

Spies Below the Moonsea



House of Moonlight

An Adventure for Characters of 5th to 10th Level



Adventure Series by Andrew Bishkinskyi

House of Moonlight

A Spies Below the Moonsea Adventure



The time and place for a mysterious meeting are set. What the adventurers find is bound to set them upon a journey to a land of darkness, decadence and deception.

A Four- to Six-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters. Optimized for APL 8.

By Andrew Bishkinskyi

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ADVENTURE PRIMER

“A rightful place awaits you in the Realms Above, in the Land of the Great Light. Come in peace, and live beneath the sun again, where trees and flowers grow.”

— The Message of Eilistraee

This section provides the adventure’s background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your players’ characters to the action.

BACKGROUND

Dedicated to the good goddess Eilistraee, the Drow House Tor’Erhyl of the Zethlentyn Protectorate is working toward ending slavery within their realm.

In recent tendays, they have managed to get a cryptic message to the surface via a band of unsuspecting adventurers who had been passing through the Underdark. The message contained a sigil of the house and coordinates to a location on the surface. A specific date was also noted.

Unbeknownst to surface powers, the location and time are not for a meeting, but rather denote the time and place where another of Zethlentyn’s houses plans to conduct a surface raid to take slaves. Unable to directly interfere themselves, House Tor’Erhyl is hoping that those dispatched to the location would be able to intervene and prevent the abduction.

As far as adventurers are concerned – all they know is the time and place. They’re asked to go and see who shows up. The location in question is a nondescript clearing in the woods. A certain caravan that often passes by the location has made a habit of making camp there en route. It is this caravan that the drow are intending to ambush.

EPISODES

- **Episode 1: A Meeting About a Meeting.** Characters meet **Liana Tuffletackle** of the Lords Alliance and are asked to travel to a specific location in the Moonsea.
- **Episode 2: A Moonlit Dance.** Characters must intervene when a drow raiding party attacks a caravan. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: The House of Moonlight.** Characters travel to the Underdark to establish an alliance with a good-aligned drow house. This is **Story Objective B**.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure includes two bonus objectives.

- **Bonus Objective A: Sights Below the Moonsea.** On their journey through the Underdark, the party has several interesting encounters. This bonus objective can be found in **Appendix 7**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Witness.** While investigating the collapsed mine, the characters locate a duergar miner trapped underneath. Rescuing him could hold the key to their search. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 8**.

EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, and play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately 4 to 6 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 4 hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

Main Objective Only. To complete the adventure’s main objective, the characters participate in Episodes 1 through 3 in order, however, you may include the opportunity to pursue bonus objectives.

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by one or two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives.

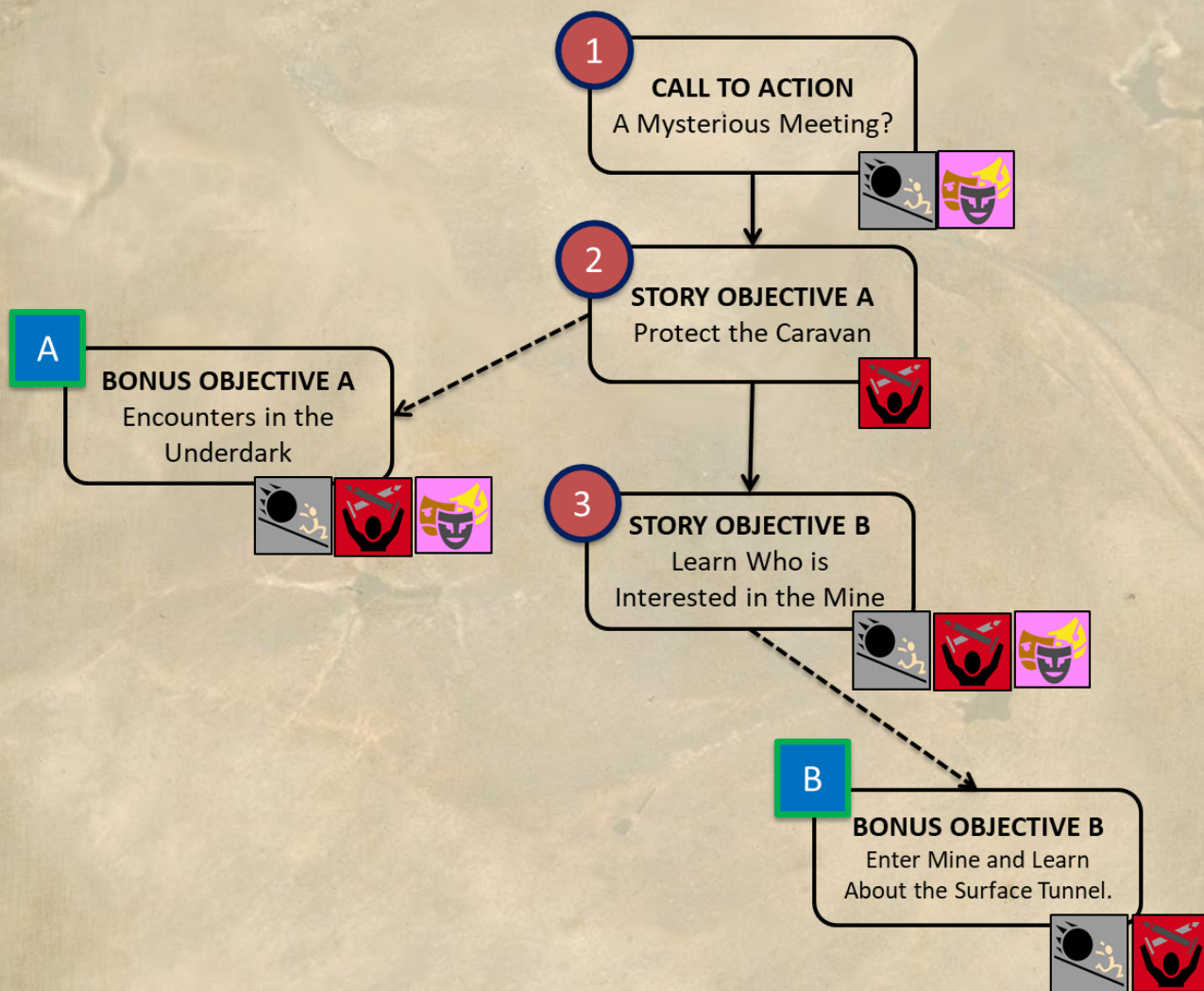
The bonus objectives may only be taken at specific points in the adventure.

Bonus Objective A can be encountered after Episode 2 and before Episode 3, as it takes place while the party journeys through the Underdark.

Bonus Objective B can be encountered during Episode 3, while the characters investigate the Axcelon mine.

EPISODE FLOWCHART

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



EPISODE 1: A MEETING ABOUT A MEETING (CALL TO ACTION)

Estimated Duration: 20 Minutes

SCENE A. THAR AND AWAY

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Clandestine Meeting or Drow Ambush? The authorities in Melvaunt have been delivered the note by a party of adventurers. They are looking for a someone to go investigate what they believe is a meeting.

A Moon Coin and a Note. Characters who played CCC-HAL-03 *Six Swords Unbound* were the actual recipients of the mysterious note from an unknown source (it had been planted without their knowledge during an adventure in the Underdark). These adventurers may have delivered it to the authorities or chosen to investigate the area themselves.

Eilistraee's Faithful. Worshippers of Eilistraee and characters familiar with the Underdark may have heard stories of the mysterious "moon coin". Upon inquiring, they are brought to speed.

AREA INFORMATION

The meeting is at the home of **Liana Tuffletackle**.

Dimensions & Terrain. Liana's home lies in an affluent area on the outskirts of the town. It looks as though a vacation or secondary residence has been converted to a permanent living space. The house was initially built for human height, yet most are now halfling-size, creating an odd effect.

There is a large office that multiple guest chairs of different sizes, clearly set up by someone sensitive to the need of entertaining humanoids of various shapes – there is even a chair where back has been designed to allow a humanoid with a tail to slide in.

Light Conditions. The adventure begins in the morning, with the sun shining brightly outside.

CREATURES/NPCs

Liana Tuffletackle ("of the Waterdeep Tuffletackles!") – Female Halfling Noble, Lords Alliance, NG. (Liana previously appeared in *Six Striking Swords*, where she had been charged with resolving the trade stoppage on the route to Thar.)

What Does She Want? Liana is a low-ranking member of the Lords Alliance who has been posted to Melvaunt to look after the surging trade interests there. It's not a great post – especially with the many dangers in nearby

Thar. Liana is business-savvy and intelligent, but not much use in the field.

Liana serves the Lords Alliance interests: prosperity of trade and safety of the region are her top priorities – things she takes very seriously indeed!

What Does She Know? In the course of sorting out a recent trade disruption, a group of adventurers ended up in the Underdark and while being escorted out by some drow, they were slipped a mysterious coin and a note. The note has the coordinates of a surface location and a time – which is tomorrow night.

The sender of the note is unknown, though it is known to have come from the Underdark. Attached to the note was a coin with the symbol of Eilistraee – a good goddess of the drow.

CALL TO ACTION

Liana believes it critical to investigate the note and is willing to go herself. However, she understands that she is not quite equipped to handle the dangers of Thar (though she had recently been forced to ride her trusty pony "Dave" a full day's ride down the Thar trade route and felt totally invigorated by the experience!)

- Liana tasks the party with investigating the location of the meeting at the stated time. She will accompany them, but leaves the approach details up to them. If it is a meeting, she does want to ensure that it starts off on the right foot. This is **Story Objective A**.
- Liana also mentions that there are a great many dangers in Thar and making allies against them is paramount. If there is an opportunity to make new allies, it needs to be pursued. "Making an ally today prevents them from being an enemy tomorrow!" **Story Objective B** is to pursue an alliance if an opportune partner presents themselves.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

If time allows, the adventure contains two Bonus Objectives, each taking approximately one hour each to complete. **Bonus Objective A** can be encountered after Episode 2 and before Episode 3, as it takes place while the party journeys through the Underdark.

Bonus Objective B can be encountered during Episode 3, while the characters investigate the Axcelon mine.

EPISODE 2: A MOONLIT DANCE

Estimated Duration: 80–90 minutes

SCENE A. NOTHING OF NOTE PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene after **Episode 1**.

OBJECTIVES

The characters arrive at the meeting location, find it empty and must investigate.

AREA INFORMATION

This scene takes place at the meeting spot, however, if the characters wish to take precautions or a sneaky approach, they may do so. If the characters purposely choose to hurry and arrive early, they can arrive in the early afternoon on the meeting day, otherwise they arrive in late afternoon just as the light is beginning to dim.

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The area referenced in the note is a small clearing in the middle of fairly dense forest, about 100 feet away from the main trade route road. The forest closer to the road is broad-leaved, but switches to mostly coniferous after the first few dozen feet and remains so until being cut off by a sheer rockface past the clearing. **Refer to map in Appendix 5.**

Lighting. The weather is clear through the day and night.

Tracks. The area of the clearing is covered in pine needles and conceals tracks.

Other Features. The area has a stone firepit that has haphazardly been concealed with some tree branches but doesn't take much looking to find. In truth, this area is a stopping spot for a wagon and horses, though characters have no way of ascertaining who camps here or why.

Concealed Path. A wagon path from the main road to the clearing has actually been cut through the trees and is purposely disguised using logs and branches to conceal it from view. Caravaners like their spot hidden and secluded for the purposes of both safety and privacy. A combination of DC13 Wisdom (Perception and/or Survival) and Intelligence (Investigation) checks can help the group uncover that someone occasionally stops here. They can find humanoid footprints, though they're too old to identify. It looks like it has been at least a couple of weeks since the spot was last used.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters arrived early, they can spend their time in whatever way they wish in preparation. There are plenty of ways to hide in the trees and bushes. Further scouting and investigation do not reveal anything (there is nothing to find).

If the characters arrived just as it was getting dark, it soon becomes dark and they hear the approach of a wagon on the road. **Proceed to Scene B.**



SCENE B. THE CARAVAN

The caravan that typically camps here is coming from Glistar and has had a long trip. They're the ones who created this clearing and plan to stay here. They know nothing about any drow, moon coin or the characters. Allow some tension as the caravan approaches and the characters find a way to approach them. The caravan has some guards but this isn't intended to be a combat.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Same as Scene A.

Lighting. It is a clear night and the moon shines bright above. It is too dark to see by the moon's light alone, so mechanically, it's considered dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

Zim Von Zeam – Human Male, leader of caravan, N.

Zim is an experienced trader that has done this route countless times (Zim and his caravan may have been previously encountered during *Six Striking Swords*)

What Does He Want? Zim's only objective here is to get his caravan a safe rest for the night.

What Does He Know? His caravans have been using this camp for years. They come through every few weeks, but only stop here on the way back from Glistar.

He has no idea about any moon coin or drow. If asked about drow, Zim is noticeably worried. He tells a story about one of his former guards. Her brothers had been taken by a drow raid and she spent many years looking for them, to only recently be reunited. (This story is about Naivara Firahel, whose brothers adventurers had the opportunity to rescue during *Six Swords Unbound*). Drow abductions are every traveler's nightmare.

If asked, Zim shares that this caravan is regularly scheduled, so it's possible that someone knew they would be resting here. Caravan schedules are well known in both Glistar and Melvaunt. In addition to goods and guards, several passengers of no note are traveling with the caravan for safety.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters have had a chance to chat up the caravaners, Zim insists on camping for the night. While somewhat concerned about the characters' clandestine "meeting", no place is any safer, especially with the characters here. He invites the party to join them for dinner.

After dinner, with most of the caravan crew and passengers having retired for the night, drow raiders attack the camp (Details in **Scene C.**)

If any members of the party have the *A Moon Coin and a Note* story award, they are first contacted by **Kayleth Tor'Erhyl** and warned of the imminent raid. If this is the case, they have just under 10 minutes in-game time to prepare for it. Kayleth herself hides during this time.

If no one has the story award, Kayleth observes them from a safe distance using stealth and invisibility. As the drow approach, she uses the *message* spell that tells one character: "ready yourselves, they come, may the moon grant you strength". The party then has 3 rounds to act before the raiders arrive. The recipient of the message also receives the benefit of the *bless* spell for 1 minute (no concentration). Proceed to **Scene C.**

Kayleth Tor'Erhyl – Drow Female, Sword Dancer of Eilistraee, House Tor'Erhyl of the Zethlentyn Protectorate, CG.

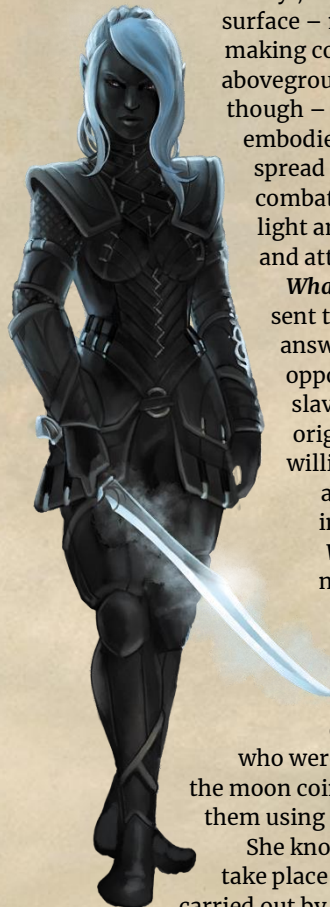
Kayleth is a high-ranking member of House Tor'Erhyl, she has made the journey to the surface – not her first – in the hopes of making contact with characters aboveground. Kayleth is skilled and stealthy, though – like other Sword Dancers – she embodies the will of Eilistraee and aims to spread joy and song where she goes. In combat she fights like a dancer, utilizing light and showy acrobatic movements and attacks.

What Does She Want? Kayleth has been sent to make contact with any who answer the summons of the note and oppose the drow that come to take slaves. Those that were given the note originally had proven that they were willing to oppose evil drow and if they are present, she reveals herself immediately.

What Does She Know? Kayleth was not the one to plant the original note and coin, but she was party to the plan and chosen to be the one to see it through on the surface. She was given a description of those adventurers

who were given the note and having held the moon coin and note, she is able to track them using divination magic.

She knows that a slave raid is scheduled to take place here. She knows that raid is being carried out by Lolth-worshipping House Ouss'Nassath.



SCENE C. DANCE OF DARK AND LIGHT

*“And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes”*

– Byron

OBJECTIVES

The characters must fend off a drow raid and protect the caravan.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Same as Scenes A&B, refer to map in **Appendix 5**. Terrain outside the clearing is difficult terrain for any creature without darkvision. Using a torch or light spells does not negate this. Due to the large number of trees and branches, any ranged attack rolls that target a creature outside of the clearing are subject to a –2 penalty. This is in addition to any cover determined to be provided by individual trees and other features.

Lighting. It is a clear night and the moon shines bright above. Though the moon is out, it is too dark to see by its light alone – mechanically, this is the same as being in the dark. The drow raiders attack under cover of magical darkness, which several of them cast prior to approaching.

CREATURES/NPCs

Caravaners. Zim Von Zeam (swashbuckler), 4 caravan guards and 8 commoners (caravan hands and passengers) are present. The guards take a defensive position and spend their time protecting Zim, the cargo – and when they realize this is a drow raid – the passengers.

Kayleth (drow inquisitor) is hiding when the fighting starts, but joins in when the shadowblade makes her entrance. Kayleth’s entrance is accompanied by a loud melodic song, the moon glow of her sword and an acrobatic jump.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak: 1 Drow Knight, 6 Drow Spies

Weak: 3 Drow Knights, 6 Drow Spies

Average: 1 Drow House Captain, 6 Drow Spies

Strong or Very Strong: 1 Drow House Captain, 1 Drow Knight, 4 Drow Elite Warriors

One of the spies or drow elite carries a wand of web.

While the force is being tactically commanded by the Captain (or knight), it is actually being led by a Drow Shadowblade. She stays out of combat and observes, ensuring no one gets away. The shadowblade goes last in initiative (ahead only of Kayleth) and performs the following actions:

Round 1. Casts *faerie fire* (dark) and teleports away into shadows.

Round 2. Teleports in and attacks a character concentrating on a spell. This is a tactical choice and is used for maximum effect.

The shadowblade. After the shadowblade takes her action at the end of round 2, Kayleth joins the battle and duels the shadowblade, going immediately after her in initiative. From this point, the shadowblade is 100% committed to fighting Kayleth. As Kayleth is able to neutralize the shadowblade’s main advantage, she eventually defeats the shadowblade. While it is strongly recommended that the duel be narrated as the two drow chase each other through the trees, it can also be played out, with player characters being able to intervene. Kayleth must survive the encounter.

Zim, Liana and caravaners. During rounds 1 and 2, all the guards and civilians take cover at the wagons. Starting with Round 3 and going on initiative 10, the 5 of them take shots at the drow. For simplicity, 1d4 of these shots actually hit and those that hit do 5 points of piercing damage each.

Kayleth Adjustments. If using Kayleth’s stat block, the death lance ability is instead called sword of moonlight and deals radiant damage instead. It also radiates bright light in a 15ft radius. On her spell list, replace contagion, insect plague and harm with greater restoration, far step and dawn respectively (far step is used to chase the shadowblade).

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The drow assume that the characters are simply guards. They look to incapacitate everyone. They are, after all, here to take slaves.

EXPLORATION

Characters may have set traps or otherwise prepared. Allow this to provide small advantages. Surprising the drow is unlikely as they fully expect guards and armed resistance.

SOCIAL

The drow raiders can’t be reasoned with. Kayleth can be persuaded to assist the party in other ways than dueling the shadowblade. The guards can be rallied to start firing during round 2 rather than 3.

SCENE D. NEW ALLIES

PREREQUISITES

Proceed with this scene once characters have dealt with the drow raiders.

OBJECTIVES

Kayleth tells the characters of House Tor'Erhyl and invites them to journey to the Underdark to discuss an alliance.

CREATURES/NPCs

Kayleth, Liana and Zim are all present once the attack is repelled.

DEVELOPMENT

If she has not already done so, Kayleth introduces herself and tells the characters that she belongs House Tor'Erhyl of the **Zethlentyn Protectorate**, in the Underdark. Now that they have proven their willingness to stand up to evil drow, she invites them to accompany her to the Underdark and discuss an alliance with the leadership of her house.

Liana is very enthused by the development and encourages the characters to go and establish an alliance while she goes back to Melvaunt to report. (While Liana can – very reluctantly – be persuaded to accompany them into the Underdark, she has no significant role play in the adventure from here on.)

Zim Von Zeam interrupts the discussion multiple times to ask if there is trade in the Underdark – his mind is racing and thinking business.

While Kayleth is first apprehensive about the caravan leader, she soon becomes enthusiastic about his participation. Unbeknownst to the party at this point, House Tor'Erhyl is working on a way to free some of the slaves held by other houses and to transport them to the surface. At some point, she realizes that an experienced caravaner could be of great use.

Zim and one guard offer to travel along. Regardless of the party's agreement, they have no role to play in the remainder of this adventure (Zim's efforts to establish an Underdark trade route are detailed in future adventures and he is intended to survive this one).

TREASURE

EXCERPT FROM SIGHTS BELOW THE MOONSEA: A GUIDE TO THE ZETHLENTYN PROTECTORATE

The Zethlentyn Protectorate is a state of allied drow houses located in the Deep Wastes region of the Middledark. Although colloquially referred to as a city, Zethlentyn actually encompasses several settlements, many with their own borders and protections.

Unlike most drow settlements, Zethlentyn is not dedicated to Lolth and allows the worshippers of all deities, including those of the Spider Queen. The Protectorate was founded on the principles that Drow superiority over others can be best attained by drawing on the strengths of all Drow and that in their superiority, Drow can find strength and dominance in any pursuit.

On the bodies of the defeated drow, the characters find a *Wand of Web*. See Appendix 9 for details.

REST & JOURNEY

There is no significant urgency for the party to begin their journey to the Underdark and so before or after they conclude their discussions, they are able to take a long rest.

Once the party has taken a rest, they can begin their journey to Zethlentyn. **Bonus Objective A** is available at this point – it takes approximately 60 minutes and details the party's journey through the Underdark. For details of this objective proceed to **Appendix 3**. Otherwise, this objective is skipped, the journey is considered uneventful and the party can proceed to **Episode 3**.

DM TIP:

If the party does not undertake Bonus Objective A, its text can be used to summarize some of the sights and people that the party encounters on their journey – crossing the Moondeep Sea, the Moontunnel, etc.

EPISODE 3: THE HOUSE OF MOONLIGHT

Estimated Total Duration: 100–120 Minutes

(Scenes A&B: 20 minutes, Scenes C&D: 50–60 minutes, Scene E: 20–30 minutes, Concluding the Adventure: 10 minutes)

SCENE A. LIGHT IN DARKNESS

After several days' journey, the party arrives in the territory of the Zethlentyn Protectorate and are led by Kayleth to the grounds of House Tor'Erhyl.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. No map is required for this section. Castle Tor'Erhyl is an extraordinarily large construction that extends out from a cavern wall and incorporates several large stalagmites seamlessly into an otherwise chaotic design of brick walls and towers.

Without a doubt, however, the castle's most unique feature is the massive dimly shining disc that from a distance resembles the moon itself. In reality it is a large translucent window built into the side of a tall rear stalagmite. Inside it, a large garden of particularly brightly glowing mushrooms is kept expertly cultivated to create the moonlike shine.

Lighting. Castle Tor'Erhyl is located within the greater area called Zethlentyn Prime, where the streets and other common areas are typically dimly lit with cultivated fungus and magic lights of different colours. The light on the grounds of the castle is somewhat brighter and set up to resemble moonlight.

SURFACERS IN ZETHLENTYN

Why don't the Zethlentyn drow kill the characters on sight? Earlier this year, a band of adventurers led by a renegade drow brought down a major drow house within the Zethlentyn Protectorate. This event has greatly raised the interest of other houses in the use of surface mercenaries and explains the recent tolerance for surface adventurers, and various levels of curiosity about them.

DEVELOPMENT

Prior to setting foot on castle grounds, Kayleth stops to explain that within Zethlentyn, adventurers should always be cautious when crossing onto house ground. While the Sald'iar – the protectorate's internal defense force – ensure (often brutally) that no mischief happens on public ground, once one crosses onto house ground, they are entirely at the mercy of that house.

Kayleth further assures the adventures that they are safe on Tor'Erhyl grounds.

AN ENTRANCE SET TO SONG

Once inside the castle, the characters are led to a reception hall where a feast has been prepared. Music

and singing can be heard throughout and seem to be commonplace in the castle.

EXCERPT FROM SIGHTS BELOW THE MOONSEA: A GUIDE TO THE ZETHLENTYN PROTECTORATE

To allow each of the member houses their opportunity to pursue power, the laws of the protectorate do not actually protect the houses from each other, nor do they restrict any activities that those houses may participate in. To these ends, the protectorate has two prime laws, of which the law of internal conflict is the first:

- The law of internal conflict: Protectorate ground – protectorate business. House ground – house business.
- The law of external threat: All serve the protectorate.

The essence of the first law is that anything goes, so long as it happens on the grounds of one of the houses and not on the common ground of the protectorate.

A half-dozen drow are present here – both male and female. Seated at the far end of the long table is a young-looking drow female wearing a platinum circlet adorned with the symbol of Eilistraee. She gestures for the characters to enter. This is **Matron Meriele Tor'Erhyl**.

Among the other present drow is a strikingly tall female with a thin topknot of long white hair adorning her otherwise bald head. She is the one singing when the party enters. This is **Volana** – another sword dancer. As the party enters, Volana's eyes fix immediately on Kayleth. Once she finishes her song and as the matron welcomes the party, Volana rushes purposefully toward Kayleth and the two embrace, locking foreheads and sharing a sigh of relief.

SCENE B. SPIES BELOW THE MOONSEA

This scene is set in Castle Tor'Erhyl as per **Scene A**.

OBJECTIVES

Characters meet Matron Tor'Erhyl, who offers them the opportunity for an alliance.

CREATURES/NPCs

Meriele Tor'Erhyl – Drow Female, Matron of House Tor'Erhyl of the Zethlentyn Protectorate, CG. Meriele Tor'Erhyl looks strikingly young (early 20s in human terms) but is over 200 years old. She smiles brightly and speaks excitedly. Her mannerisms mask a cunning and calculating mind and though the deception is not entirely malicious, neither is it incidental.

What Does She Want? One of House Tor'Erhyl's goals is to establish a way to smuggle slaves – oft taken from other Houses – out of Zethlentyn and to give them their freedom and a new life. To this end, they seek allies on the surface.

What Does She Know? House Tor'Erhyl's anti-slavery stance is no secret in Zethlentyn, but as is often the case, one drow house's pursuit of something that other houses find distasteful is far from unusual. The current plan remains a secret.

Among recent events in the protectorate is the destruction of one of the major houses – House Vith'tyl. This destruction was accomplished with some skilled help from surface adventures. Not only has this event created a power struggle for houses that seek to rise in the rankings, but it has vastly raised interest among the drow in the use of external mercenaries.

The other major event that has taken place is the sudden collapse of the **Axcelon Diamond Mine** which – until the time of their unexpected demise – had been run by House Vith'tyl. Greater divination has revealed to the **Council of Eleven** (Zethlentyn's ruling body) that something dangerous lies deep in the mine – a creature or something else. The council has declared that the control of the mine will be given to whichever house identifies and gets rid of the danger. This chaotic and competitive edict has several of the houses excited. Nothing is simple, however, and some of the houses do not wish to tip their hand that they are pursuing the mine. Some want others to try, fail and lose face.

House Tor'Erhyl's interest is not so much in the mining of diamonds – which may not even be viable after the collapse – but rather in a rumored passage to the surface that was reportedly being worked on by House Vith'tyl for their own purposes. Such a secret passage could potentially help House Tor'Erhyl's transport liberated former slaves to the surface.

CALL TO ACTION

Matron Tor'Erhyl would like the party to travel a short distance to the mine, investigate the collapse and discover what other houses – or their representatives – are there and interested in the mine. The collapse is extensive, so they're unlikely to find their way far inside, nor are they expected to. The discovery of other houses' presence at the mine is **Story Objective B**. If time does not allow for Bonus Objective B, there is no mention of entering the mine.

Bonus Objective B. If time allows for Bonus Objective B, the Matron asks the party to try and find a way inside – which may be difficult without an official writ – but if the opportunity presents itself and they can get in, they

ABOUT ENTERING THE MINE

The mine has been declared “public ground”, thereby preventing any conflict between houses and prompting oversight from the Sald'iar.

Additionally, only parties that have been granted a writ by the protectorate are allowed down into the mine. House Tor'Erhyl does not currently have a writ. If asked, they say that they will look into it while the party investigates.

should search for any evidence of the secret tunnel. They're absolutely not to start any trouble (violence) – especially with the Sald'iar guards.

Gaining entrance into the mine and learning about a surface passage is **Bonus Objective B**

SCENE C. THE AXCELON MINE: OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

A veritable city of near two dozen tents has sprung up around the Axcelon Mine entrance. Formerly belonging to House Vith'tyl, with that house having been recently wiped out, the area has become Protectorate Ground. This has put the various interested parties in the precarious position of not being able to simply kill each other.

With the mine being located a few miles from Zethlentyn Prime, the peace is being kept by a pair of Sald'iar guards who mind the mine's entrance, their glistening black armor serving as a grim reminder of their ruthless efficiency should anyone get out of line. The Sald'iar do not let anyone into the mine who does not have an official writ allowing exploration.

OBJECTIVE

While insignias of several of the great houses are not difficult to spot, their intent may not be what it seems. Snooping around, conversation and observation can give the characters insight into who truly has a chance at the mine.

The goal is to learn – through any means – that **House Claddatar**, **Clan Moontunnel** and **House Zaunmice** are the strongest bidders and that the duergar mercenaries are here as scouts for **House Quiltrin**.

As the mine is currently considered to be Protectorate Ground, combat would be strictly punished – even the drow obey this.

SCOUTING

Initial scouting provides the characters with the map of the area as per **Appendix 6**. It is trivial – even with the characters' base knowledge of the protectorate to identify the insignias belonging to House Claddatar, House Zaunmice and Clan Moontunnel of the dwarves.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The majority of this episode is expected to revolve around the party socializing with the various camps and learning what they can. The different camps and interactions with them are detailed in **Scene D**. It should be very clear to the characters that being on Protectorate Ground is keeping them alive here and that starting any kind of violence with any of the camps would result in swift and deadly reprisal.

Bonus Objective B. The characters aren't allowed into the mine unless they can convince one of the parties with a writ to allow them entry. (While the characters are expected to pursue obtaining this, it is not required as a fortuitous opportunity eventually presents itself – see **The Attack** below.)

THE ATTACK

At some point during their investigation, several maddened monsters burst out of the mine and threaten the camp. This encounter can be triggered at the DM's discretion and is detailed in **Scene E**.

It's recommended that this event takes place once the party has done most of their socializing or if they become stuck, or begin to run out of time. The combat can even be skipped (or dramatically simplified) if the party is more interested in social interaction or there is a lack of time.

If the party is working on Bonus Objective B and has not yet found a way into the mine, the attack presents them with the opportunity to enter.

If the party obtains permission to enter the mine early on, the combat encounter can be moved to take place inside the mine.

SCENE D. THE AXCELON MINE: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

CAMPS AT THE MINE

The following minor and major players have camps at the mine. Learning about their motives requires interactions or spying. Additional information on the houses can be found in **Appendix 8**.

THE DWARF CAMP

The Dwarves of **Clan Moontunnel** are aligned with **House Briz'belar** and see the opportunity to re-open and operate the mine as a way of diversifying themselves from building projects. They naturally have the best set of skills for the job.

The dwarves are more tolerant of surfacers and don't require much persuasion to converse. They despise the duergar and complain about gray dwarves' presence. **Clan Moontunnel** possesses a writ allowing entrance. They're not stupid and suspect the party to be spies. The dwarves offer a deal – if the characters share what they find out about the other houses here, the dwarves will allow them one-time entry into the mine under their writ.

THE DUERGAR CAMP

The duergar mercenary company **The Deepaxe Delvers** are here not to vie for the mine, but to evaluate it and to spy on the progress of other houses at the behest of **House Quiltrin**.

The duergar are unlikely to talk to the characters. Their tent does contain several pieces of correspondence between the gray dwarves and their employer. The duergar can also be persuaded (DC15) to accept a bribe of 75g-100g to reveal their employer. The **Deepaxe Delvers** have a writ to enter the mine and have been inside. They've even lost a couple of people to a collapse.

THE LESSER HOUSES

Two lesser drow houses have separately come out to the mine in the hopes of securing the patronage of one of the great houses.

- **House Nishe'arth** currently operates a successful copper mine, but they do not have an official writ allowing entrance. Their leader **Miven Nishe'arth** is a shrewd businesswoman. She is frustrated by lack of recognition of their own mine operation. She's been turned down by **House Claddatar** and is evaluating whether to risk approaching the necromancers of **Zaunmice**. She's not willing to lower herself to even talking to the dwarves.

- **House Bil'drantral's** specialty is underdark wilderness hunting. Represented by **Trinnel Bil'drantal** and two other top hunters, they have little interest in operating the mine, but see the chance to kill whatever monster lives within. This is an opportunity to distinguish themselves and gain the patronage of a great house – preferably **Claddatar**. They do not have an entry writ and are frustrated that they've not been able to gain audience with the **Claddatar** party.

THE BLADES TENT

Selvetaim's faithful of **House Claddatar** have a reputation as some of the protectorate's top fighters and they're here to prove it. A fully male contingent led by **Fourthblade Nolkath Claddatar** himself, they are fully aware of others vying for attention, but are not interested in sharing the accolades of winning the mine or in subcontracting anyone else to use their writ.

It's not possible to gain audience with **Nolkath**, but this house has lesser ranked grunts who are bored and can be chatted up. They can be approached in multiple ways, but the key is to have a "grunt-to-grunt" chat or to help alleviate their boredom with a game or a performance. A DC15 Charisma (Persuasion, Intimidation, Performance, Gaming Set of choice, Athletics) is required for them to share their general intentions here.

THE SKULL TENT

Even the other drow give this camp a wide berth. The **House Zaunmice** party consists of two gaunt robed drow – both males. The leader is **Corpseplanter Solthus Zaunmice**. The other male is his apprentice, but rarely speaks and is never referred to by name. Doing most of their grunt work are several sturdy skeletons and pair of undead oxen-like creatures the purpose of which seems to be pull carts and to create an almost unbearable stench in the area.

The main motivator for **House Zaunmice** being here is to obtain bodies of the fallen miners or of whatever beast haunts the mine. The necromancers are menacing and reveal nothing. They do have a writ and have been into mine. By snooping around their wagons (DC15 Stealth to avoid being kicked by the undead creature for 15 points of bludgeoning damage), characters find several decaying body parts – a DC15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the victims were crushed when the mine collapsed – this confirms that the necromancers are retrieving bodies from the mine.

SCENE E. THE AXCELON MINE: MADDENED BEASTS

PREREQUISITES.

As per **Scene C**, this scene can be triggered at any time during the party's interactions at the camp or moved inside the mine. The description here assumes that it takes place outside at the camp.

It's important to note that if the characters are pursuing **Bonus Objective B** and have not obtained permission to go inside, this scene creates an opportunity to do that without a writ. The Sald'iar guards may get knocked away or covered in rubble as the beasts burst out or the sound of an extra beast may result in the Sald'iar allowing the characters to go in to deal with it. Or perhaps the characters can simply use the fight as a diversion to sneak in. Use whatever best suits the strengths of the party, but obtaining entrance as a result of this encounter should be trivial. If the characters are not pursuing **Bonus Objective B**, the opportunity to go in simply does not arise.

BURSTING OUT

A deep rumble and shaking of the ground are accompanied by the alarmed shouts of two drow (Claddatar) and a Duergar (Deepaxe Delvers) running out of the mine's entrance just as several **kruthik** burst out of the ground both ahead and behind them.

The **kruthik** are typically intelligent, however, these ones have been driven mad by something and attack indiscriminantly. Other than learning that their behavior is unusual for their species (along with the presence of multiple hive lords) it's not possible to determine anything further on this matter (the truth of this is the subject of another adventure!)



DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

While not required to run the encounter, below are

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

The attack consists of a large number of **kruthik** – many spread out to attack or be fended off by other camps. The adjustments below refer strictly to the enemies faced by the characters.

Very Weak: 1 **kruthik** hive lord and 2 adult **kruthik**

Weak: 1 **kruthik** hive lord and 4 adult **kruthik**

Average: 2 **kruthik** hive lords and 4 adult **kruthik**

Strong: 4 **kruthik** hive lords and 2 adult **kruthik**

Very Strong: 4 **kruthik** hive lords and 6 adult **kruthik**

some ideas of how the other camps react to the attack:

- The **Clan Moontunnel** dwarves form a shield wall.
- The **Deepaxe Delvers** enlarge and/or go invisible.
- **Clan Claddatar** drow calmly assume a defensive formation and draw swords, they attack with swift, highly practiced strikes.
- **Corpseplanter Solthus** and his apprentice walk out of their tent almost in-sync and cast two walls of fire that encircle their compound and result in the **kruthik** recoiling and rushing away.
- The drow of **House Nishe'arth** panic. Several are killed and **Miven** is forced to flee.
- The hunter drow of **House Brin'drantal** can be seen quickly applying bright warpaint and howling as they attack – almost barbarian-like. They each fight with different weapons – one has two large curved knives, the second a large double-bladed staff and the third a massive spear that she throws to pierce an on-rushing **kruthik**'s skull.

OPPORTUNITY

If pursuing **Bonus Objective B**, the commotion creates plenty of opportunity to the characters to enter the mine as described in **Scene C**, if this is the case, proceed to **Appendix 4**.

If not pursuing **Bonus Objective B**, the characters may spend additional time socializing with the other campers or return to **Castle Tor'Erhyl** if they've collected enough information – proceed to **Concluding the Adventure** if this is the case.

After the battle ends, the characters obtain a **Potion of Superior Healing**. This can be obtained in multiple ways – one of the **NPCs** (likely the dwarves) may toss it to them, or they might find it on the body of one of the victims of the attack.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Upon reporting back to Castle Tor'Erhyl, Matron Merielle thanks the characters for their help. She awards them a **Moon-touched Rapier** of House Tor'Erhyl. It has been specially enchanted to allow them to allow the bearer to speak Undercommon. She is very pleased that the alliance is mutually beneficial and promises that there will be more opportunities to work together for the greater good.

All characters in the party also gain the story award **Knowledge of House Tor'Erhyl**.

The party is not required to return to the surface at this time, but if they wish to, they can be guided above. Whenever they return and eventually report to **Liana Tuffletackle**, she is extremely pleased that there is now hope that many of those long thought lost to the drow might one day be liberated and returned to their families on the surface.

TREASURE

MOON-TOUCHED RAPIER OF THE DARK TONGUE

Weapon, Common

In darkness, the unsheathed blade of this sword sheds moonlight, creating bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet.



ADVENTURE REWARDS

ADVANCEMENT AND TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

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:

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

- Story Objective A: Stop the drow raid.
- Story Objective B: Secure an alliance with House Tor’Erhyl (by learning who is interested in the Axcelon mine)

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

- Bonus Objective A: Complete the Underdark journey to Zethlentyn.
- Bonus Objective B: Learn of the secret surface passage.

PLAYER REWARDS

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

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCKS

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

WAND OF WEB

Wand, Uncommon, Requires Attunement, Table F.
The full description of this item can be found in the dungeon masters guide (DMG).

MOON-TOUCHED RAPIER OF THE DARK TONGUE

Weapon, Common
In darkness, the unsheathed blade of this sword sheds moonlight, creating bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet.

STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story awards:

Knowledge of House Tor’Erhyl. You have gained some insight or secret of a drow house. Other houses of the Zethlentyn Protectorate may find this valuable. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.

Drawn to the Wheel. You have received a vision of a great magic item at the bottom of the Axcelon mine. You sense that it is a powerful weapon. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.

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 other rewards listed above.

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.

APPENDIX 1. LOCATIONS & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

MERIELE TOR'ERHYL (MERRY-ELLE TOR-AY-HILL) – DROW FEMALE, MATRON OF HOUSE TOR'ERHYL

Personality. Meriele Tor'Erhyl looks very young (early 20s in human terms) but is over 200 years old.

Typically, she smiles brightly and speaks excitedly. Her mannerisms mask a cunning and calculating mind and though the deception is not entirely malicious, neither is it incidental.

Ideal: *Change. We must help bring to life Eilistraee's vision for our race.*

Bond: *I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.*

Flaw: *Responsibility weighs heavily upon me and avoid forming deep bonds because of it.*

KAYLETH TOR'ERHYL (KAY-LETH TOR-AY-HILL) – DROW FEMALE, SWORD DANCER OF EILISTRAEE

Personality. Kayleth is a high-ranking member of the house Tor'Erhyl. Extremely independent, Kayleth was chosen as the one to make contact with the surface and prevent the most recent slave-taking raid – a mission that was a great success. Kayleth had also been tasked with guiding surface adventurers safely down to Zethlentyn.

Ideal: *Freedom. Chains are meant to be broken, as are those who would forge them.*

Bond: *I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.*

Flaw: *Once I pick a goal, I become obsessed with it to the detriment of everything else in my life.*

ZIM VON ZEAM

Personality. Zim is an experienced and toughened trader, always looking for the next opportunity. His expertise is running caravans.

Ideal: *Commerce. The trade must flow.*

Bond: *I am a man of my word and care for those who work for me.*

Flaw: *I'll buy from anyone and sell to anyone.*

LIANA TUFFLETACKLE

Personality. Liana is part of a minor noble family in Waterdeep and a low ranked Lords Alliance member. She wasn't thrilled to be sent to the backwater town of Melvaunt, but has decided to make the best of it by improving trade and looking out for Lords Alliance interests.

Ideal: *Responsibility. It is my duty to respect the authority of those above me, just as those below me must respect mine.*

Bond: *I will face any challenge to win the approval of my family.*

Flaw: *I put on a brave face, but am actually quite afraid of violent conflict and getting hurt.*

APPENDIX 2. CREATURE STATISTICS

ADULT KRUTHIK

Stat block metadata Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft.

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages enter here

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages: Kruthik

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Inline Subhead. The inline header has the bold/italic character style, and this paragraph uses the “5E – STAT BLOCK BODY PARA1” style. Keen Smell. The kruthik has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The kruthik has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kruthik’s allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn’t incapacitated.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. This continues using the same stat block body style as in the previous section.

Really Big Stick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Multiattack. The kruthik makes two stab attacks or two spike attacks.

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

Spike. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

BANDERHOBB

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills: Athletics +8, Stealth +7

Condition Immunities: Charmed, Frightened

Senses: Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages: Common understands and the languages of its creator, but can’t speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

Source: *Volo’s Guide to Monsters*

CARAVAN GUARD (SCOUT)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills: Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses: Passive Perception 15

Languages: Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Source: *Monster Manual*

CORPSEPLANTER (DROW NECROMANCER)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws: INT +7, WIS +5

Skills: Arcana +7, History +7

Damage Resistances: Necrotic

Senses: Passive Perception 11

Languages: any four languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The necromancer is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The necromancer has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *mending*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*, * *mage armor*, *ray of sickness**

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, * *ray of enfeeblement*, * *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, * *bestow curse*, * *vampiric touch**

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

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand*, *cloudkill*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death**

*Necromancy spell of 1st level or higher

Grim Harvest (1/Turn). When necromancer kills a creature that is neither a construct nor undead with a spell of 1st level or higher, the necromancer regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times if it is a necromancy spell.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

Source: *Monster Manual*

DERRO SAVANT

Small humanoid (derro), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+1)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)

Skills: Stealth +4

Senses: Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 7

Languages: Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Spellcasting. The derro savant is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The derro knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *chromatic orb*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *spider climb*

3rd level (2 slots): *lightning bolt*

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

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage.

Source: *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

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 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

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

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: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 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 wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

REACTIONS

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

Source: *Monster Manual*

DROW HOUSE CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid, 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 action.

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 innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

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

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 his 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.

REACTIONS

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

Source: *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

DROW SHADOWBLADE

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws: DEX +9, CON +7, WIS +6

Skills: Perception +6, Stealth +9

Senses: Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages: Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 11 (7,200 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 innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

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

Shadow Step. While in dim light or darkness, the drow can teleport as a bonus action up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. It then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn.

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 attacks with its shadow sword. If either attack hits and the target is within 10 feet of a 5-foot cube of darkness created by the shadow sword on a previous turn, the drow can dismiss that darkness and cause the target to take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The drow can dismiss darkness in this way no more than once per turn.

Shadow Sword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage. The drow can then fill an unoccupied 5-foot cube within 5 feet of the target with magical darkness, which remains for 1 minute.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) 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.

Source: *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

GRICK

Medium monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances: Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages: --

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The grick makes one attack with its tentacles. If that attack hits, the grick can make one beak attack against the same target.

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

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

Source: *Monster Manual*

GRICK ALPHA

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Damage Resistances: Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages: --

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The grick makes two attacks: one with its tail and one with its tentacles. If it hits with its tentacles, the grick can make one beak attack against the same target.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 22 (4d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Beak. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Source: *Monster Manual*

HOOK HORROR

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 15 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills: Perception +3

Senses: Blindsight 60 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages: Hook Horror

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Echolocation. The hook horror can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Keen Hearing. The hook horror has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hook horror makes two hook attacks.

Hook. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Source: *Monster Manual*

KAYLETH TOR'ERHYL (DROW INQUISITOR)

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Breastplate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws: CON +7, WIS +10, CHA +10

Skills: Insight +10, Perception +10, Religion +8, Stealth +7

Condition Immunities: Frightened

Senses: Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 20

Languages: Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge: 14 (11,500 XP)

Discern Lie. The drow knows when she hears a creature speak a lie in a language she knows.

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 innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *detect magic*

1/day each: *clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *levitate (self only)*, *suggestion*

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

Spellcasting. The drow is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *message*, *poison spray*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *cure wounds*, *inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *silence*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle*

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

5th level (2 slots): *contagion*, *dispel evil and good*, *insect plague*

6th level (1 slot): *harm*, *true seeing*

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 death lance attacks.

Death Lance. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage it takes. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

Source: *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws: CON +4, WIS +2

Senses: Passive Perception 10

Languages: Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

REACTIONS

Parry. The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

KRUTHIK HIVE LORD

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 20 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages: Kruthik

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Keen Smell. The kruthik has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The kruthik has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kruthik's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Tunneler. The kruthik can burrow through solid rock at half its burrowing speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kruthik makes two stab attacks or two spike attacks.

Stab. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Spike. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Acid Spray (Recharge 5–6). The kruthik sprays acid in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Source: *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*

UMBER HULK

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 93 (11d10+33)

Speed: 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (0)	10 (0)

Senses: darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft. Passive Perception 10

Languages: UMBER HULK

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Confusing Gaze. When a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the umber hulk and is able to see the umber hulk's eyes, the umber hulk can magically force it to make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, unless the umber hulk is incapacitated.

On a failed saving throw, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during that turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action but uses all its movement to move in a random direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes one melee attack against a random creature, or it does nothing if no creature is within reach.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the umber hulk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the umber hulk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Tunneler. The umber hulk can burrow through solid rock at half its burrowing speed and leaves a 5 foot-wide, 8-foot-high tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The umber hulk makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its mandibles.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Mandibles. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Source: *Monster Manual*

XORN

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 19 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 73 (7d8 + 42)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

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

Skills: Perception +6, Stealth +3

Damage Resistances: Piercing and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Adamantine

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages: Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

Source: *Monster Manual*

ZIM VON ZEAM (SWASHBUCKLER)

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

Senses: Passive Perception 10

Languages: any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swashbuckler makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its rapier.

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

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

Source: *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

APPENDIX 3. UNDERDARK JOURNEY (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

Estimated Duration: 60 Minutes

OBJECTIVE OVERVIEW

This bonus objective details the party's journey of several days through the Underdark to the Zethlentyn Protectorate. The three brief scenes are intended to provide characters with a flavor of Underdark life and denizens. There is likely only time for one or two of the three scenes. If time runs short, a scene can be skipped, but should be summarized as having happened. If there is only time to run one, **Scene B** is recommended.

SCENE A. CRASHED PARTY

As the characters proceed into the Underdark, led by their capable guide Kayleth, they come across a party of **derro** traveling along with several **female steeders**. The derro are attempting to recover one of their carts that has fallen into a crevice. These would-be merchants have captured and trained several steeders and are on their way to sell them in Zethlentyn.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. This scene takes place in a large cavern, about 200ft wide. A large 30ft wide crevice runs through the middle of the cavern with a narrow natural landbridge bisecting it in the middle and allowing travel across. No specific map is provided for this encounter.

Lighting. The faerzress in the area gives off a sickly greenish light throughout the cavern. It is considered to be dim. The crevice is dark beyond 10ft down and within.

CREATURES/NPCs

Dodarak, derro group leader, NE.

Dodarak is a **derro savant** who has become obsessed by the entrepreneurial idea that he can make a fortune breaking in and selling steeders. To this end, he has conscribed several others and they are now heading to attempt selling their first lot in Zethlentyn. Dodarak frequently talks to himself as though another person was actually present.



What Does He Want? Dodarak and his crew are manic and paranoid, but ultimately they do not wish to fight anything bigger than themselves. They want to recover their cart and continue on their journey.

What Does He Know? They've seen some movement in the crevice and have been afraid to go down.

TREASURE

If the characters successfully assist the derro in retrieving their cart, Dodarak gives them a *potion of superior healing*. If the adventures kill the derro, it can be found on the derro bodies.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

If the characters attack the derro party, they face 4 **derro savants** and 6 **female steeders** who act as separate combatants. One of the savants is **Dodarak** himself, who has 56 hitpoints. Add or subtract 1 **savant** and 1 **female steeder** for stronger or weaker parties.

EXPLORATION

Crossing the crevice on the land bridge requires going past the derro. If the characters wish cross elsewhere, they can avoid the derro. It'll be up to them to find a clever way to get across the crevice which is 60ft deep. 2 **gricks** and a **grick alpha** live and hunt at the bottom at the crevice. Add or a remove 2 **gricks** for stronger or weaker parties.

SOCIAL

The derro are manic but don't want to fight. Dodarak tries to get the characters to help get the cart out of the crevice. Plenty of rope is available, though the derro aren't particularly strong. The cart is damaged and can't be reliably secured by ropes without descending (mage hand, etc.). Once the cart is secure, bringing it up is not difficult. If the characters descend, they're attacked by the gricks.

SCENE B. PORT DARKTIDE

On the fourth day of the journey, Kayleth leads the characters to a small port on the shores of the **Moondeep Sea**. She explains that there are two main routes into Zethlentyn – a lengthy trek by land (caverns) and a safer, more comfortable journey by ship across the Moondeep Sea. House Tor’Erhyl has already paid for their passage by ship.

OBJECTIVE

This scene is intended to introduce **House Briz’belar** and their strange practices. All passengers of Briz’belar ships must participate in a passage ritual.

AREA INFORMATION

Port Darktide started its life as little more than a dock and a small fort, but has grown to a moderately sized trading post that has basic amenities. The town is territory of House Briz’belar who control the majority of the Moondeep Sea’s commercial vessels. Most of the port’s shops are bazaar-style stands located outside.

Dimensions. The port is not very large and can be walked end-to-end in 10-15 minutes. No map is required.

Light. There is a number of various colored lights through the port. Looking out over the sea, it is pitch dark into the distance.

A COIN FOR THE FERRYMAN

As the party approaches the port, Kayleth fills the characters in on the Port as well as on House Briz’belar and their peculiar rituals.

After they arrive and she checks in with their ship – which is set to depart in an hour – she informs the party that one part of the journey’s price must be paid by them. As the ship will be passing across the **Bay of Regrets**, all aboard must partake in the “Passing of Regrets.” All partaking must drop into the sea an object connected to one of their regrets. Kayleth explains that the object itself is of no significance – it could something they own, something that reminds them of a regret, or even a note with the regret written on it.

Vendors around the port sell a variety of trinkets and there are even some who can custom carve a simple piece for the characters. Most things can be purchased

for 5-10 silver pieces and it is not difficult to find a metal or bone trinket in any shape.

Allow each character to come up with what they need and purchase it. If players are unable to come up with an item, have them use a piece of paper to write a regret and bring it along.

The characters may choose not to take anything. This is considered disrespectful and Kayleth cautions against it. See below for consequences.

KELAGH’DIN’S WAKE

Once they’re ready, characters board the **Kelagh’din’s Wake** – a large vessel, with a number of oars connected to a huge wheel, so that rather than needing to be pulled by an individual, all the oars can simultaneously be used by rotating the wheel atop the deck. A bound and oddly docile **gorgon** is strapped into the contraption to do the pulling.

The strange ship has short masts which can be unfolded to become taller or dismantled to go through low cavern passages. While there is occasional wind upon the Moondeep Sea, is it unpredictable and can’t be counted upon to propel a ship at all times.

HOUSE BRIZ’BELAR

The sailors of house Briz’belar are all drow. They wear sleeveless tunics and bear tattoos featuring sea and tentacle motifs. The captain is a male by the name of **Bardiin Briz’belar**. He has a thin face and would be considered roguishly handsome by most standards. He has a calmness and smiles often – creating a particularly eerie sensation when this smile accompanies tales of horror on the sea.

Upon setting out, the captain brings all the passengers to the side of the ship and asks them to cast away their regrets. Any character that refuses to participate is secretly cursed with bad luck: the next time they roll a natural 20 on a to-hit or saving throw roll, the result is considered a natural 1 instead. This function similar to a portent roll and does not persist beyond this adventure.

Beyond this, the two-day journey is uneventful and ends at Port Moontunnel, described in **Scene C**.

SCENE C. PORT MOONTUNNEL

OBJECTIVE

This short scene introduces characters to **Port Moontunnel** and the dwarves of **Clan Moontunnel**. While the characters have the opportunity to ask questions and learn some of the history (as per the sidebar). Their objective is to proceed through the Moontunnel to Zethlentyn once they're ready.

AREA INFORMATION

Port Moontunnel is similar in size to Port Darktide, yet entirely different in look. Massively fortified by blocky finely masoned stone walls, the port is clearly of dwarven make. The decorative motifs feature not dwarves, but mainly drow, ships of odd makes and massive sea creature tentacles.

The port has no land access other than the tunnel and in the water, there is a giant portcullis that opens like the maw of a great beast to let the Briz'belar ship approach.

Once inside, the port is home to a number of finely carved stone buildings of dwarven build. The far grander sight, however, is the 40ft wide and more than 60ft tall arched entrance to a tunnel that is carved into the rockface and seems to stretch endlessly into the distance. This is the Moontunnel.

THE MOONTUNNEL

Though the party – especially if there are elves present – gets strange looks, they have no trouble proceeding forward under Kayleth's confident direction. She sets a quick pace and leads the party through to the tunnels. She informs the characters that the tunnel is just over 20 miles long and that it would take a hard march for most of the day to get to Zethlentyn. The tunnel trek is detailed in **Scene D**.

HOUSE BRIZ'BELAR & CLAN MOONTUNNEL

One of the protectorate's oldest houses, House Briz'belar has – by drow standards – a strange history. For more than 50 years, the house toiled tirelessly at one seemingly foolish task – digging miles through solid rock in order to create a passage from Zethlentyn to the Moondeep Sea. The unusual part was that the drow themselves did much of the tunneling. This unfit work for their race garnered them nicknames such as a “dirters” and “moles”. It also nearly bankrupted and ruined the house. It wasn't until they switched tactics and took a full clan of dwarves as slaves that the tunnel was actually completed.

Yet the history drew stranger still. Enamoured with their creation and wanting to make it grander still, the dwarves made an unheard-of alliance with the drow. Calling themselves Clan Moontunnel, the dwarves not only continue lifelong improvements to the Moontunnel that they helped complete, but also provide high-end building services to the rest of the protectorate.

With the tunnel complete and their former slaves turned into staunch allies, the fortunes of House Briz'belar became to turn around. Ships to sail the Moondeep Sea were built and new avenues for trade became open and profitable. As centuries passed, the nicknames of “dirters” and “moles” were replaced by a reputation as fearless sailors who dared to cross the calm yet dangerous Moondeep Sea. As many non Briz'belar ships were lost at sea, rumours began of the house having made some dark pact with the mysterious “deep ones” that ensure their dominance of the sea trade.

Those of House Briz'belar have embraced these rumours and began to adorn their ships with tentacled figureheads and performing strange rituals during the crossings for all to see.

SCENE D. THROUGH THE MOONTUNNEL

OBJECTIVE

Characters have the opportunity to help Clan Moontunnel dwarves fend off a wildlife attack.

PRIDE OF THE DWARVES

Though the tunnel was built in slavery and for the drow, it is easy to see why the dwarves have such an attachment to their creation. The Moontunnel is not only a brilliant feat of structural engineering, but a work of art to admire. Statues, carved reliefs, and magical light fixtures in both dwarven and drow styles adorn the walls. Walking along the tunnel's smooth marbled floors is closer to being in a museum than in a road through the Underdark. It's truly a marvel.

There is not a lot of traffic in the Moontunnel as the characters pass, though Kayleth still recommends that they try to remain as inconspicuous as they can to avoid drawing attention.

A CONSTANT MENACE.

A few hours into their journey, the characters hear a commotion one hundred feet ahead. There are dwarven shouts and the sound of stone breaking.

Upon approach, a breach in the tunnel's wall can be seen, and a trio of Clan Moontunnel dwarves are trying to prevent some Underdark monstrocities from breaking through.

As the characters approach, one of the dwarves casts a spell and creates a small wall of stone intended to seal the breach. It sounds like the monstrocities will burst through it at any moment.

The dwarves yell at the characters:

"The battlerager brigade is on their way to reinforce us, , but the barrier may not hold long enough!"

The monsters soon burst through and characters have the opportunity to assist in disposing of them.

Choose one of the following Underdark monster encounters for the party.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Encounter 1: Pack of 6 hook horrors

Add or remove 1 **hook horror** for each rank of party strength above or below average.

Encounter 2: Pack of 3 umber hulks

Remove 1 **umber hulk** for weak or very weak.
Add 1 **umber hulk** for strong or very strong

Encounter 3: Pack of 3 xorns

Remove 1 **xorn** for weak or very weak
Add 1 **xorn** for strong or very strong

The Clan Moontunnel Battlerager Bridage 3 arrives a few minutes after the encounter is over (or earlier if the party is at risk!). They're a rough and tumble bunch and almost disappointed that they won't get to kill anything. Still they offer the party a chance to rest safely if they wish to do so before getting to the city.

The remainder of the journey is uneventful. Proceed to Episode 3.



APPENDIX 4. BONUS OBJECTIVE B.

Estimated Duration: 60 Minutes

SCENE A. INTO THE COLLAPSE

OBJECTIVE

The characters enter the collapsed mine and must search for signs of a secret tunnel to the surface.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Lighting Conditions. The mine is entirely dark.

Terrain. Beyond the entrance, the mine is in rough condition. While a number of well-established passages are visible, most have collapses a short way in and cannot be ventured further into. Whatever happened to cause the collapse caused massive damage. It's easy to see why it has been difficult for someone to simply resume operations – a lot of work needs to be done here to restore the mine to operating condition.

A couple of passages can be followed down for a few hundred feet – walking through these passages requires climbing over collapses and passing areas where collapses have recently been cleared. Most of the work that has been done so far has focused on clearing the mine's main tunnel. Although some of the side tunnels look to have been recently explored, following them leads to dead ends.

Eventually, the main passage comes to a larger chamber and splits into three tunnels that all look recently worked. Regardless of which tunnel the characters go down, 50ft into it, any character whose mind is not protected from telepathic intrusion (such as by a Ring of Mind Shielding) gets a vision of a powerful weapon deep within the mine (see sidebar).

VISION OF THE WHEEL

DM Note: The Wheel is intended to be a mystery. It's important that absolutely no additional information beyond what is detailed here is provided to the players. The vision and wheel are resolved in a future adventure.

The vision of the wheel is the same for all characters, though their interpretation of it may differ.

Every character briefly sees an ornate spinning wheel. The wheel is part of a larger object, though it is unclear what that object is (as though viewed in an extreme close-up). Both the wheel and large object are elaborate and highly detailed. They look to be made of several materials that look to include gold (or another similarly colored metal) and gemstones.

Every character feels the same sense of this item being a powerful weapon.

The vision fades after a couple of seconds.

Any character that succeeds on a DC8 Intelligence (History) check on the wheel while in the mine remembers reading about a magical wheel that bestows great magical powers upon the user. What they had read was fairly vague in details beyond the wheel having been lost to time.

Should any character attempt to research the wheel at a library or elsewhere upon exiting the mine, they are not able to find any reference to it.

TUNNEL 1

This tunnel goes about 400ft in before reaching an impassible collapse. The party finds a number of skeletons here – the skeletons seem to be neatly stacked as though for use. (House Zaunmice has been exploring this way). There is nothing else of note.

TUNNEL 2

This tunnel goes 300ft. The party find the remains of a large dead froglike creature. A successful DC15 Intelligence (Nature or Arcana) check identifies it as a **banderhob**. A successful investigation check confirms it was slain using a number of swords. (This was done by House Claddatar troops)

Tunnel 3 is detailed in **Scene B**.

SCENE B. THE LOST DUERGAR

OBJECTIVE

Proceeding down the last tunnel, the characters find a collapse containing the information they seek.

TUNNEL 3

200ft down this tunnel, the floor has collapsed, leaving a hole. The collapse is recent and the floor leading up to it is unstable. A successful DC15 Intelligence (Investigation or Masonry Tools) identifies this as a danger.

If more than 3 characters are standing within 20ft of the collapse, the unstable area collapses. All creatures in the area of the collapse must succeed on a DC15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5d8 (22) bludgeoning damage from the fall and rubble. On a successful save, they take half. In either case, the ground collapses 20ft down.

If the unstable area is spotted, it can be safely navigated so long as there are never more than 3 creatures standing on it. The other side of the 20ft wide collapse is stable.

BURIED IN THE RUBBLE

Buried in the rubble 20 feet below the party are two duergar. One of these is dead, the other is stable but unconscious. Spotting them from above requires a successful DC12 Wisdom (Perception) check. From the ground, it's trivial. At least 1 point of healing is required for the injured duergar to regain consciousness.

Several of the duergar's bones are crushed and her injuries are very severe. She's unable to move of her own accord but can speak once she's healed.

The other duergar's body contains an oil of slipperiness.

CREATURES/NPCs

Nalifra Deepaxe, female duergar, LE.

Nalifra is part of the Deepaxe Delvers mercenary company who are camped above. Her and a partner had been exploring this tunnel when it collapsed.

What Does She Want? Nalifra is grievously wounded and will do anything to be healed and safely returned to her companions above.

What Does She Know? She knows that the passage beyond here is blocked. This is as far as it's currently possible to get in the mine. The Deepaxe Delvers once worked for House Vith'tyl – the mine's previous owners – and she can confirm that there was indeed a secret passage dug up into the rock at one point, in the hopes of finding a new surface route. However, the exploration party that went up there never returned and the passage was found to have been sealed from above. She knows its location (it's deeper down, in a currently inaccessible area of the mine. Adventurers that played CCC-HAL-01 *Fate of the Nightworms* may recognize this tale).

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

As the characters converse with Nalifra or explore the collapse area, the reanimated corpse of the **banderhob** from the previous scene ambushes them from behind.

Unbeknownst to the party, it had been raised by a hiding necromancer of House Zaunmice, who has now departed. (The risen monster hints at the fact that House Zaunmice wants bigger monsters to for their necromancy.)

Use the regular stat block for the monster, changing its type to **undead**.

EXPLORATION

To get Nalifra to safety, the party must find a way to transport her body out of the hole and back out of the mine. Allow for the party to come up with creative ways to do this.

Nalifra has an old map of the mine that includes a reference to the secret passage. Because of the notation and party's lack of knowledge, it's difficult for them to tell what the map is without her active cooperation.

Characters may find (DC13 Intelligence (Investigation)) this map on her should she perish or while she's unconscious.

SOCIAL

Nalifra is hateful and does not like the characters. Yet she desperately needs their help, so she may very well volunteer that "I know a lot about the mine. Used do some work down here in the old days. Get me up safely and I'll tell you anything you want!"

She holds up her end of the bargain once they escort her out. Prior to them doing so, the only thing she tells them is that they can't get any deeper at the moment due to the collapse.

APPENDIX 5. MAP OF THE HIDDEN CAMPSITE



APPENDIX 6. MAP OF AXCELON MINE EXTERIOR

Note: The interior of the mine is not to scale on this map.



APPENDIX 7. MAP OF THE UNDERDARK JOURNEY

LOROSFYR

THE DEEP WASTES

ZETHLENTYN

Port Darktide

Port Moontunnel

MOONDEEP SEA

<- To Maerimydra

v To Surface Passage
(Thar / Melvaunt)

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APPENDIX 8. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE HOUSES OF ZETHLENTYN.

THE FIFTH HOUSE: QUILTRIN

House Quiltrin was established by traders from Sschindylryn. Realizing over the years that they've found a niche where males are able to achieve even higher prominence than in their home city, a number of merchants split off and founded an official house.

Their connections outside the Protectorate quickly allowed them to dominate many mercantile affairs. Success in external trade was of course good for the Protectorate as a whole and greatly contributed to its recent growth.

THE SIXTH HOUSE: CLADDATAR

The Sixth House is a militaristic, male-dominated house dedicated to the deity Selvetarm.

It would be unthinkable in a Lolth-worshipping city that an entire house would worship her enslaved protector. In Zethlenty, however, those who were once indentured or of low rank and prayed to the enslaved, have now risen to a position of great power.

Those of House Claddatar worship Selvetarm not out of pity for their lot in society, but for his battle ferocity and unmatched combat prowess.

Over the years, House Claddatar has earned great respect among the drow of Zethlenty, and many warriors – males especially – yearn to join the House.

While it's still somewhat taboo for a female drow to worship Selvetarm, some who wish to focus their efforts on melee combat have joined over the years.

A typical House Claddatar warrior is known for their unflinching calm – they are not quick to anger, yet when one's ire is incurred, they fight like possessed beasts. Another distinguishing feature is their typical appearance. While all drow typically prize appearance, House Claddatar male warriors especially exemplify this and for anyone that might find male drow physically attractive, these are just about perfect specimens.

THE TENTH HOUSE: ZAUNMICE

The Tenth House is – much to the chagrin of several others -- dedicated to the death goddess Kiaransalee. Operating on the outskirts of Zethlenty, they are allies

to none within, yet seem to be content with taking what they want from the battles without.

THE ELEVENTH HOUSE: BRIZ'BELAR

One of the protectorate's oldest houses, House Briz'belar has – by drow standards – a strange history. For more than 50 years, the house toiled tirelessly at one seemingly foolish task – digging miles through solid rock in order to create a passage from Zethlenty to the Moondeep Sea.

The unusual part was that the drow themselves did much of the tunneling. This unfit work for their race garnered them nicknames such as a “dirters” and “moles”. It also nearly bankrupted and ruined the house. It wasn't until they switched tactics and took a full clan of dwarves as slaves that the tunnel was finally completed.

Yet the history grew stranger still. Enamoured with their creation and wanting to make it grander still, the dwarves made an unheard-of alliance with the drow. Calling themselves Clan Moontunnel, the dwarves not only continue lifelong improvements to their creation, but also provide high-end building services to the rest of the protectorate.

With the tunnel complete and their former slaves turned into staunch allies, the fortunes of House Briz'belar have turned around. Ships to sail the Moondeep Sea were built and new avenues for trade became open and profitable. As centuries passed, the nicknames of “dirters” and “moles” have been replaced by a reputation as fearless sailors who dare to cross the calm yet dangerous Moondeep Sea.

As many non Briz'belar ships were lost at sea, rumours began of the house having made some dark pact with the mysterious “deep ones”, and this has only served to ensure their dominance of the sea trade. Those of House of Briz'belar have embraced these rumours and now adorn their ships with tentacled figureheads and perform strange rituals during the crossings for all to see.

For obvious reasons, House Briz'belar has close ties to the mercantile House Quiltrin.

APPENDIX 9. MAGIC ITEMS & STORY AWARDS

MAGIC ITEMS

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

WAND OF WEBS

Wand, Uncommon, Requires Attunement, Table F.

The full description of this item can be found in the dungeon masters guide (DMG).

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

MOON-TOUCHED RAPIER OF THE DARK TONGUE

Moon-touched Rapier with the *language* (Undercommon) minor property.

Weapon, Common

In darkness, the unsheathed blade of this sword sheds moonlight, creating bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. The bearer of this weapon can speak and understand Undercommon.

STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story awards:

Knowledge of House Tor'Erhyl. You have gained some insight or secret of a drow house. Other houses of the Zethlentyn Protectorate may find this valuable. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.

Drawn to the Wheel. You have received a vision of a great magic item at the bottom of the Axcelon mine. You sense that it is a powerful weapon. This award has no immediate mechanical effect.

APPENDIX 10: CHARACTER PORTRAIT CARDS



Zim Von Zeam
Caravan Leader

Zim Von Zeam

Human Male

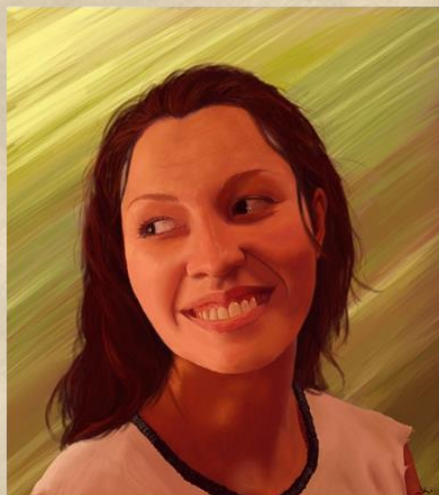
Caravan Leader

Personality. Zim is an experienced and toughened trader, always looking for the next opportunity. His expertise is running caravans.

Ideal: Commerce. The trade must flow.

Bond: I am a man of my word and care for those who work for me.

Flaw: I'll buy from anyone and sell to anyone.



Liana Tuffletackle
Lords Alliance (Melvaunt)

Liana Tuffletackle

Halfing Female

Lords Alliance (Melvaunt)

Personality. Liana is part of a minor noble family in Waterdeep and a low ranked Lords Alliance member. She wasn't thrilled to be sent to the backwater town of Melvaunt, but has decided to make the best of it by improving trade and looking out for Lords Alliance interests.

Ideal: Responsibility. It is my duty to respect the authority of those above me, just as those below me must respect mine.

Bond: I will face any challenge to win the approval of my family.

Flaw: I put on a brave face, but am actually quite afraid of violent conflict and getting hurt.

Flaw: Once I pick a goal, I become obsessed with it to the detriment of everything else in my life.

Bond: I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Ideal: Freedom. Chains are meant to be broken, as are those who would forge them.

Personality: Kayleth is a high-ranking member of the House Tor'Erhyl. Extremely independent, Kayleth was chosen as the one to make contact with the surface to prevent the most recent slave-taking raid. While graceful and acrobatic in combat, Kayleth is often direct and serious when she speaks.

Sword Dancer of Ellistraee
(Kay-leth-tor-ay-hill) – Drow Female

Kayleth Tor'Erhyl



Kayleth Tor'Erhyl
(kay-leth tor-ay-hill)
Sword Dancer

Flaw: Responsibility weighs heavily upon me and avoid forming deep bonds because of it.

Bond: I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Ideal: Change. We must help bring to life Ellistraee's vision for our people.

Personality: Meriele Tor'Erhyl looks youthful (early 20s in human terms) but is over 200 years old. Typically, she smiles brightly and speaks excitedly. Her mannerisms mask a cunning and calculating mind and though the deception is not entirely malicious, neither is it incidental.

Drow Female, Matron of House Tor'Erhyl
(Merry-elle-tor-ay-hill)

Matron Meriele Tor'Erhyl



Meriele Tor'Erhyl
(merry-elle tor-ay-hill)
Matron of House Tor'Erhyl

DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th–10th 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.

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.

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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