

D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

Secrets of Golden Fire

An elusive school of monks and misfits traveling westward has smuggled itself into Melvaunt at a time of celebration, only to be cruelly ensnared by shadows from its fraught past. Will you help them hold back the darkness?

A 4-Hour Adventure for 1st-4th Level Characters



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Introduction

Welcome to *Secrets of Golden Fire*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system.

The adventure is set in Melvaunt and the shores east of town on the Moonsea during the Greengrass festival (first day of spring).

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting This Adventure

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

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

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 equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters,	APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Before Play at the Table

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

Adventure Primer

[This adventure has a hidden backstory, as many do, that informs the motives of the supporting cast and antagonists. It is recommended that you familiarize yourself with the Background below and improvise dialogue earned by the party when confronting certain NPCs, but some notes to remind the DM of this exist in the text in this version.]

Adventure Background

Nearly two centuries ago, deep within the Empire of Shou Lung of far-off Kara-Tur, a gifted monk and sage with her own burgeoning school made a profound discovery regarding the nature of ki. This Founder's revelations, which she rued sharing with her pupils every season since, related to a method by which life energy could be channeled into and through all manner of objects. The school had only weeks to practice their new techniques before power-hungry authorities in the region closed in on them. The martial and military applications of this ki-infusion were simply too tempting to ignore. Knowing the improper use of such techniques could create widespread violence and the utter corruption of ki practitioners everywhere, the Founder's school went underground and swore never to divulge what they'd learned. Most of them eventually died cruel deaths for their silence.

The Founder was shattered by what her secret had wrought and disappeared. Her most loyal but least bold comrade, Master Peren Tan, would ultimately survive and travel ever westward with a handful of monks bearing the styles and secrets of the school. His half-elven blood gave him the stamina to survive into the present day, long after all his fellows vanished; he became "Teacher", rescuing countless stray outcasts in every region, creating the nomadic Swift Horse School. With time, his heart hardened to the Founder, but he created a home for over a hundred souls. Today, he is weary and leans on two stalwart adjutants, Jandar Nicodeme and Ralbea Silentread, to protect and foster the current thirty two students who look to him for wisdom and training. Knowing that even

their new refuge in Melvaunt's damaged harbor cannot last, he persists.

Unknown to all, the Founder was discovered by a somber, celestial ki-rin that bound her as a warlock patron. This holy beast assured the monk that sharing the secret was no mistake and that it would serve a pure, immense purpose in the Material Plane someday. Reinvigorated, the Founder traveled west in secret, hardly aging over the years. With her patron's guidance she has made a sanctum of a derelict shrine to Torm east of Melvaunt on the Moonsea coast. From here, she sends portentous dreams to the reluctant Teacher, beckoning him for a meeting of reconciliation. As the Founder waits, the walls of the cave around her burn with a living fire that transcribes the first verses of her secret techniques into the stone.

An organisation called the Syndicate continues to pursue the Founder and her school till this day. They have at last discovered the Swift Horse School's location and hidden identity. Nicodeme, trusted martial instructor, is a deep-cover wererat spy with a force of elite hobgoblin killers under his command. Worse, he has tempted the School's most brilliant young monk, Kanithar, to the Syndicate's cause with promises of much-deserved vengeance against the boy's tyrannical homeland of Thay. Even Kanithar's friends, gregarious Rai Astorio and inquisitive Beat of Heart, are oblivious to his imminent fall.

Today, on the eve of Greengrass, Melvaunt partakes in festivities of renewal after a trying year and the School secretly celebrates a day of sport in the docks district after a costly jaunt through Thar's wasteland. Nicodeme knows tonight is his best chance to extract whatever truths haunt Teacher, which will hopefully lead to the secrets his masters have waited one hundred and eighty two years to claim. Swift Horse is doomed to subjugation and failure without unforeseen help. Help that the Founder is counting on...

Adventure Overview

Part 1

In the midst of fruitless guard duty, the adventurers come across Swift Horse students and are drawn to their warehouse by Beat of Heart's impulsive invitation. They find that only through success in the exhibition of arts and skills can they get closer to Teacher and learn his purpose. Tensions and passions flare towards the end of the games, hinting at trouble.

Part 2

Having gotten closer to the monks, the characters are caught up in the Syndicate's strange attack and find their lives directly threatened. With some help from Beat of Heart and Rai, the characters can pursue the traitor Nicodeme and prevent his faction from stealing explosive secrets that jeopardize everyone. Whether inside the warehouse or atop the moonlit roofs of festive Melvaunt, the Syndicate's forces must be fought.

Part 3

The party travels the cliff-side east of Melvaunt in pursuit of the Syndicate's vanguard. If not already beaten, Nicodeme, Wind Talon (a Syndicate assassin), and Kanithar will stand in their way, but they may attempt to reach a truce when the Founder's sanctum proves impenetrable. The party must decide how to manage Beat, Rai and Kantihar's needs while protecting the Founder's secrets. Rai's hidden bloodline may prove vital for victory here, and Beat will do her utmost to protect her friends.

Adventure Hooks

No Faction: Melvaunt is packed and quite entertaining on account of the festival, and you're hoping to find security work in light of the crises that faced the city last year. Oddly, no official jobs were posted so you'd better team up and find a willing patron. The town still bears scars, particularly on the waterfront, across the walls and on the rebuilt northern edge. If you're a drinking sort, you may have met up at the newly-renovated, tabaxi-run Cat's Eye Tavern near Asberyth Square.

Emerald Enclave (Faction Assignment):

Merchants on the road from Thentia to the east have

reported unusual luminous phenomena washing across coastal waters and up over the beaches. They say it resembles the auroras described in the Spine of the World, but in warmer hues. Members are to seek out an expert who has information on these phenomena, assess any dangers and report to the Enclave.

Harpers (Faction Assignment): The Harpers have actually eased the passage of a group called "Swift Horse" through the eastern the Moonsea territories, both concealing evidence of their presence and watching their back for pursuers from afar. Members are to quietly make themselves known to the group and gather more information on their pursuers, in case they could be a broader threat. Concrete physical evidence of their activities or methods is sought.

Lords Alliance and Order of the Gauntlet:

Although the Alliance does not fully operate in Melvaunt, authorities sympathetic to them have heard from the City Watch that pairs and trios of hooded strangers have been slipping past the outer checkpoints and have vanished into the city. Certain wagon manifests also seem suspicious on second glance and may have covered for stowaways. Faction members should be on the lookout for groupings of these fellows and report illegal activity. There may be a resurgence of Cyric cultists here, and this is particular interest to the noble Order.

Zhentarim (Faction Assignment): A Black Network agent has deserted in Melvaunt bearing many inconvenient trade secrets and first-hand knowledge of a few assassinations. Adventurers are to keep an eye out for a Halfling woman with deadly marksmanship and a penchant for dangerous beasts. Her last known alias was 'Wind Talon' and she is of completely average Halfling appearance. She is to be returned to the Zhentarim dead or alive.

Part 1. I'm Late for School!

Estimated Duration: 90 minutes

This section will steer the party towards the Swift Horse School. Once there, they meet the key players and should join in the tail-end of the exhibition of skills, which can earn them rewards and even an audience with the withdrawn Teacher. **It's important that you briefly highlight Nicodeme, Ralbea and Kanithar even if the players avoid speaking to them directly.**

Keep the games moving swiftly but reward quick, creative solutions and storytelling. It should serve as a kind of icebreaker between party members and the School.

A. Rift Alley

Melvaunt, City of a Thousand Forges, is full to the brim with myriad folk eager to partake in today's Greengrass festivities and put two troubling seasons behind them. Between city walls ravaged by an orc horde, chaotic rifts to the plane of Mechanus popping open, and the sinister machinations of Cyric's death cultists, there is much to move past. Tonight is slated to bring a raucous parade hosted by the Joydancers of Lliira and engineered by the craftsmen of Gond.

You crossed paths in this city while being hired for festival security. It seemed like the most lucrative and necessary work, but today has proven quite frustrating. No merchant or stall involved in Lliira's joyful Swords Cast Down ritual is eager to see their door darkened by armed adventurers, so despite the ample distractions and finger foods, you have been very bored.

A few hours past high-sun you find yourselves outside of the Cat's Eye Tavern where a Tabaxi couple serves you refreshing cups of tea. DYour relaxation is interrupted when you spot a strange magical shimmer down a nearby alley. You spit out your tea as the air is rent by gashes bigger than horses that afford you views of some maddening clockwork vista! A collection of spindly, clicking, geometrical constructs tumble into formation through the planar anomalies; modrons, judging by the scuttlebutt in Melvaunt since last year's incursion. More of them are approaching you from the distant side of those rifts...The one resembling a starfish speaks rapid-fire gibberish with five mouths: They're launching themselves in your direction!

The alley is around a corner from the street's bustle and roughly 15 feet wide with crates and barrels

scattered about, but no map or scaling should be necessary because of the brevity of this fight. For weaker parties, the **pentadron** does not attack on its turn; it Dodges and reiterates the same order. Otherwise, it fights as normal by spewing the paralytic gas from the 'hub' connecting its heads (even if it hits the subordinates). Three **monodrones**, two **duodrones**, and one **tridrone** attack any who resist. During the first round of battle Beat leaps off the roof and onto a monodrone, and rolls with it spitting a hissing around the corner. Rai also leaps off the roof and does a flying kick into another monodrone and follows as it rolls around the corner too.

If the party flees they bump into Alston Baffleston anyway, receiving the same pay for keeping quiet about the hazardous incident given the festival's importance.

At the end of the first round, read of paraphrase the following:

As combat begins in earnest, the modrons are yanked back backwards into the rifts with a strange popping sound. The rifts then close, leaving humming seams in their place, but heavier, well-ordered mechanical steps come from outside of the alley. A squad of six metal men about the height of dwarves has formed up around a flashy, bespectacled gnome who waves his hands in a frenzy of somatic components surrounding the glinting cog-shaped necklace he proudly wears.

"I do appreciate your stumbling across this miniature rift, which we shall indubitably patch up within the hour, but it's time to move along if you please. Our new and improved Gondsmen now secure this area and the city as a whole so there really isn't any need for hired swords. Please tell whomever hired you that Alston Baffleston of The Purple Portals Temple gave you express permission to leave all this in the hands of the Wonderbringer's best servants." His impressive casting and the armaments of the Gondsmen make it clear this is no negotiation.

Alston brooks no argument and assures skeptics that these Gondsmen are much-improved compared to the prototypes of last year.

- A DC10 Religion check verifies that his holy symbol and terminology mark a true worshiper of Gond, God of craft and smith work.

- A DC12 Intelligence (Arcana) check confirms Alston is wielding powerful conjuration magic to hold the rift shut. His contingent will make ample room for the party to leave.

A few yells and 'kiais' can be heard from around the corner. "Well then! More vagrants poking their noses into dangerous matters... Why don't you make yourselves useful and deal with them?" offers the gnome. He throws out a tumbled, golden-hued quartz stone for your troubles and tells you to stay out of trouble.

Treasure

The stone is aventurine, also known as love stone, and worth 50 gp.

XP Award

If the party remains non-violent with Alston/the Gondsmen and eventually complies, award each character 50 XP.

B. Interlopers

Finding the pair in another, smaller alley is trivial. The adventures can help the two teenagers finish off the two monodrons. Beat's curiosity won't allow her *not* to meet a colourful group of strangers. Rai is game but somewhat reluctant, being wary of any violence the players could bring.

The young man looks you over with a guilty smile. "Ehh, thanks for your help; Beat and I couldn't resist getting a hold of one of those things..." He gestures to the young cat girl at his side. "Yeah!" she pipes up. "We've got to make sure they aren't a threat to the School!" Rai's eyes widen and he jabs Beat in the side with his elbow. "Oops... but Rai, you know the School's the most exciting thing to happen since my folks dragged me to this smokey place!" [PARTY CAN INTERJECT HERE] Rai starts to drag Beat away after a curt bow to you, but she resists and says "Nonononono, these guys look really cool and they went right after the modrons aaaaand they obviously don't have anything better to do now! What's that about, huh? Who are you guys?"

Roleplaying Rai Astorio

Rai is a lean human teenager dressed simply in a belted tunic and leggings, but his shock of white-blond hair really catches people's attention. Any adventures that look closely will see odd flecks of gold in his dark eyes. He is wide-eyed and attentive, often seen doing push-ups and stretches. He always wants to do things the right way and honour his Teacher. His mixed Shou and Turami ancestry hides a blood tie to the Founder herself.

Quote: "If Teacher decides you're worthy, then I can adapt! I'd better warm up..."

Roleplaying Beat of Heart

Beat is an energetic and curious Tabaxi youth. She gets bored easily so when her chores are done she loves to spend her time hunting and exploring in the city, which her parents emigrated to only five months ago. She is smart, very fast, and more than able to slip out of dangerous situations quickly.

After finding the Swift Horse School, she became obsessed with their hybrid approach to monk teachings and she trains every day. She is a welcome guest but not a full-fledged member, and lacks any ki abilities whatsoever. She also has a weakness for fish and meat and will stare longingly at it until she is offered some; it's the best way to silence her motor-mouth.

Quote: "Ooooh! What's going on over there?"

Beat makes her pitch:

"Alright, friends, here's the thing; this festival might be nice on the surface, but it's LOUSY when you look harder. Those Lliiran's who are burying the swords and axes for lasting peace or whatnot? They'll turn around and sell 'em to mercs in a couple days! The tinkers for Gond are reeeal high on themselves since rolling out those new toys and won't give you the time of day. And Loviatar's House of Pain? *shudder* SO MUCH blood and broken glass over there. Stay. Away.

So how about I take you to a secret place and get you a real challenge, eh?" She winks as Rai sighs. "And check out what I took off those modrons!" She holds up a copper amulet containing tiny interlocking gears [Note: this Clockwork Amulet is a common wondrous item]. I can hear it ticking! I'm going to put it in the prize pile and maybe you can win it if you are good enough!"

"You know Kanithar will rat them out to Ralbea and Teacher out when you sneak them in, right Beat?"

"No sneaking! I've got a good feeling about this one, pal. Let's move it, sports day's almost done!"

"Exhibition day, Beat. I swear..."

Beat (**tabaxi scout**) takes charge once Rai (**martial arts adept**) runs ahead; she leads them on a very indirect route to try and conceal the School's relative position. All but those familiar with Melvaunt will be hard pressed to keep their bearings. A **Wisdom (Survival) check DC13** will allow characters to find their way back to the tavern area without assistance. Characters with the Urban Bounty Hunter background can automatically find their way back with no check. Beat will eagerly chat about the characters but wants to keep the School as mysterious as possible. Sharp eyed characters **Wisdom (Perception) check DC16** (passive or active) will notice a barn owl (common in these parts although not so much in the city) shadowing the party. If they mention it to Beat and Rai their faces turn red and they mutter something about having to wash dishes for a week. The awakened owl is Ralbea's and has been keeping tabs on the pair since they snuck away from the warehouse earlier in the day.

Stat Block Changes:

Beat has:

+20 ft. climb speed

+Feline Agility. When the scout moves on its turn in combat, it can double its speed until the end of the next turn. Once it uses this ability, the scout can't use it again until it moves 0 feet on one of its turns.

+Healer. Beat uses a healer's kit for either effect:

-When you use a healer's kit to stabilize a dying creature, that creature also regains 1 hit point.

-You can spend one use of a healer's kit to tend to a creature and restore 1d6 + 4 hit points to it, plus additional hit points equal to the creature's maximum number of Hit Dice. The creature can't regain hit points from this feat again until it finishes a short or long rest.

Multiattack. The scout makes two claw attacks.

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

Rai has:

+only two unarmed strikes and no darts

C. The Games Begin

It takes about fifteen minutes to reach the Swift Horse hideout by Beat's tricky route, which winds southwestward into the docks district. You notice very few people, a great deal of rubble stored haphazardly in sheds, and a shocking amount of overgrown plant life choking out the alleys. Confident nobody has followed you, Beat leads you to a large, three story high, damaged warehouse with patched-up walls. A door opens after she raps a sequence of knocks on the wall.

"Better get the rejection over with..." Rai mutters, leading you inside. On the first floor, boxes and tents have all been set up around the edges of the building to leave a large, open space in the center. Areas have been sectioned off and roughly thirty people of all walks of life are milling around either limbering up or attempting to organize this happy chaos that you've intruded on. The second and third stories are built entirely around the inner edge of the walls. The second level is equipped with cranes for transferring goods at ground level. Everyone turns to notice you. More than a few look tense and poised for flight or fight, while others look up curiously.

The second floor isn't a floor at all as a railed walk way extends along the walls and there are maneuverable cranes and catwalks that would allow for easy access to goods that were once packed up to the ceiling. Staircases lead to the second and third floor. The main doors are 10 feet high and the 2nd floor is 15 feet up. The third floor is 30 ft up with the whole building 40 feet high. The building has seen better days. There are many holes in the walls and boarded up windows. Both cranes still work and must be operated from the 2nd floor. They twist in a 180 degree arc and a large hook hangs from the end of the main rope which can be winched by a second person. A large net has been strung from the second floor and thin plank crosses over top of it allowing acrobatic people to take another way across the 2nd floor.

Rai is worried. The characters may want to make an attempt to smooth things over. Whatever they have to say, Rai insists that they need to check in with the Teacher first. Characters can make a **Charisma (Persuasion/Deception) DC 15** check, to have him

just take the characters into the makeshift arena and allow them to sign up for whatever they want. If this happens Ralbea, a wood elf **druid**, intercepts the group before they can get any further. Characters that try to intimidate their way in will also cause Ralbea to appear with 5 **martial arts adepts**. **Nicodeme** will then request an apology. If one is sincerely made the characters will be allowed to stay, although the character who did the intimidation will not be able to participate in any of the games. If there is no apology the characters will be asked to leave and the module is over and everyone should go home and think about being nicer people.

When Rai attempts to take the characters up to see the Teacher they run into Ralbea. She strides down the staircase from the 2nd floor where she was overseeing the games. She is an auburn haired, wood elf dressed in patched, but comfortable green robes. A barn owl sits on her shoulder and appears to be whispering in her ear. She pauses for a moment and then looks at the party.

Welcome to the School of the Swift Horse, I am Ralbea, one of the instructors here," she says bowing her head slightly. "And welcome back, Rai," she says with a raised eyebrow," and Bea....drat that cat!" she sighs as Beat's tail disappears into the crowd. "I was just taking these adventurers to see Teacher," says Rai sheepishly. "They want to compete in the games today." "I will speak with you and Beat later about your escapades in town, but for now, the Teacher is not available. However, I was alerted to the arrival of our guests and I'm happy to invite them to participate. Perhaps if they perform well enough they can rouse the Teacher from his meditation and take tea with him. Explain the games to them, Rai and introduce them to the others. Good luck to you all."

With that she heads back upstairs trusting Rai to wrangle the party. Her owl stays on the banister to watch you.

XP Award

If everyone comports themselves with manners and makes a good impression on the School right away, award each character 50 XP.

C. The Games Begin (aka. Sports Day)

Rai or Nicodeme can explain all of the following events to the characters. The exhibition contests will be adjudicated quickly and semi-abstractly. Each contest requires an unusual combination of abilities so that characters are challenged in unique ways.

Each successful check in these contests earns the player one 'token' (a paper crane said to bring luck), which can be cashed in for rewards at day's end. Passing two of the three checks indicates that the player is the overall winner in their event. Passing all three represents smashing success and earns a special fourth token.

Lastly, **natural rolls of 1 or 20** have special importance; the former results in comedic and spectacular failure that DM and player can conceive of together, and the latter instantly earns **inspiration** (which a player can immediately pass to another party member as encouragement if they themselves already have it)

Each player can participate in two different events at most.

Eloquence

A loading bay space on the second floor has been rearranged such that crates and curtains form a private, somewhat quiet space for reflection. Incense and other accoutrements are here to enhance focus, and some missing slats in the wall provide a stunning easterly view of the sunrise over Melvaunt and the Moonsea.

The exhibition of eloquence involves the crafting of oratory to fit a traditional form but reflect the theme of the contests and festivals of the day, or capture beauty that the participant has experienced in their lifetime. Ralbea is the primary judge, and is therefore easily accessed for conversation by anyone trying this contest.

It is an **Intelligence (Performance) check, DC 10** to start and increasing by +2 for each roll.

Players may have advantage once if they actually write and recite an appropriate haiku.

Disrespectful conduct here counts as one or more failures, DM's discretion.

If a player does not win, then Ralbea judges a blind tiefling woman named Orianna the victor for her

evocative poetry; she describes vistas, flora and fauna with eloquence that puts the sighted to shame.

Balance

On the second floor, a plank has been erected between opposite balconies with a safety net stretched out below. The dizzying height and creaking of wood add to the challenge.

To demonstrate inner harmony and balance contestants must walk across the plank, without falling off, while heavy, leather balls filled with sand are thrown at them. They either take the hits or dodge them.

It's a **Constitution (Acrobatics) check, DC 10** to start and increasing by +2 for each roll.

The event is hard to miss so all eyes are on the players when they attempt it. The main thrower is a goliath youth named Thotham who doesn't crack a smile until someone bests him at contest's end. The back-slapping congratulation that ensues is hard to endure.

Speed

This contest is a parkour race through, over and around adjacent abandoned buildings, cleverly concealed by Ralbea's druidic plants. Characters must be agile and aware to pick out the most appropriate route to the finish.

It is a **Dexterity (Survival) Check, DC10** to start and increasing by +2 for each roll.

Urban Bounty Hunters get advantage on their rolls. Taking harmful actions against other racers is grounds for instant disqualification from this and other events.

Winning the event with two successes ties a player with Beat of Heart, who has reigned supreme in prior races. Three successes means they actually best her, earning her awe from this point on.

Strength

Characters must grapple **Renthor the Swift**, a good natured but bucking centaur who's almost a school mascot at this point. Ralbea rescued him from exile in forests east of the Earthspur Mountains and they made the glacier crossing together with the others. It is a contest where players must grapple using **Strength (Animal Handling) DC 12** in place of

Athletics (because of his unusual body) and increasing by +2 for each roll. Any character that makes a horse related joke gets disadvantage on their next roll.

Any character that offers the centaur alcohol gets advantage on their roll, as this makes him go a little easier on them. A **Passive Insight of 13** or higher would have had them overhear Renthor make reference to his love of the stuff (and immense capacity for it) just prior to wrestling.

Sparring

The special attraction, which every member is encouraged to participate in, is a mock duel versus some of the school's most interesting fighters. It is a streamlined battle with certain special rules and restrictions:

- Victory goes to the first fighter to land a blow on the opponent, which represents the breaking of a ceramic tile tied to their chest. Blows made to harm an actual living creature are **prohibited** unless declared non-lethal. Assume non-lethal blows fail to every knock out an opponent.
- No real or ranged weapons are permitted, but wooden dummy versions of any melee or thrown weapon desired (plus shields) are available.
- Armor is not permitted, but wooden shields are.
- Anyone bringing in a casting focus cannot also bring a weapon.
- Only spells that either target self or use an attack roll are permitted. Spells granted by one's race are subject to the same restriction.
- Fighters must stay inside the warehouse but can otherwise run around if needed.
- Speaking is fine, but it's implied that some modicum of respect should be shown. Opponents may do a bit of taunting if they're skeptical of the party, so players can return the favour if they feel like it.
- Any damage accidentally inflicted may be patched up after the by healers in the school.
- The player's speed in attaining victory determines their reward; 4 tokens for first-round victory, decreasing by one each round to a minimum of 1 token. No tokens for a loss.

DM Notes:

- Instead of initiative, determine whether the player goes first by having them call even or odd and rolling any die.
- Keep things moving quickly to make time for everyone.

- Don't use a map, but do track whether or not duelists are adjacent/within melee reach.
- If a grapple or shove is attempted by the player, the opponent has a +2 modifier to their check to resist or break out.
- Feel free to give feedback or hints if the fight drags or they ask the right questions.
- Players must pick their equipment prior to knowing their enemy's identity. As DM, you can 'metagame' lightly and quickly by selecting a fighter well-suited to the player's abilities, so long as you keep things moving.
- Miscellaneous player abilities not accounted for in this text are for you to adjudicate.

There are 6 different possible opponents. Each has unique qualities that grant strengths and weaknesses to keep things interesting. Roll 1d6 if you wish to randomize the opponents

- 1) **Leorio**, the precocious young human wizard: AC15 from mage armor, has a shy snowy owl familiar that swoops in to grant him advantage on his firebolt (+3 to hit) shots on each of his turn. Spooking the owl with a **DC10 Charisma(Intimidation)** check as an action, or otherwise disabling it, prevents it from helping. The boy can be played as a parody of a certain boy wizard.
- 2) **Ashen**, the brusque and temperamental Fire Genasi Martial Arts Adept: AC14, fights with nunchaku and kicks (+4 to hit, two attacks per turn) or produce flame (+3 to hit) at a distance. His thin-skinned nature is obvious to anyone with **passive insight of 10** or higher and taunting him in any way, rather than showing fear or respect, will cause his guard to drop. This grants the player advantage on all subsequent attack rolls (no check required).
- 3) **Mimikyu**, the enigmatic kenku mimic in a mask: AC12, attacks with one of two kama (+5 to hit, one attack per turn, basically a reversed police nightstick held against the forearms). They almost perfectly mirror the player, causing both their attacks and the kenku's to have disadvantage. If the player succeeds at a free **DC14 Deception/Performance (Dexterity)** check on a given turn, they throw the mimicry out of step and bypass this penalty for that turn.

- 4) **Orianna**, the serene and blind (with 10 ft blindsight) tiefling acolyte of Tyr: AC11, attacks with a light hammer (+5 to hit, melee or thrown, but not to start with) but casts **sanctuary (DC15 Wisdom Saving Throw)** as a bonus action on her first turn, then Dodges constantly. She speaks calmly to the player, trying to suss out "what justice means to you" during the fight, as befits a worshipper of Tyr. If the player speaks truthfully and succeeds on a free **DC14 Int/Wis/Cha(Religion)** check, OR voluntary blinds themselves in any way, they become able to ignore both the spell and the Dodge condition for the remainder of the fight. Orianna only attacks if the player fails the check by 5 or more OR remarks on her tiefling heritage.
- 5) **Mendyllyn**, nearly-mute firbolg moon druid: AC16 from *barkskin*, armed with a sickle. She turns invisible at the start, reappears as an animal still wearing the tile, +3 to hit.

- 6) **Thotham**, mighty young goliath: AC14, throws two wooden hand axes (+4 to hit, two attacks per turn, 10 axes total)

Special Event

When all the players interested in battling have finished, a grudge match of sorts takes place between Rai and a prodigal student named Kanithar who has been present intermittently throughout the day, never drawing excess attention. Characters with **passive perception 13** or higher recall hearing other students whispering about Kanithar's prowess, as they do now before a respectful silence sets in. The chatter includes effusive praise of his skill and capacity for quick learning, calling him a "battle genius" but notes his fearful lack of humor and brooding intensity as potential problems. It seems he was a slave in Thay until recently, but his feelings surrounding the school are more complex than simple gratitude at this point.

Roleplaying Kanithar

Being a survivor of Thayan slavery, he has cast off his old family name and taken on a severe demeanor and intense dedication to ki training. He comes across as cool and polite, making him popular, but prodding into his background or commenting on the bone comb that holds back his ponytail can send him into a silent rage; it's made of part of the slaver he killed to gain he freedom. Teacher and Nicodeme monitor his progress with care and attention, but Kanithar is practically an instructor, despite his youth and recent arrival. Inwardly, he is losing faith in Teacher for his willingness to keep running west rather than fight the evils of the world as a team, particularly those in Thay, which makes him a mark for Nicodeme's message. He treats Rai and Beat as younger siblings; with some affection but also a measure of condescension and distance.

During the fight, Rai fights brashly and throws new tricks at Kanithar one after the other to try to best the 'ace'. Kanithar counters proficiently and presses closer to Rai with each exchange, menacing him but speaking little. Rai puts some distance between them and remarks with irritation on how Kanithar has changed lately.

At this, Kanithar's eyes flare with malice, he tells Rai he understands nothing of the world, and he ends the fight with a flurry of savage blows, some of which actually leave Rai bleeding. Rai's tile breaks and no rules are broken, but the tension is palpable. Players note Beat's skill with a healer's kit (counting as the Healer feat, which can aid them later) when she rushes to Rai and patches his wounds. Both are dismayed at whatever has happened to their friend/rival.

After the fight, the Teacher and Ralbea do their best to salvage the mood and bring the exhibition to a close. Nicodeme and Kanithar slip away to affirm that the plan is on tonight, which sneaky players may be able to intercept. Players can cash in on their victories to potentially stay for a full dinner or even get a private audience with the Teacher in the beginning of Part 2.

D. Prizes!

	Token target needed by party size				
Reward	3-PC	4-PC	5-PC	6-PC	7-PC
1) Trinkets	6	8	10	12	14
2) Potion of Greater Healing	12	16	20	24	28
3) Tea with Teacher	15	20	25	30	35
4) Clockwork Amulet	18	24	30	36	42

1: 1d8 rolls on the Trinkets table (PHB pg.160), representing curios the students would like the players to take on their journey (as they don't expect any of the players to stay, but had fun)

2: This one potions is Ralbea's work, brewed with either exotic fruit juice or rice wine (player's choice, she has both in storage)

3: The more-or-less private meeting with Teacher will take place this evening, during dinner. See Option B: Tea with Teacher.

4: Beat of Heart will never forget today, and she insists the party takes this common wondrous item (which she pulled of the monodrons she fought that morning) and think of her when they hear its ticking.

PC's receive all the rewards equal to and lower than the number of tokens they earned. So if they earn enough tokens to claim Tea with Teacher, they also gain the Greater Healing Potion, and the trinkets.

XP Award

If all players earned at least one token, award each character 100 XP.

If all players were good sports on the whole, award each character 50 XP.

Part 2. Fighting Evil by Moonlight

There are several options a party can choose from to complete this section. If you are pressed for time, cut option C.

- A) The party eats dinner on the ground floor with most of the school. They are attacked by the **Vargouille** and **Hobgoblins**. Rai and Beat come down from the top floor and explain that the teacher has been attacked as well. Relbea's owl leads them to the Founder.
- B) The party has tea with the Teacher. They are attacked by **Nicodeme** and **Wind Talon**. Players may decide to go back downstairs and help with that fight. If so, Ralbea's owl will lead them to the Founder's location like in Option A. Otherwise:
- C) After the Teacher is attacked the Party decides to pursue the assassins over the rooftops where they will fight **Wind Talon** and **Hobgoblin Iron Shadows**.

Nicodeme, the main combat instructor and a trusted member of the school, is actually the most senior agent involved. He's been at the school for three years and conceals his wererat lycanthropy traits well using experimental formulations from his overseers in the east.

The main assassin is a Halfling woman who defected from the Zhents, but now is a freelancer who rides a vicious peryton. She is an excellent shooter and poisoner, and the Syndicate has provided her with a Helm of Telepathy with which to extract the Teacher's Secrets when the time is right.

Lastly, a strange man is set to arrive at the school tonight carrying a grotesque secret weapon. This man is a husk and a vargouille on the verge of sprouting its wings, with a body that is largely

hollowed out and fleshless. A heavy traveller's cloak conceals him and the strange, pseudo-magical-ki gong contained in his chest cavity. He leans heavily on a walking stick with a padded handle.

Sadly, Kanithar has been taken in by Nicodemus's promising talk of a future where the Syndicate unlocks the ki-manipulating secrets of the Founder. The boy, being an ex-slave from Thay, has seen the deep evil wrought by mages in the world and has grown to resent the School's willingness to simply wander when they could take a more active role in liberating people; his ideals are such that his own rescue is just not enough. Nicodemus swears (truthfully) that the Syndicate only knows enough at this point to create weapons that turn ki against its users, and they require the full story from the Founder in order to unlock other applications. Kanithar realizes that such weaponry and techniques could circumvent and trump the arcane might of Thay someday, and dreams of righteous vengeance. This dream is enough for him to turn his back on his comrades. He was told that that the School was to be held hostage, but no one would be killed. Tonight, his job is simply to let the withered man in through the door and leave the scene when Nicodemus gives the sign. He does not know that a contingent of Hobgoblin Iron Shadows stands by to be summoned to the school for a slaughter.

Option A) Ask Not for Whom the Gong Tolls

Players are enjoying a pleasant, hearty dinner on the ground floor of the School. Some students are melancholy about missing out on the city's festival but understand the need for secrecy. Most have warmed up to the party after their performance, with their suspicion of adventurers melting away over the course of the meal. Teacher is on the third floor with Relbea, and Kanithar is on watch under the stern (but fraudulent) eye of Nicodeme from the second floor. Rai and Beat are on the roof watching the fireworks.

The disguised vargouille arrives at the door and is let in and announced by Kanithar. It hobbles forward and seems injured so people rush to provide aid. Nicodeme runs upstairs to ostensibly

inform the Teacher. Then the visitor's head detaches and his robes fall away to reveal the imbedded gong. He strikes the gong with his walking stick and activates it. As the strangely loud sound echoes throughout the building all but six (Renthor the Swift, Beat, Rai, Orianna, Leorio and Ralbea) of the school's 30 students (those who have no ability to use ki so far, plus Rai's special case) are crippled with Lv 4 exhaustion and have no access to their ki powers. Any monks in the party are hit with Lv 1 exhaustion only since they were not trained by the Teacher and their ki does not resonate to the sound in the same way.

The sound dies away quickly, but none of the monks are restored. A large crash can be heard upstairs, like a wall being broken down. Bandits rush in through the front door and a fiendish humanoid steps out from the shadows on the second floor, blocking the stairs. Nicodeme, can be heard shouting from the top floor, "Kill the newcomers and take the rest hostage! We've got what we've come for, but they could be hiding more."

The attackers use the tents for cover and focus on the characters. Party members who fall can be dragged to cover and stabilized by one of the three the students who are not exhausted.

The main attackers are the crazed **vargouille** (who is actually what remains of a Syndicate descendant) and four **hobgoblins**.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove three **hobgoblins**
- **Weak:** Remove two **hobgoblins**
- **Strong:** Replace two **hobgoblins** with one **hobgoblin captain**
- **Very Strong:** Add two **hobgoblins** and a **hobgoblin captain**

The attackers surrounded the building after being smuggled in by their Syndicate bosses, possibly with magic the Harpers missed. Their focus is on killing the characters and preventing anyone from escaping. The students not affected by the gong try to pull their comrades out of the way of the fight and protect them as best they can. When the fight

dies down (with the promise of more attackers biding their time outside), Beat and Rai come downstairs with a message from Ralbea and her owl.

"The Teacher has been attacked!" gasps Rai. "Nicodeme has turned on us and tried to kill the Teacher." "There was this weird flying thing with antlers and a giant vulture and they smashed in through the roof! We almost fell off, well Rai nearly did," interjects Beat. Rai is about to yell at her but looks around at the chaos and asks, "What in the Nine Hells happened here?!"

Give the party a chance to fill them in. Rai will ask where Kanithar is, but the traitor has already snuck out during the battle to meet with Nicodeme. Rai does not know why he is unaffected by the gong. Ralbea is working to heal the Teacher and counteract the effects of the gong.

Rai and Beat look horrified at the news. "Kanithar is a traitor? No. I won't believe it." states Rai firmly. Beat looks at you imploringly. "Ralbea knows where Nicodeme is going. Will you help us, please? He is on the way to destroy everything the Teacher fought to protect and unleash something terrible on the region. I don't know what that even means. But we have to stop it and now Kanithar is involved. You'll have the thanks of the School of the Swift Horse. Helios here knows the way." She nods to the owl.

The players can have a moment to think things through. If they go upstairs to see Ralbea, they will find her with the Teacher on the third floor. Part of the ceiling has been smashed open and the two instructors are sitting in the wreckage. He is much worse for wear having just survived being stabbed with a poisoned blade, but he is not dead, just exhausted and attempting to come up with ways of removing the effects of the gong. Ralbea will ask why the party hasn't pursued Nicodeme already because every minute counts. There is no way for the characters to help with the gong. If they refuse to go after Nicodeme then she asks them to leave.

The party can take a short rest if they want to risk giving Nicodeme an extra hour to complete his plans. It's not actually an issue as Nicodeme can't break into the Founder's cave.

When the party decides to leave, continue on to Part 3: The Vision of Golden Fire.

Treasure

The highest-ranking hobgoblin carries a decorated longsword with a silver hilt worth 75 gp, two *potions of healing* and a written, concealed decryption key for Syndicate missives that can be turned by Harpers to complete their **faction assignment**.

XP Award

If the party stands to fight and does not use members of the school as cover, award each character 50 XP.

Option B) Tea with the Teacher

If the party earns a private audience with the Teacher they are escorted up to the third floor's office, which he has converted into a private room for sleeping and meditation. There are some exotic but threadbare cushions scattered around the room and the Teacher sits cross legged on one of them with a small tea tray next to him piled high with small wooden cups and a steaming pot of tea.

He is a half-elf with Shou features and a slight salt and pepper beard. He wears simple robes and looks both strong and alert, but hides the fact that he is also weary and concerned. Characters that make a **DC13 Wisdom (Perception/Insight)** check will note that the lines around the Teacher's eyes show him to be tense and worried. He sits near a small window that looks out over the city. Occasional fireworks pepper the sky. Ralbea sits outside this room's curtain for most of the tea session, sipping tea and keeping tabs on both the students below and the newcomers meeting Teacher.

The Teacher does not stand when you enter, but he gracefully inclines his head. "Welcome to you all. I knew that the School would have important guests this day, but did not anticipate how skillful they would be. Thank you for taking tea with me after all of your efforts." Ralbea pours everyone a cup of tea and tries not to appear too concerned about your proximity to the Teacher. "I am content to sit with you all in peaceful contemplation, but I suspect you have questions for me. Please be at ease and ask what you wish. I will answer as best I can."

The conversation is a chance for Zhentarim, Harper, and Emerald Enclave agents to fulfill their missions, though the Teacher's reactions vary. He is truthful about everything he says and simply refuses to answer certain questions rather than lie about any topic.

For Zhentarim,

- He is not fond of the Black Network (since its methods remind him of the Syndicate), but isn't rude about it.
- He has not seen any people fitting the description given to him, and neither has Ralbea. The Halfings in the school have been here too long to match the profile.
- He hopes the players resolve the matter peaceably.

For Harpers,

- He is willing open up about his conviction that the School's past has come back to haunt him.
- He says that he is not the true founder of this style, only its maintainer, and the Founder may have need of him.
- He has been contacted by the Founder and would like the Harpers help investigating the cliffs to the east soon in hopes of understanding the cryptic messages he has been receiving.

For the Emerald Enclave,

- Ralbea is also a member of the Enclave and will encourage the Teacher to speak with the party if they identify themselves as members.
- The Teacher knows of the lights from images in his dreams and from one allusion in the *sending* from

the Founder. He believes strongly that they stem from a good and pure source, but fears that they could be dangerous.

- He gives the party his blessing if they agree to investigate.

For the Order of the Gauntlet and the Lords Alliance

- He admits that the School of the Swift Horse did sneak into the City, but they have no malicious intent.
- He apologizes for their misdirection, but he is afraid that the School is being followed by a group from Kara Tur called the Syndicate, that wishes to harm them.
- Neither the School nor the Syndicate are involved with Cyric in any way.
- He doesn't wish to discuss the Syndicate any further, but believes they pose no threat to the City of Melvaunt.

When all the faction reps have had a chance to speak with the Teacher there are footsteps in the hall, and then Nicodeme steps past the curtain and over to Teacher. He then announces that a strangely withered man has appeared and is asking for shelter. In actuality Nicodeme is here to extract secrets from the Teacher, kill him, and then find the Founder.

The gong rings; its sound builds for a moment and then cuts out completely, at which point the ki-suppression occurs. The Teacher is hit particularly hard and collapses

(Roll Initiative)

On 23 Nicodemus catches and supports the Teacher, then whistles sharply to signal the halfling assassin, Wind Talon, perched on a nearby roof astride her peryton.

On 20 The peryton rips back a portion of the flimsy roof, leers menacingly at the party members, and hops off out of view, leaving Wind Talon just a moment to poke her head in and scan the Teacher's mind with her Helm of Telepathy. Dazed and

exhausted, the Teacher unwillingly surrenders the Founder's location from his dreams through *detect thoughts*. A collapsing portion of the roof temporarily blocks Ralbea from entering, and her attention is split between this room and the chaos below (where all other ki users are collapsing and shock troops are pouring into the warehouse).

As the fight continues Nicodeme stabs the Teacher with a poisoned blade. It will be a mortal wound without intervention, both deep and laced with poison that Teacher's ki would normally neutralize. The goal is to 'sever the head' of the school to leave them without direction from the man who dodged the Syndicate for years, but not to kill everyone, since that would truly bury the valuable secrets should the mind scan prove fruitless.

He then escapes to the roof as soon as there is an opportunity to disengage. The peryton will dodge while Wind Talon provides cover for the wererat's escape. Once he is on the roof he leaps onto a giant vulture and the two fly off. The Halfling uses the Helm of Telepathy to project the location of the Founder to Syndicate henchmen, so if anyone is killed there is always someone who knows where to go. When Ralbea can act, she will try to stabilize the Teacher with druidic magic. If the characters are able to kill Nicodeme, Wind Talon will take his place later in the adventure and Kanithar will have to do the talking (as he's slipped out to the roof by now). If Wind Talon and/or the peryton are taken out, there will be fewer enemies for the party to tangle with later in the adventure.

Option C: Rooftop Battle

Teacher will have moments to impress on the party that his worst fears are playing out and that these foes must be stopped from taking the secrets that lie where they're now headed. He begs them to give chase through the opening on the second floor.

Chasing the running Syndicate members leads to a conflict right above the passing parade.

Area Description:

- Players enter on the south east corner and need to reach the north west corner; enemies guard the area.
- The rooftops are approximately 30 ft. off the ground at the edges, rising another 15 ft. for slanted roofs, with some exceptions as seen on the map.
- Climbing up or down the walls to ground level requires a **DC10 Athletics check**.
- The chimneys are 10 ft. high and provide three-quarters cover, but also cast long dark shadows to the west that a **hobgoblin iron shadow** can use for Shadow Jaunt, contrasting with the dim ambient light.
- Spectators hoping to get close to the fireworks occupy the edges of the roads, counting as difficult terrain. They will flee after violence breaks out, but area of effect spells and the like could kill civilians if used there. Some children could be on the rooftops looking for a better view.
- A parade advances north in the streets; ahead of the float (shaped like Lliira's holy symbol, a sturdy trio of six-pointed stars) are tall cloth banners depicting scenic vistas and historical peacetimes, which rise to 40 ft and count as total cover.
- The float and banners move north at 10ft/round, unless the oxen are spooked by fighting (DM's call) and they all pick up the pace to 20ft/round.
- The float rises to 25 ft. and can hold three Medium creatures before collapsing, as it's supported by wooden columns and is quite top-heavy.
- **Optional:** On Initiative count 20 losing ties, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, fireworks burst overhead and flood the area with bright light, eradicating the shadows from chimneys and the like until the next round. This removes the Shadow Jaunt ability from play for that round.
- **Optional:** At ground level, there are security Gondsmen equipped with net launchers that try to quell a battle with limited effectiveness. At Initiative count 0 once the battle is joined, any player character standing on the edge of a rooftop has a 1 in 4 chance of being targeted by one of them. +4 to hit, same function as a net in PHB pg. 148.
- **Optional:** Chasers on the ground are slowed by crowds (difficult terrain) but spared from attacks, which makes it a viable recovery strategy for wounded players to clamber down and return later.

They can even call on healing from Lliran priests for a price while on the run (spellcasting services)! Play for laughs.

- **Optional:** Falling or jumping from a roof injures a civilian unless the character succeeds on a DC12 Dexterity saving throw.

By default there is one **hobgoblin iron shadow** and Wind Talon's **peryton** to defeat here, without its rider (by default, adjustments below). The carnivorous flyer prefers to strike humans, elves and half-elves and would normally tear out the heart after felling one, but Wind Talon's preternatural trained bond with it taught it restraint in the interest of speed. It will still prioritize such characters as targets. If reduced to half its hit points the peryton flees to rejoin Wind Talon.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **peryton**
- **Weak:** Replace the **peryton** with two **bandits**
- **Strong:** Add Wind Talon the **spy**, riding her peryton
- **Very Strong:** Add Wind Talon the **spy**, riding her peryton, and four **bandits**

After beating the Syndicate's rear guard here, the party is able to slip away from the authorities and out of the scaffolded cleft in Melvaunt's eastern wall.

Rai and Beat catch up with the party; they can quickly recap the situation at the school and impress on the party that Kanithar has seemingly betrayed the them, fleeing with Nicodeme after letting the gong carrier in. The students are still crippled by the gong, Rai being an odd exception, and are being held hostage while Nicodeme goes to claim his goal outside of town.

Stat Block Changes:

Wind Talon (Spy) has:

Halfling Nibleness. The spy can move through the space of any creature that is a size larger than it.

Naturally Stealthy. The spy can attempt to hide even when it is obscured by a creature that is at least one size larger than it.

Driven to bring Kanithar back (refusing to believe he's really a traitor at heart) and save their school, the youth will insist on joining the party. If the party agrees, Ralbea's awakened owl makes an appearance and reminds them of the cliffside landmark they need to reach. It will take until the wee hours of the morning to reach that place overland, but exhaustion checks are not necessary. If the party insists on taking a short rest during this trip, the students can't stop them.

Treasure

The hobgoblin iron shadow carries a decorated dagger with a silver hilt worth 75 gp, a *spell scroll of shadow blade*, and a written, concealed decryption key for Syndicate missives that can be turned by Harpers to complete their **faction assignment**.

XP Award

If the party manages not to harm any civilians, award each character 50 XP.

Part 3. The Vision of Gold Fire

The journey to Torm's derelict shrine doesn't need to be elaborated on beyond some descriptions of the sand dunes, beech trees, and the odd golden shimmer on the lake, to build atmosphere.

The character's pursuit ends at a coastal cliff shrine. They round a bend on the rocky beach and enter an inlet with steep sides. 50 feet back from the water is a 50 foot high cliff. A well-worn set of stairs lead up from the beach and end at a roughly hewn cave mouth 30 feet up the cliff. This aperture and everything past it is covered in hemisphere of 'golden fire' (actually the Founder's ki siphoning) that continuously wicks off of the lake's waves, across the beach and up the 10 ft. wide staircase.

Two large stone figures flank the cave entrance inside of the dome, but their features have eroded away, only their longswords are clearly visible. A **DC15 Perception or Investigation** check will reveal that these are real, but very tarnished, silver longswords that can be detached and used. The

sides of the inlet slope up to the top of the cliff. The cliff faces are riddled with nooks and crannies where sea birds have nested for ages.

The silhouettes of those statues and of a meditating humanoid can be glimpsed through the shield. Where the back wall of a humble shrine should be, there is actually a new 10x10ft opening sculpted out of the stone and sand by the Founder's power. This leads into the larger sanctum described later in this section.

The golden, translucent fire also dances along the water's edge and covers the stairs. It is 10 feet wide, 20 feet high. A **DC 12 Arcana or Religion check** will reveal it to be pure radiance, the fuel for smites and celestial effects. **DC 16** will reveal that it is possibly being generated by a celestial being and is probably dangerous to touch.

Note: Any creature that enters the fire or starts its turn there will take 1d4 radiant damage. Aasimar, Celestial Warlocks, Lawful Good characters, or characters with any other celestial aspects are immune to this damage, Rai included. The fire cannot be dispelled or removed. It does not burn nonliving matter.

Nicodeme and Kanithar stand on the thin ledge that surrounds the shielded entrance on the east side. Their faces are hard to see as they stand in front of the fire, which blocks their way to the cave. Their minions stand on the ledges below the cave, giving the fire a wide berth.

Characters enter from the west side. Rai refuses to sneak over and addresses Kanithar directly.

"You traitor!" Screams Rai. "Kanithar, how could you turn on the Teacher and the School that saved you?!"

"We are going to take this knowledge the School hid from the world and turn it on the Red Wizards of Thay! I will destroy their evil and free their slaves! How can I not?!"

"Yes," says Nicodeme, "help us with these noble goals." But as he steps forward to address you the clouds part and the full moon shines down on both the teacher and student. The teacher's face is that of a man-sized, sneering rat, and the student's has taken on a twitching, bestial aspect.

"Mouse men! Yells Beat as her fur fluffs out and her tail lashes back and forth. "We have to stop them, they're eeeeviiiiiii! But that's Kanithar.....oh no..."

"This was the price I had to pay to avenge my family. Please, my friends help me."
Rai sinks to his knees and Beat clutches his shoulders. "I don't know what to do," says Rai, his voice shaking. Beat looks at you with wide, tearful eyes.

The characters must decide if they should agree with Nicodeme and help him and Kanithar with their plans, or fight for something they really don't understand.

If they question Nicodeme he will reveal the following things, with **DC13 Wisdom (Insight)** checks distinguishing truth from lies:

- He works for an organization run by powerful interests in Kara Tur whose name roughly translates to "the Syndicate." (TRUE)
- The Swift Horse School has been hiding the knowledge of how to empower mundane objects with ki energy which the "selfish" Teacher refuses to share even with his own students. (TRUE)
- Kanithar has been a great help, so of course the Syndicate will help him with his revenge against

Thay. (FALSE, they'll string him along carefully and eventually dispose of him if he protests)

- The Syndicate is already able to make rudimentary destructive items with the snippets of knowledge they have, like the gong. (TRUE)
- If the characters help complete the formula then their usage can expand to more beneficial applications (TRUE, but to what end?) and this would be their opportunity to take this knowledge and share it with their factions. (FALSE, the Syndicate would put great effort into keeping it all to themselves)
- Resistance is futile, as Nicodeme has already summoned powerful arcanists to this location who will arrive by sunrise to crack open the sanctum, take the secrets and silence any who oppose them. (Technically FALSE, BUT detects as TRUE because Nicodeme believes it's true and has used a sending stone to contact his people; the Syndicate is watching through an invisible scrying sensor but is too cautious to teleport here on his request)

Rai does not want to fight his friend and schoolmate. If the party wants to fight Nicodeme then they can try to convince Rai and Beat to join them. They need to do an inspiring speech or weave some amazing lies to ignite Rai's fighting spirit. **DC 15 Persuasion or Deception.** This is an epic moment, please encourage good role playing!

If the party succeeds continue on to Part A. If the party fails, run Part A, but the characters receive no assistance from Rai and Beat to start. If the party decides to join Nicodeme continue to Part B.

PART A: Fight Nicodeme and the Syndicate

Rai stands up, grabs Beat's hand and turns to face you.

“Thank you my friends. I forgot myself and you brought me back. He flashes a grim smile.

“Those bastards will pay for what they have done to our school!” Suddenly, his eye light up with the same golden fire that burns along the beach, but Rai doesn’t seem to notice. Some of the radiance dances along Beat’s whiskers. She looks calm for once. “We will fight for the School of the Swift Horse.”

“Let’s go,” say Rai. “But leave Kanithar to me.”

Fight!

Enemies: Kanithar is a **martial arts adept** who has gained incredible resilience and a feral appearance from his sudden onset of lycanthropy. Because the ki in his body is fighting that curse, all other wererat abilities are omitted.

Stat Block Changes:

Kanithar has:

+ **Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren’t silvered

Nicodeme fights cautiously and is a full **wererat**. On the upper cliffs, Wind Talon the **spy** is lurking and can provide sneaky support; she is a **spy** with the Halfling Nimbleness and Naturally Stealthy traits. If she is not adjusted out of this fight, she wears the Helm of Telepathy. If she was removed, she is splayed out on the worn staircase with golden fire coursing over her.

The fight should feel deadly but this is mitigated by the terrain and the help available to the players.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **spy**; Kanithar the **martial arts adept** only fight players if directly attacked or if Nicodeme goes down, otherwise locked into battle with Rai
- **Weak:** Remove the **spy**
- **Strong:** No adjustment
- **Very Strong:** Add Wind Talon’s **peryton**, which she can fly in battle and acts as an independent mount
- If the **peryton** was defeated, add a **hobgoblin iron shadow**

- (Enemies defeated in Part 2 are absent and can be substituted with suitable **hobgoblin-type** replacements.)

Rai can pass through the golden fire unharmed. Nicodeme will allow him to engage with Kanithar, convinced that his personal student will have no trouble against a young upstart. Nicodeme and any minions will focus on the party. Assume that the two students do 5 points of damage to each other each round. Rai will be angry at any character that interferes with their fight and insists that they don’t kill Kanithar. Both NPCs will aim to do *non-lethal damage*.

Climbing the sides of the inlet requires a **DC12 Athletics check**. The moon shines brilliantly down on the scene, this, coupled with the golden fire ensures there are no shadows.

Beat will not partake directly in the fight. She will use her skill to apply healing kits to people who are in danger. She will enter the golden fire if necessary and will even drag people out of it to heal them.

At some point during the battle Rai will ‘power up’ meaning his celestial blood will be fully activated. His hands will be covered in the golden fire and he can use an action to transfer this fire to any one melee or ranged weapons he chooses. These chosen weapons will also glow with golden fire and their damage type turns to Radiant. There are no bonuses to hit or damage, but they are considered temporarily magical.

He can do this up to three times, simultaneously. This power up could happen at any point and DMs can use their discretion. Possible triggers include:

- PCs are unable to damage Nicodeme
- A PC is dropped or killed
- Beat is hurt or killed
- Rai is cornered or about to die
- A bard gives Bardic Inspiration to Rai
- A buff spell is cast on Rai
- A PC tries to hurt Kanithar (Rai will try to intimidate the PC into standing down, +4 Intimidation with advantage due to cool celestial flame power up)

If the party prevails, and Kanithar is not dead, Rai and Beat will request that he be taken back to the school to be judged by his peers. If Rai and Beat did not fight with the party this is when they will rejoin the group ashamed that they didn't fight and worried about their friend. If Kanithar is not unconscious he will be both ashamed at having worked against the School, but also distraught that his chance at fighting the Red Wizards is gone. Beat will remind him that there may still be answers on the other side of the barrier. If Rai did not power up during the battle, his body flares with golden fire as he approaches the glowing barrier. When he touches it the barrier and all the fire fades away, but light still emanates from within the cave. If Rai is dead then the fire simply fades and the party may enter.

The cave is a 40x40x20 ft high room roughly hewn from the cliff side. It's a derelict shrine to Torm. There is a hole in the ceiling directly above a worn altar in the centre of the room. The full moon is directly above the hole and illuminates the altar, but this opening is concealed by an illusory terrain from the top side. Behind the altar is a 20 foot high indentation in the wall where it looks like a large statue of a humanoid once stood, but checks will reveal this to be much more recent than the shrine's construction. Carved into all the walls and the ceiling are words in an unknown language (Celestial) that glow with golden fire. On the altar sits an ageless Shou woman dressed in a simple tunic with breeches and bare feet. She appears to be exhausted.

The Shou woman turns to you and smiles. "I am the Founder. You have chosen well this day and gained me enough time to finish my ritual. She gestures to the walls. Here lie written the secrets of my Ki, but not just anyone can interpret them. Rai, step forward."

If Rai is dead, The Founder will ask for his body to be placed on the altar. The fire that illuminates the writing will coalesce into the glowing form of a ki-rin, It looks somewhat like a golden stag covered in

scales and fur. It has coppery, cloven hooves, violet eyes, and a copper, spiral horn. It is insubstantial and cannot be attacked. It will touch its horn to Rai's body and cast Raise Dead. It will not raise anyone else.

As Rai stands before the Founder you can see clear similarities in their features, so it is of no surprise when the Founder says, "Rai, some of the energy from my celestial pact with my patron is in your blood. You are my great grandson and destined to bring this knowledge to the world. With the teaching of the school, and further training with me, you will fight a coming evil." Rai looks surprised.

"More training with you?! What does that mean? I don't want to leave the School and my friends when I don't even really know who you are." He turns towards you and Beat, "What should I do?"

"Don't leave us," says Beat.

"It will be difficult for the School to protect you and the knowledge here," says the Founder gently. If one could easily interpret the emotions of an extra planar being of goodness, you would say the ki-rin looks annoyed.

"Rai, the truth is my blood runs in your veins; it resonated with mine such that my pact will soon become yours, and I believe subtle movements of fate brought you to the School's protection for this eventual calling. Be strong, great-grandson.

Give the players an opportunity to give input on Rai's decision. He will do whatever they say in the end.

Either way the Founder then explains that the School of the Swift Horse must stop running and settle in Melvant to protect this site and build their resources for the coming evil (which she will give no details on). If Rai goes with the Founder the ki-rin will shake its mane and golden fire will cascade over the party. They will receive the Story Award

“Blessings of the Ki-rin” unless they are evil and then they get no benefit. Beat will be inconsolable. If Rai stays with the group Beat will be delighted, and the Founder and the ki-rin will disappear in a flash of fire. The party can then return to the School and impart what it knows. Ralbea and the Teacher will look strangely relieved at the news that they no longer have to be on the move. They will welcome Kanithar back with some trepidation, but recognize that the right thing to do would be to one day help Kanithar find peace with his past which could mean a fight with the Red Wizards.

Regarding the location:

“This place was dedicated to Torm, a divine being whose exhortation of self-sacrifice and courage resonate with the entity I serve. Even in this region, where history makes people suspicious and fearful of their neighbours, there were those who felt the need to enshrine these virtues. I felt the call of this shrine and began my work, waiting for circumstances to bring us all to this point. Thank you, sincerely, for risking yourselves to make it here.”

Inspection of the words carved into the shrine reveals them to be passages written in celestial that are introductory fragments of beautiful poetry. Rai, the Teacher, and any celestial speaker could grasp some of their meaning, but it will take much study and soul searching to fully understand and make use of it. Perhaps one day the ki-rin and the Syndicate will both return to play out their destinies.

Part B: The Party Helps the Syndicate

Rai stands up, grabs Beat’s hand and turns to face you.

“Thank you my friends. I can’t harm another member of my School, no matter what he’s done. Maybe we can convince Kanithar to come home after Nicodeme gets what he wants.” Beat hisses and cries at the same time. “No! I won’t work with a rat man,! Why are you humans so stupid?!” she yells at Rai, and runs off, back to the School. Rai steps into the flames and walks up the stairs unharmed, when he reaches Nicodeme and Kanithar on the top edge the shield and all the fire evaporates. Nicodeme gestures for you all to enter

The cave is a 40X40X20ft high room roughly hewn from the cliff side. It’s a derelict shrine to Torm. There is a hole in the ceiling directly above a worn altar in the centre of the room. The full moon is directly above the hole and illuminating the altar, but this opening is concealed by an illusory terrain from the top side. Behind the altar is a 20 foot high indentation in the wall where it looks like a large statue of a humanoid once stood, but checks will reveal this to be much more recent than the shrine’s construction. Carved into all the walls and the ceiling are words in an unknown language (Celestial) that glow with golden fire. On the altar sits an ageless Shou woman dressed in a simple tunic with breeches and bare feet. She appears to be exhausted.

The Shou woman looks sadly up at you, Rai, and Nicodeme in the back. “You have chosen poorly this day, my great grandson.” You realize that she and Rai have clear similarities in their features. “None of you are worthy of my patron’s blessing. You will find nothing here of value. The secrets will not be shared yet.” Then she and Rai disappear in a flash of golden fire.

“Huh,” says Nicodeme, looking around at the carved walls. “I guess I’m left with a bunch of loose ends. I’m sorry, but I’m afraid we’re going to have to kill you now, and that cat girl too. Kanithar, it’s been fun.” The wererat and his minions leap at you with the intent to kill!

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **spy**; Kanithar the **martial arts adept** only fight players if directly attacked or if Nicodeme goes down, otherwise locked into battle with Rai
- **Weak:** Remove the **spy**
- **Strong:** No adjustment
- **Very Strong:** Add Wind Talon's **peryton**, which she can fly in battle and acts as an independent mount
- If the peryton was defeated, add a **hobgoblin iron shadow**
- (Enemies defeated in Part 2 are absent and can be substituted with suitable **hobgoblin-type** replacements.)

Kanithar will start the fight dodging, unable to accept what has happened. If anyone attacks him he will fight them the next round. He can be persuaded to return to the School with a **DC 15 Persuasion or deception check** with advantage if they mention using Remove Curse to get rid of his growing lycanthropy. Nicodeme and his minions will focus on killing the players first. Kanithar won't turn on his teacher, but will fight the minions. If Nicodeme reaches 10 or fewer HP then he will whistle for the giant vulture that is lurking nearby and try to escape. The vulture will not attack.

After the battle if the characters take the time to look over the inscriptions and can read Celestial, then they will find it to be nonsensical gibberish. The party will then have to decide if they will return to the school and report what happened or simply leave with the treasure they have gained from the fight.

If they return to the school, then they will not be allowed in. Beat has told of their betrayal and when it is ascertained that Rai is not with the Party then they assume the worst has happened. If the Party convinces them otherwise DC 20 Persuasion or Deception, they will still firmly ask them to leave while the school attempts to rebuild. The School of the Swift Horse will be gone from Melvaunt by the next day.

Treasure

Wind Talon wears the *helm of telepathy*.

There is a decorative right-hand gauntlet made of silver within the shrine, left behind by whatever transpired and originally placed here in tribute to Torm, which is now worth 250 gp to collectors due to the unique pattern of etchings burned into it by the golden fire.

This gauntlet or (found with a DC 13 Perception/Investigation check) a similarly-marked piece of detritus can be presented to by Emerald Enclave members to complete their **faction assignment**.

Nicodeme wore two jade-studded bracers intended to painfully block blows as a deterrent for failure at the school, and they are worth 25 gp apiece.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Duodrone	50
Hobgoblin	100
Hobgoblin Captain	700
Hobgoblin Iron Shadow	450
Martial Arts Adept	700
Monodrone	25
Pentadrone	450
Peryton	450
Spy	200
Tridrone	100
Vargouille	200
Wererat	450
Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Comply with Alston	50
Good first impression	50
One token each	100
Good sport	50
Stand and fight/don't harm civilians	50

The adventures minimum and maximum XP awards are located on the Adventure Rewards document. Note that DDAL adventures award a maximum of the “target XP” award. Only epics may grant the “maximum” amount.

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 900 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 1200 **experience points**.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Adventurine	50
[Clockwork amulet parts	100]
Silver-hilt weapon	75
Fire-engraved gauntlet	250
Jade-studded bracers	50

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Helm of Telepathy

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)
The helm protects all the areas that it should but only barely, using just enough material to cover them while leaving cosmetic gaps and slits. It sports a distinct geometric design that originated somewhere far to the east and stands out to any observer, but that slight build makes it possible to conceal the apparatus under a cloak as easily as one would a circlet or tiara.

Potion of Greater Healing

Potion, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Potion of Healing

Potion, common

This item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Scroll of Shadow Blade

Scroll, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Clockwork Amulet

Wondrous item, common

This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*

Downtime Activities

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn access to the following downtime activity:

Saved the School: Having aided the school in a time of great need, you are welcome to stay with them for a time, come what may. If you spend 5 downtime days training at Swift Horse, you train your spirit to make one future Wisodm saving throws with advantage, at which point this benefit disappears.

Story Awards

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

Betrayed the School: Your choices have made you a mortal enemy of the Swift Horse School and its Founder. They avoid you as best they can and are likely to retaliate against you with force should the conditions favor them. Perhaps one day you can redeem yourself in their eyes...

Blessing of the Ki-rin. You have helped the Ki-rin and its allies on the Moonsea and it may see fit to bless you with celestial aid down the road. This can only happen if you once again elect to help the School of the Swift Horse.

Renown

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Emeral Enclave members can earn **one additional renown** for submitting one of the two fire-engraved objects from the shrine
 Harper members can earn **one additional renown** for turning over the decryption key
 Zhentarim members can earn **one additional renown** for bringing Wind Talon in at the end of the adventure.

Appendix 1. Monster/NPC Statistics

Monodrone

Medium construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Modron

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Axiomatic Mind. The monodrone can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.

Disintegration. If the monodrone dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Duodrone

Medium construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Modron

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Axiomatic Mind. The duodrone can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.

Disintegration. If the duodrone dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.

Actions

Multiattack. The duodrone makes two fist attacks or two javelin attacks.

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

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

Tridrone

Medium construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Modron

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Axiomatic Mind. The tridrone can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.

Disintegration. If the tridrone dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.

Actions

Multiattack. The tridrone makes three fist attacks or three javelin attacks.

Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Pentadrone

Large construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +4

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Modron

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Axiomatic Mind. The pentadrone can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.

Disintegration. If the pentadrone dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.

Actions

Multiattack. The tridrone makes five arm attacks.

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

Paralytic Gas (Recharge 5-6). The pentadrone exhales a 30-foot cone of gas. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be *paralyzed* for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Beat of Heart (Scout)

Medium humanoid (tabaxi), chaotic good

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Martial Arts Adept

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the adept is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The adept makes three unarmed strikes or dart attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the adept can choose one of the following additional effects:

- The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (adept's choice).
- The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the adept's next turn.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Druid

Medium humanoid (wood elf), any alignment

Armor Class 11 (16 with barkskin)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Druidic plus any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The druid is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, produce flame, shillelagh*
1st level (4 slots): *entangle, longstrider, speak with animals, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, barkskin*

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh* or if wielded with two hands.

Hobgoblin

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Actions

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

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

Vargouille

Tiny fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d4 + 6)

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands Abyssal, Infernal, Common but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Dive Attack. If the peryton is flying and dives at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee weapon attack, the attack deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage to the target.

Flyby. The peryton doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Sight and Smell. The peryton has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage..

Kiss. The vargouille kisses one incapacitated humanoid within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or become cursed. The cursed target loses 1 point of Charisma after each hour, as its head takes on fiendish aspects. The curse doesn't advance while the target is in sunlight or the area of a daylight spell; don't count that time. When the cursed target's Charisma becomes 2, it dies, and its head tears from its body and becomes a new vargouille. Casting *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or a similar spell on the target before the transformation is complete can end the curse. Doing

so undoes the changes made to the target by the curse.

Stunning Shriek. The vargouille shrieks. Each humanoid and beast within 30 feet of the vargouille and able to hear it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the vargouille's next turn. While frightened in this way, a target is stunned. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the Stunning Shriek of all vargouilles for 1 hour.

Hobgoblin Captain

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (half plate)

Hit Points 55 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The hobgoblin makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

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.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the hobgoblin 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 hobgoblin. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin is incapacitated.

Hobgoblin Iron Shadow

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The hobgoblin is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *true strike*

1st level (3 slots): *charm person*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *silent image*

Unarmored Defense. While the hobgoblin is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The hobgoblin makes four attacks, each of which can be an unarmed strike or a dart attack. It can also use Shadow Jaunt once, either before or after one of the attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Shadow Jaunt. The hobgoblin magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Both the space it is leaving and its destination must be in dim light or darkness.

Peryton

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages understands Common and Elvish but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dive Attack. If the peryton is flying and dives at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee weapon attack, the attack deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage to the target.

Flyby. The peryton doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Sight and Smell. The peryton has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The peryton makes one gore attack and one talon attack.

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

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Wind Talon (Spy)

Medium humanoid (lightfoot halfling), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) 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 spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

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.

Jandar Nicodeme (Wererat)

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills, Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft. (rat form only), passive Perception 12

Languages Common (can't speak in rat form)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shapechanger. The wererat can use its action to polymorph into a rat-human hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into its true form which is humanoid. statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is not transformed. It reverts to its true form when it dies.

Keen Smell. The wererat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid form only). The wererat makes two attacks one of which is a bite.

Bite (Rat or Hybrid form only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

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

Hand Crossbow (Humanoid or Hybrid form only).

Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Appendix 2. Maps





