



Spare the Rod

The Zhentarim were in over their heads the moment the demon child was delivered to them. They were woefully unprepared to raise a baby, let alone an infant demon. Two tenday ago, it disappeared and has not returned. With the rumors of a fiendish influence spreading throughout the forest, the Zhentarim's worst nightmare has come true.

A Four-Hour Adventure for 5th – 10th Level Characters



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Introduction

Welcome to *Spare the Rod*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system.

This adventure takes place in the city of Hillsfar, on the southern shore of the Moonsea, and in its surrounding environs.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting This Adventure

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than		Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent		Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than		Average
5 characters, APL less than		Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent		Average
5 characters, APL greater than		Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than		Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent		Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than		Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Before Play at the Table

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

Adventure Primer

Adventure Background

Several years ago, agents of the Zhentarim captured a half-demon child during the liberation of the Underdark city of Maerimydra. The child's father was the demon lord, Graz'zt the Dark Prince. Fortunately for the Zhentarim, Graz'zt, being wholly evil, did not have much attachment to the child and did not come searching for him.

Regardless, the Zhentarim could not predict what they were getting themselves into, as the child developed quickly, both physically and intellectually. Hoping to learn more about the nature of fiends by observing the child, the creature quickly became more trouble than the Zhentarim had predicted. It escaped several times but was quickly recaptured. Now, the "problem child" has escaped from his Zhentarim captors once again, stolen some obscure arcane research materials in the process, and is believed to be the cause of the sudden increase in fiendish creatures in the environs around Hillsfar.

After several unsuccessful attempts to recapture the "problem child," the Zhentarim have turned to their allies in the other factions in tracking down and apprehending the creature.

Location and NPC Summary

Allano Rothé Farm (uh-LA-no ROETH). A now-abandoned farm where the Allano family used to raise rothé (large, cattle-like creatures). It resides above an underground fey'ri outpost from long ago.

Bryan Tusons (BREYE-uhn TOO-sunz). Human foreman at Goodroot Farm.

Church of Waukeen (wah-KEEN). An old temple dedicated to the neutral deity of commerce, trade, and wealth, Waukeen, that is currently being restored. Erve (see below) is the overseer of the church's graveyard and crypts.

Dark Linsa (DARK LIN-sa). A female half-drow operative of the Zhentarim, primarily based around the Moonsea region.

Erve (ERF). A male human priest of Jergal serving at a Church to Waukeen outside of the city.

Goodroot Farm. A famous beet farm on the outskirts of Hillsfar. The Red Plumes use a beet-based dye from Goodroot Farms for the feathers they wear as part of their uniforms.

Hillsfar (HILZ-far). The major urban area and trade center for the region.

House of Happiness. The combination temple/dance house/tavern dedicated to Lliira in Hillsfar. The clergy that worship there are known as Joydancers.

Nolo. A male cambion spawn of Graz'zt, captured and raised by the Zhentarim. Intelligent but chaotic in behavior.

Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into four parts:

Part 1. The party meets Dark Linsa, a Zhentarim operative, at the House of Happiness in Hillsfar. She offers the job of tracking down the escaped child of Graz'zt. She gives them a lead, directing them to the church of Waukeen outside the city.

Part 2. The party travels to the church of Waukeen outside of Hillsfar to learn what they can from Erve, a priest of Jergal, who has encountered followers of Graz'zt before. The party discovers earlier followers of Graz'zt had the odd habit of stockpiling beet juice from Goodroot Farm.

Part 3. A tip from the church of Waukeen leads the party to the Goodroot Beet Farm, where they must save the staff from a pack of fiendish giant scorpions. The party learns that the only dye Goodroot Beet Farm supplies is to the Red Plumes (who use it for their feathers) and to the old Allano rothé farm.

Part 4. The party heads to the remains of the old Allano rothé farm, where they discover an ancient fey'ri complex under the farm and finally come face to face with the child of Graz'zt himself.

Adventure Hooks

In Dark Linsa's Pocket (Story Award). Characters that have this story award from **DDEX1-10 (Tyranny in Phlan)** are contacted by Dark Linsa, who tells them she needs their assistance with a very sensitive matter. They should meet her in the House of Happiness in Hillsfar. Dark Linsa playfully suggests that noncompliance in this matter is not an option, and that success in the mission might even cause her to forget the debt that the character(s) currently owe her.

Harpers, Lord's Alliance, Order of the Gauntlet (Faction Assignment). Your faction contacts have asked you to report to the House of Happiness in Hillsfar. Zhentarim representatives need assistance protecting the Moonsea region from a resurging threat. Doing so helps further strengthen your faction's standing and influence with the Zhentarim.

Emerald Enclave (Faction Assignment). Corrupted and fiendish creatures are once again threatening the area around Hillsfar. Your faction has reason to believe the Zhentarim are at fault and are asking you to meet a Zhentarim representative at the House of Happiness in Hillsfar, along with representatives of the other factions, and see what you can do to save the region from the Zhentarim's foolish meddling. Again.

Rage of Demons, Season Three. If you have played any of the DDEX03-xx series adventures, you receive an invitation from the Zhentarim to meet one of their agents at the House of Happiness in Hillsfar as they are looking to hire mercenaries with a specific type of “experience” that you possess.

CCC-BMG-HILL Adventures. If you have previously played any of the HILL series, the Zhentarim have noticed your skills and asked you to meet their agent at the House of Happiness, as they are in need of adventurers.

Zhentarim (Faction Assignment). You have been asked to meet a faction contact in the House of Happiness in Hillsfar about a very sensitive matter your “family” would like your aid with.

Part 1. The Skinny

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

The characters arrive at the House of Happiness and learn about the escaped demon child. They are offered the job of capturing (preferable) or eliminating (acceptable) the monster. Based on what they already know and have managed to learn, the characters need to perform some additional research to track down the monster’s whereabouts.

General Features

The House of Happiness has the following general features.

Terrain. The main hall is quite large and spacious, although a central area appropriated as an impromptu dance floor counts as **difficult terrain** due to the dense mass of sweaty bodies pulsating thereon.

Weather. The weather is cool with a light rain falling. It is hard to guess if this is just a momentary shower or the harbinger of something stronger to come.

Light. A series of *continual flame* spells are placed on sconces around the perimeter of the room. Colorful bursts of sparks regularly flare at random intervals and locations as well, likely the result of numerous *prestidigitation* cantrips.

Smells and Sounds. An ever-changing array of scents – some pleasant, some acrid – waft through the temple comprised of a chaotic mix of perfumes, colognes, cooked food, and the sweat of dancers. Music plays in the background, serving as the soundtrack for the seemingly unending cacophony of conversations and laughter.

The House of Happiness

Hillsfar’s temple of Lliira, better known as the House of Happiness, seems an unlikely place for a meeting with a representative from the Zhentarim, but that is where you find yourself on this drizzly midday.

The temple is packed with Joydancers, the moniker given to the dancing, singing, and laughing followers of Lliira in this bizarre cross between a bar, festhall, and place of worship.

You spot a half-drow sitting alone at a long table in a distant corner. She fidgets with a small object, passing it through her fingers as she stares at you.

The half-drow is Dark Linsa, the Zhentarim operative. Dark Linsa has appeared in **DDEX1-10 (Tyranny in Phlan)**, **DDEX3-08 (The Malady of Elventree)**, and **CCC-QCC2017 (Delusions of Grandeur, Dreams of Revenge)** and is easily recognized by characters encountering her before.

If the characters approach, Dark Linsa smiles and greets those she recognizes by name. Continue:

The woman puts down the object, revealing it as a deeply scratched silver coin. “I’m Dark Linsa,” she offers with a smile, “and I assume you are what your respective factions could afford to send. Pick a chair. I’ll fill you in on what we know and what we need of you.”

Dark Linsa provides the characters with information contained in the **Adventure Background** section, as well as the additional details below:

- The demon child is a spawn of Graz’zt and another humanoid creature whose race has not yet been positively identified.
- The creature is called “Nolo.”
- Like its father, Nolo is a cunning creature that relies on treachery and deceit rather than outright aggression.
- The Zhentarim believe Nolo is trying to establish himself as a new demon prince and rightful heir to its father’s title.
- They also believe the creature is still somewhere in the area around Hillsfar. The fiendish influence manifesting in creatures may be Nolo creating or summoning his own horde.
- The Zhentarim have had difficulty in tracking down the “problem child” since his latest escape.
- She asks the characters to track down and either capture or eliminate the demon-child and return the arcane manuscripts he fled with.
- Dark Linsa is prepared to offer the party 600gp, a good word on the characters’ behalf to their faction leaders, and the promise of a debt owed to them by the Zhentarim.

The stolen arcane documents consist of several unrelated works on conjuration, transmutation, and ancient Netherese magic.

If any party member has the *In Dark Linsa's Pocket* story award from **DDEX1-10, Tyranny in Phlan**, Dark Linsa playfully implies that noncompliance in this matter is not an option and that success might even cause her to forget the debt the character(s) currently owe her.

If the characters accept the job, Dark Linsa provides them with one more piece of information. Since the call for assistance went out, Erve, a human priest of Jergal (lawful neutral deity of fatalism and proper burial) and a member of the Order of the Gauntlet, also responded. Erve revealed that years ago, the local church of Waukeen (neutral deity of commerce, trade, and wealth) was infiltrated by a cult that revered Graz'zt. Since his encounter with some of the cultists a few years back, Erve has become something of an expert on Graz'zt and can offer assistance to anyone wishing to learn more. The church of Waukeen lies just outside of Hillsfar proper.

Roleplaying Dark Linsa

This half-drow rogue has long been a member of the Zhentarim and displays a rather brusque exterior, although she is honorable to a fault. She expects the same honor displayed in those she works with.

Quote: "If I agree to do it for that price, then you're gonna owe me one."

If the characters decide to head to the church of Waukeen, proceed to **Part 2**.

Tricks of the Trade

Interaction Encounter. Dark Linsa, knowing that the characters are either here because their factions have sent them to assist or are mercenaries for hire, expects the negotiation for payment to be an inconsequential part of this interaction. She has no respect for anyone who wants to waste time haggling on payment or attempting to use Deception or Intimidation on her.

XP Award

If the characters agree to help the Zhentarim without trying to negotiate a higher rate of pay, award each character 100 XP.

Part 2. The Waukeen Dead

Estimated Duration: 40 minutes

In this chapter, the characters travel to the church of Waukeen on the outskirts of Hillsfar to meet with Erve, a priest of Jergal, who is overseeing the restoration, use, and cataloging of the graveyard and crypts there. He can teach the party quite a bit about Graz'zt and help discover a potentially useful clue.

General Features

The church of Waukeen and its surrounding areas have the following general features.

Weather. The weather has degraded to cold and damp.

Light. Although gloomy and overcast, there is still plenty of light to see normally outside. Sconces inside the church provide bright light, while in the crypts it is dark. Torches and lanterns placed throughout the crypt may be lit to provide bright light.

Smells and Sounds. Outside, the pleasant smell of petrichor somewhat makes up for the chilling rain, while the splash of large raindrops makes it difficult to hear. The church itself is comfortable and dry, and deadens the sound of the rainfall considerably. The crypts are cool and damp, smell strikingly of mustiness, and are unnervingly quiet.

The Church of Waukeen

The church of Waukeen has seen better days, but efforts are underway to renovate the aged structure and tend to adjoining lands, including the church cemetery. There is much work still to be done, however.

Entering the church, your party is greeted by one of Waukeen's acolytes. "The blessings of Waukeen be upon you", he offers. "What brings you to the house of Waukeen on such a day?"

There are a total of seven clergy members serving at the church (two **acolytes** and five **priests**). If the party explains they are here to learn about Graz'zt, or that they are looking for Erve, they are told that the priest of Jergal is working in the crypts. One of the acolytes can lead them to him.

Your guide leads you to the back of the church and descends a set of marble stairs ending at an iron door.

"Although he is not a follower of Waukeen himself," the acolyte explains, "our brother Erve has been of great assistance to us with burial services, maintenance of the crypts, and restoration of the adjoining graveyard. The rest of us have been occupied with restoring the church which, only a few years ago, had lay abandoned. Progress has been slow, however, as we do what donations allow."

Pushing open the large iron door, your companion exposes a cool, relatively dark chamber on the other side of the portal. A lantern hanging just inside the doorway provides enough light to see that this chamber is vast.

"Brother Erve?" your guide calls into the chamber, his voice echoing back. "There are some people here to see you."

In the distance, a single point of light comes into view and moves toward you.

Characters offering a donation without further prompting receive the benefits of a 1st-level **bless** spell bestowed upon them by the grace of Waukeen at the start of their next combat in this adventure.

Roleplaying Erve

As a follower of Jergal, the lawful neutral deity of fatalism and proper burial, Erve is rather stoic and non-excitable as a rule, with only rare demonstrations of his dark sense of humor. As he spends much of his time going over lists and catalogs, Erve has mildly impaired vision and wears glasses regularly.

Quote (usually in unusual circumstances): "That happens sometimes."

Erve, carrying a lantern and a very large tome, comes out of the recesses of the crypts. He has previously appeared in **DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)**, and if any of the characters played **Mission 5 (The Afterlife)** in that adventure, Erve recognizes them immediately, and possibly even permits himself a slight smile. If the characters recall Erve as having died during that adventure, he nonchalantly quips: "I got better. That happens sometimes."

If the party explains why they are here or questions Erve about Graz'zt, Erve dismisses the acolyte graciously. The acolyte closes the large iron door (it is not locked) on his way out. Erve is pleased that the Zhentarim have decided to follow up on his offer to provide information and asks the party to follow him deeper into the chamber (returning toward where he was summoned from).

Erve can tell the party that some of the original church founders secretly revered the demon lord Graz'zt. He knows this since he was once possessed by the spirit of one of the founders. During that time,

other followers of Graz'zt were drawn to the abandoned church. Fortunately, they were defeated by a group of adventurers, and Erve was freed.

Since that time, Erve has studied Graz'zt and learned much useful to those tracking down Graz'zt's scion.

- Graz'zt is a demon lord with the accompanying power: he is completely evil; can change his appearance and teleport; and is superhumanly strong and intelligent.
- He can be quite charming and is a master manipulator, but is also capable of terrible violence when provoked.
- Graz'zt is supposed to be resistant to cold, fire, lighting, and magic, as well as immune to poison and non-magical physical attacks.
- In his normal form, Graz'zt stands nine feet tall and has six digits on each limb.
- Given that the demon child is a spawn of Graz'zt, he would expect the child to exhibit some of his father's traits.
- Supposedly, Graz'zt had no interest in his children, but kept them around merely for amusement.
- Graz'zt is known to have reproduced with drow, fire giants, orcs, and quaggoths, among other humanoid species.
- The last group of Graz'zt cultists killed here are entombed in these very crypts, along with their personal effects at the time of their death ("some believe one must pass into the afterlife surrounded by the items important to them, lest they become a restless spirit," Erve tells the party).
- If they wish to examine the items left behind by the cultists, Erve can show the party where they are interred.

If the party wishes to explore the tomb of the Graz'zt cultists, Erve leads them to a large mausoleum near the back of the chamber. When the party decides to unseal the door and enter the tomb, read:

Erve pauses to record the date and your names as "visitors" in his large tome. When the vault door is opened, a dry, musty smell emerges. In stone alcoves along the back of the vault lie six bodies, each tightly bound in thick, white linen. Beside the bodies, as well as the floor space near them, are neatly stacked piles of clothing, assorted papers, and numerous small containers, all coated with a fine layer of dust.

The papers contain notes about the church, a map of its location, rituals of adoration to Graz'zt, and some

notes on conjuration magic written in a blood-red substance. The clothing consists of sets of human-sized commoner's clothes, traveler's clothes, and priestly vestment, all in various stages of decay. The other items include personal effects: several holy symbols, handmade totems of Graz'zt, and a large collection of glass containers, all wax sealed, containing a viscous red liquid.

As the characters explore these objects, **two wraiths** rise from the bodies and attack. "Undead." Erve announces with absolutely no hint of alarm or excitement. "That happens, sometimes."

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group.

- **Very Weak, Weak:** No changes
- **Strong, Very Strong:** Add one **wraith**

Developments

Erve has two vials of holy water on him, in case of such an emergency. At an initiative count of 1, he offers them and backs away, preferring to leave the monster fighting to the professionals.

Once the creatures are defeated, the party can more closely inspect the artifacts. Erve is hesitant to give the party permission to remove any items unless they somehow manage to convince him (any logical argument – DM's discretion) that they may be important to their search.

If they wish to take the papers, for example, mentioning the documents stolen from the Zhentarim may have been related (since both involve conjuration) persuades Erve.

Characters inspecting the liquid-filled containers can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they realize the deep red substance inside is not blood: there is an imprint in the wax seals reading "Goodroot Farm," and the conjuration notes are penned in whatever red substance is within these containers. Characters who played **CCC-BMG-HILL3-01 (Shephard the Weak)** or **CCC-BMG-HILL3-02 (Suffer the Children)** recognize these as similar to the containers discovered in the jackalweres' cave in that adventure.

If the characters fail the check or refer to the red substance as blood, Erve points out the wax seal and explains, "Not blood, beet juice."

Any characters that played **DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)** recognize Goodroot Farm and know its location, which is also noted as a point of interest on a map found within the tomb (a symbol on the map matches a logo-like symbol on the wax stamp), and

Erve also knows where the farm lies in relation to the church and to Hillsfar. He can give them directions to get there if they do not take the map or are not familiar with the area.

If the party decided **not** to enter the tomb, Erve can tell them what sorts of personal effects they were buried with (he interred them) and mentions the numerous glass containers of beet juice from Goodroot Farm, although he does not know what they were for.

If the characters decide to investigate Goodroot Farm, proceed to **Part 3**.

Tricks of the Trade

Combat Encounter. The wraiths are aware of the characters when they first enter the mausoleum, hiding within the bodies of the deceased cultists, hoping for an opportunity to surprise them once they enter the tomb.

If you have the wraiths attack before the party learns the truth about the beet juice, you could have several containers of it accidentally shatter during the combat, splashing (what appears to be) blood everywhere.

Interaction Encounter. Erve is not an adventurer and has had his fill of it when he was possessed several years ago. He is quite happy to share whatever information he can, as he does not believe it makes a difference; everything will play out exactly as intended...whatever that means.

If the DM would like to run this encounter differently, they can; this is but ONE possible way the encounter can play out.

Treasure

Erve allows the party to keep any unused vials of holy water he presented them with, saying, "Who knows, you may need it." Keep in mind, if they do not enter the tomb, he does not give the vials to them.

The clothing found in the tomb can be repaired via the *mending* cantrip, but Erve is hesitant to allow the characters to take anything from the tomb unless they think it somehow ties into their search. The same applies to the rest of the personal effects.

XP Award

If the characters discovered the writing on the wax seal, the map to Goodroot Farm, and that the glass containers did not contain blood on their own without being told by Erve, award each character 150 XP.

Part 3. The Root of Evil

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

In this chapter, the party travels to Goodroot Farm to learn what they can about the strange substance the deceased followers of Graz'zt were stockpiling. While there, they battle a swarm of giant scorpions that attack the farm, looking for an easy meal.

General Features

Terrain. The relatively flat terrain in this area is great for farming and travel. The roads consist of packed earth and stone and are in relatively good condition. Areas not consisting of road or open farmland are hardwood forest.

Weather. The region is starting to dry out after the recent rainfall, with the temperature becoming more comfortable during the day and only slightly cooler at night.

Light. Skies are clearing up, providing bright light during the day and a clear view of the sky at night.

Smells and Sounds. The air is fresh, clean, and invigorating. The sounds of insects fill the fields and forests, with the calls of songbirds adding to the cacophony during the day.

Goodroot Farm

The road to Goodroot Farm is well-traveled by traders and pilgrims alike, making it relatively well maintained. You arrive at the outskirts of the farm and can see several large open fields with the occasional glimpse of workers. A large structure must be the main home or office for the property.

If the party approaches the fields, the farmhouse, or any of the workers, a large blonde man, skin tanned by prolonged exposure to the sun, intercepts their course and asks what they want. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that other workers in the area momentarily pause to watch the man's interaction with the party.

Depending on the party's response, what they want to reveal, and their follow-up questions, the man (Bryan) can provide the information below. If anyone in the party attempts to intimidate or threaten Bryan, the other workers (treat as **commoners**, armed with farming tools treated as clubs) come to his defense.

If the party converses peacefully with Bryan, the workers lose interest and go back to work. The following information can be learned from talking with Bryan:

- The man is Bryan Tusons, the foreman on the farm. He has worked here for 15 years, since the current owner's parents ran the farm.

- He handles all business for the farm while the owner, Constance Goodroot, is away.
- Constance is travelling, leaving Bryan in charge. She is not due back for a couple weeks. Bryan does not know where she is; she occasionally leaves for days or weeks at a time on "family business".
- The farm's primary crop is beets, but they do grow some cabbage and kale (as companion crops), as well as marigolds (to keep insects away), which they also sell in limited quantities.
- Vegetables are 3 sp per bushel; marigolds are 3 cp a bunch. These are market prices in Hillsfar, but Bryan is willing to sell directly to the party.
- If the characters ask about the beet juice or produce one of the glass containers from the church of Waukeen, Bryan is noticeably surprised. The farm rarely produces vegetable dye, only doing so regularly for the Red Plumes, which orders by the cask. The farm produces dyes for two other customers, as far as Bryan knows.
- The Goodroots and Bryan are the only ones who make the dye. There was never enough volume of requests for them to train others to make it. Bryan can show the party the equipment and explain the process if they are really interested.
- Once, long ago, the farm produced limited quantities of dye for the church of Waukeen, who wanted it in small quantities for painting.
- The other customer was the old Allano rothé farm, which apparently just got up and running again. They placed an order just a few days ago, paying up front and well above market price.
- Rothé are large shaggy herd animals, one of the primary types of livestock in this region, similar to musk oxen.
- Two of the farmhands, a pair of half-elves named Eri and Tra, delivered the dye to the Allano rothé farm yesterday but have not yet returned. Bryan is getting concerned.

After Bryan answers a few questions but before the conversation ends, read:

While you converse with Bryan, suddenly workers run frantically toward you. Several large insect-like creatures are pursuing the workers across the field.

Four giant scorpions have skittered into one of the fields, terrifying and chasing the workers. When Bryan sees them, he runs to the farmhouse to retrieve a *potion of animal friendship* he keeps there.

Giant Fiendish Scorpions

If you wish, you may choose to alter the giant scorpions into fiendish creatures (but keeping them at challenge rating 3) by giving them the following traits:

- Change the creatures' type from "beast" to "fiend"
- Lower the hit points per creature from 52 to 38
- Give them **damage resistance** to **cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons**
- Grant them **immunity** to the **poisoned condition**

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak, Weak:** No change
- **Strong:** Add one **giant scorpion**
- **Very Strong:** Add two **giant scorpions**

Developments

It takes Bryan four rounds to find the potion, retrieve it, and return. If more than half the creatures are dead and none of the party members or farmhands are dead, he waits to drink the potion, assuming the party may be able to handle them on their own. If the party manages to defeat the creatures, Bryan gifts the potion to the party as a sign of thanks and answers any further questions.

If the party ends up scorching a good portion of the farmland through the use of multiple evocation effects (fireballs, cones of cold, acid spells, etc.), Bryan answers further questions but keeps the potion for himself so he has a less destructive option available if similar creatures appear in the future.

Any characters who played **DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)** know the way to the old Allano rothé farm. Bryan also gives them directions if needed. The location is also indicated on the map recovered from the tomb in **Part 2**.

If the party decides to investigate the Allano rothé farm and search for the missing half-elves from the Goodroot Farm, proceed to **Part 4**.

Tricks of the Trade

Combat Encounter. The giant scorpions frighten the farmhands, pursuing them through the fields. This should motivate the characters to respond, so the creatures break off pursuit and focus on the party once attacked.

Farmhands do not need to be attacked unless the characters are slow to respond or make very bad choices once they appear.

Interaction Encounter. Bryan is protective of the farm, his boss, and his fellow workers. He provides whatever information he can but is glad to see the party leave so he can get back to work. He becomes offended if it is implied that the farm, or anyone working for it, would knowingly be involved with something nefarious.

If the DM would like to run this encounter differently, they can; this is but ONE possible way the encounter can play out.

Treasure

If it was not used and the characters did not blow up a significant portion of the farm during the battle, Bryan will give the party a *potion of animal friendship* given him long ago by a druid named Beral (from **Mission 1 (The Birth)** in **DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)**) who frequents the area.

XP Award

If the characters acted fast enough to prevent any of the farmhands from getting killed, award each character 150 XP.

Part 4. All Work and No Play

Estimated Duration: 135 minutes

The characters travel to the remains of the old Allano rothé farm and find it still abandoned. Exploring the ruins, the party battles a demon before discovering an old fey'ri fortress underneath the farm. There they make a final stand against Nolo.

General Features

Terrain. The farm has been abandoned and is overgrown. The fields count as difficult terrain. In the fey'ri complex, the stonework and passages are in relatively good shape.

Weather. The temperature is warm and the sky clear.

Light. Outside, depending on the time of day, it will be brightly lit during the day or dark at night. Inside the remains of the barn, it is dimly lit during the day. In the fey'ri complex, it is completely dark.

Smells and Sounds. The farm smells of grasses and earth, as does the inside of the barn, although inside there is also a slight musky scent. The fey'ri complex has a noticeable sharp smell of musk mixed with sulfur. Outside, the farm is alive with the buzzing and chirping of various insects. The barn and the fey'ri complex are completely quiet.

1. The Farm

The old Allano rothé farm was abandoned after the deaths of its original owners, but someone was supposed to be taking it over and getting it going. You see no evidence of that, however, as the farm is completely overgrown and returned to the wild. The fields are quiet, except for the occasional buzzing of insects.

Down the overgrown and partially washed out road leading into the farm, a single structure, a wooden barn, remains, listing noticeably to the right.

Those with a passive Perception of 15 or better, or anyone who asks to make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) or Wisdom (Perception or Survival) skill check, notice a pair of depressions, possibly caused by a cart or other wheeled vehicle, leading toward the barn.

Exceeding those checks by 10 or more permit a character to notice a recent splattering of dried blood along the edge of one of the tracks.

Characters that have played *Mission 4 (The Death)* from *DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)* recall a hidden passage opened to an underground complex somewhere near the barn but cannot find it because of the overgrowth.

2. The Barn

The outside of the barn is badly weathered and worn. Hinges have detached from the doors and boards are missing in places. The frame of the structure lists precariously.

Peeking between missing boards reveals that nature is reclaiming the interior of the barn, although the frame of a cart or wagon is stored inside. If the characters enter the barn, read:

Inside the weathered and dilapidated barn lies a macabre sight: a wagon contains the blood-splattered bodies of two recently slain half-elves, while the corpse of their horse, still attached to its reins, lies mutilated on the ground.

A **nalfeshnee** witnessed the characters approach and hid inside the barn. Nolo summoned it accidentally during his arcane experiments, but it decided to assist Nolo so that it can report what it learns about this scion of Graz'zt back to its master.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Replace the nalfeshnee with one **yochlol**
- **Weak:** Replace the nalfeshnee with one **erinyes**
- **Strong, Very Strong:** No change

Developments

The structure of the barn is crumbling, having succumbed to elements since the farm's abandonment. Any ranged or spell attacks that miss their intended target, as well as any damaging area of effect (excluding poison or psychic damage) spells damage the structure instead. See the **Collapsing Barn** sidebar for further details.

Collapsing Barn

Mechanical Trap (Levels 5-10 dangerous threat)

This trap is a hazard owing to the structure's current disposition. The nalfeshnee is aware of the structure's condition and takes only half damage on a failed save and no damage on a successful save. In addition, he cannot be rendered prone or restrained by the collapse.

Trigger. Twenty points of cumulative ranged or spell damage that misses its intended target or area of effect damage causes the structure to groan and shift slightly, resulting in the collapse of the roof. The barn is considered immune to poison and psychic damage.

Effect. All individuals within the barn must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one, and be knocked prone. Those that fail the save by 5 or more are also restrained, requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to free themselves. Once the barn collapses, the area within it, as well as all immediately adjacent squares, count as difficult terrain.

Countermeasures. After the first 15 points of damage are dealt to the barn, a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the structure may collapse if it sustains much more damage. Each use of the **mending** cantrip applied to the barn will erase the effects of 1d4 + 1 points of damage done to the structure.

Once the combat is over, characters searching the barn with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check discover a concealed stone trapdoor set into the ground. The trapdoor appears much older than the barn itself. If the barn has collapsed, the trapdoor has been damaged, reducing the DC by 5. Beneath the trapdoor is a steep staircase which descends about 20 feet into an underground passage.

Treasure

If the characters search the barn, they find a small leather drawstring pouch containing two rubies, each worth 200gp.

XP Award

If the characters prevented the barn from collapsing, award each character 200 XP.

3. The Gallery

Both doors to this room are unlocked and untrapped. When the characters enter the room, read:

This room has seen very recent use. Papers, written in varying scripts, litter the floor, as do many small open containers, identical to those from Goodroot Farms. In addition, an open crate of sealed beet dye sits in the room. Most remarkably, however, every square foot of wall space, from the ground to about seven feet from the floor, is covered in random scrawling and glyphs, all painted on the walls in deep red vegetable dye. Another door rests in the southeastern corner of the room.

Characters may use several different skills, including Arcana, History, Investigation, Perception, and Nature, to make sense of the various writings on the wall. Passing a DC 10 check reveals many unrelated passages written in the walls in here, in several different languages.

Those who pass an Intelligence (Arcana) check at DC 15 can tell that some of the writings are related to transmutation magic: in particular, rituals intended to produce changes in living creatures over a wide area. Several shorter passages relating to conjuration magic used to summon creatures from other realms pepper the walls as well.

Those who understand the ancient Netherese language, pass a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) skill check, or use the *comprehend languages* spell, note several passages that seem to reference movement through *time* in addition to movement through space.

None of what's written here, except the references to Netherese chronomancy, represent anything particularly revelatory to any practitioner or student of the arcane; it appears that a novice was trying to piece together spells or rituals by stringing together parts of common spells along with jumbles of arcane symbols: more the work of someone who did not fully understand what they were doing as opposed to any sort of master of the arcane mysteries.

Those searching the papers find most to be written in Common, penned recently, and referencing multiple, unrelated sources. Characters searching them can use **Handout 1** as a quick reference on the papers; there simply isn't enough time to read through all of them. These papers (excluding Nolo's personal journal) are the stolen papers Dark Linsa told the party about.

Developments

The hallway on the other side of the southern door of this room is also covered in red arcane writings from the floor to near the ceiling, much as the previous room was.

Treasure

The unopened bottles of beet juice dye are worth a total of 70 gp and can be used to dye up to seven full sets of canvas, cloth, or leather clothing bright red. Alternately, they are also quite safe to consume, having a mild, sweet taste.

XP Award

If the characters look through the discarded papers to gain insight on Nolo's actions, award each character 100 XP.

4. The Last Stand

The northern stone door to this room is locked and has AC 17, 27 hp, and a DC 15 lock. If the barn remained standing and the characters approach stealthily down the corridor—compare their Dexterity (Stealth) checks against Nolo's passive Perception—Nolo has a *lightning bolt* readied from the *ioun stone of reserve* orbiting his head, which he launches when the door opens.

Like the last two areas, the walls in here, as well as part of the floor, are covered in random scrawling, a series of jumbled arcane rituals. Containers of the red dye are also located here, along with more scattered papers. Most importantly, two fiendish creatures clad in plate armor, their skin bright-red with bat-like wings protruding from their backs, look to you. They are identical, down to the small purple stone orbiting their heads, except that one appears faded out, as if some incorporeal ghost or vision.

Nolo is a **cambion** with additional traits described in the *Adjusting the Encounter* sidebar, below. He starts the encounter having already summoned a

temporal ally (see sidebar, below) to assist in writing the rituals that Nolo attempts to piece together. If Nolo heard the barn collapse, he expects trouble and casts the *lightning bolt* spell from his *ioun stone of reserve* when the party opens the door.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are the guidelines for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak, Weak:** Increase the cambion's hit points to 143; give him an additional +1 bonus to all saving throws, skills, attacks, and spell save DC; give him a +2 bonus to AC (Nolo wears plate armor); increase the Fire Ray damage to 28 (8d6); Nolo cannot *plane shift* but does have a *ioun stone of reserve* that contains the *lightning bolt* spell
- **Weak:** Increase the cambion's hit points to 158; give him an additional +1 bonus to all saving throws and skills; give him a +2 bonus to AC (Nolo wears plate armor), attacks, and spell save DC; increase the Fire Ray damage to 31 (9d6) ; Nolo cannot *plane shift* but does have a *ioun stone of reserve* that contains the *lightning bolt* spell
- **Average, Strong, Very Strong:** Increase the cambion's hit points to 173; give him an additional +2 bonus to AC (Nolo wears plate armor), saving throws, skills, and attacks; increase his spell save DC by 3; increase the Fire Ray damage to 35 (10d6) ; Nolo cannot *plane shift* but does have a *ioun stone of reserve* that contains the *lightning bolt* spell

If the party surprises Nolo and wishes to speak with him instead of initiating combat, he happily explains that he escaped from the Zhentarim so he could teach himself magic. He wants to find or create others like himself.

If the party asks Nolo to explain what he means by "create," he explains has been experimenting with transmutation magic to create fiendish creatures, as he has been doing on a smaller scale in the area. Nolo attempts to use *fiendish charm* on the party members as they speak, targeting fighters or arcane spellcasters first. If a fight breaks out, Nolo summons a *temporal ally* as an action.

Temporal Ally

Nolo has managed to piece together part of an ancient Netherese ritual that allows him to summon a duplicate of himself from another point in time and bring him to the present. This duplicate appears within 30 feet of Nolo, is faded and ghostly in appearance, does not speak, and cannot be targeted or injured by attacks or effects. The temporal ally's personal equipment cannot be removed or interacted with by another creature. The temporal ally can, however, be dispelled as if it were a 5th level magical effect.

The temporal ally disappears if Nolo is reduced to 0 hit points or if Nolo spends an action to dismiss the temporal ally back to its proper point in time. While present, the temporal ally may choose to perform one of the following actions on Nolo's turn:

Switch Places: Nolo and the temporal ally may swap locations by teleportation, which does not provoke opportunity attacks, as long as the two of them are within 60 feet of each other.

Minor Fiendish Transmutation: The temporal ally may target one opponent with one of the following effects by reading a section of the magical script on the wall. As he does so, part of the writing on the wall flares and disappears. All effects are vestigial, cosmetic, and temporary, disappearing after 2d4 minutes. Characters targeted by the attack must succeed at a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or roll 1d12 on the following table:

- 1 Change in eye color and/or pupil shape
- 2 Sprouts antlers, horns, or spikes on head
- 3 Skin color changes to bright red or dark black
- 4 Vestigial bat-like wings sprout from the back
- 5 Spouts a tail (or an additional one)
- 6 Skin becomes covered in hair or scales
- 7 Ears become elongated and/or pointed
- 8 Grows a snout
- 9 Sprouts body spikes
- 10 Grows an extra vestigial limb
- 11 Takes on a physical characteristic of an animal
- 12 Grows tusks (or additional ones)

Developments

Nolo is considered native to this plane of existence for the purposes of the *banishment* spell.

When Nolo is reduced to 0 hit points, the following events occur in rapid succession:

- The *temporal ally* disappears.
- The writings on the wall related to conjuration magic disappear. As they do, Nolo loses his fiendish physical traits and starts to take on the appearance of an older human male, much to his apparent horror.
- The writings on the wall related to Netherese magic also disappear, with Nolo fading away as they do, finally disappearing completely when the last bits of Netherese disappear from the wall.

Treasure

Nolo wears a leather belt pouch containing a vial of *oil of slipperiness* and a *potion of clairvoyance* in addition to the *ioun stone of reserve* orbiting his head.

There is a total of 1,000 gp in various coins, gems, and trade bars gathered behind the door in the southeast corner of this room.

XP Award

Defeating Nolo is worth 10,000 XP.

Conclusion

The door on the southeastern corner of room 4 leads to a hallway containing Nolo's treasure hoard. This hallway eventually exits through portal 6 in **Mission 4 (The Death) of DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)**. If you have that adventure and characters have played it, they may follow this passage to find another way out. All treasure and creatures are gone from this further section and the statue trap mentioned in that adventure no longer functions.

Providing Nolo is either killed or captured and the party returns as many of the stolen papers as they can find, Dark Linsa makes sure the characters receive their promised award. Each character gains the **A Debt Owed** story award in addition to the **Hidey Hole** story award for discovering the fey'ri complex below the old Allano farm.

If the characters remain in the Hillsfar region for a short while after this adventure, they may be sought out by Erve, who is interested to find out what they can tell him about the child of Graz'zt.

If the party reports on the death of Eri and Tra to Bryan at Goodroot Farms, he is visibly upset but thanks the characters. If mentioned, he offers to buy back any remaining, unopened, containers of beet juice dye. If the characters wish to keep it, Bryan gives the party instructions for its use.

If Nolo was killed, the characters each have the same, strange dream on the second night following their visit to the old Allano farm:

Rumors of strange occurrences brought you to the Hillsfar region. But this is not Hillsfar as you currently know it. This is the Hillsfar of several years ago, with the old First Lord still in charge and non-humans barred from entering lest they wish to find themselves confined to the arena, fighting for their lives. Something is not right. Is this a memory?

You travel north on the Moonsea Ride, the often-used merchant road south of Hillsfar, which also navigates through expansive Cormanthor Forest. Others travel with or near you.

A muffled shout bursts from a copse of trees off the road, and an old human man wearing torn and bloody clothes staggers into view. The blood on his clothes comes from small cuts and scratches rather than any large wound. His charge toward you is slow, ponderous, and shaky. Before you can even draw weapons or ready spells, he collapses in the grass. He still shouts, however, although the words grow fainter and fainter with each passing moment.

As he dies at your feet, there is something familiar about the old man's face...

The old man's face is the same as Nolo's in the moment he became human and disappeared. The man's final words are contained in **Handout 2**. Characters that played **DDEX3-1 (Harried in Hillsfar)** will recognize these words, as well as the man himself, from the introduction to that adventure. Each character also gains the **Whispers of Madness** story award.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Acolyte	50
Commoner	10
Erinyes	8,400
Giant Scorpion	700
Nalfeshnee	10,000
Nolo	10,000
Priest	450
Wraith	1,800
Yochlol	5,900

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Not haggling over pay offered	100
Finding clues to Goodroot Farm	150
Saving farm workers	150
Preventing the barn collapse	200
Searching through Nolo's papers	100

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **4500 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **6000 experience points**.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Dark Linsa's payment	600
Vials of holy water (2)	25 each
Rubies (2)	200 each
Beet juice dye	70
Nolo's stash	1,000

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Ioun Stone of Reserve

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement), Magic Item Table G

This deep violet, almost indigo, translucent prism has a noticeable chunk broken off of one corner. When found, it contains the spell *lightning bolt*. While orbiting the owner's head, the stone emits a low buzzing, like an insect, which is only perceptible to the owner. This item can be found in **Player Handout 7**.

Oil of Slipperiness

Potion, uncommon, Magic Item Table B

The glass bottle containing this viscous black fluid has a label reading "XWXXX". This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Potion of Animal Friendship

Potion, uncommon, Magic Item Table B

The thick, brown fluid in this small clay pot resembles chunky mud and feels scratchy on the throat while being consumed. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Potion of Clairvoyance

Potion, rare, Magic Item Table C

When the cork protecting the fluid in this glass vial is removed, the user can hear faint, undecipherable whispers coming from the clear, yellow fluid within. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Downtime Activities

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn access to the following downtime activity:

Learn the Culture (Hillsfar). You may spend 5 downtime days (and the associated lifestyle cost) in Hillsfar touring the city and learning the history of the region. You gain advantage on any single ability check relating to the city of Hillsfar, the Red Plumes, the Great Law of Trade, or on any single attack against a fiendish or evil fey creature. More information can be found in **Player Handout 3**.

Story Awards

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

A Debt Owed. The Zhentarim appreciate your efforts. You may remove this story award from your log sheet in exchange for either of the following:

- You may remove the **In Dark Linsa's Pocket** story award from DDEX1-10, if you have it and you wish to do so.

- If you are a member of the Zhentarim, you may gain **one additional renown point**.

Otherwise, keep this story award and it may have other repercussions in the future.

Hidey Hole. You know of a long-lost fey'ri complex under an abandoned farm on the outskirts of Hillsfar. Before or after any adventure in Hillsfar (including any DDEX3-xx or HILL x-x adventure), you may spend downtime in the area and receive the benefits of a Modest lifestyle at no cost.

Whispers of Madness. Your dreams are occasionally haunted by visions of Nolo and an old human man wearing torn and bloody clothes that are somehow related. You gain the ability to read and understand spoken Abyssal (but not to speak or write it) if you do not already have it.

Renown

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Members of the Zhentarim that earn and elect to not take the **A Debt Owed** story award earn **one additional renown point**.

DM Reward

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG) for running a four-hour adventure.

Appendix. Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

Bryan Tusons (*BRI-un TOO-sunz*). Human foreman at Goodroot Farm. Bryan tends to the business of the farm while its owner, Constance Goodroot, is away. Bryan has worked on the farm for nearly two decades and is very protective of the farm and its owner.

Dark Linsa (*Dark LIN-sa*). Female grey-skinned half-drow rogue. Member of the Welcomers (Phlan Thieves' Guild) and the Zhentarim. Dark Linsa frequently serves as a messenger on behalf of the Zhentarim.

Erve (*ERF*). A male, human priest of Jergal serving at a Church to Waukeen outside of the city. Erve is very mild-mannered and has a subtle and seldom-displayed sense of humor. He is responsible for burials and internments at the church of Waukeen and keeps very detailed records of where individuals are buried and any requests to visit the crypts. When he learned about the Zhentarim's problems with a spawn of Graz'zt, Erve realized that his dealings with followers of Graz'zt must have been destiny preparing him to step up and offer what he has learned.

Nolo (*NO-lo*). AKA "Subject No. 10". A male cambion spawn of Graz'zt captured and raised by the Zhentarim; very intelligent, but also very chaotic in his behavior, Nolo is attempting to learn magic through brute-force casting of patched-together rituals and spells with no formal training. He is looking to use transmutation to create more creatures like himself (fiends), as he has not met others like him in his time with the Zhentarim, but he knows they must exist. He has also experimented with summoning fiends from other realms.

Appendix. Monster/NPC Statistics

Acolyte

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. Acolytes are a 1st-level spellcasters. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Acolytes typically have the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (3 slots): *bless*, *cure wounds*, *sanctuary*

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Cambion

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (scale mail)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6, Int +5, Cha +6

Skills Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fiendish Blessing. The AC of the cambion includes its Charisma bonus.

Innate Spellcasting. The cambion's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The cambion can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *alter self*, *command*, *detect magic*
1/day: *plane shift* (self only)

Actions

Multiattack. The cambion makes two melee attacks or uses its Fire Ray twice.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Fire Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Fiendish Charm. One humanoid the cambion can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the cambion's spoken commands. If the target suffers any harm from the cambion or another creature or receives a suicidal command from the cambion, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cambion's Fiendish Charm for the next 24 hours.

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Erinyes

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex+7, Con+8, Wis+6, Cha+8

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered.

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Hellish Weapons. The erinyes's weapon attacks are magical and deal an extra 13 (3d8) poison damage on a hit (included in the attacks).

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

Actions

Multiattack. The erinyes makes three attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 13 (3d8) poison damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. The poison lasts until it is removed by the *lesser restoration* spell or similar magic.

Reactions

Parry. The erinyes adds 4 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Erinyes must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Giant Scorpion

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages --

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The scorpion makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its sting.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). The scorpion has two sets of claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Nalfeshnee

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 184 (16d10 + 96)

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +11, Int +9, Wis +6, Cha +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The nalfeshnee has advantage on saving throws against spells and spell effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The nalfeshnee uses Horror Nimbus if it can. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (5d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Horror Nimbus (Recharge 5-6). The nalfeshnee magically emits scintillating, colored light. Each creature within 15 feet of the nalfeshnee that can see the light must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the nalfeshnee's Horror Nimbus for the next 24 hours.

Teleport. The nalfeshnee magically teleports along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Priest

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

Actions

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Wraith

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Yochlol

Medium fiend (demon, shapeshifter), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex+6, Int+5, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Deception +10, Insight +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal, Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Shapechanger. The yochlol can use its action to polymorph into a form that resembles a female drow or giant spider, or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

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

Spider Climb. The yochlol can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Innate Spellcasting. The yochlol's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The yochlol can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *web*

1/day: *dominate person*

Web Walker: The yochlol ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The yochlol makes two melee attacks.

Slam (Bite in Spider Form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. (10 ft. in demon form), one target.

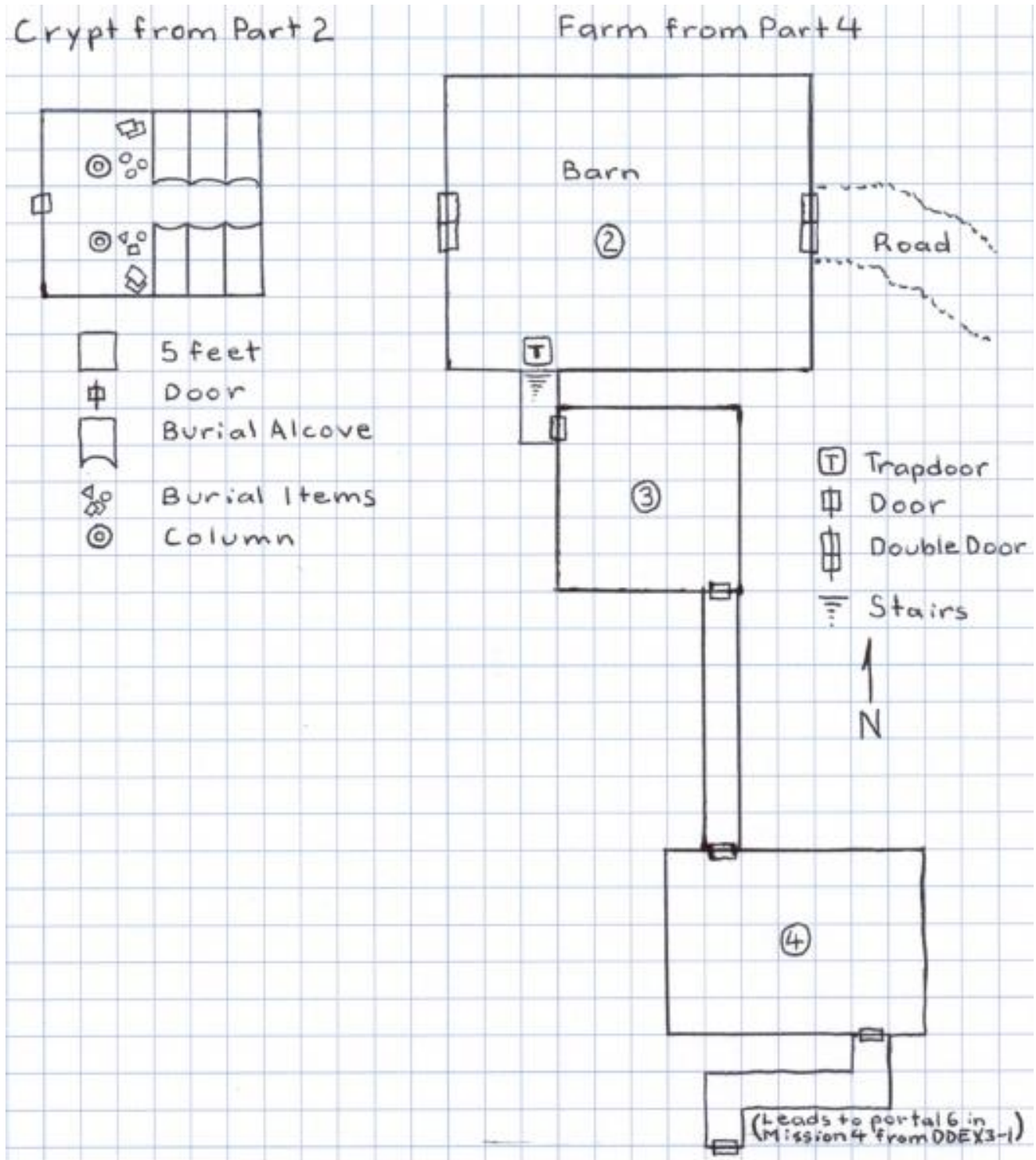
Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning (piercing in spider form) damage plus 21 (6d6) poison damage.

Mist Form. The yochlol transforms into toxic mist or reverts to its true form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is also transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

While in mist form, the yochlol is incapacitated and can't speak. It has a flying speed of 30 feet, can hover, and can pass through any space that isn't airtight. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to nonmagical damage.

While in mist form, the yochlol can enter a creature's space and stop there. Each time that creature starts its turn with the yochlol in its space, the creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target is incapacitated.

Appendix. Map



Handout 1.

Many of the papers scattered around the room appear to be pages from textbooks on conjuration and transmutation magic; specifically, magic used to summon creatures from other realms and magic used to transform creatures into different types of creatures. There are no spells or rituals contained on the pages, per se, but there are sections and elements that could be used to create such magic.

Several of the papers appear relatively new and are marked with a symbol of the Zhentarim. They seem to be selections from a report on “Subject: No, 10”; a half-demon offspring of the Dark Prince, Graz’zt, who seems to exhibit some of his paternal parent’s characteristics (although it does not elaborate on which qualities). The subject is described as difficult, conniving, and unable to be trusted.

Among the papers there is also a ragged journal, written in broken common by the unsteady hand of an individual complaining of his captivity and his weak, foolish captors who regularly observe and interrogate him. The author longs to find others like himself and promises revenge on his captors once he does so. Several scrawled arcane symbols that are repeated in sections imply the author was attempting to perfect his arcane script.

Several documents which appear to date back to the period known locally as “The Rage of Demons” describe a fiendish corruption that exists under Hillsfar, possibly related to the Dark Prince, Graz’zt. The unnamed author goes on to say that this evil influence from underground may be leaching into the earth itself and affecting things that grow in the regions around Hillsfar. It is suggested that materials grown around Hillsfar may have an amplifying affect if used for certain ritual preparations because of it, although further research would be necessary to confirm that suspicion.

If any of the characters can read *ancient Netherese* or use the *comprehend languages* spell, they also learn:

Several very old pages contain information on an odd type of magic the characters are unfamiliar with. It has elements similar to conjuration and divination, but seems to deal with the movement of creatures and things rather than just information through time itself, as opposed to space. The tracts seem to be nothing more than philosophical proposals, but are interesting nevertheless.

Handout 2. Dream Message

“There is a message from this land's new master, but it is hidden five-fold.

The first is at the place where dandelions rise above and cover the people. The virile and the virulent can be one and the same. The hell-tinged one is lost, and then several are found.

The second runs red with the blood of roots, where an heiress lies and hides her pain in long wooden boxes. She hides more than that though, but only to keep what is hers.

The third is at the spring of blessed life, where the hauntings protect and the protectors haunt. The water runs on, of course, and must be freed for all.

The fourth holds the great thundering beasts, but the beasts are gone, to give way to a greater thundering beast with death in its eyes. They await at a place of ancient elven evil.

The fifth lies where the ancients lie beneath night's marble, forgotten but not gone. The lost wealth of a forgotten time pays terrible dividends now.”

Handout 3. Downtime Activity

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn access to the following downtime activity. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

Learn the Culture (Hillsfar)

You may spend 5 downtime days (and the associated lifestyle cost) in Hillsfar touring the city and learning the history of the region. You gain advantage on any single ability check relating to the city of Hillsfar, the Red Plumes, the Great Law of Trade, or on any single attack against a fiendish or evil fey creature.

Handout 4. Story Award

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

A Debt Owed

The Zhentarim appreciate your efforts. You may remove this story award from your log sheet in exchange for either of the following:

- You may remove the ***In Dark Linsa's Pocket*** story award from DDEX1-10, if you have it and you wish to do so.

- If you are a member of the Zhentarim, you may gain **one additional renown point**.

Otherwise, keep this story award and it may have other repercussions in the future.

Handout 5. Story Award

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

Hidey Hole

You know of a long-lost fey'ri complex under an abandoned farm on the outskirts of Hillsfar. Before or after any adventure in Hillsfar (including any DDEX3-xx or HILL x-x adventure), you may spend downtime in the area and receive the benefits of a Modest lifestyle at no cost.

Player Handout 6. Story Award

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

Whispers of Madness

Your dreams are occasionally haunted by visions of Nolo and an old human man wearing torn and bloody clothes that are somehow related. You gain the ability to read and understand spoken Abyssal (but not to speak or write it) if you do not already have it.

Handout 7. Magic Item

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

Ioun Stone of Reserve

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

An *Ioun stone* is named after Ioun, a god of knowledge and prophecy revered on some worlds. Many types of *Ioun stone* exist, each a distinct combination of shape and color.

When you use an action to toss one of these stones into the air, the stone orbits your head at a distance of 1d3 feet and confers a benefit to you. Thereafter, another creature must use an action to grasp or net the stone to separate it from you, either by making a successful attack roll against AC 24 or a successful DC 24 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. You can use an action to seize and stow the stone, ending its effect.

A stone has AC 24, 10 hit points, and resistance to all damage. It is considered to be an object that is being worn while it orbits your head.

This vibrant purple prism stores spells cast into it, holding them until you use them. The stone can store up to 3 levels worth of spells at a time.

Any creature can cast a spell of 1st through 3rd level into the stone by touching it as the spell is cast. The spell has no effect, other than to be stored in the stone. If the stone can't hold the spell, the spell is expended without effect. The level of the slot used to cast the spell determines how much space it uses.

While this stone orbits your head, you can cast any spell stored in it. The spell uses the slot level, spell save DC, spell attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the original caster, but is otherwise treated as if you cast the spell. The spell cast from the stone is no longer stored in it, freeing up space.

This deep violet, almost indigo, translucent prism has a noticeable chunk broken off of one corner. When found, it contains the spell *lightning bolt*. While orbiting the owner's head, the stone emits a low buzzing, like an insect, which is only perceptible to the owner.

This item can be found on pages 176-177 of the **Dungeon Master's Guide**.