WATERDEEP: DRAGON HEIST

Gray Hands

Faction Missions and DM's Resources for Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

Introduction

A big part — at least if you want it to be — of the official **'Waterdeep: Dragon Heist'** campaign book, is the adventurers interaction with the multitude of factions, guilds, gangs and networks that operate in Waterdeep.

One of the more interesting of these factions are the Gray Hands and Force Grey. Local to Waterdeep, the Gray Hands are a special security force under the command of Waterdeep's Blackstaff, Vajra Safahr. Their elite members are known as Force Grey — resourceful adventurers who are called upon to aid Waterdeep in challenging times. A worthy side job for any up-and-coming adventurer in Waterdeep!

The purpose of this document is to make being a Gray Hand an entertaining prospect — something that can fill out several sessions of gameplay on its own while the rest of the story in Waterdeep: Dragon Heist unfurls.

In this document, you'll find the following:

- **More detailed descriptions** of the Gray Hands, Force Grey, the Blackstaff and Blackstaff Tower, meant to inspire and aid you when you use them during the campaign.
- **The *Gray Hand Token***, a magical item members of the Gray Hands might receive.
- **Three complete faction missions** based on the brief descriptions given in Chapter 2 of Waterdeep: Dragon Heist, and pointers on how to set your party up for success if they undertake the fourth mission — an excursion into the Xanathar's lair underneath Waterdeep.
- **Three battlemaps** for the missions, two of which are stunning maps graciously provided by Neutral Party. Visit Neutral Party's patreon to find alternate versions of these maps, as well as many more maps in the same style.
- **Creature Cards** for each creature the party is likely to face while completing the three first missions given by Vajra Safahr.

Gray Hands / Force Grey

As is made clear in the campaign book, the Gray Hands are a private security force beholden to the Blackstaff and, in severe cases, the Open Lord of Waterdeep. It's not quite a secret police — they aren't secret, for one thing — but their job description is similar: they handle missions either too delicate or too dangerous for the City Watch.

If we read through other works, the two branches — Gray Hands and Force Grey — look nearly identical in older sourcebooks ('Forgotten Realms — Heroes Lorebook' and 'City of Splendors: Waterdeep'). It seems that the two names were used to describe the exact same organization, but have since been divided into two separate branches of the same organization. This makes for some confusion — probably also in this very document — but very simplified, the distinction is clear: Gray Hands are the grunts, while Force Grey is the elite.

Pay and Benefits. So, what does a character get out of joining the Gray Hands? Well, there's the nifty benefits mentioned in the campaign book: get-out-of-jail-free-cards, borrowing magical items, and timely help from Force Grey adventurers in desperate situations. The faction missions offer some rewards as well — albeit only some of them, and the reward is never gold and platinum.

There is, however, tradition for steady pay with the Gray Hands. According to 'City of Splendors: Waterdeep' the gig used to pay 100 gp per month, on the premise that you were available for call 30 hours each tenday. That's not too shabby — but not something that'll make kings out of paupers either.

The Blackstaff

The name Blackstaff was first held by Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, but after his death in 1374, the name has since evolved into a title given to Waterdeep's High Wizard. The seventh and current Blackstaff is the young Vajra Safahr.

Vajra Safahr gained the title after her lover, the previous Blackstaff Samark Dhanzscul, was murdered in 1479 DR. A rival wizard planned to steal the Blackstaff's power by murdering Samark and incapacitating his heir, Vajra Safahr, but the young tethyrian woman was saved by heroic Waterdhavians — among them Meloon Wardragon and Renaer Neverember. She's been Blackstaff for more than a decade now, but she's still getting used to her responsibility.

How Vajra's young age and tumultuous start as a Blackstaff shows in your campaign is up to you, but it wouldn't be surprising if she was stern, authoritative and demanding with strangers, but slightly overwhelmed and insecure under the surface. Constantly striving to grow in power and knowledge — not for her own gain, but so she'll some day feel worthy of the esteemed title she bears.

Blackstaff Tower

This tower made of black, smooth stone, with no windows or doors, sits three stories tall on Swords Street in the Castle Ward. A 20-foot wall surrounds the tower, with a main gate and a smaller entrance for apprentices. People chosen by the Blackstaff can open the door with their palm, while some magical items also grant entrance through the outer wall. The tower itself is protected from scrying magic and teleportation magic — under most circumstances the tower is only accessible if the Blackstaff allowed it.

The tower is much larger inside than it looks from the outside. Magical in nature, there's no set floorplan — it can look however you want it to look. Rooms switch around either by the magic of the tower itself or with secret keywords. If you want to give your players a sense for the magical nature of the tower, have them enter into a different room each time they visit the Blackstaff Tower.

Gray Hand Token

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement and approval by the Blackstaff)

The Gray Hand token is a clasp, ring or brooch, resembling a human hand, fingers together and palm out. While attuned to the token, you have advantage on Charisma checks made to interact with civic officials of Waterdeep (including Lords, magistrates, and Watch and Guard officers). If the token is more than 5 feet away from you for more than 1 minute, it magically vanishes and reappears on your person.

Dragonward Strike. As a bonus action, you call upon Aghairon's dragonward to bolster your next attack or the next spell you cast. If you choose to bolster an attack, the next melee weapon attack you make before the end of your turn has advantage and deals bonus force damage equal to your character level on a successful hit. If you choose to bolster a spell, the next spell you cast before the end of your turn is cast as if you had used a spell slot one level higher to cast it. Once you use this ability, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

Faction Missions

Chapter 2 of Waterdeep: Dragon Heist details four missions Vajra Safahr might give Gray Hand members. Below, we expand upon these missions, turning the first three into full sidequests and giving advice on the fourth. As is always the case, anything you find here is merely a suggestion. You know best what works at your table, so don't hesitate to change things as you see fit. There's nothing to stop you from shuffling missions around or skipping some entirely. Enjoy!

A Monk on a Mountain

Vajra Safahr's first quest is simple. Seek out Hlam on Mount Waterdeep and ask him if he's heard about threats to the city. Below we'll expand upon this quest, making it a full day of adventure.

The Mission

> "I have a nagging feeling that there's evil brewing in Waterdeep. Evil beyond the petty violence of street thugs warring in the streets. I want you — all of you — to seek out Hlam, a monk who lives in a cave on the side of Mount Waterdeep. Ask him what he's heard about threats to the city, but try not to annoy him or overstay your welcome."

Vajra Safahr gives directions to the cave, as well as a *Gray Hand token* to each faction member (or the most promising prospects), and tells them to show it to the City Guards stationed near Hlam's cave. The City Guards — a small force posted to make sure the venerable monk's meditation isn't disturbed — have orders to let Gray Hands through.

This is meant to be a test of character more than anything else. The Blackstaff could easily send a Griffon Cavalry Rider or contact Hlam through magic, but Hlam is the best judge of character she knows. She wants his opinion of the party as much as she wants to know if he's perceived any threats.

Scaling the Mountain

Mount Waterdeep only reaches about 1,500 feet above sea level, but the trail to Hlam's cave is steep and winding. While it doesn't require climbing checks, the 5 mile mountain trail is considered difficult terrain — making the trek a three hour journey all told. Before they set out, have your players choose which character leads the climb.

The trek is divided into three stages, one for each 1½ mile traveled (one hour at a medium pace), each of which end in an obstacle. After each stage — but before each obstacle — the characters must succeed on DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. Exhaustion gained this way is removed if the character expends hit dice during a short rest. Give the party a chance to take a short rest before presenting them with the obstacle they've reached.

Rockfall

After 1½ mile of travel, ask the character who leads the climb to make a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, the character realizes that the mountainside here looks very loose and unsettled — there's a very real threat of a rockfall or rockslide. On a failure, the character perceives nothing.

Soon after, the rockslide happens. Boulders, smaller rocks and gravel come tumbling down from a hundred feet up the mountainside. Each character must make three DC 12 skill checks, as they try to evade the rockslide (remember that exhausted characters have disadvantage on skill checks):

- A Wisdom (Perception) check (with advantage if the characters were warned about possible rockfalls).
- A Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.
- A Strength (Athletics) check.

Rockslide Skill Challenge

Failures	Consequence
0	The character jumps clear unscathed.
1	The character takes 1d10 bludgeoning damage.
2	The character takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage and is restrained.
3	The character takes 3d10 bludgeoning damage and is restrained and buried under rocks.

Consult the 'Rockslide'-table to determine how each character fares. Characters can free themselves or another restrained character by using an action and succeeding on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Three successful Athletics checks are needed to uncover a buried character. This becomes relevant if a character is both unconscious and buried (in which case everyone rolls initiative and must work to extricate and stabilize the character before it's too late!)

Saboteur. Characters who succeeded on their Perception check saw a humanoid figure standing on the path a hundred feet up the mountainside, where the rockslide started, wearing the gold and blue of a city guard. The person, a **Zhentarim Bandit** named Mirka, runs off after starting the landslide, disappearing out of sight as he follows the trail to the top of the mountain. Due to the winding path (or the steep climb, if they try to go directly up the cliffside), the party has no chance of catching him before the next obstacle unless they use magic (such as the *fly* spell). If the party manages to catch Mirka, see the 'Zhentarim Bandits'-sidebar on the next page.

Manticore Ambush

After 3 miles of travel, the party finds an old stone bridge crossing a mountain river. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals scattered droppings from a large animal in the area — a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes the manticore scat. As the characters cross the bridge (or if they begin looking to the skies), a **manticore** launches itself from its cave a 100 feet above the ground. It makes a Dexterity (Stealth) check against each character's passive Perception, surprising characters it succeeds against. If the characters are on edge because of the droppings, they can't be surprised.

If the characters are on the bridge, the manticore tries to swoop down and shove or grapple characters, attempting to push them into the river. Otherwise, it's content to stay a 100 feet away and fire tail spikes at the party, only landing to fight them in melee if they try to flee or if it runs out of tail spikes. The manticore flees into its cave if reduced to 20 hp or less.

Rocky Stream Map. For this encounter, use the Rocky Stream map provided by Neutral Party. The river runs 20 feet beneath the bridge. A character who starts their turn in the water must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check or be swept 20 feet away. A DC 12 Strength (Athletics) is required to climb back up to the bridge.

Manticore's Lair. Without climbing equipment, it takes two DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks to climb the 100 feet up to the lair (failure results in a 20-foot-fall or 60-foot-fall). Within the small cave, the manticore has stored a half-eaten, dead City Guard, and a coinpurse with 10 green agates worth 20 gp each (Manshoon's payment to the manticore).

Zhentarim Guard Post

After 4½ miles of travel, the path starts snaking into the mountainside itself. Steep cliffs now surround the path on both sides. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check notices five pairs of humanoid footprints going up the mountain, visible now that the trail is protected from wind and weather by the cliffs. One set of tracks seems to have come down within the last day or two and gone up very recently (this is Mirka going down the set the avalanche off on unwanted guests).

As the characters continue, they find a small guard post blocking the narrow canyon. Drakkan and Mirka (NE male human **Zhentarim Bandits**) and Otira (CE female human **apprentice wizard**) disguised in stolen City Guard armor and uniforms peer out from over the 10-foot wall. If they spot the characters coming up the trail, they call for **Terrik**, a handsome human man dressed in a Guard Captain's uniform. Terrik welcomes the party from a safe perch behind the wall on the guardhouse's roof:

> "Hail! I'm Captain Terrik of the City Guard. Who comes?"

If a character shows their Gray Hand token and tells Terrik they've come to speak with Hlam, he tries to warn them off:

> "Me and my men are here to make sure no one disturbs the old geezer's meditation. And it's good we do — I wouldn't want to bother that old monk, if I was you. He insisted we let no one trouble him. Even hit Drakkan here upside the head just for trying to bring him some food and drink!"

If the characters insist that they must speak with Hlam, Terrik obliges and tells them "alright then, that's on you. Come help push the gates open". This is a lure — Terrik just wants one or two of the characters to step into the pit trap (see below) in front of the gate before his men attack. If the characters start asking suspicious questions or refuse to approach the gate, Terrik orders his men to attack.

Mountain Checkpoint Map. For this encounter, use the Mountain Checkpoint map provided by Neutral Party. The 10-foot wall provides cover to bandits standing on the raised platform or on the roof of the guardpost. A DC 12 Athletics check is required to climb the wall. The gates are locked, requiring a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check or a DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) to open.

Pit Trap. The Zhentarim bandits have dug a 5 feet wide, 15 feet long and 10 feet deep trench in front of the gates and hidden it with canvas, dirt and rocks. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the tarp (allow a player a check if they say they look for traps, or when they are just about to step in the pit). A character who steps on the canvas must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the pit (taking 1d6 damage as they do). A DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb out of the pit.

Defeating the Bandits. If the bandits are losing badly, Terrik tries to flee down the mountain to avoid capture. If any of the Zhentarim bandits are caught, promises of freedom or threats of violence can force them to tell everything they know (see the 'Zhentarim Bandits'-sidebar).

Treasure. Drakkan and Mirka each carry a pouch with 10 gp (their advance pay), Otira has a 50 gp amethyst and a *wand of magic missiles*, and Terrik's pouch contains 100 gp and a vial of *drow poison*. The guardpost otherwise contains only beds, stale provisions and five flasks of cheap bourbon. Three dead guards can be found in a shallow grave out back.

Zhentarim Bandits

The fake City Guard are bandits from Manshoon's Zhentarim, although they have never heard about or met Manshoon. The evil wizard recognized that Hlam was likely to sense his presence in Waterdeep, but didn't want to face the old monk in combat. Instead, he had Urstul Floxin send a small band and a manticore up to the mountain to prevent anyone from speaking to Hlam.

Each Zhentarim has a winged snake tattoo on forearm or shoulder. They know the following, which they'll divulge under threats of violence (DC 12 Intimidation), if they believe it will secure their freedom (DC 12 Deception/Persuasion), or if under a *charm* spell or similar magic:

- They received their orders from Urstul Floxin a week ago, via one of his flying snakes. They don't know where Urstul Floxin resides.
- They trekked up the mountain under cover of darkness, and, with the manticore's aid, took the guards posted here by surprise.
- Three of the City Guards are buried in shallow graves out back, while the manticore took the last one to its lair.
- They haven't spoken to or seen the old monk.
- They're supposed to stay here until they receive new orders.

Speaking with Hlam

When the characters have defeated or bypassed the Zhentarim, they can trek the last half mile up to Hlam's cave near the top. They find the bald, wizened old monk sitting crosslegged and with closed eyes on a boulder in a small cave. If the party speaks, he puts up a single finger to silence them. After an uncomfortable minute of silence, he nimbly uncurls his legs and slide down the boulder, before saying: "And so it is lost, a hundred-year-old truth nearly unraveled. I hope you have important cause to interrupt me."

If asked politely, the stern monk will give the dire warning presented in the campaign book ("Evil's twin hides its face for now. Expect that to change before winter's end") and refuse to elaborate. You can also have Hlam present the party with other cryptic truths relating to their backgrounds, factions, or people they're involved with. He'll be taciturn and somber — and utterly intolerant of disrespect, lies and other shenanigans.

If the party tells Hlam about their troubles getting to the mountaintop, the old monk begrudges the loss of life, but also shows a measure of appreciation for "some of the most quiet and undisturbed meditation I've had in years — until you came along, that is."

Conclusion

The trek back down Mount Waterdeep takes only a few hours and is made without the need for Constitution saving throws and without running into obstacles. When the party reconvene with Vajra Safahr at Blackstaff Tower, she asks them for Hlam's warning. If the party tells her about their ordeals on the way, the Blackstaff ensures them that she'll have a patrol send up there as soon as possible. Within a day or two, she'll also have learned exactly how the party conducted themselves with the monk, and what, if anything, the old monk has to say about them. Each Gray Hand character gains 1 renown.

Deepwater Dragon

In this mission, Vajra Safahr gives the party *potions of water breathing* and tells them to discover the intentions of a young bronze dragon who's taken up residence in Deepwater Harbor. Below we'll flesh out the party's encounter with Zelifarn as well as provide an optional Skill Challenge.

The Mission

> "A young bronze dragon has taken up residence in Deepwater Harbor. It startled a few sailors recently but hasn't hurt anyone. Metallic dragons are usually good, but just to make sure, I'd like you to learn its intentions".

Vajra Safahr gives each character a *potion of water breathing* and directions to the area where the dragon was last seen.

Speaking with Zelifarn

The party finds Zelifarn very quickly after they dive into the Deepwater Harbor. The young dragon is swimming around a shipwreck a little ways outside the harbor proper. As described in the campaign book, Zelifarn is a friendly **young bronze dragon**, who's love for shiny baubles is only surpassed by his curiousity. He'll ask curious questions (such as "How can you breathe underwater?", "Wow, where did you get that sword?" and "You look odd. You're a what now?") and is delighted by the answers ("Water breathing potions? That's so cool!", "You bought it from a shop? I've always wanted to visit a shop!" and "I didn't even know that you existed. Neat!")

If asked why he's here, Zelifarn tells the simple truth: "I came swimming by and saw these cool shipwrecks. Found some gold in one. Some bones in another! Don't know what I'll find in this one — it's so exciting!" It only takes a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check for a character to be certain that Zelifarn is no threat to Waterdeep.

Treasure in the Deep

If Zelifarn likes the party, he'll ask them to help him search the nearby shipwreck ('The Green Maiden') which he says "reeks of gold!". Even though he's only a young dragon, he's still too large to get below deck — and an old enchantment protects the hull, preventing him from smashing through and creating his own entrance. If the characters help him, he'll offer to divide the treasure in even pieces between him and each party member.

If the party agrees to search the shipwreck, it becomes a skill challenge to determine how much treasure they can gather before their *potions of water breathing* run out. Have each player describe how their character aids the search — or the effort to get the treasure out — and have them roll an appropriate DC 13 skill check.

Some examples include:

- Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) to look for treasure within the hull.
- Strength (Athletics) to help carry treasure out.
- Dexterity (Acrobatics) to get into tight spaces.
- Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) to open locks, etc.

The skill challenge ends when the party has failed three checks or succeeded on a maximum of five checks. Tally up the final haul on the 'Shipwreck'-table (the table is cumulative, so five successes means the party finds everything listed).

Shipwreck Skill Challenge

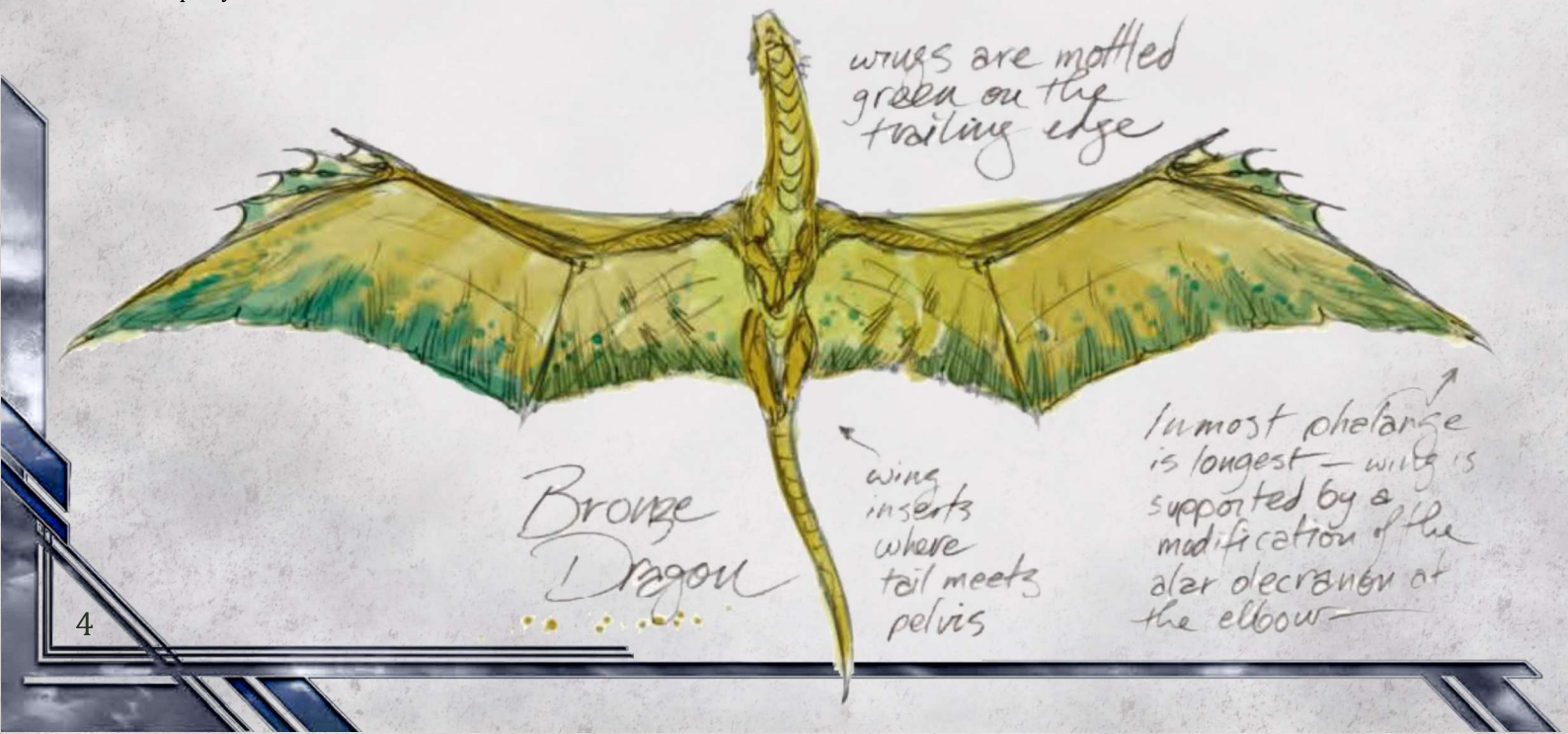
Successes	Treasure
1	1d100 gp and 1d100 sp
2	1d10 azurites (10 gp each)
3	1d6 10-pound silver trade bars (50 gp each)
4	An ivory statuette of a monkey (250 gp)
5	A *wand of magic detection*

If the party failed three times, it means they've run out of time and must return immediately to the surface. Zelifarn will help them get the treasure up onto the shore (or even the docks, although the dragon takes care not to be seen by anyone).

Conclusion

After splitting their treasure with Zelifarn (who much prefers gold), Gray Hand characters can return to Vajra Safahr and be rewarded with 1 renown, if they can tell her with some certainty that Zelifarn doesn't pose a threat to Waterdeep.

If you want to, you can have Zelifarn become a friend to the party, who can aid them later in the campaign — either under the water, if their adventures take them there, or if they need a flying tour over Waterdeep. Zelifarn detests combat and won't help them in a fight unless under dire circumstances.



Braincheck

In this mission, Vajra Safahr asks the party to find out what's going on with Meloon Wardragon. One of the Xanathar's intellect devourers has eaten his brain and taken control of his body, but we're not really told how this mystery should be solved. Below we'll provide some ways for the party to actually fix Meloon and complete the mission.

The Mission

> "A member of Force Grey has been acting strangely of late. His name is Meloon Wardragon, and his happy-go-lucky demeanor has soured. He's been hanging around the Yawning Portal more than usual. Figure out what's wrong, and see if you can get him right. Report back in a tenday."

Observing

A character who observes Meloon Wardragon can roll a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check for each day spend observing. On a success, the character notices Meloon Wardragon's daily battle with his axe *Azuredge*. This manifests as Meloon clutching the axe with one hand and getting an almost pained expression on his face. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check tells the character that Meloon Wardragon is being resisted by his magical weapon.

Besides this daily struggle, Meloon seems pretty normal, although a bit detached. Most of the time he spends with a drink in his hand, which he barely sips off, simply looking around at other patrons and listening to their conversations.

Asking Around

If the characters ask various regulars and staff at the Yawning Portal, they can use Charisma checks to learn information (a general DC is listed for each NPC, but feel free to alter DC's, grant advantage or completely forego the need, based on the characters relationships with them). A character can glean the following information from each regular or patron:

Durnan (DC 10). "It's true, Meloon's been a little sour lately. Ain't doing much of nothin', but sittin' there lookin'".

Bonnie (DC 18). "He's not himself. As in, that's not Meloon Wardragon, the man — it's something else inside him. Trust me, I have some experience with that..."

"Threestrings" (DC 15). "I've been wondering about him. Seems to be talking to his axe — having discussions, almost."

Jalester Silvermane (DC 10). "Seems like a nice enough fellow. Far as I can tell, he is happy and does no harm."

Obaya Uday (DC 10). "I've been wondering if something ails him. That troubled look on his face. But he says he feels fine, so I haven't pressed him. I hope you can help him."

Yagra Stonefist (DC 15). "Used to be friendly — dull in the head, if ye know what I mean — but friendly. Lately he's been giving me dirty looks. Not the good kind either."

Speaking With Meloon

If the party approaches Meloon (or he approaches them, if they've been asking questions about him or openly observing him) he'll deny that anything's wrong. Here are some pointers for a conversation with Meloon:

- "Something wrong? No, no, there's nothing wrong. A bit bored maybe. Haven't had a good adventure in a while."
- "Ah, is Vajra concerned about me? She's such a mother hen. There's nothing to be worried about. Really!"
- "Arguing with my axe? Ah, no, Azuredge is just restless. Knows there's evil out there, and wants me to go fight it!"

Regardless of how he gets to it, Meloon Wardragon will eventually suggest a small adventure to the party:

- "I've heard that there's a fiend in the sewers — a real dangerous one too. Been killing folk and spreading its foul stench. The City Watch ain't equipped for that kind of work. So what do you say — wanna go on a sewer hunt?"

The **hezrou** that Meloon Wardragon is talking about was released into the sewers by Manshoon. It has been killing Xanathar Guild members for weeks, but the guild has finally found its lair. Meloon Wardragon is trying to kill two birds with one stone: he'll solve a problem for the Xanathar Guild and he'll get rid of the nosy adventurers. If the party agrees, Meloon leads them into the sewers under the Castle Ward.

The Hezrou's Lair

Down in the sewers, Meloon quickly finds yellow markings — left by Xanathar Guild scouts — leading to the hezrou's lair (a perceptive character might notice that they are the same kind of markings the characters followed when going to the Xanathar Guild Hideout during Chapter 1: A Friend in Need).

After half an hour of wading through knee-high sewage, the party find themselves near the hezrou's lair — a large, square chamber normally used by the Cellarers' and Plumbers' Guild to monitor water flow and take sewer samples. Four locked double-doors (DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to open) lead into the chamber from each direction — the southernmost door lies destroyed on the floor. Blood and body parts from several corpses litter the tiles of the lair.

Grates. A river of sewage flows lazily under two 10-by-10-foot grates in the floor. The grates are flimsy and not meant to be walked upon. Each time a creature moves onto a grate for the first time on its turn, it must roll a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A small creature rolls with advantage, while a Large creature or a creature wearing heavy armor rolls with disadvantage. On a failure, the entire grate falls into the sewage water below. Any creature standing on it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall with it. A creature that falls in takes no damage, but must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each round, ending the effect on a success. A DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check is needed to climb out of the water (a character helping from above can grant advantage).

Fighting the Hezrou. As the party enter the chamber, they find the hezrou hunched over two dead Xanathar Guild bandits in the northeastern corner, loudly biting into bone and flesh. It attacks intruders with murderous bloodlust, never giving up or attempting to flee.

Meloon's Sabotage. During the fight, Meloon's prowess is obvious, as he deals devastating blow after devastating blow to the demon — even without the bonus damage Azuredge would provide if he could still attune to it.

However, the intellect devourer-controlled warrior always tries to angle himself so that the party bears the brunt of the hezrou's onslaught. He also tries to — discreetly — put the characters in harm's way. Once on each of his turns, forego one of his attacks and tell the players that Meloon 'fumbles', causing him to trip, disarm, or shove a character (closer to the demon or onto a grate). Allow the target character a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against Meloon's +9 Strength (Athletics) to avoid Meloon's sabotage.

If a character becomes suspicious, a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Meloon isn't actually that clumsy, and that he's trying to intentionally sabotage the characters.

Body Snatcher

After defeating the hezrou, the false Meloon Wardragon turns to the party. With a coldness in his voice and a blank face, he'll let them know: "You fought well. It's a shame, really, that you'll not leave this place. Don't worry, I'll make sure everyone knows how valiantly you fought before the demon got you." The big man then lifts Azuredge high to make a devastating blow against one of the characters — but the magical axe drops from his grasp and falls to the ground, apparently too heavy to lift and completely stuck to the floor (this is a feature of Azuredge, which it uses to avoid being used by an unworthy wielder).

Having played his hand, Meloon attacks anyway, attempting to disarm and take one of the character's weapons. Eager to destroy its old wielder, Azuredge attunes to any character that grasps its hilt, allowing them to wield the +3 battleaxe against Meloon. The intellect devourer inside Meloon's head fights until Meloon is killed (again), after which it jumps into the sewer water and atttempts to escape back to the Xanathar's lair.

Treasure. Four dead bodies (three Xanathar Guild bandits and a male halfling worker from the Cellarers' and Plumbers' Guild) in three times as many pieces litter the lair. Among the carnage is 1d20 gp and 1d100 sp, along with three short swords and a light crossbow. The party can also take Azuredge, who, in a soft, female voice, tells them to take it and Meloon's corpse to the Blackstaff.

Conclusion

If the party only return with the information about Meloon's peculiar interaction with Azuredge, the Blackstaff thanks them for their aid and each Gray Hands member receive 2 renown. It's up to you to decide whether she sends them back to do more for Meloon, or if she takes over from here.

If the party defeated Meloon, Vajra is deeply troubled by their account — and grateful for their aid. She rewards them with a *wand of secrets* and each Gray Hand member receives 2 renown. She also confiscates Azuredge from the party. If Meloon's body is returned to her, Vajra Safahr has Meloon resurrected soon after. If you want, you can later have the adventurer stop by Trollskull Manor to give his thanks.

In the Eye of the Beholder

In this mission, Vajra Safahr wants the party to move up to the big leagues. She asks them take on the Xanathar's Guild head-on and kill the mindflayer Nihiloor. Covering the entirety of the Xanathar's lair would be a whole document in itself, but below we'll give some advice on how to start the dangerous mission.

The Mission

> "The Xanathar is using intellect devourers to take control of Waterdavians in key positions throughout the city. We must deal with this problem at once. Infiltrate Xanathar's lair and destroy whatever is responsible for creating these creatures."

This mission makes even better sense if the party has dealt with Meloon's troubles, tying the quests neatly together.

Alternate Purposes

If it makes sense in your campaign, you can have Vajra Safahr give this mission to the party as they're already looking to get something (or someone) else from the Xanathar's lair: the Bregan D'aerthe traitor (see Bregan D'aerthe faction missions), the *Stone of Golorr*, a key for the Vault of Dragons — or even the 500,000 gold dragons, if Xanathar has gotten its appendages on it! Vajra can give this additional job as they come by asking for directions to the lair.

A Helping Hand

If the party helped free Meloon, you can have Vajra send the experienced adventurer with them. It makes sense — he's a senior Force Grey member and he has a bone to pick with Nihiloor. Bringing Meloon along greatly increases the party's chance of success — and also gives you a tool to use if the party are getting in over their head. At any point, you can have Meloon turn to the party and tell them to flee before sacrificing himself to cover their escape.

With the Blackstaff's Aid

The Blackstaff can't very well go trudging through the sewers along with the party, even if the stakes are high. She is much too busy and her life is much too valuable. Besides, her presence might attract unwanted attention — and perhaps even more dangerous foes than the Xanathar. However, there is something the Blackstaff can do to help. At your discretion, she can loan one or more of the following magical items to the party for this mission:

- A *wand of enemy detection* with 7 charges.
- A small packet of *dust of disappearance*.
- A *scroll of locate creature*, that Vajra suggests they use to locate intellect devourers immediately after entering the Xanathar's lair (this points them straight to Nihiloor).
- A *ring of resistance* against psychic damage for each character.

Conclusion

If the party returns successful to Vajra Safahr, they'll get the 2 renown they deserve. The book suggests Vajra also rewards them with potions of resistance, but allowing them to keep some or all of the magical treasures she gave them could also be a good prize for their work. And, if the party managed to somehow kill the Xanathar, destroy it's lair or otherwise deal a crippling blow to Xanathar's Guild, she might even elevate Gray Hand members to positions in Force Grey!

Manticore

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	7 (–2)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Tail Spike Regrowth. The manticore has 24 tail spikes, that regrow when it finishes a long rest.

Actions

Multiattack. The manticore makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws or three with its tail spikes.

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

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

Tail Spike. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/200 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Zhentarim Bandit

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 17 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

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

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Terrik

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. Terrik has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Otira

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. Otira is a 1st-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *ray of frost*, *mending*

1st level (2 slots): *grease*, *sleep*, *shield*

Actions

Wand of Magic Missiles (7 charges). Otira can expend 1 or more of her *wand of magic missile's* charges to cast the *magic missile* spell from it. For 1 charge, she casts the 1st-level version of the spell. She can increase the spell slot level by one for each additional charge she expends.

Hezrou

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 136 (13d10 + 65)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	5 (–3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +8, Wis +4
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Abyssal, Telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 8 (3900 XP)

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

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the hezrou must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the hezrou's stench for 24 hours.

Actions

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

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Meloon Wardragon

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Survival +6
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Telepathy 60
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). Meloon can reroll a saving throw that he fails. He must use the new roll.

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

Actions

Multiattack. Meloon makes four attacks with Azuredge.

Azuredge. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Intellect Devourer

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)
Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities blinded
Senses blindsight 60 ft., 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.

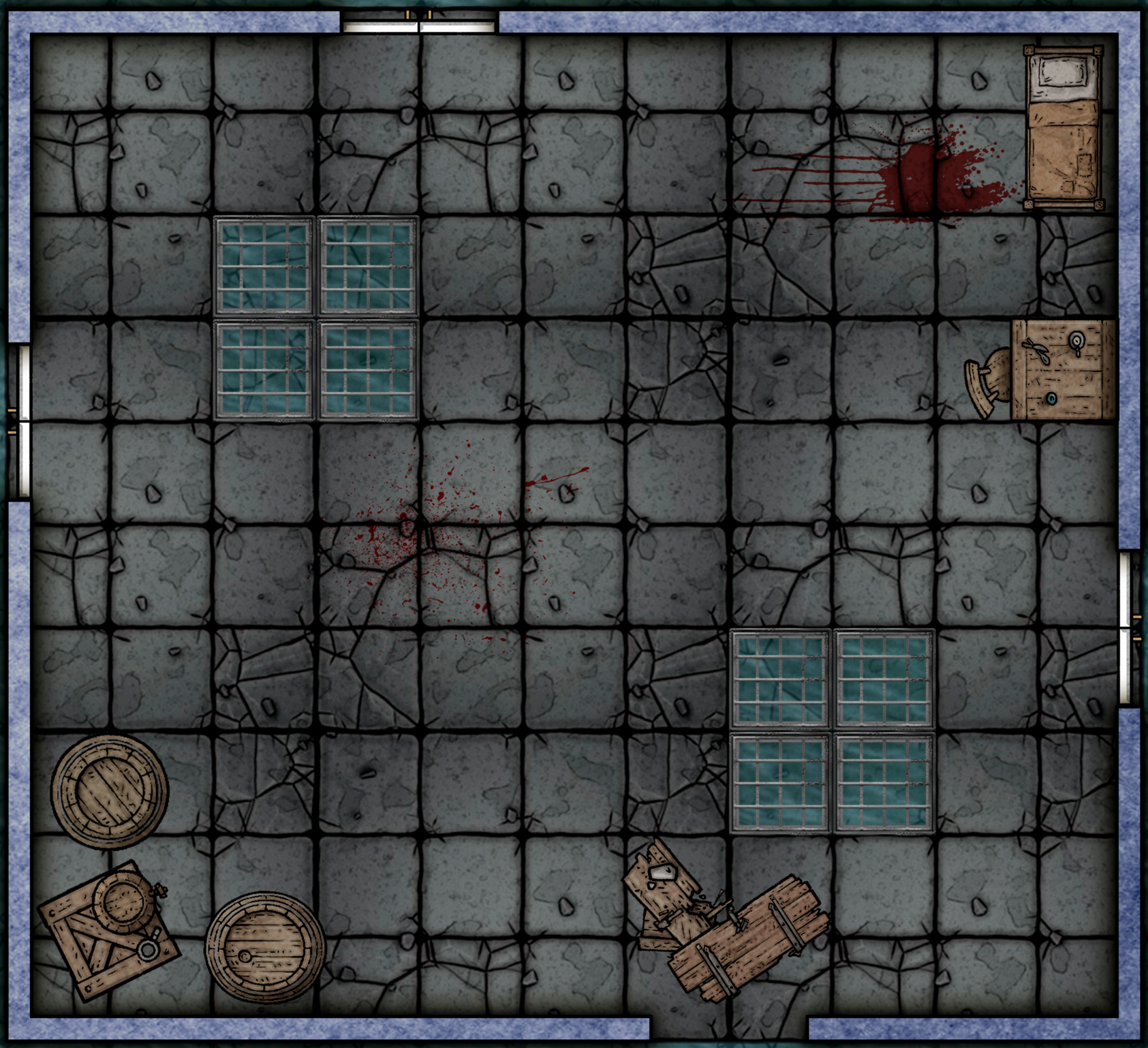
Actions

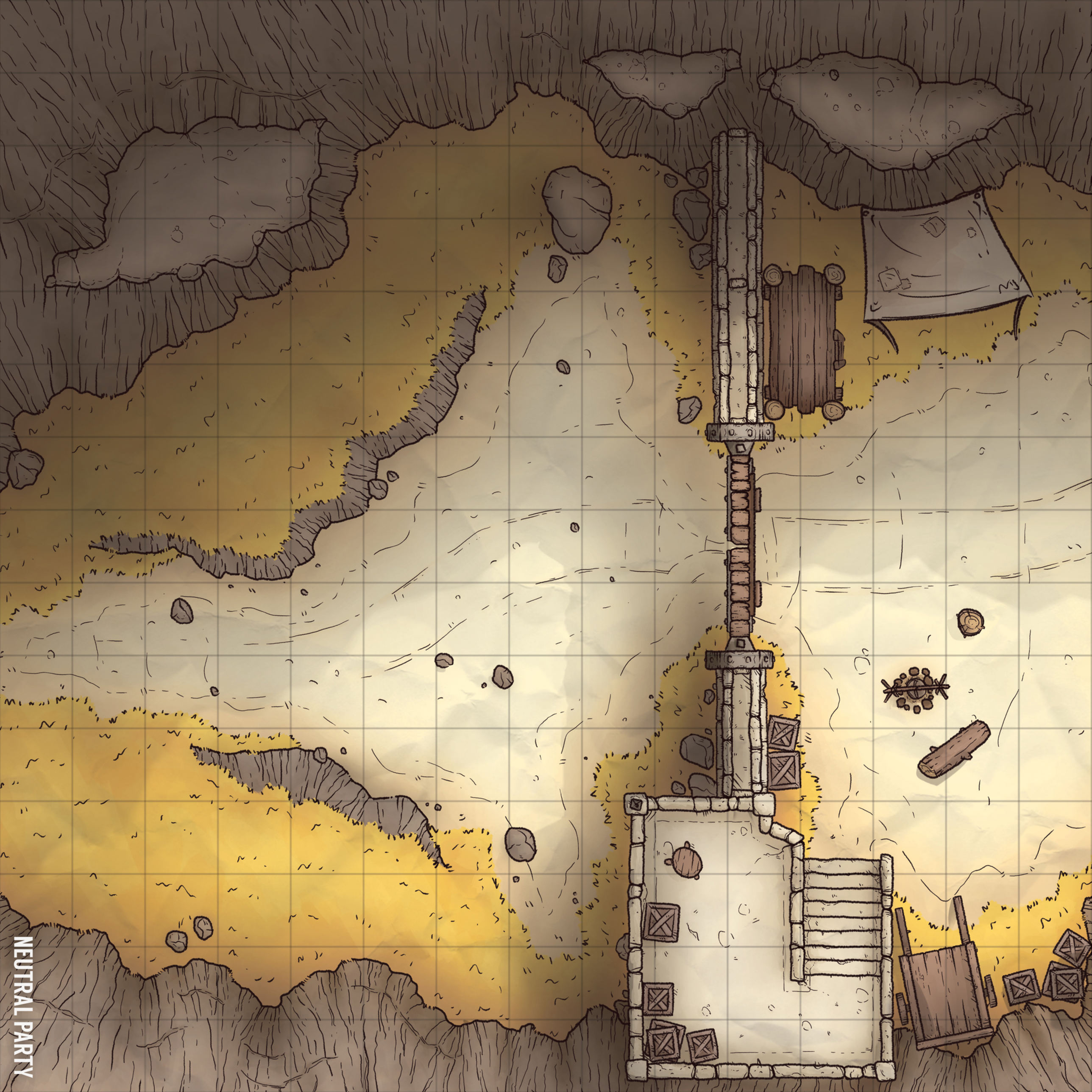
Multiattack. The intellect devourer makes one attack with its claws and uses Devour Intellect.

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 that has a brain. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage. Also on a failure, roll3d6: 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 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.

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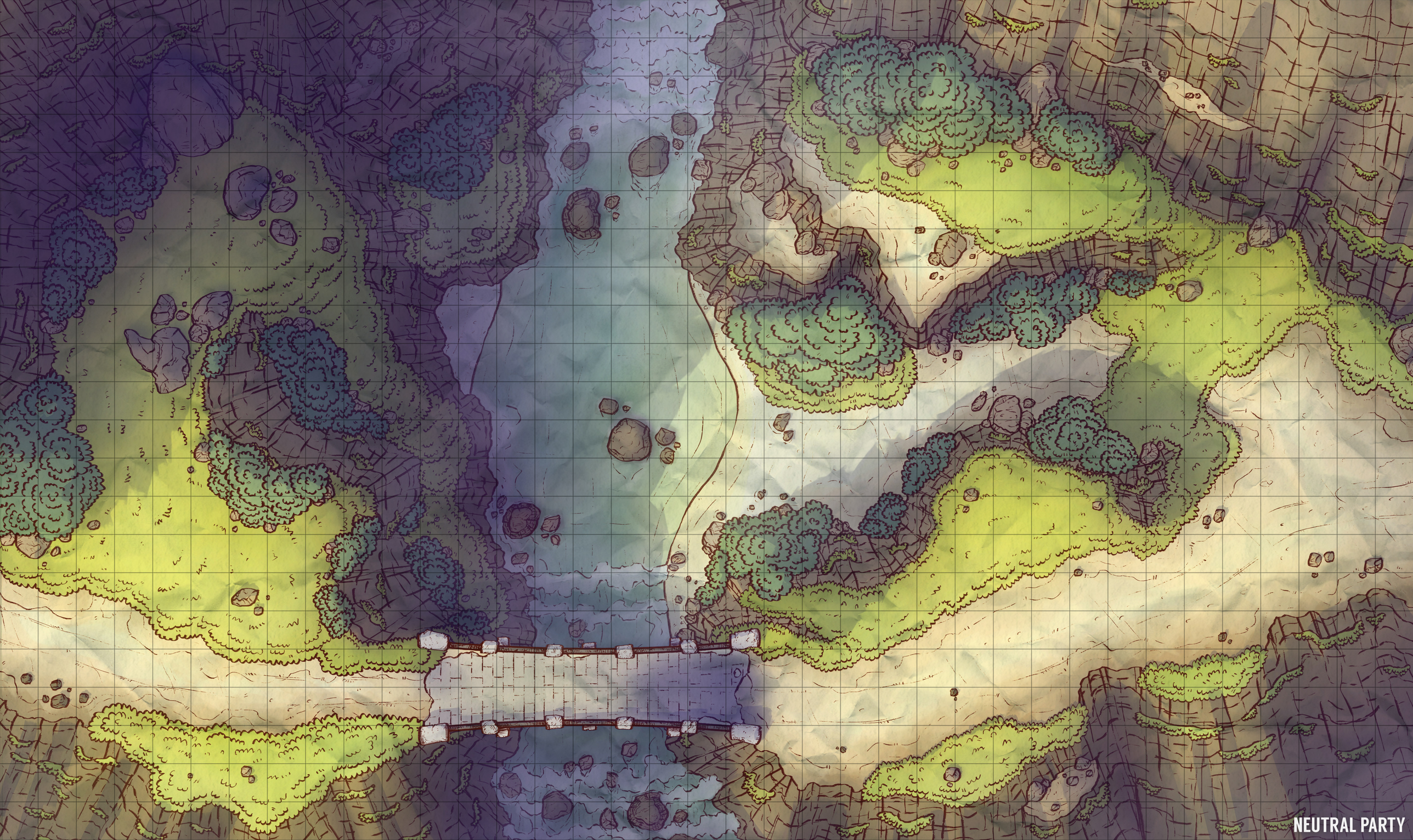
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A Valeur RPG DM's Resource

This document was made with GM Binder.

A big thanks to Neutral Party who've graciously provided the 'Rocky Stream' and 'Mountain Checkpoint' maps. Become a patron at https://www.patreon.com/neutralparty and gain access to all their beautiful battlemaps — and every new map they make.

We hope you get some use out of this resource. If there's anything missing, let us know. Also, don't forget to leave a comment and a review — they're greatly appreciated.

A big thank you to everyone who purchased this product. You are helping adventures become real and dreams come true. You can find our other work on the DM's Guild.