



Shiitake

the Talking Mushroom



As news of gruesome murders begin to die down within the walls of Hillsfar, reports of deaths in the farmland reach the Senate. Coincidences or is there a bigger evil behind all this?

A 2-Hour Adventures for Tier 2 Characters.

Optimized for APL 8.

CREDITS

Lead Designer: Jia Jian Tin

D&D Adventurers League Guildmaster: Chris Lindsay

Art Director & Graphic Design:

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D&D Adventurers League Wizards Team: Adam Lee, Chris Lindsay, Mike Mearls, Matt Sernett

D&D Adventurers League Administrators: Alan Patrick, Travis Woodall, Lysa Penrose, Claire Hoffman, Greg Marks, Amy Lynn Dzura.

Playtesters: Donnie Golden, Brian Smith, Diana Zuniga, Michael Douglass, Alejandro Gonzalez, Deidre Douglass

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Adventure Primer

*Velvet Parasol
Unfurled by autumn rain
Shiitake mushroom*

—Ed Harrison, Shiitake Haiku

Background

The madness of the demonlords died down after heroes of the realm banished them back to the abyss. However, their minions and cultists still linger around the area.

Recently, the cultist from each demonlord has been a little more daring. They have been spotting committing crime in daylight and more recently were involved in a series of murder within the walls of Hillsfar (CCC-SQC-03-01: Consumption).

While adventurers have managed to temporarily handle the crisis in the city. News of trouble outside the city walls reaches the ears of Sir Rexx Aaron III. Some old allies have agreed to attempt to handle to situation but it has proven quite the pickle. Thus, adventurers have been requested to aid with the issue.

Episode

This adventure has a total of four objectives, each taking approximately **one hour** to play. The adventure begins with the *Introduction* scene.

Episode 1: Introduction. This is the Call to Action. Character meet with Sir Rexx Aaron III to discuss the current issue plaguing the farmers outside the walls of Hillsfar.

Episode 2: A Talking Mushroom. Characters travel to the farmlands and investigate. Characters will discover the spreading of some form of madness and assist the Blackleaf Clan in defending the triage camp.

Episode 3: A Cure for A Friend. After discovering the location of the lab of the *Collector*, the characters travel to the Underdark to destroy this camp. .

Bonus Objective A: Goatee!. A farmer lost some of his goats! A young girl promised to get his goats back but he prefers to trust adventurers.

Bonus Objective B: Quintessence. Characters run into a strange group of Mindflayers who requested some help with slimes.

Episode Sequence

Depending on your time constraints, play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

How Will You Play?

The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

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

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

These can occur between any of the episodes but fit most naturally between the Secondary Objective and the Main Objective. They are most naturally added when the characters are moving between locations.

Adventure Hook

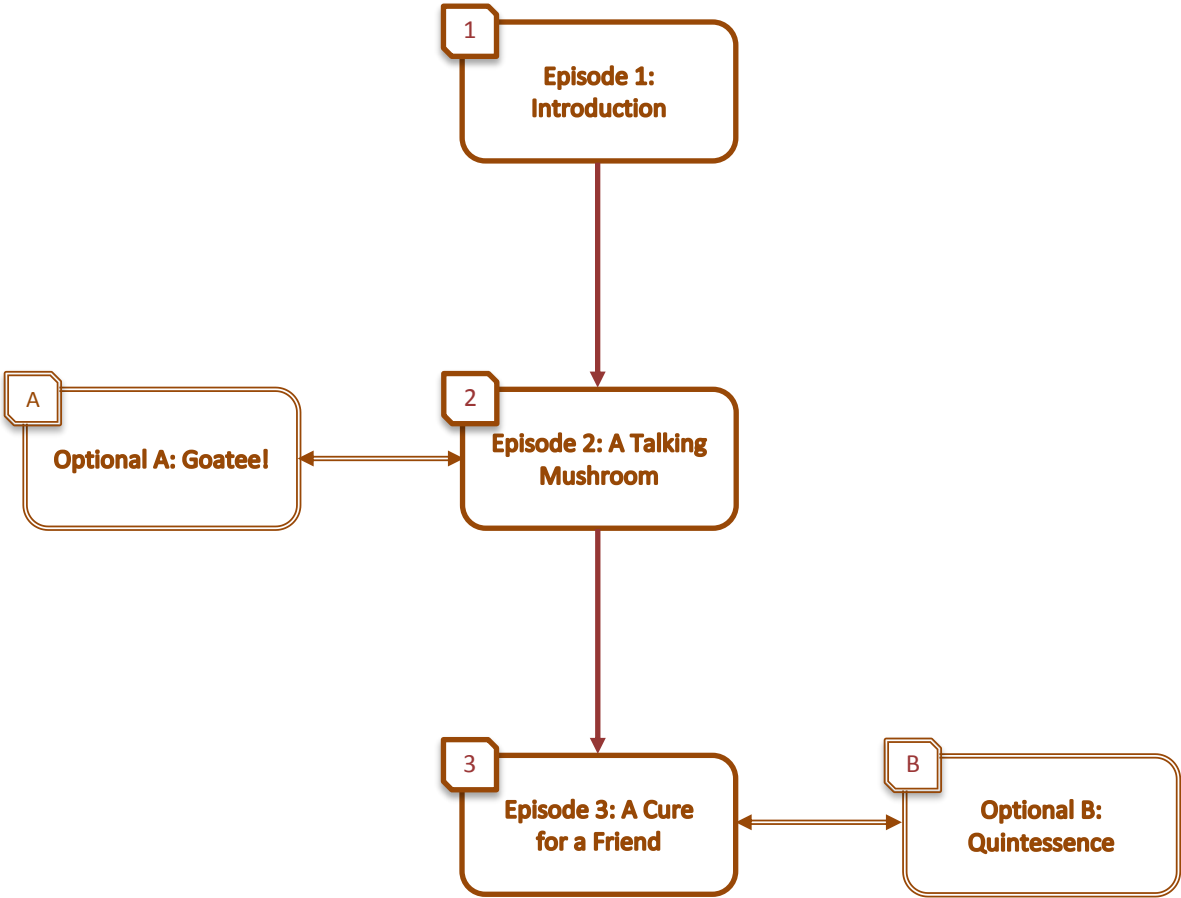
Consumption. Some adventurers may have completed CCC-SQC-03-01 Consumption and were staying in Hillsfar when Sir Rexx Aaron III request for aid.

Shiitake! Adventuring may be important but news of tasty shiitake mushrooms can be hard to resist for some. Of course, it wouldn't hurt to get paid while enjoying some tasty mushrooms!

Faction request. Characters with a faction are requested to aid Sir Rexx Aaron III. He was a hero during the Rage of Demon incident and though retired still have influence over some faction matters.

Local Folk Hero. Character's previous exploit in the region made them top candidates to be approached during this time of need.

Episode Flowchart



Episode 1: Introduction (Call to Action)

Meeting Senator Aaron

This chapter acts as the Call to Action and a simple introduction for the characters.

Played Previous Adventure. The characters are requested to continue the investigation regarding *the Collector*. Senator Aaron and Captain Tanheel beliefs the incidents are likely related.

Didn't Played Previous Adventure. Depend on which hook works best for the characters, they are either here to assist the faction/Senator Aaron or get revenge on the individuals responsible for ruining their Shiitake!

Area Information: Ledger Office

The area has the following features:

Dimension & Terrain. The Ledger Office is currently packed with stacks of papers. Geary the Ledgerman can be seen attending to a series of forms. The office is 100 ft. by 60 ft. There is a meeting table set up with Senator Aaron and Captain Tanheel seated at the table.

Lighting & Weather. The room is magical lit with bright light and kept warmth at a comfortable temperature.

Creatures/NPCs

Geary the Ledgerman. The Ledgerman family served First Lord Vuhm Yestral long before he was appointed the First Lord of Hillsfar. Strangely enough, all they did was handle the designing and processing of forms, a service widely undervalued in society, or at least that the opinion the Ledgerman family will often share. Geary is the only member of the family left (as far as anyone knows) and he currently acts as not only the town ledgerman, but also as the town crier. He wears a bright purple colored suit and brings a balloon the Bert's Potion Shop Logo everywhere he goes.

Objectives/Goals. Geary is to ensure characters fill out the correct forms, correctly.

What do They Know? Geary is not sure why the Senator or Captain Tanheel needs the characters. The forms require characters to discuss their adventuring experience, basic demographic information, and previous crimes. **Use this as an

opportunity to have characters introduced themselves.

Senator Aaron (Sir Rexx Aaron III). Sir Rexx Aaron III is an elected member of the Senate. He is a retired adventurer and was a prominent member of the Order of the Gauntlet. Senator Aaron uses his wealth from adventuring to help the farmers of Hillsfar. He is concern because the Red Plumes are busy cleaning up the mess caused by *the Collector* and has no time to address to issues outside the walls of Hillsfar.



Objectives/Goals. He is here to convince the characters the importance of protecting the villagers and farmers outside the wall.

What do They Know? Turtle and Qiao (from CCC-SQC-02-01 None the Wiser) are already assisting some druidic clan in minimizing the damage. Senator Aaron has paid for clerics and guards to assist with the triage effort there.

According to scouts, the villagers have been acting weird. Most of them have been throwing feast for no particular reason and have consumed too much food. Several deaths have been reported of villagers dying from consuming dirt or simply consuming too much food. Senator Aaron's experience with the demonlord convinces him that this is Jubilex's madness at play again. A farmer by the name of Adam Lance was the latest to have reported on these strange happenings just two days ago. Characters should visit him first for any information.

Senator Aaron provides the characters with one *Potion of Climbing* and one *Potion of Heroism*.

Captain Tanheel. Captain Tanheel is a Winterstalker of the Emerald of Encalve (Rank 4) and Captain of the ship Tymora's Luck. He is also the local contact for the Emerald of Enclave. Captain Tanheel leads the investigation into the strange fertilizers recovered from Ulrich's farm (CCC-SQC-01

the Woodland Sage) and has been trying to keep up with all the cultists' activities.

Objectives/Goals. To connect characters with the Blackleaf Clan druids and inform characters about what he knows.

<https://www.dmsguild.com/product/253214/NPCs-of-Hillsfar-Fresno-CCC>



What do They Know? The Blackleaf Clan has set up a triage camp between the villages. However, the number of sick villagers have been increasing and they can no longer keep up. The most recent correspondent informs the Captain about a talking myconid. The Blackleaf Clan has recently relocated their camp due to attacks from the cultist, the villagers should be able to direct you to their new location.

Based on investigations from previous adventurers (CCC-SQC-03-01: Consumption) and his own, Captain Tanheel is certain there is an outpost the cultist use from the Underdark. While the Collector has been killed, it seems there is some coordinated effort still happening in and around Hillsfar. If the characters can locate this outpost, collect necessary evidence of further activities and destroy the outpost! While Captain Tanheel has nothing to offer the characters, the Blackleaf clan has offered some of their magical secrets in return for aid.

Captain Tanheel offers to rent **Riding Horses** for any faction members and a discount to non-faction members (3 gold pieces per day). Alternatively, more frugal characters may ask for a squire with a half of a coconut in each hand to help mimic the sound of mighty galloping steeds.

Details about the NPCs can be found in the NPCs of Hillsfar document available for free (*Pay what you want*) on the DM's Guild. You can obtain the document at this link and add extra interaction to your game as required.

Episode 2: A Talking Mushroom

There are a total of three **Scenes** in this episode. Here is a summary of each scene and its sequence.

Scene A. Characters travel to one farm house and finds a family feasting. Resolving the conflict here, characters gains information about the potential culprit and is directed to **Scene B**.

Scene B. Characters travel to a neighboring farm house and resolves the conflict here. The characters then learn about the location of the triage camp and receives **Bonus Objective A**.

Scene C. Characters find the triage camp and meets from familiar faces (if they have played previous Fresno CCC). They are brought up to date on the situation and resolves a conflict here which leads them to **Episode 3**.

Prerequisites

Characters must complete **Chapter 1** before pursuing this Episode.

Main Objective A

Identifying the source of the problem in the farmlands.

Scene A: Lance Farmhouse

Characters arrives at the first farm house of Adam Lance and his family. Adam was the latest to report on the strange happenings around the farmland.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Farmland and Building. It is a small plot of land filled with corn. There are two buildings here, a farmhouse and a barn. Farming equipment is scattered all around the farm as if everyone just dropped their tools and stopped working.

The barn door are wide open with a feasting table set up. A group of eight humans surround it. The doors to the farmhouse is barred from the outside.

Feasting Table. Inside the barn a make shift feasting table is set up. Eight humans are seated around the table. Five of them look like farm workers while the other three are a small family (father, mother, and son).

Creatures/NPCs

Characters have the opportunity to interact with the following NPCs:

Adam Lance and Eva Lance. Adam and Eva are the owners of this small farmland. They are happily married and parents of Ida and Jayson, twelve and eight respectively. They hire farmhands from the village close by. Both of them have recently been inflicted with Jubilex's madness and can not stop feasting. They also encourage others to feast and will behavior aggressively if rejected. However, this is just the beginning of the feast, the farmhands confused but are appreciative of the gesture nonetheless.

Objectives/Goals. Adam and Eva wants to ensure everyone feast, until they die. They will invite the character to feast with them.

What do They Know? It is necessary to feast as to give thanks to the great blessed one! Their daughter is being a nuisance, claiming they have been inflicted by the demonlord's madness! They barred her in the house so she can not prevent others from enjoying themselves!

Jayson. Jayson is an eight-year-old human male and son to Adam and Eva. He is not sure why his parents are throwing a party, but he is enjoying it.

Objectives/Goals. Jayson enjoying food but is worried that mom and dad locked his 'sissy' in the house. He will occasionally bring up this matter and his parent will get angry and yell at him to not talking about that "disbeliever." After a few minutes of eating, Jayson will say he is full and Adam and Eva begin to attempt to grapple him and force feed him food.

What do They Know? Jayson doesn't know much. He knows their friend Shiitake has been acting weird lately but 'sissy' is the one that worries about things. He just listens to her stories.

Ida. Ida is a twelve-year-old human female and daughter to Adam and Eva. She is currently barred in the farmhouse. She is a well-educated girl, attending lessons at the local temple after finishing work at the farm. When interacting with adventurers, she carries herself with confidence and proudly shares that she will be an adventurer once she is old enough to leave home.

Objectives/Goals. Ida is trying to break out of the house and will try to seek help. If the characters fail to pick up any clues from the feast and the parents

aggression, Ida breaks out of the house and confronts her parents again.

What do They Know? Ida is aware of the demonlords influence and remember reading about the feasting madness. She tried to stop her parents but failed. Recently, she good friend Shiitake came to the farmhouse with mushrooms filled with dirt. Shiitake often travels around the villages selling tasty mushroom treats. However, this time they were filled with dirt and Shiitake had a mouth. Shiitake is a myconid from the Underdark.

Ida is aware of the triage camp set up somewhere in the region. She was trying to get her parents there when they shut her in the farmhouse. However, she does not know where the triage camp is but she knows Mr. and Mrs. Pennywise knows the location of the triage camp. She can guide the characters to Pennywise farmhouse is the characters help to subdue her parents and bring her parents to the triage camp.

Farmhands. The farmhands are hired from around the area. While Adam and Eva's actions are intolerable, the farmhands do not have the courage to step in. Most of them are shocked and stunned by the actions and the sudden change in mood around the feasting table.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Direct combat should not be an option here. Characters are expected to subdue using magic or grappling etc. If characters kill the father or the mother, award them the **Murderer** story award.

EXPLORATION

Characters can find all kinds of farm tools around the barn that could be helpful to them in this conflict. .

SOCIAL

While reasoning with the madness is impossible, rallying the farmhands and Ida to help out is easy. A simple **DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check** is enough to get them to do anything that doesn't put themselves in too much danger or harm the farm owners.

Scene B: Pennywise Farmhouse

As the characters arrive here, some oozes are attacking the farmhouse.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Farmland and Building. It is a relatively small and open farmland. Pennywise owns some cattle, sheep, and goats. The fence is broken by some ooze sending the animals fleeing all around the farmland. The building is slightly barricaded as some ooze approaches the farmhouse. A wererat and a tiefling child defends the farmhouse. The characters approach the farmhouse from the back and hears fighting occurring at the front of the house.

Creatures/NPCs

Characters have the opportunity to interact with the following NPCs:

Pennywise Family. The Pennywise family is a small halfling family who owns this piece of the farmland. Mr. Pennywise is afflicted with a mild **Juiblex** madness “I refuse to part with any of my possessions.” Returning the goats to him ends this effect. Alternatively, characters can cast *Great Restoration* on him. Though he still appreciates if the characters return the goats.

Objectives/Goals. Mr. and Mrs. Pennywise are trying to gather as much of their animals back. They can’t afford to lose too many of them. However, now they are throwing pots and pans at the oozes in an attempt to help Avariella and Micky fend off the slimy monstrosities.

What do They Know? There has been an increase in ooze attack which is strange. It is common to have bandits or wild beast attack the farmland but not oozes. Micky holds up well against bandits and wild beast as they can’t hurt him because of his curse but he had been injured fighting the ooze! Three of Mr. Pennywise’s favorite goats ran away a few days ago and he is extremely worried about them. He bought them from a round-belly Shou man who was passing through this area. The man had lots of flying cats, goats, and even some dinosaurs! A young girl wandered by and offered to retrieve the ‘goatees’ but has not yet returned. If the characters offer to find his goats for him, he will agree to leave his farmhouse for the triage camp and reward the

characters with one of his unique animals. (This is **Bonus Objective A**)

Avariella. Avariella is a young Tiefling child. She uses the statblock of an **Apprentice Wizard**. She is an orphan living around the farmland with her brother. Recently, the Pennywise family has taken them in.

Objectives/Goals. She and her brother are trying to protect their home from the invading ooze.

What do They Know? Avariella knows about the triage camp. She mentions a Shou lady there that was very nice to her and has checked in on the Pennywise family just a day ago. Mr. Pennywise has been very worried about his missing goats and refused to leave until they are found.

Micky. Micky is a human boy inflicted with the curse of lycanthropy allowing him to turn into a **Wererat**. He is an orphan like Avariella and considers her his sister. They wander the farmlands begging for food and shelter. When they are lucky, they get paid to do simple task. Recently, the Pennywise family has taken them in.

Objectives/Goals. Despite his curse, Micky is **Lawful Good**. He and his sister are trying to protect their home from the invading ooze.

What do They Know? Micky does not know how he got his curse. He also struggles to control his transformation ability often requiring him to be stabbed a few times before he changes into **Hybrid** form. He has found lycanthropy to be particularly useful to fight off bandits though he is still trying to improve his fighting skills. He is unsure what is causing the ooze attack recently but he knows he is struggling to defend the farmhouse. He would like to convince Mr. Pennywise to move to the triage camp as it is well defended but he wasn’t sure how well it would be received.

Oozes! There is one **Black Pudding** and two **Ochre Jellies** attacking the farmhouse. They attack whatever is most threatening to them. The oozes are currently engaged with **Micky**. If the characters do not catch their attention by attacking them in the first round of combat, the ooze consumes **Micky**. Avariella helps by casting *Firebolt* (1d10, +4 to hit) on her turn and Ida helps by casting *Scared Flames* (1d8; DC11). If **Micky** dies, both children freak out and stop participating in combat.

Slowly oozing around

Oozes have slow speed and are really meant to be engaged in tight narrow areas like the Underdark etc. Thus, some players may try to run away to create a distance between themselves and the oozes. If this happens, the oozes ignore the characters and attack Micky and Avariella instead. At the beginning of combat, Micky has 4 HP (AC 14 natural armor, max HP 30), Avariella is was full health (AC 14 mage armor, max HP 11). If either of the child dies because the character allowed the child to 'tank' the oozes, the clerics at the triage camp refuse to interact with the characters for the rest of the adventure.

Combat Balancing

Very weak: Remove the Ochre Jellies, Avariella does 2d10 damage instead.

Weak: Remove the Ochre Jellies

Strong: add one ochre jelly. Ida does not help in combat as she is too worried to engage the ooze.

Very Strong: Add two ochre jelly

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The characters fight the ooze

EXPLORATION

There isn't much to explore in this encounter. However, if the characters distract the ooze away from the farmhouse or does anything to make it safer for Avariella to engage the ooze, give her advantage on her attack rolls.

SOCIAL

There really isn't much to discuss with some mindless ooze

Scene C: The Triage Camp

The characters arrive at the triage camp under the direction of Avariella.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Triage Camp. The triage camp is located near an abandon temple familiar to those who met Turtle and Qiao before (*CCC-SQC-02-01: None the Wiser*). The camp consist of multiple large makeshift tents mostly filled with humanoids in different state. Some are mourning as if hurting, some have to be tied down as they scream and struggle, others lay catatonic on their bedroll. Some clergies from the city of Hillsfar are here helping including clerics from Bane, Lathander, Selûne, and Valkur.

Also here is Turtle, an elder turtle, he is currently tending to the sick in one of the triage tent. There are so some druidic looking humanoids passing herbs and soup around the tents. Most of them wear clothes made from dark green and black leaves. Some of them wear boots that leaves behind a trail of faintly sparkling dust that disappears almost immediately. All the boots are made of leaves have a faint light blue glow to it (similar to any Eladrin in winter mood; it is now winter time in Hillsfar).

Blackleaf Clan Tent. Another larger tent is set up a little further away from the triage camp. The tent is covered in dark green and black leaves. While there is no signs anywhere, anyone who knows *Druidic* see “Blackleaf Clan” written over the tent. Characters who had played *CCC-SQC-01 The Woodland Sage* recognizes the group automatically.

Unlike the triage camp, there are well-armed guards standing outside the camp. One can notice druids flying in and out of the tent bringing food and herbal medicine to the sick in the triage camp. All the flying druids wears the same light blue colored boots.

Creatures/NPCs in Triage Camp

Characters have the opportunity to interact with the following NPCs:

Turtle. Turtle is an older turtle that has been helping villagers whenever he can. Characters who played *CCC-SQC-02-01 None the Wiser* encounter him before. He is the adopted father of Qiao and both of them now travels the outskirts of Hillsfar providing aid to villages especially children.

Objectives/Goals. While his medical and herbalism knowledge is lacking, Turtle is a master of mindfulness and has been providing meditation sessions for villages who can participate.

What do They Know? If characters want more information, they should speak with Jorm or Qiao, they are more familiar with the situation around here.

The sick villagers. These villagers consist of different humanoids from around Hillsfar.

Objectives/Goals. They are trying to get treatment for injuries from ooze attack or manic love ones.

What do They Know? There has been an increase in ooze attack which is strange. The villagers usually deal with bandits and wild beast but Sir Rexx Aaron III often hires adventurers to deal with bandit camps in the region. Ooze though... they’ve heard stories of them consuming adventurers in the Underdark but never dreamed of encountering them outside there abyss.

Clerics of Bane. There is a hand-full of clerics from the Bane Temple here to assist with the effort.

Objectives/Goals. All the clerics are member of the *Zhentarim*. They are here to attempt to improve the image of Bane with the villagers. However, their main purpose here is to spy on the Blackleaf Clan and report back to Zhent.

What do They Know? Zhent doesn’t trust the Blackleaf Clan and Captain Tanheel and personally invited Zhent to spy on them if it eases his/her anxiety.

The Blackleaf Clan are holding a myconid prisoner. Strange enough it has a mouth, extremely unusual for a myconid. If the characters would like to approach it, be careful, its insults hurts.

The Clerics of Lathander are being a pain in the ass. They think because the people love them they could just boss the other clerics around? The Clerics of Bane would encourage the characters to ‘handle’ the Clerics of Lathander in exchange for secret information about *the Collector’s* lair. If the characters deal with the Cleric of Lathander by any means, the Clerics of Bane inform them that there is a secret entrance to some jail cells in the main chamber of the lab. This gives characters **advantage on ability checks** to identify the secret entrance in **Episode 3: Area B**. The clerics also inform the characters they are no longer handling minions of the Collector. Someone else has taken over and has a different approach to their overall goal.

Zhent is an NPC in Hillsfar that does not feature heavily in this module. Zhent is the point of contact for the Zhentarims in Hillsfar.

Details about the NPCs can be found in the NPCs of Hillsfar document available for free (*Pay what you want*) on the DM's Guild. You can obtain the document at this link and add extra interaction to your game as required.

<https://www.dmsguild.com/product/253214/NPCs-of-Hillsfar-Fresno-CCC>

Clerics of Lathander. There is a hand-full of clerics from the Temple Lathander here to assist with the effort. However, none of them appear to be assisting with anything.

Objectives/Goals. While the clerics came out to the villages with the intention to help, the love from the villagers quickly got to their head. Now they act like they are in charge of the whole operation and boss others around.

What do They Know? The other clerics are doing an acceptable job tending to the villagers. The Clerics of Lathander are nature leaders and it only make sense that they are overlook this operation.

The druids are strange backward folks using unknown medication and not trust divine powers.

Clerics of Selûne and Valkur. The clerics of Selûne and Valkur consist of younger members of the temple and some adventurers. Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** sense these clerics seem to be trying to avoid contact with the Clerics of Lathander.

Objectives/Goals. The clerics received news of trouble brewing in these villages and sent help to aid the villagers. If asked politely the clerics will provide one casting of *Mass Curing Wounds* (3d8 + 4) to heal the characters.

What do They Know? The Blackleaf Clan druids have been amazing at providing remedies for the madness. They have some type of herbal medication that appear to suppress the effects of the madness.

The Clerics of Lathander has been quite annoying, ordering the other clerics around and disrespecting the druids. Just the other day the Clerics of Bane had nearly had a fight with them but Jorm stopped them before anything happened. Someone should do something about it before innocents get hurt.

Druids of the Blackleaf Clan. Druids of the Blackleaf Clan consist of human and elven males and females. Most of them are rather busy helping the sick villagers here but the characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** feels frustration brewing among them that is not due to the madness outbreak.

Objectives/Goals. They deliver herbal medicine and check on the sick here.

What do They Know? The clerics have not been very appreciative of the druids work here. While the druids are the ones running the operations the Clerics of Lathander appears to think they are the boss and authority here, ordering the other clerics and the druids around.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

the Clerics of Lathander are **Warpriest**. Do remind the characters that killing the clerics would have consequences and they are fighting in the camp with innocent bystanders. If the characters kill one of the clerics, the druids and the other clerics does not talk to the characters anymore. The Clerics of Bane will not provide them the information promised if a cleric is killed. If the characters kill any bystanders, the other clerics will join the fight and kill the characters. Use the **Warpriest** statblock for all other clerics as well (A total of nine more Warpriest).

EXPLORATION

There isn't much to explore around here beyond interacting with the NPCs. If characters would like to assist, have them roll **Wisdom (Medicine) or other appropriate rolls at a DC 15**. If they succeed, award them inspiration.

SOCIAL

The characters can choose to use words instead of muscle to talk the clerics out of their bad behaviors. They must succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation) check**. A DC 11 if the characters have already knocked one cleric out. Anyone with the **Murderer** story award from CCC-SQC-02-01 None the Wiser has disadvantage on all Charisma based skill checks.

Creatures/NPCs in Blackleaf Tent

Characters have the opportunity to interact with the following NPCs:

Jorm Eisle. Jorm Eisle is a druidic priest and leader of the Blackleaf Clan. The Blackleaf Clan was a peaceful group that has often partnered with the Emerald Enclave faction to help preserve the flora, fauna, and wildlife around Hillsfar. The Blackleaf Clan were once outlawed in Hillsfar after they attacked the Ulrich estate, though later they were cleared of wrong doing when a slavery ring was discovered there. Jorm currently works closely with Turtle and Qiao to repair the image of the Blackleaf Clan. Characters who played CCC-SQC-01 *The Woodland Sage* recognizes Jorm.

Objectives/Goals. When Jorm heard of the madness spreading in the outskirts of Hillsfar, he saw this as an opportunity to serve some of the people his clan has hurt during their assault of the Ulrich estate.

Jorm offers to teleport them to the teleportation circle. He informs them to seek any ingredient used to create the madness. His druids should be able to reserve engineer a cure. He provides the characters with two vials containing herbal medication that can temporary suppress the effects of madness.

What do They Know? Jubilex's cultist is responsible for these madness. The camp has already been attacked by cultist and ooze and there has been an increase in number of attacks on the camp in the past week.

The Blackleaf Clan are good friends with Turtle and Qiao. They have guide the clan back to a more peaceful way. They are also great friends with Shiitake, a myconid cook that has provide them with amazing food. However, the madness seems to have affected Shiitake and it appears he is dying. The madness appears to be related to the mushrooms and oozes if only the characters could find out where the lab is and retrieve some sample the druids can probably make some potion to cure the madness. The druids are willing to share their knowledge to make flying boots with the characters.

Shiitake appears to be dying. He is one of the earliest to suffer from the madness so Jorm fears all the other villagers will soon die as well. He does not understand how the Senate and the people of Hillsfar can sit idle while people outside the walls die! (Jorm does not know about the incidents in CCC-SQC-03-01 *Consumption* where people inside the wall were suffering too. If informed, he will be a little more understanding.)

Qiao. Qiao is a Shou woman with demonic looking eyes. She is a tainted human meaning she has demonic features. The previous Red Plume cut her tongue out however adventurers restored her speech in CCC-SQC-02-01 *None the Wiser*. If any one of the characters were the one who helped her, they have advantage on any Charisma check with Qiao.

Objectives/Goals. Qiao is here to help defend the camp and protect the innocent here.

What do They Know? Incidents like these started happening nearly six months ago though there were few and far between. However, about months ago, so many came to seek help that they could no longer keep up. Karl Davion and Captain Tanheel offered to provide help with Karl providing gold to set up the camps and contacting clerics while Captain Tanheel contacted the Blackleaf Clan who came immediately.

Shiitake was a myconid who would sell spices and tasty mushroom around the villages. Qiao has been busy keeping up with villagers needing help and hasn't seen Shiitake for a while. It saddens her to see him so rude when he was a very kind and loving mushroom. Now he just goes around insulting anyone he sees.

Qiao found a map detailing the location of a "base" in the Underdark from some cultist she beat up a couple of days ago. The cultist she interrogated spoke about some strange Mindflayers disrupting their plans. The map also details a teleportation circle nearby that cultist use to travel quickly between the two locations.

Shiitake. Shiitake is a very talkative mushroom that enjoys cooking. He sells tasty shiitake mushrooms. For the villagers around Hillsfar, he was a pleasant sight especially because people who didn't want to talk to him could just not inhale his spores which allows communication. Unfortunately for them, Shiitake has grown a mouth... somehow. The madness has driven him a little crazy and he wouldn't stop insulting anyone he sees. All his insults are also *Vicious Mockery* at Tier 3 (3d4; DC17).

Objectives/Goals. Insult everyone he sees. Shiitake will answer questions but will always throw an insult or two first.

What do They Know? The great Jubilex is coming to set us free! The mushrooms are from the Underdark, they are common mushrooms found around the region that are not very tasty. However, adding dirt to it making it one of the best dish in this plane! Shiitake does not know how he got his mouth

but he is certain it is due to the blessing of the great one!

Workplace Bullying

The purpose of the scene with the cleric is to add play time and have an additional time sink for the adventure. If you are running on a limited time schedule or if character spent a lot of time with Shiitake, you can skip that part.

During playtesting, some parties enjoyed Shiitake and spent a large amount of time there. Others got the information and just moved on rather quickly.

Episode 3: A Cure for a Friend

There are a total of five **Scenes** in this episode. Here is a summary of each scene and its sequence.

Teleportation Circle. Characters arrive at the cult's teleportation circle in the Underdark and are greeted by some mind flayers who offer to help the characters, if they agree to cooperative as well.

Area A. Entrance to *the Collector's* lair involved traveling through a small stream where characters are engaged by from oozes.

Area B. The main lab of *the Collector* though it is clearly abandoned, however, some cultist are still left here. Maybe they have an idea for a cure?

Area C. Unfortunately the cultists left behind are too crazy to help and continued exploration is necessary. Characters locate some prisoners who are able to assist with creating the cure.

Area D. Some ingredient required are contained here. Unfortunately *the Collector* has also prepared a surprise for the adventurers here.

figured out a plan to contact the people of Hillsfar until the characters conveniently ran into them. The Thoon Mind Flayers informs the character they need some help retrieving their package that is infested with oozes as their abilities are less effect with oozes. In return they offer to help the characters assault *the Collector's* lair. If the characters are interested in this offer, process to **Bonus Objective B**. The Mindflayers assist by stunning all the enemies but the Ooze Master automatically makes this saving throw.

The Mindflayers don't actually need the characters help to fight the ooze. They are merely 'testing the water' to see how cooperative humanoids from the surface world would be.

Teleportation Circle

Characters arrive here after Jorm teleports them here according to instructions found on the cultist map.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Teleportation Room. The area is a small cave just enough to fit the circle. Creatures have to crawl through a small tunnel to get out of this small cave. It is well hidden from others.

Surprisingly there is three **Mind Flayers** here. One of them is snacking on one of the cultists while the other two are studying the small cave. As the characters arrive, they seem excited to discuss a potential cooperation. There are ten dead cultists here, which gives the characters an idea of how powerful the mind flayers are.

Creatures/NPCs

Characters have the opportunity to interact with the following NPCs:

Thoon Mind Flayers. This is an inquisition of Thoon Mind Flayers. They are traveling here to attempt to negotiate access to the Hillsfar Mages' Guild Library in exchange for their knowledge and assistances in the future. However, they have not

Area A

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Shallow Stream. The area is a shallow stream that is considered difficult terrain. The water comes from the dark lake and thus is dark and hard to notice the bottom of the stream. The water is ankle deep for most of the travel. The characters have to travel on feet for about 30 minutes before arriving to this area. The water reaches knee deep here. If the mind flayers are present, they are wary of possible ambush by oozes, this gives characters advantage on Wisdom (perception) checks to spot hidden oozes.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Black Pudding. Multiple Black Puddings hide in the darkness of the stream waiting to surprise adventurers. Characters must pass a **DC 15 Wisdom (perception) check** or be surprised by the first Black Pudding attacking them.

Not the brightest bulb

The Mindflayers' mindblast is at a DC23, thus, none of the creatures here can make the saving throw and will be permanently stunned. If you are short on time, handwave this combat. Otherwise, let your players have some fun.

Combat Balancing

Very weak and weak: Remove the third wave.

Strong and Very Strong: Add an extra Black Pudding to the third wave.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Characters fight the Black Pudding. There are three waves of ooze, each wave consisting of one Black Pudding.

EXPLORATION

Exploration isn't really an option here.

SOCIAL

Not sure why characters would try to negotiate with oozes but I had players tried this before...

Area B

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Large Room. See *Appendix 4* for dimension. This room has tables and papers all over the place. At first glance, it may seem that characters have found a gold mine of information, it quickly becomes clear the cultist have already destroy most of the information in this lab. If the mind flayers are with the characters they warn the character about the number of cultist in this room (See balancing). There are alchemical ingredients here including three *Alchemist Fire*. A group of cultist are destroying paper documents, throwing them into a barrel.

The entrances and exits of this room become sealed by magical as rocks move to seal the characters in this room with the cultist and the Ooze Master. The mindflayers are trapped outside. As combat begins, air is sucked out of the room. On the first round of combat, the characters must hold their breath. They can hold their breath for minutes equal to their Constitution modifier. After the first round, if the character speaks or cast spells requiring verbal component, they lose their breath and will drop to 0 hitpoints after a number of turns equal to their Constitution modifier. This effect is here to complicate the combat especially when the character have the mindflayers to assist them.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Jubilex Cultist. Five cultists are here destroying documents (use *Gladiator* statblock). Three of them stop and attack the characters the moment they notice the character while the other two continue to destroy the document.

Black Pudding. There is a black pudding locked in the barrel to destroy documents. The cultist will let the Black Pudding out if they are engaged in combat. Cultists destroying documents continue to

run back and front from the paper stacks to the pudding.

Ooze Master. An ooze master is also here supervising the operations.

Objectives/Goals. If the characters are not immediately aggressive towards the group, the Ooze master tries to discuss its leader's plan (without giving much detail) to buy time for the cultist to destroy more documents. The ooze master focuses on maximizing their ability to destroy documents here.

What do They Know? The ooze master knows and is willing to disclose the following information. He thanks the characters for destroy the Collector, it only makes his "master's" plan. His master has a great plan and the characters are mere pawns in this complex game of chess. He insults the characters' intelligence at every opportunity. There is nothing the character can do to stop the great plan. If the character suggest Jubilex will be stopped, the ooze master laughs at them stating, "You fools don't even know who is moving the pieces."

If the party earns the Mindflayer's favor, their mindblast stuns the all the cultist. The ooze master becomes much less confident but will still fight to his death.

Without the mindflayers' help, the characters find documents in the lab describing the creation of a special poison fused with faerzress.

If they have the aid of the mindflayer, the Thoons warn that once upon a time, a group of mindflayers experimented with oozes, giving them the power to assault the mind instead of the body. This 'gave the ooze capability to control their victims like puppets. This information is important in CCC-SQC-03-03, so have character record this information down.

Combat Balancing

Very weak: Remove two Gladiator

Weak: Remove one Gladiator

Strong: Add another Gladiator

Very Strong: Add an extra Black Pudding and a Gladiator

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Characters fight the cultist.

EXPLORATION

A DC 20 Intelligent (investigation) check reveals a hidden door to Area C.

SOCIAL

The cultist are not too sane and will not surrender.

Area C

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Rest Area and Cells. See *Appendix 4* for dimension. The smaller areas here are used as resting areas by the cultist. However, most of them are outside in Area B. The two jail cells holds a member of the Blackleaf Clan and a deep gnome.

If the main door is used, it sounds a bell that alerts the cultist to the characters presence. However, if the secret entrance is used the character gain a surprise round on the cultist, unless the characters does something to alert them.

If the mind flayers are with the characters, they inform the characters there are two more experienced cultist in this area.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Jubilex Cultist. Two cultist are here guarding the prisoners and preparing them for transport (use *Gladiator* statblock). They attack the character on sight. **The mindflayers can stun them and negate this combat as well.

Blackleaf Clan member, Amber. Amber is a human female. She was 'captured' during one of the raids. She had attempt to sneak into the cultist camp by being captured. She is currently mad and is trying to consume anything and everything. The characters have to cure her madness to get any information out of her.

What do They Know? Jubilex's cultist is stores most of the ingredients in Area D. She witness them mixing the liquid to spread the madness. She tried to steal some of the mushroom that was soaked in the liquid hoping to return to camp to find a cure. Instead she immediately became mad which indicates the madness can spread by touch.

Deep Gnome. The deep gnome is just a vessel for an intellect devourer that the Thoon Mind Flayer placed here.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Characters fight the cultist.

EXPLORATION

Search the area, the characters find one *Potion of Greater Healing* and a *Spellscroll of Aid*.

SOCIAL

The cultist are not too sane and will not surrender.

Area D

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Mushroom Stockpile. See *Appendix 4* for dimension. That area contains piles and piles of purple glowing mushrooms. Any character that touches these mushroom directly must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become stunned. Characters have to get creative at retrieving some of the mushrooms here for the Blackleaf Clan.

As the characters get close to the mushroom piles, a *Glyph of Warding* is set off. All characters inside the room must make a **DC 17 Dexterity saving throw** or suffer 28 (8d6) fire damage or half as much on a success. The Black Pudding in the room must make this saving throw as well.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Black Pudding. There is a Black Puddings in this area. It attacks the characters once the glyph goes off. **You can skip this combat if you are short on time.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Characters fight the ooze.

EXPLORATION

Searching the room, characters can find tools to pick up the mushroom safely.

SOCIAL

Once again... who would negotiate with oozes....

Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

Upon returning to the Blackleaf Clan tent, Jorm immediately order their top herbalist to study the mushrooms. With the help of Amber's knowledge and the mushroom they discover a cure within days to cure all the villagers. However, the characters must help with the study of the cure by making a Intelligent (Nature, Medicine, or Herbalism Kit) roll at DC 20 in order for the cure to be created quick enough to safe Shiitake. If the characters secured the strange substances from the Thoon Mindflyer, this roll can be ignored.

As promised, Jorm shares the secret to creating the special *Winged Boots* with the characters. After a few days, the characters receive a mail from Shiitake who shares the knowledge of creating a special spice pouch with the characters for helping safe his life.

The Senate meets and discuss the implication of giving access to the Thoon Mind Flyer. In the end, the First Lord decides to allow the Mind Flyers to stay and use the library if they promise to help protect the city if it were to come under attack during their stay. The Thoons agree to the conditions presented to them.

If characters completed **Bonus Objective A**, Mr. Pennywise presents them with a pet squirrel. One character receives the **Crazy Squirrel (Paladin)**.

Any character who sacrificed at least one of their fate to the Thoons, receives the **Time is of your essence** story award.

Adventure Rewards

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

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

- **Story Objective A:** Assist in the defending on the triage camp.
- **Story Objective B:** Destroy the Collector's lab.
- **Bonus Objective A:** Help Mr. Pennywise find his goats.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Help the Thoon Mindflayers secure the portal to the Far Realms.

Player Rewards

The characters earn the following player rewards for completing **the main objectives**:

Magic Item Unlock

Winged Boots: This pair of boots is crafted by magically fusing leaves from the Comanthar forest and ancient magic that still lingers around Myth Drannor. The wearer of the boots leaves behind a trail of faintly sparkling dust that disappears almost immediately. The leaves on the boots changes color according to the season of the region. This item can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Heward's Handy Spice Pouch: This item can be found in **Appendix 7**.

Story Awards (Appendix 8)

Time is of your essence: You have assisted the Thoon Mind Flayers to acquire a strange substance they call quintessence. Aiding the mysterious creatures may yield dividend in the future. You would hope...

Crazy Squirrel (Clerics): Dress in clergy robes with a red symbol of the Raven Queen glowing. If *Speak with Animal* is used to communicate with it, it says it

is a Cleric of the Raven Queen and is here to smite undeads!

This Crazy Squirrel functions as a pet, does not contribute to combat, or provide any benefit beyond its adorableness!

Consumables (Appendix 9)

Potion of Climbing: When you drinking this potion, you gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour. During this time, you have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks you make to climb. The potion is separated into brown, silver, and gray layers resembling bands of stone. Shaking the bottle fails to mix the colors.

Potion of Heroism: For 1 hour after drinking it, you gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour. For the same duration, you are under the effect of the *bles* spell (no concentration required). This blue potion bubbles and steams as if boiling.

Dungeon Master Rewards

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

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

Appendix 1: Creature Statistics

This appendix details monsters that are encountered in this adventure

Blackguard

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throw Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common and Undead

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The blackguard is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The blackguard has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *protection from evil and good*, *thunderous emite*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *find steed*

3rd level (2 slots): *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*

Actions

Multiattack. The blackguard makes three attacks with its glaive or its shortbow.

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

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Dreadful Aspect (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The blackguard exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the blackguard must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from the blackguard, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Black Pudding

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (–3)	16 (+3)	1 (–5)	6 (–2)	1 (–5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amorphous. The pudding can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage.

The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Reactions

Split. When a pudding that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new puddings if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new pudding has hit points equal to half the original pudding's, rounded down. New puddings are one size smaller than the original pudding.

Gladiator

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the gladiator hits with it (included in the attack).

Actions

Multiattack. The gladiator makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Reactions

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

Ochre Jelly

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amorphous. The jelly can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Reactions

Split. When a jelly that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new jellies if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new jelly has hit points equal to half the original jelly's, rounded down. New jellies are one size smaller than the original jelly.

Tyrannasaurus Rex

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 136 (13d12 + 52)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 18

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The tyrannosaurus makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. It can't make both attack against the same target.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the tyrannosaurus can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

War Priest

Medium humanoid, any alignment

Armor Class 18 (Plate)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throw Con +6, Wis +7

Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, scared flame, spare the dying*
1st level (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, silence, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, crusader's mantle, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians, water walk*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, mass cure wounds, hold monster*

Actions

Multiattack. The priest makes two melee attacks.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Guided Strike (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The priest grants a +10 bonus to an attack roll made by itself or another creature within 30 feet of it. The priest can make this choice after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.

Ooze Master

Huge undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 9 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12+60)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	1 (-5)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +7, Insight +4

Damage Resistances lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities acid, cold, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft.

Languages Common, Primordial, Thayan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Undead Nature. The ooze master doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the Ooze Master or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 9 (2d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon that hits the Ooze Master corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition that hits the Ooze Master is destroyed after dealing damage.

The Ooze Master can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

Instinctive Attack. When the Ooze Master casts a spell with a casting time of 1 action, it can make one pseudopod attack as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. The Ooze Master is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): acid splash, friends, mage hand, poison spray

1st level (4 slots): charm person, detect magic, magic missile, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, Melf's acid arrow, suggestion

3rd level (3 slots): fear, slow, stinking cloud

4th level (3 slots): confusion, Evard's black tentacles

5th level (1 slot): cloudkill.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (3d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) acid damage.

Reactions

Instinctive Charm. If a creature the Ooze Master can see makes an attack roll against it while within 30 feet of it, the Ooze Master can use a reaction to divert the attack if another creature is within the attack's range. The attacker must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature that is closest to it, not including itself or the Ooze Master. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target. On a successful save, the attacker is immune to this Instinctive Charm for 24 hours. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect.

Appendix 2: Bonus Objective A – Goatee!

Prerequisites

Characters must assist the Pennywise family and accept the task to find Mr. Pennywise's missing goats in *Episode 2*. This Bonus Objective can be attempted anytime, even after the completion of *Episode 3*.

Bonus Objective A

Locate the three missing goats.

Scene A

Characters follow the tracks of the little girl and goats. The muddy road made it fresh even though the goats have been gone for days. The characters arrive at a mountain and the track are seen headed up.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Dimension and Terrain. The earlier hike is easy but after about 30 minutes of hiking the characters encounter and unexpected snow storm. Strong winds make it difficult to see ahead of them. The storm appears nature.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Goliath Tribe. After travelling for about 10 minutes in the snow storm the characters run into a friendly tribe of Goliaths native to the area. They have a small camp established here. There is a total of eight Goliaths tending to different task within the camp. The characters also spot three goats kept in cages. One of the goats is unconscious, one of the goats is jumping uncontrollably, and the final goat is screaming but muffled by the heavy leather placed over the cage. One of the Goliath is also cooking something that smells amazing.

Objectives/Goals. The Goliath live here. Currently they are to take care of the three goats until the "Greatest of All Time" returns.

What do They Know? If asked about the goats, the Goliath states the "the Greats of All Time" came to retrieve them but she is now on another mission

to tame the "mighty dragon" at the top of the mountain.

Who is this "Greats of All Time?" Only the mightiest of adventurers of course. She has slayed many with her bloodied kitchen knife!

If the characters asked for some food the Goliaths would share their meal. The meal is very tasty and the hot soup is amazing in this cold weather. Characters who partake in the meal can spend their hit dice to recover health. The Goliath request the characters not cast any spells while in the camp. They will not allow the characters near the goats because the "Greatest of all Time" has instructed them to protect the goat. The Goliath are willing to provide the party with cold weather gear and other equipment is they need to continue their journey. However, if the party is rude or attempts to steal the goat, the Goliaths attack them. Use the *Gladiator* statblock for the Goliaths.

Scene B

After resting at the Goliath's camp the characters can continue their hike to the top of the mountain.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Dimension and Terrain. The snow here thins but it remains cold. The peak of the mountain has a small opening and then a cave. A little girl sits outside the cave holding what looks like a leash that extends into the cave. She is calling out to her "goatee" but characters hear a loud roar instead. A *DC 13 Intelligent (nature) check* reveals it is definitely a dinosaur but a DC18 check reveals it is most definitely a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Elisande. Elisande sits outside the cave waiting for her new found goat. She becomes excited when the characters arrive and exclaim that they should play with her goat before tugging on her leash. When she does this a *Tyrannosaurus Rex* rushes out of the cave and breaths blue flame on the characters.

Tyrannosaurus Rex. This beast lives here in the cave until Elisande came and put a collar on it. It has been mutated by living near fearzress for a long time. This gives it a 60 feet blue fire breath once per day. Characters must succeed on a DC13 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 42 (12d6) fire damage, half as

must on a success. The spine of the T-rex glows blue from its tail to its head before it releases the breath giving characters advantage on their saving throw.

Characters only need to reduce the T-rex to below 50 hit points before Elisande stops them and agrees to leave with her new found 'goat.' Anyone that points out the T-rex is not a goat gets stabbed for 1

.

piercing damage and 42 (12d6) necrotic damage.

Elisande always hits but never scores a critical hit.

Once the T-rex is below 50 health, Elisande stops the fight and says she's ready to leave. She tells the party they are allowed to have the "little babies" as Elisande has found her goats

Appendix 3: Bonus Objective B – Quintessence

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this common magic

Prerequisites

Characters agree to assist the Thoon Mind Flyers in in *Episode 3*. This Bonus Objective can be attempted anytime, even after the completion of *Episode 3*. However, this also means the characters does not gain the benefit of having the Thoon Mind Flyers with them in *Episode 3*.

Bonus Objective B

Assist the Mind Flyer to recover their belongings.

Scene A

The Thoons lead the characters to small cave.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Dimension and Terrain. The area in a small cave with some Black Puddings in them. There appears to be a box in a corner of the cave and the Black Pudding seem to be protecting it.

Creatures/NPCs

These creatures or NPCs are in this area.

Black Pudding. Four Black Pudding guards the box from any intruder. They await the return of other cultist but the cultist are already dead.

Combat Balancing

Very weak: Remove two Black Puddings

Weak: Remove one Black Pudding

Very Strong: Add an extra Black Pudding



Thoon Mind Flyer. The Thoons are powerful enough to destroy these black puddings but they are interested to test the willingness of the characters to assist with small matters.

Objectives/Goals. The Thoon are trying to test the characters' willingness to assist them. Once the characters have destroyed the black puddings, they reveal their true purpose here.

What do They Know? The vials in the box are quintessence. A special substance created from the essence of creatures destined to do great things. The substance allows psionics to manipulate time, a powerful but dangerous ability guarded by the Thoons.

They are an inquisition of Thoon Mind Flyers. An inquisition is only sent out when a grave danger threatens the existence of the collective group. An unstoppable beast is in the area and the Thoon Mind Flyer would like to gain access to the Mages' Guild library to study the area around Hillsfar to identify its location.

The Thoon states one vial of quintessence can prevent Shiitake from dying as the characters create the cure for the madness. If the characters are willing to sacrifice some of their fate/destiny for the Thoons to create this substance, the Thoons will reward them in the future. Characters have to sacrifice their fate, meaning if they were destined to accomplished something, that is now lost. However, the characters have no control over what part of their destiny is consumed in this process. Each great person, such as the adventurers, are destined to do many great things so sacrificing some of them is ok. The Thoons will not let any individual characters sacrifice more than fifty percent of their fate/destiny.

Designer's Note

Mechanically, sacrificing a character's fate has no mechanical effect whatsoever. This is purely a roleplaying hook for characters to roleplay with the mystery of the subjects itself. As the Thoons explain, creating quintessence consumes one of their fate, something they were destined to accomplish. It does could potentially deprived them of their age but once again, that is up to the characters to roleplay.

Quintessence can be used to stall time. If an object is covered in quintessence, it is lost in time. For example, if a love one is poisoned and dying, covering them in quintessence would stop them from dying and aging. But covering an entire humanoid would take a lot of quintessence. It could be used to preserve ancient artifacts. Beyond that, it

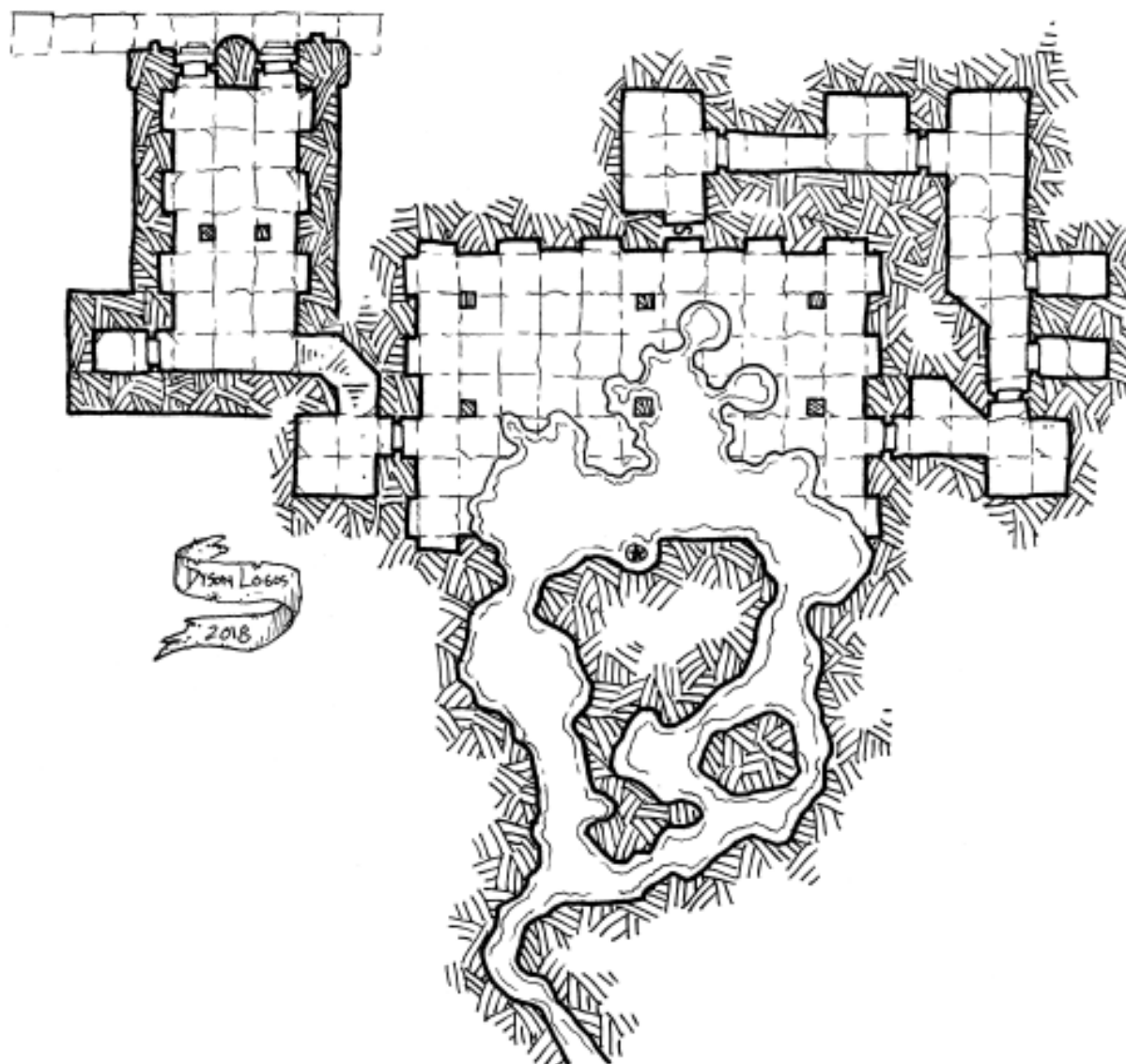
could be used to enchant a psionics ability allowing them to manipulate time. This aspect of quintessence is a little too complicated and would take years for them to explain, it is better saved for another time.

Once every characters had a chance to decide if they would like to sacrifice their fate, the Mind Flayers

create the quintessence and follow the characters to *the Collector's* lab or back to Hillsfar. Characters who sacrificed their fate gain the ***Time if of Your Essence*** story award.

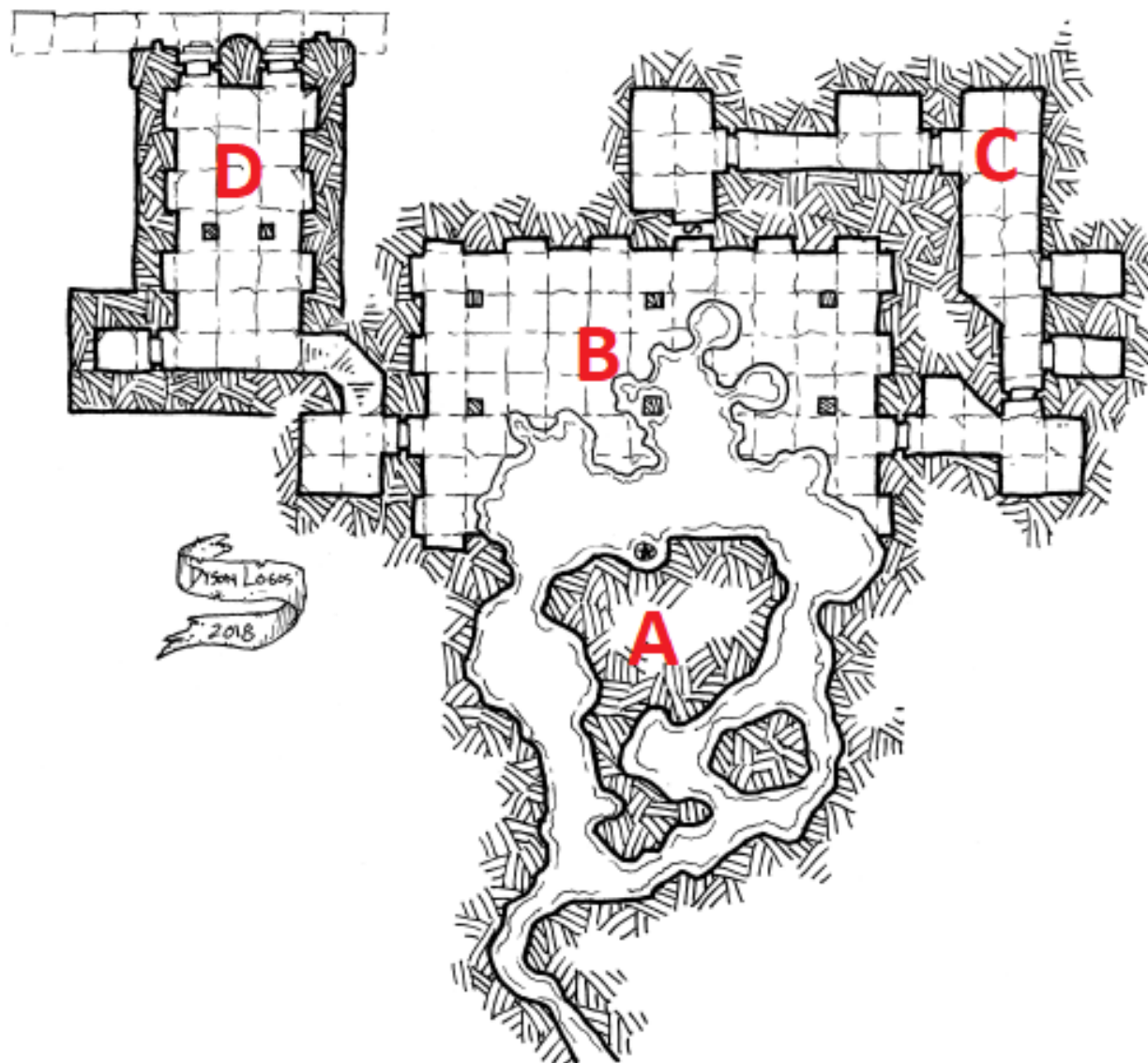
Appendix 4: Player Map for Episode 3

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Appendix 5: DM Map for Episode 3

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Appendix 6: Magic Item

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock these magic items

Winged Boots

This pair of boots is crafted by magically fusing leaves from the Comanthar forest and ancient magic that still lingers around Myth Drannor. The wearer of the boots leaves behind a trail of faintly sparkling dust that disappears almost immediately. The leaves on the boots changes color according to the season of the region.

While you wear these boots, you have flying speed equal to your walking speed. You can use the boots to fly for up to 4 hours, all at once or in several shorter flights, each one using a minimum of 1 minute from the duration. If you are flying when the duration expires, you descend at a rate of 30 feet per round until you land.

The boots regain 2 hours of flying capability for every 12 hours they aren't in use.

Appendix 7: Common Magic Item

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

Heward's Handy Spice Pouch

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

Appendix 8: Story Award

During the course of the adventure the characters have to opportunity to earn these story awards.

Time is of Your Essence

You have assisted the Thoon Mind Flayers to acquire a strange substance they call quintessence. Aiding the mysterious creatures may yield dividend in the future. You would hope...

Crazy Squirrel (Paladin)

Clad in shinny plate armor, this adorable squirrel also wields a sword and a shadow shield with a red symbol of the Raven Queen glowing. If *Speak with Animal* is used to communicate with it, it says it is a Paladin of the Raven Queen and is here to smite undeads!

This Crazy Squirrel functions as a pet, does not contribute to combat, or provide any benefit beyond its adorableness!

Appendix 9: Consumables

During the course of the adventure the characters may even the following consumable items.

Potion of Climbing: When you drinking this potion, you gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour. During this time, you have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks you make to climb. The potion is separated into brown, silver, and gray layers resembling bands of stone. Shaking the bottle fails to mix the colors.

Potion of Heroism: For 1 hour after drinking it, you gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour. For the same duration, you are under the effect of the *bles* spell (no concentration required). This blue potion bubbles and steams as if boiling.

Appendix 10: Dungeon Master Tips

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

New to D&D Adventurers League?

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

New to the Annual Storyline?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep>

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storylineseasons/waterdeep-adventures/>

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

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown.

These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration. To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

Determining Party Strength

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