



THE SKULL SQUARE MURDERS

A Waterdeep Adventure

When Volothamp Geddarm hires you to recover a missing key, you find yourself wrapped up in a series of murders in Lower Skullport. Can you find the killer before they find you?

Part One of the *Skullport Shakedown* trilogy.

A Two-Hour Adventure for Tier 2 Characters.

Optimized For: APL 8



CREDITS

Lead Designer: Paige Leitman

Editing: Travis Woodall, Ben Heisler

D&D Adventurers League Guildmaster: Christopher Lindsay

Art Director and Graphic Designer: Rich Lescouffair

Interior Art: Provided by Wizards of the Coast

D&D Adventurers League Wizards Team: Adam Lee, Ari Levitch, Chris Lindsay, Mike Mearls

D&D Adventurers League Administrators: Alan Patrick, Amy Lynn Dzura, Travis Woodall, Lysa Chen, Claire Hoffman, Greg Marks

Playtesters: James Bowen, Jonathan Cruz, Jared Fagen, Travis Fuller, Mionne Gooch, Megan Green, Austin Haffke, Ben Heisler, Jody Johnson, Kerry Kaszack, Ginny Loveday, Special Agent Mathis, Chris McGovern, Jawsh Murdock, Daniel Oliveira, Adrian Rhodes, Sam Robertson, Dave Rosser, Candaysee Sargent, James Schweiss, Tor Segundo, Tim Shauver, Jia Jian Tin, Marcella Velazquez, Tina Wheeler

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ADVENTURE PRIMER

Murder is like potato chips: you can't stop with just one.

—Stephen King, *Under the Dome*

BACKGROUND

VOLOTHAMP GEDDARM is trying to get his hands on a key that will purportedly allow entrance to **AHGHAIRON'S TOWER**. Ahghairon's tower, where the first **OPEN LORD OF WATERDEEP** is entombed, is secured by a *force cage* and other spells and traps that keep people out and the mysterious treasures that **AHGHAIRON** laid there safe. However, both The **XANATHAR** and **BREGAN D'AERTHE** want the key and to eliminate their rivals.

This plot plays out against the backdrop of **SKULLPORT**, the secret town beneath Waterdeep. A long-time resident, the mind flayer **YRAXILINITH** accidentally ate the brain of the wrong person. Rather than start a murderous feud with the **ZHENTARIM**, it made a deal to recover the key for them. Past that, it just wants to be left in peace to raise show-quality intellect devourers.



EPISODES

The adventure is spread over three to five episodes that takes approximately two to four hours to play. These episodes are initially introduced by a Call to Action Episode.

- **Episode 1: A Friend in Need.** Volo meets with the characters and begs them to recover the key for him. He says that he could be on the cusp of the most exciting bit of modern archaeology ever accomplished in Waterdeep! This is the **Call to Action**.
- **Episode 2: Lower Skullport.** The characters visit Thimblewine's Pawn Shop and found out that the shop owner sold the key and that there is a serial killer plaguing the area. With a little poking around, they can find out the person who bought the key did so for a mind flayer called Yraxilinith. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: The Mind Flayer.** After facing a gauntlet of traps, the characters can confront Yraxilinith in its lair. It happily tells them that it bought the key (through a cat's paw) and that it sent the key (by courier) to the Zhentarim to settle a debt. This is **Story Objective B**. It also tells them that it has been committing the murders, but with a good reason.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure also includes two, 1-hour bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning additional **advancement and treasure checkpoints** in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure's appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: Laurel Stillwater.** A note leads the characters to Laurel Stillwater, the hag's assistant at Dead Man's Corner. They must find out what she knows. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 3**.
- **Bonus Objective B: The Bat's Roost.** The trail continues to The Bat's Roost, a seedy fighting den where the characters must get information from **GRUBBUS PITSNOUT**, a goblin mage and bookie, to learn the location of the mind flayer's lair. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 4**.

EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, play style, and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

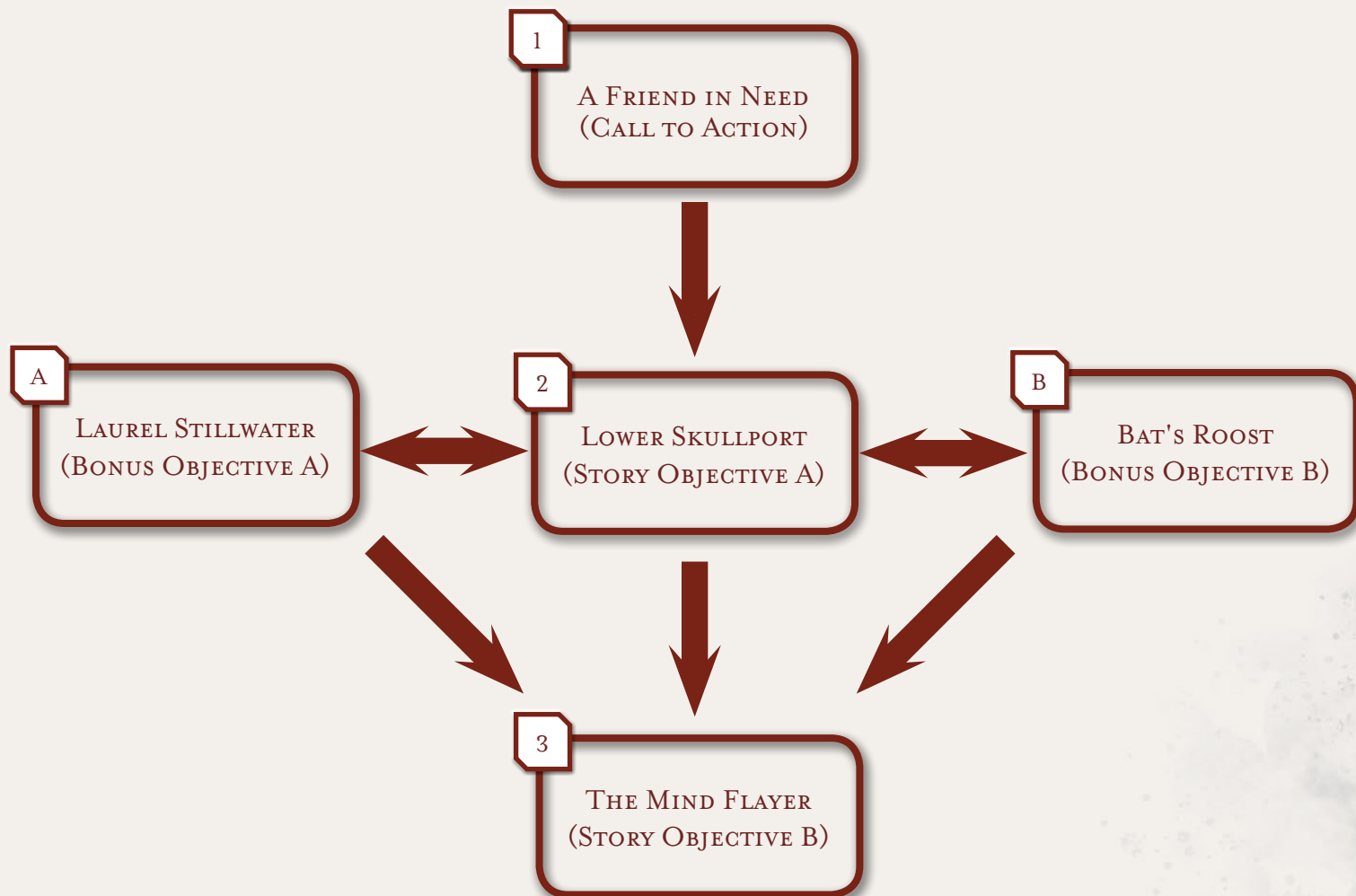
The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

Story Objectives Only. To complete the adventure, the characters participate in **Episodes 1 through 3** in order. In **Episode 2**, they must encounter Scene C to proceed.

Story and Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by one or two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives. These objectives branch off **Episode 2. Bonus Objective A** should be played before **Bonus Objective B**, but you do not have to play both objectives. They must be completed before **Episode 3**, which completes the main objective.

ADVENTURE FLOWCHART

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.





EPISODE 1: A FRIEND IN NEED



Estimated Duration: 15 minutes.

SCENE A. LOCATION

The adventure begins at the last remaining inn in Skullport, the Guts and Garters. How the characters came to be there depends what other adventures they played prior to this one.

- **Played Previous Adventure.** Either the Blackstaff, Vajra Safahr or Artor Morlin has recommended the adventurers to Volo. The Blackstaff uses a sending spell to deliver a short message to characters she knows. Artor Morlin uses a courier. The message is: *“Volothamp Geddam has need of adventurers, and I’d like to keep an eye on what he’s up to. It could be trouble for Waterdeep, or an unimaginable opportunity, or both. Join him at the Guts and Garters in Skullport. Bring your friends”.*
- **Didn’t Play Previous Adventure.** The characters’ reputations proceed them. Volothamp Geddam is searching for just the right heroes to help him get what he needs.

In either case, Volothamp Geddam sends them a note along with a bit of background about Skullport (**Appendix 5**).

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The inn is a run-down, two-story building in Lower Skullport. The ground floor contains a large common room, the stairs to the cellar, and the barkeep’s private quarters, while the guest rooms are confined to the building’s second floor. Each leg of the main, L-shaped room is about 20-feet wide and about 50-feet long.

Lighting. The room is dimly lit by cheap, grimy oil lanterns and candles.

CREATURES/NPCs

Volothamp Geddam sits at a table, trying not to draw the attention of the rather intimidating regulars. The innkeeper (and secret member of the Xanathar Guild), **Quietude** (a tiefling **commoner**), sullenly washes dishes behind the bar while a particularly rowdy and raucous crew of **bugbears** laughs, jokes, and throws dice in the corner.

Objectives/Goals. Volo wants to hire the heroes to recover a stolen key (truthfully, it’s not stolen, Volo just wants it) engraved with a gold dragon that he claims allows entrance into Ahghairon’s Tower. Ahghairon’s Tower was formerly the home of the great wizard who was the first lord of Waterdeep and has been sealed by magic for generations. Volo has rented rooms for the heroes at the Guts & Garters and asks them to go find the key and get it at any cost. He promises to include them in any exploration of Ahghairon’s Tower (*“There’s wealth there beyond your wildest dreams, my dearest friend, but we need the key first!”*). Quietude wants to hear what the heroes are doing so he can report it back to The Xanathar. The bugbears want to be left alone.

What Do They Know? Volo knows that the key was last seen in Lower Skullport at Thimblewine’s Pawn Shop. He urges the heroes to recover the key—giving them specific instructions on how to find the pawn shop, as well as a picture of the key itself (**Appendix 5**). Quietude knows about Thimblewine’s Pawn Shop, and that people have been turning up dead and gruesomely murdered around Skull Square which makes the community nervous. The bugbears know that they normally hang out in Skull Square, but they haven’t been lately because of the murders. They only go as a large pack.

CALL TO ACTION

Volo’s request that the characters explore Skullport in search of the golden key is the **Call to Action**, suggesting Thimblewine’s Pawnshop as a good place to start. Proceed to **Episode 2**.



EPISODE 2: LOWER SKULLPORT



Estimated Duration: 60 minutes.

AN EXTREMELY-BRIEF GUIDE TO SKULLPORT

Skullport is a ruined and nearly abandoned port town in a cavern deep beneath the grand city of Waterdeep. This shadow port is home to numerous illicit activities and any vice can be found for the right price or if you are strong enough to take it. But woe to those who garner the attention of the Skulls! These floating, disembodied skulls rarely interact, but have been known to punish open conflict by raining fireballs down on all parties and bystanders.

The town connects to several levels of the Undermountain dungeon and to various sea caves. It is protected by Skull Island, which holds a hardened fortress. Two-story towers armed with siege weapons are strategically placed along the 20-foot-high outer walls.

Limited in width by the underground cavern where it sits, Skullport's buildings rise upward from the street level of Lower Skullport into ramshackle levels called Middle and Upper Skullport. Almost all of the levels are controlled by the Xanathar Guild. Xanathar is a mysterious paranoid tyrant to most, but those privy to deeper secrets know it is a beholder. The organization is based on a survival of the fittest mentality, with those who scheme the best rising to the top.

Skullport is largely abandoned and many of the remaining residents work for Xanathar, pay tribute to Xanathar, keep tabs on Xanathar for another organization, or if very talented, all of the above. A few Harper spies seek to undermine Xanathar's schemes, Zhent agents have infiltrated the Xanathar Guild, and drow from Bregan D'aerthe occasionally lurk in dark alleys. Almost any creature could be encountered walking the streets

and beyond the unpredictable intervention of the Skulls or the ire of the Xanathar Guild, there is no law.

ALTERATIONS TO MAGIC IN SKULLPORT

Skullport is affected by the changes to magic that are common throughout Undermountain. No spell other than wish can be used to enter Undermountain, leave it, or transport oneself from one level to another. *Astral projection*, *teleport*, *plane shift*, *word of recall*, and similar spells simply fail, as do effects that banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artifacts that have properties that transport or banish creatures to other planes as well. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal, such as the *etherealness* spell, is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from Undermountain is pulled back into the dungeon upon leaving that plane.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

Lighting. The darkness of the cavern is truly astonishing, broken only by light sources carried by travelling denizens or leaked from building interiors.

Lower Skullport. Also called the Street Level, this section of the city encompasses the buildings near the ground level of the cavern.

Middle Skullport. This city region is built on top of Lower Skullport buildings and stalagmites as well as into the cavern walls.

Upper Skullport. The highest locations in the city are referred to as Upper Skullport. These buildings, haphazardly built atop the buildings of Middle Skullport and into huge stalactites, rise all the way up to the cavern's 90-foot-ceiling.

Travel. Numerous ladders, stairs, and ramps grant access to Skullport's upper regions. Catwalks, rope bridges, and old ship's rigging crisscross the city above the ground. Anchored to the various buildings and the cavern's natural features, they act as streets and alleys in the air. Most of the catwalks are 10 feet in width and are as rickety and haphazard as everything else here.

THE FLAMESKULLS

Over a century ago, these flameskulls were arbiters of their own mad version of law and order in Skullport. While they have deteriorated and are now generally incomprehensible, they can be a tool for the DM to add some weirdness to the adventure. They can interrupt fights with powerful magic, suddenly appear to give the characters bizarre quests, or claim that the party is violating some nonsensical law. Feel free to use them in whatever way enhances your adventure!

SCENE A: THIMBLEWINE'S PAWNSHOP

In this episode the characters visit Thimblewine's Pawnshop to look for a key and they'll have to win over the owner or use other means to find out who she sold it to.

PREREQUISITES

The adventurers must complete the **Call to Action** before beginning this episode.

STORY OBJECTIVE A

Discovering that the key was purchased by an orc that lives on Skull Square is **Story Objective A**.

WHAT ABOUT LOCATE OBJECT?

In an area as small as Skullport, *locate object* is a fine way to locate the key (and, in fact, how Yraxilnith located it originally). However, Yraxilnith is pretty smart, and stores the key in a lead-lined box—rendering the spell ineffective.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. A U-shaped counter dominates the west side of the store. A variety of shelves and bins contain an impressive variety of junk, antiques, and collectables. A large decaying chess pawn painted in peeling black paint hangs above the front door.

Lighting. Candles provide dim light when the shop is open. The shop is unlit when Krystaleen isn't here.

BUYING OR SELLING ITEMS IN THE PAWNSHOP

Krystaleen buys adventuring gear and tools from visitors at half price but sells at 5x normal cost. Other than adventuring gear and tools, she sells tiny clockwork toys (as described in the rock gnome entry in the *Player's Handbook*) for 50 gp each. She has a decorative metal tin containing 10 random trinkets (*Player's Handbook*, Chapter 5) for sale for 1 gp each.

CREATURES/NPCs

Krystaleen (a female rock gnome **noble**) has two **stone defenders** sunk into the floor and two clockwork mobiles hung from the ceiling that are actually **oaken bolters**. Krystaleen slaps the ledger closed when the characters enter, leaving it by the cashbox. If the characters buy anything, she enters the item in question, the price paid, and the name and address of the purchaser in her ledger. Then she writes a receipt on a scrap of paper.

Objectives/Goals. Krystaleen wants the heroes to either buy something or leave quietly. She is reluctant to tell them who she sold the key to because she values her clients' privacy.

What Does She Know? Krystaleen sold the key yesterday to an orc named Mugrub who lives on Skull Square.

Suggested Clue. An orc named Mugrub bought the key and lives on Skull Square.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** Remove the **oaken bolters**.
- **Strong:** Add one **stone defender** and one **oaken bolter**.
- **Very Strong:** Remove the **stone defenders** and add an **iron golem**.

PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE A: THIMBLEWINE'S PAWNSHOP)

Combat

The clockworks only attack in response to Krystaleen being injured. Krystaleen will flee the shop. The clockworks have been instructed to do nonlethal damage unless Krystaleen has been killed.

Exploration

The ledger is next to the cashbox when Krystaleen is in the shop. When she is not there, it is locked in a cashbox which requires a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 14 check to open. The lock on the front door requires these tools as well, but only a successful DC 12 Dexterity check to open. Sneaking past her might be easier if she's distracted (by someone haggling with her, for example). Her passive perception is 12.

Social

Krystaleen is proud of the privacy her clients enjoy. The characters must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to convince her to tell them who bought the key. A bribe of at least 50 gp allows the character to make the check with advantage. She flees if the characters attempt to intimidate her. If charmed, Krystaleen tells the characters whatever she knows.

SCENE B: WELCOME TO SKULL SQUARE

When the characters get to Skull Square, the local community asks them to help solve the murders because Frankie identifies them as 'heroes'. They also find out that Mugrub lives on the southwest corner of the square.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. Skull Square is an open plaza that is about 50-by-50 feet. Rusted iron cages hang from old, wooden posts - several of which contain gristly, mostly-decayed corpses. Sets of rotting wooden stocks are featured in the center of the square surrounding a well secured by a grate that is rusted shut. Buildings face the square on three sides while the fourth side faces a massive stone outcrop. A broad set of stone stairs climb up to Middle Skullport to the north.

Lighting. One home on the northwest side of the square has a lamp hung above the door, which casts bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. This lights up most of the square (see map in Appendix 7). The rest of the square is dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

Frankie Frogsleap (a female halfling **commoner**) owns the home with the lantern in the northwest corner and approaches the heroes as they arrive. **Irontusk** (an agender **orc**) is squatting in the home on the north side, and **Artemus** (a male **hobgoblin warlord**) is restoring the home on the south side of the square. Frankie knocks on their doors to bring them out to talk to the heroes.

Objectives/Goals. Frankie wants the characters to put a stop to the killings—a plan that both Artemus and Irontusk are on board with. Artemus and Irontusk each have their own agenda, though, and want to know more about why the heroes are here (Artemus reports to the Zhentarim and Irontusk reports to The Xanathar.)

What Do They Know? Frankie, Irontusk, and Artemus know about the three former victims. Artemus has seen a tall, cloaked figure skulking around the area a few times. It scared some of the people working on the renovations of his house. The figure was notable because the person was wearing gloves. Irontusk says that the bodies have been neatly beheaded by a sharp knife. They also know where Mugrub lived and show the heroes to her home.

THE VICTIMS THUS FAR

There have been a number of victims of the Skull Square murder so far. Among them:

- A wererat slum lord. Tenants that complained found themselves plagued by rats.
- A half-drow doctor whose patients had a suspiciously high mortality rate. Frankie suspects he was a fraud.
- The former resident of Artemus' home, a bugbear ran a protection racket on the Square and murdered a duergar in public for back-talking her.

Suggested Clues. The victims were often terrible people. The murderer is a tall humanoid figure wearing gloves. The bodies were neatly beheaded with a sharp knife. Mugrub lives on the southwest side of the square.

COMPLICATION: WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?!? (OPTIONAL)

Artemus is can be touchy if he's treated like a monster. He can be calmed with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check but attempts to intimidate him only provoke him. If the fight is on, he clears his throat, apologizes politely to Frankie and Irontusk for what's about to happen, and whistles sharply. Four **hobgoblins** emerge from his home and attack, accompanied by a **hobgoblin devastator**. The hobgoblins don't try to kill the characters, they want to knock them out and throw them in a puddle of unspeakable filth near the old fish market.

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene.

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Remove the **hobgoblin devastator** and one or two **hobgoblins**.
- **Strong or Very Strong:** Add two or three **hobgoblins** and a **hobgoblin devastator**.



SCENE C: MUGRUB

When the characters visit Mugrub's home, they find out she has been killed by the Skull Square murderer. This goes against the murder's motive as Mugrub was a kind person and the other victims of the Skull Square murderer were horrible people. A note in her home leads the characters either to **Yraxilinit's Lair** or **Bonus Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This abandoned home on the southwest side of the square is damp, squalid, and reeks of mildew. There is a beheaded body lying on the floor in a huge puddle of still-wet blood.

Lighting. The home is completely dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

Frankie, Irontusk, and Artemus are nearby, and come into the house when they learn Mugrub is dead.

What Do They Know? Frankie, Irontusk, and Artemus can verify this is how the other victims of the Skull Square murders died. They didn't notice any marks on the other bodies, but they didn't look for those marks and/or didn't get to the other bodies before the scavengers did. They have no idea where Mugrub got 300 gp to pay for the key; she was not wealthy. They also note that unlike the rest of the victims, Mugrub wasn't a terrible person.

The Body. The body was beheaded with a sharp knife. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Medicine or Perception) check reveals faint, but distinct marks around the remains of Mugrub's neck and shoulders. A character that succeeds on a Wisdom (Medicine) check identifies the marks as being ligature bruises—consistent with ropes or tentacles.

Searching the Home. A search of the home turns up a paper receipt for a golden key with an engraving of a gold dragon bought for 300 gp from Thimblewine's pawnshop in Krystaleen's handwriting (**Appendix 5**). The adventurers also find a note Mugrub left detailing where to take the key (**Appendix 5**). This note leads to Yraxilinit's lair (**Episode 3**).

BONUS OBJECTIVE A. If you are utilizing this additional content, the adventurers find a note Mugrub made (also in **Appendix 5**) that says, "*Remember to get the gold to pay for the key from Laurel Stillwater*". Frankie, Irontusk, and Artemus are able to provide directions to Laurel's shop.

SIDEBAR: ADVENTURING MAKES ME SLEEPY

While the characters aren't under any time constraints imposed by Volo to get his key back, the killings don't stop just because the characters get tired. Each time the characters take a long rest, Yraxilinit makes time for a light snack. Here are its next two victims. Make up more as needed, but the rest of Yraxilinit's victims after these two are horrible people that got what they deserved.

- A priest of Umberlee is killed. A search of her home finds notes about his casting locate object for a client looking for a golden key.
- An elderly duergar artisan who makes fine torture implements is killed. Notes in her home indicate she made a lead-lined box for a mind flayer.





EPISODE 3: THE MIND FLAYER LAIR



Estimated Duration: 40 minutes.

YRAXILINITH'S LAIR

The characters have located the creature that bought the key, and who is likely responsible for the Skull Square murders. What are they going to do about it?

PREREQUISITES

The characters begin this episode after learning the location of Yraxilinth's lair, either from **Episode 2, Bonus Objective A**, or **Bonus Objective B**.

STORY OBJECTIVE B

When the characters learn the key was given to a drow courier who was going to the Keel Haul they complete **Story Objective B**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Dimensions & Terrain. This building's only public entrance is a secret door a block east of Skull Square. Locating the door requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, but it's found without the need of a check if the characters spend 10 minutes looking for it. The home is irregularly shaped and approximately 40 feet on a side. Within is a winding queue of traps (**Scene A**).

Lighting. There's no light here except that which the heroes bring with them.

SCENE A: THE TRAP QUEUE

When the characters find the secret door to Yraxilinth's compound, they are led into a winding queue of traps. Yraxilinth really enjoys its privacy.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features.

Traps. The winding hallway has 6 areas that are potentially trapped (see map in Appendix 7). Consider using no traps or only the **poison gas** trap if the group is weak, lacks characters with abilities that can heal, or is significantly exhausted from the adventure thus far. Otherwise, utilize all six trapped areas. All of the traps require a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to detect, and a successful DC 16 Dexterity check made with a set of thieves' tools to disable. However, if the check fails by 10 or more, the trap is triggered.

Three sample traps follow:

- **Crossbow Trap.** Two heavy crossbows are strung to a web consisting of **dozens of tripwires**—only one of which triggers the trap, a tripwire at roughly neck-level for a Medium humanoid. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals which tripwire triggers the trap. When triggered, each crossbow attacks the creature that triggered the trap (+8 to hit). On a hit, the target takes 5 (1d10) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) poison damage, or half as much on a successful save. If the group is **strong** or **very strong**, consider increasing the poison damage to 44 (8d10) or the DC to 15. Instead of disabling the trap, Medium size creatures can move at half speed and Small size creatures are shorter than the tripwire and may move through the square freely (though any Medium creatures following them might trigger the trap).
- **Flame Trap.** A **magical rune** covers the last 5 feet of the floor, walls, and ceiling of the 20-foot x10-foot area and is triggered by a Small or larger creature walking over it. When triggered, the rune explodes in a gout of flame. Each creature within the trapped area must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) fire damage, or half as much if the save is successful. If the group is **strong** or **very strong**, consider increasing the fire damage to 28 (8d6) and/or the DC to 15. This trap is automatically detected when viewed by a creature using *detect magic*.



- **Poison Gas.** A **pressure plate** at the far end of the is triggered when more than 20 pounds is placed on it and fills the area with poison gas. Each creature in the trapped area must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one hour. If the group is **strong** or **very strong**, consider increasing the DC to 15. This trap is automatically detected when viewed by a creature using *detect poison* and *disease*.

COMPLICATION: THESE TRAPS ARE TOO EASY! (OPTIONAL)

If there is sufficient time, and if the heroes have had it too easy thus far, the trap room can be spiced up with seven **intellect devourers**. (If the group is **strong**, or **very strong**, consider increasing that number to twelve. If the group is **weak** or **very weak** either omit the encounter or reduce the number encountered to two or three). The intellect devourers are tiny, so they do not set off the traps, and are smart enough to use the traps to their advantage. There are tiny “doggie doors” in the walls so the intellect devourers can move around freely through the walls.

SCENE B: YRAXILINITH’S LAIR

This spacious studio contains a bookshelf, a desk and chair, a mediation mat, and a wall full of designer kennels containing a score of show-quality intellect devourers. While it might have a monastic look, it is clear that it was formerly much more finely decorated.

CREATURES/NPCs

Yraxilinith (a **mind flayer**) and three **grimlock veteran** bodyguards are in the lair. The **intellect devourers** are secured in their kennels.

Objectives/Goals. Yraxilinith wants to tell the characters the truth so they’ll go away without violence. The grimlocks and intellect devourers serve the mind flayer to the death.

PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE B: YRAXILINITH’S LAIR)

Combat

Yraxilinith is no fool and has no reservations against attacking unconscious foes to kill them. The grimlocks follow suit. It drinks the *potion of fire giant strength* and stuns spellcasters and healers. If the characters trigger any traps or if combat erupts in Scene A, the mind flayer is aware of their presence. If combat appears too easy, a few of the intellect devourers jump in to save Yraxilinith. Yraxilinith will capitulate if the intellect devourers are threatened. If they are injured, it immediately recharges mind blast, uses it as a special reaction, then attacks whoever hurt the intellect devourers with advantage the following round. If Yraxilinith drinks his potion of fire giant strength, his attack bonus with melee weapon attacks increases to +10.

Exploration

The characters might sneak in and observe **Yraxilinith**. If so, they learn that it frequently talks to its intellect devourers (using its mouth, because they are THAT cute) and they could overhear it talking about the deal. They may be able to steal its diary or kidnap a **grimlock veteran** or **intellect devourer** to learn the information about the key without even encountering the mind flayer.

Social

Yraxilinith greets the characters while petting a teacup intellect devourer on its lap. It is delighted to talk to the adventurers—asking them pithy questions on the concepts of good and evil. Yraxilinith doesn’t want to fight and tries to convince the characters to spare its life if threatened—going so far as to give them its amulet of health as a bribe. As a last-ditch offer, it truthfully offers to leave Skullport and return to its colony.

WHAT IF THEY KILL THE CLUE?

Some groups aren't going to wait to see if a mind flayer is friendly and are likely to attack it on sight. They can learn what Yraxilinitz knew by reading its diary, which requires a DC 10 +2d6 Intelligence saving throw or earn a level of madness after three failed attempts (as per the *DMG* page 258). The madness is that the character wants to consume brains. *Comprehend languages* allows safe reading. Its diary summarizes what Yraxilinitz knows. They can also learn of Yraxilinitz's plans from one of the grimlocks or even the intellect devourers if any survive the encounter.

What Does It Know? Yraxilinitz was asked to retrieve the key to repay a debt to the Zhentarim, specifically a tiefling named Bosskyn. It gave the key to a drow courier named Cory'bant'ex to deliver to Bosskyn at the Keel Haul in Middle Skullport. Discovering this information is **Story Objective B**.

TREASURE

Yraxilinitz has both of the following items on his person; depending on how the encounter proceeds, the characters may take receive one or both of them:

- A *potion of fire giant strength*
- An *amulet of health*

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Remove a **grimlock veteran**.
- **Strong:** Add two **grimlock veterans**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **grimlock veterans** and two **grimlock master thieves**.

WRAP UP: CORY'BANT'EX AND THE KEEL HAUL

At the end of the adventure the characters have resolved things (one way or the other) with Yraxilinitz and they know that a drow courier named Cory'bant'ex took the key to a Zhent named Bosskyn at the Keel Haul. Presuming they report back to Volo, he's delighted that they've gotten this far, and is encourages them to go to the Keel Haul to find Bosskyn, and he'll try to find some help to go with them.

If the characters report back to Frankie, Irontusk, or Artemus, they question the characters about whether they did the right thing.

- If the characters killed Yraxilinitz, they suggest maybe Yraxilinitz was doing a service for Skullport. While it did kill a few presumptively innocent people, aren't all the evil people it killed a great service? Maybe it even prevented a lot of deaths.
- If the characters let Yraxilinitz live, they suggest that it's just going to keep murdering people. While some of them committed crimes, is every crime worth a death penalty? Is it fair that Yraxilinitz (who's grasp on mammalian ethics is tenuous at best) the judge?

ADVENTURE REWARDS

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

ADVANCEMENT CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each completed **main objective**, as follows:

- **Story Objective A:** Find out who bought the key
- **Story Objective B:** Find out that Yraxilinitz gave the key to a drow courier named Cory'bant'ex who was going to the Keel Haul in Middle Skullport

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each **bonus objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A:** Question Laurel Stillwater
- **Bonus Objective B:** Learn who took the gold

PLAYER REWARDS

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

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters completing the adventure unlock:

Amulet of Health. An electrum pendant in the shape of an eye surrounded by a grasping tentacle hangs from a mithril chain. You have the feeling you are being watched whenever you were this amulet. This item can be found in **Appendix 6**.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the *ALDMG (Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide)* for more information about DM Quests.



APPENDIX 1: LOCATIONS & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

- **Volothamp Geddarm (Vo lo THAMP guh DARM).** Volo is a male noble, and a bombastic world traveler and a chronicler of many things. The author of the Guide to Monsters is a personable mooch, with an inflated opinion of himself and his importance in the world, but he's not without his charm. There is nothing he won't do to help a friend in need. He's well-dressed and portly with a florid complexion and brown hair.

Personality: *I'm friendly and unreliable.*

Ideal: *I have no wish to explore jungles, lost cities, and dungeons. Friendly taverns and bawdy festhalls are more my style.*

Bond: *Planning an expedition? You really should buy a copy of my latest book, Volo's Guide to Monsters!*

Flaw: *My penchant for indulgence and my propensity for mockery have earned me a few enemies. I tend to wear out my welcome.*

- **Quietude (KWI eh tood).** Quiet is a mild-mannered, unflappable male tiefling commoner who listens more than he talks, and observes more than he misses. A courier from The Xanathar comes in every day to get Quiet's assessment of the guests that are staying at the Guts and Garters Inn. He's unfailingly polite and has a modest pride in doing his job well. The Xanathar pays him well (considering) and this job keeps him out of sight of the Waterdeep City Watch. He has medium gray skin, shiny black horns that go up and forward from his brow. His long black hair is in a neat ponytail.

Personality: *I chose the name Quietude because I'm calm, patient, and still.*

Ideal: *I need to do this well because I'm a professional.*

Bond: *I'm don't particularly like or trust The Xanathar Guild, but they pay me well enough.*

Flaw: *I'm a 'live to fight another day' kinda guy.*

- **Frankie Froggleap.** This female halfling commoner is a tough-as-old-tree-roots community organizer who is deeply concerned about the Skull Square murders. She's about half-convinced that The Xanathar Guild is behind them all and is using this as an opportunity to clean house. She's older, with lined deep brown skin, and dark curly hair with streaks of gray. She's trying to make Skullport a better place, and to organize people that live here so that they can work to combat the influence of the Xanathar Guild. She makes her living as an herbalist and physician.

Personality: *I'm idealistic, outspoken, and very wise.*

Ideal: *When people work together, there are no problems they can't solve.*

Bond: *I'm devoted to the ordinary people of Skullport.*

Flaw: *I have a hard time trusting outsiders.*

- **Krystaleen (kris TA leen).** Krystaleen is a female rock gnome noble. Her good temper, sunny personality, and dedicated work ethic certainly set her apart from many residents of Skullport. The original Thimblewine was her uncle, and he passed the shop down to her when he died. For all her personable manners, Krystaleen is a shrewd business owner and doesn't trade, bargain, or barter to her disadvantage, ever. She is a rock gnome mage with long pointy ears, dark eyes, short black hair with bangs in her eyes, and golden skin.

Personality: *I'm cheerful, friendly, and always looking for the best value for my money.*

Ideal: *Uncle Thimblewine always said if you give people a nib, they'll take you for a dragon.*

Bond: *Everyone knows that I deal fairly, and that's why they shop here.*

Flaw: *Sometimes I abruptly change my mind for no good reason.*

- **Irontusk.** This canny old orc is working for The Xanathar. They prefer to be called they or them. They're mostly trying to stalk the drow in Skullport to see what the dark elves are up to. Irontusk has greying hair, wears several earrings, and has a gravelly voice.

Personality: *I'm caught between looking out for myself and my instinct to belong to a clan.*

Ideal: *I'm looking out for number one.*

Bond: *I live in Skull Square, and I'm willing to work with the other residents to keep myself safe.*

Flaw: *I refuse to adopt or pay attention to what civilized people think are good manners.*

- **Artemus Holmes (ART uh mus Holmes).** This male hobgoblin warlord is very urbane, very well dressed, and very large. He's also a local mid-level gang boss for the Zhentarim. Artemus is not the type to get his hands dirty. He wears a nice suit and has a ring on every finger.

Personality: *I'm pleasant, I'm well-mannered, I'm good looking, and I'll send the goon squad to break your legs if you cross me.*

Ideal: *I'm a hobgoblin of my word – it's part of being cultured.*

Bond: *I love the structure and discipline of the black network.*

Flaw: *I get irrational when people treat me like I'm dumb, ignorant, or a savage.*

- **Yraxilinith (UH racks il in ith).** This mind flayer is pleasant-tempered, civil, and far more interested in conversation than combat. It regards its intellect devourer pets with all the adoration of a cat lady/gent. It ate a Zhentarim agent a couple of tendays ago, and the local Zhents got incensed, so it was tasked with getting the key as a payment to appease them.

Personality: *I'm very picky. I mostly prefer to feed on the brains of unforgivably evil creatures. They're tasty! Plus, I'm doing society a favor. They should thank me.*

Ideal: *Truth is the foundation of knowledge, so I never lie.*

Bond: *My intellect devourers are my babies. My research into their creation and care must be protected at all costs.*

Flaw: *It is inconceivable that another creature could outsmart me.*

- **Laurel Stillwater (LORE ell STILL water).** This necromancer is an old woman with tangled green-blue hair. She talks to herself constantly in third person. Through a very complicated family relationship, she's the half-sister of Olive Stillwater, a sea hag and owner of the Dead Man's Corner. Olive's out of town visiting her sisters and has left Laurel in charge for a while.

Personality: *You get farther in life with a pretty lie than the ugly truth.*

Ideal: *I NEED more blood, so I can make more zombies.*

Bond: *I take the credit and direct the blame to others.*

Flaw: *I generally tell the truth, but I leave out the parts that make me look bad.*

- **Grubbus Pitsnout (GRUB us PIT snout).** This goblin mage is an ex-adventurer who is laying low in Skullport until some unfortunate business dealings in Waterdeep are forgotten. His natural intelligence allows him to run the books at The Bat's Roost with ease. He has genteel manners.

Personality: *Grubbus Pitsnout of the Waterdeep Pitsnouts.*

Ideal: *Knowledge is power, and I ain't here to be second best.*

Bond: *Oh crap. I gave you my word. Okay, okay, I'm keeping it. Geez. Keep yer hair on.*

Flaw: *I'm so smart that I think it makes me good at everything!*



APPENDIX 2: CREATURE STATISTICS

This appendix details monsters that are encountered in this adventure.

BLACKGUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 153 (18d8+72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The blackguard is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *protection from evil and good*, *thunderous smite*
2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *find steed*
3rd level (2 slots): *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blackguard makes three attacks with its glaive or its shortbow.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Dreadful Aspect (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The blackguard exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the blackguard must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from the blackguard, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

ORDONEZZ, A NONBINARY DROW BLACKGUARD

Drow use the specified stat block, modified as follows:

- **Type:** Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil
- **Senses.** Darkvision 120 ft.
- **Language:** Common, Elvish, Undercommon
- **Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.
- **Innate Spellcasting.** The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell DC 10 + Charisma Modifier). They can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

- **Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, they have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

BUGBEAR

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (hide armor, shield)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

ACTIONS

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage in melee or 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage at range.

CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

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

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

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

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

ORC CHAMPIONS

Orcs use the specified stat block, modified as follows:

- *Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil*
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.
- **Language** Common, Orc
- **Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

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 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

TIEFLINGS

Tieflings use the specified stat block, modified as follows:

- *Medium humanoid (tiefling), neutral evil*
- **Damage Resistance** fire
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.
- **Languages** Common, Infernal
- **Infernal Legacy.** The Tiefling knows the mage hand cantrip. Charisma is the spellcasting ability.

HALFLINGS

Halflings use the specified stat block, modified as follows:

- *Small humanoid (halfling), neutral good*
- **Languages** Common, Halfling
- **Lucky.** When the halfling rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, she can reroll the die and must use the new roll.
- **Brave.** The halfling has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- **Halfling Nimbleness.** The halfling can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than hers.

FLAMESKULL

Tiny undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 40 (9d4 + 18)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances Lightning, Necrotic, Piercing

Damage Immunities Cold, Fire, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Rejuvenation. If the flameskull is destroyed, it regains all its hit points in 1 hour unless holy water is sprinkled on its remains or a dispel magic or remove curse spell is cast on them.

Spellcasting. The flameskull is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no somatic or material components to cast its spells. The flameskull has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*

1st level (3 slots): *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (2 slots): *blur*, *flaming sphere*

3rd level (1 slot): *fireball*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The flameskull uses Fire Ray twice.

Fire Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target.

Hit: 10 (3d6) fire damage.

GLADIATOR

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brave. The gladiator has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the gladiator hits with it (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gladiator makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Parry. The gladiator adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the gladiator must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

KOBOLDS

Kobolds use the specified stat block, modified as follows:

- *Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil*
- **Languages** Common, Draconic
- **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.

GREATER ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Wis +1

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Turn Resistance. The zombie has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The zombie makes two melee attacks.

Empowered Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

HOBGOBLIN

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage, or 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

HOBGOBLIN DEVASTATOR

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Arcane Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a damaging spell attack if that target is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin and that ally isn't incapacitated.

Army Arcana. When the hobgoblin casts a spell that causes damage or that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, it can choose itself and any number of allies to be immune to the damage caused by the spell and to succeed on the required saving throw.

Spellcasting. The hobgoblin is a 7th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *fire bolt*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud*, *magic missile*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *scorching ray*
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*
4th level (1 slot): *ice storm*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

HOBGOBLIN WARLORD

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3, Cha +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hobgoblin makes three melee attacks. Alternatively, it can make two ranged attacks with its javelins.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the hobgoblin can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the hobgoblin. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin is incapacitated.

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 attacks

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.

MAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

ACTIONS

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

GOBLINS

Goblins use the specified stat blocks, modified as follows:

- *Small humanoid (goblinoid)*, *neutral evil*
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.
- **Language** Common, Goblin
- **Nimble Escape.** The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

MASTER THIEF

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7 Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any one language (usually Common) plus thieves' cant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the thief can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If the thief is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the thief instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The thief deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the thief that isn't incapacitated and the thief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thief makes three attacks with its shortsword.

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. The thief halves the damage that it takes from an attack that hits it. The thief must be able to see the attacker.

GRIMLOCKS

Grimlocks use the specified stat blocks, modified as follows:

- *Medium humanoid (grimlock), neutral evil*
- Their proficiency bonus is doubled for Perception checks
- **Condition Immunities** blinded
- **Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius)
- **Language** Undercommon

MIND FLAYER

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft., Undercommon

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The mind flayer's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

1/day each: *dominate monster*, *plane shift* (self only)

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

Extract Brain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the mind flayer. *Hit:* The target takes 55 (10d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the mind flayer kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The mind flayer magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

YRAXILINITH THE MIND FLAYER

The mind flayer's stat block is modified as follows:

- **Potion of Fire Giant Strength.** Yraxilinith may consider drinking a potion of fire giant strength if things aren't going well for it. In which case, its Strength increases to 25. As a result, its bonus to hit with melee weapon attacks increases +10 to hit. Similarly, the DC to escape its grapple increases to 22. The extract brain attack is +14 to hit and does 62 (10d10+7) points of damage.
- **Amulet of Health.** Note that this mind flayer is wearing an Amulet of Health which increases its Constitution to 19 and its hit points to 110.

MUMMY

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +2

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The mummy uses its Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with its Rotting Fist

Rotting Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. The mummy targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If that target can see the mummy, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of the mummy's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it's also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dread Glare of all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours.

NECROMANCER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACTIONS

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

NOBLE

Medium Humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

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

REACTIONS

Parry. The noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

GNOMES

Gnomes use the specified stat blocks, modified as follows:

- **Type:** Small humanoid (gnome), lawful neutral
- **Senses.** Darkvision 60 ft.
- **Language:** Common, Gnomish
- **Gnome cunning.** The gnome has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
- **Tinker:** The gnome has proficiency with artisan's tools (tinker's tools). Using those tools, they can spend 1 hour and 10 gp worth of materials to construct a Tiny clockwork device (AC 5, 1 hp). The device ceases to function after 24 hours (unless they spend 1 hour repairing it to keep the device functioning), or when they use your action to dismantle it; at that time, they can reclaim the materials used to create it. They can have up to three such devices active at a time. When they create a device, choose one of the following options:

Clockwork Toy. This toy is a clockwork animal, monster, or person, such as a frog, mouse, bird, dragon, or soldier. When placed on the ground, the toy moves 5 feet across the ground on each of your turns in a random direction. It makes noises as appropriate to the creature it represents.

Fire Starter. The device produces a miniature flame, which you can use to light a candle, torch, or campfire. Using the device requires your action.

Music Box. When opened, this music box plays a single song at a moderate volume. The box stops playing when it reaches the song's end or when it is closed.

OAKEN BOLTER

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands one language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The oaken bolter makes two lancing bolt attacks or one lancing bolt attack and one harpoon attack.

Lancing Bolt. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Slam. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 50/200 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). While grappled in this way, a creature's speed isn't reduced, but it can move only in directions that bring it closer to the oaken bolter. A creature takes 5 (1d10) slashing damage if it escapes from the grapple or if it tries and fails. As a bonus action, the oaken bolter can pull a creature grappled by it 20 feet closer. The oaken bolter can grapple only one creature at a time.

Explosive Bolt (Recharge 5-6). The oaken bolter launches an explosive charge at a point within 120 feet. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ORC

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

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.

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 +2

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

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 attacks 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.

SHADOW DANCER

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +4

Skills Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The shadow dancer has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.

Shadow Jump. As a bonus action, the shadow dancer can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Both the space it teleports from and the space it teleports to must be in dim light or darkness. The shadow dancer can use this ability between weapon attacks of another action it takes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shadow dancer makes three spiked chain attacks.

Spiked Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or suffer one additional effect of the shadow dancer's choice:

- The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is a Medium or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the shadow dancer can't grapple another target.
- The target is knocked prone.
- The target takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage.

STONE DEFENDER

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands one language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

False Appearance. While the stone defender remains motionless against an uneven earthen or stone surface, it is indistinguishable from that surface.

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

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Intercept Attack. In response to another creature within 5 feet of it being hit by an attack roll, the stone defender gives that creature a +5 bonus to its AC against that attack, potentially causing a miss. To use this ability, the stone defender must be able to see the creature and the attacker.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage.

WARLORD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 229 (27d8 + 108)

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

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

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Indomitable (3/Day). The warlord can reroll a saving throw they fail. They must use the new roll.

Survivor. The warlord regains 10 hit points at the start of their turn if they have at least 1 hit point but fewer hit points than half their hit point maximum.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warlord makes two weapon attacks.

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

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

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The warlord can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The warlord regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Weapon Attack. The warlord makes a weapon attack.

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

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

DROW

Drow use the specified stat blocks, modified as follows:

- **Medium humanoid (drow), neutral evil**
- **Languages** Common, Undercommon
- **Fey Ancestry.** The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.
- **Innate Spellcasting.** The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 8 + proficiency bonus + Charisma modifier). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
 - At will: *dancing lights*
 - 1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*
- **Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

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

APPENDIX 3: LAUREL STILLWATER (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes.

SCENE A. DEALING WITH LAUREL

The characters must find out where Laurel Stillwater got the gold that Mugrub used to pay for the key.

PREREQUISITES

The adventurers can pursue this bonus objective only if they found the note in **Episode 2, Scene C**.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

Getting the information from Laurel Stillwater that leads to either Yraxilinit's lair or The Bat's Roost is Bonus Objective A.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features

Dimensions & Terrain. Several dilapidated shops lean together on the shore of Skull Harbor in this abandoned slave market. Dead Man's Corner is the only one left open. It's a sturdy building made of driftwood and old ship's planking that is approximately 20-by-30 feet.

Lighting. The area is completely dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

Laurel Stillwater (a particularly barmy **necromancer** woman) is the hag's assistant and minds the hag's shop while her two **mummy** pirates watch over her. Laurel has a few **zombies** for sale.

Objectives/Goals. Laurel wants to keep the details of her dealings with Mugrub, Yraxilinit, and/or Grubbus a secret. Her main goal is to unload the three zombies that she's got left ("*They're great for setting off traps!*") and asks for nothing more than a small vial of the buyer's blood and three freshly plucked hairs. Each zombie wears a rope around its neck.

A character who buys a zombie must lead it around by the rope; otherwise, the zombie stands still and does nothing (which actually means they are lousy trap-finders). The zombie doesn't take actions—it's like dragging around a disgusting non-floating balloon made of meat. The zombie disintegrates into a rotting pile of flesh upon completing a long rest or leaving Skullport—whichever comes first.

What Does She Know? If the characters convince her to talk, she tells them where she got the gold:

If you are NOT playing Bonus Objective B:

Laurel knows that she got the gold from a mind flayer named Yraxilinit and where its lair is. She knows that it's well-guarded, but not the nature of the protections – best to get a zombie or two!

BONUS OBJECTIVE B. If utilizing this additional content, Laurel **INSTEAD** knows that she got the gold from a goblin named Grubbus Pitsnout at a warehouse under the Bat's Roost fighting pit and tells the characters where that is.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** Remove one or both **mummies**.
- **Strong:** Add three more **mummies**.
- **Very Strong:** Laurel has 108 hit points; add four **greater zombies**.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

Combat

Laurel directs the mummies and zombies to do her dirty work—directing them target lightly armored spellcasters first. The pirate mummies have been brined in seawater and are resistant to fire damage. Laurel is not keen to die and is likely to surrender if reduced to a quarter of her hit points.

Exploration

If the characters carefully observe the area, they can sneak into the shop. Laurel likes to talk to her pets. She tells them about how she got money from either Yraxilinit or Grubbus Pitsnout as she updates them on what's going on in her life.

Social

While Laurel doesn't want to tell the adventurers about her dealings with Mugrub, a successful DC 16 Charisma (Deception, Persuasion, or Intimidation) check convinces her to talk. If half the characters buy zombies, they have advantage on this check. If they each buy a zombie, she freely tells them what she knows.

APPENDIX 4: THE BAT'S ROOST (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes.

SCENE A: GETTING IN TO SEE THE GOBLIN

If the characters have completed Bonus Objective A, they know Laurel got the gold Mugrub used to buy the key from Grubbus Pitsnout in a warehouse below the Bat's Roost fighting pit. (The main entrance of the Bat's Roost is in Middle Skullport. The warehouse below it is in Lower Skullport.)

PREREQUISITES

The adventurers must complete **Bonus Objective A** before beginning this episode.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

Getting the information from Grubbus Pitsnout that leads to Yraxilnith's lair is **Bonus Objective B**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The warehouse beneath The Bat's Roost is a 30-by-30-foot stone building with large double doors on the east side.

Lighting. It is completely dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

A shadar kai named **Traydis** (a female **shadow dancer**) and **Ordonez** (a nonbinary **drow blackguard**) are second-string pit fighters, lounging around waiting for their turn to see Grubbus.

Objectives/Goals. They not keen on someone cutting in front of them and think roughing someone up may endear them to the vicious little goblin.

What Do They Know? They know that Grubbus is upstairs, with his orc bodyguards interviewing a feisty kobold gladiator.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** Remove the **drow blackguard**; they don't think this fight is worth their time.
- **Strong:** Add another **shadow dancer** as Traydis' twin sister jumps in to join the fight.
- **Very Strong:** Add a **drow warlord**, who comes out of the bathroom right as the fight starts.

PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE A: GETTING IN TO SEE THE GOBLIN)

Combat

The shadar kai shadow dancer and the drow blackguard work together as a team. The Shadow Dancer grapples/restrains targets or knocks them prone, then the blackguard attacks those targets with advantage. At very strong, the warlord uses its legendary actions to command the two in the hold 'em/hit 'em routine. The combatants subdue anyone they take down and telegraph their intention to not kill the heroes. They tie the heroes up if they overcome them and call Grubbus down to look at them.

Exploration

There are many ways into the Bat's Roost that don't involve going in the warehouse door! If the characters go to Middle Skullport, they can sneak through the fighting pit and into Grubbus' office. Or they could climb the exterior walls of the building with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check and enter a window down the hall from his office. Traydis and Ordonez both like to gamble, and so would happily suggest an arm-wrestling match between the drow blackguard and a character using opposed Strength (Athletics) checks. If the heroes win, they get in first.

Social

Traydis and Ordonez are not eager to die and are happy to engage in some theatrical bluster well before a fight breaks out. They can be cowed with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check, though it's easier to persuade or lie to them with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception). If the characters can spin something believable as to why Grubbus would want to see them or if they bribe them at least 15 gold (EACH!) they have advantage on that check. Clever characters could even start a fight between the two!

SCENE B: GRUBBUS

Grubbus is a very busy goblin who interviews all the fighters and sets the odds on all of the matches at the Bat's Roost. His office is above the warehouse, but below the Bat's Roost proper.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. A 30-foot hallway leads to Grubbus' office and a makeshift infirmary/green room for the fighters. There are plenty of couches and chairs that provide cover.

Lighting. It is completely dark.

CREATURES/NPCs

Grubbus Pitsnout (a male goblin **mage**) and his two female **orc blades of Ilneval** bodyguards are interviewing Snagglegrin the Vicious (a female **kobold gladiator**).

Objectives/Goals. Grubbus wants the heroes to leave without violence but he also doesn't want to snitch on the mind flayer ("That right there, my friend, is what we call a career-limiting move!"). The orc bodyguards want to keep Grubbus safe and to do what he says. Snagglegrin is spoiling for a fight so she can show off her prowess.

What Do They Know? Grubbus knows that a mind flayer calling itself Yraxilnith has been betting hard on the fights in the last few tendays and has made several hundred gold. Over drinks, "Raxie" told Grubbus that it needed the money to buy off some Zhents that it had offended. Grubbus had Yraxilnith followed and knows where it lives (he was going to sell the information about where that treasure trove of cash was to some thieves.).

TREASURE

Grubbus keeps a *potion of greater healing* in his safe to revive a wounded gladiator. If he's impressed by the heroes' good manners, he gladly hands it over and wishes them luck.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene, according to your group.

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** Remove the **orc blades of Ilneval**.
- **Strong:** Add three **orc blades of Ilneval**.
- **Very Strong:** Replace the **orc blades of Ilneval** with three **orc champions**.



APPENDIX 5A: NOTE FROM VOLO

Gentle friend,

Please call upon me in the Guts and Garters in Skullport. I'd like you to participate in the greatest find in urban archaeology in Waterdeep in centuries!

Very preliminary map and the forward to my next folio are attached!

Volo

Volo's Extremely Brief Guide to Skullport

Skullport is a ruined and nearly abandoned secret port in a cavern deep beneath our beloved Waterdeep. This villainous den is home to numerous illicit activities and any vice can be found for the right price or if you are strong enough to take it. But woe to those who attract the attention of the Skulls! These floating, disembodied skulls rarely interact, but have been known to punish open conflict by raining fireballs down on all parties and bystanders.

The town connects to several levels of the Undermountain dungeon and to various sea caves. It is protected by Skull Island, which holds a hardened fortress. Two-story towers armed with siege weapons are strategically placed along the 20-foot-high outer walls. Limited in width by the underground cavern where it sits, Skullport's buildings rise upward from the street level of Lower Skullport into ramshackle levels called Middle and Upper Skullport.

It is controlled by "the Xanathar Guild". The organization is based on a "survival of the fittest" mentality, with those who scheme the best or murder their rivals rising to the top. Many of the residents work for Xanathar, pay tribute to Xanathar, keep tabs on Xanathar for another organization, or if very talented, all of the above. A few Harper spies seek to undermine Xanathar's schemes, Zhent agents have infiltrated the Xanathar Guild, and drow from Bregan D'aerthe occasionally lurk in dark alleys. Almost any creature could be encountered walking the streets and beyond the unpredictable intervention of the Skulls or the ire of the Xanathar Guild, there is no law.

Note that long-range transportation magic generally doesn't work in Skullport.

APPENDIX 5B: VOLO'S VERY RUDIMENTARY MAP OF SKULLPORT



APPENDIX 5C: PICTURE OF THE KEY



APPENDIX 5D: MUGRUB'S RECEIPT FROM THIMBLEWINE'S PAWN SHOP

THIMBLEWINE'S PAWN SHOP

client: Mugrub

Residence: Skull Square

Item purchased: golden key with gold dragon on handle

Price: 300 gp, paid in full with cash

APPENDIX 5E: MUGRUB'S MAP



APPENDIX 5F: MUGRUB'S NOTE

REMEMBER TO GET
THE MONEY FOR
THE KEY FROM
LAUREL STILLWATER

APPENDIX 6: MAGIC ITEM

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

AMULET OF HEALTH

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

Your Constitution score is 19 while you wear this amulet. It has no effect on you if your Constitution is already 19 or higher without it. This item is found on **Magic Item Table G** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

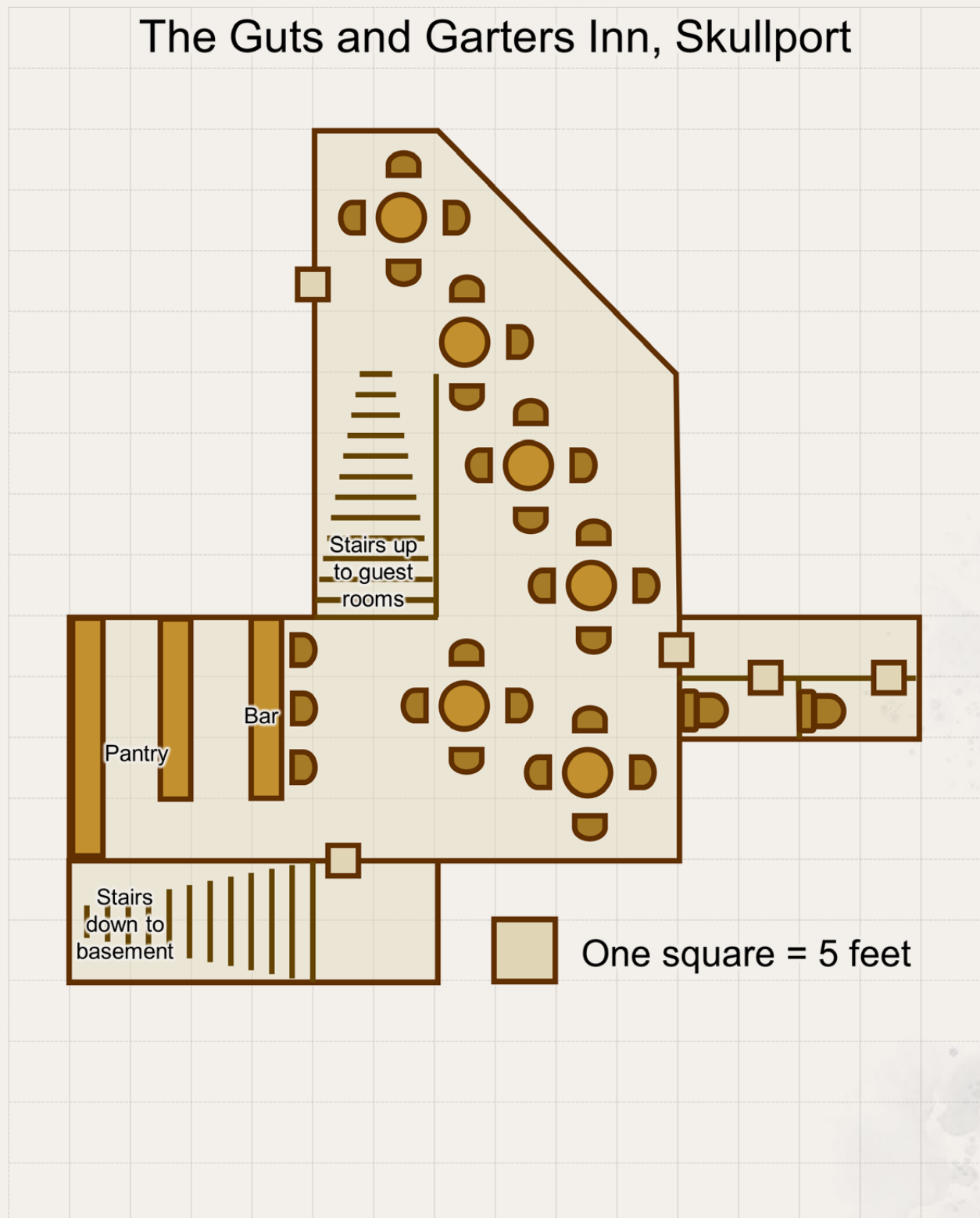
An electrum pendant in the shape of an eye surrounded by grasping tentacles hangs from a mithril chain. You have the feeling you are being watched whenever you were this amulet.



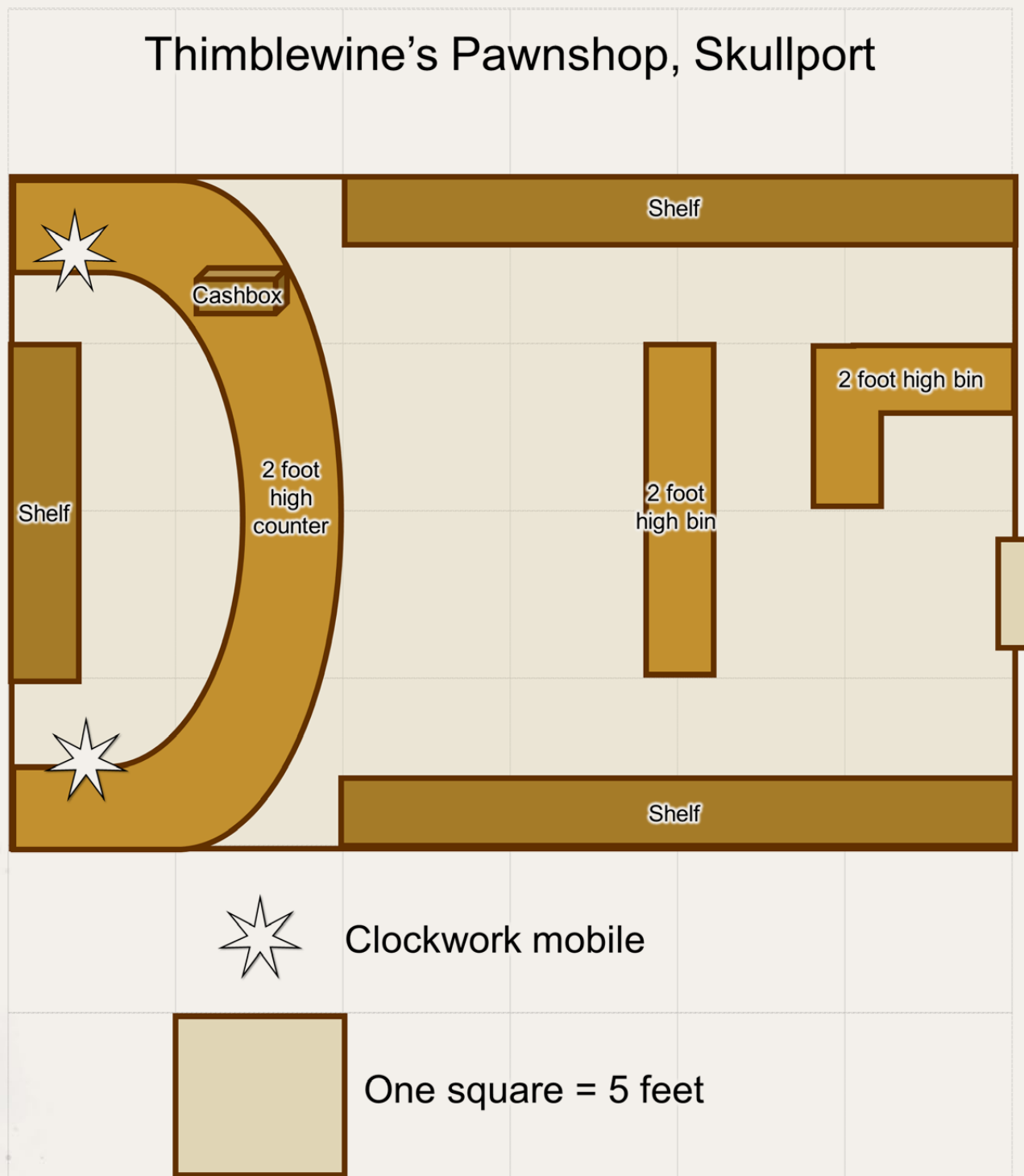
APPENDIX 7A: LOWER SKULLPORT DM OVERVIEW MAP



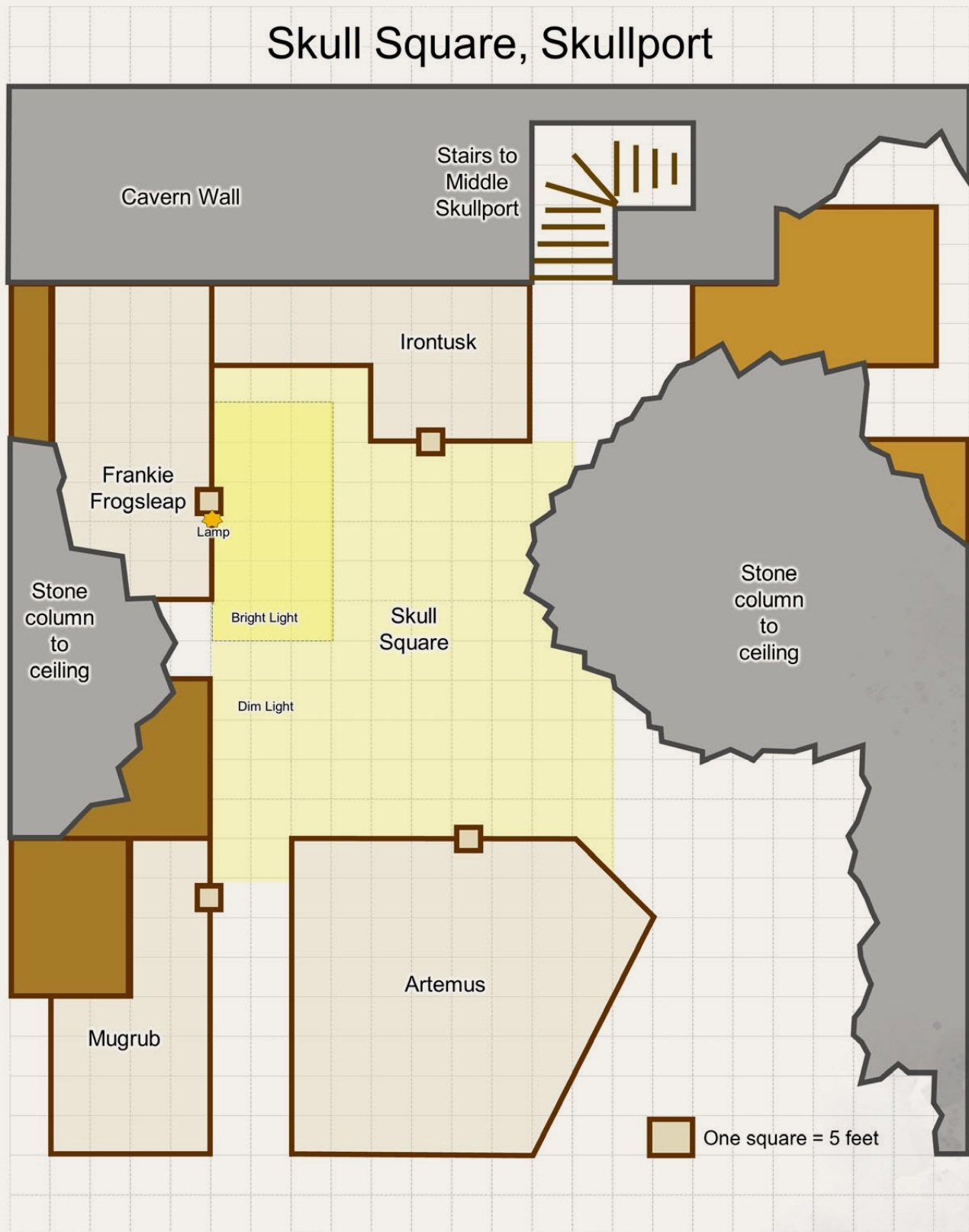
APPENDIX 7B: GUTS AND GARTERS DM MAP



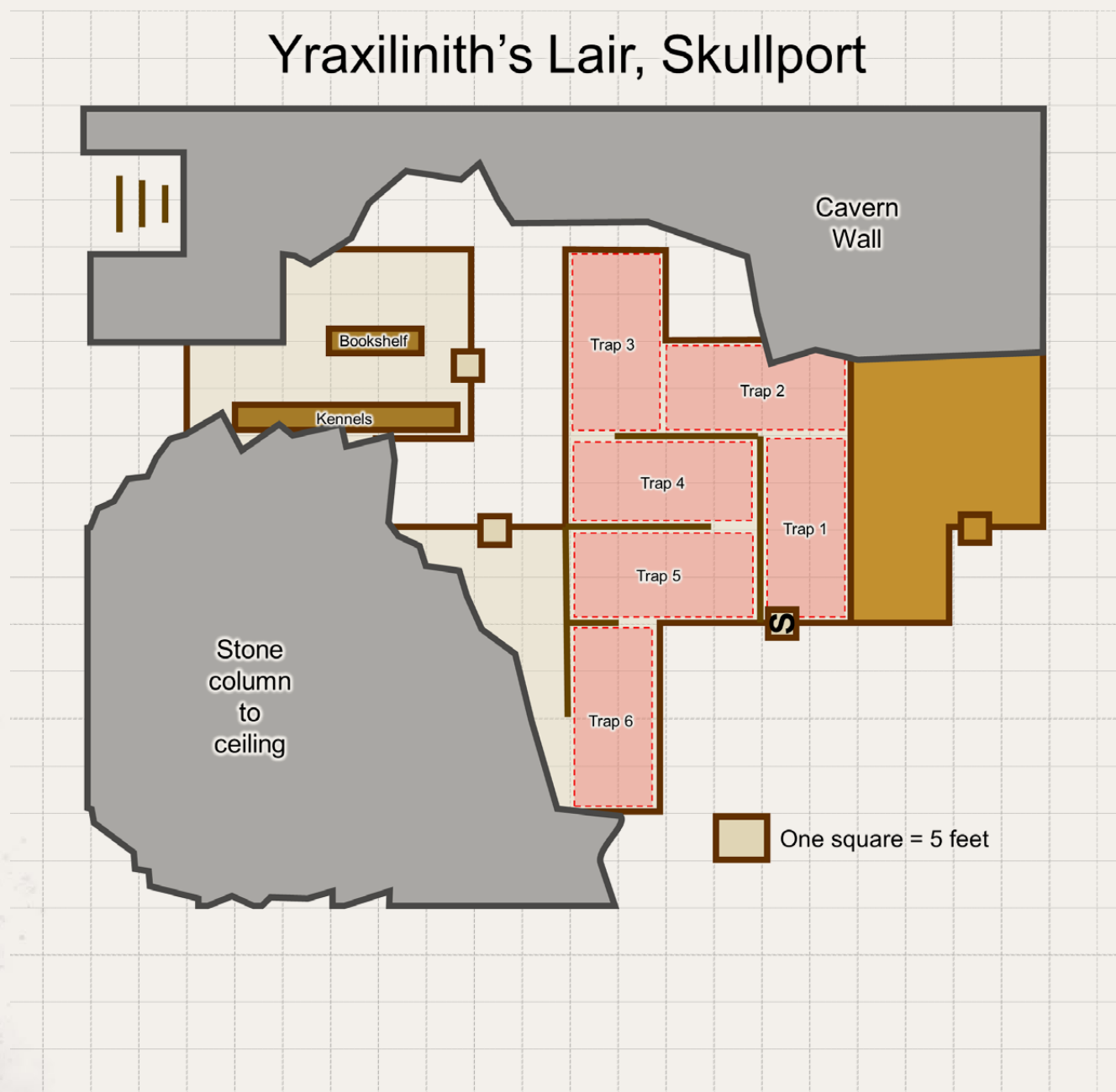
APPENDIX 7C: THIMBLEWINE'S PAWNSHOP DM MAP



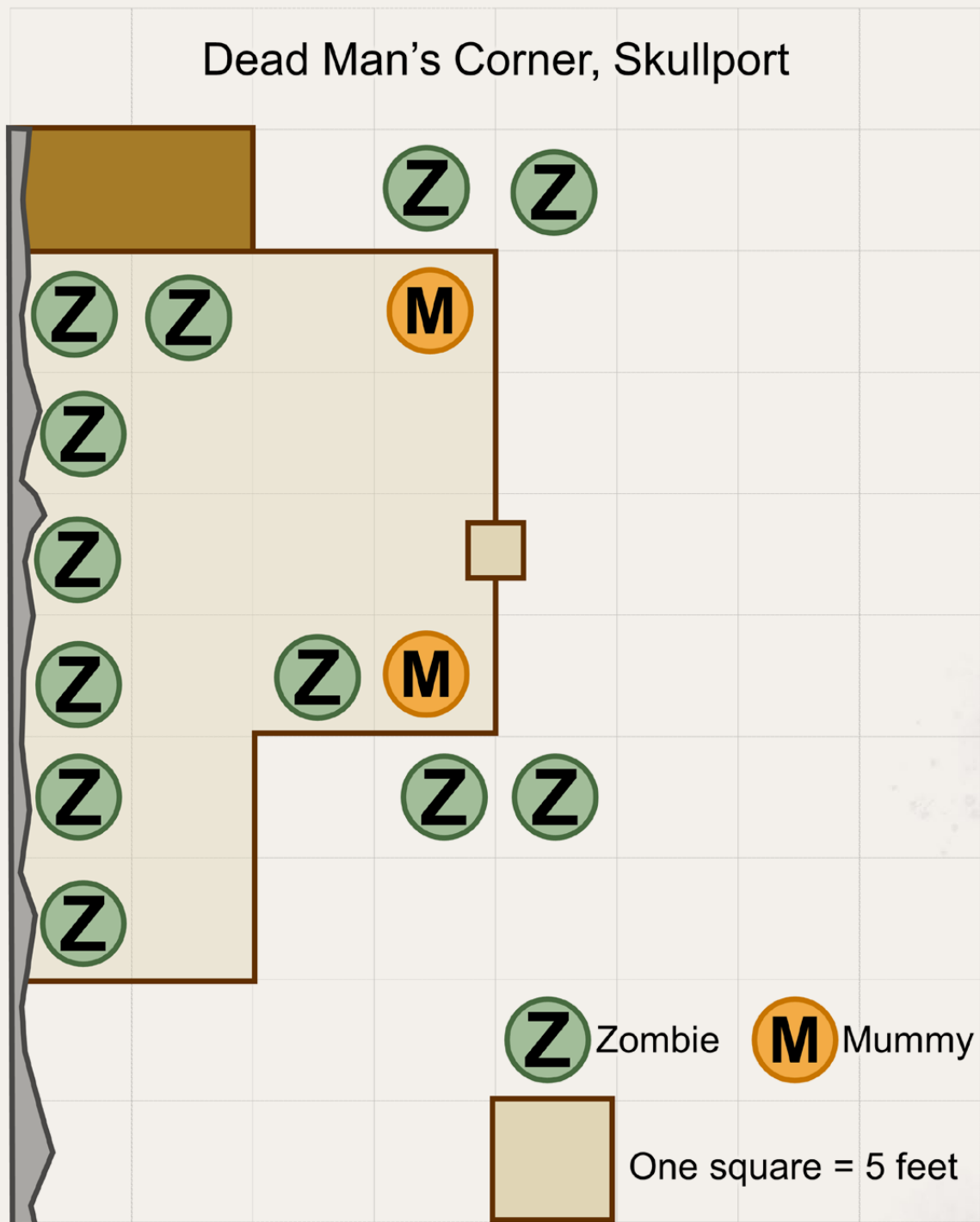
APPENDIX 7D: SKULL SQUARE DM MAP



APPENDIX 7E: THE TRAP QUEUE AND YRAXILINITH' LAIR DM MAP



APPENDIX 7F: DEAD MAN'S CORNER DM MAP



APPENDIX 7G: BAT'S ROOST DOWNSTAIRS DM MAP



APPENDIX 7H: BAT'S ROOST OFFICES DM MAP



APPENDIX 8: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

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

NEW TO WATERDEEP?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep>

NEW TO BEING THE DUNGEON MASTER?

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/waterdeep-adventures/>

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

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

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

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

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

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

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

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

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party	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

AMULET OF HEALTH

DDALo8-10 The Skull Square Murders

Your Constitution score is 19 while you wear this amulet. It has no effect on you if your Constitution is already 19 or higher without it. This item is found on Magic Item Table G in the Dungeon Master's Guide.

An electrum pendant in the shape of an eye surrounded by grasping tentacles hangs from a mithril chain. You have the feeling you are being watched whenever you wear this amulet.

RARE

MAGIC ITEM TABLE: **G**

Item Unlock

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Item Unlock



WATERDEEP
DRAGON HEIST™



WATERDEEP
DRAGON HEIST™



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DRAGON HEIST™



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