



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

Stormrider Slept Here Crimson Codex Adventure #9 An Adventure for 9th Level Characters (Scaled for 7th to 11th Levels of Play)

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Adventure Background

Even before the city of Stormreach was founded, travelers from the Dragonmarked Houses, particularly House Cannith, made their way into Xen'drik to study the ruins of the giant civilization. The first Cannith settlement was grouped among other ramshackle camps near what is now the city of Stormreach. When these explorers arrived, Sorrowdusk Island in the Thunder Sea held a city of dark elves who remembered the civilization left behind and had clung to that memory, rather than turning inward to the jungles like many of their brethren. They claimed to await the return of the giants who had once been their masters, and they did not welcome outsiders into their midst. The Cannith settlers made every effort to make contact, but as the first envoy seemed to come to an accord with the dark elves, tragedy struck. The volcanic island on which the city was built erupted; the city itself, rather than being destroyed by lava and ash, disappeared, leaving no trace of the dark elves or the Cannith ambassadors.

As a wyrmling, the blue dragon Stormrider had occasionally lived among the dark elves of that city, highly respected for his wisdom and power even in his youth. On the island, he found a globe that contained fragments of the draconic Prophecy, highly prized by the dark elves and kept within their throne room. When the volcano erupted, he assumed that city, and the globe along with it, had been destroyed. In his search following the eruption, he found nothing remaining of the city or the Prophecy fragments, not even ruins.

During the Last War, a famous artist and talented artificer, Silora d'Cannith, visited Stormreach and painted much of the landscape. One of her most famous paintings, the "City of Hope," is based on a dream she is said to have had while on Xen'drik. Notably, the painting features the constellation of Chronopsis, the draconic god of Prophecy, leading students of the draconic Prophecy to believe that some clue may be contained in the work of art. In recent days, it was purchased by House Cannith representatives in Stormreach through merchant Edizar Sym. Stormrider, seeing his opportunity to capture the painting and solve its riddle, ordered his network of thieves to take Sym's entire shipment to a warehouse where the dragon could look over the painting at his leisure.

Adventure Synopsis

Candle, trying to solidify the relationship the PCs began in *CRC-08 If at First*, instructs the PCs to meet with Sym's representative and investigate the theft of the shipment. Sym's representative, Prescott, is very clear that a very important client ordered the painting: the rest of the cargo is important, but losing the painting could cost Sym dearly. In the course of the PCs' investigation, they discover where the cargo has been taken, and Prescott insists upon identifying the cargo. When they arrive at the warehouse where the cargo has been stored, they find that another Codex member is there, guarding the painting on Stormrider's behalf, currently fending off a group of Cabal of Shadows operatives who hope to gain access to the portion of the Prophecy themselves.

After defeating the Cabal, the PCs must decide which orders to follow: recover the painting and angering Stormrider, or leave it with Stormrider and lose their powerful patron Sym? Luckily, there may be a third way. If they can solve the riddle of the painting, perhaps they can barter with Stormrider for it. The painting reveals that the elven city is now below water and has formed a coterminous point with the plane of Mabar, the Endless Night. The PCs have two days (less if they took their time finding the shipment) to access the city and find the portions of draconic Prophecy that Stormrider seeks. This would be easier if the voyage to the city itself weren't through sahuagin-ruled waters. It is possible for the PCs to bribe their way past the sahuagin forces, but it is more likely that they face the monsters in their own territory, in addition to the creature guarding the city's entrance.

Once they reach the underwater passage into the city, they find that much of the city itself has been preserved, including many of its former residents. Now undead, they work to prevent the PCs from solving the riddles that allow them to recover the parts of the Prophecy that Stormrider desires. They must also be wary of the creatures of Mabar that now infest every shadow in the once-bright city.

Troubleshooting

Crimson Codex operatives use a "pass-signal" to confirm their identities and transfer information. Due to recent troubles inside the Codex, the "pass-signal" changes regularly. As the adventure opens, the PCs are given the current signal: a handshake where each party taps once, then three times, on the other person's wrist. In situations where a handshake is not accessible, one Codex member uses the "long-short-short-short" signal to identify himself. (This could be through a cough, the ringing of a blacksmith's hammer, a knock, or so forth.)

Even if the PCs have not played in a Crimson Codex adventure before, they are assumed to be members, experienced in the operations of the faction. In addition, they have dealt with Candle in the past and know she is the highest-ranking Codex member on Xen'drik. She is someone who can be trusted and must be listened to. As Candle is unavailable for questioning when it comes down to which patron to support, the PCs must ultimately decide for themselves.

This adventure also includes aquatic terrain and underwater combat. DMs should make themselves very familiar with pages 92 and 93 of the *DMG* before the start of the adventure. The other condition DMs must be aware of when running this adventure is the timing: the adventure begins on the day before the new moon, which is the first day that Mabar is in conjunction with Sorrowdusk Island. If the PCs wait too long to solve the mystery, their chance to visit the lost City of Hope vanishes like the city itself.

Finally, as always, this adventure is meant to be fun for both the players and the DM. If circumstances require deviation from the flow of the adventure, do not hesitate to follow that new direction. As a DM, you should attempt to get the PCs back on track, but also feel free to make alterations to the adventure if those changes contribute to a play experience that is more fun. Certainly all adventures should challenge both the PCs and the players, and there should be a risk of death and loss, but a completely overwhelming (or underwhelming) experience is no fun for anyone.

If the PCs have Reward Cards that allow them to reveal an Adventure Secret, they can use these to solve either of the puzzles: the painting or the globe. Additionally, before the adventure begins, DMs should ask the PCs what their cover stories are, as Prescott may make reference to their known professions.

Adventure Start

A Codex messenger, a boy wearing a red belt, approaches the PCs. As he approaches, he starts to make the old symbol, but then hesitates. Instead, he takes the PC's hand and shakes it, tapping once, then three times, on the underside of the PC's wrist. "New signal," he says with a wink, then hurries off, leaving behind a square of paper in the PC's hand. The square of paper is **Handout 1**, instructing the PCs to meet with Edizar Sym's secretary, Prescott, as members of "Herrenger's Part Time Adventuring Company," to solidify the relationship and continue to gain Sym's faith.

If the PCs received the "Patronage of Edizar Sym" Story Object in *CRC-8 If at First*, they have already visited Sym's offices, and Prescott recognizes them. Prescott greets all the PCs at the door, but treats those with the patronage Story Object with greater respect. He is a lanky man with a prominent Adam's apple and thinning gray hair; he has the nervous habit of adjusting his spectacles up the bridge of his nose. Prescott ushers the PCs inside a small meeting room just off the front door and explains the situation:

"What I am about to tell you is of the utmost secrecy. Your company has proven itself to us in the past, and we hope that you will not let us down. Late yesterday evening, one of my employer's ships, the Bonny Belle, reached port. The captain signed over his cargo to what he believed to be our usual portage company and dismissed his men for shore leave. Unfortunately, the cargo never arrived at our warehouses. I've interviewed several of our guards, and they all say the same: no cargo was delivered last night, and none has arrived this morning. We have to conclude that the porters were, in fact, thieves, and have summarily relieved us of our trade. This, of course, is unacceptable. Master Sym requests that you track down where the cargo has gone, using whatever means are necessary inside the boundaries of Stormreach law, and report back to me. The cargo--thirty crates--notably bears Master Sym's sigil, and along with the usual trade, includes a masterful painting requested by a very valuable customer. That customer will arrive tomorrow morning, expecting the painting to be here, waiting for her, so if this matter cannot be resolved in a timely fashion, Master Sym's reputation is at risk. It is essential, of course, that this matter not be spoken of openly, as a rumor could damage Master Sym's business endeavors--something none of us want!"

Prescott is able to show the PCs Sym's sigil and can tell the PCs the painting is by Silora d'Cannith. He is also happy to provide the name of the ship's captain (Whitney Defoe), a roster of the crew who were on board, and the bill of lading (receipt) signed by the portage company. Sym usually does all of his cargo work with Ameer's Portage Company, and Prescott is happy to give them the information on how to reach that portage company, though he states that when Ameer was contacted, he explained he'd been contacted in writing and told not to come, as Sym had hired a different company for this delicate assignment. Prescott has no idea where Ameer might have gotten this idea. He informs the PCs that they can reach him here at the offices at any time of day, as he expects to get little sleep until the matter is resolved. It is important for Prescott to explicitly state the deadline--multiple times, if necessary. The PCs need to be aware that if they can't get the painting back to Prescott before dawn, their job is considered a failure.

If any of the PCs have a cover story that involves working on or near the docks, Prescott is aware of this as their secondary job--Sym's informants are reasonably good, and they have found out as much about

Herrenger's Adventurers as they are able. Prescott is particularly glad to have people who may have contacts at the docks or among the porters working on the job.

Should the PCs ask about Edizar Sym's son Quenzin from *CRC-08 If at First*, Prescott assures them that the lad is doing well and has a member of House Jorasco looking after him to help him recover from the trauma of his experiences. If the PCs ask specifically, Prescott admits that Quenzin has regular nightmares, but tries to make light of it--"After all, who wouldn't have nightmares after what he went through?"

Part One – The Loot Gone Missing

The PCs, through stealth, guile, or intimidation, can discover the location of the missing cargo. While deciding how to recover the cargo, they notice members of the Cabal of Shadows attempting to steal the cargo from the original thieves. To complicate matters, working with the thieves is a member of the Crimson Codex, here on orders to secure a clue to the draconic Prophecy on behalf of Stormrider. The PCs must decide which patron of the Codex to side with—or think quickly enough to strike a bargain between the two angry parties.

I Know a Guy Who Knows a Guy

Throughout the PCs' investigations, it is raining in Stormreach. This is not just a friendly little rain; this is a soak-through-your-cloak rain that's a common part of winter in the tropics. Every NPC the PCs interact with should mention something about how wretched the weather is now that it's the rainy season, or how glad they are that winter here is all rain and not any of the snow you see in Fairhaven/Korth/Flamekeep/etc. This is important as it establishes the season in which the adventure takes place, and helps the PCs in solving the later riddle.

The PCs might try a variety of investigative techniques to track down the lost cargo. Although the thieves are part of Stormrider's network, they are not as savvy as members of the Crimson Codex--or the Cabal of Shadows for that matter. The PCs can follow several clues in order to locate the warehouse where the cargo has been taken.

PCs may first wish to investigate Prescott or Sym. It is fairly simple to gain information on Sym's business: DC 5 Knowledge (local) or Gather Information checks reveal him to be an honest merchant. At DC 10, the PCs remember or learn that he always acts within the law. DC 15 shows that he has an excellent reputation with local government, including the Coin Lords. DC 20 or higher reveals that companies Sym hires that fail him find themselves without business and sore pressed to get by in Stormreach.

If any PC has the Research or Investigate feat and ask to compare the signature on the bill of lading (the receipt they received from Prescott) to public records, they may do so. Going through the public records is of moderate difficulty, requiring a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check and 1d4+2 hours. The signature belongs to Morren Astango, a petty criminal who has been apprehended by the Stormreach Guard more than once and the Iron Watch twice--which should be more than enough times to keep him incarcerated.

PCs making an effort to gather information, whether from Captain Defoe, members of the *Bonny Belle*'s crew, or from other likely contacts in the docks district can gain the following information. PCs who already know the name Morren Astango may add +5 bonus to their Gather Information checks. If PCs use the Story Object giving them access to Stormrider's Network, they find that the network knows absolutely nothing about the stolen goods--obviously they don't want to tell anyone about their own nefarious deeds! PCs may not apply that Story Object to any of their checks.

- DC 5 - The *Bonny Belle* docked yesterday, and a group claiming to work for Ameer's Portage Company, one of the larger companies at the docks, picked up the shipment.
- DC 10 - Ameer's Portage Company usually uses half-giants, orcs, and half-orcs to haul cargo, but the group that picked up the cargo from the *Bonny Belle* was predominantly humans and half-elves. They were wearing the uniforms and had the proper paperwork for Ameer's Portage Company. One of them signed for all the merchandise.
- DC 15 - Most of the portage workers in the docks district drink at the Ship's Cat Tavern. It's not a very nice place. It's run by a shifter named Harysh who's very protective of her cats. The tavern itself has probably a score of the critters running around at the feet of the patrons.
- DC 15 - If the PCs specifically ask for a good description of Astango, a local describes him as a short, burly man with a bald head and a beard.
- DC 20 - One of the porters looked like Morren Astango, a petty criminal. We thought he was making good on his promise to find real work. He drinks over at the Ship's Cat sometimes.
- DC 25 - Several of the old warehouses at the north end of the docks district have been purchased recently by a new merchant--a patron of the arts, some say, but no one knows his name.

The PCs may come up with additional ways to find the warehouse where Morren Astango and the thieves have hidden the cargo. If they get a description of Astango and look for him, either at the Ship's Cat or just around in the docks district, he's sure to show up. He's not the brightest conductor stone on the lightning rail, and the PCs could either follow him back to the warehouse (in the most roundabout route through port-side Stormreach possible, stopping at several taverns or merchants to avoid the rain until he's kicked out) or intimidate him into giving them a location. Astango plays dumb as long as he can (which is not a stretch for him), but he eventually gives the PCs the whole spiel: this was his big chance to make it into one of the thieves' rings in Stormreach, and now he's blown it for sure. He's already blabbed about the job once to some shady guys who threatened him. Astango has a +10 Bluff modifier, and is not inclined to get into combat--he'll blab rather than fight. If the PCs attempt to cast *charm person* on him or use other magical means to get information, his saves are Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2. Astango is just a rogue conman and has no magical abilities.

The warehouse itself is a two-story, square 40' x 40' building with a large barn-door style entrance (chained and locked, Open Locks DC 40), a small entrance in the front (locked, Open Locks DC 30), and several windows for light on the second floor. Nearby warehouses of the same shape and size offer PCs a place from which to watch their target location or look through the windows. Several of the windows have closed shutters, but at least two of them have open shutters; none of them have glass panes. The warehouse is a newer brick building (DC 20 Climb check). Inside the building, along with crates, piled to ten feet high, bearing what looks like it might be Sym's mark (it's a DC 30 Spot check to identify it from the second story--if the PCs use *clairvoyance* or an alternate method of sight at a distance, it is indeed Sym's mark), is a large easel bearing what might be a painting covered with a sheet. There are also two guards; from above, the identity of these guards is indistinct, but if the PCs have found some way to look inside, they see a human and a halfling guard, discussing esoteric texts and the draconic Prophecy.

In large part, the investigation is supposed to be a chance for the PCs to roleplay, either in their cover identities or in interacting with NPCs along the docks. Create personalities as odd and off-kilter as makes sense, but while finding the warehouse should be a bit challenging, the PCs should discover the location by early evening. Notably, early evening is when the rains pause and the sky clears, just enough to show three slivers of moon shining down over Stormreach. Prescott is happy to join them to identify the cargo.

PCs may also decide to find out what they can about Silora d'Cannith. Gather Information isn't helpful, as no one in Stormreach has any real information about the artist.

- Bardic Knowledge, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), or Knowledge (arcana), DC 5 reveals that Silora d'Cannith is a Dragonmarked member of the House Cannith.
- DC 15 reveals that Silora d'Cannith is a famous artist and artificer.
- With a DC 20 check, PCs find out that Silora d'Cannith often imbued her paintings with magical effects.
- A DC 25 check reveals that her most famous painting is a fanciful depiction of Sorrowdusk Island off of Xen'drik, and is called "City of Hope."

Who Are You Working For?

The tension in this part of the adventure comes from having Prescott at the site with the PCs when they learn that Sym's cargo was stolen by Stormrider's network of thieves. This leads to the need for quick thinking and careful roleplaying. Do whatever you can to make this situation occur. If the PCs enter the warehouse without Prescott, have Prescott arrive after the battle, claiming that he had another team following the PCs as a backup.

As the PCs decide how to handle retrieving the cargo, the two guards, Felix Chamberlain (a Crimson Codex member) and a halfling, are attacked by four members of the Cabal of Shadows. If the PCs are not already inside, they have to open the locks, come in through the windows, or bash down the door (20 HP, hardness 5; Break DC 23).

Creatures: These four members of the Cabal of Shadows intend to take the painting at all costs.

Zig: male human warlock 7, Combat Statistics.

Runt, Scout, and Zapeth: male human rogue 5, Combat Statistics.

Tactics: As soon as the PCs enter, Felix clangs his rapier against the floor: one long and three short. The Cabal, alerted to the newcomers, turn to fight the PCs, ignoring the halfling guard and Felix. The halfling guard and Felix stay out of the direct fighting, though if the PCs do not have a bard among them, Felix uses his inspire courage ability to give the PCs a +2 to hit and damage. The halfling sneaks away as soon as he can (and, if it seems difficult for him to escape, may use magic to get away--such as *dimension door* or a like spell).

The Cabal members are devious. Before the PCs enter combat, Runt and Scout are under the effect of a *blink* spell at CL 5, and Zapeth has *invisibility* cast on him at CL 3. Zig has already used a scroll of *stoneskin*. On the first round of combat, Zig uses a scroll of *haste*. Zapeth does not enter combat until he can engage the PCs; he's meant to be back up if something complicated happens. The rogues arrange their combat together, trying to flank the weakest or least-armored-looking Codex operative first, and concentrating their attacks on a single target until that target is downed. Zig, on the other hand, is completely chaotic, trying to hit as many targets as possible.

Zig has every intention of fighting to the death and taking down as many as he can with him. The rogues, on the other hand, have no intention of dying; if they survive, they can make the attempt to steal the painting another day. They have no problem leaving Zig to die on his own. If one of the rogues falls below 10 hit points, he withdraws from combat, swigs a potion of *cure serious wounds*, and returns if he believes he can continue to aid his comrades. The rogues each have only one potion of *cure serious wounds*, so the second time one drops below 10 hit points, he withdraws, and the other two rogues flee within two rounds.

Developments: Once the Cabal members are defeated, Felix very gratefully comes forward, offering his hand to shake (and giving them the Codex pass-sign again), thanking them for their heroic efforts, and, if the PCs have kept any Cabal members alive, asking them which adventuring company they're from (so he doesn't blow their cover). Felix is an extremely charming and attractive half-elf, who wears a mithral chain shirt and has a mandolin strapped to his back. As long as any Cabal members are within listening distance, Felix speaks in code, saying he's just a guard who has been contracted out to a very powerful artist, a poet and musician who wears *blue*, to guard a painting he's purchased. (This is a partial lie: Felix knows Stormrider's people stole the painting for the blue dragon, but he didn't know there was Codex interest in the merchant it was stolen from. Felix has +15 to his Bluff check.) He speaks Draconic, Giant, Elven, Goblin, and Common. Felix tries to make the following points:

- The blue musician, the one who likes to practice his scales, is particularly interested in some of the details of the painting.
- His employer purchased it because he believed it might help him in his particular studies.
- As an artist, the blue musician thought it might serve as a muse for his poetry, particularly the type he binds in tomes of red.
- Felix is sure that the intermediary who hired him on this job would not want him to hand over the work without giving the blue musician a chance to examine it.
- The painting is so beautiful, he could swear it's enchanted.
- The blue musician is determined to look at the painting himself. He will return to Stormreach in two days; he's away on business involving Chamber music.

Felix is working for Stormrider under Candle's orders. Felix was unaware that Stormrider's goals and Sym's might conflict. If the PCs have the means to contact Candle (such as through a *sending* spell), she responds, "Felix is a Codex operative. Please both groups, if possible. Use your best judgment for the good of the Codex."

If the PCs are able to talk to Felix openly (outside the hearing of the Cabal), Felix is more forthright with his information. Stormrider believes that this painting holds the key to a lost city he visited as a youth. He left there his notes about a globe that contained draconic Prophecy within the city.

The PCs have a little bit of time to choose who they will side with--or find a way to come up with a compromise. They may simply choose one employer over the other; their job was to aid Sym in this matter, after all, and perhaps they'll go with their original orders. They may decide that siding with a big blue dragon belonging to The Chamber rather than an uppity merchant is the best choice. Or they may try to get both sides to compromise. If they present Prescott with either a very good story (Bluff vs. Prescott's Sense Motive of +15) or are able to convince him that there are good reasons for him to wait for the painting (Diplomacy DC 35), they might get him to extend their deadline. If the PCs successfully convince Prescott to give them two days to return the painting (and the rest of the cargo), he looks at them warily but says they've earned his trust; he hopes they prove him right.

Alternately, the PCs could attempt to bargain with Felix. The easiest way to do this is to solve the riddle of the painting: if they work on the painting while Felix is present and discover that they only have two days to get to the city (given the time limit of the planar conjunction), *and* they volunteer to go and look for whatever Stormrider has lost, it only requires a DC 20 Diplomacy check to convince Felix to turn the painting back over to Sym. (They've gotten what information out of it they can, after all.)

If the PCs side with Prescott, Felix shakes his head and tells the PCs he believes they're making a mistake, but turns over the painting. If the PCs side with Felix, (or simply don't return the painting in time), they receive a black mark in Sym's book, they lose the powerful merchant's patronage, and their quests for the Codex could become much more difficult in the future.

The PCs may try to interrogate the Cabal members. This is fine; all the Cabal members know is that the painting is supposed to hold a key to the draconic Prophecy. One of their operatives overheard Morren Astango discussing the painting, then they bullied the thief into revealing its location. Their orders were to recover it for the Cabal.

Scaling the Encounter

7th level characters: Zig is not present.

8th level characters: There are two rogues instead of three.

10th level characters: Add a second warlock, Zim, with identical stats and tactics.

11th level characters: Add a third warlock, Zor, with identical stats and tactics.

Combat Statistics

ZIG

CR 7

Male human warlock 7

CE Medium **humanoid (human)**

Init +3; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

hp 37 (7 HD); DR 2/Cold Iron and DR 10/Adamantine up to 70 points

Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee dagger +4 (1d4-1/19-20)

Ranged *eldritch blast* +8 (4d6)

Base Atk +5; Grp +4

Warlock Invocations (CL 7th):

Frightful Blast

Hammer Blast

Eldritch Chain

Summon Swarm

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14 (16), Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 17

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Focus (Ranged Touch)

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +4, Intimidate +15, Knowledge

(arcana) +7, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +5, Use Magic Device +16 (+18 for scrolls)

Possessions *chain shirt* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *quiver of Elhonna*, scrolls

of the following spells: *crushing despair*, *cure critical wounds*, *fire shield*, *haste*, *rainbow pattern*, ~~*stoneskin*~~

Hook "Raise a toast to chaos!"

See Appendix for an explanation of the warlock class and abilities.

RUNT, SCOUT, AND ZAPETH

CR 5

Male human rogue 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Listen +8, Spot +8

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 25 (5 HD)

Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee short sword +5 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged short bow +7 (1d6/x3)

Base Atk +3; Grp +4

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Special Atk sneak attack +3d6

Combat Gear potion of *cure serious wounds*, 2 potions of *neutralize poison*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Balance 13, Disable Device 10, Hide 11, Jump 8, Listen 8, Move Silently 11, Open Lock 11, Search 10, Spot 8, Tumble 13

Possessions masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork shortsword, masterwork shortbow, 10 normal arrows, 5 cold iron arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, masterwork thieves' tools

Special Ability evasion, trap sense, trapfinding, uncanny dodge, sneak attack +3d6

Hook "Live to fight another day."

The Mysterious Painting

Depending on the outcome of the argument about the painting, several things could happen. The most likely is that the PCs remain with or return to Felix at the warehouse and examine the painting there. If the PCs return the painting to Prescott without examining it, the secretary grows nervous about whether the painting might be a forgery and asks the PCs to examine it, just to make sure nothing is wrong. In either case, the PCs have a chance to look at the painting that seems to be the focal point of the trouble.

If the PCs are with Felix, he tries to help as much as he can, and can help to steer the PCs in the right direction if they get off track. Prescott, who'd rather just dismiss the whole thing as nonsense, is rather less inclined to help. The DM should be very careful about giving too much information--the challenge for the PCs is figuring out which details in the painting are important.

The painting, which is provided in **Handout 2**, is of a woman looking out over the ocean at night, gesturing to an island. These are the important details (which the PCs should notice on their own--don't make it obvious):

- The woman is human and has a dragonmark (which can be identified as the Lesser Mark of Making with a DC 20 Spellcraft check). (PCs who gained information about Silora d'Cannith earlier can easily guess that this is a self-portrait.)
- A DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check recognizes this as Sorrowdusk Island. DC 15 Knowledge (history) recalls a time when there was a city on Sorrowdusk.
- There are three slivers of waning moons in the sky--identical to tonight's sky.
- A DC 10 Bardic Knowledge check, a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) or Survival check, or a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check, reveals that the visible constellation, Chronepsis, is the dragon god of prophecy.
- There are two boats, one called the *Endless*, the second called the *Night*. With a DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) or Bardic Knowledge check, a PC can make the connection between the ship names and the plane of Endless Night, Mabar. (PCs with in-character knowledge of the planes may, in fact, recall this without making the check.)

The painting is, in fact, magical, and has a strong aura of transmutation.

Activating the magic of the painting is not difficult if the PCs notice the right details. The word "Mabar" said aloud during a conjunction of the plane of Mabar with Eberron, reveal the second painting beneath the first.

The important details of the second painting, shown as **Handout 3** are as follows:

- The woman is elven and the dragonmark has changed. (It can now be identified as the Greater Mark of Death with a DC 25 Spellcraft.)
- The moons are gone.
- The city is gone, and the woman's hand is now pointing below water.
- The names on the boats have changed to the *New Moon* and the *Winter Solstice*. As the *New Moon* is following the *Winter Solstice*, it should be easy (DC 10) for anyone who made the Knowledge (the planes) check about the painting's connection to Mabar to figure out that the conjunctions between Mabar and Eberron happen on the three days surrounding the new moon following the Winter Solstice. If they didn't make the connection before, it still requires a DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check, or a DC 30 Bardic Knowledge roll.
- On a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check, the PCs remember that the city that was once on Sorrowdusk Island disappeared below the waves--possibly during a conjunction with the plane of Mabar.
- As a note, the Mark of Death here is likely metaphorical, rather than historical, in significance.

If the PCs change the painting in front of Prescott, he nearly has a breakdown, desperately pleading with the PCs to change it back. (The key to restoring the painting is the same as revealing the secondary one: saying "Mabar" aloud.) Felix, however, is delighted at the revelation: this is exactly the clue that Stormrider was looking for. Felix knows that Stormrider has been looking for the missing city for scores of years. If the PCs don't figure out they've only got two days to get to the city--which means that Stormrider won't return until

after it's already disappeared again--Felix anxiously points this out, and encourages the PCs to go out to the city and try to recover the bits of Prophecy that Stormrider lost.

Both Felix and Prescott can tell the PCs that this is Sorrowdusk Island (and where it is located)--and any of the PCs with ranks in Knowledge (local) recognize it on their own. It's about a half-day's journey on a fast ship.

Part Two – The Realm of Sahuagin

In order to get to the city, the PCs must accomplish four things: 1) hire a boat, 2) figure out how to breathe underwater, 3) deal with the Sahuagin, and 4) fight the monster lurking in the cavernous entrance.

Bubble, Bubble, Toil and Trouble

Before the PCs leave Stormreach, they need to have a plan for their journey underwater. If the PCs sided with Prescott and Sym, Prescott can give each of them 1 *potion of water breathing* as their pay, but wants to have nothing to do with the rest of the PCs' journey. Felix also has access to *potions of water breathing* if asked. If the PCs come up with another solution, support their creativity; anything that seems reasonable for the number of rounds they'll be below water should be allowed to work. (The potions last for 10 hours.) PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Survival check may be given a chance to go over the underwater combat rules in the *DMG*, and may be prompted to remember spells such as *freedom of movement*. Underwater combat doesn't happen very often, so PCs who make the appropriate checks, in the DM's opinion, may be given extra hints on things they might purchase in Stormreach.

There are three boats available for hire at the docks on the night of the first day, and one additional boat available the next morning. The journey should take a half-day, depending on the boat. *Wind's Fury* is an elemental sloop captained by a member of House Lyrander that can get them there by morning (if they leave at night) or by afternoon (if they leave at first light). The cost is prohibitive, however: for this day trip and a pick-up the following day, the cost is 250 gp. If the PCs want the ship to wait for them, the cost is 325 gp. The captain will leave them a rowboat, however, which they can dock at Sorrowdusk Island. The *Wind's Fury* has a standing agreement with the sahuagin in the area of Sorrowdusk Island, and being on this vessel grants the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus to any rolls negotiating with the tribe. (Sometimes you get what you pay for.)

Jennie Rose is a sloop captained by fisherman Dory Engle, who is happy to take the PCs either out at night or in the morning if the weather holds (which it does). He'd been planning to go out fishing that direction anyway, and only charges 10 gp for the voyage (and an additional 10 to wait around or pick them up). Unfortunately, the *Jennie Rose* is not an elemental vessel, and won't arrive until noon if they leave at night, or evening if they leave at first light. The *Jennie Rose* has had cordial dealings with the Sahuagin before, but not enough to adjust any rolls the PCs make.

Sandusky's Trident is an elemental sloop captained by a non-Lyrander representative--despite the fact that the captain bears a Dragonmark that might say otherwise. The ship is a little shadier than the others, but works at half the rate of the *Wind's Fury* (125 gp out and back, 200 to wait). It is only available to leave at first light, though the PCs can encounter Captain Sandusky the night before to hear his deal. Leaving at first light gets the PCs to Sorrowdusk Island at noon (it's a speedy little ship!). Unfortunately, Sandusky has had poor interactions with the Sahuagin, and any rolls the PCs make negotiating with the tribe carry a -2 circumstance penalty.

When the PCs set sail, read or paraphrase the following, changing the time of day as necessary:

The weather holds. The skies are remarkably clear for this time of year, and even the clouds that had been present from the earlier rains seem to have sunk to the south, far away from the island. Sorrowdusk Island appears on the horizon just when the captain told you it would; you can see small settlements dotting the coast, but nothing the size of the marvelous city in Silora d'Cannith's painting.

"We're in sahuagin territory," the captain announces. "Have to stop and negotiate to go any farther. Assuming they grant their permission, I'll get you as close to your location as I can. If they don't... well, you're either out a bit of money, or you're swimming from here."

As though summoned by the captain's words, three sahuagin crest the surface of the water, eyeing you with the same distrust they show all surface dwellers.

The sahuagin are perfectly willing to negotiate, but the key factor here is that no matter how high the Diplomacy or Bluff rolls, something of value must be exchanged. The lowest acceptable Diplomacy or Bluff roll to open negotiations is DC 15. If the PCs fail this by 5 or more, add three sahuagin to the combat at the city's entrance. The sahuagin are happy to barter, and their starting price is 300 gp worth of items or gold. They can be bartered down to 10 gp value based on Diplomacy checks, Bluff checks, or good roleplaying. As a guide, for every point of the check over 15, take 10 gp off the price.

In addition, if the PCs fail to negotiate with the sahuagin, the captain of the ship they've hired gives them a rowboat and wishes them the best of luck: he'll go no farther, but he'll wait here for them to return. This doesn't have any mechanical penalties, other than it taking maybe an hour longer for the PCs to arrive at their destination, but could be an interesting roleplay.

What Lurks in the Deep Blue Sea?

The PCs should direct the captain to let them off near the large standing rock just west of Sorrowdusk Island. Whether they dive directly from the boat or land on the island and dive from there, read or paraphrase the following:

The water is warmer than you expected, and as the waves move at the water's surface, you can also feel the ebbs and flows of a thermal current, pushing you upward. The cliff-like side of the island is pocked with holes, and where you think the woman in the second painting was pointing, you see a large, dark cavern.

The cavernous entrance into the underside of the island is dark and shadowy--traits perilous when Mabar is in conjunction. What's worse, the cavern is inhabited by an elder tojanida. Due to the thermal currents, the water is considered rough (DC 15 Swim check to move at 1/4 speed). It is 60 feet straight down to the top of the cavern, another 30 feet to the base of the cavern. The ocean floor is a further 30 feet below this.

Creatures: This creature is only defending its home (possibly with the aid of three angry sahuagin, trying to get revenge on the PCs).

Elder Tojanida: hp 127; *Monster Manual* 243-244.

Tactics: The elder tojanida opens the surprise round as soon as the PCs enter its cave. (A DC 20 Spot check allows PCs to act in the surprise round. After that, the elder tojanida uses its ink cloud special attack to confuse the PCs. It attempts to attack one PC at a time, disabling one before moving on to the next. (If the sahuagin are present, they ambush any PC the elder tojanida has wounded, not acting until there is one PC they can flank and fight.)

Developments: After the PCs defeat the elder tojanida, they still have 100 feet to swim in the cavern/tunnel before it opens up into air.

Scaling the Encounter

7th level characters: Use two adult tojanidas instead of the elder tojanida.

8th level characters: No change.

10th level characters: Use two adult tojanidas and the elder tojanida.

11th level characters: Use two elder tojanidas.

Part Three – The City of Hope

Most of the city is in ruins, but the palace, where the PCs should aim, is still as opulent as it once was. Unfortunately on the main thoroughfare, undead and creatures of darkness lurk in the shadows.

Flight to the Palace

As the PCs come up out of the water, they find themselves climbing onto what was once the main road of a wealthy city. Now, however, ruins surround them. Read or paraphrase the following to set the tone:

The city before you barely resembles the opulent city in Silora d'Cannith's painting. The cobblestone road ahead of you is cracked, in places resembling rubble more than a path. The remnants of houses and shops are crumbled on either side. The only thing that seems to be bright in this underground darkness is a building that appears to be a mansion or palace. The road leads directly to it, and even at this distance, you can see that the destruction wrought upon the rest of the city has not touched it. It glows with a soft, golden light, casting shadows among the ruins, which seem to move of their own accord. Ahead of you on the once-grand road, one of these shadows pulls away from a home, and you see it is no shadow at all, but a humanoid creature seemingly made of darkness. Then you hear the howls of beasts, and between you and the creature, strange, wolf-like monsters charge toward your party.

Creatures: These creatures of Mabar feed off the living.

Bodak: hp 58; *Monster Manual* 28
Barghests (3): hp 33; *Monster Manual* 23.

Tactics: The bodak and the barghests are the first denizens of this pocket of Mabar to find the PCs in the city. In order to feed off the living, they must keep any visitors from reaching the palace, the one spot of brightness in this dim world, and a place where they cannot enter. The palace is 200 feet from the PCs along the cobblestone road. The road is 10 feet wide, and the terrain on either side of the road is rough (PCs can only travel at 1/2 speed) due to the ruins that must be climbed over to pass through this area.

The bodak starts the fight 60 feet ahead of the PCs on the road. At its first opportunity, it closes to within 30 feet (which requires a double move action) and, on the next round, uses its *death gaze* (a standard action) on the nearest PC. This is a save or die effect (DC 15 Fortitude). More information on dealing with gaze attacks can be found on page 309 of the *Monster Manual*.

The barghests attack indiscriminately, not working together as they each want a kill for themselves. They are already under the effects of the *blink* spell, and they start combat by using their *crushing despair* ability. (Note that PCs who are closing their eyes suffer the 50% mischance for *blink* as well as a 50% mischance for blindness. These should be rolled separately.) The barghests attempt to remain 30 feet away from the bodak to avoid the *death gaze*. If they do come within 30 feet of the bodak, they avert their eyes.

The PCs do *not* need to stay and fight these creatures. If a cleric can turn the bodak and get the PCs moving toward the palace, they can avoid the majority of the combat by finding safety within the palace's walls--these creatures of literal darkness are afraid of the magical light that surrounds the building.

Developments: After the PCs defeat this group, DMs should make it clear that there's more where that came from--probably too many to fight, and the PCs are working on a limited time frame. If the PCs don't start hurrying toward the palace, more barghests make their way out of the shadows, and bodaks can be seen slipping out of the shadows. (If they need further encouragement, these foes can actually be brought into combat.)

Scaling the Encounter

7th level characters: No bodak.

8th level characters: No barghests (after the bodak is defeated, barghests can be used as a threat to get the PCs moving).

10th level characters: No change.

11th level characters: Two bodaks.

Writing on the Walls

When the PCs reach the palace, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the palace, the doors swing inward, and light showers the area around you. Creatures of darkness cower at the edge of the light, red eyes glaring at you from the shadows.

When the PCs go inside, the doors close behind them. Notably, the doors are not locked, allowing the PCs to leave at any time. (Curious rogues or other trapfinders may wish to search for the mechanism by which the doors open and shut; this requires a DC 30 Search check. The mechanism is an area trigger that seems to be connected to a combination of giant gears and elven magic. Disabling the device would lock the doors, and a DC 20 Strength check would then be required to allow the PCs to leave.)

There is a short hallway from the doors into the main atrium of the palace. The ceiling soars overhead, and the walls glow with unearthly light. As your eyes adjust, you can see that the light seems to form a pattern on the walls, glowing with such brilliance it almost appears to be inlaid gold.

PCs who can read Draconic recognize the shapes in the pattern as letters, though a very old form, and they seem to be inverted, upside-down, or backward.

The light is actually coming from a crystalline globe suspended from the ceiling, 60 feet above the PCs heads, which (due to the difficulty of looking upward into the glow) requires a DC 20 Spot check to locate. The walls are utterly smooth, slanted upward into an arch or dome, making them impossible to climb without magic. Flying (or viewing the globe up close using some other technique) shows that the globe suspended from a crystalline stalactite-like formation, and appears to be seamlessly connected. A PC who makes a DC 25 Search check on the stalactite notes that the stalactite appears to be a mechanism. Any PC who flies or climbs around the globe blocks the light from coming out, casting shadows into the letters on the walls. Once they've gotten to the globe or brought the globe down to where they can see it, it is easy to figure out that

the globe itself contains the prophetic writings, and that the reflection on the walls is backward and inside out due to the light shining out through the lettering on the globe itself.

Other features of the room include a fountain at the center of the room; high arching doorways now sealed (the light plays over these as well); a large bookcase at the far edge of the room built in the same shape as the doorways. The secret to lowering the globe is in the fountain (though PCs who search the bookcase, passing more than a DC 5 Search check, can also find *Stormrider's Book of Riddles*, written in Giant). The fountain still spouts water, but what is most interesting about it is that within the water display is a carved relief Sorrowdusk Island, complete with the standing stone off to one side. Words engraved in Giant script around the lip of the fountain read: *The secret has sunk beneath the waves*.

The key is to move the relief of Sorrowdusk Island, which can be lifted with a DC 20 Strength check (this check can be aided by up to three PCs). There is also a latch, which a PC with the trapfinding ability can discover on a DC 25 Search check, and can be disabled on a DC 22 Disable Device check. In either case, the whole island lifts off of the center of the fountain, and within the water are three dragonshards, secure in notches in the fountain bottom: a Khyber shard, an Eberron shard, and a Siberys shard (each accompanied by a label in Giant: *To Khyber*, *Home*, and *To Siberys*). These are actually buttons and a lever (though, removed from their sockets, they are regular dragonshards), and can be used to move the globe downward (Khyber) and upward (Siberys) and to release the globe (Eberron). The stalactite itself either expands or contracts, bringing the globe down to five feet above the fountain, and stopping at five feet from the ceiling (the position it is in when the PCs arrive.) If the PCs release the globe before lowering it, any PCs within ten feet of the center of the fountain may make a Reflex Save DC 20 to catch it. (Should they miss, the globe is damaged.)

When the globe is removed from the "stalactite," the light from the globe diminishes to a 60-foot radius glow, extinguishing the letters on the walls. Staying within this radius keeps the PCs safe as they exit the ruined city, now claimed by Mabar.

Ending the Adventure

There are several possible endings to this event, depending on whom the PCs sided with in the beginning. If they sided with Sym in the first place, they may take what they found in the ruins to Stormrider (or one of his representatives) to try to get back into his good graces. If they sided with Stormrider, they may still take what they found in the ruins to him, and try once again to barter for the painting and cargo to get back in Sym's good graces. Unfortunately, choosing sides has a price, and it is too late to barter with Sym; the damage is already done, and the PCs receive the Disgust of Edizar Sym Story Object.

If the PCs tried to broker a deal, they can return to Felix with the goods from the ruins. Felix, authorized to speak with Stormrider's voice, accepts either of these possibilities: a) the undamaged globe and the dragonshards, or b) the damaged globe, the dragonshards, and *Stormrider's Book of Riddles*. (The *Book of Riddles* contained notes that Stormrider made while originally viewing the part of the draconic Prophecy hidden inside the globe, and thinks he'll be able to use it to interpret the damaged version.) If the PCs manage to meet these qualifications, they do not receive the Disgust of Stormrider Story Object.

If the PCs managed to satisfy both Sym and Stormrider, they are summoned to Happy Hubbard's Publishing House (where many of them have been before) to speak with Candle, who has just returned from her own mission:

Candle sits at a table in Happy Hubbard's, reading a dusty tome, and looks up as you arrive. Her purple-blue scales glisten with delight, and she gives you a reptilian smile. "Well done [Serpents/Vipers]. You have acquitted yourselves marvelously, handling a difficult diplomatic situation with delicacy and cleverness. The Codex is lucky to have such quick thinking individuals as members!"

Event Treasure

If the PCs did not use their *potions of water breathing*, they may retain these. Additionally, if they were commended by Candle at the end of the adventure, they may take from the Codex's stores a combination of up to 4 scrolls and potions up to a 1500 gold piece (campaign cost) limit each.

Adventure Questions

1. How well did the PCs go about gathering information on the smugglers?
 - a) They did their homework and came to the correct answer.
 - b) They hardly worked at all, taking just a small bit of information and running with it.
 - c) They never did manage to figure out where the cargo was, and the adventure was a failure.
2. Did the PCs defeat the Cabal of Shadows operatives?
 - a) Yes, they put them handily in their place.
 - b) Yes, but they lost a lot of resources doing so.
 - c) Yes, but several party members were killed.
 - d) No, they all died/they never got this far.
3. How did the PCs handle choosing sides?
 - a) They strove to please both parties, and convinced Prescott to give them a chance to bargain with Stormrider's people.
 - b) They tried to please both parties, but had to choose.
 - c) They sided with one party almost immediately.
 - d) Not only did they bumble into siding with one party, they blew the cover of the Crimson Codex.
4. Did the PCs solve the riddle of the painting?
 - a) Yes, they examined the art work in detail, found the second image, and restored it to its original state.
 - b) Yes, they found the second image through sheer luck, then forgot to change it back.
 - c) Yes, they were stumped and required a little help from Felix/the DM.
 - d) No, they were stumped and the adventure ended.
5. How did the PCs handle the combats underwater and against the denizens of Mabar?
 - a) They routed their foes with no trouble.
 - b) They craftily avoided as much combat as they could to reduce their loss of resources.
 - c) They won the fights, but with heavy losses.
 - d) They died horrible, terrible deaths/they never got this far.
6. Did the PCs solve the riddle of the globe?
 - a) Yes, they solved the puzzle easily, brought the globe down safely, took the dragonshards, and found *Stormrider's Book of Riddles* to boot!
 - b) Yes, they brought the globe down safely, using a little trial and error.
 - c) Yes, but the globe was damaged in the fall.
 - d) No, they returned empty handed/they never got this far.
7. How would you rate the group's roleplaying?
 - a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying.
 - d) None. They treated the adventure as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

Story Objects

Object ID: EXCC28

Object Name: Disgust of Stormrider

Object Description: The PCs have angered a powerful ally of the Crimson Codex. PCs with this Story Object may no longer use the Stormrider's Network Story Object, and they may be caused difficulty in the future due to their inability to appease the dragon.

Object ID: EXCC29

Object Name: Disgust of Edizar Sym

Object Description: The PCs have angered a powerful ally of the Crimson Codex. PCs with this Story Object may no longer use the Patronage of Edizar Sym Story Object, and they may be caused difficulty in the future due to their inability to appease the powerful merchant.

Handout 1

A note received from a Codex messenger:

If you've received this, then by now you know our current code. If one of our members is unable to offer the signal via handshake, they will use the same progression via sound (clearing of the throat and so on) to identify themselves. It is polite to respond in kind, so that the operative knows his code was not misunderstood.

Your current mission is to continue under the guise of a member of Herrenger's Part Time Adventuring Company in courting our newest patron, Edizar Sym. His representative, Prescott, has requested a meeting at noon, today, at Sym's offices. I believe he will be giving you a somewhat routine assignment--certainly far less important than your normal missions, but worthwhile to further indebt Sym to us. His support has already been invaluable to us in our operations here on Xen'drik, and the continuation of that support is imperative. My own tasks take me out of Stormreach for the week, and I will be unavailable for consultation. Should you come upon any difficulties, I trust that you will use your best judgment in furthering the goals of the Codex.

Your peer in foresight, I am,

*Candle
Director of Operations in Xen'drik*

[directions to Sym's offices follow the note]

Handout 2

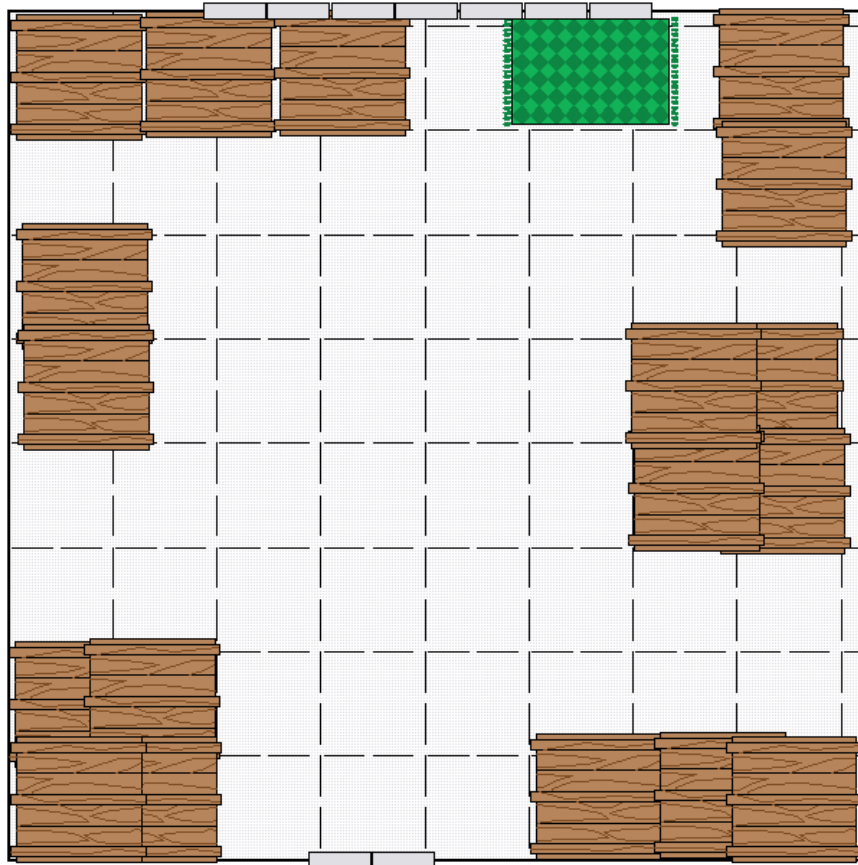


Handout 3

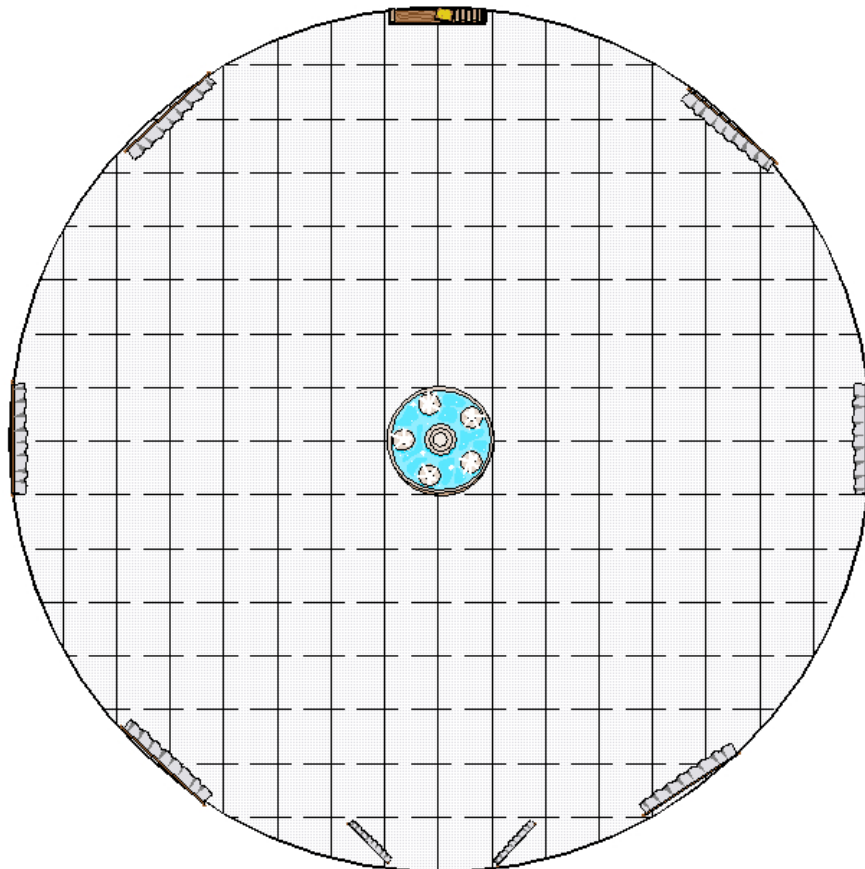


Map 1

The Warehouse



Map 2



Appendix

Rules for Warlocks

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Warlocks are proficient with all simple weapons. They are proficient with light armor, but not with shields.

Because the somatic components required for warlock invocations are relatively simple, a warlock can use any of his invocations while wearing light armor without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance. However, like arcane spellcasters, a warlock wearing medium or heavy armor or using a shield incurs a chance of arcane spell failure (all invocations, including *eldritch blast*, have a somatic component.) A multiclass warlock still incurs the normal arcane spell failure chance for arcane spells received from levels in other classes.

Invocations: A warlock does not prepare or cast spells as other wielders of arcane magic do. Instead, he possesses a repertoire of attacks, defenses, and abilities known as invocations that require him to focus the wild energy that suffuses his soul. A warlock can use any invocation he knows at will, with the following qualifications:

A warlock's invocations are spell-like abilities; using an invocation is therefore a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. An invocation can be disrupted, just as a spell can be ruined during casting. A warlock is entitled to a Concentration check to successfully use an invocation if he is hit by an attack while invoking, just as a spellcaster would be. A warlock can choose to use an invocation defensively, by making a successful Concentration check, to avoid provoking attacks of opportunity. A warlock's invocations are subject to spell resistance unless an invocation's description specifically states otherwise. A warlock's caster level with his invocations is equal to his warlock level.

The save DC for an invocation (if it allows a save) is 10 + equivalent spell level + the warlock's Charisma modifier. Since spell-like abilities are not actually spells, a warlock cannot benefit from the Spell Focus feat. He can, however, benefit from the Ability Focus feat, as well as from feats that emulate metamagic effects for spell-like abilities.

The four grades of invocations, in order of their relative power, are least, lesser, greater, and dark. A warlock begins with knowledge of one invocation, which must be of the lowest grade (least). As a warlock gains levels, he learns new invocations.

Finally, unlike other spell-like abilities, invocations are subject to arcane spell failure chance as described under Weapon and Armor Proficiency.

Description of Invocations

Invocations are typically added to the regular *eldritch blast* use, unless they mimic a spell.

Eldritch Chain: This blast shape invocation allows you to improve your *eldritch blast* by turning it into an arc of energy that "jumps" from the first target to others. An *eldritch chain* can jump to one or more secondary targets within 30 feet of the first target, allowing you to make additional ranged touch attacks and deal damage to the secondary targets if you hit.

You can "jump" the chain to one secondary target per five caster levels, so you can strike two additional targets at 10th level, three additional targets at 15th level, and four additional targets at 20th level. Each new target must be within 30 feet of the previous one, and you can't target the same creature more than once with the *eldritch chain*. If you miss any target in the chain, the *eldritch chain* attack ends there.

Frightful Blast This eldritch essence invocation allows you to change your *eldritch blast* into a *frightful blast*. Any creature struck by a *frightful blast* must succeed on a Will save or become shaken for 1 minute. A shaken creature struck by a *frightful blast* is not affected by the shaken aspect of the blast but takes damage normally. Creatures with immunity to mind-affecting spells and abilities or fear effects cannot be shaken by a *frightful blast*.

Hammer Blast: You transform your *eldritch blast* into a *hammer blast*. The *hammer blast* deals normal damage to objects rather than half.

Summon Swarm: You can use *summon swarm* as the spell with this invocation. Unlike the spell, this invocation has a duration of concentration instead of concentration +2 rounds.

Eldritch Blast (Sp): The first ability a warlock learns is *eldritch blast*. A warlock attacks his foes with eldritch power, using baleful magical energy to deal damage and sometimes impart other debilitating effects.

An *eldritch blast* is a ray with a range of 60 feet. It is a ranged touch attack that affects a single target, allowing no saving throw. An *eldritch blast* deals 1d6 points of damage at 1st level and increases in power as the warlock rises in level. An *eldritch blast* is the equivalent of a spell whose level is

equal to one-half the warlock's caster level (round down), with a minimum spell level of 1st and a maximum of 9th when a warlock reaches 18th level or higher.

An *eldritch blast* is subject to spell resistance, although the Spell Penetration feat and other effects that improve caster level checks to overcome spell resistance also apply to *eldritch blast*. An *eldritch blast* deals half damage to objects. Metamagic feats cannot improve a warlock's *eldritch blast* (because it is a spell-like ability, not a spell). However, the feat Ability Focus (*eldritch blast*) increases the DC for all saving throws (if any) associated with a warlock's *eldritch blast* by 2.

Detect Magic (Sp): Beginning at 2nd level, a warlock can use *detect magic* as the spell at will. His caster level equals his class level.

Damage Reduction (Su): Fortified by the supernatural power flowing in his body, a warlock becomes resistant to physical attacks at 3rd level and above, gaining damage reduction 1/cold iron. At 7th level and every four levels thereafter, a warlock's damage reduction improves.

Deceive Item (Ex): At 4th level and higher, a warlock has the ability to more easily commandeer magic items made for the use of other characters. When making a Use Magic Device check, a warlock can take 10 even if distracted or threatened.