

CCC-CNE-006



Burst!

Part 1 of the Vhaeraun-Touched series

A stolen artifact and a missing adventuring party sends a group of heroes on a hunt across the Moonsea Region. Unfortunately, the heroes will wind up being the prey. A Two/Four-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

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Commented [TW1]: This is any other designers that worked on the adventure.

Commented [TW2]: You must include the names of anyone who playtested the adventure here.

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Adventure Primer

Background

Drow priestess Sabrae Ssambra was chosen by Lolth to be judged for higher service. Sadly, Sabrae was deemed unworthy and returned to the Underdark transformed into a drider. Driven into the caverns outside Szith Morcane, Sabrae was observed by the god Vhaeraun, the son and rival of Lolth. Vhaeraun decided to create a drider army to attack his mother. All those creatures Lolth deemed unworthy would be the tools of her undoing. Vhaeraun united driders into a nest and granted them the ability to reproduce by planting eggs in humanoid's chest cavities. What Sabrae and her flock needed was a steady supply of hosts to stumble into their lair.

Vhaeraun conceived a plan to provide hosts. He tricked seven drow to steal an artifact, the *Eye of Lolth*, from the Hillsfar Museum. When the drow returned to the Underdark entrance along the Waydown River, the son of Lolth rallied his loyal troops in Zamoniezash to block the entrance from the thieves, driving them away.

The thieves, still in possession of the *Eye of Lolth*, turned southeast to the Earthspur Mountains, where they could enter the Underdark.

By then, Hillsfar Lord Detective Henry Uskworth had hired a group of adventurers to track down the thieves and return the *Eye of Lolth*. Taken before Priestess Imrae, the adventurers learned all that had transpired in the Waydown sinkhole. They discovered the Vhaeraun cult, which Priestess Imrae Khalazza had executed. The adventuring party pursued the thieves into the Earthspur Mountains.

While passing through the Flooded Forest, one of the drow fell to an arrow loosed by a summer eldarin hunter, Elabrimborn. Elabrimborn took the drow and his possessions back to his lodge, where he performed taxidermy on the slain drow. The once proud servant of Vhaeraun became a trophy.

The other drow thieves made it to the tunnels beneath the Earthspur Mountains, where they were ambushed by Sabrae and her allies. The drow and the adventuring party pursuing them, found themselves caught in webs and used as hosts for a new generation of Vhaeraun-touched driders.

The heroes can be famous adventurers within the city of Hillsfar. Their reputation for discretion precedes them, and the Red Plumes contact them. The heroes can also be found by Lord Uskworth at the House of Happiness, singing about their exploits. Being a good judge of character and strong in insight, the Lord is sufficiently impressed to recruit these adventurers for his mission. If the characters played

in QCC-2019-02C, they may have assisted Lord Uskworth and have his trust.

Episodes

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

If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the **Call to Action** once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play.

- **Episode 1: Last Remembered Smile.** The characters are recruited by Lord Uskworth to travel through the Underdark from the Waydown Garrison. Once there, they should discover what happened to the preceding adventuring party and recover the stolen *Eye of Lolth*. This is the **Call to Action**.
- **Episode 2: Waydown and Underdark.** The characters deal with a cruel drow priestess to discover what happened to the previous adventuring party and the drow thieves. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: Horrors Beneath the Earthspurs.** The adventurers journey into a cave leading into the heart of the Earthspur Mountains. They discover Vhaeraun's creation of a drider army, capable of reproduction, and are chased out of the nest. This is **Story Objective B**.

Bonus Objectives

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

- **Bonus Objective A: Snuffed Out.** The heroes discover a light source-snuffing mold that's in a symbiotic relationship with a creature who's survived from millennia. The adventurers must survive the beast. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 5**.
- **Bonus Objective B: The Hunter in the Mud.** Passing through a swamp, the heroes find themselves competing in a hunting contest against a summer eldarin. If they win, the adventurers win the drow thief's journal and map. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 6**.

Commented [TW3]: Each adventure consists of three episodes pursuing two story objectives and two optional bonus objectives. Each story objective should take 1 hour for 2-hour adventures, and 2 hours for 4-hour adventures. The bonus objectives should each take 1 hour.

Commented [TW4]: Three episodes is the standard for 2-hour and 4-hour adventures. No more. No less. 1-hour adventures (the minimum length of an adventure) can (and probably should be self-contained single episodes) but must still have a call to action. They should have only one story objective.

Commented [TW5]: Max 2 bonus episodes.

Episode Sequence

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

How Will You Play?

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

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

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by **one- or two- hours** by utilizing the bonus objectives provided in the appendices.

Evil Never Sleeps!

Vhaeraun is building an army. He's taken the driders rejected by Lolth and turned them into creatures that can reproduce with the sacrifice of a humanoid host. Vhaeraun wants to keep his drider army project secret while he grows their numbers. When the adventurers stumble upon the secret, the god will do everything he can to prevent the heroes from escaping with the truth.

Commented [TRW6]: In addition to the story Objectives, each adventure must contain two, 1-hour bonus objectives that extend the adventure's duration. These bonus objects must be tangentially related to the story objective such that not running them doesn't confuse the DMs or the players, but related enough so as to not seem completely unrelated.

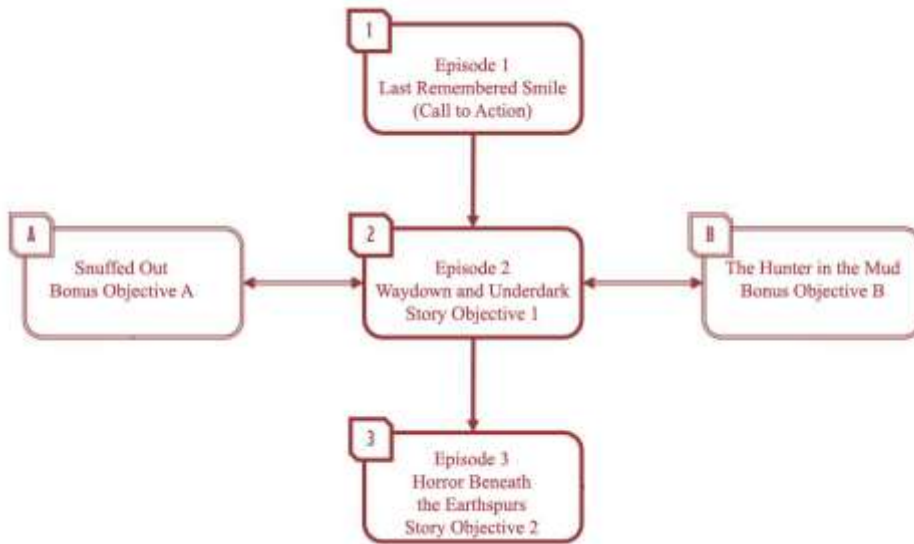
Episode Flowchart

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

Commented [TW7]: Simple, easy to read flowchart that describes how the bonus objectives relate to the story objective.

Example is below. The arrows indicate where a episode or bonus objective leads to.

DD-series adventure flowcharts will be uniform in design. CCC adventure designers may use whatever design they wish.



Episode 1: Last Remembered Smile (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

Scene A. Mysteries in the House of Happiness

The adventurers meet Lord Detective Henry Uskworth at the House of Happiness to discuss a rescue and retrieval mission.

- **Stolen artifact.** Drow broke into the Hillsfar Museum to steal the *Eye of Lolth*. They snuck into the Waydown Garrison to reenter the Underdark.
- **Missing adventurers.** The companions aren't the first to be sent on this mission. Another group was sent after the thieves. After emerging from the Underdark the group told the garrison guards they needed to hurry. There was a long journey ahead of them. Lord Uskworth wants this group's fate discovered.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The House of Happiness lives up to its name. Flowers adorn every table. Multi-colored ribbons hang between the long house's beams. Mirrors along every wall reflect the brightly-colored decorations. Everyone smiles and raises a glass to either Llira (the goddess of happiness) or whatever fortune has kept them kicking this long.

Lighting. Bright lanterns coupled with colorful banners makes this a bright and cheerful refuge.

Creatures/NPCs

Lord Detective Henry Uskworth

Description. Lord Detective Henry Uskworth is a tall, gaunt member of the Red Plumes. He prides himself with analytical thinking, which he has little ability to put on hold. He provides medical, psychological and strategical advice to any who will seek him out. While many would feel overwhelmed and used in such a position, Lord Uskworth finds great satisfaction finding the answer to other people's mysteries.

Objectives/Goals. Lord Uskworth is obsessed with solving problems. What drives him crazy is a puzzle he can't crack. The elusive thieves and the missing adventuring party have tasked Uskworth's crime-solving abilities to the point he's willing to send a second team after the first into the unknown.

What Does He Know?

- Two weeks ago, a group of drow stole a medallion, known as the *Eye of Lolth*, from the Hillsfar Museum. Uskworth tracked them from the city to the road leading to the Waydown. There, the Red Plumes have a garrison built over a sinkhole that leads to the Underdark. It's Uskworth's theory that drow with the skill to steal the *Eye of Lolth* might have the skillset needed to infiltrate Waydown Garrison.
- The *Eye of Lolth* is a golden bracelet with a ruby magically suspended in the center. No part of the ruby touches the bracelet. It seems to float in the gap between the gold. There's writing in Undercommon on the bracelet. It reads: From the Demon Webs, Lolth sees all who scheme against Her."
- Uskworth sent a group of adventurers to travel the Waydown River into the Underdark. Their mission: bring the thieves to justice and return the *Eye of Lolth*.
- Four days after entering the Underdark, the adventurers returned to the Waydown Garrison, but with no drow and no *Eye of Lolth*. All they'd tell the Red Plumes was they had no time to waste. A long journey was ahead of them. This is the last that adventuring party was ever seen.
- Uskworth would like the adventurers to travel the Waydown into the Underdark and learn about the *Eye's* thieves' destination. Follow them, and most likely the first group of adventurers. Find out what became of them. Return the *Eye of Lolth* if possible.
- Detective Uskworth also provides a map to the Waydown Garrison and a letter of introduction to the leader in charge of the compound, Captain Maggarl Helck.

Treasure and Rewards

- Uskworth will pay a reward for this deed (TCP's). The Red Plumes will outfit the group for travel. This includes rations and restocking any dungeoneering or exploring kits.
- Uskworth also provides a map to the Waydown Garrison and a letter of introduction to the leader in charge of the tower, Captain Maggarl Helck.

Commented [TW8]: This Episode is essentially an immersive adventure hook. It shouldn't take up too much of the adventure's time.

Each Episode is broken down into scenes. Each page should contain only two scenes of a single column each, or one scene if too large for a single column). Scenes should be limited to a single page.

Commented [TW9]: This should always be measured in minutes.

Three servers dressed in very colorful miniskirts dance as they listen to what seems to be a very serious lecture given by a studious-looking man. The man's sash identifies him as a Detective in the Red Plumes. His billowy hat sits on an adjacent chair. A fourth server has her foot on the table. The Detective examines it.

As the adventurers approach, they hear the Detective prescribe a homemade remedy for an ointment to ease foot aches of people who spend most of the day on their feet. When finished with his treatment plan, the Detective turns to the adventurers and says, "I can smell Camichel grass on your boots. It grows no closer than ten miles from Hillsfar. Therefore, I deduce you are the adventurers I sent for. Please take a seat."

The servers take drink orders and leave to retrieve the cocktails and ales. The Detective leans forward and introduces himself. Then, he summarizes what he knows.

"I wish you well on your expedition," Detective Uskworth says. "It's easy to take such a mission impersonally, so pay attention." He calls over a strawberry-red-haired server with freckles. She has a tattoo of a gray dagger with green fluid dripping from it on her left forearm. Her purple lipstick has

specks of glitter. "Kathrina, please come here," Lord Uskworth calls. She approaches.

"These are the heroes who will be venturing forth to bring your brother and his companions back," Detective Uskworth says.

Kathrina hugs each adventurer. "Please," she begs, "Bring Nigel home safely. On his right arm he has the same tattoo as me." She shows her tattoo so everyone can take in the details. "You'll make a simple girl very happy," Kathrina says and hugs Lord Uskworth.

Kathrina Hirodro is not a simple girl. She's a Zhentarim, specializing in combat first aid and poison.

Call to Action

- The objective of this adventure is to travel into the Underdark via the Waydown Garrison and learn where the thieves who stole the *Eye of Lolth* are hidden.
- While trying to locate the *Eye of Lolth*, discover the fate of the first adventuring group sent after the thieves.

Episode 2: Waydown and Underdark

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

Setting Description

Prerequisites

The adventurers receive the map and letter of introduction from Lord Uskworth in Episode 1.

Story Objective A

The adventurers travel through the Underdark to track down the thieves who stole the *Eye of Lolth* and find the missing adventuring party.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Waydown Garrison is a special fortification built by the Red Plumes to guard against incursions from the Underdark. At the compound's heart, a hundred-foot drop leads to the Waydown River, which flows into the Underdark. Following rigorous leadership by Captain Maggarl Helck, the compound, home to thirty rugged soldiers, is spotless in every respect. Despite being a gateway to the dirty caves of the Underdark, the Garrison is a bastion of cleanliness and order. There are many locked doors, isolating the actual sinkhole leading to the Underdark entrance.

Lighting. The garrison is well-lit by braziers. Captain Helck wants to be able to see that every cranny has been well-cleaned.

Scene A. Waydown Garrison

Creatures/NPCs

The men of the Waydown Garrison are proud of their home and mission. Though emotionally taxed by Captain Helck's OCD, they are united and prepared for any task, whether it be scrubbing the floors or fighting trolls who climbed up from the Underdark.

Captain Maggarl Helck

Description. Captain Helck is a tall human with blonde hair and a bushy well-manicured mustache, which he twirls when speaking. There isn't a speck of dirt on his uniform, reminding the adventurers how spotless the garrison is.

Objectives/Goals. Captain Helck is humiliated the drow got past his guards and accessed the sinkhole. He sees this as a potential black mark on his record and will do anything in his power to find out where his reputation stands in Hillsfar. He will take steps to shift the blame to anyone else. He always brags about his triumphs, no matter how minor.

What Does He Know? Captain Helck knows drow infiltrated the garrison after stealing a priceless artifact. Captain Helck found in the sinkhole room footprints that belong to an elvish style of boot. The room is kept remarkably clean, so the dirty footprints were not hard to find. He's afraid his position leading the Waydown Garrison is in jeopardy.

Scene A. The Captain's Mustache

Following the Waydown River leads to the Red Plume Garrison, barricaded by a portcullis. A guard calls down, "State your business."

Honestly telling why they're at the garrison raises suspicions, because the Red Plumes have done everything they can to suppress knowledge of the security breach. The adventurers are allowed in but taken to witness interview rooms, where they're badgered about being spies who obtained secret Red Plume information. All this stops once Detective Uskworth's letter is presented. Likewise, the adventurers are immediately given red carpet treatment if they show Detective Uskworth's letter of introduction to the tower guard.

The adventurers are led to the mess hall, where the center table is decorated with a cotton

Commented [TW10]: Instead of describing a specific scene, you can provide information about the area that the episode is set in—history, laws, denizens, area, etc., in addition to the general information the DM needs to paint the picture (dimensions, lighting, weather, etc.)—especially if different scenes share the same features (so it doesn't have to be repeated each time).

In addition, here we see how two different scenes are laid out—each with their own column.

Scenes are labeled alphabetically.

tablecloth, candles, breads, cheeses and a pitcher of ale. They're met by Captain Helck.

The Captain stands at attention. "Salutations, I am Captain Maggarl Helck, master of the Waydown Garrison. I run a top-notch operation and am utterly humiliated that a pack of shadow-sneaking drow penetrated our defenses and escaped into the Underdark. Usually we're worried about things coming out of that bloody pit. We had three trolls climb up from there... a hundred feet over the raging river. I led my men in fierce battle. You know what I learned that day? Dead trolls bounce like a toy ball when they fall down a hole.

"So, sit down. Enjoy our hospitality, and tell me your theories about this whole drow business- especially any part where it isn't my fault they got in here."

Roleplay the conversation with Captain Helck.

Once Captain Helck is satisfied with what the adventurers have to say, he says, "Very well. Follow me to the sinkhole."

Captain Helck leads the adventurers through narrow winding passages to a long empty hall. At the end of it is a set of iron double doors, decorated with the image of a gigantic man standing guard over the city of Hillsfar. The giant defensively holds his shield. Captain Helck unlocks the doors, revealing a room dominated by a twenty-foot by forty-foot pit. Rushing water can be heard echoing up from the gorge. Three men stand at attention near the sinkhole. To the side, an unfinished statue seems out of place. Captain Helck approaches the statue and says, "Has'than Zann Queli."

Anyone who speaks Elvish recognizes this phrase as, "Blessed by birth."

"**Clay golem**," Captain Helck explains, pointing at the statue. "Be sure to repeat those words when you

return, or my men will have a nasty mess to clean up. Well, off you go."

Captain Helck motions toward a platform connected to a wooden treadwheel crane. "Climb on board, and my men will lower you. There're several boats docked down there you can use. Good luck, and bring back those devils who slipped through my fingers."

The crane lifts a platform and swings it over the hundred-foot drop. Tediously, the platform's lowered to the Waydown River.

Indeed, four rowboats await the adventurers. Each rowboat can handle three passengers. If the group is playing Bonus Objective A, proceed to **Appendix 5**.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

If the adventurers refuse to show Lord Uskworth's letter of introduction to the front gate guards, they're roughly dragged inside to be interrogated. Combat is possible. There's a Red Plume (**veteran**) for each adventurer.

EXPLORATION

The group won't have the run of the garrison. Captain Helck controls their movements, quickly sending them off after milking them for information. If the group insists on downtime before going into the Underdark, the DM can improvise exploring the Waydown Garrison.

SOCIAL

The adventurers meet with Captain Helck. The Captain wants to extract information about who's being blamed for the incursion. He responds in such a way that his involvement looks positive or any blame can be easily dismissed.

Commented [TW11]: The players are destined to engage with a scene in different ways. This is a great place to describe what happens if any of the three core pillars of the game are used as an approach by the characters. This is particularly useful if the scene in question is intended to engage one pillar (i.e. combat), but through clever roleplay and discourse the players turn it into a social or exploration scene. These aren't rules for the DM to follow, these are suggestions, so they should be worded as such.

Note that it takes up a good chunk of room, so plan its use carefully!

Scene B. Rowing on the Waydown

If you are doing Bonus Objective A, go to **Appendix 5**.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The caverns prove to each be very different. Sparkling quartz. Slick marble. Caves with no walking room due to an abundance of stalactites and stalagmites.

After several hours of travel, have the adventurers make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the adventurers see crude paintings on the cavern walls, depicting a bird inside some sort of cage.

Lighting. The Waydown flows through pitch blackness. It is lit by whatever resources the adventurers have.

Creatures/NPCs

Snadoole and Cramoonie

Description. These humanoids are very fish-like, from their bulbous eyes to their flipper-like appendages.

Objectives/Goals. The **kuo-toa** are slavers always on the lookout for potential captives. However, they've recently been humbled, after losing a fight with a group of adventurers. Since their queen has been absent for some time, the kuo-toa are concerned with the future of their society. The fear has led to a cowardice streak. The kuo-toa are content to watch from the shadows as the adventurers pass by.

What Do They Know?

- Snadoole and Cramoonie are scouts awaiting the return of Priestess Yolongop and her retinue from Zamoniezash.

- The Priestess went to Zamoniezash, a new drow settlement, a long time ago by their reckoning, to negotiate a trade agreement.
- The kuo-toa know nothing about a drow party coming down the Waydown, but they did encounter the adventuring party.
- The adventurers proved too tough to capture, so the kuo-toa cut their losses and let the adventurers pass. The kuo-toa don't know what happened to the adventurers afterwards.

Have the adventurers make a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to see a pair of fishlike humanoids lurking behind some stalagmites, watching the group pass. A DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies them as kuo-toa, a deviant amphibious race known to be slavers.

The adventurers can go ashore and track the elusive kuo-toa by making opposed roles. The adventurers must make a Wisdom (Perception) check. The kuo-toa make a Dexterity (Stealth) check, with Advantage because of their familiarity with the locale. If the adventurers get the higher total, they pin down the kuo-toa. If the kuo-toa bested the adventurers, the amphibious creatures disappear into the Underdark.

If caught, the kuo-toa hiss and are recalcitrant. Should combat break out, the kuo-toa have advantage on all Hide actions. A DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check gets the kuo-toa to speak. Remember, the kuo-toa only speak Undercommon.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The adventurers can fight the **kuo-toa** in their home caves. This should prove to be a challenge, as the kuo-toa know every nook and cranny. If defeated, the kuo-toa can be forced to talk.

EXPLORATION

The group can explore the caverns, hunting the kuo-toa they saw from shore. Even if they're not found, there's evidence here of a much larger village than the few kuo-toa the companions saw.

SOCIAL

Snadoole and Cramoonie can be made to talk through any social skill, although they only speak Undercommon. From the conversation, the adventurers are forewarned about the drow village down river.

Commented [TW12]: The players are destined to engage with a scene in different ways. This is a great place to describe what happens if any of the three core pillars of the game are used as an approach by the characters. This is particularly useful if the scene in question is intended to engage one pillar (i.e. combat), but through clever roleplay and discourse the players turn it into a social or exploration scene. These aren't rules for the DM to follow, these are suggestions, so they should be worded as such.

Note that it takes up a good chunk of room, so plan its use carefully!

Scene C. Zamoniezash

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Zamoniezash is a long abandoned dwarven village. Despite the ages, it's remained in good condition. However, the drow are gradually destroying the dwarven buildings, because they're too short for drow preference. So far, only one building has been constructed by the drows' slaves: the abode of Priestess Imrae Khalazza.

Drow artisans constructed a life-sized Zurkhwood statue of Lolth along the Waydown. This is the first visible sign of the village from the river.

Lighting. The drow don't need light to see by, so there are no fires, except the candles in Priestess Khalazza's abode. Also, incandescent fungus has been used to decorate the Priestess's structure, giving it a divine essence.

Creatures/NPCs

Priestess Imrae Khalazza

Description. A regal drow priestess, she wears flowing black robes that look more like webs the lower you look on the outfit. She has a long neck, which she covers with a choker. Her hair is whitish-blue and flows down behind her hips. Her lips are pouty and covered in blood red lipstick.

Objectives/Goals. Princess Khalazza is more concerned with what her family in Szith Morcane think of her ruling of this drow outpost than actually running the outpost. Delays in construction, coupled with the scandal of Vhaeraun worshippers has made the Priestess look and feel weak. Plus, the ineffective kuo-toa slaves she managed to catch continue to make her judgments all seem poor.

What Does She Know?

- Two tendays ago, a group of adventurers came to the village looking for thieves. They didn't find the thieves, but uncovered a Vhaeraun cult in the village.
- Priestess Khalazza has a worker shortage, because the lower caste drow assigned to her company proved to be worshippers of Vhaeraun and were put to death.
- Shortly after the executions, Priestess Yolongopop, of the kuo-toa village, arrived to negotiate a trade deal. Instead of negotiating, Priestess Khalazza enslaved the kuo-toa and put them to work erecting

structures. The kuo-toa have proven to be unreliable if not ineffective slaves.

- Priestess Khalazza is enraged about having Vhaeraun worshippers under her nose and to have the last batch of visiting surface dwellers reveal their unfaithfulness to Lolth.
- Priestess Khalazza believes she should have been the one to discover her peoples' treachery.
- The adventurers' presence and presumed knowledge about some of the controversial events that transpired in Zamoniezash puts Priestess Khalazza in a state just short of dropping her collected persona and gutting the adventurers with a fish bone. She restrains herself because she doesn't want to look like she can't govern a drow enclave by losing control when things become stressful.

Priestess Yolongopop

Description. The leader of the kuo-toa village, the Priestess is usually covered in shell necklaces. Since her enslavement, the drow have robbed her of her accessories. She's fought long and hard to keep the cage containing the mechanical bird.

Objectives/Goals. Priestess Yolongopop came to the fledgling drow village to create a business relationship, dealing in slaves. Instead, she and her kuo-toa were forced into slavery. She yearns to escape bondage, by any means necessary. Even more important, she desires to protect the mechanical canary in the cage, which she and her fellow kuo-toa believe to be a god.

What Does She Know?

- The mechanical canary in the gnome cage floated down the Waydown and came to rest near the kuo-toa's village. The kuo-toa never saw anything like this before and worship it as a fetish. Priestess Yolongopop divined its name: Flakydociousbop.
- Kuo-toa have an ability to bring their made-up gods to life through the power of belief.

When the adventurers arrive, they're met on the shore by curious drow artisans. They still carry a dagger and wear leather armor, but they're more interested in dying strands of spider webs into tapestries. Once ashore, these artistic drow escort the adventurers to Priestess Khalazza's abode for conversation and refreshment. On the way, the adventurers see several kuo-toa slaves. They have crude tattoos of a bird inside a cage.

The Priestess's residence is much different than the rest of the village. Most of the structures are dwarvish in architecture and engineering. The Priestess's residence is a patchwork of stone and Zurkwood planks. Spider webs cover the exterior. Strands of webbing have been dyed to depict scenes of drow hunting quaggoths and elves. Priestess Khalazza kneels on a full-body cushion in front of a statue of Lolth. The statue is about the size of a mastiff. There's a cord around the priestess's neck, connected to a key that fits the locked box she keeps her journal in.

The Priestess finishes her prayers and rises. She turns to face her guests. "Surface dwellers, welcome to Zamoniezash. To what do I owe this honor?" A DC 12 Intelligence (Insight) check reveals subtle tones of sarcasm. The Priestess is far from happy about this visit.

To deal with the kuo-toa and adventurers, the Priestess thinks up a cunning plan. If the adventurers agree to all compete in the combat arena against the "kuo-toa champions" and emerge victorious, she will reveal the information she gained from the Vhaeraun worshippers during their torture and from the last adventuring party.

Priestess Khalazza doesn't care if the kuo-toa die in combat. If they do prevail, Priestess Khalazza will have them ritually sacrificed to Lolth. However, to motivate the kuo-toa, she promises them their freedom if they defeat the adventurers.

It's possible the adventurers don't fall for this arena nonsense and initiate combat in Priestess Khalazza's receiving room. In this case, the adventurers fight Priestess Khalazza (a **drow priestess**) and two **drow house captains**. Each round, 1d3 **drow** (up to a total of 5 at a time), join the fray from the outside.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Strong/Very Strong:** Add an **elite drow warrior**

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The adventurers can fight the Priestess Khalazza and her court to gain knowledge of what happened to the drow thieves and the previous adventuring party. This will prove to be a tough fight.

EXPLORATION

The group can explore the Priestess's abode, assuming she's been incapacitated or tricked to leave. They find the locked chest which contains the Priestess's journal.

SOCIAL

Although Priestess Khalazza is biased against adventurers, great roleplaying and some high rolls might circumvent the need to prove their prowess in the arena.

Every round a drow stands next to the Lolth statue, on initiative 20, losing ties, a **giant spider** materializes.

This is going to be a very difficult fight for most groups to win. The high difficulty reflects the adventurers starting a fight where they're outclassed, instead of strategizing in the arena to emerge victorious.

If the Priestess and her consorts are defeated, the Priestess unlocks a chest containing her journal, which tells what she learned from the Vhaeraun worshippers and the other adventuring party. If the adventurers are defeated, they're taken to the gladiator pen and allowed a short rest before being forced to battle the kuo-toa.

All the information Princess Khalazza knows is in her journal, kept in the locked chest in her receiving room. The chest is trapped.

Poison Needle Trap

Simple trap (level 5, deadly trap)

A tiny, poisoned needle hidden in a lock discourages the adventurers from disturbing the Priestess's treasure.

Trigger. Anyone attempting to pick or open the lock triggers the trap.

Effect. The triggering creature must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 55 (10d10) poison damage and is poisoned for ten minutes. While poisoned in this way, the creature is paralyzed. On a successful save, the creature takes half the damage and isn't poisoned or paralyzed.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the needle, but only if the creature inspects the lock. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using Thieves Tools disables the needle, and a check with a total of ten or lower triggers the trap.

The journal is written in Undercommon. Use the handouts in **Appendix 7** and **8** to distribute the information. If Priestess Khalazza verbally shares the information, the DM should summarize the prose found in **Appendixes 7** and **8**.

Commented [TW13]: Combat scenes should provide some suggestions to DMs on how to adjust its difficulty to account for the strength of the characters' group.

The Building Encounters document in the designer packet provides information on how to scale your Scene.

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Note that it takes up a good chunk of room, so plan its use carefully!

Scene D. The Arena

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain Priestess Khalazza stands on a dais elevated above the crowd surrounding the sixty-foot diameter circle, which was once a dwarven forge. The drow leveled it to the stone floor. There are four grates scattered across the battlefield, as shown on the map. On initiative 10 of each round, losing any ties, randomly roll a d6 to determine which grate belches out a tower of fire. If a five or six is rolled, all four grates flare up. The inferno lasts for the **duration** of the round. Anyone standing within five feet of the fiery grate suffers 4d10 fire damage and catches on fire. Besides the grates, the only remainder of the dwarven structure are small walls so well built the drow haven't been able to tear them down. These walls, shown on the map, provide three-quarters cover.

The Gladiator Pen

After meeting with Princess Khalazza, the adventurers are escorted by five **elite drow warriors** to the gladiator pen. The kuo-toa are already there, sorting through piles of armor, confused looks on their faces, because they rarely use armor. One of the kuo-toa sits surrounded by two bodyguards, whispering prayers to a mechanical canary inside a gnome cage.

Kuo-toa have an ability to bring their made-up gods to life through the power of belief. If the priestess spends a combat round focusing her faith in Flakydociousbop, she may spend an action to make a DC 17 Religion check. On a success, Flakydociousbop materializes to aid the Priestess.

Should Flakydociousbop appear, it takes the form of a tiny golden bird with a razor-sharp beak. Use the stat block for a **Quickling**.

Quickling Stats Adjustments:

- Change Fey to celestial.
- Replace Sylvan with Undercommon.
- **Blinding Radiance.** Any attack against this deity while looking at it suffers disadvantage.
- Replace Dagger with Beak. It can't use this weapon as a ranged attack.

The important thing to convey is how the kuo-toa look like they don't want to fight. There's a sense of desperation about them. The kuo-toa stick to

themselves and form a wall around their Priestess, should the adventurers try to speak with her. If the heroes wish to communicate, they need to start with the Priestess's retinue. A DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check breaks the ice. Remember, the kuo-toa only speak Undercommon.

The retinue tells how they came to Zamoniezash almost two tendays ago to negotiate a trade deal. Instead, they were captured and forced into slavery. Now, Priestess Khalazza promises to let the kuo-toa go free if they defeat the adventurers in the arena. If the adventurers request it, they may speak to Priestess Yolongopop. She explains she's praying to her fetish, delivered from the waters of the river, to summon the god to her aid.

The adventurers might try to convince Priestess Yolongopop into joining with them to fight the common enemy, the drow. Through solid roleplaying, Priestess Yolongopop grows to like this plan.

The Arena Battle

The following section is broken down into two scenarios: Versus Kuo-toa and Alliance Against Drow. The adventurers might change from fighting the kuo-toa mid-fight to leading an allied assault against the drow. In this case, jump from one scenario to the other.

Twenty drow surround the arena, and one elite drow per adventurer stands guard at different points around the circle. If a combatant tries to flee, the elite drow forces them back into the fray. This includes any combatant who falls under the influence of a fear-inducing ability or spell. Because of their role in the battle, the **elite drow** should be counted in the combat initiative.

Priestess Khalazza (**drow priestess**) sits on a throne with two **drow house captains** at her side. The vain priestess rises. "Citizens of Zamoniezash, today I reward you for all your toils with entertainment—blood sport. The interlopers from the surface will square off against the foul kuo-toa. A lot is at stake: their lives, information hard sought after, and freedom. May Lolth provide her blessing on this event. Now, my gladiators, fight for the glorious prizes you seek."

Versus the Kuo-toa

The **kuo-toa whips** surround Priestess Yolongopop, who casts spells from her protected position, when she isn't focusing her faith on the mechanical bird.

There are two **kuo-toa whips** and Priestess Yolongopop, a **kuo-toa archpriest**. Adventurers can make a DC 10 Intelligence (Insight) check to realize the kuo-toa don't want to fight, but the whips will gladly sacrifice themselves for their priestess.

The kuo-toa know about the fiery grates and prepare for battle by rolling in the sand, making themselves fire resistant the first time they suffer fire damage.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak/Weak:** Remove one kuo-toa whip
- **Strong:** Add a **kuo-toa monitor**
- **Very Strong:** Add three **kuo-toa monitors**

If the adventurers win the fight, Princess Khalazza tells what she knows, as detailed in **Appendix 7** and **Appendix 8**. If the adventurers lose, surviving adventurers are prepared for ritual sacrifice, along with the kuo-toa victors. Though bound, the adventurers have time for a short rest before the drow drag them to the riverbank, beneath the Zurkhwood Lolth statue, to be ritually slaughtered and fed to the giant spiders.

They should have a chance to escape. Any kuo-toa who escapes knows the information in **Appendix 7** about what happened when the first group of adventurers arrived.

COMBAT

Ideally the adventurers align with the kuo-toa to take on the drow. Because of the crowds, only ranged attacks can target the Priestess during the first three rounds. Area of effect spells that can neutralize or weaken the powerful villains on the dais will speed up combat.

EXPLORATION

The ground has grates that shoot fire through them. Strategically maneuvering around the grates will benefit the heroes. Their opponents suffer extra damage as they burn.

SOCIAL

Forming an alliance with the kuo-toa leads to an easier battle. Furthermore, the adventurers can learn how to bring a kuo-toa idol to life as a deity to aid them.

Alliance Against the Drow

The crowds cheer, ready for the adventurers and kuo-toa to tear one another apart. The roar of the crowd just begins to slacken as the combatants' eyes fall on the crowd. The combatants gain a surprise round.

The adventurers and kuo-toa battle Priestess Khalazza (a **drow priestess of Lolth**), two **drow house captains** and a number of **elite drow warriors** equal to the number of adventurers. The twenty **drow** gathered around the battlefield are noncombatants. They start fleeing once the battle begins. They also provide difficult terrain to reach Priestess Khalazza and her consorts. This effect lasts for three rounds. To make the battle more fun for the players, allow them to run the kuo-toa allies.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Strong:** 5 **Drow** stay to fight
- **Very Strong:** 10 **Drow** stay to fight

Treasure & Rewards

- **Special Rewards.** The adventurers gain Princess Khalazza's journal.

Returning to the Waydown Garrison and traveling to the Flooded Forest takes several days. Several long rests occur.

Commented [TW15]: Combat scenes should provide some suggestions to DMs on how to adjust its difficulty to account for the strength of the characters' group.

The Building Encounters document in the designer packet provides information on how to scale your Scene.

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Scene E. The Flooded Forest

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain The adventurers travel eastbound through the Flooded Forest, where their feet sink an average six inches in the mud with each step. The mosquitos are so large they could unite forces and carry off a cat familiar. Between the dying leaning trees and the fallen rotten trunks of oaks and maples, there are multitudes of places for predators to ambush from.

With a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, the heroes see a family of alligators making their way through the mud. Even the baby gators don't leave any ripples as they pass. Suddenly, branches are yanked back, and the largest owlbear the party has ever seen grabs one of the larger alligators by the tail and slams it against a tree trunk until it stops moving. The **owlbear** then retreats into the fog with its prize. Use the maximum possible hit points for the owlbear.

If the group is playing **Bonus Objective B**, proceed to **Appendix 6**. Otherwise, after a few days of travel, have the group make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to avoid the effects of Sight Rot.

Sight Rot

A beast or humanoid that drinks water tainted by sight rot must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become infected. On Day 1 after infection, the creature's vision starts to become blurry. The creature takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls and ability checks that rely on sight. At the end of each long rest after the symptoms appear, the penalty worsens by 1. When it reaches -5, the victim is blinded until its sight is restored by magic, such as *lesser restoration* or *heal*.

Sight rot can be cured using a rare flower called Eyebright, which grows in some swamps, including the Flooded Forest. Given an hour, a character who has proficiency with an herbalism kit can turn the flower into one dose of ointment. Applied to the eyes before a long rest, one dose of it prevents the disease from worsening after that rest. After three doses, the ointment cures the disease entirely.

One day after making the roll to determine whether they get sight rot, the group leaves the Flooded Forest behind and enters the foothills of the Earthspur Mountains.

Ascending the Earthspurs takes two days.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Gung-ho adventurers might wish to attack the owlbear. This is an unnecessary combat the DM can hand-wave by saying the owlbear vanishes from sight. If time isn't a consideration, let the group fight the owlbear.

EXPLORATION

The swamp is ripe with mushrooms and rare herbs that can be used by herbalists and alchemists. Allow DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) checks to find useful fauna. Shortcuts can also be detected by making 3 DC 17 Intelligence (Survival) checks. Success cuts two days of travel off the journey.

SOCIAL

Sadly, there aren't many folks to talk to in the Flooded Forest. For groups that enjoy roleplaying, allow them to meet a group of treasure hunters destined for Yrraphon.

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Episode 3: Horrors Beneath the Earthspur Mountains (Story Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Setting Description

The company finds the entrance the other adventuring party and the drow thieves before them used to enter the Underdark. While wandering through the darkness, they overcome some safeguards placed by Vhaeraun to protect his small pack of Vhaeraun-touched driders. Once in the nest, the adventurers discover the tragic fate of the thieves and other company. They also learn about the driders' mutations. Chased by Vhaeraun-touched driders, the adventurers row a boat down a swiftly-moving, winding river to escape the caves. With the Vhaeraun-touched driders behind them, the group can bring news of this threat back to civilization.

Prerequisites

The adventurers need to learn in Episode 2 where the drow thieves and adventuring party went.

Story Objective B

The adventurers follow the trail into a cave into the Earthspur Mountains. They discover the truth behind Vhaeraun's creation of a drider army. They find the *Eye of Lolth* and determine the fate of the previous adventuring party.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The episode takes place inside caverns of varying sizes connected by tunnels. The tunnels are ten feet wide and fifteen-feet high, making it easy for the Vhaeraun-touched driders to climb on the ceiling and drop behind their prey. Cobwebs fill the tunnels closest to the exit but become less of a problem the closer to the nest the adventurers travel. This is territory where Lolth and her minions are forbidden.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers find is the light they create.

Scene A. Outside the Caves

As the adventurers reach the steeper mountain trails, one of the adventurers needs to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Investigation) check to maintain their quarry's trail. On a failure, the group loses 1d4 days before they pick it up again. The extra strenuous travel forces everyone to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they suffer a level of exhaustion. On a success, they're simply frustrated. If the game is going short on time, waylay the group with a cliffside encounter with a **wyvern**.

Eventually, the weary adventurers reach the eight-foot wide mouth of a cob web-covered cave. Dozens of spiders skitter away when the web's disturbed, or as light illuminates the passage.

Scene A1. The Outer Porch

Dimensions & Terrain. The webs from the entry fill this twenty foot by twenty-foot chamber.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

With a DC 18 Wisdom (Investigation) check, the group finds a pin in the shape of a strider, the symbol of Szith Morcane. It must have fallen from one of the thieves' cloaks as he struggled to get past the webs. There are two wooden doors, one to the north and one to the east. The eastern door's locked, requiring a DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check to open or a DC 15 Strength check to break down. The door has 15 hit points.

Scene A2. Room of Death and Illusions

Dimensions & Terrain. In front of each entry to the forty-foot by forty-foot chamber, there's a three-foot high pillar holding three black half-masks.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

Commented [TW19]: Instead of describing a specific scene, you can provide information about the area that the episode is set in—history, laws, denizens, area, etc., in addition to the general information the DM needs to paint the picture (dimensions, lighting, weather, etc.)—especially if different scenes share the same features (so it doesn't have to be repeated each time).

In addition, here we see how two different scenes are laid out—each with their own column.

Scenes are labeled alphabetically.

Creatures/NPCs

Hidden

Objectives/Goals. Hidden, the **young shadow dragon**, is biding his time until the Vhaeraun-touched driders have reproduced enough to create an army capable of taking on Lolth. Until then, he lounges in the room of illusions, which he finds entertaining. Even more entertaining to him is taunting the adventurers who have no idea how bad the situation is about to get for them. Hidden knows he isn't allowed to kill people who come through this room. Vhaeraun only wants the dragon to weaken them so they can be picked off by the Vhaeraun-touched driders and used as hosts.

What Does He Know? Hidden knows the layout of the nest. He knows the adventurers are entering areas occupied by the Vhaeraun-touched driders. He knows the adventurers will stumble upon horrific scenes of death before falling prey to the same fate. Plus, he's privy to Vhaeraun's schemes to use the Vhaeraun-touched driders to make an assault against Lolth.

One half-mask has blue lenses. The second has red lenses. The third has violet lenses. When worn, each mask filters out certain threats in the room. There are chained yeth hounds and mephitis. Reaching through a portcullis, a **young shadow dragon** stands alert. It can reach ten feet between the bars into the room.

Some of the creatures are real. Some are illusions. By choosing the correct mask to study the scene, the safe path can be found. Or, an adventurer can cast *dispel magic* with a fourth level spell slot. The illusionary threats then vanish. The correct mask to use is the one with the blue lenses. This matches the half-mask Vhaeraun wears.

If the adventurers ignore the masks or choose the wrong one, they each end up suffering a single attack by a **yeth hound**. If the adventurers linger indecisively, allow a yeth hound to use its *Baleful Baying* action.

The group might be curious about the shadow dragon. If the portcullis is opened with a DC 16 Strength check (the shadow dragon can easily open the portcullis himself, should he wish), the shadow dragon makes a single claw attack, unless repeatedly assaulted by the adventurers. Then, it keeps fighting, until the adventurers flee the room. It won't follow the adventurers out of the room. Hidden calls after them, "It would be far too unsatisfying to kill you myself."

Scene A3. Yeth Hound Kennel

Dimensions & Terrain. This chamber began as a historical record of the Vhaeraun-touched driders. Since then, it's become a kennel for the **yeth hounds** who serve Vhaeraun by protecting the drider nest.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

There are five yeth hounds chained to the eastern wall. If approached or set free, they attack any creature not in the favor of Vhaeraun.

The writing on the wall is in Undercommon. Its translation can be found in **Appendix 9**. Along the western wall, there's a hidden door. The brazier hanging there can be turned counter-clockwise to open it. It takes a DC 18 Wisdom (Investigation) check to find the secret door. Of course, the character doing the searching must indicate he's looking at the western wall.

Fake Door Between A4 and A6.

Dimensions & Terrain A locked wooden door lies against the wall on the north side of the passage.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

It takes a DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check to open or a DC 15 Strength check to break down. The door has 15 hit points.

If the door is opened, ten-thousand tongues crammed into the narrow closet collapse onto everyone within ten feet of the door. Those touched by tongues need to make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, their tongue falls out of their mouths and vanishes into the pile. A *greater restoration* spell can heal the muted adventurer.

Scene A4. Treasure Room

Dimensions & Terrain The thirty-foot by fifty-foot chamber contains the packs and bags taken off the humanoids abducted by the Vhaeraun-touched driders. The loot's scattered randomly about this cavern. Most of the goods have no value to the Vhaeraun-touched driders.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight.

Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

Characters can scoop up as much gold as they wish. When the group flees the caverns, the DM should describe how piles of gold spill out of their bags. For characters with *bags of holding*, the DM will have to be a bit more creative. The remaining gold's awarded at the conclusion of the adventure as TCPs.

Scene A5. Shrine to Vhaeraun

Dimensions & Terrain The thirty-foot by thirty-foot chamber is dominated by a 15-foot tall statue of Vhaeraun. There are three bodies in here, stuck to the statue's base by some kind of webbing. Horrified expressions fill their faces. Their abdomens are burst open. Egg fragments can be found in their chest cavities and in front of their corpses.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

When the adventurers turn around to leave, they find a stone wall blocking their way. Etchings on the Vhaeraun statue's base start to glow. They read: "Keep your eyes on the magnificence of Vhaeraun if you desire your freedom."

So, if the adventurers keep their eyes on the statue and walk backwards, they will pass through the stone wall that magically appeared. Those who don't do this see their friends walk backwards through the wall and vanish.

If the players are stumped by this puzzle, have them make a DC 12 Intelligence (Insight) check to figure out the solution.

Scene A6. Ambush Chamber

Dimensions & Terrain This forty-foot by sixty-foot trapezoidal chamber has thirty-foot high ceilings. There are so many stalactites and stalagmites it's difficult to take in the entire room from one position. Anything could be lurking in here. There are six exits. Most are corridors. However, there's a wooden door in the southwest corner. It's locked. It takes a DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check to open or a DC 15 Strength check to break down. The door has 15 hit points.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

Two different events occur here.

The first time the adventurers pass through the room, they find a young red-headed male human who bears a passing resemblance to Kathrina, the waitress at the House of Happiness, stuck to a stalagmite by sticky webbing. Upon examination, he has an unnatural potbelly. Also, there's a tattoo on his left arm of a gray dagger dripping green fluid... identical to Kathrina's. This is her brother, Nigel. He's still alive, although his breathing is shallow and erratic. He can be brought to consciousness by a simple shake. When Nigel awakens, he looks at the adventurers, then at himself and the webbing. He remembers all that's happened. "Kill me," Nigel begs.

Give the adventurers a few moments to respond. If they don't kill him, Nigel's chest further swells. There's loud cracking sounds as the egg and his ribs break. Nigel screams with his dying breath as a drider the size of a giant spider escapes his chest cavity. It tries to disappear into the shadows. If the adventurers are intent on hunting the creature down, use the stats for a **giant spider**. On the baby drider's initiative, it dashes out of the chamber. If it survives, it vanishes into the shadows.

If the group kills Nigel in a way that involves full body damage or running a weapon through his guts, the baby drider's killed. If not, then the baby drider bursts out of its host and takes off running.

There's also a dead drow lying splayed, stuck with webbing to a stalagmite. His chest is burst open with egg remnants inside and on the ground next to him. A golden bracelet with a ruby magically suspended in the center is on the ground next to the him. No part of the ruby touches the bracelet. It seems to float in the gap between the gold. There's writing in Undercommon on the bracelet, the *Eye of Lolth*. It reads: From the Demon Webs, Lolth sees all who scheme against Her."

The dead drow also has a *Wand of Web*. This treasure is unlockable and purchasable with TCPs.

The second time the adventurers enter this room, they can't help but look in the direction of where Nigel's body lies. Have everyone make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw as paranoia creeps in. On a failure, the hero feels like he's being watched but can't work through the paranoia enough to make a thorough search of the room. Those who pass the saving throw may make a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to see the giant Vhaeraun-touched **driders** lurking on the ceiling. Those who don't see the Vhaeraun-touched driders don't get to act in the surprise round of combat and suffer Disadvantage to attacks against them. Slowly, the

Vhaeraun-touched driders draw their longswords and drop next to their chosen targets.

Adjusting the Driders' Stats

Make the following changes to the drider statblock to make them Vhaeraun-touched driders:

- **Egg Planters.** As an action, a Vhaeraun-touched drider may slice open an incapacitated target's chest and plant an egg inside it. The egg excretes enzymes that heal the incision instantly. After 1d6+2 days of gestating, the egg breaks open, as the baby Vhaeraun-touched drider's born. The host's ribs are shattered, and vital organs rupture. The host dies.

Once the Vhaeraun-touched driders start attacking, the monsters continue to attack in waves. Each wave is one round apart. Once the cycle completes, it repeats until the adventurers are either dead or have left the caves. When there are multiple Vhaeraun-touched driders entering the fray, one of them is of the spellcasting variant.

Waves of Monsters

Round 1: 2 Vhaeraun-touched driders

Round 2: 2 Yeth hounds, 1 Vhaeraun-touched drider

Round 3: 12 mud mephitis, 2 Vhaeraun-touched driders

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Round 1: 1 Vhaeraun-touched drider Round 2: 3 yeth hounds, Round 3: 12 mud mephitis
- **Weak:** Round 1: 1 Vhaeraun-touched drider Round 2: 6 mud mephitis, 2 yeth hounds Round 3: 1 Vhaeraun-touched drider, 12 mud mephitis, 1 yeth hound
- **Strong/Very Strong:** Round 1: 3 Vhaeraun-touched driders, 5 yeth hounds, Round 2: 2 Vhaeraun-touched driders, Round 3: 4 Vhaeraun-touched driders, 12 mud mephitis

More and more enemies enter the battlefield. When the cycle of attacking enemies repeats itself, have the adventurers make a DC 8 Intelligence check. On a success, they realize there are virtually unlimited numbers of enemies to attack them. It's smartest to flee.

Make the most of all the corridors the monsters can enter from. The Vhaeraun-touched driders might choose to use stealth and walk across the ceiling, positioning themselves before dropping next to the chosen target. If the door in the southwest corner is closed, the yeth hounds can't enter through it unless a Vhaeraun-touched drider or a mephitis opens it for

them. The monsters never enter from the corridor that leads to the chambers containing the river, making this the best choice for the adventurers to use when they flee.

If the adventurers try to flee back through A1, they're met by 1d8+6 Vhaeraun-touched driders in the corridors leading to A1.

All the monsters fight to incapacitate the adventurers, not kill them. The heroes are needed to serve as hosts for the next generation of Vhaeraun-touched driders.

Oh yes, the monsters will pursue the adventurers wherever they go.

Yes, They Will Use Fireball

The ceiling is high enough for the arcane users to cast fireball, roasting the Vhaeraun-touched driders, but not scorching the party. Throughout the combat, the ceiling is crawling with dozens of Vhaeraun-touched driders. If a character casts *fireball* or a similar spell at the ceiling-lurking creatures who haven't yet joined in the combat, roll 2d8+4 to determine how many of the monsters get caught in the blast.

Roll only once to see if the Vhaeraun-touched driders make their Dexterity save, and apply damage normally. This will keep the action moving and simplify DM bookkeeping.

Be sure to have the scorched Vhaeraun-touched driders be the next ones to enter the fray. This will reward the spellcaster for using such a powerful spell.

Treasure & Rewards

The adventurers can find the *Eye of Lolth* which is a story award only usable in this adventure, and the *Wand of Web*.

Reward. *Eye of Lolth.*

The *Eye of Lolth* is a golden bracelet with a ruby magically suspended in the center. No part of the ruby touches the bracelet. There's writing in Undercommon on the bracelet. It reads: From the Demon Webs, Lolth sees all who scheme against Her."

The *Eye of Lolth* is a holy relic, not a tool the adventurers can harness the abilities of. However, possessing this artifact will allow the companions a chance to escape the caves and gain Lolth's favor.

Magic Items. *Wand of Web.*

Wand (uncommon), (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can expend a charge to cast the *web* spell (save DC 15) from it.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a

Commented [TW20]: Combat scenes should provide some suggestions to DMs on how to adjust its difficulty to account for the strength of the characters' group.

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d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The adventurers need to defend their position in the cave and quickly destroy the monsters, before the next wave strikes. Eventually, they will realize fleeing is the smart move.

EXPLORATION

Pursued by the Vhaeraun-favored monsters, the adventurers can explore the waterfall or river caverns, where they'll find a puzzle that will give them the necessary help to escape.

SOCIAL

These Vhaeraun-touched driders are first generation driders still insane from decades of isolation in the Underdark. Their madness has been focused by Vhaeraun to protect their young at all costs.

Commented [TW21]: The players are destined to engage with a scene in different ways. This is a great place to describe what happens if any of the three core pillars of the game are used as an approach by the characters. This is particularly useful if the scene in question is intended to engage one pillar (i.e. combat), but through clever roleplay and discourse the players turn it into a social or exploration scene. These aren't rules for the DM to follow, these are suggestions, so they should be worded as such. Note that it takes up a good chunk of room, so plan its use carefully!

Scene A7. Waterfall

Dimensions & Terrain The 50-foot diameter chamber is dominated by a waterfall spilling into the cave from the southern wall. The rough waters flow through the north wall into A8. A mist swirls throughout the chamber, making it difficult to see anything further than 10-feet from the viewer. Attacks against creatures further than 10-feet away suffer Disadvantage.

If the adventurers enter this room before A8, there's a life-sized marble statue of Lolth positioned so Her face looks at everyone entering the room through the eastern door. Lolth's eye is composed of a ruby identical to the one in the *Eye of Lolth*. The other eye socket is empty. To the left of the statue, there's a drawing of a boat etched onto the ground. To the right of the statue, there's a drawing of an apple.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

If the adventurers take the *Eye of Lolth* and place it inside the empty eye socket, the companions are able to turn Lolth's head so she can look either at the apple or the boat drawing. If the head is turned toward the boat etching, a rowboat magically appears. It's large enough to carry the entire party. Complete with oars, the boat has 50 hit points and AC 11. If the adventurers turn Lolth's head to face the apple etching, an apple magically appears. When bitten into, a swarm of spiders skitter out of the fruit. The imbiber also gains the same benefits as if he ate a goodberry.

The monsters from A6 continue to pursue the adventurers into this room. Replenish the supply of monsters, using the schedule provided in A6.

Treasure & Rewards

The adventurers can find *Lolth's Apple*.

Magic Items. *Lolth's Apple.*

Divine Gift

If any of the apple's swallowed, the imbiber gains the benefit of having eaten a goodberry.

Scene A8. A River Runs Through It

Dimensions & Terrain This 50-foot diameter chamber has a 15-foot high ceiling. The 10-foot wide river flows into the room from the southern wall and disappears through a hole in the northern wall. With a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurers detect that after passing through the northern wall, the river steeply flows downwards, into the depths of the mountain.

If adventurers didn't go to A7 first, they find the marble Lolth statue and pair of etchings, as described in A6. If they go to A7 first, there's no statue or etchings here.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

Ten **steam mephitis** guard this chamber. When the pursuing monsters enter the chamber, the steam mephitis have the audacity to boss around the Vhaeraun-touched driders. The monsters fly or walk on the ceiling to chase the adventurers down the river.

Scene A9. Stairs to a Dead End

Dimensions & Terrain The winding passageway leads upwards to a passage that runs 20-feet to a five-foot deep, 15-foot wide ledge over a 500-foot drop into a valley.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create. As the adventurers near the cave mouth, they'll find themselves looking at light too bright to stand. Daylight floods the cavern. The Vhaeraun-touched driders and their companions refrain from going into the sunlight.

Unless the adventurers have creative methods to escape, they'll be forced to make a last stand here.

Scene A10. River Chase Part 1

Dimensions & Terrain The river spirals down the mountain in a series of tight turns as the boat travels with 40-feet of movement per round. This segment of the journey lasts for three combat rounds.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight.

Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

The adventurers row their boat down steep drops and around sharp curves, through the heart of the mountain. Pursuing mephitis, yeth hounds and Vhaeraun-touched driders race to keep up with the boat. Keep track of each creature's speed. The boat might eventually travel so fast some of the monsters can't keep up. Every round, a fresh batch of monsters join the fray, as described in A6. Keep the combat as abstract as possible to keep the scene moving as quickly as possible during this climax.

At least one adventurer needs to spend his turn paddling. If a second character steps up to spend his turn rowing, the primary rower gains Advantage on this round's DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. The remaining adventurers may participate in the fight against the monsters. If the rower fails his check, the boat crashes into the wall, taking 2d10 bludgeoning damage. The boat has 50 hit points and AC 11. Everyone in the boat must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking the same damage as the boat and being flung into the water. Every round a character starts in the water, he suffers 2d6 cold damage. On his turn, the swimming character may make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to catch up to the boat and climb into it. This check can be attempted every round. Each round after the first, the difficulty for the check increases by 1.

The rower must make the Strength (Athletics) check each of the three rounds of this journey's leg. Continue the running battle between Vhaeraun's minions and the adventurers.

Boat Crash

- **Trigger:** The boat crashes into the cave wall.
- **Effect:** The boat suffers 2d10 bludgeoning damage. Everyone in the boat must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they suffer the same damage the boat suffered and are thrown into the water.
- **Countermeasures:** One character spends his turn as the primary oarsman. If two characters spend their round rowing, the primary oarsman gains Advantage on the DC 10 Strength (Athletics) roll. On a success, the boat avoids a collision... this round.

Scene A11. River Chase Part 2

Dimensions & Terrain The river plunges down a steep straight chute. However, low-hanging stalactites are frequently scattered throughout the cavern.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.

Each of the two rounds of this length of the journey, the primary oarsman needs to make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) roll to navigate the boat between the stalactites. If a second character sacrifices his turn to rowing, the primary oarsman makes the check with Advantage. If a rowing check is failed, the boat scrapes beneath a large sharp stalactite. Everyone on the boat needs to make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to duck. On a failure, the character suffers 4d10 bludgeoning damage. On a success, the character takes half damage. The boat has 50 hit points and AC 11.

The running combat between the adventurers and Vhaeraun's monsters continues during this leg of the journey. The adventurer's boat accelerates to 50-feet of movement per round.

Stalagmite Slalom

- **Trigger:** The boat scrapes beneath a low-hanging massive stalactite.
- **Effect:** Everyone on the boat must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the character suffers 4d10 bludgeoning damage. On a success, the character suffers half damage.
- **Countermeasures:** One character must use his turn to row the boat between the threatening stalactites. He makes a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) roll. If a second character sacrifices his turn to also row, the primary oarsman may make the check with Advantage. On a success, the boat dodges the stalactites... at least this round.

Scene A12. River Chase Part 3

Dimensions & Terrain The river begins to level out as it races past the lair of a shadow dragon. Piles of treasure adorn both sides of the shore. Statues and intricately-decorated columns from lost kingdoms combined with chests full of gold. Directly ahead, a blinding point of light grows larger as the boat speeds toward the cave mouth.

Lighting. The Vhaeraun-touched driders and the shadow dragon can see perfectly fine in the darkness and abhor the sunlight. Therefore, the only light the adventurers will find is the light they create.// at least until they reach the cave mouth.

The boat races toward the cave's exit, through the lair of Grughuda the **adult green shadow dragon**. The boat's built up enough speed it only will be in

this deadly area for one combat round. The boat has 50 hit points and AC 11. One character needs to act as the primary oarsman to paddle the boat out of the lair with a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. If a second character chooses to use his turn to row, the primary oarsman gains Advantage on his check. On a failure, the dragon gets to make a round of attacks. The attacks occur right after the rowing check was failed.

The dragon uses its Frightful Presence and then makes three attacks: one with its bite action, two with its claw attacks. The bite attack can target anyone in the rear two rows of the boat. The claw attacks target those sitting in the rearmost row.

The monsters chasing the adventurers continue their chase and attacks until the boat passes through the cave's mouth. They won't go out into the daylight.

Gravity of the Situation

Dimensions & Terrain The adventurers fly out of the mountain cave and into the blinding light of day. With their eyes nowhere near adjusted to the change in brightness, they tumble hundreds of feet down a beautiful mountain-side waterfall into a lush strong tree with immense boughs that seem to have grown beneath the waterfall for the express purpose of saving the adventurers.

Lighting. The daylight is blinding to the adventurers. It will take time for them to make sense of their surroundings and realize how close to death they were, falling out of the cave.

The boat shoots out the cave mouth and tumbles over a 200-foot high waterfall. It safely lands in the boughs of a giant tree. Have each adventurer make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character sees tens of thousands of spiders in the tree top. They cushioned the adventurers' landing. Thousands of arachnids died upon impact. The survivors skitter away. As they vanish, the adventurers hear a chorus of telepathic voices whisper, "Friend of Lolth."

If a character is a cleric or paladin of a good or lawful good god, they need to make restitution to their god or goddess for having earned the favor of evil Lolth. Affected players should tell their next DM about this development, so she can describe the uphill battle of currying favor with the patron deity. This should not have a mechanical penalty to the character but rather be flavor added to the story.

If the adventurers somehow made it out of the mountain with the *Eye of Lolth*, the spiders steal the artifact while the adventurers are blinded.

If the adventurers attempt to remove an implanted egg from an adventurer in the tree, they have Advantage as the spiders climb into the incision and help cut the egg from where it's stuck inside the body cavity. The healer needs to make a DC 17 Intelligence (Medicine) check to remove the egg. Spells won't help. On a failure, the healer causes internal bleeding. A DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check is required to stop the bleeding, or the victim dies 1d4 hours later. No further attempts can be made to remove the egg without killing the host.

Wrap-Up: House of Happiness and Tower of Justice

After a tending of travel, the adventurers safely return to Hillsfar. Kathrina, of the House of Happiness, has a message for the group to meet Lord Detective Henry Uskworth at the Red Plumes Tower of Justice. The companions have the unfortunate obligation to break the news to Kathrina about Nigel's horrible death.

Tower of Justice

Dimensions & Terrain. The Red Plumes Tower of Justice is a magnificent structure, where scores of underpaid, overworked law enforcement officers struggle to gather enough evidence to close the files burdening their desks. The Tower is extremely busy at all times of day. Officers in impeccably clean uniforms march through the halls, rushing between interrogations, the evidence room and their desks.

Visitors to the tower emerge in a 20-foot-high spacious foyer with marble floors and columns. Most are dark gray or brown. There's also a golden statue of a Red Plume officer standing watch. The statue inspires vigilance and patriotism from the ranks. A set of stairs, 15-feet wide, leads to the second floor.

The lobby is busy at all times of day, with lawyers and Red Plumes zig-zagging around the snack bar and statue on their way to see a prisoner or attend an interrogation.

Lighting. The Tower of Justice lobby is brightly lit by magical means. It tries to convey a sense that the

Red Plumes are the light that drives the shadows out of Hillsfar. The light also shows the brilliance of the Tower's design, from the marble floors to the carved columns.

Across town, the adventurers reach the heavily fortified Red Plumes Compound. Upon telling the guards who they are, the group's escorted inside the Tower of Justice. They easily find Lord Uskworth buying coffee from a blind man at a cart identified as Confession Concessions. "Well done," Lord Uskworth says when he sees them. He buys them all coffee and leads the adventurers to a large library in the southeastern corner of the tower.

"The *Eye of Lolth*. Do you have it?" the Detective asks as he stirs sugar into his coffee.

Lord Uskworth listens patiently to the group's story. Upon completion of the tale, the detective seems even paler. His hands shake, and coffee spills over the lip of his cup. "I need to speak with the Director," the Lord whispers. "It seems we may need an army to deal with this problem."

The group is properly awarded for their efforts. If asked for help for an adventurer serving as host to a Vhaeraun-touched drider egg, Lord Uskworth gets the adventurer the best surgical care possible, and the egg is successfully removed. Of course, the egg is kept, incubated, and the baby drider is studied... until it escapes.

The adventurers are promptly escorted out the front doors as Lord Uskworth dutifully marches up the grand stairway to the Director's office to discuss Hillsfar's choices for containing the Vhaeraun-touched drider threat.

Adventure Rewards

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

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

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

- **Story Objective A:** Traveling into the Underdark from the Waydown Garrison, the adventurers discover what happened to the previous adventuring party and the drow thieves.
- **Story Objective B:** The adventurers discover Vhaeraun's created a drider army. They survive to report the news.

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

- **Bonus Objective A:** The adventurers must survive the ancient beast lairing in the lake near Zamoniezash.
- **Bonus Objective B:** The company competes in a hunting contest against a summer eldarin to gain a drow thief's journal and map.

Player Rewards

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

Magic Item Unlock

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

Dagger of Venom.
Weapon (dagger), rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

You can use an action to cause thick, black poison to coat the blade. The poison remains for one minute or until an attack using this weapon hits a creature. That creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d10 poison damage and become poisoned for one minute. The dagger can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

This item can be found in **Appendix 12**.

Story Awards

Characters playing the adventure may earn:

- **Web Weary.** Adventurers who survive this adventure know how to tread cautiously through Vhaeraun-touched drider lairs and rescue allies trapped in Vhaeraun-touched drider webs. This may have great benefit in future *Vhaeraun Touched* adventures.
- **"Kill Me."** If an adventurer puts a humanoid about to die giving birth to a Vhaeraun-touched drider out of his misery in this adventure, her sanity teeters. Whenever faced with a similar situation in the *Vhaeraun-Touched* series, the DM is advised to describe the character's struggle with her sanity.

More information can be found in **Appendix 13**.

Dungeon Master Rewards

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

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

Commented [TW22]: This section may not exceed a single page. Unless you've got story awards, it's unlikely to exceed a single column, so if you manage to bust the page limit, you're probably doing something wrong.

Commented [TW23]: In addition to downtime activities, the characters may earn story awards for performing a certain act during the adventure. Unless otherwise permitted, story awards may have no built-in mechanical benefit—the effect of a story award should be contained in future adventures. When designing an adventure, refer to previous adventures for interesting ways to tie story awards into the story. The rewards.doc provides additional guidance.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

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

Lord Detective Henry Uskworth (Hen REE UHSK werth). Lord Detective Henry Uskworth is a tall, gaunt member of the Red Plumes. He prides himself with analytical thinking, which he has little ability to put on hold. He provides medical, psychological and strategic advice to any who seek him out. While many would feel overwhelmed and used in such a position, Lord Uskworth finds great satisfaction finding the answers to other people's mysteries.

Personality: *Driven to seek answers, Lord Uskworth lives in his own mind, working puzzles and searching for solutions.*

Ideal: *Everything can be explained with logic.*

Bond: *A fresh perspective opens more doors in Lord Uskworth's mind.*

Flaw: *Lord Uskworth cannot appreciate the moment without over-analyzing it.*

Priestess Imrae Khalazza (im RAE KA loz uh). A regal drow priestess, she wears flowing black robes that look more like webs closer to the ground. She has a long neck, which she covers with a choker. Her hair is whitish-blue and flows down behind her hips. Her lips are pouty and covered in blood red lipstick.

Personality: *Prisoner to her narcissistic tendencies, Priestess Khalazza doesn't care as much about how she rules the outpost of Zamoniezash as much as she cares about how her mother views her progress.*

Ideal: *With mother's approval, the world is perfect.*

Bond: *Visible progress is far better than measurable progress.*

Flaw: *Must be in control and able to solve every problem.*

Elabrimborn (el uh BRIM born). A blonde summer eldarin, Elabrimborn lives in an estate in the Flooded Forest, where he gets to enjoy the art of hunting those he deems to be beasts and then performs taxidermy on their corpses.

Personality: *Elabrimborn comes across as a gentleman of refined tastes. He drinks wine he makes.*

His house is immaculate. He hides his constant need to hunt... and kill those he deems to be beasts.

Ideal: *Being surrounded by trophies of my conquests makes me feel more of a success in life*

Bond: *Enjoy the fine things.*

Flaw: *Some sentient lifeforms are nothing more than beasts to be hunted and stuffed.*

Priestess Yolongopop (yo lawng oh PAWP).

Priestess Yolongopop is a middle-aged kuo-toa leader of a faltering tribe. Dedicated to improving her people, she sets out to Zamoniezash to negotiate a deal in the slave trade.

Personality: *Introverted, the priestess spends most of her time in prayer over the mechanical canary in the gnome cage that washed down the river to her village. She believes it is a deity who will come to life if she wills it to.*

Ideal: *With a new god and a trade deal with the neighboring drow village, the kuo-toa community will be back on its feet.*

Bond: *She wants her people to thrive and be happy.*

Flaw: *She underestimates the evilness in others.*

Flakydociousbop (fleck ee DOUGH sis BOP).

Flakydociousbop is a trinket willed into existence as a minor deity by the kuo-toa.

Personality: *Dedicated to protect those who gave it existence, the deity is fiercely loyal to Her worshippers.*

Ideal: *To serve and be loved is the greatest reciprocation.*

Bond: *She gives Her life to those who gave Her life.*

Flaw: *She is a weak creature physically.*

Zamoniezash (zahm on ee ZASH). Zamoniezash is an outpost of Szith Morcane, serving as an outpost for slaving parties.

Commented [TW24]: This is always Appendix 1. Ideally, this shouldn't exceed a single page in length. Each NPC and location should have an entry with a phonetic pronunciation and information relevant to the adventure. This is a great opportunity to bring the faces and places you create to life—don't skip here.

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Adult Green Shadow Dragon

Huge dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 207 (18d12+90)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +2, Cha +8

Skills Deception +8, Insight +7, Perception +12, Persuasion +8, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Living Shadow. While in dim light or darkness, the dragon has resistance to damage that isn't force, psychic, or radiant.

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

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

Actions

Multiaction. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8+6) slashing damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8+6) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware

of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened 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. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Shadow Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales shadowy poisonous gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The shadow is under the dragon's control.

Legendary Actions

The dragon 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 dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d6+6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

Commented [TW25]: This is always Appendix 2. Stat blocks must be placed in alphabetical order—not in order of appearance by episode or scene.

Commented [TW26]: If your adventure includes monsters or NPCs that the characters have the potential to fight, you MUST include all of the relevant stat blocks. Minor modifications to the stat block may be included in the body of the scene or a sidebar in this appendix, but more extensive changes may require that the stat block itself be modified. If you provide a modified monster/NPC, the title of the original monster must appear in parenthesis beside the modified monster's title. CCC adventure designers may not modify stat blocks but may provide minor modifications in a sidebar.

Clay Golem

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10+56)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the language of its creator but cannot speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Acid Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to acid damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the acid damage dealt.

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 60 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell 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:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this attack reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The reduction lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Haste (Recharge 5-6). Until the end of its next turn, the golem magically gains a +2 bonus to its AC, has

advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and can use its slam attack as a bonus action.

Crocodile (Alligator)

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d10+3)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Drider

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10+52)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +9

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

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

At Will: *dancing lights*

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

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

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

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

Actions

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

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

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

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

Drider (Spellcasting Variant)

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10+52)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +9

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

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

At Will: *dancing lights*

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

Spellcasting: The drider is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The drider has the following spells prepared from the cleric spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *poison spray*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *detect magic*, *sanctuary*

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

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*

4th level (2 slots): *divination*, *freedom of movement*

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

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

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

Actions

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

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

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

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

Drow

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

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

At Will: *dancing lights*

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

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

Actions

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

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

Drow Elite Warrior

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 71 (11d8+22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +5, Wis +4

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +10

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

At Will: *dancing lights*

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The drow makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13

Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Drow House Captain

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 162 (25d8+50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +6, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Battle Command. As a bonus action, the drow targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see or hear the drow, the target can use its reaction to make one melee attack or to take the Dodge or Hide actions.

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

Innate Spellcasting: The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *dancing lights*

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The drow makes three attacks: two with his scimitar, and one with his whip or hand crossbow.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is an ally, it has advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

Drow Priestess of Lolth

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 71 (13d8+13)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+0)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +6, Cha +7

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6, Religion +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

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

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

At Will: *dancing lights*

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

Spellcasting. The drow is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The drow has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *poison spray*, *resistance*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *detect poison and disease*, *ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *protection from poison*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals* (2 giant spiders), *dispel magic*

4th level (3 slots): *divination*, *freedom of movement*

5th level (2 slots): *insect plague*, *mass cure wounds*

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

Actions

Multiaction. The drow makes two scourge attacks.

Scourge. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 17 (5d6) poison damage.

Summon Demon (1/Day). The drow attempts to magically summon a yochlol with a 30 percent chance of success. If the attempt fails, the drow takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage. Otherwise, the summoned demon appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of its summoner, and can't summon other demons. It remains for 10 minutes, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

Giant Spider

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d10+4)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +7

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

Languages --

Challenge 1 (100 XP)

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

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

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target's hit points to 0, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60, one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a

success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage, immunity to bludgeoning, poison and psychic damage).

Kuo-toa

Medium humanoid (kuo-toa), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Amphibious. The kuo-toa can breathe air and water

Otherworldly Perception. The kuo-toa can sense the presence of any creature within 30 feet of it that is invisible or on the ethereal plane. It can pinpoint such a creature that is moving.

Slippery. The kuo-toa has advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape a grapple.

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

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

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

Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one Large or smaller target. *Hit:* The target is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check to free itself or another creature in a net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

Reactions

Sticky Shield. When a creature misses the kuo-toa with a melee weapon attack, the kuo-toa uses its sticky shield to catch the weapon. The attacker must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw, or the weapon becomes stuck to the kuo-toa's shield. If the weapon's wielder can't or won't let go of the weapon, the

wielder is grappled while the weapon is stuck. While stuck, the weapon can't be used. A creature can pull the weapon free by taking an action to make a DC 11 Strength check and succeeding.

Kuo-toa Archpriest

Medium humanoid (kuo-toa), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (13d8+39)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +9, Religion +6

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Undercommon

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The kuo-toa can breathe air and water

Otherworldly Perception. The kuo-toa can sense the presence of any creature within 30 feet of it that is invisible or on the ethereal plane. It can pinpoint such a creature that is moving.

Slippery. The kuo-toa has advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape a grapple.

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

Spellcasting. The kuo-toa is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The kuo-toa has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, sanctuary, shield of faith*

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

3rd level (3 slots): *spirit guardians, tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *control water, divination*

5th level (2 slots): *mass cure wounds, scrying*

Actions

Multiattack. The kuo-toa makes two melee attacks.

Scepter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) lightning damage.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Kuo-toa Monitor

Medium humanoid (kuo-toa), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +6, Religion +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Undercommon

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The kuo-toa can breathe air and water

Otherworldly Perception. The kuo-toa can sense the presence of any creature within 30 feet of it that is invisible or on the ethereal plane. It can pinpoint such a creature that is moving.

Slippery. The kuo-toa has advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape a grapple.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The kuo-toa makes two attacks: one with its bite and two unarmed strikes.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage, and the target can't take reactions until the end of the kuo-toa's next turn.

Kuo-toa Whip

Medium humanoid (kuo-toa), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +6, Religion +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Undercommon

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. The kuo-toa can breathe air and water

Otherworldly Perception. The kuo-toa can sense the presence of any creature within 30 feet of it that is invisible or on the ethereal plane. It can pinpoint such a creature that is moving.

Slippery. The kuo-toa has advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape a grapple.

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

Spellcasting. The kuo-toa is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The kuo-toa has the following spells prepared:

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

1st level (3 slots): *bane*, *shield of faith*

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

Actions

Multiattack. The kuo-toa makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its pincer staff.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Pincer Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the kuo-toa can't use its pincer staff on another target.

Mud Mephit

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 27 (6d6+6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Terran

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of sticky mud. Each Medium or smaller creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the end of the creature's next turn.

False Appearance. While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mound of mud.

Actions

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

Mud Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit belches viscous mud onto one creature within 5 feet of it. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained 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.

Owlbear

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10+21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) slashing damage.

Plesiosaurus

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d10+24)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hold Breath. The plesiosaurus can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Quickling

Tiny fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)

Speed 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	23 (+6)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blurred Movement. Attack rolls against the quickling have disadvantage unless the quickling is incapacitated or restrained.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The quickling makes three dagger attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage.

Steam Mephit

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Ignan

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a cloud of steam. Each creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Innate Spellcasting (1/Day). The mephit can innately cast *blur* requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) fire damage.

Steam Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of scalding steam. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Summer Eldarin

Medium fey (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (17d8+51)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +8

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Fearsome Presence. Any non-eldarin creature that starts its turn within 60 feet of the eldarin must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes frightened of the eldarin 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. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to any eldarin's Fearsome Presence for the next 24 hours.

Fey Step (Recharge 4-6). As a bonus action, the eldarin can teleport up to 30-feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The eldarin makes two weapon attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 15 (2d10+4) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Reactions

Parry. The eldarin adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the eldarin must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Veteran

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

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

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

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

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

Wyvern

Large dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d10+39)
Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages --
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one another attack.

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

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

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Yeth Hound

Large fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Damage Immunities Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Silvered

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan understands but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The yeth hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Sunlight Banishment. If the yeth hound starts its turn in sunlight, it is transported to the Ethereal Plane. While sunlight shines on the spot from which it vanished, the hound must remain in the Deep Ethereal. After sunset, it returns to the Border Ethereal at the same spot, whereupon it typically sets out to find its pack or its master. The hound is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, but it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane. Once it is adjacent to its master or a pack mate that is on the Material Plane, a yeth hound in the Border Ethereal can return to the Material Plane as an action.

Telepathic Bond. While the yeth hound is on the same plane of existence as its master, it can magically convey what it senses to its master, and the two can communicate telepathically with each other.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, plus 14 (4d6) psychic damage if the target is frightened.

Baleful Baying. The yeth hound bays magically. Every enemy within 300 feet of the hound that can hear it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the hound's next turn or until the hound is incapacitated. A frightened target that starts its turn within 30 feet of the hound must use all its movement on that turn to get as far from the hound as possible, must finish the move before taking an action, and must take the most direct route, even if hazards lie that way. A target that successfully saves is immune to the baying of all yeth hounds for the next 24 hours.

Yochlol

Medium fiend (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8+64)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Deception +10, Insight +6

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

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal, Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Shapechanger. The yochlol can use its action to polymorph into a form that resembles a female drow or giant spider, or back into its true form. Any equipment it is carrying or wearing isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

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

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

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

At will: *detect thoughts*, *web*

1/day: *dominate person*

Web Walker. The yochlol ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The yochlol makes two melee attacks.

Slam (Bite in Spider form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. (10 ft. in demon form), one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning (piercing in spider form) damage plus 21 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Mist Form. The yochlol transforms into toxic mist or reverts to its true form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is also transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

While in mist form, the yochlol is incapacitated and can't speak. It has a flying speed of 30 ft., can hover and can pass through any space that isn't airtight. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to nonmagical damage.

While in mist form, the yochlol can enter a creature's space and stop there. Each time that creature starts its turn with the yochlol in its space, the creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target is incapacitated.

Young Red Shadow Dragon

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10+85)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +8

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities fire

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Living Shadow. While in dim light or darkness, the dragon has resistance to damage that isn't force, psychic, or radiant.

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

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

Actions

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

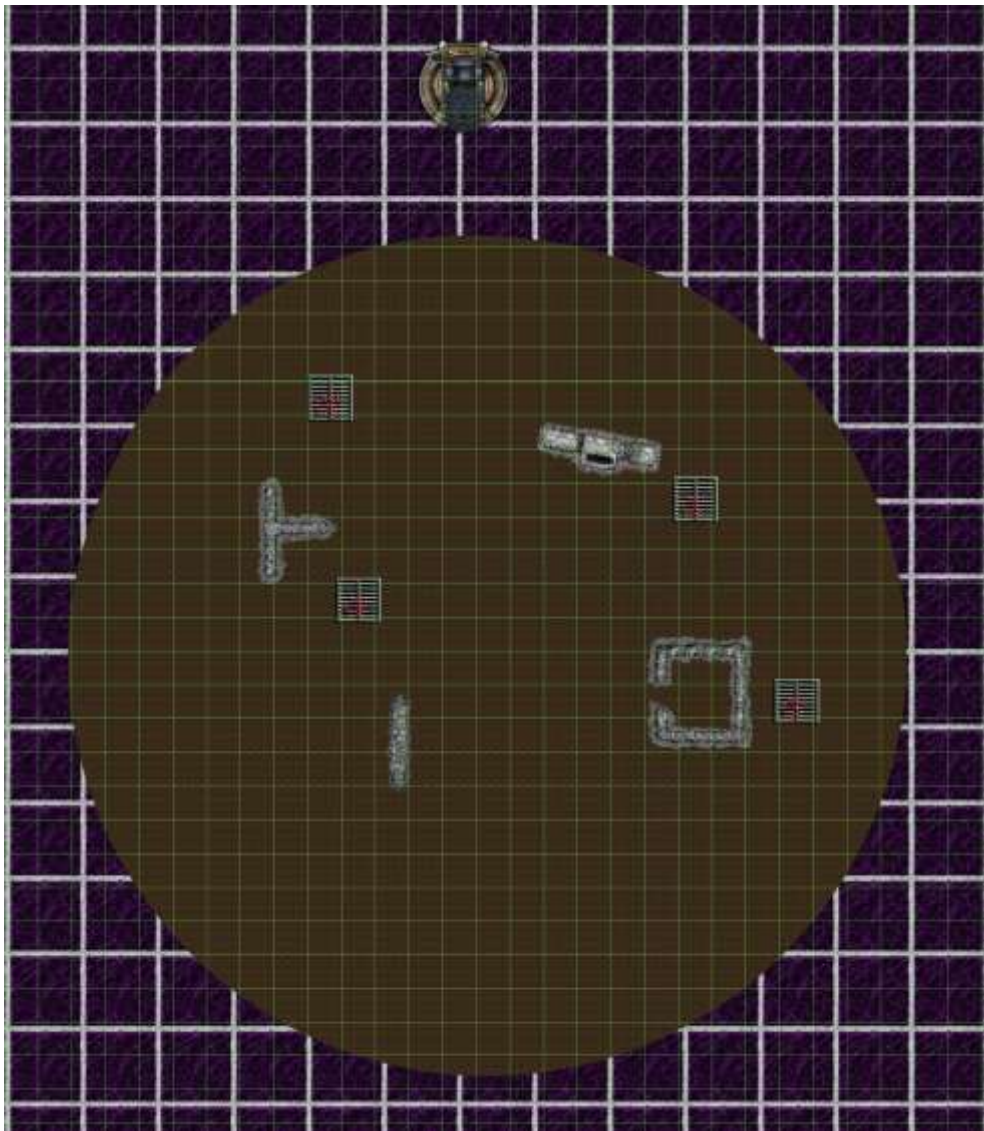
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+6) slashing damage.

Shadow Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales shadowy fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The shadow is under the dragon's control.

Appendix 3: Drow Arena

Each square equals 5 feet.



Commented [TW27]: This appendix and those that follow will differ from adventure to adventure, but each must have its own number. The DM Tips appendix should always be last with any player handouts immediately preceding it.

Appendix 4: Drider Nest Caverns

Each square equals 5 feet



Commented [TW28]: This appendix and those that follow will differ from adventure to adventure, but each must have its own number. The DM Tips appendix should always be last with any player handouts immediately preceding it.

Appendix 5: Snuffed Out (Bonus Objective A.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Setting Description

In this episode, the characters pursue **Bonus Objective A**. As they row through the Underdark on the Waydown, they pass through the lair of an ancient dinosaur in a symbiotic relationship with a frustrating strain of fungus. The heroes must survive their encounter with the dinosaur.

Prerequisites

The adventurers need to reach the boats at the bottom of the Waydown Sinkhole and sail into the Underdark. This happens in Episode 2, Scene B.

Bonus Objective A

The adventurers must survive the ancient beast lairing in the Underdark lake.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The adventurers' boats accelerate down the Waydown River, zig-zagging as the river plunges into unknown depths of Toril. Fascinating caverns fly past. Some barely hug the riverbank before ending in moss-covered walls. Others are fantastic cathedrals of nature, hundreds of feet across and equally tall.

Feel free to use any of the fungi and fauna from *Out of the Abyss* to customize and decorate your group's arrival to the Underdark.

Eventually the Waydown stops flowing downwards at such a steep angle, allowing the adventurers to take stock of their surroundings. They enter a narrow cavern with low overhead. If any of the adventurers are using torches, lanterns or any form of natural or magical lighting, fluorescent green fungi sprouts rapidly from a pile of droppings. The brighter the light, the more rapidly the fluorescent green fungus spreads, like vines jutting out in every direction, covering the walls and keeping up with the adventurers' boats.

A DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the fungus is responding to the adventurers' light. If the lanterns are hooded or extinguished, the fungal vines slow their growth. In complete darkness, they stop growing.

Lighting. There is no natural light in the Underdark along the Waydown. Keeping illumination going through these caves draws the unwanted attention of the Ilumsnuffitoid.

Ilumsnuffitoid

This fungus is very rare, even in the Underdark. It grows only from the excrement of the Ilumsnuffasaurus, a river monster dating back to when dinosaurs dominated Faerun's surface. The fungus spreads until it can reach out and touch the light source. Then, the light goes out with a pop (even magical light), and everyone within a ten-foot radius of the extinguished light source gets covered in black soot. The soot carries a pungent scent that attracts local Ilumsnuffasauruses, alerting them to the presence of prey.

Scene A. Illumination Troubles

If the adventurers don't dim their lights enough, the fungus tendrils grow across the riverbank and wind toward all light sources. Once the fungus makes contact with the light source, there's an audible pop as the light, magical or natural, is extinguished. A cloud of black soot covers everything in a ten-foot radius causing a horrid sulfuric stench. The reeking odor draws the attention of an Ilumsnuffasaurus whose lair is nearby. The ancient lizard dwells in deep lakes in wide open areas. The adventurers' boats enter such a location.

Scene B. Creature From Another Age

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. A forest of 50-foot high zurkhwood mushrooms grows thirty feet above the lake-like area the Waydown delivers the adventurers into. Niferns skitter beneath the Zurkhwood mushroom tops. The lake reaches 200-feet in diameter. The sides rise up to the Zurkhwood Forest ridge, showing different colorations in the stone, a historic record of ancient Toril.

Lighting. There is only as much light as the adventurers bring with them. The Ilumsnuffitoid may have already snuffed out torches and magical lighting.

Creatures/NPCs

The adventurers encounter a Ilumsnuffasaurus. The Ilumsnuffasaurus is a dinosaur leftover from when dinosaurs roamed Toril. This specimen has managed to exist in the Underdark, living off the

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In addition, here we see how two different scenes are laid out—each with their own column. Scenes are labeled alphabetically.

creatures who live in the Zurkhwood forest above its lake. The kuo-toa regard it as a god and sacrifice a number of their captured slaves to it.

When the Ilumsnuffasaurus appears, the water ripples in the middle of the cavern as scales the size of a small wagon skim the surface. Then, the beast's serpentine head breaks the surface. Glassy black eyes gaze out at nothing. It opens its maw, showing off a tongue the size of a bear cub and teeth the size of daggers.

If the adventurers avoided getting covered in soot, the lead rower of each boat may make a DC 16 Strength (Stealth) check with Advantage to row the boat quietly across the lake to where the Waydown River continues its journey. On a failure, the Ilumsnuffasaurus rises from the depths to prey on the humanoids.

Plesiosaurus Modifications

- Blindsight 120 feet.

For the Ilumsnuffasaurus, use the stats for **plesiosaurus**.

The Ilumsnuffasaurus attacks the boats first. These large structures are easiest to locate and

destroy. A boat has AC 11 and 50 hit points. If a boat is destroyed, all passengers fall into the seventy-foot deep lake. The beast can easily detect the flailing/swimming adventurers and attempts to feed on them.

Cunning adventurers might row their boat to the side of the lake and climb up the thirty-foot wall with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to the Zurkhwood forest. From there, they can snipe at the monster from relative safety.

If the adventurers kill the Ilumsnuffasaurus, they've successfully completed **Bonus Objective A**. Fifteen minutes after leaving the Ilumsnuffasaurus's lair behind, the Ilumsnuffitoid is no longer a problem.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Don't increase the dinosaur's hit points.
- **Strong/Very Strong:** Have two Ilumsnuffasauruses.

Commented [TW30]: Combat scenes should provide some suggestions to DMs on how to adjust its difficulty to account for the strength of the characters' group.

The Building Encounters document in the designer packet provides information on how to scale your Scene.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Protecting the boat should be the first objective. Making it levitate so the adventurers can snipe at the beast will prove beneficial. There's no good way for melee-based characters to engage from a safe distance.

EXPLORATION

Climbing to the Zurkhwood forest provides lots of cover and a solid place to attack from: shooting dinosaurs in a barrel.

SOCIAL

Unless a character can *speak with animals*, there's little chance of a social encounter. But if someone can do that, the heroes can bargain for their lives.

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Note that it takes up a good chunk of room, so plan its use carefully!

Appendix 6: Title (The Hunter in the Mud.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Setting Description

In this episode, the characters come across a summer eldarin who encountered the drow thieves and slew one of them. In exchange for a competition, the summer eldarin's willing to let the adventurers take a look at the drow's journal and map.

Prerequisites

The adventurers need to have crossed into the Flooded Forest, as described in Episode 2, Scene E.

Bonus Objective B

The adventurers meet a summer eldarin who's willing to let the adventurers look through a journal and map that belonged to one of the drow thieves. They simply need to engage in a hunting competition.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The terrain starts to rise, and the maples seem to be more alive and vibrant. Perfectly planted rows of maples act as boundaries for an easily-traversed road through the mire. Past the trees, the adventurers see a three-story house built on the highest ground of the Flooded Forest. A balcony extends from the second floor. In front of the house, a hedge maze rises from the swamp. Instead of the lush green, perfectly manicured hedge mazes of Neverwinter noble estates, this one is composed of brambles. Spiky thorns jut out of the ten-foot-high hedge. The maze covers two acres of swamp.

Lighting. A haze perpetually leaves the Flooded Forest in perpetual twilight. At night, the darkness is thicker than most places.

Creatures/NPCs

Elabrimborn

Elabrimborn claims to be a man of nature. He isn't comfortable in crowded cities or villages where everyone insists on getting in your business. He prefers a solitary life, to be in the company of animals. Besides, it gives Elabrimborn great pleasure to make this little island of the Flooded Forest a little more beautiful. A DC 17 Intelligence (Insight) check reveals Elabrimborn's not telling the whole story. He's leaving out his blood lust, his desire to kill off those he considers beasts. Yes, he considers the drow to be beasts.

Objectives/Goals. Elabrimborn is a summer eldarin who enjoys living in the wilds, where he can have privacy to enjoy the finer things in life without interference from society. Also, this allows him the isolation to hunt sentient beings for sport, then use taxidermy to transform the corpses into trophies.

What Does He Know? Elabrimborn knows the adventurers are on a quest related to the drow he killed. He knows the information he has stashed away could greatly benefit the companions. However, their desperation gives him a chance to force them into a hunting competition.

The group can go to the front door or try to pass by stealthily. If the group tries to move on, they're surprised when an arrow with a note tacked to it slams into a tree, inches from an adventurer's head. The note reads: Don't be rude. Be my guests. E-." Looking back at the house, the group sees an elf standing on the balcony, poking out from behind a false wall, placed several feet in front of the real wall, built to be indistinguishable from the real one. The hunter waves.

If the group insists on leaving, Elabrimborn hunts the companions through the swamp. The rules for the hunt are the same as the hunt competition in the maze.

If the adventurers head for the house, they meet the tall blonde elf standing in the doorway with a bottle of wine in his hand. "Welcome to Bramble Bloom Estate, my home. I am Elabrimborn. You all look like you could use some wine and cheese. Am I wrong? Please come inside."

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In addition, here we see how two different scenes are laid out—each with their own column.

Scenes are labeled alphabetically.

Scene B. Elabrimborn's Estate

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The house is large and open, with visible rafters overhead and plank floors under foot. There are round platforms scattered throughout the open space. Each contains the stuffed remains of a creature Elabrimborn hunted and killed. These include: a troll dog, a giant owlbear and a drow dressed in black leather armor.

Lighting. The main room is brightly lit by a large fireplace. The trophies are highlighted by floating balls of light.

Elabrimborn invites everyone to take a rest on overstuffed rothe leather chairs. He pours them all a glass of wine, which he makes himself.

Elabrimborn steers the conversation to what brings the group into the Flooded Forest. Are they treasure hunters bound for Ylraphon? If the adventurers tell the truth, his excitement's piqued. He considers the group to be fellow hunters, having pursued the drow back and forth across the Moonsea Region. He yearns to test his prowess against the adventurers'. Go to **Elabrimborn's Challenge**.

The adventurers might question Elabrimborn about the stuffed drow. The elf snickers, "A group of them tried to sneak across my estate several weeks back. I followed them until I came to the most advantageous spot to pick off their rearward member."

Elabrimborn dragged the body back to his estate and stuffed the drow, like any other prized trophy in his collection. The adventurers might be curious what possessions the drow had. Elabrimborn admits he found a journal and map in the drow's bag. These items are hidden in a safe place. Perhaps he'd wager them if the group consented to a competition.

Proceed to **Elabrimborn's Challenge**.

Elabrimborn's Challenge

The adventurers' ability to track the drow from the Waydown through the Flooded Forest proves the group comprises exceptional hunters. Elabrimborn would like to see how good they are compared to him. He proposes a hunt. The companions and Elabrimborn will enter the hedge maze from different entrances. They'll hunt one another. When they find their prey, they'll make a single nonlethal attack. The side that scores the most hits in three rounds wins. If

Elabrimborn wins, he has the honor of besting the adventurers. If they win, Elabrimborn grants them access to the drow's possessions.

Each round, the adventurers choose a hunter. The group must rotate between different hunters. The others will be potential attackers. The hunter makes two different skill rolls of his choice, used to either evade Elabrimborn or track him through the maze, while avoiding his keen eyes. Allow the hunters to choose which skills they roll, but they must justify their choices by describing how they're using the skills.

Elabrimborn uses his Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Perception).

Both sides add their roll results together. If the adventurer gets the better result, the adventurers get the drop on Elabrimborn. If Elabrimborn gets the higher total, he gets the drop on them.

If the hunter gets the drop on Elabrimborn, everyone in the party except the hunter rolls for initiative. The character with the highest initiative gets to make a single attack with Advantage against Elabrimborn. However, the character who rolls the highest initiative may forsake his attack in order to use an ability to buff the attack of the character who rolled the second highest initiative. If Elabrimborn gets the drop on the company, he makes an attack with Advantage at the adventurer of his choice. This initiative order continues to be used for subsequent rounds in the contest, negating a need for multiple initiative rolls and the same characters always getting to make the attacks.

If Elabrimborn and the adventurer hunter tie, both sides come upon one another at the same instant. Elabrimborn rolls initiative and gets worked into the initiative order. Whoever has the higher initiative, Elabrimborn or the next adventurer to act in initiative order, gets to make the attack. If that attack misses, the next highest initiative roller gets to make an attack. After that, both sides break off the attack to hide in the maze.

Once someone's been hit by an attack, both sides get two minutes to hide in the maze before the hunt resumes. This has no mechanical effect.

Before the hunt begins, roll 1d4. On that round of the hunt, a pair of alligators) attack the adventurers during the initiative count. Play through the full initiative this round. If Elabrimborn wins this round, he makes his attack on initiative number 99 and runs back into the maze to hide. If Elabrimborn was attacked this round, he afterwards runs back into the maze for two minutes to hide. He doesn't intervene in the alligator (**crocodile**) fight.

If Elabrimborn (**summer eldarin**) wins the contest, he thanks the adventurers for the challenge and sends them on their way. He returns to his estate. If attacked, he doesn't pull any punches and fights to kill. If the adventurers emerge victorious, Elabrimborn is true to his word and provides the group with a journal and map from the drow's possessions.

If Elabrimborn's killed, it takes a DC 25 Wisdom (Intelligence) check and 3d6 hours of searching to find the drow's map and journal, under a trapdoor beneath the platform the drow's mounted onto. The trapdoor's rigged with a trap.

Blade Tension Trap

Simple trap (level 5, dangerous trap)

A tiny blade is loaded like a trebuchet bolt in the cubby beneath the trapdoor. When the door's opened, the blade's launched into the face of the person looking into the trapdoor.

Trigger. Anyone attempting to pick or open the lock triggers the trap.

Effect. The triggering creature must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 55 (4d10) piercing damage and is partially blinded until he takes a long rest as the blade nicks the target's eye. He suffers disadvantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks and other skills and attacks that depend on sight. On a successful save, the creature takes half the damage and isn't blinded.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the trap, but only if the creature inspects the lock. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves tools disables the launching device, and a check with a total of ten or lower triggers the trap.

The map shows the drow's planned route from the Waydown Garrison through the Flooded Forest and to a specific cave in the northwest Earthspur Mountains. For the journal, go to **Appendix 11**.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Elabrimborn has designed his estate to be a battleground, where he has advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks, because of hidey-holes. The heroes will need to keep him in sight, or else suffer nasty sneak attacks.

EXPLORATION

Studying the estate with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds hidey-holes Elabrimborn built to gain Advantage during fights on his property. Success on this check negates Elabrimborn from making use of those places.

SOCIAL

Elabrimborn is psychopathic with no regard for life other than his own. Only promises of a greater hunt will pique his interest and bring him round to negotiate.

Commented [TW33]: The players are destined to engage with a scene in different ways. This is a great place to describe what happens if any of the three core pillars of the game are used as an approach by the characters. This is particularly useful if the scene in question is intended to engage one pillar (i.e. combat), but through clever roleplay and discourse the players turn it into a social or exploration scene. These aren't rules for the DM to follow, these are suggestions, so they should be worded as such.

Note that it takes up a good chunk of room, so plan its use carefully!

Appendix 7: Priestess Khalazza's Journal Part 1 (Player Handout #1)

A company arrived from the surface. I despised them upon sight. I loathed them even more when they proved capable. They sought information about a drow party, not from my settlement, whose trail had gone cold after penetrating the defenses of the Waydown Garrison. The time this happened coincided with the time my best warriors insisted on going on a slave hunt. They returned empty-handed, but some of them were injured. I associated these injuries to an encounter with the ancient lizard who sleeps in the lake upriver.

After using some spells and searching my hunters' dwellings, the surface dwellers found evidence that my hunters were followers of Lolth's hated child, Vhaeraun, and had recently been visited by him in their dreams.

The hunters confessed being visited by Vhaeraun and were instructed to drive away a group of drow who would try to enter the Underdark from the Waydown. Apparently they were successful. These other drow were driven away to enter the Underdark in the northwest Earthspur Mountains.

I was shocked to learn I had Vhaeraun cultists in my fold. I ordered the adventurers to leave Zamoniezash immediately, to which they obliged me. Then, I prepared to torture those Vhaeraun blasphemers.

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Appendix 8: Priestess Khalazza's Journal Part 2 (Player Handout #2)

The Vhaeraun cultists must have made contact with their god, for none would verbally forsake him and ask for Lolth's forgiveness in death. The story of how Vhaeraun met with my men remained consistent between all the blasphemers. They awoke from their trance with the sense that something was wrong. One by one they gathered at the riverbank. Then there was an explosion, as the Lolth statue burst into flames and curled into the fetal position. Its stomach bubbled, as if many things were crawling around inside its abdomen. One by one, the creatures - a cross between a giant spider and a drider landed in a puddle of slime. It only took moments for the spider/drider creatures to find their legs. There was one for each hunter. They looked into each hunter's eyes. The men knew they were in the presence of divinity. "I am Vhaeraun, faithful and patient followers" the creatures spoke in unison. "I have chosen you for a very important task. Seven drow will try to enter the Underdark from the Waydown. Be ready for them at the sinkhole. Drive them off, but do not kill them. Demand they return to the Underdark via the Earthspur Mountains. So speaks Vhaeraun!

"When they are gone, return to your village and know you have served your god well. You have played a great role in changes to the multiverse that will lead to Lolth's downfall. Be proud, my faithful. Hurry to the sinkhole. The drow are on their way."

The hunters awoke in their dwellings. They returned to the riverbank and found the Lolth statue still intact. But they did find the tracks of giant spiders around the places the drider-like creatures fell from the statue.

The group conspired to get me to send them on a slave hunt. They were successful. May their limbs nourish the giant spiders around Zamoniezash. And may that beast Vhaeraun learn not to put blasphemers under my nose.

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Appendix 9: Yeth Hound Kennel Wall Translation (Player Handout #3)

Vhaeraun rose against his mother, Lolth, and was punished greatly for his efforts. First, Lolth took her son's tongue. Then, she greatly scarred his face. From that day forward, Vhaeraun concealed his scars by wearing a black half mask with two blue lenses. Now, Vhaeraun leads mephitis, yeth hounds and shadow dragons in his quest to destroy his mother. However, his greatest weapon remains hidden...

Appendix 10: Secret Room Wall Translation (Player Handout #4)

Sabrae Ssambra was rejected for special service to Lolth. The fickle spider goddess mangled her chosen's body into something half drow and half spider, then sent her back to the Underdark. Sabrae fled her home of Szith Morcane, doomed to hunt alone for hundreds of years in darkness and madness.

Merciful Vhaeraun visited her and said, "Lolth doesn't know the mistake She made by condemning you to existence as a drider. I choose you to become a queen, a queen of a new type of drider, one that can multiply. You, along with your children and their children shall unite and drive Lolth from the Demon Webs."

Appendix 11: Vuzdilyn's Journal (Player Handout #5)

We were awakened to a dream- all seven of us. We awoke into darkness. There was a creaking sound that grew louder. Then, the floor broke out beneath us, and we fell into sand beneath a life-sized statue of Lolth. A thousand rats surrounded us. We were bathed in painful light, caused by the glowing eyes of the vermin. In unison and with a deep voice, the rats spoke. "I am Vhaeraun, and I am charging you with a sacred task. Journey to Hillsfar. In their museum, they possess Lolth's beloved artifact, the Eye of Lolth. Retrieve it. Bring it back to the Underdark. There, I will claim it and reward you."

We awoke and found ourselves in an unfamiliar sandy cavern. No rats. No Lolth statue. With luck, we found our way back to Szith Morcane. There, we planned our ascension and the theft.

The return to Waydown was a big surprise. Warriors from Zamoniezash intercepted us and prevented our return to the Underdark. They must have been pawns in Lolth's schemes to prevent Vhaeraun from acquiring the Eye of Lolth. Luckily, we escaped with the artifact and plotted a new course to the Underdark: through the Earthspur Mountains. Lolth can't plug all the gateways leading into the Underdark.

Appendix 12: Magic Item

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

Wand of Web (Table F)

Wand (uncommon), (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can expend a charge to cast the *web* spell (save DC 15) from it.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

This item is found on **Magic Item Table F** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Commented [TW34]: If the item is found in another book, replace this with the book's title.

Appendix 13: Story Awards

Characters playing the adventure may earn:

- **Web Weary.** Adventurers who survive this adventure know how to tread cautiously through Vhaeraun-touched drider lairs and rescue allies trapped in Vhaeraun-touched drider webs. This may have great benefit in future *Vhaeraun Touched* adventures.
- **“Kill Me.”** If an adventurer puts a humanoid about to die giving birth to a Vhaeraun-touched drider out of his misery in this adventure, her sanity teeters. Whenever faced with a similar situation in the *Vhaeraun-Touched* series, the DM is advised to describe the character’s struggle with her sanity.
- **Eye of Lolth.** A golden bracelet with a ruby magically suspended in the center is on the ground next to the him. No part of the ruby touches the bracelet. It seems to float in the gap between the gold. There’s writing in Undercommon on the bracelet, the *Eye of Lolth*. It reads: From the Demon Webs, Lolth sees all who scheme against Her.”

This isn’t a magic item, but an item sacred to Lolth and her followers. It only exists in this adventure and cannot be attained for any future games.

Characters will not be able to acquire the item and keep it. Lolth arranges for her minions of spiders to take the *Eye of Lolth* at the end of the adventure.

Appendix 14: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-9th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

New to the Annual Storyline?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep>

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/waterdeep-adventures/>

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

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

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

These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

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

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

Adjusting This Adventure

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

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

Determining Party Strength

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

Commented [TRW35]: A Final Note on Prerequisites and Objectives

D&D Players love to do things that their DM's can't possibly anticipate, and at the same time, Dungeon Masters are encouraged to customize the content of our adventures, mixing and matching bits here and there to make the final story as-played, their own.

To help facilitate this kind of flexible play, please utilize a rearrangeable approach for each adventure, part of which is providing clearly stated PREREQUISITES, (things that must take place prior to the beginning of an episode) and OBJECTIVES (things that should be accomplished before the end of an episode).

Objectives and prerequisites allow DMs to more easily swap the position of episodes throughout play. The DM might even add content to an episode or remove content from an episode without losing track of what needs to happen when by explicitly calling out the dependencies that exist between the different parts of the adventure or episode.

A Word to the Wise

It is also possible, given a complex episode with multiple locations, to make use of prerequisites and objectives to make scene order flexible inside the episode itself. Consult with the admins in charge of content before doing this however.

Commented [TW36]: CCC adventure designers may omit this.