



Present

# BLACK BLADES, BLACK WINGS

*As the Zhentarim slowly reoccupy the Citadel of the Raven, they continue to explore the tunnels under the mountain one level at a time. Three tendays ago, a new section of the tunnels broke open, and the first group exploring did not come out. Neither did the second. Nor the third. Unwilling to risk their necks any further, the Zhentarim turn to the other factions for aid in figuring out what threat lies beneath the mountain.*

A four hour adventure for 5<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> level characters .

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Black Blades, Black Wings*, part of the D&D Adventurers' League, and the Convention Created Content program. This adventure premiered at 1d4Con 2017, a local gaming convention in Martinsburg, West Virginia. **This adventure is designed for three to seven 5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> level characters, and optimized for five characters of 8<sup>th</sup> level.** Characters outside of this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

## ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

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

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

### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

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

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

## BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while the running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to

use in combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.

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

## PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

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

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

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

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

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

## SPELLCASTING SERVICES

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

**Citadel of the Raven:** Bane, Loviatar

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Citadel of the Raven was the heart of a massive series of interlinked fortifications along the western and northern slopes of the Dragonspine Mountains. At times occupied by exclusively the Zhentarim to watch the southern flank of Zhentil Keep, it also has had a shared garrison from the major cities on the Moonsea to help watch against invasion from west and the north, specifically. Eventually the Zhentarim turned against their allies and ejected them, occupying the base exclusively until the Netherese Empire returned and wiped out the extensive fortifications and the citadel itself on their way to destroying Zhentil Keep post-Spellplague.

With the major Netherese threat ended when the last of their floating cities fell from the sky, and with the recent significant upheavals in the nearby cities which boasted Zhentarim refugee populations, such as Mulmaster, certain groups of Zhentarim operatives have taken upon themselves to reestablish the Citadel as the first step towards securing the old line of forts. They see this as the first step to hopefully restoring Zhentil Keep itself.

Unfortunately, the process of exploring the hundreds of miles of tunnels under the Citadel and the mountains is proving daunting even for the ambitious Zhents, and of late, their operatives have been going missing at an alarming rate. An ulitharid, is continually making sacrifices of creatures that it traps in the Underdark, masquerading as a drider to throw people off of its tracks. The use of the form one of her driders has angered Lloth, and turned this section of the Underdark more deadly than even normal.

During this adventure, the characters arrive at the Citadel for reasons of their own, meet briefly with its occupants, and then head down into the Underdark beneath the mountain to find the most recently missing operatives. After encountering the source of the problems, they hopefully return with rescued Zhentarim scouts.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE PORTAL TO THE PLANE OF FIRE?

Members of the Brotherhood of the Cloaks in Mulmaster, the Emerald Enclave, and the Harpers are curious as to what happened to one of the many shattered portal fragments that was scattered around

the City of Blades following the Battle of Mulmaster a couple of years ago. One prominent portal that had sat in the center of a square in the Zhentarim Ghetto has gone missing recently, and for their own reasons, these groups want to know what happened to that opening onto the Plane of Fire. In the last month, divinations have suggested that the destination was the Citadel of the Raven, but the factions are unsure as to why, or how.

### THE FORTRESS MUST BE REBUILT

The Zhentarim are attempting to rebuild the fortress at the Citadel of the Raven. At one point in the past, the city-states of the Moonsea helped garrison the facilities against incursions from the west as well as keeping an eye on their Zhentarim neighbors. The Lords' Alliance would like its agents to demonstrate their resourcefulness and utility to the Zhentarim commanding the facility as a first step towards restoring those garrisons from the city-states to prevent Zhentarim forces from building up unobserved.

### MONEY TO BE HAD

Rumors abound that the Zhentarim are willing to part with money for adventurers willing to help them reclaim the tunnels under the Citadel of the Raven. The rumors also claim that the Zhentarim have stopped using their own agents because of some dark presence under the Citadel.

### ELVEN HERITAGE

Adventurers of elven heritage (elves and half-elves) have had strange dreams and visions of late, plaguing their attempts at trance and sleep: Clicking sounds of many legs in the darkness; pursuit by something their elven eyes cannot discern; a gaping hole of nothingness chewing through the thickest spider's web they've ever conceived of... When their journey takes them away from the Citadel of the Raven, these become more pronounced, more terrifying, and when they travel towards it, the visions recede – somewhat. For those of drow heritage, this is even worse: they see among the visions flashes of red eyes spiraling with chaos, though they are capable of recognizing this as a sign from an angry Lloth.

### THINGS TO CHECK FOR:

1. Story Awards: **Mushroom of Connection** (CCC-ODFC01-01)
2. Modules Played: CCC-BMG-03 *CORE01-03 A Hole in the World*

# PART 1: BLACK BLADES (30 MINUTES)

## OUTSIDE THE MOUNTAIN

It is hardly unexpected to run into other adventurers just outside a bastion of civilization in the wilds, but standing among the ruins of an abandoned Zhentarim fortress, each of you must have your own reasons to explain your presence. Whether or not you choose to share them is up to you.

Directly constructed into the side of the mountain over your heads, the new Citadel of the Raven offers a commanding view of the nearby mountain passes and valleys from towering watchtowers and a thick curtain wall. A thousand foot deep kill zone separates the ruins of the old fortifications you have been passing by for days from the new walls. The gates are currently open, and a steady, yet thin, stream of people passes in and out.

### GENERAL FEATURES

**Construction:** All of the construction on the surface seems to have been done from recycled remnants of the previous fortress that was destroyed by the Netherese. Everything is good, solid stone construction and merges into the mountainside with no apparent gaps.

**Weather:** Slightly overcast, somewhat cool, but otherwise pleasant. It might rain later, once the sun goes down.

**Terrain:** Mostly paved with stone blocks, there are patches of mountain still visible inside the fortress. The surface there seems to have been scraped up and turned, as if the Zhentarim have plans to plant food crops within the walls.

**Buildings:** In addition to watch towers on the walls every 150 feet, there are some buildings that look like administration buildings, some stables, a couple of buildings that look to be barracks and, given the amount of smoke from that building, a forge. There is also a fortress-like building holding a gate into the mountain itself.

### ADMINISTRATION BUILDING:

This building houses the offices of the Zhentarim leadership at the Citadel. The party is directed here first if they are looking for work or when they are quickly recognized as not belonging to the Zhentarim garrison.

The Citadel is commanded by Ardragon Naveen Behrouz. The Ardragon is worried of late because his scouting parties keep disappearing in the tunnels under the secured area in the mountain. If the party offers to assist, he leaps at the opportunity to have experienced adventurers investigate rather than throw away more of his men. He explains that the Zhentarim knew it would be dangerous to explore into the edge of the Upperdark, but usually the scouting parties returned with only minor injuries or a couple of casualties at most. In the last three tendays, however, he has lost four scouting parties, including one he expected to return yesterday. They seem to have vanished without a trace, which is impressive for a patrol of nine scouts and an experienced Captain (named Brannigan, if a player asks).

If the adventurers find and rescue the most recent scouting party that disappeared, he will pay each adventurer 10 gp for every scout returned alive, plus they may keep any treasure that they find underground. Additionally, he will offer stabling space and feed for any mounts that they do not wish to take underground. He suggests that they speak to the scouts who have returned from the tunnels about the challenges they faced, and he gives them a writ on his authority that allows them to purchase equipment from the Citadel at cost: non-Zhentarim would normally receive a 25% markup. Speed is of the essence – if his men are in trouble, they likely won't survive for very long.

### STABLES:

There are a number of different mounts present in the stables, mostly horses, with a couple of smaller side buildings for more exotic mounts that might not get along with horses. The stablemaster assures the adventurers that he will look after any mounts left in his care as if they were his own, but if the adventurers aren't back in a tenday, he'll likely sell their mounts to pay for their food and stable care.

### BARRACKS:

These two identical, mirror-imaged buildings are low slung and contain a small armory between the main entrance and the sleeping area. A smaller entrance gives access to the latrine area at the other end of each building. Each building appears to hold 50 soldiers and their gear, which a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check indicates is unlikely to be sufficient combined strength of arms to hold the walls of the Citadel. If the adventurers come here without the Ardragon's writ,

they are escorted to the Administration building by a patrol equal in size to the party.

### **FORGE:**

The most interesting building present above ground, the forge seems to be fed by fire from beneath its foundation, apparently coming from within the mountain. A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that this area is not known for volcanic activity. Other than that oddity, the forge is identical to many a smithy in most towns and cities, and looks capable of handling the needs of the Zhents who live in the fortress.

### **MOUNTAIN ENTRANCE:**

The entrance tunnel is the most heavily fortified area in the Citadel and the rest of the fortress has not skimped on defenses. A series of 4 portcullis and 2 iron bound doors can be used to block the tunnel, which has arrow slits on both sides as well as murder holes in the ceiling. A passive Investigation or Perception of 20 reveals that sections of the floor also appear to slide away. If the adventurers come here without the Ardragon's writ, they are escorted to the Administration building by a patrol equal in size to the party – they are not permitted underground.

## ***FIRST LEVEL UNDERGROUND***

### **GENERAL FEATURES**

**Lighting:** Brightly lit by red light which shines from crystals that seem to have grown in lines along the walls. Unfinished areas have variable lighting by lanterns and torches.

**Walls, Floors, and Ceilings:** In areas with crystal lighting, the four sides of the corridors and all the rooms are finished stone. In unfinished areas, the walls are rough stone, the floors are mud, and the ceilings are either natural or supported by wooden beams.

**Air Quality:** Surprisingly fresh. Occasionally characters may feel a small draft. It seems likely that there are vents to the surface located randomly. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check is required to find one. They are approximately six inches long and only an inch wide. Once one is found, others are found easily. There are many of them.

The underground portion of the Citadel feels just as militaristic as the surface, if not more so. Lit surreally by unceasing, glowing red crystals, it seems to increase your comfort down here and the ease with which your eyes adjust.

You pass multiple barracks rooms, armories, and dining halls, and with them, the associated debris of living in close quarters underground. You are pretty sure you saw something that looked like a stable, and was that a farm? Uniformed Zhentarim are everywhere, and running around between them are children, both of the more common surface races and goblin. You see the occasion adult goblin keeping an eye on things as well, though they mostly do not wear the uniform of the Zhentarim.

The rooms and corridors are finished stone, with textured floors, and most anyone you ask can direct you to where the scouts stay in between their sojourns deeper under the mountain.

### **TALKING TO THE ZHENTARIM SCOUTS**

The Zhentarim scouts are initially reluctant to discuss their business with outsiders. A DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check can loosen their tongues. A 5 gp or more bribe per Zhentarim can grant advantage on this check. Alternatively, showing them the Ardragon's writ will cause them to speak up without a check. They can answer the following questions.

#### **What have you encountered under the citadel?**

- "This one time, the stalactites came to life and started dropping down all over us. Killed Jon."
- "Sometimes you reach a crevice, and if you don't have the gear to cross it, all you can do is turn back."
- "We were just walking along when they came out of the walls, creatures of living shadow. Our weapons couldn't hurt them, so we ran. Kylie didn't make it."
- "Watch the mushrooms. They can save your life. Or just as easily kill you. But only the mushrooms – other fungus is deadly."
- "Sometimes, seeing in the dark wasn't a help at all."
- "This close to the surface, you don't tend to see the big worms, but the little ones is bad enough. Watch the tails."
- "Seen lots of webs down there. Never any spiders. I wonder sometimes if it was just the drow messing with us."

### Is there any special equipment we should take?

- “The apothecary might have something for you. Everything down there is deadly, and he’s got the best stuff.”
- “Make sure you take a light source. You might be able to get a nice one that won’t go out if you follow the lights on the walls.”

### Why are there so many goblins down here?

- “The Mountaintrappers handle the farms down here, and we keep bigger folk from messing with them. It works out for everyone.”

### What equipment do you have for sale?

The scouts have access to all the supplies from the charts *Weapons* and *Adventuring Gear* in the *Player’s Handbook*, either from their own resources or directing the characters to the appropriate areas of the underground base, such as the shrines, apothecary, or armories. This equipment is available at a 25% markup for non-Zhentarim unless the Ardragon’s writ is shown at the time of purchase. Rank 3 Zhentarim can purchase equipment for themselves at a 10% discount, or get a trusted friend an only 10% markup.

### APOTHECARY

While antitoxin, healer’s kits, and potions of healing are the primary stock in trade here, the head herbalist does have one *potion of greater healing* that he is willing to sell to a member of the Zhentarim for 500 gp, or 625 gp to a member of another faction. If shown the writ from the Ardragon, he smiles gently and replies “What potion of greater healing?” He is unwilling to change his prices under almost any circumstances, except if a member of the party has the Story Award **Mushroom of Connection** from CCC-ODFC01-01 *Hammer and Anvil*, in which case he will hand over the potion in exchange for voiding that award. He only has one potion, even if more than one party member has the story award.

### HEART OF FLAME

**Lights:** The lights mentioned by the Zhentarim scout are the lighting crystals that run along all the finished areas of the complex. DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that this is unnatural. A DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check indicates that this growth was probably guided by some form of magic. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the lighting appears to circulate through the crystals (up one side of the corridors and back the other way on the other side). The crystal radiates strong evocation and transmutation magic if examined in that

way. Once this information is determined, backtracking the lighting crystals to their source is simple.

This area is off limits without presenting the writ from the Ardragon. No amount of persuasion, intimidation, deception, or bribery will convince the guards to let you in, unless the party is all Zhentarim – they will need to show their faction coins for proof. Inside is the portal fragment that was carted all the way from Mulmaster. Crystals, like those that line all the walls, grow right up to some complex piece of visible, twisting magic that hovers just outside the portal and seems to drain fire from it. A highly observant person will be able to discern that the Heart of Flame is right next to the back wall of underground Forge, and directly below the above ground Forge, and is clearly providing their fire as well.

A large piece of fabric lies on the floor underneath the hovering portal. Any character with proficiency in Arcana and who completed CCC-BMG-03 *CORE01-03 A Hole in the World* immediately recognizes the markings on the fabric as a modified version of the circle used to contain and move the portal to Mechanus in Melvaunt. Otherwise, a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check is required to discern the purpose of the circle. **This likely seems to be information that the Cloaks, Harpers, and Emerald Enclave are looking for.**

Additionally, there is a young wizard apprentice present at all times monitoring the portal fragment. For 100 gp, he is willing to cast the *continual flame* spell on one item that the party possesses. He is only able to do this once per adventure.

## PART 2: SEARCHING THE TUNNELS (2.5 HOURS)

Once you descend past the levels of the Citadel reoccupied by the Zhentarim, you enter a completely different world. Without light, these tunnels press in on you, a presence that almost caresses the back of your mind with as you descend into the bowels of the earth. If the Zhentarim have delved too deeply and greedily, there is no telling what you might find down here skimming across the edge of the Underdark.

### GENERAL FEATURES

**Air Quality:** Cool and just slightly damp. The general impression is a faint whiff of rotting earth.

**Sound:** The walls are solid rock. Sounds travel oddly and for a long distance underground.

**Ground and Walls:** Solid rock, coated in many places with a faint sheen of mud. Occasionally slippery.

**Lighting:** The tunnels are dark except for whatever sources of light the characters bring with them.

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

For this part of the adventure, the party should encounter numerous iconic challenges of being in underground at the edge of the Underdark. The core of this section is to track the path that the Zhentarim party took on its most recent trip underground. To successfully track the Zhentarim scouts, the party must make four Wisdom (Survival) checks, beginning after their first hour of travel. A single party member can track the Zhentarim with a DC 15 check, or the group can attempt to follow the path with a group check at DC 11. A successful check leads the party to the next check in an hour of travel, while a failed check results in three hours of travel before the next sign of the Zhentarim scouts is found. After each check, the party should face one combat encounter (they reach the final area after the last check) and possibly a hazard, depending on how many hazards they are facing.

Keep track of how the party spends its time as it travels. The journey to their destination takes five hours under ideal circumstances. Rests, significant ritual castings, and getting lost all add time to the journey. Keep track of their travel time. Each hour of travel beyond 8 will have effects in the final encounter

and, in addition, each hour of travel beyond eight (minus hours spent resting) will result in Constitution saving throws to avoid gaining levels of exhaustion. These saving throws start at DC 11 and increase by 1 for each additional hour of travel. If the party chooses to take a long rest, they can stop making these saving throws until another 8 hours of travel have passed. The DC also reverts to 11.

### MODIFYING UNDERDARK TRAVELS

The party should face encounters and hazards based on the average party level:

**Very Weak:** 2 Hazards, Choldrith Patrol, 1 Easy Encounter, Banderhobbs

**Weak:** 2 Hazards, 2 Easy Encounters, Banderhobbs

**Average:** 3 Hazards, 1 Easy and 1 Medium Encounters, Banderhobbs

**Strong:** 4 Hazards, 1 Easy and 1 Hard Encounter OR 2 Medium Encounters, Banderhobbs

**Very Strong:** 4 Hazards, 2 Hard Encounters, Banderhobbs

Additional encounters or hazards may be run for challenge purposes if time is not a factor. If a party is particularly powerful or skilled, consider combining a hazard into an encounter, particularly if the hazard is unlikely to impose a problem for creatures in the encounter.

Make sure to be aware of the party's marching order at the beginning of the journey and any time they wish to change the order.

### TREASURE

The following treasure packets are available and should be distributed during an appropriate encounter:

1. 2 250gp diamonds
2. 30pp and 200gp (This is not available to a Very Weak party.)
3. A *potion of greater healing*
4. A *potion of greater healing*
5. 2 doses of Drow sleep poison (add this to treasure found in the final encounter if not present in one these encounters)
6. Journal Entries (Player Handout 1) (This should be found during the Choldrith Patrol, Drow Patrol, or Banderhobb encounter only)

## HAZARDS

### 1. RUSSET MOLD

Any party which is unable to see coloration in the darkness of this tunnel nearly wanders automatically into the area of russet mold, since it simply looks like strangely patterned rocks when viewed in grayscale (passive Wisdom (Insight) DC 18 to notice something is off with the rocks). In the event that the party can see in color, they can spot the rust-colored fungus growing in a thin shell across the rocks on both sides of the hallway and the ceiling. The floor is muddy and slick here. The russet mold extends for 30 feet down the hallway in front of the party. If the party does not notice the mold, the first person in the marching order provokes a spray of spores from the mold when they reach a point within 5 feet of the first mold. A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the russet mold once the party is aware of its presence and gives them information about russet mold including the effects of the mold's poison and how to neutralize or kill the mold. The mold may be considered a creature during this hazard for the purposes of targeting effects.

The tunnel containing the russet mold is 10 feet in diameter, so it is impossible to pass through without triggering the mold's spores. For each 10 feet of travel in the tunnel, a creature must make a separate Constitution save against the poison, and a creature that is already poisoned by the russet mold takes 3 (1d6) poison damage from the mold on subsequent save failures. A creature starting its turn in the middle of the russet mold area must make a Constitution save immediately at the start of its turn. A creature that attempts to dash across the muddy floor must make a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone in the middle of the moldy area. If a creature falls prone in such a manner, the DC of the immediate Constitution saving throw they must make against the mold's poison increases to 15.

If the party simply tries to run through the mold area, a creature making it in 1 turn will make 4 Constitution saves, a creature taking 2 turns will make 5 Constitution saves, a creature taking 3 turns will make 6 Constitution saves, and a creature using *misty step* will make 2 Constitution saves.

### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one is damaged by the russet mold.

#### Russet Mold

##### *Natural hazard*

Any creature that comes within 5 feet of russet mold must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw as the mold emits a puff of spores. On a failed save, the creature becomes poisoned. While poisoned in this way, the creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns, sprouting mold as it takes damage. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. Any magic that neutralizes poison or cures disease kills the infestation. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by the mold's poison damage dies. If the dead creature is a beast, giant, or humanoid, one or more newborn vegepygmies emerge from its body 24 hours later.

Russet mold can be hard to kill, since weapons and most types of damage do it no harm. Effects that deal acid, necrotic, or radiant damage kill 1 square foot of russet mold per 1 damage dealt. A pound of salt, a gallon of alcohol, or a magical effect that cures disease kills russet mold in a square area that is 10 feet on a side. Sunlight kills any russet mold in the light's area.

### 2. YELLOW MOLD

If anyone in the party has a passive Perception of 15 or higher (recalling that dim light reduces passive Perception by 5 and that darkvision shows darkness as dim light), read:

The floor of this corridor appears to be fuzzy.

This tunnel's floor (and five feet up the walls) is coated in yellow mold for a distance of 20 feet. The tunnel is approximately fifteen feet in diameter.

### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one is damaged by the yellow mold.



### Yellow Mold

#### Natural hazard

Yellow mold grows in dark places, and one patch covers a 5-foot square. If touched, the mold ejects a cloud of spores that fills a 10 foot cube originating from the mold. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the creature takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a successful save.

Sunlight or any amount of fire damage instantly destroys one patch of yellow mold.

### 3. COLLAPSING CEILING

The loud crack from above you is your only warning as dust flutters into your eyes. The ceiling is coming down!

Have the party roll initiative. This 15 foot diameter tunnel has lost integrity and the ceiling is about to fall. The ceiling falls in an area 120 feet long, centered on the middle of the marching order, at the beginning of the second round. A passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 13 or better can immediately identify the danger zone, as can any dwarf (or other creature with Stonecunning) or Underdark native race, anyone proficient in mason's tools, or having an appropriate background or class feature related to underground survival. Anyone with multiple of these features gains advantage on their initiative roll for this hazard.

When the ceiling collapses, huge chunks of rubble rain down on anyone still in the danger zone. Each creature still in the zone must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half that on a success. Either way, they are knocked prone and buried under the rubble. While buried, a creature is considered blinded, restrained, unable to breathe, and takes 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage at the start of their turn. Two DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks must be made to free a creature so buried, or a single check if the creature succeeded on its Dexterity saving throw. Either the buried creature or another creature that is not buried may make these checks.

### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one is hurt by the collapsing ceiling.

### 4. COLLAPSING FLOOR

When your boot sinks into the rock beneath you, you have enough time to realize that this is going to be bad as you watch the cracks spiral outward from the penetration. The cracks sound like thunder as you begin to fall, surrounded by slashing and piercing shards of rock.

Characters must make two DC 13 Dexterity saving throws as the floor collapses from underneath them without warning. The first allows them to avoid the slashing rocks that are falling with them that made up the floor of the tunnel. A failure results in 7 (2d6) slashing damage. The second saving throw prevents them from being impaled on spikes of rock at the bottom of the fall, with a failure resulting in 14 (4d6) piercing damage. Characters also fall 30 feet during the process, for 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. Effects which can slow a fall, such as the *feather fall* spell, grant advantage on the Dexterity saving throws. Creatures intimately familiar with stone and tunnels (such as having the Stonecunning trait or something similar in their racial traits) also gain advantage on their saving throws. For purposes of defensive effects, each party member is targeted separately by the effects of the collapse.

### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one is slashed or pierced by the debris from the tunnel.

### 5. MUSHROOM CAVERN

Mushrooms fill the floor of the cavern for a distance of 20 or so feet from the entrance before abruptly stopping in a straight line across the rocks, then resuming 50 feet beyond the point where they stopped.

Anyone with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 20 or higher sees a few drops of water fall upward in the area without mushrooms. Anyone looking at the ceiling 40 feet overhead automatically sees that the space with no mushrooms on the floor of the cavern is completely filled with mushrooms on the ceiling.

*Detect magic* indicates that the area is filled with strong transmutation magic – a permanent *reverse gravity* effect. Creatures that try to traverse the area simply by walking are exposed to the effect immediately and fall 40 feet to the ceiling (and 40 feet back to the floor on the other side if applicable). A *dispel magic* spell suppresses the effect for 1 round. Anyone attempting to climb on the walls in an attempt to avoid falling must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill checks each time the direction of gravity reverses for them. The mushrooms growing on the floor and ceiling are of insufficient size and strength to form hand holds to prevent a creature from falling. The party will likely try something clever to over this hazard: adjudicate their efforts appropriately with advantage or decreased falling damage, but remember that complicated efforts will consume time to set up.

#### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one damaged by the reversed gravity.

#### 6. BOTTOMLESS CREVICE

**NOTE:** It is suggested that this hazard is used last, if used, to prevent anyone from sitting around with nothing to do prior to the final combat.

The way forward is blocked by a crevice which descends indefinitely into the darkness. You can see, forty feet away, on the far side, the remnants of a block and tackle setup that likely allowed humanoid creatures to cross this area previously.

The crack in the earth is between 35 and 40 feet across as far as can be seen to the left or right of the path. If the characters choose to take 2 hours, they can climb along the rift in either direction and eventually find a narrow enough portion that they can make the jump. Any Strength (Athletics) checks made during this period should have a DC of 12. A single Strength saving throw should be made halfway through the period as the characters jump from one side to the other of the rift (there are no ledges except in the initial area, so they have to catch themselves on the wall). The DC of this save should vary based on the equipment the character is carrying. Any character proficient in Athletics or Acrobatics is considered proficient with Strength saving throws for this instance.

Alternatively, characters might attempt to create a rope bridge. To get a rope across initially requires either a grappling hook or a ranged weapon with a short range of greater than 40 feet to which the rope can be attached. A Dexterity (Athletics) check or an attack roll with the weapon in excess of 20 is required to firmly attach the rope for someone to cross. Failure by more than 5 means that nothing happens, but failure by 5 or less (total of 15 – 19) means that the rope appears to be attached, but will give out when the first character is half way across the chasm. A Strength saving throw of DC 15 is required to catch themselves on the far wall of the crevice. If they manage a saving throw total of 10 but less than 15, they catch themselves on the close wall instead. At less than 10, they fall to their doom. Once on the wall, they have to climb back up. Once a single person is on the far side of the crevice, using rope to rebuild the block and tackle system becomes trivial, though takes nearly 30 minutes to set up and ferry everyone across.

#### ***Their Doom?!***

A character which falls into the crevice survives the fall, but only just. They awaken to the noise of the party arriving/starting combat in the final area with 1 hit point while tied up in the drider's ritual circle. Consider allowing them to help you with monsters in various combat encounters until that time. This character also receives the story award **I've Fallen And I Got Up**. If the party attempts to farm this story award, the characters who 'fall' in the crevice instead take a minimum of bludgeoning damage equal to their maximum hit points + 15 and are delayed by an additional 8 hours in their rescue operation, assuming they survive.

#### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one falls to their doom.

#### 7. PIERCERS

This 60 foot high cavern is the same as every other you have encountered, but smells like rotting meat and dried blood instead of sour mud.

**Piercers** hide among the stalactites at the top of this cavern. A body lays 10 feet inside the cavern behind a

stalagmite. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check will spot it from the entry and indicate that it was struck by a heavy weight from above. Characters who look at the ceiling will see the creatures getting ready to drop onto them. Otherwise, the body is spotted as the creatures attack with surprise.

If the party is aware of the piercers, they are not a threat, nor do they remain a threat after their initial attack, as it will take them far too long to regain an attack position on the characters.

There are two piercers for each party member.

## 8. RAW MAGIC

Light crackles ahead of you, a glimmering net of lightning that divides the corridor into tiny sections. The net moves towards you at a frightening pace, sizzling through the air, the smell of ozone growing stronger and the feel of magic tearing at your mind.

Each character has 1 turn before the net of raw magic strikes them. They cannot outrun it, nor can they see through to the other side. The raw magic also creates an extreme wild magic zone: any spells cast in its presence force one roll on the Wild Magic Surge table in the *Player's Handbook* per level of the spell, or a single roll in the case of a cantrip.

Any character proficient in Arcana is automatically aware that the *dispel magic* spell will likely open a temporary hole in the field, and that the field will likely do psychic and force damage. A DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check (no action required) is otherwise needed for this information. *Dispel magic* will allow the caster and one other creature no more than five feet behind or in the same row as the caster in the marching order to avoid being struck by the field.

When the field strikes a character, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Failure of the Dexterity saving throw results in 15 (6d4) force damage and the creature is subject to the effect of the *dispel magic* spell. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage, and is not subject to any other effects. Creatures with spell slots can sacrifice a spell slot as a reaction to taking the damage. Doing so blocks 5 (2d4) force damage per level of the slot.

Failure of the Dexterity saving throw by 5 or more results in a DC 15 Intelligence (or spellcasting ability, if the creature has one) saving throw, unless the creature takes no force damage. Failure on this saving throw

results in 15 (6d4) psychic damage, or half as much on a success.

### XP AWARD

Award **each party member 150 XP** if no one takes psychic damage from the raw magic field.

## OPTIONAL COMBATS

### 1. CHOLDRITH PATROL (SPECIAL)

This combat takes place in a 60 foot long oblong cavern with the entrance and exit at the points opposite each other on the long axis. The short axis is 40 feet, though the cavern is 60 feet high. The entry and exit corridors are 15 feet in diameter. The cavern is in darkness. The cavern is filled with 5 and 10 foot diameter stalactites, stalagmites, and columns with no more than 10 feet between any extrusion.

The two **cave fishers** are on ledges 40 feet off the floor, and their tendrils are strung across the most likely paths through the columns and stalagmites. There is one **chitine** for each party member. The **choldrith** hangs back and provides support until it sees an opening to rush into combat.

### TREASURE

The cave fisher(s) can be sold back at the Zhentarim camp near the surface for a total of 500 gp. A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check is needed to know that the bodies are valuable, and a way to transport them is required – chopping them into pieces is a viable option.

### 2. ROPER (EASY)

This combat takes place in a 60 foot long oblong cavern with the entrance and exit at the points opposite each other on the long axis. The short axis is 40 feet, though the cavern is only 20 feet high. The entry and exit corridors are 15 feet in diameter. There are two **ropers** on the ceiling along the centerline of the cavern. They are located 20 and 40 feet from the entrance to the cavern. The cavern is filled with 5 and 10 foot diameter stalactites, stalagmites, and columns with no more than 5 feet between any extrusion. The ropers attack when the entire party is in the room.

### 3. YOUNG PURPLE WORM (EASY)

This combat takes place while the party is walking down a tunnel that is only 15 feet wide and 10 feet tall. A **young purple worm** bursts through the wall ahead of the party and turns on them, sensing food. A second **young purple worm** blocks their escape by punching through the wall of the tunnel behind the party.

### 4. SWARM OF CRANIUM RATS (MEDIUM)

These rats occupy a cavern full of bio-luminescent fungi, so that the glow from their exposed brains is not immediately obvious in the underground. There are

sufficient cranium rats to form 3 **swarms of cranium rats**.

### 5. SHADOW DEMONS (MEDIUM)

This combat takes place in a 60 foot long, oblong cavern with the entrance and exit at the points opposite each other on the long axis. The short axis is 40 feet, though the cavern is only 20 feet high. The entry and exit corridors are 15 feet in diameter. The cavern has no illumination. The cavern is filled with 5 and 10 foot diameter stalactites, stalagmites, and columns with no more than 5 feet between any two extrusions. When the four **shadow demons** sense the party approaching, they use the fact that they are incorporeal to hide in the rock formations. They willingly take the 5 (1d10) damage to get the drop on the party.

### 6. DROW PATROL (HARD)

This combat takes place in a 60 foot long oblong cavern with the entrance and exit at the points opposite each other on the long axis. The short axis is 40 feet, though the cavern is only 20 feet high. The entry and exit corridors are 15 feet in diameter. The cavern has no illumination. The cavern is filled with 5 and 10 foot diameter stalactites, stalagmites, and columns with no more than 10 feet between any two extrusions. The **draegloth** uses the extrusions to approach with cover, while the **drow mage** uses them for cover and concealment throughout the combat. There is one regular **drow** for each member of the adventurers' party, rounding out the drow party.

### 7. KORRED (HARD)

This combat takes place in a 60 foot long oblong cavern with the entrance and exit at the points opposite each other on the long axis. The short axis is 40 feet, though the cavern is only 20 feet high. The entry and exit corridors are 15 feet in diameter. The cavern is dimly lit. One of the **xorn** was found by the **korred**, and the second **xorn** was summoned by him 10 minutes ago as a mate for the one he had found previously (using his *conjure elemental* spell that he is currently concentrating on). The **korred** attacks immediately when the party's presence interrupts the mating because the xorns sense the treasure the party carries.

## ***REQUIRED COMBATS***

### **BANDERHOBBS**

These two **banderhobbs** were summoned by the drider warlock to help him kidnap the explorers in the tunnels for his experiments.

This combat takes place in a 60 foot long oblong cavern with the entrance and exit at the points opposite each other on the long axis. The short axis is 40 feet, though the cavern is only 20 feet high. The entry and exit corridors are 15 feet in diameter. The cavern is in complete darkness. The banderhobbs attempt to capture a party member each, then flee, unless they believe they can capture more than one.

### **TREASURE**

If cut open, one of the banderhobbs has a Zhentarim signet ring, signifying a unit commander, in its gullet. The interior is engraved with Captain Paz Brannigan's full name. Captain Brannigan or Ardragon Behrouz will pay 100 gp for its return. A representative of any other faction will pay 200 gp for it.

## PART 3: BLACK WINGS (45

### MINUTES)

This room is dimly lit and clearly has been occupied for some time. In the middle of the room, addressing a circle of runes carved into the floor, is a creature of nightmare – half drow elf and half giant spider, reading from a thick tome decorated in webbing and eyes. “Oh, good, more visitors,” says an excited voice in your mind. Multiple humanoid figures are bound in the middle of the circle of runes, and as the drider makes the slightest motion, one arches up off the floor, trailing a glowing purple rope that connects it to the others. Its scream tears into your mind as it goes limp, then falls to the floor with a sickening thump. The drider smiles and makes eye contact. “I need two of them. You can eat the rest,” that same, calm voice continues.

Each time one of the captives in the circle dies, the conscious player characters in the room must make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or take 5 (2d4) psychic damage as they feel the death. The **ulitharid** and its allies are immune to this effect. There is **cloaker** hidden on the ceiling. The ulitharid maintains its guise as a drider until it is attacked.

To figure out how many captives remain, determine how many hours have passed since the characters set out into the tunnels. For each hour that has passed beyond eight, the ulitharid has eliminated 1 member of the Zhentarim scouting group. There are nine scouts and their captain in the Zhentarim unit. The unit commander, Captain Brannigan, is the last one to die, short of any party members. If the party manages to reach the drider’s lair in under 8 hours, the scout who dies in the box text is the first one. The ulitharid has killed no more than 6 of the scouts when the party arrives at its lair.

For the purposes of determining if any scouts die during combat, the regular scouts and Captain Brannigan have 1 hit point. Each scout dies if they take more than 12 damage from a single source, Brannigan only dies if he fails three death saving throws (or more than 55 damage from a single source).

Each death grants the ulitharid additional benefits, if done prior to the party’s arrival in his lair (including the death in the box text).

Death	Benefit
1	The ulitharid gains 20 temporary hit points.
2	The ulitharid gains the effect of the <i>sanctuary</i> spell.
3	The ulitharid gains the effect of a <i>freedom of movement</i> spell.
4	The ulitharid gains a +2 bonus to its Strength score.
5	One time this combat, the ulitharid can impose disadvantage on a save by a single target against an effect it created.
6	One time this combat, the ulitharid can impose disadvantage on a save by all targets of an effect it created. This is a separate ability from the one granted by the 5 <sup>th</sup> kill.

The ulitharid communicates telepathically with its allies, and projects any commands such that the party can hear them as well, trying to instill fear in them. He orders that any obvious spellcasters be eliminated first, primarily to prevent them from using *counterspell* on him and his limited number of spells. Additionally, the ulitharid’s lair is filled with a permanent *forbiddance* effect, which can be dispelled with a 6<sup>th</sup> level or higher *dispel magic* spell (DC 16 for a lower level *dispel*). Otherwise, it affects celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead as described in the spell (note that this would include any summoned familiars and mounts, as per the spell descriptions).

### MODIFYING THE ENCOUNTER

*Adjustments are not cumulative*

**Very Weak:** Replace **ulitharid** with a **dridr**

**Weak:** Replace **cloaker** with three **trappers**

**Strong:** Add a **trapper** hidden on the ceiling.

**Very Strong:** Add **banderhobb** standing by the magic circle.

The ulitharid (or drider) has the following option available to it in combat:

#### Damage Shunt

*Reaction*

When this creature takes any damage, and is within 30 feet of its ritual circle, it can transfer the damage to a creature that is in the circle.

## DEVELOPMENT

Read the following when the ultharid is first damaged (or the drider is killed for a very weak party):

As the blade (spell/energy) strikes the drider, its form wavers, twisting in on itself. The spider legs become tentacles, hanging from where its mouth should be, its hair morphs into a hooded cowl, and its night-black skin becomes a purplish blue as it stands on two legs and sneers.

As the mind flayer dies, collapsing to its knees, a brief vision of a stunningly beautiful drow woman appears in your mind's eye. "I will remember your deed today," she says cryptically, with a half-smirk before kissing you in the center of your forehead. As she draws back, you're sure you see a hint of a spider's web connecting her lips to you, but that couldn't be, could it? The body of the mind flayer hits the floor.

Everyone in the party gains the story award **Chaotic Blessing of the Queen of Spiders**. A *remove curse* or *dispel magic* cast before 24 hours have passed removes this blessing, otherwise it is subject to the rules presented in the story award text. If wished, the party may exceed the normal spellcasting services limits (3 spells per day) to get the blessing removed. If Captain Brannigan of the Zhentarim scouting party was recovered alive, Zhentarim members may now return his ring to him for the amount mentioned in that section. If more than 6 members of the Zhentarim scout party were recovered alive or the party chooses to pay for their revival, the party each receives the story award **Challenge Coin of the Citadel**.

## TREASURE

The rope tying the prisoners together is a *rope of entanglement*. The exhausted prisoners are unable to break free from it.

## REWARDS

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

### EXPERIENCE (MIN/MAX XP: 4500/6000

#### EACH)

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

### COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Banderhobb	1800
Cave Fisher	700
Chitine	100
Choldrith	700
Cloaker	3900
Shadow Demon	1100
Drider	2900
Draegloth	2900
Drow	100
Drow Mage	2900
Korred	2900
Piercer	100
Roper	1800
Swarm of Cranium Rats	1800
Trapper	700
Xorn	1800
Young Purple Worm	1800

### NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Bypass Russet Mold	150 XP
Bypass Yellow Mold	150 XP
Survive Collapsing Ceiling	150 XP
Survive Collapsing Floor	150 XP
Anti-Grav Cavern	150 XP
Bottomless Chasm	150 XP
Raw Magic Field	150 XP

### TREASURE

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

### TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP value
Treasure Packet 1	500
Treasure Packet 2	500
Cave Fisher Corpses	500
Zhentarim Scout Bounty	up to 90 each PC
Zhentarim Commander Ring	100 or 200

**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*.

### ROPE OF ENTANGLEMENT

*Wondrous Item, rare*

This rope is 30 feet long and weighs 3 pounds. If you hold one end of the rope and use an action to speak its command word, the other end darts forward to entangle the creature you can see within 20 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained.

You can release the creature by using a bonus action to speak a second command word. A target restrained by the rope can use an action to make a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (target's choice). On a success, the creature is no longer restrained by the rope.

The rope has AC 20 and 20 hit points. It regains 1 hit point every 5 minutes as long as it has a least 1 hit point. If the rope drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed.

When seen out of the corner of one's eye, this rope appears to writhe about with a mind of its own, but clearly has not moved when looked at directly. Additionally, whenever you are within 120 feet of a creature with telepathy or psionic ability, the rope glows a faint purple (providing dim light within 1 foot).

### POTION OF GREATER HEALING

*Potion, uncommon*

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

### DROW POISON

*Poison (Injury)*

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.

## ***STORY AWARDS***

### **I've Fallen but I Got Up.**

Having fallen into a seemingly bottomless crevice and somehow surviving due to the mind flayer's twisted magic, you gain the flaw "I like jumping off high things that I probably shouldn't." A *remove curse* spell cast on you for the purposes of removing the flaw voids this story award and removes the flaw.

### **Chaotic Blessing of the Queen of Spiders.**

You have drawn the attentions of Lloth to you, and she has noticed your prowess in battle. In recognition for slaying the mind flayer masquerading as one of her *beloved* driders, she has granted you a blessing, but you hardly feel blessed by it. What effect this has on your future adventuring career remains to be seen.

Additionally, sometimes when you sleep or trance, you have dreams or visions of spiders bursting forth from beneath your skin, demons eating you alive, or your loved ones turning into half-spider monstrosities, but at the end of the vision or dream, you always feel the cool press of Lloth's lips against your forehead again and you briefly feel that everything will be okay before jerking awake with horror in your eyes. A *remove curse* cast at 9<sup>th</sup> level or a *wish* can end this effect, as can a successful Divine Intervention by a deity not allied to Lloth. At that point, you should strike through this paragraph, but retain the first one.

### **Challenge Coin of the Citadel**

You have received a challenge coin marking you as a friend of the Citadel of the Raven. It bears the markings of the Citadel on one side of this golden coin, and the symbols of both the Zhentarim and your faction on the other. For members of the Zhentarim, it just holds a singular flying snake. When traveling in the area, showing the coin will, under most circumstances, grant you access to the Citadel and services provided at their regular cost (instead of the 25% markup for outsiders), as well as a night of protection inside its walls, including a bed in the barracks. Up to six companions may accompany you into the Citadel on the strength of your word guaranteeing their good behavior. In the event of any member of your party violating this good conduct oath, you will be stripped of this coin (and any others you and your companions have on you) and cast out into the cold.

## ***DOWNTIME***

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

## ***RENOWN***

Each **party member** receives **1 renown** for eliminating the threat of the drider warlock.

Members of the **Brotherhood of the Cloaks** advance **1 rank** in that organization if they successfully identify the ritual used to move the portal fragment. Members of the **Harpers** and the **Emerald Enclave** gain an **additional renown** if they identify that ritual as well.

Members of the **Lords' Alliance** receive **one extra renown** if they receive a Challenge Coin of the Citadel.

Members of the **Order of the Gauntlet** receive **one extra renown** if they immediately reject the Spider Queen's blessing by getting a *remove curse* or *dispel magic* cast on themselves within 24 hours.

Members of the **Zhentarim** receive **one extra renown** if they return the signet ring to either Captain Brannigan or the Ardragon.

## ***DM REWARDS***

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*. For that purpose, this is a 4 hour module for APL 8.

# APPENDIX 1: NPCs/MONSTERS

## BANDERHOBB

*Large Monstrosity, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (Natural Armor)

**Hit Points** 84 (8d10 + 40)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

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**Skills** Athletics +8, Stealth +7

**Condition Immunities** Charmed, Frightened

**Senses** Darkvision 12ft, passive Perception 12

**Languages** understands Common and the languages of its creator, but cannot speak

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

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**Resonant Connection.** If the bandhobb has even a tiny piece of a creature or an object in its possession, such as a lock of hair or a splinter of wood, it knows the most direct route to that creature or object if it is within 1 mile of the banderhobb.

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

### Actions

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**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (5d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the banderhobb can't use its bite attack or tongue attack on another target.

**Tongue.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15ft., one creature *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and the target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is pulled into a space within 5 feet of the banderhobb, which can use a bonus action to make a bite attack against the target.

**Swallow.** The banderhobb makes a bite attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, the creature is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the banderhobb, and it takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage at the start of each of the banderhobb's turns. A creature reduced to 0 hit points in this way stops taking the necrotic damage and becomes stable.

The banderhobb can have only one creature swallowed at a time. While the banderhobb is not incapacitated, it can regurgitate the creature at any time (no action required) in a space within 5 feet of it. The creature exits prone. If the banderhobb dies, it likewise regurgitates a swallowed creature.

**Shadow Step.** The banderhobb magically teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space of dim light or darkness that it can see. Before or after it teleporting, it can make a bite or tongue attack.

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

## CAVE FISHER

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

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

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

---

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +5

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. passive Perception 12

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Adhesive Filament.** The cave fisher can use its action to extend a sticky filament up to 60 feet, and the filament adheres to anything that touches it. A creature adhered to the filament is grappled by the cave fisher (escape DC 13), and the ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage. The filament can be attacked (AC 15; 5 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage, but a weapon that fails to sever it becomes stuck to it, requiring an action and a successful DC 13 Strength check to pull free. Destroying the filament does no damage to the cave fisher, which extrudes a replacement filament on its next turn.

**Flammable Blood.** If the cave fisher drops to half its hit points for fewer, it gains vulnerability to fire damage.

**Spider Climb.** The cave fisher can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceiling, without needing to make an ability check.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The cave fisher makes two attacks with its claws.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Filament.** One creature grappled by the cave fisher's adhesive filament must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw, provided that the target weighs 200 pounds or less. On a failure, the target is pulled into an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the cave fisher and the cave fisher makes a claw attack against it as a bonus action. Reeling up the target releases anyone else who was attached to the filament. Until the grapple ends on the target, the cave fisher can't extrude another filament.

**Source:** Cave Fisher, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

## CHITINE

Small monstrosity, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 14 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 18 (4d6 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

---

**Skills** Athletics +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Undercommon

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The chitine has advantage on saving thoughts against being charmed, and magic can't put the chitine to sleep.

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

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the chitine knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The chitine ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The chitine makes three attacks with its daggers.

**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.

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

## CHOLDRITH

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather armor)

**Hit Points** 66 (12d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

---

**Skills** Athletics +5, Religion +2, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Undercommon

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The choldrith has advantage on saving thoughts against being charmed, and magic can't put the choldrith to sleep.

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

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

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the choldrith knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The choldrith ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

**Spellcasting.** The choldrith is a 4<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (Save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks) The choldrith has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots): *bane, healing word, sanctuary, shield of faith*

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

### Actions

---

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

**Web (Recharges 5-6).** Ranged weapon attack: +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the

restrained target can make a DC 11 Strength check, bursting the web on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (DC 10; 5 hit points; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison and psychic damage).

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

## CLOAKER

Large Aberration, chaotic Neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d10 + 12)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

---

**Skills Stealth** +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Deep Speech, Undercommon

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

---

**Damage Transfer.** While attached to a creature, the cloaker takes only half the damage dealt to it (rounded down), and that creature takes the other half.

**False Appearance.** While the cloaker remains motionless without its underside exposed, it is indistinguishable from a dark leather cloak.

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, the cloaker has disadvantage on attacks rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### Actions

---

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

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, the cloaker attaches to it. If the cloaker has advantage against the target, the cloaker attaches to the target's head, and the target is blinded and unable to breathe while the cloaker is attached. While attached, the cloaker can make this attack only against the target and has advantage on the attack roll. The cloaker can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. A creature, including the target, can take its action to detach the cloaker by succeeding on a DC 1+ Strength check.

**Tail. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

**Moan.** Each creature within 60 feet of the cloaker that can hear its moan and that isn't an aberration must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until the end of the cloaker's next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the cloaker's moan for the next 24 hours.

**Phantasms (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The cloaker magically creates three illusory duplicates of itself it isn't in bright light. The duplicates move with it and mimic its actions, shifting position so as to make it impossible to track with cloaker is the real one. If the cloaker is ever in an area of bright light, the duplicates disappear.

Whenever any creature targets the cloaker with an attack or a harmful spell while a duplicate remains, that creature rolls randomly to determine whether it targets the cloaker or one of the duplicates. A creature is unaffected by this magical effect if it can't see or if it relies on senses other than sight.

A duplicate has the cloaker's AC and uses its saving throws. If an attack hits a duplicate, or if a duplicate fails a saving throw against an effect that deals damage, the duplicate disappears.

**Source:** Cloaker, *Monster Manual*

## DRAEGLOTH

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 123 (13d10 + 52))

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

---

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +5

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Abyssal, Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The draegloth has advantage of saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put it to sleep.

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

At will: *darkness*

1/day each: *confusion*, *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*

### Actions

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

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.

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

## DRIDER

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 123 (13d10 + 52))

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

---

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +9

**Senses** dark vision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Elvish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drider has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drider to sleep.

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

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

**Web Walker.** The drider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The drider's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). The drider can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The drider makes three attacks, either with its longsword or its longbow. It can replace one of those attacks with a bite attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* +2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Longbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage.

Source: Drider, *Monster Manual*

## DROW

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

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

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

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*

### Actions

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

**Hand Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Source: Drow, *Monster Manual*

## DROW MAGE

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +5, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

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

**Innate Spellcasting.** The drow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material component:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

**Spellcasting.** The drow is a 10<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The drow has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *witch bolt*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *alter self*, *misty step*, *web*

3<sup>rd</sup> level (3 slots): *fly*, *lightning bolt*

4<sup>th</sup> level (3 slots): *Evard's black tentacles*, *greater invisibility*

5<sup>th</sup> level (2 slots): *cloudkill*

### Actions

**Staff.** Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d6 -1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 -1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands, plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

**Summon Demon (1/day).** The drow magically summons a quasit, or attempts to summon a shadow demon with

a 50 percent chance of success. The summoned demon appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet if its summoner, acts as an ally of its summoner, and can't summon other demons. It remains for 10 minutes, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

**Source:** Drow Mage, *Monster Manual*

## **KORRED**

*Small fey, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 102 (12d+6 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

---

<b>STR</b>	<b>DEX</b>	<b>CON</b>	<b>INT</b>	<b>WIS</b>	<b>CHA</b>
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)

---

**Skills** Athletics +9, Perception +5, Stealth +5

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Dwarfish, Gnomish, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Command Hair.** The korred has at least one 50-foot-long rope woven out of its hair. As a bonus action, the korred commands one such rope within 30 feet of it to move up to 20 feet and entangle a Large or smaller creature that the korred can see. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled by the rope (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The korred can use a bonus action to release the target, which is also freed if the korred dies or becomes incapacitated.

A rope of korred hair has AC 20 and 20 hit points. It regains 1 hit point at the start of each of the korred's turns while it has at least 1 hit point and the korred is alive. If the rope drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed.

**Stone Camouflage.** The korred has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

**Stone's Strength.** While on the ground, the korred deals 2 extra dice of damage with any weapon attack (included in its attacks).

**Innate Spellcasting.** The korred's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *commune with nature*, *meld into stone*, *stone shape*

1/day each: *conjure elemental* (as a 6<sup>th</sup>-level spell; galeb duhr, gargoyle, earth elemental, or xorn only), *Otto's irresistible dance*

## **Actions**

**Multiattack.** The korred makes two attacks with its greatclub or hurls two rocks.

**Greatclub. Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage, or 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage if the korred is on the ground.

**Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage, or 24 (4d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage if the korred is on the ground.

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



## PIERCER

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (+5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

---

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive

Perception 8

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

---

**False Appearance.** While the piercer remains motionless on the ceiling, it is indistinguishable from a normal stalactite.

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

### Actions

---

**Drop. Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, one creature directly underneath the piercer. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage per 10 feet fallen, up to 21 (6d6). *Miss:* The piercer takes half the normal falling damage for the distance fallen.

**Source:** Piercer, *Monster Manual*

## ROPER

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 93 (11d10 + 33)

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

---

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** --

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

---

**False Appearance.** While the roper remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal cave formation, such as a stalagmite.

**Grasping Tendrils.** The roper can have up to six tendrils at a time. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 20, 10 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the roper, which can extrude a replacement tendril on its next turn. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check against it.

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

### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The roper makes four attacks with its tendrils, uses Reel, and makes one attack with its bite.

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 +4) piercing damage.

**Tendril. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength saving throws, and the roper can't use the same tendril on another target.

**Reel.** The roper pulls each creature grappled by it up to 25 feet straight toward it.

**Source:** Roper, *Monster Manual*

## SHADOW DEMON

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

---

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Cha +4

**Skills** Stealth +7

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

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

**Damage Immunities** cold, lightning, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

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

**Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

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

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, the demon has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

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

### Actions

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) psychic damage or, if the demon had advantage on the attack roll, 17 (4d6 + 3) psychic damage.

**Source:** Shadow Demon, *Monster Manual*

## SWARM OF CRANIUM RATS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

---

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

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

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** telepathy 30 ft.

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

**Illumination.** As a bonus action, the swarm can shed dim light from its brains in a 5-foot radius, increase the illumination to bright light in a 5- to 20-foot radius (and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius), or extinguish the light.

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

**Telepathic Shroud.** The swarm is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as to all divination spells.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** The swarm's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). As long as it has more than half its hit points remaining, the swarm can innately cast the following spells, requiring no opponents:

At will: *command*, *comprehend languages*, *detect thoughts*

1/day each: *confusion*, *dominate monster*

### Actions

**Bites.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., on target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

**Source:** Swarm of Cranium Rats, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

## **TRAPPER**

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d10 + 30)

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

---

<b>STR</b>	<b>DEX</b>	<b>CON</b>	<b>INT</b>	<b>WIS</b>	<b>CHA</b>
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)

---

**Skills** Stealth +2

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

---

**False Appearance.** While the trapper is attached to a ceiling, floor or wall and remains motionless, it is almost indistinguishable from an ordinary section of the ceiling, floor or wall. A creature that can see it and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Nature) check can discern its presence.

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

### **Actions**

---

**Smother.** One Large or smaller creature within 5 feet of the trapper must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 14). Until the grapple ends, the target takes 17 (4d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. While grappled in this way, the target is restrained, blinded, and at risk of suffocating. The trapper can smother only one creature at a time.

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

## ULITHARID

Large aberration, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate)

**Hit Points** 127 (17d10+34)

**Speed** 30 ft.,

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)

---

**Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +9

**Skills** Arcana +9, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 18

**Languages** Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 2 miles

**Challenge** 9 (5000 XP)

**Creature Sense.** The ulitharid is aware of the presence of creatures within 2 miles of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a *mind blank* spell, a *nondetection* spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

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

**Psionic Hub.** If an elder brain establishes a psychic link with the ulitharid, the elder brain can form a psychic link with any other creature the ulitharid can detect using its Creature Sense. Any such link ends if the creature falls outside the telepathy ranges of both the ulitharid and the elder brain. The ulitharid can maintain its psychic link with the elder brain regardless of the distance between them, so long as they are both on the same plane of existence. If the ulitharid is more than 5 miles away from the elder brain, it can end the psychic link at any time (no action required).

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** The ulitharid's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

1/day: *confusion*, *dominate monster*, *eyebite*, *feeblemind*, *mass suggestion*, *plane shift* (self only), *project image*, *scrying*, *telekinesis*

### Actions

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**Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature *Hit:* 27 (4d10+5) psychic damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 14) and must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

**Extract Brain. Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the ulitharid. *Hit:* 55 (10d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the ulitharid kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

**Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6).** The ulitharid magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or take 31 (4d12+5) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

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

## XORN

Medium elemental, neutral

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 73 (7d8 + 42)

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

---

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +3

**Damage Resistances** Piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Terran

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

**Earth Glide.** The xorn can burrow through nonmagical unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the xorn doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

**Stone Camouflage.** The xorn has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

**Treasure Sense.** The xorn can pinpoint, by scent, the location of precious metals and stones, such as coins and gems, within 60 feet of it.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The xorn makes three claw and one bite attack.

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

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Source:** Xorn, *Monster Manual*

## YOUNG PURPLE WORM

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14 (Natural armor)

**Hit Points** 93 (11d10 + 33)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

---

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** --

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

**Tunneler.** The worm can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 5-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The worm makes two attacks; one with its bite and one with its stinger.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) piercing damage.

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target makes a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

**Source:** Purple Worm, *Monster Manual*, Young Purple Worm, DDEX1-11 *Dark Pyramid of Sorcerer's Isle*, Purple Wormling, *Storm King's Thunder*

# PLAYER HANDOUT 1: UNDERDARK JOURNAL

27 DAYS AGO

*The dream came again. Noise in the darkness, piercing cold. The eyes of void.*

25 DAYS AGO

*I have to go out, into the tunnels. I must find the source. The Goddess commands in the darkness.*

24 DAYS AGO

*I have my troops. The mission is blessed - I have more than just simple soldiers. I must be following the will of the Goddess.*

20 DAYS AGO

*The dreams won't stop. They're getting worse - I can hardly make it through the night now. Maybe we should turn around.*

15 DAYS AGO

*This must be the right direction. The dreams are still there, the clicking of so many legs haunting my rest, but they aren't as bad, aren't as fierce.*

10 DAYS AGO

*I think I saw something, moving among the tunnels. Unnatural creature, alien. My troops ran it down - some sort of arcane abomination. There wasn't a dream afterwards. I think the Goddess was pleased.*

9 DAYS AGO

*The task is not done, clearly. We turned for home, but the visions returned harsher than before. All my troops told me of seeing them.*

5 DAYS AGO

*I saw a face on a spider's body in the vision, draped in the void, with eyes that are infinitely deep. Not the exquisite beauty of the Goddess. Maybe the target is finally clear. I must serve the Goddess. Such are her favorites, though. Could I be wrong? What could it have done to deserve its death?*

## **PLAYER HANDOUT 2: MAGIC ITEM AND ITEM REWARDS**

### ***ROPE OF ENTANGLEMENT***

*Wondrous Item, rare*

This rope is 30 feet long and weighs 3 pounds. If you hold one end of the rope and use an action to speak its command word, the other end darts forward to entangle the creature you can see within 20 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained.

You can release the creature by using a bonus action to speak a second command word. A target restrained by the rope can use an action to make a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (target's choice). On a success, the creature is no longer restrained by the rope.

The rope has AC 20 and 20 hit points. It regains 1 hit point every 5 minutes as long as it has a least 1 hit point. If the rope drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed.

When seen out of the corner of one's eye, this rope appears to writhe about with a mind of its own, but clearly has not moved when looked at directly. Additionally, whenever you are within 120 feet of a creature with telepathy or psionic ability, the rope glows a faint purple (providing dim light within 1 foot).

### ***DROW POISON***

*Poison (Injury)*

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.

# PLAYER HANDOUT 3: STORY

## AWARDS

### **I've Fallen but I Got Up.**

Having fallen into a seemingly bottomless crevice and somehow surviving due to the mind flayer's twisted magic, you gain the flaw "I like jumping off high things that I probably shouldn't." A *remove curse* spell cast on you for the purposes of removing the flaw voids this story award and removes the flaw.

### **Chaotic Blessing of the Queen of Spiders.**

You have drawn the attentions of Lloth to you, and she has noticed your prowess in battle. In recognition for slaying the mind flayer masquerading as one of her *beloved* spiders, she has granted you a blessing, but you hardly feel blessed by it. What effect this has on your future adventuring career remains to be seen.

Additionally, sometimes when you sleep or trance, you have dreams or visions of spiders bursting forth from beneath your skin, demons eating you alive, or your loved ones turning into half-spider monstrosities, but at the end of the vision or dream, you always feel the cool press of Lloth's lips against your forehead again and you briefly feel that everything will be okay before jerking awake with horror in your eyes. A *remove curse* cast at 9<sup>th</sup> level or a *wish* can end this effect, as can a successful Divine Intervention by a deity not allied to Lloth. At that point, you should strike through this paragraph, but retain the first one.

### **Challenge Coin of the Citadel**

You have received a challenge coin marking you as a friend of the Citadel of the Raven. It bears the markings of the Citadel on one side of this golden coin, and the symbols of both the Zhentarim and your faction on the other. For members of the Zhentarim, it just holds a singular flying snake. When traveling in the area, showing the coin will, under most circumstances, grant you access to the Citadel and services provided at their regular cost (instead of the 25% markup for outsiders), as well as a night of protection inside its walls, including a bed in the barracks. Up to six companions may accompany you into the Citadel on the strength of your word guaranteeing their good behavior. In the event of any member of your party violating this good conduct oath, you will be stripped of this coin (and any others you and your companions have on you) and cast out into the cold.