



Present

SERENADE OF PAIN

Left in webs and reeking of rot, bodies dot the streets and alleys of the Zhentarim Ghetto, and no one does a thing. But leave one body inside Mulmaster's walls, and everyone loses their minds. Especially the Cloaks and the City Watch. Which is probably why a Zor and Cloak representative has invited you to breakfast.

A four hour adventure for 1st - 4th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Serenade of Pain*, part of the D&D Adventurers' League, and the Convention Created Content program. This adventure premiered at 1d4Con 2018, a local gaming convention in Martinsburg, West Virginia. **This adventure is designed for three to seven 1st - 4th level characters, and optimized for five characters of 3rd level.** Characters outside of this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (round an average level of X.5 or greater up, otherwise round down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

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

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while the running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- **WARNING:** This adventure makes use of spellcasting monsters which use spells from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure – such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, other passive skills, etc.)

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role – facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of the **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling - play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Players with the acolyte background may call on the following temples during this adventure:

Mulmaster: Azuth, Cyric, Loviatar, Tymora

ADVENTURE PRIMER

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Pieron Marivaldi, Bard-Extraordinaire, has a dream. Unlike most people in the entertainment business, his dream is not about finding success in his field. His dream is about helping to bring about the return of the god Kyuss.

Using his talent, Marivaldi travels around Faerun entertaining the masses and spreading his word. He uses his silver tongue to turn the uninitiated into believers, all eager to help him with his goal.

His travels have led him and his faithful urchin companion to Mulmaster, where the two have found a safe location in an abandoned theater. Using his performances at the famous The Wink and The Wave tavern, he has gathered a small congregation who meet at his sanctuary. Seeking to expand his endeavors, he is turning his most trusted followers into incubators for his rot grubs, and then depositing these bodies in locations around the Zhent Ghettoes.

The Legend of the Worm

Long before the Worm God crawled over the land, it is believed that Kyuss was a man, who was a devoted follower of a deity that became corrupted. In his bid to become a deity himself, Kyuss is supposed to have killed his entire flock of followers.

Due to his heinous crimes, the other deities entombed him in a Dark Obelisk.

His minions of rot grubs, worms, other insects and the undead are signs that worse things are going to come before Kyuss returns to the world.

Further information can be found on the DM's Guild:
Monsternomicon: Kyuss and His Sons.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure is broken down into five parts:

Part 1: The Adventurers are invited to breakfast with Zor Owyn Krennin, who informs them about his concerns regarding some recent deaths that have been happening in the Zhent Ghettoes. As the party is about to leave, reports come in about another body that has been found.

Part 2: The party head off to the Shrine of Lathander, where the body of a young woman is found. There, they begin their investigation into the killings, by following clues found on the body, which eventually takes them to the victim's home and the Shrine of Kyuss.

Part 3: Information leads the party to the victim's work place, The Wink and The Wave. There they meet one of her friends (Rebeka), who is able to tell them the location of the killer's hideout.

Part 4: The party arrives at an abandoned theater, which has been turned into a place of worship for Kyuss by

Marivaldi.. Here the party confronts Marivaldi and stops his spread of evil.

Part 5: The party returns to Zor Krennin to give him an update and collect their reward.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

LORDS ALLIANCE MEMBERS:

You are invited by Warduke (and Zor) Owyn Krennin to come to Mulmaster to help him investigate a recent spree of murders in the Zhent Ghettoes. Due to current agreements with the Zhenatrim and the Red Wizards he knows that the Cloaks and City Watch will not officially get involved.

MEMBERS OF THE CLOAK:

You are invited by Cloak Owyn Krennin to come back to Mulmaster to help him investigate a recent spree of murders in the Zhentarim Ghettoes. This request is considered "off the books" due to the agreement between the Cloaks, Zhenatrim, and Red Wizards. That said, having such a powerful figure as a friend may prove useful in future endeavors.

ALL OTHER ADVENTURERS:

Zor Owyn Krennin has posted broadsheets in various taverns, inviting 'skilled and discreet individuals' to breakfast at his manor to discuss a job.

PART 1: OVERTURE

Estimated Duration: 15mins

The characters have been invited to visit Zor Krennin at his residence in Mulmaster. Huge portions of the city are being rebuilt following the damage caused by the devastation orbs, the scars of the city still obvious.

While huge parts of Mulmaster have been lost to the devastation that befell it, there are still portions of the city a person can explore around and forget what had happened in the past. The address that you have been given is in one of those areas.

You approach a large house that is well maintained. The door is answered after you knock by a well-dressed butler, who looks you up and down. He invites you to enter and then leads you silently through the hallway to a large double door.

After opening it, he speaks briefly to the person inside then turns back to you. "Master Krennin will see you now," gesturing for you to go inside.

Once through the door, you find yourself in a beautifully furnished room, whisking you far away from the scenes of devastation you had seen walking through the city of Mulmaster. Sitting behind a large mahogany desk, you see a dark-haired human man, of about fifty, wearing a dark blue silk robe.

Leaning against one of the bookcases that line the room is a dark-haired female elf flicking through a large book. While she does not turn at your entrance, you still feel as if she is watching you.

The man points to the chairs that have been placed in front of the desk, one for each of you, and invites you to sit down. He waits for you to make yourself comfortable before continuing. It is at this point that the elf loses her interest in the book and focuses on the conversation.

"Thank you for coming," Owyn Krennin begins. "I am Zor Krennin, and this is my associate, Zora Iathrana." The elf nods her head and smiles, as she is introduced.

They wait politely wait for you to introduce yourselves, as other servants clatter in carrying trays full of breakfast food and drinks.

Give the players the opportunity to introduce their characters before continuing.

As you finish your introductions, Zor Krennin sits forward in his seat, his expression one of business. "I have asked you here to help with a most disturbing errand," he says. "It has been brought to my attention that several bodies have been found around the Zhentarim Ghettoes, which is not overly unusual in and of itself, but it has me concerned that there may be more to this than meets the eye."

Zor Owyn Krennin is an adventuring wizard, member of the Lords Alliance, and senior member of the Cloaks. The female elf is Lia Iathrana, his long-time friend.

Roleplaying Zor Owyn Krennin

Roleplaying Information

Zor Owyn Krennin, a life-long resident of Mulmaster, was once an adventurer, is a wizard, who looks like he has seen more in his life than he cares to talk about. In his younger days, he sought adventure and tried to save the world from those that sought to destroy it. But during one expedition he was injured and had to retire to his home town, where he does his best to protect it from the troubles that may still befall it. Highly respected, his voice is heard but he knows better than to push those in authority to do what they have no interest in.

Quote: "I would do it myself, but Fate has decided that I need to let more capable people do it for me."

Owyn wants to hire the adventurers to investigate and bring an end to the murders that have been happening in the Zhent Ghettoes. The Cloaks and the City Watch rarely take an interest in anything that happens in that area, so no one has tried to find the perpetrator.

Owyn imparts the following during his conversation with the adventurers:

- Four bodies have turned up in the Zhent Ghettoes over the last three months. They have been in different locations, but each body was carefully laid out, as if done with a possibly ritualistic purpose.
- Each of the bodies was hidden in a well populated area. They were decayed and full of bugs by the time they were found.
- There was no sign of violence, and the cause of death was not instantly obvious, as there were no distinct weapon or magic wounds. The bugs seem to have devoured the evidence.
- All the bodies were dressed in brown robes, similar to those found by acolytes of various faiths. But they were not carrying any religious symbols and none of the temples have reported anyone missing.
- The most alarming detail is all the bodies were strung up on webs.
- While he has no proof, Owyn feels that there is more to this than a simple murder and body dump. Due to his

many years of adventuring there seems to be something familiar about these killings.

- Even as a senior member of the Cloaks, Owyn knows that he would not be able to get the Cloaks to investigate the deaths in the Zhent Ghettoes, as they have an agreement with the Zhentarim and Red Wizards to not get involved. Therefore the PCs must keep their investigation “off the books”.
- Owyn is convinced that no one will question a bunch of adventurers wandering around the Zhent Ghettoes and he will pay the party 20 gp each if they can bring him back some evidence that the killings have ended or evidence as to who or what is behind the deaths.
- Owyn offers to swear any arcane spellcaster in as a member of the Brotherhood of the Cloak.

If the party agrees to help, Owyn tells them to come back to his house once they have the necessary proof that the culprit has been stopped. The Zor makes it clear that he is unconcerned whether the culprit is brought to justice or does not live to tell the tale.

He hands over a personalized not for the party, signed by him, in case they run into any trouble from the City Watch or other Cloak members. It might not keep them out of trouble, but it would bring their predicament to his attention.

If the party asks for more money, he politely tells them that they are free to keep anything they find during their investigation that does not seem to be relevant to solving the murders.

Owyn gets to his feet and is about to ring the bell for the butler to see you out, when the door bursts opened and a red faced, blond haired urchin unexpectedly enters, breathing heavily.

“Zor Krennin,” he stammers, trying to catch his breath. “They found another one.”

Owyn looks at the young boy, his face full of questions. “Where in the Ghettoes did they find this one?”

The boy shakes his head. “It’s not in the Ghettoes. It’s at Lathander’s Shrine. They found it at dawn.”

Owyn stares at his companion, who is suddenly showing more interest in this recent development than she had the whole time you were in the room.

Turning his attention back to you, Owyn urgently states “you should check this out and find out as much as you can. For some reason, our killer has decided to get someone’s attention. We need to stop them before they escalate this further.

The party can ask more questions, but the boy does not know much more than he has already revealed. He tells the party that the Zor had instructed him to come as soon as he heard of any other bodies that followed the same pattern. The boy remains long enough for Owyn to reach into his pocket and pull out a coin.

(Give out Player Handout 1: Post Devastation Map of Mulmaster.)

PART 2: TWISTED EVERY WAY

Estimated Duration: 1hr 30 mins

THE SHRINE OF LATHANDER:

As you arrive at the Shrine of Lathander, your gaze falls upon a columned structure with the remains of a gabled roof. The building lies west to east, with the bronze holy symbol mounted on a thick post sitting where the first rays of the sun will shine upon it. Behind the shrine is the edge of a cliff, which looks down upon the southern part of Mulmaster and across to the wall that separates the walled city and the Zentarim Ghetto, beyond Southroad Keep.

The crowd milling around the shrine are not the usual visitors. Instead of Lathander's worshippers, a couple of members of the city guard are talking to a man and woman in robes, while two men wearing the symbol of the Cloaks look deeper into the structure.

It is not until you draw closer that you see the object of their interest. Hanging between the two pillars nearest the altar is a large web holding the body of a young woman; her body twisted and bent in an abnormal way. The ground beneath the shrine appears damp and churned up.

When you reach the edge of the Shrine, one of the Cloaks breaks his vigil and walks over to where you stand. "No one is allowed in here," he says, eyeing you suspiciously. "What do you want?"

While the Cloaks have been uninterested in the previous murders that happened in the Zentarim Ghettos, a death around the Shrine of Lathander has drawn the attention of the Cloaks and City Guard. They do not want people ruining their crime scene.

Once the party have explained their reason for being there, and more importantly shown their note from Zor Krennin, Eghan Treemantle is willing to allow the party to enter the shrine and get their first real look at the victim. If they do not introduce themselves, the Cloak will not let them pass. If the party is not willing to co-operate, the Cloaks and City Guard will stop them from entering. While there appears to be a few people of authority around the shrine, it should be explained that there is ample backup within whistle distance and the location is a respectable location.

Once inside the Shrine, the true horror of the situation is revealed. The young human woman has been strung up by a huge web, her body slashed and twisted in an unnatural way. Limbs twisted in the wrong directions and her head turned towards the shrine, her face still showing the pain that she endured during her death. Her eyes are open and gazing in horror towards the altar, her mouth screaming in terror.

Eghan shares the following:

- The body was found just before sunrise when the lay acolytes arrived in order to check the Shrine and make it ready for Lathander's morning rays.
- The young woman appears to have been murdered elsewhere and placed at the Shrine in the early hours of the morning. Based on the lack of blood in the vicinity.
- While her death is reminiscent of the other murders, this one is different in the location the body was left and the brutality of the victim's wounds.

Eghan then excuses himself to allow the party to examine the body on their own. The party can make the following checks to discover further information about the death.

The Web:

- DC 15 Intelligence (Nature): The web seems far too perfect to have been made by a real spider. Time has been taken to make the display of the body look perfect.
- DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana): The web has been created by magic.
- A *detect magic* spell would show the web glowing with conjuration magic.

The Body:

If the party begins to poke around the body, go to **THE WORMS THAT TURNED** encounter (below).

- DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation): The party discovers an unsigned letter in her pocket addressed to Lily Monsoon. The letter agrees to a meeting and contains Lily's address.
- DC 12 Wisdom (Perception): Based on her clothing, the victim appears to be a maid or other domestic servant. She does not appear to be a resident of this area.
- DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine): The victim's wounds have been inflicted by various means. There are traces of weapon and magic damage. The worst wound is on her torso and seems to be the source of the grubs.

THE WORMS THAT TURNED:

Once the body is touched, it seems to magically come alive, as it begins to writhe on the web. Seconds later, the young woman's shirt bursts open and insects pour from her abdomen.

As soon as one of the party begins to investigate the body, the insects that have been infesting Lily pour out of her abdomen, looking for new hosts. Two **swarms of rot grubs** hit the ground and attack the party. The Grubs fight until they are all dead.

The Cloaks and the City Guard are unable to assist with the fight, as they are busy keeping bystanders out of the Shrine and away from danger.

MODIFYING THE ENCOUNTER

Adjustments are not cumulative

Very Weak: Remove one **swarm of rot grubs**

Very Strong: Add one **swarm of rot grubs**

Once the fight is over, any adventurer who has been infected with grubs can be cured by priests at the nearby Temple of Tempus for 40 gp, if they are unable to get cured by one of the party (This counts against the party's spell services per day, but they will cure more than three if necessary). The lay acolytes are able to keep an infected person alive long enough to get to the temple, but they do not know the *lesser restoration* spell.

The party can now continue to investigate the body without further issue.

If the party talks to Eghan about the letter found on the body, he informs the party where they can find Lily's address. He asks the party to give him the letter and tells them that he will give them a head start on their investigation before informing his partner and the city guard about the clue.

LILY'S HOUSE

As you arrive at your location, you discover that the address you have been given is above a bustling hardware store. The area is not as well-to-do as the area around Lathander's Shrine, but it is still several steps above the Zhentarim Ghetto. It does not take you long to find the door to the second floor residence, which you discover to be locked. You suddenly realize that you did not find a key on the young woman's body.

The door can be unlocked with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) or DC10 Strength check. The party is sure that if they make a noise opening the door, they will attract the attention of the people inside the store.

A check around the building reveals a drainpipe at the rear of the property, away from prying eyes and a semi-open window. A successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or DC 12 Strength (Athletics) can climb the pipe and enter the window. Once inside, the door can be unlocked without any check.

Inside you see two rooms. The living area has one comfy chair, a wooden cupboard against the wall, a dining table with two seats, a mantle over the fireplace, and a writing desk. The room is immaculately tidy. The bedroom holds a single bed, a chest of drawers and a shelf. This room is messed up, with traces of mud on the floor.

(Give out Player Handout 2: Lily's House)

In the living area, the party can discover the following:

- **Table or Fireplace** - DC 11 Wisdom (Perception): The table has two unused plates and two glasses laid out on it, as if a guest was expected. A look at the fireplace reveals a cold stew hanging over a dead fire.
- **Cupboard** - DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation): The wardrobe is filled with mundane items, but a successful check finds a secret compartment near the bottom. Inside are a handful of Waterdhavian dragons (gold coins), a note with the same handwriting as the one found on the body and a small bag containing a single platinum coin with the image of a worm on it.
- **Letter** - DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) *Advantage if proficient with a forgery kit* - Letter is written by the same person as the one found on the body. The contents include an invitation to meet at the Shrine of Kyuss and is signed P.M.
- **Desk** - DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation): In one of the drawers is a key, which looks like it will fit the front door and a pamphlet relating to the return of Kyuss, with a sketch of a pit filled with worms and insect carapaces.

In the bedroom, the party can discover the following:

- **Bed** - DC 11 Wisdom (Perception): The bed is unmade and appears to be missing some covers.
- **Bed** - DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation): There are spots of blood on the remaining sheets and pillow.
- **Chest of Drawers** - DC 11 Wisdom (Perception): There is an identical outfit to the one that Lily was wearing. The other items inside appear to be more every day clothing.
- **Chest of Drawers** - DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation): Attached to the bottom of one of the drawers is a torn portion of a flyer bearing the name Pieron Marivaldi.
- **Shelf** - No Check Required: On the shelf, there is an Obelisk statue.
- **Obelisk** - DC 15 Intelligence (Religion): The monolith is a tribute to the God Kyuss. If a character picks it up a faint rhythmic pulse can be felt within.
- **Floor** - DC 13 Wisdom (Nature) or DC 13 Wisdom (Survival): The mud on the floor is not from the local area. There are large traces of ash mixed into the dirt. It matches the description of areas in Mulmaster that have been devastated by fire.

If the party does not find many clues, they should still find the pamphlet showing the shrine to Kyuss on the floor near the door.

TREASURE

The party finds a small bag containing a large platinum coin with the image of a worm (10 gp), Waterdhavian dragons (10 gp) and a black Obelisk that pulses when touched (worth 10 gp).

XP AWARD

If the party searches Lily's house and finds the clues connecting Lily and the Shrine of Kyuss, they receive 100 xp each. It is not awarded if they only find the pamphlet on the floor when they leave.

THE SHRINE OF KYUSS

Working your way through the remains of docks and wrecked ships, you finally reach a cleared space amongst all the rubble. Unlike Lathander's Shrine, the Shrine of Kyuss does not instantly fill you with a feeling of awe or worship, as you find yourself gazing down into a shallow hole. The only indicator that you have reached your destination is the ring of green bristling worms and the shed carapaces of other vermin, similar to the pamphlet you found in Lily's house.

You edge your way closer, careful to make sure your feet remain on solid ground. Most of the city around the shrine is buried underwater, and the ground is very damp.

The shrine is quiet and you feel like you can hear the sounds of insects burrowing under foot. A young, brown-haired boy is the only other person in the area. As you draw close, you seem to attract his attention for the briefest of moments, then he picks up his things and disappears into the shadows.

As the party approaches the shrine, the young boy disappears into the shadowy interior of a broken ship. While he appeared to have little interest in the party, he remains watching for a moment to see why they are in the area. If anyone from the party shows an interest in him, he slips through the small crevices in the ruins, deeper from view and finds himself another place to watch from. If the party tries to find him, they are unsuccessful, as he knows the ruins, far better than them.

The shrine is mostly a pile of old insect bodies, with a few indications that someone comes to the place and lovingly tends to it. Some of the grub carcasses appear to be similar to the insects that attacked the party at the crime scene.

There are footprints in the mud, but they are indistinguishable from all the others, as the moisture in the dirt and the travels of the insects have destroyed their actual shape and size.

Any character with a passive Perception of DC 11 or higher spots a flicker of movement on the side of a nearby post where the young boy was standing. Once they get close, but before they can investigate it further...

DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING:

As you look around, you notice that the pools of water that lie around the shrine suddenly seem to bubble up. It appears like some weird after effect of the devastation in this area, but when you notice some of the insect carcasses that touch the water start to sizzle, you know that it's more than that.

Out of two pools of water, two **ochre jelly** appear between the party and the way out. The jellies react to the presence of the party and attack.

MODIFYING THE ENCOUNTER

Adjustments are not cumulative

Very Weak: Remove one **ochre jelly**.

Very Strong: Add one **ochre jelly**.

Once the fight is over, the party will have time to look around, although they may want to do it quickly, as there are plenty of other pools around.

The party can now investigate the paper, which turns out to be a flyer. The flyer is advertising a night of entertainment with the highly talented Pieron Marivaldi at 'The Wave and Wink' Tavern in seven days' time, although someone has pinned a 'Cancelled' sign across it. Beneath it, looking a little weathered is another flyer with the same information, only that one is dated three days ago.

If the party found the portion of the flyer in Lily's house, they will discover that the older one is the same one that she had the remains of.

Once the party shows an interest in the flyer or mentions heading off to 'The Wave and Wink', the young boy, who has been watching them, leaves his place of vigil and heads off away from the shrine, moving quickly and quietly.

Anyone with a passive Perception of DC 11 or higher hears the creaking of wood under foot, but does not see the boy leave.

PART 3: PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Estimated Duration: 45 mins

EN ROUTE

The Wink and Wave Tavern is on the other side of town from the Shrine of Kyuss and will allow characters to pass locations where they could take a short rest or pick up supplies.

Unlike the neighborhood around the Shrine of Kyuss, the streets on the other side of town faced a different form of destruction. Instead of lakes of water, the area is full of large sinkholes and mounds of earth, highlighting even more the horrors that had befallen the tortured people of Mulmaster.

As you draw closer to the end of your journey, you spot a familiar face up ahead. A young boy looks down the road towards you, then ducks into a narrow alleyway, obviously trying to avoid your notice. Fluttering out of his hand, a paper flyer catches on the wind before dropping unceremoniously onto the floor, where it jitters for a moment and then stops.

A booted foot stamps heavily on the paper, drawing your attention to a large man standing in the middle of the street. A group of armed individuals enter behind him, each looking at you intently.

Four **thugs** and a **bandit captain** stand in the street, their weapons out. It is obvious that they are waiting for the party and will not let them pass. They cannot be talked out of attacking the party. The boy has disappeared into an alleyway beyond where the men are standing and is gone before the characters can get to him.

MODIFYING THE ENCOUNTER

Adjustments are not cumulative

Very Weak: Remove the **bandit captain**.

Weak: Remove one **thug**.

Strong: Add one **thug**

Very Strong: Add two **thugs**.

Once the fight is over, the party can search the bodies. On most of the bodies, the party discovers a handful of coins in one or both of their pockets. The leader of the group is carrying a small bag containing a large platinum coin, bearing the image of a worm. The party see that it is identical to the one at Lily's house, if they found it during their investigation.

TREASURE

The party finds a small bag containing a large platinum coin with the image of a worm (10 gp) and a handful of coins worth 20 gp.

THE WINK AND WAVE

The rest of the way to the The Wink and Wave tavern is uneventful, but that did not stop you from keeping your eyes peeled.

Unlike the rest of the places that you had visited today, The Wink and Wave is not quiet, nor is it empty. There is a steady flow of people entering the large building, each dipping into their pockets and handing over silver coins to the man on the door.

The Wink and Wave Tavern is a very popular location in Mulmaster. Most of the people entering appear to be travelers, merchants or sailors, though a good number of locals frequent the place, including the odd noble here and there, although they tend to keep their heads down, trying not to attract attention.

The Wink and Wave is a dance hall and festival place, that has a good selection of mid-grade liquors and ales, all part of a "buy five, get one free" deal. They also sell food.

Due to having to repair the damage that the building took during the devastation, there is a door charge of 5 sp to enter the establishment.

When you hand over your five silver pieces, the doors to The Wink and Wave are pulled open, and you join the bustling crowd inside. Music fills the interior, making you forget all about the trouble that has happened outside, whisking you away to a more fun and free place.

You see people milling around the bar area, filling up on the endless choice of ales and liquors. A large sign invites you to "buy five and get one free", while a chalked menu gives your eyes a glimpse at the feasts on offer. You hear the sound of merry conversations and laughter, as you move deeper into the room.

A young woman walks passed you, smiling sweetly as she carries an empty tray back to the bar. Her costume instantly pulling you back to the task at hand, as your mind flashes back to a similarly dressed young woman hanging in a web, a scream instead of a smile on her face.

You notice a man tending the bar looks you up and down before returning to his job of pouring drinks.

The tavern is busy, even though it is mid-afternoon. There are groups scattered around the room, but none seem to be showing any interest in the party. People raise their eyes briefly at newcomers and then continue with their own entertainment.

If the party tries to talk with any of the patrons, they are greeted politely, but have no interest in talking to the group of armed adventurers, nor do they have any information regarding Lily's murder.

If the party walks up to the bartender, they find him talkative, and pleasant. He introduces himself as Marin Folgert, head bartender.

He can give the characters' the following information if they question him:

- Lily worked as a server at The Wink and Wave. She was popular with the patrons and would make a lot of tips.
- Lily was supposed to work the previous three nights, but she had not shown up for her shifts.
- Pieron Marivaldi had been appearing at The Wink and Wave once a tenday for the last four months.
- Pieron Marivaldi does not frequent the establishment when he is not performing, but he does like to talk to the other patrons before and after his performances, sometimes attracting large groups of people. He always settles the bill at the end of the night.
- Lily had been captivated by Pieron on his first visit and she made sure to work on all the nights that he was playing. When her shift finished, she would always stay and listen to the tales he would tell to his followers.
- Pieron cancelled his next show, when he came to drop off a letter for Lily. He gave no reason why.

Marin does not know much else about either Pieron or Lily, as he was far too busy working to gather any more information. He does point out that one of Lily's friends works at the tavern, and he points over to the young lady, who smiled at the party earlier.

Marin Folgert waves over the young server and imparts a few words to her. When she turns around to face you, her demeanor has changed and a single tear rolls down her cheek.

"I-I can't believe it," she says as she looks at you, her eyes seeking answers in your faces. "What can I do to help you?"

Marin points to a quiet table near the back of the room. "You can talk to Rebeka over there, but don't keep her long, she has work to do."

As the group walks over to the table, Rebeka begins to cry more audibly and it takes a few minutes for her to be able to speak. A glass of something strong makes her recover much quicker and warms her up to the party better, otherwise she

is a little suspicious of them and is a little hesitant at given them information, but either way she give them the following:

- She and Lily were best friends, but Lily had been getting more and more distant over the last couple of months.
- A few months ago, Rebeka had seen Lily talking to a well-dressed female elf. The elf gave Lily a small money pouch.
- Since Pieron Marivaldi had appeared on the scene, Lily did not seem interested in doing anything other than listening to his stories.
- Pieron Marivaldi would spend hours before and after his shows telling stories to people who would listen. The same people would show up between his shows and would try to convince others to attend the bard's performances.
- Pieron Marivaldi always reeked of cheap cologne, like he was trying to mask another smell.
- Lily carried around a platinum coin with an etching of a worm on it, which she had received as a gift from Pieron. Rebeka had seen one or two other patrons with the same coin.
- When Rebeka had shown an interest in joining Pieron Marivaldi's group, Lily had warned her off.
- During Pieron Marivaldi's last performance, Lily left the tavern. Intrigued, Rebeka followed her to an abandoned theatre.
- That same night, the bard broke his tradition and left right after his performance. He had been talking to a young boy just beforehand.

If the party asks Rebeka the location of the theatre, she draws them a crude map to a part of the city devastated by fire.

XP AWARD

The party is awarded 50 xp each for getting information from Rebeka.

PART 4: THE BARD OF THE OPERA

Estimated Duration: 1hr 15mins

THE WAY IN

You find yourself standing in front of what once was a very impressive theater, but is now a partial ruin. Half of the entrance and marquee lie in rubble on the ground, and holes pepper the exterior walls. A portion of the roof is missing and a sizable hole is visible on the west side of the building, underneath the gables.

It is obvious from a cursory glance that there is no way to enter through the main door due to all the rubble.

Checking around the outside of the building, the party cannot find a way in through the back. If there was a stage door, it has been destroyed in the same manner as the front. There are no windows on the ground level, but there are plenty of ledges and holes large enough to make good foot and hand holds.

Characters with Proficiency in Mason's or Carpenter's tools gain advantage on either of the following checks:

- DC 11 Intelligence (Perception): Work out a route using the ledges and holes to reach the opening.
- DC 11 Wisdom (Athletics or Acrobatics): Identify spots that will not carry the weight of a climber.

If a character makes the climb without first checking for a safe route, the character should make either a DC 12 Dexterity or DC 12 Strength saving throw to see if they fall off the building. If the character is unsuccessful, they fall 20 feet and take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Once the party enters the building through the hole in the wall, they find themselves in the attic of the theater. There is enough light coming in through the roof to make the area bright enough to see. Traversing the beams and rigging that operate the curtains and scenery is difficult terrain, if the PCs want to move at a normal pace they need to make a DC 10 Acrobatics check or they fall off the gantry. If they fail, they fall 20 feet onto the stage below and take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

XP AWARD

The party is awarded 50 xp each for safely navigating the way up the side of the building.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Eventually the party finds the steps that lead down to the ground level, backstage. From this position, they can make out the stage, but debris has blocked their way through. The party can enter the audience hall by a small flight of stairs.

As the first character's feet touch the ground of the audience hall, read or paraphrase the following:

The stage lights up and a melodic operatic voice can be heard throughout the theatre. On the stage, a woman in an ornate, billowing gown is lit by five glowing stage lights. Behind her, a flurry of movement heralds the arrival of a bevy of ballerinas, each in a brightly colored dress.

As the song reaches its crescendo, the huge chandelier that hangs high above begins to swing. Slowly at first, but growing faster and faster as the woman's voice reaches a higher and higher note. On the final note, the light breaks away from the ceiling and lands with a loud crash on the ground, covering the orchestra pit with debris.

Looking back at the stage, the lights have taken on a reddish glow and the disembodied spirit of the singer moves out of her dress and the ballerinas begin to trudge toward the front of the stage, their costumes dissolving, revealing weapons in their hands.

The scene on the stage is an illusion of living creatures performing a show from a previous life. Center stage is a **poltergeist**, just behind it are four **skeletons** and at the front of the stage are five **giant fire beetles**, casting light onto the performers.

Reaching the stage requires the party to climb through the orchestra pit. While it appears that the area is difficult terrain, the chandelier, like the rest of the performance is an illusion. The pit is full of rubble. Navigating the rubble is considered climbing, no athletics check is required.

MODIFYING THE ENCOUNTER

Adjustments are not cumulative

Very Weak: Remove two **skeletons**.

Weak: Remove one **skeleton**.

Strong: Add one **skeleton**.

Very Strong: Add two **skeletons**.

Once all the creatures are defeated, a search of the stage reveals that one of the brooches on the opera singer's dress is a real opal and the bodies of the giant fire beetles are still glowing and can be used as a light source.

A look around the area reveals no way to get further backstage, as the area is blocked off by debris. It is

impossible to leave the audience hall and go through to the lobby, due to the collapsed ceiling and doorway.

It seems that the only way to leave the theatre is the way the party entered, but they find no evidence that people gather in this area.

If the way is not up, it must be down. To find the trapdoor exit, the party can make some or all of the following checks:

- DC 12 Wisdom (Perception): reveals a trapdoor in the stage floor.
- DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation): finds a lever to work the trapdoor backstage, but it is hard to pull.
- DC 10 Strength: to pull the lever and trigger the trapdoor.
- DC 12 Strength: to directly pry open the trapdoor without the lever.

TREASURE

The party finds an Opal Brooch worth 20 gp and 5 giant fire beetle glands that will remain glowing for 1d6 days (worth 5 gp each).

DOWN ONCE MORE

Most of this area is in darkness, except where detailed. A light source will be needed by any character that does not have darkvision to see.

STORAGE ROOM

As you open the trapdoor and begin your descent down the rickety ladder, you are overwhelmed with the stench of death and decay. When your foot moves off the last rung, you find yourself stepping into wet dirt that almost seems to move under you, and your mind is filled with walking upon hundreds of crawling worms. The room is otherwise occupied with old boxes and props from a long time ago. You see a doorway leading towards the orchestra pit and three others that lead into the bowels of the theatre.

The door to the orchestra pit is locked and the keyhole is too rusted to work open. If the door is opened, the way through is blocked by chandelier debris. An open doorway leads the other way, deeper into darkness. The other two doors are also blocked.

The door leads into a corridor that contains three other doors; one on the left, one on the right and one straight ahead.

PIERON MARIVALDI'S ROOM

When you walk through the door, you feel like you have been transported away from the dirt and decay of the old theater to a beautiful house. The brightly colored furnishings are ornate and in perfect condition.

The room is lit with candles in sconces around the walls. A large bed dominates the far wall, covered in a luxurious duvet and pillows, beside it is a beautiful musical instrument. A writing desk, a wardrobe and a dressing table make up the rest of the room. Off in one corner, in contrast to the rest of the furniture is a small cot, with scratchy covers, looking a little like a pet's bed.

This is the bard's room. A quick look around indicates that Pieron Marivaldi is not short on money, all of the furniture is expensive and looks out of place in the ruins of the theater. With the door closed, it would be easy to imagine that this room could be anywhere in the world.

On the desk, is a duplicate copy of the Obelisk that was found in Lily's room, but it does not pulse when touched. There is also a half-written note on the same paper as the one found on the body. The desk has a drawer that contains one of the large platinum coins and a journal, written in the same handwriting. (*Give out Player Handout 3: Marivaldi's Journal*).

The wardrobe contains some brightly colored clothing that the party can surmise is worn by Pieron during his performances. There is also a selection of dark clothing that is covered with dirt and what appear to be patches of blood. Hidden near the bottom is a potion bottle, containing red liquid.

On the dressing table is a pile of old flyers from around Mulmaster and some other cities where the bard has been performing.

Lying next to the bed is a Zulkoon; a complex pump organ that originated with the zulkirs of Thay. It is used in the casting of their spells and is considered to have a dramatic, but sinister sound.

TREASURE

The party finds a large platinum coin with the image of a worm (10 gp), an ornate Zulkoon worth 100gp and a *potion of healing*.

HARVEST ROOM

As you open the door, the stench almost knocks you backwards. The room is dark and dank. Around the room are large containers full of dirt, which moves as if alive.

In the middle of the room is a table, on which lies the still body of a man. At first glance it appears as if he is merely sleeping. The blood that drips slowly off the edge of the table onto the ground reveals the truth.

In the far corner, a large travelling chest sits on top of a small hand cart. Beside it, rumbled into a ball you see a pile of material, its greyness broken up by patches of darkness.

A DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) reveals the material to be the bedding from Lily's bed. Her body was wrapped in it and taken to this room, where it was infested with the rot grubs. Once the material is moved, a shiny object drops to the floor. On inspection (no check necessary), the party can see that it is a Cloak symbol. A member of the Cloaks will notice this badge is not exactly like their own, and a *detect magic* spell will show that the badge does not have the correct enchantments.

A DC 13 Intelligence (Medicine) check reveals that the man on the table did not put up a fight before his death. It looks very much like he gave his life voluntarily.

Looking in the containers, the party can see that the dirt is alive with more rot grubs. The containers are deep enough that the grubs cannot get out on their own. Anyone who wishes to destroy the bugs can do so by setting the containers on fire. This is also the case with the rot grubs consuming the body. **If the party took a long rest, one of the containers is empty; it looks like someone recently removed the contents.**

The travelling chest contains traces of blood and is how the bodies have been transported to their final resting places.

SANCTUARY

Before you push open the door, you hear a voice coming from the room beyond. Without being able to make out the words, you can tell from the intonation that someone is preaching.

The door is not locked and can be easily pushed open without a check.

The room beyond the door is very large and resembles a large temple. At the far end of the room, an ornate altar bearing the image of a skull, with its eyes and mouth pouring out wriggling worms. On its surface is a statue, a stylized bug bursting out of a black obelisk.

Behind the altar, a man stands in brown robes, his voice echoing around the chamber. A group of people sit nearby, listening to the man's near hypnotic voice, as he preaches about the return of the worm god, Kyuss.

As you step through the door, the man's eyes turn towards you and a smile plays at his lips. Without breaking his speech, the congregation stands as one and turns to face you.

"I have been expecting you," Pieron Marivaldi says, as his full attention is focused on you.

Standing in the room are **Pieron Marivaldi**, one **cult fanatic** and one **Kyuss cultist** for each character (maximum seven). The cultists begin on the front row of pews, nearest the altar.

The bard fights to the death, while his followers give up once the bard is defeated. Pieron Marivaldi fights selfishly, and will defend himself to the detriment of his underlings.

MODIFYING THE ENCOUNTER

Adjustments are not cumulative

Very Weak: Remove **cult fanatic**.

Weak: Remove two **Kyuss cultists**.

Strong: Add one **Kyuss cultist**.

Very Strong: Add one **cult fanatic**.

If the Characters did not take a long rest read:

Once it is clear that the end is near, Pieron Marivaldi calls out with his last breath. "Run, Lucio!"

You catch sight of a young boy shooting out from beneath the altar, a bag clutched firmly in his hands. He looks very briefly at your group, hatred in his eyes, before he squeezes through a crack in the wall and disappears.

When you reach the crack, you see a network of tunnels leading from the opening. But there is no trace of the boy. He is gone.

If the Characters took a long rest read:

Once it is clear that the end is near, Pieron Marivaldi looks towards a crack in the wall, an involuntary motion that brings a smile to his face, as he exhales his last breath.

When you investigate the crack, you notice a track of small footprints and evidence of something being dragged through the wet mud. Someone else was here, but they left hours ago.

Once the fight is over, the party can find a large platinum coin on each of the congregation and the gold figurine on the altar. Wrapped in the dead hand of the bard is a scimitar, the hilt resembles a leech-like worm.

TREASURE

The party finds eight large platinum coins with the image of a worm (10 gp each), a large gold obelisk worm statue worth 150 gp and the bard's scimitar *Ripper's Claw*.

PART 5: THE FINAL CURTAIN

Estimated Duration: 5 mins

As you wait outside Zor Krennin's study door, you hear voices inside. The door opens, and the conversation becomes more audible. You recognize the male voice instantly, but it does not take you too long to realize the other is the silent elf from your previous visit.

"How was I to know she would end up dead?" the elf says, as you hear booted feet pace across the floor. "She was just supposed to gather information."

"If you had communicated your plans, maybe we could have stopped this from happening," Owyn responds, his voice indicating this was a common complaint of his.

Fortunately, the conversation comes to an abrupt halt, as the butler introduces your arrival and shows you back into the room.

The Zor invites you once again to sit down and asks his manservant to bring refreshments.

"I hope you have been successful," he says, as he lowers himself into his chair. The look on his face tells you that he knows you have been.

To conclude the adventure, the party needs to bring its findings and inform the Zor what they have discovered. He is particularly alarmed if they mention Kyuss, the Obelisk and the bugs.

He thanks the adventurers for their help and gives them their award.

THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED...

Pieron Marivaldi had come to Mulmaster to find people to join his cult to Kyuss. He had been using his performances around town to promote his teachings and bring people into his circle. Once the person was invested enough into the teachings they were invited to join him at his sanctuary and were given a platinum coin to show they had been accepted.

To spread Kyuss' word and bring people to true divinity, some of his congregation allowed themselves to be infested with rot grubs. When they failed to turn into spawn of Kyuss, Marivaldi would leave the bodies around the Zhent Ghettoes hoping that natural infestation would bring about better results. Knowing that the Cloaks and City Watch would not do anything about the situation, he would be able to infest more people without drawing any official attention.

Once the Zor had heard about the deaths and grew interested in finding the culprit, Zora Iathrana had hired Lily to act as her eyes and ears, as the young woman worked in a

bustling environment that saw a lot of people, who might just hear something. She was paid in Waterdhavian Dragons. Fortunately, or unfortunately, for Lily, Marivaldi came to perform at her work place and it had not taken her too long to realize that he was the person Zora Iathrana was looking for. But before she made her concerns known, she wanted to get proper evidence to give the Zora.

Lily befriended Marivaldi and got herself invited into the congregation, but she still had no evidence that he was the person leaving all the bodies. So one night, when he was performing, she snuck into the church and found the Harvesting Room. Unaware that she had been seen by Lucio, who kept watch of the hideout, she was revealed as a spy to Marivaldi.

Inviting himself to her house for dinner, Marivaldi overpowered Lily, wrapped her up in her bed clothes, and took her back to his hideout. During the tussle, he saw her fake Cloak badge and knew the authorities were taking an interest in his business. To leave them a message that he knew they were on to him, he positioned her body on Lathander's Shrine, an ancient enemy of Kyuss.

TREASURE

The Adventurers receive the promised 20 gp each for identifying and stopping the killer.

REWARDS

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

EXPERIENCE (MIN/MAX XP: 900/1200 EACH)

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

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Bandit Captain	450
Cult Fanatic	450
Giant Fire Beetle	10
Kyuss Cultist	100
Ochre Jelly	450
Pieron Marivaldi (Bard)	450
Poltergeist	450
Skeleton	50
Swarm of Rot Grubs	100
Thug	100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Investigating Lily' House	100
Interviewing Rebeka	50
Safely Climbing Theater Wall	50

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP value
Waterdhavian Dragons	10
Pulsing Obelisk	10
Large Worm Coin	10 each
Bandit Treasure	25
Opera Ghost Opal	20
Fire Giant Beetle Glands	5 each
Zulkoon	100
Worm Obelisk Statue	150
Zor's Reward	20 per player

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

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RIPPER'S CLAW (+1 SCIMITAR)

Weapon (Scimitar), uncommon

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

This scimitar is never dirty, no matter how much blood or dirt might have touched its blade. The pommel is formed to resemble a leech-like worm that wraps around the hand that is wielding it. The worm will nip at the hand and draw blood if it has been more than 24 hours since the weapon has last fed.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

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

STORY AWARDS

During the course of this adventure, the characters may have earned one or more of the following story awards:

The Worms that See

You have caught the attention of an imprisoned god, and his minions will express his displeasure with you. Minions of Kyuss and insects will target you by preference in combat, and attack you with savage ferocity.

To Wear the Cloak

If your character is an arcane spellcaster, Zor Krennin has offered to sponsor your admittance into the Brotherhood of the Cloak. Though joining the Cloaks is mandatory for any arcanists seeking to stay in Mulmaster for an extended period of time, and sponsorship is not required, Zor Krennin's sponsorship might be a future boon.

DOWNTIME

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

RENOWN

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

Members of the **Brotherhood of the Cloaks** advance **one rank** in that organization for completing this adventure set in Mulmaster.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*. For that purpose, this is a 4 hour module for APL 3.

APPENDIX 1: NPC/MONSTERS

BANDIT CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Source: Bandit Captain, *Monster Manual*

CULT FANATIC

Medium Humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

Actions

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

Source: Cult Fanatic, *Monster Manual*

GIANT FIRE BEETLE

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 4 (1d6+1)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	10 (+0)	12(+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 30ft., passive Perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Illumination. The beetle sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5ft., one target.

Hit: 2 (1d6-1) slashing damage.

A **giant fire beetle** is a nocturnal creature that takes its name from a pair of glands that give off light. Miners and adventurers prize these creatures, for a giant fire beetle's glands continue to shed light for 1d6 days after the beetle dies. Giant fire beetles are most commonly found underground and in dark forests.

Source: Giant Fire Beetle, *Monster Manual*

KYUSS CULTIST

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +3, Perception +4

Senses tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the cultist is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While the cultist is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 10 feet (included in its speed).

Actions

Multiattack. The cultist makes two melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Parry. The cultist adds 2 to its AC against one melee or ranged attack that would hit it. To do so, the cultist must see the attacker.

Source: Sacred Stone Monk, *Princes of the Apocalypse*

OCHRE JELLY

Large Ooze, Unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45 (6d10+12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1(-5)

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amorphous. The jelly can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Reactions

Split. When a jelly that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new jellies if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new jelly has hit points equal to half the original jelly's, rounded down. New jellies are one size smaller than the original jelly.

Source: Ochre Jelly, *Monster Manual*

PIERON MARIVALDI (BARD)

Medium Humanoid (Human), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Celestial, Common, Primordial

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Magic Initiate. The bard knows two cantrips from the Warlock spell list. In addition, the bard can cast *cause fear* (spell save DC12) once at its lowest level without using a spell slot. It must finish a long rest before casting this spell again.

Spellcasting. The bard is a 4th-level caster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC12, +4 to hit with its spell attacks). It has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, infestation, mage hand, toll the dead, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Song of Rest. The bard can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The bard can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Taunt (2/day). The bard can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the bard, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the bard's next turn.

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Source: Bard, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

POLTERGEIST

Medium Undead, chaotic Evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Invisibility. The poltergeist is invisible.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the poltergeist has disadvantage on attack roll, as well as on Wisdom (perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Forceful Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) force damage.

Telekinetic Thrust. The poltergeist targets a creature or unattended object within 30 feet of it. A creature must be medium or smaller to be affected by this magic, and an object can weigh up to 150 pounds.

If the target is a creature, the poltergeist makes a Charisma check contested by the target's strength check. If the poltergeist wins the contest, the poltergeist hurls the target up to 30 feet in any direction, including upward. If the target then comes in contact with a hard surface or heavy object, the target takes 1d6 damage per 10 feet moved.

If the target is an object that isn't being worn or carried, the poltergeist hurls it up to 30 feet in any direction. The poltergeist can use the object as a ranged weapon, attacking one creature along the object's path (+4 to hit) and dealing 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage on a hit.

Source: Poltergeist, *Monster Manual*

SKELETON

Medium Undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Bludgeoning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak.

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Source: Skeleton, *Monster Manual*

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

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

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested with 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the creature's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with zero hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

Source: Swarm of Rot Grubs, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pact Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally is not incapacitated.

Actions

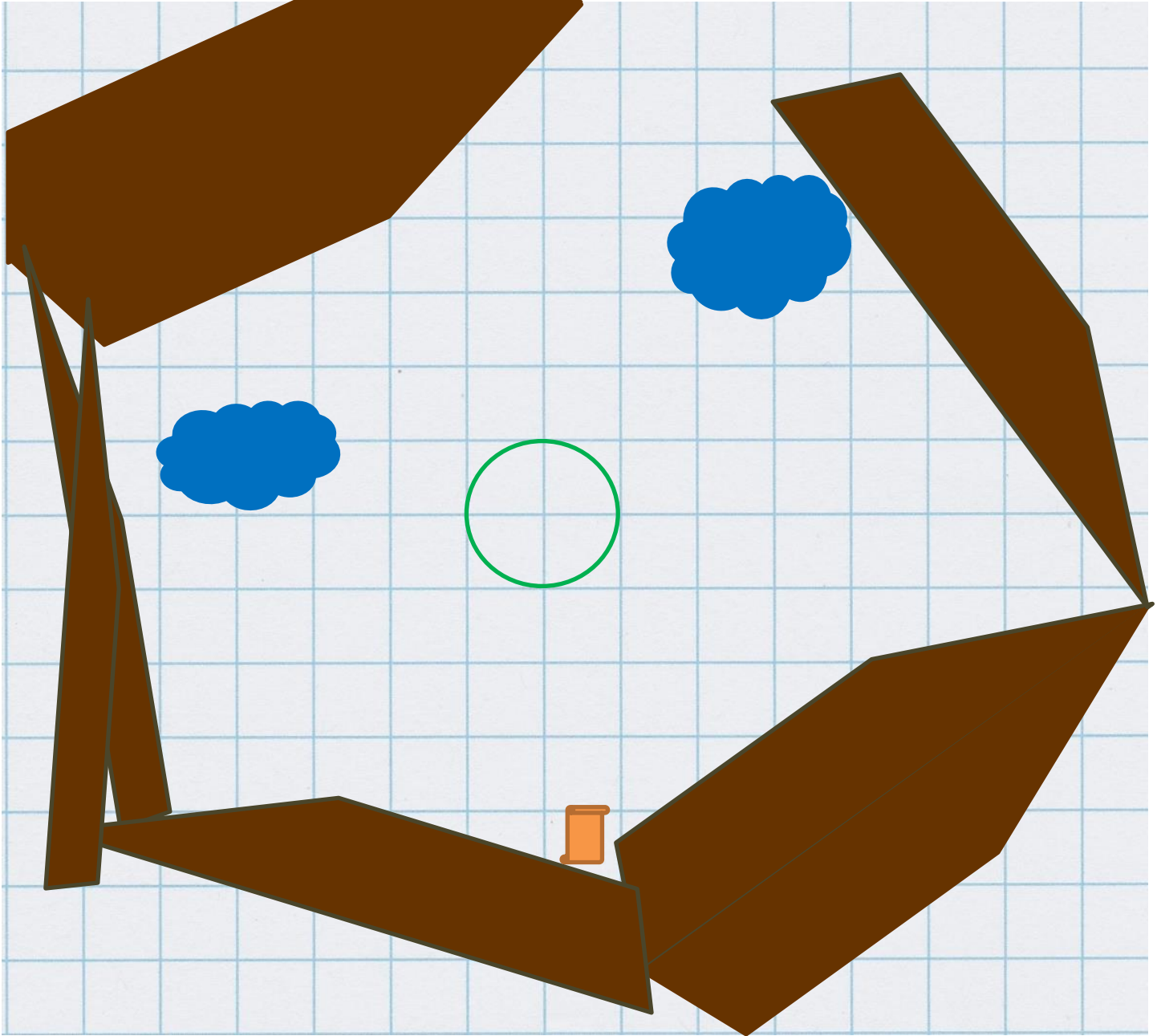
Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.


Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.


Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.


Source: Thug, *Monster Manual*

APPENDIX 2: SHRINE OF KYUSS



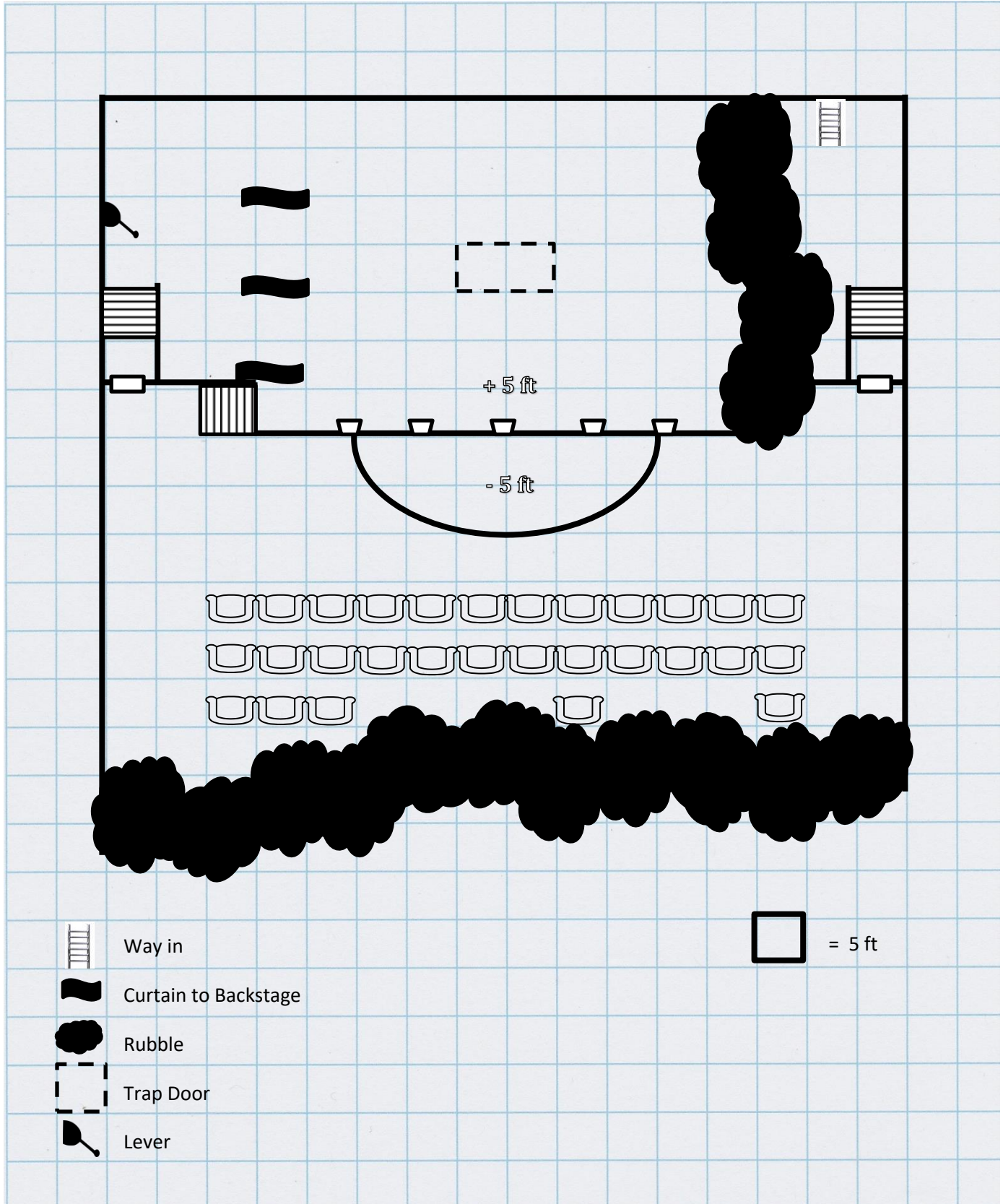
 Shrine Pit

 Pools of Water

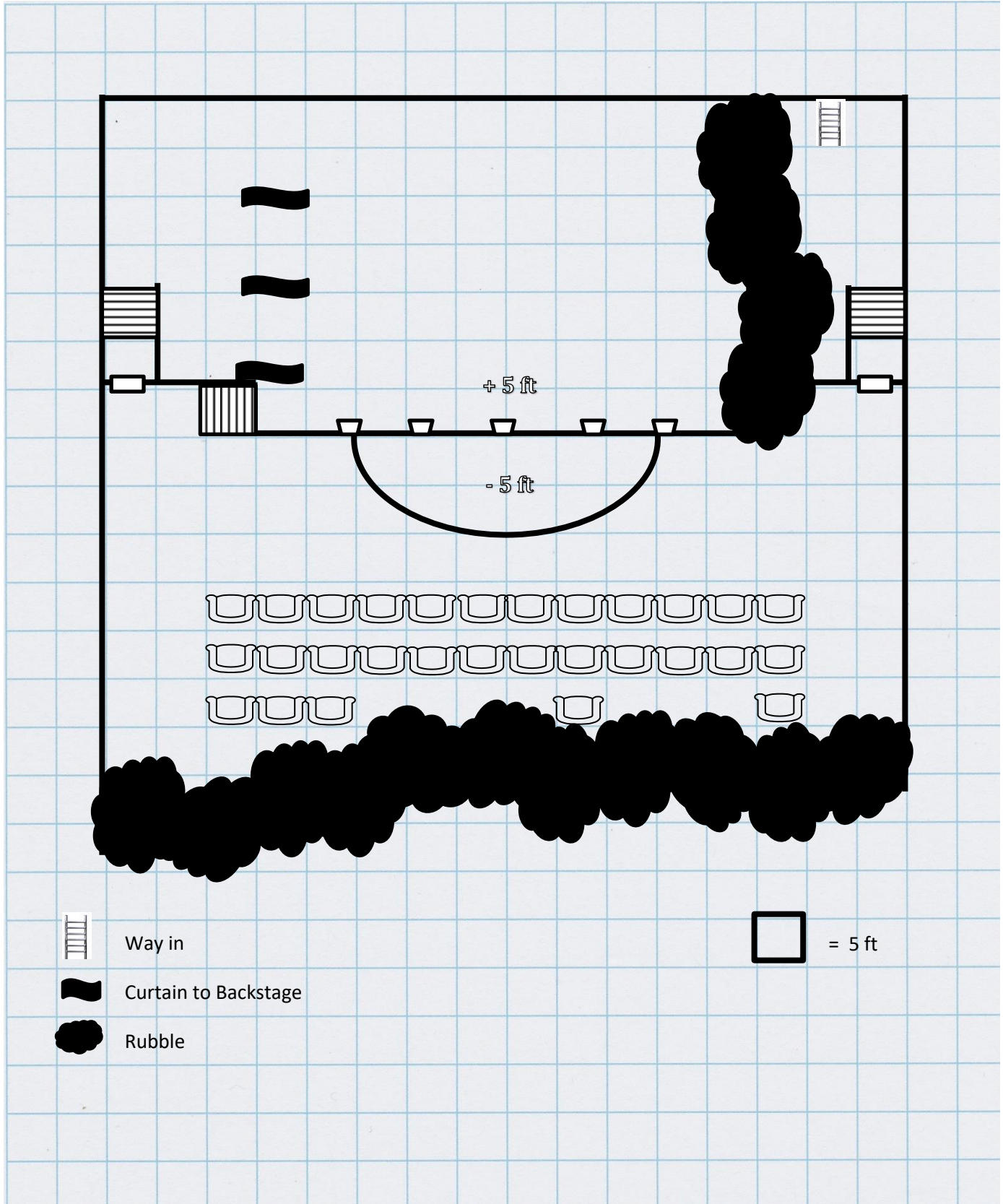
 Flyer

 5 feet

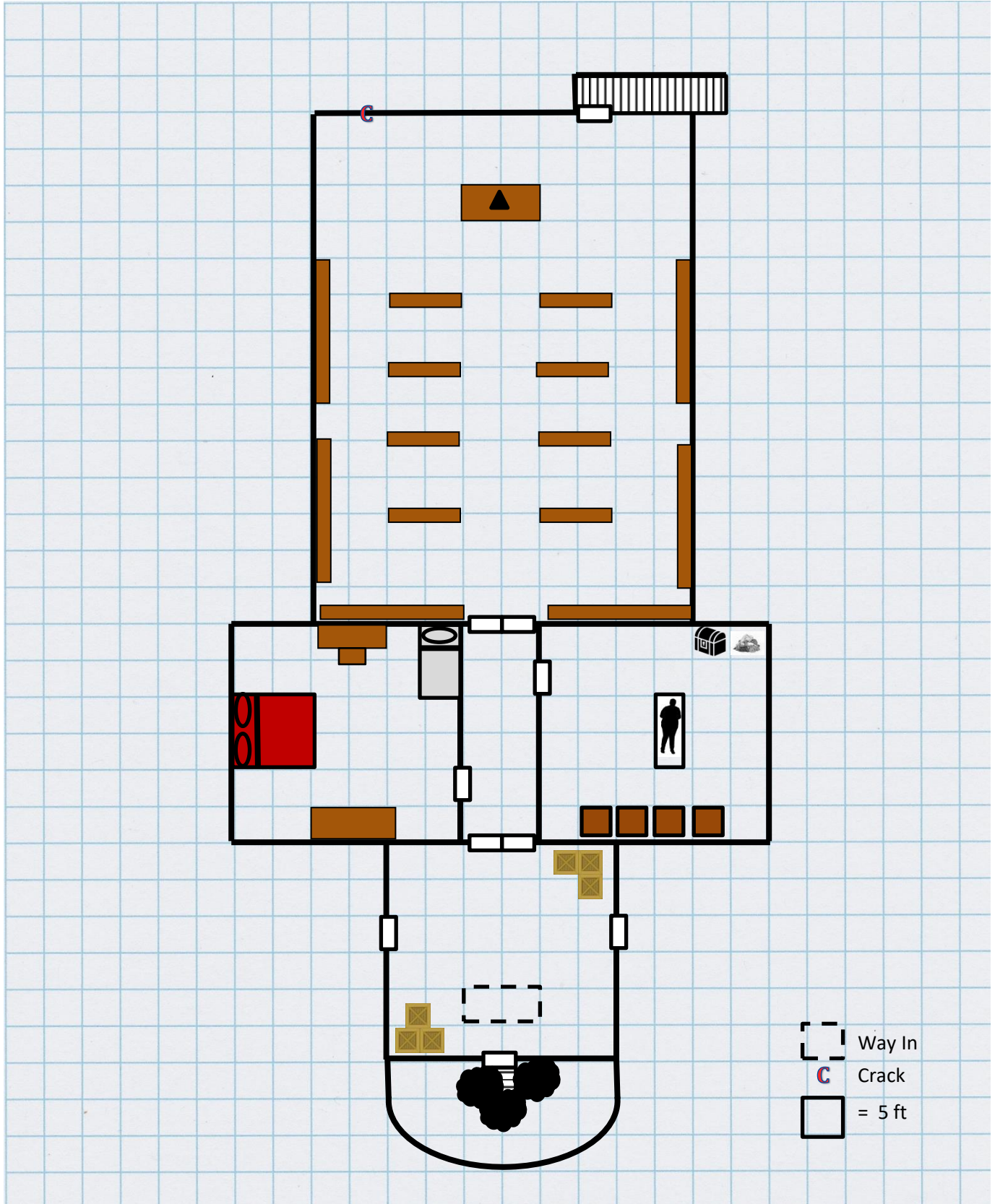
APPENDIX 3: STAGE MAP (DM VERSION)



APPENDIX 4: STAGE MAP (PLAYER VERSION)



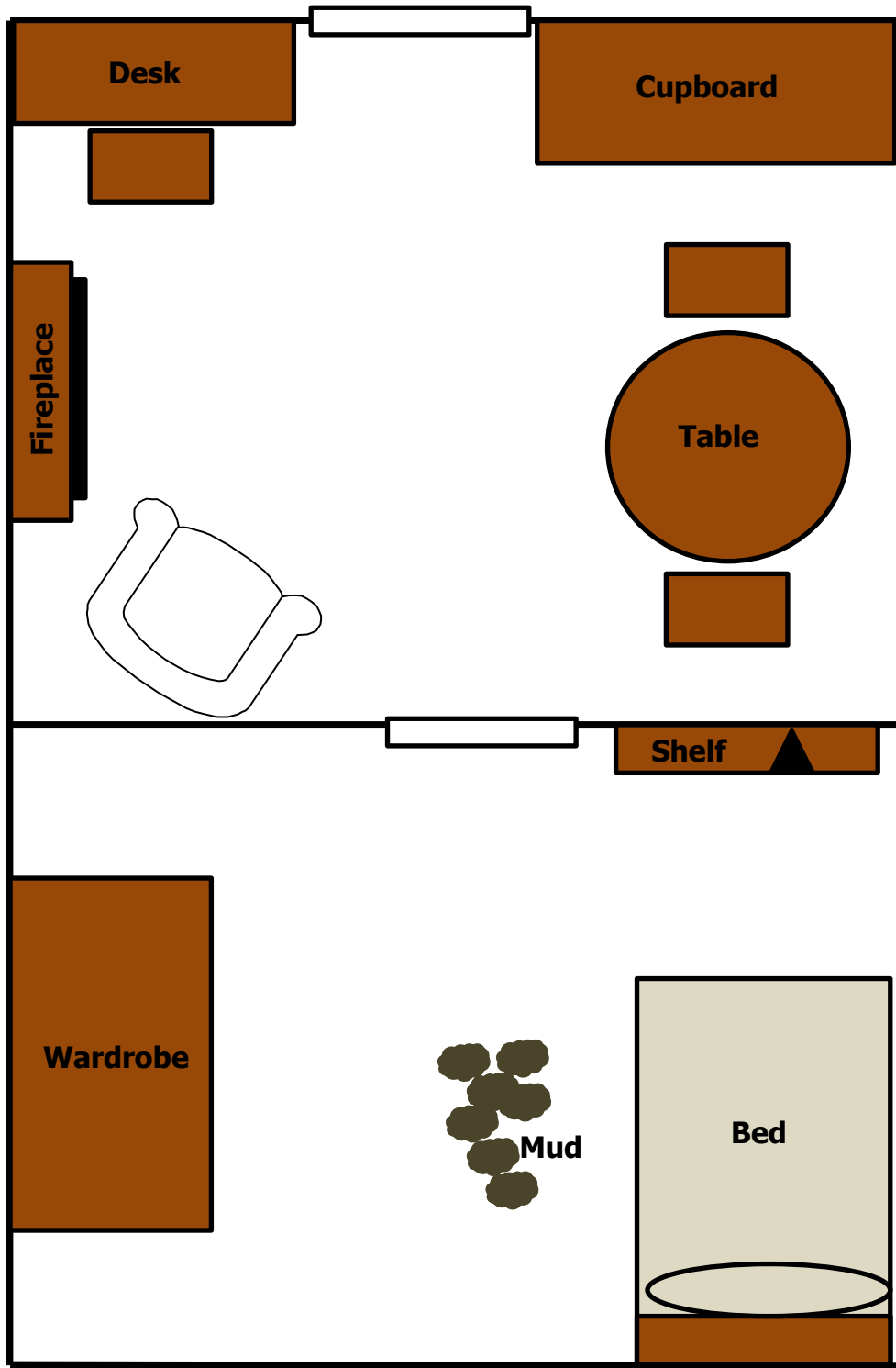
APPENDIX 5: UNDERGROUND LAIR MAP



PLAYER HANDOUT 1: POST DEVASTATION MAP OF MULMASTER

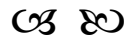


PLAYER HANDOUT 2: LILY'S HOUSE

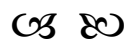


PLAYER HANDOUT 3: MARIVALDI'S JOURNAL

The congregation is growing and I have found more people willing to help in Kyuss's endeavor. Mulmaster has been the perfect place to spread the word. So many people looking for salvation after what has happened here. He was right.



I do not know where I am going wrong. The dream revealed that the grubs would help bring about the true divinity and cover the world with the believers of Kyuss. But so far, I have been unable to raise one spawn. How will I reach my own divinity if I am unable to lead others to theirs? Hopefully, by letting the grubs infest naturally they will bring about a more successful result.



Betrayed! Lily seemed to be one of the more faithful, but she was a traitor. Damn all who try to stop the spread of Kyuss' teachings.

PLAYER HANDOUT 3: MAGIC ITEM

REWARD

RIPPER'S CLAW (+1 SCIMITAR)

Weapon (Scimitar), uncommon

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

This scimitar is never dirty, no matter how much blood or dirt might have touched its blade. The pommel is formed to resemble a leech-like worm that wraps around the hand that is wielding it. The worm will nip at the hand and draw blood if it has been more than 24 hours since the weapon has last fed.

PLAYER HANDOUT 4: STORY AWARDS

The Worms that See

You have caught the attention of an imprisoned god, and his minions will express his displeasure with you. Minions of Kyuss and insects will target you by preference in combat, and attack you with savage ferocity.

To Wear the Cloak

If your character is an arcane spellcaster, Zor Krennin has offered to sponsor your admittance into the Brotherhood of the Cloak. Though joining the Cloaks is mandatory for any arcanists seeking to stay in Mulmaster for an extended period of time, and sponsorship is not required, Zor Krennin's sponsorship might be a future boon.