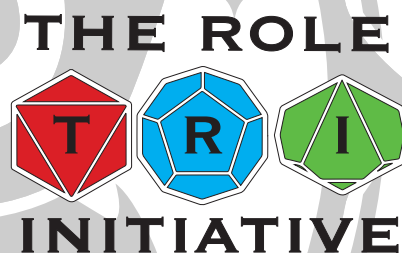


THE DARK OF THE HIVE

Part Four of the Yûlash Series

Strange events are occurring near the town of Yûlash—ground tremors originating from an old mind flayer hive. Our heroes are asked to investigate the old hive and determine the cause of the seismic activity, but another pressing matter is revealed to them, too.

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



JEFF C. STEVENS
Adventure Designer

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Optimized For: APL 13
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Story Arc Coordinator: Mark Merida

Editors: Kasey Walko, Ruth Jedlinsky

Formatting and Layout: David Jedlinsky

Art: Luiz Prado

Yûlash Sigil: Jay Africa

Cartography: Elven Tower RPG Maps, Jeff C. Stevens

Organized Play: Chris Lindsay

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

D&D Adventurers League Administrators: Alan Patrick, Bill Benham, Travis Woodall, Claire Hoffman, Greg Marks, Lysa Chen

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Dark of the Hive*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and The Role Initiative's Yûlash series.

This adventure occurs in Yûlash, a small city along the coast of the Moonsea, and inside the caverns that lead to the mind flayer hive introduced in CCC-TRI-02, "Impression Left Behind."

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.

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

"Beware the dark pool at the bottom of our hearts. In its icy, black depths dwell strange and twisted creatures it is best not to disturb."

—Sue Grafton, *I is for Innocent*

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure begins with the PCs being summoned to Yûlash to investigate the mind flayer hive introduced in CCC-TRI-02, "Impression Left Behind."

Bizarre seismic activity has been occurring near the old hive, and there is concern that a second portal to the Far Realm may be open. The adventurers are hired to investigate the old hive, gather three books, locate a possible rogue mind flayer, and destroy the Far Realm portal if one exists.

A tadpole from the illithid hive has grown to enormous size and is now plowing through the old tunnels, looking for food. Its actions and size have caused many sections of the original tunnel system to collapse. The adventuring party will have to find a new way to the hive.

A rogue ulitharid has collected and stored energy from the Far Realm portal introduced in CCC-TRI-02, and is now using this energy to open a new portal in order to collect aberrations.

The energy from the new portal causes strange mutations to any creature injured within the caverns and passages close to the Far Realm portal.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Hillsfar (HILLS-far). The City of Trade, which is struggling to move on from the days of the second Great Law of Humanity.

Vuhm Yestral (VYOOM YES-tral). The First Lord of Hillsfar has taken great interest in helping the city of Yûlash. With his Red Plume soldiers, he has been intent on removing all evil threats from the area surrounding the town.

Vilcuum (vil-KOOM). A liaison from the nearby Ryxyg (RICKS-ig) mind flayer hive.

Gagnor Grell (GAG-no GRELL). A simple man; both in the mind and in life.

Kaz'mazal (KAHZ mah-zahl). Ulitharid outcast who studied arcane magic, and has an interest in Far Realm energy.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure begins with the adventurers being summoned to Yûlash to investigate the mind flayer hive introduced in CCC-TRI-02, "Impression Left Behind."

Part 1. Encore Performance—15 Minutes. The adventurers meet with Vuhm (the First Lord of

Hillsfar) and Vilcuum the illithid as they are briefed on the issue.

Part 2. The Big Bad—25 minutes. The adventurers enter the cave which leads to the mind flayer hive. There, they are confronted by the creature that has caused the seismic activity.

Part 3. Ever So Deeper—45 minutes. The adventurers find the original entrance to the hive is now blocked with rubble, and they must take an unfamiliar route, through the Underdark, to reach the hive. They find themselves pitted against environmental hazards that have been created by the recent seismic activity, and they begin to learn more about Kaz'mazal (a rogue mind flayer).

Part 4. The Hive Caverns—60 minutes. The adventurers reach the Underdark caverns which are within range of the mutating effects of the Far Realm portal. They find themselves faced with spell-casting concerns, emotional issues, and mutations created from healing.

Part 5. The Old Hive—60 minutes. Having reached the old hive, the adventures search for the remaining rare books and the Far Realm portal. Finding the portal, they also find Kaz'mazal.

Part 6. Returning to Yûlash—15 minutes. The adventurers return to Yûlash and relay what they have found.

AUTHORS NOTES

The run-time of this adventure is highly dependent on the level of role-play your players enjoy. **The Hand in the Tunnel**, **Kings of the Mountain**, and **The Library** have the potential to be roleplay heavy. To alleviate a possible lengthy adventure, you may allow the players to be creative in the way they handle some of the exploration and obstacle encounters.

Too easy? This adventure is written so that not every obstacle the adventurers face will be a major challenge. It seemed fitting that there would be varying levels of difficulty for a high-level party adventuring through the caverns of the Underdark.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure occurs several days after the events of CCC-TRI-02.

Cut apart **Player Handout 1**, and hand the appropriate letter to the characters who meet the criteria. Note that the letters are not being sent by faction representatives. The First Lord has been instructed to keep these requests secret, and the factions have not been informed of the situation.

PART 1. ENCORE PERFORMANCE

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

The adventure begins with the party arriving at the First Lord's tent. The adventurers may have received a written summons to attend the meeting, while others, having completed CCC-TRI-14, "The Voice in the Night," may still be in Yûlash. Strangely, no faction representatives are present.

As the adventurers enter the First Lord's tent, read or summarize:

The First Lord sits at a rectangular table holding a finely crafted silver mug in his right hand. As the last of you enters, he places the mug on the table next to a silver, crumb-dusted plate. He dabs his mouth with a blue cloth napkin, clears his throat, and says, "Ah . . .adventurers! I'm very glad you have responded to the summons. There are strange events occurring in the old mind flayer hive and we needed a few good heroes to investigate the matter."

Vuhm offers the adventures a place to sit at his table, and then summons a squire to fetch ale and food for the adventurers. The First Lord states that they are waiting for one more guest. He chats with the adventurers as they relax and eat their bread and well-aged goat cheese. He will share the following basic information:

- Ground tremors have been originating near an old mind flayer hive.
- The First Lord knows very little about what is going on in the old hive.
- He assumes it's just normal seismic activity as the area is prone to earth tremors every now and again.
- He has been advised by Vilcuum, a mind flayer of the Ryxyg hive, that an investigation may be in order.

ENTER THE CONSULTANT

Shortly after the adventurers sit at the table, the final guest arrives. Adventurers who participated in CCC-TRI-02, "Impression Left Behind" recognize him as Vilcuum, the mind flayer of the Ryxyg hive, and the consultant who aided them during that adventure.

A few minutes later, the squire returns to the tent. "My Lord, your final guest . . .ahem . . .guests have arrived," he says as he holds the tent flap open. A glistening, leathery, tentacled creature in black and silver robes enters the tent, followed by an impeccably dressed man with a simple-looking face.

Vilcuum has grown tired of using its tentacles to create a voice box, and many creatures do not like

to communicate via telepathy. He has hired this man, Gagnor Grell, to act as his proxy in speaking. Vilcuum has created a mental link with Gagnor which allows him to use the man as his voice.

ROLEPLAYING VILCUUM

Vilcuum (vil-KOOM) is a liaison from a nearby mind flayer hive. He's anxious for the adventurers to begin their journey, as he believes he knows what's causing the tremors. He doesn't want to scare the adventurers away, however, by telling them his theory that a neothelid could be running rampant in the old hive.

Gagnor is very pleased with the arrangement. He is paid handsomely, and even though he has no control over his body when Vilcuum establishes the psychic link, he gains a little bit of the mind flayer's intelligence. He appreciates understanding things that he normally wouldn't understand—things that others would have no trouble understanding.

ROLEPLAYING GAGNOR GRELL

Gagnor Grell (GAG-no GRELL) is a simple man; both in the mind and in life. He enjoys simple comforts, like a nice warm mug of spiced cider, and is easily impressed with the most basic tasks.

Not being an intelligent man, Gagnor doesn't understand how a lot of things work in the world. When not linked to Vilcuum, he touches and pokes at things, sniffs at them, drools slightly, and is easily distracted.

Quote: "Oh, what's that?"

Vilcuum uses Gagnor like a puppet, speaking through him via telepathy.

The simple-looking man, his body now mimicking the motions and swaying of the leathery creature, says, "Thank you, First Lord, for arranging this meeting. You and I have discussed the concern about the seismic activity, but I have not been fully open with you about my own concerns."

Vilcuum continues to speak through Gagnor as he imparts the following information:

- He is not certain what is causing the tremors, but it needs to be investigated.
- He wants the party to recover three books.
- The books could be used to create another Far Realm portal so it's in everyone's best interest that these books don't fall into the wrong hands.
- A mind flayer named Kaz'mazal may be looking for the books and he may already be in the Hive.
- Kaz'mazal was an outcast who studied arcane magic and had an interest in Far Realm energy.

When the above information has been shared, read or summarize:

Vilcuum pulls a piece of parchment from its coat and hands it to you. “Here is a list of the books I want you to find,” says the simple-looking man.

“Since we don’t know the nature of this seismic activity, and since it appears to be getting stronger, I’m afraid time is of the essence, and you must begin your adventure now.”

Give the players **Player Handout 2**. On the parchment, written in magnificent handwriting, is a list of the three books Vilcuum mentioned. The book titles are:

- *The Far Realm—Common Misunderstandings*
(written in Infernal)
- *Far Realm Portals & How to Maintain Them*
(written in Undercommon)
- *Arcane Magic and Far Realm Energy*
(written in Common)

Vilcuum is prepared to offer 500 gp for each of the three books returned to him. If the party tries to negotiate for a better bargain, it could go as high as 1,000 gp each.

The First Lord’s squire can lead the adventurers to the mind flayer hive entrance. Upon arrival there, he quickly turns and heads back to the First Lord’s tent.

PART 2. THE BIG BAD

Estimated Duration: 25 minutes

The adventurers enter the cave which leads to the hive where they face the first of their challenges.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The cave floor is loose rock, but not considered difficult terrain.

Weather. The temperature inside the cave is dry and cool.

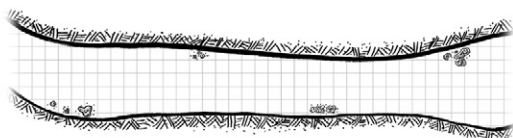
Light. Unless otherwise noted, all sections are dark.

Smells and Sounds. Dirt, dampness, and fresh dust from the rumblings that are occurring deeper within the cave.

A. BIG BAD BATTLE

After the adventurers enter the cave and travel 100 feet, read or summarize:

The entrance to the hive is a massive 30-foot-wide, 25-foot-tall opening. After traveling roughly 100 feet, a thudding sound, along with a low rumble, begins to belch from the interior of the cave, and it seems to be getting closer. Small bits of stone drop from the ceiling, and the ground shakes.



1 square = 5 feet

The thudding sound is caused by two **hill giants** charging out of the interior of the cave and rushing toward the adventurers.

The hill giants are running! Not toward the party, but away from a more dangerous creature. The pair had entered the cave only a few hours ago, looking for something to eat, when a **neothelid** broke through a cave wall near the giants. The pair knew they had better retreat, so they bolted for the opening.

The rumbling is caused by the hungry neothelid which chases after the hill giants. It has been using its Creature Sense to hunt down food. The hill giants, although not very intelligent, do have large brains that should make a filling meal.

The hill giants make one attack against the party and then disengage. They see the adventurers as a nice distraction for the beast that is chasing them, and knocking one of them prone would certainly make the beast stop to gather the easier prey.

If the party is not in combat with the hill giants, have each PC roll a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, that character notices that the rumbling sound was not the hill giants, and the sound appears to be getting closer—the ground still

shakes and small chunks of stone still fall from the ceiling.

Three rounds after the hill giants are seen, the neothelid comes into view. The party members are much more intelligent than the hill giants, and the neothelid's Creature Sense allows it to locate the most intelligent party member. This party member becomes the focus of the neothelid and its hunger.

A massive, purple-colored beast pours out of the interior of the cave. Its body nearly fills the entire passage. Four long tentacles flail around its giant, toothy maw. It stops for a moment. Its head moves quickly up and down, side to side, and its tentacles slither quickly through the air, as if searching for something.

The head stops moving, and it turns its attention toward you—it seems to have found a new target. The creature rears its body back, and then springs forward!

If defeated inside the tunnel, the neothelid's body fills most of the corridor, making it a very tight squeeze for large creatures.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

All Party Strengths

- **Hill Giant (2):** AC 13, 105 hp, Init –1
- **Neothelid:** AC 16, 325 hp, Init –2

PART 3. EVER SO DEEPER

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

As the party travels deeper into the main cave, about 200 feet on, they find the main cave has experienced a cave-in, but a new crevice has opened up nearby.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. Jagged, rocky tunnels, some fresh and some old.

Weather. Damp, cave-like.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, all areas are dark.

Smells and Sounds. Occasional tiny tremors as the ground and rock settle from the recent seismic activity caused by the neothelid.

A. MOVING ON

Finding themselves blocked by a recent cave-in, and needing to continue farther to reach the old hive, the party finds a newly created crevice.

After traveling another 200 feet deeper into the wide cave, you find your path blocked by a recent cave-in. However, there is a new crevice in the nearby wall.

A humid, warm draft spills from the crevice.

The new crevice leads to “The Steam Chasm.”

A character investigating the new crevice feels a warm, humid breeze flowing from the crevice, and the crevice appears safe enough to travel through.

The neothelid, while roaming the hive for food, has created quite a mess. Its movement has caused many of the old hive tunnels to collapse, but other, previously hidden tunnels are now exposed. New tunnels have been created by the neothelid, too. Its hunger drove it to punch through the thinner walls.

B. THE STEAM CHASM

The party travels through a narrow passage and enters a large cavern containing an enormous chasm. There are stone pillars dotted across the chasm.

GENERAL FEATURES

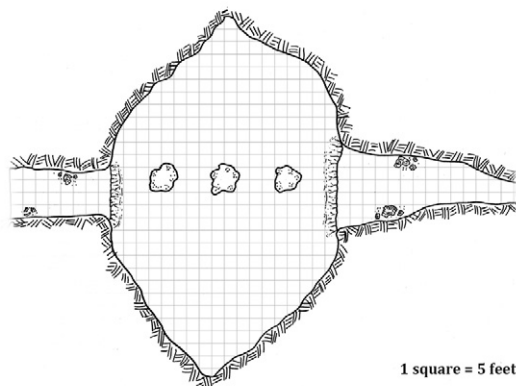
Terrain. The pillars are covered with small rocks and are considered difficult terrain. The walls of the chasm are slick from the steam.

Weather. The air is hot and humid. Several steam vents empty into the chasm and create a wall of steam. This steam prevents the adventurers from seeing the bottom of the chasm.

Light. The room is dark, and the steam limits visibility to 25 feet.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of sulfur is heavy in the air and the hissing of the steam through the exit vents below the bridge is constant.

This encounter can easily be shortened if the players come up with an extremely clever way of completing these obstacles. If this occurs, a simple explanation of their actions will suffice, and an automatic success can be granted.



The narrow passage, just large enough for you to travel single file, slopes upward at an easy angle. It's too narrow for the hill giants to have come this way, and the sharp edges of the stone walls suggests this is a new passage.

The tunnel opens to a large, steam-filled cavern bisected by a deep and wide chasm. Stone pillars—the remains of what was once a natural stone bridge—rise from chasm's floor and could act as stepping stones to the other side. The steam prevents you from seeing how deep the chasm is. It also prevents you from seeing the other side.

The chasm is 40 feet deep and 102 feet wide. Each of the pillars has a radius of 10 feet and is 40 feet tall, ending more or less level with the chasm's edge. The pillars are 15 feet apart from each other and the chasm walls.

PILLAR TO PILLAR

A character may attempt a running long jump to reach a pillar. To do so, the character must spend 10 feet of movement to reach the jump point, after which the character may jump a number of feet equal to its strength score. So, a creature with a strength score of 16 who runs 10 feet prior to the jump can jump a distance of 16 feet. If a creature attempts a standing long jump, the distance covered is $\frac{1}{2}$ of its strength score in feet.

If a character has a strength score below 16, that character may attempt to jump to a pillar by passing a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. A success results in the character landing on the pillar.

The pillars, due to the jagged edges and debris from the collapse, are considered difficult terrain. Whenever a character lands on a pillar, it must pass a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or land prone.

FALLING

A character falling to the bottom of the chasm takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. In addition, the character takes 3 (1d6) fire damage from the steam each time it ends its turn on the chasm floor, or while scaling the chasm.

CHASM FLOOR AND WALLS

The walls of the chasm are slippery, and sight in the chasm is limited to 10 feet. A character attempting to scale the chasm must pass a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check with disadvantage. The use of a rope or climbing gear grants advantage to the check.

HEAT EFFECTS

Once the party crosses the steam-filled chasm, party members wearing medium or heavy armor who spend more than five rounds within 5 feet of the chasm must pass a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion due to the prolonged exposure to heat. Characters wearing heavy armor have disadvantage on the roll.

DEVELOPMENT

The tunnel on the other side of the steam chasm continues on and leads to “The Hand in the Tunnel.”

C. THE HAND IN THE TUNNEL

As the adventurers trek deeper into the caverns, they notice a hand and forearm sticking out from a recently collapsed tunnel that would have connected to their tunnel. The hand is limp and cold, and belongs to a drow woman named Sas’oth. She escaped from the illithid library when a troll snatched her lover, Feliara. Sas’oth grabbed a leather sack and placed the book she had been assigned to read in the sack. It was the only weapon she could come up with.

Sas’oth then tried to follow the troll to save her lover, but the beast was too quick, and it knew the tunnels better than she. She met her fate several days ago, when the tunnel she was using collapsed.

The rubble around the woman is loose and can easily be removed to expose the rest of her body. Once removed from the rubble, the adventurers find the remains of a once attractive young drow woman. Her lifeless body appears malnourished, but the obvious cause of death is from the cave-in. Her left hand clutches a bloodied leather sack that holds a book titled *The Far Realm—Common Misunderstandings*. The book is written in Infernal, anyone who skims the book and who can read and understand Infernal glean the following information:

- **Far Realm Portals are good!** Although some races believe accessing the Far Realm is good, it

is actually very bad; the potential of releasing a deadly aberration exists.

- **Far Realm energy causes no ill effects.** This is false. A portal once caused strange mutations at Firestorm Peak.

If *speak with dead* is cast on Sas’oth, she knows:

- She and five companions were trapped in a section of the Underdark after a cave-in.
- A huge quaggoth captured them and locked them in a strange library.
- Her lover, Feliara, was with her in the library.
- They were forced to read books, scrolls, and tomes.
- If they didn’t obey, the Quaggoth used some type of psionic attack on them.
- Every day, a Quaggoth would enter the library, leave some bits of food, a pitcher of water, and then take one of her companions from the library.
- Those who were taken never returned.
- This started four days ago, and only she and her lover, Feliara, remained.
- A four-armed troll broke down the door of the library, grabbed Feliara, and then ran into the tunnels.
- She lost the troll in the tunnels.

Due to the lingering effects of the Far Realm portal, spells like *raise dead* have no effect on Sas’oth. She has too many internal and external mutations to allow her to be raised (see “Far Realm effects—Healing,” in the appendix).

TREASURE

If a character searches the body, they find a white quartz pendant attached to a thin electrum chain (100 gp).

DEVELOPMENT

The tunnel continues for another 300 feet and then opens to a small cavern. See part 4A, “The Prisoner.”

PART 4. THE HIVE CAVERNS

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

This area of the Underdark, and the area beyond, are full of Far Realm energy that seeps from the Hive.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

- Having a good understanding of the Far Realm effects will help this adventure run smoothly and provide roleplay opportunities for the players.
- To shorten the runtime, remove **C. The Room of Stars** encounter. You could also have the goblins and orcs immediately surrender when they see the adventurers.

The following effects are in play from this point on:

FAR REALM EFFECTS—SPELLCASTING

If a character/creature attempts to teleport or magically move outside of the material plane, the caster must roll a DC 16 Spellcasting ability check. On a success, the spell works as intended, but with side effects. On a failure, the spell fails.

In either case, the caster takes 13 (5d4) psychic damage and its hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of damage taken. This reduction in hit point maximum can only be removed after a long rest. This is the psychic impression left behind from the attempted magical transportation (from CCC-TRI-02).

FAR REALM EFFECTS—HEALING

Whenever a character/creature heals, either by magic or natural methods, a vestigial growth forms on the character/creature—typically in the area the of the injury. The DM may decide which growth to use. Suggestions include:

- A third eye that oozes black mucus
- A third eye that moves with the creature's other eyes, but in the opposite direction
- A third arm that dangles from the creature's torso
- An extra finger which can grasp and hold a small object
- A second mouth somewhere on the creature's upper torso
- A set of chattering teeth on the creature's neck
- An extra nose on the creature's face
- A tiny extra leg that kicks sporadically
- A small thumb that grows from the side of the creature existing thumb
- An extra toe that makes wearing boots uncomfortable

These mutations start small, like the size of the tip of one's index finger, but they grow rapidly. Within 10 minutes, it's obvious that the small growth has increased in size. After one hour, the growth

has reached full-size, which is half the size of the original appendage.

These mutations are mostly cosmetic, troublesome, annoying, and do not typically add any benefits or conditions to the subject, unless they rest (see "Resting" and "Healing"). The growths remain while the creature is within range of the Far Realm energy. Once the creature leaves the area, the growths begin to shrink, and completely disappear after 48 hours, leaving no scars or other effects.

A creature passing a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check recalls that these effects should not be occurring if the original Far Realm Portal was closed. There may be another Far Realm Portal, and its energy is creating these effects.

FAR REALM EFFECTS—RESTING

Whenever an injured creature rests, it heals. Resting creatures that heal develop growths.

FAR REALM EFFECTS—EMOTIONS

The Far Realm energy also affects moods and emotions. Whenever an argument or confrontation occurs between party members, the DM should mention that the characters strongly believe in their own arguments or decisions, more so than they normally would.

THE FAR REALM BOOKS

If the party finds one of the requested books and reads or skims it, upon passing a DC 13 Intelligence (Insight) check, they find information in the book that explains the above effects of the Far Realm energy.

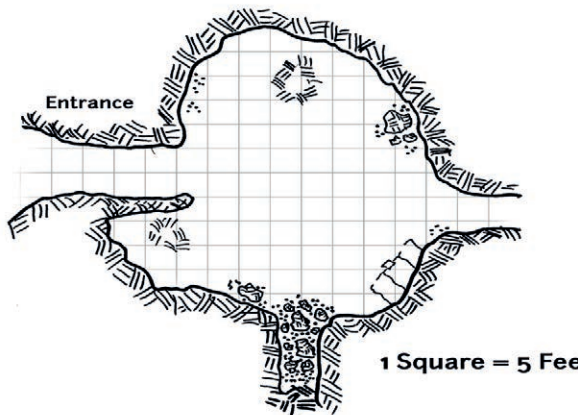
Note: These effects were inspired by the AD&D module *The Gates of Firestorm Peak* by Bruce Cordell

A. THE PRISONER

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

The tunnel opens to a small cavern with three cages along the back wall. The cages appear to be made of large stones, each with a gate-like door fastened out of tree limbs and vines. The center cage gate is closed, while the other two gates are open.

A giant, green pile of skin, hair, and claws lays on a makeshift bed of moss and twigs in the middle of this small cavern. It appears to be one creature, as you only see two legs and one head, but it looks like it has four arms. Suddenly, the green pile sucks in a large breath of air and stirs. The abomination leaps up, bares its teeth, flails its four arms, and charges.



The adventurers have just stumbled upon a troll (use **girallon** stats and abilities, but describe as a four-armed troll with no regeneration) that has been mutated by Far Realm energy, giving it four arms. Its recent wounds from a brief encounter with other creatures of the Underdark have healed with side-effects. The troll's extra arms are usable, giving it two additional attacks on each of its turns.

Four additional four-armed trolls rest behind the tunnel's right wall.



THE CAGES & FELIARA

The center cage holds an injured **drow** woman. The trolls recently stole her from the illithid library, before many of the tunnels collapsed. Her name is Feliara, she is badly injured, and a plethora of vestigial growths cover her body, both internally and

externally. She is dying, and she knows it. No means of magic or healing can cure her.

Feliara and her companions were captured by the ulitharid and they were imprisoned in a very odd way. They were locked in a library and forced to read books and manuals of all sorts. If asked about any of the books the party is searching for, she recalls reading '*The Far Realm—Common Misunderstandings*', but in her current state, she can't recall any of the details of the book.

Feliara is dying quickly and she only has time to answer four questions before she finally passes. If the party doesn't ask questions, roll a d10 to determine what Feliara says. The growths in her mouth and throat make it difficult for her to speak.

d10 Information

- 1 She and her companions became trapped after a ground tremor caused a cave-in.
- 2 A huge quaggoth captured them and acted as their guard.
- 3 She and her companions were locked in a strange library.
- 4 Every day, a quaggoth entered the library, left some bits of food and a pitcher of water, and then took one of her companions. They never returned.
- 5 A mind flayer, but with six tentacles, and calling itself Kaz'mazal, entered the library and studied her and her companions.
- 6 They were forced to read books, tomes, and manuals of all sorts.
- 7 If they didn't obey, the quaggoth emitted some type of psychic blast that caused them pain.
- 8 They were trapped in the library four days ago, and only she and her lover, Sas'oth, remained.
- 9 A troll broke down the door of the library and yanked her out.
- 10 She hopes Sas'oth escaped. When the troll took her, her head smacked into a wall and she lost consciousness. She woke up several times while the troll dragged her through the tunnels and eventually dropped her in the cage.

Feliara dies while the adventurers speak with her; her wounds and the growths are too severe for her to be saved. Read or summarize the below:

Feliara reaches under her torn shirt and removes a white quartz pendant attached to a thin electrum chain. "Take this," comes her raspy and soft voice. Tears well up in her pale-blue eyes as she continues. "Give it to Sas'oth if you find her. Please tell her that I love her, and someday we will be whole again."

Feliara reaches out to give you the pendant, but it slips from her grip as her body falls limp and lifeless.

TREASURE

If the moss and twig beds are searched, the party finds a leather sack containing a large black opal worth 1,000 gp, a bent jeweler's loop, and a rusty dagger. Feliara's pendant is worth 100 gp.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak

- **Four-armed Troll (4):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

Weak

- **Four-armed Troll (5):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

Average

- **Four-armed Troll (5):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

Strong

- **Four-armed Troll (6):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

Very Strong

- **Four-armed Troll (7):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

EXIT

The tunnel on the far wall continues through the cave system. When the party continues their journey from this area, read or summarize:

As you continue down the tunnel you pass two more tunnels now rendered impassable by cave-ins. After 300 feet, you come to a wooden gate that hangs on rusty hinges. It's obviously been torn down and repaired several times. A sign written in common hangs on the gate and reads: Keep Out! Pesifikly Trolz.



B. THE KINGS OF THE MOUNTAIN

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

Five kobolds live in this area, and they have built a wooden door in an attempt to keep the trolls out. The door has been destroyed and rebuilt several times, and it hangs on rusty hinges. The hinges, if not lubricated prior to opening the gate, squeak and groan when the gate is opened.

If the party applies some type of lubricant to the hinges before they open the gate, it opens quietly, and the kobolds are unaware of their entrance. However, if the gate is opened without being lubricated first, the gate creaks and groans loudly and alerts the kobolds, who quietly and stealthily look to see what is entering their cavern.

When the party opens the gate, read or summarize the boxed text below, taking into account the current state of the rusty hinges.

A large cliff stands on the other side of this large cavern. On the left side of the cliff, several rock outcroppings appear to act as a stairway to the top of the cliff. The right side of the cliff face appears rough and jagged.

Although difficult to see from this vantage point, it appears there are two tunnel openings at the top of the cliff—one to the east, and one to the west.

Note: The use of transportation spells (*misty step*, *teleport*, *dimension door*, and similar) could be harmful. Refer to **Far Realm Effects—Spellcasting**.

A monk or other creature with special movement abilities may be able to ascend the cliff and surprise the kobolds. If this occurs, the kobolds are surprised, and do not immediately attack.

THE KOBOLDS

Four **winged kobolds**, named Whiskey, Tango, Alpha, and Foxtrot, and a **kobold inventor**, named Klink, live in a small cave at the top of the cliff. The kobold lair entrance is only 3 feet wide and 3 feet tall, which creates a secure area for the kobolds. The trolls spent many hours trying to reach the kobolds, shoving their arms in as far as possible, but they were never successful.

If the kobolds are aware of intruders, they yell “Who’s that? What you want?”

The kobolds aren’t looking for a fight. If the party speaks kindly to the kobolds, the kobolds are friendly and may even offer to help them up the cliff (no ability checks required). The kobolds also mention the pesky trolls, and are very happy if the party states they killed the trolls.

If the adventurers are not nice to the kobolds, the kobolds attack the party while they attempt to climb the cliff (see “Scaling the Cliff”).

KOBOLD KNOWLEDGE

If asked about mind flayers, or other recent occurrences, the kobold share the following information:

- While in another section of the tunnels, Tango saw a woman drow carrying a bag while running through the tunnels.
- The earthquakes created an opening further up the tunnel that leads to an old ruin or something. They haven't gone in.
- They sometimes hear screams coming from the ruins.
- They heard a group of goblins further up the tunnel yesterday.
- Once, they saw a purple creature with tentacles in these tunnels.

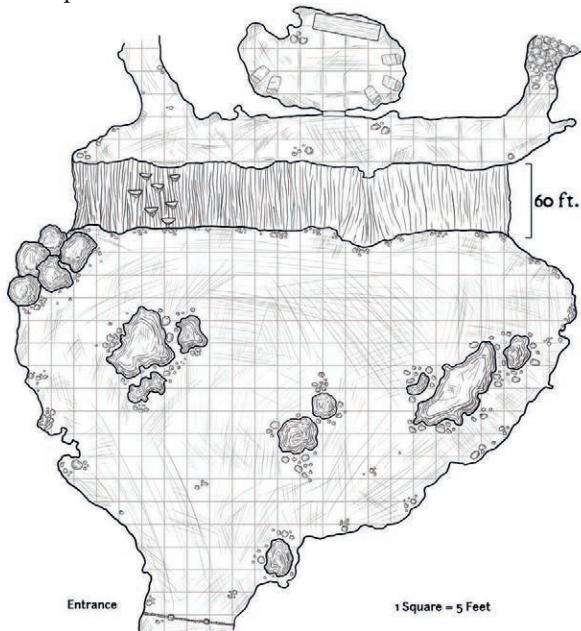
THE CLIFF

The cliff is 50 feet tall and can be scaled by using the rock outcroppings on the left, or by climbing the cliff face on the right.

THE CLIFF FACE

A creature may attempt to climb the jagged cliff face. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check every 15 feet the creature climbs. The use of climbing gear, or similar, grants advantage to this check.

On a failed check, the creature falls a number of feet equal to the distance they have climbed. For each 10 feet fallen, a character/creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage and is prone when they land on the patch of stone at the base of the cliff.



ROCK OUTCROPPINGS

There are eight 5-foot-radius outcroppings. Each is about 10 feet above the other, and at various

positions on the cliff face. They can be used to scale the cliff. Using the outcroppings requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check each round as a character jumps to reach the outcropping and then pulls itself up. A failed check results in the character landing prone on the outcropping below and suffering 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall. The use of climbing gear, or similar, grants advantage to the check.

SCALING THE CLIFF

If the adventurers have not made themselves known, or are hostile to the kobolds, the kobolds hang over the edge of the cliff, or fly about the cave and throw items (roll a d4 on the table below) at the adventurers while they attempt to scale the cliff. These distractions induce disadvantage on climbing checks.

d4	Thrown Item
1	A small rock that's just big enough to be a distraction when climbing
2	A small pouch filled with troll manure, which smells terrible
3	A flask of acid, which causes 7 (2d6) acid damage on a hit
4	A flask of alchemist's fire which causes 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of the target's turns. A character can end the damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

All Party Strengths

- **Winged Kobold (4):** AC 13, 7 hp, Init +3
- **Kobold Inventor:** AC 12, 13 hp, Init +2

Treasure. If searched, the kobold bodies have one of the above items and 5 cp. In addition, Klink's body has three small, painted stones: green, white, red.

THE KOBOLD LAIR

An unlocked, patchwork, wooden door, repaired several times after the troll visits, acts as the entrance to the kobold's lair. The doorway is just large enough for a medium-sized creature to fit, and its metal armor scrapes against the sides. A creature entering the lair finds five beds made from bits of leather, ragged clothing, and old feather pillows.

A small table and chair stand along the back wall, and the table holds several empty glass vials, two vial of alchemist's fire, a bucket of troll manure, a rusty dagger, a *potion of climbing*, and two *potions of healing*.

Resting on the ground, to the right of the table, is a reinforced wooden chest with a wooden cage sitting on top. The chest is visible, but the cage is

covered with a purple cloth that ends just above the chest.

The cloth-covered cage holds a skunk (see kobold inventor's *Skunk in a Cage*). When the cloth is lifted, the skunk sprays its musk on whoever lifts the cover.

The reinforced wooden chest has a strange-looking lock on it. A six-inch round metal plate covers the front of the chest. The plate has three holes in it, and each hole is colored: green, white, and red. Placing the stones found on Klink's body inside the matching colored holes unlocks the crate. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools also unlocks the chest. The chest holds a piece of parchment and two medium-sized yellow diamonds worth 500 gp each.

A note written in Common is on the piece of parchment; give them **Player Handout 3**.

TREASURE

In addition to the items described above, a creature actively searching the lair and passing a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a *spell scroll of sunbeam* under one of the makeshift beds, presumably the inventor's bed.

DEVELOPMENT

The 10-foot wide tunnel continues 300 feet, then opens to "The Room of Stars." As the party approaches this area, they start to hear a low rumble, feel an increase in humidity, and see condensation on the tunnel walls. Also, a light blue glow emanates from the end of the tunnel.

C. THE ROOM OF STARS

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The tunnel opens to a land bridge, which disappears into the far wall of the cavern. 40 feet under the bridge, a quick moving river originates from a roaring waterfall and then flows further underground.

Weather. The mist from the waterfall makes everything wet and slippery.

Light. The cavern is illuminated by thousands of inch-long bioluminescent worms that cling to the ceiling.

Sounds. The waterfall is very loud. Characters attempting to communicate in this cavern must yell.

The passage turns into a natural stone bridge that bisects a large cavern. The bridge disappears into the cave wall on the other side.

A 30-foot-wide waterfall empties into a wide river which passes under the bridge and then disappears under a cave wall. A large section of stable rock acts as a shoreline directly below the bridge and a tunnel entrance can be seen across the river and to the northeast.

Thousands of small, blue lights line the ceiling of

the cavern, slowly pulsating from dim to bright. These lights provide ample light.

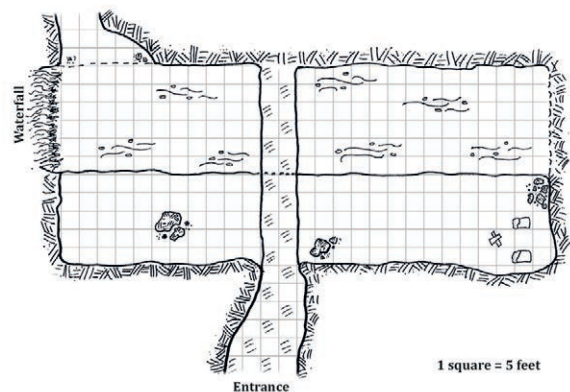
To the south, the blue glow from above reveals what appears to be an old campsite, and another collapsed passage.

Note: The use of transportation spells (*misty step*, *teleport*, *dimension door*, and similar) could be harmful. Refer to **Far Realm Effects—Spellcasting**.

STARS ON THE CEILING

The blue light is created by thousands of bioluminescent inch-long worms that cling to the ceiling. The worms are not dangerous, and they have no attacks. If a DM wishes, a glowing worm may fall from the ceiling and land on or around a PC, but cause no damage. If removed from the cave, the worm emits light in a 6-inch radius for 1 hour before it dies. If gathered and stored in a glass container, twenty of more worms emit blue light in a 15-foot radius for one hour.

If smashed, the worm's bioluminescence smears and coats a 6-inch section of a surface lasting one hour. If smeared on a character, attackers are granted advantage to attack rolls made against that character. The smear cannot be washed off, but it can be removed with fire, which causes 1 point of damage to the character/creature covered in the smear.



THE STONE BRIDGE

The stone bridge stands 40 feet above the river and landmass. A character may use a rope to climb down to the landmass below the bridge. The first two characters to use the rope may do so freely by passing a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. A failed check results in the creature falling, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed check. The mist from the waterfall causes the rope to become slippery, and subsequent creatures have disadvantage on their climbing checks.

THE CAMPSITE

It's obvious the site hasn't been used for a very long time. A character passing a DC 15 Intelligence

(Investigation) check notices a piece of oiled leather sticking out of the ground near the bedroll nearest the river. If removed, the character retrieves a finely crafted jeweler's pick, a piece of charcoal, and a piece of parchment paper. The parchment paper has the beginnings of a map on it and the drawing looks a lot like this cave.

HISTORICAL NOTE

A couple of dwarven adventurers entered these caves many years ago. They were lucky and found five large black opals. Fearing the loss of all their treasure to bandits or thieves, they hid two opals in the small cave behind the waterfall, and two opals in the deep pit below the waterfall. They had planned to take one opal back to civilization, sell it, and return with better mining gear, but a hungry troll ended that idea, and them.

THE RIVER

The river is 30 feet deep and has a swift current. A character attempting to swim the river must pass a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check or be pushed downstream 10 feet. A character has disadvantage on the roll if it wears medium or heavy armor.

A character starting its turn at the south wall, where the river slips into a fully enclosed cave with no air, must pass a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check or be sucked into the underground river and begin to drown, suffering one level of exhaustion for each failed check.

THE WATERFALL

The waterfall creates a mist that makes all surfaces slippery. A creature attempting to climb the far wall must succeed on DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks with disadvantage. On a failure, the creature slips and falls, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage per every 10 feet fallen.

Treasure. The waterfall's constant flow and churning has created an 80-foot-deep, 15-foot-radius hole directly below it. A frayed end of rope can be noticed, barely sticking out from the rocky shore next to the pool, with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. Digging and following the rope leads to a leather bag hanging along the side of the churning pool. Inside, there are two black opals (1,000 gp each).

THE CAVE BEHIND THE WATERFALL

The waterfall conceals a small cave (20 feet deep, 20 feet tall, and 5 feet wide). Accessing the cave requires a character to successfully swim to the waterfall and then pass a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to pull itself out of the water and up to the slippery cave ledge.

Treasure. If searched, a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a group of oddly placed stones (which are

trapped—see below) along the back wall. A dirty leather sack containing two black opals (1,000 gp each) is hidden under the stones.

FALLING STONE TRAP

Simple trap (level 5–10, moderate threat)

A trap is set within the stones and, if moved, causes a camouflaged hempen rope to release several large rocks from the ceiling.

Trigger. A character moving one of the stones causes the camouflaged rope to release several large rocks from the ceiling. A failed disarm check also causes the rocks to fall.

Effect. The trap causes several large stones to fall. The triggering creature must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the trap. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disarms it.

DEVELOPMENT

The western tunnel continues 150 feet. The main tunnel is blocked by a recent cave-in, but a new crevice has opened which leads to the mind flayer hive.

PART 5. THE OLD HIVE

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Play time can be shortened by removing the exploration of the “Illithid Living Quarters,” by summarizing “The Hidden Staircase,” and by moving directly to “The Secret Lab.”

Characters who have played CCC-TRI-02 will begin to recognize the area as they enter The Arcade. These tunnels do not show signs of the damage from the neothelid. Nevertheless, there have been environmental changes since the time of the prior adventure.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. Unless otherwise noted, the halls and rooms of the hive are made of stone blocks which have obviously been crafted.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, the tunnels and rooms within the old hive are dark.

A. THE ARCADE

After traveling several hundred feet, the passage comes to an end, but an opening to the left leads to a tunnel crafted from stone blocks. A thin layer of fog shrouds the room’s floor.

When walked on, the floor in this area crunches. It was once covered in a thick mucus-like substance, but the downfall of the original hive has caused it to dry up. Characters that played CCC-TRI-02 recall the original state of this area.

B. THE HIVE POOL

This enclosure appears to have once been a massive pool. Its water level appears merely half full, and the remaining water is murky, smells horrible, and appears lifeless.

The water is 1 foot deep. The pool once held tadpoles used by the mind flayers. One tadpole, the neothelid that appeared at the beginning of the adventure, grew and devoured the other tadpoles. Having run out of food, and having grown to giant-size, it left the pool and began hunting in the tunnels and caves of the hive.

The pool is now a disgusting stagnant pool of leftover tadpole and neothelid feces. A character that enters the pool, and can smell, must pass a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute as it retches from the smell.

Treasure. A character entering the pool and passing a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a large pearl worth 250 gp.

C. THE TRANSFORMATION CHAMBER

Naked corpses in varied states of decay line the walls of the room. It appears that they once stood in a shallow cavity along the wall, and while some still do, others lay sprawled chaotically on the floor, as lifeless heaps.

This chamber once contained a mix of fifteen humans and drow that were being transformed into illithids, but the downfall of the hive has left them to die and decay.

The passage to the north once led to the hive’s Elder Brain Chamber, but that passage is now blocked with rubble and is no longer accessible.

D. THE LIBRARY

The illithid has kept a library containing preserved brains, rare books, historical scrolls, and maps. Two **orc blades of Ilneval** and four **goblins**, trapped in the hive due to the collapsing walls and cave-ins caused by the neothelid, have set up a camp in the library, and they are using the contents for a campfire and roasting the preserved brains over the fire.

GENERAL FEATURES

The library has the following general features:

Terrain. The floor and walls here are natural stone. The ceiling is that of the cavern the room was fashioned within.

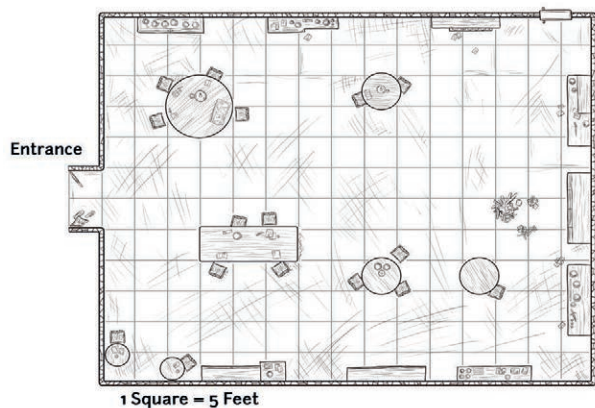
Furniture. Bookshelves, most filled with glass containers holding preserved brains of various creatures, line the walls. Tables of various sizes and shapes sit in the middle of the room.

Weather. The air here is humid and warm.

Light. The room would be considered dark if not for the large fire being built near the back wall.

Smells. Musty, old books, embalming/preserving fluids, wood smoke, and animal musk fill the room.

The flickering light of a fire slips out from an archway further ahead and along the right wall of the tunnel. Voices speaking in common and goblin come from within the room beyond the archway. “Fire not hot enough! Burn more book!”



As the party enters the room, read or summarize the following:

The passage leads to a door that's been ripped from its hinges. Two orcs and four goblins, each with a stack of books and an empty glass jar next to them, sit around a fire near the back of the room while roasting some type of meat skewered on the tip of their swords.

The room appears to be a library, with shelves filled with books and jars along the walls. Tables, also containing books and liquid-filled jars, are scattered about the room.

When the party enters the room, the orcs and goblins jump to their feet, fling the roasting brains from their swords at the party members, and prepare to fight. Make ranged attack rolls for each of the goblins. On a hit, the roasting brain splatters and sticks to the target, and the target takes one point of fire damage.

The two orc blades of Ilneval and two goblins engage in melee attacks, while the rear two goblins engage in *Flaming Book* attacks.

FLAMING BOOK ATTACKS

If a battle ensues, the two rear goblins throw flaming books at the adventurers.

The goblins, not being very good melee fighters, pull books from the nearby stacks, light them on fire, and throw them at the adventurers. Since these goblins aren't proficient in the art of book throwing, their attack bonus is +2, and they have a range of 30 feet.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

All Party Strengths

- **Orc Blade of Ilneval (2):** AC 18, 60 hp, Init +0
- **Goblin (4):** AC 15, 7 hp, Init +2

Roll a d20 each time a goblin pulls a book from a stack, on a result of 1–5, the goblins just happen to grab one of the books the adventurers seek—*Far Realm Portals & How to Maintain Them*. The book is written in Undercommon. Any creature skimming the book, and can read and understand Undercommon, gleans the following information:

- It is rumored that certain aberrations, when enchanted with arcane magic, have been able to store energy from the Far Realm. Little is known which type of magic or spells create this ability; sadly, those who succeeded never notated the process, or they didn't live to make the notations.

If the goblins light this book on fire, and the adventures locate it after the battle, the book is near useless as the majority of the pages are burnt and half-missing.

ORCS BE NICE?

If the party does not immediately attack the orcs and goblins, there is the possibility for roleplay. The orcs and goblins became trapped in the hive, and they just want to get out, but they are lost. Even though it's against their nature, they promise not to attack in exchange for directions out of the Hive area.

WHAT THE ORCS KNOW

The orcs have seen and heard a few things during their short exploration of the hive.

- They heard muffled screams coming from across the hall.
- When they investigated, they found several locked rooms, but they didn't open them. Those obviously weren't going to lead out of the tunnels.
- They caught a quick glimpse of a large mind flayer in one of the rooms. It turned and saw them, but it left them alone.

THE BOOKSHELVES & TABLES

Varying sizes of glass containers rest on the tables and line most of the bookshelves. The illithids preserved many brains of several different species of creatures for study.

The bookshelves on the back wall hold scientific books, scrolls, and tomes; none of which are very valuable.

THE SMALL DOOR

A small doorway stands next to the bookshelves. The passage behind the door is filled with rubble from a cave-in and, since the door opens in that direction, it cannot be opened. It takes 40 points of damage to destroy the door.

If the door is destroyed, rubble spills into the library. Each creature within 10 feet of the door

must pass a DC 16 Dexterity check or take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage as the rubble rolls on to them.

There is no other exit from this room. The party must turn around and leave through the entrance, returning to the Hive area.

TREASURE

Each of the orcs and goblins carry 5 gp, 10 sp, and 15 cp.

E. THE ILLITHID LIVING QUARTERS

The hive tunnel passes several other tunnels with collapsed archways and impassable rubble. Eventually, the adventurers reach the illithid living quarters.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Living Quarters have the following general features:

Terrain. The floor here is natural stone and is more or less level.

Weather. The air here is humid, yet cool.

Light. There is no light here save for that which the characters brought with them.

Many of the entrances are locked, or covered in rubble. A character may attempt to unlock a door with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, or with a successful DC 18 Strength check. On a success, they find a room filled with dust and debris. Additionally, they may find 1d10 x 5 gp stashed in each room and one of the trinkets listed on the d6 table below:

d6 Trinket

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | A small, petrified brain. A DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine or Nature) check reveals that it is the brain of a drow elf and it is nearly 1,000 years old. |
| 2 | A detailed color sketch of a goblin, his mid-section splayed open revealing his internal organs. |
| 3 | A tooth from an unknown beast. |
| 4 | A jar with a clear liquid and containing twenty eyeballs of various size and color, none of them matching. |
| 5 | An empty leather scroll case. |
| 6 | A quill stand fashioned from the lower jaw of a toothy beast. It holds several different sizes and types of quills. |

F. KAZ'MAZAL'S QUARTERS

The door to Kaz'mazal's quarters is ajar. If running low on time, this could be the first room the adventurers find while in this area.

This living area is neat and tidy, and has obviously been used recently. Next to a desk along the far wall, a creature lies half in and half out of what appears to be a secret passage.

The body in the door is that of a dead quaggoth if the party chooses to investigate it. The desk along the far wall has the following items on it.

- several blank pieces of parchment
- an ink well
- a quill made from an exotic feather
- A scroll written in Elvish containing information about a historical event that occurred at a place called Firestorm Peak.
- Creatures close to a Far Realm portal at Firestorm Peak suffered many mutations.
- *Arcane Magic and Far Realm Energy*, which is one of the books the party is looking for.

The book is written in Common, and a player skimming the book finds the following information:

- How to use arcane magic to create a Far Realm energy storage device
- Using stored energy to create a new portal
- The combination of Arcane Magic and Far Realm energy can be used to mutate creatures
- Mutated creatures may gain special powers

If the party investigates the secret passage and the body, read or summarize:

A secret door next to the desk is held open by the body of a large quaggoth. The legs of the beast lay in the chambers, while the upper torso lies in the stairwell of the hidden passage. The quaggoth is dead; its eyes bulge from their sockets, and a grey liquid oozes from its ears and nose.

This is the quaggoth mentioned earlier in the adventure. The beast's natural psionic abilities had been magnified by the energy from the Far Realm portal, but over-exposure has caused its brain to become liquefied when a mini-psionic explosion occurred in its skull.

G. THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE

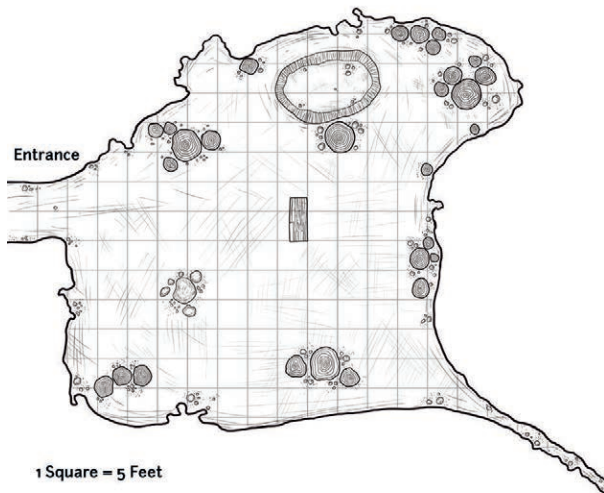
When the hive was active, Kaz'mazal hid this secret tunnel which leads to its arcane research laboratory.

The door opens to a natural stone staircase, its steps varying in height and width. It winds down a natural tunnel. Descending roughly 45 feet, you enter another large cavern filled with stalactites and stalagmites.

What appears to be a duergar is shackled upright to a blood-streaked, leaning table in the center of the room. The figure is mutated—its right arm is now several tentacles, and its left leg has been removed, but is mutating.

The smell of decay fills the cavern and a humming sound is coming from the west wall.

A thin passage located in the southeast corner appears to continue further into the cavern.



Kaz'mazal uses the table to hold his unwilling victims. Four large, round metal rings are fastened to the table. The quaggoth, when he returned with a drow elf, tied them to the table. Kaz'mazal then opened the creature's skull and ate its brain, gaining the knowledge it had just learned by reading the books in the library.

Kaz'mazal also uses the table to restrain victims as he wounds them and then watches the victim mutate.

The duergar strapped to the table is Bra'gark. In life, Bra'gark was a jovial duergar with a fondness for ale and strong mead. Sadly, he met with the large quaggoth, was captured, and became one of Kaz'mazal's experiments. Now he is dead, but a *speak with dead* spell could reveal the following:

- He was captured by a large quaggoth and then bound to this table.
- A huge mind flayer with six tentacles cut him in several places.
- The cuts turned into these odd mutations.
- Several times, he saw the vile creature go through the tunnel on the other side of the room.



A 30-foot-deep pit is near the west wall. Large black flies buzz incessantly around, two male and two female drow bodies, in various states of decay, lying at the bottom of the pit. Once Kaz'mazal had consumed the victim's brain, the quaggoth dumped the body into the pit. Slowly, the number of bodies in the pit has decreased as scavenging creatures of these tunnels have found easy meals.

A creature who can smell, and ending its turn within 5 feet of the pit, must pass a DC 18 Constitution save or be poisoned for one turn as it writhes from the smell.

If searched, the corpses have nothing of value. All corpses have had their skulls opened and their brains removed.

The passage on the east wall is 5 feet wide, and could be a tight squeeze for some adventurers. After 20 feet, the passage opens to a small cavern (20' x 20') with a large wooden door on the far wall. This is the entrance to Kaz'mazal's secret lab.

A narrow passage leads to a small cavern with a large wooden door on the far wall. A thin line of light slips out from under the door.

A creature listening at the door and succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check hears a low hum originating from the other side of the door.

TRAPPED DOOR HANDLE

Simple trap (level 11–16, moderate threat)

The door is unlocked but the handle is trapped with a *glyph of warding* (Spell Glyph—*shatter*).

Trigger. A creature touching the door handle activates the glyph.

Effect. The glyph casts *shatter* at 3rd level, centered on the triggering character. All creatures within a 10 foot radius must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 4d8 thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A *detect magic* or successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the glyph. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check made within 5 feet of the door disables the trap, and a check with a total of 10 or lower triggers it. A successful *dispel magic* cast on the handle destroys the trap.

XP AWARD

If the characters detect and disable the trap, award each character 250 XP.

Whether the trap on the door was triggered or not, Kaz'mazal's Creature Sense makes him aware of the adventurers' presence. Unless they are protected by a *nondetection* spell, *mind blank*, or similar effect, Kaz'mazal knows they are coming.

H. THE SECRET LAB—THE FINALE

Kaz'mazal's secret lab is directly underneath the old Far Realm portal.

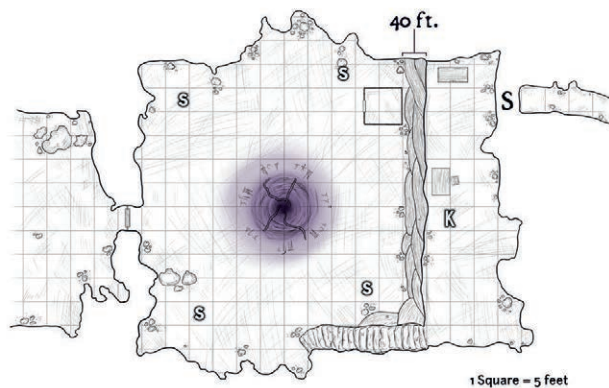
A creature resembling the mind flayer you met in the First Lord's tent, only larger and with six long tentacles, stands on a stone balcony overlooking the room.

Waves of purple energy ebb from four creatures, one floating in each corner of the room, into a vibrant purple portal located in the center of the room. They look bizarre with their one large eye and four flailing tentacles, each tipped with a small eye.

From the center of the ebbing portal, four long and pale tentacles whip in the air.

A cage containing a curious-looking, sleek and slender, black creature sits in the northeast corner of the room.

The lab is a large, natural cavern and is 60 feet wide by 60 feet long, with the ceiling ending 80 feet above. A stone staircase has been carved out on the east wall, granting access to a balcony area that rises forty feet above the main level.



Kaz'mazal (K) stands on the balcony overlooking the room. Its Far Realm Batteries—four **spectators** (S) which it stole from the original hive. Kaz'mazal, using the arcane knowledge it has recently gleaned, enhanced the spectators, which allow them to siphon Far Realm energy from the original portal that appeared in CCC-TRI-02. The Batteries now hover in the corners of the room, and feed the newly created portal with energy.

ROLEPLAYING KAZ'MAZAL

Kaz'mazal is happy to see the adventurers enter its laboratory—it needs more test subjects. If spoken to, Kaz'mazal replies using his telepathy.

Quote: "Outstanding, I need more test subjects for my experiments. Yield now, and save yourselves . . . additional pain."

Kaz is infatuated with using the energy from the Far Realm portal, and it wants to experiment with all the various humanoid races. It plans to dominate the creature emerging from the portal and use it as a tool to collect more test subjects.

It doesn't want to kill all the adventurers, that would not provide it with test subjects, but it isn't afraid to wound them. It needs a few of them alive, but just barely.

The Far Realm batteries continue to power the new portal while making two eye attacks against the adventurers.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Combat. Kaz'mazal's Creature Sense prevents it from being surprised, unless the characters are able to mask themselves from this ability. In addition, Kaz'mazal has telepathically notified all creatures in the laboratory of the threat, so all creatures in the laboratory have Advantage on their initiative roll when combat begins.

Far Realm Batteries. The spectators do not move. They continue to feed energy into the Far Realm Portal.

Leaving so soon? If the adventurers leave the room, the captured Far Realm aberration is released and moves out of the laboratory to attack them.

THE CAGE

Kaz'mazal has a cage setup in the corner of the room, in the event an interesting creature slips through the Far Realm Portal.

For weak and very weak parties, the cage is currently empty. Otherwise, a captured aberration is in the cage (use **earth elemental** statistics with type changed to *aberration*), and Kaz'mazal uses his Telekinesis ability to open the cage on his second turn.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak & Weak

- **Spectator (4)**: AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
- **Kaz'mazal**: AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

Average

- **Spectator (4)**: AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
- **Earth Elemental**: AC 17, 126 hp, Init –1
- **Kaz'mazal**: AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

Strong

- **Spectator (4)**: AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
Eye Ray save DC is increased to 15.
- **Earth Elemental**: AC 17, 126 hp, Init –1
- **Kaz'mazal**: AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

Very Strong

- **Spectator (4)**: AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
Eye Ray save DC is increased to 15.
- **Earth Elemental**: AC 17, 126 hp, Init –1
- **Kaz'mazal**: AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

THE FAR REALM PORTAL

The Far Realm energy from the four Far Realm Batteries maintains the portal. Once three of the Batteries are destroyed, the portal collapses.

A horrific-looking, tentacled aberration from the Far Realm is slowly creeping out from the portal. Unless the portal is destroyed in 6 rounds, the nasty creature (use **roper** statistics with type changed to *aberration*), emerges from the portal and moves about the room attacking the closest creature. Only the top half of the tentacled aberration is out of the portal. The creature may use all of its attack and abilities, but it may not move around the room until it has completed its slow migration from the portal.

If the portal is destroyed before the tentacled aberration fully migrates from it, the aberration is also destroyed.

THE BALCONY

A small desk and chair holds several tomes, books, and scrolls of no value.

THE VAULT

A small vault is found on the balcony, on which Kaz'mazal has cast *arcane lock*. A successful DC 25 Strength check breaks the vault open, or a successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools opens the vault.

Treasure. Inside the vault, the adventurers find a *tome of leadership and influence*.

PART 6. RETURNING TO YÛLASH

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

There are several ways the adventurers could return to Yûlash.

PRESSED FOR TIME?

Returning to Yûlash could be made faster by allowing the secret exit to be found without a skill check.

THE HIDDEN DOOR

A hidden passage is located in the northeast corner of the balcony. The passage can be spotted with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation). The door opens to a narrow 100-foot-long passage which leads to the outside world. Once outside, the adventures can easily find their way back to Yûlash.

TELEPORTATION

If the Far Realm portal and the Batteries are destroyed, the adventurers are free to use teleportation magic to exit the hive and tunnels.

RETRACE THEIR STEPS

Navigating the hive and tunnels back to the main entrance should be relatively easy. They are aware of the obstacles they've encountered, and having the ability to cast traveling magic should make the return trip rather easy. The only difficulty they may have is with the river in "The Room of Stars" or crossing "The Steam Chasm."

REPORTING THE FINDINGS

Vilcuum and the First Lord are waiting for the adventurers in the First Lord's tent. Vilcuum takes the books and rewards the PCs with the agreed upon sum, even paying the full amount for *Far Realm Portals & How to Maintain Them* if it was burnt. Both are very glad to hear the Far Realm portal and Kaz'mazal have been taken care of.

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
Hill giant	1,800
Neothelid	10,000
Four-armed troll	1,100
Winged kobold	50
Kobold inventor	50
Orc blade of Ilneval	1,100
Goblin	50
Far Realm Battery	700
Tentacled aberration	1,800
Far Realm monstrosity	1,800
Kaz'mazal	5,000

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
The Steam Chasm	250
The Kings of the Mountain (if roleplayed)	500
The Room of Stars	250
The Library (if roleplayed)	500
Each book returned	1,000

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **10,125 experience points**.

The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **16,875 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
Books retrieved (3)	500 each
Sas'oth's pendant	100
Feliara's pendant	100
Large black opal	1,000
Vial of acid	25
Flask of alchemist's fire	50
Medium-sized yellow diamonds	1,000
Waterfall black opals (2)	1,000 each
Cave black opals (2)	1,000 each
Large pearl	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.

TOME OF LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Wondrous Item, very rare

This purple leather tome has 4 mind flayer tentacles embedded in the cover. When you read the book you hear someone else's voice reading it to you in your head. This item can be found in Player Handout 4.

POTION OF CLIMBING

Potion, common

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

This item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

SPELL SCROLL OF SUNBEAM

Scroll, very rare

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RENOWN

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

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:

Vuhm Yestral (VYOOM YES-tral). The First Lord of Hillsfar has taken great interest in helping the city of Yûlash. With his Red Plume soldiers, he has been intent on removing all evil threats from the area surrounding the town.

Vilcuum (vil-KOOM). A liaison from the nearby Ryxyg (RICKS-ig) mind flayer hive.

Gagnor Grell (GAG-no GRELL). A simple man; both in the mind and in life.

Kaz'mazal (KAHZ mah-zahl). Ulitharid outcast who studied arcane magic, and has an interest in Far Realm energy.

APPENDIX. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

HILL GIANT

Huge giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d12 + 40)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (–1)	19 (+4)	5 (–3)	9 (–1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 +5) bludgeoning damage.

NEOTHELID

Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 325 (21d20 + 105)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	7 (–2)	21 (+5)	3 (–4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +1, Wis +8, Cha +6

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Creature Sense. The neothelid is aware of the presence of creatures within 1 mile of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a *mind blank* spell, a *nonetection* spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The neothelid's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *levitate*

1/day each: *confusion*, *feeblemind*, *telekinesis*

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

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) psychic damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be swallowed by the neothelid. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the neothelid, and it takes 35 (10d6) acid damage at the start of each of the neothelid's turns.

If the neothelid takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the neothelid must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the neothelid. If the neothelid dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The neothelid exhales acid in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful save.

GIRALLON

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	5 (–3)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the girallon can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature it can see.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The girallon makes five attacks: one with its bite, and four with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

WINGED KOBOLD

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (3d6 – 3)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	8 (–1)	7 (–2)	8 (–1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Dropped Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, one target directly below the kobold. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

KOBOLD INVENTOR

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)	7 (–2)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +0

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Weapon Invention. The kobold uses one of the following options (roll a d8 or choose one); the kobold can use each one no more than once per day.

1. **Acid.** The kobold hurls a flask of acid. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) acid damage.

2. **Alchemists' Fire.** The kobold throws a flask of alchemist's fire. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) fire damage at the start of each of the target's turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

3. **Basket of Centipedes.** The kobold throws a small basket into a 5-foot-square space within 20 feet of it. A **swarm of insects (centipedes)** with 11 hit points emerges from the basket and rolls initiative. At the end of each of the swarm's turns, there's a 50 percent chance that the swarm disperses.

4. **Green Slime Pot.** The kobold throws a clay pot full of green slime at the target, and it breaks open on impact. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/20 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is covered in a patch of green slime (see chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). *Miss:* A patch of green slime covers a randomly determined 5-foot-square section of wall or floor within 5 feet of the target.

5. **Rot Grub Pot.** The kobold throws a clay pot into a 5-foot-square space within 20 feet of it, and it breaks

open on impact. A **swarm of rot grubs** emerges from the shattered pot and remains a hazard in that square.

6. **Scorpion on a Stick.** The kobold makes a melee attack with a **scorpion** tied to the end of a 5-foot-long pole. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

7. **Skunk in a Cage.** The kobold releases a skunk into an unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The skunk has a walking speed of 20 feet, AC 10, 1 hit point, and no effective attacks. It rolls initiative, and, on its turn, uses its action to spray musk at a random creature within 5 feet of it. The target must make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target retches and can't take actions for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A creature that doesn't need to breathe or is immune to poison automatically succeeds on the saving throw. Once the skunk has sprayed its musk, it can't do so again until it finishes a short or long rest.

8. **Wasp Nest in a Bag.** The kobold throws a small bag into a 5-foot-square within 20 feet of it. A **swarm of insects (wasps)** with 11 hit points emerges from the bag and rolls initiative. At the end of each of the swarm's turns, there's a 50 percent chance that the swarm disperses.

GOBLIN

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)	8 (–1)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

ACTIONS

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

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

ORC BLADE OF ILNEVAL

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Skills Perception +3, Insight +3, Intimidation +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Foe Smiter of Ilneval. The orc deals an extra die of damage when it hits with a longsword attack (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orc makes two melee attack with its longsword or two ranged attacks with its javelins. If Ilneval's Command is available to use, the orc can use it after these attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage or 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage when used with two hands.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Ilneval's Command (Recharge 4–6). Up to three allied orcs within 120 feet of this orc that can hear it can use their reactions to each make one weapon attack.

SPECTATOR

Medium aberration, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +6

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

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

Eye Rays. The spectator shoots up to two of the following magical eye rays at one or two creatures it can see within 90 feet of it. It can use each ray only once on a turn.

1. *Confusion Ray.* The target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, or it can't take reactions until the end of its next turn. On its turn, the target can't move, and it uses its action to make a melee or ranged attack against a randomly determined creature within range. If the target can't attack, it does nothing on its turn.

2. *Paralyzing Ray.* The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

3. *Fear Ray.* The target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the spectator is visible to the target, ending the effect on itself on a success.

4. *Wounding Ray.* The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Create Food and Water. The spectator magically creates enough food and water to sustain itself for 24 hours.

REACTIONS

Spell Reflection. If the spectator makes a successful saving throw against a spell, or a spell attack misses it, the spectator can choose another creature (including the spellcaster) it can see within 30 feet of it. The spell targets the chosen creature instead of the spectator.

If the spell forced a saving throw, the chosen creature makes its own save. If the spell was an attack, the attack roll is rerolled against the chosen creature.

ULITHARID

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 127 (17d10 + 34)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +9

Skills Arcana +9, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 2 miles

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Creature Sense. The ulitharid is aware of the presence of creatures within 2 miles of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a *mind blank* spell, a *nondetection* spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

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

Psionic Hub. If an elder brain establishes a psychic link with the ulitharid, the elder brain can form a psychic link with any other creature the ulitharid can detect using its Creature Sense. Any such link ends if the creature falls outside the telepathy ranges of both the ulitharid and the elder brain. The ulitharid can maintain its psychic link with the elder brain regardless of the distance between them, so long as they are both on the same plane of existence. If the ulitharid is more than 5 miles away from the elder brain, it can end the psychic link at any time (no action required).

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The ulitharid's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

1/day each: *confusion*, *dominate monster*, *eyebite*, *feblemind*, *mass suggestion*, *plane shift* (self only), *project image*, *scrying*, *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (4d10 + 5) psychic damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 14) and must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

Extract Brain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the ulitharid. *Hit:* 55 (10d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the ulitharid

kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The ulitharid magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot-cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or take 31 (4d12 + 5) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

ROPER

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (–1)	17 (+3)	7 (–2)	16 (+3)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

False Appearance. While the roper remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal cave formation, such as a stalagmite.

Grasping Tendrils. The roper can have up to six tendrils at a time. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 20, 10 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the roper, which can extrude a replacement tendril on its next turn. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check against it.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The roper makes four attacks with its tendrils, uses Reel, and makes one attack with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and the roper can't use the same tendril on another target.

Reel. The roper pulls each creature grappled by it up to 25 feet straight toward it.

EARTH ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (–1)	20 (+5)	5 (–3)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

Damage Vulnerabilities thunder

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Earth Glide. The elemental can burrow through non-magical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Siege Monster. The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

APPENDIX. ENCOUNTER SETUP

BIG BAD BATTLE

ALL PARTY STRENGTHS (13,600 XP)

- **Hill Giant (2):** AC 13, 105 hp, Init –1
- **Neothelid:** AC 16, 325 hp, Init –2

THE PRISONER

VERY WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (4,400 XP)

- **Four-armed Troll (4):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (5,500 XP)

- **Four-armed Troll (5):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (5,500 XP)

- **Four-armed Troll (5):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (6,600 XP)

- **Four-armed Troll (6):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (7,700 XP)

- **Four-armed Troll (7):** AC 13, 59 hp, Init +3

FOUR-ARMED TROLL (GIRALLON)

- Remove climb speed.
- Add languages Giant

THE KINGS OF THE MOUNTAIN

ALL PARTY STRENGTHS (250 XP)

- **Winged Kobold (4):** AC 13, 7 hp, Init +3
- **Kobold Inventor:** AC 12, 13 hp, Init +2

KLINK

- Remove *Skunk in a Cage*. Klink left it in the lair.

THE LIBRARY

ALL PARTY STRENGTHS (2,400 XP)

- **Orc Blade of Ilneval (2):** AC 18, 60 hp, Init +0
- **Goblin (4):** AC 15, 7 hp, Init +2

THE SECRET LAB—THE FINALE

VERY WEAK & WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (7,800 XP)

- **Spectator (4):** AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
- **Kaz'mazal:** AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (9,600 XP)

- **Spectator (4):** AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
- **Earth Elemental:** AC 17, 126 hp, Init –1
- **Kaz'mazal:** AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (9,600 XP)

- **Spectator (4):** AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
Eye Ray save DC is increased to 15.
- **Earth Elemental:** AC 17, 126 hp, Init –1
- **Kaz'mazal:** AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (9,600 XP)

- **Spectator (4):** AC 14, 39 hp, Init +2
Eye Ray save DC is increased to 15.
- **Earth Elemental:** AC 17, 126 hp, Init –1
- **Kaz'mazal:** AC 15, 127 hp, Init +1

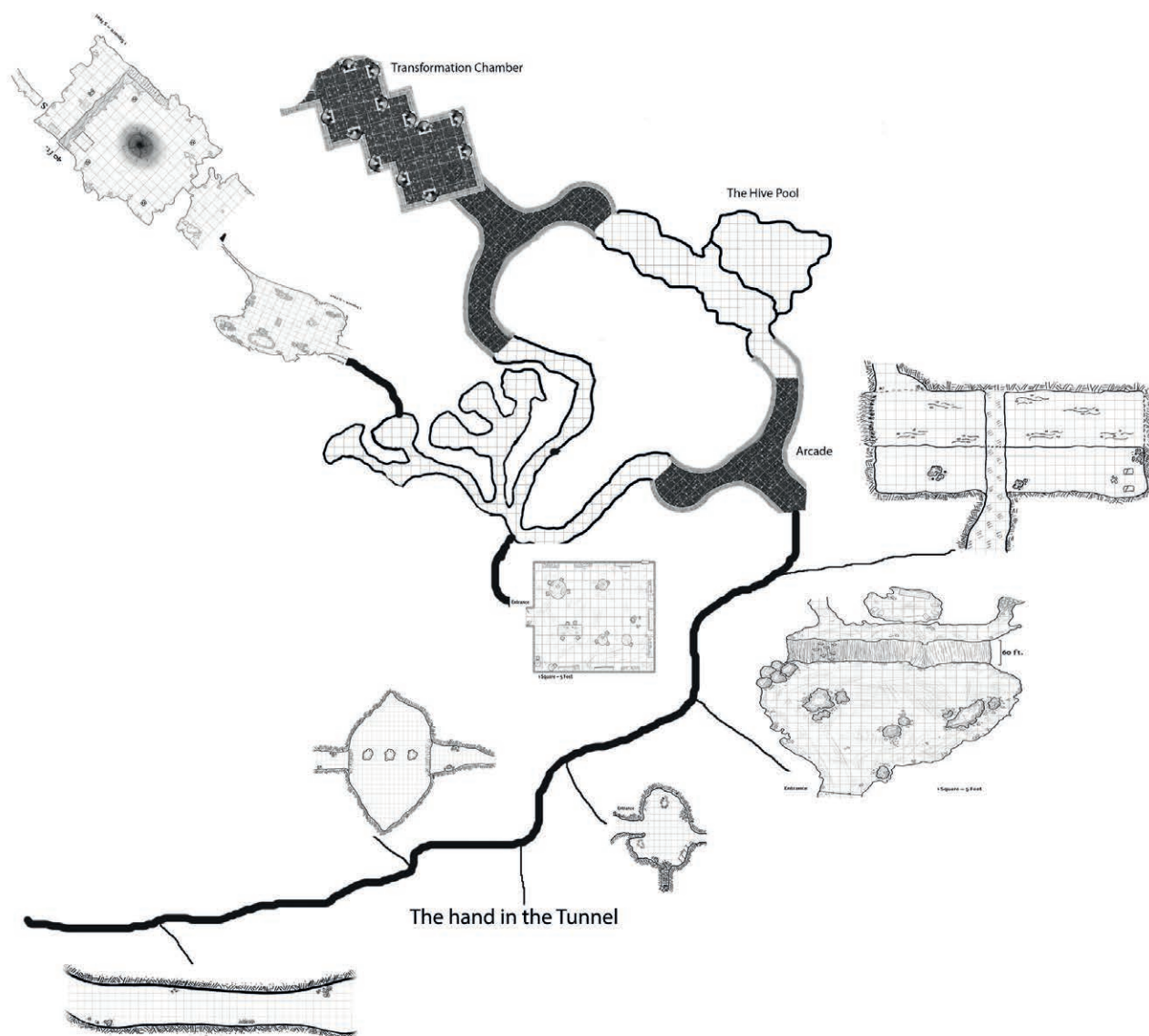
FAR REALM BATTERY (SPECTATOR)

- The Far Realm energy absorbed by the spectators has made them more powerful. Increase the save DC for each of their eye rays to 15.

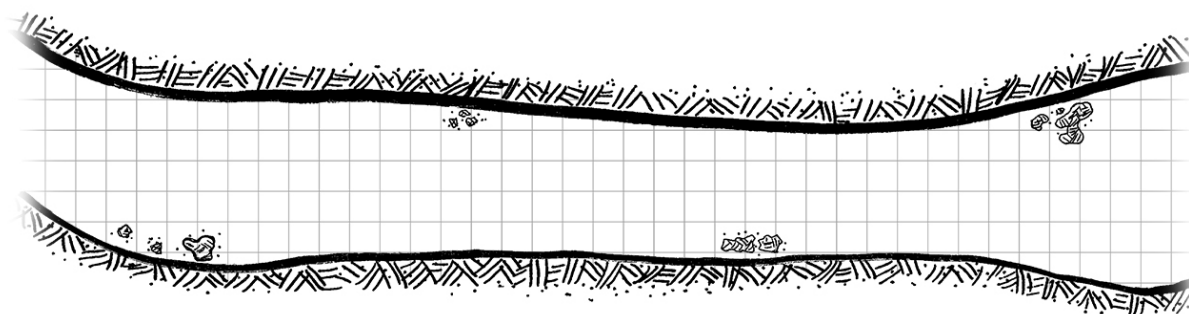
FAR REALM MONSTROSITY (EARTH ELEMENTAL)

- Change type to *aberration*.

APPENDIX. OVERVIEW MAP

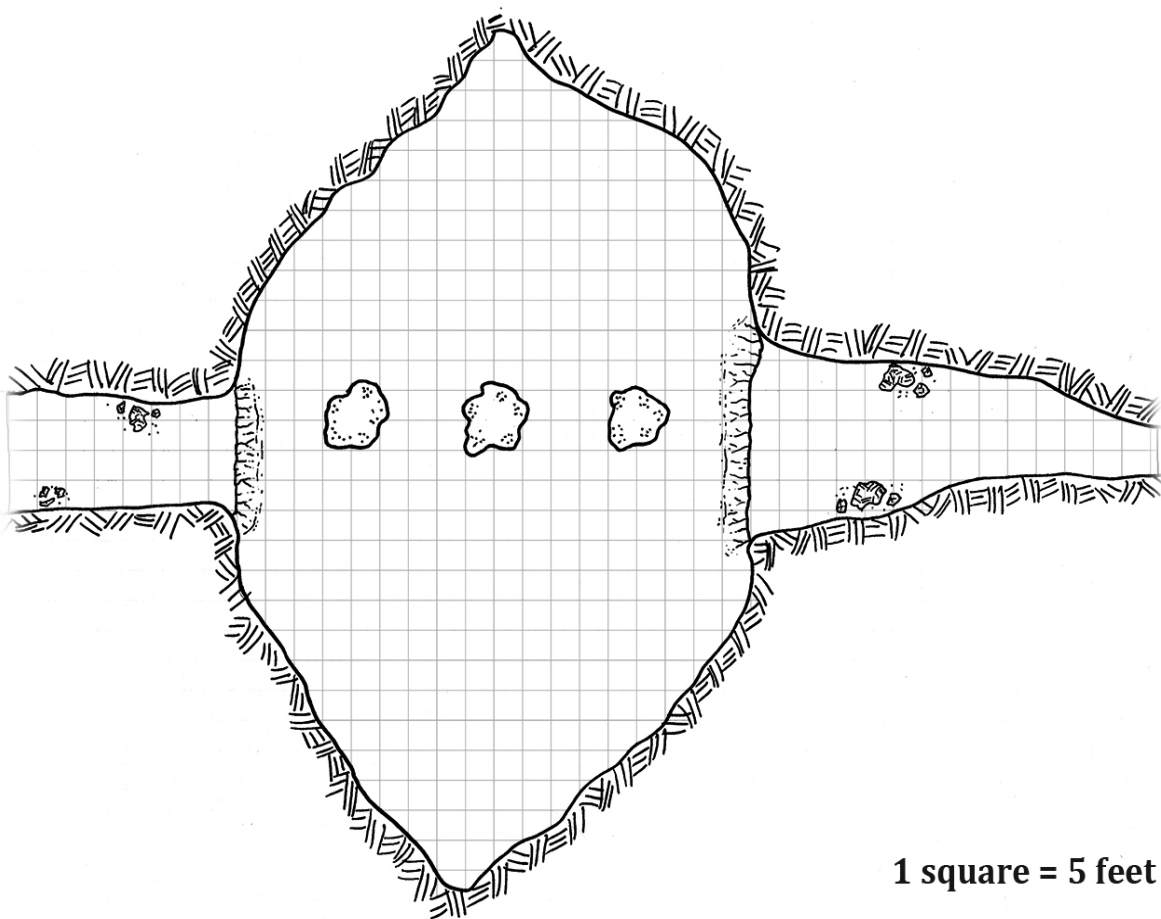


BIG BAD BATTLE



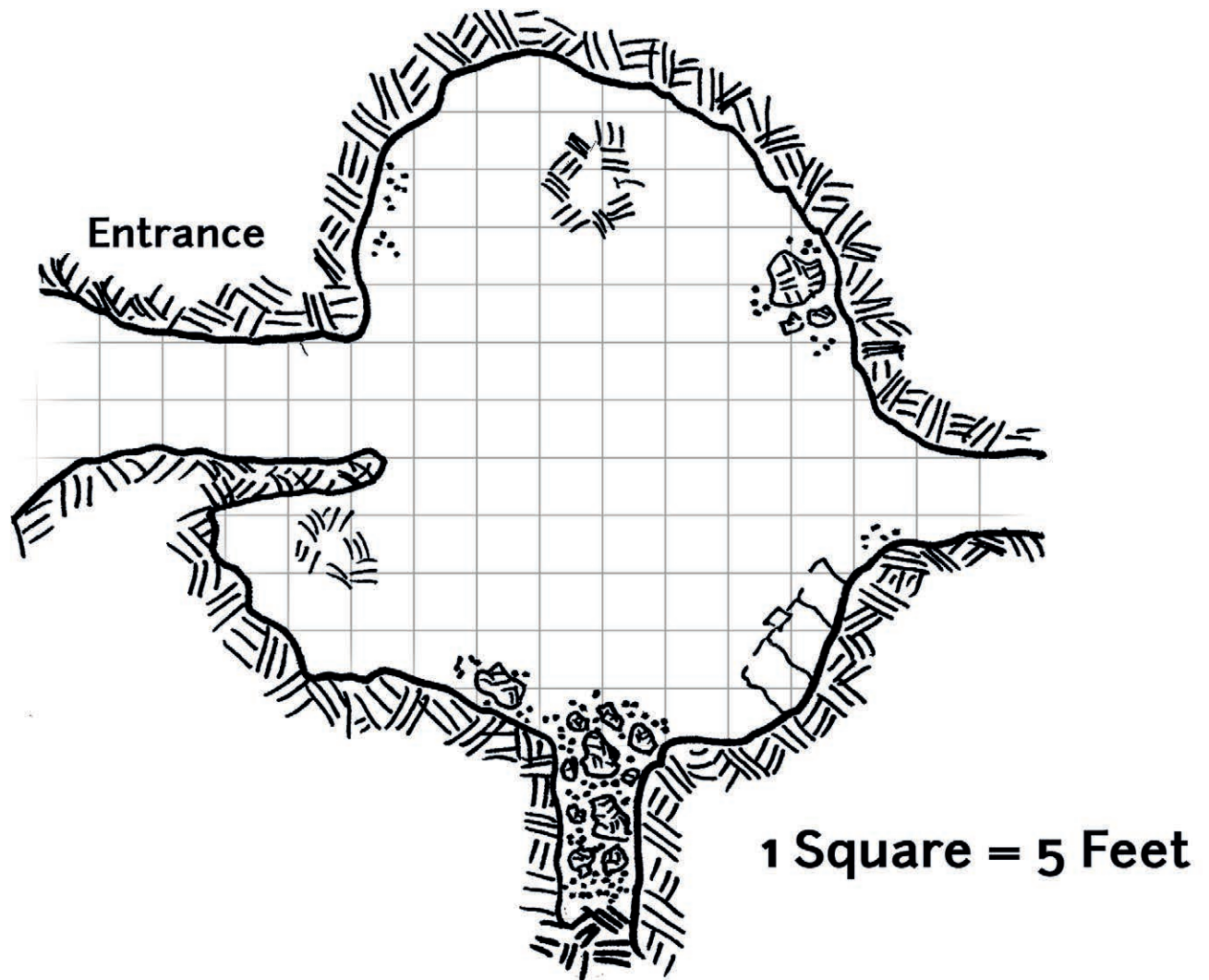
1 square = 5 feet

THE CHASM

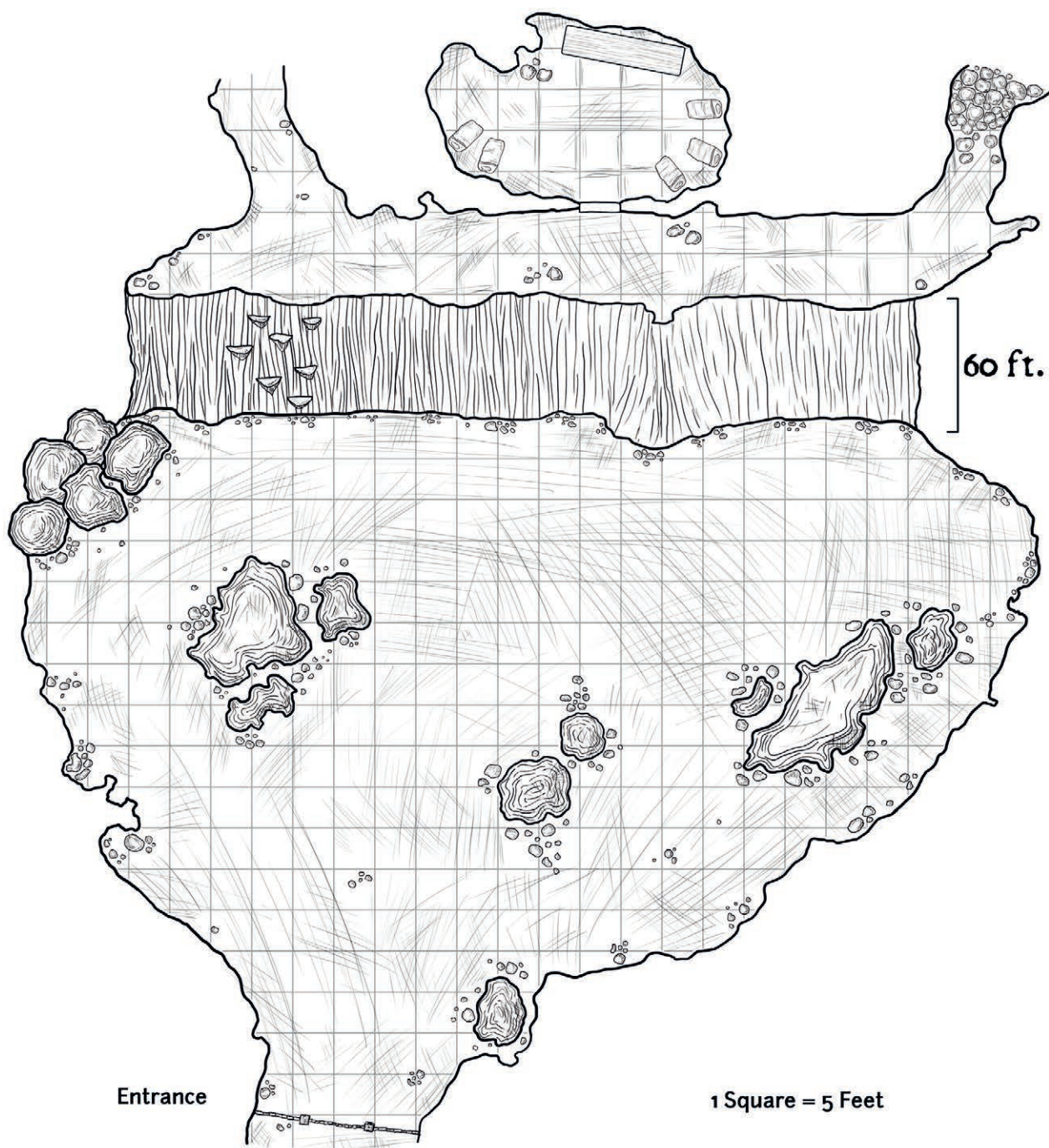


1 square = 5 feet

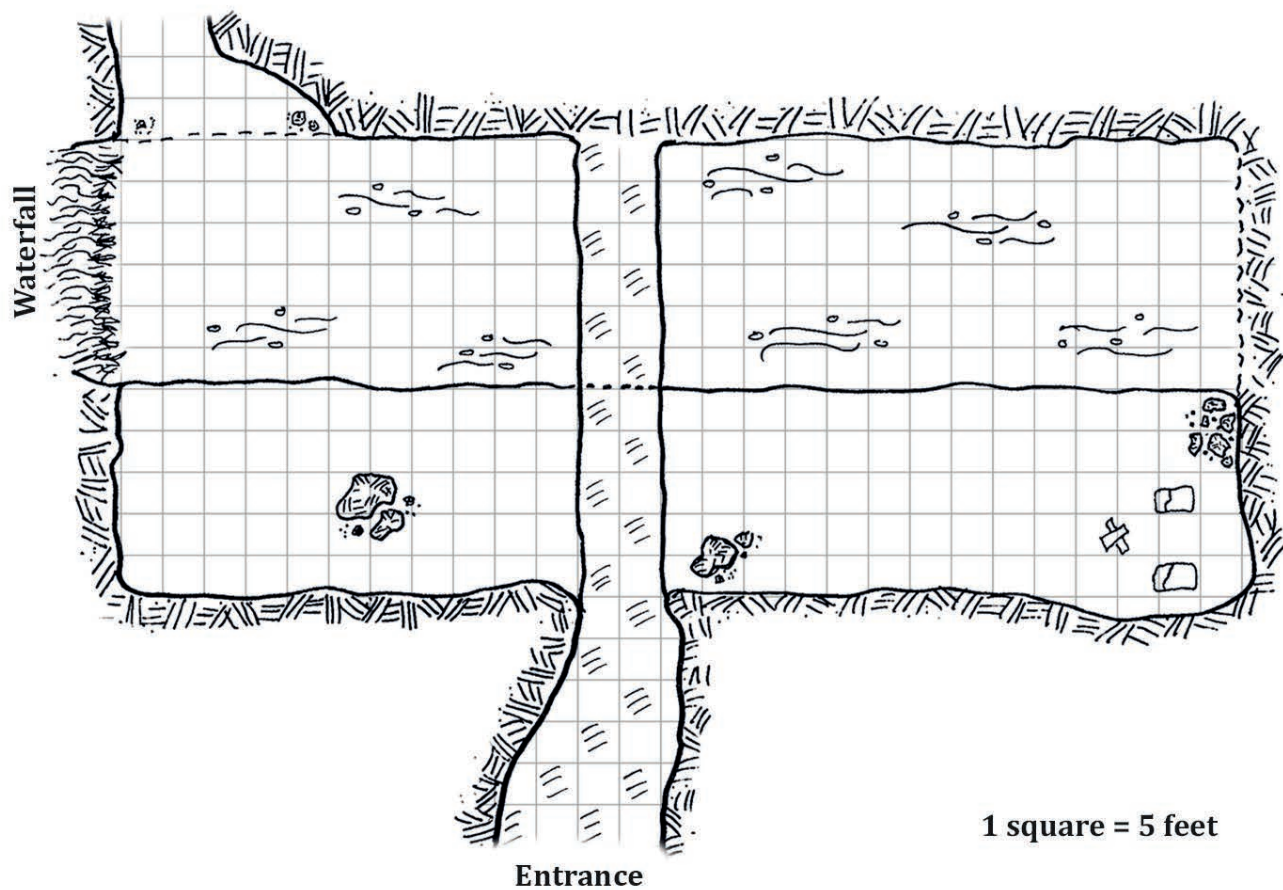
THE PRISONER



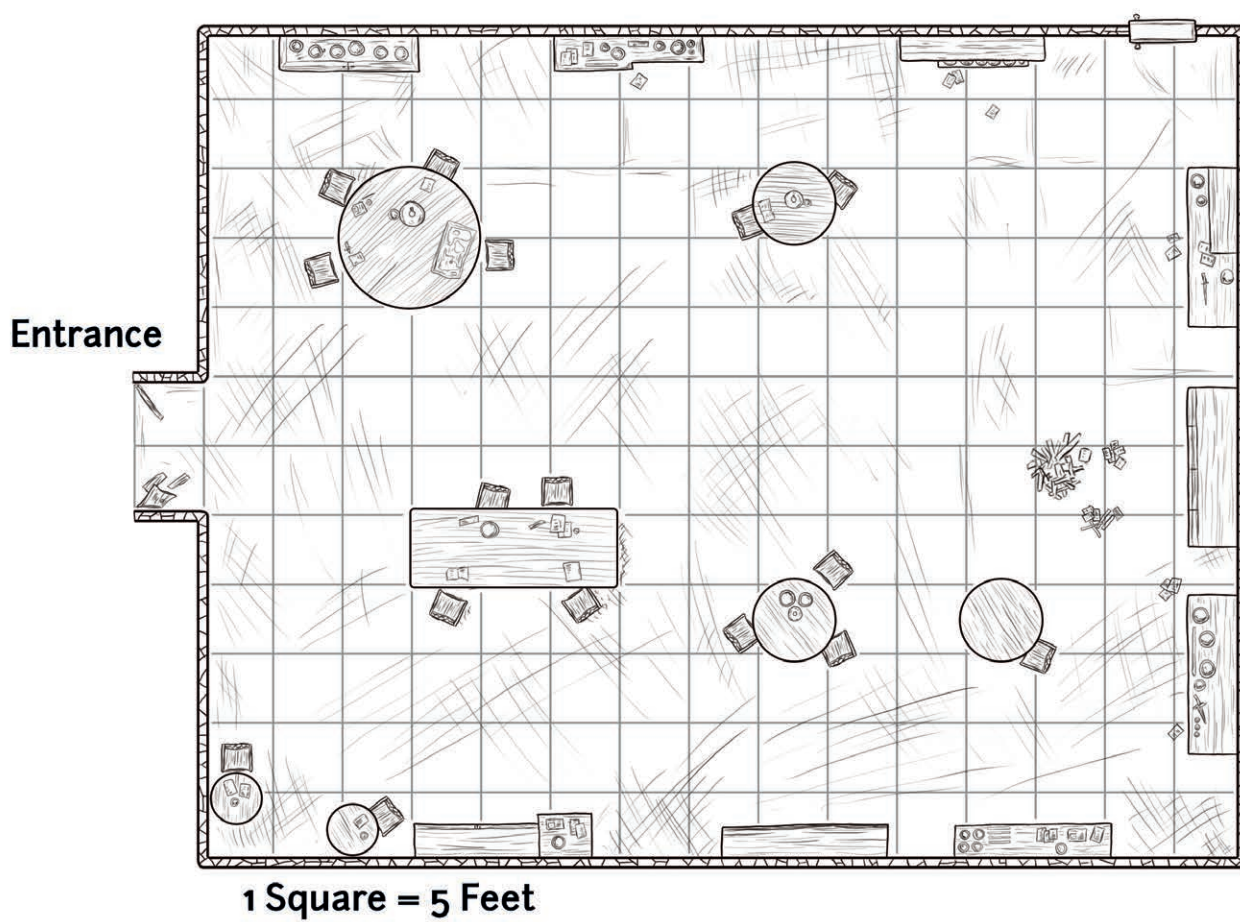
KINGS OF THE MOUNTAIN



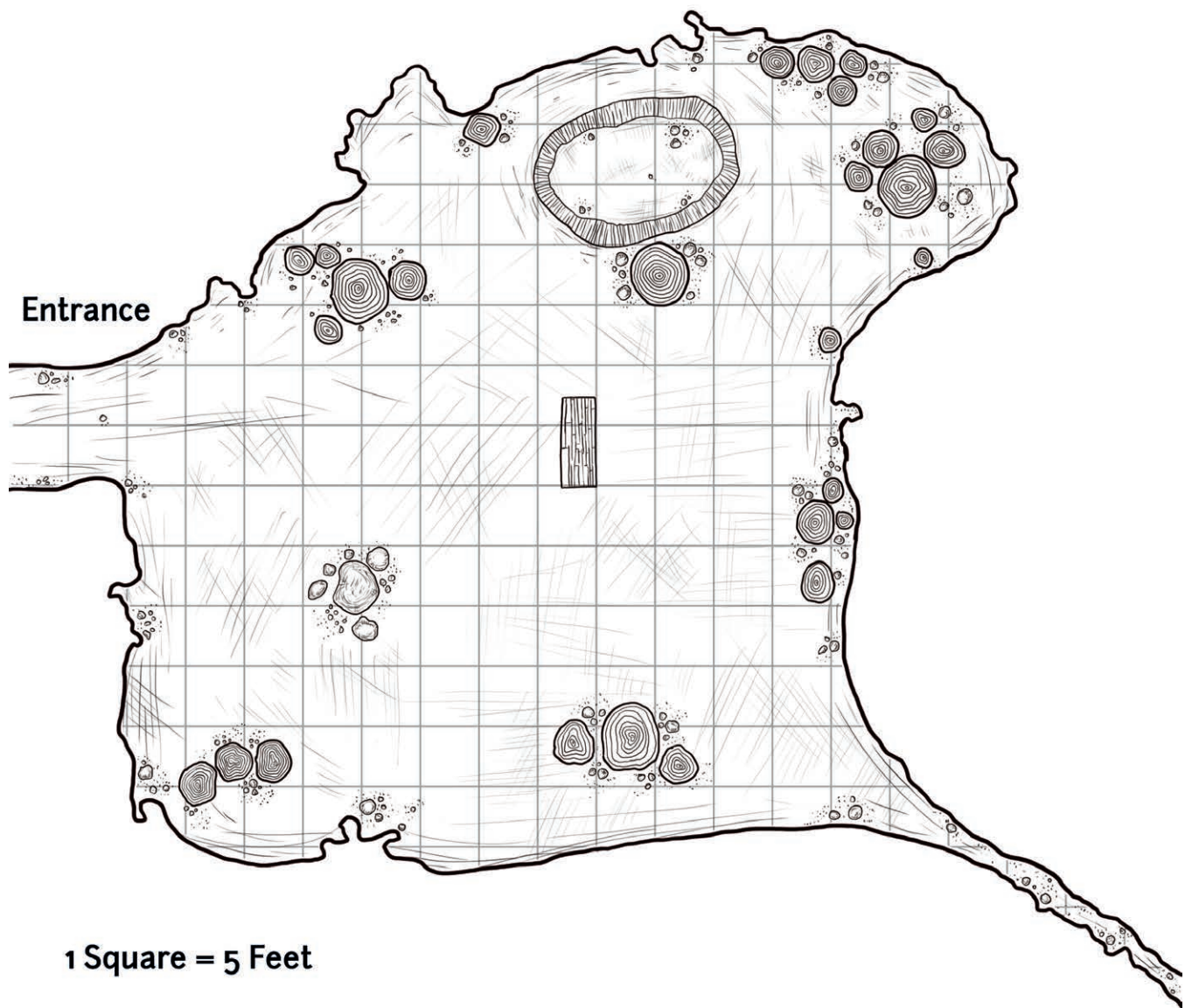
THE ROOM OF STARS



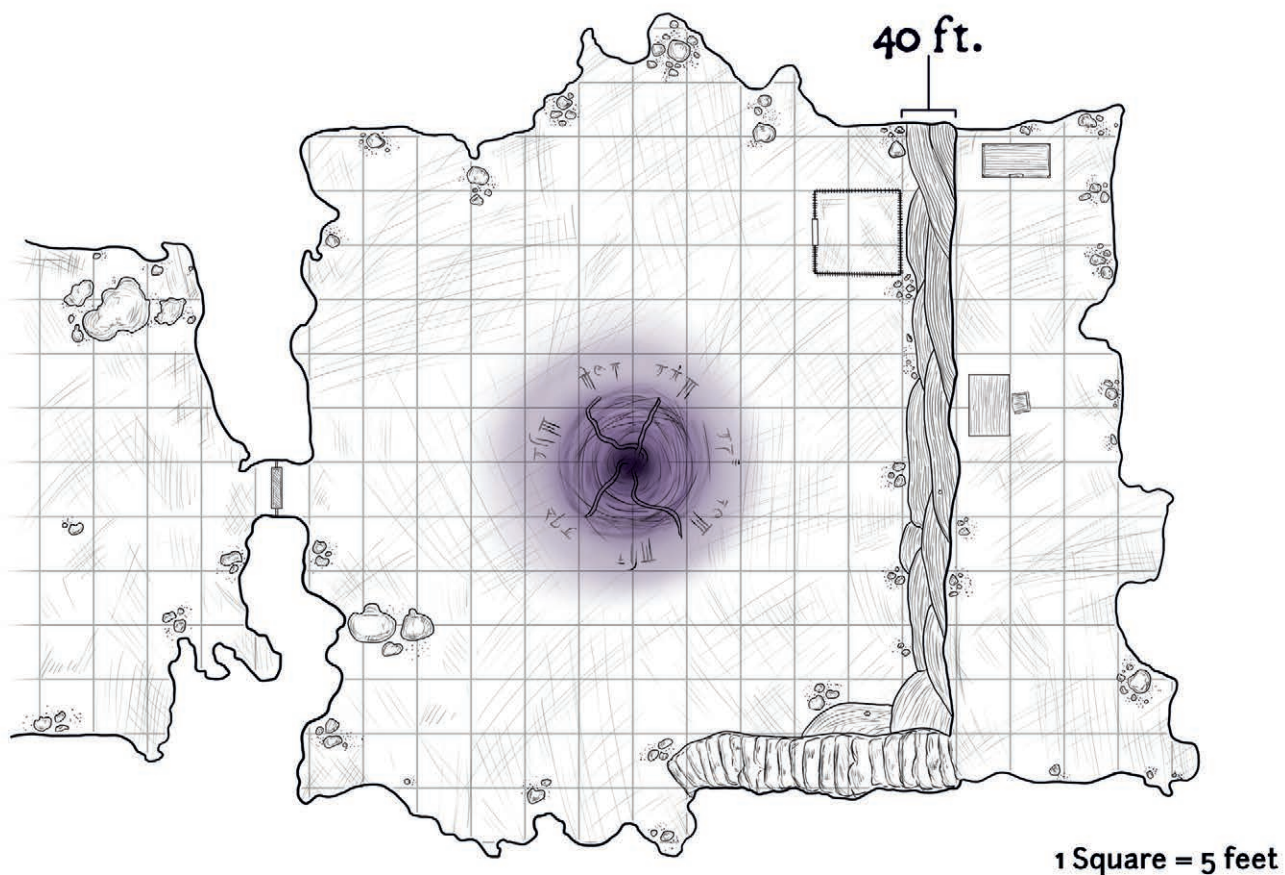
THE LIBRARY



THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE



THE SECRET LAB – PLAYER VERSION



APPENDIX. FAR REALM EFFECTS

FAR REALM EFFECTS—SPELLCASTING

If a character/creature attempts to teleport or magically move outside of the material plane, the caster must roll a DC 16 Spellcasting ability check. On a success, the spell works as intended, but with side effects. On a failure, the spell fails.

In either case, the caster takes 13 (5d4) psychic damage and its hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of damage taken. This reduction in hit point maximum can only be removed after a long rest.

FAR REALM EFFECTS—HEALING

Whenever a character/creature heals, either by magic or natural methods, a vestigial growth forms on the character/creature—typically in the area the of the injury. The DM may decide which growth to use. Suggestions include:

- A third eye that oozes black mucus
- A third eye that moves with the creature's other eyes, but in the opposite direction
- A third arm that dangles from the creature's torso
- An extra finger which can grasp and hold a small object
- A second mouth somewhere on the creature's upper torso
- A set of chattering teeth on the creature's neck
- An extra nose on the creature's face
- A tiny extra leg that kicks sporadically
- A small thumb that grows from the side of the creature existing thumb
- An extra toe that makes wearing boots uncomfortable

These mutations start small, like the size of the tip of one's index finger, but they grow rapidly. Within 10 minutes, it's obvious that the small growth has increased in size. After one hour, the growth has reached full-size, which is half the size of the original appendage.

These mutations are mostly cosmetic, troublesome, annoying, and do not typically add any benefits or conditions to the subject, unless they rest (see **Resting** and **Healing**). The growths remain while the creature is within range of the Far Realm energy. Once the creature leaves the area, the growths begin to shrink, and completely disappear after 48 hours, leaving no scars or other effects.

A creature passing a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check recalls that these effects should not be occurring if the original Far Realm Portal was closed. There may be another Far Realm Portal, and its energy is creating these effects.

FAR REALM EFFECTS—RESTING

Whenever an injured creature rests, it heals. Resting creatures that heal develop growths.

FAR REALM EFFECTS—EMOTIONS

The Far Realm energy also affects moods and emotions. Whenever an argument or confrontation occurs between party members, the DM should mention that the characters strongly believe in their own arguments or decisions, more so than they normally would.

THE FAR REALM BOOKS

If the party finds one of the requested books and reads or skims it, upon passing a DC 13 Intelligence (Insight) check, they find information in the book that explains the above effects of the Far Realm energy.

Note: These effects were inspired by the AD&D module *The Gates of Firestorm Peak* by Bruce Cordell

PLAYER HANDOUT 1. LETTERS FROM FIRST LORD VUHM YESTRAL

1A. IMMEDIATE RETURN REQUESTED

For characters that have played CCC-TRI-02, but haven't played another adventure before undertaking this one.

<Character's Name>,

I fear something may have been missed in the recent exploration of the mind flayer hive. Strange activity is occurring near that area, and we require your help yet again. Please return forthwith, meeting me in my tent in Yûlash to discuss the terms of the services.

First Lord Vuhm Yestral

PS – this information is need-to-know. Please keep it to yourself.

1B. REPEAT PERFORMANCE REQUESTED

For characters that have played CCC-TRI-02, but have played another adventure before undertaking this one.

<Character's Name>,

Though your efforts in thwarting the plans of the elder brain and mid flayers were exemplary, there appears to be something new and strange occurring in the region near the old hive. Please meet with me in my tent outside Yûlash to discuss the terms of the services.

As always, discretion with this matter and information is appreciated.

First Lord Vuhm Yestral

1C. A FAVOR REQUESTED

For characters who have not played CCC-TRI-02 but who know the First Lord of Hillsfar.

<Character's Name>,

Your past service to Hillsfar makes you a suitable candidate for a delicate task. Strange activity is occurring near an old mind flayer hive and we require your talents. Please meet with me in my tent outside Yûlash to discuss the terms of the services. Discretion with this information is appreciated.

First Lord Vuhm Yestral

1D. YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU

For characters who have not played CCC-TRI-02, and for those who do not know the First Lord of Hillsfar.

<Character's Name>,

Tales of your exploits indicate you might be suitable for a delicate task. If you are up for a challenging task, please meet with me in my tent outside Yûlash to discuss the terms of the services. You have been chosen specifically for this task, so please don't share this with anyone.

First Lord Vuhm Yestral

PLAYER HANDOUT 2. VILCUUM'S LIST OF BOOKS

Vilcuum wishes to recover the following books

*The Far Realm—Common Misunderstandings
written in Infernal*

*Far Realm Portals & How to Maintain Them
written in Undercommon*

*Arcane Magic and Far Realm Energy
written in Common*

PLAYER HANDOUT 3. THE KOBOLD LETTER

My dearest Vixie,

It's Tango's turn to return home. He's been at this outpost longer than I have. This troll is bothersome, but so far, we've been able to keep him at bay.

I miss you. Soon, we will be together again. I have three very special presents for you when I return. One of them is me, but the other two are secret!

Until we see each other again, know that I am always thinking of you and our future. I imagine many little kobolds will be running around very soon!

Yours truly,

Klinky Bear

PLAYER HANDOUT 4. MAGIC ITEM

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

TOME OF LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Wondrous Item, very rare

This book contains guidelines for influencing and charming others, and its words are charged with magic. If you spend 48 hours over a period of 6 days or fewer studying the book's contents and practicing its guidelines, your Charisma score increases by 2, as does your maximum for that score. The manual then loses its magic, but regains it in a century.

This purple leather tome has 4 mind flayer tentacles embedded in the cover. When you read the book you hear someone else's voice reading it to you in your head.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.