a vault key. If the check fails by 5 or more, the main antagonist learns of the search and sends followers to attack the characters and, if possible, take the *Stone of Golorr* from them:

- The Skum Lord sends a **kuo toa monitor** and three **kua toa** (70 percent chance), or **Zacria** (see Appendix A) and three **sea spawn** (30 percent chance). If Zacria has been killed or is otherwise indisposed, a **skum** is sent in her stead.
- Remallia Haventree sends three **spies** and two **guards** (70 percent chance), or two **knights** and an **apprentice wizard** (30 percent chance).
- The Rag Mage sends a **cult fanatic** accompanied by three **bullywugs** (70 percent chance), or four of his **Fray mages** (30 percent chance).

KEY DESCRIPTIONS

The keys listed in the Vault Keys table are described below in alphabetical order.

Admantine Bar

As described in *Dragon Heist*.

Animated Construct

As described in *Dragon Heist*; Nim Wrackmutter in Clockwork Wonders can provide an animated construct for their use. The characters can rent Nim's nimblewright, Primo the Magnificent, for an up-front fee of 500 gp. If Primo is destroyed before being returned, Nim demands 2,500 gp as payment.

Cask of Dwarven Ale

Any ale from Gyudd's Distillery will serve this purpose. Characters can purchase one from most of the local taverns or from Gyudd's business directly.

Drunken Elf

As described in *Dragon Heist*.

Flumph Eyestalk

Each bowl of flumph stew sold in the Worm's Gullet has a one in ten chance of having an intact eyestalk floating in it. Alternatively, Blong in the Skum Lord's lair (area A20) has two eyestalks—though it's currently using them.

Gems Worth at Least 1,000 gp

As described in *Dragon Heist*. Dumathoin's Jest is the best-known place to get gems in Skullport.

A Good Mind

Any living humanoid with an Intelligence score of 18 or higher counts for this key. Alternatively, the characters can purchase a choice pickled brain from one of the vendors on Illithid Way for 100 gp.

Impostor

In a direct sense, Garryth at the Overflowing Urn, Mertensian Bluud of the Reforged Ring, or Madame Iydyanya in the Lower Port fit this description. Alternatively, a professional actor (such as from the Troll's Guffaw) can also fulfill the requirements of this vault key.

Pair of Bugbear Ears

As described in *Dragon Heist*. There is no shortage of bugbears in Skullport; many work for the Reforged Ring, the Xanathar Guild, and to a lesser degree the Zhentarim.

Petrified Creature

Morganis Andropoeia, the medusa who runs the Maedar's Widow, has many petrified works for art for sale. A smaller beast can be purchased for 100 gp. Ranking members of the Xanathar Guild can request a petrified humanoid be transported from the beholder's lair for a percentage of the hoard.

Severed Drow Hand

There are many drow in Skullport that can be used to acquire this trophy. A member of the Chosen of Eilistraee is willing to sacrifice their hand if their faction is guaranteed 10% of the vault's treasure. A particularly clever character might realize that the hand need not come from a living drow—the

Vault Keys (roll 3 times, once for each key)

d6	First Key	Second Key	Third Key
1	Adamantine bar	Animated construct	Petrified creature
2	Flumph eyestalk	A good mind	Cask of dwarven ale
3	Drunken elf	Gems worth at least 1,000 gp	Impostor
4	Shackles	Tooth worth at least 500 gp	Pair of bugbear ears
5	Skullport bat	Severed drow hand	Shapechanger
6	Silvered warhammer	Rare snake	Zombie

Chosen can provide a skeletal hand from one of their entombed deceased members for a lesser price.

Shackles

A pair of manacles can be easily acquired from the old slave market in the Lower Port or from a member of the Reforged Ring.

Shapechanger

As described in *Dragon Heist*. There are a number of doppelgangers working in the Troll's Guffaw theater and as members of the Unseen in the Broken Pike Tavern; otherwise, there are a fair number of lycanthropes and other shapechangers in Skullport who can be hired to accompany the characters.

Silvered Warhammer

As described in *Dragon Heist*.

Skullport Bat

Characters can purchase a bat from the Feathered Rat in the Lower Heart. Alternatively, they can capture one from the many bats in the Upper Port area near the Bat's Roost tavern, though attempting to capture one will result in 1d4 swarms of bats attacking the characters present.

Tooth Worth at Least 500 gp

The characters can purchase a rare or exotic tooth, such as an ancient dragon's tooth, from a vendor in

Illithid Way. Alternatively, they can search the fighting pits in a number of Skullport businesses (the Thrown Gauntlet, the Hobbled Lamia, etc) for a lost tooth after a high-stakes fight.

Rare Snake

The Zhentarim can provide (or sell) a flying snake to fulfill this requirement. In a more roundabout way, Mertensian Bluud or a high-ranking member of the Zhentarm (including a member of the Doom Raiders) fits this key description.

Zombie

A zombie can be procured by the use of an *animate dead* spell, readily found in Beggar's Rest Pass if blood is shed there, or purchased from the sea hag Olive Stillwater at Dead Man's Corner in the Lower Port.

HALASTER'S VAULT

Once the characters have the *Stone of Golorr*, they can use it to determine the location of Halaster's vault and the keys needed to enter it.

CHANGES FOR DRAGON SWINDLE

The Vault of Dragons as described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* needs few adjustments to fit the modified story of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*. If you plan to continue the story of your characters in *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, you may elect to give Halaster's vault a more eccentric aesthetic to match some of the areas described in Undermountain or to foreshadow Halaster as an important future figure.

AURINAX

In *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, Aurinax loyally guards the treasure on behalf of Dagult Neverember and is immune to Waterdeep's dragonward thanks to the *dragonstaff of Ahghairon* in his possession. The following adjustments change Aurinax's backstory to fit the narrative of *Dragon Swindle*.

- Aurinax is under Halaster's permanent ensorcellment, tasked with guarding the treasure until its services are no longer required. Its personality is otherwise unchanged.
- You may choose to have Aurinax's dwarf disguise match the appearance of Halaster himself, though the characters and NPC's present may not recognize the Mad Mage's form.
- The lore of the *dragonstaff of Anghairon* makes its inclusion potentially problematic; you might elect to rename the staff, alter its properties, explain its presence, or omit it entirely.



Characters attempting to convince or deceive Aurinax will face slightly modified premises for doing so. Instead of claiming to have been sent by Dagult Neverember, the characters could try to claim that they serve Halaster and are taking the treasure under his orders; Aurinax has no reason to think this is the case, but also knows precisely how unpredictable the Mad Mage can be.

The characters can claim that by finding the *Stone of Golorr* and accessing the vault, they are the intended recipients of Halaster's gold. This is actually most likely the case; a character who shows Aurinax the *Stone of Golorr* or who takes the time to explain the events that led them to the vault has advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks to convince him that the gold is theirs by right.

By engaging the dragon in conversation, characters might learn how Aurinax came to guard the treasure. More importantly, they can learn that the gold dragon's service to Halaster ends when the gold no longer needs guarding. Aurinax has waited untold centuries for someone to take the treasure so that he can be free to pursue his own life; a character can exploit this to make Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) checks with advantage.

LEAVING THE VAULT

As in *Dragon Heist*, the main antagonist sends forces to intercept the characters as they are leaving the vault for the first time.

- If Remallia Haventree is the antagonist, she arrives with 5 **guards** to secure the vault. She might 'allow the characters to live' if they lead her to the gold and agree to leave empty-handed. In the interest of fairness and a satisfying campaign end, Remallia should refrain from using her *cone of cold* or *fireball* spells against the characters if she is engaged in combat. She might choose to unleash these spells against threats like faction reinforcements or the dragon Aurinax.
- If the Skum Lord is the main antagonist, it sends a **skum** (see appendix A) and four **sea spawn** to secure the vault.
- If the Rag Mage is the antagonist, it arrives with two **giant rats** and three **swarms of rats** to claim the treasure for itself. If the Rag Mage is destroyed, it regenerates elsewhere in Skullport but doesn't return to the vault.

FACTION REINFORCEMENTS

If the characters joined one or more factions in Skullport and kept them informed of their progress, you can have reinforcements arrive to help combat the antagonist or add a new element to the situation.



Chosen of Eilistraee. Narceza Ulin sends **Iljrene Ahbruyn** (see appendix A), and four **drow** to assist the characters. If Iljrene is unavailable, another **drow mage** is sent in her stead.

The Keepers. The Keepers send **Yarvi Yandle** (see appendix A) and two **apprentice wizards**.

Kraken Society. Navroth Keltesh (see appendix A) arrives with a pair of **giant crabs**.

The Reforged Ring. Mertensian Bluud sends two **thugs** and two hooded figures, who reveal themselves as **yuan-ti malisons** (type 1).

Xanathar Guild. Xanathar sends **Ahmaergo** (see *Dragon Heist*, appendix B) and four **bugbears**, ostensibly to protect faction members but more importantly to secure the vault.

Zhentarim. As described in *Dragon Heist*, the **Doom Raiders** (see *Dragon Heist*, appendix B) arrive to help the characters. Ignore the additional text in that section about splitting the treasure; see the next section for further.

CLAIMING THE TREASURE

With such a massive amount of coin now ripe for the taking, the major factions of Skullport are all looking for their piece. The six factions have the following demands and desires to consider:

- Xanathar and his guild demand the majority of the treasure hoard, as Skullport is ‘their’ city and the *Stone of Golorr* is their property. The Xanathar Guild and the Zhentarim have already negotiated a majority split of the hoard: the two factions split any unclaimed coin and will not be satisfied with anything less than sixty percent (300,000 gp) of the hoard in total.
- The Keepers, the Kraken Society, and the Reforged Ring each vie for ten percent (50,000 gp) of the total treasure. They will ask any faction members from among the characters to help them make their case with the Xanathar Guild and Zhentarim.
- Though generally disliked by most of the other factions, the Chosen of Eilistraee negotiate a truce with the Xanathar Guild as part of a claim for ten percent (50,000 gp) of the treasure. The Reforged Ring and the Chosen of Eilistraee will be dissatisfied if the opposing faction is given a share of the hoard.
- The Xanathar Guild and Zhentarim plan to give the characters ten percent (50,000 gp) of the treasure for their efforts, though one or more characters might try to negotiate for more.

As you might have noticed, there is no way to satisfy all parties involved in splitting up the hoard, even if the characters forego their share completely. The

above considerations are designed to create short and long term repercussions on the city of Skullport, the balance of power between various factions, and the characters’ relationship with those factions. Feel free to ignore, modify, or rewrite the above considerations if you plan on running an extended campaign.

ONWARD AND DOWNWARD

The characters should be 5th level by the end of this adventure if you follow the same format as *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. One day, the characters awake to find a note inside Mindflay Manor:

“You’ve found my gold. Now find true riches! Undermountain beckons.”

If you wish to continue the adventure in *Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, you can do so by either:

- Having the characters adventure locally in Skullport for a time, reaching 7th level and accessing Undermountain’s Sargauth Level directly from Skullport’s river access or connecting passages.
- Having the characters access Undermountain from the Yawning Portal in Waterdeep.



CHAPTER 5: GROWING CONCERN

Those Who Harp are a secretive society who conduct clandestine operations to prevent or subvert evil tyrants. There's no overarching power structure controlling the Harpers; each agent tends to act independently or as part of an insulated local cell.

Enter Remallia Haventree, lady of Waterdeep's House Ulbrinter and high-ranking Harper. The Harpers have worked tirelessly to sabotage the machinations of the Xanathar Guild and the Zhentarim in Waterdeep for years, with 'Remi' Haventree as a key player in these efforts. When Remallia learned of the *Stone of Golorr* and the mass of wealth hidden in Halaster's Vault, she had two key realizations: first, neither Xanathar nor the Zhentarim could be permitted to acquire such wealth; and second, with that amount of gold Remallia could tear the power structure of Skullport to the ground. Gathering loyal Harper agents to her cause, Remallia has infiltrated Skullport with the goal of gaining access to Halaster's Vault at any cost.

FACING REMALLIA HAVENTREE

Roll percentile dice to determine Remallia's location when the characters arrive.

d100	Location
01-50	She's having a conversation with Felrax in area E12.
51-90	She's in her room in area E39.
91-00	She's moving between areas E40 and E41, reviewing agent reports

DISRUPTING REMALLIA'S OPERATION

The characters can hinder Remallia's operation in the following ways.

Incapacitate Setana. The ghost Setana is the ever-vigilant first line of defense to discourage Skullport's residents from investigating the manor too closely. If Setana is temporarily banished (see area E1) or if she is incapacitated using the golden haircomb in area E39, Remallia will need to reassign resources to protect the mansion instead of investigating the Stone.

Oust Ulvira. Characters can learn that Ulvira Snowveins at the Feathered Rat is a Harper agent from various pieces of circumstantial evidence or a

report in area E13 that directly implicates the shop owner. Providing this evidence to the Xanathar Guild results in Ulvira being arrested (and likely never seen again), removing one of Remallia's best long-term information-gatherers in Skullport.

Release Undead. Releasing the zombies from area E16, the vampire spawn from area E4, or Dalagor the Cold from area E35 without being forced to destroy them poses problems for the Harpers in the manor at large. The released undead will generally attack living beings at random within the mansion's walls; Dalagor and the vampire spawn will operate more intelligently. Dalagor specifically has the ability to command the other undead in his former home.

REMALLIA'S LAIR

Remallia Haventree and her fellow Harpers have taken up residence in Dalagor's Fortress, a three-story stone mansion that rises from the Central Heart through the Upper Heart. Dalagor the Cold was a mercenary lord in Skullport and a contemporary of Lord Byronae Trilluach, Auden Trilluach's father. A ruthless individual, Dalagor amassed considerable wealth in Skullport and grew increasingly dependent on undead soldiers to fill his ranks. Now Dalagor's Fortress is a dark and forbidding place full of hidden secrets and locked doors.

Dalagor's Fortress has the following features, unless otherwise noted:

- The walls, floors, and ceilings are a dark gray stone.
- Unless otherwise noted, rooms and hallways are 10 feet high.
- Doors are thick dark-stained hardwood with metal hinges on one side. If a door is locked, the lock can be picked by a character who makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or the door can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. Remallia, Vimat, and Felrax carry keys that unlock all doors in the manor with the exception of area E4 and E35.
- Areas are unlit unless otherwise noted.

GHOUL SERVANT

Dalagor's Fortress still has an active occupant, a **ghast** named Vimat that worked as Dalagor's servant. Vimat wears a magical amulet that suppresses its Stench trait. Vimat made its presence known to the Harpers and offered to continue its duties in the manor in exchange for meat, a deal the Harpers cautiously agreed to honor.

Vimat is dutiful and well-informed about Skullport's history, especially during Dalagor's time in the late 1300's DR. It is not particularly loyal to the Harpers and is willing to look the other way for intruders if sufficiently interested or bribed. Vimat is aware of the secret in room E35 and it is the one thing Vimat cares about protecting. Vimat has the key to area E4 but doesn't keep it on its person, hiding it among its possessions in area E20.

E1. ENTRANCE HALL

This hall has the following features:

- A frayed and rotted rug runs from the front double doors to the entrance of area E9.
- Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher notice filthy footprints tracking on the rug and stone floor.

Setana. The entrance hall is constantly guarded by Setana, a female human **ghost** who used to work in the now-closed Crowing Cockatrice Inn. Setana has been a Harper agent her entire ghostly existence and now serves Remallia Haventree. Setana can cast *invisibility* on herself at will and generally remain unseen in the hall. She can use her Incorporeal Movement trait to move through the walls, ceilings, and floors of the manor with the exception of area E16 and E35; she is unaware that area E16 even exists.

If Setana sees creatures she doesn't recognize, she confronts them and attempts to scare them away through intimidation. If necessary, she escalates to using her horrifying visage and the possession abilities. Characters who pose as Harper agents have advantage on Charisma checks to interact with Setana if they mention Remallia Haventree's name or present a Harper symbol.

Setana prefers to flee rather than fight. If she is reduced to 0 hit points, she reappears in the manor within 2d4 days. If the golden haircomb in area E39 is destroyed, Setana's hit point maximum is reduced by 1d4 each day. If her hit point maximum is reduced to 0 or she is reduced to 0 hit points during this time, she is destroyed permanently. Setana will obey the commands of a character in possession of the golden haircomb as long as it doesn't require her to directly or knowingly harm a member of the Harpers.

E2. SITTING ROOM

This was often used as a waiting room for those seeking an audience with Dalagor. It contains the following features:

- If it is 'growing season,' the room is dimly lit by phosphorescent fungus growing on the window.
- The room contains four armchairs around a large

stone fireplace and two endtables. The furniture is dusty and aged but still usable.

- Faded but imposing paintings of Dalagor hang on the walls and above the mantle. The pictures are enchanted so that Dalagor's head and eyes move slightly to glower down at the room's occupants.

E3. TROPHY ANTECHAMBER

This room contains ceremonial weapons hung on display; a longsword, a flail, and three spears. The weapons are aged ceremonial items and aren't usable. They are worth a total of 600 gold pieces.

E4. CLOAK ROOM

This room was used to hang up coats, cloaks, and robes. The door to this room is locked. A few dusty, age-ruined coats are still hanging on hooks along one wall; more are heaped in the corner.

Vampire remnant. Hibernating in the pile of cloaks and coats is a withered **vampire spawn** with a reduced hit point maximum of 37 (5d8+15). The spawn is a creation of Dalagor's former majordomo, a vampire named Ezira Gloomdelve. Ezira left Skullport decades ago, but she left the vampire spawn behind to protect a particular item.

Ebon key. The vampire spawn wears a simple leather cord looped over its neck; dangling from the cord is a black metal key that opens the door to area E35.

E5. DERELICT HALLWAY

This hallway between areas 3 and 7 has chunks of stone littering the floor, as pieces of the wall have fallen and crushed a stone table. The floor of the area is considered difficult terrain and has been left unexplored by the Harper occupants.

Enchanted Tapestry. A ragged tapestry hanging from the wall is enchanted to attack intruders, which includes anyone other than the undead who reside in the manor. Treat the tapestry as a **rug of smothering**.

E6. PARLOR

This parlor room is furnished with several game tables, including chess and a five-player set for liar's dice. Dalagor was known as calculating and stoic, and would often passively intimidate rivals by methodically beating them in games of strategy and deception.

Treasure. The chess pieces are made of delicately painted porcelain and are worth 150 gp as a set. The cups of the liar's dice set are made of polished quartz and the dice are amethyst; each player's set is worth 25 gp each, and 150 gp if all five player sets are sold together.

E7. STORAGE ROOM

This room is filled with dusty boxes containing stored tapestries, crates containing decrepit bolts of cloth, and austere iron candlebrum meant for use in area E1 and E9 during the rare occasions when Dalagor played host for his peers. A spiral staircase leads up to the northern area E19.

Fey Occupant. This out-of-the-way room is home to Slim Jack, a **boggle** who has lived in the manor for almost forty years. Boggles are commonly drawn into the Material Plane from the Feywild as a result of intense feelings of abandonment or isolation; Slim Jack isn't sure how it got here or what called it. Unbeknownst to Slim Jack, the emotions that called it belong to Dalagor in area E35; however, Slim Jack knows that area E35 is the only place it can't enter with its dimensional rift ability. If the characters discover Slim Jack, it offers them help and information around the manor as long as they promise to help it find a way into area E35.

E8. WATER CLOSET

This room contains a small sink and toilet.

E9. GREAT HALL

When Dalagor was in power, his great hall was used for practicing troops more often than it hosted feasts. The room contains the following features:

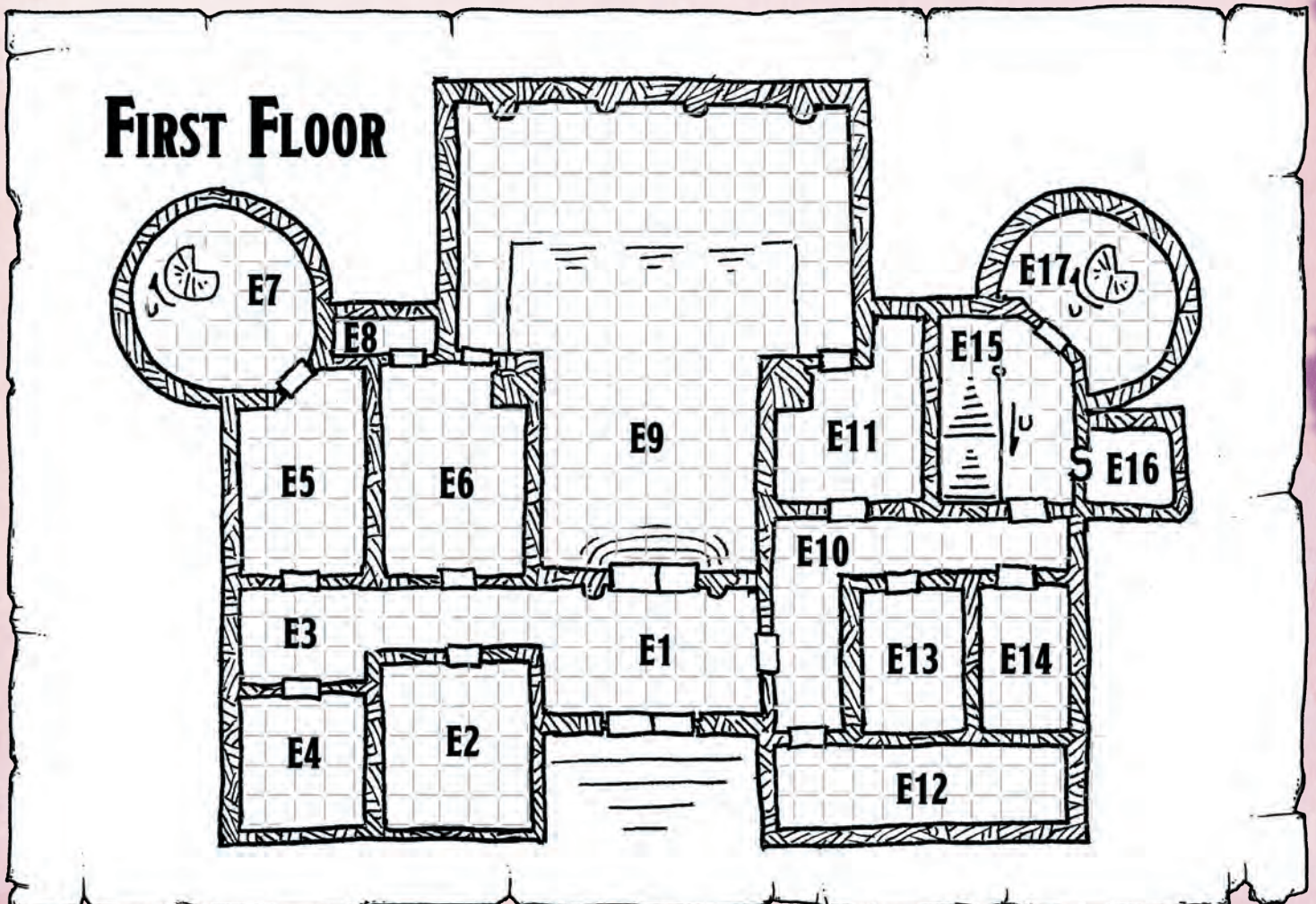
- The room is brightly lit by sconces with *continual flame* cast on them.
- Steps lead up to a raised perimeter where old, battered training dummies stand next to empty weapon racks. A high-backed chair looks down on the lower area of the room like a throne.
- The ground level portion of the room contains two long tables with bench seats.

E10. HALLWAY

The tattered banners, flags, or badges of the various military companies and other rivals defeated by Dalagor are pinned to the walls of this hallway. Small unlit and unfueled oil lamps jut out from the wall intermittently.

E11. KITCHEN

The manor's kitchen no longer prepares feasts for Dalagor and his array of trusted officers, but it is



more than sufficient to meet the needs of the Harpers currently residing in the manor. Most of the food here is in the form of basic ingredients and dry goods: characters that spend ten minutes gathering usable food can package up to ten days' rations.

E12. REPURPOSED TROPHY ROOM

The copper dragonborn **mage** Felrax has turned this trophy room into a ground-floor bedroom. It contains the following features:

- A stuffed **hook horror** stands in one corner with arms upraised.
- There is a fireplace on the wall at the far end of the room. The mounted head of an **umber hulk** peers down from above the fireplace.
- A twin-sized bed has been placed under the window on the far wall.

Felrax. The dragonborn mage can usually be found in this room if he isn't partaking in a Harper mission. He assumes anyone who has gotten past the entrance hall in area E1 is a Harper agent unless they become hostile or reveal themselves in some other obvious manner.

Treasure. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a silver medallion of the dragon god Bahamut, worth 50 gold pieces, tucked beneath the mattress. Felrax believes he is constantly misplacing the medallion; in truth, Slim Jack (see area E7) keeps using its dimensional rift ability as a prank to relocate the medallion to various different but plausible locations.

E13. BRIEFING ROOM

A large table in this room is covered with a full-sized map of Skullport's three levels and marked with handwritten notes in cypher. The table is surrounded by ten wooden chairs, and there is a small cabinet containing stacks of parchment, quills, and bottles of ink.

Harpers. Two Harper **spies** are writing mundane observation reports in this room but will respond to commotion in area 10 and 14. Operating under the assumption that everyone in the building is a fellow clandestine agent, the spies never give their real names or details about their assignment, nor do they ask anyone else for the same.

Map. A character can decipher one of the coded notes on the map with ten minutes' work and a successful DC 17 Intelligence check. The notes reveal the following:

- The Harpers have an agent in the Troll's Guffaw theater. This refers to Orith the Lucky, the tiefling actress described in "encounter 6, Theater" in the

'growing season' encounter chain.

- The owner of the Feathered Rat, Ulvira Snowveins, is a long-time Harper informant.
- One note marks the location of the old windmill from the growing season encounter chain encounter 10, "Converted Windmill" as a Reforged Ring building but doesn't note the presence of a Harper agent there.

A creature that fails its Intelligence check by 5 or more interprets the cipher incorrectly, getting either nonsensical results or leads that point them to incorrect people or businesses.

E14. FIELD HOSPITAL

Skullport is a perilous place, and many Harpers embed themselves with dangerous groups in dangerous areas. More than a few have been injured, and a few of them are recovering in this makeshift recovery room. The room contains two narrow cots and a cabinet with medical supplies.

Wounded Harpers. There are two injured Harpers in this room. One is Jon Bouler, a comatose human noncombatant with 3 hit points and AC 8. The second is Oin Somers, a nonbinary drow **veteran** recovering from a broken leg. Due to their injury, Olin's speed is reduced by half and their hit point maximum is reduced to 45 (7d8+14).

Treasure. The medicine cabinet contains a healer's kit, rolls of clean linen strips for use as bandages, and two *potions of healing*. Taking the items will likely arouse Olin's suspicions.

E15. STAIRCASE

This small hallway leads to the first-floor staircase and the door to area E17. The area is brightly lit by a *continual flame* spell one of the Harpers cast on a wall-mounted sconce.

Puzzle Wall. The south wall before the door to E17 contains a hidden entrance to Dalagor's treasure vault (E16). The wall is carved with a relief; Dalagor's visage looms large over a row of uniform, identical soldiers. Around Dalagor's head are words in Common: "The Living are Blind."

Opening the passageway to area E16 requires all creatures in the hallway to 'blind' themselves by closing or covering their eyes before covering Dalagor's eyes on the stone relief. The character(s) doing so feel the stone vanish beneath their fingers; upon opening their eyes, the wall has vanished to reveal area E16. The stone wall reappears 1 minute later; a living creature touching the wall from area E16 causes the wall to vanish again.

E16. HIDDEN VAULT

During Dalagor's heyday this secret room was the mercenary lord's primary treasure vault. Ezira Gloomdelve, Dalagor's majordomo, all but emptied the vault before her departure from Skullport.

Zombies. Ezira left three **zombies** in this room as a parting gift to anyone who tried to plunder Dalagor's vault; the zombies attack any creature in area E15 as soon as the wall between the rooms is vanished.

Treasure. The only treasure left in the room is a small unlocked wooden chest, which contains 20 platinum pieces, 120 gold pieces, and a small uncut ruby worth 300 gold pieces. The ruby is enchanted and will appear to ooze blood when held.

E17. INTERROGATION ROOM

Dalagor the Cold used to torture enemies for information in this tower room, and the Harpers have utilized the existing tools here for their own interrogations. This area contains the following features:

- There are four sets of arm and leg shackles affixed to the wall around the room's perimeter.
- Sets of old, rusted torture implements hang on the wall opposite the shackles.
- A table with adjustable pitch and affixed ankle and wrist shackles sits near the stairs in the center of the room.
- A bucket used for catching blood or other waste rests near the foot of the table.

The room is unoccupied. Examination of the wall shackles and table indicate at least one person has been held here recently.

E18. SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Because the east end of this hall has unobstructed floor-to-ceiling windows, the Harpers keep the wall sconces enchanted with *everlasting flame* shrouded to keep the light from being noticed outside. The area is in dim light.

E19. TOWER CHAMBERS

These second-level tower rooms are furnished as austere sitting rooms with plain wooden tables and chairs. They were often used as recreational areas for Dalagor's home forces when they weren't on duty.

Treasure. The northwest tower's table has an uneven leg, which is kept level by a boxed set of playing cards. The cards were made by a Skullport local and is an item of interest worth 50 gp to the right buyer.

E20. VIMAT'S QUARTERS

Vimat used to keep up appearances by keeping this furnished bedroom tidy, but after Dalagor's fall the manor's head servant abandoned pretense formed a living space more reminiscent of a den. It contains the following features:

- **Wardrobe.** The only intact piece of furniture in the room contains the carefully preserved clothing Vimat wears as a work uniform.
- **Nesting Pile.** The bed has been dismantled into a large nest-like pile of shredded blankets, curtains, clothing, and gnawed bones.

Treasure. Any creature that makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check searching the room finds a small brass key in the messy bed pile. This key unlocks the door to area E4.

E21. BARRACKS

Dalagor's guards and low-ranking on-site soldiers were mainly housed in this large room. It contains the following features:

- Two dozen single cots are lined perpendicular to the north and south walls. The cots closest to the door to area E18 look relatively clean; the rest are covered in dust and cobwebs.
- Unlit and unfueled oil lamps jut from simple fixtures on the north and south walls every ten feet.

Harper agents who don't have an assigned room elsewhere in the manor use the cots closest to the door as a place to rest while awaiting assignments or updated instructions. The residents of the manor don't go into this room unless they have a particular reason to.

E22. OLD ARMORY

Attached to the common barracks is the armory for the soldiers living there. Old wooden weapon racks and armor stands are overturned and broken on the floor.

Metal Eater. A **rust monster** has found its way into the armory and has spent its time eating most of the metal weapons and armor here and is running low on food.

Treasure. Innumerable arrows, swords, spears, bolts, and axes are now nothing more than useless shafts and handles. A dozen sets of leather armor are still serviceable; a character that succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a pouch concealed in one of the armor sets, which contains four sapphires worth 50 gp each.

E23. COMMUNAL LAVATORY

When Dalagor's on-site forces were still primarily made up of living soldiers, this group bathroom served most of their combined needs. It contains the following features:

- Three sinks in this room used to have rudimentary *create or destroy water* spells enchanting the faucets, but the taps are no longer functional.
- Four stalls line the west wall, three toilets and one shower. One of the three toilets is smashed to pieces. The enchantment on the shower still allows a weak flow of cold water.

E24. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Phixis Hardwit (CN female rock gnome **bard**) and Arel the Willow-Speaker (NG male wood elf **druid**) live in this converted officer's quarters.

During daytime hours, this pair is relaxing and playing Three-Dragon Ante. Every so often, one of them goes to the bathroom in area E23 or gets food from area E11.

E25. UNUSED BEDROOM

Dust-covered white sheets are draped over twin armchairs, the bed, a footlocker, and dresser in this guest bedroom.

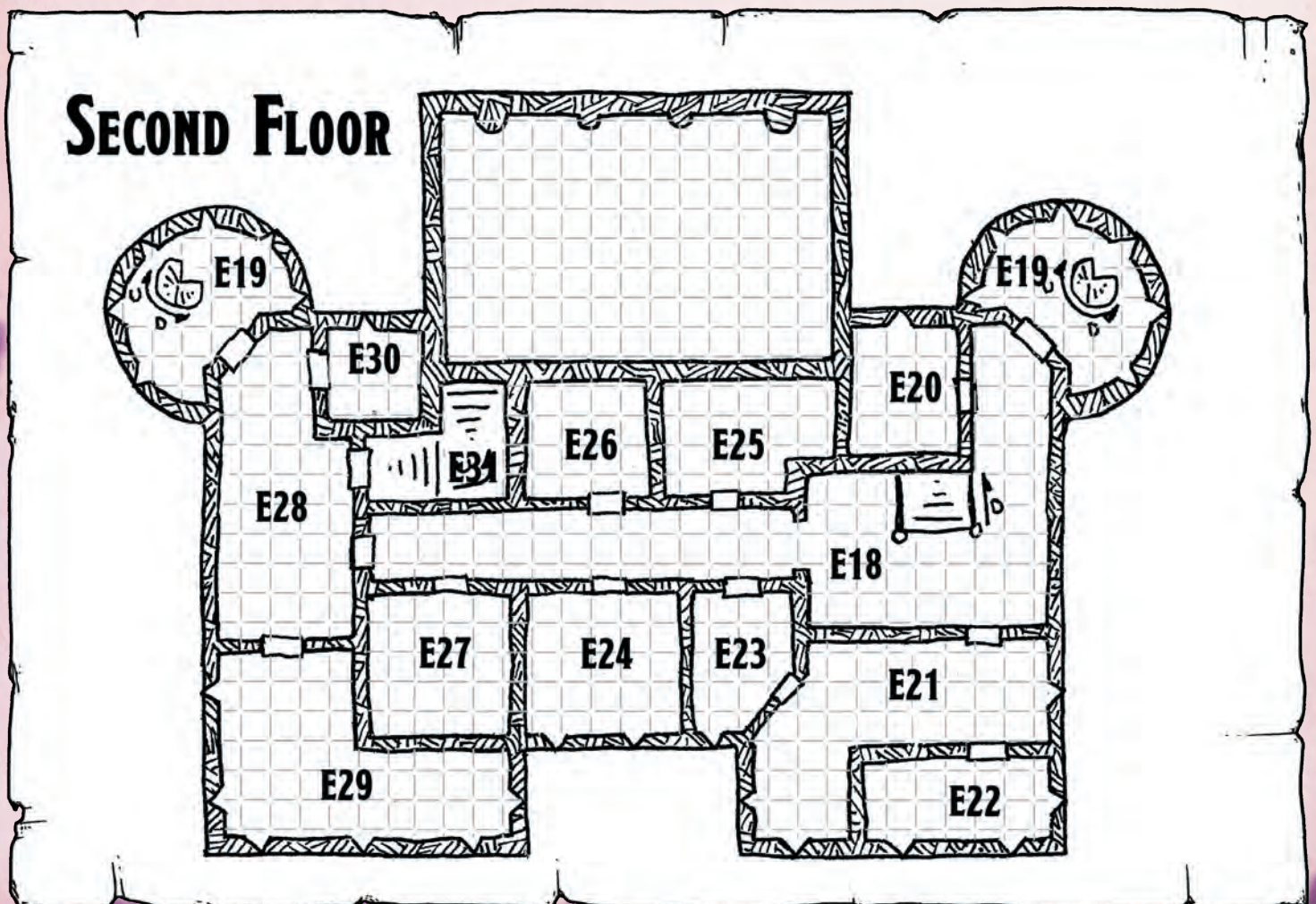
Covered Urn. Resting atop the dresser is a heavy urn with black-painted figures of flame-wreathed dogs fleeing a terrible wind. Opening or damaging the urn causes the ashes contained within to fly out and form a **hell hound**, which returns to ash when slain.

Treasure. The remaining contents of the urn is a large sapphire, an *elemental gem*.

E26. TROOP STORAGE

Once another barracks-room for living soldiers, Dalagor replaced most of his forces with undead and converted this room to a storage area for some of those troops.

Zombies. Suspended against the walls by hooks under their armpits are 12 **zombies** dressed head to toe in armored uniforms. The zombies are inert unless commanded by Dalagor to awaken, or until one or more of their number is harmed; otherwise, only a



DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that these are more than withered corpses.

E27. ORATORY OF THE LICH-LORD

In his old age Dalagor the Cold's desire to extend his own life included faith in Velsharoon, the now-dead god of necromancy and a common patron of liches. Dalagor's private sanctuary to the Lord of the Forsaken Crypt has walls draped with deep purple curtains, accenting alcoves embedded with humanoid skulls.

Altar. Opposite the room's entrance is a rough altar of dark gray slate. Sitting atop the altar is a large holy symbol of Velsharoon; a grinning skull carved from dragon bone wearing a silver crown against a hexagon of obsidian, worth 1,500 gold pieces.

A *detect magic* spell or similar magic reveals a glow of necromancy magic around the holy symbol; damaging the symbol or removing it from the altar causes the symbol to exude black smoke, which coalesces into a **wraith**. The wraith doesn't appear if the holy symbol is targeted with a *dispel magic* spell or similar, or if the symbol is removed by Dalagor himself.

E28. TROPHY HALL

This large area between the northwest tower, the stairs in area E31, and areas E29 and E30 is used as a trophy hall for some of Dalagor's personal victories from the Underdark.

Xorn Trophy. In the southwest corner of the room is the stuffed corpse of a **xorn**. It weighs 700 pounds and is worth 1,600 gp. The only way to physically remove the trophy from the room is through large reinforced windows directly across from it on the west wall; pushing the xorn into the window with enough force to topple it through requires characters with a combined Strength score of 30 or more. If the trophy falls to the ground outside unhindered there is a 60% chance the trophy is badly damaged, reducing its value to 700 gold pieces.

Duerǵar Armaments. Along the west wall are mounted pieces of battle-damaged weapons and armor claimed from a defeated Duerǵar troop. Among the dark metal pieces are a worn but usable breastplate, a whip in good condition, and a general's greatsword shattered into eight pieces. Together the items are worth 600 gold pieces to the right buyer.

E29. OVERGROWN ROOM

A cracked wall has made this room's original purpose indecipherable, as glowing fungus has

invaded through the gap and completely overgrown the room's surfaces. The entire area is brightly lit, and whatever furniture that used to be in this room has collapsed and is now covered by a shapeless mass of the phosphorescent growth.

Any character that enters the room leaves behind smears of glowing fungus with their footsteps for 1 hour, creating a trail. Creatures can follow this trail (no check required). Removing the fungus residue from shoes or feet requires ten minutes of work or using magic like the *prestidigitation* spell.

E30. SERGEANT'S QUARTERS

Two sergeants shared used to share this small bedroom, which contains two dust-covered single cots and twin footlockers.

Treasure. One of the footlockers is still locked and can be opened with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools. It contains a longsword with an ebony pommel and matching black scabbard, worth 50 gp. Below the sword is a yellowed old note from the sword's owner, a sergeant during the waning days of Dalagor's leadership who decided to desert his post and seek his fortune in Waterdeep or elsewhere.

E31. STAIRWAY

A door separates the second-floor landing from this undecorated staircase to the third floor.

E32. THIRD FLOOR LANDING

The common hallway of the third floor is unadorned other than a series of hanging braziers enchanted with *continual flame* spells.

E33. GLOWING BATTLEMENTS

The battlements of Dalagor's home are brightly lit, as large patches of glowing fungus have grown on the exterior walls and floors of the building at this elevation. The windows to areas E34 and E36 are locked but can be opened from the battlements with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools. The windows to area E35 are secured with rigid metal shutters and can't be accessed from this area.

Window Access. Areas E44 of the northwest and northeast towers have small broken-out windows looking onto the battlements. Characters of size Medium or smaller can squeeze through these windows to areas E44.

E34. THIRD-FLOOR LAVATORY

Designed as a master bath for Dalagor's personal use, this room is more lavish than the communal bathroom on the floor below it.

Bathtub. The bathtub in this room is a freestanding stone basin with adamantine feet and taps. The twin taps are enchanted with magic similar to the *create or destroy water* spell, one with hot water and one with cold. The tub can be detached from its floor drain, weighs 1,200 pounds, and is worth 4,000 gp.

E35. DALAGOR'S BEDROOM

The door to this room is ornately carved ebon wood depicting necromantic symbols. The door is locked and cannot be picked; its corresponding key can be found in area E4. The room contains the following furnishings:

- A four-poster bed is draped with moldering, tattered, graying curtains and is made with dust-covered silk sheets. A figure is lying supine on the bed (see below).
- Two large arched windows on the wall opposite the door are locked; heavy iron shutters on the exterior

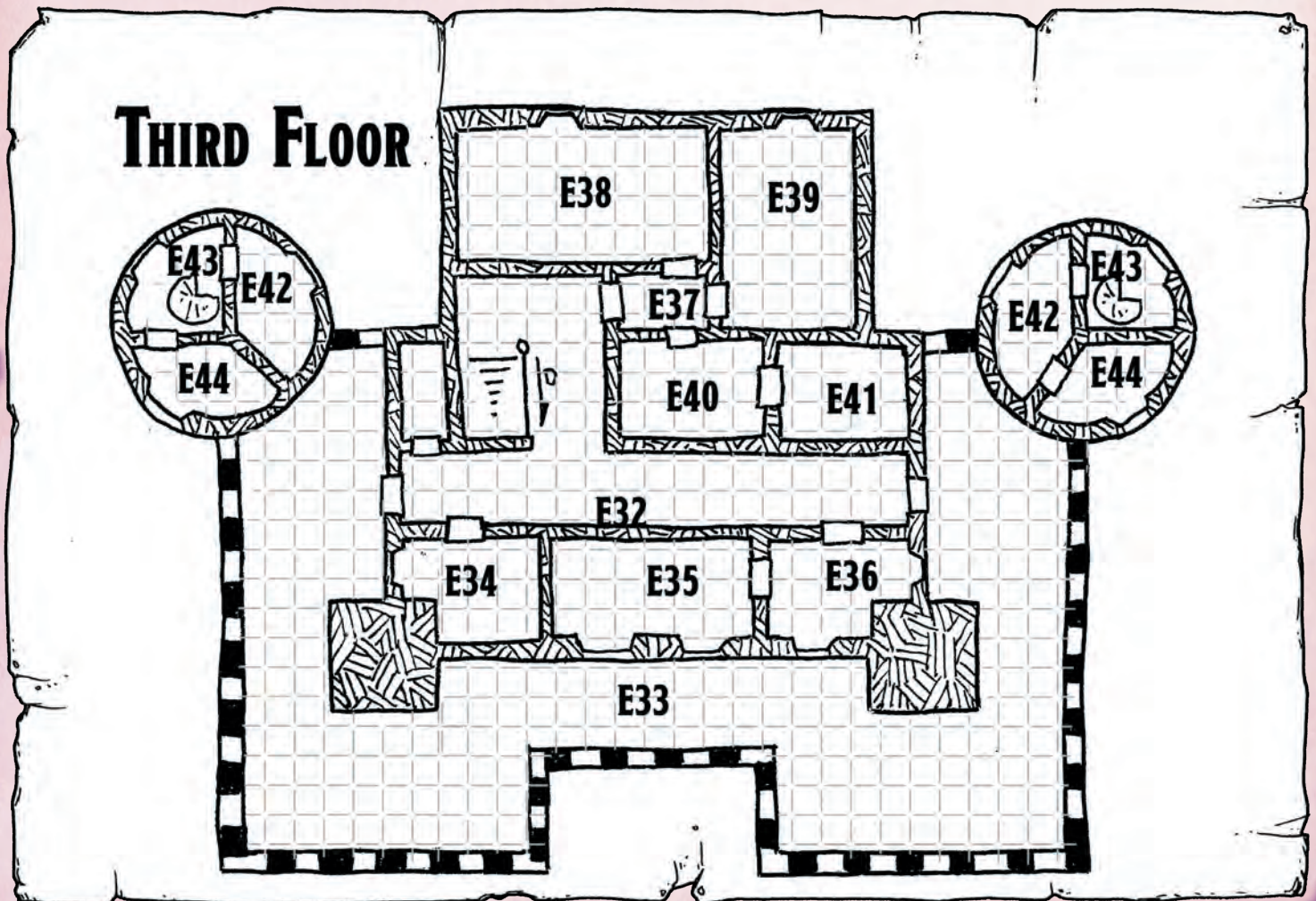
blocks any view of the outside.

- The remains of a chair and desk are smashed to splinters across the floor of the room, creating deep gouges in a faded rug.

This room, like area E16, is immune to effects that would allow a creature to teleport into it, force its way inside, or otherwise bypass the walls or door (for example, Setana cannot enter this room even when she is traveling through the Ethereal plane).

Dalagor the Cold. Lying on the bed is the former mercenary lord Dalagor, who was transformed into an intelligent undead creature by his vampire majordomo Ezira prior to her departure from Skullport. Dalagor greatly feared his own mortality but sees the cruel joke of his transformation. He was locked in this room after his transformation and has lain dormant ever since. Dalagor has the statistics of a **wight** with the following changes:

- He is wearing a black iron breastplate and has an AC of 16.
- He has proficiency with Athletics, History, Insight, and Intimidation checks.
- He speaks Common, Elvish, Goblin, and Undercommon.



Dalagor awakens when the door to his room is opened with very little knowledge of how much time has passed. Dalagor is torn between his calculating intelligence and his undead hunger to drain the energy of living things. Characters can convince Dalagor not to attack with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check; Dalagor will also attempt to flee if he is reduced below half his hit point maximum. Alternatively, Dalagor might bargain for his life by disclosing the location of Ezira's spellbook in area E38 or the secret vault room in E16; Dalagor is unaware that the vault has almost entirely been emptied already. If the characters are accompanied by Slim Jack (see E7), the boggle immediately allies itself with Dalagor.

Treasure. Dalagor wields a magical black longsword with a matching hilt. Anyone wearing or wielding the longsword who doesn't already have darkvision from another source gains darkvision to a range of 20 feet.

E36. DALAGOR'S OFFICE

What was once Dalagor's personal office is now a burned-out husk. The mercenary lord's files and other personal papers in this room were rigged with a magical trap, which incinerated the room's contents when looters attempted to access them without the proper password.

E37. DETECTION CHAMBER

Acting as an antechamber between areas E38 and E39, this room is enchanted with an *alarm* spell that sounds a soft chime in both chambers if they are occupied. Dalagor, Slim Jack, and Vimat know a password ("Immortal" in Deep Speech) that prevents the *alarm* from activating.

E38. EZIRA'S LIBRARY

This library is lined with shelves and contains a large central writing desk.

Spellbook. Ezira Gloomdelve, Dalagor's vampire majordomo, was a knowledgeable and accomplished spellcaster. Utilizing Ezira's magic but wanting to ensure his control over her, Dalagor kept her spellbook hidden in plain sight—concealed in a lead-lined secret compartment of Ezira's own desk. Detecting the compartment requires a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. The compartment is magically sealed; only Dalagor himself knows the password ("Doomthirst"). Opening the compartment without the password requires a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a *dispel magic* spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher.

Ezira Gloomdelve's spellbook is an ash-gray tome weighing 15 pounds. It contains the following spells: *alarm*, *animate dead*, *blight*, *create undead*, *danse macabre*, *dispel magic*, *finger of death*, *fireball*, *speak with dead*, *soul cage*, *tongues*.

E39. REMALLIA'S CHAMBERS

Remallia Haventree lives in the former bedroom of the vampire majordomo Ezira Gloomdelve. The room contains the following:

- A lavish four-poster bed with deep red sheets and drapery. The window is adorned with matching curtains.
- The room is brightly lit by a *continual flame* spell in a fireplace of dark granite. An armchair and table are set in front of the fireplace.
- A dark wood vanity and matching dresser are set against the west wall.

Alarm. If Remallia isn't in the manor, there is a 75% chance she has cast the *alarm* spell as a ritual on the door to her chambers. Both Vimat and Setana know the password to bypass the spell ("Arthagast"); otherwise, the spell can be removed with *dispel magic* or a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If Remallia receives the mental alert that the spell has been triggered, she sends the silver raven from her *figurine of wondrous power* to Felrax, asking him to investigate.

Remallia. If Remallia Haventree is present in the room, she is seated in the armchair with her back to the door, reading a book or studying Harper reports. Between the hours of 10 at night and 2 in the morning, Remallia is instead performing her trance to recover hit points and spells. While in her trance, Remallia's eyes are closed and she has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Treasure. Remallia's vanity contains an emerald necklace worth 750 gold pieces and a golden hair comb worth 100 gold pieces. The hair comb is actually the item binding the ghost Setana to the world of the living. Destroying the comb with the application of holy water or a *remove curse* spell untethers Setana from the material world; see area E1 for further.

E40. WAR ROOM

A narrow table and high-backed chairs in this room were once used by Dalagor in private meetings with his top officers. Now, Remallia uses it to review agent reports and formulate strategies.

E41. RECORD ROOM

This room's cabinets contain numerous field reports from Harper agents. By spending 10 minutes

searching reports and making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check can find one or more of the following, at your discretion:

- One Harper operative suspects Mertensian Bluud of the Reforged Ring is a yuan-ti, and that there is a place of worship for a yuan-ti deity hidden in Mertensian's home.
- A brief report notes that a worker in the Skullport Registry might be a double agent for an unknown group. This refers to Zacria (see appendix A), a tiefling-turned-**deep scion** in service to the Skum Lord.
- Several reports detail various agents' observations of the characters and their manor on Illithid Way. If the characters operate a business open to the public, some of these reports are written by agents who posed as customers.

E42. TOWER STOREROOMS

These dusty tower rooms are filled with wooden crates of aged, unusable weapons and faded uniforms for Dalagor's soldiers.

E43. THIRD FLOOR TOWER STAIRWELL

Broken-out tower windows are rimmed with glowing fungus, bathing this room in dim light. There is a 25% chance that a **swarm of bats** is sleeping in this room.

E44. TOWER GUARDROOM

The furniture in these guardrooms has been removed, leaving them empty. Broken windows allow

characters of size Medium or smaller to climb out to the battlements of area E33.

SPECIAL EVENT

You can use the following special event centered around Dalagor's Fortress.

DALAGOR: SWORD HEIST

A half-elf **master thief** named Loravor Quick has been hired by a Waterdhavian noble to recover Dalagor's personal longsword as an item of historical interest. Loravor is in possession of 50 feet of silk rope, a climber's kit, thieves' tools, three bags of ball bearings, and two bags of caltrops. He is unaware that Dalagor is now an undead creature.

Top-Down Approach. Loravor accesses Dalagor's Fortress by climbing up to area E33.

Incomplete Information. Loravor's instructions suggest Dalagor is interred somewhere within the fortified manor, but doesn't indicate where or how. Though he might be expecting squatters in the fortress, Loravor quickly realizes the area is occupied by Harpers.

Alliances of Opportunity. If Loravor meets the characters and determines they aren't Harper agents, he offers a truce: his aid in exchange for securing Dalagor's sword. If the characters and Loravor access the master bedroom (area E35), Loravor is happy to bend or break that bargain if he can negotiate for the longsword.



CHAPTER 6: IN FULL FLOOD

The Kraken Society used to secretly control most of Skullport, and the aboleth known as the Skum Lord was the overseer of their holdings. Over time the Kraken Society's power dwindled to almost nothing, giving ground to more aggressive criminal enterprises like the Xanathar Guild. Disillusioned with the kraken Slarkrethel, the Skum Lord left the diminished Kraken Society and began gathering forces under its own command.

Before running this chapter, review the "Aboleth" section of the *Monster Manual*. Within its lair, the Skum Lord has access to lair actions. The Skum Lord also causes its regional effects with the exception of underground surfaces within 1 mile of the lair being difficult terrain.

FACING THE SKUM LORD

Roll percentile dice to determine the aboleth's location when the characters arrive.

d100	Location
01-50	The Skum Lord is in its private chambers in area A10.
51-90	The Skum Lord is away from the lair, in the sewers or dungeons below Skullport.
91-00	The Skum Lord is lurking at the bottom of the pool in area A8.

The Skum Lord might attempt to recruit one or more characters into its service. The aboleth, if it can see one of the characters directly or through its illusory projection regional effect, will attempt to privately communicate using its telepathy. If a character responds, the Skum Lord learns their deepest desire due to its Probing Telepathy ability and will attempt to strike a bargain with them for their service, the *Stone of Golorr*, the treasure, or a combination of the three. The Skum Lord is likely to make private deals with multiple characters if it can.

If characters refuse to respond to the Skum Lord's telepathy or refuse its offer, it might attempt to enslave one or more of them. Enslaved creatures repeat their saving throw whenever they take damage, so the Skum Lord will only use them long enough to lead the other characters into a trap.

DISRUPTING THE SKUM LORD'S OPERATION

The characters can hinder the Skum Lord in the following ways.

DESTROY THE ABOLETH STATUES

Destroying the aboleth statuettes in area A18 enrages the Skum Lord's **sea spawn** and throws its operation into chaos for a tenday.

RELEASE THE MOUTHER

If the **gibbering mouter** in area A16 escapes its cell, it wanders through the lair and kills random minions until it's finally brought down.

STEAL OR RUIN THE REPLICAS

The magical models in area A21 are some of the Skum Lord's most prized possessions. Destroying or stealing them enrages the Skum Lord and upends its operations for a few days.

THE SKUM LORD'S LAIR

The aboleth's home base is located below Skullport in a complex connected to the city's labyrinthian sewers. Putrid and ancient, the sewers are home to oozes and any number of monsters from the connected dungeons below Skull Square. Waterways connect the sewers, the lair, the dungeons, and the River Sargauth, giving the Skum Lord and its swimming servants ways to travel around Skullport undetected. Within the aboleth's saturated hideout, its followers worship it like a living god.

Reaching the Skum Lord's lair is a less-than-simple matter of finding the door. Characters who are part of the Kraken Society will know to ask their faction for information about the location of the lair; if no character is a member of this faction, Auden Trilluach or any character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check recalls the Skum Lord's history with the Kraken Society. Non-faction members can meet with Navroth Keltesh at the Frontal Lobe to negotiate for this information.

Characters can also find the entrance to the Skum Lord's lair by piecing together numerous partial maps and journals on file in the Skull Island Registry, which allows them access to the records for 5 gp a day and takes 2d4 days to complete. The Skum Lord's undercover deep scion agent, Zacria, works in

the Registry and may attempt to lead the characters astray.

A1. LAIR ENTRANCE

The entrance to the Skum Lord's hideout is a black metal door. The entirety of the door is covered with the raised reliefs of tentacles twisting and overlapping one another. The door has no locks, openings, or hinges.

Any creature that touches the door with the intent to enter activates it; the tentacles that make up the door animate and retract, sliding into the walls, ceiling, and floor around the entrance.

A2. CHAINED CORRIDOR

The left side of this hallway has five recessed areas, each containing a **zombie**. The zombies are chained to the wall and can't reach beyond the space just outside their respective alcove. The zombies are dormant and indistinguishable from a normal humanoid corpse when they aren't actively attacking another creature.

Password. A creature who speaks the correct password can walk through the hallway without activating the zombies. The password is "Skum sovereign" in the twisted syllables of Deep Speech. Anyone who has visited the lair as a guest of the Skum Lord knows this password.

A3. NOTHIC CHAMBER

This split-level chamber has two sets of stairs to a curved upper platform.

Grook. A **nothic** named Grook lives in this room and loosely serves as a kind of doorman. Grook is a former gnome wizard who works for the Skum Lord and is paid in information. Grook's Truesight makes illusions, magical disguises, and invisibility useless; his attention to detail and bonus to Wisdom (Insight) checks make deception difficult. Grook's first loyalty is to knowledge; if he suspects visitors of being the Skum Lord's enemies, he demands they subject themselves to his Weird Insight feature as payment for his silence.

A creature can avoid giving up a personal secret by sharing a suitably interesting piece of information about something else, such as a closely guarded secret of a faction it belongs to. Suitable secrets include Mertensian Bluud's true identity, Setana's role as a longtime Harper spy, or the fact that Garryth at the Overflowing Urn has been replaced by a doppelganger.

A4. CLOAK ROOM

This small, square room contains a number of tattered, mottled-green cloaks on hangars. Followers of the Skum Lord sometimes wear these within the lair, but they're most often used by **sea spawn** or similar servants when they venture out into Skullport, using the hood to hide their piscine features.

A5. HALL OF STARS

This room contains the following features:

- The walls, ceiling, and floor are glossy black.
- The only illumination comes from floating motes of light near the ceiling, which create an infinity mirror effect with the walls and floor.
- When a character or an allied NPC enters this room for the first time, roll a d6; on a 5 or 6, the creature is overwhelmed by the infinity effect and must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the room. A frightened creature can't willingly enter the room unless they close their eyes or are otherwise blinded. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw when they finish a short or long rest.

A6. MEDITATION CHAMBER

The walls of this room are smeared with bewildering, nonsensical symbols. Against the east wall is a crudely wrought statue of an aboleth, a simplistic representation of the Skum Lord itself. Characters looking at the statue hear faint whispering in a language they can't quite understand.

Weird. If a creature spends more than 10 minutes in this chamber or takes the time to make an Intelligence check to examine the statue, it must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the character takes 3d6 psychic damage and has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide from the Skum Lord's servants in the lair and Charisma (Deception) checks when interacting with them; on a success, the character has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to detect the presence of the Skum Lord's servants within the lair and on Wisdom (Insight) checks when interacting with them. In either case, these effects last 1d6+1 hours.

A7. WASTE ROOM

The lair's denizens bring offal and personal waste to this room, which contains the following features:

- The floor is uneven and filled with two feet of foul, brackish water. It is considered difficult terrain.
- The room is unlit.

Crabs. Three **giant crabs** feed on the refuse thrown here. Because of the opaque wastewater, they have

advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide. If the giant crabs attack, innumerable young crabs in the water join by attacking each character in the room on initiative count 10 (+0 to hit, 1 piercing damage) each round. Once the giant crabs are defeated, their smaller counterparts retreat into the wastewater.

Treasure. A character that succeeds on a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the picked-clean ribcage of a Medium-sized humanoid with a muck-covered diamond worth 600 gp rolling around in the body cavity.

A8. AUDIENCE CHAMBER

This large cavern is the central hub of the Skum Lord's lair. Its ceiling is 20 feet high.

Skum Lord's Pool. More than half of the chamber is dominated by an ice-cold pool of water. The Skum Lord uses this pool when it addresses assembled followers or receives guests in person. Water-breathing inhabitants of the lair are permitted to use the pool in the Skum Lord's absence or during these occasions, as long as they keep at a respectful distance. An almost entirely submerged tunnel goes east from the pool and the chamber, leading to the aboleth's private sanctum (A10).

The pool is 50 feet deep at its lowest point. If the Skum Lord is near the bottom of the pool (see 'Facing the Skum Lord' percentile table), it is deep in telepathic communication with agents outside the lair.

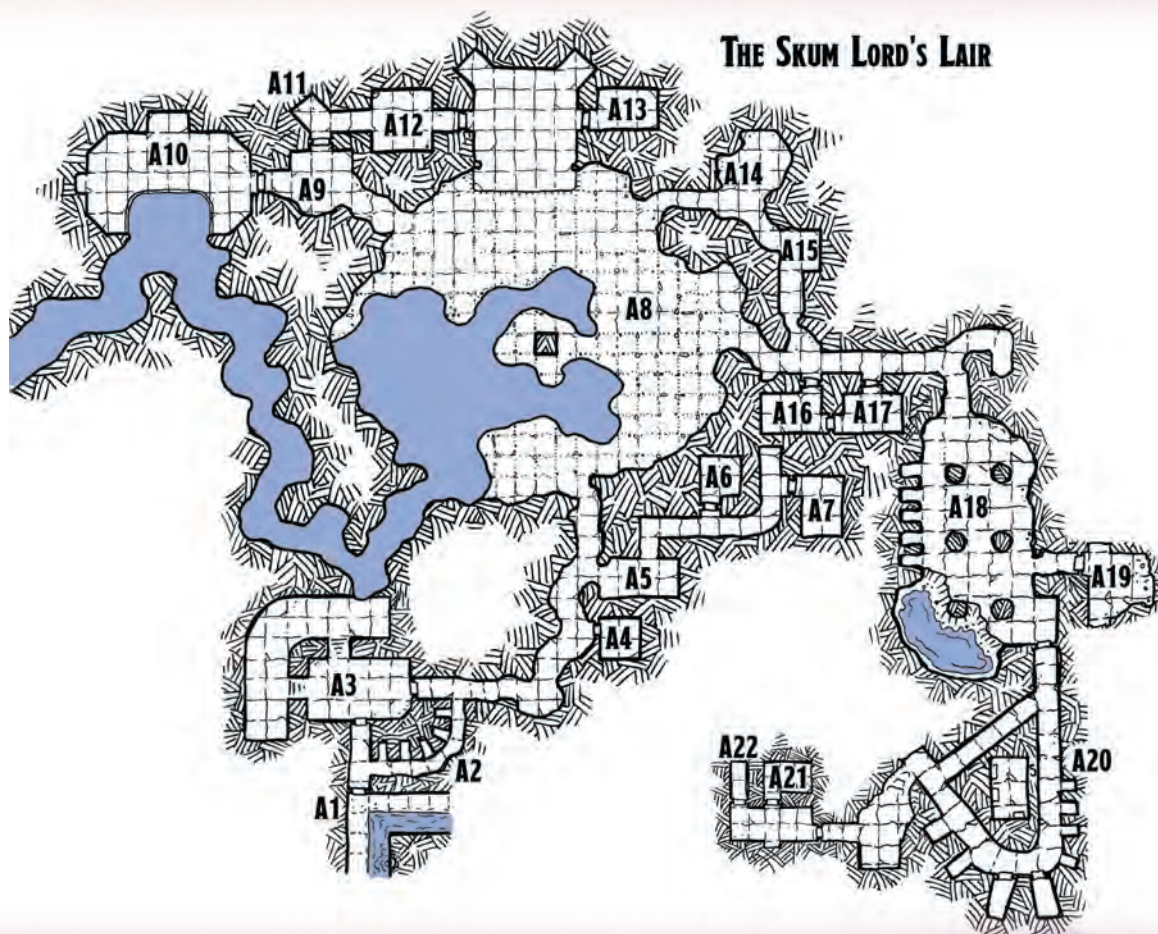
Stage. A raised stage contains a large stone table ringed with carved stone chairs, all of which are fused to the ground. A large space at the northern edge of the table has no chair; the Skum Lord projects its image into this space when overseeing meetings from another location in its lair. The stone table is used as both a meeting-place and as a ritual altar where humanoids are turned into **sea spawn** (see special event).

Chuul Guardian. A **chuul** lives in this chamber, preferring to lurk half-submerged in the pool. The chuul is unintelligent and assumes characters are fellow allies of the Skum Lord unless given a reason to think otherwise.

A9. GRICK NEST

This small area acts as a waiting room and has the following features:

- A pair of **grick** hide in the rock of the unworked south wall of the room. The gricks are enslaved by the Skum Lord and do not attack unless attacked or instructed to do so by Zacria or the Skum Lord itself.



The grick are not intelligent enough to initiate telepathic communication with the Skum Lord of their own volition.

- The door in the west wall leads to the Skum Lord's Sanctum (A10). This door is made of stone and carved with a dizzying array of eldritch symbols. The door is locked at all times; Zacria and Blong possess keys and the Skum Lord itself can open the door at will with a telepathic command. Alternatively, the lock can be picked with a successful DC 18 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools, or forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. The door has AC 18, 32 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.
- A door in the north wall leads to the Meeting Room (A11 and A12). Two stone benches flank the doorway on the adjacent northern wall sections.

A10. SKUM LORD'S SANCTUM

The Skum Lord's private chambers are mostly unadorned. The Skum Lord receives private audiences here or meditates in front of its fountain (see below), reaching out telepathically to its followers or entities unknown.

Fountain of the Blood Queen. In an alcove on the north wall is a fountain made of black basalt, depicting a bloated aboleth without tentacles. A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Religion) check can identify this as Piscaethces the Blood Queen, a Great Old One and progenitor of the aboleths.

The Skum Lord can activate the fountain as an action with a telepathic command, causing the water to form a hovering 8-foot sphere around the aboleth's form. The sphere moves with the Skum Lord according to its swim speed. The Skum Lord must maintain concentration on the sphere each round to maintain it; if it loses concentration or if the sphere leaves the confines of this chamber, it falls to the ground and cannot be reactivated for 1 minute.

Waterway. A pool of water in the southern portion of the room connects to an underwater passageway; the passage leads to area A8 approximately 120 feet away to the east, and flows into the Skullport Dungeons 300 feet to the west. The waterway is 40 feet deep.

Treasure. At the bottom of the entrance to the watery passage are the skeletal remains of a **kraken priest**, a member of the Kraken Society killed by the aboleth decades ago and left to rot. The skeleton is impaled and held in place by the priest's own weapon, a *trident of fish command*.

A11. ELDRITCH MOSAIC

The wall of this alcove is entirely dominated by a finely detailed mosaic, which depicts the Skum Lord

reaching its tentacles sinisterly around Skullport, while humanoids clamor with horror in the streets below.

Maddening Recognition. A humanoid creature hostile to the Skum Lord that investigates the mosaic sees a familiar face among the terrified people on the mosaic: their own. The creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened and incapacitated for 1 minute. A creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is subjected to a random form of short-term madness as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

A12. PRIVATE MEETING ROOM

A heavy stone slab acts as a standing table in this room. Violet and deep purple *everlasting flames* burn in stone braziers, lighting the room. When Zacria acts as a surrogate for the Skum Lord she meets with agents and outsiders in this chamber. The aboleth itself rarely projects its image into this room.

A13. STORAGE ROOM

Components for the Ceremony of Spawn (see Special Events at the end of this chapter) are stored in this room. Its notable inventory includes:

- A series of 10 mottled black and purple robes hung against the wall, which are worn by the Skum Lord's humanoid followers during the ceremony. Each set of robes is worth 2 gp. An eleventh set of robes is trimmed with gold and silver and is worth 10 gp.
- Two large obsidian braziers; each weigh 500 pounds and is worth 400 gold.
- A shelf holds four pots meant to hold incense for spellcasting; the last two pots are full and contain a total of 250 gp worth of incense.

A14. KUO-TOA DEN

This unshaped cavern is home to six **kuo-toa**, and four **kuo-toa whips**. One of the whips, Slurkkidikopp, is the de facto leader of the kuo-toa in the Skum Lord's service. The kuo-toa are all fervently loyal to the aboleth.

Slurkkidikopp and the other kuo-toa have a secret; in an effort to be 'helpful,' they took a human prisoner from area A16 and attempted to perform the ritual to transform him into a **sea spawn**. Instead, the ritual went awry and turned the prisoner into a **gibbering moulder**, which immediately consumed their archpriest Foorplipedip and several others. The kuo-toa managed to lure the creature back into its cell but are now terrified that someone will discover what they've done.

A15. CELL RELEASE

Two large wheels on the east wall of this chamber control the locks to the cell doors of areas A16 and A17; a third wheel controls the lock of the door between them. A creature can turn one of the wheels to lock or unlock one of the three doors as an action; the mechanism makes a clunking noise in the floor beneath the wheels and at the respective cell door a few seconds later.

Kuo-Toa Interference. If the kuo-toa from area A14 see anyone lingering around the cell mechanisms or attempting to use them, they desperately attempt to discourage anyone from accessing the cell housing the gibbering moulder (A16), coming up with increasingly ridiculous excuses for doing so.

A16. GIBBERING CELL

Characters outside one of the doors to this cell hear the following:

“A heavily muffled voice from within this cell can be heard periodically sobbing and moaning.”

This cell initially housed a human prisoner from Skullport before the kuo-toa in area A14 accidentally transformed him into a **gibbering moulder**. The moulder mutters, sobs, and cries out on occasion and especially when it senses noise from outside its cell, but this isn't the same as its Gibbering trait.

If a creature opens the door and enters the cell, the moulder immediately begins using its Gibbering trait and moves to attack them. The moulder continues to use its Gibbering trait for 1 minute after losing sight of its last target.

A17. PRISONER CELL

This bare cell is identical in appearance to area A16. It is currently unoccupied.

A18. DROWNED CHAPEL

A rotten, fishy odor fills this room, which contains the following features:

- Six wet, rough, black stone columns run from floor to ceiling in two rows at the room's center.
- Five alcoves on the west wall contain twisted statues of the Skum Lord similar to the larger version found in area A6. A creature hostile to the Skum Lord that stares at these statues for too long hears vague whispers and experiences a dull headache for the next hour.

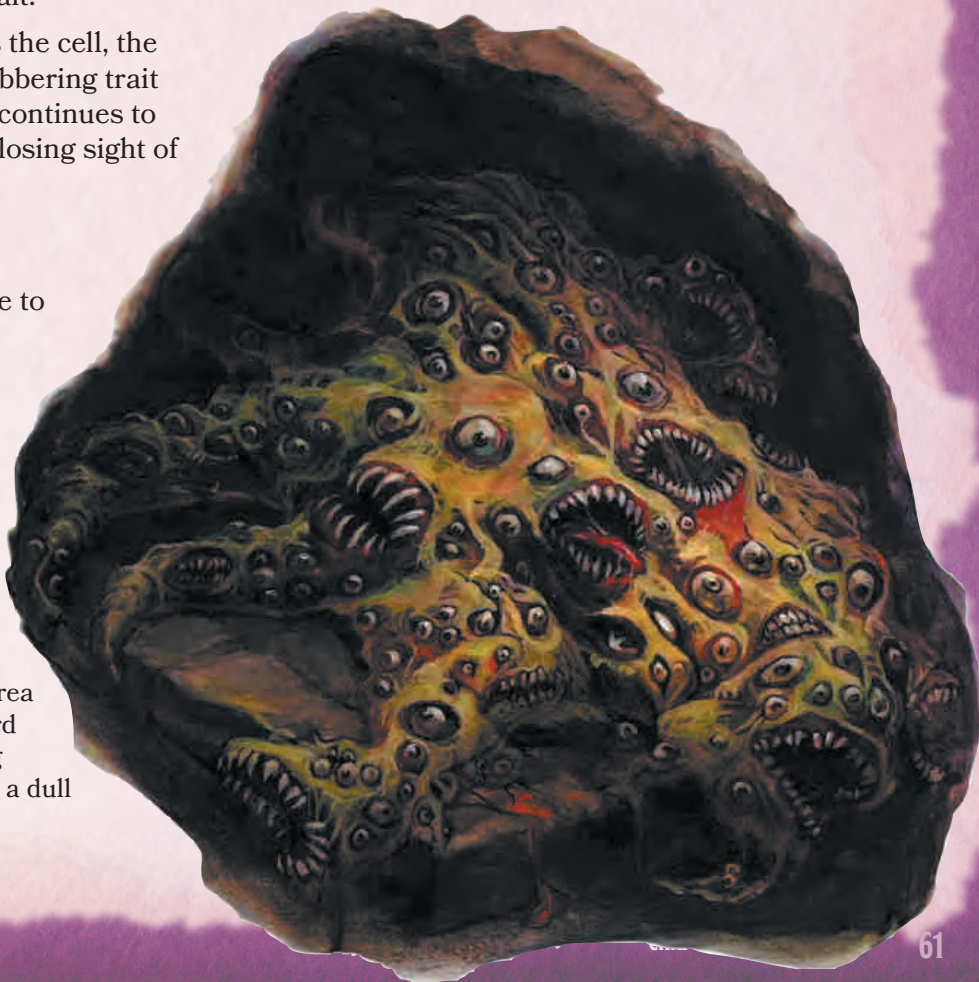
- A pool of stagnant water in the southwest corner is saltwater polluted with slime and cast-off scales and is undrinkable.

Sea Spawn Worshippers. When a supplicant has no better use to the Skum Lord or when an enslaved humanoid is selected to remain in the lair, the Skum Lord transforms the creature into a **sea spawn**. Seven sea spawn can be found here at any one time, either worshipping the aboleth statues or immersing themselves in the pool of seawater. They assume anyone who enters the chapel is an ally unless the characters make it clear they are not allies of the Skum Lord.

A19. ZACRIA'S CHAMBERS

These are the private quarters of Zacria (see Appendix A), a **deep scion** who operates in Skullport under her former identity as a tiefling working in the Skull Island Registry. Zacria is only in the Skum Lord's lair when she's not working at the Registry or out performing a mission in the guise of her cover identity. Characters can piece together information about the identity of the room's occupant with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

If the characters turned to the Skull Island Registry as part of their search for the Skum Lord's lair, Zacria is in this room and raises the alarm if she recognizes the characters.



A20. SKUM LORD'S LIBRARY

The Skum Lord carries countless years of memories inside its own head, but it also maintains a sizeable collection of books ranging from ancient lore to modern works. The aboleth has a flawless memory of its catalog and occasionally tasks its followers with bringing new volumes to its personal chambers for its perusal.

The library is the only location in the lair that is kept fully dry. It consists of a roughly triangular set of corridors with shelves set into deep recessed alcoves. A set of stairs in the west corner lead up to the Skum Lord's collection of artifacts in area A21.

Blong. The library is maintained by a **flumph** named Blong (LE nonbinary). Blong has been in Skullport almost as long as the Skum Lord, and decades of feeding on the aboleth's immense telepathic energy have corrupted Blong into the aboleth's lawful evil ally. Blong spends its time keeping the library pristine or re-reading its favorite books in the collection. It wears a goblin skull as a hat. Blong initially assumes any visitors are fellow servants of the Skum Lord; if the characters become hostile or the flumph senses emotions or telepathic communication that indicates

the characters mean harm, Blong will use its stench spray and attempt to escape to its private room (see below) or out to the chapel.

Locked Stacks. The two southernmost alcoves are locked behind iron gates. Blong carries the key to these gates. The gates can be opened with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools or forced open with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. Each of these rooms contains 2d4 books worth 25 gp each. Each book weighs five pounds.

Secret Chamber. The area in the middle of the triangular corridors contains a secret room, which serves as Blong's private quarters. The entrance to this room is an illusory wall in the eastern library hallway; the illusion can be detected with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Blong's room contains miscellaneous books in the flumph's personal collection (mostly pulp romance novels). Searching the room also yields an iron key, which opens the gate to area A22.

Artifact Collection

The Skum Lord keeps a set of unusual objects in this room.



A21. REPLICAS ROOM

This room contains two enchanted scale models:

- A palatial castle made of pure ice stands atop a stony plateau, radiating a thin, chilly mist over its surface. The tiny form of a kraken made of ice occasionally emerges from the castle and flies through the air around the model's battlements before returning to its lair.
- An obelisk floats above the floor of the room, its surface an ever-changing tapestry of writhing symbols and images. Tiny doorways occasionally open in the obelisk's side, and a keen observer can see crazed honeycomb tunnels within.

Each of the models are four feet tall, weigh 450 pounds, and are worth up to 6,000 gp to the right buyer. A character can make separate DC 20 Intelligence (History) checks to identify either of these structures:

- The ice castle is the Court of Meiriona, located near the southern edge of the High Moor. Some have suspected that the eponymous Meiriona, an eladrin fleeing banishment from the Feywild, has thrown in with aboleth masters. None have dared oust her while a flying ice-kraken defend the castle, however.
- The floating obelisk is Xxiphu, the Soaring City. The city is supposedly an eldritch ruin beneath the Sea of Fallen Stars, but in recent decades many have sworn that the city is once again floating among the clouds.

A22. THE SLEEPER

An iron gate stands at the entrance to this short alcove, where a humanoid figure is frozen with arms upraised and an expression of surprise on its face. The figure is Farium Blusber (NG male human **druid**), who was placed into a magical stasis and purchased by the Skum Lord as a curiosity.

Iron Gate. The gate is locked; it can be opened with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools or forced open with a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. The key to this gate can be found in Blong's personal quarters in the secret room of area A20.

Ending the Stasis. Any character that makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine the figure is alive but trapped in a magical stasis. The effect can be ended with a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell.

The Sleeper Awakened. His speed is halved, and he has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. Farium believes this is a lingering effect of his time in stasis, but it is really the latter stages of a **slaad tadpole** gestating in his chest cavity—the curiosity that drove the Skum Lord to 'collect' his body in the first place. With Farium out of stasis, the

tadpole will finish its growth and burst forth within 1d4 hours, attempting to escape and grow into a fully-grown **blue slaad** within 2d12 hours of emerging.

If the Skum Lord becomes aware of the slaad's presence, it will attempt to control it using its Enslave ability. If successful, the slaad will be held in area A17 as the aboleth slowly transforms the creature into a **skum** over the course of 1d4x10 days.

SPECIAL EVENTS

CEREMONY OF SPAWN

Occasionally, a loyal lackey or weak-willed prisoner is transformed into a **sea spawn** by means of a special ritual. The participant is brought to the slab on the stage in area A8; if they are unwilling, they are bound or held down by the **chuul** that resides in this chamber.

The sea spawn from area A18 and Zacia dress in the ceremonial robes from area A13 and bring out the braziers there, lighting them on either side of the slab. Finally, the Skum Lord laboriously works its way from the pool to the stage, where it wraps the subject of the ritual in its tentacles. Over the course of the next hour, the creature is transformed into a new sea spawn.

During the ritual, the aboleth's attention is focused entirely on the transformation process while the sea spawn chant and wail; all of the creatures involved in the ritual have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice other creatures in the room.

HAVE WEASEL, WILL TRAVEL

Farcor Fastfinger (NE male deep gnome **master thief**) has been keeping an eye on events in Skullport and tracked down the location of the Skum Lord's lair. Along with his faithful **giant weasel** Slandersnout, the gnome has infiltrated the aboleth's hideout and is on the lookout for valuables. The pair 'paid' for their entrance in area A3; Groom can see through Slandersnout's transformation (see appendix A) and Farcor told him the story behind it.

Farcor and Slandersnout are using their talents of stealth to go unnoticed by the lair's denizens. They're happy to team up with the characters in exchange for an even split of treasure; if they locate the replicas in area A21 Farcor recognizes their value and insists on a plan to take them.

CHAPTER 7: A TIME FOR DYING

RAGGAMOFFYNS

Over a century ago, rumors swirled about a mysterious figure known as the Rag Mage. Trash and debris would shudder and stir, heralding the arrival of the unpredictable and enigmatic figure who was equally likely to impart cryptic wisdom or bring residents to a violent demise. This figure was once a drow archmage whose name has long since been lost, even to himself: the Skulls of Skullport took advantage of newfound power to transform the drow into the maddened Rag Mage to serve their bidding.

Over time, the Rag Mage's metamorphosis completed itself as he emerged as a new Skull. The Fourteenth Skull has never been anything more than an urban legend of Skullport—after all, who can tell if one Skull is any different from the others?

The Fourteenth Skull is still in possession of its individuality and knowledge, if not memory of its former life. With this sentience comes anger, as the former Rag Mage resents the Skulls of Skullport for its long and twisted transformation. To exact its revenge, the Rag Mage now seeks to supplant the Skulls of Skullport and the factions of Skullport both, using Halaster's hoard of gold to install itself as the new immortal lord of Skullport.

THE FRAY

The magic protecting Skullport also keeps the Skulls of Skullport alive, but this is a trick that the Rag Mage seeks to manipulate to its own ends. In preparation for its plan to replace the existing Skulls, the Rag Mage has gathered thirteen mages into its service and granted them a taste of its immense power, promising them that they will replace the existing Skulls when its plan comes to fruition.

Their sanity knocked askew to the exposure of the Skulls' power, the mages of the Fray lurk in the hidden corners and forgotten bowels of Skullport. Homeless and wrapped in tattered cloaks to honor the Rag Mage's form from a century before, they perform inscrutable tasks for their master and communicate in inane babble.

Statistics for the **Fray mages** can be found in Appendix A.

Pieces of refuse and cast-off garbage jump and twitch, drawing together into a swirling swarm. These are **raggamoffyns**, a category of animate, swarming garbage constructs that are direct extensions of the Rag Mage's will. These swarms of trash appear in two identifiable variations: the smallest **tatterdemanimal**, the larger and eponymous **raggamoffyn**. Regardless of variant, raggamoffyns tend to swarm around a foe, confusing and disorienting it.

Fortunately for foes of the Rag Mage, the Fourteenth Skull's ability to summon and maintain these entities is limited: the raggamoffyns can only be summoned in small numbers and only for a short time.

FACING THE RAG MAGE

Roll percentile dice to determine the Rag Mage's location when the characters arrive.

d100	Location
01-25	It's elsewhere in Skullport.
26-74	It's floating between areas X9 and X10.
91-00	It's with 1d4 Fray mages in area X15.

As the Fourteenth Skull, the Rag Mage has the same statistics as the other **Skulls of Skullport** and is functionally immortal, making it difficult to defeat. Even if it is destroyed, the Rag Mage will simply return just like any of the other Skulls of Skullport. Because it is immortal, the Rag Mage doesn't take attempts to defeat it personally and doesn't seek to kill the characters in turn.

The Rag Mage has greatly benefitted from its status as an urban legend, allowing it to act undetected for years. It has only a small circle of followers, often choosing to act through intermediaries when direct violence is necessary. Raggamoffyns leave no real evidence behind, only garbage.

DISRUPTING THE RAG MAGE'S OPERATION

The characters can hinder the Rag Mage in the following ways.

INCAPACITATE THE FRAY MAGES

The mages of the Fray are replaceable, but doing so takes time. Characters can find a Fray mage by spending at least 3 days searching Skullport

REVEAL THE RAG MAGE

Exposing the Rag Mage's existence works against its goal to remain undetected in Skullport. Offering proof that the Rag Mage is real to the Xanathar Guild, the Zhentarim, the Chosen of Eilistraee, the Keepers, or the Harpers will pique their interest and likely prompt a response.

- The Rag Mage attacks the characters with various **raggamoffyns** during the course of events in Swindle Season. Having one or more NPCs from the above factions present during these events helps prove the existence of an undiscovered antagonist in Skullport.
- If one of the **Fray mages** can be captured rather than killed, they can be turned over to one of the above factions. The faction spends 2d4 days interrogating the Fray mage, attempting to glean a coherent picture out of the mage's disjointed ramblings.

If the Rag Mage's lair is discovered and brought to the attention of one or more factions, the faction will send forces to secure it but cannot hold it, because as the Fourteenth Skull the Rag Mage cannot be killed permanently.

THE RAGGED CAVERNS

When the Fourteenth Skull appeared as the humanoid Rag Mage a century ago, residents of Skullport steered clear of the Upper Trade Lanes due to the rumors that the strange ragged figure appeared there. Garbage accumulated in this area, ever-building and seemingly impossible to clear for long. This marked the first appearance and stories of the **raggamoffyns**.

Stories of the Rag Mage have long since faded from mainstream culture in Skullport, but the Rag Mage's lair is still very much present. The lair is accessed through Whisperhaunt Pass, with one of its many side-tunnels leading to a cavern complex utilized by the Fray and the Fourteenth Skull itself.

RAGGED CAVERNS FEATURES

The following features apply to the caverns.

- The Ragged Caverns are a small network of tunnels and cave chambers. The caverns have 15-foot-high ceilings. The tunnels have 10-foot-high ceilings. Some caverns have doorways, which are 7 feet in height.
- Each of the doors in the caverns are made of oak and has AC 14, 21 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If a door is locked, it can be picked by a character who makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or it can be forced open with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. The Fray mages in the lair have keys to

the locked doors. The Rag Mage doesn't have a key to the doors, which unlock, lock, open, and close at his command.

- Unless noted otherwise, all areas are brightly lit by *continual flame* spells cast on wall sconces.
- An errant gust of wind from Whisperhaunt Pass reaches the lair and blows through the caverns every 2d10 minutes. The wind doesn't do more than disturb loose papers or similar objects, but creatures in chambers adjacent to the characters who have the Keen Smell trait make an immediate Wisdom (Perception) check to detect the characters' presence. Creatures in rooms separated by a closed doorway do not make this check.
- The vermin in the caverns—rats, insects, and the like—do not attack allies of the Rag Mage or those accompanied by allies of the Rag Mage. The vermin do occasionally fight with each other, and commotion from areas containing these creatures is often ignored by residents of the caverns.

GETTING TO THE CAVERNS

The Rag Mage's lair is a closely guarded secret. Characters can figure out its location in any one of the following ways.

FOLLOWING THE FRAY

Characters can locate one of the **Fray mages** by spending 1d4+1 days searching Skullport for one of them and making a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check at the end of that time. One or more characters can then make a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check to follow the Fray mage undetected; the Fray mage eventually makes its way to Whisperhaunt Pass within 2d4 hours.

LOCAL RUMOR

Characters can spend a week of downtime (or alternatively 2d4 days) hunting down rumors about the Fray mages, the raggomoffyns, and the Fourteenth Skull. At the end of this time, the character makes a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a successful check, the character learns about the trash filling the Upper level around the Upper Trade Lanes; spending 1d4 hours investigating this area reveals that the refuse appears to be blowing in from Whisperhaunt Pass.

FACTION INFORMANT

A member of the Zhentarim, the Harpers, the Iron Ring, the Keepers, or the Chosen of Eilistraee might have conducted their own investigation into the rumors about the raggamoffyns or the Fray mages and be aware that Whisperhaunt Pass is the nexus of activity. One of these factions might be willing to share

this information with the characters in exchange for a share (10%, or 50,000 gold pieces) of the hoard.

AREAS OF THE RAGGED CAVERNS

X1. OTHRIM'S HALL

The entrance to the Rag Mage's lair is a large stone room with the following features.

- The room has a 20-foot-high ceiling.
- The room is unlit.
- Six exit doors lead to areas 2, 3, and 4.

Othrim. Filling a huge part of the space is the hunched and seated figure of a **fomorian** named Othrim. The twisted, mutated giant has in this chamber for over a decade after being spared by the Rag Mage; now he faithfully serves his master in the only way he can. Othrim's statistics are modified in the following ways.

- Othrim's eyes were destroyed in a battle long ago; the fomorian is permanently blinded and can't use its evil eye ability.
- He has a passive Perception of 13.
- Othrim speaks Common, Giant, and Undercommon.

Othrim assumes only servants of the Rag Mage could have found this hidden lair and greets them as such. Though unintelligent, his suspicions are aroused if one or more characters chooses a door to any area other than area X4.

X2. PRISONER CELLS

These bare, rough-hewn cells are completely unlit. The doors to the cells have no discernible keyholes or accessible lock mechanisms from inside the cells. When the door to one cell closes, it locks and the adjacent cell opens. Locked doors can only be opened from the outside. Prisoners overpowered or found unconscious in the Ragged Caverns are usually taken here.

Secret Door. A small 5-foot passageway connects the two cells via a pair of secret doors. A DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to detect the presence of one of these doors from outside the passageway.

X3. TRAPPED DOORS

These doors open up to dead ends with a *glyph of warding* spell contained within. The DC for saving throws to avoid these spells or dispel them is 14.

- **Area X3a.** This glyph contains the *burning hands* spell cast at 2nd level.

- **Area X3b.** This glyph contains the *dissonant whispers* spell.

- **Area X3c.** This glyph contains the *magic missile* spell cast at 2nd level. The four bolts, in the appearance of glowing flameskulls, each strike a different target (other than Othrim) if possible.

X4. HALL OF RAGS

The length of this call is decorated with row after row of filthy, frayed sheets of cloth and canvas hanging from the ceiling every 5 feet. The room ends in an entrance to a narrow tunnel to area X5.

X5. CAVERN OF ONE MILLION LEGS

The floor of this chamber is covered in a soft moldering peat-like substance and is considered difficult terrain. Multiple connecting tunnels lead to area X6.

Centipedes. If the floor is disturbed, two **swarms of insects** (centipedes) and three **giant centipedes** emerge from the soft soil. If these centipedes are killed, they are replenished within 2d4 hours.

X6. RATHOME

This chamber is home to an infestation of rats, who are constantly eating and being eaten by the centipedes in area X5. The rats congregate as 2d4 **swarms**.

X7. OOZE CHAMBER

The normally grimy walls, floors, and ceilings in the Ragged Caverns are strangely clean in this chamber. The area is lit by only a single *continual flame* sconce next to the door to area X8.

Oozes. Golam the warlock (see area X8) keeps a number of oozes in this chamber. The room contains two **ochre jellies** and one **gray ooze** clinging to the ceiling. Golam has warded the area, preventing the oozes from leaving the chamber unless he specifically allows it.

Treasure. A creature searching the chamber finds bits of degraded, rusted weapons and armor and scoured-clean pieces of bone. Among the useless detritus is a silver-clasped *cloak of protection* and a total of 23 gold pieces that fell into a nook in the stone floor.

X8. ALTAR OF THE OOZE

Three stone pillars support the ceiling of this chamber. A door leads to area X7; two stone stairways lead down to each X6 and X23. A small bedroll on the floor is surrounded by yellowed books.

Golam. This is the home of Golam (half-orc male **warlock of the great old one**), who considers themselves an ally and not a servant of the Rag Mage. He will investigate noises coming from area X7. Golam's patron is Ghaunadaur, a god of oozes and ostensible member of the drow pantheon.

For reasons unknown, Ghaunadaur has told Golam to expect the arrival of intruders and to do them no harm (unless attacked). As such, Golam provides basic information about the lair and its inhabitants and will even allow the characters to rest in his chamber for a short while.

Treasure. Golam possesses a holy image of Ghaunadaur designed for rituals: a ring of polished onyx surrounds a disk of purple amethyst, an eye of onyx and pale marble at its center worth 500 gp.

X9. FRAYED CONCLAVE

This large, sprawling area is the main meeting place and home of the **fray mages** and the Rag Mage's other humanoid supplicants. Flies and other insects buzz through the air constantly, and a thick odor of human waste pervades the room.

At any given time there is at least one **Fray mage** present in this room, along with 2d6 **cultists**, and 1d6

bandits. 1d4 **giant rats** are also found here. Most of the room's occupants are sleeping or huddled together in hushed conversations at any given time. All of the humanoids in the room are carriers of Skulker Fever (see Dying Season effects in Chapter 4).

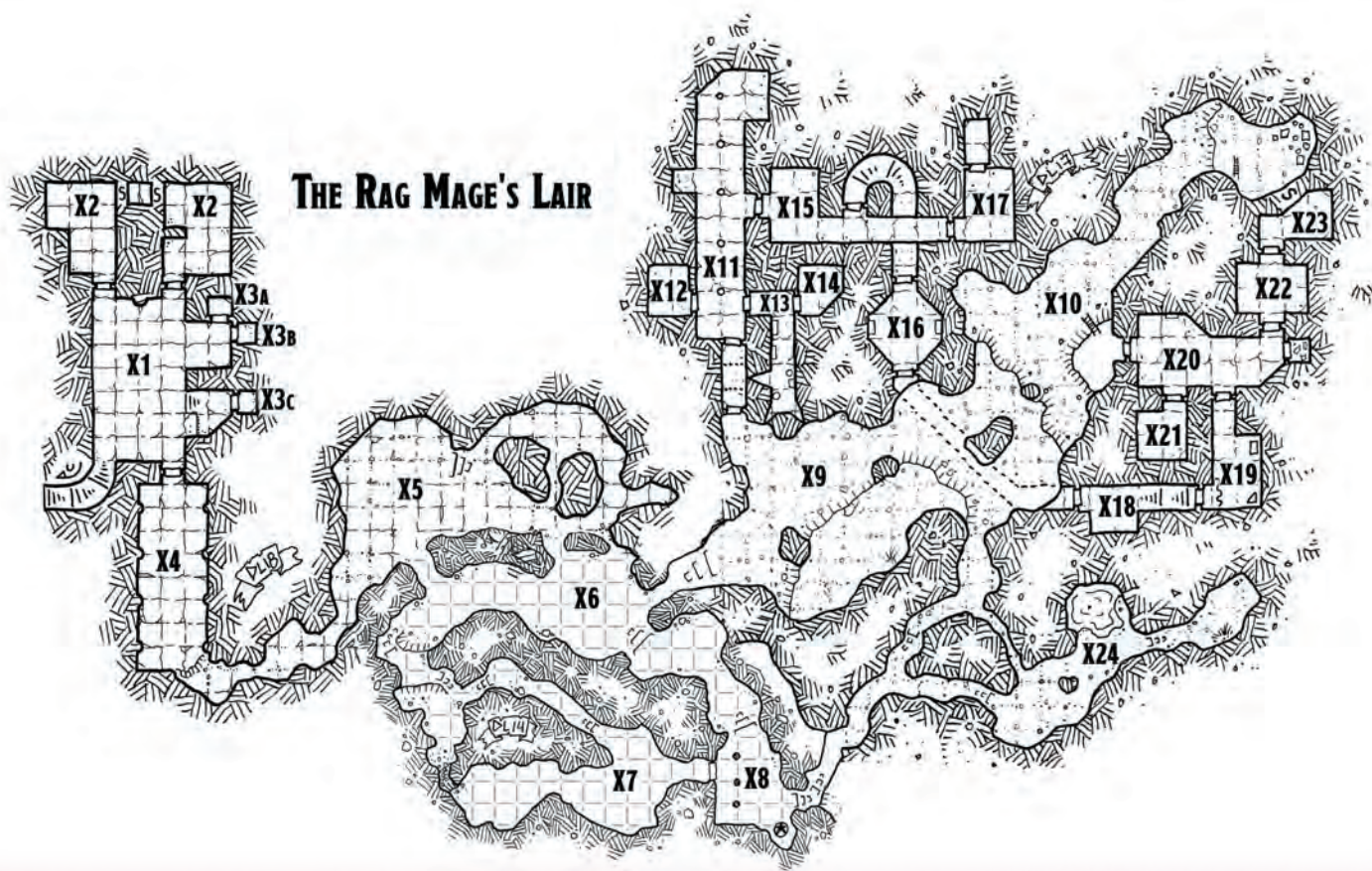
A door in the north-western corner of the room leads to area X11. A sharp 10-foot drop at the far end of the room leads to area X10.

X10. FUNGAL HOLLOW

Most of the humanoid followers' waste is thrown down into this unlit room. Mushrooms and other fungus have grown all over the floor and cavern walls in this moist, fetid environment. A stony shelf on the eastern wall of the room has a door to area X19.

Secret Passage. A hidden tunnel leads from the far end of the room to area X22. Detecting the passage from this area requires a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. A creature size Medium or smaller must crawl to move through this tunnel.

Fungus Among Us. Two **violet fungus** hide among the mundane growths in the room; almost as dangerous is the single **shrieker** that clings to the wall near the secret passage at the far end of the room.



X11. TATTERED HALLWAY

This hall is littered with scraps of paper, cloth, and similar garbage. When a creature not loyal to the Rag Mage moves more than 10 feet in this area the garbage animates, becoming 2d4 **tatterdemanimals**. The tatterdemanimals pursue creatures into areas 12, 13, 14, and 15; creatures harassed by the tatterdemanimals have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

X12. STOREROOM

This room contains unkempt piles of threadbare clothing. A character that spends at least 1 minute searching the room can find an outfit matching those of the Rag Mage followers in area X9. A character wearing one of these outfits passes casual inspection as a member of the Rag Mage's followers, or can be used as part of a formal disguise.

X13. LARDER

This long, narrow room contains multiple shelf-filled alcoves stocked with beans and other dry goods. A character searching the shelves with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers two uncut rubies hidden behind some of the containers. The gems are worth 250 gp each.

X14. COLD STORAGE

Raw meat is stored in this room, which is enchanted to keep the temperature below freezing. The room contains the whole frozen corpses of three **giant rats** and four **giant wolf spiders**. A creature in this room must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw each hour or gain one level of exhaustion.

X15. HALL OF THE RAGGED ONE

The Fray uses this room as a meeting-place, where they exchange information or occasionally receive a group briefing directly from the Rag Mage itself. The room contains a large, splintering table topped with a yellowed, hand-drawn map of Skullport. The map is only passably accurate, with notations listing businesses that have been closed for decades. A reedy, high-pitched tone is discernible in the space and appears to be focused on the object at the head of the table (see below).

Ragged Statue. A featureless, rudimentary stone figure stands at the head of the table. The statue is draped with a tattered black cloak, the clothing worn by the Rag Mage before it became the Fourteenth Skull. If the characters spend more than a minute in the room or if any of them touch the cloak, the

high-pitched tone intensifies, forcing characters in the room to succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 2d4 thunder damage and become stunned for 1 minute. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw takes half as much thunder damage and isn't stunned. A stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect early on a success.

The robe's effect is muted inside a *bag of holding* or similar extradimensional space where the characters aren't present. A *dispel magic* spell suppresses the robe's debilitating tone for 1 hour, and a *remove curse* spell ends it permanently. Once the detrimental features of the robe are removed, it acts as a *cloak of protection* for any creature that attunes to it.

X16. REFLECTION CHAMBER

This room has two dusty floor-to-ceiling mirrors opposite one another. A creature standing in the room and looking into the mirror doesn't see their own reflection; instead, they see a tall figure dressed in rags and tatters, wearing a ragged hood that hides their face. If the creature continues to watch, their reflection quickly pulls back the hood to reveal a burning **flameskull** visage underneath. A creature that witnesses this must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the room for 1 hour, fleeing through one of the two exits and into the next area.

X17. PRISON CELL

This cell is used for the long-term housing of prisoners, but is currently unoccupied. Its filth-smearing stone floor has a few ragged blankets and no other furnishings. A creature that interacts with the blankets must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract *Skulker Fever*. The small connecting room is a lightless confinement chamber that muffles all sound when the door is closed.

X18. SKULLWAY STAIR

The tunnel passageway from area X16 leads to a stairway and the door to area X19. A tall alcove of skulls occupies the wall beside the foot of the stairs. If a creature makes noise louder than a harsh whisper in the 10-foot area at the foot of the stairs or on the stairwell, the skulls animate and collapse onto the 10-foot area. The skulls deal 2d4 piercing damage each round until there are no more creatures in the area, at which point the skulls fly back up into their niches.

X19. COFFIN ANTECHAMBER

This chamber connects the staircase to area X18 to Mister Stitch's laboratory in area X20.

Occupied coffin. The only notable feature of this room is an aged iron coffin with a sealed lid. The lid can be pried open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, revealing the withered corpse of a **vampire** with a silver stake embedded in its chest. The vampire attempted to find a place to lair near Skullport several decades ago, discovered the Rag Mage's lair, and was killed for its trouble. The silver stake is merely a precaution by the Rag Mage's followers; removing it doesn't revive the vampire. The stake is worth 30 gp.

X20. STITCHED LABORATORY

Rickety wooden tables in this room are piled with a seemingly nonsensical assortment of objects, including bits of straw, ragged sackcloth, books, scrolls, and rotted meat. Most sentient servants of the Rag Mage try to avoid this room when they can, and think nothing of screams or similar noises coming from this area of the lair.

Mister Stitch. The laboratory's permanent residence is a **scarecrow** named Mister Stitch. Mister Stitch was created by the Rag Mage and is interested in making scarecrows of its own. Instead of straw or a similar filling, Mister Stitch's stuffing is made of living insects. Mister Stitch has the following modifications to the scarecrow stat block.

- It has 40 (9d8) hit points.
- It has an Intelligence of 14 (+2).
- It is not vulnerable to fire damage.
- It can speak, read, and write Common and Undercommon.
- When Mister Stitch is reduced to 0 hit points it breaks apart into a **swarm of insects** in the same space. Unless the swarm is destroyed, Mister Stitch reforms from it 24 hours later.

Mister Stitch spends most of its time studying stolen spellbooks and other tomes and trying to make obedient scarecrows by experimenting on the goblins in area X21. It assumes the characters are allies of the Rag Mage unless they give it a reason to think otherwise. It tasks them with retrieving the corpse of a size Medium or larger creature for 'spare parts' in its experiments.

Treasure. Any character that spends at least 10 minutes searching the room can make a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, finding a partially intact spellbook among the scrap and refuse covering the tables. The spellbook is bound in peeling brown leather and most of the pages are ruined, but its intact

pages contain the following wizard spells: *message*, *ray of sickness*, *speak with dead*, and *animate objects*.

X21. GOBLIN CELL

This unadorned stone room contains a waste bucket and several piles of filthy, rotted straw.

Prisoners. Imprisoned in this cell are three goblins, victims of Mister Stitch's sadistic experiments. All three of them have forgotten their original names and most of their lives before being kidnapped for the scarecrow's torturous research, taking on the nicknames given them by their cruel captor. The three prisoners are.

- Seeno, who is blinded by their eyelids being stitched shut.
- Sayno, whose mouth is sewn almost entirely shut and cannot speak in anything more than muffled grunts.
- Heeno, who had cotton stuffed into their ears before the lobes were folded and sewn over the opening of the ear canals. They are deafened as a result.

The three goblins have nothing material to offer the characters in exchange for their freedom, but will help as best they can. Their priority is to escape and to protect one another. The goblins are former workers at the Flatbacks in the Lower Port, and laborers there might recognize the trio.

X22. SCALED LAIR

This room is the home several **lizardfolk**, who are tasked with defending the lair against the subterranean creatures that occasionally breach the lair. There are four **lizardfolk** led by a **lizardfolk** shaman named Yiss'ri.

X23. BREACHED CHAMBER

This bare room contains the entrance to a collapsed tunnel in the east wall. It is the site of a previous **troglydite** raid on the lair. The hidden tunnel between this area and area X10 is obvious from this room.

X24. BULLYWUG GROTTO

This cave contains a stagnant pool of water. Smeared half-eaten bug parts litter the floor.

Bullywugs. This area is home to four **bullywugs** and their leader Groo'uk, a **bullywug croaker**. Groo'uk rides Wurty, a **giant toad**; all five bullywugs and the toad spend most of their time lingering in the filthy pool. Groo'uk is rarely called upon to perform missions for the Rag Mage, which clashes with her desire for treasure and power. Groo'uk and her bullywugs will look the other way in exchange for a bribe of gems, art objects, or other pretty objects

worth at least 100 gp total; if the bribe is worth 150 gp or more, Groo'uk gives the characters her prisoner (see below).

Sir Elten the Bold. In the far dead-end chamber of area X23 is a wounded and tied-up halfling **knight** named Sir Elten of Boareskyr. Elten was part of a group of adventurers who entered Undermountain weeks ago and became lost in the twisting tunnels of the Sargauth level; Elten was the only survivor. Elten has the following changes to his statistics.

- He has a walking speed of 25 feet.
- His currently has 31 hit points.
- He is suffering from one level of Exhaustion.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The following special events can occur while the characters are moving through the Rag Mage's lair.

CREATING A FRAY MAGE

If at least one member of the Fray has been killed by the characters or another creature, the Rag Mage replaces them by empowering one of its other followers. This ritual is held in area X9; the Rag Mage floats above its followers while they wail and chant, seeking its attention. Their cries continue after the Rag Mage selects one of the supplicants, sending a torrent of harmless magical flame into the eyes and mouth of the chosen candidate. By the end of the ritual, the candidate's statistics become those of a **Fray mage**.

The entire event takes approximately thirty minutes from start to finish. During this time, the following changes to the lair are in effect.

- The creatures in area X9 and adjacent areas have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks using hearing.
- Mister Stitch leaves area X20 to attend the ritual. There is a 50% chance that Golam leaves area X8 to watch the ritual as well.

TROGLODYTE INCURSION

A nest of **trogloodytes** breaches the cavern wall in area X10, and 2d4+1 **trogloodytes** enter the lair. These troglodytes move to area X9 and engage with the Rag Mage's forces. Groups of 2-3 troglodytes split off into adjacent areas, spreading chaos. The lizardfolk in area X22, Mister Stitch in area X20, and the bullywugs in area X24 move to areas X9 and X10 to fight the troglodytes and prevent more from entering the lair.

Event Effects

For the next 30 minutes (or sooner, depending on NPC and character interactions with the troglodytes), the Rag Mage's forces are occupied with containing the troglodytes. Characters have advantage on ability checks to pass themselves off as followers of the Rag Mage or to move about unnoticed by followers occupied with rooting out the troglodytes.

Troglodyte Goals

The troglodytes aren't trying to conquer the lair permanently, just kill as many creatures and carry off as many bodies for feeding as they can in a short amount of time. You may elect to have characters or NPCs reduced to 0 hit points by the troglodyte's attack rendered unconscious instead, a choice by the troglodytes to keep the meat 'fresh' as they attempt to carry the bodies away.

CHAPTER 8: SKULLPORT: A TWO- COPPER TOUR

A BRIEF HISTORY

The origins of Skullport lie in history older than the criminal the criminal organizations that currently control it. Though ancient history by this point, the ripples of Skullport's origins still affect daily life in the Port of Shadows.

Dwarvish origin. In the –1200's DR, the Melairkyn clan of dwarves discovered mithral in the depths of present-day Mount Waterdeep, arriving from the Underdark. The dwarves established a small realm, creating new rooms and caverns and expanding its borders into a subterranean area (present-day Undermountain). The Melairkyn rooted out duergar and drow, with whom they had considerable competition, but one area of present-day Undermountain repelled their excursions.

Netherese enclave. Mages from the ancient kingdom of Netheril had secured this underground level for their own use, sealing it against the curious dwarves. Calling themselves the Sargauth Enclave, the mages constructed a great and secretive city devoted to gods and magic in the cavernous depths. It was the Sargauth Enclave who first created the series of magical water locks that allow ships to travel to and from this underground region along the River Sargauth. They constructed an enchantment over the caverns, called the Mantle, which acted as structural support for the cave system.

Literal and societal collapse. When the Netherese empire fell in –339 DR, the damage to the empire's magic was felt even in the depths of the Enclave. The ceiling over the city, in the present-day third level of Undermountain, partially collapsed; the massive, singular cavern was broken up into a series of ruined riverways and chambers as it is known today. Meanwhile, the Melairkyn dwarves had experienced more and more aggression from drow and duergar forces boiling up from the Underdark. From –677 DR until 34 DR, the dwarves kept the aggressors at bay. In 34 DR, a massive force of drow entered Melairkyn territory and killed the dwarvish king, Melair IV. The Melairkyn retreated from their home and were driven

further and further into obscurity until their apparent disappearance in 211 DR.

The coming of Halaster. As the drow overtook the former Melairkyn holdings, Halaster Blackcloak appeared in the depths below the mountain and began purging it of drow and duergar forces. By the early 300s DR, Halaster had control of the area; the duergar had already left these halls and the drow finally abandoned it by the late 400's DR. By this point, the Mad Mage had moved into this subterranean realm permanently. For more of Halaster's own history with the area, see the **Undermountain Overview** chapter of *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*.

Shradin and the founding of Skullport. A Netherese necromancer named Shradin Mulophor discovered the ruins of the Sargauth Enclave in the 1100's DR and asked Halaster's permission to establish a residence there. Surprisingly, Halaster agreed. A small settlement grew from the ruins of the old city, attracting the lowest dregs of society to its dark depths. The residents called their home 'Skullport,' naming them after the strange flameskulls that patrolled the city and attacked existential threats to the cavern. When a faction known as the Keepers came to the growing community, they learned how to awaken the water locks first created by the Netherese mages centuries ago. Shradin continued to act as the undisputed ruler of Skullport until 1369 DR, when the increasingly mad necromancer was killed by the Skulls of Skullport, presumably to protect the city from his insanity.

Criminal rulership. Though the Skulls are sometimes seen as a kind of ruling force in the city, they do not actively control its activities in any way. The control of Skullport in the past few centuries has passed between a number of gangs and other criminal organizations, usually seizing power from the previous faction and expanding its own illegal enterprise until the next entity unseats it. Today Skullport is controlled by the Xanathar Guild, a broad organization ruled by its namesake beholder.

SKULLPORT AS IT COULD BE

By many accounts at the time, Skullport's structure and residents were ravaged by the Spellplague and the city has been mostly abandoned as its residents fled or were killed. For the purposes of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*, what is presented here is a vision of the city that remains a vibrant, if dangerous, underground metropolis.

SURVIVING SKULLPORT

Waterdeep is a beautiful city of law, growth, and life. Skullport is an ugly city of lawlessness, dilapidation, and social rot. The residents of Skullport are referred to as ‘Skulkers,’ highlighting the foulness of both the city life and the temperament of its population.

Skullport slang. There are a few local terms that residents commonly use in conversation. Understanding them can help newcomers navigate the city, or sound less like tourists — both of which significantly reduce their chance of being stabbed.

- **The Heart.** This is the easternmost and most cavern-like area of Skullport. As a result, it’s also the tallest from floor to ceiling.
- **Skulker.** A resident of Skullport.
- **The Trade Lanes.** A term referring to an area where many Skullport businesses are located. If the port area goes straight back from the water’s edge to the cavern wall, the Trade Lanes are located between it and the rougher cavern area of the Heart.

Some other phrases in Skullport include.

- “If you believe that, I have a minotaur to sell you!” This is an old saying that refers to a minotaur who lived in a cage outside the Deepfires Inn (now the Raging Bull). Swindlers and bad practical jokers would ask newcomers to free the minotaur in exchange for coin; more than a few fools ended up strangled to death by the captivity-maddened minotaur when they approached it.
- “Like a cool drink from the Sargauth.” Meaning ‘extremely unpleasant.’
- “Go drink from the Sargauth!” Please don’t.

THE THREE LEVELS

Due to the unregulated nature of construction in Skullport (see below) and limited space, buildings are often stacked atop and between one another; other ‘buildings’ are suspended from the cavern ceiling, supported by stone columns and stalactites, carved into the columns and stalactites themselves, or built on rocky shelves at various heights.

In order to better navigate their city, Skulkers began to designate three ‘levels’ of the city.

Lower level. This ground level occupies the bottom of the cavern.

Middle level. This level often includes structures built atop the lower level buildings, or secured to rocky shelves at approximately the same elevation.

Upper level. This highest level is mostly on the eastern end of the city, where the ceiling is more cavern-like and structures can utilize columns, stalactites, and so on.

BUILDINGS

There are primarily two types of buildings in Skullport: buildings utilizing the ancient Netherese structures, and buildings made of makeshift materials. Without a stable centralized government, there are no sources or standards for building materials. Quality lumber is a rare import and doubly expensive due to the difficulty involved in bringing it to the Port of Shadows.

Skulkers make do with what they have. Many buildings are slum-like, made of whatever flotsam that appears on the River Sargauth. Some buildings are literally ships that were hoisted up from the river path to the South Sea Caves; these vessels are shoved, stacked, or suspended into any space where they will fit.

STREETS AND WALKWAYS

The streets of the lower level are made of stone and dirt, packed down and worn by centuries of the residents’ foot traffic. Ancient gutters and grates lead to the city’s rudimentary sewer system, a relic of the days of Netherese construction.

The middle and upper levels utilize walkways between buildings. The walkways are usually ten feet wide and made of wood and rope cannibalized from ships and their rigging. Some of the oldest walkways have been petrified by years of mineral drips, making strange rock-like bridges between long-established locations.

UPKEEP

The ruling criminal organization of a city often undertakes whatever civil projects it needs to in order to maintain its own properties. In the process they provide some maintenance on the streets, walkways, and bridges that everyone in Skullport uses.

LOCATIONS IN SKULLPORT

LOWER LEVEL

LOWER PORT

SLAVE MARKET

During its peak, this marketplace near the docks clamored with business. With the scouring of many drow from Undermountain and the decline of the Iron Ring, the slave market is rarely used as anything more than a convenient landmark as a meeting place. The abandoned market is a small flagstone courtyard with multiple stage platforms and a number of humanoid-sized cages rusted beyond all usability.

LP1. DEAD MAN'S CORNER (*DotMM*)

A **sea hag** named Olive Stillwater sells human zombies out of this shop.

THE TRADEWAY

Where Furlough Street turns east it becomes the Tradeway, running the length of the lower trade lanes until it meets the Lower Heart.

LP2. SKIN DEEP TATTOOS

An old dwarf named Dwarnid Inkpeddler (N male shield dwarf **thug**) is a walking advertisement for his work; his body is covered in tatoos that he did himself, even in areas he had to use a mirror to see. Dwarnid has had his share of apprentices over the years, but currently works alone. He offers tattoos at a rate of 5 gp per square inch of full-color coverage, at roughly 30 minutes per square inch.

Rumors swirl that Dwarnid knows how to create magic-infused tattoos that can cast simple spells in a manner and style similar to low-level spell scrolls for a price premium. If there's any truth to this, both Dwarnid and his customers are good at keeping it a secret.

LP3. LEECH'S QUICK CURES

The owner of this business is not the original Leech, but this apparent inheritor is no less of a charlatan healer. Leech sells 'miracle cures' of herbal remedies and false potions; his *potions of healing* are sold at

market price, but the hit points they restore are only temporary hit points that vanish after an hour.

LP4. WAREHOUSE

This warehouse nestled up to Leech's Quick Cures is an eyesore, even for Skullport. Most Skulkers don't know it's owned by a lamia named Transtra. Transtra owns a brothel in the Lower Heart called the House of the Long Slow Kiss, and this warehouse is used to house supplies for the business—at least, that's the story. The warehouse is also used to house illicit goods that the lamia doesn't want the Xanathar Guild to collect 'tax' on.

LP5. WAREHOUSE

This large warehouse is three full stories, and is rigged with multiple traps to dissuade intruders. Hidden compartments and illusory wall sections make it a smuggler's dream—at least, it was until the Xanathar Guild took control of Skullport. The warehouse was cleaned out to discourage anyone from holding out on Xanathar.

LP6. SPIDER'S FLEET O' FEET

Until a few years ago, this small shack was a courier service run by a tiefling nicknamed Spider, who had the inexplicable power to stick to surfaces. Spider hired the acrobatic and the quick-footed from around Skullport to act as message runners until the day he died; many of his former employees still live in Skullport and remember the old tiefling fondly. A few of them still sell their speed for message running and other odd jobs, usually at Herald's Meet.

LP7. SKULL ISLAND REGISTRY

This house is packed from cellar to second story with filing cabinets and harassed clerks. The employees of the registry have the job of recording bills of sale, shipping records, and other transactions—a bizarre vocation for a city built on crime and underhanded dealings.

This business was originally founded by the Iron Ring as a means of tracking important intel. When the Iron Ring's control of Skullport waned, so did the Registry. With the Xanathar Guild's rise to power, the registry has been newly staffed under the direction of the beholder crime lord's lieutenants.

HERALD'S MEET

This courtyard acts as a rare public common area in Skullport. Ten ship masts are embedded in the ground and are used to post flyers, advertisements,

and job postings. Many of the offers of employment lack specific detail but will often direct job-seekers to established local middlemen.

Scribes (NG **commoners** with a +2 proficiency using calligrapher's supplies) loiter around the Herald's Meet, making a modest living by writing or reading postings for illiterate Skulkers, or translating those in an unfamiliar language. There's an unspoken rule that the scribes are not to be meddled with due to the service they provide; anyone attempting to hurt or steal from one of the scribes will find themselves quickly surrounded by angry locals.

SHADOW PASS

On the opposite, northern end of Skullport from the river's edge is Shadow Pass, one of Skullport's many passages to the rest of Undermountain and one of the most frequently used. This rough, crooked passageway has two key features; the creatures from whom the passage gets its name, and a large black block of stone.

Shadows. Numerous **shadows** lurk in this route to and from Skullport. They appear to be bound to the black block of stone in the passage, as they attack anyone who attempts to damage or deface it. Otherwise, the shadows only attack travelers who attempt to rest within the crooked path of the pass.

Stone block. A block of dark basalt stands near the Skullport end of Shadow Pass. Humanoid skulls occupy many hollows on the stone's surface, which stands almost twenty feet high. Those approaching Skullport from Undermountain are greeted by the block when it causes one of its skulls to animate at random, floating forward to welcome travelers to the city and warning them against bringing the ire of the Skulls of Skullport.

LP8. STORR-IT

Storr is a half-orc who thinks the name of his business is the smartest thing he's ever come up with (it is). Storr-It is a small warehouse where Skulkers can store items they don't want to keep on their person or in their residence. Storr will protect items in storage for only a few copper a day, but the low price comes at the cost of quality; Storr-It is a leaky, rat-infested pit of a building where items run the risk of spoiling in the squalid conditions.

LP9. THE TROLL'S GUFFAW

This ramshackle theater keeps up business with bawdy comedies and dramas twisted to include more violence and off-color humor to appeal to

its disreputable audience. During its founding, performances in the Troll's Guffaw were enhanced with magical illusions and acted out by a cast of doppelgangers, some of them members of the notorious Unseen. Today, the theater still pulls crowds looking for good entertainment in the squalor of Skullport, and the actors and actresses aren't doppelgangers...as far as anyone knows.

THE GAUNTLET

This narrow east-west alley lies in the north east section of the Lower Port, near where the port transitions into the Lower Trade Lanes. It earns its grim moniker due to the high population of common thieves and muggers that loitered there, usually discussing some upcoming illicit job or accosting any poor fool who made the mistake of wandering into the alleyway.

Today, there are no more pickpockets and robbers in the alleyway than any other street in Skullport, but for the sake of navigation the Gauntlet has kept its name.

LP10. SHATTERBLADE'S

This drinking hall was owned by a pirate lord named Rhaunaguth and named for a mithral shield he carries into battle. Its current owner, a crooked-nosed human named Bulmoor, boasts that the shield still hangs above the bar. In truth, it's a passable fake that Bulmoor paid well for—but not nearly as much as he got for selling the real shield. The tales of Rhaunaguth still draw pirates and other sea scum to the hall for a drink and frequent fistfights.

LP11. THE BLACK TANKARD

The sign hanging outside this business is a charred black mug filled with bones. The building itself is equally grim, with black stone walls and customers sipping bitter mugs of beer. In a feature oddly reminiscent of Waterdeep's Yawning Portal tavern, a well stands in the middle of the common room. No intrepid adventurers pay to dive into this well, however, as it leads straight into Skullport's monster-infested and mazelike sewers. Despite the barely passable quality of its food, the Black Tankard is a favorite watering hole of Ahmaergo, one of Xanathar's top underlings.

LP12. WUGG'S NECESSITIES

Thessia Wugg (LE human **commoner**) inherited this adventuring supply store from her father Thesophus. She also inherited his business security guard, a narcoleptic minotaur named S'nogg Mudmane who spends as much time nodding off on the job as he does

intimidating would-be thieves. Thessia is a ruthless businesswoman who charges adventurers double the usual price for essential supplies...unless they're truly desperate. Then she charges triple.

LP13. THIMBLEWINE'S PAWNSHOP (*DotMM*)

Krystaleen (NE female rock gnome **commoner**) is the niece of the establishment's former owner and namesake. Her pawnshop has a habit of buying trinkets and other likely-stolen goods.

LP14. FINDLEWOLF'S GALLEY

Named for its founder, this tavern hall is now run by his son, Fimblewulf (N male human **commoner**). Long bench seats and tables serve simple but hearty meals in what is less a restaurant and more a mess hall. Residents of Skullport can pay 3 sp for a good meal and a tankard of weak ale, but Findlewulf's is not a place for conversation; numerous **thugs** on staff make sure diners clear out as soon as they've finished their meal. As Fimblewulf sees it, customers rarely have a chance to start a brawl in his establishment if they never get a chance to talk to each other.

LP15. THE BURNING TROLL

This inn is sizable for Skullport, with a full three stories and a cellar. Rooms here are of a comfortable quality, and it boasts a wide range of passable food and drink. It's also one of the few businesses in Skullport founded by former adventurers; these adventurers pursued marauding trolls right into the city, using brandy to torch the creatures and put them down for good. The locally nicknamed 'Trollsinge Vanguard' used the money from their adventures to build the Burning Troll and even expand it over time. The original adventuring company are long dead, and their grandchildren currently own and operate the Burning Troll.

LP16. MADAME IVYDANYA'S FORTUNES REVEALED

Many in Skullport are superstitious and desperate to believe in things than can predict or control their fate. Many see Madame Ivydanya as the real deal, due in no small part to the fact that the human woman hasn't appeared to age a day in over a century. The truth is that Ivydanya is long dead, and a **green hag** named Auntie Gutcrunch has assumed her form and her business. Posing as Ivydanya, Auntie Gutcrunch has kept up appearances with her own hag magic and manipulative talents. Only Olive Stillwater at the Dead Man's Corner knows Auntie Gutcrunch's true nature, but doesn't share this knowledge out of a kind of begrudging professional courtesy.

LP17. THE FLATBACKS

Originally called 'Haffa's Flatbacks' after its half-ogre founder, this freight hauling business is now owned and operated by the goblins and kobolds that would have been in Haffa's employ while he was alive. The goblins and kobolds are remarkably disciplined for their kind, likely just intelligent enough to know that menial labor for an honest wage is preferable to enslavement or extermination in Skullport.

LP18. THE DROWNED BUOY

This dingy one-story inn is located near the banks of the Sargauth in the lower level. The proprietor, a man named Wallid "Wally" Gumluk, is so decrepitly ancient that some suspect him of being a poorly-disguised undead creature. Rooms are only 2 silver pieces a night, but the passably comfortable rooms come without a meal. They also come without assurances; old Wally is quick to tell patrons that he isn't responsible for any robberies, burglaries, pickpocketing, assaults, or murders...though he waits until the room is already paid for before making this disclaimer.

LP19. XANATHAR WAREHOUSE

This warehouse business close to the Sargauth was taken over by the Xanathar Guild when they rose to power. It's protected at all times by a handful of **bugbears** and **thugs** who work for the guild.

LP20. SARGAUTH FISH MARKET

Skulkers say you can tell which fish are brought in by ships from the South Sea Caves and which are caught in the River Sargauth, because the ones brought in by the sea caves actually look like fish. The local catch are generally bony, pale things that bottom-feed in the still, cold waters of the Sargauth, including gray eels and bony white flatfish.

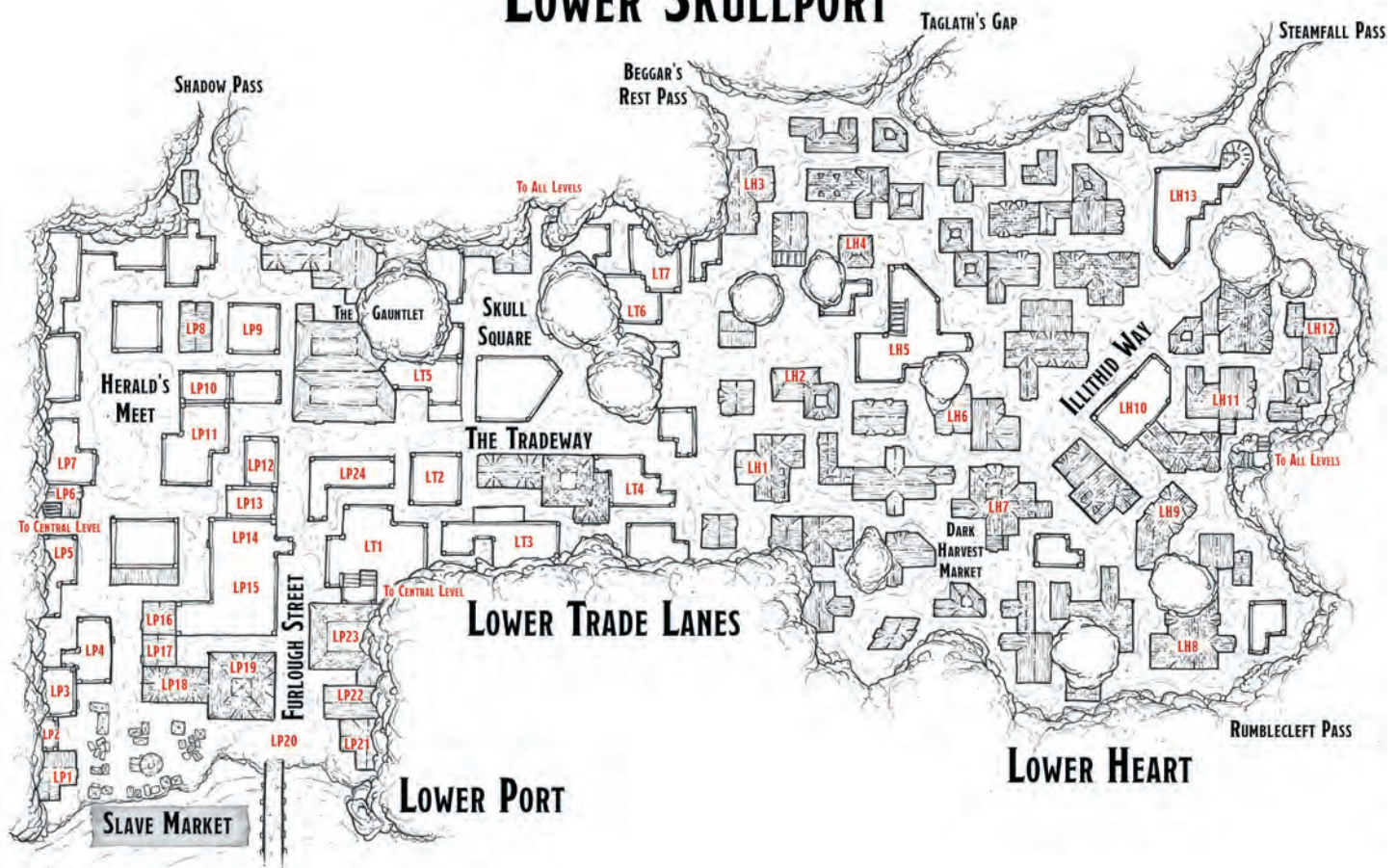
FURLOUGH STREET

The street heading due north from the Sargauth Fish Market is one of the most trafficked and well-maintained. Business owners and questionable independent contractors seek to attract residents coming to or from the fish market, or those heading to or from the River Sargauth and Skull Island.

LP21. THE NORTHERN WHARVES FISHERY

This was the site of a fish market and a popular spot for rumor-spreading, until an errant rumor about Xanathar made its way to the beholder crime lord and

LOWER SKULLPORT



he had the place burned out. Now it's a charred-out husk.

LP22. THE BROKEN PIKE TAVERN

This small, one-floor taproom is a cheap, run-down meeting place for plenty of low-ranking bandits and enforcers. Unknown to many is that it's also a meeting place for the Unseen, a dangerous criminal faction that welcomes shapechangers. One or more **doppelgangers** are usually in the tavern at any one time in disguise.

LP23. ABANDONED BUILDING

Despite its large size and excellent placement along Furlough Street, this large home never stays occupied for long. Years ago it was the site of Hired Horrors, a business of wizards that created twisted monsters for dungeons all over the world. One night, terrible screams erupted from Hired Horrors; its occupants were never seen again. Though no monster has ever been proven to reside there, unsettling feelings and even injuries attributed to 'a creature' keep would-be residents from staying long.

LP24. THE HOBbled LAMIA

Years ago, the Hobbled Lamia was a festhall complete with poor drinks, poor food, nightly wrestling matches, and adult company for hire. Its current owners, encouraged by the Xanathar Guild, have placed greater emphasis on nightly fights. Many members of the Xanathar Guild place bets on these fights or participate themselves, often getting an unfair advantage; few Skulkers want to risk the guild's wrath by injuring a member of the Xanathar Guild.

LOWER TRADE LANES

LT1. GYUDD'S DISTILLERY (DotMM)

One of the few local suppliers in Skullport, this distillery is owned by a group of dour mountain dwarves. The eponymous Gyudd (CN male shield dwarf **commoner**) is a notorious drunk who nevertheless makes consistent deliveries to local taverns and the Xanathar Guild itself. His 'Wyrmwizz' ale is particularly popular, though some aren't sure

Gyudd is joking when he says the brew's recipe includes a "special ingredient."

LT2. CLOCKWORK WONDERS

A pair of rock gnomes named Tykkyl and Tohkkal Burrwarden own this business, where they can construct clocks and clockwork contraptions of all kinds. Their best-known work is Skullport's waterclock, which allows accurate measurement of time in the subterranean city.

The Burrwardens have taken on an apprentice in recent years named Nim Wracksputter, who has created a clockwork humanoid he dubbed the **nimblewright**. Nim and his creations are relevant to the events of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*.

LT3. THE SEA CHEST (DotMM)

This business sold chests and other containers, but closed after a mind flayer ate the owner's brain.

LT4. THE DRAGLINES

This business offers ship repairs to the many vessels that sustain damage over the course of navigating the Sargauth, smuggling, or engaging in piracy.

LT5. HALL OF THE VOICE

Silver tongues can be hard to find in a city of foul-mouthed miscreants. The speakers in the Hall of the Voice can be hired to speak convincingly on behalf of someone, usually someone accused of a crime. Though the Xanathar Guild metes out punishment for crimes against the guild, public opinion is usually the deciding factor on cases heard in Skull Square, which lies just around the corner from the Hall of the Voice. Those who can afford the Hall's services usually go free, and those who don't usually aren't around to make a complaint.

SKULL SQUARE

Stocks and cages mark this sizable public square in the trade lanes on the lower level. Here criminals are punished with hours and even days spent locked in stocks or cages, subject to public ridicule in what might be Skullport's kindest form of justice. A far crueler avenue to punishment stands nearby.

Skullport dungeon well. A grated well in Skull Square is a steep, sloped passageway to a myriad of chambers beneath Skullport. Severe crimes that don't carry a sentence of immediate death might subject the criminal to an unpleasant trip into these chambers. The dungeons below are a haphazard assortment of rooms that occasionally connect to the sewers and

which house many dangerous creatures; few who are sentenced to the dungeons ever find their way back out.

LT6. MISKER'S MANSE

Before the coming of Xanathar, a different beholder ruled Skullport. Decades ago, a beholder named Misker became a successful smuggler and took on the title of the Pirate Tyrant, exerting considerable control over the city. The three-story mansion of strange purple and green stone still stands today, though its interior has been modified to better facilitate humanoids.

LT7. THE SNAKE PIT

This two-floor home was the notorious residence of Zstulkk Ssarmn, the **yuan-ti abomination** leader of the Iron Ring slavers. No one dared uttered the nickname 'Snake Pit' near a member of the Iron Ring while they ruled Skullport, but the moniker has become part of the public vernacular in the years since. Even **Mertensian Bluud** (Appendix A), the leader of the Iron Ring's successor organization the Reforged Ring, uses the nickname when referring to his own home. What people don't know is that Martensian is actually Zstulkk Ssarmn himself, disguised as a human. The patient yuan-ti has learned from his prior mistakes and wishes to build a new slaver organization with a clean slate.

Zstulkk's continued presence here also protects the home's secret, a small temple to the yuan-ti god Sseth. The temple is located beneath the bottom floor of the home, and only Zstulkk and a few trusted lieutenants know of its existence.

LOWER HEART

LH1. THE FLAGON AND DRAGON TAVERN (DotMM)

This one-story tavern serves local brews from Gyudd's Distillery. It's owned and operated by Cal'al Claddani (NE female half-drow **spy**), who is happy to share information about the city or valuable information for a few coins.

LH2. MANOR HOUSE

This two-floor manor was once owned by a wealthy speaker from the Hall of the Voice; if it is currently occupied, it is likely by a rich merchant or favored ally of the Xanathar Guild.

LH3. THE HELL HOUND'S MUZZLE



No tavern in Skullport can be considered 'safe,' but some are more dangerous than others. One of the deadliest is the Hell Hound's Muzzle, frequented by assassins and hired killers of all stripes. The owner is an ancient githzerai named Grimmbold (CE male **githzerai zerth**), who has a side job overseeing a group of contract killers with his companion Esten (CE male rock gnome **mage**). The two were originally sent to Skullport as Zhentarim agents on a suicide mission to investigate and take control of Undermountain; Grimmbold and Esten became disillusioned with the Black Network and left the organization, settling down in Skullport. Today, they are no particular friend or foe to the Zhents and have considerable information about the goings-on in both Skullport and Undermountain.

LH4. THE FEATHERED RAT (*DotMM*)

No one would expect a pet store to succeed in a town like Skullport. Then again, the owner Ulvira Snowveins (CG female half-elf **commoner**) doesn't ask what happens to the animals after they're sold. She also pointedly doesn't ask why goblins and kobolds sometimes refer to her pet store as "the best restaurant in town."

LH5. THE GUTS & GARTERS (*DotMM*)

This building presents itself as an inn, but everyone knows it's a front for the Xanathar Guild. The proprietor is a tiefling named Quietude, who spies on guests for his master. A secret passage leads to Xanathar's hideout.

LH6. THE THROWN GAUNTLET

The most popular pit fighting establishment in Skullport. A small sand-floored fighting ring sees at least half a dozen bouts per day, all under the control of Skuerren Skargettian (LE male **duergar**). The house controls and enforces all betting (and takes its cut); the proceeds have allowed the Thrown Gauntlet to offer food and drink of better quality than one might expect from such a violent business.

LH7. THE SANGUINE HALL

The previous owner of this butcher's shop skipped town with years of savings and amid rumors that he offered services beyond cutting up livestock. Its current owner is a Calimshite woman named Pasha, who does not offer 'special butchering services' as far as anyone knows.

DARK HARVEST MARKET

The Dark Harvest is a food market specializing in local ingredients—primarily fungi and the meat of underground creatures. This includes insects and bugs found in Undermountain, a fact that shocks new arrivals to the city. Nastier fare can be bought here, sought by intelligent creatures with less standard appetites. The occasional mind flayer can be found around the area of the Dark Harvest, looking for a stall selling preserved brains for their consumption.

LH8. THE RAGING BULL

Originally a tastefully expensive inn called The Deepfires, the old inn's primary landmark was the Raging Bull, a minotaur kept caged and insane near the entrance. Decades later the inn is under new management and named for the now-deceased minotaur, whose suspended skeleton within the cage now acts as macabre signage for the business.

LH9. THE SWORD & SEXTANT (*DotMM*)

This business was originally founded by a retired adventurer. It's now owned by two halflings named Will and Oleander, who buy and sell maps.

ILLITHID WAY

This prominent central street in the Lower Heart gets its moniker for its appeal to mind flayers and their servants. Dark and shadowy, Illithid Way is a welcome environment for illithids to shop unnoticed for pickled brains and stranger items, which stalls along the street are happy to provide. More information about Illithid Way and its residents is presented in CHAPTER BUTTS.

LH10. HOUSE OF THE LONG SLOW KISS

This tall four-floor structure is painted a clean white, which its owner ensures is kept clean. The **lamia** Transtra owns and operates this brothel, as well as a number of illicit side businesses. Transtra is interested in the treasures of Undermountain, and might hire adventurers to retrieve certain items for her. Under the lamia's sway is Uliss, a **behir** that is enamored with Transtra and protects her fiercely when summoned from a depths of a well in her private chambers.

LH11. MALAKUTH TABUIRR'S RESIDENCE

This townhouse is home to two drow males. The first is Malakuth Tabuirr (NE male **drow elite warrior**), who trades in slaves and mercenary work. His life partner Amryyr Yauntyrr (LE male **drow mage**) is more erudite, spending most of his time studying in the home after his old book business was replaced by the Sea Chest. The pair have spent years changing the exterior of the home to match a drow aesthetic. The upper floor of the home contains a shrine to the drow god Vhaeraun, a piece of information the couple carefully hides from other drow in Skullport.

LH12. RHAUNAGUTH'S KEEP

This fortified tower was once the home of the pirate lord Rhaunaguth. The pirate is long dead, but various bandit groups, squatters, and would-be Skulker factions have operated out of this tower.

LH13. THAGLAR'S FOUNDRY (DOTMM)

A harsh duergar named Thaglar Xundorn runs this large foundry, which crafts weapons, armor, and tools.

STEAMFALL PASS

This tunnel is constantly dampened by blasts of steam from Thaglar's Foundry (see *Dungeon of the Mad Mage*). Hot, humid air pervades the tunnel and the soot and steam have made the floor muddy, turning it to difficult terrain. Steamfall Pass is dangerous to enter or exit at night, when random blasts of fresh steam from the Foundry pose a threat to anyone near the Skullport end of the pass. Creatures caught by a blast of steam must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2d6 fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

BEGGAR'S REST PASS

This route to Undermountain gets its grim name in commemoration of hundreds of vagrants, all of whom were buried alive when the stone floor of the passage liquefied and re-solidified within the span of a few brief moments in 1358 DR. The event was linked to the Time of Troubles, though this fact has yet to convince anyone to build any kind of structure within the confines of the pass. Travelers say the passage is eerily quiet—just quiet enough to hear the faint moans and scratches of the long-dead beggars trapped below. It's said that if blood is shed in Beggar's Rest Pass, **zombies** will emerge from the stone floor and attack those who would dare to bring more death to this mournful place.

RUMBLELEFT PASS

A deadly earthquake shook Skullport within a century of its founding, releasing a gas that killed hundreds of residents and then inexplicably reanimated them as zombies, causing further destruction. Though Shradin Mulophor took control of the undead and supposedly saved the city, dark rumors still swirl that it was a ploy for Mulophor to replenish his undead army. The fissure opened by the quake is referred to as Rumbleleft Pass, as it connected to a number of irregular tunnels that eventually connect to other areas of Undermountain. The tunnels are confusing and cross over themselves several times, making them a maze that's never been mapped.

TAGLATH'S GAP

This passage to Undermountain is named for its only permanent resident. While he was alive, Taglath was a seducer and poet who wooed many women (and possibly men) in Skullport. One night, Taglath was attacked by an invisible foe who left slashing wounds across his body. The entity pursued the poet into the infamous pass and ended his life for good; now Taglath's Gap is haunted by his ghost. Most often, Taglath's spirit manifests as a greenish vapor that sparkles with a dark purple light, preceded by whispered lines of prose.

CENTRAL LEVEL

CENTRAL PORT

CP1. GENTLEMAN'S GROGGERY

This single-story tavern has two oddities: first, the massive colony of bats that lives above (and sometimes within) the structure; second, an *antimagic field* that pervades the entire structure, an odd relic from the Time of Troubles. Because of this, the Gentleman's Groggery is a popular meeting place for negotiations, as it minimizes the chance for enchantment or magical attack. The proprietor here is a half-orc named Wurgit (NE male half-orc **bandit**) who inherited the tavern from his grandfather. There's a new waiter every few tendays in the Gentleman's Groggery, as the constant need to scare away bats leaves workers exhausted and covered in guano.

CP2. THE BAT'S ROOST (DotMM)

Named for the bat swarms that sleep throughout this entire area of the central level, the Bat's Roost is a small establishment dedicated to battles of fisticuffs and heavy betting.

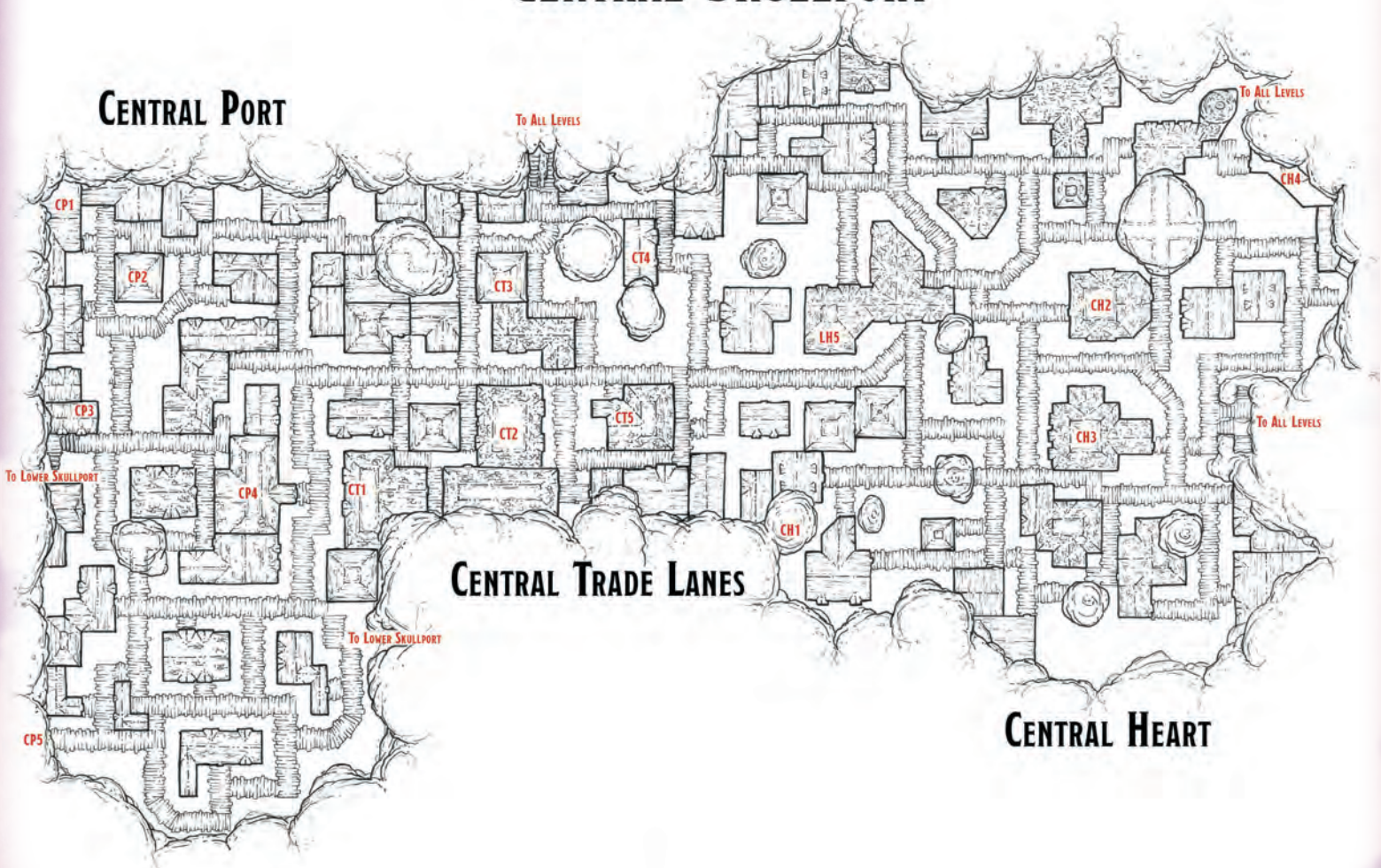
CP3. THE WANDERING DERVISH

The term 'exotic' is not often thrown about in the melancholy darkness of Skullport, but it's the façade presented at the Wandering Dervish. This festhall's interior is painted with desert scenes and décor supposedly inspired by the desert of Zakhara, a land far to the east of the Sword Coast. The unscrupulous owner is Nicamar Turtlebuck (NE male halfling **noble**), who plays up the 'mystique' of Zakhara to a painful degree, including hiring dancers who supposedly don't speak Common or Undercommon.

CP4. THE KEEL HALL (DotMM)

This former tavern still bears its ship-themed decorations, but is now a Zhentarim outpost. Only

CENTRAL SKULLPORT



Zhentarim members are given free reign here. The leader of the Zhentarim in Skullport, a blind tiefling **spy** named Bosskyn Gorr, lives here.

CP5. ROONSUNDRY'S WARREN

This uncharted section of tunnels and caverns is blocked by a magical door, which shifts through various colors. This was, or is, the home of a wizard named Othur Roonsundyr (CN male human **archmage**), an eccentric man who never accepted visitors and only rarely strayed from his home to the markets of Skullport. Few have any clue how to get past Roonsundyr's prismatic door, and none who have ever come back out again. Though the wizard should have been dead of old age decades ago and hasn't been seen in all that time, the magic of the door and rooms beyond it are apparently as strong as ever. It's a popular rumor around Skullport that Roonsundyr is still alive beyond that door, living in some enchanted cavern or demiplane of his own making.

CENTRAL TRADE LANES

CT1. THE LANTERNLIGHTER'S (DotMM)

The old half-elf Anderian Dusk (N male **commoner**) sells all manner of lanterns and lamp oils from his little shop in the central level trade lanes. With the rise of the Xanathar Guild, Anderian has been tasked with keeping some areas of the city well-lit, such as the port area and around warehouses or other businesses owned by the guild.

CT2. TWINBEARD'S TRAPS

Dwarf trapsmith Thorvin Twinbeard works out of this shop, but he's often away doing work directly for Xanathar.

CT3. THE POISONED QUILL (DotMM)

This go-to forgery service is run by a woman named Tasselgryn 'Tas' Velldarn (NE human **archmage**), who secretly knows and communicates with Halaster. She has a *teleportation circle* hidden in her residence and is the only person in Skullport permitted by Halaster to cast such a teleportation spell; however, she will not reveal its existence or permit the characters to use it, under Halaster's orders.

CT4. THE LANTERNLIGHTER'S (DotMM)

Anderian Dusk is an aged half-elf who runs this small lantern shop. The Xanathar Guild frequently uses Anderian to replace or repair the small number of streetlights they want to maintain.

CT5. SARGAUTH'S BOUNTY (DotMM)

Darum and Duram Ghaz are a pair of dwarf brothers who sell salvage from the river.

CENTRAL HEART

CH1. SANGALOR'S HOME

It's not necessarily rare to see an illithid in Skullport, but it's certainly unusual to see one that worships a traditionally human deity. Sangalor is a devout follower of Oghma, god of knowledge, and their home is filled with thousands of every kind of book and scroll imaginable. The house itself is shaped like a nautilus shell set with rows of stained-glass windows. Sangalor is a courteous host to the intelligent and informed, but has no qualms about incapacitating intruders with magical defenses or his own considerable power.

CH2. LORD TRILLUACH'S VILLA

This fortified manor is suspended from the cavern ceiling by massive chains and supported from beneath by stone buttresses. It is one of the most strikingly fashionable buildings in Skullport; Lord Byronae Trilluach insisted on importing materials and builders from beyond Undermountain to construct his home and spared no expense. This half-elf mercenary 'lord' of Skullport is recently dead of old age, but his children keep a retinue of loyal guards on the payroll to defend their home. Byronae's son Auden Trilluach features in the events of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*.

CH3. DALAGOR'S FORTRESS (DotMM)

In *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, Dalagor's Fortress is a three-story manor that has been utilized as a Harper hideout and is staffed solely by a dragonborn **mage** named Felrax. In *Skullport: Dragon Swindle*, this location is Remallia Haventree's headquarters. See Chapter 5: Growing Concern for full details on the manor home.

CH4. LODGE OF THE BEASTLORD

This lavish tavern and inn is generally reserved for members only. Its membership is reserved for hunters of beasts and of men, and only those who prioritize the thrill of the hunt above all else can hope to be accepted as initiates. Those invited to join must eventually pass a final test that involves hunting down and killing a close friend or family member, or risk being hunted themselves. The lodge boasts luxurious wood-paneled walls, enormous fireplaces, and many

trophies from contributing members. The only stone room is a bare chamber containing a shrine to Malar, god of the savage and bloody hunt.

UPPER LEVEL

UPPER TRADE LANES

WHISPERHAUNT PASS

An opening to this passage is easily accessible from the Upper Trade Lanes but its other end opens well above the lower trade lanes, making it useless as a travel path. It is made doubly so by the dangerously strong gusts of wind that blow through the passage without warning, which can be strong enough to knock someone off of their feet or send them tumbling downward. It's believed there is a one-way portal to the Plane of Air somewhere in the small tunnels that branch off of the passage; no one seems certain, however, because the strength of the wind increases

exponentially as one attempts to explore these tunnels.

UT1. THE HIDE N' HAIR

For over a century now, this tannery has mysteriously changed hands at a rapid pace. Locals swear there's a new owner every time they go in, but the current proprietor never seems to remember much about the previous owner or even how they got there. Skulkers have learned to accept the good products provided at the Hide n' Hair and to avoid questions about its staffing.

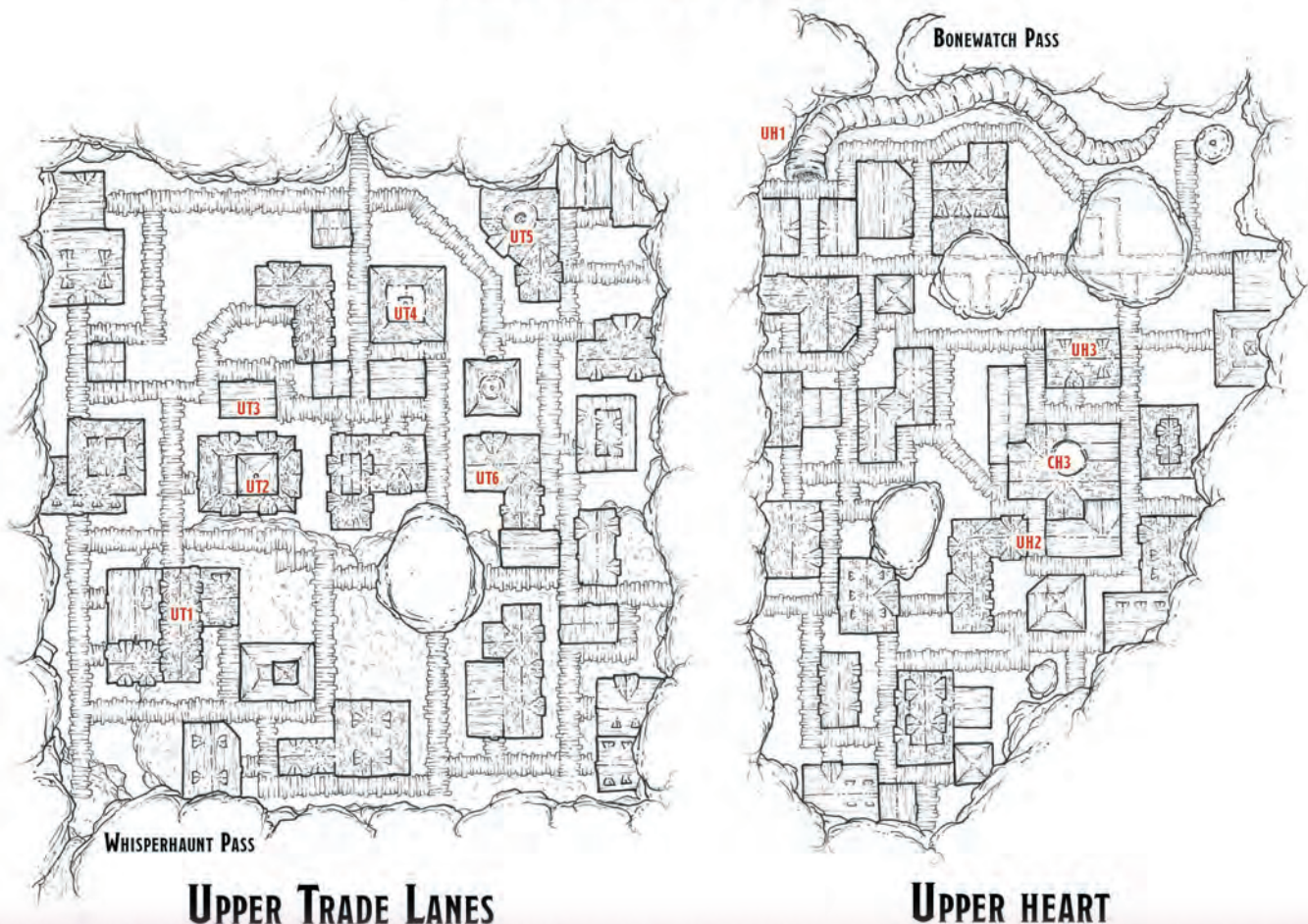
UT2. THE OVERFLOWING URN (DOTMM)

A man named Garryth operates this lantern oil business. Unknown to anyone else in Skullport, the real Garryth has been dead for years; a **doppelganger** killed him and took his place some time ago.

UT3. THE BONEYARD

Trading in bones of all kinds, Dethyn Hurl (NE male shield dwarf **commoner**) sells everything from tiny

UPPER SKULLPORT



bones for a few coppers apiece to full skeletons. A bullette skull hangs over the front door to the shop, and Dethyn has happily spread the rumor that it will animate if anyone attempts to shoplift.

UT4. DUMATHOIN'S JEST (DotMM)

A **duergar** named Ygarra Urmbaalt appraises gems from this squat one-story building.

UT5. THE MAEDAR'S WIDOW

Despite the incredible quality and the high price of her work, Morganis Andropoea is not a sculptor in a traditional sense. Morganis is a **medusa**, and her detailed sculptures are the work of her Petrifying Gaze rather than any learned craft. The medusa came to Skullport more than a century ago after her husband was killed by adventurers, and operates the business by arranging victims in the proper attire and poses before freezing them in place. Her work can even be found in the villas of some Waterdhavian nobles, who are either unaware of the sculptures' true origin or look the other way.

UT6. THE NIGHTSHADE'S CARESS (DotMM)

A withered mummified hag owns this apothecary, which specializes in ingredients and deadly poisons from the underground.

UPPER HEART

BONEWATCH PASS

Named for the enormous, immovable one-eyed skull that peers down onto Skullport, Bonewatch Pass

is a miles-long tunnel riddled with spiked pits and spear traps. The traps make the pass attractive to necrophages like **carrion crawlers** and the occasional **ghoul**, or to creatures like **kobolds** who possess an affinity for such devices.

UH1. THE WORM'S GULLET (DotMM)

The popularity of this restaurant, located inside a petrified purple worm corpse, has plummeted since it received its new owner. Gharz Stonedark (LE male **duergar**) is a Xanathar-appointed loyalist who had better odds of killing the purple worm with his bare hands while it was alive than he does serving a passable meal.

UH2. TANOR'THAL REFUGE (DotMM)

Magically carved by a drow family to resemble a massive spider clinging to the cavern ceiling, this house is long since abandoned. Today it is infested with giant spiders and choked with webs.

UH3. THE FRONTAL LOBE

There's an alien quality to the Frontal Lobe's dark crystal windows and polished walls. Decades ago this business was too dangerous for anyone but its illithid patrons to frequent, but a decline in the local mind flayer population has opened the venue to other patrons. Most non-illithid visitors find the strange dissonant music and unnatural perfume-like vapors disconcerting. Mind flayers still come to the Frontal Lobe for its aesthetic, though the decline of the Iron Ring slavers have reduced the stock of slaves available for well-paying illithids to feast upon.



APPENDIX A: MONSTERS AND NPCs

This appendix lists notable NPCs and creatures in alphabetical order. Creature statistics that don't appear in the *Monster Manual* or *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* are included here for reference.

AUDEN TRILLUACH

Auden is a half-elf and son of late mercenary lord Byronae Trilluach, the original owner of the *Stone of Golorr*. Byronae's son is no mercenary lord himself, but is a capable warrior whose name still commands a modicum of respect in Skullport. Auden can be a shrewd and detached tactician who nevertheless harbors a strong sense of loyalty for his friends.

Statistics

Auden has the statistics of a **swashbuckler** (see *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* for statistics) with the following changes:

- Auden is lawful evil.
- He speaks Common, Elvish, and Undercommon.

BOGGLE

These little fey creatures are called to the Material Plane by feelings of loneliness, feelings that aren't too hard to find in a city like Skullport. The magic pervading Undermountain makes even temporary proximity between the Feywild and the Material Plane unlikely, but nevertheless a few of these creatures have slipped into Undermountain at large over its long history. Boggles are notorious pranksters, using their ability to open dimensional rifts to perform mischievous, if harmless, practical jokes.

BOGGLE

Small fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 18 (4d6 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR 8 (-1) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 13 (+1)

INT 6 (-2) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances Fire

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Sylvan

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Boggle Oil. The boggle excretes nonflammable oil from its pores. The boggle chooses whether the oil is slippery or sticky and can change the oil on its skin from one consistency to another as a bonus action.

Slippery Oil: While coated in slippery oil, the boggle gains advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made to escape bonds, squeeze through narrow spaces, and end grapples.

Sticky Oil: While coated in sticky oil, the boggle gains advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to grapple and any ability check made to maintain a hold on another creature, a surface, or an object. The boggle can also climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Dimensional Rift. As a bonus action, the boggle can create an invisible and immobile rift within an opening or frame it can see within 5 feet of it, provided that the space is no bigger than 10 feet on any side. The dimensional rift bridges the distance between that space and any point within 30 feet of it that the boggle can see or specify by distance and direction (such as "30 feet straight up"). While next to the rift, the boggle can see through it and is considered to be next to the destination as well, and anything the boggle puts through the rift (including a portion of its body) emerges at the destination. Only the boggle can use the rift, and it lasts until the end of the boggle's next turn.

Uncanny Smell. The boggle has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Pummel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage.

Oil Puddle. The boggle creates a puddle of oil that is either slippery or sticky (boggle's choice). The puddle is 1 inch deep and covers the ground in the boggle's space. The puddle is difficult terrain for all creatures except boggles and lasts for 1 hour.

If the oil is slippery, any creature that enters the puddle's area or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

If the oil is sticky, any creature that enters the puddle's area or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be restrained. On its turn, a creature can use an action to try to

extricate itself from the sticky puddle, ending the effect and moving into the nearest safe unoccupied space with a successful DC 11 Strength check.

BULLYWUG CROAKER

Bullywugs find few friends in a town like Skullport, as they are too arrogant and short-tempered to settle permanently in the city proper. They tend to settle in isolated alcoves and caverns around the River Sargauth, occasionally accosting travelers or anyone else unfortunate enough to stumble across them. More powerful and arrogant than the common bullywug are the croakers, who have learned to weave magic into their voice.

BULLYWUG CROAKER

Medium humanoid (bullywug), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (Hide Armor, Shield)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 12 (+1) **CON** 12 (+1)

INT 7 (-2) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Damage Resistances Fire

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Bullywug

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious The croaker can breathe air and water.

Speak with Frogs and Toads. The croaker can communicate simple concepts to frogs and toads when it speaks in Bullywug.

Standing Leap. The croaker's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The croaker has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Glaaar-pat (3/Day). The croaker sings a song of marshy doom. Each chosen creature within 30 feet of the croaker that can hear the song must make a



DC 12 Wisdom saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw also has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws until the end of its next turn.

Rooooo-glog (1/Day). The croaker sings an ode to an elder froghemoth. Each bullywug within 30 feet of the croaker that can hear the song gains 10 temporary hit points.

FARCOR FASTFINGER

A gruff thief-for-hire, Farcor (NE male deep gnome) has a reputation around Skullport for his level-headed competence. Farcor's partner in crime is a **giant weasel** named Slandersnout; only Farcor knows that Slandersnout is his former partner, permanently transformed after a run-in with Halaster in the depths of Undermountain.

Statistics

Farcor has the statistics of a **master thief** (see below), with these changes:

- His size is Small.
- He has a walking speed of 25 feet.
- He has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.
- He can speak, read, and write Common, Gnomish, and Undercommon.
- He has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
- He has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.



FRAY MAGE

At any given time, thirteen of the Rag Mage's most devoted cultists are empowered as members of the Fray, spellcasters who wear ragged clothing in honor of the mortal form the Rag Mage once possessed. The members of the Fray are promised that they will become the new Skulls of Skullport (see below) when the Rag Mage takes control.



FRAY MAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 12 (+1)

INT 9 (-1) **WIS** 16 (+3) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Undercommon

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The Fray mage is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The Fray mage has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *thaumaturgy*, *toll the dead*, *word of radiance*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *command*, *inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *silence*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Fray mage makes two melee attacks.

Club. *Melee weapon attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

ILJRENE AHBRUYN

This drow woman's small frame belies her ferocity; Iljrene leads the Chosen of Eilistraee's warriors in battle and is a capable agent and tactician to boot. With the Reforged Ring's efforts to regain power in Skullport and rumors of negotiations between the Xanathar Guild and the Zhentarim, Iljrene has taken a renewed interest in active recruitment of new members into the Chosen.

DROW HOUSE CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Chain Mail)

Hit Points 162 (25d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 19 (+4) **CON** 15 (+2)

INT 12 (+1) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 13 (+1)

Saving Throws DEX +8, CON +6, WIS +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Battle Command. As a bonus action, the drow targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see or hear the drow, the target can use its reaction to make one melee attack or to take the Dodge or Hide action.

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The drow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drow makes three attacks: two with his scimitar and one with his whip or his hand crossbow.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is an ally, it has advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

REACTIONS

Parry. The drow adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

ILLUSIONIST

As wizards improve their knowledge, most choose to focus their efforts on a particular school of magic. Illusionists learn to confuse opponents or avoid conflict entirely; in Skullport, they are used by some factions as agents and infiltrators.

ILLUSIONIST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 9 (-1) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 13 (+1)

INT 9 (-1) **WIS** 16 (+3) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Saving Throws INT +5, WIS +2

Skills Arcana +5, History +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any four languages

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The illusionist is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC

13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The illusionist has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *color spray*, * *disguise self*, * *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, * *mirror image*, * *phantasmal force**

3rd level (3 slots): *major image*, * *phantom steed**

4th level (1 slot): *phantasmal killer**

*Illusion spell of 1st level or higher

Displacement (Recharges after the Illusionist Casts an Illusion Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, the illusionist projects an illusion that makes the illusionist appear to be standing in a place a few inches from its actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls against the illusionist. The effect ends if the illusionist takes damage, it is incapacitated, or its speed becomes 0.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee weapon attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 – 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

LORAVOR QUICK

Irritatingly charming for a resident of Skullport, Loravor Quick (NE male half-elf) believes flashy acrobatics and biting taunts are just perks of the job. However, beneath this arrogant bravado is a skilled thief who knows when a job is no longer worth the trouble.

Statistics

Loravor has the statistics of a **master thief** (see below), with these changes:

- He has darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- He has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.
- He can speak, read, and write Common, Elvish, and Undercommon.

MERTENSIAN BLUUD (ZSTULKK SSARMN)

The yuan-ti Zstulkk Ssarmn was one of the most powerful members of the Iron Ring slavers a century ago; he led the faction alongside other Lords of Iron including Xanathar's current majordomo, Ahmaergo. The slavers of the Iron Ring were never popular in Skullport, and Zstulkk learned much from the

faction's collapse. The Reforged Ring is now led solely by Zstulkk Ssarmn himself, without equal, though the yuan-ti disguises himself as a human man named Mertensian Bluud with the aid of a magic metal neckband.

Statistics

Mertensian (Zstulkk) is a **yuan-ti abomination**. In his true form, Zstulkk has a ten-foot-long snake body with black and gray scales and a scale-covered human head. When disguised as Mertensian Bluud, Zstulkk is an intense dark-haired man with spectacles and a chinstrap beard.

MASTER THIEF

In a city of burglars, robbers, pickpockets, and every kind of thief in between, the best at their illegal craft don't steal for the sake of base survival. These adepts enjoy comfortable lifestyles as high-ranking faction agents or well-paid freelancers.

MASTER THIEF

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 12 (+1) **CON** 12 (+1)

INT 7 (-2) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Saving Throws DEX +7, INT +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Thieves' Cant plus any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the thief can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If the thief is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the thief instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The thief deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the thief

that isn't incapacitated and the thief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thief makes three attacks with its shortsword.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage

NARCEZA ULIN

With the death of the former High Priestess Qilue Veladorn, a warrior-priestess named Narceza Ulin became the new leader of the Chosen of Eilistraee. Like her predecessor, Narceza is a passionate follower of the Dark Maiden who is determined to protect her temple complex from the evils of Undermountain.

DROW INQUISITOR

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Breastplate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 11 (+0) **DEX** 15 (+2) **CON** 14 (+2)

INT 16 (+3) **WIS** 21 (+5) **CHA** 20 (+5)

Saving Throws CON +7, WIS +10, CHA +10

Skills Insight +10, Perception +10, Religion +8, Stealth +7

Condition Immunities Frightened

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 20

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Discern Lie. The drow knows when she hears a creature speak a lie in a language she knows.

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The drow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *clairvoyance, darkness, detect thoughts, dispel magic, faerie fire, levitate (self only), suggestion*

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

Spellcasting. The drow is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, message, poison spray, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, magic circle*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, divination, freedom of movement*

5th level (2 slots): *contagion, dispel evil and good, insect plague*

6th level (1 slot): *harm, true seeing*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drow makes three death lance attacks.

Death Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage it takes. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

NAVROTH KELTESH

Two centuries ago, Navroth was a dragonborn merchant-captain who knew nothing of Skullport beyond what she'd heard from dockyard tales. When her vessel sank beneath the waves she was taken and transformed by the kraken Slarkrethel, molded into his devout servant. After the decline of the Kraken Society in Skullport and the aboleth Skum Lord cut off telepathic communication with Slarkrethel, Navroth was sent to salvage the faction's remaining holdings and to build a loyal following in Skullport anew.



KRAKEN PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) DEX 10 (+0) CON 16 (+3)

INT 10 (+0) WIS 15 (+2) CHA 14 (+2)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances Lightning; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The priest can breathe air and water.

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

At will: *command*, *create or destroy water*

3/day each: *control water*, *darkness*, *water breathing*, *water walk*

1/day each: *call lightning*, *Evard's black tentacles*

ACTIONS

Breath Weapon. As an action, Navroth can expel a jet of saltwater from her maw. This line is 5 feet wide and 30 feet long. Each creature in this line

must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone. Once Navroth uses this breath weapon, she can't use it again unless she finishes a short or long rest.

Thunderous Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) thunder damage.

Voice of the Kraken (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). A kraken speaks through the priest with a thunderous voice audible within 300 feet. Creatures of the priest's choice that can hear the kraken's words (which are spoken in Abyssal, Infernal, or Primordial) must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

RAGGAMOFFYNS

Before the Rag Mage became the mythical Fourteenth Skull of Skullport, rumors in Skullport spoke of the very garbage of the street animating in a sudden and violent whirlwind. These entities moved under their own power, overwhelming victims at random. These entities, known as raggamoffyns, are manifestations of the Rag Mage's will that are still under the Fourteenth Skull's control today.

RAGGAMOFFYN

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 10 (2d8+1)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (0) DEX 8 (-1) CON 12 (+1) INT 1 (-5)

WIS 5 (-3) CHA 1 (-5)

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Swarmlike. The raggamoffyn can occupy another creature's space and vice versa. The raggamoffyn can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Driving Swarm. The raggamoffyn forces a creature who shares its space to make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be forced to move up to half its speed in a direction of the raggamoffyn's choice.

This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks and if the direction is blocked or would cause obvious harm, the target stops moving.

Garbage Pelt. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the raggamoffyn's space. *Hit:* 1 (1d4-1) bludgeoning damage, and the affected creature has disadvantage on attack rolls until it leaves the raggamoffyn's space.

TATTERDEMANIMAL

A smaller manifestation than the raggamoffyns, tatterdemanimals are little more than whirlwinds of paper and similarly light rubbish. Tatterdemanimals are too light and weak to cause physical harm, but they swirl around their victim's face to dismay and confuse them.

TATTERDEMANIMAL

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 4 (1d6+1)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 8 (-1) **DEX** 8 (-1) **CON** 12 (+1) **INT** 1 (-5)

WIS 5 (-3) **CHA** 1 (-5)

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Swarmlike. The tatterdemanimal can occupy another creature's space and vice versa. The tatterdemanimal can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Driving Swarm. The tatterdemanimal forces a creature who shares its space to make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be forced to move up to half its speed in a direction of the tatteredanimal's choice. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks and if the direction is blocked or would cause obvious harm, the target stops moving.

SEA SPAWN

Ancient creatures of the deep have long utilized their knowledge to create loyal humanoid servants. These sea spawn are transformed with piscine anatomy and appearance and are devoted to their aquatic masters, though they cannot stray far from bodies of water.

SEA SPAWN

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 15 (+2) **DEX** 8 (-1) **CON** 15 (+2)

INT 6 (-2) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 8 (-1)

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Common understands but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Limited Amphibiousness. The sea spawn can breathe air and water, but needs to be submerged in the sea at least once a day for 1 minute to avoid suffocating.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sea spawn makes three attacks: two unarmed strikes and one with its Piscine Anatomy.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Piscine Anatomy. The sea spawn has one or more of the following attack options, provided it has the appropriate anatomy:

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Poison Quills. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12) if it is a Medium or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the sea spawn can't use this tentacle on another target.

SKULLS OF SKULLPORT

One of Skullport's great mysteries are the Skulls, thirteen (known) flameskulls of particular power that wander the streets and walkways of the city cavern. Very few know that the Skulls are all that remains of the Netherese that once lived on this site in an enclave that fell some 1700 years ago in a cavern collapse

and surge of wild magic. That same wild magic transformed thirteen of the most powerful archmages into the Skulls, who are mysteriously bound to the magic that continues to pervade the city to this day.

Law and Disorder. The Skulls are the city's constant defenders, capable of slaughtering or neutralizing powerful foes. They are functionally immortal, even for flameskulls — when a Skull dies, a random unfortunate resident of Skullport is killed within minutes as the Skull bursts renewed from their head. The only thing holding back the Skulls is their addlepatented nature; centuries of life and the wild magic that created them have left the Skulls half-mad. The Skulls float around Skullport, meting out strange punishments for crimes both real and imagined.

The Fourteenth Skull. One of the antagonists of *Skullport: Dragon Swindle* is the Rag Mage, a former drow archmage who was subjugated to the Skulls' will in the late 1300s DR. Over time the Rag Mage was transformed into a fourteenth Skull of Skullport for reasons unknown. The Fourteenth Skull has always been a thing of urban legend, something the new Skull has worked hard to maintain. The Rag Mage didn't become maddened by his transformation like the other Skulls, but has kept his personality for now. As an antagonist for this adventure, the Rag Mage plots to take control of Skullport and find a way to replace

the thirteen Skulls with his loyal supplicants, the Fray mages.

SKULL OF SKULLPORT

Tiny undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 63 (14d4 + 28)

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

STR 1 (-5) **DEX** 17 (+3) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 18 (+4)

WIS 10 (+0) **CHA** 11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +7 History +7 Perception +3

Damage Resistances lightning, necrotic, piercing

Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2300 XP)

Illumination. The skull sheds either dim light in a 15-foot radius, or bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. It can switch between the options as an action.

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

Rejuvenation. If the Skull is destroyed, it regenerates by bursting out of the head of a random commoner in Skullport within 2d10 minutes, killing the commoner instantly and regaining all of its hit points. A *remove curse* or *protection from evil and good* spell cast on a commoner during the time before the Skull bursts out of it causes a different random commoner to be affected.

Spellcasting. The flameskull is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no somatic or material components to cast its spells. The flameskull has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *mage hand*

1st level (3 slots): *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (2 slots): *blur*, *flaming sphere*

3rd level (1 slot): *fireball*

Skullport Arcane. In addition to its normal spellcasting, the skull can cast a limited number of



R. SPEARS

spells as part of its connection to Skullport's mythal. Its spell save DC for these spells is the same as its spellcasting ability. If a creature succeeds on its saving throw against one of these spells, it cannot be targeted by that spell again for 24 hours. The skull can cast the following spells innately, requiring no spell slots or somatic or material components:

At will: *legend lore*, *polymorph*

1/day each: *geas*, *Otto's irresistible dance*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skull uses Fire Ray twice.

Fire Ray. Ranged spell attack: +7 to hit, range 30 ft., one target: *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

SKUM

Sea Spawn (see above) are people given piscine features but otherwise remain humanoid; skum are nothing of the kind. Fully transformed by an aboleth's eldritch magic and diseased touch, a skum's humanoid form has melted like candlewax until it is only a vague creature with tentacles, a lumped torso, withered arms, and featureless head.

SKUM

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR 19 (+4) **DEX** 11 (+0) **CON** 18 (+4)

INT 7 (-2) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 9 (-1)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances Psychic

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Abolethic Vassal. The skum is permanently charmed by its aboleth master.

Amphibious. The skum can breathe air and water.

Psychic Conditioning. The skum is immune to the frightened and charmed conditions unless they are from effects created by an aboleth.

Water Dependency. The skum takes 6 (1d12) acid damage every 10 minutes it goes without exposure to water.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skum makes three attacks: two with its trident and one with its Mind-Breaking Touch.

Trident. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Mind-Breaking Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Poison Quills. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) psychic damage, and the target has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws until the end of the skum's next turn.

WARLOCK OF THE GREAT OLD ONE

Skullport is a city for the fringes of society, and Undermountain-at-large is a place for buried secrets and hidden magic. It's the perfect backdrop for warlock servants of Great Old Ones, entities of ancient horror and eldritch realms beyond space and time.

WARLOCK OF THE GREAT OLD ONE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 9 (-1) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 15 (+2)

INT 12 (+1) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 18 (+4)

Saving Throws WIS +4, CHA +7

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Damage Resistances Psychic

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Telepathy 30 ft. any two languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

At will: *detect magic, jump, levitate, mage armor (self only), speak with dead*

1/day each: *arcane gate, true seeing*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 14th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, eldritch blast, guidance, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp.*

1st - 5th level (3 5th-level slots): *armor of Agathys, arms of Hadar, crown of madness, clairvoyance, contact other plane, detect thoughts, dimension door, dissonant whispers, dominate beast, telekinesis, vampiric touch*

Whispering Aura. At the start of each of the warlock's turns, each creature of its choice within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage, provided that the warlock isn't incapacitated.

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.

YARVI YANDLE

Yarvi is a pink-haired lightfoot halfling who's served the Keepers for over forty years. Unlike most of her kind Yarvi is soft-spoken; she is a studious and knowledgeable **mage** who tends to only show quintessential halfling excitement when engaged in a lively discussion of the arcane.

ZACRIA

This tiefling woman was subjected to a public trial six years ago under accusations of selling secrets from the Skull Island Registry where she worked. Zacria was innocent, but couldn't fully prove it; as a result, the crowd at Skull Square threw her down the chute to the dungeons. There, Zacria met the Skum Lord and was transformed into a **deep scion** in its service.

Having 'escaped' the dungeons and therefore served her sentence, Zacria was allowed to return to work. Now she actually is stealing secrets and giving them to her master, the Skum Lord.



DEEP SCION

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., walk 20 ft. (in hybrid form), swim 40 ft. (in hybrid form)

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 13 (+1) **CON** 16 (+3)

INT 10 (+0) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 14 (+2)

Saving Throws WIS +3, CHA +4

Skills Deception +6, Insight +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Stealth +3

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Aquan, Common, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The deep scion can use its action to polymorph into a humanoid-piscine hybrid form, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The deep scion reverts to its true form if it dies.

Amphibious (Hybrid Form Only). The deep scion can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. In humanoid form, the deep scion makes two melee attacks. In hybrid form, the deep scion makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

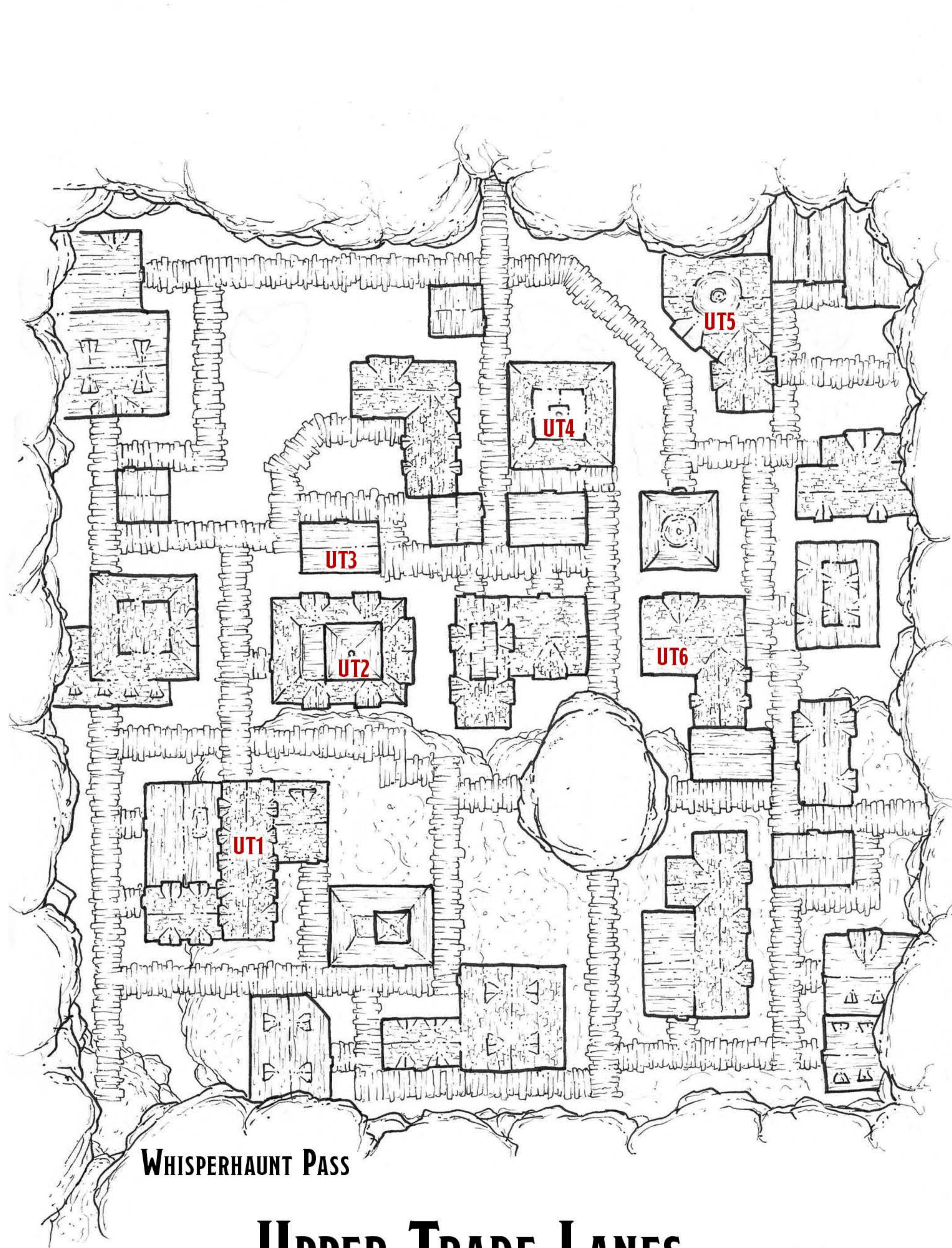
Battleaxe (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Bite (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

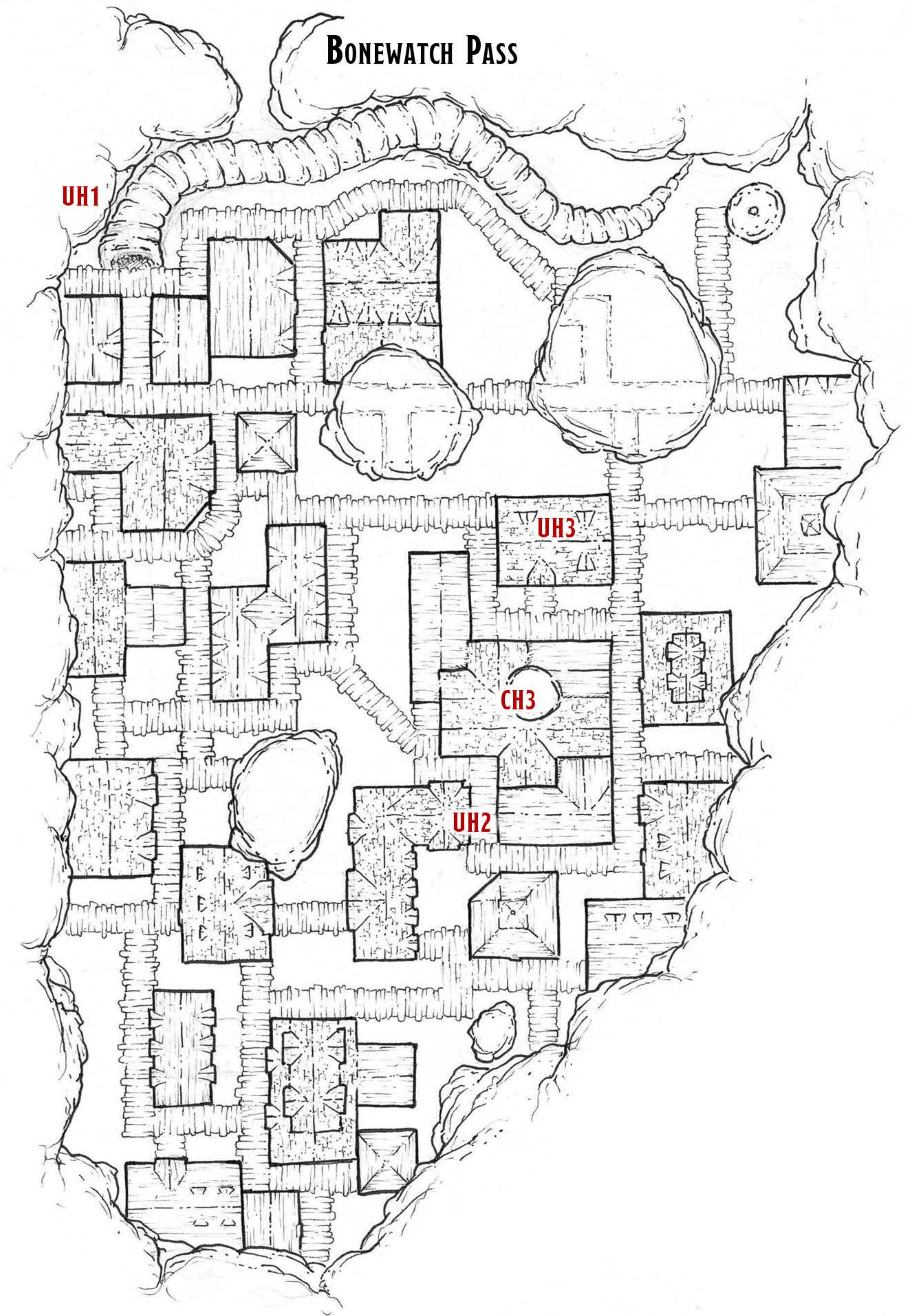
Claw (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Psychic Screech (Hybrid Form Only; Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The deep scion emits a terrible scream audible within 300 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of the deep scion must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of the deep scion's next turn. In water, the psychic screech also telepathically transmits the deep scion's memories of the last 24 hours to its master, regardless of distance, so long as it and its master are in the same body of water.

UPPER SKULLPORT



UPPER TRADE LANES



UPPER HEART

CENTRAL SKULLPORT

CENTRAL PORT

To ALL LEVELS

To ALL LEVELS

CP1

CP2

CT3

CT4

CH4

LH5

CH2

CP3

CT2

CT5

To ALL LEVELS

CH3

To LOWER SKULLPORT

CP4

CT1

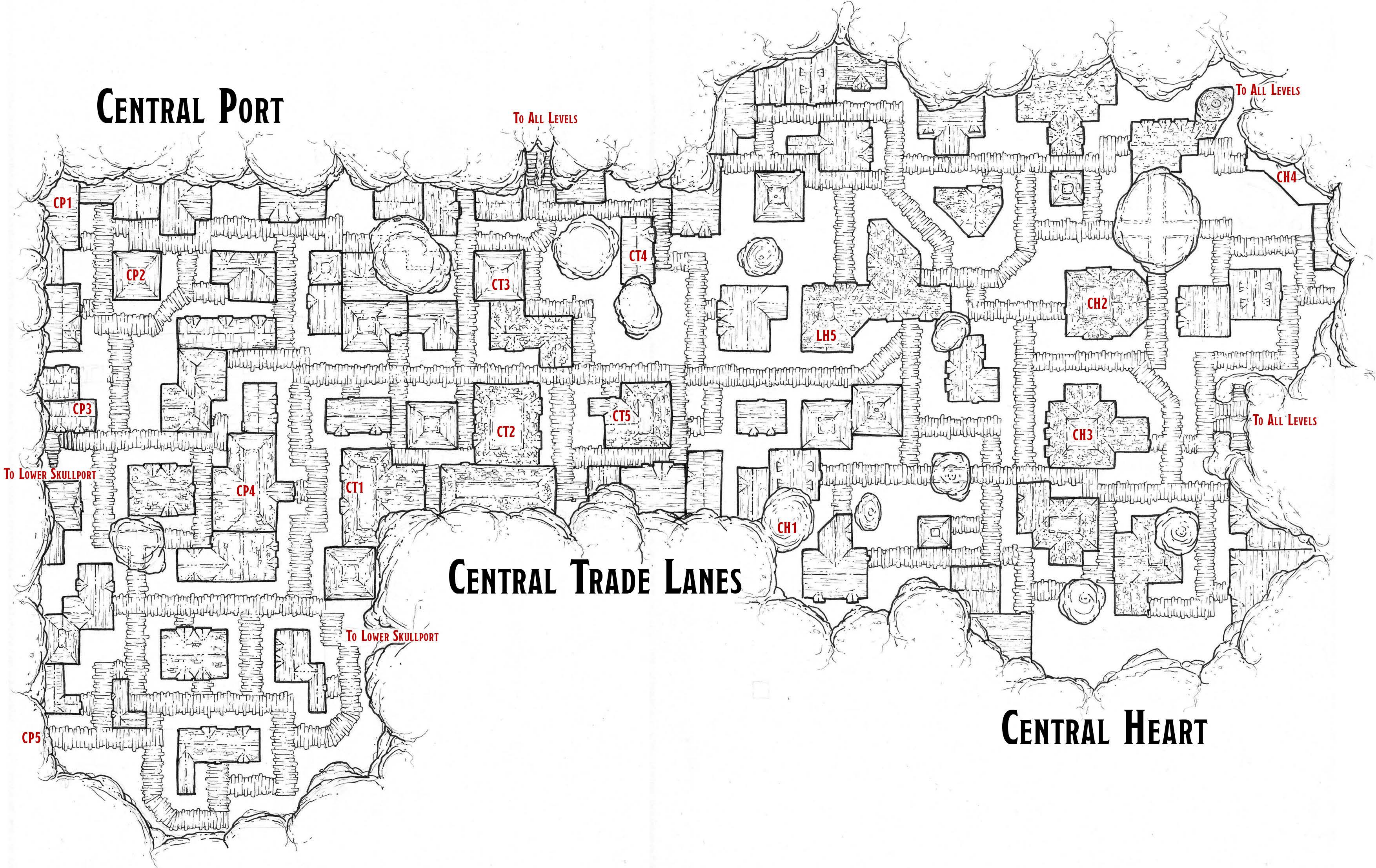
CH1

CENTRAL TRADE LANES

To LOWER SKULLPORT

CP5

CENTRAL HEART



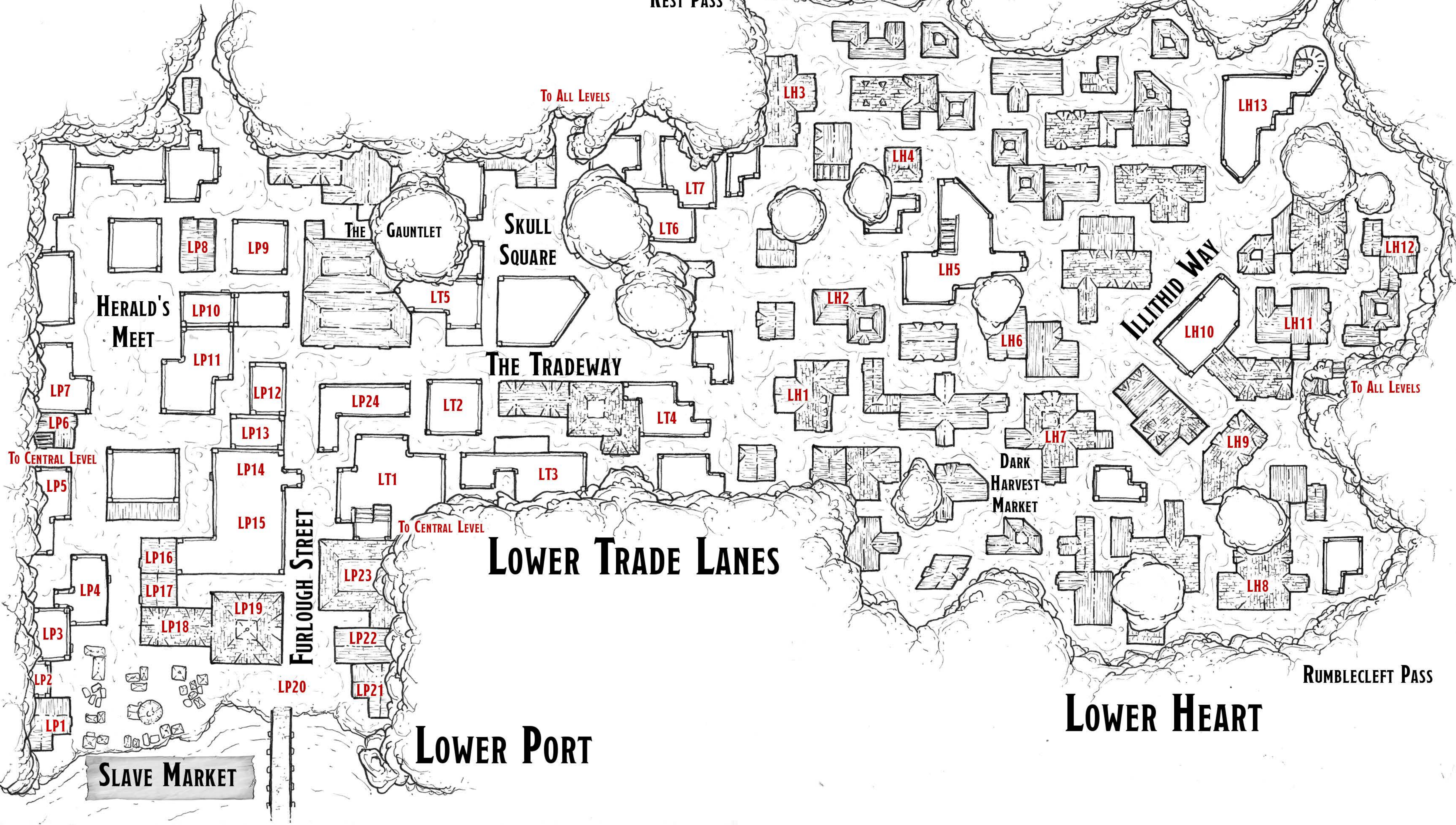
LOWER SKULLPORT

TAGLATH'S GAP

STEAMFALL PASS

SHADOW PASS

BEGGAR'S REST PASS



To All Levels

To All Levels

To Central Level

To Central Level

SLAVE MARKET

HERALD'S MEET

THE GAUNTLET

SKULL SQUARE

THE TRADEWAY

LOWER TRADE LANES

LOWER PORT

LOWER HEART

DARK HARVEST MARKET

FURLOUGH STREET

ILLITHID WAY

RUMBLECLEFT PASS

LP8

LP9

LP10

LP11

LP12

LP13

LP14

LP15

LP16

LP17

LP18

LP19

LP7

LP6

LP5

LP4

LP3

LP2

LP1

LP24

LP23

LP22

LP21

LT2

LT1

LP20

LT5

LT3

LT4

LT6

LT7

LH1

LH2

LH5

LH6

LH7

LH9

LH8

LH3

LH4

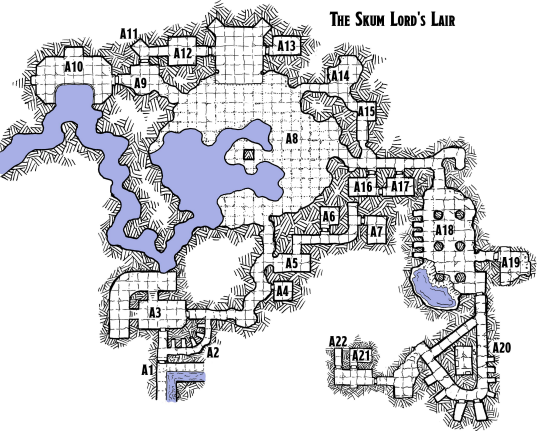
LH13

LH12

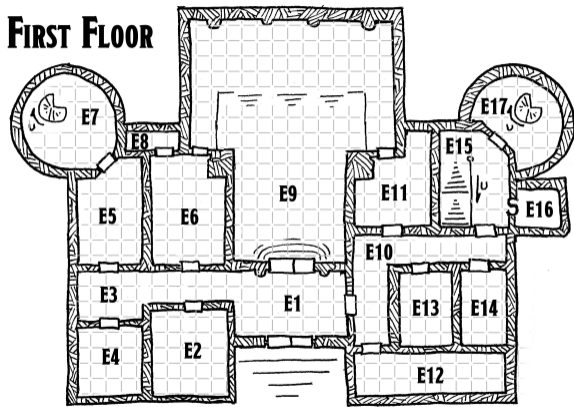
LH11

LH10

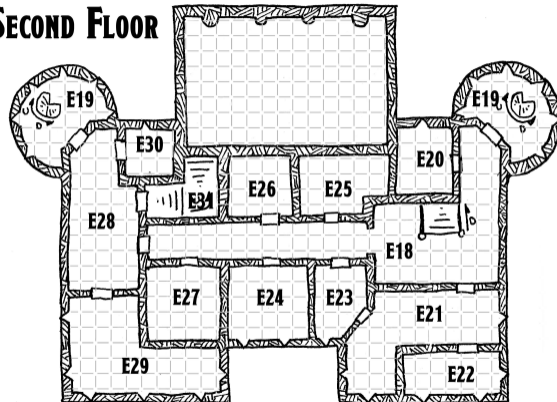
THE SKUM LORD'S LAIR



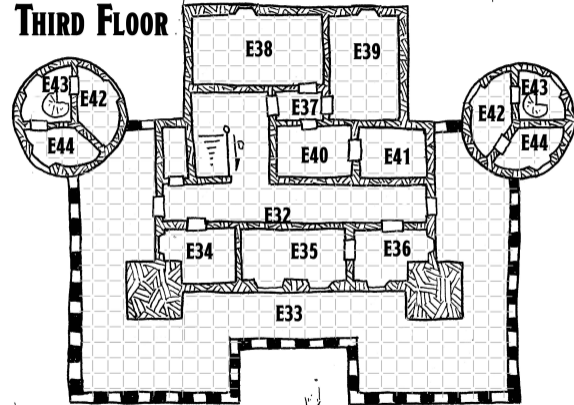
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



THE RAG MAGE'S LAIR

