

VACANT

CCC-KUMORI-02-01

A DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ADVENTURE BY MA'AT CROOK

Torrential rains and blustering winds drive the party into a cursed hamlet, resting in the eye of the storm. A mesmerizing void, mutated creatures, and the very ground could swallow the party, forever trapping them — unless they can escape.

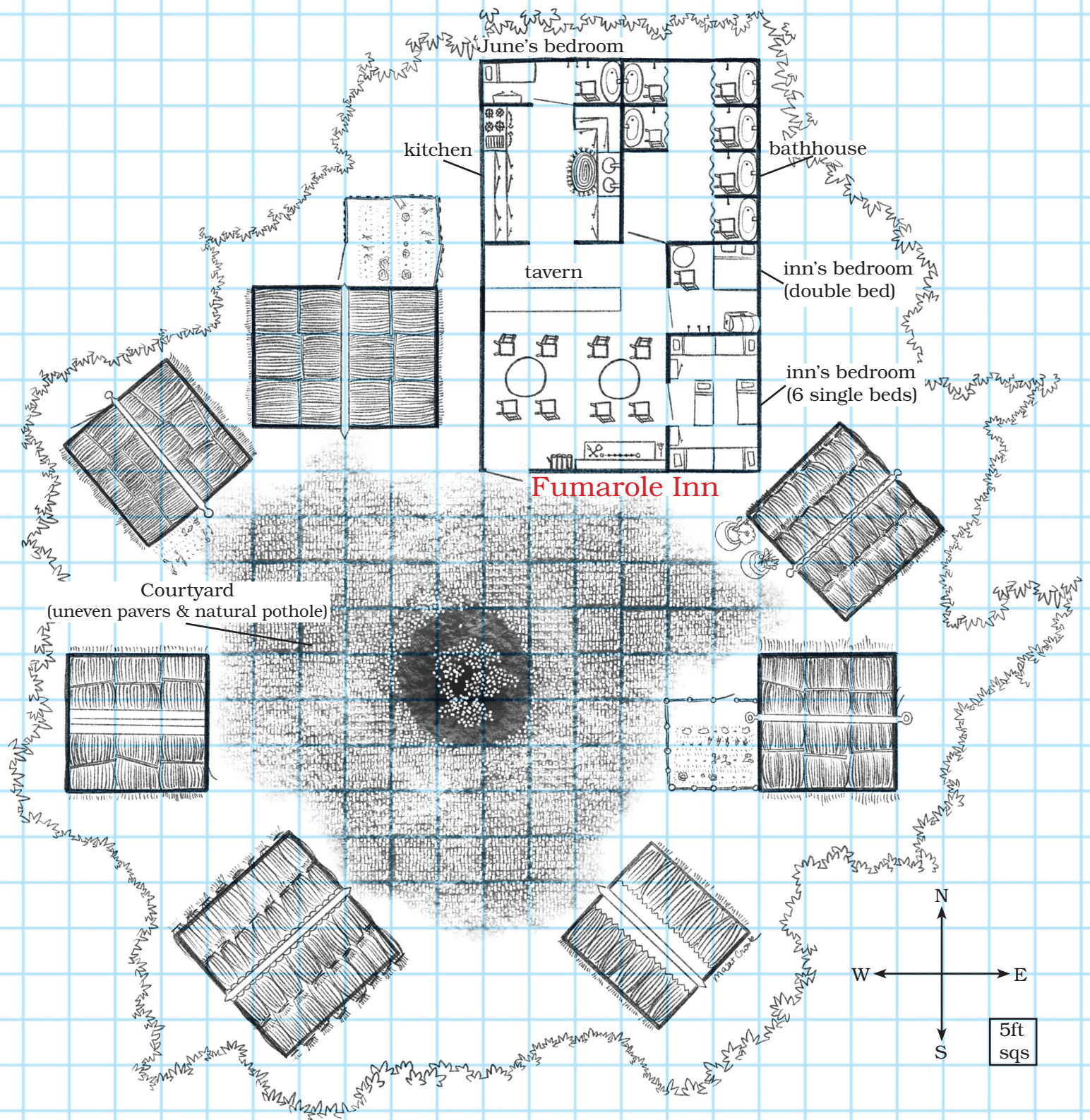


2-4HR
TIER 1
APL 1



MaatCrook

MAP



The Unnamed Thorp (a small hamlet)

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ADVENTURE PRIMER

This section provides the adventure's background, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks you can use to introduce your players' characters to the action. Refer to **Appendix 1** for a list of prominent non-player characters (NPCs).

Background

Deep within **BORDER FOREST** an **UNNAMED THORP**, a tiny hamlet, is reborn from the earth at the arrival of every storm and is swallowed again at the storm's passing, dragging its citizens and newcomers with it.

The thorp itself is riddled with divots, gopher holes, an ever-growing **SINKHOLE**, and surrounded by a rotted, **HOLLOW FOREST**. Deep depressions—holes, tunnels, hollows, and burrows—plague and mesmerize inhabitants.

The mystery of this thorp is caused by the very land itself, cursed by a **VOID** that claims, infects, and reclaims all upon it. If the characters can't escape the thorp before this storm passes, they too could be trapped.

Potential Triggers

This is a horror adventure. Some of the illustrations and subject matter, **fear of holes and insects**, could frighten or make some players uncomfortable. Please adjust your presentation as needed and consider using safety tools (<https://breakoutcon.com/index.php/extras/safety-tools>).

Episodes

This section provides the Dungeon Master (DM) with an overview of how the adventure is most likely to play out. The adventure is laid out into three **episodes**, taking approximately **2 hours**, total, to play. **Episode One: Drawn In** introduces the **Call to Action**. The adventure also includes two 1-hour **bonus objectives** that can be played if time permits.

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

- **Episode One: Drawn In** (30 minutes). The party shelters from a storm and can **explore inside Fumarole Inn and talk to its patron and owner** to discover clues to the void-curse.
- **Episode Two: Pull of the Void** (45 minutes). Within the thorp's courtyard, a sinkhole is widening. The characters can **discover the real danger of the void-curse**; this is **Story Objective A**.

- **Episode Three: Run!** (45 minutes). With the sinkhole widening and devouring all, ever on their heels, the party can flee the thorp and **escape** the surrounding area affected by the void; this is **Story Objective B**.

Bonus Objectives

This adventure also includes two, 1-hour bonus objectives the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—**earning additional advancement and treasure checkpoints** in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure's appendices (3 and 4), as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: Rescue and Requit** The characters may try to **help NPCs** (including the void-spotted cat) escape the thorp. If successful, the rescued NPCs and their families would show the party their gratitude. Find more details about this bonus objective in **Appendix 3**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Clear the Forest** This is optional and can extend the amount of gameplay by another one to two hours. After escaping the thorp, the party can recruit a large group of clerics, paladins, warlocks, and wizards from surrounding areas to **remove the curse**, bringing balance back to the Border Forest. Find more details about this bonus objective in **Appendix 4**.

Episode Sequence

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

How Will You Play?

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

Story Objectives Only. To complete the adventure's story objectives, play 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, utilizing the bonus objectives provided in the appendices (3 and 4). Start play of Bonus Objective A at the end of Episode 2 or beginning of Episode 3. Bonus Objective B can begin at the resolution of Episode 3.

Adventure Hooks

Hooks draw the players into the game, giving them a starting point.

Vacant begins with the adventurers in the Border Forest of the Moonsea area. This module can be played as a character's first adventure or between missions. Knowing their characters best, players can come up with reasons for their character or party being here. For example, they could be on a hunting trip, exploring, or traveling through Border Forest along the Black Road.

Below are more adventure hooks. If playing this adventure with *Kumori-02-02*, *Kumori-02-04*, or after *Bleeding Gate: Amalgamation* (CCC-BLD 1-2) refer to their corresponding hooks below.

Kumoricon CCC Module Hooks

CCC-KUMORI-02-02

Your party has been called into the Border Forest to assist the headmaster of the Moonsea School for Homeless Children with a delicate matter between the school and fey nobility. While traveling through the dense forest, intense winds and stinging rain overtake you.

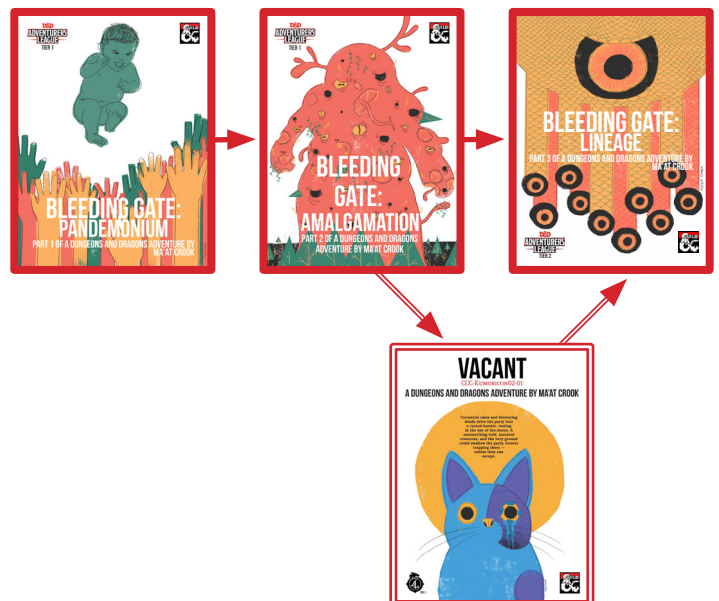
CCC-KUMORI-02-04

Your party answered the call to celebrate the Wild Monster Capture Festival in the Moonsea area. On your way there, cutting through the Border Forest, you are hit by mighty winds and rain.

Bleeding Gate Hook

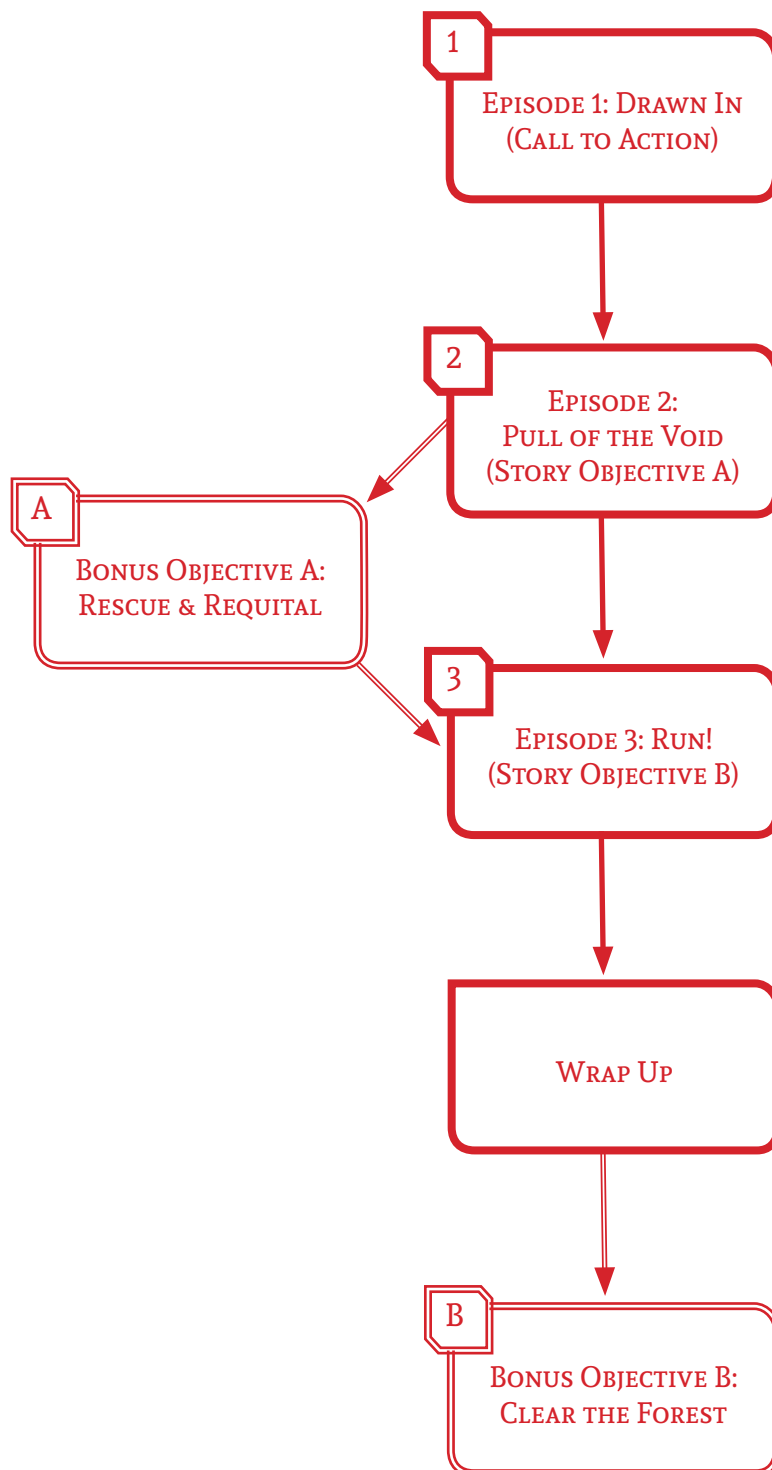
After playing *Bleeding Gate: Amalgamation* and before playing *Bleeding Gate: Lineage* (CCC-BLD 01-03) Ersu Heidagurne, Peacesmith, and head of the Census Watch, asks the characters to **investigate a Peacesmith disappearance**. Hoola, a half-orc Peacesmith and adventurer, was last seen three days ago in Border Forest during a mighty storm. His disappearance doesn't match the other reports; no sightings of Arnfred Miruforge were spotted, and no shouts for "Lord Saultrophine, Master of Chaos" were heard.

He had been camped with his party, woke early to hunt breakfast alone, and never returned. His party searched for him, but a passing storm had washed away all tracks.



EPISODE FLOWCHART

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



EPISODE ONE: DRAWN IN

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes.

The party had been in the Border Forest (See **Adventure Hooks** above) when a storm suddenly broke through the tree canopy. They withstood stinging raindrops and pelting debris before glimpsing gabled roofs, mud walls, and a welcoming sign reading, “Fumarole (*FYOO-ma-rōl*) Inn—Hot Food, Cool Spirits, Warm Lodging, and Hot-Spring Tub Baths!!!” They had arrived at a small thorp—a tiny hamlet with seven residences and the one tavern inn—all circling a poorly maintained courtyard of uneven pavers and a natural pothole. The eye of the storm had settled over the thorp, creating a reprieve.

Currently, the party is **inside Fumarole Inn** in front of a blazing fireplace. The only other **patron smiles at them and holds his hands over his ears**. The **innkeeper’s head is down**; she may not have noticed the party enter.

Scene A: Fumarole Inn

Characters may **explore the inn**, take advantage of its amenities, and **speak with and assist the patron and owner**.

June, the innkeeper, is in no condition to speak, other than mumbling to herself (See **Creature/NPC: June, the Innkeeper** below). Ayel, the patron, is friendly and forthcoming (See **Creature/NPC: Ayel, the Patron** below). While June and Ayel are unaware of the cause of their troubles, they are both plagued by a curse (See the “Void-Curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth” sidebar below).

Exploring the inn presents several opportunities for the characters to gather clues about the curse, potentially causing them to become mesmerized by the void, like June. Characters find the void within some of the following areas of the inn:

- Taking a bath in a **bathhouse** tub or investigating the **kitchen** reveals the drains don’t drain in a swirl; counter to physics they dump water straight down like a cylinder. Seeing this could mesmerize characters, showing a fascinating, empty void.
- The knothole in the bottom of the empty chest in the **bedroom** could mesmerize characters, causing them to contemplate how comfortable and quiet it would be to rest in the void.
- Under June’s **counter** is a money box and ledger (See **Treasure & Rewards** below). The ledger’s accounting has the center of many zeros scribbled in; looking at them could potentially mesmerize characters.
- Studying June’s **counter** to see the tiny burrow holes she is staring at could stun characters to gaze into the deep nothingness of the void.

After the characters have a fair understanding of the oddities in the inn, proceed to **Episode Two: Pull of the Void**.

Void-Curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth

The party doesn’t yet know they could potentially become the next victims of the void-curse, damned to be obsessed with and slowly transformed by the depressions. Victims are trapped, forever after born from the soil, every storm, and swallowed by the void again at the storm’s passing.

Characters studying burrows, tunnels, hollows, and anything hole-like must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, or they have the **stunned condition** (See the following “Stunned Condition” sidebar).

At first, until the void grows too strong, another character can **push, drag, or lift** a mesmerized character away, breaking the effect (see the following “Push, Drag, or Lift” sidebar). Alternately, casting the spell *fog cloud* or using other creative means to block a character’s view of the void can also break the stunned condition.

Characters **swallowed by the void** do not “die;” they are immediately reborn in the loose soil of the courtyard’s growing sinkhole. They awake with full health, free of conditions, and remember nothing of their time being mesmerized. Following through with this feature adds tension and gives a clue to the threat.

Stunned Condition

Player’s Handbook (PHB), pg 292

While stunned a player character (PC)...

- Will be **unable to move**, do an **action**, or do **reactions**
- Can only **speak falteringly**
- Will automatically **fail** any **Strength and Dexterity saving throws**
- Any **attacks against them** will be made at **advantage** (roll 2d20 and use the highest number)

While stunned in this thorp the characters are mesmerized to **stare into the void**, at the hole, burrow, or divot that caught their attention.

Push, Drag, or Lift

PHB, pg 176

To calculate a PC’s carrying capacity **multiply their Strength score by 30**. That is how many pounds they can push, drag, or lift without slowing their speed. Any weight above that, pushed, or pulled will slow the PC’s movement speed to 5 feet.

Fumarole Inn Area Information

Fumarole Inn features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Fumarole Inn houses a **tavern** in the front, **kitchen** behind the bar counter, **two bedrooms** to rent (one with a double bed and another with six single beds), a six-tub **bathhouse**, and, the owner, **June’s bedroom** behind the kitchen. The structure was well built by June but has since been **damaged by burrowing beetles**, carving out

small holes and tunnels within its wooden beams and boards. (See the map on the inside cover).

Lighting. The fireplace and a few fixtures cast with light give the interior of the inn a **soft, orange glow**.

Smells. The mouth-watering fragrance of **vegetable soup and a roast** escapes the kitchen.

Traps & Puzzles. Looking into burrows, knotholes, the patron's ear canal, or water as it drains is mesmerizing (See the "**Void-curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth**" sidebar above).

Recalling History of the Area

With a **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check** characters recall no known settlements having existed in this particular part of the Border Forest. But there it is, a small thorp with a handful of unimposing, weathered homes, puny gardens, and a single inn. With a **lower History check**, characters believe this insignificant thorp could have easily been overlooked and forgotten by anyone who happened upon it.

Scene A Objective

Discover the strange goings-on in the thorp, see the void in holes and how it's affecting the locals.

Void-Curse: Passage of Time

Those trapped by the void are reborn from the earth during a storm and swallowed again at its passing. They are not aware of the passage of time as the void waits for another storm to rebirth the thorp and its occupants. From their perspective, no time has passed between storms. If they were cooking when they were swallowed by the void, at the next storm's arrival, they pick up exactly where they left off preparing the meal **without sensing a skip in time**. To their knowledge, they are experiencing the same storm.

Creature/NPC: June, the Innkeeper

June, an over six-foot tall half-elf with olive skin and an auburn bob and long braid running down her back (pictured in **Appendix 3**), is hunched over her counter-top. The loose hair of her bob brushes the surface as she studies the insect damage done to her

counter.

Objectives/Goals. Usually driven to **work hard and serve customers**, June is currently mesmerized (**stunned**) by the void she sees in the burrow holes on her counter.

What Does She Know? Anytime June can see any insect damage, covering the wood counter, walls, floor, and furniture inside her inn, **she is stunned**.

- June repeatedly mumbles, "Woke up. There was a storm but not on us. Went to work. The burrow holes. The void..."

If June's stunned condition is **broken** (ex: she's relocated outside, *mending* to all holes, *fog cloud* obscures sight. etc.) she is happy to speak with those who helped her and follows them wherever they go.

- She **doesn't know** why she was mesmerized.
- If a character mentions "**the void**," she confirms having thoughts of the void while mesmerized.
- June has been **in this unnamed thorp** since building her inn, she thinks at least 120 years ago (unknown to her it's been over 200 years; see "Void-Curse: Passage of Time" sidebar).
- She doesn't realize anything truly strange is going on. This life, living in a perpetually stormy area, is **normal** to her.

"Crazy" and Related Comments

Ayel (or another NPC) responds to any "crazy"-related words or comments from players. Below are examples of possible responses. Choose what makes sense for the situation.

- "Hey! Wait just one minute don't make light of peoples' mental health. That's just mean."
- "Don't vilify people for doing the best they can. Please try to be more understanding."
- "Those words shame and isolate people, and that's never helpful or heroic."
- "Think about this world, all the violence, illusions, charms, and loss! Of course people are gonna get depressed, grieve, look over their shoulders, and have a hard time trusting their senses."
- "Be kind and specific; she's acting withdrawn, and I guess it's possible I might have a phobia but don't call us 'crazy.'"

Playing the Pillars

Combat

If NPCs are attacked, their **wounds can stun** the attacker, on a failed Constitution saving throw. If the NPC (having between 4 and 10hp) reaches zero hit points, they turn to dust and are drawn into the ground (being reborn in the courtyard). They return to the inn without memory of the attack or their being **swallowed by the void** (see "Void-curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth" sidebar above).

Exploration

Investigating any room could reveal clues, or it could expose holes that can potentially cause a character to be mesmerized (see "Void-curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth" sidebar above). See **Treasure & Rewards** below for items found in the different rooms of the inn.

Social

The NPCs are victims but unaware of the curse or how it is affecting them. June is unresponsive to any conversation unless a character breaks her stunned condition. Ayel is eager to be helpful. If PCs can help June and Ayel, they gladly follow them wherever they go.

A **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check** reveals every NPC in the thorp (including the spotted cat in **Episode Two**) or PC reborn in the sinkhole, **smells strongly of earth and heavy rains**, but is physically very healthy.

More details in [Appendix 1](#).

Creature/NPC: Ayel, the Patron

Ayel (*ay-EL*) is a friendly, willowy, young human with disheveled red hair and reddish-brown, freckled skin, always keeping his hands cupped over his ears. He is a traveling herbalist and hunter who happened upon the thorp while escaping a storm.

Objectives/Goals. He'd like to **get back to hunting**, but his **fear** of bugs crawling into his ears is keeping him from lowering his arms. Despite the pain and exhaust of holding his arms up, and how much he misses hunting, he can't stop worrying.



What Does He Know? Ayel is forthcoming.

- He was surprised to find any settlement here, let alone this tiny hamlet. But with the number of people finding it and staying, the thorp can't remain this small much longer.
- Ayel's **time here** has been no more than a few months (unknown to him he's really been here about three years; see "Void-Curse: Passage of Time" sidebar). The last few tendays June's been withdrawn, and the past two days he's covered his ears.
- When he first arrived, June and he talked a lot, including about her frustration at insect damage to her inn. This got him thinking about bugs too, and he **started covering his ears** to keep them from crawling into them—"Everyone's heard of people with ear pain or hearing loss, only to have a cleric remove some bug from their ear canal!" It takes a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince him to **uncover his ears**. Those **forcing Ayel's hands away** from his ears are automatically **mesmerized** to see the deep nothingness of the

void where Ayel's ear canal should be.

- Ayel's never seen anything like **this storm**. It hasn't let up his entire time here, and the eye of the storm has stayed over the thorp. He seems unaware of the contradiction to the party's experience; for them, the storm started no more than three hours ago. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals he honestly believes what he is saying; this has been his experience as he's known it.

More details in [Appendix 1](#).

Treasure & Rewards

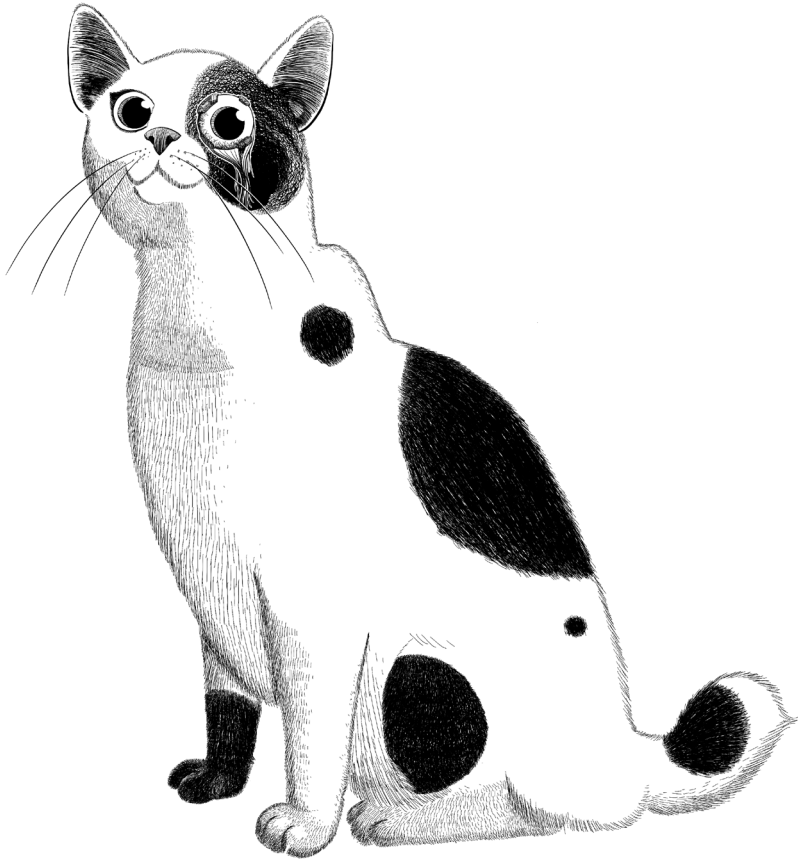
- **Ayel's Gear.** Found in one of the **inn's bedrooms** are Ayel's backpack, bedroll, mess kit, torches, rations, a waterskin, herbalist kit, and hemp rope. The rations smell and taste like earth, the hemp rope and torches have been made delicate by decay, and picking up any other items reveal they are filled with mud, ruined.
- **Money Box and Ledger.** Found on a shelf under June's bar **counter**, in the **kitchen**, or in **June's bedroom** is a locked money box. Unlocking the box with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** (adding their proficiency bonus if proficient at lock-picking tools) or **damaging it by 10 hit points** opens it to show coins and a ledger. The coins crumble to dirt at the slightest touch. The ledger had been well kept, documenting over a hundred years of accounting. Now it is yellowed and dirty from decades of neglect. Some of the zeros were colored in and potentially mesmerize the reader.
- **Non-Magical Tea Pot Set.** Found on a shelf under June's **counter**, in the **kitchen**, or in **June's bedroom**, this tea set is of sentimental value only. The pot is cast iron and shaped like a round beholder; the pot handle, spout, and lid handle make three of the ten eye-stocks. The cups are chibi representations of creatures—a brass cup in the shape of an ancient brass dragon (contains trace amounts of lead), a transparent glass gelatinous cube, an iridescent rainbow-stone Roc (naturally leaches a sweetener), and a red clay efreeti with the initials "MC" carved on the bottom. If able to speak with June, she tells the party the set's creator gave her the tea set at the inn's grand opening. The creator crafted the set in admiration of June's astounding productivity, beautiful craftsmanship, and hard work. The tea set is imperfect; June knows no one should use one of the cups.
- **Towel and Soaking Herbs.** Found on the chairs within the curtained stalls of the **bathhouse**. The herbs smell of earthy, mentholated licorice and create a calming, soothing soak when added to a warm bath.

Call to Action

The objective of this entire adventure is to learn about the void-curse and escape before the storm passes and the void swallows the thorp, surrounding area, and all inhabitants.

EPISODE TWO: PULL OF THE VOID

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes.



The Courtyard

Outside the front door of Fumarole Inn, a **cat** meows a hopeful trill. Balancing on a loose paving stone, the spotted cat looks up at anyone opening the door of

the inn. Other than the cat, the courtyard is empty, the pothole rests in the center, somewhat broader and deeper than it was when the party arrived. Closed homes circle the area. The eye of the storm remains overhead, slowly passing, off-center of the courtyard. Soon the storm will move on.

The characters can interact with the cat in **Scene B1. The Void-Spotted Cat** or, if the characters ignore the cat or learn nothing from them, skip ahead to **Scene B2. Hoola Hollers**.

Prerequisites

This episode begins after **Episode One: Drawn In (Call to Action)**.

Story Objective A

Discover the real dangers of the void and the threat it poses to the party.

The Courtyard Area Information

The unnamed thorp's courtyard features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The courtyard roughly has a 50-foot diameter, covered in paving stones loosened by sinking soil. At the party's arrival this sinking ground appeared to be a 15' x 15', shallow pothole, now it is clear that the ground sunk more during their time inside the inn; it is a **25' x 25' wide, 5-feet deep sinkhole**. Currently, the sinkhole has **stable, easily-traveled terrain**, and seems safe enough. **Tunnel holes** are visible along its outer walls. After the sinkhole widens again, it becomes **difficult terrain**, except for those characters who have been swallowed by the void and reborn in the sinkhole. For them, their **footing is sure** as if they know the area like the back of their hand as if they belong there.

Lighting. The **sun shines** down through the eye of the storm, illuminating the thorp; however, the surrounding storm clouds and sheets of rain in the encompassing forest make the **air heavy and dark**.

Playing the Pillars

Combat

Once a character has the stunned condition, from **looking at the cat's spot**, combat is triggered.

If NPCs, including the cat in any of their forms, are attacked, their fresh wounds stun the attacker on a failed Constitution saving throw. If the NPC reaches OHP they turn to dust and vanish (being reborn in the courtyard as their true selves) and returning to the inn without memory of the attack or their being **swallowed by the void** (see "Void-curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth" sidebar above).

Exploration

The **cat and sinkhole** are the most productive things to investigate.

If time permits and characters wish to explore the **thorp's homes**, feel free to get creative. The houses have nothing of value inside but may provide more clues to the void-curse. **Appendix 1** provides a **Random NPC Quick Reference List** of NPCs trapped in the thorp. An example for an item could be a flyer announcing a race, brought by Arrow, the racer. The flyer is dated six years ago but Arrow believes they arrived less than a year ago

Social

After **Hoola** shouts for people to stay away from "his" tunnel within the sinkhole, **thorp citizens** crowd around. Characters have a brief opportunity to speak with them or with Hoola before the sinkhole widens again. **Appendix 1** provides a **Random NPC Quick Reference List** of NPCs trapped in the thorp.

Smells and Sounds. The air **smells of damp earth**, and the sound of **winds and rain** remind the characters of the terrible storm just outside the thorp.

Traps & Puzzles. While the party spent time inside the inn the **curse has gotten stronger**; pushing, dragging, and lifting a stunned character **no longer works to break the condition** as referenced in the “Void-curse: How it Works, Mesmerized, & Rebirth” sidebar above.

Looking into the spot over the cat’s left eye could cause the stunned condition on a failed check, followed by a combat encounter as the void transforms the cat.

Scene B1. The Void-Spotted Cat

Outside the inn, a spotted cat rubs against each of the characters legs, begging for attention. The characters can examine the cat or ignore them.

- On a **DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, they successfully **hold** or otherwise capture the cat.
- A **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or (Nature) check** within 10 feet of the cat shows that the spot over the **cat’s left eye** seems to be a gaping, black void, an empty hollow, going on for an endless depth. Resting in that depth is the cat’s watching eye, nerve endings floating detached but still somehow sending messages to their eager brain. Any character noticing this must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**, or they are stunned, mesmerized to stare into the void, calling them to it.
 - **Failing the Constitution saving throw** triggers a combat encounter as the cat’s void spot grows, mutates the cat into **1 void varmint**, and threatens to devour the stunned character (See the “Creature Modifications” sidebar below and the void varmint stat block in [Appendix 2](#)).

More details on the void-spotted cat below and in [Appendix 1](#).

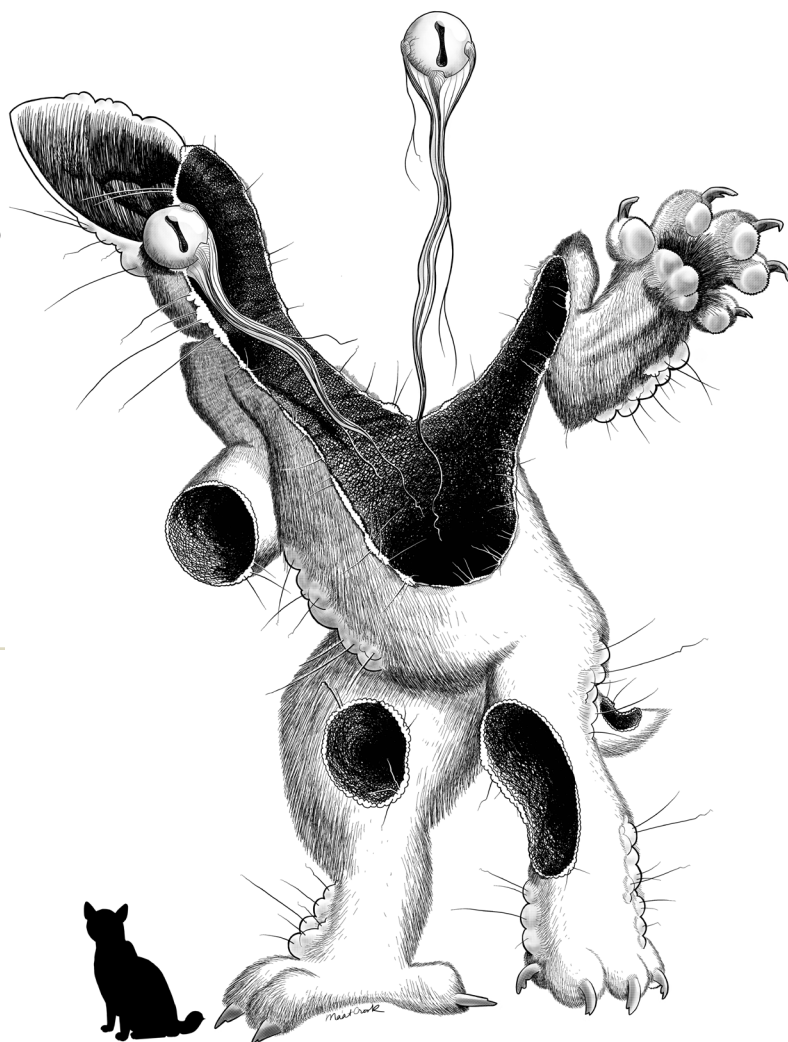
Creature/NPC: The Void-Spotted Cat

An average cat, white with black spots and a short tail.

Objectives/Goals. The cat is hungry for food and attention.

What Does the Cat Know?

- The things cats know. They’re a normal cat...except for **the void in the spot over their left eye**.



Encounter Adjustments

Suggested encounter adjustments are not cumulative

Party Size	Suggested Monsters (in Appendix 2)
Weak	1 chasm creature
Strong	no change
Very Strong	1 hollow brute

Creature Modifications

Chasm creatures, hollow brutes, and void varmints have the following change to their stat blocks:

- Their **Swallow** action is a **Legendary Action**. The chasm creature can take 3 legendary actions of the option below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. The chasm creature regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Swallow. The chasm creature makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target with zero hit points or a target they are grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed and reappears buried under the loose soil of the sinkhole. The target has full health, is free of all conditions, and has no memory of their time mesmerized.

If the **cat or void varmint reaches OHP**, they turn to dust, are absorbed into the ground, and reborn as a cat inside the sinkhole, healthy, and with no memory of the attack.

Scene B2. Hoola Hollers

A half-orc, Hoola, on summoned elkback, rushes to the sinkhole and levitates himself in front of a tunnel lining the sinkhole wall. He shouts, “**Stay away! It’s meant for me!**” The characters can **explore the sinkhole, and speak** with Hoola or with the gathering crowd of citizens.

- Imprinted in the soil, at the mouth of Hoola’s tunnel, is an impossibly clear and detailed facial imprint. A **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** confirms it is identical to Hoola’s face.
- Any characters investigating the sinkhole find one tunnel meant for them. It has an impossibly perfect imprint of their face in the dirt at the mouth of the tunnel. Other characters need to make a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check** to see the facial imprint clearly, confirming it looks exactly like the PC. No other characters or NPCs are drawn to that particular tunnel, only the person who matches the facial imprint.
- If none of the characters investigate the sinkhole, one random player character spots an “**interesting tunnel,**” believes it’s meant for them and feels a pull toward it. From the distance of the sinkhole’s edge, if a character wishes to try to resist the urge to investigate, a **DC 18 Constitution saving throw** allows them to stay on the edge. Once they’ve entered the sinkhole, no saving throw resists investigating closer.
- After **at least one player character finds a tunnel** meant for them or if the characters’ investigation is stalled, Hoola squeezes inside his own tunnel.
 - The party has one opportunity to pull Hoola out of his tunnel with a **contested Strength (Athletics) check** against the void-sinkhole’s **Strength (Athletics) check + 5**. If they **fail or do not try**, he is **swallowed by the void**. If they **succeed**, Hoola **follows the party** wherever they go.

Contested Checks

PHB, pg 174

When one character wants to do something another does not want them to do, like a player character wanting to pull someone out of the earth while it tries to drag a character down, they can roll a contested check to see who succeeds. In this case...

1. The player wanting to pull Hoola out of the tunnel rolls a **Strength (Athletics) check**.
2. The DM rolls a d20 and adds the tunnel’s **Strength (Athletics) of +5** to resist.
3. The highest roll succeeds. A tie means the player character’s pull failed.

Creature/NPC: Hoola, the Peacesmith

Hoola is a leather-clad half-orc adventurer and Peacesmith (see the **Bleeding Gate Hook**), with neurological paralysis of his legs. He uses the *levitate* and *find steed* spells for his movement.

Objectives/Goals. He is possessive of a sinkhole tunnel, believing it calls him.

What Does He Know?

While he **protects “his” sinkhole tunnel...**

- He is focused solely on keeping anyone from interfering with his tunnel.

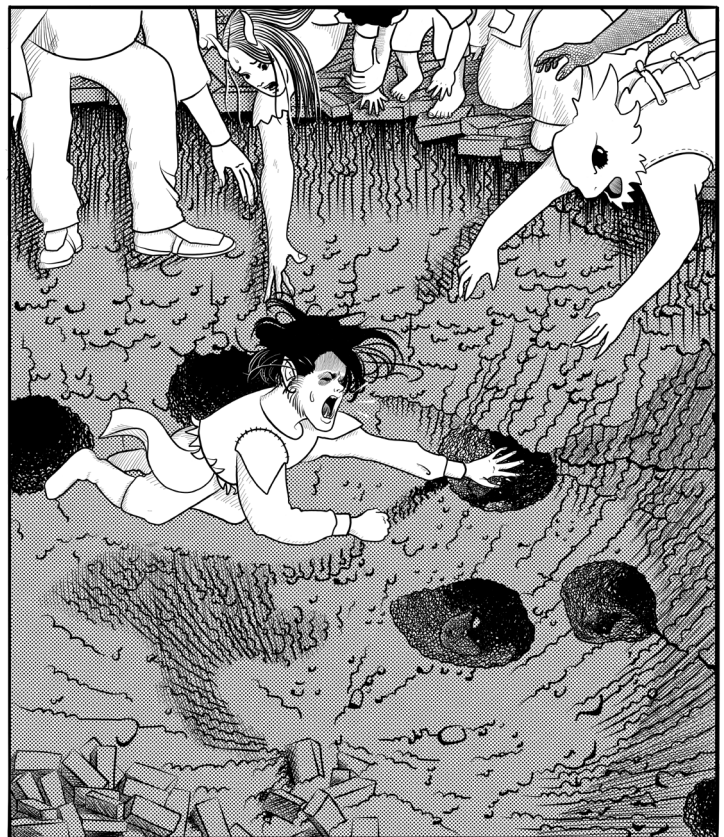
Once Hoola **enters the tunnel...**

- He recalls long forgotten knowledge, “I-I found this place in the rain. I thought I’d been here a few hours, but it’s been days. Storm passes, and the void pulls us under. Into nothingness! Storm comes, and we rise! No! Save them from the void! Save yourselves before it swallows you! Run!” The earth shakes and begins pulling him in. Characters have one chance to pull him out with a contested Strength check.

More details in **Appendix 1**.

Once Hoola warns the characters the sinkhole widens, swallowing the thorp and everyone continuing to stay in it. Proceed to **Episode Three: Run!**

Hoola levitating in the sinkhole, guarding “his” tunnel.



Melot Crank

EPISODE THREE: RUN!

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes.

Back Into the Storm

The ground shakes. The sinkhole widens, deepens. The surrounding forest is the only place to run as the sinkhole continues to grow larger. Those who do not make their **escape** are swallowed by the void and reborn in the sinkhole. Running is the only way of preventing this from happening again and again.

Prerequisites

This episode begins after Hoola enters the sinkhole tunnel and gives his warning, in **Episode Two: Run!**.

Story Objective B

Escape!

Bonus Objective A: Rescue and Requit

As the sinkhole widens, characters can try to **help the thorp citizens escape**. To successfully complete the objective, the characters need to get an average of two NPCs per party member to the end of the adventure, alive. Alternately, if the party has fewer NPCs, if the characters take significant risks to protect those NPCs, they may also succeed. More information in **Appendix 3**.

The Border Forest Area Information

This area of the Border Forest features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Border Forest appears to extend as far as the eye can see in all directions around the thorp. The ground is wet but easy enough to travel.

The growing sinkhole is **difficult terrain**, except for those characters who have been swallowed by the void and reborn in the sinkhole. For them their **footing is sure**.

Lighting. The storm rages, the air is thick with wind-blown rain and debris. Clouds and the obscurements only allow for **dim** lighting.

Smells The air smells strongly of damp earth and rain.

Traps & Puzzles. The **Hallow Forest** and void-transformed people met in **the Clearing** could cause the **characters to be swallowed by the void** and reborn in the sinkhole. Heavy **winds lift up the characters** who need to grab treetops for safety.

Playing the Pillars

Combat

In **Scene C2: The Clearing**, there is an opportunity for combat against **void-transformed people**. To remind the characters of their danger, **narrate the sinkhole's encroachment**, getting 5 feet closer every round or an appropriate amount of time.

Targets who's HP reaches zero are swallowed by the void and reborn in the sinkhole as their true selves, at full health, with no conditions, and no memory of being affected by the void or combat. The party may rescue these NPCs.

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Exploration

This episode and its scenes are focused on escape. The sinkhole is continuing to widen, ever on the characters' heels. This is no time for exploring. **Run!**

Social

At this point, **Bonus Objective A: Rescue and Requit** is an option. Characters can try to **rescue** as many NPCs as they wish, including the cat.

To save time and reduce repetition of rolls, you may want to consider allowing players to roll once on saving throws for their character and the escaping NPCs, as a group, rather than rolling for each individual character.

Scene C1.

The Hallow Forest

The trees immediately surrounding the thorp are rotten and hollow; their gaping voids threaten to pull characters in as they dash between trunks and duck under branches. Each character must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** (spells like *longstrider* give advantage) to pass without being engulfed by a tree's hollow void.

On a failed saving throw a character and any NPCs they help are **swallowed by the tree** and reborn in the sinkhole. After they have easily dug themselves out, their last memory is of running toward the forest. They see the sinkhole widening around them. The ground inside the sinkhole should be difficult terrain, but their **footing is sure** as if they are strangely familiar with it. When they reach the forest there is no need for a second saving throw; the sinkhole has swallowed the hallow trees.

Creature/NPC

The only NPCs to meet in this area are those who are running to escape the sinkhole. [Appendix 1](#) provides a [Random NPC Quick Reference List](#).

Scene C2. The Clearing

On the characters heels, the sinkhole continues swallowing the forest they've dashed through. Ahead is a grassy clearing which looks like it gives an unobstructed path for a good fifty feet, at least. A terrified bleat draws the party's attention to the right. The void transformed the thorp residents into **1 void varmint** and **2 chasm creatures** (pictured below); they hunch over a downed stag.

The void varmint and chasm creatures do not notice the party or survivors if they stand quietly on the edge of the clearing or succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to sneak past them.

Creature/NPC

For this combat interaction pick NPCs, that did not make the escape, to be the void varmint and chasm creatures, preferably NPCs the characters interacted with or would recognize, like Ayel. [Appendix 1](#) provides a [Random NPC Quick Reference List](#).

Encounter Adjustments

Suggested encounter adjustments are not cumulative

Party Size	Suggested Monsters (in Appendix 2)
Weak	3 chasm creature
Strong	no change
Very Strong	1 hollow brute & 2 chasm creature

Creature Modifications

Chasm creatures, **hollow brutes**, and **void varmints** have the following change to their stat blocks:

- Their **Swallow** action is a **Legendary Action**. The chasm creature can take 3 legendary actions of the option below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The chasm creature regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Swallow. The chasm creature makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target with zero hit points or a target they are grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed and reappears buried under the loose soil of the sinkhole. The target has full health, is free of all conditions, and has no memory of their time while mesmerized.

Scene C3. The Rising Wind

The wind builds strong enough to lift all characters and NPCs up, 30 feet in the air. It whips everyone around the trees, tossing them to and fro, nearly knocking them into each other and the treetops.

Below are three examples of how individuals or teams can save themselves from being knocked into the treetops and taking damage:

- On a **DC 15 Strength saving throw**, an individual character successfully grabs the tree. On a failure, they grab the tree but also receive **1d6 damage** in a collision with it.
- Any two conscious characters can use the **Help Action** (to gain advantage) on one **DC 12 Dexterity check** to catch each other. On a success, they can use another **Help Action** to grab a treetop with a **DC 15 Strength saving throw**. On a failure, they grab the tree but also receive **1d6 damage** from being crashed into it.
- Any conscious character can grab an unconscious character with a **DC 12 Dexterity check**. On a success, the conscious character can then try to grab a treetop or pull the other character toward a treetop with a **DC 15 Strength saving throw**. On a failure, the conscious character receives **1d6 damage** from flying debris. The unconscious character is now safe in the tree.

Reward creative thinking; perhaps tossed ropes give characters flung in the air advantage on checks. There could be many solutions to this problem.

Creature/NPC

There are no new creatures to meet here.



WRAP UP

Once the characters are safely in the treetops, you can summarize the following information, as it applies to them.

Story Objectives A & B. Watching from the treetops, the characters see the sinkhole grow. Trees around the perimeter lean and fall into the crater, slowly disappearing into the churning soil. The characters' trees creak and angle but do not fall. The storm clouds dissipate, the wind ceases, tremors stop, and the dust settles. Before their eyes the depressed ground levels out, leaving a large, muddy clearing. All evidence of the sinkhole and thorp are gone, swallowed, vanished, until the next storm. Any characters previously swallowed by the void suddenly have their memories back and receive a **story award** below. From here the characters can climb down the trees and continue onto new adventures, onto **Bonus Objective B: Clear the Forest**, or, if this was a side-quest, continue their previous adventure.

Bonus Objective A. If the characters were able to aid in the escape of an average of 2 NPCs per player character or the risks they took to rescue fewer NPCs demonstrated great heroism, then they succeed in this objective. Escaped NPCs suddenly have their memories back, remembering the void trapped them in the thorp after happening upon it much as the party did. They were cursed to relive a life obsessed with the void, for months and, some, years (for help with NPC names and details see the **Random NPC Quick Reference List** in **Appendix 1**). See **Treasure & Rewards: Bonus Objective A** for the gifts these NPCs and their loved-ones give the party.

Bonus Objective B. This objective can be played after Scene C3 and extends the adventure's gameplay.

The players succeed in completing this objective if they were able to recruit a large group of clerics, paladins, warlocks, and wizards from surrounding areas to cast *remove curse* on the site of the thorp. If June is still alive, she thanks them with free meals at her tavern (the old one or one she rebuilt) any time they are in the area. If Hoola is alive and returned to the Peacesmith Guild in Emmudomier, he spreads word of your heroism. Ersu, head of the Census Watch and Harper, is impressed. He invites you to join the Census Watch and, while on your travels, asks that you report back any Peacesmith issues you witness. More information in **Appendix 4**.

Treasure & Rewards: Bonus Objective A

Stick-Figure Drawing. This drawing is made by one of the rescued children or the child of a rescued, adult NPC, upon their return to their home.

Blanket. This blanket is made from scraps of fabric; one of the scraps is the softest thing ever felt.

Live Musical Performance. Teenaged brothers, Sevan and Tilver, perform this concert (see **Appendix 1**). Their band is called Roc and Gnoll, and their setlist includes "Life of the Party," "Dragonborn to be Wild," and "Barbarian Rhapsody."

Heward's Handy Spice Pouch. This belt pouch of fine spices (*Heward's Handy Spice Pouch*, XGtE, pg 137) is given by one of the escaped NPCs. It is one of their most prized possessions, and they missed not having it while trapped in the thorp—everything there tasted a bit like dirt. They hope it will serve the party well (see **Appendix 7**). Two waxy, heart-shaped leaves, sewn together, form this pouch.

ADVENTURE REWARDS

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

Advancement Checkpoints

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

- **Story Objective A.** Investigate the curse.
- **Story Objective B.** Escape.

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

- **Bonus Objective A.** Rescue citizens.
- **Bonus Objective B.** Remove the curse.

Player Rewards

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

Magic Item Unlock

Characters completing the **Bonus Objective A: Rescue & Requit** unlock:

Heward's Handy Spice Pouch. Two waxy, heart-shaped leaves, sewn together, form this pouch. Speaking the name of any nonmagical food seasoning will cause it to appear inside the pouch. This item can be found on pg 137 of *XGtE* and **Appendix 7**.

Story Award

TPVoid. Your entire party was swallowed by the void and born again from it. No matter how often you bathe, your body smells of damp earth and heavy rains. For every time the entire party was swallowed by the void, you lost **1d4 months** of time. You had been trapped by the thorp and relived life, again and again, storm after storm, until your escape. This award can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Dungeon Master Rewards

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

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

APPENDIX 1: LOCATIONS & NPCs

Locations

The following locations are almost NPCs in their own right. They are a part of the mystery and the antagonists.

- **Fumarole Inn (FYOO-ma-rōl ENN).** Features warm rooms, a tavern, and a bathhouse with running hot water from a natural spring. It also features burrowing-beetle holes throughout and tubs who's water drains counter to physics, holes giving a glimpse into the void cursing this thorp.
- **The Sinkhole.** Quickly grows in the courtyard, with small tunnels eventually becoming exposed along the sinkhole walls. Each tunnel is made for and calls to residents and visitors. If anyone, NPCs (including the cat) or PCs, is swallowed by the void, they are reborn here.
- **The Eye of the Storm.** Creates a reprieve from the wind and rain but, like a Venus flytrap, gives creatures reason to stay too long on this cursed land.
- **The Hollow Forest.** Rotten, knotted, hollow trees surround the thorp. In relative quick time, the voids within these trees grow and threaten to pull creatures in.

NPCs

The NPCs featured in this adventure are victims. Player characters may choose to speak to any or all of them to get clues to solve the mysterious goings-on:

- **Ayel (ay-EL).** Human, 26 years old, although his time in the void makes him think he's 23. Ayel is a thin man with disheveled red hair and light, reddish-brown, freckled skin. He is a hunter and herbalist who happened upon the thorp during a storm. He keeps his hands cupped over his ears and is unable to work since developing a fear of insects and arachnoids. The PCs meet him at the tavern and, if not with them during the escape, meet him again at the end of the adventure, as a void-transformed creature and threat (pictured in [Episode One: Drawn In, Scene A](#) and [Wrap Up](#)).

Personality. I spend much of my time alone but am a people-person, so I'll "talk your ear off."

Ideal. Preparedness. "Prevention is worth a vial of cure," as they say.

Bond. My wanderlust keeps me always on the move.

Flaw. I don't usually stay in one place long.

- **June (JOON).** Half-elf, believes she's about 120 years old but is well over 200 due to her time in this void-cursed thorp. She is tall, over six

feet, and muscular, with olive skin, and a long, auburn braid, running down her back (pictured in [Appendix 3](#)). Once a driven innkeeper, now she is unable to serve her customers, mesmerized by burrow-holes in her inn. When she is not stunned in this manner, she greets people with a crooked smile and strong handshake.

Personality. I'm a stickler for doing things well; it's a waste of my time not to give my full effort.

Ideal. Improvement. I want to always improve my skills as a cook and service worker.

Bond. I built Fumarole Inn. Losing it would be infuriating, but I'd insist on rebuilding.

Flaw. When faced with a difficult problem I process out-loud, repeating words to myself often.

- **Hoola (HOO-la).** Half-orc, 34-year-old. Hoola is a leather-clad adventurer and Peacesmith (see the [Bleeding Gate Hook](#)) with neurological paralysis, impeding his mobility. He uses the *levitate* and *find steed* spells for his movement. Hoola is from nearby Emudomier and doesn't realize he has been trapped by the void three days ago; from his perspective, he's been in the thorp a matter of hours. When the characters meet him, he is enamored by a sinkhole tunnel, believing it calls him and belongs to him (pictured in [Episode Two: Pull of the Void, Scene B2](#)).

Personality. I believe you aren't your mistakes but what you do after realizing your mistake, tells me exactly who you are.

Ideal. Peace. I practice my Peacesmith training to be compassionate, respectful, and willing to negotiate.

Bond. I defend those who ask for my help.

Flaw. I grew up with little and can be a bit possessive about some things.

- **The Void-Spotted Cat.** Cat, 9-year-old. The cat is white with black spots and a bobtail. The cat is ordinary in every way, except one of the cat's spots, over their left eye, is a mesmerizing void (pictured in [Episode Two: Pull of the Void](#)). If a character is stunned by looking at it, the cat transforms into a **void varmint** (pictured in [Episode Two, Scene B1](#)). If the cat or void varmint is attacked and reaches 0 hit points, they turn to dust, are swallowed by the void, and are reborn as a healthy cat, in the sinkhole. They remember nothing of the attack.

Personality. Please give me attention and food.

Ideal. Attention. Please pay attention to me.

Bond. I love food and a good chin scratch.

Flaw. There's a void in the spot over my eye.

Random NPC Quick Reference List. Listing the kind of information player's might ask when their characters choose to help or speak with NPCs.

Name	Characteristics
Arrow "they"	Race: Fire Genasi Occupation: Racer Home: Baldur's Gate, Sword Coast region Missing: 6 years, disappeared on a cross-continent race, was in 1st place.
Basil "she"	Race: Kobold Class: Cleric and farmer Home: Glistler, Moonsea to the east Missing: 11 months, scavenging for healing herbs for a girlfriend, who she used to take for granted before mysteriously falling ill.
Batbayar (Bat-BAY-ar) "she"	Race: Gnome Class: Barbarian Home: Hillsfar, Moonsea to the southeast Missing: 12 weeks, this tough grandmother was looking for her human neighbors' missing teen-aged sons, Sevan and Tilver.
Canada "she"	Race: Dragonborn Class: Psionic Rogue Home: Yûlash, Moonsea to the southeast Missing: 14 days, she & her gang were being chased by the cultist that experimented on them, giving them psionic powers. Only she disappeared.
Conri (Con-REE) "they" and "he"	Race: Once a halfling, reincarnated as an Aasimar Class: Ranger Rogue Home: Luskan, Sword Coast to the west Missing: 15 weeks, they were leaving a completed mission in Emudomier.
Dark "he"	Race: Orc Class: Warlock Home: Mirabar, Sword Coast to the west Missing: 9.5 years, he received a book that foretold of deaths; he followed one of the potential victims to see if it was true. He lost the book in a void-creature attack.
Dulcibella (DUL-sah-BELL-ah) "she"	Race: Bugbear Class: Sorcerer Home: ? Missing: ?, she doesn't remember. She's extremely likable, many are struck by her beauty.
Errat (AIR-rat) "he"	Race: Dwarf Class: Druid Home: Emudomier, Moonsea to the east (in the mountain range north of the Ride) Missing: 31.5 years, he was hunting for the type of hallucinogenic mold that took his husband's life, to find a cure.
Fa'meer "she"	Race: Short-tailed Tabaxi Class: Paladin Home: Neverwinter, Sword Coast Missing: 4 months, she was on her way home after delivering a message.
Humfrey (Hum-FREE) "he"	Race: Yuan-ti Occupation: Artist Home: Emudomier, Moonsea to the east (in the mountain range north of the Ride) Missing: 7 months, on a life-drawing trip, studying wildlife. His loved-ones have surely missed him but likely think he's working, being thorough in his studies.
Jelena (Juh-LEE-nah) "she"	Race: Goblin Class: Ranger Home: Phlan, Moonsea to the east Missing: 9 months, she was hunting, being monstrous to real monsters.

Name	Characteristics
Jong "he"	Race: Halfling Occupation: Farmer Home: Hulburg, Moonsea to the east Missing: 2.5 years, going to Evereska, with his infant son, to return a dead Sun Elf's personal effects, found buried in his radish field.
Keyonay (Key-oh-nay) "she"	Race: Turtle Class: Fighter Home: Anauroch desert, to the west Missing: 42 years, she had tracked a violent force of goblins into the forest.
Maple "he"	Race: Dwarf Class: Ranger Home: Port Nyanzaru, Chult to the south Missing: 3 days, he was on his way to compete in the Wild Monster Capture Festival.
Masa (MAH-sah) "he"	Race: Dwarf Occupation: Traveling Optometrist & Zhentarim associate Home: Emudomier, Moonsea to the east (in the mountain range north of the Ride) Missing: 21 years, while traveling on the Black Road. He's a tall dwarf, intimidating and muscular in dark glasses, but likable and tender-hearted for a made man.
Mun-mun "ey" ey(the)y)/ em/eir/ eirself	Race: Kenku Class: Necromancer Home: Border Forest Missing: 8 years, ey've been living in the Border Forest, rejecting society and morality nonsense.
Ripa (Rip-ah) "she"	Race: Triton Occupation: Fisher Home: Phlan, Moonsea to the east Missing: 18 years, she was on the way to find family off the Sword Coast, passing through the forest on the Black Road.
Sevan "he"	Race: Human Class: Aspiring Bard Home: Hillsfar, Moonsea to the southeast Missing: 13 weeks, he and his brother left home to enter a battle of the bands.
Shayma (SHAY-muh) "she"	Race: Tiefling Class: Rogue Home: Waterdeep, Sword Coast to the west Missing: 3 days, she was caught in the same storm as Hoola, while she was on her way to Whitehorn to prove to her mentor she's not a second-rate rogue.
Tilver "he"	Race: Human Class: Aspiring Bard Home: Hillsfar, Moonsea to the southeast Missing: 13 weeks, he and his brother left home to enter a battle of the bands.
Yar "he"	Race: Aarakocra Occupation: Witch Home: Essembra, south (now abandoned) Missing: 95 years, on a journey to find a community needing a witch.
Zohare (Zoe-HAIR) "ze" ze/zir(zeer)/ zirs/zirself	Race: Human Occupation: Mathematician Home: Whitehorn, The Ride to the east Missing: 1 year, ze worked at the Moonsea School for Homeless Children. Ze is practicing a speech in the form of a death metal song to appease zir boss & keep zir job.

APPENDIX 2:

CREATURE STATISTICS

Cat

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3(-4)	15(+2)	10(+0)	3(-4)	12(+1)	7(-2)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: --

Challenge Rating 0 (10xp)

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

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

can cut out, along the dashed line

Chasm Creature (Giant Frog)

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	13(+1)	11(+0)	2(-4)	10(+0)	3(-4)

Skills: Perception +2, Stealth +3.

Senses: Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 12.

Languages: --

Challenge Rating 1/4 (50xp)

Amphibious. The chasm creature can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The chasm creature's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the chasm creature can't bite another target.

Swallow. The chasm creature makes one bite attack against a Small or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the chasm creature, and it takes 5 (2d4) acid damage at the start of each of the chasm creature's turns. The chasm creature can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the chasm creature dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Creature Modifications

Chasm creatures, hollow brutes, and void varmints have the following change to their stat blocks...

- Their **Swallow** action is a **Legendary Action**. The chasm creature can take 3 legendary actions of the option below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The chasm creature regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Swallow. The chasm creature makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target with zero hit points or a target they are grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed and reappears buried under the loose soil of the sinkhole. The target has full health, is free of all conditions, and has no memory of their time while mesmerized.

Hollow Brute (Giant Ice Toad)

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16(+3)	13(+1)	14(+2)	8(-1)	10(+0)	6(-2)

Damage Immunities: Cold.

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10.

Languages: Ice Toad

Challenge Rating 3 (700xp)

Amphibious. The hollow brute can breathe air and water.

Cold Aura. Any creature that starts their turn within 10 feet of the hollow brute takes 5 (1d10) cold damage.

Standing Leap. The hollow brute's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the hollow brute can't bite another target.

Swallow. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature the hollow brute is grappling. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the hollow brute, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage and 11 (2d10) cold damage at the start of each of the hollow brute's turns. The hollow brute can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the hollow brute dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Void Varmint (Giant Toad)

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

Senses: Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 10.

Languages: --

Challenge Rating 1 (200xp)

Amphibious. The void varmint can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The void varmint's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the void varmint can't bite another target.

Swallow. The void varmint makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the void varmint, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the void varmint's turns. The void varmint can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the void varmint dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

APPENDIX 3: RESCUE & REQUITAL (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

Objective

As the sinkhole widens in **Episode Three: Run!** and begins swallowing the thorp and surrounding forest, the characters may try to **help NPCs** (including the void-spotted cat) escape.

Execution

As the party, and the NPCs they help, travel through the Border Forest they encounter many obstacles.

- In **Scene C1: The Hallow Forest**, the trees are transformed by the void, their hallows could swallow the characters and NPCs. If the character fails their Constitution saving throw, the character, and the NPCs they are accompanying all are swallowed by the hallow trees and reborn in the sinkhole.
- In **Scene C2: The Clearing**, the characters encounter void-transformed people from the thorp. This is an opportunity for stealthing and/or combat, risking being injured or being swallowed by the void.
- In **Scene C3: The Rising Wind**, the characters are lifted up 30 feet in the air. They must secure themselves, and the NPCs they are helping, in the treetops or be bludgeoned as the wind tosses them around.

The character may choose to leave injured NPCs behind to reduce the risk of harm to the others or refuse to abandon anyone, even if they fear it will slow down their own progress. They may show great heroics in protecting, guiding, and assisting the NPCs or be more focused on the number of NPCs they help.

Completion

If the characters took significant risks to their own lives to help the NPCs escape or helped an average of 2 NPCs per player character reach the end of the adventure alive, then they succeed in this objective.

Escaped NPCs suddenly have their memories back, remembering the void trapped them in the thorp after happening upon it much as the party did. They were cursed to relive a life obsessed with the void, for days, weeks, months and, some, years (see the **Random NPC Quick Reference List** under **Appendix 1**).



June and the Spotted Cat, celebrating their rescue

Treasure & Rewards

The rescued NPCs and their families would like to show the party their gratitude.

Stick-Figure Drawing. This drawing is made by one of the rescued children or the child of a rescued, adult NPC, upon their return to their home.

Blanket. This blanket is made from scraps of fabric; one of the scraps is the softest thing ever felt.

Live Musical Performance. Teenaged brothers, Sevan and Tilver, perform this concert (see **Appendix 1**). Their band is called Roc and Gnoll, and their setlist includes “Life of the Party,” “Dragonborn to be Wild,” and “Barbarian Rhapsody.”

Heward’s Handy Spice Pouch. This belt pouch of fine spices (*Heward’s Handy Spice Pouch*, XGtE, pg 137) is given by one of the escaped NPCs. It is one of their most prized possession, and they missed not having it while trapped in the thorp—everything there tasted a bit like dirt. They hope it will serve the party well (see **Appendix 7**). Two waxy, heart-shaped leaves, sewn together, form this pouch.

APPENDIX 4: CLEAR THE FOREST (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

Objective

After the characters have successfully escaped and all escaped NPCs have been returned to their homes the party can **recruit** a large group of clerics, paladins, warlocks, and wizards from surrounding areas to bring balance back to the Border Forest, **removing the curse** from the land.

Execution

The party can travel to areas around Border Forest looking for spellcasters having the spell, *remove curse*. Once the party has recruited a large enough number of spellcasters (the number is at the DMs discretion), they surround the cursed area and begin casting *remove curse*. Obstacles could make their recruitment or cleansing difficult. The following are examples of obstacles:

- Spellcasters may ask for favors in exchange for their help—run an errand, pay them, chase off a rival spellcaster, or the party could owe them a future favor.
- The party may need to defend the spellcasters from attackers, while they complete their spells.

Something for the party to consider is if they cast the spell while the thorp is swallowed by the void or during a storm when the thorp and its remaining residents have been reborn from the void. If they cast when the thorp is swallowed, all victims of the curse will be lost forever in the void. If they wait until the next storm, for the thorp to rise from the earth, they become vulnerable to the curse and void-transformed creatures but will also be able to free everyone.

Completion

If the characters successfully assist in the removal of the curse, they complete this objective. They have brought some balance to this area of the forest.

Treasure & Rewards

Free Meals. If June is alive and no longer trapped by the void, she shows her gratitude by offering free meals any time you visit her tavern (the old one or one she rebuilt).

Invitation to Join the Census Watch. If Hoola is alive and returned to the Peacesmith Guild in Emmudomier, he spreads the word of your heroism. Ersu, head of the Census Watch and Harper, is impressed. He invites you to join the Census Watch and, while on your travels, asks that you report back any Peacesmith issues you witness.

APPENDIX 5: PLAYER HANDOUTS

Skill Check Help Sheet

Duplicate

Skills Checks. Each character has skills they are good, average, or flawed with. As a player you can use your imagination to come up with creative ways to get through situations or navigate an environment. The following give examples to spark your imagination.

Skill Check	Examples
Acrobatics	Dexterously flip, roll, dive, balance, etc.
Animal Handling	Wisely calm down a domesticated animal, direct your mount to attempt a risky move, intuit an animal's intentions, etc.
Arcana	Intelligently recall lore about magical spells, items, symbols, traditions, and planes & their inhabitants, etc.
Athletics	Strongly climb, jump, swim, etc.
Deception	Use your charisma to lie, mislead, be ambiguous, fast-talk, gamble, disguise yourself, give false assurances, maintain a straight face, etc.
History	Intelligently recall lore about past/historical events, people, civilizations, disputes, recent wars, etc.
Insight	Wisely determine intentions, lies, predict someone's next move, read body language, speech habits, and changes in mannerisms, etc.
Intimidation	Charismatically threaten, cause fear, pry, convince, etc.
Investigation	Intelligently look for clues, objects, deduce (what kind of weapon caused a wound, weakest point of a tunnel), etc.
Medicine	Wisely stabilize the dying with a healer's kit, diagnose illness, etc.
Nature	Intelligently recall lore of terrain, plants, animals, weather, & natural cycles, etc.
Perception	Wisely spot, hear, detect a presence, be aware of surroundings, eavesdrop, etc.
Performance	Use charisma to perform (music, art, storytelling, dance, etc.), entertain, etc.
Persuasion	Use charisma to influence, negotiate, foster friendship, request, inspire, etc.
Religion	Intelligently recall lore about deities, rites, prayers, religious hierarchies, holy symbols, practices of secret cults, etc.
Sleight of Hand	Your dexterous hands plant, steal, conceal an object, etc.
Stealth	Dexterously conceal yourself from enemies, slink past guards, slip away without being noticed, sneak up on someone without being seen or heard, etc.
Survival	Wisely follow tracks, hunt, navigate, identify signs of wildlife, predict the weather, avoid natural hazards, etc.

cut along the dashed line and distribute to players

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Player Tents & How to Play

print on cardstock for best results

<p>Player: _____</p> <p>pronoun: _____</p> <p>Character: _____</p> <p>pronoun: _____</p> <p>Race: _____ Class: _____</p> <p>Alignment: _____ Level: _____</p> <p>Armor Class: _____ Passive Perception: _____</p>	<p>How to Play D&D</p> <p>1. The Dungeon Master (DM) will describe what is happening around you. 2. You say what you'd like to do. Ex: "I look in the pile for things of interest." 3. The DM may ask you to roll a d20 (20-sided dice) to see if you succeed.</p> <p>While in "Initiative," on your turn, you can...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Move. My character's movement speed is ____ ft. Take 1 of these Actions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Melee Attack (your character sheet & <i>Player's Handbook</i>/PHB says if you have multiple attacks per Action)<ul style="list-style-type: none">To see if you hit, roll 1d20 + STR mod (can choose DEX if weapon has "finesse") + Prof Bonus.If you hit, roll the damage dice listed in your weapon's information + STR mod (can choose DEX if weapon has "finesse").Ranged Attack (your character sheet or PHB says if you have multiple attacks per Action)<ul style="list-style-type: none">To see if you hit, roll 1d20 + DEX mod + Prof Bonus.If you hit, roll the damage dice + DEX mod.Cast a spell (Spell details are in the PHB).Dash make another move (see above, #1).Disengage, move away from a threat without them attacking you.Dodge, giving an attacker disadvantage on hitting you (they roll 2d20 & use the lowest roll).Help a fellow player on their turn, giving them advantage on their next turn (they roll 2d20 & use the highest roll).Ready an Action for later, "If _____ happens, I will _____."Take 1 Bonus Action, on a spell or ability listed as a "Bonus Action."Take 1 Reaction (at any time in the round)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make an opportunity attack if an "enemy" who was next to you moves away, unless they disengage.Use a spell or ability listed as a "Reaction."
<p>Player: _____</p> <p>pronoun: _____</p> <p>Character: _____</p> <p>pronoun: _____</p> <p>Race: _____ Class: _____</p> <p>Alignment: _____ Level: _____</p> <p>Armor Class: _____ Passive Perception: _____</p>	<p>How to Play D&D</p> <p>1. The Dungeon Master (DM) will describe what is happening around you. 2. You say what you'd like to do. Ex: "I look in the pile for things of interest." 3. The DM may ask you to roll a d20 (20-sided dice) to see if you succeed.</p> <p>While in "Initiative," on your turn, you can...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Move. My character's movement speed is ____ ft. Take 1 of these Actions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Melee Attack (your character sheet & <i>Player's Handbook</i>/PHB says if you have multiple attacks per Action)<ul style="list-style-type: none">To see if you hit, roll 1d20 + STR mod (can choose DEX if weapon has "finesse") + Prof Bonus.If you hit, roll the damage dice listed in your weapon's information + STR mod (can choose DEX if weapon has "finesse").Ranged Attack (your character sheet or PHB says if you have multiple attacks per Action)<ul style="list-style-type: none">To see if you hit, roll 1d20 + DEX mod + Prof Bonus.If you hit, roll the damage dice + DEX mod.Cast a spell (Spell details are in the PHB).Dash make another move (see above, #1).Disengage, move away from a threat without them attacking you.Dodge, giving an attacker disadvantage on hitting you (they roll 2d20 & use the lowest roll).Help a fellow player on their turn, giving them advantage on their next turn (they roll 2d20 & use the highest roll).Ready an Action for later, "If _____ happens, I will _____."Take 1 Bonus Action, on a spell or ability listed as a "Bonus Action."Take 1 Reaction (at any time in the round)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make an opportunity attack if an "enemy" who was next to you moves away, unless they disengage.Use a spell or ability listed as a "Reaction."

APPENDIX 6: STORY AWARDS

TPVoid

Story Award, Vacant CCC-KUMORI-02-01

Your entire party was swallowed by the void and born again from it.

- No matter how often you bathe, your body smells of damp earth and heavy rains.
- For every time the entire party was swallowed by the void, you lost **1d4 months** of time. You had been trapped by the thorp and relived life, again and again, storm after storm, until your escape.

APPENDIX 7: MAGIC ITEMS UNLOCKED

Characters completing **Bonus Objective A: Rescue & Requit**, in this adventure, unlock this magic item. It can be purchased for 2 treasure checkpoints.

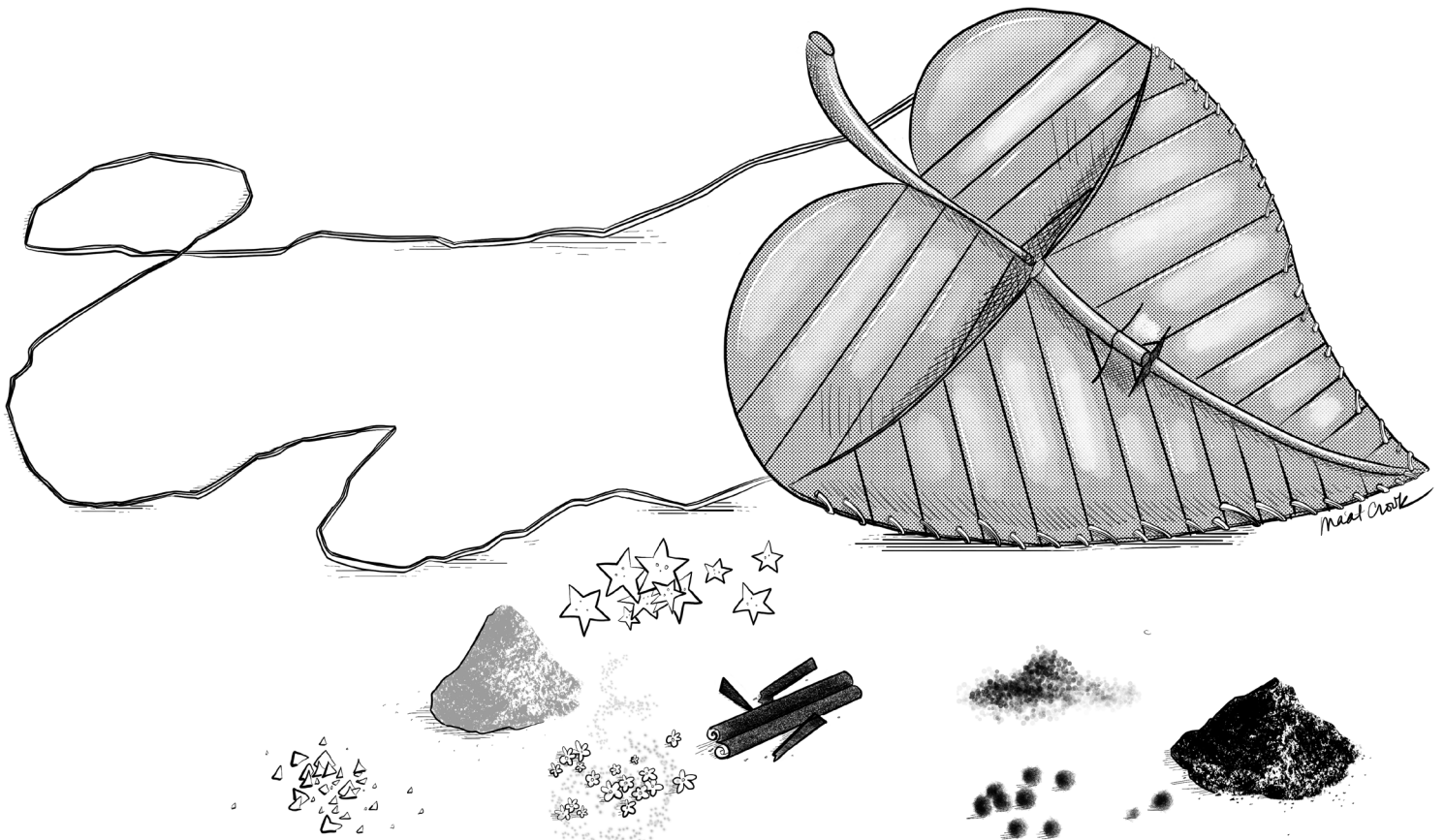
Heward's Handy Spice Pouch

Wondrous Item, common

This belt pouch appears empty and has 10 charges. While holding the pouch, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges, speak the name of any nonmagical food seasoning (such as salt, pepper, saffron, or cilantro), and remove a pinch of the desired seasoning from the pouch. A pinch is enough to season a single meal. The pouch regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn.

This item is found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything, pg. 137.

Two waxy, heart-shaped leaves, sewn together form this pouch.



APPENDIX 8: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This horror adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st to 4th level characters** and is optimized as a **learn-to-play for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 1**.

This adventure gives experience with each saving throw and ability check (see [Appendix 5](#)), offers opportunities for quick combat, and can easily be run as theater of the mind, although a map is provided for those who work best with visuals. It also gives some helpful information for newer Dungeon Masters. Characters outside 1st to 4th level cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place entirely within the Border Forest, west of the Ride plains in the Moonsea area.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

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

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

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d want to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiarize 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 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 the Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure provides a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with 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	less than 1 APL	Very weak
3-4	equal to 1 APL	Weak
3-4	greater than 1 APL	Average, no adjustment
5	less than 1 APL	Weak
5	equal to 1 APL	Average, no adjustment
5	greater than 1 APL	Strong
6-7	less than 1 APL	Average, no adjustment
6-7	equal to 1 APL	Strong
6-7	greater than 1 APL	Very strong

For more from the designer-
Twitter | [@MaatCrook](#)
Web | maatcrook.com

If you enjoyed this adventure, check out its inspiration, mangaka, Junji Ito’s horror work.

