



The Altar of the Smoldering Eye

A fanatical priest nears completion of an ancient ritual that will transform the residents of Ylraphon's Old City into yuan-ti. It has been revealed that he hides in a ruined temple in the Flooded Forest. The sands of time quickly slip away as our adventurer's approach.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 1st - 4th Level Characters



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Introduction

Welcome to *The Altar of the Smoldering Eye*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Convention content* for ***Snake River Comic Con***.

The adventure takes place on the Moonsea in the Flooded Forest, in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st - 4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting This Adventure

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

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

Determining Party Strength

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

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

Before Play at the Table

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

Playing the Dungeon Master

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

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

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

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

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

Adventure Primer

Adventure Background

An investigation into a disease that had befallen some citizens of Ylraphon conducted by a group of adventurers has led to a yuan-ti temple in the Flooded Forest. It is here that the pit master Sitalash performs a ritual that concludes his long game to transform those infected into yuan-ti.

Now, the ritual builds to a crescendo and there is less than one day remaining to thwart Sitalash and prevent the citizens of Ylraphon from the terrible fate that awaits them.

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature in this adventure:

Sitalash: An older male yuan-ti malison warlock, Sitalash believes his people come first and will do anything to follow the traditional rules of his ancestors

Flooded Forest: The flooded Forest lies south of Mulmaster and north of Ylraphon and is home to many dangerous creatures. The swampy forest is constantly encroaching on Ylraphon.

Adventure Overview

The adventurers enter the yuan-ti temple and must brave its traps before facing Sitalash in a deadly confrontation to the death.

The adventure is broken down into FOUR parts:

Part 1. The characters teleport to an elven watch tower to prepare for their assault on the temple.

Part 2. A complex set of locks and traps guard the entrance into the ritual chamber that the adventurers must defeat before moving forward.

Part 3. The party is confronted by the angry spirits of orcs who have awakened by the temples desecration.

Part 4. The final showdown with Sitalash to end the ritual or fail and see the Old City turned to yuan-ti servants.

Adventure Hooks

Characters who are continuing from *SRCC1-1 Down the River of Snakes* do not need a special introduction into this adventure, as it continues the quest they have already begun.

For characters who have not played the previous episode, use the guidance below to determine how they became involved in these strange events.

Previous Adventures. If the characters have previously participated in adventures in and around Ylraphon, they may already be in the area looking for work or helping refugees from other Moonsea cities. The alliance of refugee leaders that governs life in the Old City, where many unfortunate expatriates dwell outside the walls of Ylraphon proper, have recruited the characters on an urgent quest to save many of those living here from a horrific curse.

Reinforcements. Characters may have been sent by their faction or another powerful group to help stop an evil ritual that could threaten the region of the southern Moonsea. They reported to Andorran Bree, the ranking priest at the local temple of Selûne, who arranged for them join the quest, and will help teleport them closer to the site of the ritual.

Working for Phlan, Mulmaster, Hillsfar, Hulburg, or Another Major Moonsea City. Given recent tumultuous events and political instability in many ports on the Moonsea coast, a large number of refugees have left them to seek safety in Ylraphon. The leaders in one or more of those cities sent the characters to look into the fate of those who fled.

On arriving, the characters saw that most refugees live in the Old City, a makeshift village in the ruins outside the Ylraphon walls. They also received word of an eldritch plot that will transform many of the Old City's residents into crazed yuan-ti if it isn't stopped. Deribis, a local leader, who fled Phlan herself during the rule of the Maimed Virulence, has recruited the characters for the quest to stop the ritual.

Harpers (Faction Assignment). Harper characters see certain symbols disguised in the designs on the border of the note, prompting them to seek a hidden message. The symbols detail a form of simple cypher based on taking the first letter of each word in the note and changing it to a different letter. The secret message is from Andorran Bree, the leader of the temple of Selûne and a high-ranking Harper.

The message says that Victor Cire, a refugee from Mulmaster who is also the Lead Chef at a tavern and restaurant called the Vandal's Vigor, is an informant for the Harpers. He disappeared over two tendays ago after sending a message that he was concerned about yuan-ti activity in his workplace. He may have been taken as a slave by the yuan-ti. The characters are advised to look out for Victor, and bring him back alive if they can.

Lord's Alliance (Faction Assignment). Lords Alliance characters receive a visit from Ayre Affapanov, daughter of an influential member of their faction, Zor Serge Affapanov. Despite his reputation as an ambitious, unforgiving, and ruthless noble, Serge is also the member of Ylraphon's ruling merchant council most concerned with the refugees living in the Old City. Ayre tells you the Serge wants the threat of the yuan-ti stopped, and quickly, with no room for error. Having heard of Deribis's plan, Serge charges Lords Alliance members with making sure they and their companions reach their destination before nightfall, rather than endangering the quest by staying out in the wilds after dark. He expects them to show leadership by keeping their groups focused and on track, rather than getting distracted by extraneous looting or the unnecessary slaughter of random monsters.

Eye, but the characters must light it exactly at dawn.

For Those Just Joining Us...

Here is some vital information for characters who did not play the previous episodes in this series of adventures, which is supplied to them in Ylraphon by the refugee leader Deribis, the priest of Selûne Andorran Bree, or another appropriate NPC:

- When night falls on the day the adventure takes place, a yuan-ti warlock called Sitalash will perform a ritual to transform many of the residents of Ylraphon's Old City section into his mad reptilian servants.
- The ritual will be performed at a converted yuan-ti temple, the Altar of the Smoldering Eye, once built by orcs as a sacred site for the worship of their god Gruumsh, but later claimed by yuan-ti as a holy shrine to their serpentine deities.
- The Altar of the Smoldering Eye is 10 miles away from Ylraphon in the Flooded Forest, an overgrown swamp full of monsters and punishing terrain.
- Rather than having to traverse that dangerous wilderness, the characters will be teleported just before sunrise to an old elven tower near the temple.
- The teleportation circle in the tower was reactivated by brave adventurers who made the trek on foot.
- When the characters complete their quest, the circle will be used to bring them back to Ylraphon.
- An enchanted candle created by Andorran Bree will grant the characters immunity to many of the evil spells that protect the Altar of the Smoldering

Part 1: Why Does It Always Have to Be Snakes?

Expected Duration: 10 minutes

If the characters are all continuing from *SRCC1-2 Down the River of Snakes*, this adventure picks up right where that previous episode left out (if the characters did well, they are likely just finishing a long rest). Skip to **Part 2: Speak, Friend, and Enter**.

If one or more characters are beginning this adventure without having played the previous episode: They have been teleported from the Moonwater, the temple of Selûne in Ylraphon. They are transported to an ancient and uninhabited elven watchtower near the Altar of the Smoldering Eye. Thanks to the adventurers who made the trek through the Flooded Forest and scouted out this place, the teleportation circle in the tower is now usable, and arriving characters have a safe spot from which to begin their expedition.

However, they came to be here, the characters have been given a magical candle to aid them in their quest, which will only work if they light it at sunrise. If they have lost the candle somehow, or if they fail to light it at the proper time, their quest is much more difficult.

The Mongoose Candle

The ancient ancestors of the humans of the Shining Lands were the first to craft this single-use consumable magic item, made from the wax of boiling cinnamon and embedded with the teeth of a mongoose that died of natural causes. *Mongoose candles* were weapons against the various reptilian servitor races of the prehistoric empire of Okoth. When the candle is lit, the characters who participated in the ceremony to light it are immune to permanent location-based magical effects created by reptilian humanoids such as the yuan-ti for 1 hour. Whenever a lit mongoose candle stops burning, it melts away.

This item cannot be retained after the end of the adventure.

Read or paraphrase the following at the beginning of this adventure:

You stand on the roof of the abandoned elven watchtower, located by the authorities of Ylraphon as a safe site for the beginning of your delve into the yuan-ti temple. From here, you can look down upon the Altar of the Smoldering Eye, only half a mile away. The Flooded Forest is sparser around the temple, and you can see crude etchings on the roof of the half-buried structure portraying the lost eye of the orc god Gruumsh, though he has not been worshipped here in centuries. You see no defenders between you and your destination, but there appear to be no entrances above ground. It appears you must remain cautious.

If it is dawn, and the characters were not too late, and now they are following their instructions and activating the special item they were given, read or paraphrase the following text as well:

As the sun's first rays break over the black canopy of the woods, you light the enchanted candle you were given. For a brief moment, the shadows cast by the candle's light lengthen up into the sky and across the landscape, but the flame does not grow in size. A pleasant smell of cinnamon infuses the air, covering the reek of the swamp. The candle's magic is ancient and difficult to comprehend, but you're guessing it has served its purpose and protected you from some of the temple's wards. You have an hour before the candle will burn out and your immunity to those defensive spells ends.

Whether the characters activated the candle or not, read or paraphrase this last bit of text:

A scroll you find in the tower's teleportation circle seems to have been sent as a test of the circle's magic after the re-opening of the tower re-activated it. The note on it is for you, and it explains that after you have completed your mission, you can come back to this tower and wait in safety. At nightfall, anyone in the circle will be teleported back to the temple of Selûne in Ylraphon—since nightfall is when the ritual will be complete, by that time you will almost certainly have already succeeded in stopping it or died trying.

Hidden in the border of the letter are the details of the Harper faction mission. The letter itself is signed by Arden Marsh, give any members of that faction the information for their mission.

Leaving the Tower

Once all this is done, the characters can exit the tower. However, on their way out of the magical locked door, they find the corpse of a dead orc on the doorstep, riddled with arrows. This orc looks different than most—he is taller and leaner than most members of the species, and he wears immaculately maintained red splint mail that is actually salvageable.

A DC 12 **Intelligence (Religion)** check identifies a symbol of a bloodied blade on the armor as being that of Ilneval, the orc god of battle and strategy. From the looks of it, the orc was trying to get into the tower, but couldn't get through the magically warded door. DC 11 **Wisdom (Medicine)** checks show that seven arrows in the dead orc's flesh were coated with poison from a deadly local swamp snake.

In addition to the orc's armor, he bears a broken shield and a satchel containing a letter. Though the letter mentions an heirloom the orc carried, a silvered scimitar, no such item can be found here. Give your players the letter, which is **Player Handout 1: A Letter of Introduction**. The letter is written by Arden Marsh, a member of the noble House Marsh, one of Ylraphon's ruling merchant families. Both the broken shield and letter bear the sigil of House Marsh: a black tree on a blue circle, with a wolf and falling star on one side and raven and moon on the other.

The letter beseeches any friends of Ylraphon, servants of good, or champions of civilization to grant assistance and shelter to this orc, whose name is Eglavale. It notes that Eglavale is a member of a tribe of lawful, honorable orcs called blood orcs, who have entered House Marsh's service. Eglavale was charged with capturing a one-eyed wereboar called Khull Bannon, who ambushed and killed a company of Eglavale's comrades in the Marsh house militia. To any who aids the orc in discovering who hired Khull for this murder, Arden promises the gratitude of himself, his family, and the larger organization he represents: the Order of the Gauntlet.

Characters who played *SRCC1-2 Down the River Snakes* may have encountered other members of the Bannon clan, but none of the warriors they saw had one eye.

Treasure

The orc has no weapon, and his shield is useless, but the red splint mail he wears is in great condition,

and can be claimed for a character's use or to be sold for coin.

Onward into Darkness

All the business at the tower takes about 5 minutes. After that, the characters can travel to the Altar of the Smoldering Eye in about 10 minutes (reducing that time by 25% if they rush, taking a -5 to passive Perception, or increasing that time by 50% if they choose to move stealthily). If they used the candle to protect themselves from the temple's arcane defenses, this gives them about 45 minutes to enter the temple and stop the ritual before those defenses can affect them once more.

The Smoldering Eye's Defenses

Any eldritch protections left by the temple's orc builders have long since faded, but the yuan-ti who later took over the area have created several more powerful enchantments to defend it.

Characters who participated in the brief ritual to activate the *mongoose candle* are immune to these effects for 1 hour. Otherwise, anyone inside the temple or within 50 feet of its underground entrance is subject to the following effects (which work as the equivalent of the *hallow* and *dominate monster* spells, both cast using 8th-level spell slots):

- As per the *hallow* spell, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead can't enter the area, nor can such creatures charm, frighten, or possess creatures within it. Any creature charmed, frightened, or possessed by such a creature is no longer charmed, frightened, or possessed upon entering the area. You can exclude one or more of those types of creatures from this effect.
- Any non yuan-ti entering this area reduces any fire damage they inflict on a yuan-ti or snake by half while they remain in the area.
- Any non yuan-ti entering this area cannot cause any yuan-ti or snake to be frightened while they remain in the area.
- No creatures within the area can move or travel using teleportation or by extradimensional or interplanar means (which also prevents teleportation into the area), as per the appropriate effect of the *hallow* spell.
- Any humanoid that is not a yuan-ti who enters the area must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they are magically compelled (as if by a *dominate monster* spell) not to move any further into the area of The Altar of the Smoldering Eye, and to stop anyone else who tries to enter. 10 minutes later, and again every 10 minutes, they can make the saving throw again, ending the effect on a success. Otherwise it lasts indefinitely, not even ending if the creature is further than 50 feet from the temple. To end the effect, the creature must either succeed on the saving throw or move further than 1 mile away from the temple. Incapacitated creatures are also freed from this

effect. Once a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this magical compulsion, they are immune to it for 1 hour.

Due to these defenses, characters who did not use the magical candle (or have taken more than one hour to complete their quest since activating it) will find entering the temple and stopping the ritual much more difficult.

Part 2: Speak, Friend, and Enter

Expected Duration: 50 minutes

In Part 2 the adventurers must defeat a complex door that Sitalash has constructed, based on sophisticated designs from the ancient empire of Okoth. He considers himself invulnerable behind the door.

The door has a complicated lock, with three separate segments that must be operated precisely to open it. Failed attempts to overcome the first segment activate phase 1 of a series of traps, closing the outer door and activating a magical effect that stymies the characters' efforts. Failed attempts to open the second segment activates phase 2 of the traps, releasing poison darts and gas. Failed attempts to work the third segment activate trap phase 3, activating monstrous constructs that attack the adventurers.

Time to Rest?

The ritual nears its dark conclusion and there is no time for a respite. The characters may try to take a short rest, but if they do so, the effects of the *mongoose candle* will fade, and they will be subject to the arcane defenses described in Part 1. If the characters attempt to take a long rest, after 1 hour, not only will the mongoose candle stop protecting them from the arcane defenses, but the characters will be ambushed by Sitalash and his minions, who have been alerted to the characters presence by the temple's wards. If this occurs, Sitalash's group attempts to approach the resting characters stealthily and gain surprise if possible.

Reaching the Entrance

General Features

The general features of the yuan-ti temple are as follows:

Light and Visibility. The Foyer has no provided light. The characters must use darkvision or provide their own light. The poison clouds and other features of this encounter have no effect on flames and are not affected by them.

Smells. The area is a long disused ruin in a swamp. A few malodorous swamp vapors follow the adventurers in, but otherwise the temple only smells musty and old unless otherwise specified.

Sounds. The area is completely quiet, like a tomb.

When the characters arrive at the temple site, read or paraphrase the following:

The temple is an ancient orcish ruin, but it is clear the yuan-ti have rebuilt much of it, and it is still well-protected. Much of it is underground, and thick tangles of vines, swamp grass, moss, and mud hide its entrance. Using the map provided by the research of Deribis and her allies in Ylraphon, it is not terribly difficult to find the underground tunnel that leads down to the Altar of the Smoldering Eye, but you doubt you would have found it any other way.

Characters protected from the arcane defenses described in Part 1 by the enchantment of the *mongoose candle* can make their way down without any trouble. Otherwise, the effects described in the sidebar labelled **The Smoldering Eye's Defenses** kick in as soon as any characters enter the tunnel, likely requiring immediate saving throws. Resolve any such effects as necessary.

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters make their way down:

The cacophony of sounds from the swamp above is muted as you make your way carefully down 50 feet of slick spiral stairs until you reach the bottom archway. In many places, you see eye symbols of the orc god Gruumsh, but they have been defaced, often replaced with depictions of serpents or Draconic graffiti.

As you approach the archway, you notice two ancient doors flanking it, which seem poised to close and lock you in. Looking through the archway, you see a magnificent chamber, 40 feet long and 25 feet wide.

Ancient tilework from ages past draws your attention to the opposite side of the chamber through the archway, where another, more ornate door stands at the far end. This last door is a great slab of strangely carved stone with a unique design at its center, and the tiles leading up it to are inlaid with arcane designs that occasionally wrap around images of yuan-ti ruling over other races. Sculptures of snakes on the wall and ceiling, in iron, bronze, and alabaster, are covered in cobwebs, yet no dust covers the tile images on the floor, and the great door at the end looks as clean as the day it was made.

Surely this next room must be the grand entrance chamber. The massive doors on the archway seem designed to prevent retreat or escape, but the urgency of the situation pushes you. There is no way forward but through this room.

The Ophidian Enigma

To move beyond the foyer, the party must successfully contend with a complex lock built into the far door.

Dungeon Features

- The **main door** has an AC of 10 and 35 HP. It is immune to psychic and poison damage and resists all other damage except bludgeoning. Any attack that deals damage to the door causes the attacker to take 11 (2d10) psychic damage (or 5 (1d10) if the party strength is Very Weak or Weak).
- The **outside double doors** have an AC of 15 and 30 HP each. They are immune to psychic and poison damage and resist all other damage except bludgeoning.
- **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** checks indicate that teleportation magic does not work in the entranceway. No such spell can be cast in the area and any existing effect is suppressed while the target is in the area. (This smaller, localized effect is not suppressed by use of the enchanted candle.)
- **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** checks (made with advantage by those with the Stonecunning trait or proficiency with mason's tools) reveal that the carvings here are much more recent than the structure. There was probably a different design on the walls when they were first built, though it is unclear whether ancient orc markings were replaced, or *more* recent yuan-ti ones were carved over the older ones. In any case, it is highly unlikely that orcs built the current major features in this room.
- Characters may notice that some of the snake sculptures on the wall or ceiling have **rubies** in place of eyes. There are twelve rubies (worth 20 gp each), which can be pried out with an appropriate weapon or tool. However, each time a ruby is removed before all three segments of the lock mechanism are solved, the character removing it takes 2 (1d4) lighting damage. After the door is unlocked, prying the rubies out no longer causes damage.

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters have fully entered the room:

Before you, embedded in the ornate door, you find that what appeared to be some kind of symbol at distance is actually an incredibly intricate mechanism beyond what a dwarf or even a priest of Gond might produce. It looks to be some sort of lock, but arcane runes cover much of its surface.

The mechanism seems to be ensconced so deeply in the door that it is difficult to tell which pieces are meant to move. Some of it is bronze metalwork with a snake-like appearance, while other segments seem to be portions of the stone of the door itself. The visible metalwork is divided into three segments: one outer ring surrounding a second inner ring, which in turn circles a complicated globe of brass gears and shapes.

It appears these three segments can be moved, and that they must be properly manipulated to open the lock.

At this point, have the players roll initiative for their characters, and begin acting in initiative order. There are no enemies attacking (yet), but the various effects of the door are tracked as if the characters were in combat.

The three segments of the lock mechanism can be used to open it, but they can only be operated in order. The second (the inner ring) is locked in place until the first (the outer ring) is correctly positioned, and the third (the central globe) is locked in place until both of the other two are properly used.

Opening the lock mechanisms requires each of the three segments to be moved in a particular way, requiring **Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** checks to manage the inner workings of the lock directly, or **Intelligence (Religion)** checks to read enough symbols to determine how the visible pieces are meant to be moved. The particulars of these rolls (including DCs and how many checks are required) are described under each of the three segments, below.

The Painting

If any of the characters have the painting from the encounter with Shali in *SRCC1-1 Trouble in the Old City*, they receive advantage on all Intelligence checks to open the lock.

1a. First Section

Successfully shifting the first segment of the lock into place requires two successful DC 10 **Intelligence (Religion)** checks to reveal the religious significance of the symbols on each part of the lock, suggesting the beginnings of a pattern and allowing the character(s) succeeding to simply move the piece correctly by hand (as intended by the door's creators) in a way which advances the lock. Alternately, two successful DC 11 **Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** checks can manipulate this segment in a way that aligns the inner tumblers of the lock. These two kinds of checks are not cumulative with each other; two successful checks of one kind or the other are required.

The first time a character fails one of these rolls: Their failure to shift the first segment into place activates phase 1 of the trap. Read or paraphrase the following:

The eyes of the many snakes carved into the walls and ceilings flash, pulsing brightly with ruby red light as a deafening rattle emanates from the wall carvings. The door you came through begins sliding closed on the other side of the room.

As described, the outer door begins to close, and it finishes closing and locking on Initiative 20.

In addition, all creatures that can see or hear the walls of the room must make a DC 13 **Wisdom saving throw**. Those who fail have disadvantage on all attack rolls and ability checks for 1 minute. A character subject to this effect can make another DC 13 **Wisdom saving throw** at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect early on a success.

The first time a character inflicts damage on the far door: Phase 1 of the trap activates, just as if a roll to manipulate it had been failed as described previously.

If two successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) or DC 11 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) checks are made:

The first segment of the lock is resolved, and the second segment can now be manipulated. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the last piece of the outer segment clicks into place, the other carvings on the door start to move as well. The pattern on the outer ring of the lock mechanism now creates an image, almost like the planks of a round fence or palisade. The movements of the stone carvings on the door start to look like maybe they too form a picture. Perhaps you're on to something?

Once this is done, move on to the **Second Section**.

1b. Second Section

Getting the second segment of the lock arranged properly requires two successful DC 11 **Intelligence (Religion)** checks to recall the meaning of the larger symbols on this segment of the lock and move its parts correctly, or three successful DC 12 **Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** checks to determine the proper alignment based on the mechanism. These two kinds of checks are not cumulative with each other; two successful Intelligence checks or three successful Dexterity checks are required.

The first time a character fails one of these rolls after the first segment of the lock has been successfully completed: Their failure to shift the first segment into place activates phase 2 of the trap. Read or paraphrase the following:

A hissing sound near your face draws your attention to a cloud of green vapor coming out of the door you seek to unlock. Even worse, after the ruby eyes of the snake carvings on the wall flash for a moment.

As soon as this occurs, the darts strike from the walls. Immediately make an attack roll against each character in the room who is not within 5 feet of one of the doors. This attack works as follows:

Wall Dart Trap. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target. **Hit:** 1 piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) poison damage.

As described here, the outer door begins to close, and it finishes closing and locking on Initiative 20.

In addition, on Initiative 20, the green cloud issuing from the door builds up around the characters and takes effect. Any creature within 30 feet of the door must make a DC 12 **Constitution saving throw** or take 2 (1d4) poison damage and become poisoned until the start of their next turn.

Every time a character fails one of these rolls after the first segment of the lock has been successfully completed: If they failed the roll by 5 or more, that character takes 5 (2d4) psychic damage (or 2 (1d4) if the party strength is Very Weak or Weak).

If a creature inflicts damage on the far door after the first segment of the lock has been successfully completed (but before the second segment is done): Phase 2 of the trap activates, just as if a roll to manipulate the second segment had failed, as described previously.

If two successful DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) or three successful DC12 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) checks are made: The first segment of the lock is resolved, and the second segment can now be manipulated. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the next segment clicks into place, portions of the inner ring slide out over the outer ring, interrupting it with cylindrical shapes that resemble towers along a wall. You also see portions of the surrounding door moving, the details becoming clearer as shapes begin to form into an encircling spiral. It now looks like manipulating the globe-shaped center segment will complete the process.

Once this is done, move on to the **Third Section**.

1c. Third Section

Operating the final segment of the lock into place requires three successful DC 12 **Intelligence (Religion)** checks to properly arrange the parts of the globe-shaped mechanism so that symbols representing phases of the moon are in order, or three successful DC 13 **Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** checks re-orient the gears within it to unlock the door. These two kinds of checks are not cumulative with each other; three successful Intelligence checks or three successful Dexterity checks are required.

The first time a character fails one of these rolls after the first and second segments of the lock have both been successfully completed: Their failure to shift the first segment into place activates phase 3 of the trap. Read or paraphrase the following:

Spiraling shapes unspool from the ceiling and fall on you. It takes a moment to realize they are the iron snake sculptures, suddenly animated and attacking!

This **swarm of poisonous snakes** is made of metal, but is identical to a normal swarm of poisonous snakes except as described below.

Iron Snake Swarms

The mechanical guardians each have the statblock of a **swarm of poisonous snakes**, with the following minor changes:

- They are a swarm of Tiny constructs instead of Tiny beasts.
- They are immune to poison damage, psychic damage, and the poisoned condition.

Each round on Initiative 20, all iron swarms of poisonous snakes active in the room attack the characters, but first roll a d6. If you roll a 4, 5, or 6, another iron **swarm of poisonous snakes** drops down from the ceiling and attacks just before the others. The maximum number of swarms activated in this way cannot exceed the number of characters.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Only one iron **swarm of poisonous snakes** ever enters the room, and no d6 is rolled.
- **Weak:** When you roll the d6 to see if a new **swarm of poisonous snakes** joins the fight on Initiative 20, a new swarm only appears on a roll of 5 or 6.
- **Strong:** Add one **guardian portrait** that enters with first **swarm of poisonous snakes**.

- **Very Strong:** At the beginning of each round until the final segment is successfully placed into position, on initiative 20, **one swarm of poisonous snakes** enters the room, along with one **guardian portrait**. No d6 is rolled.

Every time a character fails one of these rolls after the first and second segments of the lock have both been successfully completed: If they failed the roll by 5 or more, that character takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage (or 4 (1d8) if the party strength is Very Weak or Weak).

If a creature inflicts damage on the far door after the first segment of the lock has been successfully completed (but before the second segment is done): Phase 3 of the trap activates, just as if a roll to manipulate the third segment had failed, as described previously.

If three successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) or three successful DC13 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) checks are made: The first segment of the lock is resolved, and the second segment can now be manipulated. Read or paraphrase the following:

You position the final segment into place, and the centerpiece of the lock transforms, becoming a representation of a walled city, perhaps. The stone carvings on the wall finish shifting and form another image: a bas relief of a giant snake coiled around a city, poised to devour it whole. You can almost hear the screaming of the small people fleeing the town. A flickering glow from the rubies in the eye of the carved snake makes the entire scene look as if it were wreathed in flames. There is a series of clicking noises as the door unlocks.

Once the door has been unlocked, any constructs or other creatures attacking in the room cease attacking, returning to the walls and ceiling as if they were once more mere decoration. There is no further danger here.

Treasure

Rubies in the eyes of the snake carvings can be removed. There are a total of 12 such rubies, each worth 20 gp (for a total of 240 gp).

In addition, when the final segment falls into place, an empty glass bottle emerges from a panel in the west wall, held in a stone sconce carved to resemble a snake's tail. A second mechanism resembling the fanged head of a venomous snake pops out of the wall above the bottle. Liquid drizzles down from its fangs to fill the empty bottle with liquid. The bottle now contains a new *potion of healing*. The

mechanism cannot be triggered again, and it contains only one dose of the healing potion.

Unto the Breach

When the characters open the unlocked door, read or paraphrase the following:

The door swings open away from you. The corridor beyond the door leads downward to the east. It looks safe enough, for the moment, but who knows what dangers lie beyond?

Part 3: Who Ya Gonna Call?

The ghosts of orcs angered by the violation of their temple attack the characters as they descend deeper underground.

Read or paraphrase the following:

At the end of the corridor, you easily open another door of carved stone to reveal a 40-foot wide room with high ceilings and a hexagonal shape. There are five other doors, one on each wall. The entire room is centered around what looks like a metal cage. This structure of iron bars forms a perfect 20-foot by 20-foot cube, with two gates to enter it, one facing the western door you opened, the other facing the opposite door to the east. A massive chain with links nearly a foot wide enters the cube through a hole in the top, running down like a pillar to the cage's floor, and appears to exit again through a second hole and then pass down into a dark 20-foot wide shaft the same size and shape as the cage. Within the cage-like structure, the desiccated corpse of a very large beast-like humanoid lies slumped against the chain.

DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) checks (made with advantage by those with the Stonecunning trait or proficiency with mason's tools) discern that most of the room shows the crude cunning of orc design, but the iron structure in the middle is more recent, and likely the work of whoever created the elaborate door in Part 2.

Except for the eastern door opposite where the characters enter, all the doors besides the one the characters open into this room are false doors carved into the stone of the walls. The cage is a sort of crude elevator, and it leads down into the underground area where the ritual will be performed.

The False Doors. Four of the six doors in this room—the northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast doors—are false, leading nowhere. They are also traps. Each door appears to be locked to any **Wisdom (Perception)** check lower than DC 13. A DC 15 check reveals that something is off, and a DC 15 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals that the doors are false. Attempting to open the doors reveals nothing. However, any attempt to bash a door down or unlock it causes that door to slam forward like a battering ram, forcing anyone within a 10-foot line emanating towards the center of the room to make a DC 13 **Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, they are pushed back 10 feet away from the door and take 2d6 bludgeoning damage. On a success, they are merely pushed 10 feet back.

The Eastern Door. This door cannot be touched. A barrier of magical force like a *wall of force* spell prevents anyone from coming within 5 feet of it. The key to opening this door must lie elsewhere (and outside the scope of this adventure).

The Cage. The gates to this cunning mechanical structure are unlocked. Once inside, a character can see two very obvious pressure plates in the floor. One says “Up” and one says “Down.” Stepping on the “Down” plate causes the entire cage to move downward through the opening in the floor of the room until it reaches the underground level where the ritual will take place. Stepping on the “Up” plate raises the cage back up to here. The cage only moves up or down as long as there is still weight on the appropriate plate—it stops as soon as the one who activated it steps off.

Completely lowering or raising the cage takes a total of five rounds. If someone lowers it, proceed to **Going Down**, following.

The Corpse. The large body next to the chain wears an eyepatch. It can be identified with a DC 13 **Intelligence (Arcana or Nature)** check as that of a wereboar in its hybrid form. Normally, lycanthropes return to their humanoid forms in death, but this one died in some strange way that mummified it instantly, before its body could fully transform. This also makes it impossible to tell how long it has been here. This is Khull Bannon, the mercenary sought by the dead orc the characters found earlier. In addition to his items (described under treasure), Bannon has a note on his person from his employer, which you should give to your players as **Player Handout 2: The Werebear's Orders**.

This note is from someone named Jhag Bannon, a warchief of the Bannon clan. It says that clerics of both Gruumsh and Malar have ordered Khull to aid in the reclamation of Gruumsh's temple. The wereboar was ordered to kill three blood orcs from House Marsh's militia, then drip their blood in this area to awaken the ghosts of other blood orcs bound here. The purpose was to aid in a later exorcism, but power of the ghosts was underestimated, and they killed Khull.

Treasure

Khull carries 15 gp worth of coin and equipment.

Going Down

When the characters descend in the elevator, read or paraphrase the following:

There is a great clunking sound and a sudden lurch as the cage-like conveyance begins lowering itself—and you—deep into the earth. The pit into which it descends is as black as midnight and thick with mist. You have an eerie feeling that you are not alone.

Even with darkvision, it is impossible to see how wide the shaft is around the cage. It is definitely larger than the elevator itself.

It takes 5 rounds (30 seconds) for the conveyance to make it all the way down. During that time, however, the characters will be attacked by angry ghosts.

As the characters begin their descent, they immediately begin to see spectral images in the darkness directly beneath their feet. These spirits look much like Eglavale, the dead orc the characters found outside the watchtower, but appear much more decomposed. They are tall orcs with red armor emblazoned with the same symbol. These blood orc ghosts use the statistics of **shadows** with a couple of differences.

Accounting for Time

If the trap room took too long, skip this encounter to make sure there is time for Part 4.

Blood Orc Ghosts

The blood orc ghosts have the same statistics as shadows, except for the following added traits:

- **Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the blood orc ghost can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.
- **Eldritch Binding.** The blood orc ghosts cannot attack yuan-ti.
- **Rising Shadow.** While not in sunlight, the blood orc ghost has a fly speed of 40 feet

At the beginning, there are only three **shadows**. On Initiative 20 of the second round, however, another **shadow** with the same added traits rises from Khull Bannon's corpse and attacks. On Initiative 20 of the third round, two more **shadows** appear and attack.

Even though they can fly, memories of their living days make the ghosts appear to be climbing into the elevator from beneath, even as they pass through the bars with their Amorphous trait.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** There is only one **shadow** at the beginning of combat, and no more appear in the third round.
- **Weak:** Only one additional **shadow** appears in the third round.
- **Strong:** There are five **shadows** at the beginning of the fight instead of three.
- **Very Strong:** There are seven **shadows** at the beginning of the fight instead of three.

Tricks of the Trade

Due to being front-line warriors in life, the shadows don't use their stealthiness to their advantage as they should, but they do make full use of their mobility. They try to confuse and harass the characters at first, capitalizing on how trapped the characters within the 20-foot cube and toying with them before destroying them. Yuan-ti characters likely notice that the shadows are not attacking them at all.

Developments

On Initiative 20 of the fifth round, whether or not the battle is still happening, another spirit appears in the center of the elevator, its intangible image imposed over the chain. This new spirit has no material form, and it and the characters cannot touch or harm each other.

This spirit appears to be another blood orc in red clerical vestments, with brandishing the same sign of a bloody longsword the others display, but brandished as a holy symbol. When it appears, all the shadows vanish, even in mid-fight. If the shadow of Khull Bannon has not been destroyed, the other spirits drag it screaming into a spectral dark doorway which appears. See **The Orc Cleric's Ghost**, below.

The Orc Cleric's Ghost

When the ghost of this blood orc cleric of Ilneval appears, it simply says, "You are neither orcs of Gruumsh nor vengeful dwarves nor the yuan-ti interlopers. What is your business here?"

The ghost hopes the characters can destroy the yuan-ti, whose magic both keeps the blood orc spirits bound here and prevents those spirits from attacking their reptilian jailors. Its name in life was Dulvain, but it considers this of little importance, as it remains in death what it was in life, a humble symbol of Ilneval. It doesn't talk long, preferring action to conversation, but can relate the following if asked:

- The ghost and his people were blood orcs, members of a special subrace of orcs, bred by the other orcs of the fallen kingdom of Vastar to reconquer these lands for the dwarves.
- After winning the war, they wanted to create a more disciplined society, dedicated to the more lawful god Ilneval instead of Gruumsh.
- The blood orcs' attempts to change things were met with betrayal, as they were tricked, divided, lured into various underground ruins, and murdered by shamans of Gruumsh.
- The curse binding them to this place was fading when yuan-ti came and made it strong once more.
- The ghosts lay in this pit where they were killed in unhappy slumber until the wereboar awakened them with the blood of their kin. The wereboar paid for this in life, and is paying an even more horrible price now.
- When the wereboar tied, a silvered scimitar it carried fell through the bars and clattered to the bottom of this pit, where one of the yuan-ti claimed it.
- The ghosts cannot harm yuan-ti, though they hate them.
- If the yuan-ti are all killed, the blood orc spirits can move on to their final rest.
- A spiraling tunnel from the bottom of this pit leads to a deeper and fouler one, where the yuan-ti perform their foul ritual.

If the characters give the ghost any answer that gives the ghost reason to believe they will destroy Sitalash and his followers, the ghost grants a spiritual boon: It heals each character for 3d8+9 damage, and reverses any Strength drain the shadows inflicted.

The ghost's directions are correct; the characters can exit the elevator and proceed down the spiraling tunnel to finally confront Sitalash.

Part 4: What an Incredible Smell You've Discovered

Sitalash nears the completion of the ritual. Now is the only chance to thwart his vile plans.

Expected Duration: 50 minutes

The Ritual of Surrender

A spiraling tunnel with more serpent imagery painted on its walls leads you deeper underground. A foul, musky reptilian scent lets you know that the ritual site must be close. The passage opens into a large, open chamber with one long serpent painted in a coil on the ceiling. The only other feature is a large pit at least 50 feet across and 30 feet deep with sloped sides and steep stairs toward the bottom.

At the bottom is a ritual circle with four braziers with red flames that throw an ominous glow over the whole room. You see a human painted in strange symbols strapped to an altar at the bottom of the pit with a Yuan-ti malison standing over them with snake arms raised and chanting.

Arranged around the altar are a number of small items you suspect were stolen from the village.

Sitalash, a **yuan-ti pit master**, performs the ritual, while two **cultists** watch for intruders. The cultists are humans from Ylraphon who have succumbed to the disease and have been granted darkvision.

When the characters enter, as soon as they are noticed by the ritualists, read or paraphrase any of the following pieces of text that fit the listed criteria.

After Sitalash sees the adventurers:

"I see the defenders of the weaker races have come in an attempt to stop me. You are foolish to come so far just to throw away your lives. Kneel before me and I will find a suitable place for you as slaves. Fight me and you will end up as sacrifices."

If there is a yuan-ti character:

"How DARE you come and attempt to stop my holy work. You shame your ancestors and your name will go down in the list of those that betrayed the yuan-ti!"

Sitalash attacks immediately after his initial taunts. If he doesn't get the chance to finish his words (such as if the character attack before he can say them), he

and his cultists are not surprised, and Sitalash will simply speak his threats as he fights.

One of the cultists carries the fine silvered scimitar emblazoned with the Marsh family crest (as seen on the orc's letter and shield).

The human on the altar is Victor Cire, a refugee from Mulmaster who was the lead chef at the Vandal's Vigor in the Old City. His sous chef was Sitalash's yuan-ti pureblood agent Shali, who decided Victor was a little too curious about the ingredients being added to the dishes, and kidnapped him for Sitalash.

On **Initiative 20** in the first round, a ritual poison in Victor's system begins to take effect. He is reduced to 0 hit points, and though unconscious he begins coughing up blood along with a runny green liquid. If he is not stabilized, healed, or given other medical aid before the end of the third round of combat, he will die. Rescuing Victor is a requirement for Harper characters to fulfill their faction assignment.

During the battle, Sitalash will antagonize the adventurers with declarations such as:

"You attempt to resist the inevitable? You will be ground down like wheat before the harvest."

"Your death will be for the glory of the snake god!"

"Is that the extent of your fury? You will fall before Merrshaulk's wrath!"

If Sitalash knocks one of the adventurers unconscious, he bellows:

"Merrshaulk will take your sacrifice for the glory of the Yuan-ti!"

Sitalash

In addition to his other statistics, Sitalash gains the following trait:

- **Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** If Sitalash fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Sitalash is a **yuan-ti broodguard**. He does not gain the Legendary Resistance trait described above.
- **Weak:** Sitalash is a yuan-ti broodguard. He gains the Legendary Resistance trait described above, but can only use it once instead of twice.

- **Strong:** Increase the total number of cultists to four cultists.
- **Very Strong:** Add a yuan-ti broodguard.

Tricks of the Trade

Sitalash and his minions will attempt to capture the adventurers as potential slaves instead of killing them. Any melee attack that reduces a character to 0 hp will leave that character unconscious but stable, unless it is a critical hit. A character reduced to 0 in this way does not need to roll death saving throws.

If Sitalash knows that the adventurers are about to attack he will cast *invisibility* on himself and one of the cultists.

Sitalash attempts to engage non-dwarf targets in melee. He will use *misty step* if prevented from reaching melee range until he's out of spell slots.

Remember that Sitalash is a 6th level caster and gets two blasts when he casts an *eldritch blast*.

If there are any yuan-ti in the party, Sitalash condemns them as traitors to the yuan-ti race and attempts to attack them first.

Developments

Due to their proximity to the ritual, the characters begin to develop temporary reptilian traits as they fight, as follows:

- 2nd round: On Initiative 20, all non-yuan-ti creatures present feel their eyes transforming into the slitted eyes of snakes, granting them 60 feet of darkvision for 1 minute.
- 3rd round: On Initiative 20, all non-yuan-ti find their skin becoming scaly, granting them a +1 bonus to AC for 1 minute.
- 4th round: On Initiative 20, all non-yuan-ti feel their limbs become flexible and serpentine, granting them a +1 bonus on attack rolls for 1 minute.
- 5th round: On Initiative 20, all non-yuan-ti transform completely into serpent human hybrids, with reptilian eyes, snake-like heads, and forked tongues. This grants them immunity to poison damage and the poisoned condition.

After 1 minute, or when all enemy creatures have been defeated (whichever comes first), these serpentine mutations fade completely, and the characters return to normal.

Treasure

Sitalash has a small cache of coin (40 gp) in the ritual chamber. He also has a *staff of the Adder*, though he

believes it is unnecessary to use against such "inferior foes".

Any member or high-ranking retainer of the Marsh family will give the characters an 80 gp reward for the return of the silvered scimitar with their house crest. If they choose to sell it on their own instead, it only sells for 65 gp.

Aftermath

If the adventurers were captured, that ends the adventure for them. Rather than moving on to the conclusion, read or paraphrase the following:

You wake up with all your gear taken and locked in a cell. Some kind of poison or mental power saps your will, and forces you to serve the yuan-ti as a slave. The horrific sights you behold during this time will haunt you in the days to come. It takes several days for you to escape from the yuan-ti, but you eventually recover your gear and return to civilization. You occasionally feel some remnant of yuan-ti taint in your flesh, but you also know that the citizens of Ylraphon probably didn't fare as well as you.

If the characters defeat Sitalash while the *mongoose candle's* effects are still active, the fetid reptile smell in the room vanishes immediately, and is replaced by the warm cinnamon smell the candle emitted.

If Victor was rescued, he is extremely grateful, and asks the characters if there is anything he can do to repay them. He even asks if they have ever thought about opening a tavern or other business, and says he is looking for partners in such a venture.

Unless something went terribly wrong, the characters should have more than enough time to return to the elven watchtower before nightfall. To enter, they must merely speak the elven passphrase Deribis gave them. So long as they are standing in the teleport circle when the sun goes down, they are instantly teleported back to Ylraphon. Otherwise, they must spend about 8-12 hours traveling back on foot.

When the characters return to Ylraphon, proceed to the conclusion.

Conclusion

Expected Duration: 10 minutes

Read or paraphrase the following:

When you arrive back at Ylraphon, Deribis meets in the inner sanctum of the Moonwater, the temple of Selûne. Two others are also present: a red-armored orc of unusually noble bearing called Krim, and Andorran Bree, the High Initiate of the temple. Andorran he offers you healing for any wounds you have suffered.

"Welcome back," Deribis says. "I hear you have had quite the adventure. I hope you'll tell me all about it."

If anyone (including Victor if he made it back) is wounded, Andorran Bree casts *mass cure wounds*, healing everyone for 3d8 + 5 hit points. If there are Harper characters present, he makes special effort to greet them, and praises their success, especially if they rescued Victor. Andorran then excuses himself to attend to temple business (taking Victor with him if he is present).

Krim is only present to ask if the characters saw any sign of his kinsman Eglavale. If told of Eglavale's fate, he is grateful, if saddened, but pleased that the blood orc likely met his end in battle. Krim can also offer a reward of 80 gp for the return of the silvered Marsh scimitar, and can give Order of the Gauntlet members who want to report to Arden Marsh directions to find him, at the Ylraphon docks aboard a ship called the *Blue Phantom*.

Deribis is eager to hear of the characters' exploits. If the adventurers tell a tale of their success, she responds as follows:

"It seems that I and my fellow refugees owe you a debt of gratitude. I must reward you for saving my people. The coffers of the Old City Alliance have been drained by managing this whole affair, for we are a poor community, but the nobleman Serge Affapanov, leader of the refugees from Mulmaster, has donated 250 gold pieces from his family's personal wealth to reward you.

"Thank you again for your great service. You are just the kinds of heroes my people need. Most adventurers dwelling around here stay within the Palisade walls, but out in the Old City with the refugees, we are trying to build a home of our own, and the people there need protection too. If you ever feel compelled to choose a home-base for your life between adventures, I hope you will consider joining our community—if you ever want to own land of your own, I can help with that too!"

If the adventurers were unsuccessful but escaped, Deribis instead says the following:

"It is unfortunate that you were unable to stop the ritual. Clerics from this temple and Morningrise Hall, the Old City's new shrine to Lathander, were able to save most of the victims but several ran off into the swamps before we could cure them. Unfortunately, most of the money I would have given you was spent curing the afflicted, so I can provide no reward!"

Rewards

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

Experience

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

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Cultist	100
Guardian portrait	200
Swarm of poisonous snakes	450
Yuan-ti Broodguard	450
Yuan-ti Pit Master	1800
Yuan-ti Pureblood	200

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Save the town's chef from being sacrificed	250
Foil Sitalash's plot	200

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 450 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 600 **experience points**.

Treasure

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

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Belongings of the orc Eglavale	10
Eglavale's splint mail (if sold)	100
Ophidian Enigma rubies	240
Khull Bannon's possessions	15
Snake skins	60
Sitalash's stash	40
Silvered scimitar (if returned to Marshes)	80
Silvered scimitar (if sold elsewhere)	65

Deribris' reward 250

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

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

Potion of Healing

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Staff of the Adder

Staff, uncommon (requires attunement by a cleric, druid, or warlock)

You can use a bonus action to speak this staff's command word and make the head of the staff become that of an animate poisonous snake for 1 minute. By using another bonus action to speak the command word again, you return the staff to its normal inanimate form.

You can make a melee attack using the snake head, which has a reach of 5 feet. Your proficiency bonus applies to the attack roll. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 poison damage.

The snake head can be attacked while it is animate. It has an Armor Class of 12 and 20 hit points. If the head drops to 0 hit points, the staff is destroyed. As long as it's not destroyed, the staff regains all lost hit points when it reverts to its inanimate form.

Red Splint Armor

The characters may claim the orc Eglavale's splint armor. The metal is red, and it bears the symbol of the orc deity Ilneval, god of battlefield leadership and strategy. One character may keep it, or the party may sell it for 100 gp.

Silvered Marsh Scimitar

If the characters defeat the cultists in Part 4, they may claim the silvered heirloom scimitar the Marshes lent to the orc Eglavale. The party can return it to the Marshes for a reward of 80 gp or sell it for 65 gp, or one character can keep it.

Story Awards

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

Captured! You have become a servant of the yuan-ti Sitalash and must escape. Escaping costs 5 downtime days as you and your fellow captives create and execute a daring escape. However, seeing yuan-ti causes you flashbacks to the horrors you experienced. The next time you roll Initiative when yuan-ti are present, you have disadvantage on that Initiative roll.

The characters gain this award if Sitalash defeats them.

Local Pursuit. You have become involved with a local institution in Ylraphon. You may choose **one** (and only one) of the “Local Pursuit” story award options described in **Player Handout 4Y: Local Pursuits** for successfully completing this adventure. This signifies your character having the opportunity to become more involved with day-to-day life and significant institutions in Ylraphon. You may gain only one of the story award options listed for completing this adventure, though you may later gain additional ones if other adventures grant these story award options.

This award is available to characters who defeated Sitalash and made it back to Ylraphon.

Ylraphon Adventurers Guild. You may join the Ylraphon Adventurers Guild if you defeated Sitalash before nightfall, if you obtained one of the Local Pursuit story awards (as described above), or if you are willing to pay 50 gp initial dues as described in **Player Handout 4Z: The Ylraphon Adventurers Guild**. This grants access to the Guild Delving downtime activity described in that handout, as well as other benefits to be seen in future modules set in Ylraphon.

This award is available to characters who successfully completed this adventure

Renown

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

Members of the Harpers who bring Victor back to Ylraphon alive gain **one additional renown point**.

Members of the Order of the Gauntlet who bring back word of the fates of Eglavale and Khull Bannon, or who return the Marsh scimitar, gain **one additional renown point**.

DM Reward

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

Appendix. Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

Sitalash (Sit-all-ash). Sitalash is a yuan-ti with his mind set on overtaking the Moonsea. He has uncovered an ancient ritual that will help bolster his numbers and it all begins in Ylraphon.

Appendix. Monster/NPC Statistics

Cultist

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Actions

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

Swarm of Poisonous Snakes

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1))	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

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

Senses blindsight 10ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 12 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damaged on a successful one.

Yuan-ti Broodguard

Medium humanoid (yuan-ti), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (7d8+14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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15 (+2) 14 (+2) 14 (+2) 6 (-2) 11 (+0) 4 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +4, Wis +2

Skills Perception +2

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Mental Resistance. The broodguard has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't paralyze it.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The broodguard makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage

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

Yuan-ti Pit Master

Medium humanoid (yuan-ti), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +6, Perception +3, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The yuan-ti's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The yuan-ti can innately cast the following spell s, requiring no material components:

At will: *animal friendship* (snakes only)

3/day each: *poison spray*, *suggestion*

Mental Resistance. The yuan-ti has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't paralyze it.

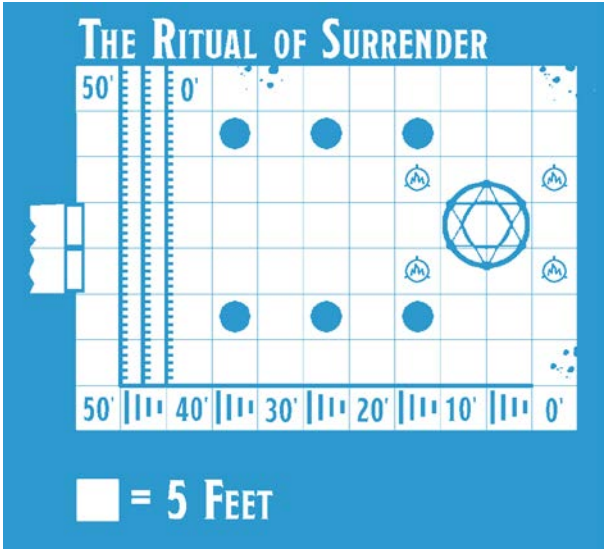
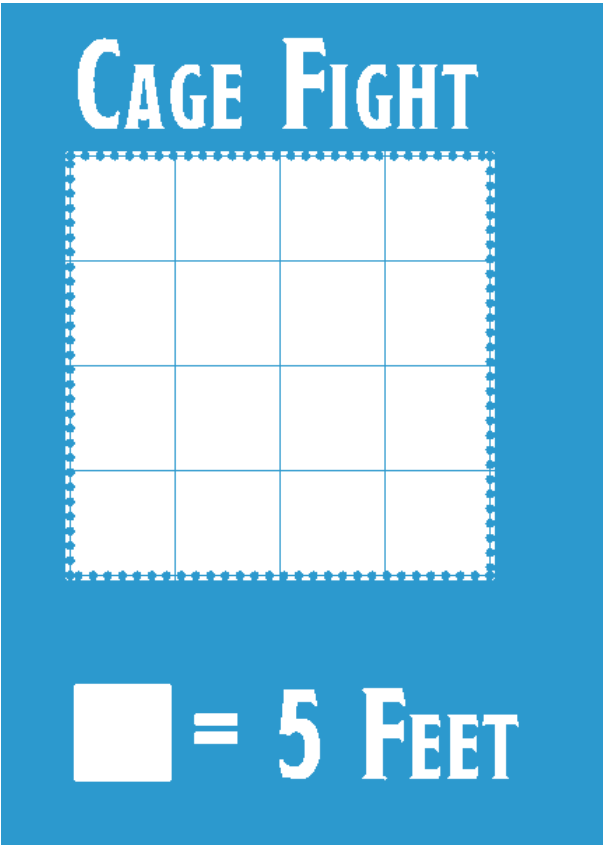
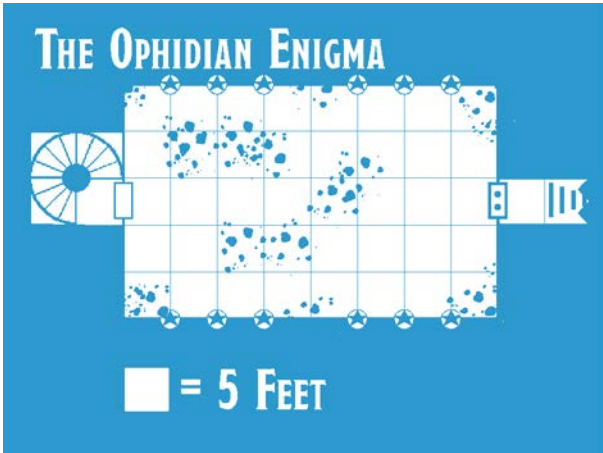
Actions

Multiattack. The yuan-ti makes two melee attacks

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Appendix. Map



Player Handout 1: A Letter of Introduction

The broken signet seal and signature on this letter indicate it was written by Arden Marsh, a member of the noble House Marsh, one of Ylraphon's ruling merchant families. It also bears the sign of House Marsh: A black tree on a blue circle, with a wolf and falling star on one side and raven and moon on the other.

GREETINGS—

GIVEN THE WELL-JUSTIFIED DISTRUST OF ORCS AMONG CIVILIZED FOLK, I WRITE A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR THIS HONORABLE WARRIOR, EGLAVALÉ, A LOYAL SERVANT OF HOUSE MARSH. BE IT KNOWN: THE ORC EGLAVALÉ IS A TRUSTED OFFICER IN THE MARSH HOUSE MILITIA, ONE OF A TRIBE OF LAWFUL ORCS CALLED BLOOD ORCS WHO HAVE ENTERED THE FAMILY'S SERVICE. HE IS IN THE FLOODED FOREST ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS, CHARGED WITH CAPTURING A ONE-EYED WEREBOAR CALLED KHULL BANNON, WHO AMBUSHED AND KILLED OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR MILITIA.

BEYOND THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE, IT IS IMPERATIVE TO THE TOWN AUTHORITIES AND OTHERS DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF RIGHT THAT WE DISCOVER WHO HIRED THE WEREBOAR FOR THIS DEED, WHICH MAY BE PART OF A LARGER PLOT AGAINST YLRAPHON'S PEOPLE.

AS FURTHER PROOF OF OUR HOUSE'S FAITH IN EGLAVALÉ, HE BEARS A SILVERED SCIMITAR STAMPED WITH THE SYMBOL OF OUR HOUSE, WHICH BELONGED TO MY LATE GRANDFATHER. WE WOULD NOT GRANT THIS PRECIOUS HEIRLOOM WITHOUT FAITH IT WILL BE RETURNED.

IF YOU BE A FRIEND OF YLRAPHON OR HOUSE MARSH, OR IF YOU ARE A SERVANT OF GOOD OR A CHAMPION OF CIVILIZATION, PLEASE GRANT THE ORC EGLAVALÉ HOSPITALITY AND KIND TREATMENT, AND SHELTER OR AID AS YOU MAY BE ABLE. YOU WILL NOT ONLY EARN THE GRATITUDE OF MYSELF AND MY FAMILY, BUT OF THE HUMBLE DEFENDERS OF YLRAPHON'S PEOPLE AND RIGHTEOUS FOLK EVERYWHERE KNOWN AS THE ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET.

—ARDEN MARSH

Player Handout 2: The Wereboar's Orders

KHULL..

BROTHER. THE EYE OF GRUUMSH AND THE HOWL OF MALAR ARE AGREED. IT IS TIME TO RECLAIM THE ALTAR OF THE SMOLDERING EYE FROM THE YUAN-TI. MY WARBAND AND I WILL DESCEND UPON THE TEMPLE BEFORE THE NEW MOON.

YOUR PART IS DIFFERENT. YOUR REWARD WILL BE THE HAND OF MY SECOND DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE. SHE IS HEALTHY AND SHOULD GIVE YOU MANY YOUNG.

YOU MUST KILL THREE OF THE HERETICAL BLOOD ORCS WHO HAVE DEMAINED THEMSELVES BY SERVING HUMAN LORDS. THEN YOU MUST TAKE THEIR TRAITOROUS BLOOD TO THE INFERNAL MACHINE THE SERPENT-MEN MADE IN OUR TEMPLE. YOU ALREADY KNOW THE WAY. RIDE THE CAGE DOWN. SPRINKLE THE BLOOD INTO THE BLACK PIT OF BETRAYAL AS YOU DESCEND. THE SPIRITS OF THE ANCIENT BLOOD ORCS WILL BE AWAKENED AND FREED. THEN THE HOWL OF MALAR CAN EXORCISE THEIR DEFILING PRESENCE WITH HER CLERICAL MIGHT.

BE WARY OF THE BLOOD ORC SPIRITS. AND USE THE MIGHT OF OUR ANCESTORS TO PUT DOWN ANY WHO TROUBLE YOU. AFTER SO LONG BOUND TO THE PIT WHERE THEY DIED FOR THEIR REBELLION AGAINST GRUUMSH. THE GHOSTS WILL LIKELY RISE WITH UNQUENCHABLE RAGE AND THIRST FOR LIVING FLESH. DESTROY THEM ALL.

MOTHER SAYS HELLO.

..WAR-CHIEF JHAG BANNON

Player Handout 3: Magic Item

Staff of the Adder

Staff, uncommon (requires attunement by a cleric, druid, or warlock)

You can use a bonus action to speak this staff's command word and make the head of the staff become that of an animate poisonous snake for 1 minute. By using another bonus action to speak the command word again, you return the staff to its normal inanimate form.

You can make a melee attack using the snake head, which has a reach of 5 feet. Your proficiency bonus applies to the attack roll. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 poison damage.

The snake head can be attacked while it is animate. It has an Armor Class of 12 and 20 hit points. If the head drops to 0 hit points, the staff is destroyed. As long as it's not destroyed, the staff regains all lost hit points when it reverts to its inanimate form.

Player Handout 4X: Story Awards

The characters can earn the following story awards during play.

Captured!

You have become a servant of the yuan-ti Sitalash and must escape. Escaping costs 5 downtime days as you and your fellow captives create and execute a daring escape. However, seeing yuan-ti causes you flashbacks to the horrors you experienced. The next time you roll Initiative when yuan-ti are present, you have disadvantage on that Initiative roll.

The characters gain this award if Sitalash defeats them.

Local Pursuit

You have become involved with a local institution in Ylraphon. You may choose **one** (and only one) of the “Local Pursuit” story award options described in **Player Handout 4Y: Local Pursuits** for successfully completing this adventure. This signifies your character having the opportunity to become more involved with day-to-day life and significant institutions in Ylraphon. You may gain only one of the story award options listed for completing this adventure, though you may later gain additional ones if other adventures grant these story award options.

This award is available to characters who defeated Sitalash and made it back to Ylraphon.

Ylraphon Adventurers Guild

You may join the Ylraphon Adventurers Guild if you defeated Sitalash before nightfall, if you obtained one of the Local Pursuit story awards (as described above), or if you are willing to pay 50 gp initial dues as described in **Player Handout 4Z: The Ylraphon Adventurers Guild**. This grants access to the Guild Delving downtime activity described in that handout, as well as other benefits to be seen in future modules set in Ylraphon.

This award is available to characters who successfully completed this adventure.

Player Handout 4Y: Local Pursuits

If you successfully completed this adventure, you may choose one “Local Pursuit” story award. This signifies your character becoming involved with significant Ylraphon activities or institutions. You may gain only one of the story award options listed below for completing this adventure, though other adventures may offer additional ones.

Local Pursuit: House Affapanov Militia

Your deeds City have impressed the leaders of House Affapanov, one of the merchant houses that rule Ylraphon, and you have been offered a commission as an officer in their house militia. Immediately before or after an adventure set in Ylraphon, you may spend 5 downtime days on duty training with Zor Serge Affapanov’s military advisor, a blue-horned tiefling and Warlock Knight of Vaasa named Agate. Once during your next game session after this activity, you may inform your DM you are using this benefit to either gain advantage on a single attack roll with a piercing weapon or a cantrip, or on a single Charisma check with a professional soldier or a member of House Affapanov. When you use this benefit on an attack roll, the attack blazes with a violet, starlight glare.

Note: *You cannot claim this story award if you have another story award that makes you a member of a different house militia in Ylraphon (such as Local Pursuit: House Marsh Militia), and claiming this award prevents you from gaining other such house militia story awards in the future.*

Local Pursuit: House Marsh Militia

Your deeds have impressed some of the leading members of House Marsh, one of the merchant houses that rule Ylraphon, and you have been offered a commission as an officer in their house militia. Immediately before or after an adventure set in Ylraphon, you may spend 5 downtime days on duty training with either the paladin Sir Bresden Marsh or his ally the blood orc Krim Dragul. Once during your next game session after this activity, you may inform your DM you are using this benefit to

either gain advantage on a single attack roll with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon, or on a single Charisma check with a professional soldier, a blood orc, or a member of House Marsh.

Note: *You cannot claim this story award if you have another story award that makes you a member of a different house militia in Ylraphon (such as Local Pursuit: House Affapanov Militia), and claiming this award prevents you from gaining other such house militia story awards in the future.*

Local Pursuit: Old City Homesteader

You have chosen to make a new home in the mix of ruins and residences outside Ylraphon’s Palisade known as the Old City. This story award marks you as a resident of Ylraphon. One time, immediately before or after an adventure set in Ylraphon, you can spend 1,000 gp and 30 downtime days to become the owner of a 10-foot by 10-foot room which you can call entirely your own, which contains a bed, one chest, two chairs, and a very small table. Because you live among them, during adventures set in Ylraphon or the Flooded Forest, you gain advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to influence refugees from Mulmaster and other Moonsea ports.

Local Pursuit: Part-Time Taverner

Your experiences in the Old City brought you into contact with a group of would-be tavern owners looking to found their own place outside the Palisade, who offered to bring you in as a partner. Choose a name for the tavern and record the name as part of this story award (“*Local Pursuit: Part-Time Taverner (Name of Tavern)*”). If you wish, you can write down the same tavern name as other characters who take this story award, making them some of your partners. Immediately before or after an adventure set in Ylraphon, you can spend up to 10 downtime days tending to your business, making use of the “Running a Business” downtime activity described on page 129 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*, with a maintenance cost of 2 gp per day for your share of expenses. In addition, if you purchase a meal or drink in Ylraphon during an adventure, the price you pay is never higher than the normal price listed in the *Player’s Handbook* (this does not affect lifestyle expenses)

Player Handout 4Z: Adventurers Guild of Ylraphon

The Adventurers Guild of Ylraphon is a loose-knit league of “dungeoneers, tomb-robbers, errant crusaders, swashbuckling mercenaries, and sundry formidable scalawags of all races and vocations” (according to its charter). It represents adventurers’ interests in town and helps regulate the profitable exploration of the surrounding ruins.

Joining the Guild

To initially join the Adventurers Guild of Ylraphon, a character must speak to Jotan Silverhammer, lieutenant guildmaster and volunteer sergeant of the Town Watch. There is no cost if you discovered the cause of the illness affecting the Old City, or if you obtain one of the *Local Pursuit* story awards (described in Player **Handout 4Y: Local Pursuits** or appearing in other adventures), due to your substantial contribution to prosperity of the Old City. Otherwise, initial dues are 50 gp, with additional payments of 12 gp a month. These costs are waived, however, for volunteers either who work three shifts a month for the Town Watch. In game terms, this means a character must spend 50 gp to join, and to remain a member, whenever they spend downtime, they must spend an additional 4 gp for every 10 downtime days they spend (though you may be able to substitute downtime for this cost, see below).

If a character who owes these dues fails to pay them as soon as they spend downtime, they must pay them by the end of their next game session or they lose all benefits of guild membership, and must pay the 50 gp initial dues again to regain them.

Benefits of Membership

Members of the Adventurers Guild may delve local ruins in search of treasure. They gain access to the *Guild Delving* downtime activity before or after any adventure set in Ylraphon.

New Downtime Activity: Guild Delving

Immediately before or after an adventure set in Ylraphon, you may spend up to 30 downtime days (minimum 10) to attempt to research, find, and explore some of the ruins of Outer Ylraphon in search of treasure. In the presence of the DM, roll percentile dice and add the number of days spent on this downtime activity, comparing the total to the Treasure Seeking Results Table on this page.

d100 +

Downtime

Spent

Result

1-35	A fatiguing and fruitless cavern exploration. You spend 10 gp on expenses and gain 4 levels of exhaustion. For each downtime day you spend recovering before your next adventure, you remove one of these exhaustion levels.
36-50	A difficult and taxing trudge through the Flooded Forest. You gain 2 levels of exhaustion. For each downtime day you spend recovering before your next adventure, you remove one of these exhaustion levels.
51-65	A strange and discouraging affair. You make only enough to recuperate half of your lifestyle expenses.
66-79	A lengthy but unremarkable overland trip. You recuperate half your lifestyle expenses and gain 2d12 gp.
80-89	A profitable expedition to the Underdark. You recuperate half your lifestyle expenses and gain 1d4 x 10 gp.
90-99	An exciting delve into a lost dwarven tomb. You recuperate half your lifestyle expenses and gain 1d6 x 10 gp.
100-109	An unexpected discovery of a long-lost merchant house compound. You recuperate all your lifestyle expenses and gain 1d8 x 10 gp, as well as a book on the history of a Sword Coast city or town. (Have your DM select a title for it.)
110-119	A lost shrine. You recuperate all your lifestyle expenses and gain 1d10 x 10 gp as well as a holy symbol for a deity of your choice.
120 or Higher	Altar of the Ghost Hound. You find a millennia-old shrine to a god you cannot identify, with treasures laid upon an altar deep beneath the ground. You recuperate all your lifestyle expenses and gain 1d12 x 10 gp as well as a <i>potion of healing</i> . <i>If this is the first time you have rolled this result:</i> You also gain a shining copper cloak-pin bearing the image of a flaming spirit hound. Write down “Copper Pin of the Spirit Hound” as a separate story award on your logsheet.