

THE HEIR OF

ORCUS

VERSE III

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



Roll20

**ANTHONY
JOYCE**



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

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



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Special thanks to my wife Jennifer for putting up with all
my writing and Michael Balin for his tireless efforts to bring
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CCC-ROLL20-02 *The Heir of Orcus Verse III*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Adventure Primer	2
Background.....	2
Episodes.....	2
Adventure Hooks.....	2
Choosing a Side.....	2
Episode Flowchart	3
Episode 1: The Tumultuous Road to Duerradin (Call to Action)	4
Scene A: On the Road Again.....	4
Scene B: Onward to Duerradin.....	7
Episode 2: Duerradin (Main Objective A)	8
Scene A: Arriving in Duerradin.....	8
DM Map of Duerradin.....	10
Scene B: Exploring Duerradin.....	11
Area 1: Serenity.....	11
Area 2: The Black Pyramid.....	12
Area 3: Duerra Alley (Market).....	13
Area 4: Reclamation Station.....	14
Episode 3: Duerra Spire (Main Objective B)	15
Scene A: Meeting Ios.....	15
Scene B: Into the Mind.....	16
Ios Battle Map.....	18
Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure.....	19
Adventure Rewards	20
Advancement Checkpoints.....	20
Treasure Checkpoints.....	20
DM Rewards.....	20
Appendix A: NPCs & Locations	21
Episode 1 NPCs.....	21
Episode 2 NPCs.....	22
Episode 3 NPCs.....	23
Bonus Objective NPCs.....	24
Prominent Locations.....	24
Appendix B: Creature Stat Blocks	25

Appendix C: Maps	34
C1. Map of the Trollcrag Mountains Foothills.....	34
C2. Player Map of Duerradin.....	35
C3. DM Map of Duerradin.....	36
C4. Map of Ios's Consciousness.....	37
C5. Player Map of Psym Tower (Bonus Objective A).....	38
C6. DM Map of Psym Tower (Bonus Objective A).....	39
C7. Player Map of the Illithid Nautiloid (Bonus Objective A).....	40
C8. DM Map of the Illithid Nautiloid (Bonus Objective A).....	41
Appendix D: The Reclamators of Duerradin (Bonus Objective A)	42
Scene A: Joining the Reclamators.....	42
Scene B: Psym Tower and the Search for Ax.....	43
Area 1: Psym Tower Main Lobby.....	44
Area 2: The Ninth Floor.....	44
Area 3: Room 9A.....	44
Area 4: Room 9B.....	44
DM Map of the Psym Tower.....	44
Area 5: Room 9C.....	45
Appendix E: Free the Mind (Bonus Objective B)	46
Scene A: The Disappearing Psyms.....	46
DM Map of the Illithid Nautiloid.....	46
Area 2: Airlock.....	47
Area 3: Command Deck.....	47
Appendix F: Player Handouts	49
F1. Invitation from Ios.....	49
F2. Story Award: Detente.....	50
F3. Story Award: Cthulhu Cometh.....	51
Appendix G: Magic Items	52
Appendix H: Dungeon Master Tips	53
The Heir of Orcus: Origins	54

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

EPISODES

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

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

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

BONUS OBJECTIVES

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

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

ADVENTURE HOOKS

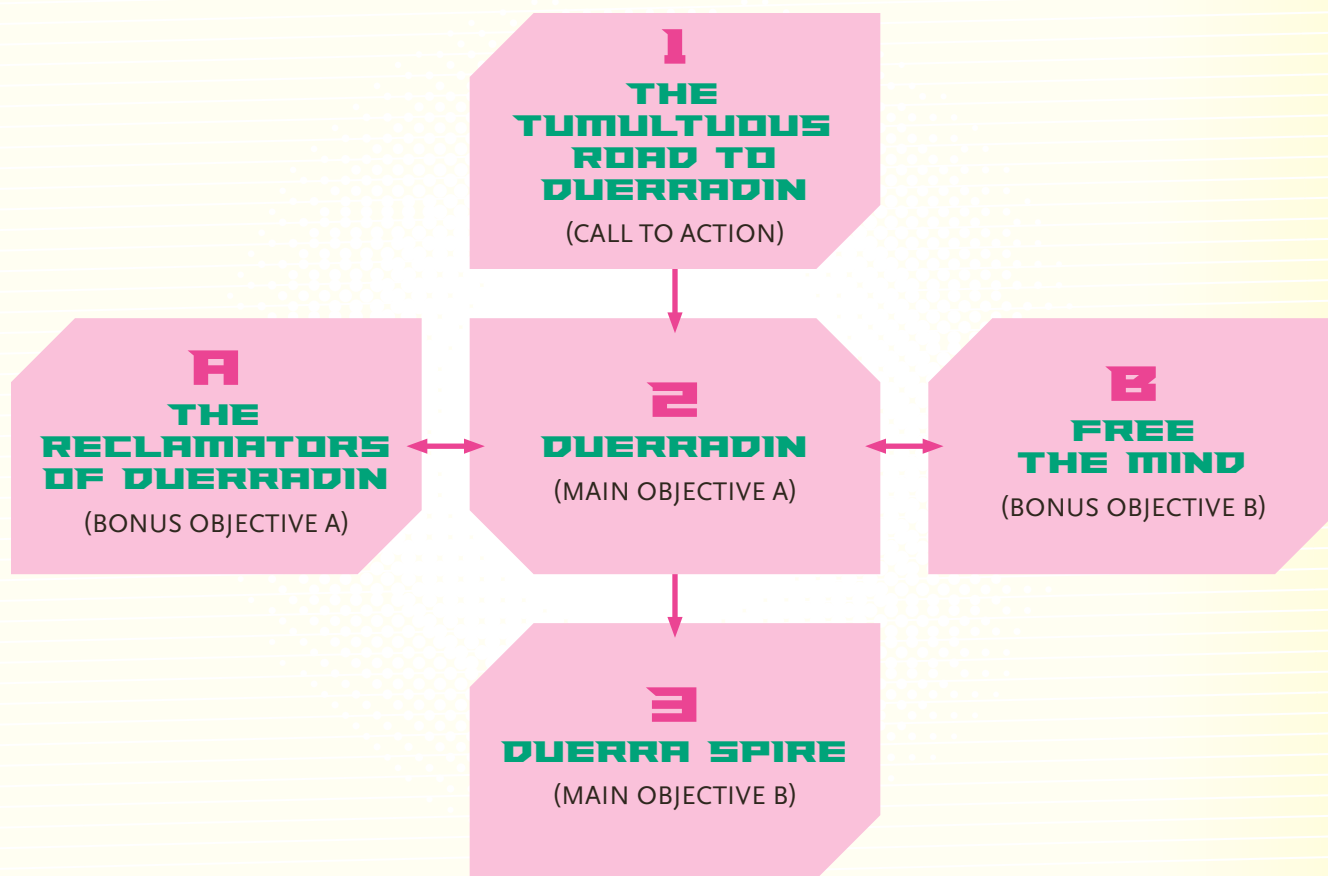
Each character receives a letter requesting their presence in Duerra Spire to speak with a mysterious individual named Ios (see "Invitation from Ios" in **Appendix F: Player Handouts**). Ios expresses its concern with the recent rise of the Cult of the Heir. It fears the Cult will attempt to steal valuable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

CHOOSING A SIDE

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

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

EPISODE FLOWCHART



EPISODE 1

THE TUMULTUOUS ROAD TO DUERRADIN (CALL TO ACTION)

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

ESTIMATED DURATION: 30 minutes

SCENE A: ON THE ROAD AGAIN

OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Rolling foothills beneath the Trollcrag Mountains.

Lighting. Dim moonlight illuminates the sky.

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

CREATURES/NPCS

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

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

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

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

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

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

KNIGHTS OF HOLY JUDGMENT



THE INQUISITOR

SER TITUS

SER GERTZ

THE CULT OF ZARIEL



VINDICTUS

MORDAKAI

ORIANNA

NURFENPURF

LORE THE DM SHOULD KNOW

Orcus. Orcus is the Demon Prince of Undeath, also known as the Blood Lord. Orcus rules over Thanatos, the 113th layer of the Abyss. For more detailed lore, reference *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* or *Out of the Abyss*.

The Heir of Orcus. This merciless, malevolent cambion is the daughter of Orcus and the embodiment of betrayal and deceit. She murdered her mother, a priestess of Tyr, during childbirth. Her true name is unknown except for the pages of a tome hidden deep within the Abyss. An ancient prophecy spoke of her birth and the evil reckoning to come as she grows in power.

Zariel. Zariel rules Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells and the central battlefield in the eternal Blood War. Many eons ago, she was a mighty angel tasked with observing the Blood War on Avernus. The influence of Avernus ultimately corrupted her, and she became an Archdevil.

Cthulhu. A mysterious Great Old One. Those who attempt to know or understand Cthulhu fall into madness; its will and motivations are beyond comprehension. A few Chosen

Ones (reference the “Chosen One” story award in *The Heir of Orcus: Verse II*) draw the attention of Cthulhu, but what it desires with such individuals is unknown.

The Blood War. An eternal conflict between demons and devils raging on the lower planes, the war is mostly fought along the River Styx, between the Abyss and Avernus.

Tyr. Tyr is the Faerûnian god of justice. His symbol is balanced scales resting on a warhammer. Followers of Tyr see things in terms of black and white, as good or evil. The Knights of Holy Judgment is an order devoted to Tyr and to seeking out vengeance against all that is evil. These knights wear thin strips of diaphanous cloth over their eyes to remind others of the blindness of justice.

Ser. The title “Ser” is a gender-neutral, knightly title used by the Knights of Holy Judgment. This title exemplifies Tyr’s adherence to blind justice, and anyone, regardless of gender, is equally capable of executing justice in Tyr’s name.

WHAT DO THE KNIGHTS OF HOLY JUDGMENT AND THE CULT OF ZARIEL KNOW?

Rumors spread about a “Cult of the Heir” operating throughout the Moonsea region. No one has seen the Heir of Orcus since she was unleashed from the Temple of Orcus.

Clan Duerra sent letters asking for assistance in investigating possible Cult of the Heir activities in Duerradin.

While normally fierce enemies, the Knights of Holy Judgment and Cult of Zariel realize that the threat of the Heir of Orcus must be dealt with. They have agreed to cease hostilities with each other in the Moonsea region until the Heir of Orcus is dealt with.

EVENT: “ATTACK OF THE CULTISTS!”

In this event, the characters are attacked by a mob of **cultists** dedicated to the Heir of Orcus. The mob of cultists were sent to delay the characters traveling to Duerradin. The Heir of Orcus has cultists in Duerradin; these cultists do not want the characters to investigate their activities there.

Draw on real life inspirations to decide who is leading this angry mob of cultists. Make up a name and personality that caters to your group’s dynamic. The mob can engage in small conversation, but they are determined to violently attack the Knights of Holy Judgment, the Cult of Zariel, and anyone who refuses to join their cult.

Running this Event. Characters make a group ability check to defeat the mob of cultists. To make a group ability check, each character makes an ability check using a skill of their choice. If at least half the group succeeds, the whole group succeeds, otherwise they fail. Have fun with this scene and allow characters to feel heroic by narrating epic combat scenes using their ability checks. If characters fail their ability checks, let them have fun by

describing entertaining ways they might fail. There are four outcomes for this event based on the group ability check (see Epic Success, Success, Failure, and Epic Failure below for details).

Difficulty. This is a DC 15 group ability check.

Epic Success. Zero failed ability checks. The characters valiantly defeat the cultists! All characters gain inspiration!

A vision of Tyr appears before characters aligned with the Knights of Holy Judgment and smiles upon them. A floating flame with Zariel’s image appears before characters aligned with the Cult of Zariel; Zariel tells the characters they will make great commanders in the Blood War one day. The visage of Cthulhu appears in a shroud of darkness before characters aligned with Chaos. Its many tentacles wrap around the characters to consume them, then vanishes into darkness.

The cultist leading the mob drops a *gem of brightness* after their defeat.

Success. At least half the group succeeds their ability checks and there is at least one failed ability check.

The characters defeat the mob of cultists during their hard-fought battle. Each character takes 10 (3d6) slashing damage from the mob of cultists during the course of the battle. The cultist leading the mob drops a *gem of brightness* after their defeat.

Failure. At least half the group fails their ability checks and there is at least one successful ability check.

The characters are overwhelmed by the mob of cultists during the battle. The friendly NPCs mount a rally with the characters and chase the mob of cultists away. If all the characters belong to the Chaos side, a horrible visage of a tentacled monstrosity scares away the cultists. Each character takes 28 (8d6) slashing damage from the mob of cultists during the course of the battle.

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



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

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

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

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

WHAT DO THE CULTISTS OF THE HEIR KNOW?

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

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

DEVELOPMENT

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

TREASURE

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

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

SCENE B: ONWARD TO DUERRADIN

The travel to Duerradin utilizes the “Travel-Montage Approach.” The characters choose from three different montage travel scenes as they make their way toward Duerradin. Engage players by allowing them to describe their actions during the travel montage. There is no requirement for running combat encounters even if the characters choose to describe their actions as “engaging in combat” with NPCs present in the travel montage. Due to the low-level threats of enemies that might be present along the way to Duerradin, it is recommended that the DM allows the characters to narratively win each combat encounter in a “combat montage.” DMs are encouraged to award inspiration for excellent montage descriptions. All roads are equal distance/time from Duerradin.

OPTION 1: THE HIGH ROAD TO DUERRADIN

The High Road to Duerradin goes through the mountains and down into the Underdark, ending at the north gate of Duerradin. The following events occur on their travel:

- High in the mountains, characters spot the silhouette of a large dragon roaring in the distance. It vanishes into the thick clouds after a moment.
- A pack of white wolves chases a mountain goat. The goat rams two white wolves off the mountainside to their deaths. The wolves eventually bring down the goat, but not before it impales one last wolf with its horns.
- Near the end of the High Road, an elderly man looks for his lost goat. He claims the spirit of his former spouse possessed the goat and ran away from his home in the mountains.

OPTION 2: THE LOW ROAD TO DUERRADIN

The Low Road to Duerradin goes through the foothills of the Trollcrag Mountains and down into the Underdark, ending at the east gate of Duerradin. The following events occur on their travel:

- A group of half-orc thugs demands the characters pay a toll of 5gp to pass unharmed. If a combat montage occurs and any thugs are killed, the characters find a journal on one of the thugs. The journal reveals that the thug has been saving up money for his sick child and turned to crime in desperation.

- A troll covered in abnormal growths eats a horse in a bog off the side of the road. The troll appears happy as it hums a silly melody.
- A small half-orc boy in a strange wheelchair contraption approaches the characters. He looks for his father and needs money for medical expenses.

OPTION 3: THE DARK ROAD TO DUERRADIN

The Dark Road to Duerradin goes through the Underdark ending at the south gate of Duerradin. The following events occur on their travel:

- A male deep gnome named Jimjar approaches the characters and asks if any of them have ever been to Velkynveve. He tells them what a terrible place it is and that he is trying to avoid heading in that direction. He offers to make bets with the characters but has no gold, so he only bets with rocks instead.
- The Underdark opens up into an enormous cavern with glowing crystals and fungi illuminating a group of drow chasing after a group of humanoids as they race through the Underdark. In an instant, they vanish into the darkness.
- A female drow in dark clothing appears out of darkness; she looks exhausted. She asks the party if they have seen a small male deep gnome along the road; she has a bounty for him and wants to take him to Velkynveve.

DEVELOPMENT: ARRIVING AT DUERRADIN

The characters arrive at Duerradin after the travel-montage concludes. Upon arrival, the darkness of the Underdark is shattered by beams of magnificent purple and pink rays of light dancing in harmonious synchronization about a massive, awe-inspiring duergar spire in the middle of the outpost. Characters who study the lights and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check discover the lights are small mechanical devices powered by psionic energy.

Large walls protect the outpost from enemy incursions. The gates of Duerradin open as the characters approach. These gates also function as psionic-powered scanners which scan anyone entering, thus recording their entry into Duerradin. Episode 2 begins once the characters enter the gates of Duerradin.

EPISODE 2

DUERRADIN (MAIN OBJECTIVE A)

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

ESTIMATED DURATION: 45 minutes

SCENE A: ARRIVING IN DUERRADIN

OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

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

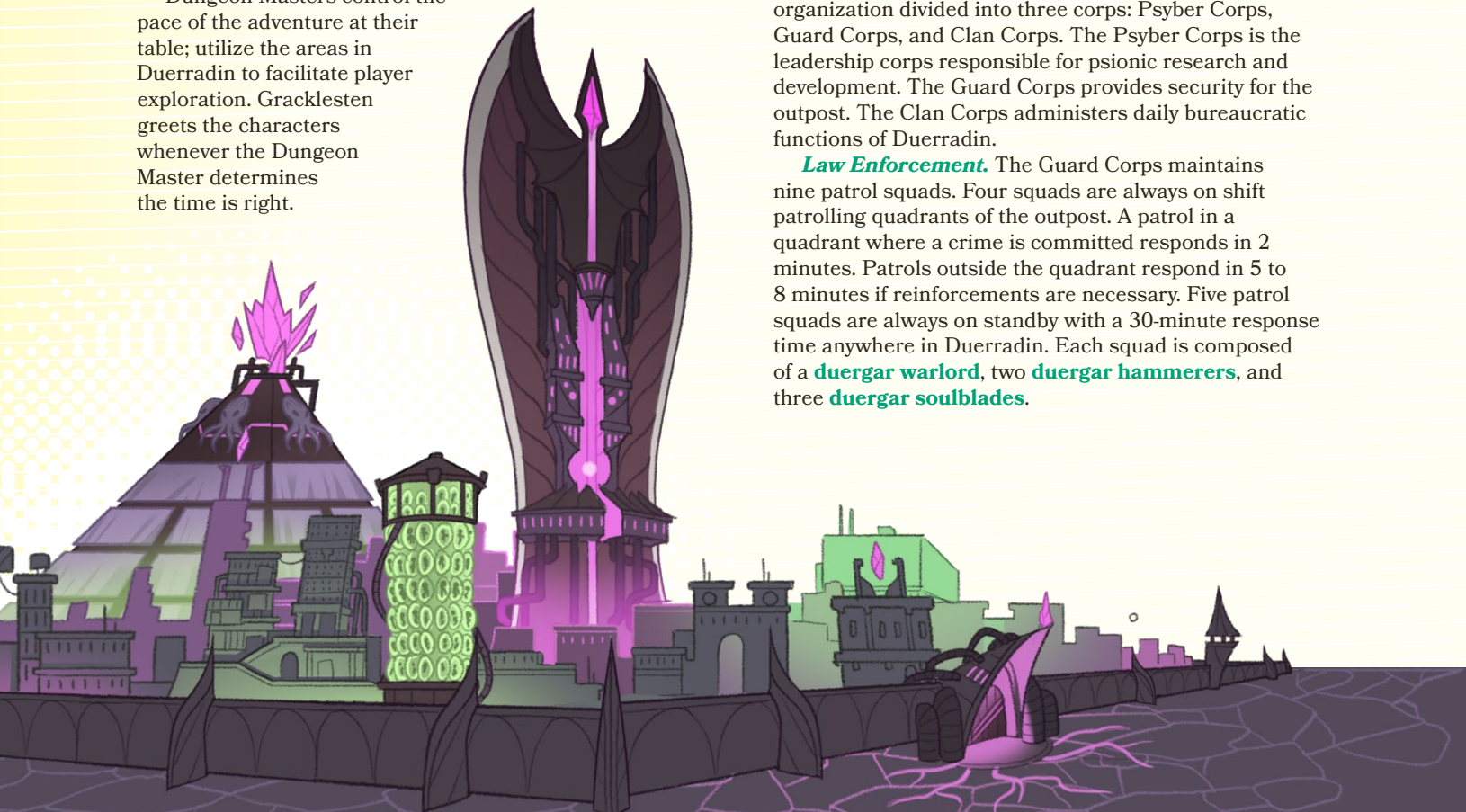
Lighting. Dazzling neon lights cast bright light throughout the outpost. Beams of light pierce the darkness above the outpost as small illuminated mechanical contraptions fly about overhead.

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

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

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

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



LORE THE DM SHOULD KNOW: DUERRADIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CREATURES/ NPCs

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

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



DM TIP: FACILITATING BONUS OBJECTIVES

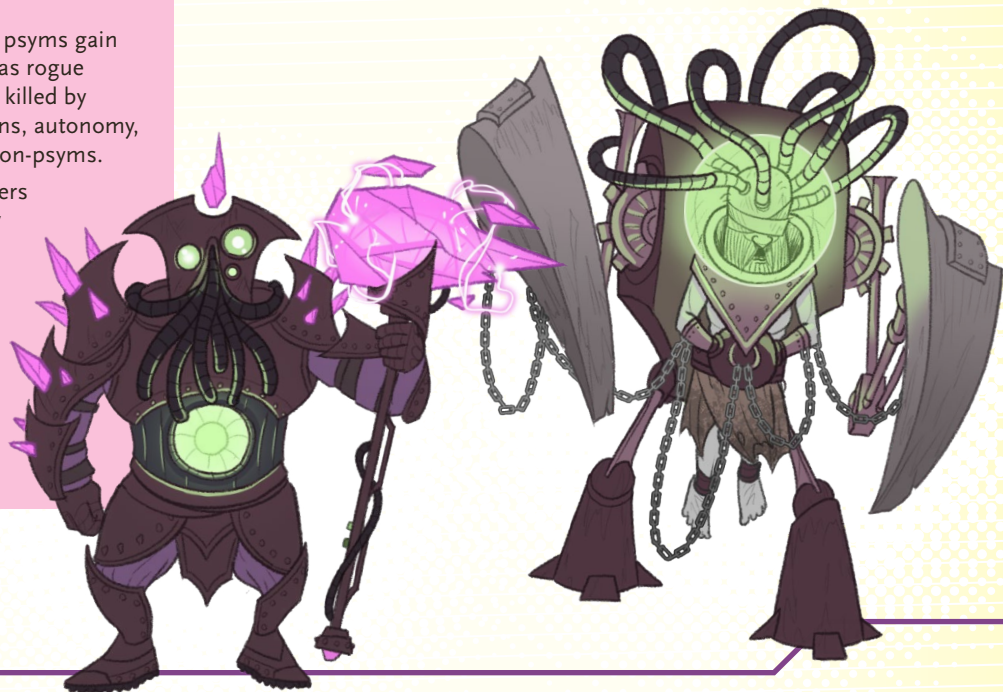
If you are running the Bonus Objectives, Gracklesten takes the characters to Duerra Spire once he receives a "ready" notification from Ios. This allows players ample opportunity to explore Duerradin and play out any Bonus Objectives before heading to Duerra Spire for the Main Objectives. DMs determine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

WHAT DOES GRACKLESTEN KNOW?

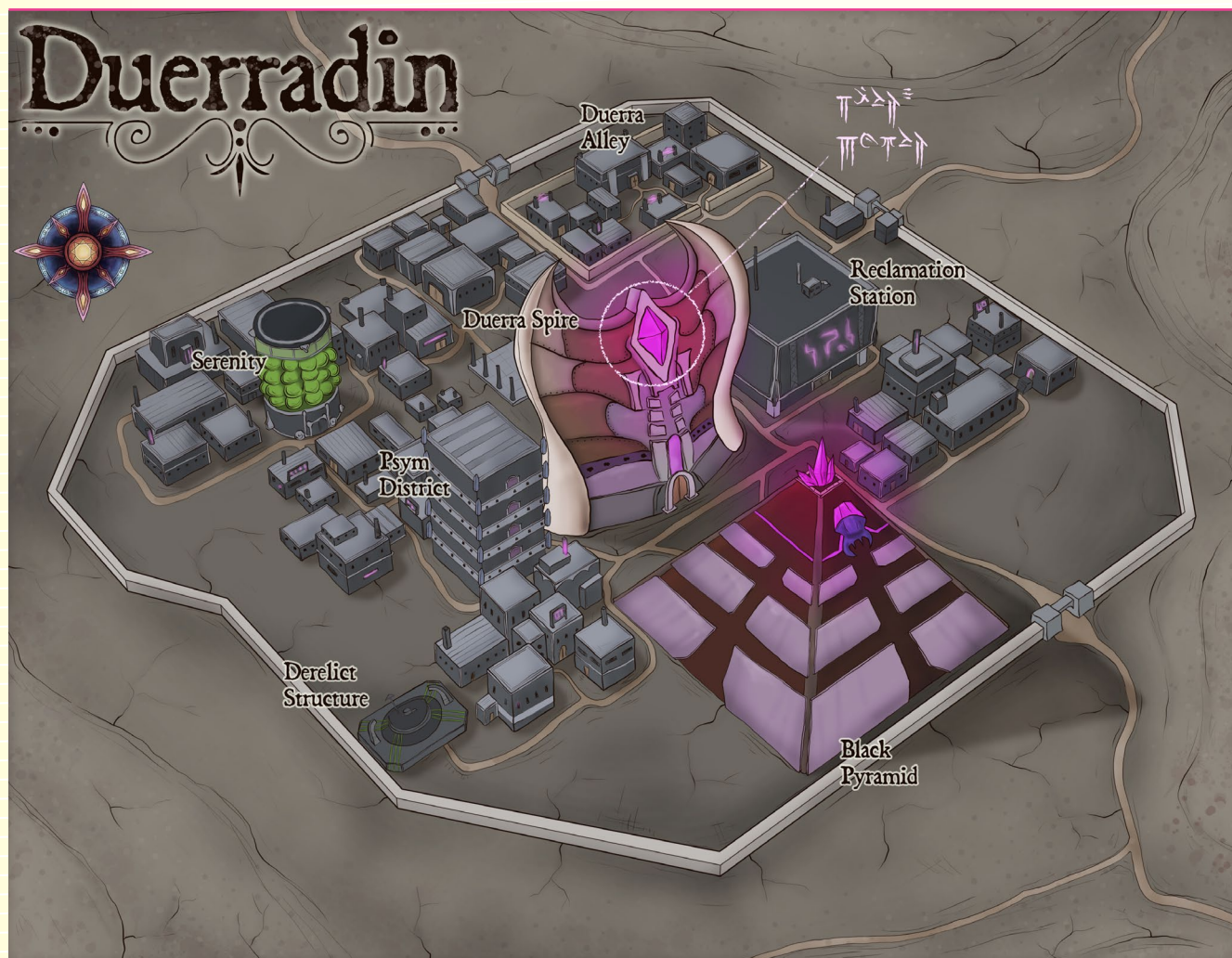
- Gracklesten knows a great deal of lore of Duerradin.
- The Reclamators are recruiting new officers to investigate the increased occurrence of rogue psyms (see **Appendix D: The Reclamators of Duerradin**).
- Several psyms have mysteriously vanished (see **Appendix E: Free the Mind**).

DEVELOPMENT

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



DM MAP OF DUERRADIN



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

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

EXPLORATION

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

SOCIAL

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

SCENE B: EXPLORING DUERRADIN

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

AREA 1: SERENITY

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

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

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

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

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

CREATURES/NPCS

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

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

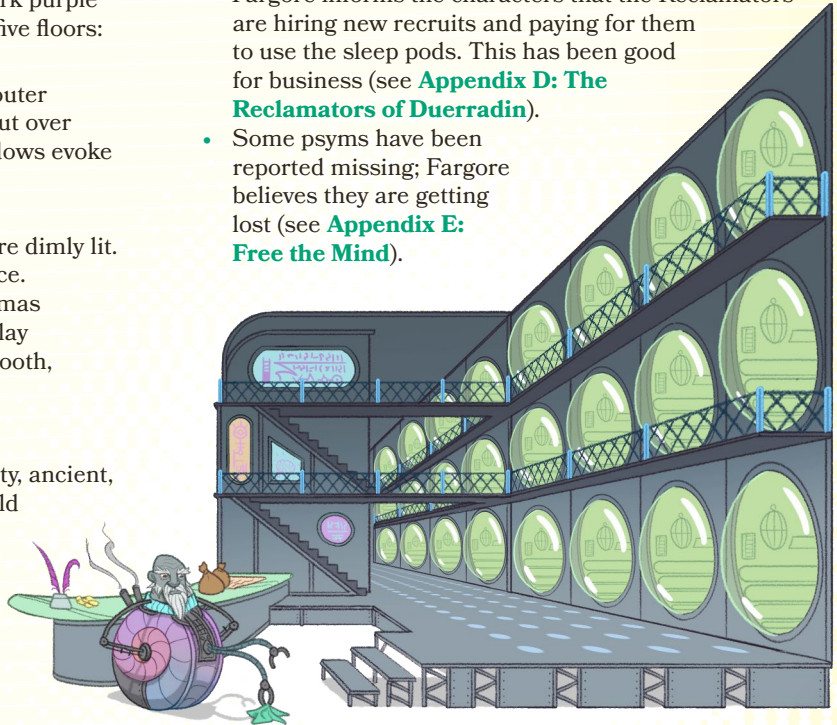
Fargore's Objectives/Goals.

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



WHAT DOES FARGORE KNOW?

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



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

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

EXPLORATION

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

SOCIAL

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

AREA 2: THE BLACK PYRAMID

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

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

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

CREATURES/NPCS

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

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

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

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



WHAT DOES LIA KNOW?

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

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



PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

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

EXPLORATION

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

SOCIAL

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

AREA 3: DUERRA ALLEY [MARKET]

Duerra Alley is a congregation of shops and storefronts. The alley teams with outsiders visiting Duerradin to purchase exotic wares and goods. Trade goods and raw minerals sell in large commercial quantities at reasonable prices.

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. A tightly compact commercialized business alley in Duerradin.

Lighting. Bright light cascades from merchant storefronts as they utilize elaborate illusions to advertise their wares.

Smells & Sounds. Industry, metal, and sweat linger throughout the rambunctious alley filled with eager merchants vying to sell their wares. Merchants shout out sales and deals to passerby.

Sights. Nearly every storefront utilizes specifically designed attractive **drow** psyms as an attempt to lure customers into buying their goods and wares.

SHOPS

All prices are equal to prices listed in the *Player's Handbook* (chapter 5, "Equipment").

- **Duerra's Blades.** Sells weapons.
- **Mindshields.** Sells armor and shields.
- **Underdarker.** Sells common, costume, fine, and travelers clothes. These clothes have a psyberpunk (duergar/psionic influence) aesthetic.
- **Grim One's Warehouse.** Sells adventuring gear, equipment packs, and tools.
- **Dark Treasures.** Sells trade goods.

CREATURES/NPCS

Psym Clerks. Each shop in Duerra Alley has an attractive psym **drow** selling wares (genders vary). The psyms have no names, referring to themselves by the shop name to which they are assigned. These psyms are designed to be overly flattering toward customers. They have a high level of etiquette and are customer service oriented.

Xig (N male **drow**) is a pleasant, bald, and muscular rogue psym shopping for clothes in Duerra Alley. Xig recently discovered a love for flashy clothing, which

makes him feel good about expressing his true self. Overly excited to acquire some new clothing in Duerra Alley, he thinks to himself, "Today is going to be a good day!"

Objectives/Goals. Xig recently became self-aware that he is a rogue psym. He has been trying to find ways to experience the fulfillment and enjoyment of life whenever he is not working. Today, Xig is shopping for some new clothes to brighten up his day.



WHAT DOES XIG KNOW?

- He recently became self-aware that he is a rogue psym.
- Underdarker received a shipment of designer clothing which is now on sale!
- Xig is fighting the urge to express himself for who he truly is. He realizes the dangers this might pose if the Reclamators discover his true nature.

EVENT: "XIG'S DAY OUT"

At any time during the characters visit to Duerra Alley, this event triggers.

A newly recruited young Reclamator (male human **commoner**) stumbles across a Xig in Duerra Alley. There is a heated confrontation as the two yell at each other. The Reclamator pulls his weapon to kill Xig, who panics, grabs the Reclamator by his head, lifts him into the air, and crushes his skull in front of everyone. The crowd of shoppers scream in horror and run. The characters spot the rogue psym still holding the bloodied corpse of the Reclamator by his smashed head.

Running this Event. Characters have a few moments to react before Xig spots them and runs away in fear. He attempts to hide in a nearby barrel. Characters who succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check spot him.

Success. The character sees Xig hiding in a barrel. If the characters confront Xig, he pleads for his life and does anything he can to avoid being taken to the Reclamation Station.

Failure. If no characters spot Xig, he remains hidden in the barrel until the area is clear. Xig weeps at his fate. He's escaped Reclamation for now but knows it's only a matter of time before he meets his end. He tries to escape Duerradin so he can continue his life.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

A guard patrol responds two minutes after Xig kills the Reclamator, (reference the "Law Enforcement" subsection in Scene A).

EXPLORATION

Characters can find almost any good or ware within Duerra Alley. If characters shop they can purchase the goods listed under the "Shops" subsection.

SOCIAL

A character who barter with a shopkeeper and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check earns a 10 percent discount on any items purchased from that store in Duerra Alley during this adventure only.

AREA 4: RECLAMATION STATION

The Reclamation Station serves as the administrative and operational hub for the Reclamators. Newly established, the Reclamators recruit eager outsiders to help address the growing number of rogue psym incidents.

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This is an imposing dark slick steel structure with the clear insignia markings denoting the Reclamation Station. Inside, at a large metal desk, sits a Reclamator Administrative Officer named **OLGAX**; behind her are offices and holding cells.

Lighting. The exterior and interior of this building are dimly lit. The outside of the structure has large dark blue illusions in the shape of the Reclamator badge.

Sights and Sounds. Reclamators enter the structure with body bags. Several psyms claim they have done nothing wrong as Reclamators escort them into the building.

CREATURES/NPCS

Olgax Duerra (LE female **duergar warlord**) is an impressively burly Reclamator Administrative Officer with fluffy white hair. She is in charge of the Reclamation Station and the recruitment of new Reclamators.

Olgax's Objectives/Goals. Olgax wants to recruit new Reclamators to seek out rogue psyms and bring an end to the rogue psym epidemic.



WHAT DOES OLGAX KNOW?

- Duerradin needs more Reclamators due to an increasing rise of rogue psym incidents. The Reclamators keep Duerradin safe from rogue psyms. Rogue psyms are extremely dangerous and cannot be trusted!
- Becoming a Reclamator isn't for the light-hearted. Reclamation is a tough job. Olgax asks the characters if they are here to join the Reclamators. If the characters want to join the Reclamators, Olgax recruits them (see "Development: Joining the Reclamators").

DEVELOPMENT: JOINING THE RECLAMATORS

Olgax offers to recruit the characters into the Reclamators. Joining the Reclamators begins **Bonus Objective A** (see **Appendix D: The Reclamators of Duerradin**). A character joining the Reclamators receives a *cloak of many fashions*.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

If Olgax is attacked, a guard patrol responds after two rounds of combat (reference the "Law Enforcement" subsection in Scene A).

EXPLORATION

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 notice a rogue psym in a cell motioning for them to come over. The rogue psym pleads with the characters and says joining the Reclamators might allow them to save rogue psyms escape Duerradin.

SOCIAL

Olgax loves to hate on psyms, so any character who speaks poorly of psyms earns her favor and gains advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with her. If characters speak fondly of psyms, they gain disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with Olgax.

EPISODE 3

DUERRA SPIRE (MAIN OBJECTIVE B)

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

ESTIMATED DURATION: 30 minutes

SCENE A: MEETING IOS

OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

AREA INFORMATION: DUERRA SPIRE CHAMBER

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

CREATURES/NPCS

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

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

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

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



WHAT DOES IOS KNOW?

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

DEVELOPMENT

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

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

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

EXPLORATION

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

SOCIAL

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

SCENE B: INTO THE MIND

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

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

LORE THE DM SHOULD KNOW: QUALITH TRANSCRIBER

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

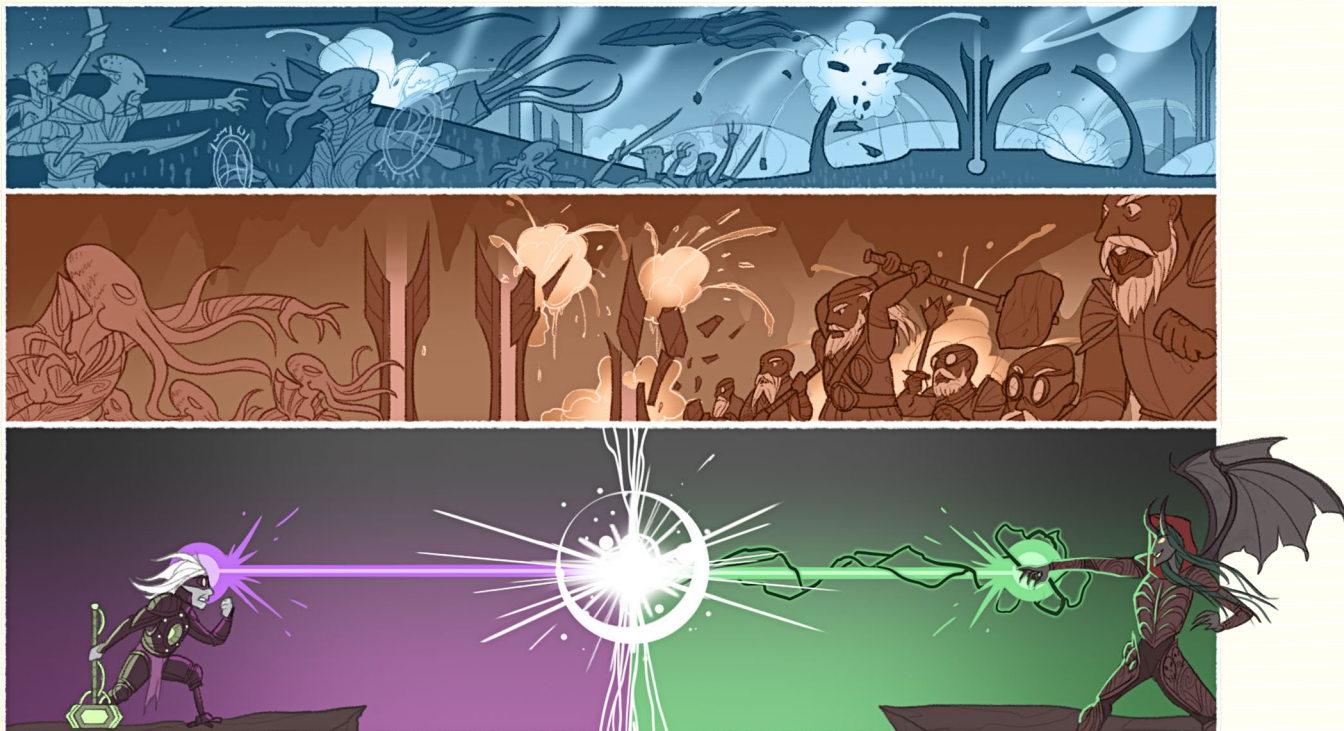
ENTERING IOS'S CONSCIOUSNESS

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

AREA INFORMATION: IOS'S CONSCIOUSNESS

The area has the following features:

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



a psychic manifestation of the Heir of Orcus. A small piece of Deep Duerra's mind exists within Ios, and likewise, the influence of the Heir of Orcus infects a portion of Ios's consciousness. Due to her presence, the influence of the Abyss slowly grows within Ios's mind.

Terrian and Alien Relic Bonuses. There are several terrain features and alien relics present in Ios's consciousness. Characters can gain three quarters cover if they use these to block enemy attacks.

Battlefield Memory Bonuses. Characters can occupy spaces where memories of the gith, duergar, and illithid battle with each other. Any attack roll made against characters occupying these spaces has disadvantage, and the characters make Dexterity saving throws with advantage.

Lighting. The raging battles all around bathe Ios's consciousness in dim, flickering light.

Smells & Sounds. Shouts, screams, and blasts echo through the memories of Ios. The smell of dead gith, illithids, and duergar hangs in the air. Demonic incantations reverberate from the Heir of Orcus as she battles the remnant of Deep Duerra.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER: COLLAPSING THE CONSCIOUSNESS

The characters begin the encounter on the platform occupied by Deep Duerra. The enemy NPCs begin on the platform occupied by the Heir of Orcus.

The characters will either repel the Cult of the Heir or the Cult will successfully extract the psymulator technology. There are three ways to collapse Ios's consciousness and resolve this encounter:

Destroying the Qualith Transcriber. The *qualith transcriber* has AC 18 and 200 hit points (see the "Encounter Adjustments" sidebar below for changes to the *qualith transcriber*'s hit points based off party

ENCOUNTER ADJUSTMENTS

Very Weak. Zhantos starts with 90 hit points, Shadow Fang starts with 102 hit points and does not use the Shadow Breath action, Sweetbriar starts with 39 hit points, and the *qualith transcriber* starts with 150 hit points. The Heir of Orcus loses concentration if she takes 200 damage.

Weak. Zhantos starts with 121 hit points, Shadow Fang starts with 140 hit points and does not recharge the Shadow Breath action, Sweetbriar starts with 61 hit points, and the *qualith transcriber* starts with 175 hit points. The Heir of Orcus loses concentration if she takes 225 damage.

Strong. Zhantos starts with 184 hit points, Shadow Fang starts with 216 hit points, Sweetbriar starts with 105 hit points, and the *qualith transcriber* starts with 225 hit points. The Heir of Orcus loses concentration if she takes 275 damage.

Very Strong. Zhantos starts with 216 hit points, Shadow Fang starts with 255 hit points, Sweetbriar starts with 130 hit points, and the *qualith transcriber* starts with 250 hit points. The Heir of Orcus loses concentration if she takes 300 damage.

THE INFILTRATION TEAM



ZHANTOS



SHADOW FANG



SWEETBRIAR

strength). If destroyed, the Cult of the Heir vanishes, and Ios's consciousness collapses. **SWEETBRIAR** is holding the *qualith transcriber* when the encounter begins.

Damaging the Heir of Orcus. The Heir of Orcus has AC 18, is immune to fire and necrotic damage, and resistant to non-magical attacks. If the Heir of Orcus takes 250 damage, she loses concentration momentarily, and Deep Duerra's psychic attacks overwhelm her, collapsing Ios's consciousness points (see encounter adjustments sidebar below for changes to the amount of damage required to break the Heir of Orcus's concentration based off party strength).

Technology Extracted. At the end of eight rounds of combat, if either the Heir of Orcus or the *qualith transcriber* have not been destroyed, Deep Duerra is overwhelmed by the Heir's demonic powers, the psymulator technology is successfully extracted, and Ios's consciousness collapses. The Cult of the Heir's mission is successful.

CREATURES/NPCs

The Cult of the Heir infiltration team furiously breaks into Ios's memory via a *qualith transcriber*. **ZHANTOS**, **SHADOW FANG**, and **SWEETBRIAR** are elite agents of the Heir of Orcus attempting to steal Ios's memories regarding psymulator technology. The remnant of Deep Duerra and the Heir of Orcus are present.

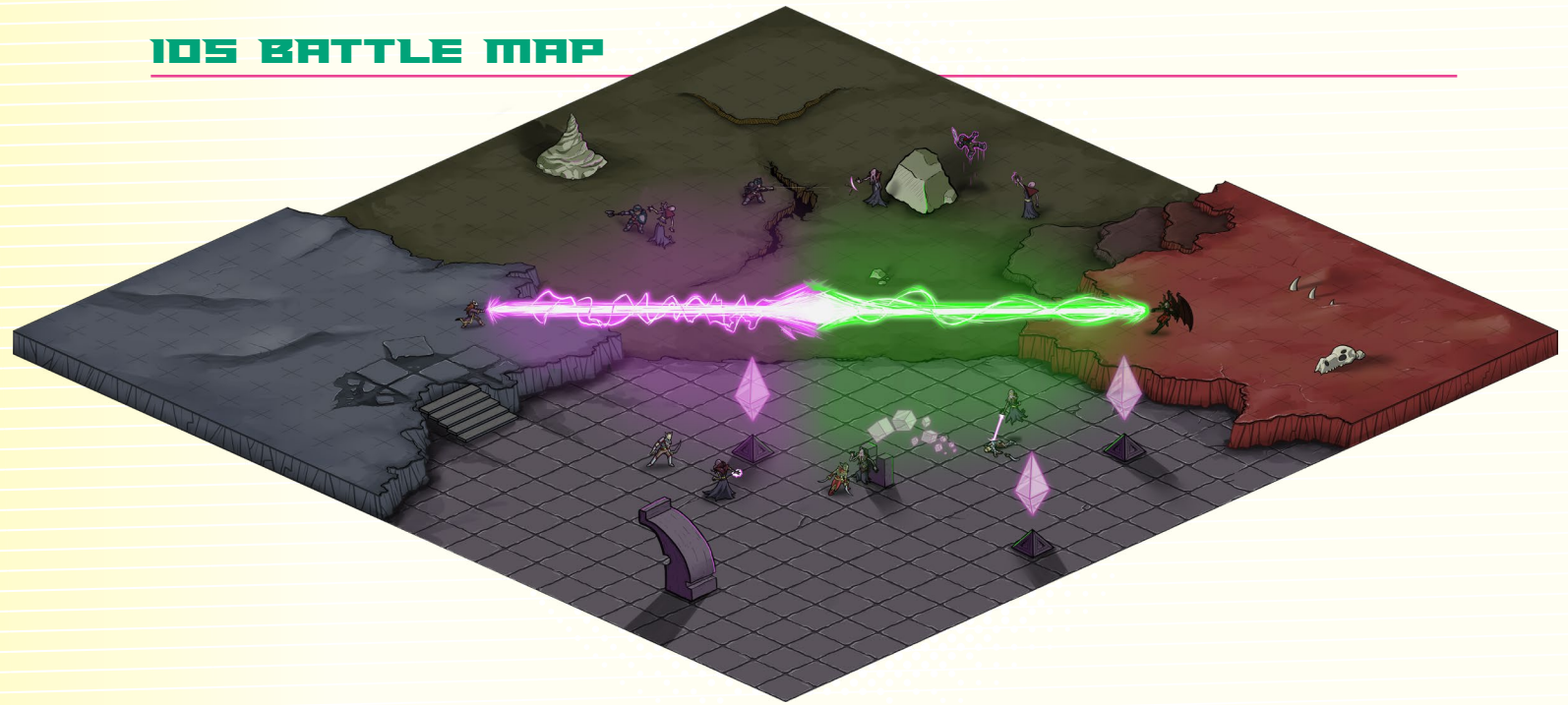
Zhantos (CE male black dragonborn **blackguard**) is an evil paladin in the service of the Heir of Orcus. He wears an eye patch and dons heavy black armor. Zhantos is zealous and takes joy in crushing paladins and knights in battle.

Shadow Fang (CE male **young red shadow dragon**), is an intelligent and power-hungry shadow dragon, worships the Heir of Orcus in hopes that he might gain incredible power from her. He understands magic from his time in the Shadowfell and prioritizes killing any spellcasters.

Sweetbriar (CE female halfling **master thief**) is an undercover Zhentarim agent corrupted by the Heir of Orcus. Sweetbriar has the appearance of a cute friendly gnome; she loves to wave at people and blow little kisses. However, don't let her demeanor fool you, she is now a double agent sent into Ios's consciousness to steal the psymulator technology. Sweetbriar begins the encounter holding the *qualith transcriber* and using it to extract memories from Ios. She tries to hide and remain behind cover to protect the *qualith transcriber*.

Deep Duerra. A remnant of Deep Duerra's psyche was infused with Ios's consciousness when she subjugated the elder brain long ago. Deep Duerra appears as a small female duergar child, the same age she ensnared Ios.

IOS BATTLE MAP



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

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

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

WHAT DOES THE INFILTRATION TEAM KNOW?

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

TREASURE

Ios gives the characters one *potion of heroism*.

DEVELOPMENT

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

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

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

EXPLORATION

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

SOCIAL

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

WRAP-UP: CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The *Heir of Orcus: Verse III* features many impactful choices:

- Did the Cult of Zariel and Knights of Holy Judgment join forces?
- Are rogue psyms hunted down in Duerradin or did the characters allow them to go free?
- Did the Cult of the Heir's infiltration extract the psymulator technology from Ios?

Please post the outcomes of your players choices during this adventure in the discussion section of *The Heir of Orcus: Verse III* on the DMs Guild. Future Verses will incorporate the decisions made by groups posted in the discussion section of the product page. In addition to this, *Verse III* features several possible immediate outcomes. Refer to the following developments to wrap up this adventure.

DEVELOPMENT: “CRUSH YOUR ENEMIES!”

CONDITION FOR THIS ENDING: *The characters successfully prevent the Cult of the Heir from stealing the psymulator technology.*

Cutscene. The scene depicts an unknown location deep in the Abyss. The Heir of Orcus sits upon a throne of conjoined withering manes as Zhantos, Shadow Fang, and Sweetbriar bow before her (if any died, they resurrected in the Abyss).

The Heir calmly walks up to Zhantos and caresses his face. Her caress turns as she violently pulls upwards on his head and decapitates him. Before anyone reacts, she grabs Sweetbriar, lifts her in the air, and snaps her in two. Shadow Fang recoils in fear; the Heir looks toward Shadow Fang as she spreads her wings and charges—the screen cuts to black.

DEVELOPMENT: “WHAT HAVE WE DONE?!”

CONDITION FOR THIS ENDING: *The Cult of the Heir escapes with the psymulator data.*

Cutscene. The scene depicts an unknown location deep in the Abyss. The Heir of Orcus sits upon a throne of conjoined withering manes as Zhantos, Shadow Fang, and Sweetbriar bow before her (if any died, they resurrected in the Abyss).

The Heir calmly walks up to Zhantos and caresses his face. Sweetbriar presents the *qualith transcriber*, placing it gently into the open hand of the Heir. Slowly, the Heir's

face contorts into a wicked smile as she whispers, “Father, I’m coming for you.” She bites the end of her tongue. “I shall tear the horns from your head and meat from your bones until you are nothing but a mound of withered flesh, and I rule over all of the Abyss!” The scene goes black as the vile and wicked laughter of the Heir of Orcus rings out in madness.

DEVELOPMENT: “DEATH CANNOT FREE YOU!”

CONDITION FOR THIS ENDING: *This ending occurs for any characters killed and not resurrected before the end of the adventure.*

Refer to each character's respective side for a unique cutscene. As destiny has it, these characters have a more significant role to play in this story. Their side resurrects characters.

Knights of Holy Judgment. Darkness turns into blinding light as the character wakes. The Inquisitor stands before them flanked by several devas of Tyr. The Inquisitor looks the character in the eyes. “Arise. Against all odds, you fought bravely. You are needed now more than ever; quickly, let us be off.” The character looks at their armor or clothes, recognizing they wear the armament of the Inquisition—they can accept or decline this garb.

Cult of Zariel. Darkness becomes fiery light as the character wakes in Avernus. “To arms! Ready yourselves and hold the line,” Vindictus yells as a wave of a thousand demons clashes against the forces of Zariel in Avernus. Ear-shattering blasts rock the ground beneath their feet, just as a balor lands before them. The balor roars with its whip and flaming sword readied—the screen cuts to black.

Chaos. The character opens their eyes to the emptiness of an infinite galaxy. Planets, stars, and solar systems break the darkness as they float aimlessly in space. The light of a nearby sun shines upon the silhouette of a behemoth humanoid creature. The creature slowly turns, revealing the grotesque hideousness of its face and octopus-like head covered with feelers squirming their way towards the character's helpless body. The figure's mouth opens to razor-sharp teeth, which set upon the character like a grinder. After a moment of searing pain, the character wakes, lost deep in the Underdark, with the word “Cthulhu” deeply (and permanently) etched into the skin of their forehead.

ADVENTURE REWARDS



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

ADVANCEMENT CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive one advancement checkpoint and one treasure checkpoint for each **main objective** they complete, as follows:

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

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

- **Bonus Objective A.** The characters join the Reclamators and decided to hunt down or help a rogue psym. Do psyms have souls? The characters struggle with this moral choice.
- **Bonus Objective B.** The characters investigate the disappearance of several psyms. The clues lead them to the Cult of the Heir and their insidious plot.

TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive a treasure checkpoint for completing **both main objectives** and **both bonus objectives**. There is a maximum of four treasure checkpoints for this adventure.

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCKS

Gem of Brightness. This magnificent sapphire blue 20-sided gem resembles an artifact of lore. Deities from another dimension used gems crafted in such a fashion to control the actions and decisions of mortals. Many Faerûnian scholars believe there is no truth to such myths. This item can be found in **Appendix G: Magic Items**. Characters unlock this magic item if they complete **both main objectives**.

Cloak of Many Fashions. This cloak is worn as part of the Reclamator uniform. Reclamators normally wear the cloak with a rugged brown appearance and a large ribbed collar. In certain circumstances, Reclamators choose to use a modified version of their cloaks; black with wolf fur along the collar. This item can be found in **Appendix G: Magic Items**. Characters unlock this magic item if they complete **both main objectives** and **Bonus Objective A**.

Potion of Heroism. For 1 hour after drinking it, you gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour. For the same duration, you are under the effect of the bless spell (no concentration required). This blue potion bubbles and steams as if boiling. This item can be found in **Appendix G: Magic Items**.

STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Detente. For now, the Knights of Holy Judgment, Cult of Zariel, and forces of Chaos work with one another and toward a singular purpose—to destroy the Heir of Orcus. Will you maintain this unsteady alliance? More information can be found in **Appendix F: Player Handouts**.

Cthulhu Cometh. Characters who sided with Chaos and thwarted the Cult of the Heir in Duerradin receive this award.

For a moment, everything goes black. Deep down, you feel a calling, one you cannot ignore. Whispers burrow in your mind; madness consumes your thoughts. Suddenly, in your mind, it shows itself: a behemoth tentacle-laden Great Old One. Its soul-crushing gaze locks with yours, and only then do you realize—Cthulhu Cometh. More information can be found in **Appendix F: Player Handouts**.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other preceding rewards.

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

APPENDIX A

NPCs & LOCATIONS

EPISODE 1 NPCs

MORDAKAI MAFISTO

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

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

OBJECTIVE: Defeat the Cult of the Heir.

PERSONALITY: "My soul is weary of war."

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

BOND: "Dragonchess is my only solace."

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



NURFENPURF

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

The deformed steward for the Mafisto Twins and their manor.

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

PERSONALITY: "I'm bitter and angry."

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

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

FLAW: "I spy on everyone."



ORIANNA MAFISTO

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

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

OBJECTIVE: Recruit others into the Cult of Zariel.

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

IDEAL: "I want others to love me."

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

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



SER GERTZ

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SER TITUS

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

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

OBJECTIVE: Destroy the Cult of the Heir!

PERSONALITY: "JUSTICE, VENGEANCE, TYR!!"

IDEAL: "RETRIBUTION FOR EVILDOERS!!"

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

FLAW: "JUSTICE IS NEVER WRONG!!"



THE INQUISITOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



VINDICTUS

(VIN-dic-TUS)

Female **Erinyes**

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



OBJECTIVE: Defeat the Heir of Orcus and her cult!

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

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

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

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

EPISODE 2 NPCs

FARGORE

(FAR-gor)

Male **Duergar**

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

OBJECTIVE: Make money by having guests stay at Serenity.

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

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

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

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



GRACKLESTEN

(GRAK-el-Sten)

Male **Duergar Mind Master**

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

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

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

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

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

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



LIA

(LEE-ah)

Female **Drow**

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

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

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

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

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

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



OLGAX DUERRA

(OL-gax)

Female Duergar **Warlord**

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

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

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

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

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

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



XIG

(ks-IG)

Male **Drow**

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



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

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

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

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

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

EPISODE 3 NPCS

IOS

(EYE-ose)

Elder **Brain**

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

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

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

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

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

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



SHADOW FANG

(SHA-doe FANG)

Male **Young Red Shadow Dragon**

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

OBJECTIVE: Gain power by worshiping the Heir of Orcus.

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

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

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

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



ZHANTOS

(zhAN-tos)

Male Dragonborn **Blackguard**

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

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

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

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

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

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



SWEETBRIAR

(SWEET-bry-air)

Female Halfling **Master Thief**

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

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

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

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

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

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



BONUS OBJECTIVE NPCs

AX

(Ax)

Male Drow **Shadowblade**

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

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

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

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

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

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



Y'OOT

(Yuet)

Male Drow **Commoner**

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

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

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

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

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

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



THELBUNIOUS

(THel-beu-neous)

Male Human **Warlock of the Fiend**

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

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

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

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

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

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



J'CIK

(J-Serk)

Male **Ulitharid**

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

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

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

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

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

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



PROMINENT LOCATIONS

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

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

APPENDIX B

CREATURE STAT BLOCKS

BLACKGUARD

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

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

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

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

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

ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

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

CULTIST

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

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

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

DROW

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 13 (3d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Elvish, Undercommon
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

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

At will: *dancing lights*
1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

DUERGAR

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail, shield)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Duergar Resilience. The duergar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the duergar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the duergar is Large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the duergar lacks the room to become Large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, or 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.

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

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The duergar magically turns invisible until it attacks, casts a spell, or uses its Enlarge, or until its concentration is broken, up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the duergar wears or carries is invisible with it.

DUERGAR DESPOT

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d8 + 56)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	5 (-3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +6

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The duergar despot's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12). It can cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *mage hand*, *minor illusion*

1/day each: *counterspell*, *misty step*, *stinking cloud*

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

Psychic Engine. When the duergar despot suffers a critical hit or is reduced to 0 hit points, psychic energy erupts from its frame to deal 14 (4d6) psychic damage to each creature within 5 feet of it.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the duergar despot has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The despot makes two iron fist attacks and two stomping foot attacks. It can replace up to four of these attacks with uses of its Flame Jet.

Iron Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must make a successful DC 17 Strength saving throw or be thrown up to 30 feet away in a straight line. The target lands prone and then takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

Stomping Foot. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 18 (3d8 + 5) to a prone target.

Flame Jet. The duergar spews flames in a line 100 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

DUERGAR HAMMERER

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)	5 (-3)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 7

Languages understands Dwarvish but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Engine of Pain. Once per turn, a creature that attacks the hammerer can target the duergar trapped in it. The attacker has disadvantage on the attack roll. On a hit, the attack deals an extra 5 (1d10) damage to the hammerer, and the hammerer can respond by using its Multiattack with its reaction.

Siege Monster. The hammerer deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hammerer makes two attacks: one with its claw and one with its hammer.

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

Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

DUERGAR MIND MASTER

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +2

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Duergar Resilience. The duergar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the duergar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The duergar makes two melee attacks. It can replace one of those attacks with a use of Mind Mastery.

Mind-Poison Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage and 10 (3d6) psychic damage, or 1 piercing damage and 14 (4d6) psychic damage while reduced.

Invisibility (Recharge 4–6). The duergar magically turns invisible for up to 1 hour or until it attacks, it casts a spell, it uses its Reduce, or its concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the duergar wears or carries is invisible with it.

Mind Mastery. The duergar targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw, or the duergar causes it to use its reaction either to make one weapon attack against another creature the duergar can see or to move up to 10 feet in a direction of the duergar's choice. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect.

Reduce (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically decreases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While reduced, the duergar is Tiny, reduces its weapon damage to 1, and makes attacks, checks, and saving throws with disadvantage if they use Strength. It gains a +5 bonus to all Dexterity (Stealth) checks and a +5 bonus to its AC. It can also take a bonus action on each of its turns to take the Hide action.

DUERGAR SOULBLADE

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 25 ft.

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

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Duergar Resilience. The duergar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Create Soulblade. As a bonus action, the duergar can create a shortsword-sized, visible blade of psionic energy. The weapon appears in the duergar's hand and vanishes if it leaves the duergar's grip, or if the duergar dies or is incapacitated.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The duergar's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *blade ward*, *true strike*

3/day each: *jump*, *hunter's mark*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the duergar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Soulblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) force damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) force damage while enlarged. If the soulblade has advantage on the attack roll, the attack deals an extra 3 (1d6) force damage.

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the duergar is Large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the duergar lacks the room to become Large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The duergar magically turns invisible for up to 1 hour or until it attacks, it casts a spell, it uses its Enlarge, or its concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the duergar wears or carries is invisible with it.

DUERGAR WARLORD

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate ail, shield)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Duergar Resilience. The duergar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the duergar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The duergar makes three hammer or javelin attacks and uses Call to Attack, or Enlarge if it is available.

Psychic-Attuned Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage while enlarged, plus 5 (1d10) psychic damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Call to Attack. Up to three allied duergar within 120 feet of this duergar that can hear it can each use their reaction to make one weapon attack.

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the duergar is Large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the duergar lacks the room to become Large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

Invisibility (Recharge 4–6). The duergar magically turns invisible for up to 1 hour or until it attacks, it casts a spell, it uses its Enlarge, or its concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the duergar wears or carries is invisible with it.

REACTIONS

Scouring Instruction. When an ally that the duergar can see makes a d20 roll, the duergar can roll a d6 and the ally can add the number rolled to the d20 roll by taking 3 (1d6) psychic damage. A creature immune to psychic damage can't be affected by Scouring Instruction.

ELDER BRAIN

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)

Speed 5 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Int + 10, Wis +9, Cha +12

Skills Arcana +10, Deception +12, Insight +14, Intimidation +12, Persuasion +12

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands Common, Deep Speech, and

Undercommon but can't speak, telepathy 5 miles

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Creature Sense. The elder brain is aware of the presence of creatures within 5 miles of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each one's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a mind blank spell, a nondetection spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The elder brain's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate*

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

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the elder brain fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The elder brain has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Telepathic Hub. The elder brain can use its telepathy to initiate and maintain telepathic conversations with up to ten creatures at a time. The elder brain can let those creatures telepathically hear each other while connected in this way

ACTIONS

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and takes 9 (1d8 + 5) psychic damage at the start of each of its turns until the grapple ends. The elder brain can have up to four targets grappled at a time.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The elder brain magically emits psychic energy. Creatures of the elder brain's choice within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or take 32 (5d10 + 5) 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.

Psychic Link. The elder brain targets one incapacitated creature it can perceive with its Creature Sense trait and establishes a psychic link with that creature. Until the psychic link ends, the elder brain can perceive everything the target senses. The target becomes aware that something is linked to its mind once it is no longer incapacitated, and the elder brain can terminate the link at any time (no action required). The target can use an action on its turn to attempt to break the psychic link, doing so with a successful DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the target takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. The psychic link also ends if the target and the elder brain are more than 5 miles apart, with no consequences to the target. The elder brain can form psychic links with up to ten creatures at a time.

Sense Thoughts. The elder brain targets a creature with which it has a psychic link. The elder brain gains insight into the target's reasoning, its emotional state, and thoughts that loom large in its mind (including things the target worries about, loves, or hates). The elder brain can also make a Charisma (Deception) check with advantage to deceive the target's mind into thinking it believes one idea or feels a particular emotion. The target contests this attempt with a Wisdom (Insight) check. If the elder brain succeeds, the mind believes the deception for 1 hour or until evidence of the lie is presented to the target.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The elder brain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The elder brain regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tentacle. The elder brain makes a tentacle attack.

Break Concentration. The elder brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. The elder brain breaks the creature's concentration on a spell it has cast. The creature also takes 1d4 psychic damage per level of the spell.

Psychic Pulse. The elder brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. Enemies of the elder brain within 10 feet of that creature take 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Sever Psychic Link. The elder brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. The elder brain ends the link, causing the creature to have disadvantage on

all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the end of the creature's next turn.

ERINYES

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +8, Wis +6, Cha +8

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Hellish Weapons. The erinyes' weapon attacks are magical and deal an extra 13 (3d8) poison damage on a hit (included in the attacks).

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The erinyes makes three attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 13 (3d8) poison damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. The poison lasts until it is removed by the lesser restoration spell or similar magic.

KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

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

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

REACTIONS

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

MASTER THIEF

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +3

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

Senses passive Perception 13

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

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thief makes three attacks with its shortsword.

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

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

REACTIONS

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

MINDWITNESS

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

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

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +5

Skills Perception +8

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 600 ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Telepathic Hub. When the mindwitness receives a telepathic message, it can telepathically share that message with up to seven other creatures within 600 feet of it that it can see.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mindwitness makes two attacks: one with its tentacles and one with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 20 (4d8 + 2) psychic damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

Eye Rays. The mindwitness shoots three of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to three targets it can see within 120 feet of it:

1. **Aversion Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
2. **Fear Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
3. **Psychic Ray.** The target must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or take 27 (6d8) psychic damage.
4. **Slowing Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target's speed is halved for 1 minute. In addition, the creature can't take reactions, and it can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn but not both. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
5. **Stunning Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for 1

minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

6. **Telekinetic Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the mindwitness moves it up to 30 feet in any direction, and it is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of the mindwitness's next turn or until the mindwitness is incapacitated.

If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is telekinetically moved up to 30 feet in any direction. The mindwitness can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.

NEOTHELID

Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 325 (21d20 + 105)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	7 (-2)	21 (+5)	3 (-4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +1, Wis +8, Cha +6

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Creature Sense. The neothelid is aware of the presence of creatures within 1 mile of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a mind blank spell, a nondetection spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The neothelid's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *levitate*

1/day each: *confusion*, *feeblemind*, *telekinesis*

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

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) psychic damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be swallowed by the neothelid. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the neothelid, and it takes 35 (10d6) acid damage at the start of each of the neothelid's turns.

If the neothelid takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the neothelid must succeed on

a DC 18 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the neothelid. If the neothelid dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The neothelid exhales acid in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

PLANETAR

Large celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 200 (16d10 + 112)

Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +11, Cha +12

Skills Perception +11

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Angelic Weapons. The planetar's weapon attacks are magical. When the planetar hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 5d8 radiant damage (included in the attack).

Divine Awareness. The planetar knows if it hears a lie.

Innate Spellcasting. The planetar's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). The planetar can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect evil and good*, *invisibility* (self only)

3/day each: *blade barrier*, *dispel evil and good*, *flame strike*, *raise dead*

1/day each: *commune*, *control weather*, *insect plague*

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The planetar makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) slashing damage plus 22 (5d8) radiant damage.

Healing Touch (4/Day). The planetar touches another creature. The target magically regains 30 (6d8 + 3) hit points and is freed from any curse, disease, poison, blindness, or deafness.

PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

SUCCUBUS/INCUBUS

Medium fiend (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30ft., fly 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Skills Deception +9, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +9, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Telepathic Bond. The fiend ignores the range restriction on its telepathy when communicating with a creature it has charmed. The two don't even need to be on the same plane of existence.

Shapechanger. The fiend can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Without wings, the fiend loses its flying speed. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form.

Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

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

Charm. One humanoid the fiend can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the fiend's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target suffers any harm or receives a suicidal command, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to this fiend's Charm for the next 24 hours.

The fiend can have only one target charmed at a time. If it charms another, the effect on the previous target ends.

Draining Kiss. The fiend kisses a creature charmed by it or a willing creature. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Etherealness. The fiend magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

WARLOCK OF THE FIEND

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7, Persuasion +7, Religion +4

Damage Resistances slashing damage from nonmagical attack not made with silvered weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any two languages (usually Abyssal or Infernal)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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

At will: *alter self*, *false life*, *levitate* (self only), *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*
1/day each: *feeblemind*, *finger of death*, *plane shift*

Spellcasting. The warlock is a 17th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *fire bolt*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st–5th level (4 5th-level slots): *banishment, burning hands, flame strike, hellish rebuke, magic circle, scorching ray, scrying, stinking cloud, suggestion, wall of fire*

Dark One's Own Luck (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

When the warlock makes an ability check or saving throw, it can add a d10 to the roll. It can do this after the roll is made but before any of the roll's effects occur.

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.

ULITHARID

Large aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 127 (17d10 + 34)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +9

Skills Arcana +9, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 2 miles

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Creature Sense. The ulitharid is aware of the presence of creatures within 2 miles of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a mind blank spell, a nondetection spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

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

Psionic Hub. If an elder brain establishes a psychic link with the ulitharid, the elder brain can form a psychic link with any other creature the ulitharid can detect using its Creature Sense. Any such link ends if the creature falls outside the telepathy ranges of both the ulitharid and the elder brain. The ulitharid can maintain its psychic link with the elder brain regardless of the distance between them, so long as they are both on the same plane of existence. If the ulitharid is more than 5 miles away from the elder brain, it can end the psychic link at any time (no action required).

Innate Spellcasting. The ulitharid's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts, levitate*

1/day each: *confusion, dominate monster, eyebite, feeblemind, mass suggestion, plane shift* (self only), *project image, scrying, telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (4d10 + 5) psychic damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 14) and must

succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.

Extract Brain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the ulitharid. *Hit:* 55 (10d10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the ulitharid kills the target by extracting and devouring its brain.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The ulitharid magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or take 31 (4d12 + 5) 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.

YOUNG RED SHADOW DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +8

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities fire

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Living Shadow. While in dim light or darkness, the dragon has resistance to damage that isn't force, psychic, or radiant.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the dragon can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the dragon has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Shadow Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales shadowy fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The shadow is under the dragon's control.

APPENDIX C

MAPS

C1. MAP OF THE TROLLCRAG MOUNTAINS FOOTHILLS



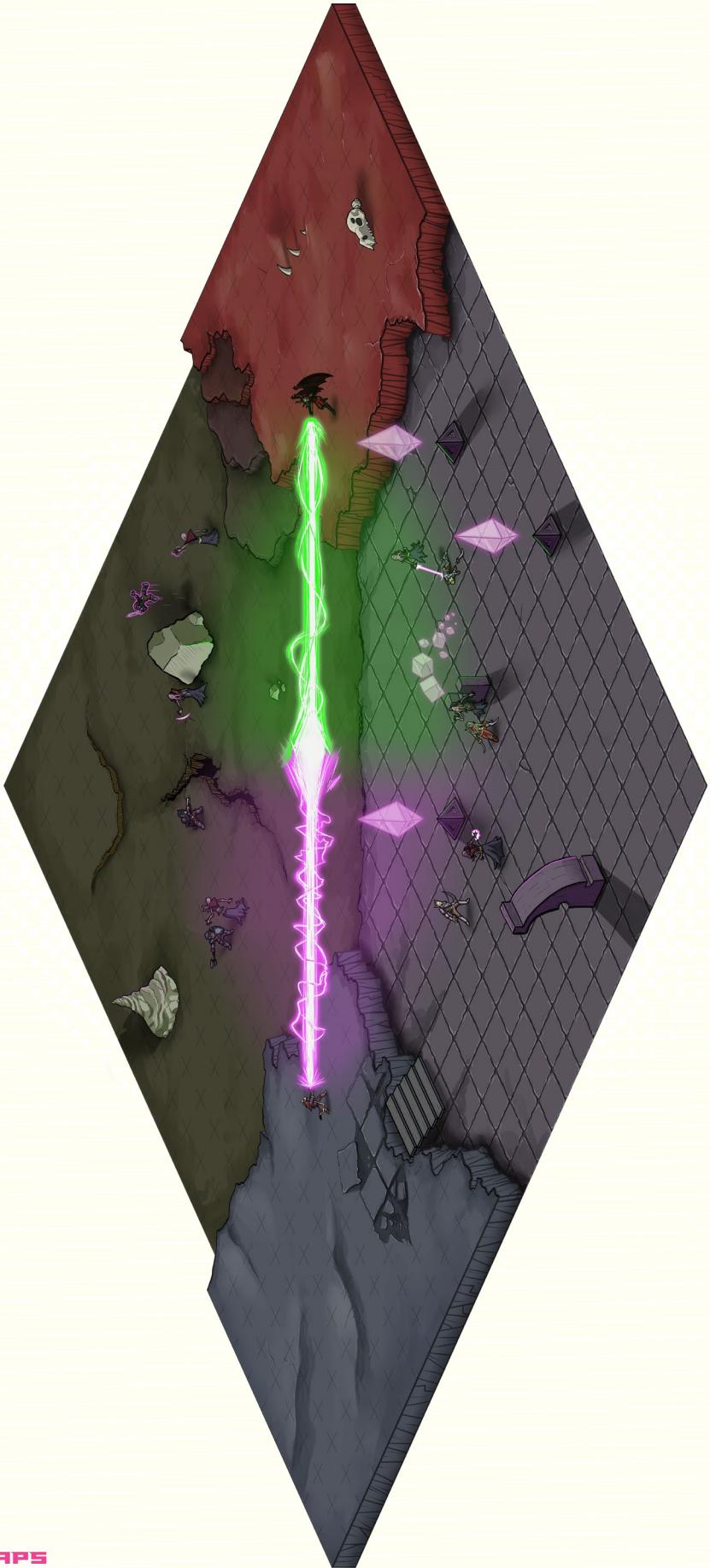
C2. PLAYER MAP OF DUERRADIN



C3. DM MAP OF DUERRADIN



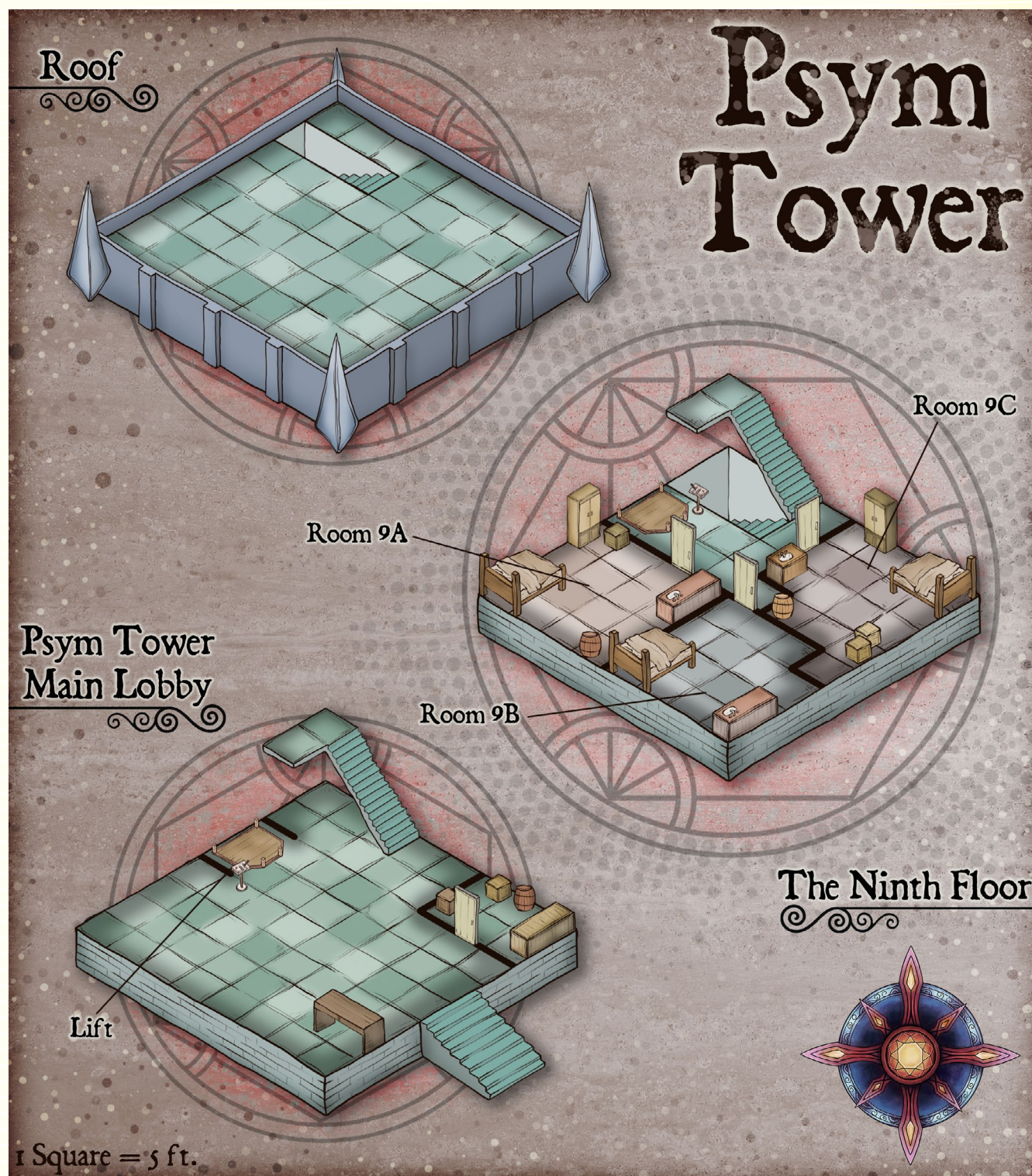
C4. MAP OF IDS'S CONSCIOUSNESS



CS. PLAYER MAP OF PSYM TOWER (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)



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



C7. PLAYER MAP OF THE ILLITHID NAUTILOID (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)



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



APPENDIX D

THE RECLAMATORS OF DUERRADIN (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

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

ESTIMATED DURATION: 60 minutes

SCENE A: JOINING THE RECLAMATORS

OBJECTIVES

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

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

AREA INFORMATION: EVALUATION ROOM

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

CREATURES/NPCS

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

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

EVENT: "PSIONIC EVALUATION"

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

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

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

QUESTIONS

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

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

TREASURE

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

DEVELOPMENT

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

SCENE B: PSYM TOWER AND THE SEARCH FOR AX

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

AREA INFORMATION: PSYM TOWER

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

CREATURES/NPCS

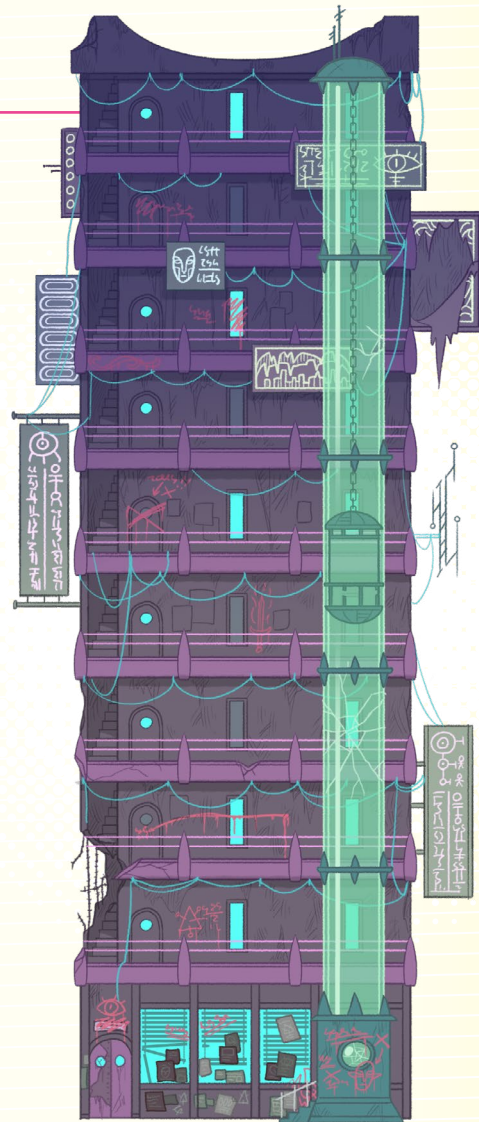
Y'oot (N male drow **commoner**) is playing with a red ball in front of Psym Tower. He is an excitable young child psym eager to make new friends and he dreams of being a great hero one day. There are visible bruises on Y'oot after an intoxicated psiontist beat him with a club.



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

WHAT DOES Y'OOT KNOW?

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



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

TREASURE

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

DEVELOPMENT

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

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

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

EXPLORATION

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

SOCIAL

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

AREA 1: PSYM TOWER MAIN LOBBY

The area has the following features:

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

Lighting. Neon lights cascade off the walls.

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

FEATURES

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

AREA 2: THE NINTH FLOOR

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

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

AREA 3: ROOM 9A

The area has the following features:

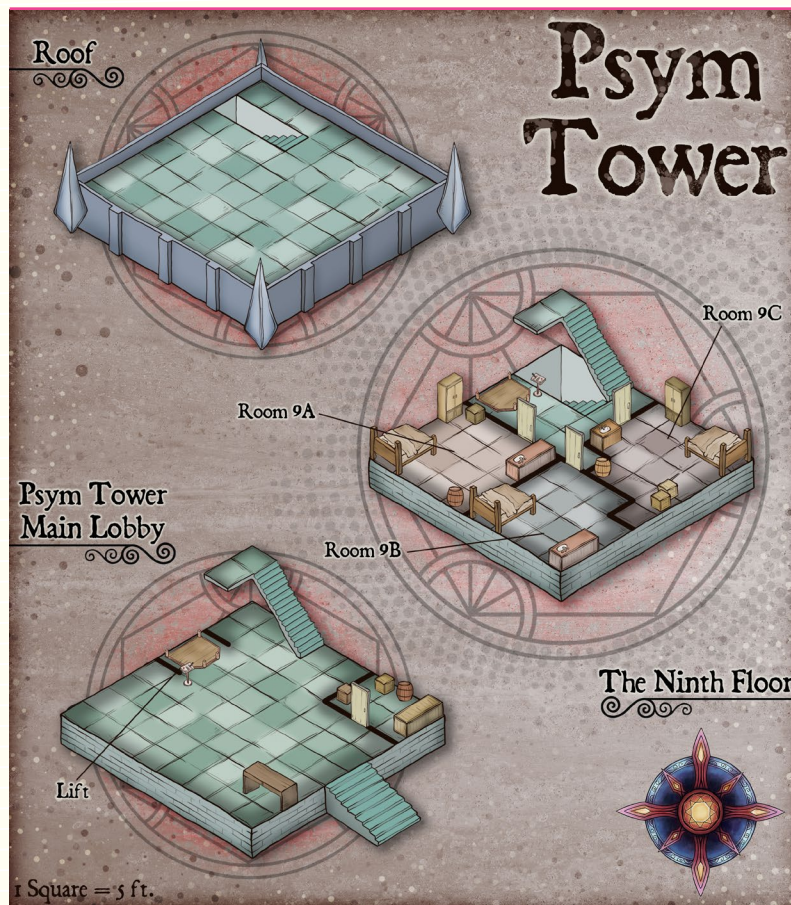
Terrain & Dimensions. A small psym studio apartment. The kitchen appears in disarray, with dishes and shattered glass on the floor.

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

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

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

DM MAP OF THE PSYM TOWER



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

TREASURE

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

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

AREA 4: ROOM 9B

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

The area has the following features:

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

Lighting. Dim light; Ax has installed a custom voice activated light system. He can turn off the lights at will using a command word of the DM's choosing.

Smells & Sounds. The room smells of spices and garlic. Ax cooks one last meal before he escapes; protein worms simmer on the stove in the kitchen.

CREATURES/NPCS

Ax (CG male **drow shadowblade**) packs his gear, preparing to leave Duerradin. Ax is deadly, stealthy, and intelligent. He is not overly aggressive or violent and only attacks the characters in self defense, to include if they try to apprehend him. Ax views Y'oot as a younger brother.



Ax's Objectives/Goals. Ax is fearful his time is short; he is busy packing his things in Psym Tower to escape from Duerradin. If he spots a Reclamator, he readies himself for a fight to the death. As a last resort, he flees to the roof in an attempt to hide.

WHAT DOES AX KNOW?

- An intoxicated psionist was beating Y'oot with a club, Ax acted out of anger after the psionist refused to stop. He broke the psionist's arm in order to protect Y'oot.
- Ax realizes Reclamators will come after him for this.
- He desperately wants to escape before it's too late.

TREASURE

Y'oot's stick figure drawing of Ax wearing a cape.

AREA 5: ROOM 9C

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Collaborative Story Time: What's it look like inside?

Lighting. Collaborative Story Time: How is the room lit?

Smells & Sounds. Collaborative Story Time: What kind of music blares from the room?

Inside the room are two dwarf psym **commoners**. Collaborative Story Time: What are the dwarves doing in here?

TREASURE

A ventriloquist puppet resembling a female vistani vampire hunter sits on a shelf. Underneath the puppet a tag that reads, "Is No Fun, Is No Blinsky!"

DEVELOPMENT: THE RECLAMATION OF AX

These are potential outcomes for this Episode. You are empowered to adjust them as you see fit.

Ax is Killed. The characters kill Ax. If this occurs, just as the characters land the killing blow, Y'oot appears to witness the death of his hero at the hands of the characters. Y'oot cries out in anguish and pain as he runs to hold his fallen hero one last time. Y'oot burns the names and faces of the characters into his mind and swears to avenge Ax's death. It may be tomorrow or three decades from now—but Y'oot shall meticulously plan out his revenge when the characters least expect it!

Ax Escapes. Ax escapes from the characters. He seeks to live out the remainder of his life far away from the walls of Duerradin. With a tear in his eye, Ax holds onto the stick figure drawing Y'oot gave him. He takes one final look at Duerradin before stepping off as a free man into the unknown that waits.

Meanwhile, Y'oot is left alone; if the characters do not help Y'oot and leave him at Psym Tower, the mean psionist returns and finishes what he started. Poor Y'oot is never heard from again.

The Characters Help Ax Disappear. This can be done in a number of unique ways such as faking Ax's death, helping him escape Duerradin, hiding him away, lying and saying they couldn't find him, etc. DMs are encouraged to allow players maximum agency to develop unique and creative ways of solving this episode.

DEVELOPMENT: RETURNING TO RECLAMATION STATION

If the characters kill Ax or make it appear as if he is dead and return to Reclamation Station, they are greeted by a cheering group of Reclamators and an exuberant Oglax. They are officially inducted as Reclamators of Duerradin and given Reclamator Badges.

If Ax escaped or the characters fail to hide the fact that they may have helped him escape, the Reclamators strip them of their Reclamator uniforms and inform the characters they have failed to prove themselves as viable Reclamators in Duerradin.

TREASURE

Any characters officially inducted into the Reclamators receive a shiny gold metallic Reclamator badge. The skull of a mind flayer is etched into the center of the badge with the words "Reclamator of Duerradin" beneath it. This badge has no monetary value.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

If the characters are wearing Reclamator uniforms and Y'oot is not present, Ax attacks. He believes no one escapes the wrath of the Reclamators. If Y'oot is present, Ax asks to leave peacefully.

EXPLORATION

Highlight the clues regarding the occult ritual in Room 9A. Be creative with whatever is in Room 9C; collaborative storytelling is essential!

SOCIAL

Ax listens to the characters if they succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check. If characters are wearing Reclamator uniforms, the check is made with disadvantage.

APPENDIX E

FREE THE MIND (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

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

ESTIMATED DURATION: 60 minutes

SCENE A: THE DISAPPEARING PSYMS

OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

AREA INFORMATION: DERELICT STRUCTURE

The area has the following features:

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

DM MAP OF THE ILLITHID NAUTILOID



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

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

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

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

AREA 1: TUNNEL

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

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

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

AREA 2: AIRLOCK

The area has the following features:

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

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

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

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

AREA 3: COMMAND DECK

The area has the following features:

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

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

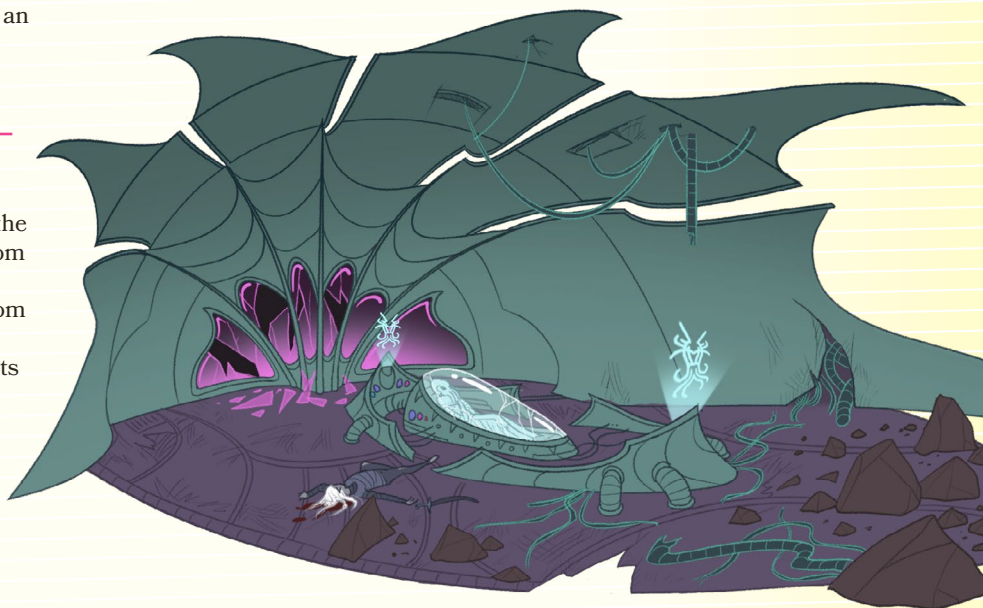
Smells & Sounds. There is a raspy, frantic, male voice yelling for help. The yells are coming from the cargo closet.

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

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

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

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



Qualith Stones. Three Qualith Stones float atop each nautiloid control panel. Each stone pulsates a unique color; those being red, blue, and purple. See the “Qualith Stones” sidebar for more information.

CREATURES/NPCS

A **mindwitness** chased Thelbunious into the cargo closet and floats about the command deck waiting for Thelbunious to reappear.

Mindwitness's Objectives/Goals. The mindwitness guards J'Cirk's stasis pod and attacks any creature that attempts to harm J'Cirk. The mindwitness is harmless to anyone that isn't a direct threat to J'Cirk and floats about the command deck cleaning up dust particles. It makes a strange whirling noise when it cleans dust.

A **neothelid** is brooding in a nearby tunnel system and will attack the characters at the most opportune time to catch them by surprise.

Neothelid's Objectives/Goals. The neothelid has no objectives or goals, it simply seeks to destroy the characters!

J'Cirk (LE male **ulitharid**) is laying in stasis, waiting to be awoken. He wears elegant illithid clothing, speaks with educated authority, and has awe inspiring intellect.

J'Cirk's Objectives/Goals. J'Cirk wants to re-establish his exterminated mind flayer colony. He put himself into stasis hoping to avoid Deep Duerra's notice and will do almost anything to stay alive and escape into the Underdark to set up a colony of his own.

Thelbunious (CE male human **warlock of the fiend**) screams at the top of his lungs for the mindwitness to leave him alone. He says it's the ugliest thing he's ever seen. Thelbunious is inappropriate, disgusting, and foul in his conversation.

Thelbunious's Objectives/Goals. Thelbunious was sacrificing a psym with his fellow cultist in the derelict structure when the floor suddenly caved-in. Thelbunious



QUALITH STONES

These stones are inscribed with Qualith symbols, used as a means of storing illithid lore. These were written as a type of “log/journal” kept by the ulitharid J'Cirk. If a character fails the required Intelligence check, they suffer a massive migraine and must wait 24 hours before retrying to access the stones' information.

Red Qualith Stone. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check reveals the following information:

- This nautiloid serves as an escape vessel for the mind flayer colony.
- In times of crisis, the highest-ranking mind flayer and the elder brain would be taken to this vessel to escape and begin their colony anew.

Blue Qualith Stone. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check reveals the following information:

- During Deep Duerra's assault, the mind flayers realized they could not save the elder brain called Ios. They poisoned it in hopes it would die a quick death.
- The poison was unsuccessful and may have unintentionally allowed Deep Duerra to enslave Ios.

Purple Qualith Stone. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check reveals the following information:

- The nautiloid is inoperable.
- The large dock housing the nautiloid has completely collapsed, destroying several of the nautiloid's critical components.
- J'Cirk is unable to leap forward in time to rendezvous with the “others.”

followed the tunnel into the nautiloid and was attacked by a mindwitness. His fellow cultist was killed by a neothelid tunneling into the nautiloid. Thelbunious locked himself into the closet out of fear for his life!

TREASURE

Three Qualith Stones float atop each nautiloid control panel: one red, one blue, and one purple stone. A miniature model nautiloid is inside one of the cargo closets.

PLAYING THE PILLARS

COMBAT

The neothelid attacks at a convenient time. Thelbunious does not want to fight. J'Cirk wants to avoid fighting so he can leave peacefully and start his own mind flayer colony.

EXPLORATION

There are several control panels in the nautiloid command deck. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check turns these displays on. The displays reveal interplanar maps, travel patterns, and blueprints for dreadnought nautiloids.

SOCIAL

Thelbunious is freaking out since he is in an illithid nautiloid. After a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, Thelbunious informs the characters he was sacrificing psyms for their souls. Alternatively, J'Cirk will gladly eat Thelbunious's brains and tell the characters this information if they let him go free.

APPENDIX F

PLAYER HANDOUTS

F1. INVITATION FROM IOS

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

Dearest Adventurer,

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

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

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

Sincerely,
Ios

F2. STORY AWARD: DETENTE

DETENTE

Characters earn this story award if they work with any characters of a different side to defeat the Heir of Orcus and her forces.

For now, the Knights of Holy Judgment, Cult of Zariel, and forces of Chaos work with towards a singular purpose, to destroy the Heir of Orcus.

Will you be able to maintain this unsteady alliance?

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THESE STORY AWARD SLIPS TO PLAYERS RECEIVING THEM

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CCC-ROLL20-02 The Heir of Orcus Verse III

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CCC-ROLL20-02 The Heir of Orcus Verse III

F3. STORY AWARD: CTHULHU COMETH

CTHULHU COMETH

Characters who sided with Chaos and thwarted the Cult of the Heir in Duerradin receive this award.

For a moment, everything goes black. Deep down you feel a calling, one you cannot ignore. Whispers burrow in your mind, madness consumes your thoughts. Then suddenly, in your mind, it shows itself, a behemoth tentacle-laden Great Old One. Its soul-crushing gaze locks onto yours, only then do you realize... *Cthulhu Cometh*.

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THESE STORY AWARD SLIPS TO PLAYERS RECEIVING THEM

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CCC-ROLL20-02 The Heir of Orcus Verse III

CLOAK OF MANY FASHIONS

Tier 2, 2 treasure checkpoints

While wearing this cloak, you can use a bonus action to change the style, color, and apparent quality of the garment. The cloak's weight doesn't change. Regardless of its appearance, the cloak can't be anything but a cloak. Although it can duplicate the appearance of other magic cloaks, it doesn't gain their magical properties. This cloak is worn as part of the Reclamator uniform. Reclamators normally wear the cloak with a rugged brown appearance and a large ribbed collar. In certain circumstances, Reclamators choose to use a modified version of their cloaks; black with wolf fur along the collar. Characters unlock this magic item if they complete both **main objectives** and **Bonus Objective A**.

GEM OF BRIGHTNESS

Tier 2, 16 treasure checkpoints

This prism has 50 charges. While you are holding it, you can use an action to speak one of three command words to cause one of the following effects:

The first command word causes the gem to shed bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. This effect doesn't expend a charge. It lasts until you use a bonus action to repeat the command word or until you use another function of the gem.

The second command word expends 1 charge and causes the gem to fire a brilliant beam of light at one

creature you can see within 60 feet of you. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

The third command word expends 5 charges and causes the gem to flare with a blinding light in a 30-foot cone originating from it. Each creature in the cone must make a saving throw as if struck by the beam created with the second command word.

When all of the gem's charges are expended, the gem becomes a nonmagical jewel worth 50 gp. This item is found on "Magic Item Table F" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This magnificent 20-sided gem is made from the remains of earth, fire, water, and air elementals and resembles an artifact of lore. It is said, deities from another dimension used gems crafted in such a fashion to control the actions and decisions of mortals. Many Faerûnian scholars believe there is no truth to such myths. Characters unlock this magic item if they complete both **main objectives**.

POTION OF HEROISM

Potion, Rare

For 1 hour after drinking it, you gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour. For the same duration, you are under the effect of the *bles* spell (no concentration required). This blue potion bubbles and steams as if boiling.

APPENDIX H

DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

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

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

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

NEW TO BEING THE DUNGEON MASTER?

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/start-here/dungeon-masters/>

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

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

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

and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

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

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

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

When combat is a possibility, this adventure provides sidebars for each possible encounter that helps you to determine how to create an appropriate challenge. While you're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience and consideration.

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

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

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

THE HEIR OF ORCUS: ORIGINS

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



DID THEY TRULY BELIEVE...

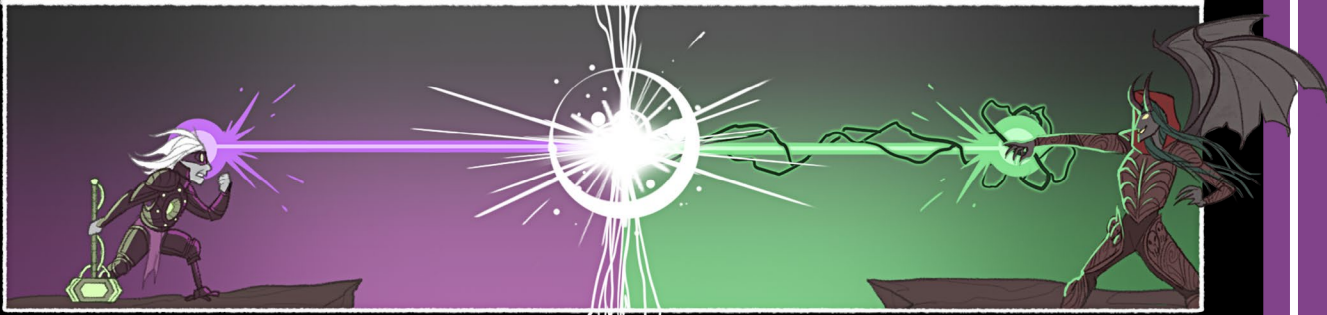


...THEY COULD STOP THE PROPHECY?



MAY THE GODS PITY US,

FOR TODAY THE HEIR OF ORCUS IS BORN!



THE HEIR OF ORCUS STRIKES BACK!

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

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

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

For use with the fifth edition
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