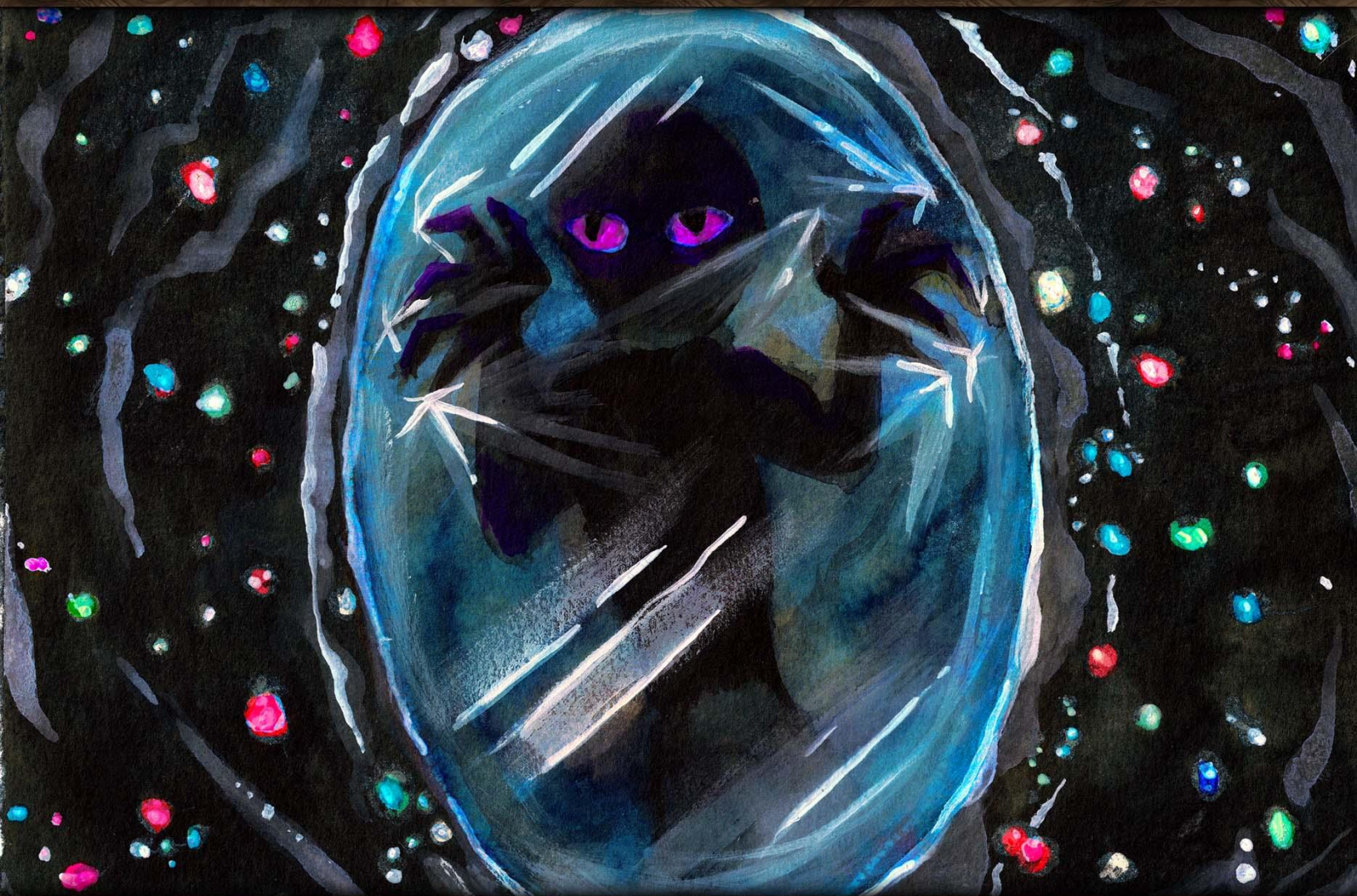




# ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

## THE HEART OF SHADOW

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A 4-hour Border Kingdoms adventure  
for characters of 11th - 16th level





# THE HEART OF SHADOW

A great evil is rising in the Border Kingdoms. The dead walk the wilderness in greater numbers than ever before. As if they are driven to some hidden task or agenda. But they aren't the only thing stirring in the wilds of the kingdoms. More shadows have woken in the dark places that the weak of will dare not go, but where the brave will dive into the heart of. Which are you?

*A Four-Hour Adventure for 11th-16th Level Characters*



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**Adventure Code:** CCC-GHC-BK1-10  
**Optimized For:** APL 13

**Adventure Producer:** Gamehole Publishing

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## Bodak image Wizards of the Coast

**Woman holding sword image** Wizards of the Coast

### Champion image Wizards of the Coast

## Evoker image Wizards of the Coast

## Ghost image Wizards of the Coast

## Veteran image Wizards of the Coast

## Crystal Prison map Matthew Sargent

## A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT ENCOUNTER SCALING

*The Heart of Shadow* 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 HEART OF SHADOW*, 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.

This adventure is a straightforward dungeon found within the wilds of the Border Kingdoms. While the majority of the heroes are dealing with the undead that have started to gather, this party will find evidence of a darker evil. One that comes from much further away than a grave. They will find outsiders trying to break into this realm from a prison they were placed in long ago.

### BACKGROUND

The **QURTH FOREST** is located in the center of the kingdoms, and is one of the most dangerous lands to be traveling in. The Bloutarran scouts count on it. But recently an evil has woken in the forest that not even they can work around. One that heard the call of the Dark Knight building power in the kingdoms.

Unfortunately for this would-be tyrant, what was roused is not something that will answer his call, and whose will cannot be bent. There are far more disturbing things in the dark than the Black Wyvern and his patron, and they have come to Qurth.

### EPISODES

As play begins, the characters receive their Call to Action. This is not an experience-granted episode but instead sets the stage for what is to come.

The meat of the adventure is dungeon crawl. As such, most of it will be in a larger episode. The first encounter that will direct them towards the hidden complex where the outsiders are pushing against their bonds will direct them to their primary objective – to prevent the release of the trapped outsiders. Prevent it or dispatch them as they make their way free of their prison.

## EPISODE SEQUENCE

After the characters receive their Call to Action, the adventure will lead into the forest. There they will face a potential ambush. This ambush of undead that are being “driven” by the will of the imprisoned outsiders directs them towards the hidden tunnel system where the real enemy is attempting to gain enough life force to open the gates.

From there, the players will make their way into the cavern of crystals where the prison was hidden until the prodding of the imprisoned creatures reached out to sentient beings with the power to aid them in their release.

The final fight will be against these cultists and the outsiders that are still attempting to fully push through the prison and back into the Border Kingdoms. All in hopes of returning to their home. After having some revenge.

### ENCOUNTERS

This adventure will take place over the course of 3 parts, including a combat encounter to launch them on the path, a dungeon crawl through the caverns leading to the prison room, and a final fight at the prison room itself.



DARK  
KNIGHT'S  
BADGE



BLACK  
WYVERN'S  
BADGE

## CALL TO ACTION

The adventure begins as the party gathers at an inn located in Bloutar. It is possible they have just completed the adventure outlined in *For the Glory of Bloutar* or are simply enjoying a bit of rest before signing on for the next adventure.

Once they are settled in, they will watch as a scout comes in from the wilds. His leathers are scored and bloodied, a thick bandage is across his left leg that appears to darken the longer he stands there. He is Thornton Poole, a man that took to the wilds when his family disowned him. While he is a stark and rough man, he isn't one left to flights of fancy.

He will tell the story of a dark presence in the forest. One that hid in waiting for anyone traveling through that way. The adventurers he was leading through the forest fought bravely but were no match for these ravenous undead. Thornton himself barely made it back alive.

If the players wish to determine if Poole is being truthful, allow them to roll an insight check. Feel free to roll his "deception" roll, but he is being completely honest. He's not a particularly honorable man, but he isn't deceptive or evil. The information he will share includes:

- The creatures that ambushed them were undead. But they were different than the ones that have been reported recently.

- Each of these zombies bore a mark on them. He wasn't able to determine what it was before he had to take flight.
- He marked the hunter's path he took them down with his personal brand. He will show it to them so that they could follow the path back to the sign of the attack.

### THORNTON POOLE

**Personality:** He gave up on the life of a noble a long time ago. As such he places little stock in the affairs of people. He is far more comfortable with animals, or among the trees.

**Bond:** Poole suffers from terrible visions. He has seen the fall of his family and ran from it. In the wilds, he sees the coming of a great evil.

**Flaw:** Thornton has been known to drown his visions out with strong drink on several occasions. It is the only reason he comes in from the wilds.

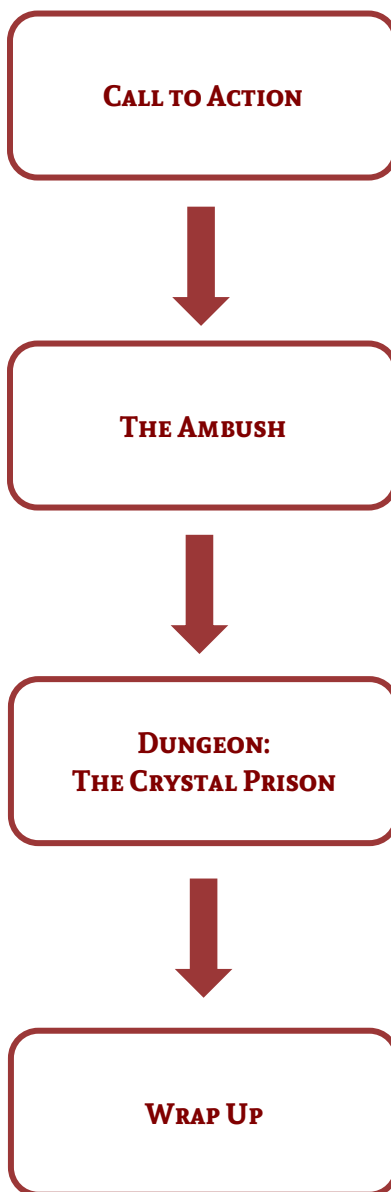
**Personal Quotes:** "Many hands make for light work. My daddy taught me that."

If the heroes aren't convinced by the tale of Thornton Poole, the barmaid for the inn will attempt to convince to the adventurers to take up the task of trying to return the lost travelers. Jillian (as the heroes have come to know her), tells them her friend Kara Thrumm was one of the would-be adventurers that had gone out to answer this odd threat that popped up. And she is worried about her. If the party heads out to find out what they can about her, Jillian offers everything she has to offer. (About 25 gold.)



## 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 may take in reaching their stated objective.





# THE AMBUSH

## THE DEATH OUTSIDE

### PREREQUISITES

The characters have talked to Thornton Poole at the inn and have made their way along the hunter's path to look for the missing adventurers.

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

The forest is heavy with undergrowth through this hunting trail. It is slow going without the aid of magic or a guide. All of the trees have branches far up the trunks making it as clear as a forest can be.

#### LIGHTING

The entire forest the further the party goes along the trail is dimly lit. Without the aid of torches, lanterns or magic, the characters will be at disadvantage on perception checks relying on sight.

#### TRAPS

There are no traps in the forest proper. The entire danger here is the ambush that the dead under the control of the outsiders have set up for them. If anyone in the party has a passive perception DC20 they will spot the dead laying in wait among the trees.

### OBJECTIVES

The party should discover the source of the dead, and the direction from which they came. While they laid a proper ambush, their travel isn't subtle. Following the trail will be easy (DC10 survival check).

### CREATURES/NPCs

The ambush is set at the site of the previous attack. A pack of 6 **bodaks** (altered to switch the Mark of Orcus to be linked to the Star Spawn Seer) have set up between the trees and are waiting for more sentient creatures to arrive.

#### OBJECTIVES/GOALS

Defeat the bodaks, collect the proof of the death of the adventuring team, and pick up the trail leading to where these creatures came from. If they are looking for Kara Thrumm, they will notice she is absent from the bodies currently

### WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

They were told by Poole that this isn't the first of these ambushes. The party he had been leading through there was sent out there to search for the source of the undead and purge it. He has suggested

that they find the source themselves to deal with it and collect any reward.

### DEVELOPMENT

As the final bodak falls, a voice will echo through the minds of all the creatures in the clearing. It's deep and multi-tonal sound is as alien as the method by which it is delivered. The statement is simple, "You have not seen the last of us. Your deaths shall free us. See you soon."

### WHERE IS THE STARSPAWN SEER?

Once they have discovered the source of the undead is the Starspawn Seer, they will find the trail left by the dead as they made their way to the trail from the crystal prison. The seer is still locked within the prison, but the weakened wards have left it with the ability to stretch its mind out to strike at the world.

### TIMING AND EXPLORATION

Allow the characters some time to rest, should they need to. If they hesitate longer than a standard long rest another grouping of bodaks will follow them. Otherwise, they will make their way through to find the crystal prison before the wards fully come down.



# THE CRYSTAL PRISON

## TUNNEL SYSTEM

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### PREREQUISITES

The characters defeated the bodaks and followed their tracks back to the prison. The mouth of the cavern system is overgrown enough that the tracks are likely the only way they would find the location of the prison.

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

Unless listed differently in the room description, the walls of the tunnels are 20' in height. The walls of the tunnel are set with crystals throughout the area. Most rooms have broken crystals littered near the walls.

#### LIGHTING

Several the crystals seem to hold a slight glow to them. Singly it doesn't do much, with a number of them, it means the entire area (where not mentioned different) has a low glow about it.

#### TRAPS

While there are no traps in the tunnel system itself, there is an energy that permeates the walls and crystals. What that means is that any time a spell (divine or arcane) is cast within the tunnel system (including the prison), treat as if it were cast by a wild mage. If they (or you, DM's choice) rolls a 1 on a d20 when they cast a level 1 or higher spell, they trigger a wild surge. If a wild mage is in the party, they surge on any spell level 1 and higher.

### OBJECTIVES

Making their way through the tunnels they will come across Kara Thrumm with the potential to save her (bonus objective), and the source of the undead in the poisoned pool (tertiary objective) as well as the Crystal Prison where the outsiders are attempting to break through (primary objective). Once they have completed the exploration of the cave and stopped the release of the Star Spawn, they can return to Bloutar for the Wrap Up.

## 1. ENTRANCE CHAMBER

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### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

The entrance to the tunnel system is in a small hill with a heavy amount of moss and undergrowth covering the cave. A heavy trail coming out from between the vines from a large number of undead have made it easier for would be saviors to locate.

From within the smell of mildew and rot is light, but present. It is mixed with a heavy mineral smell that is produced by the crystals woven through every wall of the system.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Four **howlers** have taken up in the cave just inside the tunnel. They are protective of this "new lair" they have found, and only let creatures pass that have the touch of the Star Spawn on them. They will attack the party on sight and fight to the death. Of course they will also alert the rest of the system of the arrival of the heroes.

## 2. CENTRAL CHAMBER

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### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

One of the largest open caves in this system, the ceiling domes upward from 18' at the edges to around 35' in the center. Stalactites hang above, formed of large crystals, with a pair of stalagmites that have been sheared off to form a type of smooth table on them.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Six **piercers** are sitting in among the stalactites in this chamber waiting for prey to come near. They are modified from the original monster due to the nature of the cavern. If they strike a creature, they do damage and attempt to take it down. If they hit stone/crystal on the floor, they will explode, dealing 20(4d6) force damage to any adjacent creature, half if they make a DC18 dexterity saving throw.

## 3. SCENE OF THE CRIME

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### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

Much of this chamber is open and free. The signs of the history of this chamber are apparent though. Several corpses are strewn about the chamber. Dried blood and bits of bone are all that remain of a couple of them, but at least two more are shoved against the wall, half-eaten and rotting.

Though none of these are Kara Thrumm, they do seem to be the bodies of other adventurers. Anything of value on them is either gone, or destroyed from their violent deaths.

## 4. HOLDING PATTERN

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### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

This chamber is nearly devoid of any glowing crystals. As such, it is completely dark in there. Broken crystal bits are covering the floor throughout



making it difficult terrain. Anyone attempting to move at full speed will take 2(1d4) damage for each 5' they move in the area.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Three modified **bodaks** are sitting in this room. They won't react to anything other than creature entering the chamber. They are currently being held there for use by the Star Spawn should they need eyes outside the cavern.

## 5. BOTTLENECK

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

This length of cavern is clean and clear due to the warriors setting up here. In the event that the warriors have been warned of the approach by the howlers, a temporary blockade will have been set up at the east end of the cavern for the evoker to set up behind.

### CREATURES/NPCs

Six **veterans** have set up in here to block any intrusions in the Crystal Prison. They are backed up by an **evoker** who has set up behind a blockade formed from equipment they have brought in with them.

If the fight is going poorly for them, the evoker will use a messaging spell to inform their lord that they need help, bringing the **bodaks** from room 4 into aid them (assuming they haven't been dispatched by the heroes. Otherwise, he will flee down the hall to join their lord in the Crystal Prison.

**Note:** Remember that the evoker is subject to the same wild surges as the players.

## 6. MUDDY CHAMBER

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

The floor of this chamber is covered in a thick mud, causing it to be difficult terrain up to the entrance. A thick crack in the stone wall is where the water and mud are finding a way in. Overall, it is kind of a miserable place to be, which is why the warriors are using it as a holding cell.

### CREATURES/NPCs

A human swashbuckler (Kara Thrumm) was captured by the warriors and is being held in this room. Likely for ransom, or for a sacrifice, should one be needed. If the players release her, she will offer to hang back to protect their flank but cannot go up against the warrior lord that is attempting to break open the prison. All she asks in return is to be returned to Bloutar and Jillian.

If not presented with a weapon to defend herself, she will whisper softly to herself, causing a basket hilted rapier to appear in her hand.

### BONUS OBJECTIVE

Return Kara to Bloutar and Jillian. Keep her safe through the remainder of the adventure so she can return.

## 7. DARK WATER

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

The northern end of this chamber dips deeply, but is filled with a thick, black water. It smells strongly of mildew and rot. Every once in a while the thick, viscous liquid will release a single bubble.

### CREATURES/NPCs

A **ghost** sits at the edge of the water, just staring at it. The spirit isn't aggressive, and if the players speak with it, the creature will inform them that the pool is the source of the **bodak** that have been causing the problems. There was a holy stone that had been in the pool to purify it. Some thief had stolen it out of the pool and since then the dead have been forming out of the ooze that took its place.

**Note:** If the players attack the ghost it will attempt to halt them and speak, but otherwise it will disappear into the walls and not return until they are gone.

### HAZARDS

Any creature that either touches or enters the pool will feel their life force being stripped from them, taking 20(4d6) necrotic damage. They can only enter the pool safely if they are carrying the Heartstone (found in area 9).

## 8. FEEDING HALL

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

This area has been used for the keeping of bodies of sacrifices. Storage and for the feeding of the new creatures spawned from the pools. The smell of rot is strong in the room, but otherwise it resembles most of the caverns.

### TREASURE & REWARDS

There are the remains of several bodies in this room. Without picking through too much (DC15 investigation or perception) the party will find a backpack in generally decent order, even if it is covered in rot and gore.

A quick survey of the contents will produce a healer's kit, a *potion of greater healing* and a *potion of flying*.

## 9. HEARTSTONE'S LAST STAND

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

Easily the largest room in the system, it holds several stalagmites that are smoothed similar to the ones in area 2. The entire room seems to be littered with broken crystals and shards that have scattered everywhere. The ceiling in this cave goes from 15' at the edge to 40' in height in the middle.

#### CREATURES/NPCs

Towards the far end of the room, the party can spot the corpse of an elf. She has been slain recently, but it is clear that in one hand she holds a rapier, and in the other she is clutching a large stone that holds a strong glow to it, unlike most of them seen in this cavern complex. She was felled by mutated piercers similar to the ones in area 2. Within this room there are 12 **piercers** ready to finish the job on adventurers.

#### BONUS OBJECTIVE

Return the Heartstone to the corrupted pool to prevent more undead from forming and taking over the forest.

## 10. THE CRYSTAL PRISON

### AREA INFORMATION

#### DIMENSIONS & TERRAIN

A fissure in the tunnel has uncovered the hidden antechamber to this prison. A cut stone room is formed with a 25' high ceiling, and while there is no light source in the room, the teleportation circle in the middle of it is giving off enough of a glow to produce light as if a lantern was in use here.

#### TRAPS

The double doors leading into the Prison Chamber are locked and the spawn lead the warrior attempting to free them in setting a glyph of warding on the door. If the party opens the door (DC20 dexterity/thieves tools check) without shutting down the glyph of warding (DC15 investigation to discover, 5th level spell ward for dispelling purposes), a 5th level fireball spell will go off (DC15 dexterity save for half damage).

#### CREATURES/NPCs

A **champion** stands before the mirror door to the crystal prison inside the chamber. His concentration is required to release the star spawn from their prison. What he isn't aware of as he turns to face the party in combat, is that as soon as he falls in battle, two **Star Spawn Hulks** assume his place. From that point, the **Star Spawn Seer** can do a single attack through the mirror on each of its turns. On its third turn, if the hulk is still standing the mirror will crack open and it will be free. This is the only way the party can attack it. If they manage to defeat the hulk before the seer's third turn, it will remain trapped in the crystal prison.

#### DEVELOPMENT

Once the party has either destroyed the Star Spawn, or have trapped them in the prison again, they can return to Bloutar having discovered the source of the attacks on the trails. Though if they haven't cleared up the Dark Water pool in area 7, the threat isn't completely contained.

## WRAP UP

Once the characters have dealt with the Crystal Prison and have returned to Bloutar, the people at the inn will sing their praises. Thorton will pay for their drinks, as he will be well into his cups, even though his leg has been healed by the local cleric.

If the party managed to rescue Kara and return her to Jillian, they will both approach with their thanks, and Kara will offer them her rapier in form of payment – as well as an assurance to her girlfriend that she is going to settle down and give up her adventuring life.

#### TREASURE & REWARDS

If the party saves Kara, they will get the rapier from Kara. Otherwise, they could have also found it on the elf rogue who had attempted to steal the Heartstone.

**Magic Items.** A magic rapier known as Angel Sting. (See **Appendix 4: Player Handouts**.)



## 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 2 advancement checkpoints and 4 treasure checkpoints for **completing the adventure**. In addition, they receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 2 treasure checkpoints for completing each of the each of the **bonus objectives** below.

- **Bonus Objective 1:** Return Kara to Bloutar and Jillian. Keep her safe through the remainder of the adventure so she can return.
- **Bonus Objective 2:** Return the Heartstone to the corrupted pool to prevent more undead from forming and taking over the forest.

### 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.

**Angel Sting (*Dancing Sword*).** Specifics on this item can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Handouts**.

### 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 2: CREATURE STATISTICS

### BODAK

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 7 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** lightning, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Abyssal, the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Aura of Annihilation.** The bodak can activate or deactivate this feature as a bonus action. While active, the aura deals 5 necrotic damage to any creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the bodak. Undead and fiends ignore this effect.

**Death Gaze.** When a creature that can see the bodak's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the bodak, the bodak can force it to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw if the bodak isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, unless it is immune to the frightened condition. Otherwise, a creature takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the bodak until the start of its next turn. If the creature looks at the bodak in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw.

**Sunlight Hypersensitivity.** The bodak takes 5 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

### ACTIONS

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

**Withering Gaze.** One creature that the bodak can see within 60 feet of it must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### CHAMPION

*Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 143 (22d8 + 44)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Con +6

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Indomitable (2/Day).** The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

**Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).**

As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.





## EVOKER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 66 (12d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Int +7, Wis +5

**Skills** Arcana +7, History +7

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** any four languages

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The evoker is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The evoker has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*\*, *light*\*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*\*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*\*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*\*

2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image*, *misty step*, *shatter*\*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*\*, *lightning bolt*\*

4th level (3 slots): *ice storm*\*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand*\*, *cone of cold*\*

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*\*, *wall of ice*\*

\*Evocation spell

**Sculpt Spells.** When the evoker casts an evocation spell that forces other creatures it can see, it can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. These creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell. If a successful save means a chosen creature would take half damage from the spell, it instead takes no damage from it.

### ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 - 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.



## 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.





## HOWLER

Large fiend, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 90 (12d10 + 24)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 17 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 5 (-3) | 20 (+5) | 6 (-2) |

**Skills** Perception +8

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

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Abyssal but can't speak

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** A howler has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the howler's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The howler makes two bite attacks.

**Rending Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, plus 22 (4d10) psychic damage if the target is frightened. This attack ignores damage resistance.

**Mind-Breaking Howl (Recharge 6).** The howler emits a keening howl in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area that isn't deafened must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the howler's next turn. While a creature is frightened in this way, its speed is halved, and it is incapacitated. A target that successfully saves is immune to the Mind-Breaking Howl of all howlers for the next 24 hours.

## PIERCER

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 1 (-5) | 7 (-2) | 3 (-4) |

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the piercer remains motionless on the ceiling, it is indistinguishable from a normal stalactite.

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

### ACTIONS

**Drop.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, one creature directly underneath the piercer. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage per 10 feet fallen, up to 21 (6d6). *Miss:* The piercer takes half the normal falling damage for the distance fallen.

## STAR SPAWN HULK

Large aberration, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (13d10 + 65)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 20 (+5) | 8 (-1) | 21 (+5) | 7 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 9 (-1) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +3, Wis +5

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Deep Speech

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Psychic Mirror.** If the hulk takes psychic damage, each creature within 10 feet of the hulk takes that damage instead; the hulk takes none of the damage. In addition, the hulk's thoughts and location can't be discerned by magic.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hulk makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target also takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the target's next turn.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Reaping Arms (Recharge 5-6).** The hulk makes a separate slam attack against each creature within 10 feet of it. Each creature that is hit must also succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

## STAR SPAWN SEER

Medium aberration, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 153 (18d8 + 72)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 22 (+6) | 19 (+4) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Int + 11, Wis +9, Cha +8

**Skills** Perception +9

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Undercommon

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Out-of-Phase Movement.** The seer can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. Each creature it moves through takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage; no creature can take this damage more than once per turn. The seer takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The seer makes two comet staff attacks or uses Psychic Orb twice.

**Comet Staff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

**Psychic Orb.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 feet, one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) psychic damage.

**Collapse Distance (Recharge 6).** The seer warps space around a creature it can see within 30 feet of it. That creature must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, is magically teleported up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space the seer can see, and all other creatures within 10 feet of the target's original space each takes 39 (6d12) psychic damage. On a successful save, the target takes 19 (3d12) psychic damage.

### REACTIONS

**Bend Space.** When the seer would be hit by an attack, it teleports, exchanging positions with another star spawn it can see within 60 feet of it. The other star spawn is hit by the attack instead.

## 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.

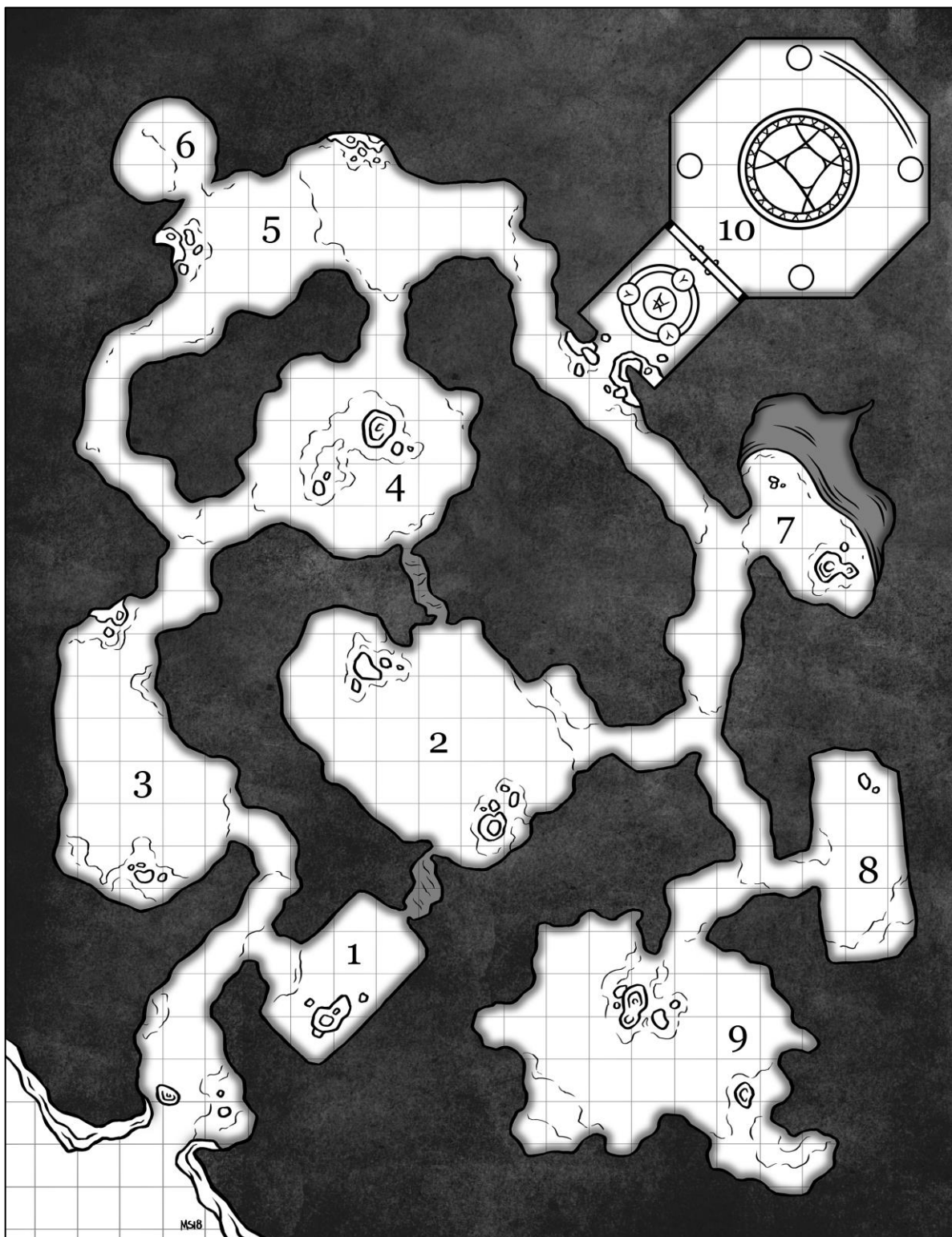




## APPENDIX 3: MAPS

### THE CRYSTAL PRISON

Scale: One square = 5 feet



## APPENDIX 4: PLAYER HANDOUTS

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

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#### ANGEL STING (*DANCING SWORD*)

*Weapon (rapier), very rare (requires attunement),  
Table H*

You can use a bonus action to toss this magic sword into the air and speak the command word. When you do so, the sword begins to hover, flies up to 30 feet, and attacks one creature of your choice within 5 feet of it. The sword uses your attack roll and ability score modifier to damage rolls.

While the sword hovers, you can use a bonus action to cause it to fly up to 30 feet to another spot within 30 feet of you. As part of the same bonus action, you can cause the sword to attack one creature within 5 feet of it.

After the hovering sword attacks for the fourth time, it flies up to 30 feet and tries to return to your hand. If you have no hand free, it falls to the ground at your feet. If the sword has no unobstructed path to you, it moves as close to you as it can and then falls to the ground. It also ceases to hover if you grasp it or move more than 30 feet away from it.

While in possession of the item, the bearer feels fortunate and optimistic about what the future holds. Butterflies and other harmless creatures might frolic in the item's presence.

This item can be found on page 161 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## APPENDIX 5: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 10th-16th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 13**. 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    |

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#### NEW TO THE BORDER KINGDOMS STORYLINE?

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.

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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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