

PH'THEEV, UNBOUND!

Part Two of the Psionic Menace Series

The flumph cloister is overjoyed to see its member returned, but warns of a psionic menace that resides nearby, causing most other creatures to flee. This menace is still in its infancy, and must be taken care of before it poses a threat to the area-at-large. Your flumph friend must come with you to sniff out the signs, so keep it safe!

A Four-Hour Adventure for 1st–4th Level Characters



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Ph'theev, Unbound!*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and The Role Initiative's *The Psionic Menace* series.

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

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

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

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

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3–4 characters, APL less than 3	Very weak
3–4 characters, APL equivalent to 3	Weak
3–4 characters, APL greater than 3	Average
5 characters, APL less than 4	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent to 4	Average
5 characters, APL greater than 4	Strong
6–7 characters, APL less than 5	Average
6–7 characters, APL equivalent to 5	Strong
6–7 characters, APL greater than 5	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 note cards, 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

Hardshaper Hollow, or colloquially “the Hollow” is a long, deep trench that connects the caverns of the Underdark to a cave system that opens onto the surface near Hillsfar. Though it is far from any major Underdark settlements, it is a well-known connection between the two worlds, or at least as well known as such connections ever are.

A number of small outcroppings, ledges, and dead-end tunnels pepper the walls of the Hollow, but near its midpoint, a large plateau overlooks the Hollow.

A bare, thin path is the only way past the plateau—only a single small ramp connects it to the cavern below—making it the most defensible point to dictate who can pass through the Hollow.

In ancient times, the plateau, and by extension the Hollow, was home to a mind flayer colony and their elder brain overlord. They made effective use of their position, enslaving underdwellers and surfacers alike. A war with a rival mind flayer hive resulted in the colony’s complete destruction. Their dead elder brain was left to rot in its briny fluids, and the few survivors relocated. Since then, control of the Hollow has changed hands many times. Its distance from more civilized locales makes it less valuable than some routes to the surface, but also more easily controlled and forgotten, for those that value discretion.

Bands of drow looking to raid the surface for slaves, duergar traders, orc warbands, and smugglers of all races, including surfacers, have all taken possession of the Hollow for a time. Some for months, others for decades.

More recently, however, a new force has gained control of the plateau, and thus the Hollow: The Order of the Gauntlet. Twelve years ago, the Order took the plateau from a band of drow, and took to fortifying it against a retaliatory attack.

A number of defensive structures, small towers, traps, and other fortifications had been built and destroyed by the various groups that controlled the plateau in the past. Those the Order constructed immediately upon taking control of the location, stand much stronger than those of the past. Three stone towers, built into a perimeter wall, now overlook a brightly-lit path, dotted by magical lights. An iron gate blocks the top of the solitary foot path.

The plateau was named Fool’s March, and over time, merchants began to move in to cater to the guards and do business with Underdark dwellers. Craftsmen and other professionals moved in to support these merchants. Many brought their families with them, and soon the locale became a true settlement, beyond a fortified position. A small

schoolhouse was built for the influx of children relocating to and being born in Fool’s March.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A few months ago, a myconid by the name of Odora set up shop in Fool’s March. It claimed to be an emissary of its people, who had learned the value of trade with other races. Every few weeks, a group of myconids brings new wares for Odora to sell (mostly raw and carved zurkhwood, edible fungi, and fungal reagents).

Though many of the residents were wary of the creature, it has been nothing but honest. It is in fact a kind and caring being that gives food to those who cannot afford it, and would gladly fight to protect its new home.

Until about a month ago, Odora simply took up residence in a small patch of ground, and sold wares out of boxes and piles on the ground. But as business was good, and as the people of Fool’s March began to accept it, the myconid decided it would carve out a small storefront in the cavern wall.

With the help of a local dwarven stonemason named Desdrilsia Barrelgrog, the project was going quite well, until an existing cave was discovered behind the one being excavated. The cave contained a briny and foul-smelling pool of water, and as such would not be suitable as part of the new store. Odora decided to section off the area with an animal skin, and use it only as a storeroom for larger products that wouldn’t absorb the smell.

Soon after the new store was complete, a local child named Jorhi Gruv, a bit of a local trouble-maker, found his way into the strange back room. Curious about the pool, he foolishly took a sip of the water, connecting him to the lingering psionic energy of the elder brain that once resided in the pool.

Jorhi returned to the pool a number of times, compelled to absorb even more of its latent power. Now, almost all of the power has transferred to him, and he has begun to unconsciously warp the world around him. While he sleeps, his powers turn inward, growing his corruption ever more. A simple child of 7 years, Jorhi has no idea of the true power, or evil, he has tapped into.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Odora (oh-DAR-ah). A Myconid emissary and trader

Ph’theev (FUH-theev). A fussy, but earnest flumph, deeply committed to helping both its cloister and the surfacers of Fool’s March

Desdrilsia Barrelgrog (des-DRIL-see-ah bah-rel-GROG). A dwarven stonemason

Jorhi Gruv (JOR-hee GRUV). Local child and troublemaker that drank corrupted elder brain fluids. He is now the source of the corrupting power.

Alna and Yui Gruv. (ALL-na GRUV. YOO-ee GRUV). Jorhi's parents, a leatherworker and merchant respectively

Lilli Hillpeak (LIL-ee HILL-peek). Captain in the Order of the Gauntlet

Koshi Mistvalor (KOH-shee MIST-vah-lore). Zhentarim Spy

Cati Mav (CAT-ee MAHV). Female human noble, member of the Lords' Alliance seeking an alliance with the flumph cloister

Hifna Redbraid (HIF-nah RED-braid). The teacher at the local schoolhouse

Fool's March (FOOLS march). A plateau in the Underdark connected to the surface via The Hollow.

Nyrsh'aff (???). A flumph cloister in the Underdark that has long lived in relative peace and enjoys friendly relations with the nearby settlement of Fool's March

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken down into 3 parts:

Part 1. The Other Side—100 minutes. The players travel through a teleportation circle from Hillsfar into the Underdark, making their way to the flumph Ph'theev's home cloister. The players learn of dark psionic forces coming from the town of Fool's March, but they will have to pass through intellect devourer territory to get there. At the cloister, Cati Mav, a member of the Lords' Alliance, asks the players to help her secure an alliance with the flumphs.

Part 2. Investigation—100 minutes. At Fool's March, Lilli Hillpeak, captain of the guard, asks the players to slay whatever evil entity is causing the madness spreading through her town. The players begin to sleuth out the source of the evil presence, dealing with a number of corrupted locations. Koshi Mistvalor, a Zhentarim spy, approaches them and asks them to bring her a piece of the evil entity they are hunting.

Part 3. Confronting the Evil—70 minutes. The players have gathered enough information to put the pieces together, leading them to Jorhi Gruv, a local child miscreant that has been infected with evil. Do they kill him, or do they spare the child and hope to find another way to rid him of his corruption?

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The primary hook for this adventure comes from CCC-TRI-16. The players rescue the flumph Ph'theev from smugglers, and he begs them to travel through the smugglers' teleportation circle, which leads them to the adventure area.

If you want to run this adventure on its own, the players could encounter Ph'theev anywhere you choose. If they are already in the Underdark, Ph'theev can lead them to its cloister. Otherwise, it

can lead them to an appropriate teleportation circle or portal, or simply to the cave system that leads to the Hollow.

If you instead want to bring the players into the area before they meet Ph'theev, here are a few more options. The adventure is much more difficult without Ph'theev, though, so you should make sure the players either travel to Nyrsh'aff and find it there, or run into it in Fool's March or during travel.

A Flumph Alliance. Cati Mav of the Lords' Alliance hires the players to steal an intellect devourer chrysalis, in order to win the trust of a flumph cloister. When the players arrive, they find the cloister worried about the psionic presence.

Lords' Alliance (Faction Assignment). Lilli Hillpeak, captain of the Order of the Gauntlet guards in Fool's Hope, sends a letter or messenger to the players, asking for help with a madness that has taken hold of the settlement.

Zhentarim (Faction Assignment). Koshi Mistvalor, a Zhentarim spy in the Order ranks, hires the players to find the source of a psionic presence, and deliver her a sample of whatever creature or object is responsible.

A friend in Ph'Theev. Ph'theev the flumph joins the players during this adventure. It is fussy, but earnest, and deeply committed to helping both its cloister and the surfacers of Fool's March.

Ph'theev is not much of a combatant, but nonetheless it is a useful ally, primarily for its ability to sense the psionic corruption the players seek.

While you should roleplay Ph'theev, and you ultimately have final say on its actions, let one of the players control it during combat, perhaps trading off who controls it each encounter. The players will most likely want to keep it out of danger and away from enemies, but in a pinch it can make attacks, use its Stench Spray ability, or take the Help action as needed.

Ph'theev can also tell the players the following at the start of the adventure:

- It comes from a cloister named Nyrsh'aff in the Underdark and is far away from home. The cloister has long lived in relative peace and enjoys friendly relations with the nearby settlement of Fool's March, but recently a dark influence has made itself known.
- This psionic menace has driven several members of the cloister to insanity, since they are sensitive to telepathic influences.
- The local population of intellect devourers (the members of which have developed a way to breed separate from their original masters) has also been affected. Many have fled, but others have been acting erratically.
- The flumph cloister knows little about this menace and its motives, but believe it to be a force

of great evil. As best they could tell, it was located somewhere in or around the nearby surfacer settlement of Fool's March.

- Ph'theev was sent to the settlement to warn its occupants of the danger in their midst, but while travelling it was kidnapped by smugglers.

PART 1. THE OTHER SIDE

Estimated Duration: 100 minutes

The adventure begins as the players travel through a teleportation circle in Hillsfar.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Hollow has the following general features.

Terrain. Generally rocky

Weather. Cool, heavy moisture in the air

Light. Dark, occasionally lit by luminescent fungi.

Smells and Sounds. Water dripping, wet and slick rocks covered by various fungi and mushrooms.

1. THE PORTAL

Estimated Duration: 5 minutes

With a whoosh, a flash of light, and a loud pop, you appear in a small, dim cave, lit by a dozen or so luminescent mushrooms. The area is strewn with bowls and dishes, lying amidst three bedrolls. An iron pot (partially filled with some kind of old stew) rests on burned logs in the center of the chamber and a half dozen open wooden boxes are arranged around its perimeter. Some old tools lean against the wall near the cave's only exit: a 5-foot-wide, uneven tunnel that slopes downward into the dark.

This area was used by the smugglers as a staging area where they kept extra equipment and left a few guards to keep watch. Now, only a few stray supplies are left.

Ph'theev doesn't recognize the cave, but the only exit leads, after a few hundred feet, to a much larger, 40-foot-wide tunnel, which it does recognize. It can navigate home from there.

The three bedrolls are clean enough to take if any of the players especially wants one. One of the boxes still contains 3 nets, but the rest of the containers are empty. A clean mess kit and two dirty mess kits can be collected, and the iron pot is small enough to be portable, should anyone want to take it. Two shovels, a miner's pick, and a fishing rod lean against the cave wall.

2. NYRSH'AFF

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

Traveling from the teleportation circle to the flumph cloister takes about an hour. The trek takes them mostly through areas lit by fungus, but is occasionally much darker. The party will do well to have a light source.

As you clamber over a jagged pile of rocks into yet another tunnel, the frequency of luminescent fungus increases dramatically, until you are walking across a strange yet beautiful carpet of many vivid colors.

Up ahead, you can see a larger cavern, where the colorful glow seems to flicker and flow across the walls and ceiling, like a fungal aurora borealis.

When you reach the cavern, you can see that a small, clear lake in the center of the room, its bed covered in bright fungus, causes the soothing patterns. Around the lake are three dozen creatures that look much like Ph'theev. Flumphs!

Taking notice of you, the flumphs draw closer, warily at first, but upon seeing Ph'theev, they rush to him with joyous expressions, their dull blue glow replaced by bright yellow.

At first, the telepathic chatter is indecipherable, with dozens of voices speaking at once, but after a minute, and a number of embraces, one of the flumphs turns to you. "Who are you, that have returned Ph'theev to us?"

Nyrsh'aff is home to 49 **flumphs**, including Ph'theev. The smaller tunnels that dot the area lead to many smaller caves, where the flumphs sleep, or simply go for peace and quiet. The larger cavern is their communal space, where they play in the clear waters and speak of deep philosophical truths.

Most of the flumphs now occupy the central chamber, though a few that have grown sick from overexposure to the evil presence are resting.

A visitor and welcomed guest, Cati Mav (human noble), also currently resides in one of the smaller caves.

The Flumphs. The flumphs are friendly, welcoming, and curious. They lament that they have no food to offer (as they feed only on psychic energy) but bring comfortable, moss covered rocks to sit on, and ask the players about themselves with genuine interest. They also ask how the players came to meet Ph'theev, and bring it home.

Soon, though, conversation turns to darker things. The flumphs share Ph'theev's worry about the growing psionic menace. After a short time resting and reuniting, Ph'theev wishes to travel to Fool's March, to confront whatever this strange threat is.

The flumphs, Ph'theev included, know the way to Fool's March, as well as the many tunnels in the area, including the intellect devourer nests. The flumphs of the cloister warn that the devourers have left their nests, and now roam about between here and Fool's March.

DEVELOPMENT

Cati Mav's Proposal. Soon after the players arrive—whenever there is a lull in conversation—Cati Mav, noble and member of the Lords' Alliance, enters the main cavern and approaches them.

You suddenly hear someone clear their throat behind you. It is strange, since flumphs don't make noises like that.

Turning around, you see a middle-aged human woman, dressed in fine clothing, smiling back at you with excitement.

"Hello there!" she says, still beaming. "I hear you're the ones that brought back poor, lost Ph'theev."

Cati is pleasant, and extremely eager. She is genuinely happy that Ph'theev is back, and if the players mention that they plan to deal with the evil presence, she is glad for that as well, but her focus remains on her mission, and that mission may have just gotten a whole lot more possible.

Cati was sent by the Lords' Alliance to negotiate an alliance with the flumphs, and has requested they send an envoy back with her. The flumphs are interested, but have asked for a show of good faith; they want Cati to bring them an intellect devourer chrysalis—a sort of egg they use to grow their young without the need for mind flayer masters.

The flumphs hope to raise an intellect devourer of their own, teaching it to be good and just, and to eat only the brains of animals.

The problem is, Cati isn't much of an adventurer, and has no way to acquire such a thing. With the arrival of these heroes, and with the intellect devourers wandering about outside of their nests, perhaps there's a chance.

She explains all this to the players, and offers that if they recover a chrysalis for the cloister she will pay them handsomely and also offer the sincere thanks of the Lords' Alliance

TREASURE

Cati pays the party 50 gp if they bring the chrysalis for her to present to the cloister.

3. THE AMBUSH

Estimated Duration: 40 minutes

After forty-five minutes of travel towards Fool's March, the party reaches intellect devourer territory. If any party member has a Passive Perception of 13 or higher, read the following:

Up ahead, around a corner, you hear what can only be giggling.

Around the corner, the tunnel widens from 10-feet-wide to 20-feet-wide. Three intellect devourers have used their Body Thief ability to inhabit the bodies of three smugglers—**bandit captain** Threnn and two of his **thug** underlings.

If they notice the giggling, the players have a chance to sneak up on the creatures. Either way, when the players round the corner, read the following:

Men in tattered black cloaks walk about with staggered, almost drunken motions. They poke their weapons at the walls, and giggle at nothing.

If the players played "Ph'theev, the Despondent," they know these are smugglers from the same organization they dealt with. If they saw or met Threnn, they recognize him.

The smugglers' brains have been eaten, so even if the devourers are forced out, the criminals are quite dead.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3

Weak

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug:** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

Average

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug (2):** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

Strong

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug (3):** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

Very Strong

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug (4):** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

ID Madness. During combat, each smuggler/intellect devourer is confused, as if with the *confusion* spell, though the effect is not a spell. Outside of combat, they mill about slowly. Each host has an intellect devourer that is killed when its host body is killed.

4. DEVOURER GAUNTLET

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

In order to reach Fool's March, the party must travel through an area crawling with intellect devourers, driven from their nests by madness. The area consists of a number of wide tunnels, caves, and shallow underground streams.

As you reach a fork in the road, where the tunnel splits into three, Ph'theev stops you. "Ahead we can take many routes. If we are careful, perhaps we can avoid any more conflict."

In order to traverse the area successfully, the players must make a series of three DC 16 group ability checks. Each character can use a different ability to help them avoid danger.

Appropriate checks include Dexterity (Stealth) to help keep the party quiet and unseen, Wisdom (Perception) to hear which tunnels may contain danger, Strength (Athletics) to help the party climb up onto ledges or over rough terrain where the

devourers don't wander, and Wisdom (Survival) to navigate winding, out of the way tunnels. Let players be creative though, and allow them to make any check that you feel would help them avoid detection.

On a failed check, the players encounter an **intellect devourer** that attacks them from 1d4x10 feet away. During combat, the intellect devourer is confused, as if with the *confusion* spell, though the effect is not a spell. If the creature cannot see any of the party (or Ph'theev), it wanders off instead of pursuing them.

After three checks, successful or otherwise, the party makes it through the area and enters the Hollow. Each check takes about ten minutes.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

All Party Strengths

- **Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp, Init +2

MAD INTELLECT DEVOURER

Devour Beast Intelligence. These intellect devourers can use their Body Thief ability on beasts as well as humanoids.

DEVELOPMENT

Finding a Chrysalis. In order to locate an intellect devourer chrysalis, the players will need to sneak into a nest. Luckily, the nests are all abandoned, and Ph'theev can navigate them to one. Even without Ph'theev, the flumphs of the cloister can provide directions before the characters leave.

Taking this detour simply requires one additional group check after they have made three checks already, successful or not, and adds another ten minutes to their trek.

This small chamber is rank with rotting meat. The intellect devourers are deadly hunters, but clearly do not care for the flesh or bones of their victims. Animal carcasses, and a few humanoid bodies, lie about in various states of decay.

In the back of the cave, you see what appears to be a fist-sized sack made of gray, veiny skin.

The chrysalis is soft, but durable, and barely weighs 1 pound. So long as it not exposed to extreme heat or cold, or directly attacked, it remains healthy. The creature inside occasionally wiggles or kicks.

XP AWARDS

If the party succeeded in at least one group check, each player earns 50 XP. They are rewarded another 50 XP for the optional detour by returning the chrysalis to Cati Mav.

PART 2. INVESTIGATION

Estimated Duration: 100 minutes

After the characters have traveled through the Hollow for another half hour, they reach a narrow portion of the canyon, where Fool's March perches on a plateau.

PH'THEEV AND THE MADNESS.

Ph'theev is resistant to the psychic presence, for now. It does not need to make saving throws while in Fool's March, but 24 hours after the players arrive in the Underdark, whether they are in Fool's March or not, Ph'theev goes mad as the psionic power manifests more fully. It gains the flaw, "I must flee as far from home as possible."

If the party spends more than 8 hours in the Underdark, Ph'theev senses that they have less than a day before the psychic power builds to a point where it will burst.

GENERAL FEATURES

Fool's March has the following general features.

Terrain. Generally rocky

Weather. Cool but not wet

Light. Most areas are lit by torchlight.

Sounds. General sounds of a small town, people greeting each other and normal work being carried out.

The wide canyon narrows and ahead you see many bright torches set into the walls, extending hundreds of feet down the path.

High above the torches, you spy a long ledge with a stone barricade built along its length. Three small towers are built into the barricade and a staircase carved into the rock leads all the way up to an iron gate.

See appendix, "Fool's March Map."

1. FOOL'S MARCH

Estimated Duration: 5 minutes

Fool's March is home to just over a hundred people, including the 24 Order of the Gauntlet soldiers posted there, 16 young children, and a teacher. The rest are merchants, craftsmen, and a few odd folk that have taken up residence for their own reasons.

Due to the madness, eleven of the town's adults have been locked in one of the Order's towers. Everyone else in town has been feeling off, and experiencing short moments of confusion, but have not yet succumbed to madness.

The outpost is built on a plateau, 50 feet above the canyon floor, and a 10-foot-tall stone barricade, scattered with three 20-foot-tall towers lines the cliff. The plateau is roughly 500 feet long, and extends about 800 feet into the canyon wall. A single, 10-foot-wide staircase is carved in the canyon

wall on the south side of the plateau, leading to an iron gate in the barricade.

The outpost itself is sparse, with large areas of empty space between small clusters of buildings.

When the players approach the gate, Lilli Hillpeak, **knight** and captain of the guard, approaches them along with two **guards**.

As you traverse the stairs, you spot figures on the barricade. One of them shouts something unintelligible, presumably to someone on the other side of the wall. The voice sounds like it belongs to a male humanoid.

The heavy iron gate begins to rise, and by the time you reach it, it has opened fully. A human woman in heavy plate armor, carrying an enormous sword on her back emerges from the open gate. She is flanked by two less heavily armed soldiers. They all bear the insignia of the Order of the Gauntlet.

Wearing a stern expression, the woman asks, "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

Lilli is a harsh woman, but she cares about her people, and is deeply concerned about the madness overtaking the outpost. She is still dedicated to its defense from outside threats though, and is wary of strangers. If Ph'theev (or any flumph) vouches for the party, her demeanor grows much softer. She introduces herself and welcomes them with open arms. If the party lacks a flumph, they'll need to convince Lilli that they are here to help, but that is not too hard. So long as they seem earnest, she warms up quickly.

Once convinced the players are here to help, Lilli welcomes them into the outpost. She offers them 50 gp as incentive if they can stop the madness, and the eternal gratitude of the Order of the Gauntlet if they can kill whatever evil creature is causing it. She also grants them free food and lodging in the Order barracks, if they need it.

When the players are allowed past the gate, read the following:

Beyond the gate, you find a large plateau, extending many hundreds of feet into the cavern wall. A few dozen structures built from a variety of materials are lit by many torches. Some of the buildings stand in small clumps while others stand alone. You spot firelight dancing inside of a few scattered holes in the cavern wall.

DEVELOPMENT

The Presence of Evil. The power of the corrupted child is most potent in Fool's March. Those who live here have had time to grow accustomed to it, and only slowly fall into madness, but the players have not.

After each hour a character spends in Fool's March, they must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. The first time a character fails this saving throw, they suffer a short-term madness effect. The second and third times, they suffer a long-term madness effect. A fourth failed save results in an indefinite madness effect. Further failures result in only additional long-term madness effects.

The effect is cumulative, so if the players spend a half hour in town, leave, then come back, they'll have to make a save after another half hour. Still, they might want to take a break from the town to short rest at some point.

It is likely the players will complete the adventure before making more than one or two of these saves, and they could easily finish before making any at all. The town is small, and encounters shouldn't take too long. But if they dawdle, or they don't have Ph'theev to point them in the right direction, the madness could overtake them.

Evil Awakened. 24 hours after the party arrives in the Underdark, Jorhi's power awakens more fully. Still far from his full potential, he becomes a much more deadly threat. His statistics are fully replaced by those of a **neogi master**, but he is small sized and appears mostly human except for the tentacles now growing from his face.

Though extremely intelligent, he is consumed by a need to destroy, and to devour. He simply rampages across the settlement with no rhyme or reason. If they are still alive, the animals from section 2a, "A Lonely Child's Friends" join him.

LOSING PH'THEEV.

If Ph'theev dies, the party leaves it behind, or it decides the party is too evil or dangerous, this section becomes more difficult. The players will have to look around on their own, ask locals about any strange events, or hope to just run into something relevant.

Finding one of these locations without randomly running into it requires a successful group ability check, DC 16, to locate one of the corrupted locations. Each character can use a different ability to help the investigation. Appropriate checks include Intelligence (Investigation) to search for clues, Wisdom (Perception) to look around, and Charisma (Persuasion) to ask locals for information. Let players be creative though, and allow them to make any check that you feel would help them gather information.

Each such check takes one hour, meaning another saving throw against the evil presence.

2. SNIFFING ABOUT

Estimated Duration: 90 minutes

Once in town, the investigation can begin.

Ph'theev turns to you. "I am feeling the presence much more strongly here, but I do not know exactly where it is coming from."

Asking around, the townsfolk, including the Order of the Gauntlet, can tell the players the following:

- People started having strange dreams and feeling dizzy about a week ago. Things have been getting worse since then, from temporary lapses in sanity, to a dozen or so residents being locked up for their own safety.
- The newest member of the community is a myconid named Odora. Folks were wary at first, but have really warmed up to it. They don't think the myconid is behind anything.
- Desdrilsia Barrelgrog, a stonemason living in the outpost, helped Odora carve out a new shop last month.
- The nearby flumph cloister of Nyrsh'aff is friendly to Fool's March, but they don't have much contact. They are happy to see Ph'theev among the party. You can always trust a flumph.

Desdrilsia, dwarven **commoner**, can confirm that she helped Odora carve out its new shop, and also explains that they found another cavern while digging, which smelled really bad. Desdrilsia is an honest-and-straightforward sort of dwarf with a relaxed demeanor, despite the evil that has come to her home.

The Madhouse. If the players want to speak with the townsfolk that have already been driven mad, Lilli can authorize them to enter the tower, but the poor crazies can't tell them much. The players can get the following out of them with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check:

- They can all feel something evil influencing them, but they don't know what or where it is.
- The evil is getting stronger, but is lessened at night. (This is because Jorhi is sleeping, but they don't know this.)

After the players are satisfied with questioning the locals, or if they aren't sure what to do next, Ph'theev senses something.

Ph'theev tells you, "I am beginning to feel the dark presence more strongly in three locations in this settlement."

The characters can now follow Ph'theev's senses. He can initially feel the power vaguely in the northern section of the outpost, near the center of town, and at the western cavern wall. As he gets closer, he

can narrow down his sense, and lead them to any of the three locations described in sections 2a, 2b, and 2c.

2A. A LONELY CHILD'S FRIENDS

Estimated Duration: 40 minutes

Jorhi spends a great deal of time among his “friends” in the northern part of the outpost, which mostly contains storage buildings. His friends consist of two stray dogs, Mochy and Sniffer whose owner died last year, a cat named Milkstorm that belongs to a local chef named Yumil Nedid, and a fist-sized spider that makes its webs in the area. Jorhi calls the spider “The Devourer” ever since he saw it catch and eat a full-sized rat.

Unfortunately, since he spends so much time with them, Jorhi's corruption has spread to his friends. They now stalk the area, but so far retain enough of their animalistic fear to avoid humanoids. If approached by anyone but Jorhi, they defend their territory and attack.

The animals have all grown considerably in size, and have been tainted by psionic evil. Use **dire wolf** statistics for Mochy and Sniffer, **tiger** statistics for Milkstorm, and **giant spider** statistics for The Devourer, but they are neutral evil, and their corruption also makes them emit a terrible psychic burst when damaged.

As the players approach the animals, read the following:

You look around a corner, and find four green glowing eyes staring back at you. Two massive creatures emerge from the shadows, growling. They appear to be sickly, rabid dogs the size of horses. The pair suddenly charges at you, barking wildly.

As the dogs charge, Milkstorm and The Devourer sneak up behind. Roll initiative for them, but don't reveal them yet. Have each player make a Wisdom (Perception) check at the start of each of the hidden creatures' first turns, opposed by the animal's Dexterity (Stealth). The animal remains hidden from any character that fails this check until it makes its first attack. If it attacks a creature that it is hidden from, it has advantage on the attack roll.

If/When a player first sees each of these hidden animals, read the following:

Milkstorm:

A massive, disgusting cat appears from the darkness behind you. It is the size of a lion or tiger, but looks like a house cat that is missing many tufts of fur. Its eyes glow green with fury as it pounces.

The Devourer:

A gigantic spider, almost as large as the dogs, crawls from a rooftop. Glowing green smoke pours from its eight eyes. It hisses and lunges at you.

Ph'theev can identify the four animals as the source of the stronger corruption he feels in the area, but not the source of the evil presence at large.

These animals have been permanently physically altered, but a *lesser restoration*, *greater restoration*, *remove curse*, or *dispel evil and good spell* returns an animal to its previous state of mind, and removes its Tainted trait, should the players wish to save them.

XP Awards. Award an additional 25 XP to each player for each animal they cure, should they manage it.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak

- **Dire Wolf:** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2

Weak

- **Dire Wolf:** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2

Average

- **Dire Wolf:** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Giant Spider:** AC 14, 26 hp, Init +3

Strong/ Very Strong

- **Dire Wolf (2):** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Giant Spider:** AC 14, 26 hp, Init +3

CORRUPTED ANIMALS

Each of these creatures has the following trait:

- **Tainted.** Whenever this creature takes damage, each enemy within 5 feet of it takes 1 psychic damage.

2B. THE CHALK ZONE

Estimated Duration: 40 minutes

A large schoolhouse stands beside a clearing. The structure is made of wood (or perhaps zurkhwood) and painted red.

In the clearing, you spot many shapes drawn on the stone in colorful chalk.

If the chalk drawings are investigated further, the drawings include: a foursquare field (a 10-foot by 10-foot square, separated into four smaller squares, numbered 1 through 4), several hopscotch courses, many stick figures, a crude fiendish creature carrying a polearm, a well-drawn dog, and a landscape with a sun and rainbow.

Ph'theev can feel that the chalk drawings are emanating corrupt energy, but cannot tell at first if

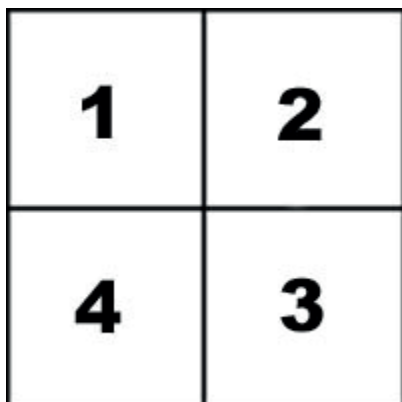
they are the source of the evil presence. Once they activate, he can tell they are not the source.

If anyone steps onto or touches any of the drawings, or if they spend more than five minutes in the schoolyard, the drawings begin to animate.

Suddenly, the chalk around you begins to glow with an unnatural green light. A drawing with a fiendish visage—a humanoid with claws, fangs, and horns—rises from the stone, taking on a three-dimensional form. It remains crude in shape and its texture is still that of a chalk drawing, full of gaps. It carries a polearm of similar material.

Before you can react, the world around you warps. The ground seems to shift beneath you, and the large square drawn on the ground expands until it reaches a length of 40 feet on a side.

You find yourselves standing in an inner square. The fiendish creature stands in the middle of an adjacent square.



Each of the four squares has expanded to 20 feet on a side. The players begin in the space numbered 1, while the chalk creature (use **babau** statistics) begins in the square numbered 4.

The chalk lines separating the squares, and those on the outer edges, are blocked by a wall of force. The ceiling 10 feet above is similarly blocked. The chalk babau's spears are conjured chalk, which can pass through the barriers between squares by traveling along the ground as two-dimensional chalk drawings, emerging from the ground after passing under the barrier.

Despite being initially cut off from their foe, roll initiative at this point.

Four! At the start of each character's turn, including Ph'theev, but not the chalk creature, a soft bouncy ball appears in space 4 and is bounced into that character's space (even if that space is also 4), passing through the barriers between spaces as needed.

Any creature in a space that a ball is bounced into, even if it is not their turn, can try to bounce it to another space. To do so, they must use their action or reaction to succeed at one of the following rolls:

- DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check
- DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check
- Attack roll with an unarmed strike or a bludgeoning weapon against AC 16.

If the roll succeeds, the ball is bounced to another space of their choice. If it fails by less than 5, it is instead bounced to one of the other two spaces, determined randomly, where another character may be able to bounce it.

If no creature interacts with the ball, or the roll fails by 5 or more, it bounces out of the area, and all creatures in that space are immediately teleported to space 1, maintaining their relative position within the space as nearly as possible.

If a creature bounces the ball to space 4 from another space, it is absorbed into the chalk creature if no other creature occupies that space, and the character that bounced it there is immediately teleported to the space numbered 1 higher than the space they are in, maintaining their relative position within the space as nearly as possible.

Once a character is in space 4, they can attack the chalk babau, cast spells on it, and otherwise interact with it without being blocked by the barriers, but it can also attack them with melee attacks.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak

- **Babau:** AC 16, 82 hp, Init +3
Remove all damage resistances and the Innate Spellcasting, Multiattack, and Weakening Gaze abilities

Weak

- **Babau:** AC 16, 82 hp, Init +3
Remove all damage resistances and the Innate Spellcasting ability

Average

- **Babau:** AC 16, 82 hp, Init +3

Strong

- **Babau:** AC 16, 102 hp, Init +3

Very Strong

- **Babau:** AC 16, 121 hp, Init +3

CHALK DEMON

Make the following modifications to the babau stat block:

- Change type to *construct*
- Ranged attacks can be made instead of melee attacks when using **Multiattack**.
- **Water Susceptibility.** For every 5 feet the chalk babau walks in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 acid damage.
- Add the following action:
Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Development. When the demon is defeated, the chalk drawings return to normal, except the crude fiendish drawing is smudged and missing its weapon.

Treasure. The chalk creature's glaive remains behind when it dies. Despite appearing to be a chalk-drawn weapon (filled with gaps due to the rough surface it was drawn on) it is solid all the way through, though it does feel chalky, and leaves chalk residue when touched. It functions as a *+1 glaive*.

2C. ODARA'S SHOP

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

Only a curtain of beads stands in the entrance of this cave, carved out of the side of the cavern. Inside, you find a homey shop, decorated with rugs and tapestries with earthen tones, and lit by red luminescent mushrooms held in pots. Another curtain, this time a sheet of patterned cloth, hangs over an opening in the back of the room.

Shelves along the walls hold a wide variety of preserved fungi and powders in jars. A small desk near the back of the room holds a lockbox.

A humanoid mushroom creature stands behind the desk. It holds its arms out in a welcoming gesture.

The front of the shop is quite normal, and Odora the **myconid adult** spends most of its time there, and even sleeps there, sitting behind the counter. The curtain in the back leads to another cavern.

Odora speaks through its Rapport Spores, which can be a strange experience, but the myconid is pleasant and humble, always more interested in helping people than making a profit.

Ph'theev can feel that the corruption is coming from somewhere behind the curtain in the back. If asked, Odora will allow the players into the back, even if they don't say why they want to go back there.

You move the curtain aside to reveal a larger, undecorated chamber. A waft of foul air strikes your noses, smelling like a swamp filled with a potent alchemical concoction.

Large stacks of zurkwood boards line the walls, and in the center of the chamber, a raised, crater-like hole contains greenish, polluted water. You presume the smell comes from that.

The fetid water of the pool emits the corruption Ph'theev senses, and he can tell it is not the source of the presence.

The pool is, at this point, relatively harmless. It is polluted, still water and is not drinkable. Touching it causes no harm.

The pool can be cleansed of its residual evil by pouring three flasks of holy water into it or casting

purify food and drink, *remove curse*, or *dispel evil and good*. Ph'theev can tell a single flask of holy water is working, but it will take two more to fully purify the pool.

- A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that corrupted water might be cleansed with holy water.
- Cleansing the pool of its residual energy is not strictly necessary to solve the outpost's problems. However, Odora is extremely grateful if the players manage and they also explain what they are doing, since the myconid doesn't know the pool is evil. It just knows the water is smelly.
- Odora will pay them back for any holy water expended, or buy the holy water in the first place if they request it.

XP Award. Each player earns 25 XP if they cleanse the pool.

Treasure. Odora gives each player 5 pp if they cleanse the pool. If they steal from the myconid, the box on the counter contains 29 pp and 54 gp.

3. A PIECE OFFER

Estimated Duration: 5 minutes

At some point during the investigation, Koshi Mistvalor approaches the party. This can occur at any time while the players look into the corruption Ph'theev senses, but is most appropriate after they have been to one or two of the corrupted locations. Use your judgement and place this encounter where it feels most dramatically appropriate.

One of the Order guards approaches you with purpose from down the street. She sidles up to you, gets in very close and gestures for all of you to do the same.

"I have a proposal for you," she says in a hushed tone.

Koshi is a human **spy**, and has been posing as an Order of the Gauntlet guard for almost two years. She has decided to risk her cover now (since she figures the outpost is doomed anyway) for the chance to bring back something rare and powerful to her superiors.

She tells the players outright that she is a member of the Zhentarim, and she seeks a sample of whatever is causing this corruption and madness. If it is a creature, a piece of its flesh or a sample of its blood will do. If it is an object or plant, any old piece works. She offers 100 gp, and the thanks of the Zhentarim, if the party delivers.

Koshi is cunning and smooth. She knows how to spin her request to make it sound as innocent as possible. What harm is a small piece? But she is polite, and smart enough to know not to push her luck.

If the players refuse her offer or tell the Order about her, she skips town and they don't see her again. If they attack her, she attempts to flee. The Order will lock her up if the players bring her to them, but there's no reward in it for the party.

TREASURE

Koshi pays the party 100 gp if they bring her the requested sample.

PART 3. CONFRONTING THE EVIL

Estimated Duration: 70 minutes

1. OLD FASHIONED SLEUTHING

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

Having explored all three of the locations Ph'theev sensed, you still have not discovered the source of this evil presence.

The flumph turns to you. "I still cannot seem to sense what we seek, but it is clear whatever this force is, it is connected to each of these corruptions."

The players will now have to put some pieces together.

Most anyone in town can tell them Jorhi Gruv likes to sneak into shops to steal small trinkets. He's never stolen anything of real value, and his parents usually get him to return what he takes after a day or so. Most of the townsfolk think Jorhi is a good kid, if a little weird.

The school teacher Hifna Redbraid, as well as most of the Order of the Gauntlet members, know that Jorhi doesn't really have any friends, but takes care of a couple of dogs named Mochy and Sniffer (whose owner died) in the northern part of town. He has been known to be friendly with all the other animals in town, especially the cat Milkstorm, that belongs to a chef in town.

Hifna, any of the children in town, or any parent in town, can tell the party about the kids that attend the school. Hifna and the children know that Jorhi is the one that drew the fiendish creature and the foursquare court.

Putting together all, or even some, of this information should lead the players to Jorhi. Just about anyone in town can point them to his house.

2. JORHI'S HOUSE

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

The Gruv house is a small, two-story building. Its first floor is made of stone and its second floor is built from zurkhwood.

Jorhi's parents, Alna and Yui Gruv, both female human commoners, are in the living room, and they both answer the door if the players knock. Jorhi himself is upstairs in his room, sleeping if it's late, or playing with a couple of dolls during the day.

The door opens, and two middle aged human women stand in the doorway. They look confused, but not alarmed.

One of the women asks, "What can we do for you?"

Alna and Yui are down-to-earth folk that enjoy good wine and good company. They try to keep a light mood, despite the evil that has befallen the

outpost, and are quick to make a joke or a sarcastic comment.

Given just about any reason besides "we're here to kill your son," they're glad to let the party inside, especially if they have a flumph with them.

The women invite you inside, and show you into a homey living room, lit by a warm fire, where they offer you a seat and a drink—wine or tea, your choice.

If the players ask about Jorhi, his parents tell them he has been a bit more reclusive than normal lately, but they assume it's a result of all the stress from these strange times. He hasn't shown any signs of madness himself.

The women are glad to chat with the players or trade stories, but eventually the party will need to confront Jorhi. If they say they can help him, his parents will either bring them to him, or call him downstairs.

If the players head upstairs to Jorhi's room, read the following:

The two women show you upstairs and down the hall to an open door, where you see a child sitting on the floor, humming a pleasant tune.

A bed, dresser, desk, and chair adorn the room, which is lit by torchlight. A painting of a boat at sea hangs on the wall.

The boy faces away from you, but is clearly playing with two stuffed cloth dolls.

If they instead convince his parents to call him down, read the following:

A young boy comes thumping down the stairs. He holds a stuffed cloth doll in each hand.

Jorhi initially seems like a shy, but polite child. He is more interested in playing with his dolls than talking to strangers, but he'll answer questions if his parents ask him to. He still does not understand what is happening, and honestly answers. He knows only that his animals friends have gotten bigger and not that they are corrupted, and that he "just thought of" the idea for the chalk drawing. If asked directly, he even admits to sneaking in to Odora's shop, and drinking from the pool.

If the players talk about him being corrupted, they mention he might be connected to the evil presence, or if he notices the players drawing weapons or readying spells, Jorhi attacks.

Suddenly, the child's eyes glow with intense green light, and his expression turns to extreme anger. He screams, and glowing green smoke pours from his mouth.

His dolls fall to the ground, but quickly climb to their feet. Each of them reaches inside of itself through a seam, and pulls out a large, sharp pin.

Jorhi's statistics are those of a **neogi master**, but his appearance is humanoid, with proto tentacles growing from his chin. His doll(s) use the **scarecrow** statistics.

SETTING UP THE ENCOUNTER

Very Weak

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
No spell slots

Weak

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3

Average

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
- **Scarecrow:** AC 11, 36 hp, Init +1

Strong/Very Strong

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
- **Scarecrow (2):** AC 11, 36 hp, Init +1

JORHI

Make the following changes to the **neogi master** stat block:

- Change size to small

3. CONCLUSION

Estimated Duration: 5 minutes

After they defeat Jorhi, the players will need to decide what to do next. If they killed him, then their job is done, though his parents are inconsolable and blame the party. If they instead subdued him, he is still a danger, though the corruption and madness he caused is temporarily abated. Everyone (including players) that are affected by madness, is cured. If Jorhi wakes up, anyone within 10 miles that was previously affected relapses, gaining their madness(es) again.

Lilli, the captain of the guard, would prefer to kill him, because he is already lost. Jorhi's parents beg the party to spare him, but don't know what to do otherwise.

Koshi, the Zhentarim spy, doesn't care what they do with the child, but she still wants a sample from him; some blood or a finger, maybe. See part 2, section 3, "A Piece Offer" for more on Koshi.

The players may try to cure the corruption, but this is nearly impossible. If you want to continue the adventure, you might come up with a special reagent that could be used to remove his corruption, but otherwise, the players will need to come up with some very potent magic, such as a *wish* spell, to cure him. Not likely.

On the other hand, so long as Jorhi remains unconscious, the corruption is contained. If they can find a way to keep him knocked out, the problem is solved. Even keeping him in a peaceful sleep is enough now that he has been subdued.

If the players don't come up with a solution or ask what Ph'theev thinks, he proposes a solution; he could take Jorhi back to his people, where they could temper the corruption with their combined power. It's risky, and could result in the corruption of the cloister, but the child might be okay, and even perhaps learn to control the evil-within-him and do some good with his powers.

Returning through The Gauntlet. Once Jorhi is dead or knocked out, the intellect devourers regain their senses enough to return to their nests. The area becomes (relatively) safe to travel through once again, though the nests become extremely deadly, each containing 1d4+2 intellect devourers.

If the players wish to travel through the area again before Jorhi is dealt with, they'll have to make the checks again, though they earn no further rewards. They'll be wise to deal with the dark presence before returning to the cloister, and Ph'theev can tell them as much.

Overtaken By Evil. If the players can't defeat Jorhi, whether in his normal form if he is fully awakened (see part 2, section 1, "Fool's March"), the outpost is doomed. Very few make it out alive, and Jorhi becomes a being of truly immense power. He might take control of Fool's March, ruling over the few utterly mad survivors, or he might disappear into the Underdark, seeking mind flayers to rule. In any case, he is now a job for much higher level characters.

TREASURE

Whatever they do with the child, so long as it stops the madness in the settlement, Lilli pays the party 50 gp as thanks.

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
Flumph	25
Bandit Captain	450
Thug	100
Intellect Devourer	450
Commoner	10
Neogi Master	1,100
Dire Wolf	200
Tiger	200
Giant Spider	200
Babau	1,100
Myconid Adult	100
Scarecrow	200

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Devourer Gauntlet	50
Bringing a Chrysalis to Cati Mav	50
Cleansing the Corrupted Pool	25
Curing the animals' madness	25/animal cured

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **900 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **1200 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
Chrysalis	50
Odora's Reward	50 gp per character
Odora's Box	344 gp
Koshi's Payment	100 gp per character
Lilli's Payment	50 gp

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.

+1 GLAIVE

Weapon (glave), uncommon

Despite appearing to be a chalk drawing filled with gaps due to the rough surface it was drawn on, it is solid all the way through, though it does feel chalky, and leaves chalk residue when touched. This item can be found in **Player Handout 1**.

RENOWN

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

Members of the Lords' Alliance that bring the cloister an intellect devourer chrysalis on behalf of Cati Mav earn **one additional renown point**.

Members of the Zhentarim that bring a flesh or blood sample from Jorhi to Koshi earn **one additional renown point**.

DM REWARD

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

APPENDIX. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

Odora (oh-DAR-ah). A Myconid emissary and trader

Ph'theev (FUH-theev). A fussy, but earnest flumph, deeply committed to helping both his cloister and the surfacers of Fool's March.

Desdrilsia Barrelgrog (des-DRIL-see-ah bah-rel-GROG). A dwarven stonemason.

Jorhi Gruv (JOR-hee GRUV). Local child and troublemaker that drank corrupted elder brain fluids. He is now the source of the corrupting power.

Alna and Yui Gruv. (ALL-na GRUV. YOO-ee GRUV). Jorhi's parents, a leatherworker and merchant respectively.

Lilli Hillpeak (LIL-ee HILL-peek). Captain in the Order of the Gauntlet.

Koshi Mistvalor (KOH-shee MIST-vah-lore). Zhentarim Spy.

Cati Mav (CAT-ee MAHV). Female human noble member of the Lords' Alliance seeking an alliance with the flumph cloister.

Hifna Redbraid (HIF-nah RED-braid). The teacher at the local schoolhouse

APPENDIX. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

BANDIT CAPTAIN

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

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d5 + 3) piercing damage.

THUG

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

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

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

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

INTELLECT DEVOURER

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities blinded

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

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

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

If the host body drops to 0 hit points, the intellect devourer must leave it. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the body drives the intellect devourer out. The intellect devourer is also forced out if the target regains its devoured brain by means of a *wish*. By

spending 5 feet of its movement, the intellect devourer can voluntarily leave the body, teleporting to the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The body then dies, unless its brain is restored within 1 round.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 XP

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

DIRE WOLF

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

TIGER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Pounce. If the tiger moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tiger can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

GIANT SPIDER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +7

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

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage, immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

BABAU

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

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

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The babau's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11). The babau can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *heat metal*, *levitate*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The babau makes two melee attacks. It can also use Weakening Gaze before or after making these attacks.

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

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage when used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Weakening Gaze. The babau targets one creature that it can see within 20 feet of it. The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength 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.

Source: *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

SCARECROW

Medium construct, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

False Appearance. While the scarecrow remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary, inanimate scarecrow.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scarecrow makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the scarecrow's next turn.

Terrifying Glare. The scarecrow targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the scarecrow, the target must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw, or be magically frightened until the end of the scarecrow's next turn. The frightened target is paralyzed.

NEOGI MASTER

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 71 (13d6 + 26)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +3, Persuasion +6

Senses darkvision 120 ft. (penetrates magical darkness), passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 30 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Mental Fortitude. The neogi has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened, and magic can't put the neogi to sleep.

Spellcasting. The neogi is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast* (range 300 ft., +4 bonus to each damage roll), *guidance*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

1st–4th level (2 4th-level slots): *arms of Hadar*, *counterspell*, *dimension door*, *fear*, *hold person*, *hunger of Hadar*, *invisibility*, *unseen servant*

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

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned 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.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Enslave (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The neogi targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by the neogi for 1 day, or until the neogi dies or is more than 1 mile from the target. The charmed target obeys the neogi's commands and can't take reactions, and the neogi

and the target can communicate telepathically with each other at a distance of up to 1 mile. Whenever the charmed target takes damage, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Source: *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

APPENDIX. ENCOUNTER SETUP

THE AMBUSH

VERY WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (450 XP)

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3

WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (550 XP)

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug:** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (650 XP)

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug (2):** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (750 XP)

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug (3):** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (850 XP)

- **Bandit Captain:** AC 15, 65 hp, Init +3
- **Thug (4):** AC 11, 32 hp, Init +0

DEVOURER GAUNTLET

VERY WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (450 XP)

- **Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp, Init +2

WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (450 XP)

- **Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp, Init +2

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (450 XP)

- **Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp, Init +2

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (450 XP)

- **Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp, Init +2

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (450 XP)

- **Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp, Init +2

A LONELY CHILD'S FRIENDS

VERY WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (200 XP)

- **Dire Wolf:** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2

WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (400 XP)

- **Dire Wolf:** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (600 XP)

- **Dire Wolf:** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Giant Spider:** AC 14, 26 hp, Init +3

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (800 XP)

- **Dire Wolf (2):** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Giant Spider:** AC 14, 26 hp, Init +3

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (800 XP)

- **Dire Wolf (2):** AC 14, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Tiger:** AC 12, 37 hp, Init +2
- **Giant Spider:** AC 14, 26 hp, Init +3

THE CHALK ZONE

VERY WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Babau:** AC 16, 82 hp, Init +3
Remove all damage resistances and the Innate Spellcasting, Multiattack, and Weakening Gaze abilities

WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Babau:** AC 16, 82 hp, Init +3
Remove all damage resistances and the Innate Spellcasting, Multiattack

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Babau:** AC 16, 82 hp, Init +3

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Babau:** AC 16, 102 hp, Init +3

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Babau:** AC 16, 121 hp, Init +3

CHALK DEMON

Make the following modifications to the babau stat block:

- Change type to *construct*
- Ranged attacks can be made instead of melee attacks when using **Multiattack**.
- **Water Susceptibility.** For every 5 feet the chalk babau walks in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 acid damage.
- Add the following action:
Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

JORHI

VERY WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
No spell slots

WEAK PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3

AVERAGE PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
- **Scarecrow:** AC 11, 36 hp, Init +1

STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
- **Scarecrow (2):** AC 11, 36 hp, Init +1

VERY STRONG PARTY STRENGTH (1,100 XP)

- **Neogi Master:** AC 15, 71 hp, Init +3
- **Scarecrow (2):** AC 11, 36 hp, Init +1

APPENDIX. FOOL'S MARCH MAP



PLAYER HANDOUT 1. MAGIC ITEM

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

+1 GLAIVE

Weapon (glaive), uncommon

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Despite appearing to be a chalk drawing filled with gaps due to the rough surface it was drawn on, it is solid all the way through, though it does feel chalky, and leaves chalk residue when touched.

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