



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

The End of the Viper's Tail Crimson Codex Adventure #12 An Adventure for 13th Level Characters (Scaled for 14th to 16th Levels of Play)

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The draconic Prophecy says that all things come full circle. All of the Codex's expertise, knowledge, and talent—and the help of friends new and old—will be needed in the face of impending destruction. But will any of it matter with the larger threat that sweeps toward Stormreach like a tidal wave? A Xen'drik Expeditions Crimson Codex faction adventure for characters level 11-16.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

Sources: Complete Adventurer [Jesse Decker], Complete Scoundrel [Mike McArtor and F. Wesley Schneider], Complete Warrior [Andy Collins, David Noonan, Ed Stark], Magic of Eberron [Bruce Cordell, Stephen Schubert, Chris Thomasson], Eberron Campaign Setting [Keith Baker, Bill Slavicek, James Wyatt], Five Nations [Bill Slavicek, David Noonan, Chris Perkins], Libris Mortis [Andy Collins and Bruce Cordell], Player's Handbook 2 [David Noonan], Secrets of Xen'drik [Keith Baker, Jason Bulmahn, Amber Scott]

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Adventure Background

In the Age of Giants, experiments both mundane and magical were carried out in the name of power and progress. Perhaps none of the experiments were more controversial than the one performed by a frost giant named Yzilax Ikkerstol, who believed that time was not a constant, but something that could be controlled and even used as a tool.

Yzilax carried out his experiments on a frozen glacial island in the middle of the Iceflow Sea. His experiments involved arcane magic, divine magic, psionic magic, shadow magic, and incarnum, as well as tapping planar power. Yzilax's experiments were only partially complete when the quori invasion plummeted all of Xen'drik into war. Fellow giants urged Yzilax to suspend his work and help repel the invasion from Dal Quor, but the war only strengthened Yzilax's belief that his work would lead to the creation of a weapon more powerful than any seen before.

Hoping to repel threats from the quori, as well as the giants he forsook, Yzilax employed guardians and time-bending traps to protect his work. The experiments and discoveries of Yzilax continued apace until the unleashing of the magic by the giants that ended the war, closed the gate to Dal Quor, and eventually plunged the giant civilizations on Xen'drik into chaos.

The draconic Prophecy reveals that the survival of the Codex on Xen'drik is very unlikely, and the continued existence of any of its members anywhere is growing more unlikely by the day. But information from the daelkyr Virulence, and help from the blue dragon Stormrider, point to some hope of reducing the scope of the loss.

What happened to Yzilax and his experiments has been lost to time. But the remains of his work, and perhaps more startling finding, remained locked in a frozen prison on that glacial island near Everice. But some know something about the Tower of Time that sits in silence atop the glacier. And soon the Crimson Codex will as well.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are called to a meeting of all available Codex Vipers and Serpents. Ohnal Caldyn has seen enough disturbing portents that he puts the entire Faction into play. Various pieces of the Prophecy and snippets of information from him, Virulence, and Stormrider point to a few steps that might be taken to lessen the devastation that is in the offing for the Crimson Codex.

The PCs' task points them to the direction of the former residence of a frost giant who experimented with temporal magic. On an isle in the frigid waters of the Iceflow Sea, the PCs find that time acts strangely in certain areas. Based on the clues provided to them by their faction and its allies, the PCs learn they have to activate three temporal traps in order to gain access to the tower of the storm giant.

The first temporal trap takes them back to the first encounter the Codex had with Virulence in a Codex safehouse, where the servants of Daelkyr slaughtered numerous Codex members are set up a series of twisted tests for the Serpents. The second trap takes them to the seaside lair of the skum who captured their first leader on Xen'drik, Zeke Brithlestone. The final trap takes them to face an ambassador of Karnath, who the Codex originally tricked into thinking they were a peace delegation from Thrane. Once all these encounters have been completed, the PCs are returned to their own time, and they can now access the storm giant's tower.

Within the tower, the PCs must convince the time-traveling giant to share with them a bit of his knowledge about time. The information that he passes on to them is vital to the upcoming fight against the forces that look to slaughter all the factions and the citizens of Stormreach.

Troubleshooting

This is the final Crimson Codex faction adventure, and it deals with a great deal of information and several NPCs from previous adventures. As the players gather and prepare, get an idea of which previous Crimson Codex adventures they have played. Knowledge from these adventures will definitely come into play during this adventure. The adventure assumes that the PCs are active and successful members of the Crimson Codex. If the PCs have never played in a Crimson Codex adventure before, provide a brief explanation of what the Crimson Codex is and what has happened previously, if you know the details. More about the Crimson Codex can be found on the RPGA website at

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/ebxe/20070924a>. A summary of previous Crimson Codex adventures is available there as well, allowing you to familiarize yourself with the current plot.

Crimson Codex operatives use a "pass-signal" to confirm their identities and transfer information. Due to recent troubles inside the Codex, the "pass-signal" changes regularly. As the adventure opens, the PCs know the current signal: a handshake where each party taps once, then three times, on the other person's

wrist. In situations where a handshake is not accessible, one Codex member uses the "long-short-short-short" signal to identify himself. (This could be through a cough, the ringing of a blacksmith's hammer, a knock, or so forth.)

Finally, as always, this adventure is meant to be fun for both the players and the DM. If circumstances require deviation from the flow of the adventure, do not hesitate to follow that new direction. As a DM, you should attempt to get the PCs back on track, but also feel free to make alterations to the adventure if those changes contribute to a more enjoyable play experience. Certainly all adventures should challenge both the PCs and the players, and there should be a risk of death and loss, but a completely overwhelming (or underwhelming) experience can lessen enjoyment of the game.

Since the adventure deals with events from the past and travel through time, it is important that characters have a little knowledge of what has happened previously, even if they did not live through those events directly. Each encounter contains a brief description of what happened in the past, but only read it if necessary. Instead, let the players recount on their own what happened if they did play through the encounter in a previous adventure.

Also, when the PCs travel through time, they begin the encounters from the past with no buff spells active, regardless of what they have cast before they travel and when those buffs are supposed to expire. However, they also are back to normal when they return from the past, and they have not used any resources and are at full hit points. However, if a PC dies in the past, he has one negative level back in his present time. This negative level can only be restored with a *greater restoration*, *wish*, or *miracle*.

If a PC has any Player Reward Cards or other abilities that allow the PC to know the next "adventure secret," you can allow the PC to automatically know the answer to a puzzle or another piece of important knowledge specified in the adventure.

Finally, the puzzle at the end of the adventure relies on you know how to spell the names of each of the PCs exactly. Make sure you have that information easily at hand at the beginning of the adventure so you can create the puzzle for them quickly, without tipping them off what you are doing.

Adventure Start

The PCs begin the adventure in a secret Crimson Codex meeting chamber below the city of Stormreach. Read or paraphrase the following to begin. If you have the time, you can avoid the long boxed text by role-playing the meeting instead:

Looking around the chamber, anyone would realize times must be truly desperate. Nearly three dozen Crimson Codex Serpent and Vipers like you sit in a ring around a central table. At the table are Ohnal Caldyn, the leader of your organization and the compiler of the Caldyn Fragments, the texts that some say can predict the future. Next to him is the spellscale Candle, who has been leading the Codex efforts in Xen'drik for the past several months. On the other side of Ohnal Caldyn is Zeke Brithlestone, the former leader of the Codex on Xen'drik, who was forced to leave his position when he was kidnapped by the forces of the daelkyr called Virulence. Speaking of that daelkyr, the half-drow named Pinesky also sits at the table, looking more and more sickly and withered as the days pass. Once just a scholar in the employ of the Codex, the half-drow was selected by Virulence to be the vessel through which he spoke.

Also at the table are other noted figures: a bald human named Fritz-Roy, who used to act as your handler when on Codex missions; the dwarf Cantankerous, who trained some of Codex Serpents as they earned the rank of Viper; a young lad named Maldwick, who is covered from head to toe with wriggling dragonmarks, and a halfling named Pfilo who represents Stormrider, a powerful blue dragon bard and an advisor of the Codex.

When the final members of the meeting take their seats, Ohnal stands and speaks. His middle-aged face is far more wrinkled and grim than you remember. "We are doomed, the Prophecy says. No matter which way I look—no matter what signs I see—everything points to doom. I follow each thread of the Prophecy, looking for any sign of hope. But while the threads of the web that is reality certainly run in different directions, and to different places, I see naught but doom for the Crimson Codex." He pauses. "But just because I can see no hope does not mean there is none. Some of those in this room have thoughts and information that we must use to explore possible alternatives."

Caldyn motions to the half-drow Pinesky, who stands. He looks 50 years older than the last time you saw him. "I have seen his thoughts on the matter." Pinesky says the word "his" like it is a nightmare he speaks of. "Many possibilities exist for our redemption, he thinks. Some of them are complete madness, like slaughtering every last person in Stormreach. Others are beyond my ability to comprehend. But there are some places that we might look to find answers. I have given everything I can remember of his thoughts to Candle."

After Pinesky sits, Pfilo stands. "Stormrider sends his greetings and kind wishes. He is consulting with those on the Chamber who are unhappy that a certain contingent of great dragons seem to have decided to

take direct action against the Codex and other forces around Eberron. He has learned of much, and I will share everything I can with you."

Finally, Candle stands. "Based on what we have learned through Prophecy, via our own knowledge, and through the information provided by our friends, we have put together several missions to be undertaken by our Serpents and Vipers. When I call your name, move to the area indicated, introduce yourself to the rest of your team, and prepare to be briefed on your mission."

All of the other Serpents and Vipers around you are called and sent off for briefings on their missions. Finally it is just you left. "That leaves you," says Candle, and then she smiles. "Don't let being last make you think anything is wrong with you. In fact, we have saved the most intriguing mission for you. Wait here, and others will be back shortly to provide you with an explanation."

Part One – Out of Time

The PCs are provided with the mission. Also, they are given pieces of Prophecy and advice from others that they can take with them on their mission.

Give the PCs a few minutes to introduce themselves and interact in character. When it is time to continue, Ohnal Caldyn himself re-enters the room, followed by Pinesky and Pfilo:

Ohnal Caldyn speaks. "Thank you for your patience. As Candle mentioned, we have saved the most important mission for our most competent agents." He looks around and smiles. "And since you are the only ones still here, that must be you."

Caldyn spreads a map on the table, showing several islands in a large body of water. [PCs who make a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check recognize the area as the Iceflow Sea.] He points to an island. Pfilo the Filch speaks. "Stormrider believes that this island was once the home of a frost giant wizard who believed that he could unlock the secrets of time. If those secrets were ever unlocked, they have been lost. Perhaps they are destined to be regained."

*Here Pinesky adds, "The one who broke my mind had many thoughts regarding time. I wrote them down." [Pinesky hands the PCs a piece of parchment, which is reproduced as **Handout 1**.]*

Ohnal Caldyn speaks again. "I too have seen some references to time, and the manipulation of time, in my most recent observations of the Prophecy. I have written them on that parchment as well. Like most things related to the Prophecy, it doesn't make much sense until there is a context for it. We are going to teleport you to this glacial island where Stormrider believes this giant's home was located. Using your skills and the notes we have provided, try to find anything we can use in whatever disaster is approaching. When your mission is complete, use this stone of sending to contact Candle, who can extract you via teleportation. If you can find your own way back, so much the better."

The PCs can ask questions, but no one knows much more than they have already shared. The giant's name is currently unknown, and other than his experiments being related to the study of time, nothing is known about him.

PCs know, with a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check, that the area where they travel to is frigid cold. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that during the day the temperatures would be above 0 degrees Fahrenheit, but at night the temperatures might very well fall below that. For those types of conditions, a *endure elements* provides enough protection, but otherwise both a cold weather outfit AND fur clothing are needed to survive sub-zero temperatures.

The Codex can put the PCs in touch with a merchant who can sell potions and scrolls of *endure elements* for double the normal cost, instead of the campaign cost of 5 times. This can only be purchased with cash on hand, however.

See the New Rules section for more information on equipment that can be used in the cold, as well as cold dangers the PCs might face on their mission.

Part Two – At the Tower of Time

The PCs arrive at the glacial island that is home to the Tower of Time. The Tower is currently stuck outside of time, and the only way the PCs can bring it back is to trigger all three temporal traps protecting the tower. The PCs can explore the area, activate the three traps to bring the tower back to this time, and then enter the tower. Yzilax Ikkerstol is still within the tower, and the PCs must convince him to provide access to his notes and experiments. See **Map 1** for the layout of area around the Tower of Time. The areas marked on the map are described below.

Area 1 – The Glacier's Trail

The PCs are teleported to the base of the glacier. If they teleported in the morning, the temperature is 20 degrees Fahrenheit. The daylight is barely enough for people with normal vision to see. It remains this way until nighttime, when the temperatures fall below 0 degrees Fahrenheit and the darkness is absolute.

The wind screams around the bottom of a steep trail leading up a glacier. In the distance are the crashing waves of the Iceflow Sea. Ahead of you, carved into the steeply sloping ice, is the trail leading up the frozen mountain. The path would not be traversable if not for the steps that have been carved into the ice.

A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that these ice steps must have been carved relatively recently (within the last couple of decades); otherwise the steps would have eroded in such an unrelenting wind.

Without the aid of magic, traversing the mountain off the carved trail is impossible. The trail is easily climbed, however. There are no signs of any other creatures having been in the area recently.

Area 2 – The Hourglasses

At each of the places marked 2 on the map, there rests a 20-foot-tall hourglass made of ice. When the PCs first see these hourglasses, the sand within them is running upward. The sand reappears at the bottom of the hourglass after the top gets half-filled. The hourglasses are stuck outside of time, so they cannot be affected by the PCs in any way.

After the first trap is sprung and the PCs complete one encounter in an alternate time, the sand in the hourglass moves up very, very slowly. After the second trap and the second encounter in an alternate time, the sand stops running, and the PCs can even see grains of sand in suspension. After the final encounter, the hourglasses come back into this time, and they begin to run normally. An hourglass takes 24 hours to run out.

Once the PCs have brought the hourglasses back into this time, the only way to get the tower to appear is to smash all of the hourglasses, which can be done easily with a blow from a bludgeoning or slashing weapon.

Area 3 – The First Temporal Trap

When the PCs approach this area with a light source, read or paraphrase the following:

The path leads into a dark cave. The cave runs as deep into the mountain as you can see. The tunnel into the mountainside runs about 100 feet, and then there is a fork: one tunnel runs north and another runs east. In the center of the area, where the tunnel forks, is a ten-foot-diameter sphere of shadowy darkness. It floats just inches off the ground, and it almost touches the ceiling.

This is the first temporal trap. Any PC with the trapfinding ability instantly recognizes this as the trigger of a malfunctioning magical trap, and what the trap is or does cannot be determined because of the malfunctioning. The trap cannot be disabled, but it can be easily avoided. A *detect magic* cast on the sphere reveals overwhelming transmutation magic. A DC 40 Knowledge (arcana) check gives the impression that the sphere triggers something to do with time, but an exact read on what might happen is impossible to get.

If the PCs choose to avoid the sphere, they can do so; however, the only way to complete the mission is to trigger this trap (and the other two similar traps elsewhere on the glacier). When the PCs trigger the trap by touching the sphere, everyone within 200 feet of the sphere is moved through time. Read or paraphrase the following:

You come to your senses standing in a chamber out of a nightmare. The place is full of different-colored strands of what looks like spider webs. Hanging from the web are bodies, or pieces of bodies. You face down a passage out of this chamber into another one. A trail of blood is spread out before you down the

passage. What is inside the chamber ahead is blocked from your view by an earthen wall. A voice speaking loudly in Common says, "Where I am? What are you doing here? Who are you?"

The realization suddenly strikes: this place was once a Crimson Codex safehouse, and it was the site of a terrible massacre by the forces of the daelkyr Virulence. The scholar Pinesky was rescued from the chamber ahead of you.

When the PCs move forward to look into the room, read:

In the chamber are three identical creatures: female daelkyr half-blood warriors wielding greatswords and staring in confusion at each other. A tarp-covered form moans and writhes within a hole in the ground near one of the three.

Creatures: The Crimson Codex operatives defeated Gris'eld, this daelkyr half-blood hexblade, and they rescued Pinesky from the hole where he was being kept. A rift in time has brought two other versions of Gris'eld to this spot. Although they are confused, the three versions work together to defeat the PCs. PCs may try to use skills and deception to get the three to fight each other. At your discretion, you can allow the PCs to cause one or more of the versions of Gris'eld to hesitate for a round, but under no circumstances can they be talked into attacking each other.

Gris'eld 1, Gris'eld 2, and Gris'eld 3: daelkyr half-blood hexblade 13: hp 115; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: Once the confusion has cleared, the three Gris'elds understand that the PCs are a threat, and they work together flawlessly to defeat them. They act as though they are able to read each other's minds.

They use their greater hexblade's curse on three different targets until they run out. They use their Arcane Strike feat to get a bonus to hit and damage on their first attacks. When applicable, they use their luck feats early and often. If there is one foe that is obviously a greater threat, they team up to eliminate that threat first, assisting each other to give themselves a greater Power Attack option.

Each of the Gris'elds has three luck rerolls that they can use with their luck feats. Unless things are dire, they each save one reroll in the event they fail a crucial saving throw. The holes are less than 4 feet deep, and they count as difficult terrain.

Developments: If the PCs defeat all of the Gris'elds, they can rescue Pinesky. As soon as they take the tarp off of him and the Gris'elds are defeated, the encounter is over and the PCs return to their own time. Also, if the PCs attempt to leave this location, they are kicked back to their own time, back at the glacier.

Scaling the Encounter

11th and 12th Level Characters: Remove one Gris'eld.

14th Level Characters: No changes.

15th and 16th Level Characters: Add one Gris'eld.

BREED LEECH CR 1

LE Tiny aberration (Symbiont)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages understands Undercommon, telepathy with host

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee bite +4 (1d3-2)

Space 2½ ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Base Atk +0; Grp -10

Abilities Str 6, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 10, Ego 2

SQ symbiont traits

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Hide +12, Move Silently +4

Bolster Body (Su) While a breed leech is attached to a host, the host gains 5 bonus hit points per day and gains a +1 bonus on Fortitude saves.

Combat Statistics

GRIS'ELD CR 13

Daelkyr half-blood hexblade 13

CE Medium aberration

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Daelkyr

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 115 (13 HD)

Fort +8 (includes +1 from breed leech), Ref +8, Will +10 (mettle; arcane resistance: +2 versus spells or spell-like abilities)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 *vicious greatsword* +21/+16/+11 (2d6+9/19-20)

Ranged throwing scarab +6 (1d6+2/19-20 plus 1d6 acid)

Base Atk +13; Grp +18

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack

Special Actions greater hexblade's curse

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +3, 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*, *potion of bear's endurance*, *potion of fox's cunning*

Hexblade Spells Known (CL 6th):

3rd (1/day)—dispel magic, protection from energy, vampiric touch

2nd (2/day)—false life, mirror image, see invisibility

1st (2/day)—charm person (DC 13), expeditious retreat, protection from good, Tasha's hideous laughter (DC 13)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14

Feats Arcane Strike, Cleave, Fortuitous Strike, Lucky Start, Power Attack, Survivor's Luck, Symbiont Mastery^B, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Bluff +11, Diplomacy +20, Intimidate +20

Possessions combat gear plus +3 *chain shirt*, +2 *vicious greatsword*, breed leech symbiont, symbiont, *cloak of resistance* +2, *belt of giant strength* +4

Personal Symbiont (Ex) Gris'eld has a breed leech symbiont. If a symbiont is lost, she can grow a replacement from her flesh in 2d4 days. Symbionts gained in other manners, and personal symbionts yet living, cannot be replaced in this manner.

Symbiont Dependency (Ex) If Gris'eld has no contact with at least one of her symbionts for 24 hours, she takes 1 point of Constitution damage. She takes this damage every 24 hours, until contact is restored, and damage sustained in this fashion cannot be restored by any means as long as she remains separated from her symbiont.

Unbalanced Mind (Ex) Any creature that attempts to read the thoughts of a daelkyr half-blood or otherwise study her mind must make a Will save (DC 18) or be dazed for 1 round.

Greater Hexblade's Curse (Su) Four times per day, as a free action, a hexblade can unleash a curse on a visible foe within 60 feet. The target takes a -4 penalty on attacks, saves, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for 1 hour thereafter. A successful Will save (DC 25) negates the effect.

Mettle (Ex) If Gris'eld makes a successful Will or Fortitude save against an attack that would have a lesser effect on a successful save, she instead completely ignores the effect.

Dark Companion Gris'eld has an illusionary companion. An enemy next to the companion takes a -2 to saves and to its AC. The companions speed is 30 ft., and it acts on Gris'eld's turn each round, following her mental commands perfectly. The dark companion takes up a 5 ft. space, and it cannot attack or be attacked. It is treated as a 4th-level spell for figuring dispel attempts. The companion cannot flank and does not provoke attack of opportunity, as foes recognize it as illusionary.

Area 4 – Ice Bridges

The areas marked 4 on the map are ice bridges over a crevice in the glacier. Due to the thick ice covering these bridges and the strong winds, it takes a DC 20 Balance check to cross. PCs failing that check fall 80 feet. Even though the bridges are about 100 ft. long, only one check is needed. PCs can bypass the danger by flying, using ropes, etc.

Area 5 - Graffiti

When the PCs pass through this passage, they find some writing etched into the cave wall. Since it is in Giant, only read or paraphrase the following if the PCs have the means to read it:

The passage runs through a piece of the mountain and comes out the other side. Halfway through the passage, etched into the wall, are words in Giant: "Only stopping time can bring our master back."

Area 6 – The Second Temporal Trap

Like the first trap, the trigger of this trap is a large floating ball of dark substance. It has all the properties of the trigger the PCs find in Area 3 and Area 9. It floats in the passage leading through the earth and out onto the ledge. When the PCs touch the trigger, read the following:

You stand on a ledge in a warm, wet cave. Water fills the rest of the cave, and in the middle of the water is a small rocky island. In a cage on this island is the slumped form of Zeke Brithlestone, the former leader of the Crimson Codex on Xen'drik. You remember that Zeke was captured by some aberrations and brought to this cave, but he was rescued and sent back to Khorvaire to recover.

Swimming through the water is a number of amphibious forms. They rise from the water and look in your direction with hostility.

As soon as the PCs appear in the chamber, the skum attack. After the second round of combat, the temporal distortions in the area cause a temporal change: the whole chamber is flooded to the ten-foot-high ceiling with water. This means the PCs have to hold their breaths and deal with the other problems involved in underwater combat.

However, PCs who make a DC 35 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (planes) check can figure out that the temporal fluctuations are so subtle here that they can be manipulated. As a standard action, a PC who makes the check can attempt to alter the temporal condition to remove the water. A successful DC 25 check in any of the following skills works: Use Magic Device, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (planes), or Spellcraft. Characters with ranks in other skills dealing with magic, such as incantation or psionics, can also use those, at your discretion. A success brings the time back in line so that the water goes back to its regular level in the blink of an eye. A player can use an Adventure Secret to know this and gain a +20 to this check.

Creatures: These skum have been tasked to guard Zeke.

Skooloob: male skum fighter 12: hp 145; Combat Statistics

Bloolina and Skloora: female skum scout 9: hp 80; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: The skum scouts remain in the water, as far away from the PCs as possible while staying close enough to deal skirmish damage. They move twenty feet each round to deal the +5d6 skirmish damage. If they are getting hit by creatures on the ledge, they go beneath the water to hide and drink their potions. If they find a creature that is particularly susceptible to their damage, they focus their attacks there, moving on to the next target when that one falls.

Because of special training, Skooloob gets multiple bite attacks in a full-round action if he foregoes his claw attacks. He does not burst out onto land immediately; he first dives beneath the water and drinks potions. If PCs come into the water or get near the cage, he focuses his attacks on them.

Developments: When the skum have been defeated and the wet twine that holds closed the cage has been removed, the temporal distortion ends and the PCs return to their own time.

Scaling the Encounter

11th and 12th Level Characters: Remove both female skum scouts.

14th Level Characters: No changes.

15th and 16th Level Characters: Add three female skum scouts.

SKOOLLOOB CR 14

Male skum fighter 12

LE medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +2; Senses Listen +15, Spot +16; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Aquan

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14

hp 145 (14 HD)

Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +11

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +23/+18/+13 (2d6+11/19-20)

Ranged javelin +15 (1d6+7)

Base Atk +13; Grp +24

Atk Options Power Attack, rake 1d6+3

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of greater magic fang* +3

Abilities Str 24, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., amphibious

Feats Alertness, Greater Weapon Focus (bite), Greater Weapon Specialization (bite), Improved Critical (bite), Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Specialization (bite)

Skills Hide +7, Listen +15, Move Silently +7, Spot +16, Swim +23

Possessions combat gear plus *belt of giant strength* +4, *ring of protection* +2, *vest of resistance* +2, 3 javelins

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +19 melee, damage 1d6+3. A skum gains two rake attacks while swimming.

BLOOLINA AND SKLOORA

CR 11

Female skum scout 9

LE medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +8; Senses Listen +14, Spot +14; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Aquan

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18

hp 80 (11 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +11 (evasion), Will +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +13 (2d6+4) and

2 claws +8 (1d4+2)

Ranged +2 *light crossbow* +16/+11 (1d8+2)

Base Atk +9; Grp +13

Atk Options rake 1d6+2, skirmish +3d6 (+5d6 with Improved Skirmish)

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*, *potion of cat's grace*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

SQ Battle fortitude, camouflage, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, flawless stride, trackless step, trapfinding, uncanny dodge, amphibious

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Skirmish, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (crossbow)

Skills Balance, +13, Escape Artist +13, Hide +18, Listen +14, Move Silently +18, Spot +14, Swim +21, Tumble +13

Possessions combat gear plus +2 *light crossbow*, +2 *mithral shirt*

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +7 melee, damage 1d6+2. A skum gains two rake attacks while swimming.

Skirmish (Ex) The skum scouts deal +3d6 damage on all attacks taken in a turn after moving at least 10 feet in that turn (or +5d6 after moving at least 20 feet). The extra damage only applies to creatures with a discernable anatomy. The damage is only dealt to targets within 30 ft. The scouts also gain a +2 competence bonus to AC in a round that they move at least 10 feet (or +4 after moving at least 20 feet).

Camouflage (Ex) The skum scouts can hide in any natural terrain as per the ranger ability.

Area 7

This is simply a winding path up the glacier. Nothing noteworthy is located here.

Area 8

The ice bridge is much wider and thicker than the others. No Balance check is needed to cross it. Within the ice that comprises the bridge is a frozen giant skeleton. The skeleton looks to have fallen down, for it is facing up the mountain (where the tower appears later), and its right hand is reaching out toward the top of the glacier.

Area 9 – The Third Temporal Trap

Like the first two traps, the trigger of this trap is a large floating ball of dark substance. It has all the properties of the trigger the PCs find in Area 3 and Area 6. It floats in the passage leading through the earth and into the cave. When the PCs touch the trigger, read the following:

You stand in a well-appointed room. Across the room from you stands a human dressed in armor made of human bones. He wields a sword quite possibly also made of bone. Behind him a creature dressed in armor that at first look like humans, but then you realize they are zombies. Between these zombies is a severely beaten human female in manacles. The human looks at you in surprise, and shouts in Common: "So you sneak in to assault us, do you? Die, Thranish scum!"

Although it is too late, you recognize this situation. Several months ago, some Crimson Codex Serpents impersonated a Thranish diplomatic junket at peace talks. The human attacking you is a half-crazed Karnathi ambassador who wants nothing more than to kill you and paint the walls with your remains. The human female in manacles was a Thranish spy who was being used as leverage in the negotiations.

Creatures: Sir Malachi and his underlings attack for all they are worth, and they do not surrender.

Sir Thirslow Malachi: male human paladin4/bone knight 10: hp 126; Combat Statistics.

Major Svenson and Corporal Hertlein: Karnathi zombie fighter 9: hp 90; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: Sir Thirslow hits the PCs as fast and as hard as possible. He takes cover behind a table and casts *divine sacrifice*, hoping that an enemy moves close enough to hit with a full attack in the next round. The zombies cover him with a barrage of arrows. When Thirslow is prepared, he attacks the nearest enemy with his death attack, knowing that certain creatures may not be vulnerable to it. If Thirslow is having trouble hitting the PCs, he orders the zombies forward to assist him in his attacks and provide flanking.

Developments: Once Thirslow and his zombie troops are defeated, the encounter is concluded and the PCs move back to their own time.

Scaling the Encounter

11th Level Characters: Remove both zombie fighters.

12th Level Characters: Remove one zombie fighter.

14th Level Characters: No changes.

15th Level Characters: Add one zombie fighter.

16th Level Characters: Add two zombie fighters.

Combat Statistics

SIR THIRSLow MALACHI

CR 14

Male human paladin 4/bone knight 10

LE Medium humanoid

Init -1; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1

Aura courage (10 ft., allies +4 vs. fear)

Immune poison, sleep affects, paralysis, disease, death effects, fatigue, exhaustion, ability damage to physical stats, ability drain, energy drain, death from massive damage, stunning attacks, nonlethal damage, extra damage from sneak attack and critical hits

Languages Common

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20

hp 126 (14 HD); DR 5/bludgeoning

Immune disease, fear

Fort +18, Ref +8, Will +12

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 *bonecraft greatsword* +19/+13/+8 melee (2d6+9 [+1d6 vs. living creatures]/17-20)

Base Atk +11; Grp +15

Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack

Special Atk death strike (DC 23 Will), rebuke undead 5/day (+5, 2d6+11, 11th)

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 10th):

2nd—knight's move

1st—divine favor, divine sacrifice

Abilities Str 18, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16

SQ fight while disabled or dying, bone march (40 HD total, up to 10 HD creatures), lay on hands, share spells, *summon skeletal steed*, undead traits, fill the ranks

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Craft (armorsmithing) +8, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (religion)+7, Ride +7, Sense Motive +8

Possessions +3 *bonecraft full plate*, +3 *bonecraft greatsword*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *amulet of health* +2

Bone March (Su) As a standard action, Sir Thirslow can assume control of up to 40 Hit Dice of animated undead from a willing caster, provided the caster and the undead are within 60 feet of him. He cannot control any individual undead creature with 11 Hit Dice or more.

Death Strike (Su) Once per day, Sir Thirslow can use his bonecraft weapon to strike down a living foe. He must decide to use this ability before the attack roll is made. If the attack succeeds, the target must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or die. This is a necromantic death affect.

Fill the Ranks (Sp) Sir Thirslow's can use a limited form of raise dead once per day. The target corpse rises as a Karnathi skeleton or Karnathi zombie.

Lay on Hands (Su) Sir Thirslow's lay on hands ability heals 42 points per day, and heals undead as well as living creatures.

MAJOR SVENSON AND CORPORAL HERTLEIN**CR 12**

Karnathi zombie fighter 9

LE Medium undead

Init +4; Senses Listen +14, Spot +14

Aura evil, undead

Languages Common

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24

hp 90 (12 HD); DR 5/slashing

Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +8

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee mw longsword +14/+9/+4 (1d8+2/19-20)

Ranged +1 frost longbow +17/+17/+12/+7 (1d8+5+1d6 cold/x3)

Base Atk +11; Grp +13

Atk Options Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con --, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11

SQ darkvision 60ft., undead traits, +4 turn resistance (+11 within 60 ft. of Sir Thirslow)

Feats Improved Rapid Shot, Improved Turn Resistance, Lifebond, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (comp. longbow), Weapon Specialization (comp. longbow)

Skills Climb –1, Jump –1, Listen +14, Search +4, Spot +14

Possessions +2 half plate armor, +1 frost longbow (+2 Str), masterwork longsword, buckler, 40 arrows

Area 10 - Scree

This area is a flat spot on the side of the mountain, where scree from farther up the mountain has rolled and settled. Nothing of interest is in this area, although the scree must be climbed over to get to the tower once it appears.

Area 11 – A Tower Out of Time

The tower of Yzilax Ikkerstol is lost outside of time when the PCs first arrive at the glacier, so there is an area on the side of the ice mountain that looks as if a structure may have once stood, but it is missing now. After the PCs bring the hourglasses back to the current time by triggering the three traps and then smashing the hourglasses, the tower appears. When the tower reappears, read or paraphrase the following:

Where once an empty space stood, there is now a tall tower, appearing to be made of ice and stone. Runes completely cover the outside of the tower, and a metal door—at least 12 feet tall—decorates the tower.

A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that the runes are powerful pieces of magic that deal with a variety of magical types: divine, arcane, psionic, planar, shadow, incarnum, and possibly others.

When the PCs approach and enter the tower, read the following:

The bottom floor of the tower appears as a cross between a library and a laboratory. The curved walls of the circular tower are completely lined with shelves holding books, tomes, scrolls, and arcane materials of all shapes and sizes. In the center of the room is a huge stone and ice table. Upon the table rests innumerable dragonshards. Standing on the other side of the table is a ghostly figure of a blue-skinned giant. When he sees you, he starts making the arcane motions of a spellcaster.

Call for initiative and let the PCs act. While the PCs can interact with the room, Yzilax the frost giant is stuck outside of time. He can see the PCs, and the PCs can see him, but they cannot interact with each other. Let the PCs waste some resources here until they figure out that neither group can interact physically.

After the situation becomes apparent, Yzilax stops trying to defend his tower and simply stares at the PCs. He tries to speak, but no sounds come out. He can see the PCs, but he cannot hear them. He reacts in anger if the PCs begin searching his tower and disturbing things, shouting and gesticulating. A PC who can speak Giant and who makes a DC 35 Spot check can make out some of the words Yzilax Ikkerstol is

mouth. They are warning the PCs to leave him alone not mess around with his time-bending device (described below).

The PCs can search the tower without any interference. With a successful Search check of DC 25, they find the following items of interest:

- There are close to 300 small Khyber, Eberron, and Siberys dragonshards lying on the large stone and ice table. On each shard is etched on letter of the Giant alphabet.
- The table itself is etched with so many tiny diagrams and runes that it nearly impossible to read them all.
- Five scrolls of comprehend languages are held in the bookcases.

The puzzle the PCs must solve is at the same time very simple yet difficult. Right now, Yzilax Ikkerstol is lost in time. There is one area of the table with spaces to insert the shards. The number of spaces available for shards matches the names of the PCs and Yzilax. For example, if four PCs named Joe, Tom, Fred, and Willa were playing, the spaces on the table would look like this:

That would mean the PCs would have to take the shards with the letters and spell their names and Yzilax's name using the Giant alphabet:

Y z i l a x
J o e
T o m
F r e d
W i l l a

When the PCs do this, they bring themselves into the same time and place as Yzilax Ikkerstol, and they can then talk to him.

At first, Yzilax Ikkerstol is very angry that the PCs brought him out of his time. He does not attack them, but he orders them to leave. A DC 20 Diplomacy check calms him down. Also allow for good roleplaying to achieve this, or other skills/powers can be used as well. If the PCs mention that they are afraid the city of Stormreach on the continent of Xen'drik is in danger, Yzilax Ikkerstol stops his tirade and seems interested:

"Is it currently at the turn of you would consider your millennium? Around 1000 years in your method of keeping time? Yes, danger is one thing you are certainly in. I cannot do anything to save you, for you are beyond that. I have learned that time, on its grandest scale, cannot be changed, but sometimes individual lives can be altered. If you promise to leave me be so I can return to my travels, I can offer you something that might help each of you." The frost giant rummages through the dragonshards on the table. In his giant hand he holds out one dragonshard for each of you. Take these. Go back to your place and time. Fight your war. Use these as you can.

The dragonshards have the ability to alter time slightly, as described below. Yzilax refuses to answer any other questions, and he does not talk any more about his experiments or travels through time. He offers to send the PCs back to their own time and place using teleportation magic, if they cannot do so themselves.

Ending the Adventure

With luck, the PCs have bargained with Yzilax Ikkerstol, secured the time-altering shards, and learned about the inevitable downfall of Stormreach. The PCs can also accept Yzilax's offer for transportation back to the Codex meeting area.

Since all of their travels and challenges have taken place outside of the current time, they should arrive back in Stormreach having used no resources. This is a good thing, because when they arrive, they find a note leading them immediately to their final mission (assuming the PCs play the final Expedition adventure *Endgame* next). No one else in the Codex is present, and no amount of searching or magical communication finds them.

Event Treasure

The PCs may take the following event treasure into any other Xen'drik Expeditions adventures they play during this convention or game day. Once this event has been reported, the event treasure goes away. This treasure must be of a kind openly available to the PCs under normal rules. This event treasure is per PC, not for the entire group. Before you head out on your next mission, you can take the following:

- 4 *potions of cure serious wounds* or *repair serious wounds*
- Magical or mundane equipment worth 20000 gp (purchased at campaign cost). If you spend all of this money on one item, it can be one that is locked, and you can treat it as if you had unlocked it.

Adventure Questions

1. How did the PCs far against the three Gris'elds?
 - a) The PCs never made it this far.
 - b) The PCs easily defeated the Gris'elds.
 - c) The PCs defeated the Gris'elds only after much hardship.
 - d) The Gris'elds defeated the PCs.
2. How did the battle against the skum go?
 - a) The PCs defeated the skum, but the victory came at a price.
 - b) The PCs never made it this far.
 - c) The skum defeated the PCs.
 - d) The PCs easily vanquished the skum.
3. How did the PCs manage in the battle against the bone knight and his minions?
 - a) The PCs were defeated here.
 - b) The PCs defeated their foes at a great cost to the party.
 - c) The PCs won easily.
 - d) The PCs never got to this encounter.
4. Were the PCs able to figure out that they had to trigger all the traps and then break the hourglasses?
 - a) No, they never figured out how to proceed and thus never found the tower.
 - b) The PCs figured out the way to bring back the tower with ease.
 - c) The PCs finally figured out how to bring back the tower, but only after many hints and much time.
5. Did the PCs figure out the dragonshard board?
 - a) They never made it this far.
 - b) They figured it out easily.
 - c) They solved the puzzle after many hints and much time passing.
6. Could the PCs convince the frost giant to assist them?
 - a) No.
 - b) Yes.
7. How was the roleplaying?
 - a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying.
 - d) None. They treated the adventure as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

Story Objects

Object ID: EXCC37

Object Name: Time-Touched Dragonshard

Object Description: This Eberron dragonshard contains traces of time magic. As an immediate action, the holder of a shard can stop time for just a moment. Due to this magic, the last d20 that was rolled by anyone other than the player holding the shard must be re-rolled. Also, by giving up hit points, the holder can give a circumstance bonus or penalty to that roll. For every ten hit points sacrificed, the die roll can be modified by +/- 1, to a maximum of +/- 4. After the shard is used once, it turns to dust. Shards can only be used once per round by anyone.

Object ID: EXCC38

Object Name: The End of the Serpent's Tale

Object Description: You have succeeded where no other Serpent or Viper in the Codex could have. Your deeds and accomplishments will go down in history as some of the strangest and bravest. Whenever you are in the presence of other Crimson Codex operatives and members, you are treated with awe and deference.

New Rules

Arcane Strike [Feat] *Complete Warrior* 96

You can channel arcane energy into your melee attacks.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When you activate this feat (a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity), you can channel arcane energy into a melee weapon, your unarmed strike, or natural weapons. You must sacrifice one of your spells for the day (of 1st level or higher) to do this, but you gain a bonus on all you attack rolls for 1 round equal to the level of the spell sacrificed, as well as extra damage equal to 1d4 points times the level of the spell sacrificed. The bonus you add to your attack rolls from this feat cannot be greater than your base attack bonus.

Fortuitous Strike [Luck Feat] *Complete Scoundrel* 77

You can hit a foe in just the right place.

Prerequisite: Character level 6th, any luck feat.

Benefit: You can expend one luck reroll as a swift action to reroll a weapon damage roll. You can expend two luck rerolls as a swift action to reroll an attack roll. You gain one luck reroll per day.

Lifebond [Monstrous Feat] *Libris Mortis* 28

Select a specific living creature that is friendly to you. You create a special bond with that creature.

Prerequisite: Cha 11, undead type.

Benefit: Whenever the chosen creature is within 60 feet, you gain a +4 bonus to your turn resistance and a +2 bonus on all saving throws. If the chosen creature dies, you lose these bonuses and take a -2 on all saves for 24 hours.

Lucky Start [Luck Feat] *Complete Scoundrel* 79

Sometimes your luck overcomes a slow natural reaction.

Benefit: You can expend one luck reroll to reroll an initiative check. You gain one luck reroll per day.

Special: Unlike most other luck feats, using Lucky Start requires no action.

Improved Skirmish [Feat] *Complete Scoundrel* 78

With a few extra steps, you gain even greater benefits from your skirmishing combat style.

Prerequisite: Skirmish +2d6/+1 AC.

Normal: A scout's normal skirmish bonus activates when he moves at least 10 feet.

Survivor's Luck [Luck Feat] *Complete Scoundrel* 81

You can avoid situations that would surely affect others.

Prerequisite: Character level 9th, any luck feat.

Benefit: You can expend one luck reroll as an immediate action to reroll a saving throw you just failed. You gain one luck reroll per day.

Symbiont Mastery [Feat] *Magic of Eberron* 51

You have stronger control over an attached symbiont than regular creatures, and you gain vitality for each symbiont attached to you.

Prerequisite: Wis 11.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on the Will saves made during any personality conflict between you and your symbiont. You gain 2 bonus hit points per symbiont attached to you. If you detach a symbiont, you lose these hit points immediately.

Divine Sacrifice [Spell] *Spell Compendium* 70

Evocation

Level: Blackguard 1, paladin 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

Your first attack each round for the duration of the spell deals an extra 5d6 points of damage if it hits, and you take 10 points of damage each time you make such an attack, whether or not the attack is successful.

Knight's Move [Spell] *Spell Compendium* 129

Transmutation (Teleportation)

Level: Cleric 3, paladin 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 swift action

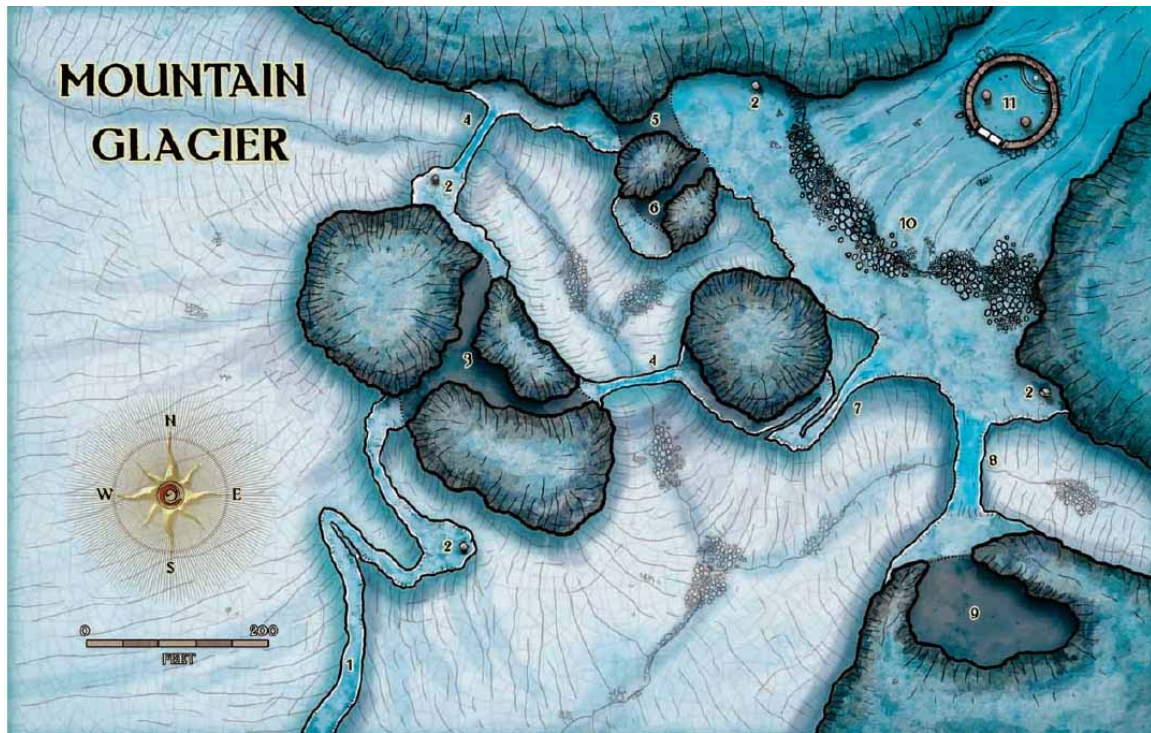
Range: 5ft./2 levels

Target: You

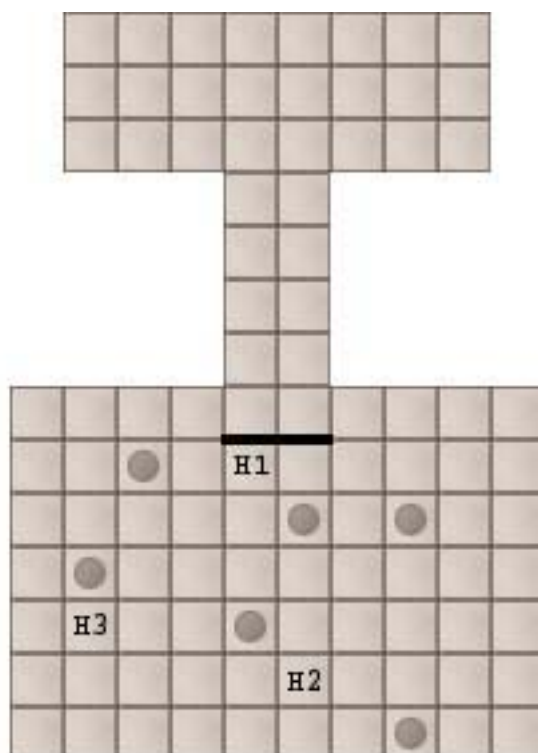
Duration: Instantaneous

You can teleport with a limited distance and a circumspect form of movement. You can instantly move up to 5 feet per two caster levels, but you must end this movement in a square that leaves you flanking an enemy.

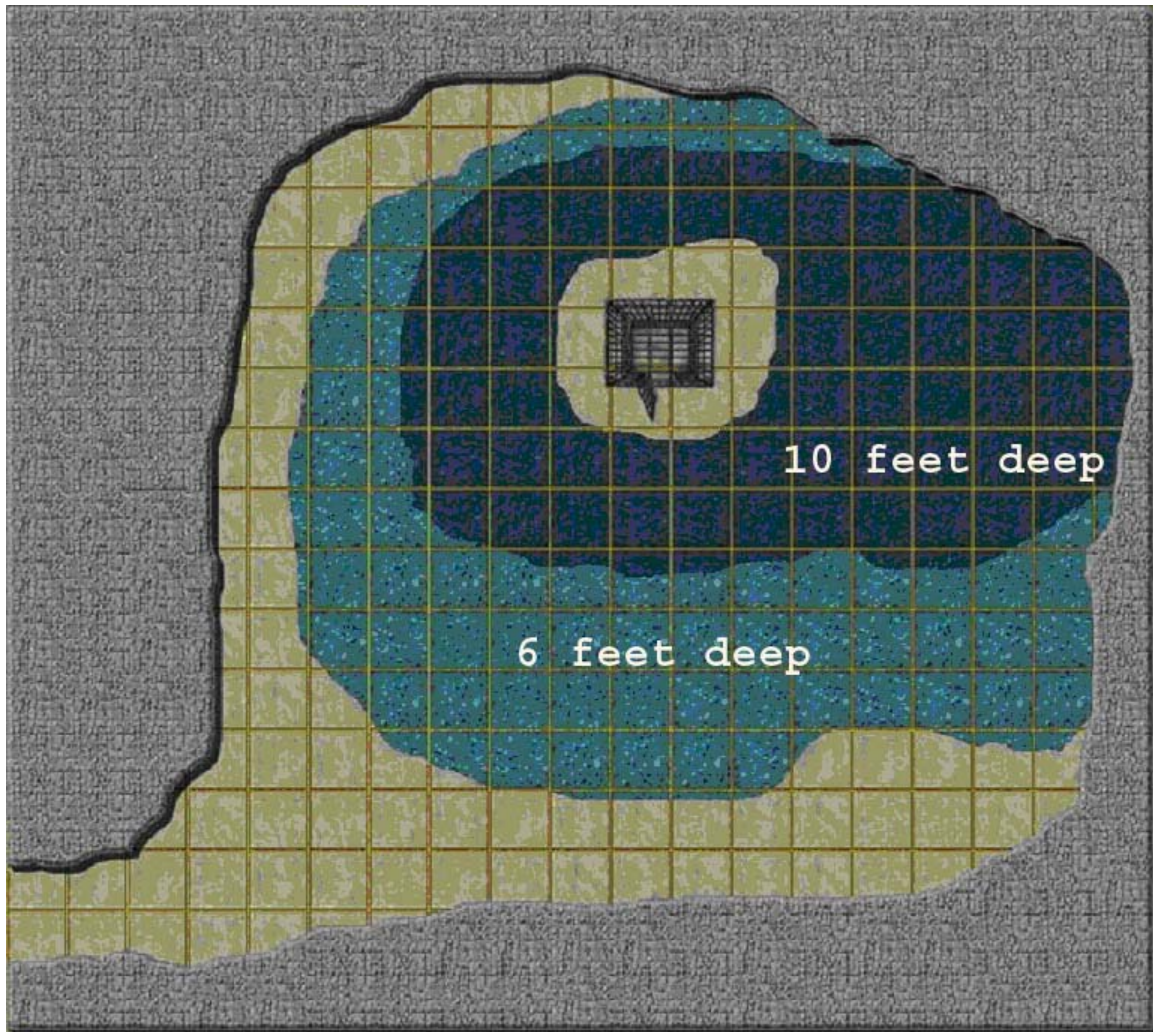
Map 1 –



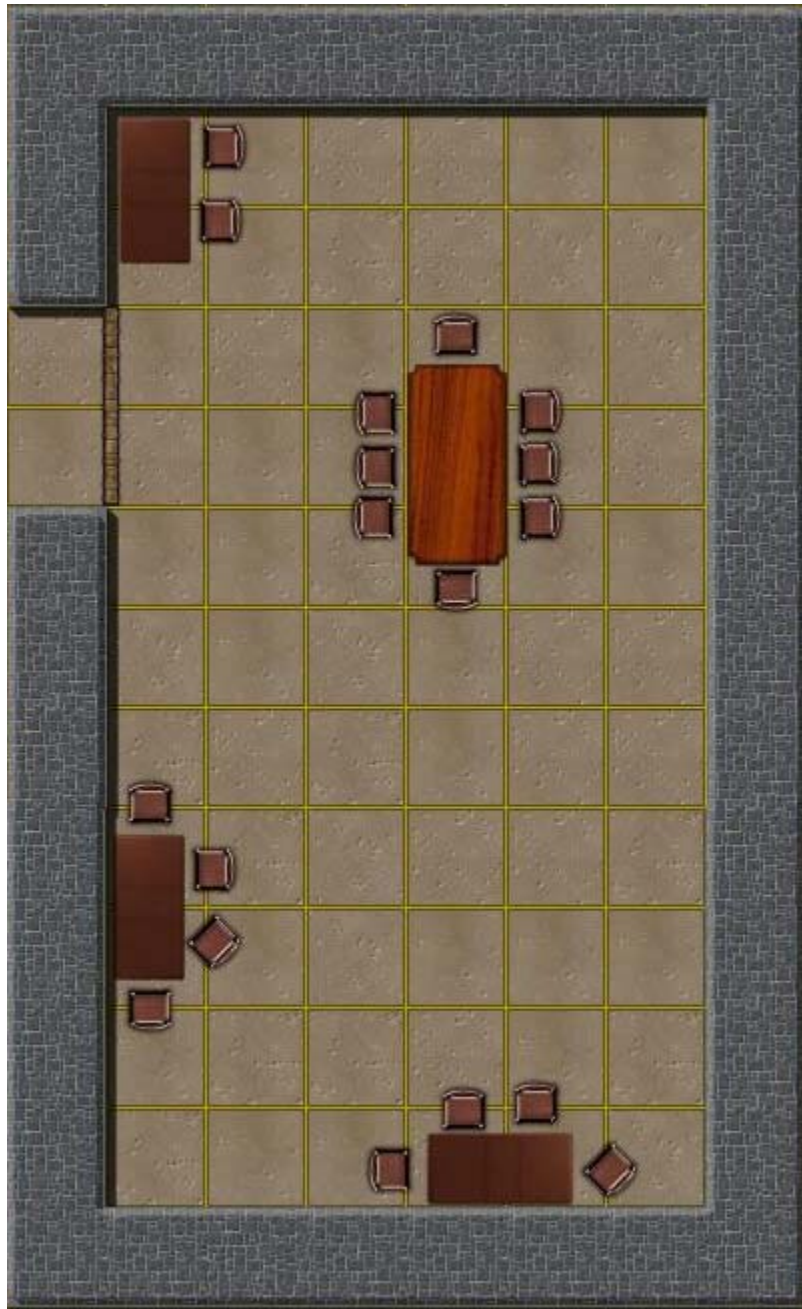
Map 2 – Gris'elds' Lair



Map 3 – The Skum Cave



Map 4 – The Meeting Room



Handout 1

[The first set of scribbled notes comes from Pinesky, and he says these thoughts and impressions come directly from the mind of the daelkyr Virulence, who has been both a major antagonist and a erstwhile helper of the Codex.

The second set of notes is made by Ohnal Caldyn himself.]

Time kills, but it can be smashed.

Don't avoid thrice timely traps.

Time cannot be changed, but all change with time.

When the wave threatens to crash over the port,
And our three masters join forces,
A titan of time reappears in his welcome prison.
To free time, free time from its prison.
To talk in time, place yourself in time freely.
Time talks of a lack of time, yet provides time.