



D&D
ADVENTURERS
LEAGUE

NECROMANCER OF ZHENTIL KEEP, PART II
ZHENTARIM'S LAMENT



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NECROMANCER OF ZHENTIL KEEP, PART 2

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A dark force is rising from the ruins of Zhentil Keep. The Zhentarim themselves are on the move to stop it from spreading, and you have been pulled into the struggle. Will you find the objects of power that your adversary searches for before it is too late?

A 4-hour adventure for 11th-16th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Zhentarim's Lament*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure. It is part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and Con Created Content Program.

This adventure is designed for 11th through 16th -level characters, and is optimized for five 13th-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in the adventure.

The adventure takes place in the Moonsea region, and will take the players through the ruins of Zhentil Keep and across the surface of the Moonsea in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that continues their story.

If you're running this adventure as part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters.

Players can continue to play their

characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit :

www.dndadventurersleague.org

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before running this module for your players, you should make sure you've taken the following steps to prepare.

- Make sure you have the most recent copy of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*. Errata is available online.
- Read through this adventure to familiarize yourself with the storyline. Take notes or highlight areas you find important, or as a reminder during the game. Decide how you would like to portray NPCs, or choose tactics for use in combats.
- Be familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- If you want to use resources such as a DM screen, a battle map, miniatures, or other options, gather them together prior to running.
- If you can find out the composition of the group, you can make alterations as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Prior to game play, ask your players to provide you with relevant information about their characters.

- Character name and race
- Character class and level
- Passive Wisdom (Perception), which is the most commonly used passive ability check
- Other notes that you may like to have, or that are specified by the adventure, such as backgrounds, traits, fears, flaws, etc.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fills in the other values and writes notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time or see the need to do so, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for their irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

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

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this module, you will find sidebars provided that give information to assist you in making adjustments in encounters for weaker or stronger parties, as well as smaller or larger groups.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL <	Very Weak
3-4 characters, APL =	Weak
3-4 characters, APL >	Average
5 characters, APL <	Weak
5 characters, APL =	Average
5 characters, APL >	Strong
6-7 characters, APL <	Average
6-7 characters, APL =	Strong
6-7 characters, APL >	Very Strong

A result of average party strength indicates that no adjustments should be made for encounters.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

You are the Dungeon Master, and so you have the most important role in the game; making it fun for your players! It's up to you to help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in the mind the following:

You Are Empowered. You get to make decisions about how the group interacts with the NPC's and the environment within this adventure. It is okay to make considerable changes or engage in

improvisation, so long as you maintain the original spirit of what's written.

Challenge Your Players. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience level of the players (not the characters) in the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Mind the Time. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. *The Dungeon Master's Guide* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1 st level)	10gp
<i>Identify</i>	20gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2 nd level)	40gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90gp
<i>Divination</i>	210gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250gp
<i>Resurrection</i> *	3,000gp
<i>True Resurrection</i> *	50,000gp

*These spells require an additional expenditure of downtime days (150 for *resurrection* and 350 for *true resurrection*). This cost can be reduced by 50 days for each faction rank above 1 that the character possesses. This downtime is spent in community service for the church that provided the spell in question. The Acolyte Background feature does NOT reduce the gp or downtime cost for either of these spells.

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Acolytes can call upon spellcasting services in and around Phlan as follows: Kelemvor

DEATH AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DEATH

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead*

or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from the session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is not longer available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Hundreds of years ago, Zhentil Keep was a thriving, if socially downtrodden city. Its leaders were often mages of incredible power, and many of those mages managed to overcome the limitations of a lifespan to continue their magical research. As liches, they lived under the city and helped to govern as best they could while they toiled away in their laboratories. Time ravages all things, however, and the minds of the liches faded into madness. The Night Plague was a time of terror for the citizens of Zhentil Keep, as the liches walked the night, kidnapping and murdering randomly. The liches were finally driven deep under the city and bound there. Legend tells that there they would remain as long as a Lord of the Zhentarim still resided in Zhentil Keep. Those days have long since past.

Recently, mysterious and deadly magical attacks have occurred around the Moonsea. Strange magical fog has been summoned in several cities of the region, transforming citizens into ravenous undead.

Meanwhile, a growing organization of bandits were causing more problems for the area, and adventurers were hired to deal with them and their leader, the Blackwind.

Now, an officer of the Zhentarim has led a small army into the ruins of Zhentil Keep, intent on stamping down any further threats. Marzellus Marshward believes that the person behind the magical attacks seeks objects of power lost in the ruins of Zhentil Keep. Objects that might even be tied to the powerful undead mages of the Zhentarim, who might be free of their bonds and preparing to wreak havoc upon the Moonsea.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Zhentarim's Lament is divided into five parts:

Part 1. Zhent's Intent. (15 minutes) The adventurers are formally introduced to Marzellus Marshwind, an officer of the

Zhentarim. He tells them of powerful objects that must be found before whoever is behind the attack on Phlan finds them.

Part 2. The Tower High. (1 hour 15 minutes) Traveling through the ruins of Zhentil Keep, the group seeks out what is left of the Tower High, once home to Manshoon.

Part 3. Unexpected Fellows. (1 hour 15 minutes) Seeking one of the objects in a graveyard, the adventurers run into a group of unexpected beings who are also searching for a powerful artifact.

Part 4. A Sailor's Unlife. (1 hour) Taking to the water, the group joins a crew of sailors seeking the ghostly pirate ship that may hold an object of power.

Part 5. Necromancer Revealed. (15 minutes) Their missions complete, the group finds that they are too late, and their foe is revealed.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Any of the following hooks may justify the party's presence in Phlan during the start of the adventure.

Binder's Torment. This adventure is the direct follow up to Binder's Torment. If they completed that adventure, they are already in position to pick up with Zhentarim's Lament.

Faction Requests. With attacks on the Moonsea increasing, the adventurer's have been asked by their factions to meet with the Zhentarim officer currently holding the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep. A dark force seems to be at work in the ruins, and it is up to them to stop it.

For the Good of the Moonsea. Those who may not have a faction will have heard about strange, magical attacks upon communities around the Moonsea. Following rumors and leads, they find themselves in the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep, where a Zhentarim officer holds information that may lead them to stopping the dark force at work.

PART I. ZHENT'S INTENT

The group meets Marzellus Marshward. If they played through the events of Ebon's Tide, this follows immediately after they completed that adventure. If they have not, they have been requested to speak with Marshward in order to help stop a dark force that may be lingering in the ruins of Zhentil Keep.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The ruins of Zhentil Keep are strewn with rubble, though some of the streets have been cleared.

Light. The day is overcast, though the threat of rain seems to have blown over.

Sound. Soldiers setting up camp, good-hearted jibes between comrades.

Smell. The scent of cooking fires being started up, roasted rabbit and fowl cooking slowly.

A handsome man, still in his prime and wearing leather armor and a cloak bearing the sigil of the Zhentarim, stands before you, flanked by several Zhentarim guards. In the distance, you can hear the sounds of battle in the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep. The Zhentarim officer looks uninterested in the fighting going on out of view, but stares at you intently. "Yes," he says, "you will have to do."

Marzellus Marshward introduces himself to the adventurers, and asks that the adventurers do the same. If they took part in part one of this trilogy, Binder's Torment, he thanks them for their part in the beginning of the downfall of the Ebon Tide. He tells them that Zhentarim forces now move against the fledgling organization, and will have them routed or enlisted within hours, now that the head of the group, the Blackwind, has been removed.

If the characters convinced the Blackwind to re-enlist with the Zhentarim, join the Lords' Alliance, or otherwise abandon the ruins of Zhentil Keep, the sounds of battle are between the Zhentarim soldiers and those members of the Ebon Tide who stood with Risan, who betrayed the Blackwind at the end of Binder's Torment and attacked the adventurers.

Marshward tells the group that the Zhentarim were sent here not only to remove the Ebon Tide, but also to investigate disturbing rumors that a dark force has been building in the area. Several attacks have been made around the Moonsea, a release of a strange fog that transformed living beings into undead. Those undead then attacked their friends and neighbors, and had to be destroyed. If the players took part in Binder's Torment, this story is known to them, as they helped to fight off the undead that were created in such an attack on Phlan.

Scouts in the area have reported that ruins in the northern part of Zhentil Keep have been ransacked recently. Marshward, a historian of Zhentil Keep and the Zhentarim, fears that whomever is digging into the burnt earth of the ruins may be seeking objects of power from long ago. He tells the characters the following:

- Hundreds of years ago, Zhentilar mages, grown old and without heirs, descended beneath Zhentil Keep and learned the secrets of unlife. Those mages gave their souls to become liches, powerful undead mages.
- While the mages continued to hold their positions of power in the Keep, time wore on their minds. In 882 DR, events that would come to be known as the Night Plague began to terrorize the citizens of Zhentil Keep. The liches, now mad, began

to roam the streets at night, kidnapping and murdering those they found, using many in horrid experiments deep under the surface of the Keep.

- The lichs were finally driven back underground and locked there. Legend says that the bonds that held the lichs would remain as long as a single lord of the Zhentarim still resided in Zhentil Keep. That time has long since passed.
- Now, whether it be those lichs, or some other creature, someone has been seeking out something in the ruins of the Keep. Marshward believes those items are the phylacteries of the lichs, which were hidden away after they were entombed.
- If the lichs, or someone else, recovers those phylacteries, they could harness vast powers. Marshward fears that those responsible for the attacks around the Moonsea are the same as those seeking the phylacteries. The attacks have been relatively small, even with the loss of lives that has occurred. With such a bolstered power, those attacks could be many times larger, perhaps large enough to cover an entire city.
- While Marshward and his men secure the southern ruins and seek more information, he would like the adventurers to find and recover three objects that are in his records, if they have not been stolen already. One lies beneath the ruins of the Tower High, once home to the archmage Manshoon, founder of the Zhentarim. Another is rumored to be hidden away in a graveyard in the western side of the city. Finally, one was said to be lost to the waters of the Moonsea. Rumors of a ghostly pirate ship sailing those waters has Marshward wondering if the phylactery is involved.

Marshward knows those not in the Zhentarim have no reason to trust him or do as he asks. He appeals to their hopefully good nature to do what is needed to protect the innocent of the Moonsea region. In addition, he can offer them a reward, gems worth 1000 gp, if they should succeed.

If an adventurer is a member of the Zhentarim faction, Marshward hands them a sealed scroll (**Player Handout 1, Zhent's Orders**).

Secret Mission : The Zhentarim

An old ally of the Zhentarim has been seen around the ruins of Zhentil Keep. The beholder, Xarunxaxx, has come out of hiding and appears to be seeking something. Zhentarim members are requested to make contact with Xarunxaxx and help him find what he's looking for. In exchange for their service, the beholder is requested to report to Zhentarim leaders in Darkhold.

If the characters question Marshward on why they should trust a Zhent, read or paraphrase the following:

Marzellus looks long at you, then nods. "Yes, it is true that the Zhentarim have long been a shadowy network of spies and cutthroats. In recent times, however, we have stood shoulder to shoulder with the rest of Faerun as we lay down our lives to protect it. All we ask is for a bit of return on that investment of trust and support. We ask that you now trust us, before it is too late."

The DM may choose in what order to run Parts 2 through 4, or may explain to the players where their objectives are located, and let them choose which to obtain first.

PART 2. THE TOWER HIGH

The adventurers have traveled through the northern ruins of Zhentil Keep. Due to the time limit of this adventure, there are no encounters as they move through the city, though describe seeing shadows moving just at the edge of their vision, or seeing one or more skeletons walking in the distance.

For this chapter, use Appendix. Map 1.

1. THE RUINS OF THE TOWER HIGH

Seeking an object of power, the adventurers come to the ruins of the Tower High, former home of the Zhentarim's founder, Manshoon.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. Rubble and shattered timbers cover the ground floor of what remains of the Tower High. This makes much of the area difficult terrain, as adventurers climb over and through the ruins.

Light. The sun shines, but goes behind some fast moving clouds from time to time. This causes hard shadows to become diffused while the sun hides, only to return a moment later. If the group arrives at night, the ruins are in total darkness, only starlight and a sliver moon lending any natural lighting to the city.

Sound. Day or night, the northern ruins of Zhentil Keep are often quiet. Every so often, the adventurers may hear a wild dog barking, or inhuman snarling sounds in the distance. While on the surface, one might hear melancholy singing, or voices that apparently have no source.

Smell. The city has long since sat empty of civilization. The scent of dust and rock plug a creature's nose.

Crumbled walls surround a ruined courtyard. Signs that three towers once stood are apparent, though none of the remaining tower walls stand more than 20 feet high. The Tower High was once the tallest of these structures; now it is only rubble.

The ground floor of the Tower High is covered in shattered rock and rotting wood. A DC 13 Perception (Wisdom) check reveals a staircase that descends into the ground along the curve of the tower. However, it is choked with rock a few yards from the surface. Those who go looking through the other ground level rubble find a perfect cube of rock, 10 feet wide, sitting near a also perfect square hole in the ground. They may also find the cube and hole in the ground if they enter through the north side of the tower's crumbling wall, which offers plenty of areas to crawl over or through.

Looking in, they find a staircase winds down into the darkness. The staircase begins 25 feet below the surface, so the players must find a way to climb down to it. A short drop without a rope will cause 11 (2d10) points of bludgeoning damage. The staircase goes in a spiral, leading the group 50 feet under the ground. An iron-bound oak door stands at the end of the staircase. Arcane writing, all glyphs of warding, surround the door. The door, however, is open slightly, and the glyphs appear inert.

2. TROPHY HALLWAY

Descending the staircase from the ground floor of the Tower High, the adventurers find themselves 50 feet under the surface, entering a massive hallway.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The open hallway is even and smooth, with a long carpet laid down the center.

Light. Bright light emanates from the magical torches that illuminate the hallway whenever a creature enters.

Sound. Except the sounds of a man talking to himself as the group nears the end of the hallway, the trophy room is quiet as a crypt. The magical torches make no sound, nor do they give off heat.

Smell. The air is dry, and though there should be dust, the room is free of such. There is a lack of smells other than what the party brings with them.

A grand hallway, thirty-five feet wide, stretches off into the distance. As you enter, torches on either side of the door light themselves with a brilliant flame. More torches, spaced every twenty feet along the hallway, light in succession, illuminating the length of the room. At the far end, about one hundred and fifty feet away, another door stands open slightly. Between you and the door, trophies grand and grisly line the walls.

This hallway is decorated with trophies taken by Manshoon. Some are bones, some are weapons, and some are small, personal effects such as a wooden pipe, or another wizard's hat. The largest of these trophies is the skull of a black dragon, which sits in the center of the right wall of the hallway. Across from it is the wooden pipe, as though that item had equal importance. Collecting the trophies to sell, the players can garner enough items to equal 500 gp. The black dragon skull can be sold for 1000 gp, though they must find a way to get the large object through the medium-sized door and up the 5 ft wide staircase.

The door at the far end of the hallway is almost identical in build to the one the group enters through, and also has magical glyphs of warding carved around it. As before, these glyphs seem to be inert. A DC 13 Perception (Wisdom) check at the door allows a character to hear someone muttering to themselves on the other side of the door. "No no no, that isn't it. Interesting, but nothing that grand. Hmmmm..."

If someone should remove a torch from its bracket, it goes out. It lights again upon being inserted back into its bracket, but will not light again otherwise.

3. LIBRARY

The adventurers enter a long lost library of Manshoon, and meet Tirrodu.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The room is mostly open, but for some leather chairs and side tables arranged on the west side of the room.

Light. Soundless and heatless globes of light illuminate this room comfortably. The light is not too bright, but perfect to read by.

Sound. Except for noises made by the group or Tirrodu, this room is absolutely silent.

Smell. The scent of old books fills this room.

The room beyond is warmly lit by glowing lamps spaced evenly on the walls. They do not seem to be of flame, but rather a small hovering ball of light. Shelves of books cover every other inch of the walls, and several comfortable looking leather chairs sit around the room, with fine wood reading tables for convenience. A man, rusty red hair done up in convoluted braids and a beard to match, stands against the wall to the right. Leaning against it, his dark purple robes seem to flow slightly, though there is no wind. Not looking up from his book, his musical voice reverberates around the room, "Yes, welcome, do come in. Care to lend me a hand?"

The man's name is Tirrodu, and he is an **arcanaloth** in disguise. The fiend has no intention to cause violence, however. He is simply searching this long-lost library for spells and knowledge he has not already collected. He has found a secret door in the library, which he is happy to point out if the group wants to help him. It is warded against outsiders, as well as several other types of creatures, and the arrival of the adventurers is quite fortuitous to him.

He offers the adventurers a trade. For their service, a simple jaunt through the secret door and retrieval of what they may find beyond, he will give them a tome he has been carrying with him for quite some time. "It's done me as much good as it can, but I believe one of you might find it useful." The book is a *tome of leadership and influence*, and he will give it to them upon their return from the room beyond, whether their search ends in the spell he has been searching for or not. He seeks Manshoon's secret spell for creating clones, a version of the spell that the archmage alone has ever managed to create. While the arcanaloth has no intention of cloning

himself, the knowledge is worth the endeavor.

If the group attacks the arcanaloth, he will sigh and shake his head, obviously disappointed with these lesser creatures. He will toss a few massive damage spells at them, if he can assure the spells won't harm the library itself, and then will *dimension door* away before he is below half health. This encounter does not award experience points.

This will leave the search for the secret door to the adventurers. It can be found on a DC 20 Perception (Wisdom) or Investigation (Intelligence) check. The runes around it are invisible, but can be seen with *see invisibility*, *detect magic* or truesight. The door is trapped, which can be noticed on a separate DC 20 Investigation (Intelligence) check. The magical glyph causes the room to be filled with *cloudkill*. It can be removed by *dispel magic*, with a spellcaster ability check of DC 20. The glyph resets after being set off.

While the room is filled with many books, only a few are uncommon enough to be worth anything. Those dozen books, which can be singled out by spending at least an hour searching through the room and a successful DC 17 History (Intelligence) check, can be sold for 500 gp. If the group attempts to carry out all of the books, there are hundreds of tomes. Reward creative ways of carrying out the tomes, or simply the time that it would take to do so. They can sell the entire collection for 600 gp (including the dozen rare tomes). None of the tomes hold magical secrets of spells, though many are on magical theory and the nature of the Weave.

Hidden in a secret compartment in one of the reading tables is another tome, its cover a series of hinged pieces of quartz crystal. If the group agrees to help Tirrodu, and return with their findings from the hidden library, the arcanaloth will tell them that he found it earlier, and they may be interested in it. If Tirrodu is gone, they must succeed on a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check to notice the secret compartment if they are searching the tables. The compartment is latched but not locked, and can be opened easily enough once found. This book is the object they seek, and emits a chaotic swirl of auras if viewed with *detect magic*. It does not appear to have a purpose however, if a spell such as *identify* is cast upon it.

4. HIDDEN LIBRARY

The group has found the hidden library, and its guarded contents.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The room is free of obstacles, except for a single leather chair and a small table.

Light. The room is adequately lit to read comfortably. The warm light emits from the ceiling, and bathes everything below it in soft illumination.

Sound. The room is completely silent, though at times, Tirrodu will ask how things are going while he waits in the main library.

Smell. While not as strong as the main library, the scent of old books lingers here. There is also the odd scent of sweet candies on the air.

Ambient light warmly illuminates this small room, which has only a handful of books though shelves cover the entirety of the walls. A single leather chair sits in the center of the room with a side table upon which rests a wand and pouches of leather.

Though they must be ancient, the components seem to be useable still. The light is coming from the ceiling, which appears to be enchanted to provide constant illumination.

The wand is enchanted to work in this room only, and can be used to draw books from their shelves to the person seated in the leather chair. It does not work outside of this room, though its magic is not dispelled if removed.

A secret door is hidden behind a bookshelf, and can be spotted on a DC 17 Perception (Wisdom) check. The bookshelf itself is trapped, rigged to fall on someone trying to open it if they do not disarm the trap. The trap is found on a DC 13 Investigation (Intelligence) check, and can be disarmed with a DC 13 thieves' tools check. On a failed check, or if the bookcase is moved (it pulls away from the wall and then slides to the left) without disarming the trap, anyone 10 feet directly in front of it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage as they are struck by the falling bookcase.

The door behind it is also trapped, as well as being locked. The lock can be picked on a DC 15 thieves' tools check. The trap can be found on a DC 17 Investigation (Intelligence) check, and disabled with a DC 17 thieves' tools check. A small wire is

connected to the bottom of the door, and will pull open gas canisters hidden in the frame of the door when the door is opened. The gas fills the small hidden library and the secret chamber beyond. At the start of their turn, anyone in these areas takes 23 (5d8) poison damage on a failed DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or half as much on a successful one. The gas lingers for one minute, then becomes inert and fades away. Creatures who hold their breath or don't need to breathe are affected by this gas.

In the small alcove beyond the hidden door stands what appears to be the perfectly preserved body of a dark haired human male. It wears robes that were in fashion over a hundred years ago, and a signet ring that shows the seal of the Zhentarim from around that same time period. This is a clone of Manshoon, though it was never activated. It is warded against someone other than Manshoon from touching it, however. If touched by another creature, it quickly begins to rot, a blackening and crumbling of its flesh, and then falling into what looks like ash. Anyone standing in the small alcove must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to jump away as it crumbles and exudes noxious gases. On a failed save, the creature suffers 13 (3d8) necrotic damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

In a small, carved niche near the body is a crystal bowl shaped like an egg. Under its lid is a handful of what appears to be candy. These are specially prepared treats, however, and have been magically imbued. Their effects can be learned through an *identify* spell, or with a DC 14 Arcana (Intelligence) check. The candies that act as spell scrolls act similar to a potion, where it

has a one-time use, but the spell itself cannot be learned from the candy as one would from a scroll.

- Three light blue candies that taste of winter mint. These act as *potions of superior healing*.
- One orange and white swirled candy that tastes of orange crème, and acts as *fox's cunning*, as per the *spell scroll of enhance ability*.
- One black candy that tastes of anise that acts as *bear's endurance*, as per the *spell scroll of enhance ability*.
- One yellow candy that tastes of lemon and sugar, which acts as *eagle's splendor*, as per the *spell scroll of enhance ability*.

If the players locate the secret room behind the bookshelf, and enter it without setting off the traps, award them **500 experience points** each.

One minute after the group enters the hidden library, a glyph, hidden in the magic of the ceiling, is activated.

Your ears suddenly pop as from pressure at a high altitude, and the room's temperature drops significantly. In small clouds of purple smoke, three darkly skinned creatures appear amongst you. Four-armed and powerfully built, they turn their oddly wolfish faces toward you, growling in unbridled hatred. As one, they leap for your throats.

The creatures summoned by the glyph are **draegloth**, creatures given to Manshoon by an entourage of drow who once came seeking the archmage's services. Locked away in pocket dimensions within the hidden library, they attack without mercy, though they cannot leave the confines of the hidden library. Once their foes are defeated

or fled, they disappear, returning to the pocket dimension they were summoned from.

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative.

- Very Weak: Reduce each draegloths' hit points to 91 and remove the Multiattack action.
- Weak: Reduce each draegloth's hit points to 91.
- Strong: Increase each draegloth's hit points to 182.
- Very Strong: Adjust as Strong, and an invisible wall of force activates in the doorway, blocking entrance or exit. It can be removed with *dispel magic*, spellcaster ability check of DC 17. This may split the party, and will keep any ranged combatants from getting too far away.

Summoning and conjuring spells that summon beings from other dimensions or planes will not work while inside the hidden library and hallway leading up to it.

TREASURE

The ten books that are left in this room are all written by Manshoon and delve deeply into odd magical theories. The spell that Tirrodu seeks is not present, a mystery the arcanaloth must continue to try to unravel. However, three spells scrolls have been wedged into the books. Those scrolls are *programmed illusion*, *forcecage*, and *simulacrum*. In addition, a wizard or other arcane spellcaster may study the books as a downtime reward to learn more about the nature of magic. If the group decides to keep the books instead of selling them, arcane casters gain the **Nature of the Weave** story award.

The magic candies from the hidden alcove are detailed above. The crystal bowl is worth 100 gp.

If the group takes the books to sell, they can find a buyer who will give them 1500 gp for the collection.

DMs who do not wish to award senseless violence against NPCs that have not

provoked it may well not allow the players to receive the *tome of leadership and influence* if they attacked Tirrodu. That is completely within your right. Overly kind DMs may want their players to gain the magical tome despite their violent ways, at which point it could be found as one of the books shelved in the hidden library.

If the player's retrieved the scrolls from the hidden library and returned them for Tirrodu to peruse, grant them **1000 experience points** each. If they attack Tirrodu, they do not gain this non-combat experience.

PART 3. UNEXPECTED FELLOWS

The adventurers enter what still remains of an ancient graveyard in the northern ruins of Zhentil Keep. There, they encounter a small group of what may be unexpected allies, at least momentarily.

1. STRANGE ALLIES

Searching for signs of a crypt that may hold a powerful magic item, the group makes its way through the cemetery. As they wander, they see a small group of creatures speaking to one another.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The cemetery is mostly in shambles, with headstones, stone rubble, and dead trees flung about as though a storm raged through the area.

Light. During the day, the sun dances in and out of some fast-moving clouds. Hard shadows that appear when the sun is out diffuse suddenly as it hides in cloud cover, then jump back into sharp focus. If it is night, only stars and a sliver of a moon offer any light to see by.

Sound. Distant voices can be heard, and every so often, music will blow in on a gentle breeze. These sounds don't appear to have a source. Scraping of something sharp against stone will split through the graveyard from time to time.

Smell. Dead foliage and rot, dust, and piles of rock and ruins offer up their scents to those passing through.

Through the ever-present gloom, you notice a group of robed figures near a crumbling ruin of a crypt. They seem to be conversing with another creature, a mass of flesh that floats above the ground, writhing stalks sprouting from the top of it. Small eyes peer around from those stalks, while one central eye on the orb of its body looks ponderously at those speaking to it.

The group may be quick to attack the group ahead of them, or they may avoid them entirely. Some may even attempt communication, especially if one is a Zhentarim faction member and received their secret mission.

The floating orb of eyes is an ancient **beholder** named Xarunxaxx. He is in conversation with three mind flayers from the Underdark who have come here seeking a rumored magic item. Two of the **mind flayers** guard the third, who is an **alhoon**, and does the bulk of the speaking with Xarunxaxx. The alhoon is named Udruaq, though the living mind flayers do not reveal their names.

If the adventurers attempt to approach stealthily, without magic to hide them, the beholder spots them when they get within 120 ft.

"Ah," the beholder says loudly, "We have unexpected guests coming to join us." The beholder turns to face you, but its mouth seems to be turned in a wry smile. The robed figures seem to glance about, but do not seem overly worried.

Xarunxaxx is not concerned about the group until they attack, at which time he and the mind flayers will unleash their full killing abilities upon the group. If reduced to half his hit points, Udruaq will *plane shift* away.

If they decide to approach peacefully, however, the creatures do not attack immediately. As the adventurers near the beholder, they notice how old the creature is. Dry cracks appear on its skin, and it is missing several teeth. The mindflayers remain hooded, though a DC 15 Perception check may catch gray-colored flesh on their hands as Udruaq gestures, or the occasional movement of a face tentacle from the shadows of his hood.

The mindflayers are seeking an object of power that was said to have been hidden within Zhentil Keep after 1368 DR, an object that has the power to repel enemies for a time. Deep in the Underdark, they have been at war with the phaerimm, creatures more alien than the mind flayers, and they have been hard pressed to hold their defenses. The phaerimm will overrun them soon, and the rumored magic item may give them the advantage they need to turn the phaerimm back.

Xarunxaxx knows where the object is hidden, and was negotiating with the mindflayers to have it retrieved for them. The beholder is most appreciative of the timing that brought him a group of adventurers to do the work for him. In return, Udruaq has brewed up a very potent *potion of longevity* for the beholder, which will make Xarunxaxx 50 years younger. The beholder and mind flayers are both very honest in their dealings with the adventurers, mostly because they are both desperate to gain what they will from their bargain. However, if the group turns on them, they will respond with violence immediately. If reduced to half his hit points, Udruaq will *plane shift* away, but will remember the group's treachery, earning them an eternal enemy.

If asked about a lich's phylactery or a similar object of power hidden in the graveyard, Xarunxaxx will share information with them if they have agreed to help him retrieve the statue he needs. The phylactery was hidden away in the same crypt as the statue, the last resting place of a powerful mage of the Zhentarim. He warns them that the crypt is bound to be warded by magic, and possibly other fearful creatures. He then tells them where the crypt is located, though it may be hidden with illusory spells. If persuaded (DC 17 Charisma check), Xarunxaxx may accompany the adventurers through the graveyard, and could possibly remove the illusion that hides the crypt with his antimagic cone.

Xarunxaxx knew the mage, Lysator, when he was much younger. Due to an odd level of respect (coming from a beholder), and not a small amount of paranoid fear, Xarunxaxx will not enter the crypt. Of course, he probably won't reveal the truth of his fear, and will make any other excuse possible before showing that level of weakness to these minions.

If the adventurers bypass the beholder and the mind flayers completely, they spend hours looking for the crypt. Using *detect magic*, they are able to speed the search up as they can see the auras of the enchantments placed upon the crypt. They still need to see through the illusion protecting it, however. Without the aid of magic, a DC 20 Perception (Wisdom) check or a passive 15 Arcana (Intelligence) will allow the group to sense there is something weird about that crypt right over there.

TREASURE

If the adventurers agree to retrieve the statue for Xarunxaxx, he offers to reward them grandly. Obviously, his information should be worth their service, but when they return, he will grant them a worldly boon: a pouch of ruby dust worth 1,500 gp.

2. CRYPT OF LYSATOR UMBRICH

The group arrives at the final resting place of a powerful Zhentarim mage.

The crypt that lies in ruins before you is supposed to hold and be defended by powerful magic, but as far as you can tell, it wouldn't even keep out a swarm of bats. Stone has crumbled, the ceiling collapsed, and blackened vines have overtaken the structure.

What the adventurers see is, of course, an illusion. Anyone with truesight can see through the cloaking magic. Interacting with the ruins grants a character a DC 17 Investigation (Intelligence) check to see through the illusion. The illusion can be removed by *dispel magic* with a DC 17 spellcaster ability check. Once revealed, the crypt still remains resplendent, seemingly not affected by the rot of the city around it. The door is locked and trapped. A magical glyph, carved into the tumbler within the lock itself, activates if the door is unlocked with anything except its key, which the characters do not possess. While the trap cannot be seen with an Investigation check, it does radiate with transmutation magic if *detect magic* is used. *Dispel magic* can deactivate the glyph on a DC 17 spellcaster ability check, as can a DC 17 thieves' tools check. If the trap is activated, the creature unlocking the door must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution save or be transmuted into a mass of floating bubbles, vaguely in the

shape of their original form for 1d4 minutes. The bubble creature cannot speak or act upon the physical world other than to touch things and leave behind a disturbing residue. It can move at a rate of 10 ft per round, and cannot Dash. A strong wind can move it as though it were a leaf.

If the players locate the cloaked crypt and enter it without setting off the glyph trap, award them **500 experience points** each.

3. INSIDE THE CRYPT

Gaining access to the crypt of Lysator, the group seeks their goal. Use Appendix. Map 2 for this section.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The crypt is free of debris. The ceiling is 15 feet high.

Light. The interior of the crypt is dark and has no sources of light.

The crypt remains clean despite the years and the destruction of Zhentil Keep. The walls are covered in tapestries which seemingly detail some of the greatest practical jokes played by Lysator. There is one where he caused a ranking officer of the Zhentarim to become a reverse centaur (let the players believe what they want for what that looks like). And here is a depiction of his birthday gift that caused a beholder's eyestalks to turn to flowers. A DC 13 Perception (Wisdom) check allows a character to note that the beholder on the tapestry looks strikingly like a younger version of Xarunxaxx. In the center of the chamber, surrounded by memories of his life, lies the sarcophagus of Lysator himself, the lid carved to be a quite realistic likeness of the mage himself.

Searching the crypt, the players can spot a secret compartment on a DC 13 Investigation (Intelligence) check. It also is magically trapped, which can be removed with a DC 18 *dispel magic*, or can be deactivated for one minute with a DC 18 Arcana (Intelligence) check. If a player opens the panel without removing the trap, they must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw, or their skin becomes a bright blue. Whenever they take a long rest, the color shifts to a different hue; red, yellow, purple, gold, etc. This effect is permanent, though it can be ended with a *remove curse* spell.

If the players spot the trap and remove it, award them **500 experience points** each.

Inside the secret compartment are several objects (a short sword, a vase, a crystal amulet, a statue of some tentacled creature that also has 10 legs, and a spellbook), all of which appear magical if viewed with *detect magic*. Some radiate transmutation, while others show auras of necromancy, evocation, and conjuration. All of them are fake, however, and turn into dung one hour after being removed from the crypt. If players take the time to cast *identify* on any of the objects, feel free to make them seem as grand as you want, such as a +3 flametongue short sword, or as simple as a statue that causes your room to smell like daisies when activated. Attempts to read the spellbook, even with truesight or *comprehend languages* fail. A DC 18 Intelligence check will reveal that the words in the book are just made up gobbledygook. These items are, again, ruses to throw off would-be tomb robbers.

The lid of the sarcophagus is trapped with magic. *Detect magic* reveals the trap, or a

DC 20 Investigation (Intelligence) check. The trap cannot be removed except by magic, such as *dispel magic* with a DC 20 spellcaster ability check. If the lid of the sarcophagus is moved without removing the trap, the trap is sprung. Anyone standing inside the crypt must make a DC 17 Strength saving throw as the ceiling temporarily disappears and they are launched 50 feet up and out of the building. They land 20 feet from the building in a random direction and take 30 (5d10) bludgeoning damage. This trap resets after it is activated if the sarcophagus is closed.

If the players spot the trap and remove it, award them **500 experience points** each.

Inside is the supposed body of Lysator, garbed in fine robes worth 100 gp. Assorted gold rings and amulets adorn the body, worth 150 gp.

This body is not truly that of Lysator, however, and is just there to be plundered should a tomb robber have made it this far. A DC 17 Investigation (Intelligence) check reveals that the bottom of the sarcophagus is false. A DC 15 Investigation (Intelligence) search for how to open it will reveal that it can be slid sideways, though it disappears into the side of the sarcophagus, and does not stick out the other side as might be expected. Beneath the false bottom is a pit that appears to be deeper than any in the party may see. This is an optical illusion, as the black-colored portal that takes up the space just gives the look of a pit. *Detect magic* reveals the presence of the magic that powers the portal. It can be targeted with *dispel magic* with a DC 25 spellcaster ability check, though the group will then lose access to the treasure beyond forever.

Of course, Lysator's legacy would not be complete if this portal wasn't tricky in some way. Those who drop down through the portal are transported to a small pocket dimension, where his true body lies in rest. However, they must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw, or lose all of their hair. All of it. This effect does not reverse when they leave the room beyond, and is permanent. It may be ended by the *remove curse* spell, at which point, their hair will begin growing at a normal rate once again.

If the players find the false bottom of the sarcophagus and descend into the portal, award them **500 experience points** each.

4. BURIED AMONGST THE HEAVENS

Galaxies swirl about this pocket dimension, which holds the remains of Lysator. Use Appendix. Map 2 for this section.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The floor is free of debris.

Light. Starlight from the constellations around the room bathes the room in ambient light.

Sound. A low, constant hum is present. A character who is musically inclined may recognize faint shifts in the hum which may be intentional, as though some song were being played in notes drawn out into minutes, hours, even days.

Smell. Though the source cannot be located, this room smells oddly of green apples.

Stars and masses of colored gases, planets being born, living, and dying, and other unknown sights of the heavens swirl about you as you fall unknown distances. As you gently land, you find yourself on a platform of what appears to be colored glass, its mostly transparent purple allowing you to see more movements of the cosmos below you. You note that some of the constellations that move about the room disturbingly resemble warriors and thieves screaming in horror. Set into the center of the glass disc below you appears to be another sarcophagus sunken into the floor. The body of a simply robed mage rests peacefully beneath a glass lid.

This pocket dimension was crafted by Lysator in preparation for his eventual demise. While the stars and other celestial events are not real, they do mimic the movement of the actual skies if one could look deeply into the cosmos. The effect on a viewer is quite real, however. Upon entering the room, any creature that relies on sight must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they act at disadvantage on all initiative rolls, ability checks, saving throws, and attack rolls while in this room. They may repeat this saving throw, at disadvantage, at the end of their turn to end the effect.

Placed within his robes, Lysator was buried with the objects that the players are seeking. A DC 13 Investigation (Intelligence) check reveals a seam around the lid of the sarcophagus in the floor. Using a crowbar, it can be lifted with a DC 15 Strength check. This, however, activates the guardians of the room.

As the glass lid rises up, screams erupt from the writhing cosmos around you. Stars seem to grow closer, then move toward you. Those constellations of warriors have come to life, and move to defend their charge.

Two **star golems** appear to pull free of the fantastic scene surrounding the room, then move to attack the closest creatures. While they do not differentiate targets initially, if attacked with magical weapons or spells, they will switch targets to focus on those dealing the most damage first. They begin using their Flare lair action at the start of the second round of combat.

On initiative count of 20 (losing ties), starting on the first round of combat, all trespassers into the star crypt must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, or start to fade away into a constellation-like pattern. On a success, a character withstands the magic. Three successes rendered a creature immune to the effect, and any failures rendering the creature partially faded are nullified. On the third failure, a creature fades away completely, replaced by dots of light and faint lines connecting them, much like a constellation is drawn. Only a ghostly visage of their former self reappears as they become one with the scene surrounding the platform. They are considered to be petrified, similar to a *flesh to stone* spell, and magic that can free them from such a spell can be used to reverse their condition.

Characters cannot step off the platform. Reaching out over the edge of the platform meets with resistance, as though something solid were keeping them from plummeting into the celestial void before them.

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative.

- Very Weak: Reduce each star golem's hit points to 115 and remove the Multiattack action. Reduce the Charisma saving throw DC to 12.
- Weak: Reduce each star golem's hit points to 115.
- Strong: Increase each star golem's hit points to 235.
- Very Strong: Add one star golem. Increase the Charisma saving throw DC to 17.

As long as the star golems are not active, or are destroyed, a creature only has to stand in the center of the glass disc and think about leaving to be lifted up by unseen forces and returned to the crypt. They are ejected unceremoniously out of the stone sarcophagus, but take no damage upon landing.

TREASURE

Lysator was interred with surprisingly little in the way of earthly goods. The *statue of antipathy* and a rather rough carving of a horse are all that reside with his body. The carving is the object the group seeks, however, and emits strong magical auras of all types if viewed with *detect magic*. The carving's purpose is a mystery, however, as spells such as *identify* reveal nothing.

If the players return to Xarunxaxx and give him the *statue of antipathy*, award them **1000 experience points** each. If they attack the beholder or the mind flayers, they do not gain this non-combat experience.

PART 4. A SAILOR'S UNLIFE

To search the Moonsea, the group is given access to a brigantine named Lucky Hound. The ship belongs to a crew of Ebon Tide who have taken on with the Zhentarim, and is captained by a raven-haired half-elf woman that goes by the name of Flicker. There are eight other crewmembers; four human females, a halfling male, two male gnome identical twins, and a tiefling male.

After a few hours of searching the surface of the Moonsea, the adventurers' quarry finds them.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The deck of the Lucky Hound is open but for the movement of sailors going about their duties. The surface of the water is choppy, but the swells are low.

Light. The sun slips in and out of view as clouds move across the sky.

Sound. The waves slapping against the hull of the ship, sailors shouting orders.

Smell. The salt of the sea, fish in buckets on the deck of the ship.

Fog covers the waters around you as you scan what you can see of the horizon for other ships. The small crew moves tensely but efficiently on the deck, prepping for any situation. From the stern, a cry of alarm goes up. As you turn, a blackened frigate, its sails tattered and lifeless, glides up from below the surface of the water on the port of your brigantine. Its decks are manned by bodies free of or losing their flesh, and skulls grin back at you across the gap between your ships. A man wearing a tricorne hat and most of his skin steps forward and looks over your ship. With a smile he raises his hand. "Fire." Booms deafen you as your ship shudders from multiple impacts.

The Purdy Gurdy was a war frigate, and sank decades ago. It is now crewed by nine **skeleton pirates** and a **dread pirate** captain.

The undead pirates aren't there to take prisoners, they are there to sink ships and take booty. Their frigate may well overpower the character's brigantine, and the magic repelling nature of the frigate is only one more strike against the group. Time is of the essence in this battle.

If a character is looking at the ghost frigate for weak spots or clues, have them roll a Perception (Wisdom) check. On a 12, they notice not only the gaping holes that probably sunk the frigate originally, but they can see through the frigate itself in waves. On an 18, they notice the masthead of the frigate, a mermaid whose hair seems to be flowing in unseen currents, has a faint glow about its head.

In truth, the hair of the mermaid is kelp and other seaweed and mosses. Magic is making it move, just as it is animating the ship and its crew. Stuck in the seaweed of the mermaid's mane is a crystal amulet, its sickly green glow causing the face of the mermaid to be illuminated. If the amulet can be freed of the mermaid's hair, its magic over the ship is broken. The crew fall lifeless to the deck, and the frigate quickly solidifies and takes on water, sinking in a matter of moments.

However, the ship isn't incapable of defending itself. If a living creature attempts to remove the amulet, the mermaid masthead moves to attack it. Its kelp hair lashes out with a +8 to hit. On a successful hit, the target is grappled and restrained. The masthead can grapple up to

five Medium creatures in this manner. It can grapple two Small or Tiny creatures for each Medium creature it could grapple, or one Large creature for every two Medium creatures. It cannot grapple Huge or Gargantuan creatures. On an Initiative count of 20 (losing ties), the masthead can make two slam attacks against a grappled creature. It strikes the target with advantage, with a +8 to hit. On a successful hit, it deals 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage. A grappled creature may take an action to attempt to break free on a DC 17 Acrobatics (Dexterity) or Athletics (Strength) check.

Spells that target the Purdy Gurdy or her crew have a chance to reflect back at their caster, or simply dissipate. When a spell would affect the ship or her crew, roll a d6.

- 1-2 : The spell functions as usual.
- 3-4 : The spell reflects back at the caster.
- 5-6 : The spell activates, then does nothing.

The amulet woven into the masthead's hair is the cause of this odd wild magic.

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the dread pirate's *destructive wave* spell slots. Its multiattack is reduced from three attacks to two. Its Hellfire Orb ability deals 14 (4d6) fire and 14 (4d6) necrotic. Reduce its hit points to 108.
- **Weak:** Remove the dread pirate's *destructive wave* spell slots. Its multiattack is reduced from three attacks to two. Reduce its hit points to 108.
- **Strong:** Increase the dread pirate's hit points to 180. Spells cast at the dread pirate directly either reflect back on the caster or fail (50% of each). This does not include area of effect spells.
- **Very Strong:** Increase the dread pirate's hit points to 180. It has 2 daily uses of Hellfire Orb instead of one. Spells cast at the dread pirate directly either reflect back on the caster or fail (50% of each). This does not include area of effect spells.

TACTICS

As the Purdy Gurdy fires its first volley into the Lucky Hound, combat begins. The first round of cannon fire damages the brigantine, but does not disable it. Flicker orders the Lucky Hound away, but the frigate is unnaturally quick and catches up and maintains its position along the port side of the brigantine. The cannons begin reloading themselves, as though an unseen force is working them.

The dread pirate remains on the Purdy Gurdy, though four of the skeleton pirates will attempt to cross onto the Lucky Hound by using hooked ladders to attach to the brigantine and then climb over. The ladders can span 20 foot gaps, and quick thinking by the characters may keep skeletons from making it to the deck of the brigantine. The remaining skeleton pirates will fire their bows from the Purdy Gurdy.

The crew of the Purdy Gurdy focus on the characters, recognizing their threat. If the adventurers fall, the skeleton crew then sets to work on the crew of the brigantine.

On initiative count of 20 (losing ties) on the third round, the Purdy Gurdy opens fire again. This disables the brigantine, which does not have its own cannons, but was built for outrunning warships like the Purdy Gurdy. The brigantine now can move at half speed, and is taking on water.

It takes the frigate until initiative count of 20 (losing ties) on the seventh round of combat to fire again. This will cripple the Lucky Hound, which begins sinking. If the adventurers and crew survive the battle, they'll have to use bits of wreckage to float and swim to shore, a laborious endeavor that takes two hours. For each 30 minutes spent swimming, have the characters make DC 13 Constitution saving throws. On a failure, they gain a level of exhaustion.

If adventurers take the battle to the deck of the Purdy Gurdy, the skeleton crew and captain focus on those characters rather than firing at the other ship.

TREASURE

The captain's scimitar is of remarkable craftsmanship, and is worth 100 gp.

PART 5. NECROMANCER REVEALED

Their tasks complete, the group returns to Marzellus Marshward.

Depending on which area the players did last, the Zhentarim will meet them nearby. This will be the docks if they took care of the ghost ship on the Moonsea last, or at the southeast gate of the northern ruins of the city.

Marzellus Marshward smiles gratefully as you deliver the objects of power. “Grand work, friends. Grand work. So many threats now removed.” You notice as several other charms clink together on chains around his neck.

He tosses you a pouch, then pauses momentarily, staring off toward the northern ruins. Finally he turns to you and smiles once again, this time with a hint of malice. “For your service, I give you this chance to flee. Run along, little sheep. Run along.”

The ground begins to shake violently, and you hear shouts of alarm as the Zhentarim soldiers are knocked from their feet. Beyond the crumbling walls of the northern Keep, you see gray mist billow dozens of feet into the air, then hundreds. From the center of the city, a massive black shard rises from the cloud, up and up and up.

As the gray fog nears its peak, it breaks and rushes outward toward the edges of the city. Toward you.

Marshward appears to still be standing before the characters, staring intently at them. However, he is long gone, and this being before them is the result of a *simulacrum* spell. A character with a passive Perception of 18 or more will have noticed a split second where Marshward seemed to blink in and out, the moment where he and the simulacrum swapped

places. The true Marshward is now in the rising tower of obsidian in the center of Zhentil Keep.

If attacked, the simulacrum will simply stand there and let itself be hit, staring intently at the group, and will fall apart into ice and snow after only a few strikes.

The gray cloud takes one minute to reach the group, wherever they started the encounter. Their best chance is to flee immediately from the incoming fog, which they should recognize as the same stuff that was released in Phlan, but on a much larger scale. If they have not fled within five rounds, they won't be able to outrun the cloud. However, they may try jumping into the water, either the Moonsea, or the River Tesh. This will block the effect of the fog, as long as they stay low in the water as they swim away. A DC 13 Nature (Intelligence) or Arcana (Intelligence) check might reveal this to characters who don't think of it themselves.

If the group refuses to move, they will be caught in the fog. This may prove to be deadly, as they must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, or be overcome by the power of the cloud. On that round, they fall to the ground choking and incapacitated. *Greater restoration* or *remove curse* will halt the effect if cast on an effected character this round. On the second round, the character dies, only to rise the following round as one of the following undead:

d6 Roll	Undead Type
1	Skeleton
2	Zombie
3	Wight
4	Vampire Spawn
5	Wraith
6	Poltergeist

During the time, the Zhentarim army and those Ebon Tide that remained in the ruins are also being affected by the magical fog. Hundreds are falling, only to rise again as undead. Howls of pain rise from the ruins as former compatriots turn on one another, the undead now killing those who managed to shrug off the effect of the fog.

If the players return the objects of power to Marzellus, award them **1000 experience points** each. The pouch he tossed them before swapping places with this simulacrum has their monetary reward. He has no need for gems to carry on the next step of his plan.

BUT WE DON'T TRUST THAT GUY...

If the players decide to not return the items of power to Marzellus, don't force them to. Ask them where they would like to take them instead. Some options may be their faction leaders, or Krenez at the waypoint bindery from the first part of this trilogy. They may choose to hold on to them, and not give them to anyone.

Unfortunately, Marshward has spies and minions across the Moonsea, many of which are ingrained in other factions. Within days, the objects disappear as they are tracked down by those loyal to Marshward. The characters may end up with warrants for their heads, claiming theft of property rightfully belonging to Marshward or the Zhentarim. It is only after his treachery that Marshward's true intentions are revealed. Until then, he is a high-ranking officer of the Zhentarim, and holds a good deal of sway.

Marshward's plans also do not hinge upon only the objects he's hired the adventurers to find. While they are out searching for those objects, he and his Zhentarim soldiers are scouring the ruins of Zhentil Keep for

other items that will allow him to carry on with his plans.

DM APPENDIX. NPC SUMMARY

Below is a list of named NPCs that appear in this adventure.

Marzellus Marshward (MAHR-zell-US MARSH-ward). A high ranking officer of the Zhentarim, Marzellus appears to be a human male in his mid-thirties. He is rarely seen without his blackened and worked leather armor, his hooded cloak worked with the symbol of the Zhentarim.

Xarunxaxx (ZAH-roon-ZACKS). An aging beholder seeking ways to turn back the clock so he may live longer.

Udruaq (OOD-roo-ACK). A mind flayer alhoon who has given himself to undeath to help his people fight against the phaerimm that invade their Underdark home.

Lysator Umbrich (LIE-sah-TORE UHM-brick). A now-dead mage, Lysator was once a powerful member of the Zhentarim. He was well known for his practical jokes, but he was trusted with some of the most important secrets and objects of power the Zhentarim had.

Tirrodu (TEER-oh-DOO). A plane-hopping arcanaloth, he has come to Faerun seeking long-lost knowledge from the library of the archmage, Manshoon.

APPENDIX. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

Alhoon

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +8, Wis +6, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +8, Deception +7, History +8, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft, passive Perception 17

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft

Challenge Rating 10 (5,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. The mind flayer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The mind flayer's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

1/level each: *dominate monster*, *plane shift* (self only)

Spellcasting. The alhoon is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The alhoon has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *confusion*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *phantasmal killer*

5th level (2 slots): *modify memory*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slots): *disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*

Turn Resistance. The alhoon has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Actions

Chilling Grasp. *Melee spell attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6). The alhoon magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Arcanaloth

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed 30 ft, fly 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +9, Wis +7, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +13, Deception +9, Insight +9, Perception +7

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

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft, passive Perception 17

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft

Challenge Rating 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The arcanaloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The arcanaloth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self*, *darkness*, *heat metal*, *invisibility* (self only), *magic missile*.

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

Magic Weapons. The arcanaloth's weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting. The arcanaloth is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with

spell attacks). The arcanaloth has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *shield*, *Tenser's floating disk*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *phantasmal force*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fear*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *dimension door*

5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane*, *hold monster*

6th level (1 slots): *chain lightning*

7th level (1 slots): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slots): *mind blank*

Actions

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) slashing damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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

Beholder

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 180 (19d10 + 76)

Speed 0 ft, fly 20 ft (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +7, Cha +8

Skills Perception +12

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 22

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon
Challenge Rating 13 (10,000 XP)

Antimagic Cone. The beholder's central eye creates an area of antimagic, as in the *antimagic field* spell, in a 150-foot cone. At the start of each of its turns, the beholder decides which way the cone faces and whether the cone is active. The area works against the beholder's own eye rays.

Actions

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage.

Eye Rays. The beholder shoots three of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to three targets it can see within 120 feet of it.

1. *Charm Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the beholder for 1 hour, or until the beholder harms the creature.

2. *Paralyzing Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

3. *Fear Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

4. *Slowing Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target's speed is halved for 1 minute. In addition, the creature can't take reactions, and it can take either an action or a bonus action on its

turn, but not both. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

5. *Enervation Ray.* The targeted creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

6. *Telekinetic Ray.* If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or the beholder moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. It is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of the beholder's next turn or until the beholder is incapacitated.

If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is moved up to 30 feet in any direction. The beholder can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.

7. *Sleep Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep and remain unconscious for 1 minute. The target awakens if it takes damage or another creature takes an action to wake it. This ray has no effect on constructs and undead.

8. *Petrification Ray.* The targeted creature must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

9. *Disintegration Ray.* If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 45 (10d8) force damage. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, its body becomes a pile of fine gray dust.

If the target is a Large or smaller nonmagical object or creation of magical force, it is disintegrated without a saving throw. If the target is a Huge or larger object or creation of magical force, this ray disintegrates a 10-foot cube of it.

10. Death Ray. The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 55 (10d10) necrotic damage. The target dies if this reduces it to 0 hit points.

Legendary Actions

The beholder can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The beholder regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Eye Ray. The beholder uses one random eye ray.

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 153

Languages Abyssal, Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge Rating 7 (2,900 XP)

This stat block is for monster and NPC types. You can use this section to describe the NPC

if you wish. Delete stat blocks irrelevant to the creature.

Fey Ancestry. The draegloth has advantage on 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). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

At will: *darkness*

1/level 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 target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage.

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

Dread Pirate*

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +8, Cha +9

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge Rating 16 (15,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The dread pirate has advantage of saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Marshal Undead. Unless the dread pirate is incapacitated, it and undead creatures of its choice within 60 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against features that turn undead.

Spellcasting. The dread pirate is a 17th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *compelled duel*, *searing smite*

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

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *elemental weapon*

4th level (2 slots): *destructive wave (necrotic)*

Actions

Multiattack. The dread pirate makes three scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee weapon attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target(s). *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) slashing damage.

Hellfrost Orb (1/day). The dread pirate hurls a magical ball of dark energy that explodes at a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 31 (9d6) cold damage and 31 (9d6)

necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. The dread pirate adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the dread pirate must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

(*Based on the death knight, armor and weapon changed, CR lowered with stats to match.)

Mind Flayer

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)

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

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 16

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft

Challenge Rating 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. The mind flayer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The mind flayer's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

1/level each: *dominate monster*, *plane shift* (self only)

Actions

Tentacles. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) psychic damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escaped DC 15) and must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

Extract Brain. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the mind flayer. *Hit:* The target takes 55 (10d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the mind flayer kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6). The mind flayer magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Skeleton Pirate*

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft

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

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

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge Rating 3 (700 XP)

Undead Nature. A skeleton pirate doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. A skeleton pirate makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its rapier.

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

Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

(*Based on a swashbuckler, with skeleton attributes.)

Star Golem*

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 30 ft, fly 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge Rating 10 (5,900 XP)

Star golems appear as an arrangement of bright points of light, with faint rays of light connecting them to form what appears to be a constellation. A vague and dim outline gives the constellation features of whatever the constellation represents. This is often a warrior or some fantastic beast, but can even be objects such as a cup.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell effect or effect that would alter its form.

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

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee weapon attack:* +10 to hit, reach

5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8+6) bludgeoning damage.

Slow (Recharge 5-6). The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, a target can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its turn. In addition, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, but not both. These effects last 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.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside its lair with one or more other star golem, the star golem can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the golems can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Beams of light connect the star golems and grow to painful intensity. All creatures that can see must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. A creature who failed may repeat the save at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a successful save. Creatures who cannot see are immune to this effect. Creatures who use their reaction to cover their eyes make the saving throw at advantage. Simply closing their eyes does not give a creature protection from the effect.

(*Based on a stone golem, with the added lair action and fly movement.)

REWARDS

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

EXPERIENCE

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

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP / Foe
Alhoon	5,900
Arcanaloth	8,400
Beholder	10,000
Draegloth	2,900
Dread Pirate	15,000
Mind Flayer	2,900
Skeleton Pirates	700
Star Golem	5,900

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task/Accomplishment	XP / Character
Retrieve scrolls for Tirrodu	1000
Retrieve statue for Xarunxaxx	1000
Return objects to Marzellus	1000
Disarm/bypass traps in the hidden library	500
Disarm/bypass trap on the entrance to the crypt	500
Disarm/bypass trap on the hidden compartment	500
Disarm/bypass trap on the sarcophagus lid	500

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **11,360 experience points**.

The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **13,360 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

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 whom gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Gems from Marzellus	1,000
Various trophies	500
Black dragon skull	1,000
Crystal Bowl	100
Dozen rare tomes	500
Common tomes	100
Weave theory tomes	1,500
Pouch of ruby dust	1,500
Lysator's fine robes	100
Lysator's gold jewelry	150
Dread pirate's scimitar	100

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

TOME OF LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Wondrous item, very rare

The red leather that covers this tome is embossed with a smiling man with a third eye. A description of this item can be found in **Player Handout 2**.

POTION OF SUPERIOR HEALING

Potion, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 188).

SPELL SCROLL OF ENHANCE ABILITY

Scroll, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 200), and the spell in the *Player's Handbook* (pg. 237).

SPELL SCROLL OF FORCECAGE

Scroll, very rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 200), and the spell in the *Player's Handbook* (pg. 243).

SPELL SCROLL OF PROGRAMMED ILLUSION

Scroll, very rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 200), and the spell in the *Player's Handbook* (pg. 269).

SPELL SCROLL OF SIMULACRUM

Scroll, very rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 200), and the spell in the *Player's Handbook* (pg. 276).

RENOWN

All faction members gain one renown point for successfully completing the adventure. Members of either the Zhentarim who completed their faction assignment gain **one additional renown point**.

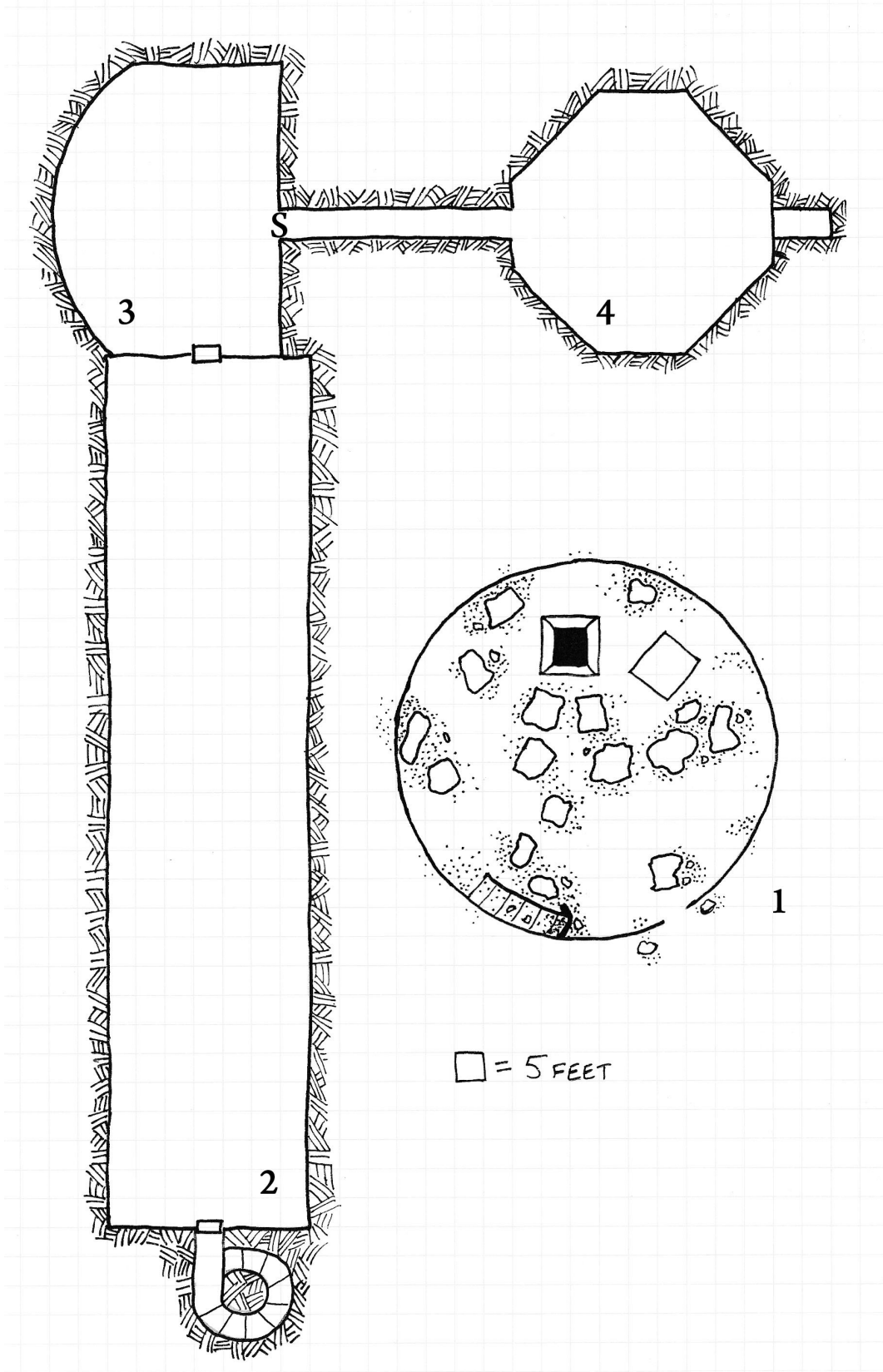
DOWNTIME

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

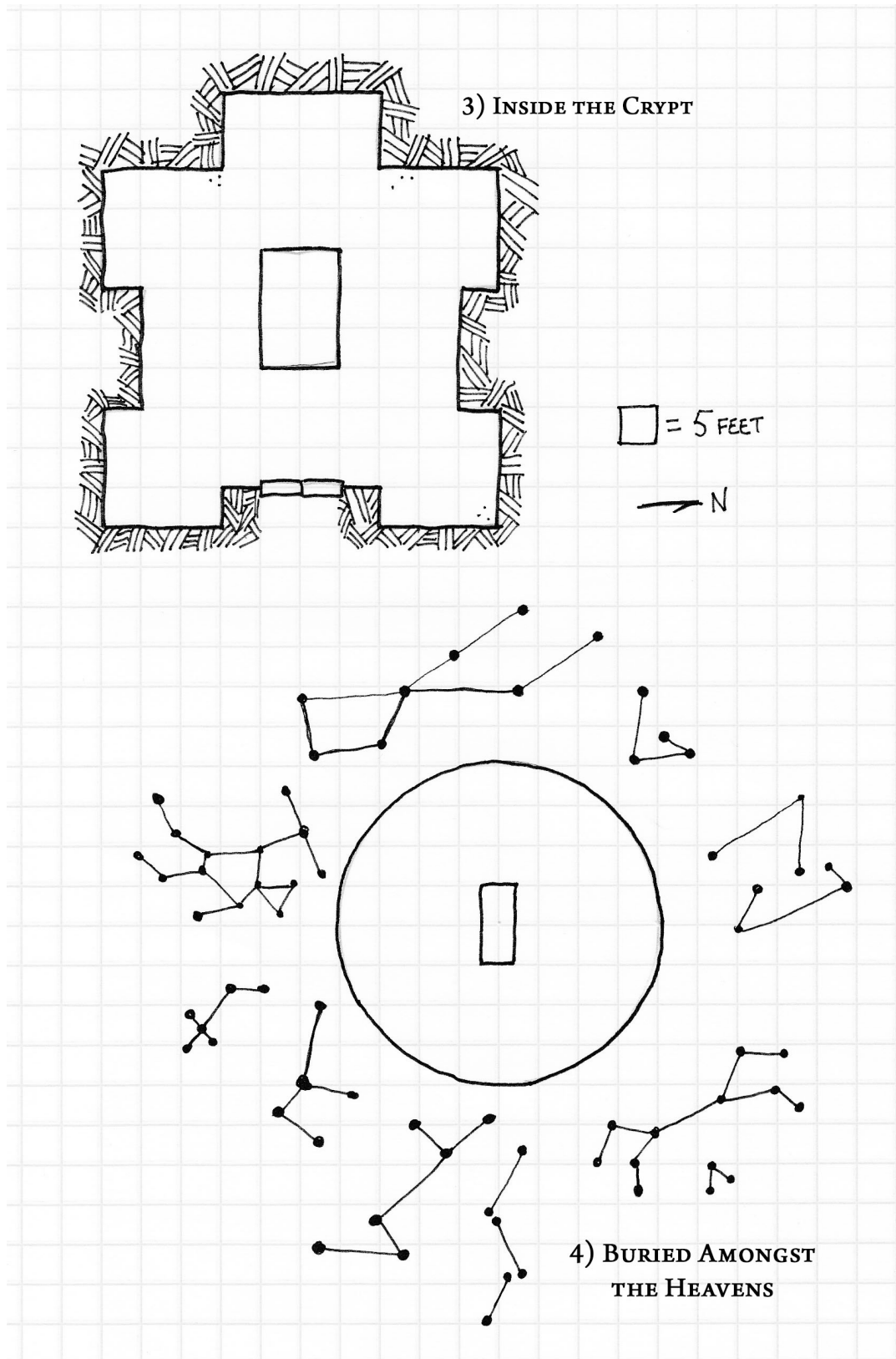
DM REWARDS

You receive **3,375 XP, 1,688 gp, and ten downtime days** for each session you run of this adventure.

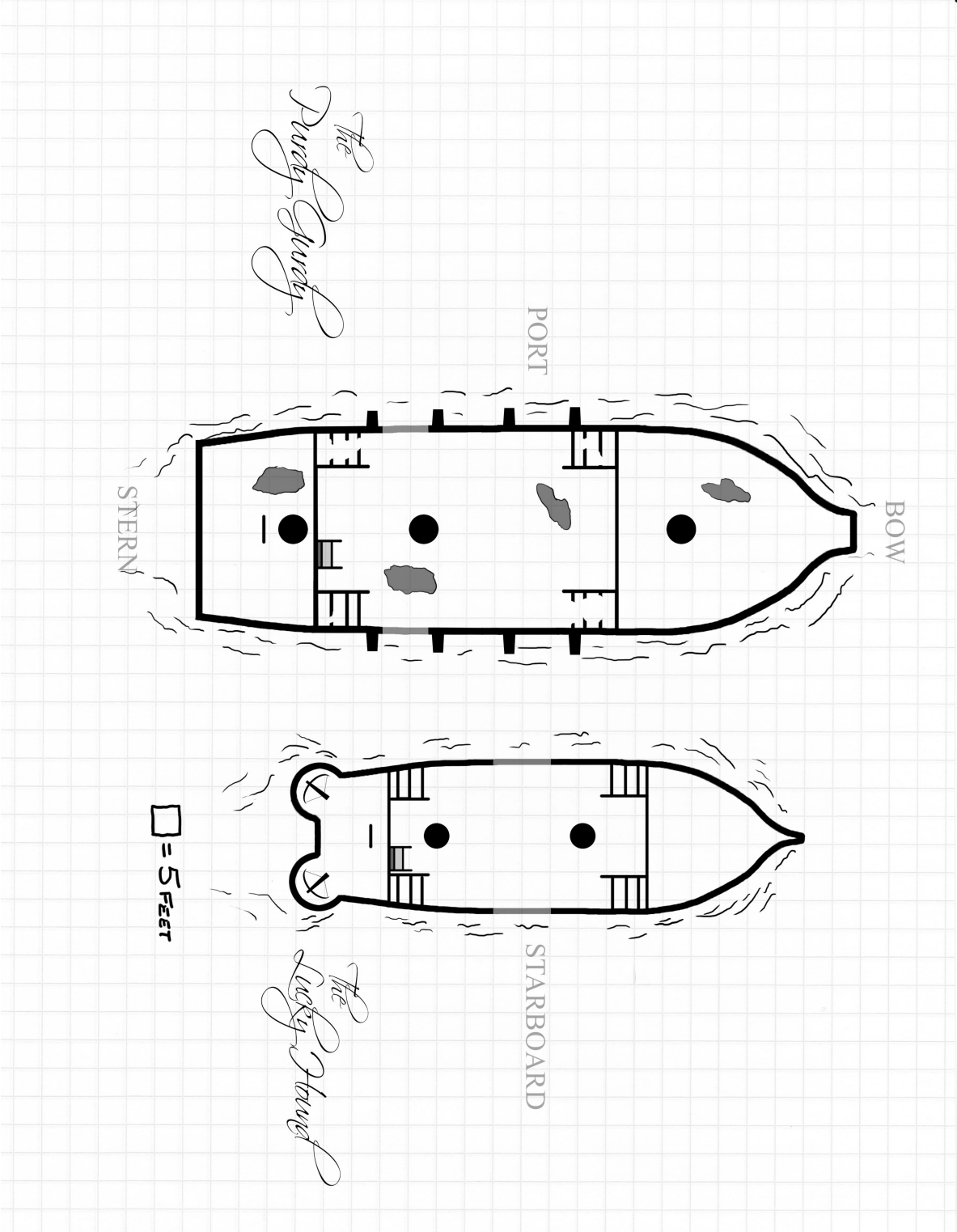
APPENDIX. MAP I



APPENDIX. MAP 2



APPENDIX. MAP 3



PLAYER HANDOUT I. ZHENT ORDERS

If a character is a member of the Zhentarim, Marzellus Marshward hands him a scroll during Part 1.

We have heard rumors that an old ally of the Zhentarim has been spotted in the ruins of Zhentil Keep. We would be most interested in speaking with him again. Seek him out, offer him your assistance, and persuade him to give us an audience. Humbly ask him to reveal himself to the commander in charge at the Keep, or travel to Darkhold if it would please him.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2. TOME OF LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

TOME OF LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Wondrous item, very rare

The red leather that covers this tome is embossed with a smiling man with a third eye.

This book contains guidelines for influencing and charming others, and its words are charged with magic. If you spend 48 hours over a period of 6 days or fewer studying the book's contents and practicing its guidelines, your Charisma score increases by 2, as does your maximum for that score. The manual then loses its magic, but regains it in a century.

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 208).

PLAYER HANDOUT 3. STORY AWARDS

Characters have the opportunity to earn the following story awards during this adventure.

NATURE OF THE WEAVE

You have uncovered a series of tomes written by the archmage, Manshoon. By spending 50 downtime days, you gain proficiency in the Arcana skill. If you are already proficient in Arcana, you double your proficiency when making checks with the skill.

Results Code for CCCROZK01-02, Zhentarim's Lament

If you are DMing this adventure between the months of June 2017 and December 2017, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future.

If a player does not have a mobile device, please ask them to head to <http://www.whpublications.com/surveys/> to enter their feedback. Thank you!

