

TOME OF HORRORS

2020

INSTANT ENCOUNTERS VOLUME TWO



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PIT FIENDS?	3
THEY ESCAPED!	3
THE BASEMENT	3
ABYSSAL LARVA.....	3
DON'T EAT THE PURPLE SHROOMS.....	4
FUNGUS FOREST.....	4
RESTLESS NATIVES	4
BLINDHEIM	4
OASIS OF THE KRAKEN.....	6
THE OASIS WHILE TRAVELING, THE	6
SAND KRAKEN.....	6

PIT FIENDS?

Part humor, part horror, this little adventure should prove a delight for any party. It is designed for a Tier 1 party, but it can be beefed up by adding more abyssal larvae, or having a few demons pop in on a hunting trip (**dretches** hunt and eat abyssal larvae).

THEY ESCAPED!

While visiting a city the character hear screams coming from the marketplace. Three abyssal larvae are attacking innocents, biting at will and spraying their maggots about willy-nilly. Once this infestation is put down the characters (though use of Arcane, Perception, and Religion) can backtrack the trail of the abyssal larvae to a nearby townhouse.

The townhouse is empty and there is the distinctive smell of rotting meat permeating the street outside. The front and back doors are locked (easily picked or smashed open), but several windows have been broken from the inside. Investigating inside reveals that this is a middle-class townhouse that hasn't seen a maid's care for weeks. Five more abyssal larvae are prowling the house and will launch an uncoordinated attack.

THE BASEMENT

Venturing in to the basement of the townhouse, the characters find an unit room containing a summoning circle, a large pit, and a small workroom study. Papers lay scattered across the room as well as broken fragments of glass and pottery. A well chewed up corpse dressed in the remains of fine robes lies in one corner. The circle is unbroken but not active. The pit is ten feet deep and contains six squirming larvae as well as several pieces of lumber propped up against the edge. The abyssal larvae can squirm up the bookcase to get at intruders.

ABYSSAL LARVA

Medium outsider, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +2

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Tortured Mind. The mind of an Abyssal larva cannot be read. If a creature attempts to read an Abyssal larva's mind, it takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, the creature cannot take reactions and uses their action to Dash in a random direction, even if that leads them into dangerous areas.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) acid damage.

Maggot Spray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +3 to hit, range 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 poison damage and the target must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned effect on a success.

MASTER HAVIN'S NOTES

On the workbench and scattered across the floor are the notes of the townhouse's owner, a magic practitioner of middling power named Havin. He had recently inherited the house and had returned home from his studies in Remé. Seeking a means to apply his arcane knowledge and make some money to fund further research and study, he hit upon a unique waste removal strategy. Abyssal harvesters will eat nearly any organic substance, so why not summon several and use them as a waste disposal system? They would be easier to manage than an ottyugh, and better than the current method of hauling, burning, and composting.

However, the city leaders were not keen on the idea of summoning demons inside the city and refused Havin's idea. In a rage he decided he would show them by making a prototype to prove his theory. The bookcase was a test to see if the abyssal larvae would consume wood. Instead they sped up the lumber and consumed Havin. Searching his notes reveals that a total of twenty larvae had been summoned, the characters might want to hunt down the rest.

ABYSSAL LARVA

This creature looks like a puffy and bloated human-sized whitish-yellow maggot with purplish veins pulsating under its fleshy form. A vaguely humanoid head sits atop its body, and its facial features are twisted and disdraught as if the creature was in a constant state of pain. A pair of large, downward-curving horns jut from its head, just above its sunken eyes. Its mouth is lined with filthy and sharpened fangs.

Abyssal larvae are believed to be the final form of an evil soul deemed too weak to become a demon or even the servant of a demon. Another theory suggests that the larvae are the imprisoned forms of slain demon princes and lords. Whatever their true origin, Abyssal larvae are plentiful throughout the Abyssal planes and are some of the most disgusting and loathsome creatures encountered there.

These creatures feed on anything they can consume, be it rotting carcasses, freshly slain creatures, and even waste. Consumables are first liquefied through a process requiring the Abyssal larva to regurgitate stomach acids onto its meal. As the food breaks down, the larva slurps it up and consumes it.

While loathed by the more civilized, some demons such as dretches and babaus savor the juicy flesh of these creatures and often engage in hunting expeditions across the Abyss, killing and devouring as many as they can find.

Acting as if almost mindless, Abyssal larvae attack any living creature they encounter. They have no real tactics other than swarming a foe and biting relentlessly. These creatures fight until destroyed.



DON'T EAT THE PURPLE SHROOMS

This one-sheet adventure is designed for 2-4 characters of Tier 1. It can be dropped in to any dungeon crawl or similar adventure that takes place in a natural cavern. While the encounter can be resolved through violence, that is by no means the only means by which the drama can unfold.

FUNGUS FOREST

The passage opens in to a large cavern nearly a mile long and half as much wide filled with all manner of fungi. Small molds and lichens cling to the rocky floor and struggle up the walls, toadstools taller than a human thrust up out of a forest of smaller caps, funnels, pillars, shelves, and umbrellas. The air is filled with spores and very humid. Small waterfalls tumble down from the walls and form a small lake in the middle of the cavern.

The cavern is alive with insects and rodents, but none of them appear to be of large enough size to prove a threat to even a Halfling. Many of the mushrooms are of a bioluminescent species and thus the entire cavern is lit in patches of pale greens, blues, and yellows. In between these patches the darkness of the underworld prevails and the species found there might be very different, and more hazardous, than those who venture in to the dim twilight regions.

This cavern provides a place to tarry for an hour or longer. The lake provides fresh water and the many of the mushrooms are of edible varieties (though these tend to not be the bioluminescent ones). There are fish in the lake, blind white squirming things that can be easily caught with hook and line.

RESTLESS NATIVES

After 1d4 hours in the cavern the local tribe of blindheim awaken and begin their regular routine. First comes the struggle over who is in charge this day, followed by a frolicking good fight. This creates a fair amount of noise and produces flashes of light as the blindheim try to pin each other in their eye beams. This disturbance should be visible to the characters from a distance, and might draw their attention and interest.

After the waking ritual is complete, the blindheim set about their next task for the day, namely getting some food and torturing some small animals. Eventually either the characters will take note of the blindheim or the blindheim will notice that there are intruders. This is when the fun begins.

The blindheim know the area and are remorseless hunters. While not terribly intelligent, they are cunning in a low sort of way. A straight up fight does not please them, but the chance of fresh meat from the surface is too much to let pass. At first the blindheim will scatter, each seeking its own hiding place from the larger and fearsome intruders. After an hour, especially if none of the blindheim have been attacked, the twelve members of the tribe will begin to gather again.

Cooperation is not their strong suit, but they can work together for short periods of time. The blindheim will first gather in one large group and attempt to ambush the characters, preferably while the latter are sleeping. If this fails, the surviving blindheim will break in to groups of two or three and attempt to snipe intruders with their eye beams in order to blind them before moving in for the kill. Any blindheim attack can be driven off by killing one of them, but these little aberrations are relentless. They will continue to follow the characters and make periodic attacks until all the blindheim have been killed.

These little monsters will continue their attacks, although at decreasing intervals, for days if need be. Their opportunism knows no bounds and they can show up in the middle of another combat, snipping from the sidelines and rushing in to get a bite or two in their wide mouths before running off. The blindheim should be pests, pests that drive the characters to frustration and perhaps to even rooting out the nest and ending the threat once and for all.

Then again, they reproduce rapidly and asexually, thus it only takes one for the threat to pop up again, and again, and again.

BLINDHEIM

This creature is a 4-foot-tall frog-like humanoid with large, bulbous eyes that constantly emit bright yellow beams of light. Its skin is mottled yellow, growing darker across its back. Its feet are webbed as are its claws.

Blindheims dwell in underground caverns and sustain themselves on a diet of fungi, molds, and small rodents. An extra eyelid allows the blindheim to "turn off" its eyes when it is sleeping or resting. A dead blindheim's eyes are dull gold in color.

Blindheims are 4 feet tall and weigh about 150 pounds.

A blindheim attacks by first blinding a foe with its gaze and then rushing in to use its bite attack. It can turn its eyes on and off as it wishes but always leaves them on during combat. If overmatched, a blindheim flees.

BLINDHEIM

Small aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 17 (5d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Primordial

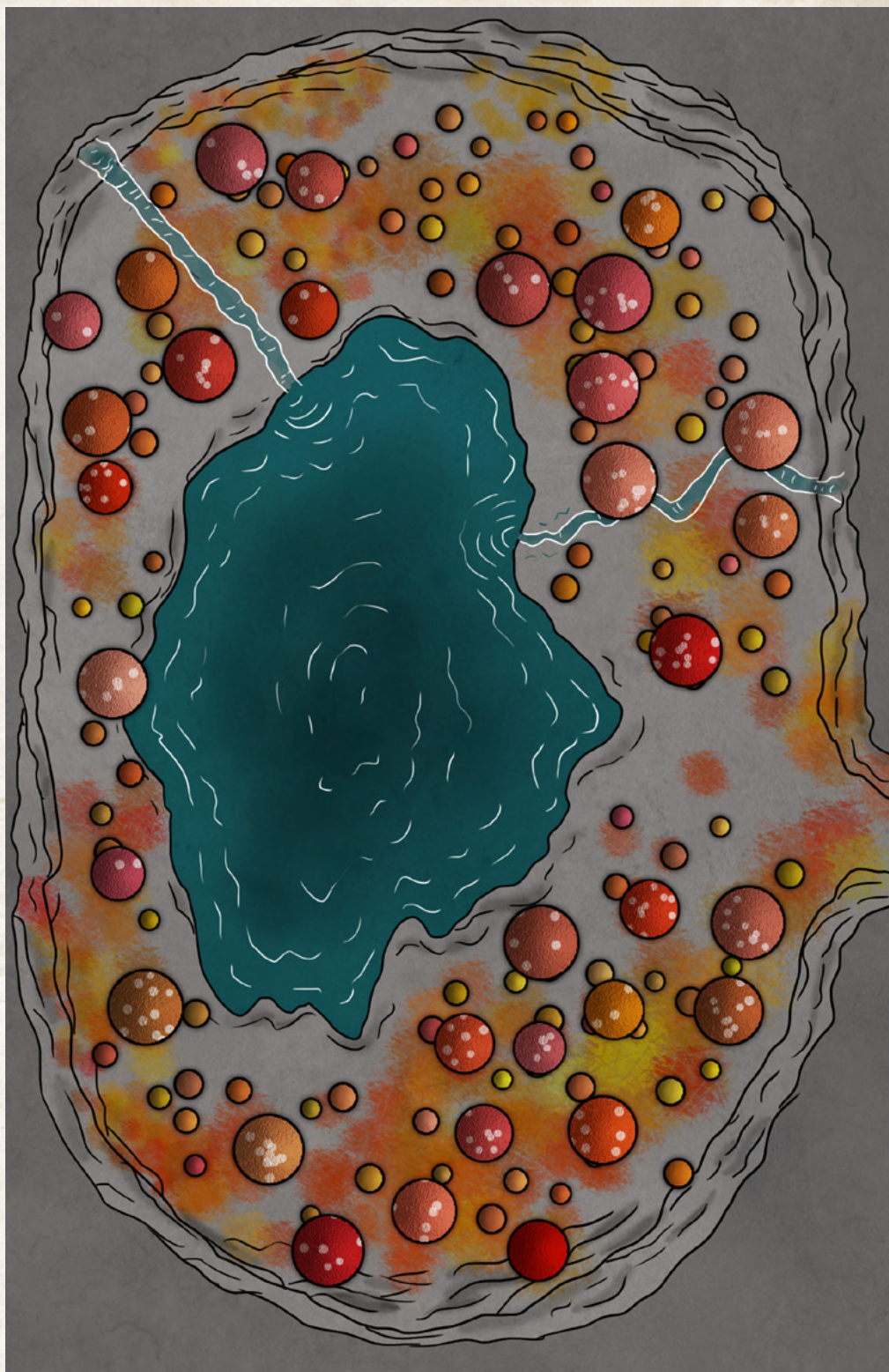
Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Eye Beams. When a blindheim's eyes are open, it emits a 30-foot cone of light. It can see normally in this light and functions normally in areas of magical darkness. A creature looking at a blindheim when its eye beams are "on" must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 hour. A blinded creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

ACTIONS

Bite, Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.





OASIS OF THE KRAKEN

This one-sheet adventure is intended for a party of 2–6 characters of Tier 2. It can be used whenever the characters are traveling across desert sands, through wastelands, or similar areas. Any mix of characters will serve well, but characters with wilderness survival skills will be most useful.

THE OASIS WHILE TRAVELING, THE

characters discover an isolated oasis surrounded by a low ridge of rock on three sides that protects a deep pool of clean, fresh water. The opening allows easy entrance and faces away from the prevailing winds, which offers even better protection from the elements. The area around the oasis is empty, and it appears that no desert tribe claims the region. Unbeknownst to the characters, the oasis is not settled because the locals consider it haunted (and because the lone inhabitant who dared to live here was eaten in his home).

Vegetation grows thick on the rock ridge around the oasis, with palm trees, shrubs, and grasses providing food for animals and firewood for a campfire. The overhanging trees offer abundant shade, and some even bear fruits, dates, and nuts that fall to the ground. Anyone looking for tracks finds that no large animals appear to use the oasis. The pool at the center of the oasis is 30 feet across but devoid of any fish. The waters are cool and quite refreshing to any weary travelers.

Just to the east of the oasis is a tumbled-down ruin of adobe blocks. It appears someone once lived within the structure, but time and wind have taken their toll. The sandy floor in the center of this building appears to have erupted upward from below some time ago. Broken furniture is cast aside and broken along the walls.

The oasis is the occasional home of a sand kraken that feeds on animals or travelers that happen along. The beast left weeks ago at the start of mating season. Unfortunately for the characters, the kraken is now returning to its hunting grounds, satiated and ready for its next meal.

SAND KRAKEN

A huge, bloated, eyeless, and formless octopus rises from the sand. From its pale-yellow, shapeless body sprout 10 long tentacles tipped with cruel barbed pads.

Sand krakens are dangerous creatures encountered only in remote wastelands. A sand kraken keeps its body well concealed, buried deep in sand or loose rock, and inaccessible to most attacks. The creature rarely moves from the place where it digs its first burrow (although they are known to travel during mating season), and once it settles in, it rarely sees the light of day again. The only parts of a sand kraken that are usually seen are its tentacles, and by then it is often too late.

Sand krakens are omnivores but prefer meat to any other food. Once it captures and kills its prey, it pulls the carcass down into its sandy lair and devours it with its great central maw. For this reason, a number of scholars speculate a biological relationship between sand krakens and dust diggers.

For most of its life, a sand kraken remains dormant and silent, buried several feet below the surface of the ground. When it senses prey, its tentacles swiftly rise to the surface. A sand kraken uses its initial attacks to immobilize prey by constriction. Each tentacle has its own secondary brain and can attack independently. While tentacles can be harmed and severed, the only true way to kill a sand kraken is to dig it up and destroy its body.

SAND KRAKEN

Large aberration, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d10 + 36)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	5 (–3)	13 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Buried Camouflage. A sand kraken has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth)

checks and it has total cover from attacks as long as it remains buried.

Keen Smell. The sand kraken has advantage on Wisdom (Perception)

checks that rely on smell.

Tentacles. A sand kraken has 10 tentacles, each of which can grapple one creature. Each tentacle has an AC of 20, 15 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Severing or destroying a tentacle deals no damage to the sand kraken, and severed tentacles regrow at a rate of one per day.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sand kraken makes three tentacle attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d12

+ 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a

DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned

until the disease is cured. For every 24 hours that elapse, the target

must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5

(1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if

the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the

target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13

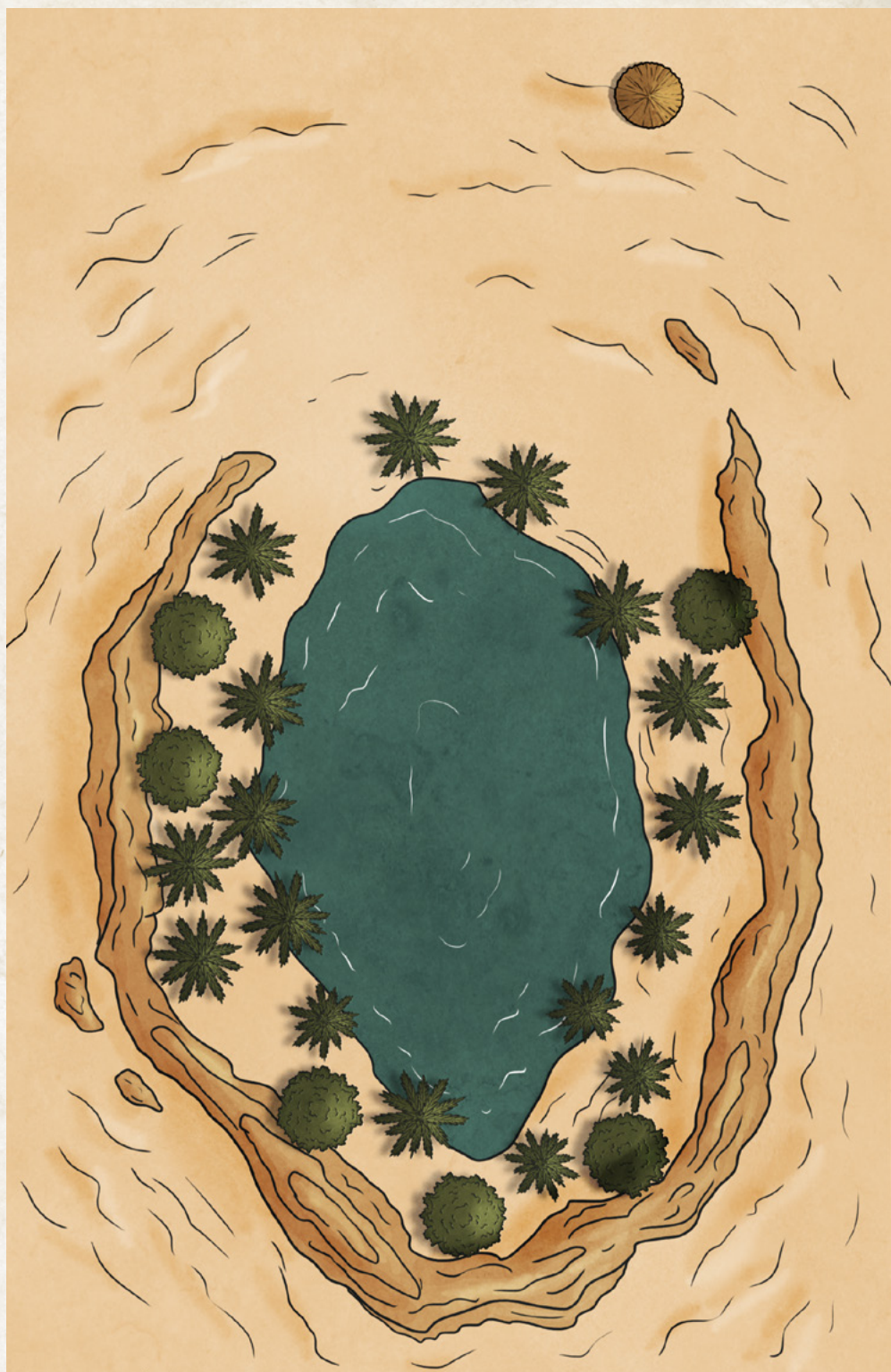
(2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 15)

and restrained. Until the grapple ends, a grappled target takes 13 (2d8

+ 4) bludgeoning damage at the beginning of each of the sand kraken's

turns.





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