



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™



MISTS OF THE MOONSEA

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Adventure Designer

Adventure Code: ELMW2-2

Optimized For: APL 8



The heroes of Elmwood find clues that lead them to follow the trail of their adversaries to the Bell of the Deep, the sunken castle of Northkeep beneath the violet waves of the Moonsea. Can they make it safely there through the ancient terrors of the Moonsea as well as all the obstacles their adversaries can put in the way?

A four-hour adventure for 5th - 10th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Mists of the Moonsea*, a Convention Created Content D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the Baldman Games Elmwood adventures.

This adventure is designed for three to seven 5th - 10th level characters, and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting This 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 (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less 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 running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Become familiar with the adventure's appendices and handouts.

- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, 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 your 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 a 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 that players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

100% of the author share of the profits from these adventures will be given to the following as a charitable donation:

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For almost 100 years, the ACLU has worked to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States.



Adventure Primer

Adventure Background

In the last year or so, the realm of Ravenloft has been oddly cotangent to the Moonsea. During that time, a band of seven adventurers slipped through the mists of Ravenloft. This group found themselves the unlikely heroes of the downtrodden people of Barovia. A vampire, Strahd Von Zarovich, ruled the land with cruelty and bloodshed, and good adventurers cannot refuse a challenge like that. After exploring the land and finding artifacts that would help them against the master vampire, the adventurers heard a rumor of a mystical place of power called the Amber Temple. The Amber Temple was founded by an order of paranoid and reclusive wizards, who were stewards of the tombs of dead gods. When a being as powerful as an evil god is slain, it still retains a shard of power and becomes a vestige of its prior self. The adventurers went to the Amber Temple because they had heard that the vampire had acquired his own formidable powers there. They knew that in order to have a chance against the ancient evil, they would need every advantage in the fight. They accepted gifts of power from the vestiges.

- Nesbit Gath (NEZ-bit Gath) is a gnome transmutation wizard. He's younger, nervous, and all he cares about is acquiring new magic and arcane knowledge. One of the dead gods gave him the secret to becoming a lich if only he had stronger command of magic.
- Olwain Jorudel (ALL-wane JŌ-ru-del) was an elven forest warden. Something happened in the Amber Temple and his loyal cooshees were transformed into hell hounds.

- Skamos (SKAY-mōs) is a tiefling warlock with dark purple skin and large black freckles. She is a big, buff woman with a jovial temper, but who is a berserker in a fight. She was gifted with great strength and likes to bully others and make them feel inferior.
- Alfred the Boneater is a human man dressed in simple clothes, with skeletal wings growing out of his back, and a crossbow in his hand.
- Lathai the Heartseeker (LATH-eye) is a drow ranger. She has assumed the power to walk on walls and ceilings like a spider
- Patrin (PĀTE-rin) is a silver colored dragonborn paladin. While he used to be exceedingly polite, he's gotten to the point where he won't take no for an answer.
- The dowager countess Constance Trentham (TRENTH-um) is a very old, very proper, very cultured half-elf woman who seeks political power. The magic of the dead gods gave her the power of storms.

However, this power changed them. They became paranoid, untrusting, merciless, and cruel as the vestiges of the dead gods slowly took them over. They fought the vampire and banished him for a while; they were sure he would return. They returned to the Moonsea with new goals: to loot and pillage whatever they chose, and to gain power for their own glory and benefit. Nesbit Gath is the putative leader of the group, having enforced his will upon them with his magical prowess. Since they came to the Moonsea, they tangled with a local necromancer named Tyranne Epaline. That fight ended in a draw. Nesbit Gath has decided instead to apprentice to the lich Akempus, who rules the sunken city of Northkeep. While he does so, the rest of his team has run amok. Nesbit Gath and Akempus seal Northkeep in a barrier of magical energy so that they can be left alone while they work.

In the previous part of the story (ELMWOOD 2-1 TENDRILS IN THE FOG) the heroes discovered that Skamos and Olwain have been raiding farms and homesteads in the vicinity of Elmwood. Aliana Mathnir (Al-EE-ahn-ah MATH-near), the constable of Elmwood, hires the characters to investigate and put an end to the attacks. The heroes discover that this isn't an isolated incident, and that Skamos and Olwain are part of a larger group that is being called to Northkeep. Aliana Mathnir has worked to get a ship and captain to help the adventurers find a way in to Northkeep.

Adventure Overview

This adventure is divided into eight parts.

Introduction: We're on a Boat. There is a brief review of the events of ELMWOOD 2-1 and the reason why the characters are here. They are attempting to find the wreck of the Eye of Akempus, the ancient flagship of Northkeep. The ship's bell will allow the characters to enter the sunken city of Northkeep from a portal on Yarralumla Island.

Encounter 1: The Sea Elves. The characters meet up with sea elf Prince Ulatha, who offers to give them salvage notes to help them locate the wreck of the Eye of Akempus.

Encounter 2: Blood in the Water. Because the sea elves are far from their settlement and vulnerable, they are attacked by Marel (evil sea elves) and their servitors.

Encounter 3: Locating the Wreck. The characters must decode the salvage notes to learn the location of the wreck.

Encounter 4: The Eye of Akempus. The characters must go below the waves of the Moonsea and brave the dangers of the wrecked ship to recover its magical bell.

Encounter 5: Alfred the Bone Eater. As the characters sail towards the entrance of the magical passage, they are chased by the reanimated Eye of Akempus, and its undead crew. Alfred the Bone Eater, one of the adventurers that is possessed by a vestige of a dead god, senses this is the ideal time to attack the characters.

Encounter 6: Lathai the Heartseeker. The opening of the magical passage is a small island that is guarded by another of the vestige-possessed, Lathai the Heartseeker.

Conclusion. The ghost of Lathai the Heartseeker, finally free from her curse, thanks the adventurers for freeing her and aids them with the knowledge of how to enter Northkeep. The characters report back to Aliana Mathnir to plan the assault on Nesbit Gath's stronghold.

Timeline of Play

The adventure is designed for 4 hours of play. Use the table below to budget your time, adjusting the pace as necessary to keep on schedule. In a large public event, you'll need to keep an eye on the clock.

Stage	Playing Time
Introduction: We're on a Boat	10 mins
Encounter 1: The Sea Elves	15 mins
Encounter 2: Blood in the Water	55 mins
Encounter 3: Locating the Wreck	15 mins
Encounter 4: The Eye of Akempus	30 mins
Encounter 5: Alfred the Bone Eater	55 mins
Encounter 6: Lathai the Heartseeker	55 mins
Conclusion	5 mins

Adventure Hooks

Give adventurers who played ELMW2-1 Handout 1, On the Trail of Nesbit Gath.

Give adventurers who did not play ELMW2-1 Handout 2, Hired by Aliana Mathnir.

Elmwood

Elmwood is a small town about sixty miles southwest of Mulmaster on the coast of the Moonsea. This small town is detailed in the "Elmwood at a Glance" appendix.

Introduction: We're on a boat

This adventure begins on the Red Lock, a boat hired out of Elmwood. The characters have been brought together to find an entrance to the sunken ruins of the Castle of Northkeep, the home of the Bell of the Deep. Take a few moments for the characters to introduce themselves and get to know each other. Read or paraphrase:

The nimble ship hired to help you, the Red Lock, cuts through the violet waters of the Moonsea. Drake Holmstrumph tosses a jangling net of expensive looking gold chased cups overboard with a hurried prayer to Umberlee before turning to your group to go over the challenges you face:

"Them bastards what were murderin' up and down the coast are gone, but now Constable Mathnir says that there's more of 'em holed up in the sunken castle. And apparently no one can get into it now. Some kinda magic around it. If anybody would know how to get in anyway, it'd be the sea elves." He grinds his teeth for a moment. "Never known 'em to be the generous sort, but this is the best chance we've got." He shrugs as if he feels that's unlikely, but he's not going to argue with the job he's been given to help you.

What Drake Knows

Drake is suspicious by nature and won't volunteer this information, but he will respond truthfully if the characters ask him questions.

- Drake is generally aware of what has happened previously (as covered in Handouts 1 and 2).
- It is rumored that the sea elves nearly lost their prince to the Cult of the Crushing Wave three or four years ago. Adventurers saved the prince around the ruins of Fort Dalton. The sea elves have long memories and some of the folks from the Zhentarim, the Harpers, and the Emerald Enclave encouraged them to help the characters. (If any of these characters played DDEX2-12 Dark Rites at Fort Dalton they might have run into Prince Ulatha there.)
- The sea elves don't particularly want to get involved in 'surfacers' problems, so agreeing to meet with the surfacers is highly unusual.
- This area of the Moonsea is particularly dangerous. In

addition to giant gar and pike, the occasional boatload of Crushing Wave cultists from Mulmaster, and pirate followers of Umberlee, there is a tribe of exceptionally evil sea elves that live nearby, the Marel.

- Originally normal aquatic elves, the Marel were cursed by the gods for their refusal to assist the humans of Northkeep a thousand years ago. They are wholly evil and worship Umberlee. Their skin is pale white, their hair is a sickly blackish-green color, and their eyes glow with an eerie, pale green light.
- A fair few of the crew of the Red Lock are drow. If asked about his drow crewmembers, Drake will point out that they're another group of refugees that have shown up in Elmwood in the last several years. They keep to themselves and are hard workers. Their darkvision makes them exceptionally useful for taking night watches.

General Features

Atmosphere. It's a lovely summer day on the Moonsea with bright, clear weather perfect for sailing.

The Red Lock. A medium sized fast merchant ship owned by Drake Holmstrumph, named for Drake's late wife, whose flame-haired image is captured in her bowsprit. She's moving briskly across the waves and the deck is mostly stable.

Crew. There are about a dozen sailors aboard. The crew is a mix of humans and half elves, but there are several drow who are squinting in the light and wearing hats to shade their eyes.

The Moonsea. The Moonsea has purplish waters. It is a freshwater sea. The water temperature is fairly cool. The waves in this area are small, generally less than 2 feet.

Roleplaying Drake Holmstrumph

Drake is an older human man with gray hair, dark eyes, and brown skin. What he lacks in youthful energy, he makes up in experience and wisdom. He lost his whole family in the Burning and it's turned him into a bitter man. However, he's one of the oldest survivors left in Elmwood and the town looks up to him. He is a merchant captain and is well versed in all the trade routes of the Moonsea. Drake is a fearless and experienced captain, who regularly ran the Phlan blockade to get supplies into the city when it was taken over by the green dragon Vorgansharax. He's got a mercenary mindset.

Quote: "Aye, I can get you where you need to go. The question is, what can ye pay for it?"



PART 1. DIVE IN

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the characters are ready to meet the sea elves.

A rock pinnacle comes into view on the horizon, and Drake shouts orders to his crew, and soon the ship slows dramatically. "That's it: Dampieri Rock," Drake nods at the rocks, turning the ship's wheel in a series of delicate maneuvers. "Just a speck o' nothin', but it's a good landmark. The sea elves should be waitin' for ye below." One of the drow sailors hands over a satchel containing a few glass bottles filled with cloudy green fluid. There are odd jellyfish-like bubbles floating in the liquid. "Constable gave me these to pass along to you in case you can't breathe underwater. Ye've got an hour as I understand it." When opened, the potions smell faintly of the sea. The Red Lock stops in about 15' of water near the stone pinnacle, and sharp-eyed sailors point out a single figure waiting below the water. The sea elf is wearing deep green trunks that contrast nicely with his silvery blue skin and long dark blue hair. He is adorned with a variety of pearl jewelry. The elf raises a hand to wave at the Red Lock. "That must be Prince Ulatha. Must be the trustin' sort because I don't see no guards." Drake snorts in disbelief. Suddenly the plants and fish below are pushed aside by a great current, and you can see more figures below. They look like white skinned sea-elves astride long saw-toothed fish that are larger than horses. They advance on Prince Ulatha with sinister intent.

Two **Marel** and two of their **giant gar** servitors are attacking the prince, with only the characters to save him.

General Features

Above the Water. It's a lovely summer day on the Moonsea with bright, clear weather perfect for sailing. The waves in this area are small.

Underwater. The water is cool shallower than 30 feet and cold deeper than 30 feet. It's clear, so the water tinges everything with violet, and makes red and orange colors appear muddy brown.

Terrain. Dampieri Rock is a seamount where one old pinnacle reaches the surface. The seamount is a plateau about 70 feet across that's about 45 feet deep. Past that the seamount slope descends sharply to several hundred feet. The terrain is rocky and uneven, and the area is full of silvery fish and seaweed.

Rocks. There are a few low banks of rock that stick up about five feet and can provide cover. Only the pinnacle of Dampieri Rock sticks up above the surface of the Moonsea.

Current. The Marel have magically summoned a current to help them. Any creature without a swim speed that is in the current is pushed 5 feet in the direction of the current for every 5 feet traveled in the current. (Creatures with a swim speed choose whether the current affects them.) If someone can make a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) or nature check at the place where the current originates, they can cause it to cease, or reverse direction.

Off the Sea Mount. If the characters or Prince Ulatha leave the top of the seamount, they find that the Marel have corralled an immense school of stinging freshwater jellyfish to surround the area. Anyone in this area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw each round or take 22 (4d10) points of poison damage, save for half.

Prince Ulatha. The prince acts on initiative 0 and aids in the defense of vulnerable characters. If asked to, he will withdraw and dodge. For the purposes of this combat, Prince Ulatha will go unconscious at 0 hit points and make death saving throws as a character does.

Underwater Combat

When making a melee weapon attack, a creature that doesn't have a swimming speed (either natural or granted by magic) has disadvantage on the attack roll unless the weapon is a dagger, javelin, shortsword, spear, or trident.

A ranged weapon attack automatically misses a target beyond the weapon's normal range. Even against a target within normal range, the attack roll has disadvantage unless the weapon is a crossbow, a net, or a weapon that is thrown like a javelin (including a spear, trident, or dart).

Creatures and objects that are fully immersed in water have resistance to fire damage.

The crew of the Red Lock has normal unmagical daggers, shortswords, spears, javelins, tridents, darts, and crossbows that they are happy to lend to the heroes.

Suggested Tactics

You may choose to use these tactics if you believe it is appropriate for your game. The Marel would like to kill Prince Ulatha, but they're not willing to die to do so. The Marel will flee when their forces have been reduced by 50%. The Marel and the giant gar start 45 feet away from the adventurers but between their swim speed and the current, they can be on the heroes in one move. The Marel start with psychic screeches (describe this as them blowing a shell horn so loudly it can stun). The giant gar will advance after the psychic screeches to attack the least armored foes first. The Marel will cooperate to take down poorly armored spellcasters. The Marel are vicious and evil and will attack unconscious creatures that are making death saves.

Encourage narrative solutions to the encounter other than fighting and award full XP for them. If the players have a clever way to defeat the Marel through trickery or roleplaying or other narrative means, then allow them to do so. Use the passive insight and passive perception of enemies as listed in their stat blocks. Skill check DCs should be 14 for things that seem plausible, or 18 for things that seem implausible. Reward clever ideas and good roleplaying with advantage, inspiration, and/or a reduction in DC.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

Very Weak. Remove both **giant gar**.

Weak. Remove one **giant gar**.

Strong. Add one **giant gar**.

Strong. add two **Marel** and two **giant gars**.

Treasure

If Prince Ulatha is killed, the characters find the salvage notes (**HANDOUT 3A: ELVEN SALVAGE NOTES**) left behind on the seabed. If the prince lives, he will hand them over to the characters.

Developments

The characters do not have to participate in the fight. If they choose not to act, Prince Ulatha is captured and taken away. Fortunately, his notes fall by the wayside and can be recovered by the characters.

If Prince Ulatha is saved he will use a ritual to cast Water Breathing on the party (up to 10 willing participants, so it includes some number of familiars, animal companions, and mounts). He then stops to chat with the heroes, offer them the notes that have been agreed to, and assist them with decoding the notes.

If the adventurers are overcome by the Marel, the sailors recover their bodies and equipment and take them to Elmwood to have them raised by the Church of Bane or reincarnated by the druids, or whatever else the players choose.



PART 2. PRINCE ULATHA AND THE SALVAGE CODE

If Prince Ulatha is captured or killed by the Marel, then this encounter does not occur.

Roleplaying Prince Ulatha Mesavir

Prince Ulatha was rescued by adventurers during the events of DDAL2-12 Dark Rites at Fort Dalton. If any of these characters played that adventure, he will remember them and thank them warmly. He is also aware of and appropriately respectful to characters with 15 or more points of renown. The local sea elves live in a small hidden settlement and revere Istishia, the neutral god of water elementals and purification. The prince is kind, personable, and affable, but wisely slow to trust adventurers. Ulatha doesn't overstress his royal status and prefers to interact on even terms. He's also quite handsome and will lightly flirt with kind or good-looking adventurers.

Quote: "You must come back after this is all over and tell me about your adventures. I'm keenly interested in hearing your stories."

When the characters get to the bottom, Prince Ulatha is casual and friendly.

"Greetings, I am Ulatha, Prince of the Sea Elves. I owe you a deeper favor than I can ever repay. I hear you need some information about Northkeep?"

What Ulatha Knows

Ulatha will hand over the salvage notes and leave if the characters aren't interested in interacting with him. He gives the adventurers HANDOUT 3A: Salvage Notes and this information.

- The barrier around Northkeep started up within the last few tendays. About the same time, the sea elves saw a gnome leading a human and a silver dragonborn into the ruins of Northkeep.
- His grandmother was quite the adventurer, and she explored the location where Northkeep's navy sank not long after the battle. She left him notes on how to find it, but he can't translate them.

- The elves know that the ship's bell of the flagship of Northkeep, the Eye of Akempus, was often used to open the barrier around the castle in ancient times. It should still work... if it can be recovered.
- If the characters find the bell of the Eye of Akempus, they should use it on Yarralumla island – that's where the portal through the barrier around Northkeep is weakest.

If the players want to roleplay with Ulatha, then he is a font of information about the Moonsea in general and Northkeep in specific. For every point that the party beats a DC 10 Charisma (Diplomacy or Persuasion) check, then give them an additional piece of information. If any of the characters have participated in DDAL2-12 Dark Rites at Fort Dalton, or if they have good roleplaying, give the advantage on this check. These checks are cumulative, so if a character gets a DC 19, they also learn all the information for lower DCs.

- DC 11 - Northkeep is the oldest human settlement in the Moonsea. It was a trade capital founded about 1,200 years ago and destroyed about 1,000 years ago. A dark alliance of orcs, giants, and dragons, led by the black dragon Iyrauth, assaulted Northkeep.
- DC 12 - A band of sea elves, called the Marel, refused to help the people of Northkeep, and for their cowardice they were cursed. They are now wholly evil and hate everything. They live in the great deep dark depths of the Moonsea, and have white skin, black hair, and glowing green eyes like a deep-sea fish.
- DC 13 - Historical rumor says it took forty thousand nonhuman mages and clerics calling down the wrath of Gruumsh to sink the city. The Bell in the Depths is the main city bell. Sometimes ocean currents cause it to ring and it can be heard from Elmwood to Elventree.
- DC 14 - The keep was littered with the corpses of its defenders. Many of which animated as undead. One of the more colorful intelligent undead that haunts Northkeep is a lich named Akempus.
- DC 15 - Akempus betrayed Northkeep to its enemies

in return for the title and privileges of undead overlord of the city.

- DC 16 - Akempus' daughter was the war leader of Northkeep. She was killed when the Eye of Akempus sunk, and never knew of her father's treachery. She would have killed him herself if she'd known he betrayed Northkeep.
- DC 17 - Akempus' allies double-crossed him, destroying the city instead of merely conquering it, though they kept the letter of their word to Akempus. They left him the undisputed master of the city, though it became entombed in an airless crypt deep below the ground.
- DC 18 - Until recently, Akempus has been content to "rule" over his limited domain, sitting alone in the frigid darkness, with undead servants to attend him.
- DC 19 - The sea elves who have explored Northkeep have spread tales of meeting Akempus. For a lich, he is polite and interested in talking but the many undead who travel with him are another story. The elves leave as soon as they can do so without giving offense.



PART 3. SALVAGE NOTES

When asked for them, or during a lull in the conversation, Prince Ulatha presents the salvage notes. If Ulatha was captured, skip the narrative text and clues.

"Thank you so much - I wouldn't have stood a chance against them by myself. I'm not sure how I can ever repay you." The handsome sea elf runs a hand through his hair and looks a bit sheepish. "Look, I realize that a thousand-year-old set of elven salvage notes taken in shorthand isn't going to be easy to figure out. We're likely safe here. Now, at least. Stay a while and I'll help you go through them."

The elven salvage notes are in cypher that Prince Ulatha doesn't know. If well disposed towards the characters, he'll point out that his grandmother, the explorer that developed the cypher, said the key was two particular runes which he sketches out in the sand of the top of the seamount (included in the HANDOUT 3B: PRINCE ULATHA'S CLUE).

"Hm, I guess part of this grid looks like the symbols... but I don't understand how they go together..."

Every minute in real time, while the players are working on the code, Prince Ulatha will say something to help. If the players have figured out or passed beyond the thing that Prince Ulatha says to help, then skip to the next helpful thing.

1 Minute

"Well, the most common letter should be E, right? And it looks like a plain square is the most common symbol."

2 Minutes

"Doesn't that plain square look like the box in the middle of the grid from my grandmother's hint?"

3 Minutes

"T should be the next most common, and that > symbol appears really frequently."

4 Minutes

"What if we took the grid and the X and then put a dot in each cell? That would look like the characters in the salvage notes."

5 Minutes

"Maybe if we put an A in the first cell, and went from there..."

As this is a cipher, and not merely a different language, the spells Comprehend Languages and Tongues, and the "Eyes of the Rune Keeper" Warlock Eldritch Invocation do not translate it.

The characters can also make an Intelligence (History) check, provide them with the following information:

- DC 15 - It's an old substitution cipher. Each symbol equates to one letter.
- DC 18 - Show the characters Prince Ulatha's clue. The grid and the x relate to the characters.
- DC 21 - Lay out the grid and put an A in the top left corner.
- DC 24 - Draw the grid and the x and put a dot in each one. Those are all the characters in the cipher.

I hate/love puzzles!

We play D&D to have fun. If your players really hate puzzles, and they really do not want to participate, then just have them make some skill checks (DC 14-18, whatever skills you think are appropriate) and tell them the translation.

On the other hand, if one of your players recognizes the cipher (it's a relative common cipher called "Pigpen Cipher") and solves it immediately, then that's perfectly acceptable. Sometimes metagame knowledge is okay.

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

J	K	L
M	N	O
P	Q	R

	S	
T		U
	V	

	W	
X		Y
	Z	

The solved puzzle reads:

Sail six leagues north of Northkeep

Sail nine leagues east of that

Climb twenty feet up the mast, you will see a reef about a league and a half to the north

Follow that reef down to the southwest to about five hundred and fifty feet in depth

The wreck of the Eye of Akempus is hung on three stone spires to the west

Once the characters solve the first couple of lines, or about a quarter of the words, a DC 14 Intelligence check substitutes for filling out the rest of the cipher.

Development

After the characters figure out the cipher, Prince Ulatha (if he still lives) takes his leave. He's concerned that a Marel incursion into the sunlit areas of the Moonsea is a bad sign, and that his people should be cautious.



PART 4. THE EYE OF AKEMPUS

It takes until just after midnight – with Drake's drow crew at the helm – to sail to the location detailed in the note. This patch of dark seawater is no different than any other, but repeated measurements with the astrolabe and a spirited discussion between Drake and his first mate seem to indicate that this is the place.

"In a sense," Drake says while smoking a vile-smelling cigar, "it don't matter if you go down in daylight or dark. Gonna be dark as the Abyss down there regardless." He shrugs. "Havin' said that, you can take the dive whenever you want. I'm just here to transport ye. Though I suppose them bastards are doing stuff in Northkeep behind that barrier that jest maybe you should get to foul in' up sooner rather than later."

"When you're ready, we're set on the bottom," Drake nods toward the anchor chain. "Just follow the chain down. You should be close enough to the wreck if the elves were right. Safest that way. Won't get blown out of the area by a current. When ye find the bell, hook it to the anchor chain, and we'll winch it to the surface for ye." He hands you another sackful of water breathing potions and heads off to bark at a couple of sailors.

General Features

Light. During the night, the Moonsea is dark below the surface.

Visibility. Suspended sediments and algae form an impenetrable "fog" undersea that limits all vision to 60 feet. At night, or beyond 200 feet in depth, there is no light, though darkvision functions up to 60 feet.

Temperature. The wreck of the Eye of Akempus is 550 feet deep on the sea floor. The water temperature is cool in the top 30 feet but drops to just above freezing from 90 feet deep to the sea floor.

The Moonsea. The Moonsea has purplish waters. It is a freshwater sea. The waves in this area are small, generally less than 2 feet.

Descent

If the characters wish to make Intelligence (Nature) checks about the Moonsea, this is what they know:

- DC 10 - The Moonsea is a large freshwater lake that may be up to several hundred feet deep.
- DC 12 - Light is unlikely to penetrate deeper than 30 feet, even during the day. Light spells underwater will have a greatly reduced radius.
- DC 14 - The upper 30 feet are cool, but it is nearly freezing below that.
- DC 16 - Large predators might be found in the depths. Things like large fish, eels, lampreys, as well as giant crawfish, leeches, and the larvae of giant insects. Some of these creatures won't like bright light.
- DC 18 - While it looks calm on the surface, there could be strong currents in the depths.

The descent will take 5 turns but may take more if the characters run into difficulty on the way. The adventurers can get advantage on some of these checks (or obviate them completely) with clever use of equipment, skills, or spells at the DM's discretion.

Turn by Turn on the Dive

Be sure to reward clever use of spells or equipment with advantage on these checks and saving throws, or by obviating them altogether. Druids who shapeshift into aquatic animals, paladins who summon aquatic mounts, and a character with a Ring of Swimming have advantage on these checks.

Turn One – Nothing happens.

You drop past the warmer upper layer and into the cold dark waters. There are some flickers of light from small bioluminescent creatures.

Turn Two - A strong current shakes the anchor chain. The adventurers will need to make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or get swept into a swarm of microscopic stinging venomous plankton. If so, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be under the effects of the poisoned condition for the next hour.

An incredibly strong current shakes this part of the anchor chain and a school of tiny creatures come with it. They swim around you, biting your flesh like a swarm of stinging flies. It is clear the Moonsea is full of terrors large and small!

Turn Three - The adventurers must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion from the cold water.

The water is icy cold, and you can feel it trying to sap your strength!

Turn Four - The adventurers must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be battered by the anchor chain taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage. Characters who successfully save only suffer half damage.

There must be some chop on the surface. The anchor chain bounces up and down, pulling out of your hands.

Turn Five - The adventurers must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or get separated from the rest of the group. If separated, they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion as they regroup with the rest of the adventurers.

The anchor has hooked onto a rock formation on the bottom of the Moonsea, but the chain has disturbed some sediment nearby reducing visibility to zero. If you get lost, it will take some time in the freezing water to find each other and the wreck.

The Wreck of the Eye of Akempus

The bottom of the Moonsea is cold, dark, and full of odd echoing metallic sounds. In an area of sandy bottom with three outcrops of dark brown stone the size of wagons you see a pile of timbers. The edges are softened and rounded with the passage of time, but you can see the outline of what must have been a hundred-foot-long warship. Spilled piles of stones lie next to ancient catapults. This must be the Eye of Akempus, but where is its bell?

The characters use their skills to maneuver through the wreck and find the bell. Be sure to narrate the skill checks as creatively as you can as the characters explore the wreck and encourage players to do something different each time rather than “re-use” skills.

Presented are some options but you are welcome to allow other pertinent skill checks and clever uses of spells and equipment to succeed at some of these skill checks. Remember you are empowered to modify the ability associated with a check, the DC of the skill checks, and/or give advantage or disadvantage as appropriate.

Keep track of the number of successes. Once the adventurers have six successes they find the bell. Every time the adventurers fail a check, roll on the “Failed Skill Checks While Searching the Eye of Akempus” table below.

Skill Checks for Searching the Eye of Akempus

Acrobatics DC 16 - You squeeze through a collapsed doorway, contorting your body to move through it, and verify that the ship’s bell is not in this cabin. You do find several skeletonized corpses, and one has some very expensive lapis and silver bracelets worth 500 GP.

Animal Handling DC 18 - You find a giant crayfish scavenging near the wreck. After spending some time with her you manage to convince her to dig under the midsection. While you don’t find the ship’s bell, you find several unbroken bottles of wine that are just over a thousand years old. They would be worth 750 GP to the right buyer.

Arcana DC 14 - Using your arcane senses to understand the swirls of the Weave around the wreck, you sense something in the forward area that might be the ship’s bell and encourage the group to check in that direction.

Athletics DC 14 - You break through one of the decks of the wreck and open a passage through to areas that were otherwise inaccessible.

History DC 16 - You recall some vague details on the architecture of the warships of Northkeep from over a millennium ago. After thinking about it for a bit, you realize that the ship’s bell would likely be forward, near the bowsprit.

Investigation DC 14 - Looking carefully through the wreckage, you go through it area by area and start eliminating areas that you’ve already searched and where you know the bell is not.

Nature DC 18 - Judging from the sediment and sand, and the position of the ship, it doesn’t look like this wreck has been disturbed much. The bell is probably

wherever it was originally.

Perception DC 14 - Using your keen senses, you scour through the wreckage looking for any hint of where the bell might be. While you don't see the bell, you find some jeweled scroll cases worth 500 GP.

Performance DC 18 - To get the best sound out of a bell, it should be somewhere un-enclosed, out on an open deck.

Survival DC 16 - It looks like a lot of the crew tried to get to the upper decks when the ship sank. If there was going to be treasure, one would have to squeeze through some narrow places below decks to get it.

Thieves' Tools DC 16 - While it doesn't help you find the bell, you find a locked chest that has fallen out of the officers' quarters. In it, you find a signet ring worth 750 GP and some personal effects.

Failed Skill Checks While Searching the Eye of Akempus

Roll 1d20 to determine the mishap:

- 1:** The character who failed the skill check must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion.
- 2-3:** The character who failed the skill check must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion.
- 4-5:** The character who failed the skill check must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion.
- 6-13:** No additional effects.
- 14-17:** Despite the cold and the darkness, you are resolved to succeed, and gain a point of inspiration.
- 18-19:** You only thought you failed! As you recover from the mishap, you find an important clue. This counts as a success.
- 20:** You only thought you failed! As you recover from the mishap, you find a golden bell...

Don't Forget to Loot!

Once the characters find the bell, they can continue to search for treasure. Assume any successful check - if reasonably explained - can pull up loot worth 500 GP up to a maximum of 2,500 GP total from the wreck. As this is the main way for the characters to earn money in this adventure, gently encourage them to look around. Note that they still suffer from the "Failed Skill Checks While Searching the Eye of Akempus" chart (18-20 are treated as 17s).

When the players reach 6 successes (or find the bell through the Failed Skill Checks While Searching the Eye of Akempus table), read or paraphrase the following.

You come across the rune-carved and untarnished golden bell of the Eye of Akempus. A map to Yarralumla Island is inscribed on the surface - clearly the place where it must be rung to open the portal. All you have to do to bring it up is to secure it to the anchor chain. Perhaps it's a good time to see if there are any other treasures on this ship?

Once the characters reach the surface:

Back on the Red Lock, the sharp-eyed drow on watch rush to get you hot drinks and towels so you can warm up after the dive.

Checks Made About the Bell

If the characters want to learn more about the bell, the following skill checks provide information. The characters may make these checks later in the adventure - perhaps during the fight with the crew of the Eye of Akempus in the next encounter.

Intelligence (Arcana)

- DC 14 - After close study, you sense a faint aura of conjuration magic around the bell.
- DC 16 - As most portals use conjuration to teleport, this could be a portal key. The magic seems to be gradually weakening.
- DC 18 - It would make sense that ringing the bell would serve as the portal key. The waning magic only has one or two uses left, but the magic is only expended when used properly and near the portal itself.

Intelligence (History)

- DC 14 - There were rumors that the captain of the Eye of Akempus was the most loyal servant of Akempus.
- DC 16 - The captain was Akempus' daughter, a war-leader of Northkeep who held off the orc forces for years. She was a spellcaster as well as a soldier.
- DC 18 - Her name was Angavel Kellondo, (ANG-ah-vell KELL-on-doh) and she was a sworn enemy of the followers of Gruumsh.
- DC 20 - Akempus betrayed Northkeep and opened the gates for the orc horde so that he could be overlord of the city. The orcs double crossed him and destroyed the city. If Angavel knew this, she'd swear vengeance against her father.

Intelligence (Religion)

- DC 14 - This magical item likely anchored the many spirits of the sailors that died on the Eye of Akempus.
- DC 16 - It seems only logical that the spirits of the drowned sailors will follow the bell. Be wary after nightfall.
- DC 18 - By ringing the bell and convincingly calling on the spirits of the dead to serve Northkeep, their mortal pledge may hold sway over them still. This will not deplete the magical power of the bell.

Treasure

The characters can loot a maximum of 2,500 GP from the wreck.



PART 5.

ALFRED THE BONE EATER

The flame-haired nymph on the bowsprit of the Red Lock seems to dance across the waves as the ship sails towards Yarralumla Island. After a half a day of sailing, there is another beautiful summer sunset as the orange disk of the sun sinks into the violet waters of the sea to the west. The smell of grilling fish, onions, and garlic emanates from the small galley at the back of the Red Lock.

The growling and grumbling of creaking timbers heralds a huge splash as the wreck of the Eye of Akempus surfaces above the waters of the Moonsea when the last rays of the sun fade. She is limned in eldritch green balefire and is crewed with skeletal figures draped in seaweed. As one, all the figures point at the exact location of the bell and the ghost ship veers towards you. The undead start loading catapults on the main deck.

Across the main deck, the ghostly captain gestures with her sword and commands a boarding party to swim up from the depths and start climbing up the side of the Red Lock.

The characters have had from late the previous night until sunset to take a long rest and remove one level of exhaustion.

Compare the characters' passive Wisdom (Perception) scores to 12 to see if they are surprised by the Eye of Akempus following them. If they made the Intelligence (Religion) checks to know the dead would be following them, they are not surprised - no check necessary.

Depending on player decisions and how many short or long rests were taken, it is possible that the characters are still under the effects of the Water Breathing spell cast by Prince Ulatha and/or exhaustion from exploring the Eye of Akempus.

There are several dozen undead crewmembers on the Eye of Akempus. Most of them are not involved in the fight. Be sure to stress the swarms of zombies,

wights, and revenants in the descriptions of the environment. The crew of the Red Lock are arming and firing flaming ballistae at the Eye of Akempus and keeping more of the swimming zombies, wights, and revenants from climbing on to the Red Lock. Amid the fray, two undead sailors leap onto the deck of the Red Lock to challenge the characters.

General Features

Light. It's a clear night, but there is no moonlight. The Red Lock's deck is brightly lit, 30 feet from it is dim light, and beyond that is darkness.

The Moonsea. The Moonsea has water dark as red wine at night. The freshwater sea is cool in the top 30 feet. The waves in this area are small and are generally less than 2 feet high.

Water Zombies. The water is full of swimming zombies from the Eye of Akempus. Anyone who is in the water must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or suffer 22 (4d10) points of damage from their gnashing teeth and scabbling claws (save for half) every turn until they leave the water. Climbing onto the Red Lock is a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

The Red Lock. The deck has barrels and coils of rope that are about 5' high and provide cover. The masts rise forty feet above the deck and it is a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to climb them. There are platforms 20 feet and 40 feet above the deck. The doors on the fore and aft ends of the deck lead to the interior of the ship.

The Eye of Akempus. The ghost ship has pulled up next to the Red Lock when combat begins, and the Eye's decks are dimly lit by greenish magic. If the characters wish to board, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw every round or take 11 (2d10) points of necrotic damage for every round they spend on her decks. The Eye has at least 20 zombies, wights, and revenants on the main deck. If the undead are killed, more will replace them at initiative count 20 in the following round. As the ship has been underwater for centuries, the ship and all its occupants have resistance to fire damage and advantage on saving throws against fire.

Mists. The mists of Barovia cloak Alfred the Bone Eater. Each round after he is reduced to half hit points, the mists create a 20-foot-radius sphere of fog centered on his location. The sphere spreads around corners. It lasts for one hour or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it as per the Fog Cloud spell. The fog clouds are stationary (unless moved by wind) and appear on his initiative centered on him without him having to spend an action to do so. The area in the fog is heavily obscured and blocks vision entirely. Creatures in the fog suffer from the blinded condition (can't see, automatically fail ability checks that require sight, attack rolls have disadvantage, attack rolls against the creature have advantage). Alfred the Bone Eater can see clearly through the fog cloud. The influence of the mists prevents Alfred the Bone Eater from being the target of the spell Banishment. The mists also give all undead advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Checks Made about the Eye of Akempus

The characters will likely want to learn more about the ghost ship. If they do not ask to make any of these skill checks then skip this section. The characters may wish to make some checks about the bell as well; please refer to the previous section for those.

Intelligence (Arcana)

- DC 14 - This ghost ship is empowered by the wrath of the undead who were disturbed when the bell was removed. Giving the bell back to them won't appease them - they want blood.
- DC 16- Though the undead are fixated on the bell, it may also have some power over them if you ring it. This will not deplete the power of the bell.
- DC 18- Given the flux of necromantic energy, and the relative delta between the spiritual grounding channels, plus the current phase of the moons (of course) you think that the ancient wreck used up most of its power chasing the Red Lock. If you can only hold out for a couple of minutes, they will sink again.

Intelligence (History)

- Refer to Checks Made about the Bell on page 14.

Intelligence (Religion)

- DC 13 - A lot of the undead over there look like some sort of zombie. You're going to need radiant damage to take them down for good or they might get back up again.

- DC 15 - Poison won't hurt any of the undead. The officers look like wights. You're going to need magic or silvered weapons to hurt them.
- DC 17 - The wights are the real threat here.

Alfred the Bone Eater Arrives

When the fight starts, **Alfred the Bone Eater** is hidden unless the characters have a passive Wisdom (Perception) check of 17 or better. He will spend the first round moving to get into a good place to fire (with advantage if hidden) on a vulnerable-looking character, such as a lightly armored spellcaster. Once he fires, he will be visible. When he is spotted, give the players this description.

Unlike the rest of the crew of the Eye of Akempus, there's a sharpshooter who looks alive, other than the skeletal wings growing out of his back. The human notices your regard, and mockingly salutes you as he quickly loads the hand crossbow and flies up to get a good shot. The hand crossbow flickers with flames as magical fire envelopes the bolt.

When Alfred the Bone Eater is at half his hit points, a mist comes up that benefits him and hampers the characters. This is exactly like the spell, Fog Cloud, except Alfred can see through the mist. A DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check can verify that this is related to the mists of Barovia - a strange remote demiplane of horror full of vampires and hemmed in by mists.

Ringing the Bell

It takes one action to ring the bell. The first time the bell is rung, the crew of the Eye of Akempus (but not Alfred the Bone Eater) are distracted by memories of their former life and have disadvantage on all attacks for a full round. Subsequent soundings of the bell have no effect on the crew.

After the bell is rung, Angavel Kellondo (**a revenant**) can be reasoned with to join the heroes with a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) roll. If the character attempting this roll tells her that her father betrayed Northkeep, then give them advantage on this roll (and lower the DC if the roleplaying is good). If Angavel Kellondo joins the characters, she will fight the rest of the crew of the Eye of Akempus.

Ship to Ship Combat

On initiative count 20, roll 1d20 and the characters are affected by the ship-to-ship combat table. If Angavel Kellondo joins the characters, make this check with advantage.

Ship to Ship Combat Table

- 1:** The Eye of Akempus rams the Red Lock! Characters must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage, saving for half. Half of the crew of the Red Lock is killed. This result can only happen once. If another 1 is rolled, treat it as a 2.
- 2-3:** Seaweed-covered boulders slam into the deck very close to you! All characters must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) points of bludgeoning damage, saving for half. At the DMs discretion, some characters who are not on the decks (flying, for instance) may make this save with advantage or automatically avoid the catapult fire.
- 4-5:** A green bolt of deadly energy streaks across the decks! Roll a die to determine which character is targeted, then roll to hit for a +8 ranged attack which deals 22 (4d10) points of necromantic damage if it hits.
- 6-7:** The necromantic resonance of the Eye of Akempus starts to leech life energy away! All characters must make a DC 13 constitution saving throw or suffer 11 (2d10) points of necromantic damage. A successful saving throw indicates the character has shaken off the necromantic energy and takes no damage.
- 8-13:** One of the endless number of swimming undead in the waters below the Red Lock hurls a knife at a character (roll a die to randomly determine which character). The knife is a +6 ranged attack and does 11 (2d10) piercing damage if successful.
- 14-17:** A character sees a handy coil of rope (roll a die to randomly determine which character) and can throw it on top of one of the enemy combatants. That enemy is restrained by the rope.
- 18-19:** An enemy is very close to the secondary anchor. A character (roll a die to randomly determine which character) can shove that enemy into the anchor chain, which will cause the anchor to slip overboard and taking that enemy with it. That enemy is swept off the deck for one turn and takes 22 (4d10) points of damage. (The DM is encouraged to make up an alternate scenario - or have the players make up one - that results in an enemy getting pushed overboard and taking 4d10 points of damage, such as a water barrel breaking loose).

20: The deck shifts and heaves, and the yardarm swings around wildly. A character (roll a die to randomly determine which character) can trip an enemy so that the yardarm crushes his or her skull. (The DM is encouraged to make up an alternate scenario - or have the players make up one - that kills one enemy, such as pushing him into the line of fire of one of the Red Lock's ballistae.)

Suggested Tactics

You may choose to use these tactics if you believe it is appropriate for your game. Alfred the Bone Eater uses his flaming hand crossbow (fire ray) from a distance and focuses on taking out spellcasters. If he sees a big warrior in heavy armor without religious symbols on it, he will try his Fiendish Charm and tell that character to attack the least-armored characters in the party.

The undead sailors are soaking wet from their long residency under the Moonsea, are resistant to fire damage, and enjoy advantage on saving throws versus fire. The undead sailors will focus on ranged combatants who are shooting at Alfred the Bone Eater. Note that this fight will end after five rounds as the Eye of Akempus runs out of necromantic energy.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

Very Weak. Change the undead sailors from revenants to zombies

Weak. Change the undead sailors to wights

Strong. Add a third undead sailor. Each revenant picks one of the characters as the target they are sworn to take revenge against.

Very Strong. Add four undead sailors. Each revenant picks one of the characters as the target they are sworn to take revenge against.

Developments

Regardless of the state of the battle, at the end of the fifth round, the necromantic energy that empowers the Eye of Akempus gives out and she sinks beneath the violet waves of the Moonsea. Any undead on board the Red Lock jump overboard and Alfred the Bone Eater flies off.

If the boarding party overwhelms the characters, the Red Lock flees, killing half of the remaining crew. Drake Holmstrumph takes the bodies back to Elmwood to be raised by the Church of Bane.

If Alfred the Bone Eater dies and if the characters want to search his body, they find series of water-

stained letters. His body floats after the combat, but his flaming crossbow is lost to the depths. See **HANDOUT 4: JOURNAL OF ALFRED THE BONE EATER**. When the players read the handout, the characters can make an Intelligence (Religion) or Wisdom (Insight) check to understand the following:

- DC 12 – Alfred became evil after his time in the Amber Temple.
- DC 14 – He wasn't alone, and the entire group of adventurers became evil.
- DC 16 – This is likely the result of a very powerful curse or evil divine magic.

If the characters managed to convince Angavel Kellondo to join them, she will talk to the characters for a short while after the fight. She knows everything in the “Checks Made about the Eye of Akempus” section, and “Checks Made About the Bell” in the previous encounter. She can also tell the adventurers that to open the defenses of Northkeep, they must sail to Yarralumla Island, and ring the bell in the channel in the middle of the island. Before the city sank, that would open a way into the harbor. She's not sure what that will do now. After talking to the characters, she feels a call to return to the depths, and then leaps back into the Moonsea.

Saving Alfred the Bone Eater?

Alfred's possession by Tarakamedes, the Grave Wyrms (and Lathai the Heartseeker's possession by Drizlash, the Nine-Eyed Spider) can only be cured by a Wish spell. They will not volunteer or submit to be cured willingly. If the adventurers can keep these powerful enemies alive and get them to civilization, Granthar Copperhelm of the Order of the Gauntlet will take the prisoners and see that they're properly (lawfully and kindly) incarcerated and interrogated at an Order of the Gauntlet chapterhouse far from Elmwood.



PART 6.

LATHAI THE HEARTSEEKER

The opening of the magical passage is a small island that has been used by smugglers for hundreds of years, and is a day's sail from the fight with the Eye of Akempus (during which the characters can enjoy a long rest). The adventurers discover that their enemies are one step ahead of them and have set up an ambush here.

Rain blows nearly sideways across the Moonsea as the Red Lock approaches Yarralumla island. The crew of the Red Lock has changed into oilskins to keep out the frigid rains that pelt the sturdy ship. Drake Holmstrumph stumps up to you in the storm. "Yarralumla Island has been a place that various 'small businesses' in the Moonsea have used as a meeting point for years. It's got a channel in the middle. That would get us into the lee of some of the rocks there and get us some relief from the storm. No good place to anchor outside the channel - the storm will beat us into the rocks!"

With a fair amount of deft sailing, the Red Lock sails into the channel. Once protected from the storm by the rocks of the island, the ship puts down a couple of anchors in the shallow channel. Though the wind is reduced here, rain still falls in thick sheets, making it hard to see anything. Now all you need to do is find the ancient gate...

Ideally, the adventurers will get off the Red Lock and start looking for the ancient gate. If they delay, have Drake Holmstrumph point out that the evil adventurers have been raiding up and down the coast, and delaying even by a night might cost lives. If the adventurers refuse, then Drake harrumphs off, and the night passes quietly. The storm subsides into a long slow rain the next day with fog (same visibility conditions). However, by this point Lathai the Heartseeker has had a chance to study the adventurers, and she and her band **roll all of their attacks on the first two rounds with advantage.**

As soon as the adventurers disembark to start looking around the island, **Lathai the Heartseeker**

and her two **master thieves** move to ambush the adventurers. Lathai's weapons are coated in **drow poison** that lasts for three rounds. She and her team make stealth checks at advantage. Compare those to the passive perception checks of the adventurers.

General Features

Atmosphere. It is a stormy rainy night, with wind, thunder, and lightning. The Red Lock's deck is dimly lit, and she exudes dim light from her lamps for 15'. Beyond that is darkness. Attacks and skill checks made at greater than 30 feet have disadvantage (except for area of effect spells) as this area is obscured by rain.

The Moonsea. The Moonsea has water dark as wine at night. It is a freshwater sea. The water temperature is cool in the top 30 feet. The waves in this area are medium-to-large sized during the storm (5 - 10 feet high).

Mists. The mists of Barovia cloak Lathai the Heartseeker and her team. They make stealth checks with advantage and are considered to be obscured. The influence of the mists prevents Lathai the Heartseeker from being the target of the spell Banishment.

Height. The island is rocky and has several plateaus at varying heights. It's a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move up or down from one level to another unless the character has a climb speed. If a character fails going up, he or she stays at their current elevation. If a character fails going down they take 7 (2d6) damage from falling and sharp rocks.

Cover. Line of sight will give characters 1 level up from their attacker half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws) and line of sight will give characters 2 levels up from their attacker three quarters cover (+5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws). Lathai the Heartseeker has a 40' climb speed due to her pact.

Vegetation. There is some scrubby vegetation on the island. Treat the vegetation as difficult terrain that provides half cover.

Suggested Tactics

You may choose to use these tactics if you believe it is appropriate for your game. Lathai the Heartseeker and her backup start in places where they have good cover because of height and shoot at the characters for

the first couple of rounds to soften them up. Once the characters start to engage them, they will stay close to each other and seek to get into melee range with the party as quickly as they can. Lathai knows that her poisoned blade is more likely to work on spellcasters, rogues, and lightly-armored dexterous fighters because of their possibly lower constitution and will seek to engage them rather than beefy well-armored front-line fighters. She is without mercy and will attack unconscious creatures that are making death saves. Lathai and her crew will fight to the death.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

Very Weak. Lathai the Heartseeker is a swashbuckler. Replace both master thieves with swashbucklers. Lathai the Heartseeker's weapon is coated in Drow Poison (in addition to the normal poison) that will last 1 round.

Weak. Lathai the Heartseeker is a Master Thief. Replace both master thieves with swashbucklers. Lathai the Heartseeker's weapon is coated in Drow Poison (in addition to the normal poison) that will last 2 rounds.

Strong. Lathai the Heartseeker's weapon is coated in Purple Worm Poison (in addition to the normal poison) that will last for 2 rounds. Other combatants have Drow Poison that will last 2 rounds.

Very Strong. Add four master thieves. All combatants have weapons coated in Purple Worm Poison (in Lathai's case, in addition to the normal poison) that will last for 3 rounds.

Drow Poison (Injury). This poison is typically made only by the drow, and only in a place far removed from sunlight. A creature subjected to this poison 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 creature is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake. There is no way for characters to loot poison from this encounter.

Purple Worm Poison (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated purple worm. A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. There is no way for characters to loot poison from this encounter.

Developments

If the adventurers are successful, move to the conclusion. If not, the Red Lock flees with the bell (again) and comes back a few days later to find Lathai and her crew have left. Drake Holmstrumph collects the adventurers' bodies and gear and takes them to Elmwood. They do not have a chance to talk to the ghost of Lathai the Heartseeker, but Aliana Mathnir happily welcomes them back to town, and asks them to rest a day or so from the ordeal before trying the portal at Yarralumla island.

Conclusion

Lathai the Heartseeker's Ghost

If the adventurers kill Lathai the Heartseeker, her ghost appears to speak to them. She tries to communicate her desire to talk, but if the characters attempt to fight her or turn her, she disappears never to be seen again.

In the misty rainy night, a wavering shape comes into being. The ambiguous shape of the drow ranger comes into focus. "Thank you and may Eilistraee light all your paths with silver. I was unable to fight off the influence of the dead god and it has driven me into terrible deeds. I fear death was the only way out of the pact. Look, Nesbit Gath and Patrin know you're coming for them. That's why they sent me and Alfred to stop you. And... and it's not their fault. Something in the Amber Temple... They offered us so much power and I thought it would be enough to take on the vampire. He was evil, so there was no price too large to pay to take him down. And I was so wrong." "The portal to where Nesbit and Patrin wait only opens on the spring tide – four days from now. Rest and gather your strength, you will need all of it – and cleverness – to defeat them."

She knows everything from Alfred's diary, and can discuss the events of what happened to the band of adventurers in Ravenloft. If you have read the Curse of Strahd hardback adventure, then that is a fair summary. If someone asks why she is called "The Heartseeker" it is because her beloved was killed by a drow priestess and Lathai swore she would forever seek that which was dearest to her beloved's heart, and to seek to do good in her memory.

The Portal

The adventurers can explore the portal area. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can indicate that the two high peaks on the south end of the island form part of a portal. However, due to the flux of water magic through the Weave, it can only be opened during spring tide, just after the new moon, which happens in four days.

Word from the Mainland

A storm-bedraggled seagull plops onto the deck not long after the fight. The animal caws in a strange mockery of the sheriff's voice: "Aliana Mathnir here. Come back to Elmwood. Have something for you. And some more people to help as well. Six words left - see you soon." One of the sailors picks it up and starts feeding it crumbs by hand and the exhausted bird settles into her arms.

Any druid, bard, or ranger can identify that as an animal messenger spell. Drake Holmstrumph can as well because the Druids in the Grove of Eldath use them somewhat frequently.

The trip to Elmwood proceeds in rainy, gloomy weather, but is without incident. When you arrive, Aliana whisks you off to Elmwood Hall. The new smell of the unfinished wood in the building is still strong. "The Temple of Selûne wants to help," she says. "This necklace was in their reliquary. It belonged to the priestess, but she was killed this spring during that Moander thing, and the remaining clergy say that they want you to have it for your help." She passes over a midnight-blue velvet bag and inside is a clearly magical necklace strung with black and white pearls and blue gems.

Aliana Mathnir asks the adventurers to tell her what happened, and specifically about what motivated the evil adventurers. This is a good chance for the characters to discuss how they feel about the possibility that these other adventurers aren't evil but are only cursed. She will move the conversation along as needed as long as the players are having fun talking about the moral dilemma in character.

"We'll give you a day to recover, but then we need to get into Northkeep, and put a stop to this Nesbit Gath fellow."

Roleplaying Aliana Mathnir

Aliana is a short, muscular woman with blue eyes and brown hair that is kept at shoulder length. Her skin is a rich brown color. She has a scar along her face that she got in the Burning. Prior to the Burning, she was a deputy, and took over when the constable was killed. She always offers a smile in greeting and tries to get along with everyone. She likes to keep a neat and efficiently-running town, and is more than happy to overlook minor, nonviolent offenses, or let them go with time in the drunk tank or fines to make up for damages. She is friendly and honest and likes to make everyone feel that they can come to her with any issues concerning the town.

Quote: "Look, just get along, okay? We have bigger problems to deal with."

Treasure

Necklace of Prayer Beads

Rewards

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

Experience (Min/Max XP: 4500/6000)

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.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Marel (Deep Scion)	700
Giant Crocodile	1,800
Cambion	1,800
Revenant	1,800
Wight	700
Zombie	50
Assassin	3,900
Master Thief	1,800
Swashbuckler	700

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Char
Solving the Puzzle	600
Finding the Bell	600

Treasure

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

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Reward From Drake Holmstrumph	500
Loot from The Eye of Akempus	2,500 maximum

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.

Necklace of Prayer Beads

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a cleric, druid, or paladin)

This necklace has magic beads made from aquamarine (1 bead), black pearl (2 beads), and blue topaz (1 bead). It also has many nonmagical beads made from white pearls and moonstone. If a magic bead is removed from the necklace, that bead loses its magic. To use a magical bead, you must be wearing the necklace. Each bead contains a spell that you can cast from it as a bonus action (using your spell save DC if a save is necessary). Once a magic bead's spell is cast, that bead can't be used again until the next dawn.

- 1 Bead of Blessing (aquamarine): *Bless*
- 2 Beads of Curing (black pearls): *Cure wounds* (2nd level) or *lesser restoration*
- 1 Bead of Favor (blue topaz): *Greater restoration*

Player Rewards

For completing this mission, the characters earn downtime and renown as described in the D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG).

Story Award

The characters have the opportunity to earn the following story award:

Mourning Prince Ulatha

If Prince Ulatha is killed or if the characters are overcome by the Marel, give them this story award. Consequences will be detailed in a future Baldman Games Elmwood adventure.

Alfred Lives

If the characters did not kill Alfred the Bone Eater, then give them this story award. Consequences will be detailed in a future Baldman Games Elmwood adventure.

Lathai Lives

If the characters did not kill Lathai the Heartseeker, then give them this story award. Consequences will be detailed in a future Baldman Games Elmwood adventure.

DM Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG).

Appendix: NPC / Monster Statistics

Encounter 2 Stat Blocks

Marel (Deep Scion)

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. and swim 40 ft. in hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	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.

Giant Gar (Giant Crocodile)

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)

Speed 30ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Multiattack. The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Prince Ulatha

Medium humanoid (merfolk), neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 10ft., swim 40ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Amphibious. The merfolk can breathe air and water.

Actions

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1 d6) piercing damage, or 4 (1d8) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Encounter 5 Stat Blocks

Alfred the Bone Eater (Cambion)

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (scale mail)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

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

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

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

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

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

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

Actions

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

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

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

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

The influence of the mists prevents Alfred the Bone Eater from being the target of the spell Banishment.

Wight

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

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

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

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

Undead Sailor (Revenant)

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8+64)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7, Wis +6, Cha +7

Damage Resistances necrotic, psychic

Damage Immunities poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. The revenant regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the revenant takes fire or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the revenant's next turn. The revenant's body is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Rejuvenation. When the revenant's body is destroyed, its soul lingers. After 24 hours, the soul inhabits and animates another corpse on the same plane of existence and regains all its hit points. While the soul is bodiless, a wish spell can be used to force the soul to go to the afterlife and not return.

Turn Immunity. The revenant is immune to effects that turn undead.

Vengeful Tracker. The revenant knows the distance to and the direction of any creature against which it seeks revenge, even if the creature and the revenant are on different planes of existence. If the creature being tracked by the revenant dies, the revenant knows.

Actions

Multiattack. The creature makes two fist attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature against which the revenant has sworn vengeance, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the revenant can grapple the target (escape DC 14) provided the target is Large or smaller.

Vengeful Glare. The revenant targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it and against which it has sworn vengeance. The target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target is paralyzed until the revenant deals damage to it, or until the end of the revenant's next turn. When the paralysis ends, the target is frightened of the revenant for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if it can see the revenant, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success.

Encounter 6 Stat Blocks

Lathai the Heartseeker (Assassin)

Medium Drow

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., 40' climb

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +11

Damage Resistances poison

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Thieves' cant plus any two languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assassinate. During its first turn, the assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The assassin deals an extra 13 (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 assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The assassin makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Lathai the Heartseeker has a 40' climb speed due to her pact. The influence of the mists prevents Lathai the Heartseeker from being the target of the spell Banishment.

Master Thief

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any one language (usually Common) plus thieves' cant

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 plus poison as described above.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus poison as described above.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. The thief halves the damage that it takes from an attack that hits it. The thief must be able to see the attacker.

Swashbuckler

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

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11(+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lightfooted. The swashbuckler can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Suave Defense. While the swashbuckler is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The swashbuckler makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its rapier OR one attack with its light crossbow

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

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus poison as described above.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus poison as described above.

Handout 1: The Trail of Nesbit Gath

The trail of the evil adventurers has led to the sunken castle of Northkeep. However, a magical barrier surrounds the castle. Aliana Mathnir, constable of Elmwood, sent word to your group that the sea elves of the Moonsea have information on how to enter Northkeep. Your services were requested to continue to battle the menace that preyed upon the hamlets, and to find a way to enter Northkeep.

You were paid 500 gold pieces to board The Red Lock in Elmwood and have a letter entitling you to salvage found in your quest to find a way into Northkeep. Next stop – the sea elves!

Handout 2: Hired by Aliana Mathnir

Aliana Mathnir, the constable of Elmwood, has put out a call for adventurers. The details were slim. When you met in her office in Elmwood, she explained a group of evil adventurers has come to the Moonsea from a place called Barovia and have been raiding the coast. Some of them were stopped on their way to rejoin the others in the sunken city of Northkeep. When scouts went to investigate Northkeep, they found it surrounded by an impenetrable barrier of magical energy.

Aliana Mathnir arranged for your party to travel by ship to meet with sea elves who have information about how to enter Northkeep. You were paid 500 gold pieces to board The Red Lock in Elmwood and have a letter entitling you to salvage found in your quest to find a way into Northkeep. Next stop – the sea elves!

Handout 3A: Elven Salvage Notes

Notes indicate that the bell of the Eye of Akempus could be used to enter Northkeep via a portal on Yarralumla island. The directions to the location of the wreck are encoded.

VJГЕ VГ> ЁОJГ<OV □ЄФ>П ЄС □ЄФ>ПЎООГ

VJГЕ □Г□□ ЁОJГ<OV □JV> ЄС >ПJ>

ЛЛГЗУ >V□□>Є С□□> <Г >НО ЗJV>, <Є<
VГЕЕ V□□ J F□□C JUE<> J ЁОJГ<O J□J J
ПJЕC >Є >НО □ЄФ>П

СЄЕЕЄV >ПJ> F□□C ЗЄV□ >Є >НО VE<>ПV□V>
>Є JUE<> СГΛO П<□□F□□ З□J СГC>Є С□□>
Г□ З□□>П

>НО VFOLEW ЄС >НО O<O ЄС JЎ□□Г<V ГV
П<□Г □□ >ПFOO V>Є□□ VГГFOV >Є >НО V□V>

Handout 3B: Prince Ulatha's Clue

The prince says that his grandmother, who was a famous explorer, joked that this was the clue to the cypher.



Handout 4: Journal on Alfred the Bone Eater

Contained within the journal is the following information:

Alfred and a group of six other adventurers got lost in a mist and ended up in a land called Barovia, which was ruled by a fearsome vampire. Together they stood against the vampire but were defeated and scattered.

Rumor told of a temple of amber high in the mountains, where the vampire had gained his power. Grimly determined, the band scaled the mountains and found the temple to be a tomb of dead gods.

Alfred contacted the dead god Tarakamedes and was given the power of flight. The cost of this gift was that all food turned to ash on his tongue save bone. His writings at this time express doubt and horror at his choice, but then document his slow slide towards evil. He was neither alone in his bargain nor in accepting his new power, as all seven of the adventurers made dark deals with the vestiges of the dead gods in the Amber Temple.

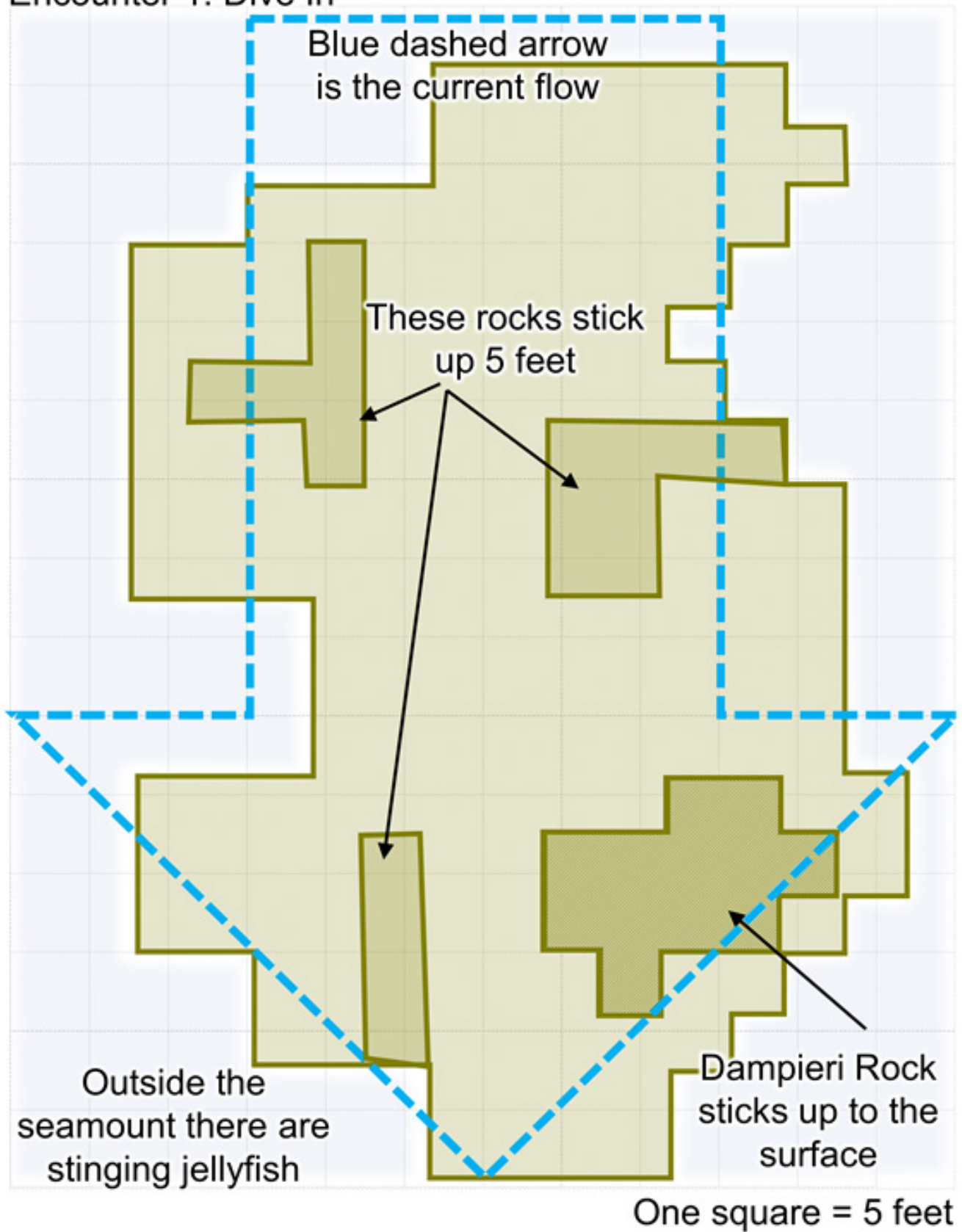
As they grew in power, the wizard Nesbit Gath led them as they slaughtered the vampire's pawns and the innocents of Barovia alike, and eventually defeated the vampire himself. With the lord of the realm displaced, the adventurers found they could leave back to Faerûn – and nothing could stand in their way.

You learn the following about the adventurers that left this land called Barovia:

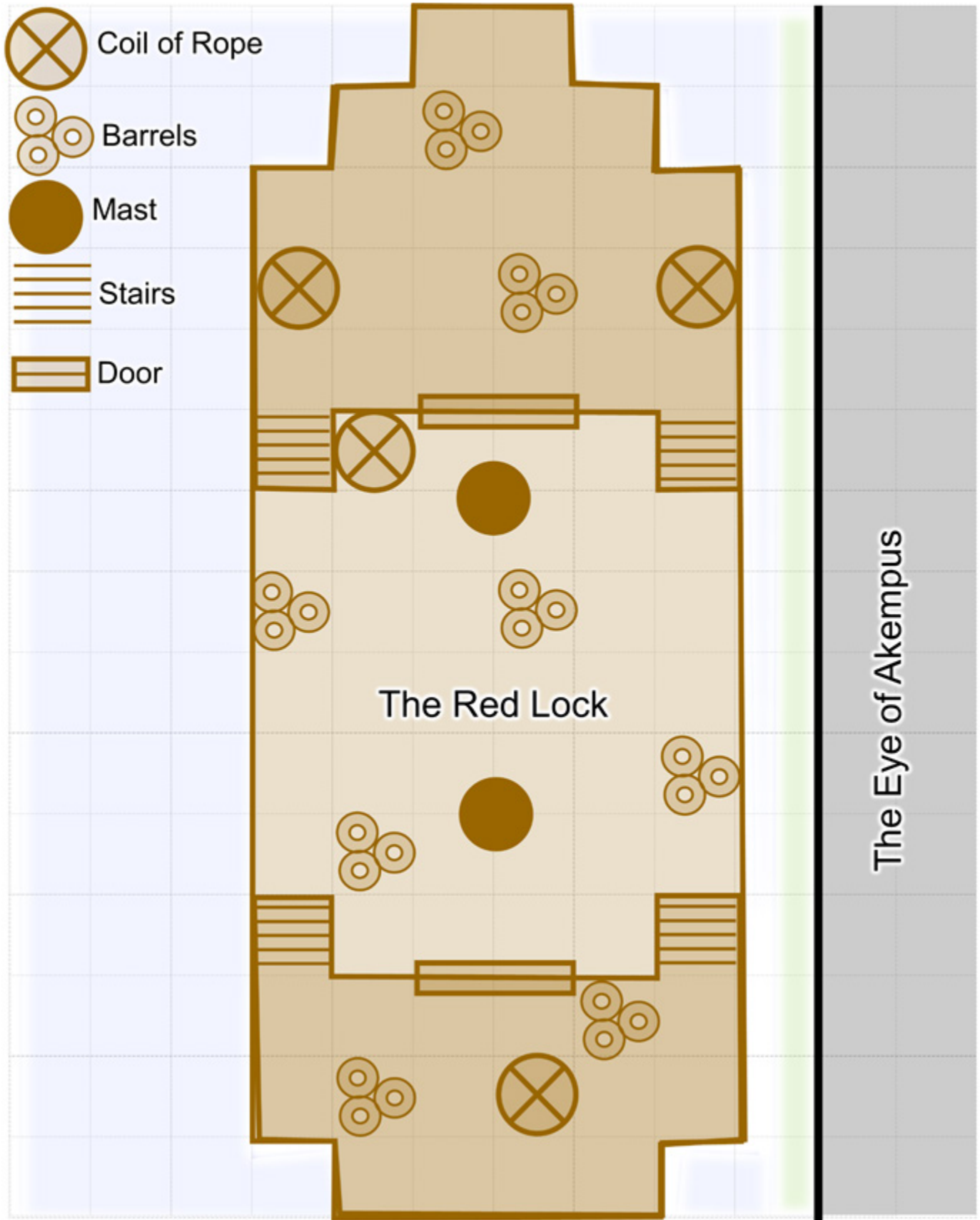
- Nesbit Gath, a gnome wizard, cares only for acquiring new magic and arcane knowledge. His dark bargain was for one of eternal life and infinite power, if only he had the strength to complete a complex ritual.
- Constance Trentham, a half elf noble, cares for tradition to be upheld and political power to be within her grasp. The magic of the dead gods gave her the power of storms.
- Olwain Jorudel, an elven warden, found power over nature and devils from his dark deal.
- Skamos, a tiefling warlock, was gifted great strength from her bargain.
- Patrin, a dragonborn paladin, was given extraordinary force of personality but at the cost of never being able to compromise.
- Lathai the Heartseeker, a drow assassin, sought a bounty on the vampire lord. Her foul bargain gave her the power to crawl across any surface like a spider.

DM Maps

Encounter 1: Dive In

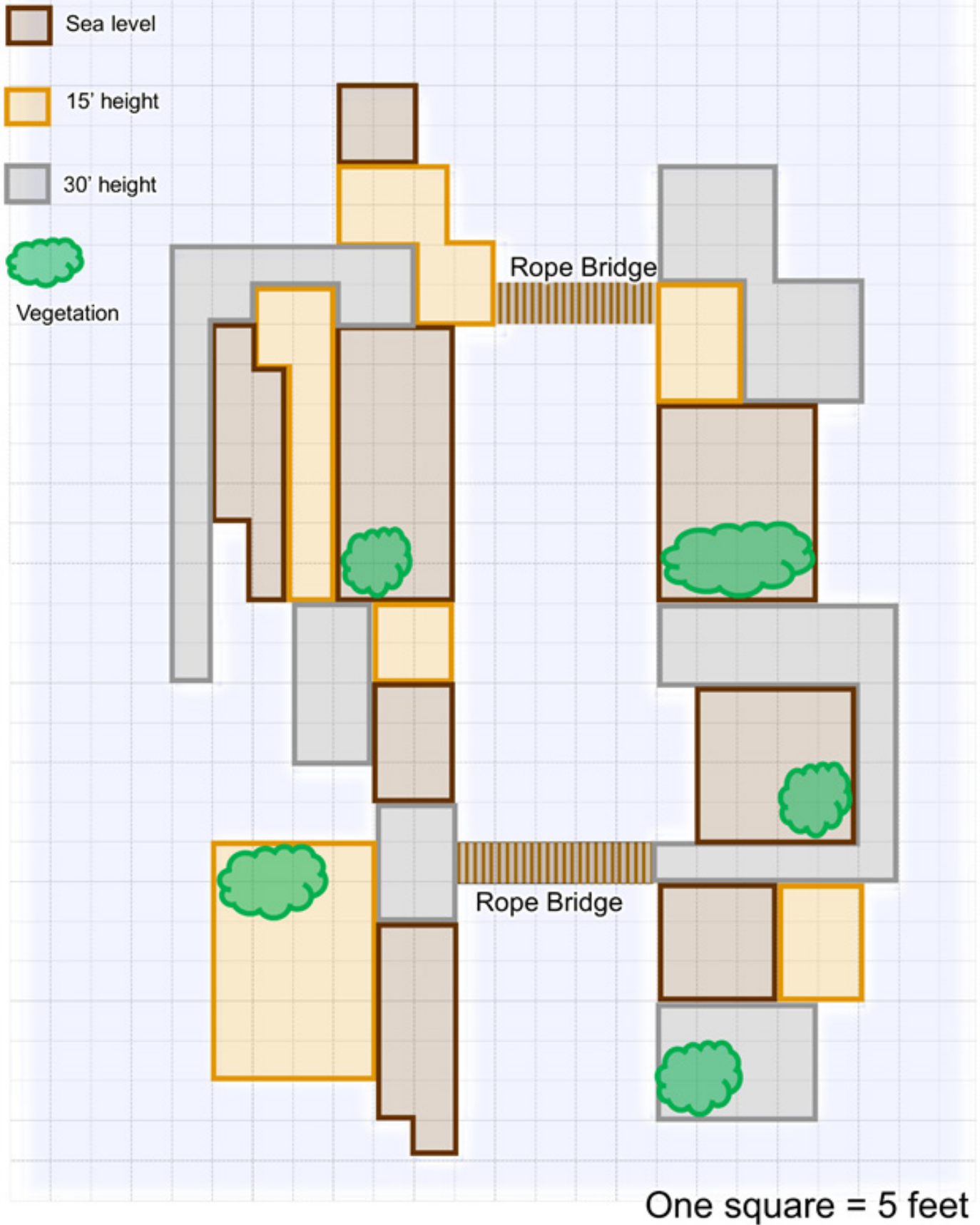


Encounter 5: Alfred the Bone-Eater



One square = 5 feet

Encounter 6: Lathai the Heartseeker



Appendix

Elmwood at a Glance

DMs can use this information as needed to help flesh out encounters in Elmwood proper.

Population. Approximately 1,500 and growing.

Races. Humans are the most numerous demographic (50%). Elves (15%) and half-elves (25%) are the most common nonhumans.

Alignment. Elmwood tends toward lawful (as influenced by Mulmaster) and towards neutral.

	LAW	NEUTRAL	CHAOS
GOOD	8%	31%	8%
NEUTRAL	18%	18%	0%
EVIL	10%	7%	0%

History of Elmwood - Elmwood is an old town which was founded 1,300 years ago. It has no valuable natural resources worth stealing (like gems or precious metals). The long history of the town is both peaceful and boring. They have been exporting fish and fine elm wood to Mulmaster for centuries. As Mulmaster grew in size and might, Elmwood became a vassal of the “City of Danger”. The nobility of Mulmaster (particularly the Culkin family) bought some of the land and began to manage it directly. About two years ago. The Cult of the Eternal Flame accidentally detonated a devastation orb in Elmwood. When the orb detonated, it created a 1-mile-wide area of intense, extreme dry heat for a full day. Wildfires started within the first hour. Anyone who didn’t flee was caught in the fires. For the next hellish day, people tried to save what they could from the burning. Most of the population was killed, and the vegetation and buildings were burned.

Elmwood Today - In the wake of “The Burning,” Elmwood was destroyed, but the survivors decided to rebuild. Since then, houses and inns and industries have been rebuilt, and the land cleared by the Burning has been turned into a patchwork of farms. The area is alive with the sound of hammering all day as new buildings are built.

The various disasters happening around the Moonsea in Phlan, Hillsfar, Mulmaster, and the Underdark have led to a refugee crisis in the area – but Elmwood needs people! The unstated policy is that anyone is welcome, as long as they are willing to keep the peace and work the land.

Culture - Crime is relatively rare, due, to the Order of the Gauntlet and the Lords’ Alliance lending their influence and manpower to peacekeeping in Elmwood. There is also a strong social pressure for everyone to do their part for the common good because the memories of the Burning are still fresh.

There is friction between the survivors and the refugees. The survivors are having to process their whole social order changing. While the survivors are sometimes not good hosts, the refugees are sometimes not good guests.

Climate - Like the rest of the Moonsea region, Elmwood is quite cool (consider the climate to be similar to Montreal, Canada). Elmwood is cool in the summer (highs about 70°F, 20°C) and cold in the winter (highs around 20°F, -6°C).

Economy - Elmwood exports timber and fish and there is a small merchant fleet that calls Elmwood home. While Elmwood now produces some crops, meat, and dairy, they still must import food until agricultural production becomes self-sustaining. Goats and sheep do well in Elmwood, as they are small enough to be herded into barns during the long cold winter. Industry in Elmwood is starting to grow given the need to rebuild. Any complex specialty items must be purchased in Mulmaster.

Government - Elmwood has never been big enough to have much of a formal system of government. In the past, a constable was chosen by popular assent. Given that the rebuilding is a much larger effort, Elmwood has expanded its government services. The constable has appointed six deputies. These officials can arrest lawbreakers, as well as assemble and lead a militia.

Organizations

Refugee Groups - There are semi-organized groups of Phlan, Hillsfar, and Drow refugees.

Survivors - The Elmwood survivors tend to stick together.

Elmwood Council - The Council meets every week or so. The Elmwood council consists of: Aliana Mathnir (Constable), Alksuth Cork (Head of Sailfollowers), Aranda Fletcher (Head of Greenstriders), Drake Holmstrumph (Leader of the Survivors), Kala Namak (Deputy, Leader of Hillsfar Refugees), Larissa Aerasumé (Priestess of Selûne), Nils Sankt (Priest of Bane), Shayad (Priestess of Chauntea), Thyra Stoneshoulders (Leader of Phlan Refugees), and Yao Seiju (Head of the Shield Trading Company).

Greenstriders - The Greenstriders are a semi-official professional organization of foresters and scouts that cooperate with each other to bring in timber.

Sailfollowers - The Sailfollowers are a tightly organized group of shipping captains, fishers and sailors. They bargain as a group to make sure shipping deals are handled fairly and to prevent arguments over fishing grounds.

Semyon and Daughters Bank - This bank has underwritten most of the loans in Elmwood, so it's in their best interest to see that the town is protected, well managed, and prosperous so people can pay back those loans.

Shield Trading Company - This is a small merchant house that has opened up a warehouse, an inn, and a trade office in Elmwood to capitalize on trade in the area.

The Factions

The Harpers - want to make sure the refugees are not abused and are not cultists of the dragon or elemental evil, or mad. The contact for the Harpers is Ragnir Nejit, the innkeep of the Silvery Gem.

The Order of the Gauntlet - has two major goals. The first is to check the influence of the Church of Bane and to promote justice and peace in Elmwood during the rebuilding. The faction contact for the Order of the Gauntlet is Granthar Copperhelm who runs the local shrine to Tempus.

The Emerald Enclave - is making sure that the farms are set up appropriately, and that people aren't taking too much timber from the forest for rebuilding. Rogon Stragoth is the official faction contact. The druids circle in the Grove of Eldath is very friendly with the Emerald Enclave.

The Lords' Alliance - want to boost trade and security so that the area is peaceful and prosperous. Norin Steelstrike is the faction contact for the Lords' Alliance. She works at the Shield Trading Company.

The Zhentarim - are making money and gaining influence over important people in the area. The banker from Semyon and Daughters - Fiorei Semyon - is the faction contact for the Zhentarim.

Important Locations

Elmwood Hall - is a new, sturdy two-story building made out of elmwood. The downstairs hosts the offices for the city officials. The upstairs is the Constable's office and home.

The Grove of Eldath - was a shelter during the Burning, and the survivors are grateful to the druids there. The grove itself was mostly burned to the ground, except for thirteen giant elm trees.

Karsure's Axelworks and Smithy - produces fine elmwood: wagons, carriages, wheels, and various metalwork (but not weapons). The smith can silver weapons for normal costs.

The Last Book Boardinghouse (poor 2 sp/day) - is a ramshackle mansion that was not burned entirely to the ground, and has been partially repaired. The rooms are very basic, but they're clean. The boardinghouse does not serve food.

Moline's Sundries and Equipment - sells adventuring gear, weapons and armor in the Players Handbook worth less than 100 GP. A variety of goods is displayed through the front windows.

Oghma's Ointments and Unguents - is run by the only apothecary in town. It sells alchemist's supplies and other reasonable alchemy and herbalism items.

The Phoenix House (wealthy 4 gp/day) - is a large public house and inn that is elaborately and expensively furnished. It caters to adventurers. There are a few conference rooms as well as a well-stocked wine cellar and extensive hot baths.

The Phoenix Monument - is a memorial marker for all of the people who died in the Burning. It is a large fountain with a golden phoenix rising from ashes lit by continual flame spells.

The Refugee Barracks (squalid, 1 sp/day) - is where refugees can live for free. The cost is paid by taxes on the other citizens of Elmwood.

The Shield Trading Company - is a trading house along the docks.

The Shrine to Tempus - is a small military field camp and open pavilion.

The Sign of the Shield (aristocratic, 10 gp/day) - is the finest inn in Elmwood. It is owned by Shield Trading Company and is mainly used for their business.

The Silvery Gem Inn (modest 1 gp/day) - is comfortable, friendly, and has really delicious cabbage soup. It is the official central meeting place for the Phlan refugees.

Stone's Dwarf Inn (comfortable 2 gp/day) - is a whimsical inn run by a gnome illusionist. Children go to school there in the mornings. There is a very lifelike stone dwarf in the front yard.

The Temple of Chauntea "The Bounty of the Goddess" - contains a large structure and elaborate gardens. Many farmers and ranchers are adherents of Chauntea.

The Temple of Selûne "The Path of Silver Light" - is the center of faith in Elmwood, and the oldest religious faith in town. The prior temple was destroyed in the burning, and rebuilt with help from the elves. Many survivors and elves pay their respects here.

The Temple of Bane “The Black Lord’s Fist” - is newly built by philanthropists from Mulmaster. Given that this is the official faith of Mulmaster, the Temple is very important in Elmwood.

The Wayfarer’s Rest Tavern (modest 1 gp/day) - is a modestly priced inn that caters to the docks area in specific. Ship captains and officers stay here.

Elmwood Council

Aliana Mathnir, Constable – LN female human Veteran. Brown hair, blue eyes, brown skin. Aliana is more interested in the greater good than in penalizing every small infraction. She likes to keep a neat and efficiently running town. She is friendly and honest. Likely at Elmwood Hall.

Alksuth Cork, Head of Sailfollowers – CG male human Bandit Captain. Bald head, gray eyes, brown skin. Alksuth has a sharp wit and a booming voice. He’s gregarious, if somewhat ill-tempered. He likes to ask a lot of questions and see what makes people tick. Likely at the docks.

Aranda Fletcher, Head of the Greenstriders – NG female half elf Scout. Blond hair, brown eyes, golden skin. Aranda looks out for others but only if they are willing to help themselves. Likely at Wayfarer’s Rest Inn.

Drake Holmstrumph, Leader of the Survivors – NE male human Guard. Gray hair, dark eyes, brown skin. Drake is suspicious of anyone who’s not a survivor of the Burning, and comes off as rather cold until you get to know him. Likely at the docks.

Kala Namak, Deputy, Leader of Hillsfar Refugees – LE female dragonborn Knight. Purple eyes, black scales. She is patient, thoughtful, and cunning. She uses her reputation and position as a shield and is more likely to threaten her way into finding what she wants/needs. Likely at Elmwood Hall.

Larissa Aerasumé, Cleric of Selûne – NG female half elf Cleric 9. Black hair, blue eyes, black skin. Larissa is a calm and thoughtful woman. She has a penchant for seeing all parts of life, the good and the bad, as part of Selûne’s divine plan. Likely at The Path of Silver Light temple to Selûne.

Nils Sankt, Cleric of Bane – LE male human Cleric 9. Bald head, blue eyes, white skin. Nils is quite cranky about being old. He remembers better days and likes to tell people about how it used to be. He will argue about almost anything. Likely at The Black Lord’s Fist temple to Bane.

Shayad, Cleric of Chauntea – NG female half orc Cleric -9. Brown hair, green eyes, gray skin. Shayad is calm and peaceful woman. She reacts poorly to those who make comments disrespectful of her heritage. She is a pacifist at heart and will

try to dissuade others from violence if possible. Likely at The Bounty of the Goddess temple to Chauntea.

Thyra Stoneshoulders, Leader of Phlan Refugees – LN female dwarf Guard. Red hair, brown eyes, rosy skin. Thyra is professional and warm as a barkeep, and enjoys getting drawn into philosophical conversations. Likely at the Silvery Gem Inn.

Yao Seiju, Local Leader of the Shield Trading Company – LE male half elf Noble. Black hair, brown eyes, golden skin. Yao Seiju is a calculating man that likes to live the luxurious life. He is willing to make a deal on most anything as long as he can get the better end of it. Likely at the Shield Trading Company.

Faction Contacts

Ragnir Nejit, Harpers – NG male dragonborn Knight. White eyes and white scales. He is extremely secretive and serious about Harper business. He owes his life to the Harpers for rescuing him from the Hillsfar arena. Ragnir is a no nonsense kind of guy. He knows the lay of the land and so he expects to get what he deserves. He doesn’t want to see anyone hurt, but a little cut or bruise is just a learning experience. Likely at the Silvery Gem Inn.

Granthar Copperhelm, Priestess of Tempus, Order of the Gauntlet – N female dwarf Priest. Black hair, brown eyes, brown skin. She’s a gruff soldier, formerly from Phlan, but has taken well to being a leader and protector in Elmwood. Likely at the Shrine to Tempus.

Rogon Stragoth, Emerald Enclave – N male half orc Scout. Brown hair, brown eyes, gray skin. He works closely with Shevarra Dyernina and the other druids in Eldath’s grove as well. Rogon is very secretive with his association with the Emerald Enclave. Rogon does not put up with racial hatred – he got enough of that in Hillsfar to last him his whole life. Likely at his ranch or out in the forest.

Norin Steelstrike, Lord’s Alliance – LN female dwarf Spy. Brown hair, black eyes, copper skin. She keeps this work completely separate from the Shield Trading Company and takes her responsibilities deadly seriously. Norin is inquisitive and asks questions whenever she thinks it is appropriate. Likely at the Shield Trading Company.

Fiorei Semyon, Zhentarim – LE female human Noble. Black hair, dark eyes, mahogany skin. The rest of Semyon and Daughters doesn’t know that she’s in bed with the Black Network, so she’s extremely circumspect with her dealings for faction business. Fiorei thinks before she speaks, and has a “can do” attitude. Of course, she always makes sure that the things that get done benefit Semyon and Daughters. Likely at the Sign of the Shield.