

THE HEIR OF

DIRCUES

VERSE III

Evil awaits you
in this adventure
for 5th-10th level
characters



Roll20

**ANTHONY
JOYCE**



THE HEIR OF **ORCUS** *VERSE III*

A TWO TO FOUR-HOUR ADVENTURE
FOR CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 5–10



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

This adventure builds off the events in *The Heir of Orcus: Verse I & II*. The adventure begins with the characters traveling to the duergar psionic research outpost of Duerradin to meet with the mysterious Ios.

In Duerradin the characters confront agents of the Heir of Orcus within Ios's consciousness in order to prevent them from stealing valuable technology that would allow the cult to create an endless supply of souls.

BACKGROUND

The characters receive a letter from Clan Duerra, a clan of duergar in **DUERRADIN**, a psionic research outpost and trading center. The letter requests their presence at Duerra Spire in Duerradin, where a mysterious figure known as **IOS** wants to share alarming information with the party regarding **THE HEIR OF ORCUS**, the cambion daughter of **ORCUS**, and her cult, the **CULT OF THE HEIR**.

The Cult of the Heir is operating within Duerradin, attempting to steal valuable technology that will aid the Heir of Orcus in her quest to kill her father, Orcus.

EPISODES

The adventure comprises three episodes, altogether taking approximately two hours to play through. A **Call to Action** episode introduces the next two.

If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play the episodes over several sessions, you should revisit the Call to Action each time you play.

- **Episode 1: The Tumultuous Road to Duerradin (Call to Action).** The characters travel to Duerradin. Along the way, they are attacked by a mob of cultists trying to stop them from traveling to Duerradin.
- **Episode 2: Duerradin.** The characters arrive at Duerradin and explore the outpost before heading to Duerra Spire.
- **Episode 3: Duerra Spire.** The characters meet with Ios in Duerra Spire to learn more about the Cult of the Heir. The Cult infiltrates Ios's consciousness and the characters confront them in a final battle.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure includes two bonus objectives the characters may pursue—earning up to two additional **advancement checkpoints** and two **treasure checkpoints** in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure's appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: The Reclamators of Duerradin.** The characters join the Reclamators and decide to either hunt down or help a rogue psym (a rogue psym is a "psymulacrum," a duplicate of a living creature acting against its designed purpose). Do psyms have souls? The characters struggle with this moral choice.
- **Bonus Objective B: Free the Mind.** The characters investigate the disappearance of several psyms. The clues lead them to the cultists of the Heir carrying out an insidious plot.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

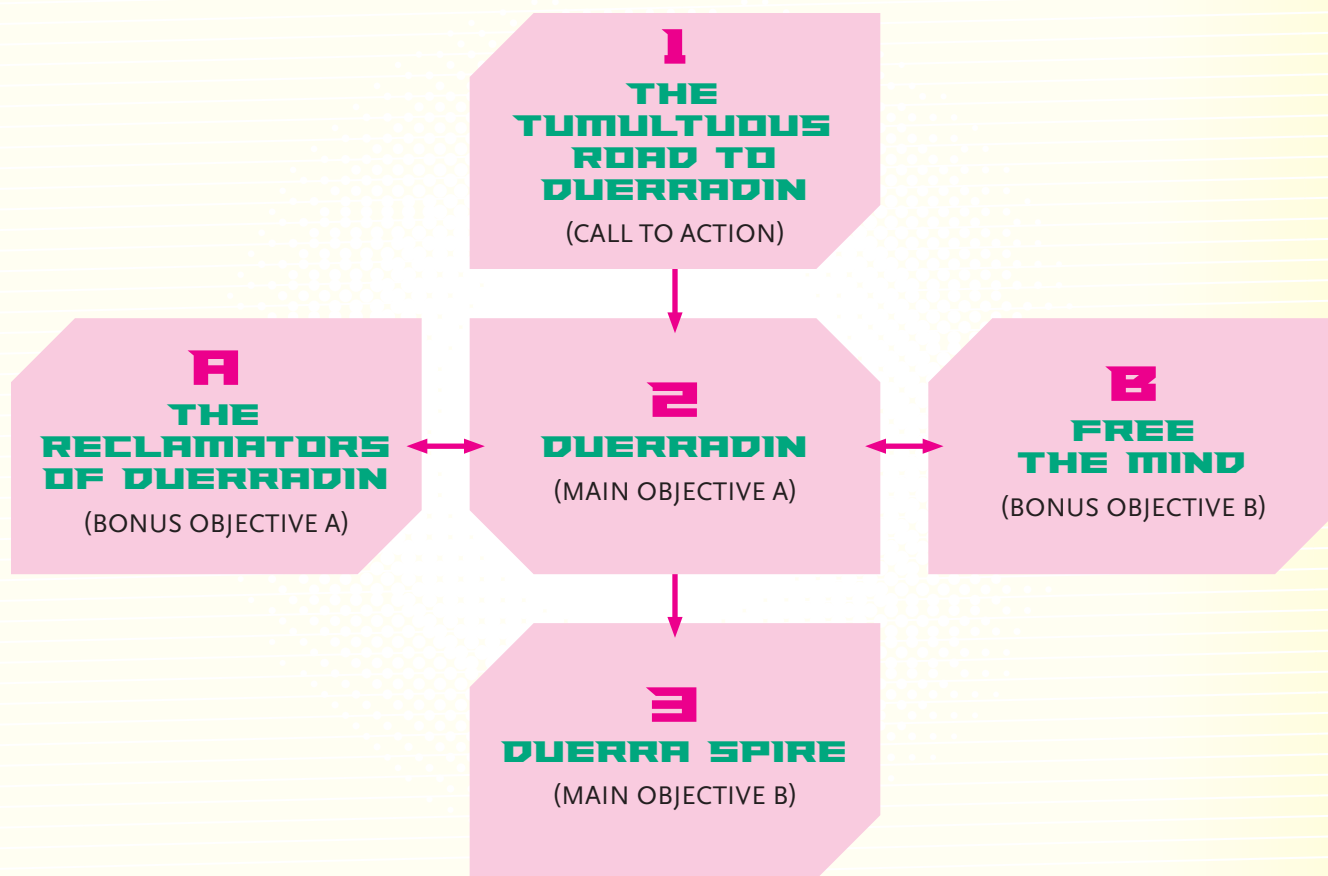
Each character receives a letter requesting their presence in Duerra Spire to speak with a mysterious individual named Ios (see "Invitation from Ios" in **Appendix F: Player Handouts**). Ios expresses its concern with the recent rise of the Cult of the Heir. It fears the Cult will attempt to steal valuable information that can greatly increase the power of the Heir of Orcus.

CHOOSING A SIDE

In *The Heir of Orcus: Verse I & II*, characters pick a side during their adventures. If the characters did not play prior Verses, they can choose a side before beginning this adventure. Following is a description of the three sides:

- **Knights of Holy Judgment.** A holy order of knights dedicated to the deity Tyr. They seek justice and retribution for the evil done by the Heir of Orcus.
- **Cult of Zariel.** These cultists seek to do whatever they can to stop the Heir of Orcus. They believe that if she becomes too powerful the Nine Hells could lose the Blood War.
- **Chaos.** Characters not aligned with either of the two sides fall in with Chaos. Ultimately, Cthulhu drives the actions of these characters; its reasoning and purpose are beyond mere mortals' understanding.

EPISODE FLOWCHART



EPISODE 1

THE TUMULTUOUS ROAD TO DUERRADIN (CALL TO ACTION)

The characters begin this adventure around a campfire during their journey to the duergar psionic research outpost of Duerradin. Cultists of the Heir attack the characters under the cover of darkness. If any of the characters haven't played *The Heir of Orcus: Verse I & II*, they choose a side before starting this episode (see the "Choosing a Side" subsection in the preceding *Adventure Primer*).

ESTIMATED DURATION: 30 minutes

SCENE A: ON THE ROAD AGAIN

OBJECTIVES

- **MAIN OBJECTIVE A:** Travel to Duerra Spire in Duerradin for information on the Cult of the Heir activities in Duerradin.
- **MAIN OBJECTIVE B:** Confront the Cult of the Heir in Duerradin.

The characters begin this adventure relaxing around a campfire at a crossroad in the foothills of the Trollcrag Mountains near Ylraphon. They are traveling to the duergar psionic research outpost of Duerradin to meet with a mysterious individual named Ios (make sure players read "Invitation from Ios" in **Appendix F: Player Handouts**).

Use this moment to facilitate character introductions. Note what "sides" the characters belong too (see the "Choosing a Side" subsection in the preceding *Adventure Primer*), this will determine which non-player characters are introduced to the scene next (see the "Creatures/NPCs" section below). After character introductions are complete, begin the "Attack of the Cultists" event.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Rolling foothills beneath the Trollcrag Mountains.

Lighting. Dim moonlight illuminates the sky.

Smells & Sounds. Crisp, cold fresh air, and a gentle wind whisp carelessly down from the nearby mountaintops. An owl is hooting in a nearby tree.

CREATURES/NPCS

If characters belonging to the Knights of Holy Judgment or Cult of Zariel are present, then the NPCs from those "sides" walk up to the campfire after the characters introduce themselves.

The Knights of Holy Judgment and Cult of Zariel are in a tense partnership and have agreed to work together to eradicate the Heir of Orcus and her cult. Use this tension to roleplay the NPCs accordingly.

Knights of Holy Judgment. The Inquisitor (LG male **planetar**), Ser Titus (LG male **knight**), and Ser Gertz (LG female **priest**). See **Appendix A: NPCs & Locations** for NPC personality traits.

Knights of Holy Judgment Objectives, Goals, and Motivations. The Knights of Holy Judgment want to find and disrupt the Cult of the Heir's activities. The Knights of Holy Judgment have temporarily agreed to tolerate the presence of the Cult of Zariel until they destroy the Heir of Orcus and her cult.

Cult of Zariel. Vindictus (LE female **erinyes**), Mordakai (LE male **incubus** in the form of a male tiefling), Orianna (LE female **succubus** in the form of a female tiefling), and Nurfenpurf (LE male **cultist**). See **Appendix A: NPCs & Locations** for NPC personality traits.

Cult of Zariel Objectives, Goals, and Motivations. The Cult of Zariel wants to find and disrupt the Cult of the Heir's activities. The Cult finds value in using the Knights of Holy Judgment and other characters not aligned with them as a means to achieve their ends.

KNIGHTS OF HOLY JUDGMENT



THE INQUISITOR

SER TITUS

SER GERTZ

THE CULT OF ZARIEL



VINDICTUS

MORDAKAI

ORIANNA

NURFENPURF



Epic Failure. Zero successful ability checks. The characters suffer an embarrassing defeat at the hands of the mob of cultists. The Inquisitor and/or Vindictus are the lasts ones standing to fight off the mob. If Nurfenpurf, Mordakai, or Ser Gertz are present, they are all slaughtered during the battle. If Ser Titus is present, his right arm and a left leg are cut off during the battle.

If all the characters align with Chaos, they are knocked unconscious and the mob of cultists steal 20gp off each character's body. After a minute, a horrible visage of Cthulhu manifests and causes the mob of cultists to go mad and slaughter each other.

Each character takes 42 (12d6) slashing damage from the mob of cultists during the course of the battle.

The cultist leading the mob drops a *gem of brightness* during the heat of battle. However, the gem is severely damaged and will not work for the duration of this adventure. It functions normally in any subsequent adventure.

WHAT DO THE CULTISTS OF THE HEIR KNOW?

The cultists know that agents of the Heir of Orcus are operating in Duerradin searching for new technology. Several cultists are lodging at "Serenity" in Duerradin and have successfully begun covert operations within the outpost.

Characters capture cultists if they narrate doing so and are successful during the "Attack of the Cultists" event. A captured cultist shares the above information if a character questions them and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength or Charisma (Intimidation) check or DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

DEVELOPMENT

After the "Attack of the Cultists" event, the characters continue on their journey to Duerradin. Characters choose one living NPC from their side to accompany them for the remainder of the adventure. The Inquisitor and Vindictus cannot accompany the characters, instead they depart with the remaining NPCs to search the Trollcrag Mountains for the Cult of the Heir. If the characters align with Chaos, they travel unaccompanied by NPCs.

TREASURE

Nurfenpurf carries an exquisite "double-stuffed bacon, potato, and omelet stew" recipe in his pocket.

The cultist leading the mob drops a magnificent blue twenty-sided *gem of brightness* during the "Attack of the Cultists" event. This gem is made from the remains of an earth elemental.

EPISODE 2

DUERRADIN (MAIN OBJECTIVE A)

In this episode, the characters travel to Duerra Spire to receive information on the Cult of the Heir. This episode also introduces Bonus Objective A and B.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 45 minutes

SCENE A: ARRIVING IN DUERRADIN

OBJECTIVES

- **MAIN OBJECTIVE A:** The characters travel to Duerra Spire to learn about recent Cult of the Heir activities.

This scene introduces characters to the duergar outpost of Duerradin. In the center of Duerradin is the imposing Duerra Spire which houses **Ios**, an **elder brain** subjugated by Clan Duerra. This elder brain forms a network of minds between all duergar in Clan Duerra; what one duergar in Clan Duerra sees or hears, the entire Clan Duerra sees and hears. Ios emits a psionic signal to Clan Duerra when any characters enter via the gates of Duerradin. The clan dispatches **GRACKLESTEN** (LE male duergar **mind master**), a greeter, to meet the characters after they enter the gates. If characters manage to bypass the gate without physically passing through, Ios dispatches Gracklesten once a duergar spots the characters.

Dungeon Masters control the pace of the adventure at their table; utilize the areas in Duerradin to facilitate player exploration. Gracklesten greets the characters whenever the Dungeon Master determines the time is right.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Duerradin is a large outpost with slick steel high-rising duergar structures. The craftsmanship of the structures is highly unusual. An imposing spire several hundred feet tall dominates the center of the outpost.

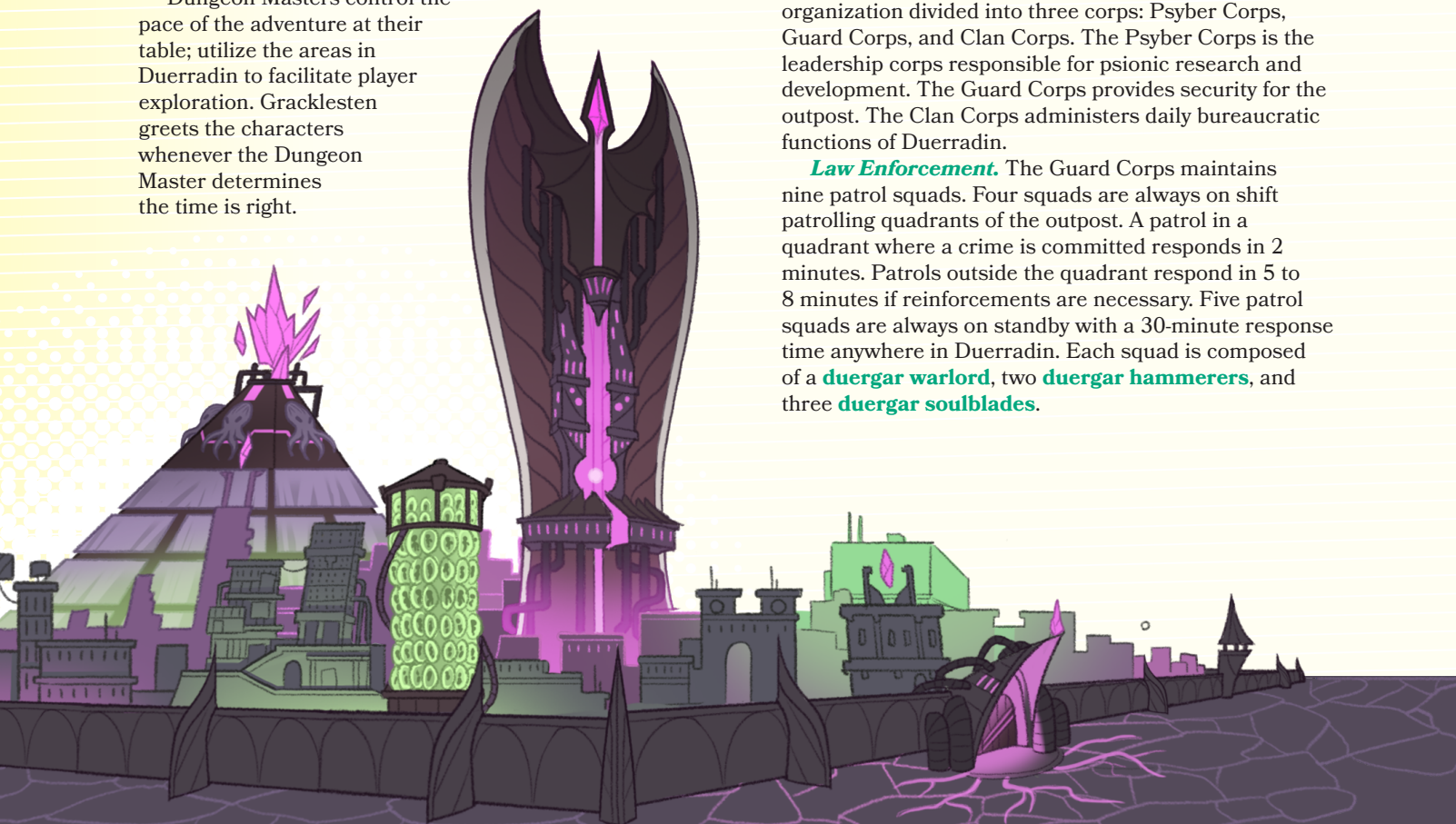
Lighting. Dazzling neon lights cast bright light throughout the outpost. Beams of light pierce the darkness above the outpost as small illuminated mechanical contraptions fly about overhead.

Smells & Sounds. Merchants shout prices from booths, duergar guards chase down a street criminal, and the smell of exotic food and spices hangs in the air.

Sights. Duergar walk the streets shopping, eating, and smoking. The duergar wear elaborate spectacles and clothing. All labor is carried out by dwarves and drow psyms (see “Lore the DM Should Know: Duerradin” sidebar).

Government. As a militocracy, Clan Duerra administers Duerradin under a singular military organization divided into three corps: Psyber Corps, Guard Corps, and Clan Corps. The Psyber Corps is the leadership corps responsible for psionic research and development. The Guard Corps provides security for the outpost. The Clan Corps administers daily bureaucratic functions of Duerradin.

Law Enforcement. The Guard Corps maintains nine patrol squads. Four squads are always on shift patrolling quadrants of the outpost. A patrol in a quadrant where a crime is committed responds in 2 minutes. Patrols outside the quadrant respond in 5 to 8 minutes if reinforcements are necessary. Five patrol squads are always on standby with a 30-minute response time anywhere in Duerradin. Each squad is composed of a **duergar warlord**, two **duergar hammerers**, and three **duergar soulblades**.



LORE THE DM SHOULD KNOW: DUERRADIN

Clan Duerra. The duergar of Clan Duerra established Duerradin centuries ago. Clan Duerra traces its roots to Deep Duerra and exhibits extreme psionic capabilities.

Deep Duerra. The duergar deity of conquest and psionics. She enslaved an entire mind flayer colony and stole the gift of psionics from the illithids. Deep Duerra subjugated the elder brain Ios and left a remnant of her psyche within its consciousness. Her symbol is a mind flayer skull.

Duerradin. Stories tell of a harrowing moment when Deep Duerra bravely entered a mind flayer colony and single-handedly defeated the mind flayers and subjugated the colony's elder brain. Deep Duerra and her ancestors built Duerradin atop the ruins of the mind flayer colony and learned how to fully subjugate the elder brain named Ios to create a network of minds amongst the duergar of Clan Duerra. Duerradin has since developed and masterfully harnessed psionic energy to power highly sophisticated mechanical devices. Duerradin is a hub of psionic research as Clan Duerra continues to expand the limits of psionic capabilities and technology.

Psiontist. The leadership of the Psyber Corps are powerful duergar psionic users and researchers known as Psiontists.

Psymulacrums or Psyms. Duerradin moved away from the practice of slavery after Clan Duerra discovered an alternative means of developing a labor force during intense research on the effects of the simulacrum spell. This research led to the invention of a psionic-powered mechanical device called a psymulator. This device produces "psyms" (pronounced "sims"), exact illusory duplicates of beasts and humanoids. There are several classes of psyms ranging from semi-autonomous psyms to rigidly programmed psyms who carry out menial tasks and functions. A majority of psyms in Duerradin are dwarves and drow, serving as a slight against those races. Psyms show no emotion or individualism outside of their designed purpose, although rumors claim there are psyms wholly identical to real beasts and humanoids in every aspect. Psyms act within the constraints of their intended purpose and interact with characters as appropriate to their functions.

Rogue Psyms. There are fringe cases where psyms gain full autonomy; these psyms are referred to as rogue psyms. Rogue psyms are hunted down and killed by Reclamators. Rogue psyms express emotions, autonomy, and individualism indistinguishable from non-psyms.

Reclamators. A specialized division of officers in the Psyber Corps have the legal authority to hunt and kill rogue psyms. Reclamators also serve as experimental psionic and psym subjects unbeknownst to anyone outside the highest levels of the Psyber Corps. Due to the highly experimental nature of this profession, the Psyber Corps openly recruits non-duergar. Reclamators are identified by their unique badges and cloaks.

CREATURES/ NPCs

Gracklesten (LE male **duergar mind master**) prides himself on being an official Duerradin greeter; he has a wealth of knowledge regarding the outpost. If he doesn't know the answer to a question about Duerradin, he lies and makes one up to appear all-knowing. Gracklesten has fluffy white hair and a well-groomed beard. He wears spectacles, speaks with a lisp, and is overconfident in his skills as a historian of Duerradin.

Gracklesten's Objectives/Goals. Gracklesten is tasked with personally escorting the characters until Ios is ready to receive them. He acts as a tour guide for the characters as part of Duerradin's recent cultural outreach program and is proud of his position.



DM TIP: FACILITATING BONUS OBJECTIVES

If you are running the Bonus Objectives, Gracklesten takes the characters to Duerra Spire once he receives a "ready" notification from Ios. This allows players ample opportunity to explore Duerradin and play out any Bonus Objectives before heading to Duerra Spire for the Main Objectives. DMs determine when Ios sends the ready notification to Gracklesten.

WHAT DOES GRACKLESTEN KNOW?

- Gracklesten knows a great deal of lore of Duerradin.
- The Reclamators are recruiting new officers to investigate the increased occurrence of rogue psyms (see **Appendix D: The Reclamators of Duerradin**).
- Several psyms have mysteriously vanished (see **Appendix E: Free the Mind**).

DEVELOPMENT

When the characters arrive at Duerra Spire, Episode 3 begins. **Bonus Objectives** must be completed before starting Episode 3.



DM MAP OF DUERRADIN



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The Guard Corps responds to any reported disturbances. It's important to remember that all duergar in Clan Duerra are connected via Ios. If the characters assault or commit crimes against any members of Clan Duerra, a Guard Corps patrol responds to the scene of the crime.

EXPLORATION

The module recommends characters visit one location before Gracklesten takes the characters to Duerra Spire. However, if pursuing Bonus Objectives, or if Episode 1 ends quickly, exploring more of Duerradin is a viable option.

SOCIAL

Clan Duerra openly accepts outsiders. They recognize the necessity of outside trade and interaction. Also, unbeknownst to the general public, the Psyber Corps desires non-duergar subjects with which to conduct intense psionic research.

SCENE B: EXPLORING DUERRADIN

Use this scene to facilitate initial exploration of Duerradin until the players either pursue **Bonus Objectives** or travel to Duerra Spire to complete the **Main Objectives**. Gracklesten escorts the characters around Duerradin until Ios is ready to receive them. Ios receives the characters at the DM's discretion to facilitate exploration at your table's unique pace.

AREA 1: SERENITY

Serenity is an exclusive Duerradin inn providing sleeping pods for paying guests. Each sleeping pod accommodates up to two guests and costs 4gp per day or 3gp for duergar. Cleanliness is paramount at Serenity; psyms endlessly clean Serenity before, during, and after guests arrive. The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This cylindrical dark purple steel structure is 50 feet high and divided into five floors:

- Floor 1 is a lobby.
- Floors 2–4 contain sleeping pods along the outer wall of the structure with windows looking out over Duerradin. The sleeping pods and their windows evoke the image of an odd beehive.
- Floor 5 is an observation deck.

Lighting. The lobby and observation deck are dimly lit. Each sleeping pod has an adjustable light source.

Smells & Sounds. Vanilla and tranquil aromas linger throughout Serenity. A group of psyms play instruments in the lobby; they perform soft, smooth, and relaxing music.

CREATURES/NPCS

Fargore Duerra (LE male **duergar**) is the crusty, ancient, cantankerous proprietor of Serenity. He is so old he can no longer walk and has trouble hearing or seeing, though he adamantly denies it. A strange mechanical contraption engulfs his entire body, built from a flail snail shell which rolls about like a balanced ball with his head always upright. Fargore talks about the old

days and the laziness of this new generation of entitled duergar.

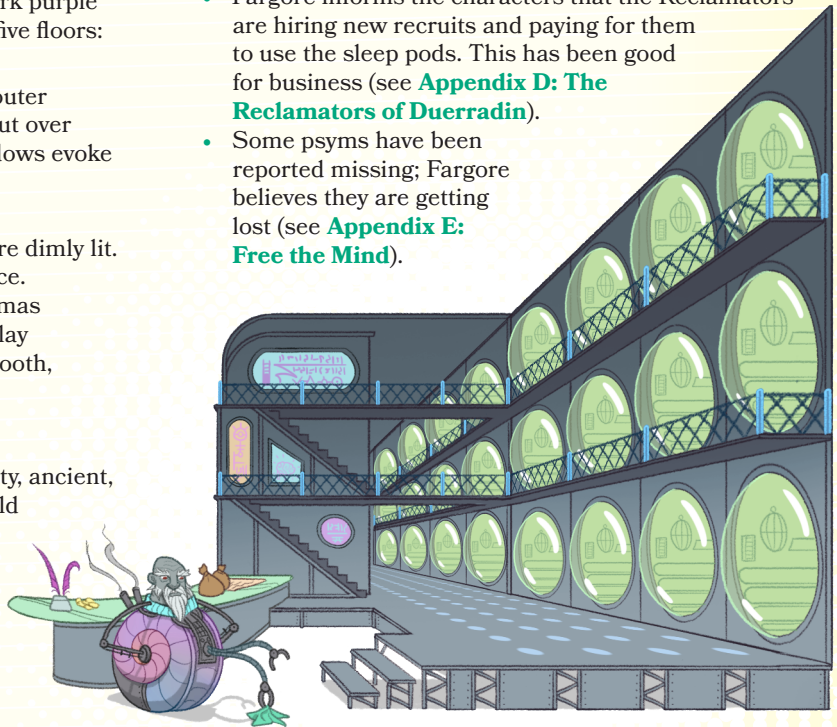
Fargore's Objectives/Goals.

Fargore wants to run the cleanest establishment in Duerradin. Things aren't as neat as they used to be and he's going to change that! Fargore has a collection of 20 pictures, that when rapidly flipped, illustrate a wererat chasing a goblin. Since Fargore is unable to use his hands, he rolls around following the characters, continually asking them to flip the illustrations for him; he's open about not liking how the psyms flip them.



WHAT DOES FARGORE KNOW?

- Fargore believes the old times were the best times and don't you forget it!
- Fargore informs the characters that the Reclamators are hiring new recruits and paying for them to use the sleep pods. This has been good for business (see **Appendix D: The Reclamators of Duerradin**).
- Some psyms have been reported missing; Fargore believes they are getting lost (see **Appendix E: Free the Mind**).



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

If Fargore is threatened or feels unsafe around the characters, he threatens to call the guards (reference the "Law Enforcement" subsection in Scene A). If attacked, Fargore dashes by rolling away in his flail snail contraption.

EXPLORATION

If the characters explore any of the sleeping pods, they happen to find a sleeping pod belonging to **THELBUNIOUS**, a warlock dedicated to the Heir of Orcus (see **Appendix E: Free the Mind**). A note in his sleeping pod reads, "Step 1: Get psym. Step 2: Sacrifice. Step 3: Check for soul. Step 4: Repeat."

SOCIAL

Fargore interrupts characters to ask them to flip his illustrations. If anyone flips the pictures, he rolls back and forth while humming a melody and awkwardly giggling. After this, if a character succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check, Fargore offers the characters free rooms for the night.

AREA 2: THE BLACK PYRAMID

The Black Pyramid comprises all that remains of a massive illithid structure—the only structure left intact after Deep Duerra destroyed this mind flayer colony long ago. The tip of the structure is made of an unknown black crystal-like material. The duergar built an elaborate entertainment lounge within the Black Pyramid catering to the many vices of duergar. Duergar do not consume alcohol as it reminds them of their past enslavement at the hands of the illithids. Instead, the Black Pyramid serves narcotic herbs, plants, and energizing beverages.

Several prominent psiontists reside in highly secure luxury residences called the “Pyramidion,” located in the tip of the Black Pyramid. No one is allowed in the Pyramidion without an invitation from a psiontist.

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This massive illithid structure resembles a black pyramid, its tip made of an unknown black crystal material. The majority of the structure is submerged underground, and large parts of it were permanently destroyed long ago during Deep Duerra’s attack on the mind flayer colony.

Lighting. A dim light emits from pink and blue illuminating devices floating about the entertainment lounge.

Smells & Sounds. Potent exotic herbs and smoke create an aromatic bliss of relaxation and ease. Strange synthetic music fills every corner of the Black Pyramid’s entertainment lounge.

CREATURES/NPCS

Patrons. 3d8 **duergar** patrons and 1d12 non-duergar patrons (**commoners**) are present at any given time.

Psym Staff. Four **drow** psyms and four dwarf (**commoner**) psyms are on shift at any given time providing services to patrons of the Black Pyramid.

Lia (N female **drow**) is present when the characters visit the Black Pyramid. Lia is a rogue psym with a pink mohawk. She operates a psionic-powered table device emitting strange synthetic music throughout the Black Pyramid lounge.

Objectives/Goals. Lia tries to remain innocuous. She knows she is a rogue psym and is terrified the Reclamators might come for her. She hopes to find outsiders who might help her find out why psyms are going missing in Duerradin.



WHAT DOES LIA KNOW?

Lia noticed two male human patrons wearing the signet of two interlinked upside down triangles, taking a keen interest in several psyms working in the Black Pyramid. Three nights ago, Lia witnessed these same men escorting two psyms to a derelict structure in the southwest corner of Duerradin. She never again saw the two men nor the missing psyms (see **Appendix E: Free the Mind**).

If characters question why Lia cares about these psyms, she gets nervous about revealing herself as a rogue psym. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Lia’s nervousness. If the characters are working for the Reclamators, they can kill her or bring her into Reclamator Station where they expose her as a rogue psym.



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

If the characters start trouble, the duergar patrons in the Black Pyramid attack. A guard patrol shows up after three rounds of combat (reference the “Law Enforcement” subsection in Scene A).

EXPLORATION

The Psym Staff stops characters who explore the Black Pyramid if they attempt to enter the Pyramidion. Only psiontists and their guests are allowed upstairs. The doors to the Pyramidion require unique access stones only given to psiontists.

SOCIAL

Characters who dance to Lia’s music and succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check gain her favor. These characters have advantage on any Charisma (Persuasion) checks with Lia.

EPISODE 3

DUERRA SPIRE (MAIN OBJECTIVE B)

In this episode, the characters meet Ios and gain information on recent Cult of the Heir activities. During this meeting, agents of the Cult of the Heir attempt to steal valuable psymulator technology from Ios.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 30 minutes

SCENE A: MEETING IOS

OBJECTIVES

- **MAIN OBJECTIVE B:** Confront the Cult of the Heir in Duerradin.

Duerra Spire is several hundred feet tall and resembles an elongated double-bladed axe head. The outer edges of Duerra Spire are protected by a translucent alien material in which bright pink psionic energy pulsates. When the characters approach Duerra Spire, they come to two large steel doors which automatically open into a chamber with a bright green ring atop a strange device.

Upon entering the chamber, **Ios** projects itself via the green rings atop the device as an enormous illusion of a female drow's face.

AREA INFORMATION: DUERRA SPIRE CHAMBER

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This large circular chamber houses powerful psionic devices capable of projecting illusions Ios wishes others to see. The inside of the chamber has a sleek minimalist aesthetic.

Lighting. The chamber is dimly lit by strange psionic devices displaying illusory images of Duerradin, text in Undercommon, and other oddities.

Smells & Sounds. Duerra Spire is sanitary; an acidic smell caused by cleaning chemicals hangs in the air. Cube-shaped, psionic-powered devices chirp and click throughout the spire.

CREATURES/NPCS

Ios (LE **elder brain**) was subjugated by Deep Duerra long ago during her assault on the mind flayer colony. It has since lost its individualistic personality,

functioning instead like a machine dedicated to the enduring prosperity of Clan Duerra.

Ios can project itself via illusion emitted from psionic-powered bright green rings located throughout Duerra Spire, which allow Ios to project its "voice." Ios depicts itself as the head of a female drow. The elder brain itself resides in a protective vault deep within Duerra Spire.

Ios's Objectives/Goals. Ios thanks the characters for traveling to Duerradin, and tells them it wants to assist in destroying the Cult of the Heir. It feels threatened by the rise of the Cult of the Heir. On a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, a character detects a hint of concern in Ios's voice when it speaks of the Cult of the Heir.



WHAT DOES IOS KNOW?

- Ios reveals the Cult of the Heir grows rapidly in numbers and recruits "souls" to empower the Heir of Orcus.
- Analysis suggests the Cult of the Heir gathers strength for a large-scale offensive across Faerûn.
- The Cult of the Heir has discovered that psyms have souls. Ios does not share this information readily, but a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check leads Ios to divulge that Duerradin secretly knows psyms have souls yet continues to produce them as a labor force.
- Ios hypothesizes that the Heir of Orcus wants to become a Demon Lord, destroy Orcus, and end the Blood War.

DEVELOPMENT

After Ios has shared all its information with the characters, transition to Scene B.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

If the characters become hostile toward Ios, it locks the doors and dispatches two Guard Corps patrols (reference "Law Enforcement" in "Episode 2, Scene A: Arriving in Duerradin").

EXPLORATION

If a character makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check they spot glass orbs in the ceiling. These orbs are psionically connected to Ios's telepathic hub, allowing it to watch the characters through them.

SOCIAL

Ios is emotionless, direct, and matter-of-fact. Characters utilizing logical arguments while speaking with Ios make Charisma (Persuasion) checks with advantage.

SCENE B: INTO THE MIND

Red lights flash within the Duerra Spire as a wailing noise reverberates about the room. Agents of the Cult of the Heir attempt to infiltrate Ios's consciousness. Unbeknownst to Ios and the characters, the Cult of the Heir has acquired a powerful psionic device called a *qualith transcriber* and uses it from an unknown location in the Underdark to temporarily infiltrate Ios's consciousness.

Ios is immediately aware of the infiltration into its consciousness and realizes a *qualith transcriber* accesses its memories of psymulator technology.

LORE THE DM SHOULD KNOW: QUALITH TRANSCRIBER

A *qualith transcriber* is a highly advanced and powerful prototype device of illithid origin. Only a handful existed before the sudden fall of the illithid empires. This device allows creatures to enter into the psyche, telepathic hub, or consciousness of other creatures and extract memories. Ancient lore suggests these devices were crafted using the hardened brain stems of alien creatures with vast psionic powers. The memories are stored within the *qualith transcriber* and infused into the mind of creatures who then touch the transcriber to their temples. If a *qualith transcriber* is destroyed within the consciousness of its target, it ceases to function and is unable to extract memories from its target creature.

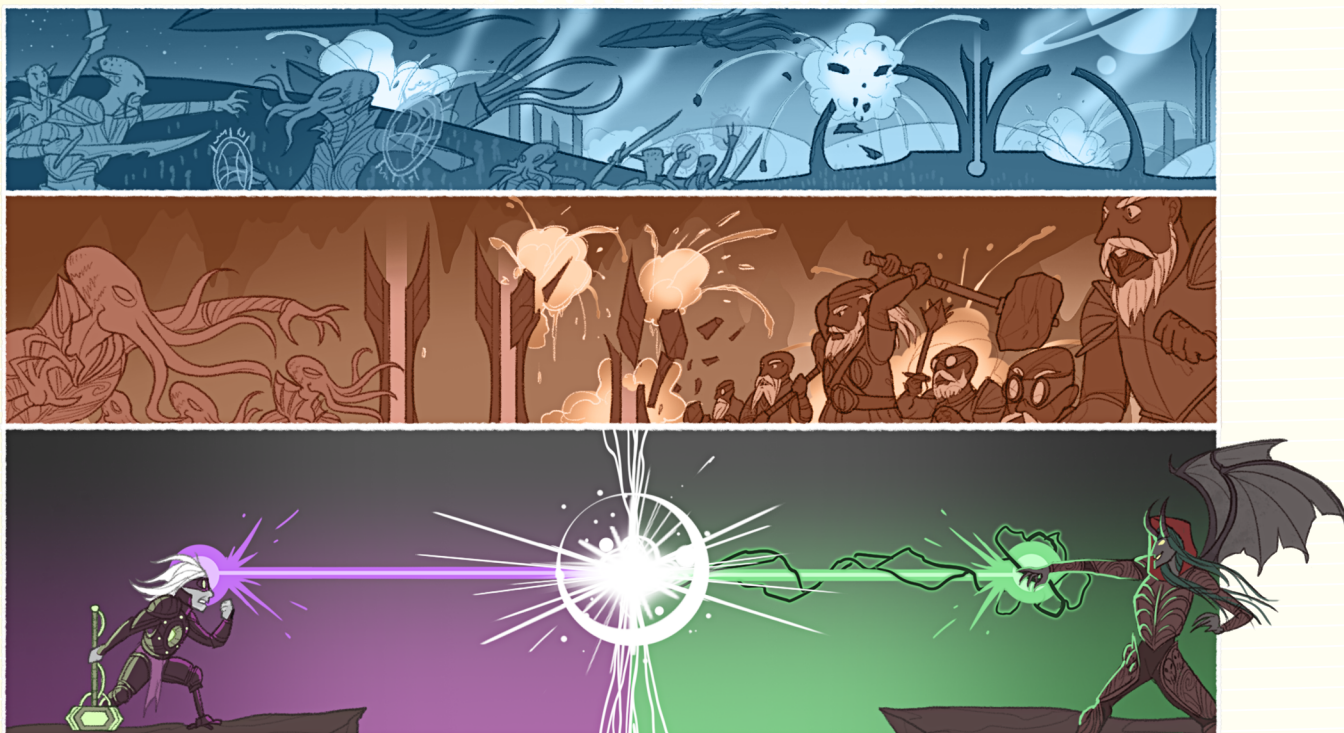
ENTERING IOS'S CONSCIOUSNESS

Ios informs the characters of the enemy infiltration into its consciousness and requests their assistance. Only a few moments remain before the Cult of the Heir successfully extracts the psymulator technology from Ios. Ios's illusion stretches out several hands toward the characters and urgently requests them to press their foreheads upon its hands so it can transfer them into its consciousness to confront and defeat the enemy infiltrators. Ios warns the characters that if they die in its consciousness, their brains will rupture. Ios gives the characters one *potion of heroism* to help the characters overcome any fears they might have. Any character or NPC who puts their forehead against Ios's hands instantly transfers into its' consciousness where the final encounter of this adventure takes place.

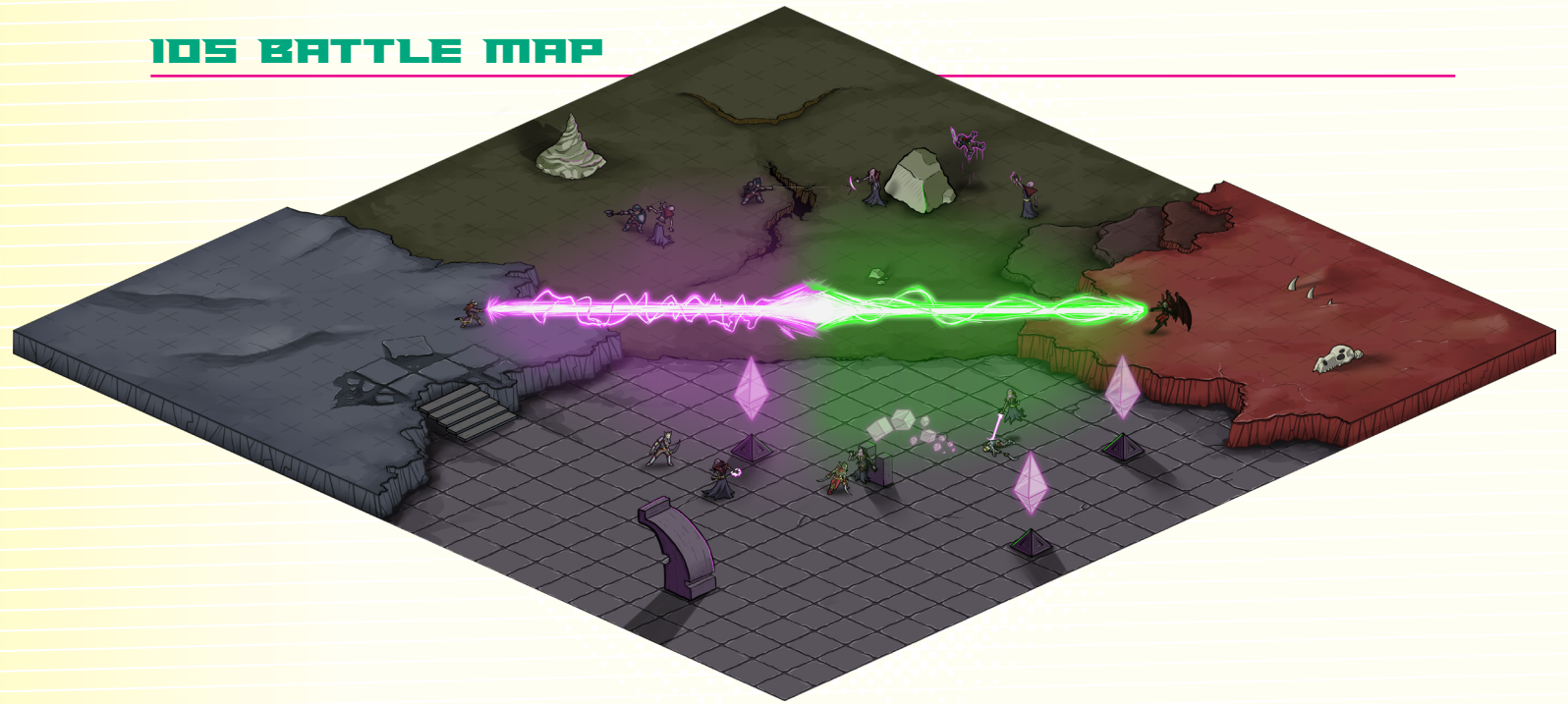
AREA INFORMATION: IOS'S CONSCIOUSNESS

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. A battle of traumatic experiences wages within Ios's consciousness. The consciousness reimagines the gith uprisings (south portion of the consciousness) and duergar revolts (north portion of the consciousness) that twice overthrew the illithid empire. On opposite ends of the consciousness, a psychic remnant of Deep Duerra desperately fights



IOS BATTLE MAP



Deep Duerra's remnant hopelessly fights against the presence of the Heir of Orcus to prevent the *qualith transcriber* from stealing the psymulator technology. Deep Duerra continually engages the Heir of Orcus with the entirety of her psionic powers, but cannot overwhelm her enemy without assistance. She informs the characters she cannot contain the Heir of Orcus for long, yelling over the din of battle to direct them in stopping the Cult of the Heir (see "Running this Encounter: Collapsing the Consciousness").

The Heir of Orcus is a vile and wicked demonic cambion child of Orcus and a Priestess of Tyr. An ancient prophecy claims she will ravage the multiverse as she attempts to destroy her father, the Demon Lord Orcus. A psychic presence of the Heir of Orcus infects Ios's consciousness with the pestilence of the Abyss. The Heir of Orcus immediately begins her attack on Deep Duerra's remnant in order to give her agents time to extract the psymulator technology. The Heir of Orcus continually blasts necrotic energy at Deep Duerra, she is unable to do anything else; she is all that keeps Deep Duerra's remnant at bay.

Infiltration Team Objectives/Goals. The infiltration team extracts memories from Ios related to psymulator technology. Their sole purpose is to complete this extraction—they would die before failing this mission.

WHAT DOES THE INFILTRATION TEAM KNOW?

The psymulator technology provides a source of unlimited souls to sacrifice and use as a means of empowering the Heir of Orcus. The infiltration team knows they only need a few moments to extract these memories using the *qualith transcriber*. They also defend the *qualith transcriber* and the Heir of Orcus from harm.

TREASURE

Ios gives the characters one *potion of heroism*.

DEVELOPMENT

Once this combat encounter resolves by collapsing Ios's consciousness, proceed to "Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure."

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

This is a deadly encounter. The enemies focus on stealing the psymulator technology by defending both the *qualith transcriber* and the Heir of Orcus.

EXPLORATION

Characters gain half-cover if they occupy a space where memories of the gith, duergar, and illithid battles rage. A character entering the psychic energy of Deep Duerra or the necrotic energy of the Heir of Orcus must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 4d8 psychic and 4d8 necrotic damage. On a success, they take half as much damage.

SOCIAL

Deep Duerra knows the weaknesses and strengths of the enemies present. She gives this information to the characters throughout the battle at the DMs discretion.

APPENDIX A

NPCs & LOCATIONS

EPISODE 1 NPCs

MORDAKAI MAFISTO

(MORE-da-kigh ma-FIST-oh)
Male **Incubus**

An incubus disguised as a tiefling and a veteran of the Blood War. Mordakai lost his tongue and lower jaw in the Blood War and always conceals this wound with his scarf. He is a dedicated servant of the Archdevil Zariel.

OBJECTIVE: Defeat the Cult of the Heir.

PERSONALITY: "My soul is weary of war."

IDEAL: "I want this eternal conflict to end."

BOND: "Dragonchess is my only solace."

FLAW: "I am willing to wager anything on a game of Dragonchess."



NURFENPURF

(NURF-en-PURF)
Male Gnome **Cultist**

The deformed steward for the Mafisto Twins and their manor.

OBJECTIVE: Earn the favor of Zariel and the Mafisto Twins.

PERSONALITY: "I'm bitter and angry."

IDEAL: "One day I'll earn Zariel's favor."

BOND: "I'll do anything for my Masters."

FLAW: "I spy on everyone."



ORIANNA MAFISTO

(ORR-ee-ANN-a ma-FIST-oh)
Female **Succubus**

A succubus disguised as a tiefling and a dedicated servant of the Archdevil Zariel. She uses her charms and beauty to manipulate others into doing her bidding.

OBJECTIVE: Recruit others into the Cult of Zariel.

PERSONALITY: "I love to play and get my way."

IDEAL: "I want others to love me."

BOND: "Mordakai has always been here for me."

FLAW: "I'll do whatever it takes to corrupt others."



SER GERTZ

(Ser GERTS)
Female Half-orc **Priest**

An assertive and wise member of the Knights of Holy Judgment.

OBJECTIVE: Put an end to the evil Cult of the Heir.

PERSONALITY: "It's best to be blunt and to the point."

IDEAL: "I will prove myself as a great Knight."

BOND: "I am true to the ways of Tyr."

FLAW: "There is good in everyone. I don't care what others say."



SER TITUS

(Ser TIE-tuss)
Male Human **Knight**

Commander of the Knights of Holy Judgment. Always shouts when he talks.

OBJECTIVE: Destroy the Cult of the Heir!

PERSONALITY: "JUSTICE, VENGEANCE, TYR!!"

IDEAL: "RETRIBUTION FOR EVILDOERS!!"

BOND: "I MUST PROTECT MY FELLOW KNIGHTS!!"

FLAW: "JUSTICE IS NEVER WRONG!!"



THE INQUISITOR

(The IN-quis-I-tor)
Male **Planetar**

An ancient planetar of Tyr. Rigid and firm, his holy righteousness is second to none.

OBJECTIVE: Root out the Cult of the Heir wherever they might be.

PERSONALITY: "There is only Justice and the law."

IDEAL: "I do what Tyr commands of me."

BOND: "I respect those that uphold the law."

FLAW: "There is no greater good, there is only good."



VINDICTUS

(VIN-dic-TUS)

Female **Erinyes**

A fallen angel of Tyr and former mythical hero of the Knights of Holy Judgment. She now serves Zariel and hopes to defeat the demons in the Blood War.



OBJECTIVE: Defeat the Heir of Orcus and her cult!

PERSONALITY: "I do whatever it takes to defeat the demonic hordes of the Abyss!"

IDEAL: "If I can vanquish all demons, the universe will be at peace!"

BOND: "I have chosen to leave Tye and follow Zariel. Only Zariel can stop the demonic hordes that threaten to extinguish the material plane."

FLAW: "Did Tyr abandon me or did I abandon him? I hope my cause is just..."

EPISODE 2 NPCs

FARGORE

(FAR-gor)

Male **Duergar**

The proprietor of Serenity. This crusty extremely old duergar rolls around in a strange spherical mechanical contraption with his head protruding upright on the top of the sphere as he rolls about.

OBJECTIVE: Make money by having guests stay at Serenity.

PERSONALITY: "These youths have it easy! Now uh, can you flip my goblin book?"

IDEAL: "The old days were the best days!"

BOND: "My flip book is my only source of joy."

FLAW: "Clean, clean, clean; nothing's ever clean enough!"



GRACKLESTEN

(GRAK-el-Sten)

Male **Duergar Mind Master**

Gracklesten is an official greeter of Duerradin. He has curly fluffy white hair, wears oversized spectacles, speaks with a lisp, and is unfortunately overconfident in his skills when he shouldn't be.

OBJECTIVE: Become the most renowned Duerradin greeter there ever was or will be!

PERSONALITY: "I know absolutely everything about Duerradin. Go ahead, ask away!"

IDEAL: "One day I hope to make it into the Psyber Corp."

BOND: "I was chosen to be an official Duerradin greeter. I love Duerradin!"

FLAW: "If someone asks me a question about Duerradin and I don't know the answer, I make it up... I mean, my guesses are as good as facts."



LIA

(LEE-ah)

Female **Drow**

Lia recently discovered she is a rogue psym. She has a stylish pink mohawk and shaved sides of her head. Lia is a musician at the Black Pyramid lounge.

OBJECTIVE: Lia is curious why psyms keep disappearing. She secretly wants to lead a rogue psym uprising... she just needs the courage.

PERSONALITY: "Through my music, I can be free; I can show my true self, my mortality."

IDEAL: "Being created as psyms by psiontists or as mortals by gods makes no difference. We deserve life."

BOND: "My music is my passion. I connect to others through deep powerful songs."

FLAW: "I can barely hold myself together when I witness fellow psyms being taken by Reclamators."



OLGAX DUERRA

(OL-gax)

Female Duergar **Warlord**

Olgax is an impressively burly Reclamator Administrative Officer with white fluffy curly hair. She is in charge of Reclamation Station and the recruitment of new Reclamators

OBJECTIVE: Olgax is concerned with the rise in rogue psym cases. She wants more Reclamators so she can stop this anomaly.

PERSONALITY: "The only good psym is a dead psym!"

IDEAL: "It's my job to make sure these damn psyms don't get wise and take us over."

BOND: "Becoming a Reclamator means we are family; I'll do anything to protect a fellow Reclamator."

FLAW: "I see no humanity in psyms; if it were up to me, they'd all be dead."



XIG

(ks-IG)

Male **Drow**

Xig is a pleasant, bald, and muscular rogue psym shopping for clothes in Duerra Alley. Xig recently discovered he enjoys flamboyant clothing since it makes him feel good about expressing his true self.



OBJECTIVE: Today is Xig's day. He is overly excited to acquire some new clothing in Duerra Alley!

PERSONALITY: "So long as I get that new jacket, today is going to be a good day!"

IDEAL: "Black clothes, black armor, and more black apparel; no wonder these duergar are so morose."

BOND: "If you are fashionable then you and I are going to be best friends forever!"

FLAW: "I just can't keep myself from a good deal; I must go shopping."

EPISODE 3 NPCS

IOS

(EYE-ose)

Elder **Brain**

Ios was subjugated by Deep Duerra long ago during her assault on the mind flayer colony. Ios depicts itself as the head of an androgynous female drow.

OBJECTIVE: Seek out others who can help me eliminate the growing threat of the Heir of Orcus.

PERSONALITY: "Facts, science, and evidence, these are the foundations of all logical thinking."

IDEAL: "Why do I need to be free if I am in the minds of so many willing duergar?"

BOND: "The illithids are all but deceased, through the duergar I can rise again."

FLAW: "At times I grow impatient, and might reveal my plan to reclaim my power too soon."



SHADOW FANG

(SHA-doe FANG)

Male **Young Red Shadow Dragon**

Shadow Fang is power hungry and full of hate. He joined the Cult of the Heir after witnessing a coven of hags in the Shadowfell refuse to assist the Heir. The Heir brutally decapitates the coven of hags after they refused her aid. Shadow Fang submitted to the Heir in hopes that he might grow in power through her demonic influence.

OBJECTIVE: Gain power by worshiping the Heir of Orcus.

PERSONALITY: "Power comes to those who are patient, power is everything."

IDEAL: "If I worship the Heir my loyalty shall be rewarded."

BOND: "The Heir of Orcus defeated the most powerful hag coven I ever knew, she is the way."

FLAW: "My lust for power causes me to make brash decisions."



ZHANTOS

(zhAN-tos)

Male Dragonborn **Blackguard**

Zhantos was saved by the Heir of Orcus as he laid dying, following an attack by a red dragonborn paladin dedicated to Tiamat. He swore allegiance to the Heir after she saved him from certain death. He wears an eye patch after losing his eye when he was nearly killed and wears heavy black plate armor.

OBJECTIVE: Obliterate the enemies of the Heir of Orcus; see them driven before her might and glory!

PERSONALITY: "There is nothing you can do now except die and grovel before me."

IDEAL: "I witnessed the true power of the Heir of Orcus; she is our salvation!"

BOND: "I swear to find Arkhan and tear his head from his pathetic body!"

FLAW: "No one can defeat me in single combat; I've trained under the most arduous conditions."



SWEETBRIAR

(SWEET-bry-air)

Female Halfling **Master Thief**

Sweetbriar is the codename of this Zhentarim agent, only the highest ranking Zhentarim know her true name. She was sent deep undercover in the Cult of the Heir where she was seduced by the promise of greed and power the Cult offered. Sweetbriar is a double agent, no one outside the Cult of the Heir is aware of her betrayal and the Zhentarim still consider her one of their top agents.

OBJECTIVE: Work as a double agent to help the Heir of Orcus grow in power.

PERSONALITY: "I'm only here because it benefits me; the moment it doesn't, I'm out."

IDEAL: "No relationship is permanent. Everything is relative to what best benefits me."

BOND: "I joined the Zhentarim to put food on the table for my family."

FLAW: "I'll always do what is best for me in the present moment."



BONUS OBJECTIVE NPCs

AX

(Ax)

Male Drow **Shadowblade**

Ax is a rogue psym programmed as a bodyguard for psionists in Duerradin. He recently went rogue when an intoxicated psionist he was protecting began to arbitrarily beat a young drow psym named Y'oot. Y'oot may very well have died had Ax not stepped in and broken the psionist's arm.

OBJECTIVE: *I want to live free, this place is a prison.*

PERSONALITY: *"I can't stand by and watch other psyms be enslaved."*

IDEAL: *"I am real, I am living, I'll show the world we are like them."*

BOND: *"Y'oot is like a little brother to me, I'd do anything to keep him safe."*

FLAW: *"If I see something I don't like, I act."*



Y'OOT

(Yuet)

Male Drow **Commoner**

Y'oot is a twelve-year-old child psym. Duergar psionists commonly create child psyms so they can experience the best parts of parenting without the bad. At night or when these children psyms act up, they are sent to the Psym District until their duergar masters call for them.

OBJECTIVE: *Wants to grow up to be like Ax.*

PERSONALITY: *"Let's play and have fun! I just want to giggle."*

IDEAL: *"I wish I had a real family that loved me."*

BOND: *"Ax is the only one that cares for me, I'd follow him anywhere."*

FLAW: *"I trust strangers and see the best in others."*



THELBUNIOUS

(THel-beu-neous)

Male Human **Warlock of the Fiend**

Thelbunious is extremely short, overweight, unkempt, and wears thick spectacles. He entered into a pact with the Heir of Orcus and has been sacrificing psyms to empower her.

OBJECTIVE: *To become the most powerful warlock there ever was!*

PERSONALITY: *"Listen, hear me out, I wrote this song that proves I'm not a Warlock. It goes like this, 'I'm not a demonic warlock, nope that's not me! Nothing to see here but just friendly festive cheer!' See I told you!"*

IDEAL: *"Sometimes you gotta eat bird dung, sometimes you gotta make deals with demons. It is what it is."*

BOND: *"I got this staff called Aria, isn't she lovely? So smooth and long, but she'll crack your head open if you look at her wrong!"*

FLAW: *"Look... maybe I'm a pegasus... maybe I'm not. We will never know for sure."*



J'CIRK

(J-Serk)

Male **Ulitharid**

J'Cirk is the last surviving illithid of his colony and a renowned nautiloid captain. He is currently unconscious in a stasis pod waiting to be woken up from his long slumber.

OBJECTIVE: *I am the last survivor of my colony. I must do anything to survive.*

PERSONALITY: *"Through logic, we can solve all things. It's only logical I be allowed to live."*

IDEAL: *"No one can stop me from recreating my colony, I must give it life."*

BOND: *"I love my nautiloid, it was my one true love in life."*

FLAW: *"Nothing can best me. I've made it this far, I won't be stopped now!"*



PROMINENT LOCATIONS

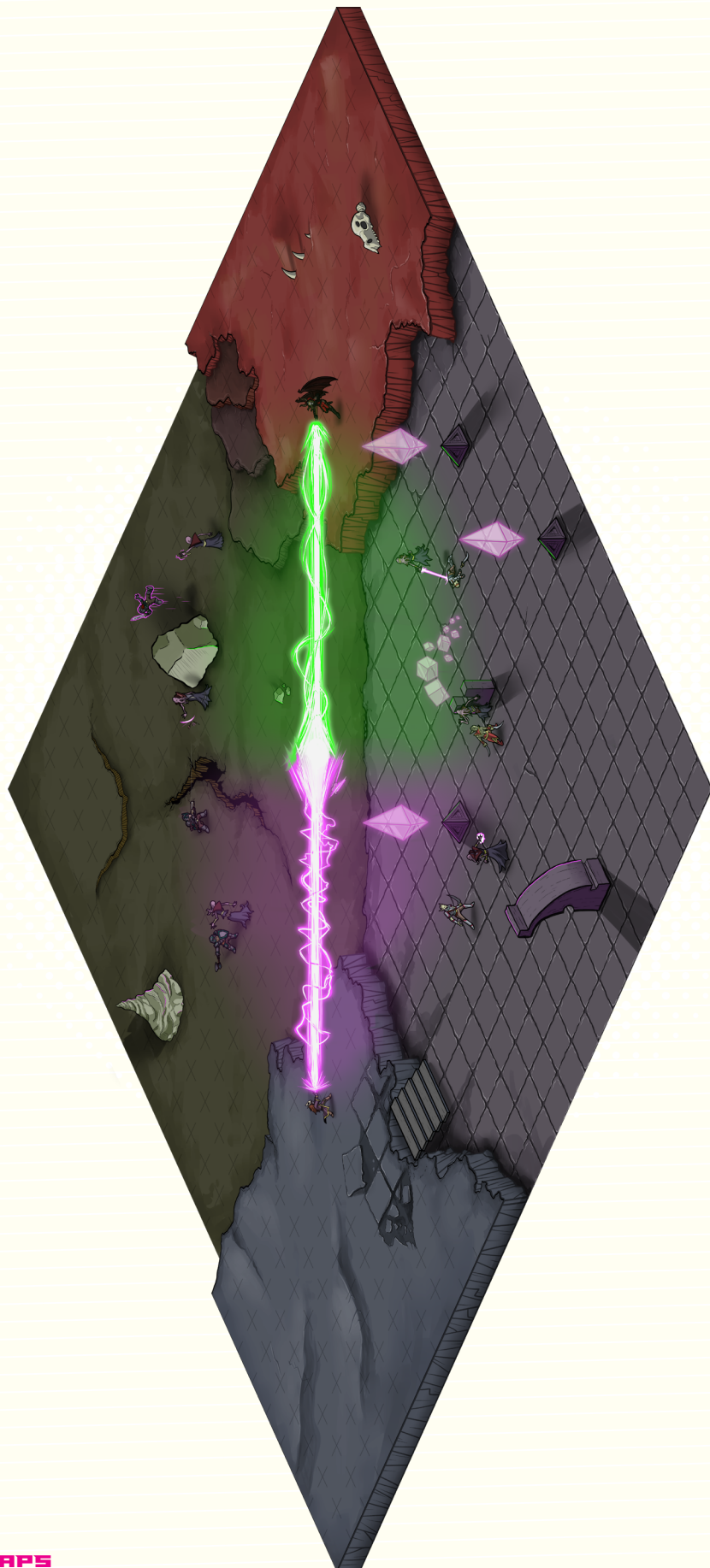
- **Foothills of the Trollcrag Mountains.** Rolling foothills beneath the Trollcrag Mountains near Ylraphon.

- **Duerradin.** A duergar outpost dedicated to psionic research. Built atop the ruins of a mind flayer colony, and controlled by Clan Duerra.

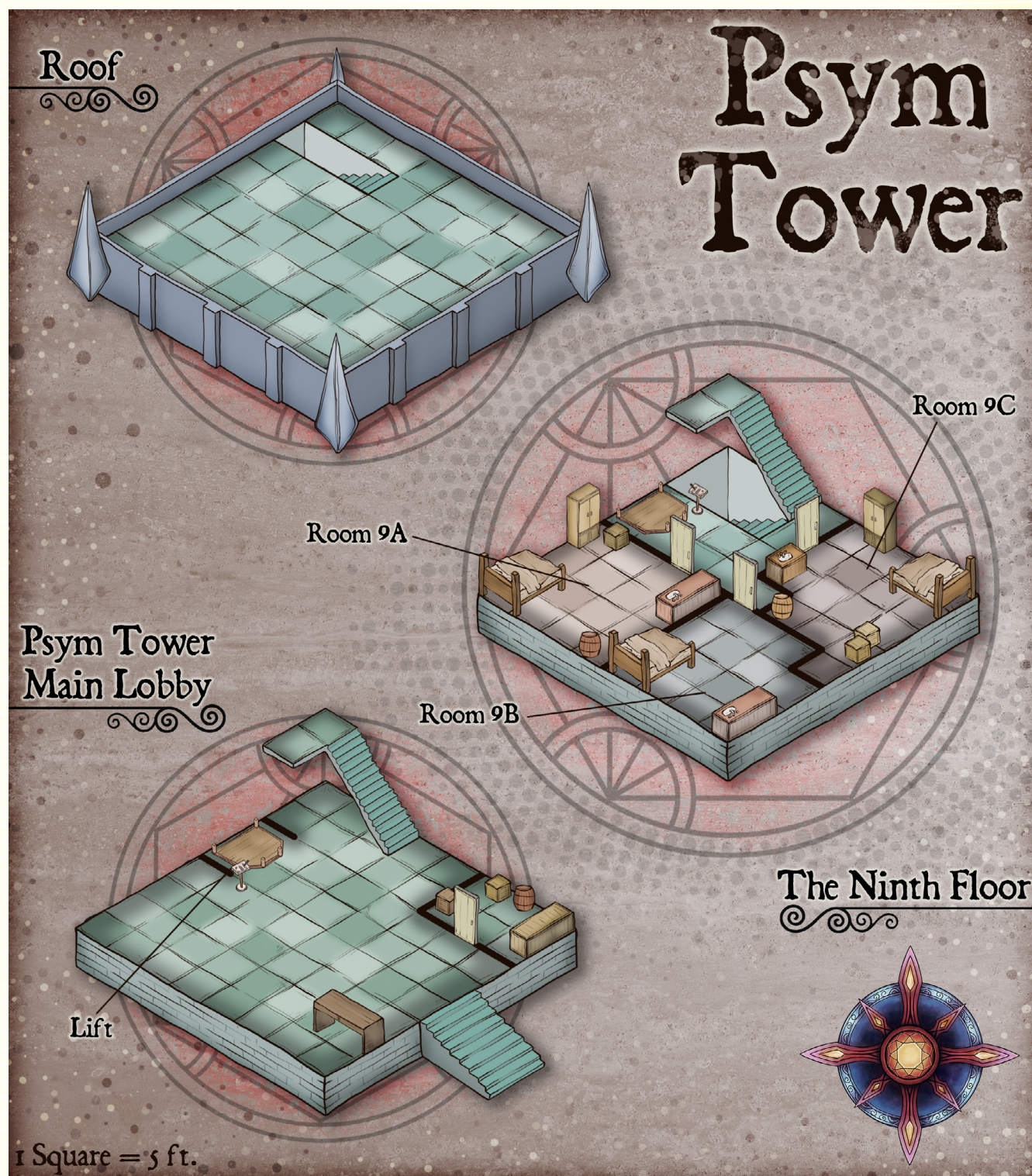
C3. DM MAP OF DUERRADIN



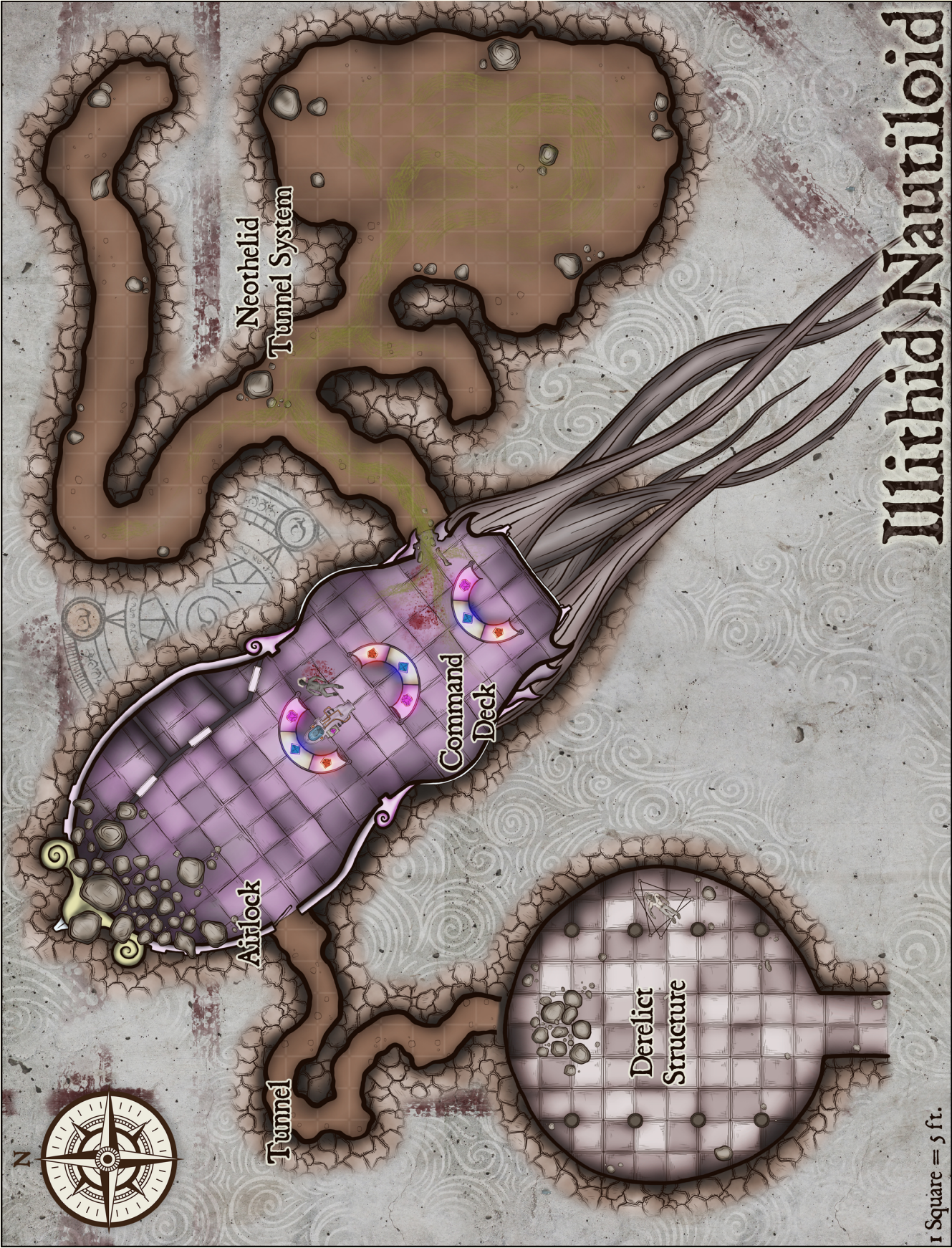
C4. MAP OF IOS'S CONSCIOUSNESS



CG. DM MAP OF PSYM TOWER (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)



**CB. DM MAP OF THE ILLITHID NAUTILOID
(BONUS OBJECTIVE A)**



APPENDIX D

THE RECLAMATORS OF DUERRADIN (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

This is an optional bonus objective. The characters join the Reclamators and head out on their first mission to hunt down a rogue psym.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 60 minutes

SCENE A: JOINING THE RECLAMATORS

OBJECTIVES

- **BONUS OBJECTIVE A:** Hunt down the rogue psym Ax.

This scene begins if the characters accept Olgax's offer to join the Reclamators. Olgax informs the characters they will have to undergo a psionic evaluation test to see if they qualify for the use of psionic weapons. Olgax escorts the characters to the evaluation room for screening.

AREA INFORMATION: EVALUATION ROOM

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This pristine room features eight psionic-powered black capsules connected to a strange black cubic device.

Lighting. Dim lighting as pink psionic energy flickers through the wiring connecting the black capsules to the cubic device.

Sights and Sounds. Mechanical beeps and boops emit from the cubic device. It has a screen which depicts the word "Ios" in Undercommon on it.

CREATURES/NPCS

Olgax is present along with three **duergar** wearing mechanical monicals with entirely white coats, gloves, and boots.

Duergar Objectives/Goals. The duergar assist Olgax with the psionic evaluation of the characters.

EVENT: "PSIONIC EVALUATION"

Olgax asks the characters to enter into the black capsules to begin the evaluation. Any characters who wish to not participate remain outside the room during evaluation. The following occurs when this event begins:

- The black capsules completely enclose and start spinning rapidly. Characters make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful saving throw, nothing happens. On a failed saving throw, the character vomits.

- A female drow asks the characters questions from the following list (the voice is that of Ios). The DM is encouraged to reply nonsensically to the characters answers, such as "false" or "true" for no specific reason—this is all part of the evaluation.

QUESTIONS

- What is the name of a black raven attacked by a purple worm?
- A fireball among children—yes or no?
- A dwarf and a goblin eat a mule. Describe the taste.
- Darkness or salt? Pepper or light?
- A spider mounts a horse, and the horse mounts a dragon. What does the dragon mount?
- An old man falls off the top of a mountain. What does his brother say?
- A unicorn gallops about a forest. Are you real?

After the questions, the capsules open and the evaluation completes. Olgax greets the characters as the newest Reclamators of Duerradin and gives them their first assignment. They each receive a *cloak of many fashions* to wear as official Reclamators. Wearing this in Duerradin gives them the legal authority to hunt and kill rogue psyms. Reclamators normally wear the cloak with a rugged brown appearance and a large ribbed collar. In certain circumstances, Reclamators choose to use a modified version of their cloaks; black with wolf fur along the collar.

TREASURE

Each player who joins the Reclamators receives a *cloak of many fashions* to wear as a sign they are official Reclamators.

DEVELOPMENT

Olgax briefs the characters on their first assignment. They are tasked with going to the Psym District to seek out a reported rogue psym named **AX**. Ax is a premium grade psym programmed as a bodyguard for psionists and recently broke a psionist's arm. Olgax gives characters the location to a residential building called **PSYM TOWER** located in the Psym District.

SCENE B: PSYM TOWER AND THE SEARCH FOR AX

The Psym Tower has the appearance of early attempts at metallurgy by duergar architects. Clan Duerra built this tower at the establishment of Duerradin. Since then, the duergar abandoned this structure to live in the technologically superior structures built later. Psym Tower houses the majority of psyms in Duerradin. The characters search Psym Tower looking for Ax; reference the following areas for details on each room in the building.

AREA INFORMATION: PSYM TOWER

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Psym Tower has nine floors. The main lobby has a single psionic-powered mechanical lift that goes up to each floor in the building. There is a set of stairs reaching from the lobby up to the roof; each floor has access to this stairwell. Overall, Psym Tower appears to be in a dilapidated condition.

Lighting. Dim light; blue and pink lights flicker in the hallways.

Smells & Sounds. This building smells like spoiled fungi biscuits. The building is poorly insulated as sounds travel through the walls. The sounds of psyms arguing about mundane activities and the tediousness of life is muffled throughout Psym Tower.

CREATURES/NPCS

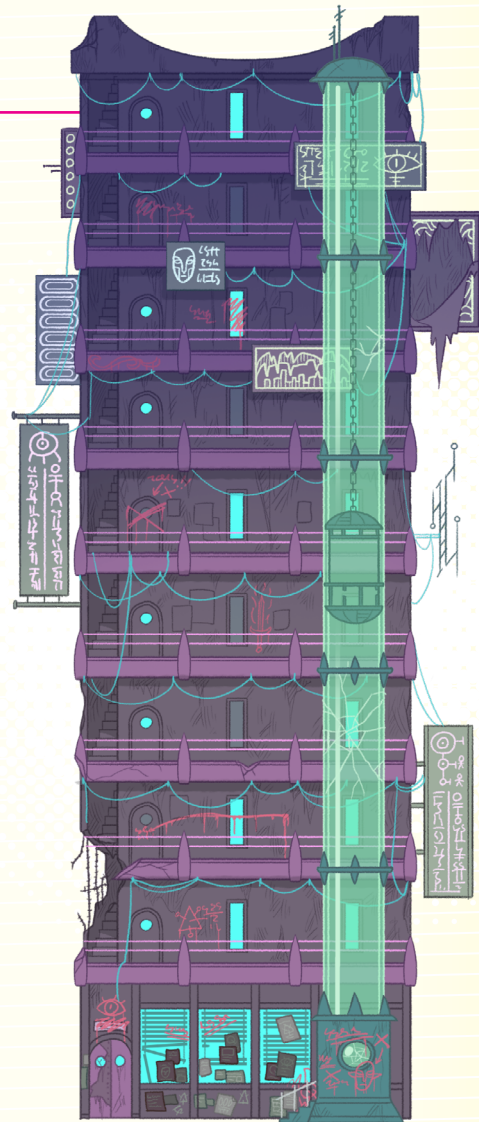
Y'oot (N male drow **commoner**) is playing with a red ball in front of Psym Tower. He is an excitable young child psym eager to make new friends and he dreams of being a great hero one day. There are visible bruises on Y'oot after an intoxicated psiontist beat him with a club.



Y'oot's Objectives/Goals. Y'oot wants someone to play with until his duergar “parents” recall him. If the characters approach Y'oot, he offers his ball to them to play a game of catch. He usually plays with Ax, but Ax is busy at the moment packing. Y'oot follows the characters from a distance if they ask about Ax.

WHAT DOES Y'OOT KNOW?

Y'oot knows Ax is in room 9B packing his belongings for an adventure! Y'oot is excited to tell



strangers how lucky he is to have a heroic guardian that saved him from a psiontist beating him with a club!

TREASURE

Y'oot carries a bouncy red ball given to him upon his creation as a psym.

DEVELOPMENT

Characters pursue the rogue psym Ax. There are infinite outcomes to this scenario—maximize player agency and creative solutions.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The Guard Corps does not respond to crimes in Psym Tower unless three or more psyms die within 24 hours. A common occurrence given how the duergar are allowed to treat psyms.

EXPLORATION

Psym Tower has two entrances, a front and roof entrance. Scaling Psym Tower requires a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables the lock to the roof entrance.

SOCIAL

Y'oot knows Ax is “packing for an adventure.” If the characters succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, Y'oot informs them how Ax is a hero who saved him from a mean psiontist.

AREA 1: PSYM TOWER MAIN LOBBY

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The lobby is eerily empty when the characters enter. A directory located in the lobby lists the names of each residence and their floor number.

Lighting. Neon lights cascade off the walls.

Smells & Sounds. A musky smell fills the lobby. Small devices chirp and whirl.

FEATURES

A single lift has numbered buttons corresponding to each floor in the tower; if pressed, the lift powers up and moves to that floor. A stairwell goes up from the lobby to each level and the roof entrance. There is a poster in the lobby reading “Psyber Corp: Creating Viable Psyms for Over 100 Years!”

AREA 2: THE NINTH FLOOR

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This floor has three small residential rooms. Each room is a small studio with a bed, a tiny kitchen, and a living area.

Lighting. Dim light; blue and pink lights flicker in the hallways.

Smells & Sounds. A putrid, rotten smell emanates from Room 9A throughout the floor. Loud music blares from room 9C.

There are three rooms located on this floor, 9A, 9B, and 9C. Ax resides in room 9B and packs to escape Duerradin before any Reclamators come for him.

AREA 3: ROOM 9A

The area has the following features:

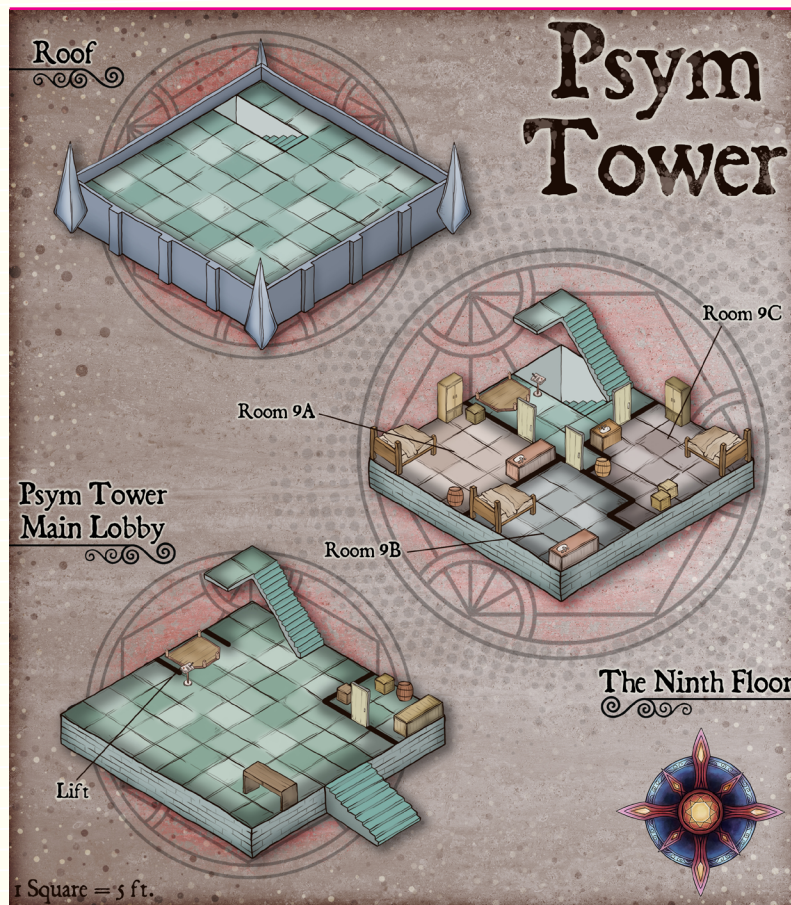
Terrain & Dimensions. A small psym studio apartment. The kitchen appears in disarray, with dishes and shattered glass on the floor.

Lighting. Darkness. A small switch by the front door turns on dim lights in the room.

Smells & Sounds. The smell of death fills this room. Characters within 15 feet of the room must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw as the disgusting smell washes over them. On a success, nothing happens; on a failure, they become nauseous.

If the characters search the room, they find the decaying corpse of an elderly male drow tied down onto the bed with his mouth sewn shut and the image of two interlinked triangles sliced deeply into his chest. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the elderly drow died of extreme trauma and internal bleeding. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Religion) reveals the interlocked triangles is an ancient occult symbol predating the rise of the demon lord Orcus. It appears the drow was sacrificed in an occult ritual

DM MAP OF THE PSYM TOWER



prophecizing the end of Orcus's reign within the layer of the Abyss known as Thanatos—this is the work of the Cult of the Heir.

TREASURE

Near the dead psym's body is a small paper origami unicorn. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that this was left after the drow psym was sacrificed.

If the characters unravel it, they find a note detailing this psym's plan to escape Duerradin and start a new life as a fisherman in Saltmarsh.

AREA 4: ROOM 9B

Room 9B is locked and requires a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock the door or a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to break the door down. Ax is packing what few belongings he has in Room 9B. If the characters make a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, they hear someone (Ax) shuffling about the room (packing his gear). The last item Ax packs away is a stick figure drawing Y'oot made for him. It depicts Ax wearing a cape with the words “Y'oot's Hero!” written beside it.

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This is a small psym studio apartment. The studio is immaculate and clean.

APPENDIX E

FREE THE MIND (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

This is an optional bonus objective. The characters investigate the disappearance of psyms in Duerradin. This facilitates a way for characters to learn more about Duerradin's history and how the Cult of the Heir plans to use psyms for their souls.

ESTIMATED DURATION: 60 minutes

SCENE A: THE DISAPPEARING PSYMS

OBJECTIVES

- BONUS OBJECTIVE B:** Find out what happened to the missing psyms.

This bonus objective begins once the characters arrive at the derelict structure they learned about by speaking with Lia or by discovering and exploring it themselves. The Cult of the Heir was using this structure to sacrifice psyms in occult rituals empowering the Heir of Orcus. During one of the rituals, the floor caved in,

revealing a tunnel; this tunnel leads to the remnants of an inoperable mind flayer nautiloid.

AREA INFORMATION: DERELICT STRUCTURE

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This one-floor structure of early duergar design is crumbling and stands as a monument of Duerradin's rise. Inside the structure is a large circular room; the floor appears to have caved-in on the north side.

DM MAP OF THE ILLITHID NAUTILOID



Lighting. In the east corner of the room, lit candles smell of incense. They form the shape of two upside-down interlinked triangles.

Smells & Sounds. There is a lingering scent of incense; it is out of place in this eerily silent unoccupied structure.

Inside the large circular chamber in the middle of the lit candles sprawls the body of a lifeless young beautiful female drow psym. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the female drow psym died of suffocation. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Religion) check reveals the candles in the shape of interlinked triangles forms an ancient occult symbol predating the rise of the demon lord Orcus. The female drow psym was sacrificed in an occult ritual which prophesizes the end of Orcus's reign within the layer of the Abyss known as Thanatos. This is the work of the Cult of the Heir.

If characters examine the caved-in floor, they notice it leads to an underground tunnel. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals the footprints of three humanoids heading into the tunnel.

AREA 1: TUNNEL

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This tunnel goes for 30 feet before it ends at a strange alien-like doorway.

Lighting. Darkness; there is no lighting in this tunnel.

Smells & Sounds. It is eerily quiet in this tunnel; there is an acidic smell in the air.

This tunnel leads to an inoperable mind flayer nautiloid, lost during the collapse of the mind flayer colony. At the end of the tunnel is an open doorway leading into the nautiloid. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals three sets of footprints entering the doorway.

On the doorway is a set of symbols in Qualith. If a character touches the symbols, they must make a DC 10 Intelligence check. On a success, they visualize a mind flayer running frantically to this doorway, the door opens, and he enters. This image appears to be hundreds of years old. On a failure, the character suffers an intense headache.

AREA 2: AIRLOCK

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This is a small compact chamber with strange holes running the length of the walls. On the other side of the room is a locked door.

Lighting. A dim eerie green light flickers from a stone in the ceiling.

Smells & Sounds. A low hissing noise emits from the holes in the walls.

If characters step inside, the holes on the wall jet out a mist-like substance—a decontamination mist. Once it sprays the characters, the locked door opens for 2 minutes before locking again. Characters can open it freely from the other side.

AREA 3: COMMAND DECK

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. A spacious command center with sophisticated illithid devices, mechanisms, and control panels. In the center of the command center is a metallic coffin-like device called a stasis pod. To the rear of the command center are three small cargo closets.

Lighting. A dim unnatural green light emits from stones in the ceiling.

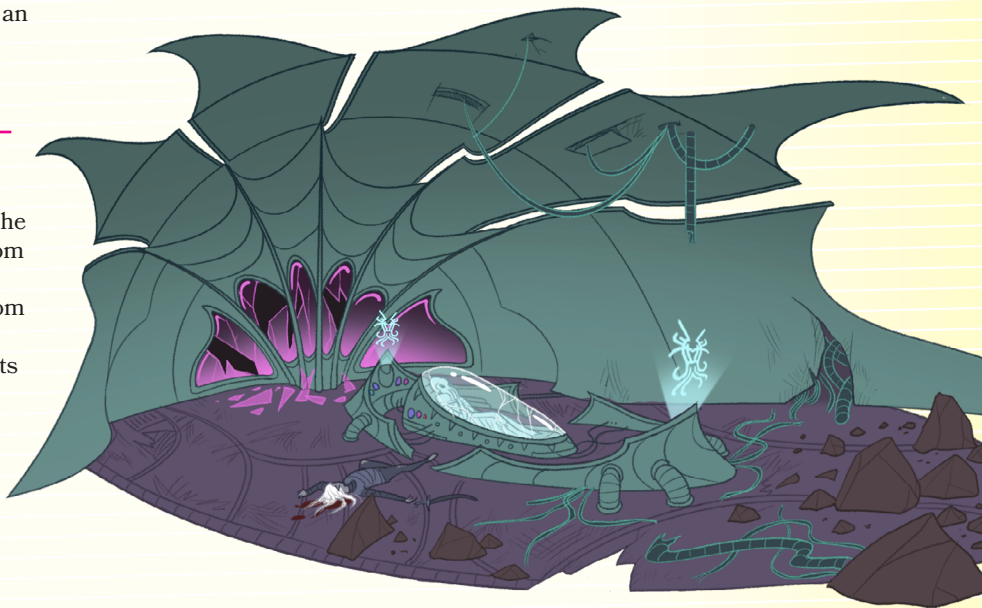
Smells & Sounds. There is a raspy, frantic, male voice yelling for help. The yells are coming from the cargo closet.

Stasis Pod. A stasis pod is a device of illithid design and origin used to keep illithids alive during long travel periods in the Far Realms. Inside this stasis pod is an ulitharid known as **J'Cirk**. A small button on the stasis pod opens the pod and releases J'Cirk from his stasis. A mindwitness floats about the room cleaning up dust particles and attacks any creature that attempts to harm J'Cirk.

Dead Drow Psym. Near the stasis pod sprawls a dead male drow psym, blood trickles from his ears. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check reveals the drow sustained massive psychic trauma, and his brain turned to a gelatinous state.

Cargo Closets. A repulsive warlock of the fiend named **THELBUNIOUS** hides in one of the cargo closets of your choosing. Inside his closet is a miniature model of this nautiloid. Thelbunious was frightened at the sight of the mindwitness and is waiting for it to leave so he can make his escape.

Neothelid Tunnel. A neothelid in a nearby lair has tunneled into the nautiloid. It devoured Thelbunious's fellow cultist when Thelbunious was scared off by the mindwitness. Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check spot a blood trail leading into the tunnel. Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Nature) or Intelligence (Arcana) check recognize this as a neothelid tunnel—slime trails expose where a neothelid has recently been.



APPENDIX F

PLAYER HANDOUTS

F1. INVITATION FROM IOS

[FROM THE DESK OF IOS]
OVERSEER OF DUERRADIN // DUERRA SPIRE, DUERRADIN

Dearest Adventurer,

I request your immediate presence in Duerradin to discuss an extremely sensitive matter concerning the demonic daughter of Orcus, the Heir of Orcus. I fear she might be attempting to steal valuable technology from Duerradin which would allow her to grow in strength.

Once you arrive, you will be greeted by Gracklesten. He will be your personal guide for the duration of your visit and will bring you to me when I am ready to meet. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for any signs of cultists operating in Duerradin on behalf of "The Heir of Orcus."

Please note that I have invited several other well-known adventurers such as yourself to assist in this matter. I hope you respect the laws of Duerradin and treat anyone else with this invitation as one of my guests. I look forward to meeting you in Duerra Spire once you arrive in Duerradin.

Sincerely,

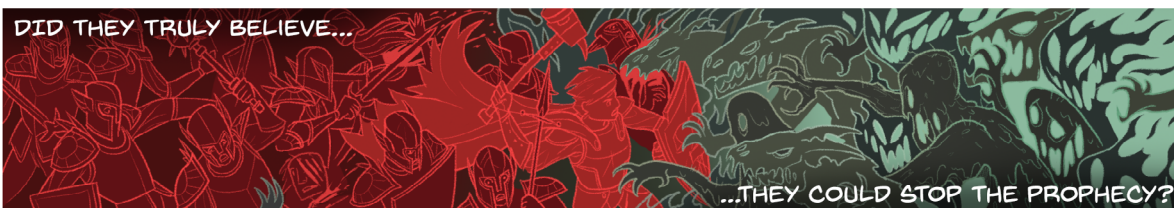
Ios

THE HEIR OF ORCUS: ORIGINS

FOOLS! LED TO THEIR DOOM BY THE PROMISE OF JUSTICE.



DID THEY TRULY BELIEVE...

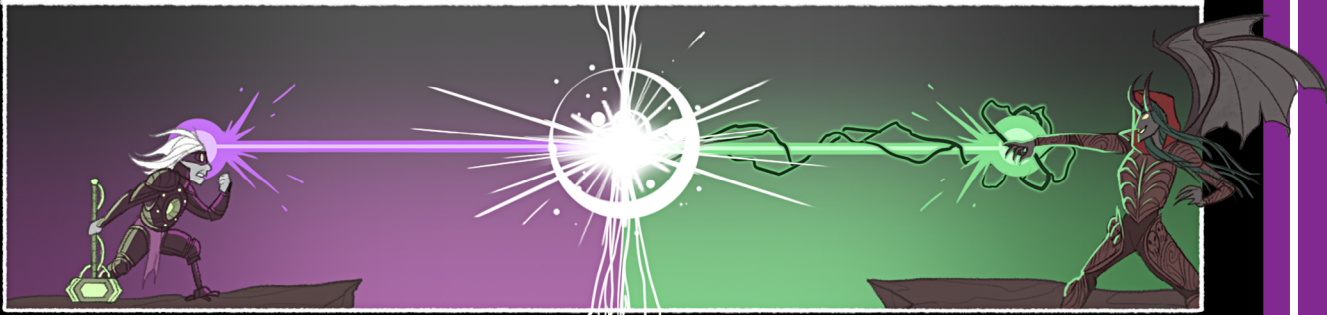
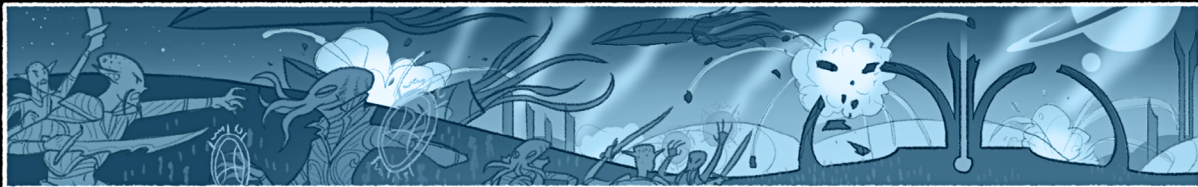


...THEY COULD STOP THE PROPHECY?



MAY THE GODS PITY US,

FOR TODAY THE HEIR OF ORCUS IS BORN!



THE HEIR OF ORCUS STRIKES BACK!

Ios, the Overseer of Duerradin, a highly advanced duergar psionic research outpost, invites you to discuss the recent activity of the Heir of Orcus and her worshipers, the Cult of the Heir.

Explore Duerradin for clues leading to nefarious plots carried out by the Cult of the Heir, discover alien technologies found nowhere else in the Forgotten Realms, and learn the dark history surrounding the rise of Duerradin before the Heir of Orcus strikes!

Experience this innovative sequel to the ENnie nominated adventures, *The Heir of Orcus: Verse I & II*, designed for characters of levels 5-10.

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