

CORSAIRS OF THE PNEUMEAN EXPANSE

A raiding delight for a tier 2 party

Written by Christopher Harding



CREDITS



LEGAL

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Eberron, the dragon ampersand, Ravnica and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries.

This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All other original material in this work is copyright 2019 by **Christopher Harding** and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All artwork used in this adventure is free licensed by Dungeon Masters Guild, from their DM Resources packs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Harding is a Games Design student at [Staffordshire University](#) (class of 2020). He writes adventures and supplements on Dungeon Masters Guild, as well as creating hand-drawn maps both birds-eye and isometric. His focuses in writing have been inclusivity, diversity, and sustainable living, though his love for heavy metal, horror in film and fiction, and the grimdark universe of Warhammer 40,000 have weaved their influences in. He also creates his own herb and spice mixes for cooking, and brews his own mead and gin.

Should you wish to get in contact or see his previous works and upcoming projects, check his [Twitter](#), his [Dungeon Masters Guild](#) page, his official [Website](#), and his [LinkedIn](#) page for additional info. He is always open to conversations and feedback, so feel free to drop him a message to discuss anything TTRPG related.

OVERVIEW

How To Use This Adventure

This adventure is aimed at those groups looking for a small side adventure, or to spice up their sea regions. This supplement has the potential to start or build on existing campaigns, even interconnecting regions with fellow hunting parties. This adventure features illithids, an aboleth and their minions, gith, and sea races on the back of swordfish.

OFFICIAL CREATURES

These creatures can be found within official Dungeons and Dragons Source books.

- Aboleth (MM pg.14)
- Cranium Rats (VGtM pg)
- Gith (MM pg.160, MToF pg.96 & 205)
- Intellect Devourer (MM pg.191)
- Kuo-Toa (MM pg.198)
- Mindflayers (MM pg.222, VGtM pg.74 & 171)
- Sahuagin (MM pg.263)

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventurers wake up in a locked room, soaked and dirty, covered with seaweed. The stagnant air around them reeks of saltwater. They discover that their boat was capsized but luckily they were rescued by a returning raiding party of gith and their allies. The harbour town they find themselves in rests on the back of a giant dragon turtle that they have allied with. They use this massive creature as a base of operations to hunt down servants of illithids and the foul slavers themselves that hide in coves and subterranean ocean hideouts. But these splinter groups of mindflayers are much more threatening than the hunters realize, having an unconventional alliance with a fellow psionic being - an aboleth. Together they work to enslave those of both the land and sea, their despicable plots too complicated to understand. Your quest is to assist the gith and their elite task force to hunt down the source of the problems, eradicating the scourge from the peninsula.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

1. UNEXPECTED COMPANY

The party awakens in a large bedroom, damp and reeking of saltwater. *Dorzak*, *Gharad*, and *Esznia* watch over them and begin questioning why they were so far out to sea. After explaining, the party is properly introduced and told about the illithid vermin that infest the waters. They are given a quick tour of **Dragonback Wharf** before setting to work. The gith have recently lost numbers and ask for the adventurer's help for the next few raids.

2. EARNING YOUR SEA-LEGS

Dragonback Wharf is situated on the back of a giant dragon turtle, persuaded and appeased by the gith that live on it. It swims across The Pneumean Expanse, the ocean that surrounds Tarrofen Peninsula. The party have been tasked to see Lyrei and acquire the appropriate provisions before heading out to Bloodbrook Cove. Before setting out they must be trained to ride the sea mounts at hand, once they have a basic understanding their journey can begin. At Bloodbrook Cove they find sahuagin attacking and enslaving a moderately peaceful tribe of kuo-toa. After saving the tribe, the party returns to Dragonback Wharf.

3. BEHIND THE VEIL

Their next excursion is at the Jha'zar Inlet, south of Bloodbrook Cove. Here the raiding party finds a lone mindflayer psion, Zanketh and some of its minions, wreaking havoc and experimenting on the mind-controlled kuo-toa. The party learns that it's not just the mindflayer pulling the strings, as once it has been defeated, the kuo-toa are still in the same condition. The party can attempt to bargain or extract further information from Zanketh.

4. CHASE TO UUL'BAHX PASSAGE

Upon returning to the wharf, the raiding party is told of some trouble happening around town. Provisions have gone missing, resources are damaged, and half of their mounts have been cut loose. Somewhere there is a spy in town sabotaging their efforts. Once the party find the spy, a chase ensues first on foot through the town, and then by sea on the remaining mounts. The spy leads them to Uul'Bahx Passage, where inside many horrors await.

5. THE PUPPET MASTERS

Anphi struggles against the mind control, breaking herself free for a few moments. She tells the party of the mindflayer colony below, deep within Qhardozek Hive. It's a rogue sect with only a few members, but their minions are vile and evil. She alludes to something else, something bigger and worse than the mindflayers, but the horror is too great, its as though a barrier is blocking out her ability to remember it. The party must fight their way through the rogue colony before facing off against the abomination Qolldux, an arcane wielding mindflayer. The fight is tough but the party prevail. The party finds research notes on a creature called an aboleth, noting that a tenuous alliance has been forged. Laid upon a research table can be found underwater breathing apparatus that attach the the face.

6. THE HEART OF EVIL

A voice echoes in the party's head, beckoning them to the pool at the farthest edge of the hive. Eyes glow in the dark depths, as multiple tentacles launch from the still waters pulling the party in, collapsing the rock. Submerged and in near darkness, Uur'Dhama introduces themselves as the new master of the seas and land, thanks to the party. They attempt to seduce and control the members before becoming enraged and lashing out. The party must now fight the aboleth runt in their lair, the Den of Horror.

7. ONE GOOD TURN

The threats have been defeated and for now the Tarrofen Peninsula and The Pneumean Expanse are safe from the clutches of planar slavers. The party is welcomed back and thanked for help, the gith couldn't have done it without them. They can use Dragonback Wharf as their home upon the seas, they are gifted treasure made by the gith, and are taught how to tame sea creatures to ride.

KEY LOCATIONS

DRAGONBACK WHARF

This town is somewhat ramshackle, but still very stable considering where it is perched. On the back of a dragon turtle isn't something to be chuckled at, as having a mobile base of operations comes in very handy.

TARROFEN PENINSULA

The Tarrofen Peninsula is close to 100 miles long from the mainland to the tip, with small islands dotted around a few kilometers away from the coastline. It's lush and green forests in the center, but turns to rocky outcrops and coral reefs around the coast.

BLOODBROOK COVE

This cove is home to a tribe of kuo-toa, more friendly than usual as they rely heavily on trading to survive. Before the sahuagin and mindflayers began to overrule them, they worked with the gith at Dragonback Wharf and other communities across the peninsula.

JHA'ZAR INLET

Once home to kuo-toa, it is now a breeding ground for chuul and uchuulon, with reckless experiments being performed on the helpless denizens. This tainted place is a wretched hive where the mindflayers unleash their vile creatures onto the world.

THE PNEUMEAN EXPANSE

This stretch of water is home to some of the most beautiful and vibrant fauna in the southern hemisphere. However, the beauty is betrayed by the abundance of psionics, and mind control toxins that are used as a defence mechanism. Many dangerous creatures reside below the waves, not least of all giant sharks and manta.

UUL'BAHX PASSAGE

The dark passage from the cove to the hive is riddled with dangers and mindless servants of both the illithid and aboleth's making. Cranium rats, chuul, and intellect devourers scout the passage, hunting down all trespassers. The winding passage leads directly into the hive where horrors surely await.

QHARDOZEK HIVE

Compared to the hive *Qolldux* came from, this is puny and pathetic. No elder brain chamber, minimal equipment, and hardly any aesthetic considerations. Aside from some carvings and a chamber for research, the hive is tiny, only a hundred feet in diameter.

UNEXPECTED COMPANY

The smell of salt and fish clings in the air as the party awakes on a cold wooden floor, the room a little larger than a cell and their clothes still damp from the ordeal they've been through. As they begin to rouse, they hear footsteps approaching from the door at the far end of the room, murmurs in a strange language grow louder until the door creaks open. Standing in the doorway is Gharad, Mayor of Dragonback Wharf, an aged githzerai, with a slouch to their stance. He scans the room eyeing up the party before calling out to Esznia and Dorzak. From the corners of the room Dorzak and Esznia stand up, apparently keeping watch over the washed up group from the shadows.

The three of them discuss something in their tongue, dropping in the odd Common phrase to keep the strangers on edge. Esznia struts over to the party, kneels down and begins to ask them questions. Who are they, why are they so far out to sea, and whether they are up for the chance to earn a bit of coin in exchange for their services. Esznia and Dorzak can tell they are adventurers, just by the equipment they carry. These folk are definitely not strangers to action. Once the party has agreed, or at least been deemed not a threat, they are free to go, though this in of itself presents some issues. The ramshackle cell they were detained in is part of a small village cobbled together from shipwrecks and basic supplies that can be traded at port.

This shanty town is lovingly named Dragonback Wharf, as it rests on the back of a giant Dragon Turtle, though friendly and appeased by the inhabitants. Getting out of town and back to land will prove difficult. If the party has accepted the invitation, they are told of Bloodbrook Cove, a suspected target of raids and enslavement by creatures most foul. The party, upon agreeing to help with the raids, are escorted to Lyrei to stock up on provisions they may need, as well as become acquainted with their part-time mount.

EARNING YOUR SEA-LEGS

At the western pier of Dragonback Wharf, Lyrei runs the provisioners, trading wares and maintaining the upkeep on resources used by the town. She and her crew are the only licensed folk who can trade directly with those on land, though everyone is welcome to put in a requisition request for what they need and want. When she is not counting supplies and filling out forms, she tends to the sea-stables that hold the mounts used by the raiding party.

Lyrei will gladly offer the strangers the provisions as requested by the raid party, on the condition that they help to transport some of their most recent trades to the correct people. With the influx of raids they are having to order in more supplies, but without the extra hands to help out. She hands a list to the party with the names to deliver their stock to.

Upon returning to Lyrei, the party is told that their mounts have been prepared, but they will need to be taught how to ride the Giant Swordfish. The swordfish is the easiest to learn, but with time much like the raid captains, they could learn to ride giant manta, giant reef sharks, or even sea wyverns with enough practice and taming.

Esznia and Dorzak accompany the party, along with **2 githyanki warriors** on the back of their mounts, traveling across The Pneumean Expanse to their destination. Upon arriving at Bloodbrook Cove, the leader notices something is off. Usually the local kuo-toa tribe would welcome them, as in recent times the raiding party have been peacekeepers of a sort, defending the locals from attackers. This time they were too late, bodies of some of the tribe members strewn across the camp. The party can make an Investigation check to notice extra tracks and where the sahuagin have taken the remaining members of the clan. Further into the cove, the party can hear the cries of kuo-toa being coralled into holding pens like cattle. As they come into view they can see a full raiding party of **10 sahuagin**. The sahuagin notice the party and ready their weapons poised to attack, defending their spoils and soon to be slaves.

With the oppressive sahuagin defeated, the captured kuo-toa can be set free to bury their dead and recover from the attack. If the adventurers decide to investigate the area they find *15gp worth of valuables* on the sahuagin bodies, and a clam shell with etchings, possibly orders. They can understand the orders if they speak sahuagin, otherwise they will need to find someone to decode it. The orders mention an informant in Dragonback Wharf, a kuo-toa that relays messages about the strength and movements of the gith.



BEHIND THE VEIL

A short trip back from Bloodbrook Cove sees the party return to Dragonback Wharf, though the base of operations has moved further south and closer to the coastline. Once they return, they should return to the mayor and report their findings. The mayor asks the party to relay a message to Lyrei, asking her to round up a few people and a couple of boats worth of supplies to aid with the relief effort at Bloodbrook Cove.

The next step for the party is to hit another pocket of disruption along the coast, the Jha'zar Inlet twenty miles south of Bloodbrook Cove. They may have helped out once, but the raid commander could desperately use another few sets of hands, at least until they recruit some more members. They can tell the party is adept at what they do, and will even throw in a reward if they can help out with the next attack. The party agrees, and after a short rest and restocking, the raiders are off once more atop their watery steeds.

As the party approaches from the sea, they can smell smoke, twirling spires of black rising in the direction they are headed. There must have already been an attack, as even one of the community's great celebrations never raises this much commotion. They get closer and it hits them. The village has been set ablaze, yet from this distance no inhabitants can be seen. The raiders dock their mounts a safe distance away and head on over to the village. They were too late. Some bodies lay on the ground, beaten into submission, and a trail of teal slime leads through the village and into the cave. To the horror of the party they discover clutches of eggs laid in the corpses of the kuo-toa.

All characters with **14 passive Perception** or higher can hear gentle clacking of bones and muffled voices. Shortly after they start to investigate and search for survivors they can hear chattering and splashing noises approach from deep in the cave. Those that have lower than **14 passive Perception** are caught unaware, allowing the **3 chuulflayers** to scuttle out of the cave and perform a surprise round, still with remnants from their prey decorating their carapaces.

The fight is tough, but the party prevails, slaying the horrible creatures, their tentacles writhing as they take their last breath. The gith have seen these creatures before, and while it worries them its an assurance that they are on the right track. They're getting closer to their eternal nemesis, illithids. This monster is what happens when a chuul is captured by a mindflayer and converted into another dastardly minion. Wherever a minion is, the master is never far behind. The party hears a soft voice in their head, calling them to tropical tree-line. Waiting in ambush is **Zanketh**, the mindflayer behind these vile mutants. If a member of the party has **15 passive Perception** or higher, they can just make out the silhouette of Zanketh shuffling in the shrubbery, otherwise Zanketh strikes and initiates a surprise round.

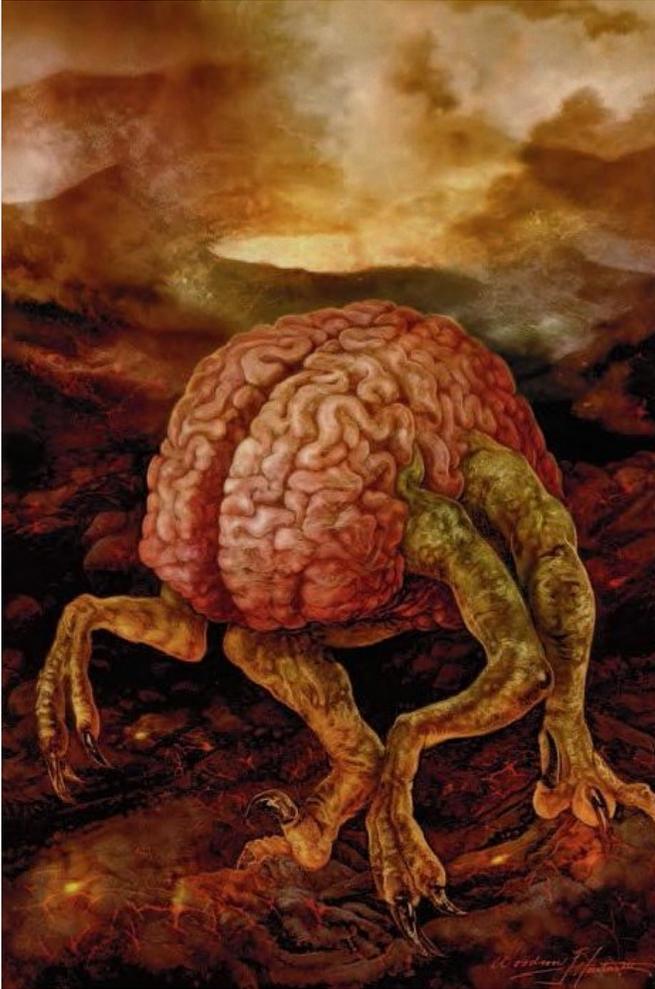
Now is not the time to mourn for the lost. This vital information must be given to the supreme commander as soon as they return to base. Once the party makes their way back, they are awarded *50 gold each and 4 Piscene Bubbles each*. These bubbles give the user 10 minutes of waterbreathing per use.



CHASE TO UUL'BAHX PASSAGE

Further down the coastline lies home, Dragonback Wharf. The raiding squad returns back to base, relaying their findings to Gharad at the town hall. This valuable information will help turn the tide, acting as a catalyst to rally locals from around the peninsula to help with their cause. The eradication of the mindflayers is all that matters to them, as it would ensure their survival across the planes. While the party has been away there has been a ruckus all over town. Crates and barrels of supplies are knocked over, stalls damaged, produce stolen, and general anti-social behavior. It is believed the suspect is still in town hiding out, last seen by the warehouses. Reports say that a kuo-toa is on a rampage, seemingly crazed and acting out, spouting gibberish as they run amok.

The party searches across the settlement, asking the townsfolk if they have seen the kuo-toa in question, and after a few shaken heads they discover that the kuo-toa is Anphi, a refugee that was given a safe haven not too long ago. She was last seen close to the warehouse in a daze, opening crates and devouring the produce inside while gibbering unintelligible words. As the adventurers get close to her, she becomes frightened and sprints to the docks, stealing one of the mounts. It is now up to the party to chase her across The Pneumean Expanse to wherever she may be heading.



Mounting up for the chase ahead of them, the party follows Anphi across The Pneumean Expanse, her maddened cackles fading on the sea breeze. Luckily Anphi didn't have much of a head start, as the adventurer discover her location quickly and was able to root her out. After 30 minutes of pursuing her on the back of aquatic beasts, they arrive at a rocky and barren outcrop with a large crack to the side. As the party gets closer to the opening, they can see a dim light emanating from further in, the smell of rancid meat fills the air as they begin to make their way inside.

THE PUPPET MASTERS

Anphi lies just past the entrance curled on the floor in pain. She is struggling against the mind control inflicted upon her by the mindflayers, breaking herself free for a few moments. She tells the party of the mindflayer colony past Uul'Bahx Passage, deep within Qhardozek Hive. Apparently it's a rogue sect with only a few members, but their minions are are numerous and spread out across the peninsula.

She alludes to something else, something bigger and worse than the mindflayers lurking in the depths. The horror is too great to fathom, it's as though a barrier is blocking out her ability to remember. Anphi loses consciousness and is unable to woken by any means known by the adventurers.

Further into the dank caverns, heavy footsteps and scratching echoes down the 10ft. wide hallway of splintered stone, the wails of agony dancing on the wind. A **swarm of cranium rats** and **2 intellect devourers** rush towards the party, attempting to overwhelm them with their rush tactics. 2 rounds after this initial onslaught, **1 chuulflayer** approaches from further in the cave to support its allies. In this enclosed space it is much trickier to maneuver, forcing the adventurers and their foes to funnel in head to head. With the creatures defeated the coast appears to be clear for them to progress.

Judging by what Anphi said, there may well be many more of these hideous abominations lurking on patrol. It is advised the party progresses slowly and carefully as not to alarm anything wandering by. Cranium rats and intellect devourers trudge through the twisting paths, searching for any intelligent life to bring back to their masters. It takes 10 minutes of walking through damp crevasses and down crudely carved steps to reach the deadly grotto, the precipice of evil where the mindflayers and their minions call home - Qhardozek Hive.

Upon entering the makeshift hive, some 80 feet in diameter, the adventurers feel a wave of pressure wash over them, their senses dampened and assaulted. Carvings of strange ruins, arcane technology and machinery litter the ground, sparking and humming strange notes. From above a floating orb emits a muted green light, brightening up the cave, while at the back of the room, a black, reflective pool of liquid sits, occasionally bubbling. All adventurers must succeed a **DC 14** Wisdom saving throw, else they have disadvantage on their next attack. In the center of the hive, a lithe, gray figure leans over a stone table, poking and prodding at the remains that lay there.

Almost immediately after they step foot into the grotto, the creature - Qolldux, looks up, revealing six long, pallid tentacles protruding from its face. In their minds the adventures can hear a voice say "Ahh fresh prey to do my bidding. Oh, how I will enjoy turning you into my minions." Qolldux stands up straight, levitating ever so slightly off the ground, before summoning **2 swarms of cranium rats**, **1 intellect devourer** and **4 kuo-toa** to attack the party. A devastating fight ensues, with Qolldux casting spells from afar.



When Qolldux is close to death, they retreat to the reflecting pool to beg for help from Uur'Dhama, something that most illithids are too proud to do. As they approach, three massive tentacles burst from the pool, wrapping around Qolldux and lifting them into the air. A giant tooth filled maw raises out of the pool and devours the mindflyer.

Once the encounter has been completed the party stumble upon research notes on a creature called an aboleth, noting that a tenuous alliance has been forged with this alien being. Communication is limited, but what can be deciphered by the scrawlings of various minions, is that any gatherings are performed around that pitch black pool. Whatever that monster was that ate Qolldux, it must be worse than the mindflyers. That pool and wherever it leads must be the lair of an aboleth.

HEART OF EVIL

The murky depths of Uur'Dhama's pool stretches deep below the island into the abyss and out to the sea. Vision is obscured in the dark and fetid water, the perfect lair for a creature as vile as an aboleth. For the party to defeat this creature without being utterly outmatched, they must find a way to bring it to the surface, or breathe underwater. A deadly battle is upon the party, but if victorious in will save countless lives by extinguishing the threat before them.

UUR'DHAMA'S LAIR

LAIR ACTIONS

When fighting inside its lair, Uur'Dhama can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Uur'Dhama takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Uur'Dhama casts *phantasmal force* (no components required) on any number of creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. While maintaining concentration on this effect, they can't take other lair actions. If a target succeeds on the saving throw or if the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Uur'Dhama's *phantasmal force* lair action for the next 24 hours, although such a creature can choose to be affected.
- Pools of water within 90 feet of Uur'Dhama surge outward. Any creature on the ground within 20 feet of such a pool must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 20 feet into the water and knocked prone. Uur'Dhama can't use this lair action again until it has used a different one.
- Water in the Uur'Dhama's lair becomes a conduit for the creature's rage. Uur'Dhama can target any number of creatures it can see in such water within 90 feet of it. A target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 7 (2d6) psychic damage. Uur'Dhama can't use this lair action again until it has used a different one.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing Uur'Dhama's lair is warped by the creature's presence, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- Underground surfaces within 1 mile of Uur'Dhama's lair are slimy and wet and are difficult terrain.
- Water sources within 1 mile of the lair are supernaturally fouled. Enemies of Uur'Dhama that drink such water vomit it within minutes.
- As an action, Uur'Dhama can create an illusory image of itself within 1 mile of the lair. The copy can appear at any location Uur'Dhama has seen before or in any location a creature charmed by Uur'Dhama can currently see. Once created, the image lasts for as long as Uur'Dhama maintains concentration, as if concentrating on a spell. Although the image is intangible, it looks, sounds, and can move like Uur'Dhama. Uur'Dhama can sense, speak, and use telepathy from the image's position as if present at that position. If the image takes any damage, it disappears.

ONE GOOD TURN

With the threats have defeated, the Tarrofen Peninsula and The Pneumean Expanse are safe from the clutches of the extra-planar slavers. No more will the threat of subjugation hang over the heads of the inhabitants, no more will they fear for their sanity and lives. On this day the scourge was stamped out from the region and those terrorized can breathe easy and begin to rebuild. No doubt the vermin from space still hide in their caves across the planet, but this region is safe at least. Upon returning to Dragonback Wharf the party is led to the mayor with the rest of their compatriots to break the fantastic news, the illithid scourge has been cleansed from the land. Even better, an aberrant aboleth strangely working with the mindflayers, has been taken out too, making the seas a much safer place for all who dwell and travel in the region. The mayor thanks the party for their assistance with these matters and offers them a variety of riches, tokens to use their mounts should they decide to return, and a humming, glowing piece of coral that can guide them to the waystone in the town center. A small coffer of donations is handed to the adventurers, funds that would be used to hire mercenaries to assist with the raids. The coffer contains *200gp*, and a necklace with a ruby encrusted in the middle.

NPC's

ANPHI (SHE/HER, CG KUO-TOA ARCHPRIEST)

- **Two Sentences:** A mind-broken Kuo-Toa, controlled and forced to spy on the raiders on behalf of her masters.
- **Appearance:** She wears disheveled robes and has many scars from being beaten by her masters. She always has a mournful expression.
- **Characteristics:** When not being controlled, she is always looking after her tribe, sometimes by force if necessary.
- **Relatable:** She just wants what is best for her tribe. Resisting the illithids would surely bring ruin to them, so she made the ultimate sacrifice.
- **Antagonistic:** She is sneaky and disrupts normal runnings of the raiding town such as letting livestock go, knocking over barrels and generally being a nuisance.
- **Threatening:** When threatened she will do one of two things - retreat as fast as possible, or snap into a rabid rage, becoming berzerk and attacking her foes.
- **Special:** Despite being mind controlled, due to the "crazy" nature of the kuo-toa psyche, she can sometimes break free for a few moments.

DORZAK (HE/HIM, LG GITHZERAI FIGHTER)

Dorzak is one of a few githzerai that roam the land and sea, in search of his people's ex-captors. His pain suffered at their hands makes him overzealous sometimes, ranting and raving about his victories.

- **Personality:** He can be rash and reckless sometimes, but luckily his superior can reign him in. He has a burning hatred for illithids and finds kinship in those who feel the same.
- **Ideal:** Is willing to work with anybody, provided they have the drive and passion for the task. Skills can be taught, drive cannot.
- **Bond:** His sea-wyvern mount, Bubbles, is his most prized possession and would do anything to keep her safe.
- **Flaw:** When he isn't brought under control, his temper can lead to on-the-fly decisions that negatively impact the clan.

ESZANIA (SHE/THEY, CG GITHYANKI SUPREME COMMANDER)

Esznia is the githyanki raid commander at Dragonback Wharf, organising all the excursions and hunts that the clan undertakes. She is well respected by her peers.

- **Personality:** They are careful and deliberate with their actions, taking all voices into account before coming to a decision. She sees herself as the mother of the group, caring for each individual.
- **Ideal:** She pours countless hours into the cause, because she knows that until the scourge have been eradicated, there can be no peace within the planes.
- **Bond:** Her bond is with the community, sacrificing her time to its care and upkeep.
- **Flaw:** Her willingness to put herself in less than ideal situations for the sake of the clan leads her to great mental strain and stress.

GHARAD (HE/THEY, LG GITHZERAI ANARCH)

Gharad is the "mayor" of Dragonback Wharf, directing and influencing the journey of the dragon turtle their town resides on. Their primary role is maintaining the smooth running of the wharf.

- **Personality:** They are headstrong and stubborn when it comes to leading the town, but takes great pleasure in seeing his plans come to fruition.
- **Ideal:** Wishes that instead of being in charge, someone worthy and younger would take up the mantle. So far very few are close.
- **Bond:** His partner is what keeps them going. Their understanding and drive, the compassion and trust they share. He is his rock, and they treasure each other always.
- **Flaw:** His aloof personality frustrates others around them, and sometimes demoralizes the crew.

LYREI (SHE/HER LG GITHYANKI KNIGHT)

Lyrei is one of many Gith here, and the head provisioner on Dragonback Wharf, allocated and requisitioning resources and gear. She and her crew are the traders of the clan, working with coastal communities on trade agreements and safe passage.

- **Personality:** *She is extremely charismatic, and very headstrong, never backing down from an argument. She tries to get the best for her clan, haggling for as long as it takes to get a better deal.*
- **Ideal:** *a good bargain should never be passed up, and if it helps cleanse the land of the illithid menace, even better.*
- **Bond:** *She is bound by a duty of care for her nephew, since his parents were lost on a raid. This young lad will grow up to be the best of her siblings, with a splash of her stubbornness.*
- **Flaw:** *Her stubbornness is both her boon and a flaw. The trouble she has caused in the past because of it has poorly impacted sales on more than one occasion.*

QOLLDUX

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +8, Wis +7, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +8, Deception +7, Insight +7,

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900)

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

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Qolldux's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16).

Spellcasting. Qolldux is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Qolldux has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, disguise self, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *confusion, Evard's black tentacles, phantasmal killer*
- 5th level (2 slots): *modify memory, wall of force*
- 6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate, globe of invulnerability*

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

Actions

Chilling Grasp. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit. reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6). Qolldux magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

QOLLDUX (THEY/THEM CE MINDFLAYER ALHOON)

- **Two Sentences:** Head of the rogue sect of Qhardozek hive, Qolldux takes command of the hive through fear and manipulation, using their undeadly magics to rule with a iron, tentacles fist.
- **Appearance:** Their pale visage betrays their health, on the verge of death at almost all times from the energies that course through them. They are dressed in ornate silks and linens, carrying a staff with the skull of a mindflayer bound atop it.
- **Characteristics:**
- **Relatable:** As an outcast and abomination, Qolldux leaned into this, exiling themselves and gaining power through whatever means necessary.
- **Antagonistic:** They constantly send cell units and spies to communities in the near vicinity, enticing those that listen, and stealing those that don't.
- **Threatening:** She actively curses townsfolk that get too close, and her corrupting influence thickens the closer to the lair you get. Minions and beasts are called forth to attack anyone that threatens her way of life.
- **Special:** Despite her powers and willingness to commit acts of violence, if she can strike up a deal that benefits her, and lets her continue practicing her dark magics, that is what she will do. Murder is a last resort, but something she is very capable of performing.

UR'DHAMA (THEY/THEM LE ABOLETH)

- **Two Sentences:** A monstrous vile creature from before the gods came to be. Their only want is to enslave and devour the lesser races, proving its superiority in the stars.
- **Appearance:** This aboleth differs slightly to its kin. The climate and environment it dwells in is imbued with strange, toxic materials. Their coloration is a deep regal blue and mottled with green splotches. The toxins have stunted their growth, making them slightly smaller than an adult would be under ideal circumstances.
- **Characteristics:** Uur'Dhama is a hateful, manipulative being, born with a sense of superiority across all planes of existence. Anything they see as other than themselves are vermin, fit only for food or to serve.
- **Antagonistic:** They have a pact with the Illithids to dominate the land and seas. It is a tenuous relationship that could break at any moment. They threaten all who use the world's oceans.
- **Threatening:** Their legions of servants and information networks below the waves are unsurpassed, allowing them to strike at any time.
- **Special:** Despite the promise made to work alongside the Illithids, Uur'Dhama is simply waiting for the right moment to overthrow them. Any opportunity the alliance is weakened, they will strike.

- Uur'Dhama is a unique creature with a liar. Use the lair rules for an aboleth (MM pg.15) with this addition: Every round a creature that isn't an aboleth is within the lair, they must succeed a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or else they become poisoned.

ZANKETH (THEY/THEM LE MINDFLAYER SCION)

- **Two Sentences:** Zanketh is Qolldux's second in command, in charge of overseeing excursion to retrieve fresh subjects and brains. They too are an outcast, their psionic powers grew strong and their elder brain saw them as a threat.
- **Appearance:** Their robes are just as lavish as Qolldux's, but are much more tight fitting, with a membranous chestplate holding it all together.
- **Characteristics:** Zanketh is happy to work with with Qolldux, but reluctant to cooperate with the aboleth. When frustrated their face tentacles twitch and spasm.
- **Antagonistic:** They have a particular fondness of experiments, relishing every chance to set their vile creations out into the world.
- **Threatening:** Their psionic abilities manipulate and control weaker creatures, allowing them to be dissected while still alive.
- **Special:** While working alongside Qolldux has its boons, Zanketh thrives on the freedom of choice to experiment and test out their new creations, perhaps able to be persuaded to overthrow them, for the right incentive.

UUR'DHAMA

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 135 (18d10 + 36)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 +5	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +8, Wis +6

Skills History +12, Perception +10

Damage Resistances poison

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Languages

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Amphibious. Uur'Dhama can breathe air and water.

Mucous Cloud. While underwater, Uur'Dhama is surrounded by transformative mucus. A creature that touches Uur'Dhama or that hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is diseased for 1d4 hours. The diseased creature can breathe only underwater.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with Uur'Dhama, they learn the creature's greatest desires if Uur'Dhama can see the creature.

Actions

Multiattack. Uur'Dhama makes three tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw can be removed by any magic that cures disease.

After 1 minute, the diseased creature's skin becomes translucent and slimy, the creature can't regain hit points unless it is underwater, and the disease can be removed only by heal or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher. When the creature is outside a body of water, it takes 9 (2d8) acid damage every 10 minutes unless moisture is applied to the skin before 10 minutes have passed.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10ft. one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Enslave (3/Day). Uur'Dhama targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by Uur'Dhama until they die or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under Uur'Dhama's control and can't take reactions, and Uur'Dhama and the target can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from Uur'Dhama.

Legendary Actions

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

Detect. Uur'Dhama makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Swipe. Uur'Dhama makes one tail attack.

Psychic Drain (Costs 2 Actions). One creature charmed by Uur'Dhama takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage, and Uur'Dhama regains hit points equal to the damage the creature takes.

CREATURES

GIANT DRAGON TURTLE

Gargantuan dragon, Neutral

Armor Class 22

Hit Points 400 (28d20 + 160)

Speed 40ft., swim 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con + 11, Wis +6

Damage Resistances fire

Damage Immunities Damage_Immunities

Condition Immunities condition_Immunities

Senses darkvision 120ft., blindsight 120ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Aquan, Draconic

Challenge 19 (22,000)

Amphibious. The dragon turtle can breathe air and water.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon turtle makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. It can make one tail attack in place of its two claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (3d12 + 12) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d8 + 11) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (3d12 + 13) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 15 feet away from the dragon turtle and knocked prone.

Steam Breath (Recharge 3-4). The dragon turtle exhales scalding steam in a 80-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 80 (11d12 + 35) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Being underwater doesn't grant resistance against this damage.

GIANT MANTA

Large beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +5, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50XP)

Underwater Camouflage. The ray has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth checks made while underwater).

Water Breathing. The ray can breathe only underwater.

Actions

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack*; +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target, *Hit*: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turn.

GIANT SWORDFISH

Large beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (5d8 + 6)

Speed 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100XP)

Water Breathing. The swordfish can breathe only underwater.

Lunge. When a swordfish moves 10ft. or more before attacking with its spear attack, it can add an additional damage die to its damage roll.

Actions

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*; +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one target, *Hit*: 10 (2d6+4) piercing damage.

Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack*; +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target, *Hit*: 9 (4d4+2) slashing damage.

GIANT REEF SHARK

Large beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2, Perception +2

Senses blindsight 30ft., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 1 (150XP)

Blood Frenzy. The shark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

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

Water Breathing. The shark can breathe only underwater.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SEA WYVERN

Large dragon, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 89 (10d10 + 35)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft., fly 70ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Senses blindsight 30ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14

Languages --

Challenge 6 (2,300XP)

Amphibious. The wyvern can breathe both underwater and on land.

Actions

Multiattack. The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Tail Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) thunder damage on a failed save, or have as much on a successful one

Steam Breath (Recharge 3-4). The wyvern exhales scalding steam in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 40 (4d12 + 15) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Being underwater doesn't grant resistance against this damage.

CHUULFLAYER

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)
Speed 20ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +6
Damage Resistances acid, psychic slashing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Understands Deep Speech but can't speak
Challenge 5 (2,900XP)

Amphibious. Chuulflayers can breathe air and water.

Sense Magic. The chuulflayer senses magic within 120 feet of it at will. This trait otherwise works like the Detect Magic spell but isn't itself magical.

Suffocating Grapple. When a chuulflayer successfully grapples a creature, they deal 12 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The chuulflayer makes two pincer attacks. If the chuulflayer is grappling a creature, the chuulflayer can also use its tentacles once.

Pincer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is a Large or smaller creature and the chuulflayer doesn't have two other creatures grappled

Tentacles. One creature grappled by the chuulflayer must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. Until this poison ends, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Frenzy Ichor. A creature hit by the frenzy ichor must succeed a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed and under the influence of the chuulflayer until their next turn. Any damage sustained to that creature will break the effect.

YOUNG SEA WYVERN

Medium dragon, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft., fly 50ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses blindsight 30ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12
Languages --
Challenge 4 (2,300XP)

Amphibious. The wyvern can breathe both underwater and on land.

Actions

Multiattack. The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

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

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

Tail Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. The target must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw, taking 15 (5d6) thunder damage on a failed save, or have as much on a successful one.

Steam Breath (Recharge 3-4). The wyvern exhales scalding steam in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 25 (6d6 + 10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Being underwater doesn't grant resistance against this damage.

ITEMS

DRAGONBACK WHARF WAYSTONE FRAGMENT

This fragment of the waystone central to the roaming town of Dragonback Wharf has an incredibly useful property. If this disc-shaped shard is left in daylight for 2 hours, it begins to glow red at the edge pointing towards Dragonback Wharf. This effect lasts 12 hours, but can be charged while in use. The glow becomes increasingly intense the closer to its counterpart it becomes. This item has no effect when it is not on the same plane as the waystone.

PISCENE BUBBLE

These gelatinous spheres are found and harvested in coral reefs, a rare byproduct of the indigenous flora below the waves. Ingesting the mucous will coat the throat and lungs, filtering the water into the stomach but clearing the air to the lungs. This allows the user to breathe underwater for 10 minutes.