



## Raven Lord's Aerie

Raids by the forces of the Raven Lord Attatarxes have taken their toll on the villages near Glister. Having finally gained an upper hand in repelling a raid, Thrusk Tharmuil seeks aid in taking the fight to the Raven Lord.

*Part Two of the Save Versus Hunger 2018 adventure series*

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



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# Adventure Primer

## Adventure Background

In the distant past, the **Warlord Attatarxes**, who was obsessed with the bird-folk such as aarakocra and kenku, used foul magics to gain eternal life. His cruelty attracted the attention of a band of heroes, who battled through his assembled cult and sought to stop the ritual. They were able to do so, but Attatarxes escaped their grasp.

Though his initial ritual was stopped, he was able to complete a secondary ritual, sacrificing the lives of thousands of his followers to transform himself into a powerful mummy lord. Some of his followers managed to seal him in his catacombs deep within the **Galena Mountains**, sacrificing themselves in the process.

Now, he has awakened once more, styling himself **The Raven Lord**, and has gathered a small army of **Uthgardt**, kenku and aarakocra who worship him as a god. This army has been raiding villages near **Glister**, making their way ever closer.

After aiding in the defense of a small village, Hetford Orchard adventurers prepare to launch a daring strike on the Aerie holding the key to the Raven Lord's immortality.

Attatarxes is more than prepared for this, however, and his Aerie is built to resist infiltration by adventuring parties. His experience with, and defeat by, adventurers in the past has driven the Raven Lord to build his defenses with such groups in mind.

### Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

**Grayfeather.** Uthgardt chieftain the players may have recruited in the last mission. He is an expert in the Raven Lord's tactics, having been a favored leader.

**Ptahrek (TAH-wreck).** Aarakocra warlord fanatically devoted to the Raven Lord. Personally responsible for the defense of the Raven Lord's heart, the key to his immortality

## Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into 6 parts:

**Part 1. Arrival-** characters arrive in Glister and are briefed by Thrusk on the task at hand. They may seek guidance from priests on mummy lords.

**Part 2. Wing It-** characters follow Thrusk's advice and tame wyverns to make the trip easier. En route they are attacked by an aerial patrol.

**Part 3. Outpost-** The characters arrive at the war camp and slip inside the Aerie

**Part 4. Mimicry is the Highest Form of Flatter.** Characters enter the first puzzle chamber and must solve a runic puzzle to gain the first organ.

**Part 5. Fly the Friendly Skies.** The characters must reach the next level through a devious trap and solve a puzzle about the nature of aarakocra

**Part 6. Heart of my Heart** the characters reach the pinnacle of the Aerie and must contend with Attatarxes' most loyal followers and his second in command, an aarakocra warlord named Ptahrek, who protects the Raven Lord's Heart.

## Adventure Hooks

**Previous Adventures.** Characters who took part in the previous adventure are contacted by Thrusk Tharmuil in the hopes that they can carry out the next stage of the process they began

**Zhentarim (Faction Assignment).** In addition, the Zhentarim seek information on the war camp within the Galena Mountains and its value as an outpost for various secretive missions. They ask members to locate any maps or paperwork they can find on the Aerie and return with them.

**Order of the Gauntlet (Faction Assignment).** The Order of the Gauntlet wishes to learn who is behind the attacks and see them brought to justice. To this end, they ask that members locate the leader of the camp and bring him to Glister for trial if possible, or proof of his death.

**Other Factions.** The factions send letters to the characters requesting their aid in taking the steps in stopping the threat to Glister.

### What are you Wearing

This module and the others in the series feature aarakocra wearing heavy armors, which technically inhibits their flight ability. For the purposes of these modules, consider them to be wearing armor made of alternative materials specially designed with the aarakocra in mind, allowing them to fly while maintaining the same Armor Class.

## Part 1. Arrival

**Estimated Duration:** 15 minutes

Characters arrive in Glister and are ushered to the Griffonwatch Castle, where they await a meeting with Thrusk Tharmuil.

### Meeting at Griffonwatch

You are led into a meeting chamber, dominated by a large wooden table with a map laid out upon it. The map shows the region north of Thar, including Glister, the Galena mountains and several settlements in the area. A small green flag has been pinned in the Galena foothills just north of Glister. It does not correspond with anything you are aware of.

"I see you have noticed the marker" an aged voice interrupts your musings. The speaker is an aged gentleman in flowing yellow robes. He gestures to the pinned flag and a small wooden box decorated with silver filigree.

"Based on the information we have gleaned, we have determined this to be the most likely location for the Raven Lord's encampment. Unfortunately, the roads to reach it see little use and are unreliable. Fortunately, I have a solution in mind for that."

At that, he turns the small box towards you and slides the top panel open along a hidden seam. Inside are a handful of brass medallions bearing the insignia of Glister.

"These were used by ancient heroes to help defend the lands around the Galena Mountains when danger arose. They are yours for this quest, though I expect them returned if you survive, their value is as much sentimental as it is monetary."

The speaker is Thrusk Tharmuil, leader of Glister. He is willing to share what information he knows with the group, which is as follows.

- Any characters who did not participate in the first module get a quick rundown of the raids on farming settlements, ending with the defense of Hetford Orchard.
- It was as a result of this battle that they were able to gain their information source. If more than half the characters possess the Uthgardt Negotiator story reward then the informant is Chieftain Grayfeather, who has come to Glister to help further combat the Raven lord. If they do not, then the source is an aarakocra who was captured

in the battle and has been "persuaded" to give information on his leader.

- Attatarxes, the Raven Lord, is a mummy lord, a powerful undead creature similar to a lich. Thrusk is unfamiliar with the creatures but the local priests may have more information
- His goal seems to be to create a kingdom of his own centered on the Galena Mountains. This would most likely involve the subjugation of many towns such as Glister. While Thrusk is confident that a military response from a city such as Waterdeep or Baldur's Gate would be enough to end the menace, he fears what would have to happen to Glister for that to be brought to bear and would rather deal with the situation now.
- The marked location is Attatarxes' forward base in the Galena Mountains. It is from here that a mix of Uthgardt, aarakocra and kenku raiders have been attacking. The source (Grayfeather or the aarakocra prisoner) mentioned that the Raven Lord's "chosen" was there as well, but wasn't sure what that meant.
- The base also serves to protect something of great importance to Attatarxes, some sort of naturally occurring rock spire that he has modified into an Aerie. It is not known what lies inside, but it seems to be of great value to Attatarxes.
- He also explains the use of the amulets to them. For a short time, the amulets allow one to tame one of the wyverns that are common in the Galena Mountains to serve as a mount. They will only serve those whose heart's desire to protect Glister.
- His plan is for the characters to use the amulets to tame wyvern mounts and use them to fly within the vicinity of the war camp. The final approach will have to be made by foot, but the wyverns will ease the early part of the journey.

Thrusk is willing to offer 500 gp and two potions of healing up front. Thrusk provides them directions elsewhere in the city if they seek to investigate further before setting out. If they seek to speak further to the source, it depends on who the source is. The aarakocra has been locked in the most secure cell in the city, and any interrogation attempts will quickly come up empty, and the characters realize he doesn't know anything more than what he has already told the guards. If the source is Grayfeather, he is more welcoming, meeting them at a local inn where he is staying. Upon finding out that they intend to breach the stronghold and enter the spire, he is forthcoming with a few more secrets. As a chieftain he was privy to the symbols and passcodes

given to the gate guards. He will happily provide those to the party.

If they seek information on defeating a mummy lord, as Thrusk suggests they do, they can consult at any of the local temples or attempt a DC 18 **Intelligence (Religion)** check. The temple leaders ask for a 25 gp donation to the needy of Glister. Either method allows them to gain a basic understanding of how mummy lords survive, specifically their need for canopic jars similar to a lich's phylactery. From there it is not a hefty leap to figure out that what the base likely guards is the location of his canopic jars, as they would likely be kept under heavy guard and behind dangerous traps. The party will have to clearly prepare for a well-guarded dungeon crawl in order to recover the relics. Whether this information comes from the character's own knowledge, the priests or any other source, the smart move should be obvious, to bring them back to the priests to be burned in a ritual cleansing. If they consult with priests for the information, the request that they do so is made overtly before they leave.

## Part 2. Wing It

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

Thrusk provides the characters with a map of easily accessible in the nearby Galena Mountains where the creatures are known to nest. Reaching the initial area is simple but getting close enough to the nest in order to use the amulets is another story entirely.

### General Features

The Galena Mountains are rugged peaks filled with danger.

**Terrain.** Mountainous, with cliffs and ravines common

**Weather.** Clear and cool

**Light.** Natural daylight

**Smells and Sounds.** Occasional wildlife sounds like eagles or goats that happen to be nearby

The valley you find yourself in is surrounded by steep stone spires. The ground around each is littered with bones of large animals and an occasional humanoid, clearly remains of meals dropped from the nests above.

At the top of each spire you can see several winged shapes, resting quietly in large nests.

In order to gain access to the wyverns, characters must scale the stone spires without attracting the ire of its inhabitants and get close enough to use the magic of the amulets, which have a range of 60' and require the target to be in sight.

- Scaling the spires is relatively easy and requires a successful DC 15 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check.
- Approaching without attracting notice of the wyverns requires a successful DC 15 **Dexterity (Stealth)** check.
- Alternatively, players can draw wyverns down into the valley. It is easy to draw attention but doing so under control requires a successful DC 16 **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check to bring them one at a time. If this roll is failed by 2, a second wyvern joins the first, with another joining for each 2 points by which the roll fails. Each wyvern nest contains 1d6 wyverns. Presenting the wyverns with fresh meat provides advantage to any **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** checks. Multiple wyverns present an extra challenge to players attempting to tame them, as they are distracted, increasing the difficulty of any further checks by characters by 2 for every extra two wyverns.
- The amulets require an action each to activate. The cast a modified version of the spell *Animal Friendship* which can only target wyverns native to the Galena Mountains. The save DC is 20, but

any wyvern who has taken damage from a character makes this save with advantage.

- Tamed wyverns are friendly to whoever tamed them but, retain their wild natures. This is a great time to add some levity to the situation- as they take flight they will obey rudimentary commands but also enjoy a few fun rolls and banking turns to “stretch” their wings- not fun for character afraid of heights or prone to bouts of queasiness.

### Time Crunch?

If running this adventure with limited time (convention play or fixed time slot) this section can be easily shorted by simply having the players roleplay the taming of the wyverns, or having it occur entirely off-screen to ensure proper time flow for the rest of the module.

## Attack from Above

Once the characters are able to gain the use of the wyverns as mounts, they are able to take to the skies and bypass the rockfall that has sealed the pass to the Vault. Attatarxes has foreseen this attempted method of approach and has posted patrols outside of the mine entrance to watch for approaching attackers.

Without magical intervention, this patrol is impossible to avoid (a half-dozen wyverns approaching a location is hard to conceal normally.)

About a half-mile from the mine characters approaching by flight are intercepted by a patrol of defenders. **10 berserkers** mounted on **giant vultures (ravens)** and **6 aarakocra veterans** swoop down on the players from above. The **ravens** are exceptional specimens, with maximum hit points (36).

They spotted the characters from a long distance away and have flown intentionally high and from the direction of the sun, making it unlikely they will be spotted before they are in their attack dive (requires a successful DC 25 **Wisdom (Perception)** check made with disadvantage due to the sunlight to spot them ahead of time.) The following rules apply to the aerial combat.

- Any character mounted on a wyvern who takes damage must succeed on a DC 12 **Strength (Athletics)** check to stay on their mount. Any character who took precautions such as tying themselves to the mount with rope makes this with advantage
- Berserkers whose mounts are killed will attempt to leap onto the back of the nearest wyvern, if one is within 15ft. This requires a successful DC 15

**Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. If they succeed, they will attempt to wrestle the rider off and take control (one grapple check to get hold of the rider, another to dislodge them.) Anyone so boarded who attempts to have their mount “roll” midair to buck the invader may make a successful DC 10 **Strength (Athletics)** check to maintain their grip during the spin. Anyone not expecting the roll has the DC increased to 20 and the roll is made with disadvantage.

- Anyone falling from their mount fall 10-100' (1d10x10' if tracking combat narratively) to the ground below, taking damage accordingly, unless they have stated a height they wish to maintain beforehand. Any friendly character within 20' when this happens can use their turn to command their wyvern to attempt to grab their falling ally. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 **Dexterity** check by the mount, but indicates the character is being carried in the wyvern's claws. Each wyvern may only carry one person this way.

On each player's turn they may order their mount to make a single attack as a bonus action. The mount may make either a Bite or Stinger attack.

#### Adjusting This Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, for your group. Changes are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak.** change 2 berserkers to **arakocra**
- **Strong or Very Strong.** add 2 **veterans**

## Part 3. Outpost

**Estimated Duration:** 15 minutes

Once the characters overcome the ambush, they can find a suitable place to land their mounts and follow the lone road to the outpost, taking a short rest if needed. Anything longer is too dangerous. If a map is needed use **Appendix 3: War Camp**.

### General Features

The outpost area has the following general features:

**Terrain.** This is a large natural canyon, with sheer cliffs on all sides.

**Weather.** The air here is cool and windy.

**Light.** Natural daylight.

**Smells and Sounds.** The sounds of conversation of hundreds of barbarians and aarakocra. The smells of a war camp- cooking fires, smith fires, etc.

The canyon road you have been following slowly begins to rise back to level with the rocks to either side, finally levelling out enough for you to see the outer perimeter of the outpost ahead of you.

A large wooden palisade has been constructed and blocks the entire road. At the center of the wall is a crude metal portcullis, allowing you a fleeting glimpse of the camp beyond- a camp built for war. Atop the palisade you can easily see four aarakocra guards, gazing lazily into the distance.

Even from here you can easily spot the Aerie. The western edge of the outpost hugs a steep cliff. Nearly two hundred feet of stone the cliff towers above the buildings below.

At its top is a massive spire of stone roughly ninety feet in diameter at the base and rising hundreds more feet before reaching a flattened plateau. Around the peak you can barely make out winged creatures soaring in loose circles around the spire. The ascent will not be easy, but it will be impossible if you cannot safely gain entrance to the camp without raising an alarm.

The characters must find a way to bypass the watch post and enter the camp peacefully, lest they find themselves under attack from the entire campsite (see captured below for dealing with such a scenario.)

The simplest way to move forward is possible only if the characters struck a deal with Grayfeather and were given the secret signal and passwords. Any characters with such must only make a **Charisma (Deception) DC 7** to be allowed entry peacefully.

If more than half of the party passes this check, the guards will ignore any who failed, assuming they are simply uncouth companions to those who passed.

Those without the proper passwords can attempt to bluff their way in as well. Such a circumstance requires a successful DC 15 **Charisma (Deception)** check to pass by the guards. Any aarakocra or kenku characters make such a roll with advantage. Use of a disguise kit or other such methods to make the party appear to be Raven Tribe Uthgardt also earns advantage, at the discretion of the Dungeon Master.

Once the characters gain entry to the camp they can make their way to the spire. This is relatively easy to accomplish; the camp assumes anyone gaining entry bears the proper credentials.

If the characters had a particularly easy time bypassing the gate, or you feel like playing up the drama of sneaking through the camp a bit, they can be approached by a group of three drunken **Uthgardt Berserkers**. They are itching for trouble and want a fight. A successful DC 15 **Charisma (Intimidation)** check can get them to back down, as can any suitable show of force by the characters.

Alternatively, any character offering them more alcohol automatically passes the encounter for the group. Failing those options, the Uthgardt attack. In such a case, the characters must end the fight quickly and without anything too showy to draw attention to themselves.

### Captured

If combat breaks out the characters will find themselves the targets of a growing mob of warriors. Each round an additional 1d4 **Berserkers** and 1d6 **Aarakocra Veterans** will join the fray until the characters fall or surrender. Fallen characters are taken alive if possible and taken to a series of cells. These cells are lightly guarded, but the characters are stripped of their gear, which is placed in a chest outside the command tent. Allow characters some creativity in their escape but be careful not to allow it to bog down the session before it can get going.

## Zhentarim

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Any Zhentarim characters will be searching for maps of the outpost. A successful DC 14 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check will allow them to spot a stack of papers on a large table beside the command tent.

A successful DC 15 **Dexterity (Stealth)** check will allow a character to approach unseen to find the papers they seek. A character that succeeds on a DC 12 **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check pockets the maps without being seen and completes their objective for the Zhentarim. Any clever distractions, such as challenging the guards to a card game makes both checks performed with advantage.

Once the party is ready to enter the spire they can approach the cliff face and find a stone archway leading into the caverns inside. Unless they have made some sort of scene they can do this unnoticed.

### XP Awards

If the characters detect and avoid the pit trap, award each character 1000 XP.

## Part 4. Mimicry is the Highest form of Flattery

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

Once the characters enter the Aerie itself they are faced with a series of puzzles and challenges to overcome.

The first section, and lowest in the aerie is designed around the kenku, who Attatarxes views with a patronizing affection- empathizing with their desire to fly, and seeing them as useful for their abilities, but of little value otherwise.

The entrance to the kenku challenge is 200' above the cave floor. Each section is patrolled by aarakocra Wraiths. The party can easily avoid them, but if they attempt more than one short rest within the aerie, they are interrupted by such a patrol. (Inform the party that they are confident the area is patrolled and that resting more than once is a risk.)

### Design Notes

The remaining portions of the Aerie represent the traps and puzzles Attatarxes has put in place to keep his organs, and through them, his immortality, safe. They are intentionally difficult to solve and should challenge your players. There are multiple solutions to each puzzle, with the most obvious usually being incorrect. **Do not spoil this feature for your players.** The nature of the puzzles is tied to his chosen servant, kenku and aarakocra. Guidance is provided in each section on helping players who are stuck, but you shouldn't give away any answers- this is high level content, players should succeed or fail on their own merit and dice rolls.

It is entirely possible and probable that the party will end up with the incorrect organs. Attatarxes included these decoys under the false solutions as obvious red herrings- because he understands the nature of adventuring parties, having been defeated by them in the past. Any characters who attempt any sort of divination to find out the nature of the organs they locate finds only vague answers. In addition, the puzzles do no reset for a full week after they are solved once. It is not until the final wrap-up when story awards are being given out that the players will truly know if they have succeeded.

The chamber you find yourselves in is massive, revealing the largely hollow nature of the cliff face you saw from outside. Some two hundred feet above you there is an obvious ledge with a doorway cut behind it. Faint light comes from within, illuminating it clearly for you to see from below. There are no stairs and no ladder to reach it, but the cliff face is littered with simple handholds and gaps.

The cliff can be scaled with two successful DC 12 **Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** checks. Any character failing the first check stumbles and slips before they get high enough to take falling damage. Anyone who fails the second check can make another check of the same type at a **DC 18** to catch themselves before they fall.

Anyone falling from the second check falls **100'** to the cave floor below, taking **35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage**. The first character to successfully scale the cliff finds an outcropping which allows them to easily tie off a rope, making further checks by anyone using said rope to tie themselves off with advantage, and any falls only deal 17 (5d6) damage as the character doesn't fall but is battered by the rocks on the cliff face.

### Rune Puzzle

Upon reaching the top the characters must solve the puzzle Attatarxes has designed to protect the canopic jar containing his lungs. Show them

#### Appendix 4: Rune Puzzle.

You enter a large chamber and notice immediately that it echoes with the sound of whistling wind from an unknown source. Your attention is drawn to the walls to your left and right. To your left, there is a pedestal carved into the rock face with a lever on the top. Above the pedestal is a strangely notched section of wall. On the opposite wall there are eight runes carved into the wall, each nearly identical and each with a slot cut into the stone beneath them. A trapdoor in the ceiling provides the only point of egress from the room.

Anyone investigating the notched section above the pedestal can easily discern that it appears the rock face is designed to slide away. A **passive Perception 20** or higher reveals the source of the whistling wind to be a faint seam in the floor that blends in with the natural rock pattern.

If a character pulls the lever two things happen.

- First, a brass disc appears on top of the pedestal beside the lever.
- Second, the stone panel slides away for 1 round, revealing a rune. (show the characters **Appendix 5: Rune Solution** while counting to 6, then hide it once again.)

Players can each attempt an **Intelligence DC20** check to memorize the rune before the panel slides closed. Success means they have memorized it- give them the copy of **Appendix 5: Rune Solution**.

Failure means they couldn't make a perfect mental image of it.

Any kenku character makes the check at a DC of 10. The stone panel cannot be blocked, and any item used to attempt to do so is either crushed or sent flying across the room.

If the characters pull the lever again, the rune opens for another round, and the check is made anew. However, the floor also grinds open along the central split, revealing an open void beneath them, threatening to spill them 200' to the entrance of the caves.

Using the lever three times after the initial appearance results in the entire party being dropped to the cave floor below, as the floor disappears into the walls entirely.

### Solution

The characters should deduce that the brass disc fits within the slots beneath the runes and is designed to represent their choice. The correct choice is rune #6, but regardless of which they choose the floor grinds closed once again and a panel opens beneath the pedestal revealing a canopic jar containing a set of lungs. If they correctly chose #6 then at the end the will receive story reward **Raven Lord's Lungs**.

### Rewards

Award each char 1500 xp for completion of the rune puzzle

### Treasure

The canopic jar is an art piece valued at 800 gp and can be sold by the party.

## Part 5. Fly the Friendly Skies

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

Upon exiting the kenku puzzle room the characters find themselves within the aarakocra test chamber. See **Appendix 6: Aarakocra** Entry for a map of the area.

Climbing up and out of the trapdoor from the kenku chamber, you find yourselves at the top of a large stone rise within the greater hollow of the cave. The platform you are standing on is roughly circular, about thirty feet across in any direction.

The sides slope down nearly fifty feet before reaching a sort of cavern floor below you. The walls of the chamber in any direction are hidden in darkness, beyond even the extent of darkvision.

Above you are nearly a dozen ropes, hanging down from a ceiling a hundred foot above you. In the center of the ceiling you can just make out a round metal outcropping that appears to be some sort of trapdoor.

There are two simple solutions to this room. Any character capable of flight can easily reach the central trapdoor. Any character not capable of flight can climb down the sides of the platform, their gentle slope requiring no check, and finds a series of stars cut into the sides of the chamber that slowly pick their way upwards and into the room above. This is indiscernible through darkvision, as the walls are 300' from the center of the room, far beyond the limits of normal darkvision.

The ropes can be climbed with **two successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Athletics) DC checks**, failure indicating a fall of 30' or 80' depending on which check is failed. In addition, the ropes are loosely affixed to the ceiling, so if two medium creatures attempt to climb the same rope then it comes dislodged, spilling both characters to the platform (with fall damage depending on height climbed by first char, and 20' for the second char.)

Once a character reaches the top of the ropes, they notice a series of metal rungs leading inwards towards the central door. These rungs can be traversed with another check as was made to climb the ropes, allowing the characters to reach the central door.

## Door

The first character to reach the door notices several things. The door itself is a round panel with a circular wheel in its center and a metal ring around the outside. It looks like a character could easily reach the door from one of the rungs, and cling to the outer ring while turning the wheel to open the door.

Reaching the door requires another check as per the ropes, but also triggers the trap in the room.

**Passive Perception 20** or higher allows any character on the rungs to notice the rock face around the door does not seem especially sturdy. In fact, when any weight over 10 lbs. is put on the door, it swings open suddenly.

Any character holding onto the door when it does so must make a successful DC 20 **Strength saving throw** or be flung free by the sudden unexpected movement. Any character who fails may make a successful DC 20 **Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to catch one of the ropes as they fly a bit sideways before falling 100'.

This trap can be averted by a character clinging to one of the rungs making a successful DC 15

**Dexterity (Acrobatic)** check to toss a rope with a counterweight at the door and pulling it loose. Once the door is open, anyone reaching it finds a series of easily climbed rungs within, allowing access to the next room.

## Rewards

Each player earns 1000 xp for gaining entry to the next area.

## Aarakocra Altar

This is the puzzle the characters must solve to access the next of Attatarxes' canopic jars.

This chamber is spacious, nearly 300 feet in radius. On one side of the chamber is a heavy iron door that you can tell by the light coming through must lead outside.

What truly draws your eyes, however, is in the center of the chamber. A large altar has been constructed there, a stone pedestal with a bowl carved into its top. Out of the altar rises a crystalline vortex, carved in intricate detail. The edges of the bowl bear runes, which appear to be cut into the stone and backfilled with powdered crystal of the same type as the vortex.

Around the central altar are four pedestals with small offering bowl. Behind each of these is a statue of an aarakocra, three of them with their hands extended and their heads bowed. Something different appears to be resting in the hands of each of these statues. The fourth statue is of an aarakocra, but his hands are held extended towards the altar as if in offering, and his beak is open, with his head extended towards the offering bowl in front of him. The pose reminds you of someone blowing out a candle.

This room is spacious and nearly empty, with the exception of an altar at the center. The altar is a stone pedestal with a bowl etched in the top. Out of the bowl rises a vortex intricately cut from a large crystal. Something is engraved in a strange language around the edges of the bowl. Around the altar are four smaller pedestals, each with a small offering bowl in their top face. Behind each of the smaller pedestals stands a statue of an aarakocra, their hands outstretched before their face in supplication. One of the statues appears to be blowing an unseen substance from its hand. One is holding a glass vial of a liquid that appears to be water, another a tinderbox and the fourth a cube of black stone.

The items are easily removed from the hands of the statues. Placing an item in the bowl before it causes an array of runes to light up on the faces of the pedestal, and a section of the crystal to light up with the matching color. (red for the tinderbox, blue for the water, and gray for the stone.) If multiple colors of light appear in the crystal, instead of merging together they seem to swirl about the carving, as if blown about by an unseen wind. The fourth pedestal lights up with a white light if the bowl is blown upon. If the obvious is done, the central vortex comes to life and spins in a whirl of

color, opening a panel in the altar and releasing a canopic jar containing a dried liver. This is the false liver- but once it is obtained the altar goes dark and refuses to allow any further interaction for a week.

The true solution lies with the engraved runes. The runes are a representation of **Auran**, the language of air elementals. Anyone able to speak the language, or using magical means, can read the inscription. Anyone able to understand **Terran**, **Ignan**, **Aquan** or **Primordial** can make an **Intelligence DC 16** check to decipher the meaning of the runes as well. The runes read:

*One element to rule them all*

Any character with applicable skills (Arcana, Religion, Nature) can make a DC 15 check to intuit that the aarakocra are in fact originally native to the plane of air. In truth, any of the pedestals, if blown upon, glows with a white light. Even when a pedestal has been activated by another element, blowing upon it will still cause a "proper" activation. Only by blowing upon all four pedestals and activating the vortex in a flash of white light does the central altar open to reveal the true canopic jar containing the liver of Attatarxes. Anyone claiming the true liver will earn the story reward **Raven Lord's Liver** at the end of the module.

### Not Getting the Hint?

This puzzle can be a bit confusing for party's incapable of speaking or reading Auran. If they can't decipher the hint and you want to give them a shot at solving the puzzle, allow a DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find a concealed inscription underneath the lip of the bowl, repeating the inscription in common.

### Rewards

Each player earns 1500 xp for solving the altar puzzle.

### Treasure

This canopic jar is also worth 800 gp. In addition, in each of the statues has gold filigree which can be removed for a total of 400 gp of metal scrap. The alcove containing the canopic jar also holds a Potion of Greater Healing.

## Part 6. Heart of my Heart

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

The final canopic jar is guarded by Attatarxes most trusted lieutenant, an aarakocra Warlord named Ptahrek. See **Appendix 7: Mountain Ascent**.

The exit from the aarakocra altar takes you once again into the bright sunlight of the Galena mountains. You find yourself atop the cliff overlooking the war camp you infiltrated earlier, and standing at the base of a massive stone edifice. In the distance, you can see Uthgardt Raven riders and aarakocra circling your position, having noticed you as soon as you left the cave. Yet for some reason they do not approach, as if content to let you reach the summit and face your final trial.

The climb before you will surely be arduous, and leave you exposed. The spire does appear to have small platforms that could serve as resting points every hundred feet, if you can reach them. The truth before you is painfully clear- your ultimate goal rests nearly four hundred feet of dizzying climb above you.

Climbing checks are made every 50' of movement up the spire- and are at a **DC 15** with the player's choice between **Strength (Athletics)** and **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** as before. Because of the layout of the natural ledges, no fall will be of over 100'. However, the ledges are narrow, and only two players at any given time can be on any one ledge. Keep careful track of where each player is on their climb, as during the battle that comes, it will be important to know who is mid-climb and who is on a platform.

The characters are able to fly up to the 300' ledge, at which point it becomes obvious that Uthgardt and aarakocra are planning to descend and intercept flying characters in large numbers. In such a case, they only target the character who is flying, and only until said character moves below the 300' mark again. When the first character climbs to the summit- Ptahrek unleashes his forces upon the CHARACTERS.

As you reach the summit, a flurry of noise and movement catches you off guard. A heavily armored aarakocra with blackened feathers and wielding a gruesome polearm stylized into the form of a feather stands forty feet back from the edge, flanked by four griffons. Behind him stands a small army of aarakocra, their feathers smudged with pitch in patterns designed to intimidate. At their center stands a stone dais, on which rests a canopic jar, sheltered from the wind by canvas banners, painted with scenes of a powerful warrior battled alongside winged warriors.

The armored aarakocra raises his weapon at your appearance and unleashes a war cry.

"His heart is mine and mine is his! For Attatarxes we fight! For the Raven Lord we die!"

The aarakocra raise their javelins in response and cry out. "His heart is ours and ours are his!"

"For Attatarxes we fight! For the Raven Lord we die!"

They take flight as one, moving to engage the characters in an aerial battle on the cliff face, relying on their mobility to win the day. The characters face the following foes. Ptahrek, an aarakocra **warlord**, 4 **griffons**, and 12 aarakocra **veterans**, an aarakocra **Necromancer** and an aarakocra **war priest**. They fight intelligently and as a unified force- Ptahrek has drilled them into a well-oiled machine. The following special tactics and rules apply.

The following effects are applied to characters engaged in combat while climbing.

- Characters subjected to a melee attack while climbing are effectively prone- giving the attacker advantage
- Attacking or casting a spell with material or somatic components while climbing requires a successful DC 12 **Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check, with failure indicating the character loses their balance and falls to the nearest ledge.
- Characters attacking while climbing cannot use both hands to attack
- Checks to continue climbing while engaged in melee are made at disadvantage and incur attacks of opportunity as usual
- The aarakocra **veterans** engage in missile fire first, targeting characters who seem most capable of defending themselves from the wall (i.e. those not carrying 2-handed weapons or those on platforms) closing to melee after 3 rounds.
- Ptahrek targets anyone climbing on the wall, using his **vicious glaive** and relying on his reach with

the weapon to keep him safely back from most characters

- The griffons circle until a character casts a spell, and are then trained to close on said character and attempts to grapple them and pull them off of the wall, dropping them with their next action (characters so grappled can attempt to grapple the griffon to avoid falling at which point the griffon will then attempt to break grapple in order to drop the character, and so forth) Any character using an item such as a flying carpet to stay aloft will also gain the attention of the griffons, who will attempt to pull them off of the object and drop them as stated above.

### Adjusting This Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, for your group. Changes are not cumulative.

**Very Weak.** change 5 veterans to **aarakocra**

**Strong or Very Strong.** add 2 **griffons**

When Ptahrek drops to **50** hit points or lower he flies back and lets out a sharp whistle, calling off the aarakocra and griffons. He addresses the strongest appearing character.

I now see that you will not be stopped from your goal. I do not wish to die this day, not for a master who is destined to lose to those such as yourselves. I offer my surrender, in exchange for my life. You may have my weapon, you may have the heart and I will order the camp to allow you to take me out safely. All I ask is that you spare me, a misguided soul, that I may repay my debts somehow.

This is entirely a ruse. He wants the characters to take the heart at the summit and to imprison him. If his surrender is accepted, he indeed carries out the promises he made- handing over his weapon, allowing the characters to take the canopic jar and ensuring they are able to leave safely. Characters can attempt a DC 18 **Wisdom (Insight)** check to determine if he means what he says. Ptahrek is NOT LYING about most of what he says, a success on the check reveals that his surrender and willingness to turn over the jar are genuine, as is his desire to survive, and his realization that they will likely overcome the Raven Lord is also true. Without a check of **24** or higher, they will not realize the subtext here, that he expected this to happen, and it is his loyalty to the Raven Lord that is causing him to surrender, and that he is hiding something (namely the fact that the heart is within his body, so as long

as he survives, even when the characters overcome the challenges of the tomb, his master will survive.)

The nature of this deception and his magical ties to the Raven Lord gives him advantage on save against any spells attempted to compel the truth, and he is intelligent enough to give vague answers that qualify for the truth and satisfy the characters, without revealing more. He is passionate about protecting his master, and knows this deception is the best way of doing so.

In actuality, the heart in the canopic jar does not belong to Attatarxes, but is another decoy. His war cry is not accidental, it is the truth of his bond to the Raven Lord. Not only is he trusted as his second in command, he is trusted with the Raven Lord's very immortality.

Attatarxes heart is magically grafted into Ptahrek, and only by burning Ptahrek's body can the characters destroy it. As such he will do anything he can in order to convince them to allow him to surrender. If the characters refuse, the aarakocra press the fight and Ptahrek attempts to escape. Characters who figure out the truth and burn the real heart gain the story reward **Raven Lord's Heart** at the end of the module.

Characters with a **Passive Investigation** of **24** or better will notice the edges of scars sticking out from the edges of Ptahrek's armor, hinting at the idea that not all is as it seems. In addition, anyone who states they are investigating the body of the warlord can determine with a successful DC 20 **Wisdom (Medicine)** check that something has been surgically implanted beneath the aarakocra's flesh. (only give this option if someone states they are searching the body itself, not just grabbing his loot.)

Once the battle is over, and the heart is claimed, the characters have to make their escape from the camp. They can either fight their way out (don't roll this battle, describe it to them) or find another way. This is a chance for some DM creativity- perhaps the Uthgardt have a glider they use to scout that the characters can use, or they flee through the mountains and make a dramatic leap into a river. More simply, the characters can signal their wyverns and flee through a hail of arrows atop the beasts.

### Treasure

The final canopic jar is worth 2000 gp. In addition, several of the aarakocra wear gold anklets engraved with black feather designs. There is a total of five of these that can be recovered worth 400 gp each. Ptahrek carries a vicious glaive and a Scroll of Slow.

## Part 7. Conclusion

The characters return to Glister with the jars they were able to claim, not sure whether they have the desired effect or not. If the organs are brought back to be ritually burned as was requested, then the priests will know as soon as the ritual begins which organs are truly Attatarxes' and which ones were actually decoys.

If the characters returned with one or more decoys and it is discovered this was, the priests and Thrusk warn them that Attatarxes is cleverer than they had imagined, and to beware their next move, as he still retains more power through his true organs than they had hoped for.

Either way, Thrusk is optimistic, and tells them that they have indeed won a major victory against Attatarxes this day. If Ptahrek was captured he is taken to a cell in Glister and locked away. If characters attempt to interrogate him about the decoy organs the guards tell them that he is currently being interrogated by their leaders and is slated for a public execution in a few days.

Thrusk cautions them that the job is not yet finished, but that their work this day will be celebrated as the beginning of the end of the Raven Lord.

(*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

## Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

### Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

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The characters receive **4** advancement checkpoints and **4** treasure checkpoints.

### Player Rewards

---

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

#### Magic Item Unlock

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

***Vicious Glaive*** When you roll a 20 on your attack roll with this magic weapon, the target takes an extra 7 damage of the weapons type. This item can be found in **Appendix 9**.

#### Story Awards

Characters playing the adventure may earn:

***Raven Lord's Lungs***. You have found and destroyed the true lungs of the Raven Lord Attatarxes. Doing so has surely served to weaken him in some way. More information can be found in **Appendix 8**.

***Raven Lord's Liver***. You have found and destroyed the true liver of the Raven Lord Attatarxes. Doing so has surely served to weaken him in some way. More information can be found in **Appendix 8**.

***Raven Lord's Heart***. You have found and destroyed the true heart of the Raven Lord Attatarxes. Doing so has left him unable to regenerate if destroyed, and vulnerable to a true death. More information can be found in **Appendix 8**.

### DM Reward

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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

## Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

**Chieftain Greyfeather.** One of the most powerful of the Uthgardt chieftains in Attatarxes' army. If events went the right way in SVH01-01 Dawn of the Raven Lord he acts as an advisor to the characters.

**Ptahrek- (TAH-wreck)** Aarakocra warlord who is in command of the Raven Lord's forces at the Aerie. He is fanatical in his devotion to the Raven Lord, and is entrusted with the Raven Lord's heart, as he is Attatarxes' most trusted ally.

## Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

### Berserker

*Medium humanoid (any race), any chaotic alignment*

**Armor Class** 13 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 9 (-1) | 11 (+0) | 9 (-1) |

---

**Senses** passive Perception 10

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

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Reckless.** At the start of its turn, the berserker can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

#### Actions

---

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

### Giant Vulture (Raven)

*Large beast, neutral*

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 22 (3d10 + 6)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

---

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 6 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 7 (-2) |

---

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Understands Common but can't speak it

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The vulture has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

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

#### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The vulture makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

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

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

### Griffon

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

---

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 2 (-4) | 13 (+1) | 8 (-1) |

---

**Skills** Perception +5

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

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Keen Sight.** The griffon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

#### Actions

---

**Multiattack.** The griffon makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

## Necromancer

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

**Damage Resistances** Necrotic

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** any four languages

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

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

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *mending*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*\*, *mage armor*, *ray of sickness*\*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*\*, *ray of enfeeblement*\*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*\*, *bestow curse*\*, *vampiric touch*\*

4th level (3 slots): *light*\*, *dimension door*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand*, *cloudkill*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*\*

\*Necromancy spell of 1st level or higher

**Grim Harvest (1/Turn).** When necromancer kills a creature that is neither a construct nor undead with a spell of 1st level or higher, the necromancer regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times if it is a necromancy spell.

### Actions

**Withering Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

## Veteran (aarakocra)

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: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

## Warlord

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 18 (Plate)

**Hit Points** 229 (27d8 + 108)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Dex +7, Con +8

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidation +8, Perception +5, Persuasion +8

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** any two languages

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Indomitable (3/Day).** The warlord can reroll a saving throw it fails. It must use the new roll.

**Survivor.** The warlord regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point but fewer hit points than half its hit point maximum.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The warlord makes two weapon attacks.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

### Legendary Actions

The warlord 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 warlord regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Weapon Attack.** The warlord makes a weapon attack.

**Command Ally.** The warlord targets one ally it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear the warlord, the target can make one weapon attack as a reaction and gains advantage on the attack roll.

**Frighten Foe (Costs 2 Actions).** The warlord targets one enemy it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear it, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of warlord's next turn.

## Wyvern

Large dragon, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 19 (+4) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 5 (-3) | 12 (+1) | 6 (-2) |

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

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

### Actions

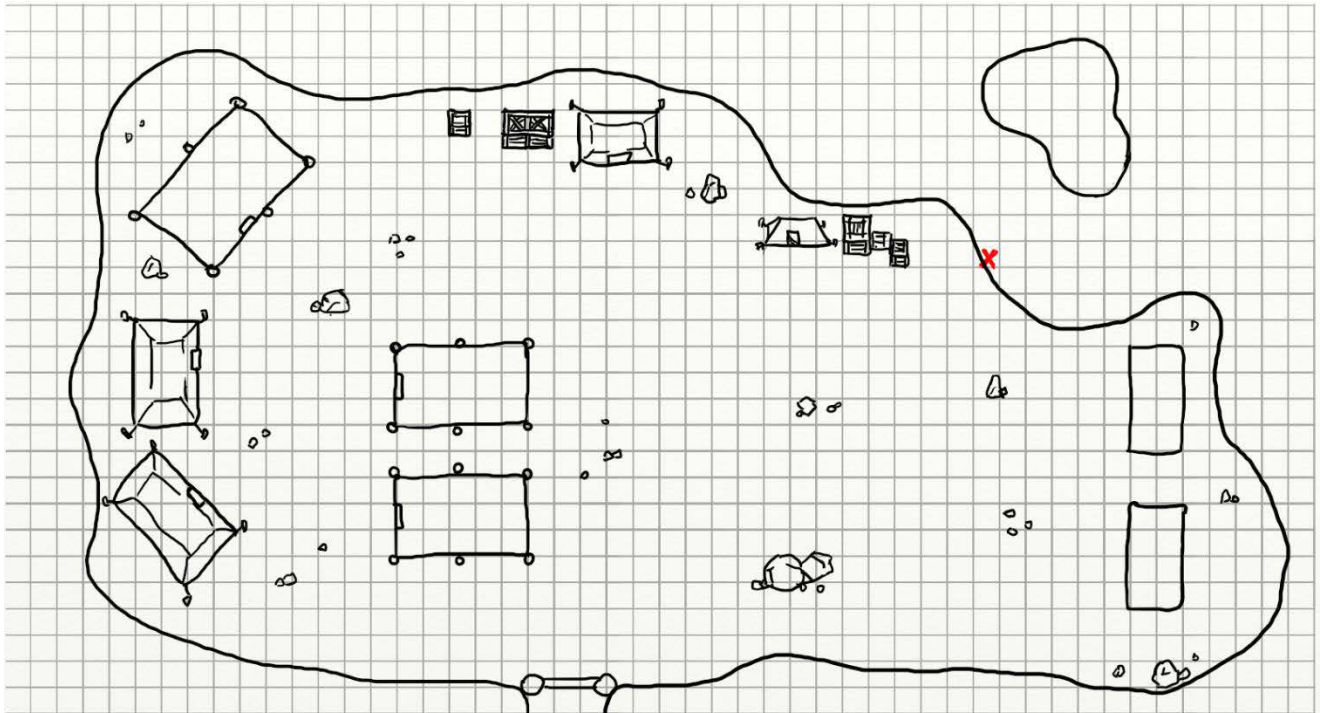
**Multiattack.** The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## Appendix 3: War Camp



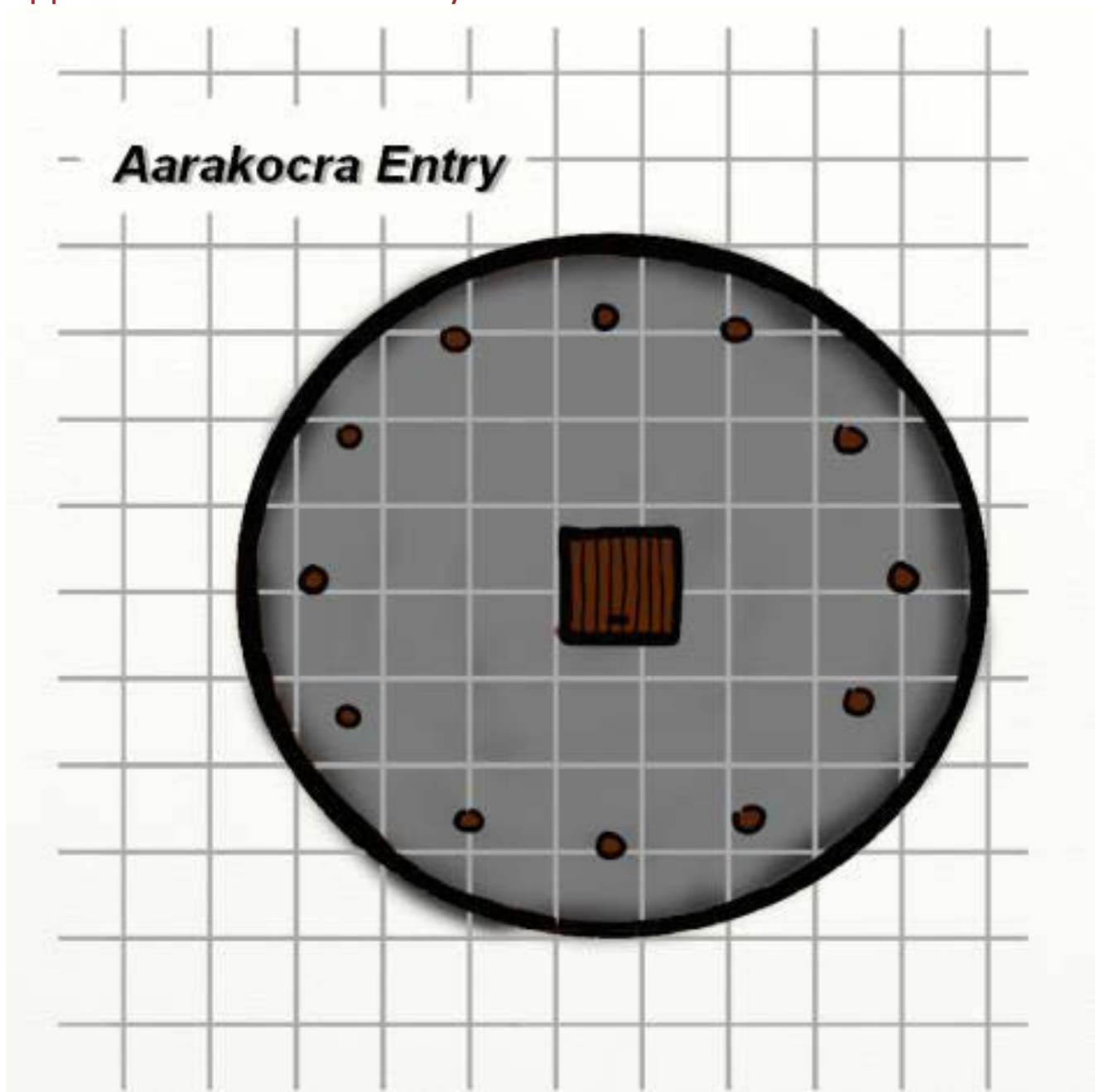
Appendix 4: Rune Puzzle



## Appendix 5: Rune Solution



## Appendix 6: Aarakocra Entry



## Appendix 7: Mountain Ascent



## Appendix 8: Story Award

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

### Raven Lord's Lungs

---

You have found and destroyed the true lungs of the Raven Lord Attatarxes. Doing so has surely served to weaken him in some way.

### Raven Lord's Liver

---

You have found and destroyed the true liver of the Raven Lord Attatarxes. Doing so has surely served to weaken him in some way.

### Raven Lord's Heart

---

You have found and destroyed the true heart of the Raven Lord Attatarxes. Doing so has left him unable to regenerate if destroyed, and vulnerable to a true death.

## Appendix 9: Magic Item

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

### Ptahrek's Glaive (Vicious Weapon) (Table G)

---

*Weapon, rare*

When you roll a 20 on your attack roll with this magic weapon, the target takes an extra 7 damage of the weapons type. This item is found on **Magic Item Table G** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The blade of this weapon is made into that of a stylized black raven feather. The wielder of the weapon has the sensation of flying whenever they close their eyes.

## Appendix 10: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 11th-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.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

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

New to the Annual Storyline?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep>  
<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/waterdeep-adventures/>

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

### Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

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

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure

that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

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

### Adjusting this Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

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

#### Determining Party Strength

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