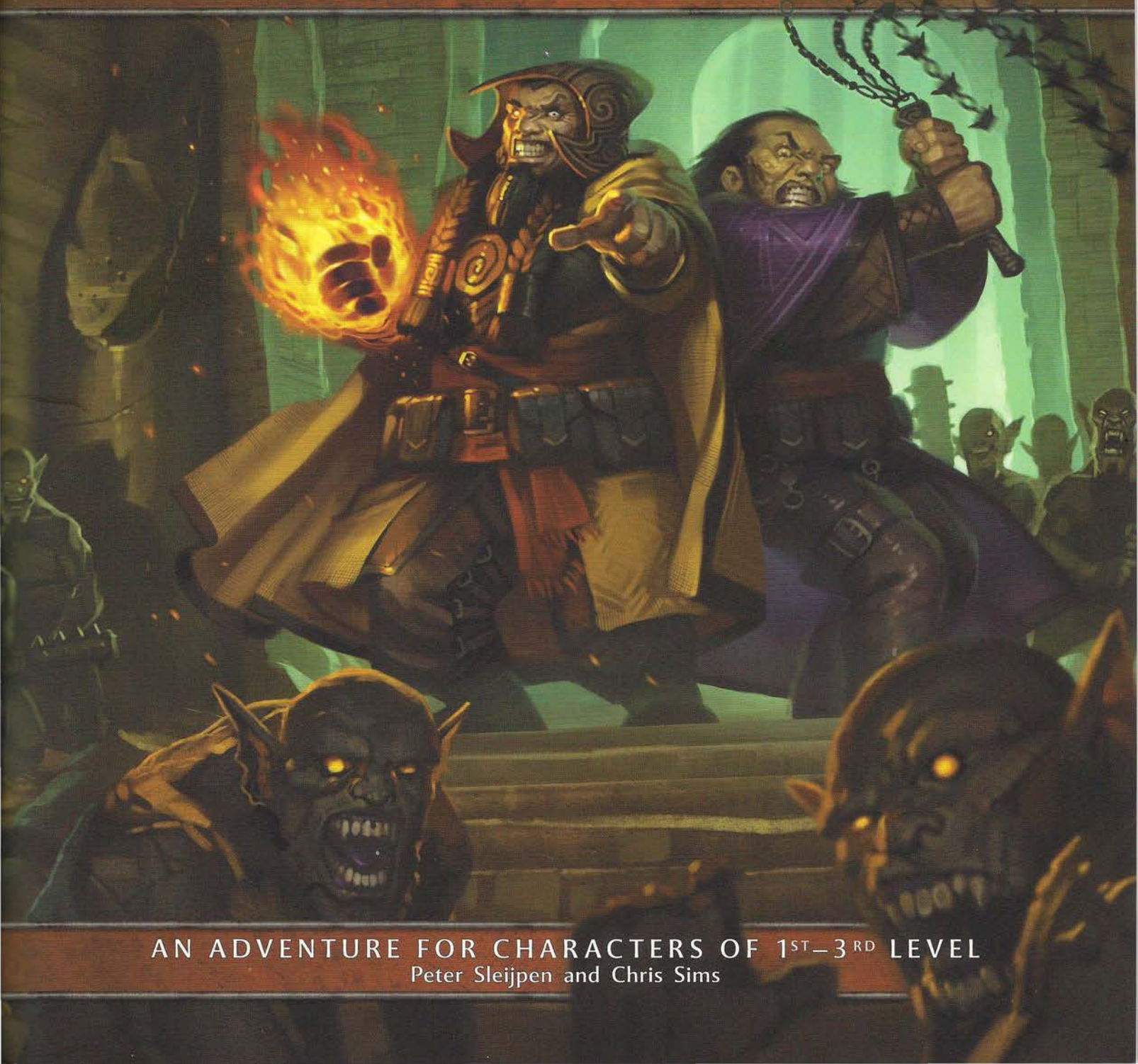


A HEROIC TIER ADVENTURE

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

## ENCOUNTERS™

### THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE™



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 1<sup>ST</sup>–3<sup>RD</sup> LEVEL  
Peter Sleijpen and Chris Sims



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620-B9728-001-EN

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™, an exciting in-store play program. This DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure is a mini-campaign season designed to be played in one-encounter sessions once per week at your local Wizards Play Network location. Each week, players can earn in-game rewards for their characters and Renown Points toward special program-exclusive DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FORTUNE CARDS™ that can be used in this and future seasons of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS play.

## PREPARING FOR PLAY

The D&D ENCOUNTERS play kit provides all you need to DM this adventure, including poster maps of encounter areas and tokens to represent monsters, adventurers, and battlefield effects. Follow the steps below to prepare for play.

### Before you run Session 1:

- ◆ Read the **Adventure Background and Adventure Summary** for the flow of the story.
- ◆ Read **Session 1: Easting Plague**, page 7, and **Outbreak**, page 10. If you are starting at another point, read the appropriate sections and what has come before.

### At the table for Session 1:

- ◆ Ensure that each player has a character to play. Players can use one of the characters provided in the kit or can create their own personas using the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules.
- ◆ Give each player a D&D ENCOUNTERS Play Tracker. This sheet, found in the play kit, allows the players to track treasure, experience points (XP), and Renown Points earned for each play session.
- ◆ Acquire a session tracking sheet from the organizer. Record all the players' DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with your DCI/RPGA number. If you or any of the players don't have a DCI/RPGA number, ask the organizer for a membership card.

### During the session:

- ◆ Each session is one encounter. DM the encounter assigned for that week's session. Typical play time for a session is 90 minutes to 2 hours.
- ◆ Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the game. As the DM, you can adjust the adventure to facilitate player fun.



### At the end of your first session:

- ◆ Have the adventurers take a short rest, but remind them to track their daily abilities. Healing surges used, daily powers expended, and other daily resources do not refresh in between sessions, only at the end of each chapter. Make sure your players track this information on their D&D ENCOUNTERS Play Trackers.
- ◆ Give out treasure and experience points. Make sure the players write down rewards on their D&D ENCOUNTERS Play Trackers.
- ◆ Turn in your session tracking sheet to the organizer. Make sure you record all the DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with names and the date of the event.
- ◆ Report Renown Point totals earned for each player to the organizer. The organizer fills out the Renown Point Tracker for the location and tells you if any player has earned exclusive DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Cards.
- ◆ Collect your special reward for providing your time as a DM to make the event happen. Your organizer has more details on this reward.

### At the end of each chapter:

- ◆ The adventurers take an extended rest, regaining all their healing surges, hit points, and daily powers. Also, their action point total resets to 1.
- ◆ Once you've been the DM for a few sessions, it's easy to prepare for your next session. Read the next session's material, and you're ready to go.

## A CHANGING GROUP

Since you can never tell who's going to show up to a D&D ENCOUNTERS session, you might wind up with a different group of players from week to week. Some players might have missed a session or two, and others might have played sessions with a different DM. That's fine. Catch new players up with a brief summary of what has come before, and make sure that returning players have marked off resources they spent (healing surges, daily powers, and so on) since their last extended rest.

**Majority Rules:** If some element of the adventure plot hinges on the adventurers making a decision in a previous session, and the group is different during the current session, find out how the decision went down from the players. Go with the majority, and if it's an even split, side with the most positive result. For example, if three of five players' characters at your table found a key in a previous encounter and two didn't, the key is considered to be in the party's possession for the session this week.

## TREASURE

As the characters progress, they have the opportunity to gain treasure in the form of gold pieces, valuables, and magic items. Whenever characters discover treasure, follow the instructions provided in the adventure and use the following rules to divide treasure among the characters.

**Awarding Magic Items:** When the characters find a nonconsumable magic item, the players can decide which character receives it. Usually, these decisions are easy, since certain items are better suited for certain characters. If this is not the case, you should assign the item to a character who has no nonconsumable magic items. If two or more characters lack nonconsumable magic items, have each of those players roll a d20. The character of the high roller receives the new item.

**Selling Items:** If none of the characters wants a particular magic item, the group can sell it at the end of the session, using the rules from the *Rules Compendium*™ rulebook. Divide the gold pieces received evenly among the party members.

**When to Gear Up:** Characters can buy equipment at the start of each chapter.

## Random Items

Use the following table to determine unidentified magic items, or choose from the table based on the adventuring group's needs.

TREASURE TABLE

d20	Result
1	+1 magic orb, rod, staff, or wand (1, 2)
2	+1 magic armor (1, 2)
3	+1 magic weapon (1, 2)
4	+1 luckblade (2)
5	+1 magic ki focus or tome (4)
6	+1 amulet of protection (1, 2)
7	+1 armor of escape or robe of useful items (4)
8	Shield of deflection (1)
9	+1 vicious weapon (1)
10	+1 safewing amulet (1) or +1 amulet of health (2)
11	Belt of vigor (1, 2)
12	+1 cloak of resistance (2)
13	+1 black iron armor (1) or +1 ebony armor (4)
14	+1 rod of malign conveyance (2)
15	Bracers of mighty striking (1) or flame bracers (2)
16	+1 fireblade (3) or +1 cold fury ki focus (3)
17	Gauntlets of blood (1) or gloves of agility (2)
18	+1 earthsplitter axe or +1 tidehammer (3)
19	Chronicle of the Dawn War (3)
20	Roll twice more (reroll if 20 comes up again)
1. Heroes of the Fallen Lands™	
2. Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms™	
3. Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos™	
4. Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium™	



# RENOWN POINTS

One of the great rewards for playing in a D&D ENCOUNTERS season is the accumulation of Renown Points (RPs), which are given out for player accomplishments during, and sometimes in-between, sessions. These Renown Points are tracked at the Wizards Play Network location, and reaching certain thresholds garners the player a tangible reward—an exclusive D&D Fortune Card.

Players can use these cards during the current D&D ENCOUNTERS season, during subsequent seasons, or possibly during both. Each card provides a benefit that is detailed on the card. Rules for using D&D Fortune Cards are found in booster packs.

As the Dungeon Master, you award Renown Points at the end of a session of play, just like you grant the players treasure and experience. Unlike experience and treasure, Renown Point totals earned for each player must be reported to the organizer at the conclusion of the session when you turn in your session tracking sheet. The organizer can then tell you if any players have qualified for a card.

The Renown accomplishments, their frequency, and the point values of each are listed below

## RENOWN POINT AWARDS

Accomplishment	Frequency	RPs
Complete an encounter	Session	3
Bring a new player	Session	2
Moment of greatness	1/chapter	2
Revive a dying adventurer ally	1/chapter	2
Deal 15+ damage to 1 enemy	1/chapter	2
Kill 3 minions with 1 attack	1/chapter	2
Take 50 enemy damage in 1 session	1/chapter	2
Create your own character	Season	5
Create a PC with Character Builder	Season	5
Create an elemental or sha'ir*	Season	2
Survive 8+ sessions without dying	Season	5

\*Using *Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos*

**Bring a New Player:** Players can earn this award for bringing a player who has never before participated in the D&D ENCOUNTERS program (current and past seasons included).

**Moment of Greatness:** When a player takes an action that is inventive, daring, or just plain cool during a session, the DM can grant this award or allow the other players to vote on whether it should be awarded.

## Renown Rewards

20 RPs earns a player the first DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Card, called Questionable Intent. 40 RPs earns a player Demented Assault, and 60 RPs earns Worth the Price. These cards are awarded to the player immediately following the session in which the card is

earned. Players can add these cards to their decks upon earning them. The organizer distributes these cards, and any questions regarding availability or quantities should be directed to the organizer.

# FORTUNE CARDS

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FORTUNE CARDS are a gameplay enhancement that showcases the chaotic and unpredictable nature of adventuring in a fantastic world of danger and magic. Every time players begin a session, they draw cards from their decks of Fortune Cards, activating the game benefit of the card at the appropriate time. Each card provides a game effect that enhances attacks, defenses, or provides some other sort of benefit to a character. Fortune Cards are featured in D&D ENCOUNTERS seasons, and player rewards consist of exclusive promotional Fortune Cards. Although players don't have to purchase Fortune Cards to play in D&D ENCOUNTERS sessions, they'll enjoy this new enhancement to their game experience.

Fortune Cards are available in eight-card booster packs and have differing levels of rarity (common, uncommon, and rare). Players can crack open packs of cards just prior to participating in a game session or come to the game with prebuilt decks. For players who want to take advantage of this gameplay enhancement, we recommend purchasing two packs per play session or bringing a deck built according to the Fortune Card rules, available in the booster packs or online at [www.DungeonsandDragons.com](http://www.DungeonsandDragons.com). The set available for purchase and use during this D&D ENCOUNTERS season is called *Spiral of Tharizdun™*.

## TACTICAL PLACEMENT

This adventure provides a sample tactical setup for each encounter, including the location of the monsters and, sometimes, a start area for the characters. Tactical maps for each encounter present only one way to set up the encounter. If it doesn't make sense to place monster or adventurer tokens in the places indicated on the map, feel free to change the placement. The narrative of how your adventure is playing out should be the major mandate for character and creature placement. For example, if a character is sneaking around behind the monsters when combat starts, then you should allow that player to place his or her token or miniature in an appropriate location.



# ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, the Sabrak clan of dwarves, in an effort to restore their clan's lost power and status, meddled with dark forces in the Sunset Mountains. The dwarves succeeded only in creating their own isolation and madness. Their clan grew smaller and ever more degenerate. Today, only the three brothers who lead the clan and a handful of other dwarves remain.

Of the three brothers, Zarnak is the eldest and most powerful. He is a seer whose mind shattered long ago when it came into contact with an ancient evil known as the Elder Elemental Eye. Through Zarnak, the middle brother, Azryg, learned to master the elements. The youngest, Jakairn, serves the family out of misguided loyalty and fear of his brothers.

Maddening visions recently made Zarnak aware of an ancient temple dedicated to Ghaunadaur, the god of oozes and aberrant creatures, near the crossroads village of Easting. Deep within the shrine, instead of a secret sanctum of Ghaunadaur, Zarnak found a hidden intrusion of the abyssal plague into the world. He also

## WHAT IS THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE?

The Elder Elemental Eye, all but unheard of in Faerûn, is the god Tharizdun. From a shard of evil he found near the dawn of time, Tharizdun helped to create the Abyss. The process shattered his mind but gave him vast power.

Thereafter, in a bid to control the cosmos, Tharizdun created the Elder Elemental Eye as a persona to dupe elemental creatures into following him and heeding his demented commands. Tharizdun's plotting brought the wrath of his fellow deities down upon him. In the end, the gods defeated Tharizdun and bound him in a remote layer of the Abyss. His vanquishers struck his name from history, naming him the Chained God.

Tharizdun gained a toehold on Toril when his whispers reached cultists in Chessenta in 1340 DR. The cult was destroyed. Others rose and fell, including a cult the plague demon Murmur started in Akanûl in 1479 DR. This cult also died at the hands of the just, but not before Tharizdun's malign presence seeped further into Faerûn.

Although Tharizdun cannot escape his prison, the essence of his will has—a sentient red liquid laced with silver and flecked with gold. This substance, known as the Voidharrow, is the source of the Abyssal plague. Demons born of this plague serve the will of the Chained God, whose ultimate goal is freedom.

mastered a way to control the affliction and its victims, who eventually die or become plague demons.

Thinking the plague demons can provide him with a limitless supply of soldiers for a conquering army, Zarnak gathered his brothers and servants in the old temple. The mad seer plans to start his conquest in Easting, spreading the plague and creating as many demons as he can.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The following is a summary of each session.

**Session 0:** Prior to the adventure, the players have a session set aside to create 1st-level characters. As the DM, your job during this session is to help them make race, class, and background decisions and let them know what options and sources are available, as discussed on page 6.

### Chapter One

At the behest of the leaders of the trade city of Iriaebor (a city located in the Heartlands of the Forgotten Realms), the party sets out to investigate a mysterious plague in the crossroads village of Easting. The search leads the adventurers toward the plague's source, which is a secret shrine in the Sunset Mountains.

**Session 1:** Characters investigate the outbreak in Easting. Arriving in the village, the adventurers find it in the grip of fear. The outbreak proves all too real. Easting's two leaders, Father Evendur and Sir Arveen, are not sure what to do with the infected. Before the adventurers can help to make a decision, some of the victims turn into demons and attack. In the end, the characters capture one of the cultists responsible for the problem—Jakairn Sabrak.

**Session 2:** Jakairn's interrogation reveals that a cult of Ghaunadaur is spreading the plague. The cult's hideout is the Sunset Shrine a few hours south of Easting. En route to the shrine, cultists attack the characters at a river crossing.

**Session 3:** The badlands surrounding the Sunset Shrine are difficult to traverse and far from safe. In the badlands, the characters encounter two drow scouts and their spider pets. After initial hostilities, these dark elves can provide useful information.

### Chapter Two

The heroes discover that an abandoned shrine of Ghaunadaur has become the haven for a cult of Elder Elemental Eye worshipers.

**Session 4:** After an extended rest, the adventurers prepare to enter the Sunset Shrine. While entering the shrine, the characters trigger magical wards and elemental guards appear.



**Session 5:** Inside the shrine, Azryg Sabrak and other cultists attack the characters. With the defeat of these guardians, the adventurers can explore part of the shrine and rescue a hostage who can provide some cryptic but significant information.

**Session 6:** The party finishes exploring the shrine's upper level, meeting only a little resistance. That changes as the characters face the crazed guardians of the temple's Great Shrine.

**Session 7:** To delve deeper into the temple, the characters need to pass the Great Shrine's altar, which turns out to be a monstrous azure jelly. Once the ooze is killed, the path into the real sanctum, the Temple of the Eye, opens. The characters have time to take a safe extended rest.

## Chapter Three

The adventures delve into the heart of the temple. They finally destroy the source of the abyssal plague in the Temple of the Eye. After a triumphant return to Easting and Iriaebor, the party faces Tharizdun cultists bent on taking vengeance in the city streets.

**Session 8:** The characters pick one of four elemental paths through a maze. Magic, hazards, and guardians make the path difficult. Eventually, the adventurers arrive at the Temple of the Eye, where they must fight

twisted elementals and demons to gain access to portals into the temple's deepest heart—the Black Cyst.

**Session 9:** Instead of arriving in the Black Cyst, the adventurers find themselves trapped in a nightmarish reflection of Easting. To escape from this mindscape before it is too late, the characters need to unlock the hopeful elements of the environment and kill the creature whose mind keeps the party bound.

**Session 10:** The mindscape collapses, and the characters arrive in the Black Cyst to confront the mad dwarf seer Zarnak and his pool of Voidharrow. While dealing with Zarnak, or afterward, the party must also destroy or purify this source of the abyssal plague. The task complete, the heroes can return to Easting in safety. The village is saved.

**Session 11:** Days later, the characters have returned to Iriaebor to report success. While enjoying their rewards, the characters meet a disguised drow who warns that the threat of Tharizdun is not at an end. A heretic drow leads bold cultists of the Elder Elemental Eye to take vengeance on the heroic adventurers. In the end, the heroes have the key to further adventure in their hands.

## Lesser Abyssal Plague

The characters have a chance to catch the abyssal plague in this adventure. The disease's progression appears below.

### ADJUSTING ENCOUNTERS

Each chapter assumes the characters are of a level equal to the chapter number. Due to differing levels and play skill, you might need to adjust encounters to fit the party at your table. Do what you can to ensure the players have fun without being overwhelmed.

**Weak Party:** You have a weak party at your table if it consists of only four characters, several characters of lower than expected level, or most or all the players are new to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. If you have a weak party, remove at least one of the lowest level or least important non-minion monsters from the encounter. Be willing to adjust the encounter on the fly, as well, if the characters are having a hard time. For example, have a monster die when a character hits it but fails to remove those last few hit points.

**Strong Party:** You have a strong party at your table if it consists of six characters, or most or all the players are veteran players who like added challenge. If you have a strong party, add one or two of the simplest non-minion monsters among those in the encounter whose level most closely matches the encounter level without going over it. If your scaled-up encounter proves too difficult, alter the encounter on the fly as described in the Weak Party section, above.

#### Lesser Abyssal Plague

#### Level 3 Disease

*Those infected by this disease slowly develop oozing sores, blisters, and growths that appear as crimson crystal laced with veins of silver and flecks of gold.*

**Stage 0:** The target recovers from the disease.

**Stage 1:** While affected by stage 1, the target exhibits sores and growths across 10% of the body and loses a healing surge.

**Stage 2:** While affected by stage 2, the target has sores and growths over 50% of the body and loses a healing surge. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.

**Stage 3:** While affected by stage 3, the target has sores and growths over 90% of the body. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex, and is slowed. In addition, the target becomes increasingly disoriented and chaotic as the demonic nature of the disease takes hold.

**Check (Stage 1 or Stage 2):** At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check.

8 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.

9-12: No change.

13 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

**Check (Stage 3):** At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check.

8 or Lower: The target dies.

9-20: No change.

21 or Higher: The target transforms into a plague demon chaos lasher.



# SESSION 0: CHARACTER CREATION

The initial session of this D&D ENCOUNTERS season is intended to allow players to create characters. They are permitted certain options, as presented below.

For this D&D ENCOUNTERS season, players can create characters using materials from the *Heroes of the Fallen Lands* and *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms* rulebooks, as well as the *Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos* supplement. In addition, players can use rules presented in *Dragon*® magazine in support of those products.

A player who misses this session can create a character elsewhere or use one of the pregenerated adventurers provided in the play kit. Each player is responsible for bringing his or her character to each play session.

## Race Options

A player may choose from any of the races presented in *Heroes of the Fallen Lands* and *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms* (dragonborn, drow, dwarf, eladrin, elf, half-elf, halfling, half-orc, human, and tiefling). In light of this season's strong elemental theme, a player may also select genasi as a race (as presented in the *Forgotten Realms*® *Player's Guide*).

## Class Options

In addition to the classes presented in *Heroes of the Fallen Lands* and *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms*, a player may choose to play an elementalist or a sha'ir from *Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos*.

## Advancement

At the end of each session, you award experience points, treasure, and Renown Points. The Reward section at the end of each session indicates how many XP to award the characters. The point total includes the encounter reward plus exploration and story awards. Each character receives the same amount of experience points, regardless of group size or player participation. Players record their rewards on their D&D ENCOUNTERS Play Trackers, and you report the Renown Points each player earns to the organizer.

**Leveling:** Players need not wait for an extended rest to level their characters. D&D ENCOUNTERS play uses an accelerated XP award system to allow players to experience their characters at a succession of levels. If a player attends every session, his or her character advances to level 2 at the start of Chapter 2 and to level 3 at the start of Chapter 3.



## Changing Characters

Players can switch characters during a D&D ENCOUNTERS season. If a player wants to do so, he or she can bring a new character with experience points equal to those of the character he or she previously played in the season. However, the new character can keep neither treasure nor items from the previous character.

## Character Death

If a character dies during a session, the player has two choices. He or she can bring the same character back at the beginning of the next session, with four fewer healing surges, or start a new level-appropriate character. If a character dies and has fewer than four healing surges remaining, that character loses all his or her remaining healing surges and can return next session with full hit points. No other penalty exists for death, except for the potential of failing to gain the Renown Points for surviving eight or more sessions without dying.

# CHAPTER 1

Leaders in Iriaebor have hired the characters to go to the village of Easting to investigate rumors of a plague. The action starts with the assumption that all the characters have undertaken the task.

## SESSION 1: EASTING PLAGUE

The adventure begins as the party arrives in Easting.

### When you're ready to start, read:

Leaders of the city of Iriaebor—Lady Bron and the Merchant Council—have hired your group to go to the village of Easting and investigate rumors of an outbreak of abyssal plague, a supernatural disease that can turn its victims into demons. Easting is built at a crossroads where the High Road to Cormyr splits from the Trader's Road to Westgate. The village is too important a stop on the trade route to lose.

Iriaebor's leaders paid you each 50 gp in advance, with the promise of more if something is amiss and you are instrumental in solving it. Your job is to verify whether the rumors are true and, if so, put an end to the disease by whatever means necessary. They left it to your discretion how to accomplish this task. Considering the plague's supernatural nature, they hinted that swift destruction of its source and victims might be the only way to stop it.

Prompt the players to introduce and describe their characters. The adventurers have been traveling together for two days and are already acquainted if not friends.

## Knowledge

All the characters have heard of the abyssal plague and its supposed ability to turn victims into demons. They know Easting is a small agricultural and trading village. Knowledgeable individuals among the characters help the players learn more. Anyone trained in the skill shown knows the associated facts.

**Arcana:** The plague does create demons, bestial creatures of destruction that are intent on spreading the contagion and increasing their numbers. Wounds from such a demon can infect a victim with the plague.

**Heal:** Creatures infected with the plague develop oozing sores, blisters, and growths of crimson crystal laced with veins of silver and flecks of gold. Roughly half of those infected survive. A quarter of the victims die, and all others turn into demons. The disease can also spread in food and drink.

**History:** Easting's people earn their living by farming, mostly livestock, and serving trade caravans bound

for Iriaebor, Cormyr, or Westgate. Most villagers live on farms in the surrounding area.

### When the players are ready, read:

*After a long day on the road, you have arrived in Easting. A wide road leads into Easting's central square, which has a large, tree-shaded pond in the middle. Wooden houses line the streets. A three-story building in the village square looks more like a fortress than a house; a wooden sign showing an ox drinking from a barrel hangs above its main door. Across from it stands a white-plastered temple.*

*Not a soul stirs on the streets. All doors and shutters are closed. The smell of smoke is strong. A building burned to its foundation is the closest structure to the village's edge.*

## Exploring the Village

Citizens have barricaded themselves inside their homes. Unwilling to open up, but relieved help has finally arrived, they talk through shut doors or shutters. With little coaxing, the citizens direct the characters to the temple where Father Evendur and Sir Arveen are holed up. Four places might be of interest to the adventurers, shown in the order the characters reach them on the main road from the outside of the village.

**Burned Building:** This is the remains of a large house. Nearby are five hastily dug graves that are fresh. In these graves, the characters can find the burned remains of humans of various ages. If the characters dig up the graves, they find that the deceased died in the fire.

**Perception DC 12:** Tracks show that people tried to prevent nearby buildings from catching fire, but nobody tried to put out the fire on this building. Doors and windows in the burned building were barricaded from the outside.

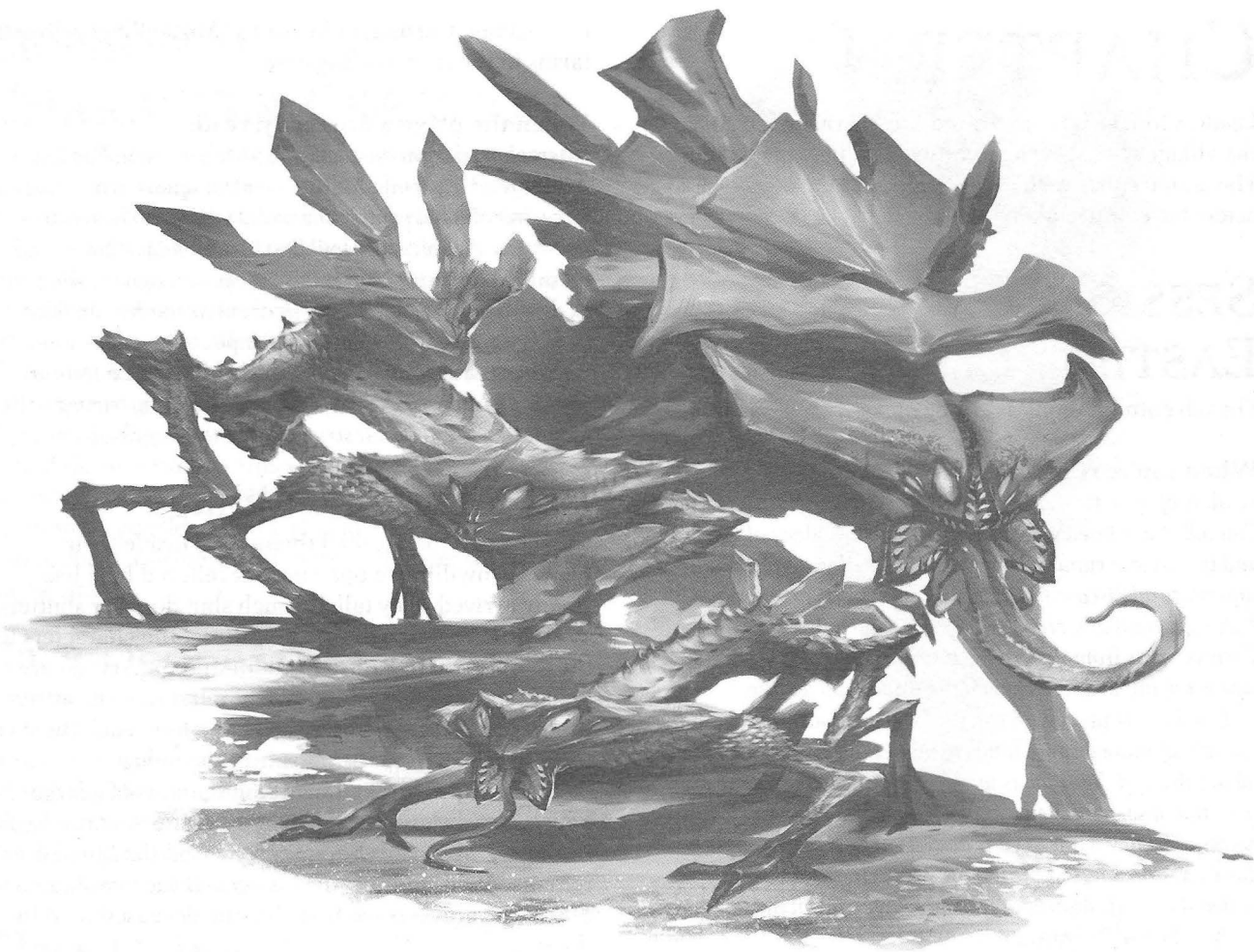
**Heal DC 12:** If the characters dug up the graves, they also discover some of the dead were clearly infected with the Abyssal plague.

**Chauntea's Temple:** Chauntea, the Great Mother, is the primary deity in Easting. Her temple is a large, open stone building. Its white walls have large windows, and grape vines and roses climb the aging plaster. At the front door stands the marble statue of a curvaceous woman, lambs darting around her feet. A simple altar stands in the building's center. One exit leads back outside into a walled flower garden and a small stone cottage. In the garden, Father Evendur and Sir Arveen are discussing what to do next. See the Heated Discussion section.

**Shrine of Tears:** At the feet of a great oak near the town center is a small makeshift altar with the remains of incense and blood. A triangle containing three tear-drops has been carved into the altar. The adventurers also find the remains of a cat.

**Religion DC 8:** The symbol is that of Talona, goddess of disease. The shrine and sacrifice are attempts to





appease her, a clear sign of the fear that has the town in its grip.

**The Thirsty Ox:** The town's large inn and tavern also serves as a caravanserai, with a great public shelter and communal storage barn nearby. Doors to this barn are barricaded from the outside. A young swordsman in leather armor stands guard alongside two sturdy commoners armed with pitchforks.

The lad is Hendar, the devoted squire of Sir Arveen. He is tired but friendly toward strangers. The two farmhands are Narth and Randal. Grim and taciturn, they (like Sir Arveen) believe the plague victims need to be killed to save the rest of the village.

Hendar tells the characters that Sir Arveen, the town's most able warrior, brought all infected villagers to the barn after recent events (the house burning). The town's leaders, Father Evendur and Sir Arveen, are discussing what to do next in the temple. Until a decision is made, nobody is allowed to enter the barn. However, besides voicing opposition, the guards do nothing to stop determined characters from opening the doors. Proceed with the **Outbreak** tactical encounter, on the next page, if the party opens the barn despite these protests.

## EASTING'S LEADERS

The village leaders are described here.

**The Priest:** Evendur is an elderly man with cropped gray hair and a weathered face. He has an aquiline nose and sharp green eyes that always seem to be measuring the worth of those Evendur looks at. A simple brown robe and leather sandals are his only possessions.

Father Evendur is a patient, calm man with a deep love for the land and life. He has lived in Easting for nearly fifty years. In that time, he has come to know every villager by name and is respected, if not liked, by all.

**The Knight:** Arveen is a sturdy woman in her thirties. She has long braided blond hair, feverish blue eyes, and the first signs of blisters on her face and hands. Her left arm is bandaged. Armed with a bastard sword and dagger, she wears plate armor and the tabard of the Purple Dragon Knights of Cormyr.

She has pledged to protect Easting, and she has lived in the village for two years. Her sense of duty is strong, but the disease is distorting her perceptions. Without the fever, she would never have proposed killing all the victims.

## Heated Discussion

Characters approaching the temple can hear an argument transpiring in the nearby garden. The characters catch a part of the argument as they approach.

### When the characters can hear clearly, read:

*Raised voices disturb the temple's serenity. One has the quality of an elderly male, while the other is a strong female voice.*

*The male voice says, "I have known most of these people since they were born, and you want us to kill them? Not all turn into demons! Are you sure the disease is not speaking through you?"*

*The female voice replies, "If I die, no one can help you if they do turn. What happens then?"*

Without outside interference, the two continue to argue and come to no agreement. Discussion stops once the characters arrive, and both leaders rise to greet the adventurers. The two leaders can relate the following after the characters identify their purpose,

- ◆ The first symptoms appeared about a tenday ago. Arveen and Evendur can share any information about the plague that the characters do not know.
- ◆ Several villagers showed signs of infection at the same time. No signs of demons have been found near the village, making it unclear where the disease originated. This has the leaders worried about an outside influence.
- ◆ Messengers left immediately to seek help, since the village lacks the resources to deal with the abyssal plague. The characters are the first help to arrive.
- ◆ Two days ago, one of the victims turned into a demon. Arveen killed the creature, but not without suffering a serious wound. She is now infected. Shortly after the fight, fearful citizens locked the others of that victim's family up in their house and burned it down. Five people died a horrible death before Arveen and Evendur could restore order.
- ◆ In the last two days, Arveen gathered all the infected people, eleven total, in the communal barn. All current victims have been gathered as far as the leaders know.
- ◆ Evendur thought Arveen gathered the sick to make caring for them easier, but now she wants to give them a quick and merciful death before taking her own life. Evendur thinks the plan is ridiculous—not all infected turn into demons, and some survive. Arveen feels her tactic is best for the town. She cannot protect the people much longer, and without her, they do not stand a chance against the demons.

- ◆ Evendur knows the Cure Disease ritual (*Player's Handbook*®, page 303), but the temple lacks the components to cast the ritual even once. (Jakairn has *residium*, a silvery powder that serves as a ritual component—see the Reward section of the **Outbreak** tactical encounter on page 10.)
- ◆ Neither Evendur nor Arveen is willing to budge at first, but they can be swayed. Evendur is correct that some die from the disease and others recover. Only a few might turn into demons. Arveen is correct that a few demons could be too much for the villagers.

At some point, Evendur and Arveen suggest that the characters examine the sick villagers. Maybe the two of them missed an important clue about the disease's origin, or the adventurers can do something to ease the victims' suffering. The leaders guide the characters to the barn, where trouble starts. Proceed with the **Outbreak** tactical encounter on the next page.





# OUTBREAK

## Encounter Level 1

### Setup

**Jakairn Sabrak, dwarf prowler (J)**  
**4 plague demon chaos lashers (L)**

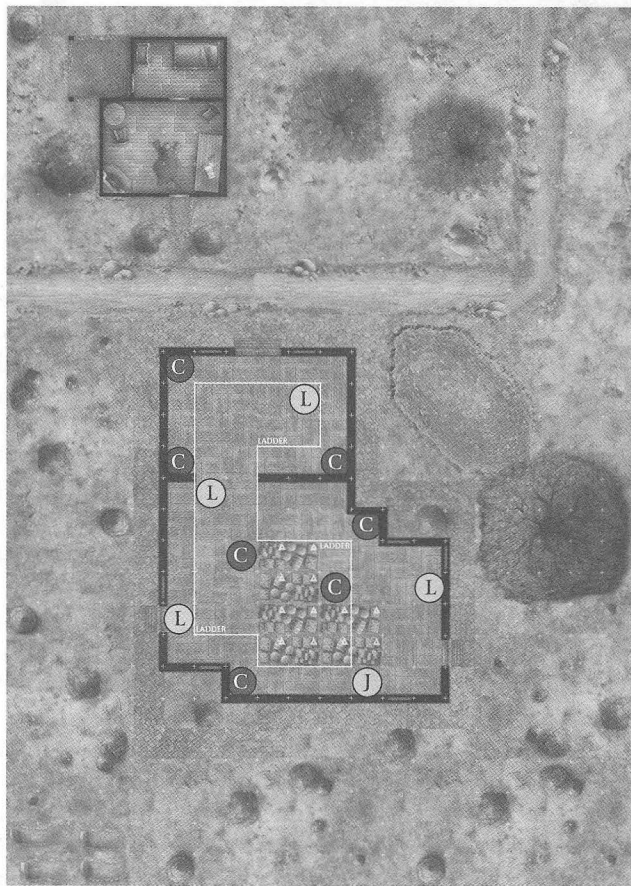
Jakairn Sabrak has been watching Easting. When the characters arrived in the village, he quickly sent a message to his superiors and sneaked into the barn through a back door.

When the characters arrive at the barn, Sir Arveen opens the doors nearest the road to allow entrance.

### When the doors open, read:

*Inside, the barn smells of rotting meat, sweat, and dirty straw. Visible in the dim light are several sick humans on makeshift beds. One of the sick shouts a hoarse warning as the doors open. A froglike monster with bulbous glowing eyes and red plating on its skin moves out of the shadows.*

Neither side is surprised. Roll initiative and begin the battle with the characters near the doors Arveen opened.



## Allied NPCs

Father Evendur, Sir Arveen, and Hendar stay out of the way and move the sick civilians away from the battle while the characters deal with the monsters. The two peasant guards flee as soon as combat begins. You can use the nonplayer characters (NPCs) who stay to add to drama to the encounter. A monster might threaten them, or one of them might help a character out of a tight spot. In any case, the NPCs recognize Jakairn as a local tinker and are surprised to see him acting against the characters. They advise against killing the dwarf.

Jakairn Sabrak, Dwarf Prowler (J)	Level 3 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid	
HP 39; Bloodied 19	Initiative +8
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +6
Speed 5	Low-light vision
<b>TRAITS</b>	
<b>Shadow Manipulation</b>	
Jakairn can make a Stealth check to become hidden when he has cover or concealment instead of needing superior cover or total concealment. He remains hidden after moving if he has cover or concealment after he ends the move.	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
Jakairn can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
Jakairn can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.	
<b>Stealthy Step</b>	
Jakairn takes no penalty to Stealth checks for moving more than 2 squares, and he takes only a -5 penalty if he runs.	
<b>Unseen Strike</b>	
Jakairn deals 5 extra damage to any target that couldn't see him at the start of his turn.	
<b>STANDARD ACTIONS</b>	
⚔ <b>Battleaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.	
🔪 <b>Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage.	
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +7, Stealth +9, Thievery +9	
<b>Str</b> 12 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 15 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+1)
	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+1)
	<b>Cha</b> 12 (+2)
<b>Alignment</b> evil	
<b>Languages</b> Common, Dwarven	
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, battleaxe, 3 handaxes	

**4 Plague Demon Chaos Lashers (L) Level 1 Skirmisher**

Medium elemental beast (demon)

**HP 30; Bloodied 15****AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12****Speed 8****Initiative +5****Perception +1****Darkvision****TRAITS****Lone Predator**

If the demon hits an enemy that has no other creatures adjacent to it, the demon deals that enemy 1d6 extra damage.

**Pulling Grab**

The demon can attempt to move a grabbed target as part of any action during which the demon also moves.

**STANDARD ACTIONS****⬇ Bite (disease) ♦ At-Will**

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

**Hit:** 1d8 + 4 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts lesser abyssal plague (stage 1).

**⬇ Lashing Assault ♦ Recharge when the demon hits with bite**

**Requirement:** The demon must have no creature grabbed.

**Effect:** The demon shifts up to its speed and makes the following attack at any point during this movement.

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d8 + 4 damage, and the demon grabs the target (escape DC 12).

**MINOR ACTIONS****⬇ Tongue Lash ♦ At-Will**

**Requirement:** The demon must have no creature grabbed.

**Attack:** Melee 2 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** The demon slides the target 1 square.

**TRIGGERED ACTIONS****Variable Resistance ♦ Encounter**

**Trigger:** The demon takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.

**Effect (Free Action):** The demon gains resist 5 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.

**Str 14 (+2)****Dex 17 (+3)****Wis 12 (+1)****Con 14 (+2)****Int 2 (-4)****Cha 10 (+0)****Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** —

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light (sunlight) outside. The barn's back room is dimly lit unless the doors and windows are opened. In that case, the whole area is brightly lit.

**Barn:** This wooden building is 20 feet high. It has two floors, with double loft doors and a block-and-tackle above the main doors nearest the road. Makeshift beds and straw cover the floor, except where storage containers are stacked in the rear room. Inside is a large opening in the ceiling (as shown on the map), with ladders leading to the straw-covered upper floor.

**Windows:** The shutters of these glassless windows are barred. A successful Athletics check (DC 12) as part of any movement is enough to crash through them.

**Bushes:** A square containing one of these plants is difficult terrain and lightly obscured.

**Civilians (C):** The seven sick villagers are treated as difficult terrain. Villagers are noncombatants with defenses of 10 and 1 hit point each.

**House:** This wooden cabin is 10 feet high with a flat roof. The walls can be climbed (Athletics DC 12).

**Rocks:** This rubble is difficult terrain.

**Spring:** This pool is difficult terrain at the edges and 5 feet deep in squares that touch no land.

**Storage Containers:** These containers are tightly stacked and 5 feet high, making them blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 8). The area atop them is difficult terrain.

**Trees:** Smaller trees are 20 feet tall, and the larger one near the pool is 30 feet tall. Their trunks are blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 8). Above half a given tree's height, thick leaves render the tree's area lightly obscured.

## Conclusion

Questioning Jakairn and dealing with the surviving victims is part of the next session. If any character contracts lesser abyssal plague, see the disease progression on page 5.

## Reward

The characters gain 250 XP for fighting the plague demons at the barn, exploring Easting, and interacting with the villagers.

**Treasure:** After the fight, to help the characters on their quest, Sir Arveen offers a random magic item (see page 2) and Father Evendur gives the adventurers one *potion of healing*. Jakairn has a pouch that contains *residuum* worth 25 gp per character. Combined with the components Father Evendur already has, the *residuum* is enough for him to cast Cure Disease once. If the characters use the *residuum* to help Evendur cure Sir Arveen instead of a party member, the priest gives the characters one *potion of healing* each.

## Tactics

**Jakairn:** This red-haired dwarf lurks around the fringes of the fight and tries to stay hidden. He attacks whenever he has a good opportunity. The demons do not consider him to be an ally, so he keeps his distance from them as much as possible.

Although he intends to kill the adventurers before they can disrupt the cult's plans, Jakairn is a coward. He hastily surrenders when cornered, bloodied, or when all the demons are gone. Unwilling to risk fleeing, he exclaims that he was forced to act against the village and has valuable information.

**Plague Demons:** The demons favor targets that are uninfected and easy to see, which works to Jakairn's favor. Each demon picks an enemy and tries to grab it and pull it away, possibly to the barn's second floor. They snap at one another—in a roleplaying sense, not literal attacks—if they pick the same target. Each demon switches targets when its current one becomes bloodied or unconscious. When bloodied, the demons' rage takes over. Only then do they go for the kill.



## SESSION 2: ACROSS THE RIVER

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate an outbreak of the abyssal plague in the village of Easting.
- ◆ The adventurers found the rumors to be true and Easting in the grip of fear.
- ◆ The village's leaders, Father Evendur and Sir Arveen, gathered the infected in one place but were unsure what to do next. Arveen, infected herself, wanted to kill the plague victims, but Evendur objected. They asked the adventurers for advice.
- ◆ Before the heroes made a decision, a few of the victims turned into demons and attacked their guardians. Characters might have contracted the plague after the fight.
- ◆ The characters captured one of the villagers, the dwarf Jakairn, alive. He is somehow in league with the demons, although this fact surprises the village leaders who think the dwarf is a local tinker.

Last session ended with the PCs defeating a group of newly formed plague demons and capturing Jakairn. The characters have not yet questioned the dwarf, nor have they decided what to do with the plague victims.

### Questioning Jakairn

Although Jakairn quickly surrendered, he comes from a family rife with insanity and is a nervous wreck.

At first, he sticks to his role as a simple tinker who got caught up in affairs beyond his understanding. He professes ignorance as to why he attacked the characters, suggesting he might have been possessed by a demon. The story is unlikely, especially since the characters can detect no magic and no telltale signs of a demonic possession (Arcana check or Religion check DC 12; Insight DC 17 to detect the bluff).

If pressed for the truth, Jakairn panics, turning into a shrieking wreck. A successful Insight check (DC 8) shows he fears for his life. A result of 19 or higher reveals Jakairn suffers from some kind of mental instability that could make him shut down if driven to too much fear.

It takes time and assurances (a few successful Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks, DC 12, made during roleplaying) to calm him down. Intimidation works only in combination with another character acting (with Diplomacy or Bluff) to restrain the intimidator from carrying out his or her threats. Otherwise, intimidation and any sort of violence work against the characters, each event counting against the number of successes the characters gain. If a character gains this

sort of failure, a successful Insight check (DC 12) identifies the problem.

Once he's cooperative and calm, Jakairn is willing to tell the truth. He first wants oaths that no one plans to kill him, and that the adventurers are willing to take out his brothers. Until such guarantees are given, Jakairn reveals only that his brothers are dangerous spellcasters behind the trouble in Easting. The dwarf also wants a proper trial for his crimes, which Evendur and Arveen can promise (see below). He is confident he can escape any jail.

Evendur and Arveen are unsure what to do with Jakairn. Both are unwilling to lie to Jakairn or torture him, and they try to persuade the characters to do neither. If Jakairn is even partially responsible for the plague, they want him to face trial.

Once ready to talk, Jakairn can provide the following information. These revelations are all true except where noted below.

**Who are you?** "A dwarf. Jakairn of Clan Sabrak. Just a dwarf, I swear."

Sabrak means "broken" in Dwarven, and it is an unlikely clan name. If asked about it, Jakairn explains

### CHARACTER PROFILE: JAKAIRN

Jakairn told the villagers in Easting that he is a wandering tinker fed up with the traveling life. He settled in Easting a few months ago. Although he is a skilled tinker, he is also a Sabrak dwarf (see the Adventure Background) who developed minor abilities in shadow magic instead of his brothers' affinity with the elements. He is in the village to spy and to make sure the experiment to spread Abyssal plague succeeds.

**Goals:** To survive, to escape his insane brothers, and to remain free.

**Key Traits:** Deceitful and cowardly, Jakairn always looks for a better deal, desperately trying to appease those more powerful than he is. The dwarf is more likely to tell others what he thinks they want to hear than to tell the truth.

**Motivation:** Greed and fear are Jakairn's primary motives, and both are closely related. Saner than most of his clan mates, Jakairn wants to have the resources to escape the grip of his mad family.

**Fears:** Jakairn fears losing himself, whether to death, to insanity, or to dead-end familial loyalty.

**Weaknesses:** Jakairn lacks willpower. He has trouble seeing anything through if it requires him to sacrifice.

**Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics:** Jakairn is a pot-bellied redheaded dwarf of about 30 years. He plays the witless victim whenever doing so is useful. If he loses his cool, he freaks out, his face twitching and voice changing from moment to moment.

that his clan was cast out of its original home and has dabbled in dark powers for generations. His ancestors were likely called this and started using it as their name.

**Where are you from?** “My family has always been on the move. We always move. But now they live in the ruins of a temple, south of town.”

**Temple?** “My brother Zarnak said it was a temple to That Which Lurks. The clan is restoring it to appease the god . . . to gain its favor. They spread the plague in this thing’s name, each victim a sacrifice.”

Religion DC 8: That Which Lurks is a title of the deity Ghaunadaur, the greater god of oozes and aberrant creatures. Ghaunadaur revels in suffering, and his symbol is an unblinking eye within a circle.

**Why are you here?** “I’m just a spy. I’m nothing! My mission is to alert my brothers if something changes, like when messengers went to Iriaebor or you arrived. I’m nothing.”

If asked, Jakairn reveals that he already used a magic scroll to send a message to the temple about the party. He has no scrolls left to send another message.

**What do you know of the abyssal plague?** “Zarnak gave me a vial of red liquid with gold flecks. I poured it into the central spring. That’s all I know. That’s all!”

Father Evendur agrees to quarantine the spring until it can be determined whether it is still contaminated.

**Who are your brothers?** “I’m the youngest. Zarnak is the eldest, a seer. His visions lead him to dark places . . . deep and dark . . . and the clan follows. Azryg is my other brother, a sorcerer with powers like a volcano . . . and a temper to match.”

**What do your brothers want?** “They never tell me anything important. Anything! And I don’t want to know. They’d take my eye or hand just for asking or . . . or hesitating. Maybe Zarnak thinks he can control the demons. I don’t know!”

**Where can we find your brothers?** “The Sunset Shrine. Zarnak calls the temple that. It’s about a day’s travel south of here in the badlands around Land’s Mouth. The entrance is between the Teeth of Ghaunadaur, a set of black spires that look like tentacles, especially under the moon.”

History DC 8: Land’s Mouth is an area of badlands where a large cavern collapsed decades ago.

History DC 12: Legends of this area do speak of peculiar spires called the Teeth of Ghaunadaur. They should be south of this village near Land’s Mouth.

**What can you tell us about the temple?** “Nothing! I wanted out of there as soon as possible. It whispers and watches. I hate it. I hate it!”

Insight DC 12: Although his hatred of the place is real, Jakairn is hiding something. If pressed, he reveals the entrance has a trap and a pass phrase that disables it. The phrase is “That Which Lurks devours all.”

**Can you take us there?** “No. It’ll kill me. They’ll kill me. You can’t make me go. I won’t. I won’t!”

Jakairn would rather die than risk facing his brothers. He is unwilling to budge on this point.

**What can we do to stop the plague?** “Zarnak works deep in the temple. Deep. He never showed me where, and I’m glad of it. The source of the plague must be there. He told us not to worry about falling sick, so he must have a cure there, too. Or he must control the plague. One or the other. He must.”

The truth is Zarnak controls the plague. Jakairn truly doesn’t know how the mad seer prevents the Sabrak dwarves from contracting the disease.

**What forces do your brothers command?** “The clan serves them, dwarves like me. Azryg also has control of some elementals. Zarnak was happy, not long ago, about recruiting new allies, but I don’t know what or who they are. Never met them. Don’t want to. Nope.”

## Sick Villagers

Before the characters go to the Sunset Shrine they need to make a decision about the infected villagers.

## Diagnosis

A character trained in the Heal skill can diagnose the sick.

**DC 8:** The disease is a weak strain but nevertheless quite powerful. Most of the victims should survive with proper care, which includes ample food, water, and rest. The character can give instructions for the victims’ care, which Father Evendur gladly volunteers to oversee. Several of the victims seem worse off than the others, including Sir Arveen.

**DC 12:** Only four infected villagers, including Sir Arveen, are in the disease’s final stage. Within the next few days, possibly as few as one, the severely infected should either die or transform. Other patients ought to have more time. Further, the disease spreads only through wounds and ingestion, not the air, so those who keep away from the sick and the corrupted spring should be okay.

## Hard Choices

Sir Arveen agrees to allow those who are not severely infected remain under Father Evendur’s care. The knight wants the severely infected (including her, if it comes to that) killed for the good of the town. A DC 12 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check can change her mind. In any case, Sir Arveen sends her squire, Hendar, to Iriaebor to warn the city about events in Easting.

## Road Trip

By now it’s clear that mad cultists are the source of the plague. The cultists are hiding in a temple of Ghaunadaur about a day’s travel south of town in badlands unsuitable for mounted travel. Haste is required. After the characters depart, run the River Crossing tactical encounter on the next page.



# RIVER CROSSING

## Encounter Level 2

### Setup

- 1 Sabrak acolyte (A)
- 1 Sabrak bolter (B)
- 4 Sabrak warriors (W)
- 2 lesser earth elementals (E)

A few hours south of the village, in a marshy river valley, the characters run into cultists sent to kill them. Place the characters' miniatures in the start area shown on the map.

### When the encounter begins, read:

*Having made good time, you enter a marshy river valley. You find a slow and narrow part of the river to ford when, suddenly, two humanoid creatures composed of rock rise from the earth to confront you. Moving over a ridge and among the vegetation on the river's far side, several chainmail-clad dwarves take aim at you with their crossbows.*

*A male dwarf who has wild black hair and wears purple robes steps from behind a tree across the river. "We expected to find you in Easting," he says. "No matter. Here or there, you are a worthy sacrifice for our master."*

Sabrak Acolyte (A) Level 3 Artillery (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 39; Bloodied 19	Initiative +1
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 16	Perception +6
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The acolyte can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The acolyte can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Burning Warhammer</b> (fire, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 damage plus 1d6 + 2 fire damage.	
⚡ <b>Mind Lightning</b> (lightning) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d12 + 4 lightning damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the acolyte's next turn.	
⚡ <b>Earth Stomp</b> ♦ <b>Recharge</b> when first bloodied	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d12 + 4 damage, and the acolyte slides the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.	
Effect: The acolyte or one ally in the burst slides 1 square.	
Skills Arcana +7	
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 10 (+1) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 13 (+2) Cha 17 (+4)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Dwarven	
Equipment robes, warhammer	

Sabrak Bolter (B) Level 2 Artillery	
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 33; Bloodied 16	Initiative +4
AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +5
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The bolter can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The bolter can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Warhammer</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage.	
🏹 <b>Crossbow</b> (psychic, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 1d6 psychic damage if the target has no cover.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 8 (+0)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Dwarven	
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts	

4 Sabrak Warriors (W) Level 1 Minion Artillery	
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
<b>Dwarf Solidarity</b>	
The warrior gains a +4 bonus to Fortitude and Will while adjacent to a dwarf ally.	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The warrior can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The warrior can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Warhammer</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage, or 6 damage while the warrior is adjacent to a dwarf ally.	
🏹 <b>Crossbow</b> (psychic, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage, plus 2 psychic damage if the target has no cover.	
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 16 (+3) Wis 8 (-1)
Con 15 (+2)	Int 10 (+0) Cha 12 (+1)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Dwarven	
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts	

## Tactics

**Sabrak Acolyte:** This male dwarf raves and blusters as the fight rages. He avoids melee, using *earth stomp* to push determined attackers away.

**Sabrak Bolter and Sabrak Warriors:** These archers spread out and shoot at the characters from cover or concealment. They focus on different targets, preferring the characters using ranged attacks and

2 Lesser Earth Elementals (E)		Level 2 Soldier
Small elemental magical beast (earth)		
HP 42; Bloodied 21		Initiative +1
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 12, Will 13		Perception +1
Speed 5, burrow 5		Tremorsense 5
TRAITS		
<b>Earth Glide</b>		
The elemental can pass through earth and rock as if it were phasing.		
<b>Brittle Skin</b>		
Whenever the elemental takes thunder damage, it takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⊕ <b>Slam</b> ♦ <b>At-Will</b>		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target cannot shift until the end of the elemental's next turn.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
<b>Overwhelming Stone</b> ♦ <b>Recharge</b> when first bloodied		
Trigger: An enemy hits one of the elemental's allies with a melee attack.		
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (triggering enemy). The target falls prone.		
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 6 (-1)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 5 (-2)	Cha 6 (-1)
Alignment unaligned	Languages understands Primordial	

those without cover. These dwarves suffer various levels of madness, so they might take reckless actions.

**Earth Elementals:** These elementals block easy access to the riverbank, trying to keep the characters from the river's far side. Once the characters make it to the other riverside, the elementals focus on defending the acolyte.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright daylight.

**Bushes:** A square containing one of these plants is difficult terrain and lightly obscured.

**Fallen Logs:** These rotting tree trunks are difficult terrain and high enough to provide cover.

**Rocks:** This rubble is difficult terrain.

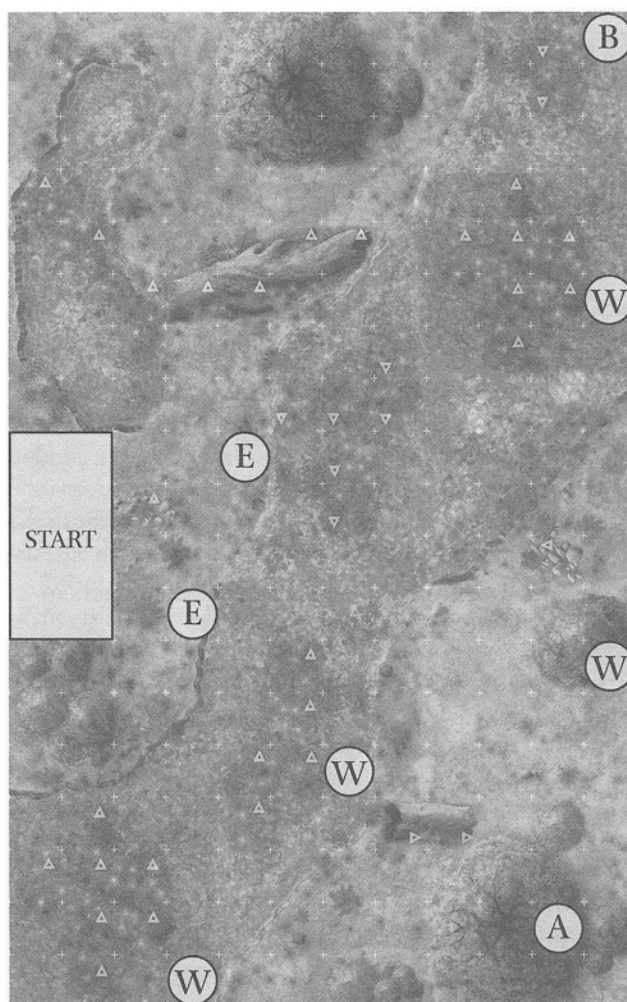
**Trees:** The larger trees are 20 feet tall, and the smaller one near the center edge of the map is 10 feet tall. Their trunks are blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 8). Above half a given tree's height, thick leaves render the tree's area lightly obscured.

**Water:** The river is difficult terrain at the edges and where otherwise noted. It is 5 feet deep in squares that touch no land and have no difficult terrain symbol.

## Conclusion

With the defeat of the dwarves, the characters are free to proceed toward the badlands to the south and Sunset Shrine somewhere within.

**Prisoners:** If the characters capture any dwarves, they prove uncooperative. They are fanatic cultists and quite insane, willing to die for the cause. At first they



try to pass themselves off as ordinary bandits, but if pressed (Intimidate check or Diplomacy check DC 19), they start to rave about the end of the world and how the Sabraks are destined to gain a better position in the world to come. They can reveal the same information Jakairn did, but they make much less sense while doing so. They claim to worship Ghaunadaur.

**Religion DC 12:** Although Ghaunadaur loves the suffering of all living creatures, he has no doctrine that might lead his followers to seek the end of the world.

## Reward

Each character gains 400 XP for questioning Jakairn, deciding what to do with the infected, and dealing with the cultists.

**Treasure:** The dwarves carry valuables worth 25 gp per character. One of these items is a silver necklace with a rough symbol like that of Ghaunadaur, an eye within a left-handed spiral (Religion DC 8 to identify; DC 19 to see that the spiral is symbolically significant, suggesting a different cult or religion). The acolyte also carries one random magic item (see page 2).

## SESSION 3:

# THE HILLS HAVE EYES

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor hired the characters to investigate rumors of an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting.
- ◆ A cult of Ghaunadaur, greater god of oozes and aberrant creatures, seems to be responsible for the plague in Easting.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague after a battle in the village.
- ◆ Jakairn, a cultist captured in the same battle, revealed the location of the cult's temple, the Sunset Shrine, in the badlands south of Easting.
- ◆ Insane dwarven cultists attacked the characters in the badlands.

**When the players are ready, read:**

*Beyond the river valley are rocky badlands. Only tough grass and thorny bushes grow here. Gullies form twisted paths among boulders, some rocks as big as houses. The sun is slowly moving toward the west.*

## Skill Challenge: Navigating the Badlands

This challenge begins once the characters enter the badlands in search of the Sunset Shrine. Characters try to pick a path through the harsh environment while tracking their assailants at the river back to the shrine. Rough terrain forms a natural maze.

**Complexity:** 2 (6 successes before 3 failures).

**Time Frame:** Each successful scene represents about 1 hour of interaction and travel. Failed scenes take at least twice as long.

## Crossing the Distance

Tell the players that traversing this terrain requires group Endurance checks.

**Endurance (DC 12; group check):** During each scene in which the characters have yet to succeed on the skill challenge, the characters must attempt this check in addition to the checks in the scene. Each character makes an Endurance check. The party gains one success or can cancel one failure if at least half the checks are successful.

## Scene 1: Broken Path

Wide canyons and treacherous boulder fields make up the outskirts of the badlands. The characters come upon a rough ravine they must traverse.

**Nature (DC 12):** The character studies the landscape and picks the likeliest path for traversing the

gorge safely. This check does not count as a success or failure on the skill challenge.

**Acrobatics or Athletics (DC 19; DC 12 if the Nature check succeeded):** The character leads the way along the roughest terrain, preparing the way for others. One character can use Acrobatics or Athletics to assist this leader. If this check is a failure, any character who fails his or her group Endurance check loses 1 healing surge to minor injuries.

## Scene 2: Keeping the Trail

After the ravine, the characters must attempt to find the cultists' trail again, and keep it.

**Nature (DC 19):** The geography holds clues for the likeliest and safest path, but the valleys of the rough hills offer numerous choices. This check does not count as a success or failure on the skill challenge.

**Perception (DC 19; 12 if the Nature check succeeded):** The character successfully finds the tracks of the cultists. A successful check indicates the characters quickly find the trail and make good progress. If this check is a failure, the characters lose time searching for the tracks.

## Scene 3: High View

The characters arrive atop a ridge of bare rock near the middle of the badlands between Easting and the Sunset Shrine. The cultists' trail is cold here, but visible from the viewpoint are the black rock spires that make up the Teeth of Ghaunadaur.

**History (DC 19):** The character identifies the Teeth accurately from old legends. This check does not count as a success or failure on the skill challenge.

**Nature (DC 19; DC 12 if the History check succeeded):** The character picks the likeliest path to continue toward the hidden temple. If this check is successful, after about an hour, the party comes across the cultists' camp from the night before (see below). A failed check indicates the characters wander and back-track until the discovery of the dwarves' camp puts them back on the right path.

**Deserted Campsite:** Remains of a small fire, food scraps, a nearly empty bottle of dwarven whiskey, and a wooden holy symbol of Ghaunadaur can be found. The symbol is an eye within a left-handed spiral (Religion DC 8 to identify; DC 19 to see the spiral is symbolically significant, suggesting a different cult or religion). Tracks and signs indicate about half a dozen dwarves stayed here about a day ago.

## Scene 4: Odd Hermit

Deep in the badlands, the party runs into a hermit that has been secretly watching the party. This hermit is a galeb duhr, a Medium elemental creature that looks like a humanoid boulder (Arcana DC 12 to identify). It burrows out of the ground and speaks—preferring



Dwarven or Giant to Common—starting with how curious it is that so many fleshy humanoids are in the badlands.

**Attack:** The galeb duhr scoffs at hostility, suggesting the characters are no better than the others scouting the area. It burrows away. The characters are permitted the Stealth check only if they suggest it after this cryptic warning.

**Converse:** The hermit is willing to talk. It asks why the characters are here. If the characters are friendly, the galeb duhr reveals that “crazed” dwarves recently captured its friend, a human male named Malgrym. The dwarves live in an old temple not far away. However, between the characters and the black spires above the temple, drow are scouting the area and spying on the dwarves. The drow and dwarves are hostile, so avoiding them (using Stealth) is wise.

If the characters already have six successes, they have earned the galeb duhr’s respect. The creature describes the best approach to the drow camp, and the skill challenge is a success. Otherwise, after alerting the characters to the drow, the galeb duhr burrows away.

**Stealth (DC 12; group check):** With foreknowledge of the drow, the characters know to use Stealth in this section of the journey. Each character attempts a Stealth check, taking a -2 penalty to the check if the party is carrying a light source. The party gains one success if at least half the checks are successful.

## Finishing the Trip

Repeat group Endurance and Stealth checks until the challenge is a success or failure.

**Success:** The adventurers find a good path, traversing stealthily through the night. They spot the drow camp before being seen. Go to the **Hostile Strangers** tactical encounter, page 18, and use the Skill Challenge Success section of that encounter.

**Failure:** Each character loses 1 healing surge to the hard journey. The adventurers stumble onto the drow camp. Go to the **Hostile Strangers** tactical encounter, page 18, and use the Skill Challenge Failure section.

## Talking to the Drow

Characters can talk to the drow only after the tactical encounter concludes with one or both drow alive. See the **Hostile Strangers** tactical encounter’s Development section.

The drow are spying on the High Road and the Trader’s Road. Zarnak’s cultists are a distraction, and the drow have taken the time to look in on them only because Ghaunadaur seems to be involved. These two Lolth worshipers despise those who revere That Which Lurks. Once the characters make the drow talk, either one gladly gives directions to the temple entrance nearby. Both know the cult consists mostly of mad dwarves under the leadership of dwarven spellcasters

of some sort. The cultists have elemental allies, as well as the aid of strange goblins that have elemental powers related to earth.

The characters might realize, through Insight (see Related Skill Checks below) or Chalindra’s journal (see page 19), that the drow are doing more than watching the Sabrak dwarves. If pressed and at the characters’ mercy, they reveal that they’re also spying on the trade routes and military strength in the area. They don’t know how their superiors might use this information.

The drow desire to go free. They do what they need to do to convince the characters to let them go.

**Chalindra:** This female drow is, as is typical of her people, arrogant and sexist against males. She prefers to address other females. Aggressive, cruel, and predatory, Chalindra cannot resist speaking in a way that disturbs surface dwellers.

**Tebrizz:** This male drow is stoic and disciplined. He respects strength, but he is prone to bloodlust. In any discussion, he is straightforward. A bodyguard and servant, he defers to Chalindra if she is conscious.

**Related Skill Checks:** Using the following skills might grant the characters more information.

**Arcana DC 12:** The goblins sound like norkers, goblinlike creatures who come from the Elemental Chaos. Norkers do indeed have elemental powers.

**Insight DC 19:** The drow are hiding something. Although they clearly dislike the cultists, the drow are also flippant about the cult—too dismissive for the cultists to be their real target.

**Religion DC 12:** Lolth worshipers hate those who revere Ghaunadaur because That Which Lurks is the last of an entire pantheon of drow deities to escape Lolth’s murder spree among those gods. The greater god of oozes and aberrant creatures fled from the Spider Queen. Drow consider him and his followers to be cowards.

## Teeth of Ghaunadaur

At the conclusion of the session the characters take their first look at the Teeth of Ghaunadaur and the entrance to the Sunset Shrine.

### When this happens, read:

*Dark needlelike rock spires, like fangs or tentacles, flank a muddy expanse and a hole of worked stone that should lead to the Sunset Shrine. The few plants that grow in the area are twisted and thorny, looking more like skeletal hands reaching from the grave.*

After this session, characters can camp safely nearby and take an extended rest, sleeping through the night and replenishing expended resources before entering the Sunset Shrine. Those who have lesser abyssal plague must make an Endurance check for the disease (see page 5).

# HOSTILE STRANGERS

Encounter Level 3

## Skill Challenge Success

If the characters succeeded on the skill challenge, they spot the drow camping at the bottom of a gulch before the dark elves spot them.

### When this happens, read:

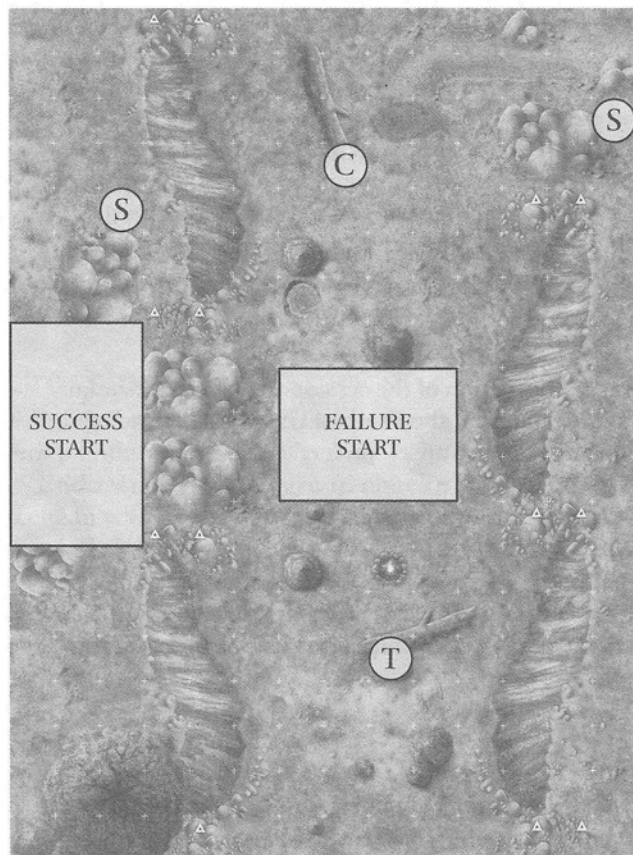
A short distance ahead, at the bottom of a small canyon, is the light of a campfire. A lithe male drow with long hair is cooking, while a scarred female with short hair watches from a nearby log. Neither has noticed you.

**Perception DC 19:** A couple spiders lurk about the camp like watchdogs.

If the characters fail to spot the spiders at first, the adventurers gain a +2 bonus to Perception checks to locate the spiders during combat. The party begins the encounter in the Success Start area.

## Skill Challenge Failure

Characters who fail in the skill challenge blunder into the camp. Tebrizz spots them approaching, and he and Chalindra quickly prepare for combat.



### When this happens, read:

The trail leads into a shallow canyon containing the remains of a campsite. As you note the fire pit is still warm, two drow rush you.

Characters begin in the Failure Start area.

## Setup

**Chalindra (C)**

**Tebrizz, drow scout (T)**

**2 ambush spiders (S)**

Place the monsters and the characters as you describe the scene according to the skill challenge results.

Chalindra (C)	Level 3 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium fey humanoid, drow	
HP 92; Bloodied 46	Initiative +4
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +3
Speed 6	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
<b>Spider Exhortation</b>	
Allied spiders have combat advantage against any enemy that Chalindra is adjacent to.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Whip (weapon)</b> ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d4 + 5 damage, and Chalindra knocks the target prone or slides it 1 square.	
⚔ <b>Attack Command</b> ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Effect: Close burst 5 (one spider ally in the burst); the target can make a basic attack as a free action.	
⚔ <b>Double Action</b> ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Effect: Chalindra uses whip once and attack command once, or she uses whip twice.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
☁ <b>Cloud of Darkness (zone)</b> ♦ <b>Encounter</b>	
Effect: Close burst 1. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Chalindra's next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight for all creatures except Chalindra. While entirely within the cloud, any creature other than Chalindra is blinded.	
Skills Athletics +8, Nature +8, Stealth +9	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 15 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 12 (+2) Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment evil	Languages Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, whip	

## Tactics

The drow despise surface dwellers, but they do not really consider the characters to be enemies. Both save their action point until after they are bloodied. See the Development section for how combat might end.

**Drow:** Tebrizz focuses on sturdy-looking melee combatants, trying to keep them away from Chalindra and the spiders. Chalindra stays close to the spiders, directing the arachnids while keeping enemies prone or sliding them into thorn bushes.

<b>Tebrizz, Drow Scout (T)</b>	<b>Level 2 Elite Skirmisher</b>
Medium fey humanoid	
<b>HP 78; Bloodied 39</b>	<b>Initiative +6</b>
<b>AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 14</b>	<b>Perception +8</b>
<b>Speed 6</b>	<b>Darkvision</b>
<b>Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1</b>	
TRAITS	
<b>Combat Advantage</b>	
If Tebrizz deals damage to a creature granting him combat advantage, that creature also takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Longsword</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.	
⚔ <b>Short Sword</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
⚔ <b>Blade Mastery</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Effect: Tebrizz uses <i>longsword</i> once and <i>short sword</i> once.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
☞ <b>Darkfire</b> ♦ <b>Encounter</b>	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of Tebrizz's next turn.	
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +9, Athletics +7, Stealth +9	
<b>Str</b> 12 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+4) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+3)
<b>Con</b> 15 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+2) <b>Cha</b> 10 (+1)
<b>Alignment</b> evil	
<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, longsword, short sword	

**Spiders:** The spiders circle their targets, trying to outflank opponents and attack from hiding.

## Development

If both spiders die and the drow are bloodied, the dark elves try to withdraw. Bloodied drow might yield or cease hostilities for parley if the characters succeed on an Intimidate check for surrender (DC 19) or Diplomacy check for negotiations (DC 12). If the adventurers talk to the drow, see the Talking to the Drow section on page 17.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light if the campfire is lit. Dim moonlight otherwise.

**Boulders:** These rocks are blocking terrain that is 5 feet high (Athletics DC 8 to climb). The tops of the rocks are difficult terrain.

**Campfire:** A creature that starts its turn in this fire's square takes 3 fire damage.

**Fallen Logs:** These rotting tree trunks are difficult terrain and high enough to provide cover.

**Ridges:** These bluffs are 10 feet high (Athletics DC 8 to climb). Creatures descending the ridges treat the squares as difficult terrain.

**Mud, Rubble, or Water:** Squares containing these obstacles are difficult terrain.

**Thorn Bushes:** A square containing one of these plants is difficult terrain and lightly obscured. A

<b>2 Ambush Spiders (S)</b>	<b>Level 2 Lurker</b>
Medium natural beast (spider)	
<b>HP 28; Bloodied 14</b>	<b>Initiative +8</b>
<b>AC 16, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13</b>	<b>Perception +8</b>
<b>Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb)</b>	<b>Tremorsense 5</b>
TRAITS	
<b>Camouflage</b>	
The spider can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has cover or concealment instead of needing superior cover or total concealment.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Bite</b> ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	
⚔ <b>Venomous Bite</b> (poison) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature the spider is hidden from); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).	
<b>First Failed Saving Throw:</b> The target is immobilized instead of slowed and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).	
<b>Special:</b> When charging, the spider can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.	
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +9, Stealth +9	
<b>Str</b> 13 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+4) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+3)
<b>Con</b> 10 (+1)	<b>Int</b> 4 (-2) <b>Cha</b> 7 (-1)
<b>Alignment</b> unaligned	
<b>Languages</b> –	

creature that leaves a thorn bush square must spend 2 squares of movement to do so or take 3 damage.

**Tree:** This dead tree is 30 feet tall. Its trunk is blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 8).

## Conclusion

In the campsite, the adventurer's discover a journal written in coded Elven. Its owner, Chalindra, is not identified by name. Although the journal defies complete study for now, translatable bits and drawings within reveal that the drow are watching traffic on the High Road and the Trader's Road, especially military movement from Cormyr and merchant caravans. The journal also makes it clear that the drow have been spying on the cultists in the Sunset Shrine. The exact location of the old temple is on a map within.

Once the characters have had a chance to deal with the drow, look at the journal, and collect treasure (see below), return to the Teeth of Ghaunadaur section (page 17).

## Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 350 XP for facing the skill challenge and dealing with the drow. If a player has attended every session this season, his or her character should have 1,000 XP and advance to level 2.

**Treasure:** Chalindra and Tebrizz each have a random magic item (see page 2). The drow also have jewelry and valuables worth 30 gp per character.



# CHAPTER 2

Fresh after an extended rest, the characters are ready to enter Sunset Shrine. Most of the characters should have 1,000 XP and, therefore, be level 2.

## SESSION 4: SUNSET SHRINE

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ♦ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate rumors of an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult of dwarven Ghaunadaur worshipers is responsible for spreading the plague.
- ♦ Characters might have contracted the plague after a battle against plague demons in Easting.



- ♦ Jakairn, a cultist captured in the same battle, revealed the location of the cult's temple, the Sunset Shrine in the badlands south of Easting. He might have provided more information on entering the temple. If half or more of the players remember learning the pass phrase, the party has that phrase, which is "That Which Lurks devours all."
- ♦ The trail to the temple was far from safe. Characters had a clash with cultists and a run-in with a couple of drow scouts.
- ♦ The adventurers found Sunset Shrine but have not investigated its entrance.

### When the players are ready, read:

*In daylight, the Teeth of Ghaunadaur still look like tentacles but seem less threatening. Between them, on the highest ground, is a hole of worn worked stone and a stairway leading downward. Surrounding terrain otherwise consists of dusty ground, rubble, a few thorny bushes, and three muddy pools.*

**Arcana DC 13 (Detect Magic):** The area between the spires is faintly magical, perhaps some weak defensive magic.

**Perception DC 20:** A soft breeze occasionally blows through, but the light wind disturbs nothing near the hole, as if the wind refuses to enter the circle of spires.

The characters must move closer to learn more.

## Dusty Signs

The elementals that guard this area have left indications of their activity that the characters can use as a warning.

**Perception DC 13:** Wind has violently scoured areas of the ground and vegetation. (Success on this check allows the following Arcana check and Nature check.)

**Arcana DC 13:** An elemental or other supernatural creature could produce such a scouring with an explosive burst power. That power could catch several creatures in it if those creatures were close together. (The area is a burst 3.)

**Nature DC 13:** The scouring looks like a sudden and localized burst of air. Such a burst of air is not a natural occurrence, and it could be very dangerous to creatures in a tight group. (The area is a burst 3.)

## Teeth of Ghaunadaur

Seven twisted black rock spires—three pairs, each joined at the base, and one single spire—surround the shrine entrance. Each spire is roughly 30 feet tall, is weathered smooth, and ends in a point like a rocky tentacle. Despite appearances, these formations are normal stone.

## Temple Entrance

Worn black stone forms the entrance and stairs into the shrine. Crude weathered carvings adorn the walls, all of the images too vague to have clear meaning, although one shows a setting sun. Down the stairs are closed doors of the same black stone.

The following skills can be used on the stairway, but if any character enters the stairway, see the Elemental Danger section below.

**Arcana DC 13 (Detect Magic):** The entrance has a magical aura, probably magical defenses of some kind.

**Arcana DC 20 (Detect Magic):** A glyph, visible only as a magical aura, is on the doors. It likely has a bypass, such as a password or pass phrase, that allows passage.

**Perception DC 9:** This stairway has been used extensively and recently. Tracks of Medium and Small humanoids can be found, as well as the wheel tracks of carts. The tracks go in and out.

## Elemental Danger

As soon as a character enters the stairway, the **Elemental Guardians** tactical encounter (page 22) begins. The elementals ignore Zarnak and his cultists, but not intruders such as the adventurers.

## Pools

Mud in the pools is gray and very sticky—it smells of rotten eggs. Each pool is about 2 feet deep.

**Perception DC 13:** Mud from these pools has been splattered around the area as if something threw globs of it in various directions. (Success on this check allows the following Arcana check and Nature check.)

**Arcana DC 13:** This mud is elemental in nature. It could even be or contain a creature, which could have thrown mud as the splattering indicates.

**Nature DC 13:** The mud is too shallow, still, and cool to hide pockets of gas or hot water that might explain the splattering in a natural way. Besides, the size of these splattered globs is too consistent to be natural.

**Disrupting the Pools:** If the characters start filling the pools with rubble or otherwise seriously disrupt them, proceed with the **Elemental Guardians** tactical encounter (page 22).



# ELEMENTAL GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 2

## Setup

- 1 dust devil (D)
- 1 lesser air elemental (E)
- 3 mud men (M)
- 1 thunder glyph (trap)

The dust devil is very dangerous. If you have a weak party or wish to make the encounter less challenging, remove the dust devil instead of another elemental.

The characters start wherever is logical for their actions leading up to the beginning of the encounter.

### When the encounter begins, read:

*A gust of wind swirls dust and shakes leaves. Mud in the pools bubbles. The wind dies suddenly, but a dust devil and whirling wind, both with glowing eyes, remain. With a wave of sulfur stench preceding them, humanoids made of mud rise from the pools nearby. These creatures also have glowing eyes.*

Dust Devil (D)	Level 3 Skirmisher
Small elemental magical beast (air, earth)	
HP 47; Bloodied 23	Initiative +7
AC 18, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +0
Speed 8	
Immune disease, poison	
TRAITS	
<b>Speed Demon</b>	
The dust devil takes a -2 penalty to all defenses while it is slowed or immobilized.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ <b>Grasping Winds</b> ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the dust devil slides the target up to 2 squares.	
⚡ <b>Stinging Sands</b> ♦ Encounter	
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d6 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the dust devil's next turn.	
Miss: Half damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
↓ <b>Gale Blast</b> ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞	
Effect: The dust devil shifts up to 5 squares. Each time it moves adjacent to an enemy for the first time during the move, it makes the following attack against that enemy.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target falls prone.	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 8 (+0)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 8 (+0)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 5 (-2) Cha 15 (+3)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Primordial

Lesser Air Elemental (E)	Level 1 Lurker
Small elemental magical beast (air)	
HP 23; Bloodied 11	Initiative +7
AC 15, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +5
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover)	
Vulnerable 5 fire	
TRAITS	
<b>Phantom in the Wind</b>	
The lesser air elemental becomes invisible whenever it starts its turn without an enemy adjacent to it. The invisibility lasts until the end of its next turn or until it hits or misses with an attack.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ <b>Slam</b> ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage.	
⚡ <b>Grasp of Storms</b> ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature that can't see the elemental); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the elemental grabs the target (escape DC 12) if it does not have a creature grabbed. Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage, and any ranged or melee attacks that hit the elemental deal half damage to the target.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 17 (+3) Wis 11 (+0)
Con 11 (+0)	Int 5 (-3) Cha 8 (-1)
Alignment unaligned	Languages understands Primordial

3 Mud Men (M)	Level 2 Brute
Medium elemental magical beast (earth, water)	
HP 43; Bloodied 21	Initiative +2
AC 14, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 13	Perception +7
Speed 5 (swamp walk)	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
TRAITS	
<b>Relentless Assault</b>	
The mud man gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against slowed or immobilized creatures.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ <b>Slam</b> ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.	
⚡ <b>Mud Ball</b> ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the mud man's next turn. If the target is already slowed, it is immobilized until the end of the mud man's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
<b>Amorphous Body</b> ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The mud man is hit by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The mud man shifts up to 3 squares.	
Skills Stealth +7	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 13 (+2) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 6 (-1) Cha 8 (+0)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Primordial

## Tactics

The elementals are simple creatures, summoned and bound to guard the shrine against intrusions.

**Dust Devil:** This elemental opens with *stinging sand*. Then the dust devil uses *grasping wind* to slide enemies into mud pools or thorn bushes, or down the stairs.



**Lesser Air Elemental:** This elemental uses *phantom in the wind* combined with *grasp of storms* until it grabs an opponent. It then tries to sustain the grab and pummel its victim to death.

**Mud Men:** These elementals prefer melee combat, focusing on those in or near the mud. If unable to reach an opponent, a mud man uses *mud ball*.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright daylight.

**Fallen Logs:** These rotting tree trunks are difficult terrain and high enough to provide cover.

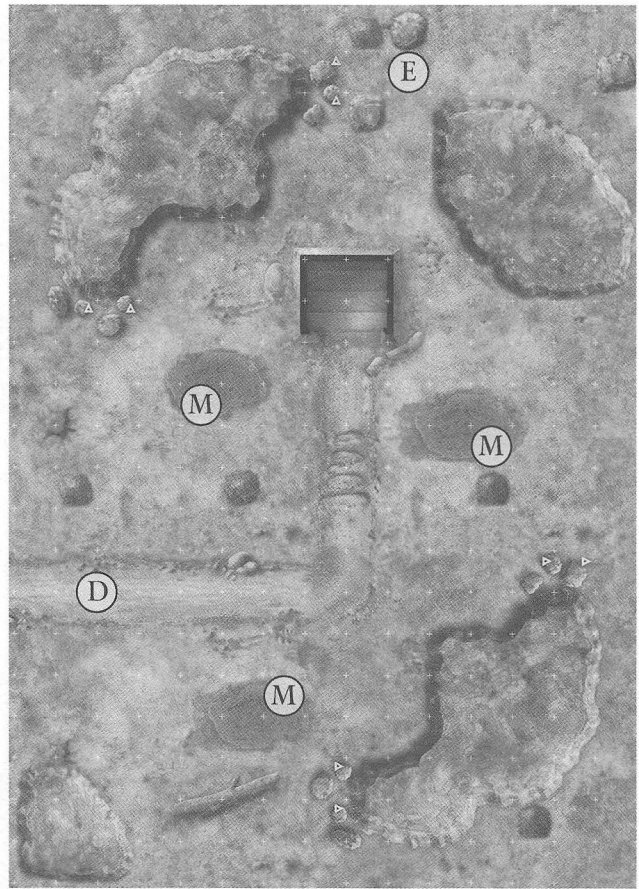
**Mud Pools:** The mud is 2 feet deep, and it is difficult terrain to any creature without swamp walk. If the dust devil starts its turn in the mud, it is slowed and can shift only 2 squares with *gale blast* until the start of its next turn.

**Rocks and Rubble:** These squares are difficult terrain.

**Stairs:** This stairway leads 10 feet underground, a fall from the side farthest from the path. The stairs are steep and rough enough to be difficult terrain.

**Shrine Doors:** At the bottom of the stairs the doors are locked (Arcana DC 20 to open; Athletics DC 20 to break; Thievery DC 13 to open mechanically). Safe entrance can be gained only through use of the proper pass phrase, which the characters might have learned from Jakairn. Ask the players if they know a special way to access the entrance. If one or more players know the pass phrase (“That Which Lurks devours all”), the characters can use the phrase.

Using the phrase unlocks the doors without a problem. However, if the adventurers fail to use the phrase and open the doors, a thunder glyph goes off.



## Conclusion

With the defeat of the elementals, the characters are free to open the temple entrance. See the shrine doors in the Features of the Area section.

### When the characters open the doors, read:

*With a grinding noise, the stone double doors open. Dry air rushes out, carrying the stinging smell of smoke. A wide corridor leads steeply down into the darkness. Its floor and ceiling are smooth, and statues fill niches intermittently along its length. The statues look like normal humanoid warriors at first glance, but something is odd about every one of them—bulging eyes, tentacles as a beard, ooze dripping from the skin, and so on.*

## Reward

For defeating the elementals, exploring the area, and opening the doors into the Sunset Shrine, each character gains 275 XP.

**Treasure:** The bodies of the mud men contain bones and other debris. One also contains a random magic item (see page 2), revealed after the creature is destroyed.

Thunder Glyph	Level 2 Trap
Detect Arcana DC 20 (detect magic)	
Immune all damage and conditions	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚡ Thunderous Blast (thunder) ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: A creature opens the warded doors without first using the proper pass phrase or disabling the glyph.	
Attack: Close burst 5 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 10 thunder damage, and the target falls prone.	
Miss: Half damage.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
♦ Pass Phrase: The proper pass phrase disables the glyph.	
♦ Disable: A DC 20 Arcana or Thievery check made from a square adjacent to the doors disables the glyph. Failure (15 or lower): The glyph makes its attack.	

**Thorn Bushes:** A square containing one of these plants is difficult terrain and lightly obscured. A creature that leaves a thorn bush square must spend 2 squares of movement to do so or take 3 damage.

**Teeth of Ghaunadaur:** These rocky spires are blocking terrain about 30 feet high. They narrow as they rise. The spires can be climbed (Athletics DC 20).

## SESSION 5: VISIONS OF DOOM

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ♦ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate rumors of an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult is responsible for spreading the plague.
- ♦ Characters might have contracted the plague after a battle against plague demons in Easting.
- ♦ A cultist captured during the same battle revealed the location of the cult's temple in the badlands south of Easting.
- ♦ The characters found the temple entrance and fought its elemental guardians. A doorway into the shrine now stands open.

### As the characters traverse the hallway, read:

*Statues in this smooth hallway become less humanoid and more aberrant as the hall proceeds steeply downward. The smell of smoke becomes stronger, and the flickering light of a large fire comes from ahead.*

Zarnak's oracular visions and the message from Jakairn have allowed the cultists to prepare for intruders. The party cannot surprise the mad dwarves.

### As the characters enter the first area, read:

*Two flaming vortices light the room. Piles of rubble indicate the remains of fallen pillars, and soot covers everything in the area. The room has several exits, most of which are closed double doors.*

*Between the roiling fires stands a tall dwarf in yellow robes. Flames dance over his skin and wild red hair.*

*At the back of the room, wooden scaffolds hold up platforms upon which dwarves wielding crossbows take aim at you. Fire in small braziers illuminates the platforms.*

*Between the platforms is an iron portcullis closing off a passageway similar to the one you're in. Behind the gate stands a red-haired dwarf in purple robes. He says, "Your arrival has been foretold."*

The robed dwarf is Zarnak Sabrak. Allow the adventures to talk with him. Clearly insane, Zarnak taunts and goads the party, but his mad ramblings make little sense. If the characters fail to initiate combat within a few exchanges, Azryg, the yellow-robed dwarf, attacks while complaining that everyone talks too much. When combat begins, proceed with the **Outer Annex** tactical encounter (page 26).

## Sunset Shrine Utility Areas

Foul-smelling braziers dimly illuminate most areas.

### 1. Blocked Corridor

The massive block drops from the ceiling to block this passage and cover Zarnak's escape (see page 27).

### 2. Dungeon

*Rusty doors set with tiny shuttered windows are barred from the outside. From one of these cells a desperate male voice shouts, "Help me! Don't leave me! I know things, terrible things. I can help you! Please!"*

A malnourished, dirty human man begs for release from one of the middle cells. Opening the barred doors from the outside is easy. If the characters open the door to his cell, he faints in relief. He bears the scars and wounds of torture. Magical healing or a successful Heal check (DC 13) can revive him.

This prisoner is Malgrym, a hermit who lived in the wilderness near Easting. When awakened, Malgrym raves madly about the Amorphous One, a monstrous blue ooze that guards the way deeper into the temple. The ooze "sleeps in the form of the high altar in the Great Shrine." He also whispers about what he calls the "Black Cyst," where he saw the mad dwarf seer stirring a red mass flecked with silver and gold. The entrance to the Black Cyst is "beyond the Great Shrine and through the black obelisk."

If released, Malgrym makes his way out of the shrine. If the characters refuse to check on the prisoner after the tactical encounter, the session ends.

**Torture Room:** At the end of the hall is a room with cages, a torture rack, and a basin that has water in it.

### 3. Chapel of Madness

*Tile mosaics depicting dizzying patterns in violet, green, and black cover the walls of this room, at one end of which is a wide depression filled with water.*

The mosaics appear to wriggle and move when stared at; the effect is unsettling but harmless. The 3-foot-deep pool is used for ritual bathing and contains filthy water.

### 4. Study

*Decaying furniture, crumbling papers, and broken containers fill the room.*

The loose papers form a mad treatise on the subjects of oozes and aberrant monsters, but they are not valuable.

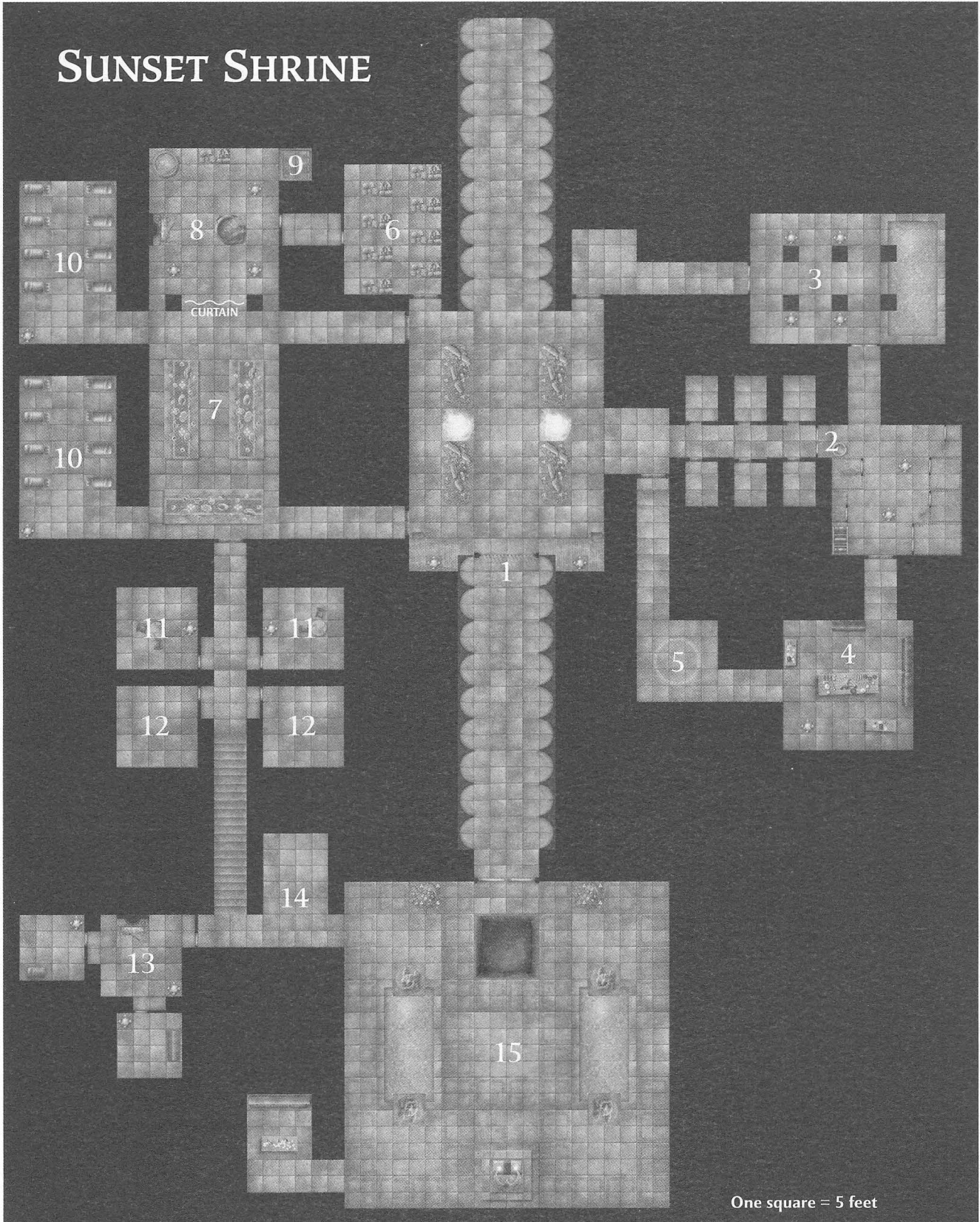
**Treasure:** Characters searching through the debris find a random magic item (see page 2) and a *potion of healing*.

### 5. Rune Circle

A runed circle is imprinted on the floor in glowing script. The circle is used for summoning rituals and has a faint magical aura.



# SUNSET SHRINE



One square = 5 feet



# OUTER ANNEX

## Encounter Level 3

### Setup

Azryg Sabrak (A)

Zarnak Sabrak (Z)

2 Sabrak bolters (B)

4 Sabrak warriors (see Tactics)

4 Sabrak norkers (see Tactics)

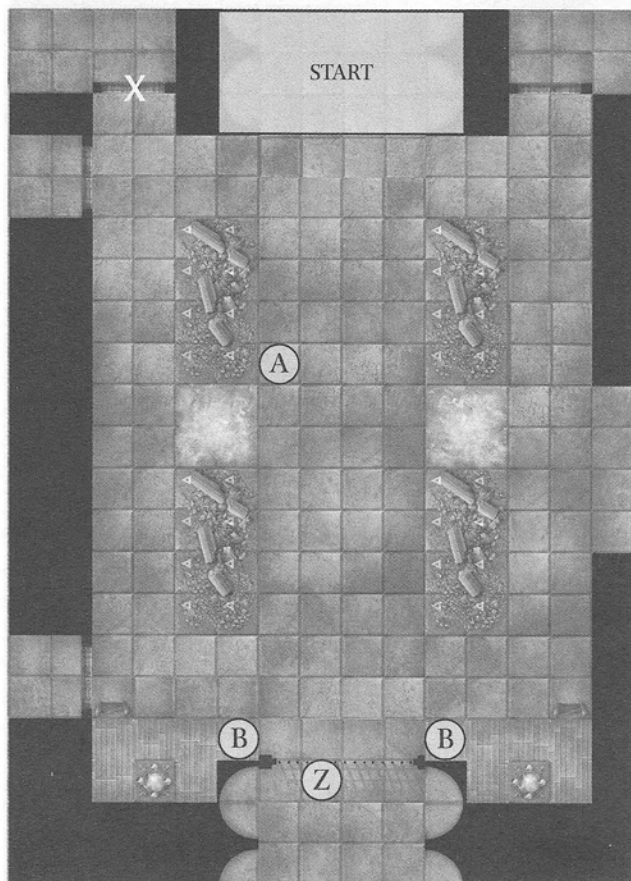
Characters begin in the start area shown unless role-playing indicates a character is somewhere else.

### When the minions enter, read:

*Dwarves in chainmail rush into the room from various doors alongside goblins that have gray, rocklike skin. Their wide eyes and bared teeth betray their fanaticism and madness.*

### Tactics

**Azryg:** Azryg uses *wrathful eruption* to drive his enemies toward him, especially if the party is still bunched up in the entry hall. He then favors melee, preferably from a position from where he can slide foes into a fire vortex and use the fires to teleport. When bloodied, he flies into a rage, growing in size but losing most of his tactical reasoning. Azryg fights until slain.



### Azryg Sabrak (A)

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

### Level 3 Elite Controller

HP 94; Bloodied 47

Initiative +4

AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 14

Perception +7

Speed 5 (earth walk)

Low-light vision

Resist 5 fire (10 fire while bloodied)

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

#### TRAITS

☼ **Flamerage Aura** (fire) ♦ **Aura 1**

While Azryg is bloodied, any enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage.

#### Stand the Ground

Azryg can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

#### Steady-Footed

Azryg can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ **Flaming Fist** (fire) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage plus 1d4 + 3 fire damage, and Azryg can slide the target 1 square.

⚔ **Fiery Flurry** (fire) ♦ **At-Will**

Effect: Azryg uses *flaming fist* twice. If he hits two different targets, he can slide one of them 1 extra square.

☼ **Wrathful Eruption** (fire, thunder, zone) ♦ **Encounter**

Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + 2 fire damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: The burst creates a zone of thunder that lasts until the end of Azryg's next turn. Enemies in the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. Any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 5 thunder damage.

#### MOVE ACTIONS

🔥 **Fiery Transport** (fire, teleportation) ♦ **Recharge** ☼ ☼ ☼

Requirement: Azryg must be adjacent to or in the area of a fire.

Effect: Azryg teleports to a space adjacent to or in the area of a fire. Each enemy adjacent to him when he arrives in his new space takes 5 fire damage.

#### TRIGGERED ACTIONS

🔥 **Flamerage** (fire, polymorph) ♦ **Encounter**

Trigger: Azryg is first bloodied.

Effect (No Action): Azryg's size becomes Large. He pushes each creature occupying a square of his new space to a square adjacent to his new space, and each such creature takes 5 fire damage. His melee reach increases by 1. Azryg remains Large until the end of the encounter.

Str 12 (+2)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 10 (+1)

Cha 8 (+0)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages Common, Dwarven, Primordial

Equipment robes

**Zarnak:** The mad seer retreats deeper into the shrine. When he does, a huge stone block drops into place just beyond the portcullis, blocking the passage to the Great Shrine. Zarnak attacks only if an enemy comes within range and uses his action point to retreat. See page 47 for Zarnak's statistics.

**Sabrak Bolters:** The bolters stay on their respective platforms and target enemies with their crossbows.

**Sabrak Warriors and Norkers:** On the first round, two minions enter through each entryway except the

2 Sabrak Bolters (B)	Level 2 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 33; Bloodied 16	Initiative +4
AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +5
Speed 5	Low-light vision
<b>TRAITS</b>	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The bolter can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The bolter can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
<b>STANDARD ACTIONS</b>	
⚔ <b>Warhammer</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage.	
🔮 <b>Crossbow</b> (psychic, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 1d6 psychic damage if the target has no cover.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 8 (+0)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment evil	Languages Common, Dwarven
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts	

doors in the west corner of the north wall and the portcullis (marked **X**). The minions leave doors open. They help Azryg gain combat advantage, and they try to impede those who advance on the bolters.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light (fire and braziers).

**Entrance Corridor:** The entrance corridor (start area) leads up steeply. Line of effect from this hallway into the chamber can be gained only while standing in squares within the start area.

**Fire Vortices:** Any creature entering a fire vortex or ending its turn there takes 5 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Portcullis:** The steel portcullis provides partial cover and is locked in place (Athletics DC 25 to force open). The bars of the portcullis have 6-inch gaps between them.

**Rubble:** This debris is 3 feet high and is difficult terrain. It can provide cover.

**Wooden Platforms:** A wooden ladder leads to each of these 10-foot-high platforms. Neither platform is built well (Dungeoneering DC 9), and the supports can be pulled down (Athletics DC 13 as a standard action, DC 20 as a minor action). If a platform falls, so does any creature on it, and its space becomes difficult terrain.

## Conclusion

The cultists are fanatics, but a successful Intimidate check or Diplomacy check (DC 20) can force one of them to reveal the general layout of the shrine. All of them worship a being they call the Elder Elemental Eye. None of the characters is familiar with this entity.

4 Sabrak Warriors	Level 1 Minion Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
<b>TRAITS</b>	
<b>Dwarf Solidarity</b>	
The warrior gains a +4 bonus to Fortitude and Will while adjacent to a dwarf ally.	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The warrior can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The warrior can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
<b>STANDARD ACTIONS</b>	
⚔ <b>Warhammer</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage, or 6 damage while the warrior is adjacent to a dwarf ally.	
🔮 <b>Crossbow</b> (psychic, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage, plus 2 psychic damage if the target has no cover.	
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 16 (+3) Wis 8 (-1)
Con 15 (+2)	Int 10 (+0) Cha 12 (+1)
Alignment evil	Languages Common, Dwarven
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts	

4 Sabrak Norkers	Level 2 Minion Brute
Small elemental humanoid	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +2
AC 14, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
<b>STANDARD ACTIONS</b>	
⚔ <b>Battleaxe</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage plus 1 extra damage per norker ally adjacent to the target.	
<b>TRIGGERED ACTIONS</b>	
⚡ <b>Elemental Rebuke</b> ♦ <b>Encounter</b>	
Trigger: An enemy reduces the norker to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (triggering enemy in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 6 damage.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 12 (+2) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 17 (+4)	Int 6 (+0) Cha 7 (+0)
Alignment evil	Languages Common
Equipment battleaxe	

**Malgrym:** Once the battle concludes, the prisoner in area 2 (see page 24) shouts for help.

## Reward

Each character gains 350 XP for defeating Azryg and his servants.

**Treasure:** Azryg carries iron keys that open the locked doors to areas 6 and 13. In addition, the monsters here have valuables worth 20 gp per character.

## SESSION 6: EXPLORING THE SHRINE

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate rumors of an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult is responsible for spreading the plague.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague after a battle against plague demons in Easting.
- ◆ A cultist captured during the same battle revealed the location of the cult's temple in the badlands south of Easting.
- ◆ The characters found the shrine entrance, fought through temple guardians, and explored some of the temple interior.
- ◆ Adventurers might have interacted with captured cultists and/or Malgrym, a prisoner in the temple. From such sources, they might have learned about the Great Shrine and its guardian (a "blue ooze"), the Black Cyst, and the source of the abyssal plague. Ask if the players know anything extra about the temple, and assume the party knows what the players know.

The session starts with the characters in the Outer Annex, ready to explore the rest of the shrine.

### Wandering Cultists

When Zarnak learned of the characters' approach, he redeployed his followers—dwarves and norkers—to the Outer Annex, the Great Shrine, and the Temple of the Eye, leaving the rest of the shrine empty. Some of the cultists ignored his orders. Overestimating their abilities, these bold cultists are about to confront the adventurer invaders.

At some point during the exploration, a group of four Sabrak norkers and four Sabrak warriors ambush the characters. Statistics for these creatures can be found in the **Outer Annex** tactical encounter, page 26. The encounter can occur in the Outer Annex, for which you have the battle map, or in one of the other areas. The minions come out of hiding, potentially surprising the characters.

If captured alive, the cultists know the same information as the other cultists, as revealed in the Conclusion section of the **Outer Annex** tactical encounter (page 27).

## Sunset Shrine Living Areas

See page 25 for an overview map. Foul-smelling braziers provide dim lighting in most areas.

### 6. Storage Room

The doors to this room are locked (Strength DC 20 or Thievery DC 13 to open). The characters might have found a key to the door on Azry's corpse in Session 5.

*Crates, barrels, and large sacks fill this room, as does the smell of blood. The butchered carcasses of a goat and several pheasants dangle from ceiling hooks.*

A search of the area shows that the cult is well supplied, although the food and drink are simple fare. Other provisions include a stack of blankets, a crate filled with various clothing, and an assortment of tools.

**Treasure:** Characters searching the supplies find a *potion of healing*, 40 arrows, 100 crossbow bolts, 2 sunrods, and 50 feet of silk rope.

### 7. Dining Room

*Three large wooden tables with benches alongside them dominate the area. Dirty dishes crowd the tables; food scraps and small bones litter the floor. Some dishes are moldy, and the area smells of rotten food.*

There's nothing of value here.

### 8. Kitchen

*A large hearth filled with warm embers stands against one wall near a raised well, and a large cauldron rests in the middle of the room. Nearby is a small pile of crates and barrels. Set into the floor of an alcove is a rotting trap door. A foul stench issues from it.*

The well water is fresh and clean. The cauldron is filled with cold, meaty stew, the crates hold foodstuffs, and the barrels contain ale. The trap door covers a refuse pit (see area 9).

### 9. Garbage Pit

*Odors of rot and waste wafts from this dark hole. Within is a deep hollow filled with a heap of garbage crawling with vermin.*

The pit is 20 feet deep and covered in slime (Athletics DC 20 to climb the pit's sides).

Any creature that stands on the rotten trap door has a 1-in-6 chance of falling through. A fall deals no damage but covers the creature in slimy filth. Nothing of worth can be found within the garbage.





## 10. Dwarf Quarters

Eight bunks line the walls. A wooden chest stands at the foot of each bunk.

The chests have no locks.

**Treasure:** The chests contain clothing and various valuables, such as coins and ivory smoking pipes, worth 15 gp per character per room.

## 11. Meeting Rooms

A couple wooden chairs and a single table furnish the room. The odor of pipeweed lingers in the air, and the table has games of chance upon it.

One room has a set of dice made of knucklebones, a deck of Three-Dragon Ante cards, and a dagger in it. The other has a marked deck of cards (Perception DC 20 to notice they're marked) and a tiny wooden box of pipeweed.

## 12. Norker Barracks

The smell of wet earth comes from the soil covering the floor in this room. Shallow depressions have been dug in the dirt. Clothes are piled in a corner.

Each of these areas is the sleeping quarters for norkers (Perception DC 9 to see their small tracks), and the depressions are their sleeping areas (Arcana DC 13 to know that norkers like to sleep in soft earth). A quick count reveals about eight sleeping places per room. The clothes are mostly simple tunics and simple trousers.

**Treasure:** Each room contains 5 gp per character in copper coins, silver coins, and various shiny baubles.

## 13. High Priest Quarters

The outer door to this suite is locked (Strength DC 20 or Thievery DC 13 to open). The characters might have found a key to the door on Azryg's corpse in Session 5.

A hearth warms this otherwise featureless room. Two unlocked doors lead to a modest bedchamber and a room containing a wooden cabinet.

The bed is covered with animal furs.

**Treasure:** The cabinet contains dwarven clothing, a decanter filled with water, bottles of fine dwarven whiskey worth 10 gp per character, and a random magic item (see page 2).

## 14. Vestry

This room is empty. From here, the characters hear gurgling water within the Great Shrine to the east.

**Perception DC 13:** The scraping sound of steel boots indicates creatures in the large room to the east.

## The Great Shrine

If the characters enter this area, run the **Great Shrine Guardians** tactical encounter on page 30.

# GREAT SHRINE GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 2

## Setup

- 1 Sabrak acolyte (A)
- 2 Sabrak templars (T)
- 1 Sabrak bolter (B)
- 4 Sabrak norkers (N)

The adventurers might try to sneak through the vestry to attack with surprise. To do so, each character must attempt a Stealth check (DC 16). If half or more of the characters succeed, the party gains a surprise round.

### When the characters can see into the area, read:

Two wide pools of filthy water dominate this vast room, one pool on each side of a gaping pit. Tall green statues with water trickling from their mouths flank the basins, and a massive altar of blue stone rests on a 3-foot-high stone dais.

A band of well-armed dwarves and gray-skinned goblins wait here, ready for battle.

Sabrak Acolyte (A)		Level 3 Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf		
HP 39; Bloodied 19	Initiative +1	
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 16	Perception +6	
Speed 5	Low-light vision	
TRAITS		
<b>Stand the Ground</b>		
The acolyte can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.		
<b>Steady-Footed</b>		
The acolyte can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚔ <b>Burning Warhammer</b> (fire, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d10 damage plus 1d6 + 2 fire damage.		
⚡ <b>Mind Lightning</b> (lightning) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 1d12 + 4 lightning damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the acolyte's next turn.		
⚡ <b>Earth Stomp</b> ♦ <b>Recharge</b> when first bloodied		
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 1d12 + 4 damage, and the acolyte slides the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.		
Effect: The acolyte or one ally in the burst slides 1 square.		
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +7		
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 10 (+1)	Wis 10 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 13 (+2)	Cha 17 (+4)
<b>Alignment</b> chaotic evil <b>Languages</b> Common, Dwarven		
<b>Equipment</b> robes, warhammer		

2 Sabrak Templars (T)	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 48; Bloodied 24	Initiative +3
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 16	Perception +5
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
☠ <b>Insane Focus</b> (fear, psychic) ♦ <b>Aura</b> 1	
Enemies in the aura cannot shift. If an enemy is in the aura and marked by the templar, and that enemy makes an attack that does not include the templar as a target, the enemy takes 5 psychic damage.	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The templar can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The templar can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Warhammer</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage, and the templar can push the target 1 square. The templar can then shift 1 square into the square the target vacated.	
Effect: The templar marks the target until the end of the templar's next turn.	
⚡ <b>Chaos Lure</b> (psychic) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: 1d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the templar pulls the target up to 3 squares.	
Effect: The templar marks the target until the end of the templar's next turn.	
<b>Lure and Smash</b> ♦ <b>Recharge</b> ☠ ☠	
Effect: The templar uses <i>chaos lure</i> and then uses <i>warhammer</i> . If the templar hits the same target with both attacks, the templar also knocks the target prone.	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 10 (+1)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 8 (+0)
	Cha 16 (+4)
<b>Alignment</b> chaotic evil <b>Languages</b> Common, Dwarven	
<b>Equipment</b> plate armor, heavy shield, warhammer	

## Tactics

These mad creatures fight to the death. Characters who capture and question one of the dwarves can learn that Zabrak fled to "the lower temple" via a secret stairway beneath the altar, using the pass phrase "Amorphous One, show me the way!" (see **Session 7: Shrine Guardian**, page 32, for more information). They don't reveal that the altar is alive, and they don't know that the pass phrase no longer works.

**Sabrak Acolyte:** This female dwarf babbles and brags during the fight. She prefers using *mind lightning* against ranged attackers. To escape melee attackers, she employs *earth stomp*.

**Sabrak Templars:** These insane troopers use *chaos lure* to pull opponents into the room. They use *lure* and *smash* to keep melee characters away from the artillery.

**Sabrak Bolter:** This dwarf keeps behind cover to snipe at ranged attackers from relative safety. He prefers targets that have no cover.

**Sabrak Norkers:** These crazed creatures work alongside the templars as impediments to the party's

Sabrak Bolter (B) <span style="float: right;">Level 2 Artillery</span>	
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	
HP 33; Bloodied 16	Initiative +4
AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +5
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
<b>Stand the Ground</b>	
The bolter can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
<b>Steady-Footed</b>	
The bolter can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Warhammer</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage.	
🏹 <b>Crossbow</b> (psychic, weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 1d6 psychic damage if the target has no cover.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 8 (+0)
	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common, Dwarven	
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts	

4 Sabrak Norkers <span style="float: right;">Level 2 Minion Brute</span>	
Small elemental humanoid	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +2
AC 14, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ <b>Battleaxe</b> (weapon) ♦ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage plus 1 extra damage per norker ally adjacent to the target.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚡ <b>Elemental Rebuke</b> ♦ <b>Encounter</b>	
Trigger: An enemy reduces the norker to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (triggering enemy in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 6 damage.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 12 (+2)
Con 17 (+4)	Int 6 (+0)
	Wis 11 (+1)
	Cha 7 (+0)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common	
Equipment battleaxe	

advance. They aim to provide combat advantage for each other and the templars.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Oil lamps dangling from the ceiling provide bright light.

**Altar:** Ambient temperature drops around this altar. Any character that starts his turn adjacent to or on the altar takes 5 cold damage (the cultists are immune).

**Pit:** This gaping pit is 10 feet deep (Athletics DC 13 to climb), and old humanoid bones litter the bottom. A creature falling into the pit takes 1d10 damage.

**Pools:** Slimy water (2 feet deep) fills these basins. The pools are difficult terrain.

**Rubble:** These heaps of rock (broken statues) are difficult terrain and high enough to provide cover.

**Statues:** A green film covers each of these hollow statues. The film is actually dried and dead green slime (Dungeoneering DC 13 to identify). Each statue is carved to look like a human partly devoured by the slime, its graven visage frozen in terror. Water issues from natural springs below the statues and trickles from their gaping mouths into the pools.

**Study:** This side room is detailed in the next session.

## Conclusion

**As the battle ends, read:**

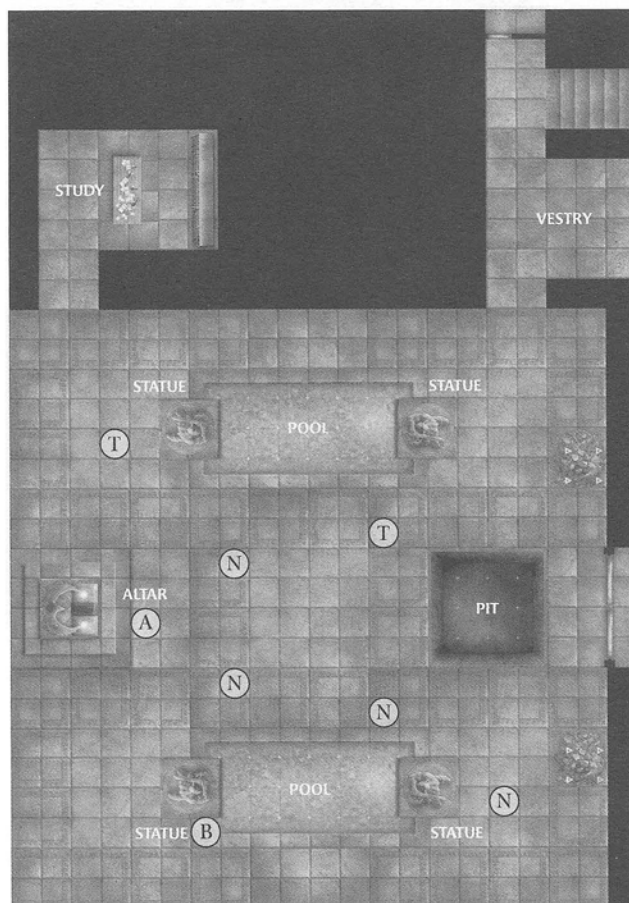
*With the last defenders defeated, an eerie silence falls.*

Further exploration of the Great Shrine is handled in the next session.

## Reward

Each character gains 275 XP for exploring the Sunset Shrine and defeating the cultists.

**Treasure:** The guardians have 30 gp per character in valuables. See also areas 6, 10, 12, and 13 for other treasure the characters might find while exploring the various side chambers.





## SESSION 7: SHRINE GUARDIAN

The session begins where the previous session left off, with the characters having defeated the guardians in the Great Shrine. As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult is spreading the plague.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague after a battle against plague demons in Easting.
- ◆ A cultist captured during the same battle revealed the location of the cult's temple in the badlands south of Easting.
- ◆ The characters found the shrine entrance, fought through temple guardians, and explored the temple to its center. In the central shrine, the characters must find an entrance to the inner temple and the source of the plague. They might have clues to what awaits them from interacting with Malgrym, a prisoner, or captured cultists.



Ask the players what they know of the temple, and allow them to use what they know. If they know little or nothing, the party knows that the source of the plague must be deeper in the temple, so this shrine is likely to have a secret entrance to a deeper level.

### When you're ready to start, read:

*The room is silent. Palpable dread and frigid air pours forth into the area from the massive blue altar.*

The adventurers are free to explore. Allow the players to place their miniatures where their characters are exploring so that you know where everyone is when the tactical encounter begins.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Oil lamps dangling from the ceiling provide bright light.

**Altar:** Ambient temperature drops around this altar. Any character that starts his turn adjacent to or on the altar takes 5 cold damage (the cultists are immune). See Investigating the Altar, below, for more information.

**Pit:** This gaping pit is 10 feet deep (Athletics DC 13 to climb), and old humanoid bones litter the bottom. A creature falling into the pit takes 1d10 damage.

**Pools:** Slimy water (2 feet deep) fills these basins. The pools are difficult terrain.

**Rubble:** These heaps of rock (broken statues) are difficult terrain and high enough to provide cover.

**Statues:** A green film covers each of these four figures. The film is actually dried and dead green slime (Dungeoneering DC 13 to identify). Each statue is carved to look like a human being devoured by the slime, its graven visage frozen in terror. Water issues from natural springs below the statues and trickles from their gaping mouths into the pools.

**Study:** This room contains a rotting desk and decrepit bookshelf. Characters searching the desk find a *potion of healing* and a random magic item (see page 2) amid worthless papers and sundry items.

## Investigating the Altar

From a distance, the altar looks like a block of smooth azure rock. Upon closer inspection, it gives the illusion of blue liquid oozing out of the altar and slowly flowing over the perfectly cut stone. The altar and the air around it are unpleasantly cold.

**Arcana DC 13 (Detect Magic):** The altar radiates a strong magical aura of protective magic, such that any creature that gets too close takes cold damage.

**Perception DC 9:** Under the altar, the floor is worn, indicating the altar has been moved in the past. It is likely to be hollow underneath.

**Worshipping at the Altar:** If a character bows to the altar or otherwise shows reverence, that character gains resist 5 cold until he or she actually takes 1 or more cold damage. (This boon explains why the cultists were immune to the altar's cold damage in the previous encounter.)

**Moving the Altar:** The cultists use a pass phrase to open the altar ("Amorphous One, show me the way!"), but when Zarnak triggered the temple's defenses he cut off use of the phrase. Now the only way to open the secret passage is to push the altar aside. If the characters try to do so, however, the altar, which is actually a monstrous ooze, awakens and attacks. When this happens, proceed with the **Amorphous One** tactical encounter on page 34.



# AMORPHOUS ONE

Encounter Level 3

## Setup

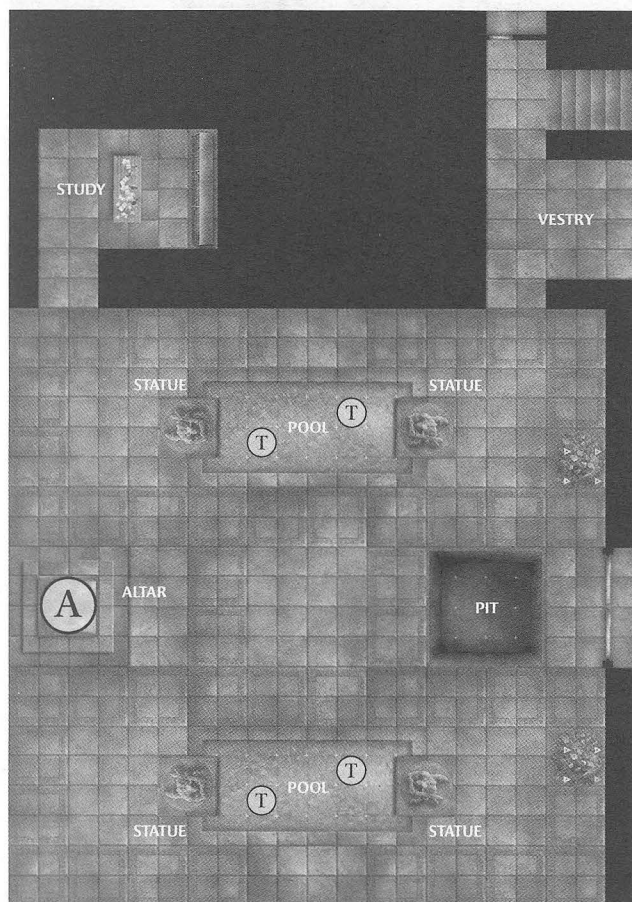
**Amorphous One, azure jelly (A)**  
4 water tentacles (T)

For a party of four, reduce the Amorphous One's hit points by 55, have *cold snap* recharge only when the ooze is first bloodied, and ignore its *icy blood* power. If the party is having a hard time, use *instinctive rampage* less often than once per round.

For a party of six or a skilled group of players, increase the jelly's hit points by 45, have *cold snap* recharge on 5 and 6, and consider adding one or two more water tentacles.

### When the ooze awakens, read:

With a flash of blue light and a rush of blood-chilling wind, the room's temperature drops to below freezing. Walls of ice spring up to seal off the exits as the altar swells and rounds, taking on the form of a blue ooze that utters something in a horrifying language. From the pools spring giant translucent tentacles of water.



## Amorphous One, Azure Jelly (A) Level 3 Solo Brute

Large aberrant beast (blind, ooze)

HP 188; Bloodied 94

Initiative +3

AC 15, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Perception +2

Speed 5 (ice walk)

Blindsight 10

Immune blinded, dazed, gaze effects; Resist 5 cold;

Vulnerable 10 fire

Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2

### TRAITS

#### ☼ Freezing Mist (cold) ♦ Aura 1

Enemies in the aura cannot shift. An enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 cold damage.

#### Instinctive Rampage

On an initiative of 10 + the jelly's initiative check, the jelly can move up to its speed as a free action. The jelly can move through enemies' spaces and gains resist 5 to all damage during the move. Each time the jelly enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, it can use *slam* against that enemy, but if the jelly hits, it does not grab the target. If the jelly cannot use a free action due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of the jelly making this move.

#### Ooze

While squeezing, the jelly moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.

#### Pulling Grab

The jelly can attempt to move a grabbed target as part of any action during which the jelly also moves.

### STANDARD ACTIONS

#### ⬆ Slam (cold) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 4 cold damage, and the jelly grabs the target (escape DC 13).

#### ⬇ Lash ♦ At-Will

Effect: The jelly uses *slam* twice.

#### ↔ Cold Snap (cold) ♦ Recharge [1]

Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + 4 cold damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of its next turn.

### TRIGGERED ACTIONS

#### Chilling Feedback (cold) ♦ At-Will

Trigger: The jelly takes damage during its turn.

Effect (Free Action): Each creature grabbed by the jelly takes 5 cold damage.

#### Icy Blood ♦ Encounter

Trigger: The jelly is first bloodied.

Effect (No Action): *Cold snap* recharges, and the jelly uses it.

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 14 (+3)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 3 (-3)

Cha 3 (-3)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages Deep Speech

### If a character speaks Deep Speech, read:

The ooze says, "I hunger!"

**Arcana DC 13:** The water tentacles can be banished with an Arcana or Religion check. They can also be physically destroyed.

**Dungeoneering DC 13:** The ooze is resistant to cold and vulnerable to fire.



Walls of ice seal off the exits, trapping the characters in the shrine. (Assume that the walls of ice form just beyond the edges of the map.) The room becomes painfully cold (see Features of the Area, below), and cold resistance granted from worshipping at the altar applies.

Place the ooze and the tentacles, roll initiative, and begin combat. Any adventurer standing in the ooze's space when it awakens and attacks is pushed into a random square adjacent to the ooze.

4 Water Tentacles (T)	Level 2 Minion Trap
Object	
<b>Detect</b> automatic	<b>Initiative</b> +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 16, <b>Fortitude</b> 12, <b>Reflex</b> 14, <b>Will</b> 13	
<b>Speed</b> 2	
<b>Immune</b> cold, poison, all conditions, ongoing damage	
<b>TRAITS</b>	
<b>Poolbound</b>	
A water tentacle cannot leave its pool. If forced out of its pool, it is destroyed instantly.	
<b>Watery Form</b>	
When the tentacle takes damage from an attack that does not deal force damage or is not a critical hit, it can make a saving throw to reduce the damage to 0.	
<b>STANDARD ACTIONS</b>	
⬇ <b>Slam</b> (cold) ⬆ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 5 cold damage, and the tentacle slides the target up to 3 squares.	
<b>COUNTERMEASURES</b>	
⬆ <b>Destroy:</b> Arcana or Religion (standard action from up to 5 squares away): DC 13 destroys 1 tentacle in range, DC 20 destroys 2 tentacles in range. <i>Failure</i> (8 or lower): A tentacle uses <i>slam</i> as a free action.	

## Tactics

**Amorphous One:** This ooze uses *instinctive rampage* to maneuver itself into a position where it can hit as many opponents as possible with *cold snap*. It then remains close to as many enemies as possible to better leverage its aura, attacks, and *instinctive rampage*. If it can, the jelly moves so enemies attacking it in melee are within reach of the water tentacles.

**Water Tentacles:** These weird constructs target the closest enemies and slide them into the pit or pull them into the pools. As if part of the Amorphous One's consciousness, the tentacles work to tactically aid the gigantic ooze, hauling opponents closer to the ooze or opening space for the jelly to move. Remaining water tentacles disappear as soon as the Amorphous One dies.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Oil lamps dangling from the ceiling provide bright light.

**Dais:** This dais is 3 feet high. In its center, a stone spiral staircase leads down into the darkness. An ice wall (see below) blocks the stairs.

**Ice Walls:** These walls seal off the shrine exits until the Amorphous One is slain. Each wall is 1 foot thick (AC/Reflex 2; Fortitude 20; 100 hp; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, and ongoing damage).

**Pit:** This gaping pit is 10 feet deep (Athletics DC 13 to climb), and old humanoid bones litter the bottom. A creature falling into the pit takes 1d10 damage.

**Pools:** Cold water (2 feet deep) fills these basins. The pools are difficult terrain, and any creature that ends its turn in one takes 5 cold damage.

**Rubble:** These heaps of rock (broken statues) are difficult terrain and high enough to provide cover.

**Statues:** A green film covers each of these four figures. The film is actually dried and dead green slime (Dungeoneering DC 13 to identify). Each statue is carved to look like a human being devoured by the slime, its graven visage frozen in terror. Hollows inside each statue indicate that each was some sort of fountain, but they are no longer functional.

**Study:** See page 32 for details.

## Conclusion

**When the Amorphous One dies, read:**

*The massive ooze turns solid, like dark ice, and then shatters. It leaves behind an immense blue jewel. The unnatural cold subsides, and the ice blocking the exits and covering a spiral staircase in the dais melts. The stairs lead down into a dark hole that has strange whispers emanating from it.*

The adventurers have accessed the secret passage to the Temple of the Eye—the heart of the shrine and the birth site of the abyssal plague.

Characters can take an extended rest at this time. Those who have lesser abyssal plague must make an Endurance check for the disease (see the progression, page 5).

## Reward

For battling the Amorphous One and finding the entrance to the Temple of the Eye, each character gains 350 XP. If a player has attended every session this season, his or her character should have 2,250 XP. That character now advances to level 3.

**Treasure:** The aquamarine gem inside the ooze is worth 100 gp per character. Characters can also find treasure in the study (see page 32).

# CHAPTER 3

Fresh after an extended rest, the characters are ready to enter the Temple of the Eye below the Great Shrine. Most of the characters should have 2,250 XP and, therefore, be level 3.

## SESSION 8: GRIP OF MADNESS

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult is spreading the plague.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague after a battle against plague demons in Easting.
- ◆ A cultist captured during the same battle revealed the location of the cult's temple in the badlands south of Easting.
- ◆ The characters found the shrine entrance, fought through temple guardians, and explored the temple to its center. There, the adventurers defeated all the guardians and descended a spiral staircase leading to the lower temple.

**When you're ready to start, read:**

*Down the spiral staircase the meaningless but maddening whispers grow louder. The stair emerges from the center of the ceiling into a small room. Black stone makes up the walls here, and four hallways lead away from this chamber.*

## Skill Challenge: Maze of Madness

The characters' first objective is to reach the Temple of the Eye, but first they must navigate a confusing maze.

The session begins in the maze's entrance chamber, which is described in the read-aloud text above but for which there is no map. Four tunnels lead from this chamber, and each one is keyed to a specific element (air, earth, fire, or water).

This skill challenge consists of a sequence of scenes that deal with specific parts of the maze and different sets of skills. Although specific skills are noted, allow players to be creative with solutions and the skills their characters use.

**Complexity:** Special—see the **Temple of the Eye** tactical encounter, page 38.

**Time Frame:** Each scene represents a few minutes of exploration or travel in the maze.

## Scene 1: Choose the Path

**When the characters inspect the four tunnels that lead from the maze's entrance chamber, read:**

*Each hallway looks the same—dark and full of gibbering whispers. The only differences exist in the symbol above each door: an eye within a left-handed spiral, but each has a different symbol as a pupil.*

**Arcana DC 9:** The pupils are twisted elemental symbols representing air, earth, fire, and water.

**Arcana DC 13:** The perverse nature of each symbol leads one to consider the negative aspects of each element. Air is invisible, fleeting, and has a love for rumor and falsehoods. Earth is unforgiving and unyielding. Fire is cunning, hot, and destructive. Water is cold and dark, yielding but smothering.

If the party also succeeded on the DC 13 Religion check and knows of the Elder Elemental Eye, the adventurers can infer that these symbols might denote evil servitors of the Elder Elemental Eye.

**Dungeoneering DC 21:** The passages turn in such a way to suggest they must eventually intersect. This room is likely to be the heart of a spiraling maze. It's unlikely to matter which entrance the party chooses. Success on this check forewarns the adventurers that they're entering a maze, granting the characters a +2 bonus on all checks in scenes other than this one.

**Religion DC 13:** The eye symbols are like those of Ghaunadaur, but the spiral is not usually part of his symbol. If the characters know the cultists worship the Elder Elemental Eye, they can deduce that this is that being's symbol.

**Choosing a Path:** The adventurers can follow one or more tunnels. Note the elements of the paths they choose, and proceed with Scene 2.

## Scene 2: Elemental Madness

*Within the hallway, the whispering grows louder and begins to make sense. It speaks of power and the glory of the elements. Sensations begin to engulf you . . .*

Exact sensations depend on the element chosen. Air creates the feeling of falling. With earth comes the impression of being crushed. Fire feels searing hot. A sense of drowning overwhelms the group that picked water. The sensation accompanies the need of the characters to orient themselves and navigate the maze. Use the element to help you describe the trip.

Ask each player how his or her character moves through the maze, deals with the elemental madness, or helps others do so, and then have each character make an appropriate skill check. For instance, one character might attempt to negate the adverse effect using Arcana while another uses Endurance to resist it. An adventurer can try to bolster his or her comrades using Diplomacy. Any character who succeeds on a DC

21 check reduces the group's Insight check DC by 2, effectively making it easier for everyone to navigate the maze. If the party split into smaller groups in Scene 1, a character can only reduce the group check DC for his particular group.

After each character has made a check as described above, have each group make a group Insight check.

**Insight DC 13 (Group Check):** Each adventurer must make this check. If more than half the characters in the group fail the check, every character in the group loses 1 healing surge. Continue with Scene 3 after the group check is made.

### Scene 3: Elemental Hazard

If the adventurers are together in one group, they come to a 30-foot-wide room containing an elemental hazard. If they split into multiple groups back in Scene 1, each separate group must confront its own hazard.

Ask each player how his or her character deals with the hazard, and then have each character make an appropriate skill check. For instance, one character might try avoiding the hazard using Acrobatics, while another might use Perception to discern a safe path. Any character who succeeds on a DC 21 check reduces the group skill check DC (see below) by 2, effectively making it easier for everyone to avoid the hazard. If the party split into smaller groups in Scene 1, a character can only reduce the group check DC for his group.

**Group Check (see below):** The relevant skill depends on the group's chosen element, and every group member must make this check. If more than half the characters in the group fail the check, every character in the group loses 1 healing surge. Continue with Scene 3 after the group check is made.

#### Air

*The sound of howling wind comes from ahead, and you soon arrive at a ledge overlooking a large room. The ledge is high above the jagged floor, and thin wooden pillars provide stepping-stones to a closed door on the other side. Wind blows through the chamber from unexpected directions.*

**Nature DC 21 (Group Check):** The characters ride the wind gusts to safety.

#### Earth

*A grinding sound comes from ahead, and you soon stand at the edge of a large room. The only exit is a closed door across the cracked floor from the entrance. Large boulders move across the floor, grinding into one another, blocking easy access to the other side of the room.*

**Dungeoneering DC 21 (Group Check):** The characters navigate a safe path across the grinding boulders.

#### Fire

*A crackling sound comes from ahead, and you soon stand at the edge of a large room. Glowing coals cover the floor. A smoky haze fills the air but does not obscure the closed door on the other side of the chamber. Coals closest to you are brightest, as if reacting to your presence.*

**Stealth DC 21 (Group Check):** The characters cross the room without causing the coals to flare.

#### Water

*The sound of a waterfall comes from ahead, and you soon stand at the edge of a large room. Water spouts from the floor upward before rushing toward a great whirlpool in the chamber's center. The water and mist does not obscure the closed door on the other side of the room.*

**Endurance DC 21 (Group Check):** The characters navigate the currents to cross the room safely.

### Scene 4: Arrival at the Temple

*The whispers gradually fade, and the long dark tunnel ends at a sturdy pair of doors emblazoned with a giant symbol of an unblinking eye.*

Proceed with the **Temple of the Eye** tactical encounter, placing the characters' miniatures outside whichever set of doors is tied to the element (or elements) they chose in Scene 1. The doors are unlocked and open into the temple.

If the party split into multiple groups in Scene 1, have the groups arrive at the temple simultaneously, but don't allow players from different groups to pass information back and forth until the party is reunited.

If any characters lost healing surges in Scene 2 or Scene 3, make sure those losses are recorded before beginning the tactical encounter.



# TEMPLE OF THE EYE

## Encounter Level 3

When the adventurers enter the heart of the temple, they come in through the door associated with their chosen element (see the map), and the room is empty. (If the characters split into smaller groups to navigate the Maze of Madness, each group enters through a different set of doors.) Characters who lost one or more healing surges in the Maze of Madness are tired and confused when they arrive here—see the Setup section.

### When the characters open the doors, read:

Beyond the doors is a large sunken room in the shape of an inverted, three-tier step pyramid with the doors at the top edge and stairs leading down. Each level is about 10 feet deeper than the one above, with a rough, angled slope of black stone between each tier. Basins of fire provide ample light, but a 30-foot-tall obelisk of black crystal in the center of the room reflects none of this illumination. Scaffolding supports a wooden platform that leads from the top tier of the inverted pyramid to the top of the obelisk. Crates and tools lie on the platform and near its supports. Across the room is an altar of black stone, as well as other sets of double doors.

Once the characters enter, they can see the second altar and all the double doors. Ask each player how his or her character explores the room, so you have an idea where each adventurer is when the encounter begins. As soon as anyone touches the obelisk or steps on the lowest tier of the room, the monsters appear.

**Arcana DC 9 (Detect Magic):** The obelisk radiates magic so strong it is almost overwhelming.

## Setup

2 Black Cyst elementals (B)

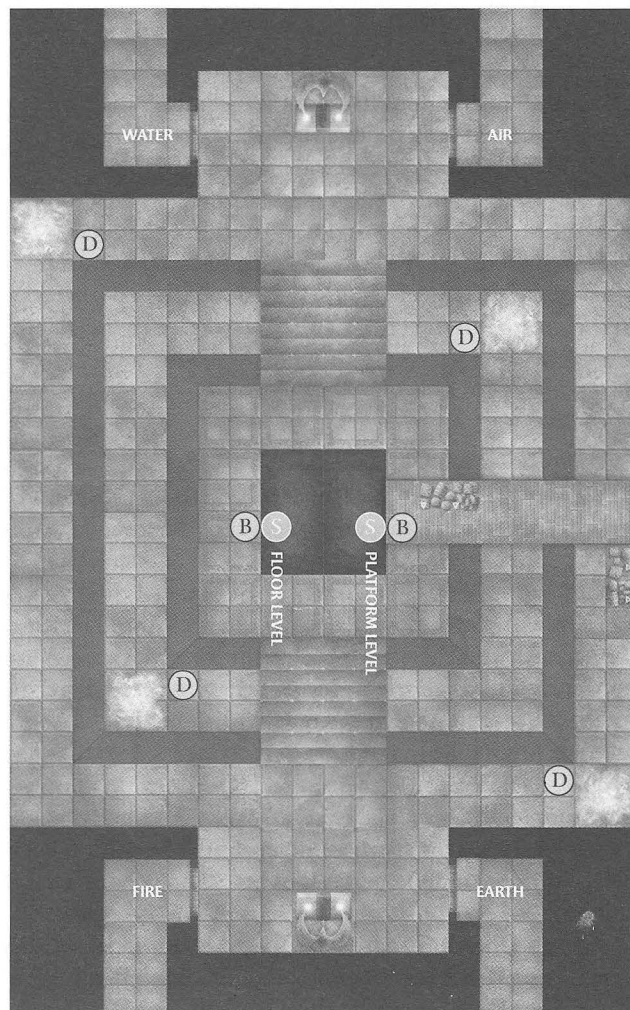
4 plague demon chaos lashers (D)

Do not place the monsters until a character touches the obelisk or steps on the lowest tier of the room.

### When the monsters appear, read:

Whispers fill the chamber, quickly rising to a piercing wail. The fires flicker, and plague demons leap from black portals that appear near the basins. Two creatures of steaming black stone split from the obelisk's massive bulk, each one leaving a shimmering energy, like a magical doorway, behind on the stone from which it emerged.

Begin combat. Any character who lost one or more healing surges in the Maze of Madness grants combat advantage (save ends).



2 Black Cyst Elementals (B)		Level 4 Brute
Medium elemental magical beast (air, earth, fire, water)		
HP 65; Bloodied 32		Initiative +4
AC 16, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15		Perception +6
Speed 5 (7 while charging)		
TRAITS		
☀ Mud Slick ♦ Aura 1		
While the elemental is bloodied, the aura is difficult terrain for enemies, and the elemental can push or slide enemies in the aura 1 extra square.		
Sensitive to Radiant		
Whenever the elemental takes radiant damage, it gains vulnerable 5 to the next attack that hits it before the end of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚡ Slam (fire) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
⚡ Quake Slam ♦ Recharge ☼ ☼		
Effect: The elemental can charge and/or use slam twice. If the elemental hits the same target with both attacks, the elemental can push that target 1 square and knock it prone.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
⚡ Ill Wind ♦ At-Will (1/round)		
Effect: Melee 1 (a creature taking ongoing fire damage); the elemental can slide the target 1 square.		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 8 (+1)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Primordial		

**4 Plague Demon Chaos Lashers (D) Level 1 Skirmisher**

Medium elemental beast (demon)

**HP 30; Bloodied 15****Initiative +5****AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12****Perception +1****Speed 8****Darkvision****TRAITS****Lone Predator**

If the demon hits an enemy that has no other creatures adjacent to it, the demon deals that enemy 1d6 extra damage.

**Pulling Grab**

The demon can attempt to move a grabbed target as part of any action during which the demon also moves.

**STANDARD ACTIONS****⬇ Bite (disease) ♦ At-Will**

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

**Hit:** 1d8 + 4 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts lesser abyssal plague (stage 1).

**⬇ Lashing Assault ♦ Recharge when the demon hits with bite**

**Requirement:** The demon must have no creature grabbed.

**Effect:** The demon shifts up to its speed and makes the following attack at any point during this movement.

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d8 + 4 damage, and the demon grabs the target (escape DC 12).

**MINOR ACTIONS****⬇ Tongue Lash ♦ At-Will**

**Requirement:** The demon must have no creature grabbed.

**Attack:** Melee 2 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** The demon slides the target 1 square.

**TRIGGERED ACTIONS****Variable Resistance ♦ Encounter**

**Trigger:** The demon takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.

**Effect (Free Action):** The demon gains resist 5 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.

**Str 14 (+2)****Dex 17 (+3)****Wis 12 (+1)****Con 14 (+2)****Int 2 (-4)****Cha 10 (+0)****Alignment chaotic evil Languages –**

## Tactics

Creatures here work together poorly. Each monster is inclined to choose its own opponent.

**Black Cyst Elementals:** These creatures charge into combat if they can, then pummel their foes into oblivion. They employ *quake slam* and *ill wind* to hurl foes farther and lower into the room. An elemental can take a move action to teleport from a square adjacent to one shimmering energy portal (see Features of the Area) to a square adjacent to the other.

**Plague Demons:** Like the demons in Easting, these fiends prefer targets uninfected with the plague. Each demon picks an enemy, trying to grab that foe and isolate it. Unlike the demons in Easting, these demons try to kill the intruders from the start.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light.

**Altars:** These stone structures are difficult terrain and provide cover. Any elemental creature standing on or adjacent to an altar deals 3 extra damage on attacks.

**Black Obelisk:** This central black spire is extremely cold. Any non-elemental creature that starts its turn in a square adjacent to the obelisk takes 5 cold damage.

**Shimmering Energy Portals:** Set into the faces of the obelisk, one atop the wooden platform and the other on the lowest tier, are two portals that lead through the obelisk into the innermost sanctum of the temple. While the Black Cyst elementals exist, the characters cannot pass through the portals. After the elementals die, it becomes clear to anyone looking into these portals, as well as anyone trained in Arcana, that the portals are exits from the room.

**Fire Basins:** These four elemental fires burn without fuel. Any creature that enters a square in the fire or starts its turn there takes 5 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Inverted Pyramid Tiers:** From the outside edge of the map toward the black obelisk, each gray area of the map represents a slope to a lower tier. These slopes are rough rock (Athletics DC 9 to climb). A creature that falls down a slope takes 1d6 damage, but the creature can slow its fall, taking no damage, with a successful DC 13 Acrobatics or Athletics check.

**Stairs:** These gradual stairways are normal terrain.

**Storage Containers:** These crates and barrels are difficult terrain that is high enough to provide cover. The containers hold treasure (see Reward below).

**Wooden Scaffolding:** These supports brace the platform that leads from the upper tier of the room to the top of the black obelisk. Scaffolding towers 20 feet above the lowest tier and 10 feet above the middle tier. It can be climbed (Athletics DC 9).

## Conclusion

Once the demons and elementals are defeated, the characters have time to explore the room and search for treasure. To exit the room and proceed to the next encounter, the characters must enter the shimmering energy portals. End the session once all the characters enter the portals.

## Reward

Dealing with the Maze of Madness and the monsters within the Temple of the Eye, and exiting the temple through the portals, earns each character 350 XP.

**Treasure:** Within the storage containers the characters find valuables worth 30 gp per character as well as two *potions of healing* and a random magic item (see page 2).

## SESSION 9: WAKING NIGHTMARE

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult is spreading the plague.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague in Easting or during the last encounter.
- ◆ A cultist captured in Easting revealed the location of the cult's temple.
- ◆ The characters found the shrine entrance, fought through its guardians, and explored the Temple of the Eye.
- ◆ At the end of the last session, the characters entered magical portals in the side of a black stone obelisk.

When the characters pass through the shimmering portals in the Temple of the Eye, they find themselves outdoors, on the road leading to Easting. To reach the Black Cyst, they must find a way to escape from this fiendish dreamscape.

### When you're ready to start, read:

*A wide road leads into Easting's central square, which has a large, tree-shaded pond in the middle. Wooden houses line the streets. A three-story building in the village square looks more like a fortress than a house; a wooden sign showing an ox drinking from a barrel hangs above its main door. Across from it stands a white-plastered temple.*

*Not a soul stirs on the streets. All doors and shutters are closed. The smell of smoke is strong. A building burned to its foundation is the closest structure to the village's edge.*

## Caught in a Mindscape

At first, everything appears to be just like it was in Session 1 in Easting. The village seems slightly more sinister, however. Air is hotter and water is fouler, and shadows move in the characters' peripheral vision.

## Dealing with the Mindscape

The characters are caught in the temple's last line of defense. They are in a twisted mindscape, a vivid and deadly nightmare. Time flows differently here—while the adventurers might sense hours passing, the whole experience takes only a few heartbeats. To escape, the adventurers must deal with the mindscape's aspects and defeat the mind holding the characters here.

**Insight:** Each time the party finishes exploring one of the three sections of the environment other than the Thirsty Ox—see Nightmare Easting below—the characters are entitled to a group Insight check (DC 21). Each area has skill checks associated with it, to be used as

guidelines for roleplaying, and each successful check at the site lowers the group Insight DC by 2. Special actions taken at the site might grant other decreases to the DC.

For example, if the characters explore the Burned Building and succeed on two checks, the group Insight DC becomes 17. If the characters also bury the corpses at the site, the DC becomes 13.

If half or more of the characters succeed on the group Insight check, the check is a success. Each success makes the village seem more sinister like the final description of the Thirsty Ox's barn. Successes and failures also have an effect on the upcoming combat—see the Benefits of Exploration section below and the **Eye of a Nightmare** tactical encounter on page 42.

## Benefits of Exploration

Characters gain benefits in the tactical encounter based on successful group Insight checks. Each effect lasts until the end of the encounter.

**Burned Building:** The characters gain some dream resilience, which takes the form of a +1 power bonus to saving throws.

**Tharizdun's Temple:** The characters gain some mental clarity, which takes the form of a +1 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls.

**Shrine of Hope:** The characters gain some dream endurance, which takes the form of a +1 power bonus to all defenses.

## Nightmare Easting

If the adventurers call out or knock on doors, no one answers. The party can break into any building (Strength DC 21 to break a door or shutters; Thievery DC 13 to pick the lock). In doing so, they find the interior is a blackened husk as if the structure was burned in a fire that did not affect the outside. Blackened bones might be found within, the remnants of former occupants. When the last character leaves such a structure, it collapses as if it were made of ash.

Like in Session 1, four places might be of interest to the characters. These locations are shown in the order the characters reach them on the main road from the outside of the village.

## Burned Building

This ruin is the remains of a large house. Five bodies remain in the debris, and looking on these unburied corpses fills the characters with despair. Pristine digging tools are scattered near the foundation.

**Examining the Building:** Characters can learn the following information.

**Heal DC 13:** None of the dead here were infected with the abyssal plague.



**Insight or Religion DC 13:** A religious or empathic character intuitively feels the dead have received no last rites. Someone might perform such a ceremony.

**Nature DC 13:** The fire did no damage to the other buildings nearby, and it should have. If the characters learn this fact, nearby buildings suddenly “grow” fire damage. One adjacent building collapses as if it burned down instantly.

**Perception DC 13:** Although the fire is recent, no one has approached this building in ages.

**Interring the Dead:** If the characters bury the dead here, making the area more like it is in the real world, the group Insight check DC decreases by 4.

## Tharizdun's Temple

As the characters approach the temple, its walls blacken and deteriorate. Its bowed windows look like screaming mouths. At the front door stands the basalt statue of a faceless, robed male figure with demons cavorting at his feet and a shard of black crystal clutched in his hands.

**Shard:** The shard comes out of the statue easily, but holding it is like grasping ice.

**Arcana DC 13 (Detect Magic):** The shard is faintly magical.

**Sanctuary:** Within the building is an empty, domed place of worship with one other exit. In the center of the floor is a small hole. The shard from the statue's hands fits into this hole.

**Arcana DC 13 (Detect Magic):** The hole has a faint magical aura. If the character has seen the shard's aura, the auras match as might be expected for an item and its receptacle.

**Placing the Shard:** If the characters place the shard into the hole, it grows into a 3-foot-tall replica of the obelisk in the Temple of the Eye. The dome lights with violet radiance, and gibbering whispers fill the air. Doing so also lowers the group Insight check DC by 2.

A booming voice says, “Only the chosen may come before me! The unfit I place on the outside.”

A successful Perception check (DC 13) reveals the whispering makes sense. Each voice says a single word in varying dread tones. “Tharizdun” is that word. A successful History check or Religion check (DC 21) reveals that this name is associated with an isolated demonic cult long ago in Chessenta and more recently in Akanûl.

**Back Courtyard:** The exit in the sanctuary leads back outside into a walled courtyard. Two burned skeletons sprawl here, one wearing scraps of violet robes and the other girded in the blackened and rusted remains of heavy armor. A longsword of unblemished steel remains next to the armored skeleton.

**Heal DC 13:** The robed skeleton, a female human by the looks of the bones, shows signs of the abyssal plague. The other skeleton is of a human male.

## Shrine of Hope

Leaves fall and disintegrate like ash as the characters approach the great oak near the town center. At its foot is a makeshift altar that has a shining plate armor gauntlet on it. The gauntlet is splattered with blood, and a gory dagger rests on the altar alongside black candles that burn with violet flame.

**Examining the Altar:** Characters can learn the following information.

**Arcana DC 13 (Detect Magic):** The candles are magically affixed to the altar. They can be put out only with another successful Arcana check (DC 13). The candles can be removed from the altar easily if they are extinguished. Otherwise, prying a candle from the altar requires a DC 21 Strength check.

**Religion DC 8:** The gauntlet is the symbol of Torm, ruler of Celestia, who is a just and honorable deity of battle. Torm is well known for protecting the cosmos against evil and chaos. The dark candles and bloody sacrifice the dagger implies would be an affront to Torm. These blasphemies should be removed.

**Cleansing the Shrine:** If the adventurers remove the blood, dagger, and candles from the altar, the group Insight check DC decreases by 4.

## The Thirsty Ox

The inn is nothing more than a sealed pile of dark masonry with a false door. A public storage barn is nearby. It's empty unless the party has attempted at least two group Insight checks.

**If the party has attempted these checks, read:**

*The sky turns red. Living plants die and drop their leaves. Buildings have collapsed, noiselessly, between this moment and the last, leaving the village a lifeless ruin. Only the barn that originally housed the sick remains standing. It has no roof, and the upper floor has broken walls. No doors or shutters block the doorways or windows.*

Go to the **Eye of a Nightmare** tactical encounter, on the next page, when the characters arrive at the barn after attempting two or more group Insight checks.

**Passive Perception DC 16:** Prowling boldly among the ruins are small, four-legged, red creatures that have crystalline back spikes and fanged beaks that open sideways.

# EYE OF A NIGHTMARE

## Encounter Level 4

## Setup

**1 demonic nothic mindwarp (N)**

4 plague demon scavengers (S)

4+ plague demon harriers (H)

The nothic is hidden on the barn's top floor, the scavengers approach from off the map, and the minions emerge on their turn (see the Tactics section). Each failure on a group Insight check while exploring the village causes one extra harrier to appear in this encounter. Place the monsters only once they appear.

Characters begin in the Start area.

**When the encounter starts, read:**

*Within the shambles of the barn are ladders to the second floor and stacks of storage containers. Where some of the sick laid in the real Easting are humanoid skeletons that have red, gold-flecked crystal protrusions.*

A shriek erupts from within the barn, and the skeletons start to glow. Small, four-legged, red creatures that have crystalline back spikes and fanged beaks that open sideways emerge from the nearby ruins and rush toward you.

The monsters here are innately aware of approaching intruders, so no side has surprise.

4 Plague Demon	Level 2 Skirmisher (Leader)
<b>Scavengers (S)</b>	
Small elemental beast (demon)	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	Initiative +6
AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +2
Speed 8	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
☼ <b>Blur of Claws</b> ◆ <b>Aura 1</b>	
At the start of the scavenger's turn, any enemy that is in the aura and grants the scavenger combat advantage takes 5 damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ <b>Claw</b> ◆ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts lesser abyssal plague (stage 1).	
⬇ <b>Frenzied Claw</b> ◆ <b>At-Will</b>	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and any other scavenger within 5 squares of the target can shift 2 squares toward the target as a free action.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Scuttle ◆ <b>At-Will</b>	
Effect: The scavenger shifts 3 squares.	
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 16 (+4)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 2 (-3)
	Wis 13 (+2)
	Cha 10 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages –	

<b>Demonic Notthic Mindwarp (N)</b>		<b>Level 4 Lurker (Leader)</b>
Medium aberrant humanoid (demon)		
<b>HP 48; Bloodied 24</b>		<b>Initiative +8</b>
<b>AC 18, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 16</b>		<b>Perception +6</b>
<b>Speed 6</b>		<b>Darkvision, truesight 10</b>
<b>TRAITS</b>		
<b>☼ Bloodletting Soul ♦ Aura 2</b>		
An ally in the aura that is reduced to 0 hit points can make a melee basic attack as a free action.		
<b>Abyssal Vigor</b>		
This creature has 1 action point.		
<b>STANDARD ACTIONS</b>		
<b>Ⓢ Claw ♦ At-Will</b>		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.		
<b>☾ Warping Gaze (illusion, psychic) ♦ Recharge</b> when no creature is affected by this power		
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +7 vs. Will		
Hit: 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends). Until the target saves against this effect, the notthic is invisible to every enemy but the target, and its claw deals 1d6 extra damage to the target.		
Miss: The notthic has partial concealment until the end of its next turn.		
<b>↔ Forbidding Glare (fear, psychic) ♦ Encounter</b>		
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +7 vs. Will		
Hit: 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the notthic pushes the target up to 2 squares.		
Miss: Half damage, and the notthic can push the target 1 square.		
<b>Skills Stealth +9</b>		
<b>Str 16 (+5)</b>	<b>Dex 14 (+4)</b>	<b>Wis 8 (+1)</b>
<b>Con 18 (+6)</b>	<b>Int 8 (+1)</b>	<b>Cha 16 (+5)</b>
<b>Alignment</b> chaotic evil <b>Languages</b> Abyssal, Deep Speech		

### 4 Plague Demon Harriers (H) Level 2 Minion Skirmisher

Small elemental beast (demon)

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6

**AC** 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13 **Perception** +2

**Speed** 7 **Low-light vision**

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

⬇ **Bite** ♦ **At-Will**

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

**Hit:** 5 damage, or 7 damage if the target is granting combat advantage to the demon, and the demon can shift 1 square. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts lesser abyssal plague (stage 1).

**Str** 13 (+2) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+2)

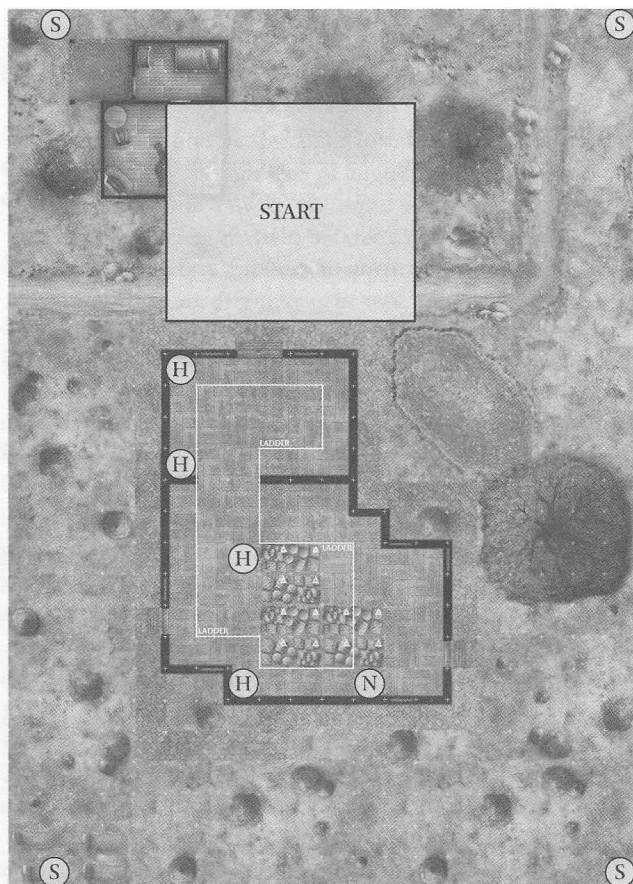
**Con** 10 (+1) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** –

## Tactics

All these monsters fight until destroyed.

**Nothic:** This creature remains hidden (Perception DC 19 to spot if a character has line of sight to it), delaying its turn until the other monsters engage the characters. It uses *warping gaze* whenever it can, attacking the character who can see it or a creature it can gain combat advantage against. It saves its action point until it is bloodied to use *forbidding glare* to escape melee attackers and follow up with *warping gaze*. If the nothic is reduced to 0 hit points, go immediately to the Conclusion section.



**Plague Demon Scavengers:** These demons swarm the characters to keep them away from the nothic and grant one another combat advantage.

**Plague Demon Harriers:** These demons emerge from the skeletons—see the Features of the Area section—on their turn, two emerging from one skeleton if necessary. They otherwise fight like the plague demon scavengers.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light from the red sky.

**Barn:** This wooden building is 10 feet high, or slightly higher where broken walls remain on the upper floor. It has two floors. No doors or shutters block access into the structure. Straw covers the floor, except where storage containers are stacked in the rear room. Inside are large openings in the ceiling, with ladders leading to the straw-covered upper floor.

**Broken Walls:** The shattered and gapped walls of the upper floor are 3 feet high and can provide cover.

**Bushes:** A square containing one of these plants is difficult terrain.

**House Ruins:** Remains of this cabin's walls are 3 feet high and can provide cover. No doors or windows remain, but ruined furniture creates difficult terrain.

**Rocks:** This rubble is difficult terrain.

**Skeletal Remains (H):** The plague demon harriers emerge from these bones, which present no obstacle.

**Spring:** This foul pool is difficult terrain at the edges and 5 feet deep in squares that touch no land. It is acidic—a creature that starts its turn in the pool takes 5 acid damage.

**Storage Containers:** These containers are tightly stacked and 5 feet high, making them blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 9). The area atop them is difficult terrain.

**Trees:** Smaller trees are 20 feet tall, and the larger one near the pool is 30 feet tall. Their trunks are blocking terrain that can be climbed (Athletics DC 9). These trees have big thorns. If a creature is forced into the tree trunk, that creature takes 5 damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

## Conclusion

The nothic is the focus of the magic keeping the characters in the mindscape. Once it dies, the mindscape shatters and the fight is over. All the other monsters disappear.

### When this happens, read:

*The one-eyed humanoid shatters in a flash of light, and the twisted village slowly washes away as if somebody threw water on a wet painting, showing more and more of a black room full of cold light. A familiar red-haired dwarf in violet robes glares at you as you begin to materialize.*

*"Why does it remain silent?" he asks.*

The session ends here as characters reach the Black Cyst. Escaping the mindscape is invigorating. Each adventurer gains the full benefits of a short rest.

## Reward

Each character gains 350 XP for exploring nightmare Easting and defeating the monsters there.

**Treasure:** The party finds that one item it carries has become magical. Items the characters interacted with in the mindscape can inspire your choice—maybe a longsword, a dagger, a gauntlet, a holy symbol (especially of Torm), or an implement that has crystal parts. Otherwise, roll one item randomly (see page 2).



## SESSION 10: THE BLACK CYST

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult is spreading the plague.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague in Easting or sessions before this one.
- ◆ A cultist captured in Easting revealed the location of the cult's temple.
- ◆ The characters found the temple, fought through its guardians, and explored it to its center.
- ◆ The characters entered magical portals in the side of a black stone obelisk. In so doing, they became trapped in a nightmare version of Easting. The adventurers overcame the trials of this mindscape and escaped into the true heart of the temple.

### When you are ready to start, read:

*A familiar red-haired dwarf in violet robes glares at you as you begin to materialize.*

*"Why does it remain silent?" he asks. "No matter!"*

*As the surroundings become solid, space warps. The robed dwarf is across the room beside a pool of glowing red liquid flecked with silver and gold. Two black altars flank the pool.*

*A room of black stone takes shape in the cold light of the portal behind you. Black liquid fills two long basins in the floor, one with a grotesque statue looming over it and the other with a pile of rubble where a statue might have been. Near the center of the room are a round basin and a cage. Inside the cage is a sprawled, deformed humanoid shape.*

*Two dwarves in black plate armor stand to each side of the round basin, between you and the robed dwarf.*

*"Why are you here?" he asks from beyond the cage.*

Zarnak is irritated at the intrusion, but unless the characters attack immediately, he is willing to talk. He is curious about the adventurers, especially their motives and how they got here. He calmly enquires about his brothers, although he doesn't really care about them (Insight DC 13).

If asked about his purpose, Zarnak starts to rave about his true goals. See the Character Profile: Zarnak sidebar. If the characters mock him or interact with the Voidharrow basin, Zarnak attacks. Make sure you are familiar with the Voidharrow Basin skill challenge in case the characters choose to interact with the basin during the encounter. Then, proceed with the **Mad Seer** tactical encounter on page 46.

## CHARACTER PROFILE: ZARNAK

Zarnak is the leader of Clan Sabrak and the mastermind behind the plague in Easting.

**Goals:** To restore the lost power and prestige of clan Sabrak at any cost. He plans to use the Abyssal plague to raise an army of demons and conquer the region. The mad seer also plans to help the Elder Elemental Eye escape its ancient bonds.

**Key Traits:** Insane and supremely confident, Zarnak is completely convinced he cannot lose. He is lucid while calm, but his lunacy breaks through the more agitated he becomes. Then he raves, spouting curses and prophecies of doom.

**Motivation:** Madness and contact with Tharizdun. Zarnak is insane beyond salvation.

**Fears:** Zarnak fears nothing, despite the fact that he has seen a possible future that includes his death at the hands of the characters.

**Weaknesses:** In his arrogance, Zarnak is willing to take unreasonable personal risks.

**Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics:** Zarnak is a tall dwarf who has wild red hair, sickly pale skin, and feverish wide eyes. He wears purple robes and black boots, and he is armed with a scourge. When speaking, his eyes twitch and widen, and his expression changes rapidly to match his riot of emotions.

## Conclusion

If, after combat, the adventurers still need to close the Voidharrow basin, use or continue the Voidharrow Basin skill challenge. Once the corrupt basin is closed, the characters can use the portal here to escape the temple. Go to the A Way Out section.

## Skill Challenge: Voidharrow Basin

This challenge begins once the characters interact with the Voidharrow basin (the red tile on the tactical map). Once a character trained in Arcana, Nature, or Religion comes within 5 squares of the basin, he or she instantly understands that this source of the abyssal plague is leaking, like corrupt blood, into this reality from another dimension. Draining energy from the basin should close the opening between the worlds.

Arcana checks, Nature checks, and Religion checks can be made within 5 squares of the basin. A character needs to be adjacent to the basin or the altars to use Endurance or Thievery, although Endurance has a special use as an immediate interrupt. Each character can make only one check per round.

**Level:** 4.

**Complexity:** 3 (8 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Endurance, Nature, Religion, Thievery.

**Arcana** (*arcane or elemental character only; DC 14 as a standard action; DC 21 as a minor action*): The character drains away the eldritch energy holding the gap open and allowing the Voidharrow through. If the result is 21 or higher, the character can also deal 5 damage to an enemy within 5 squares.

**Endurance** (*DC 14 as a standard action; DC 21 as an immediate interrupt*): The character drains energy from the basin through his or her body.

Endurance can also be used as an immediate interrupt to take the damage for an adjacent character who failed a check and should take damage (see *Failed Checks* below). If this check is successful, the character making the Endurance check takes the damage instead of the character who failed. This use of Endurance does not count as a success on the skill challenge, but it cancels the failure.

**Nature** (*primal character only; DC 14 as a standard action; DC 21 as a minor action*): The character uses primal power to rebalance the natural world and drive the Voidharrow back to where it came. If the result is 21 or higher, the character can also deal 5 damage to an enemy within 5 squares.

**Religion** (*divine character only; DC 14 as a standard action; DC 21 as a minor action*): The character channels astral radiance to force the elemental corruption of the Voidharrow out of this existence. If the result is 21 or higher, the character can also deal 5 damage to an enemy within 5 squares.

**Thievery** (*DC 14 as a standard action; DC 21 as a minor action*): The character mars symbols and messes with reagent arrangements on the altars to ruin the arcane matrix holding the Voidharrow here.

**Failed Checks:** Each failed check deals 5 damage to the character who attempted the check. If a character fails twice on any one attempt at this skill challenge, he or she also must also succeed on a saving throw at the end of the encounter or contract lesser abyssal plague (stage 1).

**Success:** This intrusion of the Voidharrow is banished from the world. All plague originating from this basin disappears, and its victims can no longer advance to stage 3 of the disease. Those already in stage 3 decrease to stage 2 and slowly recover rather than dying or transforming into a demon. Primal spirits of the earth bless the characters, who can each spend one healing surge and regain 5 extra hit points.

**Failure:** The Voidharrow reacts violently, dealing all the characters 5 damage. To remove this intrusion of Voidharrow, the adventurers have to start the skill challenge over again.

## Reward

Each character gains 500 XP for defeating Zarnak and closing the Voidharrow basin, completing their quest to find and stop the abyssal plague.

**Treasure:** The characters find *residuum* and valuables in the room worth 100 gp per character, along with two random magic items (see page 2).

## A Way Out

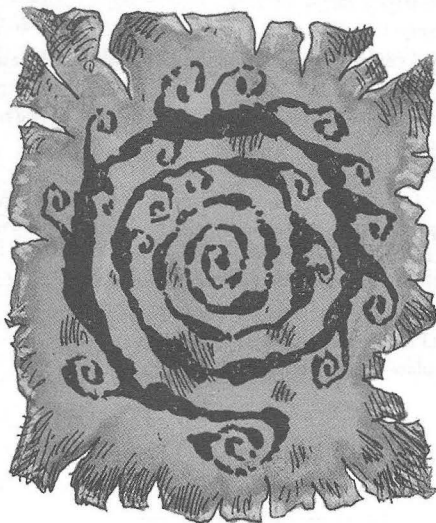
With the destruction of the Voidharrow basin and the death of Zarnak, the characters have completed their quest. However, they are still within the Black Cyst without an obvious exit. The blue portal is the key.

Any interaction with the portal shows that sentient minds can easily influence the arcane device. The party can redirect the portal to any other area within the Temple of the Eye or the Sunset Shrine, including the Teeth of Ghaunadaur. Using the portal in this way allows the adventurers to avoid a hazardous trek back through hostile territory, but it is a one-way trip.

## Easting

Once the characters are outside the temple, travel back to Easting is uneventful. If the characters closed the Voidharrow basin, they find the village rejoicing and rebuilding. Sick citizens are recovering or cured. The party receives a heroes' welcome and the chance to take and extended rest before returning to Iriaebor. Those who have lesser abyssal plague must make an Endurance check for the disease (see the progression, page 5), but no one can progress to stage 3.

**Jakairn:** If the characters left Jakairn Sabrak in the care of Easting's authorities, then the dwarf has escaped captivity by the time the characters return. Jakairn killed no one in his escape, and he left no clue to his direction of travel. He did, however, leave a dagger next to Father Evendur's pillow, perhaps to show that he chose to leave without undue mayhem.



# MAD SEER

Encounter Level 4+

## Setup

Zarnak Sabrak (Z)

2+ Sabrak templars (T)

Characters begin on the blue portal (blue tile)—see the Features of the Area section. Once the combat has started, new monsters arrive from the same portal at the start of given rounds. Choose the mix of norker minions and dwarf minions as you see fit.

**Round 2:** 1 Sabrak templar and 3 minions.

**Round 3+:** 1d4 minions. There can be no more than 5 minions on the map at a time.

### 2 Sabrak Templars (T)

### Level 3 Soldier

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

HP 48; Bloodied 24

Initiative +3

AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 16

Perception +5

Speed 5

Low-light vision

#### TRAITS

☼ **Insane Focus** (fear, psychic) ♦ **Aura** 1

Enemies in the aura cannot shift. If an enemy is in the aura and marked by the templar, and that enemy makes an attack that does not include the templar as a target, the enemy takes 5 psychic damage.

#### Stand the Ground

The templar can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

#### Steady-Footed

The templar can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

⬆ **Warhammer** (weapon) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage, and the templar can push the target 1 square. The templar can then shift 1 square into the square the target vacated.

Effect: The templar marks the target until the end of the templar's next turn.

⌘ **Chaos Lure** (psychic) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Will

Hit: 1d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the templar pulls the target up to 3 squares.

Effect: The templar marks the target until the end of the templar's next turn.

**Lure and Smash** ♦ **Recharge** ☼ ☼

Effect: The templar uses chaos lure and then uses warhammer. If the templar hits the same target with both attacks, the templar also knocks the target prone.

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 10 (+1)

Wis 8 (+0)

Con 16 (+4)

Int 10 (+1)

Cha 16 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Dwarven

Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, warhammer

### Sabrak Norker

### Level 2 Minion Brute

Small elemental humanoid

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +2

AC 14, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12

Perception +1

Speed 6

Low-light vision

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

⬆ **Battleaxe** (weapon) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 5 damage plus 1 extra damage per norker ally adjacent to the target.

#### TRIGGERED ACTIONS

⚡ **Elemental Rebuke** ♦ **Encounter**

Trigger: An enemy reduces the norker to 0 hit points.

Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (triggering enemy in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 6 damage.

Str 14 (+3)

Dex 12 (+2)

Wis 11 (+1)

Con 17 (+4)

Int 6 (+0)

Cha 7 (+0)

Alignment evil

Languages Common

Equipment battleaxe

### Sabrak Warrior

### Level 1 Minion Artillery

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +3

AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12

Perception +4

Speed 5

Low-light vision

#### TRAITS

#### Dwarf Solidarity

The warrior gains a +4 bonus to Fortitude and Will while adjacent to a dwarf ally.

#### Stand the Ground

The warrior can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

#### Steady-Footed

The warrior can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

⬆ **Warhammer** (weapon) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage, or 6 damage while the warrior is adjacent to a dwarf ally.

⌘ **Crossbow** (psychic, weapon) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 4 damage, plus 2 psychic damage if the target has no cover.

Str 13 (+1)

Dex 16 (+3)

Wis 8 (-1)

Con 15 (+2)

Int 10 (+0)

Cha 12 (+1)

Alignment evil

Languages Common, Dwarven

Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts

## Tactics

**Zarnak:** Zarnak stays close to the Voidharrow basin (see Features of the Area below), avoiding melee by keeping his allies between him and the party. He moves to keep a number of allies within 3 squares of him. The seer uses *lightning scourge* and *thunderous outrage* as escape tools.

**Templars and Minions:** Zarnak's allies protect Zarnak by keeping foes away from the mad seer.

## Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light.



**Zarnak Sabrak (Z)** Level 4 Elite Controller

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

HP 112; Bloodied 56

Initiative +4

AC 18, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 17

Perception +8

Speed 5 (earth walk)

Low-light vision

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

## TRAITS

☼ **Blessing of the Elder Eye** (thunder) ♦ **Aura 3**

Each bloodied ally in the aura deals 3 extra thunder damage with melee attacks and ranged attacks.

**Share Visions**

Allies who can see Zarnak can be surprised only if he is. Zarnak and such allies gain a +2 bonus to initiative checks.

**Stand the Ground**

Zarnak can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

**Steady-Footed**

Zarnak can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

## STANDARD ACTIONS

⚡ **Lightning Scourge** (lightning, weapon) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 1 damage plus 1d4 + 4 lightning damage, and Zarnak can slide the target 1 square.

🌀 **Mind Shock** (lightning, psychic) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will

Hit: 1d4 + 3 lightning damage plus 1d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of Zarnak's next turn.

**Mad Flurry** ♦ **At-Will**

Effect: Zarnak makes two basic attacks.

⚡ **Thunderous Outrage** (psychic, thunder) ♦ **Recharge** when first bloodied

Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +7 vs. Will

Hit: 1d4 + 3 psychic damage plus 1d6 + 4 thunder damage, and Zarnak pushes the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.

⚡ **Inspire Carnage** ♦ **Encounter**

Effect: Close burst 3 (Zarnak and each ally in the burst); the target can make a basic attack or charge as a free action.

## MOVE ACTIONS

⚡ **Move as One** ♦ **Recharge** ☼ ☼

Effect: Close burst 3 (Zarnak and each ally in the burst); the target can shift up to 2 squares as a free action.

Skills Arcana +9, Religion +9

Str 12 (+2)

Dex 10 (+2)

Wis 12 (+3)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 15 (+4)

Cha 18 (+5)

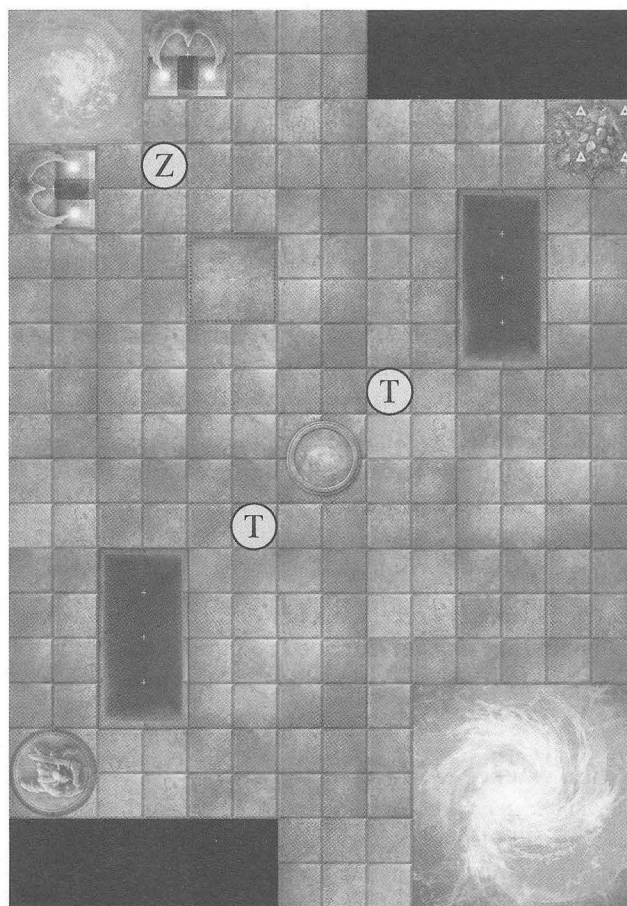
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarven, Primordial

Equipment robes, scourge

**Altars:** These stone structures are difficult terrain that is high enough to provide cover.

**Blue Portal:** This magical doorway's area is lightly obscured. When the adventurers realize the portal is bringing enemies in, a character trained in Arcana knows the portal can be disrupted. Doing so requires a successful Arcana check (DC 13 as a standard action; DC 21 as a minor action). Success prevents minions from arriving until the end of the successful character's next turn.

**Cage:** The bars of this enclosure go from floor to ceiling (10 feet) and provide cover. The doorway to the cage is locked (Strength DC 25 or Thievery DC



21 to open; Zarnak has the key). Within is the corpse of a demonic nothic that appears to have died from starvation.

**Dark Pits:** The pits are 2 feet deep and filled with necrotic seepage. They are difficult terrain. A creature that starts its turn in the pool takes 5 necrotic damage and is slowed until the end of its turn.

**Rubble:** This debris is difficult terrain.

**Statue:** The intact statue is blocking terrain. It depicts a 9-foot-tall faceless brute with misshapen limbs—someone's ghastly interpretation of the Elder Elemental Eye.

**Voidharrow Basin (Orange Tile):** This pool is difficult terrain. A creature that starts its turn in the pool takes 5 damage and must also succeed on a saving throw at the end of the encounter or contract lesser abyssal plague (stage 1). Zarnak and his servants are immune.

**Well:** This spring-fed water basin is full of swirling pure water 50 feet deep. Water fills the well almost to the top. The well's sides are 3 feet high and can provide cover.

## Conclusion

Unless the characters closed the Voidharrow basin, they still have work to do. Continue the skill challenge or go to the Conclusion section on page 44.

## SESSION 11: THARIZDUN'S WRATH

As the session begins, summarize previous events.

- ◆ The Merchant Council and Lady Bron of Iriaebor asked the characters to investigate an outbreak of the abyssal plague in Easting. A cult worshipping the Elder Elemental Eye was spreading the plague.
- ◆ A cultist captured in Easting revealed the site of the cult's temple.
- ◆ The characters battled their way to the heart of the cult's temple, defeated the cult's leader, and sealed the Voidharrow basin, saving the area from this intrusion of the plague.
- ◆ Characters might have contracted the plague in various ways.
- ◆ The adventures received a hero's welcome in Easting, where they took an extended rest and made ready to return to Iriaebor to report to the Merchant Council and receive a reward.

### When you are ready to start, read:

*The trip from Easting was uneventful, other than a chance meeting with Hendar, Sir Arveen's squire, and his party on their return from their messenger mission to Iriaebor. The squire and his comrades celebrated your victory as they shared your camp for a night.*

*Father Evendur provided you with a sealed and signed report of your deeds, which you presented to the Merchant Council and Lady Bron. They praised your efforts, gave you each a reward of 50 gp, and granted you free room and board for a month at the Wandering Wyvern, one of the city's finest inns.*

Ask the players how their characters intend to spend the evening. If they are openly speaking of recent events, admirers gather around to hear the stories of the adventure. If the adventurers prefer privacy, they can quietly enjoy their food, listening to the news and stories of other patrons.

In any case, Cinda and Ellen, barmaids who are twin sisters, serve the party. The two are friendly and efficient, taking turns bringing the characters what they need. Sometimes one sister brings a drink right as the characters ask the other sister for it. Neither takes kindly to rudeness, and neither does the human bartender Bragi nor the half-orc bouncer Girbog.

## Unexpected Informant

At some point early in the evening, a pale, hooded elf carefully contacts the character who is the easiest to approach. If the characters spared Chalindra in Session 3, you can use her. Otherwise, the elf is a female who identifies herself as Belbol Zhaun. (In Elven, Belbol Zhaun means "bringer of knowledge," which suggests strongly that her name is an alias.) In either case, the elf is a drow in disguise (Insight DC 21 to see through, although the characters recognize Chalindra).

Belbol Zhaun is a stocky female, wearing hunter's clothing and armed with a large knife and crossbow. She is polite, treating the characters with careful respect. Although she prefers to speak with female characters, she is not rude to males.

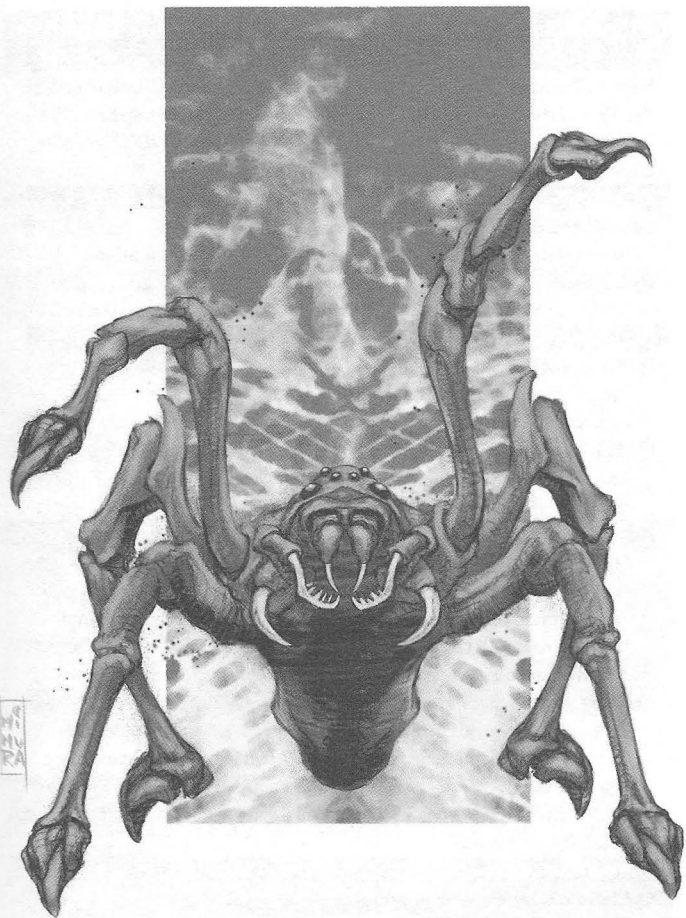
The informant claims to have information about mutual enemies that should be of great interest to the characters. If the characters refuse, she sneers, shrugs, and leaves. Otherwise she sits down, asking for a drink before she starts.

Once seated and comfortable, the "elf" reveals that she knows about the characters' run-in with the Sabrak cult of the Elder Elemental Eye. She doesn't know exactly what happened, so she is curious about the details. However, it's fine with her if the characters prefer that she get to the point.

Those for whom the informant works consider the cultists to be enemies. They have discovered that the entity known as the Elder Elemental Eye is also known as the Chained God, Tharizdun. This evil deity is the foe of all living things. The informant, on behalf of Quarvalsharess, thanks the characters for their heroics. (Quarvalsharess is Elven for "the Goddess"—this is a direct drow reference to Lolth, which characters recognize with a DC 13 Religion check.)

The informant explains that a small band of those who worship the Chained God have come to Iriaebor. She tracked a drow cultist named Vlondril here and has seen this drow watching the characters' comings and goings. Vlondril is a skilled killer, so the party should make ready for an attack.

Cinda and Ellen end their workday and leave the Wandering Wyvern during the characters' talk with the informant. Having delivered her information, the informant stands and places bone tube on the table. When this happens, proceed with the **Streets of Iriaebor** tactical encounter, page 50, but see also the Bystanders section below.



## Bystanders

Although you can use her to give the characters beneficial hints in the initial stages of the **Streets of Iriaebor** tactical encounter, the informant leaves the Wandering Wyvern and disappears into the city during the fight.

Patrons in the inn panic and move away from the area once any violence starts. Bragi hunkers down behind the bar with a crossbow. His major aim is to protect the liquor and beer, but might take one or two pot shots at a cultist during the fight if you want him to help the characters out. Allow a player to roll the crossbow attack: +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

Ellen, Cinda, and Girbog might be involved in the battle. If the characters rescue Ellen while Cinda and/or Girbog are conscious, the others take Ellen back into the tavern. These nonplayer characters can also help the adventurers. For example, Cinda or Ellen might sneak into the street and use Heal to trigger an unconscious character's second wind. Girbog might throw a chair at an enemy, causing that foe to grant combat advantage for a round.

Don't roll checks or attacks for these improvised nonplayer character actions. Use them to add fun and drama to the scene, and to reward the characters for decisive action and roleplaying in the encounter.

## Concluding the Adventure

By thwarting the ambush in Iriaebor, the characters have dealt with what might be the vanguard of a larger cult in the region. Congratulations! Your players have ceased the spread of the abyssal plague and survived the wrath of the Chained God, completing this season of D&D ENCOUNTERS.

The drow introduced in this adventure provide a hint of what players can expect in the next D&D ENCOUNTERS season, which focuses on the drow and their web of intrigue. With the threat of the Elder Elemental Eye ended, all eyes turn to Lolth and her plans for the hearty folk of Faerûn!

## Reward

The characters gain 300 XP each for talking to the informant, fighting the cultists, and (potentially) saving some innocents. If a player has attended every session, his or her character should have 3,750 XP—enough to attain 4th level.

**The Informant's Tube:** The bone cylinder contains a small, tapered bone rod encrusted with crystals and inscribed with runes. A scroll with it identifies the rod as a portal key found on some Sabrak dwarves killed in the badlands outside the Sunset Shrine. The note suggests the key might work somewhere within the temple. The characters know that an active portal exists in the temple's deepest reaches. What the party does with the information and the key is another tale beyond the scope of this adventure. Feel free to use the portal key as a hook for an adventure of your own devising, or as the means to transport the heroes to another published adventure you are prepared to run.

**Treasure:** The cultists have valuables worth 50 gp per character. Among these valuables are silver symbols of a left-handed spiral—the symbol of Tharizdun, the Chained God.



# STREETS OF IRIAEBOR

Encounter Level 5

## Setup

Vlondril, Elder Eye cult assassin (V)

2 deathjump spiders (S)

2 Elder Eye cult berserkers (B)

Just after the party talks with the informant, assassins serving the Elder Elemental Eye trigger an ambush.

### When this happens, read:

A loud crash outside, followed by screams and the bellowing of an ox, draws patrons of the Wandering Wyvern to the windows. Out on the street, an ox wagon has crashed into a public fountain. Ellen is trapped between the wagon and the fountain, unconscious. Cinda stands nearby, screaming in panic, and a sturdy-looking figure tries to calm the ox, which is in the fountain thrashing about. The wagon's driver struggles to stand in the back of the wagon, and finally manages to crouch.

Vlondril, the leader of these killers, is disguised as a passed-out drunk lying prone next to the inn door. The wagon driver and ox handler are actually Elder Eye cult berserkers who staged the accident as per Vlondril's instructions. Vlondril's pet deathjump spiders wait nearby, ready to pounce.

Place only those creatures the characters can see when the attack begins, likely the berserkers.

**Passive Insight DC 14:** The character notices that the wagon driver seems more interested in the tavern than the injured woman.

**Passive Insight DC 21:** A character who can see Vlondril notices her watching the action and readying to strike.

**Passive Nature DC 14:** The character notices that the ox handler isn't trying very hard to help or calm the ox. He must not be very familiar with such animals.

**Perception DC 18:** The character spots a spider to which he or she has line of sight.

**Heal DC 10:** Even from this distance, it's clear the crash has badly injured Ellen.

## Development

The patrons immediately look for help to any of the adventurers who were open about their past heroics. Otherwise, everyone gawks in a daze.

If the characters fail to act, Girbog (the Wandering Wyvern's half-orc bouncer) rushes out in the street to push the wagon off Ellen. The two berserkers attack and mortally wound him as he begins to move the wagon. They then close in on Cinda, doing the same to her if no one intervenes.

**Vlondril, Elder Eye Cult Assassin (V)** Level 4 Elite Lurker  
Medium fey humanoid, drow

HP 44; Bloodied 22

AC 18, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 16

Speed 6

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

Initiative +10

Perception +6

Darkvision

### TRAITS

#### Elder Eye Cult Tactics

Vlondril deals 1d6 extra damage to any target she is flanking.

#### Quick Draw

Vlondril can draw or sheathe a light weapon as a free action.

### STANDARD ACTIONS

#### ⚔ Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

#### ☯ Shuriken (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d4 + 6 damage.

#### ⚡ Fall Apart (illusion) ♦ Recharge when Vlondril uses pull together

Effect: Vlondril falls prone. Until the start of her next turn, she gains a +5 power bonus to all defenses against close attacks and area attacks, and enemies think she is dead. An enemy cannot make a melee attack or a ranged attack against her unless that enemy succeeds on a DC 21 Insight check as a minor action.

#### ⚡ Pull Together ♦ Recharge when Vlondril uses fall apart

Requirement: Vlondril must be prone.

Effect: Vlondril stands up, shifts up to 2 squares, and makes four basic attacks. She can shift 1 square each time she hits or misses with one of these attacks. Each of these attacks deals half damage on a miss.

### MINOR ACTIONS

#### ☁ Cloud of Darkness ♦ Encounter

Effect: Close burst 1. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Vlondril's next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight for all creatures except Vlondril. While entirely within the cloud, any creature other than Vlondril is blinded.

### TRIGGERED ACTIONS

#### ⚡ Elemental Vigor (healing) ♦ Encounter

Trigger: Vlondril drops to 0 hit points.

Effect (No Action): Vlondril regains 44 hit points, and fall apart recharges and she uses it.

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +8, Bluff +10, Insight +6, Stealth +11

Str 12 (+3)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 8 (+1)

Con 14 (+4)

Int 12 (+3)

Cha 17 (+5)

Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven

Equipment leather armor, short sword, 20 shuriken

## Tactics

**Vlondril:** The crazed drow starts prone, perhaps unnoticed, and attacks with *pull together*, gaining combat advantage if no character succeeded on the passive Insight check mentioned in the Setup section. If Vlondril has used *elemental vigor* and her allies are all bloodied or dead, she flees through the nearby alley. She saves *cloud of darkness* for her escape.

**Spiders:** When Vlondril gives the order, the spiders use *death from above* and attack characters engaged in combat. As opportunity allows, they move into positions that enable Vlondril or the berserkers to flank enemies.

**Berserkers:** These fanatics are bent on killing the characters. They fight to the death.





# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

## ENCOUNTERS

## WE ALL GO A LITTLE MAD SOMETIMES

As the village of Easting weathers an outbreak of the abyssal plague, brave adventurers track down the mad villains responsible for spreading it. The investigation leads to an underground temple of Ghaunadaur, the god of oozes and slimes. When the heroes descend into the temple's nightmarish depths, they quickly learn there's more going on than meets the eye.

The *Elder Elemental Eye*™ is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Roleplaying Game adventure designed for the spring 2012 season of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™ official play program. The adventure supports character options from *Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos*™ and is designed for use with the *Spiral of Tharizdun*™ set of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FORTUNE CARDS™. It also comes with three full-color battle maps, eleven ready-to-play encounters, and information on the D&D ENCOUNTERS program.

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