



CCC-GHC-BK1-03

ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

THE DARKEST KNIGHT



A 4-hour Border Kingdoms adventure
for characters of 5th - 10th level



THE DARKEST KNIGHT

Rumors abound concerning the Great Oak Mercenary Company and their possible role in the undead incursions plaguing the Border Kingdoms. Can you gain an audience with the Great Oak himself and learn what he knows?

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



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ADDITIONAL CREDITS

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Ghost image Wizards of the Coast

Specter image Wizards of the Coast

Veteran image Wizards of the Coast

Wight image Wizards of the Coast

Wraith image Wizards of the Coast

Great Oak mansion map Thomas Valley

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT ENCOUNTER SCALING

The Darkest Knight is optimized for a party of five characters. When running an adventure at a large convention such as Gamehole, it is common to have seven players at a table, which has the potential to affect encounter balance. The “Adjusting the Encounter” sidebars within the adventure are developed for an average party, but just like real life, one size doesn’t necessarily fit all.

Players have a tendency to bring their best and brightest to shows like Gamehole, and a group of seven optimized characters can easily overpower the recommended party strength you determine at the adventure's start. As a DM, you can—and should—adjust each encounter's difficulty to present a challenge for your players.

If the characters are overcoming combats too easily, increase the recommended strength level of the encounters by a step (from **average** to **strong**, for example). If needed, you can also increase the number of monsters or maximize their hit points to make things a little harder. In some cases, you may even need to increase the difficulty by two steps, just be careful not to make things unwinnable.

Remember, adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit!



ADVENTURE PRIMER

WELCOME TO *THE DARKEST KNIGHT*, A D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Convention Created Content* program.

The adventure is set in the Border Kingdoms, a tumultuous region of the Forgotten Realms on the southern shore of the Lake of Steam.

BACKGROUND

If the characters have previously played through CCC-GHC-BK1-02 *The Tithes that Bind*, they will have heard rumors of a "safehouse" or "stronghold" in the countryside that is the next step in determining why groups of undead and men are attacking innocents all over the region. The house of which they've heard mention is actually the mansion that serves as the headquarters for the Great Oak Mercenary Company.

If they haven't played through the prior adventure, they will meet or continue their adventures in an inn, where they hear of roving bands of undead and companies of men who have put small outlying villages and farms under the sword and flame, leaving few alive to tell the tale. All of the stories seem to have a consistent point of origin for the bands of marauders: A large house in the woods.

A NOTE TO THE DM

The centerpiece of this adventure is a chase through the mansion of the Great Oak Mercenary Company. Either the party is doing the chasing, or they feel they're being hunted. Parts 1 and 2 should take approximately 2 hours. Episode 3 is optional but should take about 30 minutes. Episode 4, the chase itself, should take the remainder of the time, and fill out the last of the 4-hour duration.

ADVENTURE FLOW

The Darkest Knight consists of four parts.

Episode 1: Approaching the Mansion. The party encounters a few hostile bands in the wilderness on their way to the mansion. They can deal with them in a stand-up fight or try and glean more information on what exactly is happening at the mansion.

Episode 2: Meeting the Great Oak. A beleaguered leader of the Great Oak Mercenary Company greets the party and tries to get them to remove the magical domination under which he labors. He directs them to the lake at the edge of his property.

Episode 3: Dealing with the Source. At the lake, the party encounters a juvenile aboleth who is still establishing its demesne. It is the one maintaining domination over the Great Oak. Even though it is young, it should still provide a challenge to the party.

Episode 4: The Great Oak Mansion. Back at the Mansion, the party discovers that the Great Oak has been discarded, his lifeless husk now sitting atop the throne from which he once led the greatest mercenary company the countryside has ever known. The murderer makes himself known to the party: An agent of the aboleth, a mind flayer, stalks the party through the mansion, attacking and attempting to subvert them as they investigate. Should he be discovered too soon, the chase is on!

BEHIND THE SCENES

An individual known only as the Black Wyvern is attempting his take-over of the Border Kingdoms through multiple methods: Outright fighting, subterfuge, political conquests, and so forth. One of the largest military forces in the region isn't state-run, it's the Great Oak Mercenary Company. His initial attempts to infiltrate the mercenary company where standard and non-magical tactics: Bribe the right people, get the right sort of people into the company, and then take out the others that couldn't be bribed or replaced through mundane means. But the goal of the infiltration wasn't to destroy the company, it was to make it subservient to his goals, and become yet another tool for the greater conquest.

To those ends, the Black Wyvern drew on the ancient powers that answer to him and summoned beings from between the planes of existence -- disgusting aberrations that hate life and all that it represents. Their purpose was to enslave the Great Oak himself and present the mercenary company to the world as if nothing had change. The reality is that the now corrupted company is campaigning against the region, and working for him instead of against him.



EPISODE 1: APPROACHING THE MANSION

As you approach a curve in the path, you hear the telltale clink and rattle of armor and weaponry. Pausing to arm yourselves and prepare for battle, a member of your party peers around a tree and observes a company of skeletons drawn up in military fashion. A quick count finds 12 skeletons standing at attention in the clearing. Standing to the side, in the officer's position, is a fully armored humanoid with pale and sickly-looking skin. He appears to have noticed your attention, and coughs politely to garner yours.

There are 12 **skeleton** soldiers in formation, all with standard armament. The officer is a **wight**. Standing among the trees, deeper in the forest, are 4 **wraiths**.

The officer will make overtures of peace and diplomacy, but the characters may naturally be suspicious of his motives. Allow them to make any preparations for battle before approaching the

officer, even to the point of outright attacking the company and not saying anything. The wraiths in the forest are far enough back, and are motionless, so actively perceiving them will require a successful DC 20 Perception (Wisdom) check. Anyone who searches the forest around the edges of the clearing prior to any attacking will reduce this Perception check to a DC 10.

The wraiths will attack once they've summoned a certain amount of **specters** based on the perceived strength of the party. Note that the wraiths are not tactical masterminds and have no way of properly assessing the party's strength. They'll default to at least one specter per party member and then will go from there. The DM has agency to determine the threat level or timing capabilities of the wraiths to summon a small army or just a few specters.

If the party decides to hear what the wight has to say, he'll greet them warmly as fellow soldiers. He'll ask them questions about the "War of the Many Banners" or "Stokefield's Conflict" or the "Beaches of Aengard", battles and wars of which the party has never heard. He'll tell them of the great conquests in which he took part: Both the grand victories and the tragic losses.

For every six seconds he spends talking to the party about these wars, the wraiths are summoning a new specter. Note that the woods provide plenty of buried corpses from which the wraiths can manage a summons. The wraiths attack under the following conditions: They've established that they have enough specters to overwhelm the party, they've been discovered by a party member, or the party attacks the company of skeletons for any reason.

MEN OF THE GREAT OAK?

As the party continues their journey to the mansion, they encounter a band of Great Oak mercenaries. Read the following:

The approaching band of men has made no attempts at stealth. They wander along the path out of formation, many talking and laughing. Some have weapons out and swing them carelessly, while others examine the wilderness through which they pass with suspicion and deadly intent. They all appear to be wearing the same tabard: A stylized version of a golden giant oak tree on a field of green.

If the party attempts to hide and let the mercs pass, they'll be spotted by one of the watchers, eventually, and the encounter will begin. If the party attempts to attack or confront the mercs without speaking, they will gladly oblige. However, they're willing to speak to the party prior to any official business.

The leader of the band introduces himself as Sir Cecil Fentworthy, a **knight** formerly in the service of

the Gilmann family and now a leader in the Great Oak Mercenary Company. Cecil is a 6-foot-tall mess of a man: Obvious chicken grease on his tabard, a constantly running nose, and an unkempt manner that puts the word "disheveled" to shame.

Cecil will inquire as the party's purpose this close to the Great Oak base of operations. If the party honestly relates that they're seeking answers as to why the Great Oak companies are organizing with the Orglasts and undead, he'll maintain that the Great Oak companies have always served honorably for those with coin to pay. Party members will be able to determine that he's being untruthful with a successful DC10 Insight (Wisdom) check. If confronted on his story, or claims that they're really not Great Oak company men, he'll continue to defend himself with claims of innocence, but will nod to his group to begin preparations for battle.

If the party decides to promote some sort of lie as to their purpose in the forest, he'll have no difficulty seeing through that, and will begin subtly motioning for his group to fan out and prepare for battle.

The company of mercenaries is made of 2 **scouts**, 6 **spies**, and 6 **thugs**. If fighting breaks out, the thugs will try and provide a rough defensive line while the spies maximize their damage through stealth attacks. Cecil will use his Leadership ability to apply advantage where he can to press vulnerabilities in the party.

If the fighting goes poorly for the mercs, they'll retreat into the wood, going in separate directions. If enough of them have escaped, they'll regroup and continue to stalk the party, harassing them all the way to the mansion.

If any of the rogues is captured in battle, a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check will get some information out of him (as self-serving wins out easily in these fellows over loyalty):

- The band was hired to slowly infiltrate the Great Oak mercs. Their lack of military expertise meant that the way into the organization required some play-acting, but a few tactical assassinations and "mistakes" in the middle of fighting brought decision-makers down in the companies and opened the floodgates to a lower quality of recruit.
- They don't know who hired them, they received their funds through a trusted 3rd party and met at a prearranged location to begin their infiltration, some months ago.
- The leader of the Great Oak companies, the self-nicknamed "Great Oak" himself still runs the companies from the mansion.
- While many of the Great Oak companies would take up residence at the mansion, he's never seen the inside of the building. It's huge, though, and he's heard it's opulent.

EPISODE 2:

MEETING THE GREAT OAK

This mansion is the centerpiece for two encounters: Meeting the Great Oak for the first time, and then returning after having vanquished the aboleth at the lake. It is largely empty at this moment but is capable of housing nearly three hundred soldiers.

1. THE GREAT HALL

If this is the first time the characters are entering the Great Hall, read them the following:

Four large fire pits are spaced evenly in this massive hall, surrounded by long tables that could fit 200 fighting men and women. The hall rises 3 floors, where the 2nd and 3rd floor are open, with large balconies. At the south end of the hall, perched on a raised dais, is a large wooden chair. Where one might expect such a magnificent hall to have an equally ornate throne, this chair is made of unfinished wood, looking rough in appearance. You'd expect to see it in the field, and not in such a context.

Sitting in the chair is a large and well-muscled man. Other than the man, there are no other souls in the hall. Doors are present on the east and west walls.

The Great Oak (a **veteran**) is the leader of the mercenary companies of the same name. His lineage includes giant, but it's far enough back that the only thing it contributes to his features right now is his 7-foot height and massive presence. He wields a greatsword one-handed.

As the party enters, the Great Oak will gesture that they come closer. Upon closer inspection, the Great Oak looks tired, as if he hasn't slept for days. When he speaks, he drools a little. His eyes are bloodshot and don't focus on the people to whom he is speaking, but he welcomes the party, nonetheless. He asks them questions about their journey, and what they came to seek. He knows the following:

- The free companies of the Great Oak have a hundreds-year-old tradition of honor and loyalty to those with the proper amount of coin. Business has been brisk, as of late.
- He cannot divulge the nature of those that would sign a contract with the free companies.

- Unfortunately, there are no available companies to hire, currently.
- He knows nothing of any rogues that have infiltrated the companies.
- He feels fine, why do you ask? He probably has a cold, nothing more.

Every now and then, while he's speaking with the party, he'll look up to the balconies above, and whisper: "To the lake. Go to the lake. It is there. Please," or "I cannot speak of it directly. It...hurts me to even think of it." If the party asks any questions about his whispers, he'll say out loud that he doesn't know of what they are speaking but will scrawl a pattern on his knee with his fingertips. Characters who are paying attention and who are successful on a DC 10 Perception (Wisdom) check can make out a rough map through the woods.

Any Insight checks will determine that he's under duress of some sort. Every time he comes close to saying something meaningful, he'll wince in pain as if he has a massive headache. If the party somehow manages to corner him in the conversation, he'll start to develop a nosebleed, and he'll ask them politely to leave.

If he can't get them to leave through any other means, he'll start to threaten them. Once again, it'll seem like he's being forced into this stance. If the party decides to attack him, they'll reveal the presence of the **mind flayer** on the 2nd-level balcony, as it'll Mind Blast the party and then retreat to the shadows. The Great Oak will attack the party at the same time, and the mind flayer will attempt to "kite" the party through the building (see final encounter, below).

Mind Flayer Motivations. The mind flayer is highly intelligent and will only reveal itself if it feels it's backed into a corner or if it has the upper hand. In this situation, the juvenile **aboleth** from the lake encounter in episode 3 is still enslaving the Great Oak, so the mind flayer is free to Dominate anyone else it encounters in the building.

These options for attacking now are provided in case you feel, as the DM, that you have no other options. Otherwise, the intention is that the party will feel inclined to follow the Great Oak's rough map and investigate the lake.

INVESTIGATING THE LAKE

If the party opts to investigate the lake, proceed to **Episode 3: Dealing with the Source**.

EPISODE 3: DEALING WITH THE SOURCE

At the end of the clearing, the lake shimmers in the cool night air. The forest around the edge of the lake is far enough back that the shoreline sports large blooms of moss and fields of cattails. You find yourself lulled by the pastoral nature of the area, dreaming of a sunny summer afternoon, a quiet breeze and a fishing pole.

Your dreams are broken by the feeling of pressure inside your head, and a soft voice speaks: "Guests? Friends?" The voice seems to be coming from all around you yet making no sound.

The source of the voice is a juvenile **aboleth**. He holds all the regular statistics of a fully-grown specimen but is not yet able to issue the Psychic Drain legendary action.

Additionally, while the Great Oak is still alive, the aboleth is actively using its Enslave ability on the commander. During that time, it will only be able to use its Enslave ability the remaining 2/day times.

The creature will use its Probing Telepathy to try and establish a bond with one or more of the characters, without revealing itself. It will stay in the water. Characters can spot the creature or one of its tentacles (trying to masquerade as a cattail) with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

The basic tactic of the creature is to attempt to pull those that it can't dominate into the water, where they'll be subjected to its mucus cloud. Those that aren't close enough the aboleth will attempt to enslave and then get them to force the rest of the party closer to the water.

When the aboleth has been vanquished, it naturally releases the Great Oak from his enslavement. However, that's when the Mind Flayer will understand that something has gone wrong and will take the advantage of the Great Oak's disorientation to finish him off.

RETURNING FROM THE LAKE

If the characters are entering the Great Hall after having killed the aboleth, read them the following:

The once proud Great Oak now sits slumped in his chair, as if someone has let his soul flee from his body. Blood streams down his face, covering a look of agony and final despair.

If the characters search the Great Oak's corpse, they find a key on a cord around his neck. It opens the treasury in area 23.

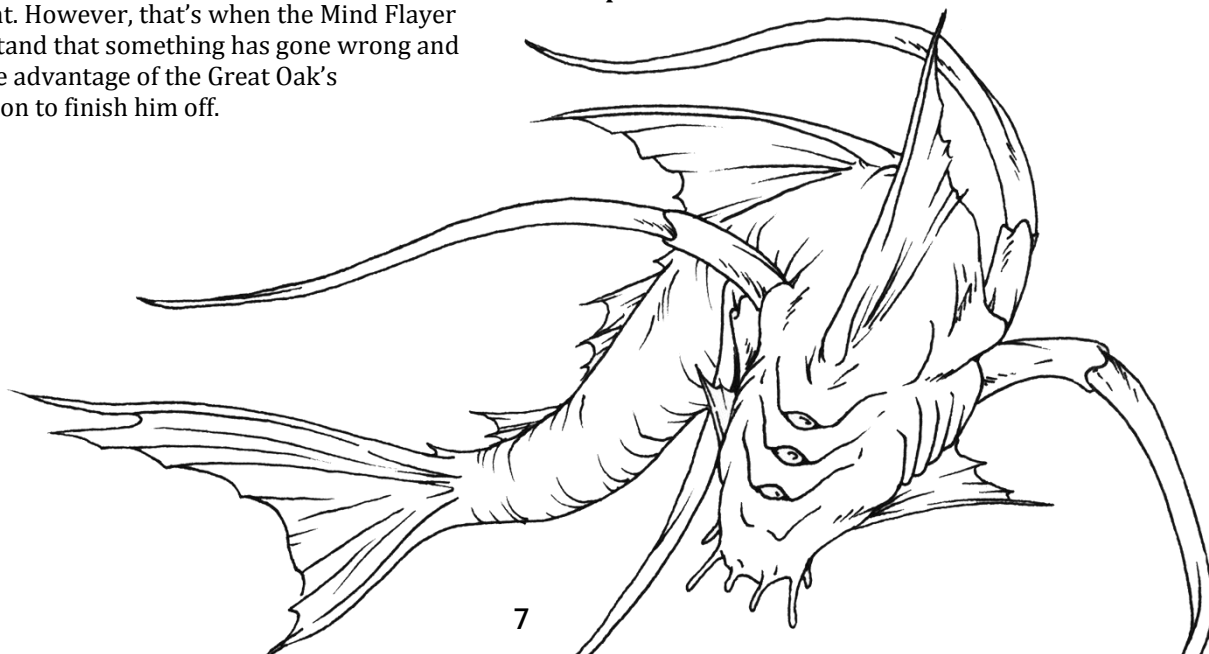
The mind flayer in the building will now take any opportunity to attack. Any time the party is collected within a 60-foot area, he'll use his Mind Blast to attempt to stun as many as possible. He carries a Scrying Eye (cast *scry* for 10 minutes, 1/day) that allows him to observe the party so that he can Mind Blast them through the walls. He will avoid outright confrontation until he can be assured that the party members are stunned. At that point, he'll advance on the party's location and attempt to feed on a party member's brain.

Anyone who is subjected to a Mind Blast in this context (regardless if they take damage) can, with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, determine the direction of the source of the attack. The mind flayer is unaware of this, and will only react, using his scrying, if he determines that the party is getting too close to his position.

To run this encounter, it is suggested to either use a table map and keep everyone in combat so you can additionally track the mind flayer's position, or, alternatively, use theater of the mind for a dramatic chase effect and choose when it's the appropriate time for the party to overtake the mind flayer.

EXPLORING THE MANSION

The remaining rooms of the mansion are detailed in **Episode 4: The Great Oak Mansion**.



EPISODE 4: THE GREAT OAK MANSION

This portion of the adventure details the rooms in the Great Oak Mansion. There is no set path for the party to follow as they explore. Use the rooms as you see fit.

1. THE GREAT HALL

See “The Great Hall” in **Episode 2: Meeting the Great Oak** for a description of this room.

2. OFFICER’S QUARTERS

This opulent room contains a 4-poster bed, a writing desk, a large fireplace, and a sitting divan. At the foot of the bed is a large iron-banded wooden chest, and mounted on the wall are a variety of shields and weaponry. Interrupted in her duties, a young servant woman gasps and stands at attention as you enter.

The young woman is Maribelle, and while she maintains her cover as a servant, she’s part of a network of rogues that have taken control of the mansion. Unfortunately, she’s not aware that she’s one of the few remaining living people in the building. She has the stat block of a **thug**. She’ll play her part dutifully, claiming no knowledge of anything that is happening elsewhere in the mansion. She knows the following:

- She’s worked here for a year and is well liked among the staff and the soldiers that occasionally make their home here.
- The companies come and go, sometimes two or three full complements of soldiers will be staying at the mansion. Sometimes, when there is a large meeting or a large contract to fulfill, there may be up to 300 soldiers in the building.
- All the companies are currently out on contracts right now. She doesn’t know the details of any of the contracts, or who has hired the soldiers.

A successful DC 18 Insight (Wisdom) check will determine that she’s not being truthful when she’s answering the party’s questions. Her main goal in this conversation is to determine who the party is, and then report their whereabouts and motives back to her master, the mind flayer.

If the party attacks her, she’ll try to defend herself, but is armed in little more than her fists, or any of the weaponry she can try and grab from the wall (simple martial weapons, only). She’ll make every attempt to escape and warn her master. If the party

captures or otherwise interrogates her, she’ll die before giving up any information about her master.

If the party fails to determine her true nature, she’ll make an excuse that she needs to keep working and will either shoo the party out of the room or will leave to go “clean” other parts of the mansion, whichever is easiest to avoid confrontation.

The shields and weapons on the walls are all serviceable, but nothing special. The chest is not locked and contains clothing, a chain shirt, and several furs. The desk is empty of anything useful.

3. OFFICER’S QUARTERS

This opulent room contains a 4-poster bed, a writing desk, a large fireplace, and a sitting divan. At the foot of the bed is a large iron-banded wooden chest and mounted on the wall are a variety of shields and weaponry.

As with the room in #2, above, all features are the same and provide the same results. However, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching the bed and the chest will reveal that a corpse has been recently stuffed inside the mattress. The corpse is naked, is a male human, and appears to be about 45 years old. The following can be discerned by those carefully investigating the corpse with a successful Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check:

- DC 10: The man died of asphyxiation from strangling. The ligature marks around his neck appear to have been 3 or 4 loops thick.
- DC 15: Unlike other strangling victims, there are no defensive markings on his neck from his hands, and his hands and arm muscles don’t appear to have been stressed.
- DC 20: There is a fine pattern of puncture marks on the scalp of the corpse, hidden under a healthy amount of hair. The puncture marks have very little blood on them, but it’s obvious that they drill through the skull. Further investigation of the weight of the skull reveals that it’s missing a great deal of expected mass.

4. EAST KITCHEN

This full-sized kitchen has two swinging doors, one on the south wall and one on the west wall. A large island in the middle of the kitchen dominates the room, while two large cauldrons hang over hearths big enough to stretch back through to the Great Hall on the other side of the wall. A young woman diligently chops vegetables with a large chef’s knife.

The girl doesn't respond to direct questions unless she's physically prohibited from continuing to chop vegetables. If she is, she has an unfocused stare and mutters things like "Ma'rm will be angry if dinner is not prepared," and "I must prepare these vegetables." A closer look at the chopped vegetables reveals that the various carrots and celery have withered and rotted, and it appears as if she's been chopping nothing but air (and, perhaps, bits of her thumb).

She won't fight back if the characters continue to keep her from her duties, but she'll repeat her mantra about the vegetables. If they leave her alone for some time, she'll return to chopping the absent food stuff. She won't even argue if insightful characters attempt to examine her head, looking for wounds. If such an investigation is taken, a successful DC 10 Investigation (Intelligence) check reveals puncture wounds around the base of her skull.

Even though she wields a chef's knife, she won't defend herself or fight if combat arises. Her basic motivation is to return to chopping vegetables.

5. WEST KITCHEN

Several shelves line the walls of this kitchen that is more of a glorified pantry. Tables stand in front of the shelves as large staging areas for the foodstuffs that fill every available space of this room. Small servant doors allow people to pass in and out of this room into the Great Hall, but they stand unused, as does most everything in this room. The faint smell of rot pervades everything in this room, ruining any thought of appetite.

Hidden in among the food are 3 **swarms of rats**. They will not attack unless someone actively investigates the food shelves.

6. WEAPONRY

Each wall of this room has every available space covered in mounted weaponry, organized by weapon type. One wall is a mixture of halberds and spears. Swords and other slashing and stabbing one-handed and two-handed weapons decorate another wall. Stands and bases throughout the room display crossbows and ammunition, cleaned and ready for use.

If the characters wish, they can acquire any weapon in this room listed in the *Player's Handbook* standard equipment listings. There are two longswords on the wall, hidden in plain sight, that are silvered. Anyone short of ammunition may find 20 quivers full of regular arrows and 10 quivers full of regular crossbow bolts.

7. ARMORY

The smell of cured leather and polished metal pervades this room. At first, you took the standing figures in the room as soldiers in formation, but it turns out they're all armor stands. The wall is covered in various padded armors, chain shirts, and coifs.

A successful DC 10 Perception (Wisdom) check reveals a dead body on the floor in the midst of the armor stands. The dead man is dressed in the fashion of a laborer, his hands stained and rough. Further investigation of the body with a successful Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the following:

- DC 10: The leather apron on the man is torn and cut, and is tangled up in his legs. It appears that it may have been caught in his legs while he was running.
- DC 15: His hands and forearms have defensive cuts all over them. He faced an armed opponent. He has no wounds on his back, so it appears as if he attempted to defend himself.
- DC 20: He has a diamond earring in one ear, and a hole in his other ear for a matching earring. The other earring does not appear to be in this room. The earring is non-magical, but likely worth a little coin.

8. HERALDRY

Resembling a large costume shop, this room is sectioned off with low level bars from which hundreds of uniforms hang. Dark in color, with the splash of the insignia of the Great Oak, the uniforms are in various states of cleanliness. The racks appear to be organized in such a fashion that the dirtiest uniforms are situated nearest to a work bench. A single uniform is hung by the work bench, and a number of bottles of chemicals are arrayed on the bench itself.

This laundry room has only one real thing of interest to the party: The dry cleaning machine. Bear with me: A manual compressor, operated by a foot pump, allows a person to fill the compressor tubes with chemicals and finely spray these chemicals over the hanging uniform. The operator then takes a brush and uses it to remove all sorts of materials from the surface of the clothing without causing wear and tear. It's a modern miracle.

It's up to the DM how detailed an explanation of the equipment is offered. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check should reveal its full operation without any mysteries, but prior to that point, it should be noted that the chemicals are

toxic if ingested. In fact, if a character attempts to spray the chemicals through the mechanism at a target, they must make a ranged to-hit roll (with a maximum range of 10 feet). A successful hit applies 9 (2d8) poison damage to the target.

9. ENTERTAINMENT AREA

A room of quiet comfort is arrayed before you. Shelves of books cover the walls, their coverage broken up only by a wall hanging displaying the heraldry of the Great Oak. Leather-covered cushioned chairs are spaced around the room and surround a small comforting hearth. A long hallway stretches to the west, in which the majority of the hallway's floor has been polished. At the end of the polished section, ten wooden pins stand in a triangle formation.

The general content of the books and scrolls secreted among the shelves is a mixture of fictional and historical stories. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the books on the shelves will reveal two *spell scrolls of identify* hidden among the books and scrolls.

If the characters would like to bowl, they can get a strike with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check and a spare with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

Note. If the characters are in a chase with the mind flayer from area 1, they may attempt to challenge the mind flayer to a match. With a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, they find out that the mind flayer is ultra-competitive and is convinced that anyone on the Prime Material Plane doesn't have the appreciation for "the pins" that he does. With some skillful trash-talk, they can convince him to drop the chase and play a few games. If the characters wish to play out the game, use the rules, above, to determine their score in the game. Due to his confidence and familiarity with the game, the mind flayer has a +8 to his Strength (Athletics) check, but only when bowling. The mind flayer will be completely distracted by the game, and an enterprising character could easily stab him in the back during this time.

TREASURE

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the books on the shelves reveals two hidden *spell scrolls of identify* within the room.

10—14: MID-LEVEL QUARTERS

These rooms are all decorated in the same manner: 2-3 beds with storage chests, a table and chairs, perhaps an easy chair. The décor for the rooms is relatively absent, with a few rooms showing some personal touches. The fact that they're private rooms

promotes the idea that they don't belong to the rank and file, but since they're not single rooms, the characters may surmise that these rooms belong to platoon leaders or sergeants.

Some of these rooms contain points of interest (things to highlight as the characters search):

- In one of the storage chests is an earmarked book entitled "The General History of Lycanthropy". Many passages regarding werewolves have been circled and underlined by a frantic and obsessed hand. An investigation of the book points the characters toward the weaponry in area 6 and identifies the silvered blades hidden there.
- A tied up package of letters that document a descent into madness over a period of months. At first, the letters tell of a soldier who found a dog, but no one else seems to notice the new pet. The dog slowly becomes friendlier, and the soldier writes about how the dog has begun to talk to him. The final few notes aren't dated and aren't copies of actual letters sent, they're just mad scrawls of "IT'S IN MY HEAD" and "I CAN'T STAND THE PAIN."
- A document detailing accounting for the attrition rate of a platoon of soldiers in the mercenary band, and how much it will cost the band in the long run if this attrition rate continues. Handwritten notations in the margins of the report are hard to read, but use the words "sickness" and "assassinated" a lot.

15. MEMORIAL HALL

This room has the faint aroma of cigar and pipe smoke still lingering in the air and baked into the fancy leather chairs. Rugs soften the overall hardness of the surrounding building, giving the impression that this room is made for relaxation and quiet reflection. Bookshelves on the wall cover almost all available space. Mounted and framed on the wall is a document that communicates a certain reverence. A short hall stretching away from the room, to the east, is filled with portraits of serious martial men and women.

The framed document on the wall is the charter for the Great Oak Mercenary Company. It documents its founding some three hundred years prior, and the signatories are recognizable as ancient forefathers of the current royal line for the region.

The portraits on the walls document those men and women who have held the office of Great Oak. The most recent portrait depicts a younger version of the man in area 1.

The room contains no secrets, except for a set of three books on one of the bookshelves, which are actually a fake front for a small cache that holds a nearly full bottle of whiskey and four small glasses.

16. OPEN BARRACKS

This large central area has two small closets but is otherwise bereft of any major personalization. Rows and rows of cots cover most available space, with enough room to walk single file between them. Stashed under each cot is a shallow and long foot locker. Most of the cots are empty, except for two: One has a young man sleeping under a simple bedsheet, and at another sits a fully battle-dressed woman, staring at the wall to the west, seemingly at a barred doorway in the west wall. Two other doors, one in the southwest corner and one in the south, are made of wood, but are closed and barred on the side facing into the room.

The body on the cot is in a sleeping position but is most obviously dead. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check informs the party that the body has been dead for nearly a week, with a much better success revealing similar wounds and head-punctures to the other bodies found in the mansion.

The soldier in battle gear is non-responsive. If she's pushed or otherwise removed from the cot, she'll attempt to get back to that position. If the cot is moved, she'll sit in that same spot. She doesn't respond to anyone taking off her gear, and if her head is examined, she'll show signs of the same puncture wounds in her head as the corpse that's also in the room. She'll always make every effort to stare at the doorway in the western wall. If she is blocked from view of the door for more than 5 minutes, she begins to cry – without words or sounds, just tears slowly falling.

That doorway is a barred and padlocked entry to a hallway with several cells in area 16b. The padlock can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check or an equivalent Strength (Athletics) check and a blunt instrument.

The bars on the other doors to the room can be easily lifted and set aside. The doors are not otherwise locked.

16B. CELLS

Six cell doors line the north wall of this small hallway. The smell of death is overwhelming. Peeking into the cells isn't difficult, and you can immediately tell that the small cells are stacked with bodies haphazardly arranged in horrifying piles.

Hidden among the piles of bodies are 3 **intellect devourers**. Servants of the mind flayer in area 1, these creatures will only attack if they believe they have the upper hand. Otherwise, they'll attempt to remain hidden. If enough bodies are moved around,

or if they feel like the party's actions will put them in danger, they may be forced to attack.

The bodies all bear the marks of having had their brains forcibly removed from their heads, as per the many other corpses in the mansion. These bodies appear to be from a variety of professions and stations within the mansion, and while some are easily identifiable (blacksmith, soldier, etc.), many appear as if they're simple house servants.

The cell doors are unlocked and stand in varying states of openness.

17. KENNEL

This large kennel holds the corpses of ten German Shepherds. The walls of the kennel are thin bars. The door to the kennel is on the west wall, and it is barred with a simple lift-bar mechanism.

Upon examination, it appears as if the dogs have died from starvation.

18. EQUIPMENT ROOM

A long hallway running east-west borders a large cage dominating the center of the room. Various implements of pet ownership are stored on shelves on the walls and are hanging from the hooks: Leashes, harnesses, etc. A large sled with detached runners is hung from the ceiling, in summer storage. Large barn doors open to a yard outside the mansion. The doors are barred on the inside.

Immediately outside the barn doors is the corpse of the kennelman. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that he was killed with blunt force trauma to the head and neck. Around his neck hangs an ivory whistle.

A *detect magic* spell will find that the whistle glows with evocation magic, and an *identify* spell will inform the caster that it is a *whistle of dog calling*. Blowing the whistle summons loyal dogs to the blower's side, even if they're 1000 feet away. A dog becomes loyal to the whistle through the regular manner of gaining a dog's loyalty, but the whistle's magic only functions within a mile of the mansion.

Unfortunately, the only dogs that are nearby are dead. Because the power of the whistle is magical, anyone blowing the whistle will still cause a reaction in the dog corpses: They'll rise from the dead as 10 **zombie dogs**. As newly formed zombies, they only have 1 hit point each, but each otherwise has the stats of a **wolf**. They qualify as undead and retain the Zombie Fortitude ability of regular zombies.

The zombie dogs attack anyone that isn't the individual who originally blew the whistle. They

cannot leave the cage in area 17 unless the cage door is open. If the mind flayer is present, the zombie dogs are just as likely to attack him as any member of the party. The mind flayer is unaware of the nature or power of the whistle.

As one of the main exits from the building, the mind flayer will, if he deems it necessary, seek to escape from the building through this exit. When it's time to run, he'll make his way in this direction.

19. GEAR SHOP

This room appears to have once been a general supply shop for the troops stationed within the mansion. A small counter blocks the entry to a hallway leading west out of the room, wherein a small shop has been set up. A narrow waiting area has been established with comfortable chairs and couches in the common area. Based on the scratches and stains on the low-level table in the center of the room, this area was also used as a gathering point for most of the enlisted soldiers.

The counter blocking entrance to the small shop area can easily be lifted aside and the contents of the shop examined. Anyone wishing to restock on gear can find anything valued at under 10 gp listed in the *Player's Handbook* in this shop, within a reasonable quantity for the space available.

20 & 20B. BANNER HALL

This two-level museum features banners from other mercenary companies, tapestries and banners from countries and regions that existed long ago, and important-looking weapons and armor bronzed and mounted on pedestals. Creative use of lighting keeps most of the hall in the dark or near-dark, highlighting sections of the displays that have been torn or bloodied or exhibit some evidence of their conquered nature. Velvet ropes connected to small stands protect some of the more fragile looking pieces.

There are no magical items on display, here, and a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check on any given item reveals its ancient nature to the character examining it. Most of the origin stories surrounding these items have faded in time, and the most any character will be able to recall will be some echo of a heroic battle or horrible conquest.

The open hallways and circular-path nature of the museum—coupled with its tactical lighting—make this a great place for the mind flayer to really toy with the party. Even if the mind flayer is in a weakened condition, this is a great place to attempt to get rid of pursuit long enough to make good on his escape through the barn doors in area 18.

21. LEADER'S QUARTERS

This large and well-appointed room appears to be the bedchamber for a leader of the Great Oak. A stylized four-poster bed dominates the room. A mural of some unnamed tribe sacrificing a large bull to the gods lines the eastern wall. At the base of the bed is a large storage trunk. Two end tables with candelabras adorn the sides of the bed.

Any character with a passive Perception better than 12 or any character who makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will detect an odor of decay and rot in this room.

Opening the curtains will expose the party to the full smell of a dead body that is covered completely by the bed sheets and quilting. It appears to have been dead for some time. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check will deduce that the woman was strangled, her head was caved in by a blunt object, and something was used to carve out the contents of her skull.

While the party examines this grisly sight, the **ghost** inhabiting the room will make itself known. It will not make any aggressive moves toward the party. It will simply phase into sight in one of the chairs in the room and will strongly resemble what is left of the body on the bed. The ghost presents itself as a striking woman in her 50s, wearing light armor over a military uniform. The armor bears the emblem of the Great Oak Mercenary Company.

If the party attacks her, she will defend herself to the point where she can make her escape or elude attention entirely. She will not attack the party and will take great pains to do no damage to the party. She cannot make sounds but appears to be speaking. She tries and tries to tell the party something but cannot. She cannot hold writing utensils and is frustrated by her inability to communicate.

Through gestures or whatever creative method the party manages to acquire, she can relate that she knows the mind flayer is her killer. She also knows that the mind flayer makes his temporary residence in area 22, the Great Oak's chambers. She feels bound to this room and her body, although nothing is really binding her to this plane or this area.

22. THE GREAT OAK'S CHAMBERS

Once a spartan but rich apartment, these chambers have been ruined with destruction, biological refuse, and what can potentially be described as the worst smell imaginable. Bits of gore and flesh cover every exposed surface. Something has clearly been using the bed for rest, but it has also clearly been eating in bed, as it is covered in a similar fashion.

If the characters managed to arrive in this area without alerting the mind flayer to their presence, this is where he will be. Due to his constant surveillance of area 1, and (if episode 3 has already taken place) his alertness regarding the demise of the aboleth, he's extremely unlikely to be here.

TREASURE

The only thing of worth in the entire room is a *tentacle rod*. It is in among the gore, haphazardly discarded by the mind flayer and then covered in another layer of gore. The rod can be found with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, if the party is actively investigating the gore. Otherwise, a character may notice something sticking out of the gore with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or if they have a passive Perception of 20 or higher.

23. TREASURY

This small room is fashioned as if it were a jail cell. The regular door opens to a small area that sits next to the rest of the room which has been walled off by reinforced iron bars and a jailer's door. This room imprisons great wealth however: Stacks of chests line the walls, with smaller sacks and purses filled with coin shoved in between.

The locked jailer's door has been magically locked and can only be opened by the key that hangs around the neck of the Great Oak. He will never offer the key to anyone or even let the party know where the key is. Only if an enterprising party member has thoroughly searched his body will they have found it.

The jailer's door can still be unlocked with a *knock* spell or a successful DC 25 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. Inside the treasury can be found a minter's livelihood in copper, silver, and gold pieces.

Anyone casting *detect magic* will discover that the coins are cursed. The nature of the curse is that anyone attempting to remove the coins from the treasury without first casting *remove curse* on them will find that the coins have disappeared and have reappeared where they belong in the treasury.

24. SERVANT'S QUARTERS

This well organized and extremely clean room holds a bed, a few chairs and a desk. A small portrait of a dark-haired woman stands on an end table near the head of the bed, and a storage chest is pushed up against the foot of the bed.

Nothing of value can be found in this room beyond a locket that has been hidden behind the picture of the woman between the backing of the frame and the picture itself. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check (if examining the portrait) or a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check will alert the curious party member to the slight deformation of the painting where the locket presses up against the art.

Inside the locket is a note that has long since crumbled to unreadability. If a *mending* cantrip is cast on it, the words "I love you, Daniel" can be faintly made out on the note.

25. GUARD ROOMS

These rooms aren't highly furnished and appear to be the resting places for the guards on this floor of the mansion. The lightly covered beds have footlockers at the base, in which can be found a few sets of uniforms.

The occupants of these rooms are long dead, their bodies having been discarded in Area 16b, along with the rest of the population. The guards didn't have anything of value.

26 & 27. OBSERVATION ROOMS

These rooms appear to have originally been built as decorative observation rooms, but may have, at one time, served a general defensive purpose. From the vantage point of these rooms, windows open out to the expansive roof, and one can see in any direction for as far as the eye will discern detail. A few crossbows are propped up against the wall.

A sharp eye will note that the crossbows aren't strung, and there are no quivers of bolts present. In fact, there is only a small wooden box near the north wall of each room in which resides the equivalent of a bottle rocket. The crossbows have metal banding on the top of the stock that protect them from direct burning damage, and the stock has been modified to handle the firework. Setting alight the firework and then pointing the crossbow in a direction makes for an excellent flare gun. However, anyone who was a little dangerous as a child can tell you that bottle rockets only very rarely inflict lethal damage.

These rooms could potentially serve as an exit for a mind flayer who is fleeing from the party. However, this exit wouldn't be his first choice, as he'd have to further run out over the roof and then jump to his certain death three stories below to the ground. Still, desperate measures may call for such action.

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 completing the objectives below in each episode of the adventure.

- **Episode 1: Approaching the Mansion:** Reach the Great Oak mansion.
- **Episode 2: Meeting the Great Oak:** Meet the Great Oak and learn of his suffering.
- **Episode 3: Dealing with the Source:** Defeat the aboleth at the lake.
- **Episode 4: The Great Oak Mansion:** Explore the Great Oak mansion and defeat the mind flayer.

PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn downtime and renown as outlined in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for completing the adventure. In addition, they earn the following player rewards for completing the adventure:

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing this adventure unlock the following magic item. Once unlocked, the item may be purchased once using treasure checkpoints. Once this item has been purchased, it's no longer available unless later unlocked by other means.

Tentacle Rod. This magic rod ends in three rubbery tentacles. This item can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handout 1**.

CONSUMABLES

During this adventure, the characters may find the following consumable items:

Spell Scroll of Identify This item can be found in **Appendix 8**.

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

ABOLETH

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 135 (18d10 + 36)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +8, Wis +6

Skills History +12, Perception +10

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Amphibious. The aboleth can breathe air and water.

Mucous Cloud. While underwater, the aboleth is surrounded by transformative mucus. A creature that touches the aboleth or that hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is diseased for 1d4 hours. The diseased creature can breathe only underwater.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with the aboleth, the aboleth learns the creature's greatest desires if the aboleth can see the creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The aboleth makes three tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become diseased. The disease has no effect for 1 minute and can be removed by any magic that cures disease. After 1 minute, the diseased creature's skin becomes translucent and slimy, the creature can't regain hit points unless it is underwater, and the disease can be removed only by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher. When the creature is outside a body of water, it takes 6 (1d12) acid damage every 10 minutes unless moisture is applied to the skin before 10 minutes have passed.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft. one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Enslave (3/Day). The aboleth targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by the aboleth until the aboleth dies or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under the aboleth's control and can't take reactions, and the aboleth and the target can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from the aboleth.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The aboleth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The aboleth regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The aboleth makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Swipe. The aboleth makes one tail attack.

Psychic Drain (Costs 2 Actions). One creature charmed by the aboleth takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage, and the aboleth regains hit points equal to the damage the creature takes.



GHOST

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. A ghost can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost 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.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.



INTELLECT DEVOURER

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages understands Deep Speech but can't speak, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Detect Sentience. The intellect devourer can sense the presence and location of any creature within 300 feet of it that has an Intelligence of 3 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a mind blank spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The intellect devourer makes one attack with its claws and uses Devour Intellect.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Devour Intellect. The intellect devourer targets one creature it can see within 10 feet of it that has a brain. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw against this magic or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage. Also on a failure, roll 3d6: If the total equals or exceeds the target's Intelligence score, that score is reduced to 0. The target is stunned until it regains at least one point of Intelligence.

Body Thief. The intellect devourer initiates an Intelligence contest with an incapacitated humanoid within 5 feet of it. If it wins the contest, the intellect devourer magically consumes the target's brain, teleports into the target's skull, and takes control of the target's body. While inside a creature, the intellect devourer has total cover against attacks and other effects originating outside its host. The intellect devourer retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as its understanding of Deep Speech, its telepathy, and its traits. It otherwise adopts the target's statistics. It knows everything the creature knew, including spells and languages.

If the host body drops to 0 hit points, the intellect devourer must leave it. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the body drives the intellect devourer out. The intellect devourer is also forced out if the target regains its devoured brain by means of a *wish*. By spending 5 feet of its movement, the intellect devourer can voluntarily leave the body, teleporting to the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The body then dies, unless its brain is restored within 1 round.

KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

REACTIONS

Parry. The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

MIND FLAYER

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	19 (+7)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The mind flayer's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

1/day each: *dominate monster*, *plane shift* (self only)

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

Extract Brain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the mind flayer. *Hit:* The target takes 55 (10d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the mind flayer kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6). The mind flayer magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned 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.

SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

SPECTER

Medium undead, lawful neutral (usually chaotic evil)

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common (normally can't speak, but knows all languages it knew in life)

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The specter 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 specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

SPY

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.



SWARM OF RATS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 24 (7d8 – 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	3 (–4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.



WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+1) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



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 weapons 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 Common, Elvish

Challenge 5 (1,800 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.

ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8+9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

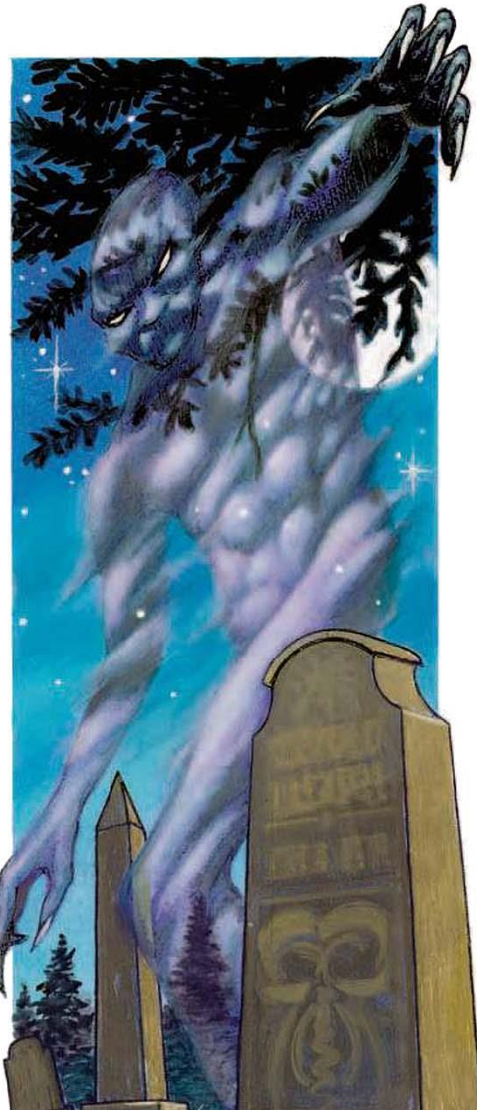
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

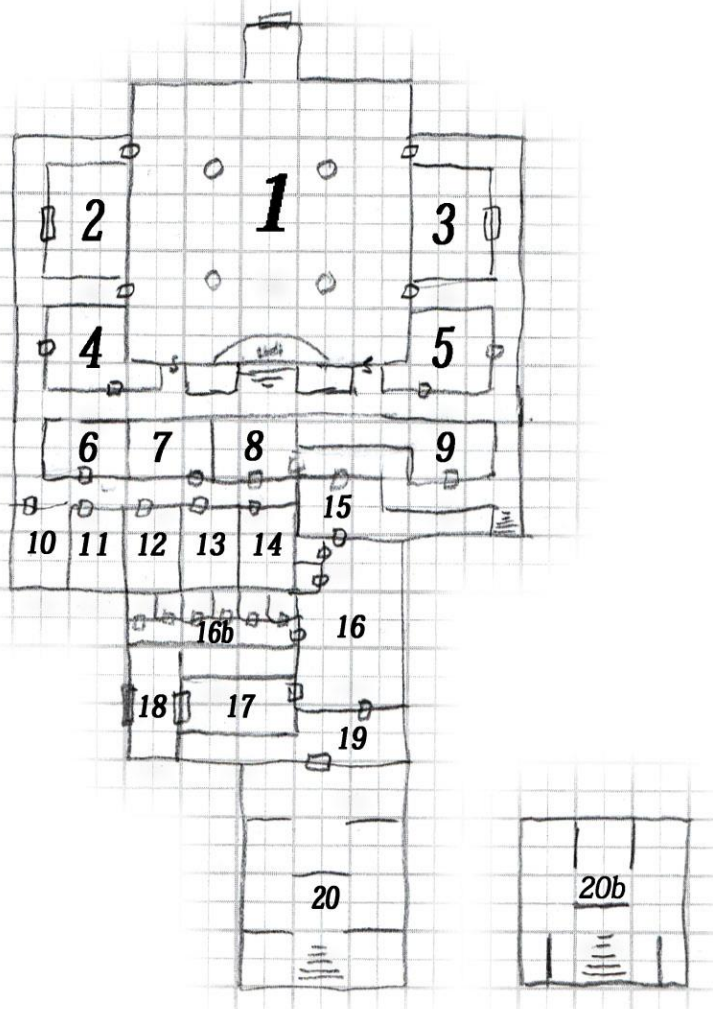
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.



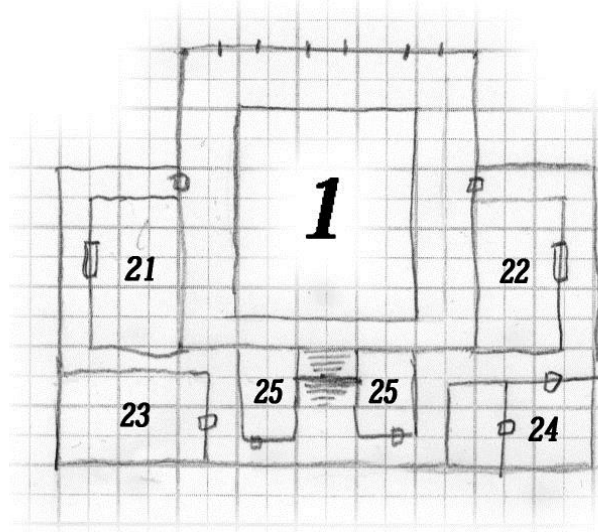
APPENDIX 2: GREAT OAK MANSION MAP

Scale: One square = 5 feet

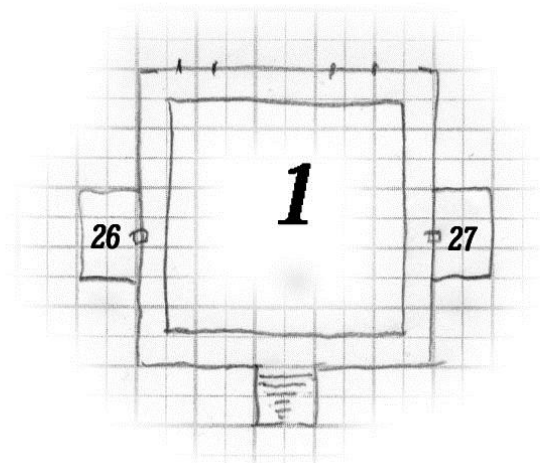
1st Floor



2nd Floor

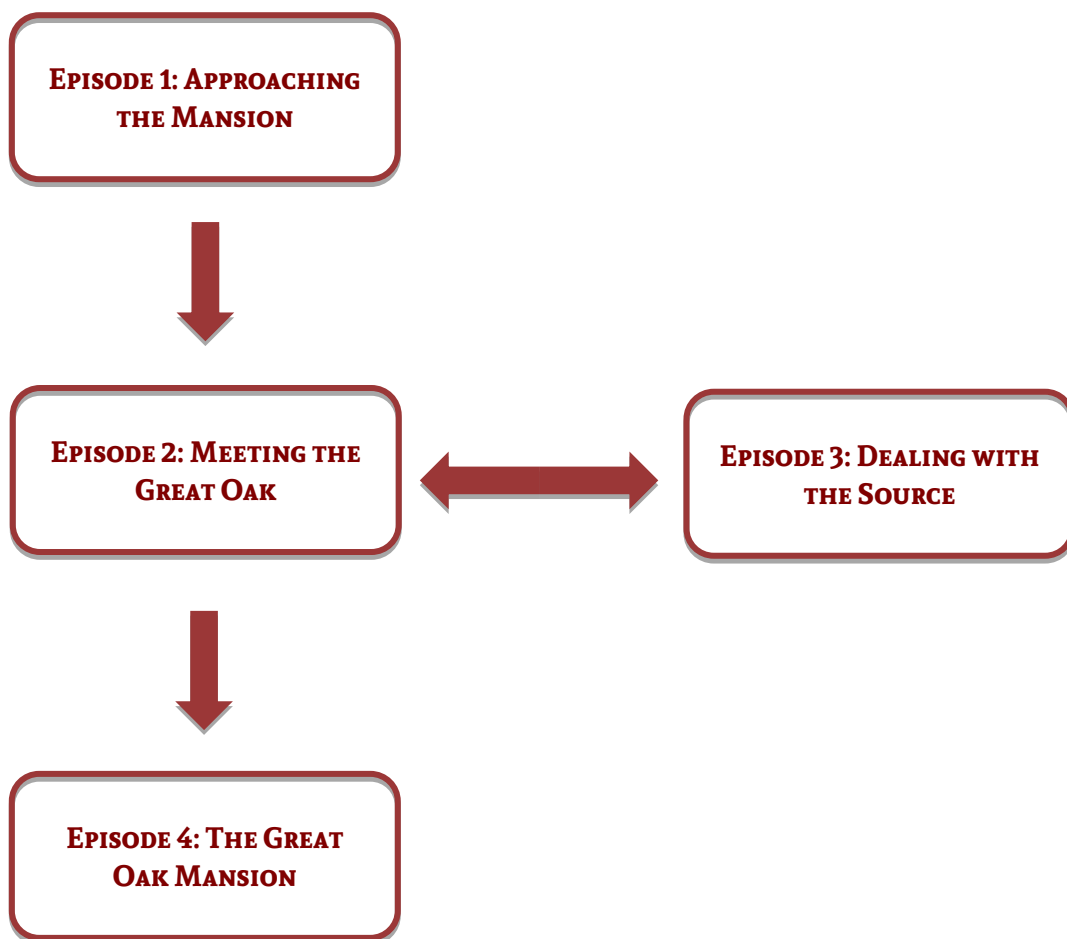


3rd Floor



APPENDIX 3: EPISODE FLOWCHART

This section should provide you, the DM, with a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players will take in reaching their stated objective. This module is linear, as all the parts lead to the next.



APPENDIX 4: ADVENTURE REWARDS

During the course of the adventure, the characters may unlock or acquire the items below. If you are distributing these to your players, print as many as you need to ensure all eligible characters receive a copy. Alternatively, allow each player to take a picture of the information with their mobile device.

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

TENTACLE ROD

Rod, rare (requires attunement), Table G

Made by the drow, this rod is a magic weapon that ends in three rubbery tentacles. While holding the rod, you can use an action to direct each tentacle to attack a creature you can see within 15 feet of you. Each tentacle makes a melee attack roll with a +9 bonus. On a hit, the tentacle deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage. If you hit a target with all three tentacles, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature's speed is halved, it has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, and it can't use reactions for 1 minute. Moreover, on each of its turns, it can take either an action or a bonus action, but not both. At the end of each of its turns, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

This item can be found on page 208 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

CONSUMABLES

SPELL SCROLL OF IDENTIFY

Scroll, common, Table A

This scroll contains a single *identify* spell.

This item can be found on page 200 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX 5: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

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

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 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

A WORD TO THE WISE

This is the first module in a long storyline that may take a couple of years or more to see to fruition. There might be questions the players have that you cannot answer. That is okay. Keep them on track and let them know their questions might well be answered in a future adventure. Have fun!

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Gamehole Con has been granted the ability to develop CCC (Convention Created Content) adventures for the Border Kingdoms. No other convention or organization outside of Wizards of the Coast has been granted this ability. Their region guide was written by Ed Greenwood and [you can get your copy on dmsguild.com](#). Border Kingdoms adventures can be run just the same as any other Adventurers League-approved content.

NEW TO BEING THE DUNGEON MASTER?

A plethora of great Dungeon Master advice can be found all across the internet. New DMs are urged to purchase a copy of the Dungeon Master's Guide and join our Facebook ([player group](#) and [DM group](#)) and [Twitter discussions](#).



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