

# THRALLS OF ZUGGTMOY: SANCTUM OF ROT

A TWO/FOUR-HOUR ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 5-10 CHARACTERS

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# Thralls of Zuggtmoy

## Sanctum of Rot

Beyond the Nidus waits the inner sanctum where the heroes must confront Zuggtmoy's zealot priest and his dark followers. The cult is preparing to use the Noctic Urn to lure a horrific entity to the Material Plane. The adventurers must stop them, or woe to all should they fail.

A Two/Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

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## Adventure Primer

The *Thralls of Zuggtmoy* is a two-part adventure that takes place in the subterranean complex of the Cult of Zuggtmoy, under the Flooded Forest. The Cult's sanctum is protected by a toxic maze called the Nidus. The Aryvandaara wood elf tribe was attacked by the cultists, who stole the tribal seer's visions and dreams with a foul artifact called the Noctic Urn. The elves, weakened by the slaughter, need the adventurers to recover the vile urn.

## Background

The **ARYVANDAARA** wood elves reside along the eastern edge of Cormanthor in the dreaded Flooded Forest, a massive, rotting bog. Here the tribe survives through the visions of their seeress, **VELUTHIL**, devout servant of the god of knowledge, Labelas Enoreth. Her divine sight guides their hunts and hides them from their foes while they pursue the desperate quest of replanting the trees and cleansing this fetid swamp encroaching across the region.

During the eve of a crucial prophecy, cultists of Zuggtmoy, fungal goddess of rot, crept into Veluthil's chambers as she prepared her ritual and slaughtered her guards, abducted her acolyte and handmaiden, **WENEVAL** and **DAOIN**, and absconded with a powerful tribal artifact, the Horn of Tilvadar, an object of importance to Veluthil's visions. While it would have been a simple matter to kill Veluthil herself, the dark servants had crueler designs.

The cultists revealed the **NOCTIC URN**, a gift from their vile goddess capable of stealing dreams. As the unholy device drained her mind of the power of prophecy, Veluthil collapsed into a catatonic sleep. Zuggtmoy's thralls returned to the **MYCONIC NIDUS**, the dream-filled urn in hand. **KUSHAR**, Veluthil's champion and protector, had been left for dead by the cultists and told the tribe's chief, **ILYRANA**, what had transpired. With so many warriors slain, she had to seek aid from outsiders. She asks the adventurers to find those who were taken as well as the urn and horn. To complicate matters, Kushar pursued the cultists alone to redeem his failure.

## Episodes

The adventure's story is spread over three **story episodes** that take approximately 2 hours to play. These episodes are introduced by a Call to Action episode. The adventure also includes two, 1-hour **bonus episodes** that can be played if time permits, which are introduced anywhere in the adventure.

If you're planning to play the entire adventure in one sitting, you only need to introduce the **Call to Action** once. However, if you plan to play them over

several sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play.

- **Episode 1: Ilyrana's Plea.** If the characters are continuing from *Myconic Nidus* move directly to episode 2. If the characters are new to the adventure, Ilyrana recruits them to recover the Noctic Urn. This is the **Call to Action**.
- **Episode 2: Madcap's Laboratory.** The adventurers encounter **MADCAP**, a fungal scientist, in his laboratory. Thoroughly searching the lab gives the characters a clue to unlock the urn and restore Veluthril's memory. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: The Rotting Moon.** The adventurers interrupt Amil-Or's attempt to summon Zuggtmoy's champion using the Urn. This is **Story Objective B**.

## Bonus Objectives

This adventure also includes two, 1-hour bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning additional **advancement and treasure checkpoints** in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure's appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: The Handmaiden.** During the attack on Veluthil, the cultists kidnapped **DAOIN**, Veluthil's handmaiden. Ilyrana asks the adventurers to find her and bring her back. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 4**.
- **Bonus Objective B: The Bodyguard.** Veluthil's bodyguard **KUSHAR** set off alone to recover the seeress' memories. Chief Ilyrana asks that the adventures bring him home, alive if possible. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 5**.

## Episode Sequence

Depending on your time constraints, play style and environment, this adventure takes approximately 2-to-4 hours to play.

## How Will You Play?

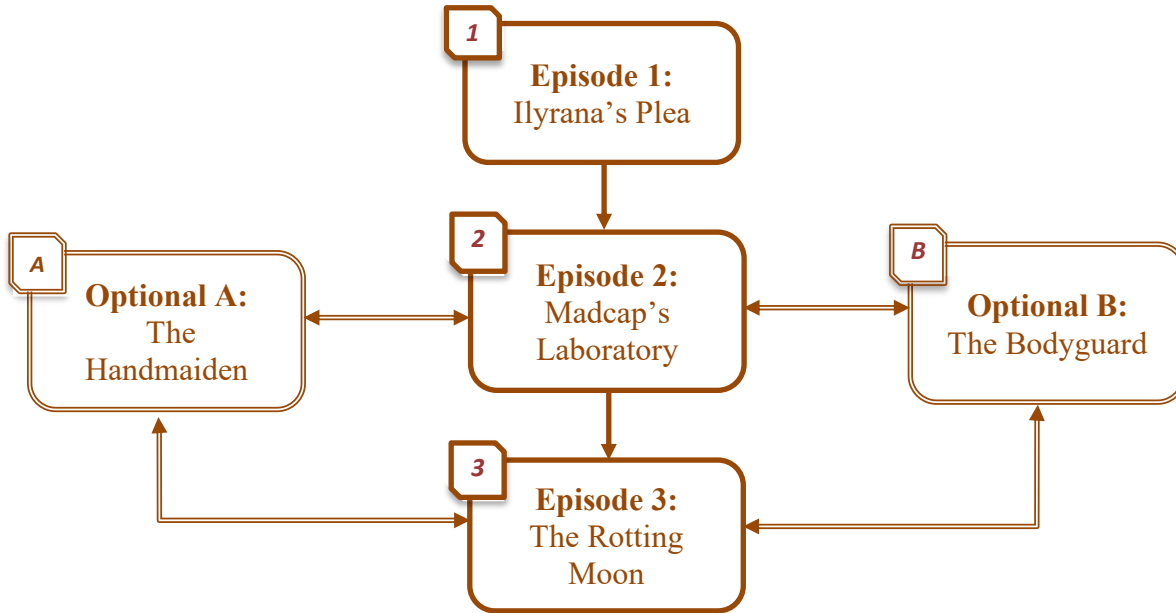
The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 **hours**. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by utilizing the **bonus objectives**.

**Story Objectives Only.** To complete the both of the adventure's story objectives, the characters play in Episode 1, then Episodes 2 through 3 in any order.

**Bonus Objectives.** You can extend this adventure by **1- or 2- hours** by utilizing the bonus objectives provided in the appendices. These objectives branch off episode 2 and 3, but their order is fluid—they set the scene for the final episode and may even have an impact on the events that transpire.

## Episode Flowchart

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



# Episode 1: Ilyrana's Plea (Call to Action)

*Estimated Duration:* 15 minutes

## Scene A. Ilyrana's Court

Ilyrana, chief of the Aryvandaara wood elves of the Flooded Forest, asks the adventurers for help.

- **First adventure in the series.** Characters who haven't played the previous adventure are presumed to have responded to a call for assistance from Ilyrana, who uses a scroll to teleport the heroes directly into the sanctum, circumnavigating the Nidus in the first adventure in the series. If the first adventure is played after this part, then the adventurers can be fighting their way out of the sanctum and through the Nidus with the urn in hand.
- **Played *Myconic Nidus* first.** Adventurers who have played the previous adventure continue where they left off.

### Area Information

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The Aryvandaara village is located high in the trees, amongst the branches. Ilyrana's court is a 50-foot diameter circular tree-hall in the forest. Ilyrana sits on a tree branch at one edge of the open-air treehouse.

**Lighting.** Sunlight above provides bright light.

### Creatures/NPCs

**Ilyrana**, chief of the Aryvandaara wood elves.

**Objectives/Goals.** Ilyrana is desperate to revive Veluthil. The seer was on the verge of making an important prophecy for the elves when her mind was stolen.

**What Does She Know?** Kushar, Veluthil's champion and bodyguard, survived the ambush despite being badly injured and left for dead by the cultists. Kushar was able to tell Ilyrana what occurred before he left the village in pursuit of the cultists to redeem himself.

**Augury** cast by the chief's advisors identified the relic the cultists used as the Noctic Urn, a 'stealer of dreams'. Ilyrana's hope is that the urn can be used to restore Veluthil's mind.

Ilyrana's trackers followed the cultists to their lair in the Flooded Forest. The chief gives simple instructions on how to find the entrance to the underground stronghold.

Veluthil's acolyte, Weneval, and her handmaiden, Daoin, were kidnapped during the attack. The chief

asks the adventurers to rescue Daoin (Weneval can be rescued in the first adventure). **Bonus Objective A.**

Veluthil's bodyguard, Kushar, was found badly injured and poisoned after the cultist's attack. Ashamed, he accompanied the scouts. However, rather than return with them, he snuck into the cult stronghold and has not been heard from since. **Bonus Objective B.**

### Call to Action

Ilyrana calls on the characters to recover the Noctic Urn. She prays that the Urn will allow her to restore the mind of the seer Veluthil.

### Story Hooks

- **Druid Circles and Ranger Paths.** A druid or forest ranger can be asked to help the elves and stop the Cult of Zugtmoy from growing stronger.
- **Elf-Friend.** If the adventurers have helped the elves of the Quivering Forest or any other village, their reputation as a friend precedes them.
- **Fame and Fortune.** The Aryvandaara may have sent a giant eagle, giant owl, or elf ranger messenger to the party while they're near Ylaphron or Mulmaster.
- **Myconic Nidus.** If the adventurers have played *CCC-BWM-04-01: Myconic Nidus*, this episode can be presented as a flashback.

### Duty of the Elves

The Aryvandaara live within the Flooded Forest trying to cleanse the land and replant the trees destroyed in the flood that birthed the terrible swamp consuming the region. Their duty is sacred and of dire importance to protect Cormanthor.

### The Cult's Plot

Now that the Cult of Zugtmoy has captured the dreams and visions of the elven seeress, they are waiting for a significant celestial conjunction. Once these stars are in trine, the cult will summon an Abyssal servitor of Zugtmoy known as the Rotting Moon to destroy the tribe and claim the region. The cult worships rot and stagnation and directly opposes the elves and their effort to regrow the forest within the swamp.

## Episode 2: Madcap's Laboratory (Story Objective A)

*Estimated Duration:* 75 minutes

### The Inner Sanctum

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In this episode, the characters investigate the cult's stronghold, searching for the Noctic Urn (and possibly one of the Bonus Objectives).

#### Prerequisites

The adventurers must complete the **Call to Action** before beginning this episode.

#### Story Objective A

The adventurers must search Madcap's Laboratory to find the command words for the Noctic Urn.

#### Area Information

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The tunnels of the cult's stronghold are a combination of worked stone and rammed earth. A loamy aroma permeates all areas of the sanctum.

Room dimensions can be found on **Appendix 3: Map of the Sanctum.**

**Lighting.** Phosphorescent fungi cover the passageways and rooms of this complex, providing bright light.

**NPCs.** Cult guards patrol the compound at irregular intervals. Combats that last longer than two rounds will draw the guards in 1 minute. Likewise, loud noises (hammering, *thunderwave*, etc.), will summon the guards in 1 minute. Each patrol consists of three **cultists** and a **cult fanatic**.

## Scene C1. The Main Entrance

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The entrance to the cult's stronghold is guarded by four **cult fanatics**.

### Creatures/NPCs

Four alcoves, two to a side, flank a 15-foot wide passageway. Inside each alcove sits a robed **cult fanatic**, legs crossed, quietly humming atonally. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that these humanoids have fungal protrusions sprouting from their skin.

**Objectives/Goals.** The sanctum's guardians are tasked only with allowing the faithful to enter.

**What Do They Know?** The creatures won't speak, continuing to hum, even if provoked to combat.

### Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** **Cult fanatics** have 20 hit points.
- **Strong:** **Cult fanatics** have 45 hit points.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **cult fanatic**. **Cult fanatics** have 45 hit points.

These cult fanatics are partially covered by fungi, and have a speed of 10 ft.

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

If combat ensues, the cult fanatics will either cast *hold person* or *spiritual weapon*, then attack with *inflict wounds*. They will not surrender.

### EXPLORATION

Sneaking past is possible. The guardians can't be lured away, but spells such as *invisibility*, *major image*, etc., combined with a Stealth check may allow adventurers to sneak past.

### SOCIAL

Adventurers attempting to bluff their way past the sanctum guardians must succeed on a group DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check. Any of the following may impose disadvantage: not wearing cultist robes, not humming a hymn, or acting strangely.



## Scene C2. Neophytes' Altar

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In this chamber, drugged neophytes of Zugtmoy worship a statue of their god.

### Area Information

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** At the center of this room is a statue of Zugtmoy, carved of black rock. Surrounding the statue is a moat of bubbling yellow liquid that exudes a noxious aroma.

### Creatures/NPCs

Inside this chamber are 12 neophytes (**commoners**) sitting in a circle around the statue. The neophytes are heavily drugged, and don't notice the adventurers unless attacked.

**Objectives/Goals.** These neophytes are praying to Zugtmoy's image to reach the next plane of mental growth.

**What Do They Know?** In their drugged state, the neophytes can only babble unintelligently.

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

If combat ensues, the neophytes flee to C12, The Altar of Zugtmoy.

### EXPLORATION

An adventurer who touches the bubbling liquid at the base of the statue must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer 3d6 poison damage. This check is made at disadvantage if the adventurer consumes the liquid.

### SOCIAL

Attempts to engage the neophytes in conversation are only mildly successful, as they're too drugged to communicate. The neophytes may inquire about mealtimes, mistake the adventurers for acolytes, or lapse into unconsciousness.

## Scene C3. Ascomoid Trap

Cultists avoid this unlocked door because they know the hallway is trapped. The hall itself is the same black stone as the rest of the sanctum, with rounded walls and ceiling.

### The Ascomoid

Above the hallway is another short passage connected to the one below by a ramp. Above the ramp are dormant mushroom creatures known as ascomoid, which are held by weak harnesses. These giant puffball fungi sit in place until they feel the vibrations of intruders below. When a disturbance occurs, the ascomoid breaks out of its restraints and tumbles below like a giant ball. When the ascomoid come to a stop, it bursts open, spraying poison spores in a 20-foot radius.

Consider the ascomoid fungus to have an Intelligence of 1. They aren't sentient and self-detonate when any creature enters the hall.

#### Trap. Ascomoid Trap

*Mechanical Trap (Levels 5-10 dangerous threat)*

This giant puffball fungi explodes in poisonous spores.

**Trigger.** Vibrations of a creature's footsteps in the hallway.

**Effect.** After being released, the ascomoid explodes when it comes to a stop. Each creature within 20 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage and become infected with a disease on a failed save. Creatures immune to the poisoned condition are immune to this disease.

Spores invade an infected creature's system, killing the creature in a number of hours equal to 1d12 + the creature's Constitution score unless the disease is removed. In half that time, the creature becomes poisoned for the rest of the duration. After the creature dies, it sprouts 2d4 Tiny ascomoids that grow to full size in 7 days. These ascomoids are harmless until fully grown.

**Countermeasures.** Avoiding causing vibrations on the floor (*fly, winged boots, etc.*).

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

The ascomoid is similar to a gas spore and explodes if it takes 1 point of damage. This means that the adventurers could detonate it from afar.

### EXPLORATION

An adventurer who makes a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a giant puffball fungus tied with netting to the ceiling of the passage.

### SOCIAL

The ascomoid isn't sentient and can't be parlayed with.

## Scene C4. Storeroom

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This room contains barrels of dry goods, water, and wine. On the wall hangs an assortment of cultist garb. This includes a dozen robes and hooded cloaks.

All the garb is embroidered with the symbol of Zuggtmoy and the personal sigil of Amil-Or, which is a variation of Zuggtmoy's symbol of a jawless human skull sprouting fungi.

### Donning a Disguise

If the adventurers don the cultist garb as a disguise, they gain advantage when attempting to bluff cultists.

If adventurers have proficiency with disguise kits and a disguise kit available, they can make themselves appear pox-marked and infected by fungi. This requires one use of a disguise kit per humanoid being disguised.

In this case, the adventurers gain advantage on Charisma (Deception and Persuasion) skill checks made within the sanctum. The adventurers are able to pass casual inspection easily.

### Treasure & Rewards

- ***Magic Items.*** Searching the storeroom finds a *potion of hill giant strength* tucked behind a robe.

## Scene C5. The Laboratory

When Zuggtmoy's human followers discovered the sanctum and its inhabitants, they contacted the myceloids. The mushroom people offered lore, eldritch secrets, and powerful reagents in return for humanoid corpses. These remains feed the myceloid fungal gardens, and the gardens in turn sprout more myceloids.

The oldest and most dangerous myceloid is called "Madcap" by the cult. The myceloids communicate via spores, and have no use for names, but they understand the reasons for humanoid language.

### Area Information

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The room contains both an alchemical laboratory and a fungal garden. All around the chamber are ceramic pots, mounds of dirt, and plant matter.

In the center of the room is a group of six humanoids tied to posts. The tops of their head have been removed, and fungal growths sprout from their exposed brains.

**Abyssal Incense.** The smell of acrid incense fills the air of the laboratory. A thick haze of bluish smoke emanates from a brazier, blanketing the room, but doesn't obscure or obstruct line of sight.

The abyssal incense has an anti-magic effect on all **abjuration magic** inside the room. If an adventurer attempts to cast an abjuration spell, it doesn't work, and no spell slot is consumed. If a character currently has an abjuration spell in effect, it is suppressed while in the room.

Knocking over the brazier, dousing it with water, smothering, or similar methods will end the magic suppression.

### Creatures/NPCs

Inside the room are Madcap, a fiendish scientist (**hezrou**) and his **shambling mound** bodyguard.

**Objectives/Goals.** Madcap is attempting to understand how dreams function. He has seeded Abyssal fungi into the brains of his prisoners and is

documenting the results. He will ask the party (regardless of how they're disguised, or what they say) to leave him alone.

**What Do They Know?** Madcap knows the control phrases for the urn but is unlikely to reveal them to the adventurers unless they threaten to destroy his precious research.

He may also let something slip about "the Rotting Moon arrives tonight."

### Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove **shambling mound**.
- **Weak:** Remove **shambling mound**. Use **bone devil** statblock for Madcap.
- **Strong:** Use **bone devil** statblock for Madcap.
- **Very Strong:** Use **rakshasa** statblock for Madcap.

In all cases, Madcap appears as a mushroom-like humanoid with a red fungal cap. Madcap has immunity to poison and the poison condition and has an Intelligence score of 17.

### Madcap's Documents

Studying Madcap's records reveals the following:

- Instructions on how to use the urn. The command word to release stored dreams is "Uhagaz". The word to capture dreams is "Shahelereth".
- The Cult of Zuggtmoy seeks to summon Thu'Zuroch, the Rotting Moon. This massive demon fungus can inflict rot and madness on entire nations.
- Thu'Zuroch can only enter the Material Plane on specific cosmic conjunctions, which matches tonight's astronomical configuration.

### Treasure & Rewards

- **Special Rewards.** Someone proficient with a poisoner's kit can collect and use one dose of **carrion crawler venom** from the laboratory. There is a single unstable dose available; the poison cannot be sold and expires at the end of the adventure session.

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

Madcap orders his bodyguard to attack obvious spellcasters. Madcap's further tactics are based on his statblock.

### EXPLORATION

Madcaps subjects are beyond saving. Consider adding thematic fungus, fungal traps, or spore clouds to this room.

### SOCIAL

Madcap has left orders with the cult that he is not to be disturbed. Parties trying to bluff their way into conversation with Madcap do so at disadvantage.

## Scene C6. The Library

This circular chamber houses several cases of books and scrolls. At the center of the room are six **cultist** and two **cult fanatics**.

If **Bonus Objective A** is being played, Veluthil's charmed handmaiden Daoin is also here, dressed in cultist robes and with her hood pulled back; instead of this page, see **Appendix 4**.

### Creatures/NPCs

The cult fanatics sit at a table in the middle of the room.

**Objectives/Goals.** These cultists are deep in study and wish to remain so.

**What Do They Know?** The cultists know that Amil-Or will summon the Rotting Moon tonight. They're able to quote Amil-Or's sermons, talk about how their leader preaches about the future, the coming time of rot and shadows, and how the rest of the Sword Coast will be led by Zugtmoy into a time of fungal bliss.

They mention that Amil-Or's words are cryptic, with references to "the time of dreams," the "Rotting Moon," and frequent talk about punishing unbelievers.

### Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Remove two **cultists**.
- **Strong:** Add one **cult fanatic**.
- **Very Strong:** Add three **cult fanatics**.

### The Key

One of the cult fanatics here wears a key on a necklace that fits the lock to area **C8**. On a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurers notice the key.

### If Combat Ensues

The cultists will scream and flee, possibly raising the alarm. The cult fanatics will attack, even though they are probably doomed.

### Treasure & Rewards

- **Magic Items.** There is a *spell scroll of vampiric touch* tucked within one of the tomes. It can be found with a thorough search.

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

If combat ensues, the cult fanatics will each cast *hold person* or *spiritual weapon*, then attack with *inflict wounds*. They will not surrender. The cultists will flee in a panic, screaming about invaders.

### EXPLORATION

Sneaking past is possible. The cultists are deep in study and may not notice the adventurers. Likewise, the cult fanatic's necklace key can be stolen with a successful a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

### SOCIAL

Adventurers attempting to bluff their way past the cultists must succeed on a group DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check.



## Scene C7. Neophyte's Chamber

This floor of this large chamber is covered with blankets and bedding. The heavy aroma of incense doesn't quite cover the smell of too many bodies living together.

This dorm houses the cult initiates, as well as warriors and priests. The cultists live communally, with only Amil-Or and his honor guard having separate quarters.

There is nothing of value in this room. If disguised, characters may use this room to attempt a short rest.

**Bonus Objective B** takes place here. See **Appendix 5** if applicable.

## Scene C8. Summoning Circle

This small room connects to the library via a small corridor. The door is locked with a padlock that requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. The door or lock can be forced with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. Equipment such as a crowbar adds advantage to the Strength (Athletics) check. One of the cultists in **Scene C6** has a key to this lock.

In the center of the chamber is a circle of chalk, drawn on the floor. Ringing the circle are black, foul-smelling candles. Disturbing the chalk or candles causes necrotic energy to erupt from the circle.

### The Summoning Circle

The symbols are in Abyssal, and a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies this as a dormant, but functional, summoning circle.

If the adventurers want to take a short rest here, they can do so without being interrupted. There are only a few followers of Zuggtmoy who have access to this room, and they're all busy with their duties.

### Trap. Summoning Circle Explosion

*Magical Trap (Levels 5-10 dangerous threat)*

Entering, altering, or destroying the Abyssal circle triggers a blast.

**Trigger.** Entering, altering, or destroying the Abyssal runes triggers the trap.

**Effect.** All creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 27 (5d10) necrotic damage from a wave of corrupting energy. On a successful saving throw, they take half damage. The circle can only be activated once and is harmless afterwards.

**Countermeasures.** Don't disturb the circle. Otherwise, the circle can be deactivated by identifying the correct rune to erase. This requires 1 minute and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check. Adventurers that can read and write Abyssal have advantage on this check. Failure triggers the explosion.

## Scene C9. Feasting Hall

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This room appears to serve as both a dining hall and a kitchen. There are three long tables at the center, and to the east is a raised pulpit in front of a screen. On the south side of the hall, near large brass doors, is a great gong. Braziers all along the walls light this chamber.

The cultists, regardless of initiation level, share their meals at the beginning and end of the day. The gong sounds for rituals and worship and can be heard everywhere in the sanctum when rung, serving as both a call and alarm based on the number of rings.

Next to the feast hall are the high priest's personal quarters. These are separated by a raised platform and screen with a pulpit in front. Amil-Or delivers his sermons and prayers from this location. When he makes an entrance, it is always accompanied by sounding the gong and deep, dissonant chanting from his bodyguards.

### The Brass Doors

The brass doors are unlocked but require a combined Strength of 30 to open. There is a hidden switch located behind a nearby brazier, which will open the door via an internal mechanism. Spotting this switch requires a Passive Perception of 15 or higher. There is also a well-hidden secret door behind a wall hanging, which requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot. This secret door opens into a winding stairway, which leads to a balcony above the main altar room (area **C11**).

## Scene C10. Amil-Or's Quarters

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This chamber is small and dimly lit by oil lamps. There are piles of filthy bandages lying around, as well as a bedroll. Near the sleeping pad are stacks of books. The room has a potent smell of fungal spores and motes drift in the air.

### Guards

As long as Amil-Or is alive, there are always three dedicated **veterans** guarding his chamber. They wear featureless bronze masks and are loyal to Amil-Or.

### Inside Amil-Or's Quarters

There is a **healer's kit** and many books related to Zugtmoy, fungus, and fiends. Amongst all these books is a copy of the *Book of Proliferant Light*, which has been well notated by Amil-Or. Another book is open to an image of a floating, spherical creature. This creature has many tentacles and eyes, and hovers above a burning city. In *Abyssal*, the book describes Thu'Zuroch, the Rotting Moon, a fungal-fiend dedicated to Zugtmoy.

## Playing the Pillars

### COMBAT

If combat ensues, the veterans attempt to target obvious enemy paladins and clerics first. They scream things such as "Defilers of the sanctum! You all must die!" and other threats while engaging in melee.

### EXPLORATION

Sneaking past is possible. The guards are standing duty but aren't attentive. As with most of the sanctum, the door is unlocked.

### SOCIAL

Adventurers attempting to bluff their way past the guards must succeed on a group DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check. Invoking Amil-Or's name may grant advantage on these checks, as the guards are devout and fearful of the priest.

## Scene C11. Balcony Level

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The passage leads to a 30-foot high balcony overlooking a massive chamber. Stone pillars stretch to the ceiling, which has a circular opening at the top. A magnificent statue of Zuggtmoy upon a raised rock platform dominates the center of the chamber. The statue is carved from the black rock of the sanctum.

This area is part of the main altar room at **C12** but is about 30 feet above the main chamber. It is accessible by the secret door in area **C9**, or by climbing the main chamber's pillars. Climbing the pillars requires a successful a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. The balcony touches the edge of the giant statue of Zuggtmoy in area **C12**.

The ceiling extends upwards for another 100 feet. There is a circular opening above that emerges out on one of the plateaus. Given flight or levitation, someone could escape from the sanctum this way.

## Episode 3: The Rotting Moon (Story Objective B)

*Estimated Duration:* 45 minutes

### Scene C12. Altar to Zuggtmoy

The tallest chamber of the sanctum is the scene of the final showdown. The ceiling extends upwards into darkness. At the center of the room is a raised rock altar. Towering above the altar is an enormous statue, carved from the black rock of the sanctum, representing Zuggtmoy in her more human form. She looks like a beautiful woman with morels, mushrooms, and other fungi sprouting from her body in a pattern that compliments her form.

**Abyssal Incense.** The smell of acrid incense fills the air of the altar chamber. A thick haze of bluish smoke emanates from a brazier before Amil-Or, blanketing the room, but doesn't obscure or obstruct line of sight.

The abyssal incense has an anti-magic effect on all **abjuration magic** inside the room. If an adventurer attempts to cast an abjuration spell, it doesn't work, and no spell slot is consumed. If a character currently has an abjuration spell in effect, it is suppressed while in the room.

Knocking over the brazier, dousing it with water, smothering, or similar methods will end the magic suppression.

#### Prerequisites

The adventurers should have defeated Madcap and possibly completed one or two bonus objectives.

#### Story Objective B

The adventurers must defeat Amil-Or.

#### Approaching the Chamber

The timing and approach the party takes has some impact on how things play out in this chamber. If the

adventurers have been stealthy, the entire congregation will be present to observe the summoning.

Many of these cultists are chanting Abyssal words to Zuggtmoy. If the adventurers have raised the alarm or engaged in combat, there are many cultists present, taking refuge with Amil-Or.

#### Amil-Or's Goal

Amil-Or's goal is to use the Noctic Urn to summon a powerful demon from Zuggtmoy's realm.

#### Amil-Or's Unveiling

Unknown to the cultists, Amil-Or is an **oinoloth** (yugoloth). When the adventurers enter the chamber, both Amil-Or's robe and human body falls to the floor as his true form becomes evident.

At this point, many the cultists panic and flee, causing disruption and chaos.

Optionally, when Amil-Or reveals his fiendish nature, some of his bodyguards also shed their mortal forms, becoming goat-headed **bulezau**.

#### Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** **Oinoloth** has 104 hit points.
- **Strong:** Add two **bulezau**.
- **Very Strong:** Add four **bulezau**.

#### Treasure & Rewards

- **Magic Items.** Amil-Or's red robe is a *cloak of protection*.

### Playing the Pillars

#### COMBAT

Amil-Or will use his Bringer of Plagues ability on his first round and instantly slay most of the cultists with his terrible blight, causing disruption and chaos.

#### EXPLORATION

If the adventurers approach via **C11** (the balcony), they may be able to surprise Amil-Or. The oinoloth has a passive Perception of 17. A clever thief could steal the urn and flee.

#### SOCIAL

Adventurers can attempt to stir up the cultists or convince them to turn away from their evil ways. On a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) skill check, the cultists may take action against Amil-Or.



## Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

---

The heroes went to the sanctum to stop Amil-Or and the Cult of Zuggtmoy. Hopefully they also learned enough about the Noctic Urn to heal the seeress upon their return to the elf tribe.

Once Amil-Or is defeated, the adventurers can recover the Noctic Urn and deliver it to the elves. If the command words are known, the seeress' dreams are released, and she begins to return to consciousness. Otherwise, the elves say they'll commune with their gods and find out more about the strange relic.

If Amil-Or's ritual is not stopped, the fiend unleashes a terrible darkness upon the land. Thu'Zuroch lays waste to the Cormanthor and the elves, and the Sword Coast is faced with yet another challenge.

### Playing Out of Order

For those characters who haven't played the first part, the narrative for *Myconic Nidus* can be flipped and they can escape with the urn, Daoin, and Kushar (assuming they rescued them) through the Nidus to the surface.

## Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

### Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

---

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **story objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective A:** The adventurers must penetrate the sanctum and search Madcap's Laboratory to find the command words for the Noctic Urn.
- **Story Objective B:** The adventurers must defeat Amil-Or.

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **bonus objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A:** Find Daoin and rescue her from Amil-Or's magical charm.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Find and rescue Kushar and absolve him from the shame of his failure.

### Player Rewards

---

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

#### Magic Item Unlock

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

**Cloak of Protection.** This cloak displays a dizzying variety of eyes, including some that look decidedly otherworldly. These blind eyes stare sightlessly in all directions. This item can be found in **Appendix 6**.

#### Consumable Magic Items

Characters completing the adventure may find:

**Potion of Hill Giant Strength.** This item is found on **Magic Item Table B** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Spell Scroll of Vampiric Touch.** This item is found on **Magic Item Table B** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### Dungeon Master Rewards

---

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement** and **treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

## Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Amil-Or (AM ill OR).** Amil-Or is a yugoloth in service to Zuggtmoy, seeking to spread fungal plague and destruction across the world.  
**Personality:** *"All things under me decay."*  
**Ideal:** *"I will bring pestilence to Faerûn."*  
**Bond:** *"I am loyal to Zuggtmoy unto death."*  
**Flaw:** *"My celestial nemesis is stronger than I am."*
- **Daoin (DAO inn).** Daoin is Veluthil's friend and handmaiden and has been charmed by Amil-Or's fiendish magic. She is also an adept priest.  
**Personality:** *"Amil-Or is the harbinger of truth."*  
**Ideal:** *"I will serve Zuggtmoy until I die."*  
**Bond:** *"My people were my life; now it is the cult."*  
**Flaw:** *"I secretly yearn to rebel against the cult."*
- **Kushar (KUH shar).** Kushar is Veluthil's bodyguard and seeks redemption via a righteous death. His failure to protect the seeress means the destruction of his people.  
**Personality:** *"I've abandoned my stoic nature."*  
**Ideal:** *"I will die with my sword in Amil-Or's heart."*  
**Bond:** *"Veluthil is my heartwood and my sky."*  
**Flaw:** *"In a hundred years, I never thought I'd fail."*
- **Sanctum (SANK tum).** The sanctum is carved from black stone, and sits under the Nidus, a fungal maze. Within, Zuggtmoy's cult grows stronger.  
**Personality:** *"I sit under the Nidus of spores."*  
**Ideal:** *"My master is undefeatable."*  
**Bond:** *"The myceloids made me."*  
**Flaw:** *"Hubris and egotism will be my fall."*

## Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

### Bone Devil (Madcap)

*Large fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

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

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

---

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

---

**Saving Throws** Int +5, Wis +6, Cha +7

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

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

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

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

**Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

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

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

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

#### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The devil makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its sting.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Sting.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 17 (5d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### Bulezau

*Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d8 + 21)

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

---

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Rotting Presence.** When any creature that isn't a demon starts its turn within 30 feet of one or more bulezaus, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 1d6 necrotic damage plus 1 necrotic damage for each bulezau within 30 feet of it.

**Standing Leap.** The bulezau's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

**Sure-Footed.** The bulezau has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

#### Actions

---

**Barbed Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease ends. While poisoned in this way, the target sports festering boils, coughs up flies, and sheds rotting skin, and the target must repeat the saving throw after every 24 hours that elapse. On a successful save, the disease ends. On a failed save, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by 4 (1d8). The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

## Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 11 (1d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 0 (0 XP)

### Actions

---

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

## Cult Fanatic

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

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8+6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

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

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

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

**Spellcasting.** The fanatic is a 4<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

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

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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



## Cultist

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

**Armor Class** 12 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**Skills** Deception +2, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

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

### Actions

---

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

## Hezrou (Madcap)

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

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

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

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

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

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

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

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

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

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

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

### Actions

---

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

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

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

## Mezzoloth

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

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

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

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

---

**Skills** Perception +3

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

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

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

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

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

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

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

1/day: *cloudkill*

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

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

### Actions

---

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

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

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

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

## Oinoloth (Amil-Or)

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

---

**Saving Throws** CON +8, WIS +7

**Skills** Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Perception +7

**Damage Resistances** Cold, Fire, Lightning; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

**Damage Immunities** Acid, Poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned

**Senses** Blindsight 60 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 17

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

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

**Bringer of Plagues (Recharges 5-6).** As a bonus action, the oinoloth blights the area within 30 feet of it. The blight lasts for 24 hours. While blighted, all normal plants in the area wither and die, and the number of hit points restored by a spell to a creature in that area is halved.

Furthermore, when a creature moves into the blighted area or starts its turn there, that creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the oinoloth's Bringer of Plagues for the next 24 hours. On a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and is poisoned.

The poisoned creature can't regain hit points. After every 24 hours that elapse, the poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's hit point maximum is reduced by 5 (1d10). This reduction lasts until the poison ends, and the target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. The poison ends after the creature successfully saves against it three times.

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

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

1/day each: *feeblemind*, *globe of invulnerability*, *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*

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

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

#### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The oinoloth uses its Transfixing Gaze and makes two claw attacks.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 22 (4d10) necrotic damage.

**Corrupted Healing (Recharge 6).** The oinoloth touches one willing creature within 5 feet of it. The target regains all its hit points. In addition, the oinoloth can end one disease on the target or remove one of the following conditions from it: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned. The target then gains 1 level of exhaustion, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 7 (2d6). This reduction can be removed only by a wish spell or by casting greater restoration on the target three times within the same hour. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

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

**Transfixing Gaze.** The oinoloth targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed until the end of the oinoloth's next turn. While charmed in this way, the target is restrained. If the target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the oinoloth's gaze for the next 24 hours.

#### Priest (Daoin)

*Medium humanoid (wood elf), chaotic good*

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 33 (5d8+5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Divine Eminence.** As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of second level or higher, the extra damage increased by 1d6 for each level above first.

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3<sup>rd</sup> level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

#### Actions

---

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

## Rakshasa (Madcap)

Medium fiend, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d8 + 52)

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

---

**Skills** Deception +10, Insight +8

**Damage Vulnerabilities** piercing from magic weapons wielded by good creatures

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

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

**Languages** Common, Infernal

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

**Limited Magic Immunity.** The rakshasa can't be affected or detected by spells of 6th level or lower unless it wishes to be. It has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The rakshasa's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The rakshasa can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts, disguise self, mage hand, minor illusion*

3/day each: *charm person, detect magic, invisibility, major image, suggestion*

1/day each: *dominate person, fly, plane shift, true seeing*

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The rakshasa makes two claw attacks.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage, and the target is cursed if it is a creature. The magical curse takes effect whenever the target takes a short or long rest, filling the target's thoughts with horrible images and dreams. The cursed target gains no benefit from finishing a short or long rest. The curse lasts until it is lifted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

## Shambling Mound

Large plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d10 + 48)

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

---

**Skills** Stealth +2

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire

**Damage Immunities** lightning

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, exhaustion

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** --

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

**Lightning Absorption.** Whenever the shambling mound is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The shambling mound makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 14), and the shambling mound uses its Engulf on it.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Engulf.** The shambling mound engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the mound's turns or take 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the mound moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The mound can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

## Veteran

*Medium humanoid (any race,) any alignment*

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

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

---

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

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

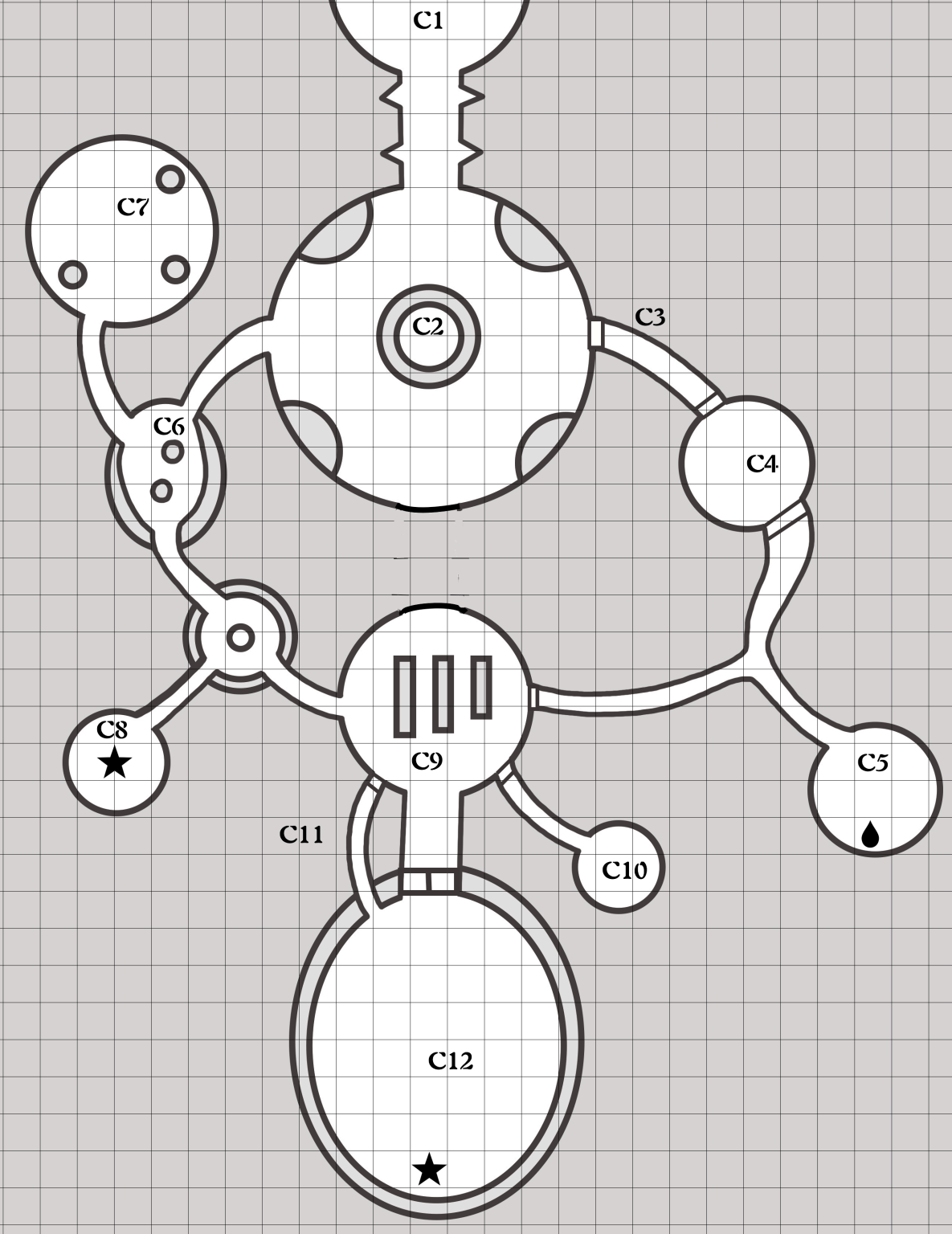
**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.



# Appendix 3: Map of the Sanctum

(1 square = 20 ft.)



## Appendix 4: The Handmaiden (Bonus Objective A.)

### Setting Description

If the adventurers have also been tasked with rescuing Daoin, Veluthil's handmaiden, she can be found in **Scene C6**. The young elf was kidnapped during the raid on the seeress and Amil-Or magically charmed her as a form of insurance against retaliation and to gain information.

### Prerequisites

Ilyrana should have tasked the adventurers with finding and rescuing Daoin, Veluthil's friend, handmaiden, and priest.

### Bonus Objective A

Find Daoin and rescue her from Amil-Or's charms.

### Area Information

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** This circular chamber houses several cases of books and scrolls. At the center of the room are six **cultist** and two **cult fanatics**. Daoin, Veluthil's handmaiden (**priest**), is also here, dressed in cultist robes and with her hood pulled back; her appearance matches Ilyrana's description.

**Lighting.** There is a candelabra with a half-dozen tallow candles shedding dim light throughout the library.

### Scene A. The Library

#### Creatures/NPCs

The cultists, cult fanatics, and Daoin sit at a table in the middle of the room.

**Objectives/Goals.** These cultists are deep in study and wish to remain so.

**What Do They Know?** The cultists know that Amil-Or will summon the Rotting Moon tonight. They're able to quote Amil-Or's sermons, and talk about how their leader preaches about the future, the coming time of rot and shadows, and how the rest of the Sword Coast will be led by Zugtmoy into a time of strife and conflict.

They mention that Amil-Or's words are cryptic, with references to "The time of dreams," the "Rotting Moon," and frequent talk about punishing unbelievers.

#### The Cultists and the Charmed Elf

The lay cultists aren't aware of Daoin's previous life as Veluthil's handmaiden and believe her to simply be a new recruit.

The cult fanatics are more knowledgeable and have been told to subdue or slay the elf at the first sign of her rebellion. If the adventurers argue too loudly with Daoin, or if the cultists are attacked, the cult fanatics will attack Daoin along with the adventurers.

#### Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Remove two **cultists**.
- **Strong:** Add three **cult fanatics**.
- **Very Strong:** Add five **cult fanatics**.

#### The Charmed Handmaiden

Daoin has been charmed by Amil-Or using fiendish power and seems especially enamored with his teachings. Arguing with her makes her hot-tempered and angry.

If Daoin is directly reminded of her previous life, Ilyrana, Veluthil, or the possibility she's been charmed, she can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If successful, Daoin is no longer charmed. She may attempt this saving throw twice, each time after a direct reminder of her previous life. If she fails both, her commitment to the cult strengthens.

If she succeeds on the saving throw, she lashes out at the cultists and begins combat immediately. Likewise, if the cult fanatics overhear the adventurers fomenting rebellion, the fanatics will attack.

Daoin can either accompany the adventurers into the sanctum or leave to inform Ilyrana of the cult's vile plans.

#### The Key

One of the cult fanatics here wears a key on a necklace that fits the lock to area **C8**. On a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurers notice the key.

#### If Combat Ensues

The cultists will scream and flee, possibly raising the alarm. The cult fanatics will attack, even though they are probably doomed.

## Appendix 5: The Bodyguard (Bonus Objective B.)

### Setting Description

If the adventurers have also been tasked with rescuing Kushar, Veluthil's bodyguard, he can be found in **Scene C7**.

#### Prerequisites

Ilryana should have tasked the adventurers with finding and aiding Kushar.

#### Bonus Objective B

Find and rescue Kushar and aid him in absolving the shame of his failure.

#### Area Information

This area features:

**Dimensions & Terrain.** This floor of this large chamber is covered with blankets and bedding. The heavy aroma of incense doesn't quite cover the smell of too many bodies living together.

This dorm houses the cult initiates, as well as warriors and priests. The cultists live communally, with only Amil-Or and his honor guard having separate quarters.

If Kushar is encountered, there are several slain cultists. One of the corpses still clutches a now-blank scroll, from which the mezzoloths were summoned.

**Lighting.** There is a candelabra with a pair of candles shedding dim light. The candelabra has been overturned in the melee, and the askew candles sputter.

### Scene B. Kushar's Folly

The adventurers see a brawny elf at the center of the chamber, battling a pair of trident-wielding, chitinous fiends. The beasts strike at the elf with claws and barbed tridents, while the warrior defends himself with a longsword. The strange purple demons bear fungal growths and warts.

The elf bleeds from fresh wounds. His eyes are wide, and he's bellowing like a raging bull.

#### The Melee

When the adventurers enter the Neophyte's Chamber, Kushar (a wood elf **veteran** who attacks with advantage) is fighting off two **mezzoloths** that are currently playing with their prey. Should the adventurers help Kushar, the mezzoloths focus their attention to the new attackers. Given the opportunity, the mezzoloths alternate using their innate ability to cast *cloudkill* and fill the entire chamber (the fiends are immune to poison).

#### Kushar, the Elf Warrior

A successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a *lesser restoration* spell will calm Kushar of his suicidal attack. Even in a more balanced frame of mind, Kushar is resistant to working alongside the adventurers. He blames himself for failing his tribe and allowing the cult to capture the seeress' dreams and believes he must get revenge alone. If he has outside help, the stain on his honor will never become clean.

If Kushar assists the heroes, he currently has 20 hit points and otherwise is treated as a veteran who attacks with advantage. He attacks wildly unless directed otherwise and screams threats in Elvish during battle.

Kushar is unable to offer suggestions or advice navigating the sanctum and seems disoriented. He has been heavily poisoned by the fungal spores of the Nidus, and expects to die a valiant, but futile, death against Amil-Or.

#### Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** The **mezzoloths** do not have innate spellcasting.
- **Strong:** Add one **mezzoloth**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **mezzoloths**. Each mezzoloth has 110 hit points.

## Appendix 6: Magic Items

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this magic item.

### Permanent Magic Items

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#### Cloak of Protection (Table F)

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

You gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws while you wear this cloak. This item is found on **Magic Item Table F** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This cloak displays a dizzying variety of eyes, including some that look decidedly otherworldly. These blind eyes stare sightlessly in all directions.

### Consumable Magic Items

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#### Spell Scroll of Vampiric Touch (Table B)

*Scroll, uncommon*

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

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

#### Potion of Hill Giant Strength (Table B)

*Potion, uncommon*

When you drink this potion, your Strength score changes to 21 for 1 hour. The potion has no effect on you if your Strength is equal to or greater than that score.

This potion's transparent liquid has floating in it a sliver of fingernail from a hill giant. This item is found on **Magic Item Table B** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Appendix 7: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5st-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.

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To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

### Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

### Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

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

#### Determining Party Strength

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